



# SHERMAN CREEK WILDLIFE AREA/ LECLERC CREEK WILDLIFE AREA 2009 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



## **Land Management Summary**

This is an update to the 2006 Sherman Creek Wildlife Area and LeClerc Creek Wildlife Area Management Plans [http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife\\_areas/management\\_plans/](http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/). These plans provide management direction for the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area located along the west side of Lake Roosevelt in the eastern foothills of the Kettle River Range, and the LeClerc Creek Wildlife Area located in Pend Oreille County along the east side of

the Pend Oreille River. The Sherman Creek Wildlife Area consists of five parcels totaling 8,782 acres. The LeClerc Creek Wildlife Area is located about 25 miles northwest of Newport and 65 miles northwest of Spokane. It consists of four land units totaling 614 acres which were purchased with Pitman-Robertson and State Wildlife funds in 1972. The majority of the area is forested and is managed for a variety of wildlife habitat improvements and public recreation opportunities.

The plan identifies needs and guides activities on the two areas based on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Mission of “Sound Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife” and its underlying statewide goals and objectives as they apply to local conditions. Plans are updated annually as habitat and species conditions change, as new regulations and scientific knowledge develop, as public issues and concerns evolve, and as administration of wildlife areas change. This management plan update also includes 2008 accomplishments, new issues, new land management strategies and performance measures for 2009.

## **Updates/Changes**

Plan Update Consolidation: For this 2009 update, management plan activities for the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area and the LeClerc Creek Wildlife Area have been combined into one document.

## **New Issues**

West Branch Little Spokane (WBLS)  
Acquisition: WDFW has acquired the first of

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two parcels along the WBLS River, in Pend Oreille County. The second parcel will be acquired no later than September 30, 2009. This roughly 3,000-acre property, consisting of mostly second-growth timber and braided wetlands, will be managed as a satellite of SCWA. Formal planning for this property will begin in October 2009.

Colville River Acquisition: WDFW’s effort to purchase a string of properties along the Colville River, to protect the cottonwood galleries and associated flora/fauna along the river, was not successful. A private party purchased this parcel.

**Major Stewardship Accomplishments**

The Bisbee Mountain Fire Salvage sale and the Sherman Creek/Oak Creek Perpetual Timber Rights Exchange Timber Sale are underway. Ownership of the timber in the sale was transferred in summer 2009, from Western Pacific Timber (WPT) to Boise Cascade (BC). The WDFW state forester Doug Kuehn, Sherman Creek Natural Resources Technician Jerry Christensen, and WPT/BC field staff have been working together to monitor activities and resolve problems. Christensen was kept employed on a half-time basis over the winter of 2008-2009, to help out with managing the sale.

The agricultural lease (hay flat) continued as in previous year. Lessee was provided with replacement irrigation parts, which increased water use efficiency. Lease was renewed in August 2009, for another five years.

Highway 20 Scenic Byway project: second (final) phase has been completed. This included development of scenic waypoints (including a kiosk at WLA headquarters, along Hwy 20), and clearing out brush along a roadway in selected spots for improved view and safety. WDFW was one of several entities involved with the planning process. U.S. Forest Service, Colville, was lead on this project. A grand opening ceremony for the Byway was held in summer 2009, at the new visitor’s center in Kettle Falls.

**Status Report of 2008 Performance Measures**

Key performance measures are identified each year to monitor progress and identify any issues that might interfere with planned priority activities. This information will be used to delete, add or alter priority strategies for 2009.

<b>2008 Performance Measure</b>	<b>Status of Performance Measure</b>	<b>Explanation of Progress/ 2009 Related Activity/ Comments</b>
Continue to work with WDFW forester and wildlife program staff in 2008, as timber harvest begins.	Harvest activities began in 2008.	Harvest will continue through 2009 and beyond.
Implement and monitor projects to provide annual improvements to deer winter range.	Maintained food plots and grass plantings, to improve forage availability for wintering deer.	Continue in 2009. Consider using seeding & spot burning to promote sprouting of ceanothus on the uplands.
Maintain/develop one spring	Tiles were laid at one spring,	Continue maintenance in

or other water source every 2 years, as staffing allows.	in summer 2009.	2009; develop spring or water sources as staffing/funding allows.
Expand open meadows by 2 acres and install 10 nest boxes for bluebirds each year.	Meadow expansion not accomplished. Staff on other projects. Bird boxes installed by Kettle Falls High School students.	Consider doing this work only if funding/staffing allow. Kettle Falls High School. Wildlife Management class is now building/installing bird boxes.
Appropriate weed control as outlined in the weed management plan.	Priority weed management goals met. Treated leafy spurge at LeClerc Creek unit in both 2008 and in early September 2009.	No change in weed control priorities from 2008. Continue in 2009.
Conduct at least one project using volunteer or school groups for outreach and education.	Participated in the annual Water Festival outdoor education program for 4 <sup>th</sup> grade students. Also in fall 2008, Kettle Falls High School students maintained bluebird boxes on the WLA.	Continue in 2009

**New Strategies**

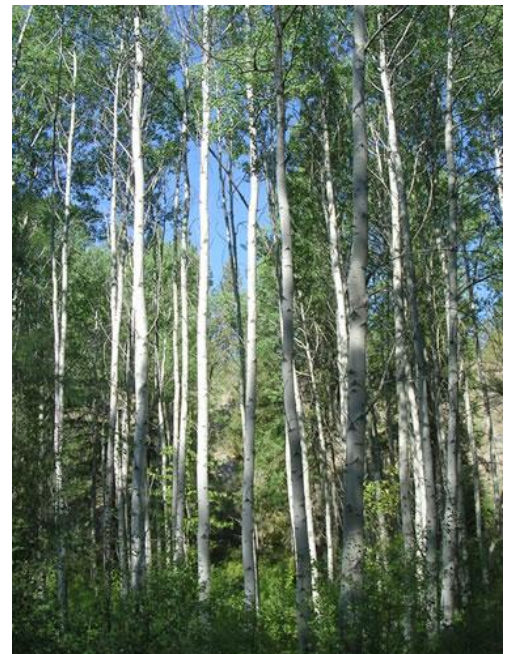
The wildlife area plan identifies many strategies or activities to address the agencies strategic plan goals and objectives, why the area was purchased, habitat conditions, species presence, and public issues and concerns. The following updated strategies have been added to respond to previously unaddressed or new issues or changes on the wildlife area. New strategies may also be in response to adaptive management as staff evaluate the impacts of past management activities.

No new strategies were identified for 2009.

**2009 Performance Measures**

Performance measures for Sherman Creek and LeClerc Creek Wildlife Areas are listed below. Accomplishments and progress toward desired outcomes will be monitored and evaluated annually.

- 1) Monitor the progress of the ongoing timber sales to accomplish Priority Habitats and Species and other management objectives specific to the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area.
- 2) Work with district biologists and foresters Doug Kuehn, to ensure proper precautions are taken around a recently found goshawk-nesting site, before timber harvest in that area begins.



- 3) Negotiate with the sharecropper to trade the agency share of the hay lease for a late season (July 1<sup>st</sup>) first cutting of the alfalfa to reduce fawn mortality.
- 4) Document options for moose and elk management projects.
- 5) Maintain existing water developments including the upland developments, the hayfield pond and the irrigation diversion system.
- 6) Expand open meadows by 2 acres and install 10 nest boxes for bluebirds, as time and funding allow.
- 7) Appropriate weed control on the wildlife area, focusing on areas adjacent to roads. Meet goals for 2009, outlined in the weed management plan. Concentrate control efforts on diffuse knapweed and Dalmatian toadflax. Review this year's weed control work, using reports generated, and compare effort and success to previous years' weed control activities.
- 8) Seed and maintain 5 acres of food plots.
- 10) Work with the sharecropper to cultivate of the alfalfa fields each year, and re-seed as appropriate, so the entire hay lease is on a maximum of a 6-year re-seeding rotation.
- 11) Implement 5 acres of snag inventory and/or recruitment for pileated woodpecker habitat each year. This is work that may need to be done by district biologist.
- 12) Maintain current road closures, and close additional roads that are unsafe for public use or have a negative impact on wildlife.
- 13) Continue pheasant releases in 2009.
- 14) As habitat surveys are conducted and analyzed, determine general trend of habitat quality. If quality is declining, attempt to determine the cause of decline and develop/implement strategies to improve habitat quality.
- 15) Conduct at least one project using volunteer or school groups for outreach and education.
- 16) Update plans as appropriate, including WA plan and all listed appendices.
- 17) Maintain all signs, parking areas and access sites.
- 18) Maintain current licenses and certifications required for staff.
- 19) Identify any capital project needs for the wildlife area.
- 20) Maintain current fire protection contracts.

### **Citizens Advisory Group**

The last Citizens Advisory Group was held on March 27, 2008, in Colville. The next CAG meeting will be held in late fall 2009, to incorporate user groups interested in the new West Branch Little Spokane (WBLS) Wildlife Area. Updates are shown below, for actions taken after last CAG meeting's input.

- Bluebird nest boxes: Hatchery Manager Mitch Combs has coordinated with local high school students in wildlife classes to build and install 10 nest boxes each fall, along with cleaning out existing boxes. UPDATE: Kettle Falls High School students will continue with bird box construction/installation/cleaning.

- Forest thinning/burning: USFS's Chris Loggers and other attending CAG members were in favor of continuing to explore options to continue with these types of forest management tools. UPDATE: thinning is being done now, via the current timber harvest on SCWA.

- Manage for aspen stands: CAG agreed this is a needed activity, and discussed ways to implement increased growth of clones. UPDATE: timber harvest currently underway was planned to increase openings where aspen stands can expand.
- Maintain/increase open ceanothus meadows: plant seeds need fire to germinate. Planned thinning and associated prescribed fire should assist with achieving this goal. UPDATE: ongoing timber harvest will increase open meadows for ceanothus expansion.
- OHV and Disabled Hunter access: USFW will be issuing a map in summer 2008, showing ATV/OHV accessible roads on their lands. WDFW can coordinate with them, to show which areas are and are not accessible. CAG discussed options for increased road accessibility for disabled hunters. On SCWA grounds, there are really no good options for implementing such a plan. UPDATE: this still needs to be done.
- Maps: SCWA, like many other WLAs, needs a good, small map that can be supplied to WLA visitors. UPDATE: WDFW has not issued a small map suitable for distribution to the public, as of mid-September 2009.

**Want to see the full plan?**

Go to –

[http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife\\_areas/management\\_plans/](http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/)

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