



SAGEBRUSH FLAT WILDLIFE AREA 2009 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Land Management Summary



Bridgeport Unit

This is an update to the 2006 Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area Management Plan

(http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/m/management_plans/) that provides

management direction for the Sagebrush

Flat Wildlife Area located in Douglas

County. The plan identifies needs and

guides activities on the area based on the

Washington Department of Fish and

Wildlife's (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 scientific

knowledge develops, as new regulations

and public issues and concerns evolve.

This update includes accomplishments in

2008, performance measures for 2009 and background information describing Bonneville Power Administration's involvement and funding of the wildlife area.

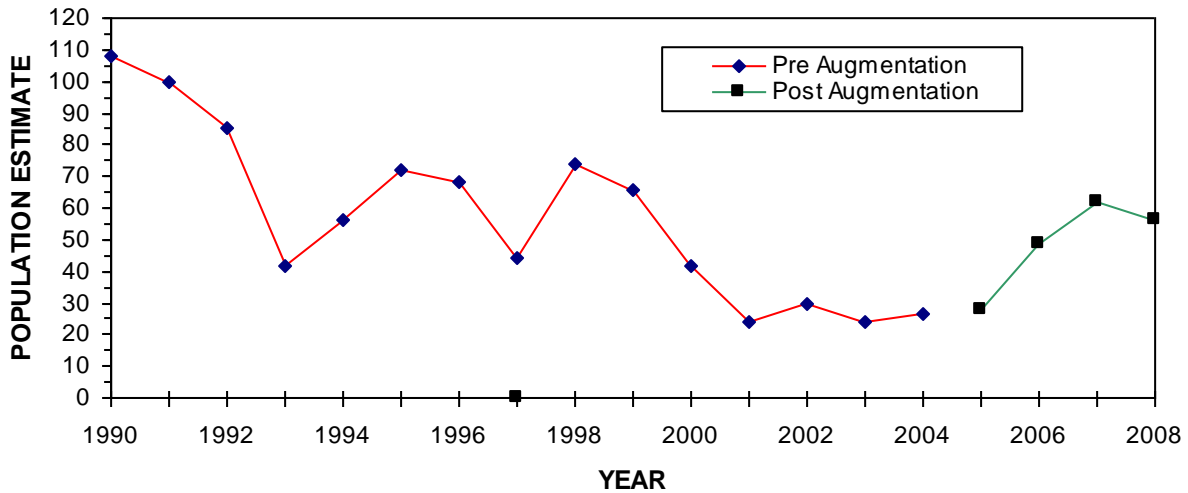
Major Stewardship Accomplishments

In April of 2008, biologists from WDFW, Bureau of Land Management and the Colville Confederated Tribes traveled to Idaho to trap sharp-tailed grouse for release on WDFW wildlife areas in Lincoln and Douglas counties and the Colville Confederated Tribes Reservation. Fourteen sharp-tailed grouse (7 female, 7 male) were released on the Bridgeport Unit. Since 2005, 52 grouse have been released on the wildlife area.

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Estimated sharp-tailed grouse population numbers on and in the vicinity of the Bridgeport Unit, based on lek surveys, suggest an increase in the population after the initial releases in 2005 (Schroeder 2008, personal communications). Population estimates in the area increased 57%, from a low of 24 in 2001 to 56 in 2008 (see figure below).



Sharp-tailed grouse population estimates based on lek surveys Bridgeport Unit and vicinity. Pre and post augmentation period numbers are separated as indicated in the legend.

In November, wildlife area staff rented an excavator and removed approximately 10-acres of Russian olive trees from riparian areas of the Bridgeport Unit (photo below). All cut stumps were treated with herbicide to prevent resprouting. Spot treatments will be necessary to kill any resprouting that may occur. As conditions allow, we replant these areas with native trees and shrubs.



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.

2008 Performance Measure	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2009 Related Activity/ Comments
Summer fallow and seed contour and mound areas in Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) field at the Sagebrush Flat Unit	Summer fallow completed. We decided to summer fallow for an additional year.	Continue summer fallow and seed in fall of 2009.
Plant trees and shrubs on the Bridgeport Unit to enhance and expand riparian	Completed. WCC crew planted approximately 1,200 willow cuttings.	Monitor for weed control in 2009 as needed.
Treat up to 150 acres infested with annual and perennial weeds. Treatments will include chemical, biological and mechanical methods.	Completed. Approximately 675 acres were treated. This figure includes spot treatment within approximately 240 acres seeded in fall of 2007.	Continue in 2009
Release up to 6,000 bio-control agents to treat perennial weeds, particularly Dalmatian toadflax on the Bridgeport, Chester Butte and Dormaier units.	Completed. Released 4,000 <i>Mecinus janthinus</i> on the Bridgeport Unit.	Continue in 2009
Maintain 150 acres of reseeded fields planted in the past 4 years on the Bridgeport Unit. Weed control, mow and interseed as needed.	Completed. Weed control and mowing were performed as needed.	Continue in 2009
Maintain shrubs and trees planted since 2000 as well as native riparian habitat with weed control, fencing and replacement of shrubs and trees lost to mortality.	Completed. Performed manual and mechanical weed control within fenced enclosures. Repaired fencing as needed. Planted shrubs and trees within enclosure to replace those lost to mortality.	Continue in 2009
Maintain the firebreaks at the Sagebrush Flat Unit to protect the area from fire.	Completed firebreak maintenance (15 miles). Treated 2.5 miles with herbicide to reduce/eliminate annual weeds.	Continue in 2009

Remove up to 2 miles of old fence from four units, old corrals from the Chester Butte and Sagebrush Flat units and unsafe building rubble and wreckage from the Chester Butte and Dormaier units.	Incomplete. Area staff removed approximately 2 miles of old fence but corrals etc remain.	Continue work in 2009 as time allows. Seek cultural resource compliance prior work at Doramier unit.
Maintain shrubs, trees and native riparian habitat with weed control, fencing and replacement.	Completed. Performed manual and mechanical weed control within fenced enclosures. Repaired fencing as needed. Planted shrubs and trees within enclosure to replace those lost to mortality.	Continue work in 2009
Maintain 15 miles of roads, 10 parking areas, 5 culverts and numerous informational signs.	Completed. Graded 3 miles of road on the Bridgeport Unit. Repaired road on Bridgeport Unit. Performed weed control and sign maintenance at parking areas as needed.	Continue in 2009
Maintain up to 50 miles of boundary fence on all units.	Completed. Repaired fences and gates as needed.	Continue in 2009
Monitor sage and sharp-tailed grouse leks. Search for new or satellite leks on or adjacent to the area.	Completed	Continue in 2009
Major Accomplishments in addition to 2008 Performance Measures		
Remove Russian olive trees on Bridgeport Unit.	Removed trees from 10 acres	Continue in 2009, another 7-10 acres remain.
Maintain solar water pump on Bridgeport Unit.	Replaced pump and solar array. New pump has greater gpm capacity.	Annual monitoring
Release sharp-tailed grouse on Bridgeport Unit.	14 grouse released	No releases planned for 2009. 2009 release efforts are focused on Lincoln county and the CCT. Releases on Bridgeport Unit are planned for 2010.
Apply for Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program grant to fund shrubsteppe restoration on Bridgeport Unit.	The application was successful. It will provide funding to restore approximately 335 acres of shrubsteppe on the wildlife area.	Begin work in fall of 2009.



New Strategies

The wildlife area plan identifies many strategies or activities to address the agency's strategic plan goals and objectives, why the area was purchased, habitat conditions, species presence, and public issues and concerns. No new strategies were identified.

2009 Performance Measures

Performance measures for the Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area are listed below. Accomplishments and progress toward desired outcomes will be monitored and evaluated annually.

- 1) Summer fallow and seed contour and mound areas in CRP field at the Sagebrush Flat Unit.
- 2) Begin shrubsteppe restoration project on the Bridgeport Unit by mowing up to 335 acres currently planted with non-native grasses. This project is anticipated to last 3 years and is funded through a grant from Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program.
- 3) Remove up to 7 acres of Russian olive trees on Bridgeport Unit.
- 4) Plant trees and shrubs on the Bridgeport Unit to enhance and expand riparian habitat.
- 5) Treat up to 150 acres infested with annual and perennial weeds. Treatments will include chemical, biological and mechanical methods.
- 6) Release up to 6,000 bio-control agents to treat perennial weeds, particularly Dalmatian toadflax on the Bridgeport, Chester Butte and Dormaier units
- 7) Maintain 400 acres of reseeded fields planted in the past four years on the Bridgeport Unit. Weed control, mow and interseed as needed.
- 8) Maintain shrubs and trees planted since 2000, as well as native riparian habitat with weed control, fencing and replacement of shrubs and trees lost to mortality.
- 9) Maintain the firebreaks (15 miles) at the Sagebrush Flat Unit to protect the area from fire.
- 10) Remove up to 2 miles of old fence from four units, old corral from the Chester Butte unit and unsafe building rubble and wreckage from the Chester Butte and Dormaier units.

- 11) Maintain 15 miles of roads, 10 parking areas, 5 culverts and numerous informational signs.
- 12) Maintain up to 50 miles of boundary fence on all wildlife area units.
- 13) Complete Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area annual Management Plan update.
- 14) Produce BPA required PISCES and annual reports
- 15) Monitor sharp-tailed and sage grouse leks.
- 16) Conduct cultural resource reviews as required.

Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) Input:

The draft management plan update was mailed to the CAG for comment. No comments were received. Over time attendance at meetings has decreased substantially. Only two members attended the last meeting/field trip that was scheduled.

Wells, Chelan and Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Areas Citizens Advisory Group - 2009

Jim McGee	Public Utilities District No. 1 of Douglas County
Von Pope	Public Utilities District No. 1 of Chelan County
Bill Stegeman	Wenatchee Sportsmen’s Association
Bob Fischer	US Army Corp of Engineers – Chief Joseph Dam/ Adjacent Landowner /Recreationist
Tim Behne	Adjacent Landowner/Cattleman/Wheat Grower/Foster Creek Conservation District
John Musser	Wildlife Biologist, Recreationist
Steve Wetzel	Washington Department of Natural Resources
Mary Hunt	Douglas County Commissioner
Mike Mackey	Chelan County Weed Board
Vacant	North Central Washington Audubon Society
Vacant	The Nature Conservancy
Neal Hedges	Chelan - Douglas Land Trust
Mallory Lenz	U.S. Forest Service
Bob Stoll	Adjacent Landowner
Vacant	US Bureau of Land Management

Want to see the full plan?
 Go to –
http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/

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Information for BPA's Wildlife Mitigation Program

The Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area is funded by the Bonneville Power Administration to mitigate for wildlife losses from the construction of Chief Joseph Dam and Grand Coulee Dam. The project provides an estimated 6,411 Habitat Units (HUs) toward their overall Wildlife Mitigation Debt for the Columbia River hydroelectric system. By funding habitat enhancement for a set period of time, and maintenance and operation costs for the life of the project, BPA receives credit towards its mitigation obligation.

Progress towards this obligation is assessed through the use of periodic surveys based on standardized Habitat Evaluation Procedure (HEP) for four focal species: Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, greater sage grouse, pygmy rabbit and mule deer. By measuring a variety of habitat features, HEP surveyors apply habitat models for each of the focal species to arrive at a numerical figure between 0 and 1 that quantifies the habitat quality for a particular focal species. This figure is known as a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI). This figure is then multiplied by the area habitat being evaluated (acres of shrub steppe, riparian, woodland, etc.) The result is expressed as a Habitat Unit (HU), which is the basic currency of HEP.

Reports/Proposals/Plans

Since 1992, the Bonneville Power Administration has provided funding for the Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area. Consequently, numerous reports, funding proposals and annual work plans have been produced, most recently in January of 2009. By following the links below, the interested reader can find detailed information on a variety of topics that the wildlife area is engaged in.

General information on the Mitigation Project

The 2010-2012 Funding Proposal Narrative submitted to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NWPCC) in January of 2009 (<http://www.nwcouncil.org/fw/budget/2010/narratives/990.doc> pages 1-12, 15, 16 contain detailed descriptions of the area's history, land purchases and rationale for mitigation and focal species)

Additional information describing BPA's role in mitigation and crediting can be found on the BPA web site: <http://www.efw.bpa.gov/IntegratedFWP/Wildlife.aspx> and <http://www.efw.bpa.gov/IntegratedFWP/wildlifecredit.aspx>

Management Activities

The NWPCC 2010-2012 Funding Proposal Narrative (pages 1-12 and 23-28) includes detailed descriptions of proposed management activities for the 2010-2012. It also includes proposed budgets and projected needs through 2018. (<http://www.nwcouncil.org/fw/budget/2010/narratives/990.doc>)

Monitoring and Evaluation

The NWPCC 2010-2012 Funding Proposal Narrative (pages 18-23, 28, 36-49) contains detailed descriptions and summation of wildlife surveys conducted on the area since 1995.

Habitat evaluation reports with detailed analysis of habitat conditions for the Bridgeport, Chester Butte and Dormaier units are included in the following:

<http://pisces.bpa.gov/release/documents/documentviewer.aspx?doc=P106525>

<http://pisces.bpa.gov/release/documents/documentviewer.aspx?doc=P106526>

<http://pisces.bpa.gov/release/documents/documentviewer.aspx?doc=P106527>

Acquisition Strategy

WDFW pursues an active acquisition program based on criteria described in management plans for sage and sharp-tailed grouse, pygmy rabbit and the internal Lands 20/20 review process.

Funding Strategy

The NWPCC 2010-2012 Funding Proposal includes detailed descriptions of proposed management activities for the 2010-2012 time period including proposed budgets plus projected needs through 2018. It also contains detailed descriptions of work elements, capitol projects and cost-share opportunities and all projected budgets.