



SHERMAN CREEK WILDLIFE AREA 2008 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Land Management Summary

This is an update to the 2006 Sherman Creek Wildlife Area Management Plan (http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/) that provides 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. There are five parcels totaling 8,782 acres. The plan identifies needs and guides activities on the area 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 2007 accomplishments, new issues, new land management strategies and performance measures for 2008.

Updates/Changes

SCWA has a new wildlife area manager, Juli Anderson, as of July 1, 2007. This change came about as a result of WDFW’s decision to put WLA managers in charge of all WDFW lands, rather than have some lands managed by upland habitat staff.

WDFW is pursuing the purchase of additional property that will be added to the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area. This is land just a few miles south of Colville, along Hwy 395, is centered on cottonwood galleries along the Colville River.

New Issues

Continuing Issue: WDFW staff, including forester Doug Kuehn, will be closely monitoring the progress of two upcoming timber sales, to ensure the highest possible benefit to wildlife in accordance with objectives outlined in the management plan. Steve Zender gave the CAG an overview of upcoming sale, at meeting on March 27, 2008.

New Wildlife Area Manager: Sherman Creek WLA was assigned to Swanson Lakes WLA manager on July 1, 2007. Usual issues with change of management: getting to know seasonal employee, local residents, CAG members, agricultural lessee, and hatchery staff; learning security codes, filing systems, etc.; studying planned timber sales.

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Highway 20 Scenic Byway Project: Second phase is in the works. This includes development of scenic waypoints (including kiosk at WLA HQ), and clearing out brush along roadway in selected spots for improved view and safety. WDFW is one of several entities involved with the planning process. U.S. Forest Service, Colville, is lead entity on this project.

Colville River Acquisition: WDFW Biologist Sandy Dotts is spearheading WDFW’s effort to purchase a string of properties along the Colville River, a few miles south of the Colville, to protect the cottonwood galleries and associated flora/fauna along the river. All of these properties, once purchased, would become part of Sherman Creek Wildlife Area.

Major Stewardship Accomplishments

The WDFW State Forester, Doug Kuehn and Kelly Craig, WDFW Deputy Assistant Manager, in cooperation with wildlife area and other program staff, completed timber harvest prescriptions and other required documents for the Bisbee Mountain Fire Salvage Sale and the Sherman Creek 5-Year Habitat Improvement Project. Harvest activities are projected to begin in 2008.

Weed management goals for control of Diffuse Knapweed and Dalmatian Toadflax were met in 2007.

Ag lease – continued as in previous year. Lessee replanted about 30 acres of alfalfa, in second year of three-year replanting schedule.

Status Report of 2007 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 2008.

2007 Performance Measure	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2008 Related Activity/ Comments
Continue to work with WDFW forester and wildlife program staff in 2007, to implement the plan for the upcoming timber sale.	Prescription developed and harvest boundaries were marked in winter of 2007/2008. Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) went out for a 30-day public review in March 2008.	The Final EA/FONSI for the timber sale was issued in April 2008. Harvest activities are scheduled to begin in late Summer/early Fall 2008.
Improve at least one aspen stand in 2007, as staffing and funding allow.	Unable to complete this, due to lack of staffing/funding.	Continue in 2008. Recommend implementing as part of the Sherman Creek 5-Year Habitat Improvement Project.
Mow 2 acres of forest openings to increase succulent forage.	Did not accomplish in 2007 due to scheduling constraints.	Identify new areas and continue in 2008
Implement and monitor	Maintaining food plots and	Continue in 2008. Consider

projects to show annual improvements to deer winter range.	grass plantings improved forage availability for wintering deer.	using seeding and spot burning to promote sprouting of ceanothus on the uplands.
Maintain/develop one spring or other water source every 2 years, as staffing allows.	Existing developments maintained.	Continue maintenance in 2008; develop spring or water source as staffing/funding allows.
Expand open meadows by 2 acres and install 10 nest boxes for bluebirds each year.	Not accomplished. Staff on other projects.	Consider doing this work only if funding/staffing allow.
Appropriate weed control as outlined in the weed management plan.	Priority weed management goals met. Diffuse knapweed and Dalmatian Toadflax populations controlled or reduced.	No change in weed control priorities from 2007.
Conduct at least 1 project using volunteer or school groups for outreach and education.	Participated in the annual Water Festival outdoor education program for 4 th grade students.	Continue in 2008. Sponsorship change this year, to Lake Roosevelt Forum.
Start ceanothus seeding and burning program in cooperation with other agencies to improve deer winter range, as time and funding allow.	Cooperated with USFS regarding the Colville National Forest, Three Rivers Ranger District, Sherman Creek Rx Fire Project- Phase II. Approximately 50 acres of the Sherman Creek WLA were Rx burned to rejuvenate palatable shrub species for mule deer. Other species that will benefit are elk, whitetail deer and wild turkey.	Continue in 2008. Consider other joint ventures with USFS to meet wildlife objectives.

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 present 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 2008.

2008 Performance Measures

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

- 1) Monitor the progress of the upcoming timber sales to accomplish PHS and other management objectives specific to the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area. Explore the possibility of using timber sale receipts to fund strategies within this management plan that are currently unfunded.
- 2) Start ceanothus seeding program and maintain a burning program in cooperation with other agencies to improve deer winter range, as time and funding allow.
- 3) Negotiate with the sharecropper to trade the agency share of the hay lease for a late (July 1st) 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, with focus on areas adjacent to roads. Meet the goals for 2008, outlined in the weed management plan. Concentrate control efforts on Diffuse Knapweed and Dalmatian Toadflax. Review the 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 and re-seed a portion of the alfalfa fields each year so the entire hay lease is on a maximum of a 6-year 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 negatively impact wildlife.
- 13) Continue pheasant releases in 2008.
- 14) As habitat surveys are conducted and analyzed, determine general trend of habitat quality. If quality is declining, attempt to determine cause of decline and develop/implement strategies to improve habitat quality.
- 15) Conduct at least 1 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 Input

A Citizens Advisory Group was held on March 27, 2008, in Colville. Three non-WDFW members attended this meeting, along with the WLA manager and three other WDFW staff members. Summary of CAG Input/Responses:

- Bluebird nest boxes: Hatchery Mgr Mitch Combs has coordinated with local high school, so that students in wildlife classes build and install 10 nest boxes each fall, along with cleaning out existing boxes at that time.
- Forest thinning/burning: USFS's Chris Loggers and other attending CAG members were in favor of continuing to explore options to continue with these forest management tools.

- Manage for aspen stands: CAG agreed this is a needed activity, and discussed ways to implement increased growth of clones.
- Maintain/increase open ceanothus meadows: Plant seeds need fire to germinate. Planned thinning and associated prescribed fire should assist with achieving this goal.
- OHVs 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 aren't accessible to these vehicles. CAG discussed options for increased road accessibility for disabled hunters. On SCWA grounds, there are really no good options for implementing such a plan.
- Maps: SCWA, like many other WLAs, needs a good, small map that can be supplied to WLA visitors.

Want to see the full plan?

Go to -

http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/

Contacts:

WDFW Spokane Office
(509) 892-1001 Ext. 324
Wildlife Area Manager
(509) 636-2344