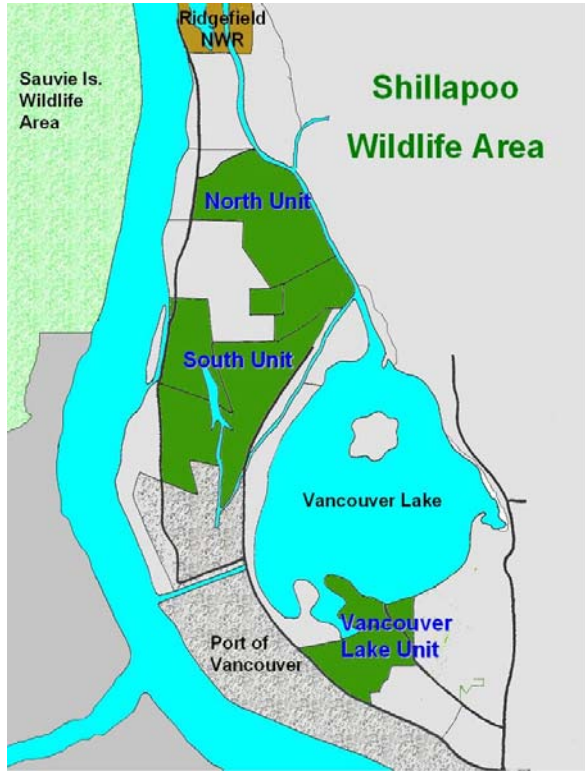




SHILLAPOO WILDLIFE AREA 2008 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



Land Management Summary

This is an update to the 2006 Shillapoo Wildlife Area Management Plan (http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/) that provides management direction for the 2341-acre Shillapoo Wildlife Area in Clark County, Washington. 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

In 2007 several changes occurred that will affect the wildlife area. The reduction of the funding level that we receive from Bonneville Power for enhancement, operation, and maintenance took effect in September. As a result, some enhancement work was scaled back. Funding that we have been receiving from the State Migratory Bird Stamp fund was also reduced, which did not allow us to hire a full time Habitat Technician during the 2007 field season. This limited our ability to monitor public and wildlife use and also impacted other habitat work. Improvements to the South Unit pump station were completed, which has allowed for better water management in the adjoining wetlands. Ducks Unlimited completed the

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first portion (120 acres) of the Shillapoo Lakebed wetland projects in the South Unit. Progress is also being made toward the start of construction on major wetland projects in the North Unit.

New Issues

We attended one stakeholder group meeting to discuss and gather comments and ideas on a potential quality hunting area and a proposed target shooting closure along the Reiger Highway in the South Unit. This effort stalled after the first meeting we attended and we need to reach other stakeholder groups before we come back to the Advisory Group with a recommendation.

We collected information on waterfowl hunter distribution by doing car counts at specific locations during the hunting season and will use the information to evaluate how to address crowding issues.

Although we have made substantial progress in controlling Himalayan blackberry, poison hemlock, and Canada thistle over the past two years; a new invasive plant on the area, English Ivy, has become an increasing problem. Each occurrence of this plant has received control work as soon as practical after discovery but it is increasing in areas surrounding the wildlife area as well. We have contacted weed management and adjoining major public landowners nearby and hopefully we will be able to develop a cooperative strategy to address the problem.

Major Stewardship Accomplishments



A levee was completed to reestablish 120 acres of wetland habitat

The most significant accomplishment on the wildlife area in 2007 was the completion of the levee at the south end of the Shillapoo Lakebed. This allowed us to retain water in about 120 acres of the historic Shillapoo Lakebed, giving us the ability to reestablish native wetland habitat in the area.

All major stands of Poison Hemlock were treated and all known English Ivy patches were treated and removed from the wildlife area.

Management of upland goose forage areas continued to improve. All pasture sites were mowed at least once and three pastures totaling about 50 acres were replanted last fall with a grass/clover mix and grain cover crop. Three fields totaling about 40 acres were sprayed to control Himalayan Blackberry and Canada thistle, thereby improving habitat value. One other site was improved as waterfowl forage area by removing blackberries.

Wetland management also continues to improve. Portions of six wetland basins were disked to control Reed Canary Grass. Reasonably good flows in the Columbia and above average rainfall also allowed us to keep water levels up in South Unit wetland basins and a noted decline in

canary grass was observed in localized areas. Plant communities in the Vancouver Lake unit basins continue to progress more toward native plant dominance and reed canary grass continues to decline.

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 the US Army Corps of Engineers, Ducks Unlimited, and others in pursuing completion of major wetland enhancements in the lakebed. Target construction to start in summer.	We are close to having all permits secured and are anticipating start of construction this summer.	Finish permitting processes; work with partners to coordinate and monitor construction.
Complete planting of ten acres of Oak habitat in two South Unit sites. Continue planting and maintaining trees and shrubs in the Lake River riparian zone and abandoned heron rookery site. Start tree planting at the old agriculture site in the North Unit.	One oak site is complete. Other sites will continue to be planted over the next few years.	Some of these projects were delayed or have special prescriptions due to historic resource protection requirements.
Clear dense Himalayan blackberry in the portion of the Buckmire slough riparian zone that is East or North of the water body in preparation for understory enhancements. Also undertake the initial removal of blackberry from at least 500 feet of fence line and 50 acres of other areas.	Progress was made at the eastern most portion of the riparian area and this work will continue in 2008.	Crew scheduling and sensitive wildlife concerns have slowed progress on Buckmire Slough. A portion of other blackberry control efforts will move to the Vancouver Lake Unit this year.
Continue wetland basin enhancement through the removal of Reed Canary Grass by disking.	Disking was completed in about 69 acres. The plant response from the previous year's effort was dramatic in some areas.	This work will continue in 2008.
Control 200 acres of Canada Thistle and treat all major stands of Poison Hemlock and	Over 200 acres was mowed. About 100 acres of this area was broadcast sprayed for	This work will continue in 2008.

individual plants to the extent possible.	<p>thistle control and other areas were spot sprayed.</p> <p>All known large hemlock stands were treated.</p>	Control of Hemlock on adjoining Port lands to the south has improved, which will help with our efforts.
Begin control of English Ivy at all known locations and continue increased monitoring for early detection and control of new invasions of exotic weeds.	<p>We have still been able to keep pace with English Ivy as it is found on the wildlife area.</p> <p>Meadow knapweed, water speedwell, and slender-flower thistle were new weeds found for the first time this year.</p>	Increases in purple loosestrife occurrence around Vancouver Lake and Lake River are a new concern. Although already present in parts of the wildlife area, we will have to watch other areas more closely in hopes of preventing new infestations.
Continue to improve upland goose/crane forage areas through fencing to improve grazing management in the North Unit, continue mowing ungrazed areas, provide cover crops, and implement removal of undesirable brush.	<p>Fencing projects that have been deferred for two to three years are now ready for implementation.</p> <p>Planting of cover crops did not occur due to funding reductions.</p> <p>Brush has been removed in waterfowl pastures, but follow up maintenance will be required for an indefinite period.</p>	Cover crops do remain an option if funding for materials can be identified.
Implementation of measures as needed to protect habitat and other features from damage due to vandalism and other unlawful acts.	Metal theft has become an issue for us. For example, a cable-type vehicle barrier was stolen from the Vancouver Lake Unit.	We will probably replace the cable with boulders.
Complete an informational document and/or poster with basic rules and information about the wildlife area.	Was not completed but we did create a prototype that included all wildlife areas in the region.	<p>We will continue to attempt to finish this basic product.</p> <p>WDFW is also beginning to update and improve information on its website.</p>

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 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.

Issues identified in italics were provided by the Citizens Advisory Group. The public comments are captured at the end of this document. Although underlined strategies have no current funding source, identifying these needs is the first step to securing additional funds.

No new strategies are proposed to be added to the Shillapoo Wildlife Area Plan at this time.

2008 Performance Measures

Performance measures for the Shillapoo Wildlife Area for 2008 are listed below.

Accomplishments and progress toward desired outcomes will be monitored and evaluated annually.

- 1) Continue to work with the US Army Corps of Engineers in pursuing completion of major wetland enhancements in the lakebed. Target construction starting in summer.
- 2) Continue planting and maintaining trees and shrubs in the Lake River and Buckmire Slough riparian zones, abandoned heron rookery site, the old agriculture site in the North Unit, and others where planting has already been initiated. Initiate planting the old slough site (Chapman Island) if fencing is completed.
- 3) Continue clearing dense Himalayan blackberry along Buckmire Slough in preparation for ongoing understory enhancements. Begin removal of Himalayan Blackberry in the Vancouver Lake unit.
- 4) Continue wetland basin enhancement through the removal of Reed Canary Grass by disking.
- 5) Control 200 acres of Canada thistle and treat all major stands of Poison Hemlock and individual plants to the extent possible.
- 6) Continue monitoring and control of English Ivy at all known locations and maintain diligence in monitoring for early detection and control of new invasions of exotic weeds.
- 7) Continue to improve upland goose/crane forage areas through fencing to improve grazing management in the North Unit, continue mowing of ungrazed areas, reseeding 38 acres of pasture, and removal of undesirable brush.
- 8) Implementation of measures as needed to protect habitat and other features from damage due to vandalism and other unlawful acts.
- 9) Complete an informational document and/or poster with basic rules and information about the wildlife area.

Citizens Advisory Group Input

A Citizens Advisory Group meeting was held on April 17, 2008 to review management progress and address any new issues or input on existing issues. Those in attendance included representatives from Pheasants Forever, Columbia Land Trust, a Neighboring Landowner, Clark County Weed Management, Vancouver Wildlife League, Vancouver Audubon, Vancouver/Clark Parks and Recreation, and the Port of Vancouver.

The following new input/issues were addressed at the meeting.

Issue: A concern was expressed regarding the amount of cover that had been removed by mowing near Lower River Road on the South Unit prior to the Pheasant season.

Response: This was an area where much of our enhancement was focused last year. Projects that affected cover included a pasture area that had just been worked up and replanted; removal of several stands of Himalayan blackberry, and two wetland basins had been disked to control Reed Canary grass. It was pointed out that the area is managed principally for wintering goose habitat and having a large amount of cover is counter to that goal. However, because we anticipated a concern with cover availability, particularly for the youth hunt, we delayed much of our routine pasture mowing in that area until later in the fall. We do have a pasture planting scheduled in that vicinity again this year but hope to complete it in the spring, which should alleviate some of the concern.

Issue: The Port of Vancouver Representative pointed out that they would also be doing some tree planting along Buckmire Slough on County Property as a mitigation measure associated with a development project.

Response: Although mitigating another impact, this project and others like it in the future could help to reestablish a continuous riparian zone benefiting both fish and wildlife.

Issue: The relatively new proposal to develop a water trail, which could stretch from Vancouver Lake as far as La Center, was discussed.

Response: If developed, the project could bring additional public recreation to portions of the wildlife area both on Vancouver Lake and Lake River. Because we would have some wildlife concerns along portions of the route, we will try to engage in the planning process to assure that these are addressed. Otherwise this seems like a good project for this area.

Want to see the full plan?

Go to -

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

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