



## SKAGIT WILDLIFE AREA 2010 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



### **Land Management Summary**

This is an update to the 2006 Skagit Wildlife Area Management Plan the full plan document can be found at this link. [http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife\\_areas/management\\_plans/](http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/). The plan provides management direction for the Skagit Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Complex that includes the numerous satellite units of Skagit Wildlife Area and a large portion of the Skagit Bay Estuary, which totals 16,708 acres in Skagit, Island, and San Juan counties and the five Snoqualmie

units, approximately 2,780 acres in King and Snohomish Counties. 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 2010 accomplishments, new issues, new land management strategies and performance measures for 2011.

### **Inside**

<b>Land Management Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Updates/Changes</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Major Stewardship Accomplishments</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>New Issues</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Status Report of 2010 Performance Measures</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2010 and Ongoing Performance Measures</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>New Strategies</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2011 Performance Measures</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Citizens Advisory Group Input</b>	<b>11</b>

### **Updates/Changes**

**WDFW budget and financial summary** –Difficult economic conditions continue to persist following the statewide revenue shortfall expected for the 2009-11 biennium. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) experienced a \$21 million cut to the operating budget. At the same time, the WDFW capital budget was cut in half from 2007-09 levels. Continual adjustments have been occurring throughout this budget cycle as revenue estimates fall short making additional spending cuts necessary.

**Milltown Island** – WDFW and Skagit River System Cooperative submitted an application for Stimulus Recovery Act money to expand the restoration effort on Milltown Island. No additional funding was received.

**Navy Study on Skagit Bay Estuary** – In the summer and fall of 2008, WDFW was approached by a group of scientist funded by the Office of Naval Research to allow access to the Skagit Bay estuary near Craft Island. These researchers from all over the U.S. are interested in various aspects of tidal delta development and the geomorphic and hydrologic processes involved. The data gathered



about sediment transport, flow in tidal channels, vegetation development, and other hydrologic characteristics will be used to improve existing models of tidal delta development. Additional data will be gathered during the summer and fall of 2009 predominately on the delta near the North Fork of the Skagit River. Attached are some links with more information about the research and student internship programs from the Woods Hole Institute.



<http://science.whoi.edu/users/elgar/STIFEX08/index.html>

**North Fork Project** – Dike District 22 completed the project to remove a failing tide gate, an 800-foot long east west spur dike and improvement of the adjacent north-south bay front dike. The material removed from the spur dike will be used to improve the north-south dike by increasing its height to 15.5 feet above sea level. The top of the north-south dike will be widened to 12 feet to allow vehicle passage and will be treated with drivable surface material. The material removed from the spur dike will also be used to backfill the void created by removal of the tide gate infrastructure. Citizen



Advisory Group (CAG) members have voiced a desire to improve access to this area by improving parking and providing a foot bridges over tidal channels. A footbridge was installed by DD#22 where the culvert was removed to provide continued access to the marsh for hunting and birding access.

**Skagit Delta Agricultural MOA process** - The Wiley Slough Collaborative process brought together recreational communities concerns related to the conversion of habitat and loss of access resulting from the intertidal restoration of the Headquarters Unit. Following this process, a group of stakeholders, representing conservation, recreation and agriculture interests, gathered

to provide guidance in the development of WDFW's vision for conservation land acquisition for the Skagit Delta.

An important outcome of the workgroup is develop guidance for WDFW to identify lands determined to have high value for conservation while recognizing the need to maintain the agricultural land mass and infrastructure needed to sustain the industry. Identification of alternatives beyond fee simple land purchase needs to be identified, researched, considered and utilized for conservation, recreation, fish habitat and wildlife needs.

The goal is to craft land conservation management and acquisition guidance for WDFW that:

- Describes and encourages an array of management options, including conservation easements, landowner agreements and fee simple land acquisition where appropriate, for public recreation, fish and wildlife habitat while minimizing the impacts on agricultural land uses.
- Identifies and improves the long-term vision and predictability of the land base for WDFW and agricultural community.
- Incorporates stakeholder interests involved in this process.
- Adapt and endures in the face of change (e.g. climate change and land use).
- Provides a legacy of sustainable agriculture, together with ecosystem health, public recreation, and fish and wildlife use for future generations.

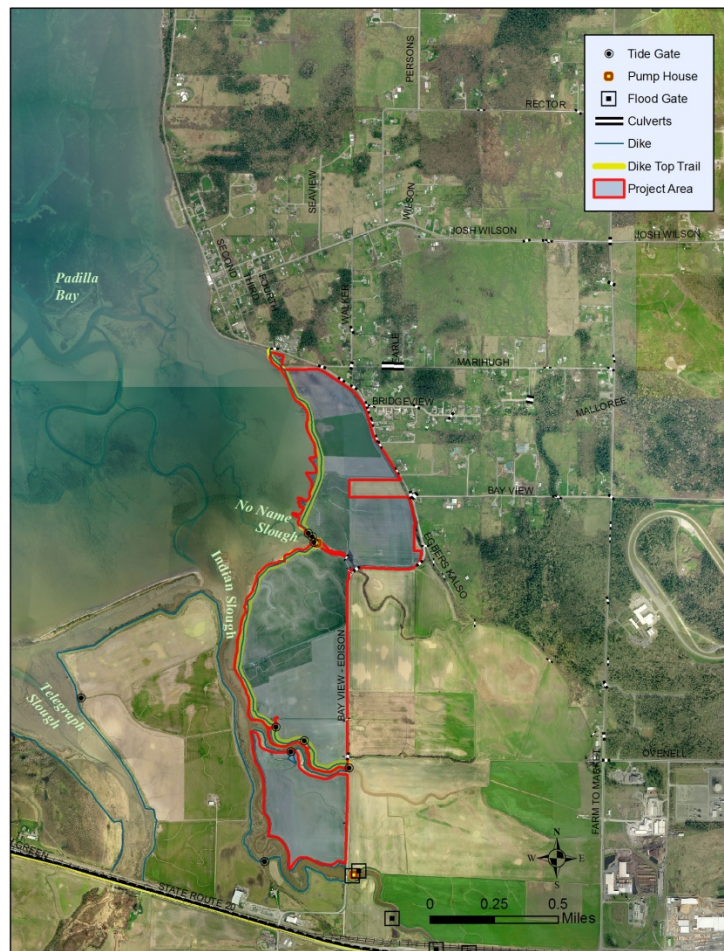
A final report titled *Guidance on WDFW'S Vision for Conservation and Land Acquisition for the Skagit Delta is available from the Region 4 office.*

**Fir Island Farms/Snow Goose Reserve Restoration** – Funding was received from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) to acquire funding for a feasibility study on the Fir Island Farms property. To examine the physical and social issues related to the potential restoration of Brown, Claude O. Davis and Dry Sloughs (Fir Island Farm/ Hayton Snow Goose Reserve). The basic project objective is to restore estuary-rearing habitat for ESA-listed salmon and improve the habitat condition both in and outside the current dike system on Skagit Bay. This project has been identified in the Skagit Wildlife Area plan as a part of the House Bill 1418 Report on Tide gates and Salmon Habitat restoration priorities.

[http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife\\_areas/skagit/restoration\\_study.php](http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/skagit/restoration_study.php)



**South Padilla Bay – WDFW** acquired approximately 240 acres along South Padilla Bay in the hopes of developing a wetland restoration project that would impact approximately 600 acres of wetlands and estuary along the south end of Padilla Bay. However following acquisition, the agricultural community voiced strong oppositions to the public ownership and restoration proposal. A group of interested stakeholders (Padilla Bay Working Group) were convened to discuss the acquisition and initial project feasibility. A summary report was produced with the preliminary designs developed from discussions between Department of Ecology, Padilla Bay Foundation, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Dike and Drainage District 12, Ducks Unlimited and Western Washington Agricultural Association. This report outlines restoration constraints and opportunities as well as identifying potential stakeholder that might be



interested in the next level of project development and implementation. Management options include a variety of projects to improve fish and wildlife habitat within a working agricultural system and a growing residential community as well as providing increased opportunities for fish and wildlife oriented outdoor education and recreation. The proximity of these new properties to other state and local ownerships provide an excellent opportunity to develop local partnerships and cooperative projects. The working group report was provided to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a part of the Coastal Wetland Grant. Following completion of the report further discussion with USFWS revealed that partial restoration scenarios were not acceptable, full restoration of the site was required in order to be in compliance with the grant. In Feb 2010, Padilla Bay hosted two focus group meetings. One was the research advisory group and the other was the natural resources advisory group. The groups were given background information on the site to include a range of wetland restoration/enhancement proposals on which they commented and provided input. The Padilla Bay working group is scheduled to be reconvened in early 2011 to discuss the current project status and the next steps.

**Wiley Slough Collaborative –** WDFW passed funding from the legislature to the Washington Waterfowl Association (WWA) for the development of a private land access plan. A consultant prepared a business plan and outline for the development of a program that would keep

agricultural land in private ownership but would also provide public access and hunting opportunity. A final report titled “Heritage Lands, a Lower Skagit River Regional Private Lands-Public Access Program” was prepared for submission to the legislature. However under the current economic climate, the Heritage Lands proposal was unable to gain the necessary support in the legislative process. Currently WWA is taking another approach. They are raising targeted funds for two potential properties. WWA will look for grants opportunities and matching funds until enough money is acquired to make the first purchase. Efforts will continue to reach out to stakeholders and provide information in an attempt to increase community acceptance of the program.

Capital budget requests were submitted to rebuild the Skagit Headquarter boat launch access but the request was not approved for the 2009-10 budgets. The project for rebuild will be submitted for the 2011-13 budget.

WWRP funds were received as a part of the State lands restoration grant to improve the habitat on the acreage north of the Headquarters entry road. Initial efforts will be to control non-native vegetation such as blackberry and plant native trees and shrubs to improve woody habitat diversity on the site. The long-term goal is to safely improve pedestrian access to this area and provide seasonal trails. Formalized plans need to be developed to create a schedule for implementation and identify funding sources.

**Johnson DeBay Slough Swan Reserve** – The boundary of the reserve came under question when it was determined that the intended reserve boundary and the one described in the regulation guide were not the same. In addition, the boundary described in the regulation guide was not complete. At the same time a neighboring property owner requested from the WDFW Commission that a portion of his property be removed from reserve status. The WDFW Commission made an interim decision to have an adjusted reserve boundary until more information on the issue can be made available. WDFW staff and representatives from the Trumpeter Swan Society were directed to work with the landowner and have been negotiating a potential land trade or acquisition. Funding was acquired to purchase the in-holding in order clear up any future conflict that might result from private ownership within the heart of the Reserve. The WDFW Commission voted on the reserve boundary during the October 2009 meeting and the boundary was reinstated in early 2010.

Initial proposals have been suggested to improve and increase public access trails on the site for seasonal bird watching and other non- hunting activities. WDFW Regional staff will clarify and develop the details of proposal before submitting for public review process. No funding has been approved for new site developments at this time.

## **Major Stewardship Accomplishments**

### **Wiley Slough Restoration Project Phase 2 –**

The Wiley Slough Restoration Project was designed to restore approximately 157 acres of tidal estuarine habitat at the Headquarters Area. The main goal of the project was to restore natural processes, conditions, functions, and biological responses to the project area specifically by removing dikes to restore riverine and tidal flooding in the project area. The species of particular management interest are ESA-threatened Chinook salmon, other salmonids and wintering waterfowl. Project implementation began during the summer of 2008. The basic design elements included in Phase 1 were the development of setback dikes and installation of



the new tide gate structure. This phase was completed in time for the pheasant and waterfowl hunting seasons.



Phase 2 restoration elements include the development of a retention pond north of the new tide gate structure, removal of the bay front and riverine dikes, removal of the old tide gate structure and development of the boat launch parking area. These major elements were completed the summer of 2009. Additional public use improvements and plantings will continue through the winter 2010.

**Agricultural Enhancements** – On the Skagit Wildlife Area in 2010 approximately 1,120 acres of agriculture enhancements were provided through contract farming agreements and staff time. Standing crops were provided on the primary hunting units on the Skagit WA: Island, Johnson DeBay’s Slough and Samish Units. Barley was planted on the Samish and Island Units to provide winter forage for waterfowl and provided enhanced hunting opportunities for the sportsman of Washington State. The barley crop on the Samish Unit had limited production this year due to flooded field conditions just following planting. Funding was not available to replant the site once more favorable field conditions existed.

Corn was only planted on Johnson’s DeBay’s Slough Hunt unit. In addition, winter wheat and rye grass provided winter forage for the snow geese on the Fir Island/ Hayton Snow goose reserve, and winter wheat was provided forage for swans on the Johnson/DeBay Slough Swan Reserve.



## New Issues

**Wiley Slough Drainage Issues** – Following the implementation of the Wiley Slough Restoration project, drainage issues began to develop. Initial concerns were focused on the tide gate infrastructure as design miscalculations failed to identify the potential during certain tidal/drainage conditions for the culverts to trap air and cause culvert floatation and repeated pipe flex. The culverts were retrofit with weighted collars to stabilize pipe movement. Once the culvert retrofit was completed a general decrease in drainage capacity was observed and the ultimate cause was unknown. There appeared to be limited time frames in which the tide gates opened to allow drainage even during minus tide events. Suggested potential causes ranged from heavy tide gate covers to hydrologic effects from fill/drain of the Wiley site. Skagit River Systems Cooperative and WDFW have worked closely with the Skagit County Dike and Drainage District #22 to identify a variety of short- and long-term solutions to address the drainage issues which to date have not been resolved.

**Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project**– Effort to move the Leque Island Restoration Project forward to the construction phase in the summer of 2009 was not successful. WDFW and Ducks Unlimited (DU) were not able to get the permits for construction from Snohomish County during the necessary construction window. The permit approval was blocked by the Snohomish County Agricultural Advisory Board and Snohomish County Farm Bureau who were concerned about the conversion of land designated as agricultural land.



WDFW was concerned about the failing dike system and the likelihood that the winter storm tides would further degrade the dike system. In an effort to protect the site for potential project implementation during the 2010 construction season, temporary coffer dams were installed just



inside the dike to keep the island from flooding once the dike failed. The coffer dams protected the site until the weekend of Easter 2010 when one of the coffer dams failed allowing tidal flooding.

The Juniper Beach water district contacted WDFW to voice their concerns that tidal water flooding Leque Island will contaminate their well system. Leque Island is within the water districts designated ground water recharge area.

WDFW and DU are working with a committee of hydrogeologists to gather well data to determine how tidal surface water on Leque Island will impact the Juniper Beach wells. Federal funding to implement the restoration project cannot be used until this ground water issue is resolved.

The failed dike and coffer dam system continued to degrade as the project permitting discussion continued. Two additional coffer dams failed and the dike continued to erode causing more and higher tidal flooding. Eide Road was over topped and water levels were impacting Highway 532. The Department of Transportation (DOT) requested an emergency dike repair from WDFW to protect Highway 532. Emergency permits were issued a temporary dike has been placed.



**Status Report of 2010 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 2011.

<b>2010 Performance Measure</b>	<b>Status of Performance Measure</b>	<b>Explanation of Progress/ 2011 Related Activity/ Comments</b>
Coordinate with the Puget Sound Partnership efforts to restore 2,682 acres of wetlands in the Skagit River delta ( <b>Skagit Bay Estuary</b> )	<b>Fir Island Farms</b> Feasibility project in progress	<b>Wylie Slough</b> Restoration completed now in adaptive management phase with drainage issues.
Explore tidal marsh restoration alternatives at Dry Slough on the <b>Fir Island Farms/Hayton Reserve</b>	A feasibility proposal is being develop for submission to the SRFB in 2009.	
Evaluate, with District Team and Citizen Advisory Group, proposed riparian habitat designs on <b>Fir Island Farms/Hayton Reserve</b>	Will be completed as part of the feasibility and design study	Feasibility project in progress.
Implement, with Ducks Unlimited, the restoration of 115 acres on <b>Leque Island</b> to intertidal estuary		Construction scheduled Summer 2010 but was postponed due to permit appeals in process
Engage the <b>Wylie Slough</b> community concerned about the loss of upland habitat and recreational opportunities to develop access alternatives and recommendations.	Funding made available from legislature to investigate the private farmland recreation cooperative. Report completed but not submitted to the legislature.	Additional funds were requested but not available. Funding was received from RCO for riparian restoration planting
Finalize, with Skagit River Systems Cooperative, the restoration design for Milltown Island and implement project ( <b>Skagit Bay Estuary</b> )	Potential to implement a controlled burn on portions of the reed canary grass pasture still being considered if the appropriate burn conditions exist.	No additional project work was completed this year.
Develop a conceptual plan, with Ducks Unlimited, on the <b>Island Unit</b> to improve wetland management capabilities for waterfowl	Initiate data collection and discussions regarding fish passage and time of use issues. Funding requested thru a capital budget and Duck Stamp proposal to be revised.	No funding approved



<b>2010 Performance Measure</b>	<b>Status of Performance Measure</b>	<b>Explanation of Progress/ 2011 Related Activity/ Comments</b>
Determine, with Ducks Unlimited and drainage districts, the feasibility of improving water level management capabilities on Samish and <b>Leque Island</b> , and <b>Island unit</b> wetlands	Samish feasibility and summary draft report being completed by Ducks Unlimited.  <b>Leque Island</b> Project delayed.	Full report not completed for Samish.  Duck Stamp proposal for ditch maintenance.  Dikes breached on <b>Leque Island</b> proposed restoration project currently on hold.
Plant approximately 165 acres of <b>Island Unit</b> 145 acres of <b>Johnson/DeBay Swan Reserve</b> 215 acres of <b>Leque Island Unit</b> 280 acres of <b>Samish Unit</b>	Completed (acres planted) Island- Barley (125) DeBay- Corn (12) remainder in winter wheat Leque- Not planted flooding Samish- Barley (240)	Continue as budget allows
Maintain 50 footbridges on <b>Headquarters, Samish, Leque Island and Island Units</b>	Work completed by volunteers with Washington Waterfowl Association on the Samish Unit.	
Secure wetland habitat in the English Boom, Port Susan, Livingston, Skagit and South Padilla Bay areas for protection, restoration and enhancement purposes as identified by the Pacific Coast Joint Venture Plan ( <b>Skagit Bay Estuary</b> ).	WDFW Land acquisition completed in South Padilla Bay. Livingston Bay acquisition completed by Whidbey Camano Land Trust.	
Apply for grants to control weeds, plant native vegetation, and use the WDFW Weed Crew	Grant funding received from RCO for planting on Headquarters and Leque Island Unit following restoration.	
Identify at least four areas where shorebird habitat exists and could be easily be enhanced ( <b>Fir Island Farms/Hayton Reserve, Island, Leque Island and Samish units</b> )	Water control and flood capabilities are currently limited on the wildlife area or impacts current agricultural enhancement program.	Water control limited
Evaluate proposal for odd/even hunting on the <b>Samish Unit</b> with the CAG and District Team.	Submitted to CAG received only received positive comments.	No progress
Train and update existing stewardship groups for Johnson/DeBay Swan Reserve, Samish Unit, Camano Island Natural Area, Guemes Island and Island Unit.	Group of volunteers prepared posters for legislative site visit.	
Continue to work with interested stakeholders to explore restoration and access options at <b>Cottonwood Island</b>		Feasibility study in progress examining channel reconnection options.
Secure long-term lease to private moorage facility near <b>Headquarters Unit</b> , or move to public land	Long term lease secured. Facility will remain in current location.	Bank restoration project schedule Summer 2011.

<p>Begin the Watchable Wildlife subcommittee process to prepare recommendations to present to the District team and CAG for review the watchable wildlife enhancements on <b>Johnson DeBay's Slough Swan Reserve, Fir Island Farms/ Hayton Snow Goose Reserve, Headquarters Restoration and Samish Units</b>, as necessary.</p>		<p>Preliminary proposals being developed to expanded non-hunting access for <b>DeBay's Slough</b>.</p>
<p>Develop and evaluate (with Citizen Advisory Group, District Team and others) a pheasant release program at other upland unit sites and/or on private property, if owners are willing</p>	<p>Information gathered to examine potential private land leasing locations within North Snohomish and Skagit counties.</p>	<p>Potential sites selected for Skagit County permitting not available in time for hunting season.</p>

### New Strategies

No new strategies proposed as a part of this management plan update.

### **2011 Performance Measures:**

Performance measures for the Skagit Wildlife Area for 2011 are listed below. Accomplishments and progress toward desired outcomes will be monitored and evaluated annually.

- Update inventory of noxious weeds species and distribution on all units.
- Determine the risk or threat level of 18 weed species to develop control priorities
- Develop programs and funding strategies (WDFW staff, Citizen Advisory Group and others) to successfully buy/lease land for recreational purposes
- Plant up to 610 acres of **Fir Island Farms/Hayton Reserve** in cereal grains for snow goose forage.
- Investigate transfer of **Sinclair Island** and **Goat Island** to State Parks Department (boat access only).
- Coordinate public use of Fir Island dike trails (**Skagit Bay Estuary**) with Dike District #22 for waterfowl hunting access.
- Evaluate liability of unauthorized public use of historic infrastructure (concrete military structures) on **Goat Island Unit**
- Educate hunters and enforce the 15-shell limit, with enforcement officers, on the **Samish and Island units** to provide quality and increased hunting opportunities.
- Inventory newly acquired **Bald Eagle Natural Area** properties transferred from the Department of Natural Resources.
- Evaluate potential fish passage options at **Johnson DeBay's Slough** with interested stakeholder groups.
- Work with WDOT and interested stakeholders in establishing fish passage at **Telegraph Slough** and Hwy. 20.

- Develop recreational use plans, with District Team and Citizen Advisory Group, for **Goat Island, Samish, Headquarters Unit** and all other major units that are compatible with fish, wildlife and habitat objectives
- Establish and maintain stewardship groups for **Fir Island Farms/Hayton Reserve, Goat Island, Leque Island** and other major units were justified.
- Evaluate, with CAG and District Team, current fish and wildlife resource value of pheasant plot parcels and, if appropriate, determine the process for disposal
- Post regulatory signs on **Goat Island** and **Guemes Island units**
- Establish guidelines for building hunting blinds on the Skagit Wildlife Area.
- Develop a prioritized list of units in which to conduct an inventory of species, use and needs

### **Citizens Advisory Group Input**

In lieu of hosting a public meeting to review the management plan update, Skagit staff forwarded a draft document to all the citizen advisory group members. Comments received from CAG members are listed below to be sure their concerns are captured accurately. Here is a brief summary list of concern:

- Plan difficult to understand and priorities are not clear.
- Good status reports but priorities and objectives not clear enough to be plan.
- Would like to be more involved in planning process.
- Would like opportunity to be involved earlier in planning process.

### **List of current Citizen Advisory Group members and their affiliation**

Steve Aslanian	Skagit Audubon Society
Rone Brewer	Washington Waterfowl Association
Virginia Clark	Pilchuck Audubon Society
Edward Connor	Skagit Watershed Council
Curt Kraemer	Fish and Wildlife Advocate (retired fish biologist)
Marilyn Dahlheim	Dog Trainer
Oscar Graham	WDFW Waterfowl Advisory Committee
Gary Gibbs	Waterfowl Hunter
Steve Hinton	Skagit River System Cooperative
Martha Jordan	Trumpeter Swan Society
Art Kendall	WA Waterfowl Association (retired fish biologist)
David Randolph	Dog Trainer
Allen Rozema	Skagitians to Preserve Farmland (executive director)
Allison Studley	Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (executive director)
Albert Vincent, Jr.	Fish and Wildlife Committee for Persons with Disabilities
Sharon Swan	Fish/wildlife advocate (Snohomish County Parks & Recreation Department Planner)
Dallas Wylie	Neighbor, Farmer

<b>CAG MEMBER</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
<b>Art Kendall</b>	<b>2/6/2011</b>	I have read through the plan. It would be very helpful to have a short summary of the things that are new compared to the last plan, stating how is this updated from the previous plan.
<b>Curt Kraemer</b>	<b>2/14/2011</b>	<p>I have reviewed the two plans (Snoqualmie and Skagit) and as far as I can tell they both are reasonable updates from the previous documents and clearly illustrate the diverse demand being placed on those management areas.</p> <p>However I do have a comment/concern that might warrant some further discussion.</p> <p>The two plans are both good status reports of the current situations on the two wildlife areas however I feel they lack the details of priorities and strategies to accomplish various objectives to really qualify as "plans".</p> <p>There is no doubt the agency and the Snoqualmie/Skagit wildlife areas are facing huge challenges from the current budget situation as well changing demands/pressures on conflicting use of wildlife areas lands. To move forward in a rational matter the agency needs to develop a list of need objectives/activities, priorities of those activities as well as strategies to achieve those objectives. Clearly many of us would like to see public involvement in that process though it should go without saying that under current conditions it will be impossible to meet everyone's interests. I understand such an approach would require a lot of work but it seems to me that is the only logically way for staff to begin taking proactive control of management and begin logically addressing conflicting demands.</p>
<b>Dallas Wylie</b>	<b>2/15/2011</b>	<p>Dallas would like to be sure that we continue to pursue the efforts to improve the Skagit Boat launch. The boat launch has been identified as a priority by the CAG group and the Wiley Slough collaborative process. He is concerned that has not received full funding even with all this public support.</p> <p>He would also like to see additional corn left standing on the DeBay Slough Swan Reserve. He has noticed that during the past few years WDFW have been allowing the harvest of all the corn within the reserve and planting a cover crop. Since the changes in management the waterfowl use of the area has decreased to include swan use. He believes that leaving corn on DeBay Isle would improve swan and other waterfowl use of the site.</p>
<b>Martha Jordan</b>	<b>2/15/2011</b>	<p>The update does not provide details or justification for some of the work being planned. If the document is intended to be a Plan, then it lacks enough detail other than these are the projects and this is what we are going to do.</p> <p>My main concern is with the Corson Unit. It appears WDFW is still on target to conduct "fish barrier" removal project in summer of 2011. There still is no solid evidence that will benefit fish.</p> <p>I have been to the site, walked all the proposed areas. In at least three areas, there is no way for fish to get into these isolated forested wetlands. Meaning, they never were there in the first place or if they were, the connection to the creek is long gone and not by man's activities.</p>



		<p>WDFW has yet to be forthcoming with fish data, proof of what fish are actually in these wetlands and proof that what they are proposing will actually be enhancement. Last summer this same project was attempted to be rammed through. The reason for it that I received is: WDFW has about \$35,000 and needs to spend it. This is a good place to spend it since we need to do so before October 15. That is no reason to push a project. As I stated earlier: where is the information we have requested on fish use in the area?</p> <p>Where is the information on how this change in water flow will affect adjacent downstream property owners?</p> <p>What will finding an alternative access route cost WDFW?</p> <p>Will this then allow the public to access the site in an uncontrolled way and create the same or similar problems with vandalism as before?</p> <p>This is simply a bad idea until further discussion and thought has been put into this aspect of the Snoqualmie WA Plan.</p>
<b>Martha Jordan</b>	<b>2/15/2011</b>	<p>Please disregard my comments just posted about the Snoqualmie WA Plan. It appears that the Corson Unit is being addressed by WDFW in a different way. Therefore, my comments have no relevance at this time because of the efforts of WDFW is doing to resolve the situation. This is a good thing.</p>
<b>Art Kendall</b>	<b>2/16/2011</b>	<p>I have similar concerns regarding the proposed inundation of the Farmed Island Segment in the Skagit WLA in the name of salmon restoration. To what extent will it benefit salmon? How will its effectiveness be measured (cost-benefit)? What will be done to mitigate for loss of waterfowl feeding habitat and hunting opportunities?</p>
<b>Art Kendall</b>	<b>3/11/2011</b>	<p>I appreciate the opportunity to review this document beforehand, but I think the CAG needs to meet face-to-face to provide meaningful guidance. I have now spent some more time with this update, the original plan and the previous updates. Once I get into them, I see that they are valuable documents. However, the format is less than ideal. It is difficult to get to the meat of the plans. The verbiage and the tables tell different stories, and it is hard to rectify them. For example, the 2010 update talks about plans for the South Padilla Bay properties, but I don't see any mention of this in the measures of performance tables. The lack of comments by others on the CAG might mean that we are overwhelmed or confused by the document, or that we don't think our input really matters. As a cause of concern, I see that Rone Brewer is not on the CAG mailing list, and that WWA was not included in the South Padilla Bay working group, nor on the Ebey Island Restoration stakeholders group.</p>
<b>Martha Jordan</b>	<b>3/11/2011</b>	<p>You articulate your concerns well. I have the similar ones about this document. My sense is, our comments will not matter in the end. This is an exercise that is required by WDFW policy or WAC. That said, I do strongly suggest that we have a CAG meeting face to face to discuss this. The unfortunate part is that it is too late to do so before the comment period ends. I do not have any open time to attend a meeting before April 8.</p> <p>Perhaps giving comments about what needs to be rectified will be of</p>

		<p>value. I greatly appreciate your taking the time with these documents. It is only through concerned citizens taking time to comment and more that we can influence how government agencies conduct our business.</p>
<b>Gary Gibbs</b>	<b>3/17/2011</b>	<p>Thanks again for taking the time to run off and print the plan update for me.</p> <p>It is quite a large document and covers a lot of ground in it's 13 pages.....it shows the successes, and the challenges we have remaining on significant projects started in the last 2-3 years, as well as future projects.</p> <p>On page 5 the mitigation issue is mentioned. As we all know, the mitigation promises made to deal with the loss of access/use have not been fulfilled for the Leque and Wiley Slough projects. The document gives the reader the sense that the WDFW has handed off this problem to the WWA and responsibility rests now with them. I would hope that this would be clarified to show that mitigation for WDFW projects is always the responsibility of the WDFW, even though citizen groups have offered to assist the WDFW.</p> <p>While reading "New Issues" on page 7, Wiley Slough and Leque Island were mentioned. Probably a more accurate heading would have been "Old Issues coming home to roost" To the casual reader of the report it would seem that these Wiley Slough drainage issues were brand new and the WDFW did not see them coming.</p> <p>The hydraulic problem of the silting in of the bayfront causing a raise in elevation was brought up time and time again at your many public meetings. It should be clarified in the report that the WDFW knew of these potential problems and chose to proceed anyway.</p> <p>The Leque Island Project is characterized as being hamstrung by public agencies holding up permitting, and being blocked by citizen advisory boards. The report states that these delays and problems are characterized as "cause was unknown". The Leque drainage issues and dike concerns that exist today were aired many times at your public meetings. To give a more realistic picture of these projects it should be added that the WDFW opted to not order additional SEPA reviews on these projects that very well could have brought these issues to light.</p> <p>On page 10 "New Strategies", I would hope the 2 items below would be added.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All projects proceed only after a complete and proper SEPA review.</li> <li>2. Reconnect with stakeholder groups such as the WWA and bring them back into the process in a meaningful way.</li> </ol> <p>The report probably should mention the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project, and how its possible impacts could effect the Skagit Wildlife Area. It's in its infancy, but a project of this scope should be noted.</p> <p>Thanks for the chance to review and comment on the report</p>
<b>Rone Brewer</b>	<b>3/22/2011</b>	<p>My thought on the Skagit/Snoqualmie Wildlife Area management plan updates are embedded in the attached documents.</p> <p>Many, if not most, of the 2006-2010 management related priorities originally identified by the CAG have not been attended to,</p>

		<p>primarily because of budgetary shortfalls and low priority. The new objectives seem to pretty clearly show that WDFW is heading more and more to a focus on restoration of natural fish and wildlife conditions and not on management of said resources or related recreation/public access. This is the inevitable endpoint of continually shrinking budgets and the related prioritization necessity.</p> <p>WWA would prefer to see more program funding directed to maintenance and operations of the wildlife areas, without which we will soon see a collapse of many of the areas and subsequent removal from public accessibility, contrary to their original intent and purpose.</p> <p>The other disturbing issue I see is the repeated lack of involvement of WWA as a stakeholder in multiple fish restoration projects. Given our past involvement and familiarity with the region, it seems WDFW is purposefully omitting WWA and its perspective from these groups.</p> <p>Thanks for the opportunity to comment.</p> <p><b>Milltown Island</b> – Does not support continued funding for additional work habitat work on Milltown Island.</p> <p><b>North Fork Access footbridge</b> – Appreciates and supports the replacement of the crossing after culvert was removed. This provides hunter access to the marsh.</p> <p><b><i>Guidance on WDFW'S Vision for Conservation and Land Acquisition for the Skagit Delta</i></b> – Requested that we make this publication available on our website</p> <p><b>South Padilla Bay</b> - Concerned about lack of involvement of Washington Waterfowl Association in the previous stakeholder process for Padilla Bay. Would like to have WWA involved as the project moves forward.</p> <p><b>Skagit Boat Launch</b> – Believes that SRFB funding should have been requested and used to rebuild the boat launch as a part of the restoration project.</p> <p><b>Wiley Slough Drainage Issues</b> – Was concerned that WDFW is paying for pumping cost and believes that is should e paid for with SRFB money.</p> <p><b>Status Report of 2009 Performance Measures</b> – Observed that few of the projected performance measures were not completed</p> <p><b>New Strategies</b> pretty clearly show that WDFW is focusing on fish and wildlife and less and less on public access. I understand this is budget related. However, it highlights the importance of concepts like the Heritage Lands Program for the future of public access.</p> <p><b>WWA involvement</b> – Would like to have WWA involved more and earlier in the planning processes of larger project such as Cottonwood Island, Samish, Leque Island, and Island Units.</p>
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