



SOUTH PUGET SOUND & NORTH OLYMPIC WILDLIFE AREAS 2012 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Land Management Summary

This is an update to the 2006 South Puget Sound Wildlife Area Management Plan and the 2010 North Olympic Wildlife Area Plan that provides management direction for the South Puget Sound and North Olympic Wildlife Areas including Union River, South Puget Sound Urban



Wildlife Interpretive Center (UWIC), McNeil Island, Nisqually, Scatter Creek, West Rocky Prairie, Black River, Snow/Salmon Creeks, Lower Dungeness, Skookumchuck, Duckabush, Davis Creek and Morse Creek located in Grays Harbor, Clallam, Jefferson, Kitsap, Mason, Pierce and Thurston 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 every two years 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 2010-2011 accomplishments, new issues, new land management strategies and performance measures for 2012. To view the entire South Puget Sound or North Olympic Wildlife Area Management Plans and past updates please visit http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/.

Updates/Changes

In 2011, WDFW along with the Washington Department of Natural Resources and Washington State Parks successfully instituted the Discover Pass legislation that has created much needed income for land management activities. The pass is required to access state recreation lands and water access sites

Inside	
Land Management Summary	1
Updates/Changes	1
Major Stewardship Accomplishments	3
Status Report of 2010-11 Performance	
Measures	6
New Strategies	8
2012-13 Performance Measures	8
Citizens Advisory Group Input	9

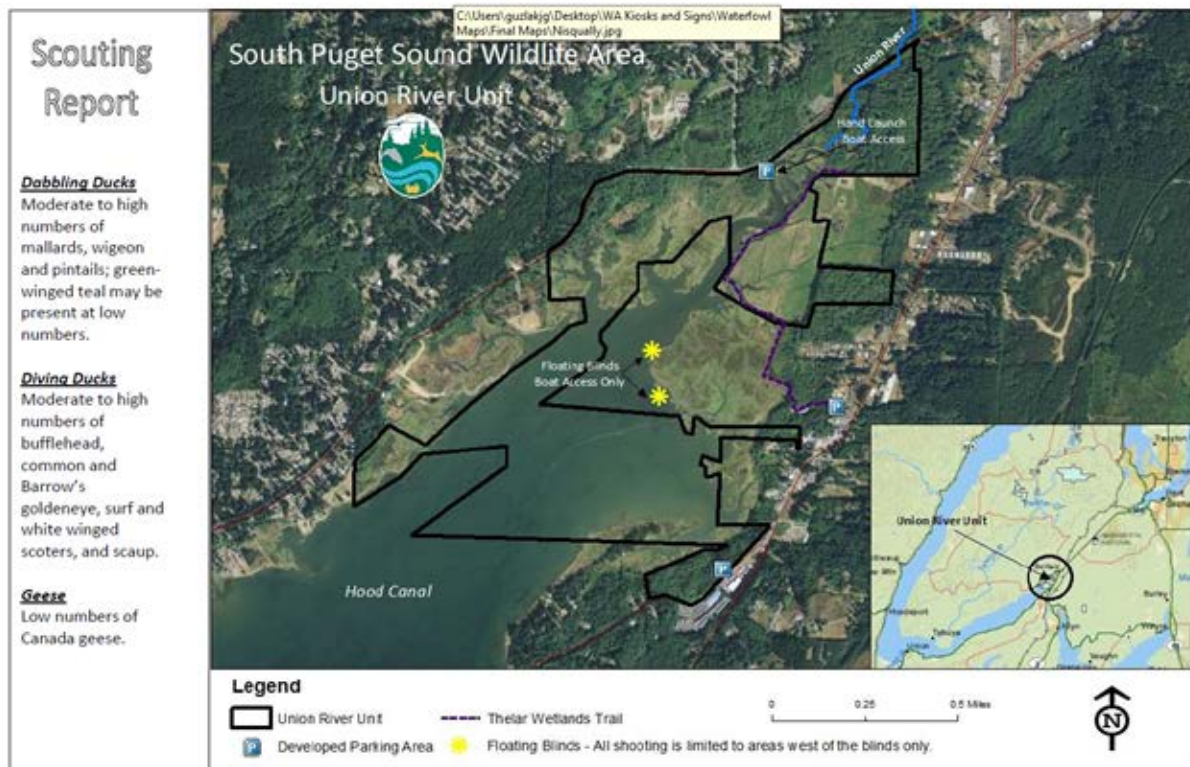
managed by Washington State Parks (State Parks), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR). These lands include state parks, water access points, heritage sites, wildlife and natural areas, trails and trailheads. The Discover Pass is needed to access WDFW's developed or designated recreation and hunting areas, trailheads, boat launches and parking areas.

Waterfowl Hunting Guide

Late in 2011 regional biologists developed a comprehensive guide to waterfowl access sites across all wildlife area units in Region 6. This guide includes overview maps and unit specific maps with access locations, parking options, blind descriptions and a general scouting report. The guide can be found online at the WDFW website at:

UNION RIVER UNIT – 420 acres

The Union River Unit is located on Hood Canal near the town of Belfair. It provides estuary protection on the Union River Delta and habitat for salmon and waterfowl. Much of the land surrounding this parcel is protected by other conservation organizations, including the Thelar Wetlands. This area is predominated by marine estuarine habitat and supports rather high numbers of waterfowl in winter. Hunting is mostly limited to 2 designated blinds with access by boat only. A small parking area and hand boat launch is located just off Highway 300 about 0.7 miles from Belfair. Alternatively, there is primitive "walk-in" access to areas located on Lynch Cove off of Highway 106 (near the Highway 3 intersection).



http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/waterfowl/where_to_go.html

Wildlife Area HCP

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is developing a habitat conservation plan (HCP) for activities on state owned and managed Wildlife Areas. The HCP will be a long-term management plan for the conservation and protection of species and their habitats on Wildlife Areas. The goals of the Wildlife Areas HCP are to provide federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) assurances for management, operational and recreational activities occurring on state Wildlife Areas, and to thereby contribute to the conservation and recovery of approximately 60 species listed under the ESA. WDFW has finalized and submitted the first completed draft of

the HCP to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). USFWS will continue their formal review during the early part of 2012.

Major Stewardship Accomplishments

Davis Creek Unit

The Davis Creek Oregon White Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) continued in 2010 and 2011. During this period, WDFW constructed approximately 1 mile of combination range and electrified fencing with wood posts. This fencing will effectively separate parking and field trial areas, as well as livestock holding areas, from damaging the oak planting that took place during the winter of 2012. This planting consisted of installing approximately 1,200 12 inches+ Oregon white oak plants many of which were grown from local acorns specific to the site.

Davis Creek and Hoxit Agricultural Leases




Both agricultural leases in the Lower Chehalis Valley were renewed in 2011. The Davis Creek lease included an additional Farm Plan that the lessee is subject to fulfilling. Currently, the Grays Harbor Conservation District is reviewing the farm practices in their development of a "nutrient management plan". This information will ultimately be utilized by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in their development of a "Comprehensive Resource Management Plan (whole farm plan)". The "whole farm plan" will help ensure that the resources are being managed in a sustainable manner and will provide the avenue for the lessee to enroll the property into the Environmental Quality Incentive Program. This program has the ability to provide much needed resources for improving the function of the farming regime.

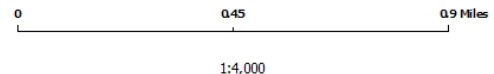
EXHIBIT 1 - Agricultural Lease Map

Davis Creek Unit



Legend

-  Livestock Holding Area
-  Building Infrastructure Included in Lease
-  Baillage/Silage Area



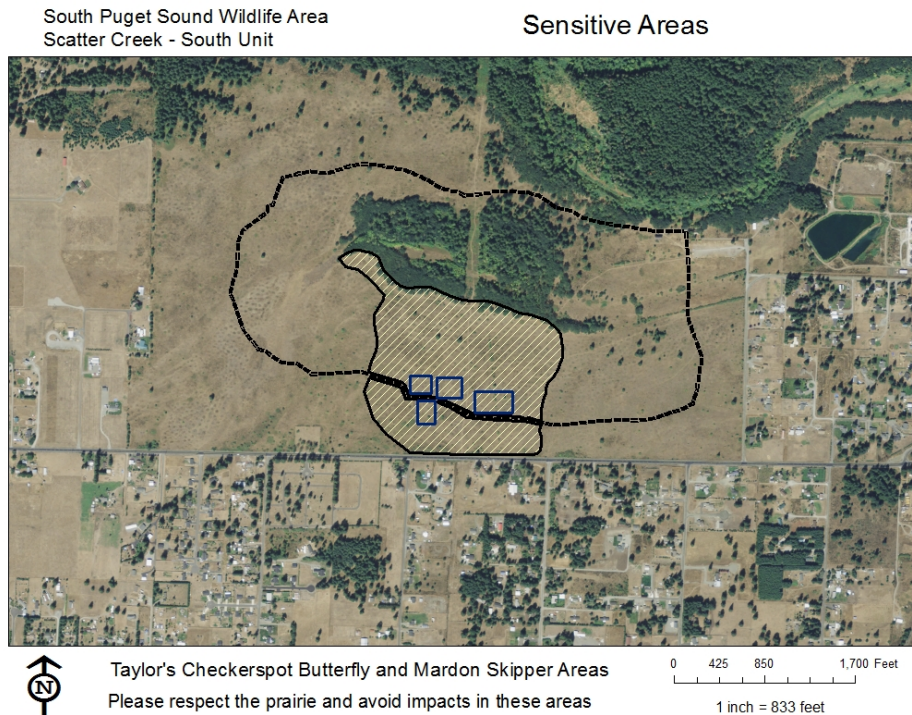
Field Trial Rules and Conditions

The rules and conditions for “Temporary Use Permits” for field trials were updated for the 2010 and 2011 season of events. These rules were developed after significant internal/external review of land management policies on the Scatter Creek and Davis Creek (Koopmans) Units and have been added as a provision to the “Temporary Use Permit”. During this time WDFW wildlife

area staff met with multiple field trial participants. Several new provisions were added to the updated rules based on these meetings. After two years of applying these rules to the units WDFW has found that the rules are working well for most recreational users. Wildlife area staff met with a broad range of field trial and hunt test participants along with State

Representative Jim McCune in January 2011 at the State

legislature. This meeting proved to be valuable for all participants in understanding the goals and objectives for managing the Scatter Creek and Davis Creek Wildlife Area Units.



Morse Creek Unit (North Olympic Wildlife Area)

The Morse Creek Riverine Restoration restored salmon and trout habitat along Morse Creek within the 130-acre WDFW wildlife area upstream of Highway 101, just east of Port Angeles. The project re-activated 1,700 lineal feet of channel as it existed in 1939, before a dike was installed that confined the creek to steep valley walls and disconnected the creek from 9.3 acres of floodplain. Funding was provided by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, National Association of Counties and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.



Snow and Salmon Creeks Unit (Discovery Bay)

The North Olympic Salmon Coalition (NOSC) has spearheaded numerous major restoration projects at the Discovery Bay over the past decade. These projects have been critical in restoring listed summer chum runs to this system and providing multiple benefits for a variety of other fish and wildlife species. WDFW and NOSC will continue this partnership into 2012 and beyond. Upcoming projects include the Maynard Nearshore Restoration Project. The challenge of this project is to find a suitable location for the Olympic Discovery Trail.



Lower Dungeness

In 2010, WDFW entered into a land use agreement with Dungeness Farms (a private waterfowl hunt club) that provides public hunting access near the mouth of the Dungeness River. Public waterfowl hunters had access to this area during the waterfowl seasons both in 2010 and 2011 for the first time in nearly 100 years. WDFW has worked closely with Dungeness Farms and the Dungeness Beach Association to ensure that this popular hunting opportunity continues into the future. Hunting is limited to Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays and holidays allowing the rest days to be consistent with the neighboring hunt club. WDFW constructed a small parking area off of Anderson Road to support the access point to this site for hunters, fishers, birders and others. During the waterfowl season WDFW also provides a Sani-Can at this parking area. This agreement is an important element to the long-term management strategy of the Lower Dungeness Unit.

WDFW continues to participate in several restoration projects located throughout the Lower Dungeness Unit including the Towne Road. Levee setback project and numerous riparian plantings throughout the area.

Scatter Creek and West Rocky Prairie Units
 Prairie restoration projects continued on West Rocky Prairie and Scatter Creek units using a variety of grant sources including Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) funds from Fort Lewis and the Recreation Conservation Office Washington, Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) State Lands Restoration Funding. In 2010 and 2011 prescribed burning techniques were successfully applied to both units. WDFW plans on expanding on its burn program over the next several years. Additionally, several thousand native prairie plants were planted at both units along with noxious weed treatment on over 1,000 acres. For a more detailed description on the prairie program please contact the wildlife area manager.



Status Report of 2010-11 Performance Measures

Key performance measures are identified each year to monitor progress and identify any issues that might interfere with planned priority activities.

2010-11 Performance Measure	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2012-13 Related Activity/ Comments
Release 1,500 pheasants at Scatter Creek and Skookumchuck units.	At least 1,500 pheasants were released on the areas in 2010 and 2011.	A like number of pheasants will be released in 2012.
Maintain 300 Oregon white oak trees on SPS UWIC unit.	300 Oregon white oaks were maintained in 2010.	Areas around trees were mowed
Collect native prairie plant, grass and forb seeds for propagation.	Native prairie plant, grass and forb seeds were collected for propagation in 2010 and 2011.	Seed collections will continue in 2012.
Control weeds on 1,000+ acres on all sites	Weeds were controlled on more than 1,000 acres in 2010 and 2011	Scot's broom and tall oat grass control will continue as needed on the wildlife area in 2012.
Continue with development of new wetland pond for western pond turtles and the South Puget Sound Unit in Lakewood	No change in status	The City no longer needed the mitigation credits because the road project was no longer funded.
Identify, survey and monitor endangered/threatened/sensitive species of butterflies.	Butterflies surveys and monitoring was completed in 2010 and 2011.	Butterfly management including identification, surveys and monitoring will continue in 2012.
Monitor dog use on SPS UWIC	Dog use on the area was	On Leash Dog Use will

site.	monitored in early 2010, however with the loss of the on-site manager this has declined. Fences continue to be breached on the site for additional access points for dog walkers.	continue to be monitored for compliance in 2012. Staff will work with the city parks department on projects to prevent this.
Work with regional staff on potential acquisitions adjacent to the West Rocky Prairie Unit.	No chance in status	No acquisitions are being negotiated at this time
Monitor compliance of field trial temporary use permits	This was completed in 2010 and 2011.	One violation letter was sent to a sponsoring trial group
Work with field trial groups and Koopman lessee to provide a quality location for this recreational activity.	Several groups who had not utilized the Davis Creek Unit in the past were able to use the site in both 2010 and 2011	Will continue to improve the field trial conditions at the Davis Creek Unit.
Submit funding proposals for grading and re-surfacing the Davis Creek parking facility	In 2010 WDFW submitted an WWRP State Land Development project for this measure	The project scored relatively low since the beneficiary was specific to just one main user group.
Continue releasing endangered Taylor's checkerspot butterflies on Scatter Creek Unit.	Endangered Taylor's checkerspot butterflies were released on Scatter Creek in 2010 and 2011.	Taylor's checkerspot butterflies will continue to be released on Scatter Creek in 2012.
Release endangered Mazama pocket gophers on West Rocky Prairie.	Releases of Mazama pocket gophers were completed in 2010.	Diversity staff continue to monitor the pocket gopher populations at West Rocky
Continue habitat restoration efforts as defined by ACUB and WHIP contracts at Scatter Creek and West Rocky Prairie	Extensive work was completed in 2010 and 2011 on both units	Numerous major projects have been funded for 2012 and 2013.
Spray approximately 50-75 acres of landscape dominated by tall oat grass at the prairie units.	Completed in 2010	Staff will continue to monitor and treat areas where necessary
Create a user friendly map product that can be utilized for distribution with temporary use permits that clearly marks sensitive areas located throughout Scatter Creek.	This was completed and updated throughout the 2010 and 2011 field trial seasons.	Maps will continue to be distributed with field trial permits. This task will also likely be a condition of the Wildlife Area HCP
Post signs at sensitive areas at the Scatter Creek Unit, closing these areas to recreational impact	Sensitive Area Boundary signs were posted at the North Unit of Scatter Creek.	This will evolve with restoration activities and changes will be made accordingly
Evaluate habitat suitability for western gray squirrels at the West Rocky Prairie Unit	This was completed in 2010	The area is likely not large enough or composed of the ideal habitat to support a release

Identify approximately 25 acres at the Scatter Creek Unit for introducing prescribed fire techniques. Burn half of the area in 2010 and seed all burned areas with a suite of native grasses, native winter annuals and native forb species	This was completed. More than 25 acres were burned over a two year period and plantings were all conducted as required by the funding contracts	More prescribed burns will be initiated in the future.
Plant 1,000 Oregon white oaks on the Davis Creek property	Completed in 2011	Oaks will be maintained for 3 years.

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. Strategies identified in italics are a response to issues provide through the Citizen Advisory Group meetings. No new or updated strategies are being proposed at this time.

2012-13 Performance Measures

Performance measures for the South Puget Sound Wildlife Area Complex are listed below. Accomplishments and progress toward desired outcomes will be monitored and evaluated annually.

South Puget Sound Wildlife Area

- 1) Release 1,500 pheasants at Scatter Creek and Skookumchuck units
- 2) Maintain 300 Oregon white oak trees on South Puget Sound UWIC unit
- 3) Collect native prairie plant, grass and forb seeds for propagation
- 4) Control weeds on 1,000+ acres on all sites
- 5) Continue with development of new wetland pond for western pond turtles at the South Puget Sound Unit in Lakewood.
- 6) Identify, survey and monitor endangered/threatened/sensitive species of butterflies.
- 7) Monitor “Dog On Leash Only” use on South Puget Sound UWIC unit
- 8) Work with regional staff on potential acquisitions adjacent to the West Rocky Prairie Unit
- 9) Monitor compliance of field trial temporary use permits
- 10) Work with field trial groups and Koopman lessee to provide a quality location for this recreational activity.
- 12) Continue release of Taylor’s Checkerspot Butterfly at the Scatter Creek Unit.
- 13) Continue release of Mazama Pocket Gopher at the West Rocky Prairie Unit.
- 15) Continue habitat restoration efforts as defined by ACUB and WHIP contracts at Scatter Creek and West Rocky Prairie Units. (Oregon white oak release, Scot’s broom control, exotic grass and shrub control, seeding of native grasses and forbs, etc.)
- 17) Create a user friendly map product that can be utilized for distribution with temporary use permits that clearly marks sensitive areas located throughout Scatter Creek.
- 18) Post signs at sensitive areas at the Scatter Creek Unit, closing these areas to recreational impact.
- 19) Evaluate habitat suitability for western gray squirrels at the West Rocky Prairie Unit.

- 20) Continue prescribed fire activities at Scatter Creek and West Rocky Prairie Units.
- 21) Attend/host annual meetings and planning sessions with internal/external partnerships on prairie research and restoration efforts.

North Olympic Wildlife Area

- 1) Maintain 2,000 Oregon white oak plants at the Bell Creek Unit
- 2) Deconstruct the Schneider Barn on the Lower Dungeness Unit
- 3) Maintain riparian plantings at the Morse Creek Unit
- 4) Develop a strategy for removing two houses on the Morse Creek Unit and one house at the Bell Creek Unit.
- 5) Explore Dungeness acquisition potential including the Three Crabs site.
- 6) Work with partners to complete the Maynard Nearshore restoration project on the Snow/Salmon Unit on Discovery Bay.
- 7) Evaluate the hunting pressure at the Lower Dungeness Unit to determine if additional hunting days are needed at this limited hunt site.
- 8) Develop a strategy for the log cabin at Morse Creek

Citizens Advisory Group and District Team Input

A new Wildlife Area Manager was hired for the South Puget Sound and North Olympic Wildlife Areas in April of 2012 prior to the timeline for these meetings. The new manager, Kyle Guzlas, will be initiating Citizen Advisory Group and District Team meetings in 2013 for each wildlife area.

Contacts:

Kyle Guzlas
Wildlife Area Manager
(360) 249-4628 Ex.230
WDFW Montesano Office
(360) 249-4628

Want to see the full plan?

Go to -
http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/index.htm