



WHATCOM WILDLIFE AREA 2014 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



Lake Terrell Headquarters.

Land Management Summary

This is an update to the 2009 Whatcom Wildlife Area Management Plan that provides management direction for the Whatcom Wildlife Area.

http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/ The wildlife area is located outside Ferndale, Washington in Whatcom County, and includes 7 sub-units comprising 5,327 acres. The largest unit is located at the

The plan identifies resource needs and guides management activities based on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Mission statement: “*Preserve, protect and perpetuate fish, wildlife and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities*” and its underlying statewide goals and objectives as they apply to local conditions. Plans are updated bi-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 includes 2012 and 2013 accomplishments, new issues and management strategies, and 2014 performance measures.

New Issues

Tennant Lake Boardwalk Renovation:

In 2013 WDFW was successful in obtaining a Recreation Conservation Office (RCO) Grant for \$180,000 to repair and renovate the Tennant Lake raised wood boardwalk. This boardwalk was originally built in the 70’s, with some flood repair work completed in the late 90’s. Over the years, Tennant Lake’s water level has risen, causing a majority of the boardwalk to be under water for several months of the year. The RCO funds would be used to make the short section of the boardwalk Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible, and would raise the low sections of the loop trail by removing the existing wood planking, and replacing the majority of it with a higher level surface. The boardwalk will also be made fish friendly by installing fiberglass grating at the overlooks. This would allow light to reach the

Inside

Land Management Summary	1
New Issues	1
Major Stewardship Accomplishments	2
Status Report of 2012 & 2013 Performance Measures	4
New Strategies	7
2014 Performance Measures	8
Wildlife Area Advisory Committee Input	8

water. This work can be accomplished with the available funds, with planning and permitting completed this year, and construction set to occur next year. Increased beaver management at Tennant Lake will also occur in conjunction with this project to assure that the new boardwalk will stay high and dry throughout the year.

Rainbow Pond Water Control:

In 2013 repairs were performed on the Rainbow Pond water control to patch a large hole in the metal standpipe. This hole allowed water to leak out and caused the Rainbow Pond water level to be very low. The patch worked well, until March 2014, when a hole appeared in the horizontal pipe of the water control. This hole collapsed and very quickly became very large and emptied the pond. Working with Ducks Unlimited, WDFW was able to secure Duck Stamp funds to get the control structure replaced. The work is scheduled for late summer 2014.

Lake Terrell Eurasian Milfoil:

Weed surveys in 2013 found an increase in the amount of milfoil in Lake Terrell. Samples were collected and sent in for identification. It was found that the milfoil in the lake is Eurasian milfoil an extremely persistent noxious weed. It was estimated there were approximately 100 acres of Eurasian milfoil in the lake. Duck Stamp funds were requested to fund an initial control effort in coordination with the Department of Ecology and Whatcom County, but were not successful. Other fund sources are being explored. WDFW would like to start the work in summer 2014.

Major Stewardship Accomplishments

Lake Terrell Dam Remodel:

The Lake Terrell dam was remodeled in September 2012. The original riser board dam was built in the 1930's and created Lake Terrell by holding back the waters of Terrell Creek. This original structure did not allow any fish passage, and was the final impediment along Terrell Creek. In early 2012, the Whatcom Conservation District and WDFW were successful in securing a \$75,000 salmon enhancement grant to remodel the dam and allow fish passage into Lake Terrell and Butler Creek. British Petroleum also provided a \$75,000 grant that allowed the remodel to go forward. The project was completed on time with no problems. Two months after completion, coho salmon were seen spawning in Terrell Creek, and also making it into Lake Terrell and Butler Creek. The new structure also allows for the safe and easy control over the Lake Terrell water level to prevent flooding, and allow water releases throughout the dry summer months.





Tennant Lake Wetland Mitigation Project:

The Port of Bellingham has completed Phase 1 of the wetland restoration project north of Slater road. This project is mitigation for wetlands lost in the Bellingham Airport expansion and entails controlling reed canary grass, planting trees and shrubs, and creating open water to improve wetland function and waterfowl habitat on WDFW lands. The first phase that was completed in 2012 enhanced 14 acres. The second phase will occur in 2015 with the remaining 23 acres of the site enhanced. Access to the project area is now restricted for the first three years, to allow for undisturbed growth of the planted vegetation. A metal fence has been constructed as a boundary along the existing trail from the parking area to the dike trail. Native Growth Protection Area Signs have been posted along the public interface boundaries of the project area. After the completion of Phase 2, the metal wire fence will be replaced with a cedar rail fence. While the Port of Bellingham will be responsible for ensuring that the mitigation project meets defined wetland performance standards during a 14 year monitoring period, the area will remain in WDFW ownership and be managed as a wildlife habitat conservation area (predominately waterfowl habitat).

Whatcom Wildlife Area Noxious Weeds:

Vegetation management continues to demand a significant portion of wildlife area staff time. Over 1,000 acres were monitored for noxious weed encroachment, and staff controlled weeds on more than 600 acres using integrated pest management practices. Species controlled included purple loosestrife, yellow flag iris, scotch broom, Japanese knotweed, and reed canary grass. All agricultural fields were sprayed for noxious weeds.

Status Report of 2012 and 2013 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 2014.

2012 Performance Measure	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2014 Related Activity/ Comments
Plant 167 acres of cereal grains for wintering waterfowl (100 acres corn, 67 acres barley)	Completed. 100 acres of corn was planted at Slater Rd. 47 acres of barley were planted at Lake Terrell and British Petroleum (BP) planted 20 acres of barley.	2014 corn planting is expected to be 100 acres, Lake Terrell barley will increase to 62 acres with new Duck Stamp funding. BP is still expected to plant 20 acres of barley.
Monitor and/or control weeds on 1,000 acres	Completed. Mowed 25 acres reed canary grass, 2 acres alders. Sprayed 20 acres Scot's broom, and 25 acres purple loosestrife. Cut flower heads off scattered yellow-flag iris. Monitored weeds on 2,000 acres.	Coordinate with WDFW weed crew to control purple loosestrife and Japanese knotweed. Increase reed canary grass mowing to 60 acres to improve hunting/ recreation and reduce reed canary grass vigor.
Work to increase summer flows in Terrell Creek without negatively impacting Lake Terrell	Completed in 2010.	Continue summer flow enhancement in Terrell Creek
Monitor success of Lake Terrell island plantings	Some Islands still lacking vegetation.	Further planting will take place in 2014
Maintain one mile of fence line on Lake Terrell unit to protect reserve from trespass	Completed	Continue annual maintenance as necessary
Pursue opportunities to create an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) hunting site at the Nooksack unit lagoon.	WDFW staff submitted capital project request for work sometime in the future.	Staff will open up handicapped access to adjacent blinds while lagoon site is being worked on.
Coordinate local Washington Waterfowl Association's (WWA) construction/ maintenance of 42 hunting/ viewing blinds	WWA conducted work parties and maintained 42 blinds. WA manager attended WWA meetings and assisted as necessary.	Continue cooperative efforts with WWA.
Monitor water control structures on Lake Terrell and Intalco units.	All water controls checked and maintained.	Continue monitoring of water controls.
Monitor dog use on Tennant Lake and Nooksack Units.	Completed	Continue to monitor dog use on Tennant Lake and Nooksack Units.
Mow the Port of Bellingham's Phase 2 area north and east of parking area to control Reed Canary Grass.	Completed	Continue to mow Phase 2 area until it is developed.
Monitor public use and fence compliance on Lummi Island bald. Update interpretive	Completed	Continue to monitor public use and fence compliance on Lummi Island bald. Update interpretive

materials at site.		materials at site when needed.
Coordinate with BP to maintain hunting and recreation areas.	Ongoing, coordinated with farmers planting barley, and mowing fields for hay.	Will continue coordinating with BP and the farmers on hunting and recreation.
Coordinate with local sportsman's club to maintain archery range	Assisted Custer Sportsmen in maintaining Intalco range. Installed new ADA packed gravel paths on the Archery Sight In Range.	Improve course safety and design. Add additional ADA accessible paths on course. Continue cooperative maintenance.
Apply for grants to meet various strategies as needed	Ongoing.	Continue to apply for new grants when available.
Coordinate 30 volunteers releasing 4,500 pheasants during hunting season	Utilized approximately 25 volunteers in 2012 pheasant release.	Continue to utilize volunteers.
2013 Performance Measure	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2014 Related Activity/ Comments
Plant 167 acres of cereal grains for wintering waterfowl (100 acres corn, 67 acres barley)	Completed. 100 acres of corn was planted at Slater Rd. 50 acres of barley were planted at Lake Terrell. British Petroleum (BP) planted 20 acres of barley.	2014 corn planting is expected to be 100 acres, Lake Terrell barley will increase to 62 acres due to Duck Stamp funds. BP is still expected to plant 20 acres of barley.
Monitor and/or control weeds on 1,000 acres	Completed. Mowed 20 acres reed canary grass, 2 acres alders. Sprayed 20 acres scotch broom, and 25 acres purple loosestrife. Cut flower heads off scattered yellow-flag iris. Monitored weeds on 2,000 acres.	Coordinate with WDFW weed crew to control purple loosestrife and Japanese knotweed. Start control of Eurasian Milfoil in Lake Terrell in 2014. Increase reed canary grass mowing to 60 acres to improve hunting/ recreation and reduce reed canary grass vigor.
Monitor public use and fence compliance on Lummi Island bald. Update interpretive materials at site.	Completed	Continue to monitor public use and fence compliance on Lummi Island bald. Remove vegetation to improve view at overlook bald.

Work to increase summer flows in Terrell Creek without negatively impacting Lake Terrell	Completed. Used water control valve to maintain creek flows through the Summer.	Continue summer flow enhancement in Terrell Creek
Monitor success of Lake Terrell island plantings	Completed	Further planting will take place in Spring 2014 using Duck Stamp funds.
Maintain one mile of fence line on Lake Terrell unit to protect reserve from trespass	Completed	Continue annual maintenance as necessary
Pursue opportunities to create an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) hunting site at the Nooksack unit lagoon.	WDFW staff submitted capital project request for work sometime in the future.	Open up handicapped access to adjacent blinds while lagoon site is being worked on.
Coordinate local Washington Waterfowl Association's (WWA) construction/ maintenance of 42 hunting/ viewing blinds	WWA conducted work parties and maintained 42 blinds and built a new ADA Accessible Blind at Lake Terrell. WA manager attended WWA meetings and assisted as necessary.	Continue cooperative efforts with WWA.
Monitor water control structures on Lake Terrell and Intalco units.	All water controls checked and maintained. Rainbow Pond control was repaired in 2013.	Continue monitoring of water controls. Replace Rainbow Pond water control structure in 2014 using Duck Stamp funds.
Monitor dog use on Tennant Lake and Nooksack Units.	Completed	Continue to monitor dog use on Tennant Lake and Nooksack Units.
Mow area north and east of parking area for off-lease dog use while Port of Bellingham enhancement project is being constructed.	Completed. Off-lease dog area was mowed, including the 23 acre Phase 2 site.	Continue to mow off-leash dog use area while construction continues.
Coordinate with BP to maintain hunting and recreation areas.	Ongoing, coordinated with farmers planting barley, and mowing fields for hay.	Will continue coordinating with BP and the farmers on hunting and recreation.
Coordinate with local sportsman's club to maintain archery range	Assisted Custer Sportsmen in maintaining Intalco range. Improved safety by installing new signs.	Improve course safety and design. Continue cooperative maintenance.
Apply for grants to meet various strategies as needed	Ongoing	Continue to apply for new grants when available.
Coordinate 30 volunteers releasing 4,500 pheasants during hunting season	Utilized approximately 25 volunteers in 2013 pheasant release.	Continue to utilize volunteers. Work with new regional volunteer coordinator.
Coordinate with other agencies	Ongoing - worked with Port of Bellingham on mitigation, Whatcom County Parks and Recreation on land use, and Whatcom County PUD on easement clearing.	Continue cooperative work as issues arise.

New Strategies

The wildlife area plan identifies strategies or activities that address the Agency's goals and objectives, why the area was purchased, habitat conditions, species presence, and public issues and concerns. The following updated strategies have been added in response 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 Wildlife Area Advisory Committee. These 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.

Agency Objective: Provide Stainable Fish and Wildlife-related Recreational and Commercial Opportunities Compatible with Maintaining Healthy Fish and Wildlife Populations and Habitats.

1. Provide and manage resource-compatible hunting and fishing opportunities

- A. Strategy: *Provide increased wheelchair accessibility at the Intalco unit archery range.* Timeframe: 2014, Funding source: Custer Sportsmen's Club funds, state operating funds
- B. Strategy: *Renovate boardwalk at Tennant Lake.* Timeframe 2014, Estimated cost \$180,000 Funding source: RCO Grant funds

Agency Objective: Reconnect with Those Interested in Washington's Fish and Wildlife.

1. Market the Whatcom Wildlife Area to a broader audience

- A. Strategy: *Fund naturalist program and a full-time naturalist position at the Tennant Lake Interpretive Center.*
Timeframe: 2014-15. Estimated cost: \$60,000 annually

Agency Objective: Provide Sound Operational Management of WDFW Lands, Facilities, and Access Sites.

1. Maintain facilities, structures, and physical improvements

- A. Strategy: *Pursue grant funds to renovate the Tennant Lake unit boardwalk.*
Timeframe: 2014 Estimated cost \$180,000 Funding source: RCO Grant funds
- B. Strategy: *Improve boardwalk at Pine/Cedar Lakes unit.* Estimated cost \$25,000.
Timeline: 2014
- C. Strategy: *Renovate Managers residence at Lake Terrell for energy efficiency.*
Timeframe 2014, Funding source: Energy savings grant

Agency Objective: Protect, Restore and Enhance Fish and Wildlife Populations and Their Habitats.

1. Maintain and improve fish populations

- A. Strategy: *Start initial control efforts to address the Eurasian milfoil infestation in Lake Terrell.* Timeframe: 2014, Funding source: State Weed Control funds.
- B. Strategy:

2. Protect, restore and enhance wetland and riparian habitats

- A. Strategy: *Assist the Port of Bellingham in implementation of the Slater Road wetland mitigation project.* Timeframe: 2014, Funding source: Port of Bellingham

- B. Strategy: Pursue purchase of last 3 acre parcel of privately owned lakebed at Lake Terrell. Timeframe: 2015, Funding source: Grant funds, state operating funds
- C. Strategy: Provide co-op funding to County or City to buy out properties in Marietta and allow levee breaching on the Nooksack unit. Timeframe: 2014. Funding source: Grant funds.
- C. Strategy: Replace Rainbow Pond water control structure. Timeframe: 2014, Funding source: Duck Stamp funds.

Agency Objective: Minimize Adverse Interactions between Humans and Wildlife

- 1. Monitor and manage public access to minimize negative effects on fish and wildlife**
 - A. Strategy: Coordinate with Port of Bellingham on construction of cedar rail fence and signage to limit access to wetland mitigation project area. Timeframe: 2015. Funding source: Port of Bellingham.
 - B. Strategy: Mow the area north and east of the parking area at the north of Slater Rd unit to provide an alternate area for dog walkers. Timeframe: 2014. Funding source: State operating funds.

2014-2015 Performance Measures

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

- 1) Plant a minimum 160 acres of cereal grains for wintering waterfowl use
- 2) Monitor and/or control weeds on 1,000 acres
- 3) Continue monitoring 20 photo points when GPS/mapping software is updated.
- 4) Plant trees & shrubs on Lake Terrell's islands to prevent erosion.
- 5) Pursue grant opportunities to create an ADA hunting site on the Nooksack unit lagoon
- 6) Release 4,000 pheasants with the assistance of 30 volunteers
- 7) Coordinate with Port of Bellingham on north of Slater wetland enhancement project. Build fence along trail, limit access to project site for 3 years.
- 8) Coordinate with WWA to maintain 42 hunting blinds and 4 boat launches at Lake Terrell, Tennant Lake, Nooksack and Intalco units.
- 9) Coordinate use and maintenance of Intalco archery range with Custer Sportsmen's Club.
- 10) Coordinate with British Petroleum on crops to plant for wildlife.
- 11) Coordinate with Whatcom Conservation District on the Lake Terrell dam summer water releases.
- 12) Coordinate with other land managing agencies
- 13) Improve equipment parking at Lake Terrell unit.

Wildlife Area Advisory Committee Input

A Wildlife Area Advisory Committee meeting was held May 7, 2014 to review management progress, address any new issues, and gather input on existing issues.

Those in attendance included:

Bob Harriman, Borderline Bassin Contenders

Sylvia Goodwinn, Port of Bellingham

Rachel Vasak, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association

Chad Deyo, WDFW

Richard Kessler, WDFW

Andrew Gamble, Custer Sportsmen's Club, submitted comments after the meeting.

WAAC Top 10 project list for 2014 (all currently unfunded)

1. Fund Tennant Lake Interpretive Center programs and Naturalist position
2. Reinstate W.A. Managers' limited commission to increase enforcement on State lands
3. Control invasive species in Lake Terrell and Tennant Lake.
4. Create more ADA pheasant hunting at Lake Terrell.
5. Install artificial habitat reefs at Lake Terrell around new fishing pier.
6. Finish remodeling of ADA hunting blind at Lake Terrell.
7. Apply for grant funds to make the Intalco archery range course more wheelchair accessible
8. Pursue land acquisition to protect wetlands adjacent to Tennant Lake
9. Pursue local Land Trust purchase of 3 acre parcel of privately owned Terrell lakebed
10. Provide co-op funds to County or City to buy out properties in Marietta.

Contacts:

Richard Kessler
Wildlife Area Manager
(360) 739-3404
WDFW Mill Creek Office
(425) 775-1311

Want to see the full plan?

Go to –

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