



WENAS WILDLIFE AREA 2017 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Land Management Summary

This is the most recent update to the 2006 Wenas Wildlife Area Management Plan. This plan provides management direction for the 105,000 acre Wenas Wildlife Area located in Yakima and Kittitas counties, in Washington. The plan identifies needs and guides activities on the area based on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife’s (WDFW) mission of “*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.



Shrub-steppe habitat in Buffalo area

Plans are updated 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 2014–2016 accomplishments, as well as new issues, new land management strategies, and performance measures for 2017–2018. The current plan can be viewed at this link: (http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/).

Updates/Changes

WILDFIRES

Human caused wildfires continue to degrade habitat and destroy capital investments such as elk control and boundary fencing on the wildlife area. Four wildfires occurred during 2014-16 all of which were in 2014 and were human caused. Three of the four fires were attributed to target shooting and totaled over 9,000 acres, the majority 8,942 acres, coming from the Cottonwoods #2 fire. On the morning of June 17, 2014, the Cottonwoods #2 fire was ignited. The fire spread quickly due to gusting winds and dry conditions. By mid-afternoon the fire was threatening homes in the Cabin Lane and Buffalo Road areas. By evening the fire had reached its maximum acres, although it wasn’t officially declared contained until the 19th. Over 8,942 acres of shrub-steppe habitat had been burned, as well as with 3.1 miles of elk fence.

Inside	
Land Management Summary	1
Updates/Changes	1
Status Report of Performance Measures	9
New Strategies	11
2017-18 Performance Measures	12
BPA’s Wildlife Mitigation Program	13
WAAC Input	13

Additionally, a private landowner lost five outbuildings, half a dozen vehicles, and a boat and camper near Cabin Lane.

Following the Cottonwoods #2 fire, we received \$500,000 in Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) emergency funds to assist with restoration of the burned area and the damaged elk fence (see page 4). The majority of the funds were spent on seeding the burned area with native seed mixes to help foster the development of native vegetation post fire. State fire funds and a grant from Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) were also received to assist with native seed costs. During the period of this update, over 2,000 acres were seeded to improve habitat damaged from the Cottonwoods #2 fire.



The flames from the Cottonwoods #2 fire



The aftermath of Cottonwoods #2 fire near the epicenter

RECREATION - TARGET SHOOTING

Recreational target shooting continues to be a challenge on the wildlife area. WDFW continues to implement the temporary fire season timing restriction on target shooting across the wildlife area. The timing restriction began June 1st in 2014, May 22nd in 2015 and June 1st in 2016, allowing target shooting from sunrise to 10:00 am only. In both 2014 and 2015, due to extremely dry conditions, the wildlife area was closed to all target shooting beginning on June 19th and July 1st, respectively. In 2016, the timing restriction ran through the fire season, ending on September 30.

WDFW staff also continued to work on developing proposals to provide target shooting opportunities while addressing safety, habitat and land management issues. In April, 2015 and April 2016, WDFW hosted public meetings in Selah and Ellensburg to take input as we developed proposals. At the 2016 meeting, a refined proposal was presented that included the following main components:

- Limit target shooting to two locations (Durr Rd West 1/Sheep Co Rd site)
- On the south end, develop a formal range at either the existing Sheep Co location (alternative 1) or at Bull Pasture location (alternative 2; agency preferred)
- Once identified improvements were completed at the two locations, the remainder of the wildlife area would be closed to target shooting.

Responses from the public on the proposal included the following concerns:

- Limiting target shooting to only two sites on the wildlife area

- Limiting motorized use on roads within the wildlife area
- Dog trainers use the proposed Bull Pasture location (alternative 2)
- Neighbors expressed concerns regarding safety, noise and home values

Due to the concerns expressed by the public, WDFW completed additional outreach to stakeholder groups to discuss their issues and concerns. including: neighbors, hunters, target shooters, National Rifle Association (NRA), motorized users, horseback riders, hikers, mountain bikers, bird watchers, and dog trainers.

Staff also toured two ranges in Grant County with NRA representatives and State Representative Dent, to better understand what design features contribute to a safe range and a shooters positive experience.



Rep. Dent touring shooting range facilities near Moses Lake

In August, 2016, based on public feedback, a decision was made to ‘hit the reset button’, which entailed dropping all previous proposals and initiating an advisory committee process. This new effort will engage representative stakeholder groups to identify the best options for managing target shooting on the Wenas Wildlife Area.

WEED MANAGEMENT

In 2014 almost 2,500 acres were treated for invasive weeds, with over 1,450 of those acres treated in response to the 2014 Sheep Company #2 fire and the 2012 Wenas Lake Fire. The following years (2015, 2016) saw a similar commitment to addressing the disturbance a large fire can bring to a plant community, while still managing other unimpacted sections of the wildlife area.

In 2015, both *Larinus minutus* and *Bangasternus fausti*, two types of weevils that prey on diffuse knapweed, were released at six locations on the wildlife area. In 2016, *Jaapiella ivannikovi*, a gall midge, was released at three locations to help biologically control an infestation of Russian knapweed.

SEEDING

From 2014 – 2016, over 1,600 acres were seeded using native upland seed mixes. A large majority of the acreage seeded during this period was a response to the Cottonwoods #2 fire, accounting for over 94% of the total acreage seeded during the period of this update or over 1,500 acres. Steep drainages were aerially seeded, while the remainder of the Cottonwood #2 fire was drill seeded. Other seeding activities during this time include weed control seeding the Roza-Buffalo powerline (2014), McCade restoration (2015), and the Wright Place restoration (2016).



Aerial seeding in response to the Cottonwoods #2 fire

EMERGENCY ELK FENCE REBUILD



Severely impacted section of fence after the fire

The 2014 Cottonwood #2 fire burned through approximately 3.1 miles of elk fence in the Cabin Lane and Buffalo Road areas, 1.325 miles required a complete rebuild, 0.95 miles in the Cabin Lane area and 0.38 miles in the Buffalo Road area. In these sections steel sucker pipe was used rather than treated wood posts. The remaining 1.8 miles was less severely impacted by the fire, and we were able to replace individual treated wood posts that had burned, replacing a total of 200 post, the majority of which was in the Buffalo Road area. In addition, 1-2 BPA and 2 Bureau of

Reclamation power poles were burned severely enough to need replacement, but no lines were disrupted.

MELLOTTE BRIDGE REPAIRS

The Mellotte Bridge over Wenas Creek was impacted by high spring flows in 2015 and 2016, resulting in buildup of debris under the bridge and damage to abutment timbers. In October 2016, the damaged abutment timbers were replaced and debris was removed from under the bridge. Through discussions with WDFW staff, it was decided that the existing bridge was at the end of its design life and needed to be replaced with a new and larger structure. It was agreed that WDFW would pursue funding to replace the bridge in the next capital budget cycle.

PUBLIC USE

Staff designed and built new reader boards and kiosks that were installed at all wildlife area entrances. We also obtained funding to purchase green dot maps for installation on the reader boards. The new reader boards and kiosks will help to better inform the public of the rules on the wildlife area and hopefully provide a better user experience.



Old Reader Board at Black Canyon



New Reader Board at Black Canyon

Staff designed and built a new gate for Buffalo Road entrance. This single panel gate is much easier for the public to close than the old two panel gate. Staff also constructed a post and rail fence at the parking area to stop mudding in the adjacent ditch line. The fence has been successful and ultimately has helped with rehabilitation of the impacted ditch.

MANASTASH RIDGE TRAILS PLANNING

In September of 2014, Manager Confer Morris, in collaboration with Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, applied, and was approved for, a Washington Recreation and Conservation Office NOVA (Non-highway and Off Road Vehicle Activities) planning grant, to help address issues on the Manastash Ridge hiking trails. These trails are heavily used by the community of Ellensburg and are becoming more popular with people from outside the area. WDFW would like to bring these user established trails into formal management in a conscientious manner, one that allows for sustainable use of the trails, while balancing impacts to ecosystems and the species that depend on the habitats provided by the wildlife area. Since the Manastash Ridge Trails are present on both Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and WFDW owned land,

the two agencies will be partnering on the planning grant to help co-manage the trails. Additional collaborating organizations include Kittitas Reclamation District and Kittitas County.



A view of Manastash Ridge and “the book”

By utilizing grant funds, wildlife area staff have an inventory of the trails present, cultural resources review is completed, and engagement with the public has occurred by hosting meetings and a stakeholders group, the Manastash Ridge Trails Coalition (MRTC) was formed. Future goals for the planning group include sharing information about the landscapes suitability for trail development, designing informational signs for the kiosk and the trail system, and presenting draft plans developed by the MRTC stakeholders group to the public.

FUNDING

Funds for managing the wildlife area are provided by Bonneville Power Administration as appropriate for their mitigation compliance (page 13, BPA’s Wildlife Mitigation Program).

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Rocky Mountain Elk

Rocky Mountain Elk population counts and estimates were not conducted in 2014 and 2015 due to mild winter conditions. The mild nature of the winter helped the herd to disperse across a large area which conflicted with the count procedure. Population estimates were resumed in 2016, with the Yakima Elk Herd estimated to consist of over 10,800 elk’ with a 15:100 bull:cow ratio and a 35:100 calf:cow ratio.

Specifically, at the Mellotte feed site official counts were conducted in late January 2016 by District Biologist Bernatowicz, he estimated 1,226 total elk with 64 adult bulls, 33 juvenile bulls, 789 cows, and 340 calves.

Rocky Mountain Mule Deer

On the ground post hunt surveys of mule deer were conducted in Naches Mule Deer Management Zone in both 2014 and 2015. A ratio of buck:doe:fawn were estimated at 25:100:57 and 16:100:39 for the respective years. Over the past decade the population has been in considerable decline, and has not rebounded to its pre-2004 levels of abundance. In 2013, the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe in partnership with WDFW began a radio telemetry study on this population of mule deer.

A total of 160 adult females were radio-marked by the Muckleshoot Tribe with 82 of those females becoming mortalities. Their results are still in a preliminary phase, but seem to indicate that survival may be lower than previously estimated.



Elk Herd along a ridgeline on the Wildlife Area

California Bighorn Sheep

In 2009, the Umptanum Bighorn Sheep herd was found to have sick and dying animals and testing confirmed a broncho-pneumonia outbreak. Between disease related mortality and culling, at least 113 sheep were removed from the population between December 2009 and May 2010. Annual monitoring through 2012 showed animal numbers increasing annually with an estimated population increase to near pre-2009 levels. In 2013 the disease re-occurred and by September 2013 all lambs of marked ewes had died and overall lamb survival was very low. The varying temporal and geographical effects of this pneumonia outbreak suggest that follow-up monitoring is crucial. There is still much to learn about the dynamics of this disease.

The Umptanum population appeared to be relatively stable from 2014-2016, with lamb recruitment continuing to be an issue, with estimates of 14 lambs, 168 ewes, and 267 total sheep in 2014. A slight decrease in population was noted for 2015 with a population estimate of 13 lambs, 168 ewes, and 238 total sheep. Lastly, in 2016 the population had an increase in lambs from 13 to 33, 144 ewes, and 233 total sheep.

ROAD MANAGEMENT/MAINTENANCE

Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan (RMAP)

From 2014-2016 wildlife area staff continued their commitment to check and clean forest road ditch-lines and culverts to prevent unnecessary damage to roads and creeks. Two fish passage barriers, an earthen dam and a culvert, were removed from Evan's Canyon Road and an adjacent spur road. These were the last two fish passage barriers identified under RMAP for removal.



Rainbow over sagebrush

Status Report of 2014 - 2016 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 2017-18.

Wenas Wildlife Area performance measures for 2014-16

2014-16 Performance Measures	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2014-16 Related Activity/ Comments
Maintain 46.5 miles of elk fence.	Completed	Yearly maintenance performed to prevent crop depredation.
Maintain 9.6 miles of stock fence.	Completed	Protect shrub-steppe from illegal motorized access.
Maintain 8.6 miles of fire breaks.	Completed	Annual prevention.
75 acres of degraded shrub-steppe seeded to native shrub-steppe species (McCade Site).	Completed	35.2 acres of degraded shrub-steppe habitat was seeded with native shrub species at the McCade site.
40 acres of weed control areas seeded to native species.	Completed	61 acres of weed control areas were seeded with native species.
1,100 acres burned in Cottonwood # 2 fire seeded to native shrub-steppe species (2014)	Completed	2,160 acres burned in the Cottonwoods #2 fire seeded to native shrub-steppe species; 630 acres were seeded in 2014.
5 acres of habitat seeded each year with native forbs to increase habitat diversity.	Completed	5 acres were seeded with native forbs in 2014 and 2016.
Weeds treated on 300 acres of the restoration seedings.	Completed	1,352 acres of restoration seedings were treated for weeds.
Weeds treated on 550 acres where fires have occurred using ground applications and additional 950 acres proposed for aerial treatment.	Completed	466 acres of weeds were treated where previous fires had burned. 2,556 acres were treated through aerial applications.
Weeds treated on 200 acres across the wildlife area each year.	Completed	In total 674 acres were treated across the wildlife area during this reporting period. 152 acres in 2014, 213 acres in 2015, and 308 acres in 2016.
Weeds treated on at least 40 miles of roadside and fire breaks on the wildlife area.	Completed	In 2014, 2015, and 2016, weeds were treated on 38, 28, and 25 miles, respectively.
Fire contracts maintained for wildlife area protection.	Completed	Completed yearly as annual maintenance.
DNR annual lease payment paid. Work with DNR and BPA to determine if a longer-term lease agreement can be reached.	Completed	Completed yearly as annual maintenance.

Annual PILT and weed assessment paid to Yakima and Kittitas counties.	Completed	Completed yearly as annual maintenance.
Annual contract submitted to BPA.	Completed	Completed yearly as annual maintenance.
Annual BPA-required Statement of Work (SOW), budget, and quarterly and annual reports submitted for the BPA-funded portion of the wildlife area.	Completed	Completed yearly as annual maintenance.
Plans completed including wildlife area plan update, weed plan, fire plan, and annual RMAP report.	Completed	Completed yearly as annual maintenance.
Contact with WAAC maintained (at least one meeting per year).	Completed	Completed yearly as annual maintenance.
Collaborate with enforcement to conduct three aerial surveys a year for Green DOT road violations.	Completed	Completed yearly.
Staff attended annual pesticide recertification workshops.	Completed	Completed yearly as annual maintenance.
Red card or blue card training completed by wildlife area staff.	Completed	Completed yearly as annual maintenance.
First aid training provided to staff.	Completed	Completed yearly as annual maintenance.



Lone pines on the Wildlife Area

New Strategies Identified for 2017-18

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.

If the Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) provided public comments on new issues, they will be identified (*in italics*) 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 Sustainable Fish and Wildlife-Related Recreational and Commercial Opportunities Compatible With Maintaining Healthy Fish and Wildlife Populations and Habitats. Improve the Economic Well-Being of Washington by Providing Diverse, High Quality Recreational and Commercial Opportunities.

1. Provide public access compatible with fish, wildlife and habitat protection

Access for hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing and other activities is an agency priority. However, access and recreation must be controlled to protect fish and wildlife resources and to comply with federal and state regulations. *Public input clearly emphasizes the importance of providing recreational access with protections for the resource.*

- A. Strategy: Address the effects of target shooting on fish and wildlife and their habitats, as well as public recreation, using an advisory committee. This new effort will engage representative stakeholder groups to identify the best options for managing target shooting on the wildlife area.

Justification: To come to a resolution on a chronic issue that impacts wildlife and their habitats, as well as user experience and can only be addressed through community involvement. *Timeframe:* December, 2017.

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

1. Maintain facilities to achieve safe, efficient and effective management of the wildlife area

- A. Strategy: Work with engineering staff to submit a capital project to replace the old railcar bridge at the Mellotte Road crossing of Wenas Creek with a new, larger structure.

Justification: This bridge is required for efficient operation of the wildlife area, providing the main access for agency personnel and public to the Cleman Mountain Unit of the Wenas WLA. It is the only access to the Mellotte elk winter feeding site. Replacement of this bridge will maintain critical agency and public access, as well as protecting fish habitat and preventing resource damage. *Timeframe:* Fall, 2016, Submit Capital Project Request form.

2017-18 Performance Measures

Performance measures for the Wenas Wildlife Area are listed below. BPA funding currently follows the federal fiscal cycle of October 1 through September 30, so performance measures for the BPA-funded portion of the wildlife area are estimated and may change or not be accomplished depending on what the annual contract with BPA requires. Accomplishments and desired outcomes will be monitored and evaluated annually. Wildlife area plans are updated every two years as habitat and species conditions change, as new regulations are enacted, as public issues and concerns change, and as funding allows. Plan updates will address these changes.

- 46.5 miles of elk fence maintained.
- 9.6 miles of stock fence maintained.
- 8.6 miles of fire breaks maintained.
- 50 acres seeded with native shrub-steppe species that burned in Cottonwood # 2 fire.
- 5 acres of habitat seeded with native forbs in 2018 to increase habitat diversity.
- Weeds treated on 300 acres of the restoration seedings.
- Weeds treated on 300 acres where fires have occurred using ground or aerial treatment.
- Weeds treated on 200 acres across the wildlife area each year.
- Weeds treated on at least 40 miles of roadside and fire breaks on the wildlife area.
- Fire contracts maintained for wildlife area protection.
- DNR annual lease payment paid. Work with DNR and BPA to determine if a longer-term lease agreement can be reached.
- At least 3 helicopter enforcement flights completed to check compliance on WLA.
- Annual PILT and weed assessment paid to Yakima and Kittitas counties.
- Annual contract submitted to BPA.
- Annual BPA-required Statement of Work (SOW), budget, and quarterly and annual reports submitted for the BPA-funded portion of the wildlife area.
- 2018-27 BPA Wildlife Categorical Review completed for WLA in 2017.
- Plans completed including wildlife area plan update, weed plan, fire plan, and annual RMAP report.
- Contact with WAAC maintained (at least one meeting per year).
- Work with Wenas Target Shooting Committee to identify solutions to target shooting conflicts.
- Staff attended annual pesticide recertification workshops.
- Red card or blue card training completed by wildlife area staff.
- First aid training provided to staff.

BPA's Wildlife Mitigation Program

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has received mitigation credit for funding habitat enhancement, and ongoing management of habitats on the majority of the Wenas Wildlife Area (South Umtanum Ridge, Umtanum Creek, and Roza Creek units). The Wenas Wildlife Area was approved as a wildlife mitigation project in 1997 and BPA-funded habitat enhancement efforts to meet mitigation objectives have been underway since that time. The project provides an estimated 19,254 habitat units (HUs) toward their overall Wildlife Mitigation Debt for the Columbia River hydroelectric system. The HUs are related to mitigation for wildlife losses resulting from the construction of Grand Coulee, McNary and John Day hydroelectric dams. Species being mitigated for on the Wenas Wildlife Area include: sage-grouse, mule deer, western meadowlark, black-capped chickadee, yellow warbler, and mink.

Most of the management strategies relating to habitat management identified in the Wenas Wildlife Area Management Plan are funded through BPA's mitigation program. A summary of these activities can be found in our most recent project review and funding proposal to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council who provides oversight of BPA's mitigation programs. The Wenas Wildlife Area Proposal (Project #200600400) is located at: <http://www.nwccouncil.org/Fw/budget/2010/proposal.asp?id=1011>. This document includes a summary of activities (work elements), a link to the project narrative, an itemized budget request, and estimated budgets through 2018. The majority of the activities relate to protection and enhancement of shrub-steppe habitat, along with measures designed to monitor the effectiveness of the activities, including habitat/plant community monitoring, wildlife population response, and periodic Habitat Evaluation Procedure (HEP) surveys to track progress toward mitigation goals.

Separate funding is used for management of the Cleman Mountain Unit. In addition, cost share for the BPA-funding portion is provided by WDFW through game surveys, science division expertise, engineering and construction shop help and advice, RMAP compliance, and periodic capital projects.

Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) Input

Wenas WAAC meetings were held on November 18th, 2014 and June 13th, 2016. Field Tours were also held on December 4th, 2014 and April 21st, 2016.

November 18th, 2014 Meeting

The main topic of the meeting was the review of potential shooting range alternatives that could serve as a formal range. Attendees shared their views and provided useful feedback which helped to refine the proposed alternatives.

Attendee's

Cindi Confer Morris	Wildlife Area Manager
Jody Taylor	Assistant Wildlife Area Manager
Richard Mann	WDFW Enforcement Captain
Ken McNamee	WA. Department of Natural Resources
George Michel	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Clay Graham	Forest Watch; Motorized Recreation
Jill Breeze	Wenas Backcountry Horseman
Mike Drougas	Wenas Backcountry Horsemen
Dick Jacobson	Yakima County Noxious Weed Board

The wildlife area manager presented the current status of the target shooting proposal, focusing on locations on the north and south end of the Wenas Wildlife Area for developing 'microsite' target shooting ranges. The WAAC had previously agreed that two sites, one on the north and one on the south, should be developed. The wildlife area manager proposed using the existing Durr Road West 1 shooting area as the north site, which WAAC members felt made sense. The remainder of the meeting was spent discussing potential south site locations. Feedback from the WAAC on potential south sites for a 'microsite' target shooting range included:

Alternative 1 – Existing Sheep Company site

- Too many past concerns/issues
- Road drops down into site; people feel unsafe with other users; some users feel like no one's watching and do illegal things; improvements would be destroyed
- Providing a nice site will improve clientele

Alternative 2 – Eastside of Sheep Company Road; Hill SW of existing Sheep Company site

- Small in size, backstop not adequate
- Maybe enough room for seven benches
- Might not be enough room for shotgun discipline
- Need all three disciplines for site to be successful
- Site might provide reduced noise impact to neighbors
- Would include Department of Natural Resources (DNR) ownership; DNR has statewide committee looking at target shooting on their land

Alternative 3 – Westside of Sheep Company Road; SW of existing Sheep Company site

- Need berms to reduce noise
- Too close to neighbors; Need to talk with inholding owners to determine support
- Enough room for all three disciplines
- Room for expansion
- Can get away from dust
- Strong berm provided by hillside

Alternative 4 – Southwest of Cottonwood site; West of Sheep Company Road and North of Bull Pasture Road

- Too far out; outside of fire district

December 04th, 2014 Field Tour

The main goal of the field review was for the WAAC to have an on-site review of the Sheep Company area locations discussed for potential range development at the November 18, 2014 meeting. Due to time constraints, Alternative 1 (existing Sheep Company site), which all members were familiar with, and Alternative 4 (Southwest of Cottonwood site), which is outside the fire district, were not visited by the group. Alternative 2 and 3 locations were visited and site specific details were discussed. Listed below are details and attributes of each of the potential sites relevant to future planning.

Attendee's

Cindi Confer Morris	Wildlife Area Manager
Jody Taylor	Assistant Wildlife Area Manager
Richard Mann	WDFW Enforcement Captain
Ken McNamee	WA. Department of Natural Resources
George Michel	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Clay Graham	Forest Watch; Motorized Recreation
Mike Drougas	Wenas Backcountry Horsemen
Dick Jacobson	Yakima County Noxious Weed Board

Alternative 3

- Good backstop present, can shoot into the hill
- Room available for all three disciplines (shotgun, pistol, and rifle). Space for 200-300 yard rifle range.
- Good access along Sheep Company Road; very visible
- In close proximity to neighbors; need to talk to neighbors and determine support/concerns

Alternative 2

- Small area
- Layout would have rifle range to the north, pistol and shotgun range to the southwest
- No room to expand
- Natural backstop is not adequate
- Site would be difficult to firebreak
- Need all three disciplines at site to be successful

April 21st, 2016 Field Tour

A field tour was scheduled to review the two south sites along Sheep Company Road where a 'microsite' target shooting range could potentially be developed. Manager Confer Morris and Assistant Manager Taylor met with three Wenas WAAC members and visited the existing Sheep Company site and the site north of Bull Pasture Road. Although it was a small group, they considered positives and negatives of each site, and preferred the Bull Pasture site.

June 13th, 2016 Meeting

The main topic of the meeting was providing the WAAC with an update on the shooting range proposal, and new concerns that have been presented from groups like the National Rifle Association (NRA), neighbors of the proposal, dog trainers, and motorized recreationists.

Attendee's

Cindi Confer Morris	Wildlife Area Manager
Jody Taylor	Assistant Wildlife Area Manager
Richard Mann	Outgoing WDFW Enforcement Captain
Bob Weaver	Incoming WDFW Enforcement Captain
Mike Livingston	Regional Director
Scott McCorquodale	Wildlife Program Manager
Melinda Posner	Planning, Recreation and Outreach Section Manager
Nathan Longoria	Wildlife Biologist
Jill Breeze	Wenas Backcountry Horsemen
Mike Drougas	Wenas Backcountry Horsemen
Clay Graham	Selah Adventures
Andy Stepniewski	Audubon
Dick Jacobson	Yakima County Noxious Weed Board

- Manager Confer Morris provided a brief summary of the target shooting project, including input shared at two public meetings on April 26 and 27. She summarized additional feedback that has been received including comments from the National Rifle Association (NRA), neighbors, dog trainers and motorized users. Input includes those who are not supportive of a ban on dispersed/unregulated shooting on the wildlife area, those who do not support road closures associated with implementation of the project, and a petition from neighbors concerned about the proposed location at Bull Pasture. The agency has received inquiries from state legislators and will be hosting a meeting of interested elected officials later in June. With other updates, Confer Morris confirmed that Central Washington University will be working with wildlife area staff to measure the anticipated noise levels generated at the two proposed sites (Bull Pasture and Sheep Company Road) near Selah.
- Given the number of formal concerns, both Confer Morris and Melinda Posner planned meetings with each of the identified user groups to listen to their specific concerns. By meeting individual with the user groups both Cindi and Melinda are hoping to foster candid dialogue about the target shooting proposal, and to better identify the totality of concerns.

Contacts:

Cindi Confer Morris
Wildlife Area Manager
(509) 697-4503
WDFW Yakima Office
(509) 575-2740

Want to see the full plan?

Go to –

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