

# Blue Mountains Wildlife Areas

## 2021-2022 Management Plan Update



This document is intended to highlight accomplishments as they relate to goals and objectives identified within the [2019 Blue Mountains Wildlife Areas Management Plan](#). The plan addresses the status of wildlife species and their habitat, ongoing restoration efforts and public recreation opportunities at the Asotin Creek Wildlife Area, Chief Joseph Wildlife Area, and the W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area. Every 10 years, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) develops a process for revising the management plans for each wildlife area to identify new management priorities and actions. In between plan revisions, the update focuses on recent accomplishments over the last two years.

## Management Highlights

### **Ebsen Water Access Area Acquisition and Renaming (*Goal #7, Provide and improve other appropriate recreation opportunities.*)**

The 7-acre site was purchased by the Wild Steelhead Coalition -- with help from many other groups and individuals who raised money to purchase the land -- and ultimately donated to WDFW. The site was renamed to the Faha Water Access Area after avid fisherman and fishing advocate Frank Faha. The site is adjacent to the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area and includes a popular hand boat launch, restrooms, and five primitive camping sites. WDFW has operated and maintained the area for many years under property-owner agreements. The acquisition ensures

the property will continue to provide access for boating, fishing, wildlife viewing, and other recreation activities for years to come.



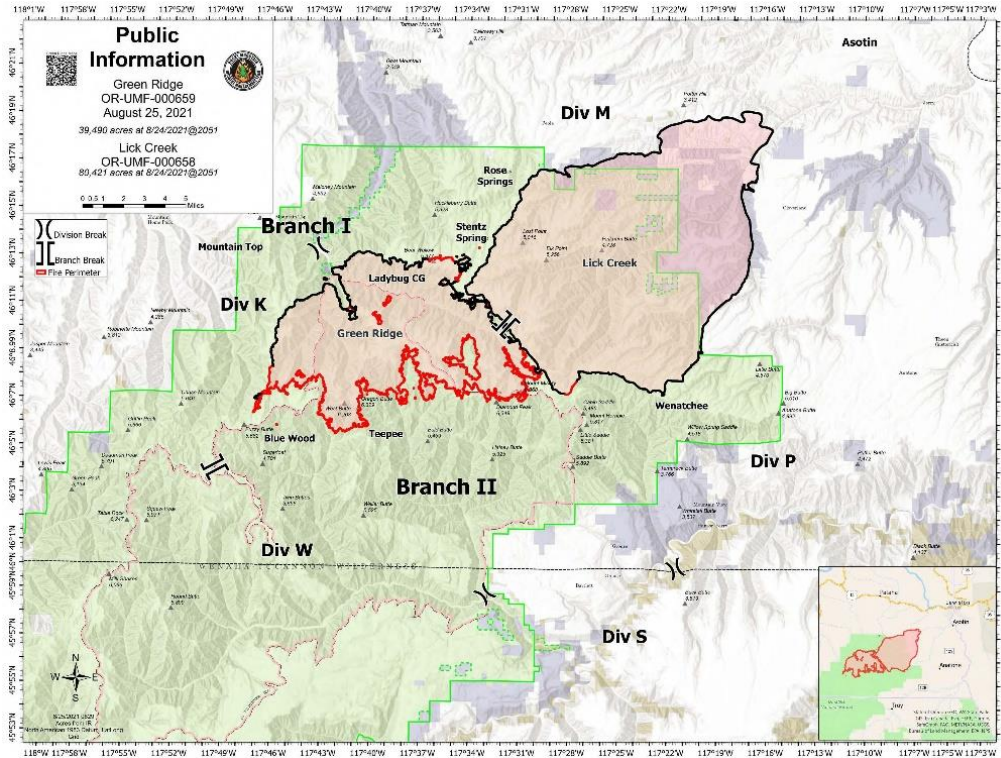
### **Dissolution of Blue Mountains Wildlife Area Complex**

In the fall of 2022, the WT Wooten Wildlife Area was split off from the Blue Mountains Wildlife Area Complex and returned to a standalone wildlife area, as it was in the early 2000s. Assistant wildlife area manager Kari Dingman was promoted to wildlife area manager of the WT Wooten Wildlife Area. Wildlife area manager Bob Dice is the manager of the Asotin Creek, Chief Joseph, and 4-O wildlife areas.

### **New Issues**

#### **2021 Lick Creek Fire**

On July 7, 2021, the Lick Creek Fire was started by lightning approximately 15 miles southeast of Pomeroy, Washington. On July 8, the fire merged with the Dry Gulch Fire that had started from lightning on WDFW land. The total acres burned was 80,421; with 19,441 acres occurring on the Asotin Creek Wildlife Area. Restoration of the burned areas included reseeding in fall of 2022, and reseeding and weed control efforts will continue over the next several years.



## 2022 Lick Creek Fire Restoration

The primary theme on Asotin Creek WLA for 2022 was the cleanup, rebuild and restore habitat and infrastructure on the Asotin Creek Wildlife Area. Wildlife area staff, along with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation volunteers removed, repaired and/or replaced 10 wildlife water collect guzzlers. They also removed old internal pasture fences that were burned and unusable and were a hazard for wildlife. Staff worked with neighboring U.S. Forest Service and Conservation District staff on weed control and native reseeding (ponderosa pine) efforts on the burn footprint. Additional work is anticipated in 2023-2024. Property boundary and cultural resource surveys were completed in preparation for new boundary fence construction. The open bid process included four separate fence rebuild construction projects totaling approximately 26 miles of boundary stock fence and 3.5 miles of elk fence. Contractors began projects during the 2022 season and continued their work into 2023.

## 2022 CJ Driveway Bank Stabilization Project

WDFW Capital and Assessment Management Program and contractors completed a bank stabilization project to alleviate further erosion from the driveway and road into Joseph Creek. The final step for this project were some dormant willow shrub plantings during the winter by staff.

