Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

for the

2009-2015 Game Management Plan

September 5, 2008

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
600 Capitol Way North
Olympia, Washington 98501-1091

AN OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

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This Program Receives Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration, Project W-96_R, Game Surveys.

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State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife

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October 7, 2008

Dear Interested Parties:

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has published a Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) titled, 2009-2015 Game Management Plan. This Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement is presented to the public and other agencies.

Major Changes Proposed in this Supplemental EIS

Changes to the 2003-09 Game Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are proposed to update the plan for 2009-15. Strategies that have been accomplished or are no longer a priority have been deleted. New issues, objectives, and strategies are proposed based on public and staff comments gathered over the past several months.

Significant new issues include: hunting near urbanizing areas; improved communications and outreach by the department; re-introduction of antelope; and wolf re-colonization. These new issues with corresponding objectives and strategies have been added to the original 2003-09 issues. Many of the original issues have been updated or modified based on new information and research, changing priorities, or emphasis.

WDFW believes this Final SEIS will assist decision makers to identify the key environmental issues, and options associated with this action. Comments received from agencies and interested parties during public review of this draft document, have been considered, and incorporated into the Final SEIS. WDFW thanks every citizen and agency for his or her thoughtful comments and input into this process.

Sincerely,

Teresa A. Eturaspe

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SEPA/NEPA Coordinator
Agency Responsible Official
Regulatory Services Division
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FACT SHEET

Title: 2009-15 Game Management Plan Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS)

Proposed Action: Changes to the 2003-09 Game Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are proposed to update the plan for 2009-15. Strategies that have been accomplished or are no longer a priority have been deleted. New issues, objectives, and strategies are proposed based on public and staff comments gathered over the past several months.

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Location: Statewide

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Notice of Availability: The Final Supplemental EIS is now available on WDFW's website at: wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/game/management/2009-2015

Original EIS: 2003-09 Game Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) 11/2002 is available on line at: wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/game/management/2009-2015

Copies are available for review at: WDFW headquarters office in Olympia or online at wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/game/management/2009-2015. Written requests for a copy of the Final SEIS should be addressed to WDFW, Attention SEPAdesk, Habitat, 600 Capitol Way N., Olympia, WA. 98501-1091, or via email at: SEPAdesk@dfw.wa.gov.

Permits and Licenses Required: None required

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SEIS 2009-15 Game Management Plan Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS)**:** 09/05/08

Background Data and Materials Referenced in the SEIS are Available at:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Wildlife Program
Natural Resources Building, 5th Floor
1111 Washington Street East
Olympia, WA 98501-1091

Licenses Required: None required

Distribution List:
Notice of the availability of this SEIS is posted on the WDFW website: http://wdfw.wa.gov/hab/sepa/sepa.htm and wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/game/management/2009-2015
Notification has been sent to all local government planning departments (city and county); affected Tribes; all state and federal agencies with jurisdiction; selected environmental organizations; and interested parties.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Game Management Plan (GMP) will guide the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's management of hunted wildlife for the next six years. The focus is on the scientific management of game populations, harvest management, and other significant factors affecting game populations.

As mandated by the Washington State Legislature (RCW 77.04.012), "… the department shall preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage the wildlife…"; "the department shall conserve the wildlife… in a manner that does not impair the resource…"; and "The commission shall attempt to maximize the public recreational… hunting opportunities of all citizens, including juvenile, disabled, and senior citizens." It is this mandate that sets the overall policy and direction for managing hunted wildlife. Hunters and hunting will continue to play a significant role in the conservation and management of Washington's wildlife.

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was completed on November 27, 2002, after public review of draft and supplemental EIS documents. The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission formally adopted the Game Management Plan on December 7, 2002. This comprehensive process facilitated public discussion and understanding, while cooperatively developing the priority strategies.

This purpose of this Supplemental EIS is to update the plan for 2009-15. The Environmental Impacts Chapter (Chapter 2) from the original EIS is not included in this document, as no changes were made to that section. Several of the original strategies and objectives have been accomplished; additional studies and research have been conducted; and some priorities have changed. Those are the changes that have been addressed in this SEIS. Public outreach earlier this year helped shape the priority issues, objectives, and strategies identified in the SEIS.

The overall goals are to protect, sustain, and manage hunted wildlife, provide stable, regulated recreational hunting opportunity to all citizens, protect and enhance wildlife habitat, and minimize adverse impacts to residents, other wildlife, and the environment.

With all of these issues, it is understood that the implementation of strategies are conditioned first on meeting game population objectives. Science is the core of wildlife management, supporting WDFW's Legislative mandate to preserve, protect, and perpetuate wildlife populations while maximizing recreation.

Science and the professional judgment of biologists is the foundation for all objectives and strategies identified in this plan. At times, the science may not be as strong as managers would like. In those instances, management actions will be more conservative to minimize the potential for significant negative impacts to hunted wildlife species. Chapter three focuses on the science and management of hunted species and lays out how those populations will be monitored to ensure perpetuation of these species over the long term.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The mission of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is "Sound Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife." The Department serves Washington's citizens by protecting, restoring, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats, while providing sustainable fish and wildlife-related recreational and commercial opportunities. Planning helps the Department prioritize actions to ensure accomplishment of its mission and mandate.

The purpose of the Game Management Plan is to assess current issues for hunted wildlife and outline strategies to help WDFW prepare for the future. The emphasis in this plan is the scientific management of hunted species populations, harvest management (hunting), and other significant factors affecting game populations. The plan is dynamic, and is designed to facilitate resolution of emergent issues and allow adjustment of priorities when issues are resolved. The issues and options in the plan are based on current management information. As new information becomes available, options may be modified or new ones developed.

The plan identifies priorities for hunted wildlife and keeps the Department focused, directed, and accountable. The plan will guide the development of the three-year hunting season packages for 2009-11 and 2012-14. In addition, the plan will direct the development of WDFW Game Division work plans and budget proposals. Implementation will begin July 2009 and continue through June 2015.

The overall goals of the plan are to protect, sustain, and manage hunted wildlife, provide stable, regulated recreational hunting opportunity to all citizens, to protect and enhance wildlife habitat, and to minimize adverse impacts to residents, other wildlife, and the environment.

Public Involvement

Active public involvement is important for successful planning. In May 2001, WDFW asked the public to identify the key game management issues that need to be addressed in the next five to ten years. This was done using a series of questionnaires and by providing a page on the agency website. Over 2,500 responses were received. Based on the issues identified during this process, WDFW hired a consulting firm to conduct a telephone survey of both the hunting public and the general public. This was used to get a more scientific sampling of the public. Responsive Management conducted the surveys using randomly selected telephone numbers with a sample of over 800 citizens for the general public survey and over 700 hunters for the hunter survey. References to public opinion based on this survey are made throughout this plan. To further refine the issues, WDFW consulted with the Game Management Advisory Council, the Wildlife Diversity Advisory Council, and members of the Fish and Wildlife Commission. The advisory councils include a cross section of interested citizens who provide feedback and advice to WDFW on a variety of topics. The information from the surveys, polls, and consultations identified the issues addressed in this plan. Finally, WDFW followed the Environmental Impact

Statement process (EIS) to facilitate public involvement in reviewing alternatives and setting priorities.

The main issues identified by the public were categorized into several key areas:

- Scientific/professional management of hunted wildlife
- Public support for hunting as a management tool
- Hunter ethics and fair chase
- Private lands programs and hunter access
- Tribal hunting
- Predator management
- Hunting season regulations
- Game damage and nuisance
- Species-specific management issues

The first public release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Game Management Plan (GMP) was on July 26, 2002. After an extension, the deadline for public comment was September 10, 2002. Comments were received from over 77 groups and individuals. Extensive public comments resulted in significant re-writing and re-formatting of the EIS and GMP. Key changes included the EIS formatting, modification of elk and cougar issues, objectives and strategies, and consideration of the impacts of hunting on non-target wildlife species.

A Supplemental EIS (SEIS) was released on October 18, 2002, with a public comment deadline of November 18, 2002. During this comment period, a scientific peer review of the cougar management section of the plan was also solicited by WDFW.

The process of developing a non-project EIS allowed WDFW to use an iterative process, with releases of a Draft and a Supplemental EIS to take comments and add, modify, or delete strategies. This iterative process was used instead of the more traditional use of preferred and alternative strategies. Essentially the number of alternative strategies was not limited and the preferred strategies were developed in concert with the public through a long scoping and development process and multiple comment periods.

The current process (2008) of developing a Supplemental EIS has included a public scoping period, discussions with the Game Management Advisory Council, and the current comment period for the draft of this supplemental EIS. Hundreds of comments have been received to help shape the amended issues, objectives, and strategies to be implemented in the 2009-15 Game Management Plan.

A few new issues or emphasis areas have also surfaced including:

- Improved communication
- Urban hunting management
- Wolf management impacts

Commission And Department Authorities

The establishment of hunting seasons and management of game species is consistent with the authorities granted the Fish and Wildlife Commission and Department of Fish and Wildlife by the Washington State Legislature through Title 77 of the Revised Code of Washington. The Fish and Wildlife Commission develops regulations under their authority through the adoption of Washington Administrative Code. In addition, various Commission and Department policies and procedures guide game management.

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission and Department of Fish and Wildlife are responsible for the management and protection of fish and wildlife resources in Washington State. The Legislative mandate (RCW 77.04.012) for the Commission and the Department includes the following for wildlife:

- The commission, director, and the department shall preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage the wildlife…
- The department shall conserve the wildlife resources in a manner that does not impair the resource. The commission may authorize the taking of wildlife only at times or places, or in manners or quantities, as in the judgment of the commission does not impair the supply of these resources.
- The commission shall attempt to maximize the public recreational hunting opportunities of all citizens, including juvenile, disabled, and senior citizens (see Title 77 Revised Code of Washington).

In addition, various policies and procedures guided the Commission and Department in developing the plan. In particular, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Hunting Season Guideline (August 1999) provided further guidance for this plan:

"Hunting seasons and regulation recommendations should be based on good science. When biological information is lacking or insufficient, management decisions should be conservative to ensure protection of wildlife resources. At no time should decisions favor income to the agency or recreation over protection of wildlife populations.

1. *In general, hunting seasons and game management units should be easy to understand while maintaining hunting opportunity and management options.*
2. *Continuity in hunting seasons over time is highly valued by the public, therefore Department recommendations for significant changes to seasons should be based on resource or management need.*
3. *Hunting season establishment shall be consistent with the Hunting Co-Management Guidelines between WDFW and Tribes.*
4. *Hunting seasons should be consistent with species planning objectives and provide maximum recreation days while achieving population goals.*
5. *A three year season setting process should be maintained which will provide consistent general seasons from year to year with annual changes in permit levels to address emergent resource concerns; natural disasters; and to meet requirements of federal guideline changes; etc.*

6. *Substantial public involvement and timely opportunity to comment must be provided for 3-year season recommendations and must be in compliance with the state's Regulatory Reform Act.*
7. *Public involvement for annual permit season setting shall include at a minimum, a standard written comment period and one public meeting where comments will be considered.*
8. *Provide separate deer and elk general season recreational opportunities for archers, muzzleloaders, and modern firearm hunters.*
9. *Special deer and elk permit hunt opportunities shall be allocated among three principal user groups (archery, muzzleloader and modern firearm) using the approved formula of success/participation rate.*
10. *Weapon and hunting equipment restrictions should be easy to understand and enforce, maintain public safety, protect the resource, and allow wide latitude for individuals to make equipment choices.*
11. *Enhanced general season considerations, special access opportunities, and other special incentives should be developed for disabled, Master Hunter program graduates, youth, and hunters 65 and older rather than special permit hunts. Master Hunter incentives should return to the program's original intent, which was to address private lands, and associated hunter ethics issues. Disabled hunter opportunities should emphasize equal access consistent with the Americans With Disabilities Act.*
12. *Private landowner hunting issues such as season length, damage control, and trespass should be given consideration when developing hunting season recommendations.*
13. *Standardize furbearer regulations that provide trapping opportunity and address damage control.*
14. *Establish migratory bird and small game regulations to provide maximum hunting opportunity considering federal guidelines, flyway management plan elements, and Department management objectives.*
15. *Hunting season closures and firearm restrictions should be based on resource conservation and public safety.*
16. *Maintain a high quality goat, sheep, and moose permit hunting opportunity consistent with resource availability."*

Implementing the Legislative mandate and Commission guidelines for game species requires knowledge of game population trends and impacts of hunting regulations, development and management of hunting seasons and actions that support (maximizing) public hunting recreation, and conservation of wildlife resources. The Fish and Wildlife Commission adopts major hunting seasons every three years. Minor adjustments are made annually such as modifying permit levels or addressing crop damage or nuisance problems. Migratory waterfowl seasons are adjusted annually in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Pacific Flyway Council.

The process for developing hunting seasons typically includes:

1. Determine the status of game populations and impacts of previous harvest strategies.
2. Preliminary discussion of ideas with the tribes, the public, state and federal agencies, and WDFW staff.

3. Development of season and regulation alternatives.
4. A formal drafting of regulations and establishment of a public comment period in compliance with the Administrative Procedures Act.
5. Development of final recommendations by WDFW staff.
6. Adoption of regulations by the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

The process of establishing hunting seasons, bag limits, and geographical areas where hunting is permitted is exempt from State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) rules through WAC 197-11-840. In addition, feeding of game, issuing licenses, permits, and tags, routine release of wildlife or re-introductions of native wildlife are also listed as exemptions from SEPA rules. However, policy development, planning, and all other game management actions are not considered exempt from SEPA rules.

Background And Setting

Native Americans

Native Americans have inhabited the State of Washington for at least 9,000 years. The Cascade mountain range splits Washington State into two very distinct environments: the dry conditions of the east and the much wetter, rain forest areas of the west. Native Americans adapted to these different conditions and evolved into two distinct patterns. The Pacific coastal Indians inhabited a land of plenty with an abundance of fish, shellfish, roots, berries, and game. While Native Americans east of the Cascades also had access to salmon and steelhead returning up the Columbia River system, they depended more on game and other food sources (Pryor 1997).

In 1853, Isaac I. Stevens was named the first Territorial Governor of the new Washington Territory. He was also appointed Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and negotiated treaties between Pacific Northwest tribes and the United States of America to pave the way for settlement and assimilation of Native Americans into non-Indian society. The treaties established a number of reservations for the Indian people, and in exchange the tribes ceded much of their territory to the U.S. government. The treaties and associated tribes are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Treaties between the United States of America and Northwest Indian Tribes.

Treaty	Indian Tribes	Location and Date
Treaty with the Yakamas	Yakama confederated tribes and bands	Camp Stevens, Walla Walla Valley June 9, 1855
Treaty with the Walla Wallas	Walla Walla, Cayuse and Umatilla tribes and bands	Camp Stevens, Walla Walla Valley June 9, 1855
Treaty of Olympia	Quinault, Hoh, and Quileute	Qui-nai-elt River –Jan. 25, 1856
Treaty of Point No Point	Jamestown S'Klallam, Port Gamble S'Klallam, Lower Elwha, Skokomish	Point No Point, Suquamish Head Jan. 26, 1855
Treaty of Point Elliott	Lummi, Nooksack, Stillaguamish, Swinomish, Upper Skagit, Suquamish, Sauk Suiattle, Tulalip, and Muckleshoot	Point Elliott January 22, 1855
Treaty with the Nez Perces	Nez Perce	Camp Stevens, Walla Walla Valley June 11, 1855
Treaty of Neah Bay	Makah	Neah Bay January 31, 1855
Treaty of Medicine Creek	Nisqually, Puyallup, Squaxin Island, Muckleshoot	Medicine Creek December 26, 1854

The tribes that signed the treaties retained certain rights and privileges. For example, Article 3 from the Medicine Creek Treaty with the Nisqually, Puyallup, Squaxin Island, and Muckleshoot Tribes states:

> *"The right of taking fish, at all usual and accustomed grounds and stations, is further secured to said Indians in common with all citizens of the Territory, and of erecting temporary houses for the purpose of curing, together with the privilege of hunting, gathering roots and berries, and pasturing their horses on open and unclaimed lands..."*

Washington State courts have interpreted this treaty language to mean that treaty tribes can hunt within the boundaries of the area ceded to the federal government by their treaty, or in areas traditionally "used for hunting and occupied over an extended period of time," on open and unclaimed lands that have not been put to a use that is inconsistent with hunting. In conjunction with such hunting, tribes are responsible for the management of their own hunters and hunting activities.

Not all of the tribes signed treaties with the government. Several of these tribes have reservations designated by federal executive order. These include the tribes of the Colville, Spokane, and Kalispel reservations in eastern Washington, and the Chehalis and Shoalwater reservations in western Washington. Tribal hunting rights for these tribes are typically limited to areas on the reservation, or in the case of the Colville tribe to areas that were formerly part of the reservation. There are additional tribal groups that are recognized by the federal government, but have no specific reservation or tribal hunting rights.

Since tribal and non-tribal hunters impact the wildlife resource over much of the state, it is important that WDFW and the tribes work cooperatively to develop management strategies that can meet the needs of both. This process is complicated by the fact that tribal subsistence and ceremonial hunting and state recreational hunting are two very different philosophies steeped in

different traditions and cultural heritages (McCorquodale 1997). This means that both sides have to work very hard to understand and appreciate other views.

Tribal governments take an active role in the management of wildlife resources. They typically have a tribal hunting committee that meets to develop regulations and management strategies. Many tribes have hired biologists, or have access to biological staff that can advise them on the development of management approaches. Tribes have taken the lead in several areas on research projects to gather the information that is needed to better manage wildlife resources. WDFW and various tribes are working together to develop herd plans for key wildlife populations. WDFW is also working cooperatively with tribes to rebuild or augment populations that are below desired levels.

European Settlement

During the early European settlement of North America, hunting was primarily a subsistence activity (Organ and Fritzell 2000). The same was true for the early immigrants to the Washington Territory. Hunting was also used to eliminate animals that posed a threat to humans or their livelihood. Hunting eventually became a profitable commercial venture promoted initially by the fur trade and later for food, clothing, and jewelry. Conflicts between market hunters and sport hunters began to occur by the mid 1800s and nationally some influential sportsmen's organizations were formed (Trefethen 1975). During the 19th century, hunting changed from mostly a subsistence activity to a commercial one, and then to the beginnings of a recreational activity. At the same time, wildlife habitats were being fenced, plowed, burned, developed into towns, and cut by roads and rails (Madson and Kozicky 1971).

By the late 1800s, there was a new movement of sportsmen and other conservation minded people. Theodore Roosevelt led a social movement that pressed for an end to commercial traffic in wildlife and for government oversight of wildlife conservation (Reiger 1975, Warren 1997). Roosevelt introduced a new thought, "conservation through wise use" (Madson and Kozicky 1971). It was also the foresight of President Roosevelt that was responsible for the establishment of the U.S. Forest Reserves (Service) and the creation the National Wildlife Refuges. His legacy of public lands is in place today, more important than ever before, as strongholds of fish and wildlife in Washington State and the Nation.

In 1928, the American Game Conference, chaired by Aldo Leopold, formed a committee on Game Policy. During this period, wildlife conservation programs focused on laws and enforcement, but a formal wildlife management profession did not exist. The report (Leopold 1930) described the problem of declining wildlife and recognized the need for scientific facts concerning game species management. The committee called for the reorganization of state game departments and outlined the steps needed to reverse the trend (Madson and Kozicky 1971, Organ and Fritzell 2000).

"The report strongly urged that conservation be taken out of politics, that fish and game funds be earmarked for fish and game programs, and that every effort be made to build competent, stable, adequately-financed conservation departments (Madson and Kozicky 1971)*."*

Funding for key elements of the (government) agencies was linked to earmarked fees paid by hunters. Most significant were, the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act (1934) which funded National Wildlife Refuges, and the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (1937) which provided federal funding for state agencies.

As the population of Washington increased, laws were enacted to protect the wildlife resources. The Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Washington enacted the first laws concerning wild animals within the territory in 1863. The first game species law allowed the, "county commissioners of each and every county authority, if they think proper, to offer a bounty for killing wild animals." Although a few early laws were passed to preserve and protect game, they were largely ineffective and not enforced. In 1890, the Governor was given authority by the Legislature to appoint game wardens in each county.

In 1901 the State Legislature passed the first hunting license requirement allowing counties to issues licenses with a fee of $1.00 for residents and $10.00 for non-residents. In addition, any person killing a male elk was required to pay an additional sum of $20. Thus, game management in Washington entered the twentieth century with the beginnings of a user-fee hunting program to be administered by the county. Appendix 2 shows the cost of hunting licenses and deer and elk tag fee changes since 1901.

The passage of the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act specified that an eleven percent excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition must be maintained in a separate fund in the Treasury, and allocated annually to the states. In order for the states to participate, each state was required to pass enabling legislation and adhere to the provisions of the Act. This required all hunting license fees be dedicated to use by the state game department. The enabling legislation was passed by Washington State Legislature and signed into law in 1939. This was the beginning of modern wildlife management.

The Natural Environment

Washington has a rich diversity of flora. Forests cover about half of the state's land area. On the Olympic Peninsula there is a temperate rain forest consisting of spruce, cedar, and hemlock with an understory of ferns and mosses. The areas surrounding the Puget Sound and the western slopes of the Cascade Range are forested, consisting mostly of cedar, hemlock, and Douglas fir with an understory of shrubs. On the eastern slopes of the Cascades and the Blue Mountains of southeastern Washington ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, Grand fir, Western hemlock, and sub alpine fir are the major species. The forests in these areas are more open with an understory of grasses and shrubs especially at the lower elevations. Across the northeast region of the state, the forest is primarily made up of Douglas fir, Western red cedar, Western hemlock, and sub-alpine fir. The forests of the state have been intensively logged and contain second and third growth forest plantations of mostly Douglas fir (Access Washington 2002).

In the Columbia Basin, the native vegetation is drastically different from the forested lands of the state, due to the dryer and hotter climate of the region. The pristine vegetation consisted of shrubs and grass (shrub steppe). With the introduction of agriculture and livestock grazing in the mid-1800s the vegetative character of the land took on a new look. Overgrazing by sheep, cattle, and horses was evident by 1885. Lands were cleared for intensive farming, both dry land and

irrigated. On the prairies of the Palouse, the conversion of all arable land was nearly complete by 1910. Other lands are continuing to be converted to the growing of agricultural crops or converted to urban uses (Access Washington 2002).

The introduction of non-native weed species by imported livestock, contaminated commercial seeds, and other sources have resulted in a dramatic change in the landscape and the productivity of the land for commercial use, as well as intrinsic values. In Washington, invading weeds have adversely impacted native wildlife habitat and domestic livestock rangelands (Access Washington 2002).

The Social Environment

The evolution of the human social environment and its impact on the natural environment has been dramatic from pre-settlement to the present. Some game species have benefited from this transition while others have not.

Between 1950 and 1960 60% of Washington's human population resided in incorporated areas. In 1990, only 52% live in incorporated areas (Access Washington 2002). This movement of people into rural and formerly undeveloped lands had significant impacts on wildlife habitat and abundance.

Washington has the second largest human population of the western contiguous states, but is the smallest in size. In 2007, the population was estimated at 6,488,000 compared to 5,974,900 in 2001 making it the 13th most populous state in the union. The long-term outlook in human population for the state of Washington is continued growth, with ever increasing impacts to the natural resources of the state.

The ten largest cities are almost exclusively on the west side of the state, with Spokane and Yakima the two representatives from the east side. The Interstate Highway 5 corridor is the area of highest human population and where the greatest changes to the natural environment have taken place. Seattle is the largest city in the state with over a half million people. The cities of Spokane, Tacoma, Vancouver, Bellevue, and Everett are all over 100,000 in population.

Industry

Before settlement, the Pacific Northwest region was important for its fur-trapping industry. With the completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1886 and Great Northern Railroad in 1893, Washington's economy grew. Agriculture and the lumber industry developed in western Washington and eventually to the east. A transportation network was a key to the growth of the state's economy (Access Washington 2002).

During the twentieth century the construction of dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers provided abundant, cheap electrical power, resulting in the rapid growth of manufacturing. Dams for agricultural irrigation also advanced farming in the dryer Columbia Basin. Farms in western Washington are small, and dairy products, poultry, and berries are the primary commodities produced. The eastern side of the Cascade Range has larger farms; potatoes, fruit, vegetables, and small grains such as wheat and barley, are the primary crops.

According to the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the 2000 Census of Agriculture showed that Washington farmland acreage totaled 15.7 million or about 35.6% of the total land area. Farmlands are highly valued wildlife habitats for which the landowner is not often recognized. Game species such as pheasants, quail, deer, and waterfowl are attracted to private lands for their abundance of food and water.

Recent changes in natural resource policies and implementation of new ecosystem management strategies have affected the timber industry, the people of Washington, and the Northwest. The timber harvest changes in Washington between 1989 and 2002 have been substantial (Table 2), (DNR 2006). The changes in forestry practices are necessary for the survival of many species that require older, larger trees. However there may be serious impacts to the future amount and quality of deer and elk forage and population numbers over the long term.

Table 2. Timber harvest changes in Washington between 1989 and 2002

Ownership	1989 harvest [a]	2002 harvest [a]	Percent Decrease
Private	4,027,278	3,000,342	-25.5
Public	1,929,039	581,728	-69.9
Total	5,956,317	3,582,070	-40.0

[a] in thousand board feet

Land Use and Ownership

The total land area of the state is 45.9 million acres. Out of this total, 2.6 million acres are aquatic lands and 43.3 million acres are uplands. The public land ownership and principal uses in the state are found in Appendix C, (Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation 2001).

Public lands make up about 52% of the state. The U.S. Forest Service, representing about 41% of public lands, manages the greatest amount of public land. The total of all federal ownership in Washington represents about 58% of public lands. State lands represent about 27% of public lands. The Department of Natural Resources is the largest manager of state lands. Local and tribal lands make up the rest.

Public lands are not evenly distributed across the state, because of the historical pattern of settlement and development. The largest concentrations of public lands are at the higher elevations, while the lowlands and lands associated with waterways are mostly private. The Columbia Basin in eastern Washington and the Puget Trough region on the west side are mostly in private ownership.

Washington Hunters

The number of licensed hunters in the state of Washington grew rapidly with the increase in leisure time and availability of game. Historical records of hunting license sales by the counties are not readily available from 1901 to 1933. From 1933 to 1953, hunting license sales show a significant increasing trend, peaking in 1953 at approximately 445,000 state and county hunting and fishing combination licenses sold (Figure 1). The incline in hunting license sales was particularly steep following World War II.

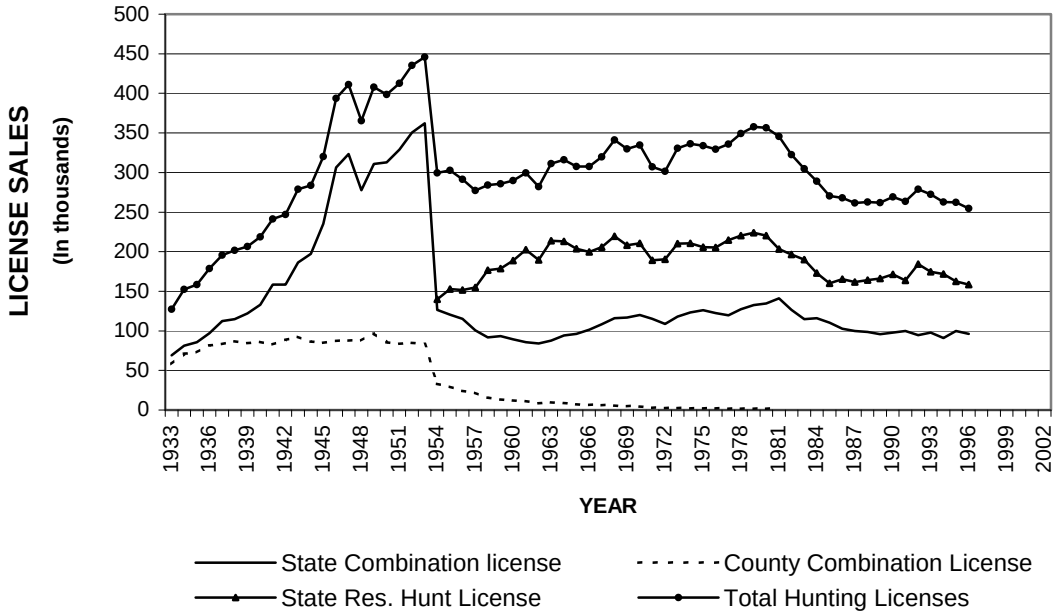


Figure 1. Washington hunting license sales and numbers, 1933-1997.

In 1954, a separate resident hunting license was introduced resulting in a significant drop in total licenses sold. This drop most likely reflects the number of fishers who chose not to purchase a state hunting license rather than the hunting/fishing combination license because they had no intention of hunting. If this is true, then the increasing trend in hunters actually peaked quite a few years later in 1979 with about 358,000 hunting licenses sold. Thereafter sales showed a declining trend through 1989, when 269,000 licenses were sold. Since 1989 there has been no clear trend in hunter numbers, however the state's human population has increased significantly.

A discussion of trends in hunting participation by Brown et al. (2000) suggests that the trend of stable to decreasing numbers of hunters continues. They predict managing wildlife damage through hunting will be increasingly challenging because of declining recruitment of hunters and declining social support for hunting. In Washington, an analysis of general season deer hunter trends does not support the predicted decline. Since 1984, deer hunting participation rates are highly variable from one year to the next and no clear trends are evident (Figure 2).

Washington hunter characteristics in 2002 are very different from a century ago. They are mostly well educated, having graduated from high school or equivalent (37%), some having additional college or trade school training (18%), college graduates (16%), and some with post-graduate or professional degrees (12%), (Duda 2002b). Washington hunters are mostly older than 45 and male dominated (93%). Waterfowl and furbearer hunter groups were almost exclusively males (Duda 2002b). In comparing a demographic study of Washington hunters (Johnson 1973) to the recent survey, there has not been any change in male dominance (94% males and 6% females) in the intervening 31 years. Age distribution of hunters in 1972 and 2002 are not directly comparable between the two studies, however, it is apparent the majority of hunters in 1972 were

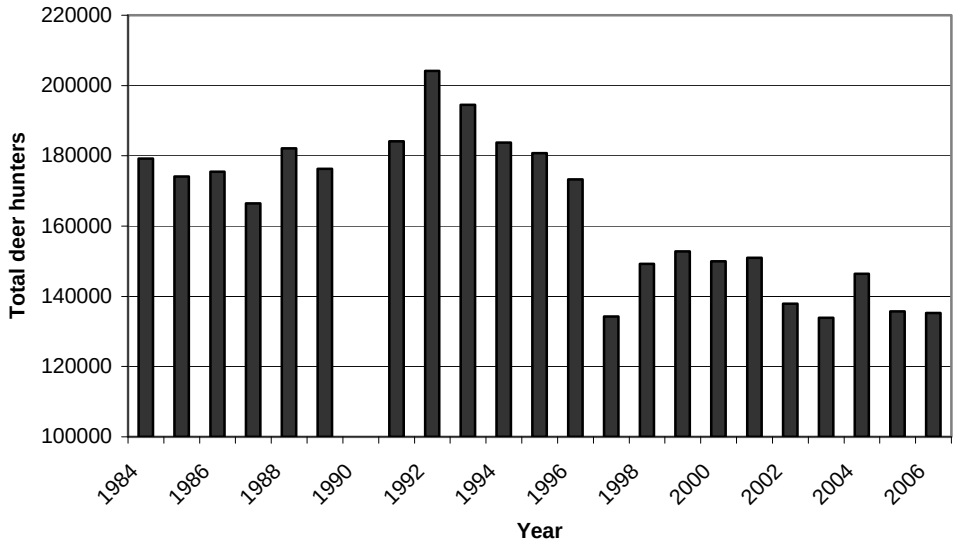


Figure 2. Washington deer hunting participation, 1984-2006.

less than 29 years of age compared to 2002 data where age of respondents were predominantly over 35 years of age.

Resource Allocation

During the 1970s, big game hunter numbers in Washington were at an all time high. Hunter crowding, competition among hunters, and the declining quality of the hunting experience resulted in significant hunter dissatisfaction. As a result, many hunters changed from the use of modern firearms to primitive archery equipment and black powder muzzle loading rifles to take advantage of less-crowded hunting conditions. In 1982, the Department formed a Big Game AD Hoc Committee to address the problems facing hunters in Washington, and develop a plan of fair allocation of hunting opportunity. The committee identified three major goals as follows:

1. Reduce crowding in the more popular modern firearm hunting seasons.
2. Provide quality-hunting opportunity.
3. Provide early primitive weapon opportunity.

Following extensive debate and public involvement in 1984, the Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted a major change in deer and elk hunting. This new rule required all deer and elk hunters to select one type of gear for hunting (modern firearm, archery or muzzleloading rifle). In addition, all elk hunters continued to be restricted to an elk tag area.

Since 1984, modern firearm deer hunters have continued to represent the majority of active hunters. Archery deer hunter numbers increased for the first 5 years and then stabilized. The number of muzzleloader deer hunters has shown a more protracted incline but appear to have stabilized, representing about 5% of the deer hunters (Johnson 1999).

Elk hunter numbers, on the other hand, have shown a more pronounced change in user group size. In 1984, modern firearm hunters represented 88% of all elk hunters, archery hunters 9.5%,

and muzzleloader hunters 2.4%. In 1998, the modern firearm hunter represented just 68% of the total, archery hunter numbers doubled in percentage and muzzleloader hunters increased six-fold. Since about 1994, the proportion of each user group (modern firearm, archery and muzzleloader elk hunter) has stabilized at about 69%, 17% and 14% respectively (Johnson 1999).

Separating hunters by hunting method has successfully distributed hunting pressure, relieved congestion, and increased primitive weapon opportunity. The quality of hunting opportunity has been more difficult to assess.

Resource allocation continues to be a contentious issue with hunters. A few of the more hotly contested issues include:

1. Which group gets to hunt first?
2. How should timing of various hunting seasons between user groups be fairly established?
3. Should fairness be related to equal opportunity (days) or equal success?
4. How primitive should "primitive weapon" hunting seasons remain?
5. How should quality opportunity be addressed?

Hunter Education/Safety Training

Hunter education programs are in place in all 50 states, reaching about 650,000 hunters annually (Duda et al. 1998). In Washington, all individuals born after January 1, 1972, must show proof that they have completed a hunter education course before purchasing a hunting license.

The former Washington Department of Game first offered hunter education in 1955 on a voluntary basis. In 1957, it became mandatory for all juveniles less than 18 years of age. In 1995, all individuals born after January 1, 1972 were required to successfully complete a hunter education class. In 1992, an Advanced Hunter Education Program was introduced as a voluntary program. Since 1996, nearly 150,000 people have enrolled in a hunter education course.

Hunter Access

As early as 1875 the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Washington passed a law that prohibited persons from entering upon private lands (enclosed premises) without permission from the landowner for the purpose of hunting grouse during the open season. This law demonstrates the early roots of conflict between hunters and landowners. Hunter access onto private lands and through private lands to public lands is a lingering issue.

WDFW has placed considerable emphasis over the years on obtaining access to lands for the enjoyment of hunting. Currently there are several programs promoting hunter access. The WDFW Private Lands Program provides incentives to private landowners through technical assistance, implementation of habitat enhancement strategies, and hunter management assistance. Landowners agree to open their lands for recreational opportunity in exchange for materials and help planting and developing habitat. The Department provides free signs and assists the landowner in posting their lands as "feel free to hunt" or "hunt by written permission." There are over 1 million acres and over 600 landowners in Washington under cooperative agreement.

The Private Lands Wildlife Management Area (PLWMA) program was developed and initiated on a trial basis in 1993. This program was designed to enhance wildlife habitat on private lands and encourage public access opportunities. Two PLWMAs were authorized in 1993, 201-Wilson Creek and 401-Champion's Kapowsin Tree Farm. A third PLWMA 600-Pysht was added in 1997.

Many changes have been made to improve the program for the private landowner, as well as the public. A common criticism of this program from hunters is that public access is not adequately addressed and wildlife habitat enhancements may be driven by incentives, rationale, or regulations outside of the PLWMA program.

There are many benefits for market-based (economically beneficial) programs on private lands for both the public and the private landowner. The major benefits are opening closed private lands to public access, protection and enhancement of wildlife habitat, economic benefit to private landowner and local economies. On the other hand, major impediments include the concern for loss of control by state agencies, potential for over-harvest of the wildlife resource, and a potential for forced decline in hunter participation rates because of escalating costs (Duda et al. 1998).

A survey of Washington hunters was conducted (Duda 2002b) to determine opinions about private land access and other private land programs. A strong majority of hunters felt that private lands were very important to wildlife and for outdoor recreation. All hunter groups surveyed felt that private land programs should provide incentives to landowners for improved wildlife habitat and allowing access onto their lands. The majority of all hunters agreed that access to private lands for hunting is important even if an access fee is charged.

Hunters are feeling the "crunch" in available hunting areas. Private lands are recognized as important to the future of hunting, especially upland game bird and waterfowl hunting. Maintaining hunting opportunities on these lands is becoming increasingly difficult and competitive. The hunter's willingness to pay landowners for hunting opportunity is a significant change from attitudes of the past.

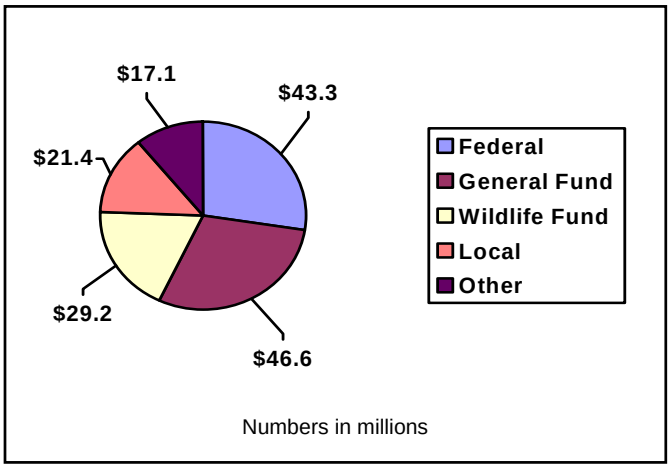
In 2006, the Fish and Wildlife Commission revised the state policy for the private lands program. As part of the revision, the PLWMA program was terminated and the Landowner Hunting Permit program (LHP) was developed. The major change included the provision of public hunting benefits.

Economics

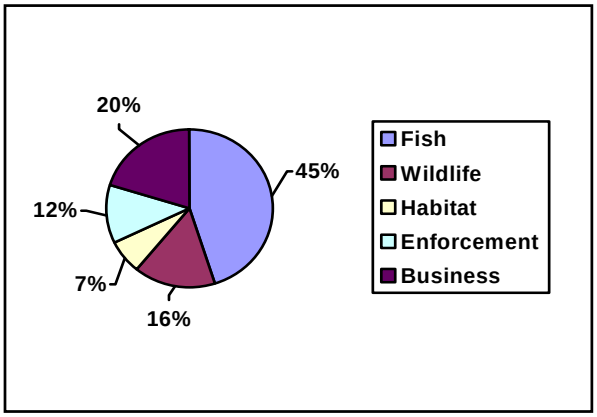
In 2006, Washington hunters spent $313 million for trip related expenses, equipment, and other expenditures primarily for hunting (U.S. Dept. of Interior et al. 2006). About 24% of their expenditures were for food, lodging, and transportation; 60% for hunting equipment (guns, ammunition, camping); and 16% for the purchase of magazines, membership dues, land leasing, and licenses and permits.

The national survey reported that there were 182,000 resident and nonresident hunters 16 years of age or older who hunted in Washington. These hunters spent 2.1 million days hunting in the state. Expenditures per hunter were $1,721 or $147 per day per hunter.

The revenues for the Department during fiscal year 2006 were nearly $158 million. Funding was from a variety of state, federal, and private/local sources. The chart below shows relative proportions of those funds.



There are six programs within WDFW. Each program's proportion of the operating budget is shown in the chart below:



The Game Division is one of five divisions in the Wildlife Program. The 2007-2009 biennial budget for the Game Division is just over $11 million. Of that total, over $2 million is dedicated to specific activities. The dedicated fund sources are from auction and raffle sales ($318,000), migratory bird permit sales ($667,000), turkey tag sales ($242,000), background license plate sales ($119,000), and the eastern Washington pheasant enhancement program ($660,000). Another $200,000 is from the general fund, dedicated for monitoring sea ducks as part of the Puget Sound Ambient Monitoring Program. The remaining funds come from the general fund ($279,000), revenue from license sales or the wildlife fund ($5.1 million), and federal funds ($4.7 million), which is mostly from the Pittman-Robertson Act (excise tax on sporting equipment and ammunition).

This $11 million is the base funding for most of the activities identified in this plan except for research, hunter education, most game damage, and law enforcement. These activities are funded from other divisions or programs within WDFW. Implementation of new activities in this plan will be dependant on additional funding, grants, and partnerships.

CHAPTER 2

General Game Management Issues

The process of developing a non-project EIS allowed WDFW to use an iterative process. Essentially the number of alternative strategies is not limited and the strategies are developed in concert with the public through a scoping and development process and multiple comment periods. The original 2003-09 plan was updated for 2009-15.

During the original 2003-09 public involvement process, issues were identified in nine categories for WDFW to address in the plan. The major categories included scientific/professional management, public support for hunting as a management tool, hunter ethics and fair chase, private lands programs and hunter access, tribal hunting, predator management, hunting season regulations, and game damage and nuisance. The final category, which centered around species-specific management issues, is addressed in Chapter Three of this document. The issues, objectives, and strategies contained within this plan are the preferred alternatives.

Scientific/Professional Management of Hunted Wildlife

The concept of scientific management is very important to the public. The use of scientific information and the judgment of professionals in management decisions were rated very high (>90%) by both the general public and hunters. Next came economic (>68%) and social concerns (>54%), followed by political concerns (<25%), which received low ratings.

Issue Statement:

WDFW wildlife managers and biologists have developed goals, objectives, and strategies in this plan to ensure long-term sustainability of all wildlife. The best available science will be the basis for the maintenance of all endemic wildlife populations. Strategies for hunted wildlife will not have significant negative impacts on the sustainability of other wildlife or their habitats. None of the strategies or subsequent hunting season recommendations or implementation of activities will deviate from these fundamental principles. Science is the core of wildlife management, the basis for achieving the agency's mandate, and the foundation of this plan.

Objective 1:

Game Division Section Managers, Regional Wildlife Program Managers, District Wildlife Biologists, and field biologists should each attend at least one professional workshop each year.

Strategies:

a. Agency staff will maintain regular contact with peer scientists and wildlife managers by attending Wildlife Society, Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agency, and Technical Group meetings or other professional workshops.

b. Significant impacts and the scientific basis for recommended actions may be "peer reviewed" by scientists outside WDFW when determined necessary by WDFW biologists, and managers.

Issue Statement:

While science and professional opinion are important, social and economic issues often drive public opinion, and ultimately management strategies and regulations. A good public involvement process is necessary for people to make up their own minds and participate in making decisions. The key is to develop programs that achieve biological objectives and are supported by the public.

Objective 2:

Provide three opportunities for stakeholders to participate in development of three-year regulation packages, collection of biological information, and in planning efforts for game species.

Strategies:

a. Maintain citizen advisory councils and seek their input at least twice during the process of developing plans and regulation packages.
b. Use the WDFW Web page to encourage public comment and ideas for regulations and priorities.
c. Conduct a minimum of one public meeting in each WDFW region for statewide issues, two per WDFW region for more local issues, and provide other routine opportunities for the public to interact with WDFW staff regarding plans and three-year regulation packages.
d. Conduct a public opinion survey at least once every six years to monitor support for agency programs, planned activities, and regulations.
e. Publicize and maintain a mailing list and an email list of citizens interested in receiving copies of plans and regulations and notify those on the list as plans and season recommendations are developed.
f. Encourage public participation and comment during the Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting process.
g. Develop and maintain opportunities for citizens to help with collection of data and interact with biological staff.

Hunter Ethics And Fair Chase

This issue is related to improving the public perception of hunters and support for hunting as a management tool. This is a very significant issue to hunters, as identified during the 2002 public involvement process. Different people define fair chase in different ways.

Issue Statement:

Many hunters think that the latitude to determine what constitutes fair chase belongs to the individual. They feel that others should not determine what is fair chase for someone else. Other hunters are concerned that the image and standard of ethics for hunting may be compromised, particularly with the expanding use of technology for hunting. This is particularly evident with equipment technology.

Objective 3:

During each three-year package, facilitate public debate of regulations for use of electronic equipment and baiting of wildlife for purposes of hunting.

Strategies:

a. Conduct public outreach and consider restricting new electronic devices or baiting of wildlife.
b. Develop effective regulations regarding fair chase that are understandable and enforceable.
c. Consider exceptions to new equipment regulations to accommodate the needs of hunters with disabilities.

Hunter Behavior/Ethics

Another significant issue for hunters identified during the public involvement process is illegal activity, and a desire for greater enforcement presence in the field.

Issue Statement:

A majority of the general public believes that many hunters violate hunting laws. They feel that hunting without a license and poaching are the major violations, and that shooting game out of season and hunting over the bag limit are also common violations. Hunters cite these same concerns with the addition of shooting from a vehicle. The public has also indicated that they developed their opinions from direct observation, physical evidence, and from talking with others. In addition, they support hunter refresher courses and feel that an additional training requirement will improve their opinion of hunters.

Objective 4:

Develop baseline compliance rates for common violations.

Strategies:

a. Work with the Enforcement Program to develop science based, objective compliance rates for common violations.
b. Emphasize the importance of hunter compliance with regulations and public opinion of hunters in hunter education classes, hunting pamphlets, and other information provided to hunters.
c. Concentrate enforcement efforts on improving compliance for the most common violations.
d. Increase the frequency of field contacts and visible presence of officers and other uniformed agency staff during hunting seasons.
e. Review and simplify, clarify, or eliminate regulations that are dubious, ambiguous, or confusing.

Private Land Programs and Hunter Access

Based on opinion surveys, hunters believe that private lands are important to wildlife and to outdoor recreation. They agree that maintaining the economic viability of farming and timber production, and controlling urban sprawl, are vital for conserving the agricultural and rural landscape so important to wildlife. Hunters also support private lands programs that provide incentives, including access fees, to landowners in exchange for improvements of wildlife habitat and access onto their lands for outdoor recreation (Duda 2002b). This continues to be a major issue for hunters. WDFW currently manages two hunter access programs, the Private Lands Program and the Landowner Hunting Permit Program that address wildlife habitat and hunter access to private land.

Issue Statement:

Even with these existing WDFW programs, hunters and landowners would like to see more. Hunters are especially concerned about closures of private industrial timberlands in southwest Washington. The most recent survey (Duda 2008) shows that this is one of the most important issues to hunters; a lack of access for waterfowl hunting in western Washington; limited pheasant hunting access in eastern Washington; extensive road closures; and a lack of general information about how to access public lands and WDFW lands. In addition, recent events in the agricultural community indicate that significant changes may occur in the US Department of Agriculture's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). These changes could release farmers from their CRP contracts, which would also allow them to cancel their access agreements with WDFW. Because of this, it is difficult to project the number of acres the department will be able to maintain in the coming years.

Objective 5:

Increase lands available for hunter access from 1.2 to 1.5 million acres over the next six years.

Strategies:

a. Implement the recommendations of the Hunter Access Stakeholders Group.

b. Publicize current programs better through the agency Web page, direct mail, the hunting pamphlet, and other hunter publications.
c. Maintain a task group of stakeholders to support and monitor recommendations for habitat and access, address landowner needs, identify funding mechanisms, and maintain strong public, hunter, and landowner support.
d. Identify locations where public lands are landlocked by private ownership and work with the landowner to improve access to public lands where possible.
e. Increase public education efforts to improve hunter awareness and provide guidance for hunting on private lands.
f. Evaluate existing private lands access programs and adjust program delivery based on hunter and landowner needs and support.
g. Develop a reservation system that helps landowners manage hunter participation rates and provides a quality hunting opportunity.

Road Management

While there is a need for public access for hunting, especially on private lands, there is also a need to control access during critical times of the year to protect wildlife resources. Road management has been recognized as an important means of controlling human disturbance by limiting vehicular access seasonally or permanently. Studies have shown that limited vehicular access reduces human disturbance that results in reduced movements and poaching of elk, Cole et al. (1977), Smith et al. (1994), Phillips and Alldredge (2000).

Washington hunters consider road closures as important for controlling hunter numbers and impacts to wildlife. A majority of hunters surveyed considered road closures important in reducing illegal activity and supported the Green Dot Cooperative Road Management System (Duda 2002b, 2008). A very high percentage also supported periodic or temporary hunting closure areas, road closures to protect game during critical periods of the year, and total access closure areas (refuges) to maintain numbers of game species in local areas.

Issue Statement:

There is strong overall support for road management systems that are designed to help manage game populations as well as protect fish and wildlife habitat. WDFW recognizes the need to improve the balance between hunter access and wildlife and habitat protection. Some systems are more effective than others. Voluntary systems such as the Green Dot System require high levels of enforcement to be effective. In addition, with expanding regulations on road access, hunters are increasing use of off-road vehicles (ORV) to gain motorized access. Indiscriminant ORV use can cause environmental damage and circumvents the intent of road access restrictions.

Objective 6:

Develop at least four road management plans in key areas of the state.

Strategies:

a. Develop a template and set of road management guidelines in 2009.
b. Complete plans for the Colockum by 2009, the Blue Mountains in 2009, Mount Saint Helens by 2010, Willapa Hills by 2011, Yakima by 2011, and the Selkirk area by 2012 that reduce active road densities to target levels, yet maintain well-distributed access for hunting.
c. Place emphasis on the expansion of private lands incentive programs in these geographic areas.
d. Emphasize gated and barrier type closures, rather than voluntary (green dot) systems.
e. Incorporate access exceptions for hunters with disabilities where possible and consider the needs of senior hunters.
f. Increase publication of road management goals and programs through the hunting pamphlet, news releases, and on the Internet.

Tribal Hunting

Native people have their own unique tradition, culture, and values related to hunting game and gathering traditional foods and medicines. Many tribes also have reserved rights to hunting and gathering in the language of the treaties signed with the United States. These rights allow tribes to manage their hunters, often with different seasons and rules than non-tribal hunters. This has lead to frustration, anger, and misunderstanding on the parts of both tribal and non-tribal citizens. At the same time, limited state-tribal coordination has made it difficult for tribal and non-tribal wildlife managers to do their jobs of managing harvest and protecting game populations.

Issue Statement:

Non-Indian hunters often do not understand the treaty rights issues, leading to anger and frustration.

Objective 7:

Develop baseline levels of public understanding and acceptance of treaty hunting rights.

Strategies:

a. Measure the current level of support for treaty hunting rights by hunters.
b. Develop an outreach package that can be sent to citizens concerned about tribal hunting.
c. Develop cooperative management programs that demonstrate state and tribal management programs.
d. Use links from the WDFW website to tribal websites with information on tribal harvest statistics.
e. Include a segment on tribal hunting rights and tribal management activities as part of the Hunter Education Program.

f. Include a description about tribal hunting rights and wildlife management programs in the hunting pamphlet.

Issue Statement:

Improve coordination of treaty and non-treaty hunting and wildlife management.

Objective 8:

Complete at least five additional coordinated tribal/state harvest management plans for species such as deer, elk, mountain goat, and/or cougar populations subject to both tribal and non-tribal hunting.

Strategies:

a. Use existing herd plans to develop coordinated harvest management plans or MOUs for elk herds or other game species. The MOUs should include harvest objectives that are sustainable and meet the needs of both state and tribal hunters; result in sharing of harvest information and hunting regulations; encourage cooperative research and population monitoring; and supports both party's interests in gaining access to lands for hunting.
b. Based on tribal interest and availability, pick key populations in each treaty area as a starting place to build working arrangements and processes for developing coordinated harvest management plans.

Wolf Recovery Issues

Issue Statement:

Wolf recolonization in Washington is a very controversial issue. Hunter and general public opinion surveys indicate that most citizens' support allowing wolves to recolonize the state. The key is how management strategies are implemented. Sixty one percent support lethal control of wolves if they cause livestock losses and fifty six percent support compensating livestock producers for losses out of the state general fund (state taxes).

Objective 9:

Complete the wolf conservation plan by 2010 with recovery objectives and strategies that are supported by the public, while minimizing conflicts with game population objectives and livestock losses.

Strategies:

a. Implement the wolf conservation plan.
b. Monitor impacts to game species.
c. Update management objectives for game species if necessary due to changing ecosystem dynamics.

Hunting Season Regulations

The Washington State Legislature provides the directive: *"The commission shall attempt to maximize the public recreational game fishing and hunting opportunities of all citizens, including juvenile, disabled, and senior citizens."* (RCW 77.04.012).

In hunter opinion survey's, most hunters expressed general satisfaction with their hunting experience. Eastern Washington pheasant and waterfowl hunters were least satisfied and deer and elk hunters expressed that satisfaction could be higher. Harvesting an animal (hunter success) and seeing plenty of game were the main factors driving hunter satisfaction. It is fairly clear that harvest success plays a significant role in hunter satisfaction.

Issue Statement:

Hunters feel that seasons are crowded and regulations too confining. In addition, they say that seasons are too short, success rates are too low, antler restrictions on deer and elk are too onerous, and overall, there is not enough game.

Objective 10:

Maintain hunter satisfaction and participation at or above 2008 levels for the life of this plan.

Strategies:

a. Consistent with population goals, conservation principles, and social constraints, develop and maintain a variety of deer and elk hunting season opportunities within each administrative district of WDFW:
    i. Provide sufficient hunting opportunities for archers, muzzleloaders, and modern firearm hunters to approach average statewide participation rates and seek to generally equalize success rates. Address additional "fairness" issues between users through the Allocation Committee of the Game Management Advisory Council and recommend changes supported by the Council.
    ii. Develop new deer or elk hunting opportunities in each District that emphasize low hunter densities and higher success rates (than current general seasons) through permit only opportunities. These opportunities should occur outside of general season timeframes.
    iii. Provide general season antlerless harvest opportunities approximately equal to recruitment in Population Management Units (PMUs) (these are combinations of GMUs) meeting population objectives. Provide harvest opportunities that exceed recruitment in populations that are above objectives.
        a. Provide general antlerless opportunity to users in the following order of priority:
            1. Hunters with disabilities
            2. Youth hunters
            3. Senior hunters

b. Provide antlerless opportunity to archery or muzzleloader hunters if needed to equalize success rates with modern firearm hunters, or equally between weapon types if success rates are nearly equal.

iv. Support the Master Hunter program by providing graduates primary consideration in hunting efforts designed to resolve private land and sensitive damage issues.

b. Districts should retain general-season opportunity whenever possible. Use other techniques to manage harvest rates within a population management unit before considering permit only restrictions.

c. While striving to achieve population goals, maintain season length as a second priority to maintaining general seasons. Use other techniques to manage harvest rates, such as timing, antler points, etc.

d. Increase hunter access and provide a variety of hunting opportunities in priority pheasant and waterfowl areas using cooperative programs, access easements, or acquisition.

i. Develop limited entry areas, marked sites, walk-in sites, or other restrictions to reduce crowding.

ii. Focus habitat programs and population enhancement activities in high priority areas.

e. Conduct a public opinion survey in 2013 to determine hunter satisfaction levels.

Pronghorn Antelope Reintroduction

Issue Statement:

Pronghorn antelope are a native species that have been extirpated from Washington since about the mid nineteenth century. From the 1930s to 1960s, WDFW conducted 4 releases in eastern Washington, but all attempts failed to establish a sustainable population. The small number of animals released and minimal monitoring likely hindered those early attempts. The Department is interested is in exploring the potential for re-establishing pronghorn in Washington. As such, a habitat assessment was recently conducted and suggested that suitable pronghorn habitat does exist in eastern Washington (Tsukamoto 2006).

Objective 11:

Complete the project assessment and public input process for reintroducing pronghorn in Washington.

Strategies:

a. Develop a planning document describing the history of pronghorn in Washington, their habitat requirements, potential issues if pronghorn are reintroduced, and options associated with reintroduction.

b. Develop a mechanism for assessing and mitigating potential landowner conflict (e.g., agriculture damage, fence damage) by 2010.

c. Develop a project cost-benefit analysis for reintroduction and funding mechanism by 2010.

d. Conduct a formal public input process (e.g. SEPA or NEPA) for collecting input on the Department's reintroduction plan.

Game Species Damage and Nuisance

The Legislature, through RCW 77.36.005, has clearly articulated the state's policy that the responsibility to minimize and resolve conflicts between wildlife and humans is shared by all citizens of the state. However, in RCW 77.36.040, the Legislature allows farmers and ranchers to receive payment for damages caused by deer and elk to crops and rangeland.

In recent public opinion surveys (Duda 2002a, 2008), a substantial percentage of respondents indicated they had experienced problems with wildlife. Raccoons, deer, and opossums were the major culprits in Washington. Damage to garbage, pets, gardens, yards and livestock were the most common problems identified.

The public identified nuisance wildlife as a major issue frequently citing recent restrictions on the use of certain traps for furbearing species. Public appreciation of wildlife is critical to maintaining wildlife protection over the long-term. If the public's experiences with wildlife are increasingly negative over time, they may not be as supportive for maintaining abundant populations. The public's ability to resolve problems they encounter with wildlife is important to help maintain support for wildlife.

Issue Statement:

Over twenty-five percent of the public experienced problems associated with wildlife. The surveys have found that the public is divided on whether funding for resolving problems should be the responsibility of impacted landowners or of local, state, or federal government.

Objective 12:

Conduct a survey to determine the level of public support and needs for WDFW assistance in dealing with wildlife nuisance and property damage.

Strategies:

a. Evaluate the survey results with stakeholders to develop strategies for addressing nuisance and property damage.
b. Implement the strategies identified by the Wildlife Conflict Stakeholder Group.

Issue Statement:

The level of concern for deer and elk damage to property generally depends on landowner tolerance and landowner tolerance often depends on how quickly the problem is resolved. Historically, crop damage by deer and elk has been addressed with hunting as the primary tool. Washington residents continue to show strong support of hunting to control animal damage to private property. However, some landowners and some situations do not favor resolution by hunting.

Objective 13:

Expand the pilot program (currently in Yakima and Ellensburg) that relies on dedicated deer and elk conflict specialists to assist property owners. Respond to crop damage complaints within 48 hours to initiate action to resolve damage.

Strategies:

a. Expand the number of conflict specialists from two to at least six, with the priority being in eastern Washington.
b. Develop a brochure explaining available tools and priorities for resolving crop damage.
c. Provide list of options to landowner for handling damage and allow flexibility to the landowner.
d. Develop a "Communications Plan" for distributing damage resolution information to landowners.
e. Use harassment and other non-lethal methods to address damage in deer and elk populations that are below management goals.
f. Continue to prioritize hunting as the most efficient means of resolving damage problems in those deer and elk populations that are above management goals and focus efforts on the animals causing the problem rather than general herd reductions. The alternatives for addressing damage problems:
    - Provide landowner's name to hunters or landowner selects hunters during general season or permit only hunts.
    - Agency selects hunters for "hot spot" hunts.
    - Allow the landowner (or immediate family member) to kill and retain one or more deer or elk through issuance of a "landowner preference" permit.
    - Allow the landowner to select one or more hunters to kill and retain one deer or elk through issuance of a "damage prevention" permit.
    - Issue the landowner a "kill" permit to take one or more deer or elk, with the state retaining the carcass. Provide the meat to charitable organizations or to tribes to meet ceremonial and subsistence needs.
    - Pay the landowner for the crop damage as the last resort.
g. Conduct an annual survey of landowners filing complaints to determine satisfaction with WDFW actions for resolving their problem.
h. Determine the level of landowner understanding of options for addressing deer and elk damage.

Urban Hunting Issues

Since early in the history of Washington, wildlife management has focused on hunting as the primary means of managing wildlife population levels and for funding wildlife conservation. As the human population grows and expands or dominates the landscape, this traditional wildlife management technique is being challenged. Increasingly, the demand for resolution of wildlife population problems also includes the constraint that hunting is a less acceptable method of alleviating conflicts. Unfortunately, the concept of general public responsibility for wildlife problem resolution has not risen to a level of political support that results in adequate funding from general taxpayers.

Issue Statement:

As the number of people in the state increase, citizen demands for resolution of conflicts with wildlife are expanding. At the same time, constraints to address perceived safety issues, noise levels, and the nuisance associated with hunter management results in significant challenges.

Objective 14:

Develop a minimum of five local level plans or significant actions designed to resolve wildlife-human problems.

Strategies:

a. Assist local governments in identifying current and potential issues for wildlife/human conflicts.
b. Support conflict resolution that includes hunting as a principal means of state funded resolution.
c. Recommend alternative conflict resolution techniques for local government consideration and funding.
d. Develop model ordinance language for local governments that supports hunting as the primary wildlife population management resolution provided by the state.

Communication Issues

Communication between the Department and constituents was a very consistent and important issue to the public that was identified in the 2008 opinion survey.

Objective 15:

Improve the department's rating on game management communication by 2013.

Strategies:

a. Expand the use of direct mail to communicate with those directly affected by game management decisions.
b. Expand the use of the department's website to explain game management policy and direction and the rationale behind decisions related to game management.
c. Continue the use of news (magazines and newspaper) releases to facilitate media coverage of important game issues.
d. Expand the use of the hunting regulation pamphlets to provide information regarding game management.
e. Implement the results of the department's communication plan being completed in 2009.
f. Hire a consultant to conduct a comprehensive review of game management communications to improve effectiveness, credibility, and public support by 2011.
g. Conduct a public opinion survey in 2013 to determine how the department rates on game management communication.

Plan Monitoring

In order to clearly identify accomplishment of the objectives identified throughout this plan, an annual reporting or "report card" will be prepared by the Game Division. This list of accomplishments will clearly demonstrate public accountability associated with implementation of the Game Management Plan.

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ELK *(Cervus elaphus)*

I. POPULATION STATUS AND TREND

Elk (*Cervus elaphus*) have been present in Washington for 10,000 years (McCorquodale 1985, Dixon and Lyman 1996, Harpole and Lyman 1999). Although complete prehistoric distribution and densities are not fully understood at this time, it is known that some form of elk was present in western Washington, on the Olympic Peninsula, on both sides of the Cascade Crest, in northeast and southeast Washington as well as the relatively arid Columbia Basin (McCorquodale 1985, Dixon and Lyman 1996, Harpole and Lyman 1999).

Both Roosevelt elk (*C. e. roosevelti*) and Rocky Mountain elk (*C. e. nelsoni*) are native to Washington (Murie 1951, Bryant and Maser 1982, Spalding 1992). Roosevelt elk are found on the Olympic Peninsula and in portions of southwestern Washington. Based on preliminary genetic work conducted by WDFW, Roosevelt elk on the west slope of the Cascade Crest have interbred with Rocky Mountain elk. Elk occurring in central and eastern Washington are Rocky Mountain elk that either avoided extirpation or were reestablished by reintroductions of elk originating from Montana and Wyoming (Washington Dept. of Game 1939, Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2002d, 2005, 2006a, 2006b).

Elk were hunted regularly but not always extensively, by Indian tribes in both eastern and western Washington (McCabe 1981). As European settlement expanded into this region, elk harvest increased dramatically. By the beginning of the 1900s, most if not all of the elk in eastern Washington had been eliminated. Small populations of Roosevelt elk persisted in southwestern Washington and on the Olympic Peninsula (Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife 2005).

By the beginning of the last century, Roosevelt elk were greatly reduced in numbers as well, but due to denser forests with more escape cover, small groups of Roosevelt elk were able to persist. Efforts to re-introduce Rocky Mountain elk were conducted from as early as 1912 through the 1930s (Washington Dept. of Game 1939). Elk populations peaked in Washington in the late 1960s and early 1970s mostly due to habitat conditions and forest management practices. A recent marked reduction in timber harvest, especially west of the Cascade Crest, and an increase in the human population in Washington has reduced the overall carrying capacity for elk in Washington compared to decades past. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) currently recognizes 10 major elk herds totaling approximately 56,000 animals.

II. RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

In Washington, elk are hunted from September through December with some special permit hunts to address agricultural damage taking place as late as March. Hunting seasons for archery, muzzleloader, and modern firearms are currently available to both resident and non-resident hunters. There are currently no quotas on the number of general elk season licenses sold. Hunters are required to choose one weapon type and declare whether they will hunt east side or west side

elk. In general, antler point restrictions are spike-only with branch-antlered bulls by limited permit-only in eastern Washington, with some exceptions in northeastern Washington. West side elk restrictions are usually 3-point minimum or greater. Some "any elk" hunting opportunities exist in parts of northeast, south central, and southwest Washington where expansion of elk populations is discouraged. In a recent public opinion survey of hunters in Washington, elk hunters indicated that they prefer less restrictive hunting seasons with more opportunities to harvest a legal animal and with more days available to hunt elk than are currently available (Duda et al. 2002a).

III. DATA COLLECTION

Elk populations are assessed for a variety of characteristics, often including herd composition and population size. Herd composition is an estimate of the proportions of various age and sex classes occurring in the population such as the number of calves per 100 cows, the number of bulls per 100 cows, or the number of spike bulls per total bulls. These data are collected using a variety of techniques, depending on data needs and local conditions. Common tools used to assess elk populations include:

- Surveys conducted by personnel on the ground.
- Aerial surveys with and without visibility (sightability) corrections.
- Mark-resight population estimates from air or ground surveys where a known number of animals are marked and then subsequent surveys are conducted and the number of marked and unmarked animals observed are entered in statistical formulas (models) to estimate the total population.
- Population modeling using aerial survey and/or harvest data and population reconstruction (Eberhardt 1969).

IV. ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT OF ELK

Issue Statement

The Department is currently developing or updating management plans for each of the ten elk herds in the state. Herd plans specifically address the unique conservation challenges that face each herd. Elk herd plans, which come under the overall management guidance of this Game Management Plan (GMP), also facilitate cooperative management with tribes. Existing herd plans are an important resource used in implementation of this GMP, and are designed to be updated every five years.

The elk herd management plans as they currently stand include:

- Blue Mountains February 2001
- South Rainier January 2002
- North Rainier March 2002
- North Cascade (Nooksack) March 2002
- Yakima December 2002

- Olympic July 2005
- Colockum October 2006
- Mount St. Helens November 2006
- Selkirk draft
- Willapa Hills draft

Objective 16:

Update or finalize drafts of the elk herd management plans.

Strategies:

a. Update the Blue Mountains Elk Herd Plan by 2009.
b. Finalize the Selkirk Elk herd Plan by 2009.
c. Update the North Cascades (Nooksack) Plan by 2010.
d. Update the North Rainier elk Herd Plan by 2010.
e. Update the South Rainier Elk herd Plan by 2010.
f. Finalize the Willapa Hills Elk Herd Plan by 2010.
g. Update the Yakima Elk Herd Plan by 2011.
h. Update the Olympic Elk Herd Plan by 2011.
i. Update the Colockum Elk Herd Plan by 2011.
j. Update the Mount St. Helens Elk Herd Plan by 2012.

Nearly all of the state's elk herds are being impacted by development and other built environments as a result of the human population increase. In some cases it involves housing developments, in other cases, it may be low density or recreational development.

There are many other factors controlling elk population levels as well. For some elk herds, the limiting factors that prevent elk herds from reaching population objective may be identifiable. For others, the limiting factors may be more difficult to isolate or the concept of limiting factors may not apply in the strictest textbook sense. The focus of the plans is to correct limiting factors and achieve the population objectives.

- For the Blue Mountains elk herd the limiting factor is likely historic antlerless harvest levels on the Oregon side of the Wenaha and more importantly, the current lack of regular fire regime in the Wenaha unit. All other units are currently at population objective. Without the benefits of fire in the Wenaha wilderness, the habitat will not support the desired number of elk and the population objective will need to be reduced.
  - The top spending priorities for this herd are habitat preservation, wildlife conflict resolution, and annual surveys.
- The South Rainier elk herd is being limited primarily by direct mortality caused by both legal and illegal hunting or undocumented harvest, and secondarily by limited habitat.
  - Securing winter habitat, annual surveys, and an increased enforcement presence are the priorities for this herd.
- The North Rainier elk herd is also limited by direct mortality caused by both legal and illegal hunting, and secondarily by loss of habitat.

  - The priorities for the North Rainier herd are habitat enhancement and annual surveys to document harvest impacts.
- The North Cascade (Nooksack) elk herd is continuing to grow and is not currently limited by the carrying capacity of the elk habitat. If the Nooksack herd is limited, it is probably as a result of agricultural lands adjacent to core elk habitat and the Agency's legal requirements to address wildlife damage.
  - The top priorities are to protect winter range on private land, enhance elk habitat quality, and minimize elk damage to agricultural lands.
- The Yakima herd is at population objective. Limiting factors affecting this herd will be better isolated when research pertaining to the carrying capacity for this herd is completed.
  - The spending priorities for this herd include research, habitat preservation, resolving wildlife damage conflicts, and winter-feeding.
- The Olympic herd is probably limited by loss of elk habitat to human encroachment and available elk habitat, which is a function of timber management on private industrial timber lands and to a lesser extent, limited timber management on U.S. Forest Service lands.
  - The top priorities identified for this herd are the green forage program, reduction of open roads, and annual surveys.
- Although there are still many unanswered questions related to the Colockum elk herd, one of the primary limiting factors is probably related to direct mortality resulting from legal hunting, undocumented harvest, kills related to resolving agricultural damage.
  - The priorities for the Colockum herd are habitat preservation, habitat enhancement, and road management.
- The Mount St. Helens elk herd is above objective at this writing. The limiting factor for this herd is likely adequate forage.
  - The spending priorities for managing this herd are enhancing habitat and improving annual surveys to determine the impacts of harvest strategies.
- The Selkirk elk herd is at population objective. The limiting factor for this herd is probably the amount of habitat created by active timber management and wildlife damage issues occurring on agricultural lands adjacent to elk habitat.
  - The priorities include habitat enhancement, annual surveys, and resolving damage issues.
- Very little is known about the Willapa Hills elk herd. The limiting factors are probably loss of habitat and direct mortality resulting from legal and illegal hunting.
  - Spending priorities have not been finalized.

In April 2001, WDFW contracted with an external, independent panel of scientists to evaluate the current elk management program. That evaluation addressed 1) the effectiveness of using post-hunt bull:cow ratios as management objectives; 2) the effects of hunting elk during the rut; 3) the effects of late season elk hunting, especially from a disturbance and caloric expenditure standpoint; and 4) the genetic consequences of using post-hunt bull:cow ratios as management objectives. This evaluation culminated in an assessment report on elk management in Washington (Peek et al. 2002).

V. ELK MANAGEMENT GOALS

The statewide management goals for elk are:

1. Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage elk and their habitat to ensure healthy, productive populations.
2. Manage elk for a variety of recreational, educational and aesthetic purposes including hunting, scientific study, subsistence, cultural and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, wildlife viewing, and photography.
3. Manage elk populations for a sustainable annual harvest.

VI. ISSUE STATEMENTS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

Population Management

Background: The primary goal is to manage for viable and productive elk populations with desirable population characteristics using the best available science. The Department measures elk populations using a variety of techniques. Techniques that work well in the more open habitats of eastern Washington may be of little value in areas that are densely forested. Population objectives defined in this plan are consistent with objectives defined in the respective elk herd plans. A realistic approach to the management of wild animal populations does not rely on exact numbers and pinpoint accuracy. Therefore, the preferred target population objectives for each elk herd are presented as an acceptable range of plus or minus 5% of the population objective (Table 1).

The population objectives are determined by agency staff using a combination of factors that include:

- Current population estimates
- Harvest history
- Current harvest levels
- Currently occupied summer and winter range
- Current condition of available forage
- Current land use practices
- Number and location of elk damage complaints
- Landowner tolerance
- Hunter satisfaction

Consistent with the primary goal, the secondary goal is to provide recreational opportunity and sustainable annual harvests that fluctuate somewhat due to weather conditions, hunter participation, the number and density of available legal animals, the number of special permits issued for a particular GMU, etc. Hunting seasons are designed to limit extreme fluctuations in sustainable harvests from year to year, although some aspects are out of the control of the Department.

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission shall attempt to maximize the public recreational game fishing and hunting opportunities of all citizens, including juvenile, disabled, and senior citizens (RCW 77.04.012).

The secondary goal can be met as long as it doesn't impinge on the population objectives for total population numbers and population composition and a viable, productive elk population defined as the primary goal. Population composition is typically measured as a ratio of bulls per 100 cows and calves per 100 cows. In some elk populations, these surveys are conducted before the hunt and then post-hunt ratios are projected using harvest information. In some populations, both pre-hunt and post-hunt information is gathered.

In a limited number of GMUs, a large enough number of elk are radio-marked to allow biologists to estimate annual mortality rates for different age classes and sex classes (Table 2). There are no elk herds in Washington where all of the parameters listed in Table 2 are collected. Different information is collected for different elk herds that live in different habitats and under differing circumstances. Two or more of the parameters in Table 2 are collected for most elk sub-populations that are monitored.

Mature bulls are defined as being older than four years, which is usually equated to having antlers with at least six tines on one side. Antler points are used as an index of age because it is a characteristic that is readily visible when conducting aerial surveys. WDFW will explore the possibility of using a different number of antler points to define mature bulls if average age correlations or other circumstances warrant.

The parameters collected in Table 2 function as guidelines for biologists to make management decisions. The challenge presented to managers is to interpret parameters and guidelines that are not in complete agreement. Pre-hunt bull:cow ratios may be high for a particular population but post-hunt bull:cow ratios could be very low. Post-hunt bull:cow ratios may be acceptable while bull mortality rates may be higher than desired.

These parameters are typically averaged over a 3-year period before changes are implemented, except for extreme cases when immediate action is required. These guidelines are not a rigid prescription. Oftentimes extenuating circumstances will dictate whether management changes will be made and what direction those changes might take. Un-hunted elk populations have shown bull-to-cow ratios ranging from 30 to 45+ bulls per 100 cows (Biederbeck et al. 2001, Houston 1982, Flook 1970).

Issue Statement:

An effective strategic plan for managing wild animals allows a certain degree of flexibility for field staff to decide if changes are warranted. Biologists must take all of the parameters available for a particular elk population into account and use their professional judgment when making management decisions.

Table 1. Population estimates and population objectives with (+/- 10 %) acceptable range for 10 elk herds in Washington.

ELK HERD	CURRENT POPULATION ESTIMATE	POPULATION RANGE OBJECTIVE
Yakima	9500	8,550-10,450
Olympic	8,620[b,c]	10,215-12,485
Colockum	3,900	4,050-4,950
North Rainier	1,845[b]	2,520-3,080
South Rainier	2,100	2,700-3,300
North Cascades	600[b]	1,755-2,145
Selkirk	2,400	2,160-2,640
Willapa Hills	7,600	7,200-8,800
Mount St. Helens	12,000[d]	9,000-11,000
Blue Mountains	4,400	4,824-5,896

a: Does not include GMUs 372 and 382
b: Estimate made in 2007.
c: Does not include Olympic National Park.
d: Mean estimate from 1996 to 1999.

Table 2. Parameter guidelines that affect decisions pertaining to hunting season structure and which class of animals would be impacted by a change in season structure.

Criteria	Class of Elk Targeted by Season Change	Consider Liberalizing Season	Acceptable Range	Consider Restricting Season
Pre-hunt Bull:Cow Ratio	Antlered & Antlerless	Greater than 35 bulls:100 cows	15 to 35 bulls:100 cows	Less than 15 bulls:100 cows
Post-hunt Bull:Cow Ratio	Antlered & Antlerless	Greater than 20 bulls:100 cows	12 to 20 bulls:100 cows	Less than 12 bulls:100 cows
Total Bull Mortality[a]	Antlered	Less than 40 %	Less than or equal to 50 %	Greater than 50 %
Percent Mature[b] Bulls In the Post-hunt Bull Sub-Population	Antlered	Greater than 10 %	2 to 10 %	Less than 2 %
Population Objective	Antlerless	Above Objective	At Objective	Below Objective

a: Total mortality from all sources including state hunting, tribal hunting, predation, winter kill, disease, etc.
b: Mature bulls are defined as having antlers with at least six tines on one side.

Objective 17:

Monitor elk populations annually to determine whether they are consistent with Tables 1 and 2.

Strategies:

a. Conduct aerial surveys to estimate populations, estimate indices, or to estimate composition ratios of bulls, cows, and calves.
b. Manage for cow elk sub-populations that are consistent with the desired rate of increase or rate of decline that will allow the population objective to be met for that elk herd (Table 2).
c. Manage for a post-hunt bull:cow ratio range of 12 to 20 bulls:100 cows (Peek et al. 2002, Biederbeck et al. 2001, Noyes et al. 1996, Squibb et al. 1991, Squibb 1985, Houston 1982, Prothero et al. 1979, Flook 1970,).
d. Manage for pre-hunt bull cow ratio range of 15 to 35 bulls: 100 cows (Peek et al. 2002, Biederbeck et al. 2001, Noyes et al. 1996, Squibb et al. 1991, Squibb 1985, Houston 1982, Prothero et al. 1979, Flook 1970,).
e. When bull mortality is measured for a population, manage for a total bull mortality rate of less than or equal to 50% averaged over three years.
f. Manage for a post-hunt mature bull (4 ½ years-old or older) percentage of 2% to 10% of the bull sub-population (Table 2).
g. Manage for herd composition and population goals at the Population Management Unit (PMU) level.

Issue Statement:

Elk are currently managed at the Population Management Unit (PMU) level. To be an effective tool in elk management and season setting, PMUs must have some biological relevance in terms of populations, sub-populations, and how elk physically use the landscape through all seasons of the year. This issue is carried over from the 2003-09 Game Management Plan because it was not completed. The current PMU structure has been defined and discussions held among biologists and managers to assess relevant groupings.

Objective 18:

Develop a report that assesses if the current PMU structure system is the most relevant grouping for elk populations and sub-populations by 2009.

Strategies:

a. Review the current PMU data; develop a mapping inventory of the current PMU structure; and redefine PMUs where necessary.

Issue Statement:

Data on elk population size and composition often are collected using helicopter surveys. Age ratios or sex ratios by themselves are inadequate in detecting population growth or decline (Caughley 1974, 1977). The use of sightability models has improved population estimates derived from helicopter surveys by accounting for sighting biases (Samuel et al. 1987).

Segregation between males and females can potentially bias aerial surveys during certain times of the year. However, the assumption that mixing of the sexes in the fall significantly reduces or eliminates gender-based sighting biases remains untested as well. The assumption that sightability models eliminate visibility differences (statistical biases) associated with different age classes and sex classes (i.e., juveniles, adults, males, females, breeders, non-breeders) should be tested. The benefits of surveying elk at times when they are freely intermixing could be outweighed by lower overall sightability during summer-fall. These effects on the accuracy and precision of parameter estimates should be explored further (Lancia et al. 1996, 2000).

Objective 19:

Evaluate aerial surveys to estimate population size, population indices, and population composition of Washington elk. Complete the evaluation of eastern Washington surveys by 2009 and western Washington surveys by 2012. Continue efforts to standardize and improve survey protocols to provide reliable data on the size and structure of Washington elk herds.

Strategies:

a. Assess current protocols for winter helicopter surveys of elk and refine where necessary. Identify populations that are most effectively monitored with winter helicopter surveys. Develop herd-specific models where appropriate.
b. Refine current data collection protocols and explore the development of new approaches to monitor elk populations and the effects of management strategies on elk populations (Eberhardt 1969).
c. Assess the population modeling approaches currently being used by WDFW and evaluate the need for new models and/or applications of population modeling.
d. Ensure adequate peer review of protocols developed and modified.

Recreation Management

Issue Statement:

One hundred thousand Washington elk hunters harvest approximately 7,000 elk annually from an estimated population of approximately 56,000. Washington has more elk hunters per elk than any other western state and has no limit on the number of elk licenses sold. Because anyone can purchase a license and hunt elk, success rates for general season hunters are low. Without carefully managed season timing, antler point restrictions, and relatively short seasons, the male sub-population would be over-harvested. Opportunities to hunt and spend time afield must be balanced against achieving or maintaining elk population objectives. As herd population levels increase, harvest levels will increase as well.

Objective 20:

Maintain a sustainable annual elk harvest (range 7,500 to 9,000) that is consistent with the population objectives in Tables 1 and 2.

Strategies:

a. Maximize season length where possible while maintaining or approaching elk population objectives.
b. In those eastern Washington GMUs that currently have spike-only hunting seasons, retain spike-only seasons and adjust branch antlered bull permit levels to achieve bull ratio objectives. Retain any bull and any elk seasons in northeastern Washington as long as population objectives are being met or have a reasonable likelihood of being met.
c. Retain 3-point restriction in western Washington as long as population objectives are being met or have a reasonable likelihood of being met over time.
d. Design and implement harvest strategies based on the best available information collected for those specific elk populations and sub-populations.
e. Unless extreme circumstances warrant, allow at least three years to determine effectiveness of regulation changes designed to achieve population objectives.

Issue Statement:

Annual harvest data are used as an index to elk population abundance and herd health and to monitor impacts of changing regulations.

Objective 21:

Improve the harvest data used to monitor elk populations and the effects of various management strategies by conducting a review of the reporting accuracy by 2010 and correcting the deficiencies identified by 2014.

Strategies:

a. Implement and improve the mandatory harvest reporting system.
b. Develop and implement strategies to improve deficiencies identified in the review.
c. Expand efforts to collect age-at-harvest data from elk teeth submitted by successful hunters.
d. Evaluate the feasibility of collecting data on elk body condition from harvested elk at check stations or using other sampling strategies.

Habitat Management

Issue Statement:

Elk habitat in Washington State is declining due to human population expansion, changes in timber management practices, progression of successional age of habitat, and competition with domestic livestock. The biggest threat to the sustainability of elk populations is loss of quality habitat. To effectively manage elk in Washington, certain priority lands must be set aside with the management of elk habitat identified as the primary activity on those lands.

Objective 22:

Maintain and enhance 2000 acres and acquire 2000 acres of habitat for Rocky Mountain and Roosevelt elk during the life of this plan.

Strategies:

a. Identify and prioritize important elk habitat that is at risk of being lost to other land use practices. Identify highest priority elk ranges to target for acquisition or conservation easements.
b. Where habitat condition or quantity limits herd productivity, identify and implement large-scale habitat conservation and enhancement projects.
c. Improve habitat condition where possible, by implementing habitat enhancements and coordinating with land management agencies and private landowners to improve elk habitat quality where those opportunities exist.
d. Purchase, lease, acquire easements, and use other incentives to protect and enhance other key areas identified in elk herd plans.

Winter Feeding

It is the intent of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife that wildlife should exist under natural conditions supported by suitable habitat. Although artificial feeding may assist in wildlife winter survival, it should not generally be considered a substitute for lost habitat and feeding shall be done only in limited situations as prescribed by Department policy.

Despite this intent, the Department maintains some supplemental feeding operations for wildlife. The main example is the Yakima elk herd where winter habitat has been eliminated. The historic winter habitat is currently growing high value agricultural crops. These crops are at risk of damage by elk unless supplemental feeding is provided each winter.

The Department also recognizes that extreme winter conditions sometimes necessitate implementation of emergency feeding operations. Both supplemental and emergency feeding of wildlife introduces an artificial food source. Feeding also results in the concentration of animals, which can make them more susceptible to disease, predation, and poaching.

The Department will attempt to identify methods designed to balance the size of populations with available winter habitat. Winter-feeding will not occur in areas where species can be hunted for recreation while feeding activities are underway. The Department will periodically evaluate the need to continue winter feeding operations.

Issue Statement:

Supplemental Feeding is defined by the Department as the regular winter feeding operations to provide feed to wildlife where adequate winter habitat is not available and feeding is necessary to support the population level as identified in a management plan, or for specific control of deer or elk damage.

A large percentage of what is considered historic elk winter range before European settlement has been removed due to agriculture and housing development. At current population levels, some elk in Washington must be fed every winter due to inadequate winter range. To prevent elk in the Yakima herd from causing agricultural damage, elk fencing and a winter feeding program was established. Elk winter-feeding programs can be problematic. They are expensive and cause elk to congregate at high densities, where they have a higher potential for spreading diseases. Elk that are fed in the winter also can have extreme impacts on shrubs, trees, and riparian zones near feeding sites. Winter-feeding programs may allow elk populations to exceed the carrying capacity of the available winter range, which can often be one of the most important factors in determining the size of an elk population that the landscape can support.

Objective 23:

Conduct an evaluation of the current elk-feeding program. Reduce the dependency on supplemental feeding if possible.

Strategies:

a. Using data generated from the Yakima elk herd study (see Research Section), report on the costs, benefits, and impacts on range condition of managing for different Yakima elk herd sizes.
b. Using the data generated from the Yakima elk herd study, determine if the Yakima elk herd population objective needs to be adjusted.

Disease

Issue Statement:

Wild elk suffer from a wide variety of diseases. Some diseases are commonplace and have very little impact at the population level. Other diseases can be far more serious, have major impacts at the population level, and have severe economic consequences.

Objective 24:

Monitor the health and disease status of wild elk in Washington by collecting at least 30 samples each year. Take blood and tissue samples when elk are captured and tested for diseases common to elk.

Strategies:

a. Continue to monitor for pathogenic conditions in elk such as foot rot and tick paralysis.
b. Sample hunter harvested elk for chronic wasting disease.
c. Follow U. S. Department of Agriculture and Washington Department of Agriculture guidelines for reporting and action when a disease is detected.

Research

Issue Statement:

The Blue Mountains elk herd has historically provided considerable recreational hunting opportunity and supported subsistence and ceremonial needs for Native Americans. Like many other regional elk herds, the Blue Mountains herd has exhibited declining recruitment in the past decade. The herd is below population objective. Although spike-only hunting has improved bull elk survival, limited, hunting opportunities for branch-antlered bulls continues in some areas. The lack of documentation of tribal harvest impacts has complicated management of this elk herd. In some units, high poaching losses have contributed to a reduction or elimination of mature bull hunting opportunity. Estimates of both adult and yearling bull survival as well as adult cow survival need to be improved for this elk herd. The overall impact of human-caused mortality is known only in very general terms

Objective 25:

Finalize current research regarding elk ecology and management in the Blue Mountains.

Strategies:

a. Quantify total mortality for adult elk in the Blue Mountains.
b. Quantify the impact of human-caused mortality on elk in the Blue Mountains, particularly the impacts of various sources of hunting mortality on adult and yearling bull elk.
c. Quantify the impacts of unreported mortality, such as tribal harvest, wounding losses, damage hunt loss, and poaching losses.
d. Address the management implications of those various sources of mortality.
e. Finalize report and submit manuscripts to peer-reviewed scientific journals for publication.
f. Develop a research proposal to identify limiting factors associated with achieving the herd's population objectives.

Issue Statement:

The Yakima elk herd is one of the largest in the state, and herd characteristics have responded well to management strategies designed to increase bull:cow ratios and the survival of adult bulls. Much of the historical winter range for ungulates is now under agricultural and rural development. Much of the potential winter range is used for high-value agriculture. Fences and artificial feeding are used to control elk distribution and movements on the very limited winter range. The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has questioned whether the size of the current elk population can be maintained without damage to sensitive habitats, such as wet and dry meadows, on spring-summer-fall range. Better information is needed on the relationship between the size of the Yakima elk herd and the habitat supporting that herd.

Objective 26:

Complete the research project and determine the appropriate population size for the Yakima elk herd given the number of environmental, social, recreational, and economic values assigned to this herd by various user-groups.

Strategies:

a. Complete the current research project developed to accomplish this objective, including a detailed analysis of habitat condition and trend is needed to better define a population goal that protects other values, including environmental, social, and economic values of this region.

Issue Statement:

The Colockum elk herd has long been plagued by low bull: cow ratios, and calf: cow ratios have also declined precipitously during the last decade. In 1994, spike-only hunting was adopted for general license holders. This regulatory change occurred throughout eastern Washington and was designed to increase bull survival, increase the ratios of adult bulls to adult cows, and to promote early, synchronized breeding. In the Yakima elk herd the effect on bull: cow ratios was rapid and dramatic. A similar response has not occurred in the Colockum herd. Bull survival apparently remains low. Bull: cow ratios have generally remained below objective. Branch-antlered bull hunting has essentially been eliminated. No positive effects have been seen in recruitment patterns in the Colockum herd as well. Habitat condition also appears to be generally poor in some concentrated use areas, such as the Coffin Game Reserve. There are a number of potential factors that may be impacting elk recruitment, including poor nutrition, predation, and low numbers of breeding adult bulls. Defensible estimates of yearling bull survival and calf survival are needed. Movements and population dynamics of elk and deer in the upper Kittitas Valley are poorly understood. Elk-landowner conflicts have been increasing on private lands in the upper Kittitas Valley. Gain a better understanding of the population dynamics and habitat use of elk in the upper Kittitas Valley.

Objective 27:

Develop two peer reviewed study proposals for the Colockum elk herd. The first proposal should address landscape use and elk movements and will be completed by 2009. The second should examine survival rates and limiting factors and should be completed by 2011.

Strategies:

a. Using radio-telemetry, gather specific information on elk movements, landscape use, and population dynamics in the upper Kittitas Valley.
b. Determine adult and juvenile elk survival for the Colockum elk herd.
c. Determine the cause of poor recruitment.
d. Analyze habitat conditions and trends at the landscape scale using remote sensing and ground-truthing.

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DEER

I. POPULATION STATUS AND TREND

Black–tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*), mule deer (*O. h. hemionus*), and white-tailed deer (*O. virginianus*) are all native to the state of Washington. The total deer population in the state numbers approximately 300,000 to 320,000 (Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife 2006). White-tailed deer populations appear to be stable or increasing. Mule deer populations in northeastern Washington are below historical levels. Other mule deer populations in central and eastern Washington are stable, with the exception of the southern Cascades where mule deer numbers have declined the last two years. Black-tailed deer populations seem to be stable across their range. The goal set by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) for the management of black-tailed deer, mule deer, and white-tailed deer populations in Washington is to maintain numbers within habitat limitations. Landowner tolerance, a sustainable harvest, and non-consumptive deer opportunities are considered within the land base framework.

II. RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Deer are hunted in Washington from September to December. State regulations provide for archery, muzzleloader, and modern rifle seasons. Historically about 45% of Washington's deer harvest was black-tailed deer, 35 % mule deer, and 20 % white-tailed deer. Due to robust white-tailed deer populations, increased opportunity for antlerless white-tailed deer hunting, depressed mule deer populations, and conservative hunting seasons for mule deer, white-tailed deer have outnumbered mule deer in the harvest for the past few years (Table 1).

White-tailed deer hunting seasons have remained consistent for the last few years, except in northeastern Washington where the white-tailed deer antlerless opportunity has gradually increased. Beginning in 1997, youth, senior, and disabled hunters were allowed to take antlerless white-tailed deer during general buck seasons in northeast Washington.

Eastern Washington mule deer seasons have been much more restrictive since 1997, although some mule deer opportunity is being reestablished in areas where mule deer herds are recovering. Some of the restrictive measures include a three-point minimum restriction for all mule deer in eastern Washington and a shortened deer hunting season for most hunters. Antlerless hunting opportunities are offered mostly by special permit only.

Throughout western Washington, black-tailed deer harvest has remained relatively stable in recent years in terms of total numbers harvested. However, success per unit of effort has decreased in southwest Washington black-tailed deer regions. Black-tailed deer still provided 12,672 or approximately 33.7% of the total 2006 deer harvest. The average annual harvest of black-tailed deer over the past six years was 14,065.

Table 1. Estimated Washington deer harvest by deer type for 1995 through 2007. Deer harvest estimates generally have confidence intervals that are within 5 percent.

Year	Black-tailed Deer	White-tailed Deer	Mule Deer	Total
2001	16,658	12,366	11,915	40,939
2002	12,968	12,087	13,639	38,694
2003	13,933	13,553	13,280	40,766
2004	15,859	14,684	13964	44,507
2005	12,301	14,852	12,638	39,791
2006	12,672	14,839	10,074	37,585
2007	12,974	14,500	10,421	37,895

III. DATA COLLECTION

WDFW conducts composition surveys from the air and on the ground to index buck, doe, and fawn ratios. Depending on the species, location and terrain involved, deer composition surveys are conducted in the spring, the summer, early fall (pre-hunt), and early winter (post-hunt) before the deer shed their antlers. Population estimates are also conducted for mule deer using the visibility bias model initially developed in Idaho for elk (Samuel et al. 1987). Variants of the model have been developed for a variety of other species including mule deer. All survey work is restricted by budget and staffing constraints.

In western Washington, black-tailed deer surveys are coupled with hunter check station information and harvest data to model populations. Sex ratios, age ratios, and survival rates are reconstructed using harvest information and those vital statistics are then entered into a sex/age/kill (SAK) population model to estimate population size (Eberhardt 1969).

Pre-hunt and post-hunt surveys are generally conducted in eastern Washington for both white-tailed deer and mule deer. Deer populations in selected areas are frequently surveyed again in March and April to assess winter survival and recruitment.

White-tailed deer are surveyed in summer to determine pre-hunting season fawn and buck ratios and again in spring to determine recruitment – those fawns that have survived their first 10 or 11 months and will likely reach their first birth date alive. Hunter check stations are used to sample age distribution of whitetail bucks in the harvest.

IV. DEER MANAGEMENT GOALS

The statewide management goals for deer are:

1. Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage deer and their habitat to ensure healthy, productive populations.
2. Manage deer for a variety of recreational, educational, and aesthetic purposes including hunting, scientific study, cultural, subsistence, and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, wildlife viewing, and photography.
3. Manage statewide deer populations for a sustainable annual harvest.

V. ISSUE STATEMENTS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

Population Management

Deer population management goals are to maintain relatively stable populations for both white-tailed deer and black-tailed deer. The population goal for mule deer management is an increase in populations within the limitations of available mule deer habitat, landowner tolerance, and extreme weather events (i.e., summer and fall drought, catastrophic fire, protracted winters with deep snow). Recreation management for deer is directly tied to population management. The recreation goal for deer is to maintain or increase hunting opportunity, improve hunting quality, and be responsive to landowner conflicts (see below).

Aside from raw counts, one of the most straightforward measures to quantify deer herds is composition ratios such as buck:doe ratios. Post-hunt buck:doe ratios reflect how aggressively the antlered class of the population is being hunted. The Department has designated four levels of hunting intensity and assigned a range of post-hunt buck ratio targets for each (Table 2). Recruitment rates and mortality rates vary substantially depending upon species, subspecies, and location.

Table 2. Hunting intensity and related buck:doe ratios.

Hunting Level	Post-hunt Buck Ratios
Liberal	10 to 14 bucks:100 does
Standard	15 to 19 bucks:100 does
Moderate	20 to 24 bucks:100 does
Conservative	25+ bucks:100 does

ALL DEER

Issue Statement:

Deer in Washington are currently managed at the Population Management Unit (PMU) level by WDFW. Most PMUs are made up of more than one Game Management Unit (GMU). Hunting season dates and bag limits are set at the GMU level with the understanding that total harvest will affect the deer population at the PMU level. This issue is carried over from the 2003-09

Game Management Plan because it was not completed. The current PMU structure has been defined and discussions held among biologists and managers to assess relevant groupings.

Objective 28:

Determine by 2009 if the current PMU designations for Washington deer populations are representative from a biological standpoint.

Strategies:

a. Review the current information available for Washington deer including the primary literature, WDFW reports, federal reports, tribal reports, university research, and contractual reports. Investigate the current information seasonal movements, migrations, critical areas, home range sizes, etc.
b. Modify those PMUs that do not currently represent deer population movement, activity, and harvest.

BLACK-TAILED DEER

Issue Statement:

Of the three types of deer hunted in Washington, black-tailed deer have historically provided the highest number of deer harvested. Black-tailed deer are difficult to survey due to the type of habitat they occupy, making it difficult to detect population changes. Age ratios or sex ratios by themselves are inadequate when trying to detect population growth or decline (Caughley 1977, 1974). Nonetheless it is incumbent to the process of setting deer harvest objectives to have some estimate or index of the number of animals in the population available for harvest (Table 3).

Objective 29:

Determine how well existing survey protocols for black-tailed deer are working by 2010.

Strategies:

a. Conduct a literature search and peer review for existing population estimate and population index techniques that would be appropriate for black-tailed deer.
b. Document, develop, and standardize survey protocols for black-tailed deer.

Issue Statement:

Black-tailed deer habitat has been reduced in western Washington due to human encroachment, a reduction in timber harvest, and the natural progression of aging timber stands (succession). Annual harvest reports indicate that black-tailed deer numbers are remaining fairly static, however, the number of days per harvested animal would suggest that black-tailed deer might have declined somewhat over the past two decades. To complicate matters further, hunting regulations have varied quite a bit over the years. Because of the terrain they inhabit and the

difficulties involved with surveying them, there are still many unknowns about black-tailed deer population dynamics that have yet to be revealed.

Table 3. Hunting intensity and related black-tailed deer buck:doe ratios.

Hunting Level	Post-hunt Buck Ratio Targets	Known Status by PMU	Desired Status by PMU
Liberal	10 to 14 bucks:100 does		
Standard	15 to 19 bucks:100 does	46, 51	46, 51
Moderate	20 to 24 bucks:100 does		
Conservative	25+ bucks:100 does		

Objective 30:

- Measure the status of the buck to doe ratios or buck mortality rates for at least 5 PMUs by 2012.

Strategies:

a. Review the current information available for black-tailed deer including the primary literature, WDFW reports, federal reports, tribal reports, other state agency reports, university research, and contractual reports.
b. Conduct post-hunt population surveys to ascertain population size or index where appropriate.
c. Conduct post-hunt population survey or conduct mortality studies to ascertain buck survival through the hunt period where appropriate.
d. Conduct pre-hunt surveys in summer and early fall to measure productivity and to measure the ratio of bucks per does and the ratio of legal bucks per 100 does.

MULE DEER

Issue Statement:

Mule deer population levels are closely tied to severe winter events and are susceptible to over-harvest. Hunting season structure for mule deer reflects this susceptibility (Table 4). Depending on the district, mule deer may be surveyed after the hunting season, before the hunting season, or during the spring green-up. Some mule deer populations may be surveyed more than one time during the year.

Table 4. Hunting intensity and related mule deer buck:doe ratios.

Hunting Level	Post-hunt Buck Ratio Targets	Known Status by PMU	Desired Status by PMU
Liberal	10 to 14 bucks: 100 does	23	
Standard	15 to 19 bucks: 100 does	11, 13, 15, 16, 21, 22, 24, 25, 32, 33, 35, 36	11, 13, 16, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 32, 33, 35, 36
Moderate	20 to 24 bucks: 100 does	14, 17, 31, 34	14, 15, 17, 31, 34
Conservative	25+ bucks: 100 does	21, 26	21, 26

Objective 31:

- Conduct population surveys each year for major herds and expand the areas surveyed by 2013 to include all PMUs where more than 50 mule deer bucks are harvested annually.

Strategies:

a. Conduct post-hunt population surveys to ascertain population size or index, and buck survival through the hunt period.
b. Expand the areas where post-hunt surveys are conducted annually to include Columbia Basin PMUs and east slope Cascades PMUs.
c. Conduct spring "green-up" surveys to determine winter survival of adults and juveniles and use this information to set special permit quotas and antlerless seasons for the coming fall hunting season.
d. Conduct pre-hunt surveys in summer and early fall to measure productivity and to measure the ratio of bucks per does and the ratio of legal bucks per does.
e. Determine the feasibility of using body condition scoring to assess overall health of mule deer and mule deer range.

Provide information to landowners regarding the needs of mule deer (e.g. Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies mule deer habitat guidelines) using agricultural organization's newsletters, etc.

Issue Statement:

Mule deer populations are more amenable to population surveys than the other two types of deer in Washington. Currently, not all mule deer populations in all parts of the state are being surveyed (Mayer et al. 2002).

Objective 32:

Improve and expand the survey protocols for mule deer by 2012.

Strategies:

a. Conduct a literature search and peer review of existing population estimation techniques that would be appropriate for mule deer.
b. Document and/or standardize best-case survey protocols for mule deer throughout the state.
c. When necessary, implement new survey protocols for mule deer.

WHITE-TAILED DEER

Issue Statement:

White-tailed deer population levels are closely tied to severe winter events. White-tailed deer have the highest potential maximum rate of increase of all North American ungulates due to the type of habitat they occupy, their age at first reproduction when on a high nutritional plane, and their ability to successfully recruit twins into the population (McCullough 1987). Compared to mule deer, white-tailed deer are less susceptible to overharvest and the hunting season structure

for whitetails reflects their ability to withstand harvest (Table 5). The antlerless component of white-tailed deer populations are often under utilized. Age ratios or sex ratios by themselves are inadequate when trying to detect population growth or decline (Caughley 1977).

Table 5. Hunting intensity and related white-tailed deer buck:doe ratios.

Hunting Level	Post-hunt Buck Ratio Targets	Known Status by PMU	Desired Status by PMU
Liberal	10 to 14 bucks: 100 does	15	
Standard	15 to 19 bucks: 100 does	11, 13, 14, 16	11, 13, 16
Moderate	20 to 24 bucks: 100 does	17	14, 15, 17
Conservative	25+ bucks: 100 does		

Objective 33:

Document the buck-doe ratios for all PMUs where at least 50 bucks are harvested each year by 2012.

Strategies:

a. Conduct post-hunt population surveys to ascertain population size or index.
b. Conduct post-hunt population surveys to ascertain buck survival through the hunt period.
c. Conduct spring "green-up" surveys to determine winter survival of adults and juveniles and use this information to set special permit quotas for the coming fall hunting season.
d. Conduct pre-hunt surveys in summer and early fall to measure productivity and to measure the ratio of bucks per does and the ratio of legal bucks per does.

Issue Statement:

Like black-tailed deer, white-tailed deer populations are difficult to estimate in Washington (Roseberry and Woolf 1991, Lancia et al. 1996, Lancia et al. 2000, Mayer et al. 2002). Age ratios or sex ratios by themselves are inadequate when trying to detect population growth or decline (Caughley 1977).

Objective 34:

Improve and expand the existing survey protocols for white-tailed deer by 2011.

Strategies:

a. Conduct a literature search of existing techniques.
b. Consult with statisticians at various universities and with other peers for latest developments in population estimation.
c. Document and/or standardize best-case survey protocols for white-tailed deer throughout the state.

Research

MULE DEER

Issue Statement:

In the 1990s mule deer exhibited declines across most of the western United States. The public, the press, and wildlife scientists have postulated a variety of theories to explain this decline. Major contributors to the decline in mule deer numbers in Washington were deterioration of mule deer habitat due to successional progression and also high winter mortality due to the severe winter of 1996-97. Because of this decline, the Department invested in a multi-cooperator, long-term mule deer research project.

Objective 35:

Complete the Mule Deer Cooperative Study by 2010 and determine the relationship between habitat, predation, body condition, and other factors as they relate to Washington mule deer survival and recruitment.

Strategies:

a. Provide information summaries and technical reports to the public.
b. Present results for the study in a variety of public forums.
c. Publish the results of the study in the primary, scientific literature.
d. Implement recommendations as appropriate.

BLACK-TAILED DEER

Issue Statement:

The mortality rates for black-tailed deer in hunted populations have been, for the most part, unknown. The Department initiated studies on buck mortality in both Region 4 and Region 6 from 1999 through 2001 (WDFW unpubl. data). Initial work suggests that buck mortality in black-tailed deer is quite variable, both between years and between sites. Further work on this topic, as well as population dynamics, habitat needs, and better techniques to estimate populations would help the Department better understand black-tailed deer.

Objective 36:

Initiate a black-tailed deer research project by 2009 to develop a better understanding of population dynamics, survival, habitat needs, and population estimation techniques for black-tailed deer.

Strategies:

a. Identify new locations to conduct black-tailed deer studies.

b. Develop a peer reviewed study proposal that considers study areas in Regions 4, 5, and 6 that will address population dynamics, limiting factors, survival, habitat needs, and better approaches to estimating populations by 2009.

WHITE-TAILED DEER

Issue Statement:

Little is known about survival, population dynamics, and movements of white-tailed deer in Washington State.

Objective 37:

Develop research questions to be answered for white-tailed deer by 2010.

Strategies:

a. Develop peer reviewed study proposal(s) to better understand white-tailed deer population dynamics.
b. Conduct basic survival and movement research on white-tailed deer in eastern Washington.
c. Identify and implement new white-tailed deer research in eastern Washington that will address population dynamics, survival, habitat needs, and better approaches to estimating populations by 2010.

Disease

ALL DEER

Issue Statement:

Wild deer suffer from a number of diseases. Some can have severe but localized impacts on a sub-population.

Objective 38:

Monitor deer for disease each year and implement means to reduce the risk of disease when possible

Strategies:

a. Continue to monitor for chronic wasting disease (CWD) in coordination with the other western state's deer and elk managers.
b. Enforce the current regulations that prevent the captive farming of native deer and elk in Washington.
c. Continue to monitor for epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD), adenovirus hemorrhagic disease (AHD), hair loss syndrome, and tuberculosis (TB).

d. Monitor for other diseases and maintain coordination with other state's wildlife veterinarians as necessary.

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BIGHORN SHEEP *(Ovis canadensis)*

I. POPULATION STATUS AND TREND

Washington State has approximately 1,200 bighorn sheep distributed in 17 herds. Of those, 12 herds are California bighorn sheep and 5 are Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. Average herd size is 92 sheep, and ranges from 10 to 198 sheep. Populations are stable to increasing in 14 herds and declining in 3 herds, where diseases and parasites are the primary causes for decline.

II. RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Populations of Rocky Mountain bighorns are still recovering from the *pasteurella* die-off. In Washington, hunters typically pursue mature rams. Therefore, harvest thresholds are based on total population size, sex structure, and the number of mature rams in a herd. Hunting opportunity is allocated by permit drawing and is a once in a lifetime opportunity (except for raffle and auction permit holders, and ewe hunts). The number of controlled hunt applications received annually ranges from 1,000-4,500, which averages approximately 151-applications per bighorn sheep hunting permit. Statewide, permit levels have ranged from 9-22 and hunter success is high (92%).

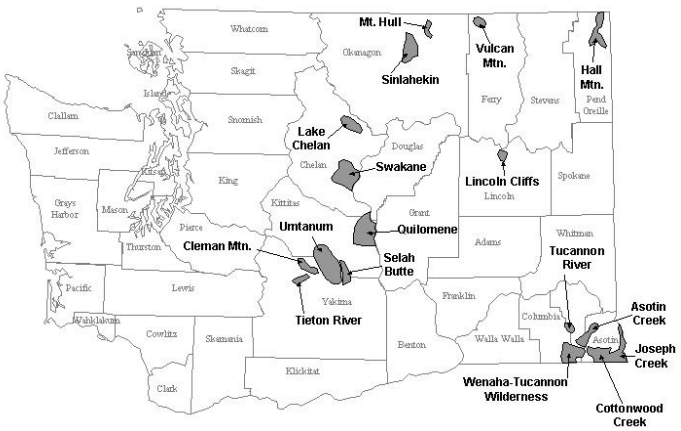

Figure 1. Bighorn sheep herds in Washington, 2008.

III. DATA COLLECTION

The Department surveys each herd annually, using either aerial or ground surveys. Surveys typically are conducted during lambing or rutting periods and data are used to estimate lamb recruitment, sex ratio, adult survival, population size, and percentage of mature rams in the population. In addition to surveys, individuals from selected herds are screened for disease and parasites during winter captures or feeding operations.

IV. BIGHORN SHEEP MANAGEMENT GOALS

The statewide goals for bighorn sheep are:

1. Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage bighorn sheep and their habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations.
2. Manage bighorn sheep for a variety of recreational, educational and aesthetic purposes including hunting, scientific study, cultural and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, wildlife viewing, and photography.
3. Manage statewide bighorn sheep populations for a sustained yield.

V. ISSUE STATEMENTS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

Habitat Management

Issue Statement:

Habitat quality influences bighorn sheep reproduction, survival, and abundance. Unfortunately, habitat conditions are deteriorating in many bighorn herds, primarily due to the spread of noxious weeds, poor forage growth, human development, and forest encroachment. To improve habitat quality for bighorn sheep, there is a need to conduct various habitat improvement projects, as the need and opportunity arises, in several herds.

Objective 39:

Conduct habitat improvement projects or protect 3000 acres of the habitat in bighorn ranges in Vulcan Mountain, Swakane, Sinlahekin, and the Blue Mountains by 2015.

Strategies:

a. Inventory and map habitat conditions.
b. Conduct controlled burns to improve habitat quality.
c. If not detrimental to other habitat or wildlife objectives, consider distributing fertilizer and herbicides to improve forage quality.
d. Distribute mineral blocks to supplement forage quality.
e. Distribute water sources to improve habitat quality.
f. Pursue other activities that enhance desirable native plant communities.
g. Pursue conservation easements and fee title purchases.

Population Management

Issue Statement:

Relocation is used as a tool to establish new populations and augment existing ones. This, in turn, increases the long-term viability of bighorn sheep by increasing total population size,

increasing the number of populations, and providing linkages between populations for the exchange of individuals and genetic material (Bailey 1992).

Objective 40:

Establish new bighorn sheep herds in Moses Coulee and Tucannon by 2012.

Strategies:

a. Relocate sheep from existing herds in Washington or out-of-state herds.
b. Allow the establishment of new herds through natural colonization of bighorn sheep.
c. Re-establish the Tucannon herd as Rocky Mountain bighorns instead of California bighorns.
d. Establish California bighorns in Moses Coulee drainage.

Issue Statement:

To better manage bighorn sheep populations, managers strive to maintain sustainable and healthy populations of bighorns, while at the same time maintain sheep at levels that minimize the risk of disease and reduce agricultural damage on private lands.

Objective 41:

Achieve desired bighorn sheep population levels for a minimum of 10 herds as indicated in Table 1 by 2015.

Strategies:

a. For herds that are exceeding population goals, trap and relocate sheep to an alternate area.
b. For herds that are exceeding the desired population size, establish ewe harvest opportunities.
c. For herds that are below the desired population size, consider restricting harvest and augmenting the population.

Table 1. Population size objectives for specific bighorn sheep herds.

	Population Size	
Herd	**Current**	**Desired**[b]
Hall Mountain[a]	26-31	40-70
Asotin Creek[a]	34-42	50-60
Black Butte[a]	72-88	300
Wenaha[a]	59-72	140
Cottonwood Creek[a]	24-30	50-60
Tucannon	24-30	60-70
Vulcan	21-27	80-110
Mt. Hull	59-72	55-80
Sinlahekin	27-33	50
Swakane	48-58	50-60
Quilomene	148-182	250-300

Umtanum (+Selah Butte)	156-190	250-300
Cleman Mountain	140-172	140-160
Lincoln Cliffs	85-105	90-100
Lake Chelan	41-51	100-150
Tieton River	33-41	75-150
Total	**997-1224**	**1,750-2,130**

[a] Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep
[b] Based on biologists estimates of habitat capacity, including forage, escape cover, and water sources

Issue Statement:

Bighorn sheep populations are sensitive to over-exploitation because of their low population growth rate and low population size (Berger 1990). As such, assessing the status of each bighorn population annually is necessary to ensure sustainability.

Objective 42:

Monitor bighorn sheep herds at a level where a 20% change in population size can be detected within 3-years or less.

Strategies:

a. Conduct big horn sheep sightability surveys annually for each herd.
b. Use radio collared sheep to enhance sightability of sheep during surveys.
c. Complete the survey protocol document by December 2009.

Issue Statement:

Certain types of *Pasteurella* spp. are pathogenic and produce acute bacterial pneumonia in bighorn sheep (Foreyt and Jessup 1982). The occurrences of lethal strains of *Pasteurella* in bighorns are most commonly associated with overlapping ranges of bighorn and domestic sheep; as *Pasteurella* is commonly found in domestic sheep. There are many uncertainties about the mode of transmission, vulnerability, and other epidemiological factors of *Pasteurella* (Martin et. al 1996). However, given the present state of knowledge, the current management practice used throughout North America to prevent the disease in bighorn sheep is to eliminate interactions between domestic sheep and bighorn sheep (Schommer and Woolever 2001).

Objective 43:

Eliminate interactions between domestic sheep and bighorn sheep in the Swakane herd, Hells Canyon herds, Cleman Mountain, Tieton, and areas identified for repatriation of bighorn sheep.

Strategies:

a. Pursue management actions consistent with the "bighorn sheep-domestic sheep management guidelines" authored by the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies bighorn

sheep working group (2007) and the "Payette Principles" produced by the U.S. Forest Service (2007).

b. Maintain at least a 9-mile buffer between domestic sheep and bighorn sheep (BLM 1998).
c. Pursue the purchase of grazing leases and conservation easements.
d. Pursue the conversion of domestic sheep grazing allotments to cattle allotments.
e. Develop physical or habitat barriers between domestic and bighorn sheep.
f. Work with livestock producers to reduce transmission of disease and parasites from domestic sheep to bighorns.
g. Develop MOUs with land managers to maintain existing buffers and agreements for separation of domestic and bighorn sheep.

Recreation Management

Issue Statement:

The demand for bighorn sheep hunting opportunity exceeds the allowable harvest for sustainable populations. Therefore, the Department restricts bighorn sheep harvest to a level compatible with long-term sustainability of each herd. With bighorn sheep, hunters typically select the largest, hence oldest, rams in the herd. Consequently, the Department manages sheep as a high quality hunting opportunity and takes precautionary steps to ensure that ample numbers of mature rams are left in the population. The result is a relatively high harvest success (mean = 92%) and post-season ram: ewe ratios that are favorable for growing bighorn sheep populations.

Objective 44:

Provide recreational hunting season opportunities for individual bighorn sheep herds where harvest success averages ≥85% over a 3-year period, while at the same time bighorn population size remains stable or increasing.

Strategies:

a. Conduct bighorn sheep hunts by permit only and allow harvest of any ram.
b. Do not hunt transplanted animals for at least five years after initial release to ensure success of the transplant.
c. Survey herds annually for at least two years before being hunted to determine size, composition, and trend.
d. Set ram permit levels as indicated in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Permit levels for all bighorn sheep herds (see example below).

	…when the herd has…			
	Population	**Ram:ewe**	**Number rams with…**	
Permit level is…	**Size [a]**	**ratio**	**≥½ curl [b]**	**≥ ¾ curl [c]**
20% of the mature rams[d]	≥50	>50:100	8	2
15% of the mature rams[d]	≥50	25-50:100	8	2
10% of the mature rams[d]	≥50	<25:100	8	2

[a] Total population size, excluding lambs. Population must be stable or increasing.
[b] Used as a measure of >3-year-old rams.
[c] Used as a measure of >6-year-old rams.
[d] Rams ≥½ curl.

For example, the permit level for herd "X" is 15% of the mature ram population because the total population size is >30 sheep, the ram:ewe ratio is between 25-50 rams per 100 ewes, and the number of rams with ½ curl is >8 and at least 2 of those 8 rams are >¾ curl.

e. Adjust permit levels for herds bordering other states and provinces to account for management activities of these other areas.
f. Consider reducing permit levels or terminating all permits (depending on population size and rate of decline) for herds declining due to disease or high parasite loads.
g. Use trap and relocation as the primary method of reducing overpopulated herds, nuisance activity, or agricultural damage. Consider ewe harvest as a secondary method, with the following conditions:
   - Ewe permits should not exceed 10-20% of the adult ewe population.
   - A harvested ewe would not count toward the one sheep a hunter can harvest in a lifetime.

Enforcement

Issue Statement:

There are only about 1,200 bighorn sheep in Washington. So any illegal harvest or harassment has the potential to impact populations. Unfortunately, the rarity and majestic nature of mature rams (i.e., their horns) makes them likely targets for illegal take.

Objective 45:

Account for all known bighorn sheep mortalities.

Strategies:

a. Permanently mark the horns of all dead bighorn sheep rams that are recovered from the field.
b. Require mandatory reporting for all bighorn sheep hunters.
c. Avoid lethal removal of bighorn sheep involved in damage and/or nuisance situations to the maximum extent possible and promote other non-lethal alternatives.

Research

Issue Statement:

Bighorn sheep are vulnerable to many parasites and diseases that significantly impact population levels. In addition, small population sizes create situations where predators and genetic inbreeding can cause impediments to population growth.

Objective 46:

Complete an evaluation of the relative risk of exposure or infection from *pasteurella* for all bighorn sheep herds in the state by 2010.

Strategies:

a. Monitor the recovery of bighorn sheep from *pasteurella* in Hells Canyon.
b. Investigate the probability of interactions between bighorn sheep and domestic sheep in areas where the two overlap.
c. Work collaboratively with Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Washington State University of disease research specifically addressing disease related issues between domestic and bighorn sheep.
d. Collect data for each herd opportunistically for assessing herd health.

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MOUNTAIN GOAT *(Oreamnos americanus)*

I. POPULATION STATUS AND TREND

Mountain goat populations have been on the decline in Washington for many years. Historically, goat populations may have been as high as 10,000 animals. Currently, goats likely number fewer than 2,500 (Rice, Pers. Commun.). Hunting opportunity has decreased accordingly, and current permit levels are conservative and represent ≤4% of the known population in herds that are stable to increasing. Despite reductions in hunting opportunity, many local goat populations remain low. However, a few populations are doing well. Goat populations along the southern Cascades, the north shore of Lake Chelan, surrounding Mount Baker, and the Methow region appear to be stable to slightly increasing.

II. RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Mountain goats have been hunted in Washington State since 1897, when hunters could harvest two goats annually (Johnson 1983). Following several years of excessive hunting, seasons were restricted in 1917, and all hunting closed by 1925. Later, goat populations recovered and hunting resumed in 1948. Since 1948, mountain goat hunting opportunity has been limited by permit.

Figure 1. Mountain goat distribution (shaded, excluding Olympic and Mount Rainier National Parks) and areas open to hunting (crosshatch), 2008.

Unfortunately, goat abundance has decreased dramatically over the last few decades. As such, hunting opportunity has declined from 218 permits in 1991 to 18 permits in 2008. The number of permit applications per hunt area ranges from 1,000 to 4,700, and averages over 1,000 applications/mountain goat permit. The hunting season for mountain goat is generally about 61 days (September 1 to October 31) and harvest success averages 63% (n = 9 years).

Currently, mountain goat hunting is an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Hunters may harvest any adult goat with horns ≥4 inches, although hunters are urged not to harvest a nanny and it's unlawful to harvest a nanny accompanied by a kid. During the 2008 season, only a fraction of the mountain goat range was open to hunting, with 18 permits in 10 goat units.

III. DATA COLLECTION

For many years, funding limitations greatly limited the Department's ability to conduct thorough and consistent surveys. However, funding from cooperative grant sources, and auction and raffle revenue, has now allowed the Department to survey all goat units open to hunting. All surveys are conducted using a helicopter and generally occur in July or September. Because funding has not been sufficient to survey all goat units, hunted units have been the priority.

The Department initiated a mountain goat research project 4 years ago. The goals of the project were to develop robust survey protocols and determine the cause(s) for the decline of goats in much of their range. Preliminary findings from that study are now available and incorporated within this chapter.

IV. MOUNTAIN GOAT MANAGEMENT GOALS

The statewide goals for mountain goats are:

1. Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage mountain goats and their habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations.
2. Manage mountain goats for a variety of recreational, educational and aesthetic purposes including hunting, scientific study, cultural and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, wildlife viewing, and photography.
3. Enhance statewide mountain goat populations and manage goats for a sustained yield.

V. ISSUE STATEMENTS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

Population Management

Issue Statement:

Mountain goat populations typically occur as meta-populations scattered across the landscape on "habitat islands" where topographic and vegetative characteristics are suitable for goats. The sizes and distribution of these islands of suitable habitats are just now being documented in Washington (Wells 2006 and other work in progress). Understanding the spatial relationship between these habitats and mountain goat use from a meta-population perspective is critical for sustainable management of mountain goats.

Objective 47:

Develop a map (and supporting documents) identifying population management units based on habitats and meta-population structure of mountain goats in Washington by 2011.

Strategies:

a. Develop a GIS model predicting quality and locations of suitable mountain goat habitats in Washington.
b. Develop a meta-population model for goats based on research findings of suitable habitats, goat movement, and population centers.
c. Re-define goat unit boundaries if spatial use patterns of distinct populations are inconsistent with current unit boundaries.

Issue Statement:

Mountain goat populations are sensitive to over-exploitation because of their low population growth rate and relatively low densities (Hamel et al. 2006, Festa-Bianchet and Côté 2008). As such, assessing the status of each mountain goat population annually is necessary to ensure sustainability.

Objective 48:

Monitor population demographics of mountain goats at a level where declines in population size can be detected within 3-years or less.

Strategies:

a. Survey all hunted goat populations annually to estimate population size.
b. Manage local goat abundance at the population management unit level.
c. Continue using demographic data from annual surveys and population modeling to assess long-term viability of mountain goat populations.
d. Incorporate demographic data from Washington mountain goats into population models as opportunities become available.

Issue Statement:

Mountain goat populations have declined dramatically in some portions of the North Cascades. Research findings suggest historical hunting levels may have been too high and unsustainable for goats. As such, many of the areas that were historically hunted have been closed to hunting for several years. Although research on other potential causes of declines would be beneficial, there is a need to develop strategies for recovering the populations in these areas.

Objective 49:

Implement management strategies that result in a detectable increasing trend in mountain goat abundance in the North Cascades by 2015.

Strategies:

a. Maintain hunting closures in population management unit areas with less than 100 goats.

b. As new information becomes available about the cause of goat declines, pursue strategies to mitigate those causes.
c. Develop an implementation document by December 2009 for relocating goats to vacant suitable habitats or augmenting depressed goat populations. The document should include at a minimum:
    - Rationale and justification for relocation
    - Priority areas for relocation
    - List of collaborating groups, agencies, and tribes
    - Source populations for relocation and impacts of removals on source population
    - Time line for relocation
    - Monitoring plan

d. Develop cooperative agreements with Tribes and land managers (e.g., U.S. Forest Service, Park Service) for habitat enhancement projects, harvest allocation and reporting agreements, and translocation efforts.

Recreation Management

Issue Statement:

Mountain goat populations are sensitive to over-harvest (Hamel et al. 2006, Festa-Bianchet and Côté 2008); goats have a low reproductive potential, extended parental care, low juvenile survival, and older age of sexual maturity in mountain goats. As a result, harvest levels for mountain goats should be restricted to levels that approximate recruitment and the status of goat populations should be evaluated annually (Rice and Gay. in prep).

Objective 50:

Provide recreational hunting opportunities in individual mountain goat herds where harvest success averages ≥50% over a 3-year period, while at the same time goat population size remains stable or increasing.

Strategies:

a. Manage abundance and harvest on a population management unit level.
   Goat populations will be surveyed beginning at least three years before being hunted to determine population size and trend. For populations to be hunted, surveys must indicate a population size of at least 100 goats in a population management unit (Rice and Gay. in prep).
b. For herds meeting the above criteria, permits shall be issued to limit the goat harvest to 4% or less of the estimated local population (excluding kids) (Hebert and Turnbull 1977, Kuck 1977, Festa-Bianchet and Côté 2008, Rice and Gay. in prep).
c. For each hunted population, nanny harvest will be maintained at or below 30% of the total harvest. This will be accomplished by:
    i. Encouraging goat hunters to harvest males in a letter accompanying each permit.

ii. Requiring all goat hunters to view an educational video on mountain goat sex identification.
iii. Restricting hunting opportunity for populations with excess nanny harvest for three years of a 5-year period.

Enforcement

Issue Statement:

Mountain goats naturally occur as bands in relatively low-density meta-populations. The scattered nature of these bands, plus the marginal status of some specific mountain goat populations make illegal harvest or harassment potentially critical factors. To ensure the sustainability of specific sub-populations, and the long-term existence of the entire meta-populations, it is important to document all mortalities and minimize illegal harvest and harassment of mountain goats.

Objective 51:

Develop a procedure to account for all mountain goat harvest mortalities by 2010.

Strategies:

a. Require reporting of all harvested mountain goats.
b. Develop a harvest allocation and reporting agreement with Tribes.
c. Enforce regulations to limit illegal harvest and harassment of mountain goats.
d. Investigate the potential for harassment of mountain goats resulting from recreational activities.

Research

Issue Statement:

Mountain goat abundance has declined steadily over recent decades throughout much of their historic range.

Objective 52:

Develop peer-reviewed publications that describe why mountain goat populations have declined, how to monitor goat populations and makes recommendations on how to recover populations by 2010.

Strategies:

a. Analyze data from recently completed research.
b. Develop publications and reports with research cooperators summarizing results and making recommendations for management.

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MOOSE *(Alces alces)*

I. POPULATION STATUS AND TREND

The number of moose in Washington has increased from about 60 in 1972 850-1,000 in 2002, to 1,500-2,000 in 2008 corresponding to about a 9.6% annual increase in population size (Poelker 1972, Zender and Ferguson, pers. Comm.2008). This increase is the result of both increased moose density in prime habitats and colonization of moose into new areas. Today, moose occur in the northeastern counties of Ferry, Pend Oreille, Stevens, and Spokane (Figure 1). Moose are occasionally spotted in Chelan, Lincoln, Whitman, Okanogan, and Whatcom Counties, and a few dispersing animals have been documented in surrounding areas and in the Blue Mountains.

II. RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Moose hunting in Washington began in 1977 with three permits in the Selkirk Mountains. Since then, moose populations have increased and expanded and the number of permits has increased accordingly. Since 1977, moose hunting has been limited by permit and the demand for moose hunting is high. The number of applications for moose permits has ranged from 800–10,000, corresponding to about 100-900 applications/permit (2007 season).

Figure 1. Moose range in Washington as of 1997 (Johnson and Cassidy 1997).

Currently, moose hunts are by permit only and, if drawn, it is an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity (except antlerless hunts). Hunting season dates are October 1 - November 30 and hunters may use any legal equipment. Moose hunts are either “any moose” or “antlerless only”. In “any moose” hunts, the majority of the harvest is adult bulls. Hunters typically see seven moose/day and, as such, harvest success is high (over 90%;). All moose hunters are required to report their hunting activities, regardless of whether they harvest a moose or not.

III. DATA COLLECTION

The Department conducts aerial surveys of all moose populations once every 1 to 3-years. Surveys typically are conducted during early winter and data are used to estimate calf recruitment, sex ratio, and trend. In addition to surveys, the Department monitors trends in

harvest data, including number of hunters, total harvest, days hunted/kill, harvest success, moose seen while hunting, antler spread (if harvested a bull), and age of harvested moose.

IV. MOOSE MANAGEMENT GOALS

The statewide goals for moose are:

1. Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage moose and their habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations.
2. Manage moose for a variety of recreational, educational and aesthetic purposes including hunting, scientific study, cultural and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, wildlife viewing, and photography.
3. Manage statewide moose populations for a sustained yield.

V. ISSUE STATEMENTS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

Population Management

Issue Statement:

Currently, the status of moose populations is estimated through aerial surveys that are conducted on a three-year rotation (i.e., all units surveyed once every three years).

Objective 53:

Monitor population demographics of moose at a level where a 20% decline in population size can be detected within three years.

Strategies:

a. Conduct helicopter surveys for all moose population annually to estimate minimum abundance, bull:cow ratios, and cow:calf ratios.
b. Incorporate survey data into a sightability model to evaluation the population status of moose at a GMU level.
c. Continue to develop, test, and employ most effective and efficient survey techniques for moose.

Recreation Management

Issue Statement:

The demand for moose hunting opportunity exceeds the allowable harvest for sustainable moose populations. As such, the Department restricts moose harvest to a level compatible with long-term sustainability. In doing so, the Department manages moose harvest as a high quality hunting opportunity, with moderate densities of moose and ample numbers of mature bulls. The result is

a relatively high harvest success (over 90%) and post-season bull: cow ratios that are favorable for healthy moose populations.

Objective 54:

Provide recreational hunting opportunities in individual moose herds where harvest success averages ≥85% over a three year period, while at the same time moose population size remains stable or increasing.

Strategies:

a. Moose populations will be surveyed annually beginning at least two years before being hunted to determine size, composition, and trend.
b. Moose harvest will be prescribed as follows:
   - Maintain ≥90% adult bulls in total harvest (Boer and Keppie 1988).
   - Maintain 10-30% antlerless moose in total harvest in areas where moose present a threat to human safety or property damage (Boer and Keppie 1988).
c. Consider liberalizing or restricting moose hunting opportunity as indicated below:

Table 1. Moose harvest guidelines.

	Harvest		
Parameter [a]	**Liberalize**	**Acceptable**	**Restrict**
Average bull:100 cow ratio	>75 bulls	60-75 bulls	<60 bulls
Average calf:100 cow ratio[b]	>45 calves	30-45 calves	<30 calves
Median age of harvested bulls	>5.5 years	4.5-5.5 years	<4.5 years

[a] Averaged over a 3-year period
[b] Modified from Courtois and Lamontagne 1997

Issue Statement:

Since 1991, the average number of moose applications/permit has risen from 63 to as high as 458 applications perm permit in 2006. Given the high demand for hunting moose, there is a need for a fair and equitable approach for allocating moose permits while maintaining a quality hunt experience.

Objective 55:

As part of the 2009-11 hunting season regulation package, evaluate modification of the permit drawing that is supported by the majority of hunters.

Strategies:

a. Maintain moose hunting by permit only.*
b. Allow "once-during-a-lifetime" opportunity for moose hunters (except antlerless only moose hunts, and auction and raffle hunts).
c. Consider alternatives that may result in hunter support, and improve the odds of drawing a permit.

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BLACK BEAR *(Ursus americanus)*

I. POPULATION STATUS AND TREND

Washington State has an abundant and healthy black bear population. Estimates using population reconstruction suggest the statewide bear population is roughly 25,000-30,000 bears (Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife 1997). For management purposes, the state is divided into nine black bear management units (BBMUs) (Fig. 1). Harvest levels vary between BBMU depending on local population dynamics and conditions. To maintain stable bear populations, modifications to harvest levels are made on a three-year rotation. The percentage of females in the total harvest and median ages of males and females are used as indicators of exploitation (Beecham and Rohlman 1994).

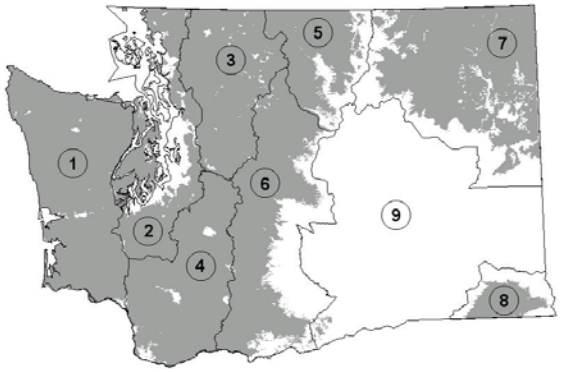

Figure 2. Black bear distribution and black bear management units (BBMU) in Washington, 2002

II. RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Black bear seasons changed considerably in 1996 when Washington voters passed Initiative 655 (which banned the use of bait and dogs for hunting black bear) in the November 1996 general election. Therefore, the use of bait and hounds for the hunting of black bear became illegal for the 1997 season. In an effort to mitigate the anticipated decrease in bear harvest, because of I-655, 1997 bear seasons were lengthened and the bag limit was increased in some areas. Legislation also was passed that provided the authority to the Fish and Wildlife Commission to reduce costs for black bear transport tags; an effort to increase the number of bear hunters and, therefore, bear harvest. As a result of these efforts, the post I-655 black bear harvest has stabilized similar to previous levels. During the first edition of the Game Management Plan (2003-2009), the majority of the hunting opportunity was in the fall, with a limited permit-only spring hunt in southeastern Washington. The Department extended the spring bear hunt opportunity in 2005 during a pilot damage hunt to address tree damage caused by bears on commercial timberlands in westerns Washington. Since 2003, the average harvest during fall and spring (excludes bears harvested under depredation permits) seasons were 1,549 and 21 bears, respectively.

Table 1. Statewide black bear harvest, hunter effort and median age information, 1991 - 2006.

								Median Age		
Year	Male	Female	Total	# hunters	Success	Hunter Days	Days per kill	Males	Females	% females
1991	876	503	1,379	10,839	13%	84,771	61	3.5	4.5	36%
1992	921	521	1,442	13,642	11%	98,434	68	4.5	4.5	36%
1993	986	521	1,507	12,179	12%	102,558	68	3.5	5.5	35%
1994	654	419	1,073	11,530	9%	110,872	103	3.5	4.5	39%
1995	850	368	1,218	11,985	10%	102,859	84	3.5	4.5	30%
1996	951	359	1,310	12,868	10%	104,431	80	4.5	5.5	27%
1997	546	298	844	11,060	8%	97,426	115	4.5	5.5	35%
1998	1,157	645	1,802	20,891	9%	216,456	120	4.5	5.5	36%
1999	757	349	1,106	37,033	3%	481,319	435	4.5	5.5	32%
2000	777	371	1,148	37,401	3%	296,849	259	4.0	6.0	32%
2001	924	515	1,439	25,188	5.7	230,431	160	3.5	5.0	36%
2002	1,133	592	1,725	24,844	6.9	219,428	127	4.5	6.5	34%
2003	983	583	1,566	22,510	7.0	192,544	123	3.5	5.5	37%
2004	1,093	561	1,654	21,573	7.7	186,626	113	4.0	5.5	34%
2005	940	393	1,333	20,724	6.4	172,527	129			29%
2006	1,061	581	1,642	21,801	7.5	168,237	103			35%

III. DATA COLLECTION

Assessing the status of a bear population is extremely difficult given their secretive nature. The Department tested the use bait station surveys as an index of relative bear abundance in the 1990s. However, an analysis of statistical power indicated that at the level of survey intensity (limited by funding), managers would not be able to detect a change in bear abundance using bait stations (Rice et al. 2002). Based on those finding, the project was discontinued and no formal surveys were conducted between 1997 and 2005. Since 2005, the Department began experimenting with using adult female survivorship as an indicator to bear status (Clark 1999). During the last three years, the Department has radio-marked bears in central Washington and south Puget Sound.

IV. HUMAN-BEAR CONFLICT

Bears and humans are often in conflict given the distribution of bears in Washington and their adaptability to suburban environments. Approximately 300-500 human-bear interactions are documented annually (Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife 2007). There is a tendency to equate levels of human-bear interactions with bear abundance. However, bear nuisance and damage activity may not be a good indicator of population status, but more likely reflects the variability of environmental conditions. For example, in 1996 human-bear complaints were at an all time high, the same year Washington experienced a late spring with poor forage conditions for black bear, followed by a poor fall huckleberry crop.

V. MANAGEMENT

Washington has a unique and challenging situation when it comes to management of our black bear population. Washington is the smallest of the 11 western states, yet has the second highest human population; a population that continues to grow at record levels. Washington also has one of the largest black bear populations in all of the lower 48 states. Given that approximately 75% of the black bear habitat is in federal or private industrial ownership, a large portion of core black bear habitat is relatively secure. This means that the long-term outlook for black bear is generally good.

VI. BLACK BEAR MANAGEMENT GOALS

The statewide goals for black bear are:

1. Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage black bear and their habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations.
2. Minimize threats to public safety and property damage from black bears, while at the same time maintaining a sustainable and viable bear population.
3. Manage black bear for a variety of recreational, educational and aesthetic purposes including hunting, scientific study, cultural and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, wildlife viewing, and photography.
4. Manage statewide black bear populations for a sustained yield.
5. Improve our understanding of predator-prey relationships and the potential impacts of black bears on key prey populations.

VII. ISSUE STATEMENTS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

Population Management

Issue Statement:

Managers often use sex and age structure data of harvested bears as an index to population growth (Pelton 2000). However, examining just sex and age structure may provide misleading interpretations (Caughley 1974, Bunnell and Tait 1981, Garshelis 1991, Clark 1999). That is, the age structure of a declining bear population can be the same as the age structure in an increasing population. In addition to this shortcoming, there is often a time lag between when a population begins to decline and when that decline is evident in sex and age structure data (Harris 1984). In some cases, by the time a decline is detected, bear numbers may have been reduced to a point where it could take as long as 15-years to recover the population. However, detecting a decline early can enable managers to make a quicker recovery or retain stability.

Sensitivity analyses of bear populations indicate that adult female and cub survival are the most influential parameters to population growth rates (Clark 1999). As such, managers should focus

survey efforts on improving the estimates of these parameters, while at the same time evaluating harvest data to assess long-term trends (Clark 1999).

Objective 56:

Monitor population demographics of black bears at a level where a 20% change in population size can be detected within three years or less.

Strategies:

a. Develop and test a survey method using female and cub survival of bears as an indicator to population status.
b. Estimate population growth using data from long-term monitoring projects, research projects, and modeling.
c. Evaluate the use of population reconstruction from ages of harvested bears as a indicator to population status.
d. Use sex and age ratios of harvest bears as secondary indicator of population change.

Recreation Management

Public Opinions

Issue Statement:

Public support for hunting black bears is lower than support for hunting several other big game animals (Duda et al. 2002, 2008). Recognizing public and hunter attitudes, WDFW faces challenging decisions about balancing hunter opportunities and public safety with public attitudes.

Objective 57:

Develop a whitepaper by 2010 describing the objectives, rationale, and public opinions for implementing spring bear hunt opportunity in Washington.

Strategies:

a. Provide strategies to mitigate problems caused by bears that correspond to methods supported by the public (see objective 60).
b. In the annual Status and Trend report, publish the results of strategies implemented under the population objectives and public safety objectives.
c. Make any changes to current bear hunting on a gradual basis and promote public involvement.

Harvest Guidelines

Issue Statement:

Hunting is the largest source of mortality for hunted bear populations (Bunnell and Tait 1985, Pelton 2000). Coupled with the low reproductive potential of bears, this makes bear populations especially sensitive to over-exploitation. For that reason, managers use a variety of biological and population trend data to assess the impacts of hunting on bear populations. In Washington, managers have used sex and age data from harvested bears as an indicator of exploitation levels (Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife 1997). The premise of this method is based on the vulnerability of different sex and age classes of black bears (Beecham and Rohlman 1994). As ages of harvest bears decline, and percentage of females in the harvested population increases, the exploitation level of the bear population is increasing. A drawback of this method is that sex and age data alone are not necessarily accurate measures of population status. A supplemental measure of population status is needed to better manage bear populations in Washington.

Objective 58:

Provide recreational hunting opportunities to annually harvest at least 800–1,200 black bears statewide, while at the same time maintaining a sustainable bear population in each BBMU.

Strategies:

a. Provide black bear hunting opportunities in each BBMU, with focused harvest in areas where public safety, property damage, and pet and livestock depredation are evident.
b. Develop harvest criteria that incorporate survey data from monitoring female and cub survivorship.
c. Until more robust harvest criteria are developed, consider liberalizing or restricting bear hunting opportunity in each BBMU as indicated below:

Table 2. Black bear harvest guidelines.

	Harvest		
Parameter	**Liberalize**	**Acceptable**	**Restrict**
% Females in harvest	< 35%	35-39%	> 39%
Median age of harvested females	> 6 years	5-6 years	< 5 years
Median age of harvested males	> 4 years	2-4 years	< 2 years

Note: Thresholds outlined in strategy "c" above are currently implemented.

Issue Statements:

Impacts to black bear populations and other native wildlife. The harvest guidelines above favor a stable and healthy bear population and are consistent with long-term sustainability. The corresponding bear population should remain at or near current levels and it is unlikely it will result in greater impacts to other wildlife species (i.e., deer and elk) or habitat communities.

Black bear harvest impacts on native species. The public has voiced concern about potential impacts of black bear hunting has on grizzly bears. With the prohibition on the use of dogs and

bait for recreational hunting of bears, potential impacts to grizzly bears caused by dogs or bait was greatly reduced. However, there is a need to educate black bear hunters on how to identify and distinguish a black bear from a grizzly bear.

Objective 59:

Provide educational materials to 50% of black bear hunters in the Selkirk and North Cascades grizzly bear recovery zone by 2013.

Strategies:

a. Provide educational brochures to black bear hunters in areas with a known grizzly bear population.
b. If black bear hunting results in repeated deaths to grizzly bears, develop additional strategies to minimize the impacts to grizzly bears recovery.

Public Safety

Issue Statement:

A primary objective of WDFW is to protect people from dangerous wildlife, including black bears. While guaranteeing that black bears will never negatively impact people is impossible, the Department does implement activities to reduce human-bear interactions.

Objective 60:

Minimize negative human-bear interactions so that the "number of negative interactions per capita" is constant or declining over the life of this plan.

Strategies:

a. Develop a black bear education and outreach plan by 2012.
b. Distribute educational materials to key entities and locations.
c. Evaluate the efficacy of capture-relocation and hazing of problem bears for mitigating conflict.
d. Utilize agency kill authority and depredation permits for problem bear incidents.
e. Promote rules, activities, and programs (e.g., fines, bear proof containers) that reduce the likelihood of bears encountering accessible garbage.

Timber Damage

Issue Statement:

Bear foods are scarce during spring, particularly those with a high nutritional value. Consequently, bears often forage on the sapwood of coniferous trees. During spring, sapwood is one of the few foods available to bears and it has a relatively high sugar content compared to other available foods. Trees with the highest sugar content, hence preferred by bears, are those

with high growth rates, such as trees on private industrial timberlands. Bear selection for sapwood is so acute that industrial timberlands can experience damage that exceeds one-third of the trees in a given stand. These damage rates can result in economic losses for landowners. For that reason, private landowners of industrial timberlands seek ways to mitigate tree damage caused by bears.

Objective 61:

Provide informational materials/brochures to help timber owners with: validating and anticipating bear damage; use of non-lethal methods to avoid damage; and lethal removal options that emphasize the use of licensed hunters. Develop a minimum of one of these brochures each year beginning in 2011. .

Strategies:

a. Develop an educational tool for validating bear damage.
b. Develop survey protocols for timber owners to determine the level and severity of bear damage over time.
c. Provide educational information on how to avoid timber damage by bears.
d. Encourage the use of non-lethal methods for responding to timber damage by bears.
e. Provide focused recreational bear hunting seasons in spring to mitigate timber damage by bears.
f. Implement an incentive-based program by 2010 for timber owners to use spring hunting seasons with licensed hunters in lieu of bear removals using contracted hunters or bear feeding programs.
g. Issue a bear depredation permit when one of the following criteria is met:
    - $\geq$ 30 trees peeled in a spring and trees are in a clumping pattern within a stand.*
    - $\geq$ 30 trees peeled over an ongoing 3-year period and trees in a clumping pattern within a stand* of pre-commercially-thinned timber, $\leq$ 30 years of age.

*The current threshold for issuing bear depredation permits for removal of bears on private industrial timberlands is <30 trees/stand. The threshold was developed jointly in 1997 by WDFW and Washington Forest Protection Association.

Predator-prey dynamics

Issue Statement:

Black bears predominately eat vegetation. However, in some areas, a sizable portion of their diet is deer and elk, particularly deer fawns and elk calves. Bears have naturally evolved with deer and elk; so even in these scenarios predation rates usually do not result in significant impacts to ungulate growth rates. However, bear predation has the potential to impact prey populations under various environmental conditions.

Objective 62:

Develop a report summarizing the current state of scientific knowledge about black bear predation on ungulates (i.e., deer and elk), the potential impacts to ungulate population growth, and management options for black bears in Washington by 2010.

Strategies:

a. Conduct a literature and peer review on impacts of black bear predation of ungulates.
b. Develop a list of potential areas in Washington where black bear predation might be impacting deer or elk population growth.
c. Discuss black bear-prey management strategies and options with other state, federal, and tribal managers.
d. Develop a peer reviewed study design for measuring the impacts of black bear predation on ungulates in the Blue Mountains by 2011.

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COUGAR *(Puma concolor)*

I. POPULATION STATUS AND TREND

Cougar occur throughout most of the forested regions of Washington State, encompassing approximately 88,497 km^2 or 51% of the state (Figure 1). For management purposes, the state is divided into nine cougar management units (CMUs)(Figure 1). No reliable estimate of statewide cougar abundance is available for Washington. In 2003, two techniques were used to provide an approximate range of statewide cougar abundance. A rough estimate from population reconstruction indicated that the minimum number of cougars in Washington might be around 900 animals. An extrapolation across the state with the highest cougar density reported in the literature suggested the maximum number of cougars in Washington might be around 4,100 animals. Since 2003, cougar population size has been assessed in three project areas in Washington. Currently, the best available estimate of statewide abundance is from an extrapolation from those projects, corresponding to about 1,900 to 2,100 animals (excluding kittens).

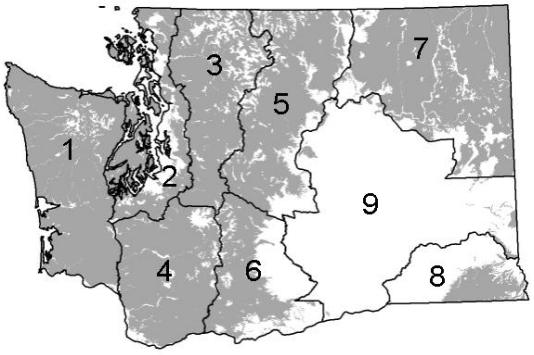

Figure 1. Distribution of cougars (gray) and cougar management units (CMUs) (numbers) in Washington.

Cougars generally are shy, secretive animals and occur throughout a variety of habitat types. Because of their reclusive nature, few people actually encounter a cougar in the wild or have an opportunity to harvest one. As a result, cougar populations can be fairly resilient to moderate-heavy exploitation. This point was demonstrated during the bounty seasons of the early 1900s, when cougar populations persisted during years of widespread persecution.

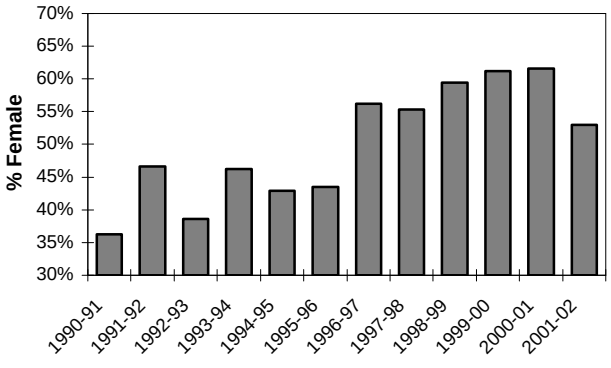

Figure 2. Percent female in statewide cougar harvest, 1990-2002, Washington.

Cougar populations and management emphasis have visibly changed during the past 12 years in Washington State. From 1987 to 1996, cougar harvest was conservative and was controlled by permit only hunting. The majority of the cougars harvested were done so with the aid of dogs. As a result, hunters tended to be selective, harvesting mostly males (Fig. 2) and older aged animals (Fig. 3). In 1996, Voter Initiative 655 banned the use of dogs for recreational cougar hunting and cougar harvest changed dramatically. From 1996 to 2003, the majority of cougars were harvested either as opportunistic encounters by deer-elk hunters and cougars, or using tracking and calling techniques. These harvest methods are not as selective as using dogs. Consequently, hunters harvested more females (Fig. 2) and younger cougars (Fig. 4) from 1996 to 2003.The changes in harvest vulnerability for specific sex and age classes of cougars have important implications for cougar populations. Without the aid of dogs, the potential for negatively impacting cougar populations is greater due to the shift to harvesting more females and younger animals (as well as more total animals) (Martorello and Beausoleil 2006, Lambert et al. 2003).

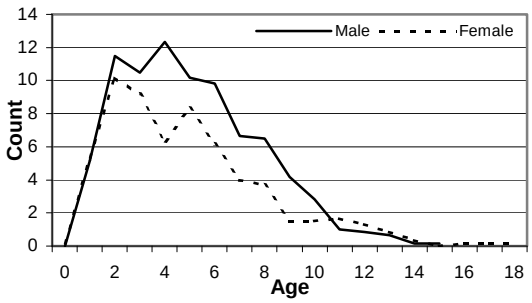

Figure 3. Age structure of harvested cougar using selective harvest methods, Washington.

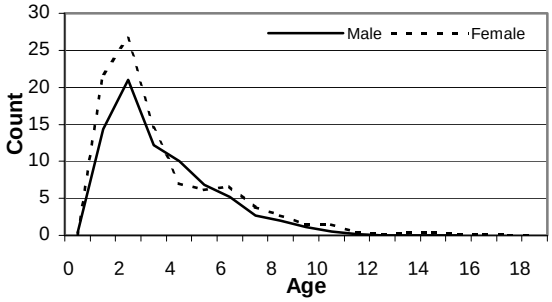

Figure 4. Age structure of harvested cougar using non-selective harvest methods, Washington.

Since 1996, WDFW has recorded information on human-cougar interactions. Of particular concern is the level of human safety incidents, and pet and livestock depredations. Recognizing the widespread scope of the issue and its importance to cougars and people in the future, current cougar management goals include maintaining sustainable cougar populations and reducing human-cougar interactions. In some cases, reducing cougar populations to a lower, but sustainable level may help achieve both of these goals. From 2004-2007, the Department experimented with reducing cougar populations to address public safety needs and reduce pet/livestock depredation. Results from the pilot program suggested that there might be a correlation between reduced cougar populations and reduced complaint levels, but it's unclear if it's a cause-and-effect relationship (WDFW 2008). WDFW plans to continue the pilot program until spring 2011 under the legislative authority of ESHB 2438. Research is also being conducted by University of Washington and Washington State University investigating a multitude of factors that might influence human-cougar interactions.

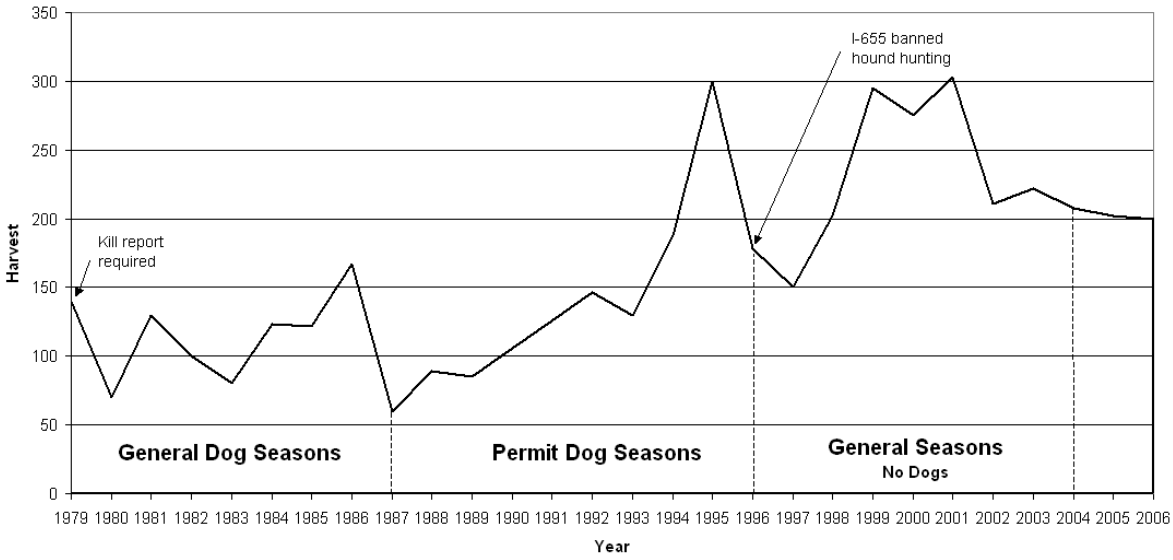

Figure 5. Trends in cougar season structure and harvest in Washington, 1979-2006.

II. RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Cougar were classified as a bounty animal in Washington State from 1935-1960. They were reclassified as a predator from 1961-1965, and again as a game animal from 1966-present (Figure 5). The number of hunters purchasing a cougar tag has increased in Washington, largely an artifact of changes in license cost, license structure, bag limits, and season length. Because of the season structure changes, the number of recreational days open to cougar hunting has increased from a low of 30 days in 1996 to a high of 228 days in 1999. This has, in part, resulted in an increase in the number of cougars harvested annually.

III. DATA COLLECTION

The majority of data collected on cougar is from harvested animals. A mandatory carcass check is required for all harvested cougars, where data samples are collected including; kill date and location, sex, age (from tooth analysis), physical condition, weight, DNA (via tissue sample), and hunter information. From these kill data the Department monitors kill date and location, total kill, and sex and age composition of the total harvest.

In addition to harvest data, the Department also collects demographic data from various ongoing cougar research projects in the state. Using these data and population modeling methods, the Department monitors the status of cougar populations in a few areas of the state and assess the impacts of hunting on cougar populations. Information from these study areas may then be extrapolated to other similar areas in Washington.

IV. COUGAR MANAGEMENT GOALS

The statewide goals for cougar are:

1. Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage cougar and their habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations.
2. Minimize threats to public safety and private property from cougars.
3. Manage cougar for a variety of recreational, educational and aesthetic purposes including hunting, scientific study, cultural and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, wildlife viewing, and photography.
4. Manage statewide cougar populations for a sustained yield.
5. Improve our understanding of predator-prey relationships and the potential impacts of cougar on key prey populations.

V. ISSUE STATEMENTS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

Zone Management

Issue Statement:

The environmental factors (e.g., prey density and human density) that influence cougar populations are not uniform across Washington, nor is the level of interaction that cougars have with people or even other wildlife. For example, in some regions cougars exist in fairly remote areas and have minimal interaction with people, while in others regions cougars exist on the fringe of suburban environments and have frequent interactions with people. In some regions it may be excellent cougar habitat, but there is a long-standing history of cougar depredation on livestock. While in other regions, cougar populations may be at carrying capacity with minimal conflict with people, but cougar predation on recovering prey populations is a concern. Each of these scenarios has different management needs and would likely have different population objectives and even harvest strategies. One way to facilitate these differences is through a zone management approach, where the population objectives and potential management actions match the resource need in a particular zone.

Objective 63:

Transition to a zone management approach for managing cougar by 2010.

Strategies:

a. Implement zones that correspond to each CMU or portions of CMUs.
b. Implement population objectives outlines in Table 1.
c. Collect public attitudes on cougar management issues for priority zones by 2012.
d. Implement hunting season options that correspond to management needs and local public preferences for each zone.

Population Objectives

Issue Statement:

Wildlife managers are frequently asked to balance the desire for abundant wildlife populations and other equally important objectives. For example, white-tailed deer managers often manage herds below carrying capacity to reduce deer damage to crops, but at a level that is still sustainable and healthy. Given the variety of interests in cougars, cougars are managed in some areas of Washington to balance the need for public safety and protection of property, while at the same time maintaining long-term sustainable populations.

Objective 64:

Manage cougar populations through appropriate harvest strategies within each CMU as indicated in Table 1 over the life of this plan.

Table 1. Cougar population objectives for each CMU.

CMU		Objective
1	Coastal	Maintain a stable cougar population
2	Puget Sound	Manage cougar population at a level that increases public safety and protection of property (see objectives 71 and 75)
3	North Cascades	Maintain a stable cougar population
4	South Cascades	Maintain a stable cougar population
5	East Cascades North	Maintain a stable cougar population at 2007 level.
6	East Cascades South	Maintain a stable cougar population
7	Northeastern	Maintain a stable cougar population at 2007 level.
8	Blue Mountains	Maintain a stable cougar population
9	Columbia Basin	Unsustainable; not considered suitable cougar habitat

Strategy:

a. For each CMU, implement a female harvest quota that corresponds to the cougar population, objective.
b. For each CMU, develop a male harvest guideline for a maximum sustainable harvest while at the same time providing a stable, healthy male age structure.
c. Modify harvest strategies and objectives consistent with changing prey population levels and cougar population trends.

Impacts:

Prey impacts on cougar. It is unlikely that cougar populations will be negatively impacted by management strategies for deer, elk, and other prey species. The current population levels for deer and elk populations are compatible with the cougar population objectives for each CMU.

Cougar impacts on prey. The cougar population objectives may impact some prey species. Because of a lower harvest level of female cougar in some CMUs, cougar populations are expected to stabilize and may increase in some local areas. Any local increases in cougars will result in more predation by cougar on ungulates (primarily deer and elk). However, if there is an

increase in the predation rate, it's unknown whether the increase would be additive (additional prey killed by cougars causing total prey mortality to increase) or compensatory (as predation by cougars increases, another prey mortality source decreases, so total mortality remains constant), or whether the net result would be large enough to detect. While there is evidence that cougar populations can impact a prey population's growth rate, this is typically associated with a small, isolated prey population, or a prey population that suffers from other environmental stressors.

Some hunters voiced concerns about the impacts of cougar predation on deer and elk herds. The primary prey species for cougars are deer and elk, and in some cases cougar populations can influence the growth rates of deer and elk populations. Increased cougar harvest is a management action that can be used to increase deer or elk populations. When Washington citizens were asked about their attitudes about managing cougars to increase deer and elk populations, support was low (Fig. 6). Recognizing the role of cougars in the ecosystem and public attitudes, WDFW manages for stable cougar populations in most management units. However, cougar management objectives and strategies do include some flexibility to address the recovery of low prey populations. In these situations, local cougar populations can be managed to enhance recovery efforts of prey species as long as the total cougar harvest within the respective CMU stays within the female harvest guidelines in Table 2.

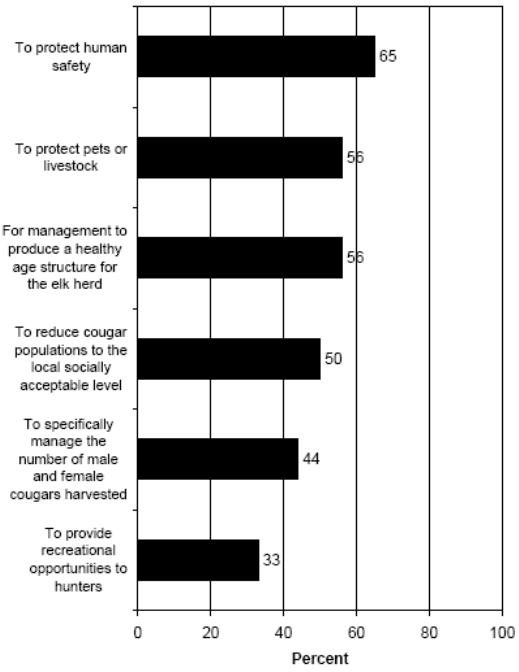

Figure 6. During a general public survey, the percent of respondents that supported cougar hunting for specific purposes (Duda et al. 2008).

Population Status

Issue Statement:

Historically, trends in sex ratios and ages of harvested cougar were used to evaluate the impact of cougar harvest on long-term sustainability. However, trend analyses are only useful when the parameters being monitored are proven valid indicators of population status, and when the collection methods are constant overtime (Caughley 1977). Today, neither of these two requirements has been satisfied for cougars in most CMUs. The lack of a valid population indicator, coupled with limited biological data, results in many uncertainties about cougar populations in Washington, including:

- The number of cougars in each CMU.
- The trend in cougar population size.
- The rate of population increase or decrease.
- The age and sex structure of the living cougar population.
- Cougar population responses to harvest.

- Age and sex specific survival rates.
- The effects of hunter harvest and how that relates to natural mortality.

Given these uncertainties, there is a critical need for the collection of accurate and precise biological data on cougar populations, and the development of a robust population indicator.

Objective 65:

Monitor the population demographics of cougar at a level where a significant change in population size can be detected within three years or less for CMUs 5, 7, & 8. Others may be added if appropriate due to high complaint levels or where hunts with dogs are allowed.

Strategies:

a. To ensure population sustainability, mark and monitor cougars in CMUs where the objective is to maintain the cougar population at 2007 levels (CMUs 5 and 7).
b. Estimate cougar population size using data from marked cougar, capture-recapture experiments, and population modeling in CMU 8 (Blue Mountains).
c. Develop inventory and monitoring protocols for cougar.
d. Estimate the impacts of harvest on cougar populations through modeling.
e. Evaluate the age structure of living cougar population in CMUs 5 and 7, and implement management actions that result in a stable, healthy age distribution.

Predator-prey dynamics

Issue Statement:

Cougar populations exist within a complex balance between prey availability, habitat quality and quantity, social behaviors, dispersal, natural mortality, and human-induced mortality and disturbance. Of these, the relationship between cougars and ungulates is central to cougar population dynamics. Cougars are effective and efficient predators and average about one deer kill (or deer equivalent) every 10 days (Ackerman et al. 1986). This has important implications when considering an ungulate population's ability to support cougars and the impacts of cougars on ungulate populations. The intricate details of the predator-prey relationship are critical for managing cougars and several questions remain, including: how carry capacity for cougars change as ungulate densities fluctuate, the impacts to ungulate populations when cougar abundance is high or low, the role of habitat quality, fragmentation, and connective corridors on the cougar-ungulate relationship. By understanding these relationships wildlife managers will be able to manage cougars with greater scientific certainty.

Objective 66:

Develop a peer reviewed research proposal by 2010 to determine the effects of manipulating cougar – population level impacts to ungulate population objectives.

Strategies:

e. Develop a study proposal and seek grants and other funding support.
f. Initiate cougar population monitoring in the Blue Mountains.
g. Manipulate cougar harvest strategies and monitor changes to prey population levels.

Sources and Sinks

Issue Statement:

Cougar population size is not constant throughout all areas of Washington State. Factors that influence cougar populations, such as prey densities and human-induced mortality, vary from region to region and certain areas of the state may act as cougar "source" or "sink" areas. "Sources" are those areas where prey densities are relatively high and cougar mortality is low. As a result, the area acts as a source population for cougars to migrate out of and into surrounding habitats (Lindzey et al. 1988, Spreadbury et al. 1996, Spencer et al. 2001). "Sinks" are those areas where prey densities are relatively low and cougar mortality is high. As a result, the area acts as a sink where cougars that migrate into the area have a low chance of surviving (Clark 1999, Logan and Sweanor 2001).

The distribution and effects of source and sink areas are important for managing cougars, particularly if they are counter to the population objectives for the surrounding area. The existence of source and sink areas, and the potential effects, have not been investigated in Washington State.

Objective 67:

Identify a minimum of four cougar habitats that act as a population source or sink by 2011.

Strategies:

a. Evaluate cougar survival rates in areas that appear to be problematic or where population objectives are not being met.
b. Evaluate the impacts of source or sink habitats on human-cougar conflicts.
c. Identify priority areas where management changes may be necessary.

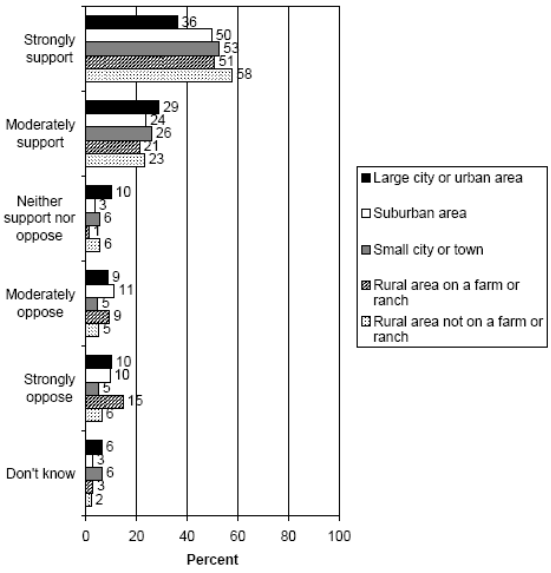

Figure 6a. During a general public survey, the percentage respondents supporting weighting local public preference more than statewide input for local cougar issues (Duda et a. 2008)

Recreational Opportunity

Public Opinions

Issue Statement:

Public attitudes on cougar management and hunting vary from region to region in Washington.

Recognizing those differences, WDFW asked the general public if they supported weighting local public preferences more than statewide input for local cougar management issues. Overall, 74% (n=805) of respondents supported weighting local public preferences. The relatively high support also appeared to be consistent regardless if respondents were from an urban, suburban, or rural areas (Fig. 6a).

Objective 68:

Implement harvest strategies that are consistent with the biological status of cougars and local public preferences.

Strategies:

a. Provide a variety of harvest strategies (e.g., general, dog, and permit season options, season dates) to the public that fosters local input for selecting the preferred strategy.
b. Implement a public education program on cougar management and public safety.
c. Provide strategies to mitigate problem cougars that correspond to methods supported by the local public.
d.
e. In the annual Status and Trend Report, publish the results of strategies implemented under the population objectives and public safety objectives.

Harvest Guidelines

Issue Statement:

In general, cougars are managed to protect human safety and property, and provide recreational hunting opportunities, while at the same time ensuring long-term sustainability. To accomplish this cougars are managed geographically in nine CMUs and the management needs vary based on the biological and public safety issues in each CMU.

To enhance this type of management system, harvest guidelines for female cougars were established for each CMU (Ross and Jalkotzy 1996). These harvest guidelines were developed using two methods: by evaluating data on past harvest and age-sex structure of harvested cougar, and developing a science based population growth model to evaluate the impacts of harvest on cougar populations. For each CMU (except Puget Sound), the guidelines correspond to a female harvest necessary to achieve a stable and sustainable cougar population at current levels (Ross and Jalkotzy 1996, Logan and Sweanor 2000).

Objective 69:

Provide recreational opportunities to target the annual harvest of 45-60 female cougars statewide, while at the same time maintaining a sustainable cougar population in each cougar management unit (excluding CMU 2 and 9).

Strategies:

a. Establish recreational hunting seasons that target the harvest quota identified in Table 2.
b. Update harvest guidelines every three years, corresponding to the three year hunting season package.
c. Update the quotas annually as appropriate, with a priority on the areas included in pilot cougar hunts allowing the use of dogs.
d. For each CMU, develop a male harvest guideline for a maximum sustainable harvest (if necessary) while at the same time providing a stable, healthy male age structure.
e. Consider creating a male-only season for cougar hunts with the aid of dogs or other regulations to maintain adult male objectives within a CMU.

Table 2. Female cougar harvest guidelines [a] by Cougar Management Unit (CMU).

CMU	Objective	Female Harvest Quota	**Average Female Harvest 2002-2005**
1. Coastal	Stable	9	7
2. Puget Sound	Maintain public safety	No limit	5
3. North Cascades	Stable	7	3
4. South Cascades	Stable	8	9
5. East Cascades North	Stable	11	25
6. East Cascades South	Stable	4	5
7. Northeastern	Stable	10	41
8. Blue Mountains	Stable	4	5
9. Columbia Basin	Unsustainable	No limit	3
Statewide		**53**	**103**

[a] Quotas are based on current biological information and harvest levels during the past 3-years; quotas include recreational harvest, depredation kills, and public safety cougar removals. However, quotas may be exceeded for depredation kills and public safety cougar removals.

Impacts:

The public has voiced concern about impacts of cougar hunting on non-target species (i.e., lynx or grizzly bear). With the prohibition on the use of dogs for recreational hunting on all native cats and bears in 1996, potential impacts to non-target species caused by dogs was greatly reduced. The only exception to this is the potential impacts to lynx or grizzly bears during public safety cougar removals, when it's lawful to use dogs to pursue cougar. However, the potential for an encounter between dogs and these listed species is low given the narrow geographical focus of the removals, lynx, and grizzly bears, and the relatively low number of participants. In addition, the timing of the cougar removals (Dec.–Mar.) corresponds to the winter dormancy period for bears, thereby greatly diminishing any potential impact to grizzly bears. Recognizing that there is some potential to encounter a lynx, specific educational materials that outline steps to minimize impacts to lynx will be provided to all cougar removal participants in lynx habitat.

Issue Statement:

To properly manage cougar populations for sustainability, prevent over harvest, and achieve public safety goals, it's imperative to know how many animals are lethally removed each year, the kill location, and biological data related to the animal (e.g., age, sex, weight).

Objective 70:

Account for all human related cougar mortalities every year.

Strategies:

a. Require mandatory carcass check of all harvested cougar and provide a summary in the harvest report each year.*
b. Mark all harvested cougar with a unique pelt identification tag.*
c. Collect biological information from all harvested cougar.*
d. By 2009, implement a mandatory reporting system for all cougar hunters regardless if they harvested a cougar or not.

Public Safety

Issue Statement:

A primary objective of WDFW is to protect people from dangerous wildlife, including cougars. While guaranteeing that cougars will never negatively impact people is impossible, the Department does implement activities that attempt to minimize human-cougar interactions in areas with a demonstrated history of conflict (Conover 2001).

Objective 71:

Minimize negative human-cougar interactions so that the "number of interactions per capita" is constant or declining from 2007 levels.

Strategies:

a. Distribute educational materials to key entities and locations.
b. Encourage recreational cougar harvest in areas with demonstrated human-cougar interactions.
c. Conduct public safety cougar removals and hunts in GMUs with a demonstrated history of human-cougar interactions.
d. Implement actions identified in agency policy for problem cougar incidents.

Research

Issue Statement:

Cougars and people live in close proximity to each other in several areas of the state, making the potential for conflict high. Unfortunately, little information is known about cougar populations, particularly in suburban environments. Understanding cougar dynamics in these environments is critical, as the potential for conflict will likely increase as human populations continue to increase and expand into rural environments (Spencer et al. 2001).

Objective 72:

Develop a report that describes the demographic and behavioral differences between cougar populations in suburban versus rural environments by 2014.

Strategies:

a. Develop publications documenting the results of completed research.
b. Utilize research findings to modify policy and management as appropriate.
c. Update educational materials to incorporate research findings.
d. Investigate the role of corridor design for facilitating or discouraging cougar movements.
e. Determine the relationship between the level of human-cougar conflict in a stable versus unsustainable cougar population.
f. Evaluate the propensity of specific sex and age class of cougar to be involved in human-cougar conflict.

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WATERFOWL (Family *Anatidae*)

I. POPULATION STATUS AND TREND

Washington provides wintering habitat for approximately 850,000 ducks, 125,000 geese, and 8,000 swans annually. In addition, the state provides habitat for approximately 150,000 breeding ducks and 50,000 breeding geese each spring and summer (see Figures 1 and 2). The Pacific Flyway waterfowl population contains almost six million ducks, geese, and swans, and many of these birds pass through the state during fall and spring.

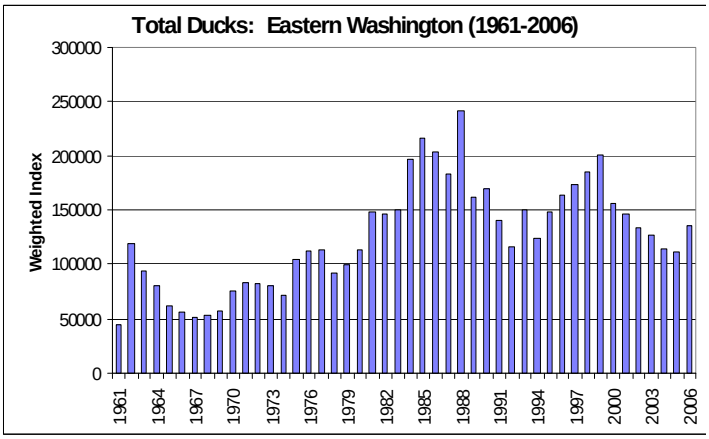

Figure 3. Eastern Washington breeding ducks.

Duck management programs are complex, due to the wide variety of species that occur here. Ducks are classified in the subfamily *Anatinae*, and the 27 species occurring in Washington belong to 4 tribes and 12 genera. The most common duck species in the winter, in the harvest, and during breeding season is the mallard.

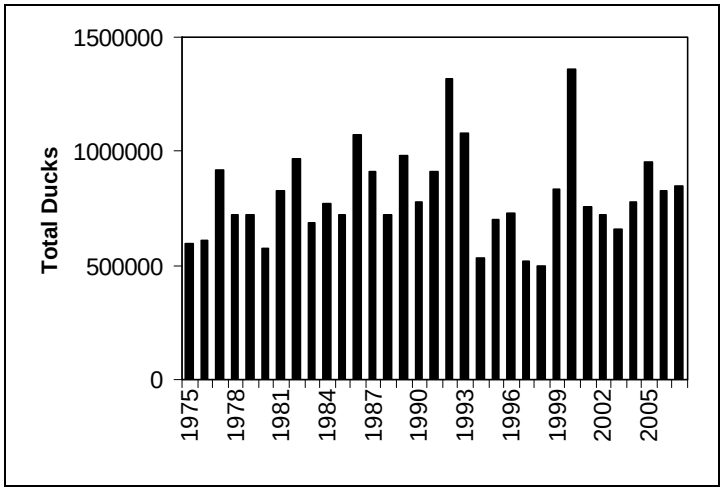

Figure 2. Washington midwinter waterfowl survey.

Management of Washington's geese and swans is also complex. Geese and swans are classified in the subfamily *Anserinae*, and Washington's 8 species belong to 2 tribes and 4 genera. Canada geese found in Washington include 7 subspecies. The most common goose during the breeding season and in the harvest is the western Canada goose. The most common swan using Washington wintering habitats is the tundra swan.

II. RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Waterfowl are hunted from the early September goose season through special damage hunts in March. Seasons are based on frameworks established by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), in conjunction with the Pacific Flyway Council (composed of wildlife agencies from the 11 western states). Over 30,000 hunters harvest 400,000 ducks and 50,000 geese each year in Washington, providing over 300,000 days of recreation annually. Washington ranks second

among the 11 Pacific Flyway states and usually ranks in the top ten states in the U.S. based on waterfowl harvested and number of hunters.

III. DATA COLLECTION

The Department conducts a variety of activities to estimate the size of the waterfowl population, production, migration patterns, and harvest. Breeding surveys are completed in April and May to measure status of the breeding population; waterfowl are marked during molting periods in the summer to document movements; duck production surveys are conducted in July to measure recruitment; migration counts are completed in October-December to track seasonal trends; and winter index counts are completed in January to document population status. Duck and goose hunter numbers and harvest are estimated using a mail questionnaire, special card survey, and mandatory harvest reports for some species (see Figures 3 and 4).

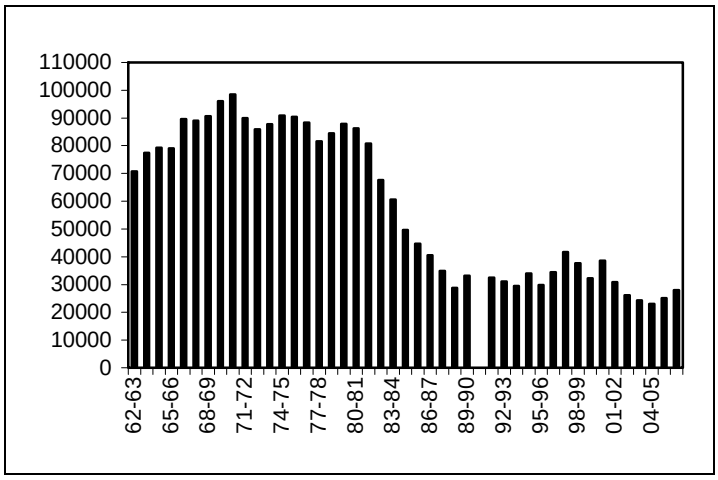

Figure 3. Washington waterfowl hunters.

IV. MANAGEMENT

Statewide management of Washington waterfowl is linked to numerous long-term interagency and international management programs. Although the USFWS has nationwide management authority for migratory birds, effective management of these resources depends on established cooperative State programs developed through the Pacific Flyway Council and North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) Joint Ventures. Goals and objectives described in this plan follow interagency and other cooperative planning efforts. Strategies identified in this plan will guide work plan activities and priorities, and must be accomplished to meet the goals and objectives.

V. WATERFOWL MANAGEMENT GOALS

The statewide goals for waterfowl are:

1. Manage statewide populations of waterfowl for a sustained yield consistent with Pacific Flyway management goals.
2. Manage waterfowl for a variety of recreational, educational and aesthetic purposes including hunting, scientific study, cultural and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, wildlife viewing, and photography.

3. Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage waterfowl and their habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations.

VI. ISSUE STATEMENTS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

Habitat Management

Issue Statement:

Wetlands and other waterfowl habitats are being lost throughout Washington due to development and conversion to other uses.

Objective 73:

Provide funding through state migratory bird stamp/print revenues and outside grants to conserve/enhance 1000 acres of new habitat annually for all migratory birds.

Strategies:

a. Determine habitat conservation and enhancement needs considering habitat trends, Joint Venture plans, literature, and regional expertise.
b. Solicit project proposals from regional staff and external organizations.
c. Utilize an evaluation team from a statewide cross-section of Department experts to rank projects.
d. The waterfowl advisory group, comprised of citizen stakeholders, will review project lists for prioritization.
e. Provide emphasis on projects to increase waterfowl recruitment in eastern Washington, wintering habitat and access in western Washington.
f. When allocating migratory bird stamp funds, consider fund allocation goals presented to the Legislature when the program was established: habitat acquisition - 48%; enhancement of wildlife areas - 25%; project administration - 18%; and food plots on private lands - 9%.
g. Develop a stamp/print program expenditure plan before the start of each new biennium.
h. Monitor effectiveness of projects through focused evaluation projects before and after implementation. Participate in organizations designed to deliver habitat improvements via multi-organization partnerships (e.g., Pacific Coast Joint Venture, Intermountain West Joint Venture).
i. Seek outside funding sources to leverage state migratory bird stamp revenues, through habitat improvement grants (e.g., National Coast Wetlands Conservation Grant, North American Wetlands Conservation Act, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program).

Population Management

Issue Statement:

Documentation of population size, movements, and mortality factors is difficult due to the highly migratory nature of waterfowl species.

Objective 74:

Manage waterfowl populations consistent with population objectives outlined in Table 1, developed considering NAWMP, Pacific Flyway Council, and Joint Venture plans.

Table 1. Waterfowl population objectives (3-yr averages, unless noted).

Species / subsp. / pop.	Area	Current Index (2007)	Population Objective	Measure
Mallard	N. America	8.3 million (annual)	8.7 million (annual)	breeding index
Pintail	N. America	3.3 million (annual)	6.3 million (annual)	breeding index
Western Canada goose	W. Wash.	2,057	1,500	nest index
Western Canada goose	E. Wash.	2,023	2,000	nest index
Cackling goose	Flyway	166,526	250,000	breeding index
Dusky Canada goose	Flyway	12,593	10,000-20,000	breeding index
Canada goose	L. Col. R. / W.V.	125,710	reduce 133K→107K	winter index
Wrangel Island snow goose	Skagit/Fraser	57,353 adults	50,000-70,000 adults	winter index
Wrangel Island snow goose	Flyway	130,000	120,000	spring index
Black brant	Flyway	123,063	150,000	winter index
Black brant	Wash. Bays	5,901	13,000	winter index
Western High Arctic brant	Skagit/Fraser	8,533	12,000	winter index
White-fronted goose	Flyway	483,190	300,000	breeding index
Tundra swan	Flyway	98,855	60,000	winter index
Trumpeter swan	Flyway	24,928 (every 5 yr.)	25,000 (every 5 yr.)	breeding index

Strategies:

a. Monitor annual status and trends of waterfowl populations through coordinated surveys with other agencies, including USFWS, flyway states, and Puget Sound Assessment and Monitoring Program (PSAMP).
b. Work with other agencies to improve estimates of waterfowl in other areas of the flyway important to Washington.
c. Provide ongoing training for new observers in waterfowl population estimation techniques.
d. Evaluate surveys to optimize accuracy and precision, including review of current literature and peer review.

Objective 75:

Document distribution, movements, and survival in accordance with flyway management goals by achieving annual banding objectives.

Strategies:

a. Band a minimum of 500 mallards each year to provide survival estimates.
b. Participate in dusky Canada goose banding programs to estimate distribution, survival, abundance, and derivation of harvest.
c. Conduct focused banding emphasis on select species (e.g., western Canada geese-ongoing, lesser Canada geese – 2008, scoters – 2008-2009, harlequins – 2009).

Objective 76:

Monitor mortality due to disease and contaminants each year and take corrective action as indicated.

Strategies:

a. Identify sources of disease and contaminants associated with mortality events (e.g., lead shot mortalities of swans in north Puget Sound)).
b. In cooperation with other management agencies, (e.g., National Wildlife Health Research Center, USFWS) take corrective action to minimize exposure to disease and contaminant sources).
c. Participate in surveillance for avian influenza, pending federal funding

Recreation Management

Issue Statement:

Federal harvest management strategies are not specific to Washington duck populations, although states are given more flexibility in developing goose harvest management strategies.

Objective 77:

Increase accuracy of surveys to measure harvest, number of hunters, and effort, accurate to ±10% at the 90% CI for each management unit.

Strategies:

a. Participate in federal Harvest Information Program (HIP) for migratory birds.
b. Provide supplemental estimates to determine regional differences in harvest (e.g., hunter questionnaire, daily card survey, mandatory harvest reports (brant, snow goose, SW Canada goose, seaduck), and brant color composition.

Objective 78:

Continue current policies to maximize duck hunting recreation consistent with USFWS Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) regulation packages, considering duck availability during fall and winter.

Strategies:

a. Establish regulations to maximize effective season days and bag limits, locating most season days later in the framework period:

Table 2. AHM Regulation Packages and Washington Season Timing.

	EASTERN WASHINGTON			WESTERN WASHINGTON		
Regulation package	**Days**	**Limit** total/mall /♀mall	**Season Timing***	**Days**	**Limit** total/mall/ ♀mall	**Season Timing***
Liberal	107	7/7/2	mid-Oct. thru late Jan.	107	7/7/2	mid-Oct. thru late Jan.
Moderate	93	7/5/2	mid-late Oct. – 9 days; remainder early-Nov. thru late-Jan.	86	7/5/2	mid-late Oct. – 9 days; remainder mid-Nov. thru late-Jan.
Restrictive	67	4/3/1	mid-late Oct. – 9 days; remainder mid-Nov. thru mid-Jan.	60	4/3/1	mid-late Oct. – 9 days; remainder mid-Nov. thru early-Jan.
Very Restrictive	45	4/3/1	mid-Nov. thru early Dec.; late Dec. thru mid-Jan.	38	4/3/1	mid-Nov. thru early Dec.; late Dec. thru early-Jan.

* USFWS rules on duck season timing:

1. Washington zones (2) – E. Washington and W. Washington
2. Season dates must be the same within each zone
3. Seasons may only be split into 2 segments
4. Youth days in addition to above days, except for liberal package

b. Assist in refining USFWS duck harvest management programs to reflect regional population differences (e.g., western mallards) by 2009.

c. Maintain state harvest restrictions, in additional to federal frameworks, on waterfowl species of management concern in Washington (e.g., sea ducks, snow geese, brant), depending on harvest levels and population status.

Objective 79:

Maximize goose-hunting recreation consistent with Pacific Flyway Council plans, considering goose availability during fall and winter.

Strategies:

a. Continue to establish regulations to follow flyway and state harvest thresholds (see Table 1 for current population indexes).

Table 3. Flyway and State Harvest Thresholds (3-yr. averages unless noted)

Goose	**Area**	**Flyway Harvest Thresholds**	**Additional WDFW Harvest Thresholds**	**Measure**
Western Canada goose	W. Wash.	Restriction level: 800 Liberalization level: 1,500	<800: reduce days/limit <1,500: eliminate Sept. season	nest index
Western Canada goose	E. Wash.	Restriction level: 1,300 Liberalization level: 2,000	<1,300: reduce days/limit <2,000: eliminate Sept. season	nest index

Dusky Canada goose	Flyway	Closure level: 5,000 Restrict level 1: 5,000-10,000 Restrict level 2: 10,000-20,000 Liberalization level: 20,000	None	breed. pop. index
Cackling Canada goose	Flyway	Closure level: 80,000 Reopening level: 110,000	None	nest index
Wrangel Island snow goose	Flyway	Closure level: 50,000 Restriction level: 120,000 Liberalization level: 160,000	None	spring pop. index
	Skagit-Fraser	Closure level: 30,000 Restriction level: 50,000 adults Liberalization level: 70,000 adults	S-F <50K adults or Flyway <120K: season ends 1st wk. Jan. S-F>70K adults: season extends past late Jan.	winter index
Brant	Flyway	Closure level: 90,000 Restrict level 1: 90,000-110,000 Restrict level 2: 110,000-135,000 Liberalization level: 135,000	None	winter index
	Skagit	None	Closure level: 6,000 (annual)	winter index
	Others	None	Closure level: 1,000	winter index
White-fronted goose	Flyway	Closure level: 80,000 Reopening level: 110,000	None	nest index

b. Utilize recreational harvest as the primary method to address depredating / nuisance goose populations above management objectives (e.g., implement Pacific Flyway SW Wash. / NW Oregon Goose Depredation Control Plan).

Objective 80:

Maintain hunter numbers between 35,000-45,000 and recreational use days between 300,000-500,000, consistent with population objectives.

Strategies:

a. Periodically survey hunter opinion to determine and recommend optimal season structures within biological constraints, to reduce the percentage of hunters who are very dissatisfied with waterfowl hunting to less than 15%.
b. Work with USFWS to simplify hunting regulations and minimize annual hunting regulation changes.
c. To reduce confusion, minimize closed periods within seasons, maximize overlap between duck and goose seasons, and reduce the number of zones with different season structures.

d. Provide special opportunity for youth by providing special recreational opportunities separate from regular seasons (e.g., youth hunts two weeks before regular season opener).
e. Modify regulations to reduce crowding and increase hunt quality on wildlife areas (e.g., shell limits, limited entry, established blind sites, limited open days), without reducing total use days.
f. Utilize habitat funding in combined programs to provide hunter access to private lands with emphasis in western Washington and the Columbia Basin.
g. Work with local governments to maintain opportunity in traditional hunting areas, minimizing or finding alternatives to no shooting zones.
h. Maintain diversity of recreational hunting and viewing opportunities.

Information and Education Goal

Issue Statement:

Members of the general public and recreational users are sometimes uninformed about management issues and waterfowl hunting opportunities.

Objective 81:

Generate at least five information and education products each year to improve transfer of information to public.

Strategies:

a. Increase public awareness of management issues and waterfowl hunting opportunities through brochures, news releases, internet (e.g. GoHunt), and pamphlets (ongoing).
b. Update web site information regarding migratory bird stamp projects and provide web page links to other organizations (every two years).
c. Continue to discuss waterfowl population management at Waterfowl Advisory Group meetings, public meetings, and select sports group forums (ongoing).

VII. LITERATURE CITED

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Pacific Coast and Intermountain West Joint Venture Management Plans, USFWS, Portland, OR.

Pacific Flyway Council Management Plans for Pacific Population of Western Canada Goose, Cackling Canada Goose, Dusky Canada Goose, Wrangel Island Snow Goose, Brant, White-fronted Goose, Tundra Swan, Pacific Coast Population of Trumpeter Swans, USFWS, Portland, OR.

MOURNING DOVE, BAND-TAILED PIGEON, COOT, AND SNIPE

I. POPULATION STATUS AND TREND

Washington provides habitat for a variety of migratory game birds other than waterfowl. This includes mourning doves, band-tailed pigeons, coots, and snipe. Mourning doves and band-tailed pigeons are monitored by cooperative breeding surveys in Washington, which provide indices but not estimates of actual abundance (see Figure 1). Coots and snipe population trends are monitored by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) standardized surveys on breeding areas.

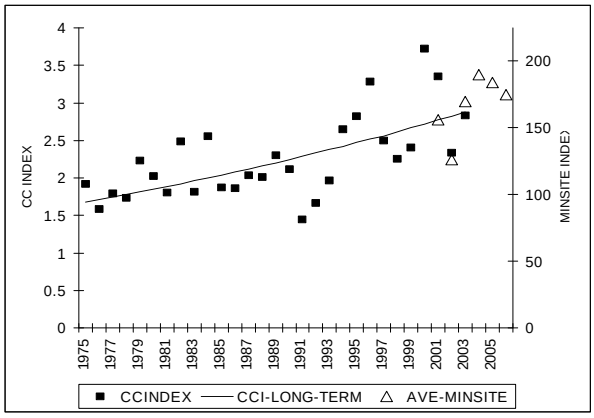

Figure 4. WA band-tailed pigeon survey information.

II. RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Mourning doves, hunted during a September season, provide late summer recreational opportunity for bird hunters. Seasons are based on frameworks established by USFWS, in conjunction with the Pacific Flyway Council (composed of wildlife agencies from the 11 western states). Approximately 6,000 hunters harvest 70,000 doves annually in Washington.

III. DATA COLLECTION

The Department maintains two surveys to estimate the size of dove and band-tailed pigeon populations. Dove call-count surveys are completed in May (see Figure 2) and band-tailed pigeon mineral sites surveys are conducted in July. Winter index counts for coots are completed with waterfowl surveys in January, in cooperation with USFWS. Harvest of these species is monitored by a variety of state and USFWS questionnaire surveys.

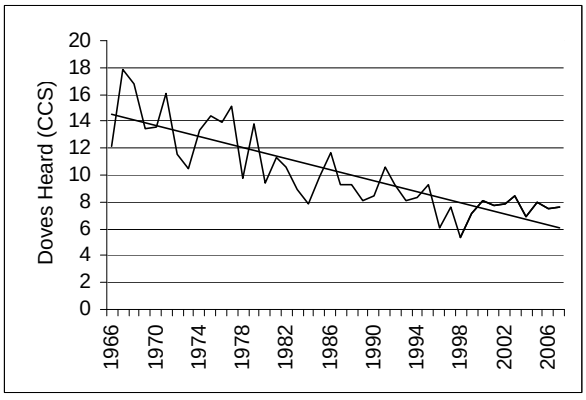

Figure 2. WA mourning dove survey information.

IV. MOURNING DOVE, BAND-TAILED PIGEON, COOT, AND SNIPE MANAGEMENT GOALS

This section describes the statewide management direction for mourning doves, band-tailed pigeons, coot, and snipe. Management of these species in Washington is accomplished through the Waterfowl Section of WDFW. Although the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has nationwide management authority for migratory birds, effective management of these resources depends on established cooperative programs developed through the Pacific Flyway Council. Goals and objectives described in this plan follow interagency and other cooperative planning efforts. Strategies identified in this plan will guide work plan activities and priorities, and must be accomplished to meet the goals and objectives.

The statewide goals for mourning doves, band-tailed pigeons, coots, and snipe are:

1. Manage statewide populations of mourning doves, band-tailed pigeons, coots, and snipe for a sustained yield consistent with Pacific Flyway management goals.
2. Manage mourning doves, band-tailed pigeons, coots, and snipe for a variety of recreational, educational and aesthetic purposes including hunting, scientific study, cultural and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, wildlife viewing, and photography.
3. Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage mourning doves, band-tailed pigeons, coots, and snipe and their habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations.

V. ISSUE STATEMENTS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

Habitat Management

Issue Statement:

Habitats for mourning doves, band-tailed pigeons, coots, and snipe are being lost throughout Washington due to development and conversion to other uses.

Objective 82:

Quantify habitat loss by developing habitat maps and management guidelines. These maps and guidelines should be posted on the agency web site by 2010.

Strategies:

a. Provide resource information to other agencies and organizations to influence land use decisions (e.g., WDFW Priority Habitats and Species [PHS] management guidelines for band-tails) (ongoing).
b. In cooperation with other agencies, track critical habitat status and trends (e.g., mineral sites, freshwater wetlands) (ongoing).

Objective 83:

Provide funding through state migratory bird stamp/print revenues to conserve/ enhance 50 acres of habitat annually for doves, pigeons, coots, and snipe.

Strategies:

a. Determine habitat conservation and enhancement needs considering habitat trends, Joint Venture plans, literature, and regional expertise.
b. Solicit project proposals from regional staff and external organizations.
c. Utilize an evaluation team from a statewide cross-section of Department experts to rank projects.
d. Develop a stamp/print program expenditure plan before the start of each new biennium.
e. Monitor effectiveness of projects through focused evaluation projects before and after implementation.

Population Management

Issue Statement:

Documentation of population size, movements, and mortality factors is difficult due to the highly migratory nature of dove, band-tailed pigeon, coot, and snipe species.

Objective 84:

Conduct annual surveys and participate in studies to monitor whether Pacific Flyway Council population objectives are being met for mourning doves and band-tailed pigeons.

Strategies:

a. Monitor annual status and trends of doves and band-tailed pigeons through coordinated breeding ground surveys with other agencies, including USFWS and flyway states.
b. Monitor annual status and trends of coots through the midwinter inventory, coordinated with other agencies including USFWS and flyway states.
c. Provide training aids for new observers in population estimation techniques, particularly for call-count surveys.
d. Participate in the Pacific Flyway dove-banding project by marking a minimum of 700 doves each year

Recreation Management

Issue Statement:

Management of limited populations requires refined harvest estimates.

Objective 85:

Increase accuracy of surveys to measure statewide harvest, number of hunters, and effort, accurate to ±10% at the 90% CI.

Strategies:

a. Participate in federal Harvest Information Program (HIP) for migratory birds, including new focus on providing estimates for lightly harvested species (e.g., snipe).
b. Provide supplemental measures to refine harvest estimates (e.g., band-tailed pigeon harvest report).

VII. LITERATURE CITED

Pacific Flyway Council, Management Plans for Band-tailed Pigeons and Mourning Doves, USFWS, Portland, OR

WILD TURKEY *(Meleagris gallopavo)*

I. POPULATION STATUS AND TREND

Efforts to introduce wild turkey, which are not native to Washington, occurred as early as 1913. However, these early release efforts (1913–1959) did not result in established populations. In 1960, 12 wild-trapped Merriam's turkeys from New Mexico were released in Klickitat County. This release resulted in establishment of Washington's largest, most stable turkey population from 1960 through 1990. In addition, 15 Merriam's turkeys were released in 1961 in the Rice area of Stevens County and a population became established. From the mid 1960s through the early 70s, turkeys were released in several Washington counties, including Okanogan, Chelan, Whitman, Pend Oreille, Kittitas, Ferry, Spokane, Clallam, Thurston, San Juan, and Lewis. Many of these releases did not result in established populations.

From 1984 through 2003, major transplant projects were undertaken to establish wild turkey populations in eastern and southwestern Washington. Wild turkeys trapped in Texas, South Dakota, Missouri, and Pennsylvania were brought into the state and released in suitable habitats in eastern and southwestern Washington. By the early 1990s wild turkey populations in eastern Washington had increased to the point that the WDFW began to transplant Washington birds into other suitable habitats within several eastern Washington counties. Western Washington wild turkey populations also received additional augmentation in the 1990s when several hundred wild-trapped birds from Iowa were released in Thurston, Lewis, Cowlitz, and Grays Harbor counties.

According to harvest trend information, most turkey populations in Washington are increasing with Stevens County having the highest population density. Other eastern Washington counties, such as Ferry, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, and Columbia, also have substantial turkey populations. Wild turkey populations in western Washington are not experiencing the same level of expansion as northeastern Washington, however, there are areas in Thurston, Cowlitz, Mason, and Grays Harbor counties that support huntable populations of the eastern sub-species of wild turkey.

II. RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Hunting seasons for wild turkeys have varied from a 2-day fall season in 1965 to the current 31-day spring season statewide, a 5-day fall general season, and a late fall permit-only season. The statewide, April 15 to May 15, spring season was established in 1994, and in 2004 the spring season was extended through May 31.

A fall season has existed since 1965. At one time, the fall season was in late November, but in 2000, fall hunting was changed from a general season to a permit-only hunt by drawing and the hunt dates were moved from late November to early October to avoid overlapping other seasons. Since 2002, fall hunting opportunities have been gradually increased in response to increasing

populations in northeastern Washington. A fall general season was established for northeastern Washington in 2004 with a late fall permit season established for the same area in 2006.

Before turkey augmentation activity in the late 1980s, hunter numbers fell to a low of 428 (1987) and turkey harvests averaged 65 birds per year (1983-1987). Statewide harvest has increased almost every each year since 1991 (Figure 1). These estimates suggest that the extremely fast growth in Washington's turkey population ended in 2002, but hunter interest remains high as hunter participation ranged between 15,000 and 17,000 from 2002 to 2006.

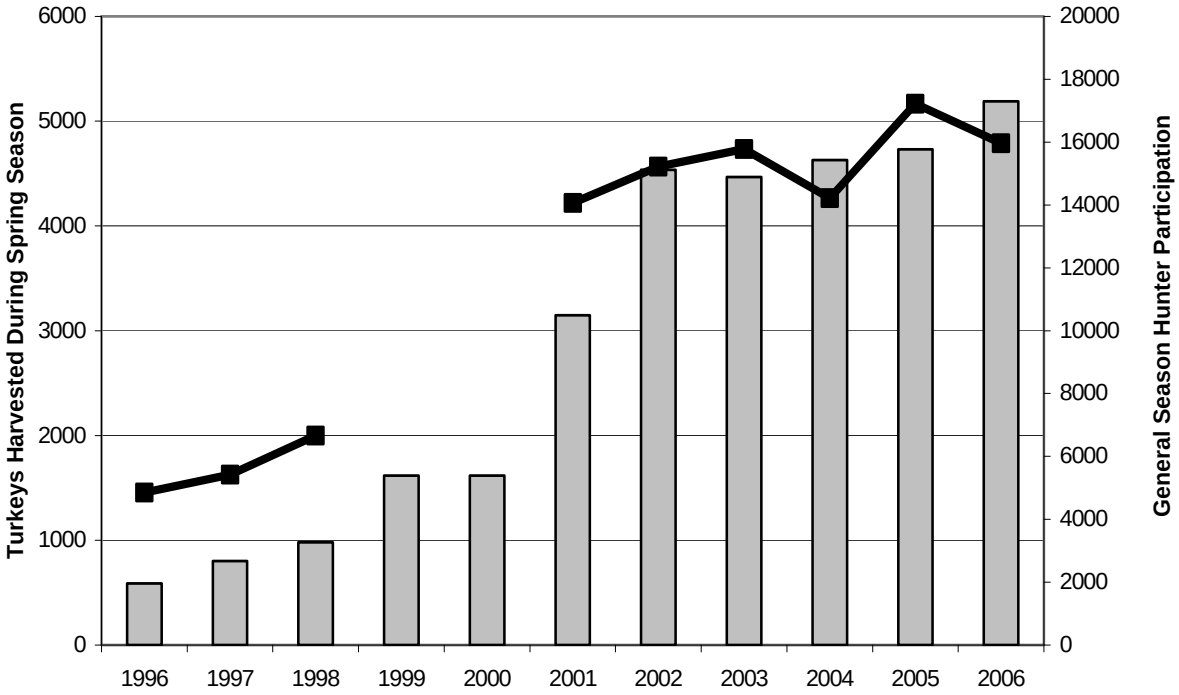

Figure 1: Spring season turkey harvest and general season hunter participation from 1996 to 2006. (Note: Hunter participation was not collected in 1999 and 2000.)

In 2006, the state legislature changed the small game hunting law to require turkey hunters to purchase their first turkey tag, which had been included with the purchase of a small game license from 1999 through 2005. The legislation changed the price of all turkey tags to $14 and dedicated 1/3 of the revenue to turkey management, 1/3 to upland bird management, and 1/3 to the Wildlife Fund in general. This revenue will be used to help the Department provide more focus on turkey and upland game bird management in the future.

A Wild Turkey Management Plan was developed through the Washington State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) process, which included a 30-day public review and comment period, was completed in 2005. The Upland Game Advisory Committee and the Fish and Wildlife Commission reviewed the plan before adoption by the Director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Detailed historical and biological information and data are included in the plan, along with specific goals, objectives, and strategies for future wild turkey management in Washington. Much of the direction provided in the plan is included in this Game Management Plan.

III. DATA COLLECTION

The largest amount of data collected on wild turkeys has been estimated harvest and hunter effort. Some limited radio tracking has been done in Pend Oreille, Yakima, Chelan, and western Washington counties to help estimate survival and production of recently released birds. In 2005-06, WDFW staff began implementing a pilot project to use wintertime driving route turkey counts as a harvest independent indicator of population status. Future efforts to collect these types of data are described in the population management section below.

IV. WILD TURKEY MANAGEMENT GOALS

The statewide goals for wild turkeys are:

1. Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage wild turkeys and their habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations.
2. Manage wild turkeys for a variety of recreational, educational and aesthetic purposes including hunting, scientific study, wildlife viewing cultural and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, and photography.
3. Manage statewide wild turkey populations for a sustained harvest.

V. ISSUE STATEMENTS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

Population Management

Issue Statement:

Turkey populations in some areas of eastern Washington have expanded substantially over the past five years. WDFW continues to receive damage complaints from residents in some of these areas. A nuisance/damage response matrix was included in the Wild Turkey Management Plan that was completed in 2005.

Objective 86:

Monitor damage complaints each year and implement effective nuisance/damage management strategies to help resolve issues as they arise and report activities in the annual Status and Trend report.

Strategies:

a. WDFW regional staff will document the location of complaints on a yearly basis and determine major factors causing complaints.
b. Use multiple methods to resolve complaints as outlined in the Wild Turkey Management Plan.
c. Provide public education materials that address problems associated with feeding wildlife.

d. Encourage planting alternate food sources to keep nuisance or damage-causing turkeys away from habitual problem areas.

Issue Statement:

Turkey populations need to be monitored to help determine appropriate hunting seasons and identify population management needs.

Objective 87:

Develop a protocol for monitoring turkey populations by 2011.

Strategies:

a. Conduct scientific and peer review of pilot turkey monitoring protocol.
b. If approved, implement turkey monitoring protocol in Turkey PMU P10 and report results in Status and Trend reports.
c. Evaluate other turkey PMUs and implement monitoring if appropriate.

Issue Statement:

Turkeys occupy almost all suitable habitats in Washington. In the Turkey Management Plan, one area in Skagit and Whatcom counties was identified as a potential introduction area. The area will be evaluated and management actions identified utilizing a process outlined in the Turkey Management Plan. The goal of a wild turkey release is to establish a self-sustaining, huntable population of birds in habitats and locations that do not result in significant damage problems.

Objective 88:

Complete the northwestern Washington turkey introduction evaluation and implement recommended strategies by June 2011.

Strategies:

a. Complete identification and evaluation of potential release sites as outlined in the 2005-2010 Wild Turkey Management Plan.
b. Identify mitigation measures needed to meet introduction goals
c. Implement an introduction operation if the evaluation supports introduction by 2010.

Issue Statement:

The 2005-2010 Wild Turkey Management Plan (WTMP) will need to be updated during the timeframe of the 2009-2015 Game Management Plan. As described in the WTMP, many areas of the state have strong, self-sustaining populations. However, in some areas of the state, turkey introductions have not resulted in robust populations. Factors limiting turkey population growth in these areas have not been identified and evaluated.

Objective 89:

Evaluate turkey population trends in each Wild Turkey Population Management Unit (PMU), identify limiting factors, and develop management strategies in the updated Wild Turkey Management Plan by July 2010.

Strategies:

a. Use harvest data to illustrate population trends in each PMU.
b. Identify and evaluate potential factors affecting population levels in PMUs with low or negative population growth.
c. Update the WTMP to include evaluation results as well as additional management strategies consistent with the 2009-2015 Game Management Plan.

Recreation Management

Issue Statement:

Turkey populations in some portions of Washington have increased to the point that expanded hunting opportunities need to be evaluated.

Objective 90:

By December 2009, develop a fall hunting opportunity recommendation that addresses concerns about population levels and fall/winter male turkey survival in PMU P10.

Strategies:

a. Determine if either sex fall hunting affects male turkey harvest during the following spring hunt.
b. Identify public preferences for increasing hen harvest through various hunting season options.
c. Identify and evaluate potential fall season options each year.

Issue Statement:

Turkey hunters and district biologists report that turkey-hunting opportunities in some areas of eastern Washington are limited due to large acreage owned by private landowners. Private land access has also been identified as an important issue in hunter opinion surveys conducted by WDFW.

Objective 91:

Over the next five years, increase the number of acres of private land available for public turkey hunting by 10% within priority turkey range.

Strategies:

a. Investigate potential incentives (e.g., payment, liability protection, hunter access management) for public hunting access on private property. Develop program options and implement those incentives that are determined to be most beneficial to the public and the landowner.
b. Increase public access to private lands by focusing efforts from WDFW's private lands access program within turkey PMU P10.
c. Partner with local chapters of the National Wild Turkey Federation and other sportsman's groups to find landowners who would allow public hunting.

Habitat Management

Issue Statement:

Opportunities to enhance wild turkey habitat exist on private and public lands throughout areas supporting turkey populations. Improving habitat conditions for turkeys also has additional values to other wildlife species that utilize the same resources.

Objective 92:

Conduct 10 habitat improvement projects in key wild turkey management areas to accomplish multiple goals including addressing nuisance issues, improving public recreational opportunities, and improving habitat conditions for multiple species by 2015.

Strategies:

a. Identify and prioritize key areas for habitat improvement.
b. Utilize available enhancement grants and dedicated turkey management funding to improve habitats utilized by wild turkeys.
c. Facilitate habitat enhancement projects on private and public properties within the primary turkey management zone (e.g., oak habitat enhancement in Klickitat County).
d. Develop habitat enhancement projects to help address issues related to winter nuisance complaints.
e. Prioritize enhancement projects on areas open to public hunting and in areas that benefit species of concern or benefit a wide variety of wildlife species.

Research

Issue Statement:

Research on wild turkeys in the western United States is not common. If research were to be done in western habitats, managers would have a better tool to use when managing the species.

Objective 93:

Support at least two research projects that increase our knowledge of wild turkeys in western habitats.

Strategies:

a. Cooperate with public and private entities (e.g., National Wild Turkey Federation) to develop research projects in Washington.
b. Develop and/or participate in inter-specific competition research projects funded through the National Wild Turkey Federation and other public entities.

MOUNTAIN QUAIL (*Oreortyx pictus*)

I. POPULATION STATUS AND TREND

Historically, mountain quail are thought to have existed in western Washington and along the southern border in eastern Washington. However, mountain quail populations in Washington have been low for several years. While there are a few areas in western Washington that hold birds, eastern Washington populations have all but disappeared. The last known mountain quail populations in eastern Washington were in southeastern Asotin County. The current status of this, and other eastern Washington populations is largely unknown but is assumed to be minimal at best.

II. RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Mountain quail hunting season extends from the first weekend in October through November 30 in western Washington; however, there have been no hunting seasons for mountain quail in eastern Washington since 1997. The 2006 mountain quail harvest was likely less than 400. Mountain quail do not represent a major recreational opportunity in the state of Washington.

III. DATA COLLECTION

To date, only incidental data on statewide mountain quail populations in Washington have been collected. These data suggest that mountain quail are limited in distribution and abundance. The Department, in cooperation with the University of Idaho, has collected data on mountain quail released as part of a population re-establishment project in southeastern Washington. Data collected through this effort include survival, nest success, and habitat use. Additional releases and other monitoring efforts are discussed in this management plan.

IV. MOUNTAIN QUAIL MANAGEMENT GOALS

The statewide goals for mountain quail are:

1. Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage mountain quail and their habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations.
2. Manage mountain quail for a variety of recreational, educational and aesthetic purposes including hunting, scientific study, wildlife viewing cultural and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, and photography.
3. Manage western Washington mountain quail populations for a sustained harvest.

V. MANAGEMENT ISSUES, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

Habitat Management

Issue Statement:

Little is known about mountain quail habitat in eastern Washington. Historic distribution has been estimated, but suitability and ability to sustain mountain quail populations is largely unknown. Mountain quail released into southeastern Washington in 2005 and 2006 were monitored through a cooperative effort with the University of Idaho, resulting in a student producing a masters thesis. The information presented in the thesis will be helpful in future habitat management efforts.

Objective 94:

Utilize data collected in the 2005-07 mountain quail study to help determine distribution of potential mountain quail habitat in Washington by 2013.

Strategies:

a. Develop a map showing potential mountain quail habitat.
b. Conduct an evaluation of eastern Washington mountain quail habitat conditions and suitability based on results from monitoring released quail.
c. Identify potential habitat enhancement projects based on the evaluation.

Population Management

Issue Statement:

Mountain quail occupy little of their historic range in eastern Washington. In 2005 and 2006, wild-trapped mountain quail from southwestern Oregon were released in southeastern Washington. This project was part of an effort to re-establish mountain quail populations in part of their historic range.

Objective 95:

Based on results from the first re-introduction effort in Asotin County, begin an additional reestablishment project in historic range in eastern Washington by 2014.

Strategies:

a. Evaluate initial reintroduction attempts to determine probability of successfully establishing populations.
b. Should probability of success be sufficient, continue to coordinate with Oregon and Idaho on additional transplant efforts.
c. Participate in a multi-state mountain quail management effort that includes participation from Oregon, Idaho, California, Nevada, and Washington.
d. Secure additional funding to support ongoing reintroduction efforts.

e. Implement short term (post release) and long term (population trend) monitoring of introduced mountain quail populations.

FOREST GROUSE (Blue *(Dendragapus obscurus)*, Ruffed *(Bonsa umbellus)*, and Spruce *(Falcipennis canadensis)*)

I. POPULATION STATUS AND TREND

Forest grouse in Washington include dusky blue grouse (*Dendragapus obscurus)* and sooty blue grouse (*Dendragapus fuliginosus*) and ruffed grouse (*Bonsa umbellus*), which occur throughout the forested lands in Washington, and spruce grouse (*Falcipennis canadensis*) that are closely tied to higher elevation spruce/fir habitats. Statewide biological surveys designed to estimate forest grouse populations have not been conducted in Washington. For many years, population monitoring has been based on the long-term harvest trend (Figure 1) based on estimates generated by conducting a mailed hunter survey. This trend shows an apparent decline in forest grouse populations, although harvest has been fairly stable since 1996. It is difficult to draw concrete conclusions because harvest estimation methods have changed over time and other factors such as hunter effort and access to forest lands may be biasing results.

A wing collection study in 1997 revealed that hunters did not accurately report the species of grouse harvested. Since hunters have not been able to accurately report the species harvested, evaluating harvest, and thus population trends for individual species is very difficult. Current grouse populations are thought to be relatively healthy, however, loss of habitat to urban expansion and changes in forest management techniques may impact population status over time.

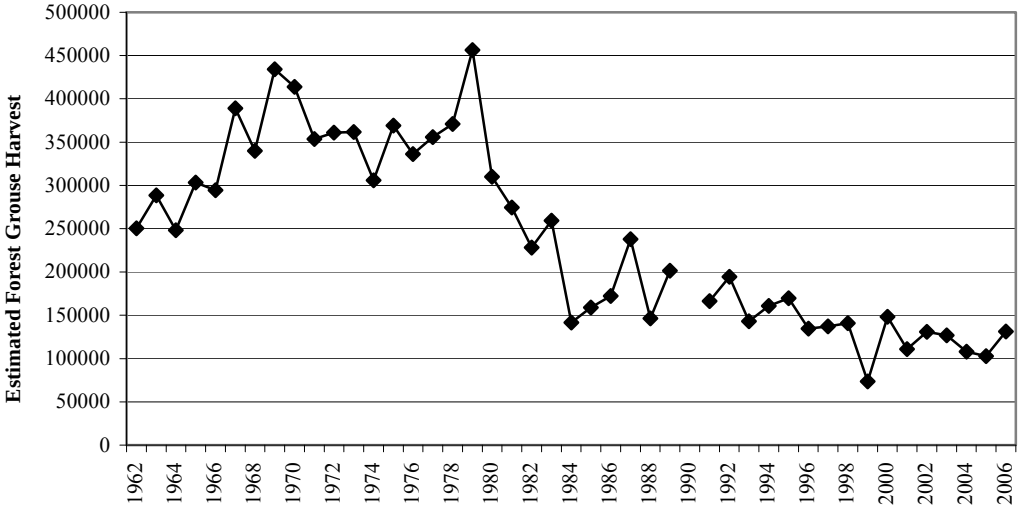

Figure 1. Estimated forest grouse harvest in Washington State from 1962 to 2006.

II. RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

The current Sept. 1 to Dec. 31 hunting season, which is similar to forest grouse seasons in Oregon (Sept. 1 – Jan. 6) and Idaho (Sept. 1 – Dec. 31), has been in place since 1987. The daily bag limit of three of any species (mixed or straight bag) has not changed since 1952. Estimated hunter numbers slowly declined from the late 1980s through 1997, but then fell sharply in 1998 and 1999 (Figure 2). The decline seen in 1999 may be a result of sampling difficulties that made data collection inconsistent with previous and subsequent years. Hunter numbers rebounded in 2000 and have remained fairly consistent, although still below historic levels.

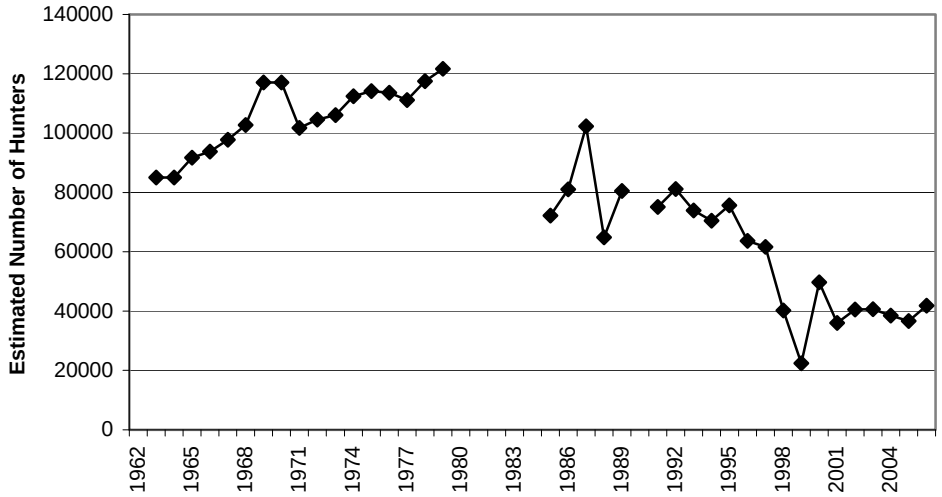

Figure 2. Estimated number of forest grouse hunters in Washington from 1963 to 2006.

III. DATA COLLECTION

Statewide population surveys for forest grouse have not been conducted. However, forest grouse wings were collected in 2000 by placing barrels in strategic locations in north-central Washington where hunters voluntarily deposited one wing from each grouse killed. Wings were classified as to species, sex, and age.

Statewide wing collections from 1993-95 provided several pieces of important information, such as, more than 70% of forest grouse harvest occurs in September and early October, before modern firearm deer seasons. Therefore, current seasons that extend through December probably have very little impact on grouse populations. In addition, there is a tendency for hunters to misidentify grouse species, which has resulted in forest grouse species being combined for current harvest survey purposes.

The most extensive data set held for forest grouse is harvest estimation, which has been collected since 1963. Data was collected by surveying approximately 10% of hunting license buyers. These data are reported in the annual WDFW Game Harvest Report.

IV. FOREST GROUSE MANAGEMENT GOALS

The statewide goals for forest grouse are:

1. Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage forest grouse and their habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations.
2. Manage forest grouse for a variety of recreational, educational and aesthetic purposes including hunting, scientific study, wildlife viewing, cultural, and ceremonial uses by tribes, and photography.
3. Manage statewide forest grouse populations for a sustained harvest.

V. ISSUE STATEMENTS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

Population Management

Issue Statement:

Current harvest estimation, which is used as an indicator of population trend, is not adequate to detect significant changes in forest grouse harvest at a local geographic level.

Objective 96:

Improve harvest estimation precision at the WDFW regional level by 2014.

Strategies:

a. Analyze harvest report data to include valid estimation at the WDFW regional level.
b. Develop a statistical model of harvest that includes the effects of weather and hunter effort.
c. Investigate the potential to report grouse harvest on the WDFW website and implement if appropriate.

Recreation Management

Objective 97:

Develop a report on hunting season impacts on grouse populations by 2010.

Strategies:

a. Conduct a literature review targeting grouse hunting season impacts on forest grouse populations

b. Determine if existing WDFW data can contribute to identification of potential impacts of season changes
c. Assimilate results into a report with recommended management actions if appropriate.

UPLAND GAME BIRDS: Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) California Quail (*Callipepla californica*), Chukar (*Alectoris chukar*) and Hungarian Partridge (*Perdix perdix*)

I. POPULATION STATUS AND TREND

According to harvest estimates, (used as an index of population densities), pheasant populations in Washington have been declining since the early 1980s (Figure 1). Harvest estimation techniques did not change between 1984 and 2000, so estimates made during that time should be comparable. In addition, crowing count surveys and brood index surveys conducted between 1984 and 1998 also indicate a decrease in pheasant populations in many areas of eastern Washington (Cliff Rice, pers comm.). Interviews with hunters and biologists support the theory that pheasant populations have decreased over time. The cause of the decline is not definitively known, although several factors are thought to have contributed, with loss and degradation of habitat being a primary factor.

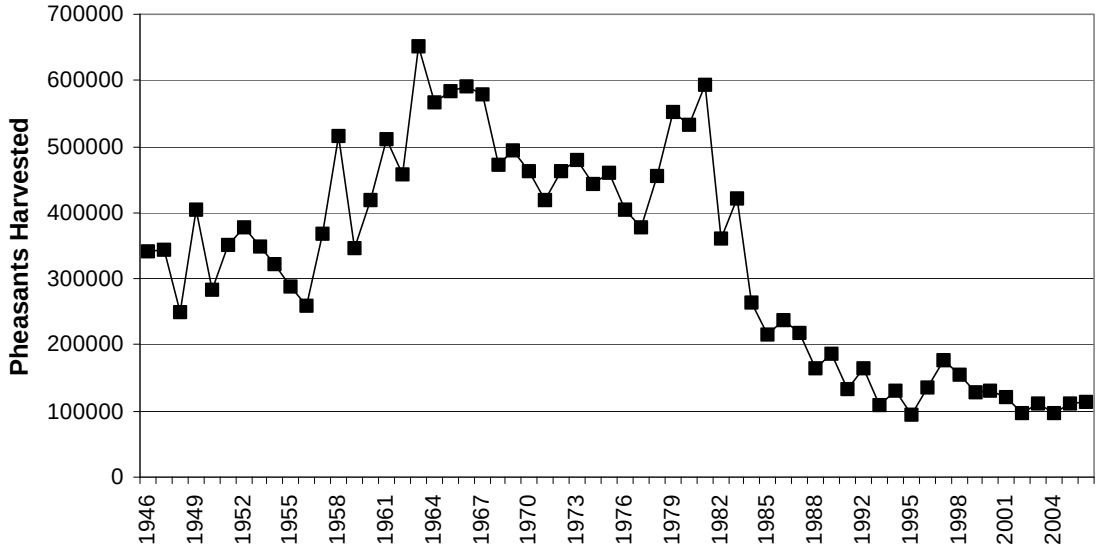

Figure 1. Estimated pheasant harvest for Washington, 1946 - 2006.

Upland game bird fall population densities, and related harvest, are often dependent on spring weather conditions and available cover since chicks have a difficult time thermo-regulating in cold, wet weather conditions. In addition, chicks need high protein diets in the spring and cold, wet springtime weather can decreases insect availability (Offerdahl and Fivizzani, 1987). Although variable from year to year, harvest estimates for quail and chukar have not dropped below 1993 levels. Currently, quail harvest levels are near the 22-year high, but chukar and gray partridge harvest are 68% and 75% lower than the 22 year high respectively (Figure 2). In

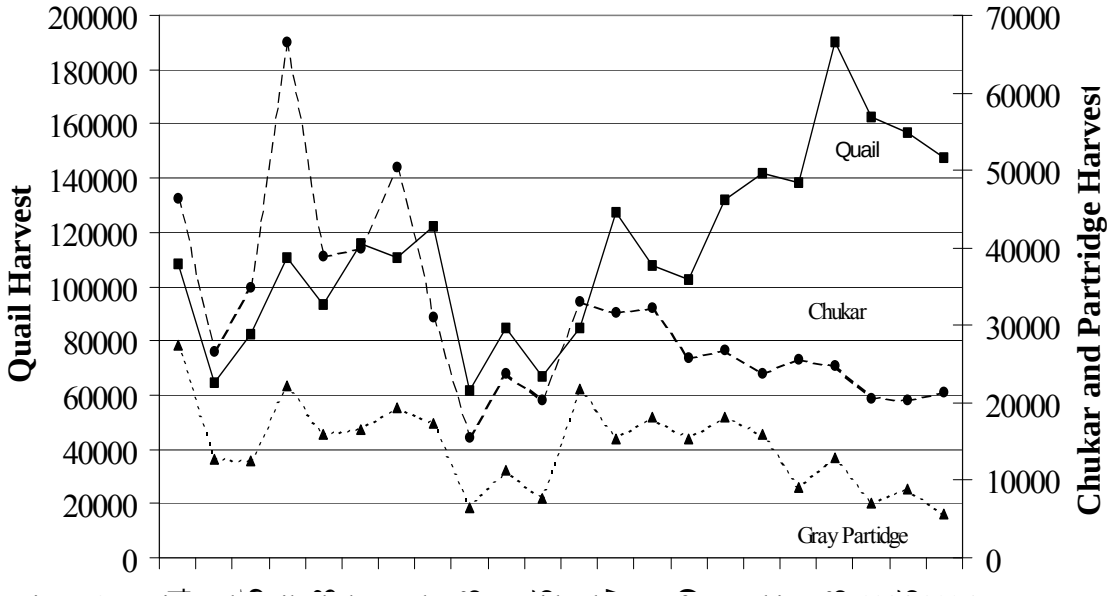

Figure 2. Estimated quail, chukar and gray partridge harvest for Washington, 1984-2006

general, Department biologist opinions of upland game bird populations correlate with the harvest estimates seen in Figures 1 and 2.

II. RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Eastern Washington pheasant season timing in Washington State has varied over the past 10 years. For many years, the season started in early to mid-October and lasted through December 31, providing hunters 11 or 12 weeks of hunting, depending on the year. In 2004, the pheasant opener was moved to the weekend after general deer season, one week later than previous years.

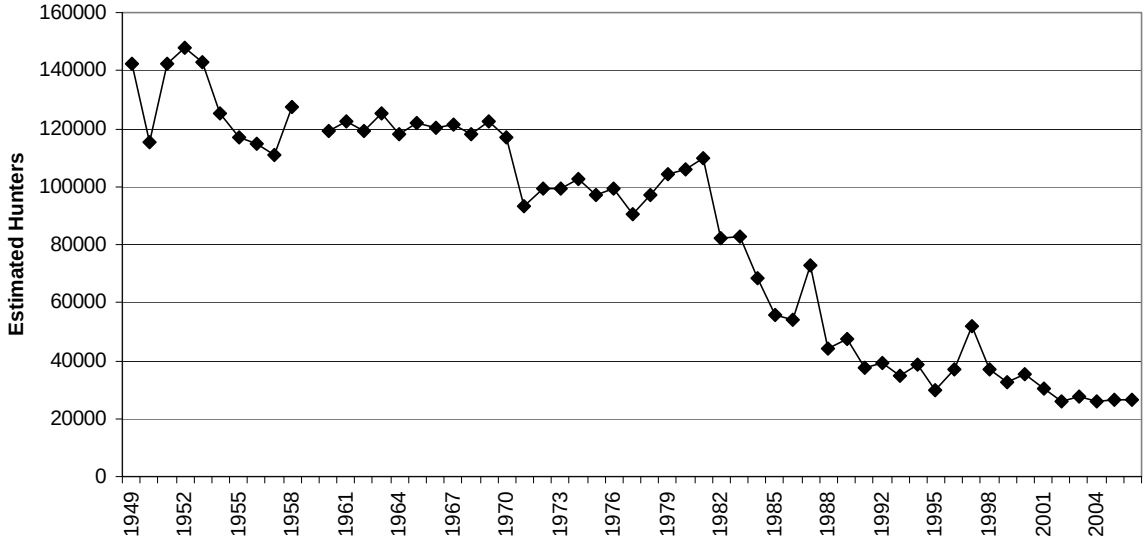

Figure 3. Estimated pheasant hunter participation in Washington State, 1949 to 2006.

With that move, the season ended up shortened in 2004, so in 2005, the season was extended into January to maintain the number of hunting days. In 2006, an estimated 26,712 people hunted pheasant in Washington. Between 1996 and 2006, only one year (1997) had more than 40,000 pheasant hunters, down from an estimated high of 142,000 in the early 1950s and a more recent high of 109,000 in 1979 (Figure 3). The spike in hunter participation in 1997 may have been due to the initiation of the Eastern Washington Pheasant Enhancement Program that year. In 2006, over 26,000 hunters spent almost 170,000 days pursuing pheasant.

Hunting seasons for other upland game birds have also varied in length over the years. During the 1960s and 70s, the chukar season was split into early and general seasons, depending on geographic area. In 1997, the early-general season was eliminated in favor of a standardized season running from early October to mid-January, which is the current regulation. The bag limit for chukar was reduced after the population crash in the early 1980s, from 10 birds per day to six. Currently, the daily bag limits for chukar and Huns are six of each species and quail has a bag limit of 10. In 2006, an estimated 15,595 people hunted quail, 4986 hunted chukar, and 2520 hunted gray partridge. Hunters spent over 128,902 days afield pursuing these upland birds.

III. DATA COLLECTION

Three types of pheasant surveys were conducted up until the mid to late 1990s in most areas of the state; 1) sex ratio counts in February and March, 2) crow counts (a male pheasant population index) in late April and early May, and 3) production counts in late July and August. In addition, aerial population surveys for chukar were completed through the late 1990s. All of these surveys were discontinued mainly due to the limited time and funding for district biologists considering all game species priorities.

Limited data are still collected annually in the irrigated farmland portions of Grant and Adams counties to provide indices of breeding population size and production of pheasant chicks. The population index is useful in determining long-term trends and major short-term population changes. The production index is a good predictor of hunting prospects and may provide information useful in determining reasons for annual changes in population size. In addition, a post-season mail survey of hunters is conducted to estimate harvest and hunter effort.

IV. UPLAND GAME BIRD MANAGEMENT GOALS

The statewide goals for upland game birds are:

1. Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage upland game birds and their habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations.
2. Manage upland game birds for a variety of recreational, educational and aesthetic purposes including hunting, scientific study, wildlife viewing cultural and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, and photography.
3. Manage statewide upland game bird populations for a sustained harvest.

V. ISSUE STATEMENTS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

Habitat Management

Issue Statement:

Pheasant habitat in eastern Washington has been lost, altered, or degraded over the past 50 years. This is considered a major factor in the decline in pheasant populations (Flaherty 1979). A Pheasant Focus Area has been identified in southeastern Washington. Three major factors influenced identification of this area: 1) cost of improving habitat is relatively low when compared to irrigated agriculture areas; 2) annual rainfall in the area is conducive to producing quality habitat without irrigation; 3) availability of federal Farm Bill programs (e.g., Conservation Reserve Program).

Objective 98:

Document the amount of quality pheasant habitat in the Pheasant Focus Area by 2009. Double the number of acres of quality pheasant habitat by 2014.

Strategies:

a. Purchase high priority pheasant habitat acreage.
b. Work with public and private landowners and funding agencies (e.g. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)) to increase quality pheasant habitat acreage through programs like the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). Specific emphasis will be put on "mid-contract management."
c. Improve pheasant habitat quality by funding habitat improvement projects through the Eastern Washington Pheasant Enhancement Program (EWPEP) and the Partnerships for Pheasants program.
d. Integrate pheasant habitat improvements and priorities with native species needs (e.g. sharp-tailed grouse and salmon).
e. Partner with non-governmental organizations (e.g., Pheasants Forever) to produce and distribute habitat enhancement informational material.

Population Management

Issue Statement:

Harvest and survey trends indicate that pheasant populations have declined over the past 50 years.

Objective 99:

Monitor population status and trend to be able to detect a 20% change over three years within the key areas identified for habitat improvement and document results in the annual Game Status Report.

Strategies:

a. Develop and/or adopt a standardized method to monitor pheasant population status within the pheasant focus area.
b. Consistently monitor pheasant populations to provide a gauge of how habitat improvements are affecting population trends.

Recreation Management

Issue Statement:

Hunters and district biologists report that upland game bird hunting opportunities in some areas of eastern Washington are limited due to large acreage owned by private landowners. Private land access has also been identified as an important issue in hunter opinion surveys conducted by WDFW.

Objective 100:

By 2015, increase the number of hunters utilizing the pheasant focus area to 15,000 and provide a variety of hunting opportunities.

Strategies:

a. Utilize the Private Lands Program to increase public access on private lands.
b. Continue to publicize where public hunting access is available.
c. Develop limited entry areas, marked sites, walk-in sites, or other restrictions to reduce crowding and provide quality-hunting areas.
d. Monitor eastern Washington pheasant hunter satisfaction through random surveys as was done in 2003 and 2007.

Issue Statement:

Estimated harvest figures show that there has been a decline in pheasant and chukar harvest over the past 18 years and other upland game birds have experienced large fluctuations in harvest. Harvest estimation data are used as an indicator of overall harvest, and population status as well as hunter effort and are the best long-term data set held by WDFW.

Objective 101:

Monitor upland game bird harvest on a yearly basis.

Strategies:

a. Improve the precision of harvest data at the county level with priority for improving data in the pheasant focus area.

b. Continue to collect harvest information on a yearly basis such that it is comparable to previous seasons.
c. Develop a method to determine if eastern Washington pheasant releases impact overall pheasant harvest estimates.

Issue Statement:

Lead is a well-documented environmental toxin and lead shot use has been prohibited for all waterfowl, coot, and snipe hunting in Washington since a nationwide phase-in was implemented in 1986-1991. WDFW has proposed amendments to WAC 232-12-068, which expanded nontoxic shot requirements to pheasant release sites and other areas, based on a high potential for ingestion of lead by wildlife.

Objective 102:

As new information and nontoxic alternatives become available, make nontoxic shot use recommendations to the Fish and Wildlife Commission through the 2009-11 season setting processes.

Strategies:

a. Research, develop, and present recommendations to the Fish and Wildlife Commission regarding bird hunting with nontoxic shot.
b. Develop and implement a public outreach and communication plan regarding nontoxic shot use regulations.

Issue Statement:

Some upland game birds exist in areas where sharp-tailed grouse and sage grouse can be found. Concerns over misidentification of game birds have been expressed and it is important that hunters know the differences between upland game birds and non-game upland wildlife.

Objective 103:

Post WDFW managed properties and distribute educational materials to hunters that describe the differences between upland game species and non-hunted upland birds each year.

Strategies:

a. Include information describing the differences between pheasants and sharp-tailed grouse and sage grouse and include it in the annual upland bird hunting pamphlet.
b. Post signs notifying hunters of sage or sharp-tailed grouse being present in areas where upland game bird hunting occurs.

Research

Issue Statement:

Implementation of habitat enhancement in the pheasant focus area is designed to improve pheasant numbers, hunter harvest, and hunter participation. Different habitat enhancement techniques can have variable effectiveness on improving pheasant numbers and it is important to understand and utilize the most effective means. In addition, past efforts in working with landowners has shown that a variety of programs are necessary to meet individual needs and provide quality-habitat and hunting opportunity.

Objective 104:

Develop annual reports that describe efforts to evaluate habitat enhancement effects on pheasant population levels.

Strategies:

a. Conduct specific experiments to determine the best vegetation or habitat manipulations to produce pheasants.
b. Provide annual progress reports in the Game Status and Trend report.
c. Update pheasant habitat management publications, USDA techniques publications, and informational brochures as appropriate.

Eastern Washington Pheasant Enhancement Program (EWPEP)

Issue Statement:

The EWPEP was developed "to improve the harvest of pheasants by releasing pen-reared rooster pheasants…and by providing grants for habitat enhancement…" A 2007 State Auditor's Office sanctioned performance audit evaluated the program to determine if the program is achieving its objectives. The program should meet legislative goals and the program should be implemented to achieve the objectives in this plan.

Objective 105:

Develop recommendations for legislative or other action to address the audit findings by 2011.

Strategies:

a. Review and analyze performance audit findings.
b. Work with conservation organizations, such as Pheasants Forever, and the public to develop recommendations.
c. Focus habitat enhancements in identified key management areas (Pheasant Focus Area).
d. Provide dedicated pheasant management and habitat improvement staff within the Pheasant Focus Area.
e. Present identified changes to legislature, Fish and Wildlife Commission, or WDFW administration for adoption as needed.

Western Washington Pheasant Program

Issue Statement:

In 1997, the WDFW closed the Whidbey Island game farm to increase the efficiency of the program. Since that time, the program has gone from being 61% self-funded to 78% with the remainder being paid for by general hunting license revenue. It is important that this program become 100% self-funded since it is a recreational program serving a specific group of hunters and it is appropriate to ensure the program does not have a financial impact on general hunting license revenues.

Objective 106:

Evaluate the current funding mechanism for the western Washington pheasant program and identify new ways to create a self-funded budget by June 2010.

Strategies:

a. Determine what percentage of small game license buyers hunts strictly western Washington pheasants.
b. Identify and present appropriate proposals to make the program self-funded.

VI. LITERATURE CITED

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Offerdahl, S.D. and A.J. Fivizzani. 1987. The Development of Thermoregulation in Gray Partridge Chicks. In Proceedings of Perdix IV: Gray Partridge Workshop. 155pp

I. CLASSIFICATION

In Washington, there are approximately 31 mid-to-small sized mammals or mammal groups that can be hunted or trapped (Table 1). Of these, 6 species are classified as game species (including 3 cross-classified as furbearers) and can be hunted (RCW 77.12.020; WAC 232-12-007). Eleven of the 31 species or groups are classified as furbearers (indicating that their hide has a commercial value in the fur industry). These 11 species can be trapped but not hunted unless seasons have been established (i.e., 3 species cross-classified as game species). The remaining species or species groups are "unclassified," and can be trapped or hunted year-around.

Table 1. Mid-to-small sized mammals that can be hunted or trapped in Washington.

Species	Genus species	Classification	Trapped	Hunted
Cottontail rabbits	*Sylvilagus spp.*	Game animal		X
Snowshoe hare	*Lepus americanus*	Game animal		X
Bobcat	*Lynx rufus*	Game animal & furbearer	X	X
Raccoon	*Procyon lotor*	Game animal & furbearer	X	X
Red fox	*Vulpes vulpes*	Game animal & furbearer	X	X
American beaver	*Castor canadensis*	Furbearer	X	
Badger	*Taxidea taxus*	Furbearer	X	
Ermine	*Mustela erminea*	Furbearer	X	
Long-tailed weasel	*Mustela frenata*	Furbearer	X	
Marten	*Martes americana*	Furbearer	X	
Mink	*Mustela vison*	Furbearer	X	
Mountain beaver	*Aplodontia rufa*	Unclassified	X	X
Muskrat	*Ondatra zibethicus*	Furbearer	X	
River otter	*Lutra canadensis*	Furbearer	X	
Coyote	*Canis latrans*	Unclassified	X	X
European rabbit	*Oryctolagus spp.*	Unclassified	X	X
Gophers [c]	*Thomomys spp.*	Unclassified	X	X
Gray and fox squirrels [a]	*Sciurus spp.*	Unclassified	X	X
Ground squirrels [b]	*Sperophilus spp.*	Unclassified	X	X
Mice	*Mus, Onychomys, Reithrodontomys, Peromyscus, Perognathus, Zapus spp.*	Unclassified	X	X
Moles	*Scapanus spp.*	Unclassified	X	X
Nutria	*Myocastor coypus*	Unclassified	X	X
Virginia opossum	*Didelphis virginiana*	Unclassified	X	X
Porcupine	*Erethizon dorsatum*	Unclassified	X	X
Rats	*Dipodomys, Neotoma, Rattus spp.*	Unclassified	X	X
Shrews	*Sorex, Neurotrichus spp.*	Unclassified	X	X
Spotted skunk	*Spilogale gracilis*	Unclassified	X	X

Striped skunk	*Mephitis mephitis*	Unclassified	X	X
Voles	*Clethrionomys, Lemmiscus, Micotus, Phenacomys spp.*	Unclassified	X	X
Yellow-bellied marmot	*Marmota flaviventris*	Unclassified	X	X

[a] Except western gray squirrels (*S. griseus*) are protected and cannot be hunted or trapped.
[b] Except golden-mantled ground squirrels (*S. saturatus* and *S. lateralis*) and Washington ground squirrels (*S. washingtoni*) are protected and cannot be hunted or trapped.
[c] Except mazama pocket gophers (*T. mazama)* are protected and cannot be hunted or trapped.

II. POPULATION STATUS AND TREND

The abundance of individual small game animals, furbearers, and unclassified wildlife is largely unknown. However, because these animals typically have high population growth rates and often experience compensatory mortality, the risk of over-exploitation is low. Nonetheless, because biological data on individual species populations are limited, harvest levels are generally managed at conservative levels.

III. RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

A combination of hunting and trapping seasons are provided for small game and furbearing animals, respectively. Hunting seasons for small game animals typically extend from late fall to early spring of the following year. Combining all species, an average of 7,038 hunters harvest 18,436 small game animals per year, which averages about 1–6 harvested animals per hunter (Table 2). The majority of the harvest is cottontail rabbits (64%), followed by raccoons (20%), snowshoe hares (13%), and bobcats (3%).

Trapping season for furbearers are generally through the winter months. Combining all species, an average of 290 trappers take 7,574 furbearers annually (Table 3). However, the trend in the number of trappers and total take has declined significantly since 2000. The majority of the take is beaver (37%) and muskrat (31%), followed by raccoon (6%), coyote (6%), and nutria at (6%).

Unclassified wildlife can be hunted or trapped year-around and no bag limits are set. Harvest pressure is low for the majority of these animals, as there is little to no documented harvest for 12 of the 16 species or groups. Those that are harvested or trapped are usually associated human-wildlife conflict and lethal take is a mitigating tool for property damage or nuisance activities.

Table 2. Harvest trends for small game mammals, 1991-2006, Washington.

Species	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Cottontail rabbit										
Harvest	7,304	8,203	7,065	7,203	8708	10290	5689	8477	10010	6582
Hunters	3,502	2,809	2,409	3,485	3146	2550	2530	2830	3046	2099
Snowshoe hare										
Harvest	1,042	1,463	483	2,398	2339	1663	1488	1548	1384	865
Hunters	1,113	991	729	1,270	1248	952	922	1010	871	753
Raccoon										
Harvest	1,759	1,838	2,776	2,008						
Hunters	484	794	504	1,117						
Bobcat										
Harvest	152	140	253	206	312	214	416	290	234	503

Table 3. Trapping trends for furbearers and unclassified wildlife, 1991-2006, Washington.

Species	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Furbearers										
Bobcat	365	180	296	59	62	98	253	250	223	302
Raccoon	1,307	832	571	250	196	281	375	396	382	542
Red fox	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Badger	14	2	13	7	3	0	2	2	1	6
Beaver	8,116	4,558	4,819	642	1,150	1,703	1,414	1,715	1,505	2,626
Mink	607	424	462	101	33	62	45	64	47	78
Marten	80	14	140	18	28	19	0	0	0	0
Muskrat	10,924	4,117	3,572	1,159	453	682	452	566	527	1,111
River otter	772	656	727	83	138	115	331	438	231	366
Weasels	49	47	87	44	8	26	59	39	1	69
Unclassified wildlife										
Coyote	1,606	922	838	503	116	32	129	62	253	113
Nutria	1,116	486	712	267	687	239	315	744	NA	NA
Skunks	127	164	175	16	17	78	179	61	67	128
Number of Trappers	601	488	473	261	169	---	153	173	165	134

IV. DATA COLLECTION

There are no formal population surveys for small game mammals, furbearers, or unclassified wildlife. Rather, WDFW examines trends in total harvest and catch-per-unit-effort, which are collected annually using a hunter questionnaire or mandatory "Trapper's report of catch" form.

Data are also collected when any of these species are in conflict with humans. For verified human-wildlife conflicts, the species, location, number of animals, sex and age information, and fate of the animals are recorded. These data are used to help assess trends in wildlife populations and identify species distributions at the local scale.

V. SMALL GAME, FURBEARERS, AND UNCLASSIFIED WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT GOALS

The statewide goals for small game mammals, furbearers, and unclassified wildlife are:

1. Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage species and their habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations
2. Manage wildlife species for a variety of recreational, educational and aesthetic purposes including hunting, trapping, scientific study, cultural and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, wildlife viewing and photography.
3. Manage statewide populations for a sustained yield.

VI. ISSUE STATEMENTS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

Population Management

Issue Statement:

There is little documentation on the current distribution and relative densities of individual small game and furbearer species in Washington.

Objective 107:

Revise the distribution map for select small game and furbearer species by 2012.

Strategies:

a. Revise the distribution maps from harvest and trapping data, sightings, and regional biologist interpretations.
b. Verify distribution as necessary from survey and ground truthing activities.

Recreation Management

Issue Statement:

Currently, there is no harvest reporting mechanism for unclassified wildlife, except those that are reported as non-target or nuisance captures on trapper's report of catch forms. Moreover, the trappers report of catch form is problematic in terms of ease of reporting and data utility.

Objective 108:

Develop a web based reporting system for furbearers and unclassified wildlife.

Strategies:

a. Provide a mechanism for reporting capture of non-target species.

Problem wildlife management

Issue Statement:

In the last two years, over 25% of Washingtonians have experienced problems with wild animals or birds. Of these, over half the problems were associated with small game mammals, furbearers, and unclassified wildlife (Duda et al. 2002, 2008). This accounts for nearly 425,000 negative human-wildlife interactions annually.

Objective 109:

Minimize negative human-wildlife interactions so that the "number of negative interactions per capita" is constant or declining by 2014.

Strategies:

a. Increase recreational harvest (trapping and hunting) in areas prone to furbearer complaints.
b. Develop educational partnerships for informing the public on how to avoid furbearer damage and nuisance activity.
c. Use contracts with private wildlife control specialists for managing individual furbearer species involved in damage and nuisance activities.

VII. LITERATURE CITED

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_____. 2008. Public opinion on hunting and wildlife management in Washington. Responsive Management, Harrisonburg, Virginia, USA.

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Appendix A Public Comments and Agency Responses

Note: The comments listed in this Appendix refer to the Objectives as they were numbered in the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. Most of the Objective numbers have changed due to changes made to the plan.

Objective 1: Develop agency hunting season recommendations and management actions that ensure long-term sustainability of endemic hunted and non-hunted wildlife.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
agree	Thank you for your support.
Certain game management units should be considered for a season pass. Some units maintain a high deer population, and hunters should be allowed to hunt archery, modern firearm, and muzzleloading seasons on a single tag. This should not be limited to lottery winners only.	The multiple season permit does allow hunters to hunt during all three seasons. These permits are limited, so hunters must apply for the permit and be drawn from the pool of applicants. The reason for limited permits is because the success rate for hunters allowed to hunt in multiple seasons is significantly higher than general season hunters.
Give all three user groups equal opportunities to harvest an animal. Example, muzzleloader seasons for deer and elk are open at the same time and not always in areas where both species can be successfully taken, whereas the modern firearms hunters have separate seasons for deer and elk.	This hunting season proposal is being considered for the 2009-11 seasons.
good idea, but don't make hunting a rich mans sport!	We understand the concern about keeping the cost of hunting reasonable for all citizens.
Hunters are no different than the D.C. beltway snipers or the Virginia Tech gunman.	We understand that there are many perspectives about hunting, however 82% of Washington citizens support hunting.
Hunting is not necessary to sustain endemic wild species. I recommend that other management techniques be found. I suspect that the majority of state residents do not support the killing of our wildlife for sport.	We understand that there are many perspectives about hunting, however 82% of Washington citizens support hunting.
I believe that seasons should be longer for elk and deer. I spend typically 3-4 mos. scouting every year using trail cameras, legwork, and optics at long range as the season gets closer to minimize impact. I feel that the multiple season tags should be in place for everyone that wants to pay the price, but still keep the east/west designation for the elk tags to keep from overcrowding some of the more popular areas. After a couple of years the novelty of the tags will wear off and you'll have only the dedicated hunters out there. We are one of the keys to the future of hunting in this state and we don care about the future of the wildlife in this state.	At some point, it may be acceptable to expand the number of multiple season permits available, but expansion must be done very carefully. The success rates for multiple season hunters is significantly higher. This is especially true for elk hunting, which could result in excessive harvest levels.
I find that your agency does not listen to individual comments. It seems that all you are interested in is making dollars to support your jobs.	We are interested in individual comments and try to balance the different perspectives of everyone.
I support this action.	Thank you for your support.
I urge the WDFW to create strong educational outreach campaigns as their primary method for wildlife management, above hunting as management.	Outreach is an important tool for improving the public's understanding and support for wildlife, however hunting is also an important management tool and 82% of Washington citizens support hunting.
In general I feel we are putting to much pressure on wildlife in this state, season are to lengthy when it comes down to user groups, with archers having some very lengthy seasons. Between all of the groups like Tribal, rifle, archer, muzzleloader, youth, disabled, over 65,master hunter, where is it going to end? What is wrong with Quality type hunting in this state. We need to go to a permit only type of hunting on the eastside for all big game. We need to hold the WDFW more accountable for the computerized drawing system which has not been working...no more extensions to the drawing period...and more accountable for the drawing results....50% of all tags should go to highs bonus point holders.rest in the regular draw...we need earlier drawing results...they should be no charge for multi season tags.	These hunting season recommendations are being considered for the 2009-11 regulation package. We encourage you to provide comments via the web site at www.wdfw.wa.gov.
Long-term sustainablitly should be the number one requirement.	Thank you for your support.
Make sure INFO is available to all	We do plan to expand the information available to the public on game management.

Page 17. Issue statement. The issue statement is good, but could benefit by more specific definitions. For example, "maintenance of endemic populations" could mean one population in the state or throughout a species' historical range. Depending on the goal, very different strategies would be required. not have significant negative impacts on the sustainability... could mean many things to many people. It may also help to identify what WDFW considers science (peer-reviewed only?). There appear to be many instances in the mountain goat chapter where significant scientific information is omitted. Objective 1. This objective would be improved by defining what sustainability WDFW is striving for. Sustainability of a single population or across a species range? A sustainable hunted population or one that is too small to sustain hunting? These are important distinctions that would have bearing on management strategies. Strategy a. To better meet WDFW's stated goals described in the issue statement and objective, agency staff should do more than consider, they should incorporate the best scientific information. As noted above, the agency should state what it considers to be science so that the desired outcomes are clearer. This strategy would benefit from incorporating land owners, interest groups and other stakeholders into the development of strategies and recommendations. With respect to mountain goats, WDFW and the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest agreed that the target number of mountain goats for the Forest would be 1,440 animals. Strategies for mountain goat harvest should be developed to be compatible with this goal	The intent of this issue statement is on a geographic scale that is large enough to accommodate a sustainable population. That scale will change depending on the species. The issue however is the same, which is to maintain sustainable populations.
Priority #1 quality wildlife populations....draw only for most units....raise license fees to reflect proper value of resourse.....opportunity #2	These hunting season recommendations are being considered for the 2009-11 regulation package. We encourage you to provide comments via the web site at www.wdfw.wa.gov.
RCW77.04.012 calls for the protection, preservation and perpetuation of wildlife species but it also call for the Game Department to maximize hunting opportunities for all citizens of Washington state. This Topic does not appear in you objectives.	This statement is in the plan and there are many objectives related to crafting hunting regulations that accomplish both.
sounds good!	Thank you for your support.
stop hunting wildlife	We understand that there are many perspectives about hunting, however 82% of Washington citizens support hunting.
Strongly agree.	Thank you for your support.
the main problem you have in hunting is that hunters go after the biggest & the best of the species, not the weakest. You are therefore, over time, destroying the genetic inheritance of these species, creating animals that cannot tolerate the rigors of life. By doing so, you are destroy8ing the long-term viability of a species.	Good management of wildlife populations ensures that older age classes survive the hunting seasons and that genetic integrity is maintained.
The word "ensure" should be replaced with "maximize."	Often, wildlife managers don't have sufficient population level information to "maximize," so we have to be a little more conservative. That is why the term ensure is used.
This should be considered a "given" process for any forthright game management	Thank you for your support.
Very important to me	Thank you for your support.
We need to somehow remove wildlife management decisions from the process of voter initiatives, to avoid bad laws being enacted by anti hunters and animal rights extremists.	Legislation has been passed in some states that limit the scope of voter initiatives regarding hunting. However, that legislation has not been passed in Washington.
Yes	Thank you for your support.
Yes, we need to improve upon our seasons and make more precise management decisions.	Thank you for your support.
You appear to have a policy to use best available science for decision making. Therefore, use this to conserve our wildlife of all species by requiring the use of nontoxic ammunition for all hunting statewide.	The Department has been recommending increased restrictions on the use of lead shot in those situations most likely to cause problems for wildlife. The issue will be addressed further with the 2009-11 hunting season regulation package.
You need to seek more humane ways to manage wildlife populations on lands already stressed by human encroachment.	We understand that there are many perspectives about hunting, however 82% of Washington citizens support hunting.
Objective 2: Provide multiple opportunities for stakeholders to participate in development of three-year regulation packages, collection of biological information, and in planning efforts for game species.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**

"Issue Statement: When the general public was asked a series of questions about support for hunting, it is apparent that overall support for legal, regulated hunting was very strong (%). However, there are some specific issues where opinions are very pronounced. A majority of those surveyed in 2002 supported hunting cougar (55%) and black bear (56%); they did not support hunting furbearing animals (42%). The level of support for cougar and black bear hunting was also lower than for most other game species. However, public support for predator reduction was high for purposes of addressing public safety, property damage, and domestic animal depredation. In order to maintain public support for hunting, the Department should consider public opinion on specific hunting issues while still achieving game population objectives." With this said it is my opinion that it is then the responsibility of our Game Management team to word public documents and hunting governance as to appeal to the "economic and social" crowd while focusing on the vast majority (>90%) who favor "scientific management." The SEIS almost sounded as if it were going to favor social/economic "public opinion" vice focusing on the overwhelming majorities concern of sound scientific management of game animals. All can be achieved with careful and thoughtful wording of documentation provided to the public. However, our ultimate focus should remain on sound scientific game management not "public opinion." (stop) "When the general public was asked a series of questions about support for hunting, it is apparent that overall support for legal, regulated hunting was very strong (%)." Q: What is the number missing in the above statement? I am VERY interested in this demographic.	Thank you for your support.
Agree	Thank you for your support.
Editor: Who is a "stakeholder" and what does that mean here?	A stakeholder is typically a representative of someone affected by an issue.
Every hunter/fisherman should have a comment and complaint form sent to them yearly to provide the department with up to date information. This way issues and concerns of hunters/fishermen can be acted upon in a timely manner before problems get worse.	The Department provides many ways for hunters and fishers to let us know their thoughts.
How does this help protect, preserve and perpetuate wild species as well as maximize recreational us of lands and hunting in Washington state as mandated in RCW 77.04.012	This helps the Department accomplish our mandate by creating a supportive and informed group of citizens who actively assist us.
I approve of strategies stated.	Thank you for your support.
I support the Advisory Group process. These meetings need to be better publicized to the conservation community not just the user groups.	We plan to expand their reach through our web site.
I support this provided that "stakeholders" also means "landowners, hunters, representatives from our disabled population, bird watchers, etc."	Yes, all of those groups are stakeholders.
I would love the opportunity(ies) to do some volunteer work and also be able to sit in on some of the planning meetings held. I plan on taking the Master Hunter Course now that it has been refined. I did sit in on the Olympia orientation and found it helpful. I really do feel that many would even take the courses without the extra tags involved; our dedication is that great.	Thank you for your support.
important	Thank you for your support.
In conjunction with this process the public needs to be adequately educated on many of the subjects prior to their input. Answers and opinions will change as the public becomes more aware of the various issues and complexities of wildlife management in our state. It is similar to asking someone if they want a new car... the answer will be yes , until you explain it will cost them money, may get lousy gas mileage, etc. . For many wildlife management is one of ideals and perfect world scenarios. We need reality education. How....newspaper articles that really explain the dynamics behind a wildlife management issue....not a news release and not an article that is written independently by a writer that may have an agenda of their own. The department needs to work with a writer to developer a story that is accurate and portrays all the facets of an issue. This is not happening . Your comment on public sentiment toward the hunting of predators can be directly related to an uninformed public. The WDFW needs to be proactive in explaining how wildlife management in today's Washington involves all segment of the wildlife population and the human population. Few realize how precarious this balance can be and how all pieces of the puzzle interact.	Outreach and education was identified as a priority and we will be looking at ways to expand our reach.
It is obvious that he who speaks the loudest get the most opportunity in this state as is quite obvious with the archery hunters, input is great by all user groups but allocation of tags is very unfair, muzzleloader hunters are almost left out , rifle hunters have very short hunting season, to tags that are very difficult to draw if they involve any kind of quality, and archery hunters get to hunt from Sept. to Dec. with very high draw odds on some very high quality hunts.	These hunting season recommendations are being considered for the 2009-11 regulation package. We encourage you to provide comments via the web site at www.wdfw.wa.gov.
NA	
Please include participants that do not hunt. We are state residents, too and should be adequately and fairly represented. Non-hunter comments should not be trivialized and discounted!	The Department strongly encourages participation in surveys and comment by all Washington citizens.
Please spend more money evaluating the biological conditions of our states game.	This plan will help us prioritize how to spend the funds available to the Department.

Provide for more contact between the sportsmen and the folks making the decisions. On-line questionnaires that do not steer comments in any direction would sure be great	We have provided space at the end of this survey for any issue you would like to see addressed.
Regulation packages should only be designed/commented on by license holders. Recognize that many older generation or rural hunters do not have access to internet to comment, thus skewing results to urbanized, and tech-savvy respondents. Reach out to under represented groups.	It is surprising how many citizens have computers and access to the internet. We also keep a mailing list for anyone interested in receiving a paper copy of our surveys.
Replace "stakeholders" with "the public." Using stakeholders only is non-scientific and would separate our wildlife from the people, threatening their future existence.	We try to engage both stakeholders who generally are a little more educated on specific issues as well as the general public.
Under the issue statement for Public Support of Hunting as a Management Tool, the value (%) is missing	Thank you, that figure is 82% and will be inserted in the final publication.
We have 185 acres located on the south Skagit hwy in Skagit county ...we presently have a small herd of elk ..this year there are 6 bulls ..7 cows...we have our property closed to hunting as we want this herd to develop...presently the muzzleloader boundary season cuts through our property ...as we understand there are problems with the" hurn " herd crossing the Skagit to the east of us ..and disturbing the residences ...I would like to suggest trying to move those elk to the west to join our herd ...I know they will wander and migrate but I would like to see the herd we have on our property expand ...the impacts to our area are minimal as we are surrounded by private and federal forest lands.	It is always a challenge to manage elk in developing areas. There are some landowners who like to have a few elk around and some who do not. The area within the muzzleloader boundary is not being managed to support elk. They are causing too many problems for neighboring landowners.
Yes	Thank you for your support.
yes, do the planning, but don't have "game" species.	Thank you for your support.
Yes, we need to use more technology and better common sense to help aid in developing better regulations for the animals and hunters.	Thank you for your support.
you need to get beyond the web-page. Make yourself more visible to the public at large. Get out of your box!	When we asked the public how they would like to receive information, most suggested direct mail, internet, and news papers. Public meetings and other venues requiring attendance by staff generally don't reach very many people.
Objective 3: Consider development and modification of regulations for use of electronic equipment and baiting of wildlife for purposes of hunting.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
Absolutely not! Baiting for purposes of hunting? Is this really hunting?	Thank you for your comment.
Absolutely not!! No "baiting" or electronic equipment for hunting. How can that be an honest "sport"?	Thank you for your comment.
baiting of bears should be legal	Thank you for your comment.
clear rules on two-way radios	Thank you for your comment.
Definitely necessary when hunted wildlife is not overly abundant and unable to meet the demands of users, but there might be some areas & dates where game is too abundant and thus some tools could be used to improve hunter success and meet management objectives.	Thank you for your thoughtful comment.
Electronic equipment and baiting of wildlife is unfair and unsporting and should be banned.	Thank you for your comment.
electronics should not be allowed!	Thank you for your comment.
Fair Chase should be defined as "legal hunting." There is no objectivity in any other definitions. Baiting of wildlife is widely misunderstood, i.e. the animals are not harassed, and are killed instantly (not injured and having to be tracked down with many often escaping to suffer or be uncomfortable). DFW either does not realize the benefits of baiting or chooses to deliberately allow the public's misconception of the practice. There needs to an public education program on this practice or the questionnaires need to be worded to indicate the positive aspects of baiting.	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion.
Focus on Keeping rules simple to improve compliance. Consider using new technologies (DNA testing) to simplify transport rules. Reduce penalties for most technical violations. Publish the correct and entire trespassing rule in the pamphlet.	All good thoughts, when we implement the strategy that includes review of existing regulations, we encourage you to provide your specific comments.
good idea	Thank you for your support
Hunting in this state is already so highly regulated and micromanaged that it is hard for me to imagine what is being considered. I would like to see baiting for bear re-legalized so that hunters in areas with strong populations of bears can have a better opportunity to evaluate a number of bears before selecting one to harvest. This is a complex issue and sensitive for hunters as well as anti-hunters and I would like to be able to be more deeply involved on this topic.	We encourage you to participate in commenting on future regulation proposals.
I agree with the use of electronic and baiting toward the use of predators.	Thank you for your comment.
I am a hunter ...have been all my life ..hunted all big game species ....I consider baiting unethical...there is no challenge in sitting there pulling the trigger on something that's coming up to eat...requires absolutely NO SKILL...only in the cases of problem bears could I agree that that is a good form of hunting	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
I believe the baiting of bears should be legal especially in highly populated bear areas. However this should only be allowed if the population of bears stays steady and/or continues to rise with this method of hunting being in place. Maybe a one year test of this baiting should be allowed to see what kind of positive or negative impact it has on the hunting and/or the population of bears. The use of electronic equipment for hunting should be allowed. I do not believe the advantage this gives to a hunter is great enough to adversely effect overall wildlife populations.	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.

I oppose any baiting or electronic equipment for purposes of hunting. This is hardly a sporting event if these are used. I believe the majority of the residents of our state oppose this. Whenever this is put to a vote these loose.	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
I support this.	Thank you for your support
I totally agree. Arguments for this type of regulation should be closely tied to and demonstrated by the loss of user group opportunity that occurs when success is increased through baiting and electronics. Fair Chase and Ethics should also be a goal rather than an alternative. You may not be able to legislative ethics but you can nudge folks in the right direction. Enforcement should not have the final say in this type of policy making....it may very well be that a law on equipment restrictions may be unenforceable however there are many laws that are difficult to enforce...the danger is that we do nothing and deprive ourselves of the chance to slowly but surely change undesirable behavior. When an equipment issue comes before the commission it is often so mired down in "difficult to enforce" comments that it dies and nothing is done. Enforcement needs to realize and accept what the goal is and not how they can make a case. 99% of the public will obey the new law.	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
If populations need to be brought down in areas....yes....obtain goal as quickly and efficiently as possible by using sportsmen as a management tool	Thank you for your support
If put before the public I believe that we can all come to a meaningful and clear definition of "fair chase". I disagree that the public should be allowed to "define fair chase in different ways." The public is not allowed to define "drunk driving" or "animal cruelty" ! Persons with left of center opinions of fair chase are only attempting to justify their weaknesses. Fair chase is fair chase ! There are many excellent books that cover this topic and it all boils down to common sense (unfortunately not common enough). Ultimately the public should define this very important topic and if given the proper opportunity I believe that the vast majority of ethical hunters will prevail.	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
In GMUs that black bear populations are high. I think baiting with a natural food source should be excepted for hunting. This lets the hunter judge the size of the animal, and less sows with cubs would be killed. And black bear numbers could be could be kept at a proper balance.	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
It's best to bring the animals to you into a controlled area then to go after them. The way thing are you could end up going after your animal and end up in a neighborhood or housing development - since they are around every hill anymore.	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
leave alone	Thank you for your comment.
Maintain current regs for electronics, allow bear bating.	Thank you for your comment.
maintain current regulations or further restrictions on the use of electronic gear	Thank you for your comment.
NA	
Need to consider mods to regs for hunters with limitations such as failing eyesight (optics on muzzle loaders) back/shoulder problems (crossbows) e.t.c.	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
never	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 3 The use of cell/satellite phones, two way radios and GPS units should be used only for emergency or search and rescue purposes and not to improve/enhance the possibility of harvesting an animal.	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
Please do not limit the use of GPS/Radio's as this is very important when hunting with my older father and his safety.	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
Replace "Consider development and modification of" with "Develop and modify." Add "with conservation of wildlife as the main priority."	We feel that the language is clear.
Some electronics should be allowed while others should not. Baiting bears I see no problem with that issue.	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
The less wildlife is exposed to human interactions, the better for wildlife. That should not mean it is ok for purposes of hunting, rather only for purposes of population monitoring.	Thank you for your comment.
The use of cell/satellite phones, two way radios and GPS units should be used only for emergency or search and rescue purposes and not to improve/enhance the possibility of harvesting an animal.	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
This could be a problem for enforcement, if it has no chance of being enforced, then don't attempt to make it illegal.	Thank you for your comment.
This is deplorable. Please scrap this cowardly idea altogether.	As you can see from the other comments, some believe quite strongly in the concern about fair chase.
This is just wrong. If hunters need this kind of help, they should give up hunting!	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
Too many people will use in illegal ways	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
Too Many People will use this in a bad way. Illegal Tracking and baiting will result in to many Trophies taken.	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
totally ridiculous. If a hunter is too lazy to get off his ass and traipse around the woods, he doesn't deserve to kill anything	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
Undecided; although I do feel that baiting for bear in brushy areas should be allowed. I've been seeing too many young an female bears shot because of lack of time to judge them. Many places are limited sight areas that rely on dumb luck to run into them	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.

Under no circumstances should baiting be allowed for purposes of hunting.	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
We heard neither of these in the hunting experience. NO!	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
What?? After passage of Initiative 655 you are looking at MORE opportunities for BAITING WILDLIFE? What is it about public revulsion against these blatantly unfair practices don't you understand?	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
Wildlife baiting at a minimum should be considered for handicapped hunters. Immobility of the Hunter could be aided by bating of the animal, and should not be considered unfair to the animal.	Thank you for your comment.
Yes - If close to population density's.	Thank you for your comment.
yes--make them stricter!!	Thank you for your comment.
your focus on "electronic devies" is somewhat narrow minded in scope. But it is a beginning... of sorts.	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
This is deplorable. Please scrap this cowardly idea altogether.	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
I support further restrictions to promote more ethical hunting. No electronic eqpt and no baiting.	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
Anti's would love this/this is supposed to be hunting not shooting.	There are many different opinions on fair chase. That is the reason we ask the public their opinion. Thank you for your comment.
Objective 4: Improve compliance for common violations and public opinion of hunters.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
Add a strategy to increase penalties for violators. Some individuals are content to pay misdemeanor fines to achieve hunting success. Higher fines and license suspension may further deter potential violators.	Several penalties have been increased in recent years, so hopefully violations have declined as a result.
add officers and lose some biologists to balance budget	Both job classes are important to the Department and both fulfill different functions.
agree	Thank you for your support.
Approve.	Thank you for your support.
Better monitoring and enforcement is required. People walking around with guns and other weapons are a threat and potential danger to the general public.	Thank you for your support.
certainly	Thank you for your support.
Change to "Through more stringent fines and license revocation, improve compliance for common violations of hunters, with special consideration of violations that result in suffering to animals and depletion of species."	There may be many strategies necessary to improve compliance besides the level of fines.
Crack down on poaching.	Thank you for your support.
Do not eliminate a regulation just because it may not be 100% enforceable.... Look at what you are trying to accomplish...ethics and a good public view of hunters.... Keep striving for those ideals and realize that 99% of the public will follow the rules.	Thank you for your support.
Editor: What does it mean to "Improve compliance for [...] public opinion of hunters"?	The public opinion survey indicated that the public was not very satisfied with hunters even though 82% supported hunting. Part of that dis-satisfaction appeared to be associated with too many violations.
Fines should be stiffer and courts should not take wildlife violations as lightly as they seem to. More enforcement officers with expanded budget are needed.	There may be many strategies necessary to improve compliance besides the level of fines.
have recognizable boundaries ..such as roads or streams...then there are NO excuses for being outside the boundaries when hunting...	In recent years we have improved the use of definable boundaries on Game Management Units. Some of the other smaller boundaries are more difficult, but we have also improved the availability of map products.
I am not sure what the most common violations are but I can imagine that it would be very easy to violate a game regulation because the regulations are getting so complex. would be easy to make a mistake and violate the law. This is a big complaint with and a regular topic of conversations with many hunters. Many states have game regulations that are much easier to understand and that lends itself to greater compliance.	Simplifying and clarifying the regulations is an important strategy in this plan.
I believe some violations need to be addressed by making the person or persons do volunteer work on some of the lands the violations occurred on. Mainly controlling litter as that is the most pressing problem that I see out there or at least it is the most noticeable.	Good idea, thanks for the comment. While not in this plan, we will consider the idea for use on our wildlife areas.
I do not think we need to improve the opinion of hunters. They are killing in the name of "sport." Perhaps they should go to Iraq where the other side has guns.	We understand that there are many perspectives about hunting, however 82% of Washington citizens support hunting.
If the game dept. won't stand up for hunters and huning issues and support hunting issues i.e. hound hunting and baiting how do you expect the general public to see hunters.	Thank you for your comment.
Improve compliance by simplifying rules, especially transporting rules, which are of NO biological importance and only punish good hunters in the quest to get "Poachers" while they are transporting. Use new technologies to simplify Tagging/transporting rules (DNA could be used for sexing if poaching suspected). Reducing red-tape rules automatically improves compliance.	Simplifying and clarifying the regulations is an important strategy in this plan.
Like the compliance part, disagree with the hunters part	Thank you for your comment.
Maximum penalty for game violations	There may be many strategies necessary to improve compliance besides the level of fines.

more field officers	Thank you for your support.
No	Thank you for your comment.
Place fines and or restitutions at a level that violators will find it a deterrent. Too many people with money say it's worth the fine to commit the crime.	There may be many strategies necessary to improve compliance besides the level of fines.
Poachers are criminals, not hunters. Hunter safety edu classes need to be completely revamped- and brought up to date so as to deal with such issues as ethics more so than being done at present.	Good idea, thanks for the comment. While not in this plan, we will consider the idea when we update the hunter education manual.
public opinion of hunters cannot be improved. They are a hazard to the environment. Regardless of the signs I post, they come onto my land, shooting their guns to scare game to see if they should trespass further. Fines should be increased.	There may be many strategies necessary to improve compliance besides the level of fines.
Reduce and simplify regulations, keeping only what is absolutely necessary. Eliminate regulations that are primarily designed to make it "easier" to catch people with tagging/transport technicalities, and not catch real poachers. Focus on real criminals. Why is it illegal for a wife to take her husbands elk to the locker without an elaborate note. Why is it required to transport only meat from certain states, but it is illegal to transport only meat from Wa killed animals (eg. need testicals attached etc). Simplify, simplify, simplify.	Simplifying and clarifying the regulations is an important strategy in this plan.
Strongly agree,, would especially like to see hunters not just driving and shooting from roads.	Thank you for your support.
the biggest compliance problems occur within the WDFW with the inability to hold a computerized drawing...and extending the drawing periods and application periods...we want results and accountability and earlier results..	We are improving our drawing and we are providing alternatives for public comment during development of the 2009-11 hunting regulation package development. We encourage you to go to our web site at www.wdfw.wa.gov and provide comment.
The public opinion of hunters will probably never be very good no matter what we do because of the type of zoned out electronics age we live in and not many people can understand doing anything with there time other than making there daily activities as lacksidasical as possible. There needs to be more programs and/or booklets to inform the public of the contributions that hunters are giving to wildlife conservation. I think the public might understand our overall positive impact on wildlife through the volunteer conservation efforts we do. Also, how the money we spend on hunting in every aspect goes back to the conservation of wildlife.	Those ideas have been incorporated as strategies in the plan.
The standards of acceptable loss need to be balanced against unforeseen events, such as disease or extremes in weather. Hunters should not have input into compliance issues for any violations. Improve tracking of poaching.	Thanks for your comment.
There are laws in place. Enforce them! Gather the facts as best as possible and if negligence was intentional, throw the book at them and let the public know what happens to persons that bring shame to the name "HUNTER".	Thank you for your support.
This is a two edged sword... increased enforcement would increase "stats" and revenue while at the same time lead to the perception of "increased violators" possibly affecting "public opinion". Rather than excessive field contacts, I support the WDFW returning to "Game Check Stations" manned by commissioned agents as well as volunteers, these were highly visible to public in general and usually were located in prominant entry/departure zones to hunting areas.	This idea is one of the strategies in the plan. Thanks for your support.
This is great. However, it appears that the current Director keeps "second guessing" many enforcement calls. He needs to stand behind his officers and support them, not be in fear of the public. Those of us who support hunting, whether we hunt or not, do believe that wildlife laws need to be enforced. This will send a message to those who may think about breaking them in the future.	Thank you for your support.
Unless you increase the number of agents, how do you propose to accomplish this. You really need to train these folks in better people skills and how to apply the rules and regulations they are supposed to enforec.	That is one of the strategies identified in the plan.
Yes	Thank you for your support.
Yes we need this very badly.	Thank you for your support.
yes!	Thank you for your support.
Crack down on poaching.	Thank you for your support.
I strongly support more enforcement.	Thank you for your support.
Objective 5: Determine hunter and landowner preferences for private land programs that address landowners' needs and increase lands available for hunter access.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
(A) Increase private land Acess (b) use Master Hunters to help regulate access and complaince	Thank you for your support. The Department will evaluate and use many different methods to improve access.
"Agree" and "Approve" (multiple comments)	Thank you for your support.
As ecosystems collapse and all species come under increased pressure from human activity how about actively encouraging landowners to put their lands into conservation where NO HUNTING is allowed. Doesn't our wildlife ever get a break from WDFW or do you exist solely to promote hunting?	There are a variety of government sponsored conservation programs in which landowners can participate. The paramount responsibility of the Department is to preserve, protect, and perpetuate all wildlife species but the Department is also mandated to maximize wildlife recreation including hunting. Hunting seasons and harvest of game species is specifically designed to ensure sustainable populations.
at this time in the case of elk...would ask for landowner controlled permits	The Fish and Wildlife Commission has provided guidance for private lands access programs and the Department will continue to utilize a variety of programs, including landowner controlled permits, to meet Commission direction.

big timber companies should pay taxes to help cover cost of managing the state resources.	Tax law is beyond WDFW authority
Create an incentive for the landowner to open the land, competitive to lease hunting rights.	The Department will continue to to develop and/or implement a variety of access alternatives that meet the needs of the private landowner as well as the hunter. The funding required to pay rates competitive with private leases would likely be expensive.
Do not do anything to increase lands for hunters	The Department is mandated to maximize public recreational game fishing and hunting opportunities of all citizens.
Focus on public land before private land. Where is your objective for access to public lands?	Close to half of Washington is in public ownership and a large percentage of that provides public access for hunting. Surveys of hunters in Washington, and nationwide, have identified access to private lands as one of the most, if not the most important issues that the Department can address.
General funds should not be used to promote hunting.	The private lands access program is not funded by the General Fund, but rather supported by hunting license revenue and federal monies provided through a tax on the sale of firearms, archery equipment, and ammunition.
good idea, but remember further fees for this priveledge still leaves alot of us out.	The Department understands the desire to keep hunting fees down, but improving hunter access will require additional funding.
Green Diamond (Simpson) has the best access that I have seen statewide and they don't have any more problems than any of the other timber companies that I can see. I've hunted statewide for a number of years so this isn't just a random statement but an educated opinion.	The Department will evaluate and use many different methods to improve access to private lands. Successful existing programs can be a great resource.
I don't believe hunters should have more access to private lands. They pose a safety danger. Land owners should not be pressured into having hunters on their land. There is already plenty of public lands. Private lands are often lower in elevation and provide sanctuaries that are badly needed. There should be places like this where animals are not hunted by humans. Most of our national parks are higher in elevation and limited in location and size.	The Department is mandated to maximize public hunting opportunities and access to private lands has been identified as one of the most important issues affecting opportunity. Working with landowners to address their needs becomes an important factor in meeting our mandate. Hunting seasons and harvest of game species is specifically designed to ensure sustainable populations.
Improve public education to prevent conflicts.	This strategy is important to improving the understanding and acceptance of healthy wildlife populations. It has been included in several strategies in the plan.
It's clear and simple. If the land owner will not allow access and hunting on their land, be it 1 acre land owner or a tree farm, then we should not be paying for any animal damage.	Current policies and rules require a landowner to allow some level of public hunting prior to being considered for damage payments.
more archery opportunities, most landowner special permits are modern firearm only, Why?	Permit numbers and weapon types are negotiated with landowners prior to the season. To date, landowners have not been interested in providing opportunity to weapon types that may be less successful at harvesting animals. The Department will continue to try to maximize public recreational value in the program.
my land is OFF limits. Maybe teach these hunters a little respect for other peoples property.	Providing hunters with additional information about private lands hunting opportunities and landowner relations is important. An additional strategy has been added to this objective.
Publicize the problem of tribal opposition to the land access bill that has failed the past 3 years. This is a story that needs telling.	Thank you for your comment.
Remember the court decision in 1842 that stated the wildlife belong to all of the people and not the aristocracy. A landowner may charge an access fee, but I do not believe they have the right to sell tags with the blessing and help of WDFW.	The Fish and Wildlife Commission has provided guidance for private lands access programs and the Department will continue to utilize a variety of programs to meet Commission direction. All programs will attempt to maximize public recreational benefits. An important distinction in WDFW programs is that landowners may only sell access.
The wildlife was here before the landowner, why then if they continue to expand their crops do wildlife suffer, if fencing to protect crops is neccessary then it should be done at their expense. Not at the expense of the wildlife, they to should be require to maintain any exsisting fencing that has been established..	The Department works cooperatively with landowners to address public access and wildlife management issues. The Washington State Legislature also directs the Department to work with landowners to resolve game damage issues using a variety of methods, up to and including payment for commercial crop damage caused by deer and elk.
There needs to be a separate objective for improving access to PUBLIC LANDS with its own strategies. The current Objective only speaks about private lands, not public, and the current programs only focus on private, while thousands of acres of public land are inaccessible.. Treat Public and private land access differently. Create an objective to improve access to public lands (DNR, USFWS, USFS, county watersheds, BLM, Monuments and parks). Focus on public access through private lands to public lands first. Use counties, Federal agencies to obtain access to significant public lands. Separate the ussue of habitat enhancement on private lands from access to private lands. Separate funding, too. Do not lump together.	Close to half of Washington is in public ownership and a large percentage of that provides public access for hunting. Surveys of hunters in Washington, and nationwide, have identified access to private lands as one of the most, if not the most important issues that the Department can address. WDFW private lands biologists typically develop working relationships with private landowners through helping them improve wildlife habitat. It is most efficient when the biologist is able to discuss access issues with the landowner at the same time. It would be much more difficult, and more expensive, to have different staff working with the same landowner on such related issues.

There should be a posting somewhere on the wdfw website where you can find landowners that are willing to have there land hunted for the purpose of damage to their land or just out of the goodness of their heart. Then have a way you can request to hunt that land like through e-mail or an address. But, if these landowners want a fee it should be suggested to be a minimal one because people are already being discouraged with hunting because of the overall cost. Especially concerning the cost of gas to go hunting.	The WDFW mapping website "GoHunt" maps general locations of over 300 private landowners who allow public hunting through our Feel Free to Hunt, Hunt By Written Permission, or Register to Hunt programs. Only the "Written Permission" lands require a landowner contact, which is displayed on signs posted on the property. In addition, the Department is developing additional programs (e.g., a reservation system) that should have more flexibility for the landowner and the hunter.
This is the wave of the future, maybe our only long term strategy.	Thank you for your support.
totaly needed with out big payments	Thank you for your support. The private lands access budget will not likely support big payments.
We need private land programs, but it also helps to have better hunter etiquette.	Providing hunters with additional information about private lands hunting opportunities and landowner relations is important. An additional strategy has been added to this objective.
Why does the Dept keep flunking communication 101? A historic lack of information from your department is unacceptable.	Providing hunters with additional information about private lands hunting opportunities and landowner relations is important. An additional educational outreach strategy has been added to this objective.
Working to increase private land for public hunting is working in many states. Just keep it simple.	Thank you for your support.
Yes - Some hunters are pigs! They Don't Follow directions + Do as they wish, Rude!	Providing hunters with additional information about private lands hunting opportunities and landowner relations is important. An additional strategy has been added to this objective.
yes for addressing landowners' needs---no to increasing lands available for hunting	The Department is mandated to maximize public hunting opportunities and access to private lands has been identified as one of the most important issues affecting opportunity. Working with landowners to address their needs becomes an important factor in meeting our mandate.
I strongly oppose privatising our publicly owned wildlife resources. I do not support giving private landowners transferable tags to sell for their commercial gains.	The Fish and Wildlife Commission has provided guidance for private lands access programs and the Department will continue to utilize a variety of programs to meet Commission direction. All programs will attempt to maximize public recreational benefits.
Mandate incentives for landowners to use hunting nad other deterents before granting them damage claims	Current policies and rules require a landowner to allow public hunting prior to being considered for damage payments.
I would like to see the Department develop a whole new private lands access program that provided a variety of options for landowners to manage access and wildlife on their property	The Department is committed to working with landowners and hunters to address hunter access issues. Adding new options to the Department's access program, in coordination with landowners and hunters, will be considered.
Objective 6: Develop road management plans in key areas of the state.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
A great idea....You need to set actual goals for closing roads...do not wait for conditions to be perfect. EGA. Year one...close 5% of roads, year 2 close 5% more roads. You need concrete goals! Involve sportsman's group in this effort and even conservation organization for volunteer help and even funding. You need to add one more stratagy.... educate the public, especially the hunting public on why you are doing what you are doing. You need to reach "Joe Hunter" through the pamphlet, newspaper article and even enforcement in the field....stopping by an elk camp to talk about it,,, signage, etc.	Identifying specific percentages of roads to be closed is difficult since what will be accomplished depends largely on funding and staff availability on the area in question. In 2007, WDFW worked closely with sportsman's groups to open motorized access in Cowlitz County and other opportunities to work together may exist. Providing hunters with information about WDFW road management goals and programs is important. An additional strategy has been added to this objective.
"Agree" and Approve" (multiple comments)	Thank you for your support.
Also consider placing restrictions on major roads, such as Highway 410 and skier access during winter and the effect all this traffic has on wintering wildlife.	The Department of Fish and Wildlife does not have the authority to close state highways.
close as many roads as necessary to provide quality opportunity	Thank you for your support. The Department will strive to provide a variety of hunting experiences, including areas with motorized access and those without.
close more roads / control Atvs	Thank you for your comment. Enforceability is an important factor in controlling ATV use.
do like oregon does, lock it down all year until hunting season to minimize poaching.	Road management programs will consider protecting areas that are critical to wildlife and wildlife habitat.
Find out the maximum walk-in distance, and use this to decide which roads should be open or closed.	Road management programs will consider protecting areas that are critical to wildlife and wildlife habitat while providing for a variety of access opportunities.
For cougar hunting must allow keyed access to lock gates	Enforcement is key to a successful road management program. Providing motorized access for only some users can cause many enforcement problems and may not be an option.
got enough roads, let the hunter walk	The proposed strategies do not call for development of more roads, rather increased management on existing roads. Strategy D is identified to help those who cannot participate in walk-in access.
Green dot systems work, if you have the enforcement people to stop violators. Greatly increase the fines to make it not desirable to get caught. Most of the current fines are no greater than a minor speeding infraction. Many people finger that is just the cost of having fun.	Enforcement is a very important part to a successful road management program. The Department does not have the authority to change the cost of a fine.
I hope roads are kept to a minimum. They are a source of erosion. They increase the chance of wildfires.	The proposed strategies do not call for development of more roads, rather increased management on existing roads.

I love walk in areas and will continue to hunt them as long as I am able but we need better maps of areas and gates that are open to hunt for people that want the access (or need). The info is sparce and unorganized.	Providing hunters with information about WDFW road management goals and programs is important. An additional strategy has been added to this objective.
I only see closed roads that stop elderly the access to hunting areas	One of the goals of a road management plan is to develop a system where hunting access is well distributed on the landscape. If designed properly, a variety of access opportunities should be maintained.
I think that the DOT system is working fine.	In some places the Green Dot system is useful. Enforceability is the main reason Strategy C calls for an emphasis on gated and barrier type closures rather than voluntary systems.
I would like to see MORE road closures for the sake of improved game mortality with the caviot that hunters may enter to retreive downed game (existing access roads only, no off-road use). Strict enforcement of access violations of course.	Thank you for your support. Enforcement is key to a successful road management program. Providing motorized access for game retrieval poses many enforcement problems and may not be an option.
More area should be set aside for handicapped hunters, and closed to non-handicapped hunters. It is very difficult to access land as a handicapped hunter, and have your hunt spoiled by those who are mobile enabled go to any area in the state is unfair.	The Department encourages hunters with disabilities to participate. Current programs provide several areas where special access and hunting permit opportunities exist and additional access exceptions are called for in Strategy D of this objective.
More of the roads owned by the state should have open gate access during peak hunting seasons. If this is not being done because of dumpers and or drug related activities a special decal could be given to hunters when they purchase their hunting license. This decal could then be put in the window of a hunters vehicle informing everyone as to their right to be in those areas. A notice could be put on the entrance to those roads informing them of the need for this decal in order to be in these areas. It should then be suggested that the people with these decals port anyone in violation of this rule just like the reporting of someone who litters on the highway. If more roads are availble to hunting, you will have more hunters and therfore more revenue from the sale of hunting licenses and equipment. I know that the more and more roads I see closing each year discourages me to even come back to hunt the next year. If you don't start providing more road access people will give up trying to hunt, especially those with slight disabilities that may not have a handi-cap card but do have a hard time getting into the woods without road access.	Road management plans strive to provide a variety of access opportunities, including those that accommodate motorized vehicles. A balance between accessibility and protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat is needed and in many areas, more open roads will not meet those needs.
Need more state land open for motorized vehicles with special permit's like the Hanncock Forest area permits.	The Department will consider a variety of methods for road management. Administering a special access permit program can be expensive.
not interested in new roads, but maintaining existing roads ok	The proposed strategies do not call for development of more roads, rather increased management on existing roads.
ORV usage is rampant in several areas. Modern technology is a growing serious problem. Enforcement is key to stopping lawlessness.	Thank you for your comment.
Partner more with DNR, USFS etc. on road plans and include fishing, hiking, other recreational access. Focus on permanent access through private lands to public lands, that way if management on private lands changes, the access to public lands is still there. While incentives are nice, use all available means (through counties, forest service, public pressure etc.)to gain legal access to significant blocks of public land for the broad recreating public. Work with other agencies more, especially county, federal, and state road departments and the DNR. This is possible in most areas discussed.	The Department has been working with USFS on road management plans, especially in WDFW Region 3. A strategy has been added to Objective 5 to address landlocked public lands.
Please continue to monitor the road use situation and close roads in areas that are important to wildlife populations. Restricting access is good for the wildlife and natural resources, traffic and litter are not.	Thank you for your support.
Refrain from overdeveloping roads that will only provide access to potential illegal hunting/poaching of wildlife.	The proposed strategies do not call for development of more roads, rather increased management on existing roads.
So slightly here. We need roads for survey hunting - but not too many.	Thank you for your comment.
Stay out of undeveloped land - we don't need any more roads.	The proposed strategies do not call for development of more roads, rather increased management on existing roads.
This is all ready in existence and appears to be a redundant effort, furthermore extensive extensive cooperative road management areas limits the ability of the general public to camp or view wildlife, especially those with small children, families, handicapped family members, etc.	There are some areas where WDFW is administering road management programs. However, some are not fulfilling their intent. Other areas identified do not currently have a WDFW road management plan or cooperative agreement. A road management plan should provide for a variety of access opportunities, including motorized access where appropriate.
Walk in access on closed roads is an important hunting option. Some level of road closures should be implemented in all wildlife areas (not just those listed), where possilble, to provide a variety of hunting options.	The wildlife areas that are listed are the highest priority areas. Other areas would be considered if funding allows.
Washington state has more road access then any other state. Don't develop roads.	The proposed strategies do not call for development of more roads, rather increased management on existing roads.
While it is important to have roads into many wild parts of our state for timber harvest, recreational access, etc., please strongly consider closing down more roads into wild areas. It is very discouraging to hike into an area, only find out that a road you weren't aware of also leads into the area. Too many roads take away from the wilderness experience and make sightseeing and hunting opportunities much less enjoyable and succesful.	The proposed strategies do not call for development of more roads, rather increased management on existing roads.
Why try to develope plans that are not likely to be managed adequately?	Enforcability is the main reason Strategy C calls for an emphasis on gated and barrier type closures rather than voluntary systems.
I strongly support road closeurs to protect our wildlife.	Thank you for your support.

The needs of senior hunters need to be more than just "considered". Most of these follks have contributed to hunting and fishing the better part of their lives and access should not be restricted just because they are no longer able to walk distances and/or are not as agile as they once were. They don't qualify for disabled status.	One of the goals of a road management plan is to develop a system where hunting access is well distributed on the landscape. If designed properly, a variety of access opportunities should be maintained.
Objective 7: Improve public understanding and acceptance of treaty hunting rights.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
A great idea however you also need to create public awareness and at the very least hunter awareness of some of the problems that tribal harvest can create if not management properly. The colicky, White river and Blue Mountain elk herds are prime examples of problems with Tribal harvest of specific age class animals. Some newspaper articles covering tribal hunting rights which include a current and accurate portrayal of tribal hunting as it exists today. The subsistence and ceremonial aspects need to be looked at as does tribal bull elk target harvests. Put forth solutions that the WDFW feel will help correct problems. Summary.... educating the public and hunting public on tribal hunting will go a long ways toward helping folks understand the tribal hunting issue however the problems that now exist cannot and should not be ignored and swept under the rug.... It just creates distrust and frustration.	Thank you for your support.
Acceptance is not understanding. I think there is no understanding when you wait 12 years to draw and elk tag with a bow and an Indian sends a 300 Win. Mag bullet over you back and kills the elk you are stalking. Have the treaty say traditional weapons only unless they buy a tag like the rest of us.	The treaties were developed over 150 years ago. The regulations for state licensed hunters are often different than tribes establish for their members.
agree	Thank you for your support.
Do something about overkill of trophy bulls by yakima tribe on the colockum	We are working with the Yakama Tribe on establishing harvest objectives and better coordination. Currently state licensed hunters are taking more elk each year than the tribes.
Don't even attempt to educate "brainwash" people. Tell the truth. Tribes get to do what they want when they want it and the WDFW can do nothing. Don't excpect hunters to enable this!	We understand that people have many perspectives on tribal treaty rights. This objective and subsequent strategies are designed to give people more information.
Essential - late of nessecary function here.	Thank you for your support.
I believe we need to list all hunting done by tribes along with non-tribal hunting, why is this not done in that it is part of the harvest...we have a right to know what is being harvested under treaty rights...	We have added a link on our web site to the Northwest Indian Fish Commission's tribal harvest report.
I don't have much to say on this other than I would lose my truck, gun, and hunting rights for an extended period for killing an elk illegally but the Indian can get a slap on the wrist for killing a gray whale that is on the endangered species list!	We understand that people have many perspectives on tribal treaty rights. This objective and subsequent strategies are designed to give people more information.
I know I am confused and angered with this issue. I think the public of Washington needs to know what the Tribes are harvesting, so we can better manage our wildlife.	We have added a link on our web site to the Northwest Indian Fish Commission's tribal harvest report.
I support treaty rights BUT, I believe that extended seasons for tribal members beyond the general seasons outlined for the public should only be conducted on tribal (reservation) lands with modern weapons, or may be conducted on public land with traditional weapons (i.e., recurve bow, etc) To facilitate or allow extended tribal hunting seasons (beyond general public seasons)on public lands with modern weapons excessively stresses game (i.e., hunting during rut or late winter) and leads to conflict between the general public and tribal members.. additionally I support tribal members reporting actual game harvests the same as required of the general public and would encourage WDFW and Tribal Authorities to establish a "quota" for the tribes under treaty and to curtail further hunting for the season once the quota has been reached or is forecasted/expected to be reached.	We understand that people have many perspectives on tribal treaty rights. This objective and subsequent strategies are designed to give people more information.
I will never accept treaty hunting rights and I really hope I never run into our native tresspaser. Sorry about the spelling.	We understand that people have many perspectives on tribal treaty rights. This objective and subsequent strategies are designed to give people more information.
I would never accept any treaty hunting rights.	We understand that people have many perspectives on tribal treaty rights. This objective and subsequent strategies are designed to give people more information.
if there is a treaty then indians should stay on the reservations to hunt, otherwise they should be held to the same standards as the rest of us.	We understand that people have many perspectives on tribal treaty rights. This objective and subsequent strategies are designed to give people more information.
It is hard to understand and accept anyone going onto nontribal lands and shooting anything they want, when ever thay want. Especially on elk herds that are not native to an area.	We understand that people have many perspectives on tribal treaty rights. This objective and subsequent strategies are designed to give people more information. Elk are native to Washington.
let tribal members hunt on tribal lands only or buy a tag and follow the rules like everyone else.	We understand that people have many perspectives on tribal treaty rights. This objective and subsequent strategies are designed to give people more information.
Needed Desperatly	Thank you for your support.
not important	Thanks for your comment.
Please consider a method of take restriction for tribal hunters....shooting off a closed road, from a vehicle is not exactly what the people that drafted the treaties had in mind. Neither is overharvest and waste of game...I have witnessed (and reported) both offences and gotton nowhere with the WDFW enforcement.	We understand that people have many perspectives on tribal treaty rights. This objective and subsequent strategies are designed to give people more information.
Some opinions will never change, don't put a lot of time or money here.	Thanks for your comment.

The public will never "understand and accept" tribal rights if they feel they are causing an unfair and unbalanced system, instead of hunting "in kind with the citizens of the state". Focus on the tribes responsibilities, not just rights. INstead of trying to convince non-hunters to embrace tribal hunting, educate license hunters on the rules tribes must follow (can they shoot from a vehicle, spotlight, etc.) if they can hunt in unsafe or unethical ways, change WAC to make these actions universally illegal.	We understand that people have many perspectives on tribal treaty rights. This objective and subsequent strategies are designed to give people more information.
This is good.	Thank you for your support.
This would be best accomplished if tribal hunting harvest reporting was both mandatory and accurate, as in other States with tribal harvest (Ex. Minnesota). I don't think anyone disputes their right to harvest, but A) their harvest needs to be monitored for the agreed to 50% take allowance and if necessary, Federal assistance should be requested in order to get them to report big game harvest's actively in order to manage our wildlife. If those thing's happen, you'd see nearly 100% support of the tribal management strategy by non-tribal sportsmen.	We have added a link on our web site to the Northwest Indian Fish Commission's tribal harvest report.
Treaty hunting rights are only valid within current accepted standards set for protecting sustainable populations of wildlife. At no time should treaty rights trump endangered or stressed species.	We understand that people have many perspectives on tribal treaty rights. This objective and subsequent strategies are designed to give people more information.
treaty hunting rights granted a hundred plus years ago have little validity today in a world where the environment is threatened & species are becoming extinct.	We understand that people have many perspectives on tribal treaty rights. This objective and subsequent strategies are designed to give people more information.
Treaty hunting rights must go. You can not possibley think you could manage wildlife with more than one rule book. They have been exploiting the resource for too long. It is discrimination plain and simple.	We understand that people have many perspectives on tribal treaty rights. This objective and subsequent strategies are designed to give people more information.
We ALL have traditions that have morphed over the mellenia. When these "treaties" were written game animals were a primary source of food. Today this is not the case. We as man-kind must evolve and adjust as we gain knowledge. Scientific Game Management should apply to all U.S. citizens regardless or race, gender or nationality. Past Washington State Law provided a prison in-mate released from WALLA WALLA entitlement to $20 and a horse. We must periodically update our treaties and laws to apply common sense. Traditions can be accomodated within the confines of existing laws.	We understand that people have many perspectives on tribal treaty rights. This objective and subsequent strategies are designed to give people more information.
Yes	Thank you for your support.
yes and also of abuses	Thank you for your support.
yes!	Thank you for your support.
You need to have OPEN rather closed meetings with the trubes. Stop the secret negotiations and decisions/agreements.	Greater public understanding and involvement in the negotiation process is being addressed.
you will never get people to accept that in this modern day ...tribes are able to go out and harvest fish and game whenever they want...unless they decide to actively pursue through the media what they are ACTUALLY doing to enhance the continuation of the game they are taking ...	We understand that people have many perspectives on tribal treaty rights. This objective and subsequent strategies are designed to give people more information.
Agree, however, it would also be beneficial to disseminate this information as widely as possible, rather than just targeting hunters who express concern about Tribal treaty rights. This could begin to be accomplished, as the GMP states, through the Hunter Education Program and through inclusion of a section on treaty hunting rights in the state's hunting pamphlet.	These are all good ideas that will be considered when the strategies are implemented.
Page 22-23, Strategies section: Add a bullet to: "Include tribal management activities on WDFW Status and Trend report". The Puyallup Tribe has brought in funds to improve habitat on more than 300 acres of winter range as a partnership project with USFS. The Tribe has also purchased critical habitat on witner range and placed it into conservation status for elk in perpetuity. The Tribe has develped a computer model for monitoring population trends on witner range, which is the "best available science" to gauge the South Rainier elk herd population. WDFW makes no mention of the Tribe's contributions in the STatus and trend report and is using very old (and less accurate data) on the status and trend of the South Rainier elk herd. If WDFW truly intends to address Objective 7: Improve public understanding and acceptance of treaty hunting rights, they will include Tribal data and contributions made by Tribes in co-managing the resource.	Cooperative management contributions will be an important piece of information for future publications and outreach. Thanks for your ideas.
This is good.	Thank you for your support.
Get the tribe to work more with the State, cas in pointthe Colville/Yakima turkey transfer, how are they immune to the Turkey due to their treaty, Turkeys are not indigineous so the treaty shouldn't apply. What if any did either tribe do to help bring turkeys into this State? They so not be exempt from WDFW regs just because of the treaty on this.	We understand that people have many perspectives on tribal treaty rights. This objective and subsequent strategies are designed to give people more information. The treaties did not distinguish which species could be hunted.
how?	Through the strategies identified.
Objective 8: Complete at least five additional coordinated tribal/state harvest management plans for species such as deer, elk, mountain goat, and/or cougar populations subject to both tribal and non-tribal hunting.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
Add: "with input on such plans solicited from animal welfare groups in Washington State."	The interests of all citizens will be considered while developing management plans.
agree	Thank you for your support.
Agree.	Thank you for your support.
By all means excellent.	Thank you for your support.

Determine Tribal take, to the extent possible, for game populations that are at conservation risk. Collaborate with Tribes to reduce potential for depleting game resources below a sustainable level.	This is being done.
Ditto note form Objective 7.	Thanks for your comment.
Doesn't do much good if the tribal members don't abide by these plans.	Thanks for your comment.
For better harvest management plans you need more game wardens in the woods in order to stop the poaching activities that are going on. These people who decide to poach or brak the rules have an open playground rightnow because they are not woried about being caught. They know there is a lack of game wardens and therefore they poach. I have not seen a game warden in my hunting area for the last 6 years. This poaching needs to be contained before a reasonable harvest management plan can be reached. The correct statistics of kills is needed in order to lay out a plan. Also, having hunters voluntarilly report the amount of animals they are seeing is going to help with the counting of certain species in an area. After all there are not enough scientists in the woods to get a perfect count on every area of the state.	Thanks for your comment. These concerns and issues are identified in other parts of the plan.
Forget "harvesting." What a euphemism.	It's a commonly understood term.
Give me a break! Where are the tribes "responsiblities" to report, or do they have any, and their consequences for ignoring laws are nil (Remember the $20 fine for killing a WHALE) Gee, overharvest of a goat might get them a ten-cent fine.	Most tribes have regulations that require there hunters to report harvest. They also have their own penalties.
I agree and would abide by any and all regulations. Would they?	Most tribes develop regulations and enforce them with their members.
I agree with all your strategies and would add the following; A representative of the hunting community shall be involved as an observer and or adviser in developing these plans. There needs to be more public involvement (even though this is a negotiation between two sovereign entities). Objective 7 will not be realized unless you improve on the public involvement aspect.	We have been discussing this possibility with the tribes during policy level meetings.
I am against the killing of any cougar for any reason.	Thanks for your comment.
I support this provided tribal authorities don't simply wish to "also manage" our public, but are willing to consent to structured harvest reporting, limiting their harvest based upon a collaborative managed qouta system and are willing to only use modern weapons during established general seasons or on their own reservation lands during extended seasons.	Thanks for your comment.
indian tribers have become a business and should be treated as such. We need to stop supporting them.	We understand that people have many perspectives on tribal treaty rights.
Need to crack down on "Tribal hunting" and I quote because they are poaching way too much not hunting, and the game department is just letting it slide.	We understand that people have many perspectives on tribal treaty rights.
Needs to be reported along with non-tribal hunting in that it is part of the harvest...why was big horn sheep left off the list in that they too are harvesting them...	We have added a link on our web site to the Northwest Indian Fish Commission's tribal harvest report.
NO...end all tribal hunting!!!! We are all citizens of WA and the USA. No one or group has any more ownership of wildlife than the other. The Governor and all who belive they do are racist and discriminatory and our wildlife resources pay the price.	The Federal treaties supercede state law.
not interested	Thanks for your comment.
ok	Thank you for your support.
State and federal guidelines should always supersede tribal hunting. These tribes benefit from tax-payer dollars being spent to protect and sustain wildlife, they shouldn't be allowed a voice in management in any manner other than tax-payers.	We understand that people have many perspectives on tribal treaty rights.
there should be no special hunts for the tribes.	We understand that people have many perspectives on tribal treaty rights.
There will never be trust between tribe/non-tribe if licenses hunters are inthe blind about tribal hunting and their rules. Don't witewash or touchy-feely this, tell us the truth.	We have added a link on our web site to the Northwest Indian Fish Commission's tribal harvest report.
This is an opportunity to educate the tribes on the issues of wildlife and human health regarding lead ammunition -- shot and bullets.	All issues are openly discussed with the tribes.
This should be a high priority. Conflict is likey to escelate unless something is done to level that playing field among Native American and other hunters.	Thank you for your support.
This should be done only in areas where they have treaty hunting rights, not state wide. Outside of their treaty right areas, tribal members should be regulated by state regulations and purchase state licenses, as non-tribal hunters and fishers must do on the tribal reservations.	This is being done.
Tribal harvest reporting of all species needs to be made a priority in the next package as well as public disclosure of tribal harvest reported on the WDFW website each year!	We have added a link on our web site to the Northwest Indian Fish Commission's tribal harvest report.
tribal members don't let us hunt big game on the reservation so why should we.	The Tribes who are party to Federal treaties reserved hunting rights outside of the tribal reservations.
unfavorable opinion	Thanks for your comment.
Until you realise that wildlife and corn are different. You will never come up with an management plan that works. More understanding of social behavior is needed and drop the "harvest" ideology.	The term harvest is commonly used and understood with regard to hunting.
What about sheep. Whales.	All issues are openly discussed with the tribes.

Without Tribal acceptance (historical) you're dead ended . All hunters wuth you well in the endeavor. Good Luck!	Thank you for your support.
Yes	Thank you for your support.
Yes, we need truly need this.	Thank you for your support.
Objective 9: Develop recovery objectives and strategies that are supported by the public, while minimizing conflicts with game population objectives and livestock losses.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
agree	Thank you for your support.
Agree.	Thank you for your support.
Ask why the Elk and Deer are leaving areas like the St. Helen Tree Farm and heading to lower elevations to feed. Weyerhauser is spraying our land and killing the food source.	Thanks for your comment.
Be careful that meeting this Objective and meeting Objective 1 are not in conflict with each other!!!	Thanks for your comment.
Do whats correct do not cow down to anti hunters enviromentalist or hunters. yOU CANNOT PLEASE EVERYONE	Thanks for your comment.
fairly interested	Thank you for your support.
Fence cattle out of wildlife refuges.	This isn't within the scope of this plan.
Focus on local public not Seattle. Don't give farmers or timber companies (bear) special permits if they don't allow hunting or if they keep everything locked during the problem animal's general season.	Thanks for your comment.
Hard to do as we do have a very liberal public here but I would like to see it.	Thank you for your support.
Here again - loot at private fund support for leases.	Thanks for your comment.
I agree with building populations of game species but do not believe there is any net benifit of bringing back top preditors like wolves to any but the most remote areas of the state. I believe land owner should have the legal ability to control preditor populations on their land directly or through other means.	Thanks for your comment.
I propose a grenway from Canada thru to the southern US...allows migratory animals to continue to do what they have always done. Chopping up land into smaller & smaller sections does not do our environment or animals any good	Thanks for your comment.
I support this.	Thank you for your support.
If the Elk & Deer populations decline due to predation by wolves and cougars - so will license sales decline = no WDFW as we know it today.	Thanks for your comment.
introduce species in areas where they will have the best chance of sustainability with limited human contact..	Thanks for your comment.
It is my oppinion, wolf recovery should be a natural process. And introduction is not needed. Wolves will migrate from Idaho and Canada. Predation on game and livestock should be closely watched. Hunting should be used, to maintain correct balances.	All of these issues are being addressed in the Conservation Plan.
It needs to be clear this objective is about wolves.	We will.
Just work on recovery	Thank you for your support.
Livestock losses will rise if Washington decides to introduce Wolves. Wolves will decimate our wildlife populations first and then they will go after livestock or even people who go out in the woods.	Livestock losses are likely to occur, however wolf populations have been established in many places without causing major issues for other wildlife, livestock, or people.
Many species need recovery strategies. I hope something is done to re-introduce wolves and the grizzley. Lynx and wolverine need more protection from loss of habitat.	Thank you for your support.
NO WOLVES!	Thanks for your comment.
Please revise this Objective....you left out the word wolf on this response sheet. It misleads anyone who happens to fill this out without looking at the plan. You fail to mention so much of this issue that the whole objective and strategy sections need to be re written... You have minimized the issue to such an extent that any comment would be uninformed and would not do justice to the issue. You need to mention trans-location, the state threatened species law, the lack of funding, what has happened in other states, how wolves are controlled, how they re populate, unique topography of Washington State, delisting, lawsuits, ect. This is a very very big issue and one which will affect wildlife management in our state for years to come...give it more print!!!!!!!	All of these issues are being addressed in the Conservation Plan. The wolf conservation plan will also be available for public comment and a repeat here is not necessary.
Protect people & animals from dangers!	Thanks for your comment.
Screw the public opinion. You are paid to do what is best for wildlife....do your job. A fireman doesn't ask the public how to put out a fire because they are not qualified, why would this situation be any different.	As described in the plan, professionals have many options in how to do their job. The greatest support comes from accomplishing the job in a fashion that is supported by the public.
the public already supports everything with expensive hunting fees.	Thanks for your comment.
Use the best available scientific knowledge.	We will.
We need game officers instead of police officers, they need to stick to game and not other law inforcment work. Attitudes need to be changed all I see are ass holes.	Our officers are high level professionals. If you have experienced a problematic incident, let our Enforcement Program know. We work cooperatively together with many enforcement branches and they assist us as well.

Wolf Recovery. In view of the problems that Montana, Idaho and Wyoming have had with wolves, I support keeping wolf numbers in Washington at a very low level where there is essentially no impact on current regulations for game management and little if any impact on domestic livestock. I question the validity of your survey where â€œmost citizensâ€™ support allowing wolves to recolonize the stateâ€. Further, â€œmost citizensâ€ do not appreciate or understand the huge impact that wolves have on ecosystem dynamics. Your stakeholders i.e., â€œmost huntersâ€ would not support recolonization. I cannot imagine the annual nightmare effect on changes in game regulations resulting from an annual increase in the wolf population and change in ecosystem dynamics. Increasing depredation on domestic stock would result in a huge drain on already tight WDFW finances.	All of these issues are being addressed in the Wolf Conservation Plan. The conservation plan will also be available for public comment at a later time.
Wolves are spreading fast ! We must impliment a management plan that includes hunting before we have the same problems other states are having.	Thanks for your comment.
yes	Thank you for your support.
Department should take a strong stance to protect bighorn sheep from domestic sheep & goats both on private lands and public lands.	We will.
Objective 10: Maintain sustainable game species populations while reducing hunter dissatisfaction as measured by a "poor" rating to less than 10% for all game species hunting.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
Achieving this objective in the future will become more difficult - there will be more people, less habitat, more closed private land, probably more poaching, and consequently fewer animals to go around. You've tried to distribute hunters and harvest, but in turn, regulations are more complex.	We understand the difficulty with achieving this objective, but are committed to implementing the strategies.
Add. Educate hunters on resource allocation, resource allocation formulas and provide statewide summaries of user group success as compared with user group size. Formulate and publicize conclusions that are derived from the statistics you provide. Eg. Put it in word form and say that the archers in region 3 harvested X number of bucks or does and that represented X percentage of the deer harvested which is or is not in line with allocation goals. Include this type of summary of the information in the statistics section of the harvest stats. Item H.... Other techniques such as equipment restrictions, road closures. Develop an urban hunting council to study ways in which huntable land near urban areas can remain open to some type of hunting. Rather than shutting down portions of a GMU, every effort should be made to develop alternatives such as permits, special education, equipment restrictions or man made boundary markers (in cases where existing boundary markers would eliminate a larger than necessary amount of land). Develop information that will accurately explain the difference between quality hunting (trophy) and quantity hunting (better chance to take some type of buck) and what the affect of each will be on such things as days in the field, areas closed to only permits, ect.. When confronted with a possible loss of opportunity for a user group, the department should contact that user group and explain this problem and attempt to reach a consensus before submitting a formal proposal to the commission.	Outreach and education is important and will be covered in a different section of the plan. We agree with the concerns about hunting in urbanizing areas, that issue is also addressed elsewhere in the plan.
agree	Thank you for your support.
Agree.	Thank you for your support.
Change the hunting units per say giving bow or muzzleloaders differnt areas to hunt every three years	The complications would be difficult for hunters to understand and comply with.
Do not overrely on permits. Use road management, antler restrictions. Strategies c and h seem opposed. I support h, general seasons with antler restrictions.	Thanks for your comment.
Forget all hunting	We understand that there are many perspectives about hunting, however 82% of Washington citizens support hunting.
Game Dept. - Only hunts where game are!	Thanks for your comment.
good idea	Thank you for your support.
Good objective.	Thank you for your support.
Hunter dissatisfaction is not from the closing of a unit or area. If there is good scientific raeson to do so than show this to the hunters and they will understand. The dissatistfaction comes when an area is open to hunting and you don't have enough animals to support the hunting. This comes from not enough scientific studies being done and not having the reports of what hunters are seeing in the woods to help with getting a correct count of the animals.	Thanks for your comment.
I am lossing my interest in deer and elk hunting because of the cost of licences and tags then add the cost of gas and the time away from your job.	Thanks for your comments. There are many reasons that people stop hunting. However, the cost of licenses is not one of the major reasons.
I believe healthy happy wildlife comes before happy hunters. I believe most of the voting public believes this.	There are several places in the plan where perpetuation of wildlife is stated as a priority along with providing hunting opportunities.
I do not support the reintroduction of antelope. I don't believe that there is enough suitable habitat to sustain a huntable population, funding for this activity would be better spent elsewhere. Obtaining access to hunt antelope on private land on a permit basis would probably result in an unacceptable "pay to hunt" situation. Also, crop and fence damage would result and require resources.	Thanks for your comment.
I find it disheartening that there aren't hardly any trophy apportunities in WA state for any species of big game animal. Almost all trophy hunting is done out of state which is a big loss of revenue to us.	Managing for older age big game animals is important and there have been more entries into the record books from Washington in the past ten years than for many years previous to that.
I support this.	Thank you for your support.

In GMUs with high witetail numbers. These GMUs should be either sex for any method of hunting. To help reduce doe populations.	Thanks for your comment.
Instead of catering to hunters, how about cutting hunting seasons so that the 95% of the state residents that do not hunt, can get out on our state lands to enjoy seeing wildlife.	We understand that there are many perspectives about hunting, however 82% of Washington citizens support hunting. We also strongly encourage you to enjoy viewing wildlife in this state.
lack of quality hunting for rifle hunters when followed by hunts by archers where alot of tags are being issued to archers....there are more archers scouting out the area than there are rifle hunters in these units...to many tags being allocated to archers	This is a hunting season issue that can be addressed in the 2009-11 hunting regulation package. Please go to our web site to provide comments on hunting seasons.
maintain game species populations by NOT destroying their genetic inheritance	We will.
Maintaining game positive, care less about hunters rating system	Thanks for your comment.
Mule deer should always be 3 point or better. You proved before it works.	Thanks for your comment.
Opinion has no place here - stick with dacts first and foremost.	Thanks for your comment.
oppose	Thanks for your comment.
permit hunting only for elk and deer	This is a hunting season issue that can be addressed in the 2009-11 hunting regulation package. Please go to our web site to provide comments on hunting seasons.
Primitive weapon users should not expect equal success rates and there should be recognition that should not be a goal between the user groups.	This is a hunting season issue that can be addressed in the 2009-11 hunting regulation package. Please go to our web site to provide comments on hunting seasons.
Quality not quantity. I have hunted 20 different states and three countries...we are without a shadow of a doubt the worst managed and the poorest overall quality. Resourse first....raise tags and make it draw only...get rid of the slob hunters by raising rates and you will be left with less hunters, same money or more, less problems, and get the same harvest ...hunters are a management tool who should be happy to pay for the privilage to participate in their interest.	Thanks for your comment.
Reduce the length of hunting seasons for each weapon choice to reduce harsment of animals and increase populations	Several techniques are used to manage harvest levels including season length. When we are not able to meet population objectives, we will consider changing regulations and seasons.
Should we/dept go to 100% special.permit hunts & eliminate or decreas the general season?	Thanks for your comment.
Strategy C: would this be a statewide permit only consideration or by GMU. Statewide big game permit only restrictions would provide the best opportunity for hunt quality and success (only for those selected of course). Strategies H and I: use of other techniques (shorter seasons, minimum point restrictions) are not acheiving the goal for higher hunt quality and hunter success while maintaing population sustainablity.	This is a hunting season issue that can be addressed in the 2009-11 hunting regulation package. Please go to our web site to provide comments on hunting seasons.
The real problem is the perception by most that WDFW is managing people for revenue and not providing real equality between the user groups. License fees have gone up and the opportunity and quality of the hunt has gone in the toilet. If you really want good opportunities, go out of state.	Thanks for your comment.
this is called knowing your resource...accurately knowing the numbers...all year long....food ..travel...predators ... hunters typically hunt an area out because everyone wants to be successful ...so they typically go to the easiest area and overhunt that population....as the number of hunters increase and the resouce numbers decrease because they don't have a chance to regain numbers ...as game is harvested out of areas ...you should close off those areas as the number of tags are filled for that given area ....post signs and broadcastrepeatedly through the media during the season when those areas are now closed as the quota for that species has been met....	Thanks for your comment.
To alleviate the overwelming number of hunters that are becoming dissatisfied with the game management by the WDFW, the department needs to reevalute the user groups and the process by which permits are distributed for quality hunting opportunities. Harvest rates of Bucks & Bulls need to increase to the portion of the user groups which purchase the licenses each year. Rifle hunters have been getting the least amount of the quality male game species in Washington State over the past 6 year packages. Citizens hunting with a rifle in Washington State continue to get less than the 80% of the Bucks or Bulls taken each year and Bow Hunting continues to get more that its fair share of the allowable game available for harvest. The allocation needs to be changed in the next 6 year package as part of the overall plan to increase the the "poor" rating of the management skills of WDFW.	Thanks for your comment.
What exactly is wrong with "hunter dissatisfaction"? Since only 3% of Washingtonians hunt, is there no concern with the 97% of the rest of us who are concerned about healthy, live animals and dissatisfied with creating endless opportunities for killing them.	We understand that there are many perspectives about hunting, however 82% of Washington citizens support hunting.
What is the definition of a sustainable game species population. That definition should follow the RCW77.04.012 that calls for maximum hunting opportunity for the citizens of Washington State.	That same RCW calls for preserving, protecting, and perpetuating wildlife. That's the balance wildlife managers seek to attain.
YES IF POSSIBLE. mAY HAVRE TO GO TO PERMIT ONLY	This is a hunting season issue that can be addressed in the 2009-11 hunting regulation package. Please go to our web site to provide comments on hunting seasons.
yes!	Thank you for your support.
Yes, we need to greatly improve our game populations, so our hunters can at least see some animals while hunting.	Seeing game is an important consideration for hunters.

You cannot manage wildlife successfully if you base everything on customer satisfaction. Satisfaction is a long term result, not short term.	Thanks for your comment.
You do a good job with this, considering what should be your budget is "allocated" for non WDFW purposes at times.	Thank you for your support.
You need to grade the hunters too. If road hunting is "poor" that doesn't mean wilderness hunting in the same unit isn't great.	Thanks for your comment.
I support permit only hunting and would improve the quality experience.	This is a hunting season issue that can be addressed in the 2009-11 hunting regulation package. Please go to our web site to provide comments on hunting seasons.
Not a realistic goal.	Thanks for your comment.
yes - But not thru put and take like pheasants	Thanks for your comment.
Objective 11: Complete the project assessment and public input process for reintroducing pronghorn in Washington.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
agree	Thanks for your comment.
All for it.	Thanks for your comment.
Although I personaly would love to see and hunt pronghorns, I believe it would or could possibly be the worst thing we could do to our already struggleing MULE DEER herds.Please reconsider !!!	Conflicts between mule deer and antelope have not been identified as a major issue. The area of Washington likely available for pronghorn re-introduction would also be relatively small.
Another source of revenue for WDFW at what price to landowners and other wildlife that will have to share their habitat.	The potential for damage to croplands are an important consideration and will be a key topic during discussions of the reintroduction plan.
As a hunter and conservationist I believe pronghorn could do well in many areas of eastern Washington. I favor their reintroduction.	Thank you for your support.
definitely	Thank you for your support.
Get rid of the cattle where prong horn are to be reintroduced, and stop blaming predators for inadequate food and shelter from over grazing.	Grazing domestic livestock and potential conflicts on private lands will be discussed and considered during plan development.
Great idea but give yourself a deadline of 2010	The relative priority of this issue is not as high as others in the plan. A deadline of 2010 would place the priority higher than deserved at this point. However, it is likely that significant progress will be made on the plan prior to that date.
Great Idea!!	Thank you for your support.
Great idea, what will they eat? Our Mule deer have a hard enough time finding natural food growing in Eastern Washington. We should think about talking to farmers to help us make food plots on our Safety Zone areas for our wilflife.	Thanks for your comment.
I agree.	Thank you for your support.
I am in favor of reintroducing pronghorn into washington.	Thank you for your support.
I fully support reintroducing pronghorn in Washington. Not only are they a beautiful animal, but if they were succesfully reintroduced into the state they would bring much additional revenue due to sportsman applying to hunt them.	Thank you for your support.
I highly support the reinterduction of prong antlelope in WA Use volunteers if needed to establish them once again	Thank you for your support.
I support this.	Thank you for your support.
Just a richman sport.	
like that idea	Thank you for your support.
please do.	Thank you for your support.
Public is very interested in this project, lot's of opportunity here.	Thank you for your support.
Public opinion only for impact...if it is viable.....absolutely reintroduce prohorn	Thank you for your support.
Since this appears to be a "searching" process - the question of "Why Bother" should be seriously considered.	The relative priority of this issue is not as high as others in the plan. However, the idea has support including funding commitments, so we plan to move forward with developing a plan and public comment process.
Strategy D: How will this be prioritized? reintroucuction will take years and a great fiscal commitment with no guarantee for a population that could sustain hunter harvest (presuming that is the goal). This time fiscal commitment could fund additional enforcement personell, for example.	The relative priority of this issue is not as high as others in the plan. However, the idea has support including funding commitments, so we plan to move forward with developing a plan and public comment process
Strongly agree.	Thank you for your support.
that would be an awesome idea!	Thank you for your support.
this should DEFINITELY happen ..	Thank you for your support.
Undecided.	Thanks for your comment.
Very good idea.	Thank you for your support.
We have enough animals that the land can barely support. Just becuase the state wants another animal they can charge you to hunt doesn't mean we should reintroduce pronghorns here. We already can't manage the animals we have. Focus on making hunting a more successful sport in this state. For example the declining blacktail deer population.	Thanks for your comment.
What is the hold up here...we have been waiting and waiting...there certainly didn't seem to be a problem reintroducing fisher to the Olympic Pennisula....everything has been done to move forward with the reintroduction and is seems to have stalled out with the WDFW...we want antelope introduced NOW.	Thank you for your support.
would be great	Thank you for your support.
Yes	Thank you for your support.
Yes - bring revalastionists in who do not hunt too.	

Yes! It's about time we bring the proghorn back. We have the land and habitiat for them. Let's introduce them as a managable huntable resourse.	Thank you for your support.
Get rid of the cattle where prong horn are to be reintroduced, and stop blaming predators for inadequate food and shelter from over grazing.	Thanks for your comment.
I support re-introduction of pronghorn antelope.	Thank you for your support.
Sounds good.	Thank you for your support.
Objective 12: Determine public support and desires for WDFW assistance in dealing with wildlife nuisance and damage.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Historically, crop damage by deer and elk has been addressed with hunting as the primary tool. Washington residents continue to show strong support of hunting to control animal damage to private property. However, some landowners and some situations do not favor resolution by hunting." Landowners do not get "compensated" for other naturally occuring events, why then should they receive my tax money for their choice to live where they live. We are the intruders, not the animals. Animal control through hunting works exceptionally well. If anything educate the public on how important hunting is to a healthy balance.	Thanks for your comment and support for hunting as a management tool.
A public survey is probably a good idea, but if landowners get too much leeway, they might be too zealous in their control efforts.	Thanks for your comment.
Add: ", using measures that minimize the killing of these animals and involving the help of animal rescue and rehabilitation organizations of Washington State."	The idea of using hunting to help manage property damage is generally in areas where deer and elk populations are quite healthy. There is not a need to rescue or rehabilitate them. In areas where deer and elk numbers are more limited then techniques such as hazing or exclusion are utilized.
agree	Thanks for your comment.
Allow damage control hunts to reduce the excess poplulations with public explanations of why this is done to save spending tax dollars	Thanks for your comment.
Approve.	Thank you for your support.
As necessary.	Thanks for your comment.
Build fences around farmers crops and stop paying them money for there damaged crops. Take it or leave it type of deal, we build you a fence and that's it.	Thanks for your comment, fencing is often the best long term tool, but also depends on the value of the crop or property being damaged.
Create strong educational outreach campaigns as the primary method for wildlife management. This should be first and foremost instead of using hunting as management. Killing is not the solution to every problem!	Outreach and education are key components of any conflict management effort. However, hunting and other lethal removal techniques may be necessary as well.
Development of strong laws that engage the protection of wildlife values with current societal standards. Present a strong public relations network with law enforcement to turn in poachers or wildlife nuisance/abusers.	Thanks for your comment.
DO NOT ALLOW WOLVES TO TAKE HOLD IN WASHINGTON	Thanks for your comment, we encourage you to comment on the plan when available.
Do what is necesary....that is what we are paying you for. If you can't do your job because you allow the public to tie your hands we are wasting $ on your salary.	Thank you for your support.
Groups will pay ranchers for livestock losses if this is necessary. Many such claims are not even true. Animals die and are eaten by wildlife but these are called kills. As for nuisance animals this is greatly magnified. How many wild animals actually kill humans as compared to vehicles, the war, humans, etc. We are not killing these sources of "nuisance". Living in the city is far more dangerous than living with wild animals. Statistics do not substantiate the fear of wild animals.	Thanks for your comment.
Hunting first. Local control.	Thank you for your support.
I agree.	Thank you for your support.
I support this provided it can be done in a timely manner. Additonally it is imperative that any decisions be communicated to adjacent property owners in the area affected to prevent conflicts.	Thanks for your support and comment.
It would be greatly appreciated if WDFW was more active in public education and outreach to promote tolerance for and living with wildlife and was less involved with lethal "solutions" to perceived conflicts.	Outreach and education are key components of any conflict management effort.
Land owners should understand that the wildlife was here first and that they are responsible for protecting their property or crops....it should not be done at the expense of the game department funds or at the expense of the life of the wildlife..	Thanks for your comment.
Let land owners post availability to hunt their land when it is being damaged. Make it readilly available information to the hunters of the state that there is a need for these damage/nuisance hunts. The biggest thing for them to be successful is to not charge for hunting these lands.	Outreach and education are key components of any conflict management effort.
more permit hunting but only as last resort	Thanks for your comment.
Need more special hunt's available for problem animals.	Thanks for your comment.
ok	
Perhapos the most non-game problem species in Washington is hom-sapian/public? How can we control their growth?	Thanks for your comment, however that is not within the scope of this plan.
Provide clear and consitent guidelines (regulations) that will allow private and public individuals or groups to manage nuisance wildlife in urban or industrial environments (not public natural areas).	Thanks for your comment.
Since the general public hasn't hesitated to interfere with the management of our wildlife resources through the initiative process, they should also be responsible for funding wildlife nuisance and damage.	Thanks for your comment.
sum good and some bad.	Thanks for your comment.

Sure, but be sure this is inclusive in delibrations.	Thanks for your comment.
The general public has little concern with this issue. It is much more of an issue with property owners who experiance damage than anyone else. I believe the state should be given a brief period of time to deal with nuisance wildlife and then let the land owner do what they believe is required to eliminate the problem. The goal should be to end property damage first and save wildlife second.	Thanks for your comment, however wildlife protection and management are high priorities for the department as mandated by the Legislature.
There needs to be much better public education in how to avoid conflicts. There must be stiff fines for "feeding the wildlife". You cannot blame bears for garbage left in their range. Citizens must take responsibility or suffer consiquences of their negligence.	Outreach and education are key components of any conflict management effort.
This is dealing with the Seals at the Bonaville Dam. Relocating & Releasing ,Has been proven NOT To work as they return. These animals are not on the endangered list and hunting them for food or shooting the majority of them will stop the destuction of our Sturgen & Salmon & Stealhead. Please do not waiste our Tax dollars in relocating these Seals	Marine mammals are not within the scope of this plan.
this is the bottomline expectation ....the easiest mandate you have ....the public can ...either fence the animals out of unwanted areas or accept the fact that they are there ....the biggest problem is balancing the numbers a given area will sustain and tracking the amount of predation whether human or historic predators...its usually when the numbers dramatically increase that people complain...	Thank you for your support. We agree that people seem to tolerate low to moderate populations of deer and elk around their property, but when the numbers climb, the conflicts often become intolerable.
This is very important to me personally. In my career I am considered an expert in this area. Our urban wildlife needs to be managed, since the trapping ban was passed on lethal traps, we have seen a huge increase in certain types of nuisance wildlife activity. I see the only answer as A)increase urban wildlife hunting opportunity and/ or B) increased WDFW control activities.	Thank you for your support.
Use master/Youth/Disabled hunters to controll most nuisance complaints	Thanks for your comment.
While minimizing harm to wildlife species.	Thank you for your support.
why not have damage control tags given by drawing to people who want the oppertunity. the master hunter program is a joke, just drive to the end of tieton drive in the winter and watch all the disfunctional people fight over who slaughtered all the elk in the orchards.	Thanks for your comment.
wildlife will always be a nuisance when people don't understand wildlife or when animals do not "listen" to humans structured,controlling way of life	Thanks for your comment.
yes	Thank you for your support.
Yes - Little or No nuisance & damage.	Thank you for your support.
yes Drop wide area hunts in favor of hot spot hunts that actually target the problem animals and not innocent animals in the general area.	Thank you for your support. This is an important tool in many situations.
You not only need to prioritize hunting as the best control method, you need to publicize it!!!!!!!!!!!! I would add to more possible strategies.... increase mending and maintenance of existing wildlife control fencing and consider adding additional fencing in repeat problem areas financed through a local tax of some type. In the Colockum consider planting alternative food plots in strategic areas of the Unit to lure animals away from agriculture sensitive locations.	Thanks for your comment. These ideas are part of managing specific damage situations. The use of habitat enhancement techniques to lure elk off of private property is identified in the Colockum elk herd plan.
Page 26-27, Game Species Damage and Nuisance: Follow strategies listed and emphasize non-lethal methods to address damage especially in elk winter range areas where elk poulations are not stable, declining, and well below herd objectives.	Thanks for your comment.
There needs to be much better public education in how to avoid conflicts. There must be stiff fines for "feeding the wildlife". You cannot blame bears for garbage left in their range. Citizens must take responsibility or suffer consiquences of their negligence.	Outreach and education are key components of any conflict management effort.
I do not support financial compensation (cash or landowner tags) to address damage. Landowners allowing access to hunters would take care of any damage problems. Landowners will just keep coming with their hands out wanting money.	Thanks for your comment.
See Obj. 5	Thanks for your comment.
yes	Thank you for your support.
Objective 13: Foster greater landowner understanding of available options and develop new strategies for resolving crop damage. Respond to crop damage complaints quickly and initiate action to resolve damage.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
A cooperative fencing program needs to be reinstated, used and monitored. This would provide permanent crop protection, possibly better acceptance of hunter access and improve relations with landowners.	This is an ongoing program in which the department spends about $75,000 per year.
Add ", using measures that minimize the killing of these animals and involving the help of animal rescue and rehabilitation organizations of Washington State."	The idea of using hunting to help manage property damage is generally in areas where deer and elk populations are quite healthy. There is not a need to rescue or rehabilitate them. In areas where deer and elk numbers are more limited then techniques such as hazing or exclusion are utilized.
Again if the land owner won't let people hunt on their land no damage control permits or compensation should be allowed.	Thanks for your comment; that is currently the way it is handled.
agree, do so by killing problem animals only - no general hunts that just target the general area.	Thank you for your support.
Agree.	Thank you for your support.

any lands that are taken out of CRP land owner should pay big penaties....and not be allowed to complain about crop damage....they need to be accountable for managing their lands and at the expense not at the wildlife expense...	Thanks for your comment. Recognize that half the state is privately owned and many landowners do support wildlife populations on their property.
Create strong educational outreach campaigns as the primary method for wildlife management. This should be first and foremost instead of using hunting as management. Killing is not the solution to every problem!	Outreach and education are key components of any conflict management effort.
damage to crops are the land owners own fault. In most cases the do not wand to open land to hunter to cure the problems early only when it is out of control.	There are often many issues to consider when working with landowners to address damage. One of those is often the timing of the damage, which frequently occurs outside of the hunting seasons.
Fencing would solve many of these problems. The jeweler protects his jewels in the city. Don't farmers have the same responsibility. In Hood River, Oregon, orchardists are fencing against elk.	Thanks for your comment, fencing is often the best long-term tool, but also depends on the value of the crop or property being damaged. Orchards are an example of when it usually pays to fence.
give them assistance to get better fencing as fencing is expensive .	This is an ongoing program in which the department spends about $75,000 per year.
Give them one option, and that is we will build you fence, so animals can't get into your crops. Maybe make a deal with the farmers to make strips of food plots in our Safety Zones for our wildlife.	Thanks for your comment, fencing is often the best long-term tool, but also depends on the value of the crop or property being damaged.
have a drawing to form a call list for damage area hunts. quit giving deprevation tags to rich farmers to give or sell to their rich friends, let someone have the chance to harvest meat they could use and need.	The department uses a variety of techniques to address damage. In some situations, damage prevention tags, which can be sold, are the best option.
Have it so that when you google wildlife crop damage it will bring you to a wdfw website that gives a landowner options as to what to do.	Thanks for the suggestion.
If the landowner wishes to claim crop damages, they must also allow hunting on their property to reduce the population of animals that cause the problem.	That is the current requirement for filing damage claims. The property must have been open for hunting the previous year.
Landowner tags should not be for sale other than perhaps a trespass fee. They should be on a draw basis. The 'good ole boy' clubs that some of the landowner seem to organize are outrageous and not sporting at all.	The department uses a variety of techniques to address damage. In some situations, damage prevention tags, which can be sold, are the best option.
part of my land is "given" to animals, & part I use for my crops	Thank you for your support.
Please define "quickly" if and when I call for help with a problem re damage - maybe I get a phone call, or maybe not.	We generally try to respond within 48 hours.
Provide financial incentive only if land open to public hunting.	Thanks for your comment.
slightly interested	Thank you for your support.
sounds good but statagies must be very quick to respond.	Thanks for your comment.
The farmer must take some responsibility too. This should be a Team solution Farmer and WDFW, not just WDFW.	Thank you for your support.
The proposed strategies seem appropriate.	Thank you for your support.
There must be larger areas of native forest left for wildlife if you want to avoid "crop damage". It is not the bear's fault if a landowner destroyed all of it's habitat and food sources. Again, humans must stop blaming wildlife for their own mistakes	Wildlife population levels fluctuate with available habitat. Tree damage caused by black bears is generally on trees from 10 to 30 years old. We work with forest owners to minimize damage and encourage maintenance of habitat.
Use Master hunters to help solve these problems	Thanks for your comment.
yes	Thank you for your support.
Yes - but good luck on your budget for this	Thank you for your support.
Allow access to hunters to resolve damage complaints.	That is the current requirement for filing damage claims. The property must have been open for hunting the previous year.
Objective 14: Develop clear understandings for the tradeoffs of management options to address wildlife populations and conflict with humans. At the same time, seek resolution of conflicts at the local level.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
Again bring everyone in on this critical issue.	Thank you for your support.
agree	Thank you for your support.
Agree with local level resolution, or Seattle would control what happens in Okanogan. Landowner-hunter-WDFW partnership for wildlife damage issues.	Thank you for your support.
Agree.	Thank you for your support.
as we continue to encroach on wildlife it should be understood that it is at our expense not wildlifes expense....predators are different in that they represent a problem to humans and need to be managed accordingly	Thank you for your support.
Create strong educational outreach campaigns as the primary method for wildlife management. This should be first and foremost instead of using hunting as management. Killing is not the solution to every problem!	Outreach and education are key components of any conflict management effort. However, hunting and other lethal removal techniques may be necessary as well
Develop humane standards of resolving wildlife incursions into public areas. Hold local enforcement to standards and made those standards known to law enforcement (don't just kill animal because darting and transferring requires time/money). Hold local communities accountable for treatment of wildlife and err on the side of wildlife when in doubt.	Thank you for your comments. Transferring animals often just transfers the problem. In situations where it makes sense, animals may be captured and transplanted to help improve population management. However these situations are not very common.
Education.	Outreach and education are key components of any conflict management effort
fairly interested	Thank you for your support.
Good luck with the politicians accepting this	Thank you for your support.
Humans are the problem.	Thanks for your comment.

I believe conflicts should be resolved at the state level. Local level folks are not objective and will usually react only with self-interest and pressure from peers. I believe our wildlife deserve objective assessment of conflict.	Thanks for your comment, I think that statewide guidelines for managing conflict might be important, but that local communities often know which techniques would work best and receive local support.
I support this.	Thank you for your support.
In my local area I wouldn't trust them.	Thanks for your comment.
Let the local (county) decide how to manage human/animal conflict. I live in Pend Oreille County and have seen what happens when cougars kill pets. People in Seattle need to understand that we live with wildlife and need to manage it when neccessary.	Thank you for your support.
Local level means Seattle doesn't rule the state.	Thanks for your comment.
Make sure the public is aware of the dangers of not managing the animals in a responsible way such as hunting. Let them be aware that if certain areas aren't managed by more hunting that they run the risk of hittin a deer or elk with their car or having someone attacked by a cougar or bear.	Outreach and education are key components of any conflict management effort
people know when they live in a rural setting ...theres wildlife ....if they don't like it they need to build bigger and better fences...wildlife will roam.....either fence it out and keep your garbage picked up...of you will have problems	Fencing is often the best long-term solution.
See 12.	Thanks for your comment.
solving problem at the local level makes more sense to me.	Thank you for your support.
Support conflict resolution that includes hunting as a principal means of state funded resolution.	Thank you for your support.
This is becoming a big issue and needs more attention. You need a full time employee that just deals with this issue, You need a special advisory council that just deals with this issue. Develop a list of alternative solution or fall back plans to ensure that the least amount of land will be lost to hunting. Work to develop wildlife management friendly guidelines for developers that will results in rural/urban developments that work for wildlife and inform purchasers of what they can and cannot do. Push for protective covenants that run with the land for such amenities as wildlife corridors and no fencing.	Thank you for your support.
Use master Hunters	We have been increasing our use of the Master Hunter graduates to help address sensitive issues and property damage problems.
We need to explain to developers what they are doing to our natural habitat for our wildlife. Humans are becoming more greedy and don't care about the habitat they are taking away from our wildlife.	This is an important issue, however for game species which are relatively abundant across the state, it is difficult to gain support for building concessions.
Why not us a "politiclly correct" hunt master and MH grad (local person) as a resource?	We have been increasing our use of the Master Hunter graduates to help address sensitive issues and property damage problems.
yes	Thank you for your support.
You need to seek more humane ways to manage wildlife populations on lands already stressed by human encroachment.	Thanks for your comment.
Humans are the problem.	Thanks for your comment
Add develop or propose alternate hunting strategies and weapon types, e.g. crossbow, shotgun, etc.	Thanks for your comment, those strategies are being proposed in the 2009-11 hunting season package.
Objective 15: Improve communications regarding management of game species.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
Add Use Newspapers and magazines to developer articles which explain how wildlife management works in Washington State. Target key issues such as tribal hunting, predator management , wolves, elk herd sustainability problems and make sure that the WDFW knowledge on these subjects is passed on to the general public... News releases are not enough and are by their nature too brief and cover only the bare essentials. You need actual articles that are non biased.	We plan to get more sophisticated in using the appropriate techniques to reach target audiences. Newspapers and magazines are important tools, but may not always reach the people who need or want the information.
Add to hunting regs book, not just internet.	The regulation pamphlet can help communicate important information, but it will depend on the message and the target audience.
agree, but minimize the number of publications. Use web site and use funds to develop habitat.	Thanks for your comment.
Agree.	Thank you for your support.
Dept. communication, or lack thereof, has be an ongoing issue for YEARS. Your "strategies" just don't get it!	Thanks for your comment.
fairly interested	Thank you for your support.
for sure	Thank you for your support.
Forget "game" species.	Thanks for your comment.
Have a section in the game hunting rules that shows the scientific evidence and/or game counts that support the decisions to manage the states GMU's in certain ways. If not in the same book put it in a book that you can pick up right next to the hunting rules booklet or at least provide the information on the wdfw website.	We currently publish an annual “Status and Trends” report that is available on our web page. We are looking to improve the report and make it more obvious on our page.
How? You are already doing a good job here.	Thank you for your support.
I think the more the public hears about the management by hunting the more they will oppose hunting so I believe this is a good idea. When put to a vote, cougar hunting with dogs was outlawed.	Thanks for your comment.
Improve communications regarding management of game species.	Thank you for your support.

Lets take the sealion problem as an example the fisherman have for years wanted the game departmet to cut down the numbers. When they finily get the word to do something they still drag their feet.	Management of marine mammals is not within the scope of this plan.
look at local control over species and their patterns of travel ...let people know locally what your management plans are ...nothing makes me more angry when someone makes decisions that affect me or my property WITHOUT my input...	Thanks for your comment. It is not very easy to make sure that everyone interested in a subject or plan gets notified. The web page or our mailing list are the best ways.
Make all of your biologists acccountable for their reports and share them publicly	Thanks for your comment.
More education and hunter involvement.	Thank you for your support.
Please do !	Thank you for your support.
Recognize that rural hunters are unlikely to use internet for information. Use Maps with info on back or hunting rules book too. Partner more with other agencies.	Thanks for your comment.
Right now, you are managing sportsman opportunities....which is not allways in the best interest of the wildlife.	Our mandate is to balance the two.
Should not rely too much on the internet and agency web page. Although the internet has become the primary method of communicating for many, a surprising number of the average households do not use it.	We agree that a variety of techniques will be necessary.
the dept is so far backwards in communication you will never catch up. It's no wonder so many hunters don't trust the dept.	Thanks for your comment.
There is simply too much communiction. The Aim of the department needs to be simplified and the regualations down sized and simplified	This is an important strategy and is in the plan.
This is good. Make sure the communications have benifitial solutions, not poison and bullets.	Thank you for your support.
This is necessary!	Thank you for your support.
Willingness to let go of old techniques or bias in favor of advancing wildlife management goals.	Thanks for your comment.
yes	Thank you for your support.
Yes, we need this very badly	Thank you for your support.
This needs to be greatly improved.	Thanks for your comment.
Annual harvest quotas are said to be sent as a draft to over 450 groups and individuals. Make sure this is truly happening and is not just lipservice.	Thanks for your comment.
Objective 16: Maintain elk populations that are consistent with Tables 1 and 2.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Add a component for spike survival in branch antlered units. A certain threshold for spike survival, post season should be developed to ensure replenishment of the branch antlered bull population. Calf survival in relation to predation needs to be taken into account and recommendation of predation control should be made if calf survival falls below a certain percentage per 100 cows. A good example is in the Blues where low calf survival is restricting herd growth. Public education should accompany any predation reduction recommendations to reduce public opposition.	Spike survival ultimately translates to post-hunt bull ratios. All District Biologists track post-hunt spike survival, but appropriate levels of spike survival will vary depending on survival of all the other age classes, therefore it is very site specific and not as useful. Calf survival is influenced by a number of different factors, not just predation. The Agency considered using calf survival as a metric in the first GMP as well as this updated version however there are too many other variables that affect calf survival to make it a good measure.
Agree if those numbers support the habitat that is available	Excellent point. We do our best to match elk numbers to supporting habitat, but that is a very difficult balancing act.
Cut cow tags for rifle hunters, muzzleloaders and stop the spike only restriction	Antlerless elk tags are used to control populations and help minimize damage. Without the spike only restriction, bulls would be overharvested.
Don’t see elk here...love to see them tho'....doesn't stop me from commenting tho'	Thank you for your comment.
Feed elk in more areas of the state especially when we have hard winters like the one we just had. Do not just feed them in a few areas where they will have to migrate and congregate to get to the food. Such as the Yakima feeding station. What about the elk in the Olympics and in the St. Helens area?	The Department's objective is to balance elk populations with available habitat and not maintain populations at unsustainable levels through feeding. Winter-feeding of elk is very expensive. The winter-feeding program and elk fences near Oak Creek prevent elk from going down to farms and orchards and causing damage. Except in extreme emergency conditions, it is the Agency's intent to minimize winter-feeding as much as possible.
Get a better cow to bull ratio #1 priority. 5 to 1 should be the goal	The bull to cow ratio range that the Department is currently using is 12-20 bulls per 100 cows in post-hunt surveys. The upper end of that range 20:100 is equal to your request of 1 bull per 5 cows.
I am concerned about this... by looking at Table 1 it appears that all (except for the St Helens herd) current population estimates are significantly below the population objectives... Based upon my understanding, with hunting (tribal and non-tribal), and predation (wolves and cougars), and winter kill the herds will not reach the objective populations under the current management plan. These objectives seem impossible to attain without shutting down hunting across the board (tribal and non-tribal) for possibly two seasons. Which leads one to believe that the current methods of estimating population size or managing herds are not relevant, or need improvement.	We are currently waiting on updates to Table 1. Currently, 3 herds are at or above objective, and 2 herds have shown marked improvement. We are still waiting on information from the others but some population objectives will likely need to be set at a more realistic level, as you suggest.
If habitat conditions change, respond more quickly to change population goals. Fore example, rules set in place to "protect" elk from hunting in the Mt. St. Helens blast zone have barely been altered in 28 years, and the area has yet to open to general hunting despite widespread overpopulation.	Some portions of the Mount St. Helens National Monument are restricted to access by the U.S. Forest Service. WDFW has managed to gain some hunting access to new areas on the monument with the creation of the Pumice Plain, Upper Smith Creek, and Mount Whittier Elk Areas.

Leave the elk alone.	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
permit only hunting as in other states	Through public opinion surveys, the elk hunters of Washington have made it clear that general season hunting opportunities for elk are very important and we will continue to try to provide that opportunity when possible.
Population objectives need more flexibility not such a long timeframe (2009-2015)	The Agency will look into more flexible population objectives. Given the amount of public scoping and public input that is required when developing a strategic plan such as this, a shorter time period is not practical.
provide opportunity for rifle, and muzzleloader hunters to have a tag during the rut season in all westside units for branch antled bulls. even if only 1 tag per unit..	We do provide some opportunity like that in Westside units (Regions 5 and 6), but would have to confer with all of the District Biologists to determine if it could be done in all units. This request is more appropriate for the three year hunting season setting process going on this fall. Check our web site to learn more about participating in that process.
put them on my property	What is your address?
Puzzled by talkback "decision" on #1	Not enough information to respond.
The Roosevelt elk need more protection.	Western Washington elk herds have been providing a fairly consistent harvest for the past 15 years. More protection without substantial habitat enhancement would result in more cases of elk exceeding the available habitat.
We need to expand our Elk populations by moving some of our problem Elk to other areas, so we can have more opportunities for Elk. For instance, Stewart Mountain in Whatcom County had Elk 30-40 years ago until tribal and non-tribal killed them off. We need to spread the Elk out in new areas to increase the total population in the Great State of Washington.	Although we have moved elk from the Mount St. Helens herd to the Nooksack herd on two occasions(2003 and 2005), the Department does not have any additional plans at this time to augment other elk populations through translocation. These projects are very expensive and dangerous. With over 6 million people in the state of Washington, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find suitable habitat for elk. Lastly, moving problem elk can often move the problem of ag. damage and nuisance elk to the new location.
We should be farther along with regard to the Blue Mountain herd. After over a decade of research we still have poor herd population. Oregon Blue Mountain herd numbers are higher. At what point will we come the conclusion that a 2-3 year halt to all Elk hunting in the Blues is necessary to their survival. The Blue Mountains are prime elk habitat and there are not any good reasons why their numbers continue to struggle.	Oregon has about 90% of the Blue Mountains complex with Washington having only about 10% of the habitat. Washington will never have as many elk as Oregon. Some of the vulnerability work that we are analyzing right now should provide additional information related to roads and habitat use.
Why so conservative wi the cahelors elk herd? Open the seasons, the clocum herd has been in trouble for YEARS please deal with it.	Thank you for your comment.
You cannot maintain elk populations without removing all the cattle from their feeding areas. Stop blaming predators and get rid of the bovines.	Thank you for your comment.
You should not try to get to this population level in one year. (Mt Saint Helens?)	We are not trying to reduce the Mount St. Helens elk herd in one year's time. This will likely take 3 to 5 years using additional antlerless special permits to reduce the elk herd to an appropriate level.
Objective 17: Develop a report that assesses if the current PMU structure system is the most relevant grouping for elk populations and sub-populations by 2009.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Definitely something that needs to be addressed. PMUs need to be reassessed based on biology as well as making management sense.	Thank you for your comment.
Is there an alternative	Status quo
It is.	Not enough information to respond.
listen to locals and people from areas	The Agency does it's best to listen to the local communities directly associated with wildlife populations as well as all stakeholders statewide that have a vested interest in wildlife.
unfavorable	No alternative was suggested.
Why not change from GMUs to PMUs for allocation concerns. Drop the GMU concept and bring all participants onto the same field of play.	GMUs help the Department direct hunting pressure to specific areas. PMUs were not intended to function that way.
yes, we need this very badly.	Thank you for your comment.
Check the date - I think it is better to meet or "exceed" the deadline date rather than always be late, so I just want to be realistic.	We'll do our best to meet the 2009 date.
Objective 18: Evaluate aerial surveys to estimate population size, population indices, and population composition of Washington elk. Continue efforts to standardize and improve survey protocols to provide reliable data on the size and structure of Washington elk herds.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
CONTINUE SAME	Thank you for your comment.
Eberhadt (1969) was on target. Why hasn't WDFW adopted /rigorously addressed in 20 years? Hello?	We had Dr. Eberhardt come talk to our staff a couple of years ago. He was actually surprised that some biologists were still using the work he published in the '60s and readily admitted that there were better approaches available now. Dr. Eberhardt is still active and publishing in peer-reviewed journals.

Have at least one public / private meeting consisting of landowners, hunters, hikers and anyone who lives or uses and area to discuss the current wintering and summering areas for the local elk populations in order to determine if elk are using the same areas year after year or if population dynamics are changing and different habitat and locations are being used by the elk. This is directly related to aerial surveys, which may not be accurate if elk are using different areas for wintering or green-up. Surveys dates should also flexible and timed to match green-up and not based on the same days year in and year out. Do not minimize the boot hunters input or retired guy who spends multiple days or weeks in an area. There is value in this data.	WDFW Biologists take in and assess information coming in from a wide variety of sources. If you contact your local District Biologist, they will be happy to hear from you regarding elk population distribution and habitat uses.
Have the public be able to provide this count information also.	Some Regions do use volunteers to formally collect survey data, but not all do. That is left to the discretion of the District Biologist.
Involve hunters. I often go afield to spot and scout elk. I travel with a GPS at all times and could provide information free of charge. Hold community training on game counting tactics and offer a small number of tags via drawing for those that provide information to the State Game Commission. We WANT to help !	WDFW Biologists take in and assess information coming in from a wide variety of sources. If you contact your local District Biologist, they will be happy to hear from you regarding elk population distribution and habitat uses.
More volunteers from the hunters and Master Hunters for herd size and counts would help.	WDFW Biologists take in and assess information coming in from a wide variety of sources. If you contact your local District Biologist, they will be happy to hear from you regarding elk population distribution and habitat uses.
OK but elk are doing well - how much more cast here?	Our goal is always to get the most accurate information for the dollar. Additional work quickly becomes cost-prohibitive so we try to make surveys as efficient as possible.
should have already been done.	Thank you for your comment. This is an ongoing process. New techniques and protocols are developed all of the time, and we do our best to remain abreast of those new developments and assess whether they can be efficiently used in Washington.
Take more time to estimate the herd count.	Thank you for your comment.
understand that you will never get a accurate count by air, you must count from ground and maybe spot by air	Accuracy and precision really depend on the habitat, the conditions, how readily visible the animals are, and the technique being used.
we need far more accurate counts than are possible with the current method used.	No new suggestion provided.
yes for surveys and protocols	Thank you for your comment.
Yes, we need more detailed and accurate data on our herds.	Thank you for your comment.
Page 36: Include statement about cooperatively working with Tribes on existing projects that have already been initiated.	We have publicized these cooperative projects in many other publications.
Strategy A: After last sentence, "Develop herd-specific models where appropriate" Add - I.E. Sightability model for the South Rainier elk herd developed by the Puyallup Tribe of Indians.	It is critically important for the tribes and state to work cooperatively and share development of techniques that can be supported by all parties.
Objective 19: Devise an alternative approach to reconstruction modeling.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
apparently needed	Thank you for your comment.
Be sure to keep enough big bulls in the Blue Mtns for the poachers, tribes, and whomever - but not us hunters.	No response necessary.
Check with some of the other states to see how they've done it. Idaho's is a good example.	We are constantly comparing notes with our colleagues in other states as well as trying to stay abreast of the current peer reviewed literature on the topic.
PUT SMART PEOPLE IN PLACE AND IMPLEMENT. DO NOT WASTE MONEY ON CONSULTANTS AND MORE OFFICE STAFF	Thank you for your comment.
This is necessary.	Thank you for your comment.
We do need alternative methods.	Thank you for your comment.
Re-word to say something more general, like "Devise and investigate alternative approaches for modeling elk populations."	No. We don't know what all the alternative approaches are going to look like at this time. It may not be "modeling" at all.
Page 37 Strategies: Add a second strategy: Strategy B. Follow tribes lead in using sightability models on the west side of the Cascades for estimating elk abundance and monitoring trends.	It is critically important for the tribes and state to work cooperatively and share development of techniques that can be supported by all parties.
Objective 20: Maintain a sustainable annual elk harvest that is consistent with Tables 1 and 2.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
5 cows to every bull should be your goal too many young elk....age class is not represented in most areas	The bull to cow ratio range that the Department is currently using is 12-20 bulls per 100 cows in post-hunt surveys. The upper end of that range 20:100 is equal to your request of 1 bull per 5 cows.
going to permit only hunting. Improve Health of Herds. Better Control of Hunting and Hunters	Every public opinion survey we have conducted of Washington elk hunters has shown that a general season elk hunting opportunity every year is an important value for hunters. WDFW does everything it possibly can to provide some general season opportunity, which is why we have the season structures that we do.
If natural predators are allowed access to elk, they will keep numbers in check. This is much more natural than using human hunting. We also know that wildlife predators select out the weak and sick, which improves the prey species, something human hunters do not.	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.

Include more Rifle quality Rut Hunts statewide as part of the sustainable elk harvest plan. At least one quality bull elk permit should be available to a rifle hunter in each GMU unit statewide during the rut. Bow hunting user group has had a larger portion of the quality elk harvested in this state for many years and need to be changed!	We do provide some opportunity like that in Regions 3 and 6, but would have to confer with all of the District Biologists to determine if it could be done in all units. This request is more appropriate for the three year hunting season setting process going on this fall. Check our web site to learn more about participating in that process.
Look at spike survival as way of increasing branch antlered bull numbers and of ways to increase spike survivability to achieve such an increase Look at tribal harvest of branch antlered bulls and make this a part of published data on how bull allocation is determined. Seek to limit tribal harvest of branch antlered bulls if herd sustainability is in question. Consider going to permit seasons rather than eliminating hunting in portions of a GMU. Boundary adjustment should be made with the goal of having the least amount of impact on the hunt able area. All options should be considered.....not just the easiest option.	We are looking at some options in the definition of a legal spike that may increase spike survival for the upcoming three-year package, 2009-2011. When we have reliable tribal harvest data, we always take that into account when it comes to harvest targets. We have no authority to limit tribal harvest. We do strive for harvest agreements with tribal entities whenever possible.
love your use of words.....a cull sounds less offensive than a "harvest". Humans are an animal species, & can be no more harvested than any other animal species. War seems the human way of "culling" our own population.	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
maintaining population good, for harvest, no	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
More flexibility, and objective needs to be written that would respond to changing population or habitat within the timeframe of this plan.	Despite what is written in the plan, the Agency always has the flexibility to respond to dramatic changes in elk populations or habitat.
No	Thank you for your comment.
No, not annual it take time. Just because the population level are not there does not mean the herd is not healthy and does not mean there should or should not be permits or tags.	As we did with the first GMP, recovery to population objective can be attempted without completely curtailing hunting.
nono	Thank you for your comment.
provide a hunting opportunity for westside elk hunting during the rut for rifle and muzzleloader hunters for branch antled bulls even if it is for only 1 tag in each GMU.	We do provide some opportunity like that in Regions 3 and 6, but would have to confer with all of the District Biologists to determine if it could be done in all units. This request is more appropriate for the three year hunting season setting process, which will take place this summer.
See # 19 above	Thank you for your comment.
Sound good but can it be accomplished???????	Yes
The east and west sides of the states should have their bull elk requirements switched back and forth every other year or every three years at least. One side of the state should be able to shoot a spike bull one year and then switch to a three point mini	The vast majority of Washington elk hunters like consistency in their hunting seasons. Constant changing back and forth would frustrate hunters and compound the difficulty of monitoring elk population responses to hunting season structure.
The harvest must vary depending upon wildfire kills and habitat loss in ordefr tho keep populations at sustainable levels.	Despite what is written in the plan, the Agency always has the flexibility to respond to dramatic changes in elk populations or habitat.
Try 3 pt or better pilot program for a limited number of hunters in portion of Eastern Wa to see if it helps improve bull survival, as it has in Western Wa.	The reason the 3 pt. antler restrictions seem to work in western Washington is related to the amount of escape cover available on the Westside. Eastern Washington does not have the same kind of escape cover, bulls would be too vulnerable, and we would ultimately kill too many bulls.
Yes, we need a sustainable elk harvest that gives the hunters a more positive outlook.	Thank you for your comment.
your muzzleloader season is too long in my area ..s Skagit hwy ...s of Skagit river .also poaching is a problem as some will hunt with bows..and in camo ...being dropped off in the woods so game dept doesn't see vehicles...using phones to call to get pick	The muzzleloader season south of Highway 20 is restricted to a defined Elk Area and is designed to reduce agricultural damage by elk. If you observe illegal activity, you should report it to WDFW Enforcement or State Patrol.
Limited opportunity should be maintained in the Blue Mtns to ensure a trophy hunt. Many other areas in Eastern Washington allow hunter opportunity. The current management strategy is working and let's keep the hunts a trophy hunt.	Thank you for your comment.
Page 38, Strategy C. "Return 3 point restriction in western Washington as long as population objectives are being met or have a reasonable likelihood of being met over time." Remove this strategy since it is not acted upon by WDFW managers.	For the most part, the three-point regulation is effective at maintaining bull objectives. In areas where there is some question, the tribes and state must work together to determine the relative necessity of making changes together.
Objective 21: Maintain overall stability of elk hunting season regulations as provided during the last three years if possible, while still targeting the objectives in Tables 1 and 2.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Again, flexibility with populations. Look what happened at Mt. St. Helens. The seasons set up to protect and increase the population after the eruption, are just now (nearly 30 years later) being slowly modified to address overpopulation. Agencies move so slowly, that the populations are rushing ahead, doing what nature wants them too, without permission from the WDFW.	We will try to maintain the appropriate flexibility needed to better manage wild elk populations.
Allow natural predators to do the thinning of herds.	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
Based upon the "objective population" versus the "estimated population" identified in table 1, this would appear impossible.	Some of the population objectives in the past have been a little too ambitious. We will try to modify them to be more realistic.
control herd numbers by better limitations on season lengths per GMU	We use a number of tools to control elk populations including season length, season timing, antlerless special permits, etc.

Draw only nearly statewide	Every public opinion survey we have conducted of Washington elk hunters has shown that a general season elk hunting opportunity every year is an important value for hunters. WDFW does everything it possibly can to provide some general season opportunity, which is why we have the season structures that we do.
Forget elk hunting	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
Increase the Rifle hunting opportunities for bulls for permits and draws. It's a bit lopsided with the archers currently getting the biggest advantage.	We do provide some opportunity like that in Regions 3, 5, and 6, but would have to confer with all of the District Biologists to determine if it could be done in all units. This request is more appropriate for the three year hunting season setting process going on this fall. Check our web site to learn more about participating in that process.
Longer seasons in areas where quotas aren't being met. Year before last was a disaster in Western Washington because of the rains and flooding. I'm sure the #'s were down for harvest that year.	It is impractical to adjust season lengths on the fly in response to rain, snow, flooding, etc. We recommend the best seasons we can to the Commission and then must contend with whatever conditions develop. That is all part of hunting.
Maintain resource allocation goals with an ultimate goal of achieving a statewide allocation of animals that is in relation to a user group's size.	This is already being done.
Modern Firearm Elk hunting seasons have continuously been moving into October with the lates significant change in the opener of being the last full weekend of October. This has generally made the season that once was in November (Nov5th-15th), now in October, a much less active weather season and generally lacking in snow. I'd like to see what should be some compromise between the previous method (again Nov5th-15th) and what it is now to keep the season in the majority of early November.	The same system for setting Eastern Washington elk hunting seasons has been used for the last 9 years and probably longer. In general, the Season opens on the last Saturday of October and runs 9 days including two weekends. This season structure is used to avoid the snow events that you are describing. Later seasons have more snow, which make elk more vulnerable which would lead to overharvest.
MOVE ELK SEASON A WEEK LATER IN EASTERN WASHINGTON	The same system for setting Eastern Washington elk hunting seasons has been used for the last 9 years and probably longer. In general, the Season opens on the last Saturday of October and runs 9 days including two weekends. This season structure is used to avoid the snow events that you are describing. Later seasons have more snow, which make elk more vulnerable which would lead to overharvest.
Move to combine, simplify GMU and Elk Areas. Open more land to hunting, especially public land. Do not shy away from changing GMU boundaries if more opportunity is provided (Loowit, Hanaford, watersheds)	This is an important strategy and will be addressed during development of the 2009-11 hunting season package.
My biggest complaint is that the YAKIMA SEASON IS TO DAMN EARLY.....There in no reason that the modern season can't be started on the second Saturday in NOV. This could be a standard forever and since you have screwed us down to a 9 day season, GIVE US A BREAK....I can recall hunting over THANKSGIVING years ago and now it will soon be labor-day.....	The same system for setting Eastern Washington elk hunting seasons has been used for the last 9 years and probably longer. In general, the Season opens on the last Saturday of October and runs 9 days including two weekends. This season structure is used to avoid the snow events that you are describing. Later seasons have more snow, which make elk more vulnerable which would lead to overharvest.
Permit only, no more general season	Every public opinion survey we have conducted of Washington elk hunters has shown that a general season elk hunting opportunity every year is an important value for hunters. WDFW does everything it possibly can to provide some general season opportunity, which is why we have the season structures that we do.
Reduce the length of hunting seasons for all weapons groups to reach population objectives	We have considered this but feel it is unnecessary art this time.
Strategy C needs to be adaptive based on current year survey and harvest results – too often survey and harvest results lag a year behind the season setting process thus the most recent information is not available to make decisions.	Because of the legal and bureaucratic processes that must take place in order for the Fish and Wildlife Commission to adopt hunting seasons, we will continue to set seasons before all of the monitoring data is available.
the muzzleloading general elk season is in conflict with the ml general deer season. please separate them out to provide the ml more opportunities for both species.	This is being considered as part of the 2009-2011. This request is more appropriate for the three year hunting season setting process going on this fall. Check our web site to learn more about participating in that process.
This has been successful	Thank you for your comment.
We need more specific and detailed rules on our Elk hunting season regulations.	No suggestions were offered here. This request is more appropriate for the three year hunting season setting process going on this fall. Check our web site to learn more about participating in that process
What are Tables 1 and 2?	Tables 1 and 2 are the criteria and objectives used for elk management listed at the beginning of the elk chapter. They are marked Table 1 and Table 2.
Why do the catcher get so much time and opportunities to hunt? Much more then the muzzleloaders.	This is being considered as part of the 2009-2011. This request is more appropriate for the three year hunting season setting process going on this fall. Check our web site to learn more about participating in that process.
Yes - a very good concept. Please work on it.	Thank you for your comment.
Yes, achieve solid bull/cow ratios.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 22: Improve the accuracy and precision of harvest data to monitor elk populations and the effects of various management strategies.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.

Ask for a voluntary report each year from elk hunters as to how many elk they saw, what sex, where, and what date they saw them.	WDFW Biologists take in and assess information coming in from a wide variety of sources. If you contact your local District Biologist, they will be happy to hear from you regarding elk population distribution and habitat uses.
fin- but how much tome - many go into this?	Comment unclear.
Forget "harvesting" elk.	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
I support this, it is imperative!	Thank you for your comment.
Important!	Thank you for your comment.
include tooth envelope with license	The Agency is exploring expanding age data assessment based on tooth collection.
need to include in all reports publicly, all tribal hunting harvest.	Those data can be obtained on the internet at http://www.nwifc.org/wildlife/biggame.asp.
Only by increasing poaching enforcement can credance be given to harvest data.	Thank you for your comment.
Provide a way for those reporting harvest data to access a more complex questionnaire that would expand upon the knowledge that a hunter has picked up from his hunt. E.g. number of elk seen , number of calves seen, number of spikes seen, number of mountain goats seen ect.. This would accomplish two things.... a greater feeling of involvement by hunters in the game management process and additional information that the department could use to supplement the knowledge that it has.	WDFW Biologists take in and assess information coming in from a wide variety of sources. If you contact your local District Biologist, they will be happy to hear from you regarding elk population distribution and habitat uses.
Rather than increasing - how bout just mainting what we have? Rather then "explore" - why not implement doing this time.	Thank you for your comment.
SYSTEM WORKS NOW	Thank you for your comment.
The accuracy of harvest reporting has improved with a mandatory system but there are still errors. Harvest data should be available before setting seasons. Can you validate some harvest reporting with check stations? Collecting body condition data will be good at assessing herd health relative to habitat but time intensive and may not result in useful data due to all the variables affecting condition.	We are developing some techniques to validate mandatory harvest data.
Use some of the Eyes in the Woods volunteers for game check help instead of many gates for Weyerhauser. They didn't provide any extra access as stated last year and just used the volunteer groups to turn hunters away from areas so the truck drivers wouldn't have to get in and out of the trucks to lock and unlock gates.	An extensive amount of additional access was provided in 2007, with 85% of the St. Helens Tree Farm open to motorized access thanks to the efforts of volunteers.
We need more detailed and accurate information on our harvest reports.	We are developing some techniques to validate mandatory harvest data.
Objective 23: Increase antlerless harvest opportunities in elk populations that are at or above population goals.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Also, overpopulated areas should not be in permit only areas, but general season areas, thus increasing overall harvest, like St. Helens, Yakima herds.	We have increased antlerless special permit opportunities in places where this is an issue. Special permits provide better control over hunter numbers and hunter pressure.
Bulls only! To allow killing of cows and calves is anti-conservation. You would see your herds disintegrate and blame the predators for your grievous error.	Antlerless kill is often a necessary tool to maintain or reduce or herds or to address agricultural damage.
DECREASE COW KILL... This will allow more spike bulls.....	Antlerless kill is often a necessary tool to maintain or reduce or herds or to address agricultural damage.
Definitely a necessary management tool if herds are to be kept at objective and there is no desire to grow them larger. Tribes should be part of this antlerless harvest since there is an "excess" number of animals.	Thank you for your comment.
Good management strategy.	Thank you for your comment.
Leave the elk alone.	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
muzzleloaders need more opportunities to harvest elk in the Williams creek GMU	This is being considered as part of the 2009-2011. This request is more appropriate for the three year hunting season setting process going on this fall. Check our web site to learn more about participating in that process.
no	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
NO. RELOCATE ELK TO AREAS THAT ARE HURTING.	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
Only by use of permits	Thank you for your comment.
PACKWOOD AREA	Thank you for your comment.
Question: So why hasn't this been done before? Where were the "experts/biologist with the St Helens Herd. Where is the Dept's upper management?	Thank you for your comment.
Strongly agree, antlerless elk still require winter food, a starved dead elk does not provide much.	Thank you for your comment.
the st helens elk herd needs to be decreased through hunting, not through starvation. starving huntable animals is not good public relations for the dept.	We have increased antlerless special permit opportunities in places where this is an issue.
There are enough cow tags out there.	Thank you for your comment.
This is a wonderful idea as long as the scientific data supports it as an ok thing to do.	Thank you for your comment.
Where possible this does provide additional hunting opportunity.	Thank you for your comment.
yes gentle by science	Thank you for your comment.

Yes, in the Packwood unit (by archery only)	Thank you for your comment.
Yes, this would be greatly appreciated by hunters.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 24: Identify areas of elk damage and minimize the number of damage incidents if possible.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
agree Only remove elk that are doing damage - spot hunts.	Thank you for your comment.
Consider capture and moving elk to other areas.	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
Damage area tags on a draw basis or Master Hunter program.	We already do this.
Farmer-hunter-WDFW partnership	We already do this.
Fences are possible and are used in the orchards of Hood River County, in Oregon.	We already do this.
Focus damage hunt (Malaga unit) as hot spot to address smaller and more restrictive area, with concentration on animals committing damage.	We are trying to do this increasingly with both the Malaga and Peshastin hunts.
for private land owners with repeat damage incidents, stop paying claims and require some kind of access for hunters, not only master hunters, to help move the animals and reduce the incidents of damage	We already do this.
I support this, but the failed Master Hunter permit process does not appear to be the answer. There were 71 bogs (prior to removal from the MH website) discussing this. Once determined if game population must be reduced due to increased damage, I would like to see a "lotto" type system where individual hunter's (those who agreed to or requested to be placed on a list for a fee) had their WILD ID's "automatically" input into a drawing and if selected are immediately contacted to see if they are available for an emergent "damage control hunt".. if the hunter does not respond or cannot make it on short notice, then another random ID is selected, etc. This would meet the crop owner's immediate need and would facilitate EVERY hunter's desire to be able to be considered to participate in such hunts.	We are considering options along these lines.
I'd like to see some regulation that discourages the continued level of development into winter habitat areas that will diminish the exposure to damage.	Engage you local county authorities and ask them about compliance with the Growth Management Act.
identify areas by GMU or smaller areas to manage animals in a more consistent way.	We already do this. Not sure what the comment is addressing.
Increase elk fence repair budget, consider constructing new elk fences in problems areas, and consider planting food plots in areas to draw elk away from problem spots.	Thank you for your comment.
Increase elk habitat in areas of damage. Buy fields if necessary.	We do this when possible.
needed of course	Thank you for your comment.
not at all important	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
PACKWOOD AREA	Thank you for your comment.
Provide the hunters with an opportunity to hunt these areas maybe with less restrictions in order to ensure success as long as it won't deplete the elk population to zero.	Thank you for your comment.
Use Master/youth/disabled hunters for hunting most nuisance elk	We try to do this within reason. Not always possible.
Utilize MH grads - selected groups to deal with the issue. Use Licensed hunters wherever possible.	We already do this.
We need to relocate these animals to new areas in our State, to increase our total Elk populations.	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
yes by drawings of regular people	Thank you for your comment.
Page 39, Strategy A. "Provide information and advice to landowners regarding techniques to prevent elk damage. Reduce elk damage using non-lethal means in elk herds below population objective." Should be in bold. If herd size is below objective, non-lethal means must be used to address damage complaints (IE: GMUs 503, 513, 516, 510).	Thanks for your support.
Objective 25: Maintain, enhance, and acquire habitat for Rocky Mountain and Roosevelt elk.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
access to huntable lands should be of prime importance. when public lands are locked out by private ownership surrounding them, then the public lands are useless.	Thank you for your comment.
Continue vegetation planting around MT Saint Helens area	Thank you for your comment.
Especially winter range.	Thank you for your comment.
GO	OK
Great as long as it doesn't mean more are's closed to hunting.	Thank you for your comment.
Habitat is vitally important, but effort should not be put into habitat unless habitat has been identified as limiting a herd below population objective, or there is a desire to raise the population objective thus needing more habitat. Simply improving habitat does not necessarily translate into a healthy herd.	Thank you for your comment.
high priority	Thank you for your comment.
I fully support the state in their desire to set aside and protect habitat for Washington State Elk populations. With the rapid development of vital elk habitat this should be one of our most important priorities if we want to have sustainable populations into the future.	Thank you for your comment.

Keep trying, but the final call will be $ oriented. There may be a neg response to the Dept. Smack to the shooting on "their" lands.	Thank you for your comment.
more habitat is needed for ECOSYSTEMS to survive.....Ecosystems is the key word here.....knocking out one part of the leg destroys the system. We are dependent on a healthy ecosystem.	Thank you for your comment.
Only if it remains open to the public... for viewing, hunting, hiking, camping, etc.	Thank you for your comment.
Recommend a 1/8 of 1 percent tax on all outdoor related sporting goods sold in the state of Washington to fund land acquisition and or establish easements for elk. Seek legislative support from various sportsmen and environmental groups throughout the state. Create a plan of action, which involves these groups to insure that, this legislations taken seriously.	As you point out, if this were to be done it would require legislative action. If this is something you desire you should contact your legislators with this request.
RMEF would be a valuable tool.	WDFW partners with RMEF on a constant basis to accomplish this kind of work.
Support. Habitat with multiple game species (not just threatened/endangered) should be acquisition priority, acquiring habitat should specifically include conservation easements	Thank you for your comment.
THEY ARE NOT NATIVE TO PACKWOOD. MOVE THEM OUT AS THEY DAMAGE PROPERTY	Thank you for your comment.
We truly need to improve and enhance our habitat. Maybe farmers could help with food plots in our Safety Zones for our wildlife.	Not sure which Safety Zones you're referencing.
Work with DNR to improve habitat, acquire habitat.	We do.
yes but acquire maybe last thing spend on	Thank you for your comment.
Add a bullet that states collaborate with Tribes wherever possible to build on existing efforts to protect critical habitat.	This will be an important piece of any Regional agreements identified as the key objective in the tribal section of the plan.
Objective 26: Evaluate the current elk-feeding program. Reduce the dependency on supplemental feeding if possible.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Add: ", unless the withholding of supplemental feeding results in animal starvation."	The reduction in dependency would be aligned with adequate winter range that would preclude the starvation that you reference.
Continue feeding programs especially the one near Mt Saint Helens	The feeding program on Mount St. Helens was intended to be a short-term emergency action, only.
Feeding is a most when the elk are fenced out of the nature winter grounds.	Thank you for your comment.
Feeding is essential in the state to maintain and elk population....funds should come out of the general state funds also.	Feeding is necessary in Region 3, along with fencing, to separate elk from agricultural lands in winter.
I just returned from Oak Creek last weekend and it was discouraging to watch those elk leaving the feeding area in the morning and returning each evening when there is no food available. Feed them if the winters are hard but I feel that we should be mobile enough to take the food to them. Further away from public access. They are beautiful to watch and my children love it, but I can show them elk in a more natural and healthy environment.	The feeding stations are a combination of public education and economic efficiency. Not all of the feed sites are readily viewable and in an average year we might have upwards of nine active feed sites. Being more extensive with feed sites would be less cost-efficient and difficult to implement in average to above average snow years.
I support this, provided it does not lead to further crop/property damage... higher winter kill, or increased traffic collisions due to game crossing highways in search of winter feed.	Thank you for your comment.
if feeding is not sound science, then why does the dept continue such a program?	Feeding is necessary in Region 3, along with fencing, to separate elk from agricultural lands in winter.
IF POSSIBLE. MAYBE BUY LAND AND PLANT CROPS FOR ELK	Thank you for your comment.
In order to keep the hunting of elk available some areas that have a high death rate in the winter need to have supplemental feeding during the harsh winter months.	Feeding is necessary in Region 3, along with fencing, to separate elk from agricultural lands in winter. The reduction in dependency would be aligned with adequate winter range available.
Keep feeding them.	Thank you for your comment.
nonsense. Tweak it - it will not go away - not now!	Thank you for your comment.
Not in favor of. Elk feeding is necessary to sustain viable herds that have had unusually harsh winter weather to survive.	Thank you for your comment.
Only where possible. If there is a strong push to obtain more winter habitat areas this could be possible.	Thank you for your comment.
Reduce if possible	Thank you for your comment.
Some places it will still be necessary, unless you can plant foods in areas they can winter and not be bothered.	The reduction in dependency would be aligned with adequate winter range.
Stop feeding the elk. You seem to do it for political reason, or to cover up poor management practices.	Feeding is necessary in Region 3, along with fencing, to separate elk from agricultural lands in winter.
Yes it's good politically - but not good science. So why don't you really put this objective info to the public more & more.	Feeding is necessary in Region 3, along with fencing, to separate elk from agricultural lands in winter. The reduction in dependency would be aligned with adequate winter range available.
Yes, feed in winter. Most of the low elevation winter ranger for elk has been destroyed by human habitation. Winter feeding is now necessary. Should assess ways to have corridors into lower elevation land for elk herds. Natural winter predation may occur.	Thank you for your comment.
Yes, we need reduce the dependency by making sustainable food plots, which would greatly reduce our winter kills	Thank you for your comment.
yes--if possible	Thank you for your comment.

you can't ...the snow levels have to be monitored ...as they can't wander all over the lowlands to eat	Feeding is necessary in Region 3, along with fencing, to separate elk from agricultural lands in winter. The reduction in dependency would be aligned with adequate winter range available.
Objective 27: Monitor the health and disease status of wild elk in Washington.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Allow natural predators to live here and use them to monitor health.	Thank you for your comment.
definitely important	Thank you for your comment.
It's being done now, isn't it?	Yes, it is, but we will continue to do so. It's important for the public to know that we are monitoring health.
Need specific objective to look at St. Helens herd, just as it is an objective to look at Yakima and Colockum herds.	We do not have specific disease monitoring objectives for Colockum or Yakima or any other herd. We evaluate herds as necessary.
Should already be doing this.	Yes, it is, but we will continue to do so. It's important for the public to know that we are monitoring health.
stop trophy hunting & the killing of the biggest & best of a species	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
This really appears like a no brainer - just do it.	Yes, we are conducting this work and will continue to do so. It's important for the public to know that we are monitoring health.
Yes, especially internal parasites from cattle.	Thank you for your comment.
Yes, we need to do more testing on our wildlife to help indicate any problems with disease.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 28: Determine the appropriate population size for the Yakima elk herd given the number of environmental, social, recreational, and economic values assigned to this herd by various user-groups.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
ALSO FOR PACKWOOD	Packwood is not part of the Yakima project.
Continue to seek to gain access so hunting can occur on the h Hanford reservation use of permits and master/youth/disable hunters when needed	Comment not related to the objective.
Develop better cooperation between the Forest Service and the WDFW on habitat and elk management related issues. Establish a meeting, at least once a year between the WDFW, DNR, BLM and the USFS and local counties to discuss any upcoming (within 12 months) policies, which will involve habitat or land use. All parties should exchange pertinent information and be included on a review panel to ensure that proper input is receive on such plans. Implementation of the suggestions would not be mandatory however it would have at least had the chance of being part of the recommendation.	Good suggestion. Thank you. In many Districts this already occurs.
Good luck.	Thank you for your comment.
Has Strategy B of the previous GMP to "Conduct intensive remote sensing data collection and GIS analyses" been completed?	Yes.
Hasn't this been evaluated also?	The field work is mostly done. There is still data analysis that needs to take place this summer.
Is this not all ready the criteria for determining "Population Objectives" for all herds? and if not, why not?	Not to this level of detail because it is too expensive.
leave the elk alone	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
Let the herd grow. The elk are best to determine their own population size.	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
Locate and provide more corridors and low elevation habitat for these herds.	Thank you for your comment.
stay the course already set have - tweak it as needed.	Thank you for your comment.
The social issue is most important. Keep feeding this herd for social rather then science issues and you will be a nice agency.	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
What the hell does the ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, RECREATIONAL AND ECONOMIC VALUES have to do with the sports hunters of WASHINGTON????????	Elk belong to all citizens of the state of Washington.
Yakima herd and eco-system can handle a large population.	Thank you for your comment.
Yes, we need to take a serious look at just how many Elk we have in this area. There maybe more than what we think.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 29: Ascertain the population dynamics of the Colockum elk herd by 2014.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
2011	This work can't be completed in 2 years.
2014 is too late - the herd has been declining for some time	This work can't be completed in 2 years.

2014 is way too far in the future. The deadline date should be 2010. Implementation of the following should occur in 2009. At least a 5% road closure along with the start of identifying additional closures of at least 5% each year until a predetermined threshold is reached.. (5% per year over the next 3 years will be below that threshold). Consider constructing wildlife fencing in problem areas. Consider planting food plots to draw elk away from problem areas. Plant these plots within 2 years and monitor for 3 years. Consult old managers of the Colockum and region 3 and old hunters to determine where elk traditionally used the Colockum, especially when the Wheat fields above westbar where in production. Analyze data from the last 3 years on tribal harvest of branch antlered bulls in the Colockum and determine if immediate action is needed to curb excessive harvest of this specific age class. Consider restricting the harvest of spike bulls in the Colockum or areas of the Colockum to permit only for 2 years to bolster the branch antlered bull population. This should begin in 2009. Begin a study on the possible effects of wolves on the Colockum elk herd. Include such items as escapement, increase agricultural damage due to escapement , habitat conditions, current sustainability problems, can wolves populations in the Colockum be controlled, can the two co exist>	This work can't be completed in 2 years.
develop more open communition with all hunters regarding the tribal harvest of mature bulls in the Colockum area.	Thank you for your comment.
From the reports I've read it sounds like they need help. There might be some intangibles involved that aren't easily identifiable.	You are correct.
get out of the planes and start walking the country and talk to the people in the area that know the herds	Thank you for your comment.
If you could keep the Indians from slaughtering the herd.	We do not control tribal seasons or bag limits.
It would appear that over all the years that elk have been excessively managed in this area that this would have occurred all ready... it is hard to understand why it hasn't..	Some research was conducted in the 1990s but more questions need to be answered.
it would be great if the dept could move this time frame up to at least 2010. please give this herd some priority in the dept's management.	This work can't be completed in 2 years.
Limit access ! Logging has had an impact on the local elk but not all of it is bad. They love open areas. Keep access limited until populations increase.	Thank you for your comment.
Reduce length of hunting seasons by 50% or so, of all weapons groups and do not allow any cow elk to be taken during general seasonsi.e. Archery	Thank you for your comment.
Trophy Bulls over hunted by Yakima tribe	We do not control tribal seasons or bag limits.
Warming climate - may effect this month then most years?	Thank you for your comment.
We also need to refine our views on this Elk herd.	Thank you for your comment.
WE SHOULD HAVE A GOOD IDEA RIGHT NOW. NEED TO STOP URBAN SPRAWL!!!	Contact your County government regarding zoning and the Growth Management Act.
Why don't we/you have this in hand now? Why do you need all these addition years - expet to appease the tribes?	Limited funds and competing priorities have delayed recent work in the Colockum.
Why is not clone sooner? Why 5 years? Do it in two or three at the most.	This work can't be completed in 2 years.
You should integrate the results of Project CAT and do some modeling of the number of cougars and potential predation effects they might have.	We will. Thank you.
Don't rush in to this.	This work can't be completed in 2 years.
Objective 30: Gain a better understanding of the population dynamics and habitat use of elk in the upper Kittitas Valley.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
A very good idea - but why just now we assume there has been no one from your Dept to address this issue, why not?	Limited funds and competing priorities influence which work can be accomplished during particular time periods.
Aren't there more nagging research questions to be addressed elsewhere with elk than putting more effort into the east Cascades herds?	Limited funds and competing priorities influence which work can be accomplished during particular time periods. There will always be more needs than we have resources to address.
I support this, but again based on the WDFW's actions and previous MH hunts in this region one would have assumed this had previously occurred... Objectives 29 and 30 would lead one to believe that the WDFW have previously been taking action PRIOR to understanding why or the consequences of their actions..., which are poor management practices.	Again, management decisions often have to be made without a full complement of answers to research questions. Limited funds and competing priorities influence which work can be accomplished during particular time periods.
RMEF may be able to help again.	We often go to RMEF for assistance on projects such as this, although RMEF is much more interested in funding habitat improvement and far less interested in funding research.
SHOULD ALREADY KNOW THIS?	Limited funds and competing priorities influence which work can be accomplished during particular time periods.
Strategies..... Develop a plan within 2 years that can be given to the county and local governments with the suggestion that it be implemented and incorporated into their land use regulations. Such a plan would include wildlife corridors, easement plans, suggested restrictive covenants, disclosure to future owner of wildlife interactions and dedicated or mitigation requirements for future development that would incorporate wildlife management policies. Identify those areas that are of critical concern and if possible put on a priority list for land acquisition. The current economic downturn may create a window for discounted land acquisition in the immediate future.	These items are already taking place. Although county governments are expected to comply with the Growth management Act, that compliance varies.
Yes, this valuable information that we need to decide the overall health of the herd.	Thank you for your comment.

Objective 31: Determine by 2008 if the current PMU designations for Washington deer populations are representative from a biological standpoint.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Great idea, why not change from GMUs (outdated) to PMUs so both bios and hunters are on the same page.	GMUs and PMUs serve different functions. GMUs allow the Department to direct hunter effort to a particular area. PMUs should function as a way to assess the herds.
natural predators could be use to check deer populations. Wolves and cougar would do a good job.	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
Our harvests are not even close to what they could or should be. The buck to doe ratio is way out of proportion in most areas in Western Washington (I mostly hunt there) but also seem to be in a lot of the areas statewide. Two or three point or better should be the norm rather than any buck. I also feel that we should have to harvest more does to get a buck. A single deer tag should be allowed and then a supplemental tag in some areas, much like the bear tags now. We have the deer and the ability to harvest more deer than are being harvested now.	This is not related to the objective, however, the Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
The trick, have balance ecologies with biologies how another?	Thank you for your comment.
We more consistent and accurate data to help us with our deer populations.	Thank you for your comment.
I urge you to help get stronger language for actions to help stop our states Mule Deer decline. I strongly believe that WDFW should designate areas such as the Okanogan/Chelan where Mule Deer management take priority over the encroaching Whitetails. Whitetail Deer are great and have their place but they are taking over and their number could be greatly reduced in targeted Mule Deer range.	We don't think that white-tailed deer are taking over Chelan and Okanogan counties.
Objective 32: Determine how well existing survey protocols for black-tailed deer are working by 2010.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
almost impossible to determine how many black-tail there are.	It is difficult but we must try.
Less and Less good habitat, plus hair slip may be reducing the black tail populations . A study is needed.	The Department is developing ideas for research related to your comments.
They aren't working.	If that's true we will try to improve.
This was the objective from the past GMP with a 2005 target date. Will this really be accomplished?	Limited funds and competing priorities influence which work can be accomplished during particular time periods.
Yes, we need some refinement.	Thank you for your comment.
Increase the amount of antler restricted areas 2 point or better	Two point antler restrictions do not seem to be having any positive effects. The Department is leaning away from two-point antler restrictions for black-tailed deer.
Objective 33: 1. Maintain black-tailed deer population numbers within habitat limitations. 2. Maintain both antlered and antlerless opportunity for black-tailed deer at appropriate levels.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Accomplishing this for all black-tail GMUs will be nearly impossible. You should select a few GMUs to see if acquiring the data is possible, estimate the cost and time commitment, and decide from there if it can be applied at a broader scale.	You are right this will be difficult. A step-wise, incremental approach is a good suggestion. Thank you.
Eliminate or greatly reduce antlerless harvest in hairless areas.	The objective states maintain where appropriate. Our district Biologists will determine the appropriateness of maintaining antlerless seasons.
Focus on antlered harvest. Non-antlered harvest of blacktail should focus in suburban/occupied damage areas.	The objective states maintain where appropriate. Our district Biologists will determine the appropriateness of maintaining antlerless seasons.
How will you know the habitat limitations without the study re #32?	A number of indices might be used, such body condition, survival, productivity, etc.
if maintaining means killing, no, if it means protecting habitat, yes	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
Increase Rifle hunting opportunities for Mule Deer Bucks in quality hunt general, draw/permit hunts.	Not related to this black-tailed deer objective. We try to provide as much opportunity to all user groups as we can within reason.
Leave the deer alone	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
No. Allow natural predators like wolves and cougars to limit populations.	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
Our blacktail future worries me, as well as bear and other large mammal's flourishing in Western Wa. due to population explosion. I've sent letters to the State Reps. as well, Washington needs to do a lot more to "discourage" growth, rather than "encourage" growth in the form of what is referred to as "growth management". Blacktail have been steadily declining as a result of habitat loss. My two primary blacktail areas in industrial timberlands have been sold, or partially sold to housing development. In rural Pierce and King County's, just in the last decade I have seen whole herds of blacktail displaced by unnecessary strip malls etc. It sounds like a tangent, but it really is I feel the biggest problem right now, even bigger than hair slip causing mites. Our legislature needs to appropriate more funds to purchase timberlands and large farms for sale to prevent development, currently King County has thousand's of acres of DNR lands that are also closed to hunting, including the Cedar River watershed that should also be opened for hunting to help alleviate pressure on other areas and increase opportunity.	You make some excellent points. The Department is always looking for ways to protect deer habitat. We encourage you to continue working with your elected officials and county government to help address these issues.

populations are down mostly do to over predation	Thank you for your comment.
The Deer can maintain their own population levels with the help of nature's predators. Mother nature knows best. Loss of shelter from logging is the greatest threat to deer. There is less habitat now. Be patient as cougar and deer populations fluctuate. That is how to keep healthy populations of Black Tail Deer.	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
There are lots of blacktail grey ghosts that never see a hunter, especially antlerless are way underharvested, include 2nd tag in areas to increase population dynamics, i.e. buck/doe appropriate levels.	How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
Yes, our Black-tailed deer population is growing rapidly in the city, and slowly growing in the foothills. We do have to maintain a better buck to doe ratio, for the health of the Blacktailed deer populations.	Thank you for your comment.
YES. GO TWO POINT OR BETTER IN ALL AREAS	Two point antler restrictions do not seem to be having any positive effects. The Department is leaning away from two-point antler restrictions for black-tailed deer.
Objective 34: 1. Increase both antlered and antlerless hunting opportunity for all user groups when appropriate. 2. Maintain mule deer populations within tolerance of landowners.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
1. for sure	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
1. no 2. not terribly interested	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
3. Increase quality Rifle hunting opportunities for Bucks & Bulls for permits and draws	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
Add: "3. Offer educational opportunities for landowners to learn how to discourage property/crop damage by deer. Take into account whether landowners have applied these methods when considering action to the detriment of the deer in response to landowner complaints."	This is already happening.
Again - go back to the 3 point or better and you will have and harvest better quality animals.	This is already being used for mule deer. Success has been limited to some local areas and inconclusive in others.
Agree. A minimally longer season would be preferable as well.	Thank you for your comment.
allow more permits for either sex in the Methow and Sinlahekin areas	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
antlerless hunts should be emphasized in areas where depredation is a problem. Antlerless hunts provide good opportunities for many hunters but monitoring of population levels must be considered. While some antlerless take may improve buck:doe ratios, this take should not approach population sustainability levels.	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
Are mule deer truly on a decline in Wash? Many land owners in eastern WA thing otherwise.	Population trends up and down are a local case by case issue as you point out.
Decrease the length of hunting seasons for all weapons groups by 50% or so to increase mule deer populations	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
DO not increase any hunting opportunity	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
Give the muzzleloader more season bring the to hunt. And move GMUs to hunt in.	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
I support this.	Thank you for your comment.
Increase Rifle hunting opportunities for Mule Deer Bucks in quality hunt draws/permits	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
Maintain antlered deer hunting at current levels. Stop antlerless hunting. Deer don't harm land owners. Hunters do.	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
Mule deer populations are declining with the habitat while whitetail are taking over. I don't have an answer for it.	Thank you for your comment.
muzzleloader hunters should have more GMU access across the state. especially areas like the entiat valley and Methow valley hunting areas. also, in SW GMUs.	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
Not in favor of. 1. Hunting should not be the focus. Robust populations should be. 2. Landowners should be held accountable to the very places they choose to live. Mule deer populations should be protected from disgruntled landowners.	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.

over allocation and harvest in quality hunting areas ,,,entiat unit needs a drastic cut in archery tags and totally eliminate the last season when these animals are on their wintering ground...way to much pressure is being put on wildlife by these late season archery tags....stop all shed hunting by user groups during the winter while they are on wintering ground....we are over allocating archery tags on the eastside for mule deer in general, with a very high success rate,	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
permit only for mule deer	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
the muzzleloader hunters should have much more access and opportunity for deer hunting across the entire state. give the access to the entiat GMU among others. why are the ml kept out of these GMUs?	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
This may be necessary - we are all landowners - but ok.	Thank you for your comment.
We need to get older age class animals in order to maintain proper health	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
why do land owners have a say in tolerance of deer populations when they moved into areas knowing the area had wildlife GMU 329 stop the doe permits and the any buck permits for that area	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
YES BUT NO DOE PERMITS!!!	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
Yes, this is a very serious issue that needs more accurate data and how to improve our buck to doe ratio.	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
Why is mule deer "increase" while white-tailed deer is "maintain" in Objective 36.	Because in general, our district Biologists indicate that mule deer still have some room to grow while white-tailed deer are for the most part at social carrying capacity. This could vary some on a site specific basis.
Objective 35: Improve and expand the survey protocols for mule deer by 2008.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
if you can afford it.	Thank you for your comment.
Provide sportsmen (and wildlife watchers) an opportunity to participate in post-hunt counts to increase the amount of population information available at a local level.	The Agency does it's best to listen to the local communities directly associated with wildlife populations as well as all stakeholders statewide that have a vested interest in wildlife.
Yes we need more detailed and accurate surveys.	Thank you for your comment.
YES. NO DOE PERMITS	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 36: 1. Maintain antlered and antlerless hunting opportunity for all user groups if possible. 2. Maintain white-tailed deer populations within the tolerance of landowners.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
1. for sure	Thank you for your comment.
1. not interested 2. not terribly interested	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
Add: "3. Offer educational opportunities for landowners to learn how to discourage property/crop damage by deer. Take into account whether landowners have applied these methods when considering action to the detriment of the deer in response to landowner complaints."	This is already happening.
Do not maintain any hunting opportunities.	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
Give the muzzleloaders more hunting opportunities across the state.	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
GMUs 130,124,121,117,113 should be three point min on bucks or antlerless. In other words you can harvest either sex whitetail deer on your over the counter tag. This should be for every one not just kids.	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
Increase Rifle hunting opportunities for Whitetail Deer Buck in quality draws/permits	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
let' em run wild	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.

muzzleloader hunters should have additional access to 100 series GMUs during the general season.	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
Need to EXPAND white-tailed deer hunting opprtunities.ESPECIALLY ANTLERLESS !!!	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
NO DOE PERMITS FOR MULE DEER INCLUDING ARCHERY!!	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
Not in favor of. Populations should be protected from unnecessary hunting and complaining landowners.	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
Pound the whitetail where they are invading mule deer range	Thank you for your comment.
Reduce White Tail Deer hunting.	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
This is a must for White-tailed deer, and how to improve our buck to doe ratio.	Thank you for your comment.
Yes or I. So cantiously on 2. You it needs doing.	Thank you for your comment.
Resource allocation needs to be re-structured. Permit levels based on success rates does not work. It is nonsense that archers are entitled to success. That policy is in direct opposition to what primitive weapon hunting is really about. Permit levels should be based on participation level, not guaranteeing success. Reduce archery permit levels. Archery equipment is too effective now and the success rates have exceeded fair amounts.	The special permit allocation formula takes three things into account- the participation rate as you've suggested it should, the average success rate for the past 5 years, and the total harvest target of animals for all weapons combined.
Objective 37: Improve and expand the existing survey protocols for white-tailed deer by 2008.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
How?	To be determined.
Yes we need more detailed and accurate surveys.	Thank you for your comment.
Add new strategy; develop, investigate and test new survey protocols.	Any new strategies will have to first be developed and then tested.
Objective 38: Maintain a variety of deer hunting opportunities within each administrative region. Increase antlerless hunting whenever possible.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
A, B, C Please Do!	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
Antlerless whitetail deer should be able to be harvested on a over the counter tag for everyone, not just kids and disabled. And it should be any method.	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
Both increase and decrease opportunities need to be shared equally among all user groups.	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
Consider alternative such as road closure, equipment limitations, and vehicle limitations to lower success rates and thus increase opportunity for all user groups. Include education of hunting public on the relationship between success and opportunity and on the tariffs between quality deer management and opportunity deer management. Resource allocation should be the preferred method of allocating harvest among the user groups. Harvest statistics should include a verbal summary of what the statistics actually mean....draw some conclusions out of the numbers. E.g. For the Chelan herd say something about how the PMU did as far as deer harvested per user group....did each group harvest their fair share on a PMU basis and then include this related to the harvest of deer for the entire state. or at the very least explain how the WDFW uses the numbers. Also explain what the following are. Region, District, PMU, GMU, Deer area	Thank you for your comment.
definitely not	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
Do not agree with increased antlerless hunting in Westside blacktail (hairless).	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
Do NOT increase any hunting	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
great idea, should already be doing this	Thank you for your comment.
Increase antlerless harvest when needed to control populations, not "whenever possible"	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.

increase either sex area in the 200 regions	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
Increase the Rifle hunting opportunities for bulls for permits and draws. It's a bit lopsided with the archers currently getting the biggest advantage.	Comment not related to deer.
Many types of hunting are more inhumane that rifles. Animals are wounded but not killed. Eliminate other kinds of hunting, esp. bow.	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
NO BLACKTAIL OR MULE DEER ANTLERLESS HUNTING. YOU'RE KILLING THE SEED.	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
NO!!!	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
some regions are much more restrictive than others regarding hunting opportunities. one can only assume that it is the region bio who is responsible for this.	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
STRONGLY AGREE !!!	Thank you for your comment.
Unit 124, as a poor buck to doe ratio. Extra tags should be given to reduce the doe population, and the smaller bucks should be allowed to grow with a three-point minimum.	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
Yes, this would be greatly appreciate by hunters.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 39: Determine the relationship between habitat, predation, body condition, and other factors as they relate to Washington mule deer survival and recruitment.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Add disease to factors	Disease is in a different section.
great, very important	Thank you for your comment.
I cannot understand how the cougar problem is not directly addressed when it comes to the decline in mule deer populations. Since the 1996 winter kill it seems as though the east cascade mule deer population has never recovered, despite the fact that we have had 3 point minimum regulations and shorter hunting seasons in place since then. In looking at the report we see that the state's estimate of cougar populations is an educated guess at best. They also mention that cougar harvests have increased since 1996. The question is not whether the cougar harvest has increased, the question is what percentage of the population is harvested each year. If the cougar population has increased significantly, which most outdoorsmen seem to think, then the harvest would go up as well. Having grown up in the foothills of the cascades it was rare when a hunter would report seeing a cougar. Now every season without fail I talk with a hunter who has seen a cougar in the wild. If there is an actual significant increase in cougar numbers this could possibly have a devastating effect on the mule deer population and should at least be considered as a major factor in their population decline. When DFW's own biologists are telling hunters (including myself) that the cougar is a big part of the mule deer population decline in the Cascade Mountains and well as the Blue Mountains, then it seems to me that there is some validity to the theory and it should be explored vigorously	This would come under the other factors portion.
No Dec M-Deer hunts	Thank you for your comment.
stop all shed hunting on public ground during the winter when they can not handle this type of pressure	Thank you for your comment.
Study effects of habitat and forage degradation due to cattle. Relate winter kill to shelter loss. Your hang up with predation blinds you. You don't know if predators scavenged deer already killed from exposure and starvation. Where's the science?	Thank you for your comment.
They need a lot of help.	Thank you for your comment.
What is the ending date of this "long term research project" or does it just go on and on and on?	The field work of the project has been completed. The data analysis and report writing is now being done.
Yes, we need more accurate information on these issues.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 40: Develop a better understanding of population dynamics and mortality rates in black-tailed deer.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
More black-tail research is needed and this is a good start. Strategy B probably will not be accomplished by 2009.	Thank you for your comment.
See the world as the deer see it. What dangers do they really face? be realistic, not prejudicial.	Thank you for your comment.
Specifically look at hair loss	Thank you for your comment.
Strongly agree, it's hard to manage a population you can only guess at numbers.	Thank you for your comment.
too vague, rewrite to be more specific (like mule deer objective)	Thank you for your comment.
what's going on with this wasting disease .in deer .??? what is causing this ..??/ this has been going on for years ....will this get into the elk population .???...it would be nice to get answers	Review the fact sheets on our web site.
Yes, we need this very badly.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 41: Develop research questions to be answered for white-tailed deer.	

Comment Received	Agency Response
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
A + B Please Do	Thank you for your comment.
Certain areas of the state seem to be faced with overpopulation with white tailed deer. Too many deer are being struck by vehicles in Eastern Washington. The quality of the bucks in my area are poor. Seldom do you see a large mature buck of four points or more.	Thank you for your comment.
Check with other states to get the guidelines as their populations and harvests are booming. We could learn a lesson or two in game management from them.	Thank you for your comment.
Don't waste precious time here - or money. They seem ok.	Thank you for your comment.
Include their environment and stresses.	Thank you for your comment.
Is this research truly necessary?	Yes.
too vague	Early stages of development.
Yes, would help out a lot.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 42: Try to maintain or enhance black-tailed deer foraging habitat.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Hunter access to such areas is quite limited.	Hunter access is an issue that we are constantly working.
its common sense	Thank you for your comment.
maybe - but cautiously	Thank you for your comment.
Promote and let the public understand that logging is a huge plus for wildlife and black-tails.	We already do this.
Some work should look at burning as a management tool.	Thank you for your comment.
Strongly agree	Thank you for your comment.
Timber, clear cuts, grasslands, water. It's all there now and being managed quite well by most of the timber companies in Western Washington except for the Rayonier lands I've hunted on. The clear cuts are a mess and almost unnavigatable, even for animals.	Thank you for your comment.
Too vague, change to something like "work with timberland owners and others to cooperatively enhance blacktail forage while addressing tree damage. Study sprayed vs. non-sprayed forest areas for timber damage and wildlife forage.	Good suggestion. Some of this may be part of the research work as it evolves.
very difficult to do with the timber industry utilizing the quantity of herbicides they are today to establish new seedlings that are beening planted, they are primarily responsible for lack of forage.	Thank you for your comment.
Work with timber companies to reduce reliance on site-prep spraying to improve habitat.	Good suggestion. Some of this may be part of the research work as it evolves.
yes, Needed esp. at low elevation	Thank you for your comment.
Yes, we need to both improve our deer's habitat and foraging habitat.	Thank you for your comment.
Yes. Deer die of hypo-thermia in freezing rain as they sleep.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 43: Try to maintain or enhance mule deer habitat including forage and security cover. Direct the Department's focus toward mule deer habitat improvement and protection.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
closing 1 area in the 200 each year at random	No
Deer need places to get out of deep snow, with hanging food of vine maple, moss, bark, lots of big cedars and large downed wood to hide under from storms. Thins don't leave habitat shelter.	Thank you for your comment.
GMU 329 want to help the mule deer habitat get an accurate count of cougar in the area and stop planting problem bears there	Thank you for your comment.
good luck.	Thank you for your comment.
I support this provided it does not exclude public access... i.e., hunting, hiking, camping, etc..	Thank you for your comment.
If the science says yes - then yes.	Thank you for your comment.
its common sense	Thank you for your comment.
Manage (reduction and prevention) of noxious weeds on mule deer winter range where weeds reduce the quality of that winter range.	We continue to do this on an annual basis.
STRONGLY AGREE !!!	Thank you for your comment.
Work with state, federal and private land owners to establish co operative road management and access limitations in wintering habitat for deer. This is especially critical in areas where winter habitat ownership overlaps or transitions. Yearly meeting should occur and a representative of the user groups for that area should be present or have met with the WDFW before hand. The knowledge of the boot hunter who spends many days or weeks in these areas should not be discounted when determining which roads or limitations should be imposed. A proactive effort should be made by the WDFW to contact local land use entities in order to make sure that wildlife friendly policies and wintering habitat areas are included in any land use regulations or requirements that are adopted by these local entities. Critical habitat needs to be identified and inserted into land use regulations. (see my previous comments on the upper Kittitas)	Many of the items you mention are already taking place.
Yes, this is a necessity for the health and population of our deer herds.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 44: Provide more information regarding deer biology and deer issues to the general public.	

Comment Received	Agency Response
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
"Where"?	Web site, publications, handouts.
Could be especially useful for urban hunting situations.	Thank you for your comment.
Education through the internet, media, and newspapers.	Thank you for your comment.
Get rid of all non native deer i.e., Fallow Deer and others in the state make it illegal to sale posses or transport etc. to prevent the spread of lice they carry	Currently, fallow deer are allowed. Would require a rule change to eliminate fallow deer.
its common sense	Thank you for your comment.
Logging is a good thing	Thank you for your comment.
Most public and hunters obtain WDFW info elsewhere, NOT on the Dept's website.	That's what we would try to improve.
send out info. with successful tag draws.	Cost prohibitive.
YES PLEASE !	Thank you for your comment.
Yes, this would give the public a better understanding of hunters and WA Fish and Wildlife are trying to do. Public needs to realize our habitat for our wildlife is disappearing exponentially because of human population and expansion of urban growth.	Thank you for your comment.
You need to make sure that newspaper articles (not news releases) are developed and published in urban and well as rural newspapers. Target your areas and topics of concern and make sure that factual, scientific articles are published for public review.	We try to do this now, but have no control over what newspapers write.
Objective 45: Minimize damage caused by deer.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
"How" ?	Fencing, disturbance, hunting seasons, etc.
Add: "using methods that result in minimal killing of the deer. Develop educational programs for landowners regarding reducing opportunities for damage by deer."	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
Again, concentrate on a cooperative fencing program as a deterrent to damage.	This is already done through cost-share program with Enforcement.
agree Do so with spot hunting of offending deer	Thank you for your comment.
D, please do + E, also-	Thank you for your comment.
Don't bother to even try.	Thank you for your comment.
Focus on the problem - hot spot hunts - not blanket areas.	Thank you for your comment.
Hard to do without a great cost.	Minimizing damage minimizes costs in the end.
How?????	Fencing, disturbance, hunting seasons, etc.
I support this with the caveat that if it is determined that the deer need to be harvested that it be open to ALL hunters and not be allowed to become the MH fiasco that occurred in the Kittitas Region.	Thank you for your comment.
IF POSSIBLE	Thank you for your comment.
It is completely impossible to grow and maintain a beautiful lawn and garden. The deer eat everything from shrubs and flowers to garden vegetables. Issuing more doe tags would minimize yard damage, and also increase the quality of the deer in our area.	Thank you for your comment.
leave the deer alone	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
More either sex hunting opportunities.	Thank you for your comment.
No. They were here first.	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
not interested	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
Over time, hunting has proven to be the only truly effective means to control deer damage, and I believe that this fact should be explained to land owners.	Thank you for your comment.
Provide ways for hunters to access problem areas to take these deer.	We continue to do this on a constant basis.
require orchard grower to maintain fences once they have been erected otherwise live with the damage	We continue to do this on a constant basis.
Strategy #e should only be used when all else fails	WDFW will continue to have an active management program that will include hunting.
vague	Very helpful, thank you.
with a drawing to the general hunting public	Thank you for your comment.
Yes, this would give the public a better understanding of hunters and WA Fish and Wildlife are trying to do. Public needs to realize our habitat for our wildlife is disappearing exponentially because of human population and expansion of urban growth.	Thank you for your comment. This comment may have been intended for the previous objective.
Through hunting, not kill permits or landowner tags.	We use all methods of hunting to address these issues depending on the circumstances. Each case is unique.
Strategy e: If the deer herds are increasing or even stable I don't think we should have to "try and exhaust all other mitigation measures" first. Should be able to employ these lethal methods immediately if so desired.	The public expects the Department to attempt non-lethal techniques, however in some cases that may not be practical. We will re-word strategy e.
Objective 46: Monitor deer for disease and reduce the risk of disease when possible.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Absolutely.	Thank you for your comment.

add specific diseases (hair loss, chronic wasting) etc.	We already monitor for these. New and unplanned pathogens may arise that the Agency has to deal with. Difficult to spell out or predict.
Certainly - do the necropsies "For all species when initial"	Thank you for your comment.
common sense says yes	Thank you for your comment.
depends on how you plan to reduce it, but interesting	Thank you for your comment.
good idea	Thank you for your comment.
How are you going to do that? White Tails should be tested for Mad Cow.	We already do this.
That's a given.	Thank you for your comment.
We need this very badly.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 47: Conduct habitat improvement projects on >10% of the habitat in bighorn ranges in Vulcan Mountain, Swakane, Sinlahekin, and the Blue Mountains.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Build the fence as soon as possible to protect the Swakane herd...Improve all habitat as needed	We are working on a resolution with the US Forest Service to manage bighorn/domestic sheep interactions.
common sense	Thank you for your comment.
Don't know enough about them but I keep trying to get a tag. I've seen them often and they are neat to watch.	Thank you for your comment.
good idea	Thank you for your comment.
Good. Only use native vegetation, no invasives.	Thank you for your comment.
I support this.	Thank you for your comment.
Include Chelan Butte and Manson.	At this point, the areas named in the objective are the highest priority for habitat improvement work.
Increase habitat improvement to at least 20% and include Chelan Butte.	At this point, the areas named in the objective are the highest priority for habitat improvement work.
please do.	Thank you for your comment.
well written objective: specific and measurable	Thank you for your comment.
Yes, it's all about the habitat to increase our Bighorn ranges.	Thank you for your comment.
Good. Only use native vegetation, no invasives.	Thank you for your comment.
Yes! Habitat improvement should be a higher priority.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 48: Establish two new bighorn sheep herds by 2012.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
agree as long as they areas are compatible with existing agriculture	Thank you for your comment.
Bring existing herds up to desired level before you establish more herds. More bang for the buck.	Thank you for your comment. We intend to do both within the life of this plan.
Glennwood would be a great place to start a herd or try again	We've completed a statewide assessment of potential bighorn sheep restoration sites, and Moses Coulee is the last area that contains suitable bighorn habitat that doesn't have other factors that reduce the desire as a candidate site (e.g., mostly private land, domestic sheep).
If you have the ground. This is a good step.	Thank you for your comment.
NO! They belong in California, only cause trouble here.	Bighorn sheep are native to Washington.
perfect	Thank you for your comment.
this would be great there can not be to many bighorn sheep in this state..	Thank you for your comment.
Where?	We've completed a statewide assessment of potential bighorn sheep restoration sites, and Moses Coulee is the last area that contains suitable bighorn habitat that doesn't have other factors that reduce the desire as a candidate site (e.g., mostly private land, domestic sheep).
Yes, hunters will greatly appreciate this and so will all outdoor enthusiast.	Thank you for your comment.
YES, please do!	Thank you for your comment.
Yes, UPPER Moses Coulee	Thank you for your comment.
NO! They belong in California, only cause trouble here.	Bighorn sheep are native to Washington.
Away from private property.	We've completed a statewide assessment of potential bighorn sheep restoration sites, and Moses Coulee is the last area that contains suitable bighorn habitat that doesn't have other factors that reduce the desire as a candidate site (e.g., mostly private land, domestic sheep).
Must not be established where access is limited or where a potential for contact with domestic sheep and goats is very, very low.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 49: Maintain bighorn sheep population size as indicated in Table 1.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Again, as in the elk, the WDFW's estimated population comes nowhere close to their "Population Objectives" in any of the areas except Clemen, Mt Hull and Lincoln Cliffs... why then does the WDFW continue to allow hunting in other areas, even on a permit basis... until either the population objectives are met or determined to be unrealistic. This would apply for elk as well...	In many cases limited hunting of mature rams does not impact population growth. From a demographic stand point, much of population growth is depended on ewe survival and success reproduction.
Higher population is some units	Thank you for your comment.
Those stats look good.	Thank you for your comment.
We need more habitat to increase our populations.	Thank you for your comment, we also have objectives and strategies to improve habitat conditions.

would agree unless we decide the range is capable of handling more.. relocate ewes as needed and not be allowed to hunt them.	Thank you for your comment.
In the bighorn sheep table I would propose that we increase the desire population size to 90-100. I think this is reasonable since the herds extend now goes all the way from the original Lincoln cliffs west, almost to Keller's Ferry.	Thank you for your comment, we've made the edit.
Objective 50: Monitor bighorn sheep herds at a level where a 20% change in population size can be detected within 3-years or less.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
I support this and am concerned about the method of estimating population if this cannot all ready be performed.	Thank you for your comment.
NO!	
ok	Thank you for your comment.
Yes this will help greatly.	Thank you for your comment.
For the objective I think it should start out "Develop a survey method to…monitor bighorn sheep herds at…	We currently have a survey method and are in the process of implementing a sightability model developed in Hells Canyon. The purpose of this objective is to actually conducted the population assessments annually.
Objective 51: Eliminate interactions between domestic sheep and bighorn sheep in the Swakane herd, Hells Canyon herds, Cleman Mountain, Tieton, and areas identified for repatriation of bighorn sheep.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
eliminate in all units and fine the people that domestic sheep cause the die off.	The Department is currently working with US Forest Service to address overlap of domestic sheep grazing and bighorn sheep.
Yes this would help out a lot.	Thank you for your comment.
YES YES YES....get rid of all domestics within 60 miles of any herd	Thank you for your comment.
Yes, limit domestic sheep.	Thank you for your comment.
We need to change domestic grazing policy. Not allow domestic sheep or goat grazing permits on public land.	Thank you for your comment.
Absolutely. The department should join the battle for protecting public lands grazing of domestic sheep and goats. Do not sit on the sidelines and let others fight the battles. WDFW should be protecting our wildlife, not bowing to politics.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 52: Provide recreational hunting season opportunities for individual bighorn sheep herds where harvest success averages >85% over a 3-year period, while at the same time bighorn population size remains stable or increasing.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
?????ADD PERMITS	The number of permits is based on the stability/growth of the population per the thresholds outlined in the plan.
agree and believe there is an opportunity to increase tags in some areas...No ewe tags should be issued move as needed	The number of permits is based on the stability/growth of the population per the thresholds outlined in the plan. Ewe hunts are only considered when there is not immediate need to relocate sheep to a new site.
agree, but set a minimum curl size for hunted sheep	Thank you for your comment. The Department use to have a minimum curl size restriction but found the ages of sheep harvested with a restructure resulted in a better living age distribution for a stable, healthy population.
It will build support. Sure	Thank you for your Comment.
no	Thank you for your Comment.
No, allow natural predation by wildlife predators.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, including hunting at levels that is consistent with long-term sustainable populations.
No. Pumping up Big Horn Populations is a bad mistake for the rest of Washington wildlife and habitat. Greed leads to disaster.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, including hunting at levels that is consistent with long-term sustainable populations.
Yes, this would be greatly appreciated.	Thank you for your Comment.
No. Pumping up Big Horn Populations is a bad mistake for the rest of Washington wildlife and habitat. Greed leads to disaster.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, including hunting at levels that is consistent with long-term sustainable populations.
Objective 53: Distribute recreational opportunity to as many individuals as possible, compatible with high quality sheep hunting experiences and the biological status of bighorn populations.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
50% of tags should go to highest bonus point holders, no ewe hunting should be allowed move sheep to new areas as needed	Thank you for your comment. The Department is currently considering ways to address the drawing odds associated with bighorn sheep hunting. Ewe hunts are only considered when there is not immediate need to relocate sheep to a new site.
Again - yes - where you can.	Thank you for your comment.
consider having these hunts be more of a "quality" hunt than the run of the mill general season hunts.	Thank you for your comment.
Great idea! I agree 100%.	Thank you for your comment.
Keep it moderate. Don't encourage new hunters. Big Horns don't belong in Washington. Our state is not a game ranch.	Thank you for your comment.

No.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, including hunting at levels that is consistent with long-term sustainable populations.
Objective should be building and sustaining healthy herds, not "recreational opportunities."	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, including hunting at levels that is consistent with long-term sustainable populations.
once again this is common sense	Thank you for your comment.
Keep it moderate. Don't encourage new hunters. Big Horns don't belong in Washington. Our state is not a game ranch.	Bighorn sheep are native to Washington.
Keep the opportunity fair for everyone. No customized opportunity for any special interest groups or individuals. Eliminate ewe hunting and transplant surplus animals to bolster existing herds or create new herds.	Thank you for your comment. The Department is currently considering ways to address the drawing odds associated with bighorn sheep hunting. Ewe hunts are only considered when there is not immediate need to relocate sheep to a new site.
Quality experience is important with once-in-a-lifetime hunts. Do not allow such high permits that it ruins the experience and decreases trophy quality.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 54: Provide educational information on bighorn sheep and emphasize the contribution of hunters to bighorn sheep recovery.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
All essential	Thank you for your comment.
Do so on the web site, spend funds on habitat enhancement	Thank you for your comment.
education--yes hunting--no	Thank you for your comment.
I support this.	Thank you for your comment.
No. Emphasize role of natural non-humane predators.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, including hunting at levels that is consistent with long-term sustainable populations.
not interested	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, including hunting at levels that is consistent with long-term sustainable populations.
OK.	Thank you for your comment.
questionable idea	Thank you for your comment.
Replace "emphasize" with "include information on."	Thank you for your comment.
This would be a very valuable asset.	Thank you for your comment.
use the money for land acquisition and enforcement not useless pamphlets!	Thank you for your comment.
Yes	Thank you for your comment.
YES...the 4h public needs to know how they could impact sheep in a negative way.	Thank you for your comment.
Work more closely with WAFNAWS.	Thank you for your comment.
WDFW should work more closely with conservation groups such as Washington FNAWS.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 55: Account for all known bighorn sheep mortalities.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
definitely	Thank you for your comment.
Hard to do but it's worth trying.	Thank you for your comment.
If possible - critical here	Thank you for your comment.
Is it even possible to account for ALL mortalities?	Thank you for your comment.
Is there poaching or not? If there is, state it in numbers killed and which herds.	There is some poaching from time to time, but this objective is designed to reduce the temptation to poach due to the value of the horns. Horns would be more difficult to sell without the agency pin in them.
Not important. This is only an excuse to criminalize scavengers and a waste of money and time.	This objective is designed to reduce the temptation to poach due to the value of the horns. Horns would be more difficult to sell without the agency pin in them.
WAFNAWS	Thank you for your comment.
Yes, this would help determine our regulations.	Thank you for your comment.
Not important. This is only an excuse to criminalize scavengers and a waste of money and time.	This objective is designed to reduce the temptation to poach due to the value of the horns. Horns would be more difficult to sell without the agency pin in them.
Objective 56: Acquire biological information that aids in bighorn management.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
If you can afford "acquiring" it.	Thank you for your comment.
Improve habitat of native wildlife. Big Horns are not important.	Bighorn sheep are native to Washington. Thank you for your comment.
It's possible as they are usually in accessible (open) terrain. Volunteers?	Thank you for your comment.
ok	Thank you for your comment.
Questionable idea, much this info already exists?	Thank you for your comment.
WAFNAWS	Thank you for your comment.
Yes, need more to detailed and accurate data.	Thank you for your comment.
Improve habitat of native wildlife. Big Horns are not important.	Bighorn sheep are native to Washington.
A full time bighorn sheep and goat biologist is necessary to maximize this resource.	At this point, other actions and strategies have been considered a higher priority. Thank you for your comment.

Perhaps add a new strategy like "Avoid any lethal removals of bighorn sheep for any nuisance problems" - use all other control methods.	Avoiding lethal removal is the working policy of Department staff. However, at times, lethal removal is the most effective tool.
Objective 57: Develop a map identifying the locations and quality of suitable mountain goat habitat in Washington.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Essential - especially now.	Thank you for your comment.
goat hunts should also be classified as "high quality" hunts, and be treated as such....with a corresponding increase in tag fees as an example.	Goat huntings are managed as rare, high quality opportunities consistent with public opinion information collected during the past plan, this SEIS, and comments for 3-year hunting season packages.
I have had the good fortune to participate with the WDFW mountain goat research project since 2004. In conjunction with WDFW, Western Washington University, the Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe and the US Forest Service, I completed my Master Thesis in 2006 mapping mountain goat habitat in the Western Cascades. I had the opportunity to work closely with several WDFW employees in the course of this research including Dr. Clifford G. Rice and Dr. Wan-Ying Chang. Here is a link to the .pdf version of my the thesis discussing the mountain goat habitat modeling I did posted on my former major advisor's (Dr. David O. Wallin) webpage at Western Washington University: http://myweb.facstaff.wwu.edu/wallin/gradstudents/wells_a/thesis_pdf/wells_thesis.pdf This habitat modeling work is GIS intensive and has been an ongoing part of WDFW's mountain goat research project since 2004. Another graduate student at Western Washington University, Tana Bues, is currently working on mapping mountain goat habitat on in the Eastern Cascades. I am continuing to work on mountain goat habitat modeling in the Cascades as part of my phD Dissertation at the University of Idaho where I am working with Dr. Janet Rachlow and Dr. E.O. "Oz" Garton on fine scale habitat selection and Brownian Bridge Movement Modeling. Specifically, we are addressing the habitat available to mountain goats in the North Cascades at the moment. I believe that the products produced thus far offer better insight to the status of mountain goat habitat than those depicted in the draft 2009-2015 Game Management Plan which is based on the GAP analysis. The GAP data offers the advantage of a state-wide map, although I do not think the accuracy or the resolution of the GAP map is better than the GIS maps we have developed since the inception of the mountain goat research project. The extent of the newer maps however, does not match the GAP analysis. Our newer GIS maps depict more of the complexity and the varied spatial distribution inherent in mountain goat habitat. With these maps, the "islands" of habitat referred to in the Game Management Plan can be identified. My main comment with regards to Objective 57 is that the objective and the strategies to meet the objective are already in place. I would be happy to comment further on this matter and volunteer my time in the development of this section of the 2009-2015 Game Management Plan. Please contact me if you have any question or would like more information or data regarding this comment. Sincerely, Adam G. Wells (360) 927-2175 well0358@vandals.uidaho.edu	Thank you for your comment. We have revised the objective to reflect the habitat mapping elements that are completed.
I support this but am concerned that we will repeat what occurred in the 90's when goats in the Olympics were found to not be "indigenous" and were destroying local fauna and had to be removed. I am worried that if we don't address the previous issues we are doomed to repeat the performance at an unacceptable expenditure in funds.	We are not recommended removal of goats from any areas of Washington.
Isn't this info already available? If not, why not? WDFW and goats have been in WA for years.	Thank you for your comment. We have revised the objective to reflect the habitat mapping elements that are completed.
Mountain Goat surveys that we paid for over the past 3 years & those aerial surveys revealed a very healthy and increasing herd of goats in our state, yet very few increases have occurred for Mt. Goat hunting permits available to us? Why survey if you are not going to manage the goats accordingly?	The permit levels reflect the status of goat herds. The only increasing goat herd is Mt. Baker, where we have re-established limited hunting opportunity.
Mountains!	Thank you for your comment.
Not important.	Thank you for your comment.
Page 68 Issue Statement. Suitable habitat for mountain goat is actually quite well known in most areas. There has also been a model developed for western Washington and one is nearing completion in eastern Washington. There is considerable science (information), but what is lacking is a coordinated, collaborative effort to use the best available science to define this habitat for the state using a common system of identification and review. Page 69 Strategy a. for Objective 57. A GIS model predicting habitat quality has been identified for western Washington and is nearing completion for the eastern Cascades. Strategy a. for Objective 57. These partnerships are in place. Population Management Issue Statement. This is a very good issue statement that emphasizes the need to assess each mountain goat population separately. The wording should be clearer to reflect the best available science on the difference in responsiveness of separate mountain goat populations/herds and cite the more recent published information on the topic (see page 212 in Festa-Bianchet and Cote 2008), in addition to the need for annual monitoring.	Thank you for your comment. We have revised the objective to reflect the habitat mapping elements that are completed.
There is an existing population of Goats at Mount St. Helens that is not on any map.	Thank you for your comment, we are revising the map to reflect more current data.

this needs to be done...there are a lot of areas that have mountain goats that are not hunted....what defines an area maybe for goats it should encompass several GMU not one specific mountain or drainage.	Thank you for your comment.
We know this already	Thank you for your comment. We have revised the objective to reflect the habitat mapping elements that are completed.
We support this and think it requisite to public lands management and to maintaining the meta-population. Identification of suitable habitat (and maybe capable habitat) would help inform other uses and could be a potential hedge against listing under the ESA should populations continue to decline in some areas. Mapping would of course inform and help prioritize augmentation and other management actions and preclude development harmful to goats and other species particularly with burgeoning motorized recreation.	Thank you for your comment, the objective is being revised to include meta-population information needs.
work with the public to document goat presence in marginal or forgotten habitats.	Thank you for your comment.
Not important.	The Department believes understand goat habitat is important for managing healthy herds.
Yes, and aggressively pursue transplanting mtn goats into the Blue Mtns.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 58: Monitor population demographics of mountain goats at a level where a 20% decline in population size can be detected within 3-years or less.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Include Mountain goat sightings on elk and deer questionnaires. Include GMU and other local landmarks. Include adult and Kid sightings.	The Departments survey protocols have been refined to be more effective and are much better than sighting data for documenting goats.
Objective 58. The best available science using local research indicates that it is not possible to detect this threshold (Rice in press). Even if it were possible, a decline of 20% is not desirable and is not consistent with not having significant negative impacts on the sustainability of wildlife, Objective 60, strategy b (no more than 4% removal per year), or the primary objective 60 to have the goat population size remain stable or increase. Strategy a. The best available science indicates that age ratios appear to be of little utility for predicting population changes over the short term (see page 205 in Festa-Bianchet and Cote 2008) due to small yearlings being frequently misclassified as kids. Collecting this data would be of limited use in meeting the objective. Strategy b. Spatial use patters do reflect distinct populations of females in a single hunt unit at Mount Baker. As long as either sex hunting is permitted this unit boundary is currently inconsistent with the best available scientific information. Although the boundary was temporarily changed for the 2008 season, it should be changed permanently. Strategy c. Population viability modeling has already been completed by WDFW and others and is the basis for strategies in Objective 60 of this plan. Viability modeling could be improved by the incorporation of local birth and survival rates, but these are not available. Even if the were, they change through time. There appears to be little value to this strategy in managing mountain goat populations, unless demographic data is collected from many herds. The best available science indicates that objective 58 is unattainable and the threshold for change unacceptable for a Management Indicator Species on the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. What may be a more effective strategy would be annual monitoring with a lower trigger point based for adapting harvest levels. In order to monitor the effects of sport harvest, the level of tribal harvest must be known. If not, it will be impossible to separate the influence of these two types of harvest. There should be a strategy to work cooperatively with tribes and allocate all harvest so that populations remain stable or increase.	Thank you for your comments. The objectives and strategies have been revised based on your comments.
This objective and #59 should be integral to goat management planning as the key to goat conservation and recovery is understanding and monitoring individual population and metapopulation trends, particularly with regard to any habitat changes due to climate changes.	Thanks you for your comment.
We are still building up herds from 20 years of mismanagement	Thanks you for your comment.
We need something.	Thanks you for your comment.
With regards to objective 58, I would like to offer the following comments. For a variety of reasons, I feel that an annual assessment of the size and recruitment of each mountain goat population will not adequately ensure that sustainable harvest strategies are in place. For one, addressing recruitment is not possible without the use of long term intensive monitoring of marked individuals as was done by Festa-Bianchet & CÃ´tÃ© (2008). Secondly, without an extremely adaptive process involved to allow emergency closure of a hunted unit, observation of a remarked decline (>20% in one year) will not be in time to prevent additional compounding mortality due to legal hunting. Thirdly, I am of the opinion that mountain goat population ecology does not remain static spatially. There is some evidence to suggest that mountain goat biology is prone to successful, rapid colonization of new, or recently un-occupied habitats and the abandonment of more recently heavily used and consequently more degraded habitats. The boundary of a mountain goat population will not remain the same over time from an ecological perspective, nor could anyone observe this phenomenon without intensively tracking marked individuals. M. Festa-Bianchet, and CÃ´tÃ© S.D. 2008. Mountain goats: ecology, behavior, and conservation of an alpine ungulate. Island Press. Washington DC.	Thank you for your comments. The objectives and strategies have been revised based on your comments.

Objective 59: Implement management strategies that result in a detectable increase trend in mountain goat abundance in the North Cascades by 2015.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Agree, sooner if possible.	Thank you for your comment.
Conservation strategies must consider and be informed by the long term. Growing and strengthening populations to more closely resemble historic numbers and distribution of goats is critical and should be the overarching goal. Management strategies must include a reexamination of fire suppression policies and the extent to which they may preclude goat conservation particularly in areas like Chopaka Mtn for example. We must find ways to return fire to the landscape where feasible and monitor its effects on goats and other wildlife species. Otherwise it seems inevitable that areas will burn anyway but much more catastrophically. Fire, habitat and ecosystem specialists and biologists within and outside the Department should be consulted with regard to the most efficient and optimal strategies.	This is a good comments, however at this point, fire ecology doesn't appear to be the limiting factor for goats. We agree that understanding the benefits of fire for goats is important, but at this time we believe there may be higher priorities.
It is already happened and many more goats are present from flight surveys over the past 3 years....	We detected goat increases on Mt Baker, but many areas of the North Cascades are still suppressed.
Make tribes report every goat harvested.	Thank you for your comment. We've added some strategies to promote complete counts of harvest goats.
No.	Thank you for your comment.
not interested	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 59. The best available science indicates that this objective has already been met. The mountain goat population at Mount Baker has increased 6 fold in the 10 years following the cessation of sport harvest. The Goat Mountain population also appears to have recently begun a period of substantial growth. Strategy a. This strategy will contribute to meeting the objective. However, it is not currently being implemented and will require unit boundary changes. An animal was removed from the Lake Ann population, which the best available science indicates is a distinct population from animals on Mount Baker (west of Swift Creek). Harvest of females in the Lake Ann population will not contribute to meeting the objective and is not consistent with this strategy. Strategy b. The best available science indicates that past harvest was the primary cause of population declines. There is no evidence to the contrary that suggests that any other factor has contributed to the observed declines. Strategy a is in response to the known factor for the decline. There does not appear to be any purpose to this strategy. Strategy c. WDFW should do more than consider this option. It should fully explore this option because it is very likely the most important strategy to meet the objective after strategy a. The MBS believes that a program of reintroduction/augmentation is critical to additional significant increases in mountain goat populations. This strategy will be necessary to provide for greater levels of consumptive and non-consumptive use by increasing the total number of animals and the distribution of populations. This strategy should involve population modeling of available harvestable surplus on the MBS completed for a period of 20 years under varying harvest scenarios, some of which use all, or a portion of, the available surplus for reintroduction. This strategy would be best if it was cooperatively developed by the WDFW, local Indian Tribes, MBS, and other interested stakeholders, that considers the short- and long-term trade-offs of harvest levels and reintroduction/augmentation and how these strategies would meet the interests of the entire community of stakeholders.	Thank you for your comments. The objectives and strategies have been revised based on your comments.
Require tribes to include their harvest.	Thank you for your comment. We've added some strategies to promote complete counts of harvest goats.
Strategy A does not qualify the spatial scale for 100 goats. Tribes may not agree to close areas. Strategy B - the role of cougar in goat declines is overlooked and downplayed. Goats inhabit low elevation forested areas in winter and are highly vulnerable to predation.	Our recent goat research project suggests historical high harvest may be a larger contributing factor to the decline of goats. From our collar data, we have not detected usually high mortality due to predation by cougar.
Sure - We should sustain more - but??	Thank you for your comment.
surveys indicated that there should be more tags in these areas why isn't there	Permits are allocated at 4% of the known population size for all huntable populations, with the exception of Mt Baker. We have purposely been more conservative on Mt Baker due to the relatively recent findings of a growing population and because our research findings on appropriate harvest levels suggest more conservative harvest.

With regards to strategy b, I believe that the current and recent ski area expansions are detrimental to mountain goat habitat and have a negative impact of mountain goat populations. In particular, the new chairlift installed during the summer of 2007 at Crystal Mountain Ski Area, encroaches on mountain goat habitat and should be treated as such. The new chair lift and ski runs offer easy, mechanized access to back country mountain goat habitat during the winter. What was once a local only tour into an area known as Goat chutes where mountain goats have been reportedly observed in the winter by backcountry skiers, is now a lift supported easily accessible backcountry ski-run. Ski area expansions, backcountry cat supported skiing and heli-skiing operations should be thoroughly investigated to determine the effects on mountain goats in the Cascades. I applaud the strategy c and fully support the idea to translocate mountain goats from the Olympic National Park to the Cascade Mountains of Washington. I am not sure what type of habitat enhancement projects, aside from road closures and land acquisition, could be done to improve habitat.	Thank you for your comment.
yes	Thank you for your comment.
No.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 60: Provide recreational hunting opportunities in individual mountain goat herds where harvest success averages >50% over a 3-year period, while at the same time goat population size remains stable or increasing.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
ADD PERMITS	The number of permits is based on the population size of the goat herd. So permit opportunity increases as goat population size increases.
agree, open up new areas	Thank you for your comment.
I believe the 4% harvest limit is too aggressive and should be 1%.	The Department is recommending a more conservative harvest threshold by requiring a minimum population size of 100 goats and harvest proportion for 4% or LESS.
No. I believe most of the residents of our state do not want these animals hunted. This should presented to the public at large and not just hunters.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and hunting goats is one form of that opportunity as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable populations.
No. Would do more harm than good. Predators must be allowed to play their role in the health of herds. Hunters kill the healthiest, not the sick.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and hunting goats is one form of that opportunity as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable populations.
Not in favor of. Ban goat hunting entirely until herds reestablish viability.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and hunting goats is one form of that opportunity as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable populations.
Not yet. Eventually - but higher for here.	Thank you for your comment.
Page 70. Issue Statement. Most people would not consider the recovery of the Mount Baker population as slow. The best available scientific information supports most of the issue statement, but also indicates that there is considerable variation (see page 212 in Festa-Bianchet and Cote 2008). Because of this variation and the typical lack of herd-specific demographic data, conservative management strategies are suggested. If harvest levels approximate recruitment, then restoration of goat populations in other areas will be precluded due to a lack of animals for transplant. Objective 60. If monitoring, under a very optimistic scenario, is set up to detect a 20% decrease in the population as described in strategy 58a, how can the objective of keeping populations stable or increasing be attained? Strategy a(ii). The best available science indicates that age ratios appear to be of little utility for predicting population changes over the short term (see page 205 in Festa-Bianchet and Cote 2008) due to small yearlings being frequently misclassified as kids. Collecting this data would be of limited use in meeting the objective and is prone to support decisions contrary to the objective since it would bias the data towards higher recruitment. Strategy b. The strategy is sound, but unattainable with the current absence of knowledge of the amounts of tribal harvest. As a result this strategy will be ineffective and can not be implemented. A strategy should be developed to incorporate all harvest in the management of mountain goat populations. Strategy c. Because tribal harvest is not known, and there are no strategies identified to obtain this information, this strategy can not be successful in meeting the objective. A strategy to work cooperatively with tribes on total population management is essential to meeting WDFW goals for sport harvest and should be high priority. Strategy d. There doesn't appear to be any available science to indicate that any goat herd in the state is declining due to disease or parasite despite considerable recent sampling of these factors. This strategy seems unrelated to the objective. A strategy is needed to base population management of an animal that is sensitive to over harvest on all harvest (tribal and sport). Such a strategy should be incorporated into Objective 58 or 60.	Thank you for your comment, the objective has been revised based on your comment.
Population size of 100 at what scale? Production ratio of 25:100 measured at what time of year? Strategy d – populations may be declining due to other factors too, such as poaching and predation.	A population size of 100 for a population management unit, which the Department is currently developing.

There are several herds not available for harvest that should be part of new GMU/Herd Goat management. Many flight studies have been completed over the past 3 years with amazing results on the increased number of goats in new herds yet very few have had additional hunting opportunities made available by WDFW. This needs to be addressed in the next package and a significant number of new/additional tags needs to be made available for the hunters of Washington State!	The Department is currently in the process of evaluating all of the goat status information from our recent study and will be incorporating this information into our 3-year hunting season package. However, the thresholds for harvest and population objectives are outlined in this plan.
We oppose hunting goats while some populations are depressed and not recovering. We would prefer to see a moratorium on hunting until the objectives identified herein are achieved, particularly Obj. 57-59 and 62 and 64 and there is a plan in place to augment at-risk populations. Initial efforts could be focused on areas where fairly minimal efforts could pay significant dividends, are adjacent or close to robust goat populations and where healthy herds have recently been documented. Excellent habitat still exists in Glacier Peak Wilderness, Cascade Pass and Johannesburg Mountain and would be good starting points for augmentation efforts and to monitor progress in this regard. The Chelan/Sawtooth and Paseyton Wilderness and Chopaka Mtn. could be viable areas for augmentation as well. If those efforts are successful augmentation could be extended progressively southward where there are big holes in current goat occupied habitat relative to their range and historic population centers. Hunter success rates and population trends for one or two herds should not be the primary determinants of hunting. Rather the status and trend of the overall population should underpin hunting. Also, we believe the current quotas are too high and if hunting is allowed to continue should be closer to 1% - 2% of the individual herd populations. The Department could consider tieing hunting to augmentation with the reduction in animals taken via hunting going toward bolstering struggling populations or reestablishing herds as per above. The price of a tag could be raised significantly commensurate with rarity and value of taking such an animal.	The Department revised the threshold in this plan from a minimum of 50 goats for a huntable population to a minimum of a 100 goats.
Yes, hunters would appreciate this very much.	Thank you for your comment.
No. Would do more harm than good. Predators must be allowed to play their role in the health of herds. Hunters kill the healthiest, not the sick.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and hunting goats is one form of that opportunity as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable populations.
Objective 61: Distribute recreational opportunity to as many individuals as possible, compatible with high quality goat hunting experiences and the biological status of goat populations.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Go slow - eventually - but now??	Thank you for your comment.
I have applied for a special hunt permit since 2005 for mountain goats. I feel the current system is valid and the best that can be hoped for given the difficulties of understandings and managing mountain goat populations. The only way improve the odds of drawing a permit would be to allow compound odds rather than additive odds for hunters who have applied for multiple years. That is to say the 2nd year a hunter applies for a permit his/her will count for 2, the 3rd year for 4, the 4th year for 8, the 5th year for 16, etc. This will give a greater preferential advantage to hunters who have been applying the longest. The current system gives a hunter on the 2nd year a chance of 2, the 3rd year of 3, the 4th year of 4, etc. This will improve greatly the odds for hunters who have applied the longest, but reduce substantially the odds for 1st time applicants.	The Department is currently asking hunters (as part of our 3-year season hunting package) if they would like an alternative to increase the odds of drawing a permit for moose, goat, or sheep.
No.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 61. The most effective strategy to obtain this objective in northwest Washington would be to recover mountain goat populations that have not recovered in the absence of hunting through a program of augmentation/reintroduction. A strategy that models populations and the available harvestable surplus for a period of 20 years under varying harvest scenarios, reintroduction scenarios, and a mix of harvest/reintroduction would allow for the attainment of this objective and provide the basis for sound management decisions based on science. This strategy should be added to Objective 59 or 61. The best available science indicates that hunting opportunities would be maximized, while having the least impact to the population, when harvest is restricted to kids and yearlings (Festa-Bianchet and Cote 2008, page 210). The objective may need to be more clearly stated with respect to what quality hunting experiences or a strategy developed to use the best science.	Thank you for your comment.
provide more opportunity to hunt goats in this state there are many herds that are not being hunting or included in surveys..	The Department is currently in the process of evaluating all of the goat status information from our recent study and will be incorporating this information into our 3-year hunting season package. However, the thresholds for harvest and population objectives are outlined in this plan.
Recreational opportunities should include viewing activities as well, since spending on non-consumptive wildlife related activities is rapidly overcomining that of hunting and is the future of wildlife management. We understand that hunting tags generate revenue for the agency but are willing to work with the DFW, the legislature and governor's office to develop broader options for department funding. People equate abundant wildlife with quality of life and this must be taken into account in any management plans. In the bigger picture the biological status and overall health of the populations must form the foundation of recreational activities.	There are many viewing opportunities for goats in Washington and we recognize that is an equally important form of recreational wildlife opportunity. From a game animal management perspective, its is beyond the scope of this plan because of other priority objectives.

The odds are so great m any hunters don't even bother to apply	The Department is currently asking hunters (as part of our 3-year season hunting package) if they would like an alternative to increase the odds of drawing a permit for moose, goat, or sheep.
Tribal harvest needs to be considered.	Thank you for your comment. We have include a strategy to promote incorporating all harvests.
Where is wildlife viewing objective for goats, sheep?	There are many viewing opportunities for goats in Washington and we recognize that is an equally important form of recreational wildlife opportunity. From a game animal management perspective, its is beyond the scope of this plan because of other priority objectives.
Yes, this would be nice.	Thank you for your comment.
No.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 62: Provide educational information on mountain goats.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Absolutely. As with other	Thank you for your comment.
And viewing opportunities for goats, sheep elk.	There are many viewing opportunities for goats in Washington and we recognize that is an equally important form of recreational wildlife opportunity. From a game animal management perspective, its is beyond the scope of this plan because of other priority objectives.
Development of brochures are duplicating materials already available. Monies could be better utilized on habitat and wildlife.	With the completion of our goat research project, there is a need to distribute that information to the public and updating our brochure is a cost effective alternative.
Do so on the web. Use funds to enhance habitat and expand the herds	All brochures will also be available online, but we also feel printed materials are important.
Information always helps the issues.	Thank you for your comment.
no	Thank you for your comment.
questionable idea	Thank you for your comment.
Regarding Objective 62 strategy d, I would be happy to participate in developing a Wild about Washington video segment on mountain goats. My phD project is expected to continue through the summer of 2010 and I spend an inordinate amount of time studying and working on mountain goat habitat modeling. I would recommend the recruitment of a TV program about hunting and volunteers who have successfully drawn permits to produce and document a program for cable television about hunting mountain goats in the Washington Cascades.	Thank you for your comment. We will give your idea further consideration.
Yes, and let the public know that hunting is allowed.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 63: Develop a procedure to account for all mountain goat harvest mortalities.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Again, should be prerequisite to hunting.	Thank you for your comment.
doubt this is possible	Thank you for your comment.
Even harder to do considering their range.	Thank you for your comment.
NOT POSSIBLE	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 63, strategy a. In order to meet this objective, there must be a strategy to determine the level of tribal harvest. If this is not the intent of the objective, it should be edited to indicate the meaning is only for sport hunting.	We have incorporated a strategy to document tribal harvest.
Probably impossible to accomplish. Legal harvest is reported, illegal harvest will be difficult to document, and you will not know if fewer goats is related to illegal harvest or other mortality causes. Strategy A has been accomplished with mandatory reporting.	Thank you for your comment.
Reporting of all harvested mountain goats is already required and insufficient to gauge the true harvest. The WDFW needs to develop cooperative strategies and methods to obtain tribal harvest records that will depend upon mutual understanding and cooperation. Increased enforcement to catch poachers and increased penalties for poaching of mountain goats should be enacted.	We think current harvest reporting requirements capture the vast majority of legal harvest. Chapter 2 of the plan describes strategies that deal with collection and sharing of tribal harvest.
Specifically require tribes to report goat harvest.	We have incorporated an strategy to document tribal harvest.
This objective needs to specifically address tribal harvest in the wording, change to account for all mt goat harvest mortalities, including tribal harvest.	We have incorporated an strategy to document tribal harvest.
yes	Thank you for your comment.
Yes, would help out with our regulations.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 64: Develop peer-reviewed publications that describe why mountain goat populations have declined, how to monitor goat populations and makes recommendations on how to expand populations.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
As far as research is concerned, the continuation of long-term intensive monitoring of marked individuals is absolutely critical to gain an understanding of the fundamental population dynamics that influence mountain goat populations. I would also like to see greater cooperation efforts with Canadian authorities to understand the border issues, if any, that are influencing mountain goat ecology in the North Cascades. The influence of backcountry winter recreation on mountain goats is another largely unaddressed and growing issue in the Washington Cascades	We agree that more research is needed. However, we are currently limited in funding given the other high priority needs and do not expect to continue population monitoring with additional capture and collaring work. That being said, we have developed a more robust sightability model and plan to implement that across more areas over time to monitor trends in goat abundance.

as with most animals when hound hunting of cougars ceased the population of cougars exploded and as a result wildlife has suffered.	The mortality data from over 40 collared goats did not suggest that predation by cougars was causing goat declines.
By all means	Thank you for your comment
great	Thank you for your comment
I support this BUT... am concerned that we will repeat what occurred in the 90's when goats in the Olympics were determined to not be "indigenous" to the area and were destroying local fauna and had to be removed. I am worried that if we don't address the previous issues we are doomed to repeat the performance at an unacceptable expenditure in funds.	Thank you for your comment
It is not possible to accurately say why populations declined due to uncertainties in survey results and accounting for recruitment and mortalities. You can propose possible reasons why they have declined, but you will never be certain with a retrospective approach.	We agree that we will never be certain. However, if we can scientifically identify plausible causes, then we can attempt to make management changes to address the decline.
Mountain Goats need more predators and fewer trophy hunters for their populations to be substantially viable.	Given recent research in Washington, we anticipate a reduced harvest level for mountain goats during the upcoming 3-year-package hunting season alternatives.
no	Thank you for your comment
Objective 64. Peer reviewed information is available (as cited above) on the decline of mountain goat populations and manuscripts have been developed by WDFW indicating the decline is due primarily to over harvest. It is not necessary to develop peer-reviewed publications to determine how to expand populations. Mountain goats have been successfully introduced into novel habitat in South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado. The state of Oregon has been successfully transplanting mountain goats from many years and has amassed considerable scientific information on the strategy. Existing research and other scientific information is sufficient to develop effective management plans. Strategy a. Most of this information has been compiled and is already in manuscript for or has been accepted for publishing. Strategy b. To be effective, management recommendations should be developed in concert with stakeholders that include land managers, tribes, and others.	For the most part, we agree, thank you for your comment
Peer-reviewed publications would be of enormous value for the reasons identified and we enthusiastically support.	Thank you for your comment
Replace "makes" with "make".	Thank you for your comment
Spend the money on habitat and expanding the populations and it won't be necessary to write publications to CYA on declining populations.	Thank you for your comment
Why do this? For what purpose/benefit for the goat population.	The rigorous nature of the review and publication process is one the most important steps in the scientific process; it's a quality control step and separates information from sound science versus poor conducted experiments
yes	Thank you for your comment
Yes this would help.	Thank you for your comment
Mountain Goats need more predators and fewer trophy hunters for their populations to be substantially viable.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and hunting goats is one form of that opportunity as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable populations.
Objective 65: Monitor population demographics of moose at a level where a 20% decline in population size can be detected within three years.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
I concur, but don't understand ho we are "estimating" herd size if we can't all ready perform this?	Thank you for your comment.
ok	Thank you for your comment.
open more hunting areas ,,,there is a good population of moose in the Omak, twisp, area that is not beening hunted.	The level of permits and areas hunted is based on the biological status of the moose population.
Yes this would help out a lot	Thank you for your comment.
Transplant moose into the Blue Mtns.	The Department is not actively transplanting moose to the Blues with the purpose of starting new populations. However, a few wayward moose have been relocated to the Blues and others are finding their way there.
Objective 66: Provide recreational hunting opportunities in individual moose herds where harvest success averages >85% over a three year period, while at the same time moose population size remains stable or increasing.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
ADD PERMITS	The level of permits is based on the biological status of the moose population.
Do we want the moose population to increase much more then it has? Many land owners don't thinks so.	The Department is attempting to limit moose population increases in areas with nuisance activity.
I support this.	Thank you for your comment.
Increase the number of Moose GMUs across more of the spreading habitat and moose population movements. Increase overall moose tags available to public for hunting!	The level of permits and areas hunted is based on the biological status of the moose population.
no	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this included hunting as long as it's consistent with long-term sustainable populations.

No. Moose are limited in number and bring great joy to people who are lucky enough to see them.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this included hunting as long as it's consistent with long-term sustainable populations.
There must be a more humane way to manage wildlife populations on lands already stressed by human encroachment.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this included hunting as long as it's consistent with long-term sustainable populations.
we have some of the highest quality moose hunting in the west...I feel we could harvest more animals and increase hunting units..	The level of permits is based on the biological status of the moose population.
Yes, hunters will appreciate this greatly.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 67: Distribute recreational opportunity to as many individuals as possible, compatible with high quality moose hunting experiences and the biological status of moose populations.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
ADD PERMITS	The level of permits is based on the biological status of the moose population.
no	Thank you for your comment.
No hunting of moose	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this included hunting as long as it's consistent with long-term sustainable populations.
No. Don't get carried away. Hunting should be for pleasure, not competition. I don't want a whole bunch of other hunters out there.	The Department also considers hunter crowding as a measure of hunt quality.
Yes, we would appreciate this greatly.	Thank you for your comment.
No. Don't get carried away. Hunting should be for pleasure, not competition. I don't want a whole bunch of other hunters out there.	The Department also considers hunter crowding as a measure of hunt quality.
Objective 68: Develop educational document for moose in Washington.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Information always helps.	Thank you for your comment
no	We believe it's important to, at a minimum, provide some educational materials to the public about wildlife resources in Washington and their status and management.
ok	Thank you for your comment
Replace "document" with "literature".	Thank you for your comment
send info. with tags. Use past hunters as advocates. Wildlife viewing too.	Thank you for your comment
Use money to better habitat and increase the number of moose	Thank you for your comment
yes	Thank you for your comment
yes - these "newcomers" need friends	Thank you for your comment
Objective 69: Monitor population demographics of black bears at a level where a 20% change in population size can be detected within three years or less.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Almost impossible in Western Washington.	We're currently evaluating the use of monitoring female survival as an index to population size in Western Washington.
do not assume that predator species have to be eliminated or subjected to human control. You are also responsible for providing an example to other countries whose predator species are in decline (panthers, cheetahs etc)	We population goal for black bears is healthy, sustainable bear populations in each bear management unit (except Puget Sound and Columbia Basin units given the sparcity of bear habitat)
Don't worry about Black Bears. Leave them be.	Thank you for your comment
No	It's our responsibility as managers to periodically check the status of bear populations to make sure we're balancing harvest with sustainable populations.
ok	Thank you for your comment
yes	Thank you for your comment
Don't worry about Black Bears. Leave them be.	Thank you for your comment
Objective 70: Identify black bear habitats that act as a population source or sink.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
excellent	Thank you for your comment
Good	Thank you for your comment
Leave population levels where they are.	Thank you for your comment, we're not recommending any changes to population levels.
ok	Thank you for your comment
What would you do when you identify population sources? Would you leave them alone?	It helps understand the potential harvest levels that the population can experience and still result in sustainable, healthy populations. It also helps us understand the influence of the source or sink to neighboring habitats.
yes!	Thank you for your comment
Leave population levels where they are.	Thank you for your comment, we're not recommending any changes to population levels.
Objective 71: Identify core habitat areas for black bears.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.

Concentrate on deer and elk, parasites, diseases, shelter, habitat and forage instead.	Deer and elk management priorities can be found their respective chapters.
Identify & protect core habitats? Your intentions are not clear in these questions.	Understanding where core bear habitats are aids in managing for long-term sustainable bear populations
just ask the timber companies	Thank you for your comment
This would help out a lot.	Thank you for your comment
yes!	Thank you for your comment
Yes. More habitat for wild animals that is OFF LIMIT to hunters.	Thank you for your comment
Concentrate on deer and elk, parasites, diseases, shelter, habitat and forage instead.	Deer and elk management priorities can be found their respective chapters.
Objective 72: Implement management strategies that are consistent with the biological status of black bear and public attitudes.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
always driven by science - but public as to give something too here	Thank you for your comment
As you have mentioned in your own 2009-2015 Game Management Plan on page 81 that, "Hunting is the largest source of mortality for hunted bear populations Coupled with the low reproductive potential of bears, this makes bear populations especially sensitive to over-exploitation." It seems critical that you would want to minimize hunting as a major strategy for management. Please make educational outreach your top priority.	The balancing point we seek is maximum recreation hunting opportunities (as indicated by agency mandate) that are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations. Thank you for your comment on outreach, it is becoming a higher priority in bear management.
Bring back hounds and baiting	Restrictions on hunting bear with dogs and bait is in Washington state statue, not Fish and Wildlife Commission rule. As such, the Washington Legislature has the authority to change laws associated with using dogs and bait, not WDFW.
Implement a information effort to educate the public as to damage, public safety and the depredation of fawns, elk calves and livestock calves by bears to foster a better tolerance and understanding for hunter harvest.	Thank you for your comment
interesting	Thank you for your comment
Leave the Black bears at peace. They can maintain their own numbers better than humans.	Thank you for your comment
Management strategies should favor the bears continued existence not the public's "attitudes".	Thank you for your comment
more spring opportunity	The Department currently is only expanding spring bear hunting opportunity when there is a specific objective that is trying to be reached, such as reduce female harvest, reduce general nuisance activity, and reduce tree damage by bears.
No hunting. Create educational outreach campaigns as primary method for wildlife management instead.	WDFW is mandated to provide recreational opportunities related to wildlife, and this includes hunting as long as the impacts due to hunting are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations.
No management. No hunting with dogs or baiting.	Restrictions on hunting bear with dogs and bait is in Washington state statue, not Fish and Wildlife Commission rule. As such, the Washington Legislature has the authority to change laws associated with using dogs and bait, not WDFW.
The public needs to be educated about black bears. Public sentiment on black bears may be directly related to public ignorance about black bears and or tainted and inaccurate articles in newspapers which do not provide the reader with all of the facts. An effort should be made to educate the public on such topics as black bear numbers, black bear tree damage, black bear predation of elk calves and deer fawn, urban bear problems, bear reproduction, bear migration, public safety, how old bears get, urban bears, ect. An educated public will be more likely to make sound wildlife decisions.	The Department is planning on developing an education and outreach plan during the time span of this plan.
the WDFW's own 2009-2015 Game Management Plan, which states on page 81 that, "Hunting is the largest source of mortality for hunted bear populations Coupled with the low reproductive potential of bears, this makes bear populations especially sensitive to over-exploitation."	The balancing point we seek is maximum recreation hunting opportunities (as indicated by agency mandate) that are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations. Thank you for your comment on outreach, it is becoming a higher priority in bear management.
To cite your own 2009-2015 Game Management Plan, "Hunting is the largest source of mortality for hunted bear populations… Coupled with the low reproductive potential of bears, this makes bear populations especially sensitive to over-exploitation."	The balancing point we seek is maximum recreation hunting opportunities (as indicated by agency mandate) that are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations. Thank you for your comment on outreach, it is becoming a higher priority in bear management.
vague. Need local control.	Thank you for your comment
Yes	Thank you for your comment
Yes, we need this badly, especially how they effect the Fawn ratios for deer herds.	Thank you for your comment
As you have mentioned in your own 2009-2015 Game Management Plan on page 81 that, "Hunting is the largest source of mortality for hunted bear populations. Coupled with the low reproductive potential of bears, this makes bear populations especially sensitive to over-exploitation." It seems critical that you would want to minimize hunting as a major strategy for management. Please make educational outreach your top priority.	The balancing point we seek is maximum recreation hunting opportunities (as indicated by agency mandate) that are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations. Thank you for your comment on outreach, it is becoming a higher priority in bear management.
Leave the Black bears at peace. They can maintain their own numbers better than humans.	WDFW is mandated to provide recreational opportunities related to wildlife, and this includes hunting as long as the impacts due to hunting are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations.

Objective 73: Provide recreational hunting opportunities to harvest 800–1,200 black bears statewide, while at the same time maintaining a sustainable bear population in each BBMU.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
again...stop trophy hunting & artificial feeding (baiting)	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this includes hunting as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations. The Department does not implement bear feeding or baiting practices.
am against all hunting of black bears except to save human life. Their population if already too low in this state.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this includes hunting as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations.
Bring back baiting with natural food source such as apples or corn. in BBMUs where bear populations are too high. Less sows with cubs will be killed.	Restrictions on hunting bear with dogs and bait is in Washington state statue, not Fish and Wildlife Commission rule. As such, the Washington Legislature has the authority to change laws associated with using dogs and bait, not WDFW.
Bring populations to levels they were before Western Wa. voters outlawed baiting and hounds.	We have not detected any major differences in black bear population levels since I-655 was passed.
definitely not	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this includes hunting as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations.
Harvest numbers too low. Should be 1200-1500 according to your date table on page 78.	Thank you for identifying the inconsistency.
How will WDFW monitor female and cub survivorship over a large scale and ultimately use it as a management tool? Strategy C strives for stable bear populations – why shouldn't there be more or fewer bears than currently exist?	The concept is to monitor population status in a few key areas around the state and use them as representative of other areas with similar habitats, hunting levels, etc.
Hunting is the greatest cause of black bear mortality in Washington. Given the very serious threats to bears from illegal poaching and the great difficulties in controlling this poaching, coupled with the very slow reproductive rate for bears, the "harvest" goals must be EXTREMELY CONSERVATIVE to prevent irreversible crashes in bear populations.	This is why monitoring living bear populations is important. Our research (both within the past decade and currently) doesn't any conclusive evidence that poaching is at a level that threatens bear populations.
I believe this is too many to harvest. No more than 500 statewide, and then widely disbursed over a wide geographic placement.	This is why monitoring living bear populations is important. That being said, even our conservative information on bear populations clearly indicate the statewide bear harvest can exceed 500 without impacting the long-term sustainability of bears.
I do not believe in hunting bear for any reason.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this includes hunting as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations.
I think a month or two bear season with hounds would maintain the bear population.	Restrictions on hunting bear with dogs is in Washington state statue, not Fish and Wildlife Commission rule. As such, the Washington Legislature has the authority to change laws associated with using dogs, not WDFW.
If hunting is the largest source of mortality for hunted bear populations and creates a sensitive bear population, we respectfully urge you to reduce your recreational hunting harvest goals and focus on educating hunters why we need to preserve this magnificent species.	This is why monitoring living bear populations is important. The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this includes hunting as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations.
Include wildlife depredation on big game herds with population sustainability problems as a strategy	This would be included in the ungulate herd that was impacted.
Increase Westside Spring Bear opportunities!	The Department currently is only expanding spring bear hunting opportunity when there is a specific objective that is trying to be reached, such as reduce female harvest, reduce general nuisance activity, and reduce tree damage by bears.
Is there data to support such kill levels via current population research?	Yes, the biological harvest thresholds in this plan (I.e., age of harvest bears, percent females in harvest) is modeled after published work conducted in Idaho. In addition, we are monitoring bears in two areas in Washington to improve our ability to assess populations.
maybe - but bear people conflict takes a toll in morality.	Thank you for your comment.
no hunting	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this includes hunting as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations.
no hunting them for SPORT!!!!!!!	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this includes hunting as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations.
NO HUNTING. If people need to entertain themselves, they need to find other ways to do so than killing our state's wildlife.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this includes hunting as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations.
NO. Too large a harvest. Go back to the "drawing board" utilizing your own studies on bear populations and sustainability.	The biological harvest thresholds in this plan (I.e., age of harvest bears, percent females in harvest) is modeled after published work conducted in Idaho. In addition, we are monitoring bears in two areas in Washington to improve our ability to assess populations.

No. And no use of dogs or baiting. We voted on this.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this includes hunting as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations. The Department does not implement bear feeding or baiting seasons.
OK, BRING BACK HOUND HUNTING!!!	Restrictions on hunting bear with dogs and bait is in Washington state statue, not Fish and Wildlife Commission rule. As such, the Washington Legislature has the authority to change laws associated with using dogs and bait, not WDFW.
Please to not allow hunting of black bears. Seek more humane ways to manage wildlife populations. Bear populations are very sensitive to over-exploitation, as described in the 2009-2015 Game Management Plan.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this includes hunting as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations.
See your own study (2009-2015 Game Management Plan), which states on page 81 that, "Hunting is the largest source of mortality for hunted bear populations€¦ Coupled with the low reproductive potential of bears, this makes bear populations especially sensitive to over-exploitation."	Thank you for your comment. The Department is currently evaluating the use of monitoring female survival as an improved method for assessing the status of bear populations. As this point, we do not have any data that suggest hunting levels area inconsistent with sustainable bear populations at the BBMU level.
That is way too many. 400 is plenty. Bears aren't corn.	The balancing point we seek is maximum recreation hunting opportunities (as indicated by agency mandate) that are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations.
the WDFW's own 2009-2015 Game Management Plan, which states on page 81 that, "Hunting is the largest source of mortality for hunted bear populations€¦ Coupled with the low reproductive potential of bears, this makes bear populations especially sensitive to over-exploitation."	The balancing point we seek is maximum recreation hunting opportunities (as indicated by agency mandate) that are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations.
There is no need to allow large-scale hunting of Black Bears!	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this includes hunting as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations. The balancing point we seek is maximum recreation hunting opportunities (as indicated by agency mandate) that are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations.
There must be more humane ways to manage bear populations on lands already stressed by human encroachment that does not involve shooting.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this includes hunting as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations. The balancing point we seek is maximum recreation hunting opportunities (as indicated by agency mandate) that are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations.
This number is too high. Your own survey notes that hunting is the greatest source of mortality for black bears plus they have a low birth rate. Revisit and rethink this objective.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this includes hunting as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations. The balancing point we seek is maximum recreation hunting opportunities (as indicated by agency mandate) that are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations. The biological harvest thresholds in this plan (I.e., age of harvest bears, percent females in harvest) is modeled after published work conducted in Idaho. In addition, we are monitoring bears in two areas in Washington to improve our ability to assess populations.
WDFW's own 2009-2015 Game Management Plan, which states on page 81 that, "Hunting is the largest source of mortality for hunted bear populations€¦ Coupled with the low reproductive potential of bears, this makes bear populations especially sensitive to over-exploitation." Maybe black bears shouldn't be harvested.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this includes hunting as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations. The balancing point we seek is maximum recreation hunting opportunities (as indicated by agency mandate) that are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations.
What about your own 2009-2015 Game Management Plan, which states on page 81 that, "Hunting is the largest source of mortality for hunted bear populations€¦ Coupled with the low reproductive potential of bears, this makes bear populations especially sensitive to over-exploitation."??? Don't you pay attention to your own research? We paid for the research - use it! Leave the bears alone.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this includes hunting as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations. The balancing point we seek is maximum recreation hunting opportunities (as indicated by agency mandate) that are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations. The biological harvest thresholds in this plan (I.e., age of harvest bears, percent females in harvest) is modeled after published work conducted in Idaho. In addition, we are monitoring bears in two areas in Washington to improve our ability to assess populations.
Yes, sounds great!	Thank you for your comment.
Please to not allow hunting of black bears. Seek more humane ways to manage wildlife populations. Bear populations are very sensitive to over-exploitation, as described in the 2009-2015 Game Management Plan.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this includes hunting as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations. The balancing point we seek is maximum recreation hunting opportunities (as indicated by agency mandate) that are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations.
If hunting is the largest source of mortality for hunted bear populations and creates a sensitive bear population, we respectfully urge you to reduce your recreational hunting harvest goals and focus on educating hunters why we need to preserve this magnificent species.	The balancing point we seek is maximum recreation hunting opportunities (as indicated by agency mandate) that are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations. Thank you for your comment on outreach, it is becoming a higher priority in bear management.

That is way too many. 400 is plenty. Bears aren't corn.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this includes hunting as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations. The balancing point we seek is maximum recreation hunting opportunities (as indicated by agency mandate) that are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations.
Objective 74: Minimize impacts of black bear hunting on grizzly bears.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
As was demonstrated in Idaho poor regulation and hunter education lead to mistaken identity over bait by a guided hunter from Tennessee and resulted in the unfortunate killing the first grizzly seen in the Bitterroot in more than 50 years. There must be a zero tolerance policy with regard to any black bear hunting impacts on grizzly bears owing to the disastrously low grizzly bear numbers.	Thank you for your comment.
Education and knowledge of grizzly bear habitat in Washington would be a major step.	Thank you for your comment.
How often does some mistake a grizzly for a black bear. Want you are doing now is good.	Thank you for your comment.
Include other hunting methods as well.	Thank you for your comment.
most of the grizzly area is locked up in the north east part of the state by the forest service interaction in most places is very limited already....they have signs up everywhere.	Thank you for your comment.
No bear hunting in grizzly territory!!	Our state and other states have demonstrated that recovering and sustainable grizzly bear populations can occur in areas with black bear hunting. We believe educating hunters is one of the best strategies for minimizing any problems.
no hunting bears!!	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this includes hunting as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations.
Not important. Washington doesn't want Grizzly bears anyway they are to dangerous of animal.	Washington does have Grizzly bears in the extreme NE corner.
NOT NEEDED	Washington does have Grizzly bears in the extreme NE corner, and we believe it is important to minimize the risk of a black bear hunter accidentally mis-identifying a grizzly bear and harvesting it.
See your own study (2009-2015 Game Management Plan), which states on page 81 that, "Hunting is the largest source of mortality for hunted bear populations€¦ Coupled with the low reproductive potential of bears, this makes bear populations especially sensitive to over-exploitation."	Comment not related to this objective. Thank you for your comment.
Spell this out.	Thank you for your comment, the strategies will include the possible actions taken by the Department.
This is putting the cart before the horse. Shouldn't we document the actual presence of grizzlies first?	Washington does have Grizzly bears in the extreme NE corner.
When hunting is limited on black bears, accidental killing of grizzly bears will decrease (except for poaching - which should be fully investigated and prosecuted).	We believe educating hunters is one of the best strategies for minimizing any problems.
yes	Thank you for your comment.
No bear hunting in grizzly territory!!	Our state and other states have demonstrated that recovering and sustainable grizzly bear populations can occur in areas with black bear hunting. We believe educating hunters is one of the best strategies for minimizing any problems.
Objective 75: Minimize negative human-bear interactions so that the "number of interactions per capita" is constant or declining.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Add: "Increase public education on avoiding negative human-bear interactions. Use relocation methods rather than killing of 'nuisance bears' whenever possible. Provide written explanation whenever lethal methods are employed."	Thank you for your comment. The Department will also be completing a black bear education and outreach plan within the time frame of this Game Management Plan.
Educating people to the fact that bears were here first & keeping people from building homes & urban sprawl into their habitats would be far more effective.	Thank you for your comment. The Department will also be completing a black bear education and outreach plan within the time frame of this Game Management Plan.
Education of public - the wildlife areas they frequent may be their last - make people understand that nature must be protected from humans by limiting accessibility of roads/recreational areas.	Thank you for your comment. The Department will also be completing a black bear education and outreach plan within the time frame of this Game Management Plan.
Fine humans who feed the bears by feeding birds or composting. Post fine warnings and distribute educational literature on how to build a bear proof garbage can shed. It's not the bears' fault humans do dumb things in bear country. Live trap and release bears. Don't kill them for human errors!!	Thank you for your comment. The Department currently does not have the authority to issue fines for this reason. However, the Department will also be completing a black bear education and outreach plan within the time frame of this Game Management Plan.
Hard to do.	Thank you for your comment.
Need less developments in Bear habitat.	Thank you for your comment.
needs localized.	Thank you for your comment.
No hunting. Create educational outreach campaigns as primary method for wildlife management instead.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, this includes hunting as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable bear populations. The Department will also be completing a black bear education and outreach plan within the time frame of this Game Management Plan.

Nonsense! We are increasing. They must go up!	The Department manages for sustainable bear populations.
Yes and the continuing presence of the Grizzly Bear Outreach Project (GBOP) is a good vehicle.	Thank you for your comment.
Fine humans who feed the bears by feeding birds or composting. Post fine warnings and distribute educational literature on how to build a bear proof garbage can shed. It's not the bears' fault humans do dumb things in bear country. Live trap and release bears. Don't kill them for human errors!!	Thank you for your comment. The Department will also be completing a black bear education and outreach plan within the time frame of this Game Management Plan.
Objective 76: Reduce annual bear damage to <30 trees/stand on private industrial timberlands.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Add: "Use relocation methods rather than killing of 'nuisance bears' whenever possible. Provide written explanation whenever lethal methods are employed."	Thank you for your comment. This topic is outside the scope of the plan and is addressed in agency Policy
Cater to the Bears and not the timber companies.	Thank you for your comment.
definitely not interested, and not a priority	Thank you for your comment.
I support this and would support returning to baiting or hound hunting for a fee on these timberlands.	Restrictions on hunting bear with dogs and bait is in Washington state statue, not Fish and Wildlife Commission rule. As such, the Washington Legislature has the authority to change laws associated with using dogs and bait, not WDFW.
I think that the use of hounds in the depredation season should be extended and the number of bears increased. This would help, it's already helping in some areas.	Thank you for your comment.
Increase it to 50 trees a year and demand that timber companies leave larger patched of native habitat.	Thank you for your comment.
its their home, they were there first	Thank you for your comment.
let land owners manage these animals as necessary to control individual animals	WDFW is entrusted to manage Washington's wildlife, however private commercial timber owners experiencing bear damage do have legislative authority to use dogs or feeding to help address the problem. They do not have authority to harvest bears with a permit from WDFW.
No damage permits of timberland is closed to vehicles during general bear season.	Thank you for your comment.
Not important. Not all trees are going to survive on the timberlands anyway.	Thank you for your comment.
Only supply depredation permit to industrial timberlands that are open to the public (by vehicle if the are is over 5,000 acres) during bear season.	Thank you for your comment.
Private timberlands should have no ability to influence the killing of bears simply because they mark their territory. The timber people need to learn to live with nature, not fight against it. I worked for the Forest Service and I know these things happen, they are simply part of nature.	Thank you for your comment.
This is a natural thinning process. The timber companies already pay to have them thinned. I don't feel we should allow timber companies to skew numbers or damage reports in order to get hunters to pay an access fee to get onto the lands.	Thank you for your comment.
This should not even be considered. The trees grown in wildlife areas are susceptible to animal damage and we should be putting our energies into protecting the wildlife that must survive near and in these artificial environments.	Thank you for your comment.
very good	Thank you for your comment.
Yes	Thank you for your comment.
Increase it to 50 trees a year and demand that timber companies leave larger patched of native habitat.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 77: Transition to a zone management approach for managing cougar by 2010.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
agree, with the ais of dogs	Thank you for your comment.
General comment for all Cougar Objectives: I believe that history has been overlooked in attempting to develop a viable cougar management plan. In the years prior to 1987, under general dog hunts, a sustainable population of cougar existed and human-cougar interactions/depredations were essentially nonexistent. During the permit seasons, 1988-1996 the interactions began to greatly increase principally because the number of permits was not set high enough. After 1996, when hound hunting ceased, human-cougar interactions/depredations increased to the level where a public outcry resulted. Clearly the population had gotten out of control. It is not rocket science to recognize that historically a cause and effect relationship existed between cougar numbers and interactions. Your goal in management should be to reduce cougar populations in all CMU/Zones to the point where interactions are reduced to the levels that existed before 1987.	We believe the relationship between human-cougar interactions and cougar populations is more complicated than just the number of cougars on the landscape (albeit that likely has an influence). The Department's objective is for stable, sustainable populations, which can be achieved at various densities. We believe zone management will better accommodate that.
Great idea!	Thank you for your comment.
I don't understand why this is necessary.	We believe this is a necessary step so the particular management action can better suit the local management need.
I feel that this approach would be an adequate way to manage cougars. Different portions of this state have different cougar densities and varying opinions by people towards cougars. A zone management approach would address the issues at hand for that specific area	Thank you for your comment.
KEEP THEM THINNED DOWN	Thank you for your comment.
No hunting with dogs.	The Department supports the use of dogs in areas where that tool is better suited to meeting local management needs.

No hunting. Create educational outreach campaigns as primary method for wildlife management instead.	The Department is mandated to provide recreation opportunities associated with wildlife, this includes providing cougar hunting opportunities that are consistent with long-term sustainable cougar populations.
This is a great idea. The more localized cougar management and regulation is, the better. People from the big cities cannot fathom what it feels like to know that a cougar is hanging out near their children's' school grounds.	Thank you for your comment.
We support a transition to zone management. Cougars have large home ranges and occur in relatively low densities. GMUs should be larger to more closely coincide with a cougar's home range. This would provide a better gauge of landscape level cougar demographics and territorial dynamics and the degree to which hunting may be affecting cougar behavior. Pilot projects and controls could be set up and based on such management zones to better understand demographics, behavior, local predator/prey dynamics and human interaction.	Thank you for your comment.
What for? Is the current system not working?	We believe this is a necessary step so the particular management action can better suit the local management need.
why do cougars get such a viseral reaction? Education, stop encroaching on habitat, stop dissecting lands (e.g. more density). Cougars are a declining population, humans are overpopulating the world & destroying ecosystems & predatory species. Does not portend well for our own survival.	The Department is currently developing a cougar education and outreach plan, which is due to be completed by Jan. 2009. The Department does not manage human encroachment or development, but understand your concerns.
We support a transition to zone management. Cougars have large home ranges and occur in relatively low densities. GMUs should be larger to more closely coincide with a cougar's home range. This would provide a better gauge of landscape level cougar demographics and territorial dynamics and the degree to which hunting may be affecting cougar behavior. Pilot projects and controls could be set up and based on such management zones to better understand demographics, behavior, local predator/prey dynamics and human interaction.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 78: Manage cougar populations within each CMU as indicated in Table 1.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
bring back more opportunities for hound hunters in GMUs with cougar problems/ high populations.	The specific application of dogs to hunt cougar for public safety purposes in outlined on ESHB 2438. The decision to continue, discontinue, and change that authority rests with the Legislature, not WDFW.
Definitely need to manage cougars for the good of Elk and Deer herds.	At this point the Department is not managing cougar populations for the benefit of deer and elk. However, for some elk herds that are below population objectives, the Department is going to see if different harvest strategies for cougar results in a favorable response in meeting elk objectives.
Good as is - but some areas can accept more cougar	Thank you for your comment.
How can a female numerical quota be set without knowing how many animals there are in a CMU? Predator-Prey models using estimates of the prey base would help set cougar population targets that can coexist with hunting opportunity and prey objectives. Setting a predator level without understanding the prey base is like ignoring habitat contributions to elk and deer populations - you just do not decouple the animal and its food source. Many CMUs have an objective set at stable what is the rationale behind this and why is it better than increase or decrease?	We use population demographic estimates (density, survival, litter production, etc) from our research areas in the state, then extrapolate to similar habitats. Because there are some uncertainties in areas without collared cougar, we also include a rather large variance term to manage conservatively when data is limited.
KEEP THEM THIN DOWNED	Thank you for your comment.
No hunting with dogs	The authority to used dogs is currently under a pilot program per ESHB 2438; which is evaluating the use of dogs for concerns for public safety and potential better, more sound management. The use of dogs is not allowed statewide and is limited to select counties.
No hunting. Create educational outreach campaigns as primary method for wildlife management instead	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and one type of activity is cougar hunting. As long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable populations.
NO! Get your science together before lousing things up worse than you have already. Cattle are causing declines of elk. Big Horns belong in California. Cougars are an essential component of a healthy wildlife ecosystem.	We currently have 4 research projects on cougar in Washington and our scientific understanding is improving each year. The Department believes cougar are a valued and important part of Washington's ecosystems and, as such, manages for healthy, sustainable populations.
Recent studies have shown that Cougar populations are actually in decline. The latest Washington State cougar population research reports that a rise in cougar hunting on a fragile population has not solved cougar-human conflicts. Select a more humane method to control populations.	The goal in the last game management plan was to reduce cougar populations in northeastern Washington, and all our scientific data indicated we have accomplished that. We have no firm conclusions to whether heavy hunting "caused" human-cougar complaints to decline. The Department is now recommending stabilizing cougar populations at the 2007 level.
This is a great idea. The more localized the management is, the better.	Thank you for your comment.
to high a numbers	The draft quota levels are projected to result in stable cougar population. The quota levels were developed with a team of scientists and data from all the cougar research projects in Washington

NO! Get your science together before lousing things up worse than you have already. Cattle are causing declines of elk. Big Horns belong in California. Cougars are an essential component of a healthy wildlife ecosystem.	We currently have 4 research projects on cougar in Washington and our scientific understanding is improving each year. The Department believes cougar are a valued and important part of Washington's ecosystems and, as such, manages for healthy, sustainable populations.
See below comments. Cougar populations should be managed consistent with natural ecological conditions and based on most current and best science.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 79: For priority CMUs, monitor population demographics of cougar at a level where a significant change in population size can be detected within three years or less.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Definitely need improved monitoring techniques.	Thank you for your comment.
good	Thank you for your comment.
Hard to do	Thank you for your comment.
How are you going to do that? You should say before asking for approval.	We capture and collar cougar to estimate key parameters like population size, survival, age structure, etc. We are also evaluating a new DNA method to estimate population size without having to capture animals.
It's obvious that cougar populations are declining -- Washington State's own research shows this. Why can we not have management that PROTECTS our wild animals -- not kills them ?	Per the objective in the last game management plan, the Department did manage for reducing cougar populations in some areas to address public safety issues. The objective now is to manage for stable cougar populations. The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and hunting is one type of activity, as long as its consistent with long-term sustainable populations.
ok	Thank you for your comment.
Strongly urge you to employ and use more research!	We currently have 4 cougar research projects and are learning more each year to help improve our management.
What are priority CMUs and why are they so designated?	Generally priority CMUs are ones in which harvest has a greater likelihood of impacting populations, and/or public safety I
yes - but this cast for each area?	Thank you for your comment.
Strongly urge you to employ and use more research!	Thank you for your comment.
How are you going to do that? You should say before asking for approval.	We capture and collar cougar to estimate key parameters like population size, survival, age structure, etc. We are also evaluating a new DNA method to estimate population size without having to capture animals.
Objective 80: Initiate a research project to determine the effects of manipulating cougar – population level impacts to ungulate population objectives.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
can we believe what your biologist are telling us...credibility is important.	Thank you for your comment.
cougar populations should not take priority over deer and elk populations.	In our view, its not one species being a higher or lower priority. We have population goals for all game species and in this case it's evaluating if we can make slight differences in our cougar management to help reach population objectives for ungulates.
Good idea.	Thank you for your comment.
Great Idea and long overdue. When herd sustainability problems occur then every available method and resource to bring back population levels should be explored and used. Responsible predation management is one of those tools.	Thank you for your comment.
In the case of the Blue Mountains, an area that once held a great elk herd this objective may be necessary to determine if in fact the cougar are holding the elk numbers down enough so they can not rebound (i.e. calf mortality by cougars is high). However, cougars are typically harvested in the winter when tracking conditions are adequate. I have concern at this objective. I feel that the objective is to have a high harvest of cougar in the Blue Mountains to see if elk numbers increase. The vacant territories that would "open up" once the dominant cougars were removed would theoretically be filled by dispersing cougars from a nearby source population. I do not clearly see this project meeting the right objectives unless the source or dispersing individuals are harvested before they could have an impact on the ungulate population.	This is a very good point and noted. Thank you for your comment.
Look around - there must be a raft of studies on this one already done.	Actually there are not.
Need more data.	Thank you for your comment.
NNNNOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!!! We will sue.	In our view, its not one species being a higher or lower priority. We have population goals for all game species and in this case it's evaluating if we can make slight differences in our cougar management to help reach population objectives for ungulates.
No manipulation. Let habitat determine the number.	In our view, its not one species being a higher or lower priority. We have population goals for all game species and in this case it's evaluating if we can make slight differences in our cougar management to help reach population objectives for ungulates.
pwe Wa State , the cougar population is in decline, this needs to be addressed to delegate safe unpopulated areas for cougar population to thrive	At this point, we do not have any data that suggest the cougar population in the Blue Mountains is declining.

Return cougar populations to what they were before hound hunting was voted out. Cougars are devastating our deer populations and are being seen in areas where they have never lived before. Take a look at hunter success rates in the years when cougars were managed compared to current years. We have had mild winters since 1996, we have much shorter seasons, and at earlier times so we should have deer populations busting at the seams. Hair loss is taking some of our deer but it is not the factor as cougar and bear. The deer aren't being over hunted as one of your DFW people talked about in the Local Newspaper. There are less hunters now then ever. Maybe that is the objective of WDFW to have natural predators at such a level they won't have a need to have hunting seasons anymore. You are well on the way to achieving that goal.	In our view, its not one species being a higher or lower priority. We have population goals for all game species and in this case it's evaluating if we can make slight differences in our cougar management to help reach population objectives for ungulates.
That should have been started 20 years ago.	Thank you for your comment.
Ungulate population objectives should be tiered to habitat carrying capacity not hunter success rates. Any cougar research project should be conducted in this light and examine and analyze predator-prey relationships with the intent of restoring those relationships and natural ecological conditions where possible (e.g. where habitat still exists) with the ultimate objective of minimal manipulation of cougar populations. This would not only inform management but help educate the public.	The carrying capacity of habitat is seldom the only significant factor driving prey populations. Very little of Washington is not influenced by human development and use and therefore the term "natural" ends up being very subjective. We try to keep all of these issues in mind when analyzing the results of research and the effects of management.
Using models to refine your questions would be appropriate. Modeling should be done as part of developing a study proposal. Use the Oregon results to guide the manipulation. The results of Strategy c will depend on study area â€“ small isolated prey populations will likely respond differently than numerous prey spread over a large area.	Good comment, thank you for your comment. We will add a strategy on modeling potential impacts.
Yes (Blue Mountains)	Thank you for your comment.
Yes please continue to do as much research on this elusive animal as possible.	Thank you for your comment.
NNNNOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!!! We will sue.	In our view, its not one species being a higher or lower priority. We have population goals for all game species and in this case it's evaluating if we can make slight differences in our cougar management to help reach population objectives for ungulates.
Ungulate population objectives should be tiered to habitat carrying capacity not hunter success rates. Any cougar research project should be conducted in this light and examine and analyze predator-prey relationships with the intent of restoring those relationships and natural ecological conditions where possible (e.g. where habitat still exists) with the ultimate objective of minimal manipulation of cougar populations. This would not only inform management but help educate the public.	The carrying capacity of habitat is seldom the only significant factor driving prey populations. Very little of Washington is not influenced by human development and use and therefore the term "natural" ends up being very subjective. We try to keep all of these issues in mind when analyzing the results of research and the effects of management.
Objective 81: Identify cougar habitats that act as a population source or sink.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Certainly - some are already well known - but other are not.	Thank you for your comment.
Leave them alone. Cougar hunting must decrease, not increase. Your strategy has already failed.	Thank you for your comment. We are recommended reduced cougar harvest in our upcoming 3-year hunting season package.
ok	Thank you for your comment.
SHOULD ALREADY KNOW	Research has identified one population source and sink, and the characteristics of each. From that, we recognize that understanding where other population source/sinks are is important for managing the spatial element of cougar populations.
Will these areas be preserved or exploited?	Neither, at this point its just identifying where they are at and the impacts to surrounding cougar populations.
You must be aware that according to the latest Washington State cougar population research, the rise in cougar hunting has NOT solved human-cougar conflicts. NO MORE HUNTING of cougars and CERTAINLY no more TROPHY hunting of cougars.	We do target specific problem animals on a case by case basis. However, the Department is also mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and cougar hunting is one type of activity under this mandate, as long as hunting levels are consistent with long-term, viable cougar populations. In addition, WDFW data on the pilot cougar hunting program does show a decline in reported conflicts.
Leave them alone. Cougar hunting must decrease, not increase. Your strategy has already failed.	Thank you for your comment. We are recommended reduced cougar harvest in our upcoming 3-year hunting season package.
Yes	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 82: Implement management strategies that are consistent with the biological status of cougars and local public preferences.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Again, people need to ensure the survival of the cougar not bend to public preferences. If they don't want them near their houses, perhaps they should move into the city and if they don't want them chasing their children perhaps they should watch their children or fence their yards.	Thank you for your comment. The Department is currently drafting a cougar education and outreach plan to help address many of the issues associated with human-cougar interactions.
Again,, educate the public. The last Seattle Times article on cougars was not Scientific and was heavily biased against hunting. The WDFW needs to pro actively make sure that some accurate articles are written which tell the whole story and do not rely on sensational headlines to sway public opinion. As you will know wildlife management in our state is a PR issue and WDFW needs to be proactive.	Thank you for your comment. The Department is currently drafting a cougar education and outreach plan to help address many of the issues associated management and human-cougar interactions.

ALLOW HOUND HUNTING BY PERMIT ONLY LIKE WE USED TO. NOW DAYS YOU CAN BUY TWO TAGS OVER THE COUNTER AND A LOT OF PEOPLE USE DOGS BUT SAY THEY DID NOT AND THE WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT KNOWS THIS!!! dO NOT WORRY ABOUT ANTI'S TELL THEM NO, GET LEGISTRATION PASSED TO STOP THEM	The Department is currently providing cougar hound hunt opportunity as directed by specific legislation. The Department does not have legislative authority to provide hound hunt opportunity beyond this level.
Bring back draw hound hunting....any other management attempts are a joke and you know it	The Department is currently providing cougar hound hunt opportunity as directed by specific legislation. The Department does not have legislative authority to provide hound hunt opportunity beyond this level.
cougars need to be managed, and is best done through hound hunting	The Department is currently providing cougar hound hunt opportunity as directed by specific legislation. The Department does not have legislative authority to provide hound hunt opportunity beyond this level.
greenbelt from upper Canada to southern US	NA - comment unclear.
Joy - but remember critters come before preferences.	Thank you for your comment.
No management that allows hunting with dogs. The residents voted against this.	The Department is currently providing cougar hound hunt opportunity as directed by specific legislation.
Please do. There are lots of cougars around NE Washington. Please consider a hound hunter "pursuit only season" to let hound hunters train their dogs, if they draw a tag the dogs need to be ready to hunt lions only. We need our dogs to be in the field more and to know what they're doing.	Thank you for your comment. We are considering more pursuit opportunity in the pilot cougar dog hunt seasons in Northeastern Washington.
Public preferences must be informed by clear and current scientific information about the value and role of predators in their ecosystems. Management strategies cannot be defined independent of public information and outreach objectives, otherwise as we have seen throughout the past several decades public preferences based on faulty or blatantly false information about cougars and the potential threats they pose to public safety will unfairly and disproportionately influence cougar management policies. "Local public preferences" must not only include those who complain most loudly about overblown threats, but must also include what could be the majority of "locals" who view cougars and other predators more rationally and in the proper context - as integral to natural systems.	Good comment. The Department will strive to inform the public about relevant cougar management issues so they can make informed decisions. The Department also plans to conduct more random surveys about local public preferences so input is not biased by a vocal minority.
recent studies have shown that Cougar populations are actually in decline. the latest Washington State cougar population research, reports that a rise in cougar hunting on a fragile population has not solved cougar-human conflicts.	We do target specific problem animals on a case by case basis. However, the Department is also mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and cougar hunting is one type of activity under this mandate, as long as hunting levels are consistent with long-term, viable cougar populations. In addition, WDFW data on the pilot cougar hunting program does show a decline in reported conflicts.
Recent studies have shown that Cougar populations are in decline.	Thank you for your comment.
Since recent studies such as the Washington State cougar research program has shown that Cougar populations are actually in decline, and reports that a rise in cougar hunting on a fragile population has not solved cougar-human conflicts, I respectfully impress up on you to actively educate the public about cougar habits, actual cougar population statistics and the impact of hunting on these populations (i.e. taking out older male Toms simply leaves room for other younger cats from other states to move in and cause problems.) Please review this very important article at:http://biology.plosjournals.org/perlserv/?request=get-document&doi=10.1371/journal.pbio.0060040	We do target specific problem animals on a case by case basis. However, the Department is also mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and cougar hunting is one type of activity under this mandate, as long as hunting levels are consistent with long-term, viable cougar populations. In addition, WDFW data on the pilot cougar hunting program does show a decline in reported conflicts.
Since the 1996 winter kill it seems as though the east cascade mule deer population has never recovered, despite the fact that we have had 3 point minimum regulations and shorter hunting seasons in place since then. In looking at the report we see that the state's estimate of cougar populations is an educated guess at best. They estimate the state's population by looking at a few areas. They also mention that cougar harvests have increased since 1996. The question is not whether the cougar harvest has increased, the question is what percentage of the population is harvested each year. If the cougar population has increased significantly, which most outdoorsmen seem to think, then the harvest would go up as well. Having grown up in the foothills of the cascades it was rare when a hunter would report seeing a cougar. Now every season without fail I talk with a hunter who has seen a cougar in the wild. Granted this could be due to other causes such as more hunters in the field, but with hunter numbers steadily declining that doesn't seem likely. I realize that this is anecdotal evidence, but when looking at how the state estimates their cougar populations I'd be willing to bet that my evidence is every bit as accurate as their's. If there is an actual significant increase in cougar numbers this could possibly have a devastating effect on the mule deer population and should at least be considered as a major factor in their population decline. When WDFW's own biologists are telling hunters (including myself) that the cougar is a big part of the mule deer population decline in the Cascade Mountains and well as the Blue Mountains, then it seems to me that there is some validity to the theory and it should be explored vigorously. Most the cougars harvested in the state now are likely harvested by hunters who are primarily hunting other game such as deer or elk. That means that they are accidentally bumping into cougars and harvesting them. Therefore if more cougars are being harvested now then before 1996, obviously there are more out there since most the time they aren't being specifically targeted when harvested.	WDFW and WSU is conducting a research project on the potential cause for declining mule deer, and cougar and other prey items are being considered. Reports from that project are just now being published.

STRONGLY AGREE !!!	Thank you for your comment.
vague. Use of dogs is not discussed anywhere in set of cougar objectives.	The use of dogs is not specifically addressed because the department is in a pilot phase of evaluating the use of dogs as a management tool.
You must certainly also be aware that cougar PROTECTION has popular support in this state, despite a small but vocal minority of hunters. NO MORE HUNTING. I cannot stress this enough.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and cougar hunting is one type of activity under this mandate, as long as hunting levels are consistent with long-term, viable cougar populations.
Since recent studies such as the Washington State cougar research program has shown that Cougar populations are actually in decline, and reports that a rise in cougar hunting on a fragile population has not solved cougar-human conflicts, I respectfully impress up on you to actively educate the public about cougar habits, actual cougar population statistics and the impact of hunting on these populations (i.e. taking out older male Toms simply leaves room for other younger cats from other states to move in and cause problems.) Please review this very important article at:http://biology.plosjournals.org/perlserv/?request=get-document&doi=10.1371/journal.pbio.0060040	We do target specific problem animals on a case by case basis. However, the Department is also mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and cougar hunting is one type of activity under this mandate, as long as hunting levels are consistent with long-term, viable cougar populations. In addition, WDFW data on the pilot cougar hunting program does show a decline in reported conflicts.
No.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and cougar hunting is one type of activity under this mandate, as long as hunting levels are consistent with long-term, viable cougar populations. Within that context, local public opinions are important for guiding time, place, and manner of cougar management activities such as hunting.
I oppose the customized opportunity given to one special interest group (houndsmen). Opportunity was taken away from the "boot" hunter. Late season conditions are mandatory for boot hunting cougar. The impact of boot hunters on cougar populations should not have required eliminating their opportunity. The use of hounds to hunt cougar is not necessary. We were achieving our harvest objectives prior to the elitist pilot program.	The Department is providing an alternative for additional late season boot hunting opportunity for hunters to consider during the upcoming 3-year season package.
Public preferences must be informed by clear and current scientific information about the value and role of predators in their ecosystems. Management strategies cannot be defined independent of public information and outreach objectives, otherwise as we have seen throughout the past several decades public preferences based on faulty or blatantly false information about cougars and the potential threats they pose to public safety will unfairly and disproportionately influence cougar management policies. "Local public preferences" must not only include those who complain most loudly about overblown threats, but must also include what could be the majority of "locals" who view cougars and other predators more rationally and in the proper context - as integral to natural systems. Recent research suggests that too much hunting pressure that either targets older established males or have the practical effect of severely impacting those animals could have more negative implications on cougar demographics and for exacerbating cougar/human encounters instead of reducing or eliminating them. The research suggests that large males regulate the social order and that killing too many of these older males has the potential to lead to unstable social organization. The DFW has reduced cougars in some CMUs quite significantly and we believe unjustifiably, to compensate for perceived public concern about the threats posed by cougars, a policy that we adamantly oppose. In the course of doing so, unsustainable numbers of females and large males have also been killed. There is no valid scientific or social rationale for maintaining an artificially depressed cougar population in NE WA or dealing with "problem" animals in this fashion. We think it would be prudent to conduct more research into the interplay between hunting and its effects on cougar population dynamics and structure. Ideally such research would include some type of control or pilot project where cougars are not hunted to measure the effects. In the interim we hope that the Department will take a more precautionary approach. Under the current system we believe there are some things that can be done to mitigate for adverse effects of hunting on cougar populations. These include raising the price of a tag and establishing strict quotas on large males and females taken. These should be predicated on stable population estimates using density estimates and kill and demographic data of researchers. Tags are now too cheap. Cougar hunts should be limited entry permit only with strict quotas and commensurate price tags. Tags could be issued via drawings which may generate more revenue for the DFW. Cougar season should begin in late November when there is snow on the ground. A later start to the season (after elk and deer seasons) will accomplish a couple objectives: there will be fewer hunters in the woods, those that are out there will be probably be specifically targeting cougars and thus there will be fewer hunters that kill cougars by chance encounter. And they will be more likely to be able to tell if the cat they're tracking is a female with kittens. The current regulation on spotted kits is ineffective because the females will often stash their young while they hunt.	Good comment. The Department will strive to inform the public about relevant cougar management issues so they can make informed decisions. The Department also plans to conduct more random surveys about local public preferences so input is not biased by a vocal minority.
Objective 83: Provide recreational opportunities to target the harvest of 53 female cougars statewide, while at the same time maintaining a sustainable cougar population in each cougar management unit (excluding CMU 2 and 9).	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.

A "male only" season with the aid of dogs could be a real problem. It is pretty difficult, except for very experienced hunters to sex a cat up in a tree...	The Department agrees that its difficult to sex a cat in many situations. In which case the hunter would have to let the cat go and wait until they tree a different cat and are certain it's a male. This concept is very similar to bag limit restrictions on waterfowl...if your not certain, don't shoot.
Absolutely no hunting of females should ever be allowed. They may very well be nursing babies when they are "harvested", thus the effect is killing many more than one. The female cougars have long period of rearing young and the traditions of "harvest" have been detrimental to overall genetic strengths sustained in larger populations, when the infants are taught those skills needed to survive - by a surviving mother, not father.	The Department tries to conduct all hunting seasons during periods when the greatest proportion of young are weaned from parental care. Occasional young may be orphaned, but that is avoided as much as possible through management actions like: reduced female take, unlawful to harvest adult female with young present, training, etc.
agree, but fewer females would be better	The Department did reduce the female quota by 40% in past heavy hunted areas.
Can't identify between male and female without the opportunity to hunt with hounds. I've seen 6 cougars in the wild and the only way I could tell the sex is the two instances that I've seen a cub with the mother.	Male only seasons would be for hunts with dogs, not general seasons.
definitely not!	Thank you for your comment.
Good idea. Population management of predators at the top of the food chain is crucial to the ecosystem	Thank you for your comment.
Hounds, Hounds, Hounds	The Department is currently providing cougar hound hunt opportunity as directed by specific legislation. The Department does not have legislative authority to provide hound hunt opportunity beyond this level.
Hunters would appreciate it.	Thank you for your comment.
Hunting Cougars is wrong, there is no reason for it. Do you take into consideration they may be raising young when you let hunters shoot them? It has been my experience that when you say 53, hunters will shoot double the amount and continue poaching anyway.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and cougar hunting is one type of activity under this mandate, as long as hunting levels are consistent with long-term, viable cougar populations.
I am opposed to all killing of cougars, male or female. There is no reason to kill them as their population is not very high to begin with. If humans would not interfere there would be an even balance between cougars, on the one hand, and deer and elk on the other.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and cougar hunting is one type of activity under this mandate, as long as hunting levels are consistent with long-term, viable cougar populations.
I support this, but believe it is necessary to incorporate hound hunting to specifically/selectively harvest female cougars.	Thank you for your comment.
Killing females and their babies is the height of cowardous. Killing kittens is illegal. Males only.	The Department tries to conduct all hunting seasons during periods when the greatest proportion of young are weaned from parental care. Occasional young may be orphaned, but that is avoided as much as possible through management actions like: reduced female take, unlawful to harvest adult female with young present, training, etc.
No hunting with dogs.	The Department is currently providing cougar hound hunt opportunity as directed by specific legislation. The Department does not have legislative authority to provide hound hunt opportunity beyond this level.
NO HUNTING. Create educational outreach campaigns as primary method for wildlife management instead. Can you not develop some HUMANE methods of managing our state's wild animals ???	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and cougar hunting is one type of activity under this mandate, as long as hunting levels are consistent with long-term, viable cougar populations.
Not sure how you can conclude that using the average female harvest over the past 3 years will result in a sustainable harvest without some additional information on cougar numbers. What is used as the population growth model? The proposed quota could lead to cougar numbers increasing or declining within a CMU depending on population size and other mortality factors affecting females.	We used a wide array of parameters from research studies (survival, litter production, mortality factors, age distribution) to evaluate the status of cougar populations then calculate for each level of hunting (male and female) the result impacts to the population. This level of female harvest has the highest probability of resulting in a stable cougar population.
outrageous.....period	Thank you for your comment.
Please move away from recreation which includes harvesting females on already fragile population.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and cougar hunting is one type of activity under this mandate, as long as hunting levels are consistent with long-term, viable cougar populations. Generally, the state's cougar population is considered healthy and viable.
Please to not allow hunting of cougars. Seek more humane ways to manage wildlife populations. Recent studies have shown that cougar populations are actually in decline. In addition, the increase in cougar hunting has not been shown to solve cougar-human conflicts (Gross L (2008) No Place for Predators? PLoS Biol 6(2): e40)	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and cougar hunting is one type of activity under this mandate, as long as hunting levels are consistent with long-term, viable cougar populations.
Recent studies have shown that Cougar populations are actually in decline. The latest Washington State cougar population research reports that a rise in cougar hunting on a fragile population has not solved cougar-human conflicts.	The recommended level of harvest is for stable cougar populations. This is a 40% reduction in harvest in the areas that were declining (NE WA). It is important to remember that the management objective in the 2003-09 plan was to cause a decline while maintaining healthy, viable populations.
Recent studies have shown that Cougar populations are actually in decline. See the latest Washington State cougar population research, which reports that a rise in cougar hunting on a fragile population has not solved cougar-human conflicts. (http://biology.plosjournals.org/perlserv/?request=get-document&doi=10.1371/journal.pbio.0060040)	The recommended level of harvest is for stable cougar populations. This is a 40% reduction in harvest in the areas that were declining (NE WA). It is important to remember that the management objective in the 2003-09 plan was to cause a decline while maintaining healthy, viable populations.

SOME AREAS NEED MORE FEMALES KILLED	This level of harvest is to achieve stable populations. Additional female take has a higher probability of causing a decline in cougar populations.
the harvest limit of 53 females is way to low should be increase	This level of harvest is to achieve stable populations. Additional female take has a higher probability of causing a decline in cougar populations.
The latest Washington State cougar population research states that a rise in cougar hunting on a fragile population has not solved cougar-human conflicts. (http://biology.plosjournals.org/perlserv/?request=get-document&doi=10.1371/journal.pbio.0060040&ct=1).	The recommended level of harvest is for stable cougar populations. This is a 40% reduction in harvest in the areas that were declining (NE WA). It is important to remember that the management objective in the 2003-09 plan was to cause a decline while maintaining healthy, viable populations.
There must be more humane ways to manage wildlife populations on lands already stressed by human encroachment then shooting them.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and cougar hunting is one type of activity under this mandate, as long as hunting levels are consistent with long-term, viable cougar populations.
This seems too high a figure - for such an uncertain population	The recommended level of harvest is for stable cougar populations. This is a 40% reduction in harvest in the areas that were declining (NE WA). It is important to remember that the management objective in the 2003-09 plan was to cause a decline while maintaining healthy, viable populations.
Washington State Cougar Population Research indicates that cougar populations in Washington are declining and that increased cougar hunting is not resulting in a decrease in cougar/human conflicts. Please change your focus from more and more hunting/killing to sensibly targeting specific problem animals.	We do target specific problem animals on a case by case basis. However, the Department is also mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and cougar hunting is one type of activity under this mandate, as long as hunting levels are consistent with long-term, viable cougar populations. In addition, WDFW data on the pilot cougar hunting program does show a decline in reported conflicts.
Washington State Cougar Population Research indicates that cougar populations in Washington are declining and that increased cougar hunting is not resulting in a decrease in cougar/human conflicts. Please change your focus from more and more hunting/killing to sensibly targeting specific problem animals.	We do target specific problem animals on a case by case basis. However, the Department is also mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and cougar hunting is one type of activity under this mandate, as long as hunting levels are consistent with long-term, viable cougar populations. In addition, WDFW data on the pilot cougar hunting program does show a decline in reported conflicts.
Where is the objective on safety cougar removals?	Strategy C on objective 84.
Why are this many females being hunted when studies are showing a DECLINE in the total population?	The recommended level of harvest is for stable cougar populations. This is a 40% reduction in harvest in the areas that were declining (NE WA). It is important to remember that the management objective in the 2003-09 plan was to cause a decline while maintaining healthy, viable populations.
Please to not allow hunting of cougars. Seek more humane ways to manage wildlife populations. Recent studies have shown that cougar populations are actually in decline. In addition, the increase in cougar hunting has not been shown to solve cougar-human conflicts (Gross L (2008) No Place for Predators? PLoS Biol 6(2): e40)	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and cougar hunting is one type of activity under this mandate, as long as hunting levels are consistent with long-term, viable cougar populations.
Please move away from recreation which includes harvesting females on already fragile population.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and cougar hunting is one type of activity under this mandate, as long as hunting levels are consistent with long-term, viable cougar populations.
Killing females and their babies is the height of cowardous. Killing kittens is illegal. Males only.	The Department tries to conduct all hunting seasons during periods when young are weaned from there parental care. Occasional young may be orphaned, but that is avoided as much as possible through management actions like: reduced female take, unlawful to harvest adult female with young present, training, etc.
We would like some clarification of the 53 female target. What is the basis of the number? Sustainable cougar population goals should not exclude CMU 2 and 9. There is no scientific basis for doing so nor is there any data to support "public safety" hunts as they are currently structured. Education and stricter complaint follow-up protocols, not drastic reduction of cougar populations are the appropriate vehicles for cougar management.	We used a wide array of parameters from research studies (survival, litter production, mortality factors, age distribution) to evaluate the status of cougar populations then calculate for each level of hunting (male and female) the result impacts to the population. This level of female harvest has the highest probability of resulting in a stable cougar population. CMUs 2 and 9 are excluded because they are not cougar habitat (Urban areas of Puget Sound lowlands and farmland of Columbia Basin)
Objective 84: Minimize negative human-cougar interactions so that the "number of interactions per capita" is constant or declining form 2007 levels.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Absolutely! And minimizing this includes very strong educational programs that involved changing human behavior (such as leaving pets outdoors).	Thank you for your comment.
allow hound hunting.	Use dogs to hunt cougar for public safety purposes is currently lawful under specific Commission authority.
Allow the use of hounds in these areas and allow the cats causing problems to move back into their proper habitat	Use dogs to hunt cougar for public safety purposes is currently lawful under specific Commission authority.
As above, create educational outreach campaigns and find humane methods of managing cougars - NOT HUNTING.	The Department is currently drafting a cougar education and outreach plan.

Can't be done! Don't waste time on this	Thank you for your comment.
Do not, under any circumstances, relocate problem cougars to another area...	Some cougars that show up in areas that are not traditionally considered cougar habitat or do not cause a significant problem are relocated. In addition, there is ongoing research evaluating the effectiveness of relocation and whether the animal is prone to conflict with people.
Education	The Department is currently drafting a cougar education and outreach plan.
Education is the answer, not destroying the animals.	The Department is currently drafting a cougar education and outreach plan.
Fine ranchers for feeding the cougars. They must us predation deterrent fencing, guard dogs and not free range their herds. Cougar populations will decline on their own. Interactions decline best when adult cats are alive to lead their young away from conflicts.	The Department does not have the authority to issue fines for this purpose. The Department is in the process of developing a cougar education and outreach plan to address many of these issues.
Identify what constitutes a negative human-cougar interaction. People's opinions of concern when seeing a cougar vary. One person may see a cougar while in their car and feel threatened while someone who is outside and sees one run off may not feel threatened at all.	The Department is currently doing this as a part of the scoping process for our draft cougar education and outreach plan.
More PUBLIC EDUCATION.	The Department is currently drafting a cougar education and outreach plan.
Need less developments building on valuable wildlife habitat.	The Department is currently drafting a cougar education and outreach plan.
No hunting with dogs. Worry about automobile accidents and war	The Department is currently evaluating whether using dogs to hunt cougar provides any benefit to reducing conflict or enhancing overall management.
not interested	Thank you for your comment.
ok	Thank you for your comment.
Replace "form" with "from". Add: ", using non-lethal means such as relocation when ever possible. When an animal is killed, provide mandatory reporting."	Thank you for your comment. All cougar hunters are required to report their harvest.
The latest Washington State cougar population research states that a rise in cougar hunting on a fragile population has not solved cougar-human conflicts. (http://biology.plosjournals.org/perlserv/?request=get-document&doi=10.1371/journal.pbio.0060040&ct=1)	Please review the Department's report on the effectiveness of the pilot cougar hunting program at www.wdfw.wa.gov.
This objective is worthy of support. Just common sense.	Thank you for your comment.
Very Good idea.	Thank you for your comment.
We support the stated intent to reduce negative human-cougar interactions but we are leery about the validity of human-cougar interaction reports especially if they are concentrated in a particular area where there is a well-known political agenda relative to cougars. We believe there are biases and other problems with the verifiability of the complaint data. Therefore we do not support this objective if it is intended as a baseline for management as a whole or in some specified GMUs unless the protocols are significantly tightened, scientifically driven and more consistent with real threats to human safety.	We did re-examine our verification protocols in 2000. Confirmed cougar incidents either require evidence (tracks, depredated carcass with evidence it was a cougar, etc) or testimony by the reporting party that is consistent with cougar behavior, size, shape, etc.
Absolutely! And minimizing this includes very strong educational programs that involved changing human behavior (such as leaving pets outdoors).	Thank you for your comment.
Fine ranchers for feeding the cougars. They must us predation deterrent fencing, guard dogs and not free range their herds. Cougar populations will decline on their own. Interactions decline best when adult cats are alive to lead their young away from conflicts.	The Department does not have the authority to issue fines for this purpose. The Department is in the process of developing a cougar education and outreach plan to address many of these issues.
We support the stated intent to reduce negative human-cougar interactions but we are skeptical about the validity of human-cougar interaction reports especially if they are concentrated in a particular area where there is a well-known political agenda relative to cougars. We believe there are biases and other problems with the verifiability of the complaint data. Therefore we do not support this objective if it is intended as a baseline for management as a whole or in some specified GMUs unless the protocols are significantly tightened, scientifically driven and more consistent with real threats to human safety.	We did re-examine our verification protocols in 2000. Confirmed cougar incidents either require evidence (tracks, depredated carcass with evidence it was a cougar, etc) or testimony by the reporting party that is consistent with cougar behavior, size, shape, etc.
Objective 85: Account for all human related cougar mortalities.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
document all cougar/human interactions too.	We do document all reported human-cougar incidents.
I have seen many instances where the wrong Cougar was killed. I believe that in circumstances where people violate their territory the animal should not be killed. It depends on the situation and should not be a blanket policy.	Thank you for your comment.
I strongly support this objective.	Thank you for your comment.
if you can	Thank you for your comment.
not interested	Thank you for your comment.
Please do so that we truly understand what are actual incidents.	Thank you for your comment.
Probably unattainable since illegal kills, highway accidents, and tribal harvest will not be reported.	Thank you for your comment.
That's being done now, isn't it?	Yes.
Yes.	Thank you for your comment.
Please do so that we truly understand what are actual incidents.	Thank you for your comment.

Absolutely.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 86: Develop a report that describes the demographic and behavioral differences between cougar populations in suburban versus rural environments.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
better leave this one behind. Pretty obvious. Study people instead!	Thank you for your comment.
Good idea. The public needs to be more informed of cougar problems	Thank you for your comment.
more density for humans, less encroachment on cougar habitat is seldom mentioned. God forbid we Americans actually make a sacrifice for anything. How do we expect other countries to maintain their populations if our response is to kill? Suggest perhaps a type of wildlife birth control.	Thank you for your comment.
no	Thank you for your comment.
ok	Thank you for your comment.
That's pretty self explanatory so why spend good money on a paper trail?	There is very limited research information on cougars living near suburban environments.
This might yield some interesting results if used in the correct manner. I can also see how it would be exploited by those who believe Cougars should be eliminated or left open to sport hunting.	Thank you for your comment.
This report would be very useful in educating the public. Please do!	Thank you for your comment.
This seems to be a good idea.	Thank you for your comment.
This would be useful. It would also be useful to follow up on the WSU research that looked at the effects of cougar control hunts in Units xxxx to build on the literature regarding hunted populations and the potential implications for cougar-human interactions. It is clear that there is a gradient of scientic opinion on this subject with important implications for cougar understanding and management.	Thank you for your comment.
Very good. Increased info is always welcome	Thank you for your comment.
Very important.	Thank you for your comment.
This report would be very useful in educating the public. Please do!	Thank you for your comment.
Yes.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 87: Provide funding through state migratory bird stamp/print revenues and outside grants to conserve/enhance 1000 acres of new habitat annually for all migratory birds.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
A fine goal. Stopping draing of fields better.	Thanks for your comments.
acquiring habitat should get more credit that enhancing habitat.	Acquisition is one of the main priorities of the program.
I support this provided public access is allowed, for hunting, bird watching, hiking, camping, etc.	Areas acquired / enhanced are open to access for hunting and fishing and other uses, with a few exceptions
I'm not informed on any of the bird info so I'm going to pass on these questions.	Thanks for your comments.
Yes!! Also, demand that wetland filling permits be decreased and limited.	Thanks for your comments.
Yes, we need more habitat for our birds.	Thanks for your comments.
Increase Stamp Price = To Fed Stamp	The Waterfowl Advisory Group plans on taking this recommendation to the Legislature.
Objective 88: Manage waterfowl populations consistent with population objectives outlined in Table 1, developed considering NAWMP, Pacific Flyway Council, and Joint Venture plans.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
As with all our state's wild animals, birds should be protected. Their habitats should be protected.	Thanks for your comments.
need to add swans as a huntable waterfowl...	If swan populations continue to increase, this will be considered in the next edition of the Game Management Plan.
Trumpeter and Tundra swans also need a wintering index for our state. A 5-year swan survey needs to continue even if the 5-year Alaska breeding survey is terminated at some point in the future.	Swans are monitored in Washington through the Midwinter Waterfowl Survey. Population objectives have been established at the flyway level based on breeding numbers. Specific wintering objectives can be considered for the next plan revision.
very good	Thanks for your comments.
Want is Table 1? Yes.	Thanks for your comments.
Objective 89: Document distribution, movements, and survival in accordance with flyway management goals.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Objective 90: Minimize mortality due to disease and contaminants.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
are you vaguely talking about lead shot here?	Nontoxic shot is already required for waterfowl. Additional restrictions are being considered in the upland bird section of the plan.
Be more specific here. Also add: ", in collaboration with bird and other wildlife organizations of Washington State."	Collaboration with other organizations is implied in all waterfowl management activities.
Lead is dead. Get the lead out!	Additional restrictions are being considered in the upland bird section of the plan.
ok	Thanks for your comments.

One significant way to minimize mortality in some species is to ban the use of lead shot, not only where we have waterfowl, but upland birds, including mourning doves.	Additional restrictions are being considered in the upland bird section of the plan.
Yes!!	Thanks for your comments.
Objective 91: Increase accuracy of surveys to measure harvest, number of hunters, and effort, accurate to ±10% at the 90% CI for each management unit.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
The Sea Duck reporting card and system need to be revamped in this next package. This a ridiculous system instituted of late which is not practical in any way for the sportsmen. To try to immediately record upon kill in winter conditions on the salt water is not practical and is obviously a mandate from a group of biologists that have never hunted Salt water Waterfowl in winter conditions. Another crazy mandate from a department out of touch with the sportsmen of this state.	We are working on getting all harvest report cards printed through the WILD system on more durable paper.
the survey when you buy a hunting license are probably not accurate	The HIP survey is used to increase the accuracy and precision of harvest surveys, by stratified sampling based on past harvest.
Yes.	Thanks for your comments.
Objective 92: Continue current policies to maximize duck hunting recreation consistent with USFWS Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) regulation packages, considering duck availability during fall and winter.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
by all means - we are in this together.	Thanks for your comments.
limited season & number	Thanks for your comments.
no	Thanks for your comments.
Yes, and lower tags for dwindling populations.	Thanks for your comments.
Objective 93: Maximize goose-hunting recreation consistent with Pacific Flyway Council plans, considering goose availability during fall and winter.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Increase goose harvest bag limits for Canadian Geese.	Bag limits are set based on consideration of population status.
limited season and number	Bag limits are set based on consideration of population status.
no	Thanks for your comments.
Strongly agree, we have lots of geese now.	Thanks for your comments.
Yes.	Thanks for your comments.
Objective 94: Distribute harvest evenly over public hunting areas.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
end harvest	Managed hunting is a legitimate recreational activity.
good idea	Thanks for your comments.
how?	Use of game reserves has assisted in distributing harvest.
impossible, ducks go where they want to.	Use of game reserves has assisted in distributing harvest.
need to add swans as a huntable species by permit	Not applicable to objective.
no	Thanks for your comments.
OK	Thanks for your comments.
Yes.	Thanks for your comments.
Objective 95: Maintain hunter numbers between 35,000-45,000 and recreational use days between 300,000-500,000, consistent with population objectives.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
As hunter numbers decrease, so should Dept expenditures on waterfowl issues	Waterfowl conservation activities should not be exclusively tied to hunter numbers.
lower numbers	Objectives were selected based on past trends in hunter numbers and waterfowl abundance.
No. Hunters will decide that.	Objectives were selected based on past trends in hunter numbers and waterfowl abundance.
95	Thanks for your comments.
Too high. Please lower to 30,000 hunters and 300,000 maximum tags.	Objectives were selected based on past trends in hunter numbers and waterfowl abundance.
yes	Thanks for your comments.
Objective 96: Generate or support at least one publication every year regarding waterfowl research or management.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
? Over the years - how will have these worked?	Publications provide important documentation and peer review of research and management activities.
Again, enough on publications. Use money for habitat and wildlife.	Publications provide important documentation and peer review of research and management activities.
New information is always welcomed.	Thanks for your comments.
no	Thanks for your comments.
ok	Thanks for your comments.

spend money on habitat improvement and access to hunting areas	Publications provide important documentation and peer review of research and management activities.
yes	Thanks for your comments.
Yes. Also promote duck stamps among environmental groups for habitat restoration projects.	Objective 97 has been modified to provide links to wildlife organization web sites.
Objective 97: Generate at least five information and education products each year to improve transfer of information to public.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
2	Thanks for your comments.
Already being done. Again, use money for habitat and wildlife.	I & E products promote better understanding of and support for waterfowl management issues.
Education also needs to include the current nontoxic shot regulations and penalties for noncompliance as well as why we need to use nontoxic shot, not just to protect waterfowl--also include information on human health issues with lead shot.	This information has recently been provided in the waterfowl / upland game pamphlet.
in crucial matters - ok.	Thanks for your comments.
no	Thanks for your comments.
OK	Thanks for your comments.
spend money on habitat improvement and access to hunting areas	I & E products promote better understanding of and support for waterfowl management issues.
why is this so specific compared with similar objectives for other game species?	The plan strives to provide measurable objectives where possible.
yes	Thanks for your comments.
Yes and on a broader scale, especially the habitat interface and cities where rural people usually work.	Thanks for your comments.
Objective 98: Target a 90% compliance rate for waterfowl hunting regulations (i.e., 90% of hunters checked are in compliance with regulations).	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
100% SHOULD BE THE GOAL	Target compliance rates are constrained by staffing levels.
Add: ", and increase the severity of fines and license revocation in the case of regulation violation."	Additional fines and license revocation penalties have been added for many violations.
Be sure to have the Director support the enforcement officers who do write tickets for noncompliance. My recent encounter with one enforcement officer regarding illegal use of lead shot on WDFW lands was: "Yep, it happens all the time. Not a big deal."	Thanks for your comments.
definitely	Thanks for your comments.
Dusky goose identification requirements is a FARCE. Measure there beak in millimeter? What a joke.	These regulations are necessary to distinguish and manage Canada goose subspecies.
Make it 95% and write more tickets.	Target compliance rates are constrained by staffing levels.
make it 98%	Target compliance rates are constrained by staffing levels.
should already be	Thanks for your comments.
Yes	Thanks for your comments.
Objective 99: Quantify and reduce habitat loss by developing habitat maps and management guidelines.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
How is developing maps and guidelines going to reduce habitat loss?	Maps allow tracking of habitat trends so that losses can be quantified and reduced.
We need this very badly	Thanks for your comments.
YES. Less destruction of ALL animals' habitats PLEASE.	Thanks for your comments.
Objective 100: Provide funding through state migratory bird stamp/print revenues to conserve/ enhance 50 acres of habitat annually for doves, pigeons, coots, and snipe.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
50 acres should be a minimum. Coots should come under waterfowl - they are basically a non-hunted entity.	Coots are not waterfowl and are hunted during established seasons.
Finance habitat through money from non-hunters.	Non-hunters pay access fees and indirect costs to support habitat programs.
I support this provided it does not result in denied access to the public.	Thanks for your comments.
We Don't have very many doves in our area east of chattleroy, WY.	Thanks for your comments.
Yes.	Thanks for your comments.
Objective 101: Meet Pacific Flyway Council population objectives for mourning doves and band-tailed pigeons.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
maybe	Thanks for your comments.
ok	Thanks for your comments.
Surpass them.	Thanks for your comments.
yes	Thanks for your comments.
Objective 102: Document distribution, movements, and survival in accordance with flyway management goals.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
do so on the web, save money for habitat restoration	Thanks for your comments.

ok	Thanks for your comments.
yes - but treat them as "inconviences"	Thanks for your comments.
Yes.	Thanks for your comments.
Objective 103: Minimize mortality due to disease and contaminants.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
A ban on the use of lead shot for dove hunting will help reduce mortality. More scientific studies are showing that they ingest lead shot and die. Also, I heard a dove hunter say the he shoots doves over the wetland areas near Moses Lake, using lead shot. He says a lot of lead goes into the wetland/lakes this way. Prohibit this to minimize mortality to all species.	Additional restrictions are being considered in the upland bird section of the plan.
Objective 104: Increase accuracy of surveys to measure statewide harvest, number of hunters, and effort, accurate to ±10% at the 90% CI.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Objective 105: Maximize recreational opportunities consistent with population status.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
longer season would be nice	Dove season was extended from 15 to 30 days in 2008.
not interested	Thanks for your comments.
Not necessary. Educational outreach is enough.	Thanks for your comments.
ok	Thanks for your comments.
strongly agree	Thanks for your comments.
Swan Hunting management should be consistent with population status and there is definitely a huntable population in Washington State. WDFW refuses to manage this waterfowl population from a sustainable use and hunting perspective. Meanwhile most surrounding states in the Pacific Northwest allow Swan Hunting in the Pacific Flyway and do not have nearly as many wintering or migrating Swans as Washington State has. This subject should be part of the next 6 year package.	Not applicable to objective.
vague	Thanks for your comments.
yes - but successful fowl management does that.	Thanks for your comments.
Objective 106: Maintain a minimum of 5,000 hunters and current recreational use days between 90,000-110,000, consistent with population status.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Add: ", and increase the severity of fines and license revocation in the case of regulation violation."	Additional fines and license revocation penalties have been added for many violations.
great idea!	Thanks for your comments.
Hunting should be limited to minimum number of hunters.	Objectives were selected based on past trends in hunter numbers and waterfowl abundance.
maintain or lower	Objectives were selected based on past trends in hunter numbers and waterfowl abundance.
Minimum should be 2500 hunters.	Objectives were selected based on past trends in hunter numbers and waterfowl abundance.
Not your business. "Grow it they will come"	Objectives were selected based on past trends in hunter numbers and waterfowl abundance.
reduce to 75,000-90,000	Objectives were selected based on past trends in hunter numbers and waterfowl abundance.
yes	Thanks for your comments.
Objective 107: Implement effective nuisance/damage management strategies to help resolve issues as they arise and report activities in the annual Status and Trend report.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Agree, but do so with nuisance hunts or trapping and transporting turkeys to areas which can support a larger population.	The agency has been increasingly aggressive in using hunting as a tool to reduce population growth. We will continue to utilize hunting seasons when at all possible, but will consider alternate hunting tools (e.g., nuisance hunts) and other tools described in the Turkey Management Plan. Currently trapping and transplanting nuisance turkeys is one of our least preferred tools since turkeys currently occupy nearly all suitable habitat. Turkeys that are trapped are relocated within occupied turkey range at the direction of the Regional staff.
Approve. (multiple comments)	Thank you for your support
D? the rural garden?? They do like strawberries, cabbage etc? They fly you knows - netting over the top + doesn't stop them for long.	The Department continues to work with damage and nuisance issues within existing staff availability. If issues continue to arise, please contact your local WDFW office.
Emphasis on specific GMU or hot spot areas.	Hunting is one of our preferred methods to address nuisance issues. The Department will continue to consider a variety of options, including but not limited to, special seasons in specific Game Management Units.
Give land owners damage tags if they ask for them.	WDFW Enforcement staff are the first response to nuisance wildlife complaints. At times officers have issued kill permits for turkey problems as appropriate. That practice will likely continue.

maybe	The Department will continue to use a variety of methods to address issues. If there is a specific concern, please contact your local WDFW office.
Monitor incoming complaints.	WDFW Enforcement staff currently track nuisance and damage wildlife complaints as part of their normal response duties. In addition, the Department may develop a more centralized database to track turkey complaint issues.
The fall hunting season for either sex in eastern Washington should be a good tool.	The agency has been increasingly aggressive in using hunting as a tool to reduce population growth. We will continue to utilize hunting seasons when at all possible, but will consider alternate hunting tools (e.g., nuisance hunts) and other tools described in the Turkey Management Plan. Changes to fall season hunting opportunity will continually be evaluated and opportunity expanded or contracted as needed.
Use master/youth/disable hunters to help reduce the nuisance turkeys	Hunting is one of our preferred methods to address nuisance issues. The Department will continue to consider a variety of options, including utilizing specific groups of hunters when that option provides the best possible results.
We need to relocate this problem birds to new areas throughout Washington to increase our hunting opportunities.	Currently trapping and transplanting nuisance turkeys is one of our least preferred tools since turkeys currently occupy nearly all suitable habitat. Turkeys that are trapped are relocated within occupied turkey range at the direction of the Regional staff.
Consider reduction in 2nd turkey tag cost to encourage more hunters to harvest turkeys.	The Department of Fish and Wildlife does not have the authority to change the cost of a turkey tag. All license and tag fees are set by the Washington Legislature.
Objective 108: Monitor turkey populations on a yearly basis.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Agree, but by GMUs	The Department currently monitors turkeys in two ways. First, turkey harvest information is collected through our mandatory reporting system. This data, with can be used as an indicator to population status, is collected and reported on a GMU by GMU basis. Additionally, the Department has begun collecting winter turkey surveys where the same routes are surveyed each winter during the months of December and January. Currently these surveys are only conducted in northeastern Washington, but may be expanded to other parts of the state.
"Approve" and "Strongly agree" (multiple comments)	Thank you for your support
Ask local land owners if they would do a count.	The Department has involved local citizens in collecting the winter survey route data. Other means of collecting data (e.g., rural mail route carriers) could be used, but they are not as effective as conducting the survey routes. If other citizens are interested in helping with the surveys, please contact the local WDFW office.
Put some on my property	The Wild Turkey Management Plan identifies those parts of the state that we are actively managing or considering for future management. If you are in an area where we are managing turkeys and we have a need to release birds, your property could be considered. Please contact your local WDFW office if you have questions.
Turkeys are over populated in the north east regions. we need longer seasons and cheaper tags.	Turkey populations in northeastern Washington are as high as they have ever been. The Department has been increasing hunting opportunities over the past 5 years, especially with fall hunting. In 2000, there were 250 fall permits with a bag limit of one. In 2008, there is a general season hunt (no special permit required) with a two bird limit and a late fall permit season with 800 permits available. Additional hunting opportunities will be discussed for the 2009-2011 hunting seasons. The Department of Fish and Wildlife does not have the authority to change the cost of a turkey tag as all license and tag fees are set by the Washington Legislature.
Western Washington needs biological diversity in turkey flock, new birds!	Western Washington turkey flocks have not increased like those in the eastern part of the state. Generally, genetic diversity is not the reason turkeys, and other game birds, do not flourish. More often, there are other limiting factors, including habitat quality and productivity. Western Washington does not have some of the food items that prove valuable in other states and much of that part of the state gets more rain than would be ideal for turkeys. The Wild Turkey Management plan identifies the need to investigate this issue more thoroughly.
Use the WANWTF more as a partner in these affairs, the WDFW seems to have a semi- negative persona when it comes to turkeys.	The Department has involved NWTF members to help implement the wintertime road surveys in northeastern Washington. We will continue to try to involved those who are interested as other opportunities arise.
Objective 109: Complete the northwestern Washington turkey introduction evaluation and implement recommended strategies by June 2011.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.

Gee whiz! When you see 30-40 of them marching along do we really need more release sites??	Currently, the potential introduction area does not support a wild population of turkeys. The Wild Turkey Management Plan outlines a process for evaluating the possibility of introducing turkeys to this area. Many different issues are evaluated, including habitat suitability, potential nuisance and damage issues, and recreational and economic benefits.
Maybe	The Department will evaluate the potential introduction based on several factors (e.g., potential nuisance and damage issues, impacts to other management actions, impacts to the long-term survival of state and federally listed or sensitive species, and recreational and economic benefits) and make a decision once that evaluation is complete.
Why is this taking so long (and presumably with more expense)?	It is important that the evaluation process be thorough and lead to a well thought out decision. The evaluation should be completed by the summer of 2008.
Transfer PMU10 nuisance birds to east slopes of Cascades to boost genetics in those flocks, they seem to be doing OK but could use a shot in the arm.	The 2005-2010 Wild Turkey Management Plan does not include direction to release additional birds along the eastern slope of the Cascade Mountains. When the Plan is revised, we will reconsider the issue, but until then, we will continue to evaluate the area's ability to sustain turkey populations over the long term. If continual releases are needed to maintain a population, it may not be the most suitable turkey habitat. In general, game bird populations do not suffer from genetic diversity problems. This is especially true in areas like the east front of the Cascades that received birds from a number of source populations.
In 2005, Conservation Northwest commented on the Draft Turkey Management Plan. Conservation Northwest is concerned that the introduction of non native turkeys may have adverse impacts on native wildlife. There has been very little research conducted to determine what impacts non-native turkeys might have and feel it is irresponsible for the Department to continue introducing turkeys until such research has been completed. In our 2005 comments we requested that the Department: Complete research on the likelihood of introduced turkeys becoming pests, including an assessment of potential costs to the state and private citizens; Complete thorough research regarding the impacts of introduced turkeys on public and private property, natural resources, native fish and wildlife, and especially threatened and endangered fish, wildlife and plants, (this must be done before new introductions take place); Complete research on the diseases and pathogens carried and spread by introduced turkeys; Complete a comprehensive new Management Plan Consult with the US Fish and Wildlife Service as to the possible effect on threatened and endangered and sensitive species; Complete the SEPA or NEPA Process; Develop an eradication plan and budget with a 100% likelihood of eradicating all turkeys from this State, that can be enabled if turkeys are found to impact threatened, endangered or sensitive species; To our knowledge, the above steps have not yet been completed and we request that until such steps are taken that the Department cease introducing turkeys into the wild within occupied units and especially in new areas. We requested that the department cease introducing turkeys into the wild, both within occupied units and especially in new areas; The Department develop an eradication plan and budget with a 100% likelihood of eradicating all turkeys from this State, that can be enabled if turkeys are found to impact threatened, endangered or sensitive species. We request the following long term steps; Complete research on the likelihood of introduced turkeys becoming pests, including an assessment of potential costs to the state and private citizens, Complete thorough research regarding the impacts of introduced turkeys on public and private property, natural resources, native fish and wildlife, and especially threatened and endangered fish, wildlife and plants, (this must be done before new introductions take place,) Complete research on the diseases and pathogens carried and spread by introduced turkeys, Complete a new Management Plan that is comprehensive, Consult with the US Fish and Wildlife Service as to the possible effect on threatened and endangered and sensitive species. Complete the SEPA or NEPA Process.	Before turkeys are released into new areas in Washington, WDFW staff will investigate issues as outlined in the 2005-2010 Wild Turkey Management Plan, which went through a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review prior to being signed by the Director. Strategy (a) of this objective was modified to emphasize following the evaluation process outlined in the Turkey Plan.
Objective 110: By December 2009, develop a fall hunting opportunity recommendation that addresses concerns about population levels and fall/winter male turkey survival in PMU P10.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
A, B + C - Please Do if hunters would follow the land owners wishes. Perhaps the hunting wouldn't be an issue - Hey Like No Smokers!	Thank you for your support. The Department will continue to improve hunter education efforts and encourage hunters to be respectful of private property and landowner concerns.
By GMU	Turkey populations are generally managed by Population Management Unit (a group of Game Management Units (GMU)) since there is migration between adjacent GMUs. However, when specific issues arise, seasons are often managed on a GMU basis.

Right now there isn't a problem, Leave it alone.	The Department continues to receive a significant number of nuisance and damage complaints from landowners in northeastern Washington. In some cases, over 200 turkeys are spending large amounts of time in the middle of cattle feeding operations. The Department would rather provide additional hunting opportunities to help address these issues rather than resorting to other means.
Have the early fall hunt run a month, Yes that means it will run into the deer season but would give them a shot at the turkeys as well.. We need a over lap.. Most turkeys are down low in farm lands and not in the forested areas..	Major changes in fall hunting seasons will be discussed during development of the 3-year hunting season packages so there is appropriate opportunity to involve hunters. Public meetings will be held in 2008 for the 2009-11 3-year package. Changes to permit numbers and calendar date shifts will take place annually.
Objective 111: Over the next five years, increase the number of acres of private land available for public turkey hunting by 10% within priority turkey range.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
agree, but increase it to 20%.	Currently, WDFW has approximately 250,000 acres of private property enrolled in a WDFW access program in the areas supporting the best turkey populations (northeastern and southeastern Washington). A 10% increase would result in the addition of 25,000 acres. The Department has focused some existing staff time on increasing public access in northeastern Washington and would certainly try to increase more than 10% if possible. However, limitations in funding and available staff time will affect our ability to accomplish this goal.
Good idea, I support this	Thank you for your support. The WDFW private lands program has lost a majority of its funding and over 60% of its staff since 2003. We remain committed to accomplishing this goal, but these facts will impact our ability to reach it.
how?	With the loss of over $1 million in private lands program funding since 2003, this objective may be difficult to attain. Over the past 4 years, WDFW has been working with landowners to identify the issues most important to allowing public access. While it varies by landowner and by land use, it is important that the Department be able to help landowners address vandalism, trash dumping, fire, liability, road maintenance, safety, and general hunter behavior. In areas where we have private lands staff, we have been able to help address many of these issues. Concentrating staff time in areas of specific interest should help us address these issues with new landowners as well.
no	Research has shown that hunter access is one of the most important factors in hunter satisfaction. It is so important that studies show that access is one of the main reasons hunters have stopped hunting. The Department is interested in working with private landowners and hunters to provide opportunities in a manner acceptable to all.
Recommended by 20% or more with problem GMU area.	WDFW will continue to work with landowners experiencing nuisance and/or damage issues. We will also continue to emphasize the need to utilize hunting pressure to help address the issues. We will certainly try to increase more than 10%, but are limited by available staff time.
Respect! No Smoking, No garbage - Don't Drive over Crops close gates, don't damage fences, Respect!	The Department sees great value in private lands access and understands the pressures that can be placed on landowners. We are committed to providing hunters with information on proper private lands access etiquette and will continue to strive to improve hunter education and encourage hunters to be respectful of private property and landowner concerns.
Objective 112: By 2010, develop a set of criteria that, when met, would direct a change in season structure or hunting opportunity.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
agree, but by GMU	Turkey populations are generally managed by Population Management Unit (a group of Game Management Units (GMU)) since there is migration between adjacent GMUs. However, when specific issues arise, seasons are often managed on a GMU basis.
no	Current management is based on evaluating trends in turkey harvest over a period of time. While this method is usable, more defined criteria would allow for hunting opportunity to be managed to better optimize hunting opportunity.
not interested unless it would lower amount of hunting	Currently, hunting season recommendations are based on an evaluation of population trends indicated by annual turkey harvest. There are no defined "triggers" that would suggest an increase or a decrease in hunting opportunity, which would be available if criteria were developed.

With the exception of the Klickitat areas I see a decline in the turkey populations in Western Washington. I'm not sure why but I'm assuming it's due in part to predation. I hate to say it but perhaps the Easterns are not the best birds to be transplanting in this area. Are any of the other species more adaptable.	Research shows that the Rio Grande sub-species is potentially more adaptable (they currently exist in western Oregon at greater densities that the eastern subspecies in Washington). The 2005-2010 Wild Turkey Management Plan identifies southwestern Washington as an eastern sub-species area, but that could be re-visited when the plan is updated in 2010.
Objective 113: Conduct habitat improvement projects in key wild turkey management areas to accomplish multiple goals including addressing nuisance issues, improving public recreational opportunities, and improving habitat conditions for multiple species.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
By GMU	In general, habitat improvement projects would be done at a scale smaller than a GMU.
If you can afford it.	Habitat improvement projects can be expensive, depending on the project type. We anticipate working on public lands as well as developing partnerships with private landowners. The Department has dedicated turkey management funds, which will help move projects through, and we anticipate applying for habitat improvement grants as well.
Improve habitat for multiple species. Turkey population increases are incompatible.	Since turkeys are generalist feeders (I.e., they eat many things), habitat improvements that affect multiple species are a must. One example of a habitat improvement project that we may begin is to work with a variety of landowners to improve Oregon white oak habitat. Improving oak habitat will affect several species other than turkeys.
The management strategies appear sound. However, if you permit lead shot for turkey hunting, this is now being deposited not just in forested areas, but agricultural areas and more. A wide variety of species are increasingly exposed to lead shot. I realize very few shells are expended during a turkey hunt, but any lead shot is not healthy for the environment or the hunter who eats the turkey.	Non-toxic shot is increasingly available. The Department recommends that hunters use non-toxic shot (see page 13 in the 2007-08 Migratory Waterfowl and Upland Game Pamphlet). While the Department cannot regulate the use of lead shot for non-hunting related activities, Objective 126 in the 2009-2015 Game Management Plan outlines Department strategies for lead shot used for hunting.
To address nuisance bird, use the WANWTF to transfer some birds into existing areas in the Central Cascades to give boost to the genetics in those flocks, It wouldn't cost the WDFW much if you use the full capacity of the WANWTF	The NWTF has participated in several trapping projects, which has been helpful to the Department on several fronts. We plan to continue to utilize NWTF members as a resource for managers/biologists who need help. The 2005-2010 Wild Turkey Management Plan does not include direction to release additional birds along the eastern slope of the Cascade Mountains. When the Plan is revised, we will reconsider the issue, but until then, we will continue to evaluate the area's ability to sustain turkey populations over the long term. If continual releases are needed to maintain a population, it may not be the most suitable turkey habitat.
Objective 114: Support at least two research projects that increase our knowledge of wild turkeys in western habitats.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
agree - however it should address differences in habitat in the Chelan/ Kittitas area versus the northeast counties	According to the 2005-2010 Wild Turkey Management Plan, research proposals will address food habits, inter-specific competition, and habitat use. These projects should be applicable to many different parts of the state.
Continued introduction and habitat enhancement to Chelan and Kittitas counties.	The 2005-2010 Wild Turkey Management Plan does not identify additional introductions in Chelan and Kittitas counties. Additional releases will be evaluated when the Management Plan is updated. The Management Plan also calls for habitat improvements in key wild turkey management areas to accomplish multiple goals including addressing nuisance issues, improving public recreational opportunities, and improving habitat conditions for multiple species. Enhancement projects may take place in Chelan and/or Kittitas counties.
lots of available habitat low densities!	A potential research project listed in the 2005-2010 Wild Turkey Management Plan would identify potential limiting factors for low density populations in western Washington.
Better study of the Eastern and how they're adapting to W.Wa.	A potential research project listed in the 2005-2010 Wild Turkey Management Plan would identify potential limiting factors for low density populations in western Washington.
This should have been done before any consideration of the introduction of turkeys to the state.	The first known attempt to introduce turkeys into Washington was in 1913. Populations have been established in Washington since the early 1960's, before wild turkey research efforts began in earnest.
Objective 115: Utilize data collected in the 2005-07 mountain quail study to help determine distribution of potential mountain quail habitat in Washington by 2013	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Objective 116: Based on results from the first re-introduction effort in Asotin County, begin additional reestablishment in historic range in eastern Washington by 2014.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.

Objective 117: Maintain a limited hunting season for mountain quail in western Washington unless harvest declines by greater than 30% over 3 years.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
as soon as you can - 'hunters help'	The Department will investigate ways to improve harvest estimates, including using hunter report cards.
Get them established before allowing hunting, then 20% decline over 3 years.	Although the opportunity is limited to just a few counties, mountain quail have been established and hunted in western Washington for many years. The strategies in this objective guide the Department to identify cost-effective methods of improving the accuracy of harvest estimates, which are typically used as an index to population status. A 30% decline is likely appropriate as variations less than that over 3 years may not reflect a true reduction in population.
introduce new populations	The Department is currently involved in a tri-state mountain quail reintroduction project in southeastern Washington. If successful, other areas will be identified for a reintroduction project.
"no" or "no-reduce the season"	One of the legislative mandates for the Department of Fish and Wildlife is to maximize hunting and fishing recreation when possible. Mountain quail are classified as a game bird by the Fish and Wildlife Commission and current western Washington populations have supported a limited hunting season for many years. Increased knowledge of these populations will help ensure sustained recreational opportunity without impacting long-term population health.
Objective 118: Develop one additional habitat management publication by 2014.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
"No", "Monies better used for habitat" , and "why"	Forest grouse habitat is distributed widely across Washington's forested landscape. As such, it is often found on commercial timber lands. The habitat management publication described here would be focused on providing management alternatives to timberland owners and managers, which is likely to be the most cost effective way to impact large acreages over time. Current guidance documents are many years old and advances in biological information and forestry techniques show a need to provide updated information.
Objective 119: Improve harvest estimation precision at the WDFW regional level.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Hard to do as most grouse are just incidental kills while out deer, elk, or bear hunting.	Improving harvest estimation at the WDFW Regional level may be difficult. While a substantial number of forest grouse are harvested by deer and elk hunters, studies have shown that the majority of grouse harvest takes place during the weeks prior to the beginning of modern firearm big game hunting.
Objective 120: Improve accuracy of hunters reporting correct species of forest grouse in the annual harvest report and report findings in the annual Status and Trend Report.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Education	Providing more educational materials to hunters will be a large part of reaching this objective.
I support this. Additionally, WDFW used to place "collection barrels" in hunting areas where hunters would deposit one wing from grouse, perhaps to assist with this WDFW should re-consider incorporating these barrels.	Collection barrel data was one of the things that lead us to understand how incorrect hunter reporting was. It is possible that barrels would be used again in the future.
I think a punch card would be good. Numbers are down. Then you can see the dates that most grouse are killed	WDFW will evaluate a variety of methods of improving harvest data for forest grouse species. Punch cards may be a tool to use to improve harvest estimates, but may not improve reporting of the species killed.
Objective 121: Develop a report on hunting season impacts on grouse populations by 2010.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
no	Thank you for your comment.
No, spend money on habitat management	Quality habitat is certainly important to all wildlife species. The amount of money spent on developing a report of this type is not anticipated to significantly impact the Department's ability to affect forest grouse habitat quality. However, investigating this issue will help the Department answer questions about hunting season length or timing that continue to be raised.
None. Their populations are so tuned in with predation, weather, timber harvest, and access that hunting season stats would be greatly skewed by false info.	Thank you for your comment. A review of scientific literature on forest grouse biology and hunting will provide a foundation for the Department to definitively answer questions about the impacts of season length and other issues.

Shorten seasons. Later start, earlier end.	Thank you for your comment. A review of scientific literature on forest grouse biology and hunting will provide a foundation for the Department to definitively answer questions about the impacts of season length and other issues.
Objective 122: By 2014, increase the quantity and quality of pheasant habitat in select WDFW districts within identified key pheasant management areas (the Pheasant Focus Area).	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
agree, habitat improvement is the key to increasing the number of pheasants. Farmers have destroyed habitat by their practices of plowing to roads and eliminating cover along fence lines.	Thank you for your support. A 2003 pheasant management workshop identified habitat changes as the most significant impact to pheasant populations. The Department values private landowners and it will be important to work with private landowners to improve habitat.
Diversify and expand habitat. Attempt to plant more hens.	The Department will strive to increase the diversity of plants included in habitat improvements as well as lands enrolled in federal Farm Bill programs. There are no plans to release hen pheasants. Research has shown that releasing hen pheasants is not a viable population management technique.
"I support this" and "I strongly support this". (multiple comments)	Thank you for your support.
need more hunting areas	Some programs that the Department will use to improve habitat will also include increasing public access to private lands. In addition, WDFW staff will concentrate on increasing public pheasant hunting access on private lands within the pheasant focus area in southeastern WA.
This needs to be done as areas have diminished in quality over the years.	Thank you for your support. A 2003 pheasant management workshop identified habitat changes as the most significant impact to pheasant populations. The Department values private landowners and it will be important to work with private landowners to improve habitat.
Objective 123: Monitor population status and trend within the key areas identified for habitat improvement and document results in the annual Game Status Report.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
agree, Releasing hens with roosters would help to increase the wild population - not all released roosters are killed.	Thank you for your support. Studies show that using released pheasants is not a cost effective, viable population management technique.
"Approve" or "Strongly Agree"	Thank you for your support.
WDFW wants to increase agricultural acreage for pheasants-great. At the same time this opens up additional land for pollution from lead shot. Where WDFW has been involved in opening new areas, all of it needs to require the use of nontoxic shot. This will protect the land, other wildlife and humans from lead toxicity.	Non-toxic shot is increasingly available. The Department recommends that hunters use non-toxic shot (see page 13 in the 2007-08 Migratory Waterfowl and Upland Game Pamphlet). While the Department cannot regulate the use of lead shot for non-hunting related activities, Objective 126 in the 2009-2015 Game Management Plan outlines Department strategies for lead shot used for hunting.
Objective 124: By 2015, increase the number of hunters utilizing the pheasant focus area to 15,000 and provide a variety of hunting opportunities.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Add: ", and increase the severity of fines and license revocation in the case of regulation violation."	The WDFW does not have the authority to increase severity of fines associated with hunting violations as penalties associated with fish and wildlife violations are set by the Washington State Legislature.
"Strongly agree" and "I support this" (multiple comments)	Thank you for your support.
Get some pheasant populations back and you will get your hunters back	The connection between quality hunting opportunities and participation is a major driver in pheasant management proposals in this document.
I will probably never hunt pheasants on your release sites again because it is just to dangerous	Thank you for your comment. Hunting on release sites is not desirable for all hunters. However, we will continue to work to improve hunter safety.
no	Hunter surveys indicate that hunters desire improved pheasant populations and with that will come increased pheasant hunter participation.
no - they will decide - depending on pheasants	The connection between quality hunting opportunities and participation is a major driver in pheasant management proposals in this document.
Yes, but only after populations are well established in additional habitat.	Thank you for your support. Habitat improvement is a major objective listed in this document and continues to be major focus for the Game Division of WDFW.
Release of some hen pheasants along with roosters on the eastern Washington release sights would help educate young hunters that they cannot shot at anything that flushes and would help to reestablish a wild population of pheasants. Not all roosters that are released are killed by hunters. They are often seen in the spring looking for mates.	The pheasant release program is not a population management strategy, but rather a way to increase hunter opportunity. Studies show that using released pheasants is not a cost effective, viable population management technique.
Objective 125: Monitor upland game bird harvest on a yearly basis.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**

"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
"Strongly support" (multiple comments)	Thank you for your support
For Chukar and quail, it would be good to know the temporal distribution of harvest to answer the question: Are too many quail and chukar being harvested late in the season.	Typically, most upland game bird harvest takes place during the first few weeks of a season when hunter participation is highest. Hunter participation late in the season is much lower, thus harvest is lower.
I support this BUT these seems redundant... is this not all ready happening?	Yes, harvest monitoring is ongoing. Strategies within this objective relate to continuing existing estimation and improving harvest estimation, especially within the pheasant focus area in southeastern WA.
if you can afford it	The cost of conducting harvest estimates is certainly a consideration. We will aim identify cost-effective ways to increase the precision of our surveys.
Monitor harvest by date and mandatory harvest report. Determine seasons by harvest periods.	Monitoring upland game harvest through mandatory reporting would be very expensive and difficult to manage since there are not individual tags to report as with deer, elk, and other species where mandatory reporting is used.
no	Upland game harvest estimates help the Department monitor population status. Without monitoring population status, the Department would not be able to meet legislative or funding source requirements.
Objective 126: As new information and nontoxic alternatives become available, make nontoxic shot use recommendations to the Fish and Wildlife Commission through the 3-year season setting processes.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
"Strongly agree" (multiple comments)	Thank you for your comment
by all means - should have done this long ago	Thank you for your comment.
DO NOT SUPPORT! Lead is a natural element and has never been PROVEN to harm wildlife or humans unless ingested in huge quantities. I DO NOT SUPPORT !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!	While lead naturally occurs in the environment, studies have shown that even small amounts of ingested lead shot can be fatal to some wildlife.
I fully support the concept of a public outreach and education plan. The fact is that research already shows that the use of lead shot is not good for people or wildlife. Start this outreach immediately and ban the use of lead shot on all WDFW owned lands and where possible on all WDFW managed lands. The information already exists to present to the Commission. The recent conference in Boise, ID on Ingestion of Spent Lead Ammunition: Implications for Wildlife and Humans presented more than enough scientific studies to show the toxic and health hazardous effects of lead ammunition.	Thank you for your comment. The Department plans to evaluate the issue during the 2009-11 3-year season setting process and continue into future 3-year processes as needed.
I support this, but do we really understand or know how much of a problem lead shot truly is? Perhaps the "lead shot" issue is being blown out of proportion, do we have any real, accurate data, numbers, etc. to support banning lead shot other than it's a "feel good" thing?	Studies have identified the negative effects of lead shot and lead ammunition. As time passes, more information is reported in scientific literature and symposia.
Non-toxic shot should be mandatory!	Since 2001 the Department has followed a process to restrict the use of lead shot in areas that have the highest potential of lead shot ingestion by wildlife. Since the Fish and Wildlife Commission only has authority over hunting related uses of lead shot or regulations on WDFW owned or managed lands, not all lead shot use can be affected by Commission action (i.e., lead shot use for target practice cannot be regulated off WDFW lands).
possible	Thank you for your comment.
When using steel shot you are more likely to lose birds because they do not know they are shot. Lead shot is best for upland birds.	Studies of waterfowl hunting have shown that there is no significant difference in wounding loss between steel and lead shot. Since the ban on lead shot for waterfowl hunting, most hunters have become more familiar with performance of steel shot loads. Some nontoxic loads (e.g., bismuth, tungsten, HeviShot®) now available to hunters perform as well or better than older lead loads. As a consequence of hunter familiarity with steel shot loads and availability of new high-performance loads, concerns about use of nontoxic loads and excessive wounding loss have declined.
wounded or unretrieved upland game birds may be contributing to lead poisoning in predatory birds, eagles for instance. Research to determine if this is a significant issue may help determine if non-toxic shot options should be considered.	Biologists are currently investigating this issue. Results from these and other studies will be considered when evaluating potential lead shot restriction actions.
We should ban lead on ALL WDFW Lands & Lands under our control as soon as possible or the Anti lead people will and we won't like their version - King county could do it Today. - Its coming - The Spokane Review has articles every month or so - and this Friendly Country	Thank you for your comment. The Department plans to evaluate the issue during the 2009-11 3-year season setting process and continue into future 3-year processes as needed.
Lead shot is poisoning our environment and wildlife. A total ban on lead shot should be implemented and strongly enforced.	Thank you for your comment. The Department plans to evaluate the issue during the 2009-11 3-year season setting process and continue into future 3-year processes as needed.
What actions have other states taken?	The use of non-toxic shot is fairly common throughout the U.S. California has banned the use of all lead projectiles for hunting in all condor recovery areas. Twenty-three states, including South Dakota and Iowa, require nontoxic shot for upland game hunting on some or all state-managed lands. states have a variety of

It would be difficult to find non-toxic shot for some shotgun gauges. Public education is a MUST.	Any transition to non-toxic shot would need to be phased in over time. Part of that phase-in would include efforts to educate the public.
Non-toxic shot is very expensive	Current prices for steel shot are approaching that of lead shot. However, other alternatives (e.g., tungsten, HeviShot®) are much more expensive. While some alternatives are more expensive, supply and demand also contribute to the current cost.
I would support this idea if there was scientific evidence that upland bird hunting related shot was a significant wildlife hazard.	Biologists are currently investigating this issue. Results from these and other studies will be considered when evaluating potential lead shot restriction actions.
Objective 127: Continue to provide educational materials to hunters that describe the differences between upland game species and non-game upland birds.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
"Absolutely" or "support" (multiple comments)	Thank you for your support
need to manage somehow bird of prey as they seem to be a big issue between survival of upland birds and lack of survival.	Biologists from across the country agree that upland bird populations can be impacted by predation (all sources, not just birds of prey) when habitat conditions are not adequate. The Department is focusing management on improving habitat. In addition, birds of prey are protected by federal law and cannot be removed as part of a management program for upland birds.
Development of brochures should be kept to a minimum. Monies better utilized towards enforcement and habitat.	The Department has placed a priority on improving habitat conditions, however, there is still a need to provide hunters with information about similar species that are not hunted (e.g., sharp-tailed grouse)
Objective 128: Evaluate habitat enhancement efforts to determine their effects on pheasant population levels.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Don't we already know this?	The Department has evaluated few enhancement efforts to a level sufficient to determine specific causes of success or failure. Increased funding will allow more rigorous testing of enhancement techniques and programs.
protect CRP lands and charge penalties to take lands out of CRP	Landowners who enroll their land in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) enter into a contract with the federal government (through the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Farm Service Agency) that requires the landowner to plant and maintain permanent cover. There are stiff penalties for those who remove their lands from the program before the end of the contract term (usually 10 years). The Department of Fish and Wildlife does not have any authority over the CRP program.
Yes. Please only use native grass seed that is weed free. No Red Top or Canary Grass.	Thank you for your support. The species that are planted into habitat enhancement plots will vary by location. WDFW staff will work to identify those plants that are best suited to provide quality pheasant habitat while complying with county weed board regulations. Redtop and canary grass are not planted in our pheasant habitat enhancement plots.
Objective 129: Develop recommendations for legislative or other action to address the audit findings by 2011.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
"Strongly support" and "Support" (multiple comments)	Thank you for your support
No. Run it by the public first please.	The State Auditor's Office audit of the Eastern Washington Pheasant Enhancement Program will likely contain recommendations to improve program delivery. The Department is committed to providing quality public service with the programs it administers. The Upland Game Advisory Committee, which is made up of members of the public who are interested in upland game issues, will be consulted during development of any recommendations. In addition, all Fish and Wildlife Commission actions must also go through a public review process.
Objective 130: Evaluate the current funding mechanism for the western Washington pheasant program and identify new ways to create a self-funded budget by June 2010.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
"Strongly agree" (multiple comments)	Thank you for your support
I support this and would support a separate access fee/day use fee with the understanding that there would be an increased hunter success rate to support the increased or additional fees.	Thank you for your support. A variety of methods will be considered during the process. The Department tries to optimize success rates while considering hunter crowding, hunter safety, release site size, and pheasant production at the Bob Oke Game Farm.
Objective 131: Revise the distribution map for select small game and furbearer species by 2010.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
I don't understand why this is necessary?	This is necessary so the Department can assess the status of this species throughout their range in Washington.

NO TRAPPING. This is the 21st century. Can we not treat our wild animals more humanely ?	Trapping is only lawful in Washington with non-body gripping traps.
Not necessary.	This is necessary so the Department can assess the status of this species throughout their range in Washington.
ok	Thank you for your comment.
Yes - welcoming our "new arrivals"	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 132: Develop quantitative protocols for assessing the population status of small game and furbearing species by 2010.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Objective 133: Develop a web based reporting system for furbearers and unclassified wildlife.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Do not limit the reporting to web based. This is not user friendly to a majority of participants.	Our information indicates it is a viable reporting option for most trappers. The Department would work with volunteer groups (WSTA) to help trappers not familiar with web based reporting.
excellent - but how ill you authenticate sightings?	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 134: Implement management strategies by 2010 that are consistent with the biological status of furbearers and public attitudes, respectively.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Again, human "management" not necessary or supported by the majority of the state residents. Ask us.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and this includes general trapping with the restrictions provided in state statue (I.e., non-body gripping traps only).
Again, newspaper articles on the effects of the trapping initiative. Mention some of the problems. A good example. The WDFW allows only the live trapping of Mt. Beavers. You can only release them on your property as they are nuisance animal. If you catch one you then have to either release it back on to your property or kill it. The method recommended for killing it was to drown it. Perhaps it is time to revisit the trapping issue from a nuisance wildlife standpoint.	Thank you for your comment. The Department will be revisiting these rules during the upcoming 3-year season package, as well as discussion humane trapping practices with the 2009 legislature for potential amendments to Washington RCW.
Item C. Develop strategies that minimize negative impacts to other native wildlife. One obvious place this can be done is to restrict the use of lead bullets for varmint or small game targets. The bullet fragmentation can be hazardous to humans who consume the game, but equally important is that animals that are shot and not retrieved are then ingested by raptors or other predators and they become lead poisoning victims.	The Department is discussion this issue during the upcoming 3-year package.
Live trap and release.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and this includes general trapping with the restrictions provided in state statue (I.e., non-body gripping traps only).
vague, are we taking the possibility of real trapping here?	Trapping included general season traps for the purposes of lethal take using non-body gripping traps.
With the exception of conibear traps and water submersible traps, the traps banned in 2000 were seldom lethal to either targeted or non-targeted species. These should be referred to as "foot hold" traps - not "body gripping".	Thank you for your comment.
yes	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 135: If wolves colonize or become established in Washington, minimize the negative impacts of coyote hunting/trapping on wolves.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
By all means. Wolves are "contributors" not "takers"	Thank you for your comment.
depends on how	Thank you for your comment.
DO NOT SUPPORT ! It is the opinion of most people who are or would be the most likely to encounter wolves that they are dangerous and destructive to man and beast, and were eradicated 80 years ago for good reason.	This comment is beyond the scope of this plan. Please see draft wolf conservation and management plan on WDFW website.
Except for animal damage control trapping, the use of leg hold traps is currently illegal in Washington. So, any concern for the inadvertent trapping of a wolf should be a non issue. With respect to the hunting of coyotes using predator calls, in addition to being much less abundant than coyotes, wolves are less responsive to calls. I believe that the chance of an opportunity for misidentification during coyote hunting is small enough that the coyote hunter should not be restricted in coyote harvest opportunities in areas occupied by wolves. The distribution of educational materials would be helpful.	Thank you for your comment.
If wolves colonize this state, that would be a positive occurrence.	Thank you for your comment.
Lot at Idaho record before you think to put wolves in this state. Not a good thing for this state.	This comment is beyond the scope of this plan. Please see draft wolf conservation and management plan on WDFW website.
Manage wolves just like WY	This comment is beyond the scope of this plan. Please see draft wolf conservation and management plan on WDFW website.
no	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and this includes general trapping with the restrictions provided in state statue (I.e., non-body gripping traps only). Trapping coyotes is generally not detrimental to wolf establishment and sustainability.

No trapping allowed!	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and this includes general trapping with the restrictions provided in state statue (I.e., non-body gripping traps only). Trapping coyotes is generally not detrimental to wolf establishment and sustainability.
No, we don't want wolves in the Great State of Washington because we do not have enough wildlife as it is. Wolves will kill the easiest meal, which means livestock or people. We don't need wolves. Focus on something more constructive and not so destructive.	This comment is beyond the scope of this plan. Please see draft wolf conservation and management plan on WDFW website.
OK	Thank you for your comment.
Stop the trapping of coyote! That would certainly minimize the negative impacts of coyoting hunting/trapping on the wolves!	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and this includes general trapping with the restrictions provided in state statue (I.e., non-body gripping traps only). Trapping coyotes is generally not detrimental to wolf establishment and sustainability.
The fear that coyote trapping will impact wolves is based on ignorance. Wolves are powerful animals and it takes a special, large trap to confine them, which are not legal or available through permit to use. A wolf's jaws are so powerful that it would take no time at all for one to destroy the springs on a coyote trap and leave the area unharmed in any way.	Thank you for your comment.
wolves are already established in Washington, a management plan needs to be adopted as soon as possible to manage at as low a populations as would be allowed, all user groups should be able to manage them	Please see draft wolf conservation and management plan on WDFW website.
Wolves out of population areas!!	Please see draft wolf conservation and management plan on WDFW website.
YES.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 136: Minimize negative human-wildlife interactions so that the "number of interactions per capita" is constant or declining.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
Add: ", including an education campaign for teaching the public ways to avoid negative human-wildlife interactions."	Thank you for your comment. Your concept can be accommodated within the current language.
Developments are the issues with wildlife interactions. We need to limit our developments from destroying our beautiful lands and to protect our wildlife from being hit by vehicles.	This is a good comment, but difficult to address in this type of management plan because the Department doesn't manage development. We do provide information to developers about wildlife every opportunity we get.
Do not support the hunting of furbearers.	We are not recommending new hunting seasons for furbearer species.
Increase public education and available alternatives.	Thank you for your comment.
Nonsense - they go up as people encroach on habitats.	Thank you for your comment.
not interested	Thank you for your comment.
OK	Thank you for your comment.
Support.	Thank you for your comment.
Yes	Thank you for your comment.
Yes...so long as this is done HUMANELY (i.e., not killing, not trapping, not allowing "trophy" hunting.	Thank you for your comment. The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and this includes general trapping with the restrictions provided in state statue (I.e., non-body gripping traps only).
Objective 137: Develop a mechanism to assess the impacts of non-native species on native wildlife and habitat communities.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
agree, even if the non-native species are contained on private lands.	Thank you for your comment.
Is this not all ready in place? What does the WDFW currently do regarding game farms, etc.?	This is done to some extent, however this objective would help prioritize the continuation. Big game farming is not lawful in Washington.
Not now. Someday but...	Thank you for your comment.
noxious weeds need to be managed especially on public ground...and private land owners should also be held accountable	Thank you for your comment.
That's in place now within our game department.	Thank you for your comment.
YES.	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 138: Develop publications or products that describe the differences between game, non-game, or furbearer species that may be easily mistaken.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.
no! use the money for lands animals or more enforcement personnel.	Achieving this objective does not prevent us from completing other objectives.
ok	Thank you for your comment.
Pamphlets can do it. Not expensive?	Thank you for your comment.
Objective 139: Provide educational information on furbearer habitat.	
Comment Received	**Agency Response**
"Agree" and "I support this" (received numerous times)	Thank you for your support.

No more trapping. Create educational outreach campaigns as primary method for wildlife management instead.	Thank you for your comment. The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and this includes general trapping with the restrictions provided in state statue (I.e., non-body gripping traps only). Achieving this objective does not prevent us from completing other objectives.
No.	The Department believes providing basic education materials is important for managing the species.
ok	Thank you for your comment.
Support.	Thank you for your comment.
Use funds to develop habitat	Achieving this objective does not prevent us from completing other objectives.
yes	Thank you for your comment.
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS	
General Comments	**Agency Response**
Overall there needs to be more cooperation with other state/federal/local land management agencies with regard to access, providing informational maps, habitat enhancement, recreation opportunities etc. And wildlife habitat and wildlife access needs to be integrated with fishing access and other recreation.	The WDFW GoHunt web mapping program provides centralized mapping information for the vast majority of public lands. Staff continue to coordinate with the Washington Department of Natural Resources to provide quality mapping/aerial photographic information for mapping. WDFW private lands staff have made fishing agreements in some areas, although they are few.
Secondly, I am concerned with trends in the WDFW or State Forest agencies to purchase tracts of land and "reduce" or prohibit public access, these are public funds being used.	The WDFW access program is committed to improving public access opportunities. If there are specific parcels of land you are concerned about, please contact the appropriate WDFW regional office.
The quail and chukar seasons are too long in Eastern Washington. Upland birds are often found in the same habitat as big game during winter. Upland bird hunters are displacing wintering big game in some areas during these late seasons. The late season also brings into question fair chase hunting ethics. Often December or January snows concentrate birds (and other animals) at low elevation where upland game birds are susceptible to overharvest and other animals are exposed to undue harassment during the winter period.	Hunting season recommendations are more appropriate during the 3-year season setting process. This comment will be considered during development of the 2009-2011 season package.
Upland bird season should be shortened to close first Sunday of December. This will give birds a running chance and time to mature. Hens should be planted with roosters to give Mother Nature a chance.	Hunting season recommendations are more appropriate during the 3-year season setting process. This comment will be considered during development of the 2009-2011 season package. Research shows that the release of pen raised pheasants is not a viable population management technique as a vast majority of them die before the breeding season.
Upland game seasons should be controlled by GMU location rather than a state wide blanket - terrain and weather conditions vary too much. Current seasons start too early in the NCW. We are hunting half grown birds. A better season would be from mid- October through the end of December - especially for chukar and partridge where the populations are quite low. A mandatory survey card where hunters report species killed and date of kill would help to determine the best time for a season and control of the bird population.	Upland bird populations are typically regulated by productivity and are not impacted by hunting in the same manner as deer and elk. Management by GMU would be excessive. Hunting season recommendations are more appropriate during the 3-year season setting process. This comment will be considered during development of the 2009-2011 season package.
Don't let the nuisance complaints steer our turkey management solely. We can sustain a Flock if we kill them all, the expansion this year was ill timed with the heavy winter, that was such a winter most thes flocks never seen, we should study the winter kill from this year before expanding our bag limit.	Since 2000, the agency has been increasingly aggressive in using hunting as a tool to reduce population growth. We will continue to utilize hunting seasons when at all possible, and will also consider alternate hunting tools (e.g., nuisance hunts) and other tools described in the Turkey Management Plan. Changes to fall season hunting opportunity will continually be evaluated and opportunity expanded or contracted as needed.
Use the WANWTF to move some nuisance birds to the Cascades to boost the genetics in those flocks, I feel these hybrids we have will be hardy enough to survive and a boost to their bloodlines will only help.	The 2005-2010 Wild Turkey Management Plan does not include a strategy to release additional birds along the eastern slope of the Cascade Mountains. When the Plan is revised, we can reconsider the issue, but until then, we will continue to evaluate the area's ability to sustain turkey populations over the long term. In general, game bird populations do not suffer from genetic diversity problems. This is especially true in areas like the east front of the Cascades that received birds from a number of source populations.
Either under Turkey, where it once was, or under Forest Grouse - have a research strategy to determine potential impact/conflict Turkeys may be having on forest grouse and/or other ground foraging birds,…	The research proposal you describe is included in the 2005-2010 Wild Turkey Management Plan and has not been lost.
Bow seasons are to long. To many wounded animals. The Eniat use to be one of the best deer units until the State allotted 300 tags to the bow hunts on there wintering range. Outrageous	Thank you for your comment. This is a specific hunting season issue and we encourage you to provide comments later this summer during development of the 2009-11 hunting season regulations.
Buck Deer - We need longer seasons and more RUT hunting opportunity to bring back some balance with the Bow and Muzzleloader hunters	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
I would also like to see the Eastern Washington Deer Season start a little later in the season so that when you go camping the fire danger has subsided. So that you may have a campfire. and also that if you bag an animal that you it won't spoil on you ,to be able to hang it outside .	Thank you for your comment.

it seams that there has been is no extra late special hunt for mule deer buck in area's like 215(Sinlahekin),209(Wannacut),204 (Okanogan East), 101 (Sherman),105 (Kelly Hill),108 (Douglas),111(Aladdin),113 (Selkirk),260 (Foster Creek),248 (Big Bend),etc,etc. Surely there could be one or two permits issued for these areas for Mule Deer Bucks per method of hunter's choice.	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
nice work on no firing center this year, that's just great. The one tag everyone waits years to get drawn for and it is deactivated. Why even hunt here anymore, the chance for a trophy animal is almost 0 now and the price of everything is just going up. This state is a joke when it comes to hunting, it would be better to save my money and go somewhere else with some opportunities. I suppose tribal members will still be able to hunt their though because everyone knows they deserve it. Even when we could hunt their tribal members got to hunt first, great idea!	The U.S. Army determines the level of access to the Yakima Training Center. Military training has been accelerated, which has in turn eliminated access for the hunts you reference.
Since our part of the state has all been clear cut, the deer have all but disappeared where they used to flourish. I have found their bodies where they died in their sleep from freezing rain and inadequate shelter, even though there was plenty of food and fat on them. Thrill killing is great sport among high school kids, too. They drive down the country roads shooting every deer they see, even a neighbor. The hunting video games have got to go.	Thank you for your comment.
there are non native deer in Washington that bring in lice that the native deer can't handle and it is thining our Black tail ang now Mule deer herds. Get rid of all non native deer species in Washington to help prevent the continual spread of the non native lice.	Except for fallow deer or reindeer, it is illegal to raise deer in captivity. Getting rid of non-native lice is probably not possible at this time.
Those of us who live in suburban and rural areas close to cities like Spokane, are getting increasingly frustrated with the white-tailed deer population. As their numbers increase, our opportunities to hunt them seem to decrease! We would like to see our late season reinstated, as well as the issuance of "B" tags for Does, and not just for kids either! A while back,4 of the 5 drivers on our farm hit whitetails (separate vehicles) within one month! We live in unit 130. HELP!	This is being addressed in the next three year package hunting season setting process.
All Permit hunting would Improve hunt quality. Success rates. Herd Health Bull/Cow Buck/Doe ratios.	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations. This issue is also being discussed as part of the 2009-11 hunting season process.
For wintering deer and elk, are there any plans to address public recreation that might displace winter stressed animals (shed hunting, off-road vehicle use, snowmobiles, hiking, etc...	The rules that pertain to lands that WDFW manages, already address this problem. The problem may still exist on other public lands like DNR and Forest service.
I would like to see the Great State of Washington with Deer and Elk populations like Colorado has. There is no reason why we can't enhance our Safety Zones with Food plots. They do it back East all over the place, and I think we need act now while the resources are still available.	Washington will never have deer and elk populations like Colorado. We are the smallest western state in terms of area, but our human population is second only to California. We do not have the same amount of habitat.
Rather than continually restricting the general hunting seasons, why not expand the special seasons like Oregon as done. Easier and better management control by the Dept. should be one mrfor results.	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer and elk seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
They should allow hunting as per the amount that the area can handle!	Thank you for your comment.
Third, I am concerned that the current method of "estimating" game populations is inadequate and grossly inaccurate, especially based upon the WDFW's desire to come up with "improved methods" and or being able to determine a 20% increase/decrease within 3 years! By simply adding 20% to any of the game estimates , which I fear the error rate could exceed that in either direction (plus or minus) it would appear that the WDFW could all ready be at it population objectives for various species without knowing it...	Thank you for your comment.
this state really needs to address SHED HUNTING way to much pressure is put on wildlife while they are on there winter range...need to close off areas to snowmobile's during the winter in wildlife wintering areas	The rules that pertain to lands that WDFW manages, already address this problem. The problem may still exist on other public lands like DNR and Forest service.
Page 33, last paragraph, sentence 5; "in a limited number of GMUs, a large enough number of elk are radio-marked to allow biologists to estimate annual mortality rates of different age classes and sex classes (Table 2). The mortality data in Table 2 is based on harvest data. Remove this sentence from page 33 since it is not a true statement.	We measure the criteria in Table 2 in a number of fashions. Sometimes we use radio-marked animals (currently two studies), we use prehunt and posthunt composition ratios, and we use harvest data and reconstruction. All of these approaches give us information that helps determine whether we are meeting or not meeting the criteria in Table 2.
Page 34, Table 1: The table entry for the South Rainier elk herd population estimate is 2100. Our estimate is ~1000 elk. This is a huge discrepancy - the elk in the Skookumchuck GMU are not a part of the South Rainier elk herd that winters along the upper Cowlitz River between ~Randle and Packwood. WDFW estimate of herd size includes the Skook. GMU. The table should be changed to reflect a more accurate estimate of the population that is considered the South Rainier elk herd. The population objective range most likely should also be modified. It seems a herd goal of 2000 would be more practical than 2850-3150.	There are several issues including the population objective that need to be addressed in the south Rainier elk herd. This elk herd plan is subject to revision during the term of the Game Management Plan.
Page 35, Table 2: Remove this table since WDFW does not use these parameter guidelines to alter hunting seasons. It looks good on paper, but if managers do not use the guidelines they are useless.	The parameters are appropriate even when difficult to measure. We need to look all of the data available, determine what more is needed and be more aggressive at working with our partners to find the funding necessary to monitor and cooperatively manage this herd.

ARCHERY HUNTERS ARE BEING SQUEEZED OUT OF HUNTING LANDS THE COLOCKUM NO LONGER HAS ELK AND SO ARCHERY HUNTERS NEED, ESPECIALLY THE SAGEBRUSH HUNTERS, MORE AREAS OPEN TO THEM, SUCH AS AREA GMU 372	Opening GMU 372 would not gain you access to the private lands that the elk frequent.
Bull Elk - Need more rifle RUT hunting opportunities. Balance for Bow hunter/ Muzzleloader Hunter opportunity falls well below what should be considered fair for modern firearm hunters.	We do provide some opportunity like that in Regions 3, 5, and 6, but would have to confer with all of the District Biologists to determine if it could be done in all units. This request is more appropriate for the three year hunting season setting process going on this fall. Check our web site to learn more about participating in that process.
CLOSE THE COLOCKUM AREA FOR 2-3 YEARS FOR ELK HUNTING TO RE-ESTABLISH THE HERD AND BRING IN NEW BLOOD FROM THE HANFORD AREA TO EXPAND THE GENETICS OF THE POPULATION	Your recommendation may be too drastic and too expensive at this point. We are looking at other possibilities to improve this herd in the three year season setting process.
Free range cattle grazing is the biggest cause of the decline of Blue Mountain Elk. Loss of shelter and winter forage from wildfire is second and internal parasites from cattle contamination is #3 by increasing starvation and winter kill. Check it out. Fence wildlife refuges with 2 strands of barbed wire at 3 and 4 feet above the ground with spacer wires. This will only keep out full grown cattle. It's time to wake up and smell the cow pie. Blaming predators that have subsisted with elk for thousands of years will only make things worse for the elk.	Thank you for your comment.
I would really like to see something done about over hunting of trophy bulls on the Colockum by the Yakima Tribe.	We are working on management of the Colockum herd with the Yakama tribe. Older age class bull numbers/ratios are important and will be part of those discussions.
THE ELK POPULATION SIZE IN PACKWOOD STARTED BECOMING A PROBLEM AT LEAST 10 YEARS AGO. MANY OF US RESIDENTS HAVE BEEN COMPLAINING ABOUT PROPERTY DAMAGE TO FISH AND WILDLIFE FOR THE LAST FEW YEARS. THE PROBLEM IS GETTING WORSE EVERY YEAR. I HAVE SUSTAINED AT LEAST $5000.00 PROPERTY DAMAGE. THE HERD SHOULD BE MOVED EAST OF THE MOUNTAINS WHERE THEY ORIGINALLY WERE BACK IN THE 1970'S. I CAN'T AFFORD TO BUILD THE KIND OF FENCE NEEDED TO PROTECT MY PROPERTY.	Balancing the needs for wintering elk with private property issues is important. This problem in the Cowlitz Valley needs to receive greater attention in the revision of the South Rainier elk herd plan and on the ground.
The state of WA should go to permit only hunters for elk and deer as in other western states. Oregon, Arizona New Mexico ect.	The Department is trying to be more aggressive with deer and elk seasons when it is appropriate. How aggressive or conservative the season recommendations are is based on the assessments of the District Biologists that monitor and manage the deer populations.
the original definition of muzzleloader weapon has been watered down by the dept until it no longer represents the original intent of being primitive and historical in nature. why does the dept continue to do this? the definition has been added on to so much that it has become confusing to say the leas. the definition needs to be rewritten for clarity and easy understanding by all.	This is being addressed in the next three year package hunting season setting process.
the original intent of muzzleloader hunting was to be primitive. not to have fancy sights, bullets with plastic tips, and all of the modern stuff the dept. keeps adding to the definition. even scopes are allowed. what do scopes have to do with being primitive? give us back what we wanted and agreed to have for a weapon in the first place. historical and primitive!!!	This is being addressed in the next three year package hunting season setting process.
allocation of tags in unjust...archery hunters are given to long a season and to many permits...look at the drawing odds and the harvest statistics...they are allocated to much game....muzzleloader hunters are almost forgot about with very little opportunity for quality hunts...the ones they have are of poor quality....westside elk muzzleloader and rifle hunters should have an opportunity to hunt in every GMU during the rut even if it is only one permit..	This is being addressed in the next three year package hunting season setting process.
Expand use of hunt master for those politically correct problem areas. Eliminate them as a "user group" in the special hunt seasons. Don't take hunting opportunities away from the three main user groups - modern, archery, muzzleloader.	The Master Hunter program was significantly modified in 2008 to make better use of the program to assist the Department in the ways you suggest.
I'm a black powder hunter and I have seen my seasons shortened over the last few years. Black powder hunters harvest a lot of antlerless deer like bow hunters. Helping with proper whitetail balances. So it doesn't make sense to me to shorten the seasons. especially in a GMU like 130 where whitetail numbers are high. And there is no other season after late black powder.	We are working on this one for the three-year hunting season setting process.
Increase opportunities for disable hunters so they can have a chance to draw permits for Bucks not just does	The intent for the opportunities provided to hunters with disabilities is to level the playing field with able bodied hunters. The intent is not to provide special opportunities. Our harvest statistics indicate that our programs are working if you assume that equal harvest rates are one measure of success.
muzzleloader hunters are really being short changed with opportunities in deer and elk seasons. I notice that groups like disabled, AHE, and archers get all kinds of new areas to hunt from year to year. but the muzzleloaders are lucky to even break even with access/opportunities to GMUs across the state.	We are working on this one for the three-year hunting season setting process.

The mandatory implementation of a resource allocation permit formula for deer should not be a requirement when all 3 user groups have opportunity within a GMU. The formula was created to insure harvest equity among user groups for a specific age class of game animal. It assumes that all harvest of such an age class will be by permit and thus the result is equality of harvest. In the case of deer where the general season is 3 point minimum and the permit season is 3 point minimum the allocation formula is unable to equitably divide the harvest for 3 point minimum deer as it has no control over the general deer harvest. A more accurate gage and method for monitoring the equity of the harvest occurs at the PMU level. Historically WDFW biologists have been able to balance the harvest equity among the user groups by allocating more or less special permits to the 3 user groups. This ability to balance harvest is lost if a mandatory allocation formula is introduced. The inequities may be further compounded if all three user groups are not allocated permits in all of the GMUs within that PMU. Mandatory permit harvest allocation formulas for GMUs should not be a requirement for deer.	Allocation is addressed in the plan. We rely heavily on a stakeholder group to help us sort out how to allocate hunting opportunity among the three users. The geographic scope of allocation is one of the issues being addressed by the group for the 2009-11 hunting season package.
the muzzleloader hunter seem to be getting the short end of the stick when it comes to hunting opportunities across the state. especially with both the general deer and elk seasons occurring at the same time. with over 130 GMUs available across the state	We are working on this one for the three-year hunting season setting process.
the price of gas is really going to limit the distance we can travel to hunt, and mean less time hunting. it would be nice not to have to drive half way across the state to hunt. if muzzleloader hunters had more GMUs available to them locally, we could afford to hunt more often and longer.	We are working on this one for the three-year hunting season setting process.
while the modern and archery hunters have several weeks to hunt each year, the muzzleloaders have only a very few days....and only like one weekend. this is ridiculous! why is the muzzleloader being picked on? give us more opportunities.	We are working on this one for the three-year hunting season setting process.
Youth opportunities for Elk Draw tags are very few (11) for the 2008 season. This seems counter intuitive when an effort is being made to encourage our states youth to become good stewards of our resources, yet the managers neglect to include significant opportunities for the youth of our state.	Most of the Youth opportunities we are able to provide are deer opportunities.
There needs to be an objective designed to maintain big game hunter numbers, just like you have for duck hunters.	We will consider this but it may be unachievable because of the increase in the state's human population and resultant impacts on available habitat.
Get rid of the Split State elk tag, it was deemed to keep overcrowding down, well with All the big bull tags on the eastside, that causes the over crowding, due to when not drawn then most folks are "Stuck" Hunting Spike on the Eastside. I witness and noted this while hunting with the Multi season tag, I saw more people hunting Spike Elk Rifle in various spot than I did all the other seasons combined. There's your over crowding!	This issue was debated during the 2006-08 hunting season process and hunters were concerned about the potential to increase competition for east side bull permits and then over crowding in western Washington to hunt 3-pt or better bulls. This issue will again be addressed as part of developing the 2009-11 hunting season package.
The game department has taken the ELK season from Mid-November to late October. This needs to move back to Mid- November for Modern Fire Arms....Please....The weather is very warm and difficult to keep meat from spoiling in October....thanks for your time...an older hunter that likes snow or cold weather when hunting "BIG GAME"....	Hunting late in the snow makes elk too vulnerable and would lead to overharvest.
Two point or better for Blacktail deer W.Wa.	Two point antler restrictions do not seem to be having any positive effects. The Department is leaning away from two-point antler restrictions for black-tailed deer.
Antelope Reintroduction - Finish EIS and Public Comment period in 2008. Plan for 2009 Reintroduction in top 2 areas. Setup Damage Mitigation Fund and reparation process/procedures. Begin management plan for 2009 release. Let's get this done! SCI/SSCF is committed to this project and needs to see the department move forward with vigor. Funding is being set up and committed.	The Department is interested in reintroducing pronghorn to Washington. To date, a pronghorn habitat assessment was been completed and did identify areas likely suitable for pronghorn. The Department is now starting the SEPA process for a reintroduction.
Bring back pronghorn	The Department is interested in reintroducing pronghorn to Washington. To date, a pronghorn habitat assessment was been completed and did identify areas likely suitable for pronghorn. The Department is now starting the SEPA process for a reintroduction.
PLEASE consider the Pronghorn reintroduction project to be a part of the overall next 6 year package!!!	The Department is interested in reintroducing pronghorn to Washington. To date, a pronghorn habitat assessment was been completed and did identify areas likely suitable for pronghorn. The Department is now starting the SEPA process for a reintroduction.
The Pronghorn reintroduction project should be a part of the overall next 6 year package!	The Department is interested in reintroducing pronghorn to Washington. To date, a pronghorn habitat assessment was been completed and did identify areas likely suitable for pronghorn. The Department is now starting the SEPA process for a reintroduction.
What about the reintroduction of the native big game mammal Pronghorn Antelope into Washington State. Shouldn't this project be part of the next 6 year package? A feasibility study has been completed 3 years ago with very positive results for reintroduction, yet WDFW continues to neglect this data and reintroduction plan. Two Yakima & Colville Indian nations are in the process of reintroduction of Pronghorn onto their respective reservation. Shouldn't WDFW lead the way in the reintroduction onto public land for the benefit of all Washington State's residents? WDFW needs to lead in this important reintroduction of a native species, the first since the California Bighorn some 30 years ago!	The Department is interested in reintroducing pronghorn to Washington. To date, a pronghorn habitat assessment was been completed and did identify areas likely suitable for pronghorn. The Department is now starting the SEPA process for a reintroduction.

What is taking so long to get antelope reintroduced to this state...we have been waiting!!!!I don't have to hunt them but I do want to see them....why do we do surveys for goats and document 200-300 goats for 3 years and then only issue 1 PERMIT???...Why are we now going to hunt ewe bighorn sheep when we have sheep herds that are less than the carrying capacity of some herds???	The Department is interested in reintroducing pronghorn to Washington. To date, a pronghorn habitat assessment was been completed and did identify areas likely suitable for pronghorn. The Department is now starting the SEPA process for a reintroduction.
you need to include the antelope reintroduction in the next budget. this project is very good for the general public and kids for wildlife.	The Department is interested in reintroducing pronghorn to Washington. To date, a pronghorn habitat assessment was been completed and did identify areas likely suitable for pronghorn. The Department is now starting the SEPA process for a reintroduction.
Please decrease predator hunting and NO female Cougars or Bears.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and hunting is one form of that opportunity as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable populations.
Hound hunting of cougars was banned by I-713. Respect the will of the voters and stop trying to overturn it.	The Washington State Legislature develops the laws that direct the Department's actions. The Department has implemented pilot hound hunting seasons as authorized by the Legislature. Additionally, the department supports the use of dogs as a management tool for managing cougar populations.
It appears that the use of dogs in hunting cougar is needed to control and keep track of cougar populations. I like how the regulations regarding cougar harvests are becoming more local, by nature. The pilot program which was started in 2003 seems to show that we need the use of dogs to control cougars. Even when the hunters haven't been allowed to use dogs the state had to recruit hound hunters to lower cougar populations anyway. Why not sell hound hunting licenses to ethical hunters and use the proceeds from the tags to more carefully chart the cougar populations? Talk about killing two birds with one stone. The best thing would be a sort of general season for hunting cougars with dogs--but if the city folk aren't ready to allow that, and have the Fish and Wildlife under their thumb, then there should at least be a dog training season. A dog training season for chasing cougars only (not harvesting) could be used to reinforce cougars' fear of humans and chase them away from rural towns. It would also be a great way to track cougar populations if hunters were required to report the location, age and number of animals treed. And the Fish and Wildlife could make money from the cougar pursuit (dog training) tags, which could be used to better control the predator populations.	The Department is recommending allowing licensed hunters to participate in the pilot cougar seasons with dogs and expanding the pursuit option in that program.
Please consider a hound hunting pursuit only season. The season would allow pursuit of game without harvest. The hounds need to be able to look at game to understand what they're supposed to be chasing...to keep them from running bears, deer, elk, moose... The pursuit and treeing does not molest or stress the cat, ask the state hunters.	The Department is considering expanding the pursuit season in the pilot cougar hunt with the aid of dogs.
The public voted against hunting with dogs and baiting. Why is this not honored.	The Department is evaluating the use of dogs as a management tool under ESHB 2438 legislative authority.
More Mt. Goat, Moose, and Sheep hunting permits.	Permits are based on population size, so as population size increases, so does permit levels.
Mountain Goat numbers might have declined in the unit boundaries but maybe a lot of the goats moved outside the line. I have surveyed mt goats in Chelan and blazed ridge in a helicopter and have seen just as many goats in the unit as out of the unit	The Department will be refining huntable goat areas and developing population management units.
The mountain goat section of the draft plan would benefit from using the best available science. There is considerable information contained in the section that is not accurate and does not take into account the considerable research on mountain goat that has occurred in within the last few years in Washington and elsewhere over the last decade. There are potential strategies to recover western Washington goat populations through reintroduction that are only cursorily addressed. Although the section of the plan for wild turkeys recommends completing introduction of a non-native species that could have negative impact to the native blue grouse, it fails to suggest using this management tool to recover a native species. The failure to use this management tool for mountain goats is puzzling. There are key data needs regarding tribal harvest levels that are critical to the success of mountain goat population management that are absent from the plan. A strategy to work with pan-tribal organizations such as the Northwest Indian Fisheries Council to obtain reliable data on tribal harvest should be identified in the plan.	Considerable changes have been made to the goat chapter. We have incorporated the mountain goat research recommendations. In addition, the tribal hunting section in Chapter 2 talks about developing harvest management plans with the tribes, which will address your concerns.
No mention of the grizzly that some of us insisted was a resident 35 years ago. You fools put a fellow in the field 15 years later to confirm this. Whatever happened to the reintroduction project in those few shire areas?	Grizzly bear management is not included in this plan.
Of course this president deer not about it! But we do you should at least let us know when you participate at the state level are thinking about grizzlies.	Grizzly bear management is not included in this plan.
Allow a year round pursuit season for coon and bring back hounds for use on bear and cougar.	The authority to use dogs to hunt bear and cougar is limited by state statue, not Fish and Wildlife Commission rule.
Idaho has had bad things happen to their wildlife number sense wolves were introduced. Don't do it.	The Department is currently develop a wolf conservation and management plan to address your issues.
The Great State of Washington does not want Wolves or evenly Grizzly bears because they are to destructive and are killing machines that just don't stop killing. In fact, they sometimes kill for the fun of it and leave the meat to rot.	The Department is currently developing a wolf conservation and management plan. Recent public surveys indicate that Washington residents do support re-colonization of wolves into the state.

Who is going to protect the big game in the eastern part of Washington from the wolves? The ranchers are going to be paid back for loss, So how is the big game hunters going to be paid back for loss? We as hunters pay more in the state then any other user groups to hunt. So if my money goes in the general fund to pay off the ranchers for loss, me and many hunters will stop buying your hunting licenses to help fund this crazy dumb wolf loss... Are you going to pay back us hunters for our loss??	The Department is currently develop a wolf conservation and management plan that will address your issues.
Wolves and Grizzly bears are the most destructive predators Washington could have. I can deal with coyotes and cougars, but not with Wolves or Grizzly bears. Look at Wyoming and Montana's problems they are having with Wolves and Grizzly bears. Washington does not need more predators, what Washington needs is more habitat for Deer, Elk, Bighorn Sheep, Mountain Goat, Moose, Pronghorn Antelope. Please I beg you not to bring in the Wolves or Grizzly bears. Hunters will not be happy, which means hunters will down right quit buying Hunting Licenses because there will be no game for them in this Great State of Washington.	The Department is currently develop a wolf conservation and management plan that will address your issues. Currently, there are no plans that include state involvement in bringing in wolves or grizzly bears.
Wolves should have been included in many of the sections of this EIS. They are already in the State and to not include them in the management plan or at least consider their impact seems like a serious omission. They will have a very large impact on certain game populations and the lack of attention given to them appears to indicate that no impact is anticipated or at least that is the message that may be mistakenly received by the public when they read this document. The elk section especially cries out for strategies that include wolf impacts upon elk populations, especially in the Colockum and the Blue Mountain herds. You need to add the wolf to this plan.	The Department is currently develop a wolf conservation and management plan. The issues you expressed will be addressed the plan.
Improve odds of drawing special species permits. ENFORCE THE SPECIAL PERMIT APPLICATION DEADLINE! instead of catering to the irresponsible and the expense of the rest of us.	Please review the 2009-11 hunting season survey currently available for comment. Application deadlines have only extended in the past when the Department is at fault for hunters not being about to apply on time.
Stop the proliferation of the auction and raffle program.	The Department believes the auction/raffle program is an important source of revenue for game management activities, and tries to balance the program with those that support and don't support it.
Please decrease predator hunting and NO female Cougars or Bears.	The Department is mandated to provide recreational opportunities associated with wildlife, and hunting is one form of that opportunity as long as harvest levels are consistent with long-term sustainable populations.
Eliminate the ewe hunt in Vulcan Mtn. Other management strategies are available for those sheep. Also, making it a 65 and older hunt discriminates against others. This hunt should have never been approved.	The Department's past GMP indicated that limited ewe harvest is an alternative to for addressing expanding bighorn populations when relocation needs are satisfied.
Regarding goose management, some populations of Canada geese appear to be local populations rather than migratory. There is a Federal program to manage nuisance geese but Washington state does not participate in that program. Is there potential for the State to participate in that program with this process?	WDFW coordinates with USDA and USFWS in implementation of control activities to conserve waterfowl populations.
The Game Dept. Should know how many or birds the area can handle	The Department does conduct regular surveys of different areas of the state. There are many variables that determine the capacity of an area to support a particular population level of birds, so that is generally only done to address significant problems or issues.
Waterfowl: Containment of non-native species is important in Washington. Mute swans are becoming an increasing problem both in the wild and in captivity. There is documented evidence that mute swans are detrimental to our native wildlife. They have been documented to hybridize with trumpeter swans (British Columbia in the wild). They are now a deleterious species in Washington. Efforts need to continue to educate out of state breeders of our restrictions and education of the public. Also needed is support to remove mute swans from breeding situations in captivity or the wild.	Because mute swans are classified as deleterious, we do work with local communities to remove them when encountered. Individuals who bring captive swans into the state and contact the agency are informed of the rules.
You must promote duck stamps to school kids, and through wildlife organizations on their web sites to increase funding.	Objective 97 has been modified to address the comment about promoting waterfowl stamp sales.
You must promote duck stamps to school kids, and through wildlife organizations on their web sites to increase funding.	Objective 97 has been modified to address the comment about promoting waterfowl stamp sales.
Emphasis should be placed on protecting our state's wildlife instead of expanding opportunities to kill them. Increase watchable wildlife programs and decrease hunting seasons so that the 95% of the public that does not hunt can get out and enjoy our state lands and wildlife.	The Department's mandate is to protect wildlife populations as well as to provide wildlife recreation, including hunting. Perpetuation of healthy wildlife populations supports the public's desire to watch wildlife as well as hunt them. Recent public opinion surveys indicate that over one third of Washington's residents have hunted at some time in their lives and eighty-two percent support hunting.
I am against hunting wildlife. We need to be more proactive in maintaining safe habitat for the little wildlife left in this state. Humans have a moral responsibility to preserve their lives and their future.	With the recent increases in the human population in Washington and the increases projected for the next twenty years, habitat loss is inevitable. The loss of habitat will result in fewer wildlife. Hunting regulations are designed to provide harvest opportunities with minimal long term impacts to populations. There are no recent (past 75 years) examples of wildlife populations that were imperiled due to hunting.

I have been a resident of this state all my life. I have seen increased habitat destruction and more of our state's wild animal populations shrinking every year. I do not believe animals should be hunted, trapped or harassed for sport. I see other states around us (with the exception of Idaho) enacting more protection for their wild animals, why can our state not do the same ?	There are examples of wildlife populations in Washington that were once hunted, but now due to habitat loss can not be hunted. Regulated hunting under modern standards does not reduce protection or sustainability of wildlife population's.
I understand what a difficult job you have protecting our wildlife yet allowing them to be hunted at the same time. I do not hunt and do not believe in it other than minor population control. Please do not favor the hunters in these issues, many are irresponsible and take more than their share. Unfortunately, I work with many hunters and their tales of taking over the limit & laughing about it disgust me. We keep taking from our environment and rarely give back. I'd hate to see any of these creatures headed for the endangered species list. I wish there was a way to monitor hunters more closely & raise penalties for their greed.	It is important to remember that hunters have historically been more motivated to support wildlife conservation than other citizens. They continue to provide substantial funding and support for wildlife management. Hunting is the primary means of managing game populations. Unfortunately, human behavior does not always achieve the expected levels of compliance of the law desired by society. In most cases, even with current levels of non-compliance, the regulations have resulted in achieving wildlife population objectives. In those cases where population objectives may be compromised by unlawful acts, greater enforcement efforts are focused on the problem.
I urge WDFW to look more intelligently at opportunities to enhance wildlife populations and well-being for its own sake rather than being solely an advocacy agency for hunters because that is in line with the wishes and expectations of the great majority of Washingtonians.	We are advocates for wildlife and we work hard to implement the expectations of Washington citizens. Not all citizens think the same way and as mentioned previously most support hunting.
If I understand correctly, this is a survey for citizens who care about wildlife management, offered by the Washington State Department of Fist and Wildlife. I'm amazed at how centered it appears to be towards the interests of hunters and landowners, as if the state and its animals existed primarily for the purpose of providing a live shooting gallery and to use land for human purposes and prevent wildlife from costing humans anything. That's certainly not my orientation towards the remaining wildlife in this state or the world, and I hope it isn't the predominant orientation of others in the state. And if it is, well, I think it's very sad and misguided.	Private lands make up about half of this state. The burden of supporting healthy wildlife populations is often carried by private landowners. Maintaining a balance between healthy wildlife populations and public expectations and use of their property is important for long term support for wildlife. Many of the strategies outlined in this plan seek to achieve that support.
It bears repeating: There are more humane ways to manage wildlife populations on lands already stressed by human encroachment.	Individual perspectives on what is humane vary significantly. The strategies outlined in the plan are intended to manage wildlife populations in ways that are supported by the majority of Washington's citizens.
Raising and releasing animals to be hunted is unfair and unsporting and should be stopped. Hunting doves, snipes and other small birds is nothing but target practice. Wounding and killing small birds in this manner is cruel and unnecessary.	Your perspective is appreciated, but as mentioned above, individual perspectives vary and this plan and the comments we receive are designed to help us manage in ways that the majority of Washington citizens support.
Why isn't natural predation allowed to control wildlife populations instead of using humans.	Predation is considered in population management efforts. While predators can influence population levels of prey species, there are many other confounding factors in managing populations that predation alone can't achieve.
The biggest problem with damage area control is the master hunters get to make a mockery of the damage control hunts, they are a joke. It should be a drawing to make a call list and if drawn you get called for special damage hunt opportunities, if you cant make it they go to the next guy on the list. master hunters have already proved they aren't at a higher standard, they are a huge problem. then there is the depredation tags given to land owners who sell them for huge amounts and or give them to their friends. give these tags to people who have never had those opportunities and could really use the meat. Quit making hunting a rich mans sport and let everyone enjoy it and have great opportunities to make awesome memories, instead of just getting to hear about the lucky rich guy that bought a 5000 dollar elk tag for the marteniz ranch and maybe set a new state record. the average guy could never afford that, lets put everyone on the same terms and have the same opportunities not just the rich!	The Department is working to improve the Master Hunter program and its members. There have been many changes in the program direction and requirements for members in 2008. Hopefully, these changes will improve the program and allow it to function as a stronger volunteer support group for wildlife and the Department. Private landowners have the right to control access to their property. In some cases, they have wildlife conflicts that can be resolved by hunters. The landowner permits provided by the Department allow the landowner to control who is on their property and address the conflict and property damage. The Landowner Hunting Permit program you referenced does require that some public access opportunity is provided. A random drawing for the public opportunity is described in the fall hunting pamphlet.
Electronic aids and devices for the handicapped, should be permitted. This could help with a more humane kills due to more pinpoint accuracy. So handicapped hunters are extremely limited and have little or no functional movement in her hands and arms. Small electrical devices could aid these hunters with rifle movement, and even firing the weapon of choice.	We support the needs of hunters with disabilities and have utilized "special use permits" to accommodate these needs. Hunters are asked to work with the Agency's Disabled Hunter Advisory Group to document their needs and recommend the type of accommodation that best resolves the issue.
Create stronger educational outreach campaigns as your primary method for wildlife management, above hunting as management. Hunting is not the answer and shouldn't be the primary method for solving the problem!	Communication was identified as an important issue for the Department to address in the current plan. Stronger outreach will be necessary to help achieve this objective. However, as mentioned previously, hunting is often the best way to manage populations and address specific wildlife-human conflict issues.
I would ask the WDFW to create strong educational outreach campaigns as their primary method for wildlife management, above hunting as management.	Perhaps one aspect of the outreach that is needed is to better explain how hunting helps achieve management objectives.
Rather than destroying natural populations of wild animals to reduce human-wildlife interactions, WDFW needs to create strong public educational outreach campaigns as the primary method for wildlife management. Knowledge reduces the fear of the unknown, and humane solutions to interactions do exist. Please work with organizations such as PAWS if you need more information on these types of answers. Thank you!	We agree that outreach efforts are important to reducing conflicts between wildlife and the public. That strategy was identified in several places in the plan to resolve specific issues.

The WDFW needs to create strong educational outreach campaigns as their primary method for wildlife management, above hunting as management. I am so saddened about your management efforts - they have not been successful to date, and something needs to be done!	Outreach obviously plays an important role in resolving wildlife issues, however changing human behavior and attitudes can be challenging.
Crack down on Riffle hunter's shooting from the road. There should be a Required Archery class for anyone who wants to hunt with a bow for the first time. Too many "x-riffle hunter turned arrow flinger's" out there.	The Department has been increasing efforts to address illegal shooting from the road and will continue to work on this issue. All hunters born after 1972 must pass a hunter education class. Those classes provide information about the use of archery equipment, but proficiency in the use of any weapon is largely the responsibility of the hunter.
The definitions of weapons in the Rules & Regs need to be clarified. Why not just reference the appropriate WAC and RCW? That's where the law resides, not in some mangers desk drawer.	While specific weapon definitions may not be a Game Management Plan issue, the department does recognize the need to clarify hunting rules in the plan. Providing the rules in the pamphlet rather than referencing statutes or code often helps hunters know what they can do.
Ecosystem management requires management of a system NOT species specific. We are dependent on a healthy system but not enough data exists to tell us what those minimums are. Till then one should err on the side of caution	Until management at the ecosystem level is better understood, management of both species and systems will be necessary.
For starters, I don't understand how the WDFW hopes to accomplish all of this on a reduced budget? Or how they intend to reduce budget shortfalls due to lack of hunting/fishing participants?...	The plan identifies the priorities, achieving them will depend on funding and support at many levels. Reduced funding will mean that fewer objectives will be completed.
HAVE AREA BIOLOGISTS IN THE AREAS OF MANAGEMENT COME INTO THE FIELD WHILE HUNTERS THEMSELVES ARE AVAILABLE TO TALK TO AND GATHER FIRST HAND INFORMATION FROM THE HUNTERS IF THEY HAVE BEEN HUNTING AN AREA FOR YEARS THEIR FIRST HAND KNOWLEDGE SHOULD BE INVALUABLE	Direct communication with hunters is important and is done by the District Biologists on a regular basis. Objective number 2 contains strategies designed to facilitate communication.
I attended the last town hall type of meeting in FIFE and the TURKEY HUNTERS controlled the time. My opinion is that who the HELL spends more money? The ELK hunters in Washington have been getting shafted for years and until we get the politics out of the game department and get hunters on the commission it will continue.....	We are planning to modify the format of the hunting season meetings somewhat that should help. The meetings are scheduled for late this summer and will include separate stations for big game and small game hunters.
I think you need to reduce some of your activity and/or some of the "high bar" goals you hope to achieve. Don't be afraid to say no in order to maintain the cultured aspects of wildlife protection.	We will try to focus on the major priorities as we implement the plan.
I wish I had more time to go over the whole information process so I could have given you some more informative answers on a lot of the questions. The wording on some of them was kind of distracting as it was hard to understand exactly what you were asking but for the most part this was a good survey and process.	Thank you for your support.
If gas prices keep rising that means less hunters, which means less revenue for the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The only way you will see more hunters is if you have more Wildlife populations. This is a very simple concept, but very difficult to control. Unfortunately, as I said earlier we are in dire need of food plots for our wildlife.	Thank you for your thoughts.
Increase the penalties for game violators. Also, increase the number of enforcement officers in the field.	The penalties for many big game violations has increased over the past several years, so hopefully that is having some impact on violations. The department supports gaining additional officers to help address hunter and fisher compliance.
It is critical that your agency solicit input from not only Washington hunters, landowners, farmers, and herdsman, but from hikers, campers, animal welfare, rescue and rehabilitation organizations, and animal population specialists at Washington's academic institutions.	Input is encouraged from all Washington residents.
Lets not go backwards on a creature who was once a regular member of our forest community.	We support the protection of all of Washington's wildlife species.
lILL THE SEA LIONS DO NOT ADVERTISE IT. AND NO NETTING OF FISH IN THE RIVERS PERIOD!!	Fishing issues are not part of this plan.
Many objectives are pretty vague, and could be refined to be more specific	We appreciate your thoughts.
Needs a way to monitor progress on the this report, like a yearly check-up.	An annual report on the accomplishments is an important strategy in the plan.
Please all I ask is just to changes the hunt areas every three years and make the point system work before it is too late	We encourage you to participate in the 2009-11 hunting regulation process. These issues will be considered.
PROTECT FISH AND WILDLIFE AND DO IT WITH HUNTING AND CONSERVATION AS TOOLS. iF THAT MEANS KILLING MORE COUGAR AND BEAR IN SOME UNITS DUE TO OVER PREDATORY KILLING OF DEER AND ELK DO IT	This issue is addressed in the cougar and black bear sections of the plan.
Some of the objectives and strategies from the previous 2003-2009 GMP are restated here with new target dates. Why should we expect them to be completed this time around if they were not last time?	Some objectives were not accomplished from the past plan and if they continued to be a priority, were included in this plan. Accomplishment of a strategy will depend on priority, funding, and relative urgency. You can play a role by monitoring our progress and encouraging support for your issues.
Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement should be written for sportsmen in the field to better understand objectives. Objectives seem to be vague and aimed at statewide, not area or GMU, which is critical to balance wildlife with habitat.	This is a statewide plan and is written for that purpose. Implementation on a local basis is best accomplished in concert with our partners through public processes. We encourage everyone to monitor our progress and stay involved in helping us achieve our objectives where you see the priorities.

The majority of your "objectives" are not measurable. Therefore they lack accountability for the specific program. Result = questionable management practices within the Dept. No numbers and no timeframes = Meaningless verbiage.	Again, with an annual progress report, everyone can monitor our progress. If you don't feel that our explanation of what we achieved fits with a particular objective, please call our attention to it.
The plan monitoring statement would be more meaningful as part of the introduction statement, not the end. Or include this concept at both the beginning and as a point of the communication section.	We will include the monitoring statement in the executive summary.
The WDFW should contact a user group that will be affected by a proposal to either reduce a hunting season, reduce a GMU size or other restrictive proposal prior to submitting such a proposal to the Fish and Wildlife commission to see if a compromise or pre approval can be reached.	Typically, we do meet with local organizations when developing our recommendations.
Use available money for habitat or enforcement, not on useless publications that just get put in the garbage. There are real problems to address, wrryabout them.	If we missed some issues that were important to you, the multiple comment opportunities are designed to identify them.
User information and reports should be made to be GMU or a region area, statewide. Statewide is confusing and leads to reports not accurate for all areas, pro and con.	It is not feasible to write this plan to include all issues at the local level.
Stop the practice of herbicidal treatments of logged forest as it will deplete food sources and reduce the total animal count and health.	Private timberlands are managed by their owners to produce an economic return. There are no laws that require landowners to produce game for hunting. Wildlife species that are endangered do receive legal protections through the forest practices regulations or from the Federal Endangered Species Act. In many cases, the department works with companies to encourage timber management practices that support wildlife.
Thinning of large forest tracts leaves no shelter for wildlife in winter. The laws must change to allow large native habitat patches when thinning hundreds of acres.	Private timberlands are managed by their owners to produce an economic return. There are no laws that require landowners to produce game for hunting. Wildlife species that are endangered do receive legal protections through the forest practices regulation
All animals whether domestic or wild have feelings just like humans. Please make better laws to protect them. Not all animals are bad, and even those that attack may have been provoked by a human so it isn't fair to judge them. Thank you.	Thank you for sharing your perspective.
There is a strong connection between killing animals and violence towards people. The state should not be promoting violence and killing. Stop the bloody war on wildlife.	Thank you for sharing your perspective.
Please straighten out the multiple season fiasco. If this had happened and was handled the way it was handled by the state the last few years there would have been multiple lawsuits in the works. It's embarrassing to the state and to me when I try to defend the state on this issue!	We are working hard to improve the permit drawing system and its implementation process.
Don't let the tail wag the dog all of the time.... This comes from the tail. At times the WDFW needs to make the correct wildlife management plan regardless of public opinion, especially if it is an un informed public opinion.	Thank you for your support, we try to make the best decisions for wildlife while considering public opinion.
I don't care about you allowing only one message from a computer. I have two sons living with me who also hunt. they have comments and suggestions they would like to make. it was very difficult to put their ideas into this one message of mine. maybe you need a better and more open communication system for us hunters out here in the real world.	Thank you for your thoughts.
This was a very difficult survey to review and take part in. If you really do want public input you are going to have to devise simpler systems with language that the public understands. Or you are simply claiming that you ask for input but your actions show that you really do not want it. Thanks for your time and for attempting to put the public into this process.	Thank you for your thoughts. There will be many opportunities for additional public input into wildlife management decisions.
Special Draw permit - All including multi-season You need to develop and implement as well as PUBLISH a contingency plan for future problems associated with permitting. As it stands now, their is no public accountability and little ramification for year after year problems.	This really isn't a Game Management Plan issue, but we will consider your comments.
This state need to be held more accountable for special permit drawings...there is currently no credibility being offered...absolutely no extensions to the application period...;.no redraws period. what is wrong with paper applications,, it is wrong to only be able to call in or do it through the internet. we should go back to the public hand drawings, we use to do it with a lot more hunters than we have today. 50% of the permits should go to the highest bonus point holders..Multi season tags should be free and no charge we are still only hunting one animal .....We should not have to declare prior to the draw our weapons choice for hunting everyone should be able turn in for the draw and after the draw pick a weapon of choice, or whether we want a eastside or west side elk tag...	This really isn't a Game Management Plan issue, but we will consider your comments. The public scoping process for the 2009-11 hunting regulations will include the permitting issue for potential changes.
I appreciate the Departments hard work and hope you will get a better understanding of how hunters feel about the hunting regulations and wildlife populations of the Great State of Washington. Thank you for time. I hope to see Washington grow into the hunting state of all of United States. Good Luck on your endeavors.	Thanks for your support.
Overall you do a great job and are presented with incredible challenges, keep on doing what you do!	Thanks for your support.
Thank you	Thanks for your support.
thank you for an opportunity to provide some input into this process. I hope the dept's wildlife section pays at least some attention to what they are receiving in this scoping process.	Thanks for your support.

THANK YOU for the opportunity to comment on your plan.	Thanks for your support.
Absolutely no closed door meeting's with the tribes...and all harvest of tribes should be included in the harvest reports...the general public is clueless as to tribal hunting that is being done...	We are working to improve communications with the public on tribal discussions before decisions are made by the Agency. We have developed a link on the WDFW web page to the Northwest Indian Fish Commission's harvest reports.
I have no problem with tribal hunting as long as there are limits and rules.	Thank you for your comment.
STOP LETTING MEMBERS OF THE INDIAN NATION KILL THE BULL ELK FOR THEIR HORNS REQUIRE THEM TO HUNT WITH A HUNTING LICENSES LIKE EVERY OTHER CITIZEN	Most tribal regulations do not allow harvest of elk with only the antler's being utilized. The consumption of wild game is an important cultural tradition for tribes. Federal treaties do not include a requirement for tribal members to carry state licenses.
Tribal rights are being abused. Tribal members should use traditional equipment.	The courts have ruled that tribal rights preserved by the treaties did not intend that only traditional equipment could be used. The issue of managing harvest levels is addressed through tribal regulation of their hunters.
Background and Settings: Native Americans section (page 5-7): Consider including a sentence or two stating the fact that Tribal harvest of deer and elk is less than 5% of total deer and elk harvested statewide.	Objective 11 includes strategies regarding public understanding of treaty rights, harvest reporting, and regulation packages.
Page 6, paragraph 2: Remove the last sentence after open and unclaimed lands: "Provided, however, that they shall not take shellfish from any beds staked or cultivated by citizens, and that they shall alter all stallions not intended for breeding-horses, and shall keep up and confine the latter". this is not relevant information and distracts from the issue that is being discussed.	The idea was to summarize the treaty language. However we agree that the language is not relevant to hunting issues and can be removed.
Respond to nuisance problems with local hot spot hunts that target the actual problem animals , not nearby animals that are not causing problems.	Response to damage issues depends on the situation. If the problem can be addressed by targeting specific animals, then there are several tools that can be used to accomplish that, including hot spot hunts.
Through the passage of I655 and I713 the voting public has given notice that they don't want population control of nuisance animals and dangerous wildlife. Therefore, resulting wildlife problems should be resolved with programs funded by the general public. Hiring additional Wildlife Agents or Wildlife Biologists just won't cut it. DFW must change its position of public education regarding this whole situation. The only solution is to educate the legislators in Olympia who, in fact, have the authority to modify the present harvest method restrictions. The trappers and houndsmen cannot resolve the wildlife problems that Washington has gotten itself into, with the inadequate methods they are still allowed to use. The people of this state look to the hired professionals for leadership and direction. Those of us who contribute directly to the DFW budget, the resource consumers, would like to see our hired professionals spend more time, money and effort managing our wildlife and educating the public and less time, money and effort placating the anti-consumptive users.	The Department has been working with a large number of stakeholders to address the wildlife conflict issue. Recommendations for changing legislation will be the result of the stakeholder involvement. These objectives and strategies were part of the 2003-09 Game Management Plan.
Eliminate the hunter ed deferral option. Create dedicated responsible hunters. Hunter Ed is a small hoop to jump through and a rite of passage.	Thank you for your perspective.
When the multi tag is issued maybe allow those drawn more choices in the permit hunts, with only four it really spreads out the opportunities kind of thin	This is a hunting season issue. Please participate in the survey available this summer regarding permit issues.
Eliminate the "hunter orange" requirement.	Thank you for your perspective.
Please provide better, more thorough statistics data on drawing odds and applicant participation.	This is a hunting season issue. Please participate in the survey available this summer regarding permit issues.

Appendix B Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement Distribution List

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