



SNOQUALMIE WILDLIFE AREA 2007 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



Land Management Summary

This is an update to the 2006 Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Management Plan, which can be found online at the following link. http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/index.htm

The plan provides management direction for the Skagit\Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Complex, which includes the five Snoqualmie units, approximately 1957 acres in King and Snohomish County and the numerous properties of the Skagit

Wildlife Area which total 16,708 acres in Skagit, Island, and San Juan counties. The plan identifies needs and guides activities on the area based on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Mission of “*Sound Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife*” and its underlying statewide goals and objectives as they apply to local conditions.

Plans are updated annually as habitat and species conditions change, as new regulations and scientific knowledge develop, as public issues and concerns evolve, and as administration of wildlife areas change. This management plan update also includes 2006 accomplishments, new issues, new land management strategies and performance measures for 2007.

Updates/Changes

Snoqualmie River flooding during November 2006 was considered to be a record flood event for the area. Crescent Lake, Cherry Valley, and Stillwater WA units were impacted. Pheasant releases were stopped during the flooding and then phased in as sites became accessible again. The Cherry Valley dike was breached and eroded in two locations. Dike district repairs are scheduled to occur sometime this summer.

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Fish Passage Barrier Removal - WDFW Habitat Program engineering staff are currently completing survey, geotechnical, and permitting processes to begin fish passage barrier removal on the Stillwater unit. Initial planning has begun on the Crescent Lake and Cherry Valley units.

New Issues

Habitat Conservation Planning for Wildlife Area Lands - WDFW is developing a habitat conservation plan (HCP) for land management activities (recreation, operation and maintenance, enhancement and restoration) occurring on state-owned and managed Wildlife Areas. An HCP is a management strategy that provides long-term certainty of ESA compliance while providing for conservation of species. HCPs are developed under Section 10 of ESA, which provides a means for non-federal entities to ensure that their actions will not conflict with the conservation needs of ESA-listed and other at-risk wildlife species. This HCP will guide long-term conservation and protection of species, and will ensure compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Wildlife Areas HCP will identify any potential conservation opportunities as well as potential adverse impacts to ESA-listed species or their habitats resulting from activities covered in the plan. The HCP will also specify management strategies to avoid, minimize, and mitigate for those impacts. Once completed the HCP must be approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service (collectively referred to as “the Services”), the agencies responsible for implementing ESA.

This planning process will take several years to complete. During 2006, WDFW interviewed stakeholders and tribal staff to identify appropriate ways to involve the public and other interested parties in development of the Wildlife Areas HCP. Initial public meetings began in 2007 to introduce the public to the HCP planning process and to request input and involvement. To learn more about the goals and benefits of the Wildlife Areas HCP check the fact sheet online at http://wdfw.wa.gov/hcp/wla_public.html.

Stillwater Wildlife Area – Several projects are being proposed on the Stillwater unit to improve habitat for fish and wildlife and include riparian planting, hydrologic modeling, and fish habitat enhancement projects.

Stillwater Riparian Planting- Stilly-Snohomish Task Force and WDFW partnered on a King Conservation District grant request to improve riparian habitat along the tributaries and the mainstem of the Snoqualmie River. This project is designed not only to improve habitat conditions by replacing invasive plant species with woody native species, but has a strong public involvement component for the local community. This proposal is currently under review and the funding status is unknown at this time.

Stillwater Hydrologic Modeling – Wild Fish Conservancy is submitting a proposal to Salmon Recovery Funding Board to request feasibility funding for a hydrologic model to examine the potential restoration of natural process on a portion of the Snoqualmie River. This model will provide information about the existing river conditions (two actively eroding banks and bank hardened sites) and the potential results of modifications such as placement of large woody debris and removal of bank hardening materials. The model will help to inform the decision to implement a design to place large woody debris near the two bank erosion sites to decrease sediment transport down river and improve fish

habitat on the site. This proposal is currently under review and the funding status is unknown at this time.

Harris Creek Riparian Planting – King County assisted WDFW with an experimental planting of willow cuttings along Harris Creek. The cuttings were placed along the Harris Creek floodplain that experiences flooding during high flows along the Snoqualmie River.

A WDFW field biologist initiated a breeding bird occupancy survey on the Stillwater Unit. Survey stations and visual encounter transects were established and an initial survey was conducted. Further surveys will be conducted the week of June 4, June 18, and July 2. The goal of this survey is to establish a list of breeding birds occurring at Stillwater Unit. Similar bird occupancy survey is planned for fall migration period, wintering period, and spring migration.

Pheasant season access - New wildlife area access rules were implemented for the waterfowl/pheasant season overlap. Historically the areas were closed to all hunting access outside of the hours for pheasant hunting (8:00am – 4:00pm) during pheasant season. This restricted access for waterfowl hunting during the timeframe that the seasons overlapped. In an effort to increase waterfowl hunting opportunities and disperse pheasant hunters throughout the entire hunting unit access was allowed to the site prior to 8:00 am and after 4:00pm. Legal shooting hours for duck and pheasant hunting still apply. Initial public support was mixed since the use changes were not clear to all sportsmen who hunted the areas but later in the season most users seemed to be supportive.

Area users and Wildlife Area staff have observed signs of trap and target shooting occurring on the Stillwater Unit. Some concerned neighbors have removed trash and found some lead shot shell casings. Wildlife Area use regulations were reposted and Wildlife Enforcement Officers were informed of these activities. Opportunities to have community education and outreach about “Getting the Lead Out” and many other issues are being considered.

Major Stewardship Accomplishments

Spencer Island –



Union Slough Breach on Spencer Island



The Ducks Unlimited sponsored SRFB project to breach the dikes on Spencer Island was completed during winter 2006. Additional funding by the Washington State

legislature to honor Willy O’Neil provided money to improve trail access to the state property by constructing an ADA dike top trail and creating short finger trails for ADA viewing and hunting blind development. Riparian vegetation was planted along the dike top trail to improve cover and hold dike material in place. Sign development and dedication of the Willy O’Neil memorial is underway. As grant funding becomes available, proposals will be submitted to create boardwalks and elevated hunting and viewing platforms similar to the ones on the Snohomish County property.

Crescent Lake – Snohomish County Surface Water Management sponsored a project funded by Washington Department of Ecology to develop a 100-foot wide riparian buffer along the Snoqualmie River boundary of the Crescent Lake Unit. This project is a part of a countywide effort to improve habitat and water quality on the Snohomish River and its tributaries. The County completed the planting work early in 2007. The second phase of the project is to place large woody debris on the site but this portion of the project is currently not funded.



Riparian Buffer Project on Crescent Lake Unit

Status Report of 2006 Performance Measures

Key performance measures are identified each year to monitor progress and identify any issues that might interfere with planned priority activities. This information will be used to delete, add or alter priority strategies for 2007.

2006 Performance Measure	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2007 Related Activity/ Comments
Restore riparian vegetation and place large woody debris on Crescent Lake Unit adjacent to the Snoqualmie River with assistance from Snohomish County’s Surface Water Management Division	Restoration planting implemented the next phase is to maintain planting and place large woody debris.	Snohomish County completed the planting work and will coordinate the placement of large woody debris as a part of the next phase of the project when funding becomes available.

<p>Identify potential riparian corridor and/or wetland projects on Stillwater Unit with WDFW Technical Applications staff (TAPPS), Ducks Unlimited, and King County's Surface Water Management Division.</p>	<p>Riparian planting projects were identified on the Snoqualmie main stem, Harris Creek, and unnamed tributaries. Funding is currently being requested from the King Conservation District for planting project.</p> <p>A funding request has been submitted by Ducks Unlimited to the State Duck Stamp Program for a feasibility study of wetland enhancement development.</p> <p>Wildlife Area staff submitted Duck Stamp proposals for agricultural enhancements for Stillwater and Crescent Lake Units</p>	<p>The King Conservation District approved the riparian planting project. Field visits to discuss the project are planned for July.</p> <p>The Ducks Unlimited Duck Stamp proposals were unfunded. .</p> <p>The Duck Stamp proposals for Stillwater and Crescent Lake were unfunded.</p>
<p>Implement projects on Cherry Valley Unit that will remove fish passage barriers and entrapment areas with WDFW Technical Applications (TAPPS) Program, Wild Fish Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited.</p>	<p>Continue to discuss compliance issues with dike district about fish passages related to the tide gate and impeller pump operation.</p>	<p>Current discussions with dike and drainage district indicate support for the modeling effort to determine the impact of setback dikes on WDFW property. Efforts to acquire funding for project feasibility will begin.</p>
<p>Complete proposal to restore 150 acres of diked and drained estuary on Spencer Island Unit. Work with Ducks Unlimited</p>	<p>Ducks Unlimited dike breach project has been completed. Riparian planting of the site has been completed.</p>	<p>Trail improvement project will also be complete with special funding from the legislature for the Willy O'Neil Memorial.</p>
<p>Develop and post boundaries of the Cherry Valley, Corson, Crescent Lake, Ebey Island, Spencer Island, and Stillwater units</p>	<p>Not completed will be coordinating with the WCC crew to aid in boundary line maintenance of known boundary and work with survey crew on sites where lines are unclear.</p>	<p>Identified for 2007 calendar project.</p>

Develop and implement a wetland enhancement project to restore portions of Cherry Creek drainage (Cherry Valley Unit) with Ducks Unlimited and Wild Fish Conservancy	A hydrologic model to show the impact of the Ducks Unlimited project design was prepared and presented to the technical representative of the Cherry Valley dike and drainage district.	Dike and drainage district members are currently reviewing the model, which indicates an increased flooding potential with the DU wetland impoundment project. Other project alternatives will be developed and discussed.
Evaluate, with District Team and Citizen Advisory Group, limiting access to Crescent Lake (Crescent Lake Unit) to better protect those priority or sensitive species (swans)	Proposal outlining concerns for District team and CAG review have not been developed.	Will continue to work with the District Team and CAG to develop a proposal outlining concerns in 2007.
Research and discuss options to provide recreational access to the nearby Honor Farm (coordinate with tribes, others) and Ebey Island Unit (coordinate with local dike district and private landowners)	An indication from the Qualco cooperative that is operating the Honor Farm property is that public hunting is not allowed on the property. Further research of the documents of this agreement will be requested for our records.	Will continue to determine property access restrictions.
Develop a list of projects by unit that individual volunteers or groups could help complete	Work with District team and CAG to identify some potential projects.	Will continue to work on developing a project list in 2007.
Inspect and maintain 12 footbridges on Cherry Valley, Crescent Lake and Stillwater units	Work with volunteers to mark and maintain footbridges.	Ongoing
Mow fields on Cherry Valley and Stillwater units	Completed	Coordinate with volunteers to spot mow to improve site between current mowing schedule.
Analyze and evaluate current and potential fish, wildlife and habitat resource value of all units with Citizen Advisory Group, District Team, other stakeholders and adjacent/nearby landowners	Information gathering process as a part of the Wildlife Area Habitat Conservation Planning effort will begin this evaluation process.	Ongoing

Mow and maintain meadow trails on Crescent Lake and Stillwater Units	Mowing on Stillwater completed but not on Crescent Lake trail.	Investigate the use of County work release crews to maintain trail on Crescent Lake
Maintain trails on Corson Natural Area	Mowing completed	Ongoing
Release 3,100 to 3,800 pheasants on Cherry Valley, Crescent Lake and Stillwater units	Completed – A portion of birds were transferred to Skagit WLA during the Snoqualmie River floods in November.	Continue the release pheasants
Review units open to bird dog training with the Citizen Advisory Group and District Team	Identified as issue to prioritize with the District team and CAG	Will continue to work on this issue
Review areas to keep open for year round dog training and field trials with District Team and Citizen Advisory Group	Identified as an issue to prioritize with the District Team and CAG	Will continue to work on this issue
Provide ‘blue card’ fire training for three Wildlife Area staff	Completed	Certification will be maintained as training becomes available
Work with Licensing Division and local businesses to provide vehicle-use permit sales on-site or at nearby businesses	Several businesses have been identified in Monroe and Duvall for selling licenses.	Consider putting up signs on user board to inform the Wildlife Area users of license dealer locations.
Contract with local, state or federal entities to provide fire suppression support	Need to clarify process in the event of grass fire.	
Attend and participate in monthly to quarterly meetings of the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum and Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum.	Attended Snoqualmie Watershed Forum coordination meeting. Now on the list for meeting schedule and will attend meetings pertinent to Wildlife Area lands.	Need to get on the announcement list for Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum

New Strategies

The wildlife area plan identifies many strategies or activities to address the agencies strategic plan goals and objectives, why the area was purchased, habitat conditions, species present, and public issues and concerns. The following updated strategies have been added to respond to previously unaddressed or new issues or changes on the wildlife area. New strategies may also be in response to adaptive management as staff evaluate the impacts of past management activities.

Issues identified in italics were provided by the Citizens Advisory Group. These public comments are captured at the end of this document. Although underlined strategies have no current funding source, identifying these needs is the first step to securing additional funds.

Agency Objective: Protect, restore and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitats.

1. Protect state listed species.

2007 Performance Measures

- Implement 1-4 projects that will remove fish passage barriers and improve wetland functions on the **Stillwater Unit**
- Pursue funding to implement 1-3 projects on the **Crescent Lake Unit** to remove fish passage barriers
- Pursue funding to implement 1-3 projects to remove fish passage barriers on the **Corson Unit**
- Research opportunities to improve managed wetland functions on the **Cherry Valley, Crescent Lake** and **Stillwater** units for waterfowl and discuss with Citizen Advisory Group and District Team
- Evaluate proposed habitat restoration projects on all units with District Team and Citizen Advisory Group
- Develop a prioritized list by unit in which to conduct an inventory of determine species, use and needs
- Work with Citizen Advisory Group and District Team to maintain and improve fishing opportunities on appropriate units
- Begin discussions with Snohomish County Parks regarding potential to provide additional waterfowl hunting on County's portion of **Spencer Island Unit**
- Develop and evaluate a pheasant release program at other upland sites and/or on private property (if owners are willing) with Citizen Advisory Group, District Team and other interested stakeholders
- Work with other Department personnel to expedite the development of a detailed color map/informational brochure for the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area
- Work with WDFW staff to improve/update the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area website to provide accurate, detailed information about the site regulations, maps and directions to access areas, facilities available and ongoing projects
- Post property line boundary on **Spencer Island** between WDFW land and the Snohomish Count Parks property
- Organize subcommittee groups to suggest workable management options for public use issues (access, sanitation, information needs, conflicting recreational uses, additional recreational lands), dog use issues and wildlife viewing enhancements.

Citizens Advisory Group Input

A Citizens Advisory Group meeting was held on February 13, 2007 to review management progress and address any new issues or input on existing issues. Attendance was limited by a major wreck on I-5 northbound, which was closed for several hours. WDFW staff members present were John Garrett Wildlife Area Manager, Belinda Schuster Asst. Wildlife Area Manager, Doug Hennick Watershed Steward for Snohomish and King County, and Susan Cierebiej Habitat Biologist TAPPS program. CAG members in attendance were Rone Brewer, Art Kendal, Oscar Graham, Steve Hinton, and Tom Rutten. John and Belinda provided a summary update of the most recent activities on the Wildlife Area and the new project opportunities. Susan Cierebiej provided a summary of the scheduled fish passage barrier removal work scheduled for the Snoqualmie to begin on Stillwater this fall. Steve Hinton presented a status update on the Wiley Slough restoration permitting process. He requested CAG comments and input on the public use enhancements that might be incorporated in the current design.

A follow-up CAG meeting is scheduled for June 7, 2007 at 6:30 at the Conway Fire Hall. These are the new issues that were mentioned as a part of the discussion.

Issue: The Citizens Advisory Group is concerned about new developing unauthorized activities on the wildlife area such as paint-ball, target shooting, use of lead shot, driving in the fields, etc. and would like to request an increased Department presences on these sites.

Response: We will be requesting increased enforcement presences on the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area access sites.

Issue: The management of the open field component of the wildlife areas is not adequately addressed in the plan. Many of these fields are not currently being managed for agriculture and are starting to be encroached by blackberry and other woody plants.

Response: Opportunities to acquire funding through the Duck Stamp process and/or farming with sharecrop or lease agreements will continue to be pursued.

Issue: What are the plans for the Crescent Lake footbridge?

Response: The Crescent Lake footbridge will be decommissioned due to liability issues. The structure was never designed and approved by our engineering department and lacks the necessary safety features for a large over water crossing.

Issue: There is concern that requesting hunting access on Snohomish County property would set a precedent and would be difficult to enforce for other county lands. The CAG would prefer to explore the feasibility of other hunting opportunities with the County.

Response: This proposal has been brought forward from past planning efforts. WDFW will continue to explore various options for increased hunter access.

Issue: CAG would like to improve community involvement and work party.

Response: We will continue to develop volunteer work projects.

Issue: Replace and update access area use regulation signs.

Response: New signs will be developed, requested, and replaces as they become available

Want to see the full plan?

Go to -

[http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/
management_plans/index.htm](http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/index.htm)

WDFW Contacts:

Mill Creek Office (425) 775-1311

Wildlife Area Manager (360) 445-4441