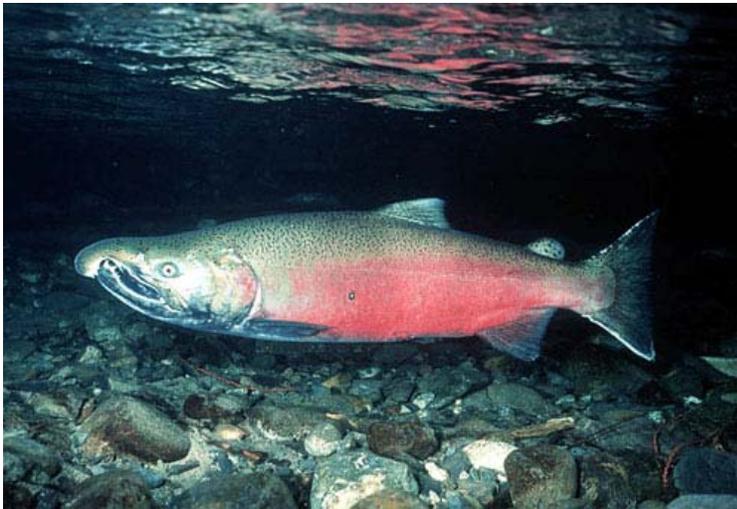




SNOQUALMIE WILDLIFE AREA 2008 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



Land Management Summary

This is an update to the 2006 Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Management Plan (http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/). 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 2007 accomplishments, new issues, new land management strategies, performance measures for 2008, and ongoing projects.

Updates/Changes

Fish Passage Barrier Removal - WDFW

Habitat Program engineering staff completed survey, geotechnical, and permitting processes to begin fish passage barrier removal on the Stillwater unit. Funding for the Stillwater Unit is available and construction will begin summer 2008. Initial planning and capital funding requests have been submitted for Crescent Lake, Cherry Valley and Corson units.

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Habitat Conservation Planning for Wildlife Area Lands - This planning process will take several years to complete. During 2007, WDFW interviewed biological and wildlife area staff to identify known distributions of species of concern as well as anticipated species of concern. The Wildlife Area staff completed a site-by-site inventory of land uses including wildlife management and recreational activities. This information will be entered into a database and combined with other species and habitat data to develop a risk assessment model, which will identify potential areas of impact to ESA-listed species. 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 have been funded 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 Project – See Stewardship accomplishments

Stillwater Hydrologic Modeling – Wild Fish Conservancy submitted 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. Salmon Recovery Funding Board funded this project. Initial data gathering has begun and will continue through this summer. Additional funds have been requested from King Conservation District grants for data analysis and to develop a stakeholder process to discuss the findings and consider project alternatives.

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. Due to late spring high water these plantings have not been evaluated for success.

Breeding Bird Occupancy Survey - A WDFW field biologist Chris Anderson initiated a breeding bird occupancy survey on the Stillwater Unit. Survey stations and visual encounter transects were established and an initial survey was conducted and are scheduled for spring and summer 2008. The study plots were paired riparian forest and restoration planting plots. Below are some excerpts from the initial summary report provided by Chris which shows a total of 70 species observed both on and off study plots. The established riparian forest habitat at Stillwater supports the bulk of breeding avian species occurring at the WMU. This habitat contains the most diverse array of species, and therefore supports the highest biodiversity. Both study plots (established forest vs. restoration) share 8 species in common (i.e. found on both plots). However, the established forest sites have many more habitat-specific associated species (15 total) vs. the baseline restoration sites (2 species).

Plot type	Total Species by plot type	Species only in plot type
Restoration	10	2
Riparian forest	23	15
Combined	25	

The four most common species in riparian forest plots are black-headed grosbeak, cedar waxwing, song sparrow, and Swainson’s thrush. The four most common species for the restoration sites were bank swallow, common yellowthroat, song sparrow, and American goldfinch.

Spencer Island –Sign development and dedication of the Willy O’Neil memorial is in the planning stages. As funding becomes available, the next step of the plan is to improve the trail surface to make it ADA accessible and to develop boardwalks and elevated hunting and viewing platforms similar to the ones on the Snohomish County Parks property. Capital budget requests have been submitted for 2009-2011 and grant funding opportunities will be submitted when available.

Lead Shot - The illegal use of lead for trap and target shooting continue to be observed on many of the Snoqualmie Units. 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. However, opportunities to improve community education and outreach regarding restrictions on the use of lead on the Wildlife area need to be modified to get the publics attention. Placement of signs at various entries or new sign development is being considered.

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.

New Issues

WDFW is actively pursuing the purchase of over 800 acres on Ebey Island from the YMCA and the likelihood of success is high. New acquisitions provide a variety of challenges and opportunities to expand restoration enhancement and agricultural program objectives. The Ebey Island acquisition initiates a process to evaluate the physical and political landscape associated with many issues related to salmon recovery, sea level rise, land use conversion (agriculture to any non-agriculture), managed wetland systems, recreational access and other public use issues.

Funding as been requested to initiate the planning and feasibility work needed to examine the site potential given the current issues within the watershed. A variety of federal, state, and local agencies and organizations will need to be involved in the planning discussion to insure that appropriate objects are defined. This discussion will improve understanding of the role this site will play in the larger landscape.

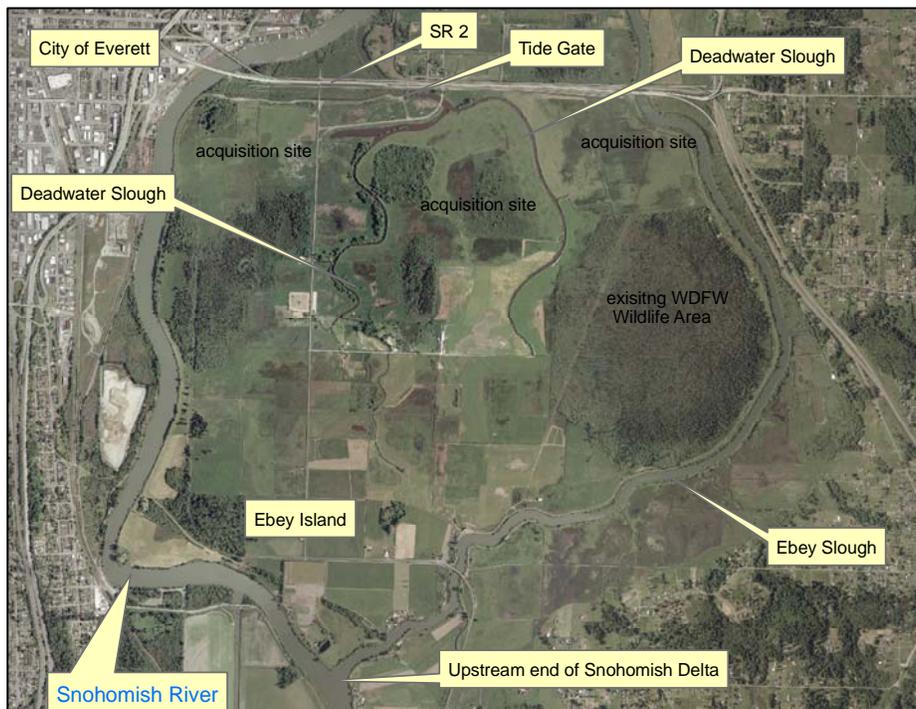
Major Stewardship Accomplishments



Stillwater Riparian Planting - The Stilly-Snohomish Task Force and WDFW received funding from a King Conservation District grant to improve riparian habitat along the Snoqualmie River and its tributaries on the Stillwater Unit. This multi-year planting project was designed to improve habitat conditions by replacing invasive plant species with woody native vegetation and develops riparian corridors along the streams within the Stillwater unit. As a part of the community outreach

portion of the project, the Taskforce organized two volunteer planting events during February and March of this year. Between the two events over 100 volunteers planted approximately 3000 native plants along the main stem of the Snoqualmie River. In addition, the Taskforce organized field trips for 3 school groups and provided educational activities for children at the planting event. The next phase of the restoration plantings will be along Harris Creek and other unnamed tributaries. These plantings are scheduled to occur after the close of hunting season in 2009.

Ebey Island (YMCA acquisition) – Acquisition efforts continue to purchase the 820-acre parcel on Ebey Island that currently belongs to the YMCA of Everett. This property not only will provide a legal access to the property currently owned by WDFW but also has a variety of restoration and enhancement opportunities. This site will also provide a greatly increased land base for fish and wildlife recreational opportunities. Coastal Wetland Grant funds have been received and state funds have been appropriated during the last legislative secession. Additional funding has been requested to begin the feasibility, design and public planning process. A temporary lease made the property available for public access during the 2007-2008 waterfowl-hunting season. There was a variety of reports about hunting success but for the most part hunters were glad to have increased public hunting opportunities in the North Puget Sound.



Status Report of 2007 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 2008.

2007 Performance Measures	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2008 Related Activity/ Comments
Implement 1-4 projects that will remove fish passage barriers and improve wetland functions on the Stillwater Unit	Permitting and design process has been completed and funding is available.	Culvert replacement and removal are scheduled to begin summer 2008.
<u>Pursue funding to implement 1-3 projects on the Crescent Lake Unit to remove fish passage barriers</u>	Capital budget funding requests have been submitted for 2009-2011.	Currently unfunded.
<u>Pursue funding to implement 1-3 projects to remove fish passage barriers on the Corson Unit</u>	Capital budget funding requests have been submitted for 2009-2011	Currently unfunded.
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	Continuing discussion regarding wetland enhancement and restoration projects on Cherry Valley and Stillwater. A portion of Crescent Lake Unit was planting with barley during 2007 with a sharecrop lease.	Duck Stamp project funding was requested for Cherry Valley water control structures and Stillwater wetland feasibility from the second year availability funds. These projects will be resubmitted during the next funding round.
Evaluate proposed habitat restoration projects on all units with District Team and Citizen Advisory Group	Ongoing	No specific projects currently proposed.
Develop a prioritized list by unit in which to conduct an inventory of wildlife area to determine species, use and needs	Ongoing	Not currently funded
Work with Citizen Advisory Group and District Team to maintain and improve fishing opportunities on appropriate units	No suggestions currently proposed to improve access.	Continue to work with CAG in 2008
Begin discussions with Snohomish County Parks regarding potential to provide additional waterfowl hunting on County's portion of Spencer Island Unit	Proposal has not been moved forward due to concerns regarding the safety issues and uniformity of county property management regulations.	This particular proposal is not supported by all members of the CAG
<u>Work with other Department personnel to develop a detailed color map and brochure for the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area</u>	<u>Information brochure has not been completed at this time due to current project workload.</u>	Continue efforts in 2008
<u>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</u>	Currently there is no funding available to expand the program to private land in King or Snohomish County.	Continue efforts in 2008
Work with WDFW staff to	There is currently an effort to	Website update should occur

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.	improve and update the information available on the agency website.	Sometime 2008
<u>Post property line boundary on Spencer Island between WDFW land and the Snohomish Count Parks property.</u>	Following dike breach the hunt boundary between the WDFW and County Park property is less clear. This project is currently unfunded.	Further discussion with County regarding the exact nature of the problem are needed
Work closely with the Citizen Advisory Group, District Team and other stakeholders on unresolved issues 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.	Committee work has not been completed due to other workload issues related to restoration projects and permitting.	Topic will be revisited during the upcoming year.
Maintain riparian vegetation planting and place large woody debris on Crescent Lake Unit adjacent to the Snoqualmie River with assistance from Snohomish County's Surface Water Management Division	Planting needs to be maintained and determine the funding status of the second phase of the project placement of large woody debris.	Coordinate with Snohomish County regarding maintenance and placement of large woody debris as a part of the next phase of the project when funding becomes available.
<u>Complete proposal to improve trail surface and develop blinds that are ADA accessible on Spencer Island Unit.</u>	Currently unfunded a capital proposal has been submitted and grant funding will be requested with available.	Continue efforts in 2008
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.	Continue to discuss compliance issues with dike district about fish passages related to the tide gate and impeller pump operation. Discussions with dike and drainage district indicate support for the modeling effort to determine the impact of proposed setback dikes.	Efforts to acquire funding for project feasibility will begin. Salmon Recovery Funding Board money has been received to acquire additional floodplain property along the Snoqualmie and Cherry Creek.

2008 Performance Measures

2008 Performance Measures Annual or Ongoing Performance Measure	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2008 Related Activity/ Comments
<u>Develop and post boundaries of the on all Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Units.</u>	Will prioritize sign work none known boundary with WCC crew & work with survey crew on unknown boundary lines.	Identified for 2007 calendar project. Extended to 2008 since not funded.
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>Riparian planting projects along -the main stem Snoqualmie River, Harris Creek, and unnamed tributaries. Funding was received 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. The first phase of planting along the Snoqualmie River was completed during February and March 2008.</p> <p>The Ducks Unlimited Duck Stamp proposals were unfunded.</p> <p>The Duck Stamp proposals for Stillwater and Crescent Lake were unfunded. They will be resubmitted during the next round.</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.	Continue in 2008
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 on the Honor Farm. Contact has been made but no documentation has been received. Ebey Island access will be improved after other acquisition completed.
Inspect and maintain 12 footbridges on Cherry Valley, Crescent Lake and Stillwater units	Work with volunteers to mark and maintain footbridges.	Develop a work crew to fix footbridges.
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

2008 Performance Measures Annual or Ongoing Performance Measure	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2008 Related Activity/ Comments
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.	Continue in 2008
Mow fields on Cherry Valley and Stillwater units	Completed Discuss the potential to develop a haying lease on the site to improve habitat conditions.	Coordinate with volunteers to spot mow to improve site between current mowing schedule
Maintain trails on Corson Natural Area	Mowing completed	Completed by volunteers
Release 3,100 to 3,800 pheasants on Cherry Valley, Crescent Lake and Stillwater units	Completed	Continue in 2008
Provide 'blue card' fire training for three Wildlife Area staff	Completed	Certification will be maintained annually
Attend and participate in monthly to quarterly meetings of the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum and Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum.	Attend 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 once Ebey Island acquisition completed.
Develop improved signage and methods to deal with newly developing unauthorized activities on the wildlife area such as paint-ball, target shooting, use of lead shot, driving in the fields, etc.	We will be requesting increased enforcement presences on the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area access sites	Continue in 2008
The Crescent Lake footbridge is failing and portions of the structure are deteriorating.	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.	To be completed in 2008
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.	Opportunities to acquire funding through the Duck Stamp process and/or farming with sharecrop or lease agreements will continue to be pursued.	Development of riparian buffers along streams and interior drainage structures will be implemented when feasible.
Request hunting access from Snohomish County Parks on the Spencer Island Property	This proposal has been brought forward from past planning efforts. WDFW will continue to explore various options for increased hunter access.	Concern has been expressed that requesting hunting access on Snohomish County property would set a precedent and would be difficult to enforce for other county lands. The CAG prefers examining of other hunting opportunities with the County.

2008 Performance Measures Annual and Ongoing Performance Measure	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2008 Related Activity/ Comments
Identify noxious and invasive weeds, species and distribution	Ongoing	Continue in 2008
Determine the risk level of weed species to develop control priorities	Ongoing	Continue in 2008
Coordinate weed control efforts with other agencies	Ongoing	Continue in 2008
Apply for grants to control weeds, plant native vegetation, and utilize the WDFW Weed Crew	Ongoing	Continue in 2008
Apply for grants and other funding opportunities consistent with planned priorities to supplement existing funding. (e.g. Salmon Recovery Funding Board, North American Wetland Conservation Act, Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, Duck Stamp, etc.)	Ongoing	Continue in 2008
Establish sharecropping agreements with neighboring farmers to address agricultural cultivation needs and generate additional revenue to support enhancement project operation and management on Stillwater and Cherry Valley Units.	Ongoing	Continue in 2008
Develop internship program for students, citizen scientists, and other volunteers	Coordinated by District Biologist	Continue in 2008
Partner with tribal agencies to monitor the restoration projects on Spencer Island and other units as they are funded and implemented	Ongoing with positive relationship with Stillaguamish and Tulalip Tribes.	Continue in 2008
Research and discuss additional habitat projects and salmon restoration efforts with tribes, the agricultural community, private landowners and county governments	Work with the Stillaguamish Implementation Review Committee and other regional planning efforts to identify projects.	Continue in 2008
Work with the agricultural and tribal community concerning what is planted on units and nearby fields; retaining or planting hedgerows for huntable and watchable wildlife; and how farming practices might benefit both farmers and fish and wildlife	Ongoing	Continue in 2008

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.

Citizens Advisory Group Input

A Citizens Advisory Group meeting was held on February 12, 2008 to review management progress and address any new issues or input on existing issues. WDFW staff members present were John Garrett Wildlife Area Manager, Belinda Schuster Asst. Wildlife Area Manager. CAG members in attendance were Martha Jordon, Sharon Swan, Art Kendal, Oscar Graham, David Randolph, and Tom Rutten. John and Belinda provided a summary update of the most recent activities on the Wildlife Area and the new project opportunities.

Agenda items discussed included updates on the following items.

- Wiley Slough Restoration project and the Wiley Collaborative Report
- Leque Island Restoration project including the status of the permit process and public meeting schedule
- Padilla Bay planning process
- Ebey Island hunting lease and funding requests for acquisition
- Samish Unit Enhancement Proposal status
- SRFB funding for projects and new acquisitions
- Cherry Valley proposal for acquisition and a Wild Fish Conservancy's proposal for restoration
- Wild Fish Conservancy's proposal to model bank-hardening removal of on the Stillwater Unit on the Snoqualmie River
- Volunteer and Sub-committee opportunities such as the renewal of the DeBay Slough Stewardship group and the upcoming volunteer tree-planting events on Stillwater.

The CAG was also informed that there would be an upcoming request a list of Top 10 most important operations and maintenance items. *Below are the written comments that we received from some CAG members regarding the funding request.*

David Randolph:

I have no comments on most of the items listed. As to the odd and even for weekends on the Samish unit I like the idea makes the hunting pressure less and it is safer with fewer people out each day.

Rone Brewer:

1. Wylie Slough Restoration Project - Project implementation may begin this summer 2008.

Wylie Slough Collaborative process report

Comment: Through the Wiley Slough recreational mitigation planning process, funding has been obtained for the Ag and hunting/recreational interests, but the hiker/bird watcher concerns have not yet been well funded. Therefore, additional funding should be sought to implement the riparian/passerine habitat and recreational/trail improvements listed in the recreation/habitat mitigation plan.

2. Leque Island Restoration Project - Construction scheduled to begin summer 2008.

Comment: Additional funding should be sought by WDFW for repairing the eastern dike. WDFW engineers should examine the use of sheet pilings to avoid having to move Eide Road and the dike landward.

3. Padilla Bay Properties planning effort - Feasibility report underway in cooperation with Department of Ecology, and Ducks Unlimited

Comment: Glad planning is underway. This should be part of the strategic planning being laid out with the local agricultural community as well as with the recreational community. The WWA would also like to be involved in this planning if waterfowl management/hunting is to be incorporated into future uses of the properties.

4. Ebe Island Acquisition - The property should be purchased during the summer 2008.

Comment: What is the plan for this property? Before purchase, the public should be informed of what the intended purposes are. This should be made part of the strategic planning being laid out with the local Agriculture community, as well as with the recreational community. I suggest the WDFW develop a one page bulleted summary plan that highlights likely use/enhancement/restoration planned for the property do it now so everyone knows what is coming!!

5. Samish Unit Wetland Management Proposal - Draft plans will be completed this year by Ducks Unlimited, to implement a three cell "moist soil" management project on this site.

Comment: Wahoo!!! Git'r Done

6. Cherry Valley/Stillwater Unit - WDFW, Wild Fish Conservancy, and Ducks Unlimited fisheries enhancement projects on these units, as well as the "barrier" removal projects on both of these units.

Comment: WDFW really needs to better inform the public of these projects. Many current users could be impacted and will be even unhappier with WDFW if they don't know what is planned. Will these projects displace past management practices and users? How will these be mitigated...if at all...if not mitigated, better tell folks now!!!

7. Samish Unit "Odd/Even" Hunting Proposal on Weekends - A proposal has been made to restrict the hunting use on the Samish Unit on the weekend, to odd and even days.

Comment: I, and in general, the WWA are in favor of this proposal. I think WWA can help WDFW get the word out to local hunters about the reasons/rationale behind this. WWA would also like to implement a pilot "blind hunt only" concept (not a reservation system but first come/first served) on at least a portion of the Samish Unit in an attempt to decrease hunter conflict and promote a BIT more quality to the hunting atmosphere

Want to see the full plan?

Go to -

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

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