

# Sherman Creek Wildlife Area

2019-2020 Management Plan Update



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

## Management Highlights

### **Forest Health (Goal #1)**

Thinning and prescribed burning projects continued within Sherman Creek Wildlife Area treatment units, restoring and maintaining priority habitats within the ponderosa pine forests to provide healthy and diverse fish and wildlife populations. The pre-commercial thinning project,

initiated in the fall of 2018 on the eastern portion of the Rustlers Gulch Unit, was completed in the spring of 2019 by a contracted thinning crew. A total of 370 acres, in three units, were treated to thin overstocked small and undesirable tree species. Slash debris produced close to the access roads was piled during the thinning process, with over 500 piles constructed. WDFW's North-Central Prescribed Burn Team removed the piled fuel through controlled burning in fall 2019. The burn team also continued prescribed burning commercially thinned forest units on the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area. Prescribed burning reintroduces this long absent component to the fire-dependent ponderosa pine forests of the wildlife area, which serve as winter range for wild ungulate species. Approximately 850 acres were treated in spring 2019 to reduce fire fuels and improve wildlife habitat on the Trout Lake side of Bisbee Mountain.



*Prescribed burning along the Trout Lake Road*

### **Kettle River Water Access Site (Goal #3)**

WDFW completed development of the Kettle River Water Access Area in May 2019, providing sustainable fish and wildlife-related recreational opportunities to a river with limited public access. The water access area is comprised of two properties separated by two miles of the Kroupa Road in northwestern Ferry County. It provides four miles of river floating between the two properties. Existing roads were improved, and parking areas with vault toilet restrooms and information kiosks were installed on each property. The northern property has a hand launch for small vessels, as well as a wildlife viewing blind overlooking a pond. The southern property also has a mowed trail from the parking area to the river. This project was made possible through grant funding from the Recreation and Conservation Office and cooperation with the Kettle River Advisory Board.

### **Pollinator Project (Goal #2)**

In fall 2019, WDFW staff members planted forb and shrub plugs in prescribed burn units along Trout Lake Road. These units, located on the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area, were treated earlier in the spring of 2019. This effort was part of a joint project between WDFW, Idaho Fish and Game, and the Xerces Society. Goals of this project include improving habitat and reducing the impacts of identified threats for bumble bees—a Species of Greatest Conservation Need—in Idaho and Washington. Post-treatment monitoring has been conducted to track plant survival.



*WDFW Burn Team member planting a forb plug*

### **Trout Creek Bridge (Goal #7)**

WDFW cooperated with the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) to install a new bridge over Trout Creek in the fall of 2020. The bridge allows BPA to maintain safe access to its Colville-Republic Transmission line. This project was timely, as new beaver activity on Trout Creek was impacting the ford crossing that provided BPA access for many years. Installation of the new bridge on the old access road, upstream of the ford crossing, allowed for the ford crossing to be abandoned and blocked.



*The new bridge and abandoned ford crossing on Trout Creek*

## **New Issues**

### **Forest Restoration Project Funding**

Grant funding awarded through the Recreation and Conservation Office has been extended through June 2022 to continue implementation of forest restoration prescribed burning on the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area.