Snoqualmie Wildlife Area

2019-2020 Management Plan Update

This document is intended to highlight accomplishments as they relate to goals and objectives identified within the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Management Plan. The plan addresses the status of wildlife species and their habitat, as well as ongoing restoration efforts and public recreation opportunities at the Snoqualmie 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.

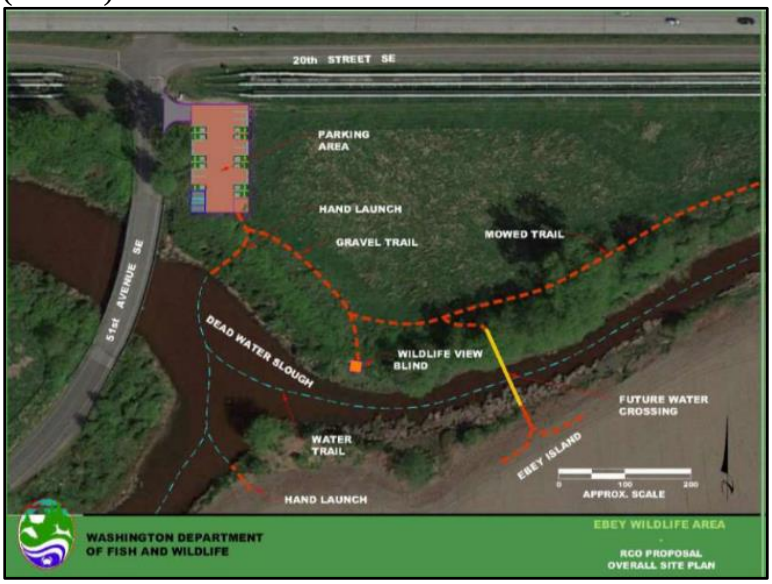
Spencer Island Unit with Snoqualmie watershed in the background

Management Highlights

Achieve species diversity at levels consistent with healthy ecosystems – Salmon habitat restoration, and amphibian monitoring *(Goal/Objective 2A. B. C.)*
Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Units provide essential habitat for Federally listed Chinook and other salmon species. Two projects completed recently address management plan goals by improving off-channel salmon rearing habitat. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) partnered with Drainage District 7, Ducks Unlimited, King County Flood Control District, Snoqualmie Watershed Improvement District, Oxbow Farms, and Sound Salmon Solutions to obtain funding for drainage, vegetation, and ditch infrastructure improvements. The Cherry Valley Ditch Maintenance Project was a six-year effort that also included an amphibian monitoring program in ponds that drain into the drainage network. Riparian restoration along Harris Creek (Phase 2) in the Stillwater Unit also provides improved rearing habitat. Sound Salmon Solutions completed this riparian enhancement project in 2020.

Support and maintain appropriate recreation opportunities – Infrastructure Improvements *(Goal/Objective 3E. I. F. L.)*
Improving public access to the Ebey Island Unit was a key priority identified in the 2018 Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Management Plan. The acquisition of a 10-acre adjoining property in 2018 was a step in addressing the problem. Since then, funding was obtained to complete the

design phase of a new public entrance to the unit. The Capital Asset Management Program (CAMP) was set for construction in 2020 until COVID restrictions delayed the project.



Ebey Island parking access design

Improving Cherry Valley access

Additional access improvements at the Cherry Valley and Stillwater units included over three miles of road and parking access work.

Maintain Operational Facilities–Facility Improvements *(Goal/Objective 9A. B.)*

A primary goal of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Management plan was to address failing facilities at the Cherry Valley Unit. A January 2019 major snow event was the catalyst for replacing the pheasant net pen. Approximately 80 percent of the support posts and rails were destroyed during that event. Master Hunter volunteers assisted with cleanup and construction of a modern pheasant pen. WDFW staff members completed the project in time for the 2019

pheasant season (Figure 4). CAMP provided funding and construction of safety improvements, including interior and exterior lighting and an OSHA-approved loading ramp.

Staff and volunteers rebuild the pheasant pen

Safety improvements at Cherry Valley facility

A capital improvement project to replace the Cherry Valley Barn rose to the top of the list over the past few years. WDFW initiated a needs assessment and design elements in 2019 and 2020.

Funding for a replacement building was secured in the 2021-2023 budget. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2022.

Deteriorating Cherry Valley barn ready for replacement

New Issues

Maintain productive and positive working relationships with neighbors, partners, and permitees - Agriculture Impacts *(Goal/Objective 6A)*

Agriculture has been a primary tool for maintaining Snoqualmie Wildlife Area habitat and vegetation goals. In 2019, agricultural lease contracts changed from a till and plant format to a no-till grass-growing format. Since then, encroachment of noxious weeds and native wetland vegetation is establishing in fields harvested for hay. Left unchecked, this vegetation shift will impact future harvests and recreational opportunities. WDFW staff members will continue to discuss treatment options with the Regional District Team and Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) members.

Cottonwood saplings encroaching fields

Bullrush, sedge and buttercup populating field

Support and maintain appropriate recreation opportunities - Maintenance Impacts
(Goal/Objective 3B. C. D.)

At the Stillwater and Cherry Valley units, noxious weeds and native vegetation are encroaching on fields where grass is grown for harvest. Encroaching vegetation is also making access for recreational use challenging. Seasonal mowing and localized herbicide use have proven to be ineffective. WDFW will discuss options for treatment with stakeholders, Regional District Team members, and WAAC members.