

3. LAND TRANSACTION

September 29, 2023

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**Item 1: Proposed Acquisition of 650(+/-) Acres in Douglas County
Chester Butte Unit, Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area, Region 2**

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Fish and Wildlife Commission Presentation Summary/Decision Sheet

Meeting date:

9/29/2023

Agenda item:

3. Land Transaction

Presenter(s):

Karen Edwards, Real Estate Services Manager

Background summary:

Item 1: Proposed Acquisition of 650(+/-) Acres in Douglas County
Chester Butte Unit, Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area, Region 2

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife staff request Commission approval of the proposed acquisition of 650(+/-) acres at the Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area, Chester Butte Unit, Douglas County, Region 2, pursuant to [RCW 77.12.037 Acquisition, use, and management of property—Condemnation—When authorized.](#)

Background summary:

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) proposes to acquire an additional 650(+/-) acres to the existing 2,262-acre Chester Butte Unit (Unit) of the Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area (WLA). The Unit is located about 7 miles southeast of Mansfield and 13 miles northwest of Coulee City in Douglas County, acquired in 1998 as a Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) wildlife mitigation project to address the loss of shrubsteppe and riparian habitats resulting from the construction of the Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams. The Unit is in an area extensively affected by glaciation 15,000 years ago, the result is a landscape featuring many examples of glacial deposition, including eskers, kames, drumlins, erratic's (haystack rocks), and a terminal moraine, and is within the Withrow Moraine and Jameson Lake Drumlin Field National Natural Landmark. Sagebrush habitat in this Unit supports Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, greater sage-grouse, as well as ferruginous hawk, sage thrasher, Brewer's sparrow, vesper sparrow, sage sparrow, white-tailed jackrabbit and Washington ground squirrel throughout the year.

The Unit includes two parking areas and provides recreational activities such as hunting of mule deer and upland birds, wildlife viewing throughout the shrubsteppe, seasonal ponds and wet meadows supporting of a variety of wildlife.

This 650(+/-)-acre property was approved through Lands 20/20 in 2021 and will be acquired for the appraised value of \$230,000 using a Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (Section 6) grant from United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The required match will be provided in the

form of land acquired with an existing Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Critical Habitat category grant through the Recreation and Conservation Office.

Once acquired, the property will be managed per the goals and objectives of [the Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area Management Plan](#). This plan guides the protection and enhancement of shrubsteppe habitat to promote the recovery of Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit, Columbian sharp-tailed and greater sage-grouse. This is accomplished through the enhancement of shrubsteppe habitat, control of noxious weeds, protection and enhancement of riparian habitat. These actions benefit a diversity of species including shrubsteppe obligates and state listed species.

Ongoing operation and maintenance costs for this proposed 650(+/-)-acre acquisition property is currently expected to be \$125 per acre, being a total of \$81,250 annually. This amount will be included in WDFW's 9v decision package for ongoing operation and maintenance for newly acquired land.

This proposed acquisition property is within Douglas County Fire Protection District #5.

Per [RCW 77.12.201](#), Douglas County does not currently opt into PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) as provided for in [RCW 77.12.203](#).

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommend Commission approval to acquire the 650(+/-)-acre property in the Chester Butte Unit of the Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area pursuant to [RCW 77.12.037](#).

Policy issue(s) and expected outcome:

Protecting habitat and providing public recreational opportunities.

Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:

Operation and maintenance costs.

Action requested and/or proposed next steps:

Approval of this land transaction.

Draft motion language:

Motion: I move to approve the land transactions as presented by staff.

Is there a "second"?

If so, then motion maker discusses basis for motion; other Commissioners discuss views on motion; amendments, if any, proposed and addressed.

Post decision communications plan:

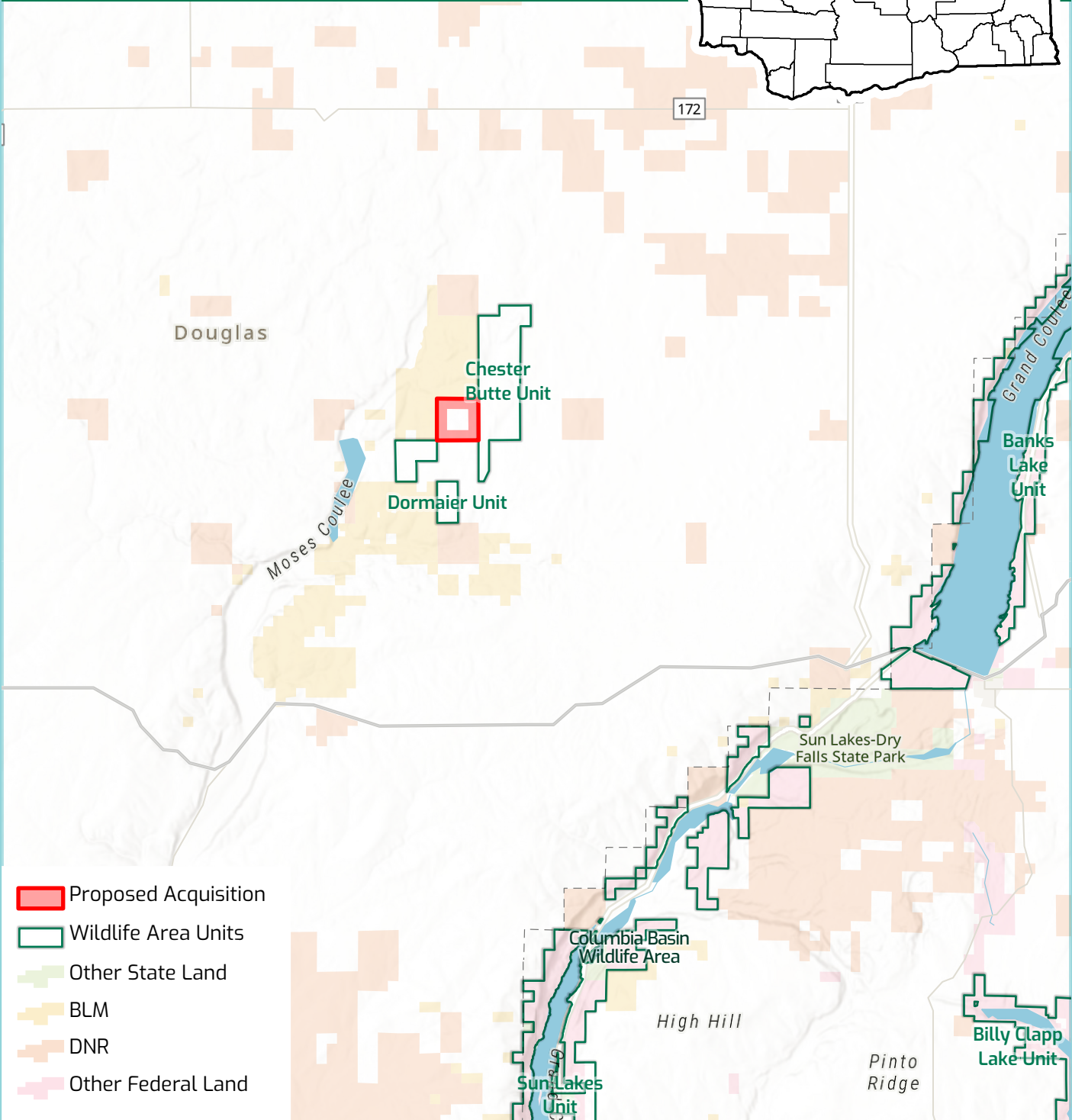
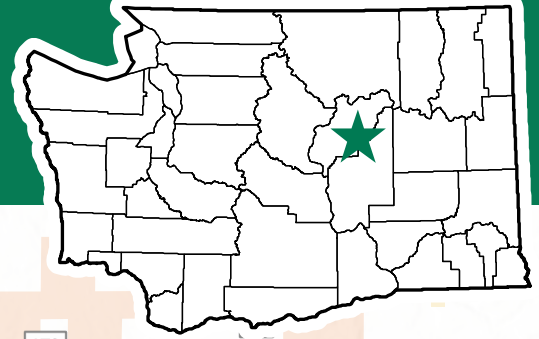
WDFW will distribute a press release informing the public of this action.







Chester Butte Addition

County: Douglas

Legal Description: Township 26N, Range 26 E, W.M., Section 33

Acers: 650 (+/-)



-  Proposed Acquisition
-  Wildlife Area Units
-  Other State Land
-  BLM
-  DNR
-  Other Federal Land



Department of Fish and Wildlife



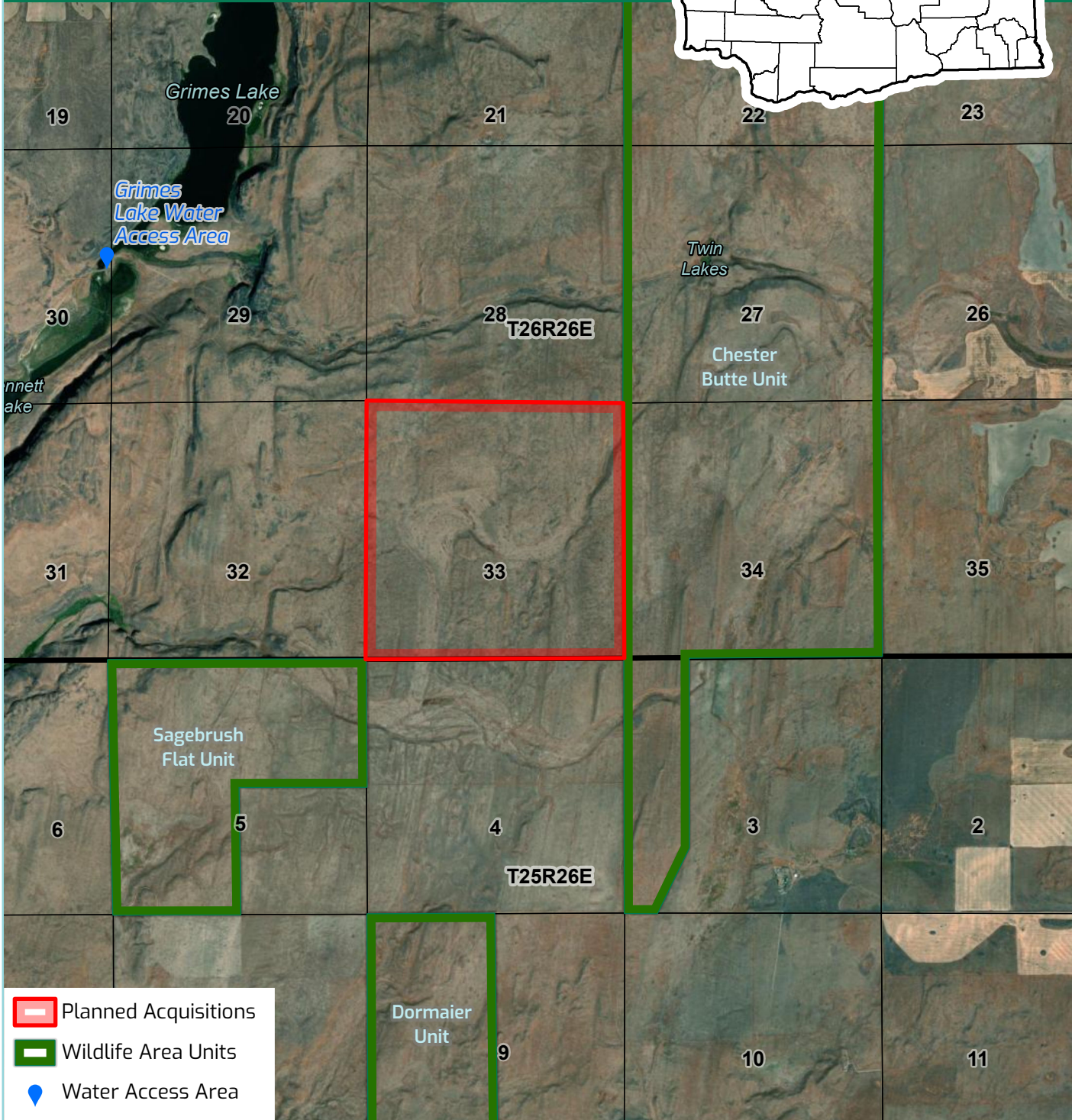
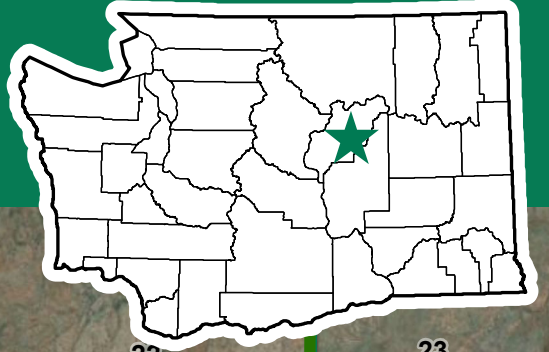
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Chester Butte Addition

County: Douglas

Legal Description: Township 26N, Range 26 E, W.M., Section 33

Acres: 650 (+/-)



-  Planned Acquisitions
-  Wildlife Area Units
-  Water Access Area



Department of Fish and Wildlife



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