Draft 5/30/17

WTS Advisory Committee

May 17, 2017 - Selah Civic Center

Meeting Summary

Committee Members in Attendance

John Baranowski	Brian Lund	Nick Perry
Lee Davis	Jim Lydigsen	Mark Pidgeon
Bill Essman	Debby McCandless	Scott Robertson
Tim Funkhouser	Steve Miller	Robert Schafer
Bret Hollar	Clay Myers	Tanya Stanley
Keely Hopkins	Craig O'Brine	
Walt Hyde	Norm Peck	

Facilitators

Elizabeth McManus and Andy Chinn, Ross Strategic

Agency Representation

Bruce Botka, WDFW	Larry Leach, WDNR	Melinda Posner, WDFW
Cindi Confer-Morris, WDFW	Mike Livingston, WDFW	Bob Weaver, WDFW
Aaron Garcia, WDFW	Nathan Longoria, WDFW	Dave Whipple, WDFW
Ross Huffman, WDFW	Scott McCorquodale, WDFW	

Welcome and Introductions

Elizabeth McManus thanked Committee members for volunteering their time and effort to participate on the Shooting Advisory Committee. Elizabeth reminded participants that Ross Strategic is a neutral third party hired to support the Committee as it works to produce recommendations to WDFW.

Elizabeth recognized the public attending the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. She reviewed the ways to provide input to the Advisory Committee: Orally at the meeting, on a paper comment form available at the sign-in table, and through an online comment form. All comments received on paper forms and online will be provided to Committee Members verbatim.

Committee members introduced themselves individually by mentioning their interests at the Wenas Wildlife Area and any specific interests or issues they would like to discuss in the Committee process.

WDFW Presentation

Mike Livingston, WDFW Region 3 Director, provided an overview of the Department's responsibilities at the Wenas Wildlife Area. Mike summarized some of the unique features of the Wenas Wildlife Area, as well as its challenges, and described recent Department efforts to manage dispersed shooting at the Wildlife Area leading up to the formation of the Committee. Mike then described WDFW's goals for Committee recommendations / advice. WDFW is requesting recommendations which meet WDFW's

mission: "To preserve, protect and perpetuate fish, wildlife and ecosystems, while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities" and which: (1) are supported by the local communities; (2) reduce risk to Wildlife Area users and neighbors; (3) improve habitat protection; (4) reduce fire risks; (5) are financially attainable and manageable; (6) provide predictability for all users; and (7) adhere to clear and concise standards.

Committee members asked for clarification on the **"financial viability" goal**. Mike clarified that the Committee isn't limited to recommending only things that can be done with current funding; it can (purposefully) recommend that WDFW seek additional funding to implement recommendations.

The "**clear and concise standards**" goal also was discussed. Mike explained that clear and concise standards are important to enforcement.

Draft Committee Charter and Draft Ground Rules

Committee members reviewed the draft Committee Charter and Ground Rules. Elizabeth reiterated a key point in the Charter, which is the approach to consensus. Consensus is defined as a recommendation that all Committee Members can at least "live with", even if it is not their first (or even their preferred) choice. The Committee will not produce majority and minority reports. Where the Committee can reach consensus on an issue, the Committee will make a recommendation. If the Committee cannot reach consensus, the facilitators will document the perspective of each Committee member. Consensus will be evaluated by straw polling during meetings, one-on-one conversations between meetings, and by Committee Member responses to draft Committee documents.

Committee members had the following discussion on the Charter and Ground Rules:

- **Additional Ground Rule**. Suggestion that at the end of each meeting, summarize agreements, remaining issues, assignments, and agenda topics for the next meeting.
- **Communication between meetings (Ground Rules)**. A request for clarification around the extent to which Committee members communicate between meetings.
    - Elizabeth clarified that communication between meetings is to be expected; however, if there are ideas or concerns arising from those communications, the request is that those items be brought before back to the Committee so the group can work on them together.
- **Decision making.** Who is the final decision maker on Committee recommendations?
    - The Committee makes the final decision on what they want to recommend (if anything) to WDFW. Once recommendations (if any) are made, the Committee's work as a Committee is done. WDFW has responsibility for decision making on management at the Wenas Wildlife Area and will decide how to move forward considering Committee recommendations. Mike Livingston clarified that Committee recommendations would be forwarded to the WDFW Director. He anticipated that consensus recommendations from the Committee would have great weight with WDFW. He also indicated that WDFW will attend Committee meetings and track the Committee's progress, and will provide information to the Committee as requested including reactions to emerging and draft recommendations so there are no surprises at the end of the Committee process.

- **Sharing Committee Member information.** Will Committee member contact information be shared among Committee members?
    - The facilitators will confirm individual preferences with Committee members and share accordingly.
- **Funding.** Is the funding that WDFW originally allocated for the construction of the two proposed shooting ranges still available?
    - WDFW confirmed that funding is still available. Some of it is being used to fund the Committee process.
- **Volunteer hours.** Are Committee hours tracked as part of volunteer hours?
    - Yes – WDFW will follow up with more information on volunteer hour tracking.
- **Meeting attendance**. How soon should facilitators be notified if a Committee Member can't make a meeting?
    - Committee members should notify the facilitators in advance as much as possible if they have a conflict with a meeting date. If a significant number of Committee members are not available for a given meeting, the meeting may be rescheduled. Every effort will be made to identify meeting dates that work for as many Committee members as possible. With a 20-person Committee it is anticipated that few (if any) dates will work for everyone. Facilitators will check in with any Committee Member who anticipates missing a meeting before and after the meeting to help him/her stay current with Committee discussions.

Straw polling

The Committee was straw polled on whether the draft Charter and Ground Rules were acceptable using thumbs up/ thumbs down. Elizabeth noted that there seemed to be agreement among Committee members on the revised (per above) draft Ground Rules and the draft Charter. She requested Committee members raise any additional concerns and none were raised.

Next Steps

- Facilitators will circulate the revised draft Ground Rules and the draft Charter one more time for anticipated Committee closure on them at the June meeting. *[Post meeting note: done, email from Elizabeth on 5/18; responses requested by 5/26. Some concerns raised by email which will be discussed at the June meeting.]*

Draft Committee Schedule

The Committee reviewed the draft schedule for regular monthly meetings. Meetings are currently assumed to be 2.5 hours in duration but may need to be longer if the Committee feels it necessary. Meetings will alternate between Selah/Yakima area and Ellensburg. (The June meeting will be in Ellensburg)

Two sets of "listening sessions" also are being planned, the first set in late June after the Committee's second meeting and the second later in the fall. Each set would consist of two meetings (Selah/Yakima and Ellensburg) and would provide an opportunity for the public to comment on Committee work to-date. Committee members would be invited and encouraged to attend if available, listen to public comments, and answer any public questions. Listening sessions will be summarized so Committee members who cannot attend will be able to consider the public input offered.

Next Steps

- Facilitators will distribute a survey to Committee members to determine preferred meeting dates. *[Post meeting note: done, email from Elizabeth on 5/18; responses requested by 5/26.]*
- Facilitators also will ask Committee members for preference on affiliation to list next to their name on Committee materials. *[Post meeting note: done, email from Elizabeth on 5/18; responses requested by 5/26]*

Information Needs

Based on individual discussions with Committee members, the facilitators compiled a draft list of information that Committee members believe would be useful to inform discussions.

- **History & Priorities**. What is the history of the Wenas Wildlife Area
    1. How did the land come to be managed by WDFW?
    2. What have management priorities been over the years? What are they now?
    3. How and by whom are management priorities set?
- **Existing Laws and Rules**. What are the current rules that apply to dispersed shooting? Information is needed on general state laws/rules, general WDFW laws/rules/policies, and any rules or policies specific to the Wenas (like the seasonal time of day closures that currently exist).
    1. How are these laws/rules/policies communicated to people?
    2. Who is allowed to dispersed shoot at the Wenas?
    3. Is there any education/competency requirement or other requirement needed? (e.g., hunter's education and hunting license/tags)
    4. Are any areas closed to dispersed shooting now?
- **Use/Use Days**. What is known about how many users use different areas of the Wenas, the usual ways different areas tend to be used (e.g., horses off Buffalo Rd), and the usual days of the week / times of day / seasons of use for different users.
- **Concerns**. What documentation is available on specific concerns (e.g., safety, fire, habitat)?
    1. Where do we have first-hand accounts of concerns?
    2. Where have concerns / complaints been investigated and what are the results of those investigations?
- **Enforcement Resources and Approach**. What is WDFW's current approach to and resources for enforcement at the Wenas? Who makes the decisions about enforcement resources (e.g., decision about how many resources; where and how they are deployed)?
- **Education, Outreach, Info Resources, and Approach**. What are WDFW's current approaches to outreach and providing information on dispersed shooting?
    1. What audiences are being reached, through what mechanisms?
    2. What information is available?
    3. What is the approach to signage?
- **Agency Mission**. What is WDFW's mission - when, and how was it established? How is it used? What force does it have? How is it relevant, if at all, to recommendations about the Wenas?
- **DFW Management and Organization.** How is WDFW organized/funded to manage the wildlife area?
    1. What are the different management roles and funding sources?
    2. What are the roles of Department biologists vs. other Department staff?
    3. Where and how are management decisions made?

4. Infrastructure (Roads). What is WDFW's current approach to/resources for road maintenance at the Wenas? Who makes the decisions about roads and road maintenance?
5. Infrastructure (Signage). What is WDFW's current approach to/resources for signs and information? What types of information are a priority to be placed on the Wildlife Area? Who makes the decisions about information sharing and signs?

- **Ideas from Other Places**. How is dispersed shooting supported in other locations, and what can be learned from strategies used elsewhere?
- **Inter-agency Relationship.** What is the management relationship at the Wenas between DFW, DNR, and BLM?

Committee members provided the following feedback on information needs.

- **Use and use days**. Associate locations with them as much as possible. This could help identify areas where shooting and other uses commonly co-exist and additional attention may be needed.
- **WDFW funding**. Information is needed on WDFW's funding for Department management and responsibilities at the Wenas and how much flexibility the Department has with funding.
- **WDFW priorities**. Information should address how WDFW identifies priorities as it sets its budget; for example, what are the constraints (if any) around increasing funding for enforcement?
- **WDFW staffing**. Information is needed on the number of WDFW staff hours at the wildlife area and numbers and types of staff and enforcement contacts.
- **Use for shooting**. More information is needed on the different types of non-hunting shooting uses there are at the Wenas and what each individual group needs.

Next Steps

- Facilitators will work with WDFW on compiling information based on Committee suggestions.
- Facilitators also will contact others with information (Sheriff's offices, Fire Districts).
- Committee members and through them their networks also will be a source of information, particularly on use / use days / use locations.

Public Comments

Members of the public provided the following comments:

- Enforcement is not a problem at the north end of the wildlife area. At Durr Road there are natural shooting lanes that do not require marking, they are clearly visible. Shooters are a very courteous group of people.
- Regarding sustainability, one idea is to return to multi-use at the wildlife area including grazing.
- The Wildlife Commission developed a rule for a bird dog training area at the wildlife area in 2002; this area has yet to be designated and action is urgently needed to designate the area. (Commenter requested follow-up meeting with Mike Livingston.)
- There was one public comment received online: A request for Committee members' affiliations to be listed with their names.

June Meeting Topics

The following potential meeting topics for June were identified:

- Closure on Charter and Ground Rules.
- Information available to meet information needs (recognizing that all information likely will not be complete by June).
- Approach to gathering use information from Committee Members and their networks.
- Summary of main themes from one-on-one conversations with Committee Members, particularly discussion of Committee Member ideas for improvements at the Wenas provided during the one-on-one conversations.
- Discussion of concerns around shooting, with an eye towards understanding what problems (if any) are present and depth and scope of the concerns.

Wrap Up and Closing Comments

Elizabeth thanked Committee Members, Agency staff, and the public for their time and participation. Committee members had the following exchanges / comments:

- One committee members suggested there appears to be a developing consensus among Committee members around "safe, multi-use" at the wildlife area. Another Committee Member responded that the Committee needs to agree on the definition of "multi-use" first.
- A Committee Member observed that everyone around the table wants to maintain shooting at the Wenas and ensure shooting can be done safely, and this is a good foundation to build on.
- A committee member asked what is the distinction between a right and a privilege in the context of shooting at the Wenas? Another Committee Member responded that, in his view, the distinction is that keeping and bearing arms is a Constitutionally protected right, while where and when target or recreational shooting is allowed is largely a privilege.
- One Committee Member remarked that, in his view, it is a credit to the shooting community that no one has been injured at the wildlife area and it shows how safe shooting practices generally are. Another Committee Member noted that he had heard/felt ricochets going over and around him and noted that lack of any injury so far may be more a matter of luck. Elizabeth noted that different experiences of Committee members, and different perspectives, would be an ongoing discussion at Committee meetings.

Elizabeth again thanked Committee Members for their work. WDFW staff distributed maps of the Wenas Wildlife Area to all Committee Members.

[Meeting adjourned]

Meeting Materials

- Meeting agenda (distributed in advance)
- Draft Charter and Ground Rules (distributed in advance)
- WDFW vision and goals (distributed in advance)
- WDFW PowerPoint (used at the meeting, available online)
- Wenas map (distributed at the meeting, available online)