

## **Updates to W.T. Wooten sections of management plan**

### **UPDATES / CHANGES**

Tucannon Lakes: The lakes on the WT Wooten WA are in need of repair. The dams are in violation of the Department of Ecology's Dam Safety Standards. A subcommittee of the District Team put together the *W.T. Wooten Floodplain Management Plan* in 2012 and revised it in 2014. Funding was received to complete the work on Rainbow Lake in 2017 & 2018 (see details below). A request for funding to continue with lake repairs was submitted to the Capital Projects Budget for 19-21.

Tucannon River Large Wood Projects: WDFW Habitat Biologist, Dave Karl, is working on designs for a large wood project between the Rainbow Lake inlet and the Hatchery Bridge with construction planned for summers 2020 and 2021. The only 2 reaches left to treat with large wood on the WT Wooten WA are the reach adjacent to Camp Wooten ELC and the reach at the Tucannon Guard Station. No designs have been made for either of those reaches at this time.

Walla Walla Properties: The Walla Walla properties that were assigned for management under the WT Wooten Wildlife Area staff in 2013 continue to have significant noxious weed issues. Weed control will continue in 2019 to try to get the weed infestations under control.

Management Plan: The Blue Mountains Wildlife Area Complex Management Plan should be completed and posted on the WDFW website summer 2019.

### **NEW ISSUES**

Donahue Parcel: RMEF purchased the Donahue Parcel originally because the seller was not able to wait for WDFW to go through the Lands 20/20 process. WDFW completed the Lands 20/20 process and purchased the Donahue Parcel from RMEF in fall 2018. One of the conditions of RMEF purchasing the parcel for WDFW was that the A-frame cabin will be removed and the parking area will be retained there to provide access to that portion of the wildlife area. Removal of the cabin and old barbed wire fence could occur in 2019.

### **MAJOR STEWARDSHIP ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Rainbow Lake: Construction on Rainbow Lake took place during the summers of 2017 and 2018. In 2017 buried pipeline was installed in the inlet channel, a sediment basin was constructed, and the footprint of the "new" lake was created and dredged out. In 2018 the new dam was constructed along the west side of the lake, the north dam was rebuilt to repair the leakage issues, and the new wetland was constructed on the west side of the lake in the footprint of the previous lake bed. Two informational signs about the project have been purchased and will be installed in 2019, as well as completion of graveling the top of the new west dam.

## STATUS REPORT OF 2018 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

<b>2018 Performance Measures</b>	<b>Status of Performance Measures</b>	<b>Progress/ 2019 Related Activities/ Comments</b>
Irrigate pastures	Headquarters and Hartsock fields irrigated throughout the summer.	Continue in 2019
Establish and maintain food plots (15 acres)	One of the food plots on the Hartsock was planted with seed donated by Pheasants Forever, one was planted with Roundup Ready alfalfa, and the third was planted with red clover.	Continue irrigating food plots in 2019. Look for options to replant food plot at Headquarters.
Maintain 8 lakes	Water level and inlet/outlet structures were maintained weekly. The <i>W.T. Wooten Floodplain Management Plan</i> was written in 2012 to provide direction for restructuring the lakes and reconnecting the floodplain. It was updated in 2014.	Continue maintenance in 2019. Continue subcommittee work. Install information signs around Rainbow Lake in 2019.
Maintain Spring Lake dam, repair damage caused by vegetation	DOE conducted a dam inspection in fall 2011.	Continue keeping vegetation cleared off the Spring Lake dam in 2019.
Maintain four mineral sites	Sites were replenished with new mineral blocks in 2018.	Continue maintenance in 2019
Maintain information kiosks	WLA information was posted throughout the year. Kiosks are now located in each campground and in main parking areas.	Continue posting WLA activity information.
Maintain 50 miles of boundary fence	Boundary fences were checked, repaired, and maintained in 2018.	WLA staff will continue regular maintenance
Maintain western half of elk fence (10 miles)	Elk fence was checked, repaired where needed, and maintained in 2018.	Maintenance will continue in 2019
Maintain or improve 2 seeps on Abels Ridge	A new spring box was installed in the spring at the head of McGowan Canyon in 2014.	Maintain McGowan spring in 2019.
Reestablish food plot on Abels Ridge	The food plots on Abels Ridge were planted in spring 2015 with a red clover mix.	Food plots will be monitored and replanted if necessary.
Modify Wooten campgrounds	Campground 3 was improved in 2017 with a circular driveway added through the campground. The remaining fiberglass outhouses were removed in fall 2018 and replaced with ADA-accessible concrete vault toilets.	Campground maintenance will continue in 2019.
Monitor existing CREP project	Monitor riparian planting success and maintain existing CREP project.	CREP contract expired in 2017.
Annually spot treat	WLA staff sprayed weeds along Tucannon	Continue weed

50 acres of weeds along roadsides and access sites	Road, Hartsock Grade, Blind Grade, and Cummings Creek road. Also treated Hartsock fields, Blind Grade fields, Blue Lake field, and campgrounds.	treatments in 2019.
Seek funding to bury the Columbia REA power line	Burying the power line will reduce the chances of another fire on the Wildlife Area.	Continue looking for funding opportunities to bury the power line. Power line burial was included in the <i>W.T. Wooten Floodplain Management Plan</i> .
Maintain 12 guzzlers and 6 troughs	Several of the guzzlers were damaged during the School fire and others have been damaged from high winds.	This task will be continued in 2019. Need to find location information and determine if some guzzlers should be replaced or removed.
Revisit 33 post-fire monitoring photopoints	Photopoints were established following the 2005 School Fire to monitor vegetation regeneration. WDFW visits the photopoints every other year. Photopoints were visited in 2018.	Visit sites in May 2020
Maintain/install 25 bluebird boxes and 10 wood duck boxes	Two wood duck boxes were built and installed near Deer Lake in 2009. One old wood duck box was refurbished.	Continue this task in 2019

## NEW STRATEGIES

Objective: Improve and Maintain Fish Populations

1. Work cooperatively with other watershed managers to identify and prioritize fish passage barriers on the wildlife area.
2. Improve one passage barrier annually as funds allow.
3. Identify and enhance one riparian area annually as funds allow.
4. Look for options to add large woody debris to streams, and do so as time and funds allow.
5. Identify ways to decrease or minimize soil erosion and/or soil delivery to streams. Close roads, reseed roads, or rock roads as necessary to achieve goal.
6. Continue work with the subcommittee to conduct public meetings and get input and comments on the *W.T. Wooten Floodplain Management Plan* projects.

Objective: Provide Sound Operational Management of WDFW Lands

1. Pursue funding and support to bury the power line that runs from the Tucannon Hatchery up to Camp Wooten.
2. Look at options to utilize wildlife friendly fence when replacing existing boundary fences. Remove old and/or unnecessary barbed wire fences.
3. Continue the permanent annual winter closure in Cummings Creek to reduce stress on wildlife during critical time periods.

Objective: Protect, Enhance and Restore Function and Structure of Native Habitats

1. Biennially revisit 33 photo-monitoring sites to assess post-fire and post-logging habitat recovery.
2. Identify and restore upland habitats that are in poor condition due to past land practices. Rehabilitate one area annually as funds allow.

## **2019 PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

- 1) Irrigate Headquarters and Hartsock pastures in summer months
- 2) Maintain 8 lakes by monitoring inlet/outlet structures twice weekly and regulating water levels.
- 3) Maintain 50 miles of boundary fence
- 4) Maintain 10 miles of elk fence. Look at ways to provide a fire barrier along fence.
- 5) Maintain or improve 2 seeps on Abels Ridge
- 6) Stock mineral blocks at four sites
- 7) Maintain 12 guzzlers and 6 troughs
- 8) Maintain/install 25 bluebird boxes and 10 wood duck boxes
- 9) Annually spot treat 50 acres of weeds along roadsides and access sites
- 10) Seek funding and support to bury the power line between Tucannon Hatchery and Camp Wooten
- 11) Identify and prioritize fish passage barriers on the wildlife area. Address at least 1 barrier annually as funds allow.
- 12) Identify and prioritize riparian areas on the wildlife area that can be enhanced. Address at least 1 area annually as funds allow.
- 13) Identify and restore upland habitats that are in poor condition due to past land practices. Address at least 1 area annually as funds allow.
- 14) Continue working with subcommittee to conduct public meetings and get input and comments on the *W.T. Wooten Floodplain Management Plan*.

## **WAAC INPUT**

Larry Scoggin – What do you spray yellow starthistle with?

*Tordon or Milestone depending on the location*

Jason Towery – Why are there things on the update that have been on here for the last 10 years? At what point do things rotate off the list if funding is never available?

*These updates are for the PR contract and are things we are required to have on the updates. Unsure how to get the contract changed to remove the things that are no longer feasible to do.*