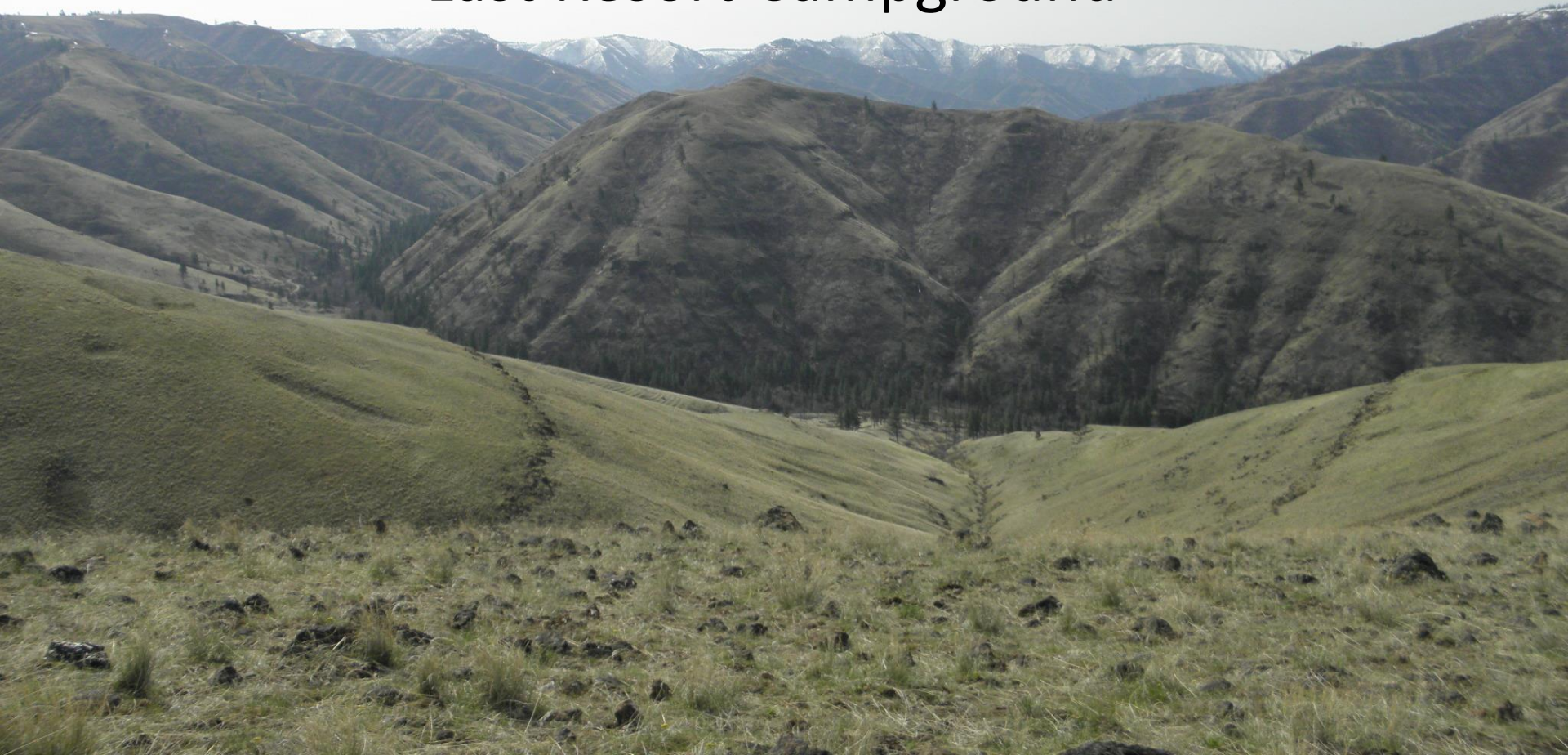


2025 WAAC Meeting

March 27, 2025

Last Resort Campground



Meeting Ground Rules

Everyone in the group is valuable and is treated with respect

One person's concern is the group's concern

Confine discussion to the meeting topic

Listen to understand

Do not interrupt

No personal attacks

WT
Wooten
Wildlife
Area Staff

Kari Dingman

- Wildlife Area Manager

Max Tritt

- Natural Resources Tech 3

Tom Jensen

- Natural Resources Tech 3

Management Plan Updates

- Highlights:
 - 10 miles of elk fence maintained
 - 4.5 miles of boundary stock fence maintained
 - 823 acres treated for noxious weeds
 - 65,300 fish stocked in Tucannon lakes
 - 6 lakes maintained for fishing
 - \$90,000 secured for constructing pole building

Rainbow Lake Blue-Green Algae

- 2023 – BGA bloom
 - Columbia County Dept of Health notified
 - Several water samples to DOE lab confirmed presence
- 2024 – BGA bloom
 - Columbia County Dept of Health notified
 - Hired Amaruq Environmental Services to take water and sediment samples
 - High levels of phosphorous found
- April 2025
 - Amaruq will be treating this spring with Phoslock to bind phosphorous

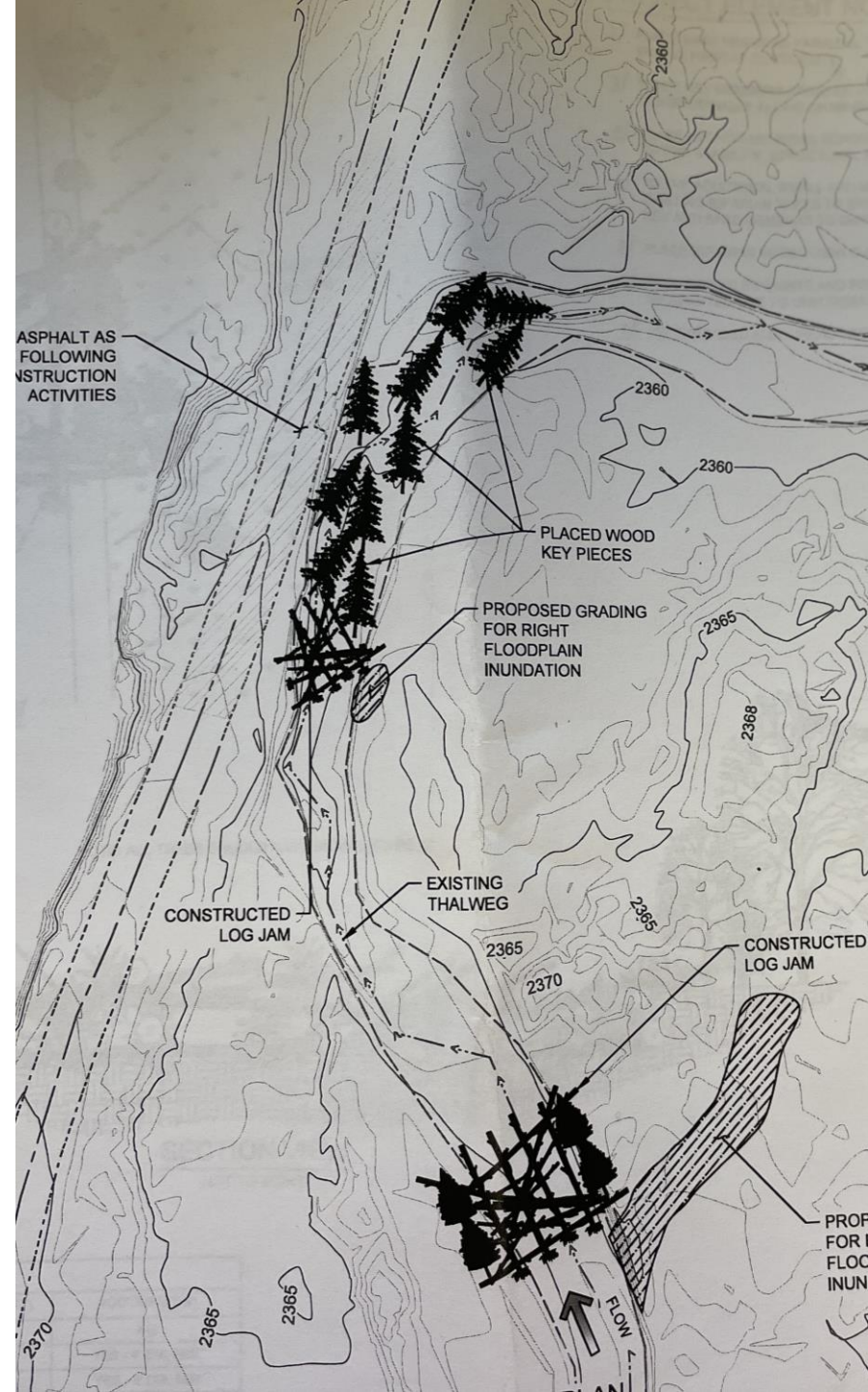


2020 Flood Damage Update

- Campground 9 cleared and reopened in 2023
- Old culvert removed at Russell Unit in 2024
- Unfinished WDFW repair work:
 - Deer Lake
 - Headquarters irrigation
- USFS
 - Tucannon Road repairs
 - Panjab footbridge

USFS Projects

- Little Tucannon Bridge
 - Longer span with more room underneath
 - Summer 2025
- Road near Watson Lake Parking Area
 - Add rip-rap Summer 2025



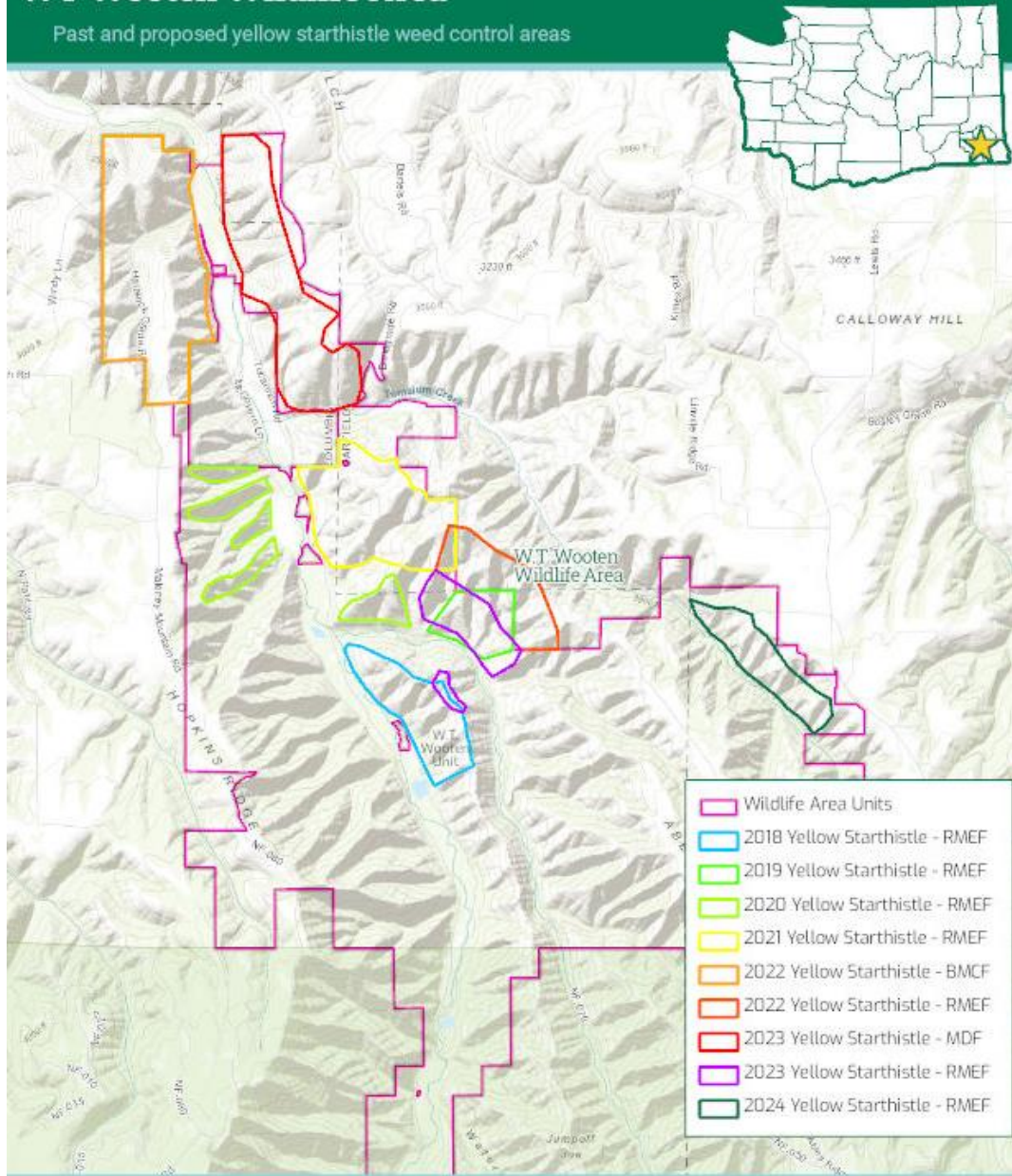
Floodplain Management Plan

- PA 5-15 Assessment
 - Co-Managers
 - WDFW, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, & Nez Perce Tribe
 - From Camp Wooten to Russell Unit
 - Alternatives
 - Co-managers working on agreed upon alternative to move forward
 - Reconfigure/relocate/remove a lake or 2 and relocate USFS road in places
 - Timeline:
 - Assessment Start Date: September 1, 2023
 - Assessment End Date: December 2025???

WT Wooten Wildlife Area

WT Wooten Wildlife Area

Past and proposed yellow starthistle weed control areas



Noxious Weed Control Grants

- 2024 Grants
 - Rocky Mtn Elk Foundation grant
 - \$15,000 to spray 300 acres
- 2025 Grants
 - \$15,000 requested from RMEF
 - 300 acres
 - \$15,000 received from PSE – Garfield County
 - 300 acres

Swegle Unit Restoration Project



- RCO State Land Restoration Grant = \$250,000
 - Restore .32 miles of West Little Walla Walla River & 30 acres of upland
- 2024
 - Wetland delineation, cultural resources, and 30% designs
 - Planted upland trees, shrubs, and forbs fall 2024
- 2025
 - Obtain remaining permits
 - Hoping to start construction Aug/Sept
 - Planting riparian trees & shrubs fall 2025

Large Wood Projects

- Cummings Creek- Phase 1 (Nez Perce Tribe)
 - Treat 1 mile upstream from mouth of Cummings Creek
 - Post Assist Log structures (PALS)
 - Salmon Recovery Board funded
 - Completed summer 2024
- Cummings Creek – Phase 2 (Nez Perce Tribe)
 - Treat next mile up from Phase 1
 - Post Assist Log Structures (PALS)
 - Salmon Recovery Board funded
 - Construction proposed summer 2025

Large Wood Projects Continued

- Big 4 Lake Decommission & River Restoration (Comanagers)
 - Decommission Big 4 Lake & remove associated infrastructure
 - Restoration project in ~2 miles of Tucannon River
 - Curl Lake to Beaver Lake inlet
 - \$6M
 - Currently in design phase
- PA 14.1 (Hatchery Bridge to Blue Lake)
 - Designs for restoration project (shovel ready project)
 - Salmon Recovery Board funded
- PA 1 (Panjab Bridge down to Howard Cow Camp property)
 - Designs for restoration project (shovel ready project)
 - Salmon Recovery Board funded

Budget Reconciliation Funds

Purchased:

- New well (2021)
- New siding on Wooten Headquarters (2022)
- Garage door opener (2023)
- 2006 International 7400 SBA Dump Truck (2023)
- 2023 MAXXD LDX Equipment Trailer (2023)
- Security Cameras (2023)

Requests:

- Mini-excavator with bucket and brush-cutter head
- Pole building construction (in progress)

Capital Budget Project Requests

- Replace outhouses built by CAMP
 - Exteriors beginning to deteriorate and crumble
- Fix road to shooting range
- Fix road to Campground 7
- Construct legal berm at shooting range



Bighorn Sheep Update

- Currently have 19 sheep in the herd
 - 6 lambs surviving from last year (out of 6 documented)
 - 5 males & 1 female
- Herd still on private land north of the wildlife area
- WDFW has no plans to supplement the herd with new animals
 - Will continue to try to ground dart and collar the sheep as opportunities present themselves



Wolf Update

- Columbia Pack
 - 1 working collar
- Tucannon Pack
 - 2 working collars
- Touchet Pack
 - 0 working collars
- 139 Group
 - 0 working collars
- Butte Creek Pack
 - 0 working collars
- Grouse Flats Pack
 - 2 working collars
- Pack counts done January-March due to packs being more cohesive and numbers being at their lowest of the year due to sub-adults dispersing and pups not surviving winter



Elk Calf Mortality Study 2021-23

- 342 neonate calf elk captured
- Increase in shed collars in 2023 (33.3%) & 2024 (52.2%) compared to 2022 (6.4%)
- Predation leading cause of mortality
- Juvenile elk survival at 300 days
 - 2022 – 13.6%
 - 2023 – 47.5%
 - 2024 – 52.5%
- 11 calves marked in 2022 harvested as spikes in 2023
 - 3 marked in 2023 harvested in 2024



Table 7. Count of mortalities classified as predation, by carnivore species, and other non-predation sources.

Study year	Cougar	Bear	Cougar/ Bear	Coyote	Wolf	Wolf/ Bear	Bobcat	Other	Total ^a
2022	57	9	5	3	1	1	1	22	99
2023	34	1	1	0	1	0	0	11	48
2024	33	1	3	1	0	0	0	7	45
All years	124	11	9	4	2	1	1	40	192

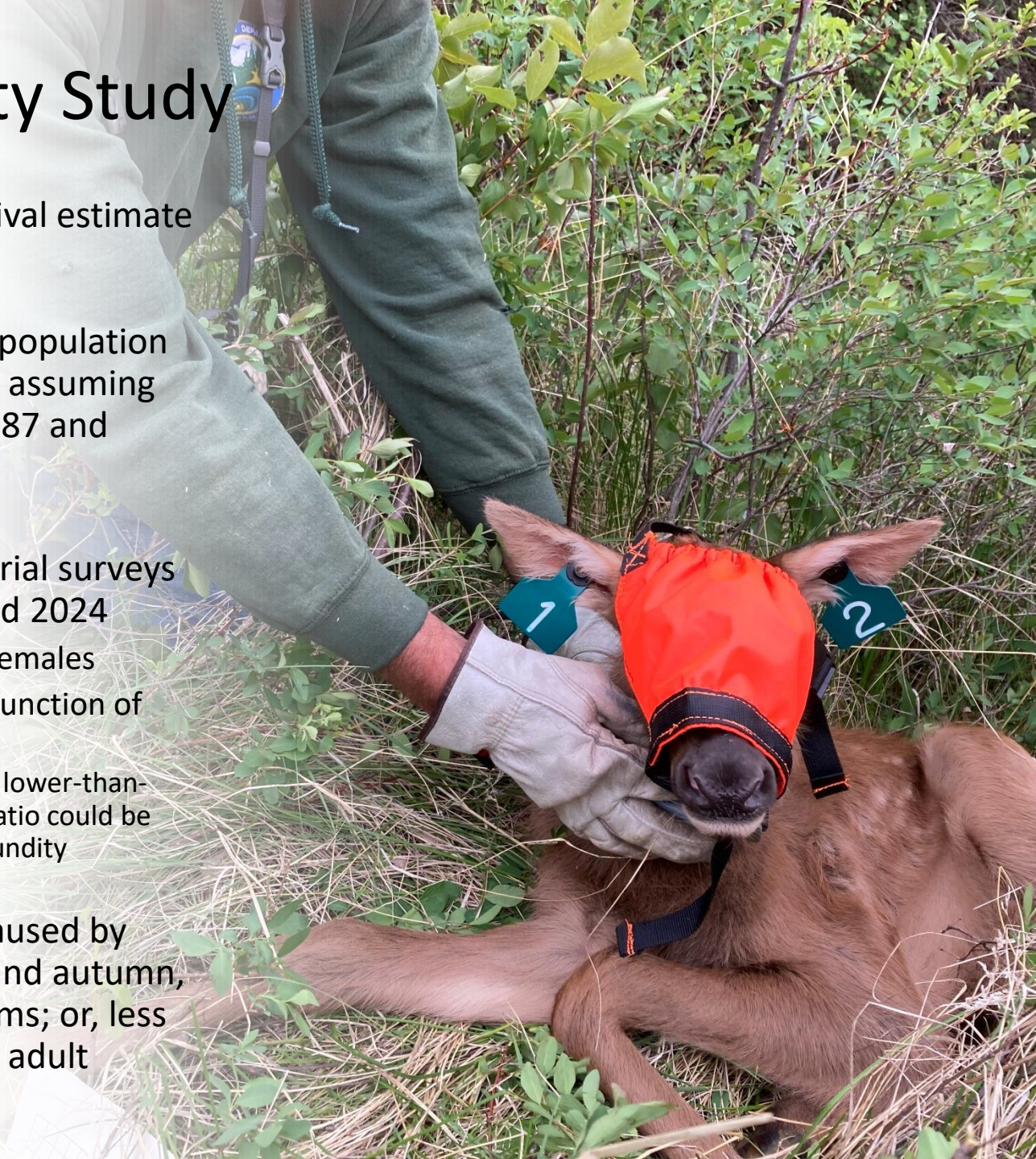
^aTotal includes all mortalities (i.e., predation and non-predation caused)

Table 8. Count of all mortality classified as other.

Study year	Exertional myopathy	Infection	Starvation	Unknown Consumed	Unknown Fire	Unknown Intact	Unknown Traum	Unknown	Harvest
2022	1	5	1	7	3	5	0	0	0
2023	0	0	0	5	0	2	3	1	0
2024	0	3	0	1	0	0	2	0	1
All years	1	8	1	13	3	7	5	1	1

Elk Calf Mortality Study

- 36.8% overall juvenile survival estimate across 3 years
- Based on estimate, expect population stability or minimal growth assuming adult female survival of >0.87 and pregnancy rates $>90\%$
- Recruitment ratios from aerial surveys were low in 2022, 2023, and 2024
 - 7-19 juveniles:100 adult females
 - Recruitment ratios are a function of fecundity
 - Higher calf survival and lower-than-expected recruitment ratio could be product of reduced fecundity
- Reduced fecundity often caused by poor nutrition in summer and autumn, especially in drier ecosystems; or, less likely, due to an increase in adult female survival



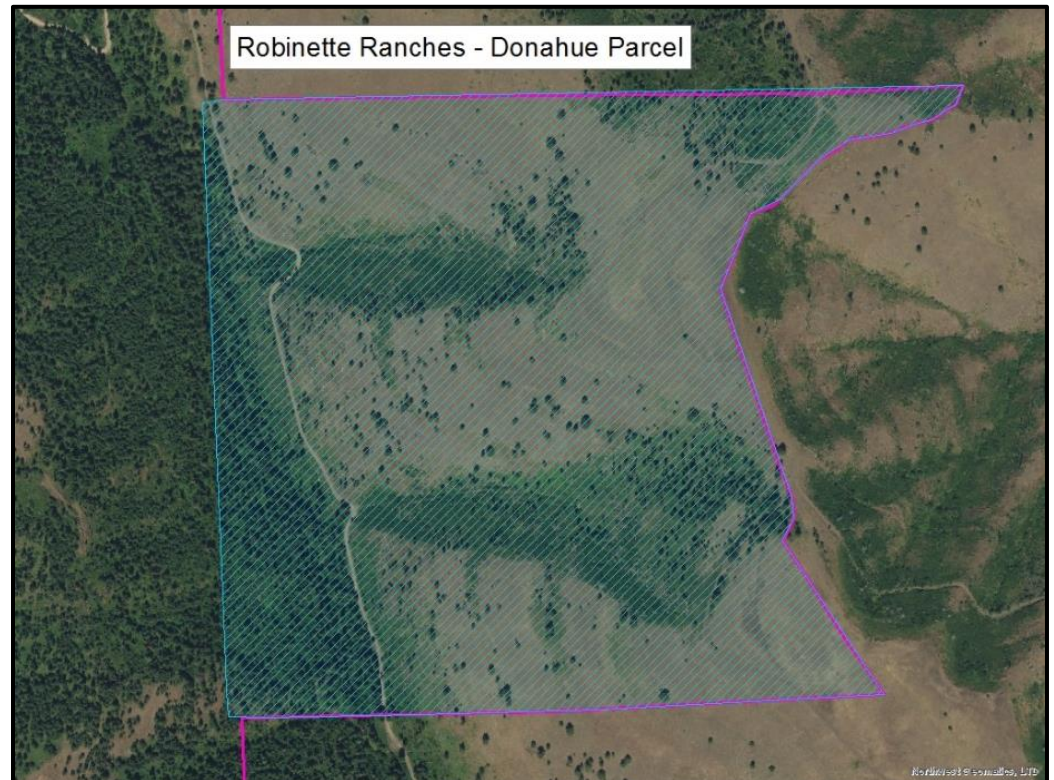
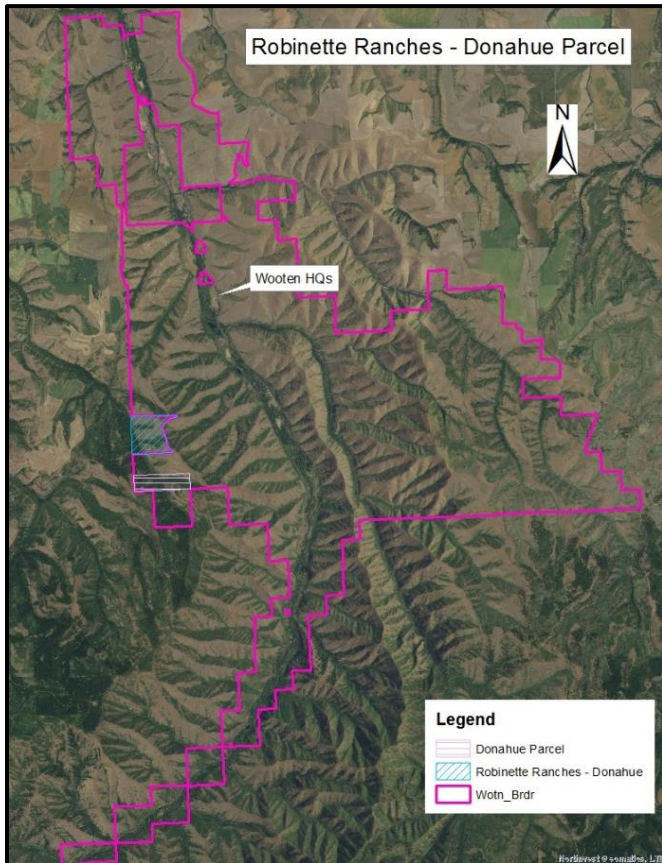


Walla Walla Property Update

- Continue weed control and litter cleanup

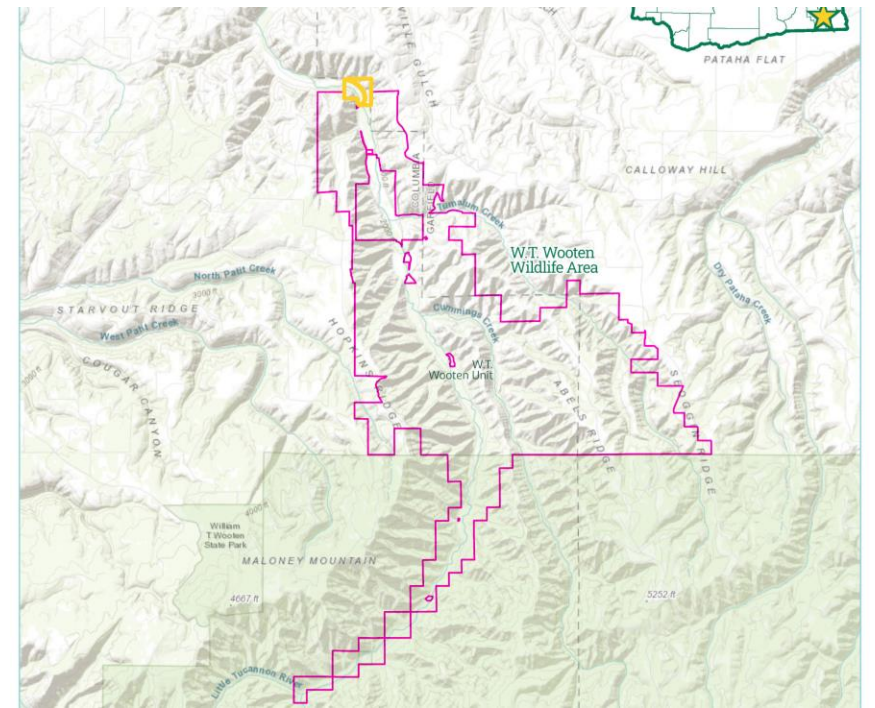
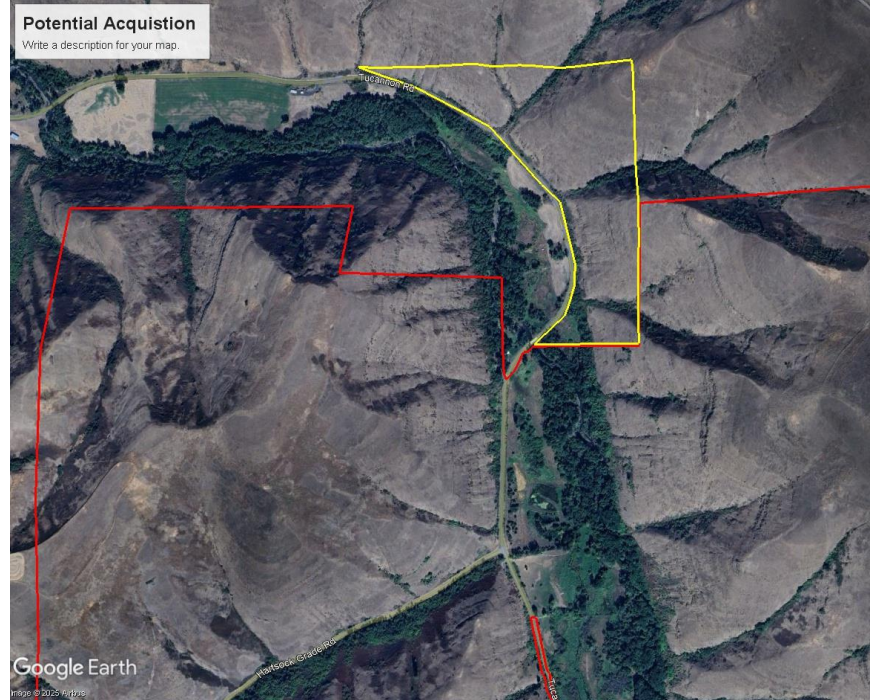
Maloney Mountain Property

- 145.82 acres
- Landowner contacted WDFW regarding purchase
- RCO Grant
 - Was funded through RCO but funding was pulled at the last minute
 - WDFW looking for funding to complete purchase



Flying S Property

- 62 acres
- Landowner would like to sell to WDFW
- RCO Grant
- Beginning phases of process



WAAC Communication

- Spring meeting
- Fall newsletter

- Wooten WAAC page on the WDFW website
 - Meeting notes and handouts





Questions??