

Wooten CAG Meeting

Thursday, March 24, 2011

Last Resort KOA

2PM - 4:00PM

Kari Dingman, Assistant Wildlife Area Manager, had mailed out the 2011 Management Plan updates to the CAG members prior to the meeting. She asked for input from the CAG members on the updates, as well as answering questions pertaining to management of the Wooten Wildlife Area.

The lakes were discussed, and the fact that funding still has not been found and the lakes are still in need of repair. BPA has \$1.3 million/year for the next 7 years to put towards spring Chinook salmon habitat improvement projects in the Tucannon River drainage. Some of that money may be used to fix the lakes, including combining Watson Lake and Beaver Lake into one lake and moving it over to the base of the hill to free the river and floodplain. Other projects the money may be used for are burial of the power line between the Wooten Headquarters and Camp Wooten, moving the main road away from the river in places where the river is pinched, and placing more large woody debris into the river channel. The Salmon Recovery Board will be administering the funds to the selected projects.

The elk fence is a continuous 26-mile fence from the Wooten WA to Tam-Tam Ridge on the East side. There were 200 elk on the outside of the elk fence, but Officer Nelson was able to push 140 elk through a one-way gate off the Mountain Road last Wednesday. The elk will be watched and if they move close enough to the elk fence WDFW may use a helicopter to try to push more through the fence. Salt blocks have been placed inside all of the one-way gates in the hopes of luring the elk through the gates on their own.

Kari discussed the recent grant work that has taken place on the Wooten WA, including Mule Deer Foundation weed control projects, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation projects (weed control and guzzler purchase), and Umatilla Tribe riparian habitat projects.

In the 2010 meeting it was also suggested that Kari ask for RSVPs from CAG members so that others can be invited if people are not going to attend. Kari attempted this in the 2011 letters sent out, but few people responded to the RSVP request. The CAG would still benefit from more user groups being represented at the meetings and we will try again next year.

Questions/Comments on the 2011 Management Plan Updates:

- When is WDFW going to give up on the bighorn sheep population in the Tucannon?

Other comments given:

- Steve Martin
 - o Discussed an Outreach Memo about salmon that will be placed at the Last Resort. Evidently a significant number of salmon went through the

hatchery fish trap and disappeared somewhere above. Johnny Johnson will be camping in the Tucannon during July and August and will be contacting people. Possibly a disease or habitat issue is causing them to die before spawning???

- The Tucannon River is going to start being stocked with only wild spawned steelhead that are raised in the hatchery. Fishing opportunity will most likely decrease for several years while the populations are establishing themselves.

- Paul Wik
 - Discussed bighorn sheep population and explained the die-off that occurred before the fire, as well as the effects of the fire. Talked about the reintroduction this year and the goal.
 - Answered questions about the cougar research project and explained what they are hoping to learn.
 - Answered questions about the cougar hunting seasons and explained why they are currently the way they are, when the next season setting cycle begins, and how the research should help with the season setting.

The meeting came to a close at 3:30 PM. Any further comments or questions can be passed on to Kari Dingman through email (kari.dingman@dfw.wa.gov) or over the phone (843-1530).