

# Agenda Item 9

## Target Shooting on WDFW Lands



*Washington Department of*  
**FISH and WILDLIFE**


Mike Livingston, Region 3 Director  
Dave Whipple, Hunter Ed Div. Mgr., Wildlife Program

# Informational Briefing

- Target shooting context & WDFW goals
- Target shooting on the Wenas Wildlife Area
- Wenas Wildlife Area Target Shooting Advisory Committee
- Target shooting rule change
- Central WA shooting range project

# Target Shooting Context & Trends

**THE CHANGING  
FACE OF TODAY'S  
TARGET SHOOTER**



Target shooting participation in the U.S.  
is on the rise -- up **19%** from **34.4 million**  
Americans in 2009 to **40.8 million** Americans in 2012.

*Source: National Shooting Sports Foundation*

# Target Shooting Context & Trends

- DNR, WDFW and USFS lands in Washington are popular for target shooting
- Agencies facing similar land management challenges
  - Increasing numbers of visitors
  - Greater diversity of recreation activities
  - Increasing use for target shooting
  - Public safety concerns
  - Habitat protection issues



# Agency Target Shooting Goals


- Recognize the diverse & increasing use of lands
- Provide target shooting opportunities
- Protect habitat from shooting related impacts
- Address public safety concerns
- Recognize & support Pittman-Robertson funding from target shooters
- Contribute to hunter R3
  - Recruitment
  - Retention
  - Reactivation



# WDFW Lands for Conservation and Recreation

## WAC 220-500-010

### Declaration of purpose—Department lands.

The primary purpose of department lands is the preservation, protection, perpetuation and management of fish and wildlife and their habitats.  Public use of department lands may include fishing, hunting, fish and wildlife appreciation, *and other outdoor recreational opportunities when compatible with healthy and diverse fish and wildlife populations.*

# Wenas Wildlife Area

- Primarily Shrub Steppe Habitat
- Easy access from Ellensburg and Selah
- Popular among
  - Hunters
  - Target shooters
  - Hikers
  - Horseback riders
  - Wildlife watchers
  - Motorized vehicle users
  - Mountain bike riders



# Wenas Wildlife Area Target Shooting

- Popular activity for years
- Increasing challenges
  - Wildfire; 9,000 acres burned in 2014
  - Trash; tons removed each year
  - Habitat loss
  - Concerns by other users





# Wenas Wildlife Area

## Past Actions & Lessons Learned

- Efforts began in 2011
- Specific proposals shared in 2016
  - Concerns expressed
  - Homeowners
  - Target shooters
- August 2016 Agency hit the “reset button”



# Wenas Wildlife Area

## Current Approach

- Removed 2016 specific proposals
- Developed a vision & goals
- Hired Ross Strategic
- Formed advisory committee
- Transparent process to find solutions



# Wenas Wildlife Area

## Target Shooting Advisory Committee

Name	Interest(s)
John Baranowski	Hiking
Lee Davis	Hunting, Shooting, Hiking, Wildlife Photography
Bill Essman	Representative - Kittitas County Commissioner's Public Land Advisory Committee, Hunting
Tim Funkhouser	Shooting, ATV, Dirt Bike Riding, Hunting
Bret Hollar	Hunting
Keely Hopkins	NRA Representative
Walt Hyde	Backcountry Horse Riding, Target Shooting, Hunting, Motorized Use
Brian Lund	Mountain Biking
Jim Lydigsen	Standing in Defense of Practiced Use of Firearms in Dispersed Locations
Debby McCandless	Neighbor, Shooting, Nature Photography, Hiking
Steve Miller	Backcountry Horse Riding
Clay Myers	Neighbor
Craig O'Brine	Hunting, Shooting, Hiking, Dog Training
Norm Peck	Nature Watching, Shooting
Nick Perry	Neighbor, Hunting
Mark Pidgeon	Hunting, Hunters Heritage Council
Scott Robertson	Dog Training, Hunting
Robert Schafer	Motorized Use, Shooting, Wildlife Watching
Tanya Stanley	Neighbor, Safety
Rachel Voss	Hunting, Habitat Conservation for Wildlife

# Wenas Wildlife Area Target Shooting Vision

*Continue to offer shooting opportunities for hunters  
and other responsible target shooters,  
while conserving wildlife habitat,  
providing safe recreational opportunities for the  
diversity of users,  
and, providing for the safety  
of adjoining land owners.*

# Wenas Wildlife Area

## Agency Target Shooting Goals

Provide target shooting opportunities that:

- Are supported by local communities
- Reduce risk to wildlife area users and neighbors
- Improve habitat protection
- Reduce wildfire risks
- Are financially attainable and manageable
- Provide predictability for all users
- Adhere to clear and concise standards



# Wenas Target Shooting Advisory Committee Preliminary Recommendations

- Enhance education and outreach w/ existing staff
- Hire additional staff: Outreach & Ed, Enforcement
- Adopt target shooting rule consistent with DNR
- Improve current concentrated target shooting areas



# Wenas Wildlife Area

## Next Steps

- Advisory committee report
- Continue working w/ advisory committee on implementation of recommendations
- Phase-in recommendations



# Agency Target Shooting Rule Change

- Explore the improvement of the existing rule to:
  - Increase safety
  - Be consistent with DNR rule
  - Provide certainty to target shooters on checkerboard lands
  - Allow improved rule enforcement
- Statewide assessment & external outreach
- Tentative Rule Timeline
  - Public hearing, June 2018
  - Public hearing & Commission action, August 2018



# Other Target Shooting Opportunities

- Central Washington Shooting Facility
  - Huge need and desire for developed site
  - Significant local support
  - Opportunity for public-private partnership

Step 1: Secure new site to develop – Kittitas Field & Stream, Kittitas County Board of Commissioners and Sheriff, WDFW

Step 2: Formulate larger partnership with interested stakeholders

Step 3: Develop site

# Recap

- Recognize target shooting is increasing
- WDFW lands play important role
  - Pittman-Robertson \$\$
  - Hunter Recruitment, Retention, & Reactivation (R3)
- Existing issues & opportunities
- Wenas has been a hotbed for a long time
  - Top priority; tackling first
  - Learn & apply lessons to other wildlife areas
  - Potential WAC change may assist in future work



# Target Shooting on WDFW Lands



# Questions?

