



METHOW WILDLIFE AREA 2007 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



Land Management Summary

This is an update to the 2006 Methow Wildlife Area Management Plan that provides (http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/pdfs/draft_methow_plan.pdf) management direction for over 32,000 acres of Washington Fish and Wildlife land in Okanogan County. The plan identifies needs and guides activities on the area based on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Mission of “*Sound Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife*” and its underlying statewide goals and objectives as they apply to local conditions.

Plans are updated annually as habitat and species conditions change, as new regulations and scientific knowledge develop, as public issues and concerns evolve, and as administration of wildlife areas change. This management plan update also includes 2006 accomplishments, new issues, new land management strategies and performance measures for 2007.

Updates/Changes

Winter 2005-06 snow pack was a tough season on mule deer in the Methow.

Although there was an 80% mortality rate on fawns last winter, surviving deer gained weight quickly as spring moisture and warm temperatures greened up south-facing slopes.

This high precipitation and warm temperatures melted snow pack quickly, and equated to a 20-year flooding cycle on the Methow River; river channels and old gravel bars were washed clean of silt, debris, and vegetation in many cases, making room for new fish and wildlife habitat on riverine systems on the Wildlife Area and throughout the Methow Watershed.

Summer drought conditions gave way to the outbreak of the Tripod Complex Fire which total over 200,000 acres, mainly on the Okanogan National Forest, however the Wildlife Area was used significantly as staging, drop points, watering holes, and emergency backburn areas for fire fighting efforts. Fall was prolonged only until the first snowfall early in November, and was accompanied by cold temperatures and higher than average precipitation (over the last

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10 years), falling over 3 feet of snow on the winter range by December. Spring runoff in 2007 will be interesting for Beaver Creek, the Chewuch River, Pearrygin Creek, Ramsey Creek, and adjacent sub-watersheds due to severe fire conditions in summer 2006 and heavy snow pack in winter 2007.

The Methow Wildlife Area acquired 193.44 acres (Sandine 42 ac, Wenner Lakes 81 ac, Holcomb 30 ac, Sandal 18 ac, and Anderson/Clausen 21 ac) from grants received by Federal Section 6 and Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) funding in 2006. An additional \$2.1 million in state WWRP and \$2.4 million from the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service have been awarded for 2007-08 for acquisitions to protect critical habitat following guidelines of the Lands 20/20 Vision document.

Funding was allocated to the Methow Wildlife Area through legislature to research, upgrade, and improve irrigation efficiencies on 5 productive agricultural fields on the Wildlife Area (\$600,000 portioned to the Big Valley South, Texas Creek Unit, Big Valley North, Cloyd Place-Beaver Creek, and Lloyd Ranch). The Wildlife Area successfully received a grant for shrub-steppe habitat restoration on historic dryland agricultural fields; this Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) grant is for \$304,000 anticipated from 2007 to 2010, which includes a temporary staff position. Our workforce in 2006 included 2 new positions in summer 2006, a vegetation management technician and a volunteer intern. The Methow Wildlife Area also received grant funding (\$6,000) to fund Washington Conservation Corp cleanup efforts on historic homestead sites, and to build and install 7 kiosks for Wildlife Area entrances (\$12,000).

WDFW partnered with the Methow Conservancy and 30 volunteers for amphibian surveys in spring 2006. These efforts identified six amphibian species throughout the Methow Watershed; many ponds and lakes surveyed were on the Wildlife Area. Methow Valley Sport Trails Association (MVSTA) partnered with WDFW to create and design new interpretive signs on the Big Valley Community trail and the winter-only Luna Chik ski trail.



Volunteer amphibian crew 2006

Signs will be installed by spring 2007. Methow Backcountry Horsemen partnered with WDFW to build a riparian protection fence and purchase and install new fire-rings in Beaver Creek Campground. WDFW is a leading partner with Washington State Parks (WSP) and the Bear Creek Corridor Project, helping to protect wildlife habitat and provide wildlife-related recreation opportunities. WDFW and WSP also partnered on Rare Plant and Vegetation Surveys on 7,000 acres of the Methow Wildlife Area and Pearrygin State Park.

Species use on the wildlife area changed in 2006 with the establishment of a new golden eagle nest site found near the Methow Wildlife Area. Two pair of prairie falcons were observed in breeding behavior in two locations on the Methow Wildlife Area, however nest locations were not identified. A cavity nest and black-backed woodpecker nestlings were found in the 2005-burn area on Pearrygin Flats.

New Issues

Mule deer winter mortality as well as year-round resident deer on the valley floor has drawn a great deal of public attention this past year. Public meetings, landowner permission to hunt valley-floor opportunities, increases in antlerless permits, and mother nature all play a continuous role in the healthy management of the Methow mule deer herd.

DNR and WDFW have developed an exchange proposal to consolidate ownerships, creating more manageable landscapes best suited for each agency's management goals and provide for the protection of critical habitat, enhanced revenue for trust beneficiaries, reduction of management costs, and provide for healthy and sustainable forest and shrub steppe landscapes. Okanogan County may be involved in some of the proposed DNR/WDFW land exchanges. Lands in the Methow Valley proposed for DNR to WDFW ownership are primarily shrub steppe or forestlands below 3,000' elevation, many are formerly leased to WDFW and a small portion of the candidate parcels are leased by private parties, properties are largely intermingled with WDFW lands, and potential exchange properties support an abundance of wildlife. For more information, see <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/htdocs/amp/transactions/exchanges.html#WDFW>.

Major Stewardship Accomplishments

Fish and wildlife habitat restoration projects were a main focus in 2006. Four new culverts were replaced for fish passage on the Wildlife Area, two on Bear Creek, one on Beaver Creek, and one on Pearrygin Creek. Two new sharecroppers were selected from an application process to maintain and improve irrigable farmland and enhance wildlife habitat. An additional sharecropper will be selected in 2007 for an additional area. Riser Lake and Pearrygin Creek riparian planting and fencing projects both had significant volunteer activity, helping to restore shrub and tree cover for wildlife habitat. Sixty acres of dryland historic agricultural fields were fallowed and planted to native grass seed as the first of our shrub-steppe restoration projects (Riser Lake- 15 acres, and Pearrygin Flats- 45 acres).



Upland and riparian restoration at Riser Lake

Status Report of 2006 Performance Measures

Key performance measures are identified each year to monitor progress and identify any issues that might interfere with planned priority activities. This information will be used to delete, add or alter priority strategies for 2007.

2006 Performance Measure	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2007 Related Activity/ Comments
<u>Obtain funding and establish protocol for surveying weeds, vegetation types, and wildlife species presence on 1 WA unit per year for the next 5 years.</u>	We established a weed monitoring protocol in 2006 and will continue to update and upgrade our capacity. Contracted PBI to survey rare plants and vegetation on 1 portion of the Methow Unit (5000 acres)	Ongoing weed surveys and treatments. Funding related. Planning to survey another 5000 acres of the Methow Unit in 2007 for rare plants and vegetation
Maintain contact with CAG at least 3 times per year.	Accomplished	Maintain contact with CAG at least 2 times in 2007.
Reseed 20 acres of historic fallowed agricultural fields on the Rendezvous unit, and 20 acres of agricultural fields on the Methow Unit Pearrygin Creek Burn area, both to native shrub steppe habitat.	Fallowed for 2 seasons and seeded Rendezvous-Riser Lake area ag fields with native grass seed. Fallowed 1 season and seeded Pearrygin Burn ag fields to native grass seed. Both in fall 06	Follow-up 2007 treatments to the sites will include spot weed control and spot seeding, and regular monitoring. Shrub and forb plantings will be introduced when native grasses hold their own (potentially fall 07 or 08)
Prioritize weedy fields for future restoration on the MWA.	Agricultural fields on the MWA were mapped using GIS, aerial photos, and local knowledge. Areas were then prioritized for dryland restoration, irrigable farmland, or other. Applied for WWRP grant to restore 600 acres to native shrub-steppe habitat using tested methods described in grant proposal.	WWRP grant scored very well. \$304,000 in funding is expected to conduct restoration work over the next 4 years.
Stop ALL Houndstongue seed production on Rendezvous Unit, Texas Creek Unit, and Little Cub Creek area with spot spraying and hand pulling crews.	Hand pulled 150 plants on Rendezvous Unit, chemical spray 0.75 ac on same area on Rendezvous Unit, and hand-pulled 15 plants on Little Cub Creek Unit. Sprayed 0.5 acres on Texas Creek Unit.	This effort will continue in 2007. Significantly fewer plants in 2006 than in 2005. Monitoring will continue into future.
Survey all MWA units for Dalmatian Toadflax and increase biological controls along eastern edge of Methow unit while destroying all new interior invaders throughout	Documented 2 new toadflax locations (1 st on the Big Buck Unit). Hand pulled, GPS and photographed 15 and 30 plants, per location respectively. Surveyed and	These efforts will continue in 2007, including mapping and documenting biological control. Monitoring will continue into future.

MWA.	GPSed the Methow Unit along Bear Creek Rd to Bear Creek for toadflax populations and biological presence (noting plant conditions). Released additional weevils in this vicinity. Sprayed new invading toadflax plants along Pearrygin Flats burn area.	
Build deer exclosure fence and plant riparian shrubs within a 250 X 50 ft area on Riser Lake to expand and protect deciduous riparian habitat.	Built temporary exclusion fence, mowed and laid plastic on reed canary grass, took photopoints, and planted 75 native shrubs (all using volunteer community).	Continue to treat weeds and monitor shrubs in 07-08. Look for ongoing intern or Rendezvous landowner to adopt project.
Follow-up on experimental treatment of 2 acres of Balky Hill Russian knapweed in fall and spring.	Gil Cooke read plots in summer 2006. No information has been sent to the Wildlife Area at this time.	Follow up with Cooke in spring/summer 07. Continue to read plots and to obtain information on potential Russian knapweed controls.
<u>Removed and/or repair 1 structure that was identified as a safety concern. Perform cultural resource survey on all structures prior to demolition.</u> Salvage wood for informational kiosks and future structures, or donate to local organizations.	The Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation identified no MWA structures with historic significance. Meetings with Okanogan County Historical Society identified several structures for protection, and grants/volunteers to conduct work. Partnered with Salmon Recovery Foundation and applying for funding to salvage old barn wood for educational kiosks for MWA.	Continue working with Okanogan County Historical Society, Salmon Recovery Foundation, and volunteers for salvage, stabilization, fencing, and maintenance, ect.
Survey, repair, and/or remove 5 miles of fenceline per year.	Repaired 1 mile fencing in various areas; removed 2 miles old downed fence in Rendezvous Unit. Surveyed fencing on Lloyd Ranch and prepared fencing diagrams/logistics. Surveyed fencing along Pearrygin Creek/ USFS boundary.	Public Works contract for Lloyd perimeter fence replacement and removal. Fencing anticipated 2007 includes ½ mi on Big Buck, ¼- 2 mi Rendezvous/ Little Cub Creek area, ¼ mi USFS boundary on Pearrygin Creek.
<u>Remove 1/8 mile of riprap on Pearrygin Creek to allow stream to follow a natural</u>	Worked with Salmon Recovery Foundation to remove large diameter rock on	Will take more time, money and efforts to accomplish this project.

<u>meander in old agricultural field. Follow up with riparian plantings and weed control.</u>	Pearrygin Creek to assist in Fulton Dam project.	
Work with Coordinated Resource Management Program to establish relationships with other agencies and local ranchers and to continue improving range management.	Met with 4 CRM groups. Continue to support and reach out to local agencies for improving adaptive management plans in the Methow Valley.	Continuous and ongoing.
Monitor 6 grazing permits and follow through on permit regulations and recommendations.	Monitored several grazing allotments on MWA and filed evaluation forms for some of them. Time intensive program.	Hoping to hire assistance for upcoming 2007 to aide in monitoring program.
Develop management plan for Lloyd Ranch, including grazing permit, sharecropper permit, and restoration and habitat protection objectives.	Setup and completed grazing permit for Troy Acord. Acord also received grant for riparian restoration on Pearrygin Creek and fencing riparian area on north end of property. WDFW volunteers and WCC crews laid plastic and planted /caged 200 trees and shrubs to provide riparian cover to denuded areas of creek.	Follow-up work on Lloyd fencing, riparian restoration, and monitoring plan for 2007.
Conduct 10 long-term monitoring surveys (5 on Methow unit, 5 on Big Buck unit) and 2 shrub-steppe songbird surveys (1 on Methow unit and 1 on Big Buck unit).	Conducted 5 long-term monitoring surveys in 2006. Specific area on Big Buck setup for shrub-steppe songbird surveys 2007.	Time and funding related. Need 2-person crew to conduct monitoring surveys, which we did not have throughout the season. Will continue 2007.
Continue photopoints and vegetation monitoring to determine effects of fencing at Peters Puddles.	Photopoints taken in 2005 (prior to and during fencing) and vegetation documented. Return in 2008 to see effects of cattle exclusion.	Time and funding allows for periodic monitoring and surveys. Not needed yearly, but every 3-5 years.
Obtain GIS layers and develop map of Methow Wildlife Area roads, access points, campgrounds, wildlife viewing opportunities, and trail systems, ect.	Setup on work computer and obtained data layers. Received weeklong training in GIS. Very useful and maps easy to create.	Continue to utilize GIS. Finalize setup of GIS-based weed monitoring program so maps can be printed easily.
<u>Map of MWA</u>	Designed map of MWA with lots of time and input from	Need to get priority from Program Managers to print a

	Olympia. Not printed for public yet.	recreation map for the MWA. The map created is a great beginning.
Facilitate campground cleanup on Beaver Creek and Chewuch/ Boulder Creek campgrounds.	Beaver Creek campground adopted by Backcountry Horsemen. Spring, they hand pulled weeds and built ¾ mi. riparian fencing along Beaver Creek. Utilized Culvert Crews to install giant boulders to prohibit vehicle access areas on Beaver and Bear Creeks.	Ongoing campground cleanup. Backcountry Horsemen will assist with installation of 15 fire-rings at Beaver Creek in spring 07. Additional work on Boulder Creek CG- funding dependent.
Work with USFS Respect the River Program and education contractor.	Looked into Respect the River Program and decided against contracted education coordinator due to funding.	Purchase and post "Respect the River" WDFW/USFS logo signs for campgrounds in 2007.
Put water rights into production and establish agricultural permittees on Big Valley Ranch and Lloyd Ranch. Move unneeded water rights into trust at Big Valley. Determine best use of Judd Ranch and Beaver Creek water rights.	MWA allocated \$600K for irrigation efficiency improvement projects. Hired water rights specialist to conduct due diligence review of all water rights on MWA. Developed water rights and irrigation plans for Big Valley North, Big Valley South, and Cloyd Place-Beaver Creek. Still developing best-use on Judd Ranch-Methow River and Patterson Place-Beaver Creek.	New agricultural leases include Ron VanderYacht on Big Valley North and Lloyd, Troy Acord on Cloyd, and to-be-determined on Big Valley South.
Establish signs throughout Wildlife Area designating ORV use on established and maintained roads only.	Developed and posting signs for Motorized Vehicles only on maintained roads on MWA.	Continue to post and educated public.
Survey and monitor nesting Golden Eagles (GE) on the MWA for disturbance and fledgling success.	Worked with WDFW raptor biologist to attempt trapping GE in spring 06. Found and moved geocache directly above GE nest in Rendezvous. Signed and rerouted activities on Pipestone rim trail due to nesting raptors on cliff walls. Surveyed Pipestone Canyon with volunteers for disturbance during nesting	No effects found, and better signage will take place in 2007. Continue to work with MVSTA, biking groups and horsemen to educate about overhead disturbance during incubating and fledgling season.

	season.	
Work with volunteers to develop a long-term protocol and implement breeding amphibian population surveys.	Partnered with Methow Conservancy and local amphibian biologist Julie Grialou. Conducted training for 22 volunteers and surveyed approx. 20 ponds in the Methow Watershed including 12 on the MWA. Received partial ALEA grant for 2007.	Additional presence/absence data will be collected with volunteer assistance in 2007.
Lobby for additional funding to hire additional FTE (Bio II) for the MWA.	Wrote letter of request to Lands Division and Program Managers.	Tasks and potential are great and current staff is inadequate to manage 32K growing acres of the Methow Wildlife Area especially given heavy emphasis on grazing and agricultural permits, and recreation along with growing human population in the area.

New Strategies

The wildlife area plan identifies many strategies or activities to address the agencies strategic plan goals and objectives, why the area was purchased, habitat conditions, species present, and public issues and concerns. The following updated strategies have been added to respond to previously unaddressed or new issues or changes on the wildlife area. New strategies may also be in response to adaptive management as staff evaluate the impacts of past management activities.

Issues identified in italics were provided by the Citizens Advisory Group. These public comments are captured at the end of this document. Although underlined strategies have no current funding source, identifying these needs is the first step to securing additional funds.

Agency Objective: Ensure WDFW activities, programs, facilities and lands are consistent with local, state and federal regulations that protect and recover fish, wildlife and their habitats.

1. Protect federally listed species on all Methow Wildlife Area Units. Federal law requires the protection of bald eagles (FT), Gray wolf (FT), grizzly bears (FT), lynx (FT), Bull trout (FT), Upper Columbia Spring Chinook salmon (FE) and Upper Columbia steelhead (FE).

A. Strategy: Protect bald eagle nest sites and winter roosting concentrations from disturbance. Winter roosting sites on the Wildlife Area include those on the Big Valley, Methow Unit, and Texas Creek Unit.

Timeline: On-going.

- B. Strategy: Work with local organizations and agencies towards fish habitat enhancement and restoration, and water trust protection to help recover Federally Endangered fish species such as Bull trout, Spring Chinook salmon and steelhead in the Methow Watershed.

Actions: Work with WA Water Trust for protecting water in stream when possible 2006-2007, on-going; partner with Bureau of Reclamation to improve habitat and reconnect side-channel habitat on the Twisp (Elbow Coulee project) and Methow (Fender Mill project) Rivers, 2007-2009; partner with Salmon Recovery Foundation in dam reconstruction projects on the Chewuch River, 2006-2007; partner with Bear Creek conservation efforts to support possible re-connection of Bear Creek to the Methow River, 2007-2008; continue to put non-use water rights into WA State Trust, on-going.

2. Manage to protect State Listed and Candidate species on all Methow Wildlife Area Units. There are four State Listed species and many Candidate species known to occur on the Methow Wildlife Area.

State Endangered and Threatened Species: Gray wolves, Canada lynx, and grizzly bears have potential to visit the higher elevations of several Wildlife Area Units. Wintering bald eagles roost and forage on many Units of the Wildlife Area; two known resident bald eagle nest sites are in close proximity to the Big Buck and Methow Units. Sharp-tailed grouse have historically nested on the Rendezvous, Big Buck and Methow Units, wintering along riparian zones in the same vicinities.

State Sensitive Species: Peregrine falcons have been observed on Goat wall in Mazama, adjacent to Wildlife Area property boundaries.

State Candidate Species: Candidate species that may be found on one or more units of the Methow Wildlife Area include: Columbia spotted frogs, Western toads, sagebrush lizards, sagebrush voles, Western grey squirrels, golden eagles, northern goshawks, merlins, Vaux's swifts, Oregon vesper sparrows, pileated, black-backed, lewis' and white-headed woodpeckers, loggerhead shrikes, fringed myotis, townsend's big-eared and pallid bats. As well, Bull trout, Chinook salmon, and/or steelhead are found in the Methow and Chewuch Rivers and in Beaver Creek on the Wildlife Area.

- A. Strategy: All Methow Wildlife Area management and enhancement activities will make protection of Listed and Candidate species a high priority.

Timeframe: On-going.

- B. Strategy: Restore habitat for future sharp-tailed grouse recovery. See Agency Objective: Protect, Restore & Enhance Fish and Wildlife and Their Habitats, Sub-objective 4, Strategies C and D.

Action: riparian restoration and river birch re-establishment-WHIP Grant received for 2008, Scott Canyon- Big Buck Unit; restoration of historic agricultural fields- WWRP grant received for 2007-2010, 600 acres on Methow Unit.

C. Strategy: Work with local and district biologists to review recovery plans for State and Federally listed species.

Timeline: On-going.

D. Strategy: Inventory the Methow Wildlife Area to identify species presence of State Species of Concern. Conservation measures to protect known individuals or concentrations are discussed in the Methow Wildlife Area Management Plan 05/06 under Agency Objective: Protect, Restore & Enhance Fish and Wildlife and Their Habitats, Sub-objectives 2, 4 and 5

Actions: A. Survey and document Townsend's big-eared, fringed myotis, and pallid bats in all unsafe buildings on the Wildlife Area prior to demolition June-2006. B. Survey and document white-headed and black-backed woodpecker nesting in Pearygin burn 2005-2007. C. Survey and document Columbia spotted frogs and Western toads in volunteer amphibian team 2006-2007. D. Work with Backcountry Horsemen and the Beaver Creek campground to reduce sediment loads from campground in Beaver Creek for Bull trout and Steelhead spawning and rearing. E. Conduct shrub-steppe songbird point-counts along Fraser Creek, Balky Hill, and Big Buck Areas in 2007-2008. F. Work with spring recreation user-groups to minimize disturbance to golden eagles during courtship, nesting and fledging periods.

Agency Objective: Protect, restore and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitats.

1. Implement measures to protect and improve aspen forests that are in decline throughout the west.

A. Strategy: Construct temporary deer and cattle fencing to allow regeneration of aspen seedlings.

B. Strategy: Partnership with local forestry/ ecology experts to enhance and protect aspen regeneration.

2007 Performance Measures

Performance measures for the Methow Wildlife Area are listed below. Accomplishments and progress toward desired outcomes will be monitored and evaluated annually.

- 1) Complete 200 acres of intensive weed treatment and planting of native shrub-steppe habitat in historic agricultural fields: mowing, cultivating, and seeding. Allocated funding required.
- 2) Work with the USFS to evaluate and determine if new hunting opportunity can be provided for disabled hunters. Continue to provide two areas of ADA hunting opportunities.
- 3) Finish water rights change application for Big Valley South and award lease to the irrigated farmland. Continue to work with agricultural lessees to develop and implement water efficiencies and habitat restoration goals in each area. Determine best use for Judd and Patterson Place determined by water rights, habitat improvement potential and local interests.
- 4) Control ALL Houndstongue on WDFW land- Riser Lake, Little Cub Creek, Judd Ranch.
- 5) Continue to provide better informational materials about the wildlife area. Install educational signs on informational kiosks and Big Valley community trail (partnership with MVSTA). Continue to develop and find funding for additional signs at key locations on the MWA.

Continue to promote and prioritize a public map to the Wildlife Program for the Methow Wildlife Area.

- 6) Continue to evaluate the wildlife habitat and human recreation on all Units of the Wildlife Area, in particular Campbell Lake vicinity.
- 7) Inventory and monitor 6 grazing permits and work with Coordinated Resource Management Program to continue improving range management.
- 8) Survey all MWA units for Dalmatian Toadflax and document condition of plants populated with biological controls. Destroy all new outbreaks/invaders.
- 9) Continue to monitor, conduct weed control and look for additional and regular volunteers for Riser Lake riparian restoration project. Conduct waterfowl surveys and gather wildlife use information during nesting and breeding seasons.
- 10) Conduct rare plant and vegetation community surveys for an additional 5000 acres on the Methow Unit of the MWA.
- 11) Work with local organizations and volunteers on amphibian surveys throughout the Methow Watershed, including the MWA.
- 12) Continue to document treatments and effects of treatments on white-top, and learn from all control measures including chemical, grazing, and mechanical farming techniques, specifically in the Rendezvous and Big Buck Units.
- 13) Work with local volunteers and Okanogan County Historical Society to develop management plans to safely preserve designated historic structures on MWA.
- 14) Conduct 5 long-term monitoring surveys and 2 shrub-steppe songbird surveys (1 on Methow unit and 1 on Big Buck unit).
- 15) Work with USFS Methow Ranger Station to outline long-term fire and fuels management partnership on WDFW land adjacent to USFS boundaries.
- 16) Monitor golden eagle and cliff-dwelling raptor nesting success in appropriate areas on MWA.
- 17) Assist with Road Management and Abandonment Plans (RMAP) and culvert replacement activities. Complete and submit all RMAP Forest Practices Application (FPA) documentation to Dept Natural Resources.
- 18) Complete WHIP grant and/or search out additional funding for Scott Canyon (Big Buck) habitat protection and wetland restoration.
- 19) Organize volunteer group to complete cattle fencing on Deadhorse Lake, Big Buck Unit.
- 20) Lobby for additional funding to hire additional FTE (Bio II) for the MWA.

Citizens Advisory Group Input

A Citizens Advisory Group meeting was held on January 18, 2007 to review management progress and address any new issues or input on existing issues. Those in attendance included:

Vic Stokes	Rancher
Arvid Iverson	Mule Deer Foundation
Tom Doran	Okanogan Conservation District
Pete Ohlson	Fire Ecologist, USFS
Tom Parmelee	Citizen, Upland Bird Advocate
Sam Lucy	Farmer
Steve Bondi	Methow Conservancy
Jan Ford	Backcountry Horsemen
Lance Christensen	Methow Valley Sport Trails Association

Kim Romain-Bondi and Robert Wottlin- WDFW

The following new input/issues were addressed at the meeting.

Issue: Deer feeding, upland to get animals off the valley floor. Non-management is not an option.

Response: District Biologist Fitkin is working with the public and the agency to address deer management ideas for the Methow Valley floor. The public meeting will be held on Feb. 15th, 2007 to address this issue and implement a strategy for reducing deer numbers.

Issue: Grain crops, food plots as an idea. Consider planting grain for enhancing bird populations in old fields

Response: Definitely will be considered and can be implemented as part of the historic dryland agricultural field restoration project.

Issue: Aspen forest regeneration sites; fire and conifer thinning management.

Response: Would be good to have a guest speaker at a later CAG meeting talk about fire, fire management, and aspen regeneration on the Wildlife Area. This portion of the ecological process on shrub-steppe and mixed ponderosa pine woodlands is missing from the Wildlife Area, but needs to be incorporated as time and funding becomes available. Currently, we lack staff to do this, however we will utilize partnerships with local foresters and grant cycles, USFS, and DNR. Background research needed as well as funding.

Issue: Response to Tripod Fire- lack of staff to do immediate large-scale response planning for grazing needs.

Response: Accommodations were made for 2 ranchers on the Wildlife Area during the evacuation stage of the Tripod Fire from USFS land (2006). There is one proposed accommodation for a rancher in need for 2007 grazing season.

Issue: Monitoring of allotments and range improvements needed to make informed decisions on grazing on the Wildlife Area.

Response: Trying to find usable data from the CRM process; gathering new data for current baseline, increase area covered beyond transects

At the conclusion of the meeting, another CAG meeting was tentatively scheduled for May 2007.

Want to see the full plan?

Go to -

http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/pdfs/draft_methow_plan.pdf

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