



# METHOW WILDLIFE AREA 2008 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



## Land Management Summary

This is an update to the 2007 Methow Wildlife Area Management Plan that provides ([http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife\\_areas/management\\_plans/](http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/)) 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

### *Weather*

Above average snowfall in winter 2006-2007 and cool spring weather conditions allowed the Methow Watershed groundwater to recharge from a decade long drought. This resulted in kettle ponds and springs full and flowing throughout the wildlife area, which had been dry for the last decade. These water sources were beneficial for waterfowl, amphibians, and wetland habitats. The cool weather conditions and lack of moisture resulted in an insignificant wildfire season. There was a 300 acre wildfire on the southern boundary of the Big Buck Unit called the Glory Fire, which transcended boundaries of USFS, BLM, DNR, WDFW and private land. A significant portion of an aspen stand was burned in a riparian draw, and a steep shrub-steppe hillside burned quickly leaving many patches of standing live bunchgrasses and bitterbrush.

Summer and fall were prolonged with the usual arid conditions until early December’s snowfall. This winter 07-08 has had lower

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than average temperatures and above average snowfall, with heaviest precipitation in the month of December and January. Snow depths ranged from 1 foot to 3 feet on most of the winter range, with vegetation and deer forage exposed on steeper southerly slopes. Spring thaw in the Methow has been slow and temperatures have been unseasonably cold. Bare ground and green-up on southern slopes was prevalent in late February, however, spring wildflower blooms in March and April were at least 2 weeks late due to late snow melt.



Aspen regeneration after Glory Fire

### *Acquisitions*



WDFW acquisition on the Methow River

In 2007, the Methow Wildlife Area acquired 446 acres of land (Methow River- 19ac, Methow River- 12ac, Rendezvous uplands- 150ac, and Wolf Canyon- 265 ac). Additionally, WDFW worked with a private landowner to protect 319.77 acres of upland habitat east of the Chewuch River under a WDFW Conservation Easement. Funds for these transactions were received from Federal Section 6 and Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) grants, which equaled about \$9 million. WDFW has applied for an additional \$11 million in 2008-2009 to State WWRP and Federal Fish and

Wildlife Service following the Lands20-20 Vision guidelines to protect critical habitat, connect migratory zones, and conserve public access to lands in the Methow Watershed.

### *Grants*

The Wildlife Area successfully received a grant for shrub-steppe habitat restoration on historic dryland agricultural fields; this WWRP State Lands Restoration (SLR) grant is for \$314,000 from 2007 to 2010. We successfully received a Wildlife Habitat Improvement Project (WHIP) grant for \$30,000 to restore a wetland and install protective fencing on the Big Buck Unit of the Wildlife Area. We received grant funding from Dept of Ecology for \$6,000 for litter cleanup on the Wildlife Area. WDFW partnered with the Methow Conservancy, amphibian expert Julie Grialou, and 30 volunteers for amphibian surveys in spring 2007. This project received an Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) grant for over \$5,000 for project logistics and equipment, which improved our success in surveying for all amphibian species and stages of their life cycle.



Amphibian surveys by local volunteers

### *Partnerships*

Methow Backcountry Horsemen partnered with WDFW to cleanup and install 15 new fire-rings in Beaver Creek Campground. WDFW is a leading partner with Washington State Parks (WSP) helping to design and provide trails and camping facilities near Pearrygin Lake State Park. WDFW and Pacific Biodiversity Institute (PBI) partnered on Rare Plant and Vegetation Surveys on 2,000 acres of the Methow Unit of the Wildlife Area, totaling approximately 10,000 acres now surveyed between WSP and WDFW land in 2006-2008.

WDFW is key partner in an effort to trap, hold, and relocate nuisance beavers to prime, unoccupied beaver habitat in the upper reaches of the Methow watershed. This effort is in conjunction with the US Forest Service, the Methow Conservancy, and the Pacific Biodiversity Institute in order to enhance summer instream flows, restore and increase historic wetland habitat, and restore critical habitat for fish and wildlife. The project has received funds totaling over \$90,000 from Dept of Ecology, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the EcoTrust Foundation.

### *Staff*

Our workforce in 2007-2008 includes: Full Time (FT) Manager, FT Assistant Manager/Maintenance Mechanic, 8-month seasonal Biologist I, 3-month seasonal Habitat Technician, and a 5-month term volunteer/intern. Our volunteer crews have been active as ever and we thank everyone who has participated in our seeding, planting and cleanup events!

### *Wildlife*

A prairie falcon eerie and 4 fledging juveniles were documented this year on the Methow Wildlife Area. A new location of pygmy short-horned lizards was located on the Big Buck Unit. Tiger salamanders were found in notable abundance during the community amphibian surveys in spring 07.



### New Issues

WDFW will curtail water usage at Big Valley by 50% if and when the Methow River flows drop below 300cfs between dates of August 15 to September 15<sup>th</sup>. This is in response to Federal Section 7 / NMFS and agriculture on WDFW land.

Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and WDFW land exchange proposals are moving forward and are currently under review. The current package includes covers 26,284 acres of WDFW lands to be exchanged with DNR. Specific lands in the Methow Valley for exchange are not known at this time, however those 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

Weed control, inventory and mapping on the Wildlife Area continues. 1312 acres were surveyed for weed species, density, acres, biocontrol insect presence, and qualitative trend assessment. Approximately 350 acres of weeds were treated using Integrated Pest Management (IPM) control methods which include mechanical farming, mechanical hand pulling, release of biocontrols, and chemical methods.



Sowing forb seed in Pipestone Canyon

The Methow Wildlife Area continues to help restore shrub and tree cover for wildlife habitat at Riser Lake and Pearrygin Creek.

We successfully used agricultural farming practices to weed and prepare approximately 145 acres for 2008 restoration, and plant our first 100 acres with native grass species. To accomplish this, we collected and are contract growing our locally adapted variety of Methow bluebunch wheatgrass and Idaho fescue. We will also be collecting Great Basin Wildrye seed in 2008 for restoration purposes. We are assessing the biodiversity of these project areas with long-term monitoring plots. Volunteers helped seed an additional 15 acres with native forb species. The

Four new culverts were removed for fish passage on the Wildlife Area, two on the Big Valley Unit, one on Cougar Creek, one on Alder Creek, and one on Little Cub Creek. Rehabilitation of the native vegetation and weed control continues on each of these sites, along with the 4 culvert replacement projects conducted in 2006. An additional 3 culverts are planned for replacement in 2008. A “closed to the public” abandoned road along Cougar Flats was obliterated using Road Management and Abandonment Plan guidelines.

WDFW staff conducted an analysis of livestock grazing permit areas, and focused long-term monitoring plots and vegetation surveys throughout the Wildlife Area. Infrastructure, stocking rates, long-term ecological integrity, and deferred rotations continue to be discussed and implemented with permittee and Coordinated Resource Management Planning (CRMP) assistance.

Fencing requires continuous infrastructure maintenance on the Wildlife Area. Approximately 2 miles of fence were repaired or replaced on boundary and internally to protect riparian areas and adjacent landowners’ property on the Little Cub Creek grazing permit area. The 2005 acquired Lloyd Ranch underwent a fencing facelift, removing 7 miles of boundary and interior fencing, and installing new boundary fencing surrounding the 5.5 acre ranch currently grazed under a WDFW permit. Deadhorse Lake wetland fencing was completed with volunteer assistance on the Big Buck grazing permitted area. An additional 2 miles of USFS /WDFW boundary fence was repaired (0.25 mile installed) between Sullivan’s pond and Cougar Flats to alleviate cattle trespass off USFS leases. Additional fences were repaired at the Judd Ranch, Texas Creek WL Unit, and at the access site of the Golden Doe WL Unit. The USFS/WDFW boundary fence on

Pearrygin Creek also underwent rehabilitation efforts to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation with installation of ¼ mile of soil erosion mats and ¼ mile new livestock fencing.

Wildlife Area’s first center pivot was installed and running in 2007 on the north end of Big Valley Unit. This agricultural area is under WDFW lease with Ron VanderYacht who is growing organic grains and alfalfa. WDFW applied for a change in water right place of use through Dept of Ecology, which is currently in review process. Upon acceptance of our change application, water will be pumped from a new well and a center pivot installed for farming under WDFW lease by Sam Lucy, Bluebird Grain Farms. These two projects were funded by legislative dollar allocated to the Methow Wildlife Area for farmland irrigation improvements.



Big Valley irrigation pivot

Water rights were temporarily donated to the Washington State Trust Water Rights Program to secure instream flow protection for water associated with the Judd Ranch (Texas Creek WL Unit, Methow River) and Patterson Place (Methow WLUnit, Beaver Creek). The water temporary donated to Washington Water Trust (WWT) is to be used exclusively to enhance instream flows for fish maintenance and enhancement, recreational uses, or preservation of environmental and aesthetic values (“Trust Water Rights”), as allowed under RCW Chapters 90.03, 90.42, and 90.54. A clause was included in the contract that allows WDFW to remove water rights from WWT if funding and necessity become available.

**Status Report of 2007 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 2008.

<b>2007 Performance Measure</b>	<b>Status of Performance Measure</b>	<b>Explanation of Progress/ 2008 Related Activity/ Comments</b>
Follow up treatment on 20 acres of historic fallowed agricultural fields on the Rendezvous unit seeded to native grass seed in 2006.	Fallowed for 2 seasons and seeded Rendezvous-Riser Lake area ag fields with native grass seed.	Follow up 2007 treatments includes spot weed control and spot seeding. 2008 more of same.
Complete 200 acres of intensive weed treatment and planting of native shrub-steppe habitat in historic agricultural fields	Seeded 100 acres to native grass seed- Pearrygin Flats; seeded 15 acres native forb seed- Pipestone Canyon; prepared 145 acres of abandoned agricultural fields	WWRP grant funding did not become available until October 2007. Larger, more intensive efforts will take place in 2008-2010.

	for tillage and planting for 2008.	
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 0.5 ac on same area on Rendezvous Unit, hand-pulled 300 plants on Little Cub Creek Unit.	This effort will continue in 2008. Significantly fewer plants in 2007, than in 2006 and 2005, however 2 new sites found on Little Cub Creek. 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 MWA.	Hand pulled 10 acres low density toadflax plants with inmate crew in Rendezvous. Monitored Methow Unit along Bear Creek Rd to Bear Creek for toadflax populations and biological presence (noting plant conditions). Sprayed 30 acres low density toadflax plants in restoration sites. Monitored herbicide control at Lloyd Ranch gravel pit (2006-2007) for new plants. Very effective control, very few plants and native bunchgrasses doing well in same area.	These efforts will continue in 2008, including mapping and documenting biological control. Monitoring will continue into future.
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.	Little work conducted on Riser Lake enclosure in 2007. General waterfowl observations conducted but no surveys completed.	No funding allocated at this time.
Monitor golden eagle and cliff-dwelling raptor nesting success in appropriate areas on MWA.	Monitored raptor nesting success and documented results in Heritage database	Continue to monitor and gather information about additional areas of nesting habitat and success.
Partner with Salmon Recovery Foundation and apply for funding to salvage old barn wood for educational kiosk and restoration on WDFW McPhearson property on Chewuch River.	Funding received and restoration work contracted through Methow Natives.	Weed control efforts in abandoned ag field and restoration work continuing

Survey, repair, and/or remove 5 miles of fenceline per year.	Repaired 2 miles of fence to protect riparian areas and adjacent landowners' property on the Little Cub Creek grazing permit area. Built fence around Deadhorse Lake wetland with volunteer assistance on the Big Buck grazing permitted area. Repaired 2 miles of USFS /WDFW boundary fence (0.25 mile installed) between Sullivan's pond and Cougar Flats to alleviate cattle trespass off USFS leased area.	Ongoing
Continue to evaluate the wildlife habitat and human recreation on all Units of the Wildlife Area, in particular Campbell Lake vicinity.	Installed signs near Pipestone Canyon closing rim trail for nesting raptors. Rerouted spring MVSTA Rattlesnake ½ Marathon to avoid rim trail.	Continue to sign and monitor Pipestone canyon for raptor nesting and disturbance in early spring
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.	CRM meetings with local ranchers are the 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> weeks of March.
Lloyd Ranch boundary fence installation and cleanup	Installed 5.5 miles of new boundary fence and removed 7 miles of interior ranch fencing. Recycled all metal posts and wire to Twisp Recycling Center.	Cleanup work continues on this property. ongoing
Inventory and monitor 6 grazing permits and work with Coordinated Resource Management Program to continue improving range management.	Worked with WDFW range specialist and seasonal biologist to inventory Fraser Creek grazing permit area for stocking rates and livestock utilization, and management recommendations for Big Buck grazing rotation and pasture management. Developed 5-year grazing permit for fall migration of livestock from Beaver Creek	Inventory 1 additional permit area for stocking rates and livestock utilization in 2008. Implement management recommendations on Fraser and Big Buck Units.

	to Bear Creek for C. Boesel	
Install educational signs on informational kiosks and Big Valley community trail (partnership with MVSTA).	Reprinting signs and WDFW sign frames ready for pickup at Olympia office.	Educational signs should be installed by summer 2008 along Big Valley community trail.
Continue to develop and find funding for additional signs at key locations on the MWA.	Partnership with USFS Therese Ohlsen to fund information signs about noxious weed populations.	Develop and install signs in 2008
Continue to promote and prioritize a public map to the Wildlife Program for the Methow Wildlife Area.	Not funded or prioritized to-date. First run of map is for kiosk signs.	Install kiosk signs in spring 2008. Continue to promote Methow Wildlife Area to WDFW as priority area for informational public maps.
Conduct 5 long-term monitoring surveys and 2 shrub-steppe songbird surveys (1 on Methow unit and 1 on Big Buck unit).	Conducted 20 long-term monitoring surveys for ecological integrity throughout the Big Buck Unit, Methow Unit (lower Ramsey Flats, Pearrygin Flats, Fraser Creek), and Rendezvous Unit (Little Cub Creek).	Utilized seasonal Biologist and summer intern to conduct monitoring surveys in 2007. No songbird surveys established due to seasonal workload and seasonal biologist hired in June-July.
Continue photo points 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 2010 to see effects of cattle exclusion.	Time and funding allows for periodic monitoring and surveys. Not needed yearly, but every 5 years.
Conduct rare plant and vegetation community surveys for an additional 5000 acres on the Methow Unit of the MWA.	Contracted with PBI "rare plant and vegetation community surveys" on 2000 acres of the Methow Unit of the Wildlife Area. Several significant areas found, but no new rare plant species.	Will continue to conduct surveys on 2000 acres in 2008 on the Pipestone Canyon area of the Methow Unit.
Continue to document treatments and effects of treatments on white-top, and learn from all control measures including chemical, grazing, and mechanical farming techniques.	Riser Lake agricultural fields, Campbell Lake intersection with Lester Road, lower Pipestone Canyon restoration site.	Ongoing
Work with local volunteers and Okanogan County Historical Society to develop management plans to safely preserve designated historic	Set up temporary use permit with Schaffer Museum to remove and relocate the Selde barn off Hwy 20 Fraser Creek Unit.	ongoing



structures on MWA.		
Organize volunteer group to complete cattle fencing on Deadhorse Lake, Big Buck Unit.	Completed	Deadhorse pasture will be utilized by livestock in spring 2008. Need to monitor and make sure fencing secure.
Work with USFS Methow Ranger Station to outline long-term fire and fuels management partnership on WDFW land adjacent to USFS boundaries.	Meetings with fire ecologists to outline and discuss potential cross-boundary fuels reduction treatment grants. Areas of highest importance: upper Rendezvous and Cougar Flats	Continue to partnership and apply for grants with USFS
Finish water rights change application for Big Valley South. Continue to work with Big Valley agricultural lessees to develop and implement water efficiencies and habitat restoration goals in each area.	Contracted WA Rivers Conservancy to assess and help with Dept of Ecology change applications on Big Valley Water Rights. MWA allocated \$600K for irrigation efficiency improvement projects; Big Valley North-completed, Big Valley South-in progress.	Change applications accepted and under public review currently. Work with engineering to install well and center pivot on south end for agriculture and native habitat rehabilitation. Bids to general contractors should be out by April, 2008.
Determine best use for Judd and Patterson Place determined by water rights, habitat improvement potential and local interests.	Hired water rights specialist to conduct due diligence review of all water rights on MWA. Water rights temporarily donated to Washington Water Trust Program for 5-year term.	Water in Trust until funding and time available for agricultural or native plant restoration.
Complete WHIP grant and/or search out additional funding for Scott Canyon (Big Buck) habitat protection and wetland restoration.	Awarded \$30,000 for Scott Canyon wetland and riparian habitat improvements and rehabilitation.	Fencing and weed control work to be started in 2008.
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.	Worked with culvert crews to remove 5 culverts on fish bearing streams. Worked with WDFW Lonnie Landrie to document completed work to DNR. FPA maps still need submission for road abandonments.	Work closely with engineering in 2008 for additional funding for rehabilitation of sites, Big Valley creek rehab site development, Cub Creek site plans, and road abandonment.
Work with local organizations and volunteers on amphibian surveys throughout the Methow Watershed, including the MWA.	Partnered with Methow Conservancy and local amphibian biologist Julie Grialou. Conducted training for 30 volunteers and surveyed	WDFW/ PBI intern entered data into spreadsheet, but still need to analyze 2007 data.

	approx. 20 ponds in the Methow Watershed including 12 on the MWA. Received ALEA grant for equipment.	
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.	No new area provided by USFS. WDFW Riser Lake trail mowed and maintained for ADA hunters. USFS closed road system on Bear Mountain available to ADA hunters.	Continue to explore options with USFS for new ADA area on upper elevation public land
Maintain contact with CAG at least 2 times per year.	Meeting in spring 07; No fall meeting due to WLA manager's maternity leave.	Maintain contact with CAG at least 2 times in 2008.
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.

Well-managed livestock grazing on Department land on the MWA has been used as a tool to increase growth, vigor, and regeneration of bitterbrush as a practice to increase forage quality for mule deer. In recent years, WDFW management goals have changed to incorporate the concept biodiversity and ecological integrity, instead of the Department's previous single species approach to management of the landscape. "Livestock grazing must be integrated with other uses to ensure the protection of all resource values, the most important of which is maintaining ecological integrity" (Fish and Wildlife Commission Policy C6003). The Methow Wildlife Area has concurrently changed its management objectives when working with livestock permits over the last several years, seeking to improve native bunchgrasses vigor and overall shrub-steppe condition while continuing to meet habitat goals such as protecting riparian areas and wetland habitats.

**Strategy:** Implement use of conservative livestock stocking rates to increase bunchgrass vigor and ecological integrity of the shrub-steppe vegetation community.

**Action:** For all livestock grazing permits on the Wildlife Area, unless stated otherwise, the following changes were implemented: Maximum utilization will not exceed (within reason) 35% use of bunchgrasses on uplands, 35% woody vegetation on shrubby riparian areas, 6 inch stubble height on sub irrigated riparian areas, and 60% use of surrounding vegetation within 100 M from watering sites. WDFW will monitor triggers and evaluate adaptive management strategies in conjunction with individual permittees (WAC 232-12-181).

### **2008 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.
- 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) Continue to work with agricultural lessee on the Cloyd Place to develop and implement water efficiencies and habitat restoration goals in each area. Continue to work with ag leasee on the Big Valley south to develop and implement restoration goals, and irrigation equipment.
- 4) Control ALL Houndstongue on WDFW land- Riser Lake, Little Cub Creek, Judd Ranch.
- 5) Install educational signs on informational kiosks and Big Valley community trail (partnership with MVSTA). Partnership with USFS to develop noxious weed signs. 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 the area surrounding Pearrygin State Park.
- 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/invasers.
- 9) Continue to look for funding for additional work on the Riser Lake riparian restoration project.
- 10) Conduct rare plant and vegetation community surveys for an additional 2000 acres on the Methow Unit of the MWA.
- 11) Analyze and develop informational poster on 2006-2007 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.
- 13) Work with local volunteers and Okanogan County Historical Society to develop management plans to safely preserve Waring homestead on Rendezvous Unit of the 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) Continue to 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) Develop a public information sharing program as a way to educate the general public about the Methow Wildlife Area's selected accomplishments.
- 19) Continue to work with adjacent landowners and WDFW real estate services to provide access to Wildlife Area parcels.
- 20) Work with USFS Methow Ranger District on prescribed fire planning for Cougar Flats, adjacent areas to USFS boundary.
- 21) Begin WHIP grant (Scott Canyon -Big Buck Unit) habitat protection and wetland restoration project.
- 22) Work with USFS Respect the River Program and install signs on Chewuch River campgrounds.
- 23) 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 March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to review management progress and address any new issues or input on existing issues. Those in attendance included:

Don Johnson  
Joyce Bergen  
John Hagen  
Jan Ford  
Vic Stokes  
Peter Morrison  
Troy Accord  
Steve Bondi  
John Rohrer  
Bill White  
Kim Romain-Bondi  
Carl Miller  
Scott Fitkin

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

**Issue:** Building management in Wolf Canyon

**Response:** Sell 20 acre parcel, or sell, salvage, and move the buildings

**Issue:** Ramsay Creek Campground Management and RMAP planned for 2008

**Response.** Close upper part while removing culvert across Ramsey Creek and improve lower part with forest management.

**Issue:** Access on Brewster and Golden Doe.

**Response:** Wildlife Area Manager will continue working with local adjacent landowners, WDFW real estate services, and Attorney General Office if necessary. Issue listed as a 2008 Performance Measure.

**Issue:** Develop a public information program to share selected highlights

**Response:** WDFW will work hard to highlight WDFW accomplishments on the Methow Wildlife Area in the local paper

**Issue:** Cattle grazing and increasing bitterbrush scientifically documented on the WLA? Control plots established? Increased grazing as a result of the "Healthy Lands Initiative", or the Washington Cattlemen Association/ WDFW MOU?

**Response:** Photographs and anecdotal information that bitterbrush has increased on the Fraser Creek Unit. Vegetation surveys' using transects was setup on this unit, but I have not seen the data at this time. They were reread in the early 2000s. Community vegetation surveys for stocking rates were established when the CRM was formulated (1991), and data WDFW collected in 2007 can and will be compared.

### **CAG New Strategies Suggested for Wildlife Management-Stewardship on the WLA**

1. Inventory work on WLA
2. Funding for secure boundary fencing, trespass livestock
2. Give fencing money proportional to grazed acres
3. Fund ongoing multi-year projects as the priority
4. Weed control monitoring/survey funding
5. Forest Management, integrate with Federal program
6. Maps for public distribution
7. Restoration of disturbed areas
8. Specific Road maintenance funding
9. Adopt a wildlife area program
10. ORV management
11. Get Non-hunting recreationalists into the revenue stream

At the conclusion of the meeting, another CAG meeting was tentatively scheduled for July 2008.

**Want to see the full plan?**

Go to –

[http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife\\_areas/management\\_plans/](http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/)

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