



# METHOW WILDLIFE AREA 2012 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

## **Land Management Summary**

This is an update to the Methow Wildlife Area Management (MWA) Plan [http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife\\_areas/management\\_plans/](http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/) that provides 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 biennially as habitat and species conditions change, as new regulations or information develops, as public issues and concerns evolve, and as administration of wildlife areas change. This management plan update includes 2010 and 2011 accomplishments, new issues, new land management strategies and performance measures for 2012 and 2013.

### Updates/Changes

Similar to the previous winter (2010-2011) the 2011-12 winter had moderate temperatures and below average snowfall. Significant snow accumulations did not occur until mid January. Once again, with modest snow depths temperatures, the valley’s mule deer herd wintered at higher elevations.

<b>Inside</b>	
<b>Land Management Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Updates/Changes</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Major Stewardship Accomplishments</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Status Report of 2010 &amp; 2011 Performance Measures</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>New Strategies</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2012 -2013 Performance Measures</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Citizens Advisory Group Input</b>	<b>13</b>



Late spring weather stirred up some excitement in the valley with above average rainfall amounts and saturated soils generating higher than normal flooding from local streams. On May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011, Pearrygin Creek experienced a geomorphic scale debris torrent. The origin was a severely burned side drainage below Tripod Peak approximately 6 miles above the MWA. Once the material got moving down the Pearygin Creek canyon it scoured everything in its path,

accumulating trees and rocks as it went along. At the lower end of the Canyon the material filled the canyon to a depth of 20 feet or more. As the material spilled out of the mouth of the canyon it spread across approximately 40 irrigated acres on the Lloyd Ranch, rendering it useless for future agriculture. It also did substantial damage to Pearrygin State Park and adjacent private property.

Other flood related damage on the wildlife area included Bear Creek campground where the creek jumped its bank and eroded out several campsites as well as blocked an access road into the Pearrygin Forest. Further north, Ramsey Creek blew out US Forest Service Road 200, closing until repairs are made sometime in the future.

### **Acquisitions**

In 2011, the WDFW acquired 387 additional acres in the Methow valley that have been added to the Methow Wildlife Area. The new properties included strategic riparian and shrub steppe habitat additions that improve the connectivity of the wildlife area for migratory wildlife populations.

### **LIBBY CREEK**

In 2011, the WDFW purchased 18.55-acres along Libby Creek. The new addition will provide benefit to wildlife by preserving wetland and riparian habitat, protect spawning and rearing habitat for steelhead (federally listed threatened species) and spring Chinook (federally listed endangered species), and protect habitat for bull trout (federally listed endangered species). This property is located approximately two miles west of the town of Carlton, in the Methow Valley, approximately 1 mile up Libby Creek Road, off Highway 153. This acquisition was funded with mitigation money under the Grant County Public Utility District, Priest Rapids Habitat Conservation project. Public access to the new acquisition is from Libby Creek Road.

## BREED

In 2011, the WDFW acquired 230.66 acres nine miles south of Twisp. The property borders WDFW holdings to the south, the Okanogan National Forest to the west, and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) lands to the north. The property also expands the public lands east-west corridor across the valley. Such a link is critical for seasonal cross valley migration habitat for mule deer. This acquisition was funded by grants from the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Section 6 Program. Public access to the Breed property is west off of State Route 153.

## HEBERT

In 2011, the WDFW added a 33.54 acre property on Beaver Creek to the wildlife area. This addition is located five miles northeast of Twisp on Upper Beaver Creek Road. Beaver Creek borders the east side of the property, with WDFW lands to the north and west and the Okanogan National Forest to the east. The purchase preserves spawning and rearing habitat for spring Chinook, steelhead and bull trout. The acquisition was funded by grants from the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program under the Riparian Habitat category and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Section 6 Program. Public access to the Herbert acquisition is from Beaver Creek Road.

## WALKER (Miller-Harrison)

In 2011, the Walker property was added 105.08 acres to the Methow Wildlife Area. The new purchase is located approximately 2.5 miles southeast of the town of Winthrop. The property is mostly surrounded by private landholders, but public access can be had from Bear Creek Road on the property's eastern boundary. The Walker parcel is comprised primarily of shrub steppe and wetland habitat, and a few acres of historically farmed fields. The acquisition was funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Section 6 Program.

## Shooting Range

Phase I of a major renovation to the Methow Wildlife Area's shooting range was completed. New improvements included a new covered shooting area, safety berms bordering the north and



south side of the range, and expanded parking area. Additional improvements will include installing new shooting benches, target backstops, and re-seeding the surrounding area with desirable vegetation to control noxious weeds infestations and minimize the risk of wildfire. The response from valley residents for this project has been entirely positive. It was funded by a Pittman and Roberts Act grant dedicated to updating

safety features and improving public target ranges. We would like to thank the numerous individuals and local contractors who helped bring this project to fruition, and who continue to help with maintenance. Much appreciated.

### **Forest Restoration**

The MWA has nearly finalized a forest management plan. In 2011 The Nature Conservancy contracted a consulting forester, Derrick Churchill to assist wildlife area staff to complete a management plan that addresses our severe forest health issues and provide appropriate prescriptions. Wildlife Area staff are currently pursuing funding to implement a project(s) that will return the wildlife area's forest to near historic tree density levels, natural spatial patterns, and a productive understory for wildlife. Our goal is, to the greatest degree possible, reestablish historic stand structure and composition while taking into account expected mortality from disease/insect infected trees, Forest Practices Rules and other considerations. This project will prepare the forest for the reintroduction of maintenance level prescribed fire.

### **Partnerships**

In preparation for their spring ride, the Methow chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen partnered with WDFW to install hitching rails and a water trough at the Bear Creek Campground. These new facilities will substantially improve the usability of this portion of the wildlife area for horseback recreation.

The relocation of nuisance beavers in the Methow Watershed continued for another year. The partnership between WDFW, US Forest Service, Methow Conservancy, and the Pacific Biodiversity Institute has successfully trapped, and relocated 134 nuisance beavers to date. WDFW is a key partner for relocating nuisance beavers to unoccupied habitat in the Methow



watershed. The goal of this project is to enhance instream flows, and restore and increase wetland and riparian habitat for fish and wildlife habitat. In addition to the relocations, project staff has placed thirty-four temperature and discharge gages at release sites to quantify the effect of beaver on instream habitat quantity and quality.

In 2010, the MWA began a partnership with the US Forest Service to collect and store native seed from the Methow Valley. The aim of the partnership is to develop a supply of native seed for use on restoration projects. In 2011, Sandberg's bluegrass (*Poa secunda*) was collected from the Frazer Unit area and sent off to be grown by a seed vendor. The project had originally been intended to grow its own seed on WDFW land, but a setback occurred when funding could not be obtained to purchase the needed farm equipment. Other native grass seed was collected by the wildlife area staff including blue wildrye (*Elymus glaucus*), western needlegrass (*Achnatherum occidentale*), and basin wildrye (*Leymus cinereus*).



The MWA still plans to cultivate one or more of these grasses on irrigated fields located at the headquarters.

The Methow Wildlife Area entered a new partnership with the US Geological Service to support research on the role of endophytic fungus in invasive weed species ecology. Findings from this work could prove highly beneficial to the wildlife area management of noxious weed populations. Preliminary results look encouraging, in particular with control of kochia and

whitetop.

Researchers from the University of Utah and Alaska continued their investigations on the effects of activated carbon soil amendments on nitrogen cycling and plant response. The latest experiment showed that relatively small additions of carbon to the soil nearly doubled germination of native grasses compared to the control. The carbon also seems to have a suppressive affect on some weed species as well. This research looks to have some important implications for restoring fallowed agricultural fields that have succumbed to exotic, invasive species.



### **Staff**

The MWA workforce in 2010-2011 consisted of a full time Manager, a full time Assistant Manager/ Maintenance Mechanic, and a seasonal Biologist I. Our volunteer crews have been active as ever and we thank everyone who has participated over the past year.

### **Fish and Wildlife**

Emerging from winter, the Methow valley mule deer herd looks to be in good condition. WDFW staff classified close to 2,900 deer in western Okanogan County. The 2012 spring count had a fawn:adult ratio of 31:100 in the Methow valley with an estimated over-winter fawn mortality of 50%, which is somewhat below average. When compared to past years, the district biologists are seeing deer numbers on the increase for two years in a row suggesting modest population growth.

Major Stewardship  
Accomplishments

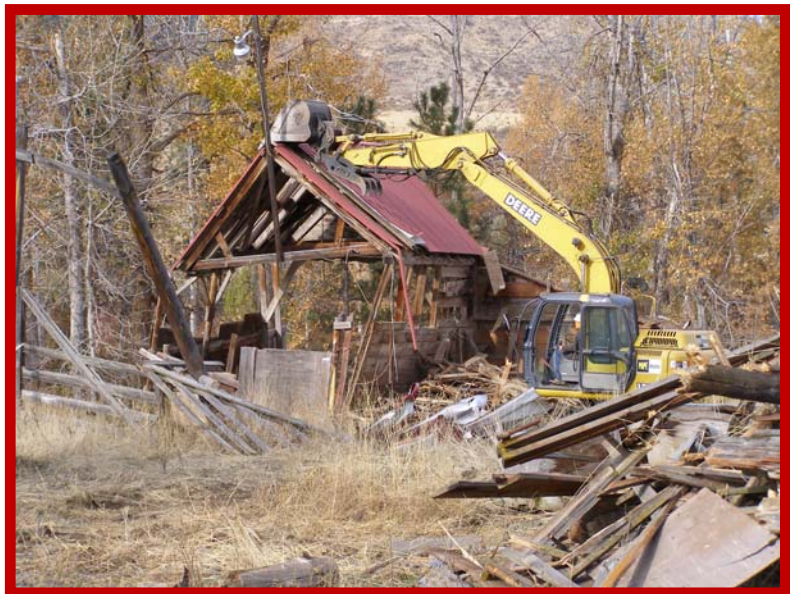
In the fall of 2011, three buildings at Judd Ranch were sold at public auction and moved to private ownership. The remaining buildings that were degraded to the point of being unusable were demolished. Most of the building material was either burned on-site or recycled. All of the structures that are of use to the agricultural lessee have been retained for use in their operation.



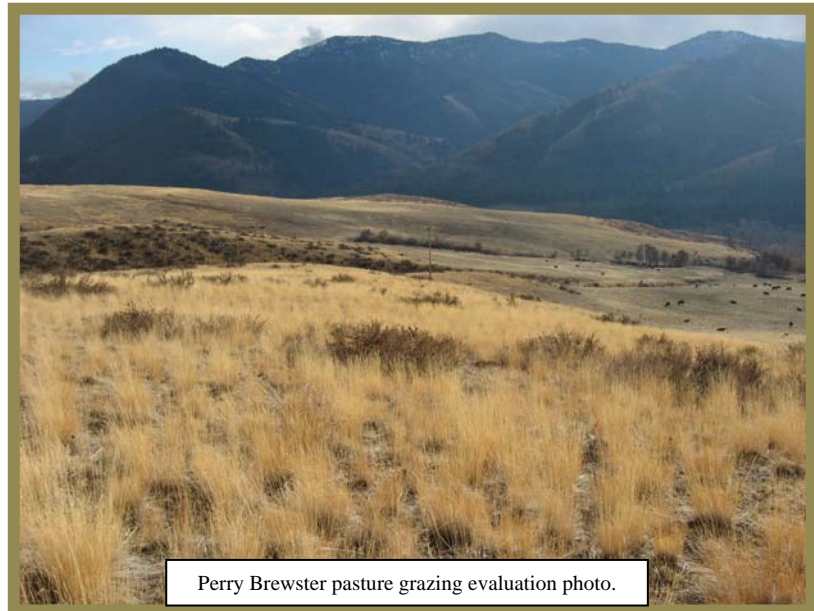
We also went through the same process at the Shenyer Parcel where the historically significant barn and silo were retained, as was the hay shed, while the shop and house were surplus. We will be continuing this building surplus/demolition on the Lloyd Ranch and Wolf Canyon properties in the near future.

The MWA is wrapping up the shrub steppe restoration project that was started in 2006. Progress has been excellent in establishing new fields with native grasses. A large part of this success was due to the above average and timely precipitation over the last two springs. Not to go unmentioned, there were also some setbacks to the project. Some fields are still proving to be difficult and challenging in weed management, particularly the Lower Pipestone and Martin fields for kochia and prickly lettuce, and the North Lloyd field for knapweeds. In 2011, the staff seeded the Ramsey Flat, Lower Pipestone, North Lloyd and Riser Lake fields with native grasses. Future plans for these fields will include follow up weed treatments and monitoring. The last of the shrub steppe restoration project fields, Golden Doe, Martin, and the East Chewuch are scheduled to be ready for fall seeding in 2012.

The MWA staff continues to implement Integrated Pest Management (IPM) methods in our work, which includes mechanical treatment, hand pulling, bio-controls, chemical and cultivation/replanting. In 2011, we saw a resurgence of several familiar weed species on the wildlife area and one new weed species. In 2010-11, staff primarily targeted large patches of whitetop, a weed commonly found on loamy soils, such as



abandoned farmed fields. It is essential for this reason that whitetop infestations are control before spreading into uncultivated areas. For 2012, a focused effort will be made to manage this weed on the Big Buck and Rendezvous units. Meanwhile, the staff is making progress in reducing houndstongue at the Little Cub and Riser Lake areas. Only minimal spot-treatments are needed now. The wildlife area staff will now focus on the recent Breed acquisition where a large infestation of houndstongue has been identified. The wildlife area staff continues to suppress Dalmatian toadflax and

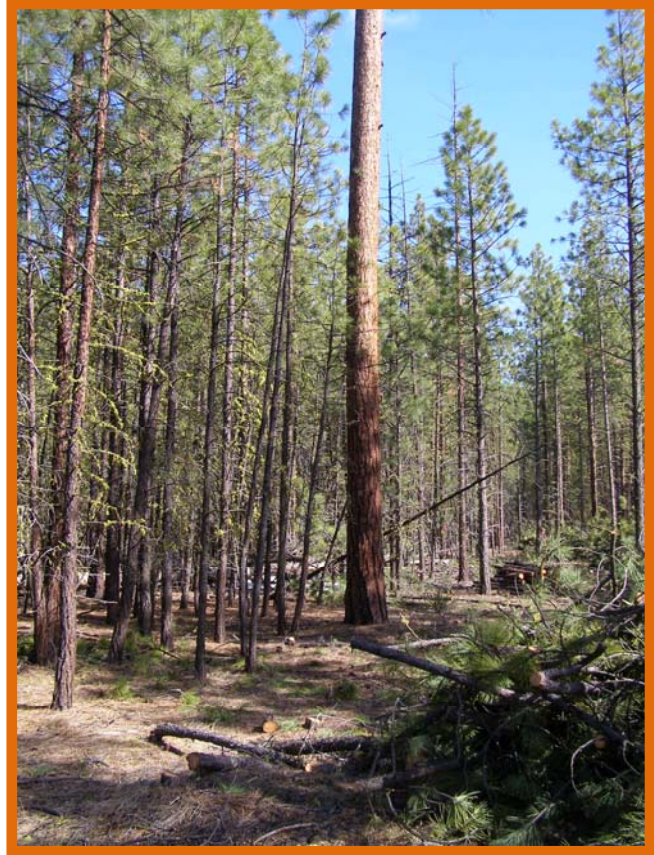


Perry Brewster pasture grazing evaluation photo.

knapweeds, but the favorable conditions in the previous two growing seasons seems to have germinated a large proportion of their seed banks. In order to counter this resurgence, wildlife area staff will release additional biological control agents in 2012 as part of our IPM program to regain control of these populations. Meadow clary (*Salvia pratensis*) is a Washington State Class A noxious weed and a new invader on the Methow. In fact, the quarter acre infestation on one of the river front parcels was the first sighting in Okanogan County. Staff treated the site and will monitor into the future to ensure no new plants get established.

During the winter of 2011-12, the MWA staff reviewed livestock grazing permits and began developing new grazing plans for the 2012-2016 permit period. All domestic livestock grazing on the Methow Wildlife Area will comply with the standards delineated in HB 1309 for ecological integrity. To ensure compliance with HB 1309 standards wildlife area staff re-read vegetation monitoring plots that were installed in 2007 for the Methow-Frazer Creek and Big Buck units. The monitoring results are a quantitative measure of compliance and a primary information source for adaptive management. In 2011, the results showed that native perennial plant cover had slightly increased and bare ground had slightly decreased over the four year monitoring period. In addition, seasonal utilization monitoring results had been well below thresholds for allowable forage removal. Our findings show that the ecological integrity for the wildlife area's rangeland is being maintained. The Methow Wildlife Area staff will continue to monitor long-term community composition and seasonal utilization monitoring on permitted pastures as well as monitoring long-term community change in ungrazed areas. Infrastructure improvements, stocking rate adjustments, long-term ecological integrity, and rotational strategies continue to be refined through the Coordinated Resource Management Planning (CRMP) process.

In 1948 the “Statewide Range Survey” was inaugurated to gather information concerning game use and forage production, as well as range condition and trend of vegetation on state-owned winter game ranges. The monitoring program lasted for only six years before termination. During the six years, range data was collected from a series of 10 transects and three enclosures on the Methow Wildlife Area. Unfortunately, the maintenance of the enclosures was neglected rendering them unsuitable for vegetation comparisons. Prior to initiating a livestock grazing program, WDFW re-read the original 10 transects in 1965. The findings of the 1952/1965 vegetation comparison showed that the range progressed towards a climax bunchgrass plant community, and the bitterbrush and preferred forb species for mule deer declined in abundance. In 2010 and 2011, the Methow Wildlife Area staff re-read 8 of the 10 original transects with plans to re-read the final two transects in 2012.



Preliminary findings of a 1955/2010 & 2011 vegetation comparison strongly suggest that wildlife area plant communities had moved towards a later successional species composition and cover. As a result, early successional plant communities are declining on the wildlife area. The comparison also suggests that ecological integrity of the wildlife area’s rangelands has not declined, but improved since 1955. Vegetation composition now comprises of more native perennial plant coverage than before, and less bare soil. Staff will continue to gather and analyze the Statewide Range Survey information to better assist future management decisions.

The permitted public firewood program has been getting strong support from valley residents. In fact, last summer the office staff was challenged to keep participants supplied with downed trees. The test plot thinning that was started in 2009 will expand in size in 2012 to meet the growing demand for easily accessible small diameter wood while rehabilitating the forest.

### **Status Report of 2010 and 2011 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 2012 and 2013.



2010 and 2011 Performance Measure	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2012-13 Related Activity/ Comments
Follow up treatment on the Rendezvous unit fields (Riser Lake and Gunn Ranch Road) that were seeded with native grasses in 2006.	Fields were treated in 2010, but no treatments were made in 2011.	Native grasses well established. Fields will be monitored and if necessary, treated accordingly.
Continue intensive weed treatment and planting of native shrub steppe habitat in historic agricultural fields	Ongoing. Ramsey Flats, Riser Lake, North Lloyd, and Lower Pipestone fields were planted in 2011.	Martin and Golden Doe fields will be prepped, treated and re-seeded in the fall of 2012 if necessary. Other planted fields will be monitored for weeds and treated accordingly.
Stop ALL Houndstongue seed production on Rendezvous Unit, Texas Creek Unit, and Little Cub Creek area with spot spraying and hand pulling crews.	Rendezvous, Texas Creek, and Little Cub sites were treated in 2010 and 2011	Continue treatments and evaluate methods. Add the Breed property to the list of properties to be treated for houndstongue in 2012.
Document and Control Dalmatian Toadflax populations on the MWA units. Use biological controls when available.	Dalmation Toadflax populations were chemically treated at Big Buck and Methow Units in 2011. <i>Mecinus janthinus</i> populations were augmented in 2010 at Pearrygin and Rendezvous areas.	New <i>Mecinus janthinus</i> releases are schedule at Fuzzy Canyon and Dead Horse Lake in 2012. Elsewhere herbicide treatments will continue.
Investigate opportunities for research projects for the wildlife area that would enhance fish and wildlife populations or fish and wildlife habitat.	Possible research may include studying methods for rejuvenating bitterbrush and aspen vigor and palatability. Investigating understory response after forest thinning treatments, or the development of agricultural techniques that effectively restore upland habitats with minimal costs.	Continue to pursue grant funding.
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.
Survey, repair, and/or remove 5 miles of fence per year.	Repaired 2 miles of fence at Little Cub, 1 mile of fence at	New fence is scheduled for Breed, Ramsey, and Wolf

	Ramsey and ½ mile at Wolf Canyon.	Canyon properties in 2012. Progress will depend on available funding.
Work with Coordinated Resource Management Program to establish relationships with other agencies and local ranchers and to continue improving range management.	Continue to support and reach out to local agencies for improving adaptive management plans in the Methow Valley.	MWA will implement CRM recommendations for 2012 and later years.
Rehabilitate Lloyd Ranch's native flora. Remove unneeded structures on the property.	Developing demolition contracts for structure removal. No funding for reclamation activities.	Irrigation in Pasture A re-started. Funds for reclamation projects will be sought.
Continue to promote and prioritize a public map to the Wildlife Program for the Methow Wildlife Area. Update MWA web page.	Not funded	Developing a map whether hardcopy or digital format will be a high priority when funds become available.
Install monitoring plots and conduct vegetation monitoring surveys to establish baseline data for long-term landscape changes to upland and riparian areas.	Five long-term monitoring plots were re-surveyed in 2011.	Continue to install more forest and rangeland monitoring plots. Install new monitoring plots for Balkly Hill, Golden Doe, and Riser Lake sites. Re-survey plots when applicable.
Continue rare plant surveys on the Methow Unit of the MWA.	No funding to continue surveys.	Will continue the rare plant surveys as funds become available.
Continue to document treatments and effects of treatments on white-top, and learn from all control measures including chemical, grazing and mechanical techniques.	In 2010 treated sites included: Rose Miller, Gunn Ranch, Pipestone, Riser Lake and right of ways. In 2011 treated sites included: Balkly Hill, Little Cub Creek, Dead Horse Lake and Scott Canyon Pastures.	Ongoing. Herbicide treatments are proving effective. Priority sites for treatments in 2012 and 2013 are Big Buck & Rendezvous units.
Work with local volunteers and Okanogan County Historical Society to develop management plans to safely preserve designated historic structures on MWA.	Set up temporary use permit with Schaffer Museum to remove and relocate the Selde barn off Hwy 20 Fraser Creek Unit.	Ongoing. Plans being developed to move the Lloyd Ranch silo to the Schaffer Museum.
Work with USFS Methow	High priority should be given	Continue to partnership and

Ranger Station to outline long-term fire and fuels management partnership on WDFW land adjacent to USFS boundaries.	to save the older pines (>150 yrs) and the remaining aspen stands from further pine encroachment. Final SEPA & FPA were approved.	apply for grants with USFS. Submitted RCO proposal for grant funding.
Resolve the water right issues between the Dept of Ecology and the WDFW; and continue to work with agricultural lessees to develop and implement water efficiencies and habitat restoration goals on or near agricultural leases.	Trust applications submitted	Ongoing
Upgrade irrigation facilities at Big Valley south, Lloyd Ranch, Wildlife Area Headquarters, Beaver Creek and the Judd Ranch.	Facilities at Big Valley South, Lloyd Ranch, Headquarters Beaver Creek and Judd Ranch were upgraded or repaired	Ongoing. Continue working with agricultural lessees to find options for cost sharing irrigation efficiency improvements.
Complete Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (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.	Project withdrawn due to increased costs.
Replace the Cub Creek culvert in 2010	Completed the Cub Creek culvert replacement	No further action required
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.	WDFW continues to administer two sites for ADA hunting opportunities.	Continue to explore options with USFS for new ADA area on upper elevation public land. Investigate whether Little Cub area could be used as an additional ADA hunting opportunity.
Maintain contact with Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) at least 2 times per year.	CAG meeting held 3/2011.	Continue to meet with CAG at a minimum of twice a year.
Lobby for additional funding to hire additional FTE (Bio II) for the MWA.	Because current WDFW funding short-falls, a FTE (Bio II) position will not be hired in the near future.	Until economy improves, pursue additional funding through grants to support a wildlife area position.

### **New Strategies**

The wildlife area plan identifies many actions to address WDFW's strategic plan goals and objectives. The following updated strategies have been added to respond to previously unaddressed or new issues on the wildlife area. New strategies may also be developed as staff evaluate the impacts of past management activities.

**Strategy:** Begin restoring riverfront/riparian parcels.

**Action:** Seek outside funding and partner with local, county, non-governmental organizations, tribes and state/ federal agencies to design, implement and monitor habitat restoration projects. This will be the beginning of a long-term effort to improve aquatic and riparian habitat.

**Strategy:** Change the time period for both spring and fall grazing on the Methow Wildlife area by pushing up the livestock release dates.

**Action:** An earlier turn out date for livestock grazing would benefit WDFW grazing program on the Methow Wildlife area in several ways. An earlier spring turnout would mean the livestock would come off the range earlier thereby enabling bunchgrasses to recover during their critical growth period. An early fall turnout would not be detrimental to bunchgrass health as they will be dormant for the year. Additionally, livestock would likely assist in the dispersal and establishment of the current year's seed crop. Fall livestock grazing would improve the range for new biomass re-growth in the spring by removing dead foliage from the current and previous year's growth. The proposed change in the time periods for grazing would not alter the triggers designated for forage utilization. WDFW will monitor triggers and evaluate adaptive management strategies for individual permits (WAC 232-12-181). Prior to any change to current grazing time periods, WDFW would consult with individual permittees and the US Forest Service (USFS) to coordinate the grazing plans for all parties. The CRMP will be the primary coordination mechanism used.

**Strategy:** Develop and support an inter-agency program (WDFW/US Forest Service) that would promote the collection, cleaning, storage and propagation of native seed stocks from the area. Such an arrangement would be mutually beneficial for participating agencies. By pooling resources, agencies would have a reliable and appropriate local seed source for their respective restoration programs.

**Action:** Continue to collect and store native plant seed from the Methow Wildlife Area. Determine appropriate cultivation practices for key plant species on the wildlife area. Prepare irrigated and dryland acreage for a seed production facility on the MWA as well as seed cleaning practices for each species.

**Strategy:** Continue to aggressively control weeds throughout the MWA using Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices.

**Action:** Develop new herbicide application equipment and techniques to improve effectiveness and application precision. Use biological controls to the greatest extent of their availability. Acquire additional cultivation equipment to improve mechanical control capacity.

### **2012 and 2013 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) Continue intensive weed treatment and planting native shrub steppe and riparian habitat in historic agricultural fields and riverfront parcels: IPM, re-vegetation.
- 2) Work with the USFS to evaluate and determine if new hunting opportunity can be provided for disabled hunters. Continue providing two areas for disabled hunting opportunities.
- 3) Continue to work with agricultural lessees to develop and implement water efficiencies and habitat restoration goals in each area.
- 4) Control houndstongue on WDFW land: Riser Lake, Little Cub Creek, Judd Ranch and Breed properties.
- 5) Continue to promote and prioritize a public map for the Methow Wildlife Area.
- 6) Inventory and monitor grazing permits and work with Coordinated Resource Management Program to continue improving range management.
- 7) Document and control Dalmatian toadflax populations on the wildlife area. Use biological controls when available. Destroy all new outbreaks/invasers.
- 8) Continue rare plant surveys on the Methow Unit of the MWA, if funds become available.
- 9) Continue to document treatments, and effects of treatments, on white-top populations, and learn from IPM techniques.
- 10) Work with local volunteers and Okanogan County Historical Society to develop management plans to preserve designated historic structures on the MWA.
- 11) Continue the long-term monitoring plot installation and vegetation surveys on the MWA.
- 12) Continue to work with USFS Methow Ranger Station to outline long-term fire and fuels management partnership on WDFW land adjacent to USFS boundaries. Seek funding to implement Forest Management Plan.
- 13) Assist with Road Management and Abandonment Plans (RMAP). Complete and submit all RMAP Forest Practices Application (FPA) documentation to DNR.
- 14) Update the Methow Wildlife Area's web page to include selected land management accomplishments of the wildlife area.
- 15) Continue to work with adjacent landowners and WDFW real estate services to provide access to MWA parcels.
- 16) Lobby for additional funding to hire (Bio II) for the MWA.
- 17) Investigate research opportunities for the wildlife area and pursue grant funding.

### **Citizens Advisory Group Input**

A Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) meeting was held on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The key topic discussed that evening was, "Public access on the Methow Wildlife Area".

Those in attendance for the winter 2011-12 meeting included:

Tom McCoy	Wildlife Area Manager
John Hagan	Wildlife Area Staff
Joyce Bergen	Washington Native Plant Society
Jan Ford	Back Country Horsemen
Vic Stokes	Cattleman
Carl Miller	Okanogan County Historical Society
Phil Millam	Rendezvous Landowners Association
John Rhor	USFS
Arvid Iverson	Mule Deer Foundation
Peter Morrison	Pacific Biodiversity Institute

Troy Acord  
Bud Hover

Cattleman  
Okanogan County Commissioner

The Methow Wildlife Area manager briefed attendees on the history, development, and aims of the Washington State Discover Pass. Depending on the sales of the new Discover Pass, the manager pointed out there could be a new funding opportunity for recreational improvements on the wildlife area. New ideas were presented then an ensuing discussion followed. One suggestion included purchasing recreational panel gates on the wildlife area. These gates would be easier for the public to operate and they would minimize the occurrences of trespassing livestock unto adjacent property owners. Overall, the idea was well received. Attendees even suggested some high use areas where the needs are greatest.

- Developing trailer turnaround spots, public parking areas, and mowing well-traveled roads during high fire danger. The manager explained the cost of archeological surveys and the required heavy equipment for providing these amenities. The attendees were taken back by the costs, but everyone agreed that these needs are important and should be further pursued.
- Developing new trails. Manager explained that there is a liability associated with designated trails on the wildlife area. The attendees were generally in agreement that the primitive trail system in place was working and no designated trails were needed. What did come out of the discussion was a strong need for signage on the wildlife area and a wildlife area map whether hard copy or digital. There was a reoccurring theme that evening that “people wanted to know, where is the public land and how do we access it?” One attendee expressed his frustration that WDFW is not considering public access when they purchase lands.
- Developing groomed ski trails at the Lloyd Ranch for winter recreation. Some of the attendees expressed caution to the idea. They suggested other forms of winter recreation such as snow shoe trails may be more appropriate for the MWA than groomed ski trails.
- Developing a new ADA hunting opportunity at Little Cub Creek area. None of the attendees had objections to the idea.

In keeping with the topic of public access on the wildlife area, the wildlife manager wanted to hear from CAG members about limitations to public land access. He provided the following examples:

- Managing private access points from neighboring landowners. The manager explained that there is no current WDFW policy on the issue, but he wanted to hear what the CAG members thought of the idea. Should private access points be allowed? Most attendees had no strong objections to allow private access points unless it involved unauthorized vehicle entries, or some private gain would be obtained from it, for example a commercial enterprise.
- Managing WDFW properties as in holdings because of access problems imposed by

neighboring property owners.

**WDFW Contacts:**

Tom McCoy  
Methow Wildlife Area  
Area Manager  
(509) 996-2559  
Region 2 Ephrata Office  
(509) 754-4624

**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/)