

Wildlife Areas

HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



Conservation Focus

Consistent with WDFW's dual mandates:

"...to preserve, protect, perpetuate and manage the fish and wildlife species of the state..."

—RCW 77.04.012

and

"..to maximize opportunities for people to hunt, fish, and appreciate fish and wildlife..."

—RCW 77.04.012 & 77.04.020

WDFW's intent is to develop an HCP for the Wildlife Areas that fosters creative partnerships (e.g., public, agency, tribal) in the interest of endangered and threatened species and habitat conservation.

Introduction

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is developing a habitat conservation plan (HCP) for land management activities (recreation, operation and maintenance, enhancement and restoration) occurring on state-owned and managed Wildlife Areas. This HCP will guide long-term conservation and protection of species, and will ensure compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The HCP must be approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service (collectively referred to as "the Services"), the agencies responsible for implementing ESA.

In 2006, WDFW interviewed stakeholders and tribal staff to identify appropriate ways to involve the public and other interested parties in development of the Wildlife Areas HCP.

This fact sheet describes the goals and benefits of the Wildlife Areas HCP, and explains how it will be developed.

What is a Habitat Conservation Plan?

An HCP is a management strategy that provides long-term certainty of ESA compliance while providing for conservation of species. HCPs are developed under Section 10 of ESA, which provides a means for non-federal entities to ensure that their actions will not conflict with the conservation needs of ESA-listed and other at-risk species.

The Wildlife Areas HCP will identify any potential conservation opportunities as well as potential adverse impacts to ESA-listed species or their habitats resulting from activities covered in the plan. The HCP will also specify management strategies to avoid, minimize, and mitigate for those impacts.

Save the Date!

WDFW has scheduled six public meetings around the state to introduce the Wildlife Areas HCP development process.* You will have an opportunity to hear more about the benefits of the Wildlife Areas HCP, and we will get to hear from you what issues should be addressed in the HCP.

Please attend the public meeting that is most convenient for you.

Mon, Apr 30

Yakima

Yakima Regional Library
102 N 3rd St., Yakima, 98901

Tues, May 1

Wenatchee

Cashmere Community Center
201 Riverside Dr., Cashmere, 98815

Wed, May 2

Spokane

Spokane Valley Library
12004 E Main Ave., Spokane Valley, 99206

Tues, May 8

Mt. Vernon

Skagit Valley College
2405 East College Way, Mount Vernon, 98273

Thurs, May 10

Olympia

Lacey Community Center
6729 Pacific Ave. SE, Lacey, 98503

Tues, May 15

Vancouver

Vancouver Community Library
1007 E. Mill Plain Blvd., Vancouver, 98663

*WDFW is developing an HCP for its Hydraulic Project Approval permit process concurrently with this HCP. Both HCPs will be discussed at these meetings.

www.wdfw.wa.gov/hcp/index.html

WDFW Wildlife Areas

WDFW manages or owns approximately 850,000 acres of land designated as Wildlife Areas. WDFW owns about 62 percent of these lands and manages the other 38 percent for other public agencies (such as the Washington Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation). Maps of the Wildlife Areas can be viewed at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildarea.htm>.

Wildlife Areas have many purposes ranging from offering a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities to providing critical habitat for management of game species (such as mule deer) and recovery of at-risk wildlife species (such as pygmy rabbits).

Numerous activities, including hunting and fishing, recreation (such as camping, hiking, and horseback riding), weed control, grazing, and road maintenance occur on these lands. WDFW-owned water access areas outside of Wildlife Areas are not currently considered under this HCP.



Scope of the Wildlife Areas HCP

WDFW is just beginning to define the scope of the HCP. In developing this scope, WDFW will review and evaluate the potential benefits, as well as potential impacts, that the Wildlife Areas activities could have on species and habitat over the next 30 to 50 years. Examples of activities and species are listed below.

Potential Activities		Potential Species	
Activities	Examples	Species	Examples
Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wetland enhancement or improvement 	Federal ESA-listed species and habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pygmy rabbit bull trout critical habitat
Restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> new plantings removal of invasive species 	Other At-Risk Species	
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> camping hunting fishing horseback riding 	State ESA-listed species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharp-tailed grouse sandhill crane
Operation and maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> road construction weed control 	Species of Greatest Conservation Need*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> common loon

* Identified in WDFW's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/cwcs>

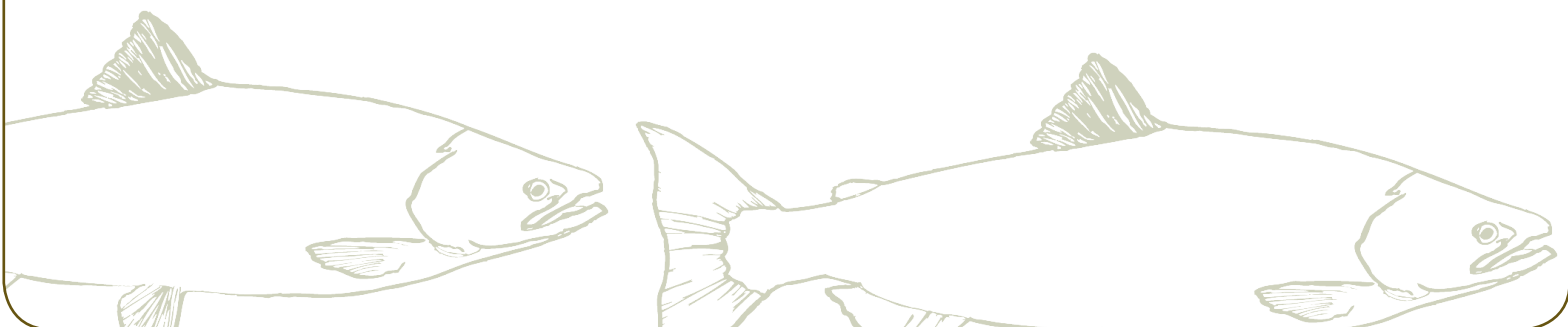
Goals and Benefits of the Wildlife Areas HCP

The goals of the Wildlife Areas HCP are:

- to provide federal ESA assurances for enhancement and restoration, recreation, and operation and maintenance activities occurring in state Wildlife Areas and
- to thereby contribute to the conservation and recovery of ESA-listed species and their habitats.

The HCP will provide the following benefits:

- Ensure that activities occurring in Wildlife Areas provide protection for up to 125 fish, wildlife, and plant species.
- Provide for the development of comprehensive inventories of fish and wildlife species, land management activities, and other public uses in Wildlife Areas.
- Maximize opportunities to conserve and recover species, while sustaining outdoor recreational opportunities in Wildlife Areas.
- Incorporate a landscape-level approach to managing at-risk species, in accordance with WDFW's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy.
- Integrate policy guidance in WDFW's Lands 20/20: A Clear Vision for the Future and provide additional guidelines to Wildlife Area operating plans.
- Streamline permitting processes for WDFW management activities that involve federal funds for operations and maintenance of Wildlife Areas.
- Establish WDFW eligibility for additional federal land acquisition grants.
- Include a collaborative public involvement process with tribes, federal, state, and local governments, and other WDFW stakeholders.



HCP Development Process

WDFW began development of the Wildlife Areas HCP in 2006. The HCP is expected to take approximately six years to complete. Initial development funding was provided through federal grants from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, with matching state funding provided by WDFW. WDFW will continue to invest significant staff and resources to complete the HCP development process, and will seek additional grant funding through 2011.

We are at the initial outreach and technical assessment stage in the HCP development process. Specific activities include:

Stakeholder and tribal staff assessment. In 2006, WDFW interviewed stakeholders and tribal staff to identify public involvement and outreach needs for development of the HCP.

Public outreach. WDFW is holding six educational public meetings in early 2007.

Activities inventory. WDFW is conducting a comprehensive inventory of land management and public-use activities that occur in Wildlife Areas. Activities for review include, but are not limited to: recreation, including hunting; habitat restoration; weed control; livestock grazing; forestry; agriculture; road and other construction activities; irrigation; and controlled burning.

Species and habitat inventory. WDFW is conducting a comprehensive inventory of ESA-listed species and other at-risk species and their habitats in Wildlife Areas.

Mapping. Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), WDFW is mapping refined boundaries of each Wildlife Area. These GIS-based maps will incorporate the inventories of species and habitats, and activities to better manage Wildlife Areas.

Predictive effects modeling. WDFW is developing a model to predict conservation opportunities for and potential effects on different species and habitats resulting from a variety of proposed activities.

Tribal Government Coordination, Stakeholder Involvement, and Public Outreach

WDFW is developing strategies to foster collaboration, including tribal government coordination, stakeholder involvement, and public outreach. Throughout the HCP development process, WDFW will:

- Work collaboratively with affected tribes on a government-to-government basis.
- Involve existing WDFW statewide advisory councils and Wildlife Areas citizen advisory groups.
- Conduct public outreach and stakeholder involvement activities to share information and provide multiple opportunities for input to those affected by the HCP.
- Host public meetings across the state.
- Provide information via fact sheets, Web pages, and other outreach materials.

Comments and More Information

If you have comments or questions related to the Wildlife Areas HCP, please contact Jennifer Quan at 360/902-2508 or wildlifehcp@dfw.wa.gov.

For information on the Hydraulic Project Approval HCP that WDFW is developing concurrently with the Wildlife Areas HCP, please contact Marc Daily at 360/902-2526 or hydraulichcp@dfw.wa.gov.

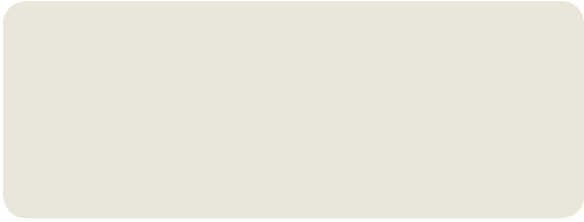
Information on both HCPs is available at the project Web site: www.wdfw.wa.gov/hcp/index.html

Next Steps

During 2007 and 2008, WDFW will:

- Continue mapping and development of inventories of species and habitats, and activities that occur in the Wildlife Areas.
- Conduct outreach at the local level by working with each of the state's Wildlife Areas citizen advisory groups.
- Coordinate with the WDFW Wildlife Diversity Advisory Council, Land Management Advisory Council, and Game Management Advisory Council.
- Conduct government-to-government tribal coordination.
- Advance development of the predictive effects model.





PERMIT
NUMBER

600 Capitol Way North
Olympia, WA 98501-1091
Attention: Wildlife Program



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(See details on front page.)

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Yakima

May 8
Mt. Vernon

May 1
Wenatchee

May 10
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Spokane

May 15
Vancouver

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