WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
WILDLIFE PROGRAM
LANDS DIVISION

FINAL DRAFT

WILDLIFE AREA MANAGEMENT PLANNING FRAMEWORK

May, 2016

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LIST OF ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS

ALEA	Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
BOR	Bureau of Reclamation
BPA	Bonneville Power Administration
CRP	Conservation Reserve Program
DAHP	Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation
DNR	Washington State Department of Natural Resources
ECY	Washington State Department of Ecology
EIA	Ecological Integrity Assessment
EIM	Ecological Integrity Monitoring
ESA	Endangered Species Act
HCP	Wildlife Area Habitat Conservation Plan
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
NAP	Natural Area Preserve
NAWCA	North American Wetland Conservation Act
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
PHS	Priority Habitats and Species
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
RCO	Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office
SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act
SGCN	Species of Greatest Conservation Need
SMA	Shoreline Management Act
SRFB	Salmon Recovery Funding Board
SWAP	State Wildlife Action Plan
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
WAC	Washington Administrative Code
WAAC	Wildlife Area Advisory Committee
WDFW	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
WLA	Wildlife Area
WWRP	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program

Washington's Wildlife Areas (WLAs) are a tremendous asset for the citizens of Washington. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) manages approximately 1 million acres of land across the state as WLAs, to provide fish and wildlife habitat and maintain recreational opportunities. With increased population growth and conversion of lands to developed uses, loss of natural habitat poses the greatest single threat to Washington's native fish and wildlife. The state's 33 WLAs play a critical role in conserving Washington's natural heritage and maintaining natural ecosystems and biological diversity. Although they make up just two percent of all land in the state, they provide significant habitat for many of the fish and wildlife species listed as threatened or endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). WLAs fill a special niche for state tourism, supporting local and regional economies, and play an important role as places for outdoor recreation. Annually, approximately 4 million people visit WLAs to enjoy the diverse recreational opportunities they provide.

WILDLIFE AREA MANAGEMENT PLANNING OVERVIEW

Introduction

The mission of WDFW is to preserve, protect and perpetuate fish, wildlife and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities. WDFW's vision is conservation of Washington's fish and wildlife resources and ecosystems, where conservation is defined as: protection, preservation, management, or restoration of natural environments and the ecological communities that inhabit them. Conservation includes management of human use for public benefit and sustainable social and economic needs.

Purpose of the Framework

WDFW manages approximately 1 million acres of land across the state as WLAs, to provide fish and wildlife habitat and maintain recreational opportunities for the citizens of Washington. WDFW is in the process of developing new management plans for all 33 WLAs, which is done every 8-10 years. This document provides the framework for statewide WLA management and summarizes the statutory, regulatory, and funding requirements that must be followed when managing them. It includes internal guidance for integrating multiple management initiatives, including how WDFW addresses and prioritizes species, habitats and recreation. It also provides transparency to the public and interested stakeholders, and outlines how WDFW manages facilities and equipment in a cost effective manner. Development of each WLA plan will be guided by this document, will be consistent with the statewide WLA goals in this document, and will identify goals, objectives and performance measures specific to each area's unique resources and features.

The planning process has been developed to integrate the priorities of the following WDFW programs: Wildlife, Fish, Habitat and Enforcement. This multidisciplinary approach to WLA planning is new, and combines review from personnel working at headquarters in Olympia with resource specialists and decision-makers in each of WDFW's six regions.

Figure 1. WDFW Programs Involved in WLA Planning Process

The outcome will be integrated plans reflecting the priorities of WDFW programs through a process that: 1) facilitates dialogue regarding priority resource issues; 2) includes the participation of regional, headquarters and other technical resource staff, and 3) addresses potential conflicts between competing objectives and WDFW programs.

This document identifies the WDFW directives, guidance and requirements that guide management actions on WLA lands. It also describes how each of these will be addressed through the planning process, and what will be documented in each plan. Where applicable, links to web sites/publications are provided for more information.

Statewide WLA Goals

The Wildlife Program Lands Division has established seven statewide goals specific to WLA management that provide the framework for developing individual WLA management plans. These goals are:

WLA Goal 1	Restore and protect the integrity of priority ecological systems and sites.
WLA Goal 2	Sustain individual species through habitat and population management actions, where consistent with site purpose and funding.
WLA Goal 3	Provide fishing, hunting and wildlife related recreational opportunities where consistent with Goals 1 and 2.
WLA Goal 4	Engage stakeholders in consistent, timely and transparent communication regarding WLA management activities.
WLA Goal 5	Maintain productive and positive working relationships with local community neighbors, lessees partners and permittees.
WLA Goal 6	Hire, train, equip, and license, as necessary, WLA staff, to meet the operation and management needs of WLAs.
WLA Goal 7	Maintain safe, highly functional, and cost-effect administration and operational facilities and equipment.

Objectives and performance measures for the statewide goals are included in the Management Direction and Approach section (page 49).

Authority and Purpose

WLA management is directed at the state level by statute including the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and Washington Administrative Code (WAC) (http://leg.wa.gov/LawsAndDepartmentRules/Pages/default.aspx), and by the WDFW's Strategic Plan, Conservation Principles, and adopted policies and procedures.

Statutory Authority

The following laws provide the primary authority for WLA management. These are a subset of the multitude of laws governing natural resource management in Washington State.

RCW 77.04.012 – **Mandate of department and commission**. States that wildlife, fish and shellfish are property of the state and authorizes the Fish & Wildlife Commission, the director and the department to preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage the wildlife and food fish, game fish, and shellfish in state waters and offshore waters. RCW 77.04.012 also states that the commission shall maximize the public recreational game fishing and hunting opportunities of all citizens including juvenile, disabled and senior citizens.

RCW 77.12.210 – **Management, sale of department property.** Directs the department to manage real or personal property, including construction of buildings, structures, and improvements, and adoption of rules for operation and maintenance of the property.

RCW 77.12.220 – **Acquisition or transfer of property.** Directs the commission to purchase, transfer or convey state property if judged to be consistent with public interest.

RCW 77.12.320 – **Agreements for purposes related to fish, shellfish and wildlife.** Directs the Fish and Wildlife Commission to enter into agreements to provide wildlife-oriented recreation.

RCW 77.12.880 – **Wildlife program management.** Directs the department to provide wildlife viewing opportunities as long as resources are not impaired.

RCW 79A.15 – **Acquisition of Habitat Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Lands.** States that it is "…the policy of the state to acquire as soon as possible the most significant lands for wildlife conservation and outdoor recreation purposes before they are converted to other uses, and to develop existing public recreational land and facilities to meet the needs of present and future generations" and creates accounts for grant funds administered by the Recreation and Conservation Funding board.

RCW 79.70 – **Natural Area Preserves.** Establishes a state system of natural area preserves, including aquatic and land areas, and defines how natural areas will be preserved.

RCW 79.13.620 – **Ecosystem standards.** Requires state-owned agricultural lands, grazing lands and grazable woodlands be managed according to the ecosystem standards.

RCW 27.34.200 – **Archaeology and historic preservation.** Authorizes the department to manage cultural resources. Executive Order 05-05 requires all state agencies with capital projects to integrate the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, and concerned tribes into their capital project planning process.

RCW 77.15 – **Fish and Wildlife Enforcement.** Directs the authority of enforcement officers on department lands.

WAC 232-12-177 – **Vehicles Using Department Lands.** Directs WDFW to limit use of motor vehicles on lands under a road management agreement.

WAC 232-13 – **Public Conduct on Wildlife Areas.** Defines acceptable conduct on WLAs and water access sites, and includes rules for camping, fires, parking, penalties, etc.

WAC 197-11-800 – **State Environmental Policy Act.** Directs the process for environmental review for all department actions. Note: WLA management plans qualify as a department action and are not categorically, or by statute, exempt under SEPA. The SEPA process for the WLA management planning process is outlined in the Public Involvement Section (page 18). Individual projects implemented on a WLA will require their own compliance with SEPA and will not be covered under this process.

WAC 232-12-181 – **Livestock grazing on department lands.** Authorizes the department to enter into grazing permits when consistent with desired ecological conditions or the department's strategic plan.

WAC 232-13-020 – **Department Lands Declaration of purpose.** Defines the primary purpose of WDFW lands as the preservation, protection, perpetuation and management of fish and wildlife and their habitats. The WAC further states that public use of department lands may include fishing, hunting, fish and wildlife viewing and other outdoor recreation opportunities when compatible with healthy and diverse fish and wildlife populations.

WAC 232-13-150 – **Regulating Public Access.** Authorizes the director to close and/or control/restrict access on department lands to protect human safety, fish and wildlife resources and department infrastructure, and to increase wildlife use in order to improve hunter success or manage wildlife viewing opportunities. It authorizes the department to control access by limiting the number of users in the areas and/or limiting the days of the week or hours of the day that the public can access the area.

WDFW Strategic Plan

The WDFW's Strategic Plan provides the focus and direction for new and continued strategies to meet its mandate and mission. The plan is updated every two years to reflect shifting priorities, and new science in fish and wildlife conservation and recreation.

The current plan (http://wdfw.wa.gov/about/strategic_plan/) outlines strategies for the 2015-2017 biennium. The Lands Division will respond as necessary to provide direction to WDFW staff in developing plans consistent with the WDFW's Strategic Plan as the strategic plan is updated; however, it is expected that the WDFW's overall strategic goals will remain relatively consistent over time. Each of the Strategic Plan goals is listed below, and includes a reference to the statewide WLA goals and how they are consistent with the Strategic Plan.

WDFW Strategic Goal 1: Conserve and protect native fish and wildlife.

Objective A: The ecological integrity of critical habitat and ecological systems is protected and restored.

To have ecological integrity, an ecosystem should be relatively unimpaired across a range of ecological attributes and spatial and temporal scales (De Leo and Levin 1997, Karr 1994 see the following link: (http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01314/\).
Systems characterized by a high degree of ecological integrity are assumed to be functioning to provide the full suite of resources for those species occupy them. Statewide WLA Goal 1 is to restore and protect the integrity of priority ecological systems and sites.

Objective B: Washington's fish and wildlife diversity is protected at levels consistent with ecosystem management principles.

WDFW's Conservation Principles (for more detail see page 13) are a WDFW-wide commitment to improve working relationships, both internally across programs, and externally in cooperation with other governments, organizations and citizens, so that healthy ecosystems are maintained for benefit of all species, including humans. The Conservation Principles collectively voice the WDFW's value in managing for fish and wildlife at the ecosystem level. Statewide WLAs Goal 1 reflects this approach.

Objective C: Threatened and endangered fish and wildlife populations are recovered to healthy, self-sustaining levels.

Washington's fish and wildlife, including threatened and endangered species, are dependent on retention, protection, and restoration of remaining available habitat and ecological processes that create and sustain these habitats. Through WLA management, WDFW can contribute to species recovery. WLAs comprise only two percent of Washington's land and full species recovery cannot occur on WLAs alone. While WLA Goal 1 is to manage for the health of ecosystems, WLA Goal 2 specifically recognizes WDFW's need to manage for individual species where necessary as a component of ecological protection and restoration. In certain cases, individual WLA units are managed specifically for individual or multiple species whose populations are declining across their ranges. These units function as protected habitat for these species, and in some cases, support individual populations to help meet species recovery objectives.

WDFW Strategic Goal 2: Provide sustainable fishing, hunting and other wildlife-related recreational and commercial experiences.

Objective A: Fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, and other outdoor activities are enhanced and expanded.

Consistent with WAC 232-13-020, Statewide WLA Goal 3 is to provide fishing, hunting and wildlife recreational opportunities *where consistent with WLA Goals 1 and 2.* WDFW is a public land management agency, and public access to WDFW lands is an important value. Through WLA Goal 3, WDFW will seek to provide opportunities for the public to access WLA lands for

recreational purposes, where such opportunities are consistent with the goals of providing functioning habitat and managing for individual species.

Objective B: Hatcheries and public access sites are safe, clean, and effectively support people's use and enjoyment of natural resources.

WDFW provides facilities so the public can access and enjoy the natural resources on WLAs, streams, lakes and other public land, and is committed to maintaining them as safe and functional for use by visitors.

Objective C: Tribal treaty coordination and implementation is achieved with adequate resources.

The outreach process for WLA planning and implementation is designed to engage and communicate with tribal entities and stakeholders (Statewide WLA Goal 4). This process is intended to maintain productive and positive working relationships with the local communities, neighbors, partners, tribal interests, lessees and permittees (Statewide WLA Goal 5).

WDFW Strategic Goal 3: Promote a healthy economy, protect community character, maintain an overall high quality of life, and deliver high-quality customer service.

Objective A: Conservation of fish and wildlife is widely supported by communities across Washington.

In the current WLA planning process, WDFW has greatly enhanced its outreach to, and communication with, stakeholders, focusing on building understanding and support of WLA management activities. Specifically, Statewide WLA Goal 4 recognizes the need for consistent, timely and transparent communication to build support for these areas within local communities.

Objective C: WDFW's decisions support communities through valuing, understanding, and evaluating input from stakeholders.

Management of WLAs is closely related to, and sometimes dependent on, neighboring landowners and interactions with local communities. While WLA Goal 4 is consistent with valuing, understanding, and evaluating input from stakeholders, WLA Goal 5 is to maintain productive and positive working relationships with neighbors, partners, and permittees, thereby supporting communities from which those stakeholders come. WDFW and the Lands Division are committed to maintaining working landscapes where consistent with fish and wildlife management objectives.

Objective D: WDFW responds to citizens and customer needs in a timely and effective way.

Specifically, Statewide WLA Goal 4 recognizes the need for consistent, timely and transparent communication relative to WLA management.

WDFW Strategic Goal 4: Build an effective and efficient organization by supporting our workforce, improving business processes, and investing in technology.

Objective A: WDFW has a diverse, robust workforce with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet future business needs.

The Lands Division recognizes the special skills and abilities required to successfully manage WLAs. It is committed to hiring and effectively training, equipping and licensing WLA staff. This commitment is reflected in Statewide WLA Goal 6.

Objective D: Work environments are safe, highly functional, and cost-effective.

"Work environments" on WLAs vary widely, ranging from access roads and offices to very remote locations. WLA staff must select and apply methods and equipment to achieve certain management outcomes. Consistent with the strategic plan, Statewide WLA Goal 7 is to maintain safe, functional and cost-effective administration and operational facilities and equipment.

Conservation Principles

The Conservation Principles express the WDFW wide commitment to working together, both internally across programs, and externally in cooperation with other governments, organizations and citizens, to implement ecosystem based management for the benefit of all species, including humans. The principles below outline how WDFW will implement ecosystem-based approach for better outcomes, and more effective engagement of citizens and partner organizations.

Principle 1	Practice conservation by managing, protecting and restoring ecosystems for the long-term benefit of people and for fish, wildlife and their habitat.
Principle 2	Be more effective when managing fish, wildlife and their habitats by supporting healthy ecosystems.
Principle. 3	Work across disciplines to solve problems because of the connections among organisms, species and habitats.
Principle 4	Integrate ecological, social, and institutional perspectives into decision making.
Principle 5	Embrace new knowledge and apply best science to address changing conditions through adaptive management.
Principle 6	Collaborate with conservation and community partners to achieve shared goals.

Policies and Procedures

The following policies direct and guide activities and management of WDFW lands.

Policy 2155 – **Protection of Cultural Resources**. Directs the protection of cultural resources on department lands.

Policy 5003 – **Managing the 21st Century Salmon and Steelhead Initiative**. Directs the department's 50-year plan to manage salmon and steelhead to recovery and sustainability in a way that is science-based, well-documented, transparent, well-communicated, and accountable.

Policy 5004 – **Conservation Initiative and Guiding Principles (see above).** Describes outcomes including integrated conservation priorities and doing a better job of addressing unmet conservation needs. The intent is to have strong interdisciplinary headquarters and regional teams that coordinate conservation priorities across all programs in the department at both the state and local level.

Policy 5203 – **Preparing and Reviewing State Environmental Policy Act and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Documents**. Provides guidance for preparing SEPA (RCW 43.21c) and NEPA documentation (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq).

Policy 5211 – **Protecting and Restoring Wetlands.** Guides the department's management of wetlands and emphasizes "no net loss and long-term gain" of wetland areas and functions.

Policy 5302 – **Winter Wildlife Feeding.** Provides authority for feeding wildlife during the winter in order to prevent and/or reduce deer or elk damage to private property, and to allow the regeneration of winter habitat that has been severely damaged or destroyed by fire or drought.

Policy 5307 – **Weed Management.** Requires the department to control listed weed species consistent with state and local laws.

Policy 5309 – **Forest Management.** Requires the development of a comprehensive forest management plan for all department-owned forestlands.

Commission Policy 6003 -- **Domestic Livestock Grazing on Department Lands.** States that domestic livestock on department owned or controlled lands may be permitted if determined to be consistent with desired ecological conditions for those lands, or with the Department's strategic plan.

Policy 6007 – **Management of Real Property Assets.** Defines authority and responsibilities for real property assets and identifies the Wildlife Program as responsible for acquisition, performance and management of WLAs and access sites.

Policy 6010 – **Acquiring and Disposing of Real Property.** Authorizes the department to acquire or dispose of real property including interests, benefits and rights inherent in the physical ownership of, and appurtenances affixed to, the land, e.g. fences or buildings.

Policy 6011 – **Selecting Conservation and Recreation Lands to Acquire** (Lands 20/20). Implements the land acquisition process outlined in Lands 20/20, with the intent to ensure that future land acquisition projects are consistent with the strategic plan, provide benefits to fish and wildlife; provide benefits for the public; and provide for operational excellence. .

Policy 6012 – **Managing Public Access on WDFW lands.** Provides a framework that addresses appropriate access while meeting the mission and mandate, and includes the process for temporary and permanent closure on lands for public safety, fish and wildlife sustainability and to support wildlife for recreational purposes.

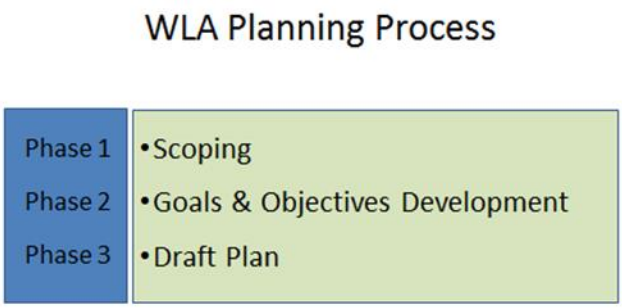
Policy M5001 – **Fish Protection at Water Diversions/Flow Control Structures and Fish Passage Structures.** Compiles and defines department application of state laws and applies to all state and private water diversions and man-made fish passage barriers in state waters to ensure restoration and maintenance of healthy fish.

WLA Planning Process

This WLA planning process was initiated in 2011, with input and direction from a cross-program steering committee and several staff focus groups that provided guidance about goals, objectives and performance measures, adaptive management, monitoring, mapping, and plan format. The process is initially being implemented through four pilot WLA plans in order to test and refine the process; this is especially valuable as it is the first time WDFW will include agency disciplines in the development of WLA management plans. The pilot plans include:

- Swanson Lakes WLA;
- Klickitat WLA;
- Okanogan Valley (includes Sinlahekin and Scotch Creek WLAs); and
- Oak Creek WLA.

Each pilot plan is expected to take approximately six to nine months to develop, and is conducted in three phases with the participation of cross-program staff, Wildlife Area Advisory Committees (WAACs) and the general public. The three phases of 1) scoping, 2) goals and objectives development and 3) plan development, are described below.



Scoping Phase

The scoping phase starts with a meeting between Lands Division planners (Project Managers) and WLA staff (collectively referred to as the Core Team) where roles and responsibilities, expectations and the proposed timeline for plan completion the plan are identified. The Core Team will identify appropriate members of the Planning Team (a sub-group of WDFW technical specialists and regional leaders), refine the public outreach plan, and contribute to planning for the following scoping meetings:

- Internal
- WAAC
- Public

At each of these meetings, the statewide planning goals, WDFW guidance and WLA resource information will be summarized, and specific questions posed to identify issues, interests and

other input. Feedback from these meetings will be used to develop goals, objectives and performance measures.

Goals and Objectives Development Phase

This phase will bring together the Planning Team for several meetings. The core of the Planning Team's work will be to identify plan actions based on input and feedback collected during scoping and the technical expertise and program priorities brought forward by planning team members. The Planning Team will confirm plan issues, and identify plan objectives and performance measures.

Draft and Final Plan Phase

The Project Manager will be responsible for writing the plan with support from WLA staff. Writing assignments will be determined by the core team through a review of the plan outline and other background information. This phase will result in a completed DRAFT plan that is ready for review by the Planning Team, WAAC and the public. Based on comments from these audiences, the draft plan will be revised and circulated for internal review by resource programs and leadership staff, the planning steering committee, and other regional staff who have been involved in plan development. After a final review by the WAAC, the plan will be advanced to program assistant directors, and eventually to the WDFW Director for final review and approval.

Figure 3 illustrates the internal and external process for developing WLA plans.

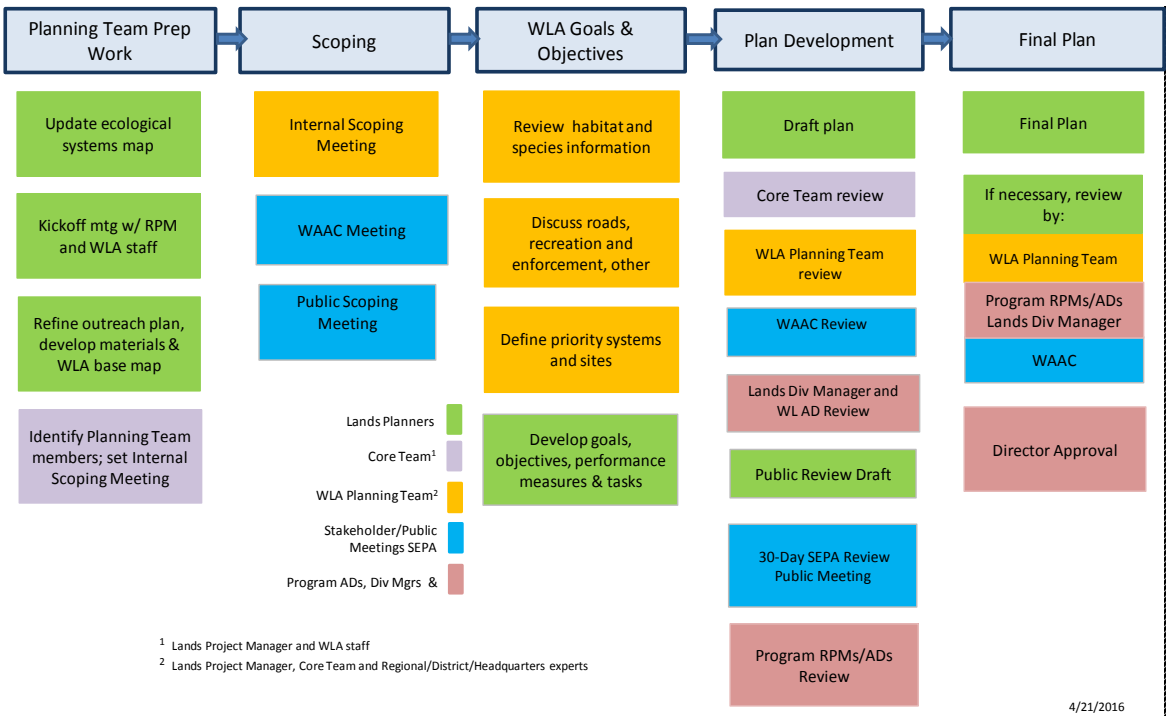


Figure 3. Wildlife Area Planning Process

Statewide Public Involvement Strategy

The WDFW is committed to involving the public in decisions affecting the management and stewardship of fish and wildlife resources, and has developed an overall strategy to ensure effective public involvement. The strategy will be consistently applied as each WLA plan is developed, and will provide flexibility to tailor activities for the unique stakeholders and local conditions in each area.

Public Involvement Activities

Development of a WLA-specific outreach plan is one of the first steps undertaken before a new plan effort is launched. Lands Planners work with regional staff to identify stakeholders, outreach activities and timing of outreach activities to support review and respectful dialogue about WLA management. The statewide strategy recommends the following public involvement activities for each WLA:

- Develop a stakeholder database that includes recreational users, conservation advocates, economic development interests, local and regional media, and other interested or impacted parties;
- Identify and coordinate with Tribal governments
- Develop WLA planning materials to announce upcoming meetings and communicate the status of the planning effort. A series of easy-to-replicate templates were developed for the first WLA plan that will be used in each area, and each planning outreach activity will be supported by the Public Affairs Office. Each plan effort will be summarized on WDFW's website, along with materials specific to that area including:
    - Email postcard (also sent via direct mail if necessary and appropriate)
    - News releases (for meetings and release of plan documents, public comment periods)
    - Fact sheet (2-4 page summary of the specific WLA, including habitats, species, special features and/or management components)
    - WAAC rosters, agendas, and notes
    - Public meeting agendas and meeting notes
- Public meetings, planned at two key points in the process:
    - At the scoping, or beginning, phase of the plan development
    - When a draft plan is released for public comment
- WAAC meetings, planned at the following points in the process:
    - At the scoping phase
    - During the goals and objectives development process
    - Before the public review draft is released for public comment

The WAAC meetings may be combined with public meetings, if determined to be an effective and efficient way of reaching both groups. The WAAC may provide final comments after the public review of the draft plan, depending on the magnitude of changes suggested through that public review. This is most likely in cases where public comments of the draft plan recommend significant deviation from WAAC or WDFW direction.

Wildlife Area Advisory Committees

WAACs, formerly Citizen Advisory Group, provide ongoing feedback to WLA managers to help guide land management actions. WAAC members represent a range of interested stakeholder groups who have an interest in management activities on Wildlife Areas. WAAC's provide input during WLA management plan development and ongoing review and input when WDFW completes two-year updates. WAACs may also review grazing permits/agriculture leases, public access management forms and other activities that may not be directly tied to management plan development or updates. Not all WLAs have functioning WAACs; these will be established prior to the initiation of plan development in those areas. As part of the public outreach strategy, staff will discuss the status of the WAAC and whether there is a need to re-establish, re-constitute and/or review membership to balance WLA interests.

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)

Public outreach conducted for each plan will support WDFW compliance with SEPA, including preparing the environmental checklist, hosting a public scoping meeting, providing a 30-day public review period for draft plans, and documenting and responding to comments.
Each WLA plan will include a summary of public involvement and SEPA activities including the response to comments in the appendix.

WILDLIFE AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN ELEMENTS

WLA Plan Content

Each plan will include sections consistent with the list below. Since the process of developing 33 plans is expected to take place over several years, and because this is a complex effort due to the integration of multiple disciplines, there may be changes to the process over time. This could result in later plans looking somewhat different from what is outlined here. Each plan, at a minimum, will include the administrative sideboards of managing the particular site, including acquisition history and funding, ecology, existing recreation and public use, and goals, objectives and performance measures. The Project Manager will facilitate discussions to identify the opportunities specific to each WLA, and tease out specific actions that meet the statewide goals and contribute to meeting the WDFW's statewide mandate.

Funding Sources

Funding for WLAs is complex, and includes funding for acquisition as well as operations and maintenance. Funding opportunities and limitations guide management activities at each WLA and are important to understand prior to making recommendations for new plan actions. Some funding sources expressly prohibit the use of lands for certain recreation activities such as hunting, as is the case on the Reardan-Audubon WLA, which is managed in conjunction with Spokane Audubon and provides critical bird habitat and birdwatching opportunities.

The most common funding sources for both acquisition and operations and maintenance purposes are summarized below, organized by federal and state funding sources. Each WLA plan will identify the funding sources used for acquisition, including all requirements of those funding sources, and funds currently used for operations and maintenance.

Federal Funding Sources

Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (Section 6)

The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund, administered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), has two land acquisition grant categories: the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Grant and the Recovery Land Acquisition Grant. Since 2000, the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund grant program has awarded $70 million to WDFW resulting in purchase of approximately 39,801 acres of critical fish and wildlife habitat. Most of these funds are used to complement and expand Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) projects that address federally listed species (see state funding sources on pg 22).

National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant

Under the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program through the Coastal Grants Program (http://www.fws.gov/coastal/coastalgrants/), the USFWS provides matching grants for acquisition, restoration, management or enhancement of coastal wetlands. Funding for the

program comes from excise taxes on fishing equipment and motorboats and small engine fuel sales.

North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA)
(http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/Grants/NAWCA/) NAWCA provides matching grants to organizations and partnerships to carry out wetlands conservation projects in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Grant and matching funds support projects aiming to protect, restore, or enhance wetland and associated upland migratory bird habitats, benefiting priority species including waterfowl, shorebirds, water birds and land birds.

Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act – Pittman-Robertson Act (PR)
The purpose of this act is to provide funding for restoration of wild birds and mammals, and to acquire, develop and manage their habitats. Of the PR funds available nationwide, more than 62 percent are used to buy, develop, maintain, and operate wildlife management areas. Funds are derived from an 11 percent federal excise tax on sporting arms, ammunition, and archery equipment, and a 10 percent tax on handguns. These funds are collected from the manufacturers by the Department of the Treasury and are apportioned each year to individual states by the Department of the Interior based on a formula that considers the total area of, and the number of licensed hunters in, the state.

Seventeen WLAs in Washington State receive annual operations and maintenance funding through the PR program. WDFW also uses PR funding to employ a range ecologist and three foresters, assist in program administration, and conduct winter feeding and restoration projects. All lands receiving PR funding are subject to NEPA and ESA Consultation through the USFWS and the National Marine Fisheries which is coordinated by WDFW.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund
Administered by the National Park Service, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (http://www.nps.gov/lwcf/), provides matching grants to states and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities as well as funding for shared federal land acquisition and conservation strategies.

Northwest Electric Power and Conservation Act
Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) provides mitigation (i.e. compensation) for the loss of fish and wildlife resources resulting from construction of dams and subsequent inundation of habitat on the Columbia River since the early 1990s. BPA's mitigation is accomplished through fee title acquisition of new lands, and funding enhancement, protection, and operations and maintenance measures on publicly owned lands managed by WDFW and/or Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR). BPA-funded activities on WLAs include administrative duties such as training and professional development and duties necessary to oversee the completion of the wildlife mitigation management plan. Other funded activities include maintenance activities on facilities, fences, signs and reader boards, and roads and trails. Enhancement activities include shrub-steppe and riparian restoration. WLAs that receive

funding through BPA include Asotin, Wenas, Sunnyside, Swanson Lakes, Scotch Creek, Sagebrush Flat, Desert and Shillapoo.

State Funding Sources

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)

The Washington State Legislature created the WWRP in 1990 to accomplish two goals: (1) to acquire valuable recreation and habitat lands before they are developed and (2) to develop recreation areas for a growing population (http://www.rco.wa.gov/grants/wwrp.shtml). WWRP is administered by the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). Chapter 79A.15 RCW establishes five grant accounts: the Habitat Conservation Account; the Outdoor Recreation Account; the Farmland Preservation Account; Riparian Protection Account; and Urban Wildlife Habitat. The Habitat Conservation Account includes four categories: Critical Habitat, Natural Areas, State Lands Restoration and Enhancement. WDFW competes for grants in all but the Farmland Preservation Account. Since 2006, WDFW has acquired approximately 157,229 acres of habitat and recreation lands with $165 million in WWRP funds. This landmark legislation and subsequent funding have come about through the support of the Governor, legislature, and the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition (http://www.wildliferecreation.org/).

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA)

The ALEA Volunteer Cooperative Grant Program (http://wdfw.wa.gov/grants/alea/) provides funding, on a cost-reimbursement basis, for individuals and organizations that undertake voluntary cooperative fish and wildlife projects in Washington State. Eligible project types include: habitat enhancement, land acquisition, facility development, research, education/outreach, and artificial production of fish and wildlife for public recreation or to restore populations. The ALEA Program is a WDFW administered program, and provides an important source of funds for WLAs.

Boating Facilities Program

RCO administers the Boating Facilities Program (http://www.rco.wa.gov/grants/bfp.shtml), established in 1964, with the main purpose of creating and permanently protecting public boating sites. RCO awards grants to projects that acquire, develop, plan, and renovate public boating facilities for motorized boats, including launch ramps, guest moorage and support facilities.

Salmon Recovery Fund

The Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) (http://www.rco.wa.gov/grants/salmon.shtml) provides funding for projects that will increase overall salmon habitat health and biological productivity. This includes support for projects that protect existing, high quality habitats and those that restore degraded habitats. Criteria include using science-based information and review by local citizens. Projects must demonstrate, through an evaluation and monitoring process, the capacity to be implemented and sustained effectively to benefit fish (See pg. 32 for more information on the Salmon Recovery Act).

Discover Pass

The Discover Pass is a vehicle access program administered by WDFW, Washington Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks) and DNR. The program requires a parking pass for visitors to access state recreation lands. Funds from the purchase of one-day and annual passes go into the Recreation Access and Pass Account, and then are distributed to the three agencies to be used specifically for lands operation and maintenance. WDFW and DNR each receive 8 percent of the total, and State Parks receives 84 percent. WDFW's share is used to help fund staff and equipment for WLA operations and maintenance.

Other state funds for acquisitions have included: Legislative Appropriation, Wildlife Fund, State Bond Account, Conservation Futures Tax Program, State General Fund, and the State Jobs Bill.

Resource Management

Applied science plays an integral role in shaping resource management decisions at WDFW. Scientists in each of WDFW's resource programs draw from published research, monitoring data, field studies and other sources to provide a strong scientific foundation for management policies adopted by the agency.

Under the guidance of federal and state resource management laws and the Conservation Principles, staff identifies species and habitat priorities relative to their area of responsibility and expertise. They develop plans, studies and other reports that lead to specific management actions for individual species, habitats and ecological systems. Examples include the statewide Game Management Plan, the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), individual game species plans (e.g. elk, white-tailed deer, wild turkey management plans), individual species recovery plans, and fisheries management and conservation plans (e.g. Forage Fish Management Plan, Puget Sound Groundfish Management Plan).

With the involvement of WDFW experts, the planning process identifies appropriate actions for each WLA, relative to ecosystems and priority resources. The following plans and programs provide the primary direction for prioritizing resource management activities in WLA plans.

Each WLA is different – in terms of the species and habitats present, their current status and condition, and the funding sideboards that exist, which, in many cases, was to conserve specific species and their associated habitats. Depending on the individual characteristics of each area, the following information in this section will guide management decisions. Each WLA Planning Team will be responsible for reviewing species and habitat management guidance as well as the species and habitats information, to identity conservation species and specific plan actions consistent with conservation requirements.

Species Management

The WDFW's fish and wildlife conservation activities are guided by a broad range of regulations, policies, plans and programs. These include federal and state listings of threatened, endangered and sensitive species; management plans such as the WDFW Game Management Plan and the SWAP which includes the list of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and associated management actions (http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/cwcs/).

The section below identifies the lists of at-risk species (diversity species): federally listed species; state listed species; SGCN and Priority Habitats and Species (PHS). Each of these lists is based on different criteria and provides varying degrees of regulatory protection. The next section includes the Statewide Wildlife Action Plan (which includes both species *and* habitats of concern), the Game Management Plan and other game-specific plans. Specific references for salmonids and other fish species are summarized last.

Diversity Species

Diversity species includes SGCN, PHS and federally and state listed species, and those species categorized by WDFW as non-hunted. This section in the wildlife area management plan will describe focal species for management actions on each WLA.

Federally-listed Species

Species that are federally listed under the ESA are in decline throughout a significant portion of their entire global range. All species that are federally listed are also state listed. The law requires federal agencies, in consultation with the USFWS and/or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - Fisheries Service, to ensure that actions they authorize, fund, or carry out are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat of such species. The law also prohibits any action that causes a "taking" (defined as "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct") of any listed species of endangered fish or wildlife, and interfering in vital breeding and behavioral activities. Likewise, the import, export, interstate, and foreign commerce of listed species are all generally prohibited.

Through individual species recovery and management plans, WLA management plans, and the future WLA Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), WDFW staff gives priority consideration to identified species of concern and their habitats. The HCP will provide assurances that management, operations and recreational activities on WLAs comply with provisions of the federal ESA, and thereby contribute to the conservation and recovery of federally listed species and their habitats. The HCP is discussed later in this section (page 33).

State-listed Species

In Washington, animal or plant species of conservation concern may be listed as endangered, threatened, or sensitive under WAC 232-12-297, or designated as a candidate species for listing. Species may be state listed and not federally listed because the state list deals only with the status of the species within Washington. State Endangered species are defined as species native to the state of Washington that are seriously threatened with extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their range within the state. State Threatened species include species likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of their range within the state. State Sensitive species are vulnerable or declining and are likely to become endangered or threatened in a significant portion of its range within the state without cooperative management or removal of threats. These lists are used to determine protection and management actions necessary to ensure the survival of the state's endangered, threatened and sensitive wildlife.

Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN)

The SGCN list is included in the SWAP (see summary below). The SWAP includes species considered by state or federal agencies as sensitive, threatened and endangered, as well as those not yet listed but of conservation concern. The list does include many species for which the most important conservation action may be a need for additional research attention. The SGCN list is designed in part to be an early warning system for species of conservation concern and it will inform future updates of WDFW species of concern lists as well as the PHS program. The new proposed 2015 list includes 270 species (http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/cwcs/).

State Wildlife Action Plan

Each state and territory in the U.S. is required to develop a proactive plan to conserve at risk wildlife species before they become too rare and before conservation actions become too costly. Washington's first such plan was completed in 2005, and was called the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS) (http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/cwcs/). The CWCS qualified Washington for an important federal funding source - the State Wildlife Grants program.

The USFWS requires updates of these plans every 10 years. The CWCS is now being referred to as the SWAP. The SWAP provides overarching guidance on SGCN and habitat conservation for WDFW and its partners and is specifically intended to inform on-the-ground initiatives such as WLA management plans. The WDFW's revision will address eight essential elements including:

1. Distribution, abundance and status of SGCN.
2. Extent and condition of key habitats and ecological systems essential to the conservation of SGCN.
3. Problems and threats that affect SGCN and their habitats.
4. Actions to conserve SGCN and their habitats.
5. Periodic monitoring of SGCN and their habitats, determining effectiveness of conservation, and adapting to new information or conditions.
6. Review and revision process
7. Coordinated development and implementation with appropriate federal, state, local agencies and tribes.
8. Public involvement in the revision, and implementation of the SWAP

The SWAP includes descriptions for habitats of conservation concern and priority conservation actions for these habitats. These are defined using a nationally recognized ecological systems classification, and identify those most important for multiple SGCN and/or imperiled in terms of ecological integrity or distribution. The SWAP includes fact sheets for each SGCN and Habitat of Conservation Concern. These fact sheets will list threats and conservation actions for each of these species, and will help guide development of objectives for WLA management plans.

Each WLA plan will identify PHS and SGCN species and management actions to address these priorities.

Priority Habitats and Species

This program supports one of WDFW's fundamental responsibilities – to provide comprehensive information on important fish, wildlife, and habitat resources in Washington. Initiated in 1989, the PHS Program serves as the backbone of WDFW's proactive approach to the conservation of fish and wildlife and is the principal means by which WDFW provides important fish, wildlife, and habitat information to local governments, state and federal agencies, private landowners and consultants, and tribal biologists for land use planning purposes and habitat protection.

PHS is used to screen Forest Practice and Hydraulic Project Approval, and SEPA reviews; by local governments to meet requirements of the Growth Management Act; for development of habitat conservation plans on federal, state and private lands; for landscape-level planning and ecosystem management by federal, state and tribal governments; and for statewide spill prevention planning and response.

The PHS program identifies habitats and species that are determined to be priorities for conservation and management based on defensible criteria, maps known locations of these habitats and species, and provides information on the conditions required to maintain healthy populations of priority species. The PHS list includes many of the species of recreational, commercial and/or cultural or tribal importance which are not included in the SGCN list. PHS management recommendations are intended to incorporate the information regarding conservation stressors and threats that are outlined in the SWAP.

Along with SGCN, (http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/cwcs/), planners and resource scientists will use PHS in the WLA planning effort to identify the presence of important species, and consider management practices for maintaining healthy populations or ecosystems.

Game Management

Many WLAs were purchased for the purpose of protecting and enhancing habitat for game animals and/or hunting. Management of game species and providing access for hunting is a key part of the WDFW's mission, and the income derived from hunting license sales provides much of the funding for operation and maintenance on WLAs that support hunting and related activities.

Game Management Plan

The WDFW's Game Management Plan provides statewide guidance on game management priorities. The plan outlines strategies for providing and improving hunting access, habitat improvement, adjusting hunting seasons, and the study of individual species needs or population dynamics to improve management. The plan is updated through a public process on a three-year cycle (http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/game/2015/).

Other Game Management Plans

Other statewide game species-specific plans include plans for elk, wild turkey, mule deer and white-tailed deer. These plans provide statewide habitat management recommendations for locations where populations of these species are present. WDFW also participates in regional or national planning processes that may apply to WLA management either specifically or in a more general sense. The Pacific Flyway Management Plan and the National Wild Pheasant Plan are examples that identify habitat goals within Washington.

Hunting Seasons and Rules

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission is the rule making body that establishes the time, place and manner by which wildlife can be hunted in the state. Rule modifications are generally made on an annual basis. Hunting rules may affect recreation or other activities on WLAs and in some cases may apply to specific WLAs. One example of where specific WLAs are addressed in hunting rules includes restrictions on shot shell types and bird dog training seasons. WLA plans will identify WLA-specific information that relates to limits and/or special circumstances with regard to hunting seasons and rules, if applicable.

Salmonids

In 1991, the federal government declared Snake River sockeye salmon as endangered. In the next few years, 16 more Evolutionary Significant Units or Distinct Population Segments of Salmonids were listed as either threatened or endangered. Seventy-five percent of the state is impacted by federal listings of at-risk salmonids. In response to this crisis, the Washington State Legislature created the Salmon Recovery Act (http://app.leg.wa.gov/Rcw/default.aspx?cite=77.85). For more than a decade, WDFW has joined other state, regional and local agencies, in addition to tribal governments in a grassroots effort to protect and restore wild salmonids. Within the Columbia River Basin, WDFW's salmon recovery effort is consistent with the Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion and stream reach assessments associated with the Upper Columbia Region process (https://www.salmonrecovery.gov/BiologicalOpinions/FCRPSBiOp.aspx).

Project Managers will reach out to salmon recovery boards and lead entities http://www.rco.wa.gov/salmon_recovery/gsro.shtml to determine if the WLA is within a priority reach for salmon recovery projects as identified in regional salmon recovery plans. Potential projects will be discussed with the Planning Team and, if and where appropriate, plan goals, objectives and performance measures will be developed. For instance, WDFW has significant land holdings along the Methow River in the Upper Columbia River watershed. These lands were identified by the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board as a priority reach for restoration. Working with the Yakama Nation, local non-profits and federal partners, WDFW shifted the management of these lands to include benefits to salmon while ensuring existing wildlife values persist. (See Restoration Pathways page 32.)

Bull trout

Bull trout populations in the Columbia River and Puget Sound were listed as a federally threatened species in 1998 and critical habitat was designated in 2005 (70 FR 56212). Bull trout occur in rivers and tributaries throughout the Columbia Basin. Bull trout exhibit both resident and migratory life history strategies and tend to prefer colder water than other salmonids. Bull trout could occur on most of the WLAs with the exception of Columbia Basin. Maintaining stream-side vegetation is essential for controlling stream temperatures and providing cover. In most cases, salmon recovery restoration projects completed on the wildlife areas will also benefit bull trout. Forest restoration projects are required to take into consideration bull trout impacts thorough ESA consultation.

Habitat Management

The WDFW directs its own research, develops its own approaches, and adopts other agencies' products to reflect the most current conservation science. Examples of this include the WDFW initiated "Restoration Pathway," which outlines a process to guide decisions and interactions with internal and external stakeholders when conducting restoration projects. It also includes the Ecological Integrity Assessment (EIA) and Ecological Integrity Monitoring (EIM) programs, which – combined with the Citizen Science program – will help meet the statewide goal of maintaining and enhancing ecological integrity on all WDFW lands.

Ecological Systems and Ecological Integrity

Ecological Systems Classification

The WDFW has adopted the EIA framework and EIM as a tool to evaluate ecological integrity and changes in integrity over time, within priority systems and sites on WLAs. Ecological Systems are a classification unit developed by NatureServe (http://www.natureserve.org/about-us), defined as "a group of (existing) plant community types that tend to co-occur within landscapes sharing similar ecological processes, substrates, and/or environmental gradients". Because these systems are classified and described (Rocchio and Crawford 3008) (http://www1.dnr.wa.gov/nhp/refdesk/communities/ecol_systems.html), conservation-based management actions can be prioritized spatially through inventory and mapping.

The WDFW associates species with ecological systems for the purposes of WLA planning, the SWAP and the HCP. There are 92 natural ecological systems in the state of Washington (NatureServe http://www.natureserve.org/); these systems fit into seven major vegetation formations, including 1) barren, 2) mixed upland and wetland, 3) herbaceous wetland, 4) woody wetland, 5) herbaceous, 6) steppe/savanna, 7) shrubland, and 8) forest and woodland.

WDFW worked with the Washington Natural Heritage Program to evaluate ecological systems using methods and criteria common to Natural Heritage Programs in the United States.

Ecological Systems of Concern are systems that have been determined to be intrinsically rare, severely degraded by human activities, in need of some conservation action, and/or are important for conservation of biodiversity in Washington. These systems of concern, along with other priority ecological systems identified by WDFW as having high wildlife diversity values (2015 SWAP), will be given added focus in the WLA planning process.

Planners and resource scientists will review the ecological systems information for each WLA and identify the priority systems for which management actions will be considered. Consistent with the EIA/EIM program, plan objectives will include identifying the current ecological integrity condition for these systems as a baseline, setting a future goal for ecological integrity, and identifying management practices and timelines to meet the goal.

Each WLA management plan will identify 1) the ecological systems present on each of the associated WLA Units, 2) the ecological systems that are considered priority systems, including systems of concern, 3) stressors to priority systems, and 4) actions needed to address the stressors. Stressors are those things that cause a system to shift away from its natural range of variability and are defined as the primary land uses, or outcomes of those uses, that may alter the natural processes of a system.

Stressors include:

- Fragmentation (reduction in total area of habitat or isolation of one habitat fragment from other patches of the same habitat);
- Land use in adjacent uplands (improperly managed grazing, development);
- Hydrological changes (irrigation, beaver removal, construction of dams/dikes);
- Vegetation changes (invasive species);
- Unsustainable grazing practices;
- Altered fire regime (climate change, invasive species, fire exclusion, increasing or decreasing fire return interval)
- Soil surface disturbance (recreation, management activities);
- Herbicide use on plant stand diversity; and
- Introduction of exotic species

Habitat Connectivity

Fish and wildlife survival depends in part on the ability to move through the environment to find food and reproduce. The degree to which land protection and condition supports these necessary movements is call habitat connectivity. WDFW is a member of the Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group (www.waconnected.org), a science-based collaboration of land and resource management agencies, non-governmental organizations, universities, and Washington Treaty Tribes. The Group has developed sophisticated scientific products for wildlife habitat connectivity throughout Washington State. These include statewide and Columbia Plateau ecoregion connectivity analyses based on focal species,

landscape integrity, and climate change. Where applicable, the WLA planning process will use this information to identify restoration areas and/or prioritize other species and landscape conservation actions.

WDFW Wildlife Areas Habitat Conservation Plan

The HCP (http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/hcp/index.html) is being developed to meet ESA requirements of avoiding, minimizing and mitigating incidental take that may result from WDFW's land management practices. Implementation of the HCP may contribute to the recovery of ESA-listed species. Generally, the HCP uses habitat, or ecological systems, as a surrogate for both the potential distribution, and potential impacts to, covered species. The protection of habitat from conversion, and management to maintain or improve ecological integrity, are beneficial to covered species. Therefore, in some locations, the HCP restricts WDFW's ability to convert ecological systems to non-habitat functions, and requires monitoring to demonstrate that management actions result in the maintenance or improvement of ecological integrity. During the WLA management process, the Planning Team will consider the anticipated HCP requirements, and identify any plan actions that will be necessary to implement the HCP, when adopted. HCP requirements will be included in the plan appendix. Completion of the HCP is expected in 2016/2017.

WDFW Forest Management Strategy

WDFW's statewide Forest Management Strategy includes an inventory of forest types and conditions, and management direction to address common forest types and conditions (e.g. fire-dependent and infrequently-burned conifer forests, oak woodlands, aspen woodlands). The strategy requires that forests be managed consistent with statewide ecological integrity goals, and requires the development of a forest plan for each forested WLA; forest plans will include the specific forest types, conditions and prioritized management strategies for forest management actions. Each WLA Planning Team will review the forest inventory relative to the specific WLA, identify potential forest management actions to include in the WLA plan, and provide input for future development of a WLA forest plan.

Weed Management

Managing weeds is a significant part of every wildlife area manager's workload to establish and maintain diverse native plant communities that will support fish and wildlife populations. Invasive plants and noxious weeds can infest high quality native plant communities and convert them to low quality monocultures with little wildlife value.

WDFW manages weeds consistent with the principles of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) as defined by state law (RCW 17.15.010). IPM is the control of weeds through a long-term management approach, using several weed management techniques such as physical, chemical, biological and/or cultural control. IPM include principles such as weed identification, prioritization for control based on land management objectives, treatment options for target weed, monitoring and adaptively managing the site to improve efficacy based on previous

treatment outcomes. Each WLA will include a weed management plan, which identifies species, timing and management practices to control weeds.

For more information about weed management, see the list of sources below:

- Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/
- Aquatic Weed Program http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/links/plants.html
- Pacific Northwest Weed Management Handbook http://pnwhandbooks.org/weed/
- Center for Invasive Plant Management http://www.weedcenter.org/index.html
- County Noxious Weed Control Board (Check online for specific counties County Weed Board Websites)

Habitat Restoration

Restoration is an important management strategy implemented by WDFW staff to protect, conserve and perpetuate species and habitats. In addition to the "Restoration Pathway" for salmon restoration (described below), WDFW has developed habitat- and species-specific restoration guidelines within PHS recommendations. As appropriate and relevant, restoration activities will be discussed in each plan. This will include past, current and future restoration projects. WDFW-specific guidance for restoration is described below.

Shrub-steppe Restoration

In 2011, WDFW collaborated with the BPA and Bureau of Land Management to develop the "Shrub-steppe and Grassland Restoration Manual for the Columbia River Basin" (http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01330/). Input was also sought from Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority's Wildlife Advisory Committee and Natural Resources Conservation Service specialists. The manual informs restoration activities in shrub-steppe and grassland habitats and can be used to design site-specific restoration activities.

Salmon Restoration – Restoration Pathway

Successful implementation of salmon recovery projects on WDFW lands requires that the values and priorities of all resource programs are reflected in their design and construction. The Restoration Pathway clarifies and streamlines the decision making process, and ensures effective communication and coordination with external partners.

The Pathway is activated when an external partner approaches WDFW with a salmon recovery project proposal. An internal cross-program team is then convened to the proposed project using the Restoration Pathway Criteria, which include:

Criteria	Description
#1	Does the proposed restoration project benefit the ecosystem?
#2	Is it feasible to replace existing WDFW land uses displaced by the proposed restoration project?
#3	Can identified legal or contractual constraints associated with the project be

	reasonably addressed to allow the proposed restoration project?
#4	Can future maintenance requirements be reasonably addressed?
#5	Can future liabilities be reasonably addressed?
#6	Can WDFW adequately staff the proposed project?
#7	What are the proposed project objectives and what steps need to be identified to ensure that the objectives are met?
#8	Can additional red flags or potential project concerns be reasonably addressed?

The Criteria were designed to uncover red flags that would need to be either addressed in feasibility or raised for management consideration.

Once a project has been designed and constructed, there is a three year adaptive management period during which project proponents are responsible for ensuring that the project functions as intended. If a salmon restoration project is identified in a WLA management planning process the Restoration Pathway framework will be used to implement the project.

Cultural Resources

WDFW is required to manage cultural resources consistent with state and federal laws, and has developed its own guidelines for meeting these requirements and ensuring appropriate management of cultural resources. WDFW staff, in some cases with the help of cultural resource consultants, identifies, evaluates and implements practices to preserve cultural resources on WDFW lands; consults with a broad array of interested parties; promotes heritage education; and provides expertise to external partners. Cultural resource staff will assess each WLA and provide relevant historical information and recommendations for appropriate management practices around cultural resources.

WDFW projects are conducted in a wide variety of regulatory contexts. These contexts are determined by permitting agencies, our partnerships in project development, property acquisition or relinquishment, and/or project funding sources. In general, all projects undergo cultural review, including research and potential fieldwork, to identify the potential of the project to impact cultural resources. Initial research would include a review of existing documentation including historic maps and photographs, diaries, journals, legal documents, and archaeological site information curated by the DAHP. This first look is followed by consultation with project stakeholders, which can include tribal governments, local landowners, project proponents, and others. This consultation is often followed by fieldwork, during which the project location is surveyed for unrecorded cultural resources and to assess the condition of known archaeological sites and/or historic structures. It is at this phase of review that archaeological sites and historic buildings are recorded. All of the research is collected in a report, which is then submitted for review. Reviewers include DAHP and local tribal government, but can also include stakeholders, regulatory agencies, and funding sources. The results of the research and consultation are used to inform the project design and any development plans.

Climate Change Impacts on Species and Habitats

WDFW staff is engaged with regional, statewide and national efforts to study climate change impacts on species and habitats. In order to fulfill its mission to serve Washington citizens by protecting, restoring and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats, WDFW is developing strategic approaches for dealing with the unprecedented threats climate change poses to our natural resources. WDFW is seeking to ensure that its investments and operations are strategic and prudent in light of predicted changes in our climate. WDFW has focused climate change efforts on mitigation, statewide, national and regional adaptation planning.

Research on Pacific Northwest climate change impacts by the University of Washington Climate Impacts Group and others have identified numerous climatic changes and associated impacts that are likely to have ecological consequences for WLAs and the ecosystem services they provide. These impacts may include changes in the distribution and composition of the state's forested lands, increases in the severity of wildfires, changes in stream flow timing, rising sea levels, longer summer drought and increases in flooding and extreme weather events. For more detail on how climate change is expected to affect Washington's natural resources, please consult WDFW's Climate Change website: (http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/climate_change/)

Climate change is a new topic to address in WLA plans. Each Planning Team will consider the impacts of climate change and consider goals; objectives and performance measures that may help mitigate these impacts, as well as consider how the wildlife area contributes to the state's overall resilience to variations in climate. Climate change threats and action are also built into many species and ecological systems specific conservation actions.

Recreation and Public Access

Consistent with the mission and mandate, and with the statewide WLA planning goals, WDFW provides opportunities to enjoy wildlife-related recreation on most WLAs. This includes fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing as the primary recreation activities. These uses are consistent with the WDFW's history of providing these activities and supporting healthy fish and game populations. It is also consistent with historical and current funding sources which obligate WDFW to provide specific recreation opportunities. For example, funding for lands acquisition and management that come from the PR Act requires WDFW to provide hunting opportunities, and manage the land consistent with this use. This has to be balanced with other funding requirements to manage for a particular habitat and/or wildlife species.

Fish and wildlife lands primarily support dispersed recreation – that which occurs outside of a developed facility. WDFW does not actively develop campgrounds, picnic areas, trails and other "focused activity areas" (e.g. off-road vehicle use, playgrounds, ball fields). Most of the state's 33 WLAs are somewhat remote, and not quickly accessed from major population centers. Entry/exits may be defined with gravel parking, signage and primitive restrooms. One or two areas have developed trails, designated campgrounds, and/or visitor "center" where staff can be accessed for WLA information. However, these are the exception. One example is the Beebe

Springs WLA, located just east of Chelan in the northeast area of the state. Beebe Springs includes a large paved parking area, restrooms, and developed pedestrian trails.

WDFW lands are also used for educational and research purposes. These activities are often directed by WDFW and/or are undertaken in cooperation with a range of recreation and conservation partners.

Increasing population and diversity of recreation interests are creating more demand, which leads to conflicts between priority and non-priority users (e.g. hunters and hikers). Increasing demand and conflicts between users also impacts natural resources. WDFW is developing a Recreation Management Strategy to address these issues, which will likely lead to new laws, rules and/or policies to balance recreation use and wildlife/habitat protection. The strategy is expected to be completed in 2017.

In the meantime, each WLA plan will address recreation and public access by identifying:

- current recreation uses and users;
- recreation conflicts between users and/or between users and natural resources
- existing and proposed recreation facilities/infrastructure; and
- goals, objectives and performance measures related to recreation, public access and future recreation needs.

With information collected at the public and scoping meetings, the Project Manager will facilitate Planning Team discussion about recreation and appropriate management actions to include in the WLA plan. This could include identifying specific locations where more intensive recreation can be supported (or be prohibited because of natural resource impacts or other management constraints), addressing seasonal use where there are resource impacts at specific times of the year (e.g. nesting of certain species), and will consider the interests of recreational users.

Road Management

Road management activities undertaken by WDFW are guided by several laws and policies including the Road Maintenance and Abandonment Planning process, which was developed in 2001 to manage roads consistent with forest practices standards (http://www.dnr.wa.gov/BusinessPermits/Topics/ForestPracticesApplications/Pages/fp_forms.aspx); and Policy 6012: Managing Public Access on WDFW Lands, which allows WDFW to require short-term, seasonal and permanent road closures to ensure public health and safety; minimize impacts to fish, wildlife and their habitats; protect WDFW infrastructure; or address budgetary constraints. Other laws and rules governing road management are listed in the section about laws and policies and include RCW 77.12.320, which authorizes the Fish and Wildlife Commission to enter into agreements to provide wildlife-oriented recreation; WAC 232-12-177 which allows WDFW to limit use of motor vehicles on lands under a road management agreement; and RCW 77.12.210, which gives the director the ability to maintain

and manage WDFW lands including the construction of buildings, structures and improvements, as well as adopting rules for operations and maintenance.

WDFW intends to develop Road Management Plans for each WLA, consistent with the statewide WLA goals; however, most of these plans will be developed at a later date. The Planning Team will provide valuable road management information and may identify road management actions in the plan, which will guide road management until Road Management Plans are developed.

Land Ownership and Management

Land management obligations may include circumstances where lands owned by other agencies and private individuals are managed by WDFW. They may also include encumbrances, or claim on property (e.g. grazing, agriculture, water rights, timber rights, etc.). These influence management activities and are described in the section below. Each WLA plan will describe these factors and their effect on land management.

WLA Naming Hierarchy

For management and administration purposes, WDFW organizes lands into a hierarchy of complexes, WLAs, and units (Figure 5). This organization maintains a consistent structure and delineates management responsibilities across the statewide system.

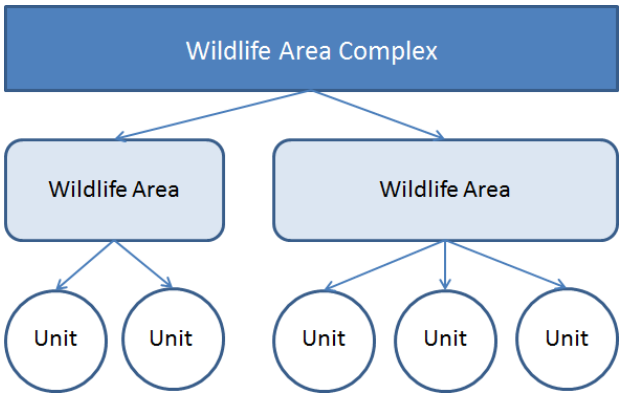


Figure 5. WLA Hierarchy

Management plans may combine more than one WLA or complex into one plan.

- A complex is made up of a suite of WLAs, supervised by one manager. Examples include Blue Mountains Complex and Columbia Basin Complex.
- A WLA is an area defined by funding source, location, proximity, geographic area, user groups and habitat. An individual WLA may be comprised of one or more units.
- A unit is WDFW property that may or may not be connected to a larger WLA or unit or is spatially discrete from the other WLAs. For example, Big Buck, Methow, Golden Doe are all units of the Methow WLA.

Property Location, Size and Other Physical Characteristics

WDFW owns or manages 921,896 acres of fish and wildlife habitat in 33 distinct WLAs across the state of Washington.

Table 2. WLAs and acres for each.

WLA	Acres
Asotin	34,450
Chief Joseph	22,810
Chehalis	1,080
Chelan	30,885
Colockum	90,296
Columbia Basin	203,925
Cowlitz	6,474
Grand Coulee	4,198
Johns River	8,601
Klickitat	17,167
Le Clerc	614
L.T. Murray	123,175
Methow	34,582
Mt. St Helens	8,337
North Olympic	1,053
Oak Creek	59,542
Olympic	1,023
Revere	2,291
Sagebrush Flat	13,320
Scatter Creek	3,589
Scotch Creek	26,223
Sherman Creek	10,997
Shillapoo	2,338
Sinlahekin	22,515
Skagit	15,921
Snoqualmie	2,817
South Puget Sound	6,344
Sunnyside/Snake River	17,720
Swanson Lakes	20,628
Wells	8,897
Wenas	98,604
Whatcom	3,530
Wooten	17,950
Total	**921, 896***

*This figure does not include water access sites located within the WLA

Each WLA will include information about the size of property, location and its physical characteristics.

Acquisition History, Funding and Purpose

WDFW land acquisition began in July 1939 when the then Department of Game purchased an 80-acre parcel of mule deer winter range in the Sinlahekin Valley of Okanogan County. Seventy percent of WDFW's properties were acquired prior to 1971 and were purchased with federal funds made available through the PR (see page 21); most of the lands were purchased to protect big game winter range and upland bird habitat. In recent decades WDFW has diversified the WLA portfolio to include properties managed for threatened and endangered species, using funding provided by the Washington State Legislature through the WWRP. Key acquisitions include critical habitats for priority species and mitigation for wildlife losses from development. For example, additional acquisitions were made for fish and wildlife as mitigation for construction and operation of hydroelectric dams by various power companies and public utility districts.

Throughout its 75-year history of acquiring and managing lands for fish and wildlife, WDFW has relied on, and continues to pursue, multiple funding sources to support these activities. Each plan will summarize specific funding sources relative to that WLA.

Lands 20/20

WDFW's Lands 20/20 process is a comprehensive acquisition program that guides the internal review and approval of potential new lands. This process ensures that future WDFW lands acquisition projects are consistent with WDFW's Mission Statement while meeting its legislative mandate. Project proposals are developed annually in the regions; regions conduct review by developing a ranked list of approved projects. These projects are submitted to Headquarters. An internal technical team is conducted and reviews and develops a statewide ranked list of projects by funding source. The draft project list is presented to the Executive Management Team for final review and ultimately the director for final approval. The process includes public review at the end of the internal process. Feedback from the public is presented at the Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting.

Encumbrances and Deed Restrictions

WDFW holds title to 629,139 acres and manages an additional 292,757acres that are owned by other agencies, organizations, or individuals. A variety of easements, deed restrictions and other encumbrances effect management of this land. This section provides an overview of the most common encumbrances encountered on WLAs. Each WLA plan will include a summary of the agreements, easements and encumbrances specific to that area.

Easements

Easements are a right, held by an entity other than WDFW on WLAs, to cross or otherwise use a portion of the land for a specified purpose. They can be valid for a specified time period or put in place indefinitely and may terminate when the land is sold, or can be transferred with other property rights to a new owner. They can also allow for utilities, irrigation structures and rights-of-way.

Conservation Easements

A conservation easement is an interest in real property established by agreement between a landowner and land trust or unit of government. Conservation easements transfer certain property rights, such as the right to develop, to an outside entity (government department or land trust) while leaving the land in private ownership. Conservation easements "run with the land", meaning they are applicable to both present and future owners of the land. As with other real property interests, a conservation easement is recorded and becomes part of the chain of title for the property. WDFW holds several conservation easements on WLAs across the state.

USFWS Section 6 Grant Requirements

In order to meet federal Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund's Habitat Conservation Land Acquisition grant requirements (Section 6), WDFW is required to complete management plans (including protection measures for listed fish and wildlife species) for all Section 6 lands acquired (including properties used for match in the grant application). The Wildlife Area HCP, once approved by USFWS, will meet these requirements. In the interim, WDFW will include ESA protection measures for Section 6 lands in the development of the new WLA management plans.

Leases and Other Permits

WLAs may also be encumbered by agricultural leases or grazing permits. These encumbrances support multiple benefits: allow the land to be managed for fish and wildlife benefit and provide grazing and agriculture benefits. This is discussed further in the section "Managing Lands on Behalf of Other Entities".

Water Rights

The Washington State Department of Ecology (ECY) is responsible for overseeing water use in the state. ECYs website provides the following overview of water rights. "*The waters of Washington State collectively belong to the public and cannot be owned by any one individual or group. Instead, individuals or groups may be granted rights to use them. A water right is a legal authorization to use a predefined quantity of public water for a designated purpose. This purpose must qualify as a beneficial use. Beneficial use involves the application of a reasonable quantity of water to a non-wasteful use, such as irrigation, domestic water supply, or power generation, to name a few. An average household uses about 300 gallons of water per day.*

State law requires certain users of public waters to receive approval from the state prior to using water - in the form of a water right permit or certificate. Any use of surface water (lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, or springs) which began after the state water code was enacted in 1917 requires a water-right permit or certificate.

Likewise, withdrawals of underground (ground) water from 1945 onward, when the state groundwater code was enacted, require a water right permit or certificate – unless the use is specifically exempt from state permitting requirements. While "exempt" groundwater uses are excused from needing a state permit, they still are considered to be water rights."

WDFW utilizes water right for six general purposes:

1. Domestic/household;
2. Livestock watering;
3. Irrigated agriculture;
4. Emergency firefighting;
5. Fish and wildlife use; and
6. Rights held in trust.

Water rights must be used or they are forfeited under state law. Unused water rights may be held without use through the Washington State Trust Water Rights program. This program, administered by ECY, provides applicants the opportunity to legally hold water rights for future uses without relinquishing the water right. Water is held in trust to maintain groundwater and instream flows and for other beneficial uses. While water is held in trust it retains its original priority date. Water rights owned by WDFW, and their specific uses, will be will be identified in each WLA plan.

Timber Rights

In some cases WDFW owns forest lands but does not own the timber or the right to harvest it. In the rare cases where this occurs it will be discussed in the forestry section of the management plan and the WLA Forest Plan.

Mineral Rights

In some cases WDFW owns mineral rights associated with its property; in most cases it does not. In cases where mineral rights are an issue it will be addressed in the management plan.

Managing Lands on Behalf of Other Entities

Of the 921,896 acres owned and managed as WLAs, 292,757 acres are managed by WDFW on behalf of other owners. These include both federal and state agencies, as well as public utilities. These management agreements are summarized below.

Washington Department of Natural Resources

WDFW leases 59,078 acres of DNR lands across ten WLAs: Asotin Creek, Wooten, Swanson Lakes, Chelan, Colockum, Columbia Basin, LT Murray, Oak Creek, Wenas, Sinlahekin and Whatcom. Permitted uses under these leases includes “wildlife habitat”, described as “parcels [that] are either interspersed within WDFW ownership and are managed as part of a WLA, or are isolated parcels that provide wildlife habitat protection”.

Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)

Grand Coulee Dam was constructed in the 1930s, leading to the development of the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project in the 1950’s. Water from the Columbia River is now pumped into the Banks Lake Equalizing Reservoir and supplies water to approximately 670,000 acres of irrigated agricultural land through a series of reservoirs, canals, and wasteways. The BOR owns large parcels of land critical to the operation of the project. In 1952, a Memorandum of

Understanding (MOU) with the former Washington Department of Game, the USFWS and the BOR turned fish, wildlife and recreational management of much of those parcels over to WDFW. The original, 50-year MOU expired and in 2002 a new, 25-year agreement was finalized. WDFW receives operations and maintenance funding from BOR for management of these lands. WDFW manages approximately 192,000 acres of lands consistent with the Columbia Basin WLA; the BOR owns approximately 71 percent of the land within the Columbia Basin WLA.

Natural Area Preserves

In 1972, the Washington State Legislature passed legislation that would establish a system of state-owned, state-managed natural area preserves (NAP). As envisioned in the Natural Area Preserves Act (RCW 79.70), these areas protect the highest quality examples of native ecosystems and rare plant and animal species, as well as other natural features of statewide and national significance in perpetuity.

These areas protect outstanding examples of Washington's natural heritage and safeguard native biodiversity. State-owned NAPs include some of the highest quality undisturbed ecosystems remaining in Washington, often protecting one of a kind features and rare plants or animals.

These areas protect the best remaining examples of many ecological communities including rare plant and animal habitat. The Washington Natural Heritage Program (http://www.dnr.wa.gov/ResearchScience/Topics/NaturalAreas/Pages/amp_na.aspx) identifies the highest quality, most ecologically important sites for protection as NAPs. The resulting network of preserves represents a legacy for future generations and helps ensure that blueprints of the state's natural ecosystems are protected forever.

WDFW currently manages 915 acres in six NAPs at the following WLAs: Columbia Basin, Colockum, Snoqualmie, Skagit, Whatcom and Shillapoo/Mt St Helens. WLA management plans will include a section addressing management of these areas including status of the NAP, monitoring conducted and future management actions.

Public Utility Districts and Power Companies

The WDFW has five active mitigation agreements with Public Utility Districts and power companies. Summarized in Table 3, these agreements mitigate for habitat losses sustained when hydroelectric dams were constructed in various parts of the state.

Table 3. List of Mitigation Agreements by WLA.

WLA	Utility District/Power Company	Acres	Agreement Expires
Olympic/Willapa – Wynoochee	Tacoma Power/Corps of Engineers	1,303	2037
Cowlitz	Tacoma Power	14,700	2038
Wells	Douglas Co PUD	8,107	2012
Chelan	Chelan Co PUD	30,000	2015
Columbia Basin	Grant Co PUD	14,295	2052

Other Entities Operating on WDFW Lands

As stated above, WDFW has operating agreements with individuals or organizations for specific uses on WLAs. The following section provides an overview of grazing, agriculture and other agreements that occur on the WLAs. Current lease agreements will be documented in each WLA plan.

Grazing Permits and Agricultural Leases

In addition to state laws and agency procedures, grazing permits and agricultural leases on WLAs are guided by HB 1309 Ecosystem Standards for state owned agricultural and grazing land. WDFW is currently reviewing the existing grazing program. Each WLA area plan will identify the total number of acres for current grazing permits and agricultural leases. Grazing on WDFW lands is allowed by permit in accordance with the above-referenced regulations. Permits lasting more than two weeks require a livestock grazing management plan that includes descriptions of ecological impacts, desired ecological conditions, fish and wildlife benefits, monitoring plans, and schedules for evaluation. Grazing permits are written by WLA managers with assistance and oversight by the range ecologist. Permits are reviewed and/or approved by regional biologists, managers and headquarters staff. Lease terms are typically no longer than five years. As of 2015, WDFW had 50 active grazing permits covering 81,434 acres on 14 WLAs. Most of these permits occur in eastern Washington.

Agricultural activities are employed primarily to produce food and cover for wildlife, and secondarily for commercial purposes. Food and cover attracts target wildlife species and reduce damage on adjacent private ownership. WDFW does not actively convert native habitat to agriculture, but may maintain areas in agriculture that were under such management at the time of acquisition by WDFW. Generally, WDFW encourages the use of grain crops to benefit wildlife on WDFW WLAs. WDFW land managers, range ecologists, biologists, and managers review agricultural permits. Lease terms are generally 5 years. Where leases are not feasible or necessary, agricultural activities are conducted by staff to meet wildlife needs. As of 2015, WDFW has 78 active agriculture permits covering 13,693 acres on 20 WLAs.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

CRP is a cost-share and rental payment program under the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and is administered by the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA). The CRP encourages farmers to convert highly erodible cropland or other environmentally sensitive acreage to vegetative cover, such as cultivated or native bunchgrasses and grasslands, wildlife and pollinator food and shelter planting, windbreak and shade trees, filer and buffer strips, and riparian buffers. WDFW lands that have historically been managed for farming may be enrolled in CRP through its lessees. Currently 4,660 acres of WDFW lands are enrolled in CRP (http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/crp/).

Local Land Use and Other Plans

WLA plans are developed consistent with local government (cities and counties) land use regulations including Comprehensive Plans and zoning laws, as required by the Growth Management Act (GMA) and Shoreline Management Act (SMA). Each WLA plan will include a description of the land use designations that are adjacent to the WLA and/or have implications for WLA management. Both laws are summarized below with a link to more information.

Growth Management Act (GMA)

In 1990 the Legislature found that "uncoordinated and unplanned growth, together with a lack of common goals… pose a threat to the environment, sustainable economic development, and the health, safety, and high quality of life enjoyed by residents of this state. It is in the public interest that citizens, communities, local governments, and the private sector cooperate and coordinate with one another in comprehensive land use planning." This is the foundation for the GMA (Chapter 36.70A RCW). Although not all jurisdictions must fully plan, meaning that they are not required to develop a Comprehensive Plan, all jurisdictions are required to designate and protect natural resource lands and critical areas.

Critical areas are included in the GMA section RCW 36.70A.172 and include the following: (a) wetlands; (b) areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water; (c) fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas (including rivers, streams, lakes, and salt water shorelines); (d) frequently flooded areas; and (e) geologically hazardous areas. These areas are to be designated and protected using the best available science to protect the functions and values of environmentally sensitive areas.

Shoreline Management Act

The SMA (Chapter 90.58 RCW) requires all local governments in Washington State to adopt Shoreline Master Programs that contain policies and regulations that will ensure no net loss of shoreline ecological functions. The SMA defines affected areas to include marine waters, streams with a mean annual flow greater than 20 cubic feet per second, water areas of the state greater than 20 acres, land extending 200 feet landward of the ordinary high water mark and associated wetlands, river deltas and some or all of the 100-year floodplain. The SMA establishes a balance of authority between local and state government. Cities and counties are the primary regulators, but the state (through ECY) is responsible for approving local master programs and some permits including variances and conditional use permits.

See the following links for more information:
(http://www.commerce.wa.gov/Services/localgovernment/GrowthManagement/Pages/LawsRules.aspx)
(http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/sma/st_guide/intro.html).

Other Plans

Other local, regional, state and federal planning efforts may influence WDFW's management activities. These may be area- or species/habitat-specific and typically are initiated by other agencies, though WDFW may be consulted in their development. This is one way new science is reviewed, may prompt consideration of new management actions, and can provide species- or habitat-specific management recommendations. In addition, plans like these are used to support grant funding applications, in concert with other materials. A sampling of relevant plans includes:

- North American Waterfowl Management Plan;
- USFWS Concept Plan for Wintering Waterfowl;
- Pacific Coast Joint Venture Strategic Plan;
- Northern Pacific Coast Shorebird Conservation Plan;
- USFWS Pacific Region Partners for Fish and Wildlife and Coastal Strategic Plans;
- Washington State's Coastal and Estuarine Conservation Program Plan;
- Important Bird Areas (IBA's) – Audubon Society;
- Partners in Flight Landbird Conservation Plans;
- US Shore Bird Conservation Plan;
- North American Waterbird Conservation Plan;
- Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network;
- USFWS Regional Wetland Concept Plan (1990);
- Globally Important Bird Areas – The American Bird Society;
- Yakima Basin Integrated Resource Management Plan; and
- Pacific Flyway Management Plan.

In addition, significant research has been conducted on WLAs. This may be directed by WDFW, by local academic institutions, or by other entities or individuals. A list of the relevant local,

regional and other planning documents, as well as any relevant research, will be included in each WLA plan.

Administration and Staffing

Land management within WDFW is divided into three organizational layers: WLA, region, and Olympia headquarters (Figure 6). Each of these is described below.

WLA Staff

WLA staff (including WLA managers, assistant managers and natural resource technicians) is responsible for stewardship activities specific to a WLA or complex. These activities include: planning and management for sustaining fish and wildlife and recreation values; operations and maintenance; habitat restoration; and public education and outreach.

Regional Staff

Regional Directors and Wildlife Program Managers oversee the implementation of WDFW goals and objectives as they apply to WLAs. They are responsible for supervision of regional program staff, including WLA staff, and the implementation of WDFW policy and budget. They interact with communities and landowners to address local issues and values. In one region the Lands Operation Manager position has been created to provide supervision to all wildlife area managers in a region. This position reports directly to the Regional Wildlife Program Manager.

Headquarters Staff

Headquarters staff in Olympia coordinate and implement policy and budget related activities. The Lands Division is responsible for WLA management and is divided into three sections: Lands Stewardship and Operations; Planning, Recreation and Outreach; and Real Estate Services. Land Stewardship and Operations is responsible for land management, restoration, and regulatory compliance. Staff provides technical assistance to WLA managers on topics including management of species and habitats, forestry, weed and range management, archaeology and planning. The Planning, Recreation and Outreach section is charged with developing new management plans for the WLAs, acquisition planning, recreation planning and designing and conducting public outreach associated with WLAs. Real Estate Services is responsible for the purchase, sale, and leasing of property. Real Estate staff also provides technical assistance to the WLA managers on water rights, trespass and encroachment resolution, easements, rights of way and commercial use. Not all staff who assist with policy development affecting lands management are located in the headquarters office in Olympia, WDFW range ecologists, foresters and one lands planner are located in or close to regional offices.

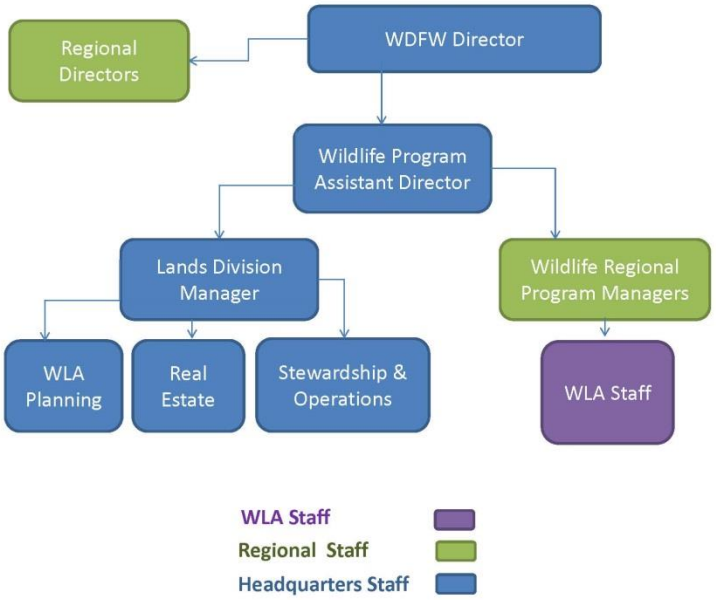


Figure 6. Responsibilities for Land Management Activities

Enforcement

The WDFW Law Enforcement Program has 144 commissioned law enforcement personnel statewide. Fish and Wildlife Officers are general authority peace officers deployed to six regions throughout the state and to a Marine Division. Officers are responsible for enforcing a myriad of laws and regulations related to health and public safety, dangerous wildlife/human conflicts, fish and wildlife protection, hunting and fishing license regulations, habitat protection, and commercial fish and shellfish harvest. On WLAs, the Enforcement Program is primarily responsible for enforcing the Fish and Wildlife Code (Title 77) and the Public Conduct Rules (WAC 232-13). Similar to the other WDFW programs, Enforcement Administration is housed in Olympia, and each region has a full complement of enforcement staff whose responsibility includes enforcement on WLAs within their assigned region.

In addition, they enforce federal laws, Oregon state statutes, and county ordinances through memorandums of agreement. They conduct boating law enforcement on state and federal waters, and law enforcement in state and federal parks and forest lands. Because of their unique capabilities, assets, and jurisdiction, officers are often called upon to respond during severe weather to natural disasters and other critical incidents, to perform public-safety and search and-rescue operations on both land and water. Officers also hold federal USFWS and National Marine Fisheries Service commissions, and have jurisdiction over federal violations, the most important of which are the ESA (summarized in the Resource Management Section) and the Lacey Act (summarized in the Statute Authority Section). Officers collaborate and coordinate with these agencies and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Each Planning Team will include enforcement staff participation, and each WLA plan may include management actions that address enforcement priorities.

Facilities and Maintenance

WLA managers and other staff are responsible for developing and maintaining WLA infrastructure and facilities. Facilities support land management activities (e.g. buildings for equipment storage and repair) as well as facilities that support public activities on the WLA (e.g. signage, kiosks, fencing, etc.). Maintenance activities on the WLA may include road and parking lot surfacing and maintenance; trail maintenance; brush clearing; hazard tree removal; weed control; construction and repair of signs, informational kiosks, fencing, hunting blinds, nesting boxes, ADA facilities and gates; graffiti removal; trash collection; restroom cleaning; and maintaining buildings and equipment to meet these obligations.

Fire Management

WDFW has arrangements with a variety of agencies (DNR, Fire Districts, U.S. Forest Service) to provide wildfire suppression services on WLAs. Because fire protection services are not available in all areas all WLAs maintain maps showing fire suppression coverage and which entity provides suppression services for each area. Additionally, some WLA staff are certified for specific fire suppression activities through the "red card" process administered by DNR. This enables them to assist with suppression when fires impact WLAs. Each wildlife area management plan will have fire response information in the appendix.

MANAGEMENT DIRECTION and APPROACH

Each plan will develop its own set of goals, objectives and performance measures consistent with the statewide directives outlined below.

Statewide WLA Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures

Goals express the long-term vision for the WDFW WLAs; the statewide goals form the foundation for the development of individual WLA goals and inform the development of the individual management plans. The statewide goals and objectives, and corresponding performance measures (Table 4) have been developed to monitor activities for WLAs across the state.

Table 4. Statewide goals, objectives and performance measures.

Goal	Objective	Performance Measure
1. Restore and protect the integrity of priority ecological systems and sites.	A. Establish abiotic landscape ecological integrity baseline for all WLAs by June 2015.	1. Baseline established (y/n)

	B. Finalize EIM framework for implementation into WLA management by June 2015.	1. Framework finalized (y/n)
	C. Maintain or reduce the distribution and abundance of invasive weeds.	1. Number of acres inspected annually 2. Number of acres treated annually
	D. Establish biotic ecological integrity baseline for priority ecological systems and sites for all finalized WLA plans.	1. Percentage of WLAs plans that have an EIM Plan that is being implemented
2. Sustain individual species through habitat and population management actions, where consistent with site purpose and funding.	A. Coordinate or participate in, species habitat and population management actions on WLAs consistent with recovery plans, management plans, department and program priorities, and available funding.	1. Number of species for which population management actions are implemented annually
		2. Number of species for which habitat management actions are implemented annually
3. Provide fishing, hunting and wildlife-related recreational opportunities where consistent with Goals 1 and 2.	A. Finish and implement the state-wide recreation strategy in 2016-17.	1. State-wide strategy completed (y/n)
		2. Percentage of WLAs where the recreation strategy has been applied.
4. Engage stakeholders in consistent, timely and transparent communication regarding WLA management activities.	A. Develop a stakeholder outreach plan for each WLA to engage interested parties in management activities.	1. Percentage of WLAs with completed outreach plans
5. Maintain productive and positive working relationships with neighbors, partners and permittees.	A. Support working landscapes and neighboring communities through development of management agreements where consistent with other WLA goals.	1. Total number of acres managed under either a) an agricultural lease or b) a grazing permit
6. Train, equip and license as necessary, WLA staff to meet the operation and maint-	A. Appropriate training of WLA staff.	1. Annual training conducted and reported to RPM.

enance needs of the WLAs.*		
7. Maintain safe, highly functional and cost-effective administration facilities and equipment.*	A. Maintenance of facilities and equipment by WLA staff.	1. Annual reporting to RPM of structures developed, maintained, and/or replaced 2. Ongoing budget review and management including annual reporting of WLA equipment and maintenance needs to RPM.

*****These performance measures will be tracked by WLA staff and RPMs, and considered at two-year update intervals, as discussed below.

Monitoring and Adaptive Management

WLA management plans will go through a biennial update by the District Team, followed by WAACs and regional staff review. The update will summarize achievements, report progress on performance measures, and potentially identify new actions to meet plan goals and objectives. Specific monitoring will take place for ecological integrity on all WLAs, and for any cultural resources, if identified and relevant on specific WLAs. These are discussed below.

Ecological Integrity Monitoring

Measuring and monitoring ecological integrity on WLAs relies on an approach developed by NatureServe and the Natural Heritage program to assess the current ecological integrity of a system compared to reference or benchmark examples, as defined by EIAs. A description of EIAs is provided in the following document that is available on the WDFW Web site: (http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01314/\).

As previously stated, the WDFW Lands Division has adopted the EIA framework, and EIM as a tool to evaluate ecological integrity, and changes in integrity over time, within priority systems and sites on WLAs.

The EIM strategy is designed to support the efforts of WDFW to maintain and improve priority systems and sites, and to provide the data needed to support both the HCP and WLA Management plans. Application of EIM at individual WLAs or WLA units is defined by the goals and objectives of the site. Each individual WLA management plan has an associated EIM plan that defines of the monitoring necessary to determine changes in ecological integrity over time.

The Planning Team has worked with WLA Managers and staff to design a volunteer recruitment strategy to meet these data collection needs. Data generated through this process will enable WDFW to assess changes in EI over time, as well as determine where to implement active habitat management and restoration to meet ecological integrity goals.

Archaeological Monitoring

Sometimes sensitive cultural resources are located near WDFW projects. In order to provide adequate protection to these resources during project development, one of two types of plans may be developed- an Inadvertent Discovery Plan or a Monitoring Plan. In general terms, both plans outline procedures to follow during project development to prevent or reduce impacts to cultural resources.

Monitoring Plans outline the responsibilities of the professional archaeologist who is present during project construction. If no professional archaeologist is present during construction, the project would operate under the Inadvertent Discovery Plan, which outlines the procedure to follow if archaeological materials or human remains are discovered during project construction. Adherence to these plans provide protection for cultural resources that are discovered during

project construction, assist WDFW personnel in complying with applicable laws, and expedite project development in the event of discovery.

Plan Implementation

As goals, objectives and performance measures are developed by the planning team, task level activities will be developed prior to the plan being finalized. Task level activities will be integrated into regional staff work plans to ensure the wildlife area meets the stated goals and objectives written in the plan.

Conclusion

The WDFW's WLA legacy began in 1939 when Washington State purchased land that became what is now the Sinlahekin WLA, located in northern Okanogan County. The development of WLA Management Plans is a critical step in protecting, conserving and perpetuating the state's native species and habitats, and is an opportunity to bring together the public and stakeholders who have the potential to impact these important resources. This document provides the framework for statewide WLA management and summarizes the WLA statutory, regulatory, and funding requirements; it describes internal guidance for integrating management initiatives, including how WDFW prioritizes species, habitats and recreation; and provides transparency to the public and interested stakeholders. This document will guide management planning for 33 WLAs over the course of 10 years.