

# Scotch Creek Wildlife Area

## 2019-20 Wildlife Area Management Plan Update



*Strawberry Lake on the Chesaw Unit of the Scotch Creek Wildlife Area*

This document is intended to highlight accomplishments as they relate to goals and objectives identified within the [Scotch Creek Wildlife Area Management Plan](#). The plan addresses the status of wildlife species and their habitat, ongoing restoration efforts and public recreation opportunities at the Scotch Creek Wildlife Area. Every 10 years, WDFW develops a process for revising the management plans for each wildlife area to identify new management priorities and actions. In between plan revisions, the update focuses on recent accomplishments over the last two years.

### **Management Highlights**

#### **Noxious Weed Management (*Goal #1, Objective B*)**

Staff members continue to work toward controlling and treating all Class A and B listed species found on the Scotch Creek units. Musk thistle on the Chesaw Unit continues to be the focus. In 2020, three staff members spent most of June, July, and August treating the infestation, which

encompasses a large portion of the unit. Plants that reached maturity and developed seed heads were treated by removing and bagging the seed heads. Biological control seed head weevils are found throughout the unit.

Across all seven wildlife units, approximately 15,000 acres were surveyed and 200 acres were treated.



*Luis Medina removing musk thistle seed heads*

Additional weed management accomplishments include:

- Treating all known hoary alyssum infestations on Charles and Mary Eder, Tunk Valley, Chopaka, and Chesaw units
- Treating leafy spurge on the Similkameen-Chopaka Unit
- Treating all know Scotch thistle infestations on the Scotch Creek and Pogue Mountain units

#### **Maintain Fences and Gates (Goal #1, Objective C)**

Staff members made repairs and improvements to the fence that borders Chopaka Road on the Chopaka Unit. Repairs and improvements consisted of stretching wire, replacing corners, replacing wire gates, and installing latches to allow easier opening and closing of gates by users. On the Scotch Creek Unit, staff members surveyed and repaired the boundary fences along Limebelt and Happy Hill. Most of the repairs involved removing down dead trees that fell across the fence from the 2015 Okanogan Complex Fire. In total, an estimated 15 miles of fence was surveyed, and five miles were repaired and improved.



*Down tree removal and fence repair on Happy Hill of the Scotch Creek Unit*

**Restore Degraded Riparian Habitat Types (Goal #1, Objective I)**

Staff members installed 11 beaver dam analogs (BDA) in a half mile stretch of the Scotch Creek Unit to restore riparian function and improve ground water storage. Additionally, approximately 200 water birch deciduous shrubs were planted in two fenced enclosures to improve winter forage for sharp-tailed grouse.



**Chopaka Forest Thinning (Goal #1, Objective J)**

Scotch Creek staff members and the prescribed burn team worked together to selectively thin the forested portion of the Chopaka Unit. The thinning prescription was developed by the WDFW statewide forester. The prescription identified felling all trees with less than 8–10-inch diameter at breast height (DBH), and five plus feet between live crowns. Downed material was lopped,

chunked, and scattered in preparation for a prescribed fire. In total, approximately 15 acres were treated.



*Post-thinning forest treatment on the Chopaka Unit*

## **New Issues**

### **Restore Degraded Riparian Habitat Types (*Goal #1, Objective I*)**

Staff members submitted a scoping change to the Recreation Conservation Office for the Scotch Creek Riparian Restoration Project. WDFW has requested to use the remaining funds from the Scotch Creek Riparian Restoration Project to improve the riparian function on the Chesaw Unit by installing instream structures.