

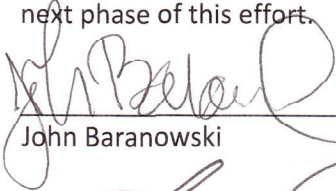
Wenas Wildlife Area Target Shooting Advisory Committee—Report and Recommendations

December 2017


Signature Page

The Wenas Target Shooting Advisory Committee Report and Recommendations describes consensus recommendations of the Committee and, on topics where agreement was not reached, describes the different perspectives held by Advisory Committee members. Consensus was defined as a recommendation that all Committee members could support or live with, even if it was not their preferred alternative.

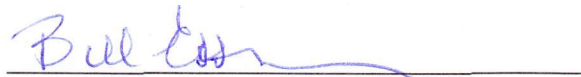
The Committee presents this report and recommendations to WDFW and looks forward to the prompt and complete implementation of its recommendations. Many Committee members also are available to continue to work together to find common ground on topics where agreement was not reached in a next phase of this effort.



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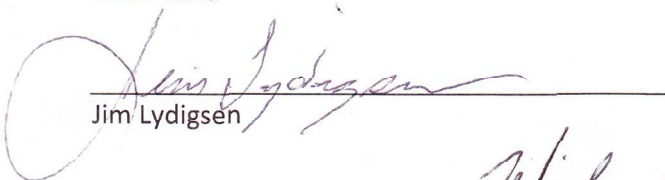
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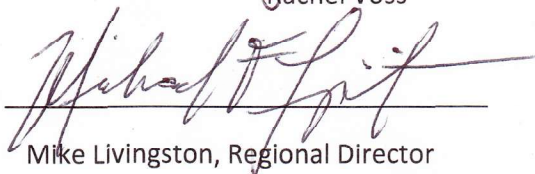


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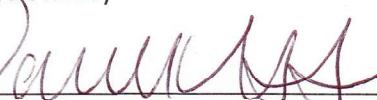
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I. Background and Introduction

This report provides recommendations from the Wenas Wildlife Area Target Shooting Advisory Committee (“WTS Advisory Committee” or “Committee”) to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) regarding shooting opportunities on the Wenas Wildlife Area. The 105,000-acre Wenas Wildlife Area is located in Yakima and Kittitas counties, and includes Washington WDFW, Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands managed primarily by WDFW. Dispersed shooting has long occurred on the Wildlife Area and will continue. Other recreationists also will continue using the Wenas Wildlife Area for activities such as hunting, watching wildlife, mountain biking, hiking, riding horses, and driving the green dot roads.

The WTS Advisory Committee represents broad recreational and neighbor interests in the Wenas Wildlife Area, and is comprised of 18 members representing: neighbors and affected landowners, hunters, target shooters, horseback riders, mountain bike riders, hikers, wildlife watchers, bird dog trainers, motorized users, and others. WDFW sent a broad invitation asking stakeholders to apply to participate in the WTS Committee. WDFW selected Advisory Committee members based on the following:

- Active user of the Wenas Wildlife Area
- Acceptance of the basic problem statement and Committee purpose and objectives
- Interest in developing a sustainable solution to recreational target shooting management at Wenas Wildlife Area
- Past experience with collaborative processes
- Ability to represent a broader user group constituency
- Willingness to participate in regular Committee meetings

A list of Committee members is in Attachment 1.

The Committee met eight times between May and December 2017. Government agencies including WDFW and DNR participated in the Committee as Ex Officio participants. Local elected officials also (at their discretion) participated as Ex Officio participants. Ex Officio participants served as resources to the Committee. In addition to full Committee meetings, small subgroups of Committee members met numerous times to identify sites to recommend for improvement for concentrated shooting in the north and south areas of the Wenas Wildlife Area.

Public input was important to the Committee process. All Committee meetings were open to the public and opportunities for public comment were provided at each meeting. WDFW also hosted, and numerous Committee members attended, four listening sessions to facilitate the Committee receiving public input. Finally, the Committee maintained an on-line public comment form. Summaries of Committee meetings, listening sessions, and online comments are available at the [Committee website](#) and in Appendix A.

The Committee considered a variety of information in its discussions including information on WDFW management history and priorities for the Wenas Wildlife Area; existing rules and regulations applicable to shooting on public lands; complaints, concerns, and enforcement at the Wenas Wildlife Area; and fires, littering and trash. Information considered by the Committee is summarized in Section II.

The Committee operated by consensus. For purposes of the Committee’s deliberations “consensus” meant that all members of the Committee can at least “live with” a recommendation, even if it was not their first (or even their preferred) choice. Consensus was evaluated through a variety of techniques, including one-on-one conversations with Committee members, straw polling during and between meetings, and documented review of Committee materials.

Ultimately the Committee reached consensus on most topics including recommendations addressing increased education and outreach; the role of enforcement and need for increased enforcement resources; focused enhancements to increase safety at four sites that historically and currently have been locations of concentrated shooting activities; and a phased approach to implementation with continued engagement with the Advisory Committee going forward. Recommendations 1–15 in Section III describe the Committee consensus.

The Committee discussed but did not reach consensus on prohibiting certain types of firearms at enhanced locations, providing sanitation stations at enhanced locations, and how to address dispersed shooting at Buffalo Road (with different Committee members defining that area more or less broadly). The different Committee members perspectives on these topics are described in text under recommendations 8, 13, and 14. The Committee also did not reach consensus on a set of principles to guide decision making on dispersed shooting. The Committee’s deliberations on principles and Committee member perspectives are described in Attachment 2.

Even for the few topics on which the Committee did not reach consensus, there were many areas of common ground. It is possible that the Committee could reach agreement on these topics with additional time for deliberations. Most Committee members are interested in continuing to work with WDFW to see their consensus recommendations implemented fully and quickly, and to continue deliberations on remaining topics.

II. Information Considered During Committee Deliberations

During early discussions, Committee members identified several types of information as important to informing the Committee’s development of recommendations. In particular, Committee members were interested in gaining insight into the scope of safety and fire issues at the Wenas Wildlife Area.

Committee members sought information in the following areas:

- Wenas Wildlife Area management history and WDFW management priorities and mandates
- Existing rules and regulations related to wildlife area use
- Number of users, types of users, and when people use the Wildlife Area
- Safety concerns and complaints submitted to WDFW
- Enforcement by WDFW and other agencies
- Number and likely cause of fires at the Wenas Wildlife Area

Committee facilitators and WDFW worked with Committee members and member organizations to compile existing data in these areas and provide summaries and complete data sets to the Committee. A high-level summary of available data is provided in the following sections. Full data are available on the Committee’s [website](#).

Overall, Committee members expressed frustration with the lack of detailed information available and noted that improved information collection will be needed to determine the impact of Committee recommendations, and to refine and adaptively manage actions at the Wenas Wildlife Area over time.

A. Management History and Priorities at the Wenas Wildlife Area

The Wenas Wildlife Area was created in 1997 by combining portions of the L.T. Murray and Oak Creek wildlife areas. WDFW is the primary land manager for the Wenas Wildlife Area, which includes lands owned by DNR and BLM. WDFW's management of the Wenas Wildlife Area is consistent with the Department's mission "To preserve, protect and perpetuate fish, wildlife and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities."

Since the Wenas Wildlife Area's inception, dispersed shooting opportunities have been available to the public; however, during the early 2000s WDFW began considering how to better manage dispersed shooting at the wildlife area. The Department's efforts were spurred by increasing public use not only from shooters but also from other users and associated concerns with user safety, trash, fire, and habitat loss.

One of WDFW's priorities is to continue offering shooting opportunities at the wildlife area while conserving habitat and providing safe recreational opportunities for all wildlife area users. To that end, the Department requested that the Committee provide recommendations which strike a balance between seven interrelated goals: (1) support by the local communities; (2) reduction in risk to wildlife area users and neighbors; (3) improved habitat protection; (4) reduction in fire risks; (5) identification of actions that are financially attainable and manageable; (6) improvement of predictability for all users; and (7) adherence to clear and concise standards.

B. Existing Rules and Regulations for Shooting on Public Lands

The three agencies (WDFW, DNR, and BLM) responsible for public land within the Wenas Wildlife Area each have their own rules and regulations governing shooting. In theory, the rules and regulations for each agency apply based on land ownership. However, the complexity of the checkerboard agency ownership within the Wenas Wildlife Area makes it impractical to try to enforce three different sets of rules and regulations.

Because of this, WDFW's enforcement desire is to apply WDFW rules and regulations across the entire Wenas Wildlife Area. WDFW's regulations for shooting on public lands (WAC 220-500-140 and WAC 220-500-220) were put in place before DNR's regulations (WAC 332-52-145) and are less detailed and less specific than DNR regulations. The lack of specificity in the WDFW regulations can present a challenge for enforcement. In addition, given the checkerboard nature of the lands, the difference between existing regulations can sometimes cause confusion. The WDFW and DNR regulations on shooting are in Appendix B.

Other law enforcement agencies, primarily Kittitas and Yakima County Sheriff's offices and the Washington State Patrol, apply the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) when responding to safety concerns at the Wenas Wildlife Area.

C. Use and User Groups at the Wenas Wildlife Area

As part of its discussions, the Committee looked at available user data from WDFW to see if any conclusions could be drawn or patterns identified. Available WDFW data included demographic data from volunteer-administered surveys at the wildlife area, at commonly-used concentrated shooting sites. The other primary background data source was from automated vehicle counters located at several key road sections within the wildlife area.

After reviewing the data, the Committee was interested to know more about when, where, and how people use the Wenas Wildlife Area. The Committee was also interested in gauging users' overall knowledge of behavioral expectations in relation to other users. The Committee designed an online survey with a series of questions intended to answer these questions. WDFW distributed the survey via its email distribution list for Wenas interested parties, a link to the survey was added to the Committee's webpage, and Committee members forwarded the survey link to their respective groups. In all, there were 602 respondents to the survey. A brief summary of responses is provided below.

- 318 respondents selected shooting and 108 selected hunting as their primary activity at the Wenas; hiking and nature walking were also popular activities
- The most popular locations for shooting were Durr Road (58 respondents) and Sheep Company Road (57 respondents), followed by Umtanum Road East (34 respondents) and West (35 respondents)
- Users visit the wildlife area more in late spring and early summer, with a slight decrease during hotter late summer months; use increases again in the fall for hunting season—September and October—and then begins decreasing in November, with the lowest use in December, January, and February
- Weekends and Fridays are the most popular for users; other weekdays had approximately even distribution of use.

Complete results of the survey are in Appendix C. More detailed analysis of the user survey results may help WDFW, and Committee members, determine potential conflicts from overlapping areas and times of use for different recreation activities.

D. Safety Concerns and Complaints

WDFW tracks written complaints/concerns on an ad hoc basis. These complaints/concerns are received by various Department staff and through several other channels such as e-mail messages to WDFW staff, comment cards at public meetings, and letters. There is no formal tracking mechanism for written concerns or complaints—tracking relies on Department staff to save complaints and concerns in their working files.

Similarly, WDFW has no mechanism to track or record complaints or concerns that come from phone calls to the Department or are transmitted in one-on-one conversations between Department staff and the public. (For example, if someone meets a WDFW employee on the Wenas Wildlife Area and complains about trash, a locked gate or a shooting incident, these complaints are not tracked unless they are subsequently submitted in writing and become a public record.)

WDFW provided the Committee with all written complaints/concerns related to the Wenas Wildlife Area since 2004. During that time, 15 individuals described a first-hand experience where they felt unsafe due

to shooting activities. These reports are in Appendix D. The Committee attempted to reference the first-hand shooting experiences with WDFW enforcement data and was not able to document that any of the experiences were reported to or investigated by WDFW enforcement.

For the most part, complaints/concerns were sent in well after the fact, making an investigation impossible. In some cases, the dates are vague or not provided and therefore cannot be matched with certainty to enforcement data. WDFW enforcement staff told the Committee anecdotally that, in most cases, by the time an officer arrives on scene of a reported shooting-related complaint at the wildlife area, the party that was shooting has already left the scene and it is practically impossible to assess what occurred.

E. Enforcement

The WTS Advisory Committee received enforcement data from the Kittitas County Sheriff's Office and WDFW Region 3 Enforcement staff.

Kittitas County Sheriff's Office

The Kittitas County Sheriff's Office reviewed their records of calls/contacts on the Wenas Wildlife Area from 2010 to present. During that timeframe, there were 13 target shooting-related calls logged as occurring on the Wenas Wildlife Area. On further investigation, 12 of these calls were on state land and one was on private property.

Of the 12 target-shooting related calls on state land, two were confirmed as illegal shooting that represented either public risk or a criminal violation, and for which citations were issued. Of the other 10 calls, five were from members of the public requesting information on where to shoot legally, four were investigated and confirmed to be legal shooting activity, and three were reported as fire hazards.

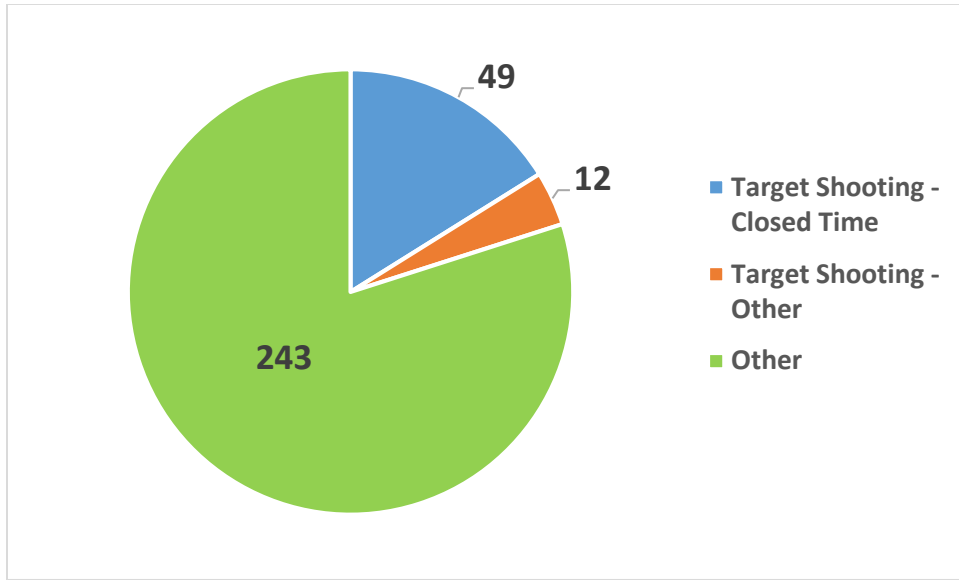
Yakima County Sheriff's Office

According to information drawn from a public disclosure request, from 2010 to March 2017 Yakima County Sheriff's Office recorded 15 total shooting-related responses on the Wenas Wildlife Area. Of these 15 responses, 10 were confirmed as shooting outside of allowed hours, two were investigated and found to be legal shooting activity, two were investigated and found to be unsafe shooting and education/information was provided, and the reasons of the remaining response could not be determined. There are no records of citations issued.

WDFW Region 3 Enforcement

WDFW Region 3 enforcement does not have data to summarize or evaluate contacts/calls that did not result in enforcement action, only summary data on citations issued (i.e., they do not track incidents of public contact or verbal warnings issued; only citations). Between July 2013 and July 20, 2017 there were 61 target-shooting-related citations issued on the Wenas Wildlife Area; 49 were for "Target Shooting – Closed Time" and 12 were for "Target Shooting – Other." During the time period examined, target-shooting-related complaints represented 20% of the total citations issued on the Wenas Wildlife Area (see Figure 1 below). WDFW is not able to further break down citations by geography (i.e., in their tracking they do not distinguish between the north and south ends of the wildlife area).

Figure 1: WDFW Citations at Wenas Wildlife Area (7/2013 to 7/20/2017)



The 12 enforcement actions for “Target Shooting – Other” included failure to remove target material, illegal targets, and use of exploding targets; Details are provided in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Shooting-Related Enforcement Data by Incident Type/Citation

Incident Number	Incident Type/Citation	Number of Citations Issued
WA-16-003284	Failure to remove target material	1
WA-14-000036	Illegal Targets	3
WA-14-001492	Illegal Targets	1
WA-15-005591	Illegal Targets	2
WA-15-010197	Illegal Targets	1
WA-13-013163	Use Exploding Targets	2
WA-14-004992	Use Exploding Targets	1
WA-16-001910	Use Exploding Targets	1

F. Fire

Between 2003 and 2014 there were 30 fires at the Wenas Wildlife Area that burned approximately 11,700 acres and cost nearly \$3 million in fire suppression and subsequent habitat restoration. WDFW and the Advisory Committee had extensive discussion of fire data for the Wenas Wildlife Area to try to determine with some certainty how many fires could be attributed to target shooting. The Committee specifically discussed 15 of these fires because of evidence suggesting they were caused by human activity.

For six of the fifteen fires discussed, the individuals responsible for starting the fire called 911 and reported that the fire started as a result of target shooting; these claims were investigated but the exact cause was not definitively determined and no charges resulted. For the remaining nine fires discussed, WDFW is confident that the fires were human-caused but acknowledges that, because their fire investigation is focused on documenting the response costs and damages from fires, not on establishing cause, they cannot be certain as to what human activity caused the fire. While the exact number of fires that can be attributed to target shooting is not known, given that there is *some* fire risk from shooting activity, the Committee recommendations include steps to mitigate fire risk at concentrated shooting sites.

In 2012 WDFW began implementing time-of-use restrictions on shooting at the Wenas Wildlife Area. Although the exact dates of these restrictions vary, they generally begin in late May or early June and remain in effect through the end of September. In 2012–2014 shooting was prohibited after 11:00 am; from 2015–2016 shooting was prohibited after 10:00 am. From June 19 to September 30, 2014 and from July 1 to September 30, 2015 shooting was completely prohibited due to high fire risk.

III. Recommendations

The Committee is making four types of interrelated recommendations to WDFW.

- A. Recommendations describing much-needed education and outreach for all user groups and calling for significant increases in education and outreach activities and resources.
- B. Recommendations describing the role of enforcement and calling for increased enforcement resources.
- C. Recommendations for focused enhancements to increase safety at four sites that historically and currently have been locations of concentrated shooting activities.
- D. Recommendations on implementation which describe a phased approach and continued engagement with the Advisory Committee going forward.

In some areas the Committee reached agreement on the main recommendation but did not reach agreement on a related topic. Differences in perspective on prohibiting certain types of firearms at enhanced locations, providing sanitation stations at enhanced locations, and how to address dispersed shooting at Buffalo Road. (with different Committee members defining that area more or less broadly) are described in text under recommendations 8, 13 and 14.

There were many areas of common ground even around topics on which the Committee did not reach consensus. It is possible that the Committee could reach agreement on these topics with additional time for deliberation; that time was not available during this phase of the process.

In addition, the Committee deliberated at length to try to reach agreement on a set of principles to inform ongoing decision-making and management of dispersed shooting on the Wenas. Ultimately the Committee did not reach agreement on this topic, due largely to differences in perspective on the meaning of WDFW's mission for management of shooting and other forms of recreation, and differences in perspective on the priority of shooting relative to other forms of recreation. The Committee's deliberations on this topic and the different perspectives expressed are described in Attachment 2. As with other topics on which the Committee did not reach agreement, there were many areas of common ground and it is possible the Committee could reach agreement on this topic with additional time for deliberation.

WDFW requested the Committee develop recommendations which meet the Department’s mission: “To preserve, protect and perpetuate fish, wildlife and ecosystems, while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities” and which: (1) are supported by the local communities; (2) reduce risk to Wildlife Area users and neighbors; (3) improve habitat protection; (4) reduce fire risks; (5) are financially attainable and manageable; (6) provide predictability for all users; and (7) adhere to clear and concise standards. The Committee believes that these recommendations, taken as a package, meet this request and represent an appropriate balance between the multiple goals WDFW expressed for this effort.

The Committee notes that these recommendations are not intended to affect hunting. The Committee recommends no changes to, or limitations on, legal hunting within the Wenas.

A. Education and Outreach

Education and outreach are the cornerstone of a long-term strategy to improve safety, reduce littering, reduce fire risk, ensure habitat protection, and create a better overall environment for all users at the Wenas Wildlife Area. Committee recommendations are based on the notion that visitors to the Wenas Wildlife Area need the following types of information to recreate safely and compatibly with other users:

- When are you entering the Wildlife Area?
- What are the expectations for each user group (shooters, horseback riders, hikers, mountain bikers, dog trainers, motorized users)? How can each group behave responsibly, both within its own activity and around other types of activity?
- What are the applicable rules/regulations for each user group?
- Where are more commonly used areas for shooting?
- Where are more commonly used areas for other uses?
- Where are habitat conservation areas?

The Committee believes most people are interested in doing the right thing (or doing things the right way), and that the main obstacle to being able to do this is a lack of information. The Committee’s recommendations address this information gap through several different approaches, most prominently:

- Development of clear materials describing what types of uses to expect at the Wenas Wildlife Area and requirements and best practices for various uses, including shooting
- Improvements to WDFW’s website to make it easier to find materials, as well as rules and regulations
- Aggressive and coordinated distribution of materials
- Increased staff presence at the Wildlife Area during peak use times
- Better signs and maps
- Continued and increased use of volunteers to amplify education and outreach efforts (including the Crime Observation and Reporting Training (CORT) course)
- Presentations and information sharing at user group meetings

Except for recommendation five, which the Committee understands will take longer, the Committee recommends all the education and outreach recommendations described below be part of Phase 1 and

that they be implemented by WDFW as soon as possible. The Committee also notes that education and outreach is ongoing and will not be “complete” at any specific point in time.

1. *WDFW should develop and install clearer and increased signage at the Wildlife Area including at all access points and at areas enhanced for concentrated shooting and all trail heads.*

The Committee believes that signage at the Wenas Wildlife Area could be improved for clarity of message as well as general visibility. WDFW should develop a strategy around both the content and placement of signage in and around the wildlife area as part of its overall education and outreach efforts—this should ensure presence of the right sign, with the right information, at the right place. The Committee is sensitive to the notion of “sign pollution” and “sign overload” and has structured its recommendations to highlight only the types and locations for signage that it believes are most necessary. Specifically, signs are recommended at the following locations:

A. Access points. Signs at access points should include information welcoming users to the Wenas Wildlife Area and describing the various uses that might be encountered, including shooting, indicating where various uses that might be encountered, and encouraging respect between user groups. Information at access points should give users the ability to easily locate themselves on the map of the wildlife area and understand the relative locations of roads, trails, areas enhanced for concentrated shooting, and other major uses (e.g., the designated dog training area). Including a map on entrance signs would meet this need.

B. Locations enhanced for concentrated shooting. Signs at locations enhanced for concentrated shooting should include:

- The type of firearm best suited for discharge at each location
- The intended shooting lanes and direction of fire
- Requirements and expectations for shooting behavior
- Fines and penalties if requirements are not met
- Specific (directional) information on other nearby uses and users shooters might expect to encounter. Paragraph C below identifies an initial set of these areas. Additional areas, if necessary, should be identified in coordination with the Advisory Committee.

C. Known areas of likely heavy overlap between shooters and other users. Areas near or adjacent to locations enhanced for concentrated shooting, and areas where shooting has historically been practiced that are not planned for enhancement, where topography, lack of adequate backstop, the crossing of trails or roads, or the proximity of houses render shooting unsafe should be signed. For example, the Committee has identified three such areas so far:

- The user defined “cut off” trail to access the Skyline trail in the vicinity of the Buffalo Road/Power Lines crossing, which has heavy use by hikers and horseback riders
- The Umptanum Creek crossing at Durr Road
- The Umptanum Falls parking area

Signs also should be placed on trails, roads, and other routinely-used locations to notify users that they are near an area enhanced for concentrated shooting. For example, the Committee has identified one such area so far:

- The Cottonwood drainage (above Sheep Company) warning hikers and horseback riders they are nearing an enhanced area used for concentrated shooting

The Committee emphasizes that areas signed in these ways should be identified in consultation with the Advisory Committee and with an eye towards limiting signs to only the locations most in need of them to reduce the overall number and type of signs on the wildlife area. Good maps showing roads, trails, and areas enhanced for shooting should go a long way towards providing the necessary information and should minimize the need for signs.

The Committee acknowledges that signs alone are not enough to curb inappropriate behavior or educate the public about “where to go and what to do” at the Wildlife Area. The Committee also acknowledges that signs may be vandalized or destroyed and will require regular maintenance or replacement (as one Committee member said, “Whoever invents a bullet proof sign will be a very rich person”). However, proper signage is still an important part of education for visitors to the wildlife area and should not be neglected. All signs should include the web address for WDFW’s re-designed website to help users easily find additional information.

2. WDFW, working with user groups such as those represented on the WTS Advisory Committee, should develop simple and clear educational materials for all users of the Wenas Wildlife Area, with a particular emphasis on clear materials addressing regulations, best practices, and codes of public conduct for shooting and recreation on public lands.

Educational materials should describe requirements and conduct expectations on public lands and where on the Wenas Wildlife Area users might expect to encounter different activities. At a minimum, this information should address:

- Different uses at the wildlife area and common locations of different uses including roads, trails, horse riding areas, dog training areas, locations enhanced for concentrated shooting, and other relevant information on where different uses commonly happen
- Different types of habitat at the wildlife area and plants and animals which depend on the habitat
- Requirements for public conduct
- What constitutes an adequate backstop in a natural environment
- “Good Neighbor” expectations for what users should expect when encountering other uses, and polite behavior/etiquette between user groups

Materials could include one-page handouts, flyers, maps (see also recommendation 3 on maps, below) or postcards. They could even include paper targets with safety/use information printed on the back. As with other materials, WDFW should make these resources easily accessible through the redesigned, easier to use website, and all materials should include the web address for WDFW’s redesigned website to help users easily find additional information.

WDFW does not have to start from scratch to develop these materials; other public agencies and organizations have developed materials that could be adapted for use at the Wenas Wildlife Area. Examples include:

- DNR
 - [Shooting Flyer](#)
 - [Mountain Biking Flyer](#)
 - Multiple Use Flyer
- Trash No Land
 - [Brochure: Common Rules for Shooting on Public Lands](#)
- National Shooting Sports Foundation
 - [Fire Warning Flyer](#)
- BLM
 - [Shooting Flyer](#)

3. *WDFW should develop maps showing access points, primary roads and trails, areas enhanced for concentrated shooting, and any other designed use areas (e.g., dog training areas).*

Maps should be available on paper (for handout), prominently posted at all entrances and trailheads, and readily available online. They could also incorporate information on times of year when uses increase. Committee members note that the Green Dot map is a successful example of a clear, easy to understand map that indicates the appropriate trail system for motorized use at the Wenas Wildlife Area. It might be used as the basis for the more comprehensive map recommended here. A similar approach should be undertaken for other uses. An [example map](#) showing multiple uses was recently developed for the Teanaway Community Forest.

4. *WDFW, working with groups such as those represented on the WTS Advisory Committee, should ensure broad distribution of educational materials and maps via multiple distribution methods.*

Educational materials will only make a difference if they get in the hands of users. WDFW should consider and to the maximum extent practical, make use of, the following distribution methods for educational materials:

- Outreach to local stores that sell firearms and ammunition (for example, ask retailers to hand out a “best practices” flyer when people purchase a firearm and/or ammunition)
- Shared at events (including sharing by supporting organizations, e.g., shared at the NRA table at the Central Washington fair)
- Available at WDFW offices and easily locatable on the WDFW website
- Shared with local groups such as NRA chapters, Mule Deer Foundation, Field and Stream, 4H clubs, Master Hunters, Backcountry Horsemen, mountain bikers, local Audubon chapters, and hiking groups (note: this list is not comprehensive and is meant to illustrate that there are many local groups that could help distribute information)
- Distributed to local law enforcement and fire departments
- Distributed to Central Washington University for distribution to incoming classes and particularly to University police and the part of the University that operates firearms lockers for students
- Shared at presentations and meetings with user groups

People take in information from a variety of sources and methods, from television to newspaper to Facebook posts. Educating the public on proper use at the Wenas Wildlife Area is no different, and will require a mix of traditional media outreach, social media channels, and personal contact such as talking

with users at trailheads, meeting with local groups, and having a presence at local events. Recommendations 5 through 7 below address the notion that successful education and outreach will require not only written materials but also one-on-one contact with Wenas users.

5. WDFW should increase Department staff presence at the Wildlife Area especially at high-use times to offer information to users.

Every public contact is an opportunity to educate people on appropriate use of the wildlife area. WDFW staff should take advantage of these opportunities by handing out informational materials and communicating with members of the public whenever possible (for example, if WDFW staff are undertaking maintenance work and encounter a group of hikers, take the opportunity to provide information). Additionally, WDFW should coordinate staff efforts related to education and outreach during times of high user activity such as weekends and the two to three weeks prior to hunting season when a large number of hunters typically access the wildlife area to sight in their firearms. As with other recommendations, local volunteer groups can bolster WDFW staff presence.

As part of rolling out the new educational information described above, the Committee recommends a concerted effort to increase staff visibility and get information in the hands of users by stationing WDFW staff and/or volunteers at heavily-used entrances to the Wenas during days and hours of peak use (likely weekends) for at least four weeks to meet a broad cross-section of users and get them information.

The Committee recognizes that resources are limited and that this sort of effort will involve decisions to move staff from other tasks to this work, and/or assign resources (managers, planners, etc.) that normally do not work in the field to temporary field duty. As described in recommendations 6 and 7 below, the Committee also is recommending an additional staff position to focus on ongoing education and outreach, and ongoing and increased use of volunteers for education and outreach.

6. To further increase Department staff presence at the Wenas Wildlife Area and provide for ongoing education and outreach, WDFW should create and fill the position of Outreach Liaison for WDFW Region 3.

At a minimum, the Outreach Liaison should be tasked with coordinating distribution of education and outreach material to increase knowledge of expected behavior and what to anticipate among all Wenas Wildlife Area user groups, identifying gaps in education and outreach materials, and working with user groups to create new materials as needed. The Committee discussed whether this should be a Department staff or a volunteer position; ultimately the Committee determined that a Department staff position would more reliably fulfill this important role. The Committee recognizes that state funding for new positions is very difficult in the current state budget atmosphere. It encourages WDFW to collaborate with NGOs or other interested groups to explore joint funding for this position. Grant funding also may be available for positions such as this and should be pursued.

7. WDFW, in coordination with local groups, should support and expand the use of volunteers at the Wenas Wildlife Area to help distribute information, continue cleanups, and assist with other activities in support of use of the wildlife area as appropriate.

Volunteers have been, and will continue to be, an important part of WDFW's outreach and education efforts. While volunteers are not a substitute for WDFW staff, many of the recommendations described above will be bolstered by volunteer actions, which WDFW can help coordinate to maximize outreach

and education activities. In addition to the recommendations described above, volunteers might help WDFW by:

- Providing information at areas commonly used for shooting, to encourage safe and responsible behavior
- Providing information at wildlife area access points about where various types of uses are most likely to occur and how users can safely co-exist
- Expanding trash pickup beyond the annual cleanups, for example by creating an “Adopt an Area” program like the “Adopt a Highway” program

B. Enforcement

Enforcement is intended to back up education and outreach activities. Recommendations are focused on clarifying regulations for shooting on public lands and optimizing existing enforcement resources, with the understanding that additional resources may be difficult to obtain. However, the Committee is recommending at least one new enforcement officer (see Recommendation 9, below) and is supportive of WDFW budget requests to establish these new resources. The Committee understands that the Legislature makes decisions about WDFW’s budget.

Except for recommendation 8 to clarify requirements for shooting on public lands, and recommendation 12 on information management, which the Committee believes should be implemented as soon as possible, enforcement recommendations are intended to be part of Phase 2 after initiation of increased education and outreach.

8. WDFW should revise its regulations on shooting on public lands (WAC 220-500-140 and WAC 220-500-220) to match DNR’s regulations on shooting on public lands (WAC 332-52-145) so the regulations are consistent.

Currently, WDFW and DNR regulations for shooting on public lands are different. WDFW’s regulations for shooting on public lands were put in place before DNR’s and are less detailed and less specific. The lack of specificity in the WDFW regulations can present a challenge for enforcement. In addition, given the checkerboard nature of the lands, the difference between existing regulations can sometimes cause confusion. Revising the regulations for shooting on public lands to make them consistent would alleviate these concerns, clarify requirements, and simplify enforcement. In general, the Committee anticipates that the WDFW regulations will move in the direction of the DNR regulations in this revision; however, if there are concerns with the clarity of the DNR regulations, this also is an opportunity to address those. The outcome the Committee is looking for is one set of reasonably specific, reasonably detailed, clear regulations for shooting on public lands that execute existing requirements. One way to accomplish this is for WDFW to simply incorporate the DNR regulations by reference. Incorporation by reference has the added benefit of ensuring that the regulations would remain consistent into the future. As described more fully in the discussion of recommendation 13, the Committee also discussed but did not reach agreement on the idea of prohibiting use of certain types of firearms at the locations enhanced for concentrated shooting. Committee members who support prohibiting use of certain types of firearms at locations enhanced for concentrated shooting supported including these prohibitions in the regulations.

During deliberations some concerns arose about compliance of other user groups with applicable rules and regulations, in particular with regard to user defined trails. This topic could be addressed during Phase 2 of the Advisory Committee process.

9. WDFW should enhance coordination with local law enforcement, non-enforcement WDFW programs, and volunteer groups (as appropriate) to focus their available patrols and on-site presence for the Wenas at sites enhanced for concentrated shooting and at trail heads during anticipated high-use periods, and should create and fill at least one additional enforcement officer position for Region 3.

The Committee was briefed on the challenges associated with enforcement at the Wenas Wildlife Area. These included the need for enforcement officers to cover a broad area encompassing not just the Wenas Wildlife Area but other wildlife areas as well, the difficulty in responding quickly (i.e., when an incident is occurring) given the distances that must be covered, and the need to address multiple enforcement priorities at any given time. The Committee understands these challenges; the Committee also understands that WDFW Region 3 enforcement already devotes 50-60% of available enforcement resources for wildlife areas to the Wenas Wildlife Area.

To address these challenges the Committee recommends a two-pronged approach. First, the Committee recommends that WDFW meet with local law enforcement, and other enforcement agencies, to discuss concerns at the wildlife area and develop a plan for emphasis enforcement patrols and presence. This should emphasize existing areas of concentrated shooting and times of known and anticipated high use. Education and outreach should be the focus of these patrols initially, however the focus should shift to issuing citations (when warranted) over time. Increased enforcement patrols should be coordinated with the increased presence of WDFW staff and volunteers (see recommendations 5 through 8) so the two activities can be mutually reinforcing.

Second, to supplement existing enforcement resources WDFW should add one additional enforcement officer for Region 3. The Committee understands that additional resources will be required to implement this recommendation and that Legislative action will be needed for these resources to become available. Committee members are willing to support WDFW in seeking resources to implement this recommendation.

10. WDFW should collaborate with the Eyes in the Woods organization and offer one or more Crime Observation and Reporting Training (CORT) courses and related support for the Wenas Wildlife Area, preferably with an initial CORT course in early spring 2018.

Eyes in the Woods is endorsed by Committee members as an important organization and the CORT program empowers hunters and others to report inappropriate behavior without the need for direct confrontation. The Committee recommends an ongoing partnership with Eyes in the Woods to routinely offer and support courses focused on the Wenas Wildlife Area.

11. WDFW should improve existing tools and/or develop new tools to make it simpler for people to document and report illegal behavior.

The ability to identify, understand, and manage concerns at the Wildlife Area depends on participation from users. WDFW currently has a text-tip line that can be used to report concerns; however,

Committee members who have experience with the line found it difficult and cumbersome to use. The Committee recommends improvement of existing tools and/or development of new tools, so people can more easily communicate concerns and document and report tips and illegal behaviors. The Committee was especially interested in development of a mobile application for reporting. This could be similar to (and perhaps use some of the same technology as) mobile applications the Department has developed for reporting invasive weeds and other invasive species.

12. WDFW should improve its enforcement records management and work towards a records management system capable of producing analysis-ready reports specific to public safety.

The Committee was frustrated by the limited information available on WDFW enforcement activities at the wildlife area and by the time (and level of effort) required to produce summaries and reports. Additional information on enforcement would allow better tracking and understanding of emerging problem areas and issues and promote more focused education and outreach, and more targeted enforcement follow up. At the same time, the Committee recognizes that records management technology is expensive both in the sense of acquiring the system and in the sense of training on the system and maintaining it. The Committee recommends that over time WDFW move towards a more robust records management system that can produce results similar to those available to most local law enforcement, including sufficient detail to allow for identification of “hot spots” of bad behavior, and tracking of public safety issues such as:

- Type of call (question, accusation etc.)
- Where, when, date/time reported, date/time investigated, date/time closed.
- Type of closure (arrest, citation, filed with prosecutor for review, warning, unfounded, not sustained etc.)

C. Enhancement of Select Sites for Concentrated Shooting

The Committee recommends that two specific sites at which shooting has historically concentrated be enhanced for continued concentrated shooting. The Committee does not recommend development of formal shooting ranges at these sites. Rather it recommends that the sites be clearly identified as areas enhanced for concentrated shooting so that all users can plan their activities accordingly, and that the inherent safety features of the sites be improved and amplified to make them more obvious to users, particularly users who may be unfamiliar with the Wenas Wildlife Area.

Locations recommended for enhancement for concentrated shooting were identified by Committee members after visiting many of the existing, user-defined, ad hoc locations of concentrated shooting. The Committee preferred to use existing, user-defined locations for the enhanced shooting sites, both because those locations are already known to and used by shooters, and because they already are impacted by active use, so relying on them minimizes disturbance of unimpacted habitat.

During their visits to the existing, user-defined, concentrated shooting sites, Committee members considered several factors such as: the inherent safety features of each area based on topography, surrounding land uses, other uses at the shooting area (e.g., proximity of trails), access, proximity to residences, history of user conflicts and/or real or perceived safety issues, and potential for fire response. The Committee preferred sites with inherent safety features that could be enhanced, sites with good access, near the entrances to the wildlife area, and sites with good fire response. In most

cases, Committee members visited the sites multiple times, together in small groups, individually, and with staff from WDFW. In response to Committee member requests, WDFW provided information on areas under consideration for recommendation, including information on past evaluations of the sites.

From these deliberations, the Committee identified four sites for further consideration for enhancement for concentrated shooting: Sheep Company Road and Buffalo Road in the South Wenas, and Durr Road and East Umtanum in the North Wenas. Committee members made additional visits to those sites, considered details of potential enhancements such as the types of firearms most appropriate for the sites, layout of firing lanes and directions, access, and construction of backstops. Committee members published the names and locations of sites under consideration in draft recommendations made available to the public and broadly distributed, and took comments on the locations under consideration at listening sessions in Selah and Ellensburg and at Committee meetings in September and October.

Based on the additional site visits and comments received at the Committee meetings and listening sessions, the Committee ultimately decided to recommend Sheep Company Road and Durr Road be fully enhanced for concentrated shooting—with enhancements designed to meet the needs of the shooting public and encourage shooters to use these sites over other sites that historically have been used (see recommendation 13). The Committee is recommending enhancements oriented for shotgun shooting only for Buffalo Road (see recommendation 14) and only limited, very specific, enhancements at East Umtanum designed to increase predictability and safety but not intended to draw additional use to that site (see recommendation 15).

The Committee reiterates that these recommendations are not intended to affect hunting. The Committee recommends no changes to, or limitations on, legal hunting within the Wenas.

13. WDFW should immediately identify existing concentrated shooting sites at Sheep Company Road and Durr Road as locations to be enhanced for concentrated shooting, and should implement initial enhancements—particularly around education and outreach—at these sites as soon as possible and other enhancements as quickly as funding can be secured. Physical enhancements should be focused and designed to increase the likelihood of safe and predictable behavior and encourage compliance with requirements and expectations.

The Committee identified four existing locations of concentrated shooting for enhancement. Two—Sheep Company Road and Durr Road—are discussed here. Buffalo Road is described in recommendation 14, and East Umptanum is described in recommendation 15.

At the existing concentrated shooting area at Sheep Company Road, WDFW should make focused enhancements for rifle and handgun with northeast orientation. Some Committee members believe provisions for shotgun also should be provided, and suggest that this be considered during Phase 2 of the Committee effort.

At the existing concentrated shooting area at North Durr Road, WDFW should make focused enhancements for short-to-mid-range pistol and rifle, plus shotgun/trap. Some Committee members believe provisions for long-range shooting also should be provided, and suggest that the North Durr Road enhancements should be expanded to address this during Phase 2 of the Committee effort.

Enhancements should be designed to increase the likelihood of safe and predictable behavior and encourage compliance with requirements and expectations. The Committee had extensive deliberations

on the types of enhancements that would be appropriate for enhanced concentrated shooting sites. The goal was to develop an approach to these sites that offered flexibility to make enhancements over time and could be implemented relatively inexpensively. The Committee recognizes that implementing these enhancements will require resources. Committee members are prepared to support implementation of these recommendations by supporting resource requests and with volunteer time.

The following focused enhancements are recommended, in order of importance. They are recommended in addition to the signs at areas enhanced for concentrated shooting described in recommendation 4, earlier in this report.

- Install fences, signs, or other deterrents to prevent unsafe direction of fire. This is largely addressed in recommendation 1, but is reiterated here for emphasis
- Manage vegetation and install fire breaks to reduce fire risk, including clearing vegetation for a distance of at least 10 feet from backstops
- Improve backstops using existing materials from within the site where practical, commercially-sold bullet traps, or other means to achieve a backstop that is at least 10 feet in height
- Identify shooting lanes and direction of fire and install separation berms of at least 8 feet in height between shooting areas
- Improve or relocate existing access roads so they are more easily accessible by passenger cars and improve parking including graveling parking areas, maintaining them relatively level and free of vegetation, and separating parking areas from roads and from shooting areas by rocks or other means
- Clearly mark intended firing lines with marking paint, signage, or other means
- Where practical, install durable bench rests for sites used for rifle shooting and durable elevated stands at sites used for pistol and shotgun shooting suitable for placing ammunition, supplies, tools, etc.
- Provide consideration(s) for the disabled
- Provide enhancements that will reduce the likelihood of littering, such as trash collection if feasible (note that the Committee recognizes that creative approaches may be needed for trash collection, since commercial collection may not be available at these locations)

Public and private grant funding may be available for these sorts of site enhancements and should be pursued.

Movement of lead in the environment should be minimized and safe removal (harvesting) of lead, if possible, is encouraged. Some Committee members suggested a separate, stand-alone recommendation on lead should be made. This idea was not fully discussed and consideration of it may be part of the next phase of the Advisory Group process.

The Committee also discussed, but did not reach full agreement on, enhancements to provide for sanitation stations (outdoor toilets). Some Committee members were in favor of outdoor toilets at enhanced shooting sites, while others were concerned that these facilities would present a safety hazard.

Some Committee members also suggested that the enhanced sites be referred to and managed as “Open Range[s]” as described in the US Department of Energy Office of Health, Safety and Security

publication “Range Design Criteria” dated 6/4/2012. This idea was not fully discussed and consideration of it may be part of the next phase of the Advisory Group process.

Finally, the Committee discussed but did not reach agreement on the idea of prohibiting use of certain types of firearms at the locations enhanced for concentrated shooting. Committee members who support prohibiting use of certain types of firearms at locations enhanced for concentrated shooting believe that shooting at these locations should be limited to the types of firearm best suited for discharge at that location to increase safety and to provide more space for the firearms best suited for each location, so the enhanced locations can serve more users. Some Committee members who hold this view believe the full suite of enhanced sites should be approached as a business plan with a view toward providing adequate capacity for shooting sports in the future, by dedicating enhanced sites to certain shooting disciplines. For example, at the Sheep Company enhanced site, this would mean rifle and pistol shooting would be encouraged and shotgun shooting would be prohibited. Committee members who hold this perspective believe the types of firearms intended for use at the enhanced sites, and the types of firearms prohibited, should be listed on signs at the enhanced sites and readily available on the re-designed WDFW website.

Committee members who did not support prohibiting certain types of firearms at locations enhanced for concentrated shooting were comfortable encouraging use of the firearm best suited for that location but were not comfortable prohibiting use of firearms that, while not the focus of the enhancements, could nonetheless be safely discharged in compliance with applicable regulations. For example, at the Sheep Company enhanced site, this would mean that shotgun shooting in compliance with applicable regulations would continue to be allowed even though the enhancements at the site are focused on rifles and pistols. They note that many shooters go out to shoot multiple firearms and would be unwilling to drive to different locations. Committee members who do not want to prohibit certain types of firearms at the enhanced sites also noted that the schedule for enhancements at Buffalo Road is unknown, making a prohibition on use of shotguns at Sheep Company particularly troubling to them. Some Committee members who were opposed to limiting use of certain types of firearms at the enhanced sites also expressed the concern that these limits might lead to the elimination of shooting altogether.

The issue of whether to limit use of firearms at locations enhanced for concentrated shooting to only those firearms which are the focus of the enhancements was not resolved and will require further deliberations in the next phase of the Committee process. Overall, Committee members who commented on this issue emphasized the importance of education and outreach to increase the understanding of safety requirements and the compliance with them—and emphasized that this likely would go a long way toward curbing unsafe behaviors.

Attachment 3 includes conceptual drawings prepared by a Committee Member showing:

- A recommended approach to focused enhancements including a conceptual layout of shooting orientation, backstops, berms, firing lines, and lanes
- A conceptual drawing of enhancements at North Durr Road
- A conceptual drawing of enhancements at Sheep Company Road
- A conceptual drawing of enhancements at Buffalo Road

14. WDFW should identify and enhance an area for concentrated shooting of shotgun at Buffalo Road approximately .8 miles north of the intersection of the power line and the green dot road. The orientation of the area should be discussed with the Advisory Group during Phase 2 of this effort. As with Sheep Company and Durr Roads, enhancements should be focused and designed to increase the likelihood of safe and predictable behavior and encourage compliance with requirements and expectations.

The Committee deliberated extensively about the Buffalo Road area. It is the location with the most reported perceived user safety concerns and has a high concentration of overlapping uses—with a user-defined access trail currently used to approach the Skyline Trail cutting through an area historically, and currently, used for dispersed shooting.

While the Committee was interested in identifying a site that could be enhanced to support a variety of firearm types at Buffalo Road, ultimately, they decided to recommend enhancements oriented only for shotgun shooting. This is due to the high concentration of use in the area, the perceived difficulty of locating/laying out appropriate backstops for use of firearms other than shotguns, and the proximity of homes. The Committee could not, during this phase of the process, identify a site that all could agree on for additional enhancements.

The Committee identified a location for shotgun oriented enhancements approximately .8 miles beyond the intersection of the powerlines and the Green Dot road. Committee members recognized pros and cons to different orientations of an enhanced area at that location. Orienting the area to the north/northeast provides relatively level and open ground and more space for enhancements including parking. Orienting to the west/northwest may ease concerns over the potential for people to use inappropriate firearms; however, because of the topography and limited level space adjacent to the road it presents more of a challenge for enhancement. Ultimately, the Committee recommends that the orientation of the enhanced site at Buffalo Road be a topic of discussion for the next phase of the Advisory Committee effort, during which time a recommendation can be made.

Whatever the eventual orientation selected, Committee members agreed that the enhanced area should provide ample space for vehicle parking to encourage use by shotgun users while, at the same time, limiting disruption to habitat. Committee members noted that one advantage to enhancements for shotgun-only in this regard is that the shot drop field (estimated at approximately 40 acres) can remain in natural cover. Because backstops and side berms are not needed, enhancements necessary for shotgun-only at Buffalo Road will be significantly less than those recommended for Sheep Company and Durr Roads (see Recommendation 13). As with the Sheep Company and Durr Road enhanced sites, access will need to be improved and maintained so the enhanced area can be easily reached by passenger car. Also, as with the Sheep Company and Durr Road enhanced sites, a safety zone around the enhanced area at Buffalo Road should be clearly signed to prevent users from accidentally wandering into the impact area. The Committee estimated the total area for enhancements, including parking, operating area, shot fall area, and safety zone at 70 acres, although, as discussed above, most of the acreage would remain in natural cover.

The Committee discussed but did not reach agreement on how best to address dispersed shooting at Buffalo Road (with different Committee members defining that area more or less broadly). This area has seen increasing use by multiple groups, including by horseback riders and hikers using a user-defined access trail to reach the Skyline Trail. Ultimately, four Committee members suggest that there should be

a small area closed to dispersed shooting at this location. The remaining Committee members do not support this approach, or any closure of dispersed shooting in compliance with applicable requirements, and instead favor other approaches to reduce user conflicts and increase safety.

Committee members who were in favor of closing a small area at Buffalo Road¹ to dispersed shooting believe a closure is needed to ensure safety given that the area is heavily used by multiple user groups. They expressed concern that education and outreach, signs, enforcement, and encouraging use of the new enhanced shooting areas might not adequately reduce inappropriate shooting in that area, particularly shooting with high-caliber, long-range firearms. They note that much of this area appears to not be in compliance with rules for target shooting, especially for rifles or other long-range firearms, in that it lacks an unobstructed earthen backstop capable of stopping all projectiles and debris in a safe manner, or it involves shooting into a road or a trail. Ultimately, they believe that a prohibition on dispersed shooting in this area would best promote safety, given the specific conditions at that location. Most Committee members who hold this view do not support any other closures to dispersed shooting at the Wenas and are, in fact, supportive of dispersed shooting in compliance with applicable requirements.

While all Committee members shared concerns about safety, Committee members who were not in favor of closure of any areas to dispersed shooting in compliance with applicable requirements supported other means to achieve safety improvements. They believe the best approach is to use the combination of education and outreach, signs, enforcement, and encouraging use of the new enhanced shooting areas to reduce inappropriate shooting behavior and increase safety as described in the rest of this report. They believe that user conflicts could be addressed by increasing separation of user groups through, for example, relocating the current user-defined access trail to the Skyline Trail, providing additional parking south and east of the current parking (as discussed in the draft Wenas Management Plan), and/or improving access and parking for the Skyline Trail trailhead, believing it to be the approach most likely to successfully provide for all users over time. Other Committee members expressed interest in enhancing a second (or alternative) site for shooting in the canyon east of Twin Canyons, which would provide increased user separation and, because of topography, could have the added benefit of providing for additional shooting disciplines.

Committee members who do not support closing any part of the wildlife area to dispersed shooting provided such shooting is in compliance with applicable rules and regulations also were concerned that such a closure would prioritize one or more user groups (e.g., hikers) over another (e.g., shooters), and that it would represent a “slippery slope” and might lead to more and more extensive closures over time. These Committee members recognize that if education and outreach, enforcement, encouraging use of the enhanced areas, etc., are not working there will be a need to reevaluate how to move forward; however, they favor giving these recommendations time to work before making decisions about what (if any) additional measures might be needed. They note that in their view, horses, hiking, and motor and mountain bike riding adversely affect habitat as much, if not more than, dispersed shooting.

¹ Committee members define the “Buffalo Road” area more broadly than others. Some are most interested in the area in the vicinity of the Buffalo Road/Power Lines crossing; others have broader areas in mind up to the entire vicinity of Buffalo Road.

Both groups of Committee members—those in support of a small closure and those not in support—expressed concern and frustration that one user group seemed to want to shut down an area for other users. Committee members in support of a small closure indicated that horseback riders and hikers were already limited in their use of the Buffalo Road area and would not use the area if dispersed shooting continues.

Committee members in support of continued dispersed shooting, provided it complies with applicable rules and requirements, felt that horseback riders and hikers were trying to take away a long-used dispersed shooting location for their convenience rather than working with dispersed shooters to try to come up with a solution. They note that a fuller exploration of the seasonality and days and times of use by various user groups should be part of any future discussion of a closure. Based on an informal public poll carried out by the Committee early in the process, it appears that shooting uses occur frequently and year around, while hiking and horseback riding uses may tend to be more seasonal, concentrated in spring and fall. More complete information—and discussion—of the seasonality of uses could help tailor future actions to better meet the needs of all users.

Regardless of their views on how best to address safety and user conflicts at Buffalo Road, Committee members agree that the Buffalo Road area should be a priority for intense education and outreach efforts. These should include the access point signs and other signs described in recommendation 1, and a concerted effort to reach out to users and user groups to ensure that these individuals and groups are aware of one another and can plan their uses accordingly. The Committee also agrees that a number of the areas historically (and currently) used by dispersed shooters at Buffalo Road may, in practice, not be in compliance with requirements for shooting on public lands because, for example, they result in shooting across a trail, or they do not have an unobstructed line of sight to an earthen backstop capable of stopping all projectiles and debris in a safe manner. Committee members agree that a significant increase in education and outreach, backed up by appropriate enforcement follow up, is needed to change these behaviors. Habitat rehabilitation in areas historically used for dispersed shooting where shooting is now discouraged might further encourage use of the enhanced sites or other more appropriate sites.

15. WDFW should make focused enhancements to the existing area of user-defined shooting at East Umtanum with a goal of improving safety and the predictability of firing direction for dispersed shooting users who avail themselves of that site.

As with Buffalo Road, the Committee had extensive deliberations about the East Umtanum site. This site has been historically, and is currently, used by numbers of dispersed shooters and the Committee considered recommending it for enhancement for concentrated shooting. However, the Committee ultimately decided not to recommend larger-scale enhancements at the East Umtanum site for concentrated shooting and instead to focus enhancements in the north part of the Wenas Wildlife Area on the Durr Road site. This was due largely to concerns expressed by neighbors and other user groups at Committee meetings and during listening sessions. At the same time, the Committee recognizes that the East Umtanum site likely will continue to be used by dispersed shooters and therefore is recommending some focused enhancements in the form of signs, other markings, and potential enhancement of existing natural backstops to ensure all users are aware of one another and to increase the predictability and safety of shooting uses, but that are not designed to draw additional shooting use to the area or to encourage more concentrated shooting.

Some Committee members support additional enhancements at East Umtanum, including a defined and improved off-road parking area to prevent additional habitat disruption from driving off the road/shoulder, and a more formal firing line/backstop enhancement along with marked firing lines and/or benches to be more directive of safe shooting directions. A Committee Member notes that some shooters at East Umtanum shoot north or a little east of north, which is a safety concern, and drive off the road to shoot from their vehicles, a concern for habitat degradation. Trails noted by some users as being of concern in this area appear to not be part of the official Wenas trail system and are user defined, rather than expressly authorized or maintained by DNR or WDFW. Further deliberation around the exact enhancements at East Umtanum that will best promote safety, limit habitat degradation, and reduce user conflicts should be included in Phase 2 of the Committee process.

As with the Buffalo Road area, some Committee members expressed frustration that, in their view, particular user groups, in this case mountain bikers and hikers, were trying to take away a long-used dispersed shooting location for their convenience rather than working with dispersed shooters to try to come up with a solution.

Also, as with Buffalo Road (with different Committee members defining that area more or less broadly), the Committee believes that a number of the areas historically (and currently) used by dispersed shooters at East Umtanum may in fact not be in compliance with requirements for shooting on public lands because, for example, they do not have an unobstructed earthen backstop capable of stopping all projectiles and debris in a safe manner. A significant increase in education and outreach, backed up by appropriate enforcement follow up, is needed to change these behaviors ensure dispersed shooting occurs in compliance with applicable requirements.

Similar to other concentrated shooting sites, movement of lead in the environment should be minimized and safe removal (harvesting) of lead, if possible, is encouraged.

D. Implementation

16. WDFW should take a phased approach to making improvements at the Wenas Wildlife Area with identifiable and measurable milestones.

The Committee acknowledges that implementing these recommendations will take time and effort and that the resources needed, in particular to make focused enhancements at sites improved for concentrated shooting, will take time—and possibly legislative action—to obtain. The Committee recommends beginning with actions that are quicker and less expensive to implement, followed by monitoring, and then moving towards more intensive management and investment if and where warranted.

Phase 1 is comprised of the majority of the recommendations on education and outreach, including development of new education and outreach materials, distribution of these materials, increased staff and volunteer presence on the Wildlife Area, and signs including signs at areas enhanced for concentrated shooting. It also includes revisions to the WDFW regulations on shooting on public lands to improve clarity and predictability, improving the WDFW website to make it easier to find rules and regulations, improved information collection, and signing and initial education and outreach actions at areas which will be enhanced for concentrated shooting (see recommendations 1 through 5, 7, 8, 12, and 13). Phase 1 should begin as soon as possible.

Phase 2 includes hiring an education and outreach liaison, increased enforcement emphasis and resources (including hiring an additional enforcement officer), and construction of focused on-the-ground enhancements to improve sites for concentrated shooting. (See recommendations 6, 9 through 11, and 14.)

Phases 1 and 2 are not intended to be strictly sequential; they can overlap. For example, if resources are available, priority on-the-ground improvements to sites enhanced for concentrated shooting might begin immediately and overlap with development and distribution of education and outreach materials. One of the intentions of the phased approach is to ensure that WDFW begins implementation of recommendations that can be accomplished quickly immediately and makes real progress, rather than waiting until resources enough for everything are available to start. Overall, the Committee anticipates the phased approach will take four or more years to complete, with the first phase being completed in the first year if not sooner.

Attachment 4 lists the Committee's recommendations by phase.

17. The WTS Advisory Committee should continue to meet to offer WDFW advice and support as recommendations are implemented. Meetings should be quarterly for the first year and semi-annual after that until the Department and the Committee determine that further support is not needed.

Many members of the WTS Advisory Committee are willing to continue to be engaged as recommendations are implemented. Future committee roles could include: further deliberations and recommendations on topics not resolved during Phase 1; support and assistance for WDFW as it works with user groups, and local and state elected officials to implement recommendations; ongoing advice and perspectives on adaptive management as more information emerges over time; and direct assistance through volunteering. The Committee acknowledges that some members may not be willing or able to commit to continuing involvement; in those cases, members should be replaced by a representative of a similar constituency/user group.

IV. Conclusion

Committee members dedicated significant time and effort to the long-standing question of how to address dispersed shooting in the Wenas Wildlife Area and reached consensus on most topics. This includes consensus recommendations on much-needed education and outreach for all user groups and calling for increased education and outreach activities and resources; the role of enforcement and calling for increased enforcement resources; focused enhancements to increase safety at four sites that historically and currently have been locations of concentrated shooting activities; and a phased approach to implementation with continued engagement with the Advisory Committee going forward.

Even for the few topics on which the Committee did not reach consensus, there were many areas of common ground. It is possible that the Committee could reach agreement on these topics with additional time for deliberations. Most Committee members are interested in continuing to work with WDFW to see their consensus recommendations implemented fully and quickly and to continue deliberations on remaining topics.

Attachment 1: List of Committee Members

John Baranowski

Lee Davis

Bill Essman

Tim Funkhouser

Bret Hollar

Keely Hopkins

Walt Hyde

Brian Lund

Jim Lydigsen

Debby McCandless

Steve Miller

Clay Myers

Craig O'Brine

Norm Peck

Nick Perry

Mark Pidgeon

Scott Robertson

Robert Schafer

Tanya Stanley

Rachel Voss

Two Committee members, Nick Perry and Debby McCandless, chose not to complete the process and left after the third and sixth meetings, respectively.

Attachment 2: Committee Deliberations and Different Perspectives on Principles To Govern Future Decisions About Dispersed Shooting

The Committee deliberated on the types of principles that should govern future decisions about dispersed shooting. Although there were many areas of common ground in these discussions, ultimately the Committee was not able to reach agreement on principles due largely to differences in perspective on the meaning of WDFW's mission for management of shooting and other forms of recreation and the priority of shooting relative to other forms of recreation. The lack of agreement on how to address shooting at Buffalo Road (with Committee members defining that area more or less broadly), and the support by some Committee members for closure of a small area to dispersed shooting in that vicinity, also made agreement on principles difficult, given that other Committee members hold a strong value for preserving all dispersed shooting that can be carried out in compliance with applicable rules and regulations.

The final draft of principals and supportive text reviewed by Committee members was:

“WDFW should apply the following principles to future decisions about dispersed shooting: (1) the purpose of the Wildlife Area is for habitat/wildlife conservation and compatible recreation – both need to be supported by WDFW; (2) there should be opportunities for all types of recreational uses – one use should not be prioritized over others, all should be allowed; (3) improvements to education and outreach are needed for all users so people better understand the rules and expectations for behavior and know what to expect; (4) dispersed shooting in compliance with applicable rules and regulations is currently allowed and should remain so; however, improvements to management of recreation, including dispersed shooting, are needed.”

“The Committee offers these principles to set the context for its other recommendations, and to set the tone for implementation. The Committee drew these principles from the content of its deliberations and by looking across their recommendations, and believes they represent a valuable compass for future management of dispersed shooting in the context of other recreation and uses of the Wildlife Area. In addition, the Committee has offered to remain involved in future decisions about implementing the recommendations in this report, and adaptive management of dispersed shooting on the Wenas (see Recommendation 3), and can assist with implementing these principles as future decisions arise.”

“Note that all Committee members agreed with these principles, including the Committee Members who support closure of a small area at Buffalo Road to dispersed shooting. These Committee members are not in opposition to dispersed shooting generally, even as they believe that, at Buffalo Rd., some additional limits are needed (see Recommendation 17 for a fuller discussion of the Committee's recommendation and different perspectives on Buffalo Rd.).”

Committee members offered the following comments on this final draft:

- *[Suggested alternative language] "Dispersed shooting in compliance with applicable rules and regulations is currently allowed and should remain so throughout the Wildlife Area; however,*

improvements to the management of dispersed shooting are needed. WDFW should consider the following principals in their management of the Wenas Wildlife Area: 1) the purpose of the Wildlife Area is for recreation and for habitat/wildlife- both need to be supported by WDFW; 2) the WDFW should support and facilitate all types of recreational uses; 3) improvements to education and outreach are needed for all users so people can better understand the rules and expectations for behavior and know what to expect". Take out word "compatible". Statement on dispersed shooting needs to be clear, not listed last and not just as a "consideration" for WDFW. There may be a priority of user groups given funding for that area's management.

- *Dispersed shooting needs to stop before someone gets hurt or worse*
- *Statement #2; at the end of the sentence "all should be allowed", ADD; all should be allowed and accommodated as recommended by the Committee while recognizing and understanding the full scope and standard needs of each form of recreation. Statement #4; Delete; the unnecessary singling out of dispersed shooting as the bad guy. ADD; and should remain so, however improvements to management of ALL forms of recreation are needed. Throughout the text All forms of recreation is what is being discussed. Singling out dispersed shooting at the end is unnecessarily discriminatory. The intent of the Committee is to create a level playing field for All forms of recreation not continue to perpetuate an adversarial relationship between them.*
- *It is important to realize that most of this land was purchased with Pittman & Robertson money (the excise tax from the sale of firearms, ammunition & archery tackle-hunters & target shooters). Other user groups have not contributed anything. It is illegal for individuals to build trails on state lands, yet it appears that there are many. Agencies would have to do a cultural resources study & SEPA before they could construct trails.*
- *I don't agree with this sentence: WDFW should apply the following principles to future decisions about dispersed shooting. Our committee is suppose to find safer uses for ALL recreation users. Sentence should state: WDFW should apply the following principles to future decisions about recreational uses on Wenas Wildlife Area.*
- *I believe the statutory mandate to maintain and improve wildlife populations and habitat (not exact wording) should receive more emphasis, and that other uses/recreational activities should be secondary. That said, I can live with this wording as an improvement over prior language, especially that wildlife/habitat is listed first.*
- *(2) there should be opportunities for all types of recreational uses that are compatible with the WDFW's primary mission- one use should not be prioritized over others, all should be allowed; I just want to emphasize that it's not a given right to just do anything out there; activities must be in concordance with the primary use of the land, or take it elsewhere...thus a caveat to the "all should be allowed"*
- *We say "one use should not be prioritized over others," but Mike Livingston says according to RCW 77.04.012 and WAC 220-500-010 that hunting and fishing are the RCW mandated recreation priorities for the department. It sounds like all other recreations come secondary to these and should be treated equally with each other. Something like "while hunting and fishing are the RCW mandated recreations for WDFW all other forms while secondary to these should be treated equally and one use should not be prioritized over others."*
- *The purpose of the Wildlife Area is for habitat/wildlife conservation and compatible recreation. Conservation includes management of human use for public benefit and sustainable social and economic needs. Target shooting is compatible with other conservation goals when in*

compliance with current law and WDFW rules for use of the Wildlife Area. The Department has a responsibility to provide direction and support for recreational activities on the Wildlife Area including dispersed and more concentrated target shooting. Improvements to education and outreach are needed for all users so people better understand the rules and expectations for behavior. Applying the recommendations included in this report will improve the recreational objectives of the many people who visit the Wenas Wildlife Area.

- *This area was paid for by hunters' and shooters' dollars, Pittman-Roberson dollars, the primary focus of this area has to be towards hunters and shooters. This language sounds like shooters are red-headed step-children and we are begrudgingly being allowed to participate. Hunters and shooters need to be first in line. It will depend on the final recommendation wording.*
- *The last sentence in the above statement; some additional limits "are" needed, etc. DELETE; THE WORD "ARE" ADD; the word "may" be needed etc.. As written the use of the word "are" implies an imperative which exists only as an opinion in the mind of a minority of the Committee. Use of the word is inappropriate. It suggests a decision has been made by the Committee or by WDFW neither of which is true. No decision should or can be made until the necessity for limits has been proven. A hypothetical is not evidence of reality. Determining the necessity for additional limits should be identified only following implementation of the Committee's recommendations, i.e., public education, improved signage and mapping, followed by evaluation of the effectiveness of each, over a reasonable period of time such as 2 years.*
- *Don't like any statements referencing the closure of shooting anywhere on Wenas Wildlife Area.*
- *I selected 2.) because of the opinion expressed in the comment above. (Note this refers to the commenters earlier comment; not to the comment above this block.)*
- *The last paragraph concerns a small area in one location. (Buffalo Road area) I think it is appropriately addressed in Recommendation 17. I suggest that the last paragraph be deleted from supportive text for Recommendation One because it is a possible exception from Recommendation One and it remains undecided if it will apply to any location.*
- *Dispersed shooting needs to be limited to protect homeowners.*

Although agreement on principles was not reached during these deliberations, given the many areas of common ground that appear to exist, it is possible that the Committee could reach agreement on principles with additional time and discussion. This could be taken up again during the next phase of the Committee process.

Attachment 3: Conceptual Drawings for Enhanced Shooting Locations

Figure 1: General Conceptual Diagram for an Enhanced Concentrated Shooting Site

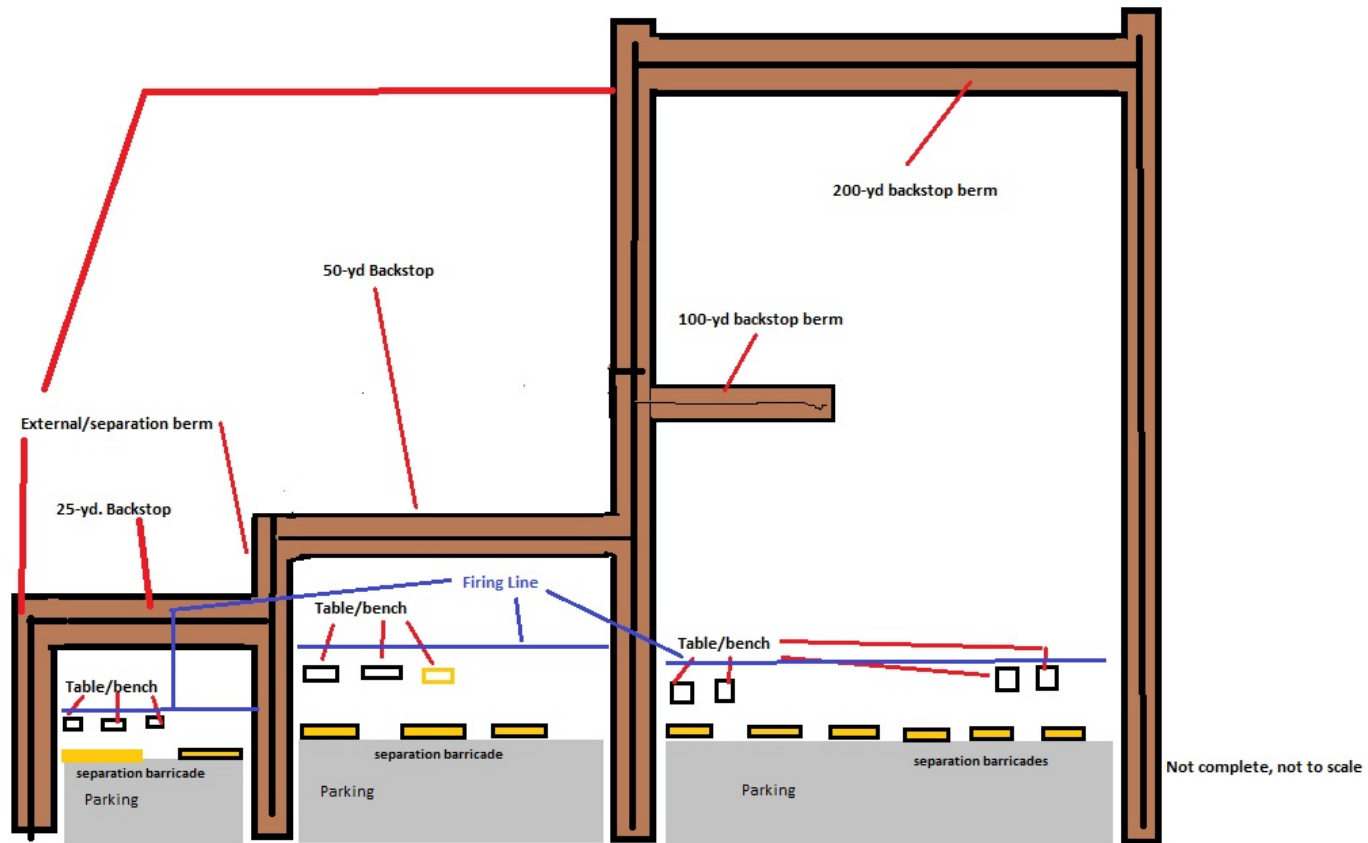


Figure 2: North Durr Road Conceptual Map

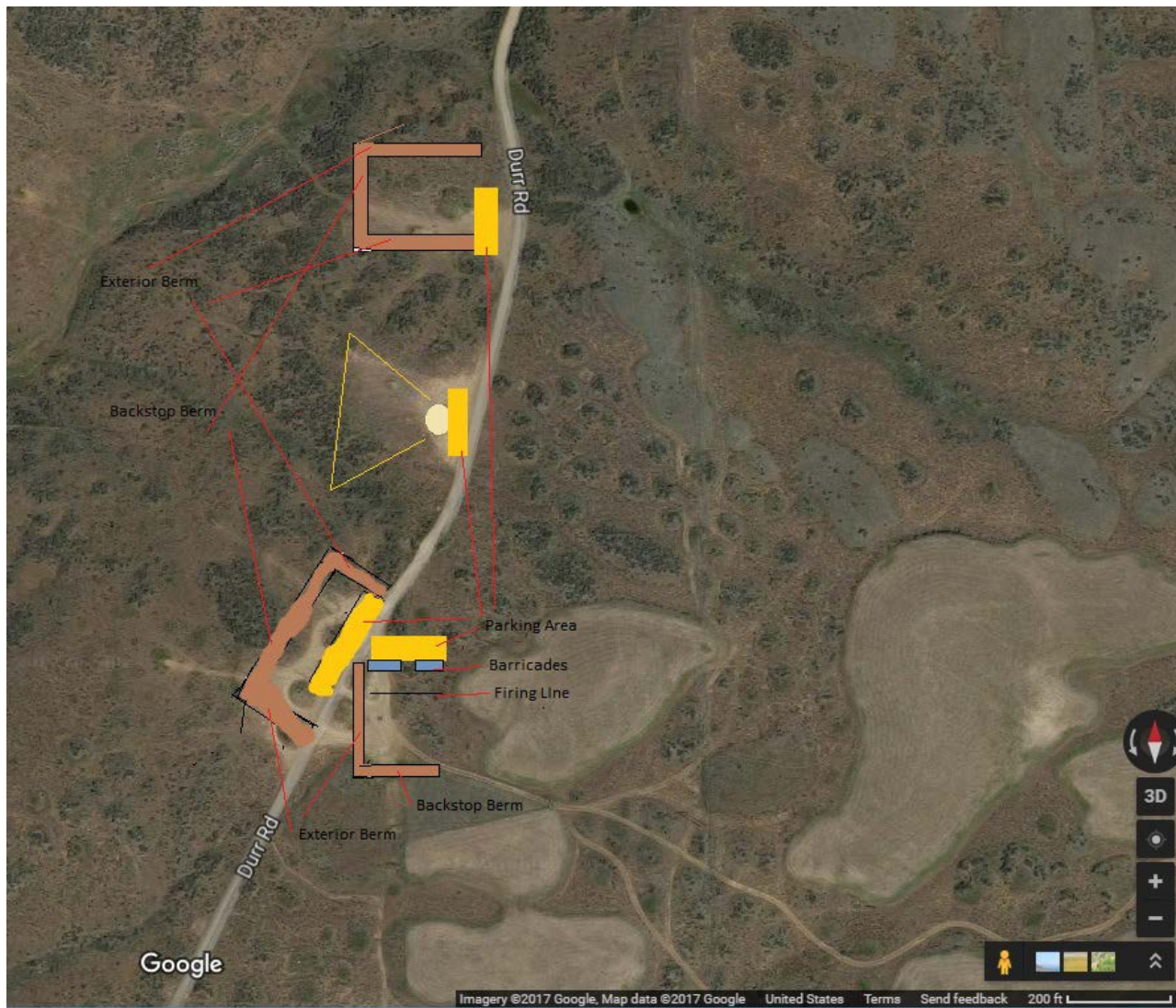


Figure 3: Sheep Company Road Conceptual Map

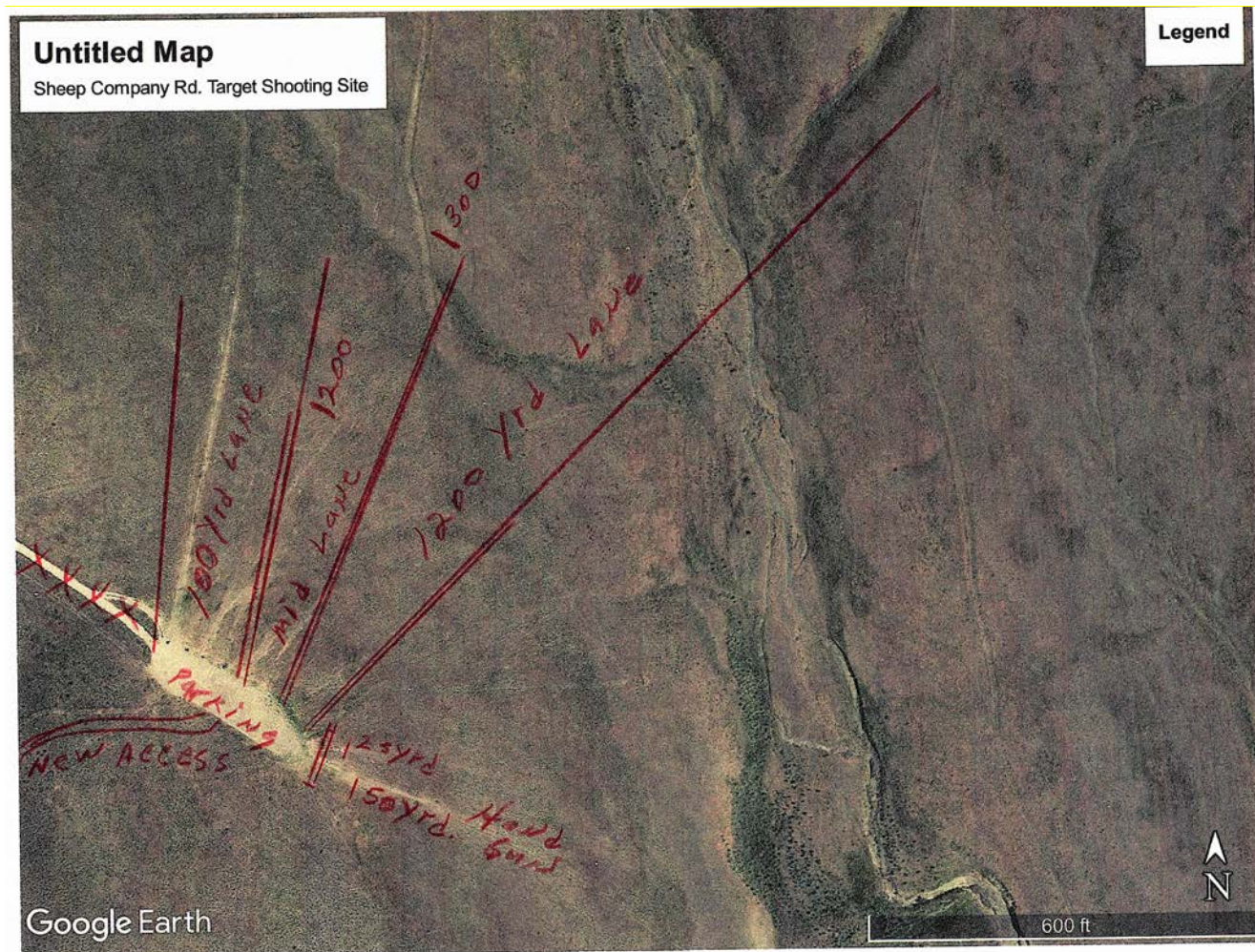
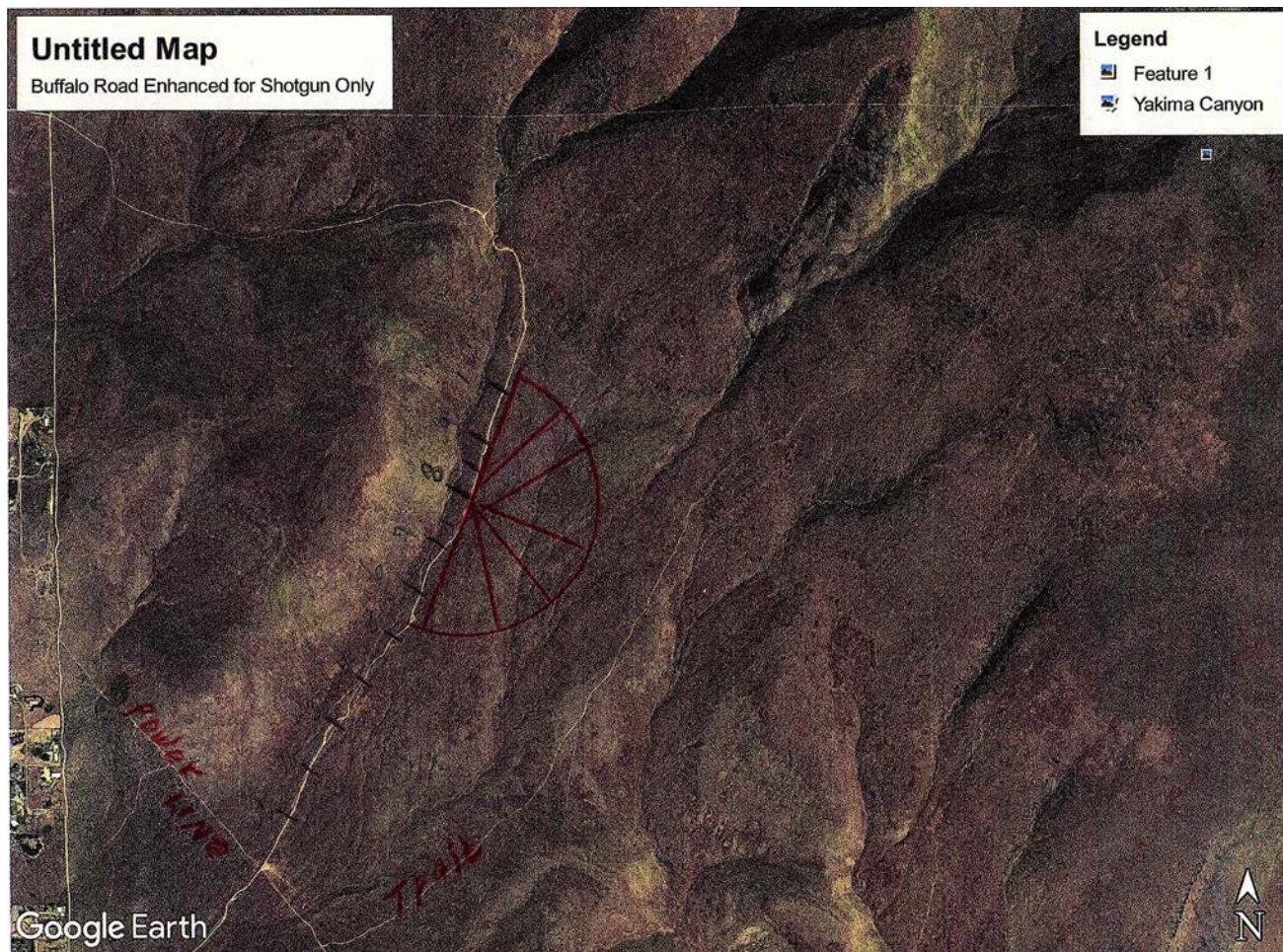


Figure 4: Buffalo Road Conceptual Map



Attachment 4: Committee Recommendations by Phase

Draft Recommendation	Phase 1	Phase 2
1. WDFW should develop and install clearer and increased signage at the Wildlife Area including at access points and at areas enhanced for concentrated shooting.	X	
2. WDFW, working with user groups such as those represented on the WTS Advisory Committee, should develop simple and clear educational materials for all users of the Wenas Wildlife Area, with a particular emphasis on clear materials addressing regulations and best practices for shooting on public lands.	X	
3. WDFW should develop maps showing access points, primary locations of roads and trails, areas improved for concentrated shooting, and any other designed use areas (e.g., dog training areas).	X	
4. WDFW, working with groups such as those represented on the WTS Advisory Committee, should ensure broad distribution of educational materials and maps via multiple distribution methods.	X	
5. WDFW should increase Department staff presence at the Wildlife Area especially at high-use times to offer information to users.	X	
6. To further increase Department staff presence at the Wenas Wildlife Area and provide for ongoing education and outreach, WDFW should work with the WTS Advisory Committee to create and fill the position of Outreach Liaison for WDFW Region 3.		X
7. WDFW, in coordination with local groups, should support and expand the use of volunteers at the Wenas Wildlife Area to help distribute information, continue cleanups, and assist with other activities in support of use of the Wildlife Area as appropriate.	X	
8. WDFW should revise its regulations on shooting on public lands (WAC 220-500-140 and WAC 220-500-220) to match DNR’s regulations on shooting on public lands (WAC 332-52-145) so the regulations are consistent.	X	
9. WDFW should enhance coordination with local law enforcement, non-enforcement WDFW programs, and volunteer groups (as appropriate) to focus their available patrols and on-site presence for the Wenas at sites of concentrated shooting during anticipated high-use periods and should create and fill at least one additional enforcement officer position for Region 3.		X
10. WDFW should collaborate with the Eyes in the Woods organization and offer one or more Eyes in the Woods Crime Observation and Reporting Training (CORT) courses and related support for the Wenas Wildlife Area, preferably with an initial CORT course in early spring 2018.		X
11. WDFW should improve existing tools and/or develop new tools develop a mobile application to make it simpler for people to document and report illegal behavior.		X
12. WDFW should improve its enforcement records management and work towards develop and/or adopt a records management system capable of producing analysis-ready reports specific to public safety.		X
13. WDFW should immediately identify existing concentrated shooting sites at Sheep Company Road and Durr Road as locations to be enhanced for concentrated shooting, and should implement initial enhancements—particularly around education and outreach—at these sites as soon as possible and other enhancements as quickly as funding can be secured. Enhancements should be focused and designed to increase the likelihood of safe and predictable behavior and encourage compliance with requirements and expectations.	X	

14. WDFW should identify and enhance an area for concentrated shooting of shotgun at Buffalo Road approximately .8 miles north of the intersection of the power line and the green dot road. The orientation of the area should be discussed with the Advisory Group during Phase 2 of this effort. As with Sheep Company and Durr Roads, enhancements should be focused and designed to increase the likelihood of safe and predictable behavior and encourage compliance with requirements and expectations.		X
15. WDFW should make focused enhancements to the existing area of user-defined shooting at East Umtanum with a goal of improving safety and the predictability of firing direction for dispersed shooting users who avail themselves of that site.		
16. WDFW should take a phased approach to making improvements at the Wenas Wildlife Area with identifiable and measurable milestones.	X	X
17. The WTS Advisory Committee should continue to meet to offer WDFW advice and support as recommendations are implemented. Meetings should be quarterly for the first year and semi-annual after that until the Department and the Committee determine that further support is not needed.	X	X

Attachment 5: Individual Committee Member Statements

Individual Statement of Jim Lydigsen (12/21/2017)

Wenas Target Shooting Committee

Supportive Text for Final Statement

Re: The lawful use of firearms in dispersed locations, outside of those sites recommended for enhancement for concentrated shooting is currently limited though the historical enforcement of WDFW/WDNR rules and regulations. Committee support for continued Dispersed Shooting which occurs in compliance of these rules and regulations is identified in committee recommendation #1, as has occurred throughout the Wenas Wildlife Area's (WWLA) 50 year history. Support of this recommendation is respecting and supporting of the US Constitution Second Amendment Rights.

Though never stated as such, it was recognized early on in the committee process that the outcomes from the Wenas Target Shooting Committee are intended to be applied by WDFW state-wide as the “poster child” for the use of firearms on public lands. Recognition of the intended wider use of the committee’s recommendations is an indicator of the political agenda and Constitutional importance behind the WWLA Target Shooting Committee existence and meetings.

Throughout the meetings the committee was frustrated by the lack of documentation available to support claims by WDFW staff relating to the use of firearms and 1. How firearms were factually instrumental in diminishing public safety; and 2. Their (firearms) connection to wildfires purported to be caused by the use of firearms. This lack of documentation and ensuing statements, being nothing more than pure hyperbole, was meant to motivate the uninformed public into believing (and buying into) a political agenda that recreation on public lands is not safe as long as so called “dispersed shooting” continues. **Fact: there has never been a documented firearms related personal injury accident in the nearly 50 years that these lands have been held for the benefit of the public.**

It must be recognized that committee recommendations #2 through #15 are the very foundation of actions intended to positively impact not only public safety and wildfires, but also the other concerns initially brought forward in the documents published in March 2017. Those documents resulted in the formation of the Wenas Target Shooting Committee. If these actions are initiated and completed, in spite of strong feelings to the contrary, the committee is successful in doing its job.

Moving forward what is fundamental and must happen are the following: The committee reached full consensus on recommendations #2 through #15. WDFW must implement these as well as investing in and completing enhancement of the four (4) sites recommended in recommendations #16 through “18. The recommendations must be given the full force and respect they command as recommendations from an official committee sanctioned by WDFW. These recommendations should be fully implemented as recommended. They should be given adequate time to achieve their goals and be evaluated as to their performance driven effectiveness. In support of this action, WDFW has announced it has begun the process to meld together the WDFW/WDNR target shooting rules and regulations. In addition, time must be allowed to fill the public liaison position, develop and distribute the public education materials, and implement all of the recommendations of the committee.

The time necessary to adequately evaluate the recommendations should be no fewer than three (3) full cycles of the recreational seasons. Therefore, following three (3) full cycles of recreational seasons (with consistent evaluation during that time) in the event sincere consistent management and definitive actions which had been taken are proven ineffective, then, and only then, should committee members, together with WDFW staff, consider or discuss and alternative measures which may further limit dispersed shooting in specific locations.

Although the Committee has put forth recommendations, it is recognized no performance criteria has been recommended nor agreed to which would allow the Committee and WDFW to measure the success of those recommendations. These criteria need to be established early in Phase II.

In light of the committee's recommendations and the expected positive outcomes and effectiveness, and considering that dispersed shooting, when operated in compliance with WDFW/WDNR rules and regulations, is a historically exercised lawful activity on public lands, these rules and regulations adequately provide safety and predictability to all stakeholders, **there is no justification for further limitations to this lawful activity.** It is recognized that an individual exercising dispersed shooting in a manor other than prescribed by law, is subject to the consequences of enforcement. **These rules and regulation, in and of themselves, impose substantial limitations on where (backstop required) and when (time of day season of the year) dispersed shooting may take place.**

At this time and only after full implementation of all of the committee's recommendations can there be proper evaluation as to their benefits. The evaluation process taking place during the phased implementation and during and following three (3) full cycles of recreational seasons, until such evaluations take place there is no justification for further discussion or opposition to dispersed shooting in any portion of the WWLA, operating and limited as the activity currently is, as allowed under the existing WDFW/WDNR rules and regulation.

Jim Lydigsen

Wenas Wildlife Committee Member

Standing firm in defense of dispersed shooting, representing the nearly 800 signatures on the NRA authorized petition which states opposition to additional limitation of Dispersed Shooting on the Wenas Wildlife Area.

Individual Statement of Steve Miller (12/21/2017)

In the final deliberations of the advisory committee it became apparent some members felt enhanced shooting areas and dispersed shooting could not co-exist in all proposed locations of the former. My thoughts on this dilemma is first and foremost I believe there is a good possibility of consensus under these following conditions:

- 1) Some compromises on specific points may be necessary to achieve a final solution if the big picture is kept in mind. "Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good"
- 2) Enhancements in specific areas to be most effective need to be weapon specific considering the local environment. It is unreasonable to expect Enhanced shooting areas to be all things to all people (i.e., types of shooting).
- 3) Dispersed shooting may take place in the vicinity or even adjacent to Enhanced shooting areas provided WDFW adopts the DNR definition and regulation of said activity. Namely DNR requires the shooter to have clear line of sight into a known backstop.
- 4) Education and perhaps enforcement of the DNR version of dispersed shooting should reduce and possibly eliminate the user conflicts experienced in some of the more popular areas used by various enthusiasts.

Steve Miller, Target Committee member