



COLOCKUM WILDLIFE AREA 2010 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



Land Management Summary

This is an update to the 2006 Colockum Wildlife Area Management Plan http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/ that provides management direction for the 91,603 acre Wildlife Area located in Chelan and Kittitas County, Washington. The plan identifies needs and guides activities on the area based on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Mission of “*Sound Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife*” and its underlying statewide goals and objectives as they apply to local conditions.

Plans are updated annually as habitat and species conditions change, as new regulations and scientific knowledge develop, as public issues and concerns evolve, and as administration of wildlife areas change. This management plan update also includes 2009 accomplishments, new issues, new land management strategies and performance measures for 2010.

Updates/Changes

Forest road management work continues on the Wildlife Area, with WDFW completing many of the road maintenance issues required by WDFW’s Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan (RMAP) for the Colockum. The main focus of this work is to improve water quality and fish habitat by reducing delivery of sediments from forest roads into streams. Roadwork that has been

completed includes installing water bars, improving drainage, replacing undersized culverts, and blocking and abandoning non-maintained roads. A major project is scheduled for July 2010 where a problem culvert in the South Fork of Tarpiscan Creek will be replaced with a bridge. Changes in the land ownership pattern of the Wildlife Area are still underway. The land exchange between WDFW and the Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) is still moving forward, but at a slower pace and in a phased approach. The checkerboard ownership pattern on

Inside	
Land Management Summary	1
Updates/Changes	1
New Issues	2
Major Stewardship Accomplishments	2
Status Report of 2009 Performance Measures	3
New Strategies	4
2010 Performance Measures	4
Citizens Advisory Group Input	5

the Colockum complicates agency land management, and is the main justification for exchanging and consolidating ownerships between WDFW and WDNR.

New Issues

The Grant County Public Utility District (GCPUD) was recently awarded a new 44-year operating license for the Priest Rapids and Wanapum Dams. The Colockum Wildlife Area includes approximately 16 miles of Columbia River shoreline inundated by the hydroelectric project. WDFW has been working closely with GCPUD in planning and implementing their Wildlife Habitat Plan and the Public Recreation Plan for the Priest Rapids and Wanapum Reservoirs. As part of the new operating license, GCPUD is required to monitor the effects of project-related recreation on wildlife and sensitive wildlife habitats, and implement corrective actions to control recreation impacts and to rehabilitate wildlife habitats. Some of the recreation-related issues being addressed are: litter, overuse of popular beach areas (such as Quilomene Bay and West Bar), sanitation, enforcement, erosion of shoreline archaeological sites, graffiti, wildfires, etc. Some corrective measures being proposed include informational and educational signage at boat launches and access points, habitat improvements in sensitive wildlife habitats, funding of enforcement personnel to work the area, improved litter cleanup, restrictions of boat wakes near shorelines to reduce erosion and partial funding of fire-fighting costs related to reservoir recreationists.

WDFW is mid-way through a study of Colockum elk, where approximately 85 elk have been radio collared for the past two years to determine their movements and habitat use. Data will be collected to assist in managing elk that sometimes move off the Wildlife Area and onto private lands, either to the north or south.

WDFW is also still in the process of evaluating the entire road system on the Wildlife Area to identify possible problem areas. These could include areas where road densities are high leading to animal harassment and low spike bull elk escapement during fall hunting seasons. Other issues include stream adjacent roads in shrub-steppe habitat areas that are not addressed by the forest road RMAP plan.



Major Stewardship Accomplishments

In the fall of 2009 the Wildlife Area manager wrote a successful grant application to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) for the installation of five vehicle gates for closed roads on the Wildlife Area. These gates are expected to increase compliance with the green dot road management system in place on the area. Two other grant proposals submitted to the Washington Wildlife Recreation Program (WWRP) were approved for funding in 2009. These include funds to

improve the primitive boat launch just north of the Wildlife Area headquarters, and another grant to assist in abandoning two stream-adjacent roads to improve water quality and fish and wildlife habitat. The Wenatchee Sportsman’s Association was also awarded a large grant to make repairs to improvements on the Wildlife Area such as spring developments and upland bird guzzlers. The Sportsman’s Association started this work in 2009 and is continuing it in 2010. In addition to these successful grants other more basic stewardship activities were continued. This includes the continued monitoring of public use through digital car counters that are installed at major entrances to the Wildlife Area. Weed control, boundary fence repair and maintenance of the green dot road system also continued to be a large part of the stewardship activities on the Colockum in 2009 and 2010.

Status Report of 2009 Performance Measures

Key performance measures are identified each year to monitor progress and identify any issues that might interfere with planned priority activities. This information will be used to delete, add or alter priority strategies for 2010.

2009 Performance Measure	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2010 Related Activity/ Comments
Meet periodically with new Citizen Advisory Group.	In progress	Colockum CAG meeting to be held August 2010.
Evaluate the effectiveness of winter range closures.	Five car counters monitored, and two enforcement flights conducted.	Continue monitoring public use, Colockum elk study underway.
Remove concrete diversion structure in Tekison Creek.	Project delayed	Tekison Creek dam to be breached in 2010.
Continue process to address stream adjacent roads in Stray Gulch and Tekison Creek.	Issue discussed in CAG and public meetings.	Project is delayed due to WDFW/WDNR land exchange.
Maintain 180 acres agricultural fields in annual grains or grasses.	In progress	120 acres re-cultivated due to poor grass establishment.
Maintain 35 miles of boundary fencing to exclude trespass livestock.	Completed	Continue maintenance in 2010. Short sections of fence completely rebuilt.
Seed 40 acres of bitterbrush and other native plants on West Bar.	In progress	Seeding scheduled to take place in fall 2010.

Coordinate road management with DNR.	On-going. New standards, signs for green dot road management developed.	Coordination will continue, bi-annual meetings held with enforcement and land managers.
Inspect and maintain spring developments.	Two springs maintained, four upland bird guzzlers repaired.	Wenatchee Sportsman's Assoc. received grant funds for more work on springs, water sources.
Perform mandatory weed control.	Coordinated with Kittitas Co. Weed Board on yellow starthistle control. Staff controlled knapweeds, whitetop, and goatgrass.	Jointed goatgrass control in progress. Diffuse knapweed, kochia needs renewed control efforts in burned areas.
Complete RMAP work in the S.F. Tarpiscan Creek.	In progress	S. F. bridge to be installed in July 2010.

New Strategies

No new strategies were reported.

2010 Performance Measures

Performance measures for the Colockum Wildlife Area are listed below. Accomplishments and progress toward desired outcomes will be monitored and evaluated annually.

- 1) Meet periodically with new Colockum Wildlife Area CAG to inform of management activities and receive public input.
- 2) Evaluate the success of winter closures on big game winter range to reduce disturbance. Determine success through continued use of car counters, aerial enforcement flights and the on-going Colockum Elk Study.
- 3) Continue effort to remove concrete diversion structure in Tekison Creek.
- 4) Continue process to address stream adjacent roads in Stray Gulch and Tekison Creek.
- 5) Evaluate success of 120 acre native grass seeding in agricultural fields in the N. Fork Tarpiscan.
- 6) Maintain 35 miles of wildlife area boundary fence to exclude trespass livestock.
- 7) Coordinate cooperative road management system with DNR.
- 8) Inspect and maintain spring developments. Maintain springs with help from volunteer organizations.
- 9) Perform mandatory weed control. Control weeds along roads, campsites, boat launch, parking areas.
- 10) Complete RMAP work in the S.F. Tarpiscan including culvert removal, bridge installation.
- 11) Seed 40 acres of bitterbrush and other native plants on West Bar through RMEF grant.

Citizens Advisory Group Input

The previous “Regional CAG” was formed to gather public input for the management of the Colockum, Oak Creek, L.T. Murray, Wenas, Quilomene and Whiskey Dick Wildlife Areas. A new CAG was formed in 2009 specifically for the Colockum Wildlife Area.

CAG membership includes:

John Musser	US Bureau of Land Management
Neil Fulwiler	Adjacent Landowner
Sam Kayser	Livestock, grazing interests
	Commercial Use / Tourism
Mark Oswood	NCW Audubon Society
Ken McNamee	WA. Department of Natural Resources
Ken Bailey	Backcountry Horseman Assoc., non-motorized recreation.
Jim Stevenson	Yakama Nation
Todd West	Natapoc Bowman, archery, deer, elk management
Lee Davis	Kittitas Co. Field & Stream Club
Tom Baskin	Disabled Sportsman Association, recreation interests
Bill Stegeman	Wenatchee Sportsmen Association
Mike Hale	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
John Erickson	Apple Country Snowmobile Association. Motorized recreation.
Todd Davis	Kittitas Co. Noxious Weed Board

The following new input/issues were addressed at the August 2009 Colockum CAG meeting:

Issue: Use of stream adjacent roads by public / motorized vehicles potentially adds sediment to fish-bearing streams. WDFW is legally required to address this issue on WDFW owned lands.

Response: *Would fire suppression and/or tribal hunting be allowed on closed roads?* Roads can be opened up in emergency situations- most fire suppression is by air transport in remote

locations. Tribal hunters have no special privileges regarding use of closed roads on WDFW lands. *Could single-track trails be established on closed roads for recreational motorized and horse / mountain bike use? More road closures to motorized use will result in increased illegal use out of frustration.* WDFW's position is that motorized use delivers the majority of sediment on stream-adjacent roads, but will attempt to relocate or open up ridge roads to provide motorized access. *Access may be needed on closed roads for effective weed control.* WDFW will attempt to leave administrative access, or use boats / ATV's for weed control. *Can WDFW remove non-Green Dot jeep roads from their maps to lessen confusion, put stronger emphasis on enforcement of regulations on wildlife areas, and increase fines for illegal off-road use?* WDFW agrees with these comments and will try to address them.

Issue: Increasing damage by elk to private lands in the Parke Creek, Caribou, and Colockum Creek areas is occurring and is currently controlled by WDFW issuing kill permits to landowners to remove the elk doing damage. However, this is counter-productive as Colockum Herd numbers are below WDFW management objectives. Also, some data shows road density and increased public use of winter range will displace animals to surrounding private ranges, where there are fewer disturbances. Early spring shed antler hunting has also greatly increased in popularity. WDFW management options include 1) seasonal closures, 2) vehicle closures, and 3) "no entry" closures.

Response: *Sportsman club spokesperson feels WDFW does not have adequate data to support additional closures- should focus on increasing enforcement efforts first and also collect more data before restricting access. WDFW could enhance forage on its lands or increase livestock grazing to attract and hold more elk. Closures affect persons of disability especially, but may be necessary to protect wintering wildlife. Many comments addressed the variables of the situation. WDFW will gather more data before deciding on a trial plan of action.*

At the conclusion of the meeting, managers advised that plans would be finalized before the next CAG meeting.

Contacts:
Pete Lopushinsky
Wildlife Area Manager
(509) 663-6260
WDFW Yakima Office
(3509) 575-2740

Want to see the full plan?
Go to -
http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/