



SHERMAN CREEK WILDLIFE AREA/ LECLERC CREEK WILDLIFE AREA 2012 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



Land Management Summary

This is an update to the 2006 Sherman Creek Wildlife Area and LeClerc Creek Wildlife Area Management Plans http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/. These plans provide management direction for the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area (SCWA) located along the west side of Lake Roosevelt in the eastern foothills of the Kettle River Range, and the LeClerc Creek Wildlife Area (LCWA) located in Pend Oreille County

along the east side of the Pend Oreille River. The Sherman Creek Wildlife Area consists of five parcels totaling 8,782 acres. The LeClerc Creek Wildlife Area is located about 25 miles northwest of Newport and 65 miles northwest of Spokane. It consists of four units totaling 614 acres which were purchased with Pitman-Robertson and State Wildlife funds in 1972. The majority of the area is forested and is managed for a variety of wildlife habitat improvements and public recreation opportunities.

The plan identifies needs and guides activities on the two areas 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 biennially 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 2010-2011 accomplishments, new issues, new land management strategies and performance measures for 2012-2013.

Updates/Changes

For this 2012 update, management plan activities for the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area and the LeClerc Creek Wildlife Area have been combined into one document. Management activities for the West Branch Little Spokane Wildlife Area are also included.

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New Issues

West Branch Little Spokane (WBLS) Acquisition: WDFW has acquired two parcels along the WBLS River, in Pend Oreille County. The parcels are contiguous and total 2,778 acres, consisting of mostly second-growth timber and braided wetlands. This entire property has been named the West Branch Little Spokane Wildlife Area (WBLS WLA), and will be managed as a satellite of SCWA. Formal planning for this property began in October 2009 and continues through 2011. The first Citizens Advisory Group meeting was held in Newport in February 2010. The



photo to the right shows Backcountry Horseman Scott Wiggins on the West Branch Little Spokane WLA with portions of Blue Lake and Horseshoe Lake visible in the background. The West Branch Little Spokane WLA is managed as a No Unauthorized Motor Vehicle site.

Major Stewardship Accomplishments

The Sherman Creek/Oak Creek Perpetual Timber Rights Exchange Timber Sale (part of the Sherman Creek WLA 5-year Habitat Improvement Project) continues to be active. Boise Cascade (BC) is still the owner of the timber and is completing the harvest. The WDFW state forester Doug Kuehn, Sherman Creek Natural Resources Technician Jerry Christensen, and BC field staff have been working together to monitor activities and resolve problems. Christensen was kept employed on an as-needed basis over the winters of 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, to help with managing the sale. The overall goal of this project is to improve forage for deer winter range.

The agricultural lease (hay flat) continued as in previous years. Technician Christensen has conducted annual weed control, field preparation and seeding of our wildlife food plots. He has also conducted annual roadside and wild land weed control.

Status Report of 2010-11 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 2012-2013.

2010-2011 Performance Measure	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2012-2013 Related Activity/ Comments
Continue working with WDFW forester and Wildlife Program staff to monitor and manage the ongoing Sherman Creek WLA Habitat Improvement Project. Performance goal: at least two field visits by the forester to the logging site.	Thinning activities continued through 2010-2011. The WDFW forester has visited the logging site at least twice over each of the last two years.	Thinning will continue through October, 2013. WDFW forester will continue to monitor progress through visits to the site.
Work with fire fuels management staff on unit layout, fire lines, and other needs associated with the prescribed burning component of the Sherman Creek WLA Habitat Improvement Project.	Cultural resource survey was completed. Fire fuel personnel have been working on unit layout and collecting information toward completion of the burn plans for all units.	Prescribed burning will occur during spring and fall seasons of 2012-2013. There will be 38 burn units totaling 3,329 acres.
Monitor and maintain habitat manipulation projects, to provide annual improvements to deer winter range. Performance goal: maintain two food plots and one grass planting annually.	Maintained two food plots and one grass planting, to improve forage availability for wintering deer.	Continue in 2012-2013. Prescribed burning as part of the Sherman Creek WLA Habitat Improvement Project is expected to promote sprouting of ceanothus on the uplands.
Maintain/develop one spring or other water source every two years, as staffing allows.	Maintained two springs on the WLA	Continue maintenance in 2012-2013; install large water trough near SCWA headquarters in 2012.
Per agreement with Kettle Falls High School, the school's wildlife management teacher and students will maintain 100 bluebird boxes that they built and installed.	100 bird boxes were maintained by Kettle Falls High School students each year. This includes replacement of boxes beyond repair.	The current plan is to continue this cooperative bird box management program with the Kettle Falls High.
Appropriate weed control as outlined in the weed management plan.	Sprayed herbicides on approximately 20 acres of weeds each year. This includes approximately 5 acres of St. John's wort, 5	Weed species including hoary alyssum and hawkweeds will be added to the priority list in 2012-2013. Work with Pend Oreille County Weed board

	<p>acres of diffuse knapweed, and 10 acres of various weeds including common mullein, yellow toadflax, and Dalmatian toadflax. Also treated less than one acre of leafy spurge at LeClerc Creek unit. One release of biological control agents was made on spotted knapweed at WBLs WLA.</p>	<p>for weed control activities at LeClerc Creek WLA and WBLs WLA, and with Backcountry Horsemen of Washington at WBLs.</p>
<p>Conduct at least one project using volunteer or school groups for outreach and education.</p>	<p>Participated in the annual Water Festival outdoor education program for 4th grade students. Kettle Falls High School and 1st grade students, as well as volunteers assisted with pheasant releases on the Sherman Creek WLA.</p>	<p>Continue in 2012-2013</p>
<p>Ensure proper precautions are taken around a goshawk nesting site before timber harvest in that area begins. Performance measure: proper “no-logging” zone is determined and instituted.</p>	<p>A 90 acre exclusion zone has been identified and delineated on the ground for protection of this nesting site.</p>	<p>Thinning around the 90 acre exclusion zone will likely be completed in 2012. Territory will be monitored for occupancy in 2012 and 2013.</p>
<p>Annually report Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan (RMAP) activities to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) by November 1, through the year 2016.</p>	<p>All forest roads on SCWA have met RMAP standards and were maintained in 2010-2011. The RMAP for WBLs was developed and submitted to DNR in 2011.</p>	<p>Forest road maintenance and RMAP reporting will continue in 2012-2013 for SCWA and WBLs. The forest roads on WBLs should meet RMAP standards by the end of 2013.</p>

New Strategies

The wildlife area plan identifies many strategies or activities to address the agencies strategic plan goals and objectives, why the area was purchased, habitat conditions, species presence, and public issues and concerns. The following updated strategies have been added to respond to previously unaddressed or new issues or changes on the wildlife area. New strategies may also be in response to adaptive management as staff evaluate the impacts of past management activities.

Agency Objective: Provide Sustainable Fish and Wildlife-Related Recreational and Commercial Opportunities Compatible With Maintaining Healthy Fish and Wildlife Populations and Habitats.

1. Provide public access compatible with fish, wildlife and habitat protection.

New Strategy: The West Branch Little Spokane WLA has been designated a No Unauthorized Motor Vehicle site. Currently parking is very limited in the area. Parking area development will be a priority as to not limit accessibility to the West Branch Little Spokane WLA.

2012 Performance Measures

Performance measures for Sherman Creek, LeClerc Creek and West Branch Little Spokane Wildlife Areas are listed below. Accomplishments and progress toward desired outcomes will be monitored and evaluated annually.

- 1) Monitor the progress of the ongoing Sherman Creek WLA Habitat Improvement Project to accomplish Priority Habitats and Species and other management objectives specific to the Sherman Creek WLA.
- 2) Maintain existing water developments including the upland developments, the hayfield pond and the irrigation diversion system at Sherman Creek WLA.
- 3) Expand open meadows by 2 acres and install 10 nest boxes for bluebirds, as time and funding allow.



- 4) Appropriate weed control on the wildlife area, focusing on areas adjacent to roads. Meet goals for 2012, outlined in the weed management plan. Concentrate control efforts on diffuse knapweed and Dalmatian toadflax.
- 5) Seed and maintain 5 acres of food plots.
- 6) Conduct at least one project using volunteer or school groups for outreach and education. At least one of these projects may be completed under 2012 Performance Measure #3, above, in the case

of bluebird nest box installation, by the Kettle Falls High School Wildlife Management class.

7) Develop at least one parking area on the West Branch Little Spokane WLA.

Citizens Advisory Group

The last Citizens Advisory Group was held on October 26, 2011, in Spokane Valley. This meeting focused on West Branch Little Spokane WLA. The group discussed planning efforts and field activities.

Those in attendance included:

Steve Fuller – neighbor and hiker/snowshoer

Greg Sweeney – West Branch Little Spokane River Watershed Committee

Scott Wiggins – Back Country Horsemen of Washington

Kenneth Elliott – neighbor

Jerry Woods – WDFW Disabled Sportsmen Committee

Sheldon Magnuson - neighbor

Tammy Magnuson – neighbor, also works with Spokane Parks and Recreation Department

Tom Vogt – executive, YMCA Camp Reed (camp abuts south end of the WLA)

Bob Watt – caretaker, Camp Reed

Tammy Allen – neighbor, coordinator for Horseshoe Lake homeowners’ group

Beverly Rowley - neighbor

Howard Rowley - neighbor

- Several neighbors and user groups are interested in volunteering in cooperative on the ground projects. One major user group is the Backcountry Horsemen of Washington (BCHW).
- Fencing: Cultural and boundary surveys have been completed. WLA manager has identified portions of the West Branch Little Spokane WLA boundary that need fencing, excluding steep grades, lakes, etc. There is no funding for fencing at this time.
- Parking Areas: The priority area for parking development will be on the east side of the WLA, off of Fertile Valley Road.
- A kiosk has been deployed at the Horseshoe Lake boat launch.
- WDFW will be hiring a Wildlife Area Assistant Manager who will be responsible for West Branch Little Spokane, as well as Sherman Creek and LeClerc Creek WLAs.
- Development of the Management Plan for West Branch Little Spokane WLA.
- An access plan for the disabled is being developed with WDFW’s ADA Manager.
- Aquatic and terrestrial weed control issues were discussed.
- Consider outreach to additional user groups. This could include kayakers, rock climbers, etc.

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Want to see the full plan?

Go to –

http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/