

Blue Mountains Wildlife Areas

Chief Joseph/Asotin Creek Wildlife Area Advisory Committee Introductory Meeting Notes

Wednesday, August 23, 2017 6:00-8:00 pm
Walla Walla CC – Clarkston Branch, 1470 Bridge Street, Room 187

Attendees

Michael Calahan, Jim Ross, Glen Landrus, Megan Stewart, Bud Scott, Stan Wilson, Joe Ford, Danette Studer

WDFW Staff: David Woodall - *Assistant Wildlife Area Manager*, Kevin Robinette, *Regional Wildlife Program Manager*, Patricia Jatczak and Melinda Posner, *WDFW Planning Staff*

Introductions

The Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) members introduced themselves. The group consists of many people who know the wildlife area wells, and have hunted, fished, and recreated on them. Interests included how wildlife areas intersect with private lands, hiking trails, restoration, volunteer work, and wildlife. Unable to attend was Sam Ledgerwood.

WDFW staff introduced themselves. Unable to attend was Bob Dice, the Wildlife Area Manager.

Overview of Agency Mission and Goals

Patricia provide an overview of the WDFW Mission and Goals, and how these are the basis for how we manage the wildlife area lands. A handout was provided, and is included with the notes.

Wildlife Area Advisory Committee

Overview

Patricia talked about the purpose, role, and responsibilities of the WAAC. The WAAC is an advisory, not a decision making body. Kevin emphasized that one of the key roles of WAAC members is to talk with your constituents to let them know about the wildlife area plan, and to bring their interests and concerns forward to the WDFW planning team. The slides from the presentation are attached to these notes.

Charter

A Draft Charter was distributed and discussed. Members were asked to review and send comments via email. The Draft Charter is attached. Please review and send comments to Patricia by September 29.

Patricia.jatczak@dfw.wa.gov

Meetings

The WAAC is expected to meet 2-3 time during the wildlife area planning process. The meetings are typically 1) Intro and Overview (Aug 2017); Review wildlife area plan action items (Fall 2017), and review draft plan (winter 2017-18). After the plan, WAACs typically meet twice per year or as appropriate.

Wildlife Area Planning Process

Patricia described the planning process and timeline and the components of the wildlife area plans. (see presentation). The plan components include: overview of the wildlife areas, by unit; recreational uses; property characteristics; geology, hydrology and climate; information and species and habitat; and a list of planned actions, along with performance measures.

Overview of the Blue Mountains Wildlife Areas

David provided an overview of the three wildlife areas: Chief Joseph, Asotin Creek, and WT Wooten. Grouse Flats was the first area to become part of the wildlife area in the 1960's. The 4-0 Ranch was the last acquisition, completed in 2017. The wildlife areas have salmon and steelhead bearing streams, as well as state listed and native rare plants. Recreation includes hunting, fishing, wildlife and wildflower viewing, as well as horseback riding, hiking, and other activities.

Overview of the Issues on the Blue Mountains Wildlife Areas

Patricia discussed some of the issues that we will be looking at in the plan, including: Elk damage, grazing, wolves, ESA-listed fish protections, bighorn sheep, species recovery, forest health, enforcement, and recreation.

Committee members expressed interest in having portions of the wildlife area lands to be working lands, controlling weeds on the wildlife area, hiking opportunities, and hunting. Hunting on the 4-0 was of interest and the quality verse open hunt was discussed. Now it is all draws on the 4-0, and people asked if that would be changed. Having more ADA access for hunting was brought up, as was the possibility of adding senior/youth hunting on the 4-0. There are a lot of other hunting opportunities on the 4-0 that are not big game.

Wrap-up and Actions

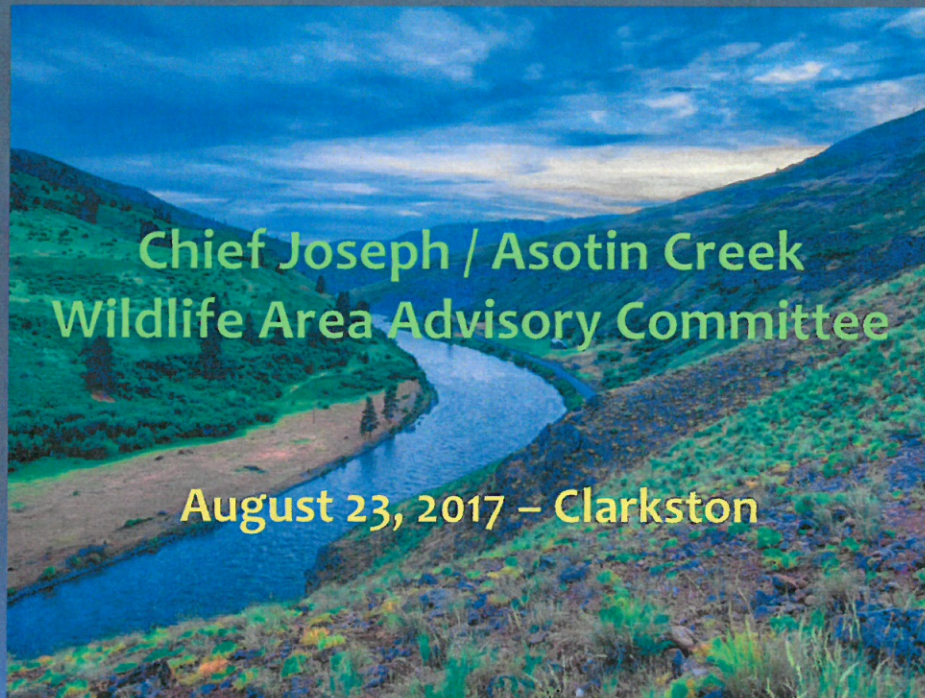
The committee asked to get materials in advance of meeting so that they could review (such as the draft action items). The committee asked for maps of the wildlife areas.

Patricia will send out the Draft Action Items when they are ready, and will look into providing maps. The next WAAC meeting will be held this fall, date TBD.

There is a webpage set up for the WAAC, and meeting materials will be posted here:
<http://wdfw.wa.gov/about/advisory/cja-waac/>

Thank you Everyone

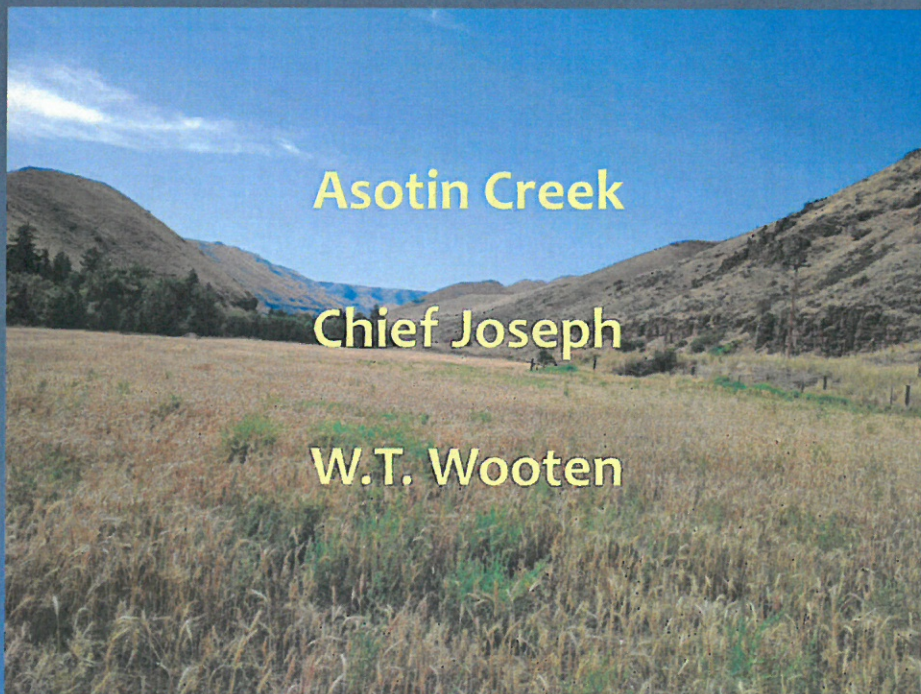
Blue Mountains Wildlife Areas



Chief Joseph / Asotin Creek
Wildlife Area Advisory Committee

August 23, 2017 – Clarkston

Blue Mountains Wildlife Areas



Asotin Creek

Chief Joseph

W.T. Wooten

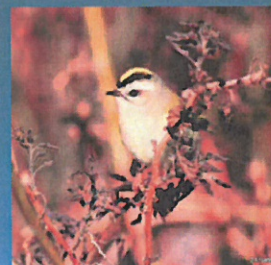
Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Agency Mission & Goals
- Advisory Committee
- Wildlife Area Planning Process
- Overview of the Wildlife Areas
- Preliminary Issues
- Discussion & Comments



WDFW Mission

*Preserve, protect and perpetuate
fish, wildlife and ecosystems
while providing sustainable fish and wildlife
recreational and commercial opportunities.*



WDFW Strategic Plan Goals

- Goal 1 Conserve and protect native fish and wildlife.
- Goal 2 Provide sustainable fishing, hunting, and other wildlife-related recreational and commercial experiences.
- Goal 3 Promote a healthy economy, protect community character, maintain an overall high quality of life, and deliver high-quality customer service.
- Goal 4 Build an effective organization by supporting our workforce, improving business processes, and investing in technology.

Wildlife Area Advisory Committee

ROLE

The role of the advisory committee is to bring the perspectives of the public and other stakeholders in the WDFW wildlife area planning and management activities.

Wildlife Area Advisory Committees

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Attend WAAC meetings
- Provide input during plan development & updates
- Represent interests of stakeholders
- Understand WDFW mission & plan goals
- Act in an advisory capacity
- Work in a collaborative manner
- Register on the WDFW volunteer website:
<http://wdfw.wa.gov/about/volunteer>

Wildlife Area Advisory Committees

DECISION MAKING

What is the WAAC role in decision-making?

Wildlife Area Advisory Committees

Discussion Guidelines

- All members are expected to participate
- Everyone's perspective is valuable
- One person talks at a time
- Refrain from side conversations
- Stay focused on meeting purpose
- Keep comments short
- Keep an open mind
- Mute cell phones

Purpose of Planning

- Sets vision for 8-10 years
- Provides opportunity for engagement
- Guides activities on the wildlife area
- Ensures lands managed consistent with mission and funding
- Identifies priority actions
- Helps integrate agency goals

Wildlife Area Planning Process

- | | |
|---------|----------------------|
| Phase 1 | • Scoping |
| Phase 2 | • Goals & Objectives |
| Phase 3 | • Draft Plan |

Blue Mountains Wildlife Areas *Advisory Committee Meetings*

During Planning Process

1. Introduction, review issues August 2017
2. Review goals & objectives Oct/Nov 2017
3. Review draft plan Jan 2018

After plan, twice per year or as appropriate

Plan Components

- ✓ Statewide and wildlife area goals
- ✓ Action items
- ✓ Property characteristics
- ✓ Reasons for purchase & obligations
- ✓ Resource management
- ✓ Public use and recreation



Summary of the Blue Mountains Wildlife Areas

Bob Dice, *Wildlife Area Manager*

- Overview
- Purpose of Property
- Current Objectives



Chief Joseph

Overview

- 25,037 acres in Asotin & Garfield counties
- Grassland canyons, river and stream frontage, ponderosa pine, woodland, wildflower meadows
- Four units: Chief Joseph, Grouse Flats, Schumaker, and 4-0 Ranch
- Hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, wildflowers



Chief Joseph

Purpose

- Enhancing bighorn sheep, mule deer, and upland game bird populations
- Protect habitat for steelhead and bull trout
- Reduce elk damage

Current Objectives

- Provide hunting and fishing opportunities
- Protect fish and wildlife habitat
- Manage for healthy ecosystems
- Support native plant populations (remove exotic species)

Asotin Creek

Overview

- 37,020 acres in Asotin and Garfield counties
- Grasslands, dry coniferous forest, canyons, salmon-bearing creeks
- Three units: Asotin Creek, George Creek, Weatherly
- Hunting, wildlife viewing, hiking



Asotin Creek

Purpose

- Protect big game winter range
- Protect habitat for steelhead and bull trout
- Protect shrub-steppe habitat for grouse and elk

Current Objectives

- Provide hunting other recreational opportunities
- Protect fish and wildlife habitat
- Manage for healthy ecosystems
- Support native plant populations (remove exotic species)

W.T. Wooten

Overview

- 16,481 acres in Garfield, Columbia, and WW counties
- Tucannon River valley, ponderosa pine woodlands, grassy hills
- Three units: W.T. Wooten (main), McDonald Bridge and Swegle Rd fishing access
- Fishing, camping, hunting, wildlife viewing



W.T. Wooten

Purpose

- Minimize conflict between wildlife and livestock
- Preserve habitat for wildlife and outdoor recreation
- Create improved fishing opportunities

Current Objectives

- Enhance habitat and improve the lakes for fishing and floodplain function
- Provide big game winter range
- Provide fishing, camping, and hunting opportunities
- Manage for healthy ecosystems

Use and Issues

How do you use the Wildlife Area now?

What are the issues that should be addressed in a 10-year management plan?

Obligations of the wildlife areas

- Enhance bighorn sheep, mule deer, and upland game bird populations
- Protect habitat for ESA listed fish
- Protect habitat for steelhead and bull trout
- Protect big game winter range
- Protect shrub-steppe habitat for grouse and elk
- Minimize conflict between wildlife and livestock
- Reduce elk damage
- Preserve habitat for wildlife and outdoor recreation
- Create improved fishing opportunities

Issues

Working Lands

- Elk damage
- Grazing on wildlife areas
- Trespass cattle
- Wolves on wildlife area

Species and Habitat Protection

- ESA listed fish
- Bighorn sheep diseases
- Managing for species recovery
- Land not well surveyed

Issues

Forests

- Forest health
- Fire danger

Enforcement

- Communication about rules
- Discover Pass issues

Recreation

- Shed antler hunting
- Target shooting

Discussion & Next Steps



Thank You!

Bob Dice, *Blue Mountains Wildlife Areas Manager*

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Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**

Chief Joseph/Asotin Creek Wildlife Area Advisory Committee

Agency Mission

Preserve, protect and perpetuate fish, wildlife and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities.

Agency Goals

Goal 1: Conserve and protect native fish and wildlife

The Department is developing strategies for protecting and restoring native fish and wildlife populations in the face of changing environmental conditions, human population growth, and urban development. The plan outlines strategies for managing specific species, such as salmon and gray wolves, as well as preserving and restoring the ecological integrity of broader ecosystems.

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

The Department is committed to providing sustainable fishing, hunting and wildlife-viewing opportunities throughout the state. These popular outdoor activities are a “quality of life” issue for millions of Washingtonians, and generate billions of dollars in economic benefits for local businesses and communities each year. This plan is designed to maintain and increase those benefits with strategies that range from better access to better catch accounting.

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

Washingtonians have a keen interest in the state’s fish and wildlife resources, whether for recreational, commercial, or aesthetic reasons. This plan includes strategies to involve citizens – and whole communities – in decisions that affect their future and that of the state’s other living resources. It highlights the importance of responding quickly and effectively to citizens’ concerns, and encourages collaborating with stakeholders to maximize the economic benefits of fish and wildlife. Recognizing the vital role hunters and fishers have played as stewards of those resources, the Department is also working to engage more citizens in that important work.

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

The Department recognizes that a skilled, diverse workforce and efficient business processes are essential to effectively manage fish and wildlife and serve the public in the 21st century. Plans for staff development include additional training opportunities and more collaboration among programs throughout the Department. Technological improvements include developing a web-based land information system and developing a web accessible employee work plan database. In addition, Lean management will continue to be used to improve a number of the Department’s business processes, including hiring, land management, and permitting.