



WDFW Shrubsteppe Proviso Near-term Advisors Meeting – Oct 19, 2021

AGENDA			
830 – 835	Welcome & meeting logistics; review ground rules		Hannah Anderson
835 - 900	Reviewing advisory group purpose, expectations, contributions		Allen Lebovitz
900 - 910	Charge of the technical teams		Janet Gorrell
910 - 935	Tech team presentation and advisor discussion	Cultural Resources	Janet Gorrell
935 - 1000		Native Plant Materials Production	Kurt Merg
1000 - 1025		Species Recovery	Gerry Hayes
1025 - 1045	BREAK		
1045 - 1110	Tech team presentation and advisor discussion	Deferred Wildland Grazing	Alissa Carlson
1110 - 1135		Wildlife Friendly Fence	Jay Kehne
1135 - 1200		Technical Tool Development	Janet Gorrell
1200 - 1215	Synthesizing the pieces – Reactions, Comments, Discussion		All
1215 – 1220	Next Steps – Revised Timeline		Hannah Anderson
1220 – 1230	Public comment		
END			

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83659343567?pwd=bDVjZjhrLzhhUWlzWUNJYzNSWTJodz09>

Meeting ID: 836 5934 3567
 Passcode: 997668
 One tap mobile
 +12532158782,,83659343567#,,,,*997668# US (Tacoma)

Shrubsteppe Resources

- [This Land Is Part of Us: Washington’s Shrubsteppe Ecosystem](#)
- [Shrubsteppe in Washington – WDFW lunchtime brown bag seminar](#)
- [WDFW Shrubsteppe Ecosystem Webpage](#)

Wildland Fire Resources

- [Wildland Fire Advisory Committee \(WFAC\)](#)
- [WFAC SHB 2561 Report on Unprotected Lands](#)
- [Washington State Wildland Fire Protection 10-Year Strategic Plan](#)

Attending:

Allisa Carlson, WSCC
Hannah Anderson, WDFW
Allen Lebovitz, WDNR
Kurt Merg, WDFW
Aaron Wold, Okanogan CD
Al Eiden, Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever
Bonda Habets, NRCS
Chris Marcolin, WDNR
Elizabeth Torrey, WDFW
Elsa Bowen, Lincoln CD
Eric Braaten, WDFW
Gerry Hayes, WDFW
Jason Lowe, BLM
Jay Kehne, CNW
Jesse Ingels
Jon Gallie, WDFW
Jordan Ryckman, CNW
Kurt Merg, WDFW
Marie Neumiller, INWC
Michael Brown, Pheasants Forever
Mike Atamian, WDFW
TC Peterson, Yakama Tribe
Colin Leingang, Yakima Training Center
Janet Gorrell, WDFW

830 – 835	Welcome & meeting logistics; review ground rules	Hannah Anderson
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Allisa reminded group of zoom etiquette
Hannah reminded group of ground rules

835 - 900	Reviewing advisory group purpose, expectations, contributions	Allen Lebovitz
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After last near term action advisory group meeting, steering committee recognized need to clarify role of this group, how it should function and be most effective.

- This group provides advice to the steering committee on issues related to implementing the proviso. Last time, we put a particular ask to the group around vetting shovel ready projects, ahead of having defined criteria for doing so.
- Going forward, we'll be asking the group to provide advice on criteria and guidance for near-term projects. Refine criteria, help to stand up implementation.
- Recognize and appreciate the different expertise/perspective in the group. Steering committee wants to leverage this and maximize it's value. We want our process to focus on hearing verbally from advisors their perspective/responses on recommendations.


- Fist of five was helpful in the prior meeting as used but generally we don't see significant need (at this point) for consensus in this group. Rather, we're looking for active contribution of perspective. Please share opinions and reasoning behind them.
- We recognize that to get meaningful feedback from the group, we need to provide enough information in advance of when the input is requested. We will try to improve on this.
- Steering committee meets to make decisions on issue as they rise. We want to rely on this group as a sounding board, vet decisions made, and provide advice on a range of factors. Steering committee DOES make consensus decisions.
- We recognize that it feels like we are rushing; timelines are driven by the proviso itself. We have made some adjustments to the timeline to create more space for advisor input (will discuss later in agenda)
- Expect that as we learn more moving forward, we'll be making course corrections and seeking advice from this group about them. This is new and could be considered a 'pilot' and we'll need advice along the way.
- Our objective is to stand up a system to deliver restoration services. The technical teams are bringing pieces to this system, but proviso implementation will still require more shape.

900 - 910	Charge of the technical teams	Janet Gorrell
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Cultural Resources

Janet Gorrell
Landscape Conservation Section Manager
WDFW Wildlife Program



1

Thank you to the team


1. Formally met three times
 - Kat Kelly (WDFW Archaeologist)
 - Dan Peterson (WDFW Wildlife Area Manager)
 - Rob Whitlam (DAHP State Archaeologist)
 - Janet Gorrell (WDFW Landscape Conservation Section Manager)
2. Direct outreach to cultural resource staff in Spokane Tribe and Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
 - Starting here as near-term action focus includes Pearl Hill and Whitney Fires
 - We are **VERY** interested in working with other Tribes
 - Tribal Historic Preservation Offices and Cultural Resource Staff
 - Tribal representatives in Near Term Action Advisory Group



2

Identified issues

1. Unable to respond at spatial and temporal scales meaningful for habitat recovery after wildfire
2. Limited capacity to meet cultural resource commitments in WDFW, partners and tribes



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Recommendations


1. Develop programmatic agreements, to the extent possible, with DAHP and the Tribes for activities funded by the proviso.
 - By mid-November, build proviso activity list and descriptions
 - Build on other NTA Team recommendations
 - Build on existing lists
 - Survey partners and land managers
 - **Comprehensive** list to include habitat restoration actions
 - Initiate development of draft programmatic agreement



4

Recommendations


2. Develop and finalize supporting cultural resource consultation documents/processes for proviso implementation including:
 - Consultation letter templates
 - Cultural resources review form to facilitate desktop review
 - WDFW workflow for consultation for projects not addressed in programmatic agreements
 - Inadvertent Discovery Plan and associated training protocol/process for WCC crews and project managers
 - Messaging for affected partners and private landowners



5

Recommendations

3. Fill existing capacity gap at WDFW by hiring archaeologist to focus exclusively on proviso, working with partners, Tribes and DAHP to accomplish the following:
 - develop programmatic agreements, with DAHP and the Tribes for activities funded by the proviso, and execute the commitments associated with those agreements;
 - Conduct full cultural resource review and consultation for projects funded by the proviso that cannot be addressed through programmatic agreements OR manage contracts for this work
 - meet all record keeping and reporting requirements of Executive Order 21-02 for projects funded by the proviso.



6

Recommendations

4. Address capacity gaps, if possible, within tribes and DAHP.



7

Relationships to other NTAs

- Technical Tool Team
 - Possible efficiencies in project descriptions, desktop review, then reporting (to satisfy programmatic agreements)
 - Integration of spatial data to be more nimble in response to fire (e.g., fire boundaries)
- Species Recovery
 - Activity lists and descriptions
- Wildlife Friendly Fencing
 - Activity lists and descriptions
 - Relationship to other agreements for similar activities
- Native Plants
- Hay/Grazing Deferment



8



Questions?

9

Cultural resources

Comments/Questions/Responses/Reactions

- Programmatic process can take a long time but very valued; appreciates focus here
- A couple of the tech teams were not aware that reviews would be necessary for all things. Need to message both the pros and cons, and be clear about expectations. Hannah responded that we're having a lot of internal conversation around interpreting EO21-02.
- 1) how sure are we that this applies to us? 2) Then it also applies to state agencies – how are they handling it? Yes, It does apply to us – state funding is the trigger. All other agencies are having discussions with AGs about it.
- Are the funds or plans for accommodating the cost of survey and monitoring? This is a cost of the project and while we haven't had the conversation around this, so unknown. Communication with landowners/managers about the costs of these and the timeline associated. Allen pointed out that if we spend money here, its' less available for other activities. What is the group's advice on this?
 - o Comment that we consider cost of cultural resources into the project costs as a whole.
 - o Recommend that we keep the funding flexible – as projects come in, can we leverage existing programmatic or someone else's cultural resource review.
- There are other organizations that have programmatic agreements in place. How can we lean on them. In case of virtual fence, with 6 anchor points on the ground, we're hoping to get through that conversation quickly.
- On WDFW lands, even simple fencing projects, pounding t-posts, requires survey – they are part of the landscape but do take time. Appreciates the programmatic approach – this blanket coverage could be the most important things that many of these groups work on. One of our highest priorities is to be nimble and this will facilitate this.
- Programmatic agreements need to go beyond the proviso work – we need clearances for WDFW work all across the state. Needs to be a priority for the agency. Agreement that this is larger than just us. But it is critical for implementing shrubsteppe restoration activities in a quick and effective manner. A suggestion is that we could pursue a programmatic exemption for the planting of plugs?
- Janet to reach out to TC Peterson directly to engage Yakama Nation.

Plant Materials NTA: Draft Recommendations

Kurt Merg
Shrubsteppe Restoration Coordinator, WDFW



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Plants NTA Team:

- Sidra Blake (WDFW)
- Eric Braaten (WDFW)
- Scott Downes (WDFW)
- Carl Elliot (Sustainability in Prisons Project)
- Colin Leingang (Yakima Training Center)
- Emily Orling (USFWS)
- Susan Ballinger (Chelan Douglas Land Trust)
- David Wilderman (DNR)

2

Challenges of Uncertainty

- Seed-based restoration versus seedling-based
- Local adaptation: Plant materials must be matched to a site

3

Recommendations: Short-term Sagebrush seed supply

1. Develop staff capacity of Sustainability in Prisons Project
 - ❖ Rejuvenate former nursery infrastructure
 - ❖ Test propagation protocols for sagebrush, bitterbrush, forbs
 - ❖ Grow up to 10k sagebrush seedlings to establish a sagebrush orchard

4

Recommendations: Short-term Sagebrush seed supply

2. Acquire and store locally-adapted sagebrush seed
 - ❖ Wild-collect
 - ❖ Establish a sagebrush orchard as a hedge against drought

5

Recommendations: Long-term

3. Support adoption of WDFW's Plant Materials Policy
 - ❖ Focused on locally-adapted, native species
 - ❖ Prioritizes plant materials according to current science
 - ❖ Communicates quality of restoration effort

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Recommendations: Long-term

4. Augment supply of locally-adapted, native plant materials
 - ❖ Map provenance of existing supply
 - ❖ Identify gaps in provenance "coverage"
 - ❖ Incentivize development of needed ecotypes
 - ❖ Support existing certification standards in RFQs



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Recommendations: Long-term

5. Inventory supply of environmentally-controlled storage for plant materials
 - ❖ Consider augmenting at WDFW, partners
 - ❖ Crucial for focal species like sagebrush
 - Sensitive to storage conditions
 - In short supply



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Team Interdependence

- ❖ Species Team, for projects that define plant needs
- ❖ Cultural Resources Team, to approve above projects
- ❖ Help Grazing NTA and Fencing NTA to provide technical assistance to landowners
- ❖ Plants NTA may contribute map layers to the Tech Tool NTA, based on seed zones or databases of restoration data



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Native plant materials

Comments/Questions/Responses/Reactions

- Ask for elaboration on quantity of plant materials – did the group talk about how much we need available for restoration projects? How have we planned for many many acres of restoration needs? Response that it depends on if we're plug focused or seed focused, and we can plan to expand plant materials only to the extent that we can marshal the labor to expend the materials.
- Any discussion of other possible sources besides SPP? There are a few schools in eastern WA that have sagebrush restoration as part of curriculum. Group has discussed programs like FFA and producing more materials through schools and engaging students in conservation work.
- Recommend reaching out to partners with teams of volunteers ready to be supplement labor. What is the process of wild sagebrush seed collection? Labor, yield, time of year, storage. Sagebrush flowers late summer/fall and now is probably the right time for collection; low tech collection good for volunteers; yield is wildly variable.
- Is there a contingency plan for when we run out of native grass seeds if they're consumed by west-wide fires? We need to get something on the ground even when natives aren't available. Plant policy will be natives-first then if driven by need, we'll turn to other options. Don't want to constrain ourselves unnecessarily.
- CNW working to get school kids involved in programs like this; Oroville high school has a green house, and CCT has a green house that they may be interested in converting in part to shrubsteppe species.
- Pheasants Forever has a seed program for grasses; AI is willing to set up Kurt for conversation
- Inland Northwest Wildlife Council has a large volunteer network and boy scouts ready to go for projects.

Recommendations of Species Recovery Technical Team


Gerald Hayes
Nongame Wildlife Biologist, WDFW
Species Recovery Tech Team Lead




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Species Recovery Tech Team

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Gerry Hayes	WDFW	Colin Leingang	YTC
Jason Lowe	BLM	Amanda Ward	FCCD
Michael Schroeder	WDFW	Peter McBride	NRCS
Jon Gallie	WDFW	Marie Neumiller	Inland NW Wildlife Council
Mike Atamian	WDFW	Jim Watson	WDFW
Kim Viverka	USFWS		




2



Species Projects


3



Firebreak for pygmy rabbits

Protect pygmy rabbit population on TNC preserve

- Funding to compensate WDFW, TNC or contractor for mowing fuel break 2-3 x annually
- Late spring, early & late summer
- Reduce wildfire risk to sagebrush area occupied by pygmy rabbits
- Yr 1 - \$1,000, Yr 2 - \$1,000



4

Expand capacity to monitor shrubsteppe SGCN species

Expanded capacity to monitor sage grouse, sharp-tails, and support on-going pygmy rabbit recovery.


- WDFW to hire a 12-month and 6-month (Feb-July) seasonal technician
- PYRA Project Lead to identify new Rec Area; Grouse Biologist to identify new leks
- Yr 1 - \$112,150; Yr 2 - \$112,150




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Task 1 estimated costs

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Habitat Restoration Projects

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General considerations

- Restore bunchgrasses & control annual grasses
- Ensure sagebrush remains on the landscape
- Prioritization of native grasses and forbs
- Winter birch provide critical habitat for STG – expand
- Native habitat with suitable soils prioritized over CRP
- Public land prioritized over private land
- More severely burned areas prioritized over less
- Areas closer to specific wildlife values prioritized over areas more distant
- Re seeding to target areas of arable soils
- Riparian areas for STG winter habitat prioritized due to time to establish



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8



Swanson Lakes field restoration

Improve habitat for STG on 350-500 acres of former ag fields on the Swanson Lakes WLA.

- WDFW would conduct the work. Funds would support staff time, rental equipment, herbicide, and seed.
- Spring 2022 conduct cultural assessment; Fall 2022 mowing and harrow; additional activity into next biennium
- Restore 350-500 acres to high quality nesting habitat for STG



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9



Winter habitat improvement

Improve winter habitat for STG by planting water birch and shrub plantings on Swanson Lakes WLA

- WDFW would conduct the work.
- Spring or Fall periods for plantings
- Anticipated success with plantings given past work by BLM



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10

Shrubsteppe restoration on Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area

Benefits to sage grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, pygmy rabbits and Washington ground squirrel on WDFW WLAs/Unit

- Sagebrush Flat/Bridgeport – 400 acres; partial funding
- Sagebrush Flat/Bridgeport/Chester Butte, Dormaier, Miller – 275 acres; partial funding
- Sagebrush Flat/Chester Butte, Dormaier, Miller – 350 acres; partial funding



11



Questions?



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12

Species recovery

Comments/Questions/Responses/Reactions

- High focus on WDFW lands – want to make sure we’re not missing the boat; understood that the money was supposed to be available to all lands. Concern about perception that WDFW may simply be using the proviso to do work they should already be doing. The way Hannah considers these restoration projects – what came forward are ‘examples’ of similar projects that may come forward through a solicitation. Steering committee will determine what of the list moves forward to all landowners in a solicitation.
- Echoing; concern that WDFW ground takes priority and certainly in Douglas County where 80% is private, we don’t want to lose the private landowner/rancher audience. Other comment – PF staff person in Waterville, and two new staff coming on in Eastern WA, can help with monitoring for species.
- Don’t want to exclude private lands, understands the comments, but at some point we DO need to prioritize and maybe there’s a good reason for prioritizing public lands. Maybe a different way to frame it is long-term benefit and management commitment – some sort of conservation goal so that we know investment will carry into the future.
- Key is “benefit for wildlife” and maybe we think about the different opportunities and balancing private vs. public land/owner benefit (e.g., most of not all of grazing deferment will benefit private landowners).
- Monitoring work was identified as near term work – why did the team go this way? The ask to this group for Task 1 was to provide projects supporting species recovery that were SEPARATE from habitat restoration. A few other things came forward (e.g., translocation) but these were backburned due to variable constraints. The conversation turned to the number of SGCN (41!) associated with shrubsteppe and need to better assess status of many of the shrubsteppe species. While the positions proposed focus heavily on grouse and pygmy rabbits, we expect that they’ll make significant inroads into better understanding status of the full 41 species. Hannah and Gerry had multiple discussions – Gerry pointed out that we don’t have enough basic information at this point to inform management decisions.

Deferred Wildland Grazing Tech Team

Initial Recommendations to Near Term Advisory Group
10/19/21



1

Task 1 - Item 1. Emergency Hay Feeding Cost-Share Program

What is it?

- Emergency Hay Feeding Cost-Share Program

How should it be done?

- Funding administered to State Conservation Commission, then to Conservation Districts for Implementation
- Producers secure hay and request reimbursement
- 75% cost-share with a \$10,000 cap
- Begin with Foster Creek CD and Lincoln County CD to determine need, expand if needed/for future fires

Optimal Timeline

- FY22 (as needed) & FY23

Approximate Budget

- \$100,000 - \$6,000 TA for 2 districts (FCCD & LCCD), \$94,000 cost-share for hay
- \$100,000 each FY for grand total of \$200,000

Anticipated Outcome

- Pastures are allowed to rest during critical growing season (to ~July 15). We are helping defer during the second year of grazing for FY22. Following NRCS Deferred Grazing Program timeline.

2

Task 1 - Item 2. Retroactive Reimbursement

What is it?

- Retroactive reimbursement for resting pasture in Pearl Hill and Whitney fire perimeters only, first year following fire, focused on high priority locations that were burned.

How should it be done?

- DFW provide high priority areas, with map overlay. CD will identify producers who rested burned pasture following the fire.

Optimal timeline

- FY22

Approximate budget

- This piece of work is part of the overall \$100,000 budget for the Emergency Hay Feeding Cost-Share Program

Anticipated Outcome

- We are assisting producers who rested burned pasture after the fire, to allow it to recover

3

Task 2 - Item 1. DFW & SCC Agreement

What is it?

- Develop an agreement between DFW and SCC to allow funds to flow from DFW to SCC, and ultimately to conservation districts for a hay feeding reimbursement program.

How should it be done?

- Coordination between DFW & SCC

Optimal timeline

- Ideally a month or two before implementation target date

Anticipated outcome

- Signed agreement between the two agencies

4

Task 2 - Item 2. Pasture Rental List

What is it?

- Develop local list of producers who might be willing to rent pasture in emergency situations

How should it be done?

- Work with Communications subgroup and Shrubsteppe Coordinator, CDs. List should be updated on an annual basis.
- *Idea for the future: develop a pasture rental program, where a percentage of rental fees could be provided to producer.*

Optimal timeline

- Lists updated annually (beginning of each fire season)

Anticipated outcome

- Network of producers (at the local level) who may have emergency grazing available

5

Task 3

Identify potential sources of funding/incentives these recommendations could leverage

- NRCS Grazing Deferment Program
- FSA Programs?
- Could incentivize the resting of pastures for active restoration efforts, seeding, planting, etc.

6

Task 3**What circumstances might impact the delivery and outcome of the recommendations?**

- Multiple fires, difficulty determining how to prioritize who will be assisted
- So many unknowns – when and where, fire severity. We won't ever know what is going to burn when, or how many will be impacted.
- Hard to determine the largest number of producers vs largest amount of acreage
- Comfort level of producers working with government agencies
- Communication will need to be very clear
- Funding cycle (state funding) can be challenging for emergency situations
- Limited funding
- Availability and cost of hay
- Source of hay and potential impact to habitat through potential weed introduction

7

Task 3**ID relationship to OTHER task teams as you understand them – connection/dependencies.**

- Species Recovery
- Fencing
- Communications
- Tech Tool (priority mapping)

ID similar work being conducted and potential connection/dependency.

- Restoration work by all partners and organizations
- Refer to 1st item above
- Recovery Groups – sometimes includes immediate assistance

8

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1110 - 1135		Wildlife Friendly Fence	Jay Kehne
1135 - 1200		Technical Tool Development	Janet Gorrell

Deferred Wildland Grazing

Comments/Questions/Responses/Reactions

- Are we talking about a full year of rest or growing season? If we follow the NRCS guidelines, it'd be a full year and the following growing season.
- Right now, looking at timeline, we'll be requesting projects by February 1st. Assuming we turn it around in a month, by March 1, is that enough time for producers to plan/implement or are we looking at reimbursing for their choices next growing season. Is March 1 early enough? Unsure, the first year could be awkward. Allisa and team will look into this for producers and availability of hay at that time of year.
- Seeing similarities in signups through CDs with fencing group, and maybe the tech tool is the place to further clarify priorities. Question about the team's selection of Pearl Hill and Whitney versus other areas; Allisa recognizes the need for immediate response to future fires.
- Any discussion about difference in providing assistance to producers grazing their own lands vs. public lands. Response that we want to be consistent about tying it to priority wildlife habitat rather than ownership.
- With rental, one associated cost will be the cost to transport cattle to a rented pasture. Consider adding this cost. Near-term feedback from producers is that many would rather not send their stock far away just to have pasture.

Shrub steppe Proviso: Wildlife Friendly Fence Committee Summary of Recommendations

1

Task 1: Priority lists with costs of needs/projects for years 1 and 2

(July 2021 - June 2022) \$600,000

- **Replace burned fence with WFF Fence**
\$3.00/foot 100% cost share (\$26,400/mile)
10 miles
\$264,000
- **Retrofit existing fence to WFF Fence**
\$2.00/foot 100% cost share (\$10,560/mile)
8 miles
\$86,000
- **Virtual Fence to replace burned fence allowing proper grazing use, protect critical habitat, defer grazing, and eliminate barriers on the landscape to wildlife movement**
4 Towers @\$12,000 per tower = (\$48,000)
500 collars for 500 cow/calf pairs @\$35/collar for two years = \$35,000
200 miles of virtual fence
Total cost per virtual fence project = \$83,000
Approximately 20,000 acres fenced per project
- 3 landowner projects @ \$83,000 = \$250,000
Approximately 600 miles of virtual fence
Approximately 60,000 acres protected, connected, restored, & in a grazing plan

(July 2022-June 2023) \$600,000

- Same as above
- Based on initial response to the initial sign-up, move outside of Pearl Hill and Whitney Fire envelopes to all fire areas from 2020, 2021, and yet to occur fires in 2022& 2023

2

Task 2: Priority lists of needs/projects without costs. Projects beyond the money we have.

- The need for replacing previously burned fences and fences that will be burned in future years wildfires with hard or virtual WFF fencing greatly exceeds the dollars allocated for this task in the Capital funds earmarked for the Pearl Hill & Whitney fire envelopes.
- As programs through Conservation Districts to produce outreach on the value of hard and virtual WFF take root, and fires continue to occur over time, the need for WFF funding past the fiscal year ending in June 2023 will be at least and possibly greater than the budgeted \$600,00/year for WFF allocated in the capital funds. There is great interest in virtual fencing in particular, on both the Colville and Yakama Reservations, the Yakima Training Center, and from private, state and federal landowners across eastern Washington in burned areas from 2020 and 2021.
- The WFF committee recommends adding WFF as a program to the ongoing proviso funds at the rate of \$600,00 per FY with similar results expected as outlined above.

3

Task 3: Identify leverage sources of funding, circumstances affecting the outcome of the recommendations and connections to other task teams.

- WFF leverage dollars could come in the form of grants through organizations like National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, Secretarial Order 3362 for migration corridors, a host of Foundations, and the USFWS Conservation partnership Program. In addition, virtual fencing could eventually be considered as an approved NRCS or FSA practice, eligible for EQIP or Emergency funding.
- The biggest circumstance affecting the outcome of the WFF committee recommendations would be the timing of fires, availability of funds to react to fires, and the continuing ongoing occurrence of wildfires in shrub-steppe habitat which could drastically affect the need for fence replacement on all land ownerships or if interest in the program is low based on the current need for fence replacement.
- The ability to replace burned fences with WFF in a timely manner is directly affected by the work being done in the cultural resource review committee. Virtual wildlife friendly fences in particular, give landowners the ability to interact with several other committees including, restoration, species protection, deferred grazing, as examples. The ability to place or remove a virtual fence wherever and when ever you need it, has huge implications for invasive plant control, allowing burned areas to recover, lowering the risk for catastrophic fires (grazed fire breaks) and protecting sensitive habitat areas such as leks.

4

Underlying Conditions of the Wildlife Friendly Fence Component of the Shrub Steppe Proviso

- The WFF committee believes that the WFF program should complement and not compete with existing programs of other agencies to replace burned fences but rather be an additional path and tool to be considered by landowners as they deal with devastating losses incurred in shrub steppe wildfires.
- In the year that has passed since the Pearl Hill and Whitney fires many of the burned fences have already been replaced in both areas.
- Because of this, an initial program aimed at the Pearl Hill and Whitney burned areas may need to be followed by widening the application area to other burned shrub steppe areas from 2020 and 2021 such as the Cold Springs Fire, Evans Canyon Fire, Batterman Fire and others.
- The WFF technical committee highly recommends that once the 1.5 million capital monies have been applied to wildlife friendly fence applications on the ground that wildlife friendly fencing be continued on an ongoing basis as an integral part of the 2.5 million/ biennium ongoing funding authorized in the Shrub steppe Proviso.
- WSU will be included in the virtual fence component of the program, at a yet to be determined capacity, to bring an element of university input and credibility to projects being implemented.
- Any fences being built on state, federal or tribal lands will need to follow all rules and regulations as outlined by those entities.

5

Wildlife Friendly Hard Wire Fence & Program Definition:

- The program will pay for 100% of the costs for materials and construction of new or retrofitted hard wire wildlife friendly fence based on receipts and invoices for materials and labor. Self-constructed fence will need records of estimates of labor based on a rate of \$25/hour. (Total reimbursement costs cannot exceed \$4.00 per foot).
- All hard fences built in the same location (footprint) of previous or burned fences to allow for the least time-consuming cultural resource review may receive priority.
- Barbed wire and Barbless wire will be 12.5-gauge, class 3 galvanized, two- or four-point barbed wire is acceptable.
- T posts minimum weight of 1.25 lbs. per/foot and five and a half feet in length. Steel posts placed at intervals no greater than 16 feet between post. T posts driven into the ground to a depth that will allow only 45 inches of the post above the ground.
- Braces and corners will be constructed with 7 foot long, 5-inch minimum diameter treated wood products or similar strength steel products set to a minimum depth of 3 feet.
- Cross bracing on braces will be made with 8-foot-long treated poles or similar strength steel poles at a minimum diameter of 4 inches.

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- Fence will consist of a top smooth wire set at 42 inches from the ground, a bottom smooth wire set at 18 inches above the ground, and two strands of smooth or barbed wire, set at 26 inches above the ground, and 34 inches above the ground.
- Constructed gates will be for a crossing opening of no more than 17 feet.
- Existing Brace and T posts in good condition may be used in completion of a fence retrofit with top and bottom wires being replaced with smooth wires at the correct distance from the ground.
- All top wires (or a combination of top and 2nd wire down) will be marked with vinyl markers to create a more visible fence for wildlife to avoid collisions or entanglement.

All cost share wildlife friendly hard fences must have a life span of at least 10 years that will be monitored by the conservation district and outlined in the landowners cost share agreement with the Conservation Districts

7

Wildlife Friendly Virtual Fence & Program Definition:

- The program will pay for 100% of solar repeating towers, and radio collar rentals for a period of two years to install an approved virtual fence system.
- A virtual fence system includes the appropriate number of solar repeating towers (\$12,000 per tower cost estimate) and leased collars for every mother cow in the herd or combined herd(s) of one to several landowners (\$35/year per collar estimated cost).
- The system must be designed in coordination with the landowner(s) by an approved virtual fence company. (Approval through the conservation district).
- Reimbursement is limited to the purchase of one solar repeating tower for every 150 cows needing to be collared with a cow herd minimum of 500 cows. Total not to exceed \$50,000.
- Multiple landowners can apply together combining their herd numbers to reach the 500-cow minimum. Towers will be placed on the landowner's property in a ratio based on the number of their cows and/or, so that the system will work across the topography of all the property in the program.
- Collar leasing costs will be paid for 500 collars for 2 years not exceeding a total of \$35,000 over the two years. The landowner will be expected to pay for necessary battery replacement on the collars with costs estimated at \$10 per collar per year.

Landowners will be expected to work with an approved Virtual Fencing company for all elements of setting up a virtual fence system on their properties. All maintenance, upgrades of collars and other management expenses occurred are at the expense of the landowner(s) or in conjunction with the fence company

8

- Where landowners in consultation with the fence company have determined that a virtual fence is not appropriate (some perimeter fence areas or along roads) landowners will be encouraged to replace any burned fences with hard wildlife friendly fences, or non-barbed electric fences of adequate design.
- Landowners receiving cost share for virtual fence must agree to continue the virtual fence program including leasing collars at their expense for a period of 3 years after the cost share ends as outlined in the landowners cost share agreement with the Conservation Districts
- Vegetation will be cleared in a 30-foot radius around each tower and virtual fences will be used to prevent damage to the tower and guidewires by livestock.

Fence Removal & Program Definition:

- Removal of burned derelict or old fences being replaced by hard or virtual wildlife fences will be encouraged to be done by the WCC crew or at the landowner's expense
- In addition, up to 3 gas powered fence roller uppers will be bought with proviso funds to be located at conservation district offices for use or to loan for fence removal in those burned areas.
- If dollars remain after the initial sign-up and or if WCC crew time is not available to remove fences, the WFF committee will consider a cost share program for burned and or other fence removal.

9



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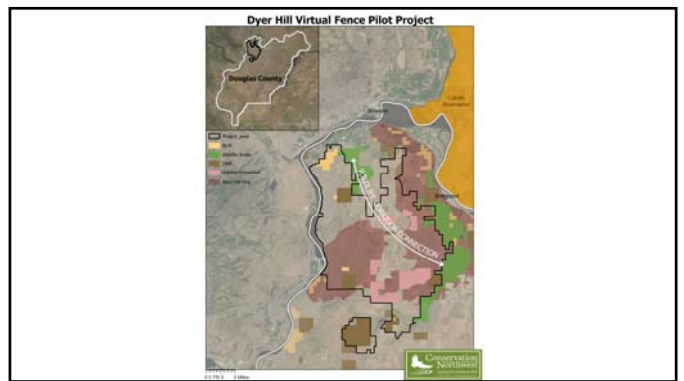
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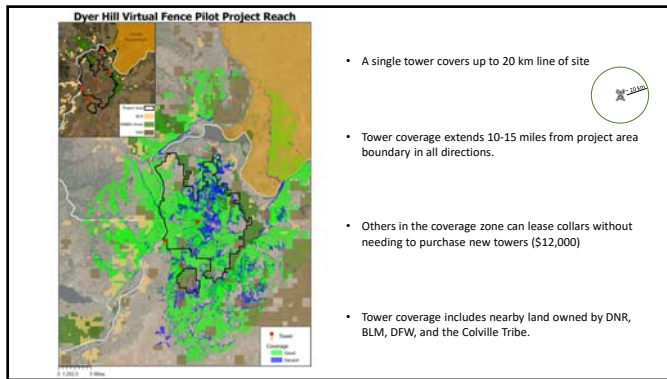
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Wildlife Friendly Fence

Comments/Questions/Responses/Reactions

- Didn't fully understand the technology; clarification on function that is DIFFERENT than electric fences for pets. Collars turn on and off depending on proximity to the towers; batteries last about a year.
- Collars are leased from the company not purchased by the landowners? Have we thought about the long-term agreements with the landowners for ongoing leases? Response that proviso should fund leasing for two years and then the landowner picks up lease cost for three years. We provide upfront but they'll take over the costs. Appreciates this approach but is concerned that the way our budget works (on fiscal year) it may be awkward paying for two years. Other question – who is purchasing the towers? Response is that this is treated like fence – once installed they become property of landowner and they'll need to maintain.
- Virtual fence may be the best tool for a producer to use to keep cattle in, but difficult to use to keep them out. Some owners will continue to have to put up boundary fencing unless ALL ownerships move to a full virtual fencing network.

Technical Tool Development

Janet Gorrell
Landscape Conservation Section Manager
WDFW Wildlife Program



1

Thank you to the team

- Two meetings since the kickoff
 - Kim Veverka (Partners for Fish and Wildlife USFWS)
 - Scott Scroggie (Sage Grouse Initiative Lead, NRCS)
 - Mark Teske (Environmental Planner, WDFW)
 - Mike Atamian (Wildlife Biologist, WDFW)
 - Scott Downes (Habitat Biologist, WDFW)
 - Ian Trewella (Senior GIS Specialist, WDFW)
 - Kurt Merg (Shrubsteppe Restoration Coordinator, WDFW)
 - Janet Gorrell (Landscape Conservation Section Manager, WDFW)



2

Our charge


Database and tool development to support management, implementation, and reporting of near-term actions.



3

Recommendations

- Adopt existing project management software for the purpose of material inventory, capacity availability and assignments, and budget tracking.
 - Materials: plants, fence markers, herbicides, tools
 - Capacity: WCC crews – what projects are they assigned to and when?
 - Budget: funds spent on materials and WCC crews




4

Recommendations

- Adopt existing project management software for the purpose of material inventory, capacity availability and assignments, and budget tracking.
 - Materials: plants, fence markers, herbicides, tools
 - Capacity: WCC crews – what projects are they assigned to and when?
 - Budget: funds spent on materials and WCC crews


Recommendation to allow Shrubsteppe Restoration Coordinator, working through the process in year 1, identify desired specifications and THEN select an appropriate solution.



5

Recommendations

- Build spatially enabled database/tool that
 - accommodates project planning, submission, evaluation, selection, and reporting;
 - allows visual demonstration of projects in context, and
 - is adapted over time, to demonstrate the magnitude of the need and implementation progress with
 - new data
 - future fires
 - demonstrated habitat recovery




6

Recommendations

Multiple modules

1. Project intake/submission – form centric
 - Responsive to project solicitations
 - Simple for partners to use - limited questions and simple geometry
2. Project selection/prioritization – map centric
 - Application of more complex spatial criteria
 - Compilation of more information volume to facilitate reporting




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7

Recommendations

Multiple modules

1. Project intake/submission – form centric
 - Responsive to project solicitations
 - Simple for partners to use - limited questions and simple geometry
2. Project selection/prioritization – map centric
 - Application of more complex spatial criteria
 - Compilation of more information volume to facilitate reporting
3. Project benefits
4. Cultural resource review




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8


Issues discussed but not yet resolved

- Processes and roles/responsibilities between modules
 - Within and between WDFW staff, between WDFW and partners, and partners and landowners
- Technical details for capturing complex projects
 - When one property/project includes multiple 'subprojects' and geometries
 - Sequencing in complex projects
- Data sharing
 - Values and sensitivities
- Processes and roles/responsibilities between modules
 - Within and between WDFW staff, between WDFW and partners, and partners and landowners
- Changing priorities with new fire events



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9



Questions?

10

Technical Tool Development

Comments/Questions/Responses/Reactions

- Think about how sign-up could occur; if dollars are flowing from WDFW to commission to CDs, we'll need an agreement at multiple levels. Can't get lost in the money trail. Allisa spoke to cost-share agreement between WSCC and CDs – the design life expectations for NRCS practices are built into agreement with landowner. Maybe we could tier to that. If the funding comes through commission for the funding, they could add these practices to their system.
- In essence – we'd develop criteria, and CDs would run the projects but not check in with the proviso group? Response is that there can be review process to embed in the procedure for their projects. E.g., they just received one-time fire recovery funding and they have a review process in place for that.
- Hannah does not anticipate that individual projects will be coming back to proviso group/advisory group for review. We're setting it up and we'll learn some things and we can adapt in the future. In the pending agreement between WDFW and SCC, there is some language about steering committee review.
- Fence team tried to tackle all of the things to be considered as criteria for wildlife friendly fencing but there were so many, that they punted this discussion until after they determine what kind of interest there was.
- Do we need the front end of the tool? From the species side, are we looking for all the species data from all the species leads? It's going to be very difficult to get this AND everything is going to be a priority. Will take more than what they've done in the species group to go down this road. And on top, we don't have a restoration tech group. Plants group is looking at supplying stuff, but not what is expected in restoration projects.

1200 - 1215	Synthesizing the pieces – Reactions, Comments, Discussion	All
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Discussion primarily around habitat restoration

- Leverage with pheasants forever, allow them to pass the funding? Key piece in all of this is making sure we're leveraging it out to the best of our ability, at least 1:1, some kind of mechanism to capture unmatched dollars. AND thinks that we have a lot of data underlying priorities within ALI. While it may not be perfect, their scorecards could be used as base model and build up from there. Lots of Douglas county will come out.
- Appreciate use of ALI data but there's a lot of other very sensitive areas and there might be areas not in any of these maps but worthy of restoration. Criteria selection can be mind-boggling. Can criteria be on a point scale rather than yes/no so that we can go with those projects that get the most points and the point scale will differentiate projects.
- Hannah clarified that the funds are use/lose within the biennium and we can't wait to make all of this perfect. We're not able to bank it. Capital dollars are not bound by fiscal year – ideally, we'll spend it all on good things and do more.
- If the money moves to another partner, is it bound by these timeframes? Answer is yes. Because of this, we'll need to be able to pivot quickly in moving funds back and forth depending on where we are and are not able to spend them.
- There's no budget associated with habitat restoration and most of the funds are taken up by the other teams – and restoration projects can't necessarily be accommodated by the outcome of

the existing teams' recommendations. Hannah's response – investing in service delivery – with habitat restoration as the overlay of three of the primary pieces of the technical teams. Shifting mindset towards seeing offerings (WCC crew, plants) as collective resources. And we're trying to set the stage to be more quickly responsive when fire happens.

- If we have a down year and we can stockpile; over time the proviso funding strengthens itself as we've invested ahead of time for the materials we need. Overtime, early investments allow more future funding to be put on the ground.

1215 – 1220	Next Steps – Revised Timeline	Hannah Anderson
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Hannah presented revised timeline.

- Short written summary of team recommendations will be coming to advisors. We're asking advisors to provide written feedback to proposed recommendations to steering committee by November 5th. Hannah will provide guidance for feedback.
- By November 15th, Steering Committee will provide final guidance to Tech Team leads.
- By December 9th, final written recommendations submitted to Steering Committee and Advisors, AND draft framing will be provided to Advisors by Steering Committee.
- These items will be discussed on December 16th meeting.
- Ask for written feedback on draft frame/system from advisors to steering committee on January 6th.
- Steering Committee will present final decisions to advisors on January 21st.
- February 1, project solicitation opens.
- ALSO, Steering Committee is delaying start of long-term strategy to allow near-term process to play out.

Near Term Action Delivery System Draft Development Timeline

