

WTS Advisory Committee Charter

Final, May 2018

I. Background & Problem Statement

The 105,000-acre Wenas Wildlife Area is in Yakima and Kittitas counties and includes WDFW, DNR, and BLM lands managed primarily by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). Target shooting has long occurred on the Wildlife Area and will continue where legal and safe. Use of the Wenas Wildlife Area by other recreational users (motorized, nature watching, hunting, etc.) also will continue.

An increase in target shooting¹ in recent years has created several challenges, including wildfires, concerns over public safety and impacts to private property, littering, and damage to wildlife habitat. Previous proposals to address target shooting generated concerns by the public. As a result, WDFW undertook an effort in 2017 in which a stakeholder advisory committee was formed, and this group provided recommendations on the best way(s) to provide for target shooting on the Wildlife Area, while addressing challenges listed above.

¹Some Committee members object to use of the terms “Target shooting” and “recreational shooting.” Committee members who object to these terms see shooting on public lands as “practiced use of firearms” and as the active fulfillment of “A well regulated Militia being necessary to the security of a free State”, as stated in the Second Amendment of the US Constitution. It is not the purpose of this Charter or the Advisory Committee to resolve legal issues having to do with the Constitutionality of shooting on public lands. “Target shooting” and “target practice” are terms from existing state regulations. WAC 332-52-145 (dealing with DNR-managed lands) defines “recreational target shooting” as: “Recreational target shooting is the use of a firearm or bow and arrow on targets and the sighting in of rifles or other firearms on department-managed lands.” WDFW regulations set standards for “firearms and target practice” in WAC 220-500-140.

II. Purpose and Objectives

WDFW convened the Wenas Target Shooting (WTS) Advisory Committee to develop recommendations for how WDFW can best provide target shooting on the Wenas Wildlife Area. The Department requested recommendations that met WDFW’s mission: *“To preserve, protect and perpetuate fish, wildlife and ecosystems, while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities”* and that: (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) if new rules or regulations are developed, provide clear and concise standards.

III. Membership

When created, the WTS Advisory Committee represented broad recreational and neighbor interests in the Wenas Wildlife Area, and was initially comprised of 20 members, representing: neighbors and affected landowners, hunters, target shooters, horseback riders, mountain bike riders, hikers, wildlife watchers, bird dog trainers, motorized users, and others. Government agencies including WDFW and the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) participated in the Committee as Ex Officio participants. Local elected officials, at times, participated as Ex Officio participants. Ex Officio

participants serve as resources to the Target Shooting Committee. WDFW sent a broad invitation asking stakeholders to apply to participate in the WTS Committee. WDFW selected Advisory Committee members from among the applicants 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

IV. Expectations of WTS Advisory Committee Members

Advisory Committee members agree to reach out to their broader community of interest and continue to strive to represent their community's perspectives. Direct participation of all current Committee members is essential to success. For that reason, members are asked to make every effort to attend in-person meetings and participate in any conference calls. Committee meetings will be in person and are expected to occur bi-monthly or quarterly, May – December 2018, in the late afternoon or evening in the Ellensburg or Selah areas. There may be public listening sessions in the Ellensburg and Selah Areas for Committee members to hear input from the broader community.

If a member decides to leave the process, he or she is asked to provide a written statement indicating the reasons for leaving.

V. Open Meetings

Meetings will be open to the public, and at each meeting, a time will be set aside for public comment. Meetings will be announced on the WDFW website. The WTS Advisory Committee's previous recommendations are on the WDFW website.

VI. Advisory Committee Recommendations and Consensus

The goal of the continuing Advisory Committee process is to provide an efficient mechanism for the committee to engage with WDFW and WDNR on implementing previous committee recommendations. Any future committee recommendations will require consensus, where "consensus" means that all members of the group can at least "live with" a recommendation, even if it is not their first (or even their preferred) choice.

Consensus may be determined via one-on-one conversations with Advisory Committee members, straw polling during meetings, or other methods. Committee discussions and any new recommendations will be captured in meeting notes and other documents (if needed).