



L.T. MURRAY WILDLIFE AREAS 2014 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Land Management Summary

This is an update to the 2006 L.T. Murray, Quilomene and Whiskey Dick Wildlife Areas Management Plan, which provides management direction for the roughly 120,000-acre wildlife area complex located near Ellensburg, in Kittitas County, Washington. The plan identifies needs and guides activities on the area based on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Mission statement “*Preserve, protect and perpetuate fish, wildlife and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities*” and it’s underlying statewide goals and objectives as they apply to local conditions.

Plans are updated every two years 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.

UPDATES / CHANGES

New Advisory Group Composition

The LT Murray Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) has been modified into a smaller, more user-based group called a Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC). The role of the WAAC will be very similar to that of the CAG – to review information, provide comments, serve as spokespersons for stakeholder groups, learn about WDFW’s mission and goals, and share priorities for land planning and management.

The 10 representatives for each stakeholder group on the LT Murray WAAC:

Andrea Nesbitt	Mountain Biking
Bill Essman	Kittitas County Field and Stream
Bill Wilson	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Clay Graham	Motorized recreation / Naneum Recreation Plan
Jason Ridlon	Back Country Horsemen/ Naneum Recreation Plan
Jason Scribner	Kittitas Audubon Society
Ken Collins	Mule Deer Foundation / ADA hunting & recreation
Robert Kruse	Landowner/ Sportsman/ Conservationist
Sam Kayser	Landowner/ Cattleman/ Agriculture
Scott Nicolai	Hiker/ Conservationist

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New Wildlife Area Staff

Natural Resource Technician 2 Brandon Zahn moved out of the area in March, 2013 and Kyle Hill was hired to fill the vacancy in September 2013.

Hunting

Pheasant: In 2012-13 roughly 400 pheasants were released annually in the Green Gate unit of the Quilomene Wildlife Area.

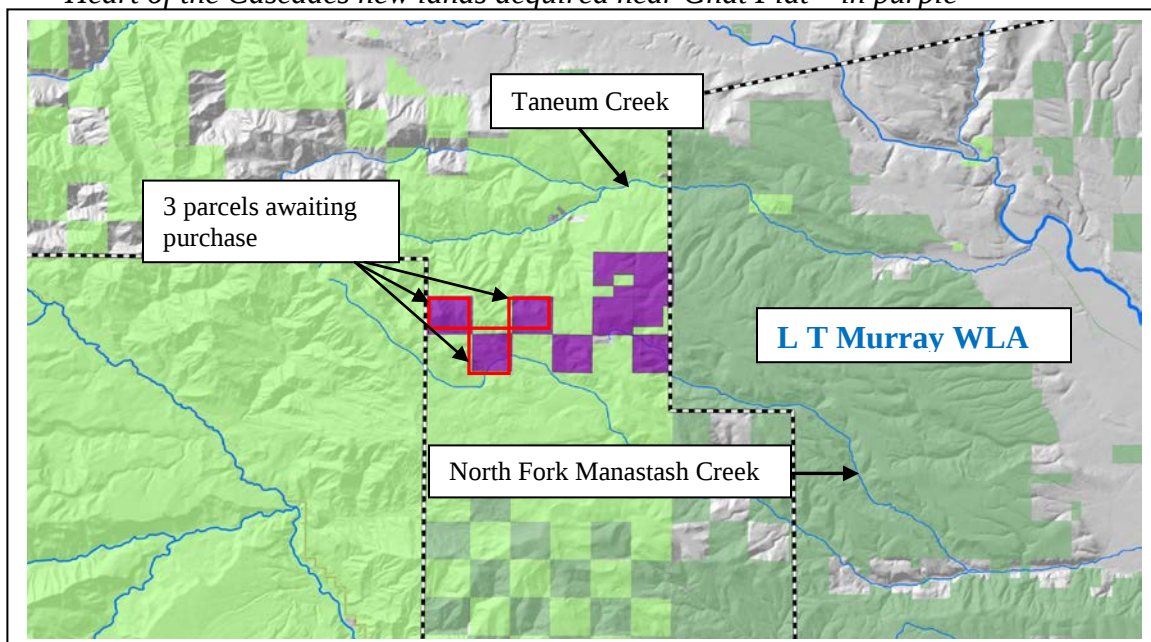
Elk: The Colockum Elk Herd is above population objective, with total herd counts in 2013 at roughly 5,500 animals after hunting season. Bull ratios, however, are still below objective. The Yakima Elk Herd is increasing and currently above population objective, with roughly 11,000 total animals after hunting season.

Mule Deer: Deer numbers were still low in 2012-13, and lice, among other environmental factors, are potentially affecting fawn and adult survival. Overall mule deer populations in the Kittitas valley remain below historic averages.

Land Acquisition

Nine parcels of land in the Gnat Flat area were identified for purchase from Plum Creek Timber. In 2013, six of the nine parcels (3,500 acres) were purchased, and funding is still being sought to purchase the final three. The property totals 5,496 acres and includes 35 miles of streams and riparian habitat. This purchase was phase III of the larger Heart of the Cascades (HOC) acquisition effort. The HOC's goals are to achieve landscape-level conservation benefits by supporting species recovery, increasing connectivity, and maintaining recreational opportunities while reducing the potential impacts of development.

Heart of the Cascades new lands acquired near Gnat Flat – in purple



In 2012, roughly 4,800 acres came to WDFW from DNR as phase II of the Land Exchange. In 2013, 640 acres were purchased in the Cole Creek drainage of upper Kittitas County.

Road Maintenance and Abandonment Planning (RMAP)

In 2012 WDFW completed 2 miles of road improvement, submitted 24.5 miles of previously closed forest road for formal abandonment, and added 2.2 miles of road to the plan due to land ownership changes (DNR/DFW Land Exchange).

In 2013 WDFW completed 7.5 miles of road improvement, submitted 35.1 miles of previously closed forest road for formal abandonment (which mitigated 1.75 miles of resource threat), and added 6.8 miles of road to the plan due to land ownership changes (new acquisition). Additionally one fish passage barrier was removed, opening up approximately one mile of passage.

Timber Management

A Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) crew continued to hand-thin overstocked timber stands in Taneum Creek drainage. The felled trees were piled and burned in some cases, or where appropriate, were added to the creek to improve fish habitat and stream function.

Weed Control

In 2012-2013 roughly 492 acres of weeds were treated using a variety of methods. Of the 492 total acres, 47 acres were treated as part of grant-funded restoration projects, over 100 acres were treated with herbicide application, 6 acres were mowed, and 385 acres were treated with bio-control insects. Kittitas County Weed Board staff assisted with weed management on the two elk feed lots within the L T Murray Wildlife Area.

Grazing

In 2012, livestock grazed Lower Parke and Vantage Highway pastures April-June, for a total of 283 AUMs. In 2013, the Vantage Highway and Whiskey Jim pastures were grazed in May-June for a total of 272 AUMs. The current grazing permit extends through 2015. Wildlife area staff continues to annually repair fences, install riparian exclosures, monitor forage utilization, and maintain water developments to support the program.

Naneum Ridge to Columbia River Recreation Plan

The Naneum to Columbia Recreation Plan is a 10-year cooperative plan between WDFW and DNR. The planning area encompasses roughly 230,000 acres and includes the WDFW-managed Colockum, Quilomene and Whiskey Dick Wildlife Areas in addition to the DNR-managed Naneum State Forest. The planning process began in June 2012, and will go through the SEPA process and public comment period in summer 2014. Implementation of the Naneum to Columbia Recreation Plan will begin pending a successful conclusion to the SEPA process.

NEW ISSUES

Forest Health Grant

Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grant proposals will be submitted in the summer of 2014, and funds will be awarded to successful applicants in 2015. LT Murray staff members are

working with the TAPASH Collaborative group to apply for a forest health grant which will treat approximately 500 acres of upland timber stands, and improve riparian function in the Manastash Creek drainage.

Bull Elk Study

The Colockum elk herd is still below objective for adult bulls, even though the True-Spike hunting regulations have successfully increased yearling bull elk recruitment. To better understand this population dynamic, WDFW Wildlife Program initiated a 3-year adult bull elk study to investigate survival and winter range habitat use. These two objectives will improve managers' understanding of the consistently low adult bull to cow ratio. In late 2013, 16 adult bull elk were radio-collared, although only 12 survived through the winter. In early 2014, another 15 bulls were collared. Each collar provides daily GPS telemetry data to allow a Central Washington University Graduate Student to: track daily movements, obtain updates of mortality status, and over the course of the study to better define bull elk winter range use.

Wanapum Dam Drawdown

In early March 2014, a crack was discovered in a spillway of Wanapum Dam, requiring the water level in the Wanapum Pool be dropped significantly. WDFW staff worked with Grant County Public Utility District (GCPUD) to post all wildlife area lands adjacent to the Columbia River as closed to human entry. This action was implemented for the protection of cultural resources and human safety.

Livestock Fence Construction

Two fence projects, Whiskey Dick and Parke Creek, are currently in the planning phase, and scheduled for construction in 2014. These fences will allow full implementation the Wild Horse CRM grazing program, and reduce the incidence of trespass livestock on the Quilomene Wildlife Area. The Whiskey Dick project is scheduled to begin construction in summer 2014 and entails two sections of livestock fence – one along Skookumchuck Creek, and another along the eastern boundary of the Wild Horse Wind Facility. The Parke Creek project is a single section of fence along the northern WDFW ownership boundary in Parke Creek, and is scheduled for construction in fall 2014. Completion of the Parke Creek fence will allow permitted grazing of the Upper Parke pasture, which has been unavailable for the first four years of the permit.

MAJOR STEWARDSHIP ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Colockum-Tarps Fire Restoration

The Colockum-Tarps fire started July 27th, 2013 and burned roughly 80,000 acres. The fire was started when faulting wiring on an irrigation pump ignited dry grass. Most of the fire occurred on the Colockum Wildlife Area, although it burned south into the Quilomene Wildlife Area. The southern fire front was finally contained along the Quilomene Ridge Road and the upper reaches of Parke Creek. Areas of soil disturbance caused by firefighting actions such as bulldozed fire lines and staging areas were hand seeded with native grass and shrub seed by wildlife area staff. Burned riparian corridors were aerially seeded by helicopter and weed control efforts will continue into the future as necessary.

STATUS REPORT OF 2012 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Key performance measures are identified each year to monitor progress and identify issues that might interfere with planned priority activities. This information will be used to delete, add, or alter priority strategies for 2013.

2012-13 Performance Measure	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2014 Related Activity/ Comments
Meet with WAAC (CAG)	Completed	Meeting held April 2012. CAG will be revised into a 10-member Wildlife Area Advisory Committee in 2014.
Maintain 13 miles of elk fence annually	Completed	Made repairs as necessary. Requested funds to replace poor sections.
Maintain 65 miles of boundary fence	Completed	Maintained boundary fence, focusing on sections needed for the grazing program and to exclude trespass livestock. Pursuing 2 projects to install ~5 miles of boundary fence where currently none exists.
Implement grazing program	Completed	Implemented grazing rotation, monitoring, fence maintenance and riparian protections.
Feed elk approximately 600 tons of hay annually	Completed. Warm winter temps and little snow reduced average hay fed.	2012-13: 431 ton over 87 days 2013-14: 181 ton over 46 days
Release ~400 pheasants annually at Green Gate unit	Completed	400 pheasant were released in both 2012 and 2013
Annually treat ≥ 500 acres of upland weeds, including 30 mi. of road-side weeds	Completed	492 acres treated, including uplands and roadsides. Lack of staff in 2013 reduced acres of weeds treated.
Continue to address road issues identified in the RMAP process	Completed scheduled work annually	Improved 9 mi of road, submitted 59 mi of closed forest roads for formal abandonment. Removed 1 fish barrier to open up 1 mile of fish passage.
Identify RMAP needs on new acquisitions	Partially completed	In 2012-13 WDFW acquired ~4,800 acres from DNR, and ~4,100 acres in upper Kittitas County that needs to be assessed.
Staff attends fire and first aid training, and pesticide license renewal as required.	Completed annually	Staff completed first aid/ CPR and annual fire training. Spray licenses were renewed annually.
Repair/remove at least 1 mile of degraded fence	Completed	Staff repaired 7 miles of fence on Quilomene Ridge and Little Parke Creek in 2012 and 2013.
Complete required annual plans and reports	Completed	Completed RMAP and PR reports each year.

NEW STRATEGIES

The Wildlife Area Management Plan identifies strategies or activities that address the Agency's goals and objectives, why the area was purchased, habitat conditions, species presence, and public issues and concerns. The following updated Strategies have been added in response 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 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
 - A. Strategy: Begin implementation of the Naneum to Columbia Recreation Plan. Timeframe: pending Naneum Recreation Plan approval
 - B. Strategy: Implement the 5-year Quilomene grazing permit. Timeframe: 2011-15
 - C. Strategy: Create a birding trail(s) on the Wildlife Areas. Timeframe: 2014
 - D. Strategy: Install kestrel nesting boxes on the Wildlife Areas. Timeframe: 2014
 - E. Strategy: Develop a trailhead and parking lot in Taneum Creek that provides ADA access, non-motorized recreation and watershed enhancement components. Timeframe: 2014-2015

Agency Objective: Minimize Adverse Interactions Between Humans and Wildlife.

1. **Monitor and manage public access to minimize negative effects on fish and wildlife**
 - A. Strategy: Inventory the current user-built non-motorized trails on the L.T. Murray and work with stakeholders to establish a sanctioned non-motorized trail. Timeframe: 2014

Agency Objective: Protect, Restore and Enhance Fish, Wildlife and Their Habitats

1. Protect, restore and enhance wetland and riparian habitats
 - A. Strategy: Pursue a RCO grant to treat overstocked forest stands on the L.T. Murray and improve watershed function in Manastash Creek. Timeframe: 2015.

2014-15 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance measures for the L.T. Murray Wildlife Areas are listed below. Accomplishments and progress toward desired outcomes are monitored and evaluated biennially.

- 1) Meet with W.A. Advisory Committee annually
- 2) Maintain 13 miles of elk fence on the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area
- 3) Maintain 65 miles of boundary fence on the Quilomene and Whiskey Dick Wildlife Areas
- 4) Feed roughly 400-600 tons of hay each winter to minimize elk depredation on private land
- 5) Release approximately 400 pheasants annually in the Green Gate area
- 6) Control weed infestations on ~500 acres
- 7) Implement 2014-15 permitted grazing rotation, including monitoring and fence maintenance
- 8) Complete scheduled 2014-15 RMAP work
- 9) Identify RMAP needs on new acquisitions
- 10) Complete annual RMAP reports, and PR reports

11) Apply for an RCO grant to improve forest health on the LT Murray Wildlife Area

WILDLIFE AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE INPUT

A Wildlife Area Advisory Committee meeting was held April 15, 2014, and was attended by the following members: Bill Essman, Bill Wilson, Jason Ridlon, Robert Kruse, Sam Kayser, Scott Nicolai, Jason Scribner, Clay Graham, Ken Collins, Andrea Nesbitt. DFW Staff included Wildlife Area Manager Shana Winegeart, Assistant Manager Wayne Hunt, and Melinda Posner acting as Facilitator.

Additional guests included Eve Kruse (adjacent landowner, Scammon's Landing, Whiskey Dick); Lana Cruse (interested party, Kittitas County Field and Stream Club); Dennis Ohlde (interested party, Kittitas County Field and Stream Club); Marc Eylar (Kittitas County Noxious Weed Board); Ken McNamee (DNR).

Meeting Summary:

Prior to the meeting, the Advisory Committee members were asked to bring two site specific projects and two wildlife area issues that their organizations would like to see implemented or addressed in the next year. The entire group then evaluated the list and ranked the top 3 projects and issues.

Scott Nicolai: Hunter, non-motorized recreation, conservationist.

1. A thinning project on the L.T. Murray designed to help minimize the potential for catastrophic wildfire, improve forest health, and enhance fish and wildlife habitat.
2. A watershed enhancement project in the Taneum area. The site is an existing parking, camping, and recreation area that is near a footbridge and informal trail system. The Taneum Creek riparian in the area is in need of protection due to shoreline camping and related activity. Proposal includes placement of boulders to confine recreational activity to outside an appropriate stream buffer, plant along the riparian, and improve the vehicle access. It would also include the removal of portions of an old levy.
3. Develop a non-motorized recreational trail from Taneum to Manastash using old closed logging roads as connectors as much as possible, and possibly include developed trail heads at each end.

Jason Ridlon: Back Country Horsemen

4. Coincidentally in the same parking/recreation area that Scott proposed in #2, Jason identified some additional needs. He also proposed the improvement of vehicle access to better accommodate more vehicles, vehicles with trailers, and possibly the creation of a second access point. He also recommended the development of a trail (part of which already exists) that would lead horseback users downstream to an area close to the mouth of Yahne Canyon, which would provide them with a safer and lower impact ford/crossing through Taneum Creek. Ken Collins began some group discussion regarding the site that Scott and Jason are proposing. Ken's question: Will the punching out of portions of the dike allow flooding in the parking area that would be considered for improvement. Members agreed that was a good point. The site would

need to be evaluated accordingly. Ken also added that it would be good to consider ADA accessibility for the site.

5. Jason's second project is the recommended moving back of the Shadow Creek gate at the Taneum end to more effectively close the no-entry area and help prevent some of the questionable activity going on at that site. Mentioned by both Jason and Ken Collins were litter, extreme shooting up of signage, the gate itself, and other things hauled in for targets. Ken also mentioned finding Sudafed packaging littered nearby, which would indicate the possibility of meth cooking activity. Staff discussed that moving the gate back would actually place it on DNR ownership, close some additional green dot road, and remove a well-used camping spot (albeit sometimes used by questionable characters). This will be a topic for follow-up discussion between the two agencies.

Jason Scribner: Audubon

6. Would like to construct some new Kestrel nesting boxes, and get some suggestions for where to place them in the Quilomene/Whiskey Dick, as well as permission for some sites they (Audubon) have in mind. During the discussion, Jason also obtained permission from Robert Kruse to place bird boxes on his family's ownership near Scammon's Landing.

7. Develop a new birding trail in the Quilomene/Whiskey Dick.

Ken Collins: Mule Deer Foundation

8. Restoration work in Quilomene Creek to repair damage done by the Colockum Tarps Fire, and enhance fish and wildlife habitat in-stream and adjacent.

9. Continue the removal of old down and damaged stock fence on all the Wildlife Area Units that is unusable and a wildlife hazard. This would probably exclude ownership boundary fence. Ken thought this an excellent opportunity for volunteer participation.

Robert Kruse: Adjacent landowner, conservationist

10. Robert began with a question as to whether or not DFW favors wildlife watering development projects. He was specifically interested in enhancing water sources for mule deer and chukar. Shana answered that water developments are quite site and species specific in that some can be prone to creating predator traps, guzzlers often develop toxicity problems, and, depending on the condition of the site, the concentration of big game in one spot can degrade habitat. Normally it is good to evaluate each spring or seep site on its own due to those factors and other considerations. Robert commented that he felt they should be considered at least as important as DFW livestock watering developments, and would like to pursue such projects at some time.

11. Robert would like to see us invest more time in the education of the public, particularly Wildlife Area users, with regard to all management practices. Additionally he sees a need to educate folks on what measures need to be taken (or are being taken) to preserve low rainfall shrub steppe.

Andrea Nesbitt: represents mountain bikers, and is interested in improving existing trails and developing new ones that have the approval of Wildlife Area management.

12. Improvement of the Joe Watt area trails presently being used, including maintenance, signage, and other means. There is a need for easier access and improved clarity of navigation of the trail system.

13. Same as 12, but including expansion of the existing system in Manastash on the south side of the Manastash drainage. Shana explained that the Manastash system would belong to the Wenas Wildlife Area, the border between the L.T. Murray and the Wenas being Manastash Creek.

14. Re-routing erosion prone areas on bike trails in the Taneum, and identifying those that would meet with approval by management. Clay Graham: Are the trails being used now legal? Shana: No, but it would be good to be able to make some official.

Ken Collins: Maybe another project to consider would be the mapping of existing trails. Ken McNamee: Why not do a trail inventory and evaluate over time for environmental, archaeological, and other management issues? Some group discussion went on as to what is or is not legal with regard to trails, since DFW does not really manage any recreational trails on the L.T. Murray at present. Perhaps the sanctioning of acceptable trails would be a better term than legalizing. Presently travel off the green dot road system is only illegal for motorized vehicles.

Jason Ridlon suggested that an inventory and evaluation of trails should occur soon to avoid the conflict of trying to take them out at a later time. There are already a lot of trails in use that people take ownership in once they are accustomed to using them. There are already L.T. Murray trails identified on maps produced by people outside the agency. Ken Collins: Break out the acceptable uses on trails, whether horse, foot, bike, etc. or all of the above. Educate the public as to those limitations. Ken McNamee: Eventually a trail plan that includes that acceptable usage info, as well as the criteria for determining it.

Bill Essman: Kittitas County Field and Stream Club

15. The club would like to see the road system within the Parke Creek, Green Gate, and Skookumchuck acquisition areas that is currently being used, accepted into the Green Dot Road Management system that is used throughout most of the Wildlife Area. Bill added that these roads are now open, and have been historically, so it would make sense to make them official. Shana reminded the group that those areas fall within the parameters of the previously mentioned Naneum Recreation Planning process, including the road management.

Marc Eylar: Can the WAAC make a request, proposal, or recommendation that they be included in the Green Dot system? Shana added that she believes Bill's proposal is the same or close to what is in the Naneum Plan now.

Clay Graham: No projects to submit; commented on the need to practice "Leave no trace", emphasized the lack of Enforcement presence to help with control of usage on the Wildlife Area, and added that education of the public is hugely important.

Robert Kruse agreed, and added once again that education is lacking on several fronts.

The members voted as follows:

Votes **Project proposal**

- 9 Fire wise/ forest health thinning**
- 7 L. T. Murray non-motorized trail inventory and evaluation to develop a trail plan**
- 1 Shadow Creek gate moved closer to Taneum Creek Rd
- 1 Beginner biking trail and non-motorized recreation trail, with signage
- ** Taneum non-motorized trailhead/parking/horse ford/ADA/watershed enhancement
- Many project ideas became combined in this discussion. See below comments.*
- 1 Mt. Bike trail development
- 1 ADA accessible trail development
- 4 Quilomene birding trail and kestrel boxes**
- 1 Quilomene Creek post fire restoration
- 1 Old livestock fence removal
- Water developments – guzzlers/springs
- 1 Shrub-steppe public education/outreach (identify resources, locations, methods)
- For recent land acquisitions, designate roads in the Green Dot system

Group discussion about the projects followed.

Sam Kayser asked if we could consider a system for marking trails similar to the Green Dot Road Management system. The group generally supported considering something along that line.

Eve Kruse asked if there was a trail inventory being done with the Naneum Planning process, and Shana explained that the Naneum Planning was a much broader scale process at this point.

**Sam commented that there were no dots on the Taneum trailhead/parking lot/watershed project, and he felt that it should be included still as an important one, particularly the improvement of the access to the parking and camping area for present users. Other members agreed that at least portions of that project were important to carry forward.

Shana said that staff would try and move forward with at least 4 projects, and that it looked like there were 3 standouts as a result of the voting. She mentioned that work in Taneum parking site was already on the radar screen. Additionally, some grass seeding in the Quilomene Creek riparian had already been done, and staff would be monitoring the condition of the shrub component. Indications so far point toward pretty good resilience with regard to that riparian vegetation.

Robert Kruse asked about what monitoring was being done in the Quilomene/Whiskey Dick beyond DFW's grazing transect work. He hoped that there were some ongoing long-term efforts, historical recording, and further information being gathered about that shrub steppe habitat condition. Shana mentioned that W.A. staff still follows up with updated photos at photo monitoring points established by past W.A. Manager Lonnie Landrie. Those have been done at 5 year intervals. Wayne mentioned that Tip Hudson of Kittitas County's WSU Extension has some transects in the Whiskey Dick as well, and Wayne asked Melinda about the progress of the Ecological Integrity Assessments on DFW Wildlife Areas. Melinda said that yes, that effort

would include the Murray at some point, and work was being done now at Swanson Lakes, Sinlahekin, and others. That will provide a baseline for monitoring areas that may not presently have much going on.

Robert commented on the decline over the past 5 years or more of both the mule deer and chukar populations, and added that cougars now abound in his area near Scammon's Landing even though they never saw them back in the time that Scammon's owned the property. Robert asked why/if the cougars were being protected in the discussion of that decline. Bill Wilson agreed that cats were hard on the deer population, and added that the recent wet springs were hard on the chukars. Bill Essman suggested that another factor was the high elk numbers and that elk could be pushing the deer out.

Shana stated that those and many other limiting factors might be combining to contribute to the decline of those two populations, and that they had certainly not rebounded from the lice infestation/hair loss over the past several years. She also pointed out that there is a lot of WDFW data on the cougar population and activity, though perhaps less for that area (Quilomene/Whiskey Dick), but she didn't feel that cats were purposely being left out of the discussion. There is likely a need for further study related to the deer and chukar decline.

There was more group discussion about cougars. Bill Wilson mentioned the loss of hound hunting as a factor, and Sam asked if it would take State Legislative action to turn that around (the answer being yes). Many felt that if there was not a return to hound hunting on some level, we could say goodbye to the deer.

Bill Essman asked about stakes and flagging marking the installation of cattle guards at two locations in Parke Creek and the Quilomene, but with no fence for them to tie to. Shana explained that we hoped to get fence installed on that stretch of north pasture, allowing grazing lessee Russ Stingley to get full use of the designated pasture area.

The discussion was opened up to include additional comments from guests.

Dennis Ohlde asked to comment on the earlier request/project proposal by Bill Essman to green dot roads in the Skookumchuck acquisition area (Green Gate, Parke Creek, and Skookumchuck). Dennis felt that WDFW was likely to use management prerogative to override the Naneum Planning process as had been done with the continuation of the February 1 to May 1 motorized vehicle restriction for 2014. He also mentioned that WDFW Enforcement officers had written two tickets for green dot violations in those areas in spite of the fact that it was not under Green Dot Road Management, tickets that had to be dismissed.

Dennis explained that he is also representing Kittitas County Field and Stream Club as an alternate for Bill Essman, and that the club would like to see a process put in place for the adoption of roads in new acquisition areas to be brought into the Green Dot system. He would like an answer on that, and also an explanation as to how the motorized vehicle restriction was grandfathered in, circumventing the Naneum process.

Marc Eylar asked about the Shell Rock Road access, which has been closed for some time now. Is there a chance that WDFW could reach an agreement with Lyle Gardinier to reopen it? Wayne answered that W.A. staff had not given up on that, and would work with Lyle if possible, although no recent discussions had been held with him. WDFW and DNR have also had limited discussion about alternate access to replace it by reopening other closed roads. The other possibility is a purchase if Gardinier were to be a willing seller.

Ken Collins mentioned that should the Elkhorn Ranch property in the Parke Creek area become available, it would be good for WDFW to pursue purchase. Others agreed. Sam Kayser added that if that came to pass it could be the third grazing lease that he'd lost to WDFW. He also acknowledged that it was a very important elk migration route, and would be a logical move strategically.

In addition to the WAAC-identified projects that that will be pursued over the next 2 years, several other issues or suggestions were brought forward by the committee or public participants:

1. Initiate studies to better understand the decline of mule deer and chukar in the Quilomene and Whiskey Dick.
2. Develop a process to apply the Green Dot system to new acquisitions.
3. Continue to pursue an access agreement to allow public travel up Shell Rock Road from Manastash Creek Road.
4. Purchase the Elkhorn Ranch property, if it becomes available.

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