

Lands 20/20

A Clear Vision For The Future



Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**

*Jeff Koenings, Ph.D.
Director*

Lands 20/20

A Clear Vision
For The Future

Washington Department of
Fish and Wildlife

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Foreword	4
Introduction	5
The Lands Portfolio: One of Many Strategies.....	5
Lands 20/20: Our Vision for the Future.....	6
Strategies for the Lands Portfolio.....	8
How Much is Enough?.....	12
Lands 20/20 In-Depth: Benefits for Fish and Wildlife	13
Priority Species.....	13
Habitat.....	14
Biodiversity.....	15
Tools.....	16
Lands 20/20 In-Depth: Benefits for the Public	18
Availability and Accessibility.....	18
Tools.....	20
Research and Education.....	21
Economic Benefits.....	22
Tools.....	22
Other Public Benefits.....	23
Lands 20/20 In-Depth: Operational Excellence	24
Fiscal Accountability.....	24
Stewardship of the Lands Portfolio.....	27
Partnership and Citizen Involvement.....	28
Wildlife Area Management Plans.....	29
Lands 20/20 Land Transaction Evaluation Matrix	31
Threshold Information.....	31
Land Transaction Evaluation Matrix	31
Conclusion	33
Appendices	35
Appendix A : References	36
Appendix B : Land Ownership Profiles	37
Appendix C : WDFW Wildlife Areas	38
Appendix D : WDFW Land Ownership and Control by County January 2005	39
Appendix E : 2004 PILT and Assessments	40

Foreword

Lands for Fish and Wildlife and the Citizens of Washington

I am pleased to present to you *Lands 20/20: A Vision For The Future*. It is an opportunity to share with you our fish and wildlife values, how those values are reflected in the unique portfolio of lands owned or managed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department), and how we make decisions about acquiring new lands.

Land acquisition is one of the tools used by the Department to conserve Washington's fish and wildlife and provide related recreational opportunities. This tool carries with it responsibilities and costs, and can only occur successfully with the support of our citizens. As our understanding of fish and wildlife values grows, and the number of entities working to preserve those values increases, it has become ever more important for the Department to clearly articulate its unique role through an overarching lands vision.

Our land legacy began in 1939 when hunters, fishers, and my predecessors recognized that some places were special for fish and wildlife and wildlife recreation, and should be permanently protected in public ownership. That recognition led to our first acquisition, an 80-acre parcel for mule deer in Okanogan County.

Today, almost 70 years and hundreds of acquisitions later, it is clear that the lands portfolio is one of our most successful conservation accomplishments. This portfolio includes over 800,000 acres owned or managed as part of the Department's Wildlife Areas and more than 600 water access sites that are public portals to lakes, rivers and marine areas. Although my Department's ownership of land represents only 1.3% of all the land in the state, these lands are vital to maintaining our rich and diverse wildlife heritage. Hundreds of thousands of people visit these lands each year to recreate and enjoy the wildlife opportunities they provide, contributing to a \$2 billion wildlife-related recreation industry in Washington.

Whenever we are asked to make decisions about acquisitions, my Department brings the best available science to the decision-making process and offers alternatives when we can. The public, however, will make the ultimate decisions about future fish and wildlife conservation or recreation acquisitions. These decisions will be based on what we are willing to risk, and what we all want to pass on to our children. Where we go from here will be up to all of us.

Sincerely,
Jeff Koenings, Ph.D.
Director



Jeff Koenings with sign for the Landowner Incentive Program

The Lands 20/20 initiative was led by an interdisciplinary team of Department staff working from a comprehensive list of policies, practices, and science-based tools and plans. Based on their efforts, a smaller policy group worked with external stakeholders to craft the Lands 20/20 vision for agency lands. That vision is summarized below, and explored in-depth on subsequent pages.

Introduction

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) is governed by a dual mandate. Its paramount responsibility is to preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage the fish and wildlife species of the state (RCW 77.04.012). At the same time, the Department must attempt to maximize opportunities for people to hunt, fish, and appreciate fish and wildlife (RCWs 77.04.012 and 77.04.020).

A portfolio of lands helps the Department accomplish these goals. The Department lands portfolio includes Wildlife Areas encompassing approximately 800,000 acres of owned and managed land, as well as hundreds of public access sites. How does the Department evaluate acquisitions and changes in its lands portfolio? What principles guide management of these lands? The Lands 20/20 report answers these questions.

The Lands Portfolio: One of Many Strategies

Although the lands portfolio is one of the Department's most important tools for accomplishing its dual mandate, other strategies are also used. These strategies include:

- Providing science-based tools and assessments to help other agencies and organizations design land management and acquisition priorities.
- Providing technical assistance for the management of lands owned by other state, federal, and local governments to maximize fish and wildlife values or recreational opportunities.
- Entering into voluntary agreements with private landowners to actively manage their lands for fish and wildlife related values or related recreation. Examples are the Department's Landowner Incentive Program and the Private Lands Hunter Access Program.

The Department does not seek to own all the lands in the state that provide benefits to fish and wildlife. Many such lands are protected by local regulations, by other conservation agencies or entities, and by conscientious landowners. Instead, the Department seeks to be strategic and selective in its acquisitions, acquires lands that provide the highest benefit to fish and wildlife and the public, and focuses on acquiring lands that would otherwise face some sort of risk (such as changing regulations, land uses, or ownership) that would seriously compromise statewide fish and wildlife values. The Department only purchases land from willing sellers at fair market value and does not condemn land. Through land acquisition, the Department provides a vital line of defense against the loss of our state's critical habitat and species.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) is the largest provider of water access in the state and currently manages over 600 water access sites that provide public access to many of the state's lakes, rivers and marine areas. Most sites have toilets, boat launches and space to park.

Introduction



Hiking the Methow Valley Trail as it traverses the Methow Wildlife Area near Winthrop in Okanogan County.

Lands 20/20: A Clear Vision for the Future

“Protecting our unique quality of life by maintaining a citizen-supported portfolio of lands to sustain Washington’s diverse fish and wildlife and their habitats into the next century.”

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife seeks to maintain a citizen-supported portfolio of lands that will:

- Provide benefits to fish and wildlife
- Provide benefits for the public
- Ensure operational excellence

Benefits to Fish and Wildlife

- Basic needs, including key habitats, will be understood for species at risk.
- Wildlife-accessible habitats will exist that are sufficient to sustain species at risk, keep common species common, and assure adequate game populations.
- Each of the habitat types in Washington State will have sufficient acreage under some form of protection to assure properly functioning habitat.

Benefits for the Public

- All Washington citizens will have an opportunity to access and appreciate this state’s fish and wildlife.
- Availability and access to fish and wildlife related opportunities will increase consistent with demand.
- All Washingtonians will have opportunity for a fish and wildlife educational experience.
- Department lands will present a direct or indirect economic benefit to the local or state economy.

Operational Excellence

- All potential Department land acquisitions will be evaluated based on their contribution towards the conservation of fish and wildlife and the provision of fish and wildlife related opportunities for the public.
- Local interests and perspectives will be solicited and accommodated to the greatest extent possible for all proposed Department acquisitions.
- In addition to fee-simple acquisition by the Department, management alternatives such as land preservation agreements, management agreements, and partnerships will be evaluated for all proposed Department acquisitions.
- The Department will identify and aggressively pursue funding sources to support operations and maintenance for all Department lands, and to manage those lands for ecological health.
- All Department lands will be managed to maintain the habitat values for which the property was acquired.
- Management plans will be developed and updated annually, with the help of local citizen advisory groups, for each Department wildlife area.

In 2001 wildlife viewers, hunters and fishers alone spent more than \$2.4 billion in Washington, according to a recent U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service survey. Much of this economic stimulus is attributable to opportunities that exist in Washington because of lands that have been set aside for this type of recreation.



Introduction

WDFW makes payments in lieu of taxes (PILT) to counties. WDFW paid \$429,000 in PILT and another \$212,000 in assessments to local taxing districts in 2004 for weed control, irrigation and, lake management, diking and drainage maintenance, etc.

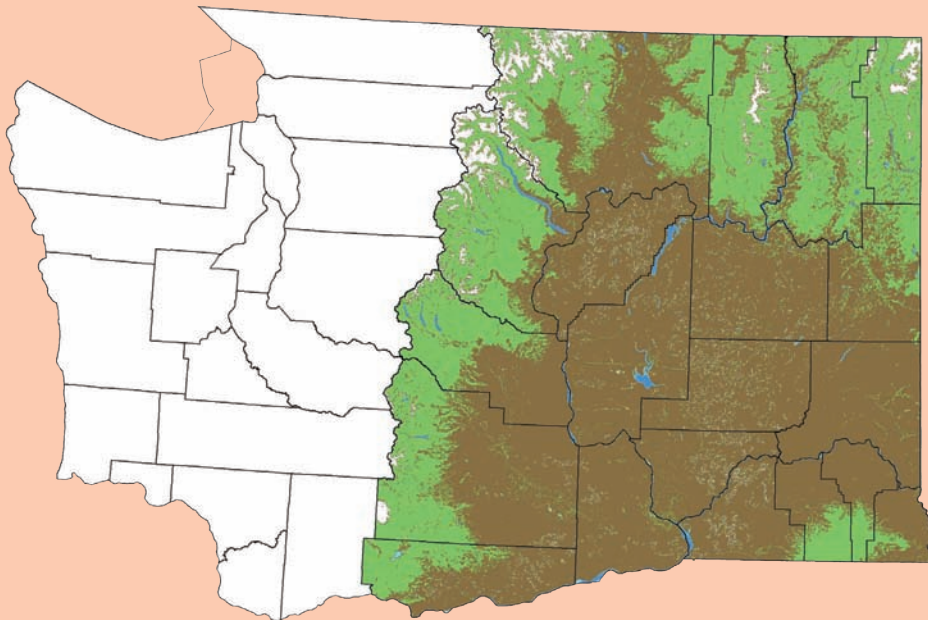
Mallards and swans lift off the Skagit wildlife area near Mt. Vernon. Here, local farmers partner with WDFW to make sure migrating waterfowl and swans have sufficient winter foods to survive.

Strategies for the Lands Portfolio

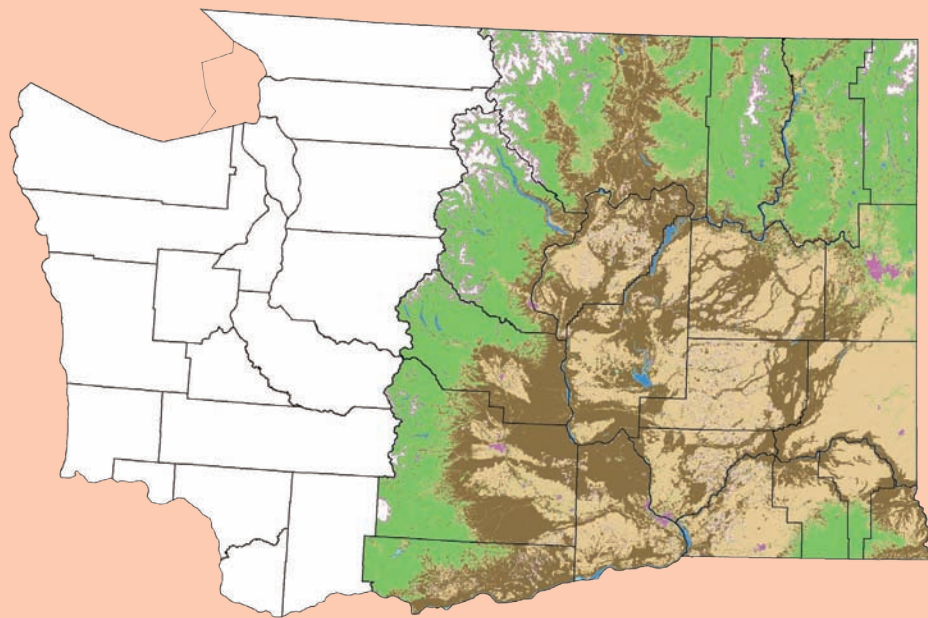
Below are examples of plans that provide the detailed strategies and priorities for evaluating individual land acquisitions and management decisions. These plans are dynamic and change as new information about conservation and recreation are acquired.

- *Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Strategic Plan.* The strategic plan includes detailed goals and objectives for the agency
- *Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy.* This strategy will be completed in October 2005 and will help shape the lands portfolio by identifying species and habitats that are most in need of conservation. This plan will maintain state eligibility for federal Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program funds.
- *Washington Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Report.* Based on this report, the Washington Biodiversity Council began meeting in the fall of 2004 to develop a statewide biodiversity strategy. When completed, this strategy will guide biodiversity conservation efforts of the Department and other agencies.
- *Ecoregional Assessments.* These reports, produced through collaboration of the Department, The Nature Conservancy, and the Washington Department of Natural Resources, assess the biodiversity and conservation potential of lands across the nine ecoregions of Washington State. Each of the eight ecoregional assessments that cover the nine ecoregions of the state will be completed by the year 2006. The ecoregional assessments provide a land evaluation that presents the relative conservation value and vulnerability of lands across each ecoregion.





Historical Shrubsteppe

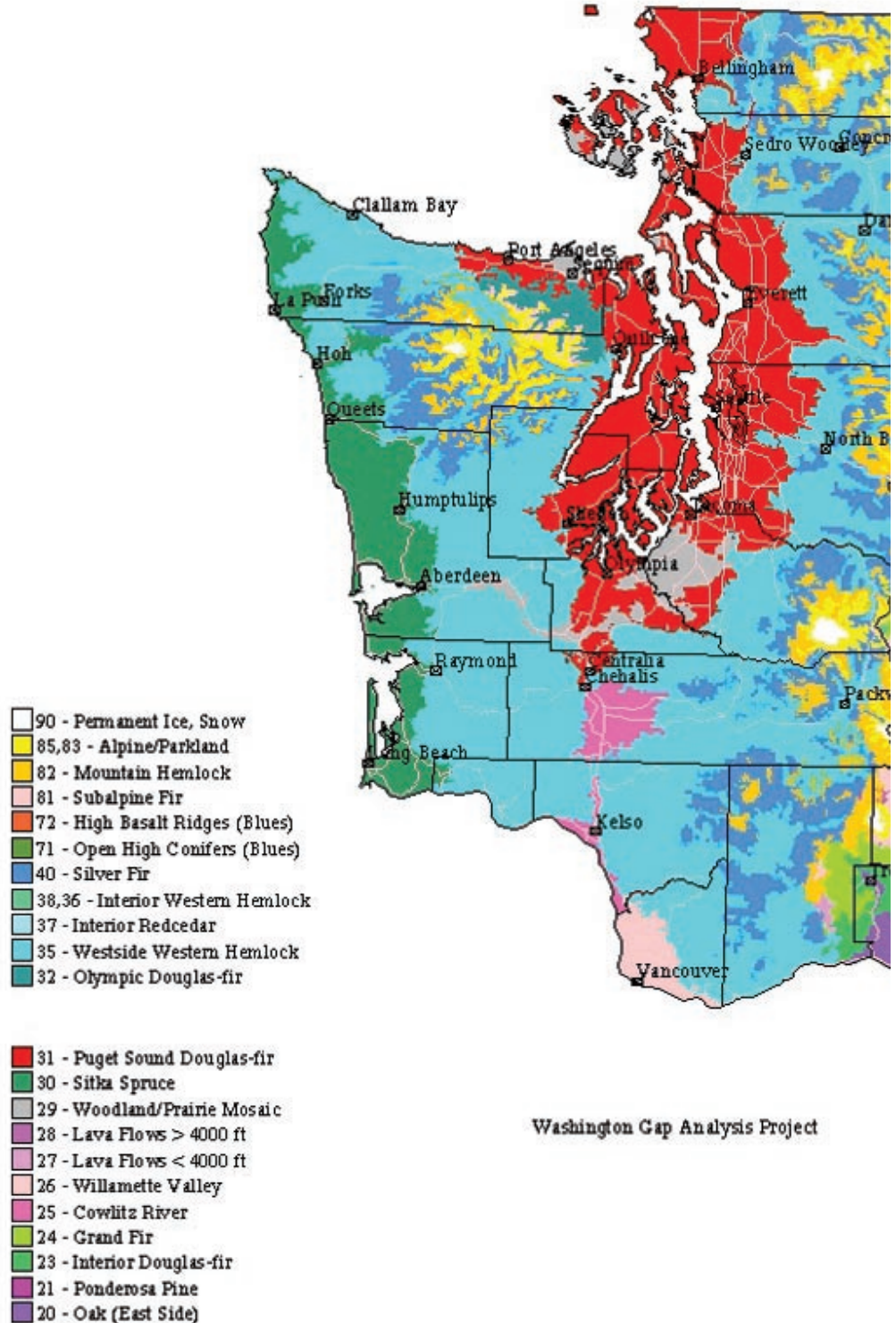


Current Shrubsteppe

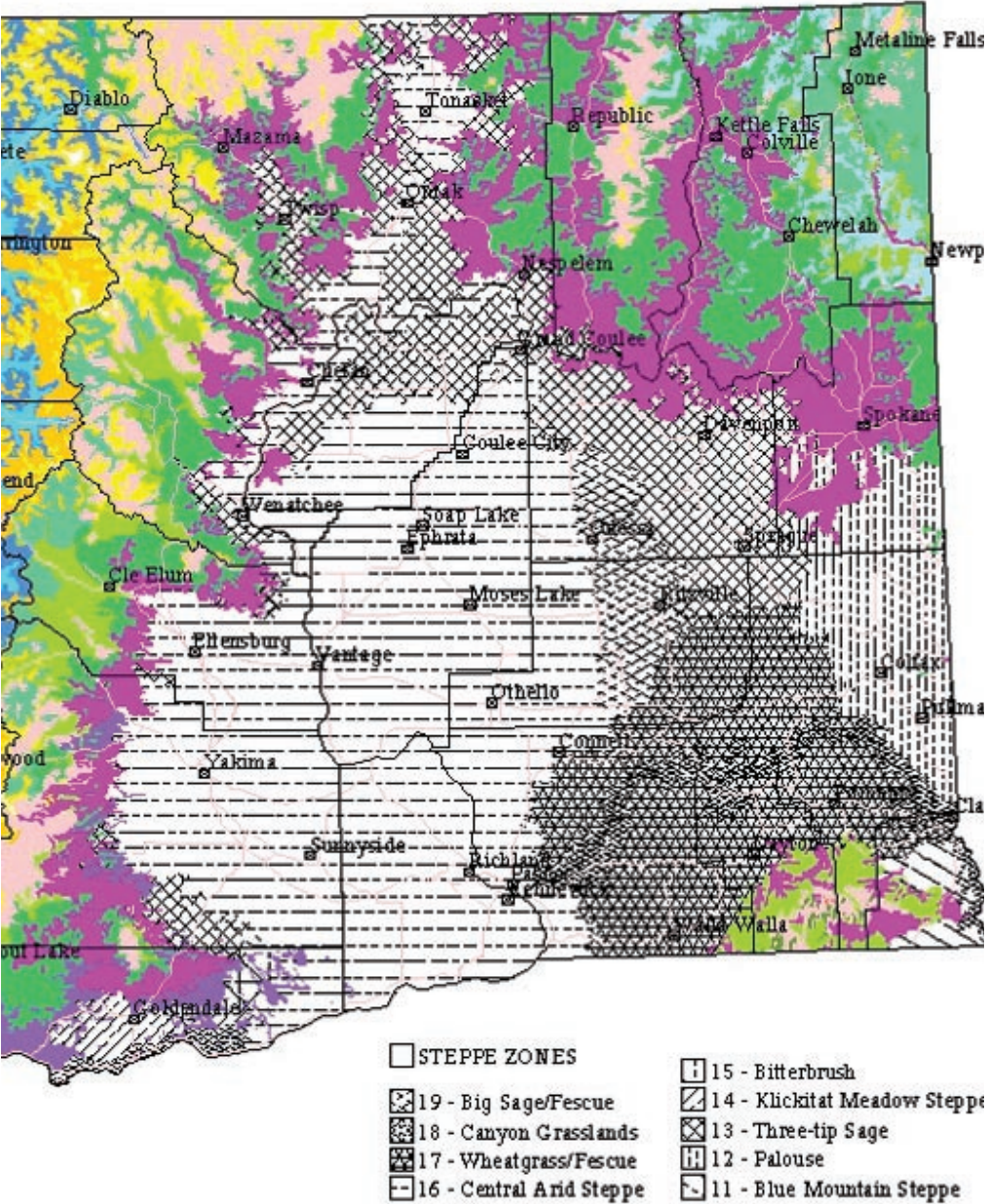
Declining Habitat: Current and historic extents of shrubsteppe/grassland habitats in eastern Washington. Historic extents represent pre-European settlement and are based on known soil/landcover relationships; current extents derived from analysis of Landsat data from 1993-1994. Within the images, green = forest cover, dark brown = shrubsteppe/grassland, tan = agriculture, blue = water, magenta = urban areas.

Introduction

Washington Vegetation Zones, Version 6, August 1996



Introduction



Introduction

WDFW-owned and -managed lands can be found in every county in Washington State. Access to these lands is free with the purchase of a hunting or fishing license, or visitors can purchase a vehicle-use permit, good for year-long access to all WDFW lands. Most WDFW lands are open 365 days/year with few restrictions to accommodate many different types of wildlife related recreation and other forms of outdoor recreation as well.

Hedgehog cactus in bloom on the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area near Ellensburg.

Photograph by Alan Bauer

How Much Is Enough?

In the next 25 years, the number of people that call Washington their home is projected to increase by 2.7 million, requiring five additional cities the size of Seattle, or 14 the size of Spokane, to accommodate that growth. By 2045, Washington's population is expected to double. Although it is the smallest continental western state, Washington is now the second most populated, which generates unprecedented pressure on our natural resources.

Washington's natural world is incredibly diverse, and that diversity supports thousands of plants and animals. This web of life is complex and understanding it in the face of a rapidly growing human population is becoming increasingly difficult. It is of paramount importance that we make every effort to protect what we can, lest we inadvertently eliminate a part that may hold the key to our own long-term survival or the natural legacy we steward.

The science underpinning our understanding of species and habitat relationships is always progressing, leading to better and more effective protection, management, and land acquisition decisions. Deciding "how much is enough," however, is not a purely scientific endeavor. The landscape – as well as the socio-political and economic circumstances – in which we attempt to protect and manage fish and wildlife and biodiversity is constantly changing. Deciding how much is enough will be a collaborative process involving many entities and the science and socio-political values they represent.

The Washington Legislature anticipated the need for such a collaborative process with the passage of Substitute Senate Bill 6242 in 2004. This bill directed the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation to conduct an assessment of the current state of our public lands, and then lead a collaborative discussion among state agencies and others that could lead



to a better coordinated acquisition strategy among all state agencies, particularly the Department, The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Washington State Parks (Parks). This report was finished as the Lands 20/20 report went to press, and is consistent with the clear and open process described here.

Benefits to Fish and Wildlife

Lands 20/20 In-depth: Benefits for Fish and Wildlife

Legislative mandate:

Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage the fish and wildlife species of Washington State. (RCW 77.04.012)

Vision:

- Basic needs, including key habitats, will be understood for species at risk.
- Wildlife-accessible habitats will exist that are sufficient to sustain species at risk, keep common species common, and assure adequate game populations.
- Each of the habitat types in Washington State will have sufficient acreage under some form of protection to assure properly functioning habitat.

Priority Species

The most straightforward way to assure that the lands portfolio provides benefits to fish and wildlife is to focus on the fish and wildlife themselves. Animals that are present on the state and federal list of threatened and endangered species are a high priority, followed closely the federal and state lists of candidate species, or species of concern, which indicate fish and wildlife populations that are likely to become threatened in the future. Finally, populations that are locally important, including important game species, or species that are identified as species of greatest conservation need in the Department's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy are considered.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife uses the presence of key habitat for these priority species as one indication of the value of land in its portfolio. Key habitat is habitat that is critical for one or more of a species' life stages. This may include breeding grounds, rearing habitat, or wintering areas. The highest priority key habitats are those that are irreplaceable. These are habitats that provide benefits to a particular species that cannot be provided anywhere else in the state. These areas are also often the last of their kind: for example, the last sage grouse mating or nesting grounds in the state, or streamside corridors that protect threatened or endangered bulltrout, salmon or steelhead.

Keystone species also deserve special consideration when evaluating acquisitions for the lands portfolio. A keystone species serves as a critical



One of the last pygmy rabbits (half of the size of the more abundant cottontail) to occur in Washington sits motionless in its native habitat on the Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area near Ephrata in Grant County.



Up to 4,000 elk receive supplemental winter feed at the Oak Creek Wildlife Area every winter as part of the Department's game management program. Department lands along with forest service and other public lands provide the bulk of the herds spring, summer, and fall habitat, but winter habitat has been lost to development.

Photograph by Alan Bauer

Benefits to Fish and Wildlife



The Puget Blue, a state candidate butterfly found on WDFW's Scatter Creek Wildlife Area in Thurston County.



One of the largest living ponderosa pines in Washington can be found on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. Ponderosa pine forests and the habitat they provide are significantly reduced in Washington due to past logging and fire control. Ponderosa pine is a fire tolerant species that evolved from exposure to intermittent wildfires.



link in the nutrient cycle of an ecosystem and has a major impact on other animals and/or plants, with far-reaching consequences if its population declines or disappears. Salmon are an example of a keystone species.

Habitat

In addition to lands for individual focal species, the Department acquires and manages lands that provide substantial benefits to multiple fish and wildlife species or are important for specific ecological processes. A decreased emphasis on single-species management reflects an increased understanding of the way ecosystem approaches provide greater benefits to fish and wildlife. Sometimes the Department conducts restoration on its lands to repair the ecological processes and landscape features that existed historically. Whether the lands have intact native plant communities and ecosystem functions, or need some restoration or management, habitat functions are the backbone of the lands portfolio and benefit robust and declining populations alike.

Some lands are acquired to assure that the ecological processes on adjacent lands remain healthy and functional. Examples of these processes include delivery of water and sediment in streams and groundwater recharge. These lands contribute to the integrity of the landscape around them, support existing protected lands, or add a core of high value habitat to surrounding land of moderate value. Other lands are actively managed to provide particular habitat functions, such as winter forage for valuable game populations.

Some lands are acquired to provide ecological connectivity, assuring that water, nutrients, and the fish and wildlife themselves can be distributed across the landscape. Such healthy lands protect migratory routes or offer a corridor that connects two larger habitat areas, preventing habitats from becoming isolated and less functional.

Biodiversity

While the Department's responsibility for responding to the decline of individual species and populations will remain for the foreseeable future, it is increasingly taking *proactive* measures to protect and preserve fish and wildlife by focusing on Washington's biodiversity.

Biodiversity is the full range of life in all its forms: the habitats in which life occurs, the ways that species and habitats interact with each other and the physical environment, and the processes necessary for those interactions. Biodiversity is sometimes referred to as the "web of life." One way of measuring Washington's biodiversity is by counting the number of different plant and animal species that live here. Our state is permanent or temporary home to 140 mammal species, 470 freshwater and saltwater fish species, 341 species of birds that either breed here or stop during their annual migrations, as well as 150 other vertebrate species, more than 20,000 invertebrates, and 3,100 vascular plants.



Marietta Slough restoration project along the Nooksack River near Bellingham. This WDFW wildlife area helps restore wetland function in the Nooksack floodplain. Benefits include improved habitat quality for fish and wildlife and a better functioning floodplain that will minimize property damage during floods.

Benefits to Fish and Wildlife

This aerial photo demonstrates the value of WDFW's Skagit Wildlife Area (in the middle of the photo) in supporting natural ecosystem and estuary functions in an area of Western Washington that has been intensively developed for agriculture. Although originally purchased for waterfowl habitat and recreation, these lands are proving to be increasingly important for salmon and other species dependent on estuary habitats.



The Department participated in the production of the 2003 *Washington Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Report*, and is working to integrate the strategy recommendations into its business wherever possible. The focus on biodiversity in the lands portfolio is carried out at a landscape scale in which the protection of many habitat types benefits rare, common, threatened, and abundant species alike. For example, when there is justification for acquisition, the Department is likely to purchase a variety of different habitat types to support the biodiversity that occurs here.

Tools

The following list includes some of the key tools that guide land acquisition and management decisions for the benefit of fish and wildlife:

- Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy
- Washington Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Report
- Ecoregional Assessments
- The Department's Priority Habitats and Species database
- The Department's Salmon Scape on-line mapping database
- Salmon Recovery Plans
- Other Fish and Wildlife Recovery Plans
- Bonneville Power Administration Columbia River Subbasin Plans
- Analytical tools such as Ecosystem Diagnostics and Treatment
- Washington State "Game Management Plan" (for hunted wildlife)

- Local habitat assessments
- Wildlife Area Management Plans
- Other plans that direct conservation or management of groups of animals or particular populations, such as Shorebird Conservation Plans, Neotropical Bird Conservation Plans, etc.
- Wildlife-Habitat Relationships in Oregon and Washington, by David H. Johnson and Thomas A. O'Neil, provides invaluable information regarding the relationships between species and their habitats in Washington and Oregon.

Figure 1 shows how potential acquisitions are prioritized according to a combination of conservation value (as indicated by biological measures) and vulnerability (risk to their current biodiversity value).

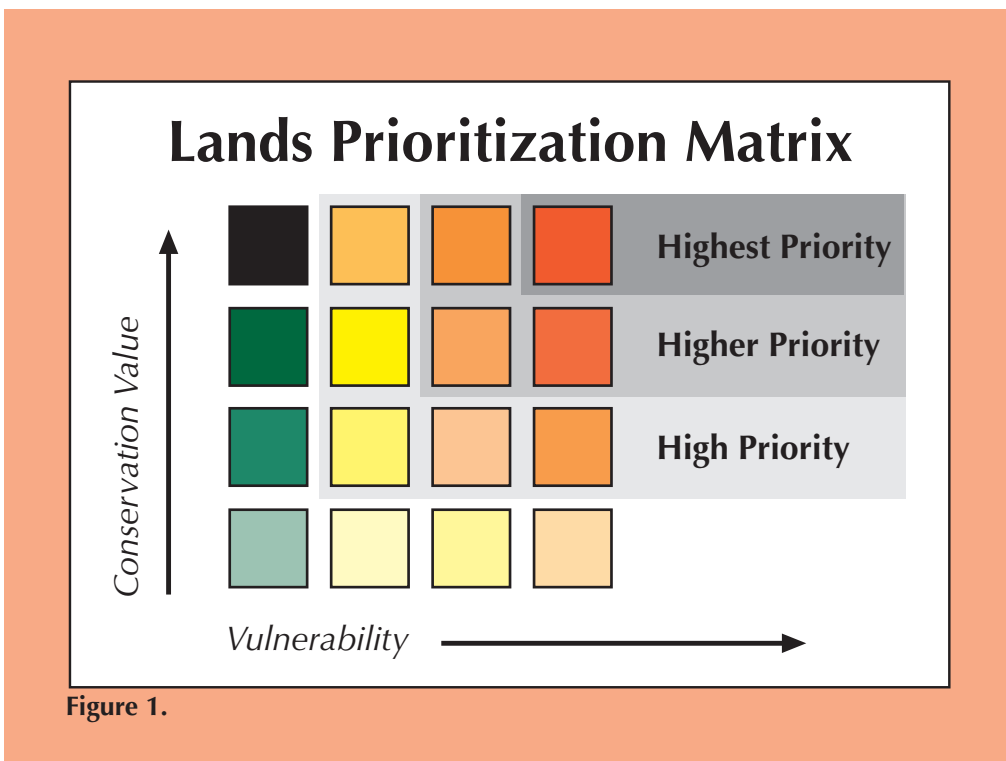


Figure 1.

Benefits for the Public



Lands 20/20 In-depth: Benefits for the Public

Legislative mandate:

"...Attempt to maximize opportunities for people to hunt, fish, and appreciate fish and wildlife." (RCWs 77.04.012 and 77.04.020)

Vision:

- All Washington citizens will have an opportunity to access and appreciate this state's fish and wildlife.
- Availability and access to fish and wildlife related opportunities will increase consistent with demand.
- All Washingtonians will have opportunity for a fish and wildlife educational experience.
- Department lands will present a direct or indirect economic benefit to the local or state economy.

Availability and Accessibility

The Department is not only responsible for the protection of the species, habitats, and biodiversity of the state, but for providing citizens with opportunities to access wildlife resources for hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing. It is estimated these uses account for over 1 million visits/year to Wildlife Areas.

In recent years Department lands have also become popular for nature walking, rock climbing, mountain biking, geocaching, hang-gliding

Healthy populations of mule deer attract over 150,000 deer hunters to various parts of the state each fall. Many find what they are looking for on WDFW's wildlife areas like the Cleman's Mountain Wildlife Area near Yakima.

Photo by Alan Bauer



Benefits for the Public



WDFW is the largest provider of water access in the state and currently manages over 600 water access sites that provide public access to many of the states lakes, rivers and marine areas. Most sites have toilets, boat launches and space to park.

and other diverse outdoor activities. For the most part, these activities are consistent with the Department's philosophy of providing all outdoor recreation opportunities that don't threaten fish and wildlife or degrade the habitats that support them.

The Department's lands portfolio includes more than 800,000 acres of owned and managed land in numerous Wildlife Areas. (For a listing of Wildlife Areas and acreages, as well as other information on the Department's lands portfolio, see the Appendix C.) In addition, the Department is the largest provider of water access in the state and currently manages over 600 access sites that provide public access to lakes, rivers, and marine areas. Most sites have toilets, boat launches, and parking space. The inserted map shows the distribution of Department lands and access sites around the state.

High quality hunting and fishing opportunities are legally and physically accessible, offer few or no restrictions, give access to many types of fish and game, and are on a physical scale that leaves everyone plenty of room to enjoy their recreational experience.

A high quality wildlife viewing opportunity is also legally and physically accessible; offers a unique viewing opportunity such as a migration corridor, wintering area, or area of high biodiversity; and accommodates wildlife viewers without crowding.



Pheasant hunting on Department lands in Eastern Washington.

Benefits for the Public



In addition to the Wildlife Areas and access sites in its lands portfolio, the Department also partners with private landowners to offer public access for public hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing opportunities. The Department does not intend to own or manage all the lands that provide public access to fish and wildlife and related opportunities – many of these are provided by national, state and local parks, other federal lands, and even private parks. When considering acquisitions for public benefit, the Department will consider whether the fish and wildlife related opportunities offered by a piece of land are significant or unique, at risk, and can only be retained through Department ownership or management.

Tools

Acquisition of land for of hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing opportunities is based upon demographics, economics, and the needs expressed by Washington citizens individually and through various plans and processes. The following list includes some of the key decision making tools:



In 2001, 47% of Washington's residents participated in wildlife watching activities and spent over \$1 billion on equipment and related activities.

Participants in Fish and Wildlife Recreational Activities

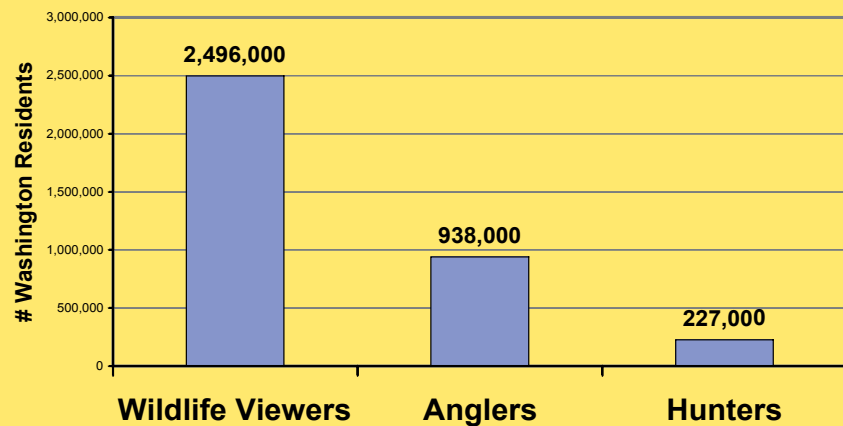


Figure 2: In 2001, 47% of Washington's residents participated in wildlife watching, compared to 30% nationally. Sixteen percent of Washington residents fished and 5% hunted. Bird watching is one of the most popular of wildlife viewing activities for Washingtonians having the fourth-highest participation rating in the country. Source: 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation; US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Census Bureau.

Benefits for the Public

- **Fish and Wildlife Commission:** The commission holds authority for all Department acquisitions and through formal public meetings and hearings around the state, offers an opportunity for citizens to voice their concerns and actively participate in the acquisition process.
- Numerous external citizen advisory councils provide valuable input to the Department on the implementation of its Strategic Plan. (Game Management Advisory Council, Steelhead Policy Advisory Group, Inland Fish Policy Advisory Group, Lands Management Advisory Council, etc.)
- *Wildlife Viewing Activities in Washington: A Strategic Plan* includes specific recommendations for new Department of Fish and Wildlife initiatives that would enhance the number and quality of wildlife viewing opportunities in the state.
- *Habitat Conservation and Recreation Plan 2004 - 2010* is required by the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation to apply for acquisition and development grants. This report identifies the overall status of recreational access and habitat conservation needs for fish and wildlife in Washington.
- The Department's Game Management Plan guides the management of hunted wildlife and was developed over a period of two years with input from thousands of hunting constituents.
- *An Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State*, produced by the Office of the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, provides recommendations to the Department to augment and improve recreational access on its lands.

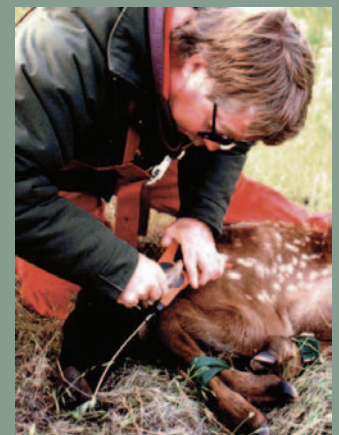
Research and Education

Most Department lands are accessible to researchers and educators from other agencies and organizations as well as universities, colleges, K-12 schools and the general public. The lands portfolio offers unique opportunities for fish and wildlife research, monitoring, and education. Examples of these opportunities include researching predator-prey interactions, monitoring population dynamics, or observing wild salmon spawning. Lands within the portfolio also offer physical spaces in which to carry out environmental lessons and programs.

The *Report Card on the Status of Environmental Education in Washington State* explains the educational benefits derived from environmental education and contains recommendations for improving the support for, and use of, environmental curriculum. The Pacific Education Institute is a complementary effort. It is a public-private partnership, supported by the Department and many other entities, that offers support to teachers in integrating the natural and social sciences into their curricula. All



Researchers learning more about anadromous fish migration patterns by implanting and retrieving coded wire tags.



WDFW researcher Woody Myers studying elk calf mortality near WDFW's Asotin Creek Wildlife Area in Asotin County.

Benefits for the Public

WDFW is the largest provider of water access in the state and currently manages over 600 water access sites that provide public access to many of the states lakes, rivers and marine areas. Most site have toilets, boat launches and space to park.



Enjoying Washington's wildlife areas one hill at a time.

Photo by Kathy Swedberg

Waterfowl hunting on Department lands in Western Washington.

of these resources can provide possibilities for linking Department lands to opportunities for research or environmental education.

Economic Benefits

Department lands provide substantial economic benefits to local governments and local enterprise.

- *Wildlife-Related.* Department lands contribute significantly to the state's fish and wildlife resources that collectively host more than 2.5 million recreation days annually for hunting, fishing, and wildlife-related recreation, fueling a recreation industry that contributes an estimated \$2 billion to the Washington economy. Rural communities benefit economically from nearby Wildlife Areas and public access sites. Thousands of wildlife watchers, anglers, hunters, hikers, campers, boaters, cross-country skiers, horseback riders, mountain bikers and people with disabilities launch their expeditions into Wildlife Areas from these "gateway communities." They purchase meals, gas, supplies and lodging, supporting local jobs and boosting tax revenues.
- *Additional Tourism Benefits.* In addition to wildlife-related recreation, Department lands contribute significantly to local economies by attracting other recreationists, such as campers, boaters, cross-



country skiers, horseback riders, mountain bikers, hang gliders and others pursuing diverse outdoor recreation. They also purchase meals, gas, supplies and lodging, supporting local jobs and boosting tax revenues.

Tools

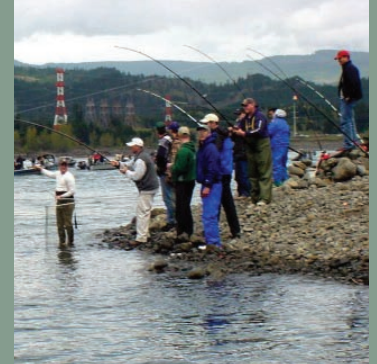
When evaluating the economic impact of land acquisitions, the Department uses the following key tools:

- The Department's responsibility to pay PILT in counties that have significant Department ownership and that choose to collect that revenue from the Department.



Benefits for the Public

- The Department's responsibility to pay for service assessments in local taxing districts where the Department owns land.
- *Wildlife Viewing Activities in Washington: A Strategic Plan.*
- *National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.* This is a long-running and respected survey effort, and Washington's portion reveals valuable information about the economic contribution of wildlife-related activities.
- For a discussion of the benefits local economies derive from Department lands, see *Adding It Up. Published by the Department of Fish and Wildlife in December 2002.*
- For a discussion on the economic impacts of Department lands, see: McKeever/Morris, Inc. and ECO Northwest. *Social and Economic Evaluation of the Washington State Wildlife Habitat Acquisition Program: A Final Report.* Prepared for Washington State Department of Wildlife on February 18, 1993.
- *Toward a coordination Strategy for Habitat and Recreation land Acquisitions in Washington State: Final Report.* This report was prepared for the Legislature by the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation as a result of ESSB 6242. The purpose of this legislation was to address many questions about the land acquisition process by multiple state agencies including the economic impact of these acquisitions on local communities and counties.
- Community and local legislative support.



Thousands of fishers descend on the Columbia River in search of salmon every year. Along the way they visit many of the small communities along the river in search of fishing supplies, gas, food and lodging.



Other Public Benefits

The Department lands portfolio also offers other benefits to the public: the environmental benefits produced by healthy, functioning landscapes. Such landscapes not only preserve fish and wildlife values, but also enhance water and air quality, filter groundwater, reduce flooding, store excess carbon from the atmosphere and provide open space.



All of WDFW's lands support watchable wildlife activities and some also provide opportunities for more vigorous activities like climbing in WDFW's Frenchman Coulee, more popularly known as the Feathers.

Operational Excellence



WDFW Researcher
Cliff Rice and WDFW
Veterinarian Briggs Hall
examine a mountain goat
in the central Cascades.

Lands 20/20 In-depth: Operational Excellence

Fish and Wildlife Commission Mandate:

Provide sound operational management of Department lands, facilities and access sites. (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Strategic Goals and Objectives, Objective 15)

Vision:

- All potential Department land acquisitions are evaluated based on their contribution towards the conservation of fish and wildlife, the provision of fish and wildlife related opportunities for the public, and the ability to provide operations and maintenance support.
- Local interests and perspectives will be solicited and accommodated to the greatest extent possible for all proposed Department acquisitions.
- In addition to fee-simple acquisition by the Department, always considers alternatives such as, land preservation agreements, management agreements, and partnerships.
- The Department will identify and aggressively pursue funding sources to support operations and maintenance for all Department lands, and to manage those lands for ecological health.
- All Department lands will be managed to maintain the habitat values for which the property was acquired.
- Management plans will be developed and updated annually, with the help of local citizen advisory groups, for each Department Wildlife Area.

Fiscal Accountability

The work of the Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) is funded through appropriations by the Legislature, by the purchase of hunting and fishing licenses, and from federal grants, and the Department is legally obligated to manage these funds responsibly.

Land ownership (fee-simple acquisition) is used by the Department to permanently protect fish and wildlife values and related recreational opportunities. In pursuing fiscal accountability when acquiring and managing land, the Department considers the following criteria:

- Land that already exists in its healthy, natural state, and already provides a high quality recreational opportunity is a more economical addition to the lands portfolio than land that needs significant enhancement or restoration.
- Where restoration or development improvements are necessary the improvements must be feasible and cost effective. Specific restoration

activities and other land management activities for each Wildlife Area will be developed within specific Wildlife Area Management Plans.

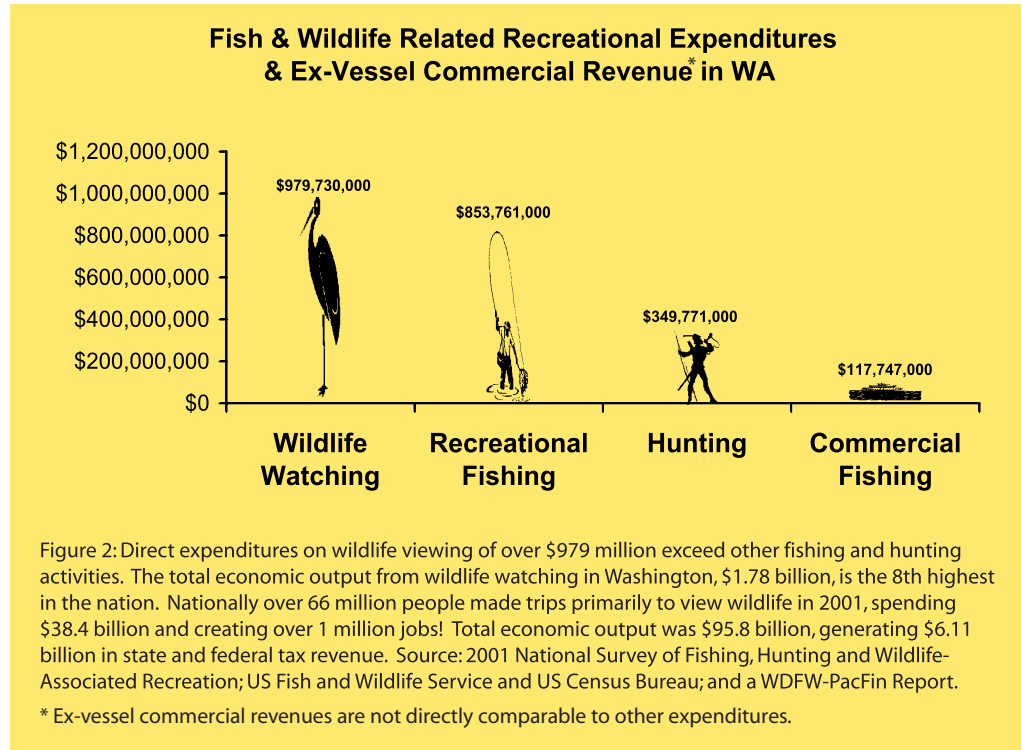
- Owning and managing contiguous or nearby lands means fewer time and staff resources must be used to maintain and operate the properties. Owning and managing lands that have similar maintenance and operations needs requires fewer types of equipment and staff expertise.

The Department is the only state agency to contribute directly to counties through “payments in lieu of taxes” (PILT). For Department-owned areas in excess of 100 acres, county governments can elect to receive an amount equal to that currently paid on similar parcels of open space land, or choose the greater of \$.70 per acre or the per acre amount paid in 1984. Alternately, the county government may choose to receive fines or forfeitures on game violations that are prosecuted within the county. Revenues from fines vary depending on the number and seriousness of the infractions written in that area. Each county chooses whether PILT or game violation fines best meets its needs. In 2004, the Department paid \$429,000 to counties for payment in lieu of taxes.



Viewing photo by
Tara Fielder.

Operational Excellence



The Department also provides payments to local taxing districts (e.g. fire protection, weed control, irrigation, mosquito control, etc) assessed against Department-owned lands. Service assessments to totaled \$212,000 in 2004.

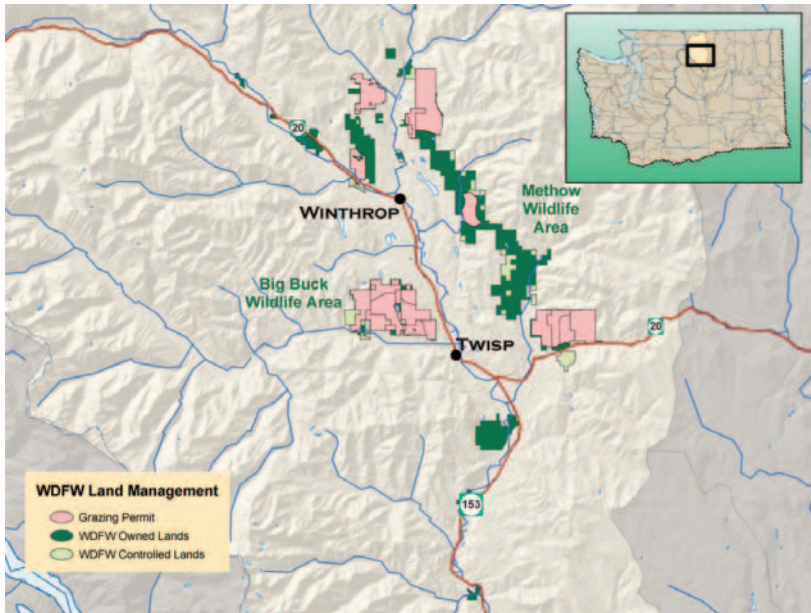
Non-ownership strategies such as providing the science tools for others, managing land for another owner, or establishing a cooperative agreement with a private landowner offer ways to meet the needs of fish and wildlife and related recreation without also assuming the fiscal and legal responsibility of land ownership.

An important aspect of maintaining fiscal accountability in managing the lands portfolio is by working to assure that the appropriate land management strategies are being used. Another component of fiscal accountability is to plan for the maintenance and operations costs of lands within the lands portfolio and to consider maintenance and operations needs before new acquisitions are added to the lands portfolio. Because the Department is expected to provide for the operations and maintenance of its own lands, it must also consider a variety of opportunities to generate revenue from the lands portfolio. These opportunities include developing partnerships with others and considering commercial activities, provided that these result in net benefits to fish and wildlife programs. The Department will also continue to work with partners and the legislature to build support for state funding of operations and maintenance.



Deer hunters using commercial packers to access the Pasayten Wilderness in Okanogan County.

Livestock grazing on Department lands is a practice that can be used to manipulate vegetation for fish and wildlife, accomplish a specific habitat objective, or facilitate coordinated resource management. Livestock grazing is integrated with other uses to ensure the protection of all resource values, the most important of which is maintaining ecological integrity.



Stewardship of the Lands Portfolio

The Department uses the following principles in the stewardship of its lands portfolio:

- Property and habitat is maintained for the purpose for which it was purchased.
- Lands within the lands portfolio must contribute fish and wildlife values or related opportunities consistent with the goals and objectives of the Department.
- Physical and legal liabilities are identified and managed. Whether the liability is an abandoned mine shaft or an encroachment from a neighboring property, the Department seeks to avoid, reduce, or remedy liabilities.
- Land management strategies chosen for particular Department lands are clearly articulated in Wildlife Area Management Plans and are developed with local citizen involvement. Because Department lands are managed for specifically for fish and wildlife and related recreational opportunities, this may mean that the land is managed differently than adjacent private or other public lands.
- The Department will strive to maintain a lands portfolio that includes the kind and amount of lands and facilities for which the Department can sustain high standards of maintenance and operations.
- The Department will utilize all resources at its disposal to help with operational funding including entering into some commercial activities (wind power generation), entering into operating agreements with local businesses and landowners, taking advantage of renewable

Operational Excellence

The public gathers at Standwood High School to provide input on Department programs in Island County.

resources (logging), and other activities that protect the long term ecological integrity of the Departments lands but also provide revenue generation for sustainable stewardship



Partnerships and Citizen Involvement

The Washington Department of Wildlife draws on partnerships with other agencies, local governments, fish and wildlife constituency organizations, and tribes, as well as input from citizens and communities, to guide the design and maintenance of its lands portfolio. Outreach to these constituencies includes formal and informal partnership arrangements. For example, the Department organizes and invites citizen advisory panels to assist in the decision making process for all activities that occur on Department lands by making them an integral part of the Wildlife Area Management Planning process.

The Department also uses an external group of landowners, constituent groups, neighbors, etc., on a statewide Lands Management Advisory council to review overall policy for all land management operations.

The Department produces a semi-annual newsletter "Landline" and mails it to approx. 1,000 individuals and organizations to highlight actions and

Umtanum Canyon on the Wenas Wildlife Area between Ellensburg and Yakima.

Photograph by Alan Bauer.



issues related to Department Lands. The Department contracts with local organizations to monitor conservation easements and enters into agreements with local volunteer organizations to provide maintenance assistance on Department Lands.

Many of the decisions affecting Department lands are subject to the State Environmental Policy Act and the National Environmental Policy Act are also reviewed by the Fish and Wildlife Commission providing additional time for public review and input.

Wildlife Area Management Plans

The Department manages 800,000 acres within Wildlife Areas (see Appendix C). A management plan for each of these Wildlife Areas guides all of the activities that occur on those lands and is reviewed annually. Each Wildlife Area Management Plan:

- Is developed with the help of a local citizen advisory panel and ensures that the Wildlife Area provides benefits to fish and wildlife and the public and is seen by the community as an asset.
- Is consistent with the Department's mission, strategic plan, and the Lands 20/20 vision.
- Provides the basis for funding and prioritizing the Department's activities on each Wildlife Area, and allows the Department to manage the land as efficiently and effectively as possible.
- Documents the Department's intentions, provides justification for actions, and is the record by which the Department communicates what is going to be accomplished on each Wildlife Area.

A Wildlife Area Management Plan requires broad internal and external review and input in order to be effective, credible, and supported. Wildlife Area Management Plans are currently being revised and updated, and all will be completed by January of 2006. Each Wildlife Area Management Plan is being developed with the input and review of local citizen advisory groups (CAGS). CAGs represent stakeholders, neighbors, and constituent groups with community and regional perspectives and are an important and ongoing part of the Wildlife Area Management Planning process. Wildlife Area Management Plans are subject to the State Environmental Policy Act, and will be adopted through that process.



Volunteers provide customer service for thousands of visitors at the Oak Creek Wildlife Area Interpretive Center along Highway 12 near Yakima each year, many to view the winter feeding of up to 4,000 Rocky Mountain elk.

Operational Excellence

These pictures show the effect of biological control (*Larinus minutus* beetle) on diffuse knapweed, a state-listed noxious weed, on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. Figure 3 shows a healthy, dense stand of diffuse knapweed in the foreground in May of 2001, just before release of the beetles. Figure 4 taken in the fall of 2003 shows diffuse knapweed almost eliminated as a result of beetle degradation.



Figure 3



Figure 4

Land Transaction Evaluation Matrix

Lands 20/20

Land Transaction Evaluation Matrix

As a result of the Lands 20/20 initiative, the Department has updated its evaluation process for considering additions and changes to the lands portfolio. The first step is to gather threshold information (see below). The second step is to assess the transaction using the evaluation matrix on the next page. This evaluation tool serves as an initial assessment to ensure consistency with Lands 20/20.

The science-based tools, plans and policies listed earlier in this document offer a basis for more in-depth assessment of changes and additions to the lands portfolio. In addition to guiding decision making, the threshold information and evaluation matrix preserve an important record of the initial values and uses of a particular acquisition project, and can be used to compare land transaction proposals.

Threshold Information

The information below must be provided in sufficient detail in order for the evaluation to proceed.

1. Planning Integration

Acquisition or conservation of each property must be linked to the Department Strategic Plan; to a local, regional, state, national, or international plan or agreement that is consistent with the Department goals and objectives; or to a mitigation settlement signed by the Department.

2. Alternatives to Ownership

Alternatives to Department ownership or management of any property (e.g. conservation provided through land use regulations, another entity holding title, or a conservation easement) must be explored.

3. Maintenance and Operations

Expected maintenance and operations costs, funding sources to meet those costs, and long-term management responsibilities must be identified for each property.

4. Local Involvement

Current and future support for, and opposition to, each project must be described.

Land Transaction Evaluation Matrix

Dept. Goals	Dept. Values	Criteria	Score
Benefits To Fish and Wildlife			40 Points Possible
	Priority Species	Necessary for Species Persistence (irreplaceable?) Federal Endangered Federal Threatened State Endangered (WDFW) State Threatened (WDFW) Federal Candidate State Species of Concern Game Species/Locally Important Species/Species of Greatest Conservation Need	/20
	Habitat	(Ecosystem Context) Protects Ecosystem Processes and Functions Contributes to Landscape Integrity Contributes to Migratory or Connectivity Corridor Risk to Fish and Wildlife Value of Property	/10
	Biodiversity	Species Richness Complexity of Habitats Conservation Priority in an Ecoregional Assessment	/10
Benefits to Fish and Wildlife Subtotal			/40
Benefits For the Public			40 Points Possible
	Availability/Accessibility	Hunting Opportunity Fishing Opportunity Wildlife Viewing Opportunity Other Recreation Opportunity Risk to Recreational Value of Property	/25
	Research and Education	Research and Monitoring Environmental Education	/5
	Economics	Effect on Tribes and Local Governments Effect on Local Enterprise	/10
Benefits for the Public Subtotal			/40
Operational Excellence			20 Points Possible
	Fiscal Accountability	Revenue Generation	/5
	Stewardship	Liabilities Identified Feasibility (Cost and feasibility of necessary restoration, facility construction, etc.) Management Efficiency	/5
	Partnership and Citizen Involvement	Outreach to Community Support from Immediate Neighbors Collaboration with Other Entities	/10
Operational Excellence Subtotal			/20
TOTAL SCORE			/100

Conclusion

The changeable nature of society's values will require the periodic review of the vision and goals described in this document to ensure that the Department lands portfolio continues to reflect those values. In addition, the Department will conduct periodic reviews of changes in species status, Department activities, and land use. In this way, the lands vision report is truly a living document, growing and changing to reflect the values and attitudes of the public served by the Department.

Ultimately, we will measure success by the health of Washington's fish and wildlife and the support they generate from Washington citizens. If we meet our legislative mandate, we will have provided Washingtonians with sufficient information to make informed choices about the future of our fish and wildlife and the recreation they provide. That information will include strategies and alternatives about land acquisition and management to preserve Washington's fish and wildlife values into the future.



Chinook salmon waiting to spawn.



Cle Elum High School students help with tranquilized cougar as part of the Department's Project Cat research effort.



Youth pheasant hunting on Department lands in Eastern Washington.

Appendices

Appendix A

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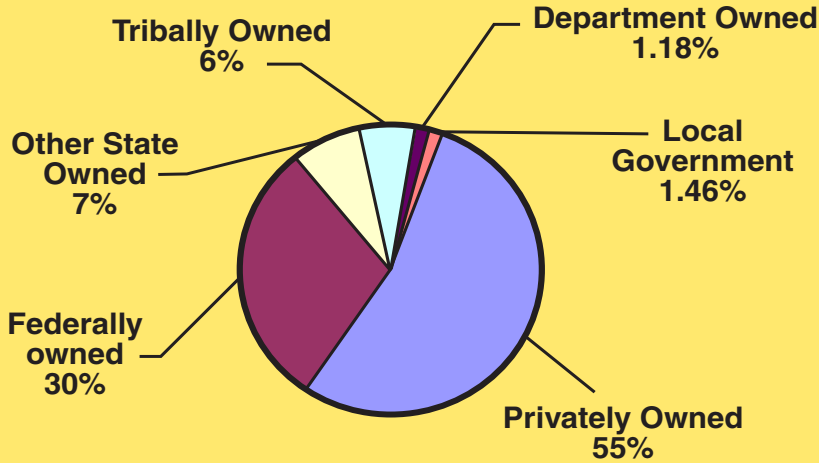
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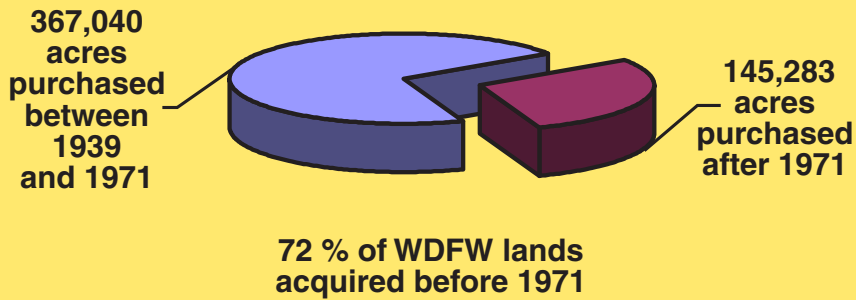
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Statewide Ownership Profile



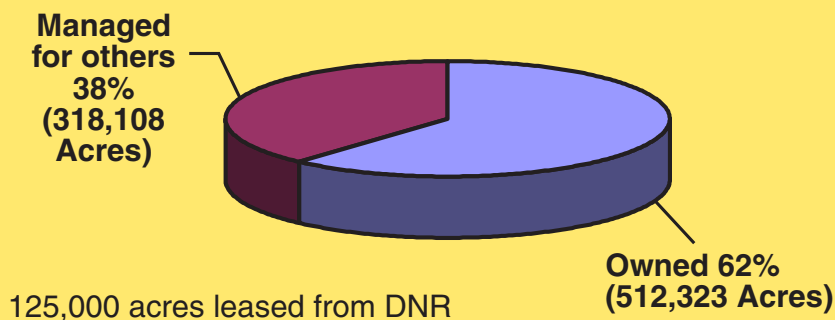
Department Acquisition History

Total Ownership = 512,323 acres



Total Dept. Owned and Managed Lands

830,431 acres



Appendix C

The Department Wildlife Areas

<i>WILDLIFE AREA</i>	<i>ACRES</i>	<i>COUNTY</i>	<i>FIRST ACQUISITION</i>
Chelan	27,812	Chelan	1965
Chief Joseph-Asotin	41,312	Asotin/Garfield	1962
Colockum	104,918	Chelan/Kittitas	1953
Columbia Basin	182,125	Grant/Adams	1952
Cowlitz	13,940	Lewis	1991
Klickitat	14,057	Klickitat	1948
Lake Terrell	2,687	Whatcom	1942
LT Murray	96,993	Kittitas	1966
Methow	34,017	Okanogan	1941
Oak Creek	41,586	Yakima/Kittitas	1940
Olympic, Chehalis, Johns River and Dungeness	4,061	Pacific/Grays Harbor Clallam/Jefferson	1952
Sagebrush Flat	8,616	Douglas	1991
South Puget Sound-BlackRiver	4,730	Pierce/Thurston/Mason	1966
Scotch Creek	16,853	Okanogan	1991
Sherman Creek	9,941	Ferry/Pend Oreille	1948
Shillapoo	1,550	Clark	1952
Sinlahekin	16,024	Okanogan	1939
Skagit	13,136	Skagit/Snohomish	1948
Snoqualmie	2,031	King/Snohomish	1964
St. Helens	2,533	Cowlitz	1989
Sunnyside	11,052	Benton/Yakima	1947
Swanson Lakes	20,476	Lincoln	1990
Wells	9,962	Douglas/Okanogan	1968
Wenas	104,087	Yakima/Kittitas	1951
Wooten	16,492	Columbia/Garfield	1941
TOTAL	800,991*		

Updated to 12/31/2004 *does not include hatcheries,
public access fishing sites or administrative sites.

Appendix D

The Department Land Ownership and Control by County

COUNTY	ACRES OWNED	ACRES CONTROLLED	TOTAL ACRES MANAGED
ADAMS	1,150.60	1,972.52	3,123.12
ASOTIN	31,075.30	10,235.05	41,310.35
BENTON	5,808.00	0.10	5,808.10
CHELAN	28,254.93	9,701.10	37,956.03
CLALLAM	735.33	340.87	1,076.20
CLARK	2,949.78	24.43	2,974.21
COLUMBIA	10,832.20	881.50	11,713.70
COWLITZ	4,269.30	1,243.18	5,512.48
DOUGLAS	13,844.52	1,532.90	15,377.42
FERRY	6,902.20	1,202.81	8,105.01
FRANKLIN	1,774.20	6,538.68	8,312.88
GARFIELD	6,934.40	121.10	7,055.50
GRANT	39,168.20	143,204.93	182,373.13
GRAYS HARBOR	5,759.20	334.84	6,094.04
ISLAND	60.50	21.18	81.68
JEFFERSON	1,396.97	98.58	1,495.55
KING	1,192.72	89.65	1,282.37
KITSAP	1,062.50	28.40	1,090.90
KITTITAS	144,533.52	72,566.59	217,100.11
KLICKITAT	13,165.70	3,221.60	16,387.30
LEWIS	410.00	1,153.84	1,563.84
LINCOLN	19,197.60	1,307.02	20,504.62
MASON	1,111.62	105.25	1,216.87
OKANOGAN	64,869.41	13,436.73	78,306.14
PACIFIC	3,518.44	59.83	3,578.27
PEND OREILLE	745.70	257.05	1,002.75
PIERCE	3,557.17	100.86	3,658.03
SAN JUAN	226.40	0.00	226.40
SKAGIT	11,382.20	1,309.13	12,691.33
SKAMANIA	311.72	223.80	535.52
SNOHOMISH	2,511.70	462.57	2,974.27
SPOKANE	175.60	8.77	184.37
STEVENS	261.90	208.89	470.79
THURSTON	1,667.90	160.70	1,828.60
WAHKIAKUM	247.90	57.23	305.13
WALLA WALLA	209.00	235.90	444.90
WHATCOM	2,859.60	1,003.44	3,863.04
WHITMAN	2,291.00	36.63	2,327.63
YAKIMA	75,898.25	44,620.66	120,518.91
GRAND TOTALS	512,323.18	318,108.31	830,431.49

Appendix E

2004 PILT and assessments

COUNTY	4/1/04 PILT ACRES	2004 PILT PAID	2004 ASSESSMENTS PAID	TOTAL PAID TO COUNTY in 2004
ADAMS	0.00	\$0.00	\$10,718.72	\$10,718.72
ASOTIN	29,277.88	\$22,297.61	\$0.00	\$22,297.61
BENTON	0.00	\$0.00	\$2,812.39	\$2,812.39
CHELAN	26,789.83	\$18,752.88	\$0.00	\$18,752.88
CLALLAM	0.00	\$0.00	\$1,204.41	\$1,204.41
CLARK	0.00	\$0.00	\$8,859.70	\$8,859.70
COLUMBIA	10,794.13	\$7,555.91	\$1,746.97	\$9,302.88
COWLITZ	0.00	\$0.00	\$834.82	\$834.82
DOUGLAS	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
FERRY	6,866.13	\$6,781.33	\$705.10	\$7,486.43
FRANKLIN	0.00	\$0.00	\$19,424.52	\$19,424.52
GARFIELD	6,914.26	\$4,839.98	\$553.14	\$5,393.12
GRANT	39,076.00	\$37,443.16	\$24,148.17	\$61,591.33
GRAYS HARBOR	3,248.00	\$7,473.66	\$0.00	\$7,473.66
ISLAND	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
JEFFERSON	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
KING	0.00	\$0.00	\$20,825.50	\$20,825.50
KITSAP	0.00	\$0.00	\$1,064.80	\$1,064.80
KITTITAS	148,762.02	\$115,909.16	\$5,703.34	\$121,612.50
KLICKITAT	13,106.35	\$21,416.95	\$760.26	\$22,177.21
LEWIS	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
LINCOLN	19,470.36	\$13,629.25	\$1,902.08	\$15,531.33
MASON	0.00	\$0.00	\$450.00	\$450.00
OKANOGAN	60,293.16	\$75,736.87	\$8,403.77	\$84,140.64
PACIFIC	0.00	\$0.00	\$333.80	\$333.80
PEND OREILLE	614.00	\$3,308.65	\$0.00	\$3,308.65
PIERCE	0.00	\$0.00	\$7,909.34	\$7,909.34
SAN JUAN	0.00	\$0.00	\$275.00	\$275.00
SKAGIT	0.00	\$0.00	\$25,157.40	\$25,157.40
SKAMANIA	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
SNOHOMISH	0.00	\$0.00	\$10,735.78	\$10,735.78
SPOKANE	0.00	\$0.00	\$1,018.75	\$1,018.75
STEVENS	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
THURSTON	1,131.00	\$5,107.61	\$11,451.18	\$16,558.79
WAHKIAKUM	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
WALLA WALLA	0.00	\$0.00	\$12.00	\$12.00
WHATCOM	0.00	\$0.00	\$69.24	\$69.24
WHITMAN	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
YAKIMA	70,130.23	\$88,792.82	\$44,933.61	\$133,726.43
GRAND TOTALS	436,473.35	\$429,045.84	\$212,013.79	\$641,059.63

March 2005



Department Lands help protect streamside corridors for Washington's diverse fish populations.