McLOUGHLIN FALLS WILDLIFE AREA STEWARDSHIP PLAN

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

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Washington Department of
FISH and WILDLIFE

2014

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PLAN SUMMARY

The McLoughlin Falls Wildlife Area (MFWA) was established by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) in May 2012 through jointly funded grants from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Section 6 program. The purpose of the 165.5-acre acquisition was to enhance riparian and big game habitat, such as riparian and riverine characteristics (6000' of frontage to the Okanogan River) beneficial to endangered fish species and grassland and shrub-steppe habitat beneficial to ungulates – both of which WDFW considers priority habitats.

The MFWA is located approximately 6 miles south of Tonasket along the Okanogan River in Township 26N, Range 27E in Section 16 W.M. . The area ranges from 860' to over 1600' in elevation. Temperature range: –5° to 110° Fahrenheit, precipitation range: 12" – 20" annually and slope range from level ground to vertical rock cliffs.

Management goals for the MFWA are to preserve and restore habitat including the processes that maintain healthy functioning habitat, i.e., fire and flooding, and species diversity for both fish and wildlife resources, maintain healthy populations of game and non-game species, protect and restore native plant communities, and provide recreational and commercial opportunities. In addition, WDFW staff will make available diverse educational, recreational and research opportunities for the public to encounter; providing visitors the chance to appreciate fish, wildlife and their habitats.

The property will be managed within the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Complex. Operation and maintenance funding for MFWA will be provided from the existing wildlife area budget, which is funded with Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act dollars. WDFW will continue to submit grant proposals and applications and identify other strategies to address unfunded management needs on the MFWA.

Primary management concerns and public issues identified in the McLoughlin Falls Stewardship Plan include:

- Seek improved access to MFWA and provide greater opportunities for recreational users
- Work closely with federal, state, tribal, local and NGOs to implement restoration projects.
- Continue aggressive weed control efforts
- Seek funding/interest to inventory plant and animal species
- Support commercial agricultural opportunities and fully utilize WDFW water rights

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

This stewardship plan is intended to provided management direction and goals for the McLoughlin Falls Wildlife Area. It identifies important management issues and guides those activities to benefit fish, wildlife and habitats within and associated with McLoughlin Falls. Updates to this plan will be provided annually as part of the Sinlahekin's Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) process in conjunction with Scotch Creek Wildlife Area. This group is referred to as the Eastern Okanogan Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (EOWAAC).

1.1 Agency Mission, Goals and Objectives

The following document strives to adhere to the mission of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), which is:

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

In order to achieve this mission, WDFW has adopted these four goals:

Goal 1: Conserve and protect native fish and wildlife

Objective A. - The ecological integrity of critical habitat and ecological systems is protected and restored.

Objective B. - Washington's fish and wildlife diversity is protected at levels consistent with ecosystem management principles, established in the Conservation Initiative.

Objective C. - Threatened and endangered fish and wildlife populations are recovered to healthy, self-sustaining levels.

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

Objective A. - Fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, and other outdoor activities are enhanced and expanded.

Objective B. - Hatcheries and public access sites are safe, clean, and effectively support people's use and enjoyment of natural resources.

Objective C. - Tribal treaty coordination and implementation is achieved with adequate resources.

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

Objective A. - Conservation of fish and wildlife is widely supported by communities across Washington.

Objective B. - The economic benefits of fishing, hunting, and other wildlife-related jobs are supported by and linked to the Department's activities.

Objective C. - The Department's decisions support communities through valuing, understanding, and evaluating input from stakeholders.

Objective D. - The Department responds to citizens and customer needs in a timely and effective way.

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

Objective A. - The department has a diverse, robust workforce with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet future business needs.

Objective B. - Employees are energized, engaged in agency priorities, and empowered to continuously improve their productivity.

Objective C. - Achieve operational excellence through effective business processes, workload management, and investments in technology.

Objective D. - Work environments are safe, highly functional, and cost effective.

1.2 WDFW Policies - The following agency policies provide additional guidance for management of agency lands.

POL-5004 The Department's Conservation Initiative and Guiding Principles

By applying WDFW's Conservation Principles outlined in this policy, the Department will be prepared for the future, including adapting to climate change and increasing human population and development pressures. Implementation of this policy will result in our ability to articulate integrated conservation priorities and better address unmet conservation needs. Our intent is to have strong interdisciplinary headquarters and regional teams that coordinate conservation priorities across all programs in the agency at both the state and local level.

POL-5211 Protecting & Restoring Wetlands

This policy applies: A. To all habitat protection assignments where WDFW issues or comments on environmental protection permits, documents, planning efforts, or violation settlements; B. To artificial wetlands that have developed because of a regional or local rise in the water table as a result of irrigation related activities structures, or other causes; C. When WDFW recommends restoration of previously drained and degraded wetland systems in landowner incentive programs; D. When WDFW has construction or land management activities that could affect wetlands. **EXCEPTION:** Artificial wetlands constructed from upland habitat to service WDFW operated wastewater treatment

facilities are exempt from this policy, except as regulated by existing law.

Policy Date: 05/20/2004

POL-5307 Managing Weeds on WDFW Lands

This policy covers WDFW compliance with State Laws Pertaining to Weed Management

Policy Date: 04/16/2008

POL-5309 Managing Forests on WDFW Lands

This policy applies to all WDFW employees and volunteers. However, if policies or procedures are in conflict with or are modified by a bargaining unit agreement, the agreement language shall prevail.

Policy Date: 04/16/2008

POL-5310 Managing Invasive Species

This policy provides direction for Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) practices with regard to preventing the spread of nonnative invasive species, to address the risks that invasive species pose to the ecosystems and economy of Washington State. It does not provide guidance for determination of what species are categorized as nonnative or invasive species.

• PRO-5310 - Managing Invasive Species

Policy Date: 02/28/2011

POL-6010 Acquiring and Disposing of Real Property

This policy applies whenever the WDFW proposes to acquire or dispose of real property. Real property includes interests, benefits and rights inherent in the physical ownership of, and appurtenances affixed to, the land, e.g. fences or buildings.

Policy Date: 03/14/2001

POL-6012 Managing Public Access On Department Lands

This policy applies to all WDFW employees and volunteers. It is designed to provide a framework that addresses the Department's mandate to preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage the wildlife and fish of the state, while providing sustainable fish and wildlife related recreational and commercial opportunities.

• PRO-6012 - Managing Public Access On Department Lands

Policy Date: 02/29/2012

POL-6015 Agricultural Leases on Department Lands

The Department enters into agricultural leases with private operators as a tool to achieve fish and wildlife management and recreation goals. While the Department may receive revenue from agricultural leases, the primary objectives of these leases is to improve fish and wildlife habitat and to address land management goals while increasing operating efficiency.

• PRO-6015 - Agricultural Leases on Department Lands

Policy Date: 09/22/2014

1.3 McLoughlin Falls Wildlife Area Goals - Management goals for the MFWA are to preserve and restore habitat including the processes that maintain healthy functioning habitat, i.e., fire & flooding and species diversity for both fish and wildlife resources, maintain healthy populations of game and non-game species, protect and restore native plant communities, and provide recreational and commercial opportunities. In addition, WDFW staff will make available diverse educational, recreational and research opportunities for the public to encounter;

providing visitors the chance to appreciate fish, wildlife and their habitats. Specific management goals and objectives for the McLoughlin Falls Wildlife Area can be found in Chapter 3.

1.4 Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) Involvement - Public participation, through the formation of a WAAC, will be used as an ongoing means to identify social, cultural, and economic issues important to the people of Washington and the management of the MFWA. The group will also provide input to help resolve current and future management issues and conflicts. WAAC participation in planning will add credibility and support for MFWA management practices and help build constituencies for the MFWA. The WAAC is made up of one representative from each major stakeholder group. WAAC members are encouraged to be spokespersons for their interest groups.

In Eastern Okanogan County a unique opportunity exists to have a single WAAC for several Wildlife Areas. This will help reduce numbers of meetings and hopefully encourage sustained participation by WAAC members in that they won't have to attend multiple meetings for different wildlife areas. Therefore a single WAAC was formed to address management of the McLoughlin Falls, Carter Mountain, Horse Spring Coulee, Buzzard Lake, Chiliwist, Driscoll Island, Sinlahekin, Scotch Creek, Tunk, Eder, Chesaw and Chopaka-Similkameen Wildlife Areas. This WAAC is known as the Eastern Okanogan County Wildlife Areas Advisory Committee (EOC WAAC). A list of EOC WAAC representatives and notes from this past years' meeting is in APPENDIX A. Individuals representing these entities will provide input during the planning process and annual reviews.

CHAPTER II. AREA DESCRIPTION AND MAP

2.1 Property Location and Size

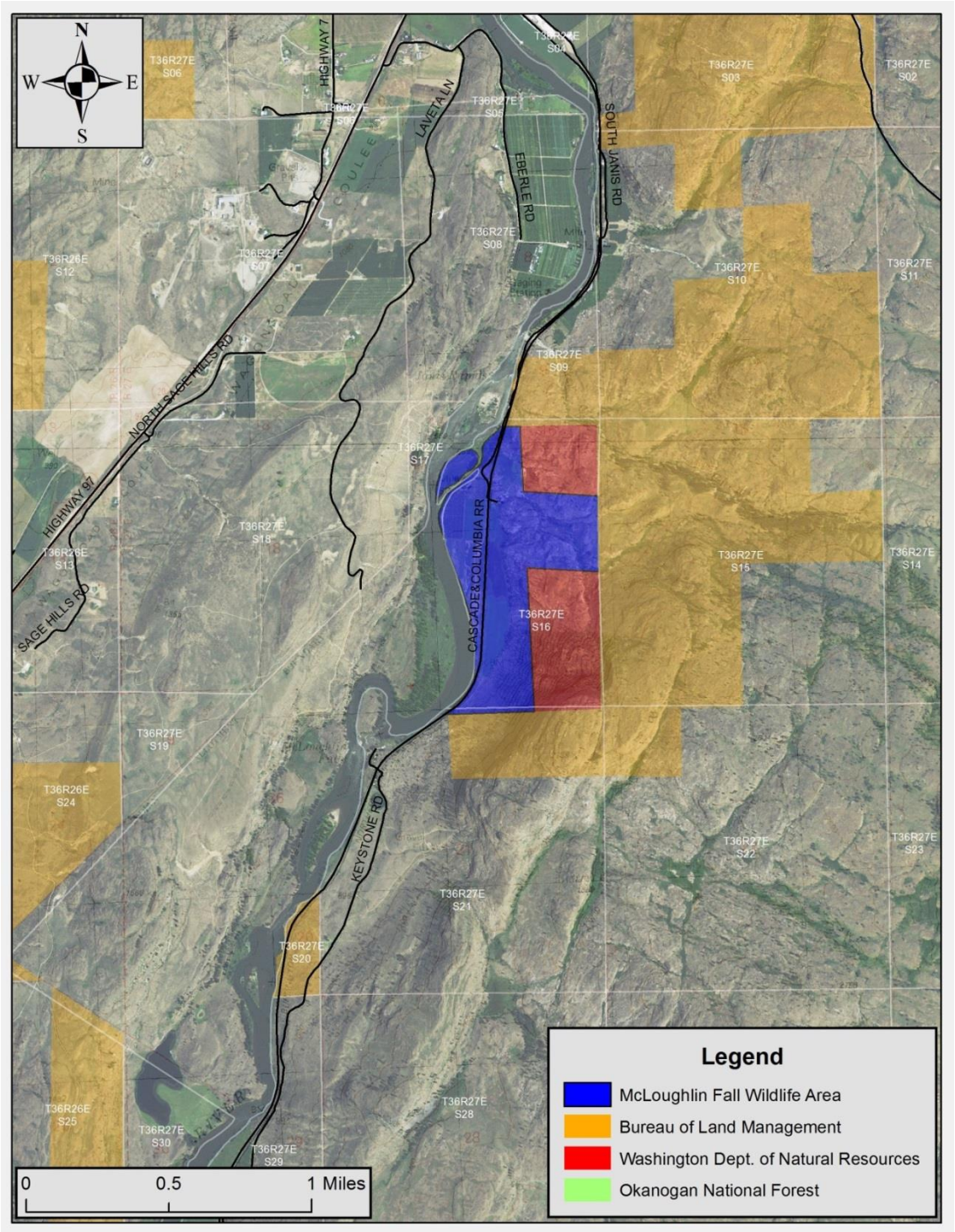
In North-Central Washington, located about 6 miles south of Tonasket, Okanogan County, primarily within the Okanogan River Valley, the MFWA is characterized by steep slopes rising from the valley floor at about 860' to the mid-slope, rock cliffs to the east over 1,600' in elevation.

The McLoughlin Falls Wildlife Area is comprised of about 165 acres. The area is bordered by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to the East and United States Department of Interior - Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to the North and South. The Okanogan River borders the property to the west – ownership under Okanogan County.

All lands owned and/or managed as the MFWA are located in Township 26N, Range 27E in Section 16 W.M.

Figure 1. – McLoughlin Falls Wildlife Area Map - County

Figure 2. – McLoughlin Falls Wildlife Area Map - Local



2.1 Purchase History and Background

The McLoughlin Falls Wildlife Area (MFWA) was acquired via fee title ownership by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) in May 2012 through jointly funded grants from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Section 6 program. The grant to acquire the property was administered through the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). The MFWA was purchased in two phases - the first 155.65-acre parcel were purchased in 2012 and the second 10-acre acquisition one year later to allow the previous owners time to clean up debris before final WDFW ownership. The purpose of the 165.65-acre acquisition was to protect summer Chinook and steelhead spawning habitat plus enhance riparian and big game habitat. The area contains a diverse mix of habitats including: floodplain, riparian, lowland, and upland habitats, with over 1.1 miles of undeveloped shoreline, off-channel habitats, wetlands, old growth ponderosa pine and riparian vegetation. These off-channel features provide key habitats for many fish and wildlife species, including neo-tropical migratory songbirds, amphibians, anadromous fish and wetland mammals. The acquisition of this area also protects it from residential development that would have extensive negative impacts to the near pristine conditions that now exist.

2.2 Adjacent Ownership

The McLoughlin Falls Wildlife Area is comprised of about 165 acres. The area is bordered by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to the East (approx. 6586' or 40% of the total boundary) and United States Department of Interior - Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to the North and South (approx. 3430' or 21% of the total boundary). The wildlife area is also bordered by private property for approximately 80 feet (less than 0.5% of the total boundary) on the far south end of the property. The Okanogan River borders the property to the west (approx. 6200' feet 39% of the total boundary) – ownership under Okanogan County. Beyond the Okanogan River to the west is Colville Confederated Tribe property purchased for the purpose of conservation. WDFW and the Colville Tribe have mutual interests in land protection in this section of the Okanogan River; considered crucial north-south and east-west corridors with habitats essential for landscape connectivity for fish, and wildlife. Various projects and initiatives within this area between various organizations are ongoing and seek to conserve and improve habitats within these corridors.

2.3 Funding

The property will be managed within the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Complex. Operation and maintenance funding for MFWA will be provided from the existing wildlife area budget, which is partially funded with Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act dollars. WDFW will continue to submit grant proposals and applications and identify other strategies to address unfunded management needs on the MFWA.

2.4 Physiography, Geology and Soils

MFWA is entirely within the Okanogan valley containing the Okanogan River, which meanders north-south through generally a broad valley. At the MFWA however, the terrain gets significantly more rugged, with vertical rock valley walls to the east and varying expanses of floodplain surrounding the wildlife area. Aspects found on the MFWA are mostly westerly or

southerly, containing significant areas of flat agricultural lands. These slopes range from level ground to vertical rock cliffs. The elevation ranges from 860' to over 1600' in elevation on the SE corner of the wildlife area. The predominant rock of the area is Mesozoic gneiss, a metamorphic rock found commonly through the Okanogan Valley. Lower elevation of the wildlife may contain Quaternary alluvium as well. The soils are either sandy/silty loam, which make up the agricultural areas or lithic rock, which is the eastern portion of the wildlife area containing the rocky cliffs and hillsides. See Appendix B for a soils map of MFWA.

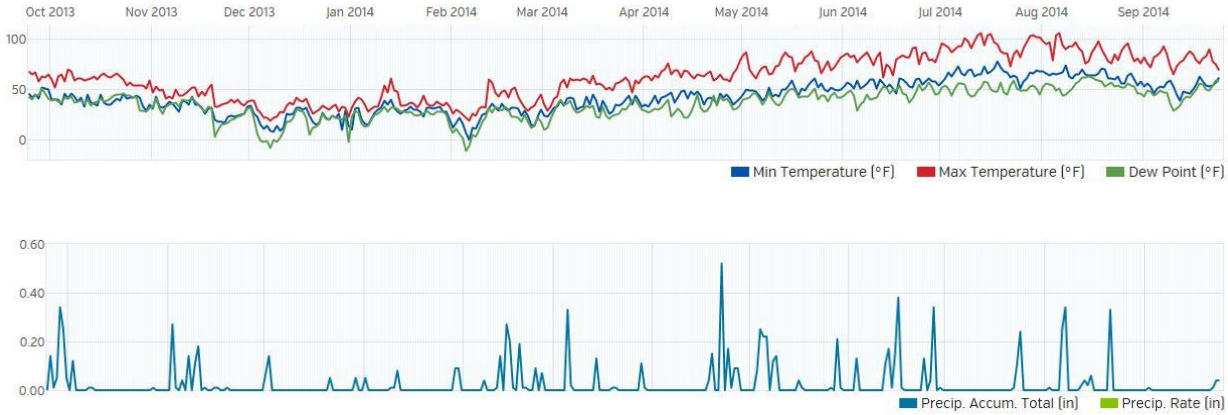
2.5 Climate

Temperature range: 0° to 105° Fahrenheit, precipitation range: 10" – 20" annually. Summers are usually hot and dry and winters are cold and with varying amounts of snowfall. Below is a climate chart from a weather station nearby:

Summary
September 24, 2013 - September 25, 2014

	High	Low	Average
Temperature	**106.3** °F	**0.5** °F	**51.9** °F
Dew Point	**67.6** °F	**-15.4** °F	**35.6** °F
Humidity	**99**%	**11**%	**58.8**%
Precipitation	**9.47** in	--	--

	High	Low	Average
Wind Speed	**26.6** mph	--	**3.4** mph
Wind Gust	**38** mph	--	--
Wind Direction	--	--	**South**
Pressure	**31.67** in	**28.22** in	--



Source: http://www.wunderground.com/personal-weather-station/dashboard?ID=KWAOROVI2

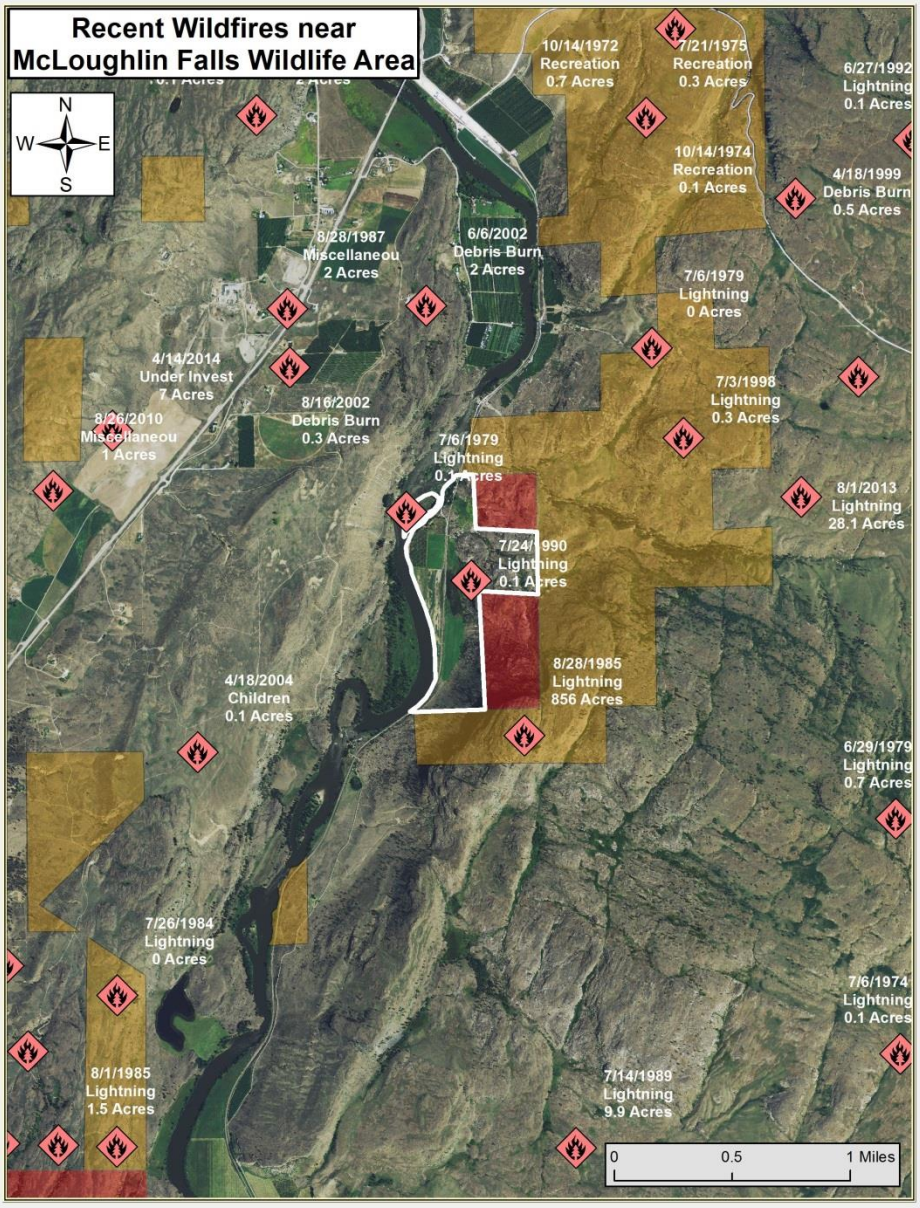
2.6 Hydrology and Watersheds

The MFWA lies within the Okanogan Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) #49. It is bordered by the Okanogan River to the west. Within the wildlife area a perennial wetland lies adjacent to both sides of the railroad which bisects the property. Seasonal flooded wetlands are also present within the riverine habitats. A non-perennial creek behind the old Wilson home site can flow during significant rain events an in the spring during runoffs.

2.7 Fire History

Evidence of recent wildfires in the area exists today. Large fires swept through the wildlife area in the mid 1980's and in 2007; lighting can frequent the area during the summer (see Figure 3 below).

Figure 3. Recent wildlife activity



The vegetation within the MFWA (and similar habitats throughout eastern Washington) are adapted to frequent fires and as such are dependent on fire to flourish and compete with non-native species. A fire history analysis of the MFWA is needed to determine the historic fire regime; or the frequency in which fire was present on the landscape before wildfires were suppressed. Prescribed burning to mimic the natural disturbance processes of fire is a management tool which should be considered.

2.8 Vegetation Types and Habitats

The following habitat types can be found on the McLoughlin Falls Wildlife Area

(See Figure 4 for Current Habitat Types)

Riparian – There are nearly 9 acres of riparian area adjacent to the Okanogan River. This priority habitat supports are variety of species and is a migratory corridor for numerous types of wildlife. During spring runoff events, many of these areas are inundated with water. Riparian species includes various Willow (*Salix ssp*.) species, Black Cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*) and Douglas Hawthorn (*Crataegus douglasii*).

Wetlands – Approximately 10 acres of wetlands (areas with surface water present or saturated soils during a portion of the growing season that generally support primarily hydrophytic plants) can be found on the MFWA. Like riparian areas, wetlands generally support a high diversity of fish and wildlife species. Wetlands on the MFWA contain cattails, various rushes and sedges.

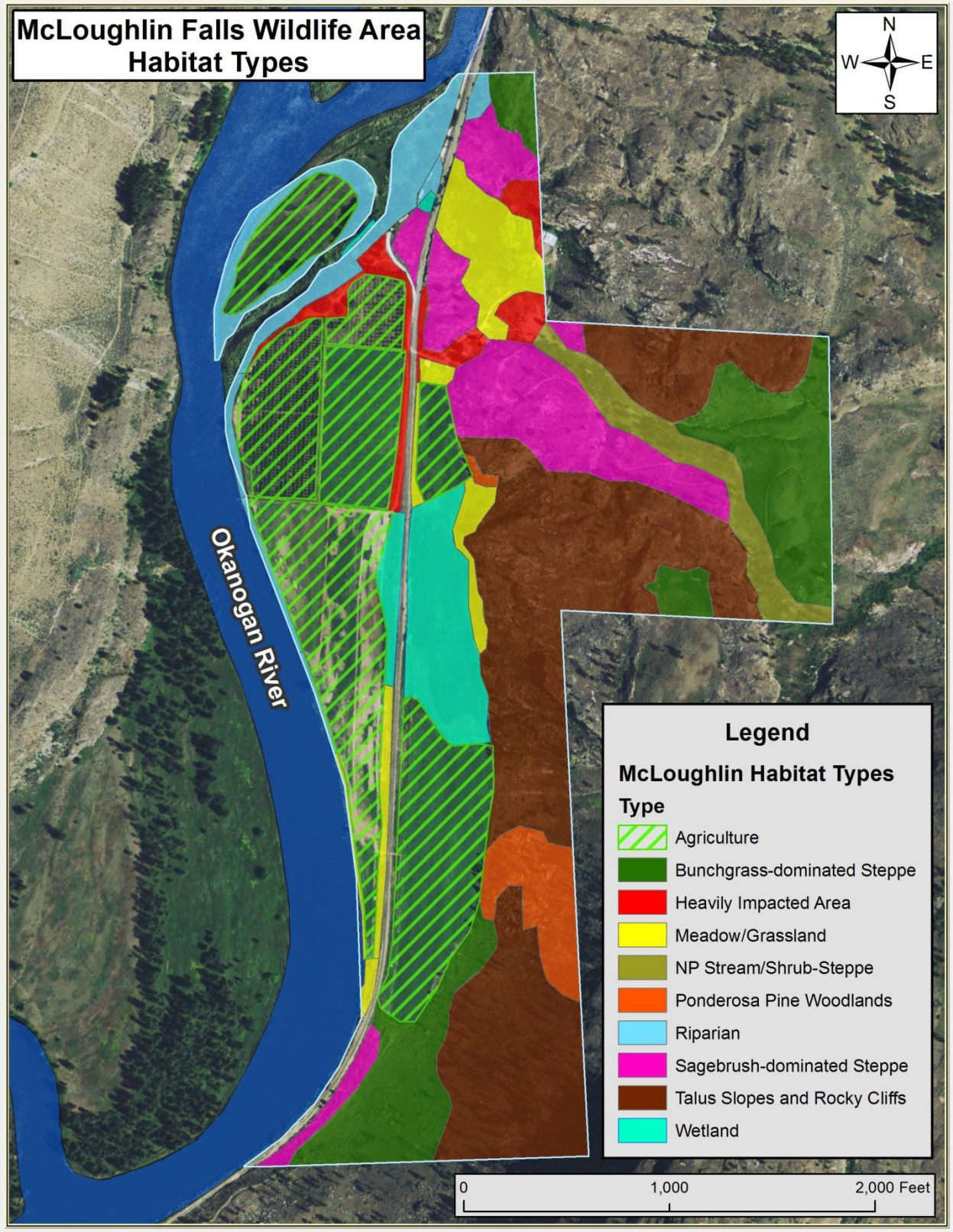
Shrub-Steppe – This priority habitat type is intermixed with various other habitats, occupying nearly one third of the wildlife area. Big Sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) is the most widespread shrub-steppe shrub, with scattered Antelope Bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*). Dominant bunchgrasses include: Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*), BluebunchWheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*), Sandberg Bluegrass (*Poa secunda*), and Needle-and-Thread (*Hesperostipa comata*). Numerous forb species, lichens and mosses can also be found. In addition to native vegetation, invasives are also prevalent such as: Downy Brome aka Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), russain knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*) and Dalmatian Toadflax (*Linaria dalmatica*).

Ponderosa Pine Woodlands – Approximately 5 acres of Ponderosa Pine Woodland can be found on the MFWA. Small Ponderosa Pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) stands can be found adjacent to agricultural areas and the toe of the rock slope to the east. Those steep, rocky slopes have scattered ponderosa pines throughout the valley wall. Similar species can be found within this habitat type found in the shrub-steppe habitat.

Rocky Cliffs & Talus Slopes – These priority habitat features make up another 1/3rd of the wildlife area and dominate the eastern extent of the wildlife area. Cliffs provide nesting habitat for Golden Eagles and talus slopes provide nesting and cover for various small mammals and reptiles.

Left – Photo of shrub-steppe habitat consisting of bluebunch wheatgrass, needle-and-thread, and big sagebrush. The riparian habitat in the background is dominated by black cottonwood, willow ssp. and the non-native Chinese Elm. Scattered ponderosa pines are also visible individually and in small stands (Photo by Justin Haug).

Figure 4. Habitat Types on the McLoughlin Falls Wildlife Area



2.9 Fish and Wildlife Species

The McLoughlin Falls Wildlife Area hosts a diverse mix of fish and wildlife species:

Mammals – Observed mammals on the wildlife area include (but not limited to): mule deer, white-tailed deer, black bear, coyote, yellow-bellied marmots, and beaver. Bighorn sheep have been observed across the river from the wildlife area (potentially travelling between herds).

Birds – Observed birds include (but not limited to): bald eagles, coopers hawk, merlin, lewis's woodpecker, California quail, ruffed grouse, and American robin. Numerous song birds use the area as a north-south corridor during migration.

Reptiles & Amphibians – Western rattlesnake, gopher snake and common garter snakes have been observed. Western painted turtles can be observed in the wetlands adjacent to the river.

Insects – Various butterflies, bees and other insect species have been observed on the wildlife area. As is the case with all fish and wildlife species on the MFWA, a formal survey of the area needs to be completed to properly manage these species.

Fish – The Okanogan River adjacent to the wildlife area holds a number of species including (but not limited to): Chinook & Sockeye Salmon, Steelhead, Rainbow trout, smallmouth bass, and pacific lamprey.

Above – Mule deer overlooking the McLoughlin Falls Wildlife Area. Photo by Justin Haug.

2.10 Current Use – Recreational and Commercial

Recreational use on the wildlife area consists primarily of hunting and fishing. Permission must be granted to cross private property from the north, leaving recreational access only from the Okanogan River or adjacent public lands (BLM and/or DNR) to the east. Commercial use on the MFWA consists of one agricultural leasee who cuts and bails hay and another leasee who grows

pears on orchard managed by the previous owner. Fees collected by the agricultural leasees go to the continued management of the wildlife area – predominately invasive species control.

Above – the pear orchard on the McLoughlin Falls Wildlife Area. Photo by Justin Haug.

2.11 Cultural Resources

Currently there are no known cultural resources on the MFWA as indicated through the Washington Information System for Architectural and Archeological Records Data (WISAARD) provided by the Washington Department of Archeological and Historical Preservation (DAHP). Two structures on the wildlife area are of significant age and currently being kept as cultural resources and potential wildlife habitat. Just NE of the wildlife area in 'McLaughlin' Canyon (*McLoughlin is the correct spelling named after David McLoughlin, son of Hudson Bay Company Chief Factor at Fort Vancouver. The name has been changed over time*) however, a well-known event took place on July 29, 1858. Native Americans from the Chelan, Okanogan, and Columbia tribes ambushed a group of approximately 160 prospectors in McLoughlin Canyon. Six of the travelers are killed, about nine others are wounded, and several Indians may have been killed. A trail has been established by the BLM that looks over the valley and wildlife area. Visit: http://www.wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/mclaughlin-canyon-trail for more information.

2.12 Issues – Past, Present and Future

Access - The overriding issue of the past, present and future on the MFWA is access to the property. Currently, the public may only access the wildlife area via the Okanogan River or by coming off of McLaughlin Canyon Road to the east and hiking down to the wildlife area. This will be a challenge for many years to come and require the department to work with a variety of stakeholders. **Weeds** - The number two issue currently is the noxious weed infestation on the wildlife area. WDFW staff has made headway since the property was acquired. The Class A weed (mandatory eradication required) Wild Four O'Clock (*Mirabilis nyctaginea*) has been a weed priority #1. **Vandalism** – The remoteness of the MFWA makes vandalism a constant issue both with the department and local landowners who have traditional users of the area (those who

had a relationship with the previous owner) travel (trespass) back and forth through their property to access the wildlife area for various activities. These individuals can also negatively impact the two agricultural leasees who have various pieces of equipment stored on the wildlife area to produce their crops.

Chapter III. McLoughlin Falls Stewardship Goals

Statewide goals and objectives listed in chapter one shape management priorities on wildlife areas. Specific wildlife area information including why the area was purchased, habitat conditions, species presence, and public issues & concerns are evaluated to identify wildlife area activities or strategies. *Public comments and concerns from the Eastern Okanogan County Wildlife Areas Advisory Committee (EOC WAAC) will be provided in APPENDIX A.* Objectives and associated strategies or tasks specific to the SWA are listed where appropriate under applicable agency objectives.

WDFW Goal #1 – *Conserve and Protect Native Fish and Wildlife*

1. Inventory and map all flora and fauna species - Knowledge of occurrence, distribution, and abundance of flora and fauna that occur on the MFWA provides information needed in making management decisions. In some cases decisions made to enhance conditions for a species or suite of species may be detrimental to other species. Knowledge about all species present will allow for more informed decision-making. **Strategy**: Conduct systematic baseline inventories of all flora and fauna. **Potential Funding**: Grants such as Aquatic Land Enhancement Account (ALEA), qualified volunteers, graduate students, interns, assistance from other agencies, i.e., BLM, assistance from other WDFW personnel. **Timeframe**: Ongoing.
2. Inventory and map abiotic site characteristics – Knowledge of the occurrence and ecological effects of abiotic factors upon the wildlife area such as soil, climate, hydrology, etc. Knowledge of these factors will help develop strategies to implement restoration projects better understand the plant and animal communities in the area. **Strategy**: Gather and catalog information. **Potential Funding**: existing State Wildlife Fund. **Timeframe**: Ongoing.
3. Document current and historic plant communities and ecosystems - Knowledge of historic and current plant communities, in particular fire history as determined from fire scars, provides an opportunity for comparative analysis of historic conditions relative to current conditions[1] (WDFW 2006). Such knowledge, incorporated into MFWA management, provides information needed in making management decisions relative to a documented historic baseline and future desired conditions. This knowledge of historic plant communities would be an important element in contributing to public education regarding the dynamics of plants, climate, soils, geology, disturbance regimes and wildlife. **Strategy**: Gather and catalog information. **Potential Funding**: existing State Wildlife Fund, qualified volunteers, graduate students, interns, assistance from other agencies, i.e., USFS. **Timeframe**: Ongoing search for grant funding.
4. Establish long-term vegetation transects and photo monitoring points - Dynamics of plant communities and disturbance regimes are a significant factor in creating the

composition and structure of wildlife habitat. Documenting changes, over time, to plant communities as a result of various management strategies allows for determining cause and effect relationships affecting wildlife species dependent on that particular plant community. Using this knowledge, management strategies can be refined. **Strategy**: Conduct systematic baseline inventories of all flora and fauna. Install permanent vegetation transects and photo points. **Potential Funding**: Grants such as ALEA, qualified volunteers, graduate students, interns, assistance from other agencies, i.e., BLM, assistance from other WDFW personnel and the NRCS. **Timeframe**: Ongoing. Funding will continue to be sought.

5. Partner with federal, state, county, and local organizations to protect and enhance fish and wildlife populations and improve associated habitats - Many opportunities exist for participation and cooperation with other governmental and private organizations in research projects that would enhance knowledge about the fish, wildlife, habitat and management of all three (WDFW 2006). Through cooperative efforts knowledge can be gained which will contribute to an overall more robust program on the SWA. **Strategy**: Continually seek opportunities to cooperate and participate in research projects with other governmental agencies and private organizations. **Potential Funding**: Grants when successful, qualified volunteers, graduate students, interns, assistance from other agencies, i.e., Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group (CCFEG), Colville Confederated Tribe (CCT), USFWS, USFS, BLM, Agency support. **Timeframe**: Ongoing search for grant opportunities and application.
6. Protect and enhance riparian habitat - The agency has prioritized riparian habitat management and protection. Riparian plant communities and associations provide for the greatest diversity of fish and wildlife species, for high densities of animals, for important breeding areas and movement corridors. **Strategy**: Develop restoration plans with agency staff and partnerships (CCT, CCFEG & NRCS) to plant native vegetation adjacent to the Okanogan River to stabilize highly-erodible banks and provide increased habitat for wildlife. Continually battle invasive riparian species such as Chinese elm, purple loosestrife, and yellow-flag iris with the support of the Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board (OCNWB). Eventually re-introduce fire into riparian habitats. Fire exclusion in riparian areas has resulted in a stagnation of vegetative succession, composition, structure and reduced the mosaic effect that contributes to increased diversity necessary for sustaining a variety of species (WDFW 2006). **Potential Funding**: Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and ALEA Grants when successful, qualified volunteers, graduate students, interns, assistance from other agencies, i.e., Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group (CCFEG), Colville Confederated Tribe (CCT), USFWS, and Agency support. **Timeframe**: Ongoing search for grant opportunities and application.
7. Protect and enhance shrub steppe habitat - The agency has prioritized shrub-steppe habitat management and protection. Shrub steppe areas provide habitat for a diversity of fish and wildlife species. Shrub steppe is also very vulnerable to habitat conversion and alteration practices. Shrub-steppe on the MFWA has been affected recently by numerous wildfires of various sizes and intensities. As beneficial as fire can be to shrub steppe, invasive species infestations must be managed due to the existing infestations surrounding the habitat. **Strategy**: Continually seek opportunities to cooperate and participate in research projects with other governmental agencies and

private organizations. Plan and seek funding for native seed collection and grow of various bunchgrass and forb species to be planted during restoration projects and proceeding instances of disturbance. **Potential Funding**: Grants when successful, qualified volunteers, assistance from other agencies, i.e., Mule Deer Foundation, USFS, BLM, and WDFW support. **Timeframe**: Ongoing search for grant opportunities and application.

8. Protect and enhance other priority and non-priority habitats – Other habitats such as wetlands, Ponderosa Pine woodlands and rocky cliffs and talus slopes provide a mosaic on the MFWA beneficial for numerous species. Micro-habitats such as snags, caves and structures need to be preserved as well. These features provide habitat for a narrow range of species but critical in the larger ecosystem. **Strategy**: Noxious weeds need to be continually managed so not to expand into these less accessible areas. Monitor for and control noxious weeds within and near these habitat types and protect micro-habitats such as snags and caves from being removed or vandalized. **Potential Funding**: Existing State Wildlife Fund. **Timeframe**: Ongoing.
9. Manage all noxious weeds consistent with state and county rules to protect fish and wildlife habitats - Weed control is required by state law to protect public economic and natural resources. Invasive weeds are one of the greatest threats to fish and wildlife habitat quality. Cooperative weed efforts are encouraged to improve efficacy and to minimize impacts on adjacent landowners as part of the agencies good-neighbor priority (WDFW 2006). **Strategy**: Produce and implement weed management plan to include weed identification and inventory, risk/threat, control priorities, and monitoring. Coordinate weed efforts with federal (BLM) and local (Okanogan County and MFWA sharecroppers) entities to improve efficacy and minimize costs. Continue to use Integrated Pest Management strategies, including biological control, chemicals, mechanical and cultural methods, to control invasive weeds. Map all weed locations using GPS to create a GIS database cataloging and showing all locations of weed occurrences and to assist in monitoring weed control efforts. Work with Okanogan County jail to use trustee work crews to cut and pull weeds. **Potential Funding**: Existing State Wildlife Fund. **Timeframe**: Ongoing.
10. Develop and implement prescribed burn plan for MFWA – Regardless of the frequent nature of wildfires in the area in recent decades, the need for periodic prescribed burning to achieve ecological integrity in those habitats that lack various, historic components that only fire can provide. A burn plan modeled after those created for restoration projects and prescribed burning on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area and other WDFW properties in North Central Washington. **Strategy**: Work with the WDFW's North-Central Washington Prescribed Burn Crew to develop a plan for future prescribed burning on the MFWA. **Potential Funding**: Existing State Wildlife Fund or grants through the Mule Deer Foundation or similar organization. **Timeframe**: Future project – ideally when the prescribed burn team is hard-funded.

WDFW Goal #2 – *Provide sustainable fishing, hunting, and other wildlife-related recreational and commercial experiences*

1. Manage for big game, waterfowl and upland birds – For big game species, habitat changes affecting vegetation composition, vigor, nutritional quality, structural and species changes would negatively affect big game species (WDFW 2006).

Homogenization of habitats, i.e., loss of a mosaic of habitats comprised of early to late successional stages, due to fire suppression for example and all the variability of plant community composition, vigor, nutritional quality, structure and species would be detrimental for big game, upland birds and waterfowl species. Maintaining and enhancing forage and security cover for species is also important. **Strategy**: Conduct prescribed burning on those habitats types which would benefit from fire and fire byproducts. Plant native vegetation in highly disturbed areas with little chance of natural re-vegetation from native seed sources. Work with sharecropper to plant and leave standing a grain crop for upland bird species such as California quail and Hungarian partridges. Goose tubs and wood duck nest boxes can be installed to enhance nesting habitat for Canada geese and cavity nesting ducks. **Potential Funding**: Existing State Wildlife Fund and assistance from other agencies, i.e., BLM, and assistance from other WDFW personnel. **Timeframe**: Ongoing.

2. Manage for small game and furbearer species - There are many small game, furbearers and unclassified species on the MFWA including bobcats, coyotes, muskrats, beaver, long-tailed weasel, river otter, etc. All of these species provide wildlife viewing opportunity. **Strategy**: Provide viewing opportunities for the public to view these species. Beavers can cause issues with the agricultural leasee who operates the orchard (chewing off newly-planted trees). WDFW will work with the orchardist to mitigate damages or potential damages. **Potential Funding**: Existing State Wildlife Fund and assistance from other agencies, i.e., BLM, and assistance from other WDFW personnel. **Timeframe**: Ongoing.
3. Protect and enhance native fish populations and their habitats - The Okanogan River provides migration, spawning and rearing habitat for the ESA-listed endangered Upper Columbia River steelhead bordering the MFWA. In addition, Okanogan summer/fall Chinook, Okanogan River Sockeye, and other resident game fish utilize the area (WDFW 2006). The Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group (CCFEG), established by the Salmon Recovery Planning Act in 1998, is responsible for developing Salmon Recovery Plans for the Okanogan watershed in addition to other watersheds. The most common limiting factors for both Upper Columbia steelhead and summer/fall Chinook are habitat diversity, sediment load, and quantity of key habitats for various life stages (WDFW 2006). **Strategy**: Work with Colville Confederated tribes, other landowners, Federal Agencies, State Agencies, i.e., Salmon Recovery Funding Board; and Non-governmental Organizations, e.g., Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group to restore floodplain and riparian functionality to the portion of the river systems of which MFWA is a part. Restore riparian vegetation with shrub and tree plantings along the shoreline of MFWA. Improve in-stream habitat for salmonid species and other indigenous fish species. **Potential Funding**: Grants when successful, volunteers, USWFS, NOAA, CCT and CCFEG. **Timeframe**: Ongoing grant search and application, coordination and collaboration with groups.
4. Protect and manage for other species – 'Other species' referring to native reptile, amphibian, insect and plant species that make up the majority of the ecological diversity of the MFWA. **Strategy**: Develop species inventories of the MFWA and determine what species are present and determine best management practices to benefit future populations. **Potential Funding**: Grants when successful, qualified

volunteers, graduate students, interns, assistance from other agencies, i.e., CCFEG, CCT, USFWS, USFS, BLM, and Agency support. **Timeframe**: Ongoing search for grant opportunities.

5. Manage for species diversity – All species are dependent on one form of plant life or another to survive. Some species are totally dependent on a specific genus or species of vegetation. It is important to know the species of plant life in order to better manage for a diversity of wildlife (WDFW 2006). Additionally, to manage for species diversity it is necessary to know what species are present and where they are in order to provide best management practices. Once comprehensive surveys are completed, plans can be developed to create, restore and maintain quality habitat for all species present. Activities on MFWA will strive to benefit a diversity of species. **Strategy**: Perform species surveys for all flora and fauna species and track spatial data using ArcGIS. **Potential Funding**: Existing State Wildlife Funds, grants, qualified volunteers, graduate students, interns, assistance from other agencies: USFS and BLM. **Timeframe**: Ongoing search for funding opportunities.
6. Protect and maintain agricultural practices that are consistent with fish and wildlife management goals and habitat protection – Currently there are two 5-year leases for agricultural practices on MFWA. One leases the property to produce alfalfa hay or grass/alfalfa mix for commercial purposes (see Appendix C for Agricultural Map of MFWA). The second grows pears within the existing orchard retrained following WDFW's acquisition. Both leases are available for renewal after 5 years and subject to numerous restrictions and conditions. Fees collected from the leases are used to supplement management costs associated with noxious weed control, fence maintenance and other infrastructure needs. These agricultural areas are a part of the mosaic of habitats within the MFWA, providing food and shelter for a variety of species. Retaining these agricultural practices also allows WDFW to continue utilizing their water rights (see Appendix D for water rights map); an additional asset or can be put into trust after proven use. In addition, these practices show local political figures and concern individuals that WDFW can own land and continue producing that form of economy; providing jobs and traditional/cultural heritage. **Strategy**: Continue to work with sharecroppers to better manage agricultural leases and manage land to benefit both the community and critters. **Potential Funding**: Existing State Wildlife Funds. **Timeframe**: Ongoing.

WDFW Goal #3 – *Promote a healthy economy, protect community character, maintain an overall high quality of life, and deliver high-quality customer service*

1. Provide public access compatible with fish, wildlife and habitat protection – Public access to MFWA is only available via the Okanogan River or from hiking in from the east from adjacent BLM and DNR properties. No public easement exists via Janis Road to the wildlife area. In addition, the Cascade Columbia Railroad bisects the wildlife area and the road accessing the area lies within the railroad's right-of-way; make future public access a remote possibility due to liability issues. Therefore, ecologically-friendly access is the only form of access currently. **Strategy**: Continue discussions with stakeholders, adjacent landowners and state & federal agencies to improve future access to MFWA. **Potential Funding**: Existing State Wildlife Funds. **Timeframe**: Ongoing.

2. Provide commercial opportunities compatible with fish and wildlife management and habitat protection - Currently there are two 5-year leases for agricultural practices on MFWA. One leases the property to produce alfalfa hay or grass/alfalfa mix for commercial purposes (see Appendix C for Agricultural Map of MFWA). The second grows pears within the existing orchard retrained following WDFW's acquisition. Both leases are available for renewal after 5 years and subject to numerous restrictions and conditions. Fees collected from the leases are used to supplement management costs associated with noxious weed control, fence maintenance and other infrastructure needs. These agricultural areas are a part of the mosaic of habitats within the MFWA, providing food and shelter for a variety of species. Retaining these agricultural practices also allows WDFW to continue utilizing their water rights (see Appendix D for water rights map); an additional asset or can be put into trust after proven use. In addition, these practices show local political figures and concern individuals that WDFW can own land and continue producing that form of economy; providing jobs and traditional/cultural heritage. **Strategy**: Continue to work with sharecroppers to better manage agricultural leases and manage land to benefit both the community and critters. **Potential Funding**: Existing State Wildlife Funds. **Timeframe**: Ongoing.
3. Protect cultural resources and retain historic structures to benefit wildlife species and historic character of property - Currently there are no known cultural resources on the MFWA as indicated through the Washington Information System for Architectural and Archeological Records Data (WISAARD) provided by the Washington Department of Archeological and Historical Preservation (DAHP). Two structures on the wildlife area, a barn and work shop, are of significant age and currently being kept as cultural resources and potential wildlife habitat. These structures potentially provide habitat for different owl species and bat species. **Strategy**: Maintain current structures as-is and improve habitat potential with platforms and bat boxes to benefit species. Develop Cultural Resource Management Plan, Inadvertent Discovery Plan and Internal Cultural Review Document for future cultural resources on the MFWA. Conduct archeological survey of areas with high potential for restoration action or disturbance. **Potential Funding**: Existing State Wildlife Funds and assistance from WDFW archeologist, CCT and DAHP. **Timeframe**: Ongoing.
4. Support continued agricultural use which provides food and cover to various wildlife species and promotes the local economy - These agricultural areas are a part of the mosaic of habitats within the MFWA, providing food and shelter for a variety of species. Irrigated alfalfa produces supplemental feed for wildlife early in the season and later into the fall/winter. During summer months, insect brooding within the fields yields a food sources for various bird species. In addition, these practices show local political figures and concern individuals that WDFW can own land and continue producing that form of economy; providing jobs and traditional/cultural heritage. **Strategy**: Continue to work with sharecroppers to better manage agricultural leases and manage land to benefit both the community and critters. Assist sharecroppers to plant a standing grain crop for species to utilize during critical periods. **Potential Funding**: Existing State Wildlife Funds. **Timeframe**: Ongoing.

WDFW Goal #4 – *Build an effective and efficient organization by supporting our workforce, improving business processes and investing in technology*

1. Maintain and improve infrastructure such as roads, irrigation water delivery, fences, property lines and buildings for effective management of MFWA – With limited funding, maintaining known infrastructure make good business sense and creates a safe environment for the public, sharecroppers and agency staff. It's also important to know where property lines so to more effectively repair damaged infrastructure and know where responsibility terminates. **Strategy**: Inventory all infrastructures on MFWA. Repair, replace and/or remove all fences which serve a management purpose. Maintain current structures to retain historic character of property and opportunity for owl and bat habitat. **Potential Funding**: Existing State Wildlife Funds, volunteers, grants, capitol project request(s). **Timeframe**: Ongoing.
2. Utilize water rights for the perpetual benefit of the agency - Retaining water rights (see Appendix D for water rights map) allows the department the future ability to put water into permanent trust, to be placed back into the watershed for the benefit of fish species. Not using these rights puts the department in risk of losing the ability to use the water for the specific agricultural purpose. Water rights in amongst themselves are valuable and often sold downstream. **Strategy**: Continue to fully utilize all existing water rights for the intended purpose. **Potential Funding**: Existing State Wildlife Funds. **Timeframe**: Ongoing.
3. Encourage public involvement and foster community support for management objectives and activities - Public participation through the formation of a WAAC will be used as an ongoing means to identify social, cultural, and economic issues important to the people of Washington and the management of the MFWA. The group will also provide input to help resolve current and future management issues and conflicts. WAAC participation in planning will add credibility and support for MFWA management practices and help build constituencies for the MFWA. The WAAC is made up of one representative from each major stakeholder group. **Strategy**: A single WAAC was formed to address management of the McLoughlin Falls, Carter Mountain, Horse Spring Coulee, Buzzard Lake, Chiliwist, Driscoll Island, Sinlahekin, Scotch Creek, Tunk, Eder, Chesaw and Chopaka-Similkameen Wildlife Areas. This WAAC is known as the Eastern Okanogan County Wildlife Areas Advisory Committee (EOC WAAC). WAAC members are encouraged to be spokespersons for their interest groups. A list of EOC WAAC representatives and notes from this past years' meeting is in APPENDIX A. Individuals representing these entities will provide input during the planning process and annual reviews. **Potential Funding**: Existing State Wildlife Funds. **Timeframe**: Ongoing.

Appendix A – Eastern Okanogan County Wildlife Area Advisory Committee

Eastern Okanogan County Wildlife Areas Advisory Committee
Meeting Agenda
Washington State Department of Transportation
28862 Hwy 97
Okanogan, WA 98840

February 26th 2014
1:00p – 4:30p

The purpose of meeting with the EOC WAAC was to obtain input to help guide management actions on the McLoughlin Falls Wildlife Area; managed as a unit as part of the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. Below is a list of issues and concerns identified by the EOC WAAC. These issues were categorized. Issues specific to another Wildlife Area were deleted from the list for areas they did not apply. Issues related to Wildlife Areas outside of the East Okanogan County Wildlife Areas Advisory Committee were passed on to the appropriate Wildlife Areas. Other issues related to Wildlife Management or General Agency issues were passed on to the appropriate program or person.

We had a total of 17 people attending, including 5 staff from WDFW and members representing 12 user groups. They include: Okanogan Wildlife Council, Audubon Society, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Dept. of Natural Resources, US Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Okanogan Valley Chapter of the Backcountry Horseman, Trout Unlimited, Okanogan Fly Fishing Club, Okanogan County Weed Control Board, the Mule Deer Foundation and one Private landowner/WLA neighbor.

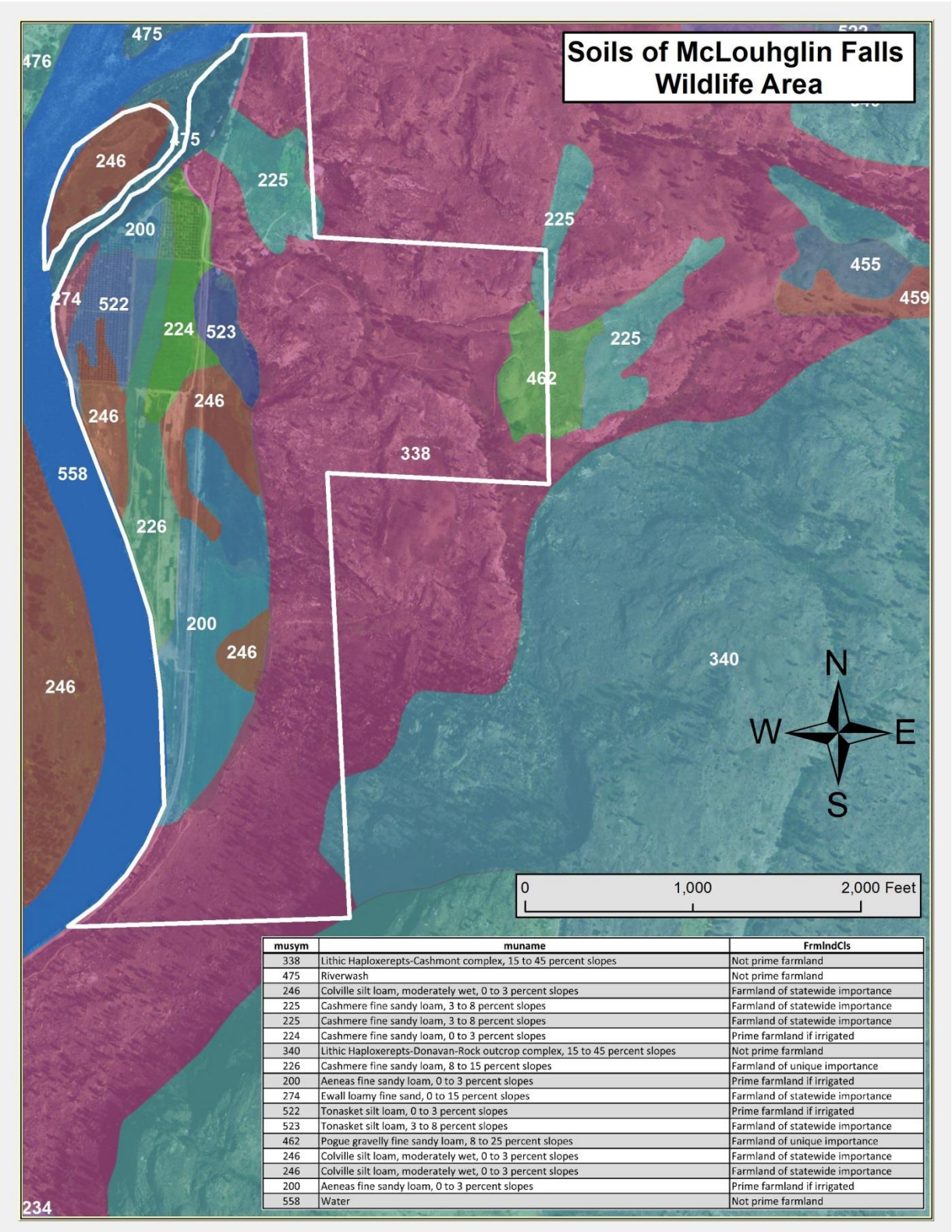
- Public access needed for McLoughlin Falls area.
    - Access is not going to be possible with the majority of the road being within the railroad easement. Future access by the public will have to continue to be from the river or contacting private property owners for permission to cross.

- Would like to have better maps of wildlife areas (hard copies/brochures). The maps on the website aren't that great.
    - Answer - Manager Haug and Olson were planning to produce some prototype maps of specific units on our respective wildlife areas. I goal would be to put these maps onto the website for people to download and/or print. The Sinlahekin is also updating their large folding map for the upcoming 75th Anniversary event in June.
- What we are presenting (weed control totals and accomplishments) doesn't match what he is reading in the Chronicle (they have been very critical of DFW management). There was the suggestion that we present our information to the County Commissioners, or

Weed Control Board to educate them in all that we have accomplished, and highlight what we are doing on new acquisitions.

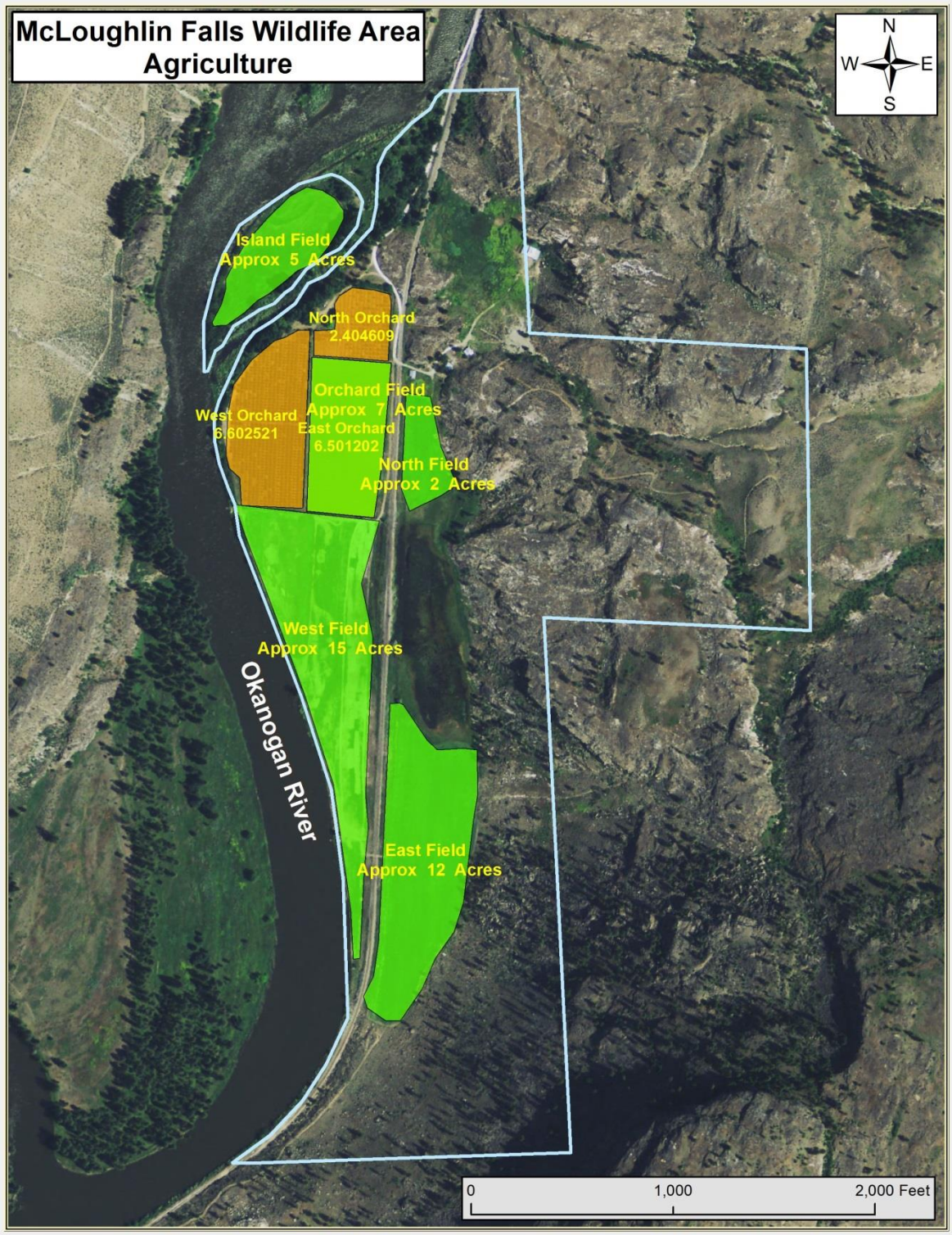
- Answer – Okanogan Lands Operations Manager Dale Swedberg has been consistently attending both the County Weed Board Meetings and Coordinated Weed Management Association meetings to share our accomplishments in controlling weeds and be engaged in the group effort to combat noxious weeds countywide.

Appendix B – McLoughlin Falls Soils Map

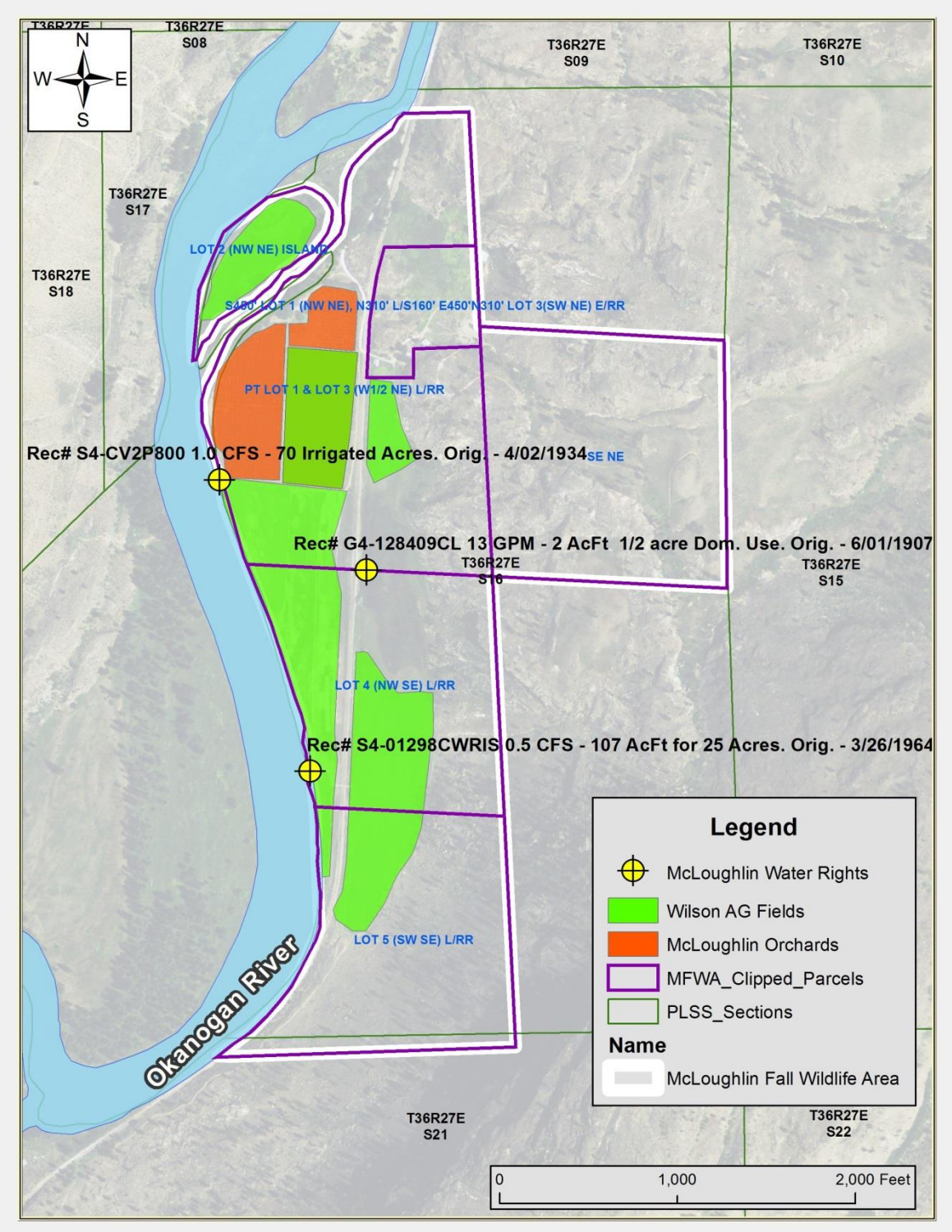


musym	muname	FrmlndCls
338	Lithic Haploxerepts-Cashmont complex, 15 to 45 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
475	Riverwash	Not prime farmland
246	Colville silt loam, moderately wet, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
225	Cashmere fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
225	Cashmere fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
224	Cashmere fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
340	Lithic Haploxerepts-Donavan-Rock outcrop complex, 15 to 45 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
226	Cashmere fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of unique importance
200	Aeneas fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
274	Ewall loamy fine sand, 0 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
522	Tonasket silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
523	Tonasket silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
462	Pogue gravelly fine sandy loam, 8 to 25 percent slopes	Farmland of unique importance
246	Colville silt loam, moderately wet, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
246	Colville silt loam, moderately wet, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
200	Aeneas fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
558	Water	Not prime farmland

Appendix C – McLoughlin Falls Agricultural Map



Appendix D – McLoughlin Falls Water Rights Map



Literature Cited –

1. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2006. Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Management Plan. Wildlife Management Program, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia. 166 pp.