

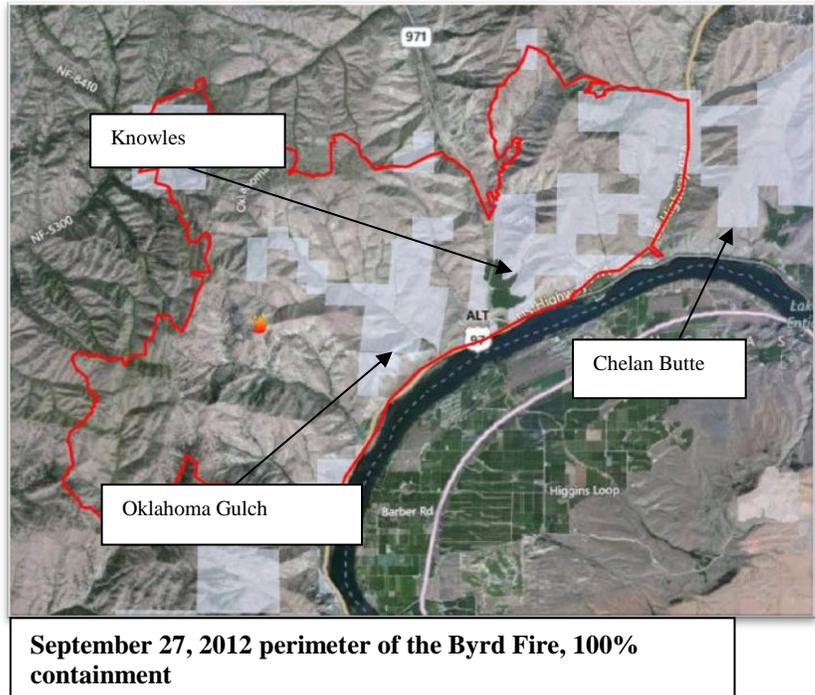


# CHELAN WILDLIFE AREA 2014 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

## Land Management Summary

This is an update to the 2006 Chelan Wildlife Area Management Plan [http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife\\_areas/management\\_plans/](http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/) that provides management direction for the Chelan Wildlife Area Complex including the Swakane, Entiat, Chelan Butte, White River and Pateros Units. The plan identifies needs and guides activities on the area based on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) mission of “*Sound Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife*” and its underlying statewide goals and objectives as they apply to local conditions.



**September 27, 2012 perimeter of the Byrd Fire, 100% containment**

Updates are written every two years as habitat and species conditions change, as new regulations and scientific knowledge develop, as public issues and concerns evolve, and as administration of the wildlife areas change. This management plan update includes new land management strategies, updates/changes and performance measures for 2014-2015.

## Updates/Changes

### Byrd Fire

On September 9, 2012 a severe lightning storm ignited complex of 18 fires across Chelan County. The Byrd Fire was one of the largest totaling 14,119 acres and burning 3,329 acres of the Chelan Wildlife Area in Oklahoma Gulch and Knowles Areas.

Most upland areas dominated by perennial grasses burned at a low intensity with little damage to vegetation. Areas with heavy sagebrush and bitterbrush cover, especially the old agricultural fields on the Knowles Area, burned at medium intensity with nearly all the shrub cover killed. High intensity burns were restricted to portions of the riparian vegetation in Oklahoma Gulch and Horse Draw on the

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**Horse Draw on Knowles Area after Byrd Fire**

Knowles. On the Knowles and Oklahoma Gulch Areas five upland bird feeders were damaged or destroyed, two spring developments were damaged, and two guzzlers received minor damage.

Restoration work after the fire started with cleaning two culverts and replacing two nonfunctioning culverts on the access road to the Knowles Area. Feeders were rebuilt and repaired by Boy Scout Troop 89 and Wenatchee Sportsmen Association (WSA) volunteers. WSA volunteers also repaired two guzzlers and wildlife area staff redeveloped the two springs.

The riparian areas on the Knowles and Oklahoma Gulch were seeded by hand with native grass mixes late in the fall.

Chelan Butte Field Restoration.

The Rocky Reach Wildlife Habitat Management Plan (WHMP) was approved by FERC in late 2010 and provides funding through the Chelan County Public Utility District for projects on the Wildlife Area. The most ambitious and challenging project is the shrub steppe habitat restoration of agricultural fields on Chelan Butte (see map on page 10) and Swakane Canyon.

On Chelan Butte there is approximately 1,100 acres of fields that are in roughly five 200-acre groups. Fields in Group 1 were seeded in 2011, and during 2012-2013 these fields were mowed to control annual weeds, especially cereal rye, up to two times per year. These fields will require additional work on the cereal rye for at least two more years. One of these fields (13 acres) also has a terrible infestation of common salsify that may require it to be fallowed and seeded again.



**Volunteers rebuilding upland bird feeder**



**Leased tractor used on steep fields at Chelan Butte**

Fields in Group 3 are of two types: five fields that can be farmed conventionally totaling 200 acres and four fields that are on slopes too steep for conventional farming with tractors and implements totaling 40 acres. In 2012 and 2013 the five conventionally farmed fields were fallowed to control annual weeds and required herbicide applications to control morning glory, a particularly tenacious perennial weed. The weed problems necessitated postponing the seeding of these fields until 2014. The four fields on very steep slopes were chemical fallowed using a helicopter to apply glyphosate in 2012 and 2013. Prior to seeding a skid-steer capable of handling the steep slopes was used to harrow the fields prior to applying seed by helicopter.



**Skid-steer harrowing Chelan Butte Fields**

Group 4 fields were mowed in 2013 in preparation for fallow operations to begin in 2014.

#### Swakane Canyon Field Restoration

After two years of mechanical and chemical fallow, the 12 fields totaling nearly 100 acres were seeded with 7 native grasses in 2012 and then seeded with a forb and shrub mix in 2013. The forb and shrub seeding was done a year after the grass seeding to allow more aggressive broadleaf weed control during 2013 as the grasses were establishing.

#### Water Developments

The WHMP also provided funding from the Chelan County Public Utility District for wildlife water development projects on the Swakane, Entiat, and Chelan Butte Units. Wildlife Area staff were able to use this funding to redevelop two springs developments (Horse Draw Spring and Maple Canyon Spring) damaged by the Byrd fire on Knowles Area. On Chelan Butte, Huni Spring, located in Huni Canyon was developed and a guzzler was installed on Downie Ridge on



**Swakane Canyon Pond**

the west end of the Butte. In Swakane Canyon two ponds that were originally dug constructed prior to the Department ownership received some much needed attention. Over the years the ponds filled in and the water control structure on one of the ponds no longer functioned. Using an excavator, many years of accumulated silt was removed, deepening the ponds by about three feet. A new control structure for one of the ponds was fabricated on site and installed. Six water basins were also installed along the dry portion of Swakane Creek that are filled using water from the irrigation system.

### Pheasant Release

After the 2010 fire in Swakane Canyon, pheasant releases were halted on the area. In 2013 pheasant releases were started again due to the success in vegetating the old agricultural fields and the loss of release sites on the Colockum Wildlife Area after fires on the release site.

### Status Report of 2012 - 2013 Performance Measures

Key performance measures are identified each year to monitor progress and identify issues that might interfere with planned priority activities. This information will be used to delete, add, or alter priority strategies for 2014

<b>2012-2013 Performance Measures</b>	<b>Status of Performance Measure</b>	<b>Explanation of Progress/ 2014-2015 Related Activity/ Comments</b>
1. Maintain and monitor Chelan Butte Group 1 fields, up to 180 acres.	Fields seeded in 2011 were mowed for weed control (146 acres) in 2012 and 2013.	Continue activity in 2014/2015
2. Prepare Chelan Butte and Swakane Canyon Group 2 fields (289 acres for seeding in 2012).	Mechanical and chemical fallow maintained on 242 acres on Chelan Butte and 85 acres in Swakane Canyon.	Completed
3. Seed Chelan Butte and Swakane Canyon Group 2 fields in 2012.	In 2012, 242 acres at Chelan Butte and 95 acres in Swakane Canyon were seeded with native grass mix	Weed control and forb-shrub seeding planned for 2013 if grass establishment and weed suppression allows.
4. Maintain and monitor Chelan Butte and Swakane Canyon Group 2 fields in 2013.	Mowing and/or herbicide applications were completed to reduce weed competition with establishing grasses.	Continue activity in 2014/2015
5. Start summer fallow on Group 3 fields on Chelan Butte in 2012 and continue in 2013.	Combination of herbicide and mechanical fallow operations conducted both years.	Four fields (195 acres) with severe morning glory infestation will require an additional year of fallow postponing seeding until 2014.
6. Seed Chelan Butte Group 3 fields in 2013.	Four small fields (40 acres) too steep for tractor-grass drill seeding were seeded by helicopter.	Four fields (195 acres) with severe morning glory infestation were not seeded and will have an additional season of weed control and be seeded in fall 2014.
7. Begin summer fallow on Chelan Butte Group 4 fields (282 acres).	Fallow initiated on two of five fields (190 acres) with worst weed problems. Seeding will be delayed until 2015.	Summer fallow in 2014 and 2015 focusing on morning glory suppression. Seeding will be delayed until 2015
8. Complete water developments on Chelan Butte, Entiat, and Swakane Units.	During 2012 and 2013, three spring developments, one guzzler, two ponds, and six catch basins were completed.	Completed
9. Complete one acre riparian restoration in 2012 and 2013 on the Swakane Unit.	Two acres completed in 2013.	Weed control and replants to be completed in 2014.

<p>10. Coordinate the maintenance of 30+ winter wildlife feeders, 35+ water structures (guzzlers and springs), and 25+ nest boxes.</p>	<p>The Wenatchee Sportsmen’s Association (WSA) maintained and repaired most of the spring developments and assisted in filling 32 feeders. Volunteers continue to monitor and maintain nest boxes.</p>	<p>Continue activity in 2014/2015</p>
<p>11. Inspect and maintain about 90 miles of road and trails to include routine inspection, weed control and repairs to road surface as necessary.</p>	<p>Routinely inspected road/trail system. Performed culvert maintenance and replaced 2 culverts on Knowles Area and performed road side weed control. Cleared snow from roads on the Pateros Units. Mowed roads to minimize fire hazard.</p>	<p>Continue in 2014/2015</p>
<p>12. Replace 50 to 75 signs, as needed based on routine inspections.</p>	<p>Completed. Updated ‘Discover Pass’ signs on all units. Made and posted signs at Swakane Canyon demarcating the pheasant release/non-toxic shot zone.</p>	<p>Continue in 2014/2015</p>
<p>13. Maintain Swakane irrigation system (including pond and outlet), shop, residence and office. Maintain three informational kiosks as funding allows. Service, repair and maintain equipment and vehicles (estimated 5 pieces)</p>	<p>Completed. Repaired several breaks in the Swakane irrigation system. Winterized system. Maintained kiosks, buildings and equipment as needed.</p>	<p>Continue in 2014/2015</p>
<p>14. Control weedy species mechanically and with chemical and bioagents. Extent of weed control will be based on funding.</p>	<p>Completed: Sprayed yellowstar thistle in and around old fields in the Knowles area (Entiat Unit). Greater effort (80 acres) was needed in 2013 after the Byrd Fire. In 2012 and 2013 Field restoration on Chelan Butte and Swakane required 2,166 acres of mechanical treatments (mow, disc, harrow) and 1,870 acres of herbicide applications for weed control and seedbed preparation. Herbicide application and mowing of weeds on roads occurred on an</p>	<p>Continue in 2014/2015</p>

	additional 16 miles of roads.	
15. Inspect and maintain about 20 miles of fence as needed. Remove fence as funding and manpower allow.	Inspected fences as needed. Wenatchee Sportsmen Association continued removing barb wire fence on Chelan Butte. Repaired 1.1 mile of wildlife fence on the south side of Chelan Butte to keep bighorn sheep out of neighboring orchards.	2014/15 - Continue fence maintenance and removal as needed.
17. Continue PUD funded field restoration.	In 2012 - 242 acres at Chelan Butte and 95 acres in Swakane Canyon were seeded with native grass mix. In 2013 fallow was maintained on 255 acres using chemical and mechanical treatments. Forty acres were seeded with native grasses. The remaining 215 acres in fallow will be seeded in 2014 due to weed issues requiring an additional year of fallow. At Swakane Canyon, 85 acres were seeded to native grasses in 2012 and with shrubs and forbs in 2013.	Continue in 2014/15

### **New Strategies**

The wildlife area plan identifies many strategies or activities to address goals and objectives related to WDFW's Strategic Plan, why the area was purchased, habitat conditions, species present and public issues and concerns. The following updated strategies have been added to respond to previously unaddressed or new issues or changes on the wildlife area. New strategies may also be in response to adaptive management as staff evaluate the impacts of past management activities.

1. Determine feasibility of establishing a new public access point on Chelan Butte near Chelan Falls. Public access to the southeast portion of the unit was lost in 2011 with changes in private ownerships and closure of a private road.
2. Develop a 5-year project plan and budget for Chelan County Public Utility District funding associated with Rocky Reach Dam Relicense requirements. Funding will be for 2016-2020.

### **2014 Performance Measures**

#### **Chelan Butte Unit**

1. Maintain and monitor Chelan Butte Group 1 fields, up to 180 acres. Seeded in 2011, it may be necessary to control annual weeds to reduce competition with native grasses and forbs. Activities will include periodic mowing and spot treatments with herbicides.

2. Maintain and monitor Group 2 fields on Chelan Butte totaling 204 acres. Seeded in November 2012, it will be necessary to control annual weeds to reduce competition with native grasses. Activities will include periodic mowing and spot treatments with herbicides. Seed shrub-forb mix if grass establishment and weed suppression are successful.
3. Maintain and monitor Chelan Butte Group 3 (W, X, Y, Z) fields totaling 40 acres. Seeded in November 2013, it will be necessary to control annual weeds to reduce competition with native grasses. Activities may include aerial application of herbicides.
4. Seed Chelan Butte Group 3 fields (A, B, G, J, O) totaling 195 acres in November 2014. Seeding was delayed one year due to additional needed morning glory control.
5. Continue fallow operation on Chelan Butte Group 4 fields N and L (200 acres) with special attention to control of morning glory infestations. Activities will include herbicide treatments, disking and cultivation. Plan for seeding in fall of 2015.
6. Initiate fallow operation on Chelan Butte Group 4 fields M, U, and V (83 acres). Activities will include mowing residual vegetation in fall. Plan for seeding in fall of 2016.
7. Replace two old A-frame style upland bird feeders on Chelan Butte Unit.

#### **Swakane Unit**

8. Maintain and monitor Group 2 fields in Swakane Canyon totaling 85 acres. Seeded in November 2012, it may be necessary to control annual weeds to reduce competition with forbs and shrubs seeded in 2013. Activities will include periodic mowing and spot treatments with herbicides.
9. Maintain and monitor two acres of riparian shrub plantings completed in 2013 in Swakane Canyon including replacement plants for first year mortalities.
10. Complete installation of one guzzler on the Swakane Unit.

#### **Entiat Unit**

11. Complete two spring developments on the Entiat Unit.

#### **White River Unit**

12. Coordinate with Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group regarding instream salmonid habitat enhancement projects and forest assessment.

#### **All Units**

13. Coordinate with Wenatchee Sportsmen's Association for the maintenance of 32 winter wildlife feeders, 35+ guzzlers and springs, and 25+ nest boxes throughout the wildlife area.
14. Inspect and maintain about 90 miles of road and trail to include routine inspection, culvert maintenance, weed control and repairs to road surface as necessary.
15. Replace 50 to 75 signs, as needed based on routine inspections.
16. Maintain infrastructure: Swakane irrigation system (including pond and outlet), Wells Wildlife Area shop and Office, and Swakane residence. Maintain three informational kiosks. Service, repair and maintain equipment and vehicles (estimated 5 pieces).
17. Control weedy species mechanically, chemically and biologically. Extent of weed control will be based on funding but will at least include some roadside spraying and yellowstar thistle spraying in the Knowles area. Quickly respond to newly discovered weed outbreaks. Work closely with Chelan County Weed Board to prevent and control weed infestations.
18. Inspect up to 20 miles of fence as needed. Maintain, repair, or remove fence as needed.

#### **2015 Performance Measures**

1. Maintain and monitor Chelan Butte Group 1 fields, up to 180 acres. Seeded in 2011, it may be necessary to control annual weeds to reduce competition with native grasses and

forbs. Activities will include periodic mowing and spot treatments with herbicides. Seed shrub-forb mix if grass establishment and weed suppression are successful.

2. Maintain and monitor Group 2 fields on Chelan Butte totaling 204 acres. Seeded in November 2012, it will be necessary to control annual weeds to reduce competition with native grasses. Activities will include periodic mowing and spot treatments with herbicides. Seed shrub-forb mix if grass establishment and weed suppression are successful.
3. Maintain and monitor Chelan Butte Group 3 (W, X, Y, Z) fields totaling 40 acres. Seeded in November 2013, it may be necessary to control annual weeds to reduce competition with native grasses. Activities may include aerial application of herbicides. Hand plant sagebrush and bitterbrush seedlings if grass establishment and weed suppression are successful.
4. Maintain and monitor Chelan Butte Group 3 fields (B, G, J, O) totaling 195 acres. Seeded in November 2014, it will be necessary to control annual weeds to reduce competition with native grasses. Activities will include periodic mowing and spot treatments with herbicides. Seed shrub-forb mix in fall if grass establishment and weed suppression are successful.
5. Continue fallow operations on Chelan Butte Group 4 fields N and L (200 acres) with special attention to control of morning glory infestations. Activities will include herbicide treatments, disking and cultivation. Seed native grasses in fall of 2015.
6. Continue fallow operations on Chelan Butte Group 4 fields M, U, and V (83 acres). Activities will include herbicide treatments, disking and cultivation. Seed native grasses in fall of 2016.
7. Initiate fallow operations on all fields in Group 5 (173 acres). Activities will include mowing residual vegetation in the fall. Plan for seeding with native grasses in fall of 2016 or 2017 depending on weeds species present and success in weed suppression.
8. Install two guzzlers on the Chelan Butte Unit.

#### **Swakane Unit**

9. Maintain and monitor Group 2 fields in Swakane Canyon totaling 85 acres. Seeded in November 2012, it may be necessary to control annual weeds to reduce competition with forbs and shrubs seeded in 2013. Activities may include periodic mowing and spot treatments with herbicides.
10. Maintain and monitor two acres of riparian shrub plantings completed in 2013 in Swakane Canyon.
11. Complete two acres of riparian plantings with drip irrigation in Swakane Canyon.
12. Replace two A-frame style upland bird feeders on the Swakane Unit.
13. Implement forest thinning project on Swakane Unit.

#### **White River Unit**

14. Coordinate with Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group regarding instream salmonid habitat enhancement projects and potential forest health projects.

#### **All Units**

15. Coordinate with Wenatchee Sportsmen's Association for the maintenance of 32 winter wildlife feeders, 35+ guzzlers and springs, and 25+ nest boxes throughout the wildlife area.
16. Inspect and maintain about 90 miles of road and trail to include routine inspection, culvert maintenance, weed control and repairs to road surface as necessary.
17. Replace 50 to 75 signs, as needed based on routine inspections.

18. Maintain infrastructure: Swakane irrigation system (including pond and outlet), Wells Wildlife Area shop and Office, and Swakane residence. Maintain three informational kiosks. Service, repair and maintain equipment and vehicles (estimated 5 pieces).
19. Control weedy species mechanically, chemically and biologically. Extent of weed control will be based on funding but will at least include some roadside spraying, yellowstar thistle spraying in the Knowles area. Quickly respond to newly discovered weed outbreaks. Work closely with Chelan County Weed Board to prevent and control weed infestations.
20. Inspect up to 20 miles of fence as needed. Maintain, repair, or remove fence as needed.

**Wildlife Area Advisory Committee Input:**

Chelan Wildlife Areas Advisory Committee Members:

Bill Stegeman	Wenatchee Sportsmen’s Association
Sam Lain	Lake Chelan Sportsmen Association
Charlie Hickenbottom	Outdoor Enthusiast
Butch Allen	Swakane Canyon Resident
Dan Smith	Audubon Society
Jesse McCarty	U.S. Forest Service
Frank Clark	Beebe Springs
Jason Lundgren	Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group

The Wildlife Area Advisory Committee meeting was held on May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014. This is a summary of comments received:

- Road management and maintenance on Roundy area: the road is nearly impassable in places. Gates to close some roads are needed.
- Use WSA volunteers to maintain/replace signs while they are out on other volunteer projects.
- Consider food plots on Chelan Butte to improve dove and upland game bird hunting opportunity.
- Water developments and shrub plantings are needed on north slopes and mesic areas (e.g., elderberry plantings) on Chelan Butte and possibly Knowles area.
- Incorporate and use the White River Flood Plain Restoration Report for managing and enhancing the White River Unit.
- Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance has a local chapter that could provide assistance building and maintaining trails for hikers and mountain bikes.
- Develop more trail opportunities (e.g., Ribbon Cliff Route on WenatcheeOutdoors.org).
- Need gates in deer fence in Ribbon Cliff to allow improved hiking access.
- Explore opportunities for trails in Entiat area (Columbia Breaks Fire Interpretive Center) and Swakane Canyon.
- Consider developing a dedicated shooting range in Swakane Canyon.
- Include a map of the Chelan Butte restoration project (see page 10)

**Contact:**  
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**Want to see the full plan?**  
[http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife\\_areas/management\\_plans/](http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/)

