

Bridge Creek Wildlife Area Draft Management Plan Public Comments

Issue or Comment	Count	Department Response
<p>Attendee asked a question regarding the review time frames for the 10-year plan. Attendee also supports the annual review of range conditions for grazing/elk forage conditioning and discussion of other management activities.</p>	<p align="center">1</p>	<p>WA manager answered the question.</p>
<p>Attendee supports grazing and fencing program as compatible with wildlife use. Commented that grazing prevents the grasslands from becoming too overgrown/decadent like "old" CRP fields that have lost a lot of their wildlife value.</p>	<p align="center">1</p>	
<p>Has wildlife/outdoor viewing increased during the past few years and what changes does this mean to BCWA?</p>	<p align="center">1</p>	<p>WA manager answered the question and also briefly talked about potential future options for Wildlife Area access/use permit that could generate funds from non-traditional sources.</p>
<p>Landowner believes that hunter behavior/ethics has improved through the last number of years. Commented that hunters are more respectful of private land and well rounded with knowledge of habitat and wildlife relationships. In the past, the landowner felt that hunters went where ever they wanted, treated all land as open access, and were more interested in harvesting than the outdoor experience.</p>	<p align="center">1</p>	
<p>Respondent (livestock co.) commented that the department's management of Bridge Creek WA through the years has been very good. The livestock company will partner with the department and manage and move livestock to best enhance winter range for elk.</p>	<p align="center">1</p>	

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<p>Respondent also confirmed that they will maintain and keep fences in good condition to maintain proper distribution of livestock and ensure adequate water for both livestock and wildlife as use salt to distribute livestock as well.</p>	<p>1</p>	
<p>Respondent stated that they will also manage livestock so as not to interfere with wildlife oriented recreational activities for the general public.</p>	<p>1</p>	

Lower Deschutes Wildlife Area Draft Management Plan Public Comments

Issue or Comment	Count	Department Response
An attendee appreciated the department having a public meeting in the The Dalles.	1	
Question whether elk were listed in the draft plan.	1	The Wildlife area (WA) manager stated that elk were described in the plan.
An attendee asked about the mountain goat in The Dalles.	1	The WA manager discussed the mountain goat's recent movements to Washington. The manager also discussed that the department is trying to get blood and hair samples from any goats to determine genetics.
Question regarding whether the 'no hunting' signs across Gordon Ridge are ODFW signs or not.	1	The WA manager explained that these signs are the private landowner's signs and that access signs along Gordon Road are BLM's.
Question whether the department will be doing any re-seeding of the burn area near Harris Ranch	2	WA manager answered that no seeding has taken place yet but soil was placed over the area. Seeding success will depend on soil moisture this spring. He noted that bunchgrasses were coming back well.
An attendee asked how horse-back riding works.	1	WA manager explained that a permit from OR State Parks was needed and that riding can occur only from Mar 1-June 30 and only on the access road to Harris Ranch.
An attendee (State Parks and Recreation staff) asked about the results of the water tank restoration meeting.	1	WA manager responded that the an historical preservation group is going to donate time and effort to restore the water tank which needs a new roof and to put bands in place. SHPO has agreed to a metal roof (not shingles) for fire protection. Work will hopefully occur this spring.
State parks staff asked how the spring box at Harris Ranch was doing.	1	WA manager stated that the water pipes are functional and bring water down to the property.
Same attendee asked how the spring near the grove of trees that were burnt was doing.	1	The WA manager hadn't checked this spring recently so he had no answer.
An attendee asked if hunters had to report hunting days again.	1	The WA manager explained that yes, hunting reporting was continuing and that the call in system has been improved.

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<p>State Parks staff stated that they were meeting with Sherman County to discuss fire prevention and that boaters have been doing better at decreasing fires and builder safer ones on the beaches.</p>	<p>1</p>	
<p>Landowner attending noted that he wasn't seeing any erosion or washes on the roads right now.</p>	<p>1</p>	
<p>An attendee noted that rabbitbrush and bunchgrasses were the common plants but since the railroad and horse grazing sagebrush has come in.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>The WA manager discussed the grasslands and sharp-tailed grouse that use to be present but human control of fires has changed plant components; sagebrush is now the dominant plant.</p>
<p>The BLM sent in two pages of comments listing typos, and additional text to augment the plan.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>The department revised the text per BLM's suggestions.</p>

Riverside Wildlife Area Draft Management Plan Public Comments

Issue or Comment	Count	Department Response
Attendee's concern and reason for coming to the meeting is mainly about chukar hunting.	1	
Attendee had concerns about cougar management along twelve miles of the Malheur River and effects on deer and elk since he hunted the Malheur River unit.	1	Ontario Wildlife District biologist responded that cougar management is currently addressed in the new cougar management plan. Cougar conflict on the Riverside WA or in the area will continue to be addressed. At this point there are no plans for a cougar target area in the immediate vicinity. Additional discussion focused on the difficulty of taking cougars on Riverside WA because of the terrain and the need to look at habitat improvement to increase deer and elk populations. Also pointed out that elk population is above management objectives and that deer numbers are holding their own.
Attendee likes to camp near the Riverside Tract for angling but is concerned about low water levels in the S. Fork Malheur.	1	Watershed District Manager explained that Warm Springs Reservoir stores water for irrigation. In abundant water years, the department plants fingerling trout which do well in successive good water years; however in low water years there is significant summertime mortality of trout in the Malheur River within Riverside Wildlife Area.
Attendee pointed out that he saw the most ATV use and abuse during chukar season and he's noticed chukar coveys decreasing over the last five years. He sees hunters hitting every ridge out there.	1	Watershed District Manager explained that technically there is no ATV use allowed on Riverside WA but BLM has no limit to ATVs. Due to difficult terrain and high cost of maintenance, there are no fences delineating between BLM and RWA properties throughout most of the Wildlife Area. District Wildlife biologist explained that moisture is the limiting factor for chukar success more than impacts of hunting.
Attendee asked what the chukar numbers have been doing over the last 3 years.	1	District Wildlife Biologist noted that chukar numbers were down this year and are significantly down from the highs of 2005. Good spring production means good bird numbers but not many old birds carry over - just don't find many 3 year old birds.

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Attendee asked what grain crops are out there and does the department seed in spring and fall?	1	WA Manager answered that the department predominantly seeds cereal grains in the fall when moisture is best to benefit food plot seedings. In spring, access roads are difficult to travel and spring precipitation is inconsistent. Some of the farming is also done to alleviate big game damage.
Attendee pointed out that a lot of hunters like the remoteness of the area.	1	Although no camping is allowed on the wildlife area now, the department wants to investigate where campsites might be an option in the future.
Attendee suggested that a concrete vault outhouse would be needed.	1	Presently there is a concrete vault toilet at the BLM recreation site just outside the entrance to the Riverside Tract. In the future as funding allows, the Department will investigate feasibility of installing an outhouse in proximity to the headquarters complex at the Riverside Tract.
Attendee asked if there was any chance to open up camping at the homestead.	1	Such an option is a long way off due to the need for a seasonal employee or volunteer to be present to maintain such a facility and prevent vandalism.
Attendee asked about public access along the rail service corridor to the north of the department's Riverside Tract. He commented that vehicle access should be at the south and north ends of the Wildlife Area and that only walking should be allowed in between.	1	Wildlife Area (WA) manager answered that this area is all private land. The kiosk is located at the end of the RWA boundary. The private landowner does not want public access at the north end so this is not a possibility at this time. WA manager explained that Long Siding road provides access but no ATVs are allowed along the rail corridor.
Attendee asked if pheasants were planted.	1	WA manager responded that yes, the department traps them at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in areas with no public hunting access and releases them at RWA.
Attendee is pleased with the Ontario A&H project and wants to see the Mule Deer Initiative succeed and see increased deer numbers.	1	

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<p>Attendee asked what the department is doing about riparian cover.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>WA manager responded that the quickest habitat response is seen in the riparian areas. The department is working to increase natural and native growth; to work with permittees to adjust grazing in areas which aren't fenced; to potentially limit grazing in fenced areas.</p>
<p>A correspondent wanted to keep Riverside WA as it now and had numerous suggestions: recruiting volunteers to assist F&W technician; wants to see an RV setup (water, sewer and power) for the volunteer but no stipend.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>The department has recently developed a volunteer host site adjacent to the headquarters complex at the Riverside Tract. Water, sewer, and electricity are currently available for hosts. Hosts are not paid.</p>
<p>Correspondent also suggested choosing able-bodied volunteers to install and move irrigation sprinkler pipes at regular intervals, able to drive tractor and ATV and work with other mechanical equipment; and conduct hunters and angler surveys</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>The Department is actively seeking volunteers to assist with maintenance and farming activities at the Riverside Tract.</p>
<p>Correspondent suggested that such volunteers not be allowed to stay longer than 3 months to avoid entrenchment and give other volunteers a chance.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>The department intends to maintain flexibility on duration of volunteers on the Wildlife Area.</p>
<p>Correspondent suggested that volunteers would serve as visible presence to prevent illegal behavior; volunteer can check and repair fencing while out monitoring.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>The department concurs with the comment.</p>
<p>Correspondent suggested that the department continue to obtain rancher cooperation to minimize the number of cattle on the RWA in early spring and late fall.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>The department collaborates with BLM, ranchers and permittees on an annual basis to develop grazing schedules, rotations and AUMs based on existing forage conditions and habitat restoration activities.</p>
<p>Correspondent thanked the department for making it possible for him to comment on the draft plan. He is interested in the plan since he fishes the Malheur River tract and enjoys this stretch of the river and appreciates the public access. He is aware of the improvement in management of the area in the last 20 years as a former BLM employee.</p>	<p>1</p>	

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<p>Correspondent appreciates the fencing projects being undertaken to improve riparian and aquatic systems along the river.</p>	1	
<p>Correspondent's primary comment relates to the need for informational signing in the vicinity to interpret management efforts, inform the public that this is public access land and that certain uses are allowed or not allowed. He suggests a small kiosk or easly to maintain and update information board while acknowledging vandalism. Also suggests some detail in the ODFW Fishing synopsis might be considered.</p>	1	<p>The department has recently installed informational kiosks at four locations at the Riverside Tract. We intend to install additional kiosks at key locations at the Malheur River Tract in the future as funding allows.</p>
<p>Correspondent is also interested in finding a place to camp overnight: tent space, parking space and posted fire closure information. He was unaware that there was no camping allowed on the wildlife area as he was planning to camp at the end of Shurtz Field access road in 2009.</p>	1	<p>Although no camping is allowed on the wildlife area now, the department wants to investigate where campsites might be an option in the future.</p>
<p>Correspondent also pointed out that the description of the Upton Mountain Access road as 'good' was optimistic as he had trouble in a 4WD a few years ago.</p>	1	
<p>Correspondent commended the department on the plan's stated goals, objectives and strategies and looks forward to following the progress in this effort.</p>	1	
<p>Correspondent wanted the department to keep cows out.</p>	1	<p>WA manager emailed the author to seek his phone number so that he could explain to him how livestock are used on the area.</p>