

Wenatchee Sportsmen's Association's Activities and Achievements

WSA Involvement with Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat:

Protection of Wildlife:

WSA lead a multiyear effort to erect a fence along highway 97A between Wenatchee and Entiat to protect deer and bighorn sheep. It was a concerted effort involving WSA, WDFW, WSDOT, land owners and the Washington State Legislature to get easements and funding. The fence was erected in 2010. WSA contributed hundreds of manhours and \$25,000 toward the effort and has since contributed a similar amount towards repairing damage to the fence from rock slides. Before the fence was erected, forty-five deer and four sheep were killed along the highway in an average year – in high snowfall years the kill was three to four times that. Since then, the kill has been one or two animals per year at the ends of the fence.

Participation in Wildlife Studies:

WSA monetarily supported and WSA volunteers participated with WDFW in numerous elk, deer, bighorn sheep and Canada goose captures, collaring and camera studies to better understand migration routes and use of habitat.

Over the years, WSA volunteers have done turkey and game bird counts to help establish population levels.

In 2019, WSA partnered with Pheasants Forever and WDFW to raise and release pheasants on the Swakane wildlife area in an attempt to establish a resident population there - it was not successful.

Acquisition and Protection of Wildlife Habitat:

WSA has been a member of the Stemilt Partnership since 2007. The partnership's goal is to acquire and protect wildlife habitat, recreation lands and water sources in the Stemilt-Squilchuck Basin. WSA was also a partner in the Naneum Ridge to Columbia River Recreation Planning Committee. Hundreds of manhours and nearly \$100,000 has been spent by WSA on studies of wildlife movements, legal fees and contributions toward acquiring and protecting wildlife habitat in the Stemilt-Squilchuck Basin to prevent those lands from being developed and inaccessible to wildlife and the public. The Partnership's effort along with a \$25,000 contribution by WSA, contributions from others, support from Linda Evans-Parlette and residual funding from the Washington State Legislature resulted in the Longview Fiber lands being purchased - about 2700 acres of land benefiting wildlife and recreation. There is still an ongoing issue in the Basin with the proposed village at Mission Ridge and its impact on wildlife and the environment.

WSA was instrumental in working with the owners of the Wallace and Burt ranches and the Chelan Douglas Land Trust (CDLT) to place conservation easements on those ranches that are now combined and known as the Horse Lake Reserve. The effort prevented the ranches from being developed into homesites and preserved them as wildlife habitat with a winter closure for migrating mule deer. WSA supplied a \$10,000 down payment on the properties and Harriet Bullett, through the Icicle Fund, supplied the rest of the funds to acquire the ranches. 1384 acres are saved into perpetuity as wildlife habitat and summer recreation lands.

Wildlife Habitat Enhancement:

WSA volunteers made and attached vinyl clips to WDFW boundary fences at Chester Butte to prevent sage grouse from hitting the fences in low light conditions.

WSA volunteers spent hundreds of manhours removing barbed wire fences from WDFW and CDLT lands.

WSA volunteers have spent hundreds of manhours building and maintaining forty-five bird feeders and over one hundred water sources for wildlife on the Quilomene, Colockum and Chelan wildlife areas. Volunteers check the water sources and the bird feeders every year in the spring to ensure that they are functioning. They fill the bird feeders with grain each fall to help the birds survive heavy snowfalls.

WSA volunteers have spent hundreds of manhours rebuilding the bird feeders, repairing the water sources and planting native vegetation in the Colockum, Swakane, Oklahoma Gulch and Chelan Butte areas following wildfires that occurred on those lands.

WSA Involvement in Recreation and Trash Cleanup:

WSA donated \$20,000 towards the WDFW shooting range in Swakane Canyon. With the advent of the shooting range, the many places where people have target shot along the road and across the canyon were eliminated by a ban on that activity there. This made it safer for people to recreate on the WDFW Swakane property.

WSA donated \$10,000 towards the acquisition of 0.84 miles of Wenatchee River waterfront where the Peshastin Mill Site used to be. The waterfront is used by many recreationists – rafters, swimmers, picknickers and fisherman. Eventually a hiking/biking path will be developed on it and it will be part of the Wenatchee River Trail to Leavenworth.

WSA donated \$500 to WDFW for developing a fishing access to Dry Lake near Manson, WA.

WSA was instrumental in developing the handicapped fishing pier at Beehive Lake.

WSA volunteers for many years released pheasants in the fall for WDFW at the Colockum, Swakane and Chelan Butte release sites.

There are residual benefits for recreation from the WSA efforts of protecting wildlife habitat at Horse Lake Reserve and in the Stemilt-Squilchuck Basin.

For years, the WSA has had a trash cleanup day around the first of June. WSA volunteers have picked up trash in the Stemilt-Squilchuck Basin, Swakane Canyon, and on Burch Mountain and Blue Grade.

WSA volunteers cleaned up Horse Lake Reserve of agricultural debris and trash before it was sold.

WSA involvement in Youth Activities:

For years, WSA volunteers assisted youths in catching trout at the Leavenworth and Entiat Fish Hatcheries – usually on a Saturday in early June. For the Leavenworth Hatchery event, five hundred poles and reels were usually acquired from manufacturers, assembled and handed out at the event by WSA. The Leavenworth event has not been held recently due to repairs needed to their fish tanks. The Entiat event was stopped due to their small pond, crowding and unruly parents – it was changed to having small groups of youths from local schools participate.

Every year WSA volunteers assist youths fishing at Rock Island's Kids Fishing Derby in late April. Loaner rods and reels and bait are supplied by WSA to the youths along with assistance as needed.

WSA sponsors youths to attend the Orcas Island Conservation Camp. It is a weeklong experience during the summer where youth are introduced to outdoor activities. The attendance fee is paid by WSA.

North Central Washington Youth Hunting and Fishing Day is an event put on by WSA in mid-September for youths wherein they are introduced to archery, rifle and trap shooting and outdoor activities. Other organizations participate to enlighten youths about their activities. As many as three hundred youths have attended in the past.

WSA has monetarily supported and WSA volunteers have participated over the years in the following youth activities: Archery in the Schools, Cascadia Conservation Kids in the Creek program, conservation classes in Wenatchee and Leavenworth high schools, field work in Swakane Canyon and the Salmon Festival at Leavenworth.

A WSA member has taken first-time youths turkey hunting – so far, five for five.

WSA donated \$10,000 to WDFW towards the development of the Beebe Springs Youth Fishing Pond and Recreation Area.

WSA Contributions to WDFW:

Note: This is only a partial list of WSA contributions given to WDFW over the years - some are noted elsewhere.

WSA funded and volunteers renovated the WDFW enforcement cabin on the Arthur Coffin Game Reserve.

WSA donated \$5000 to assist with repairs to the fence surrounding the Arthur Coffin Game Reserve. WSA volunteers helped with those repairs and subsequent ones. The fence keeps cattle from the surrounding leases out of the Reserve.

WSA donated \$7500 for a Karelian Bear dog and veterinarian bills.

WSA purchased a \$3000 tranquilizer gun for use by WDFW biologists in the Wenatchee office.

WSA purchased a \$2100 gas powered fence post pounder for WDFW use in the Colockum Wildlife Area.

WSA Fundraising and Support of Charities:

There are three methods by which WSA raises funds for achieving their goals – an annual banquet, memberships and monetary donations.

The annual banquet is held near the end of February. It consists of numerous raffles, a live and silent auction and a dinner. WSA volunteers solicit donations from merchants, sort the donations into the appropriate raffle or auction, and man the raffles and auctions during the banquet. With the exception of the 2023 banquet, the dinner had been based on a selection of wild game meat and fish donated by members and by WDFW enforcement from illegal kills that they confiscated. Unfortunately, the availability of game meat from members has diminished and WDFW has stopped their contribution making a “game feed” unfeasible.

WSA volunteers for years have supported local charities and homeless shelters in the Wenatchee area that serve meals by processing wild game meat for them. The meat came from animals that WDFW enforcement confiscated from illegal kills. Typically, this effort produced about 1000 pounds of meat and required about 100 manhours per year to process the meat.

Recognition of WSA:

WSA was recognized by WDFW on two separate occasions for its “Organization of the Year” award - 2005 and 2019. In past years, numerous WSA members have received the “Sportsman of the Year” award from WDFW for their involvement with WDFW and the conservation of wildlife.