

6/16/11 Extended Team notes

- Rick Ward, IDFG
- Philip Milburn, ODFW
- Dwayne Casey, BOC
- Tim Page, BOC
- Natalie Sexton, USGS
- Mike Marxen, FWS
- Susan Law, FHA
- Scott Reinecker, IDFG
- Jake Powell, IDFG
- Mike Gregg, FWS
- Greg Humphries, FHA
- Steve Nadeau, IDFG
- Vern Case, Riverside Irrigation District
- Sharon Selvaggio, FWS
- Chris Reighn, FWS
- Wendy Davis, City of Nampa
- Ben Keyes, Canyon County Sheriff - Marine Patrol
- Dave Dahms, IDPR
- Jeff Dillon, IDFG
- Krystal Clair, BR
- Scott McCarthy, FWS

Kendra: Summary of yesterday

Kendra: Alternatives Overview Powerpoint

- David Dahms: Difference between Alt 3 and 4. Wake starting May 15 in alt 4. Please elaborate. A: Give wildlife-dependent users increased opportunities. In alt 3, non-wake have morning time. In alt 4, because don't have that, decided maybe we should open the lake a bit earlier so have more opportunity when don't have to compete with wake.
- Jeff Dillon: Largely habitat goals/objectives. Is there another layer targeted at particular species? Rationales discuss species that will benefit from the habitat criteria.
- Mike Marxen: Thought re hunting...particularly on north side. 15-year life of CCP. Additional development as it expands. Might be helpful to have model/map...how we think growth will occur in the next 15 years. Will affect a lot of the PU activities, but especially hunting.
- Vern Case: Since irrigation rights in Lake Lowell comes first, we always have to think about the fact that anything that is done in the reservoir system below full capacity is affecting our irrigation rights. If you put something in the reservoir that takes up space and it impacts our water right. When it was built there was nothing on the banks except for sage brush.

- Tim Page: We need more information about the amount of water needed for irrigation and how much the BOC thinks they will need in the future .

Susan: Presentation on strategies tables

Participants break into groups to discuss issues and strategies.

Group Reports on Issues/Strategies (see Extended Team Table Summaries for more information)

Issues and Strategies Group 1: Three objectives/strategies

Provide safe upland hunting opps;

- separate by time, not space; upland game noon until dusk. Waterfowl in morning and evening so less disturbance to morning hunting;
- No upland hunting at all? Limited quality
- Open upland hunting in another area
- Significant reduction in #acreage in 3 vs. 4. If do that, then will create more conflicts by concentrating hunters.
- Close North Side Recreation Area to hunters, and move trail between PL1 and 3 to north side and re-open that area to upland/waterfowl. Or move that trail into a closed area

Provide quality shrub-steppe habitat

- Find way to irrigate area north of field 5 to help restore that into better sage-steppe
- Plant non-native species as well...with “native” hamstringing selves. Desirable non-natives better than undesirable non-natives
- Green-stripping...is that to provide quality habitat or to provide fire-resistance. Opinion at table is that it’s for fire-resistance, so doesn’t address issue. Forage kochia for greenstripping, but not good for shrub-steppe
- How much disturbance has there been...should we restrict travel to trails.
- Why are hunters allowed off-trail and photographers not, when should be given equal consideration in big 6?

Provide quality wildlife-observation, photography, bank-fishing

- Boardwalk bad idea...counter-productive, won’t meet people’s expectations, too many people, will disturb habitat, will restrict area available for photography, safety issue if high off water, cost-prohibitive
- Put vista...elevated overlook/pier system. Better than boardwalk that goes all the way through habitat
- Blinds would increase quality of opportunity
- Gotts Point: Better to have more opportunities for more people, than to have more tranquil opportunities for some.
- Have designated fishing spots to reduce impacts

- Make Lower parking area currently closed...ADA parking area only. Provide combination to those with proof of ADA need; or LE to cite non-ADA.

Issues and Strategies Groups 2 and 5:

Purpose of riparian/management needs

- Move firebreaks to existing breaks (irrigation return ditches). Patch size...what is good patch size?
- Reduce fuel load next to fire break and have smaller firebreak. Maintain canopy but get rid of dead/down.
- Conduct surveys re what is needed in terms of patch size. What would species benefit from.
- Change wording...non-native vs. non-desirable/invasive. Maybe there are some non-natives that are desirable.
- Discussion of trail closures...instead don't close legal activity, because illegal will continue
- Need to discuss IPM
- Flooded periodically...no topographic relief, so resident wildlife is displaced to other places. So instead

Waterfowl hunting

- reducing area doesn't solve crowding problem, so don't do that.
- Boardwalk...seasonally closed so doesn't interfere with waterfowl hunting.
- Different ideas for regulating hunting/crowding. somewhat self-limiting with parking availability. But permit system/lottery last resort because difficult to manage
- Can separate upland/waterfowl with timing restriction...different times of day to reduce crowding
- skybusting...difficult to legislate ethics. Research out there re how worked elsewhere. Look into that!
- Shell limit may encourage people to leave injured waterfowl injured

Conflict hunting non-consumptive uses vs. non-wildlife uses (jogging)

- Educate other users
- Not support for providing for non-wildlife if it's going to detract from wildlife-oriented

Youth hunt

- Support. Opening closed area on upper end of lake would accommodate existing youth hunters sufficiently to allow lake to remain open through 9/30

Nesting on SRI unit

- Is it a problem? Flyway management objectives. Population objectives
- Forage availability potentially available

- no issue with timing of closures
- Recommend look at regulated trapping that could be allowed. Could have positive impact on nest predators

Aerial application of herbicides

- all tools for weed control should be on table
- Aerial will be difficult, but where appropriate, leave it in toolbox as option. Not as selective as on-the-ground application
- Goats as weed control...only after nesting season. Look at cost/benefit. How selective are they? Is that the best approach?

Additional strategy: No strategy to address herons/cottonwood regeneration

Hunting on islands

- no hunting changes on island good. Leave door open for turnkey hunting. Can cause ag depredation
- Does CFR currently allow...upland game bird
- hunter numbers and visit days on SRI challenging to get a handle on that. Much of waterfowl hunting is occurring below high water mark. Maybe not designate particular target numbers?
- MOUs in place with other enforcement agencies?

Issues and Strategies Group 3:

Additional strategies...compromise that allows for expanded lake zone, but still addresses waterbird feeding/nesting, mudflats, emergents, fishing experience

- No wake perimeter around the lake. If impose 200-yard boundary, that boundary will move. Hard to enforce/maintain. I
- Time-based restrictions. No wake before 10 AM. 10-9 can have wake. More time-dependent than boundary.
- Activity-based time restrictions. Allow fishing in morning. Not no wake, but no tow-behind before 10 AM. To accommodate fishing opportunities as well as wildlife needs
- No wake perimeter and activity-based restrictions.

Emergent beds

- Core areas identified (known existing/potential nesting areas). How allow fishing access but still protect those core areas. Allow fringe around edges in other emergent beds so can fish around edges.
- Seasonal closures
- Assess activity impacts...does shore fishing/tube fishing/etc. have impact, greatest impact.
- Better identify the core areas.

Only no wake in east pool would address issues of nesting. But...doesn't eliminate disturbance in west pool. Cost, enforcement issues, opportunities lost. Potentially habitat/wildlife benefits, but fishing costs. Boat waves vs. weather-based waves. What has most impact

Decibel level reduction

- Motors vs. radios
- Sheriff can monitor the loudest noise. But most boat motors fall within decibel range. 88-90 for moving vehicle. Couldn't figure out value of decibel limit.

Accessibility for fishing

Gotts Point

- Closed currently to vehicles—pros/cons of that. Does provide good ADA-accessible fishing opportunity for dock. But challenges with enforcement issues
- Enforcement issues. County Sheriff can only enforce state law/Idaho code. Not CFRs. So how do we enforce rules since there is no designated Refuge law enforcement.
- Need to maintain boating opportunities...find as good of a balance as possible between blue and pink.
- Do we need an open water habitat sanctuary and where would the boundary be? What are pros/cons of closing off sections. Current no-wake zone provides some of best bass fishing, so it is hard to close that. No good answer.
- East pool should be at least partially a wake area—high priority. That will carry a lot of weight with users in the area. Boat ramp at LDRA restricts access later in season.

Issues and Strategies Group 6:

How fund new facilities/programs/LE—fee program?

- public reaction will be negative. Restricting access at same time as increasing fees
- Make sure that it will really benefit. It's expensive to implement a fee program. Is it worth it?
- Application of fee program...need more detailed study about how to implement at multiple access points. Not all same. Some seasonal hunting. Apply fee at all? Should look at details more to make sure know what getting into. Lead to restructuring?
- Keep fee system simple and show clear and direct benefits
- Entrance fee preferred over boat launch fee or both. Universal fee simplest and fairest.

Other funding strategies to create some revenue

- look at current partnerships and make sure that we're accounting for how much those partners are already contributing
- Potential for other partners...including BOC. They are spending money doing things that can benefit refuge/users. Dredging narrows channel, clear vegetation if it benefits both parties
- water conservation education

- sediment-reducing strategies/activities
- Friends group...expand their presence at contact station at Lower Dam...sales outlet at highest-used point on refuge
- Concession possibilities (boat rental, etc.)

Wake zones

- Reality of changing water levels...is what we are recommending integrated with buildup/drawdown of water every year. Don't put things on map that might be misleading to public. e.g., west pool...not really open through 9/30.
- Further analysis of yearly average drawdown. Integrate drawdown with wake zone
- Look further at wake zone in both pools

Interpretation—how increase understanding

- Looked at balance between interp and EE. Currently more EE than interp. Plan recommends shift to more interp because of variety of users. Interpretive program has ability/flexibility to reach broader audiences.
- EE: structured, following curriculum vs. interp: broader sweep of materials, to deliver messages that are interesting, compelling, get people to understand what refuge/resources/reservoir is all about.
- How pass appropriate use test for tow-behind activities. How could boating public contribute to and better understand/appreciate the refuge?
 - Take test online, reduce fee
 - Other delivery methods that can also contribute to our mission. Many choices, fun, interpretive. To get boating pass, do 3 of the following. Check back in at the visitor center to get your boating safety thing (whistle with blue goose on it, boat bumper with refuge name, etc.) Teach outdoor skills
 - service project on refuge
 - 30 minute boating skills program. Boating skills are a component of our big 6. If we're teaching boating skills (respectful to wildlife, etc.) then pass red face test. Users are much more aware of impacts and better stewards of refuge
 - Virtual geocaching event...identify what you're seeing at these coordinates
 - Self-guided boat tour
 - smart-buoys
 - wildlife-list for boaters
- Promoting fishing through
 - tag fish...catch tagged fish and get reward. More kid-oriented than competitive bass fishing.
- Change people's perceptions about wake zones. Explain reason for regulations. Protect nesting habitat, so go slow. Try to change people's behavior/activity. Wake zone doesn't mean go slow but that it's time to look for wildlife. Not just a restriction, but also an opportunity to encourage

behaviors appropriate on NWRs. “I’m going a different speed now. There are new opportunities available.”

Redesign of LDRA increase public understanding of refuge

- importance of area as primary use site. Should be new face of the refuge. To do it right, would have to do engaging design process—involve community, all users, key partners, to make sure we can pull it out right. Right now very park-like. We would like to move it from that to more of a “Refuge park” Special place that visitors are more aware of purpose.
- Welcome/orient visitors to DFNWR
- Some first-person contact (staffed VCS)
- Nature play area. Less structured, more made out of natural materials.
- That should be new place for annual festival (BioBlitz). One of most powerful outreach tools. Takes a lot of partners to pull that off. Need to shift from refuge-led program to partner-led program. Would design LDRA to facilitate the festival. Gives purpose/reason for LDRA in addition to boat launching.
- Other strategies: continued off-site presentations to groups, outreach plan taking into consideration new tools like websites/social media, be sure to identify target audience with outreach

EE program

- Focus on-site
 - Facility improvements
 - Need to hire an EE specialist
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- Urban refuges as high priority, as well as EE/interp. So deer flat as important asset in future.