Columbia Basin Pygmy Rabbit Restoration Plan

2026 – 2036

Washington Department of FISH & WILDLIFE

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Executive Summary

This document provides a framework and expectations for restoration efforts for the state and federally endangered Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*) over the next ten years (2026-2036). The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) plan continuing recovery efforts within historical pygmy rabbit range in the Columbia Basin, focusing on three proposed restoration areas with suitable shrubsteppe habitat: **Lakeview** (western Lincoln County); **Black Rock Coulee** (central Grant County), and **Saddle Mountain** (southern Grant County). We will use controlled field breeding enclosures and release rabbits into suitable habitat, following procedures used at Sagebrush Flat and Beezley Hills. Establishing additional wild populations through restorations will mitigate threats from wildfire and contribute toward recovery criteria set forth in the Washington state pygmy rabbit recovery plan (WDFW 1995) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Columbia Basin Pygmy Rabbit Recovery Plan (USFWS 2012 and 2019).

In the near term (2026-2028, prior to any rabbit translocations), WDFW and USFWS will engage in partner coordination and outreach in the three proposed restoration areas. WDFW and USFWS will identify target restoration sites and work with those respective land managers on site specific planning, preparation, review, and permitting. Private landowners and producers in the three proposed restoration areas will have the opportunity to enroll in the Conservation Benefit Agreement (CBA).

Once private landowners, farmers, and livestock producers in the three proposed restoration areas have the opportunity or are in the process of enrollment in the CBA, WDFW and USFWS can then proceed with work on the ground at the target restoration sites, potentially by late 2028 or 2029. Restoration infrastructure would then be established (where necessary) on the target restoration sites. Once infrastructure is in place, pygmy rabbits can be translocated to the restoration site. Timing of release efforts will depend on staff capacity and availability. Based on prior recovery experience, pygmy rabbits will be released for several consecutive years in each area to establish populations.

We anticipate restorations will be underway by 2029 and will first focus on the Lakeview restoration area. As staffing capacity allows, we will then move to Black Rock Coulee and then Saddle Mountain. Recovery work may occur in multiple restoration areas concurrently and we anticipate all areas will have restorations started by 2036.

Background

Large-scale land use conversion and fragmentation of shrubsteppe habitats played a primary role in the long-term decline of the Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*). The remaining small and isolated sub-populations were unable to withstand ecological stressors, resulting in the loss of genetic diversity and ultimately leading to the species' extinction in the wild by 2001. Pygmy rabbits were listed as state endangered in Washington in 1995 and as a federally endangered Distinct Population Segment (DPS) in 2003 (USFWS 2003). The DPS covers Douglas, Grant, Adams, Lincoln, and Benton counties in the Columbia Basin (Figure 1).

Suitable habitat remains the primary limitation for this species in Washington (Hayes and Gallie 2024, USFWS 2026a). Pygmy rabbits require deep soils for their burrow systems and dense stands of sagebrush and native bunchgrasses for forage and cover (Hayes and Gallie 2024). Deep soil sites with dense sagebrush stands are often found in floodplains, drainages/coulee bottoms, mounded areas (mima mounds), and 20–40-year-old fields enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a federal program that temporarily retires cropland to improve soil, water, and wildlife habitat. Pygmy rabbits avoid shallow soils, rocky areas, grasslands, riparian/wetland habitats, agricultural fields, and developed areas.

There have been intensive recovery efforts in the past 25 years. The last remaining 16 wild Columbia Basin pygmy rabbits were placed into a captive breeding program and cross-bred with pygmy rabbits from Idaho (Great Basin pygmy rabbits) from 2002 to 2010 to increase their genetic diversity and population size. In 2011, recovery efforts transitioned to a semi-wild breeding program within large enclosures located in suitable habitat where the species was recently extant. From 2011-2013 and again in 2020, pygmy rabbits were translocated from the Great Basin (Idaho, Oregon, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming) and added to the breeding enclosures to further bolster the size and genetic diversity of the semi-wild breeding population (Becker et al. 2011, Gallie and Hayes 2020). The purpose of the breeding enclosures is to serve as a source of pygmy rabbits for restorations. The juvenile rabbits (kits) born within these enclosures are released into the wild on designated restoration sites within recovery areas (Becker et al. 2011, Gallie and Hayes 2020).

Since 2011, WDFW and USFWS have restored pygmy rabbits to the Sagebrush Flat, Beezley Hills, and Rimrock restoration areas (Figure 2). Another restoration was underway in the Burton Draw recovery area when the high severity Pearl Hill fire in 2020 burned all the shrubsteppe habitat (~230,000 acres) and killed all known pygmy rabbits within the fire perimeter. Each area required four to five consecutive years of releases for population establishment (when additional rabbit releases are no longer needed). Habitat restoration from fields enrolled in the CRP played a crucial role in the success of these recovery efforts. These deep soil sites and 20–40-year-old sagebrush stands are the preferred habitat type in the Columbia Basin, with an estimated 80-90% of the wild population occurring in CRP habitat (Crowell and Gallie 2025).

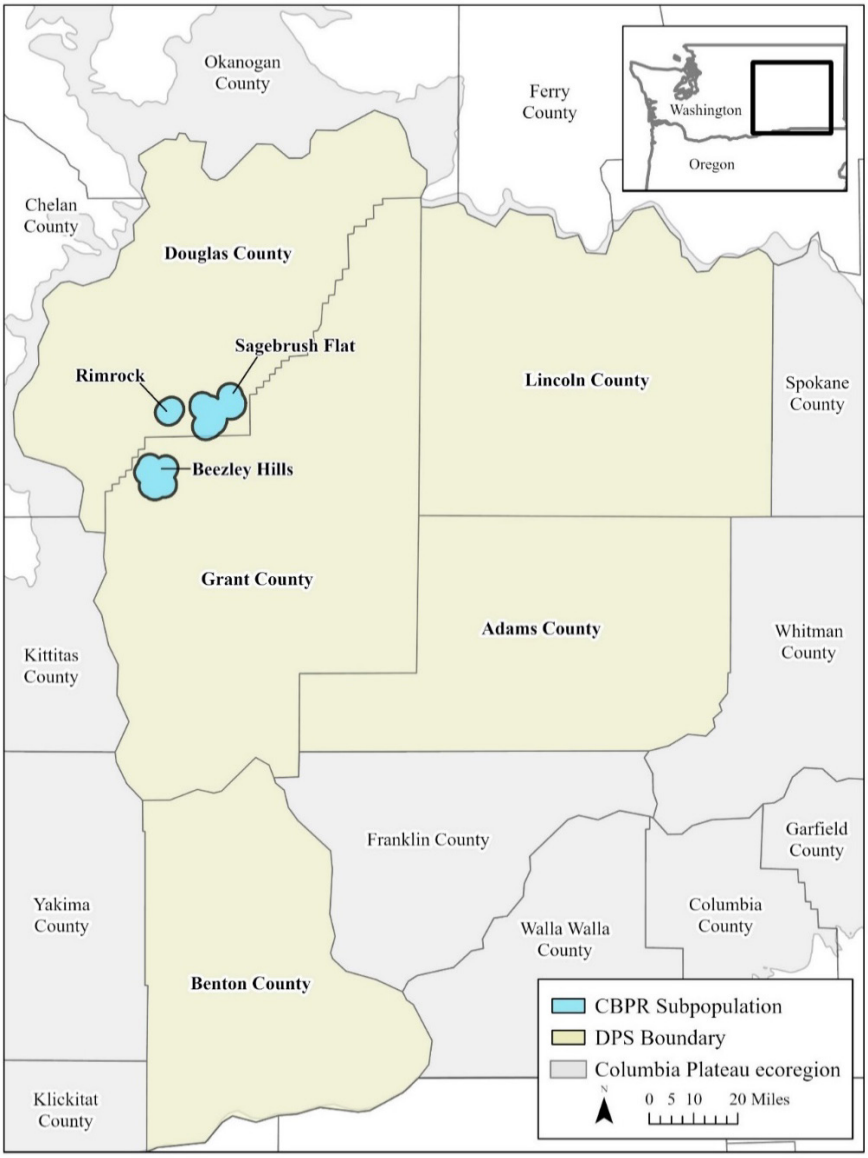

Figure 1. Map of Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit (CBPR) current Distinct Population Segment (DPS; 68 FR 10388; March 5, 2003) boundary in yellow with the current subpopulation distributions in blue (USFWS 2026b).

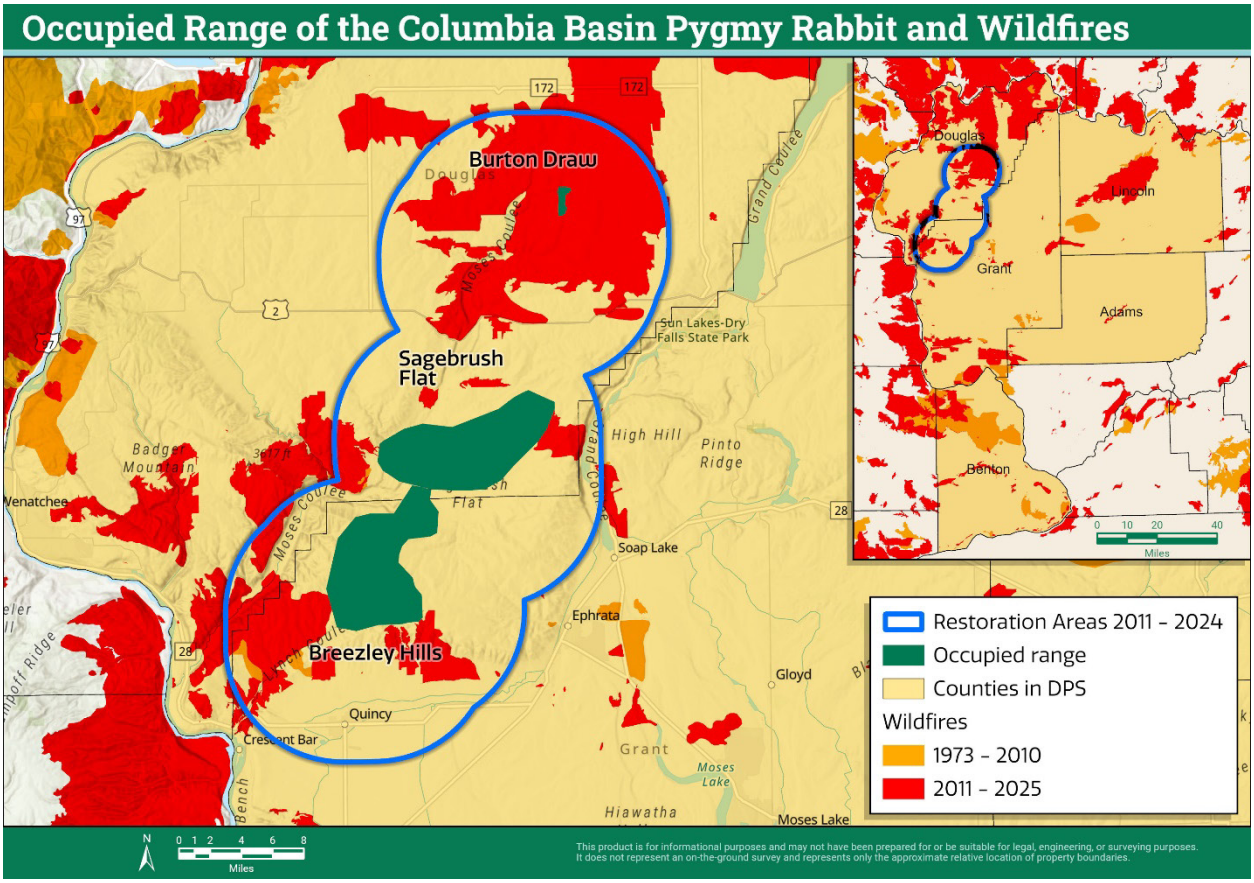

Figure 2. Occupied range of the Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit within the Beezley Hills, Sagebrush Flat, and Burton Draw restoration areas. The Burton Draw area no longer has any known occupied sites due to the Pearl Hill fire in 2020.

Although pygmy rabbits now occur across 92 square miles of southern Douglas and northern Grant Counties, they remain highly vulnerable to wildfire (Figure 2). In 2017 (Beezley Hills restoration area) and 2020 (Burton Draw restoration area), recovery efforts have been severely impacted from wildfires. These wildfires directly killed hundreds of pygmy rabbits and destroyed thousands of acres of sagebrush habitat. Once burned, it can take decades for sagebrush habitat to become suitable for pygmy rabbits again. Despite improvements in wildfire prevention and fighting response, the risk of catastrophic loss from wildfire remains the most significant threat to this species. Restoring pygmy rabbits into additional areas within its historical range and increasing the number of pygmy rabbit populations mitigates the threat of extinction due to wildfire.

The restoration plan outlines three new areas for pygmy rabbit restoration from 2026-2036 (Figure 3). Establishing additional populations will contribute toward recovery and downlisting criteria set forth in the state recovery plan (WDFW 1995) and federal recovery plan (USFWS 2012 and 2019) as well as implement objectives set forth in the federal recovery plan (listed below). Currently, there are only two populations within a distance easily covered by a large wildfire, so a greater distribution on the landscape will guard against catastrophic loss from wildland fire, disease, or other local threats.

Objectives for specific recovery actions set forth in the federal recovery plan (USFWS 2012):

- Action 1: Manage partially controlled field-breeding for the Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit.
- Action 2: Reestablish free-ranging Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit subpopulations within their historical distribution.
- Action 3: Survey for, monitor, and assess free-ranging Columbia Basin pygmy rabbits.
- Action 6: Pursue conservation agreements with landowners and managers of intervening properties within the population's historical distribution.

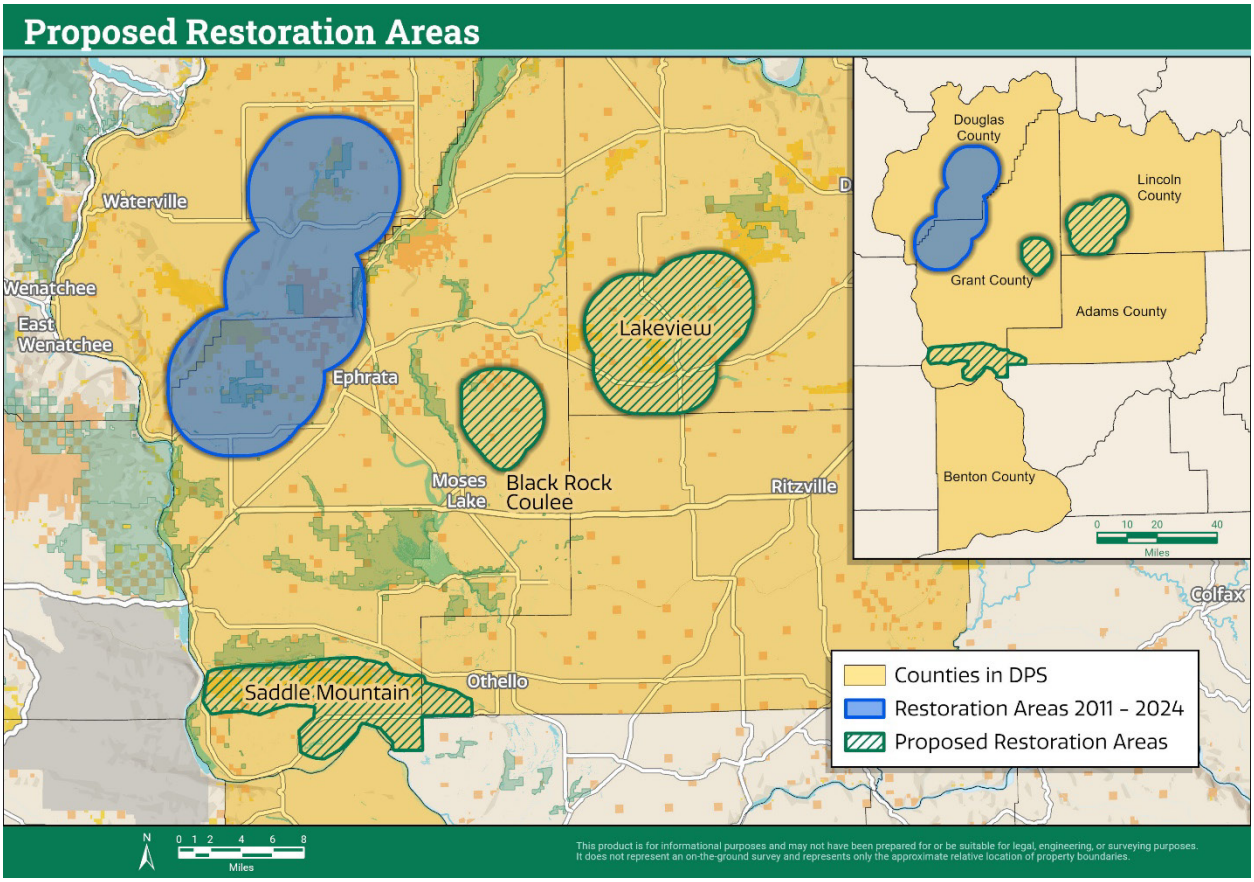

Figure 3. Three proposed restoration areas (green hatched) in relation to the areas previously restored (blue) and the historical range of the Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit (yellow shading).

Proposed Restoration Areas

We conducted a detailed assessment for numerous restoration areas within the DPS (Figure 3) and identified the best options for species recovery based on suitable habitat (Figure 4), land ownership, and road access (Gallie et al. 2024). We propose establishing three new restoration areas for pygmy rabbit populations with the following prioritization: 1) Lakeview, 2) Black Rock Coulee, and 3) Saddle Mountain. Each proposed restoration area is a restoration site or sites surrounded by a five-mile buffer.

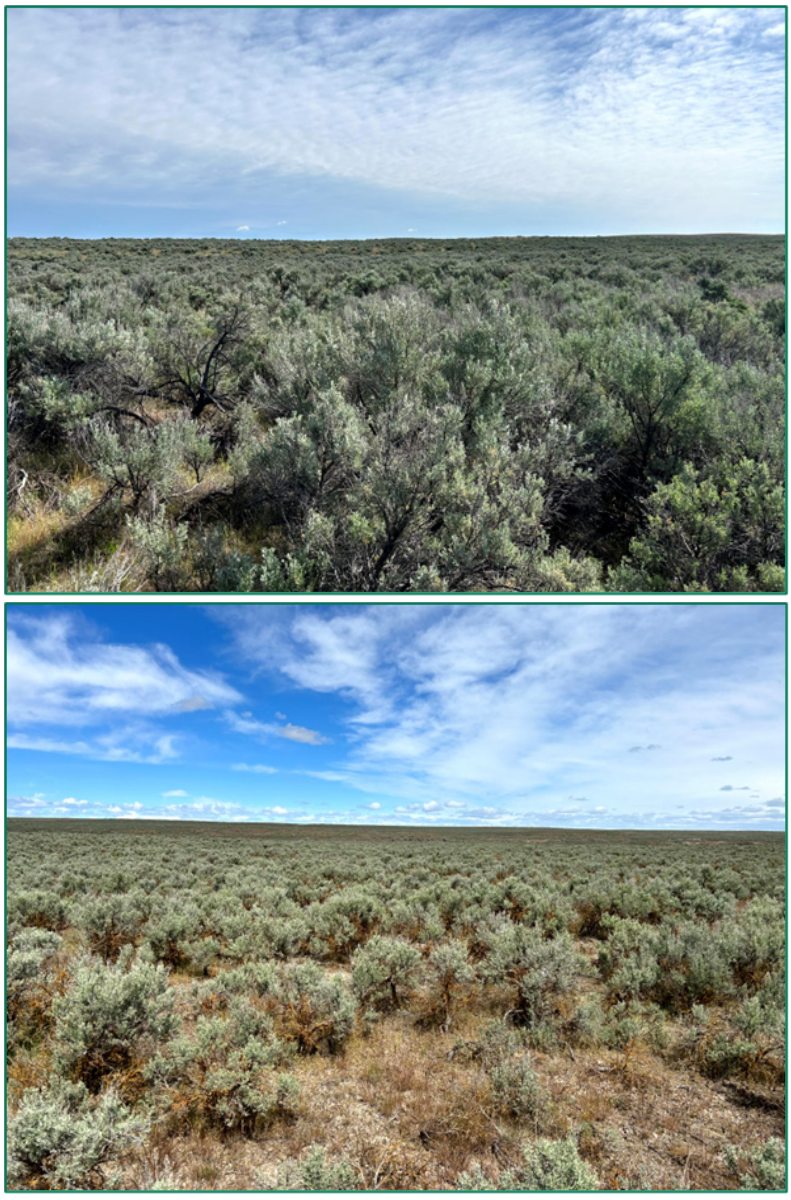

Figure 4. Examples of the dense sagebrush stands needed for pygmy rabbit habitat. Lakeview (top), Black Rock Coulee (bottom).

Lakeview Restoration Area

The Lakeview restoration area is the first priority area for pygmy rabbit recovery. Within the Lakeview restoration area, pygmy rabbits would be released on the 11,800-acre parcel managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM; Figure 5). A potential second site occurs on a private ranch located two miles to the northeast of the BLM parcel. The Lakeview restoration area includes smaller BLM parcels, some Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) parcels, and mostly private lands. Grazing occurs on the BLM and WDNR parcels, and agriculture (dryland wheat farming, CRP fields) on private lands.

The BLM parcel was identified as a suitable site because there are several retired CRP fields and dense sagebrush draws (gulches) that are ideal pygmy rabbit habitat (Figure 6). The private ranch site has similar high-quality pygmy rabbit habitat as the BLM parcel on coulee benches and bottomlands intermixed with scablands, rocky cliff areas, wetlands, and small lakes. The ranch site is adjacent to suitable habitat and CRP fields on private and WDNR owned lands. Pygmy rabbits released on the BLM parcel may disperse over time to other areas of dense sagebrush cover on other landownerships.

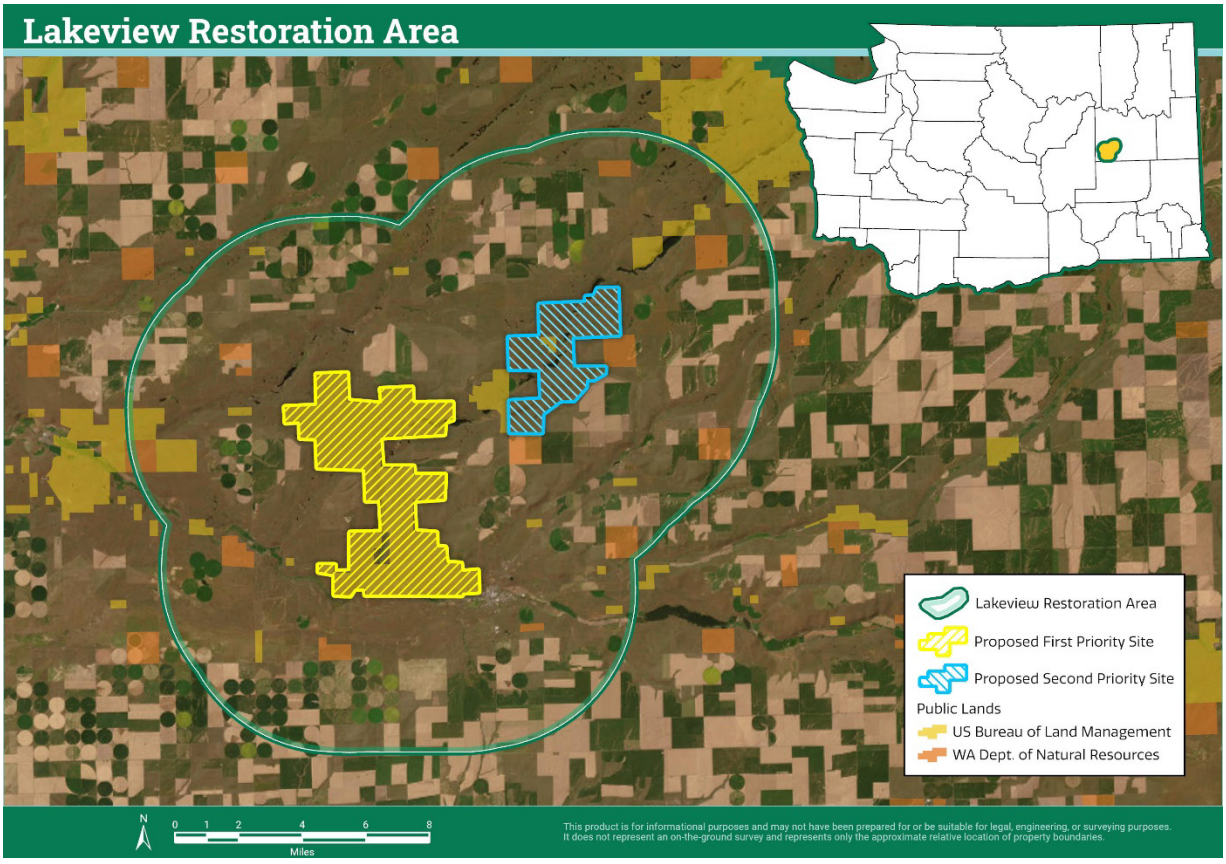

Figure 5. Proposed Lakeview restoration area and sites, western Lincoln County, Washington.

Black Rock Coulee Restoration Area

The Black Rock Coulee restoration area is the second priority area for pygmy rabbit recovery. Within the Black Rock Coulee restoration area, pygmy rabbits would be released on a 1,600-acre parcel managed by Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) (Figure 6). The Black Rock Coulee restoration area also includes smaller BOR parcels, several WDNR parcels, and mostly private lands. Most of the private lands in the northern portion of the restoration area are small ranchettes and rural dwellings; croplands and CRP fields are in the southern portion.

The site identified on BOR land has several large patches of dense sagebrush habitat (Figure 8) on the coulee bottom and benches. In addition to the BOR lands, additional suitable pygmy rabbit habitat within the restoration area occurs on WDNR land parcels and private lands, particularly mature CRP fields. Pygmy rabbits released on the BOR land parcel may disperse over time to other areas of dense sagebrush cover throughout the restoration area, including both WDNR and private lands. The East Low Canal is present on the west side of the recovery area and is a barrier to pygmy rabbit dispersal.

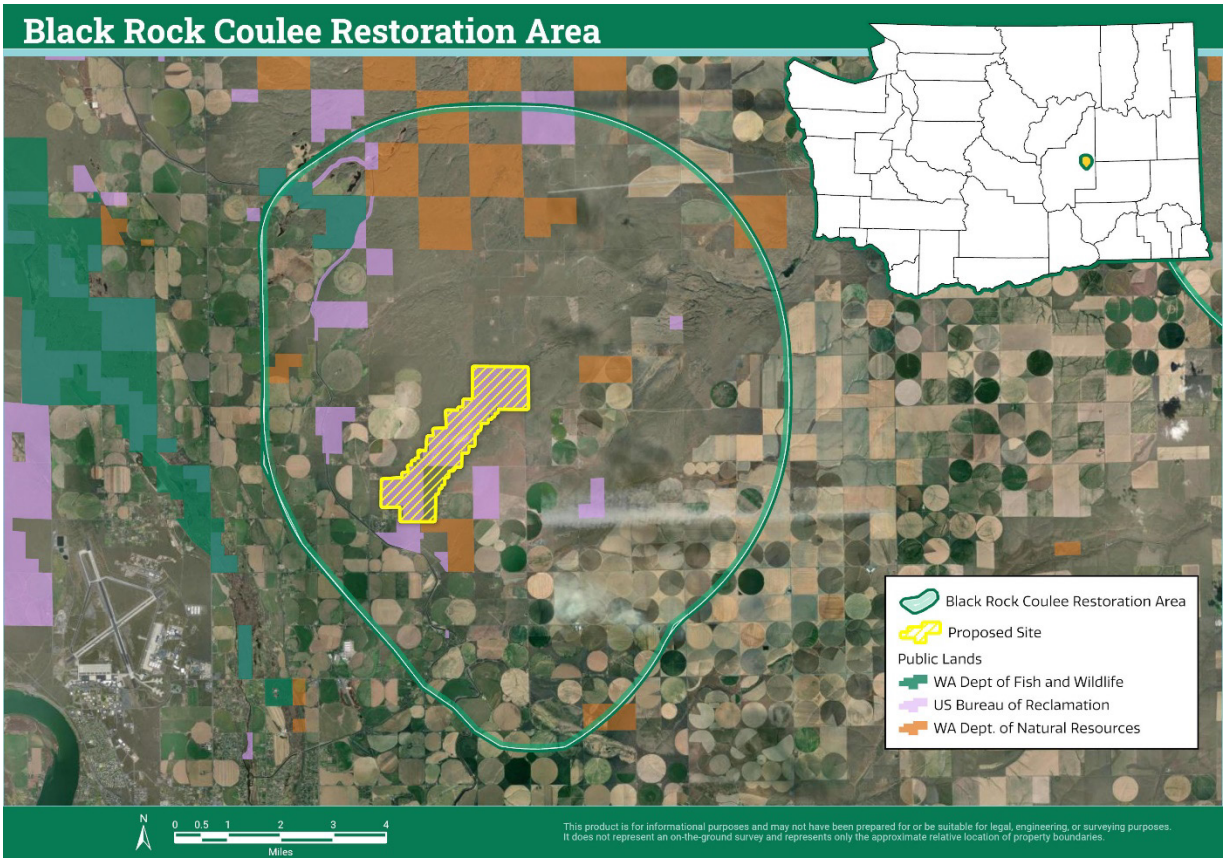

Figure 6. Proposed Black Rock Coulee restoration area and sites, central Grant County, Washington.

Saddle Mountain Restoration Area

The Saddle Mountain restoration area is the third priority area for pygmy rabbit recovery. This area includes lands managed by BLM, USFWS, BOR, WDNR, and private lands. Within the Saddle Mountain restoration area, pygmy rabbits would be released on a 1,200-acre parcel managed by BLM (Figure 7). Grazing occurs on BLM and private lands. This site is in a small plateau-type basin and benches on the ridge of Saddle Mountain (elevation range 1,900-2,400 ft) with dense stands of sagebrush on the north facing slope of the mountain. The BLM parcels are intermixed with a private ranch that has suitable habitat.

The second site (comprised of two polygons) where pygmy rabbits could be released occurs on 4,000 acres of suitable habitat managed by USFWS's Saddle Mountain National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) (Figure 7). The second site is at lower elevation (<1,000 ft) and does not have any agricultural land use or grazing. This site includes dense sagebrush and deep soils, but the current dense understory of cheatgrass reduces habitat quality and increases the fire risk; additional site assessment to evaluate the extent of cheatgrass establishment is warranted.

Pygmy rabbits released on the BLM or USFWS land parcels may disperse over time to other areas of dense sagebrush cover within the restoration area, primarily on state or federal lands, but may include some private lands. WDFW and WDNR manage lands at lower elevations (Smyrna Bench) on the north-facing slope of Saddle Mountain that may provide suitable habitat to dispersing pygmy rabbits; however, steep terrain may impede pygmy rabbit dispersal to the north and south of the plateau on the ridge of Saddle Mountain. The second site is bordered to the north by the Wahluke Branch Canal, which may impede dispersal to the south-facing slope of Saddle Mountain.

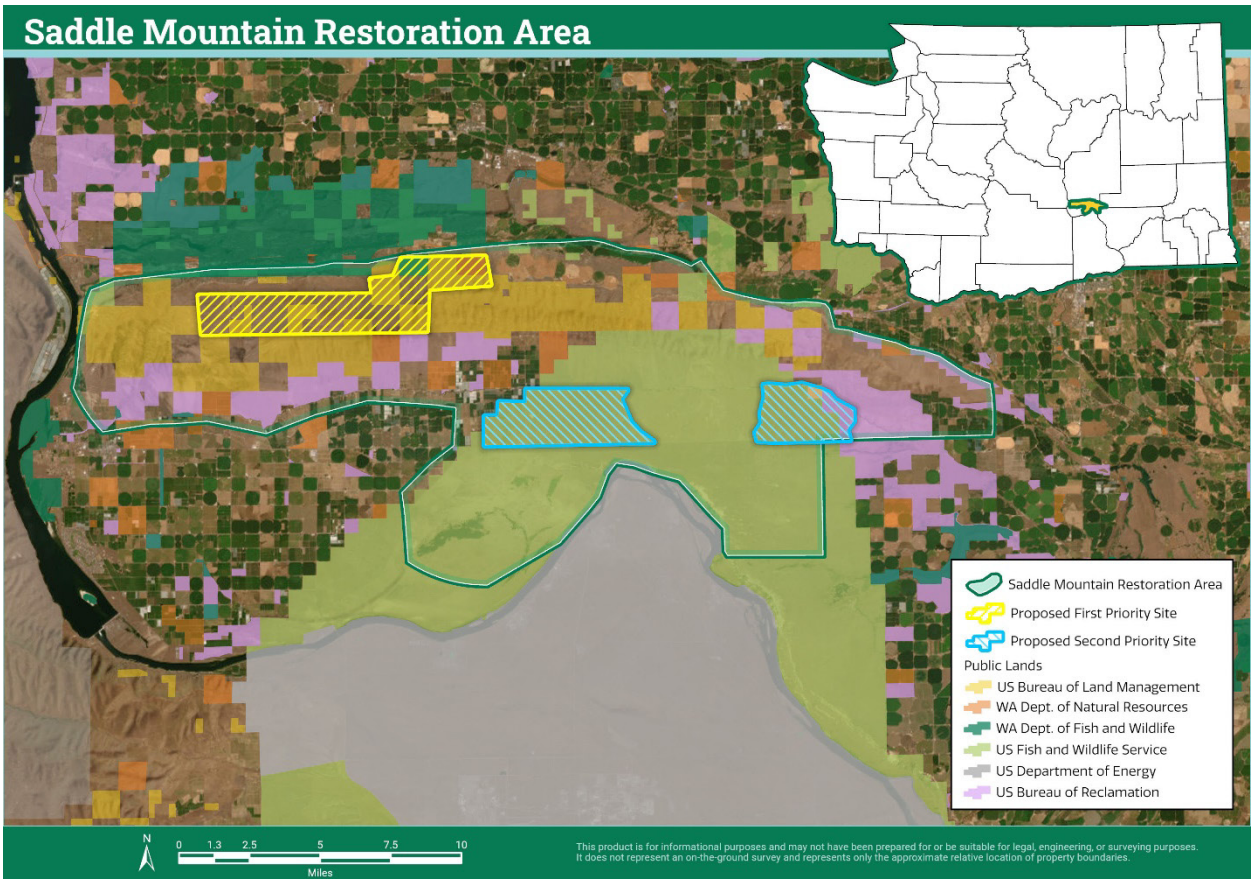

Figure 7. Proposed Saddle Mountain restoration area and sites, southern Grant County, Washington.

Timeline and Activities

The following timeline and activities are prioritized to begin with the Lakeview restoration area, followed by the Black Rock Coulee and Saddle Mountain restoration areas, respectively. Partner and stakeholder coordination and community outreach will occur across all areas from 2026 – 2028. We anticipate initiating pygmy rabbit recovery in the Lakeview restoration area in 2028, followed by the other two restoration areas as staff capacity allows. **This timeline for proposed actions is tentative and subject to adaptive management based on future biological and environmental conditions.**

Lakeview restoration area

- 2026 – 2028: Partner and stakeholder coordination and community outreach
  Enroll private landowners in Certificates of Inclusions under the Conservation Benefit Agreement
- 2028 – 2029: Establish breeding enclosures and acclimation pens on restoration site
- 2028 – 2036: Annually release approximately 35-75 juvenile pygmy rabbits until recovery metric (e.g., self-sustaining wild pygmy rabbit population) is met

Black Rock Coulee restoration area

- 2026 – 2028: Partner and stakeholder coordination and community outreach
  Enroll private landowners in Certificates of Inclusions under the Conservation Benefit Agreement
- 2030 – 2036: Annually release approximately 35-75 juvenile pygmy rabbits until recovery metric (e.g., self-sustaining wild pygmy rabbit population) is met

Saddle Mountain restoration area

- 2026 – 2028: Partner and stakeholder coordination and community outreach
  Enroll private landowners in Certificates of Inclusions under the Conservation Benefit Agreement
- 2030 – 2036: Annually release approximately 35-75 juvenile pygmy rabbits until recovery metric (e.g., self-sustaining wild pygmy rabbit population) is met

Prior to Rabbit Recovery Actions (2026-2028)

WDFW and USFWS will begin coordination with the federal landowners of the sites prioritized for restoration in 2026 to discuss planned activities and site logistics. This timeframe will be used for any environmental assessment, review, and compliance needed for these new restoration areas.

WDFW will evaluate specific locations within the proposed restoration area parcels where infrastructure could be established (breeding enclosures, fencing, or acclimation pens; Figures 8 and 9). These sites would be a short walk (approximately 200-300 yards) from existing roads. These areas and site

disturbance activities would be submitted for cultural resource review to ensure compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act. The process would involve coordination with archeologist staff from USFWS and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Spokane Tribe of Indians, and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation.

WDFW and USFWS will conduct public outreach during 2026 through 2028 with stakeholders and local communities around the restoration areas. We will solicit involvement from additional stakeholders who are located or have interests within the restoration areas. Stakeholders will have opportunity to share any concerns and provide advice for working within these areas as well as opportunities for support and collaboration.

Public meetings will be scheduled in the local community wherein WDFW and USFWS staff will provide an overview of planned pygmy rabbit activities and the details on the Conservation Benefit Agreement (see section below) for private landowners and producers nearby (within five miles) the restoration area.

Private lands and the Conservation Benefit Agreement

Safe Harbor Agreements (SHAs) are a conservation tool that contributed to pygmy rabbit recovery efforts on private lands in Sagebrush Flat, Beezley Hills, and Burton Draw. The Columbia Basin Pygmy Rabbit Template SHA was developed in 2006 and protects a total of 122,531 acres. Privately-owned lands have been and will continue to be critical to the ongoing success of pygmy rabbit recovery due to the deep/productive soils in areas simultaneously important for agriculture.

SHAs are voluntary agreements between private or non-federal property owners and USFWS and designed to protect and engage landowners whose actions contribute to the recovery of species listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). In exchange for actions that contribute to the recovery of listed species on non-federal lands, participating property owners receive assurances in the form of an Enhancement of Survival Permit from the USFWS that if they fulfill the conditions of the SHA, future property-use limitations will not occur without the landowner's consent. State and federal biologists are authorized to monitor pygmy rabbits that disperse on enrolled lands and conduct management activities that further pygmy rabbit recovery.

The SHA expires in October 2026 and will be replaced by a Programmatic Conservation Benefit Agreement (CBA; USFWS 2026b), which will retain many of the same provisions as the expiring SHA. A programmatic CBA and associated permits authorize state, local, and tribal governments, as well as other entities, to enter into an agreement for a single or multiple species and hold the associated permit. This entity can then enroll individual property owners within a specific region and convey the permit authorization and assurances to them through a "certificate of inclusion." USFWS is developing the programmatic CBA for the pygmy rabbit and WDFW will serve as the permit holder. Any interested landowners within the proposed restoration areas will have the opportunity to enroll in the programmatic CBA in late 2026 and into 2027.

Recovery Actions (2028-2036)

Recovery activities

Proven recovery methods used to establish pygmy rabbits in the wild elsewhere in eastern Washington will be implemented in the new restoration areas. Fenced breeding enclosures (Figure 8) will be established on identified sites where suitable pygmy rabbit habitat occurs. A small number (<20) of pygmy rabbits will be transferred to the enclosures to maintain a controlled breeding population. Juvenile rabbits (kits) born in the breeding enclosures will be the source of rabbits for recovery in the wild.

Figure 8. Pygmy rabbit enclosure (four to six acres in size). Enclosures are comprised of cattle panels (4.5 ft tall) with deer/elk orchard fencing (heavy duty polypropylene 1.7 x 2” mesh) attached and metal aviary netting (.5” mesh) covering the bottom 2 ft of the panel. The panels are held in place with angle iron (4ft tall) and metal wire tie. Animal digging barriers are made by using 1.5 ft of the orchard netting on the outer side and 0.5 ft of the metal aviary netting on the inner side of the fence panel and secured to the ground with 6” ground staples. Hand tools used to trim sagebrush stems and branches to clear perimeter (no digging or soil displacement involved). The enclosures blend in with vegetation from a distance. They are in place for three to five years, then removed. Photos by Jon Gallie, WDFW.

Figure 9. Acclimation pen, about one acre in size. Pens are constructed of metal hexnetting (chicken wire) fencing (5 ft tall) supported with step toe fiberglass fence posts (4 ft tall) and secured to the ground with 6” ground staples. Hand tools are used to trim sagebrush stems and branches to clear perimeter (no digging or soil displacement involved). The pens blend in with vegetation from a distance. They are in place for a single year, then moved to a new site. Photo by Jon Gallie, WDFW.

WDFW anticipates releasing 35-75 kits per year from on-site breeding enclosures. Several factors influence kit production capacity of breeding enclosures including site selection, number of enclosures sites, number of breeding adult rabbits, spring and early summer climate conditions that affect food resources in enclosures, and overwinter survival.

Prior to releasing kits in the wild, small acclimation pens (Figure 9) will be established in areas of suitable pygmy rabbit habitat located on restoration sites. During the spring through mid-summer period, small numbers of kits will be transferred from the breeding enclosures and released in acclimation pens, allowing the young rabbits to acclimate to their new surroundings and slowly disperse in the wild. Most of the released rabbits disperse within 0.5 miles of the release site, though the longest documented dispersal was six miles (WDFW unpublished data). We anticipate rabbits will disperse to available suitable habitat within the restoration area that has connectivity.

Depending on many factors, it may require at least five years of annual releases of rabbits to establish a local rabbit population whereby wild reproduction sustains annual increases in rabbit abundance. A wild

population of pygmy rabbits will be considered established when the adult winter population averages 40 rabbits/year, based on a five-year average, and a minimum of 80% of rabbits in the wild are determined to be wild-born. These metrics are based on success with restorations of pygmy rabbits to the Beezley Hills and Sagebrush Flat restoration areas and the ongoing persistence of those wild populations. WDFW will conduct annual monitoring of wild rabbits to determine distribution and abundance of wild pygmy rabbit populations.

Monitoring

Individual pygmy rabbits that are captured and released have a unique identifier based on DNA analysis of a sample of ear tissue and a microchip (passive integrated transponder; PIT tag) inserted between the shoulder blades. This allows us to identify an individual rabbit on surveys, capture effort, or when a carcass is recovered. Pygmy rabbits create and utilize burrow systems year-round and because of this trait, nearly all pygmy rabbit monitoring focuses on their use of active burrows.

Post-release/summer monitoring

We utilize several methods to determine the initial survival rate and dispersal of released pygmy rabbits. To assess survival within the acclimation pens, we conduct weekly checks to document burrow development and rabbit presence. We opportunistically use game cameras or remote PIT tag readers (which records the individual microchipped rabbits that cross the ground antennas) to determine if and which rabbits are present. We then conduct walking surveys for pygmy rabbit sign (e.g., active burrows or areas with concentrated fecal pellets) in grids up to 0.5 miles from release sites to determine the distribution of released pygmy rabbits into surrounding habitat.

Winter monitoring

Winter surveys (December - February) have been the standard approach for population monitoring as pygmy rabbit sign is easily detected on snow. Each year, we conduct intensive ground survey efforts in occupied habitat to determine the number of and distribution of actively used burrow systems. Individual pygmy rabbits can occupy multiple burrow systems, and multiple pygmy rabbits can inhabit a burrow system at the same time. We can estimate the number of rabbits occupying an area through genetic analysis of fecal pellets at the burrow site or through more intensive mark/recapture efforts. These methods have provided long term monitoring trends and generate population estimates, post-release survival rates, and the distribution of wild pygmy rabbit population on the landscape.

Planned conservation actions

There are several active conservation actions that we will employ to address threats to pygmy rabbits on the landscape. Currently, the biggest threats are wildfires and disease (rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus or rabbit hemorrhagic fever: RHDV2). RHDV2 originated in Eurasia and was first discovered in the western United States in 2020 with an extensive outbreak throughout the southwestern United States. It is highly lethal with nearly a 90% mortality rate and has been confirmed in domestic, feral, and wild rabbit species, including pygmy rabbits (Crowell et al. 2023). RHDV2 has now been detected in all

western states in addition to Canada and Mexico. In Washington, a few isolated cases occurred in feral and domestic rabbits on the west side but to date has not been detected in central Washington. There is a vaccine that provides some protection against this virus. All breeding enclosure and released pygmy rabbits will be vaccinated. WDFW will attempt to capture and vaccinate at least 30% of each wild population annually (expected to occur late fall to early winter) to protect against this disease (Russell et al. 2024).

Wildfire threat and mitigation

Wildfire is the leading threat to pygmy rabbit recovery as it both kills the rabbits and destroys their sagebrush habitat. Under the best conditions, it can take shrubsteppe 20-30 years to recover to the condition suitable for pygmy rabbits. Recovery efforts in Washington have twice been severely impacted by wildfire in 2017 and 2020, where over 150 rabbits died in three breeding enclosures, seven acclimation pens, and thousands of acres of occupied and suitable shrubsteppe habitat.

To mitigate the impact of wildfire, WDFW annually coordinates pre-wildfire season meetings with local fire districts, BLM, and WDNR. During these meetings, we discuss resource protection needs (e.g., location of pygmy rabbit enclosures, acclimation pens, occupied habitat) and feasible protection scenarios ahead of time. This coordination was invaluable in stopping the Mohr Canyon fire (2022) before it could hit the Rimrock restoration area. We plan to extend these coordination meetings to the corresponding fire districts in the new restoration areas including Grant County Fire District #12 that responds to Black Rock Coulee restoration area, Grant County Fire Districts #8 and 10 for the Saddle Mountain restoration area, and Lincoln County Fire District #3 for the Lakeview restoration area.

We also collaborate with landowners and community partners to implement proactive measures to reduce wildfire risk. Through the Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI), there are several collaborative approaches and funding options to reduce wildfire risk. WDFW annually mows access roads, uses barren earth fire breaks, prescribed burns, and targeted mowing to provide strategically placed vegetation fuel breaks to lower wildfire risk. Chemical treatment of invasive cheatgrass could be the most beneficial method to reduce wildfire risk. WDFW will collaborate with local land managers and partners to implement appropriate wildfire risk reduction in the new restoration areas and use WSRRI for guidance.

Habitat restoration and mitigating predation

Suitable pygmy rabbit habitat is difficult to create, being limited to deep soil sites and mature sagebrush stands (>20 years old). Approaches WDFW has used include chemical treatment of noxious weeds such as cheatgrass, plug planting and seeding of sagebrush, native forbs, and native bunchgrasses, and highly selective mowing of decadent sagebrush stands that are old, and dying, as well as prescribed burning. In general, pygmy rabbit habitat recovery efforts aim toward three to five-foot-tall sagebrush, sagebrush starts and living branches under one foot, and an understory of native bunchgrasses and forbs. Large scale restoration efforts following wildfire or conversion of cropland are highly beneficial but outside the scope of our planning.

Mitigating the threat of predation can involve reducing artificial structures that enable raptor perching. WDFW has removed non-native trees (raptor nesting and perching), removed derelict and unnecessary fence lines/posts, removed derelict and non-functional farm equipment, and removed illegal dumping sites that can attract coyotes and ravens.

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