



United States Department of the Interior

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Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Bureau of Reclamation, Pacific NW Region, Boise, Idaho

From: State Supervisor/Deputy State Supervisor, Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office, Portland, Oregon

Subject: Henry Hagg Lake Resource Management Plan, Scoggins Valley Recreation Area, Washington County, Oregon

This memorandum is an update of a 1992 Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) planning aid memorandum on the impacts to fish and wildlife of proposed recreational developments and improvements at Henry Hagg Lake, Scoggins Valley Park, Washington County, Oregon. The Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau) is preparing a Resource Management Plan (RMP) to address newly proposed recreational developments at the park. The scope of this memorandum is general in nature and does not constitute the formal report on the project within the meaning of Section 2(b) of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat 401 as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.).

The configuration of Henry Hagg Lake depicting the developed recreation areas at the lake and the boundaries of Scoggins Valley Park are depicted in Figure 1. A 1994 Hagg Lake Recreation Management Plan addressed several development scenarios for the park that were to be phased in over a period of several years:

In Phase I (Fiscal Year 1993), the Sain Creek day use facilities were to be expanded to include a larger parking area, a restroom, 20 parking sites, and a new picnic shelter. During Phase I, construction of parking improvements in the "Cove" area (near Recreation Area "C"), Scoggins Creek, the Elks Lodge Access area, and at Boat Ramp "C" were also scheduled.

In Phase II (Fiscal Year 1994), new parking areas, a picnic shelter, picnic sites, and a restroom were to be constructed at the "Cove" day use facilities; parking improvements and a restroom added to the Elks Lodge day use area; picnic tables, a picnic shelter, and composting restrooms

added to the Scoggins Creek day use area; a number of improvements including concessions, play structures, paved parking, and a gravel overflow parking area constructed at Boat Ramp "C"; improvements to the park's trail system made; and an amphitheater, along with parking, portable toilets, and concessions, developed in a meadow area northwest of Boat Ramp "A" (this development was later dropped).

In Phase III, which was to occur at some later date, the day use facilities at Area "A" East were to be converted to overnight facilities with camping for both tent and recreational vehicle (RV) campers, and overnight moorage developed at Boat Ramp "A". Thinning of approximately 20 acres of timber was needed to develop Area "A" East for camping. This development was to also involve construction of a sanitary waste disposal station for the RV campers, new roads, a new shower facility, concessions, play structures, and a picnic shelter. Development of walk-in camping sites was also planned for the Scoggins Creek facilities during this time period; however, it was decided that habitat impacts and the difficulty in patrolling these sites made development of isolated camping sites infeasible.

Almost all of the recreational developments described above for Phases I and II are presently in place. However, the overnight camping facilities at Recreational Area "A" East described under Phase III have not yet been constructed.

The proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP) is being developed by the Bureau as a document that will guide the future direction of development, management, and recreation at Henry Hagg Lake and Scoggins Valley Park over the next ten years. Draft goals and objectives have been developed that focus on natural resources, cultural resources, Indian sacred sites, Indian trust assets, recreation and access, and land use management and implementation. A series of draft management alternatives has been developed by the Bureau with input from an ad hoc working group comprised of Federal, State, County, and special-interest group representatives; consulting agencies; and members of the general public. These alternatives (i.e., the "No Action" alternative; minimal recreation development with resource enhancement (Alternative B); and moderate recreation development with resource enhancement (Alternative C)) are presented in Table 1. For each alternative, the table presents a matrix of topics that are applicable to the entire project area and topics that are applicable to specific shoreside areas. Note that the "No Action" alternative is not static but is, in many cases, a continuation of the 1994 Recreation Management Plan, implementing actions previously approved under that plan (but not yet completed) where funding and willing partners are available.

Fish and Wildlife Resources

Henry Hagg Lake is an extremely popular recreation site attracting people from throughout the Portland metropolitan area. Fish species present in the lake include rainbow trout, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, yellow perch, bullhead, crappie, and bluegill. The trout are stocked by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and fishing for trout and bass is very popular.

Wildlife species using the reservoir area include, but are not limited to, elk, deer, beaver, coyote, bobcat, ducks, geese, hawks, owls, and a wide variety of songbirds. Several species of reptiles and amphibians can also be found within the park boundaries, including (breeding) northwestern pond turtles, common and northwestern garter snakes, northern alligator lizards, long-toed and northwestern salamanders, newts, Pacific chorus frogs, and northern red-legged frogs. These species are found in the coves and backwater areas of the lake (Sue Beilke, Biologist, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Sauvie Island, Oregon, pers. comm., 2002). Osprey are known to nest in the area and bald eagles use the area in the winter. Waterfowl are generally found in the coves and creeks that empty into Hagg Lake, along the shoreline, and on the lake itself. Waterfowl nest in the backwater areas of the lake along Tanner, Sain, and Scoggins Creeks. Recently, about 3,000 Canada geese were sighted on the lake, loafing and feeding in the mudflats at dusk (Don VandeBergh, Biologist, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Sauvie Island, Oregon, pers. observation, 2002).

About 50 to 80 elk use the lake/park area on a year-round basis. A total population of about 200 animals inhabits the area within and just outside the park boundaries (Don VandeBergh, Biologist, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Sauvie Island, Oregon, pers. comm., 2002). During the winter, the elk move down to the meadows in the park to graze. These meadow/pasture areas (Figure 2) were established as mitigation for the loss of 1,100 acres of wildlife habitat caused by reservoir inundation and development of the park. Elk are also frequent users of the pasture areas just downstream of Scoggins Dam and of those irrigated fields surrounding the Stimson Mill. The latter pasture areas, however, are not part of the original mitigation for loss of elk habitat.

Wetlands are present within the project area. They are primarily associated with the streams that empty into the lake (i.e., Sain, and Scoggins Creeks). The reservoir itself is classified as lacustrine, limnetic, with an unconsolidated bottom and permanently flooded. The wetland sites associated with the lake and the creeks leading into the lake are designated on the attached map (Figures 3 and 3A). Since most of the mapped wetlands appear to be either outside the boundaries of the park, or in areas not effected by the proposed developments, it does not appear that wetlands, outside the lake itself, would be impacted by the project. However, the backwater or inlet areas of the lake, particularly around Tanner Creek and Nelson Cove, an inlet northwest of Boat Ramp "A" (Figure 1), could be subject to impacts depending on what development occurs in these areas.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Bald eagles winter in the area in and around the park. There do not appear to be any roosting or nesting sites within the park boundaries, but perch trees within the perimeter of the park are important for bald eagles during their winter migration period. An active bald eagle nest is present in the upper Sain Creek drainage outside the park boundaries.

Under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, 16 U.S.C. 1531, et seq. (ESA), the Bureau is required to assure that its actions have taken into consideration the impacts this project would

have on Federally listed threatened and endangered species. We have determined that bald eagles, listed as threatened in Oregon, occur in or adjacent to the park during the winter. As required by the ESA, it is the responsibility of your agency or your designee to prepare a biological assessment for the bald eagle. Should the biological assessment determine that the bald eagle is likely to be affected (adversely or beneficially) by the project, a formal Section 7 consultation should be requested through this office. Please contact:

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Fish and Wildlife Impacts

Overall impacts to fish and wildlife resources of the Henry Hagg Lake area would depend on the amount of habitat disturbance that would occur with the planned developments of the lake's perimeter (Figure 4). The increase in the numbers of people using the lake and park and the concomitant losses of habitat beyond those losses associated with present-day development would probably have the greatest detrimental impact on fish and wildlife. The proposed development of elk meadow sites within the park (planned education/research/community center at Nelson Cove meadow (northwest of Boat Ramp "A"), frisbee golf at Sain Creek meadow) is of particular concern to the Service since these areas were set aside for mitigation of the original project impacts. In addition, all of the meadows have become decadent and are now in need of complete revitalization and restoration work if they are to continue to function appropriately as mitigation sites. Development of the Nelson Cove and Sain Creek meadows (Alternative C) would probably result in the loss of these areas as elk habitat, although the Sain Creek site could continue to function as elk meadow habitat if carefully managed.

Specific impacts of each of the project alternatives affecting fish and/or wildlife resources are discussed below:

Alternative A. No Action: Continuation of existing management practices

It should be noted that many of the recreational developments listed under the "No Action" alternative include activities which were proposed for completion under Phase II or III of the 1994 Recreation Management Plan but have not yet been started or completed due to lack of funding. The impacts of these "old" proposals were addressed in our 1992 planning aid memorandum but are presented again in the present analysis for a better understanding of what the impacts are of those "B" and "C" alternatives that incorporate the "No Action" alternative (with its ongoing development) into their development proposals.

Fishing activities and other water-oriented recreation under the "No Action" alternative would probably increase somewhat over the years with limited impacts on fish and/or wildlife populations in the area. There would probably be a decline in the value of the surrounding

wildlife habitat, however, as human use of the park continued to increase, even under managed conditions. This is true for the proposed development of overnight camping facilities and a 40-slip boat dock at Recreation Area "A" East, as well as for development of recreational facilities at Scoggins Creek, Recreation Area "C", and the Recreation Area "C" Extension site. In most cases, losses to fish and wildlife are not expected to be significant; however, the proposed developments at Recreation Area "A" East would be less detrimental if overnight camping were phased in over a period of years. Appropriate monitoring would be needed to assure the success of this proposed camping opportunity not only in terms of recreation and security but also in terms of assuring the least impact to wildlife habitat and wildlife use of the area.

Alternative B. Minimal recreation development with resource enhancement

Unless carefully restored and managed, development of frisbee golf at Sain Creek meadow would probably result in the eventual loss of this site as elk meadow forage habitat. A restoration plan should be developed for this site and should include closure to recreational activities during critical periods of elk use.

Although not as detrimental as the development of overnight facilities, there would still be impacts to fish and wildlife resources associated with the "re-opening" of day use facilities at Area "A" East. Increased use of Area "A" East could result in deterioration of wildlife habitat, declines in angling success due to erosion associated with shoreline development (boat dock), and increased incidences of unwelcome wildlife-human contact. Some of the proposed developments, such as expansion of the hiking and biking trails and recreational developments at Scoggins Creek and Recreation Area "C", would encroach on the more "natural" areas of the park. Overall, however, these developments, if they include a carefully managed Sain Creek frisbee golf development, are not expected to cause significant changes or disturbance to fish and wildlife habitat.

Alternative C. Moderate recreation development with resource enhancement (Preferred Alternative)

As with the above scenario, the increases in the numbers of people using the park because of the planned day use and overnight use improvements would bring decreases in habitat availability. Development of the meadow area northwest of Boat Ramp "A" (Nelson Cove meadow) for use as an outdoor education/field research/community center would likely degrade the site to the point where elk and other wildlife use would be significantly reduced, if not eliminated altogether, thus negating mitigation for elk habitat lost during inundation. This meadow is particularly important to elk because it has a south-facing aspect and, if restored and managed properly, would provide valuable forage for elk in the late winter and early spring. This area is also one of the least developed sites in the park and provides habitat not only for elk but for deer, osprey, small mammals, and songbirds. Development of the Sain Creek meadow would also likely result in the loss of elk meadow forage habitat unless this site were carefully restored and managed (see comments under Alternative B). The loss of Nelson Cove and Sain Creek meadows would, in turn, force elk into the few remaining meadows within the park making them

even less suitable for foraging and further compromising the value of the park mitigation sites. The poor forage opportunities afforded by the remaining park meadow sites could also lead to increased depredation problems by elk in areas outside the park boundaries.

The increases in use of the lake from construction of boat docks, piers, and boat launch facilities could result in increased pollution of the lake and reduced fishing success. Day use development, however, would not be as detrimental to the environment as the construction of overnight camping sites. The development of overnight camping generally involves a more extensive and permanent loss of habitat than does the construction of picnic shelters or restrooms in already developed sites. Poaching and wildlife harassment are two possible detrimental impacts that could also occur with the development of overnight camping in the park. Development of overnight camping would involve the thinning of 20 acres of timber which would result in an immediate, though short-term, detrimental impact to wildlife using the site. However, bald eagles are not expected to be impacted by this 20-acre thinning. The greater negative impact to wildlife would come from greater human disturbance over a long period of time. Development of overnight facilities must be properly controlled to assure the least impact to wildlife habitat and wildlife resources in the area.

Development of additional recreational facilities at Recreation Area "A" West and Boat Ramp/Recreation Area "C" could have adverse impacts on fish and wildlife resources resulting from loss of habitat, possible increases in turbidity, and reductions in water quality but they would not be considered significant, primarily because these sites are already developed. However, the addition of recreational facilities in the more primitive picnic sites such as Scoggins Creek and the Recreational Area "C" Extension site would have greater adverse impacts on the amount of habitat available for fish and wildlife. Development or expansion of biking, hiking, or equestrian trails would encroach on the more "natural" areas of the park as well. None of these impacts, however, is expected to have long-term adverse effects on the park environment.

Construction of dams across the mouths of Nelson Cove and Tanner Creek Cove to create wetlands and enhance wildlife habitat in these coves could make these areas more attractive to waterfowl, northwestern pond turtles, and northern red-legged frogs (if water levels were managed properly) but would have a negative impact on fish passage, fishing, and boat access. The development of the outdoor school and research facilities at Nelson Cove could result in indirect losses of wetlands because of improper construction techniques, overdevelopment of the shoreline, and conflicting or poor management of water levels in the cove.

Mitigation

Alternative B: Minimal recreation development with resource enhancement

Improvement of existing day use facilities is appropriate but, to minimize impacts on wildlife resources, there should be only limited development of new day use facilities and they should be limited to already developed sites (i.e., proposed facilities at Boat Ramp/Recreation Area "C",

Boat Ramp/Recreation Area "A" West). Any improvements to existing day use facilities or development of new sites should consider maintaining the "natural" (rather than park) look of the surrounding wildlife habitat. The ODFW has a program called "Naturescaping, A Landscape Partnership with Nature" which may be suitable for use in the park. A management plan for the Sain Creek meadow should be developed which includes restoration and maintenance of the site for elk forage and limitation of recreational activity during critical elk use periods.

Alternative C: Moderate recreation development with resource enhancement (Preferred Alternative)

The meadow area to the northwest of Boat Ramp "A" (Nelson Cove meadow) should be maintained and managed for elk use. This meadow, while it has deteriorated significantly due to lack of management, has the potential to be highly valuable elk winter range, and any development of this site would negate its value for elk. As one of the least developed sites in the park, it should be kept in its "natural" state for wildlife use. Consideration of the development of this site for an education/ research/community center might be permissible in the future only if improvement and management of the other designated elk pasture sites in the park were brought up to ODFW standards; additional sites were designated and maintained for elk use (with resource agency approval); and it was determined that the elk population could be successfully maintained using these sites.

Development of the Sain Creek meadow has the potential to further degrade this site as elk habitat. A management plan for the Sain Creek meadow should be developed which includes restoration and maintenance of the site for elk forage and limitation of recreational activity at the site during critical elk use periods.

We support the phased development of Area "A" East for overnight camping but it should be limited in scope, conducted on a trial basis, and then evaluated for its impacts on wildlife and on the park itself. This evaluation would require increased patrols of the camping sites to assure minimal detrimental impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat in the area.

Development plans should also include planting and/or maintaining (preferably native) vegetative barriers between the meadows set aside for wildlife and the park users. Any development of a day use area should consider landscaping with native vegetation that is of value to wildlife. An ODFW program called "Naturescaping" may provide useful information in this regard.

The meadow/pasture sites within the park should be revitalized to bring them up to the standards needed to provide suitable wildlife habitat. Discing, planting, fertilizing, and/or burning the vegetation to encourage new plant growth should be considered. The Bureau should provide funding on a cost-share basis to the Washington County Parks Department for this rehabilitation.

The possibility of creating wetlands and enhancing wildlife habitat for northwestern pond turtles and northern red-legged frogs in Tanner Creek and Nelson Coves by placing dams across the

cove mouths should be further investigated. Devising a method for controlling water levels in the coves (dam notching, use of stop logs, seasonal dam placement, etc.) to allow for maximum production of pond turtles and red-legged frogs while still maintaining fish passage and fishing access to the coves should be the focal point of this effort. Any development of education/research/community facilities at Nelson Cove must also avoid adverse impacts on wetlands in this area.

To protect fish and wildlife, the Fish and Wildlife Service recommends that:

1. There be no development in the meadow/pasture area northwest of Boat Ramp "A" (Nelson Cove) unless restoration and management of the previously designated elk meadow sites are brought up to ODFW standards; other sites are designated and managed for elk use (with resource agency approval); and it is determined, through monitoring, that elk populations can be successfully maintained using these sites.
2. A management plan for the Sain Creek meadow be developed which includes restoration and maintenance of the site for elk forage and limitation of recreational activity during critical elk use periods.
3. Development of overnight camping at Area "A" East be limited in scope, conducted on a trial basis, and monitored to evaluate impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat.
4. A vegetative barrier be planted or maintained between the more undeveloped and heavily used areas of the park to help keep disturbance of wildlife to a minimum. Development or improvement of day use facilities should focus on maintenance of a "natural" look using native plants as landscaping materials. Use of the ODFW "Naturescaping" program should also be considered for its wildlife and interpretive values.
5. The Bureau provide funding to the Washington County Parks Department to rehabilitate the meadow areas set aside for wildlife mitigation when the park was developed.
6. The issue of dam construction at Tanner Creek and Nelson Coves be thoroughly evaluated for its effects on waterfowl, northwestern pond turtles, northern red-legged frogs, and on fish passage and fishing access into these areas. However, any plan to create wetland habitat and enhance wildlife use of these coves via water level management (dam notching, use of stop logs, seasonal dam placement, etc.) must assure the maintenance of fish passage and fishing access to these coves. Any development of education/research/ community facilities at Nelson Cove must also avoid adverse impacts on wetlands.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the development of the Hagg Lake Resource Management Plan. If you have any questions, please contact Kathi Larson at 503-231-6179.

KL/kl: haggk2

cc:

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