

Spotted Dog WMA Working Group Meeting Notes

Powell County Community Center, Deer Lodge, Montana

November 18, 2013

Noted at the beginning of the meeting from the prior notes that wording on the October document should be changed concerning cattle grazing on the WMA for the 2014 season

Montana FWP has determined that there will be no permitted livestock grazing on the Spotted Dog WMA for 2014.

Attributes identified by the group to be discussed (not limited to, but including)

- Road access
- Rangeland resources
- Water quality and quantity
- Recreation
- Forest health
- Fire and fuel – threats and opportunities
- Fisheries
- Non-game wildlife
- Building “Showcase” management and relationships

The group continued on addressing some of these resources, on a whole the group felt that the WMA should be looked at in sections rather than a whole. East side of the WMA and the West Side of the WMA.

FWP also addressed the group’s question on any income that is generated through the WMA does not specifically come back to the WMA. If a project is important enough monies can be prioritized. The question raised by the group is legislatively could a WMA become self-sustaining?

Water Quality and Quantity

- What do the water development goals look like?

- Can other agency experts provide education on the benefits of water development and riparian enhancement?
- Start at the bottom to begin Management of the WMA
 - Fish habitat
 - Sensitive resources (Riparian)
 - Enclosures for protection
 - Offsite water for stream protection
 - Riparian inventory is in place and can be used to begin the management process
- Eastside of WMA- almost every section of ground has water
 - Does it need to be developed and if so where
 - Does Riparian areas need to be protected
 - What type of fencing and placement of fencing need to be in place for riparian management
 - How does water development benefit wildlife, fish habitat, etc. on the WMA
 - Can Riparian enclosures be used as a rotational grazing pasture tool?

Building the “Showcase” Relationships and Management

- Look at other WMA’s work concerning:
 - Grazing plans
 - Habitat
 - Recreation
 - Hunting
 - Other critical resources
- Good Neighbor policy
 - How can surrounding landowners benefit from the WMA
 - How to manage WMA to attract wildlife to lessen the impacts on neighboring properties
 - How can habitat be increased both off and on the WMA that benefits FWP and surrounding landowners
 - Trading of Resources
 - i.e. Grazing of cattle for exchange of water development, fencing, etc.
 - Utilizing other agency resources and their expertise
 - MSU Extension
 - NRCS
 - DNRC
 - FSA, etc.

Wildlife vs. domestic vs. the resources

- Uplands: Eastside of WMA some under-utilization of range resources.
- Using cattle as a tool for Elk and wildlife enhancement of the resources
 - “The elk will follow the cattle” grazing concept
- Need to define what kind of competition there is for resource between wildlife and domestic
 - How do we complement those two with the available resource?