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Sent: Wednesday, July 01, 2009 8:13 AM
To: Palensky, Lynn
Subject: Comment on ISRP 2009-17

Comment: Washington Dept. Fish and Wildlife - Asotin Wildlife Management Area request for livestock grazing funds.

Participating Parties: WDFW, WSU (Bernardo, Daniel, Linda Hardesty, Lisa Shipley, Sara Wagner, Clark, Taryn Beth), Asotin NRCS, Rocky Mnt Elk, BPA.

I am a little confused about the funding by the Scientific Review Committee for \$150,000 for 3 years to the Washington Dept of Fish and Wildlife Asotin Management Area. According to Bob Dice WDFW, the funds will be used to maintain fence to keep trespass livestock out of the Refuge. This seems odd because WDFW is actually running their own livestock operation that requires them to build fences to keep their livestock IN the Refuge, according to Bob Dice and WDFW grazing project. FOIA shows WDFW has spent over \$140,000 on building fences to keep their livestock in the Refuge and need more funding to build more cross fences to split up the pastures, as recommended by consultant WSU Linda Hardesty and Lisa Shipley. The funding for this project should be re-considered based on the failure of a state agency to disclose detailed plans for the funding use.

The second concern is the conflict of interest and failure of a Committee member to fully disclose a relationship with this project. Linda Hardesty of Dept of Natural Resources WSU and UI who resides on the Scientific Review Committee also is fully engaged in the Asotin Wildlife Area Grazing project. Linda received over \$300,000 to assist in managing the grazing projects and act as a consultant to WDFW and helps determine stocking rates and where and to build cross fencing and selection of grazing areas. This same individual will also report on the success of the project.

The purchase of Smoothing Iron Unit was to manage for all wildlife and plant species, and the WDFW states that no species shall be damaged by any management activities. However, livestock management has taken precedence at the refuge at the expense of other species. Habitats for many species have been devastated. Large areas have been invaded by Scotch thistle and sediments from cattle disturbances are ending up in streams designated as critical for endangered fish species. This has been verified by WDFW own biologists, according to FOIA. In addition, the non game species have no priority in the Asotin grazing plan, a concern voiced by WDFW own biologists.

The extent of the weed control by WDFW is limited to spraying along the roads and that the end of it. They may partially control weeds when the County Weed Coordinator presses them. And the weeds they do control are usually due to the livestock grazing project.

One of the largest populations in the Northwest of the Federally listed *Silene Spaldingii* are set to be grazed over the next few years. WSU is tagging these plants without permits from USFWS and are treating them as if they own these plants.

Funding by NWPC should go to projects that have a beneficial effect on wildlife habitat and not to support a private livestock grazing operation. It is ridiculous to think that livestock can improve the wildlife habitat. Even if the funding is issued to WDFW to plant native plants, they are planning on grazing that area as well, which will require more funds for fencing and water tanks, etc.