

Staff Summary for June 19-20, 2024

3. Initial Private Lands Wildlife Habitat Enhancement and Management Area (PLM) Plan and License (consent)

Today's Item

Information

Action

Consider approving initial PLM plans and 2024-2028 licenses.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)

Background

California Fish and Game Code sections 3400-3408 and Title 14 Section 601 prescribe conditions for a PLM program that provides incentives for landholders to manage their property for the benefit of fish and wildlife in exchange for access to increased recreational opportunities, such as hunting tags or extended seasons ("harvest program"). In return for a harvest program, the landholder must prepare a biologically-sound wildlife management plan and complete specific wildlife habitat improvements on the PLM property.

The Department has reviewed the initial management plans for three new properties in three counties consisting of approximately 21,893 acres. These new properties cover a variety of habitats, including chaparral and riparian areas which benefit both game and non-game species. Proposed habitat improvements include promoting early successional growth, installing numerous water catchments in an arid area, and improving the quality of riparian areas by removing non-native species.

The Department recommends that the Commission approve the wildlife management plans, license applications, and 2024-2028 harvest programs under conditions specified in Exhibit 2. Habitat improvements accomplished under this plan will enhance and maintain wildlife resources on and around the PLM area. The goals and objectives stated in the management plans are compatible with Department management plans for appropriate species in this area and the Department finds they are in compliance with Commission regulations and policies for PLM licenses and plans.

Significant Public Comments (N/A)

Recommendation

Commission staff: Approve the initial PLM licenses for the 2024-2028 seasons and associated PLM management plans with proposed seasons, harvests, and habitat improvements for three properties, under a motion to adopt the consent calendar.

Department: Approve the initial PLM licenses, and management plans and proposed seasons, harvests, and habitat improvements for three properties, under the conditions specified in Exhibit 2.

Exhibits

1. [Department memo, received June 13, 2024](#)
2. [PLM Area License Initial Management Plans, 2024-2028, Proposed Seasons, Harvests, and Habitat Improvements, received June 6, 2024](#)

Staff Summary for June 19-20, 2024

Motion

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission adopts the staff recommendations for items 3-9 on the consent calendar.

Memorandum

Date: May 31, 2024

To: Melissa Miller- Henson
Executive Director
Fish and Game Commission

From: Charlton H. Bonham
Director

Subject: **Agenda Item for the June 19-20, 2024 Fish and Game Commission Meeting
Private Lands Wildlife Habitat Enhancement and Management (PLM) Area
Licenses**

Private lands are a key component of wildlife habitats throughout California that support key populations of game and non-game species alike. Pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 3400, it is state policy to actively ensure improvement of wildlife habitats on private land in cooperation with landowners. Through the Private Lands Wildlife Habitat Enhancement and Management (PLM) Program, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) advances this policy by collaborating with private landowners to develop management plans that improve wildlife habitat on their properties. As part of this program, tags are issued annually to PLM participants' allowing limited hunting on these properties.

California Fish and Game Code Section 3406(c) requires that the activities conducted pursuant to each PLM Management Plan shall be reviewed annually by the Department and by the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) at a public hearing. Licenses for such areas may be granted by the Commission for a period of five (5) years following department review and approval of the management plan (Title 14, California Code of Regulations Section 601(a)).

The Department has reviewed the initial management plans for 3 new properties in 3 counties consisting of approximately 21,893 acres. These new properties cover a variety of habitats including chaparral and riparian areas which benefit both game and non-game species. Proposed habitat improvements include promoting early successional growth, installing numerous water catchments in an arid area, and improving the quality of riparian areas by removing non-native species.

The Department has also reviewed 5-year renewals for 10 properties in 7 counties consisting of approximately 355,360 acres and annual reports for 40 properties in 9 counties consisting of approximately 254,885 acres. PLM properties are doing a variety of habitat work.

Work ranges from but is not limited to wildlife brush piles, cover crop and food plot plantings, mastication of decadent brush, non-native vegetation removal, installing/repairing water features (such as guzzlers and springs), wildlife friendly fencing, and wildlife nesting boxes and platforms.

Melissa Miller-Henson, Executive Director
Fish and Game Commission
May 31, 2024
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The Department recommends that the Commission approves the wildlife management plans, applications, and each 2024/25 harvest program under conditions specified in the attached tables. Habitat improvements accomplished under these plans will enhance and maintain wildlife resources on and around the PLM areas. The goals and objectives stated in the management plans are compatible with Department management plans for appropriate species in these areas.

The attached tables represent the second, and final, list of PLM properties recommended for approval by the Commission in 2024. We previously recommended a first list of PLM properties for approval at the April 18, 2024, Commission meeting.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Victoria Barr at (916) 203-0567 or by email at Victoria.barr@wildlife.ca.gov.

Attachment

ec: Chad Dibble, Deputy Director
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Department of Fish and Wildlife

Scott Gardner, Branch Chief
Wildlife Branch
Department of Fish and Wildlife

Mario Klip, Environmental Program Manager
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**PLM AREA LICENSE
INITIAL MANAGEMENT PLANS, 2024-2028
PROPOSED SEASONS, HARVESTS, AND HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS**

NORTHERN REGION

PLM Area	2024 Proposed Season and Harvest	Habitat Improvement Program
<p>Fort Bidwell Ranch</p> <p>Deer Zone X-3B Modoc</p> <p>11,000 Acres</p>	<p>Authorized Harvest: 3 forked-horn or better buck deer</p> <p>Issue 3 buck deer tags for the period of October 5, 2024, through October 20, 2024.</p>	<p>Mechanically treat at least 100 acres of junipers (20 acres annually). Removal will promote native beneficial forages, these junipers will be cut and piled for nesting, then burned later.</p> <p>Install Beaver Dam Analogs (BDA's) into 3 areas (at least 3 BDA's annually) to reduce the dewatering of the surrounding habitats, reduce the channel cutting and restore hydrologic function.</p> <p>Conduct riparian restoration on at least 1 mile of riparian habitat to retain and promote desired riparian buffer vegetation. Treatments will include cutting and removing non riparian species.</p> <p>Restoration activities on the first meadow which include removing encroaching upland vegetation and junipers installing BDA's to reduce stream channel incision and head cutting to aid in the rehydration of meadows.</p> <p>Aspen stand restoration on one aspen stand through removal of junipers, encroaching conifers and downed woody debris.</p> <p>Fence off at least 3 aspen stands over the next 5 years with wildlife-friendly fencing.</p> <p>Type shift at least 250 acres (50 acres replanted annually) of agricultural fields to meadow grasses that promote bedding and areas of foraging for a variety of wildlife and utilize standing buffers of grasses along roads.</p>

**PLM AREA LICENSE
INITIAL MANAGEMENT PLANS, 2024-2028
PROPOSED SEASONS, HARVESTS, AND HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS**

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

PLM Area	2024 Proposed Season and Harvest	Habitat Improvement Program
<p>360 Ranch Deer Zone A Yolo 9,493 Acres</p>	<p>Authorized Harvest: 8 forked-horn or better buck deer</p> <p>Issue 10 buck deer tags for the archery period of July 13, 2024 through August 4, 2024 and the general rifle period of August 10, 2024 through September 22, 2024.</p>	<p>Mechanically remove with a tractor or brush ripping 8 acres of decadent brush.</p> <p>Plant 8 acres of deer & wildlife mix to improve habitat for deer.</p> <p>Cattle grazing restricted to November 15 – May 15.</p> <p>Install one wood duck box #1 on the Quail Pond.</p> <p>Create 2 water collection rain guzzlers (Long Range Guzzler & Petroleum Creek #1 Guzzler) which will be between 300 – 500 gallons for wildlife, fencing them from cattle.</p> <p>Create 4 wildlife brush piles measuring at least 15 feet in diameter and 7 feet tall.</p> <p>Remove 200 feet of old barb wire fencing and replace with wildlife-friendly wire on the quail pond.</p> <p>Maintain and provide maintenance on the one well that provides water year-round to the Quail Pond. This will include repair or replacement of pumps as needed and maintenance of water lines so there is water in the pond year-round.</p> <p>Ten game cameras will be deployed across the ranch to inventory wildlife.</p>

**PLM AREA LICENSE
 INITIAL MANAGEMENT PLANS, 2024-2028
 PROPOSED SEASONS, HARVESTS, AND HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS**

PLM Area	2024 Proposed Season and Harvest	Habitat Improvement Program
<p>Magers Ranch Deer Zone C4 Butte 1,400 Acres</p>	<p>Authorized Harvest: 2 forked horn or better buck deer</p> <p>Issue 2 buck deer tags for the archery period of August 17, 2024 through September 1, 2024 and the general rifle period of September 21, 2024 through October 6, 2024.</p>	<p>Install 3 wood duck boxes next to Butte Creek and Butte Slough.</p> <p>Install 1 owl box along high line irrigation ditch.</p> <p>Install 2 turtle structures in Butte Slough and Durham Slough.</p> <p>Leave growth (grass and weeds) on every other check of all rice fields – 637 acres.</p> <p>Spray and masticate 1 acre of blackberry vines in the north meadow.</p> <p>Plant 25 one gallon coyote brush plants in the north meadow.</p>