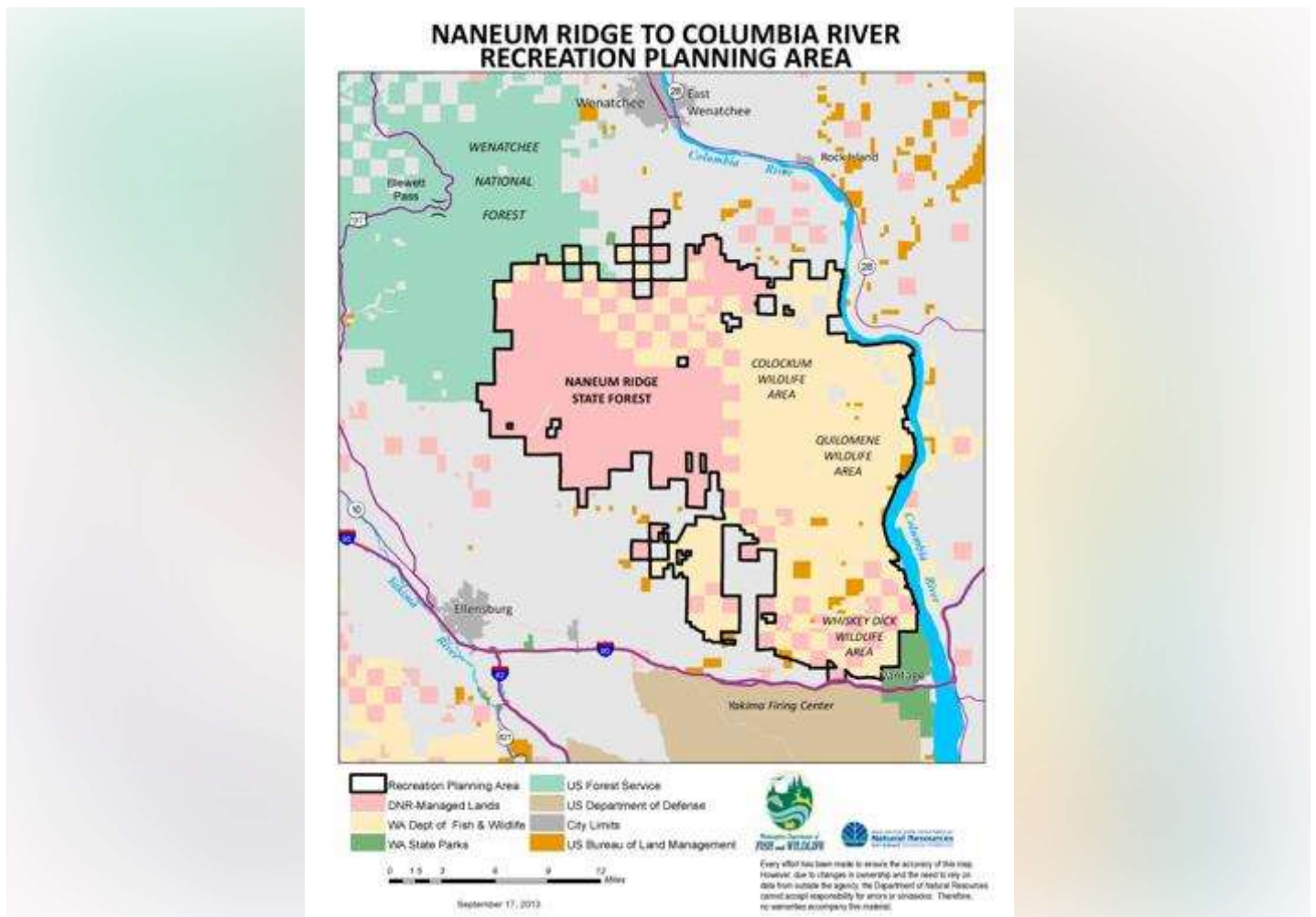


https://www.dailyrecordnews.com/members/options-proposed-for-elk-closure-area-in-naneum-columbia-river-recreation-plan/article_91856d86-4183-11e3-81a6-001a4bcf887a.html

FEATURED

Options proposed for elk closure area in Naneum-Columbia river recreation plan

By MIKE JOHNSTON senior writer
Oct 30, 2013



Contributed

Motorized access to the Whiskey Dick Wildlife Area would increase from February through April under one of the proposals in the Naneum Ridge to Columbia River recreation plan.

Another option would keep the area closed to motor traffic during that time to minimize disturbance and movement of the Colockum elk herd on to nearby farm and private rural property. The area is now under a temporary closure to vehicles from February to April.

The proposals are outlined in a plan to improve recreational use and access to the 230,000-acre Naneum Ridge to Columbia River area in Kittitas and Chelan counties.

The area is made up of state lands managed by the state departments of Natural Resources and Fish and Wildlife and is growing in popularity.

A citizens committee and agency staffs started working on a plan in April 2012 to improve recreational access and protect sensitive environmental and wildlife habitat areas.

Options eyed

The February through April closure of motorized traffic on green dot roads in the Whisky Dick wildlife area has been a point of contention with some outdoor groups and individuals who want the closure lifted.

The recreational plan, in one option, calls for the seasonal winter closure to be maintained with some limited motorized access at the perimeter of the wildlife area.

Another option envisions a three-phase approach: adding more perimeter road access around the wildlife area, then adding elk fencing to halt elk movement to private lands, then allowing additional motorized road access into the interior of the site.


Greg Shirato, deputy assistant director of the state Department of Fish and Wildlife, said the planning process is the first time the department has been called to examine how to increase and improve recreational access to a wildlife area for so many

different types of recreational uses.

Shirato's comments came during an open house on the options conducted last week in Ellensburg.

Debra Essman, president of the Kittitas County Field and Stream Club, said the nonprofit club wants the two state agencies and a citizens committee to examine the option of taking all motorized access restrictions off the area February through April as the closure isn't keeping elk in the area.

Naneum Recreation map

 Contributed Oct 30, 2013



Recreation plan unveils options for Naneum-Columbia River

[More Information](#)

Online: www.dnr.wa.gov/

To comment on options: email naneumridgerecplan@dnr.wa.gov.

Options, concepts

Some of the Naneum Ridge to Columbia River recreation planning “big” ideas that are featured in different options:

- Link trails in state-land areas to and from nearby U.S. Forest Service lands.
- Create a north-south non-motorized regional trail with connections with Squilchuck State Park in Chelan County.
- Develop more public access to the Naneum Ridge Forest from the south.
- Maintain the existing approximate 270-mile green dot outdoor road system; link with Forest Service roads, convert some roads to motorized trails.
- Develop wider trail system for non-motorized and motorized use; add more designated trailheads.
- Create a campground in the Coleman Creek area, two campgrounds in the Beacon Ridge area, and a primitive camp off Quilomene Road.
- Expand existing Lily Lake parking area to include non-motorized parking, add more trails to the area and a play area.
- Create a disabled hunter road access entry program.
- Provide amenities (portable toilets, etc.) during high-use times at popular locations. An example is the Quilomene Bay area along the Columbia River where up to 150 boats have been crowded on summer weekends.

Mike Johnston