



Report of 2017 Activities at Ninepipe Wildlife Management Area

John Grant, March 2018

This report covers land management activities planned and accomplished on the WMA during CY17. Many various other necessary daily activities not herein included are maintaining equipment, infrastructure, and public use facilities, and activities related to the general public or special interest groups.

Noxious weed management accomplishments are not specified by location. About 285 acres of chemical treatment and about 155 acres treated mechanically occurred. All crops planted are listed for the respective tract by the number of plots and acres. In total for the WMA, 40-ac barley, 1-ac triticale, 1-ac wheat, 33-ac cover crops, and 17-ac of nesting cover were planted in spring and 45-ac winter wheat were planted in the fall.

Piedalue Strips Tract

- Identify and prepare fields to offer for sharefarming lease.

Much progress was made in establishing field layouts and spraying, cultivating, picking rock, and planting food plots. In spring 30.4-ac triticale (3 plots) and 15.9-ac barley (4 plots) were planted as well as 4 plots of winter wheat totaling 28.8-ac.

- Plant grass/legume mix on hard-to-farm portions of retired sharefarmed fields.

Five spots were planted with DNC mix totaling 13.6-ac.

- Manage noxious weed with chemical and mechanical methods.

Accomplished.

Shelterbelt Tract (Delegate management of this tract to PFHS.)

- Use chemical methods to reduce and manage reed canary grass in at least 3 suitable wetland basins selected for treatment with potential natural recolonization by desirable native vegetation.

- Select and treat 10 small patches of less than 10 acres using crop/fallow rotation or chemical fallow to prepare seedbed for perennial herbaceous cover.

PFHS treated 2 plots estimated as 10-ac. Mix for pollinators provided by NRCS was planted in a 1.5-ac plot.

- Remove the invading Russian olive trees.
- Manage noxious weeds by spot spraying and mowing.

East of East Tract (Delegate management of this tract to PFHS.)

- Use chemical methods to reduce and manage reed canary grass in at least 3 suitable wetland basins selected for treatment with potential natural recolonization by desirable native vegetation.
- Use fallow, cover crops, and/or annual food production as part of a process to renovate six 1-2 acre plots of nesting cover.
- Spray and clip weeds to invigorate existing desirable upland vegetation.
- Remove invading Russian olive trees.

Pump House Tract

- Use chemical methods to reduce and manage reed canary grass.
- Develop and implement sharefarming lease to grow fields of grain by reconfiguring field boundaries and cleaning them up.

Much progress was made in establishing field layouts and spraying, cultivating, picking rock, and planting food plots. A 3.4-ac plot of triticale and 8.0-ac of barley in 2 plots were planted in spring and in fall 11.7-ac of winter wheat was planted.

- Plant grass/legume mix on hard-to-farm portions of retired sharefarm fields.

A 1.7-ac area of DNC mix was planted. Mix for pollinators provided by NRCS was planted in a 1.5-ac plot.

- Spray noxious weeds.

Accomplished.

- Manage problem weeds in newly planted DNC fields.

Native Prairie

- Remove the invading Russian olive trees.
- Manage noxious weeds by spot spraying and mowing.

212/93 Junction Tract

- Use mechanical or chemical methods to reduce reed canary grass in at least 3 suitable wetland basins selected for treatment with potential natural recolonization by desirable native vegetation.
- Plant 4 food plots of 1-3 acres each and prepare comparable ones for next year.
- Prepare up to 70 acres for a potential future sharefarming lease by reconfiguring field boundaries and cleaning them up.

Much progress was made in establishing field layouts and spraying, cultivating, picking rock, and planting food plots. Plots of 8.0-ac barley, 13.5 triticale, and 2 of wheat (11.3-ac total) were planted in spring.

- Maintain and invigorate cover by spraying and/or clipping weedy patches.

Weeds sprayed.

- Reduce population of Russian olive.
- Evaluate and treat 2 small grass plots seeded by PFHS in fall 2015.

Apparent failure to establish.

Irrigation Camp Tract

- Control noxious weeds using chemical, mechanical, and manual methods.
- Use rotation of grain crops, cover crops, and fallow on 4 sites of 1-5 acres to provide food and to renovate upland grass stands.

DU Island Tract

- Change boards in individual wetlands to restore and maintain wetland productivity.
- Supplement water in wetlands on eastern portion of this tract (especially Family Fish Pond).
- Clear brush from two ditches.

- Maintain various size fields of grain (up to 15 acres each).
22.0-ac of winter wheat was planted in 2 spots.
- Renovate old stands of grass with rotation of food plots to prepare seedbed.
- Invigorate newer stands with clipping, spraying, or haying.

Highway Shop Tract

- Provide one spring-seeded food plot and prepare/plant one in fall.
7.4-ac of spring triticale was planted.
- Clip and spray weeds.
- Remove invasive trees.

Octabeck Tract

- Apply scheduled dry out periods lasting a year or more in duration to individual wetlands to restore and maintain wetland productivity.
- Repair and develop irrigation ditches.
- Provide food plots of various sizes.
- Invigorate nesting cover by spraying and clipping weed infestations.

Schoonover Tract

- Apply scheduled dry out periods lasting a year or more in duration to individual wetlands to restore and maintain wetland productivity.
Only basins east of G canal had supplemental irrigation.
- Maintain and improve ditches.
- Provide food plots.
Winter wheat fields of 2.6-ac and 7.2-ac were planted.
- Increase size and number of cultivated plots on this tract.
- Invigorate grass stands by spraying and clipping weed infestations.
Weeds clipped and sprayed.

- Reduce the number of Russian olive and willow trees.

Grizzly Tract (Delegate some management of this tract to PFHS.)

- Apply scheduled dry out periods lasting a year or more in duration to individual wetlands to restore and maintain wetland productivity.

Unable to prevent flow through 3 damaged headgates.

- Develop proposal for water control structures on wetlands.
- Improve administrative access around wetland complex by installing culverts and filling shallow depressions.
- Clean and repair irrigation ditches.
- Provide food plots.
- Invigorate nesting cover by spraying and clipping weedy patches.
- Increase acreage under cultivation.
- Monitor and treat grass planted by PFHS in fall 2015.

Crop failure.

Fisher 50 Tract

- Invigorate decadent grass stands by mowing or applying herbicides.
- Manipulate water levels in wetland basins.

Post Creek Hill Tract

- Manipulate wetland levels.

Accomplished.

- Improve and maintain irrigation delivery system.

Ditches mowed, some bladed.

- Use grain, fallow, and cover crops as part of farming rotation to provide for wildlife food, pheasant brood habitat, and to improve soil health.

Fields were summer fallowed and 0.6-ac of winter wheat was planted.

- Invigorate grass/alfalfa fields by clipping and spraying weedy patches.

- Have PFHS renovate diverse site.

Approximately 5-ac under renovation with chemical preparation, seeding perennial herbaceous vegetation, and planting Wood's rose.

Cochran Tract

- Apply scheduled dry out periods lasting a year or more in duration to individual wetlands to restore and maintain wetland productivity.

Irrigated drawn down basins.

- Clean and repair irrigation ditches.

Ditches mowed, some bladed.

- Use grain, fallow, and cover crops as a farming rotation to provide for wildlife food, pheasant brood habitat, to improve soil health, and prepare sites for future nesting cover plantings.

Farming activities included preparing 8.1-ac that was planted to winter wheat in 3 places.

- Invigorate grass/alfalfa fields by clipping and spraying weedy patches.

Limited mowing.

Pheasants Forever Tract

- Improve water distribution, collection, and drainage by repairing dikes and modifying ditches.

Dikes and ditches mowed.

- Invigorate grasses with irrigation, mowing, and spot spraying weeds.
- Develop broodstrip to keep some areas of soil moist and sod-free during pheasant brood-rearing period.

North Herak Tract

- Improve water distribution, collection, and drainage by repairing dikes and modifying ditches.
- Provide food plots on existing farmland and expand field sizes.

Four small fields of winter wheat totally 3.1-ac were planted.

- Invigorate desirable vegetation and suppress weeds with irrigation, spot clipping, and spraying.

Some spraying and irrigating.

- Identify suitable sites to improve through the use of a rotation of grain/fallow to prepare clean seedbed.
- Control invasive reed canary grass.

A few ditches mowed.

Griffiths 80 Tract

- Repair water distribution system.
- Maintain vigor of grasses by spraying weeds and irrigating uplands in conjunction with wetland management.

Griffiths 160 Tract

- Map, repair, and improve irrigation ditches.

Most ditches mowed. PFHS digitized ditches.

- Under permit from USFWS, when grasslands require renovation, use a grain/fallow rotation for several years to prepare seedbed for planting new nesting cover.
- Invigorate grasses and suppress weeds with irrigation and spraying weeds.

Accomplished.

- Manipulate water levels in wetlands.

Accomplished.

- Clean up trash remaining from previous owner.

In process.

Herak/Myhre Tract

- Repair and clean irrigation ditches.
- Plant 2 existing food plots and start 2 new ones.

- Invigorate nesting cover by spraying noxious weeds, irrigating suitable sites during wetland recharge activities (after peak nesting season), and clipping weedy areas that cannot be sprayed.
- Assess area for shrub plantings.

Palmer Tract

- Improve and maintain flood irrigation system by cleaning ditches, reinforcing ditch banks, and installing 3 culverts.
- Create 3-5 acres of grain on 4 plots.
- Spray, clip, and pull noxious weeds.

Accomplished.

- Improve and manage broodstrip.

Dike 80 Tract

- Clean and repair irrigation ditches.
- Use rotation of food plots/fallow to prepare sites to plant nesting cover.
A 2.5-ac patch of winter wheat was planted in one of several farm fields.
- Invigorate nesting cover by clipping and spraying weedy sites.
- Maintain moist soil/early succession vegetation in late spring through summer.
- Operate solar powered pump brood strips annually from May-September.

Stockstad Tract

- Collect water in basins while irrigating uplands.

Accomplished.

- Repair and maintain ditches.

Most ditches mowed.

- Provide wildlife food in prepared sites and prepare seedbed for expanded or new food plots.

Several fields were expanded. One of 0.7-ac was planted to winter wheat.

Davis Tract

- Collect water in basins while irrigating uplands.

Irrigation runoff from neighbor provided sufficient wetland recharge.

- Repair, improve, and maintain ditch system.
- Select site and prepare 2 food plots.
- Spray and clip weedy patches of nesting cover.
- Improve drainage and administrative access.

Senator Wallace Tract

- Maintain and improve irrigation ditches.

Ditches mowed.

- Provide 3 food plots and prepare soils for 3 future food plots.

Accomplished.

- Invigorate decadent and weedy stands of nesting cover by spraying and mowing.
- Convert 1 or 2 farmed fields into nesting cover.

Apparent failure to establish.

Headquarters Tract

- Clean and repair irrigation ditch originating from E-canal.
- Provide food plots and plant nesting cover on cultivated acreages.
- Renovate poor quality nesting cover dominated by smooth brome and noxious weeds with a rotation of grain/fallow to prepare seedbed.
- Invigorate nesting cover by mowing and spraying.

Accomplished.

Short-eared Tract

- Keep wetland in various stages of dry/fill with irrigation flow.

Accomplished.

- Clean and improve irrigation ditches.

Lots mowed, some bladed.

- Install pipes to transport irrigation tailwater across D Canal.

- Plant grain or cover crops on tilled acreages.

Four fields of winter wheat (5.8-ac total) was planted.

- Have PFHS improve nesting cover on 1 tilled field and several sites with decadent perennial vegetation.

Accomplished with wide range of success. Planted wetland plants in 1 basin.

- Invigorate nesting cover with clipping, spraying, and irrigating.

Accomplished.

Ringneck Ranch Tract

- Manipulate water inflows and outflows to provide habitat for nesting, brood-rearing, and migration stopover for waterfowl and shorebirds and to restore and maintain wetland productivity.

Accomplished primarily via runoff from neighbor's irrigation.

- Use drawdown and tillage to setback cattail and reed canary grass encroachment thereby maintaining habitat diversity.

- Restore and develop flood irrigation ditch system and install culverts.

In process.

- Remove willow trees.

- Plant food plots and nesting cover on prepared fields.

Winter wheat was planted in 3 places totaling 6.4-ac.

- Control noxious weeds.
Some spraying and mowing.
- Prepare new seedbed on 10 acres for future food plots and nesting cover.
- Manage 3 broodstrips.
Only 1 managed because others were fully inundated.
- Remove clay ridge spoils from topsoil field.
Accomplished.

Allen Tract

- Improve, maintain, and clean ditches.
Most ditches mowed.
- Provide food in existing plots and establish 2 new areas for cultivation.
A 0.7-ac plot of winter wheat was planted.
- Maintain vigor of nesting cover with mowing, spraying, and irrigating.
Some mowing and spraying.
- Convert farmed sites into DNC where appropriate.
- Maintain 2 broodstrips.
- Plant nesting cover.
Accomplished.