

History of elk-agriculture conflicts in the Yakima Basin

ANTHONY NOVACK, *Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife*

Elk management at the landscape level has impacts to localized agricultural interests. The Yakima Basin has three general areas, Kittitas Valley, Yakima-Wenas Valley, and Hanford reach, where differences in management of the surrounding landscapes and the public/private ownership matrix results in a distinct set of conflicts with elk and agriculture. Crop depredations typically occur at the interface of private lands bordering large public landholdings. Small individual landowners can suffer tens of thousands of dollars worth of damage in the form of direct crop losses, broken fences, irrigation repairs and other property losses. A broad array of tools have been employed to minimize elk-agricultural conflicts which include: 1) compensation for crop losses, 2) construction of elk proof fence to protect crops, 3) issuance of special elk hunting permits and a modified elk seasons to remove problem elk.