

Proposed Grazing Guidance and Grazing Management Tools

Wildlife Committee meeting 11 June 2020

Ozeran grazing permit, 4-O Ranch Unit





Existing Direction

- FW Commission Policy C-6003
- WAC 220-500-200
- Internal Wildlife Program direction – templates and forms
- Strategic Plan (referenced by WAC)



Newly formalized GUIDANCE

- Purpose
- Vision for Grazing on WDFW Lands
- Statutory Authority for Land Management
- Roles of Grazing to Meet WDFW Mission
- Managing Risk of Grazing-Related Resource Damage with Protective Measures
- Wolf-Livestock Conflict Management on WDFW Lands



GUIDANCE: Policy C-6003

Grazing to be consistent with ~~desired ecological conditions~~ WDFW's conservation mission ~~or~~ and WAC 220-500-200.

Roles of grazing on WDFW lands

- ~~Manipulate~~ Manage vegetation for fish and wildlife
- ~~Accomplish a specific habitat objective~~
- Enhance recreational opportunity
- ~~Facilitate~~ Encourage conservation across multiple ownerships on landscape scales through coordinated resource management (CRM)
- Protect community character



GUIDANCE: Policy C-6003

Grazing caveats:

- ▶ Integrate with other uses
- ▶ Maintain ecological integrity
- ▶ ~~Protect all resource values~~ Maintain consistency with acquisition funding sources



GUIDANCE: Policy C-6003

Cross-program review

- ~~Develop~~ Conduct review procedures to ensure that permits are subject to best available science



GUIDANCE: Policy C-6003

Other items

- ~~Commission review~~
- ~~Grazing management plans~~
- ~~Coordinated resource management plans~~
- Consistency with ~~Strategic Plan~~ WAC



GUIDANCE: WAC 220-500-200

Commission review

- ▶ REQUIRED, with the following exceptions:
 - Temporary permits
 - Permits being renewed/renegotiated/re-issued on acreage permitted within the previous 10 years for non-temporary grazing
 - Permits being issued on lands acquired by WDFW within the previous 12 months – but, a permit issued on recently acquired lands without Commission review is limited to a 3-year duration, and if later renewed, must first be approved by the Commission
- ▶ ~~Permits may be issued unless disapproved by Commission within 30 days~~ must be approved by the Commission to ensure conformity with Policy C-6003



GUIDANCE: WAC 220-500-200

Upon expiration...

- Renew for up to 5 years
- Renegotiate with existing/new permittee
- Go to public auction, with ability to reject any and all bids
- Decline to re-issue the permit, providing notice and rationale



GUIDANCE: WAC 220-500-200

Grazing management plans

- Include impacts, desired conditions, benefits, monitoring plan, evaluation schedule
- May be altered as required to benefit fish and wildlife management
- Permits must be inspected at least 2 times/year
- Required EXCEPT for permits ~~lasting less than 2 weeks~~ where grazing is allowed for equivalent of < 14 days



GUIDANCE: WAC 220-500-200

Other items

- ▶ Permits consistent with ~~desired ecological conditions~~ mission/management objectives ~~or~~ and Strategic Plan
- ▶ Temporary permits for up to 1 year, fees not necessary
- ▶ Permits may be canceled for noncompliance prior to expiration
- ▶ Public access maintained on permit area unless closed by Commission or Director's emergency order



GUIDANCE: Managing risk of resource damage

If risk cannot be managed, grazing is not permitted.

Protections include

- Stocking rate
- Timing
- Additional measures, e.g.:
 - Utilization triggers - Post-fire rest
 - Sensitive species - Wolf conflict minimization



GUIDANCE: Wolf-livestock Conflict Management

- ▶ Wolf conservation prioritized– long-term conflict could render some permits incompatible
- ▶ Sanitation and nonlethal deterrence required
- ▶ Annual Operational Plan (AOP) required if wolves occur
- ▶ Lethal removal of wolves to remain a case-by-case option, but this is governed separately by the Wolf Recovery Plan and the Wolf-Livestock Interaction Protocol



Grazing GUIDANCE and Grazing MANAGEMENT TOOLS

MANAGEMENT TOOLS are included that demonstrate how the GUIDANCE is implemented and:

- ▶ Are cited by Policy/WAC

OR

- ▶ Provide transparency to topics of particular interest



Grazing Management TOOLS

- Grazing Management Plans
- Monitoring and Adaptive Management
- Ecological Integrity
- Wolf-Livestock Conflict Permit Template
- Grazing Evaluation Framework (GEF)

Mostly unchanged over ~ 5 years, but never formalized

Still early with <5 instances of implementation of either Tool



TOOLS: Grazing Evaluation Framework

- ▶ Mostly “new” procedure – approval from LDM, WRPM, RD
- ▶ DOES NOT apply to:
 - Temporary permits
 - Acreage permitted within last 10 years
- ▶ DOES apply to:
 - All other new grazing on WDFW lands
 - Grazing that would begin or continue on lands being considered for acquisition by WDFW



TOOLS: GEF

Potential objective checklist

Habitat & Recreation

- Forage benefits to wildlife
- Control vegetation structure for waterfowl
- Agricultural residue control
- Other vegetation control (reduce competition, fuels management, etc.)

Landscape-scale conservation

- Alternate pasture
- Coordinated resource management

Community Character

- Potential fire risk
- Land acquisition goals and agreements
- Maintain undeveloped space
- Build cooperative relationships



TOOLS: GEF

Potential risk checklist

- Conflicts with acquisition/management funding
- Fencing issues
- Diseases
- Conflicts with recovery plans, species of special interest, etc.
- Soils and soil crust impacts
- Conflicts with aquatic restoration
- Conflicts with recreation
- Weeds
- Wolf-livestock conflict



TOOLS: Wolf-Livestock Conflict Permit Language

New for 2019

- ▶ Nonlethal deterrence measures added to renewing permits where wolves occur

New for 2020

- ▶ Annual Operational Plans will be developed in the Blue Mountains where wolves occur

New for 2021

- ▶ Sanitation and required nonlethal deterrence measures added to all renewing permits
- ▶ All permits where wolves could occur will be amended to provide for AOP development if wolves do occur



TOOLS: Wolf-Livestock AOP

Steps

1. Wildlife Area Manager, District Wildlife Biologist, Wildlife Conflict Specialist conduct Risk Assessment and provide recommendations for Step 2.



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- Customized non-lethals
- Temporary livestock movement or removal



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2. Statewide, Regional, Divisional, and wolf-related staff provide comments and adjustments to recommendations.

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3. Wildlife Area Manager discusses AOP with Permittee and adapts as necessary to achieve consensus.

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4. If no consensus, repeat Steps 2-3 iteratively until resolved.

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4. If no consensus, repeat Steps 2-3 iteratively until resolved.
5. In the event of wolf activity center <1 mile from permit area, or depredation within local pack, repeat Steps 1-4 (within grazing season)



Timeline

Event	Date
Wildlife Program review	Nov 6 2019
Wildlife Area staff review	Dec 18 2019
Fish / Habitat Program review	Feb 11 2020
EMT Meeting	Apr 22 2020
External Outreach	from late April 2020
Commission (Wildlife Committee)	June 12 2020 (Yakima)
SEPA Review/Determination	June 20/July 20 2020
WAC public comment period	Aug 6 – 27 2020
Full Commission Briefing	Sept 11 2020 (Olympia)
Full Commission Decision	Oct 23 2020 (Colville)
Staff AOP Webinar	Fall 2020



Outreach/Public Comments