Proposed Grazing Guidance and Grazing Management Tools

Wildlife Committee meeting 11 June 2020
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 for 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
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
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.

Protection includes

- 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
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.
TOOLS: Wolf-Livestock AOP

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- Customized non-lethals
- Temporary livestock movement or removal
TOOLS: Wolf-Livestock AOP

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2. Statewide, Regional, Divisional, and wolf-related staff provide comments and adjustments to recommendations.
TOOLS: Wolf-Livestock AOP

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4. If no consensus, repeat Steps 2-3 iteratively until resolved.
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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)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
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<td>Wildlife Program review</td>
<td>Nov 6 2019</td>
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<td>Wildlife Area staff review</td>
<td>Dec 18 2019</td>
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<td>Fish / Habitat Program review</td>
<td>Feb 11 2020</td>
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<td>EMT Meeting</td>
<td>Apr 22 2020</td>
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<td>External Outreach</td>
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<td>Commission (Wildlife Committee)</td>
<td>June 12 2020 (Yakima)</td>
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<td>SEPA Review/Determination</td>
<td>June 20/July 20 2020</td>
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<td>WAC public comment period</td>
<td>Aug 6 – 27 2020</td>
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<td>Full Commission Briefing</td>
<td>Sept 11 2020 (Olympia)</td>
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<td>Full Commission Decision</td>
<td>Oct 23 2020 (Colville)</td>
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<td>Staff AOP Webinar</td>
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