

SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

Purpose of checklist:

Governmental agencies use this checklist to help determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant. This information is also helpful to determine if available avoidance, minimization or compensatory mitigation measures will address the probable significant impacts or if an environmental impact statement will be prepared to further analyze the proposal.

Instructions for applicants:

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Please answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. You may need to consult with an agency specialist or private consultant for some questions. You may use "not applicable" or "does not apply" only when you can explain why it does not apply and not when the answer is unknown. You may also attach or incorporate by reference additional studies reports. Complete and accurate answers to these questions often avoid delays with the SEPA process as well as later in the decision-making process.

The checklist questions apply to all parts of your proposal, even if you plan to do them over a period of time or on different parcels of land. Attach any additional information that will help describe your proposal or its environmental effects. The agency to which you submit this checklist may ask you to explain your answers or provide additional information reasonably related to determining if there may be significant adverse impact.

Instructions for Lead Agencies:

Please adjust the format of this template as needed. Additional information may be necessary to evaluate the existing environment, all interrelated aspects of the proposal and an analysis of adverse impacts. The checklist is considered the first but not necessarily the only source of information needed to make an adequate threshold determination. Once a threshold determination is made, the lead agency is responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the checklist and other supporting documents.

Use of checklist for nonproject proposals:

For nonproject proposals (such as ordinances, regulations, plans and programs), complete the applicable parts of sections A and B plus the [SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS \(part D\)](#). Please completely answer all questions that apply and note that the words "project," "applicant," and "property or site" should be read as "proposal," "proponent," and "affected geographic area," respectively. The lead agency may exclude (for non-projects) questions in Part B - Environmental Elements –that do not contribute meaningfully to the analysis of the proposal.

A. Background [\[HELP\]](#)

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable: WDFW Grazing Guidance and Grazing Management Tools
2. Name of applicant: Paul Dahmer, WDFW Land Stewardship & Operations Section Manager

3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Natural Resource Bldg, 1111 Washington St SE, Olympia, WA 98501
360 902-2480
4. Date checklist prepared: August 2020
5. Agency requesting checklist: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable): We anticipate implementation of the proposal in November 2020.
7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain. No
8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal. Literature is cited in the WDFW Grazing Guidance and Grazing Management Tools document. In 2002 a SEPA review was completed for the current Commission Policy for Domestic Livestock Grazing on Department Lands with a determination of non-significance.
9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain. No
10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.
None
11. Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)

WDFW proposes to update the oversight and implementation of grazing on WDFW owned and controlled lands. This proposal includes the draft WDFW Grazing Guidance and Grazing Management Tools document. The document includes content regarding a vision and roles of grazing to meet WDFW's mission, WDFW's statutory authority for land management, managing the risks associated with grazing, components of grazing management plans, monitoring and adaptive management, and ecological integrity.

The document also includes proposed changes to both the grazing policy and WAC focused on clarifying inconsistencies and ambiguities between the two, proposed direction regarding wolf-livestock management, and a framework to evaluate potential new grazing on WDFW lands.

These guidelines and tools are not project specific but will provide direction for grazing permits on WDFW lands including over 50 existing grazing permits on approximately 110,000 acres, and potential new grazing permits. Potential new grazing on WDFW lands, where grazing has not been permitted in the previous 10 years, may require project specific SEPA review.

- 1) Proposed changes to existing Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) Grazing Policy C-6003
 - a. Clarify roles of grazing on Department lands by adding the role of grazing to enhance recreational opportunity. Further clarify the role of grazing to protect community character which is consistent with the existing policy that allows grazing when consistent with the Department's strategic plan. The most recent strategic plan, 2017-2019, includes a goal to protect community character.
 - b. Maintain requirement that permitted grazing must ensure that ecological integrity is maintained, and add requirement that grazing must be consistent with acquisition funding requirements.
 - c. Remove language requiring that grazing must ensure protection of all resource values. This language lacks specificity found in the proposed WAC language stating that grazing must be consistent with WDFW's mission, management objectives and strategic plan.
 - d. Require Department cross-program review of grazing permits. Existing language merely directs the Department to develop such review procedures.
 - e. Eliminate language already found or proposed for inclusion in grazing WAC 220-500-200, having to do with grazing plans and Commission review. Require consistency with grazing WAC and the Department's conservation mission.

- 2) Proposed changes to existing Grazing WAC 220-500-200
 - a. Clarify that grazing must be consistent with WDFW's mission, management objectives AND strategic plan. This language replaces existing language that says that grazing must be consistent with desired ecological conditions.
 - b. The Commission currently does not review grazing permits being renewed. New language would clarify that permits up for renewal include permits where grazing has occurred within the last ten years. Grazing permit renewals are not issued where only temporary permits have previously occurred. Existing WAC states that temporary permits are those permits that have been issued for a period of not more than one year.
 - c. Add the requirement that the Commission must approve, rather than just review, all non-temporary grazing activity on lands that have not been grazed within the past ten years. Existing WAC specifically excludes temporary grazing activity from the requirement of Commission review.
 - d. Clarify that grazing plans are not required for permits where livestock grazing will last for fewer than 14 days. Current language says permits lasting less than two weeks. This clarifies that the 14 days need not necessarily be consecutive.
 - e. Add that Commission review is not required for permits for land acquired within the previous 12 months, but such permits are limited to a duration of 3 years after which time a grazing permit must be approved by the Commission before it can be renewed.
 - f. Add a specific provision allowing the Department to discontinue a grazing permit upon expiration of the permit.

- 3) Proposed Wolf-Livestock Conflict Grazing Permit Language
 - a. All grazing permits will include livestock sanitation measures and nonlethal wolf deterrence measures that exceed the expectations outlined in WDFW's wolf-livestock interaction protocol. For those grazing permits where wolf habitat may be present, a procedure will facilitate development of an Annual Operational Plan (AOP) if and when wolves occur in the applicable area. The AOP, just one component of an existing grazing management plan, may include additional customized measures as negotiated with the permittee, and if necessary,

temporary livestock removal or deferral. In cases of temporary livestock removal or deferral, WDFW will attempt to locate—but cannot guarantee—alternate pasture.

- 4) Proposed Grazing Evaluation Framework which is a tool used on a case-by-case basis to evaluate the risks and benefits of potential new grazing on WDFW lands.
 - a. The department may receive grazing proposals for WDFW-managed lands from a variety of sources, including staff, grazing operators, state government personnel, and other members of the general public. These proposals are sometimes associated with acreage being considered for, or undergoing, acquisition by WDFW. The Grazing Evaluation Framework was drafted with cross-program review to provide staff a consistent method of responding to grazing proposals. It directs staff to identify objectives, risks, costs, and income associated with a grazing proposal. When WDFW applies the Grazing Evaluation Framework to a given grazing proposal, staff will develop a recommendation to management regarding the proposal. Management will decide whether or not staff will move forward to prepare a full permit for district team review.

12. Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist.

This proposal will provide guidance for current and potential future grazing activities on all WDFW public wildlife areas throughout the state. Please see wildlife area maps at

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/places-to-go/wildlife-areas>

B. Environmental Elements [\[HELP\]](#)

1. Earth [\[help\]](#)

a. General description of the site:

(circle one): Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous, other _____

Site conditions vary by location. Grazing typically occurs on flat and hilly landscapes but also occurs in areas with moderately steep slopes.

b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?

The proposal does not include a change to locations and slopes.

Some areas include steep slopes and vertical cliffs.

c. What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them and note any agricultural land of long-term commercial significance and whether the proposal results in removing any of these soils.

Soil conditions vary by permit location and range from sands to loams to lithosols. No soils will be removed. Most grazing permits include lands that have been grazed for many years, and some permits include areas that were cultivated in the past under private ownership, likely under dryland conditions, until cultivation was abandoned.

- d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe.

The proposal does not include a change to locations and soil stability.

Soil stability varies by location. Soil mobility on permit areas is typically most closely associated with primitive access roads which exist independent of grazing activities.

- e. Describe the purpose, type, total area, and approximate quantities and total affected area of any filling, excavation, and grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.

NA

- f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.

The proposal does not include a change to clearing, construction or use.

Clearing or site preparation that could infrequently occur would be fenceline preparation or site preparation for infrastructure such as troughs or fords. Fenceline preparation is usually limited to mowing (negligible soil disturbance), and fenceposts or fords would have either a very small footprint of disturbance or none at all. Permits are monitored to identify and address any erosion.

- g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)?

NA

- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any:

Although the proposal does not change erosion risk, where they exist, erosion risks are specifically addressed in grazing plans by limiting access to streambanks and by limiting the stocking rate within a specific pasture.

2. Air [\[help\]](#)

- a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal during construction, operation, and maintenance when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.

NA

- b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe.

NA

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any:

NA

3. **Water** [\[help\]](#)

a. Surface Water: [\[help\]](#)

- 1) Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into.

The proposal does not include a change to the presence of surface water.

The presence of surface water varies by permit location and may include streams, lakes, ponds and wetlands.

- 2) Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans.

NA

Maintenance and the construction of fencing to protect wetland areas are routine grazing management activities and will not change as a result of this proposal.

- 3) Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of fill material.

NA

- 4) Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

The proposal does not include a change to withdrawals or diversions.

- 5) Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? If so, note location on the site plan. The presence of grazing within a 100-year floodplain will not change.

This may occur in some locations. Specific measures are identified in grazing management plans to protect soils and vegetation including fencing to keep animals out, limiting the allowed stocking rate, and the use of range riders to keep animals out of certain areas.

- 6) Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge.

No change in waste is anticipated.

Livestock access to surface waters is minimized or prevented in grazing management plans.

b. Ground Water: [\[help\]](#)

- 1) Will groundwater be withdrawn from a well for drinking water or other purposes? If so, give a general description of the well, proposed uses and approximate quantities withdrawn from the well. Will water be discharged to groundwater? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

The proposal does not include a change to withdrawals.

Existing grazing permits include the consumption of water by livestock at limited watering points that may include well-fed troughs. Unused water is discharged to the ground.

- 2) Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: Domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals. . . ; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.

NA

c. Water Runoff (including stormwater):

- 1) Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities, if known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe.

NA

- 2) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe.
No change is anticipated.

- 3) Does the proposal alter or otherwise affect drainage patterns in the vicinity of the site? If so, describe.

No

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water, and drainage pattern impacts, if any:

The proposal will not alter surface, ground, or runoff water, or drainage patterns.

4. **Plants** [\[help\]](#)

a. Check the types of vegetation found on the site:

- deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other
- evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other
- shrubs
- grass
- pasture
- crop or grain
- Orchards, vineyards or other permanent crops.
- wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other
- water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other
- other types of vegetation

Vegetation varies by location and may include most vegetation types.

b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered?

The proposal does not include changes in vegetation removal.

Vegetation removed with grazing typically includes grasses and to a lesser extent forbs, shrubs and sedges. Individual grazing management plans set utilization limits controlling the amount of vegetation removed to protect existing plant communities and ecological integrity.

b. List threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site.

No change in location is proposed.

Known threatened or endangered species presence varies by location. Known threatened and endangered species are identified in each grazing management plan with measures identified in each plan where required to protect those species.

d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any:

NA

e. List all noxious weeds and invasive species known to be on or near the site.

No change in noxious weeds is anticipated.

Existing noxious weeds and invasive species vary by location.

5. **Animals** [\[help\]](#)

a. List any birds and other animals which have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site.

Examples include:

birds: hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds, other:

mammals: deer, bear, elk, beaver, other:

fish: bass, salmon, trout, herring, shellfish, other _____

No change in permit locations is proposed.

Animal presence varies by location. All types of animals may occur on or near grazing permitted lands including birds, mammals and fish.

b. List any threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site.

No change in permit locations is proposed.

Known threatened or endangered species presence varies by location. Known threatened and endangered species are identified in each grazing management plan with measures identified in each plan where required to protect those species.

c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain.

No change in permit locations is proposed.

Permit areas may include mule deer migration routes, waterfowl and other bird migration routes, and fish migration streams.

d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any:

Individual grazing management plans include measures where necessary to preserve or enhance wildlife including limiting the number (stocking rate) and duration of livestock permitted, fencing to keep animals away from salmonid and steelhead streams, and the use of range riders to manage livestock movement.

e. List any invasive animal species known to be on or near the site.

Invasive animal species may vary by permit location but are not known to be common.

6. Energy and Natural Resources [\[help\]](#)

- a. What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc.

No change is proposed. Regular operation and maintenance activities only require gasoline for site access.

- b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties?
If so, generally describe.

No

- c. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal?
List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any:

NA

7. Environmental Health [\[help\]](#)

- a. Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste, that could occur as a result of this proposal?
If so, describe.

No

- 1) Describe any known or possible contamination at the site from present or past uses.
- 2) Describe existing hazardous chemicals/conditions that might affect project development and design. This includes underground hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines located within the project area and in the vicinity.
- 3) Describe any toxic or hazardous chemicals that might be stored, used, or produced during the project's development or construction, or at any time during the operating life of the project.
- 4) Describe special emergency services that might be required.
- 5) Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any:

b. Noise

- 1) What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)?

None

- 2) What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or a long-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from the site.

NA

3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any:

8. Land and Shoreline Use [\[help\]](#)

a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties? Will the proposal affect current land uses on nearby or adjacent properties? If so, describe.

No change

b. Has the project site been used as working farmlands or working forest lands? If so, describe. How much agricultural or forest land of long-term commercial significance will be converted to other uses as a result of the proposal, if any? If resource lands have not been designated, how many acres in farmland or forest land tax status will be converted to nonfarm or nonforest use?

No change

1) Will the proposal affect or be affected by surrounding working farm or forest land normal business operations, such as oversize equipment access, the application of pesticides, tilling, and harvesting? If so, how:

No change

c. Describe any structures on the site.

Structures vary by location and are typically limited in number.

d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what?

No

e. What is the current zoning classification of the site?

Varies by location

f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site?

Varies by location

g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site?

NA

h. Has any part of the site been classified as a critical area by the city or county? If so, specify.

NA

i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project?

NA

j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace?

NA

k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any:

NA

l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any:

No change in activity

m. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts to agricultural and forest lands of long-term commercial significance, if any:

NA

9. Housing [\[help\]](#)

a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

NA

b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

NA

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any:

NA

10. Aesthetics [\[help\]](#)

a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed?

NA

b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed?

NA

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any:

NA

11. Light and Glare [\[help\]](#)

a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur?

NA

b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views?

NA

c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal?

NA

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any:

NA

12. Recreation [\[help\]](#)

a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity?

Dispersed fish and wildlife-related recreation, and other outdoor recreation.

b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe.

No

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any:

NA

13. Historic and cultural preservation [\[help\]](#)

a. Are there any buildings, structures, or sites, located on or near the site that are over 45 years old listed in or eligible for listing in national, state, or local preservation registers? If so, specifically describe.

The presence, if any, varies by location. No change to current activities is planned.

b. Are there any landmarks, features, or other evidence of Indian or historic use or occupation? This may include human burials or old cemeteries. Are there any material evidence, artifacts, or areas of cultural importance on or near the site? Please list any professional studies conducted at the site to identify such resources.

The presence, if any, varies by location. No change to current activities is planned.

c. Describe the methods used to assess the potential impacts to cultural and historic resources on or near the project site. Examples include consultation with tribes and the department of archeology and historic preservation, archaeological surveys, historic maps, GIS data, etc.

New construction associated with grazing permits, such as fences or water troughs, requires consultation with tribes and the Dept of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, and any required surveys. The proposal will not change this activity.

d. Proposed measures to avoid, minimize, or compensate for loss, changes to, and disturbance to resources. Please include plans for the above and any permits that may be required.

Potential disturbances and proposed measures to avoid or minimize them will not change based on the proposal.

14. Transportation [\[help\]](#)

a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site or affected geographic area and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any.

NA

b. Is the site or affected geographic area currently served by public transit? If so, generally describe. If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?

No

c. How many additional parking spaces would the completed project or non-project proposal have? How many would the project or proposal eliminate?

Zero

d. Will the proposal require any new or improvements to existing roads, streets, pedestrian, bicycle or state transportation facilities, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).

No

e. Will the project or proposal use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of) water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe.

No

f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project or proposal? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur and what percentage of the volume would be trucks (such as commercial and nonpassenger vehicles). What data or transportation models were used to make these estimates?

Zero

g. Will the proposal interfere with, affect or be affected by the movement of agricultural and forest products on roads or streets in the area? If so, generally describe.

No

h. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any:

15. Public Services [\[help\]](#)

a. Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, public transit, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe.

No

b. Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any.

16. Utilities [\[help\]](#)

a. Circle utilities currently available at the site:
electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system,
other _____

NA

- d. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed.

None

C. Signature [\[HELP\]](#)

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature: 

Name of signee: Paul Dahmer

Position and Agency/Organization: WDFW/ Land Stewardship & Operations Section Manager

Date Submitted: August 31, 2020

D. Supplemental sheet for nonproject actions [\[HELP\]](#)

(IT IS NOT NECESSARY to use this sheet for project actions)

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction with the list of the elements of the environment.

When answering these questions, be aware of the extent the proposal, or the types of activities likely to result from the proposal, would affect the item at a greater intensity or at a faster rate than if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in general terms.

1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?

Livestock manure is associated with grazing and could result in limited runoff into surface waters. Some emissions of carbon dioxide and methane are associated with livestock grazing. Addition of fine sediment mobilized by grazing activities is also a possibility, but recent research suggests that this is not a major concern in many light or moderate grazing regimes.

Proposed guidelines and tools are designed to avoid or reduce these impacts and ensure that intense grazing does not occur unless (for instance) the objective is to control dense invasive vegetation where native vegetation is highly disturbed.

Grazing management plans specifically designate and restrict the location, intensity, duration, and frequency of grazing to avoid or minimize runoff and emissions.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are:

The proposal would require standardized grazing management plans to limit the intensity (stocking rate), timing (duration and frequency), and location (to protect aquatic, riparian, and otherwise sensitive habitat) of grazing. The proposal would further require monitoring of impacts to inform adaptive management to avoid impacts. Fencing and

watering stations are also used where needed to restrict livestock access to waters and riparian zones.

Riparian and upland monitoring procedures would be in place that gauge the level of disturbance from livestock grazing enabling the department to address any unanticipated impacts.

The Grazing Evaluation Framework is a tool designed to more consistently and comprehensively assess benefits, risks and costs associated with potential new grazing on WDFW lands. If an assessment warrants development of a new grazing plan, specific measures would be identified to avoid or minimize the risk of erosion and movement of livestock manure into water.

Some emissions of carbon dioxide and methane are associated with livestock grazing. Livestock stocking rates control the the level of emissions.

2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?

Grazing is designed to remove a prescribed volume of forage plants including primarily grasses and some forbs. Limited manure runoff into waters could potentially occur in fish habitat. Grazing management plans specifically designate and restrict the location, intensity, duration, and frequency of grazing to control the volume of forage plants and avoid or minimize manure runoff.

Guidelines and tools would standardize management plans and ecological integrity monitoring to identify, avoid, and respond to risks associated with grazing.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are:

The updated Commission policy would continue to require the maintenance of ecological integrity. Commission policy would also require cross-program review of grazing management plans.

The proposal would require standardized grazing management plans to limit the intensity (stocking rate), timing (duration and frequency), and location (to protect aquatic, riparian, and otherwise sensitive habitats and species) of grazing. Grazing management plans would conservatively estimate and allocate acceptable forage utilization levels in order to protect plants, fish and wildlife. Known threatened and endangered species are identified in each grazing management plan with measures identified in each plan where required to protect those species. Fencing and watering stations are also used where needed to restrict livestock access to waters and riparian zones. These measures would also prevent or minimize the risk of high levels of bare soil, livestock trailing, and erosion that might otherwise be possible under excessive grazing intensity or utilization.

The proposal would further require monitoring of impacts to inform adaptive management to avoid impacts to fish and wildlife. In addition, the proposal would specifically require measures designed to minimize the likelihood of wolf-livestock conflict in grazing management plans.

The Grazing Evaluation Framework is a tool designed to more consistently and comprehensively assess benefits, risks and costs associated with potential new grazing on WDFW lands, and therefore would reduce the risk of negative impacts to plants,

animals, fish and marine life. This tool would result in avoidance of impacts from proposed new grazing if the assessment indicates that significant impacts cannot be mitigated. If the assessment leads to development of a new grazing management plan, specific measures would be identified to mitigate the risk. The Grazing Evaluation Framework, as well as most grazing management plans, would identify invasive plants as a potential concern, enabling site-appropriate measures to be developed regardless of whether or not the introduction and/or spread of invasive vegetation is directly associated with livestock.

The Wolf-Livestock Conflict Grazing Permit Language would require that all grazing permits include livestock sanitation measures and nonlethal wolf deterrence measures that exceed the expectations outlined in WDFW's wolf-livestock interaction protocol. For those grazing permits where wolf habitat may be present, a procedure would facilitate development of an Annual Operational Plan (AOP) if and when wolves occur in the applicable area. The AOP may include additional customized measures as negotiated with the permittee, and if necessary, temporary livestock removal or deferral. In cases of temporary livestock removal or deferral, WDFW would attempt to locate, but could not guarantee, alternate pasture for the affected producer.

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

Grazing guidelines and tools would not be likely to deplete energy or natural resources.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are:

Although some biomass removal results by definition from livestock grazing within an individual year, appropriately managed livestock grazing is consistent with durable, robust natural ecosystems and benefits to wildlife habitat. The proposal would help ensure that sufficient levels of review exist to ensure appropriate management and monitoring of impacts. The proposal provides for a section within grazing management plans where utilization limits are specified. Sustainable utilization does not deplete the capacity of rangeland vegetation to regrow each year.

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection; such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?

Grazing could occur in environmentally sensitive areas where measures exist to protect the resource.

Grazing guidelines and grazing management tools would standardize management plans and ecological integrity monitoring to identify, avoid, and respond to risks associated with grazing.

Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:

The grazing management planning protects sensitive areas by limiting stocking rates, the duration and frequency of grazing, and access to water and potentially other sensitive locations while requiring monitoring of impacts to ecological integrity. Fencing and watering stations are used where needed to restrict livestock access to waters and riparian zones.

Additional protective measures typically identified in grazing management plans include forage use limitations, requirements for rest from grazing, weed control, and post-fire recovery periods that are included in the proposal designed to protect environmentally sensitive areas and habitat.

Commission Policy C-6003 would continue to encourage adaptive management which will be based on habitat monitoring results reported in grazing management plans.

The proposal, through the Grazing Evaluation Framework, would establish a clear and consistent process for evaluating the risks and benefits of developing grazing management plans for any new grazing activity that might be proposed in the future.

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?

Grazing would continue on WDFW lands with additional, more consistent and comprehensive planning and oversight. Recently updated wildlife area management plans identify the use of grazing as a part of ongoing management, and this proposal will help ensure that grazing is used in a consistent manner on WDFW-managed lands regardless of the particular wildlife area where it may be permitted.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:

See proposed measures in #4 above. Commission Policy would continue to require that ecological integrity be maintained where grazing is permitted.

Dispersed fish and wildlife-related recreation, and other outdoor recreational opportunity would continue.

6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?

The proposal will not increase such demands.

Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are: N/A

7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

The proposal will not conflict with other laws and requirements. Standardized-format grazing management plans described in the Grazing Guidance and Grazing Management Tools document specify that relevant plans, policies, laws, and agreements will be considered when developing individual grazing plans. In 2020, USFWS issued a biological assessment that allows WDFW to continue using federal Pittman-Robertson funds to manage a variety of grazing activities on the wildlife areas. Similarly, USFWS issued a non-jeopardy biological opinion in 2019 allowing the continued use of Pittman-Robertson funds to manage grazing in certain areas where the federally listed Spalding's catchfly occurs.