



WAC 220-500-200

**Grazing Program Policy and WAC
Briefing and Public Hearing**

Paul Dahmer, Wildlife Area Section Manager

Jeff Burnham, WDFW Range Ecologist

Cynthia Wilkerson, Lands Division Manager, WL Program

Timeline

Event	Date
Wildlife Program team review	Nov 6 2019
Internal/External AOP work	Dec 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
FW Commission/Wildlife Committee	June 11 2020
SEPA Review/Determination	August 2020
WAC/SEPA public comment periods	September 2020
Full Commission Briefing	Oct 23 2020
Full Commission Decision	Nov 20 2020
Staff AOP Webinar	Fall 2020



For Fish and Wildlife Commission Decision:

GUIDANCE

- ▶ Commission Policy C-6003
- ▶ WAC 220-500-200

MANAGEMENT TOOLS

- ▶ Grazing Evaluation Framework
- ▶ Wolf-Livestock Conflict Language

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 the Strategic Plan 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 to be consistent with ~~desired ecological conditions~~ WDFW's conservation mission ~~or and the Strategic Plan~~ 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 ~~as "most important resource value"~~
- ▶ ~~Protect all resource values~~ Maintain consistency with acquisition funding sources



GUIDANCE: Policy C-6003

Grazing caveats:

- Integrate with other uses
- Maintain ecological integrity as ~~"most important"~~ resource value
- ~~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~~



GUIDANCE: WAC 220-500-200

General

- 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



Permit area, Methow Wildlife Area

Permit area, Asotin Creek Wildlife Area





GUIDANCE: WAC 220-500-200

General

- ▶ 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: 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 maximum 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

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 maximum 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

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: 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



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
- **Grazing Evaluation Framework (GEF)**
- **Wolf-Livestock Conflict Permit Template**

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: 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

Annual Steps

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



TOOLS: Wolf-Livestock AOP

Annual Steps

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

- Customized non-lethals
- Temporary livestock removal – new Risk Assessment each year



TOOLS: Wolf-Livestock AOP

Annual Steps

1. Wildlife Area Manager, District Wildlife Biologist, Wildlife Conflict Specialist conduct Risk Assessment and provide recommendations for Step 2.
2. Statewide, Regional, Divisional, and wolf-related staff provide comments and adjustments to recommendations.

- Customized non-lethals
- Temporary livestock movement or removal



TOOLS: Wolf-Livestock AOP

Annual Steps

1. Wildlife Area Manager, District Wildlife Biologist, Wildlife Conflict Specialist conduct Risk Assessment and provide recommendations for Step 2.
2. Statewide, Regional, Divisional, and wolf-related staff provide comments and adjustments to recommendations.
3. Wildlife Area Manager discusses AOP with Permittee and adapts as necessary to achieve consensus.

- Customized non-lethals
- Temporary livestock movement or removal



TOOLS: Wolf-Livestock AOP

Annual Steps

1. Wildlife Area Manager, District Wildlife Biologist, Wildlife Conflict Specialist conduct Risk Assessment and provide recommendations for Step 2.
2. Statewide, Regional, Divisional, and wolf-related staff provide comments and adjustments to recommendations.
3. Wildlife Area Manager discusses AOP with Permittee and adapts as necessary to achieve consensus.
4. If no consensus, repeat Steps 2-3 iteratively until resolved.

- Customized non-lethals
- Temporary livestock movement or removal



TOOLS: Wolf-Livestock AOP

Annual Steps

1. Wildlife Area Manager, District Wildlife Biologist, Wildlife Conflict Specialist conduct Risk Assessment and provide recommendations for Step 2.
2. Statewide, Regional, Divisional, and wolf-related staff provide comments and adjustments to recommendations.
3. Wildlife Area Manager discusses AOP with Permittee and adapts as necessary to achieve consensus.
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)



Public Comment themes (WAC + SEPA)

- Wildlife, especially wolves, should be prioritized (~72 comments)
- Community character should not be a rationale (~7)
- Grazing is incompatible with WDFW's mission, and/or has negative ecological effects, or is not supported by sufficient research, and/or cannot be safely managed, and/or public lands should not be grazed generally (~76)
- Grazing has beneficial effects for habitat, fuels, and fire severity (~13)
- Grazing permits and renewals should be subject to public review and input (~12)
- Mass roll-up of form-letter comments from CBD received (900+ against grazing)
- Climate change should be considered (~4)
- Various specific recommendations about timelines, individual staff roles, and grazing plan content (many, but mostly all different)



➡ Questions?