

# Habitat Committee, Dec 2022: Grazing Management Update

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- **Grazing Management Summary, 2022**
- **Grazing Permit for FWC Review**





**BIG BEND WILDLIFE AREA  
GRAZING PERMIT AREA**



# Active Grazing Permits, 2022

Region	Complex	Permits	Acres
1	Asotin Creek	5	1,175
1	Chief Joseph	2	8,945
2	Big Bend	4	19,566
2	Columbia Basin	6	11,998
2	Methow	6	12,835
2	Scotch Creek	7	14,486
2	Sinlahekin	8	9,414
3	LT Murray	3	11,301
3	Oak Creek	3	13,803
3	Sunnyside	2	467
3	Wenas	3	1,005
5	Shillapoo	2	362
5	Cowlitz	1	240
5	Klickitat	6	11,658
	<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>117,255</b>

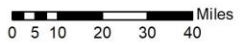
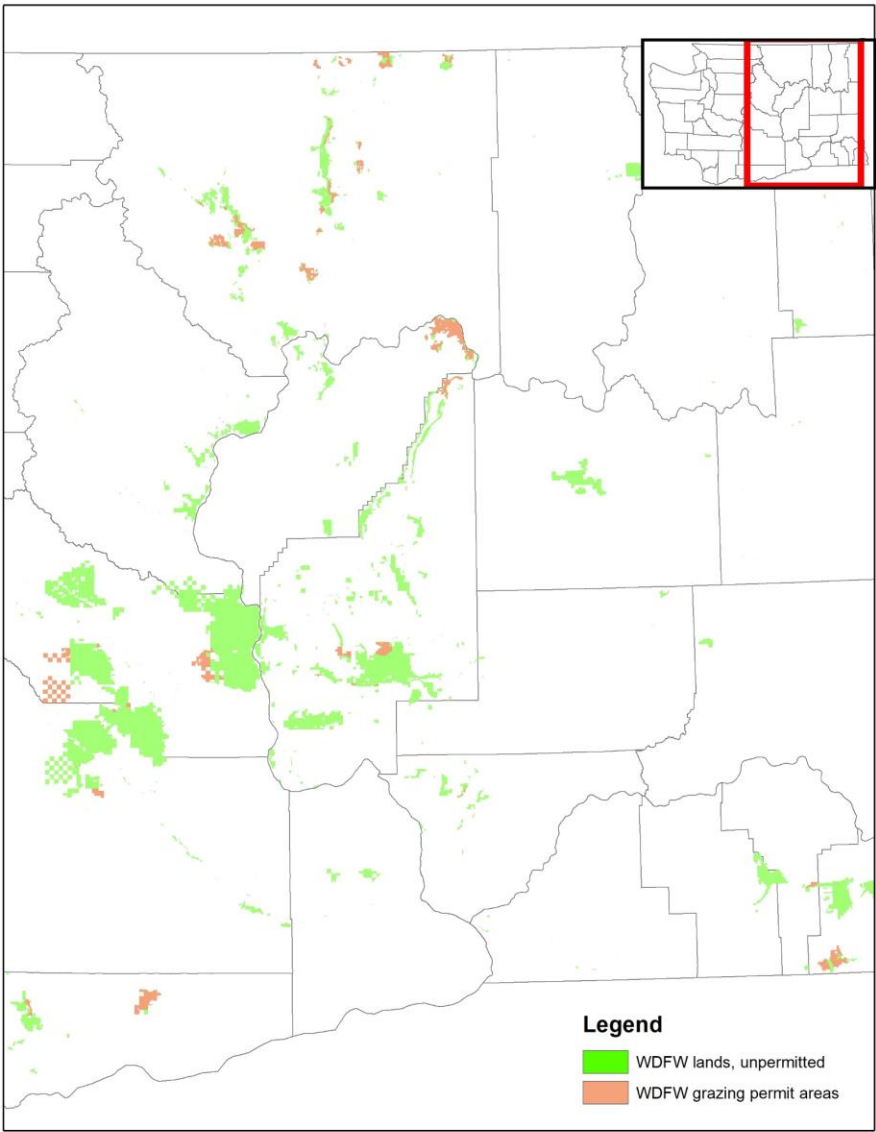


4-0 Ranch grazing permit area,  
Chief Joseph WLA





# Permitted grazing WDFW lands, 2022





# Active Grazing Permits 2022

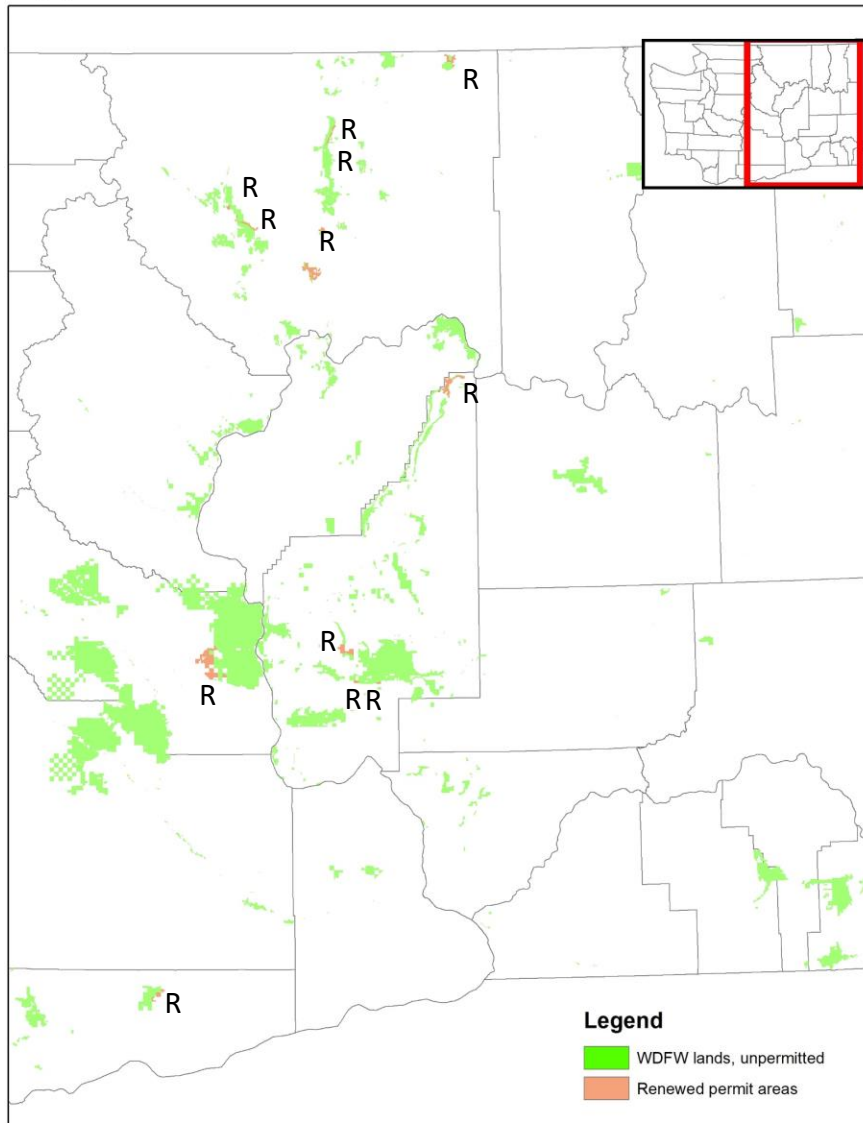
- 13 multi-year permits renewed
- 9 temporary permits issued (crossing, emergency, other)



Temporary permit, Sinlahekin Wildlife Area

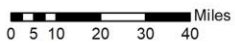


# Permitted grazing WDFW lands, 2022



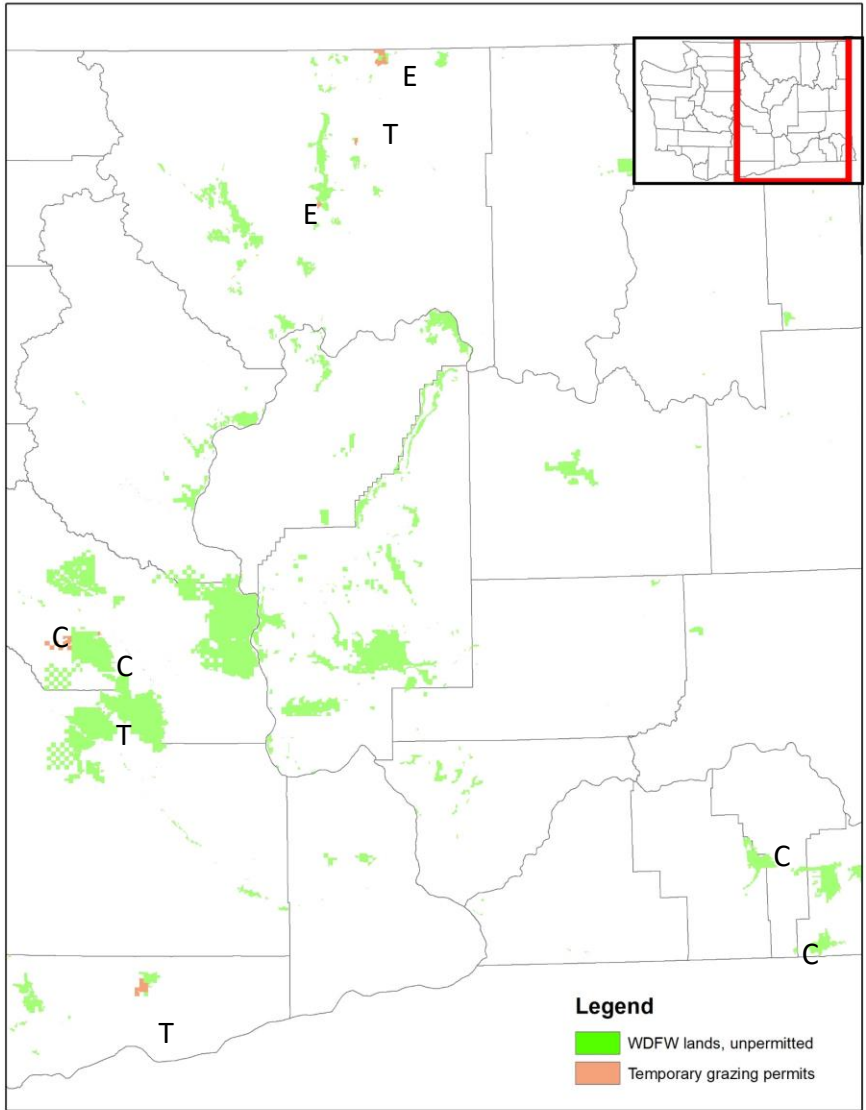
Renewed Permits on:  
Columbia Basin  
Methow  
Scotch Creek  
Sinlahekin  
LT Murray  
Cowlitz  
Simcoe

R = Permit renewed in 2022



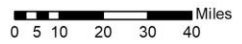


# Permitted grazing WDFW lands, 2022



- Temporary Permits on:
- Asotin Creek
  - Chief Joseph
  - Scotch Creek
  - Sinlahekin
  - LT Murray
  - Wenas
  - Simcoe

C = Crossing permit  
 E = Emergency permit  
 T = Other temporary permit





# Ecological Integrity (EI) Monitoring 2022

Metric	Rank			
	A	B	C	D
Relative cover of native species (all 3 ecosystems)	Cover of native plants $\geq 95\%$	Cover of native plants $\geq 80-95\%$	Cover of native plants $\geq 50-80\%$	Cover of native plants $< 50\%$
Relative cover of native bunchgrass (grassland and shrubsteppe)	Bunchgrass cover $> 80\%$ or near site potential	Bunchgrass cover $\geq 50-80\%$ or reduced from site potential	Bunchgrass cover $\geq 30-50\%$ or reduced from site potential	Bunchgrass cover $< 30\%$ and much reduced from site potential
Absolute cover of invasive species (all 3 ecosystems) <sup>a</sup>	None present	Invasive species present, but sporadic ( $< 3\%$ cover)	Invasive species prevalent (3-10% cover)	Invasive species abundant ( $> 10\%$ cover)
Relative cover of native increasers (grassland and shrubsteppe) <sup>b</sup>	Absent or incidental	$< 10\%$ cover	10-20% cover	$> 20\%$ cover
Fire-sensitive shrub cover (shrubsteppe) <sup>c</sup>	Shrubs mature and recovered from past fires; generally 5-15% cover	Shrubs not fully recovered from past fires; mostly shorter than bunchgrasses and $< 20\%$ cover	Shrubs generally $> 20\%$ cover; beginning to affect bunchgrasses	Shrubs clearly $> 25\%$ cover; reducing bunchgrasses
Biological soil crust; mosses and lichens (all 3 ecosystems)	Crust matches capacity of site (naturally exposed and topographically suitable soil)	Crust evident, but its continuity is broken	Crust present in protected areas and with minor component elsewhere	Crust, if present, only in protected areas



# Ecological Integrity (EI) Monitoring 2022

14 permits monitored for EI

- No significant changes in EI index
- All variables are being tracked (not just EI)

All permits are monitored every year



# CRM Photo Points



Columbia Basin Wildlife Area, pre-Russian olive removal



Columbia Basin Wildlife Area, post-Russian olive removal





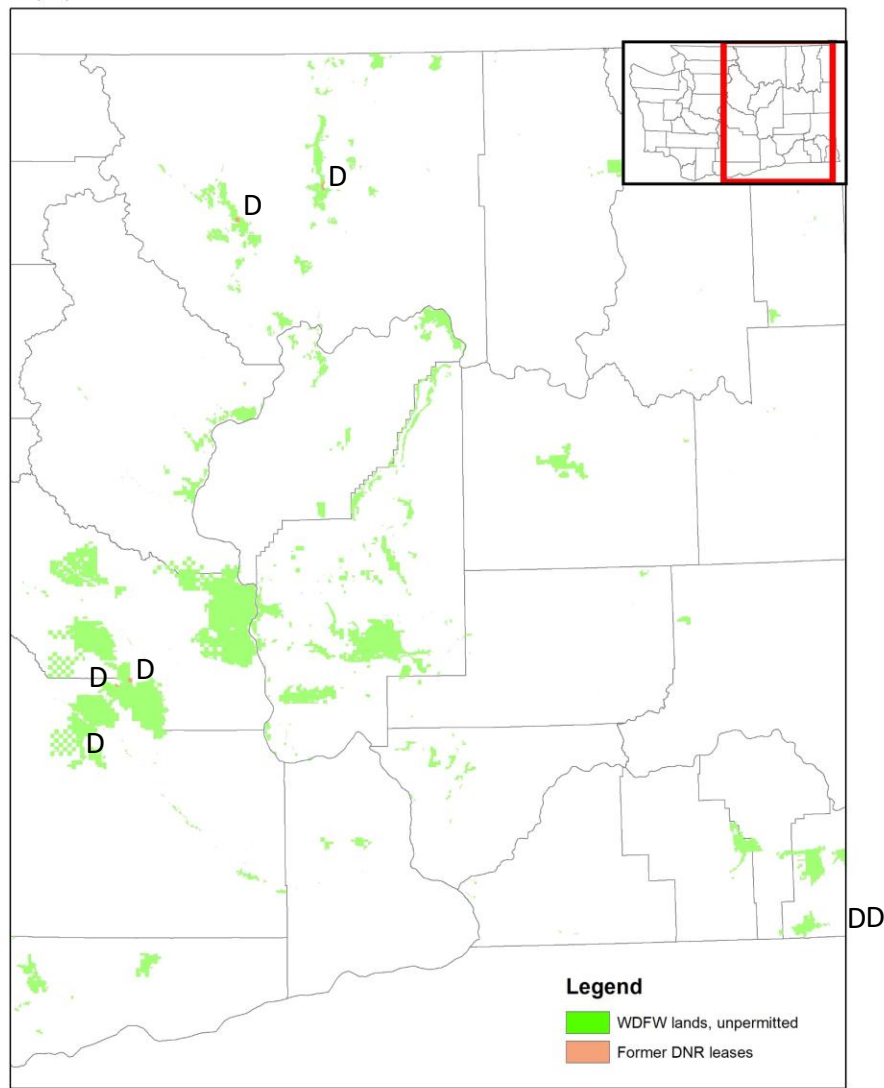
# New/Discontinuing Permits 2022

- ACQUIRED: 2 leases assumed from DNR – amendment in process
- DISCONTINUED: 7 former DNR leases that DFW assumed years ago.
  - » 10-year commitment to honor leases from 2012-2022
  - » Formal review process for each lease, data collection began in 2018
  - » Lessee notification began in early 2022

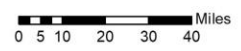




# Permitted grazing WDFW lands, 2022



Discontinued Leases were on:  
Chief Joseph  
Scotch Creek  
Methow  
Oak Creek  
Wenas



D = Discontinued (former) DNR lease





# Formal Permit Requests 2022



Permitted grazing area, Klickitat Wildlife Area Complex

2 requests received

- 1 from Okanogan County
- 1 spanning multiple wildlife areas in Regions 3 and 5

These requests were reviewed but did not result in permits issued.





# Permits for FWC Review 2023

Currently, only one known (Simcoe Mountains Unit):

- Acreage acquired in 2019
- Grazed under temporary permits, proposed for renewal in conjunction with existing permit on previously acquired acreage (same operator)



# New permits - what we said we'd tell you

1. Purpose of acquisition/funding source
2. Permit objectives
3. Ecosystem/sensitive species
4. Acreage/AUMs
5. Monitoring results
6. Community context/commitments



# Context – Simcoe Mountains Permit

- Property was acquired from Western Pacific Timber with RCO/WWRP funding
- Focus on Ecological Integrity
- Partnership and ongoing, facilitated CRM:
  - Central Klickitat and East Klickitat Conservation Districts
  - WDFW
  - Yakama Nation
  - Klickitat County
  - Recreational users
  - Grazing permittees





# Objectives

- Maintain working landscape
- Implement coordinated resource management
- Maintain or improve deer habitat



# Grazing Permit Area

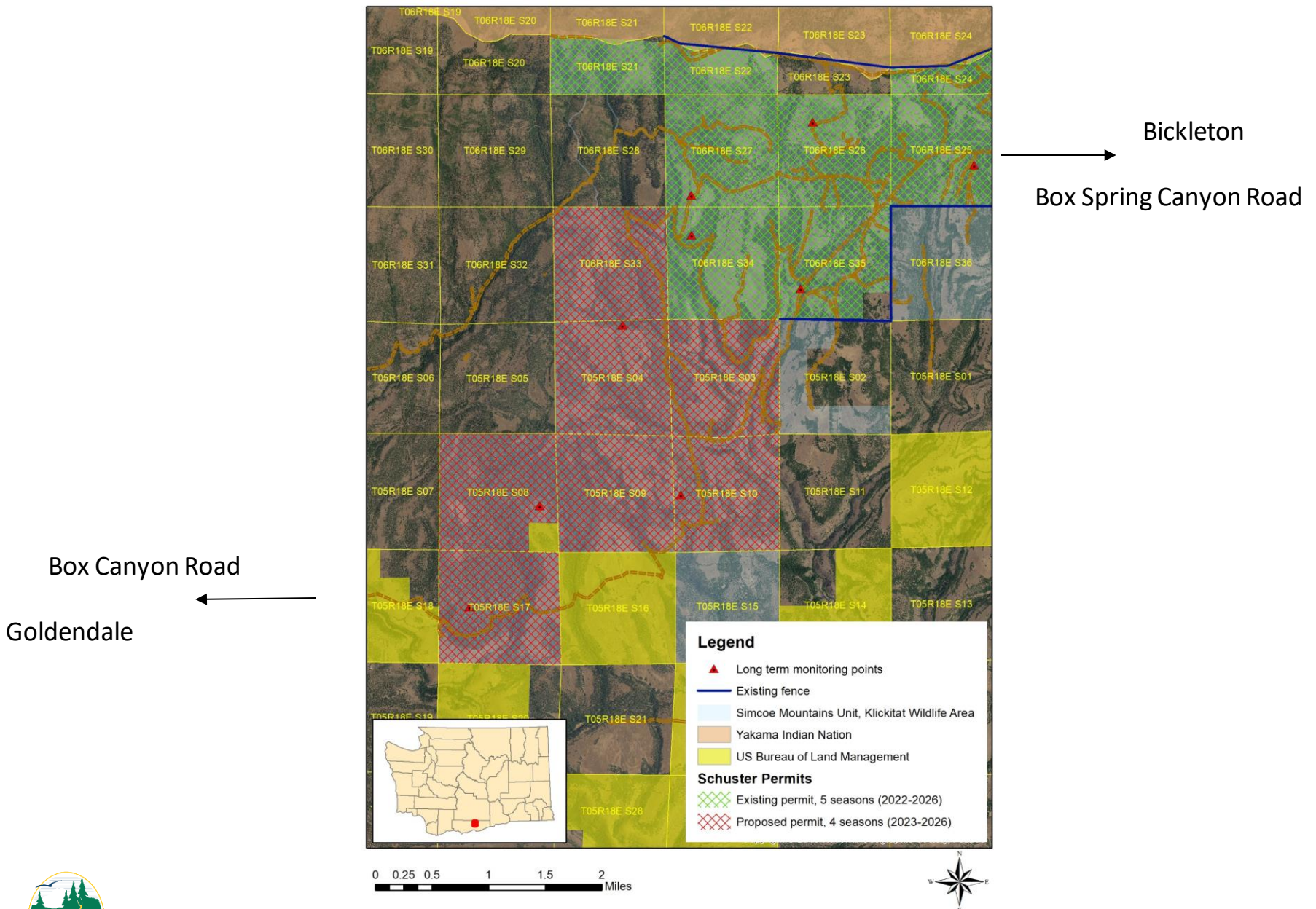


Photos courtesy of Wildlife Area Manager Sue Van Leuven





# Grazing Permit Map



Box Canyon Road

Goldendale

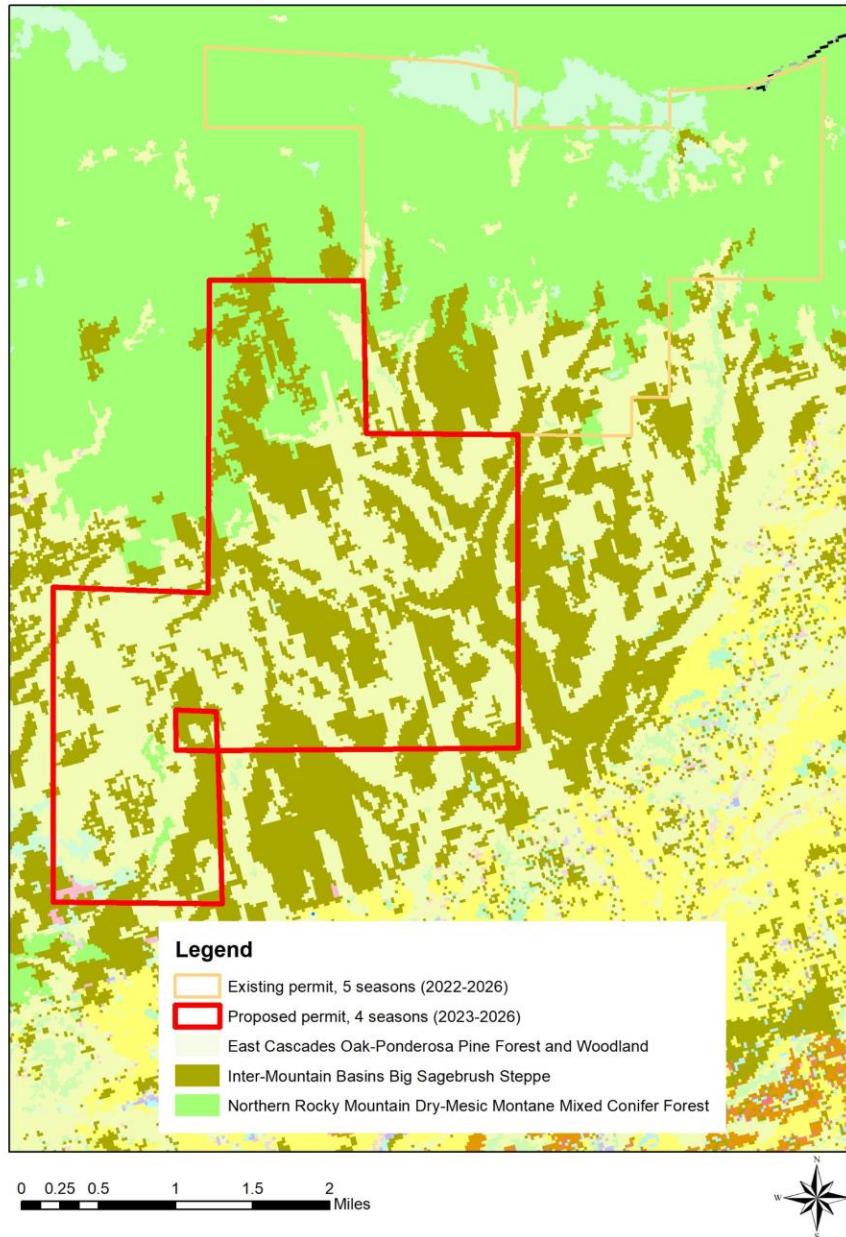
Bickleton

Box Spring Canyon Road





# Ecological Systems Map



# Sensitive Species

- (E) – Gray wolf
- (T) – Western gray squirrel
- (C) – Golden eagle, Western toad

PHS: mule and black-tailed deer, wild turkey



# Permit Conditions

- Forage estimate: 376-697 AUMs
- Some incidental early summer use; most utilization occurs after critical period

Allowed acres: 4554

Allowed forage/utilization: 400 AUMs, 50% use

Allowed timing: May 23 – Oct 15



# Permit Area – Photo Points (1)



2021



2022





# Permit Area – Photo Points (2)



2021



2022





# Permit Area – Photo Points (3)



2021



2022



# Ecological Integrity Results 2021-2022

	BARE GROUND	BIOLOGICAL SOIL CRUST	NATIVE	NATIVE BUNCHGRASS	FIRE-SENSITIVE SHRUB	INVASIVE	ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY
Mean 2021	0.05	0.12	0.68	0.70	0.05	0.10	3.69
Mean 2022	0.03	0.16	0.87	0.46	0.06	0.22	3.54
t stat	1.27	1.30	3.94	7.18	0.54	2.45	1.99
<i>p</i>	0.25	0.23	0.01	<0.01	0.61	0.04	0.09



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# Ecological Integrity Results 2017-2021

(Adjacent Simcoe permit not up for FWC review)

	BARE GROUND	BIOLOGICAL SOIL CRUST	NATIVE	NATIVE BUNCHGRASS	FIRE-SENSITIVE SHRUB	INVASIVE	ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY
Mean 2017	0.03	0.09	0.98	0.33	0.02	0.26	3.30
Mean 2021	0.04	0.09	0.78	0.65	0.02	0.15	3.63
t stat	0.77	0.12	1.65	2.02	2.12	1.96	1.75
<i>p</i>	0.48	0.91	0.17	0.11	0.10	0.12	0.15



# Ecological Integrity Results 2017-2021

(Adjacent Simcoe permit not up for FWC review)

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Mean 2021	0.04	0.09	0.78	0.65	0.02	0.15	3.63
t stat	0.77	0.12	1.65	2.02	2.12	1.96	1.75
<i>p</i>	0.48	0.91	0.17	0.11	0.10	0.12	0.15



# Next Steps

- WDFW presents to Habitat Committee
- Habitat Committee reports to full FWC
  
- WDFW sends permit to FWC
  - 30-day review period initiated
  - WDFW to brief FWC?
  - WDFW will not request any action from FWC
  - Unless FWC acts to disapprove within 30 days, WDFW may issue permit





# WAC 220-500-220: FWC Review

“... grazing permits shall first be submitted to the commission, which may review the permits to ensure that they conform to commission policy”

**The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife acquires and manages land to protect fish and wildlife and their habitats, maintain biodiversity and provide opportunities for fish and wildlife related recreation.**

GENERAL POLICIES: Domestic livestock grazing on Department owned or controlled lands may be permitted if consistent with WDFW's conservation mission and WAC 220-500-200.

1. Permitted livestock grazing on Department lands has several roles, including managing vegetation for wildlife, enhancing recreational opportunity, encouraging conservation across multiple ownerships on landscape scales through coordinated resource management, and protecting community character.
2. Permitted livestock grazing must be integrated with other uses, ensure that ecological integrity is maintained, and be consistent with any constraints tied to fund sources used to acquire or manage lands.
3. Except for temporary permits, grazing permits will be made available for internal Department cross-program review to ensure that all grazing permits are subject to best available science.
4. The Department will promote adaptive management and continued improvement of programs and practices as new knowledge and understanding of habitat ecology becomes available.



# Restated:

Commission **MUST** receive new permits

Commission **MAY** review new permits

(for consistency with Policy C-6003)

Commission **NEED TAKE NO ACTION** on new permits

Commission **MAY** disapprove new permits







# Simcoe Mountains Unit Grazing Permit Area

Questions?

