

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Regulations for the Ranching for Wildlife (RFW) Program have been adopted in Chapters 2 and 3 of the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission Regulations. Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) is directed to develop these additional guidelines and minimum ranch performance standards for implementation of this program. These guidelines must be read and implemented in conjunction with Parks and Wildlife Commission Regulations.

B. **PURPOSE:** to achieve the following on large, contiguous blocks of private land:

1. Improve public access and recreational opportunities.
2. Preserve and protect wildlife habitat.
3. Improve and enhance wildlife habitat.
4. More effectively implement species management plans.
5. Decrease or mitigate game damage.
6. Improve CPW-Landowner-Sportsman relationships

II. RANCH PROPERTY AND ENROLLMENT

A. **Property Ownership** - Record title to the enrolled property must be held by:

1. an individual; or
2. more than one individual by joint tenancy, tenancy in common, or tenancy by the entirety; or
3. a corporation, partnership, trust, or association empowered to own real property; provided that such entity has met all legal requirements to conduct business in Colorado. Copies of legal papers must be submitted to the CPW with the application for enrollment.
4. Provided, however, several parcels of land titled in different individuals or entities may be considered as a single ranch to meet the 10,000 acre minimum requirement if all owners have associated into a single business entity under which management of all the enrolled ranch property is controlled for the purposes of RFW.

B. **Non-contiguous Parcels** - Inclusion or addition of non-contiguous parcels is not preferred due to logistical and management complications and thus will be considered only under unique circumstances in which the inclusion or addition of such parcels significantly improves program implementation for CPW and for an individual ranch. In consideration of the foregoing, ranches may enroll non-contiguous parcels that are at least 640 contiguous acres in size, under the following conditions:

1. The parcel is located within five (5) miles of the main parcel.
2. The parcel is located in the same Data Analysis Units (DAUs) encompassing the main parcel for all contract species.
3. Harvest on the parcel will assist the CPW in meeting its management goals for the DAU.

4. All conditions that apply to the base property shall apply to the non-contiguous parcel, including but not limited to hunting season dates and access terms or conditions.
 5. Enrollment of all non-contiguous parcels shall be determined on a case by case basis at the sole discretion of the CPW, and shall be included only upon written approval of the RFW Coordinator. Factors considered by CPW may include, but are not limited to contribution to achieving DAU management objectives, logistics and pragmatic aspects of managing habitat and hunting access on the parcel and in relation to the main parcel, and recovery of or habitat management for Threatened or Endangered species or species of special concern.
 6. For purposes of determining contiguous or non-contiguous status, road rights-of-way's shall not be considered to divide parcels and corner to corner connected parcels shall not be considered contiguous, except that Three Springs RFW operation which currently connects two parcels less than 10,000 acres each at a corner shall be considered grandfathered for this definition.
 7. For currently enrolled ranches, existing non-contiguous parcels will be assumed included in their operations. If such inclusion is of concern to CPW managers, they should prepare a briefing paper outlining relevant issues; submit it to their Regional Manager for decision.
- C. Federal and State Lands** - Ranches may include Federal land in-holdings if they are completely surrounded by the enrolled ranch lands and there is no public access to these lands by legal road or trail. Ranches may also include contiguous or in-holding State Land Board lands, not exceeding 10% of the private deeded contiguous land base of the ranch lands enrolled in RFW. Federal or State Land Board land included in the program will not be counted toward the 10,000 acre minimum. Ranches including Federal or State Land Board land must submit a letter from the Federal land manager with the application for enrollment stating that this land may be included in the RFW contract, or a copy of their SLB Recreation Lease authorizing the use of the land for RFW. Road rights-of-way's shall not be considered to divide parcels. Corner to corner connected parcels shall not be considered contiguous.
- D. Voluntary Addition or Removal of Parcels** - Ranches may add parcels of land to an existing contract, provided that the parcels meet all program regulations and guidelines; or may remove parcels from an existing contract, provided that removal will not reduce private ownership to less than 10,000 contiguous acres; under the following conditions:
1. Amended land ownership legal description of the added or removed parcels is submitted in writing to the District Wildlife Manager (DWM) and RFW Coordinator.
 2. Amended partnership or association documents signed by the individual or entity being added or removed are submitted to the DWM and RFW Coordinator.
 3. New maps showing new boundaries of the entire RFW operation are submitted to the DWM and RFW Coordinator.
 4. Amendment to the RFW Management Plan addressing changes to habitat management, wildlife species management, and public hunting management as a consequence of the addition or removal are submitted to the DWM and RFW Coordinator.

5. Required documentation for addition or written request to remove parcels must be submitted by December 1 of the year preceding enrollment or removal from enrollment.
 6. Addition of land shall not be considered for enrollment if its enrollment will take effect in the final year of a contract.
 7. Tracts of land proposed for addition shall be included only upon written approval of the RFW Coordinator.
- E. Sale of Enrolled Ranches** - Ranches that are sold during the term of the RFW contract are required to meet all conditions of that contract through all public hunting seasons for which licenses have been allocated for that year. New owners will be required to submit a new application for enrollment for future hunting seasons.
- F. Enrollment Application** - Interested landowners must submit an application to the appropriate DWM by February 1 prior to the year in which the program is to be initiated, amended, or renewed. A Draft RFW Management Plan must be prepared by the landowner and submitted to the DWM and RFW Coordinator by May 1. The Final RFW Management Plan must be prepared by the landowner and submitted to the DWM and RFW Coordinator by August 15. The Cooperative Agreement must be signed by the landowner or the landowner's legal agent and returned to the DWM by October 1.

III. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

A. Contract Length -

1. Probationary Contract – 3-year term, provided for initial enrollment of new ranches.
2. Standard Contract – 8-year term, provided for previously enrolled ranches, re-enrolling under a new management plan.
3. Extended Contract – 10-year term, provided for previously enrolled ranches, re-enrolling under a new management plan, and who have submitted documentation of a long-term habitat improvement program with another entity or government agency.

B. RFW Management Plan and Public Hunter Information Packets -

1. A RFW Management Plan shall be prepared by the landowner in a format prescribed by the CPW, and shall become part of the Cooperative Agreement. The management plan shall be reviewed by RFW evaluation team members and other CPW personnel during the course of the Tier placement and enrollment processes. At the discretion of the CPW, the management plan shall be accepted for incorporation as part of a Cooperative Agreement or acceptable for Tier placement upon written notification from the RFW Coordinator.
2. Public hunter information packets shall be mutually developed and agreed to by the ranch and the DWM. The packet shall contain a welcome cover letter, directions and/or directional maps to the ranch, maps of ranch boundaries, roads, parking, and any areas closed to both public and

private hunters or areas with restricted access, ranch hunting rules of conduct and behavior, any liability waivers the ranch may require, and any harvest reporting forms that may be required. The packet shall identify any additional services the ranch may provide to public hunters including which services are free, which are for a fee and what the fee is for the service. Ranches may not charge for services not identified in the hunter information packet.

- C. Program Species** - RFW contracts will only be valid for deer, elk, pronghorn, black bear, turkey, moose, and bighorn sheep, except that no contract shall be made solely for moose or bighorn sheep.
- D. Contract Modification** - Contracts may be modified during the term of the contract by written mutual agreement of the CPW and the authorized ranch representative.
- E. Program Termination** - If the Parks and Wildlife Commission rescind the regulations or otherwise terminate the RFW Program, then all RFW contracts will be terminated within 90 days of Commission action and contracts shall so provide.
- F. Tier Level Placement** - The Director shall determine the most appropriate Tier placement for all ranches based upon their performance and by the existence of perpetual conservation easements on the enrolled ranch property. New enrolling ranches shall normally enter the program at Tier C and may advance to other Tier levels based upon their plans and performance in subsequent contracts. New enrolling ranches may be initially placed at higher Tier levels if they have substantial acreage in perpetual conservation easement established prior to enrollment, and meet additional high performance standards. Ranches whose performance is evaluated by the CPW evaluation team at any formal evaluation shall remain at the evaluated Tier level until such time as the next formal evaluation determines that the performance of the ranch meets the qualifications of another Tier level.
- G. Annual Ranch Performance Reports** - Ranches must submit a written Annual Performance Report by January 31 of each year to the Area Wildlife Manager, DWM, Area Terrestrial Biologist, and RFW Coordinator. The report shall be in a format approved by the CPW and shall contain hunter harvest and success, habitat accomplishments for the previous year and plans for the next year, report of accomplishments towards Tier placement criteria, and a list of private hunters and dates hunted.
- H. Evaluations** - Ranches will be evaluated for program inclusion, contract performance, Tier level placement, and program continuation or program renewal by a team, including but not limited to CPW personnel, selected by the RFW Coordinator. The RFW Coordinator will solicit review and comments from the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Society on evaluations of ranches that include bighorn sheep. Evaluation of a ranch may be conducted by the CPW at any time during the term of the contract, but shall be conducted prior to enrollment, at about the midpoint of the contract, and in the final year of the contract. Failure to comply with Parks and Wildlife Commission Regulations, RFW operating guidelines, RFW management plan, or the RFW contract will result in termination of the contract. The RFW Coordinator will, as part of Formal Evaluations, submit a report to the ranch and local CPW personnel. The report will contain documentation of past performance (if applicable), recommendations for improvement of Draft RFW Management Plans, and may include required actions to meet contract performance expectations.

Mid-term evaluation reports will contain recommendations from the Evaluation Team to the Director or his designee regarding Tier level placement and continuation or termination of the RFW contract. Upon receipt of a Final RFW Management Plan, then the Evaluation Team will notify the ranch in writing of its recommendations to the Director or his designee regarding Tier level placement and continuation or termination of the RFW contract.

1. **Appeals** - A ranch may appeal recommendations of the Evaluation Team. A ranch choosing to do so should seek resolution first at the local level with the DWM, Area Wildlife Manager, and RFW Coordinator. If not resolved at this level ranches should submit a written appeal to the Regional Manager, Terrestrial Section Supervisor, and RFW Coordinator. The appeal should describe areas of dispute, provide supporting documentation, and explain what relief is being sought by the appeal. If not resolved at this level resolution may be pursued with the Director and/or the Parks and Wildlife Commission.
2. **Pre-enrollment Evaluations** - During May, June, July, or August local CPW personnel and the RFW Evaluation team will meet with ranch owners/representatives to review the Draft RFW Management Plan and to tour the ranch, discuss management actions, and provide interchange of ideas and recommendations for improving upon the Plan. If the ranch is seeking re-enrollment, this evaluation will also include review of past performance using Evaluation Criteria to help formulate the recommendation to the Director, or his designee. Pre-enrollment evaluations will also consider CPW assessment of how well the applicant ranch will help CPW achieve program goals in the context of wildlife management, habitat management, and public service and relations.
3. **Mandatory Performance Criteria** - There are four categories of mandatory criteria: Habitat Management, Hunter Satisfaction, Ranch Female Harvest Achievement, and Public Hunter Success. **All ranches regardless of Tier placement must achieve an acceptable evaluation rating for each of the four rating categories.** Tier C ranches must meet only the mandatory criteria, whereas Tier A and B ranches must meet the mandatory criteria and additional high performance criteria as further defined in **Section III. (J)**, below. The rating period for evaluation of ranch performance in relation to these criteria is the period from the start date of a cooperative agreement to the date of any formal mid-term or end term evaluation. Data used for quantitative based criteria shall be annual or averaged data derived during the rating period.

a. **Habitat Management Category**

This is a subjective analysis conducted via interviews of CPW employees, examination of management plans, performance to date, review of documents, ranch inspection, and interviews with ranch staff.

Minimum Criteria

[Acceptable]

[Unacceptable]

- i. Habitat management is designed to help reduce or mitigate game damage to the ranch and nearby lands.
- ii. Habitat management is designed to enhance ability to meet Data Analysis Unit (DAU) objectives.

- iii. The management plan and implementation integrate livestock management with wildlife management goals and objectives, including; a grazing system is in place with articulated habitat management goals and objectives, management provides for adequate regrowth for wildlife, intensity and utilization meet generally accepted grazing standards, adequate monitoring is in place to provide for modification of grazing to meet the foregoing elements.
- iv. The plan and implementation contains management actions to gradually and incrementally improve conditions for wildlife habitat in poor condition, either through specific habitat treatments and/or through livestock grazing management.

b. Public Hunter Satisfaction Category

The following factors in this category are evaluated on the basis of annual or biannual public hunter satisfaction surveys. Survey questions are related to hunter perceptions of abundance of hunted species, equality of access, level of ranch assistance, and overall experience. Questions are rated on a 1-5 scale, except for the overall experience question which is rated on a 1-7 scale. In all cases the lower the number, the higher the rating. The rating averages hunter responses for each species over the rating period. The combined average of all questions and all years for each species is used to form the evaluation rating. This will result in a rating for deer hunters, elk hunters, etc. The questions asked are further described as follows:

Perceived Hunted Species Abundance: This rates public hunter perception of the abundance of hunted species on the ranch relative to other public land hunting experiences they have had. Hunters indicating that they have never hunted the species on public land before are not included in establishing numerical values of responses.

Perceived Equality of Access: This rates public hunter perception of the level or equality of access between public and private hunters.

Perceived Level of Ranch Assistance: This rates public hunter perception of the level of assistance ranch personnel offer to hunters for making their hunt a good experience. It includes hunter perceptions of the demeanor of ranch personnel in welcoming them to the ranch for their hunt, how effectively and efficiently hunters are checked in/out, how available ranch personnel are for hunters to get information, how problems are resolved, and how adequate hunter information packets, maps, etc. are in assisting hunters.

Overall Experience Satisfaction: This rates the overall satisfaction of hunters with their experience on the ranch.

Minimum Criteria

[Acceptable]

[Unacceptable]

- i. The average of the overall experience responses across all survey years for the rating period for each species hunted is not greater than 2.5.

c. Ranch Female Harvest Achievement Category

This compares the degree to which female harvest on the ranch meets the agreed upon female harvest objective for the ranch. The process for establishing the agreed upon female harvest objective is contained in Section IV of these guidelines.

Minimum Criteria [Acceptable] [Unacceptable]

- i. Average actual female harvest for each species is within 10% plus or minus of the agreed upon ranch harvest objective.

When a species is under DAU herd objective then under-achievement of the antlerless harvest shall not be considered unacceptable, and when a species is over DAU herd objective then over-achievement of the antlerless harvest shall not be considered unacceptable.

d. Public Hunter Success Category

Public hunter success on the ranch will be compared to regular rifle seasons success in the DAU(s) in which the ranch is located. Comparison will be made by averaging the success rates for all contract species combined for public hunters on the ranch and averaging the regular rifle seasons success rates for the same species combined within the DAU(s) during the evaluation period.

Minimum Criteria [Acceptable] [Unacceptable]

- i. Average weighted public hunter success rate shall be at least greater than 10 percentage points under the DAU regular rifle season hunter success rate.

I. Tier Placement Criteria - Tier A, B, or C must meet the minimum performance criteria listed above at the acceptable level.

1. **Tier A Qualification** - Ranches seeking placement within or maintenance of placement within Tier A must meet **at least 4 (at least 3 for Eastern Plains Ranches when agreed to in Contracts)** of the following groupings of high performance criteria. All elements of the selected high performance group must be met. Ranches seeking or placed in Tier A must identify the elements or actions they plan to implement within their plan, and must annually identify Tier A criteria they plan to achieve in their annual report to CPW.

- a. **Conservation Easement Bypass** - A ranch that has established a perpetual conservation easement on a significant portion of the ranch that has outstanding wildlife values, and which by existence of the conservation easement provides preservation and protection of the habitat and integrity of its contribution to the existence of the species on the ranch, then implementation of additional criteria may be bypassed and the ranch may be placed in Tier A. The ranch must continue to meet mandatory performance criteria.

2. **Tier B Qualification** - Ranches seeking placement within or maintenance of placement within Tier B must meet **at least 3 (at least 2 for Eastern Plains Ranches when agreed to in Contracts)** of the following groupings of high performance criteria. All elements of the selected high performance group must be met. Ranches seeking or placed in Tier B must

identify the elements or actions they plan to implement within their plan, and must annually identify Tier B criteria they plan to achieve in their annual report to CPW.

3. High Performance Criteria Menu -

a. *Habitat Management Group*

Habitat treatments are implemented which meet and improve significant habitat needs and wildlife goals and objectives for the ranch. Critical wildlife habitats are actively managed to improve conditions (Critical wildlife habitats include big game winter and transitional range, essential breeding and young rearing habitat, habitat for Threatened or Endangered species, and species of special concern). Habitat treatments are implemented which are commensurate in size with, and appropriate for the needs of key game and non-game species and vegetation type and are soundly related to habitat goals and objectives of the plan. Any wildlife habitats that are in poor condition shall have plans to aggressively restore such habitats, and habitats in acceptable or good condition shall have conditions maintained.

b. *Premier Public Hunt Timing/Opportunity Group*

Public male or either sex deer, elk and pronghorn hunting seasons are established with at least 5 days of opportunity during premier hunting opportunity periods and a low hunter density. These periods may be closely associated with peak rut periods for the species or periods when there are seasonal concentrations of male animals available for hunter harvest. This may also include additional seasons and license allocations for primitive weapons method of take hunting opportunity.

Seasonal concentration periods are determined by local CPW Managers and Biologists. Peak rut periods are defined as follows: Deer – 4th Saturday in November through the 2nd Sunday in December; Elk and Pronghorn – 4th Saturday in September through the 2nd Sunday in October. This criterion shall be considered met if half of more of the species under contract have premier season timing (rut or concentration period) or premier opportunity (primitive weapon seasons).

c. *Exceptional Hunting Services or Hunter Success Group*

- i. Services are provided to public hunters without charge that are designed to provide public hunters with a hunt of **exceptional experience and quality**. Examples of services include: guiding, pre-season scouting, game retrieval, capping, a quality orientation/familiarization with the ranch, camping or other lodging, etc. Successful achievement of this standard occurs when the combined hunter satisfaction survey rating for the rating period on the ranch are within the top 25th percentile of the RFW-wide combined hunter satisfaction ratings for the same rating period or a numeric average of 1.5, whichever is greater, OR
- ii. During the rating period for all ungulate species and genders within the RFW contract combined, average weighted public hunter success shall exceed 10 percentage points

above the combined all species, all genders weighted average public hunter success documented for all ranches within the RFW program during the evaluation period.

d. *Youth/Disability/Donated Hunt Group*

The Ranch dedicates licenses for youth, disability, and/or donated hunts. The amount dedicated is equivalent to at least 5% of the total (both public and private) average of male and female deer, elk, and pronghorn license allocation for the ranch. Actual licenses dedicated for these hunts shall be from a special allocation of licenses. They are over and above any other allocation. Donated licenses shall be donated to a non-profit entity (conservation organization, social service organization, Hunt of a Lifetime Foundation, or similar entity). Youth and disabled hunter licenses must be used within an approved CPW youth or disability access program. Licenses shall be deemed private allocation licenses for purposes of license assignment flexibility but licenses are not counted in calculating the distribution of license percentages. These licenses however are included in calculating the public minimum license requirement for enrollment in the RFW program.

e. *Exceptional Contribution to Herd Management Objectives Group*

- i.** For species 10% or more over herd objective, average actual female harvest is 10% or more over the agreed upon ranch harvest objective.
- ii.** For species 10% or more under herd objective, average actual female harvest is 10 - 20% less than the agreed upon ranch harvest objective.
- iii.** For species within 10% of herd objective, average actual female harvest is within 5% plus or minus of the agreed upon ranch harvest objective.

This criterion shall be considered met if one or more of deer, elk or pronghorn meets the foregoing standards and the other species meet the *Ranch Female Harvest Achievement Category* standard.

f. *Exceptional Contribution to Resolving Big Game Conflicts*

- i.** When applicable and where CPW agrees there are significant game damage concerns, habitat and harvest management strategies are designed to effectively and significantly reduce or mitigate game damage conflicts on nearby lands, OR
- ii.** Where desirable and applicable as an aid in distributing elk, the ranch allocates a number of hunts equivalent to 50% or more of the private license allocation concurrent with regular rifle seasons, with a relatively equivalent number of licenses across seasons.

g. *Species Management Partnerships and/or Special Opportunities Group*

- i.** The ranch plans and effectively implements additional habitat or other management actions to enhance species management or recovery of Threatened or Endangered species or species of special concern, OR

- ii. The ranch provides additional public access to or through the ranch for fishing and/or hunting other non-contract game species where such access is a priority for CPW, OR
- iii. The ranch provides planned activities associated with wildlife research, and/or K-12 educational opportunities, and/or ongoing training/education of wildlife/range/or natural resources oriented professional staff and/or college students, OR
- iv. Other significant management actions approved by CPW, including perpetual or term conservation easements which do not meet bypass conditions but which, in the opinion of CPW staff provide wildlife habitat conservation benefits.

IV. LICENSE ALLOCATION AND LICENSE DISTRIBUTION THROUGH SEASONS

A. RFW participants and CPW should view the license allocation as an opportunity to significantly help achieve DAU herd objectives, and in doing so will help improve land health and vegetative conditions that support livestock and wildlife.

1. The total number of deer, elk, pronghorn, moose, bighorn sheep, or black bear licenses (public and private) allocated to a RFW operation shall be calculated as follows, and with adjustments made as described in paragraphs 2 through 5, below. Furthermore, the 3-year average used for calculating the ranch harvest objective is a 3-year running average.

$$\left\{ \frac{\text{Ranch acres occupied species habitat}}{\text{DAU acres occupied species habitat}} \right\} \times \text{3-yr Avg. Harv. Obj. (species \& sex in DAU)} = \text{Proportional Harvest Objective}$$

$$\left\{ \frac{\text{Proportional Harvest Objective (species and/or sex)}}{\text{Historic or predicted harvest success rate on the Ranch by license type}} \right\} = \text{Number of licenses for the Ranch}$$

2. Occupied habitat shall be defined by the most current CPW species habitat maps produced by CPW GIS staff.
3. The above formula represents a starting point for estimating the ranch harvest objective and number of licenses necessary to achieve that objective. CPW may reduce female harvest objective where necessary to prevent crowding and consequently significant declines in hunter success and/or satisfaction. Female harvest objectives on a ranch may also be set in alignment with the male harvest as a proportion of the DAU male harvest objective (e.g. if male harvest is 3.5% of the DAU male harvest objective then the female harvest objective on a ranch could be calculated by multiplying the DAU female harvest objective by 3.5%). Ranches seeking Tier A or B placement above the minimum may seek greater female licenses and harvest levels in DAUs over herd objective in accordance with their plan and Tier A or B performance criteria (see also, paragraph 5 below, for adjustment of male licenses).
4. In addition to the original RFW license allocation, where the species may be determined to be substantially over herd objective CPW and RFW operations should make use of "Special

Population Management” and “PLO” licenses, but not as a substitute for the original RFW license allocation.

5. Harvest objectives and license allocations may be influenced by individual ranch conditions, as well as individual ranch plans seeking a Tier A or B placement above the minimum, either of which may result in adjustment, higher or lower, of annual license numbers. Adjustments can be made with approval of the Ranch and CPW considering, but not limited to: hunter crowding and satisfaction, enhancement of hunter success, season timing, and relative densities of the species on the ranch, all based upon the knowledge of CPW managers, biologists, and the landowner.
 6. Ranches must annually provide a minimum of thirty (30) public licenses, in total for all species for which there is a public season established, except as follows. **Exceptions are at the sole discretion of the CPW and approval by the Terrestrial Section Manager:**
 - a. Ranches located east of I-25 may offer a minimum of twenty (20) public licenses in total for all species, if no female licenses for deer, elk, or pronghorn are allocated for the ranch.
 - b. Public license allocations may be reduced to not less than fifteen (15) public licenses in total for all species, if:
 - i. In the event of catastrophic changes in game densities, license allocations must be reduced for a period not expected to last more than 3 years.
 - ii. Single species ranches.
 - iii. Ranches less than 15,000 acres.
- B.** Number of Seasons – Parks and Wildlife Commission regulations establish the minimum number of days allowed for public hunting seasons. These are minimum levels and in order to accommodate the number of public hunters licensed to hunt on a ranch, then establishing split seasons, or multiple season blocks may be needed to adequately distribute hunters and maintain reasonable hunting opportunity without excessive crowding.
- C.** In areas where there has been an expressed concern about elk movements onto and off of Ranches (currently in E-2 and E-6), the Ranch and CPW will strive to distribute hunters over seasons in order to achieve harvest, elk movement, and hunter satisfaction objectives. Ranches shall be expected to have some seasons (private and/or public) and licenses appropriately allocated to run concurrent with regular rifle deer and elk seasons. Furthermore, these seasons may be private or public and the amount of licenses allocated to these concurrently run seasons shall approximately equal or exceed 25% of the total sold private deer and elk licenses for the ranch calculated on a three year running average. These hunts may be comprised of either private or public licensed hunters or both.
- D.** Licenses are valid only on the property of the ranch covered with a Cooperative Agreement with the State of Colorado as designated on the license. Under the following circumstances CPW may authorize some licenses to be valid on multiple ranches with separate Cooperative Agreements.
1. All ranches must be Tier A and have current valid Cooperative Agreements. All ranches must be wholly owned and operated by the same person or corporation.
 2. Public hunter satisfaction levels must meet high performance standards in the RFW program on all ranches.

3. All ranches must be in the same DAU.
4. One of the ranches shall be designated as the Primary Limiting Ranch. This will typically be the ranch that can sustain the least amount of harvest or hunting pressure in comparison to other involved ranches. The maximum number of licenses (public and private) that are valid on multiple ranches shall not exceed the amount of licenses necessary to achieve maximum desired harvest amounts on the Primary Limiting Ranch and shall not harm the quality of public hunting conditions and public hunter service provided by the ranch.
5. The maximum number of public licenses valid on multiple ranches is the public share of licenses on the Primary Limiting Ranch.
6. The number of private licenses valid on multiple ranches shall not exceed the number of public licenses valid on multiple ranches. However, as may be negotiated, more licenses may be allocated for the public than for private distribution.

V. ENFORCEMENT OF RANCH RULES

- A. Parks and Wildlife Commission Regulation #002-G provides that any person that hunts pursuant to a permit (license) issued by the CPW shall comply with the terms and conditions of that permit. Furthermore, CRS 24-4-104 (4) provides for the immediate suspension of a license where the licensee commits a deliberate and willful violation or where public health, safety and welfare require emergency action. RFW regulations require that as a provision for access and using their license that public hunters must sign a statement that they have been provided ranch rules, have read, understand and agree to comply with the rules.
- B. As long as the ranch has consistently required signature of such a statement for all public hunters, then CPW officers may cite hunters for failing to comply with the provisions of a license, and/or require hunters to immediately leave a ranch.
- C. It is not the intent of the CPW that hunters be cited or dismissed from a ranch for minor or unintentional violations of ranch rules. Therefore, officer should use the lowest level of enforcement action that will gain compliance with ranch rules. If more serious actions are warranted due to deliberate and willful acts, or acts that jeopardize public health, safety, or welfare then before or as soon as possible after such enforcement action is taken, officers should contact the Attorney General's Office, Counsel for CPW for assistance in developing a finding to support the action taken by an officer.

VI. SPECIAL GUIDELINES FOR MOOSE & BIGHORN SHEEP

- A. **Access and Assistance** - Ranches enrolled for moose or bighorn sheep shall provide:
 1. Properly licensed moose or sheep hunters to be accompanied by up to two unarmed, non-hunting companions.
 2. Except as provided by these guidelines, ranches shall provide all of the following services and the services provided must be described in the Management Plan.

- a. Scouting access to properly licensed bighorn sheep hunters and up to two companions per hunter for a minimum of ten (10) consecutive days within three (3) weeks preceding the opening of public bighorn sheep hunting season. Scouting access shall not prohibit the use of motor vehicles on any ranch road or four-wheel drive trail, except that the use of motorcycles or all-terrain vehicles may be prohibited or restricted.
 - b. Lodging or areas for camping in self contained camping units on the ranch free of charge, if the hunt areas containing moose or bighorn sheep are more than 40 minutes of night driving time from nearby towns with lodging or legal camping areas.
 - c. Use of primitive "spike" camps within the ranch if the hunter has located bighorn sheep and determines that such a camp is needed for successful completion of the hunt.
 - d. Ranches with public bighorn sheep hunting seasons will not be required to meet the foregoing guideline if they provide at least all of the following services and such services are identified in the Management plan. Up to 7 days of pre-season scouting mutually arranged between the hunter and the ranch, lodging or camping locations on the ranch property free of charge, allowance for hunters to use primitive "spike" camps on the ranch for up to 4 days at a time, and a knowledgeable hunting escort for familiarization with ranch boundaries and bighorn sheep herd locations on the ranch.
3. If ranches require the presence of ranch personnel or guides for public sheep or moose hunters, guide services shall be free of charge, and hunters will not be required to actually use the service or knowledge of guides or ranch personnel.

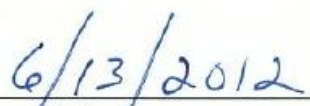
B. Seasons and License Distribution

1. Moose and bighorn sheep public seasons shall be negotiated between CPW and the Ranch in order to provide public hunters with high quality hunting opportunity and significant chance for successful harvest, if CPW and the Ranch do not agree on season structure, then the default season shall be as follows:
 - a. If the population size of moose or bighorn sheep can sustain only one bighorn ram or antlered moose or either-sex moose license per season, then the first license issued shall be a public license, the second license issued shall be a private license, the third license issued shall be a public license, and so forth.

These Ranching for Wildlife Guidelines are approved this date, to effectively implement the RFW program, and in accordance with Parks and Wildlife Commission Regulations for Big Game and Turkey.



Craig R. McLaughlin, Acting Assistant Director
Wildlife and Natural Resources



Date

FINAL REGULATIONS – CHAPTER 2 – BIG GAME

AS APPROVED – 05/10/2012

#210 - RANCHING FOR WILDLIFE – DEER, ELK, PRONGHORN, BLACK BEAR, MOOSE, AND BIGHORN SHEEP

A. Implementation Authority

1. The Director is authorized to implement the Ranching for Wildlife program, including the authority to determine ranch enrollment status, enter into cooperative agreements with ranches, establish and modify public and private season dates on each ranch, and establish and modify license allocations to each ranch including the subsequent distribution of licenses to the public and private share annually, and may establish additional Ranching for Wildlife operating guidelines subject to the following provisions.

B. Ranch Entry and Maintenance

1. Ranches must have a minimum of 10,000 acres of privately owned land in one contiguous unit. Ranches that meet this 10,000-acre minimum requirement may include privately owned non-contiguous parcels in the program if the Director determines that their inclusion will contribute to meeting the performance standards for the ranch.
2. Ranches must develop a Ranching For Wildlife Management Plan that includes goals, objectives, and strategies for achieving such goals and objectives for wildlife habitat management, species management, and public hunting management. The Management Plan shall identify the Tier category in which the ranch seeks to be placed and what specific actions the ranch will take to achieve the appropriate Tier placement criteria. The Management Plan must be approved by the Division prior to execution of a Cooperative Agreement for Ranching For Wildlife.
3. Ranches may not charge public hunters an access fee for hunting.
4. Except as agreed to in writing by the Division when necessary to meet the ranch performance standards or as mutually agreed and contained in the Management Plan, ranches must provide for equality of access in terms of geographical area and mode of transportation for both public and private hunters. No closure or restriction of land or roads shall apply to public hunters that do not also apply to private hunters.
5. Public hunts must be established at a time when the species to be hunted are present and available for harvest. No public seasons shall be established during times when normal winter conditions would prevent access to most of the ranch, nor when normal migration patterns of the species to be hunted result in the species having migrated off the ranch.
6. Ranches that establish coinciding or overlapping public and private hunts may not exclude public hunters from any portion of the ranch due to the presence of private hunters.
7. The Ranch and the Division will mutually agree to ranch rules regarding access to and hunting on the ranch by public hunters. The ranch rules will be provided to hunters prior to seasons on the ranch in accordance with other provisions contained in this regulation.
8. Enrolled ranches shall not be eligible for game damage payments or materials for those species hunted in the program when damage occurs within the boundaries of the enrolled portions of the ranch.
9. The Division may, at its sole discretion, require ranches with public bighorn sheep hunting seasons to provide scouting access to those hunters and their companions prior to such seasons. Provisions for this scouting access shall be contained in the Management Plan.

C. Cooperative Agreements, Enrollment, Denial of Enrollment, Termination of Enrollment

1. The Division is authorized to enter into Cooperative Agreements with ranches.

2. Ranches may appeal enrollment decisions to the Wildlife Commission.
3. Cooperative Agreements shall incorporate approved Ranching For Wildlife Management Plans as part of the Cooperative Agreement.
4. The Division shall periodically evaluate ranches for enrollment, contract performance, and Tier placement, and shall establish minimum performance standards for ranches enrolled in the program, including wildlife habitat management and improvement, public recreation opportunity and experience, and any factors intended to contribute to meeting Data Analysis Unit (DAU) management objectives. Such performance standards shall be incorporated into the Cooperative Agreement with the ranch.

D. Season Structures, Manner of Take, License Restrictions

1. Public and private seasons opening and closing date parameters
 - a. Deer, elk, pronghorn, moose, and bighorn sheep seasons may not begin before the first day of the statewide archery season for that species, nor extend beyond January 31.
 - b. Black bear season may not begin before September 2, nor extend beyond October 31.
2. Private season length
 - a. Deer, elk, or pronghorn private seasons are restricted to a maximum of ninety (90) days.
 - b. Moose or bighorn sheep private seasons are restricted to a maximum of 30 days.
3. Public season length
 - a. Deer and elk public season length
 1. Antlered or either sex public hunting seasons shall be a minimum of ten (10) days in length for every licensed public hunter, either as a minimum of ten (10) consecutive days in length or divided into two (2) or more five (5) day periods.
 2. Ranches must offer a total of at least ten (10) days of antlerless public hunting. The season may run a minimum of ten (10) consecutive days; or may be split into two (2) or more five (5) day periods in which a hunter's license is valid in each period; or may be split into two (2) or more five (5) day seasons in which a hunter's license is valid in one but not any other five (5) day season. Ranches electing to split seasons and limit hunter participation to a single five (5) day season must assure that total public hunter harvest and licenses available are as much or more than would be achieved in the other two antlerless season alternatives.
 3. All public seasons or periods will include one full weekend, but seasons need not open on weekend days.
 - b. Pronghorn public season length
 1. Buck or doe hunting seasons shall be a minimum of five (5) days in length. All public seasons shall include one full weekend, but seasons need not open on weekend days.
 - c. Black Bear public season length
 1. Shall be a minimum of fifteen (15) days in length.
 - d. Moose public season length

1. Antlered or antlerless public hunting seasons shall be a minimum of ten (10) days in length. Antlered seasons shall include a minimum of five (5) consecutive days without overlapping any antlerless moose hunting season on the ranch.

e. Bighorn sheep public season length

1. Public hunting seasons for rams shall be a minimum of thirty (30) days in length and shall include a minimum of fifteen (15) consecutive days of hunting without overlapping any ewe hunting season on the ranch.
2. Public hunting seasons for ewes shall be a minimum of fifteen (15) days in length.

f. Additional primitive weapon seasons may be established provided that the season is structured so there is a minimum of 5 days of opportunity in which the method of take is restricted to archery or muzzleloading rifles.

1. These seasons shall be in addition to the previously mentioned minimum season lengths. Hunters drawing licenses for these seasons shall be allowed to hunt in the season with the restricted method of take and also in at least 10 additional days of opportunity with rifle method of take for moose, or antlered or either sex deer, elk, or black bear licenses; at least 5 additional days of opportunity with rifle method of take for pronghorn, or antlerless deer or elk licenses; at least 30 additional days of opportunity with rifle method of take for ram bighorn sheep licenses; and at least 15 additional days of opportunity with rifle method of take for ewe bighorn sheep. Additional primitive weapon seasons will include one full weekend.

4. Manner of Take

- a. Rifle hunting shall be the designated manner of take. Provided further that additional public hunting seasons beyond the previously mentioned minimum levels may be established with more restricted manner of take. Any such seasons and licenses allocated to those seasons are additional public hunting opportunity and shall not reduce licenses that would otherwise be allocated for the rifle seasons.

5. License Restrictions

- a. Ranching for Wildlife licenses are the only licenses valid for hunting of species under contract on the ranch, except that auction and raffle licenses may be used when there is not a public season for the same species in progress on the ranch and antlerless deer or elk licenses may be used on a ranch when authorized in writing by the Division, subject to the following provisions:
 1. There is an established season in which such licenses would be valid in the Game Management Unit (GMU) in which the ranch is located.
 2. Such licenses shall not be used concurrently with any Ranching For Wildlife season, or at any other time when the Division determines that it would result in elk, deer, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, moose, or black bear not being available to Ranching For Wildlife public hunters.
 3. The Division determines that any resulting harvest achieved will contribute to achieving DAU management objectives.

E. License Allocation

1. A maximum of 1,000 licenses of each species and sex for deer, elk, and pronghorn, a maximum of 30 black bear licenses, a maximum of 20 licenses of each sex for bighorn sheep, and a maximum of 50 licenses of each sex for moose may be allocated to each ranch annually, and subsequently distributed to the public and private share according to the distribution table established in this regulation.
2. Division staff recommendations regarding license allocations for each ranch shall be forwarded to and approved by the Director based upon Data Analysis Unit harvest objectives, relative ranch land base and

occupied habitat for each species on the ranch to that of the Data Analysis Unit, hunter crowding, enhancement of hunter harvest, and relative densities of the species on the ranch.

3. Substitution of licenses of one species or sex for licenses of another species or sex shall not be permitted.
4. For purposes of determining distribution of licenses allocated to each ranch, either sex licenses will be treated as antlered licenses for deer and elk and buck licenses for pronghorn.
5. Landowner preference shall not be used for any public or private Ranching For Wildlife license. In addition, Ranching for Wildlife property may not be used to qualify for or receive landowner preference pursuant to §33-4-103, C.R.S.
6. The public share of the licenses in the following distribution tables represents the minimum for each species. Fractions of licenses shall be rounded up for public distribution licenses.

DEER, ELK, AND PRONGHORN				
Tier	Private Share of Licenses		Public Share of Licenses	
	% of total allocation to each ranch		% of total allocation to each ranch	
	Buck, Antlered, or Either Sex Licenses	Doe or Antlerless Licenses	Buck, Antlered, or Either Sex Licenses	Doe or Antlerless Licenses
A	90	0	10	100
B	85	0	15	100
C	80	0	20	100

BLACK BEAR	
Private Share of Licenses	Public Share of Licenses
% of total allocation to each ranch	% of total allocation to each ranch
Either Sex	Either Sex
60	40

BIGHORN SHEEP			
Private Share of Licenses		Public Share of Licenses	
% of total allocation to each ranch		% of total allocation to each ranch	
Ram	Ewe	Ram	Ewe
50	0	50	100

MOOSE			
Private Share of Licenses		Public Share of Licenses	
% of total allocation to each ranch		% of total allocation to each ranch	
Antlered or Either Sex	Antlerless	Antlered or Either Sex	Antlerless
50	0	50	100

F. Youth Licenses

1. The Division and the ranch may formulate and implement youth hunting opportunities on any ranch through Division approved youth hunting programs. The Division must approve the youth hunting program on the ranch prior to any season or license allocation for such youth hunts.

2. A maximum of 15% of the total number for deer, elk, pronghorn, or black bear licenses allocated for a ranch may be allocated as youth hunting licenses on each ranch, over and above the total number of licenses allocated for a ranch.
3. Youth hunting seasons may occur at any time within the broad parameters for seasons within the Ranching For Wildlife program.
4. Youth licenses shall be distributed to individual youth hunters by mechanisms of the approved youth hunting program on the ranch. Youth licenses shall not count as either private or public licenses for purposes of calculating the relative share of other licenses allocated for the ranch.

G. License Distribution

1. Applications

- a. Applications for private hunter licenses stamped with the ranch name and season dates shall be available to the landowner for distribution.
 - b. Public hunter licenses shall be available through application and selection from the Division during the annual limited license drawing process, except as provided in this regulation.
 - c. Leftover Ranching For Wildlife Licenses: Ranching For Wildlife licenses which are not issued through the regular drawing will be issued as "leftover" licenses, only through the "leftover" drawing process, rather than through the over-the-counter leftover license process.
2. Trinchera Ranch - One hundred percent (100%) of the limited antlered public licenses and eighty percent (80%) of the limited antlerless public licenses shall be available through the Division's annual limited license drawing process. Twenty percent (20%) of the limited public antlerless licenses will be allocated by public drawing at 1:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday in August, annually, at the San Luis Community Center, San Luis, CO. Applications will be accepted between 9:00 am and noon, on the second Wednesday in August, annually.

H. Special Restrictions

1. Unless otherwise provided in these Ranching for Wildlife regulations all hunters must comply with other applicable regulations, including, but not limited to, manner of take (except that private hunters may use any legal weapon during private seasons), hunting hours, application requirements and deadlines, bag limits, season participation, mandatory checks, OHV restrictions, and other generally applicable regulations for big game hunting.
2. A copy of the mutually agreed upon ranch rules will be provided to all public hunters prior to their hunting season. All public hunters will be required to sign a statement acknowledging that they have read, understand, and agree to comply with all ranch rules, before the hunter is allowed access to the ranch.
 - a. Compliance with ranch rules is a specific condition of the Ranching For Wildlife public licenses and subsequent access to the ranch. In addition to criminal penalties, non-compliance with ranch rules constitutes grounds for suspension and revocation of the license and/or being prohibited from further participation in hunting on the ranch, and/or in the Ranching For Wildlife program as a public hunter.
 - b. Final determination on any legal action taken towards hunters found in non-compliance with ranch rules shall be made solely by officers of the Division. This includes any citation that may be issued for non-compliance with the provisions of a license, or directing a hunter to leave a ranch. Ranch personnel may not direct a hunter to leave a ranch without specific authorization of a Division officer.

FINAL REGULATIONS – CHAPTER 3 –TURKEY

AS APPROVED – 7/13/2012

#323.5 - RANCHING FOR WILDLIFE – TURKEY

A. Implementation Authority

1. The Director is authorized to implement the Ranching for Wildlife program, including the authority to determine ranch enrollment status, enter into cooperative agreements with ranches, establish and modify public and private season dates on each ranch, and establish and modify license allocations to each ranch including the subsequent distribution of licenses to the public and private share annually, and may establish additional Ranching for Wildlife operating guidelines subject to the following provisions.

B. Ranch Entry And Maintenance

1. Ranches must have a minimum of 10,000 acres of privately owned land in one contiguous unit. Ranches that meet this 10,000-acre minimum requirement may include privately owned non-contiguous parcels in the program if the Director determines that their inclusion will contribute to meeting the performance standards for the ranch.
2. Ranches must develop a Ranching For Wildlife Management Plan that includes goals, objectives, and strategies for achieving such goals and objectives for wildlife habitat management, species management, and public hunting management. The Management Plan must be approved by the Division prior to execution of a Cooperative Agreement for Ranching For Wildlife.
3. Ranches may not charge public hunters an access fee for hunting.
4. Except as agreed to in writing by the Division when necessary to meet the ranch performance standards or as mutually agreed and contained in the Management Plan, ranches must provide for equality of access in terms of geographical area and mode of transportation for both public and private hunters. No closure or restriction of land or roads shall apply to public hunters that do not also apply to private hunters.
5. Public hunts must be established at a time when the species to be hunted are present and available for harvest. No public seasons shall be established during times when normal winter conditions would prevent access to most of the ranch, nor when normal migration patterns of the species to be hunted result in the species having migrated off the ranch.
6. Ranches that establish coinciding or overlapping public and private hunts may not exclude public hunters from any portion of the ranch due to the presence of private hunters.
7. The Ranch and the Division will mutually agree to ranch rules regarding access to and hunting on the ranch by public hunters. The ranch rules will be provided to hunters prior to seasons on the ranch in accordance with other provisions contained in this Regulation.

C. Cooperative Agreements, Enrollment, Denial Of Enrollment, Termination Of Enrollment

1. The Division is authorized to enter into Cooperative Agreements with ranches.
2. Ranches may appeal enrollment decisions to the Parks and Wildlife Commission.
3. Cooperative Agreements shall incorporate approved Ranching For Wildlife Management Plans as part of the Cooperative Agreement.
4. The Division shall periodically evaluate ranches for enrollment and contract performance, and shall establish minimum performance standards for ranches enrolled in the program, including wildlife habitat management and improvement, public recreation opportunity and experience, and any factors intended to contribute to

meeting turkey management objectives. Such performance standards shall be incorporated into the Cooperative Agreement with the ranch.

D. Turkey Season Structures

1. Public and private spring season opening and closing date parameters.
 - a. Private seasons may not begin before April 1, nor extend beyond June 1.
 - b. Public seasons may only be established within the opening and closing dates of the regularly established spring season.
 - c. Public hunting seasons shall be a minimum of ten (10) consecutive days.
2. Public and private fall season opening and closing date parameters.
 - a. Public and private seasons may not begin before September 1, nor extend beyond November 1.
 - b. Public hunting seasons shall be a minimum of ten (10) consecutive days.
3. Manner of Take
 - a. The manner of take for spring or fall RFW turkey seasons shall be the same as that for regularly established spring or fall seasons.

E. License Allocation

1. A maximum of 100 bearded turkey licenses in the spring season and 100 either sex turkey licenses in the fall season may be allocated to each ranch annually, and subsequently distributed to the public and private share according to paragraph b of this regulation.
2. The public shall receive a minimum of forty percent (40%) of the total number of licenses allocated for each turkey season on each ranch.
3. License allocation for each ranch shall be approved by the Division and recommended to the Director, based upon harvest objectives for the ranch jointly determined by the Division and the ranch, hunter crowding, enhancement of hunter harvest, and relative densities of the species on the ranch.
4. Substitution of licenses of one species or sex for licenses of another species or sex shall not be permitted.
5. Landowner preference shall not be used for any public or private Ranching For Wildlife license.

F. Youth Licenses

1. The Division and the ranch may formulate and implement youth hunting opportunities on any ranch through Division approved youth hunting programs. The Division must approve the youth hunting program on the ranch prior to any season or license allocation for such youth hunts.
2. A maximum of 15% of the total number of turkey licenses allocated for a ranch may be allocated as youth hunting licenses on each ranch, over and above the total number of licenses allocated for a ranch.
3. Youth hunting seasons may occur at any time within the broad parameters for seasons within the Ranching For Wildlife program.
4. Youth licenses shall be distributed to individual youth hunters by mechanisms of the approved youth hunting program on the ranch. Youth licenses shall not count as either private or public licenses for purposes of calculating the relative share of other licenses allocated for the ranch.

G. License Distribution

1. Applications

- a. Applications for private hunter licenses stamped with the ranch name and season dates shall be available to the landowner for distribution.
- b. Public hunter licenses shall be available through application and selection from the Division during the annual limited license drawing process, except as provided in this regulation.

H. Special Restrictions

1. Unless otherwise provided in these Ranching for Wildlife regulations all hunters must comply with other applicable regulations, including, but not limited to, manner of take (except that private hunters may use any legal weapon during private seasons), hunting hours, application requirements and deadlines, bag limits, season participation, mandatory checks, OHV restrictions, and other generally applicable regulations for big game hunting.
2. A copy of the mutually agreed upon ranch rules will be provided to all public hunters prior to their hunting season. All public hunters will be required to sign a statement acknowledging that they have read, understand, and agree to comply with all ranch rules, before the hunter is allowed access to the ranch.
 - a. Compliance with ranch rules is a specific condition of the Ranching For Wildlife public licenses and subsequent access to the ranch. In addition to criminal penalties, non-compliance with ranch rules constitutes grounds for suspension and revocation of the license and/or being prohibited from further participation in hunting on the ranch, and/or in the Ranching For Wildlife program as a public hunter.
 - b. Final determination on any legal action taken towards hunters found in non-compliance with ranch rules shall be made solely by officers of the Division. This includes any citation that may be issued for non-compliance with the provisions of a license, or directing a hunter to leave a ranch. Ranch personnel may not direct a hunter to leave a ranch without specific authorization of a Division officer.