

January 2004

Ministry of Forests

RANGE REGIME

The Range Planning and Practices Regulation gives Range Act agreement holders sole responsibility for preparing range plans and determining the most efficient and effective way to meet government standards for the range resource.

The Range Planning and Practices Regulation governs all livestock grazing, hay cutting and construction of developments such as fences on Crown range in British Columbia.

Under the regulation, range agreement holders now have two options available to them for tenure. They can prepare a traditional range use plan, an operational description of management practices for protecting range resources and addressing management objectives for other identified values. Or they can prepare a range stewardship plan, which allows licensees more flexibility to propose and implement innovative management techniques.

The Range Planning and Practices Regulation specifies the content requirements to be followed in preparing a range use plan as well as a range stewardship plan. Both plans are subject to compliance and enforcement, and have terms of up to five years, with a possible extension for another five years.

Existing range use plans will either continue or be extended to December 2005, and will then be replaced by either a new range use plan or a range stewardship plan under the Forest and Range Practices Act.

The Range Planning and Practices Regulation sets out government objectives that must be addressed for the maintenance and protection of soils, forage and plant communities, water, fish, wildlife, and biodiversity. The regulation also enables the establishment of objectives for wildlife habitat areas, ungulate winter ranges, and water quality for community watersheds.

Invasive plant species are also being guarded against by the new legislation. The Range Planning and Practices Regulation requires that prevention measures be specified if a range agreement holder's practices are likely to introduce or spread an invasive plant species.

Plants not classed as noxious under the Weed Control Act, but considered as having a negative impact or ecological implication for Crown forest and range, may now be specified as an invasive plant. A total of 42 species are now listed under the Invasive Plants Regulation.

The Invasive Plants Regulation allows the Ministry of Forests to proactively take action against new invasive plant species as they become an issue.

The Range Planning and Practices Regulation specifies requirements for monitoring and annual reporting to the government. The need for public review and comment on range plans, plan amendments or development proposals is placed at the discretion of the Minister of Forests.

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