

STAFF SUMMARY FOR APRIL 14, 2021

3. FIVE-YEAR PRIVATE LANDS WILDLIFE HABITAT ENHANCEMENT AND MANAGEMENT PLANS (CONSENT)**Today's Item**Information ☐Action ☒

Consider approving five-year private lands wildlife habitat enhancement and management (PLM) plans and 2021-2025 licenses for 14 properties.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)**Background**

California Fish and Game Code sections 3400-3409 and Title 14 Section 601 prescribe conditions for a PLM program that provides incentives for landholders to manage their property for the benefit of fish and wildlife in exchange for access to increased recreational opportunities, such as hunting tags or extended seasons ("harvest program"). In return for a harvest program, the landholder must prepare a biologically-sound wildlife management plan and complete specific wildlife habitat improvements on the PLM property.

There are three types of actions associated with the PLM program: an initial five-year PLM license and plan; annual PLM seasons, harvests, and habitat improvements; and a five-year PLM license renewal, with conditions unique to each participant's property.

Proposed wildlife management plans and annual seasons, harvests, and habitat improvements for the 14 properties have been reviewed by DFW and found to be in compliance with FGC regulations and policies for PLMs; applicants have identified the location where records will be kept and made available for inspection (Exhibit 1).

Significant Public Comments (N/A)**Recommendation**

FGC staff: Approve five-year PLM license renewals for 2021-2025, and annual seasons, harvests, and habitat improvements for 2021-2025 as recommended by DFW for 14 properties, under a motion to adopt the consent calendar.

DFW: Approve five-year PLM license renewals for 14 properties, under the conditions specified in Exhibit 2.

Exhibits

1. [DFW memo, received Apr 23, 2021](#)
2. [PLM Area License New 5-Year Management Plans, 2021-2025, Proposed Seasons, Harvests, and Habitat Improvements, received Apr 23, 2021](#)

Motion

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission adopts the staff recommendations for items 3-10 on the consent calendar.

Memorandum

Date: March 17, 2021

To: Melissa Miller- Henson
Executive Director
Fish and Game Commission

From: Charlton H. Bonham
Director

Subject: **Agenda Item for the April 14-15, 2021 Fish and Game Commission Meeting Private Lands Wildlife Habitat Enhancement and Management (PLM) Area Licenses**

The Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed the Annual renewals and 5-year renewals for 63 properties in 17 counties consisting of approximately 945,296 acres.

The Annual renewal PLM areas were previously licensed under Commission regulations Section 601, Title 14, California Code of Regulations. Full payment was made for all tags used in 2020, and all habitat work was completed.

The renewal 5-year management plans are in compliance with Commission policy for private lands management. The applicants have identified the location where records will be kept and made available for inspection.

Habitat improvements accomplished under these plans will enhance and maintain wildlife resources on and around the PLM areas. The goals and objectives stated in the management plans are compatible with Department management plans for appropriate species in these areas. In addition, access to public lands will not be diminished under implementation of these management plans.

The Department recommends that the Commission approve the specified wildlife management plans, applications, and each 2021/22 harvest program under conditions specified in the attached table.

Melissa Miller-Henson, Executive Director
Fish and Game Commission
March 17, 2021
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If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Victoria Barr at (916) 203-0567 or by email at Victoria.barr@wildlife.ca.gov.

Attachment

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PLM AREA LICENSE
NEW 5-YEAR MANAGEMENT PLANS, 2021-2025
PROPOSED SEASONS, HARVESTS, AND HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS

NORTHERN REGION		
PLM Area	Proposed Season and Harvest	Habitat Improvement Program
CLOVER CREEK RANCH DEER ZONE C3 SHASTA 880 ACRES	<p>Authorized Harvest: 3 forked horn or better buck deer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue 3 buck deer tags for the period of August 1, 2021 through November 30, 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Replace the bottom strand of barbed wire with smooth wire 18 inches from the ground on all remaining exterior fencing. ➤ Maintain at least 250 acres of thermal hiding cover area on the north facing slope south of Clover Creek. ➤ Maintain a 75-acre no hunting and low incursion area. ➤ Maintain 25 wood duck boxes on Clover Creek. Add 10 more boxes during the 5-yr. period. ➤ Maintain 8 ponds in an area of the ranch that does not currently have water to encourage reduced cattle use of riparian areas. ➤ Plant a 1-acre or larger dryland food plot and a 0.10 acre or larger irrigated food plot. ➤ Increase the amount of water piping storage tank capacity for food plot areas and wildlife water. ➤ Continue reducing erosion and controlling sediment by creating water bars on graded dirt roads. ➤ Limit grazing intensity to 50 head and only graze from December 1 through May 1 to provide forage for wildlife.
DIXIE VALLEY RANCH DEER ZONE X3A LASSEN 12,500 ACRES	<p>Authorized Harvest: 4 forked horn or better buck deer, 2 buck pronghorn antelope, and 1 bull elk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue 4 buck deer tags to take forked horn or better buck deer for the period of August 1, 2021 through November 30, 2021. No more than 3 buck deer may be harvested after October 17, 2021. No person shall take more than 1 buck deer annually in the X zones. Issue 2 buck pronghorn antelope tags for the period of August 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021 Issue 1 bull elk tag for the period of August 1, 2021 through November 30, 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Remove all western juniper from 250 acres to increase shrub recruitment for wildlife forage. ➤ Manage timed cattle grazing on 250 acres of natural pasture containing a large pond, a creek, and several springs in the south east corner of the ranch during May and September/ October to provide forage and water for wildlife. ➤ Continue revitalization of at least 90 linear feet of aspen grove. ➤ Leave the final cutting of hay standing in the 800 acre irrigated pasture to provide forage for wildlife. ➤ Replace at least 1 mile of old fencing with wildlife friendly fencing. ➤ Maintain 25 Canada goose nesting platforms at Saw Mill pond, Jacks Hole and in the large marsh area. ➤ Maintain at least 21 ponds and 25 miles of canals and waterways.

PLM AREA LICENSE
NEW 5-YEAR MANAGEMENT PLANS, 2021-2025
PROPOSED SEASONS, HARVESTS, AND HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS

PLM Area	Proposed Season and Harvest	Habitat Improvement Program
R-R RANCH MENDOCINO 1,470 ACRES	<p>Authorized Harvest: 2 bull elk and 6 antlerless elk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue 2 bull elk tags for the period of July 20, 2021 through November 30, 2021. • Issue 4 antlerless elk tags for the period of September 15, 2021 through November 30, 2021. • On or before October 15, 2021, the licensee may request (in writing) up to 2 additional antlerless elk tags to accomplish the authorized harvest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Irrigate a 7-acre alfalfa pasture. If the alfalfa production falls below a total cover of 50% in the fall, rip, replant and roll the pasture at a rate of 20 lbs./acre the following March or April with a clover and alfalfa seed mix to provide high quality forage for wildlife. The first cutting of hay will be removed and all subsequent growth will be left for wildlife use. ➤ Maintain the existing 100-acre dryland plot with a rye grass/clover mix by harvesting and thatching every summer. ➤ Maintain 2 ponds, 3 springs, and 2 water troughs for wildlife use. ➤ Install wildlife escape ramps on all water troughs. ➤ Replace 1 water trough with more durable structure as recommended by CDFW. ➤ Exclude livestock from the ranch to improve forage and cover for wildlife. ➤ Create at least 4 wood piles at least 15 feet in diameter and 6 feet high for wildlife. Recycle 50% of existing decadent wood piles by burning. ➤ Develop a control burning plan for the ranch. ➤ Evaluate invasive species on at least 100 acres each year. Initiate treatment on at least 10 acres if invasive species reach 25% cover.
R WILD HORSE RANCH DEER ZONE B5 TEHAMA 4,000 ACRES	<p>Authorized Harvest: 4 forked horn or better buck deer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue 4 buck deer tags for the period of November 16, 2021 through November 19, 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mechanically treat (by cutting) at least 10 acres of decadent brush to promote new growth and create wildlife travel corridors. ➤ Create a 0.50-acre dugout water catchment basin to provide a water source for wildlife. ➤ Build at least 10 brush piles (each 20 feet in diameter) to provide escape cover for wildlife. ➤ Burn brush piles created in 2016.

PLM AREA LICENSE
NEW 5-YEAR MANAGEMENT PLANS, 2021-2025
PROPOSED SEASONS, HARVESTS, AND HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS

PLM Area	Proposed Season and Harvest	Habitat Improvement Program
<p>SALT CREEK RANCH</p> <p>DEER ZONE B5</p> <p>TEHAMA</p> <p>640 ACRES</p>	<p>Authorized Harvest: 3 forked horn or better buck deer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue 3 buck deer tags for the period of September 1, 2021 through November 30, 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue to improve water retention ponds by repairing and plugging any leaks in the dams. ➤ Continue planting rye grass, wild oats, and clover to maintain at least 25 acres of wildlife food plots. ➤ Clear burnt snags and implement erosion control measures for at least 10 acres within areas burned by the August Complex Fire. ➤ Create at least 5 brush piles that are at least 6 feet tall and 10 feet in diameter.
<p>SHAMROCK RANCH</p> <p>DEER ZONE B1</p> <p>MENDOCINO</p> <p>16,400 ACRES</p>	<p>Authorized Harvest: 8 bull elk, 10 antlerless elk, 50 deer of which no more than 30 may be forked horn or better buck deer, and 20 may be antlerless deer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue 8 bull elk tags for the period of July 12, 2021 through December 13, 2021. Issue 10 antlerless elk tags for the period of September 15, 2021 through December 13, 2021. <p>Issue 35 either-sex deer tags for the period of July 12, 2021 through November 30, 2021.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No antlerless deer shall be harvested before September 15, 2021. No more than 15 buck deer may be taken after October 24, 2021. On or before October 25, 2021, the licensee may request (in writing) up to 15 additional either-sex deer tags to accomplish the authorized harvest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mechanically treat and/ or burn at least 100 acres of chaparral in the Grosscup sub-areas to improve early seral stage forage and habitat heterogeneity. ➤ Maintain Meyers livestock enclosure and add 1 elk crossing. ➤ Fertilize and irrigate 15 acres of hay meadow from mid-July through mid-September to provide forage for wildlife. ➤ Inspect and repair the fencing at the 6-acre Meyer pasture livestock enclosure. ➤ Mechanically hedge 0.125 acre of blackberry and/or wild rose brush in the Anderson pasture sub-area to rejuvenate browse for wildlife. ➤ Initiate a high intensity/ short duration cattle grazing treatment in the Meyers enclosure to remove accumulated mature, decadent forage. ➤ Remove and/or treat 4 acres of invasive scotch broom and restore and protect 2 springs. ➤ Create 4 new brush piles in the Grosscup sub-area. 3 mature brush piles will be burned and reseeded. ➤ Leave approximately 10.5 acres of hay meadow in the North Meadow and a 30 feet wide by approximately 1,900 feet long buffer strip along Long Valley Creek in the South Meadow during haying to provide mature forage for elk and cover for the calves. ➤ Limit cattle grazing in the hay meadows and surrounding area which encompasses approximately 200 acres to mid-October through mid-December.

PLM AREA LICENSE
NEW 5-YEAR MANAGEMENT PLANS, 2021-2025
PROPOSED SEASONS, HARVESTS, AND HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS

PLM Area	Proposed Season and Harvest	Habitat Improvement Program
SHAMROCK RANCH CONT.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Remove 660 feet of old woven wire fencing in the Grosscup sub-area to reduce wildlife entanglement. ➤ Thin 0.25 acre of dense tan oak in the Meyers Pasture sub-area to rejuvenate browse and improve acorn production. ➤ Check and maintain 21 ponds and 8 springs. Repair an existing spring box which feeds an off-channel pond (Sawmill pond and spring). The pond will be fenced to provide water and habitat for wildlife.

BAY DELTA REGION

PLM Area	Proposed Season and Harvest	Habitat Improvement Program
COON CREEK RANCH DEER ZONE A SANTA CLARA 1,650 ACRES	<p>Authorized Harvest: 8 fork horn or better buck deer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue 8 buck deer tags for the period of July 11, 2021 through November 30, 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Treat 10 acres of chaparral. ➤ Pile brush for use by quail and other wildlife. ➤ Develop 1 spring and repair existing pond. ➤ Limit cattle grazing to 80 acres of ranch.

CENTRAL REGION

PLM Area	Proposed Season and Harvest	Habitat Improvement Program
CAMP 5 OUTFITTERS - ROTH RANCH PLM DEER ZONE A MONTEREY/SAN LUIS OBISPO 5,400 ACRES	<p>Authorized Harvest: 2 bull elk, 1 antlerless elk, 6 forked horn or better buck deer, and 3 antlerless deer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue 2 bull elk tags for the period of July 2, 2021 through December 31, 2021. • Issue 1 antlerless elk tag for the period of August 15, 2021 through December 31, 2021. • Issue 6 buck deer tags for the period of July 2, 2021 through November 30, 2021. • Issue 3 either-sex deer tags for the period of July 2, 2021 through November 30, 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Plant 150 acres of grain/barley for use by wildlife. ➤ Install 2 300-gallon water troughs in appropriate locations to provide water for wildlife. ➤ Install 1 mile of waterline below the Cabin pasture to bring in new water for wildlife. ➤ Allow only limited grazing on the PLM and in some areas no grazing (40-acre riparian area). ➤ Crush, burn, or clear 10 acres of old growth brush to stimulate new forage production for wildlife.

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PLM Area	Proposed Season and Harvest	Habitat Improvement Program
DEFRANCESCO/ EATON RANCH A DEER ZONE MERCED COUNTY 4,149 ACRES	<p>Authorized Harvest: 10 forked horn or better buck deer, 3 bull elk, and 3 antlerless elk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue 10 buck deer tags for the period of July 17, 2021 through November 30, 2021. • Issue 3 bull elk tags for the period July 17, 2021 through November 30, 2021. • Issue 3 antlerless elk tag for the period of September 18, 2021 through November 30, 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Eliminate cattle grazing on APNs 087-070-011 and 087-070-013 between May 15 and December 15, 2021. ➤ Maintain water troughs at Main Spring, Deer Camp, Laurel Spring, and Hay Barn for wildlife. ➤ Replace water tank at Spring road intersection with a new wildlife friendly water trough. ➤ Continue to remove decadent juniper in Dry Lakes area. ➤ Plant 1.25 acres of winter wheat mix in Dry Lake area where juniper removal has occurred. ➤ Maintain all current fence crossings, repair, as necessary.
INDIAN VALLEY CATTLE COMPANY - LOMBARDO RANCH DEER ZONE A MONTEREY 12,500 ACRES	<p>Authorized Harvest: 3 bull elk, 2 antlerless elk, and 4 forked horn or better buck deer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue 3 bull elk tags for the period of July 2, 2021 through December 31, 2021. • Issue 2 antlerless elk tags for the period of August 15, 2021 through December 31, 2021. • Issue 4 buck deer tags for the period of July 2, 2021 through November 30, 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Burn or crush 3-5 acres of chaparral. ➤ Construct 4-6 brush piles for use by wildlife. ➤ Maintain cattle stocking rate at approximately 300 animals to reserve feed for and reduce competition with wildlife. ➤ Plant 350 acres of barley as forage. ➤ Rotationally graze all pastures and rest others thus allowing increased wildlife access. ➤ Place one new wildlife accessible water trough. ➤ No grazing in the Big Sandy creek (approx. 300 acres fenced).
LONE RANCH DEER ZONE A SAN BENITO 12,500 ACRES	<p>Authorized Harvest: 3 bull elk, 2 antlerless elk, and 4 forked horn or better buck deer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue 3 bull elk tags for the period of August 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021. • Issue 2 antlerless elk tags for the period of August 15, 2021 through December 31, 2021. • Issue 4 buck deer tags for the period of August 1, 2021 through November 30, 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Replace the leaky water trough and escape ramp in the Upper McCoy pasture to provide water for wildlife. ➤ Rest Cabin pasture (300 acres) to provide forage for wildlife. ➤ Crush 5 acres of old growth brush in the Upper McCoy pasture to promote new forage for wildlife. ➤ Prescribe burn, cell graze and or spray to control Medusahead and Yellow star thistle in the Lower McCoy pasture (180 acres) to improve forage quality. ➤ Rest Johnson pasture (1200 acres) to provide forage for wildlife. ➤ Mechanically remove Tamarisk from James creek to improve riparian habitat.

PLM AREA LICENSE
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PROPOSED SEASONS, HARVESTS, AND HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS

PLM Area	Proposed Season and Harvest	Habitat Improvement Program
PEACHTREE RANCH MONTEREY 32,104 ACRES	<p>Authorized Harvest: 4 bull elk and 2 antlerless elk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue 4 bull elk tags for the period July 2, 2021 through December 31, 2021. • Issue 2 antlerless elk tags for the period August 15, 2021 through December 31, 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Install 1 ground level water source for quail and other small animals. ➤ Build and install 8 bird nesting boxes. ➤ Monitor and report the height of the vegetation by pasture after the steers have been shipped. ➤ Install 15 escape ladders in water troughs. ➤ Install 1 elk crossing. ➤ Develop 2 springs and install a 5,000 gallon water tank to provide water for wildlife.
RANCHO LA CUESTA DEER ZONE A SAN BENITO 4,000 ACRES	<p>Authorized Harvest: 3 bull elk, 1 antlerless elk, and 4 forked horn or better buck deer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue 4 bull elk tags (to take no more than 3 bull elk) for the period of July 15, 2021 through December 31, 2021. • Issue 1 antlerless elk tag for the period of August 15, 2021 through December 31, 2021. • Issue 2 buck deer tags for the period of July 15, 2021 through November 30, 2021. <p>Note: Rancho La Cuesta is not requesting all their Authorized deer tags this year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Plant 5 acres of grasses and legumes to provide high quality food for elk and deer. ➤ Clean out and maintain water points on the ranch to provide water for wildlife. ➤ Maintain a 2,530-acre cattle-free refuge on the upper portion of the ranch for exclusive use by wildlife. ➤ Burn or mechanically manipulate 5 acres of decadent chaparral to stimulate growth of quality browse for wildlife. ➤ Build 5 brush piles for use by wildlife.
SKY ROSE RANCH, LLC. PLM DEER ZONE A MONTEREY 14,039 ACRES	<p>Authorized Harvest: 7 forked horn or better buck deer, 2 antlerless deer, and 2 bull elk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue 7 buck deer tags for the period of July 1, 2021 through November 30, 2021. • Issue 2 antlerless deer tags for the period July 1, 2021 through November 30, 2021. • Issue 2 bull elk tags for the period July 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Install 2 new wildlife watering sources in the northern portion of the ranch. ➤ Construct 10 brush piles in appropriate areas to enhance wildlife habitat. ➤ Install any combination of blue bird nesting boxes or bat roosting boxes totaling 10 units at locations to be determined on the ranch. ➤ Identify, remove, and dispose of mature tree of heaven; seed with site-appropriate native seed mix. ➤ Plant 10 acres of barley and grass mix to provide forage and cover for wildlife.