

Committee Staff Summary for May 14, 2026 WRC

3. Department Lands**Today's Item**Information Action

Discuss and potentially make recommendations for amendments to regulations regarding Department lands, including wildlife areas and ecological reserves.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

- Initial vetting January 13, 2026; WRC
- **Today's discussion and potential recommendation** **May 14, 2026; WRC**
- Commission expected to consider WRC recommendations June 17-18, 2026

Background

Commission regulations in sections 550, 551 and 630 provide the regulatory framework for public use of lands owned, managed, and/or administered by the Department, including wildlife areas and ecological reserves. As needed or requested, the Commission considers regulatory amendments that govern various public activities on Department lands, such as hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, and horseback riding. Regulations for Department lands were last amended in 2024.

Today's Meeting

Today, the Department will present proposed updates and additions to its January 2026 recommendations for amendments to Department lands regulations (Exhibit 1). The Department has also supplied a document summarizing all of the recommended amendments (Exhibit 2). WRC will discuss the Department's recommendations and potentially make a recommendation to the Commission for consideration.

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

Commission staff: Recommend the Commission support a future rulemaking regarding Department lands, based on today's discussion.

Department: Support a future rulemaking regarding the Department lands, as recommended.

Exhibits

1. [Department presentation](#)
2. [Summary of Department recommendations for Department lands](#), received Jan. 6, 2026

Committee Direction/Recommendation

The Wildlife Resources Committee recommends that the Commission support a future rulemaking regarding Department lands based on the Department's recommendation and today's discussion.



DEPARTMENT LANDS REGULATIONS

Wildlife Resources Committee

May 14, 2026

PRESENTED BY: KRISTI CRIFE, STATEWIDE ECOLOGICAL RESERVE COORDINATOR

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

DEPARTMENT LANDS REGULATIONS 2026

General Visitor
Regulations

Property Specific
Regulations

Lands Pass Program
Updates

New Designations





Sheep Ranch
Calaveras County



Title 14 §540

Neonicotinoid
pesticide use is
prohibited on
Department lands

Neonicotinoid pesticide use is prohibited on Department lands

The application of a neonicotinoid pesticide to department lands ~~by the department~~ is prohibited. For purposes of this section, “neonicotinoid” means a pesticide containing any of the following active ingredients in the nitroguanidine insecticide class of neonicotinoids: clothianidin, dinotefuran, imidacloprid, and thiamethoxam, and “department land” has the same meaning as specified in subsection 550(b)(1), Title 14, California Code of Regulations.



Title 14 §550 and §550.5

General Regulations and Special Use Permit

General Regulations for Public Use and Reservations, Entry Permits, Fees, Passes, and Special Use Permits.

Further clarify ejections and penalties for hunters.

(3) Daily Entry Permit Revocations, Refusals, and Ejections. Employees of the department are authorized to refuse entry or issuance of entry permits, revoke permits ~~and/or~~ eject and/or ban for a period of one year any visitor from department land for violation of any regulations, drug or alcohol intoxication, disorderly conduct, or for any reason when it appears that the general safety or welfare of the property or persons thereon is threatened. The decision and duration of revocation, and/or ban, in such respect, ~~by~~ of any department employee assigned management or enforcement responsibilities for the area shall be final.

(5) Penalties. (A) A visitor's failure to comply with sections 550, 551, 552 or 630 of these regulations may result in any or all of the following:

1. denial of permission to enter department lands;
2. revocation of any pass and/or permit already issued;
3. ejection from department lands for the day;
- ~~4.~~ 4. ban from department lands for ~~up to~~ one calendar year from the date of discovery; and
5. ~~4.~~ citation or arrest under applicable provisions of the Fish and Game Code or these regulations.



Title 14 § 551 (Continued)



Additional Visitor Use Regulations on Department Lands Designated as Wildlife Areas. (Continued)

(o) Designated Closures & Restrictions

- Shasta Valley WA Trout Lake & Bass Lake fishing closure during waterfowl season.

(s) Additional Hunter Opportunities on Type A and Type B

- Gray Lodge WA fall turkey season allowed on waterfowl shoot days, and spring turkey season allowed only through a special drawing.
- Yolo Bypass WA mentored apprentice deer and turkey hunts.

(x) Additional Waterfowl Reservation Regulations

- Gray Lodge WA & Yolo Bypass WA: Up to three persons
- San Luis NWR Freitas Units North and South, permits will be issued from at the check station at 2:00 a.m.



Title 14 § 552



Merced National Wildlife Refuge



Snipe hunting is allowed on all units only on waterfowl shoot days only when the area is open to hunting by adult license holders.



In assigned blinds areas, hunters must hunt from assigned blinds. In assigned zone areas, hunters must hunt from within assigned zones.



Bicycles allowed May 15th through August 15th on the designated auto tour road.



Camping is prohibited.



Title 14 § 552 (Continued)



San Luis National Wildlife Refuge



Snipe hunting is allowed on all units only on waterfowl shoot days only when the area is open to hunting by adult license holders.



It shall be unlawful to retain an entry permit or remain on the wildlife refuge later than one- and one-half hours after sunset, unless participating in overnight stay in accordance with subsection (a)(7)(E).



Camping and trailers are prohibited on the Kesterson Unit, except on the night before each waterfowl shoot day, when camping in a vehicle, motorhome or trailer within the check station parking area is allowed. Tents are prohibited. No person may build or maintain fires, except in portable gas stoves.)





THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?

Kristi Cripe
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Reserve Coordinator
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2026 PROPOSED RULEMAKING PACKAGE

CDFW Lands property specific proposed regulations will:

- Protect natural resources
- Clarify existing regulations
- Create opportunities for wildlife viewing, hunting & fishing
- Maintain safety for visitors and staff
- Designate two properties as Wildlife Areas

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1 Prohibit boating in sensitive habitat. | 7 Designate two new properties providing opportunities for public access. | 13 Update Special Use permit contact information and fees. |
| 2 Prohibit horse and pack stock on specific properties. | 8 Add language to clarify that hunters may only have 25 shotgun shells in their possession while in the field for one ecological reserve. | 14 Define when or if camping, trailers can be used on specific properties. |
| 3 Prohibit the use of trail cameras on ecological reserves and wildlife areas. | 9 Clarify that hunters hunt from assigned area (blind or assigned area). | 15 Update dog trials and/or dog training on specific properties. |
| 4 Open new hunts on specific properties or clarify existing hunt opportunities. | 10 Hunters must exit area and return permitted within 1.5 hours after sunset NWR San Luis. | 16 Ban use of neonicotinoid pesticides on CDFW Lands. Text edit to current regulation. |
| 5 Allow bicycle use during waterfowl season on a Type C area or specific dates range on NWR. | 11 Clarify ejections and penalties for hunters. | 17 Remove properties from Lands Pass Program. |
| 6 Authorize hunting and or hunting of specific species on specific properties. | 12 Close specific portions of areas for public safety. | 18 Clarify target shooting is prohibited on all Department lands except at designated shooting sites. |
| | | 19 Update federal regulations on NWR / WA. |

Region 1

- Big Springs WA - 7
- Eel River WA -17
- Elk Creek Wetlands WA -17
- Elk River WA -17
- Fay Slough WA -17
- Lake Earl WA -17
- Mad River Slough WA -17
- South Spit WA -17
- Shasta Valley WA - 12

Region 2

- Colusa NWR - 19
- Delevan NWR -19
- Hope Valley WA -17
- Gray Lodge WA - 1, 4,14
- Sheep Ranch WA -7
- Sacramento NWR -19
- Sacramento River NWR -19
- Sutter NWR - 19

Region 3

- Cache Creek WA- 17
- Eden Landing ER - 8
- Fagan Marsh ER -17
- Napa-Sonoma Marsh WA - 5,15
- Yolo Bypass WA - 4, 6

Region 4

- Kern NWR - 19
- Merced NWR/WA - 4, 5, 6, 9, 14,19
- San Luis NWR/WA - 4, 6, 10,19
- Volta WA - 2

Region 5

- Batiquitos Lagoon ER -17
- Boden Canyon ER - 6
- Bolsa Chica ER -17
- Buena Vista Lagoon ER -17
- San Elijo Lagoon ER -17
- Upper Newport Bay ER -17

Region 6

- No property proposals submitted.
- Sonny Bono Salton Sea NWR - 19

Statewide

- Related to all properties - 3, 16,18
- Related to all Type A/B WA -11