

# Grazing

## Background

Grazing leases on state land located within the planning area exceed 150,000 acres.<sup>12</sup> Such leaseholds, in addition to providing year-round forage for substantial livestock numbers, also have the effect of preserving large blocks of undeveloped land near or on the road system. By precluding other uses, these areas have been important for protecting wildlife habitat along the road system and have provided extensive public recreation opportunities. Approximately two-thirds of the 150,000 acres is located in the eastern portion of Kodiak Island north of Ugak Bay, with the remainder on Sitkinak Island. On Kodiak Island, management units K-36, K-37, K-44A, K-45, K-47, K-50A, K-51A, K-73F, K-74, K-75, and K-76 are co-designated Grazing and Public Recreation – Dispersed. This co-designation reflects the importance of both the grazing operations and dispersed public recreation uses in the area north of Ugak Bay. Grazing is intended to occur within these areas on a long-term basis along with dispersed public recreation. The area of grazing operations adjoining Lake Tead is designated Grazing, reflecting the primary use of this area for grazing. On Sitkinak Island, management units T-01, T-02, and most of T-04 are designated Grazing (Gr).

## Goals

**Grazing Opportunities.** Continue to provide opportunities for grazing on state lands in the Kodiak Island Borough.

**Availability of State Land.** Make units with existing forage and rangeland resources available for short-term and long-term grazing.

**Contribute to Economic Diversity.** Contribute to Alaska's economy by protecting range lands that provide opportunity for growth of the red meat industry and protection of large road accessible habitat areas for fish and wildlife resources which contribute directly or indirectly to local, regional, and state economies through commercial, subsistence, sport and non-consumptive uses.

## Management Guidelines

**A. Use of State Land for Grazing.** Grazing on state land is appropriate for the duration of the area plan. Grazing may be allowed in areas with appropriate classifications (11 AAC 60.010) if DNR determines that grazing is the primary value present, and after considering potential conflicts with other resource uses.

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<sup>12</sup> The production of livestock on Kodiak Island commenced with the Russian settlements and has long featured cattle on the island's extensive grasslands. Grazing on some of the adjacent islands within the planning area also dates back a long time and in some cases was associated with Military needs for beef production. In more recent years bison and elk have also been introduced onto the Kodiak Island ranches and leaseholds.

**B. Multiple Use.** All land use designations and classifications are multiple use. Lands used for grazing will be managed as multiple use lands to support a variety of public benefits, including fish and wildlife habitat and harvest, water quality maintenance, public recreation, and public access.

**C. Access and Use.** Public access across and public use of grazing lands may not be limited by persons holding grazing leases or permits unless approved as part of a grazing operations plan. (11 AAC 60.130)

**D. Grazing Operations Plans.** Prior to initiating grazing activities on a grazing permit or lease, a person must have an approved grazing operations plan that will become part of the lease or permit. DNR will assist a lessee or permittee in preparing a plan in consultation with ADF&G and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The minimum requirements of a grazing operations plan are:

1. A physical resource map showing: a) location, acreage, and configuration of the authorized area, b) proposed range improvements including corrals, feedlots, watering sites, fences, improved pasture, line shacks, etc., c) proposed headquarter site (if needed), d) existing facilities on private property or other state authorizations that are associated with the Grazing Lease (wintering feedlot, etc), proposed access, and existing physical features such as existing roads or trails and waterbodies.
2. A written plan indicating: a) the information identified in “1” above, b) proposed timing for the development and stocking, c) initial stocking rate as determined in the conservation plan, d) proposed stocking rates, proposed practices, and the standards and procedures for meeting the proposed development (in compliance with USDA/NRCS manuals), and e) specific plans for dealing with all concerns noted during adjudication of the lease that were included in the final decision as needing special attention.

**E. Lease Utilization.** State land affected by a grazing lease is only to be used for the purposes stated in the lease, and in accordance with the land classification. (11 AAC 60.060)

**F. Lands Designated Settlement and Water Resources.** To minimize conflicts between grazing and settlement, grazing leases will not be authorized on state lands that are designated Settlement (Se) or Settlement-Commercial (Sc). To protect areas identified as important watersheds, grazing leases will not be authorized on state lands that are designated Water Resources (W).

**G. Shearwater Peninsula.** Grazing is considered an inappropriate use within the Shearwater Peninsula and grazing leases are not to be authorized in this area. Grazing activities are inconsistent with the zoning regulations of the Kodiak Island Borough and the presence of bear concentrations makes such a use problematic. In addition, management units K-53, K-54, K-55, K-56, and K-58 are designated Habitat (Ha) and are to be managed consistent with the Terror Lake Cooperative Management Agreement (see management

intent for these units). This agreement recognized habitat as the primary resource value for this area, and identified maintenance of the habitat's productivity as the primary management goal. All of the management units on the Shearwater Peninsula are affected by this requirement, including management units K-57A and K-57B, which are designated General Use and Settlement, respectively.

**H. Saltery, Lake Miam, and Pasagshak Drainages.** Management units within these drainages, including units K-50A, K-51A, K-73F, K-74, and K-75, are co-designated Grazing and Public Recreation – Dispersed. Grazing is recognized as a long-term use along with public recreation, but is subject to certain management considerations that are identified in the management intent for each of these units. In those areas where grazing operations could affect recreation uses, its future viability is contingent upon the grazing lessee continued operation within the limits established in their grazing lease and conservation/development plans. State grazing management plans, recreational uses that require a permit prior to authorization or other authorizations in these areas are to address the actual and/or potential conflict between recreational users and grazing operations. These plans and authorizations are to include best management practices designed to preclude such conflict or mitigate impacts to levels that permit the existing and reasonable levels of new recreation use to continue. Consult the management intent for units K-50A, K-51A, K-73F, K-74, and K-75 for more detail on these requirements. Also consult management guideline H in the 'Recreation, Tourism, and Scenic Resources' section.

**I. Reevaluation of Grazing Leases.** Either at the time of plan revision or when the state Grazing Leases are up for renewal, impacts to fish and wildlife populations and their associated habitat by grazing operations must be evaluated. The intent of this management guideline is to avoid past mistakes and unwanted impacts to these populations in the future and to include appropriate mitigation measures in any renewed grazing leases.

**J. Local Plans and Land Use Regulations.** Authorizations for new grazing leases should be consistent with the Kodiak Island Borough's zoning regulations, Comprehensive Plan, and specific Land Use Plans. Grazing is not a permitted use in areas zoned Wildlife Habitat in the Kodiak Island Borough Zoning Ordinance. Units K-53, K-54, K-55, K-56, K-57A, K-57B, and K-58 are affected by this prohibition. See also Management Guideline G.

**K. Other Guidelines Affecting Grazing.** Other guidelines may affect grazing. See the following sections of this chapter:

- Coordination and Public Notice
- Instream Flow
- Material Sites
- Recreation, Tourism, and Scenic Resources
- Settlement
- Shorelines, Stream Corridors and Coastal Areas
- Subsurface Resources