

**Recreational Management Plan
For
Grazing Lease 030004
Pekisko Creek Ranch & Cattle Co. Ltd.
July 2012**

**Government
of Alberta ■**

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Section I

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to provide reasonable access to public land that is the subject of agricultural disposition held as grazing lease GRL 030004. The plan will attempt to balance proper land management, public safety and protection of livestock with the needs of recreational users. When using Public Land, users must comply with the *Public Lands Act*.

Legal Description

The recreational management plan covers the following public land (refer to Figure 1):

1) GRL 030004

Township 16 Range 3 W5

- Section 31
- Part SW32 (which lies to the west of an existing north-south fence line being near the west boundary of the quarter section);
- Part NW of Section 29 (which lies to the west of an existing fence line and excluded is 1.06 acres for a road as shown on the Plan 517 Q (908 RD)), Part SW29 (which lies to the west of an existing fence line),
- NE30 (excluded is 4.14 acres for a road as on Plan 517 Q(908 RD)), NW30 (excluded is 3.00 acres for a road as shown on Plan 517 Q (908 RD)), SE30, SW30 (excluded is 1.01 acres for a road as shown on the Plan 517 Q (908 RD));

Township 17 Range 3 W5

- Section 6;

Township 16 Range 4 W5

- Sections 11, 12, 13,
- N1/2 & SE of Section 14,
- 23, 24,
- N1/2 of Section 25, SW25,
- Sections 26, 27, 28,
- SE33, Part SW33 (which lies to the south of an existing east-west fence line being near the south boundary of the quarter section)
- S 1/2 34,
- Part NE35 (which lies to the south and to the east of an existing fence line), S1/2 of Section 35
- Part NW36 (which lies generally to the east of two intersecting fence lines), NE and S1/2 of 36

Township 17 Range 4 W5

- Part NE1 (which lies to the east of an existing fence line), Part SE1 (which lies to the southeast of an existing fence line), and Part SW1 (which lies to the southeast of an existing fence line);

General Landscape Description

The grazing lease is located in a landscape that is transitional between the Foothills Parkland and the Montane Natural Subregions. The Foothills Parkland Subregion is situated along the farthest east side and through the valley bottom of the planning area. Upland vegetation is a mosaic of native grassland and aspen forest, and in moister sites, willow groves. Riparian cottonwood forests are found along the creeks. Greenfeed Creek and Miller Creek are the major drainage patterns to the south and northwest portions of the planning area, respectively. Both creeks in turn drain into Pekisko Creek which flows eastward through the valley bottom. The Montane Natural Subregion dominates the majority of the planning area and has a vegetative mosaic of native grasslands, aspen and conifer forests. The topography varies from gentle slopes along the valley bottom to steep northwest to southeast trending ridges.

The easterly upland portion of the recreational management plan and the valley bottom lie within two Environmentally Significant Areas, the Highwood-Pekisko Upland and Pekisko Creek. Both are provincially significant in representing extensive Foothills Parkland landscape that has minimal disturbance from human activity.

Management Planning Context

The majority of the recreational management planning area falls within the Eden Valley Local Integrated Resource Plan. The majority of public land is designated as Zone 5 - Multiple Use. The lower slopes and valley bottom along Pekisko Creek is designated as Zone 2 - Critical Wildlife habitat. A review of the Multiple Use and Critical Wildlife designations confirms that the recreational management plan is compatible with the intent of the local integrated resource plan.

Pekisko Creek is considered a major stream that flows into the Highwood River east of Highway 22. The Eden Valley Local Integrated Resource Plan states watershed management and water resources are important and that a primary objective is to maintain water quality in streams and the rivers in the planning area.

The planning area has protective and consultative notation reservations registered on all or parts of the public land. Protective notations indicate that proposed activities may be constrained due to steep topography, watershed protection or may require the implementation of an access management plan. The consultative notation refers to the development of a range management plan on all or part of the area.

Present Activities and Management

The primary agricultural use for the land is livestock grazing. Grazing is a natural ecological process on the Foothills Parkland and Montane landscapes, and is managed to sustain the forage resource along with other resource and conservation values including wildlife habitat and watershed protection.

The grazing lease is cross-fenced into several fields whereby livestock are managed under a year round rotational grazing system. All or parts of fields will be included within four hunting zones as shown on Figure 1. The zones were established to manage hunting and recreational access. The zones are numbered and named for identification to improve communication between the leaseholder and the recreational user regarding matters of access and prevailing conditions during a visit. Allocation of hunting will occur within the boundaries of the individual zones. Recreational foot access will be allowed, but could be temporarily restricted, in a zone or zones depending on the prevailing conditions at the time of visit. It should be noted that the recreational management plan does not apply to the private land in SE25-16-4 W5 which is fenced in with GRL 030004.

Recreational activities are generally associated with hunting during the fall season for big game and in the spring season for black bear. Prior to implementing this recreational management plan, the leaseholder allowed foot access to hunt and for general visitations. This plan will formalize access to the area for recreational based activities.

Vehicle Access Management

Access to the recreational management planning area will be by way of the municipal road from the east, which parallels the Pekisko Creek valley and ends at the east boundary of SE25-16-4 W5. Figure 1 illustrates the location of the municipal road in relation to the boundary of the recreational management plan. Motorized vehicle access is not permitted beyond this point.

Priority Allocation for Access to Hunt on the Grazing Lease

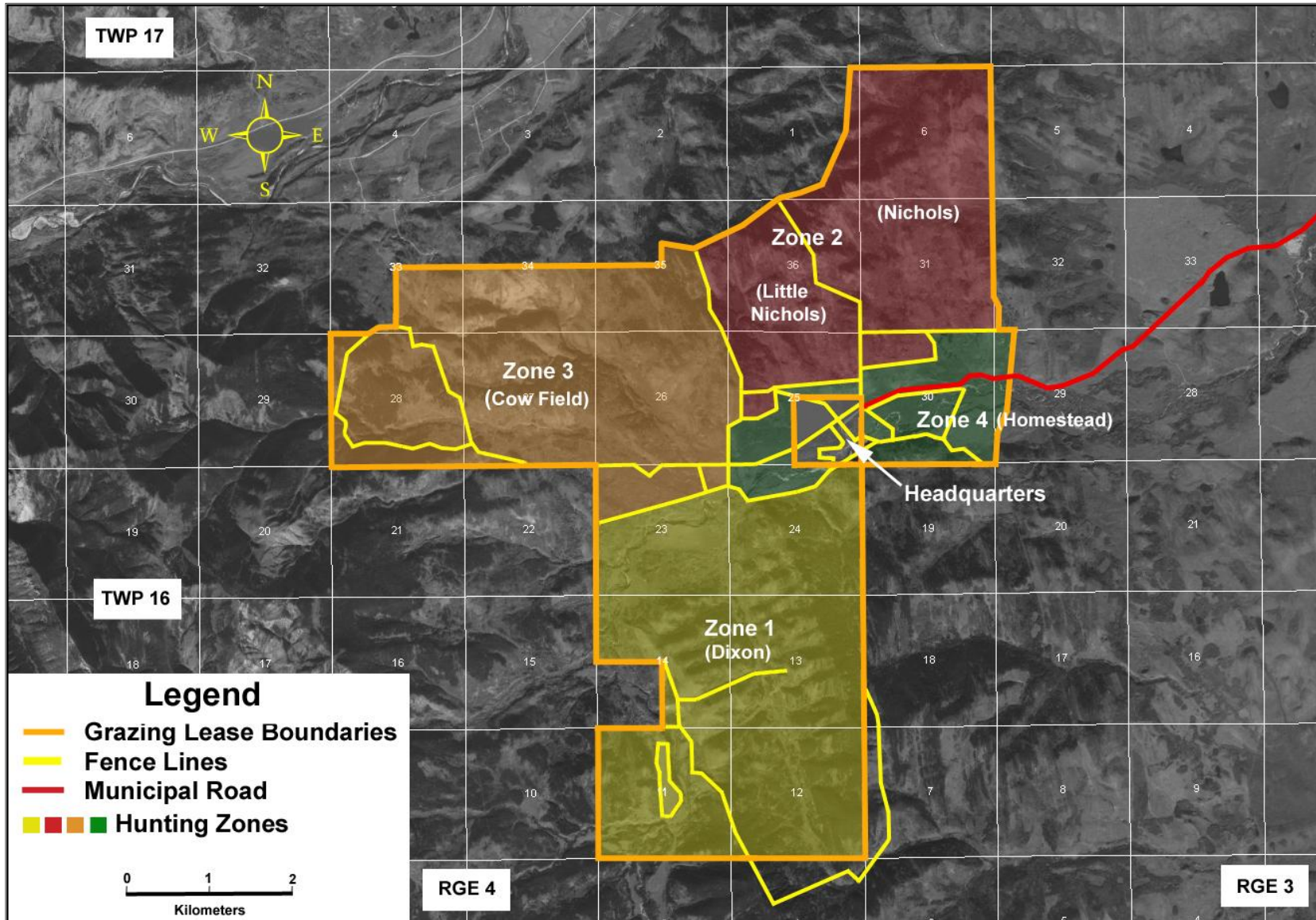
Hunting is the primary recreational activity occurring on the grazing lease and will be managed in a manner that will minimize the risk of injury to livestock. The leaseholder receives a significant number of contacts by hunters which can place a strain on the daily operation of the ranch. In order to manage hunting activities, the leaseholder has implemented a draw system to prioritize access to the lease for hunting. The schedules and conditions to access during the hunting season, and general recreational access for the balance of the year, are addressed in the section of the plan under **Recreational Access Requirements**.

General Recreational User Contact Prior to Access

A person who wishes to access the grazing lease, for purposes other than hunting, is required to contact the individual named as the leaseholder's contact person prior to entering the grazing lease. The name of the contact person and contact information can be obtained from the Recreational Access to Agricultural Public Land Website¹, or through the local office at 403-297-8800. This initial contact will determine if access is available for the proposed date of the visitation, and it will allow the leaseholder's contact person to inform the user of conditions or concerns that could be imposed at the time of the visitation, such as trail conditions, and zones open to use. Recreational users will be allowed to access the grazing lease on foot.

¹ <http://www.srd.alberta.ca/AccessAgPublicLand>

Figure 1. Recreational Management Plan Map for GRL 030004



Leaseholder Responsibilities

The holder of an agricultural lease is required to allow reasonable access for the purposes of non-commercial recreational activities, provided those activities do not pose an unacceptable risk to the land resource, a hazard to livestock, a conflict with livestock management objectives or damage to improvements, and conforms to the applicable legislation.

Monitoring of Recreational Activities

The impact of the various recreational activities on the landscape, range resource and range management practices will be assessed to ensure that the current level of use is sustainable. Resource management agencies and the leaseholder will assess the impacts that recreational activities will have on the land, which may require adjustments to ensure good stewardship of the land.

Plan Review Process

The recreational management plan will be reviewed and may be amended by agreement between the leaseholder and the Government of Alberta (GOA), when one of the following conditions occurs³:

- Subsequent to an assignment of the grazing lease, if the GOA representative or the assignee is of the opinion that the recreational management objectives for the grazing lease will differ significantly from that of the assignor;
- Issuance of an overlapping disposition that would require integration into the plan;
- Cancellation of an overlapping disposition that was integrated into the plan;
- Unreasonable loss or damage caused by recreation, as determined by the Minister in consultation with the leaseholder;
- At the time of a renewal, or as determined by the Minister in consultation with the leaseholder.

Education and Enforcement

The focus on implementing the recreational management plan will be on providing information to both the leaseholder and recreational users to encourage respect and cooperation. Educating all parties on the requirements of the legislation and supporting policies pertaining to recreational access to agricultural dispositions is an important step in reducing conflict and preventing violations from occurring. The content of this plan outlines the primary roles and responsibilities for the leaseholder and recreational users. However, if recreational users or the leaseholder contravene the *Public Lands Act*, the Recreational Access Regulation, or the Recreational Management Plan, there are provisions that allow for enforcement of those violations.

³ Changes in range management practices as agreed to by the leaseholder and the Rangeland Agrologist will not initiate a comprehensive review of the plan.

Recreational management plans are established and administered under the *Public Lands Act* and the Recreational Access Regulation. The Recreational Access Regulation further defines the duties and responsibilities of both the agricultural leaseholder and recreational user with respect to access for recreational purposes and dispute resolution.

The success of this planning process will be through a commitment to implement the objectives and conditions outlined in the recreational management plan. The holder of the grazing lease and recreational user are encouraged to obtain additional information and publications on recreational use of agricultural public land from either the Recreational Access to Agricultural Public Land Website or the local office.

SECTION II

Recreational Access Requirements

The Recreational Access Regulation requires a person using agricultural disposition land for recreational purposes to comply with the terms and conditions described in a recreational management plan. The following terms and conditions have been established by the GOA and apply to the grazing leases for the management of recreational activities:

- 1.a. Recreational users, other than hunters, are required to contact the leaseholder's contact person a minimum of 10 days to a maximum of 30 days, between 9 AM and 4 PM Monday to Friday, prior to entering the grazing lease, and must provide the following information⁴:
 - i. The number of people wishing to gain access to the land, their names and the vehicle license plate number used for transportation to the land;
 - ii. The name of a contact person or persons, and the means by which they can be contacted;
 - iii. The recreational purpose, proposed date, time and duration of access, and location within the grazing lease.
- 1.b. Recreational use on the grazing lease may be limited to a minimum of **5 individuals** per zone on a daily basis.
2. Hunting on the grazing lease is managed in four zones as shown in Figure 1. Zone 1, also referred to as the Dixon, is situated in the southern portion of the ranch. Zone 2 consists of the Nichols and Little Nichols Fields, and is situated in the northeast portion of the ranch. Zone 3, also referred to as the Cow Field, is situated in the west portion of the ranch. Zone 4, also referred to as the Homestead is situated around the headquarters of the ranch. The following conditions apply to individuals or groups seeking to hunt on the grazing lease:

⁴ The personal information collected for the purposes of the recreational management plan is subject to the *Freedom of Information and Privacy Act*, and is collected under the authority of section 5 of the Recreational Access Regulation. Questions regarding the collection and use of the personal information should be directed to: Lands Division at 780-427-3595.

- i. The number of people wishing to gain access to the land, their names and the vehicle license plate number used for transportation to the land will be provided to the leaseholder's contact person;
 - ii. The name of a contact person or persons, and the means by which they can be contacted will be provided to the leaseholder's contact person;
 - iii. The proposed date, time and duration of access, and location within the grazing lease will be provided to the leaseholder's contact person;
 - iv. Access is restricted to foot;
 - v. **Zones 1, 2 and 3** may be limited to a minimum of **5 individuals** per zone on a daily basis. **Zone 4** may be limited to a minimum of **2 individuals** on a daily basis;
 - vi. Hunting access will be awarded through a draw. Applications for the draw can be obtained by contacting the leaseholders contact person by telephone or by the email. The telephone number and email address are posted on GRL 030004 **Access Contacts and Conditions Website** which can be obtained through the **Recreational Access to Agricultural Public Land Website**;
 - vii. Hunting access may be refused if the location is unreasonably close to a fenced grazing disposition pasture in which livestock of the leaseholder are present. The leaseholder has the discretion to determine as to the meaning of "unreasonably close" in the context of Section 6(1)(d) of the Recreational Access Regulation, and should the individual requesting access disagrees with that determination; the individual has the opportunity to submit an application for resolution through the local settlement officer. The local settlement officer will make a determination based on the circumstances.
3. The following conditions may apply to recreational users:
- i. Access may be restricted to foot;
 - ii. Recreational access to a field where livestock are present may be refused;
 - iii. Any animals brought onto the land must be under the direct control of the recreational user. Dogs must be on a leash at all times, unless otherwise authorized by the leaseholder's contact person or the leaseholder;
 - iv. Access to all or part of the grazing lease can be denied when a fire ban is imposed by a competent authority under any law in force in Alberta, and is in effect in respect of all or part of the grazing lease;
 - v. Recreational users shall not light fires;
 - vi. Groups or organizations requesting access to hold special events shall require special approval, including authorization by the GOA;
 - vii. Recreational users shall obey signs posted by the leaseholder that are meant for the management of recreational activities on the grazing lease;
 - viii. Camping is not permitted on the grazing lease;
 - ix. Recreational users shall carry and remove any refuse and garbage
 - x. Recreational users shall leave gates in the same condition as found when entering or leaving the grazing lease;

- xi. Recreational users shall report any damage to land and property, or other matters of concern to the leaseholder's contact person or the leaseholder that occurred as a result of the recreational activity.
- xii. Recreational users shall not use any building or improvement on the grazing lease without the consent of the leaseholder's contact person or the leaseholder.

**Endorsement of the Recreational Management Plan for Grazing Lease
030004**

This Recreational Management Plan is hereby established pursuant to section 10 of the
Recreational Access Regulation

Original signed
Executive Director
Rangeland Management Branch

Date

Original signed
Pekisko Creek Ranch &
Cattle Co. Ltd. Leaseholder

Date

List of References

Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. 1991. Eden Valley Local Integrated Resource Plan. Edmonton, Alberta. Pub. No. I/277.

Public Lands Act, c P-40 RSA 2000 (with amendments to 12/4/2003).

Recreational Access Regulation, AR 228/2003 (Consolidated up to 221/2004).

Sweetgrass Consultants Ltd. 1997. Environmentally Significant Areas of Alberta. Resource Data Division. Alberta Environmental Protection, Edmonton, Alberta.

Wildlife Act, c W-10 RSA 2000 (Current as of January 1, 2010).