



File: 15700-01

April 13, 2016

To: Thompson Rivers District Range License Holders

Re: Range Tenure Management

Dear Range Licensee:

As we head into another year I am taking this opportunity to clarify my expectations of you as a range tenure holder. While most of you do an admirable job of managing the range resource in an ever more complex world, there are some areas that require specific attention in order to maintain what is commonly referred to as "Social Licence" to operate on crown land. We talked about a few of these at the Forestry/Range meeting held in Kamloops in January. I appreciate Kamloops Stockmen's Association support in providing that forum and I want to remind you of the following responsibilities for all grazing licensees:

RANGE USE PLANS (RUP's) are your responsibility to prepare and submit, and are legal agreements between you and the Crown outlining your accountabilities, as well as a commitment to the public on how you will manage your livestock. It is important to have a good plan that is meaningful to you, and which provides good stewardship. It is your job as a range manager to prepare your range use plan, and to follow it. Range staff can provide advice, but they cannot develop your plan for you. Take the opportunity to spend time in the field with your agrologist to discuss opportunities, concerns, and to develop mitigation strategies where required. This will help you develop a solid plan to manage your livestock and maintain healthy plant communities and watersheds. Your strategies and measures must be measurable and verifiable so ask yourself if another person would know exactly what you mean by your strategy? Would they be able to measure and verify that you followed your plan? Finally, be prepared to work with your zone agrologist to adjust your plan if faced with a drought or other changes to the environment.

Livestock are not legally permitted on your crown grazing tenure without an approved range use plan. Your draft plan should be returned to district range staff by December 15 of the year it will expire. This allows opportunity for the agrologist to review it with you, conduct consultation with First Nations, and have it approved 1-2 months prior to turnout. Ensure that you return signed copies of range use plans so that you have the legal right to turn out.

We often have many business transactions with you, including range tenures, grazing leases, water licences and others. To ensure you have the authorizations you need to keep your business flowing, we need you to return paperwork within 30 days of receipt unless you have contacted us to make alternate arrangements.

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FENCING AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS are tools to help you manage your range and ensure public safety. Regular maintenance will lengthen the life of developments, keeping your livestock where they are supposed to be and promoting healthy range. Under FRPA, you are legally obligated to maintain improvements on your crown tenure area and to remove improvements that no longer serve their intended purpose. As there is limited funding available for range developments, when staff prioritize projects they will not support applications for new fencing in areas where current maintenance is not up to standard and/or fences are still within their projected lifespan.

FIRST NATIONS INTERESTS are a key factor in decisions regarding range use plans and range improvements. I must always ensure that consultation has been adequate, that potential impacts are understood, and that impacts are mitigated where necessary. This may lengthen decision times on proposed developments or initiate changes to your tenure. Be aware of this and don't leave requests until the last minute. I encourage you to establish a relationship with Bands in your tenured area to better understand each other's interests.

STREAMS, WETLANDS AND OTHER RIPARIAN AREAS require protection from cattle impacts. We all know that cattle need to drink, however, it is your responsibility to minimize the period of use and/or the amount of riparian area (wetlands or creeks) impacted. Staff can help with information and advice, please talk to them if you see opportunities for improvement or have ideas for stewardship projects to protect these areas. When looking at forestry proposals consider the impact of logging to natural range barriers adjacent to streams and wetlands and be sure to provide your comments back to forest licensees. With early communication, there may be opportunity to mitigate potential impacts. If you are not yet familiar with the new Water Sustainability Act, you can learn more at <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/water>.

RESOURCES AND INFORMATION: The Range Management Info-flip produced in 2006 has a good summary of the *Range and Forest and Range Practices Acts* and is well worth a look. It can be found at <https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/dka/Range/Range.htm> or give range staff a call if you would like a hard copy. In addition, you may be interested in the comments and findings in recent Forest Practices Board audits of range planning and practices at <https://www.bcfpb.ca/reports-publications/reports/audit-range-planning-and-practices-cascades-district-range-agreements/> and <https://www.bcfpb.ca/reports-publications/reports/audit-forest-and-range-planning-and-practices-affecting-water-quality/>.

Thank you for your attention. If you have questions please contact district staff anytime. I wish you a bountiful spring and a profitable year.

Yours truly,



Rick Sommer, R.P.F.
District Manager