

DOM MOUNTAIN WMA AGRICULTURAL LEASE 2021 – 2025

APPENDIX B: COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

Objectives:

1. To produce and provide high quality forage for 150-200 deer and 2,000-3,000 migratory elk on the Dome Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) by maintaining the existing hay meadows in a state of good production and leaving the second cutting crop of hay for wildlife. Forage utilization by wildlife occurs primarily from December to May depending on winter conditions.

Terms:

Payment for this hay lease shall be considered an exchange for services where the lessee will receive the first cutting in full, in exchange for leaving the second cutting for wintering elk, and for being responsible for the agriculture practices required to produce and maintain these hay fields.

FWP manages weeds on the WMA, and as the agricultural field is part of the WMA, FWP includes the agricultural field as part of the weed management and spraying. Chemicals used for weed management interfere with cultivation of alfalfa, and therefore any FWP weed spraying on the field will be done in cooperation with the lessee. The lessee is responsible for farming and cultivating so as to minimize weeds, and provides weed management related to farming practices.

Specific Description of Agricultural Use Allowed:

In addition to and in conjunction with the general stipulations found in Item 4 of the agricultural lease, the lessee is specifically responsible for and agrees to:

- a) Provide equipment, labor, seed, fertilizer, herbicides, and pesticides essential for periodically renovating the hay meadows and harvesting hay as necessary to maintain good hay production.
- b) Use the water and existing sprinkler system controlled and owned by the Department on the above described Department land for first cutting hay production and subsequent second cutting forage production for wildlife.
- c) Harvest and receive all of the first cutting hay crop.
- d) Irrigate the second cutting hay crop as weather and water conditions permit to encourage second cutting hay crop production for wildlife (existing water right runs through September 30th).
- e) Not harvest the second cutting hay crop, but instead leave it standing in the field as high quality winter wildlife forage.
- f) Provide the Department with a written report on or before December 31st of each calendar year indicating what agricultural practices were accomplished, the production rates for that year, and the duration of irrigating the second cutting hay crop.
- g) Provide the Department with a series of 3-4 photos of the standing second cutting hay crop near the end of the growing season each year.
- h) Agricultural activities may occur prior to the WMA opening to the public in spring, with timing dependent upon onset of spring conditions and availability of water. When activities occur prior to the opening of the WMA to the public, the lessee will make reasonable efforts to limit activities on the field to daylight hours, no earlier than 1 hour after sunrise and no later than 1 hour prior to sunset, in order to minimize disturbance to wintering wildlife.

Benefits:

1. The production and removal of the first cutting hay crop will provide winter/spring forage of a higher quality for wildlife than would be available if field maintenance and first cutting hay harvest were not accomplished.
2. The hay forage produced for wildlife will assist the Department in meeting its objective of supporting resident deer and elk and migratory northern Yellowstone elk on the Dome Mountain WMA. The Dome Mountain WMA is an important winter range destination for a large segment of the northern Yellowstone elk that migrate annually out of Yellowstone Park.
3. Approximately 150 acres of long-established, productive, irrigated hay meadows will be maintained within the local agricultural land base, producing winter forage (baled first cutting hay) for local livestock off site.
4. A continuation of the cooperative FWP/Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation habitat project that was initiated in 1989, which included developing and maintaining a sprinkler irrigation system and renovating the hay meadows.