

July 23, 2007

Dr. Jeff Koenings, Director
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
600 Capitol Way North
Olympia, WA 98501-1091

Dear Dr. Koenings,

We wish to express our appreciation for the time your staff took to show us the WDFW pilot grazing project along Kelly and Pintler Creeks in Asotin County. Mark Quinn, Mel Asher, and Bob Dice met us in Asotin on Monday June 25th and took us to this particular project.

The Washington Native Plant Society has received numerous calls from various interest groups expressing concern about these pilot grazing projects. We too, have concerns about the impact of grazing on native plant habitat in Washington, particularly on public lands.

Mark helped us better understand the local politics of land acquisition for public agencies and the need to make compromises to acquire local support. We also recognize that some of the lands acquired have long grazing histories and are not pristine at acquisition. We trust and expect WDFW to manage these acquisitions with a long term plan of increasing their ecological health.

What policy does WDFW have for grazing lands in Washington? We would hope that lands which have never been grazed or have been in recovery for a significant number of years would not be subjected to grazing. We would also be interested in whether WDFW has a strategic plan for ensuring that lands you manage are on a management course for improved ecological health.

WDFW's Southeast Washington Subbasin Planning Ecoregion Wildlife Assessment is an excellent and thorough planning document. This document describes the damaging effects of livestock grazing on native vegetation and the wildlife dependent on it, even elk.

Our interest is in the health of Washington's native plant communities and in the protection of threatened, sensitive and endangered plant species. We are particularly concerned by reports that *Calachortus macrocarpus* var. *maculosus*, a state endangered

species may be on the Pintler/Kelly Creek project lands and that *Silene spaldingii*, a federally listed endangered species, and *Astragalus arthurii*, a state sensitive species, are reported from the vicinity of the Smoothing Iron project. The impact of grazing is cited as a management concern for the future of these species in Washington.

Sincerely,

Catherine E. Hovanic
Administrator

Michael Marsh
Conservation Chair