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WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA AMENDMENTS

2023 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Casey Snider

Senate Sponsor: _____

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill modifies provisions related to wildlife management areas.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- ▶ addresses definitions;
- ▶ establishes wildlife management area purposes;
- ▶ provides for how the wildlife management area purposes and uses are to be implemented;
- ▶ imposes certain conditions on entering a wildlife management area;
- ▶ requires specific license, permit, cooperative agreement, or certificate of registration to engage in certain uses while in a wildlife management area;
- ▶ provides exemptions;
- ▶ authorizes rulemaking;
- ▶ addresses unlawful uses;
- ▶ addresses unlawful road closures; and
- ▶ makes technical changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None



28 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**

29 AMENDS:

30 **23-21-.5**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2019, Chapter 141

31 **23-21-2.1**, as enacted by Laws of Utah 1998, Chapter 218

32 **23-21-2.2**, as enacted by Laws of Utah 1998, Chapter 218

33 **23-21-2.3**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2021, Chapter 382

34 **23-21-2.5**, as enacted by Laws of Utah 1998, Chapter 218

35 **23-21-4**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2000, Chapter 156

36 **23-21-7**, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2009, Chapter 347

37 **72-5-118**, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2019, Chapter 295



39 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

40 Section 1. Section **23-21-.5** is amended to read:

41 **23-21-.5. Definitions.**

42 As used in this chapter:

43 (1) "General plan" means a document that a municipality or county adopts that sets
44 forth general guidelines for proposed future development of the land within the municipality or
45 county and includes what is commonly referred to as a "master plan."

46 (2) "Highway" means the same as that term is defined in Section 41-6a-102.

47 ~~(2)~~ (3) "Management plan" means a document prepared in accordance with this
48 chapter that describes how one or more tracts of land owned or managed by the Division of
49 Wildlife Resources are to be used.

50 ~~(3)~~ (4) "Regional advisory council" means a council created pursuant to Section
51 23-14-2.6.

52 ~~(4)~~ (5) "Wildlife management area" means:

- 53 (a) a single tract of land owned or managed by the division; or
- 54 (b) two or more tracts of land owned or managed by the division that are within close
55 proximity of each other and managed as a single unit.

56 (6) "Wildlife management area purposes" means the purposes of a wildlife
57 management area outlined in Subsection 23-21-2.1(1).

58 Section 2. Section **23-21-2.1** is amended to read:

59 **23-21-2.1. Purposes of wildlife management areas -- Management plans.**

60 (1) The purposes of a wildlife management area are one or more of the following:

61 (a) to protect and enhance wildlife within the wildlife management area;

62 (b) to provide the public the opportunity to hunt, trap, or fish; and

63 (c) to conserve, protect, and enhance wildlife habitat.

64 ~~[(+)]~~ (2) (a) The division shall prepare a management plan for each wildlife
65 management area. The division shall ensure that the management plan is consistent with
66 wildlife management area purposes.

67 (b) Upon adoption of a management plan by the division director, the lands shall be
68 managed in accordance with the management plan.

69 ~~[(2)]~~ (3) Each management plan shall include:

70 (a) a statement of the proposed or anticipated uses;

71 (b) a description of any management limitations or conditions covering the wildlife
72 management area;

73 (c) an inventory of the existing conditions;

74 (d) a statement of the desired future condition of the wildlife management area;

75 (e) a list of strategies that may be implemented to achieve the desired future condition;

76 and

77 (f) a description of any reallocation of forage, water, or other resource appurtenant to
78 the land.

79 (4) The division may not approve a use of a wildlife management area that would
80 interfere with the wildlife management area purposes unless:

81 (a) required by law;

82 (b) the use is allowed by a valid property right; or

83 (c) the director determines that the impacts caused by the use to the following are fully
84 mitigated:

85 (i) wildlife;

86 (ii) wildlife habitat; and

87 (iii) the public opportunity to hunt, trap, or fish.

88 Section 3. Section 23-21-2.2 is amended to read:

89 **23-21-2.2. Preparation of management plans -- Participation by interested**

90 **persons and local and tribal governments -- Compatibility with wildlife management area**
91 **purposes, local government plans, and existing rights.**

92 (1) The division shall invite persons who may have an interest in how the land is
93 managed to participate in the management planning process.

94 (2) Those persons may include:

95 (a) persons who use, or may use, the land for:

96 (i) agriculture, mining, or other commercial pursuits;

97 (ii) hunting or fishing;

98 (iii) recreation; or

99 (iv) other uses;

100 (b) adjacent or nearby landowners or residents; or

101 (c) other interested parties.

102 (3) The division shall invite local government officials to participate in the
103 management planning process.

104 (4) In preparing a management plan, the division shall seek to make land uses
105 compatible with:

106 (a) local government general plans and zoning and land use ordinances; [~~and~~]

107 (b) existing rights of others within the wildlife management area[-]; and

108 (c) subject to Subsection 23-21-2.1(4), wildlife management area purposes.

109 (5) (a) If the land is located within or adjacent to tribal lands, the division shall invite
110 tribal government officials to participate in the management planning process.

111 (b) Participation by tribal officials in the development of management plans for lands
112 owned by the division does not waive the tribe's sovereignty.

113 Section 4. Section **23-21-2.3** is amended to read:

114 **23-21-2.3. Review and adoption of management plans.**

115 (1) The division shall submit the draft management plan to the Resource Development
116 Coordinating Committee created in Section **63L-11-401** and the Habitat Council created by the
117 division for their review and recommendations.

118 (2) The division shall submit the draft management plan and any recommendations
119 received from the Resource Development Coordinating Committee and the Habitat Council to:

120 (a) the regional advisory council for the wildlife region in which the lands covered by

121 the management plan are located; and

122 (b) the regional advisory council for any wildlife region that may be affected by the
123 management plan.

124 (3) Each regional advisory council reviewing the draft management plan may make
125 recommendations to the division director.

126 (4) The division director has authority to adopt the management plan, adopt the plan
127 with amendments, or reject the plan.

128 (5) At the request of the division director or any member of the Wildlife Board, the
129 Wildlife Board may review a management plan to determine whether the plan is consistent
130 with board policies and wildlife management area purposes.

131 (6) The division director may amend a management plan in accordance with
132 recommendations made by the Wildlife Board.

133 Section 5. Section **23-21-2.5** is amended to read:

134 **23-21-2.5. Change in land use where a management plan is not in effect --**

135 **Notification to affected persons -- Compatibility with local government plans and wildlife**
136 **management purposes.**

137 (1) If a management plan has not been adopted by the division director for a tract of
138 land owned by the division, the division may not change any existing right to use the land until
139 the division notifies those who may be affected by the change and local government officials.

140 (2) When changing any existing right to use the land, the division shall seek to make
141 uses of division-owned land compatible with local government general plans and zoning and
142 land use ordinances and wildlife management area purposes. If there is a conflict between
143 local government general plans or land use ordinances and the wildlife management area
144 purposes, the wildlife management area purposes govern.

145 Section 6. Section **23-21-4** is amended to read:

146 **23-21-4. Right of access to lands for hunting, trapping, or fishing reserved to**
147 **public -- Exception -- When hunting, fishing, or combination license required.**

148 (1) Except as provided in Section **65A-2-5**, there is reserved to the public the right of
149 access to all lands owned by the state, including those lands lying below the official
150 government meander line or high water line of navigable waters, for the purpose of hunting,
151 trapping, or fishing.

152 (2) When any department or agency of the state leases or sells any lands belonging to
153 the state of Utah lying below the official government meander line or the high water line of the
154 navigable waters within the state, the lease, contract of sale, or deed shall contain a provision
155 that:

156 (a) the lands shall be open to the public for the purpose of hunting, trapping, or fishing
157 during the lawful season, except as provided by Section 65A-2-5; and

158 (b) no charge may be made by the lessee, contractee, or grantee to any person who
159 desires to go upon the land for the purpose of hunting, trapping, or fishing.

160 (3) Lands referred to in this section shall be regulated or closed to hunting, trapping, or
161 fishing as provided in this title for other lands and waters.

162 (4) (a) Except as provided in Subsection (5), an individual age 18 years old or older
163 may not enter a wildlife management area for any use unless the individual:

164 (i) holds a valid hunting, fishing, or combination license;

165 (ii) is permitted to engage in the use under a contract with, or other permission given
166 by, the division; or

167 (iii) is permitted to engage in the use or to access the land in accordance with a
168 property right giving the individual the right to use or access land within the wildlife
169 management area.

170 (b) If the use engaged in by an individual described in Subsection (4)(a) would require
171 a specific license, permit, cooperative agreement, or certificate of registration under this title if
172 engaged in on other lands or waters, the individual shall hold the correct license, permit,
173 cooperative agreement, or certificate of registration to engage in the use.

174 (5) (a) If an individual is expressly exempt under this title from a requirement to hold a
175 license, permit, cooperative agreement, or certificate of registration to engage in hunting,
176 trapping, or fishing if engaged in on other lands or waters, the individual is not required to hold
177 a hunting, fishing, or combination license to enter a wildlife management area.

178 (b) An individual may travel on a highway located within a wildlife management area
179 without obtaining a hunting, fishing, or combination license.

180 (c) An individual may participate in an educational program or visit an education or
181 visitor center located within a wildlife management area without obtaining a hunting, fishing,
182 or combination license.

183 (6) (a) The Wildlife Board may make rules, in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3,
 184 Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, to define for purposes of Subsection (5):

185 (i) what is meant to be "expressly exempt under this title from a requirement to hold a
 186 license, permit, cooperative agreement, or certificate of registration to engage in hunting,
 187 trapping, or fishing"; or

188 (ii) what constitutes an "educational program" or "education or visitor center."

189 (b) The Wildlife Board may not exempt an individual under Subsection (5)(a), on the
 190 basis that the individual is not engaged in hunting, trapping, or fishing within a wildlife
 191 management area.

192 Section 7. Section **23-21-7** is amended to read:

193 **23-21-7. Unlawful uses on division lands.**

194 (1) Except as authorized by statute, rule, contractual agreement, special use permit,
 195 certificate of registration, or public notice, a person may not on division land:

196 (a) remove, extract, use, consume, or destroy any improvement or cultural or historic
 197 resource;

198 (b) remove, extract, use, consume, or destroy any sand, gravel, cinder, ornamental rock,
 199 or other common mineral resource, or vegetation resource, except a person may collect for
 200 noncommercial uses up to 250 pounds per calendar year of common rock or gravel lying on the
 201 surface of the ground;

202 (c) allow livestock to graze;

203 (d) remove any plant or portion of a plant for commercial gain purposes;

204 (e) enter, use, or occupy division land that is posted against entry, use, or occupancy;

205 (f) enter, use, or occupy division land as part of a group of more than 25 people, except
 206 a group may include up to 50 persons if the group consists of extended family members;

207 (g) enter, use, or occupy division land while engaged in or part of an organized event;

208 (h) use, occupy, destroy, move, or construct any structure, including fences, water
 209 control devices, roads, survey and section markers, or signs;

210 (i) prohibit, prevent, or obstruct public entry on division lands when public entry is
 211 authorized by the division;

212 (j) attempt to manage or control division lands in a manner inconsistent with division
 213 management plans, rules, [or] policies, or wildlife management area purposes;

214 (k) solicit, promote, negotiate, barter, sell, or trade any product or service on, or
215 obtained from, division lands for commercial gain;

216 (l) park a motor vehicle or trailer or camp for more than 14 consecutive days unless the
217 area is posted for a different duration;

218 (m) light a fire without taking adequate precaution to prevent spreading of the fire or
219 leave a fire unattended;

220 (n) use fireworks, explosives, poisons, herbicides, insecticides, or pesticides;

221 (o) use motorized vehicles of any kind except as authorized by declaration,
222 management plan, or posting; [or]

223 (p) use division lands for any purpose that violates applicable land use restrictions
224 imposed by statute, rule, or by the division[-]; or

225 (q) enter, use, or occupy division land in a wildlife management area in violation of
226 Subsection 23-21-4(4).

227 (2) A person [~~or entity which~~] who unlawfully uses division lands is liable for damages
228 in the amount of:

229 (a) the value of the resource removed, destroyed, or extracted;

230 (b) the amount of damage caused; and

231 (c) whichever is greater of:

232 (i) the value of any losses or expenses caused as a result of interference with authorized
233 activities; or

234 (ii) the consideration which would have been charged by the division for use of the
235 land during the period of trespass.

236 (3) This section does not apply to division employees or division volunteers while
237 acting in the lawful performance of their duties.

238 (4) Except as otherwise provided by statute, the criminal penalty for a violation of any
239 provision of this section is prescribed in Section 23-13-11.

240 Section 8. Section 72-5-118 is amended to read:

241 **72-5-118. Unlawful road closures.**

242 (1) Except as provided in Sections 72-1-212, 72-5-105, 72-6-114, and 72-7-103, an
243 individual who knowingly places or authorizes the placement of a temporary or permanent
244 barricade on a class A, B, C, or D road, an R.S. 2477 right-of-way, or a portion of a class A, B,

245 C, or D road or R.S. 2477 right-of-way to permanently or temporarily close the road or R.S.
246 2477 right-of-way to vehicular traffic is guilty of a class C misdemeanor.

247 (2) This section does not apply to a road closure:

248 (a) by firefighters or peace officers responding to an emergency;

249 (b) that may result from a permanent or temporary closure of a public or private
250 railroad crossing; [or]

251 (c) on an R.S. 2477 right-of-way across private land if a perpetual public right-of-way
252 has not been granted through a settlement or court order[-]; or

253 (d) by the Division of Wildlife Resources on an R.S. 2477 right-of-way across a
254 wildlife management area or a class B or D road across a wildlife management area if a
255 perpetual public right-of-way has not been granted by agreement or court order to:

256 (i) the county where the R.S. 2477 right-of-way or road is situated; or

257 (ii) the state.