



**File Code:** 1920  
**Route To:**

**Date:** May 21, 2019

**Subject:** Forest Plan Winter Range Admin Change  
**To:** Project File

This letter is intended to document an administrative change to a Forest Wide Guideline in the Kootenai National Forest 2015 Forest Plan. FW-GDL-WL-09 Big Game contained a clerical error in wording that effectively changed the interpretation of how of the guideline should be implemented and documented during project analysis that was inconsistent with application of companion Forest Wide Guideline (FW-GDL-WL-08) that did not contain errors in wording.

FW-GDL-WL-08, Big Game states that management activities should avoid or minimize disturbance to native ungulates on winter range between December 1 and April 30, with the exception of routes identified on MVUM as open to motor vehicle use. Management activities that occur on winter range during the winter period should concentrate activities to reduce impacts to native ungulates. FW-GDL-WL-08 gives an option to avoid or minimize. Coordination with local MFWP biologists during project design may aid in determining the best ways to minimize impacts to wintering big game.

FW-GDL-WL-09, Big Game currently states that management activities should be avoided on native ungulate winter range areas during the critical mid-winter period (January and February) when snow depths most likely influence movement and availability of forage. The intent behind the guideline was to use the same terminology as FW-GDL-WL-08, using the terms "avoid or minimize". FW-GDL-WL-09 contains a clerical error, mistakenly omitting the words "or minimized." The "avoid or minimize" language is also consistent with all other wildlife guidelines in the plan.

The intent of FW-GDL-WL-08 and 09 is to limit disturbance to wintering big game from management activities. These guidelines were included in the Forest Plan to contribute towards maintaining a harvestable population of big game, not due to viability concerns for big game. Together with FW-DC-WL-16, big game plan components are intended to provide habitat sufficient to support native ungulate populations meeting Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks species management plan objectives.

I am therefore making an administrative change to the Kootenai National Forest 2015 Forest Plan under 36 CFR 219.13 (c) in order to correct the clerical error that was contained in FW-GDL-WL-09:

*"36 CFR 219.13(c) Administrative changes. An administrative change is any change to a plan that is not a plan amendment or plan revision. Administrative changes include corrections of clerical errors to any part of the plan, conformance of the plan to new statutory or regulatory*



*requirements, or changes to other content in the plan (§ 219.7(f)).*

*(2) All other administrative changes may be made following public notice (§ 219.16(c)(6)). This Administrative change adds the words "or minimized" to FW-GDL-WL-09 in order to make the language consistent with the intent of the guideline, and in order to demonstrate that FW-GDL-WL-09 shall not be used as a Forest Plan standard."*

Documentation of this administrative change is also being posted on the Kootenai World Wide Website pursuant to 219.13(c) (c):

*"How public notice is provided. The responsible official should use contemporary tools to provide notice to the public. At a minimum, all public notifications required by this part must be posted online, and:*

*(6) Additional public notice of administrative changes, changes to the monitoring program, opportunities to provide information for assessments, assessment reports, monitoring evaluation reports, or other notices not listed in paragraph (a) of this section may be made in any way the responsible official deems appropriate."*



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cc: Cheryl Probert, Janis Bouma, Jeremy Anderson, Timory Peel