

Urgent Action: Tell Washington Fish & Wildlife Not to Ban Shooting

Date: Dec 4, 2007 4:42 PM

This Friday, Dec. 7 **Washington State Fish & Wildlife Commission will be considering a proposal to shut down or restrict recreational shooting on lands owned or controlled by the Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW).**

CCRKBA members across the country should pay attention because if wildlife managers can do this in Washington State, it **could set a dangerous trend for natural resource agencies in other states to try the same thing.** The commission will meet in Port Angeles, Wash. to consider proposed rules that would **authorize the WDFW to prohibit the discharge of firearms on any or all portions of department land at any time, for any reason.** In addition, the proposed rule would establish a **1,000-foot diameter "No Shooting Zone" around all designated campgrounds, regardless of any specific conditions at individual sites that would allow safe shooting within this arbitrary boundary.**

Also, **shooters could be penalized for "littering" under this proposed rule change if they fail to pick up every spent shell casing or other debris left over from their shooting session.** Additionally, the rules would require strict obedience to instructions from officers regarding use of department lands, even if the instructions have no basis in law or regulations. "This proposal should be nipped in the bud," said CCRKBA Chairman Alan Gottlieb. "We've been battling the U.S. Forest Service for the past two years over the issue of recreational shooting on public land."

Specific Issues

In the proposed new section, WAC 232-13-110(2) "it is unlawful to fail, neglect or refuse to obey the directions of such officers regarding the use of department lands." This language is excessively overbroad, and needs to be limited to only those instructions with a basis in law or regulation. As is, this section may well be unconstitutional. In the proposed new section, WAC 232-13-130(1)(b) "Shooting from or within 500 feet of a department designated campground" or in "those portions of department lands where or when such discharge is prohibited by department posted notice". This section would arbitrarily prohibit shooting within 500 feet of any designated campground, regardless of actual conditions at particular campgrounds that may permit safe shooting. Additionally, this section permits a total and complete ban on all shooting on all WDFW lands--all they have to do is post it.

In the proposed new section, WAC 232-13-130(1)(c) in regards to target shooting, "Failure to remove any debris constitutes littering." While all responsible shooters clean up after themselves, there needs to be a "Good Faith" standard here to discourage overzealous or uneven enforcement. In the proposed new section, WAC 232-13-130(2) "The department may designate locations and times for target practice." Once again, this section permits the WDFW to completely ban shooting on all WDFW property at all times.

Washington citizens have an individual right to keep and bear arms. We also have a long and proud tradition of hunting and shooting sports. Our rights and our traditions require that we have appropriate places to exercise our rights and to practice our traditions. Enabling a complete ban on shooting, arbitrary and capricious limitations on shooting, overbroad power grabs, and unreasonable standards of guilt have no place in Washington. We encourage the Commission to correct these errors prior to approving these new regulations.

CCRKBA members can contact the Washington Fish & Wildlife Commission via e-mail at: commission@dfw.wa.gov or by fax at (360) 902-2448.

The meeting agenda (item #9) is online at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/com/dec0807.htm>

The proposed rule change may be viewed on-line at: http://wdfw.wa.gov/com/dec0807_9_conduct.pdf

Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms

James Madison Building
12500 N.E. Tenth Place
Bellevue, WA 98005 Voice: 425-454-4911
Toll Free: 800-426-4302
FAX: 425-451-3959
email: InformationRequest@ccrkba.org