

KLICKITAT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

DANGEROUS WILDLIFE

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

DATED: August 20, 2019

The Sheriff's Office has received numerous complaints in regards to Cougar sightings in Goldendale, town of Klickitat, Bingen-White Salmon, Glenwood, Husum, and other neighborhoods throughout Klickitat County. This is a serious PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERN. In addition to the Public Safety Concern, cougars and bears are a major concern and a problem for the farmers and ranchers in our County. Livestock and Domestic Animals are being killed by cougar and bears in our county on a regular bases.

Based on the fact cougar and bear have over populated during the past several years because regular hound hunting of Cougar and Bear was outlawed. In accordance with RCW 77.15.245(2a), I am establishing this Dangerous Wildlife Policy and Procedures, in order to provide Public Safety protection and the protection of domestic animals, livestock, and private property within and throughout Klickitat County, Washington, from Black Bear, Cougar, Bobcat or Lynx.

Washington State Law (RCW 77.15.245 (2a)) states the following:

"Nothing in the subsection shall be construed to prohibit the killing of black bear, cougar, bobcat, or lynx with the aid of a dog or dogs by employees or agents of County, State, or Federal Agencies while acting in their official capacities for the purpose of protecting livestock, domestic animals, private property or the public safety. A dog or dogs may be used by the owner or tenant of real property consistent with a permit issues and conditioned by the director."

DEFINITIONS:

**DANGEROUS WILDLIFE:** Black bear, cougar, bobcat and lynx that attack humans; pose concerns for human safety, pets, or livestock depredations; or that involve sightings of these species where there is potential for a wildlife-human conflict or domestic animal and livestock conflict.

**IMMEDIATE THREAT:** There is a presence of dangerous wildlife and a likelihood of human injury, domestic pet or livestock depredation based on the totality of the circumstances, such as close proximity to people or domestic pets and livestock or abnormal behaviors.

**ABNORMAL BEHAVIORS:** A pattern of wildlife-related events associated with people, buildings, or yard boundaries; proximity to houses, people, barns, or corrals; or aggressive behaviors, absence of fear of humans, or reliance on food derived from humans.

**MEDIUM RISK:** No immediate threat to human safety or domestic pets and livestock but conflict is expected to continue and may escalate to threaten human safety, or domestic pets and livestock if no action is taken.

**HIGH RISK:** Immediate threat to human safety or domestic pets and livestock.

- (1) The Klickitat County Sheriff's Office Deputies and Volunteer Sheriff Posse/Special Deputies will provide the Primary Response to WILDLIFE-HUMAN CONFLICTS involving Dangerous Wildlife.

Sheriff Deputies and Volunteer Posse/Special Deputies will respond to all reported dangerous wildlife conflicts. A fully commissioned Deputy will be in charge of the incident response and has the authority of the Sheriff to invoke the appropriate action, under RCW 77.15.245 (2a) in tracking down and euthanizing the dangerous animal that is a risk to human safety or domestic pets and livestock.

The Sheriff's Office will maintain a list of Professional Hound Hunters which will be sworn in as Special Deputy or Posse Deputy with a limited commission to assist the Sheriff's Office in tracking down cougar, black bear, bobcat or lynx in accordance with Dangerous Wildlife outlined in RCW 77.15.245 (2a), that is a threat to human safety or domestic pets and livestock.

- (2) All dangerous wildlife that are captured by the Sheriff's Deputies, Sheriff Volunteer Posse/ Special Deputies, which is a threat to public safety or domestic pets and livestock concerns SHALL (WILL) be EUTHANIZED immediately if conditions allow.

The fully commissioned Deputy Sheriff in charge will complete a Klickitat County Sheriff's Office report along with photos on the Dangerous Wildlife incident and a copy will be sent to Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

- (3) Sheriff's Deputies and Volunteer Sheriff Posse/Special Deputies are required to document all conflicts of Dangerous Wildlife with humans, domestic pets and livestock that occurs within or throughout Klickitat County. A Master File of reported conflicts will be maintained at the Klickitat County Sheriff's Office and these documented contacts will be shared with Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife.

- (4) All Sheriff's Office Fully Commissioned Deputies, Reserve Commission Deputies, and Volunteer Posse Limited Commission Deputies, and Professional Hound Hunters with a Special Deputy Limited Commission from the Sheriff, will obey the Washington State Hunting laws and the Sheriff's Policy and Procedure on Dangerous Wildlife.

The Sheriff's Office will follow RCW 77.15.245 (2a) and there will be NO HOUND HUNTING of cougar, black bear, bobcat or lynx that does not fit within the guidelines of the Dangerous Wildlife Law RCW 77.15.245 (2a).

Sheriff's Office employee's and/or volunteers of the Sheriff's Office, who are found violating the Sheriff's Policy and Procedure and/or Washington State Hunting Laws, outside the guidelines of RCW 77.15.245 (2a), will face Sheriff's Office discipline and may face criminal charges.

- (5) LANDOWNER PERMISSION: whenever possible the Sheriff's Office will make every effort to obtain landowner permission when tracking a dangerous animal on their property. The exception would be while in active pursuit when tracking the dangerous animal and there is no time to contact the landowner.

Note: When the Sheriff's Office initiates a tracking of a dangerous animal under RCW 77.15.245 (2a) we will invite Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife agent to accompany Sheriff's Office personnel when tracking of the animal if time permits, however Sheriff's Office will be the Authority in Charge of tracking down the dangerous animal and euthanizing the animal. Once the dangerous animal is euthanized the animal will be turned over to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife agent.

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Date