TITLE 14. Fish and Game Commission
Notice of Proposed Changes in Regulations

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Fish and Game Commission (Commission), pursuant to the authority vested by sections 200, 202, 203, 713, 3402, 3404, and 3406 of the Fish and Game Code and to implement, interpret or make specific sections 3400, 3401, 3402, 3403, 3404, 3406, 3407, 3408, 3409, 4331, 4332 and 4341 of said Code, proposes to amend Section 601 and subsection 702(a)(1), Title 14, California Code of Regulations, relating to Enhancement on Private Lands Management.

Informative Digest/Policy Statement Overview

Current regulations in Section 601, Title 14, California Code of Regulations (CCR) describe the procedures required for the operation of the Private Lands Wildlife Habitat Enhancement and Management Area (PLM) Program. Current regulations specify tag reporting and payment requirements, initial year hunting restrictions, due dates, and annual reporting procedures.

Current regulations require licensees to sign an application annually. This is redundant paperwork for the landowner, Department and the Commission. Each Initial/5-Year Application and subsequent approval by the Commission licenses the PLM for 5 years. Modifying the language in subsection 601(b)(6) will reduce the workload on Department and Commission staff by removing the requirement for the annual application. Current regulations in subsection 702(a)(1) specify application forms for PLMs. These forms are consolidated and revised to reflect the propose amendments to Section 601.

The proposed regulatory changes will establish new tag reporting requirements, due dates, and replace tag applications with PLM vouchers. In addition, the proposed changes would allow elk and antelope hunting during the first year of enrollment in the PLM Program. Modifying tag reporting requirements will allow the PLM tag holder flexibility in validating and reporting the PLM tag. Replacing PLM tag applications with vouchers allows the use of the Automated License Data System (ALDS). Adding language to allow wardens to make unannounced property visits will deter poaching or trespass by unauthorized hunters and ensure compliance with existing laws and regulations. The proposed change to allow elk and antelope hunting the initial year of enrollment is intended to create consistency for all big game hunting.

Editorial changes are also proposed to improve the clarity and consistency of the regulations.

Benefits of the Regulations

The proposed changes to Section 601 will improve implementation of the PLM Program, increase flexibility for hunters to validate PLM tags and report their harvest, reduce workload for both Department staff and landowners, and improve compatibility with the Department's Automated License Data System. Overall, the PLM Program benefits the environment by providing incentives for landowners to improve wildlife habitat on approximately 1million acres of private lands.

Non-monetary benefits to the public

The Commission does not anticipate non-monetary benefits to the protection of public health and safety, worker safety, the prevention of discrimination, the promotion of fairness or social equity or the increase in openness and transparency in business and government.

Evaluation of incompatibility with existing regulations

The proposed regulations in this rulemaking action are neither inconsistent nor incompatible with existing State regulations. A key word search in the California Code of Regulations resulted in no other State agency having the authority to promulgate Private Land Management Regulations. There are no comparable federal regulations.

NOTICE IS GIVEN that any person interested may present statements, orally or in writing, relevant to this action at a hearing to be held in the Embassy Suites La Quinta Hotel & Spa, 50-777 Santa Rosa Plaza, La Quinta, California, on Wednesday, November 6, 2013 at 8:30 a.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard.

NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN that any person interested may present statements, orally or in writing, relevant to this action at a hearing to be held at the Hilton San Diego Mission Valley, 901 Camino del Rio South, San Diego, California, on Wednesday, December 11, 2013 at 8:30 a.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard.

Written comments may be submitted at the address given below, or by fax at (916) 653-5040, or by e-mail to FGC@fgc.ca.gov.

All comments must be received no later than December 11, 2013 at the hearing in San Diego, CA.

If you would like copies of any modifications to this proposal, please include your name and mailing address.

The regulations as proposed in strikeout-underline format, as well as an initial statement of reasons, including environmental considerations and all information upon which the proposal is based (rulemaking file), are on file and available for public review from the agency representative, Sonke Mastrup, Executive Director, Fish and Game Commission, 1416 Ninth Street, Box 944209, Sacramento, California 94244-2090, phone (916) 653-4899. Please direct requests for the above mentioned documents and inquiries concerning the regulatory process to Sonke Mastrup or Sherrie Fonbuena at the preceding address or phone number. **Victoria Barr, Department of Fish and Wildlife, phone (916) 445-5034, has been designated to respond to questions on the substance of the proposed regulations.** Copies of the Initial Statement of Reasons, including the regulatory language, may be obtained from the address above. Notice of the proposed action shall be posted on the Fish and Game Commission website at http://www.fgc.ca.gov.

Availability of Modified Text

If the regulations adopted by the Commission differ from but are sufficiently related to the action proposed, they will be available to the public for at least 15 days prior to the date of adoption. Any person interested may obtain a copy of said regulations prior to the date of adoption by contacting the agency representative named herein.

If the regulatory proposal is adopted, the final statement of reasons may be obtained from the address above when it has been received from the agency program staff.

Impact of Regulatory Action/Results of the Economic Impact Analysis

The potential for significant statewide adverse economic impacts that might result from the proposed regulatory action has been assessed, and the following initial determinations relative to the required statutory categories have been made:

(a) Significant Statewide Adverse Economic Impact Directly Affecting Businesses, Including the Ability of California Businesses to Compete with Businesses in Other States:

The proposed action will not have a significant statewide adverse economic impact directly affecting business, including the ability of California businesses to compete with businesses in other states because the proposed regulatory change will not apply to businesses directly or indirectly. The amendments are administrative improvements to licensing procedures that will not reduce the number of visits to areas surrounding private lands participating in the PLM program. Licensee and hunter spending on gas, food, sporting equipment and other area businesses are not anticipated to change.

(b) Impact on the Creation or Elimination of Jobs Within the State, the Creation of New Businesses or the Elimination of Existing Businesses, or the Expansion of Businesses in California; Benefits of the Regulation to the Health and Welfare of California Residents, Worker Safety, and the State's Environment:

Because the proposed regulatory change makes only technical, administrative changes to the current regulations, it is not anticipated to impact visits or spending in the areas surrounding private lands. Since the number of visitors and the volume of spending are not anticipated to change, direct or indirect impacts on job creation or elimination; business creation, elimination or expansion are not expected.

Significant direct benefits to the health and welfare of California residents are not anticipated, although improved wildlife habitat and sustainable wildlife populations contribute to the general health and welfare of the public.

Benefits to worker safety from the proposed regulation are not anticipated because the proposed regulation will not affect worker conditions.

The Private Lands Management Program (PLM) overall provides substantial environmental benefits by creating landowner incentives to improve habitat for wildlife on approximately 1 million acres of private lands in California.

(c) Cost Impacts on a Representative Private Person or Business:

The agency is not aware of any cost impacts that a representative private person or business would necessarily incur in reasonable compliance with the proposed action.

(d) Costs or Savings to State Agencies or Costs/Savings in Federal Funding to the State:

The proposed regulations are expected to improve administrative procedures by eliminating unnecessary annual applications and approvals for PLMs. It is expected that these changes will improve program efficiency and allow existing staff to spend more time reviewing reports and inspecting habitat improvements on existing PLMs. Therefore, no fiscal impact (cost or savings) to State Agencies and Federal Funding to

the State.

(e) Nondiscretionary Costs/Savings to Local Agencies:

None.

(f) Programs Mandated on Local Agencies or School Districts:

None.

(g) Costs Imposed on Any Local Agency or School District that is Required to be Reimbursed Under Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4, Government Code:

None.

(h) Effect on Housing Costs:

None.

Effect on Small Business

It has been determined that the adoption of these regulations may affect small business. The Commission has drafted the regulations in Plain English pursuant to Government Code sections 11342.580 and 11346.2(a)(1).

Consideration of Alternatives

The Commission must determine that no reasonable alternative considered by the Commission, or that has otherwise been identified and brought to the attention of the Commission, would be more effective in carrying out the purpose for which the action is proposed, would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons than the proposed action, or would be more cost-effective to affected private persons and equally effective in implementing the statutory policy or other provision of law.

FISH AND GAME COMMISSION

Sonke Mastrup
Executive Director

Dated: October 25, 2013