



## SPECIAL AREAS COMMUNITY PASTURES

### APPROVAL STATEMENT

The Special Areas Community Pasture Policy is hereby approved with amendments in force as the governing document for the management of all community pastures. The primary purpose of the policy is to facilitate the provision of a reliable allotment to assist in the establishment and stabilization of farm and ranch units within the Special Areas.

Chairman, Special Areas Board

May 20/09.

Date:



## SPECIAL AREAS COMMUNITY PASTURES

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### **PURPOSE:**

To provide a reliable allotment to assist in the establishment and stabilization of farm and ranch units within the Special Areas.

### **AUTHORITY:**

Special Areas Act R.S.A. 1980, Chapter S-20 with amendments in force as of July 5, 1990.

Special Areas Community Pasture Regulation, Alberta Regulation 111/92.

### **Definitions** for the purpose of this policy shall be as follows:

1. Allotment means the number of Animal Unit Months to be allocated within a Community Pasture.
2. Guide to Range Condition & Stocking Rates for Alberta Grasslands 1988 defines animal units as one mature (1,000 lb.) cow, however for the purpose of applying this policy the Special Areas Board recognizes an Animal Unit as a 1,200 lb. cow.
3. Applicant means a person who has filed an application with the Special Areas Board for privileges of grazing stock in a Community Pasture.
4. Assessment means the assessed value of real property as confirmed by the Special Areas Board Assessment Supervisor, and based upon the Special Areas General Assessment completed for 1996.
5. Immediate family means a son, daughter, son-in-law, daughter-in-law.
6. Patron means a person currently enjoying privileges of grazing stock in a Community Pasture. A patron must maintain his accounts in good standing to sustain his status.
7. Residence means the place where you normally return at night. It is a recognition by the local community of where your residence actually is, and what is right.
8. Yearlings are recognized as 0.75 AU.



## P R O C E S S

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Allotments may be provided, by the Special Areas Board (SAB), to residents of the Special Areas who are recognized by the community, as having their principal occupation as farming or ranching. They must demonstrate a tangible need for supplemental, seasonal grazing for their livestock.

### **PRIORITY:**

Allotments may be prioritized in accordance with the intent of the Community Pasture Regulations as follows:

1. Near pasture, regularly grazing, dependent upon pasture.
2. Not near pasture, regularly grazing, dependent upon pasture.
3. Near pasture, not regularly grazing, require additional grazing.
4. Operating near pasture, not residing near, regularly grazing, dependent upon pasture.
5. Any other situations that are not covered by above.

**Applicants who claim dependency upon allotment in a Community Pasture must demonstrate their need under the following criteria:**

### **ASSESSMENT:**

The applicant must provide the Special Areas Board with a summary of the assessed value of all his land used for farming or ranching. This shall include all lands owned or rented, within and outside the Special Areas.

The Special Areas Board recognizes that a 250 cow/calf unit operation is economically stable. To support this size of herd, an operator would require approximately \$400,000 of land assessment. This assessment value is given in terms of the 1996 General Assessment values. This figure may change from time to time to reflect the adjustments from subsequent General Assessments within the Special Areas.

Land rented from private sources shall be valued at 67% of its' assessed value for purposes of determining an applicants' demonstrated need.

Land rented out to others shall be assessed at 100% to the landowner.

Animal Units (AU) in Grazing Reserves outside the Special Areas shall be evaluated as an AU in a Community Pasture and be attributed to the patron's existing allotment.






Applicants holding less than \$400,000 of assessed land value shall be viewed as demonstrating a greater need than those who hold more.



## PROXIMITY:

The Community Pasture Regulations address the hierarchy of allotment priority favouring the applicants who operate and reside near a Pasture, and require supplemental grazing.

Due to the location and physical impact upon the landscape by each Community Pasture, it is not feasible to designate a boundary that generically applies to all pastures. Therefore the accepted distance of proximity, measured from pasture perimeter to applicants residence, for each Pasture is as follows:

	Bullpound	-	15 miles
	Buffalo-Atlee	-	20 miles.
	Remount	-	20 miles.
	Sounding Creek	-	25 miles.
	Richdale	-	Not applicable at this time.

Applicants or Patrons residing beyond the limits of proximity, will have a factor of 50,000 added to their assessment base.



Patrons who move their residence outside of the Special Areas boundaries shall be phased out in 3 equal annual reductions.

## LONG-TERM PATRON:


Economic Stability is dynamic and is recognized to change over time. An operators needs are greater during the years he supports a family on the farm or ranch, and less during the latter stages of his ranching career.

When a patron becomes eligible for Canada Pension Plan (CPP) or Old Age Security (OAS) benefits, this income can be used to offset living expenses. Therefore it is reasonable to presume that the patrons need to receive allotment in a Community Pasture has been reduced. The degree of less than market value grazing is not so critical to maintain economic stability.

This is based upon:

-  The patron having supplemental income - CPP / OAS.
-  The patron having lesser needs when family becomes self sufficient.

In an effort to maintain equitability among patrons, and to support the principle of providing opportunities for the lesser established applicant, the Special Areas Board will require the patron who is eligible to receive the CPP / OAS to reduce his allotment, and phase out of the Community Pasture in 3 equal annual reductions.

-  The Special Areas Board reserves the right to grant exceptions where phasing out a patron would significantly jeopardize the economic stability of his farming or ranching operation.



## PATRON-RETIREMENT OPTION:

Pasture allotments are not an inherited right, nor are they a marketable commodity.

The Special Areas Board has developed a proposal that enables a senior patron to phase out of the Pasture over time, and allow a portion of his allotment to go to an immediate family member who is actively ranching within the Special Areas.




## PROCESS:

1. Retiree may give up to 50% of his allotment to the immediate family member.
2. Immediate family member can accept the allotment up to the point that they would meet the maximum AUM's for their particular Pasture.
3. Remaining 50% returns to the allotment pool for redistribution by the Special Areas Board / Allotment Committee.
4. Retiree phases out of the Pasture in 3 equal annual reductions.
5. Surplus from retirees' reductions returns to the allotment pool and becomes eligible for redistribution.


## MULTIPLE FAMILY-UNITS:

There are a number of instances of multiple member family unit operations. In the Special Areas it is common for immediate family members to share ranching and farming assets whether they operate explicitly on their own, or as a combined family unit.


The Special Areas Board recognizes the broader assessment base required to sustain stability in the multiple family-unit. Where an individual operator would demonstrate a need for Pasture benefits as a single unit, following is a numeric relationship that would allow for immediate family members to co-operate and not exceed the assessment / field AUM maximums:




	Single or married operator	1 Unit
	Single immediate family member, as bona fide operator, working with parent	additional 0.5 unit
	Married immediate family member, with no children, as bona fide operator, working with parent	additional 0.75 unit



 Immediate family member with children, as bona fide operator, working with parent additional 1 unit.

 **Total family unit shall not exceed 2 units.**

 **Multiple family-units will have their assessment factored to reflect the cumulative relationship of their operation.**

EXAMPLE:  Single son / daughter working with parent (1.5 units)  
 Cumulative assessment at 550,000  
 Calculation: 550,000 divided by 1.5 = 366,667 assessment

## **STABILIZED UNITS OVER ASSESSMENT:**

### Patrons over assessment

Patrons holding over \$400,000 of assessed value of land, shall not be eligible for further allotment increases.

Where a Patron holds \$ 600,000 of assessment, the Special Areas Board, shall request the Patron to phase out of the Pasture in 3 equal annual reductions.


### Applicants over assessment

Applicants holding over \$400,000 of assessed value of land will not be considered for entry into a Community Pasture.

### Combined Assessment-AUM threshold

Where a Patrons' combined assessment and AUMs reach a value unit threshold of 700, any AUMs exceeding this threshold shall be returned to the allotment pool for redistribution. The allotment reduction shall occur in 3 equal annual reductions.





Multiple family-units will be evaluated under the governing unit criteria.

 The Special Areas Board reserves the right to grant exceptions where phasing out a patron would significantly jeopardize the economic stability of his farming or ranching operation.



## AUM THRESHOLD IN PASTURE




In recognition of the fact that not all Patrons will receive identical allotments, and that it is desirable to provide equitability, not equality amongst applicants, and that there must be an upper limit to the number of AUMs an individual can graze in a Pasture, the upper thresholds for each Pasture shall be as follows:

	Bullpound	200 AUMs.
	Buffalo-Atlee	400 AUMs.
	Remount	400 AUMs.
	Sounding Creek	300 AUMs.
	Richdale	25 head / patron.

These allotment thresholds are not provided as allotment targets, but do establish a point upon which no further growth will occur.

Multiple family-units shall not exceed the established Pasture thresholds.

## MISCELLANEOUS

1. The Special Areas Board makes the allotments, based upon the recommendations of the local Allotment Committee.
2. As AUMs become available, emphasis and priority shall be given, without creating a long-term imbalance to other levels, to Patrons at:
  -  The mid-level of assessment and AUMs in the Pasture.
  -  The low-end of assessment and AUMs in the Pasture.
  -  The upper-level of assessment and AUMs in the Pasture.
3. Applicants shall receive consideration after the above priorities have been met.
4. The Allotment Committee shall be responsible to provide information useful in determining actual need of applicants and patrons seeking increments to their existing allotments.
5. The Allotment Committee of each Pasture shall rotate its' membership in a manner that maintains equitable representation of its' Association members.
6. Local Allotment Committee members shall be chosen from the respective Association executive members. The executive should be elected from the Association membership.



7. Allotment Committee business shall be restricted to Allotment Committee members and representation from the Special Areas Board.
8. The Committee shall have liberty to request the presence of any non-members for the purpose of supplying information.
9. Allotment recommendations shall come from the Committee members only.
10. Local Allotment Committee members shall be Patrons of the Pasture from which the business is being discussed. (e.g. Buffalo-Atlee members must be Patrons of the Buffalo-Atlee Community Pasture).
11. Allotment Committee members unable to attend meetings, may be represented by proxy, however the proxy member must be a Patron of the Pasture under discussion.
12. Application data will include the time and location of the allotment meeting. This will enable all interested parties the opportunity to make presentations to the Allotment Committee.
13. Representation from individuals or organizations may present comments or concerns to the Allotment Committee prior to the business of allotments. The spokesperson shall have up to fifteen minutes to present his brief to the Committee. The presenter shall submit a written brief to the Committee at least 2 weeks prior to the Allotment meeting. This will enable the Committee adequate time to review the issues and prepare ahead of the meeting date.
14. Patrons shall not enter stock in more than 1 Community Pasture.
15. Applicants or Patrons taking in livestock owned by others, on lands controlled by themselves, shall be disqualified from entry to a Community Pasture.
  - This does not apply to hauled out or similarly damaged annual crop fields, nor running stock within family held lands.
  - Patrons who consider taking in stock on damaged annual crop fields shall notify the Allotment Committee for comments and approval.
  - Patrons may appeal to the Special Areas Board in extenuating circumstances.
16. Applicants or Patrons breaking native prairie lands under their control may be viewed as demonstrating a lesser need as a bona fide ranching operation.





17. Patrons selling hay from Grazing Leases shall be disqualified from entry to a Community Pasture.
18. Patrons selling hay from private lands is similar to selling grain as a cash crop, and does not affect Community Pasture privileges
19. Applicants or Patrons falsifying information supplied on their applications shall lead to disqualification of pasture privileges.
20. Occasionally extenuating circumstances contribute to a patron disposing of Special Areas lease land.  
  
Patrons disposing of lease land shall have their continued Community Pasture privileges reviewed, by the Allotment Committee.  
  
Recommendations of the Allotment Committee may be appealed to the Special Areas Board.
21. Applicants or Patrons must hold a minimum of 1/2 section (320 acres) of land.
22. Patrons not fulfilling their AUM requirements, shall either pay the full annual rate, or risk jeopardizing their existing allotment at the following years allotment review.
  - 22.1 Notwithstanding Clause 22, where the Special Areas Board requests Patrons to reduce their stocking rate in a Community Pasture due to drought or other conditions, Patrons will be exempt from the penalty provisions of that clause.  
  
The period of exemption will be for that grazing season and will be re-evaluated the following year.
23. Patrons not fulfilling their allotments for two years shall be refused subsequent entry into a Community Pasture.
24. Applicants holding irrigated land, or controlling intensive stock operations shall be evaluated on a case by case basis.
25. No allotment increase will be considered unless applied for in writing.

### **ESTATES OF DECEASED PATRONS:**

26. Where a spouse continues on as a bona fide farmer or rancher, and maintains the necessary residency criteria, he or she shall continue with the former patrons' allotment, and henceforth operate upon their own merit.
27. Where no spouse exists, the Estate shall finish up the grazing season and be permitted entry for 1 year following. This will enable the Executors a reasonable length of time to settle the affairs of the Estate.



## GENERAL

28. This policy is to be used in conjunction with the Special Areas Community Pasture Regulation, Alberta Regulation 111/12.
29. Allotment Committee recommendations may be appealed to the Special Areas Board.
30. Appeals shall be heard by the Special Areas Board with representation supplied from the Allotment Committee.
31. Appeals shall be heard at the closest community to the appellant, or centralized as necessary.
32. Appeals shall be heard no later than the end of the first week of March.

**APPEALS to the Special Areas Board regarding allotments or related business must be made within 30 days of written notification by the Allotment Committee.**

Updated & Revised: May, 2009  
by: Dug O. Major, Director Property Administration, Special Areas Board.