SMITH PRAIRIE C&H ALLOTMENT
2016 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

Boise National Forest
Mountain Home Ranger District

INTRODUCTION

The following information is direction on how livestock management is to be conducted on the Smith Prairie Cattle & Horse (C&H) Allotment for the 2016 grazing season. The Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) are part of your Term grazing Permit consistent with Part 1, Item 3 and Part 2, Item 8(a), and you are responsible for compliance with this direction.

Situations may develop during the grazing season that could require changes to these instructions. If this becomes necessary, or if you cannot comply with some part of these instructions, contact Monte Miller at 373-4243 or Holly Hampton at 587-7867, and obtain approval before initiating or deviating from your AOI. Failure to obtain prior approval could result in permit action.

The following table displays the permitted numbers and seasons of use for the Smith Prairie Allotment:

Permittee Name	Permitted Number and Class	Permitted Season of Use
L.G. Davison & Sons	55 cow/calf	5/01-10/15
Jake or Steve Ireland	21 cow/calf	5/01-10/15
Rick Russell	26 cow/calf	5/01-10/15

For the 2016 grazing season, you are authorized to graze the Smith Prairie Allotment as follows:

Permittee Name	Authorized Number and Class	Authorized Season of Use
L.G. Davison & Sons	55 cow/calf	5/01-10/15
Jake or Steve Ireland	21 cow/calf	5/01-10/15
Rick Russell	26 cow/calf	5/01-10/15

Some flexibility will be allowed for weather conditions, range readiness and livestock needs. The period of use is also subject to compliance with Forest Plan standards and guidelines and Implementation Monitoring requirements as discussed below. Please review carefully the standards and guides listed.

BILLING INFORMATION

The grazing fee for the 2016 grazing season is $2.11 per head month for cattle. You will be billed based on the authorized use listed above. Confirmation of payment through the National Finance Center is required and must be received before livestock can enter National Forest System lands. In order to meet this requirement, please ensure that bills

for collection are paid by the due date indicated.

If permitted livestock are required to leave an allotment early because utilization standards have been reached, drought conditions persist or other reasons as determined by the Forest Officer, a credit/refund may be requested. **This request must be submitted in writing to the District Ranger by December 1, 2016.**

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

Livestock may enter the Gooseneck Unit no sooner than May 1.. Cattle will remain in this unit approximately 5 weeks. After proper use is achieved in the Gooseneck Unit, livestock will be moved to the Lower Bench Unit until utilization levels are reached, approximately 5 weeks. Water will be checked in these two units prior to turn on and if water is going to be short in Lower Bench, you may switch Gooseneck and Lower Bench in the rotation. Livestock will then be moved to the Lava Creek/Spring Creek Unit until for approximately 6-8 weeks or until utilization levels are reached. The Smith Creek Unit will be used last and they will remain in this Unit until the end of the permitted season or until utilization levels are met whichever comes first. The season may need to be reduced in Smith Prairie depending on spring rains, re-growth and ensuring utilization standards are met. The Strawberry Creek Unit will be rested this season.

It has been noted in the past year that salt blocks have been left on several allotments after livestock have been removed. Salt blocks or tubs should be moved from unit to unit with livestock and all salt needs to be removed from the allotment at the end of the grazing season. This standard is part of the terms and conditions in your Term Grazing Permit.

You must notify the Forest Service no less than five (5) days prior to livestock being placed on the allotments so that authorized livestock numbers can be verified by district range staff if the Forest Service elects to do so.

STANDARDS AND GUIDES

Close monitoring of utilization levels and diligent removal of livestock when they are reached is critical to ensure compliance with end-of-season utilization standards. Failure to meet these standards may result in the modification of grazing management, including reductions in head months or permitted area.

The following standards and guidelines apply to the Smith Prairie Allotment:

- Maximum forage utilization of representative areas within each pasture shall not exceed the values shown below at the end of the growing season. Variation in utilization standards in order to achieve specific vegetative management objectives shall occur with a site-specific or project-level decision according to direction in FSM 1922.5.

  <u>Riparian Areas:</u> Maximum 45 percent use or retain a minimum 4-inch stubble height of hydric greenline species, whichever occurs first.

  <u>Upland Vegetative Cover Types:</u> Early season or season long pastures – 40 percent use. Vegetative slow growth, after seed ripe conditions or late season pastures – 50 percent use. (RAST01, p. III-45)

- Livestock salting is prohibited in Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs). Place salt no closer that ¼ mile from water and not within 100 feet of roads. Move salt from areas where utilization standards have been met. (RAST04, p. III-45)
- All livestock water developments must provide access and escape to and from water for all types of wildlife. (RAST09, p. III-45)
- Bulls must test negative for Trichomoniasis before entering National Forest System lands.
- Only certified weed-free hay and mulch are allowed on National Forest System lands.

Because it is an early season unit, upland utilization levels in the Gooseneck Unit of the Smith Prairie allotment are 40%.

IMPROVEMENTS

Your Term Grazing Permit contains a list of range improvements you are responsible for maintaining on the Smith Prairie Allotment. Please note that all range improvements must be maintained to a proper functioning condition before livestock are placed on each allotment. Failure to do so is a violation of your term grazing permit and is subject to permit action. In the event improvements cannot be practically maintained to standard, you should notify this office so we can identify them for reconstruction as funds become available.

Non-functioning range improvements need to be brought to standard, or arrangements made with district range personnel to have them removed. Abandonment of improvements is not acceptable – if developments are not functioning and are no longer needed, they must be removed. If they are in a location that does not allow for removal, these non-functioning improvements still need to allow for bird and small mammal escape. Metal troughs need to have holes cut in them large enough to allow birds and small mammals to escape from them or be tipped over so that they do not hold water. Tires also need to have holes cut in them, or be popped loose from their cement bottom and propped up slightly on edge, to allow birds and small mammals to escape from them. If none of these options are feasible, a wildlife escape ramp needs to be installed and maintained in the trough.

Wildlife escape ramps need to be installed in tire troughs. These ramps are being supplied by the Forest Service. These ladders should be installed in all tire troughs on the Smith Prairie Allotment prior to turn on. This direction also includes troughs that hold water in the spring but dry up later in the grazing season. Failure to comply could result in adverse action to your permit. Please contact Monte or Holly as soon as possible if you need to pick up escape ramps.

Cattleguards are no longer considered part of your annual maintenance. It is still your responsibility to inspect cattleguards annually and inform the Forest Service of known problems or maintenance needs on them within your allotment boundaries. This includes, but is not limited to, wing or grate repair or replacement, brush removal, and cleaning.

RIDER OR PERMITTEE INSTRUCTIONS

Off dates for these allotments are considered approximate and will depend on utilization levels. To prevent over-utilization, a concerted effort should be made to distribute cattle over the entire allotment and to effectively graze all suitable areas in that unit. Permitted numbers are based on the premise that active management will occur to effect adequate livestock distribution. Cattle need to be moved before meeting riparian and upland grazing standards. If cattle are allowed to concentrate in riparian areas and water developments without being distributed to unused areas of the allotment, the grazing capacity of the allotment is diminished to those areas only.

Permittee monitoring of utilization levels is not mandatory, but is highly advised since permittees will be held accountable for any failures to meet end-of-season compliance monitoring.

REQUIRED REPORTING

Enclosed is a Year-end Grazing Report for you to record actual use data and range improvement maintenance for the 2016 grazing season for the Smith Prairie Allotment. You need to record the date and number of cattle turned onto the allotment, the number and date cattle are removed from each unit, and estimate the time and cost of management actions, including livestock herding and improvement maintenance, associated with each allotment. Accurate records of these dates, maintenance work, and range improvement needs should be kept and returned to our office at the end of the grazing season. The Forest Service uses these records to help allocate Range Betterment Funds. These funds are used to purchase materials for improvements. **This report should be returned to the Forest Service's Mountain Home Ranger District office no later than December 1, 2016.**

If you are planning to waive your Term Grazing permit – based on either sale of permitted livestock or base property, please submit this intention to me in writing prior to the transaction.

INSPECTIONS AND MONITORING

Range personnel may require you to delay your entry date on the Smith Prairie Allotment based on range readiness inspections that they have completed. You will be notified as soon as possible if your turn-on date is delayed.

Range personnel may conduct utilization monitoring and improvement inspections periodically on your allotments.

COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game is responsible for wolf management in Idaho. The Regional Wildlife Wolf Biologist for the Fish and Game is Jennifer Struthers. Any questions you may have regarding wolf management should be directed to her. She can be reached at 208-465-8465 ext. 350.

If you suspect a wolf depredation has occurred on your livestock, USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services (Wildlife Services) should be contacted as soon as possible. The local Wildlife Services contact for this area is Jered Hedelius. He can be reached at (208) 681-8756. In the event that you cannot reach Jered, Todd Grimm should be contacted at the Boise District Office at 208-373-1630.

OTHER

When livestock carcasses are located near campgrounds, roads, trails or water reasonable and appropriate action must be taken to remove any carcasses. The permittee will contact the District Ranger's Representative to discuss the problem and determine what action would be appropriate for each specific instance. Although the Forest Service recognizes that disposal of carcasses is not always feasible in many situations there are a number of reasonable options available for the disposal of single or multiple carcasses. In most cases, carcasses should be moved at least 100 yards from campgrounds, roads, trails or water. Animal carcasses in highly visible areas need to be relocated to more remote areas.

The Forest Service's Motor Vehicle Use Rule is in place on the Mountain Home Ranger District. Public motorized, wheeled vehicle use is prohibited on all NFS lands except on routes that are designated on the current year's Motorized Vehicle Use Map. This AOI authorizes you and your employees to use wheeled motor vehicles off of designated routes for administrative use within your allotments for livestock management purposes. However, specific routes will need to be identified each year. See description of routes needed for administrative use below. This administrative use includes salting and herding of livestock, maintenance of range improvements, and forage utilization inspections. Use of heavy equipment, such as bulldozers or backhoes is **not** included in this authorization. Use of heavy equipment will need to be requested through and approved by the District Ranger on a case-by-case basis.

Routes Approved for Administrative Use:

1). Access to the Spring Creek boundary fence on ridge between Spring Creek and Long Gulch located at T3N R7E Section 34 via existing road/ATV trail.
2). Gooseneck Unit via the existing road/ATV trail 142 system.
3). Lower Bench Unit from Black Canyon to Smith Creek Falls via the existing road/ATV trail.
4) Access to the Smith Creek Boundary Fence at T3N R8E Sec 29 NESSE via existing road/ATV trail.
5) Access to the Joe Brown Rim Fence at T2N R7E Sec. 18 NENW via existing road/ATV trail.

Stephanie M. Kelley	3/22/16
District Ranger	**Date**