

**WINDY GAP 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 Windy Gap 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 Holly Hampton at 587-7867 or Stacie Prow at 587-7870, 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 Windy Gap Allotment:

Allotment Name	Permitted Number and Class	Permitted Season of Use
Windy Gap - on	78 cow/calf	06/01-10/31
off	286 cow/calf	06/01-10/31

For the 2016 grazing season, you are authorized to graze the Windy Gap Allotment as follows:

Allotment Name	Authorized Number and Class	Authorized Season of Use
Windy Gap - on	78 cow/calf	06/01-10/31
off	286 cow/calf	06/01-10/31

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 Windy Gap Allotment no sooner than June 1. Livestock will be rotated through the units, being moved prior to utilization standards being exceeded. At the beginning of the grazing season approximately 150 cow/calf pairs will be moved to the Reservoir Unit. The remaining pairs will be moved to the Canal Unit on June 15th. On approximately July 15th 120 cow/calf pairs will be moved to the Dixie Slope Unit (i.e. Windy Gap) and the remaining pairs will be moved into the North Dixie. In mid-September all the cattle will be moved to the Lockman Unit where they will remain until the end of the season which is October 31 or until utilization standards are met. One utilization standards are met, livestock must be removed from the entire allotment.

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 allotment 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 Windy Gap Allotment:

- Maximum forage utilization of representative areas shall not exceed the values below at the end of the growing season.
 - Riparian Areas: Maximum 45 percent use or retain a minimum 4-inch stubble height of hydric greenline species, whichever occurs first.
 - Upland Vegetative Cover Types: 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 than 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)
- Previously grazed units must have all livestock removed from them.
- 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.

IMPROVEMENTS

Your Term Grazing Permit contains a complete list of range improvements associated with the Windy Gap Allotment. Please note that all range improvements must be maintained to a proper functioning condition before livestock are placed on the 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 Windy Gap 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 Holly or Stacie as soon as possible if you need to pick up escape ramps.

RIDER OR PERMITTEE INSTRUCTIONS

Off dates for the allotment 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. Livestock need to be moved before meeting riparian and upland grazing standards. If livestock 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 are two Year-end Grazing Reports for you to record actual use data and range improvement maintenance for the 2016 grazing season for the Windy Gap Allotment. You need to record the date and number of cattle turned onto each allotment, the number and date cattle are removed from each allotment, 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 Windy Gap 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 allotment.

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, saddle or pack animal 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 site 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 allotment 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 Lockman-Dixie boundary fence located at T1S R8E Section 12 NWSW via existing road/ATV trail.
- 2). Access to the Little Camas boundary fence located at T1S R9E Section 21 SESW via existing road/ATV trail.
- 3). Access to the Highway 68 fence located at T1S R9E Section 19 SWSW via existing road/ATV trail.
- 4). Access to the Lockman Highway boundary fence located at T1S R9E Section 20 NESW via existing road/ATV trail.
- 5). Access via the existing road #134B and the #134C.
- 6). Access via existing road through Dixie Slope Unit in Section 30. (Access to trough on private.
- 7). Access via existing road to a trough near the Gravel pit in Section 19.
- 8). Access to fence between W. Pasture and Percy's. T1S R8E Section 13
- 9). Access to fence in the northeast side of Lockman Gulch via two track in Section 27.

Stephanie M. Kerley	3/25/16
District Ranger	Date