BRIDGER-TETON NATIONAL FOREST
KEMMERER RANGER DISTRICT

LOWER SALT CREEK ALLOTMENT
2016 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

These Annual Operating Instructions are made part of your term grazing permit consistent with Part 1, Item 3 and Part 2, Item 8(a). It references the meeting held on March 8th. Situations may develop during the grazing season which may require changes to these instructions. If this becomes necessary or if you cannot comply with some part of these instructions prior approval must be given before initiating any changes or deviating from these instructions.

Only livestock branded according to the Certificate of Brand Registrations provided to the Forest Service will be allowed to graze on the allotment. Confirmation of payment by the Forest Service must be received before livestock will be allowed to graze on National Forest lands.

Permittee	**Authorized Number**	**Season of Use**
Argyle Ranch Inc.	1400 ewe/lamb	7/1 - 10/10

Table 1.0 Lower Salt Creek Allotment – Proposed Grazing Schedule and Proper Use Criteria[1]

Order	Unit	No. of Days	Planned Dates	Proper Use Criteria
Trail On	NA			≤50% of key forage species ≥ 4" RSH of graminoids along the greenline
1st	2	30	7/1 – 7/30	
2nd	1	22	7/31 – 8/21	
3rd	3	18	8/22 – 9/8	
4th	4	32	9/9 – 10/10	
Trail Off	NA			

[1]Dates are estimates and may vary based upon range readiness, drought, proper use criteria being reach prior to the proposed move date, and/or other factors. Utilization will be monitored at key areas of the allotment. Key areas are those areas most preferred by livestock, are typically grazed first, and receive the most concentrated use.

An allotment map is enclosed; this map shows the allotment boundary, unit boundaries, and scheduled move dates. Some variation between units prescribed for grazing and actual areas being grazed may occur at areas where units are adjacent to each other and where a clear geographic boundary or other marker is not present. However, every effort should be made to ensure sheep are in the appropriate unit to be grazed at the prescribed time. All units will again be grazed this year to improve livestock distribution and use.

Notify us 3-5 days in advance as to when you plan to put your sheep on the allotment.

Movement of sheep onto and off of the allotment on National Forest lands will occur in such a way that only once over grazing occurs unless prior approval is given. Movement of sheep onto/or off the allotment is not to result in any area exceeding Proper Use Criteria within the allotment permitted to graze or any other allotment moving through.

You are authorized to vary the number of days between unit moves by three days either way. Prior approval must first be received if the need arises to vary the number of days by more than this.

Bed your sheep one night in one area only. Multiple days use of the same bed ground is prohibited. Keep camps clean at all times. Pack out all garbage off of the National Forest; this includes any garbage that may have been left from previous years. All camps are to be located away from trails, lakes, and other high use recreational areas. You are also encouraged to follow Order Number 04-00-104 as it relates to the management of your livestock on this allotment (see attached order). While not currently a requirement of your Term Grazing Permit, it is the intent of the Bridger-Teton National Forest to implement this order forest-wide over the next several years.

Proper utilization is 50% in upland forage areas in all units. A 4" to 6" stubble height of riparian species (i.e. sedges) shall be left along the greenline (i.e. stream corridors and wet meadows). Any area reaching proper utilization means it is time to move into the next scheduled unit or to come home.

You are responsible for proper utilization of forage by your sheep. If inspections reveal areas of over utilization or riparian damage, corrective measures will occur (which may mean taking your sheep home early) and action may be taken against your permit.

Equal utilization of the range is the objective. This requires herding and salting be properly conducted throughout the entire grazing season. Sheep are to be open herded once over with light to moderate utilization. Rotate your salting areas during the grazing season and from year to year. Place your salt in good forage producing areas where the sheep do not go by preference. Do not place your salt next to water, roads, trails, or in open meadows.

Every effort must be taken to completely remove sheep off the National Forest by the scheduled off date.

Adaptive Management

1) Sensitive Soil Areas: You are instructed to graze your sheep in a manner to minimize soil disturbance. Pass lightly through sensitive soil areas. You may choose to completely avoid some of these areas at your discretion. However, only do so if this will not cause new trailing and/or other adverse impacts to National Forest resources. Monitoring will continue to occur at several of these soil sensitive sites to determine (1) the trend of soil sensitive areas and (2) what effect, if any, current livestock management is having on these areas. If monitoring shows a site is not stable or improving and livestock are the limiting factor, then adaptive management strategies will be applied which would further reduce use in these areas.

2) Domestic Sheep & Big Horn Sheep Best Management Practices (BMPs): The following management practices are designed to limit livestock losses and interactions between domestic and bighorn sheep. They are consistent with the Final Report and Recommendations from the Wyoming State-wide Bighorn/Domestic Sheep Interaction Working Group.
    a) Do not turn out sick or diseased domestic sheep onto the grazing allotment/trailing route(s). Any domestic sheep which becomes ill while grazing on the allotment should be promptly treated to ensure it does not infect other animals.
    b) Do not allow contact between domestic and bighorn sheep. If bighorn sheep are sighted in a particular area then do not enter that area with domestic sheep. As necessary promptly move your domestic sheep to an area where they will not come into contact with the big horn sheep. Contact Aaron to adjust the grazing rotation.
    c) Promptly report all sightings of bighorn sheep during the grazing season to the Wyoming Game & Fish Department and Aaron. Sightings should be reported the same day they occur or as soon as possible thereafter. Reports to include number of bighorn sheep observed, sex of animals (*if it can be determined*), location, and distance from domestic sheep.

d) All livestock losses are to be reported each year using the attached Actual Use Record. Report the number of livestock lost and the reason(s) (*cause of death*) for the loss(s). If the cause of death is unknown or the carcass(s) is not found, this information should be included in the Actual Use Record.
e) All domestic sheep are to be counted upon exiting the National Forest. This will assure all domestic sheep are accounted for when exiting the allotment and trailing routes. The number of sheep that entered the National Forest should equal the recorded livestock losses, plus the number that exits.
f) If you are missing domestic sheep upon exiting the National Forest, re-ride the allotment and trailing routes and remove any sheep found.
g) Any domestic sheep found on the National Forest past October 15th may be disposed of by personnel authorized by the Forest Service.

Maintenance of all your improvements listed in Part 3 of your Term Grazing Permit will be completed at least one week prior to the proposed on date to the standard they were constructed or if reconstructed to the standards listed in your permit. This allows time for the inspection of your improvements and any potential concerns to be addressed before your livestock enter the allotment. *If your maintenance responsibilities have not been completed to the standards listed in your permit, livestock will not be allowed to enter National Forest lands*. All labor and materials needed for maintenance are your responsibility. Other items specifically discussed included:

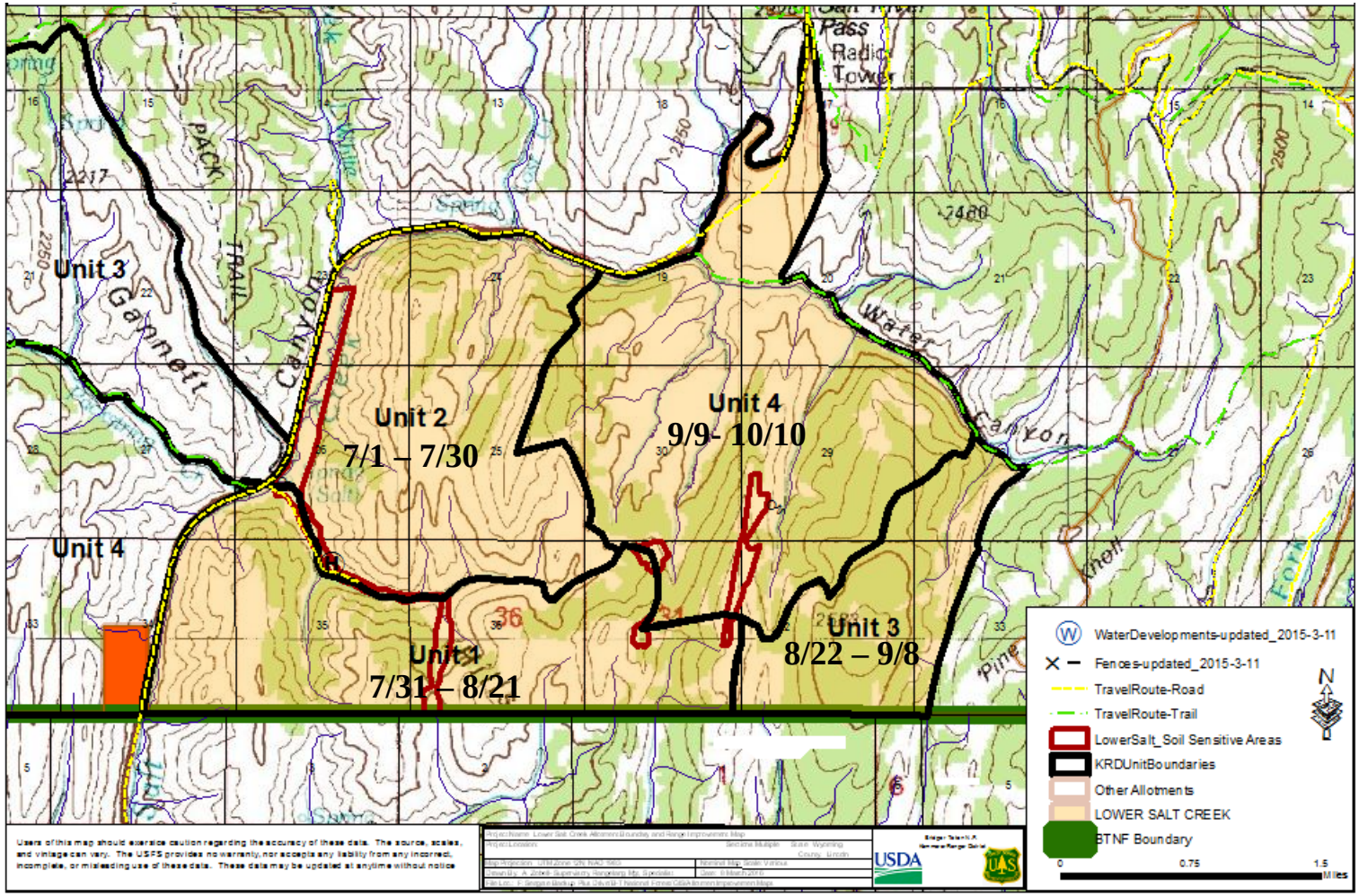
- Excess/Unauthorized use from adjacent lands should promptly be reported. Of particular interest would be drift of BLM cattle onto National Forest lands.
- A range ride of the allotment was discussed. Aaron will contact you at a later date to discuss this.

Please let us know of any new noxious weed infestations so we can keep them from becoming established. As a reminder certified weed-free hay, cubes, and straw are required on the Forest.

Complete the actual use report and return it by November 30. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Aaron (307-828-5115). Thanks for your cooperation in managing this allotment.

/s/ Adriene Holcomb — March 28, 2016
District Ranger — Date

Figure 1.0 Lower Salt Creek Allotment – 2016 Grazing Schedule; Soil Sensitive Areas; and Other Items of Interest



2016 ACTUAL USE RECORD

BRIDGER-TETON NATIONAL FOREST
KEMMERER RANGER DISTRICT

Lower Salt Creek	
Permittee: Argyle Ranch Inc.	
Authorized Season of Use: 7/1 – 10/10	Authorized Numbers: 1400 sheep (ewe/lamb)

Planned Use				**Actual Use**						
Unit	*Days Planned*	*Enter Date*	*Leave Date*	*Numbers*	*Unit*	*Days Used*	*Enter Date*	*Leave Date*	*Losses*	*Cause*
Trail On	NA				Trail On					
2	30	7/1	7/30							
1	22	7/31	8/21							
3	18	8/22	9/8							
4	32	9/9	10/10							
Trail Off	NA				Trail Off					

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Argyle Ranch Inc.)

Comments: (Included needed range improvements; improvements maintained or visited; new noxious weeds locations; and etc.)

Appendix A

UPDATED GRAZING MANAGEMENT STRAGETY

The updated grazing management strategy includes: 1) long-term benchmarks to aid in determining if an area is meeting or moving toward desired conditions as defined in the Forest Plan (USDA, 1990); 2) continued and/or increased monitoring to determine if long-term benchmarks are being met; 3) a long-term adaptive management strategy which will help ensure sites currently meeting long-term benchmarks continue to meet those benchmarks and will help ensure sites currently not meeting long-term benchmarks trend to these benchmarks where it determined livestock grazing is the primary impediment for not meeting those benchmarks. This in turn will aid in ensuring sites meeting Forest Plan desired conditions continue to meet these conditions while sites not meeting Forest Plan desired conditions and is determined to be livestock caused, will have an upward trend; and 4) an annual adaptive management strategy to ensure annual benchmarks are met and to respond to changed conditions. Data from monitoring will be considered part of the best available science and will be used to make long-term and annual adjustments to livestock grazing as needed to ensure Forest Plan direction is met. As such it will be an integral part the long term and annual adaptive management strategy. For example and among other things, monitoring will continue to determine the need and frequency for administrative adjustments in the timing, intensity, frequency, and/or management of grazing.

Updated Grazing Management - Long Term Monitoring Benchmarks

Long-term benchmarks will ensure desired conditions, as defined by the Forest Plan, are maintained and/or achieved (USDA, 1990).

1.) Allow management activities that will result in no less than 85% of potential ground cover for each vegetation cover type. Table 1 lists ground cover potentials by vegetation types. These will be used as a guideline unless more site specific ground cover potentials are obtained.

2.) Native and selected non-native species of moderate to high value for watershed protection (1993 Region 4 Range Management Resource Value Rating Guide, FSH 2209.21.27.4, Ex. 02,) will be equal to or greater than 60% of the relative cover in all vegetation types grazed by livestock. Selected non-native species are those including in plantings in the past based on their erosion control and other desired values. Includes both woody and herbaceous species.

3.) Grazing in aspen stands will be managed to ensure sprouting and sprout survival sufficient to perpetuate the long-term viability of aspen clones.

Table 1.0 Potential Ground Cover Values

Vegetation Type	Ground Cover Range at Potential[1]	Information Source(s)
Silver Sagebrush (Artemisia cana)	89 – 96 (85%=76-82)	Ashley N.F.
Mountain/Subalpine Big Sagebrush (Artemisia tridentata ssp. vaseyana)	81 – 96 (85%=69-82)	Ashley N.F.
Low Sagebrush (Artemisia arbuscula)	62 – 77 (85%=53-65)	(Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest) U-W-C N.F.-Guardsman Pass, Bear Lake Summit, and Grand Teton National Park
Snowberry (Symphoricarpos oreophilus)	92 (85%=78)	U-W-C N.F.-Salt Lake Ranger District-Big Cottonwood Canyon
Birchleaf Mt Mahogany (Cercocarpus montanus)	82 – 95 (85%=70-81)	Ashley N.F. U-W-C N.F.-Bear Lake Summit
Curlleaf Mt Mahogany (Cercocarpus ledifolius)	70 – 82 (85%=60-70)	U-W-C N.F.-Mollens Hollow Research Natural Area and Big Cottonwood Canyon – with Oak
Aspen, Populus tremuloides	90 – 98 (85%=77-83)	Ashley N.F.-Brush Creek Allotment
Uinta Alpine Grassland	97 – 100 (85% = 82-85)	U-W-C N.F-Mt View Ranger District - Bald Mt
Uinta Alpine upland turf and meadow communities[2]	80 – 100 (85% = 68-85)	U-W-C N.F.-Uinta Mountains
Uinta Alpine snowbed communities[2]	48 – 98 (85% =41-83)	U-W-C N.F.-Uinta Mountains
Uinta Alpine erosional surface (including talus) communities[2]	33 – 85 (85% =28-72)	U-W-C N.F.-Uinta Mountains
Subalpine Tall Forb – Mesic-no gopher activity (Aster, Delphinium, Artemisia ludoviciana, Geranium viscossissimum, Polemonium foliosissimum)	75 – 80 (85% = 64-68)	U-W-C N.F. Hoyt Peak, Albion basin
Subalpine Tall Forb – Wetter-no gopher activity (Veratrum californicum, Heracleum lanatum, Mertensia ciliata, Geranium richardsonii)	88 (85% = 75)	U-W-C N.F.-Albion basin and Grand Teton National Park
Subalpine Tall Forb – with gopher activity	79 –94 (85% = 67-80)	John D. Rockerfeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway

[1] Ground cover potential based on percent vegetation, litter, moss, and rock cover as measured using a minimum of 200 sample points per sample site.

Updated Grazing Management - Annual Monitoring Benchmarks

The following annual benchmarks will be implemented as a tool to meet and/or move towards long-term benchmarks. This in turn will ensure desired conditions, as defined by the Forest Plan, are maintained and/or achieved (USDA, 1990). These benchmarks are part of the adaptive management strategy. Adaptive management will be used as needed to ensure benchmarks are met. It is expected other annual benchmarks will be added in time if needed to help ensure long-term benchmarks are met and/or moved towards.

1.) As a tool to meet and/or move towards long-term benchmarks for riparian areas, maximum forage utilization standards (stubble height) for low to mid elevation *greenline* species in Class I, II, and III riparian areas in satisfactory condition will be as presented in table 2. Key species measured along the greenline will typically include a variety of species of sedges and rushes including but not limited to water sedge, beaked sedge, Nebraska sedge, woolly sedge, wool-fruit sedge, and Baltic rush.

Table 2.0 Residual Greenline Stubble Height by Stream Class for Rangelands in Satisfactory Condition

Riparian Class	Condition	Greenline Stubble Height at End of Growing Season
Stream Class I	Satisfactory	No Less Than 5”
Stream Class II	Satisfactory	No Less Than 4”
Stream Class III	Satisfactory	No Less Than 3”

[1]Currently this classification system has not been completed on the B-T National Forest. A 4” stubble height will be used until said classification system is completed.

2.) As a tool to maintain satisfactory vegetative and soil conditions (i.e. meeting long-term benchmarks such as 60% plant composition of moderate to high value for watershed protection and 85% of potential protective surface cover), maximum forage utilization will be 50% of key species on uplands, aspen, and riparian areas away from the greenline. Use will be limited to 50% of the total forage cover for perennial forb plant communities (tall forb) in satisfactory condition (i.e. meeting long-term benchmarks).

3.) As a tool to achieve rehabilitation of upland, aspen, and riparian communities away from the greenline that are not meeting or moving toward long-term benchmarks (i.e. in unsatisfactory condition), maximum allowed forage utilization on key species will be light (10%-30%). Use will be limited to 25% of the total forage cover for perennial forb plant communities without gophers, that are not meeting or moving toward long-term benchmarks (i.e. in unsatisfactory condition).

4.) As a tool to achieve rehabilitation of greenlines that are not meeting or moving toward long-term benchmarks (i.e. in unsatisfactory condition), the average greenline stubble height at the end of the growing season will not be less than six inches.

5.) Many of the perennial forb (tall forb) communities are heavily populated by pocket gophers. Bare soil increases or decreases as their activities increase or decrease respectively. As a tool to maintain or improve vegetative and soil conditions on these perennial forb gopher sites, use will be limited to 25% of the total forage cover where the protective surface cover is less than 60%.

Updated Grazing Management-Long Term Monitoring & Annual Monitoring Benchmarks
These benchmarks will continue to be evaluated by an interdisciplinary team based on monitoring to determine if permitted livestock grazing is meeting Forest Plan desired conditions or satisfactorily moving towards desired conditions. Monitoring methods identified in the Forest Plan will continue to be utilized unless other methods are identified by the best available science. Monitoring will generally include determining protective surface cover, plant community composition, forage utilization, riparian and stream bank conditions, water quality, key wildlife and aquatic species habitat conditions, compliance with grazing management practices or other grazing permit and/or annual operating instructions, and any other pertinent parameters as directed by the authorized Forest Officer.

If annual or long term monitoring evaluations determine that livestock grazing is the primary factor not allowing the benchmarks to be met (which ensure the Forest Plan desired conditions are met and/or moved towards), then management actions will be taken accordingly once that determination is made. Additional analysis will also be made to validate this determination and the extent of the affected area. Management actions may include one of or any combination of the following:

1.) Alter the amount of time an area is grazed (i.e., reduced due to over utilization, to accomplish a specific vegetation treatment, or to improve resource conditions and management).
2.) Alter livestock management (i.e., relocate salting areas and trailing routes to improve resource conditions and management).
3.) Alter the time of year an area is grazed (i.e., deferred use due to drought, exclude use to improve resource conditions, or graze an area earlier or later in the year to accomplish a specific vegetation objective).
4.) Implement range improvements projects (i.e., construct trails, stock ponds and/or fences to improve distribution and management). This will require further NEPA analysis.
5.) Alter the numbers of livestock (i.e., reduced to improve management, to accomplish a specific vegetation treatment, or to improve resource conditions).

Management actions are not limited to those listed above and may include additional adaptive management strategies. Permit administration will be conducted in accordance with Forest Service Handbook direction (FSH 2209.13, Chapter 10, section 16).

<u>Updated Grazing Management Practices</u>

1. Salting: Salt is a valuable and flexible tool to distribute livestock to suitable range that otherwise might not be grazed. As a rule, salt should be placed where additional forage utilization is desirable.

At a minimum, the following salting practices will be followed:

a.) Salt will be placed at least 200 feet from live water, roads, trails, and other high recreational areas.
b.) Salt will be placed on rocks, harden areas or containers when feasible.
c.) Salt areas will be rotated.
d.) When an area has been grazed to the desired utilization, salt will be removed from the area.

2. Sheep herding: Herding provides better distribution and proper range use. Permittees will be required to provide herders to get obtain distribution and management of sheep on the allotment.

At a minimum, the following sheep herding practices will be followed:

a) Sheep will be open herded.
b) Only once-over grazing will be allowed. However, an exception to this will be where the terrain is restrictive or water is limited and where the sheep have to pass through again.
c) Sheep will only be allowed to trail through steep hillsides and unsuitable range (no deliberate grazing, no bedding or salting). Use at these areas will be negligible to light.
d) Sheep will be bedded one night in one area only. Use of the same bed ground for multiple days will be prohibited.
e) Sheep will not be bedded within 200 feet of live water. However, there may be some exceptions to this due to the topography within the allotment.

3. Other:

a) Promptly remove any sheep that have died from within 100 yards or in sight of administrative sites, roads or trails, corrals or sources of water.
b) Certified Weed-Free hay, cubes and straw will be required on National Forest land.