

**File Code:** 2210

**Date:** 27 June 2016

Fred Fulstone  
F.I.M. Corporation  
PO Box 12  
Smith, NV  
89430

Dear Fred

This letter will serve as your Annual Operating Instructions for the 2016 grazing season on the Rickey S&G Allotment of the Bridgeport Ranger District permitted to F.I.M. Corporation. This AOI is made part of your grazing permit consistent with Part 1, Item 3 and Part 2 Item 8(a). Situations may develop during the grazing season which require changes to these instructions. If this becomes necessary, or if you cannot comply with some part of these instructions, contact the District Ranger and obtain approval before initiating changes or deviating from these instructions.

**Permitted Use:**

Allotment	Number	Kind	Class	Season	Head Months
Rickey S&G	900	Sheep	Ewe/lambs	6/28 – 9/30	2811

**Authorized Use:**

Allotment	Number	Kind	Class	Season	Head Months
Rickey S&G	700	Sheep	Ewe/lambs	7/17 – 9/30	1749

Grazing on the Rickey S&G Allotment will start on the Labrosse Unit, a full count of livestock entering the unit will be made on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July prior to entering the unit. Livestock will be moved off the Labrosse Unit to the Rickey Peak Unit of the Allotment by July 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Consultation:**

Informal Consultation on the Domestic Sheep Grazing from 2016 through 2025 on the Labrosse Unit of the Rickey S&G Allotment was completed on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016 with letter File No. 2016-I-0344 from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Required practices under consultation include:

- 1) The permittee will notify the Forest Service (Bridgeport Ranger District Ranger or Natural Resource Officer), by telephone or in person, at least 48 hours before entering and exiting the Unit to fully document the actual season of use which will occur annually between June 28 and July 31;
- 2) 48 hours prior to the permittee entering the Unit, the Forest Service will contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for the most recent (as of the date of the call) SNBS locations. If SNBS are known to be located north of the Trigger Line for



- the Unit, the permittee will be contacted by the Forest Service and domestic sheep will not enter the Unit on the scheduled date of entry. Domestic sheep will not be authorized to enter the Unit until such time as the SNBS have moved south of the Trigger Line for the Unit as described in the BA. Authorization for entry will be credible reported sightings, as determined by the Bridgeport District Ranger;
- 3) the permittee will provide instruction/training and supervision to ranch and staff members (i.e., camptenders and shepherders) specific to SNBS identification, prevention of contact, and escape plan procedures as described in the BA. The permittee will monitor and ensure that the Forest Service's grazing standards and guidelines are being followed and document meetings and instructions to shepherders in a log book;
  - 4) the permittee will place and retain 1 shepherd and 2 guard dogs and at least 1 herding dog with the domestic sheep while in the Unit. More experienced, informed and responsible shepherders will be placed with the band of sheep on the Unit. Shepherders will be instructed to avoid moving domestic sheep through dense vegetation and to increase their vigilance on bright, moonlit nights. The permittee must utilize herding and guard dogs on the Unit that are mature and effective. Female dogs in heat will not be placed on the Unit;
  - 5) the permittee will conduct on and off counts of all individual sheep, to document the number of sheep on the Unit. The permittee will provide the Bridgeport District Ranger or Natural Resource Officer with this number within 24 hours of each count. Forest Service employees will be present during these counts as workload allows;
  - 6) the permittee will use a marker sheep ratio of at least 1:20. Marker ewes will include ewes that are naturally-colored black sheep, individuals with bells (at least a ratio of 1:100), and other ewes with distinguishing marks. If using "bell" sheep as markers, an identifying mark will be placed on the bell sheep in case the bell is lost. If a marker sheep is lost (i.e., dies, is removed from the band) it will be replaced. The 1:20 ratio must be met all season long;
  - 7) the permittee shall conduct marker sheep counts once a day. A complete full count will also be required as soon as possible after a predation or weather event in which the band is "scattered." "Scattered" is defined as more than sight or sound distance between groups of sheep. These counts will be recorded in a log book which specified the total marker sheep count, how many losses, and what the loss was (e.g., ewe, lamb), when a "scattering" event occurs, and what caused the loss. The log book will be provided to the Bridgeport District Ranger or Natural Resource Officer at the end of the grazing period for the Unit. This log book can be faxed, mailed or hand delivered to the Forest Service;
  - 8) if at any time during the grazing season or during the off count, a domestic sheep is determined missing from the Unit, the permittee will notify the Bridgeport District Ranger or Natural Resource Officer (within 12 hours of receiving shepherd's call) as defined in the updated *Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep/Domestic Sheep Escape Management Plan and Communication Protocol for the Rickey S&G Allotment (Labrosse Unit), Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Bridgeport Ranger District (Plan)*(Boatner 2016). The Forest Service will immediately contact the Service and CDFW. The permittee and the Forest Service will immediately initiate a comprehensive search (hiking, driving, horseback) for the stray(s) and report to the Service and CDFW the results as discussed in the Plan;
  - 9) the permittee will remove any sick or physically disabled (i.e., lack of ability to remain

- with the band) domestic sheep from the band before entering the Unit. The shepherd/permittee will immediately remove from the band any domestic sheep that becomes sick or physically disabled after the band has entered the Unit or provide prompt veterinary treatment to injured domestic sheep that are not disabled;
- 10) the shepherd's camp, nighttime bedding ground, and midday bedding ground locations will be selected such that communication between guard dogs and herding dogs by smell, sound (barking), and sight is maintained and to take advantage of both guard dog and herding dog reticular activating systems. These locations will adhere to established "bed ground" standards;
  - 11) the camp locations and bedding ground locations selected will be acceptable of domestic sheep and thus result in sheep remaining within the bedding grounds. These locations will adhere to established "bed ground" standards;
  - 12) shepherders will carry cell phones so that they may contact appropriate personnel in case of domestic sheep straying or SNBS sightings. Currently, the Unit has small pockets without cell phone coverage, but areas of coverage are not greater than one mile away. In addition, there are options for land-line calls at Twin Lakes Resort and Doc and Al's Resort which are located at the north and south ends of the Unit. Therefore, if calls/texts need to be made, it is anticipated that the shepherders will either be able to make calls from within the Unit or would be away from the herd for approximately 30 minutes. It is anticipated that cell phone coverage will continue to improve, thus minimizing areas without coverage and minimizing the time a herder would be away from the herd. For the majority of time that grazing operations are conducted in the Unit, harders have cell phone coverage or are within a few minutes of getting cell phone coverage;
  - 13) the Bridgeport Ranger District will implement allotment administration actions. Forest Service personnel will visit the Unit once or twice during the grazing season, averaging one visit every 2 weeks while domestic sheep are on the Unit. This number may change based upon the actual season of use, but the average of 1 visit every 2 weeks will remain regardless; and
  - 14) if at any time during the grazing period, a SNBS is opportunistically observed by CDFW, Forest Service, or other agency personnel north of the Trigger Line for the Unit, the shepherd will be notified by the Forest Service and will move the domestic sheep immediately and within 24 hours away from SNBS and northward to the main portion of the Rickey S&G Allotment.

### **By-Day Creek Drainage:**

The upper By-Day watershed on the Rickey S&G Allotment has more restrictive allowable use standards because of the presence of Lahontan Cutthroat Trout. Use of herbaceous species within the riparian zone must not exceed 30% of the current year's growth. Use of shrub species (willows and aspen) must not exceed 20% of the current year's growth. Utilization of herbaceous plants in the upland sites must not exceed 40% of the current year's growth and streambank disturbance must not exceed 10% of the streambank.

**Management Requirements:**

Allotment maps and management requirements, including improvement maintenance, salting, camping and bedding have been provided to you.

Only the F,M, Cross, Quartercircle W, Birds Head, MF Combined, Quartercircle L and Circle Brands are authorized under your term grazing permit.

Range improvements listed under part three in your term permit must be maintained before livestock enter allotments. The maintenance standards, also listed in part three of your permit must be followed when maintaining improvements. Range improvements must be maintained even when there is non-use on an allotment; for whatever reason.

Sheep may use a bedding/nooning area no more than once per season. No nooning, shading, bedding within 100 yards of any streams. Do not bed sheep within 200 yards of designated campgrounds, trails, trailheads, or maintained roads.

Practice open or loose herding and minimize the use of sheep herding dogs to avoid soil displacement. Only once over grazing is allowed. Graze rather than trail to water and do not water at the same locations. Route sheep to avoid steep slopes with loose soil, snow bank areas, and active rills or gullies.

Place salt at least ¼ mile from water, roads, and trails. If there are specific areas that require salt placement outside these guidelines, you must obtain approval from this office prior to salting. Haul dead livestock at least 100 yards from roads, trails and water. All garbage and debris associated with managing your livestock on Forest Service Allotments must be removed from the National Forest.

If you or your employees spot a wildfire on any of your allotments, report it immediately to the Interagency Dispatch Center in Minden, NV at **(775) 883-5995**. As a reminder, if the Bridgeport Ranger District enters into fire restrictions during 2016 this restriction applies to your operation as well.

Invasive weeds are becoming a serious threat to the welfare of our rangelands. Your assistance is needed to identify new outbreaks of weed populations and to prevent the establishment of weeds on the forest. Pay particular attention to areas where stock are concentrated such as loading/unloading areas, water developments, and salting areas. A Noxious Weed Free Hay order has been implemented on the Forest. This requires any hay that is brought onto the National Forest must be certified free from noxious weeds. All livestock entering the National Forest are recommended to be fed Certified Noxious Weed Free Forage for at least 2 days prior to entering the Forest. Pelletized feed is not affected by this order.

The Bridgeport Travel Management Record of Decision was signed on March 5, 2010. With the issuance of this decision all roads and trails designated for motor vehicle use have been identified on a motor vehicle use map (MVUM), available free of charge at the Bridgeport Ranger District Office. As detailed in 36 CFR 261.13; 36 CFR 212.51a the prohibitions on motor vehicle use will not apply to motor vehicle use that is specifically authorized under a written authorization issued under Federal Law or Regulation (e.g. term grazing permit). Through the

2016 grazing season, you and your employees are authorized to travel on routes within the allotment in your permit to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of your term grazing permit (e.g. improvement maintenance, dead livestock removal).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Marshall', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

JEREMY MARSHALL  
District Ranger