



File Code: 2210; 2230

Date: May 5, 2016

Scossa Ranch, LLC
Russell Scossa
676 Foothill Rd
Gardnerville, NV 89460

Dear Mr. Scossa,

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS MODIFICATION

This letter will document the modification to the Annual Operating Instructions, and serve as the Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the 2016 grazing season on the Noble Canyon C&H allotment. The use permitted in your Term Grazing Permit is listed below along with the modified authorized use for the 2016 season:

PERMITTED USE:

Allotment	Number of Livestock	Season of Use
Noble Canyon C&H	4 Horses	6/1-10/10
Noble Canyon C&H	144 cows/calves	6/26-9/30

AUTHORIZED USE:

Allotment	Number of Livestock	Season of Use	Days
Noble Canyon C&H	4 Horses	6/1-10/10	132 days
Noble Canyon C&H	25 cows/calves	6/26-9/30	97 days
Noble Canyon C&H	119 cows/calves	7/11-9/30	82 days

*According to the rest rotation schedule, the Silver Mountain and Noble Canyon Units are scheduled to be grazed this year. The Raymond Meadows Unit will be rested. 25c/c pairs will enter the Silver Mountain Allotment on or near June 26th and graze until September 30th or until utilization has been met. An additional 119c/c pairs will enter the allotment on or near July 11th and graze the Silver Mountain and Noble Canyon Allotments until September 30th or until utilization has been met.



ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT:

Actual turn on date will depend on range readiness. For the purpose of livestock accountability, contact the Carson Ranger District **five to seven days prior to turnout** and when you make unit moves. Please keep us posted about activities and conditions of the allotment.

The schedule dates of use are flexible as long as they are within the permitted use parameters, but a one-week notice must be given before any changes are made to the above dates. The District Ranger must approve any changes in the planned use.

Salt must be placed at least $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from water, (springs, seeps, and streams), roads, and trails. If you have questions about the placement of salt, contact Courtney in my office and she will locate suitable sites with your input. Dead livestock must be moved at least 100 yards from water and from roads and trails used by the public. All garbage associated with managing the allotments must be removed from National Forest system lands.

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 is concentrated such as loading/unloading areas, water developments, and salting areas. We have implemented a Noxious Weed Free Hay order on our Forest. This will require any hay that is brought onto the National Forest to be certified free from noxious weeds. It is *strongly* recommended that all livestock entering the National Forest be fed **Certified Noxious Weed Free Forage** for at least 3 days prior to entering the Forest.

ALLOWABLE USE:

Noble Canyon C&H: Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment, Record of Decision dated January 21, 2004, Appendix A, Section D, "Management Standards and Guidelines," paragraphs 50, 103, 120 and 121:

Riparian sites:

- ✘ In meadows that are in early seral status (an early stage of succession in a plant community or vegetation type, generally characterized by plant species that are adapted to colonizing disturbed areas with a high proportion of bare soil) livestock utilization of grass and grass-like plants must be limited to **30 percent (or minimum six-inch stubble height)**.
- ✘ In meadows that are in late seral status (fifty percent or more of the relative cover of the herbaceous layer is late seral with high similarity to the potential natural community, a diversity of age classes of hardwood shrubs is present, and regeneration is occurring) livestock utilization of grass and grass-like plants must be limited to a maximum of **40 percent (or minimum four-inch stubble height)**.

- ✘ In meadows that are **degraded** (such as those in early seral status with a greater than **ten percent** meadow area in **bare soil and active erosion**) **total rest** from grazing is required until they have recovered and have moved to a mid or late seral status.
- ✘ In riparian areas browsing on mature riparian shrubs (including willow and aspen) is not to exceed **20 percent** of the annual leader growth and is not to exceed more than **20 percent** of individual seedlings.
- ✘ Disturbance of meadow-associated stream banks and natural lake and pond shorelines is not to exceed **20 percent** of the stream reach or **20 percent** of the natural lake or pond shoreline.
- ✘ Livestock grazing will be modified or suspended on meadow ecosystems when it is determined that ecological status is moving in a downward trend.
- ✘ Pesticide application to livestock is prohibited within riparian conservation areas and critical aquatic refuges.

Upland sites:

- ✘ Sage and mountain brush plant communities can be grazed a maximum of **45 percent** of the current annual growth of key grasses and **40 percent** of the current annual growth of bitterbrush.

Yosemite Toad: The allotment contains species occurrence and proposed critical habitat within the Noble Canyon Unit:

- ✘ Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment, Record of Decision dated January 21, 2004, Appendix A, Section D, "Management Standards and Guidelines," paragraph 53: Exclude livestock from standing water and saturated soils in wet meadows and associated streams and springs occupied by Yosemite toads or identified as "essential habitat" in the conservation assessment for the Yosemite toad during the breeding and rearing season (through metamorphosis). Wet meadow habitat for Yosemite toads is defined as relatively open meadows with low to moderate amounts of woody vegetation that have standing water on June 1 or for more than 2 weeks following snow melt. If these conditions do not persist in the meadow for more than two weeks, grazing will only be allowed in those portions of the meadow where dry conditions exist.
- ✘ If fencing of the area is impractical, grazing will be excluded from the entire meadow until the meadow has been dry for two weeks.

- ✘ The management of Yosemite Toads on the Noble Canyon Allotment was discussed. Amphibian surveys were conducted on the allotment in 2014. Noble Lake is surrounded by steep upland vegetative slopes with a large dry meadow up above to the south. Cattle use the meadow and surrounding uplands to the south and east of Noble Lake. The steep terrain prevents cattle from accessing the lake regularly; they generally spend their time in the large meadow, and at the small pond above and to the northeast of Noble Lake. In order to mitigate impacts to Yosemite toad around Noble Lake, cattle will be pushed to this portion of the grazing unit later in the grazing season to allow the meadows enough time to dry out.

Sierra Nevada Yellow-Legged Frog: The allotment contains species occurrence and proposed critical habitat within the Noble Canyon Unit:

- ✘ Disturbance of meadow-associated stream banks and natural lake and pond shorelines is not to exceed **20 percent** of the stream reach or **20 percent** of the natural lake or pond shoreline.

It is your responsibility to monitor utilization and ensure that the allowable use standards are not exceeded. You are responsible for determining when allowable use has been reached and to move or remove livestock from the allotment to prevent exceeding these standards. The Forest Service is responsible for monitoring your compliance with the allowable use standards. Because we do not know the ecological condition of every meadow located within the allotment, please err on the side of caution when monitoring utilization on riparian species.

RANGE IMPROVEMENTS:

Range improvements listed in your permit must be maintained to standards listed in Part 3 of your term grazing permit prior to livestock entering the allotment. If an improvement is inaccessible prior to the on date, you must notify staff in my office prior to livestock entry into the allotment. If there is a need for any additional improvements and/or major repairs to existing improvements, please contact the Carson Ranger District range staff for assistance.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT:

Forms for recording your actual use and range improvement maintenance costs are included with this plan. Please complete and return the forms by December 31, 2016.

If you see a wildfire, please contact the Minden Interagency Dispatch at **(775) 883-5995**.

The grazing fee has increased to \$2.11 per head month.

Only cattle with the S open A on the left hip are authorized to graze on the Noble Canyon C&H Allotment.

Payment of your grazing bill is due five days prior to your earliest turnout date to allow time for processing. As a reminder the Forest Service is required to give permittees a minimum of 30 days to pay your grazing fees. The Forest Service is requesting that permittees schedule their AOI meeting a minimum of 35 days prior to their earliest on date to provide adequate time to plan for the upcoming grazing season.

As a reminder, approval of requests for permittee convenience nonuse is not automatic and the authorized officer should discuss the reasons for the nonuse request with the permittee. Approval of a request for permittee convenience non-use must be in writing by the authorized officer. Full or partial permittee convenience nonuse may be approved by the authorized officer for no more than three consecutive years and not more than four years in any ten year period.

OTHER:

This summer we will be visiting the allotment to conduct permit compliance monitoring and would like to provide the opportunity for you to join us during these efforts. Our range staff, Courtney Ghiglieri, will contact you at least 72 hours prior to a scheduled allotment visit to discuss times and dates with you if you are interested in attending.

Every effort needs to be made to keep cattle out of Silver Creek Campground throughout the grazing season. We encourage you to stay in contact with the campground host.

If you have any questions regarding these instructions or any aspect of grazing on the National Forest, please contact our Range Staff, Courtney Ghiglieri at (775) 884-8150.

Sincerely,



IRENE DAVIDSON
District Ranger