

**Bighorn National Forest
Powder River Ranger District**

2016

Annual Operating Instructions

For

Battle Park C&H Allotment

Recommended By: _____ Date: _____
Rangeland Management Specialist

Accepted By: _____ Date: _____
Permittee

Accepted By: _____ Date: _____
Permittee

Approved By: _____ Date: _____
District Ranger

As Permittee, my signature on these Annual Operating Instructions certifies that there is no change to my permitted livestock or base property ownership as described in my grazing permit.

Upon signature by the District Ranger, these Annual Operating Instructions are hereby made a part of your Term Grazing Permits number 1557A, 10003A, and 10033.

Any changes or deviation from the direction outlined in the Annual Operating Instructions will need to be requested in advance to the Powder River Ranger District. This includes changes in animal numbers, class of livestock, period of use (changes in entry or exit dates from unit to unit), or changes in pasture rotation. No changes in these instructions will be recognized without verbal or written confirmation from the Powder River Ranger District.

BATTLE PARK C&H ALLOTMENT

YEAR 2016 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

Permitted and Authorized for 2016:

Battle Park C&H Allotment Permittee	Permitted				Requested				% of permitted AUMs
Forshee Trust	446	Cattle	Mature	07/01-10/12	446	Cattle	Mature	07/01-10/12	100%
	100	Cattle	Yearling	07/01-10/12	100	Cattle	Yearling	07/01-10/12	100%
	5	Horses	Mature	07/01-10/12	5	Horses	Mature	07/01-10/12	100%
Forshee Land and Livestock, LLC	354	Cattle	Mature	07/01-10/12	354	Cattle	Mature	07/01-10/12	100%
	200	Cattle	Yearling	07/01-10/12	200	Cattle	Yearling	07/01-10/12	100%
	3	Horses	Mature	07/01-10/12	3	Horses	Mature	07/01-10/12	100%
Shirran Trust	124	Cattle	Mature	07/01-10/12	124	Cattle	Mature	07/01-10/12	100%
Total Allotment Stocking requested in AUMs									100%

Forshee Land and Livestock, LLC permit has been modified to include 75 head of mature livestock that were previously held in abeyance.

Before Entering the Allotment

I suggest that you review your term grazing permit, Allotment Management Plan, and Annual Operating Instructions prior to turning onto the allotment, and ask questions if any portion is not clearly understood.

Year 2016 grazing fees are \$2.11/head month, and must be paid before livestock can be turned onto the Forest. Let Thad or Kerri know the actual date and number of livestock entering the National Forest and, upon request, provide for having stock counted.

The rotation for year 2016 is as follows:

Pasture	Sequence			2016 Clockwise
	2014 Clockwise	2015 Counter Clockwise		
South Fork South, West	Rest	Rest	Trail through as entering allotment.	*13
South Fork South, East	9	1	35% upland utilization guideline	12
Soldier Creek	8	2	Limited grazing (25% upland utilization guideline)	11
Soldier Creek East Riparian (Fish Pen)	7	3		10
Warner Ridge Southwest	6	4		9
Warner Ridge Northeast				
**Warner Gulch				8
Bald Ridge South	5	5		7
Bald Ridge Middle		6	Limited grazing (7 inch stubble height in Ponds and Bowl)	6 - Limited grazing
Bald Ridge North		7		5
Middle Fork	4	8		4
Buck Creek	3	9		3
Bellyache Flats				
Buck Creek, Vee's, South	2	10		2
Buck Creek, Vee's, North				
South Fork North	1	11		1

*Permittee may graze this pasture only after Forest Service has monitored it to ensure resource conditions are favorable to graze this season after having been burned in the fall of 2014.

**New pasture added to the allotment; previously part of Dry Tensleep C&H

Entering the Allotment

The turn on date for Battle Park C&H Allotment is tentatively authorized for July 1, but is dependent upon range readiness as discussed in the revised Battle Park C&H Allotment Management Plan (AMP). If livestock are delayed, the value of animal months may be credited against next year's fees, if requested by the end of the calendar year.

Resource Guidelines

Resource guidelines are described in the Bighorn National Forest Vegetation Grazing Guidelines, the Bighorn Forest Plan, and in your revised AMP. The allowable use guidelines for utilization of the current year's forage are listed in the following tables. These guidelines are applicable at the time the livestock leave the unit and include use by both livestock and wildlife. Battle Park C&H Allotment is managed under a "Rotation" grazing strategy, and existing rangeland condition is considered "satisfactory". Existing rangeland condition determinations may be revised as trend assessments are conducted.

Uplands (percent utilization by weight of forage species)		
Type Of Management	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Rotation	45	35

Riparian Vegetation Residue Guidelines		
Season Of Use	Existing Rangeland Condition	
	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Early Use Pasture; Livestock leave pasture prior to 08/01	5 inches	5 inches
Summer & Fall Use Pasture; Livestock leave pasture after 08/01	5 inches	7 inches

*Satisfactory is defined here as meeting or moving toward desired vegetative condition and unsatisfactory is defined as not meeting desired vegetative condition or undetermined. Vegetation residue guidelines are expressed in terms of the inches of stubble height to be left, measuring longest leaf of designated Carex species, after livestock use. In this case, all wide leaved sedges have been designated, subject to update

Your rotational grazing strategy and pasture move triggers are described in your revised AMP. Note that livestock use beyond allowable guidelines could result in an administrative action in subsequent years, such as an adjustment to the season of use, in order to allow plants a chance to recover and restore root reserves.

Monitoring

Monitoring of forage use levels and other livestock impacts should occur throughout the grazing season, with management adjustments made as needed. If issues are raised indicating the need to monitor aspen, stream banks, or willows, we will work with you to determine transect locations and establish transects on the ground. Any data you collect and submit will be maintained in USFS permanent record.

To facilitate monitoring actual use, and to avoid the need to measure utilization on all Suitable rangeland, monitoring will be done using a key area concept. Key areas are listed and described in your revised AMP. Note that allowable use guidelines apply to all Suitable rangeland on the allotment, and that key areas may be revised as needed. The Forest Service will conduct spot checks throughout the grazing season, and I encourage your participation.

The Forest Service plans to install willow monitoring transects on the allotment. Possible locations to include Bald Ridge Middle, Bald Ridge North, Buck Creek Vees, or Middle Fork pastures. Permittees and range rider have agreed to notify range specialists in advance of grazing these pastures and after they have left the pasture.

The 2015 Notice of Non-Compliance, for exceeding allowable use guidelines in 2014, has been remedied, therefore, the permittees have requested to run full permitted numbers. The Forest Service and the permittees plan to continue close monitoring of the allotment to ensure utilization guidelines are met.

Maintenance of Improvements

Term grazing permits state that permittees will maintain assigned range improvements to standards of repair, orderliness, and safety acceptable to the Forest Service. A complete list of the improvements and designated

maintenance responsibility is included in Part 3 of term grazing permits, with maintenance standards described in your revised AMP.

Projects Planned for 2016 include:

Impt #	Improvement name	Project Discussion
501138	Buck Creek Guzzler #1	-Remove old materials from site. -New pipeline and tank to be installed running from 501181.
501181	Vees Rim Spring and Tank	-Remove old materials from site. -Permittee to install new pipeline and tanks to run from the spring and pump north to 501139, south to 501138 and further south to new tank in South Fork North pasture on Frank's Flat.
501139	Buck Creek Guzzler #2	-Remove old materials from site. -New pipeline to be installed running from 501181.
501165	Soldier Creek Riparian Pasture Fence	-Mostly completed; wire is gone but some posts still remain to be removed in 2017.
501200	Soldier Creek Riparian North Link Fence	-Has been completed; needs to be signed off by FS staff & DR.
501214	Soldier Creek Stock Pipeline & Stock Tank	Was completed, has been used, but was not properly placed and is in view of the road; Nate has agreed to bury it, as opposed to moving it out of view.

Grazing permit modifications for cooperative range improvements (form FS-2200-113) must be completed prior to expenditure of Forest Service funds for project work. As materials for these projects become available, these activities can be coordinated through Thad or Kerri. The permittees and Forest Service should identify range improvements that are in need of major repair and ensure that such repairs are completed to standard during the 2016 grazing season.

Wolves

On Sept. 23, 2014 the US District Court for the District of Columbia vacated the USFWS wolf delisting rule under the endangered species act. The court reinstated federal protections for Wyoming wolves that were in place prior to the 2012 delisting therefore wolves are again listed under the ESA as a nonessential experimental population in all of Wyoming. Take of wolves may be authorized only by the non-essential rules or by permit issued under section 10 of the ESA. You must contact US Fish and Wildlife Service for any wolf related predation or harassment of livestock. You can contact Mike Jimenez with USFWS or your local Wildlife Services contact. Please inform the Rangeland Management Specialist of any wolf activity on your allotment as well.

Non-Compliance Remedy

During the 2015 grazing season, there was a failure to comply with the required actions stated in Part 2, section 7 of your term grazing permit and FSH 2209.13 Chapter 10 12.22. A notice of non-compliance was issued on November 30, 2015 for failure on your part to meet the requirements as outlined in your term grazing permit which include clauses from the Bighorn National Forest Plan, Battle Park Allotment Management Plan, and your Annual Operating Instruction direction and provisions tied to your term grazing permit.

I am requiring the following actions be carried out for the 2016-2018 grazing seasons in order to remedy this non-compliance.

The following actions are required during the 2016-2018 grazing seasons to remedy the non-compliance:

- All mature livestock placed on the allotment must be owned by and branded with registered brands of the following current permittees: Forshee Trust, Forshee Land and Livestock, LLC, or George Thomas Shirran Rev. Trust.
- Permittees must provide a bill of sale and brand inspection for any mature livestock placed on the allotment with brands other than those of the existing permittees and must be branded with the current permit holder's brands.

Failure to comply with these actions within the prescribed time frames may result in the initiation of permit suspension or cancellation procedures, in whole or in part.

Other

Salting and additional management practices are described in your term grazing permit as well as in your revised AMP.

Documentation on the enclosed Annual Use Report is required, and will help us to plan livestock use in the future. Return the completed form to the Powder River Ranger District Office by **October 31, 2016**.