

**Bighorn National Forest
Powder River Ranger District**

2016

Annual Operating Instructions

For

Doyle and Poison Creek C&H Allotments

Recommended By: _____ Date: _____
Rangeland Management Specialist

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 Permit number 10025.

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.

Doyle Creek and Poison Creek C&H Allotments

Year 2016 Annual Operating Instructions

Permitted and Authorized for 2016:

| Caza Ranches, LLC | LS Kind | LS Class | Permitted | | | Approved | | |
|------------------------|---------|----------|-----------|------|------|----------|------|------|
| | | | LS # | From | To | LS# | From | To |
| Doyle Creek Allotment | Cattle | Mature | 266 | 7/6 | 9/15 | 266 | 7/6 | 9/15 |
| Poison Creek Allotment | Cattle | Mature | 200 | 7/7 | 9/21 | 200 | 7/7 | 9/21 |
| Poison Creek Allotment | Horses | Mature | | | | 8 | 7/7 | 9/21 |

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 Kerri or Thad know the actual date and number of livestock entering the National Forest and, upon request, provide for having stock counted.

Rotations for 2016:

| Pasture | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
| Doyle Creek Allotment | | | | | |
| Lower Doyle, east | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Upper Doyle, west (including Upper Doyle Allotment) | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Poison Creek Allotment | | | | | |
| Billy Creek | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Poison Creek | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| *Hazelton | 3 | 2 | 3 | REST | REST |
| Muddy | Gather | Gather | Gather | Gather | Gather |
| *Caza Ranches, LLC will rest Hazelton pasture and must watch utilization closely in other two pastures. If utilization guidelines are reached, permittees are authorized to use Hazelton pasture if needed before they are required to come off forest. | | | | | |

Entering the Allotment

The turn on date for Doyle Creek C&H Allotment is tentatively scheduled for July 6 and Poison Creek C&H is July 7 but is dependent upon range readiness as discussed in the revised Doyle Creek C&H and Poison Creek 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. Doyle Creek and Poison Creek C&H Allotments are 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.

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Resource guidelines below for Doyle Creek C&H and Poison Creek C&H Allotments are derived from their respective Allotment Management Plans, dated 09/30/1999. The allowable use standards for utilization of the current year's growth by livestock and wildlife will be as follows:

| Uplands (percent utilization by weight of forage species) | | |
|---|---|----------------|
| Type Of Management | Satisfactory* | Unsatisfactory |
| Deferred Rotation | A maximum of 40% of current year's growth in first used pasture; a maximum of 50% of current year's growth in all other pastures. | 40 |

| Riparian and Aspen** 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 | | |
| ** Grass species residue guidelines within the boundaries of aspen stands when livestock leave the pasture. | | |

The Allotment Management Plan for Doyle Creek includes the following additional guideline:

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Riparian above 8500' elevation | An 8" stubble height of all wide leaved sedges on greenline. |
|--------------------------------|--|

* The "Bighorn National Forest Vegetation Grazing Guidelines, April 23, 2007" indicate that stubble height measurements are to record longest leaf measurements.

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.

Forest Service plans to install willow monitoring transects in a couple locations on both Doyle Creek and Poison Creek allotments. Exact locations to be determined at a later date in the field but locations will include Poison Creek pasture and Upper Doyle pasture.

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.

Planned Range Improvement Projects for 2016:

| Improvement # | Improvement Name | Project Description |
|---------------|---------------------|--|
| 105051 | Munker's Pass Fence | Is in disrepair and not being used; it needs to be picked up |

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 Kerri or Thad. 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.

Cow Camps

There are no permanent cow camp locations on Doyle Creek or Poison Creek C&H Allotments. As in past years, you are authorized to set up a temporary cow camp and horse pasture at the Muddy Divide Corral location. An extended stay permit for this camp will be provided by the Forest Service.

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**.