

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

2016

EAST LOWER TONGUE C&H ALLOTMENT

TONGUE DISTRICT

BIGHORN NATIONAL FOREST

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Amy Ormseth  
District Ranger

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Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Permittee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

EAST LOWER TONGUE C&H ALLOTMENT  
2016 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

A. Before Entering the Allotment

1. Review all clauses of your term grazing permit and the information contained within these Annual Operating Instructions (AOI). Be sure to contact David or Aaron if you have questions or any portion of your grazing permit or these operating instructions is not clearly understood.
2. The current year's grazing fees must be paid before placing livestock on the National Forest.
3. Review Section G. - Maintenance of Improvements, and complete the necessary maintenance of assigned range improvements as described in that section.

B. Entering and Leaving the Allotment

The on-date for the allotment is tentatively set for July 5th. I remind you that you are the responsible party to meet the allowable use/herbage left guidelines described in Section D below so making sure there is adequate forage available when livestock enter the allotment is an important decision and can affect not only your ability to meet guidelines but the length of time cattle may remain on the allotment.

Livestock may continue to be trailed to and from the allotment via the Smith Creek Stock Drive. If the stock drive is used the following mitigations must be used to reduce impacts from livestock trailing to the following areas.

1. Livestock will be trailed on or very near the Freezeout Road (FSR #168) when trailing (either direction) the estimated 0.6 mile adjacent to Camp Creek between the Dry Fork Saddle (junction of the Freezeout Road and Dry Fork Road, a.k.a. FSR #149) and the point where the Freezeout Road crosses Camp Creek. The important thing to remember is to keep the livestock on the Freezeout Road or on the sagebrush slopes adjacent to the road and off of the flatter benches or terraces adjacent to Camp Creek.
2. When trailing from west to east across the divide between Camp Creek and Sheep Creek, livestock will be trailed on or adjacent to the Freezeout Road for approximately another 0.25 mile instead of trailing through gate adjacent to the cattleguard at the junction of the Freezeout Road and the Sheep Creek Road (a.k.a. FSR #201). Access through the fence on this divide will be through the gate adjacent to the cattleguard on the Freezeout Road located along the edge of the old clear cut north of the Sheep Creek Road.

C. Authorized Numbers and Pasture Rotation

<b>Permittee</b>	<b>Authorized Livestock Numbers</b>	<b>Authorized Season of Use</b>
Sheeley Ranch	285 Mature	7/05-10/10
	4 Horse	7/05-10/10
Norman & Milan Schreibeis	58 Mature	7/05-10/10

Pasture Sequence	Permittee	Pasture Name
1	Schreibeis	PK Horse *
1	Sheeley	Sheeley Special Use *
2	Both	North Tongue Campground (3-5 days)
3	Both	North Bear Lodge
4	Both	South Bear Lodge
5	Both	Sheeley Creek
6	Both	Little Willow/Marcum Creek
7	Both	North Tongue Campground
8	Schreibeis	PK Horse *
8	Sheeley	Sheeley Special Use *
9	Both	Burgess Junction Trap **

\* This rotation allows for use of the Sheeley SU pasture and PK Horse pasture for a few days at the beginning and end of the season for gathering, shipping, etc. as long as use within these pastures does not exceed guidelines and use is coordinated with other permittees who may also use the PK Horse pastures for similar purposes.

\*\* This trap may be used as a bull pasture or holding pasture after August 1<sup>st</sup> or worked into the pasture rotation anytime during the season (time of use would be changed each season) as long as the allowable use/herbage left guidelines shown in Section D below are not exceeded.

This planned pasture rotation is designed to help provide for the long term health and productivity of each pasture but may be changed, with sound reasons and prior approval, if it becomes necessary over the course of the grazing season. You are encouraged to use adaptive management practices (e.g. use of temporary electric fence, use of riders and low stress handling techniques, combination of allotments, etc.) to help meet the allowable use requirements described in Sections D and E below. To assure your management does not negatively affect other resources, all proposed changes to these instructions must be discussed with and approved by David or Aaron prior to implementation on the ground.

**D. Allowable Use/Herbage Left Guidelines**

The allowable use/herbage left guidelines are designed to ensure that short-term effects of livestock grazing activities are within established parameters intended to provide for the long-health and sustainability of rangeland resources. The following allowable use/herbage left guidelines will apply to all areas of your allotment. Total use by livestock and wildlife combined must not exceed any of these guidelines at the time livestock leave a pasture.

**1. Upland Range Sites**

Sites on sedimentary soils below 9,200 feet elevation (Excludes sites dominated by timothy and smooth brome).	Visual Obstruction Reading (VOR) of 5 or more bands for all applicable sites (a VOR of band 4 is acceptable).
Sites on granitic soils below 9,200 feet elevation (Excludes sites dominated by timothy and smooth brome).	A VOR of 5 or more bands for all applicable sites.

All <u>other</u> sites (such as sites dominated by timothy and smooth brome, or above 9200 feet elevation). This applies only if the modified Robel pole cannot be used.	A. Maximum of 40% by weight in all pastures used prior to August 1 <sup>st</sup> . B. Maximum of 50% by weight in pastures used after August 1 <sup>st</sup> .
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## 2. Riparian Range Sites

Herbaceous vegetation on all sites except areas suitable for water vole habitat.	A. A residual 5" stubble height on wide leaved carex species if livestock leave pasture prior to August 1st. * B. A residual 7" stubble height on wide leaved carex species if livestock leave pasture after August 1st. *
Herbaceous vegetation adjacent to streams suitable for water vole habitat.	A residual 7" stubble height on wide leaved carex species at all times during the grazing season for that portion of small stream known as the West Fork of Sheeley Creek between Owen Creek Holding Trap (adjacent to corrals) and its confluence with East Fork of Sheeley Creek east of Hwy 14. *
Willows	Maximum of 35% use of current years leaders by livestock.

## 3. Aspen Range Sites

Herbaceous vegetation within all aspen stands.	A residual 5" stubble height for all grasses and sedges when livestock leave a pasture.*
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\* All stubble height guidelines stated for riparian and aspen range sites are the minimum required when transect measurements record the longest leaf length of all leaves readily available for livestock grazing for each plant measured. Leaves or portions of leaves trampled in the mud, lying on the ground or in water, protected by willows or otherwise unavailable to livestock are not to be included in the measurements. Transect measurements may also record the average length of all leaves available for grazing from each selected plant. If the average leaf method is used, all minimum guidelines shown in tables above will be adjusted downward 1".

Livestock must be moved to the next pasture or off the National Forest if in the last pasture when further use will exceed one or more of the allowable use/herbage left guidelines shown above. Moves will be completed and the pasture you are leaving shall be cleaned of livestock within 2-4 days of initiating a pasture move. It is your responsibility to manage your livestock within each pasture to assure use does not exceed any of the above guidelines. This will require constant monitoring of the vegetation by you and/or your allotment rider and not just simply waiting for estimated calendar dates to determine the proper use period for each pasture. It is imperative you take whatever steps are necessary (use of riders, move salt weekly, reduction in total numbers, shorten length of grazing periods in pastures, etc.) to manage your livestock to assure all guidelines are met throughout each pasture.

It is also important to note the allowable use/herbage left guidelines shown above apply to all suitable range (riparian and uplands) within the allotment. To assist you with your responsibilities of monitoring the actual use, all monitoring measurements will be done using a key area concept. The key areas are generally those areas livestock have the tendency to graze first when placed in a pasture. Livestock also tend to graze these areas repeatedly. As a result, these areas will typically

reach the allowable use/herbage left guidelines before any other area of the pasture. If actual use in these key areas does not exceed the allowable use/herbage left guidelines, then use in the rest of the pasture will most likely not exceed guidelines either (unless, for example, livestock are constantly pushed off the key areas to other portions of the pasture). The important thing to remember is actual use should not exceed any of the guidelines throughout the pasture. If our management causes a change in use patterns we may need to discuss a change in key area boundaries.

#### E. Monitoring

An integral part of the ROD for the Tongue AMP is the use of adaptive management. Adaptive management requires a continuous cycle of planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation into our management approach and modifies future management based upon the results. Our best chance for success will be for permittees and Forest Service to cooperatively work together to read transects, interpret the data, and discuss any annual or long-term adjustments that may be necessary to meet the intent of the ROD.

The annual monitoring will primarily use a combination of the following three protocols:

1. **Carex Stubble Height:** Stubble height measurements will be taken using paced transects in all key areas with riparian range sites. The number and location of transects you need to read will depend on the area size and the variances of use levels. One transect within 3 feet of the water's edge may be sufficient in narrow riparian areas where use does not vary across the riparian zone. Two or more may be necessary in larger riparian areas or whenever use on streambanks (especially within 3 feet of the water's edge) is noticeably different from the rest of riparian zone. In large areas where use does not vary, locate one or more transects within 3 feet of the stream but if use varies across the zone, locate at least one transect within 3 feet of the water's edge and additional transects further away from the stream. Each transect will consist of 50 measurements with a recommended 10 or more feet between each measurement. Transects to determine the actual use must be read within 7 days after livestock leave each pasture. Photos of each transect are not required but would be helpful to substantiate your documentation.
2. **Robel Pole:** Visual obstruction readings (VOR) using a modified Robel pole will be used to measure the remaining standing crop in appropriate key areas below 9200 feet (excludes sites dominated by timothy, smooth brome or very dense sagebrush): A minimum of 2-4 paced transects will be read in key areas located on sedimentary soils and a minimum of 2-5 transects in each key area located on granitic soils. Each transect will consist of 20 stations with each station a minimum of 10 meters (approximately 33 feet) apart. At each station, four VORs (one in each cardinal direction) are recorded. Transects to determine the residual standing crop must be read within 7 days after livestock leave each pasture. Photos of each transect are not required but would be helpful to substantiate your documentation.
3. **Grazing Response Index (GRI):** GRI ratings may be determined for key areas within each pasture. Upland and riparian range sites, occurring in the same or separate key areas, will be rated independently of one another. It is important that you keep accurate records of the actual number of cattle, dates livestock graze in each pasture, monitoring data gathered, and any observations of plant development throughout the grazing season. This data will be useful to complete rating forms for key areas in your allotment. Like the allowable use guidelines, the ROD for the Tongue AMP requires livestock to be managed to consistently (4 out of every 5 years) provide a neutral to positive GRI rating for each pasture.

As in recent years, the Forest Service will be completing spot checks throughout the grazing season for consistency in meeting allowable use/herbage left guidelines and gathering information for the GRI ratings. You, however, remain responsible to manage your livestock to assure these guidelines are met and neutral to positive GRI ratings are achieved. I strongly encourage you to keep close watch of the growth cycle of the desirable forage plants to be able to adjust the length of grazing periods in each pasture as necessary and to complete spot checks of all key areas on a regular basis to assure actual use remains within the guidelines stated above. Feel free to give David or Aaron a call at anytime during the grazing season to compare notes and/or to discuss potential GRI ratings for your pastures. I have enclosed copies of the data forms to assist you with your monitoring. Please remember any forms and/or photos submitted to our office will be placed in the allotment monitoring folder.

F. Key Areas:

Properly selected key areas give an indication of the overall acceptability of current grazing management to meet all resource objectives. These areas may be moved or redefined in future years if monitoring results indicate a change is necessary. The following is a list of the key areas: Properly selected key areas give an indication of the overall acceptability of current grazing management to meet all resource objectives. These areas may be moved or redefined in future years if monitoring results indicate a change is necessary. The following is a list of the key areas:

Sheeley Creek/Highway Pasture:

1. An area 350 yards either side of Sheeley Creek from Fence #230 (pasture drift fence between Sheeley Creek and Little Willow pastures) to where FDR #214 crosses Sheeley Creek.
2. An area 350 yards either side of the East Fork of Sheeley Creek (parallel to the highway) in section 19.
3. The riparian area adjacent to the West Fork of Sheeley Creek between the Owen Creek Sheep Trap and the confluence with Sheeley Creek east of Hwy 14.

Little Willow Pasture:

1. The area in the SE1/4 of section 12 between Little Willow Creek and the tributary to Little Willow, which is below the wetland enclosure (this area includes the two streams and the adjacent uplands).
2. An area 350 yards either side of Marcum Creek in Section 13.

North Bear Lodge Pasture:

1. An area 350 yards either side of Big Willow Creek between Hwy 14 A and the North Tongue Campground pasture.
2. An area 350 yards either side of Little Willow Creek between Hwy 14 A and the North Tongue Campground pasture.

South Bear Lodge Pastures:

1. An area 350 yards either side of Big Willow Creek south of Hwy 14A for approximately 1/2 mile.
2. An area 350 yards either side of Little Willow Creek south of Highway 14A to the Little Willow pasture fence.

North Tongue Campground:

1. An area 400 yards north and west of the North Tongue River both upstream and downstream of FDR 15 (Burgess Road) for a distance of approximately 3/4 mile.

#### G. Maintenance of Improvements

Part 2, Clause 8(i) of your term grazing permit states "...the permittee will maintain all range improvements, whether private or Government owned, that are assigned for maintenance to standards of repair, orderliness, and safety acceptable to the Forest Service". The minimum maintenance requirements are explained in greater detail in Part 3 of your term permit. A complete list of the improvements and designated maintenance responsibility is also included in Part 3 of your term grazing permit. The initial maintenance of each improvement must be completed prior to the time livestock enter the pasture in which the improvement is located each year or in the case of allotment boundary fences prior to livestock entering the pasture on either side of the fence. For many improvements, maintenance will be on going and will require additional attention after livestock enter the pasture.

#### H. Range Improvement Projects

As discussed in our recent meeting, the following range improvement projects are planned for the 2015 grazing season.

1. Materials will be made available to install a temporary electric fence in the North Bear Lodge pasture near Highway Department Camp to help achieve better livestock distribution in the pasture. Contact Aaron prior to entering the pasture to make sure when materials will be available and make arrangements for pick up.
2. The Forest's Road Crew will be working on several small projects on the Tongue District in 2016. One of the jobs on the list is to install a new collection system and spring box for Spring #345 located towards the middle and on the east side of Big Willow Divide. Plans are to run a pipeline from this spring to the Marcum Creek area but funds are not available to purchase the pipe this year. David or Aaron will contact you when the crew is ready to do the work to see if you are available to help install the spring box and buck and pole fence in preparation for the pipeline in the near future.

#### I. Salting Practices:

The proper use of salt can be used as a good management tool to help you achieve proper utilization. The following are guidelines that should be used when placing salt on your allotment. If you feel your management situation requires changes in these guidelines please contact David or Aaron to discuss.

1. Scatter salt in its proper location prior to livestock entering the pasture.
2. Salt should be placed between water developments and at least 1/4 mile from water if at all possible. Salting near water just encourages cattle to stay nearby and should seldom be practiced.
3. Salt away from small parks, trails, roads and areas of concentrated public use. Salt should be placed in areas of rock outcrops, mature timber (other than aspen), or areas of dense sagebrush where the general public will not easily see it.

4. Change your salt location at least every year and preferably every time salt is placed within a pasture. Moving salt blocks 50-100 feet can prevent an area from becoming abused from salt placement year after year. Placing salt in areas of dense sage and changing location every 2-3 weeks or yearly (depending on length of grazing period) is an effective way to use cows to control sagebrush over small areas or create small pockets of grass within large areas dominated by sage.
5. Remove salt from an area when actual use in the nearby vicinity is approaching the allowable use standard. Livestock must be moved to the next pasture when proper use is reached.

ACTUAL USE RECORD - 2016

TONGUE R.D.

EAST LOWER TONGUE  
ALLOTMENT

BIGHORN NATIONAL FOREST

ACTUAL USE

Pasture	Number of Cattle	Date on Pasture	Date off Pasture

Losses: Numbers by age class and possible cause (Poison, natural or predator).

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Allotment Operating Costs:

Labor Costs:

Rider \_\_\_\_\_ Transportation Cost \_\_\_\_\_  
Horse Maintenance \_\_\_\_\_

Improvement Maintenance

Water \_\_\_\_\_  
Fence \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Improvement Construction

Water \_\_\_\_\_  
Fence \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Salt \_\_\_\_\_

Permittee Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE ATTACH ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR NOTES YOU WISH TO PLACE IN THE PERMANENT ALLOTMENT FILE.