

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

2016

WEST FREEZEOUT C&H ALLOTMENT

TONGUE DISTRICT

BIGHORN NATIONAL FOREST

Amy Ormseth
District Ranger

Date

Permittee

Date

WEST FREEZEOUT 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 16th. 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

Permittee	Authorized Livestock Numbers	Authorized Season of Use
John Kane	50 Mature	7/16-10/10
Kane Land & Livestock	246 Mature	7/16-10/10
S.R. Cattle Company	123 Mature	7/16-10/10

Pasture Sequence	Pasture Name
1	Traps and Sheep Creek (up to 5 days)
2	Schuler Park *
3	Hay Creek
4	Dry Fork
5	Sheep Creek/Traps
6	PK Horse (up to 5 days for John Kane only to accommodate trucking home)

* John Kane may place cattle in the Schuler Park pasture when entering the allotment. John may also keep his cows in the Dry Fork and/or the Hay Creek pasture when SR Cattle and Kane L&L moves to the Sheep Creek pasture provided allowable use guidelines have been met in all key areas of either pasture at that point in time and adequate forage remains to sustain this additional grazing and still meet all allowable use guidelines at the end of the season.

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 st . B. Maximum of 50% by weight in pastures used after August 1 st .

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 1 st .*
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	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 at all times during the grazing season for that portion of Fool Creek beginning at upper end of the West Riparian Exclosure and extending upstream approximately 0.75 miles.*
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. 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 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:

Schuler Park Pasture:

1. Suitable range and open parks within 300-400 yards of Fool Creek.
2. The area commonly known as Schuler Park, including both riparian and upland range sites.
3. The open parks adjacent to small tributaries to Fool Creek between Fool Creek and Hay Creek Divide (SW1/4 Section 27, SE1/4 Section 28 and NE1/4 Section 33, T56N, R 89W).
4. The open parks adjacent to the pipeline tanks on Hay Creek Divide between Fool Creek and the North Tongue River.

Hay Creek Pasture:

1. An area 0.25 mile either side of Hay Creek beginning in basin 300-400 yards south of tank #528 and extending northeast along the creek to the pasture boundary. This area is large enough and past monitoring results show use patterns on upland range sites have consistently varied between the area surrounding Hay Creek Spring and the area known as HN Flats that it warrants reading two sets of four transects with the robel pole.
2. The area between FDR #168 and Fool Creek (commonly known as Fool Creek Basin) in Section 22, T56N, R89W.

Dry Fork Pasture:

1. An area extending up the side slopes 0.25 mile on either side of the Dry Fork drainage, including the aspen stands to the south, from range improvement #484 (Sunrise's lower tank) downstream to the allotment boundary fence between the Freezeout and Upper Dry Fork allotments.
2. An area 300-400 yards either side of Camp Creek beginning where Camp Creek turns away from FDR #168 and extending in a southeast direction to Fool Creek (SW1/4 Sec 8 & NW 1/4 Sec 17).
3. An area 100 yards either side of Fool Creek from Fence #455 (drift fence between Hay Creek and Dry Fork pastures) downstream to Camp Creek.
4. The upland ridge extending 0.25 mile either side of FDR #168 between Fence #455 and Camp Creek.

Sheep Creek Pasture:

1. Open parks along the full length of Sheep Creek, including the lower half of West and East Forks of Sheep Creek.

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. .

As in previous seasons, David and John Kane will be the parties responsible for the service and maintenance of the Garden of the Gods pipeline during the 2016 grazing season. To fulfill this responsibility, they must:

1. Assure the pipeline is in working order and water is flowing through the line at all times livestock are grazing any of the four pastures serviced by the line.
2. Adjust valves to provide an adequate flow of water to tanks when livestock are grazing in pastures where tanks are located in the West Lower Tongue and West Freezeout allotments. Livestock from the West Lower Tongue allotment will likely not utilize the Garden of the Gods or the PK Special Use pastures until sometime in late August or September.
3. Respond to any notice of problems with the line from the Forest Service or other grazing permittees within 24 hours of such notice. Response will mean reviewing the problem on the ground and restoring flow to the appropriate stocktank(s). If flow cannot be restored, they agree to call the Tongue District upon returning home to fully explain the situation and give an estimate of time when flow could be restored.

H. Range Improvement Projects

1. A temporary electric fence will be installed around the terrace between FSR #168 (Freezeout Road) and Camp Creek, immediately northeast of FSR #151 (Skull Ridge Road), to limit use in this area of the Dry Fork pasture. The fence will be installed in the same location as it was in past seasons and must be in place prior to, or within 3 days of, livestock entering the pasture.
2. A temporary electric fence will be installed around the terrace adjacent to Hay Creek and immediately south of Hay Creek Spring. The fence will be installed in the same location as it was in past seasons and must be in place prior to, or within 3 days of, livestock entering the pasture.
3. The Forest Service purchased a cattleguard to place in FSR #150 at the junction of the Freezeout Pass Creek boundary fence on top of Dry Fork Ridge. The FS road crew will install the cattleguard this summer while working on the Tongue District but it will be the permittees responsibility to install any necessary gates in the fence line adjacent to the gate. We have discussed the project with the Pass Creek permittee as well. David or Aaron will contact you when the crew is getting ready to install the cattleguard.
4. Replace stocktank at Freezeout Water Development (#546) in the Freezeout Point Trap. Spring is located in timber east of FSR #199 and north of Freezeout Cow Camp. A cultural survey of the project area will be completed in the next few weeks. The tank can be replaced after the survey has been completed and the area given a green light for the project to continue.

The Forest Service will furnish the materials to replace stocktanks at existing developments and the permittees will be responsible for installation. The Forest Service initially provided the materials to install the temporary electric fences and will replace materials when they reach the end of their

useful life due to normal wear and tear. The permittees are responsible to install the fences each year and to provide reasonable care and maintenance so the materials can be used several seasons. A lack of care will result in the permittees being responsible for replacement.

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.

WEST FREEZEOUTALLOTMENT

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).

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.