Big Piney Ranger District
Bridger-Teton National Forest

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS
2016
SOUTH COTTONWOOD ALLOTMENT #2009

FBNF LIMITED PARTNERSHIP
C/O FREDDIE BOTUR
12028 HWY 189 N.
BIG PINEY, WY 83113

I. INTRODUCTION

The permitted use for the South Cottonwood Allotment is as follows:

Forest Permit	1080, cow/calf	08/01 - 10/05

Authorized Use for 2016:

FBNF	1080 cattle, cow/calf	08/01 - 10/05

The Permittee(s) must notify the range personnel at Big Piney, 5 days prior to the time livestock enter or leave the Forest.

Non-use of less than 90% of the permitted livestock numbers requires written approval. Verbal applications will not be accepted. If total non-use is approved the permittee is still responsible for their assigned improvement maintenance.

A credit/refund application must be submitted within a week after placing livestock late on the allotment or removing livestock early. A credit/refund is not automatic but must be requested in writing by the permittee(s) and approved by the District Ranger.

The permittees are responsible for meeting the terms and conditions of the grazing permit, including day to day monitoring of forage utilization and moving livestock according to management guidelines. The vegetative utilization limits for this allotment are described below. **As a rule of thumb, two inches of stubble should remain in upland areas, and four inches of stubble should remain in riparian areas.** We have attached a landscape appearance form that provides a narrative description of what different vegetative utilization percentages look like in the field. The vegetative utilization descriptions should aid the permittees and their riders in determining when the vegetative utilization limits are reached. Please contact the range personnel at Big Piney if you have questions or would like additional training in the use of these guides.

Forest Service personnel will be checking permit compliance periodically during the grazing season and will perform long term monitoring to determine if management objectives are being met.

The Forest Service will be asking for your actual use records at the end of the grazing season. This includes the number and dates livestock enter and leave grazing units. It also includes livestock losses and causes of death. Please keep accurate records.

II. MANAGEMENT OF LIVESTOCK

Initial distribution of your livestock will be throughout the allotment, not just allowing the livestock to distribute themselves. The following Bridger-Teton National Forest plan proper utilization standards shall apply to this allotment for all classes of livestock:

Upland range sites - not to exceed **50%** utilization on key forage species.
Riparian range sites - not to exceed **50%** utilization on key forage species.

Once the percent allowable vegetative utilization is achieved, livestock must be moved off the allotment.

Some flexibility in livestock turn on may be allowed for weather conditions, Range readiness and livestock needs. However, any changes to the grazing season need to be approved by forest personnel.

Regular herding and riding practices is the key to achieving proper livestock distribution and provides for the fullest use of the grazing season. Salt must be placed out of bottoms, oil locations, clearcuts and away from water, roads, forest system trails, and recreational sites.

In an attempt to reduce grizzly bear/ human conflicts the Forest Service is requesting all grazing permittees to take the following action:

- All livestock predation will be reported to Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), BTNF, and Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD).
- All depredation control work will be conducted by WGFD or its authorized agent following Interagency Nuisance Bear Guidelines (pages 51-70 of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Guidelines, USD1 Fish and Wildlife Service 1986)
- Food Storage Guidelines will be followed for all camps associated with livestock operations (See Food Storage Order 04-00-104).*
- Riders are required to watch all livestock closely for sick, injured or stray animals
- Permanent FS employees will monitor allotments on a regular basis.
- All dead stock posing a health or safety hazard will be moved when within 1/4 mile of live streams, springs, lakes, water, riparian areas, system roads and trails, developed recreation areas, dispersed camping and picnic sites.
- Sick or injured animals will be removed when possible.
- No cattle carcass will be removed if human safety is of concern.

*Food Storage Guidelines for all camps associated with livestock operations (Food storage Order 04-00-104 (USDA Forest Service 2004)):

1. All food and refuse must be acceptably stored or acceptably possessed during daytime hours.
2. All food and refuse must be acceptably stored during nighttime hours, unless it is being prepared for eating, being eaten, being transported, or being prepared for acceptable storage.
3. Any harvested animal carcass must be acceptably stored, unless the carcass is being field

dressed, transported, being prepared for eating, or being prepared for acceptable storage.

4. Camping or sleeping areas must be established at least 1/2 mile from a known animal carcass or at least 100 yards from an acceptably stored animal carcass.

Open and positive communication is encouraged. Feel free to contact the range personnel if you have any questions or problems. They will be happy to discuss allotment management, on the ground status, Forest Plan standards and guidelines, and possible changes in allotment management.

III. IMPROVEMENT MAINTENANCE

All range improvements assigned in the 10-year Term Grazing Permit must be maintained to a good functioning condition before livestock are placed on the allotment. In the event these improvements cannot be brought up to standard, you should notify this office so we can schedule them for reconstruction as funds become available.

The North Cottonwood/South Cottonwood Division Fence #2029 is scheduled for rebuild this grazing season.

During the 2000 grazing season we extended the allotment boundary fence between your allotment and the adjacent sheep allotments across South Cottonwood Creek and up the north side of the creek into the timber to prevent cows from entering the sheep allotment. The fence was built with a let-down section accross the creek. In the future, it will need to be put up at the beginning of each season and taken down at the end of each season. We are aware that the south end of the fence needs to be extended but until livestock are placed on the allotment we are unwilling to expend the funds to build the extension.

IV. ALLOTMENT STATUS

The livestock management on South Cottonwood allotment will follow the Allotment Management Plan (AMP) approved in 1996. The Standards and Guidelines identified in the Bridger-Teton National Forest Plan that deal with the management of this allotment are included in the AMP. It is very important you understand these Standards and Guidelines since they form the basis for the management of this allotment.

Effectiveness monitoring is long-term monitoring that occurs over an extended period of time. It is used to determine if management practices are effective in meeting Forest Plan Goals, standards and objectives for livestock grazing. The specific objective based on the established monitoring bench mark areas for the South Cottonwood allotment are, ground cover of 70%, stream bank stability rating of 7 and riparian ecological status of late seral or higher on 85% of the steams. If these objectives are met allowable utilization limits of vegetation will be 50% of key species. If objectives are not met allowable utilization limits of vegetation will be reduced to 25% to provide for improvement.

Current condition and allowable vegetative utilization on the South Cottonwood allotment by pasture is as follows:

ALLOTMENT	GROUND COVER/TREND	STREAM BANK STABILITY RATING	RIPARIAN ECOLOGICAL STATUS	CURRENT ALLOWABLE UTILIZATION LIMIT
South Cottonwood	100/S	8.0 South Cottonwood Ck	100% meeting	50%

Trend Equals: U-upward, S-stable, D-down, N-one reading no trend yet.

The Standards and Guidelines identified in the Bridger-Teton National Forest Plan that deal with the management of this allotment have been incorporated into the updated plan.

V. OBSERVATIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS SEASON

You exhausted your last year of personal convenience non-use in 2015.

VI. OTHER

The grazing fees for the 2016 grazing season are $2.11 per head month.

You are required to pay your grazing bill before livestock are turned onto the Forest.

ONLY Certified Weed-Free hay is allowed on national forest system land in Wyoming. If you need sources of Certified Weed-Free hay, please contact the Sublette County Weed and Pest Control office at 307/367-4728.

Review by: _____
Permittee

Approved by: _____
District Ranger