

**2020 Annual Operating Instructions
Plateau Farms LLC #4572
Salmon/Pole/Champion (SPC) #40500 & Owl Creek #40700
S&G Allotments**

1: INTRODUCTION:

Permitted Use:

Allotment	Numbers	Season	Head Months
Owl Creek # 40700	850 e/l	07/06 - 07/30	699
Salmon/Pole/Champion (SPC) # 40500	850 e/l	08/01 - 08/20	559
	950 e/l	06/11 - 08/20	2218
	1725 dries	08/21 - 10/20	3459
	1725 dries	08/21 - 10/20	3459
SPC Total HMs			9695

Authorized Use: Upon payment of fees, you are authorized to graze as follows:

Allotment	Numbers	Band	Approximate Season*	Head Months
Owl Creek	800 e/l	2	07/02-07/26	658
Salmon / Pole / Champion	800 e/l	2	07/27-08/06	289
Salmon / Pole / Champion	1725 dries	1	08/14-09/18	2042
Salmon / Pole / Champion	1725 dries	1	09/23-10/15	1304
Fall Driveway Trailing	1725 dries	1	10/16-10/20	284
Driveway to State Section	775 e/l	1	06/06-06/08	76
Salmon / Pole / Champion	775 e/l	1	06/11-06/27	433
Salmon / Pole / Champion	775 e/l	1	07/01-08/06	943
Sheep Driveway	1775 dries	2	08/14-08/15	113
Salmon / Pole / Champion	1725 dries	2	08/24-09/18	1475
Salmon / Pole / Champion	1725 dries	2	09/25-10/13	1078
Fall Driveway Trailing	1725 dries	2	10/14-10/18	284
<i>(Totals: Owl 658 HMs & SPC 8321 = 8979 HMs)</i>				

*These dates are approximate, and are subject to change. Actual on-dates, off-dates, and grazing rotations will be determined on the basis of range readiness within the permitted dates, utilization, truck availability, presence of wolves, or other resource considerations as deemed necessary by the authorized Forest Officer. Such changes will typically be made in consultation with the permittee(s). Actual dates will be determined as the season progresses to avoid areas frequented by wolves.

Permitted Livestock Brand:

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2: COMPLIANCE:

This AOI is made part of your Term Grazing Permit consistent with Part 1, Item 3 and Part 2 Item 8(a) of the General Provisions and Requirements. Your compliance with these instructions is essential for the proper management of National Forest System lands. Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of your permit and these instructions may result in issuance of a notice of non-compliance with the terms of your grazing permit.

Permittees with livestock in rested units, grazing units outside the season of use, and grazing areas not authorized, will be held non-compliant with the terms and conditions of their Term Grazing Permit. Such non-compliance may result in billing for excess use, permit modification / cancellation, or other actions as provided in FSH 2209.13.

Situations may develop during the grazing season which require modifications to these instructions. If this becomes necessary, or if you cannot comply with some part of these instructions, contact the District Ranger and obtain approval before initiating changes or deviating from these instructions.

3: BILLING:

The 2020 cost per Head Month for sheep is \$.27 per head month. A Bill for Collection will be mailed to you with a copy of your signed AOI. Grazing fees must be paid by the date specified on the Bill for Collection to:

USDA Forest Service c/o US Bank
PO Box 6200-09
Portland, OR 97228-6200

Confirmation of payment through the "lock box" process must be received before livestock can enter NFS lands.

*******NOTE***** For the 2020 grazing season we highly encourage you to pay your bill online to prevent unnecessary exposure/spread of COVID-19. The mail services may have delays due to the virus. Please notify us when you have made your payment.**

The Bill Payment website <http://www.fs.fed.us/billpay> outlines important information regarding the payment processing timeline and guides you through the bill payment process. You must input the bill number from the Bill for Collection and must pay the bill in full as a condition of using the Online Billpay website. Upon completion and submittal of payment information and payment processing, you will receive an email that confirms payment.

Reminder: payment not processed prior to a bill due date will incur penalty and interest charges regardless if using the Online Bill payment option or submitting payment through the mail.

A few important facts if using the Online Bill Payment option:

- No partial payments are allowed.
- Allow four (4) business days for payment processing.
- Payments received after 8:00 ET are submitted the next business day.
- Payments made on holidays are submitted the next business day. Holidays are not counted as a business day.

4: LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT:

2020 Rotation:

Approximate Dates	Allotment or area	Rotation Area Grazed* SPC bighorn buffer map avoidance area is in attachments
<u>Ewe/Lamb Band #2</u> (herders - Alfredo & Papa Six Toes)		
07/02-07/26	Owl	Contact Nate Duncan (208-727-5007) a few days prior to unloading. Depending on wolf activity, unload at the bridge at Silver Creek. Immediately trail to Owl Creek Allotment.
07/27-08/06	SPC	Graze over Galena to the Salmon River heading to the higher areas of the drainage until shipping.
08/07-08/13	Private	Ship lambs (approximate dates)
<u>Dry Band #1</u> (herders - Alfredo & Papa Six Toes)		
08/14-09/18	Salmon	West side of the Salmon River via the cut-off road to Chemeketan & Camp Creek areas
09/18-09/22	Private	Shear lambs (approximate dates)
09/23-10/15	Salmon / Pole	Camp Creek, below Chemeketan, Lower Salmon River area flat and Cut off Road area
10/16-10/20	Driveway	Fall Trailing
<u>Ewe/Lamb Band #1</u> (herders - Freddie & Juan)		
06/06-06/08	Trailing	Sheep driveway
06/09-06/11	School Section**	School section
06/11-06/27	SPC	4 th of July Creek for approximately six days. Then Milky Creek which will be grazed for approximately 10 days. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any occurrences of sheep found on the Warm Creek C&H or Fisher Creek S&G Allotment s could prompt compliance action. Then heading back out the same general way as entered, avoiding areas already trailed through or any portion that has been previously grazed.
06/27-06/30	School Section**	School section
07/01-07/30	SPC	Lost Creek, Taylor Flat upper troughs, Horton Peak & Twin Creeks areas staying high on the face of the mountain, staying out of the buffer area delineated on the attached map on page 12.
07/31-08/06	SPC	Pole Creek Meadow
08/09-08/13	Private	Ship Lambs (approximate dates)
<u>Dry Band #2</u> (herders - Freddie & Juan)		
08/14-08/15	Trailing	Sheep driveway
08/16-08/23	School Section**	School section
08/24-09/18	SPC	Lower Taylor Flat trough area 1 st & 2 nd tank

09/16-- 09/24	Private	Shear lambs (approximate dates)
09/25-10/13	SPC	Two Trees area, Little Springs, ATV Flat and the Cut-Off Road
10/14-10-18	Driveway	Fall Trailing

*When utilization is met in each unit or area sheep are to be moved on to the next scheduled unit or area, or removed from the allotment. This standard can be met with once-over grazing.

** No authorization to graze State Lands (School Section) is implied. This unit is shown in the grazing rotation schedule for the purpose of continuity.

Pole Creek Meadow Section 19 & 30 will be rested once every three years.

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
rested	grazed	grazed	rested	grazed	grazed	rested	grazed	grazed	rested	grazed

You will be responsible for monitoring livestock move thresholds or “triggers” during the grazing season. These “triggers” will assist you in ensuring that end of season utilization standards are not exceeded. The Sawtooth NRA range staff will conduct spot checks during and after the grazing season. Typically, “triggers” will be the standard(s) listed in Section 5 below. Livestock should be moved before utilization standards are reached. This will help prevent forage utilization in excess of standards and allow sufficient time to “clean” the unit of remaining livestock.

It is in your best interest to distribute sheep throughout useable areas in the allotment. **Use of riparian areas needs to be carefully monitored by you**, see Section 5. For example, if sheep are allowed to concentrate in riparian areas and/or water developments, utilization standards may be reached prior to the scheduled pasture moves or “off-dates”. If you have any questions about the Standards and Guides listed below, please contact the range staff.

5: STANDARDS AND GUIDES:

Proper Use Standards:

Your Term Grazing Permit specifies maximum allowable utilization levels applicable to your allotment. To comply with the Amended 2012 Sawtooth National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan), changes to some of the allowable use levels have been implemented; specifically when the riparian goals and objectives are not being met. When utilization estimates indicate that allowable use levels have been reached in the pasture currently being grazed, livestock must be moved to an unused area or pasture, or removed entirely from the allotment regardless of any time remaining in the grazing season schedule.

You are responsible for tracking forage use levels and complying with utilization standards. For your convenience, the utilization standards for Salmon/Pole/Champion & Owl Creek S&G Allotments under the Forest Plan are listed below.

Riparian Areas: All Creeks on Salmon/Pole/Champion – 6” utilization standard

Water sedge (*Carex aquatilis*) or Nebraska sedge (*Carex nebraskensis*) will be the key species measured to determine riparian (greenline) utilization.

Utilization Standards for Riparian (Forest Plan)

- Forage Utilization standards for riparian areas shall not exceed 30% use of most palatable forage species, or must retain a minimum 6 inch stubble height of hydric greenline species, whichever occurs first. (1996 SPC Decision Notice)

Riparian Areas: All Creeks on Owl Creek – 4” utilization standard

Water sedge (*Carex aquatilis*) or Nebraska sedge (*Carex nebraskensis*) will be the key species measured to determine riparian (greenline) utilization.

Utilization Standards for Riparian (Forest Plan)

- Maximum 45 percent use or retain a minimum stubble height of 4” on hydric greenline species, whichever occurs first. (Standard RAST01). This standard applies to the streams that are moving towards or meeting Forest Plan vegetation desired conditions. Streams not meeting these conditions will fall under the following standard.
 - Forage Utilization standards for riparian areas shall not exceed 30% use of most palatable forage species, or must retain a minimum 6 inch stubble height of hydric greenline species, whichever occurs first, *when riparian goals and objectives are not being met* (Management Area 2, Standard 02143).

Upland Vegetative Cover Types: all allotments / units – Sagebrush / Fescue

Bluebunch wheatgrass (*Agropyron spicatum*) and Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*) will typically be the key species measured to determine upland utilization, though other species may be measured to estimate utilization at the discretion of the Forest Officer.

- Early season grazing (ie: through early July): 40% use or retain a minimum of 3-inch stubble height for Kentucky bluegrass, a 6-inch stubble height for Bluebunch wheatgrass, and a 2-inch stubble height for Idaho fescue, (Standard RAST01).
- Late season grazing, after seed ripe conditions: will not exceed 50% use, (Standard RAST01).

Note: The utilization percentages represent the maximum year end use that will be allowed based on current livestock management practices. This standard may be met through “once-over” grazing.

6: IMPROVEMENTS:

All improvements for which you have maintenance responsibility are listed in Part 3 of your Term Grazing Permit.

Improvement maintenance must be completed prior to livestock turn out. If it is found that maintenance has not been completed, and permitted livestock are present on the allotment or unit, the permittee may be billed for unauthorized use and / or permit action may be taken for non-compliance.

Permittee (or an authorized agent of permittee) use of ATVs and motorcycles outside designated routes shown on the Sawtooth National Forest/Sawtooth National Recreation Area Motor Vehicle Use Map is limited to activities required for allotment management operations such as maintenance and repair of range improvements, and distribution or retrieval of salt, (e.g during or immediately after the authorized grazing season). Limited additional authorization is provided to facilitate sheep herder travel to and from camps during the grazing season.

Motorized and/or mechanized equipment is not allowed in wilderness areas unless authorized after completion of a Minimum Requirements Analysis. If you need a map showing the wilderness boundary please contact the range staff.

Note: If an allotment is in non-use status, the permittee is still responsible for improvement maintenance.

No ground disturbing activities may be conducted by the permittee or their personnel on National Forest System lands without prior approval from the authorized Forest Officer.

Any plans to reconstruct or build new improvements on the Forest should be coordinated with the range staff.

New, reconstructed, or replaced livestock water developments must provide access and escape to and from water for all types of wildlife. (Standard RAST09)

7: PERMITTEE, HERDER or CAMP TENDER INSTRUCTIONS:

Please notify SNRA range staff before allowing your livestock to enter any allotments.

You, or your authorized agent, will provide sufficient riders or herders to obtain proper distribution, protection, and management of sheep on the allotment as required by your Term Grazing Permit and associated guidance (i.e, 1996 Salmon/Pole/Champion and Owl Creek S&G Allotment Decision Notices (DN) and Forest Plan).

You are required to provide a copy of this Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) and associated maps to each herder, and to **ensure each herder understands** the written contents. Please contact range staff if you need assistance providing an AOI in a foreign language. Additional guidance and grazing restrictions are listed below. Evidence of failure to follow the requirements in this section may result in action against your permit.

Fish Restriction Dates

Mitigate, through avoidance, the adverse effects of livestock access or activities that may result in trampling of redds or disturbance of spawning or reproductive staging of Endangered Species Act listed fish species (Standard TEST25).

1. The following restrictions apply to SPC, based on initiation of spawning for Threatened and Endangered fish species. (Ongoing All Aquatics BA)
 - a) Pole Creek above Twin Creek:
 - Watering only at turbulent reaches after August 15 (bull trout)
 - b) Pole Creek below Twin Creek:
 - No watering after August 1 (chinook salmon)
 - c) Salmon River below Chemeketan CG:
 - Watering only at turbulent reaches after August 15 (bull trout)
 - d) Champion, Fourth of July, Taylor, Twin, Rainbow, Grandprize, Germania, Galena, Three Cabins and Camp Creeks:
 - Watering only at turbulent reaches after August 15 (bull trout)

1996 Owl Creek Allotment DN mitigation measures

1. Active riding and herding to prevent mechanical damage to streambanks.
2. Sheep grazing will be restricted in high cirque basins and slopes over 9,000 feet elevation to protect sensitive alpine plant communities and avoid forage conflicts with mountain goats. Titus Lake basin and upper Owl Creek basin will be closed to sheep entry.
3. Areas on the east side of Big Wood River located mainly on bluffs within ¼ to ½ mile band along the east side of the Big Wood River will be closed to grazing.
4. A buffer between Russian John and Silver Creek will be closed to grazing for the benefit of wildlife.
5. Bridges should be used for stream crossings as much as possible.

1996 Salmon/Pole/Champion DN mitigation measures

1. Active riding and herding to prevent mechanical damage to streambanks.

2. Sheep grazing will be restricted in high cirque basins and slopes over 9,000 feet elevation to protect sensitive alpine plant communities and avoid forage conflicts with mountain goats. Bromaghin Peak will be closed to sheep entry.
3. Sheep trailing on the Stanley to Ketchum Sheep Driveway will not cross through any stream containing critical habitat.
4. Preceding fall trailing over Pole Creek on Road 194, a spot check will be made for redds 300 feet upstream and downstream of the bridge. If redds area present, physical barriers or specific herding will be used to prevent sheep access to the redds during trailing.

Sheep grazing

Livestock trailing, bedding, watering, and other handling efforts shall be limited to those areas and times that maintain or allow for restoration of beneficial uses and native and desired non-native fish habitat. (Standard RAST02)

Only one night one time use of bed grounds is allowed. (Standard RAST05)

Only open or loose sheep herding will be practiced, except where site-specific vegetation management (e.g., noxious weeds or reforestation) is needed and has been prescribed. (Standard RAST06)

Only open or loose “once-over” grazing will be allowed, with the exception of designated sheep driveways, travel routes, or where specifically authorized. (Standard RAST07)

Avoid trailing or grazing in aspen stands which have been treated to enhance aspen regeneration.

Bedding of sheep and salting of livestock in plantations will be prohibited until plantation trees have grown to a size that reduces their susceptibility to damage from livestock. (Standard RAST08)

Route sheep to avoid steep slopes with loose soil, watershed rehabilitation sites, active gullies and snowbank areas. (Guideline RAGU08)

Do not bed sheep within 200 yards of designated campgrounds, trails, trailheads or maintained roads.

Avoid sheep bedding in and nooning in noxious weed infested areas to the extent possible.

Grazing is not authorized beyond the upper watershed boundary of the Salmon River drainage into the Big Smokey Creek drainage.

The Pole Creek Resource Natural Area (Pole Creek Guard Station) is closed to grazing. The boundary fence should be readily identified and easy to avoid.

Do not allow sheep to be shaded or bedded within 100 yards of all creeks. If this is not reasonable due to topography, ensure that the sheep are as far back as possible from the creek.

Graze rather than trail to water, and if possible, water sheep at different locations each time.

Sheep may be trailed over watershed divides above 9,000 feet where suitable, as long as they are loose herded and not allowed to bed or graze.

Salting

Livestock salting will be prohibited in RCAs. Sheep will be salted only at bed grounds. Salt will be placed in containers and moved with the sheep. (Standard RAST04)

Salt fed in loose form shall be placed in an approved container such that it is prevented from spilling onto the ground. Do not salt in areas above 9,000 feet, or in cirque basins at this elevation.

Do not place salt within 100 yards of any watering area or meadow unless you receive prior approval. This includes seeps, water troughs, and creeks.

Herder Camps

New herder camps must not be located in perennial or intermittent stream Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs). RCA is defined as the area within 300 feet of either side of all water bodies.

Each camp will be kept clean, which means litter will be picked up and either hauled away or burned. Only combustible items may be burned.

Herder camp use will not exceed five days time in one location unless prior permission is obtained from the appropriate Forest Service official. Camps should be located to avoid conflict with other Forest users.

Tying pack or saddle stock to trees at camp is prohibited. Pack and saddle stock kept at camp must be high-lined, picketed or hobbled. Horses used by herders in conjunction with permitted livestock management shall not be staked or picketed within a 300 foot buffer from streams.

Sheep Driveway

Fall trailing from Galena Summit to the SNRA south boundary is limited to 5 day duration. Please avoid all traditional recreation campsites when fall trailing on the Wood River Side.

Route sheep at least 1/4 mile from Galena Lodge when crossing Gladiator and Senate Creeks. This area is closed for rehabilitation from historic sheep impacts and contains valued wildflower meadows for recreation purposes. In addition to the above, please avoid the yurt area behind Galena Lodge shown on the map on page 13. Please coordinate any sheep movements within the Galena Lodge area with Galena Lodge management.

Sheep trailing in or out of the allotment to access the Stanley-Ketchum sheep driveway will not cross through any stream containing designated critical habitat such as the Salmon River and Frenchman Creek.

Do not bed sheep within 600 feet of designated campgrounds, trails, trailheads or maintained roads.

Sheep may be trailed over watershed divides above 9,000 feet where suitable, as long as they are loose herded and not allowed to bed or graze.

Avoid sheep bedding in and nooning in noxious weed infested areas to the extent possible.

Do not allow sheep to be shaded or bedded within 300 feet of all creeks. If this is not reasonable due to topography, ensure that the sheep are as far back as possible from the creek.

Fire

To meet Forest Service requirements, exhaust from camp stoves must be filtered through a spark arrester screen with no larger than 3/8 inch mesh.

Never leave camp fires unattended.

All camps must have a serviceable axe, shovel, and bucket for fire control.

Other

Permittees are responsible for cleaning or repairing all roads and trails damaged by sheep. Immediate action is required.

Promptly remove or bury any sheep that have died within 100 yards or in sight of administrative sites, system roads or trails, corrals or sources of water. If warranted, other methods of removal may be allowed with special permission from the District Ranger.

All lands outside of designated travelways, motorized use shall be prohibited unless otherwise authorized. (see Section 6).

By USDA order #04-00-097, all non-pelletized hay, straw or mulch possessed, stored, or transported on National Forest System Lands, in individual bales or containers, must be tagged or marked as weed free, or must have the original and current evidence of weed free certification documentation present. All markings must meet State and / or County standards for certification as weed free.

8: REQUIRED REPORTING:

Enclosed is a grazing use record form for the upcoming season. Please use this form to record the time (dates) livestock spend on an allotment as well as other information such as livestock loss, salting, grazing use, resource concerns, improvement needs etc. The grazing use record should be returned at/or before the next spring meeting.

Please submit requests for credits or refunds before December 31.

9: INSPECTIONS & MONITORING:

Range inspections may be made several times during the grazing season to check maintenance of range improvements, forage utilization, and compliance with the grazing rotation and standard requirements. If you are interested in participating in allotment inspections, please notify the range staff at the beginning of the grazing season.

End-of-season compliance monitoring will be conducted by the range staff. Exceeding end-of-season utilization standards will be regarded as non-compliance with the terms of your grazing permit. In addition to the potential for permit action, this may further result in the modification of grazing management (including reductions in Head Months or permitted area) until the risk of adverse impacts to habitat is minimized.

10: COORDINATION & COOPERATION:

Questions about what can or cannot be done in reference to defending livestock, harassing wolves, or shooting wolves should be directed to:

- Rick Ward, Idaho F&G Regional Wildlife Mgr. - Salmon, Idaho (208-756-2271)

- Jason Husseman, Idaho F&G Wildlife Biologist – Salmon, Idaho (208-756-2271)
- Todd Grimm, State Director USDA APHIS Wildlife Services - Boise, Idaho (208-378-5077)
- Pat Castillo, Wildlife Services Technician – Mostly Custer County (208-484-3164)
- Sam Kocherhans, Wildlife Services Technician – Mostly Blaine County (208-681-8792)

Permittees should continue working with their local Wildlife Services representative on depredation issues.

In order to reduce the potential for depredation, the Forest Service recommends that the following procedures be implemented each grazing season:

- Remove sheep and saddle stock carcasses from the area where they will not serve as an attractant to predators. The intent of this recommendation is not to require removal of carcasses from the allotment, but to remove them out of areas currently being grazed or areas soon to be grazed.

Work with IDF&G and Wildlife Services in implementing other effective preventative actions to reduce the risk of depredation.

The Forest Service recognizes that Plateau Farms LLC and Idaho Department of Fish & Game have developed a “Best Management Practice for Separation between Domestic Sheep and Bighorn Sheep” agreement because of the potential for conflict between wild sheep and domestics. In addition to BMP’s agreed to in that agreement, we also require the herders conduct regular sightings throughout the day for Big Horn sheep. We also require that the herder make the appropriate contact with the Forest Service or Idaho Department of Fish & Game when a bighorn sheep sighting is reported on or within a minimum of one mile of the Owl Creek, Salmon / Pole / Champion and Allotments.

Bighorn sheep contact number for IDF&G Salmon Region is listed below.

- Dennis Newman, 208-756-2271

11: OTHER:

If you are planning to waive your Term Grazing Permit – based on either sale of permitted livestock or base property, please submit this intention to me in writing prior to the transaction.

We look forward to working with you and solicit your cooperation and involvement in bringing about sound range and livestock management practices that will enhance all of the allotment's resources. If you have any ideas or suggestions that will improve the management of this allotment, we would like to hear from you. If you have any questions concerning these Annual Operating Instructions, please call Nate Duncan – 208-727-5007, Beth Bratlie 208-774-3013 or myself at 208-727-5000.

12: SIGNATURE:

Kirk Flannigan, Area Ranger

Date

13: MAPS, FORMS & ATTACHMENTS:

- Permittee Actual Use Record form (use, losses, costs, etc.)
- Salmon/Pole/Champion map showing Bighorn buffer area to avoid in 2020
- Yurt avoidance areas map behind Galena Lodge

