United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
Carson Ranger District
1536 S. Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701
(775) 882-2766 Fax (775) 884-8199

File Code: 2210/2230
Date:

Russell Scosssa
Scossa Ranch, LLC
676 Foothill Road
Gardnerville, NV 89410
Dear Mr. Scossa,

This letter will document the informal, telephone Annual Operating meeting held between Scossa Ranch, LLC, and the United Stated Forest Service (USFS), on February 19, 2014, and serve as your Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the 2014 grazing season on the Noble Canyon C&H allotment. The use permitted in your Term Grazing Permit is listed below along with the authorized use for the 2014 season:

PERMITTED USE:

Allotment	Number of Stock	Season
Noble Canyon C&H	4 Horse	6/1-10/10
Noble Canyon C&H	144 cows/calves	6/26-9/30

AUTHORIZED USE:

Allotment	Number of Stock	Season
Noble Canyon C&H	4 Horse	6/1-10/10
Noble Canyon C&H	75 cows/calves	6/26-9/30

*Silver Mountain and Raymond Meadows are scheduled to be grazed this year. Noble Canyon will be rested.

Please keep a detailed actual use record so you can apply for a credit/refund at the end of the grazing season if needed. The following excerpt from Forest Service Handbook 2209.13, chapter 80, 81.5-Refunds and Credits should give you some context:

"Requests for refunds of grazing fees paid or credits towards the payment of the following year's grazing fees must be made in writing and approved by the authorized officer and may be available in limited situations where the total amount of grazing by the permittee's livestock during a grazing season was less than the amount assessed in the Bill for Collection. Refund/credit requests of less than $100 will be processed as credits against the grazing fee for the next authorized grazing season. Refunds or credits may be approved only if the permittee delays placing permitted livestock on the designated allotment(s) at the beginning of the grazing season, places fewer permitted livestock on the designated allotment(s) than authorized by the permit, or removes permitted livestock from the designated allotment(s) prior to the end of the permitted grazing season at the request of the authorized officer. However, requests for refunds or credits may only be approved when the basis for the request is related to the condition of National Forest System rangeland resources; for

example, the forage was not ready for grazing at the beginning of the grazing season or the utilization level was reached prior to the end of the grazing season. Requests for refunds or credits which are based on the permittee convenience or business motivations of the permittee shall be denied."

ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT:

Actual turn on date will depend on range readiness. For the purpose of livestock accountability, contact the Carson Ranger District **five to seven days prior to turnout** and when you make unit moves. Please keep us posted about activities and conditions of the allotment.
The schedule dates of use are flexible as long as they are within the permitted use parameters, but a one-week notice must be given before any changes are made to the above dates. The District Ranger must approve any changes in the planned use.

Salt must be placed at least ¼ mile from water, (springs, seeps, and streams), roads, and trails. If you have questions about the placement of salt, contact Courtney in my office and she will locate suitable sites with your input. Dead livestock must be moved at least 100 yards from water and from roads and trails used by the public. All garbage associated with managing the allotments must be removed from National Forest system lands.

Invasive weeds are becoming a serious threat to the welfare of our rangelands. Your assistance is needed to identify new outbreaks of weed populations and to prevent the establishment of weeds on the forest. Pay particular attention to areas where stock is concentrated such as loading/unloading areas, water developments, and salting areas. We have implemented a Noxious Weed Free Hay order on our Forest. This will require any hay that is brought onto the National Forest to be certified free from noxious weeds. It is *strongly* recommended that all livestock entering the National Forest be fed **Certified Noxious Weed Free Forage** for at least 3 days prior to entering the Forest.

ALLOWABLE USE:

Noble Canyon C&H:

Riparian sites:

- In meadows that are in early seral status (an early stage of succession in a plant community or vegetation type, generally characterized by plant species that are adapted to colonizing disturbed areas with a high proportion of bare soil) livestock utilization of grass and grass-like plants must be limited to **30 percent (or minimum six-inch stubble height)**.

- In meadows that are in late seral status (fifty percent or more of the relative cover of the herbaceous layer is late seral with high similarity to the potential natural community, a diversity of age classes of hardwood shrubs is present, and regeneration is occurring) livestock utilization of grass and grass-like plants must be limited to a maximum of **40 percent (or minimum four-inch stubble height)**.

- In meadows that are **degraded** (such as those in early seral status with a greater than **ten percent** meadow area in **bare soil and active erosion) total rest** from grazing is required until they have recovered and have moved to a mid or late seral status.

- In riparian areas browsing on mature riparian shrubs (including willow and aspen) is not to exceed **20 percent** of the annual leader growth and is not to exceed more than **20 percent** of individual seedlings.

- Disturbance of meadow-associated stream banks and natural lake and pond shorelines is not to exceed **20 percent** of the stream reach or **20 percent** of the natural lake or pond shoreline.

- Livestock grazing will be modified or suspended on meadow ecosystems when it is determined that ecological status is moving in a downward trend.

- Pesticide application to livestock is prohibited within riparian conservation areas and critical aquatic refuges.

Upland sites:

- Sage and mountain brush plant communities can be grazed a maximum of **45 percent** of the current annual growth of key grasses and **40 percent** of the current annual growth of bitterbrush.

Raymond Meadows Creek: Lahontan Cutthroat Trout habitat:

- Utilization is not to exceed **30 percent** (six inch stubble height) of herbaceous species, and **20 percent** of willows; or **60 percent** use of the total height of plants for a year.

- **Maintain 90 percent streambank stability.**

It is your responsibility to monitor utilization and ensure that the allowable use standards are not exceeded. You are responsible for determining when allowable use has been reached and to move or remove livestock from the allotment to prevent exceeding these standards. The Forest Service is responsible for monitoring your compliance with the allowable use standards for the Raymond Meadows unit. Because we do not know the ecological condition of every meadow located within the allotment, please err on the side of caution when monitoring utilization on riparian species.

RANGE IMPROVEMENTS:

Range improvements listed in your permit must be maintained to standards listed in Part 3 of your term grazing permit prior to livestock entering the allotment. If an improvement is inaccessible prior to the on date, you must notify staff in my office prior to livestock entry into the allotment. If there is a need for any additional improvements and/or major repairs to existing improvements, please contact the Carson Ranger District range staff for assistance.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT:

Forms for recording your actual use and range improvement maintenance costs are included with this plan. Please complete and return the forms by December 31, 2014.

If you see a wildfire, please contact the Minden Interagency Dispatch at **(775) 883-5995.**
The grazing fee is $1.35 per head month.

Only cattle with the S open A on the left hip are authorized to graze on the Noble Canyon C&H Allotment.

Payment of your grazing bill is due five days prior to your earliest turnout date to allow time for processing. As a reminder the Forest Service is required to give permittees a minimum of 30 days to pay your grazing fees. The Forest Service is requesting that permittees schedule their AOI meeting a minimum of 35 days prior to their earliest on date to provide adequate time to plan for the upcoming grazing season.

As a reminder, approval of requests for permittee convenience nonuse is not automatic and the authorized officer should discuss the reasons for the nonuse request with the permittee. Approval of a request for permittee convenience non-use must be in writing by the authorized officer. Full or partial permittee convenience nonuse may be approved by the authorized officer for no more than three consecutive years and not more than four years in any ten year period.

OTHER:

This summer we will be visiting the allotment to conduct permit compliance monitoring and would like to provide the opportunity for you to join us during these efforts. Our range staff, Courtney Ghiglieri, will contact you at least 72 hours prior to a scheduled allotment visit to discuss times and dates with you if you are interested in attending.

Every effort needs to be made to keep cattle out of Silver Creek Campground throughout the grazing season. We encourage you to stay in contact with the campground host. This is usually not a problem when the Noble Canyon unit is being rested.

If you have any questions regarding these instructions or any aspect of grazing on the National Forest, please contact our Range Staff, Courtney Ghiglieri at (775) 884-8150 (until April 1, 2014), our Natural Resource Officer, Maureen Easton at (775) 884-8151, or HTNF Range Program Manager, Dave Palmer at (775) 355-5387.

Sincerely,

Roderick J. Alfred

RODERICK ALFRED
District Ranger