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Enclosed are your Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the Bennington Canyon, Dunn Canyon, Rattlesnake, and Pole/Draney Sheep Allotments. These Instructions are guidelines for managing your allotment during the 2015 grazing season. We have also included your **Actual Use Form, which should be completed and returned with the folder to the Montpelier Ranger District by November 30, 2015.**

I. Permitted Numbers and Grazing Schedule

Table 1: Permitted Livestock

Allotment	Permitted Numbers	Authorized Numbers for 2015	Season of Use	Authorized Season for 2015	Class	Rotation
Bennington/Dunns Canyon	1080	Non use Personal Convenience	6/26- 9/22**		Ewe/Lamb	
Rattlesnake Canyon/Red Pine	1000	900	5/20- 9/27**		Dry Band	
Dunns Canyon/Red Pine	1050	972	6/23- 9/26**		Ewe/Lamb	
Pole/Draney	1020	918	6/27- 9/20**	2 days trailing through state lease and private land	Ewe/Lamb	Clockwise
Total	4150					

** The on date may change due to range readiness.

The dates in Table 1 are tentative and may change do to range readiness, use levels or environmental factors such as fire or drought. Unforeseen circumstances could result in livestock leaving the allotment and you may be asked to remove livestock if utilizations standards are being exceeded, regardless of the cause. **It is your responsibility to follow the**



current or any seasonal changes to the grazing schedule. Changes to the dates or rotation are to be approval by a Forest Officer prior to taking place.

Bennington Canyon, Dunns Canyon, Rattlesnake Canyon and Red Pine allotments will be managed as 3 allotments. The west side of the Red Pine Allotment will be used with Rattlesnake Canyon. Dunns Canyon will be used with Red Pine to the north and east. The Bennington Canyon allotment will use the upper right hand fork of Georgetown Canyon and Upper Dunns Canyon. The Red Pine Allotment will be combined into the existing allotments to allow flexibility to the current permittee's operation.

II. Non-use

If you intend to take any non-use, it must be approved prior to the grazing season. As a reminder, you must own the livestock you place on the allotment. Leasing of livestock is a violation of your Term Grazing Permit and will result in the cancellation of your permit.

III. Grazing Rotations

Generally, loose herding and once-over grazing, alternating clock wise and counter clock wise directions on a yearly basis should be practiced. Bed grounds, shade-up areas, and salting locations will not be used more than once during the grazing season. Utilization of the uplands following once over grazing practices should not exceed standards shown in Table 3 below. After sheep have watered, they should be encouraged to move off the riparian area before being allowed to noon bed. Do not allow sheep to noon bed near water. Do not place salt by designated Forest Service trails, roads or within the riparian areas of creeks, springs and ponds. Do not salt in the same location twice.

The lower elevations on the allotments have deer and elk winter range. There is critical winter range identified on the Rattlesnake Allotment along the western front. Monitor your allotment closely to ensure that allowable forage utilization is not exceeded. The aspen regeneration units located on Fox Flat are within the Montpelier Elk Valley Cattle Allotment. These units are not to be grazed and sheep will not be allowed to bed in the units. Because two bands (and three bands on light snow years) will trail over the same country, a maximum number of trailing days for each band is specified. Getting sheep to the Bennington Allotment involves trailing through the south end of the Montpelier-Elk Valley Cattle Allotment for approximately 1 to 2 days both going to and coming from the Bennington Allotment. This crossing is permitted, however days on the Cattle Allotment count toward your permitted days on the Allotments.

Rattlesnake Canyon/Red Pine

The south facing and low lying areas will be used early to target dyers woad in the early stages of growth. The sheep will trail from private land up through Gertch Hollow and travel the ridge north to the head of Dunns Canyon. From the head of Dunns Canyon they will trail to the bottom of Dunns Canyon. Total trailing-on days from the mouth of Gertch to and out of the bottom of Dunns is 4 days. Sheep will graze south from Dunns Canyon to Rowley Canyon. 100 acres of private land is used along the boundary, but is not tied to the permit. In heavy snow years it may be necessary to truck the sheep to this location and begin grazing as the high ridges may be covered with impassable drifts. The sheep will trail to Left Hand Fork and up Little Rolph Canyon to the Forest Boundary. Sheep will graze the Red Pine spring area, Big Canyon, and then, graze north to Jones Canyon and Rattlesnake Basin. The sheep will graze south along

the eastern boundary of the Rattlesnake Allotment. The sheep will trail home from Left Hand Fork and up Dunns or Right Hand Fork. Then down Gertch Hollow. Trailing - off the allotment from lower Right Hand Fork to the mouth of Gertch Hollow is limited to 3 days. Again, days trailing count as season of use and are not in addition too. It is possible this rotation may be reversed in alternate years. Water will need to be hauled at some locations.

Bennington/Dunns Canyon

The sheep will begin grazing up Gertch Hollow and along the ridge toward Dunns Canyon. Upper Dunns Canyon and Upper Right Hand Fork will be used by this band. The armchair trough in Dunns Canyon and the Upper troughs in Right Hand Fork will be used. The sheep will remain mostly on the Bennington Allotment. Trailing-off the allotment from Joes Gap to the mouth of Gertch Hollow is limited to 2 days.

Dunns Canyon/Red Pine

Sheep will trail from Gertch Hollow and along the ridge to lower Dunns Canyon and lower Right Hand Fork, then up to Left Hand Fork to Cold Spring and using the allotment to the north and east. Trailing-on from Gertch to lower Right Hand Fork will not exceed 3 days. Sheep will trail back home via Dunns Canyon or Right Hand Fork. Trailing-off the allotment from lower Right Hand Fork to the mouth of Gertch Hollow is limited to 3 days.

Pole/Draney

A deferred system of grazing, although desirable, is not practiced on this allotment. Under this plan the sheep enter at the southeast side of the allotment and graze the lower country on the east side of the allotment. They then cross the road and graze above the active mine and work their way into the high country. The allotment is grazed in a counter-clockwise direction and they leave from the same point where they entered the allotment. If a deferred system were used the high country would not be ready when it was grazed clockwise and the low range would be less palatable by the time they reached it, even if the sheep started in a different area.

IV. Grazing Standards and Guides

Standards and Guides covering the allotments are found in the *2003 Revised Forest Plan for the Caribou National Forest* and are now made part of your permit. The proper use standards/triggers for this allotment are listed in tables one and two below. Your livestock must be removed from an area when the allowable forage utilization levels are reached in either the uplands or the riparian areas. The utilization standards will apply to, both native and desirable non-native, key species.

Riparian Guidelines for Grazing

Table 2. Riparian Zone Forage Utilization and Stubble Heights (AIZ)

Season of Use	Properly Functioning Condition (%/Stubble Height)	Functioning at Risk (High to Moderate) (%/Stubble Height)	Functioning at Risk (Low to Non Functioning) (%/Stubble Height)	Non Functioning (States C & D) (%/Stubble Height)
Spring	65/2	55/3	45/4	55/3
Summer	55/3	45/4	35/5	45/4
Fall	45/4	35/5	20/6+	35/5

The standards in Table 2 above are the riparian forage utilization standards that will be applied.

If it is determined that bank disturbance/alteration, greenline stubble height or woody/shrubby species utilization should replace the utilization triggers listed above it will be addressed in the site specific standards below. Riparian site specific standards will be established when a Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) rating is conducted on the riparian area. The site specific standards for riparian areas will come directly from the PFC rating and the latest Grazing Implementation Guide. If a site specific PFC rating has not been conducted on a riparian area standards for the area will be established by the Range Specialist on the allotment. The Range Specialist will follow the standards listed in Table 1 above until a PFC rating has been completed.

Upland Utilization Guidelines

Table 3. Upland Forage Utilization Levels

Allowed Upland Forage utilization	Type of Upland Area		
	Critical Winter Range	Winter Range	Non Winter Range
Grasses and herbaceous Species (% dry weight)	35	45	55
Shrubs (Annual leader growth)	10	20	35

Big Game critical winter range occurs on your allotments.

The standards in Table 2 above are the upland forage utilization standards that will be applied to all of your allotments

Utilization of upland vegetation will be based on stubble height and percent of total weight grazed on key forage species. **Key grass species** include Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*), bluebunch wheatgrass (*Elytrigia (Agropyron) spicata*), tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*) and mountain brome (*Bromus carinatus*). There is critical winter range identified on the Rattlesnake Allotment along the western front. In those areas designated as critical winter range within the Rattlesnake Allotment use on the uplands cannot exceed 35% these areas or on the front range of the allotment.

As the season progresses, Forest Personnel will be routinely checking range and forage conditions. If monitoring determines that there is a shortage of forage, or other associated resources are sustaining unacceptable impacts, early removal of the livestock from the allotment will occur. If livestock are removed from the Forest early (at the request of the South Zone Range Staff), your remaining grazing fees will be credited to next year’s fee. This must be requested by you in your actual use form.

V. Permittee Responsibilities:

- 1. Salting** - Salt should be placed in lightly used areas and used as a distribution tool. Salt is not permitted in riparian areas, forest plantations, shade-up areas, roads, or areas where cattle normally tend to congregate. Use of a packhorse is recommended to get salt into areas that receive light use. Rotate or remove salt from areas receiving excessively heavy use. Make sure all salt bags are packed out.
- 2. Herding** - Effective and frequent riding is a good method of achieving uniform forage utilization and extending use in riparian areas. Cattle should be checked regularly to ensure

they are properly distributed. Areas around sheep camps should be kept clean and trash packed out. Camp must be equipped with a shovel and axe for putting out campfires.

3. **Weed-free hay** - Any hay or straw brought on the Forest must be certified, "Weed free".
4. **Maintaining Improvements** - All improvements listed in part 3 of your permit must meet Forest Service Standards. These standards may be set by the Forest Officer over the allotment. A delay in livestock turnout on the allotment will result if improvements do not meet acceptable standards prior to the grazing season. If they are not up to standard, and your livestock are on the allotment, administrative action may be taken against your permit. Maintenance work should be completed and up to standards prior to cattle entering the allotment.
5. **Noxious weeds**- Dyer's woad, leafy spurge, and thistle are located on your allotment. Because of budget constraints, the control of noxious weed needs to become a joint effort. If you know of any infestations bring them to the attention of the Forest Officer. There may be spray days coordinated on your allotment and your assistance with them would benefit all.

VI. Range Improvement Projects

There are many improvement projects that could be completed on the allotments. These should be prioritized and completed as funding becomes available.

- Construct a new set of sheep troughs on the east side of Left-Hand Fork Georgetown Canyon road; water to be piped from Shale spring to the Hawks Roost turnoff. Shale spring trough will remain functional.
- Move Armchair spring troughs below trail to obtain more slope for gravity flow.

VII. Trailing and Trucking:

- Sheep could either trail on, or be trucked to the allotments.
- When trailing sheep must use Forest Service system roads where applicable.
- Trailing while on National Forest System land will be counted as part of the permitted days.
- All overnight stops on Forest land while trailing to or from the allotment will be counted against the permitted days.
- Sheep should cover a minimum of 6 miles a day when trailing to or from the allotment.
- Do not overnight sheep in the same location where a previous band of sheep has stayed that year.

Specific to Pole/Draney Allotment

Sheep are not allowed to graze or trail through Whiskey Flat on the Montpelier District.

You will be allowed to cross the mine dump to get your sheep to the allotment, please continue working with Smokey Canyon mine staff to avoid conflicts. They are not to rest, water, or graze; just move through

Specific to Dunns/Redpine Allotment

Early in the summer as sheep get to Georgetown Canyon special care needs to be taken to avoid the road reclamation project site. Sheep may water from Georgetown Creek while feeding the North Slope of Georgetown Canyon, but may not water or bed in the reclamation area. In the fall Sheep should trail through the reclamation area on the road, and not stop to rest or water until through the site.

Failure to follow management requirements, grazing permit modifications, or annual operating instructions can result in suspension or cancellation of your Term Grazing Permit. Please refer to your Term Grazing Permit, Part 1, Section 3, Part 2, Section 8 (a-h).

VIII. Special Instructions:

- Within the Rattlesnake Basin Timber Sale, sheep should avoid these units; even trailing could cause damage to young seedlings. These units are not protected by a fence. Sheep watering is limited to five days at the ponds in Rattlesnake Basin. Hauling water will be required within Jones' Canyon and Rattlesnake Basin area for use of available forage.
- The Twin Creek Timber Sale has been completed and natural regeneration is occurring in the harvested units. These units must be avoided to allow seedlings to become established without risk of livestock trampling. An on site visit will be scheduled with the Timber staff and you, so clear direction is received.
- In Red Pine Spring, efforts should be made to move the sheep away from the water after drinking so they will not bed in the riparian area. When utilization standards are met, it is time to move on to a different water source. If this area has been grazed prior to the sheep arriving and utilization is at or below standards, then move on to a different water source and inform the Montpelier District of your observations.
- **Do not bed or shade up sheep next to the Georgetown Municipal Spring in the Right Hand fork of Georgetown Canyon. This area is enclosed by a fence and is not to be used as a corral.**
- Please notify the District when the sheep need water from the Summit View Campground. Sheep are not allowed to graze in the Summit View Camp Ground. The fence surrounding the Campground is not adequate to keep the sheep out. Diligent herding is required when sheep are near the Campground.
- Use of Gertch Hollow troughs is limited to bands trailing on and off the Forest and grazing by the Bennington band. Total use from trailing bands will depict time used by the Bennington band.
- **It is your responsibility to make sure your herders are aware of allotment boundaries, and that sheep are kept within the allotment. Drifting onto cattle**

allotments to return use favors is not acceptable.

IX. Wolf Status:

Wolves in Idaho are no longer under the protection of the federal Endangered Species Act. On May 5, 2011, wolf management in all of Idaho reverted to state management under state code 36-1107 and Idaho's 2002 Wolf Conservation and Management Plan. [PDF, 662 KB]

Simply put, the law says wolves molesting or attacking livestock or domestic animals may be disposed of by livestock or domestic animal owners, their employees, agents and animal damage control personnel. No permit from Fish and Game is necessary. The incident must be reported to the Fish and Game director within 72 hours, with additional reasonable time allowed if access to the site where taken is limited. Wolves so taken shall remain the property of the state.

Livestock and domestic animal owners may take all nonlethal steps they deem necessary to protect their property. A permit must be obtained from the director to control wolves not molesting or attacking livestock or domestic animals. Control is also permitted by owners, their employees and agents pursuant to the Idaho department of fish and game harvest rules.

"Molesting" means the actions of a wolf that are annoying, disturbing or persecuting, especially with hostile intent or injurious effect, or chasing, driving, flushing, worrying, following after or on the trail of, or stalking or lying in wait for, livestock or domestic animals.

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/public/wildlife/wolves/?getPage=167>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Idaho State Office - Toll-free at: 877-661-1908

To report suspected wolf depredations on livestock or pets, contact

USDA Wildlife Services: Toll-free at: 866-487-3297 or 208-378-5077

All AOI's will be posted on the internet. In conjunction with this action all permittees must sign the AOI showing that they have read it and accepted the terms, conditions, and management practices presented in it.

If you have questions or concerns during the grazing season, feel free to call me or any of the range staff on the zone. Our phone numbers are as follows.

	Office	Cell
Dennis Duehren District Ranger	208) 847-0735	
Kevin Parker Supervisory Range Specialist	208) 547-1108	208)313-7328
Dell Transtrum Range Specialist	208) 847-0375 208) 847-8939	208) 313- 5683