Bighorn National Forest
Medicine Wheel/Paintrock Ranger District

2014

Annual Operating Instructions
For
Bear/Crystal Creek S&G, Beaver Creek S&G, and Antelope Ridge S&G

Recommended By: ___*/s/Shawn Heinert*_____ Date:__*6/5/14*_____
Rangeland Management Specialist

Accepted By: __*/s/Regan R Smith*_____ Date: _*3/18/14*_____
Permittee

Approved By: __*/s/Robert M Cochran for*_____ Date: _*6/5/14*____
District Ranger

As permittee, my signature on these Annual Operating Instructions certifies that there is no change to my permitted livestock or base property ownership as described in my grazing permit.

Upon signature by the District Ranger, these Annual Operating Instructions are hereby made a part of your Term Grazing Permit number 01816A, approved by the Medicine Wheel/Paintrock District Ranger on 5/22/2012.

Any changes or deviation from the direction outlined in the Annual Operating Instructions will need to be requested in a written notice to the Medicine Wheel/Paintrock Ranger District. This includes changes in animal numbers, class of livestock, period of use (changes in entry or exit dates from unit to unit), or changes in pasture rotation. No changes in these instructions will be recognized without written confirmation from the Medicine Wheel/Paintrock Ranger District.

2014 Annual Operating Instructions for Bear/Crystal Creek S&G, Beaver Creek S&G, and Antelope Ridge S&G

Before Entering the Allotment
Please review all clauses of your term grazing permit and the information contained within this Annual Operating Instruction (AOI). Be sure to ask questions if any portions of your grazing permit or these operating instructions are not clearly understood.

Current years grazing fees must be paid prior to sheep entering the National Forest.

The following describes the **Permitted Use** for **Bear/Crystal Creek S&G, Beaver Creek S&G, and Antelope Ridge S&G**, as described in your permit signed on May 22, 2012:

Livestock			Period Of Use		Animal/Head Months
Number	Kind	Class	From	To	
1600	Sheep	Mature	07/06	09/23	4,208
3	Horse	Horse/Mule	07/06	09/23	8

Entering the Allotment
The following information describes your Annual Operating Instructions for Bear/Crystal Creek S&G, Beaver Creek S&G, and Antelope Ridge S&G, and Whaley Creek Pasture on Whaley Creek S&G, as discussed. Use of Whaley Creek Pasture has been approved for the 2012 grazing season.

Tentative Turn on Dates

- **07/06** Bear/Crystal Creek, Beaver Creek, and Antelope Ridge S&G. These three allotments will be managed in a rotation together with one band of sheep grazed across all three.

The actual date livestock may enter the allotment will depend on range readiness. Unless notified by a Forest Officer that a delay will be necessary to allow for further forage development, you may plan to place livestock on the allotment on the entry date shown on your Bill for Collection.

Pasture moves should be based on utilization levels. If there is a need to vary from this rotation, please discuss with your Rangeland Management Specialist prior to doing so. It is important that you visit with the Permittee and/or herders of the neighboring bands to make any necessary arrangements so as to avoid mixing sheep.

Antelope Ridge, Bear/Crystal Creek and Beaver Creek S&G Authorized Use

Number and Class	Pasture Rotation	Season of Use
1700 Dry Ewes (7/6-8/15) 1050 Dry Ewes (8/15-9/30) 15 Rams (8/15-9/1) 30 Rams (9/1-9/30) 3 Horses	1. Flats/Buck	07/06- 09/30
	2. Little Baldy	
	3. Corral	
	4. Elk Knob	
	5. Lake Creek	
	6. Lick Creek	
	7. Baldy/Mountain	
	8. Gravel Pit/Roane Creek	
	9. Monument	
	10. South Beaver	

Compliance:
Upon signature, this AOI is made part of your grazing permit consistent with Part 1, item 3 and Part 2, Item 8(a). Please remember, your bill must be paid prior to entering the allotment. Other situations may develop during the grazing season which requires changes to these instructions. If this becomes necessary or if you cannot comply with some part of these instructions, the District Ranger must approve any changes in the planned area prior to implementing those changes.

Billing:
This AOI describes livestock movement and your paid grazing bill authorizes livestock to be turned out on National Forest System Lands.

Due Date: Payment of your grazing bill is due five days prior to your earliest turnout date to allow time for processing. The Forest Service is required to provide Permittee's 30 days to pay grazing fees.

Unauthorized Use: Livestock grazing on the National Forest System lands without the grazing fees being paid and processed are considered to be unauthorized and are cause for action to be taken against the grazing permit. Livestock remaining on the National Forest System lands after the end of the authorized grazing season must be billed at the unauthorized use rate and administration costs, and may be cause for action to be taken against the grazing permit.

Livestock Management

Type of Rotation: Deferred Rotation

Standards and 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 long term health and sustainability of rangeland resources. The two general approaches used to measure actual use to determine if the guidelines were met are residual herbage left and utilization.

Residual herbage left methods are expressed as the amount of herbage **left** after livestock grazing has occurred, and includes methods such as, stubble height and visual obstruction methods (Modified Robel Pole).

Utilization methods are expressed as the amount of forage **removed** by grazing or trampling, and include methods such as, paired plots and ocular estimates.

Please review the following allowable use/herbage left guidelines that will apply to all areas of you allotment(s). Total use by livestock and wildlife combined must not exceed any of these guidelines at the time livestock leave a pasture. You are responsible for determining when allowable use has been reached and for moving your livestock to the next unit in your rotation or off the allotment when allowable use has been reached.

Upland Range Sites

Idaho Fescue vegetation types on sedimentary soil sites on the forest below 9,200 feet elevation (Excludes sites dominated by timothy and smooth brome)	Visual Obstruction Reading (VOR) of 4 or more bands for all applicable sites in each pasture.
Idaho Fescue vegetation types on granitic soil sites on the forest below 9,200 feet elevation.	Visual Obstruction Reading (VOR) of 5 or more bands for all applicable sites in each pasture.
All Other Sites (sites dominated by sagebrush, timothy and smooth brome or above 9,200 feet elevation)	A. Maximum of 40% by weight in pastures used prior to August 1st. B. Maximum of 50% by weight in pastures used

	after August 1st.

Riparian Range Sites

Herbaceous vegetation on all sites.	A. Average 5 inch stubble height on wide leaf carex species remaining if livestock leave a pasture prior to August 1st *. B. Average 7 inch stubble height on wide leaf carex species remaining if livestock leave a pasture after August 1st *.
Willows	Maximum of 35% use of current years leaders by livestock

*All stubble height guidelines stated above 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 trampled in the mud, lying on the ground or in water, protected by willows, or otherwise unavailable to be grazed are not included in the measurements.

Aspen Range Sites

Herbaceous vegetation within all aspen and cottonwood stands.	5 inch stubble height for all grasses and sedges when livestock leave a pasture*.

* All stubble height guidelines stated above 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 trampled in the mud, lying on the ground or in water, protected by willows, or otherwise unavailable to be grazed are not included in the measurements.

Livestock should be moved to the next pasture or off the National Forest, if in the last pasture, when further use will exceed the stated allowable use. It is your responsibility to manage your livestock within each pasture to assure these guidelines are not exceeded. This will require frequent monitoring of the vegetation by you and/or your rider, and not making pasture moves based on calendar dates.

It is important to note that allowable use guidelines outlined in this AOI, apply to all suitable range sites within the allotment(s). To assist you with your responsibilities of monitoring the actual use, all monitoring measurements will be done using a key area concept. Key areas are generally those areas livestock have the tendency to graze first when placed in a pasture. In most cases, the key areas will include both riparian and upland range sites, so it is important to keep close watch on the all range sites with the key area and plan livestock moves when use is nearing the guideline on either the upland or riparian sites.

Key Areas

Key areas serve as a monitoring and evaluation point for the degree of grazing use. Properly selected key areas give an indication of the overall acceptability of current grazing management to meet all resource objectives. The following is a list of key areas for each allotment; these areas may be moved or redefined in future years if monitoring results indicate a change is necessary.

- **<u>Bear Creek/Crystal Creek:</u>**
    1. Riparian zone at the headwaters of Bear Creek from Bald Mountain Road, extending south to the rims.
    2. The portion of the riparian/willow zone south of Bald Mountain Road in SW1/4SW1/4 Section 6 T55N, R91W.

- **<u>Beaver Creek:</u>**
    1. The riparian area along South Beaver Creek from Highway 14A south for approximately 1.0 mile.

2. The riparian area along headwaters of North Beaver Creek near Bald Mountain corrals in NW corner of Corral Pasture.
3. Sagebrush benches adjacent to and south of Highway 14A, located between the Hunt Mountain overlook and gravel pit.

- **Antelope Ridge**:
    1. Approximately 1.0 mile south of the Dayton Gulch road along the riparian zone of Lick Creek .
    2. Portion of the gentle sloping bench beginning approximately 200 yards west and ending approximately 0.25 miles east of Lake Creek Stock Pond. This bench lies immediately north and adjacent to the upper reaches of Lake Creek .

If you need assistance determining use levels or identifying the key areas, please do not hesitate to contact Shawn Heinert or Nick Padilla.

Monitoring

Permittee collection and submission of *Carex spp.* stubble height data is voluntary, but requested by this office. The permittee monitoring program was designed to give the permittee a trigger point to help determine when livestock should be removed from a pasture. You are still responsible to manage your livestock to assure that allowable use guidelines are met in all areas of the allotment. It is strongly encouraged that you continue to complete stubble height monitoring in all key areas with riparian plant communities, to assure actual use does not go beyond the guidelines stated within this AOI. Any forms voluntarily submitted to our office will be placed in the allotment monitoring folder.

When conducting stubble height monitoring, it is recommend that you read enough transects to obtain a representative sample of the residual leaf length of the dominant sedges. The number of transects you will need will depend on the size of the area and the variances of use levels. One transect may be sufficient in a narrow riparian area where use does not vary. Two or more may be necessary in a larger riparian area if you detect utilization varies significantly within 3 feet of the water's edge, compared to the remainder of the area. Photos of the transects with its general location, are not required, but would be helpful to substantiate your documentation. The Forest Service will also be conducting spot checks and transect measurements of key areas throughout the grazing season to verify guidelines are being met.

Range Improvements

Range improvements listed in part three of your permit must be maintained before livestock enter the allotment(s). The maintenance standards listed in 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 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. The minimum maintenance required will be as follows:

1. **Springs:** All tanks are to be level, completely surrounded by dry ground and easily accessible by livestock. The inlet and overflow pipes are to be free of crimps or breaks, completely buried or otherwise protected from livestock and capable of delivering water to and away from tanks without any water spilling in the immediate vicinity (20-30 ft.) of the tank. Livestock barriers over tanks must be sturdy and all poles and planks must be in good condition and nailed/bolted in place.

2. **Wire Fences:** Fences are to be in an upright, vertical position with all broken wires repaired, wires tight and properly spaced and all corner posts, braces, line posts, steel posts, stays, loops, staples, etc. replaced as needed. Gates are to be tight enough to prevent sagging but must be able to be easily opened and closed by the general public.

3. **Buck and Pole Fences:** Fences must be in an upright, serviceable position. Bucks that are spreading and lowering the overall height of the fence must be stabilized with a bottom brace or replaced. All poles must be nailed to bucks and all broken or rotting poles and bucks are to be replaced.

Planned range improvements

- East Bald Corral #54-01 reconstruction has been discussed and could be done when funding is available. Not a necessity, as permittee has been able to use another corral, also somewhat waiting to see what happens with the Whaley Creek S&G allotment. FS will attempt to make a determination this year on how to procede.

Permittee Instructions

1. The Permittee will inform the Forest Officer administering the grazing permit of the date and number of sheep entering the National Forest and will provide for having the animals counted by a Forest officer prior to or as the animals enter the allotment if requested.
2. If stray domestic sheep are suspected from the band, the permittee shall immediately notify the Forest Service and will conduct a search for any stray sheep. If sheep are known to have strayed from the band during trailing, they will be removed by the permittee in a timely fashion.
3. Permittee is to inform the Forest Service a minimum of 10 days prior to intended trailing sate to allow Forest Service and/or Wyoming Game and Fish Department an opportunity to survey trailing route for bighorn sheep that may have entered into the area.
4. A fulltime herder is required for each band of sheep.
5. Sheep will be open herded. Grazing periods in each area would vary from 1 to 10 days before camp is moved, and would depend on allowable use guidelines.
6. Sheep will not be bedded on top of Bald Mountain.
7. Excessive trailing and bunching of sheep should be avoided. Snow bank areas and steep, sparsely vegetated slopes **should be avoided** to minimize soil movement.
8. When bighorn sheep are in visible proximity of/or are known to come in contact with, domestic sheep, the permittee or Forest Service personnel shall immediately notify Wyoming Game and Fish Department with the location and description of the bighorn.
9. Sheep **must be bedded in a new location every 1-3 days** to avoid leaving bedding grounds with little residual vegetation and/or trampled soils. Bedding grounds should be moved annually where possible.
10. Compliance with the Bighorn National Forest off-road travel restrictions are required at all times. An off-road permit may be issued (at the District Rangers discretion) upon request for the sole purpose of moving and tending your livestock camp. The permit will be issued with the stipulation that soil conditions must be dry and no resource damage will occur.
11. Salt should be placed on rocky ground or salting troughs to avoid damage to vegetation and soils. To minimize attraction to wildlife species, salt only sufficient amounts so that surplus is not left behind after livestock leave the area.
12. Permittee or permittee employees shall not use or place poison, including cyanide guns, for predator control on National Forest lands.
13. Dead livestock carcasses must be moved at least 100 feet from the high water line of streams and lakes, springs, and out of the view of roads or trails, and away from any areas of significant public use.

14. Do not trail sheep to camp at noon.
15. Permittee will hand out flyers with "If you see Bighorn Sheep" to his or her employees detailing what to do if the herder is to see a bighorn sheep.
16. Sheep camps must be kept clean and well maintained at all times. Use a trench type latrine at each camp and cover pit with 12 inches of soil when camp is moved. Do not bury cans and/or other rubbish, and pack trash out.
17. Horses to be used on the allotment and kept in the horse pastures will be charged for at the same rate as for cattle. These horses will be broke and usable, for use in the management of the allotment. Application for horse use will be made each year prior to beginning of the grazing season.
18. Any equipment used in the transport of livestock, including horse trailers and stock trucks, should be washed before coming onto the allotment(s) if they have been used in areas where noxious weeds are present.
19. 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 noxious weed free, or must have the original and current evidence of noxious weed free certification documentation present. All markings must meet the State and/or county standards for certification as noxious weed free.
20. Your assistance in locating noxious weed sites and reporting them to your Forest Officer is greatly appreciated. If you are able and willing to assist in treating noxious weeds, please work with your Forest Officer to determine how best to help.
21. If livestock are being fed hay prior to coming on to the Forest, please see to it that they are fed weed free hay at least 2 days prior to entering the Forest

Required Reporting
Enclosed is a Grazing Use Record for the upcoming season. Please use this form to record the dates livestock spend on the allotment as well as other information such as livestock loss, grazing use, resource concerns, etc. Range Improvement Maintenance form is also included. Please provide information on any project you maintain. Please return the forms following the 2014 grazing season by October 30, 2014.

Coordination & Cooperation
If you spot a wildfire, report it immediately to the Interagency Dispatch Center in Cody, WY at (307) 578-5740 or Toll Free (800) 295-9954

Notice
The permittee will provide the Medicine Wheel/Paintrock Ranger District with notification of any changes or deviation he or she wishes to make in these Annual Operating Instructions.

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 resources. If you have any ideas or suggestions that will improve the management of the allotment, we would like to hear from you. Please keep us posted about activities and conditions on the allotment. If you have any questions or concerns regarding management, please do not hesitate to contact Shawn Heinert or Nick Padilla at (307) 548-6541.