

2014 Annual Operating Instructions

Powder River C&H Allotment

Powder River Ranger District

Bighorn National Forest

District Ranger _____ Date _____

Permittee _____ Date _____

Powder River C&H ALLOTMENT
YEAR 2014 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

Permitted and Authorized for 2014:

Powder River Allotment	LS Kind	LS Class	Permitted			Authorized		
			LS #	From	To	LS#	From	To
Robert C. Samuel	Cattle	Mature	325	7/16	9/30	300	7/16	9/30
	Horse	Mature	2	7/16	9/30	5	7/16	9/30
Authorized use for 2014 not in non-use status								

- Before Entering the Allotment

I suggest that you review your term grazing permit and the following Annual Operating Instructions, and ask questions if any portion is not clearly understood.

Year 2014 grazing fees are \$1.35/head month, and must be paid before livestock can be turned onto the Forest. Let Scott or Kerri know the actual date and number of livestock entering the National Forest and, upon request, provide for having stock counted.

2014 rotation:

Pasture	Rotation Sequence		
	2012	2013	2014
Powder River	3	1	2
Webb Creek	1	3	1
Upper	2	2	3

- Entering the Allotment

The turn on date for Powder River C&H Allotment is tentatively authorized for July 16. Plan to turn livestock onto the allotment on or after this date unless you feel that forage is not ready to be grazed, or unless you have been notified that delays are necessary to allow for further plant development. The actual date livestock may be turned onto the allotment depends on range readiness. The value of animal months lost due to a delay for forage development may be credited against next year's fees, if requested by the end of the calendar year.

Indicators to determine range readiness are soil and vegetation conditions. Rangeland is generally ready for grazing when soil has become firm after winter and early spring precipitation, and when plants have reached a stage of growth at which grazing may begin under a specific management plan without long-lasting damage. This occurs when grasses are headed out, forbs are in full bloom, and shrubs are leaved out. Livestock should not be turned on until all portions of the first pasture of a rotation are determined to be "ready", and subsequent pastures in a rotation will be "range ready" when their scheduled grazing use is to occur.

- Resource Guidelines

Resource guidelines below are derived from the Powder River C&H Allotment Management Plan, 03/20/2000. The allowable use standards for utilization of the current year's growth by livestock and wildlife will be as follows:

Uplands	A maximum of 40% of current years growth in <u>first</u> used pasture; a maximum of 50% of current years growth in all other pastures.
Riparian*	A 5" stubble height of all riparian sedge species
Aspen	A 5" stubble height of all grass species within boundaries of aspen stands when livestock leave the pasture.

* The "Bighorn National Forest Vegetation Grazing Guidelines, April 23, 2007" indicate that stubble height measurements are to record longest leaf measurements which results in a 5 inch standard, unless otherwise agreed upon.

Moves between pastures are dependent upon forage utilization levels and other resource objectives being met for a pasture. When it is determined that further use and impacts in a pasture will exceed allowable use levels, livestock are required to be moved to the next pasture in the scheduled rotation, or off National Forest if they are already in the last pasture. It is your responsibility to see that livestock are managed to best utilize available forage while assuring guidelines are not exceeded. Since precipitation, forage production levels, and other factors change from year to year and livestock utilization patterns vary, this will require monitoring by you and/or your rider throughout the season.

Livestock use beyond allowable guidelines could result in an administrative action in subsequent years, such as an adjustment to the season of use, in order to allow plants a chance to recover and restore root reserves.

- Monitoring

The primary emphasis for monitoring should be placed on measuring stubble height in riparian areas, and estimating percent by weight of forage removed on upland sites, as described above. If issues are raised indicating the need to monitor aspen, stream banks, or willows, we will work with you to determine transect locations and establish transects on the ground. It is strongly recommended that permittees monitor livestock impacts. Any data you collect and submit will be maintained in permanent monitoring files.

To facilitate monitoring actual use, and to avoid the need to measure utilization on all Suitable rangeland, monitoring will be done using a key area concept. "Key" areas are generally those areas of a pasture which livestock have the tendency to go to and graze first. Key areas serve as a monitoring and evaluation point for the degree of grazing use occurring in each pasture. They are chosen based upon the premise that if utilization in these key areas does not exceed allowable utilization standards, then use in the rest of the unit will most likely not exceed standards either. This is not to imply that guidelines need only be met in "key areas". Allowable use guidelines apply to all Suitable rangeland on the allotment. Key areas may be revised as needed.

I encourage you to contact Scott or Kerri should you have any questions, want assistance with measurements, or need monitoring forms. In order to assure your results accurately reflect livestock use, all measurements must be completed within 7 days of the time livestock are removed from the pasture. Be sure to record the date measurements are taken, and the name of the data collector(s). Photos of the transect showing its general location and actual forage remaining will support your numerical documentation. The Forest Service will conduct spot checks throughout the grazing season and I encourage your participation.

- Key Areas:

Pasture	Location
Powder River & Upper	Riparian area along the North Fork of the Powder River; from the Forest Boundary north to the north allotment boundary: T48N, R85W, Sections 16, 21, 28, 29, & 32.
Webb Creek & Upper	Riparian area along Webb Creek (this includes both the upper forks); from the headwaters south to the Forest Boundary: Sections 8, 17, 18, 20, 29, 30, & 31, T48N, R85W.
Powder River	SESW Section 32, T48N, R85W: Meadow near swamp.
Upper	SENE Section 17, T48N, R85W: Gentle slopes south of Road #450.
Upper	NWNE Section 16, T48N, R85W: Meadow just east of Road #29.

Key areas are also identified on your allotment map, revised in 2013. Contact this office if an additional copy is needed.

I encourage you to keep thorough notes while taking measurements and making observations during the grazing season. Should your data indicate changes might be needed in key area locations, contact Scott or Kerri to discuss adjustments.

- Maintenance of Improvements

Term grazing permits state that permittees will maintain assigned range improvements to standards of repair, orderliness, and safety acceptable to the Forest Service. A complete list of the improvements and designated maintenance responsibility is included in Part 3 of your term grazing permit. Normally, maintenance 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. Materials from abandoned range improvements or maintenance activities must be removed from the Forest. The minimum maintenance standard for improvements is as follows:

- 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. Any ‘let-down’ fences for which you are responsible should be let down after grazing use, for the winter. Obstacles, such as down logs and trees, shall be removed from the fence line. Dead and leaning trees that may fall onto the fence shall be felled and removed from the fence line.

- Buck and Pole Fences, and Pole-top 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 fastened to bucks or posts, and all broken or rotting poles and bucks are to be replaced. Obstacles, such as down logs and trees, shall be removed from the fence line. Dead and leaning trees that may fall onto the fence shall be felled and removed from the fence line.

- Springs and Stock Tanks: 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 spring boxes and tanks. Over-flow outlets on stock tanks shall prevent excessive water spill in the immediate vicinity (30 ft) of the tank. Tanks are to be level, completely surrounded by dry soil, gravel, or rock, and easily accessible by both cows and calves. Livestock barriers over tanks must be sturdy and poles and planks must be in good condition and fastened in place. Drain the system and components following periods of use where freezing may cause damage.

- Stock Pipelines: Maintain cover over buried pipelines, and maintain backfill around structures. Avoid travel over shallow buried pipelines. Repair any damage to above-ground and on-ground pipelines immediately. Remove all foreign debris that hinders system operation. Drain the system and components soon following periods of use. Maintain erosion protection at outlets. Protect the area adjacent to the trough with gravel or cover. Be sure that any outlet pipe is free and not causing erosion. All pipeline scraps and other unused pipe or debris remaining from maintenance activities must be removed from the Forest.

- Planned Range Improvement Projects, 2014

Number	Name	Project description
503003	North Unit/South Unit Division Fence	Consider moving this fence to the south to make pasture sizes more equal; Bob to have his rider this year consider this option.
503010b	Webb Creek Spring	Visit site with permittee to determine feasibility and proper clearances for moving it lower elevation so it will flow better.
503012	Powder River East Spring	Proposed; undetermined location; NEPA not completed; Bob to have his rider this year consider this option.

- Salting Practices

The proper use of salt can be used as a management tool to help achieve proper utilization. The following guidelines must be followed when salting unless you have been given direction by a Forest Officer to do otherwise:

- a) Scatter salt in its proper location prior to livestock entering the pasture.
- b) Salt should be placed between water developments, and at least 1/4 mile from water if possible.
- c) Salt away from small parks, trails, roads, and areas of concentrated public use.
- d) Salt should be placed in areas of rock outcrops, mature timber stands (other than aspen), or areas of dense sagebrush.
- e) Change your salt location at least every year and preferably every time salt is placed. Moving salt blocks at least 100 feet can prevent an area from becoming abused from salt placement year after year.
- f) Remove salt from an area when proper use is reached.

- Other

In accordance with discussion at spring meetings, sheep permitted to Mark Lyman Revocable Trust are authorized to trail through and graze Webb Creek & Upper Units of Powder River C&H Allotment, for a total of no more than 7 days, with an on-date tentatively authorized for July 6. The objective is to reduce risk of Larkspur grazing to cattle.

Permittees are authorized to maintain a camp trailer at cow camps for quarters if needed.

Any dead livestock shall be moved to a location greater than 200 feet from water, 500 feet from developed campgrounds, and out of view from roads or trails.

Permittees are required to abide by all Forest road restrictions and closures, as are all users of the public lands. No exceptions will be made without prior written approval.

Documentation on the enclosed Annual Use Report is required, and will help us to plan livestock use in the future. Please make sure both on and off dates are recorded for each pasture as well as the number of cattle. Feel free to make any other pertinent management notes, as they will be helpful in determining future management decisions for the allotment. Return the Actual Use Report to the Powder River Ranger District Office by December 31, 2014.