

## 2015 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

### DRY FORK ALLOTMENT

These are your Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the Dry Fork Allotment. We are including a signature page at the end of each AOI which we are requesting permittees sign and return to the district. This signature page also includes the signatures of the district ranger and current range management specialist overseeing the allotment. We believe that this process better represents the cooperative nature of managing these areas and indicates an understanding of the information in this document as well as the information in your term grazing permit(s).

The Dry Fork Allotment is comprised of two drainages with no defined units and is grazed as an on/off management system. Your term grazing permit authorizes you to graze 44 head of cattle on the Dry Fork Allotment from July 1 to October 31. The current allowable use for the allotment is set at 50% utilization on key forage species on uplands and in the riparian areas. Fifty percent utilization on riparian species equates to a 4 inch stubble height. Browse use of willows and other woody species is also set at 50%. When the utilization level of 50% is reached, cattle need to be removed from the allotment.

The drier mesic meadows adjacent to streams and springs should be watched to ensure that use levels are not exceeded. These meadows are of concern across the district and more focus on use levels in these areas will occur. While all adjacent meadows should be looked at, the drier meadows have less chance of regrowth and therefore are of highest concern. The upland annual use level of 50% should be used to manage the dry meadows and your rangeland management specialist will work with you to determine when a desired use level has been met, so that everyone understands what the meadows should look like after livestock use.

**Designated Monitoring Areas(DMA's):** DMA's are used to monitor representative riparian areas within a grazing unit which establishes a record of utilization and trend. The information from the DMA is also used to plan cattle moves, determine if end of season indicators are met, and to evaluate whether current management is effective or needs to be modified. Permittee monitoring, documentation and photos are encouraged before entering and when leaving each unit.

**Fence & Water Improvements:** Please refer to Part 3 of your Term Grazing Permit. Allotment boundary fences should be maintained prior to cattle entering the allotment, interior fences should also be maintained prior to cattle entering a new unit. Existing improvements should be maintained each year before requesting new improvements.

**Response to Predators:** Should predator issues arise on the allotment, please contact your range management specialist and Idaho Fish & Game or Wildlife Services with the information. Coordination with permittees and all agencies listed above is important to assess predator issues and share information on predator management decisions on National Forest administered lands and those areas adjacent to National Forest.

**Grazing Fees:** The grazing fees for the 2015 season are \$1.69/head month. Your grazing fee payment will need to be received prior to turning livestock out on the National Forest. Receipt of payment could take up to 2 weeks from the date payment is sent.

**Actual Use Report:** At the end of the grazing season you will be receiving an INDIVIDUAL ACTUAL USE REPORT. You will need to provide a record of the dates your cattle enter the forest, dates they leave the forest, and a record of losses. The report is a requirement of the special terms and

conditions of your term grazing permit. Please return this report to the Lost River Ranger District office in a timely manner.

**NEPA and Allotment Management Plans (AMP):** Our office is in the process of completing an environmental analysis and documentation for livestock grazing in the Dry Fork Allotment and four others in the Antelope Creek drainage. Permittees will need to work closely with your rangeland management specialist and other Forest personnel to develop a proposed action for grazing management in conjunction with a long term grazing management strategy (AMP) for your allotment.

This work will include taking a hard look at historic and existing grazing activities to determine whether current management is adequate to comply with the Forest Plan and other laws and regulations that govern the management of public lands. This process will include several meetings with permittees to discuss and agree on feasible and appropriate management goals and monitoring objectives on the allotment that will meet or move us toward the desired conditions for multiple resources on the allotment.

One example of this would be reviewing maps and other existing information on water developments to determine the functionality as livestock water and/or the necessity of converting stock ponds to troughs to provide adequate water while protecting the integrity of the spring source for wildlife, water and soil resources. Fence issues should also be discussed. The ultimate goal of this analysis is to determine the existing condition and trend of those areas most likely to be affected by livestock grazing and develop a plan to minimize impacts through best management practices for livestock grazing. Your participation in development of the proposed action and AMP are crucial to the success of your operation and our long term management of the area.

If you have any questions about these instructions, or management of the allotment please contact Diane Weaver or the District Rangeland Management Specialist at (208) 588-3400.