

**Pass Creek C&H Allotment
2015 Annual Operating Instructions**

Below is your Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the Pass Creek Allotment. This AOI addresses Forest Service administered lands within the Pass Creek Allotment as discussed during the meetings April 24, 2015. Please review your Term Grazing Permit for range improvement maintenance, and salting standards. Actual on-dates and off-dates are dependent on range readiness and when allowable use indicators are met. The Forest Service may approve changes to the grazing rotation in consultation with the permittees to address range condition situations that may occur due to weather related circumstances.

<u>Permittee</u>	Permitted Cattle Authorized				<u>2015</u>	<u>Season</u>
	<u>Term</u>	<u>Suspended</u>	<u>Allow</u>	<u>Non-Use</u>		
Loristica, LLC.	417	28	389	0	389	7/15-10/1
Ramshorn Grazing Assoc.	331	22	309	0	309	7/15-10/1
Keith Lewis	176	11	165	0	165	7/15-10/1
Squaw Creek Grass	103	7	96	0	96	7/15-10/1
Murdock Farms	90	6	84	0	84	7/15-10/1
Wade Waddoups	50	3	47	0	47	7/15-10/1
Brent Bingham	45	0	45	0	45	7/15-10/1
P. Hawkins/P. Jones	17	0	17	0	17	7/15-10/1
Leon L. or Brett T. Williams	16	0	16	0	16	7/15-10/1
	1245	77	1168			

2015 Stocking Reduction:

Diane Weaver issued a decision on February 27, 2014 to reduce grazing permits on the Pass Creek Allotment by 25% of the permitted numbers. The decision was based on extensive monitoring data demonstrating that the appropriate stocking rate for the allotment is 25% less than previously permitted. The decision was appealed by the Pass Creek permittees on April 16, 2014. The decision was then upheld by Chuck Mark, Forest Supervisor, Salmon Challis National Forest on August 13, 2014. There was no discretionary review of this decision by the Intermountain Regional Office. The reduction from a total of 1,660 permitted cow/calf pair to 1,245 permitted cow/calf pair will therefore be implemented beginning the 2015 grazing season.

Grazing Unit Rotation: See Table 1 & 2 attached Pass Creek Allotment 2015 Grazing Plan.

The NRCS SNOTEL sites across the Lost River Ranger District currently range from 64-90% of the Water Year average through the month of March. The Lost River Range SNOTEL site at Hilts Creek is at 64% and the Upper Lemhi Range Snotel is at 90% of average. All indications show that cumulative drought impacts could persist or worsen this year. If this occurs the Forest Service expects that cattle may need to be moved more quickly through units and removed prior to the scheduled off date. Forage production is dependent on growing season (April through September) temperatures and precipitation. Even when drought conditions subside there is a lag time for plants to physically recover from the stress of the drought.

Two full time riders are required on the allotment. This means two riders are required on the allotment 7 days per week. If riders need time off permittees need to fill in or ride themselves. The two additional riders in 2013 were very helpful in managing Wet Creek and it is recommended that additional riders be used on the allotment while grazing Wet Creek and surrounding units.

A Suspension and Notice of Non-Compliance was issued and/or extended to the permittees on the Pass Creek Allotment in 2014 for **failure to keep livestock in scheduled pastures and failure to meet utilization standards.**

The following actions are required of Pass Creek permittees during the 2015 grazing seasons to remedy the non-compliance and suspensions:

1. All livestock are to be kept in the scheduled pasture according to the AOI or direction from the District Ranger or a rangeland management specialist as adjustments are made throughout the season.
2. End of season indicators are not exceeded.
3. Cattle are kept out of exclosures.

Failure to comply with these actions within the prescribed timeframes may result in the initiation of permit suspension or cancellation procedures.

Biological Assessment: A new biological assessment (BA) was issued for the Pass Creek Allotment on March 5, 2014 and a Letter of Concurrence issued by US Fish and Wildlife Service on April 14, 2014. It is very important that the grazing system on pages 2-3 and the conservation measures on pages 8-9 in the BA be followed closely. If you have any questions on the conservation measures please ask the Forest Service about them.

Allowable Use Indicators: End of season 4-inch stubble height on hydric sedges & grasses is required along the greenline of riparian areas except along **Wet Creek within the Pine Creek Unit and the Wet Creek Unit where a 6-inch stubble height indicator will be used.** While adequate regrowth may occur under average growing season conditions, the opposite may be true during below average conditions. Special attention should be made to drier weather conditions. To meet the end of season standard it is recommended to move cattle during drier conditions at prior to the trigger being met. Upland indicator for utilization is 50% use of key species (Idaho fescue and Bluebunch wheatgrass) on current year's growth.

End of season woody species utilization (browse) is 50% current year's growth except Upper and Lower Big Creek and Wet Creek within the Pine Creek Unit where a 30% indicator will be used. **The end of grazing period streambank alteration indicator is 15% on Wet Creek in the Wet Creek Unit and along Wet Creek in the Pine Creek Unit from the Forest boundary upstream to Coal Creek. The alteration indicator is 20% on Wet Creek within the Pine Creek Unit between Coal Creek and the rider's camp and 30% for the unnamed tributary in the Pine Creek Unit.** See annual indicators table on page 7.

Manage the mesic meadows adjacent to streams and springs to ensure that 50% use at end of growing season is not exceeded. Keep in mind that with drier conditions meadows will have less chance of regrowth. Your rangeland management specialist will work with you to help you identify what the meadows should look like after livestock use at 50%.

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. Permittee monitoring, documentation and photos are encouraged before entering and when leaving each unit.

Cleaning Grazing Units: Livestock need to begin moving from a unit prior to the stubble height indicator being met to ensure allowable use indicators are met. This is especially important during drought conditions. In most cases 7 days should be adequate. **Permittees should assist range riders in moving cattle to new units and in checking to assure that the unit cleaned stays clean.** Range riders should keep permittees informed of problems cleaning grazed units. Bulls are to be kept with the main herd or **removed from the allotment when they disrupt herd management.** Frequent back-riding indicates there is a herd management problem. **It is also the permittees responsibility to correct problems caused by drift from other units.**

It is critical that cattle are kept out of the Wet Creek Unit prior to and following scheduled use within this unit. It is a hard unit to clean due to the topography and timber, and should be checked regularly following scheduled use to quickly identify cattle that were missed when cleaning the unit.

Livestock Trailing: Livestock will trail through the Pine Creek Unit on three separate occasions in the 2015 grazing season. The Pass Creek grazing permits authorize livestock to trail for one day through the Pass Creek Allotment along the Pass Creek Road (FS RD 122) from the Big Lost River basin to the Little Lost River basin on or around June 1st each year. These livestock typically stay along the road, but there is likely to be some livestock accessing Wet Creek within the Pine Creek Unit as this trailing occurs. The Forest Service documented very little use from trailing livestock across the allotment during the same time period in 2013 and 2014. Permittees should ensure all gates between BLM/Private and the Forest are closed so that cattle do not re-enter the Pass Creek Allotment following trailing. The Blue Jay Canyon drift fence should be maintain prior to this trailing event so that livestock do not enter the South Pass Creek Unit and get missed during the trailing event.

Livestock grazing will begin July 15th in the Big Creek and Sands/Coal Creek Units. The remainder of the permitted cattle that don't trail in June will need to trail through the Pine Creek Unit while entering the allotment for the grazing season. They will cross Wet Creek at the designated trailing site on or around July 15th on the way to the Sands/Coal and Big Creek units at the beginning of the grazing season. The June 1 and July 15 trailing events will account for the entire herd crossing Wet Creek one time.

During the main grazing season there will be around 1,168 cow/calf pairs trail from the Sands/Coal Unit to the Wet Creek Basin Units around August 7-11th. Ensure that livestock do not graze the lower portion of Wet Creek below Coal Creek during this trailing event. Livestock will be allowed to gradually enter the upper portion of the Pine Creek Unit while moving from the Sands/Coal Creek Unit to the South Wet Creek Basin Unit as long as riders and permittees ensure the cattle are not drifting down to and grazing Wet Creek.

This livestock trailing will occur across roughly ¼ mile of Wet Creek below the rider's camp near the confluence of Coal Creek and Wet Creek similar to trailing of livestock in 2013 and 2014. The cattle that trail out to the Little Lost River basin at the end of the grazing season will need to trail through the Pine Creek Unit on the way off the allotment. There will be roughly 180 cow/calf pair coming off the allotment in this direction. This trailing event will be similar to the June 1st trailing with very few cattle accessing Wet Creek as cattle trail off the allotment. The remaining cattle will trail off the allotment through the Pass Creek Narrows.

Fence & Water Improvements: Please refer to Part 3 of your Term Grazing Permit for a list of improvements. Maintain allotment boundary fences prior to cattle entering the allotment; maintain interior fences prior to cattle entering a new unit and while livestock are scheduled adjacent to these fences.

- ✓ **Basin Creek enclosure water pump and the water pump for Sands/Coal Unit will be installed prior to livestock entering units. It is very important to use the intake screen on the Sands/Coal unit pump to prevent fish entrainment. Work with Forest Service to ensure pump works prior to placing cattle in the Sands/Coal Unit.**
- ✓ **Exclosures will be maintained prior to entering units and kept clean of livestock. This includes fences around springs. If livestock enter exclosures remove them promptly and fix fences to keep livestock from re-entering. Permittees should notify the Forest Service if this occurs.**

A few jack rails were broken on the Wet Creek enclosure fence during the 2014 grazing season. These rails need replaced by the permittees prior to grazing in 2015. The Forest Service will ensure the remaining portion of the Wet Creek enclosure fence is in good working condition by July 15th. This will include pulling up the sagging jacks on the south side of the enclosure. Permittees will be responsible to ensure the fence stays in good condition throughout the grazing season.

Rider's Camp: Horses will continue to graze within the Rider's Camp Pasture but they are not allowed along Wet Creek within the pasture. Cattle are not authorized to graze within the rider's camp pasture. The corrals will be reconstructed to keep horses off of the stream.

Weed Free Hay: In accordance with State Law, please ensure that range riders bring hay that is certified and tagged noxious weed free.

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. You are eligible for a credit refund from last year for the head months that were paid for last year, but not used due to the Forest Service having you remove livestock early.

Actual Use Report: An Actual Use Report will be mailed to you shortly after cattle leave the allotment. This form is to be completed and returned to the Lost River Ranger District by October 15th after you have removed livestock from your allotment. The Association President will need to provide a consolidated report with the numbers and dates when cattle entered the allotment, moved from unit to unit, when cattle were removed from the allotment. Each permittee will need to provide an individual report with dates when their cattle entered and left the allotment.

This information is used for the purpose of evaluating and analyzing: grazing allotment and grazing unit use, compliance with annual operating instructions, and planning next season's grazing management strategy. Applications for refunds/credits for unused portions of your allotment must be requested and filed separately. Please contact our office if you need an application for refund/credit. Questions and assistance regarding these instructions should be directed to Diane Weaver or the District Rangeland Management Specialist at (208) 588-3400.

Pass Creek has 1245 permitted head of cattle beginning the 2015 grazing season with 3234 permitted head months.

Table 1. 2015 Potential Grazing Rotation *Estimated 79 days with 1168 head.

Order of Use	Unit Name	Number of Head	On Date	Off Date	HM's Permitted 3234	End of Growing Season Stubble Height Indicator/Streambank Alteration/Woody Browse	Trigger Stubble Height	Actual End of Season Stubble Height/streambank Alteration/Woody Browse	Use Exceeded
1	Lower Big Creek ¹	1471	7/15		3034	4/NA/30%	5		
1	Upper Big Creek ¹					4/NA/30%	5		
1	Sands/Coal ¹			8/7		4/NA/50%	5		
2	Wet Creek (Upper) ²	200	8/5	8/11		6/15%/50%	7		
3	Pine Creek ³		8/8	8/10		Wet Creek 6/20%/30% Pine Creek 6/20%/30%	7/7		
4	North Wet Creek Basin ⁴		8/11			4/NA/50%	5		
4	South Wet Creek Basin ⁴			9/11		4/NA/50%	5		
5	Southeast Pass Creek ⁵		9/12			4/NA/50%	5		
5	Twin Lakes ⁵					4/NA/50%	5		
5	South Pass Creek ⁵					4/NA/50%	5		
5	North Pass Creek ⁵			10/1		4/NA/50%	5		
	Total			79					

¹The Lower Big Creek Unit, Upper Big Creek, the Sands/Coal Creek Unit will be run together.

² The Wet Creek Unit will be used by roughly 200 pair of cattle as they trail from Big Creek and Sands/Coal to Wet Creek Basin.

³The Pine Creek Unit would receive incidental grazing as the livestock would be trailed from Sands/Coal Creek Unit to the North and South Wet Creek Basin Units.

⁴The South Wet Creek Basin Unit and the North Wet Creek Basin Unit will be run together.

⁵ The South East Pass Creek Unit, the Twin Lakes Unit, the South Pass Creek Unit, and the North Pass Creek Unit will be run together this year.

* Length of season and days of use in each pasture may change depending on management and weather factors.

Table 2. 2015 Annual Operating Instructions *Estimated 79 days with 1168 head. (All actions are permittees responsibility, unless otherwise noted)

Order of Use	Unit Name	EOS Season Stubble Height Indicator	Trigger	Actions to be Taken Prior to Cattle Entering Unit	Actions to be Taken During and after Cattle are in Unit
1	Lower Big Creek	4	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconstruct boundary fence. Ensure no cattle are entering the unit from adjoining BLM allotment. Maintain all unit boundary fences, place salt away from creeks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor Upper Wet Creek to keep cattle from drifting into that unit Keep cattle pushed to Upper Big Creek to allow for drifting back into Lower Big Creek. Maintain high cattle and clean up and place cattle that are grazing lower in the units. Move all cattle out of both upper and lower Big Creek and Sands/Coal Unit in an *estimated 22 days from entering the units, or when triggers are met. Permittees to provide additional riding during move, and back riding to ensure unit is clean. Upper and Lower Big Creek require additional riding as cattle go to the creeks to water and are hard to move back up.
1	Upper Big Creek	4	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Massacre divide spring enclosure and reset headbox to standard before entering unit. The Upper Big Creek enclosure fence will not be used unless annual use indicators cannot be met within the fenced area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute cattle in uplands and monitor the Wet Creek unit for back drift. Maintain high cattle and clean up and place cattle that are grazing lower in the units. Move all cattle out of Upper and Lower Big Creek and Sands/Coal Units in an estimated 22 days from entering the units, or when triggers are met. Permittees to provide additional riding during move, and back riding to ensure unit is clean.
1	Sands/Coal Creek	4	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place salt in uplands and complete fence maintenance. Get pump in Wet Creek with Forest Service provided fish screen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor Upper Wet Creek to ensure cattle are not getting into that unit. Move cattle out of Sands/Coal Creek and Upper and Lower Big Creek an *estimated 22 days from entering the units, or when trigger is met. Ensure adequate stubble is present to bring livestock through the Sands/Coal Unit from the Big Creek Units without exceeding end of season indicators in Sands/Coal. Place cattle in uplands immediately to reduce use on lower riparian areas. Install temporary water pump, pipeline and trough to water cattle from Wet Creek, discourage use in Coal Creek. Use fenced area between Sands/Coal and Pine Creek Units and trough to assist in efficient livestock movement between Sands/Coal through Pine Creek and off the allotment at the end of the season. Open water gap gate to Wet Creek to allow watering of livestock while in the Sands Creek Unit. Keep gate to Wet Creek Unit closed.

Order of Use	Unit Name	EOS Stubble Ht Indicator	Trigger	Actions to be Taken Prior to Cattle Entering Unit	Actions to be Taken During and after Cattle are in Unit
2	Upper Wet Creek	6	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor this unit while in Sands/Coal, Big Creek, and Pass Creek Units and remove any cattle that may drift into this unit immediately. Ensure enclosure fence is up and in good condition and water gap gates are closed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor while in Sands/Coal Creek, Big Creek, and Pass Creek Units to ensure no drift into unit. Closely monitor enclosure and maintain to ensure cattle don't get in. If cattle do drift in remove them immediately. Keep water gap gates closed while in this unit. Monitor key area closely and begin moving cattle to Big Creek when approaching the trigger.
3	Pine Creek	6 (stream-called Pine Creek by permittees) 6 (Lower Wet Creek)	7 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put up let down fence between Pass Creek and Hilts Creek 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carefully monitor Pine Creek Unit while grazing other units. If cattle drift into this unit please remove immediately. The Pine Creek Unit would receive limited grazing as the livestock would mainly be trailed from Sands/Coal Creek Unit to the North and South Wet Creek Basin Units. This will be done to ensure there are very limited impacts to Wet Creek this year. When trailing livestock from Sands/Coal to Wet Creek Basin, cattle may graze the upper portion of the Pine Creek Unit not to exceed end-of-season indicators. Back ride regularly to ensure unit is cleared and cattle do not move back into unit Permittees to provide additional riding during move, and back riding to ensure unit is clean.
4	North Wet Creek Basin	4	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permittees to maintain spring enclosures to standard and install floats. Placement of salt and fence maintenance. Install Basin Creek water pump before cattle enter unit. Maintain Basin Creek enclosure fence and place electric fence charger. Add six foot gate to fence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move cattle out of North Wet Creek Basin an *estimated 30 days from entering unit, or when trigger is met. Permittees to provide additional riding during move, and back riding to ensure unit is clean. Install temporary water pump, pipeline and trough to water cattle away from the Basin Creek Enclosure. Keep livestock out of enclosures. Check the North Wet Creek Basin Unit regularly throughout the grazing season to ensure no cattle are left in the Unit that would then enter the enclosure after the main herd has moved out of the unit. Keep electric fence up until certain all cattle are out of the Unit.

Order of Use	Unit Name	EOS Stubble Ht Indicator	Trigger	Actions to be Taken Prior to Cattle Entering Unit	Actions to be Taken During and after Cattle are in Unit
4	South Wet Creek Basin	4	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permittees to maintain spring exclosures to standard. • Placement of salt and fence maintenance. • Maintain Black Tail Canyon Trough. It may need replaced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move cattle out of South Wet Creek Basin an *estimated 30 days from entering either units, when trigger is met, or if cattle congregate along fence. • Limit use in Basin Creek Units when there are low water years to decrease impacts to seeps, springs, and limited water channels. • Permittees to provide additional riding during move, and back riding to ensure unit is clean. • Keep livestock out of exclosures.
5	Southeast Pass Creek	4	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permittees to put up and maintain temporary electric fence at bottom of Mud Lake around the spring. The fence should stay on the south of the trail and encompass the entire wet area. The fence along the road needs to be removed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Total of an estimated 20 days in the four Pass Creek Units combined, or when trigger is met. • Permittees to provide additional riding during move, and back riding to ensure unit is clean. • Move lower cattle or problem cattle to uplands or to other Pass Creek Units. •
5	Twin Lakes	4	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain permanent spring exclosures to standard. • Fix lower spring development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Total of an estimated 20 days in the four Pass Creek Units combined, or when trigger is met. • Permittees to provide additional riding during move, and back riding to ensure unit is clean. • Maintain to standard spring developments. • Move lower cattle or problem cattle to uplands or to other Pass Creek Units.
5	South Pass Creek	4	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place cattle in unit before off date in South East Pass and Twin Lakes. • Place cattle in this unit first then move to North Pass Creek. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move cattle into the Pass Creek Units as they come out of Southeast Pass Creek and Twin Lakes Units. • Monitor and move cattle when trigger is met • *Total of an estimated 20 days in the four Pass Creek Units combined, or when trigger is met.
5	North Pass Creek	4	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain fences and developed springs/troughs in Wagon Box and Telephone to standard. • Maintain floats to troughs. • Do not leave cattle on summit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move cattle into the Pass Creek Units as they come out of Southeast Pass Creek and Twin Lakes Units. Allow some cattle to drift from Mud Lake around the upper portion of North Pass Creek by Wagon Box. • Monitor and move cattle when trigger is met. • *Total of an estimated 20 days in the four Pass Creek Units combined, or when trigger is met. • Permittees provide additional riding during move, and back ride to ensure previous units are clean.

***Estimated days in units are based on past management and drought. Remember these are only estimates to help meet triggers in units. If in any unit triggers are met earlier than these estimated dates, cattle need to be moved to next unit accordingly. In the same regard, if cattle are distributed and have not met triggers by the estimated date, these dates may be adjusted with approval from authorized forest officer. Please remember to notify your association president or the Forest Service with any adjustments or changes to your annual operating instructions.**

While the Pass Creek Allotment is going to be used with larger areas being grazed within any given time period, the key areas need to be monitored closely to ensure that a trigger is not met on an area where there will be a need to move the remainder of the herd to the next unit. An example is where North Wet Creek Basin and South Wet Creek Basin are being grazed together. If the South Wet Creek Basin unit reaches its trigger first, the herd will need to move over to the Pass Creek Units to ensure that South Wet Creek Basin Unit end of season indicators are not exceeded for the year. This could occur prior to the North Wet Creek Basin reaching the trigger.

General Items To Be Completed Prior to the 2015 Grazing Season

1. Continue to work on communication system. This will be critical with the adjusted management system and a new permittee on the allotment.
2. Ensure riders, permittees, and Forest Service personnel:
 - a. Are aware of the need to complete accurate records
 - b. Know where key areas are located
 - c. Know when and how to measure indicators
 - d. Understand riders have authority to move cattle to next unit early, if necessary.
 - e. Know to look for changes in cattle behavior (distribution, congregation, walking fences) as an indication of the time to move
3. Ensure fences and water developments are maintained to standard before cattle enter allotment and units.

General Items To Be Completed During the 2015 Grazing Season

1. Ensure accurate records are kept
2. Hold permittee and Forest Service field meetings during the season to discuss potential issues and resource conditions. One will be held in late August, before cattle move from the Pass Creek units to the Wet Creek and Pine Creek Units to ensure everyone understands how the move will affect Wet Creek. Others will be held as needed.
3. **Ensure salt is placed off streams; at least ¼ mile and is placed well ahead of the cattle movements.**
4. Ensure units are regularly ridden with emphasis on streams.
5. Ensure back riding occurs in all units. Ride Wet Creek and Pine Creek Units regularly to ensure no cattle are in those units outside of scheduled days.
6. **Remove Bulls in a timely manner after they have been effective.**
7. **Permittees need to provide additional help to riders when moving from unit to unit to ensure units are being cleaned.**

2015 Recommended Developments to Improve Livestock Distribution in Order of Priority

1. Maintain allotment boundary fences prior to cattle entering the allotment; interior fences should be maintained prior cattle entering a new unit. Emphasis should be placed on the fence around the Pine Creek Unit fence. If livestock enter this unit out of sequence the permittees should ensure the location of livestock movement is identified and repaired.

Recommended Developments to Protect/Restore Resource

1. **Basin Creek Enclosure and Sands/Coal Unit water pumps will be installed prior to livestock entering units.**
2. **Enclosures need to be maintained prior to entering units so that cattle will not get into them.**
3. **Maintain enclosures throughout entire grazing season so that potential of cattle not removed from units does not allow cattle to get into enclosures after the main herd is moved.**
4. **Reconstruct Big Creek boundary fence.**