

Arco Pass C&H Allotment 2015 Annual Operating Instructions

Below is your Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the Arco Pass Allotment. This AOI addresses Forest Service administered lands within the Arco Pass Allotment and information discussed during the meeting April 23, 2015. Please review your Term Grazing Permit for grazing utilization, range improvement maintenance, and salting standards. Actual on-dates and off-dates are dependent on range readiness and when allowable use standards 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> | <u>Term</u> | Permitted Cattle Authorized | | | <u>Brand</u> |
|---------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| | | <u>Non-Use</u> | <u>2015</u> | <u>Season</u> | |
| Whynotgraze, llc | 269 | 67 | 202 | 6/16-9/30 | |
| North Slope Ranches | 142 | 35 | 107 | 6/16-9/30 | |
| David Andreason | 58 | 14 | 44 | 6/16-9/30 | |
| Total | 469 | 116 | 353 | | |

| <u>Grazing Unit Rotation</u> | <u>Estimated Days and Dates</u> | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|------------------------|
| Wood Canyon ¹ | 21 | 6/16-7/6 | |
| Seeding ² | 5 | 6/16-6/20 | |
| Brier/Hurst ² | 26 | 6/21-7/16 | |
| Horsethief | 36 | 7/7-8/11 | North Slope |
| | | 7/17-8/11 | Andreason/Whynot Graze |
| Seeding | 40 | 8/12-9/20 | |
| Seeding ² | 5 | 9/21-9/25 | |
| Wood Canyon ¹ | 5 | 9/21-9/25 | |

¹ This indicates only North Slope Ranches cattle.

² This indicates only Andreason and Whynotgraze cattle.

The Andreason/Whynotgraze cattle will be put in the seeding to pair up and rest prior to the move to Brier/Hurst. The two dates in Horsethief indicate when the two separate herds will be coming into the unit. At the end of the season the North Slope Cattle will be taken from the Seeding to Wood Canyon and the Andreason/Whynotgraze herd will stay in the seeding for five more days.

A rider will be required to be on the allotment 5 days per week. If the rider cannot be there, permittees need to make other arrangements to be on the allotment.

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.

There is a permitted recreational event held on and around your allotment this year. It is an ATV Rally with guided tours across the Lost River Ranger District on July 10-12.

Allowable Use Standard: End of season 4-inch stubble height on hydric sedges & grasses is required along the greenline of riparian areas, 50% utilization in the uplands. A patchy or uneven use pattern along the greenline will usually result in stubble height standard being met. While adequate re-growth may occur under average growing season conditions, the opposite may be true during below average conditions. Special attention should be made during drier weather conditions. It is recommended a stubble height trigger above 4 inches be used in drier conditions to plan cattle moves.

The drier mesic meadows adjacent to streams and springs should be watched to ensure that 50% use is not exceeded. These meadows are of concern across the district and more focus is going to be put on use levels in these areas. While all adjacent meadows should be looked at, the drier meadows have less chance of re-growth 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. Woody species standard is 50% utilization of current year's production.

Riparian areas with greenlines dominated by Kentucky bluegrass and tufted hairgrass should also receive special because these plants have less bank stability than greenlines dominated by deep-rooted plants. Greenlines dominated by these plants are in a lower state of ecological condition and should be managed to increase the amount of stable hydric sedges, grasses, and shrubs where appropriate.

Woody browse use levels were exceeded last year in Hurst unit. This is the second year in a row where end of season indicators were exceeded. The stubble height and browse use standards needs to be maintained along the riparian areas within the allotment to ensure proper riparian function and limit erosion and trampling of the stream banks. All end of season indicators need to be met on the allotment this year to ensure compliance with your term grazing permits.

Other factors should be considered for planning cattle moves between units. These include prevention of stream bank trampling, increase in rate of stubble height removal, changes in grazing preference from grasses and sedges to young willows and other shrubs, large groups of cattle congregating in fence corners, at gates, or riparian areas for long periods of time.

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.

Cleaning Grazing Units: Livestock need to begin moving from a unit prior to the stubble height standard being met to ensure allowable use standards are met. This is especially important during drought conditions. In most cases 7 days should be adequate. Permittees should be prepared to assist range riders in checking that the unit cleaned stays clean. Range riders should keep permittees informed of problems cleaning grazed units. Bulls should 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.

Prevent drift from Horsethief Unit into the Brier/Hurst Units; this will require additional riding while in these units. Identify a proposed fence location to improve management between the two units. Discourage concentration of cattle on key areas in Brier, and riparian areas with salting and riding.

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. Continue working with Forest Service to review reconstruction of any old drift fences between Horsethief and Brier/Hurst.

Upland water availability for cattle continues to be a limiting factor for scheduling the Brier/Hurst/Wood Units. Continue to work on existing water developments to bring them up to standard. Work with Forest Service to determine if Hurst Canyon trough system can be reconstructed to a working order. Maintain fences around spring sources to keep livestock out.

You are authorized to bring equipment onto the forest for cleaning cattle guards on the allotment. The authorization will include using the equipment to replace a section of pipeline in the seeding pasture adjacent to the road. The equipment may also be used to aid in hauling materials in to reconstruct the round trough in the Horsethief unit. This work will be done prior to turnout.

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.

Actual Use Report: An Actual Use Report will be mailed to you shortly before cattle leave the allotment. This form is to be completed and returned to the Lost River Ranger District two weeks 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.