

**Bighorn National Forest
Powder River Ranger District**

2015

Annual Operating Instructions

For

Grommund and Sourdough C&H Allotments

Recommended By: _____ Date: _____
Rangeland Management Specialist

Accepted By: _____ Date: _____
Permittee

Accepted By: _____ Date: _____
Permittee

Approved By: _____ Date: _____
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 Permits number 1269A and 1883B.

Any changes or deviation from the direction outlined in the Annual Operating Instructions will need to be requested in advance to the Powder River 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 verbal or written confirmation from the Powder River Ranger District.

GROMMUND AND SOURDOUGH C&H ALLOTMENTS
Year 2015 Annual Operating Instructions

Permitted and Authorized Use for 2015:

	LS Kind	LS Class	Permitted			Authorized		
			LS #	From	To	LS#	From	To
Johnson-Rogers	Cattle	Mature	172	7/7	9/30	200	7/7	9/15
	Horse	Mature	4	7/7	9/30	4	7/7	9/15
	Cattle	Mature	59	7/7	9/30	59	7/7	9/15
Robert W. Palmersheim	Cattle	Mature	100	7/7	9/30	100	7/7	9/30

- 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 2015 grazing fees are \$1.69/head month, and must be paid before livestock can be turned onto the Forest. Let Thad or Kerri know the date and number of livestock actually entering the National Forest and, upon request, provide for having stock counted.

The rotation for year 2015 is as follows:

Pasture	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Upper Sourdough, West	1	3	3	2	4
Lower Sourdough, East	2	*REST (trail through)	4	3	5
Brush Creek & West-of-Camp	3	4	2	1	3
Upper Grommund & Northeast	4	2	1	4	2
Lower Grommund & Southeast	5	1	5	5	1

- Entering the Allotment

The turn on date for Johnson-Rogers Cattle Company and Palmersheim is tentatively authorized for July 7. 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 Grommund Sourdough C&H Allotment Management Plan, 12/28/1999*. The allowable use standards for utilization of the current year's growth by livestock and wildlife will be as follows in the below table.

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.

* Subsequent to signing of the AMP, the condition of Sourdough C&H allotment was determined to be meeting or moving

toward desired, and the riparian guideline reflects this change.

** The "Bighorn National Forest Vegetation Grazing Guidelines, May, 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 administrative actions in subsequent years, such as an adjustment to the season of use or pasture rest, 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 prefer to work with you to determine appropriate protocols and locations. Permittees are no longer required to submit annual stubble height data; however, it is strongly recommended that you continue monitoring. Any data you collect and submit will be maintained in permanent files.

To facilitate monitoring livestock use levels, and to avoid the need to measure utilization on all rangelands, 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. They are chosen in 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 standards need only be met in key areas. Allowable use standards apply to all rangeland on the allotment. Key areas may be revised by the District Ranger as needed.

I encourage you to contact Thad 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 should 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 data. The Forest Service will conduct spot checks throughout the grazing season and I encourage your participation.

Willow monitoring efforts will continue on Sourdough and possibly Grommund allotment this year. The Forest Service will notify you as monitoring dates are scheduled so you can participate in the effort.

- Key Areas

Key areas serve as a monitoring and evaluation point for the degree of grazing use occurring in each pasture. Properly selected key areas give an indication of the overall acceptability of current grazing management to meet all resource objectives.

<i>Pasture</i>	<i>Location</i>
Upper Sourdough West	Riparian area at Hanson Sawmill, Lynx Park, and Caterpillar Park
Lower Sourdough East	Riparian area along US Highway 16 N of Sourdough Creek, in W-1/2 SE-1/4 34-50-84
West of Camp	SWSWNE 30-50-83; riparian area in upper portion of drainage leading to cow camp
Brush Creek	SE1/4 18-50-83; along Brush Creek
Upper Grommund	SW1/4 29-50-83; on Grommund Creek
Northeast	E1/2 21-50-83; above Aspen Basin Spring
Lower Grommund	SE1/4 21-50-83; riparian area along the stream

Southeast	NESE 28-50-83; riparian area along the stream
Key areas are scheduled to be revisited and designated as polygons on a revised allotment map. Benchmark sites are also scheduled to be redefined with desired conditions described.	

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 Thad 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 with maintenance standards described in your revised AMP. 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.

- Planned Range Improvement Projects

Grazing permit modifications for cooperative range improvements (form FS-2200-113) must be completed prior to expenditure of Forest Service funds for project work. As materials for these projects become available, these activities can be coordinated through Thad or Kerri. Range improvement projects have been discussed and planned as follows:

Improvement #	Improvement Name	Project Description
104003	North WY Land Company Cow Camp Pasture Fence	Permittee to determine if still want to use and either maintain or remove. This fence is not on the map and should be field verified by FS personnel.
108003	Sourdough Camp Drift Fence	Rogers will have a portion of this fence rebuilt with buck 'n rail by the time livestock enter this pasture in 2015.
108007	Emery Spring	Needs a tank. FS to provide 10' fiberglass tank if funding allows in 2015.

- 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:

- Scatter salt in its proper location prior to livestock entering the pasture.
- Salt should be placed between water developments, and at least 1/4 mile from water if possible.
- Salt away from small parks, trails, roads, and areas of concentrated public use.
- Place salt in rock outcrops, mature timber stands (other than aspen), or dense sagebrush.
- Change salt locations 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 repeated salting.
- Remove salt from an area when proper use is reached.

- Wolves

On Sept. 23, 2014 the US District Court for the District of Columbia vacated the USFWS wolf delisting rule under the endangered species act. The court reinstated federal protections for Wyoming wolves that were in place prior to the 2012 delisting therefore wolves are again listed under the ESA as a nonessential experimental population in all of Wyoming. Take of wolves may be authorized only by the non-essential rules or by permit issued under section 10 of the ESA. You must contact US Fish and Wildlife Service for any wolf related predation or harassment of livestock. You can contact Mike Jimenez with USFWS or your local Wildlife Services contact. Please inform the Rangeland Management Specialist of any wolf activity on your allotment as well.

- Other

Permittees are authorized to maintain a camp trailer at cow camp for supplemental 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, 2015.