

**FEATHERVILLE, YUBA RIVER and CAYUSE CREEK
S&G ALLOTMENTS
2015 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS**

Boise National Forest
Mountain Home Ranger District

INTRODUCTION

The following information is direction on how livestock management is to be conducted on the Featherville, Yuba River and Cayuse Creek Sheep and Goat (S&G) Allotments for the 2015 grazing season. The Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) are part of your Term grazing Permits consistent with Part 1, Item 3 and Part 2, Item 8(a), and you are responsible for compliance with this direction.

Situations may develop during the grazing season that could require changes to these instructions. If this becomes necessary, or if you cannot comply with some part of these instructions, contact Holly Hampton at 587-7867 or Cindy Lancaster at 587-7870, district range staff, and obtain approval before initiating or deviating from your AOI. Failure to obtain prior approval could result in permit action.

The following table displays the permitted numbers and seasons of use for your allotments:

Allotment Name	Permitted Number and Class	Permitted Season of Use
Featherville	2950 ewe/lamb	05/20-08/20
	3750 ewes	08/21-09/30
	5 horses	05/20-09/30
Yuba River	900 ewe/lamb	06/16-08/15
	1650 ewes	08/16-10/15
	7 horses	06/16-10/15
Cayuse Creek (temporary)	1000 ewe/lamb	06/07-06/25

The Featherville Allotment has a variable numbers and season permit, which permits a total of 7834 sheep Head Months (HMs) for the period of use.

For the 2015 grazing season, you are authorized to graze your allotments as outlined below. In addition, because your herders will spend most of the summer packing and not using camp wagons, you are authorized 5 head of horses per band this grazing season.

Allotment Name	Authorized Number and Class	Authorized Season of Use
Featherville	900 ewe/lamb (#7)	06/01-09/02
	860 ewes	09/03-09/30
	5 horses	06/01-9/30
Cayuse Creek (temporary)	900 ewe/lamb (#8)	07/04-07/10
	5 horses	07/04-07/10
Yuba River	850 ewe/lamb (#8)	07/01-8/25
	5 horses	07/01-8/25

In 2010, you were issued a Notice of Cancellation on the Featherville Allotment, permanently cancelling 20 percent of your permitted HMs due to repeated permit violations. In 2011 an additional 20 percent of your permitted HMs was cancelled due to repeated permit violations. This reduces your permitted HMs on the Featherville allotment to 7834. Your current authorized use is approximately 3,464 HMs, or 44 percent of your permitted use on the Featherville Allotment.

Some flexibility will be allowed for weather conditions, range readiness and livestock needs. The period of use is also subject to compliance with Forest Plan standards and guidelines and Implementation Monitoring requirements as discussed below. Please review carefully the standards and guides listed.

The Featherville Allotment in the Elk Fire was mainly impacted on the south-western half of which approximately 19% of the allotment is in the burn area. The severity of the burn varied from low to high in places forming a mosaic pattern with areas unburned. Severity ranged from low to high along several perennial streams. High severity burns occurred along both Green Creek and Dog Creek.

The Featherville Allotment will need to be rested for a minimum of two growing seasons in the Elk Complex fire area. Portions of the allotment that were within the 2012 Trinity Ridge Fire will need to be rested for a minimum of one more growing season. Length of closure will depend on the seeding/seedling establishment, and the natural re-vegetative recovery rate of the burned area. No range improvements were lost in the fire.

Featherville S&G Allotment –Fire Effects	
Number of Permitted Sheep	2950 ewe/lamb; 3750 ewe; 5 horses
Season of use	2950 ewe/lamb: 05/20 to 08/20 3750 ewe: 08/21 to 09/30
Approximate % of Allotment Burned	19% (28,267 of 146,600 acres)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approx. 97% of allotment is NFS lands 	

In 2012 the Trinity Ridge Fire burned approximately 145,700 acres on the Mountain Home Ranger District and Idaho City Ranger District of the Boise National Forest. The fire area

covers three active sheep and goat allotments and one closed allotment. Active allotments include: Featherville Allotment, Cayuse Allotment and North Fork Allotment. The closed allotment is the Sheep Creek Allotment. After a fire, the forest has standard requirements for rehabilitation of a grazing area. The following section discusses those guidelines.

Forest Plan Guidelines:

Guideline VEGU05, states: "Where wildfire has burned within an allotment, burned areas should be evaluated to determine if rest from livestock grazing is necessary for recovery of desired vegetation conditions and related biophysical resources."

Guideline VEGU06, states: "When sagebrush cover types are determined to need rest from livestock grazing following a wildfire, areas should be rested for a minimum of two growing seasons. Evaluate whether additional rest is needed after two growing seasons. Base this determination on the following factors: a) The ecological status of the sagebrush community prior to the wildfire, b) How Long the sagebrush community had a density or canopy closure greater than 15 percent prior to the wildfire, c) The severity and intensity of the fire, d) The amount, diversity and recovery of forbs, grasses and palatable shrubs that are present after 2 years of rest in relation to desired conditions. In areas other than sagebrush cover types, an appropriate rest period should be determined. Base this determination on the following factors: Soil conditions, the amount, diversity and recovery of forbs, grasses and palatable shrubs that are present after 2 years of rest.

BILLING INFORMATION

The grazing fee for the 2015 grazing season is \$0.34 per head month for sheep and \$1.69 per head month for horses. You will be billed based on the authorized use listed above. Confirmation of payment through the National Finance Center is required and must be received before livestock can enter National Forest System lands. In order to meet this requirement, please ensure that bills for collection are paid by the due date indicated.

If permitted livestock are required to leave an allotment early because utilization standards have been reached, drought conditions persist or other reasons as determined by the Forest Officer, a credit/refund may be requested. **This request must be submitted in writing to the District Ranger by December 1, 2015.**

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

The general routing patterns for your bands are depicted on the attached maps. The bands will be routed along these general patterns, with specific direction outlined below. Deviations of more than ½ mile from either side of the defined route should be discussed with Holly or Cindy. The shipping dates listed are tentative and will be firmed up as the summer progresses.

LAMB BAND #7 - Herder & Camp Tender: Arturo & Milo

900 ewes/lambs	6/01-9/08	BNF Featherville Allotment
(cull 40 ewes)	(9/08 ship lambs)	Rock Bar Corral
860 drys	9/08-9/30	BNF Featherville Allotment
2 horse and 3 mules	6/01-9/30	BNF Stock

1. **Lamb Band #7** will enter the Casey Gulch Pasture of the Featherville allotment on June 1 from private fields in the Deer Creek area. This will then enter the Cayuse Creek Allotment no sooner than July 4 using Abbot Bridge to cross the river. This band will graze in a northeasterly direction for approximately 1 week utilizing the Cayuse Creek, Little Cayuse Creek and Three Forks Creek area as depicted on the attached routing map. This band will exit the Cayuse Allotment after a week where they will enter the Featherville Allotment. They will utilize the Bald Mountain Pasture that did not burn in the Trinity Fire for the remainder of the season. Following the route depicted on the attached map the band will graze the north east side of Bald Mountain working in a north and north east direction grazing the West Fork James Creek and Fall Creek area. **Sheep will loop around toward Bald Mountain Creek where they must cross on the Hot Spring Trail Bridge. No livestock crossing or watering would occur at any time in known occupied bull trout habitat defined as areas known to be used by bull trout.** These areas include: Bald Mountain Creek from the #047 Hot Spring Trail Bridge downstream to the mouth for the 2015 grazing season. If new information or surveys indicate bull trout occupancy in other currently unoccupied areas, this project design feature would then be applied. This PDF specifically addresses known occupied habitat. Sheep will then graze in a south west direction while utilizing the Bear Creek and Lake Creek areas. Sheep will then move south east staying east of Elk Creek towards the Rocky Bar Corrals, shipping on September 8. **Avoid trailing, nooning and camping activities on the peaks and ridges east of Steel Mountain area divide crossing (T5N, R10E, Sec 20) to prevent inadvertent impacts to the Idaho dwarf-primrose.** While trailing down the 126 road towards Featherville sheep must avoid aspen stands to the west of the 126 road. Sheep cannot graze, bed or noon in these aspen stands. Once the lambs are shipped, the dry ewes will move in a southerly direction towards Featherville using Horse Ranch Mountain, Upper Spring Creek and Red Warrior Creek. **Areas to avoid include portions of Bear Creek (as indicated on the map) from the mouth of Steel Creek upstream to Charcoal Creek (near old Rocky Bar Guard Station), and Bald Mountain Creek from the #047 Hot Spring Trail bridge downstream to the mouth. Also, avoid the new tree plantation units (as indicated on the map).** Sheep will come off the allotment no later than September 30th. Sheep may have to come off the allotment early depending on allotment conditions.

LAMB BAND #8 - Herder & Camp Tender: Teodoro & Adrin

850 ewes/lambs	6/11-6/30	SNF Shake Creek Allotment
2 horse and 3 mules	6/05-6/30	SNF Stock
850 ewes/lambs	7/01-8/25	BNF Yuba River Allotment
2 horse and 3 mules	7/01-8/25	BNF Stock
850 ewes/lambs	8/26-10/05	Sawtooth NF

Due to recent fires, Lamb **Band #8** will spend some of the time grazing on the Boise National Forest (**BNF**) but it will ship lambs on the **SNF** at the SFk Boise River corral where it merges with dry **Band #1** before heading to graze the Bridge Creek Allotment. **Lamb Band #8** will enter the Yuba River Allotment no earlier than July 1. Following the route depicted on the attached map the band will graze through Trail Creek, East Fork Yuba River circling back through the Corbus Creek area, McGuire Creek, Decker Creek, Sawmill Creek and Grouse Creek areas. The band will exit the allotment between Grouse Creek and Senator Creek approximately August 26. Lamb **Band #8** will exit the **BNF** Yuba River Allotment and graze down Bear Creek to ship lambs at the SFk Boise River corral.

You must notify the Forest Service no less than five (5) days prior to livestock being placed on the allotments so that authorized livestock numbers can be verified by district range staff if the Forest Service elects to do so.

Herd management:

Avoid impacting roads, trails, erodible soils, and especially areas that have not recovered from past fires.

Each band must have at least one herder to control sheep. Request map if needed for specific areas where sheep should not be grazed or trailed. Also review your Term Grazing Permit content under Terms and Conditions for site specific grazing limitations.

Generally, we are more concerned about soil displacement caused by sheep than we are about the amount of forage they consume. Light-once-over grazing, resembling 20 percent use of forage, is the easiest way to obtain proper grazing use on your sheep allotments. This practice can be achieved by spreading the sheep out and slowly grazing them across the landscape. If the routing areas we have discussed or identified do not meet the foraging needs of your sheep, that implies the area lacks protective cover, is susceptible to erosion, and is probably too fragile to be grazed, therefore you will need to discuss these situations with us to get them corrected for the future.

STANDARDS AND GUIDES

Close monitoring of utilization levels and diligent removal of livestock when they are reached is critical to ensure compliance with end-of-season utilization standards. Failure to meet these standards may result in the modification of grazing management, including reductions in Head Months or permitted area.

The following standards and guidelines apply to your allotments:

- The applicable Forest Plan Standards (including those reflected in permit Terms and Conditions and Annual Operating Instructions) may be modified by the Responsible Official to accelerate attainment of the desired conditions, and may include:
2. Maximum forage utilization of representative areas within each pasture containing NFS lands will not exceed the values shown below at the end of the growing season. Those utilization levels are as follows:
 - Upland Vegetative Cover Types: Maximum 40% use for early season or season-long pastures, and maximum 50% use for vegetative slow growth, after seed ripe conditions, or late-season pastures (Forest Plan Standard RAST01, [USDA Forest Service 2010a, p. III-47])
 - Riparian Areas: Maximum 30% use or retain a minimum 4-inch stubble height of hydric greenline species; whichever occurs first (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 1999). Utilization of woody species will be limited to 30% or less of available new growth (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 1999).
 3. Livestock salting would be prohibited in Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs). Sheep would be salted only at bed grounds, and salt shall be placed in containers and moved with the sheep (Forest Plan Standard RAST04 [USDA Forest Service 2010a, p. III-47]).
 4. Only one-night/one-time use of bed grounds would be allowed (Forest Plan Standard RAST05 [USDA Forest Service 2010a, p. III-47]).
 5. Only open or loose sheep herding would be practiced, except where site-specific vegetation management is needed and has been prescribed (Forest Plan Standard RAST06 [USDA Forest Service 2010a, p. III-47]).
 6. Only annual once-over sheep grazing would be allowed, with the exception of designated sheep driveways, travel routes, or where specifically authorized (Forest Plan Standard RAST07 [USDA Forest Service 2010a, p. III-47]).
 7. Bedding of sheep and salting of livestock in plantations would be prohibited until plantation trees have grown to a size that reduces their susceptibility to damage from livestock (Forest Plan Standard RAST08 [USDA Forest Service 2010a, p. III-47]).
 8. Sheep should be routed to avoid slopes with loose soil conditions, active gullies, and snowbank areas that have low productivity, soil puddling, and compaction conditions (Forest Plan Guideline RAGU08 [USDA Forest Service 2010a, p. II-49]).
 9. Damage to or loss of Forest System trails from timber harvest, livestock grazing, road construction, mining, special uses, and prescribed fire activities should be repaired or mitigated by the appropriate party (Forest Plan Guideline REGU22 [USDA Forest Service 2010a, p. III-68]).
 10. Only certified noxious weed-free hay, straw, or feed is allowed on NFS lands (Forest Plan Standard NPST01 [USDA Forest Service 2010a, p. III-38]).

11. On all lands outside of designated travel ways, motorized use is prohibited, unless otherwise authorized (Forest Plan Standard REST04 [USDA Forest Service 2010a, p. III-66]).
12. Livestock trailing, bedding, watering, and other handling efforts shall be mitigated, through avoidance, to address adverse effects to occupied threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate (TEPC) plant habitat (Forest Plan Standard TEST22 [USDA Forest Service 2010a, p. III-13]).
13. Management actions that occur within occupied sensitive plant species habitat must incorporate measures to ensure habitat is maintained where it is within desired conditions, or restored where degraded (Forest Plan Standard BTST01 [USDA Forest Service 2010a, p. III-35]).
14. Avoid trailing, nooning and camping activities at Sacajawea's bitterroot sites from mid-June to end of July. (The Dog Mountain population will not be included in this mitigation until the location is more exactly defined.)
15. Avoid trailing, nooning and camping activities on the peaks and ridges east of Steel Mountain area divide crossing (T5N, R10E, Sec 20) to prevent inadvertent impacts to the Idaho dwarf-primrose.
16. Livestock salting and/or bed grounds shall be located outside occupied TEPC plant habitat so that plants shall not be adversely affected by associated trampling (Forest Plan Standard TEST24 [USDA Forest Service 2010a, p. III-13]).
17. The adverse effects of livestock access or activities that may result in trampling of redds or disturbance of spawning or reproductive staging of ESA listed fish species should be mitigated through avoidance (Forest Plan Standard TEST25 [USDA Forest Service 2010a, p. III-13]).
18. Effects to occupied TEPC plant habitat through grazing system design and implementation, and livestock handling adjustments should be mitigated through avoidance (Forest Plan Standard TEST26 [USDA Forest Service 2010a, p. III-14]).
19. No nooning, shading, or bedding of sheep within 100 yards of all streams. After watering livestock, remove them from the RCA.
20. Do not bed sheep within 200 yards of designated campgrounds, trails, trailheads, or designated roads.
21. Sheep should be grazed, rather than trailed to water. Watering would not occur at the same location more than once during a grazing season.
22. To ensure adequate forage in designated winter range for elk, livestock would not graze critical winter range in the late season (after July 1) more than one out of every three years. On years that critical winter range would be used after July 1, maximum 30% use on upland and hydric species would be achieved. *(Does not apply for 2015 grazing season as this area will not be grazed)*

23. No livestock crossing or watering would occur at any time in **known occupied bull trout habitat defined as areas known to be used by bull trout**. These areas include: Lower Rainbow Creek, Lower Trinity Creek, Bear Creek from the mouth of Steel Creek upstream to Charcoal Creek (near old Rocky Bar Guard Station), Phifer Creek from the NFS road 156/Phifer stream crossing downstream to the mouth, Buck Creek from the confluence of its two unnamed tributaries downstream to the mouth, Bald Mountain Creek from the #047 Hot Spring Trail bridge downstream to the mouth, Roaring River upstream of the NFS road 255/Roaring River stream crossing to the confluence of Scotch Creek. If new information or surveys indicate bull trout occupancy in other currently unoccupied areas, this project design feature would then be applied. This PDF specifically addresses known occupied habitat. (Reference Map)
24. Livestock would cross designated bull trout critical habitat streams at road/trail-stream crossings, where available. If road/trail-stream crossings are not available, no livestock crossing of designated bull trout critical habitat streams would occur after August 15th.
25. Where livestock cross streams containing designated bull trout critical habitat prior to August 15, no cutting of vegetation or removal of large wood within RCAs would occur. Sheep will be loosely herded, not driven across such streams to minimize bank disturbance.
26. Livestock use should be discouraged in progeny sites, seed orchards, and plantations that have not been certified (Forest Plan Guideline RAGU06 [USDA Forest Service 2010a, p. III-48]). In addition, livestock use should also be discouraged in areas with natural whitebark pine regeneration.
27. All garbage generated by the present herder, or previous herders must be cleaned up by the camp tender for the ranch foreman or herder to haul away. All garbage would be hauled by the ranch foreman or herder to a county waste disposal facility. Any garbage left on the permittee's allotment reflects on his and the Forest Service's ability and interest in being a good land steward.
28. The permittee would promptly notify the Forest Service if noxious weeds are observed on the allotment. The Forest Service would determine a treatment regime for noxious weeds on the allotment.
29. Use of aspen groves would be discouraged for nooning sheep in order to minimize use of clones and understory vegetation.
30. A buffer zone around the Trinity Ridge shipping corral; sheep will avoid bedding and grazing in the buffer zone except during active shipping operations, in order to reduce impacts to soil and water from the historic and current concentrated use areas within the buffer. Other permitted uses in the Trinity Ridge buffer area include vaccinations, branding, mouthing, bagging, and additional sorting, activities that would require about 3 additional days in that area outside of shipping. *(Does not apply for 2014 grazing season as this area will not be grazed)*
31. Mitigate, through avoidance or minimization, management actions within known nest or denning sites of TEPC species if those actions would disrupt reproductive success during

the nesting or denning period. (Forest Plan Standard TEST12 [[USDA Forest Service 2010a, p. III-12].

IMPROVEMENTS

Your Term Grazing Permit contains a complete list of range improvements associated with the Featherville Allotment. Please note that all range improvements must be maintained to a proper functioning condition before livestock are placed on the allotment. Failure to do so is a violation of your term grazing permit and is subject to permit action. In the event improvements cannot be practically maintained to standard, you should notify this office so we can identify them for reconstruction as funds become available.

Non-functioning range improvements need to be brought to standard, or arrangements made with district range personnel to have them removed. Abandonment of improvements is not acceptable – if developments are not functioning and are no longer needed, they must be removed.

HERDER OR PERMITTEE INSTRUCTIONS

There is a three day limit for herder camps. Ensure that camps are kept clean and moved frequently. Pack stock should be picketed, hobbled or highlined when at camp.

Designated roads and trails used for trailing of sheep and saddle stock must be cleared and restored to their original condition immediately after use.

The Forest Service recommends that the following procedures be implemented each grazing season:

1. Keep camp meat in coolers and not hung.
2. Burn, bury, or pack out food leftovers, bones, garbage etc. including food not consumed by dogs accompanying the herders.
3. Bury or remove sheep and saddle stock carcasses from the area where they will not serve as an attractant to predators.
4. Never leave campfires unattended. To meet Forest Service requirements, camp stoves must be fitted with a spark arrestor screen with 3/8 inch or smaller mesh. Employees must be kept informed of the current fire situation and the permittee's fire prevention responsibility. The Forest Service will advise the permittee when special fire restriction orders become effective.
5. Camps will be kept in primitive condition. No improvements will be allowed. If a new fire pit is constructed, dismantle it and restore the area before moving to the next camp.

Permittee monitoring of utilization levels is not mandatory, but is highly advised since permittees will be held accountable for any failures to meet end-of-season compliance monitoring.

REQUIRED REPORTING

Enclosed is a Year-end Grazing Report for you to record actual use data and range improvement maintenance for the 2015 grazing season for your allotments. You need to record the date and number of sheep and horses turned onto the allotment, the number

and date they are removed from the allotment, and estimate the time and cost of management actions, including livestock herding and improvement maintenance, associated with the allotment. Accurate records of these dates, maintenance work, and range improvement needs should be kept and returned to our office at the end of the grazing season. The Forest Service uses these records to help allocate Range Betterment Funds. These funds are used to purchase materials for improvements. **This report should be returned to the Forest Service's Mountain Home Ranger District office no later than December 1, 2015.**

INSPECTIONS AND MONITORING

Range personnel may require you to delay your entry date on any of your allotments based on range readiness inspections that they have completed. You will be notified as soon as possible if your turn-on date is delayed.

Range personnel may conduct utilization monitoring and improvement inspections periodically on your allotments.

COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game is responsible for wolf management in Idaho. The Regional Wildlife Wolf Biologist for the Fish and Game is Jennifer Struthers. Any questions you may have regarding wolf management should be directed to her. She can be reached at 208-465-8465 ext. 350.

If you suspect a wolf depredation has occurred on your livestock, USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services (Wildlife Services) should be contacted as soon as possible. The local Wildlife Services contact for this area is Jered Hedelius. He can be reached at (208) 681-8756. In the event that you cannot reach Jered, Todd Grimm should be contacted at the Boise District Office at 208-373-1630.

OTHER

When livestock carcasses are located near campgrounds, roads, trails or water reasonable and appropriate action must be taken to remove any carcasses. The permittee will contact the District Ranger or her representative to discuss the problem and determine what action would be appropriate for each site specific instance. Although the Forest Service recognizes that disposal of carcasses is not always feasible in many situations there are a number of reasonable options available for the disposal of single or multiple carcasses. In most cases, carcasses should be moved at least 100 yards from campgrounds, roads, trails or water. Animal carcasses in highly visible areas need to be relocated to more remote areas.

A gate has been placed at the 183A/183A7 road junction, implementing a full-time road closure. You are authorized to use existing roads behind the locked gate for livestock management. A key can be picked up at the Mountain Home Ranger District Office to allow access behind the gate. The gate should be kept locked at all times and the key must be returned to the office prior to September 25.

The Forest Service's Motor Vehicle Use Rule is in place on the Mountain Home Ranger District. Public motorized, wheeled vehicle use is prohibited on all NFS lands except on routes that are designated on the current year's Motorized Vehicle Use Map. This AOI authorizes you and your employees to use wheeled motor vehicles off of designated routes for administrative use within your allotments for livestock management purposes. However, specific routes will need to be identified each year. See description of routes needed for administrative use below. This administrative use includes salting and herding of livestock, maintenance of range improvements, and forage utilization inspections. Use of heavy equipment, such as bulldozers or backhoes is not included in this authorization. Use of heavy equipment will need to be requested through and approved by the District Ranger on a case-by-case basis.

Routes Approved for Administrative Use not on the MVUM map:

Featherville Allotment

- 1). Access to roads 151 C, 151 D, and 151E.
- 2). Access to roads 101A, 101B, 101J, 101J1, and 101K.

Cayuse Allotment

- 1). Access to roads 138A and 138B.

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Stephaney M. Church	5/4/15
District Ranger	Date