WILLOW CREEK C&H ALLOTMENT
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 Willow Creek Cattle & Horse (C&H) Allotment for the 2014 grazing season. The Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) are part of your Term grazing Permit 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, 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 the Willow Creek Allotment:

Allotment	Permitted Number/Class	Permitted Season of Use
Willow Creek	449 cow/calf	06/01 – 10/31

For the 2015 grazing season, you are authorized to graze the Willow Creek Allotment as follows:

Allotment	Authorized Number/Class	Authorized Season of Use
Willow Creek	365 cow/calf	06/20 – 10/31

There are approximately 315 head-months (HMs) of forage on IDL land and approximately 1,832 HMs of forage available on National Forest System (NFS) land within the Willow Creek Allotment, totaling 2150 HMs. Total authorized use for the 2015 grazing season is 1608 HMs.

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.

BILLING INFORMATION

The Forest Service grazing fee for the 2015 grazing season is $1.69 per head month for cattle. 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. IDL will bill separately for their authorized HMs.

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

Due to the Pony fire in 2013 the Willow Creek C&H Allotment had a majority of its landscape burned at low to moderate severity. The far western portion did not burn. Approximately 90% of the allotment is in the burn area. Severity was mainly low to moderate along most perennial streams.

The Willow Creek Allotment has been rested for two growing seasons where severity was moderate. Length of closure is dependent on the seeding/seedling establishment, and the natural re-vegetative recovery rate of the burned area.

Willow Creek C&H Allotment –Fire Effects	
Number of Permitted Cattle	449 cow/calf
Season of use	06/01 to 10/31
Approximate % of Allotment Burned	90% (34,080 of 37,859 acres)
• Approx. 84% of allotment is NFS lands	

During the 2015 grazing season (after seed-set) a majority of the Willow Creek Allotment may be grazed.

Livestock will cross onto the Willow Creek Allotment approximately mid-May to access pastures on the lands administered by IDL. Cattle will enter Forest Service Land no earlier than June 20th, where cattle will use the Bug Field, Bear and Long Gulch Units first. The Bug Field may be used up to 65% utilization. As utilization standards are reached, cattle will be moved through the Fiddler/Devils Hole next and then entering the Willow Creek Unit around August 16th. Livestock will leave the allotment by October 31, or when utilization standards are reached, whichever occurs first.

STANDARDS AND GUIDES

Standards and guides listed below apply to NFS lands within the Willow Creek Allotment unless stated otherwise. 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 the Willow Creek Allotment:

- Maximum forage utilization of representative areas within each pasture shall not exceed the values shown below at the end of the growing season. Variation in utilization standards in order to achieve specific vegetative management objectives shall occur with a site-specific or project-level decision according to direction in FSM 1922.5.

  Riparian Areas: Maximum 45 percent use or retain a minimum 4-inch stubble height of hydric greenline species, whichever occurs first.

  Upland Vegetative Cover Types: Vegetative slow growth, after seed ripe conditions or late season pastures – 50 percent use. (RAST01, p. III-45)

  *For the 2015 grazing season utilization standards for the Devils Hole/Little Fiddler Unit, there will be 25 percent maximum use.
- Livestock salting is prohibited in Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs). Place salt no closer than ¼ mile from water and not within 100 feet of roads. Move salt from areas where utilization standards have been met. (RAST04, p. III-45)
- All livestock water developments must provide access and escape to and from water for all types of wildlife. (RAST09, p. III-45)
- Bulls must test negative for Trichomoniasis before entering National Forest System lands.
- Only certified weed-free hay and mulch are allowed on National Forest System lands.

You are authorized a 65% upland utilization standard on the NFS lands in the Bug Field pasture to help control black grass bug densities in the intermediate wheatgrass seedings. Prior to utilization levels being exceeded, livestock will move into the Long Gulch/Devil's Hole Unit, then the Willow Creek/Fiddler Unit last.

In addition, the following standards apply to IDL administered lands within the Willow Creek Allotment:

- Maximum forage use of 65% on crested and intermediate wheatgrass seedings.

IMPROVEMENTS

The following improvements need to have maintenance completed prior to turn-out if grazed; or prior to the end of the grazing season if not grazed this year.

Item #	Improvement Name	Improvement #	Improvement Type (3-wire fence, water trough, etc.)	Allotment Name	Improvement Location (also see maps)
1	Pine-Packsaddle Division	1108	3-wire Fence	Willow Creek	T2N R6E Sec 33 SWSW
2	Willow Rim Drift	1111	3-wire Fence	Willow Creek	T1N R6E Sec 4 NWNW
3	Cottonwood Fiddler Drift	1115	3-wire Fence	Willow Creek	T2N R6E Sec 26 NESW
4	Bug Field	1144	3-wire Fence	Willow Creek	T1N R6E Sec 2 SWSW

Your Term Grazing Permit contains a complete list of range improvements associated with the Willow Creek Allotment. Please note that all range improvements must be maintained to a proper functioning condition before livestock are placed on each 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. If they are in a location that does not allow for removal, these non-functioning improvements still need to allow for bird and small mammal escape. Metal troughs need to have holes cut in them large enough to allow birds and small mammals to escape from them or be tipped over so that they do not hold water. Tires also need to have holes cut in them, or be popped loose from their cement bottom and propped up slightly on edge, to allow birds and small mammals to escape from them. If none of these options are feasible, a wildlife escape ramp needs to be installed and maintained in the trough.

Wildlife escape ramps need to be installed in tire troughs. These ramps are being supplied by the Forest Service. These ladders should be installed in all tire troughs on the Willow Creek Allotment prior to turn-on. This direction also includes troughs that hold water in the spring but dry up later in the grazing season. Failure to comply could result in adverse action to your permit. Please contact Holly or Cindy as soon as possible if you need to pick up escape ramps.

Cattleguards are no longer considered part of your annual maintenance. It is still your responsibility to inspect cattleguards annually and inform the Forest Service of known

problems or maintenance needs on them within your allotment boundaries. This includes, but is not limited to, wing or grate repair or replacement, brush removal, and cleaning.

RIDER OR PERMITTEE INSTRUCTIONS

The establishment record for the Raspberry RNA acknowledges that incidental use occurs within the RNA and that regular riding will be done to prevent excessive grazing in the RNA. Please ensure that when cattle are in the Devil's Hole area that the Raspberry RNA is ridden regularly and any livestock found are relocated into other parts of the allotment.

The off date for this allotment is considered approximate and will depend on utilization levels. To prevent over-utilization, a concerted effort should be made to distribute cattle over the entire allotment and to effectively graze all suitable areas in that unit. Permitted numbers are based on the premise that active management will occur to effect adequate livestock distribution. Cattle need to be moved before meeting riparian and upland grazing standards. If cattle are allowed to concentrate in riparian areas and water developments without being distributed to unused areas of the allotment, the grazing capacity of the allotment is diminished to those areas only.

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 the Willow Creek Allotment. You need to record the date and number of cattle turned onto the allotment, the number and date cattle are removed from each unit, and estimate the time and cost of management actions, including livestock herding and improvement maintenance, associated with each 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 the Willow Creek Allotment 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's 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.

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:

1). Access to the Willow Creek BLM boundary fence located at T2N R5E Section 28 SWSW via existing road/ATV trail.
2). Access to the Pine-Packsaddle division fence located at T2N R6E Section 33 SWSW via existing road/ATV trail.
3). Access to the Willow Rim drift fence located at T1N R6E Section 4 NWNW via existing road/ATV trail.

4). Access to the Bear Field fence located at T1N R6E Section 2 SESE via existing road/ATV trail.
5). Access to the Cottonwood Fiddler drift fence located at T2N R6E Section 26 NESW via existing road/ATV trail.
6). Access to the Dawes-Willow boundary fence located at T2N R5E Section 1 NESW via existing road/ATV trail.
7). Access to the Bug Field fence located at T1N R6E Section 2 SWSW via existing road/ATV trail.
8). Access to the Slater-Grouse Creek boundary fence located at T2N R5E Section 20 NENW via existing road/ATV trail.
9). Access to the Cow Creek drift fence located at T2N R5E Section 26 NWSW via existing road/ATV trail.
10). Access to the following water developments via existing roads/ATV trails: #1357, #2220, #1474, #1478, #1318, and #1447.

Idaho Department of Lands	**Date**

Stephaney Church	5/21/15
District Ranger	**Date**