

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

2015

WEST LOWER TONGUE C&H ALLOTMENT

TONGUE DISTRICT

BIGHORN NATIONAL FOREST

Amy Ormseth
District Ranger

Date

Permittee

Date

WEST LOWER TONGUE C&H ALLOTMENT
2015 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

A. Before Entering the Allotment

1. Review all clauses of your term grazing permit and the information contained within these Annual Operating Instructions (AOI). Be sure to contact David or Zach if you have questions or any portion of your grazing permit or these operating instructions is not clearly understood.
2. The current year's grazing fees must be paid before placing livestock on the National Forest.
3. Review Section G. - Maintenance of Improvements, and complete the necessary maintenance of assigned range improvements as described in that section.

B. Entering and Leaving the Allotment

The on date for the allotment is tentatively set for July 1st or later. I remind you that you are the responsible party to meet the allowable use/herbage left guidelines described in Section D below so making sure there is adequate forage available when livestock enter the allotment is an important decision and can affect not only your ability to meet guidelines but the length of time cattle may remain on the allotment.

C. Authorized Numbers and Pasture Rotation

Permittee	Authorized Livestock Numbers	Authorized Season of Use
Jack and Edward Wilson	82 Mature	7/01-10/10
Robert and Carol Berry	Personal Convenience Nonuse	

Pasture Sequence	Pasture Name
Wilson	
1	South Experimental
2	North Special Use
3	River
4	North Experimental
5	PK Special Use

This planned pasture rotation is designed to help provide for the long term health and productivity of each pasture but may be changed, with sound reasons and prior approval, if it becomes necessary over the course of the grazing season. You are encouraged to use adaptive management practices (e.g. use of temporary electric fence, use of riders and low stress handling techniques, combination of allotments, etc.) to help meet the allowable use requirements described in Sections D and E below. To assure your management does not negatively affect other resources, all proposed changes to these instructions must be discussed with and approved by David or Zach prior to implementation on the ground.

D. Allowable Use/Herbage Left Guidelines

The allowable use/herbage left guidelines are designed to ensure that short-term effects of livestock grazing activities are within established parameters intended to provide for the long-health and

sustainability of rangeland resources. The following allowable use/herbage left guidelines will apply to all areas of your allotment. Total use by livestock and wildlife combined must not exceed any of these guidelines at the time livestock leave a pasture.

1. Upland Range Sites

Sites on sedimentary soils below 9,200 feet elevation (Excludes sites dominated by timothy and smooth brome).	Visual Obstruction Reading (VOR) of 5 or more bands for all applicable sites (a VOR of band 4 is acceptable).
Sites on granitic soils below 9,200 feet elevation (Excludes sites dominated by timothy and smooth brome).	A VOR of 5 or more bands for all applicable sites..
All <u>other</u> sites (such as sites dominated by timothy and smooth brome, or above 9200 feet elevation). This applies only if the modified Robel pole cannot be used.	A. Maximum of 40% by weight in all pastures used prior to August 1 st . B. Maximum of 50% by weight in pastures used after August 1 st .

2. Riparian Range Sites

Herbaceous vegetation on all sites except areas suitable for water vole habitat.	A. A residual 5" stubble height on wide leaved carex species if livestock leave pasture prior to August 1st.* B. A residual 7" stubble height on wide leaved carex species if livestock leave pasture after August 1st.*
Willows	Maximum of 35% use of current years leaders by livestock.

3. Aspen Range Sites

Herbaceous vegetation within all aspen stands	A residual 5" stubble height for all grasses and sedges when livestock leave a pasture*
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* All stubble height guidelines stated for riparian and aspen range sites are the minimum required when transect measurements record the longest leaf length of all leaves readily available for livestock grazing for each plant measured. Leaves or portions of leaves trampled in the mud, lying on the ground or in water, protected by willows or otherwise unavailable to livestock are not to be included in the measurements. Transect measurements may also record the average length of all leaves available for grazing from each selected plant. If the average leaf method is used, all minimum guidelines shown in tables above will be adjusted downward 1".

Livestock must be moved to the next pasture or off the National Forest if in the last pasture when further use will exceed one or more of the allowable use/herbage left guidelines shown above. Moves will be completed and the pasture you are leaving shall be cleaned of livestock within 2-4 days of initiating a pasture move. It is your responsibility to manage your livestock within each pasture to assure use does not exceed any of the above guidelines. This will require constant monitoring of the vegetation by you and/or your allotment rider and not just simply waiting for estimated calendar dates to determine the proper use period for each pasture. It is imperative you take whatever steps are necessary (use of riders, move salt weekly, reduction in total numbers, shorten length of grazing periods in pastures, etc.) to manage your livestock to assure all guidelines are met throughout each pasture.

It is also important to note the allowable use/herbage left guidelines shown above apply to all suitable range (riparian and uplands) within the allotment. To assist you with your responsibilities of monitoring the actual use, all monitoring measurements will be done using a key area concept. The key areas are generally those areas livestock have the tendency to graze first when placed in a pasture. Livestock also tend to graze these areas repeatedly. As a result, these areas will typically reach the allowable use/herbage left guidelines before any other area of the pasture. If actual use in these key areas does not exceed the allowable use/herbage left guidelines, then use in the rest of the pasture will most likely not exceed guidelines either (unless livestock are constantly pushed off the key areas to other portions of the pasture). The important thing to remember is actual use should not exceed any of the guidelines throughout the pasture and if our management causes a change in use patterns we may need to discuss a change in key area boundaries.

E. Monitoring

An integral part of the ROD for the Tongue AMP is the use of adaptive management. Adaptive management requires a continuous cycle of planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation into our management approach and modifies future management based upon the results. Our best chance for success will be for permittees and Forest Service to cooperatively work together to read transects, interpret the data, and discuss any annual or long-term adjustments that may be necessary to meet the intent of the ROD.

The annual monitoring will primarily use a combination of the following three protocols:

1. **Carex Stubble Height:** Stubble height measurements will be taken using paced transects in all key areas with riparian range sites. The number and location of transects you need to read will depend on the area size and the variances of use levels. One transect within 3 feet of the water's edge may be sufficient in narrow riparian areas where use does not vary across the riparian zone. Two or more may be necessary in larger riparian areas or whenever use on streambanks (especially within 3 feet of the water's edge) is noticeably different from the rest of riparian zone. In large areas where use does not vary, locate two or more transects within 3 feet of the stream but if use varies across the zone, locate at least one transect within 3 feet of the water's edge and additional transects further away from the stream. Each transect will consist of 50 measurements with a recommended 10 or more feet between each measurement. Transects to determine the actual use must be read within 7 days after livestock leave each pasture. Photos of each transect are not required but would be helpful to substantiate your documentation.
2. **Robel Pole:** Visual obstruction readings (VOR) using a modified robel pole will be used to measure the remaining standing crop in appropriate key areas below 9200 feet (excludes sites dominated by timothy, smooth brome or very dense sagebrush): A minimum of 2-4 paced transects will be read in key areas located on sedimentary soils and a minimum of 2-5 transects in each key area located on granitic soils. Each transect will consist of 20 stations with each station a minimum of 10 meters (approximately 33 feet) apart. At each station, four VORs (one in each cardinal direction) are recorded. Transects to determine the residual standing crop must be read within 7 days after livestock leave each pasture. Photos of each transect are not required but would be helpful to substantiate your documentation.
3. **Grazing Response Index (GRI):** GRI ratings will be determined for key areas within each pasture. Upland and riparian range sites, occurring in the same or separate key areas, will be rated independently of one another. It is important that you keep accurate records of the

actual numbers of cattle, dates livestock graze in each pasture, monitoring data gathered, and any observations of plant development throughout the grazing season. This data will be useful if you choose to cooperate with David, or Zach to complete rating forms for key areas in your allotment. Like the allowable use guidelines, the ROD for the Tongue AMP requires livestock to be managed to consistently (4 out of every 5 years) provide a neutral to positive GRI rating for each pasture.

As in recent years, the Forest Service will be completing spot checks throughout the grazing season for consistency in meeting allowable use/herbage left guidelines and gathering information for the GRI ratings. You, however, remain responsible to manage your livestock to assure these guidelines are met and neutral to positive GRI ratings are achieved. I strongly encourage you to keep close watch of the growth cycle of the desirable forage plants to be able to adjust the length of grazing periods in each pasture as necessary and to complete spot checks of all key areas on a regular basis to assure actual use remains within the guidelines stated above. Feel free to give David or Zach a call at anytime during the grazing season to compare notes and/or to discuss potential GRI ratings for your pastures. I have enclosed copies of the data forms to assist you with your monitoring. Please remember any forms and/or photos submitted to our office will be placed in the allotment monitoring folder.

F. Key Areas:

Properly selected key areas give an indication of the overall acceptability of current grazing management to meet all resource objectives. These areas may be moved or redefined in future years if monitoring results indicate a change is necessary. The following is a list of the key areas:

Big Willow Creek Pasture:

- 1) An area 300 yards either side of Big Willow Creek in the vicinity of the summer homes in Sections 11 and 15.
- 2) An area extending approximately 1/4 mile south of the pole right-of-way fence for Highway 14A in Sections 9 and 10.

River Pasture:

- 1) Banks of the North Tongue River and the river terrace between the North Tongue River and Highway 14A.

Big Willow Divide (East) Pasture:

- 1) The open park commonly known as Big Willow Divide.

Garden of the Gods Pasture:

- 1) An area in the southeast corner of the pasture between Fence 454A (Experimental pastures) and Dry Gulch.
- 2) An area within 300 yards on either side of the creek bottom in Dry Gulch extending from the River pasture fence to the springs near the top of the gulch.

North Experimental Pasture:

- 1) Uplands within the west half of the pasture.

North Special Use Pasture:

- 1) Uplands and wetlands within the west half of the pasture including wetland adjacent to north fence of aspen enclosure.

PK Special Use Pasture:

- 1) Uplands and wetlands within the east half of the pasture including the wetland adjacent to enclosure for Spring #563.

G. Maintenance of Improvements

Part 2, Clause 8(i) of your term grazing permit states "...the permittee will maintain all range improvements, whether private or Government owned, that are assigned for maintenance 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. The initial maintenance of each improvement 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. For many improvements, maintenance will be on going and will require additional attention after livestock enter the pasture. The minimum maintenance required will be as follows:

Springs: All tanks are to be level, completely surrounded by dry ground and easily accessible by both cows and calves. The inlet and overflow pipes are to be free of crimps or breaks, completely buried or otherwise protected from livestock and capable of delivering water to and away from tanks without any water spilling in the immediate vicinity (20-30 ft.) of the tank. Livestock barriers over tanks must be sturdy and all poles and planks must be in good condition and nailed/bolted in place.

Wire Fences: Fences are to be in an upright, vertical position with all broken wires repaired, wires tight and properly spaced and all corner posts, braces, line posts, steel posts, stays, loops, staples, etc. replaced as needed. Wire spacing may be adapted to the needs of each fence but the bottom wire should be 16-18" off the ground and the top wire must be no higher than 42" above the ground. Gates are to be tight enough to prevent sagging but must be able to be easily opened and closed by the general public.

Buck and Pole Fences: Fences must be in an upright, serviceable position. Bucks that are spreading and lowering the overall height of the fence must be stabilized with a bottom brace or replaced. All poles must be nailed to bucks and all broken or rotting poles and bucks are to be replaced.

The Tongue District has agreed that Mike Kane will be the sole party responsible for the service and maintenance of the Garden of the Gods pipeline during the 2012 grazing season. As such, Mike will be the only person authorized to adjust valves to direct water to the various tanks served by the pipeline throughout the season. Should water not be turned on to a tank when livestock enter a pasture served by the pipeline or you encounter any problems in maintaining an adequate flow to a tank, you can call Mike directly or you can call David or Zach and discuss the situation with them. This arrangement is being applied on a trial basis in 2012 and will be evaluated at the end of the season to determine if it will continued beyond the 2012 season.

H. Salting Practices:

The proper use of salt can be used as a good management tool to help you achieve proper utilization. The following are guidelines that should be used when placing salt on your allotment. If you feel your management situation requires changes in these guidelines please contact David or Zach to discuss.

1. Scatter salt in its proper location prior to livestock entering the pasture.
2. Salt should be placed between water developments and at least 1/4 mile from water if at all possible. Salting near water just encourages cattle to stay nearby and should seldom be practiced.
3. Salt away from small parks, trails, roads and areas of concentrated public use. Salt should be placed in areas of rock outcrops, mature timber (other than aspen), or areas of dense sagebrush where the general public will not easily see it.
4. Change your salt location at least every year and preferably every time salt is placed within a pasture. Moving salt blocks 50-100 feet can prevent an area from becoming abused from salt placement year after year. Placing salt in areas of dense sage and changing location every 2-3 weeks or yearly (depending on length of grazing period) is an effective way to use cows to control sagebrush over small areas or create small pockets of grass within large areas dominated by sage.
5. Remove salt from an area when actual use in the nearby vicinity is approaching the allowable use standard. Livestock must be moved to the next pasture when proper use is reached.

ACTUAL USE RECORD - 2015

TONGUE R.D.

WEST LOWER TONGUE
ALLOTMENT

BIGHORN NATIONAL FOREST

ACTUAL USE

Pasture	Number of Cattle	Date on Pasture	Date off Pasture

Losses: Numbers by age class and possible cause (Poison, natural or predator).

Allotment Operating Cost:

Labor costs:

Rider _____

Improvement Maintenance _____

 Water _____

 Fence _____

 Other _____

Improvement Construction _____

 Water _____

 Fence _____

 Other _____

Salt _____

Transportation Cost _____

Horse Maintenance _____

Permittee signature _____ Date _____

PLEASE ATTACH ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR NOTES YOU WISH TO PLACE IN THE PERMANENT ALLOTMENT FILE.