



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Sawtooth National Forest  
Ketchum Ranger District

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Date: June 24, 2010

Flat Top Sheep Company  
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**2010 Annual Operating Instructions  
For Flat Top Sheep Company  
Sheep and Goat Allotments  
Administered By  
The Ketchum Ranger District  
Sawtooth National Forest**

**Prepared & Recommended by: Bill Whitaker, Range Management  
Technician**

Accepted by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Permittee**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

Approved by: /s/ Kurt J. Nelson  
District Ranger

June 24, 2010  
Date



## ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS 2010

### INTRODUCTION

Flat Top Sheep Company

Allotments Included:

Fisher-Grays, Porcupine, Elkhorn, Corral Creek, Lower Hyndman, Pioneer Cabin Sheep and Goat Allotments

### *Permitted Numbers and Seasons:*

Numbers	Season	Allotment
Variable numbers and season. Not to exceed 904 head months. 1 horse	06/16- 08/15  06/20-08/15	Corral Creek S&G
Variable numbers and season. Not to exceed 904 head months. 1 horse	06/16- 08/15  06/20-08/15	Elkhorn S&G
Variable numbers and season. Not to exceed 904 head months. 1 horse	06/16- 08/15  06/20-08/15	Lower Hyndman S&G
Variable numbers and season. Not to exceed 6344 head months. 5 horse	08/16-10/15  08/16-10/15	Pioneer Cabin S&G
Variable numbers and season. Not to exceed 2798 head months. 1 horse 5 horse	06/16-7/31 8/25-9/21  6/16-6/30 8/25-9/21	Fisher-Grays Creek S&G
Variable numbers and season. Not to exceed 812 head months. 1 horse 5 horse	08/01-08/10 09/22-10/01  08/01-08/10 09/22-10/01	Porcupine S&G

***Authorized Season of Use and Numbers***

Band #1- Elkhorn, Corral Cr. and Pioneer Cabin (north unit) Allotments

Band #2- Lower Hyndman and Pioneer Cabin (south unit) Allotments

Band #3- Fisher-Grays Creek, and Porcupine Allotments

Numbers	Season	Allotment	Head months
Band #1 650 ewe/lamb	7/1-10/7	Elkhorn, Corral Creek, Pioneer Cabin (north unit)	2135
Band#2 650 ewe/lamb	7/10-10/4	Lower Hyndman, Pioneer Cabin (south unit)	1876
Band #3 1300 ewe	7/10-9/30	Fisher-Grays, Porcupine	3579

**LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT**

**Emphasis will be placed upon once-over light use while grazing the bands on the allotments. Carefully review with your herders the Terms and Conditions section of this document which contains specific management standards, guidelines, conditions and practices found in the 2003 Sawtooth National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) as well as your Term Grazing Permit.**

**Specific instructions or management actions such as routing, or areas to avoid for example will be found in the sections of this AOI specific to the allotment and the band that uses it.**

**Reminder: All livestock feed or straw brought on to the Forest is to be certified noxious weed free.**

**Corral Creek - Elkhorn – Pioneer Cabin (north unit) Allotments**

**Band #1**

The Elkhorn, Corral Cr. and Pioneer Cabin (north unit) allotments will be used by a lamb band of 650 ewes. The lamb band will enter the allotment at Independence Gulch on 7/1 and graze in a northerly direction using Independence Gulch, Keystone Gulch and Parker Gulch sequentially. When these drainages are grazed to standard the band will move to the drainage that has the guzzler in it adjacent to Boundary campground in the lower portions of the Trail Creek drainage. The area in lower Trail Creek that burned in 2007 (benches adjacent to Trail Creek and Boundary campground) has recovered sufficiently to allow grazing however any concentrated use such as bedding in aspen stands that burned or riparian areas should be avoided and lightly used). After the band has grazed Parker Gulch and the area adjacent to Boundary campground to standard the band will then move to the Corral Creek drainage near the junction to Trail Creek and graze easterly up this drainage to the Pioneer cabin area. The band will then move to the

Long Gulch and left fork of Corral Creek. When this drainage is grazed to standard the band will graze/trail down the Corral Creek drainage to Trail Creek using previously un-grazed areas skipped earlier to help provide an un-grazed route out of the Corral Creek drainage. The band will then graze up the Trail creek drainage to Wilson Creek towards the end of the season leaving the Forest on 10/7. When leaving the allotment in preparation for moving through Ketchum the band will trail down the Trail Creek road staging the sheep on BLM lands for which you are permitted near the Boundary campground.

**When the band is using the Parker Gulch portion of the Elkhorn Allotment, plan on hauling water so the band can be watered at the end on the road in the left fork of Parker Gulch. (This is the drainage leading to Proctor Mt.)**

**Close attention to management needs to occur in Uncle John's Gulch. Please caution your herders about trailing the steep toe slopes above the water, especially areas associated with conifers. Encourage your herders to use the uppermost portions of Uncle John's Gulch more and reduce use lower in the drainage.**

**The small drainage immediately west of Uncle John's Gulch has been a problem in the past. Excessive trailing through the mouth of this drainage to access water in Corral Creek has been a problem. Different routes to water and watering locations should be explored and repeated trailing through the mouth of this drainage avoided. In addition remind the herder that the small headwater spring in this drainage has also been a problem and that use of this spring needs to be as light as possible (one time).**

**It is important that the entire length of the upper portion of the Corral Creek drainage adjacent to Long Gulch is used to facilitate once over grazing practices. The sheep have a tendency to skip the lower areas in Long Gulch in preference to higher elevations. You are authorized to place a tent camp above the Pioneer Cabin trailhead to facilitate management in this area. No permanent structures will be allowed at the camp. In addition the camp wagon may be located on a closed road shortly below the trailhead. Please contact my range staff to identify an appropriate location in the field for the tent camp as well as the wagon.**

**One watering will be allowed in the headwaters of Long Gulch. Trailing along the constricted bottom in the head of Long Gulch needs to be avoided. The sheep are not to be moved through this constricted area. Please reference the allotment map and emphasize this area to the herder.**

**No grazing is allowed above the large sagebrush basin in the head of the left fork of Corral Creek. Please reference the allotment map for the specific locations.**

**Have the herder avoid the Pioneer Cabin trailhead and the area immediately adjacent to the trailhead when entering and leaving the upper Corral Creek drainage.**

**A suitable location for the herder camp is located a short distance below the trailhead. Please camp in the small drainage immediately above the last designated**

**campsite in Corral Creek (#13). The sheep need to be carefully managed when watering in this area.**

**Please inform your herder that bed-grounds need to be well separated spatially in order to achieve “once over” grazing standards. Use GPS maps with collar information provided in the past to help define problem areas to plan this year’s grazing strategy. Pay particular attention to areas where GPS points from collar information appear “clustered”.**

**The GPS collar on the Corral Creek band failed last year we would like to collar this band just prior to entering the Forest. Please contact my range staff just prior to the band trailing through the Cove Creek allotment so that a collar can be placed on with this band. Your cooperation is appreciated.**

**The area that burned in 2007 located in the lowermost portions of the Trail Creek drainage adjacent to Boundary campground has recovered sufficiently to allow grazing. Any aspen stands that burned should only be lightly used or avoided entirely avoid concentrated uses in these aspen stands such as bedding. Riparian areas that burned adjacent to Trail Creek should only be used for watering the band with the band spread over a large area. Once watered the band should be moved well away from the creek.**

**Please avoid the immediate area around Pioneer Cabin with the sheep.**

**When leaving the Forest the band should trail down the Trail Creek road to the BLM. The herder may camp at the dispersed site near the Trail Creek Bridge if needed when staging the sheep in preparation for moving through Ketchum.**

### **Lower Hyndman - Pioneer Cabin (south unit) Allotments**

Following is this year’s general grazing route that the band will follow this season:

As we discussed this year we will continue to authorize the band to trail through the Cove Creek drainage (Cove Creek Allotment) in order to access the Lower Hyndman/Pioneer Cabin allotments. The authorization to trail through Cove Creek is on a trial basis only. Future use of this route will depend upon observed effects this route has on natural resources, the permitted grazing operation in the Cove Creek allotment and any unforeseen issues that may develop. We recognize the advantages this alternative route gives your operation. National Forest lands may benefit as well due to added flexibility and improved management. The band will be trailed through the Cove Creek drainage in one day and bedded near the mouth of the drainage either on private land or lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). It will be your responsibility to obtain the necessary permission or authorization to use private property or BLM

A lamb band of 650 ewes will enter the Forest near the headwaters of Cabin Creek (Cove Cr. allotment) on approximately 7/10. The band will trail through the Cove Creek drainage to the East Fork of the Wood River in one day. The band may be watered and nooned at the trough located approximately ½ mile west of the shipping corrals at Big Witch Creek and north of the Cove Creek road. As much as possible the band should follow the road while trailing through

the Cove Creek allotment. When the band leaves the Cove Creek drainage it will be grazed/trailed (2-3 days) through the East Fork Cattle and Horse allotment in the lower portions of the Hyndman Creek drainage to the Johnson Creek and Bear Gulch drainages. The band will then graze Bear Gulch and Johnstone Creek to standard and then graze northerly adjacent to Hyndman Creek to the north fork of Hyndman Creek. In the north fork of Hyndman Creek drainage, the band will use the lower portions of this drainage to Button Creek. Near the mouth of Button Creek the band will cross the north fork of Hyndman Creek and cross back over into the main Hyndman Creek drainage near the trailhead. The band may access the upper Hyndman drainage and the upper portions of Hyndman Creek near the yurt by trailing through the cattle allotment. When trailing through the cattle allotment, the band will trail well above the creek along the toe slopes. When leaving the headwaters of the Hyndman Creek drainage the band may again trail through the cattle allotment using a route closer to the creek avoiding the earlier route. When the upper portions of the Hyndman Creek drainage are grazed to standard the band will then graze/trail in an easterly direction down the main Hyndman Creek drainage to Larkspur Gulch using areas previously skipped earlier in the season to provide an un-grazed route. After Larkspur Gulch is grazed to standard the band will follow the ridge separating Milligan Gulch and Hyndman Creek to Milligan Gulch that is in the sheep allotment. The entire reach of Milligan Gulch drainage contained in the sheep allotment may be used. However the riparian area in the lower portions of Milligan Gulch adjacent to the cattle allotment should be lightly used and watering limited to 2-3 times along this reach. After Milligan gulch is grazed to standard the band will then cross to Courier Gulch and trail through the old cattle allotment portion of Courier Gulch to the BLM in the lower part of the drainage leaving the Forest on 10/4.

**Please use the GPS mapping that my range staff provided you earlier this year to plan this year's grazing strategies. Pay particular attention to areas where GPS bedding points appear clustered and try to get as much spatial separation between these points as possible.**

**Inform your herder that the headwater springs in Bear Gulch needs to be lightly used. Close adherence to herding standards of light once over, with sheep well distributed is especially critical in this area. The drainage bottom in the right fork of Bear Gulch near its confluence is to be rested again this year. *Be sure to instruct your herder to avoid the small springs near the mouth of this drainage.***

**The entire reach of the main Bear Gulch drainage needs to be used by the band in order to achieve once over grazing standards.**

**We will allow light use of the lower portion of Milligan Gulch for watering and grazing by the band. Please limit watering to 2-3 times along the entire lower reach of Milligan Gulch in the sheep allotment.**

**Previous inspections have indicated that the aspen stands in the immediate area around the trough in Milligan Gulch are receiving heavy use. Please avoid nooning in the aspen stands in the immediate area of the trough.**

**The sheep are allowed one day to trail through the Forest Service portion of the Courier Creek drainage. Be sure the herder is familiar with the BLM/FS boundary in this drainage.**

**The sheep may water in the more gentle portions of the cattle allotment above the trailhead in Hyndman Creek when using the yurt area if necessary. Keep watering in the cattle allotment to a minimum, 2-3 times.**

**Be sure your herder understands that *all* of the upper cirque basins in the Hyndman Creek drainage are closed to grazing; the closure is marked on the allotment map. As we discussed when we rode this area with you in 2006 the sheep should not go beyond the small stream that they would need to cross in order to access the cirque basins in the North Fork of Hyndman Creek. The sheep may graze the lower slopes immediately above the lake in this area. In the yurt area (below Hyndman Peak) we will consider anything beyond the creek where the yurt is located as out of bounds. Conflicts with recreation as well as heavy use from sheep around the yurt area are concerns. Use in this area needs to be watched very closely.**

**We realize that when the band grazes back through the Hyndman Creek drainage when leaving the upper portions of the Hyndman drainage that it may not be possible to entirely avoid areas previously grazed. You are authorized to trail through areas previously used if necessary. However this practice should be kept to a minimum. Careful routing of the band and skipping areas earlier in the season to provide un-grazed areas later in the season should minimize this practice. Where crossing over areas previously used is unavoidable the band should be rapidly trailed across these areas.**

### **Fisher/Grays Allotment**

Following is this year's general grazing route that the band will follow this season:

On approximately 7/10, a dry band of 1300 ewes will enter the Fisher/Grays Creek Allotment at Porcupine Creek. The band will use the lower portions of the Porcupine (Dry Canyon downstream) and Little Baugh Creek drainages for approximately 10 days. The band will then move to the Fisher Creek drainage and graze the Fisher Creek and Baugh Creek drainages for approximately 10 days. The middle portion of the Fisher Creek drainage is to be avoided due to lack of capable rangeland. The band will then graze/trail to the Grays Creek drainage using the upper portions of the Porcupine and Fisher Creek drainages in route. The band will then use the upper portions of the Grays Creek drainage. When the upper portions of the Grays Creek drainage is grazed to standard the band will cross over to the Iron Mine drainage via upper Pasture Creek. After the Iron Mine drainage is grazed to standard the band will cross back through previously unused portions of the Pasture Creek drainage and use the lower un-used portions of Pasture and Grays Creek drainages. The band will then graze up Aspen Gulch and Coral Creek to the head of Burks Creek. The band will then trail across the head of Burks and LeMoyne Creek to the headwaters of Painter Creek. The band will then graze across the heads of the Painter and Prunty Creek drainages leaving the Forest via Buck Creek on 10/01

**The riparian area in the lower portions of Porcupine Creek is in poor condition. Due to the constrictive nature of this drainage the herder needs to be extra careful to avoid trailing the bottom with the band and repeated use. The band needs to be well distributed when watering in this area.**

**Due to lack of capable area the Fisher Creek drainage bottom approximately one mile up from the Forest boundary is to be avoided by the sheep.**

**Due to the rough terrain and lack of capable area in the headwater portions of LeMoynes and Burks Creek limit use to trailing only, across these drainages.**

**Please avoid using the immediate area around Robert Hennifer's camp.**

**We would like to collar this band to gather more GPS data on its movements this year please contact my range staff just prior to the band entering the allotment so that a collar can be placed with the band. Your cooperation is appreciated.**

**The Fisher Creek portion of the Fisher-Grays Creek allotment was rested last year. Please instruct your herder that all of the areas specified in this AOI are to be used this year.**

### **COMPLIANCE**

This AOI is made part of your grazing permit consistent with Part 1, item 3 and Part 2, Item 8(a). **Procedures for modifying this AOI:** Situations may develop during the grazing season which requires changes to these instructions. If this becomes necessary, or if you cannot comply with some part of these instructions, contact the District Ranger and obtain approval before initiating changes or deviating from these instructions.

### **REPORTING**

The permittee is required to provide timely and complete actual use information to the Forest Officer in charge upon request. Use of calendars, maps, or actual use forms provided will be utilized to record dates for turning out, shipping, leaving the allotment, as well as location and number of days of use of each camp and or prominent drainage (those identified on maps).

We need to know dates of entry into each new allotment or major drainage, noteworthy change in sheep numbers, occupied camp or band locations with dates of occupancy, periods of use within specific drainages, and maintenance of range facilities. Please notify us of significant losses, from predators or poisonous plants, herding problems (logistical or due to unforeseen circumstances), conflicts with other Forest users, and any other grazing related information you feel is worth reporting.

### **2009 SEASON GRAZING RESULTS**

**Lower Hyndman** - collar data still indicates clusters in areas please inform your herder to keep bed grounds spaced as widely as possible when grazing an area. Be sure your herder is well informed of the area being rested in the headwaters of the North Fork of Hyndman Creek, and the right fork of Bear Gulch as identified on the allotment map.

**Fisher-Grays Creek Allotment**-The entire usable area in the Fisher-Grays- Porcupine allotment complex needs to be grazed this year as described in this AOI.

Use the collar data from the map provided to you which depicts grazing patterns last year on this allotment to improve management and reduce clusters as indicated by the data.

**Corral Creek Allotment complex**- the herder did a good job managing the sheep in the lower portions of the allotment in Corral Creek along the riparian area.

### **BILLING**

Grazing fees should be paid within 15 days of receipt of billing. Confirmation of payment of fees through Lock Box must be received prior to livestock entering the allotment.

### **INSPECTIONS AND MONITORING**

Inspections will be made within each allotment to monitor grazing use and insure compliance with the direction set forth within the AOI. Standard monitoring will include visual inspections, photo points, and rapid assessments to estimate use and ground cover.

### **COOPERATION**

Please keep us informed of wolf activity while grazing the allotments. Adjustments can be made to routing or bedding as the need arises, to head off problems.

Please have your employees forward any reported sightings of bighorn sheep to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game immediately. We will follow the 2009 protocol developed at the inter-agency meetings.

We will continue to update the weekly recreation trail report regarding the location of sheep bands. This along with signing informing the public that sheep are in the area has proven successful in reducing conflicts with recreational use of the trails. We will be contacting you throughout the summer to provide us with updated information.

The potential of conflicts between grazing, such as guard dogs and the general public recreating on the district is especially high on the Corral Creek, Lower Hyndman and Pioneer Cabin Allotments due to the proximity of several high use recreation trails, roads, and busy trailheads. The herder will need to be especially attentive with the sheep and guard dogs to reduce conflicts while in these areas, especially if in close proximity to system trails or roads. The trailheads and major trails will be posted informing the public that sheep are in the area.

As you have seen we are acquiring useful data regarding grazing with the use of GPS collars on the bands. We would like to collar the Corral Creek and Grays Creek band this year to further track grazing activities. Please contact my range staff just prior to these bands entering the Forest so that collars can be placed on these bands. We appreciate your cooperation.

## **DROUGHT**

Drought conditions will be monitored as the season progresses. Grazing will be managed on an allotment by allotment basis focusing on water availability and soil disturbance. A water truck and temporary troughs may be needed as the season progresses to insure better distribution of sheep use of available water.

## **Terms and Conditions for Sheep Grazing**

Following are the Terms and Conditions applicable to sheep grazing that must be followed while grazing on the Ketchum Ranger District.

These permit terms and conditions are needed to move toward or to achieve the desired conditions, goals, and objectives for vegetation, wildlife, fish, riparian, soil and water resources described by the Sawtooth Forest Land & Resource Management Plan. Other than Guidelines, the following Terms & Conditions are binding limitations placed on management actions. Guidelines represent preferred or advisable courses of action that are generally expected to be carried out.

### **Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines:**

*Only one night/one time use of bed grounds is allowed. (standard). See exception under Wolf guidelines.*

*Only open or or loose sheep herding will be practiced except where site-specific vegetation management (e.g., noxious weed control or reforestation) is needed. (standard)*

*Only annual once-over sheep grazing will be allowed, with the exception of designated sheep sheep driveways, travel routes, or where specifically authorized. (standard)*

*Livestock salting will be prohibited in RCA's (riparian conservation areas). Sheep will be salted only at bed grounds. Salt will be placed in containers and moved with the sheep. Tarps and hollowed logs meet the criteria for salting in containers. (standard)*

*Only certified noxious weed-free hay, straw, or feed is allowed on National Forest Systems lands. (standard)*

*Earth-disturbing equipment used on National Forest System lands- such as cats, graders, and front-loaders-shall be cleaned to remove all visible plant parts, dirt, and material that may carry noxious weed seeds. Cleaning shall occur prior to entry onto the project area and again upon leaving the project area, if the project area has noxious weed infestations. (standard)*

*New, reconstructed, or replaced livestock water developments must provide access and escape to and from water for all types of wildlife. (standard, reference part Three of the Term Grazing Permit under maintenance of structural range improvements)*

*On all lands outside of designated travelways, motorized use shall be prohibited unless otherwise authorized. (standard)*

*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. (guideline)*

*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. (guideline, generally site specific in the AOI)*

### **SHEEP HERDING**

- 1. The permittee or herd manager will provide sufficient riders or herders to obtain proper distribution, protection, and management of sheep on the allotment as required by the Rangeland Project Decision (RPD)/Allotment Management Plan (AMP) and/or the Annual Operating Instructions (AOI).*
- 2. Do not allow sheep to be shaded or bedded within 100 yards of all streams. If this is not reasonable due to topography ensure that the sheep are as far back as possible from the streambank.*
- 3. Graze no closer than 200 yards from all lakes or ponds specified as closed to sheep grazing in Part 3 or your Term Grazing Permit. This may not apply on all allotments. Check Part 3 on your Term Grazing Permit.*
- 4. Do not bed sheep within 200 yards of designated campgrounds, trails, trail heads, or maintained roads.*
- 5. Graze rather than trail to water, and water at different locations each time.*
- 6. The permittee is required to provide a copy of the Annual Operating Instructions to each herder, and to ensure each herder understands the written contents.*

### **OTHER:**

- 7. Permittees are responsible for cleaning or repairing system roads and trails damaged by sheep to the condition existing prior to trailing. Immediate action is required. (standard)*
- 8. All predator control will be in accordance with the approved Predator Control Plan and Federal and State laws and regulations.*
- 9. Promptly remove or bury any sheep that have died within 100 yards or in sight of administrative sites, system roads or trails, corrals or sources of water.*
- 10. Before and after shipping, sheep will not be allowed to graze, shade, or bed within one-quarter mile of the corral. Exception: After leaving the corral, the sheep will be allowed to water one time before departing the immediate area.*
- 11. Control guard dogs when other Forest users or pets are near by.*

## **SHEEP CAMPS:**

- 12. Each camp will be kept clean. All litter and unburned material from fire pits will be hauled away and disposed of off-Forest. Human waste must be buried if it is within 150 feet from water. The use of detergent in streams is prohibited.*
- 13. Only existing herder camps are approved for use. New camp locations must be approved by a Forest Service officer.*
- 14. Camps will be kept in primitive condition. No improvements will be allowed. If a new fire pit is constructed, dismantled it and restore the area before moving your camp.*
- 15. Herder camp use will not exceed 5 days per location unless prior permission is obtained from a Forest officer. Camps should be located to avoid conflict with other Forest users*
- 16. Pack and saddle stock will be high-lined, picketed or hobbled when in camp. Tying pack or saddle stock to trees at camp is prohibited.*
- 17. Holding pens, corrals, or mangers used for riding stock will be cleaned up when camp is moved.*

## **FIRE**

- 18. Employees must be kept informed of the current fire danger, situation, and the permittee's fire prevention responsibility. The Forest Service will advise the permittee when special fire restrictions become effective.*
- 19. Exhaust from camp stoves must be filtered through a spark arrestor screen with 3/8 inch (or smaller) mesh.*
- 20. Never leave campfires unattended.*
- 21. Possession of an adequate shovel and bucket for fire control is required at camps.*

## **WOLF GUIDELINES**

- 22. The permittee will be contacted immediately when the district becomes aware of wolves in an area. Possible re-routing of the band may be agreed on between the permittee and the District Ranger.*
- 23. Meat will be kept in containers to avoid attracting wolves.*
- 24. Food wastes will be burned, buried, or packed out with other camp refuse.*
- 25. Preventive measures should be coordinated with Idaho Fish and Game.*
- 26. Only bed sheep down for one night per bed ground under normal circumstances. When there is wolf activity in the area and fladry is used to minimize predation, bed grounds may be used for more than one night. When this situation occurs bed ground site selection needs to be discussed with the Range Management Specialist for this allotment.*

### **Enclosures:**

*Allotment Maps*

*Actual Use Reporting Forms*