

**BASS CREEK
GRAZING ALLOTMENT
2010 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS**

**BITTERROOT NATIONAL FOREST
STEVENSVILLE RANGER DISTRICT**

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTION OBJECTIVES

The Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) are used in addition to your Term Grazing Permit to specify terms and conditions, and management goals for this allotment. It provides specific items such as direction for management of livestock, monitoring and communication procedures to and from district personnel. All requirements of your Term Grazing Permit remain in force, unless specifically noted in the AOI.

Grazing Permit for Ruffato Land and Cattle Company

Allotment	Permit	Class	Factor	Number	On Date	Off Date	AUM's*
Bass Creek North	Term	Cow/calf	1.32	25	06/01	07/31	66
Bass Creek South	Term	Cow/calf	1.32	25	06/01	07/31	66

* AUM is number allotted x factor x number of months grazed

1) GRAZING MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES, ANNUAL STANDARDS AND MANAGEMENT TACTICS

A) Continue to encourage native grass dominance.

B) The National Environmental Policy Act requires a review of each grazing allotment to allow grazing. The Rescission Act issued in 1995 allows us to continue grazing until these reviews are complete.

C) The season of use described above is an estimated time period that livestock will be allowed on the allotment. The season of use may be increased or decreased based on weather conditions, allowable use levels, range readiness, or other conditions affecting forage and water availability.

D) Please let Diane or Gil know of your plans to move cattle on and off the allotment. Please keep track of your actual use through the season so we may better understand patterns of use and your management efforts. For example, please note if you pull cattle off early. This will also qualify you for a credit on your next year's grazing bill.

E) Allowable use is the maximum level of grazing that is authorized to occur on the allotment. Removal or dispersment of cattle will be required if allowable levels are approached before the scheduled off date. Allowable use levels for your allotment are 50% utilization in summer range areas, and 35% in winter range. These standards are one of the important measures we use to determine how well an allotment is managed and whether the grazer is complying with the permit terms and the goals of management.

Diane and Gil are available to help you evaluate, at any time, when you are approaching the allowable use levels in any of the key areas.

The grazeable drainage bottoms are magnets for livestock concentration. Please make a strong effort to prevent over utilization of these sites. Most of our concerns about cattle impacts these days focus on riparian areas and streams for a variety of reasons. We will try to establish cages this year on some key sites to help track forage utilization levels.

2) 2010 SEASON UNIT STOCKING AND ROTATION

Based on the Annual Application, the following numbers of livestock are authorized for the 2010 season;

Unit	Class	Number	On-Date	Off-Date
Bass Creek North	Cow/calf	25	06/01	07/31
Bass Creek South	Cow/calf	25	06/01	07/31

Dates are tentative depending upon how permittee distributes his cattle, proper use, water availability and climatic conditions. Although spring has been cool and wet, low snow pack this past winter could cause conditions to dry out quickly when summer heat hits. If that happens, it may be necessary to pull cattle off the allotment early.

North Unit: This unit is a single pasture and is grazed on a season-long basis.

South Unit: This unit is divided into 4 pastures. Pasture three (on the North end of the South unit). Utilize only one unit at a time, to shorten the duration of use in those pastures. Keep gates closed between pastures, after moving to the next unit.

3) ENTERING THE FOREST

A) The current year's grazing fees will be paid at least 5 days before the on-date of the grazing season or prior to the time livestock enter the National Forest unless prior arrangements have been made in writing.

B) The permittee must notify the Forest Service when entering the Forest and/or moving cattle between pastures or off the Forest.

C) The Forest Service will confirm or adjust the on-date based on range readiness.

4) NOXIOUS WEEDS

Spotted knapweed and sulfur cinquefoil are common throughout the allotment. Treatments have been applied in the past and will continue to be done as needed. The South pasture was treated in 2006.

5) GENERAL MANAGEMENT

A) Before entering the allotment, a cattle count may be taken. The Forest Service should be notified in advance of the on-date, in order to be available at the time and date specified by the permittee.

B) Salt should be used to draw cattle into areas of low use and removed when areas have received proper use. At the end of the grazing season, all residual salt will be removed from salt grounds and the allotment. Salt only the units or areas where stock should be. Do not salt the whole allotment in advance; salt progressively with stock movement. Please do not place salt in areas where new tree plantations are being established. Salting on ridge tops and benches is recommended. Placement of salt within ¼ mile of live water will be avoided.

C) Riding will be necessary to disperse cattle and achieve more uniform use throughout the allotment.

D) Any concentrations of cattle in riparian zones shall be moved and dispersed into areas of low use. Cattle utilization in riparian zones will not exceed 35 percent on big game winter range. The riparian pastures may be used temporarily as holding pastures while gathering, sorting, or moving.

6) RANGE IMPROVEMENTS

Range improvements will be maintained annually to standards of original construction. Improvements must be maintained before stock reach the respective pastures, otherwise cattle will not be turned on or moved and may be requested for removal from the allotment.

A) All work done with a dozer, tractor, backhoe, or other earth moving equipment must be approved in advance by the District Ranger.

B) Assigned water developments are to be maintained for livestock use during the planned period of use.

C) Any necessary follow-up herbicide treatments will be discussed at the spring meeting.

7) FOREST FIRE CONTROL

The Permittee and any managers are expected to take all reasonable precautions to prevent fires, to make diligent efforts to suppress fires, and to report all fires endangering NFS lands to the Stevensville Ranger District or the Bitterroot National Forest dispatcher at 363-7134

All internal combustion engines used on the Forest will be equipped with a serviceable spark arrestor and/or muffler. Caution is also required when using vehicles off developed roads.

All burning requires prior approval by the District Ranger.

8) CONTACT

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or

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