



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Sawtooth National Forest  
Ketchum Ranger District

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File Code: 2210

Date: June 24, 2011

Denis and Lauri Kowitz  
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### 2011 Annual Operating Instructions

For Denis and Lauri Kowitz

Sheep and Goat Allotments

Administered by the

Ketchum Ranger District

Sawtooth National Forest

Prepared and recommended by: Bill Whitaker, Range Technician

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

Permittee

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Approved by: /s/ Kurt J. Nelson

District Ranger

June 24, 2011

Date



## Annual Operating Instructions 2011

### INTRODUCTION

**Permittee:** Denis and Lauri Kowitz

**Allotments Included:** Warm Springs and Deer Creek/Curran S&G

### Permitted Numbers and Seasons:

Numbers	Season	Allotment
Variable numbers and season. Not to exceed 3923 head months. Not to exceed 1100 mature sheep and 2500 total sheep (ewes + lambs). 4 horses	6/16-9/30  6/16-9/30	Warm Springs S&G
Variable numbers and season. Not to exceed 1870 head months. Band not to exceed 850 mature sheep and 2500 total animals (ewes + lambs) 2 horses	6/16-8/20  6/16-8/20	Deer Creek/Curran S&G

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

Numbers	Season	Allotment	Head Months
800 ewes/lambs 800 ewes 5 horse	06/20-08/24 (ship) 08/25-08/26 06/20-08/26	Deer Creek/Curran S&G	1788
800 ewes/lambs 800 ewe 1 Horse	06/24-8/25 (ship) 08/26-9/30	Warm Springs S&G	2604**

\*Due to the late spring and delayed turnout the authorized season (billing) will be reflected differently than the actual dates of use however the head-months which is the basis for billing will remain approximately the same or be less than the head-months reflected in the billing. Changes in the season of use will be more accurately reflected in the **Livestock Management** section of this AOI for each allotment.

\*\*Monitoring of fire recovery on the burned portions of the Warm Springs Allotment has indicated that recovery is sufficient to allow grazing to resume.

**BILLING**

**Confirmation of payment of fees through the Lock Box in San Francisco must be received prior to livestock entering the allotment.** For the purpose of accountability, please contact Robert Garcia, or Bill Whitaker five days prior to entering the allotment.

**LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT**

Emphasis will be placed upon once-over light use while grazing the band on the allotments. Carefully review with your herders the **Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines and Grazing Permit Terms and Conditions for Sheep Grazing** 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.

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

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

As a result of phone conversations with you on 6/23 with the district range staff the following changes are being made to the AOI from originally planned and reflected in the authorized use (billing). These changes are a result of the unusually late spring that delayed turnout on the allotments. The general routing and shipping dates will remain the same.

The Deer Creek-Curran band will enter the Forest on approximately **July 5**.

The Warm Springs band will enter the Forest on approximately **July 8**.

The following instructions will describe the general routing, approximate shipping dates, and areas available for grazing and specific management that needs to be followed in the Warm Springs and Deer Creek/Curran allotments.

### **DEER CREEK/CURRAN ALLOTMENT**

The 800 head lamb band will enter the allotment in the headwaters portion of the Wolfstone drainage from Bullion Gulch on approximately 7/5. The band will graze down this drainage (Forest portion) to the bridge at the junction of Wolfstone and Deer Creek. The band will cross Deer Creek and use the upper portions of the Panther Gulch and North Fork of Deer Creek drainages. Sufficient area in the lower portions of Panther Gulch and the North Fork of Deer Creek will be avoided by this band in order to allow un-grazed routes for the Warm Springs band to access the Warm Springs allotment and the Deer Creek band to access the shipping area in Panther Gulch. When the upper portions of the North Fork of Deer Creek and Panther Gulch are grazed to standard the band will graze northerly through the Sullivan Creek, Enclosure Creek and Lupine Gulch drainages to Poison Flats and the Lick Creek drainages. When these drainages are grazed to standard the band will trail southerly across the eastern flanks of Buttercup Mountain (the heads of Bear Gulch, Frys Gulch and Lost Draw) to the Curran Gulch drainage. The band will then graze through the Curran Gulch and Kinsey Creek drainages to Slide Canyon. The band will then graze down Slide Canyon and cross Deer Creek. The band will then graze up the lower portions of the North Fork of Deer Creek and cross into Panther Gulch to ship on approximately 8/22 from the shipping area at the junction of Panther Gulch and Nay Aug Gulch. When the lambs are shipped the band will trail down the road to Wolfstone Creek and trail up the Wolfstone drainage leaving the Forest on 8/24. When trailing through the Wolfstone drainage when leaving the allotment the band will pick an un-grazed route up this drainage specifically planned for this purpose. Please reference the allotment map for general routing information and specific directions contained within this AOI.

**If crossing Deer Creek at the junction to Slide Canyon proves to not be feasible the band will cross at Wolfstone in order to trail to the shipping area. The Slide Canyon route is preferable to reduce trailing in the Wolfstone drainage.**

**When accessing the shipping area and when leaving the allotment (Wolfstone drainage) you are authorized to trail across areas previously grazed earlier in the season, however this practice should be avoided as much as possible. Careful planning will be necessary regarding routing so that un-grazed areas are available to provide routes when leaving the allotment or in preparation to shipping.**

**The riparain areas in Wolfstone Creek and the North Fork of Deer Creek should be used as lightly as possible.**

**Please follow these instructions when shipping in Panther Gulch. The sheep are to be trailed to the facility from some distance (1/4-1/2 mile) and moved directly into the corral. All sorting and holding of the sheep will be in the confines of the corral. The sheep are not to be watered or grazed within the immediate vicinity of the corral. Shipping from Panther Gulch will be from portable corrals located at the Greenhorn Guard station. Please coordinte with my range staff concerning the use of these corrals. The panels are to be removed and returned shortly after shipping.**

**Damage to system trails by sheep has been a problem. Inform your herder of this problem and plan accordingly. Repair any damage immediately. The permittee will be held accountable for trail damage that is not immediately repaired to an acceptable standard.**

**As we discussed at this years spring meeting, conflicts with guard dogs and the recreating public has been a problem. The herder will need to be attentive with the sheep and guard dogs to reduce conflicts, especially if in close proximity to system trails or roads. Major trails and trailheads will be posted by range staff informing the public that sheep and guard dogs are in the area. In addition signs will be given to you that can be moved with the sheep and placed by the herder in strategic locations informing the public of the proximity of sheep and guard dogs in the area.**

## **Warm Springs Allotment**

As we discussed at this year's spring meeting allotment inspections indicate that soil and vegetation recovery following the 2007 Castle Rock Fire is sufficient to allow grazing on the allotment with the following precautions:

Although aspen stands and riparian areas that burned during the 2007 Castle Rock fire have recovered to the degree identified to allow grazing in the recovery plan developed for the fire, they may still be vulnerable to damage by sheep if not carefully managed. Aspen stands that burned may be grazed by the band; however, use should be light. Avoid any concentrations of sheep within individual aspen stands that burned such as bedding/nooning.

Riparian areas that burned should only be used for watering the band with the band widely distributed. Avoid any concentrations of sheep in burned riparian areas. Once the band has been watered it should be moved and nooned well away from the riparian area. We will be spot monitoring sheep use in these recovery areas to insure impacts are not unacceptable.

Many areas dominated by dense stands of conifer previous to the Castle Rock fire burned very hot and will be avoided by the band when grazing on the allotment.

A band of 800 ewes with lambs will enter the Forest near the headwaters of Wolfstone Creek (Deer Creek/Curran Allotment) on approximately 7/8. The band will trail down the drainage to the bridge crossing Deer Creek at the junction of Wolfstone and Deer Creek drainages. When trailing through Wolfstone a route different than the route taken by the Deer Creek/Curran band will be used as much as possible. After crossing Deer Creek the band will then trail along the Deer Creek road across the Kelly Mountain/Greenhorn allotment to Panther Gulch. The band will then trail up Panther Gulch entering the Warm Springs allotment at the headwaters of Greenhorn Gulch on approximately 7/10. The band will then use the headwaters of the Greenhorn drainage grazing to the heads of Lodgepole and Mahoney Creeks. Portions of Lodgepole and Mahoney Creek drainages will be avoided by the lamb band in order to provide un-grazed routes for the dry band to use when leaving the allotment at the end of the grazing season.

After the Greenhorn Creek, Mahoney Creek and Lodgepole Gulch drainages are grazed to standard, the band will enter the Warm Springs drainage at the head of the Red Warrior drainage. The lamb band will then use the Red Warrior drainage grazing westerly to Rough Canyon. The band will cross Warm Springs Creek at Rough Canyon for shipping at the Placer Creek corrals on approximately 8/25. The Placer Creek drainage can be used by the lamb band prior to shipping if needed. The dry band will graze easterly after shipping and use the Castle Creek, Bar Gulch and Rooks Creek drainages. The band will then graze to the Red Warrior drainage and graze up this drainage to the headwaters of the Lodgepole and Mahoney Gulch drainages. The band may graze to the West Fork of Warm Springs Creek prior to grazing up the Red Warrior drainage if needed. The band will then graze down Lodgepole Gulch and the Mahoney Creek drainages to the Kelly Mountain-Greenhorn allotment boundary. The band will trail across the upper portions of the Kelly Mountain-Greenhorn allotment and the lower portions of the Limekiln allotment leaving the Forest on 9/30. Reference the allotment map for general routing information and specific direction regarding these instructions.

**In the Greenhorn Gulch drainage be sure your herder is especially attentive of the guard dogs and grazing in proximity of the busy trails located in this drainage.**

**Damage to system trails by sheep has been a problem. Inform your herder of this problem and plan accordingly. Repair any damage immediately. The permittee will be held accountable for trail damage that is not immediately repaired to an acceptable standard. The trail in Warfield Gulch has recently been relocated and is especially vulnerable to damage by sheep. Be sure your herders are aware of this and avoid the trail to the extent possible.**

**The trough in Lodgepole Gulch needs repaired. Refer to your Term Grazing Permit that outlines your responsibilities and maintenance standards as a condition of your permit.**

**As we discussed at this years spring meeting conflicts with guard dogs and the recreating public has been a problem. The herder will need to be especially attentive with the sheep and guard dogs to reduce conflicts, especially if in close**

**proximity to system trails or roads. Major trails and trailheads will be posted by range staff informing the public that sheep and guard dogs are in the area. In addition signs will be given to you that can be moved with the sheep and placed by the herder in strategic locations informing the public of the proximity of sheep and guard dogs in the area.**

## **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**

You are 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. **Weekly reporting for trail information updates will suffice as actual use reporting with the addition of any notable changes in numbers of mature sheep.**

## **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.

**Post fire monitoring will continue on the Warm Springs allotment to further assess recovery and further determine the effects that grazing may be having on recovery.**

## **COOPERATION**

Once again this year we will work in partnership with the Idaho Department of Fish & Game and the Defenders of Wildlife in fostering a non-lethal approach to preventing sheep and wolf mortality in the Big Wood River drainage. Adjustments can be made to routing or bedding as the

need arises, to head off problems. Meetings will be scheduled as necessary to assess how things are going or head off potential problems.

Questions about what can or cannot be done in reference to defending flocks, harassing wolves, or shooting wolves should be directed to Steve Nadeau at the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) Headquarters Office in Boise, Idaho (208-334-3700); Todd Grimm, USDA APHIS Wildlife Services in Boise, Idaho (208-378-5077); or local Wildlife Service's contacts. Permittees should continue working with their local Wildlife Services representative on depredation issues. **Note: Due to recent changes in management of wolves, these phone numbers may change as the season progresses.** The phone numbers listed above are from 2010 wolf management.

In order to reduce the potential for depredation, the Forest Service recommends that the following procedures be implemented each grazing season:

*Keep camp meat in coolers, and not hung.*

*Burn, bury, or pack out food leftovers, bones, garbage etc. including food not consumed by dogs accompanying the herders.*

*Bury or remove sheep and saddle stock carcasses from the area where they will not serve as an attractant to predators. The intent of this recommendation is not to require removal of carcasses from the allotment, but to remove them out of areas currently being grazed of areas soon to be grazed.*

*Work with IDF&G and Wildlife Services in implementing other effective preventative actions to reduce the risk of depredation.*

Contact the range staff at the Ketchum Ranger District (208-622-5371) for local Wildlife Service's contact information.

The Forest Service recognizes that you and the Idaho Department of Fish & Game have developed a "Best Management Practice for Separation between Domestic Sheep and Bighorn Sheep" agreement because of the potential for conflict between wild sheep and domestics. In addition to BMP's agreed to in that agreement, we also require the herders conduct regular sightings throughout the day for bighorn sheep. We also require that the permittee make the appropriate contact with the Forest Service or Idaho Department of Fish & Game if a bighorn sheep sighting is reported by the herder while tending the sheep on the allotments or on the Ketchum/Stanley driveway.

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 preventing conflicts with recreational use of the trails. We will be contacting you on a weekly basis while the bands are on the Ketchum Ranger District to provide us with updated information.

The potential of conflicts with the general public and grazing, such as trail damage, or guard dogs is especially high on the Deer Creek/Curran and Warm Springs allotments due to the proximity of several high use recreation trails, roads, and busy trailheads. The herder will need to be 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. The herder will be given additional signs that will be moved with the sheep and placed at strategic locations more proximal to the sheep in order to inform the public of the presence of sheep and guard dogs.

## **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.

### **Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines and Grazing Permit Terms and Conditions for Sheep Grazing**

Following are the Forest Plan standards, guidelines and Grazing Permit terms, conditions and practices applicable to sheep grazing that must be followed while grazing on the Ketchum Ranger District.

These permit standards, guidelines, 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)
- 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. At camp, pack and saddle stock will be high-lined, picketed or hobbled. 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. At camp, 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.**

## **IMPROVEMENTS**

**27. The permittee is responsible for the maintenance of structural range improvements as delineated on Part 3 of your Term grazing Permit. These improvements will be maintained prior to placing sheep on the allotment. Please refer to your permit for the specific maintenance standards for structural range improvements.**

**Enclosures: Spanish Standards and Guidelines, allotment maps will be provided prior to the sheep entering the allotments.**

Sincerely,

*/s/ Kurt J. Nelson*  
KURT J. NELSON  
Ketchum District Ranger

