

**2011 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS
FOR THE
COUNCIL MOUNTAIN C&H ALLOTMENT**

INTRODUCTION

These Annual Operating Instructions are a guide for implementing grazing management activities on the **Council Mountain C&H Allotment** for the 2011 grazing season. This plan was developed with participation of the livestock permittees at the Annual Operating Instruction meeting held at the Council District Office on April 27, 2011. The interdisciplinary resource personnel and livestock permittees who participated in development of this plan were Permittees Matt Jones & Myron Motichka, Bill Copher, Marlin Wolfe, Wes Hudman, Russell & Justin Mink and Jerry Yantis and Rangeland Management Specialists Andy Bumgarner and Jennifer McMorris and District Ranger Greg Lesch.

These instructions are a guideline for grazing management. It is necessary to contact the Forest Service if there are any changes or additions to these instructions through out the grazing season. Refer to Part 2 of your term grazing permit for general terms and conditions which apply to these Annual Operating Instructions.

Permitted Use			
Permittee	Allotment	Livestock Numbers	Season of Use
Bill Copher	Council Mountain	125 cow/calf pairs	6/20-10/15
Motichka Farms		75 cow/calf pairs	
Tom Gibbons & Dennis Heck		239 cow/calf pairs	
Norman Hansen		60 cow/calf pairs	
Marlin Wolfe		179 cow/calf pairs	
Wes Hudman		100 cow/calf pairs	
Mink Land & Livestock		175 cow/calf pairs	
Alvin Yantis		180 cow/calf pairs	
Jack Yantis		46 cow/calf pairs	
Grays Creek		138 cow/calf pairs	

Permitted Livestock Brands

Permitted Pack & Saddle Stock

2011 Authorized Use			
Permittee	Allotment	Livestock Numbers	Season of Use
Bill Copher	Council Mountain	125 cow/calf pairs 30 cow/calf pairs*	6/20-10/15
Motichka Farms		75 cow/calf pairs	
Tom Gibbons & Dennis Heck		Non - Use	
Norman Hansen		Non - Use	
Marlin Wolfe		162 cow/calf pairs	
Wes Hudman		45 Non - Use 55 cow/calf pairs 23 State Lease	
Mink Land & Livestock		175 cow/calf pairs	
Alvin Yantis		162 cow/calf pairs	
Jack Yantis		46 cow/calf pairs 8 State Lease	
Grays Creek		138 cow/calf pairs	Vacant

*permittee is authorized to fill in behind non-use taken by other allotment permittee

COMPLIANCE

This AOI is made part of the Term Grazing Permit consistent with Part 1, item 3, and Part 2, item 8(a). Situations may develop during the grazing seasons which require 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. The season of use is especially dependent upon weather conditions (annual precipitation) which influences annual forage production and range readiness. The District Ranger's authority to modify term grazing permitted use is further described in Part 2, Section 8 (b) & (c) of your permit.

Refer to your term grazing permit, part 2 (general terms and conditions) and part 3 (special terms and conditions) for a list of general and specific management practices required by the permittee.

All livestock feed or straw brought on to the forest is required to be certified weed free.

PREVIOUS YEAR GRAZING RESULTS

2010 Grazing Rotation			
Permittee	Allotment	Livestock Numbers	Season of Use
Bill Copher	Council Mountain	125 cow/calf pairs	6/20-10/15
Motichka Farms		75 cow/calf pairs	
Tom Gibbons & Dennis Heck		239 cow/calf pairs	
Norman Hansen		60 cow/calf pairs	
Marlin Wolfe		179 cow/calf pairs	
Wes Hudman		100 cow/calf pairs	

		23 State Lease	
Mink Land & Livestock		175 cow/calf pairs	
Alvin Yantis		150 cow/calf pairs	
Jack Yantis		46 cow/calf pairs 8 State Lease	
Grays Creek		138 cow/calf pairs	Vacant

BILLING

Grazing fees of \$ 1.35/HM must be paid before livestock are authorized to enter the National Forest. Payment must be made to: USDA Forest Service, c/o Citibank, P.O. Box 301550, Los Angeles, California 90030-1550. The Council District Office must receive confirmation from the Citibank Lockbox that payment has been made prior to cattle entering the Forest.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

The Council Mountain C&H Allotment is managed under a deferred rotation grazing system which was designed by the permittees to defer grazing use each year with in their individual use areas.

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Mink Land & Livestock		175 cow/calf pairs		
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Grays Creek		138 cow/calf pairs		Vacant

Bill Copher: June 20 cattle will turn out in above the East Fork Ditch, in order to rest Spring Creek. Approximately July 1, the cattle will be moved up the East Fork Weiser River to Dewey Creek and the lower end of Joker Creek. Around August 5 the cattle will be moved into the Elsberry Spring and Switchback Spring area and up to Blue Bunch Ridge. Cattle will return home by way of Bench Creek and the East Fork Weiser River through Shingle Creek and off the Forest by October 15. **As long as the Forest Service is setting up, maintaining, and letting down the Shingle Flat enclosure, no overnighting of livestock is permitted.**

Motichka Farms: June 20 turn out 50 pair on Filly Creek and Pin Creek. Turn out 25 pair on Dry Beaver. The 50 pair will move out Around July 15 to the Fire Gulch area and upper Dry Beaver. Approximately August 1 the cattle will be moved to the Blue Bunch and Red Point area. They will then move along the Boise line around September 15 to the north end of Beaver Creek Riparian Demonstration Area until about October 1. Livestock will be removed from the Forest by October 15.

Roughly July 1, the 25 pair from Dry Beaver Creek turnout will move up Beaver Creek, staying outside of the enclosure, for approximately 10 days and continue on to the burned area at the head of North Fork Creek. Around September 15 start down North Fork Creek and arrive at the south end of the Beaver Creek Riparian Demonstration Area around October 1. Livestock will be removed from the Forest by October 15.

Hudman: 16 pair and 1 bull will be turned out June 20 in Fourth Gulch, moving to Dry Beaver and the Bench Creek area. The remaining livestock will be turned out in Pin Creek and moved toward Gaylord Creek to Dry Beaver then to the Blue Bunch springs area. Livestock will be removed from the Forest by October 15.

Alvin Yantis: On June 20, 162 pairs will be turned out at Thompson Corner and moved up the ridge to the south fork of Wood Gulch. The cattle will be moved from Wood Gulch to Cookhouse Gulch and graze along the contour road. Around August 1 move livestock through the contour fence and up along the ridge at the base of Council Mountain, and over, utilizing Granite Basin and the head of Deseret Basin and off the Forest by October 15.

Salt will not be placed in Deseret or North Cottonwood Creek. Cattle may drift through these areas.

Jack Yantis: June 20 the cattle will be turned out on Fort Hall Ridge moving up to Cutoff Saddle, North Mill Creek, Cold Spring Creek, and down the East Fork Weiser River over the stock driveway home by October 15.

Mink Land & Livestock: 175 pair of cattle will be turned out on June 20 in Sheep Creek and Dutch Oven. The cattle will utilize this area until sometime after July 4. They will be pushed up around the head of Warm Springs Creek and into Bucks Basin and Lake Basin. Cattle will return home through Crystal Creek and the lower end of Cabin, Boulder and Bar Creeks. All efforts will be made to keep cattle out of the tree plantations. Livestock must be removed from the allotment by October 15.

Marlin Wolfe & Norman Hansen: Cattle will turn out in Lester Creek, Grossen Creek, Camp Creek, and South Fork Mill Creek drainages. The area will be utilized until approximately August 15, if allowable use has not been met. Cattle will proceed up North Fork Cottonwood Creek on the contour road up Larkspur Gulch, to the headwaters of Dewey Creek and on up to No Business moving through Deseret Cabin, past the enclosure through Squaw Flat and over to No Business. Bring cattle home through Squaw Flat and Granite Basin, and off the Forest by October 15.

The season of use dates are tentative and may vary according to range conditions and utilization levels within the use areas. Livestock movement dates will vary and may be shortened or extended as conditions warrant. These dates are guidelines and vary from year to year based on growing conditions and precipitation.

The grazing prescriptions are designed to meet the resource needs of the soils and vegetation. For drainages which support habitat for the Chinook Salmon (threatened species under the Endangered Species Act), it is necessary to develop prescriptions that eliminate any adverse impacts to the salmon habitat. Fisheries Biologists will complete Biological Assessments on this grazing activity to ensure that any known and/or potential effects have been eliminated. The known or potential problem areas have been identified below, along with the respective mitigation measures designed to eliminate each adverse effect.

1. Resource Concerns: Little Salmon River drainage in section 31, Vick Creek drainage in section 22 above the Forest boundary and Big Creek drainage along Blue Bunch Ridge in sections 5, 8, 17, 21, 27.

Mitigation Measures:

1. Maintain an allowable use of 40% in the uplands.
2. Maintain an allowable use of 30% in riparian areas.
3. Adjust grazing practices as necessary to maintain or improve inland and anadromous fish resources and fish habitat.
4. Assure that existing facilities within RCAs do not prevent or retard attainment of WCIs.
5. Limit livestock trailing, bedding, watering, salting, loading, and other handling to those areas and times that will not prevent or retard attainment of WCIs.
6. Salt is not to be placed in meadow bottoms, where livestock congregate and should be placed no less than 0.25 miles from water.

The utilization standards you will be responsible for meeting are from the Biological Opinion for the Weiser River Watershed, issued by the Fish and Wildlife Service on May 5, 1999, page 62 item 7 mitigation measures states: "In bull trout habitat, residual stubble heights within riparian areas shall be at least 6 inches for key representative riparian graminoid species (grasses, rushes, sedges, etc.) at the time cattle are moved from a unit. **No more than 30% use by weight on upland type grasses which occur on floodplains or 40% use where stream temperatures are functioning adequately shall be permitted.** No more than 25% of the annual growth (i.e. current season's leaders, not existing plant material) of woody species shall be browsed....".

Notify the Forest Service at least 5 days before you turn onto the allotment of when and where turnout will occur so that a count can be made if desired.

STANDARDS AND GUIDES

The following are specific utilization standards and guidelines from the July 2003 Forest Plan. Utilization percentages are by weight and are the maximum allowed.

RAST01 - Maximum forage utilization of representative areas within each pasture shall not exceed the values shown 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.

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

b) Upland Vegetative Cover Types: Early season or season long pastures – 40 percent use. Vegetative slow growth, after seed ripe conditions, or late season pastures – 50 percent use.

In cattle allotments where riparian area restoration is an objective (Upper East Fork Weiser River subwatershed, Beaver Creek), grazing systems should be designed to incorporate the following parameters where appropriate (RAGU02):

a. Provide residual vegetative cover (at least 6 inches of hydric vegetation) either through regrowth or rest treatments for at least 75 percent of the years in a rotation cycle.

b. Reduce the duration of riparian area grazing periods where needed. Grazing period reduction may be especially needed in the fall where riparian deciduous woody species are an important riparian vegetation component.

c. Design grazing periods to take advantage of favorable seasonal livestock dispersal behavior (examples: spring use of uplands, due to wet riparian conditions, late fall upland use, due to cold temperatures, poor dispersal during “hot” season).

d. Incorporate sufficient growing season rest to provide good vigor, physiological needs, and regeneration of all riparian plants.

e. Where deciduous trees and shrubs are important in the composition, modify the frequency of grazing periods, reduce the grazing duration, or reduce grazing intensity to levels that provide for recovery/maintenance of healthy diverse trees and shrubs.

East Branch Weiser River and Middle Fork Weiser River are listed on the Idaho State 303(d) impaired water quality list and has been identified in the Forest Plan in the Management Area 3 Weiser River Objective 0318 for improvement of water quality. **Please be aware, on these two rivers you are required to maintain a 6 inch residual stubble height on hydric greenline species to be measured at the end of the growing season, not the end of the grazing season.**

When an area reaches allowable use levels the cattle will be moved and kept from returning to that area. If cattle are in the final area of the rotation sequence and utilization standards are reached, then they will have to be removed from the allotment.

In the event a designated mitigation measure fails to protect a species listed under the Endangered Species Act, a change in the authorized grazing activity will occur. If proper utilization levels are reached, then livestock will be moved to the next grazing area or off the forest. If livestock grazing does not comply with the terms and conditions of these Annual Operating Instructions, then the Forest Service policy and procedures dealing with administrative permit actions will be followed.

Livestock in units outside the season of use or on an allotment other than the one permitted, is a violation of the terms and conditions of the Term Grazing Permit. The Forest Service recognizes that a 100% clean pasture or allotment is not always achievable by the scheduled move or off date however; adequate effort is expected to achieve that.

IMPROVEMENTS

All range improvements must be maintained prior to turning livestock into the use area scheduled for turn out. Some improvements may not be accessible by turnout because of snow levels or elevation. If this occurs notify your rangeland management specialist. If an existing range improvement has been properly maintained but requires reconstruction, a cooperative effort can be made between the Forest Service and permittee to reconstruct the development, depending on material availability. Those projects to which the permittee contributes normally receive higher priority for funding by the Forest Service.

Maintenance of spring developments is vitally important to the health of your livestock and to the grazing allotment. If you are aware of spring developments that require reconstruction or extensive maintenance, please discuss this with your Rangeland Management Specialist.

The permittees are required to ride the bull trout spawning habitat exclosures twice per week to maintain, repair, keep cattle out of and/or remove cattle from. The permittees are responsible for these exclosures.

The Shingle Flat exclosure has been rebuilt as originally designed. Until the permittees set it up, maintain it, and let it down, **no livestock use is authorized.**

For a list of assigned maintenance of structural improvements as well as maintenance standards see part 3 of your term grazing permit.

PERMITTEE/RIDER INSTRUCTIONS

Part of good cattle management is riding to assure proper cattle distribution. In particular we want to insure that the stream banks and meadows aren't over used. These riparian areas are considered key areas and will be monitored. When an area has reached maximum allowable use levels cattle will be removed from that area and kept from returning. Keeping cattle off select areas and in areas of less use serves to prolong the time cattle can expect to stay in an area.

If cattle are in the final area of the rotation sequence and utilization standards are reached, then they will have to be removed from the allotment.

Salting

Salting is restricted to the following:

- No less than ¼ mile from water, and not be placed in meadow bottoms. Exceptions to this must be cleared and approved by the District Ranger prior to placing the salt.
- Placed at a minimum distance of 100 yards from open roads and out of sight from roads if possible.
- Should be located in a rocky area where minimal vegetation grows.
- Unconsumed salt will be removed from the site.
- ¼ mile from timber plantations with trees less than 15 feet tall. If this can't be accomplished, the District Range and Reforestation personnel will work with you to find acceptable locations.

REQUIRED REPORTING

We are requesting you to report actual use information for each unit grazed because we are required to report this grazing use to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). This information is also very important when conducting future allotment analysis. Any format is acceptable. If you would like a Forest Service form or have any questions about what information to include in the Actual Use Report, please call Andy at 208-253-0114 or 208-549-4262. **Actual Use needs to be turned in no later than December 1, 2011.**

INSPECTIONS AND MONITORING

Turnout will not occur prior to range readiness. Range readiness is measured by soil moisture and plant growth. Soils may be damp but should be firm to avoid excessive compaction due to livestock. Grass species must be a minimum of 6 inches in height. Arrowleaf balsamroot should be in bloom or past bloom.

Allotment/pasture inspections will be performed periodically throughout the grazing season by Forest Service Personnel. Livestock distribution, correct livestock location, numbers and identification, structural improvement maintenance, and utilization levels will be evaluated during these site visits. If you wish to accompany Forest Service Personnel on these inspections please contact the Rangeland Management Specialist.

COORDINATION & COOPERATION

Cooperation with neighboring permittees is encouraged, however if there are problems occurring that cannot be settled let your Rangeland Management Specialist know so that steps can be taken to correct the problems.

The Middle Fork blow down project located south of No Business should be completed this summer. The contract is good through 2012. If you would like a map of the project we can provide one for you.

Please review the AOI for consistency with our discussion at the annual meeting, if correct sign and return it to Andy.

GREG LESCH
District Ranger

DATE

Bill Copher
Permittee

DATE

Mink Land & Livestock
Permittee

DATE

Motichka Farms
Permittee

DATE

Tom Gibbons & Dennis Heck
Permittee

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