

2011 Annual Operating Instructions

Muddy Creek C&H Allotment

Powder River Ranger District

Bighorn National Forest

District Ranger _____ Date _____

Permittee _____ Date _____

MUDDY CREEK C&H ALLOTMENT
Year 2011 Annual Operating Instructions

Permitted and Authorized for 2011:

Muddy Creek C&H Allotment Permittee	LS Kind	LS Class	Permitted Use			Requested Use for 2011		
			LS #	From	Use To	LS #	From	Use To
Burnett Creek LLC	Cattle	Mature	114	06/25	09/25	114	06/25	09/25
	Horse	Mature	1	06/25	09/25	2	06/25	09/25
Crazy Woman LLC	Cattle	Mature	63	06/25	09/25	63	06/25	09/25
	Horse	Mature	1	06/25	09/25	1	06/25	09/25
Patchwork Partners LLC	Cattle	Mature	63	06/25	09/25	63	06/25	09/25
	Horse	Mature	1	06/25	09/25	2	06/25	09/25
Bear Track Inc.	Cattle	Mature	100	06/25	09/25	100	06/25	09/25
	Horse	Mature	1	06/25	09/25	1	06/25	09/25
Tim & Jackie Reimler	Cattle	Mature	321	06/25	09/25	321	06/25	09/25
	Horse	Mature	1	06/25	09/25	2	06/25	09/25
Klondike Ranch LP	Cattle	Mature	79	06/25	09/25	79	06/25	09/25
	Horse	Mature	1	06/25	09/25	2	06/25	09/25

- Before Entering the Allotment

I suggest that you review your term grazing permit and the following Annual Operating Instructions, and ask questions if any portion is not clearly understood.

Year 2011 grazing fees are \$1.35 /head month, and must be paid before livestock can be turned onto the Forest. Let Scott or Silas know the actual date and number of livestock entering the National Forest and, upon request, provide for having stock counted.

2011 rotations:

Pasture	2010	2011	2012
East Rotation (Crazy Woman, Burnett, Bear Track, Klondike)			
Upper Elgin	3	2	1
Lower Elgin	2	1	3
Caribou Mesa	1	3	2
West Rotation (Patchwork and Reimler)			
Holding	1,5	1,5	1,5
Pole Creek	2	4	3
Caribou Creek	3	2	4
Crazy Woman	4	3	2

- Entering the Allotment

The turn on date for Muddy Creek C&H Allotment is tentatively authorized for June 25. Plan to turn livestock onto the allotment on or after this date unless you feel that forage is not ready to be grazed, or unless you have been notified that delays are necessary to allow for further plant development. The actual date livestock may be turned onto the allotment depends on range readiness. The value of animal months lost due to a delay for forage development may be credited against next year's fees, if requested by the end of the calendar year.

Indicators to determine range readiness are soil and vegetation conditions. Rangeland is generally ready for grazing when soil has become firm after winter and early spring precipitation, and when plants have reached a stage of growth at which grazing may begin under a specific management plan without long-lasting damage. This occurs when grasses are headed out, forbs are in full bloom, and shrubs are leaved out. Livestock should not be turned on until all portions of the first pasture of a rotation are determined to be "ready", and subsequent pastures in a rotation will be "range ready" when their scheduled grazing use is to occur.

- Resource Guidelines

Resource guidelines below are derived from the Muddy Creek C&H Allotment Management Plan, 05/19/2000. The allowable use standards for utilization of the current year's growth by livestock and wildlife will be as follows:

Uplands	A maximum of 40% of current years growth in <u>first</u> used pasture; a maximum of 50% of current years growth in all other pastures.
Riparian*	A 5" stubble height of all riparian sedge species
Aspen	A 5" stubble height of all grass species within boundaries of aspen stands when livestock leave the pasture.

* The "Bighorn National Forest Vegetation Grazing Guidelines, May, 2007" indicate that stubble height measurements are to record longest leaf

Moves between pastures are dependent upon forage utilization levels and other resource objectives being met for a pasture. When it is determined that further use and impacts in a pasture will exceed allowable use levels, livestock are required to be moved to the next pasture in the scheduled rotation, or off National Forest if they are already in the last pasture. It is your responsibility to see that livestock are managed to best utilize available forage while assuring guidelines are not exceeded. Since precipitation, forage production levels, and other factors change from year to year and livestock utilization patterns vary, this will require monitoring by you and/or your rider throughout the season.

Livestock use beyond allowable guidelines could result in an administrative action in subsequent years, such as an adjustment to the season of use, in order to allow plants a chance to recover and restore root reserves.

- Monitoring

The primary emphasis for monitoring should be placed on measuring stubble height in riparian areas, and estimating percent by weight of forage removed on upland sites, as described above. If issues are raised indicating the need to monitor aspen, stream banks, or willows, we prefer to jointly determine appropriate monitoring protocols and locations. Permittees are no longer required to submit annual stubble height data; however, it is strongly recommended that you continue monitoring. Any data you collect and submit will be maintained in permanent files.

To facilitate monitoring actual use, and to avoid the need to measure utilization on all Suitable rangeland, monitoring will be done using a key area concept. "Key" areas are generally those areas of a pasture which livestock have the tendency to go to and graze first. If utilization in these "key areas" does not exceed allowable utilization guidelines, then use in the rest of the unit will most likely not exceed guidelines either. This is not to imply that guidelines need only be met in "key areas". Allowable use guidelines apply to all Suitable rangeland on the allotment. Key areas may be revised as needed.

I encourage you to contact Scott or Silas should you have any questions, want assistance with measurements, or need monitoring forms. In order to assure your results accurately reflect livestock use, all measurements should be completed within 7 days of the time livestock are removed from the pasture. Be sure to record the date measurements are taken, and the name of the data collector(s). Photos of the transect showing its general location and actual forage remaining will support your data. The Forest Service will conduct spot checks throughout the grazing season and I encourage your participation.

- Key Areas

Key areas serve as a monitoring and evaluation point for the degree of grazing use occurring in each pasture. Properly selected key areas give an indication of the overall acceptability of current grazing management to meet all resource objectives.

Pasture	Location
Lower Elgin	Riparian area near spring development #105016, in NE ¼ 6-49-83
Upper Elgin	Riparian area along Sourdough Creek
Caribou Mesa	Riparian area adjacent to Sidehill Park Riparian area along US 16, across from the Pole Creek pullout
Crazy Woman	Riparian area along US Highway 16 Riparian area west of Pole Creek Road on Hess Creek Riparian area west of Pole Creek Road on N Fork Crazy Woman Ck
Crazy Woman West	Riparian area along Crazy Wmn Creek, west of Sheep Mtn Road
Pole Creek	Riparian area along north tributary to Pole Creek, west of horse pasture, in N ½ 22-49-84
Caribou Creek	Riparian area along US 16, adjacent to Crazy Woman Campground
Holding Pasture	Riparian area in southeast portion of pasture on Muddy Creek

I encourage you to keep thorough notes while monitoring. Should your data indicate changes might be needed in key area locations, contact Scott or Silas to discuss adjustments.

- Maintenance of Improvements

Term grazing permits state that permittees will maintain assigned range improvements 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. Maintenance 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. Materials from abandoned range improvements or maintenance activities must be removed from the Forest. The minimum maintenance standard for improvements is as follows:

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. Gates are to be tight enough to prevent sagging but must be able to be easily opened and closed by the general public. Any ‘let-down’ fences for which you are responsible should be let down after grazing use, for the winter.

Buck and Pole Fences, and Pole-top 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 fastened to bucks or posts, and all broken or rotting poles and bucks are to be replaced.

Springs and Stock Tanks: 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 spring boxes and tanks. Over-flow outlets on stock tanks shall prevent excessive water spill in the immediate vicinity (30 ft) of the tank. Tanks are to be level, completely surrounded by dry soil, gravel, or rock, and easily accessible by both cows and calves. Livestock barriers over tanks must be sturdy and poles and planks must be in good condition and fastened in place.

Reservoirs and Stock Ponds: Any fill material used to create a dam must maintain sufficient vegetative cover to prevent erosion. The emergency spillway, if present, must also maintain sufficient vegetative cover to prevent erosion. Livestock travel routes must be planned such that trailing does not generate additional erosion in and around the reservoir. Erosion damage that does occur will be repaired as soon as is practicable. If ponds are not sealing well, bentonite or other sealers should be used to reduce seepage. Deeper reservoirs reduce evaporation loss over shallow reservoirs; as reservoirs silt in, they should be cleaned.

Stock Pipelines:

Maintain cover over buried pipelines, and maintain backfill around structures. Avoid travel over shallow buried pipelines. Repair any damage to above-ground and on-ground pipelines immediately. Remove all foreign debris that hinders system operation. Drain the system and components soon following periods of use. Maintain erosion protection at outlets. Protect the area adjacent to the trough with gravel or cover. Be sure that any outlet pipe is free and not causing erosion.

- Planned Range Improvement Projects

The following range improvement projects have been proposed for construction or reconstruction. Grazing permit modifications for cooperative range improvements (form FS-2200-113) must be completed prior to expenditure of Forest Service funds for project work. Obtain an off-road permit, if needed, before commencing range improvement work. Coordinate project work through Scott or Silas.

2011 Projects:

Imvt #	Improvement Name	Project Description
105006	Elgin Park Drift Fence	Maintenance needed but reconstruction not a high priority. Permittees will request Off-Road permit if needed.
105014	Muddy Creek Hilltop Spring (Maddox Spring)	Needs relocation and a new tank, rails, and bucks. Forest Service agreed to look at the site with permittees this year. Forest Service to verify heritage clearance, permittees plan to do in 2011 if possible.
105022	East Long Park Spring	New tank installed 2008, need to remove old enclosure and re-build with buck and rail. Use rails stock piled from Swede Canyon boundary fence. Contact Forest Service for off-road permit to pick up rails.
105023	Ela Ka Wee Spring (by the gravel pit)	New tank was installed in 2008; need additional spring-box as site dries late in season. Forest Service agreed to look at the site with permittees in 2011.
105028D	Muddy Cow Camp North Cabin Outhouse	May relocate outhouse in the trees between the cabin and corrals. Permittees asked if outhouse at Crazy Woman Campground could be used. Forest Service agreed to look at the site on the ground with Permittees in 2011.
105007	Upper Elgin/Caribou Mesa Fence, East	Re-align fence to eliminate one of two road crossings. Forest Service will provide cattleguard if funding allows. Permittee to look at/complete this project in 2011.
105058	North Pole Creek Spring #4	Headworks needs revisited to prevent airlock. Permittees to look at it in 2011.
105060	Ela Ka Wee Two Spring	Spring box present but tank needed, away from riparian area. Look at with Forest Service this year; Dube may be able to provide a tire tank.

- Salting Practices

The proper use of salt can be used as a management tool to help achieve proper utilization. The following guidelines must be followed when salting unless you have been given direction by a Forest Officer to do otherwise:

- a) Scatter salt in its proper location prior to livestock entering the pasture.
- b) Salt should be placed between water developments, and at least 1/4 mile from water if possible.
- c) Salt away from small parks, trails, roads, and areas of concentrated public use.
- d) Salt should be placed in rock outcrops, mature timber stands (other than aspen), or dense sagebrush.
- e) Change salt locations at least every year and preferably every time salt is placed. Moving salt blocks at least 100 feet can prevent an area from becoming abused from salt placement year after year.
- f) Remove salt from an area when proper use is reached.

- Other

Permittees may be authorized extended stay camping permits for purposes of permit administration. However, permittees must coordinate camp locations with the forest service prior to authorization.

Move dead livestock to a location greater than 200 feet from water, 500 feet from developed camp sites, and out of view from roads or trails.

Permittees are required to abide by all Forest road restrictions and closures, as are all users of the public lands. No exceptions will be made without prior written approval.

Documentation on the enclosed Annual Use Report is required, and will help us to plan livestock use in the future. Please make sure both on and off dates are recorded for each pasture as well as the number of cattle. Feel free to make any other pertinent management notes, as they will be helpful in determining future management decisions for the allotment. Return the Actual Use Report to the Powder River Ranger District Office by December 31, 2011.