MINK CREEK RANGE ALLOTMENT
ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

Grazing Season 2012

Montpelier Ranger District **Caribou-Targhee National Forest**

I. Permitted Livestock:

The following table provides direction for management of livestock on the allotment as reflected in your term grazing permit. Permitted use is from June 16 to August 15. Dock Flat will be grazed early to allow cattle to graze bulbous bluegrass and Wyethia (Dock weed). Cattle will begin grazing on Dock Flat on June 2. The off date of August 2nd reflects the early start of the season. If you intend to take any non-use, it must be approved prior to the grazing season.

Permittee	Livestock			Period of Use		Pasture or Unit
	Number	Kind	Class	From	To	
Angels' Rest Ranch, Inc.	15	Cattle	Cows	6/2	8/2	Graham-Peterson Horse Basin Upper Birch Creek Lower Birch Creek
Royce or Lorraine Christensen	65	Cattle	Cow/calf	6/2	8/2	Graham-Peterson Horse Basin Upper Birch Creek Lower Birch Creek
Phillip J. or Bryan J., Christensen	44	Cattle	Cow/calf	6/16	7/15	Croney Hollow
				7/15	8/15	Mink Creek
Kent Egley	39	Cattle	Cow/Calf	6/2	8/2	Graham-Peterson Horse Basin Upper Birch Creek Lower Birch Creek
Jensen Children Family Trust- Lynn Jensen	13	Cattle	Cow/Calf	6/2	8/2	Graham-Peterson Horse Basin Upper Birch Creek Lower Birch Creek
Richard C. or LaDawn Jensen	25	Cattle	Cow/Calf	6/2	8/2	Graham-Peterson Horse Basin Upper Birch Creek Lower Birch Creek
Jay or Cindi Wilde	24	Cattle	Cow/Calf	6/16	8/15	South Canyon
	33			6/2	8/2	Graham-Peterson Horse Basin Upper Birch Creek Lower Birch Creek
Total Number	258					

Results of 2011Monitoring:

Upland and riparian standards were met. Upper and lower Birch Creek were above the 6 inch stubble height measured at the key areas. Mink Creek was 4 inches. Bank stability and covered banks remain stable. 33% utilization on Dock Flat.

The Mink Creek Cattle Association has been proactive in trying different management to make the best use of the allotment by having the cattle use less attractive but still productive areas, instead of staying on the creek. The intensive grazing on Dock Flat will be attempted again this year. We realized that we needed to divide the pasture in Dock Flat to get the desired level of use. For our trial grazing we would have liked to have seen an even higher use level. Transects will be read again next spring at close to the same phenological stage in Wyethia. Over the past number of years the cattle have been held off of Birch Creek until fall and then only for a short while. The Association will be able to manage this area to met standards.

The South Bear River Range Allotment Management Plan Revisions Final Environmental Impact Statement decision stated that adaptive management will be implemented to manage this allotment. Annual monitoring is used on key areas to determine when livestock shall be moved between units or off the forest instead of using a set time or number of days. Livestock permits are not adjusted on an annual basis, but if long-term monitoring shows consistent problems between numbers of livestock, season of use or conflicts with other resources, then the permit may be adjusted on a permanent basis to meet management goals and standards.

II. Grazing Standards and Guides:

Standards and Guides covering the allotment are found in the *2003 Revised Forest Plan for the Caribou National Forest* or the *South Bear River Range Allotment Management Plan Revisions Final Environmental Impact Statement* and are part of your permit. The proper use standards/triggers for this allotment are listed in the tables below. Your livestock must be removed from an area when the allowable forage utilization levels are reached in either the uplands or the riparian areas. The utilization standards will apply to, both native and desirable non-native, key species. Stubble heights on riparian areas will have to be adjusted to meet percent utilization standards if non-native species such as red-top or Kentucky blue grass are monitored. Monitoring of use will include using utilization cages, utilization scales/gauges, ocular estimates or a combination of these three.

Livestock grazing use in the uplands should not exceed the utilization levels shown below.

Upland Forage Utilization Levels

Vegetation Component	Allowable Percent Utilization	
	Winter Range	Non Winter Range
Grasses and Herbaceous Key Species (% dry weight)	45%	55%
Shrubs (% annual leader growth)	20%	35%

Riparian Zone Forage Utilization and Stubble Heights (AIZ)

Season of Use	Properly Functioning Condition (%/Stubble Height)	Functioning at Risk (High to Moderate) (%/Stubble Height)	Functioning at Risk (Low to Non Functioning) (%/Stubble Height)	Non Functioning (States C & D) (%/Stubble Height)
Spring	65/2	55/3	45/4	55/3
Summer	55/3	45/4	35/5	45/4
Fall	45/4	35/5	20/6+	35/5

Site-specific standards are implemented using the Caribou Riparian Grazing Implementation Guide. Site-specific standards are below. Mink Creek is functioning at risk low (2003) and Birch Creek is functioning at risk-high (1999). If it is determined that bank disturbance/alteration, greenline stubble height or woody/shrubby species utilization should replace the utilization triggers listed above, it will be addressed in the site specific standards below. Riparian site specific standards will be established when a Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) rating is conducted on the riparian area. The site specific standards for riparian areas will come directly from the PFC rating and the latest Grazing Implementation Guide. If a site specific PFC rating has not been conducted on a riparian area, standards for the area will be established by the Range Specialist on the allotment.

Site –specific standards:

Stream	Rating	Forage Utilization Standard*
Mink Creek	Functional-At-Risk/Low	4”/5”/6” AIZ- Stubble Height
Birch Creek	Functional-At-Risk/High	3”/4”/5” AIZ –Stubble Height

The numbers represents early (start of grazing season until 7/15), mid 7/16 – 8/15, late season use (8/16 to end of growing season), respectively.

Jay Wilde will be completing the monitoring studies on the allotment using the Multiple Indicator Method.

Proper use standards will be the determining factor in deciding if livestock are allowed to graze the entire season or must be removed early.

III. Range Improvement Maintenance Responsibilities:

The Mink Creek Cattlemen’s Association hires out the fencing responsibilities.
The permittee is responsible for maintaining range improvements to the standards of repair, orderliness, and safety, acceptable to the Forest Officer in charge.
Fences and water developments need to be maintained prior to the movement of livestock into the successive units. Permittees would like to work on Horse Basin Spring, specifically redo the head box and put in a new trough.

IV. Permittee Responsibilities:

1. **Salting -** Salt should be placed in lightly used areas and used as a distribution tool. Salt is not permitted in riparian areas, forest plantations, shade-up areas, roads, or areas where cattle normally tend to congregate. Use of a packhorse is recommended to get salt into areas that receive light use. Rotate or remove salt from areas receiving excessively heavy use.

2. **Herding -** Effective and frequent riding is a good method of achieving uniform forage utilization and extending use in riparian areas. The longer cattle can be kept out of these key areas, the longer they can remain on the Forest. Cattle should be checked regularly to ensure they are properly distributed.

3. **Weed-free hay -** Possessing, storing, or transporting, non-pelletized hay, straw or mulch on National Forest System Lands without having each individual bale or container tagged or marked as weed free, or having original and current evidence of weed free certification documentation present is prohibited. All markings must meet the State and/or County standards for certification as weed free.

4. **Maintaining Improvements -** All improvements listed in part 3 of your permit must meet Forest Service Standards. These standards may be set by the Forest Officer over the allotment. A delay in livestock turnout on the allotment will result if improvements do not meet acceptable standards prior to the grazing season. If they are not up to standard, and your livestock are on the allotment, administrative action may be taken against your permit. Maintenance work should be completed prior to cattle entering the allotment and to standards.

5. **Noxious weeds-** are located on your allotment. Because of budget constraints, the control of noxious weed needs to become a joint effort. If you know of any infestations bring them to the attention of the Forest Officer. There may be spray days coordinated on your allotment and your assistance with them would be a benefit for all.

V. Special Instructions:

All AOI's will be posted on the internet. In conjunction with this action all permittees must sign the AOI showing that they have read it and accept the terms, conditions, and management practices presented in it.
The permittee(s) may be allowed motorized access to maintain or develop range improvements assigned in their grazing permits or for other authorized administrative activities. Prior permission to authorize this use must be obtained from the District Ranger.
Please become familiar with the terms and conditions of your grazing permit.
If you have any problems or suggestions please contact any one of the Range Staff.

Please inform the District Office, especially during entry dates, of a convenient time and place to enable an accurate count of livestock to be made.

An extension in the grazing season must be requested in writing at least three weeks before the off date. The District Ranger can approve or deny the request.

VI. Wolf Status:

Wolves in Idaho are no longer under the protection of the federal Endangered Species Act.
On May 5, 2011, wolf management in all of Idaho reverted to state management under state code 36-1107 and Idaho's 2002 Wolf Conservation and Management Plan. [PDF, 662 KB]
Simply put, the law says wolves molesting or attacking livestock or domestic animals may be disposed of by livestock or domestic animal owners, their employees, agents and animal damage control personnel. No permit from Fish and Game is necessary. The incident must be reported to the Fish and Game director within 72 hours, with additional reasonable time allowed if access to the site where taken is limited. Wolves so taken shall remain the property of the state.
Livestock and domestic animal owners may take all nonlethal steps they deem necessary to protect their property. A permit must be obtained from the director to control wolves not molesting or attacking livestock or domestic animals. Control is also permitted by owners, their employees and agents pursuant to the Idaho department of fish and game harvest rules. "Molesting" means the actions of a wolf that are annoying, disturbing or persecuting, especially with hostile intent or injurious effect, or chasing, driving, flushing, worrying, following after or on the trail of, or stalking or lying in wait for, livestock or domestic animals.

http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/public/wildlife/wolves/?getPage=167
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Idaho State Office - Toll-free at: 877-661-1908
To report suspected wolf depredations on livestock or pets, contact
USDA Wildlife Services: Toll-free at: 866-487-3297 or 208-378-5077

VII. Forms to be completed:
Actual Use Forms must be returned by November 30th following the grazing season. Failure to do so may result in Permit Action.
If you have questions or concerns during the grazing season, please call me or the range staff on the zone.

	Office	Cell
Dennis Duehren - District Ranger	(208) 847-0375	
Kevin Parker – Supervisory Range Specialist	(208) 547- 1108	208) 313 -7328
Jane Rushane – Range Specialist	(208) 847 - 0375 (208) 847 - 8939	(208) 313 – 5683

Annual Operating Instructions
Mink Creek C&H Allotment
Montpelier Ranger District
2012

Accepted By: _____ _____
Date

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Approved By: _____ _____
Dennis Duehren **Date**