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2012 Annual Operating Instructions

For the Anchustegui Sheep and Goat Allotment

administered by

the Fairfield Ranger District

Sawtooth National Forest

Permit #5012

Prepared and Recommended by: John Shelly, Rangeland Management Specialist

Reviewed by: _____
Permittee Date

Approved by: Mike Dalton 6-18-12
District Ranger Date



This will serve as your Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for grazing on the South Fork Boise River Allotment on the Fairfield Ranger District (District) during the 2012 grazing season.

Proper Grazing Use

Proper use will be light, once over approximating 20 percent utilization of current year's forage. Do not bed sheep more than one night in anyone location. After your sheep have adequately watered from streams move them to a different shade location at least 100 or more yards away from the stream. We do not want the sheep to impact the riparian zone any more than necessary, meaning after they get watered they are not allowed to spent the rest of the afternoon shaded up adjacent the stream. This has been a past problem so do discuss this need with your herder.

Grazing Strategy

This year you will graze one larger ewe/lamb band of 1,000 adult sheep, age 6 months or older. Start on 6/20 at Cherry Creek and in one day cross Ditto Flat via the Willow/Little Smoky sheep driveway to gain access to the Little Smoky road. This will be your first overnight spot. The next day, trail down the Little Smoky road to where it intersects the Carrie Creek road. This is your second overnight location. The next day continue trailing down Little Smoky road to Five Points Campground area which is adjacent to the mouth of Wash Canyon (6/23) and start grazing the Little Smoky Pasture on 6/24 the same way you have done so in the recent past. Stay east of Salt Creek and herd this band towards the summer home area near the mouth of Salt Creek. Next enter the Skunk Creek Pasture via Fleck Summit road on or around 7/11 and graze the southern OP and Fletcher drainages before entering the upper end of Skunk Creek drainage. Lambs will be shipped at the South Fork Boise River Corral on or about 8/10. This band will finish (8/11-9/08) by grazing up Emma Creek and then down Vienna Creek and lower Johnson Creek. The Smiley Creek Allotment within the Salmon River drainage is out-of-bounds, meaning this band must access the Vienna Creek drainage from upper Emma Creek, the way it did the last time it grazed this area. The ewes will be trucked off Forest in after they have finished this last leg of their grazing cycle.

Crossing of Vienna, Johnson, and Emma Creeks will be at the same place they were before. John Shelly will visit with you when lambs are shipped to give you specific instructions on where after August 15th creek crossings need to occur.

Herd management

Your band will have at least one herder and one camp tender to control sheep while on NF land. See the content under Terms & Conditions for Sheep Grazing for site-specific limitations on sheep use.

Light-once-over grazing is crucial to achieving desirable grazing effects. Utilization of capable range will be limited to slowly grazing through (once-over) to achieve 20 percent use of current year's forage.

If the identified routing does not meet the foraging needs of your sheep, that implies the area lacks vegetation, is susceptible to erosion, and is too fragile to be grazed. An alternative route may need to be explored if the existing route poses a problem.

Use only designated stream crossings after August 15th where bull trout spawning and rearing habitat occurs. Designated stream crossings will be identified on Emma, Vienna, and Johnson Creeks. Please pay particular attention to these crossing instructions.

Reporting

Information requested by the Forest must be complete, accurate, and presented in legible English (when reported in writing). You and my range staff have already discussed these reporting requirements. When sheep camps are re-supplied we will need to obtain actual use information from the herder/camp tender at that time. The requested information will be for the time span from the last report to the present. It should be translated into English and given to John Shelly. You can simply fax (764-3211) or email (jshelly@fs.fed.us) a copy of this report or stop by the office and turn in a written or verbal response of the same.

We need to know dates of entry into each new pasture or drainage, noteworthy changes in sheep numbers, dates of occupancy for camp including their locations, periods of use within specific drainages, and dates of water trough or corral maintenance. If a group of sheep are removed or lost during the season, you must record the number, time period, and suspected location where this occurred. Please notify us of significant losses from predators such as wolves and poisonous plants, herding problems (whether they are logistical or related to unforeseen circumstances), conflicts with other Forest users, and any other grazing related information you feel is worthy of reporting. Remember, significant changes to this AOI must be approved by the Forest Service ahead of time and the change must be reflected in your reported information.

At the end of October you should plan to meet with District range staff to complete a post-season review. The purpose of this meeting is to obtain missing or the remainder of this year's unreported information, identify grazing successes or failures, exchange resource concerns, interpret or review previous actual use reports for completeness and legibility, and discuss reasons why this AOI did not work as intended.

Terms & Conditions for Sheep Grazing

These permit terms and conditions are needed to move toward or achieve the desired conditions, goals, and objectives for vegetation, wildlife, fish, riparian, soil and water resources described in the Sawtooth Forest Land & Resource Management Plan. Except for *Guidelines*, the following Terms & Conditions are binding limitations placed on your grazing management actions. *Guidelines* represent preferred or advisable courses of action.

SHEEP HERDING

1. *Guideline:* The permittee or manager will provide sufficient herders to obtain proper distribution and management of sheep on the allotment as required by the Term Grazing Permit, Allotment Management Plan, or these Annual Operating Instructions.
2. Do not allow sheep to be shaded or bedded within 100 yards of flowing water.
3. Only one night/one time annual use of bed grounds is allowed.
4. Do not bed sheep within 200 yards of designated campgrounds, trails, trailheads, or maintained roads.
5. *Guideline:* Practice open or loose herding and minimize the use of herding dogs to help prevent soil displacement.

6. *Guideline:* Graze rather than trail to water and only water once at each stream location. No watering will be allowed in lakes that are identified as closed to livestock.
7. Only once-over grazing is allowed.
8. *Guideline:* Route sheep to avoid steep slopes with loose soils, snow bank areas, snowfields, and rills or gullies.
9. You are responsible for insuring that herders understand and follow these Annual Operating Instructions and the terms & conditions specified in the Term Grazing Permit.
10. During shipping operations, sheep will be placed within the corral as soon as they arrive and will remain in the corral until all handling is completed. Before and after shipping, sheep will not be allowed to graze, shade, or bed within one quarter mile of the corral.

SHEEP CAMPS

11. 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.
12. Only historic and existing herder camps are approved for use. New camp locations must be approved by the Forest Service.
13. Camps will be kept in primitive condition. No permanent improvements will be allowed and if a fire pit is constructed dismantle it and restore the area before moving your camp.
14. Herder camp use will not exceed 5 days per location unless prior permission is obtained from a Forest officer.
15. At camp, pack and saddle stock will be high-lined, picketed, or hobbled. Tying pack or saddle stock to trees at camp is prohibited.

FIRE

16. Employees must be kept informed of the current fire danger and the permittee's fire prevention responsibility. The Forest Service will advise the permittee when special fire restrictions become mandatory.
17. Exhaust from camp stoves must be filtered through a spark arrestor screen with 3/8 inch (or smaller) mesh.
18. Never leave campfires unattended.
19. Possession of an adequate shovel and bucket for fire control is required at camps.

OTHER

20. Permittees are responsible for removing sheep caused debris on all roads and trails and for repairing tread surfaces along with cut and fill slopes to their condition prior to sheep arrival. Immediate action is required!
21. Do not salt in riparian areas; under trees; or within 200 yards of water, trails, or maintained roads. Loose salt must be placed in tubs when offered to your sheep.
22. Only certified weed-free feed is allowed on NF lands and any hay or straw used in association with your grazing permit must be certified and tagged as free of noxious weed seed. Processed feeds such as alfalfa cubes and pellets are considered weed-free.
23. Promptly remove or bury sheep that have died within 100 yards or within view of administrative sites, system roads and trails, corrals, or sources of water. Notify John Shelly or the Fairfield District Ranger if you want to request permission to deviate from this standard.
24. *Guideline:* Contain/control guard dogs when other Forest users or their pets are nearby.
25. All predator control will be in accordance with Federal and State laws and regulations.
26. **Record and timely report grazing information** according to this AOI or when requested by a Forest officer.

Areas Closed To Grazing or Areas with Site-Specific Grazing Limitations (including suggested corrective actions), are listed below:

1. Grazing impacts within riparian areas are a primary resource concern. To prevent adverse impacts you must herd sheep to maximize distribution and minimize repeat use of riparian areas.
2. Some stream reaches will be closed to grazing beginning August 16 to protect aquatic spawning and rearing habitat associated with bull trout. Your band will only be allowed to cross Johnson, Vienna, and Emma Creeks where the crossings have been designated. Normal grazing must take place away from main Johnson Creek and watering will be restricted to the designated crossings or smaller tributaries that feed into Johnson Creek.

More grazing limits or closures may be implemented during the grazing season based on resource conditions, wildfire related issues, drought, permittee non-compliance, or unforeseeable circumstances. If instructions for such limits or closures are given to you, they will be treated as part of this AOI. Standards for livestock use and forage utilization must be met in all grazing areas. You will need to exit a pasture/allotment once standards have been met due to management problems or circumstances beyond your control.

Drought

Grazing will be managed during drought situations on a drainage-by-drainage basis to maintain soil and vegetative resource conditions. The circumstances created by drought make it more important to accomplish adequate herding and proper livestock distribution.

Grazing Cooperation

Your cooperation with the Forest Service (FS) in the event of wildfire on the Sawtooth NF or any of the surrounding lands is essential to implement successful fire suppression operations. Incident management operations take priority over activities of Forest users; therefore, fire suppression activities on the Forest or surrounding lands may dictate allotment management. In the event or threat of fire, you could be directed to remove your livestock from the SNF.