ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

2012

LOWER DRY FORK C&H ALLOTMENT

AND

LAKE CREEK C&H ALLOTMENT

TONGUE DISTRICT

BIGHORN NATIONAL FOREST

Clarke McClung
District Ranger

6/22/12
Date

Permittee

Date

LOWER DRY FORK and LAKE CREEK, C&H ALLOTMENTS
2012 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

A. Before Entering the Allotment

1. Review all clauses of your term grazing permit and the information contained within these Annual Operating Instructions (AOI). Be sure to contact David, Zach or Tyler if you have questions or any portion of your grazing permit or these operating instructions is not clearly understood.
2. The current year's grazing fees must be paid before placing livestock on the National Forest.
3. Review Section G. - Maintenance of Improvements, and complete the necessary maintenance of assigned range improvements as described in that section.

1. Entering and Leaving the Allotment

The on-date for the allotment is tentatively set for July 3rd. If you do not hear from us you can plan to place livestock on the allotment on the 3rd or after as you determine what best fits your schedule. I remind you that you are the responsible party to meet the allowable use/herbage left guidelines described in Section D below so making sure there is adequate forage available when livestock enter the allotment is an important decision and can affect not only your ability to meet guidelines but the length of time cattle may remain on the allotment.

C. Authorized Numbers and Pasture Rotation

Permittee	Authorized Livestock Numbers	Authorized Season of Use *
Dana & Alice Kerns	175 Yearlings	7/03-9/13
	225 Mature	7/03-10/02
	100 Mature	7/16-10/02
	40 Horses	7/03-10/02
Krayton & Druann Kerns	Non-Use	

* The authorized numbers and season of use shown are for the combined use of Lower Dry Fork and Lake Creek allotments. The authorized season of use has been adjusted so the season is the same for both allotments to accommodate the planned pasture rotation.

Pasture Sequence	Allotment	Pasture Name
First Herd*		
1	Lower Dry Fork	Double Springs
2	Lake Creek	Bear Trap
3	Lake Creek	Lake Creek
Second Herd*		
1	Lower Dry Fork	Lower
2	Lower Dry Fork	Double Springs

3	Lake Creek	Bear Trap
4	Lake Creek	Lake Creek
5	Lake Creek	Lick Creek
6	Lake Creek	East Burnt
7	Lake Creek	Parks

* Plans are to trail cattle up the canyon in two herds using paid clientele authorized under an outfitter guide permit. The first herd consisting of 175 yearlings and 225 cow-calf pairs will be trailed to the Lower pasture in Lower Dry Fork allotment on July 3rd. The second herd consisting of 100 cow-calf pairs will trail to the Lower pasture of Lower Dry Fork allotment on July 16th. The second herd will stay in the Lower pasture until July 24th and then they will be trailed to the Double Springs pasture combining with the first herd. On the same trip, a herd consisting only of 175 yearlings in the Lower Dry Fork allotment will be trailed to the Lake Creek allotment where they will remain until they are trailed off the mountain around September 13th. The combined herd of 325 cow-calf pairs will be trailed from the Lower Dry Fork allotment on August 15th where they will join the herd of yearlings in the Lake Creek allotment. This herd will remain in the Lake Creek allotment until they are trailed off the mountain around October 2nd.

This planned pasture rotation is designed to help provide for the long term health and productivity of each pasture but may be changed, with sound reasons and prior approval, if it becomes necessary over the course of the grazing season. You are encouraged to use adaptive management practices (e.g. use of temporary electric fence, use of riders and low stress handling techniques, combination of allotments, etc.) to help meet the allowable use requirements described in Sections D and E below. To assure your management does not negatively affect other resources, all proposed changes to these instructions must be discussed with and approved by David, Zach or Tyler prior to implementation on the ground.

D. Allowable Use/Herbage Left Guidelines

The allowable use/herbage left guidelines are designed to ensure that short-term effects of livestock grazing activities are within established parameters intended to provide for the long-health and sustainability of rangeland resources. The two general approaches used to measure actual use to determine if the guidelines were met are residual herbage left and utilization.

Residual herbage left methods: This is expressed as the amount of herbage left after livestock grazing and includes methods such as stubble height and visual obstruction methods (Robel pole).

Utilization methods: This is expressed as the amount of forage removed by grazing or trampling and includes methods such as paired plots and ocular estimates.

The following allowable use/herbage left guidelines will apply to all areas of your allotment. Total use by livestock and wildlife combined must not exceed any of these guidelines at the time livestock leave a pasture.

1. Upland Range Sites

Sites on sedimentary soils below 9,200 feet elevation (Excludes sites dominated by timothy and smooth brome).	Visual Obstruction Reading (VOR) of 5 or more bands for all applicable sites (readings of 4 bands or more acceptable).

Sites on granitic soils below 9,200 feet elevation (Excludes sites dominated by timothy and smooth brome).	Visual Obstruction Reading (VOR) of 5 or more bands for all applicable sites.
All Other Sites (such as sites dominated by timothy and smooth brome, or above 9200 feet elevation).	A. Maximum of 40% by weight in all pastures used prior to August 1st. B. Maximum of 50% by weight in pastures used after August 1st.

2. Riparian Range Sites

Herbaceous vegetation on all sites except areas suitable for water vole habitat.	A. A residual 5" stubble height on wide leaved carex species if livestock leave pasture prior to August 1st.* B. A residual 7" stubble height on wide leaved carex species if livestock leave pasture after August 1st.*
Willows	Maximum of 35% use of current years leaders by livestock.

3. Aspen Range Sites

Herbaceous vegetation within all aspen stands.	A residual 5" stubble height for all grasses and sedges when livestock leave a pasture.*

* All stubble height guidelines stated for riparian and aspen range sites are the minimum required when transect measurements record the longest leaf length of all leaves readily available for livestock grazing for each plant measured. Leaves or portions of leaves trampled in the mud, lying on the ground or in water, protected by willows or otherwise unavailable to livestock are not to be included in the measurements. Transect measurements may also record the average length of all leaves available for grazing from each selected plant. If the average leaf method is used, all minimum guidelines shown in tables above will be adjusted downward 1".

Livestock must be moved to the next pasture or off the National Forest if in the last pasture when further use will exceed one or more of the allowable use/herbage left guidelines shown above. It is your responsibility to manage your livestock within each pasture to assure use does not exceed any of the above guidelines. This will require constant monitoring of the vegetation by you and/or your allotment rider and not just simply waiting for estimated calendar dates to determine the proper use period for each pasture. It is imperative you take whatever steps are necessary (use of riders, move salt weekly, reduction in total numbers, shorten length of grazing periods in pastures, etc.) to manage your livestock to assure all guidelines are met throughout each pasture.

It is also important to note the allowable use/herbage left guidelines shown above apply to <u>all suitable range</u> (riparian and uplands) within the allotment. To assist you with your responsibilities of monitoring the actual use, all monitoring measurements will be done using a key area concept. The key areas are generally those areas livestock have the tendency to graze first when placed in a pasture. Livestock also tend to graze these areas repeatedly. As a result, these areas will typically reach the allowable use/herbage left guidelines before any other area of the pasture. If actual use in these key areas does not exceed the allowable use/herbage left guidelines, then use in the rest of the pasture will most likely not exceed guidelines either (unless livestock are constantly pushed off the

key areas to other portions of the pasture). The important thing to remember is actual use should not exceed any of the guidelines throughout the pasture. If our management causes a change in use patterns we may need to discuss a change in key area boundaries.

E. Monitoring

An integral part of the ROD for the Cattle and Horse Livestock Grazing on Two Project Areas on the Tongue Ranger District (aka Big 6) is the use of adaptive management. Adaptive management requires a continuous cycle of planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation into our management approach and modifies future management based upon the results. Our best chance for success will be for permittees and Forest Service to cooperatively work together to read transects, interpret the data, and discuss any annual or long-term adjustments that may be necessary to meet the intent of the ROD.

The annual monitoring will primarily use a combination of the following three protocols:

1. Carex Stubble Height: Stubble height measurements will be taken using paced transects in all key areas with riparian range sites. The number and location of transects you need to read will depend on the area size and the variances of use levels. One transect within 3 feet of the water's edge may be sufficient in narrow riparian areas where use does not vary across the riparian zone. Two or more may be necessary in larger riparian areas or whenever use on streambanks (especially within 3 feet of the water's edge) is noticeably different from the rest of riparian zone. In large areas where use does not vary, locate two or more transects within 3 feet of the stream but if use varies across the zone, locate at least one transect within 3 feet of the water's edge and additional transects further away from the stream. Each transect will consist of 50 measurements with a recommended 10 or more feet between each measurement. Transects to determine the actual use must be read within 7 days after livestock leave each pasture. Photos of each transect are not required but would be helpful to substantiate your documentation.

2. Robel Pole: Visual obstruction readings (VOR) using a modified robel pole will be used to measure the remaining standing crop in appropriate key areas below 9200 feet (excludes sites dominated by timothy, smooth brome or very dense sagebrush): A minimum of four paced transects will be read in key areas located on sedimentary soils and a minimum of 5 transects in each key area located on granitic soils. Each transect will consist of 20 stations with each station a minimum of 10 meters (approximately 33 feet) apart. At each station, four VORs (one in each cardinal direction) are recorded. Transects to determine the residual standing crop must be read within 7 days after livestock leave each pasture. Photos of each transect are not required but would be helpful to substantiate your documentation.

3. Grazing Response Index (GRI): GRI ratings will be determined for key areas within each pasture. Upland and riparian range sites, occurring in the same or separate key areas, will be rated independently of one another. It is important that you keep accurate records of the actual number of cattle, dates livestock graze in each pasture, monitoring data gathered, and any observations of plant development throughout the grazing season. This data will be useful to complete rating forms for key areas in your allotment. Like the allowable use guidelines, the ROD for the Tongue AMP requires livestock to be managed to consistently (4 out of every 5 years) provide a neutral to positive GRI rating for each pasture.

As in recent years, the Forest Service will be completing spot checks throughout the grazing season for consistency in meeting allowable use/herbage left guidelines and gathering information for the GRI ratings. You, however, remain responsible to manage your livestock to assure these guidelines are met and neutral to positive GRI ratings are achieved. I strongly encourage you to keep close watch of the growth cycle of the desirable forage plants to be able to adjust the length of grazing periods in each pasture as necessary and to complete spot checks of all key areas on a regular basis to assure actual use remains within the guidelines stated above. Feel free to give David, Zach or Tyler a call at anytime during the grazing season to compare notes and/or to discuss potential GRI ratings for your pastures. I have enclosed copies of the data forms to assist you with your monitoring. Please remember any forms and/or photos submitted to our office will be placed in the allotment monitoring folder.

F. Key Areas:

Properly selected key areas give an indication of the overall acceptability of current grazing management to meet all resource objectives. These areas may be moved or redefined in future years if monitoring results indicate a change is necessary. The following is a list of the key areas:

Lower Dry Fork C&H Allotment

Lower Pasture:

1. Area east of Little Bighorn River in sections 30 and 31 dominated by aspen and ninebark.
2. Area extending 1/4 mile north of fence separating the Lower/Middle pasture fence.
3. Open park surrounding ninebark and bluegrass area in northwest 1/4 of Section 6.

Middle Pasture:

1. An area extending in a 0.25 mile radius of all seep areas within the open park known as Double Springs.
2. Open park and creek drainage in vicinity of Beer Springs (N1/2, section 27).

Cow Camp Pasture:

1. Open parks between cow camp and pasture fence separating the Middle and Cow Camp pastures.
2. Open parks, including aspen stands, on south facing slope north and east of cow camp.

Dry Fork Ridge Pasture

1. Open park between rain trap (#549) and the cow camp.
2. Open park located north of Road #114 in Section 15.
3. Open park west of and including the creek drainage upstream of stock tank #471.

Lake Creek C&H Allotment

Lake Creek Pasture:

1. An area beginning at the Dayton Gulch road and extending approximately 1/2 mile south (upstream) of the Dayton Gulch road and lying between Forest System Road (FSR) #142 and the timber on the east side of the of Lake Creek/Ice Creek divide.

2. An area 400 yards either side of Lake Creek beginning at the Dayton Gulch road and extending north (downstream) to that point on Lake Creek commonly known as "the Narrows".

Lick Creek Pasture:

1. An area 0.25 mile either side of Lick Creek beginning 1/4 mile south (upstream) of the Dayton Gulch road and extending downstream to where the valley narrows and becomes timbered north (downstream) of the fish exclosures.
2. An area 0.25 mile either side of Dayton Gulch Creek within the open meadows in section 13 and 18.

Bear Trap Pasture:

1. An area 200 yards either side of the upper reaches of Taylor Creek above tank #470 in section 35. This key area will be reevaluated this year and a new one may be designated.
2. The open, uplands parks within Section 7 that lies adjacent to FSR #148 and north of the Lick Creek/Bear Trap pasture drift fence.

Little Horn C&H Allotment

East Burnt Pasture:

1. 300 yards on either side of both drainages flowing into the Little Bighorn River SE1/4 Section 1, T56N, R91W, and SW1/4 Section 33, T57N, R90W.

Parks Pasture:

1. An area within 300 yards on all sides of East Side Water Development.
2. An area within 300 yards on all sides of Little Horn Parks Water Development.

G. Maintenance of Improvements

Part 2, Clause 8(i) of your term grazing permit states "...the permittee will maintain all range improvements, whether private or Government owned, that are assigned for maintenance 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. The initial maintenance of each improvement 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. For many improvements, maintenance will be on going and will require additional attention after livestock enter the pasture. The minimum maintenance required will be as follows:

Springs: All tanks are to be level, completely surrounded by dry ground and easily accessible by both cows and calves. The 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 tanks without any water spilling in the immediate vicinity (20-30 ft.) of the tank. Livestock barriers over tanks must be sturdy and all poles and planks must be in good condition and nailed/bolted in place.

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. Wire spacing may be adapted to the needs of each fence but the bottom wire should be 16-18" off the ground and the top wire must be no higher than 42" above

the ground. Gates are to be tight enough to prevent sagging but must be able to be easily opened and closed by the general public.

Buck and Pole 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 nailed to bucks and all broken or rotting poles and bucks are to be replaced.

H. Neighboring Allotment Rotations

The rotations for the neighboring allotments are being provided to give you an idea of when livestock may be adjacent to any allotment boundary fences you are responsible for maintaining. Please remember the dates shown are approximate dates only and those permittees will be monitoring use to determine when the actual moves will occur.

Little Horn C&H/Wyoming Gulch C&H
7/01 – 9/30

1. Trail/Horse
2. West Burnt
3. Half Ounce
4. Bald Mountain/Rooster Hill

Little Horn C&H – Holding rotation
7/06 – 9/30

1. Lower Little Horn
2. Wagonbox
3. Willow
4. Lower Little Horn

I. Range Improvement Projects

As discussed in our recent meeting, the following range improvement projects are planned for the 2012 grazing season.

1. A pole horse corral will be constucted in the Cow Camp pasture of Lower Dry Fork C&H. Materials for the corral will be furnished by the Forest Service and permittee will provide labor/equipment to install the improvement.
2. A ¼ mile, 3 wire, stretch of fence will be constructed from the NE corner of the cow camp lot, extending east into a patch of thick timber to expand the existing horse pasture. Forest Service will provide the materials and permittee will provide the labor/equipment to install the improvement.

J. Salting Practices:

The proper use of salt can be used as a good management tool to help you achieve proper utilization. The following are guidelines that should be used when placing salt on your allotment. If you feel your management situation requires changes in these guidelines please contact David, Zach or Tyler to discuss.

1. Scatter salt in its proper location prior to livestock entering the pasture.
2. Salt should be placed between water developments and at least 1/4 mile from water if at all possible. Salting near water just encourages cattle to stay nearby and should seldom be practiced.
3. Salt away from small parks, trails, roads and areas of concentrated public use. Salt should be placed in areas of rock outcrops, mature timber (other than aspen), or areas of dense sagebrush where the general public will not easily see it.

4. Change your salt location at least every year and preferably every time salt is placed within a pasture. Moving salt blocks 50-100 feet can prevent an area from becoming abused from salt placement year after year. Placing salt in areas of dense sage and changing location every 2-3 weeks or yearly (depending on length of grazing period) is an effective way to use cows to control sagebrush over small areas or create small pockets of grass within large areas dominated by sage.
5. Remove salt from an area when actual use in the nearby vicinity is approaching the allowable use standard. Livestock must be moved to the next pasture when proper use is reached.

ACTUAL USE RECORD - 2012

TONGUE R.D. LOWER DRY FORK, and LAKE CREEK C&H ALLOTMENTS BIGHORN NATIONAL FOREST

ACTUAL USE

Pasture	Number of Cattle	Date on Pasture	Date off Pasture

Losses: Numbers by age class and possible cause (Poison, natural or predator).

_____

_____

_____

Allotment Operating Cost:

Labor costs:

Rider _____

Improvement Maintenance

Water _____

Fence _____

Other _____

Improvement Construction

Water _____

Fence _____

Other _____

Salt _____

Transportation Cost _____

Horse Maintenance _____

Permittee signature _____ Date_____

PLEASE ATTACH ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR NOTES YOU WISH TO PLACE IN THE PERMANENT ALLOTMENT FILE.