

**2012 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS
FOR THE
LICK CREEK C&H, NO BIZ ON/OFF, AND HUNGRY ON/OFF ALLOTMENTS**

INTRODUCTION

These Annual Operating Instructions are a guide for implementing grazing management activities on the **Lick Creek C&H, No Biz On/Off, and Hungry On/Off Allotments** for the 2012 grazing season.

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
Rocky Comfort Cattle Company, LLC	Lick Creek	Variable NTE* 5,288 HM**	Variable Season not to exceed 3/16-12/31
	No Biz On/Off	Variable NTE* 6 HM**	
	Hungry On/Off	Variable NTE* 77 HM**	

*Not to exceed
**Head months

2012 Authorized Use			
Permittee	Allotment	Livestock Numbers	Season of Use
Rocky Comfort Cattle Company, LLC	Lick Creek*	Variable NTE* 5,288 HM**	Variable Season not to exceed 3/16-12/31
	No Biz On/Off	Variable NTE* 6 HM**	Variable not to exceed 6/1-10/15
	Hungry On/Off	Variable NTE* 77 HM**	Variable not to exceed 3/15-11/15

* Permit includes Bear Creek, Wildhorse/Crooked River, and Lick Creek C&H Allotments.

Permitted Livestock Brands

Permitted Pack & Saddle Stock

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

2011 Grazing Rotation			
Permittee	Unit	Livestock Numbers	Season of Use
Rocky Comfort Cattle Company, LLC	Lower Salt Creek*	460 cow/calf pairs	3/16-6/1
	Lower West Lick Creek	460 cow/calf pairs	6/2-6/30
	Upper West Lick** Creek/Lower Bear Creek	458 cow/calf pairs	7/1-8/10
	East Lick Creek	370 cow/calf pairs	8/15-10/31
	East Lick Creek*	52 Bulls	8/16-10/15
	Indian Creek*	519 cow/calf pairs	11/11-12/31
	Lower Salt Creek*	270 Yearlings	5/11-6/8
	Lower West Lick Creek	270 Yearlings	6/9-8/10
	Bardmas*	222 Yearlings	5/20-7/1
	Gladhart/Doe Creek	149 cow/calf pairs	6/21-10/31
	Lick Creek Riparian	150 Yearlings	6/30-7/15
	No Biz On/Off	12 cow/calf pairs	6/8-6/20
	Hungry On/Off	17 cow/calf pairs	6/8-6/20
	Cuddy Mountain	310 cow/calf pairs	6/21-9/30

2011 Utilization		
Pasture	Upland/Riparian	Percent Utilization
Lick Creek Riparian Pasture	Riparian	Light 40%
Upper West Lick Creek (tree farm)	Upland	Moderate 41%
Lower West Lick Creek (summit gulch)	Upland	Light 25-30%
East Lick Creek (hoo hoo gulch area)	Upland	Light 21-25%
Gladhart/Doe Creek	Upland	Light 21-25%
East Lick Creek	Upland	Light 25-30%
No Biz	Upland	Slight 10%
No Biz Creek	Riparian	No use
Hungry	Upland	Slight 10-20%

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 Lick Creek, No Biz On/Off, and Hungry On/Off C&H Allotments are managed in conjunction with the Wildhorse/Crooked River, and Bear Creek C&H Allotments. These allotments are all managed through the OX Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP) which incorporates the management of private lands, IDL, Idaho Power, Forest Service, and BLM lands. The CRMP was designed to utilize all OX available lands for grazing into one grazing plan that would provide the most beneficial use to all resources.

2012 Grazing Rotation			
Permittee	Unit	Livestock Numbers	Season of Use
Rocky Comfort Cattle Company, LLC	Indian Creek*	462 cow/calf pairs	3/27-6/1
	Upper West Lick** Creek/Lower Bear Creek	462 cow/calf pairs	6/2-7/15
	Lower West Lick Creek	460 cow/calf pairs	7/16-8/5
	East Lick Creek	400 cow/calf pairs	8/11-10/27
	Lower West Lick Creek	450 cow/calf pairs	11/11-11/30
	Lower Salt Creek*	450 cow/calf pairs	12/1-12/31
	Upper Salt Creek*	456 Yearlings	3/26-6/12
	Upper Salt Creek*	290 Yearlings	3/25-6/15
	Bardmas*	290 Yearlings	6/16-7/16
	East Lick Creek*	52 Bulls	8/16-10/15
	Gladhart/Doe Creek	96 cow/calf pairs	6/20-10/27
	Lick Creek Riparian	150 Yearlings	7/1-7/10
	Hungry On/Off	17 cow/calf pairs	4/11-6/22
	Cuddy Mountain	310 cow/calf pairs	6/21-9/30
	No Biz On/Off	12 cow/calf pairs	6/23-7/5

*These pastures are made up of a combination of land ownership.

**The Upper West Lick Creek Unit is used in conjunction with Lower Bear Creek Unit of the Bear Creek C&H Allotment.

The season of use dates are tentative and may vary according to range conditions and utilization levels within the pastures. Pastures move dates will vary and may be shortened or extended as conditions warrant.

There are at least eight different areas that have populations of Northern Idaho Ground Squirrels (NIDGS) located within the Lick Creek Allotment in the Cold Springs, Tree Farm, Calf Pen, Summit Gulch, Rocky Comfort Flat, Fawn Creek, Hoo Hoo Gulch, and Deer Creek areas. By early August utilization must be no greater than 40 percent. Trailing through these areas, as well salting within ¼ mile

of these sites is prohibited. All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) or Off Highway Vehicles (OHVs) are not authorized off roads near NIDGS sites.

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.

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 Bear 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.

Due to the presence of Bull Trout in Bear Creek no grazing is authorized in the Upper Bear Creek Unit after August 15.

IMPROVEMENTS

All range improvements must be maintained prior to turning livestock into the unit scheduled for use. 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 following list of projects has been approved and cleared for construction during the 2012 grazing season. However, annual wildlife surveys for spotted frog and NDGS must be completed prior to construction. Also, if you are planning on performing maintenance on existing spring developments which will require ground disturbance an archaeological site review must be completed before maintenance can be performed.

- North Fork Butterfield spring (Lick Creek Allotment)
- Rock Spring (Lick Creek Allotment)
- Pagossa Sping

A categorical exclusion (CE) and biological evaluation (BE) must be completed before the Calf Pen Pond project can be started. Forest Service will start this process during the summer of 2012 and notify you when it is complete.

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.

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.

Salting

Salting is restricted to the following:

- No less than ¼ mile from water, and not be placed in meadow bottoms.
- Placed at a minimum distance of 100 yards from open roads and out of sight from roads if possible.

- Should be moved yearly unless present salt ground is located in a rocky area where no 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.
- Salt shall not be placed in occupied NIDGS habitat.

REQUIRED REPORTING

All requests for refunds or credits for unused portion of grazing fees for Forest System Lands must be received in the Council or Weiser Ranger District office by March 1 following the grazing season.

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 January 31, 2012.**

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 not saturated, and should be firm to avoid excessive compaction due to livestock. Perennial grass species must be a minimum of 6 inches in height and out of the boot stage. 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.

There are two active logging operations within the Lick Creek Allotment. The Summit Gulch/Squirrel Timber Sale is located mainly within the Upper West Lick Creek Pasture. This sale is active and logging is expected to take place throughout the summer. The contract is good through 2013. The Lick Creek Timber Sale is located mainly within the East Lick Creek Pasture. Logging is expected to occur this summer and the contract is good through .

The Cuprum Timber Sale is also active and lies to the north of the Lick Creek and Bear Creek Allotments. Logging is expected to continue this summer and the contract is good through 2013. This sale does not affect any of your allotments but log trucks and associated traffic should be expected on the Council/Cuprum road as well other roads in the area of the sale.

If you would like maps of any current timber sales in your area let your Rangeland Management Specialist know and he can provide them for you.

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

_____/s/ Gregory S. Lesch_____
GREG LESCH
District Ranger

DATE

Rocky Comfort Cattle Company LLC
Permittee

DATE