

**2012 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS
FOR THE
COUNCIL MOUNTAIN C&H ALLOTMENT**

INTRODUCTION

These Annual Operating Instructions are a guide for implementing grazing management activities on the **Council Mountain C&H Allotment** for the 2012 grazing season. This plan was developed with participation of the livestock permittees at the Annual Operating Instruction meeting held at the Council District Office on May 8, 2012. The interdisciplinary resource personnel and livestock permittees who participated in development of this plan were Permittees; Jack and Donna Yantis, Matt & Butch Jones, Bill Copher, Wes Hudman, Russell, Roy & Justin Mink, and Jerry Yantis, Office of Species Conservation Dustin Miller and Mike Edmondson, Forest Service personnel; Fisheries Biologist Trish Giambra and Rodger Nelson, Rangeland Management Specialists Andy Bumgarner, Jennifer McMorris and Amy Baumer, and District Ranger Greg Lesch.

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
Bill Copher	Council Mountain	185 cow/calf pairs	6/20-10/15
Matthew & Shannon Jones		75 cow/calf pairs	
Tom Gibbons & Dennis Heck		Non-Use	
Marlin Wolfe		Non-Use	
Wes Hudman		100 cow/calf pairs	
Mink Land & Livestock		175 cow/calf pairs	
Alvin Yantis		180 cow/calf pairs	
Jack Yantis		46 cow/calf pairs	
Grays Creek		138 cow/calf pairs	

Permitted Livestock Brands

Permitted Pack & Saddle Stock

2012 Authorized Use			
Permittee	Allotment	Livestock Numbers	Season of Use
Bill Copher	Council Mountain	185 cow/calf pairs	6/20-10/15
Matthew & Shannon Jones		75 cow/calf pairs	
Tom Gibbons & Dennis Heck		Non - Use	
Marlin Wolfe		Non - Use	
Wes Hudman		90 cow/calf pairs	
Mink Land & Livestock		175 cow/calf pairs 40 cow/calf pairs fill in behind Non-Use	6/20-10/15 7/6-10/15
Alvin Yantis		180 cow/calf pairs	6/20-10/15
Jack Yantis		46 cow/calf pairs 8 State Lease	
Grays Creek		138 cow/calf pairs	Vacant

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	Allotment	Livestock Numbers	Season of Use	
Bill Copher	Council Mountain	125 cow/calf pairs 30 cow/calf pairs*	6/20-10/15	
Motichka Farms		75 cow/calf pairs		
Tom Gibbons & Dennis Heck		Non - Use		
Norman Hansen		Non - Use		
Marlin Wolfe		162 cow/calf pairs		
Wes Hudman		45 Non - Use 55 cow/calf pairs 23 State Lease		
Mink Land & Livestock		175 cow/calf pairs		
Alvin Yantis		162 cow/calf pairs		
Jack Yantis		46 cow/calf pairs 8 State Lease		
Grays Creek		138 cow/calf pairs		Vacant

*permittee is authorized to fill in behind non-use taken by other allotment permittees

2011 Utilization			
Area	Date	Upland/Riparian	Percent Utilization
Sheep Creek	6/21/11	Upland	10%
Joker Creek	7/26/11	Riparian	10%
Beaver Creek	7/26/11	Riparian	25%
Dry Beaver Creek	7/26/11	Riparian	3%
Cottonwood Creek	7/27/11	Upland	30%
Beaver Creek	8/24/11	Riparian	26%
Squaw Flat to E. Fk. Weiser road to Dewey Creek	8/31/11	Riparian	6-20%
Squaw Flat	9/20/11	Riparian	30-35%
Dry Beaver	9/20/11	Riparian	25-30%
Beaver Creek	9/20/11	Riparian	20-25%
Dewey Creek inside Exclosure # 3	9/22/11	Riparian	0-5 % (6 in SH)
Upper E. Fk. Weiser (directly west of exc. # 5)	9/29/11	Upland	20-25%
Upper E. Fk. Weiser (inside exc. # 5)	9/29/11	Riparian	20-25% (9 in SH)
Headwaters of Little Salmon	10/17/11	Upland	0-5%
Beaver Creek drainage up to 176 road	10/26/11	Riparian	20%
Beaver Creek drainage up to 176 road	10/26/11	Upland	15-20%

Vick Creek drainages	10/26/11	Upland & Riparian	0-10%
Vick Creek to Bluebunch saddle spring along 587 road	10/26/11	Upland	5-10%
Bluebunch saddle spring along 173 road to Big Creek	10/26/11	Upland	5-10%
Big Creek drainage	10/26/11	Upland & Riparian	0-5%

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 Council Mountain C&H Allotment is managed under a deferred rotation grazing system which was designed by the permittees to defer grazing use each year with in their individual use areas.

2012 Grazing Rotation				
Permittee	Allotment	Livestock Numbers	Season of Use	
Bill Copher	Council Mountain	185 cow/calf pairs	6/20-10/15	
Matthew & Shannon Jones		75 cow/calf pairs		
Tom Gibbons & Dennis Heck		Non-Use		
Marlin Wolfe		Non - Use		
Wes Hudman		90 cow/calf pairs		
Mink Land & Livestock		175 cow/calf pairs 40 cow/calf pairs fill in behind Non-Use	6/20-10/15 7/6/-10/15	
Alvin Yantis		180 cow/calf pairs	6/20-10/15	
Jack Yantis		46 cow/calf pairs 8 State Lease		
Grays Creek			138 cow/calf pairs	Vacant

Bill Copher: Cattle will turn out in Spring Creek until allowable forage utilization is reached. The cattle will move through Shingle Flat, and proceed to the East Fork Weiser River, up Bench Creek to Dry Beaver Creek, Blue Bunch Ridge and Red Point. The cattle will return down Joker Creek to the North Fork of Mill Creek and off the allotment by October 15. **As long as the Forest Service is setting up, maintaining, and letting down the Shingle Flat enclosure, no overnighting of livestock is permitted.**

Matt & Shannon Jones: Turn out in Filly Creek. From Filly Creek proceed to Fire Gulch and then to Dry Beaver. After August 1st move up to Blue Bunch Springs and Red Point and return down Beaver Creek. Livestock will be removed from the Forest by October 15.

Wes Hudman: Cattle will be turned out at Gaylord Creek and Pin Creek, proceeding up to the upper Beaver Creek and Dry Beaver Creek, back to Star Creek, Fourth Gulch, Third Gulch, Second Gulch, and lower East Fork Weiser River, continuing off the allotment by October 15. Livestock will be removed from the Forest by October 15.

Alvin Yantis: Turn out at Thompson Corner and distribute the cattle into the South Fork Wood Gulch area until allowable forage utilization is reached. The cattle will then move into Cookhouse and North Cottonwood, Log Cabin Gulch, Bull Flats, and Tamarack Gulch until approximately August 15. Then the cattle will be moved to Granite Basin and Dead Ox. October 1st the cattle will be moved over the top of Council Mountain and will proceed down through Lost Sheep Camp and off the allotment by October 15. Salt will not be placed in Deseret or North Cottonwood Creek. Cattle may drift through these areas.

Jack Yantis: Turn cattle out on Fort Hall Ridge. Once allowable forage utilization has been reached, move livestock easterly through Shingle Flat, up Old Cascade Road to Cold Spring Saddle, into Cold Spring Creek and Dewey Creek, down Dewey Creek to the East Fork Weiser River to Bench Creek, First Gulch, Second Gulch and Third Gulch, over the stock driveway and off the allotment by October 15.

Mink Land & Livestock: Cattle will turn out in Sheep Creek until utilization is reached. The cattle will continue up to the head of Cabin Creek to Buck Basin and Crystal Creek. They will return down Arbuckle Basin to Sheep Creek and off the allotment by October 15. The additional 40 cow/calf pair filling in behind non-use will be run in the same area as Mink's main herd. This area was used in the past in conjunction with the now vacant Grays Creek Permit.

Tom Gibbons, Dennis Heck and Marlin Wolfe: Non-Use

Marlin Wolfe: Non-Use

The season of use dates are tentative and may vary according to range conditions and utilization levels within the use areas. Livestock movement dates will vary and may be shortened or extended as conditions warrant. These dates are guidelines and vary from year to year based on growing conditions and precipitation.

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 grazing prescriptions are designed to meet the resource needs of the soils and vegetation. For drainages which support habitat for the Chinook Salmon (threatened species under the Endangered Species Act), it is necessary to develop prescriptions that eliminate any adverse impacts to the salmon habitat. Fisheries Biologists will complete Biological Assessments on this grazing activity to ensure that any known and/or potential effects have been eliminated. The known or potential problem areas have been identified below, along with the respective mitigation measures designed to eliminate each adverse effect.

1. Resource Concerns: Little Salmon River drainage in section 31, Vick Creek drainage in section 22 above the Forest boundary and Big Creek drainage along Blue Bunch Ridge in sections 5, 8, 17, 21, 27.

Mitigation Measures:

1. Maintain an allowable use of 40% in the uplands.
2. Maintain an allowable use of 30% in riparian areas.
3. Adjust grazing practices as necessary to maintain or improve inland and anadromous fish resources and fish habitat.
4. Assure that existing facilities within RCAs do not prevent or retard attainment of WCIs.
5. Limit livestock trailing, bedding, watering, salting, loading, and other handling to those areas and times that will not prevent or retard attainment of WCIs.
6. Salt is not to be placed in meadow bottoms, where livestock congregate and should be placed no less than 0.25 miles from water.

The following standards apply to the East Fork Weiser River and Dewey Creek Bull trout spawning areas. Written in the August 28, 2008 Council Mountain and Indian Mountain Allotments Amendment to the Biological Assessment for the Weiser River Watershed, utilization standards will be changed from the 1999 Biological Opinion (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1999) inside and outside of the exclosures to match the Payette Forest Plan standard (RAST01) of 45% utilization in riparian areas.*

*The standard being replaced was “[r]esidual stubble heights within riparian areas shall be at least 6 inches for key representative riparian graminoid species (grasses, rushes, sedges, etc.) at the time cattle are removed from a unit. No more than 30% use by weight on upland type grasses which occur on floodplains or no more than 40% use where stream temperatures are functioning adequately shall be permitted. No more than 25% of the annual growth (i.e., of current season’s leaders, not existing plant material) of woody species shall be browsed. Permitted utilization levels may differ from these levels if restoration to acceptable conditions is necessary for a given riparian site.”

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 East Fork Weiser River subwatershed, Beaver 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.

East Fork Weiser River and Middle Fork Weiser River are listed on the Idaho State 303(d) impaired water quality list and has been identified in the Forest Plan in the Management Area 3 Weiser River Objective 0318 for improvement of water quality. **Please be aware, on these two rivers you are required to maintain a 6 inch residual stubble height on hydric greenline species to be measured at the end of the growing season, not the end of the grazing season.**

When an area reaches allowable use levels the cattle will be moved and kept from returning to that 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.

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.

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. The Forest Service recognizes that a 100% clean pasture or allotment is not always achievable by the scheduled move or off date however; adequate effort is expected to achieve that.

IMPROVEMENTS

All range improvements must be maintained prior to turning livestock into the use area scheduled for turn out. Some improvements may not be accessible by turnout because of snow levels or elevation. If this occurs notify your rangeland management specialist. 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 permittees are required to ride the bull trout spawning habitat exclosures twice per week to maintain, repair, keep cattle out of and/or remove cattle from. The permittees are responsible for these exclosures.

The Shingle Flat exclosure has been rebuilt as originally designed. Until the permittees set it up, maintain it, and let it down, **no livestock use is authorized.** For a list of assigned maintenance of structural improvements as well as maintenance standards see part 3 of your term grazing permit.

Permittees taking Non-Use are still responsible for timely and adequate maintenance of the range improvements assigned to them in their grazing permits.

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.

Salting

Salting is restricted to the following:

- No less than ¼ mile from water, and not be placed in meadow bottoms. Exceptions to this must be cleared and approved by the District Ranger prior to placing the salt.
- Placed at a minimum distance of 100 yards from open roads and out of sight from roads if possible.
- Should be located in a rocky area where minimal 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.

REQUIRED REPORTING

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 December 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 should be firm to avoid excessive compaction due to livestock. Perennial grass species must be a minimum of 6 inches in height. 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.

