

2013 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

ANTELOPE ALLOTMENT

Below is your Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the Antelope Allotment. This AOI addresses Forest Service administered lands within the Antelope Allotment and reflects information discussed during the spring meeting. Please read this information and sign the included signature page. The district ranger and current range management specialist will sign once all permittee signatures for an allotment are received. We believe that this process better represents the cooperative nature of managing these areas and indicates an understanding of the information in this document as well as the information in your term grazing permit(s). In the case of allotments running as unofficial associations, the elected president may sign for all permittees on an allotment with approval from the group.

Please review your Term Grazing Permit for grazing utilization, range improvement maintenance, and salting standards. Actual on, off and move-dates are dependant on range readiness and when allowable use levels are achieved. The Forest Service may approve changes to the grazing rotation in cooperation with the permittees to address range condition situations that may occur due to weather related circumstances.

Do not overnight or hold livestock in the Leadbelt Allotment, Lower Camp Creek Unit. Other methods will need to be used in getting your cattle on and off of the forest.

| <u>Permittee</u> | <u>Permitted</u> | <u>Non-Use</u> | <u>Authorized</u> | <u>Season</u> |
|----------------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Mountain Springs Ranch LLC | 249 | 0 | 249 | 07/01-10/15 |
| Shane Rosenkrance | 95 | 0 | 95 | 07/01-10/15 |
| Evelyn Reese* | 93 | 0 | 93 | 07/01-10/15 |
| James Babcock | 75 | 0 | 75 | 07/01-10/15 |
| Rueben and Russell Babcock | 311 | 106 | 205 | 07/01-10/15 |
| David Keele | 75 | 75 | 0 | 07/01-10/15 |
| | 898 | 181 | 717 | 07/01-10/15 |

Your diligence in keeping livestock out of Smiley Meadow in 2011 and keeping livestock out of the enclosure in 2012 was appreciated. The partial suspension has been removed for the 2013 grazing season.

| <u>Grazing Unit Rotation</u> | <u>Estimated Days/ Dates</u> | <u>Riparian/Upland/Woody</u> |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Burnt Hollow | 16 7/1-7/16 | 4 inches/ 50% / 50% |
| Bear Creek | 30 7/17-8/15 | 4 inches/ 50% / 50% |
| Smiley Meadows | 19 8/16-9/3 | 4 inches/ 50% / 50% |
| Iron Bog | 22 9/4-9/25 | 4 inches/ 50% / 50% |
| Dry Canyon | 20 9/26-10/15 | 4 inches/ 50% / 50% |

Allowable Use: A 4-inch stubble height on hydric sedges & grasses will be used as an end of season annual indicator of utilization along the greenline of riparian areas. A patchy or uneven use pattern along the greenline will usually result in stubble height annual indicator being met. While adequate regrowth may occur under average growing season conditions, the opposite may be true during below average conditions. Special attention should be given to drier weather conditions. A stubble height trigger above 4 inches is recommended in drier conditions to plan cattle moves as regrowth is limited under these conditions.

Riparian areas with greenlines dominated by Kentucky bluegrass and tufted hairgrass should also receive special attention to achieve end of season stubble height. Greenlines dominated by these plants have less bank stability than greenlines dominated by deep-rooted plants and are possibly in a lower state of ecological condition. These sites should be managed to increase the amount of stable hydric sedges, grasses, and shrubs where appropriate.

There is not an appropriate site to measure riparian stubble height on the Iron Bog unit, therefore upland utilization is used as an annual measure of use. Woody browse use on riparian shrubs will not exceed 50% of new leader growth and upland forage utilization will not exceed 50%.

The drier mesic meadows adjacent to streams and springs should be watched to ensure that use levels are not exceeded. These meadows are of concern across the district and more focus is going to be put on use levels in these areas. While all adjacent meadows should be considered, the drier meadows have less chance of regrowth and therefore are of highest concern. The upland annual use level of 50% should be used to manage the dry meadows and your rangeland management specialist will work with you to determine when a desired use level has been met, so that everyone understands what the meadows should look like after livestock use.

Other factors should also be considered for planning cattle moves between units. These include prevention of stream bank trampling, increase in rate of stubble height removal, changes in livestock behavior, changes in grazing preference from grasses and grass-like plants to young willows and other shrubs, large groups of cattle congregating in fence corners, at gates, or in riparian areas for long periods of time.

Designated Monitoring Areas (DMA's): DMA's are used to monitor representative riparian areas within a grazing unit which establishes a record of utilization and trend. The information from the DMA is also used to plan cattle moves, determine if end of season indicators are met, and to evaluate whether current management is effective or needs to be modified. Permittee monitoring, documentation and photos are encouraged before entering and when leaving each unit.

Cleaning Grazing Units: Livestock need to begin moving from a unit prior to the stubble height indicator being met to ensure allowable use levels are achieved. This is especially important during drought conditions. Permittees should be prepared to assist range riders in checking that the unit cleaned stays clean. Range riders should keep permittees informed of problems cleaning grazed units. Bulls should be kept with the main herd or removed from the allotment when they disrupt herd management. Frequent back-riding indicates there is a herd management problem. It is also the permittee's responsibility to correct problems caused by drift from other units.

The Dry Canyon Unit should receive additional attention prior to cattle entering the Unit and after cattle have been moved from the Unit to ensure that use is not occurring outside of the planned schedule.

Fence & Water Improvements: Please refer to Part 3 of your Term Grazing Permit. Allotment boundary fences should be maintained prior to cattle entering the allotment, interior fences should also be maintained prior to cattle entering a new unit. Existing improvements should be maintained each year before requesting new improvements. The Bear Creek-Cherry Creek fence maintenance will be shared by permittees from both allotments. The Cherry Creek and Antelope permittees will determine the midpoint of the fence. Cherry Creek will maintain the east half and Antelope will maintain the west half.

The Smiley Meadow let down fence should be maintained in a way that allows it to be let down upon

cattle leaving the pasture. This fence should be put up one week prior to livestock entering the unit and let down within two weeks of livestock leaving the Smiley Meadow unit. Forest Service will provide additional materials to further improve the design of the letdown fence.

Weed Free Hay: In accordance with State Law, please ensure that range riders bring hay that is certified and tagged noxious weed free.

Response to Predators: Should predator issues arise on the allotment, please contact your range management specialist and Idaho Fish & Game or Wildlife Services with the information. Coordination with permittees and all agencies listed above is important to assess predator issues and share information on predator management decisions on National Forest lands and those areas adjacent to National Forest.

Grazing Fees: The grazing fees for the 2013 season are \$1.35/head month. Your grazing fee payment will need to be received prior to turning livestock out on the National Forest. Receipt of payment could take up to 2 weeks from the date payment is sent.

Actual Use Report: An Actual Use Report will be mailed to you upon completion of the grazing season. This form is to be completed and returned to the Lost River Ranger District in a timely manner. The association President will need to provide a consolidated report with the numbers and dates when cattle entered the allotment, moved from unit to unit, and when cattle were removed from the allotment. Each permittee will need to provide an individual report with dates when their cattle entered and left the allotment. This information is used for the purpose of evaluating and analyzing: grazing allotment and grazing unit use, compliance with annual operating instructions/ term grazing permits, and planning next season's grazing management strategy.

Applications for refunds/credits for unused portions of your allotment must be requested and filed separately. Please contact our office if you need an application for refund/credit.

NEPA and Allotment Management Plans (AMP): Our office is in the process of completing an environmental analysis and documentation for livestock grazing in the Antelope Allotment and four others in the Antelope Creek drainage. Permittees will need to work closely with your rangeland management specialist and other Forest personnel to develop a proposed action for grazing management in conjunction with a long term grazing management strategy (AMP) for your allotment.

This work will include taking a hard look at historic and existing grazing activities to determine whether current management is adequate to comply with the Forest Plan and other laws and regulations that govern the management of public lands. This process will include several meetings with permittees to discuss and agree on feasible and appropriate management goals and monitoring objectives on the allotment that will meet or move us toward the desired conditions for multiple resources on the allotment. The ultimate goal of this analysis is to determine the existing condition and trend of those areas most likely to be affected by livestock grazing and develop a plan to minimize impacts through best management practices for livestock grazing. Your participation in development of the proposed action and AMP are crucial to the success of your operation and our long term management of the area.

Questions regarding these instructions should be directed to Thad Berrett at 588-3400.

Antelope C&H Allotment 2013 Annual Operating Instructions

Salmon-Challis National Forest
Lost River Ranger District
PO Box 507
Mackay, Idaho 83251

Approved By: /s/ Diane L Weaver 04/08/2013
Diane L. Weaver Date
District Ranger

Prepared By: /s/ Thad Berrett 04/03/2013
W. Thad Berrett Date
Rangeland Management Specialist

Accepted By: /s/ James Babcock 04/03/2013
James Babcock Date
President, Antelope Grazing Association

Signing for all members of the Antelope Grazing Association:

Reuben H. and Russell Babcock, Permittees
Shane Rosenkrance, Manager, Mountain Springs Ranch LLC
David Keele, Permittee
Evelyn Reese, Permittee
Josh Felton, Manager, Shane Rosenkrance permit

Please sign and return this page to the above address