



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Sawtooth National Forest
Ketchum Ranger District

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Date: May 21, 2013

2013 Annual Operating Instructions

For Denis and Lauri Kowitz

Sheep and Goat Allotments

Administered by the

Ketchum Ranger District

Sawtooth National Forest

Permit # 3029

Prepared and recommended by: Bill Whitaker, Range Management Specialist

Approved by: /s/ Kurt J Nelson

District Ranger

May 21, 2013

Date



Annual Operating Instructions 2013

INTRODUCTION

Permittee: Denis and Lauri Kowitz

Allotments Included: Warm Springs and Deer Creek/Curran S&G

Permitted Numbers and Seasons:

Numbers	Season	Allotment/Head Months
Variable numbers and season. Not to exceed 3923 head months. Not to exceed 1100 mature sheep and 2500 total sheep (ewes + lambs). 4 horses	6/16-9/30 6/16-9/30	Warm Springs S&G/ 3923 Head Months
Variable numbers and season. Not to exceed 1870 head months. Band not to exceed 850 mature sheep and 2500 total animals (ewes + lambs) 2 horses	6/16-8/20 6/16-8/20	Deer Creek/Curran S&G/ 1870 Head Months

Authorized Season of Use and Numbers for 2013: As discussed this year the Deer Creek/Curran and Warm Springs allotments will be used together and grazed by a single band.

Numbers	Season	Allotment	Head Months
850 ewes/lambs	06/18-09/01 (ship)	Deer	2124
850 ewes	09/02-9/30	Creek/Curran and	810
3 horses	06/18-09/30	Warm Springs S&G	Total= 2934

BILLING

Confirmation of payment of fees through the Lock Box in San Francisco must be received prior to livestock entering the allotment. For the purpose of accountability, please contact Robert Garcia or Bill Whitaker five days prior to entering the allotment.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

Emphasis will be placed upon once-over light use while grazing the band on the allotments. Carefully review with your herders the **Terms and Conditions** section of this document which contains specific management standards, guidelines, conditions and practices found in the amended 2012 Sawtooth National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) as well as your Term Grazing Permit.

Reminder: All livestock feed or straw brought on to the Forest is to be certified noxious weed free.

Specific instructions or management actions, such as routing, or areas to avoid will be found in the sections of this AOI specific to the allotment and the band that uses it.

Deer Creek/Curran and Warm Springs Allotments

As discussed the Deer Creek/Curran and Warm Springs allotments will be used together this year and grazed by one band. Using both allotments with one band should provide additional flexibility and allow you to focus more management attention on one band.

The 850 head lamb band will enter the allotment in the headwaters portion of the Wolfstone drainage from Bullion Gulch on approximately 6/18.

The band will graze westerly through the Wolfstone Creek, Kinsey Creek, and Curran Gulch drainages. The band will then trail northerly across the easterly flanks of Buttercup Mountain (the heads of Lost Draw, Frys Gulch, and Bear Gulch) to the Poison Flats and Lick Creek area and resume grazing. When this area is grazed to standard the band will graze the Lupine Gulch, Sullivan, and Enclosure Creek areas to the Red Warrior drainage in the Warm Springs allotment. If needed the band may also use the upper portions of the North Fork of Deer Creek drainage and graze across the headwater portions of Mahoney Creek and the uppermost portions of Lodgepole Gulch prior to Red Warrior. When the band enters the Red Warrior drainage the band will begin grazing westerly across Red Warrior to Warfield and Rough Canyon. The band will cross Warm Springs Creek at Rough Canyon for shipping at the Placer Creek corrals on approximately 9/1. The portion of the Placer Creek drainage within the Warm Springs allotment can be used by the lamb band prior to shipping if needed. After shipping the dry band will graze easterly and use the Castle Creek, Bar Gulch, Rooks Creek, and West Fork of Warm Springs drainages. The West Fork of Warm Springs drainage may be rested if not needed. The band will then lightly graze/trail along the Warm spring road to the Red Warrior drainage. The band will then graze up the Red Warrior drainage using un-used portions of this drainage purposely saved for this use. The band will then finish the season using portions of the Lodgepole Gulch and Mahoney Creek drainages that were not used earlier in the year. When leaving the allotment the band will trail across the upper portions of the Kelly Mountain/Greenhorn allotment and the lower portions of the Limekiln allotment (1 day) leaving the Forest via Greenhorn Gulch on 9/30. Reference the allotment map for general routing information and specific direction regarding these instructions.

- **Management of sheep within these allotments is complex due to the challenging terrain as well as the high recreation use that occurs on the Ketchum Ranger District. It is important that you work very closely with your herders while grazing on the Deer Creek/Curran and Warm Springs allotments and that they are well informed and understand the instructions and conditions contained within this year's AOI such as routing, Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines and Terms and Conditions of your Term Grazing Permit and these instructions.**
- **The burned area from the 2012 Enclosure Fire will be rested in 2013 and 2014, or until the area has sufficiently recovered. Be sure to instruct your herders to avoid this area with the sheep.**
- **The riparian areas in Wolfstone Creek and the North Fork of Deer Creek should be used as lightly as possible.**
- **You are responsible for any damage to system trails by sheep. Be sure to emphasize this requirement to your herders. Repair any damage immediately. The permittee will be held accountable for trail damage that is not immediately repaired to an acceptable standard.**
- **Conflicts with guard dogs and the public has been a problem. The herder will need to be attentive with the sheep and guard dogs to reduce conflicts, especially if in close proximity to system trails or roads. Major trails and trailheads will be posted by range staff informing the public that sheep and guard dogs are in the area. In addition signs will be given to you that can be moved with the sheep and placed by the herder in strategic locations informing the public of the proximity of sheep and guard dogs in the area. In the Mahoney Creek, Lodgepole Gulch, Red Warrior and Warfield drainages inform your herder to be especially attentive of the guard dogs and grazing in proximity of the busy trails located in these drainages.**
- **Please follow these instructions when using the shipping facilities at Placer Creek. The sheep are to be trailed to the facility from some distance (1/4-1/2 mile) and moved directly into the corral. All sorting and holding of the sheep will be in the confines of the corral. The sheep are not to be watered or grazed within the immediate vicinity of the corral. The corrals at Placer Creek will be used 2 times this year. It is imperative that impacts in this area associated with shipping be kept to a minimum. Use of this facility is shared with Plateau Farms LLC please coordinate use and maintenance with them. In order to avoid recreation conflicts please inform my range staff one week prior to using the facility so that the area can be signed informing the public of this activity.**

- **Inspections in the past have indicated that the meadows along Warm Springs Creek immediately east of the junction of Castle Creek tends to get heavily used. Inform your herder to be especially attentive and adhere to once-over grazing. Inspections last year showed that by routing the lamb band further east in order to cross Warm Springs creek and trail to the shipping corrals along the Warm Springs road use levels in this area were reduced. Please follow this general route this year. Referance the attached map.**

COMPLIANCE

This AOI is made part of your grazing permit consistent with Part 1, item 3 and Part 2, Item 8(a). **Procedures for modifying this AOI:** Situations may develop during the grazing season which requires 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.

REPORTING

The permittee is required to provide timely and complete actual use information to the Forest Officer in charge upon request. Use of calendars, maps, or actual use forms provided will be utilized to record dates for turning out, shipping, leaving the allotment, as well as location and number of days of use of each camp and or prominent drainage(those identified on maps)

We need to know dates of entry into each new allotment or major drainage, noteworthy change in sheep numbers, occupied camp or band locations with dates of occupancy, periods, of use within specific drainages, and maintenance of range facilities. Please notify us of significant losses, from predators or poisonous plants, herding problems (logistical or due to unforeseen circumstances), conflicts with other Forest users, and any other grazing related information you feel is worth reporting.

Weekly reporting for trail information updates will suffice as actual use reporting with the addition of any notable changes in numbers of mature sheep. Not reporting to my range staff: (1) weekly sheep locations; and (2) intended routing patterns could prompt non-compliance procedures. Please phone my range staff or provide this information no later than Wednesday noon of each week. If my range staff is not available leave the information on his phone, e-mail, or provide written information to the front desk personnel at the Ketchum District office.

INSPECTIONS AND MONITORING

Inspections will be made within each allotment to monitor grazing use and insure compliance with the direction set forth within the AOI. Standard monitoring will include visual inspections,

compliance with AOI and grazing standards, photo points, and rapid assessments to estimate use and ground cover.

COOPERATION

Once again this year we will work in partnership with Blaine County, the Idaho Department of Fish & Game and the Defenders of Wildlife (Susanne Stone 208-424-9385) in fostering a non-lethal approach to preventing domestic sheep and wolf mortality. Emphasis will be on the Ketchum Ranger District, the Sawtooth National Recreation Area and other areas within Blaine County south of Galena summit. Coordination will be important. Adjustments can be made to routing or bedding as the need arises to head off problems. Meetings will be scheduled as necessary to assess how things are going or head off potential problems.

Questions about what can or cannot be done in reference to defending flocks, harassing wolves, or shooting wolves should be directed to Jerome Hansen at the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) Regional Office in Jerome, Idaho (208-324-4359) or John Rachel at the Fish and Game office in Boise, Idaho (208-324-4359); Todd Grimm, USDA APHIS Wildlife Services in Boise, Idaho (208-378-5077); or local Wildlife Service's contacts. Permittee's should continue working with their local Wildlife Services representative on depredation issues.

In order to reduce the potential for depredation, the Forest Service recommends that the following procedures be implemented each grazing season:

Keep camp meat in coolers, and not hung.

Burn, bury, or pack out food leftovers, bones, garbage etc. including food not consumed by dogs accompanying the herders.

Bury or remove sheep and saddle stock carcasses from the area where they will not serve as an attractant to predators. The intent of this recommendation is not to require removal of carcasses from the allotment, but to remove them out of areas currently being grazed of areas soon to be grazed.

Work with Defenders field staff, IDF&G and Wildlife Services in implementing other effective preventative actions to reduce the risk of depredation.

Contact the range staff at the Ketchum Ranger District (208-622-5371) for local Wildlife Service's contact information.

The Forest Service recognizes that you and the Idaho Department of Fish & Game have developed a "Best Management Practice for Separation between Domestic Sheep and Bighorn Sheep" agreement because of the potential for conflict between wild sheep and domestics. In addition to BMP's agreed to in that agreement, we also require the herders conduct regular visual scans throughout the day for bighorn sheep. We also require that the permittee make the appropriate contact with the Forest Service or Idaho Department of Fish & Game if a bighorn sheep sighting is reported by the herder within one mile of the sheep.

The potential of conflicts with the general public and grazing, such as trail damage, or guard dogs is especially high on the Deer Creek/Curran and Warm Springs allotments due to the proximity of several high use recreation trails, roads, and busy trailheads. The herder will need

to be attentive with the sheep and guard dogs to reduce conflicts while in these areas, especially if in close proximity to system trails or roads. The trailheads and major trails will be posted informing the public that sheep are in the area. The herder will be given additional signs that will be moved with the sheep and placed at strategic locations more proximal to the sheep in order to inform the public of the presence of sheep and guard dogs.

We will continue to update the weekly on-line recreation trail report regarding the location of sheep bands. Please provide us with this band location information by Wednesday noon each week. This information along with signing informing the public that sheep are in the area has proven successful in preventing conflicts with recreational use of the trails.

DROUGHT

Drought conditions will be monitored as the season progresses. Grazing will be managed on an allotment by allotment basis focusing on water availability and soil disturbance. This year's water content in the snowpack is well below average and dry spring conditions are a concern. Due to low water content in the snowpack and dry conditions the possibility of livestock leaving the allotments early this year for resource protection is a possibility. We recommend planning for this possibility.

Concerning drought projections regarding the possibility of wildfire is that this year may be similar to last season or worse. Consequently implementation of fire restrictions or other actions is a definite possibility.

Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines and Grazing Permit Terms and Conditions for Sheep Grazing

Following are the Forest Plan standards, guidelines and Grazing Permit terms, conditions and practices applicable to sheep grazing that must be followed while grazing on the Ketchum Ranger District.

These permit standards, guidelines, terms and conditions are needed to move toward or to achieve the desired conditions, goals, and objectives for vegetation, wildlife, fish, riparian, soil and water resources described by the Sawtooth Forest Land & Resource Management Plan. Other than Guidelines, the following Terms & Conditions are binding limitations placed on management actions. Guidelines represent preferred or advisable courses of action that are generally expected to be carried out.

Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines:

- **Only one night/one time use of bed grounds is allowed. (standard).**

- **Only open or loose sheep herding will be practiced except where site-specific vegetation management (e.g., noxious weed control or reforestation) is needed. (standard)**
- **Only annual once-over sheep grazing will be allowed, with the exception of designated sheep driveways, travel routes, or where specifically authorized. (standard)**
- **Livestock salting will be prohibited in RCA's (riparian conservation areas). Sheep will be salted only at bed grounds. Salt will be placed in containers and moved with the sheep. Tarps and hollowed logs meet the criteria for salting in containers. (standard)**
- **Only certified noxious weed-free hay, straw, or feed is allowed on National Forest Systems lands. (standard)**
- **Earth-disturbing equipment used on National Forest System lands- such as cats, graders, and front-loaders- shall be cleaned to remove all visible plant parts, dirt, and material that may carry noxious weed seeds. Cleaning shall occur prior to entry onto the project area and again upon leaving the project area, if the project area has noxious weed infestations. (standard) No ground disturbing activities may be conducted on National forest Systems land without prior approval from the authorized officer.**
- **New, reconstructed, or replaced livestock water developments must provide access and escape to and from water for all types of wildlife. (standard, reference part Three of the Term Grazing Permit under maintenance of structural range improvements)**
- **On all lands outside of designated travelways, motorized use shall be prohibited unless otherwise authorized. (standard)**
- **Damage to or loss of Forest System trails from timber harvest, livestock grazing, road construction, mining, special uses, and prescribed fire activities should be repaired or mitigated by the appropriate party. (guideline)**
- **Sheep should be routed to avoid slopes with loose soil conditions, active gullies, and snowbank areas that have low productivity, soil puddling, and compaction conditions. (guideline, generally site specific in the AOI)**

SHEEP HERDING:

- 1. The permittee or herd manager will provide sufficient riders or herders to obtain proper distribution, protection, and management of sheep on the allotment as required by the Rangeland Project Decision (RPD)/Allotment Management Plan (AMP) and/or the Annual Operating Instructions (AOI).**
- 2. Do not allow sheep to be shaded or bedded within 100 yards of all streams. If this is not reasonable due to topography ensure that the sheep are as far back as possible from the streambank.**

3. Graze no closer than 200 yards from all lakes or ponds specified as closed to sheep grazing in Part 3 or your Term Grazing Permit. This may not apply on all allotments. Check Part 3 on your Term Grazing Permit.
4. Do not bed sheep within 200 yards of designated campgrounds, trails, trail heads, or maintained roads.
5. Graze rather than trail to water, and water at different locations each time.
6. The permittee is required to provide a copy of the Annual Operating Instructions to each herder, and to ensure each herder understands the written contents.

OTHER

7. Permittees are responsible for cleaning or repairing system roads and trails damaged by sheep to the condition existing prior to trailing. Immediate action is required. (standard)
8. All predator control will be in accordance with the approved Predator Control Plan and Federal and State laws and regulations.
9. Promptly remove or bury any sheep that have died within 100 yards or in sight of administrative sites, system roads or trails, corrals or sources of water.
10. Before and after shipping, sheep will not be allowed to graze, shade, or bed within one-quarter mile of the corral. Exception: After leaving the corral, the sheep will be allowed to water one time before departing the immediate area.
11. Control guard dogs when other Forest users or pets are near by.

SHEEP CAMPS

12. 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.
13. Only existing herder camps are approved for use. New camp locations must be approved by a Forest Service officer.
14. Camps will be kept in primitive condition. No improvements will be allowed. If a new fire pit is constructed, dismantled it and restore the area before moving your camp.
15. Herder camp use will not exceed 5 days per location unless prior permission is obtained from a Forest officer. Camps should be located to avoid conflict with other Forest users
16. At camp, pack and saddle stock will be high-lined, picketed or hobbled. Tying pack or saddle stock to trees at camp is prohibited.
17. Holding pens, corrals, or mangers used for riding stock will be cleaned up when camp is moved.

FIRE

18. Employees must be kept informed of the current fire danger, situation, and the permittee's fire prevention responsibility. The Forest Service will advise the permittee when special fire restrictions become effective.

19. Exhaust from camp stoves must be filtered through a spark arrestor screen with 3/8 inch (or smaller) mesh.
20. Never leave campfires unattended.
21. Possession of an adequate shovel and bucket for fire control is required at camps.

WOLF Guidelines

22. The permittee will be contacted immediately when the district becomes aware of wolves in an area. Possible re-routing of the band may be agreed on between the permittee and the District Ranger.
23. At camp, meat will be kept in containers to avoid attracting wolves.
24. Food wastes will be burned, buried, or packed out with other camp refuse.
25. Preventive measures should be coordinated with Idaho Fish and Game.
26. Only bed sheep down for one night per bed ground under normal circumstances. When there is wolf activity in the area and fladry is used to minimize predation, bed grounds may be used for more than one night. If this situation occurs bed ground site selection needs to be discussed with the Range Management Specialist for this allotment.

Improvements

27. The permittee is responsible for the maintenance of structural range improvements as delineated on Part 3 of your Term grazing Permit. These improvements will be maintained prior to placing sheep on the allotment. Please refer to your permit for the specific maintenance standards for structural range improvements.

KURT J. NELSON
Ketchum District Ranger

**Enclosures: Allotment Maps, Spanish Annual
Operating Instructions**