

## 2013 SOLDIER CREEK ALLOTMENT OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS SAWTOOTH NATIONAL FOREST - FAIRFIELD RANGER DISTRICT

PERMITTEES	Permitted Numbers	*Permitted Head Months	Permitted Use Season	Authorized Head Months	Authorized Use Season
Black Butte Hills LLC Camas Creek Ranch Rodney Gonsales – Mgr.	746 c/c	3728	6/1 – 10/30	**1864 (530 c/c)	7/1 – 10/15 (107 days)
Suspended Use (50%)				1864	

\* HMs are the product of variable numbers and the season of use

\*\* This number reflects a 50% permitted HM suspension (First year of three).

**COMPLIANCE:** The Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) are considered part of your Term Grazing Permit, Part 2, Clause 8(a), and you have agreed to carry out its provisions and other instructions upon signing the Term Grazing Permit (TGP). Consequently, failure to follow this AOI is a violation of your TGP. The contents of this year’s AOI reflect the discussion at our **5/9/13** annual meeting in Fairfield. Situations may develop during the grazing season requiring changes to these instructions. If this becomes necessary, or if you cannot comply with some part of these instructions, contact the Range Management Specialist to obtain approval before initiating any significant changes.

**CHANGE REQUEST NOTIFICATION/PROCEDURE:** The permittee will provide the Fairfield District Ranger with notification of any proposed changes to these Annual Operating Instructions. This could include changes in animal number, season of use, length of stay, class of livestock, or a change in pasture rotation. The Fairfield District Ranger or his staff will document and consider the request. If approved, the FS will provide confirmation of the change.

**NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT:** According to Idaho law, hay and straw transported onto National Forest land must be certified Noxious Weed Free.

**2012 Utilization Review:**

Many of the stubble height and utilization levels on all Designated Monitoring Areas (DMAs) within the allotment were not in compliance with the FS standards.

**2012 Management Effectiveness Review:**

The management of cattle across the allotment during the 2012 season was only partially acceptable. There were excessive grazing impacts occurring within riparian zones during July and August as a result of not moving cattle soon enough.

**MONITORING:** Utilization must be monitored by the permittee and by forest personnel. We welcome your participation in our monitoring activities. Monitoring of key areas will be used to determine the maximum allowable livestock use on the allotment. Key areas are defined as relatively small areas that serve as evaluation sites. They guide the general management of the entire pasture. Permittees especially need to watch riparian areas closely because they meet use

standards prior to upland sites and it is your responsibility to move livestock to meet the required stubble height standards.

**Issues Needing Resolution:**

The practice of trailing livestock into the Lawrence Creek pasture through the southwest gate from off of the Soldier road is discouraged due to the localized soil disturbance it causes. We prefer that you only use this gate as an exit point instead of an entry point.

All water development maintenance must be performed prior to livestock being placed in each pasture where developments occur. Please document your water development maintenance using a GPS camera, and also complete the provided trough maintenance checklist. This will be required to verify compliance of the required water development maintenance.

Extra riding may be needed to assure livestock are completely removed from pastures. Some pastures take extra effort to get all of the cattle removed.

**Resource Conflicts:**

Moving large numbers of cattle up Soldier Creek creates excessive disturbance to the streambank and the trail next to it. Your practice of trailing small groups of no more than a dozen pair has positive results. The best method to get cows up the North Fork of Soldier Creek is to drop them into the highest tributaries from the Salt Bowns Road. This has proven to be the best management practice because it causes the least amount of riparian impact.

**Coordination:**

There will be a lamb band of sheep grazing on the Soldier Creek Allotment for ten days during the middle of June. It will graze within the Lawrence and Owens Creek drainages the same way it has in the past. One other band of ewes without lambs will be trailing off Forest in early October via the Couch Summit road and Owens Creek trail, exiting at the Forest boundary. After crossing at Couch Summit it only takes one day to get off NF .

**BILLING INFORMATION:**

Grazing fees for this season will be \$1.35 per head month. Payments are to be made by the due date displayed on your grazing bill. The process takes approximately 10 days from the time you submit your bill until it is processed and verified through “Lockbox”. Notice of payment must be received by the district office prior to your entry. If notice has not been received by the district office you cannot enter the allotment with your cattle. Payment validates your Term Grazing Permit and authorizes grazing for your permitted livestock.

**LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT**

The following is a sequence and schedule for distributing your cattle on the Soldier Creek Allotment.

1. All bulls or livestock over six months of age are considered permitted animals. Livestock will be permitted on the allotment only for 530 cow/calf pairs for the 7/01-10/15 season listed on the Bill for Collection, but only after payment has been received.
2. Planned use may be adjusted by the Forest Service according to range readiness, drought, high fire danger, or due to the availability of forage and water. The length of stay for units may be negotiable but no longer than your permitted season. This will depend on residual stubble heights and overall grazing impacts, especially within riparian areas.

**2013 ROTATION SCHEDULE**

Grazing Unit	Estimated Days Per Unit	Estimated #'s
1. Lawrence/Owens	20	530
1. Free Gold/Bridge		530
2. Reedy/Sawmill	12	530
2. Baker/Trail Gulch	10	530
3. N Fk. Soldier	20	530
4. Cottonwood & S Fk. Soldier	15	530
5. Upper & Lower Phillips	22	530
6. Three Mile	18	530

The maximum allowable use level will be influenced by a number of factors such as the number of animals, length of stay, weather, amount of herding, and the over all permittee management effort. It is your responsibility to move livestock from one unit to the next before maximum allowed use is reached. We would be willing to help you determine the proper time to exit the pasture if you feel the 4” riparian utilization standard is getting close. Just bring this concern to our attention so we may be of assistance. We ask that you give us adequate notice to respond to your request. Permittees are responsible to manage their livestock in a way that does not impair or degrade the condition of the range, especially within riparian areas.

**SAWTOOTH NATIONAL FOREST UTILIZATION STANDARDS**

Maximum forage utilization of representative areas within each pasture shall not exceed the values shown at the end of growing season. Variation in utilization standards to achieve specific vegetative management objectives may occur with a site-specific or project-level decision according to direction in Forest Service Manual 1922.5

- A) **Upland Vegetative Cover Types:** : Leave at least 3.5” (60% by weight) on the Beef and Stovepipe early season pastures. (1<sup>st</sup> entry = 40% use)  
Leave at least 3.0” (50% by weight) on the remaining upland late season pastures.
- B) **Riparian Areas:** Retain a minimum 4 –inch stubble height of greenline species (sedges). Once in the last pasture, if allowable use occurs prior to the end of your authorized season, cattle must be removed from the allotment.

**KEY SPECIES:** Allowable use is the degree of grazing use specified for a particular area or plant species. Refer to the use level stated below. It is the maximum utilization allowed on key upland grasses (40-50% or about 3" left) such as Idaho fescue or bluebunch wheatgrass and key riparian sedges (45% or about 4" left) such as the blue/green colored Nebraska sedge. These use levels are the same ones contained in Part 3 of your Term Grazing Permit.

**STRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENTS:** See Part 3 of your TGP for a list of structural range developments. The permittee will inspect and maintain each development according to the TGP specifications. This is required before livestock enter or are placed into the next pasture. Livestock may be held off or may be required to leave the allotment if assigned maintenance has not been completed. Allotment boundary fences must be maintained prior to the entry dates of adjoining allotments. Permittees in non-use status are still responsible for their proportionate share of maintenance. It is the responsibility of the permittee to notify the Forest Service after each pasture has been maintained. Remember, this is required before livestock enter the allotment or are placed into the next pasture.

**Note: When you maintain your water developments make sure the wildlife escape ramp is present and functional. Please contact us if you need replacement ramps.**

**Motorized Access to Improvements:** Unless the FS has decommissioned a particular road segment, all constructed mining and logging roads with cut and fill slopes will remain open to permittee motorized travel.

Motorized Closure Exemptions are:

- 1) The road along the watershed division fence west and southwest of the Salt Creek sheep corral is still open. The portion of this fence line road east and southeast of the corral remains closed.
- 2) The road in the SW corner of the allotment (WF Threemile Creek) just north of the lone private cabin will be exempted for salt hauling purposes.
- 3) The road to the gravel pit halfway up Couch Summit is exempted for permittee use.
- 4) The road through the ski hill and up to the yurt is also exempted.

**LIVESTOCK DISTRIBUTION:** Proper salting techniques need to be practiced. Place salt in open areas of low natural livestock concentration at least ¼ mile away from water, and on high ground such as ridges or saddles that are accessible and used as livestock travelways. Do not place salt and supplements on system roads, trails, or in meadows. Riding must be done to disperse cattle within each allotment pasture.

**LIVESTOCK OWNERSHIP:** Permitted cattle must be owned and marked with a brand registered to the permittee. The brand must also be identified on the TGP application.

**REQUIRED REPORTING:** The permittee is required to keep accurate records concerning movement of livestock and to furnish such information to the Forest Service. Actual use reporting must be within a week of moving cattle from one pasture to the other. End-of-season actual use reports must be supplied to the Forest Service no later than the last day of October.

The Permittee must notify the Fairfield Ranger District at least five (5) days before cattle enter the allotment. This will allow district personnel the opportunity to count the livestock if we so desire. Failure to provide cattle numbers or pasture on and off dates will be considered permit non-compliance and may also negate the possibility of any future request to adjust your numbers or season of use, or to receive a credit or refund for unused head months.

**OTHER:** Observing, documenting, and reporting other uses that occur on the allotment provide valuable information regarding overall management. These uses could include: unauthorized livestock use, mining related activities, recreation conflicts, conflicts with authorized sheep trailing, predator problems, and unusual wildlife sightings (e.g. wolverines, lynx, mountain goats, bighorn sheep, moose, etc.)

**ADDITIONAL ANNUAL MANAGEMENT CONCERNS:** Livestock that are discovered before or after their permitted season or not within their permitted area are considered excess use livestock. When excess use livestock are identified as belonging to a permittee, the permittee will be billed for them at the unauthorized use rate and permit non-compliance action may also be initiated.

Dead livestock must be removed or disposed of on National Forest Lands if they are within 300 feet of flowing water or system trails or roadways.

If you have any questions or suggestion to improve the management of the allotment, please feel free to contact John Shelly at (208) 764-3474 or stop by the district office in Fairfield.

**ACTUAL USE SUMMARY**

	Lawrence/ Owens	Free Gold/ Bridge	Reedy/Sawmill Baker/ Trail G	N Fork Soldier	Cottonwood/ S Fork Soldier	Upper & Lower Phillips	Three Mile
DATES/NUMBERS ENTERED							
DATES/NUMBERS EXITED							

**Remarks: (maintenance, cattle losses, weed infestations, and unforeseen problems)**

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**2013 SOLDIER CREEK AOI**

REVIEWED BY:

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Permittee

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Date

APPROVED BY:

/s/ Mike Dettori  
District Ranger

June 12, 2013  
Date