

2013 Annual Operating Instructions

Grassy Mountain, Vance Creek, Hershey/Lava, Little French Creek,
Josephine, Twenty Mile, Cougar Creek, Slab Butte,
Brundage, Bill Hunt, and Jughandle Sheep Allotments
McCall and New Meadows Ranger Districts, Payette National Forest

These Annual Operating Instructions are for implementing grazing management activities on the above listed allotments for the 2013 grazing season. These instructions were developed with the participation of the livestock permittee on April 1, 2013. The interdisciplinary resource personnel and livestock permittees who participated in development of this plan are:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
1. Phil Soulen	Permittee	4/1
2. Harry Soulen	Permittee	4/1
3. Cesar Allon	Permittees' Foreman	4/1
4. Lisa Klinger	McCall District Ranger	4/1
5. Kim Pierson	New Meadows District Ranger	4/1
6. Brian McMorris	Rangeland Management Specialist	4/1
7. Diane Green	Idaho Department of Lands	4/1

2013 AUTHORIZED

<u>PERMITEE</u>	<u>NUMBERS</u>	<u>SEASON</u>	<u>ALLOTMENT</u>
Soulen Livestock	1000 ewe/lamb	07/10-09/27	Cougar Creek
	1000 ewe/lamb	07/10-09/24	Brundage/Bill Hunt
	1000 ewe/lamb	07/10-09/27	*Twenty Mile
	1000 ewe/lamb	07/10-10/10	*Jughandle
	1000 ewe/lamb	07/10-09/24	Slab Butte
	24 pack stock	07/10-10/06	Above Allotments
	2000 dry ewes	09/28-10/10	Slab Butte
	2000 dry ewes	09/25-10/10	Brundage
	4000 sheep	one day in spring	Van Wyck Pasture
	4800 sheep	two days in fall	Van Wyck Pasture
	6700 sheep	3 days in spring	Van Wyck Driveway
	7200 sheep	2 days in fall	Van Wyck Driveway

The Grassy Mountain S&G, Hershey Lava S&G, Little French Creek S&G, Josephine, and Vance Creek S&G Allotments are not authorized for domestic sheep grazing this year because they have been designated as unsuited for domestic sheep grazing by the July 2010 Record of Decision for the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and Forest Plan Amendment Identifying Suitable Rangeland for Domestic Sheep and Goat Grazing to Maintain Habitat for Viable Bighorn Sheep Populations (FSEIS ROD).

*Not all of the area within these allotments is authorized for domestic sheep (eastern 75% of Twenty Mile and northern 10% of Jughandle is NOT authorized).

The permittee will do on/off counts for all bands authorized onto the Payette NF. The Forest Service is planning to be present when the sheep are trailed onto and off of the Forest this year. Permittee will notify Forest Service personnel so arrangements can be made to meet with the permittee for the on/off count.

The AOI is viewed by the Forest Service as instructions issued for implementing the term grazing permit and as such is part of the permit. This AOI is made part of the term grazing permit consistent with Part 1, item 5 and Part 2, Item 7(a). Situations may develop during the grazing season which requires changes to these instructions. If changes become necessary, or if the permittee cannot comply with some part of these instructions, please contact the appropriate District Ranger and obtain approval before initiating changes or deviating from these instructions. Refer to Part 2 of the grazing permit for general terms and conditions that apply to these operating instructions. Failure to comply with the AOI direction is a violation of the grazing permit and will be resolved following agency procedures established in regulation, manuals and handbooks.

The grazing fee of \$0.27/HM must be paid prior to livestock entering National Forest. This bill is due five (5) days prior to the earliest turnout date. The New Meadows Office must receive confirmation from Lockbox that payment has been made prior to livestock entering the Forest.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS PERTAINING TO SEASON OF USE AND LIVESTOCK NUMBERS

The grazing prescriptions are designed to meet the resource needs of the soils and vegetation. Consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service has been completed on the allotments with listed species. The potential problem areas have been identified and mitigation measures have been designed to reduce adverse effects.

The District Ranger may modify the season of use and livestock numbers permitted on any given year. The season of use is dependent upon weather conditions (annual precipitation and temperature) 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 the term grazing permit.

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. Grass species other than bulbous bluegrass and cheatgrass must be a minimum of 6 inches in height and out of the boot stage. Arrowleaf balsamroot should be in bloom or past bloom.

Livestock Rotations

The rotation schedule below is a general outline of grazing for the 2013 grazing season.

Cougar Creek

The band will access the allotment at the south end on the East Fork of Fisher Creek. The band will graze through the lower country south of Granite Lake first. This area dries out early and lack of water is a problem if used later in the year. After proper use of the lower country the band will move northeast of Granite Lake and continue north through lower portions of Deep Creek, Camp Creek, and Cougar Creek. The band will then loop back utilizing the upper portions of these drainages. The sheep will then trail to Sater Corral for shipping lambs approximately September 27.

Twenty Mile

This band will start out trailing through Bear Basin, Hartley Meadows, Sater Meadows, and Granite Lake to Warren Wagon Road. Once on Warren Wagon Road the sheep will trail to the Pearl Creek Road and begin grazing towards Pearl Lake. Once at the top of the drainage the sheep will graze south down to Warren Wagon Road where the sheep will trail to Sater Corrals for shipping lambs approximately September 27.

Slab Butte

The sheep will graze north up the Fisher Creek drainage on the west side. The band will loop back once the sheep reach Fisher Creek Saddle and graze south on the east side of the Fisher Creek drainage. Sheep are not authorized on the north side of the ridge at Fisher Creek Saddle. Shipping will be at Sater Corrals approximately September 24.

Jughandle

This band will enter the allotment around Shaw Twin Lakes and graze south towards Paddy Flat.

Brundage/Bill Hunt/State Land

This band will graze from the south to north. Shipping will be at Sater Corrals approximately September 24.

Brundage/Bill Hunt/State Dry Band

After shipping of the lambs at Sater Corrals two bands will join to create a dry band. This band will graze the Bill Hunt/Brundage/State Land from north to south.

Slab Butte Dry Band

After shipping of the lambs at Sater Corrals two bands will join to create a dry band. This band will graze areas of the Slab Butte Allotment that the ewe/lamb band did not graze.

Trailing Instruction

Sheep will be trailed on the Van Wyck Driveway and then onto the Forest thru Bear Basin. The permittee is authorized to cross 6 bands of sheep on the Van Wyck Driveway this year. Sheep

are held in pastures on National Forest lands adjacent to Cascade Reservoir. The permittee is only authorized to have 4 ewe/lamb bands in the spring for one day and 2 dry bands in the fall for two days on the Forest portion of the Van Wyck Pasture. Prior to use, the permittee will contact Renee Kehler (Emmett Ranger District) (208) 365-7010 with the exact dates the trailing and pasture use will occur.

The ewe/lamb bands will start entering the National Forest July 10, or later depending on range readiness. Sheep will then trail to their assigned areas.

The Jughandle band will move from State Land to Forest Land. They will come in from the north part of the allotment (Shaw Twin). The band will exit from the south part of the allotment (Paddy Flat) to State Land.

The remaining bands will trail to the allotments via the designated trailing route north of the Little Ski Hill. This route gives the bands access to Bear Basin. The bands (20-Mile, Cougar, and Slab Butte) will then trail towards Hartley Meadows and Sater Meadows. The 20-Mile band will trail by Granite Lake to the Warren Wagon Road. This band will then trail to the Pearl Creek drainage and start grazing. The band will avoid Upper Payette Lake Campground. The sheep will trail off Forest using the same trail as when they came on Forest.

Livestock are not to bed on the recreation trails when trailing thru Bear Basin. This area is heavily used by the recreating public. It is important to continue to work together to reduce conflicts with the public.

Resources to Monitor

Ridge between Shaw Twin and Boulder Lake

West slope of Jughandle Mountain

Exclosure in Sater Meadows

Management Decision

Minimize impacts to soil erosion associated with livestock grazing. Work with range specialist.

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Closed to trailing, bedding, and grazing

Allowable Use/Mitigation Measures

The following allowable use criteria and mitigation measures are to be followed for all grazing activities. There will be Forest Service personnel monitoring these standards throughout the grazing season along with any long term vegetation monitoring that may be collected this grazing season.

1. Sheep are to move to the next Unit or leave the allotment after 40% use in riparian areas and uplands (Goose Creek drainage is 30% use in riparian and uplands). Sheep will be allowed annual once over grazing with the exception of designated sheep driveways, travel routes, or where specifically authorized. When the permittee observes proper use standards being reached, the livestock will be moved to the next area or off the Forest and the permittee will notify the Forest Service.

2. Sheep watering is limited to one time per location
3. One night per bed site
4. Grazing around all high mountain lakes is prohibited in the Goose Creek drainage only
5. Bedding of sheep in plantations will be prohibited until plantation trees have grown to a size that reduces their susceptibility to damage from livestock.

Salting Requirements

Salting is restricted to the following:

1. No less than 0.25 mile from water and not to be placed in meadow bottoms.
2. Only at bed grounds.
3. Contained and not placed directly on the ground.
4. Unconsumed salt will be removed from the site.

Other Management Requirements

Implement the Emergency Response Plan (ERP) (March 29, 2011 updated May 14, 2012, and updated July 9, 2012 and May 24, 2013). Actions taken are to ensure separation between bighorn sheep and domestic sheep.

Domestic sheep or goat grazing may only be permitted where separation from bighorn sheep can be maintained. If separation cannot be maintained, permitted domestic sheep and goat grazing shall be prohibited (RAST11).

The Payette National Forest will notify permittees immediately of any known stray or domestic sheep according to the ERP (March 29, 2011 updated May 14, 2012, and updated July 9, 2012 and May 24, 2013).

The permittees herders will be required to document at least once a day the location of the domestic sheep. When the herder documents GPS location for the day, it must be when they are with the sheep. This location will be recorded and turned in to the New Meadows Ranger District throughout the summer at least every seven (7) to fourteen (14) days. The Forest Service will provide one GPS unit with batteries and one log book per band. The permittee and herders will be trained in the use of the GPS Unit before turnout. If the GPS provided to the permittee is broken or lost because of negligence, the permittee will be responsible for replacing it.

Herders will also count marker sheep (black, horned, belled, other distinguishing feature, etc.) daily to assure that no small groups of sheep have separated from the main band. Counting will be noted in the log book.

If dipping of sheep becomes necessary, the permittee will contact the District Range personnel to determine an appropriate site. The permittee will implement a closed system and haul all effluent off National Forest System lands.

Sheep are not authorized to bed or salt on Forest Service trails.

The permittee is responsible for ensuring there is no trash left behind when moving sheep camps.

MAINTENANCE OF RANGE IMPROVEMENTS

All range improvements must be maintained prior to turning livestock into the unit scheduled for use. The permittee is required to provide the materials and labor during routine maintenance. 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. Please notify Forest staff if you have any improvements that are in a condition in which they may require reconstruction within the next several years so the improvement can be reevaluated. Shipping corrals are maintained just prior to shipping dates. Portions of the corrals are temporary and are not maintained at an earlier date to avoid vandalism.

MONITORING OF THE ANNUAL LIVESTOCK GRAZING ACTIVITY

We are requesting the permittee to report actual use information for each unit grazed. The herder folder currently provides information on this, so the Forest Service may transfer it to an actual use form for signature at the 2014 AOI meeting.

MULTIPLE USE COORDINATION

1. There will be no tree planting in Paddy Flat this year, but the plantations planted in 2011 and 2012 will need to be avoided. There was about 192 acres planted in 2011 and 220 acres planted in 2012. If there are any questions on planting please contact John Champa or Darel Simpson at (208)253-0100.
2. There will be road decommissioning in the Paddy Flat and Brundage/Bear Basin areas. There is up to 5.9 miles in Paddy Flat and 8.2 miles in Brundage Bear Basin that will be decommissioned this year.
3. Bear Basin may have thinning (Brundage VMP) this year. There could also be pile burning in the units this year.
4. Meadows Slope 4 and Rocky Bear projects will have logging, thinning, chip/haul, and road work this year. There may also be spring/fall burning of around 20 acres and piles associated with this project. This would be in the Rock Flat/Ecks Flat area.
5. If there is damage to Forest System trails by the permittee's livestock, the permittee will be required to repair or pay for it to be repaired.
6. In the past, the Payette Lakes Ski Club sponsored a triathlon taking place in mid July or early August. This affected the area around Warren Wagon Road. In 2012 this event occurred off National Forest System land. The Forest Service will notify the permittee if this event occurs on the Forest and what the date may be.
7. Pay close attention to recreationists when trailing thru the Bear Basin trails. It is important to be cautious as this area has become a popular place for people to ride bicycles.
8. There is a 100 mile race in the planning phase to take place on the McCall District this summer/fall. The permittee will be notified of the event before it happens.
9. Hope House may have an event from approximately 7/27 to 8/19 at the north end of Brundage Reservoir. Please avoid use of the area during this time if the event occurs.

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT

In the event a designated mitigation measure fails to protect a species listed under the Endangered Species Act (Chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull trout), a change in authorized grazing activity will occur. The change could be as simple as moving the sheep out of the area to a requirement for the sheep to be moved off of the allotment. If this situation arises, the Forest Service will be contacting you to discuss the situation.

If proper use grazing levels are reached then livestock are to be moved to the next grazing unit or off of the allotment. If livestock grazing does not comply with the terms and conditions of these Annual Operating Instructions then Forest Service policy and procedures regarding administrative permit actions will be followed.

Invasive weeds are becoming a serious threat to the welfare of rangelands. The Forest Service asks the permittee to provide assistance in identifying new weed infestations and to help prevent the establishment of weeds on the forest. Please pay particular attention to areas where stock is concentrated such as loading/unloading areas, water developments, and salting areas. It is not required for the permittee to report identification of weed populations although voluntary reporting is appreciated. The Payette National Forest is part of Region 4 of the Forest Service. Region 4 has a requirement that any hay that is brought onto the National Forest be certified free from noxious weeds. All livestock entering the National Forest are recommended to be fed **Certified Noxious Weed Free Forage** for at least 2 days prior to entering the Forest.

VOLUNTARY

In addition to these instructions, the permittee has identified other management actions that will be voluntarily implemented this year.

1. Remove sick or physically disabled domestic sheep from the band. If a sheep is no longer able to keep up with the band it will be killed or removed from the allotment.
2. Use a minimum of 2 guard dogs per band.
3. Bands will be fully counted in locations where counting can be accomplished and when bands change major geographic locations (i.e. moving from one major drainages to another). Due to changing conditions such as precipitation, thunderstorms, water availability, wildfires, predation events, forage availability, etc., areas in which full counts are conducted will be adjusted as the grazing season proceeds. Dates in which counts are completed will be documented in the log books.
4. Each pack string will carry binoculars to improve their ability to spot bighorn sheep.

REQUIRED

The following are management actions that the permittee discussed in detail with District Rangers and Range Management Specialist at the AOI meeting. These actions require

implementation during the 2013 grazing season for one or both of the following reasons: 1) to meet the intent of the Emergency Response Plan and 2) to reduce the likelihood of stray domestic sheep and goats.

1. Each band will have either a satellite phone, cell phone, radio, or other similar and effective communication device (Send or Spot) that is in functioning order. Functioning order is defined as operable and not “dead” or having battery life adequate to make contact (per Emergency Response Plan, March 29, 2011 updated May 14, 2012, and updated July 9, 2012 and May 24, 2013). Any of the required communication equipment may be used to notify the permittee that the emergency response plan is being activated.
2. If the herders or pack strings spot any bighorn sheep while grazing on the Forest, they will adjust their grazing path according to the Emergency Response Plan (March 29, 2011 updated May 14, 2012, and updated July 9, 2012 and May 24, 2013) and haze the bighorns out of the area to minimize the possibility of direct contact.
3. The permittee will immediately report any bighorn sheep sightings according to the Emergency Response Plan (March 29, 2011 updated May 14, 2012, and updated July 9, 2012 and May 24, 2013).
4. Predator attacks, primarily wolf attacks, may create a risk for a straying event. If a predator attack results in stray domestic sheep, the permittee will immediately implement the Emergency Response Plan (March 29, 2011, updated May 14, 2012, and updated July 9, 2012 and May 24, 2013).

The Permittee is responsible for ensuring herders are informed and understand the standards, guidelines, and other management direction in this plan.

Please review the AOI for consistency with our discussion at the annual meeting, and sign and return it to the New Meadows Ranger District. If a signed copy is not received within two weeks, this AOI will serve as the final copy approved by the District Rangers.

/s/ Lisa J. Klinger
Approved by
Lisa J. Klinger
McCall District Ranger

6/20/2013
Date

Soulen Livestock Company
Permittee

Date