

2013 Annual Operating Instructions

Piney C&H Allotment

Tongue Ranger District

Bighorn National Forest

District Ranger _____ Date _____

Permittee _____ Date _____

Piney C&H ALLOTMENT
YEAR 2013 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

Permitted and Authorized for 2013:

Piney Allotment	LS Kind	LS Class	Permitted			Authorized		
			LS #	From	To	LS#	From	To
S. K. Johnston	Cattle	Mature	264	7/10	9/15	264	7/24	9/15
	Horse	Mature	4	7/10	9/15	4	7/24	9/15

- Before Entering the Allotment

I suggest that you review your term grazing permit and the following Annual Operating Instructions, and ask questions if any portion is not clearly understood.

Year 2013 grazing fees are \$1.35/head month, and must be paid before livestock can be turned onto the Forest. Let Scott or Kerri know the actual date and number of livestock entering the National Forest and, upon request, provide for having stock counted.

2013 Rotations:

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Piney Allotment	Non-use	Early on-date	Late on-date	Early on-date

- Entering the Allotment

Year 2013 is planned as a late on-date for Piney C&H Allotment as displayed in the table above and described in your AMP. Turn-on is tentatively scheduled for July 24 and is intended to defer livestock grazing until plant maturity (defined by seed set). The on-date may be adjusted earlier or later based on the actual time of seed set.

Plan to turn livestock onto the allotment on or after this date unless you feel that seed set is not adequate to meet this objective or unless you have been notified that delays are necessary to allow for further plant development. Your on-date and range readiness are discussed in the revised AMP for Piney C&H allotment.

- Resource Guidelines

Piney C&H Allotment resource guidelines are described in the Bighorn National Forest Vegetation Grazing Guidelines, the Bighorn Forest Plan, and in NEPA analysis for AMP revision. The allowable use guidelines for utilization of the current year's forage are listed in the following table. These guidelines are applicable at the time the livestock leave the unit and include use by both livestock and wildlife.

Piney C&H Allotment is managed under a "rotation" grazing strategy. The figures below are maximum upland allowable use and riparian stubble height guidelines, by key area, based upon a 07/19/2006 assessment of 'meeting or moving toward' desired conditions on benchmark sites.

Pasture	Key Area		Key Species	Allowable Use Guideline	
	#	Type			
Baird Spring Meadow	1	Riparian	Carex	Meeting	5 inches
South Meadow	2	Riparian	Carex	Meeting	5 inches
Guard Station Meadow	3	Riparian	Carex	Meeting	5 inches
Penrose Park near CF-1	4	Upland	Forage	Meeting	45%
Long Draw	5	Upland	Forage	Meeting	45%
N Piney above Guard Station	6	Riparian	Carex	Not Meeting	5" prior to 08/01, 7" after 08/01

Vegetation residue guidelines are expressed in terms of the inches of stubble height to be left, measuring longest leaf of designated Carex species, after livestock use. In this case, all wide leaved sedges have been designated, subject to update.

Moves onto the allotment are dependent upon the later of either the above scheduled date or range readiness. When it is determined that further use and impacts will exceed allowable use levels, livestock are required to be moved off National Forest. It is your responsibility to see that livestock are managed to best utilize available forage while assuring guidelines are not exceeded. Since precipitation, forage production levels, and other factors change from year to year and livestock utilization patterns vary, this will require monitoring by you and/or your rider throughout the season.

Livestock use beyond allowable guidelines could result in an administrative action in subsequent years, such as an adjustment to the season of use, in order to allow plants a chance to recover and restore root reserves.

- Monitoring

The primary emphasis for monitoring should be placed on measuring stubble height in riparian areas, and estimating percent by weight of forage removed on upland sites, as described above. If issues are raised indicating the need to monitor aspen, stream banks, or willows, we prefer to jointly determine monitoring protocols and locations. Permittees are no longer required to submit annual stubble height data; however, it is strongly recommended that you continue monitoring. Actual use data is still to be turned in by permittees. Any data you collect and submit will be maintained in permanent monitoring files.

To facilitate monitoring livestock use, and to avoid the need to measure utilization on all Suitable rangeland, monitoring will be done using a key area concept. The key area concept and specific key areas for Piney C&H Allotment are described in the revised Allotment Management Plan.

I encourage you to keep notes throughout the grazing season. Should your data indicate changes might be needed in key area locations, contact Scott or Kerri to discuss adjustments.

- Maintenance of Improvements

Term grazing permits state that permittees will maintain assigned range improvements to standards of repair, orderliness, and safety acceptable to the Forest Service. A complete list of the improvements and designated maintenance responsibility is included in Part 3 of your term grazing permit. Maintenance must be completed prior to the time livestock enter the pasture in which the improvement is located each year, or in the case of allotment boundary fences, prior to livestock entering the pasture on either side of the fence. Materials from abandoned range improvements or maintenance activities must be removed from the Forest. The minimum maintenance standard for improvements is as follows:

Wire Fences: Fences are to be in an upright, vertical position with all broken wires repaired, wires tight and properly spaced, and all corner posts, braces, line posts, steel posts, stays, loops, staples, etc. replaced as needed. Gates are to be tight enough to prevent sagging but must be able to be easily opened and closed by the general public. Any 'let-down' fences for which you are responsible should be let down after grazing use, for the winter. Obstacles, such as down logs and trees, shall be removed from the fence line. Dead and leaning trees that may fall onto the fence shall be felled and removed from the fence line.

Buck and Pole Fences, and Pole-top Fences: Fences must be in an upright, serviceable position. Bucks that are spreading and lowering the overall height of the fence must be stabilized with a bottom brace or replaced. All poles must be fastened to bucks or posts, and all broken or rotting poles and bucks are to be replaced. Obstacles, such as down logs and trees, shall be removed from the fence line. Dead and leaning trees that may fall onto the fence shall be felled and removed from the fence line.

- Planned Range Improvement Projects

No mandatory permittee range improvement projects have been identified for 2013. Permittees may work on the Penrose Park Range Study Exclosure and/or relocating the gate near the ATV cattleguard in the Snow Lake Drift Fence if time permits.

- Conifer Encroachment

You are authorized to assist in reduction of conifer encroachment in accordance with a Decision Memo addressing the topic signed June 9, 2006. The intent is to maintain meadows by removing encroaching conifer trees. Predominantly small ($\leq 7''$ dbh) trees may be felled using hand crews, with slash lopped to 18". Trees felled will be available for firewood, in accordance with other forest policies. As discussed in our spring meeting, contact the Forest Service prior to any treatment in order to coordinate priority treatment areas and project area boundaries. Total acres treated, before and after photos, and a map showing location of treatment unit should be submitted following treatment.

- Salting Practices

The proper use of salt can be used as a management tool to help achieve proper utilization. The following guidelines must be followed when salting unless you have been given direction by a Forest Officer to do otherwise:

- a) Scatter salt in its proper location prior to livestock entering the pasture.
- b) Salt should be placed between water developments, and at least 1/4 mile from water if possible.
- c) Salt away from small parks, trails, roads, and areas of concentrated public use.
- d) Salt should be placed in areas of rock outcrops, mature timber stands (other than aspen), or areas of dense sagebrush.
- e) Change your salt location at least every year and preferably every time salt is placed. Moving salt blocks at least 100 feet can prevent an area from becoming abused from salt placement year after year.
- f) Remove salt from an area when proper use is reached.

- Other

Any dead livestock shall be moved to a location greater than 200 feet from water, 500 feet from developed campgrounds, and out of view from roads or trails.

Permittees are required to abide by all Forest road restrictions and closures, as are all users of the public lands. No exceptions will be made without prior written approval. Your request for season long authorization to access the cow camp is currently being reviewed. You will be notified when a decision has been made.

Documentation on the enclosed Annual Use Report is required, and will help us to plan livestock use in the future. Please make sure both on and off dates are recorded for each pasture as well as the number of cattle. Feel free to make any other pertinent management notes, as they will be helpful in determining future management decisions for the allotment. Return the Actual Use Report to the Powder River Ranger District Office by December 31, 2013.