

2013 Annual Operating Instructions

South Canyon C&H Allotment

Powder River Ranger District

Bighorn National Forest

District Ranger _____ Date _____

Permittee _____ Date _____

SOUTH CANYON C&H ALLOTMENT
Year 2013 Annual Operating Instructions

Permitted and Authorized Use for 2013:

South Canyon C&H	LS Kind	LS Class	Permitted			Authorized		
			LS #	From	To	LS#	From	To
Lazy Bighorn LLC	Cattle	Mature	465	07/01	10/01	423	06/25	09/25
	Cattle	Yearlings				40	06/25	09/25
	Horse	Mature	5	07/01	10/01	5	06/25	09/25

- 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 date and number of livestock entering the National Forest and, upon request, provide for having stock counted.

Planned rotations:

Pasture	2013		2014		Repeat Sequence
Sand Draw Pasture	1		1	Trail Thru	Entire Herd
Childs Creek Pasture	2	Trail Thru	2	Trail Thru	
Trails Pasture	3	Trail Thru	3		
Beef Pasture	4		4	Trail Thru	
Simmons Park	Late		Early		Sub-group 1
Leigh Ck Pasture	Early		Late		Sub-group 2
Pasture Park Area	Late		Early		Sub-group 3
Roundup Grounds	(5)	REST	7		
Prospect	6		6		
Canyon Creek (including Gold Mine Road)	7		5		Entire Herd
Beef Pasture	8	Trail Thru	8		
Trails Pasture	9		9	Trail Thru	
Childs Creek	10	Trail Thru	10	Trail Thru	
Sand Draw Pasture	11	Trail Thru	11		

Trailing through the "Strip", a part of Monument C&H allotment, should be completed in no more than one day's time.

* Roundup grounds area that was Rx burned fall 2011 will be rested.

As discussed in our spring meeting, plan to construct temporary electric fence around the Round-up Grounds area that was prescribe burned fall of 2011. This area will need to be protected from livestock grazing for another growing season in order to facilitate plant recovery from the prescribed burn.

- Entering the Allotment

The turn on date for South Canyon C&H Allotment, Childs Creek pasture, is tentatively authorized for July 1. Plan to turn livestock onto the allotment on or after this date unless you feel that forage is not ready to be grazed, or unless you have been notified that delays are necessary to allow for further plant development. The actual date livestock may be turned onto the allotment depends on range readiness. The value of animal months lost due to a delay for forage development may be credited against next year's fees, if requested by the end of the calendar year.

Indicators to determine range readiness are soil and vegetation conditions. Rangeland is generally ready for grazing when soil has become firm after winter and early spring precipitation, and when plants have reached a stage of growth at which grazing may begin under a specific management plan without long-lasting damage. This occurs when grasses are headed out, forbs are in full bloom, and shrubs are leaved out. Livestock should not be turned on until all portions of the first pasture of a rotation are determined to be "ready", and subsequent pastures in rotation will be "range ready" when scheduled grazing use occurs.

- Resource Guidelines

Resource guidelines are described in the Bighorn National Forest Vegetation Grazing Guidelines, in the Bighorn Forest Plan, and in your AMP. The allowable use guidelines for utilization of the current year's forage are listed in the following tables. These guidelines are applicable at the time the livestock leave the unit and include use by both livestock and wildlife.

South Canyon C&H Allotment is managed under "Rotation" grazing strategies, and existing rangeland condition is considered "satisfactory". Existing rangeland condition determinations may be revised as trend assessments are conducted.

Maximum allowable use guidelines (percent utilization by weight of forage species)		
Type Of Management	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Growing Season Long	30	10
Fall and Winter	45	15
Rotation	45	35
Deferred Rotation	50	40
Rest Rotation	50	40

Riparian Vegetation Residue Guidelines		
Season Of Use	Existing Rangeland Condition	
	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Early Use Pasture Livestock leave pasture prior to 08/01	5 inches	5 inches
Summer & Fall Use Pasture Livestock leave pasture after 08/01	5 inches	7 inches

*Satisfactory is defined here as meeting or moving toward desired vegetative condition and unsatisfactory is defined as not meeting desired vegetative condition or undetermined. Vegetation residue guidelines are expressed in terms of 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 between pastures are dependent upon forage utilization levels and other resource objectives being met for a pasture. When it is determined that further use and impacts in a pasture will exceed allowable use levels, livestock are required to be moved to the next pasture in the scheduled rotation, provided that pasture has met range readiness requirements, or off National Forest if they are already in the last pasture. 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. Any data you collect and submit will be maintained in permanent files.

To facilitate monitoring actual use, and to avoid the need to measure utilization on all suitable range, monitoring will be done using a key area concept. "Key" areas are generally those areas of a pasture which livestock have the tendency to go to and graze first. If utilization in these "key areas" does not exceed allowable utilization standards, then use in the rest of the unit will most likely not exceed standards either. This is not to imply that standards need only be met in "key areas". Allowable use standards apply to all suitable range on the allotment. Key areas may be revised as needed.

I encourage you to contact Scott or Kerri should you have any questions, want assistance with measurements, or need monitoring forms. In order to assure your results accurately reflect livestock use, all measurements should be completed within 7 days of the time livestock are removed from the pasture. Be sure to record the date measurements are taken, and the name of the data collector(s). Photos of the transect showing its general location and actual forage remaining will support your data. The Forest Service will conduct spot checks throughout the grazing season, and I encourage your participation.

- Key Areas

Key areas serve as a monitoring and evaluation point for the degree of grazing use occurring in each pasture, and are shown on the Allotment Management Plan map included in your recently revised Allotment Management Plan. 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.

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.

Springs and Stock Tanks: Inlet and overflow pipes are to be free of crimps or breaks, completely buried or otherwise protected from livestock, and capable of delivering water to and away from spring boxes and tanks. Over-flow outlets on stock tanks shall prevent excessive water spill in the immediate vicinity (30 ft) of the tank. Tanks are to be level, completely surrounded by dry soil, gravel, or rock, and easily accessible by both cows and calves. Livestock barriers over tanks must be sturdy and poles and planks must be in good condition and fastened in place.

Reservoirs and Stock Ponds: Any fill material used to create a dam must maintain sufficient vegetative cover to prevent erosion. The emergency spillway, if present, must also maintain sufficient vegetative cover to prevent erosion. Livestock travel routes must be planned such that trailing does not generate additional erosion in and around the reservoir. Erosion damage that does occur will be repaired as soon as is practicable. If ponds are not sealing well, bentonite or other sealers should be used to reduce seepage. Deeper reservoirs reduce evaporation loss over shallow reservoirs; as reservoirs silt in, they should be cleaned.

Stock Pipelines: Maintain cover over buried pipelines, and maintain backfill around structures. Avoid travel over shallow buried pipelines. Repair any damage to above-ground and on-ground pipelines immediately. Remove all foreign debris that hinders system operation. Drain the system and components soon following periods of use. Maintain erosion protection at outlets. Protect the area adjacent to the trough with gravel or cover. Be sure that any outlet pipe is free and not causing erosion.

- Planned Range Improvement Projects

The following range improvement projects have been proposed for construction or reconstruction. Grazing permit modifications for cooperative range improvements (form FS-2200-113) must be completed prior to expenditure of Forest Service funds for project work. As materials for these projects become available, these activities can be coordinated through Scott or Kerri.

- Planned Improvement Projects:

Improvement #	Improvement Name	Project Description
505014D	Canyon Creek Cow Camp Horse Pasture	Move fence below road. A portion of the fence has already been constructed. Proceed and complete this project in 2013.
505015	County Line Interallotment Fence, South Half	Maintain in 2013
505026	Leigh Creek Drift Fence	Add stays around trees on new portions of fence constructed in 2011, in 2013.
505110	Child's Creek Pipeline	Install new pipeline to feed Sand Draw tanks from Child's Creek; 1.5", fusible pipeline and buried. Determine material needed and location in 2013.
505120D	Sand Draw Butt Pipeline	Bury portion of pipeline near the road in 2013.
505130A	Upper Trails Tank North	Continue to remove material from the site in 2013.
508114	Trap Water Tank & Pipeline	Continue to remove old abandoned portions
505614	Trails Unit Spring	No plan to move ahead with this project at this time.
505616	Childs Creek Rim Fence	Project Completed.
505619	Round-Up Divide Fence	Temporary electric fence to protect 2011 RX burn. Option to make permanent. Implement in 2013.
505623	Mitchell Trails Pipeline	Planning location and specification in 2013.
505627	Gold Mine Road Spring	Detailed construction/development plan in 2013.

- Salting Practices

Use salt 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:

- Scatter salt in its proper location prior to livestock entering the pasture.
- Salt should be placed between water developments, and at least 1/4 mile from water if possible.
- Salt away from small parks, trails, roads, and areas of concentrated public use.
- Place salt in rock outcrops, mature timber stands (other than aspen), or dense sagebrush.
- 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 repeated salt placement.
- Remove salt from an area when proper use is reached.

- Other

Permittees are authorized to maintain a camp trailer at cow camps for quarters if needed.

Carcasses of dead livestock are to be removed to a distance of at least one hundred (100) feet from live water, and at least five hundred (500) feet from any areas of concentrated public use. 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.

Documentation on the enclosed Annual Use Report is required, and will help us to plan livestock use in the future. Record both on-and-off dates for each pasture, as well as the cattle numbers. Make any other pertinent management notes, as they will be helpful in making management decisions for the allotment. Return the Actual Use Report to the Powder River Ranger District Office by December 31, 2013.