

## FEATHERVILLE S&G ALLOTMENT

### 2024 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

Boise National Forest  
Mountain Home Ranger District

#### INTRODUCTION

This AOI is made part of your grazing permit consistent with Part 1, item 3 and Part 2, Item 8(a), and you are responsible for compliance with this direction.

Permittee	Permitted Livestock			Authorized Livestock		
Sawtooth Sheep, Inc.	<u>Number</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Season</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Season</u>
	2950	ewe/lamb	5/20-8/20	2950	ewe/lamb	5/20-8/20
	3750	ewes	8/21-9/30	3750	ewes	8/21-9/30
	5	horses	5/20-9/30	5	horses	5/20-9/30

The Featherville Allotment has a variable numbers and season permit, which permits a total of 7834 sheep Head Months (HMs) for the period of use.

Permitted use is the livestock numbers and season of use listed on your grazing permit. Authorized use is the number of livestock and season of use you are authorized for in the current grazing season and reflects stocking and/or season of use adjustments for the given year.

Situations may develop during the grazing season that could require changes to these instructions. If this becomes necessary, or if you cannot comply with some part of these instructions, contact the District Ranger to obtain approval before initiating or deviating from your AOI. Failure to obtain prior approval could result in permit action.

Some flexibility will be allowed for weather conditions, range readiness and livestock need. The period of use is also subject to compliance with Forest Plan standards and guidelines and Implementation Monitoring requirements as discussed below. Please carefully review the livestock management, plus the standards and guides listed below.

#### LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

Allotment Name	Authorized Livestock and Band #	Authorized Dates
Featherville	900 ewe/lamb (#7)	6/05-9/30
	5 horses (#7)	6/05-9/30

The general routing patterns for the sheep bands are depicted on the attached maps. Bands will be routed along these general patterns, with specific direction outlined below. Deviations of more than ½ mile from either side of the defined route should be discussed with range staff. The shipping dates listed are tentative and will be firmed up as the summer progresses. Band #7 will ship at the Pine corrals located on private land near McCoy Bridge.

**LAMB BAND #7 (Bear Hole Band)- Foreman: Victor Herder & Camp Tender: Arturo and son**

900 ewes/lambs	6/05-9/30	BNF Featherville Allotment
2 horses and 3 mules	6/05-9/30	Ships approximately 10/01 at Pine corrals

**Lamb Band #7** will enter the Featherville allotment in the Dog Creek Pasture on approximately June 25<sup>th</sup> near Tollgate Creek. This band will graze in a southerly direction utilizing the Towne Creek, Cannon Gulch, Bird Gulch, and Badger Creek areas. The band will then head in a northerly direction towards upper Camp Creek and Tally/Baker Creek as depicted on the attached routing map. Be sure to avoid the tree plantations between Herrin Creek and Tally/Baker Creek area, and the tree plantations in the lower Bear Hole/upper Cougar Creek and East Fork of Fall Creek area. This band then head south and southwest towards Sheldon Creek and Red Mountain, then head north and northeast towards Bear Hole Creek, Windy Creek and towards the upper part of Parks Creek, head of West Parks Creek, mid-portion of Rainbow Creek grazing towards the upper portion of Trinity Creek and North Fork of Trinity Creek. This band will ship at the Trinity Creek Corrals in August. If allotment conditions change, the sheep will come off the allotment earlier than originally planned near Green Creek and ship at the Pine Corrals. **Avoid impacting roads, trails, erodible soils, steep slopes, and especially areas that have not recovered from past fires.** Sheep will exit the allotment no later than September 30<sup>th</sup>.

**STANDARDS AND GUIDES**

Notes: Ensure no drift out of this allotment onto the Featherville S&G Allotment.

The following standards and guidelines **apply to the Featherville Allotment:**

1. Maximum forage utilization of representative areas within each pasture containing NFS lands would not exceed the values shown below at the end of the growing season:
  - Upland Vegetative Cover Types: Maximum 40% use for early season or season-long pastures, and maximum 50% use for vegetative slow growth, after seed ripe conditions, or late-season pastures (Forest Plan Standard RAST01, [USDA Forest Service 2010, p. III-47]).
  - Riparian Areas: Maximum 30% use or retain a minimum 4-inch stubble height of hydric greenline species, whichever occurs first (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 1999). Utilization of woody species will be limited to 30% or less of available new growth (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 1999).
2. Livestock salting would be prohibited in Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs). Sheep would be salted only at bed grounds, and salt shall be placed in containers and moved with the sheep (Forest Plan Standard RAST04 [USDA Forest Service 2010, p. III-47]).
3. Only one-night/one-time use of bed grounds would be allowed (Forest Plan Standard RAST05 [USDA Forest Service 2010, p. III-47]).
4. Only open or loose sheep herding would be practiced, except where site-specific vegetation management is needed and has been prescribed (Forest Plan Standard RAST06 [USDA Forest Service 2010, p. III-47]).
5. Only annual once-over sheep grazing would be allowed, except for designated sheep driveways or travel routes or where specifically authorized (Forest Plan Standard RAST07 [USDA Forest Service 2010, p. III-47]).
6. Bedding of sheep and salting of livestock in plantations would be prohibited until plantation trees have grown to a size that reduces their susceptibility to damage from livestock (Forest Plan Standard RAST08 [USDA Forest Service 2010, p. III-47]).
7. 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 (Forest Plan Guideline RAGU08 [USDA Forest Service 2010, p. II-49]).
8. Damage to or loss of NFS trails from timber harvest, livestock grazing, road construction, mining, special uses, and prescribed fire activities should be repaired or mitigated by the appropriate party (Forest Plan Guideline REGU22 [USDA Forest Service 2010, p. III-68]).

9. Only certified noxious weed-free hay, straw, or feed is allowed on NFS lands (Forest Plan Standard NPST01 [USDA Forest Service 2010, p. III-38]).
10. On all lands outside of designated travel ways, motorized use is prohibited, unless otherwise authorized (Forest Plan Standard REST04 [USDA Forest Service 2010, p. III-64]).
11. Livestock trailing, bedding, watering, and other handling efforts shall be mitigated, through avoidance, to address adverse effects to occupied threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate (TEPC) plant habitat (Forest Plan Standard TEST22 [USDA Forest Service 2010, p. III-13]).
12. Management actions occurring within occupied sensitive plant species habitat must incorporate measures to ensure habitat is maintained where it is within desired conditions or restored where degraded (Forest Plan Standard BTST01 [USDA Forest Service 2010, p. III-35]).
13. Livestock salting and/or bed grounds shall be located outside occupied TEPC plant habitat so that plants shall not be adversely affected by associated trampling (Forest Plan Standard TEST24 [USDA Forest Service 2010, p. III-13]).
14. Adverse effects from livestock access or activities which may result in trampling redds or disturbing spawning or reproductive staging of Endangered Species Act listed fish species should be mitigated through avoidance (Forest Plan Standard TEST25 [USDA Forest Service 2010, p. III-13]).
15. Grazing system design and implementation and livestock handling adjustments should be made so that effects to occupied TEPC plant habitat are avoided (Forest Plan Standard TEST26 [USDA Forest Service 2010, p. III-14]).
16. Nooning, shading, or bedding of sheep shall not occur within 100 yards of any stream. After watering livestock, they shall be removed from the RCA.
17. Sheep shall not be bedded within 200 yards of designated campgrounds, trails, trailheads, or roads.
18. Sheep should be grazed, rather than trailed to water. Watering would not occur at the same location more than once during a grazing season.
19. Livestock would cross designated bull trout critical habitat streams at road/trail stream crossings, where available. If no road/trail stream crossing is available, livestock crossing of designated bull trout critical habitat streams would not occur after August 15.
20. Livestock use should be discouraged in progeny sites, seed orchards, and plantations that have not been certified (Forest Plan Guideline RAGU06 [USDA Forest Service 2010, p. III-48]). In addition, livestock use should also be discouraged in areas with natural white bark pine regeneration.
21. All garbage generated by the present herder or previous herders must be cleaned up by the camp tender and hauled away by the ranch foreman or herder to a county waste disposal facility.
22. The permittee would promptly notify the Forest Service if noxious weeds are observed on the allotment. The Forest Service would determine a treatment regime for noxious weeds on the allotment.
23. Use of aspen groves would be discouraged for nooning sheep to minimize use of clones and understory vegetation.
24. Mitigate, through avoidance or minimization, management actions within known nest or denning sites of TEPC species if those actions would disrupt reproductive success during the nesting or denning period. (Forest Plan Standard TEST12 [USDA Forest Service 2010, p. III-48]).

The Featherville S&G Allotment Biological Assessment dated September 10, 2013 supported by a Letter of Concurrence from The Fish and Wildlife Service on October 25, 2013 amended the Boise National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan with specific management direction for livestock grazing on allotments within the Decision area. The following management practices in regards to bull trout apply:

No livestock crossing or watering would occur at any time in known occupied bull trout habitat defined as areas known to be used by bull trout. These areas include: Lower Rainbow Creek, Lower Trinity Creek, Bear Creek from the mouth of Steel Creek upstream to Charcoal Creek (near old Rocky Bar Guard Station), Phifer Creek from the Road #156 stream crossing downstream to the mouth, Buck Creek from the confluence of its two unnamed tributaries downstream to the mouth, Bald Mountain Creek from the #047 Hot Spring Trail bridge downstream to the mouth, Roaring River upstream of the NFS road #255/Roaring River stream crossing to the confluence of Scotch Creek and Dog Creek from the mouth upstream to the Crosscut trail crossing. If new information or surveys indicate bull trout occupancy in other currently unoccupied areas, this project design feature (PDF) would then be applied. This PDF specifically addresses known occupied habitat.

### **HERDER OR PERMITTEE INSTRUCTIONS**

Generally, we are more concerned about soil displacement caused by sheep than we are about the amount of forage they consume. Light-once-over grazing, resembling 20% use of forage, is the easiest way to obtain proper grazing use on your sheep allotments. This practice can be achieved by spreading the sheep out and slowly grazing them across the landscape. If the routing areas we have discussed and identified do not meet the foraging needs of your sheep, that implies the area lacks protective cover, is susceptible to erosion, and is probably too fragile to be grazed, therefore you will need to discuss these situations with us to get them corrected for the future.

There is a three-day limit for herder camps. Ensure that camps are kept clean and moved frequently. Pack stock should be picketed, hobbled or highlined when at camp.

Designated roads and trails used for trailing of sheep and saddle stock must be cleared and restored to their original condition immediately after use.

The Forest Service recommends that the following procedures be implemented each grazing season:

1. Keep camp meat in coolers and not hung.
2. Burn, bury, or pack out food leftovers, bones, garbage etc. including food not consumed by dogs accompanying the herders.
3. Bury or remove sheep and saddle stock carcasses from the area where they will not serve as an attractant to predators.
4. Never leave campfires unattended. To meet Forest Service requirements, camp stoves must be fitted with a spark arrestor screen with 3/8 inch or smaller mesh. Employees must be kept informed of the current fire situation and the permittee's fire prevention responsibility. The Forest Service will advise the permittee when special fire restriction orders become effective.
5. Camps will be kept in primitive condition. No improvements will be allowed. If a new fire pit is constructed, dismantle it, and restore the area before moving to the next camp.
6. All garbage generated by the present herder or previous herders must be cleaned up by the camp tender and hauled away by the ranch foreman or herder to a county waste disposal facility.
7. Avoid impacting roads, trails, erodible soils, and especially areas that have not recovered from past fires. Each band must have at least one herder to control sheep. Request map if needed for specific areas where sheep should not be grazed or trailed.
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Permittee monitoring of utilization levels is not mandatory but is highly advised since permittees will be held accountable for any failures to meet end-of-season compliance monitoring.

### **IMPROVEMENTS**

Your Term Grazing Permit contains a complete list of range improvements associated with the Featherville Allotment. Please note that all range improvements must be maintained to a proper functioning condition before livestock are placed on the allotment. Failure to do so is a violation of your Term Grazing Permit and is subject to permit action. In the

event improvements cannot be practically maintained to standard, you should notify this office so we can identify them for reconstruction as funds become available.

Non-functioning range improvements need to be brought to standard, or arrangements made with district range personnel to have them removed. Abandonment of improvements is not acceptable – if developments are not functioning and are no longer needed, they must be removed.

Close monitoring of utilization levels and diligent removal of livestock when they are reached is critical to ensure compliance with end-of-season utilization standards. Failure to meet these standards may result in the modification of grazing management, including reductions in Head Months, or permitted area.

#### **NON-USE**

Please be aware that nonuse in excess of 10% of your permitted numbers must be requested at least 30 days before the “on” date. Nonuse for personal convenience may be approved on a year-to-year basis for a maximum of three consecutive years and not more than four years in any 10-year period. Longer periods of nonuse for range protection will only be approved under a written agreement.

**All permittees are required to pay their bill and turn on at least 90% of permitted numbers as stated on their grazing permit under Part 2, section 9. Failure to place livestock on the allotted range/pasture without approved nonuse may result in cancellation of the term grazing permit in whole or in part.**

#### **BILLING INFORMATION**

The grazing fee for the 2024 grazing season is \$0.27 per head month for sheep and \$1.35 per head month for horses. You will be billed based on the authorized use listed above. Confirmation of payment through the National Finance Center is required and must be received before livestock enter National Forest System (NFS) lands. To meet this requirement, please ensure that bills for collection are paid by the due date indicated.

If permitted livestock are required to leave an allotment early because utilization standards have been reached, drought conditions persist or other reasons as determined by the Forest Officer, a credit/refund may be requested. **This request must be submitted in writing to the District Ranger by December 1, 2024.**

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Non-functioning range improvements need to be brought to standard, or arrangements made with district range personnel to have them removed. Abandonment of improvements is not acceptable; if developments are not functioning and are no longer needed, they must be removed. In the event improvements cannot be practically maintained to standard, notify the office so they can be identified for reconstruction as funds become available. Wildlife escape ramps need to be installed in troughs. These ramps are supplied by the Forest Service. The ramps should be installed in all troughs prior to turn-on. This direction also includes troughs that hold water in the spring but dry up later in the grazing season. Failure to comply could result in adverse action to your permit.

#### **REPORTING**

If you are planning to waive your Term Grazing Permit, based on either sale of permitted livestock or base property, please submit this intention to me in writing prior to the transaction.

#### **INSPECTIONS AND MONITORING**

Range personnel may require you to delay your entry date on the Featherville Allotment based on range readiness inspections that they have completed. You will be notified as soon as possible if your turn-on date is delayed.

Range personnel may conduct utilization monitoring and improvement inspections periodically on your allotments.

### **COORDINATION AND COOPERATION**

Permittees should continue working with their local Wildlife Services representative on depredation issues. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game is responsible for wolf management in Idaho. Any questions you may have regarding wolf management should be directed to Josh Royse (Southwest Regional Supervisor) at 208-465-8465 or Craig White (Magic Valley Regional Supervisor) at 208-324-4539.

If you suspect a wolf depredation has occurred on your livestock, USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services should be contacted as soon as possible. The local Wildlife Services contact for this area is Clayton Wetzstein. He can be reached at (208) 681-8756. If you cannot reach Clayton, Jared Hedelius should be contacted at the Boise District Office at 208-616-5778.

The Forest Service shall coordinate targeted preventative measures to be taken within a one-mile buffer of active wolf den or rendezvous sites to reduce spatial overlap of wolves and livestock during the grazing season, with the intent of reducing the risk of wolf-livestock conflicts and depredations. The Range staff or District Ranger will present known wolf den or rendezvous areas at the annual AOI meeting and will notify permittee(s) if new sites are discovered during the grazing season. Den and rendezvous sites must be documented as actively in use in the current grazing season by a Forest Service District Wildlife Biologist and/or through communications with Idaho Department of Fish and Game. To the extent practicable, the Range Management Specialist will work directly with the permittee on the necessary preventative measures to be taken to minimize or avoid wolf-livestock conflicts. Actions may include, but not limited to:

- Re-routing individual band trailing patterns to avoid denning, rendezvous.
- Escort affected sheep bands through the vicinity denning, rendezvous, or other sensitive wolf sites. This may include increased human presence and or additional deterrent actions to deter wolf-livestock conflicts.
- Reduce band exposure in the vicinity of denning, rendezvous, or other sensitive wolf sites by increasing rate of band passage or other actions to minimize the length of time of band's presence in those sites.

- Other site-specific actions taken to minimize or avoid wolf-livestock conflicts.

If a wolf-livestock conflict occurs, Range staff or other designated Forest Service employee will contact the permittee to coordinate targeted preventative measures to try to reduce further conflicts.

#### OTHER


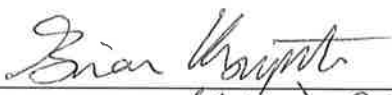
When livestock carcasses are located near campgrounds, roads, trails, or water reasonable and appropriate action must be taken to remove any carcasses. The permittee will contact the District Ranger's Representative to discuss the problem and determine what action would be appropriate for each site-specific instance. Although the Forest Service recognizes that disposal of carcasses is not always feasible in many situations there are several reasonable options available for the disposal of single or multiple carcasses. In most cases, carcasses should be moved at least 100 yards from campgrounds, roads, trails, or water.

A gate has been placed at the 183A/183A7 road junction, implementing a full-time road closure. You are authorized to use existing roads behind the locked gate for livestock management. A key can be picked up at the Mountain Home Ranger District Office to allow access behind the gate. The gate should always be kept locked, and the key must be returned to the office prior to September 25.

The Forest Service's Motor Vehicle Use Rule is in place on the Mountain Home Ranger District. Public motorized, wheeled vehicle use is prohibited on all NFS lands except on routes that are designated on the current year's Motorized Vehicle Use Map. This AOI authorizes you and your employees to use wheeled motor vehicles off of designated routes for administrative use within your allotments and permitted dates for livestock management purposes. However, specific routes will need to be identified each year. If motor vehicle use is needed outside of your permitted dates, please seek authorization from the District Ranger. See description of routes needed for administrative use below. This administrative use includes salting and herding of livestock, maintenance of range improvements, and forage utilization inspections. Use of heavy equipment, such as bulldozers or backhoes is **not** included in this authorization. Use of heavy equipment will need to be requested through and approved by the District Ranger on a case-by-case basis.

#### Routes Approved for Administrative Use:

- 1). Access to roads 151 C, 151 D, and 151E.
- 2). Access to roads 101A, 101B, 101J, 101J1, and 101K.

	4-17-24
Permittee	Date
	4/22/24
District Ranger (Acting) - Brian Kapitzer	Date