

## Cat Creek C&H 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. The permit for Tree Top Ranches, LP #03104A which expires December 31, 2033, for the Cat Creek Allotment has been changed to the following permitted numbers, as also documented in a permit modification letter.

| Permittee            | Permitted Livestock |              |               | Authorized Livestock |              |               |
|----------------------|---------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------------|--------------|---------------|
|                      | <u>Number</u>       | <u>Class</u> | <u>Season</u> | <u>Number</u>        | <u>Class</u> | <u>Season</u> |
| Tree Top Ranches, LP | 112 on/<br>88 off   | cow/calf     | 6/16-8/01     | 80 on/<br>120 off    | cow/calf     | 6/16-8/01     |
|                      | 72 on/<br>58 off    | cow/calf     | 7/25 – 10/31  | 72 on/<br>58 off     | cow/calf     | 7/25 – 10/31  |
|                      | 112 on/<br>88 off   | cow/calf     | 11/01 – 11/05 | 112 on/<br>88 off    | cow/calf     | 11/01 – 11/05 |

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**

The Cow Creek Pasture (Chimney Creek)- is comprised only of private lands and BLM. BLM has a turn on date of 6/16.

The Bennett Mountain Pasture - In 2015 was effectively removed from the grazing rotation and from the Cat Creek Allotment. This pasture was 95% private land and 5% BLM. This allows more flexibility within the private lands. This pasture is 100% fenced off from National Forest System Lands.

In 2023, permittee requested to go from a cow/calf and yearling operation to strictly a cow/calf operation. Their Term Grazing Permit No. 031044 was modified to reflect this change.

#### **STANDARDS AND GUIDES**

The following standards and guidelines apply to the Cat Creek Allotment:

- Maximum forage utilization of representative areas shall not exceed the values below at the end of the growing season.

- **Upland Vegetative Cover Types: (Heifer Pasture only)** Vegetative slow growth, after seed ripe conditions or late season pastures – 50 percent use/Riparian area 45 percent use or a 4-inch stubble height. (RAST01, p. III-45)
- Livestock salting is prohibited in Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs). Place salt no closer than  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from water and not within 100 feet of roads. Move salt from areas where utilization standards have been met. (RAST04, p. III-45).
- All livestock water developments must provide access and escape to and from water for all types of wildlife. (RAST09, p. III-45)
- Previously grazed units must have all livestock removed from them.
- Bulls must test negative for Trichomoniasis before entering National Forest System lands.
- Only certified weed-free hay and mulch are allowed on National Forest System lands.

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.

Once utilization standards are met, livestock must be removed from National Forest System lands.

#### **RIDER OR PERMITTEE INSTRUCTIONS**

Off dates for these allotments are considered approximate and will depend on utilization levels. To prevent over-utilization, a concerted effort should be made to distribute livestock over the entire allotment and to effectively graze all suitable areas in that unit. Permitted numbers are based on the premise that active management will occur to effect adequate livestock distribution. Livestock need to be moved before meeting riparian and upland grazing standards. If livestock are allowed to concentrate in riparian areas and water developments without being distributed to unused areas of the allotment, the grazing capacity of the allotment is diminished to those areas only.

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.

#### **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 \$1.35 per head month for cattle. 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 can enter National Forest System 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.**

#### **IMPROVEMENTS**

Your Term Grazing Permit contains a complete list of range improvements associated with the Cat Creek 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.

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 Cat Creek 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.

#### **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.

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 the Cat Creek Summit North boundary fence located at T1S R10E Section 31 NWNW.
- 2). Access to the Cat Creek-Wood Creek boundary fence located at T1S R10E Section 29 SENW.
- 3). Access to the Cat Creek-North Camas boundary fence located at T2S R10E Section 2 SWNE.
- 4). Access to the Highway 20 boundary fence located at T1S R9E Section 23 NWSE.
- 5). Access to the Cat Creek Summit South boundary fence located at T1S R10E Section 31 NWNW.
- 6). Access to the Highway 20 Reservoir boundary fence located at T1S R9E Section 23 SWSW.

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|---|--|------------------|
|                                      | 1266 TOP RANCHES, LP<br>Larry D. Williams, Pres. | 03-29-2024       |
| Permittee   |  | Date             |
| <br>Brian Knutzen<br>District Ranger | Brian Knutzen (Acting Ranger)                    | 4/4/2024<br>Date |