

2025 Annual Operating Instructions
 Fall Creek/Whitebird C&H Allotment
 New Meadows Ranger District, Payette National Forest

The annual operating instructions are a guide for implementing grazing management activities on the Fall Creek/Whitebird C&H Allotment for the 2025 grazing season. These instructions were developed with the participation of the livestock permittee on May 7, 2025. Those involved in developing this plan were:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>
1. Bill & Catherine Marek	Permittee (No one present)
2. Konnyr Marek	Permittee
3. Dana Harris	New Meadows District Ranger
4. Brian McMorris	Range Specialist (PNF)
5. Crystal Dannar-Planer	Range Specialist (NPCLWNF)

<u>PERMITTEE</u>	<u>PERMITTED NUMBERS / SEASON</u>	<u>2025 AUTHORIZED NUMBERS / SEASON</u>
Konnyr Marek	138 cow/calf 6/10- 10/31	138 cow/calf 6/1-10/31
Bill & Catherine Marek	137 cow/calf 6/10-10/31	137 cow/calf 6/10-10/31

All cattle on the Fall Creek/Whitebird C&H Allotment shall be branded with the  or  brands.

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 3 and Part 2, Item 8(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 term 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 permittee shall notify the District Ranger five (5) days prior to the date and location of entry of livestock onto National Forest system lands. An “on” count may be done at this time. We will notify if we will be there to count you on.

Grazing fee of \$1.35/head month must be paid before livestock are authorized to go on the National Forest. This bill is due five (5) days prior to your earliest turnout date. The New Meadows District Office must receive confirmation from Lockbox that payment has been made prior to cattle entering the Forest. **Based on current events please do not wait to pay your bill as it may take additional time for checks to clear. We recommend paying online. The web address for payment of the grazing bill on-line is located in the upper right-hand corner of your bill.**

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. Fisheries biologists have completed Biological Assessments on this grazing activity for Chinook salmon, steelhead trout and bull trout (species listed under the Endangered Species Act). Any known and/or potential effects of livestock grazing on the fish species have been mitigated.

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 permitted grazing use is further described in Part 2, Section 8 (c) of your 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.

In accordance with Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2255.1 all grazing permittees are required to conform to livestock laws and quarantine regulations of the State and Secretary of Agriculture while their livestock are on Forest Service administered land. Forest officers shall not allow livestock under quarantine to enter Forest Service administered lands until the quarantine is lifted or until the hold order is released. Grazing permits may be suspended or cancelled, in accordance with FSM 2204, for failure to comply with such laws or with any approved special rules of a recognized livestock association.

Livestock Rotations and Allowable Use/Mitigation Measures

As allowable use grazing criteria and mitigation measures are reached, livestock are moved to the next grazing Unit or off Forest Service Administered Lands.

2025 Grazing Rotation

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Prescription</u>	<u>Allowable Use/Mitigation Measures</u>
Whitebird Ridge, Trail Creek, and Fall Creek Units	Turnout Authorized Date or Range readiness	40% allowable use on upland vegetation. 4" stubble height on hydric greenline species or 30% use in riparian areas.

Cattle will be trucked to the Whitebird Ridge Unit, on your authorized date and after range readiness. Livestock will graze the ridge in Wildhorse Saddle, Rattlesnake Creek basin, and Cougar Creek basin areas for approximately 2 weeks to one month on Forest Service Administered Lands. They will then trail south onto the Payette National Forest portion of the allotment and use the Trail Creek Unit on the west side of the ridge (Rapid River side). Cattle will graze this unit for approximately one month. They will then move over the ridge to the east (Little Salmon side) into the Fall Creek Unit prior to August 15. Cattle will need to be kept out of the Pony Creek (RNA) drainage. Approximately September 30th, cattle

will be moved back to the north on the Whitebird Ridge Unit until standards are met or October 31, whichever comes first.

The known or potential areas have been identified below along with the respective mitigation measures designed to eliminate each adverse effect.

<u>Resource</u>	<u>Mitigation</u>
1. Bull trout spawning area on Rapid River near mouth of Fry Pan Creek.	Move livestock out of Trail Creek Unit into Fall Creek Unit by Aug 15

Monitoring and Allowable Use Results

The following allowable use criteria and mitigation measures are to be followed for all grazing activities. There will be Forest Service personal monitoring these standards throughout the grazing season along with any long-term vegetation monitoring that may be collected this grazing season. When annual use is collected there needs to be about a 10% allowance on either side of the mean percent utilization to account for error and/or bias.

The uplands have a 40% allowable use limit, and riparian areas are limited to 30% use, or 4-inch stubble height of hydric greenline species.

There was nothing in 2024 that was recorded above standards.

Other Requirements

If livestock are found dead on the allotment you will be responsible for moving the carcasses 100 yards away from recreation trails, roads, or live water.

Salt placement is required to be at least ¼ mile from a riparian plant community, should be located ¼ mile from timber plantations until the trees have grown to a size that reduces their susceptibility to damage from livestock, and 100 feet off roads, where possible. If this can't be accomplished, the New Meadows District range personnel will work with you to find acceptable locations. All salt blocks shall be removed when livestock have been moved out of a unit or off National Forest.

Trailing/Trucking

The livestock will be trucked onto the allotment and unloaded around Wildhorse Saddle if the road is open. Alternative options may need to be looked at if the road is closed. The livestock may be trucked off or trailed off Forest Service Administered Lands. A small temporary holding pen is authorized behind the gate above one of the old horse corral drainages on road #2056. The permittee will need to work with the Forest Service when it is time to start bringing livestock off the allotment. The Forest Service can only authorize actions on Forest Service Administered Lands or easements.

MAINTENANCE OF RANGE IMPROVEMENTS

All range improvements must be maintained to standard prior to turning livestock into the Unit scheduled for use. 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 funding. The permittee is required to provide the materials and labor during routine maintenance.

The Forest Service and permittee will look at replacing the water tank on Earthquake Spring (PNF). This is time and funding dependent. You have approval to replace the water tank and do maintenance. If this spring development requires more than replacing the water tank and maintenance with hand tools no work will be allowed until approval is provided to the permittee in writing from the Forest Service.

The Forest Service and permittee will look at replacing the water tank on Ted Spring, Cattleguard Spring, Ranyhan Spring, and Lower Rattlesnake Spring (on NPCNF) This is time and funding dependent. You have permission to proceed with rebuilding these springs.

The Forest Service and permittee will look at rebuilding the Cougar Creek Spring (on NPCNF) at the end of the lower Wildhorse Saddle Road south past the gate. Reconstruction of this spring development is dependent on time and available funding. If this spring development requires more than replacing the water tank and maintenance with hand tools no work will be allowed until approval is provided to the permittee in writing from the Forest Service. You need to flag the pipeline you are proposing to use on the water improvement.

The Forest Service and permittee will look at rebuilding Whitebird Ridge Spring (on NPCNF). Reconstruction of this spring development is dependent on time and available funding. If this spring development requires more than replacing the water tank and maintenance with hand tools no work will be allowed until approval is provided to the permittee in writing from the Forest Service. You need to flag the pipeline you are proposing to use on the water improvement.

The Forest Service and permittee will look at relocating Upper Rattlesnake Spring (on NPCNF). Reconstruction of this spring development is dependent on time and funding. The permittee has permission to replace the tank with a bigger one in the same location and work on the water source/headbox. **No work outside the existing disturbed area will be allowed at this time.**

The Forest Service will work with you on trying to rebuild Cow Camp Cabin. The permittee has been provided a general area to put the cabin. The permittee still needs to submit signed blueprints for approval by the Forest Service and county, and fill out the special use application. The Forest Service will continue to work with the permittee throughout the process.

Temporary corrals may be used to truck cattle on and off Forest Service Administered Lands until a suitable location for permanent corrals is approved. The Forest Service will work on getting the corral site on the upper road #2056 behind the gate at Wild Horse Saddle approved.

The permittees will need to work with the Forest Service if there is a need to go off trail to salt and maintain range improvements. You will need to notify the District Ranger (New Meadows or Slate Creek), and they will make a decision on a case-by-case bases.

ACTUAL USE REPORTS

We are requesting you to report actual use information for each unit grazed. Forms may be completed by each individual permittee or one form can be completed by the group. However, a form should be completed for each unit grazed by livestock. If you have any questions about completing the form, please call the range department at the Forest Service at (208) 347-0300. We request the forms be returned no later than the AOI meeting for the 2026 grazing season.

MULTIPLE USE REQUIREMENTS

If there is damage to Forest System trails by the permittees' livestock the permittee will need to repair it or pay for it to be repaired.

There may be prescribe burning next to the allotment but nothing is planned on this allotment at this time.

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT

In the event a designated mitigation measure fails to protect a species listed under the Endangered Species Act, a change in authorized grazing activity will occur. 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.

Other Species listed are Whitebark Pine was listed as threatened December of 2022 and Wolverine was listed threatened January 2024. If you stay within allowable use standards in these areas currently no further mitigation is needed.

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. The Payette National Forest has a requirement that any hay (non-pelletized), straw or mulch that is brought onto the National Forest be certified weed free. All livestock entering the National Forest are recommended to be fed Certified Weed Free Forage for at least 2 days prior to entering the Forest.

If there is a wildfire on your allotment, we will work with you and try to provide as many updates as possible. Please work with your local district office who will be working closely with any fire teams. Make sure you have a plan if a wildfire happens on or near your allotment.

The Forest Service will work with you within our rules and regulations during exceptionally dry years. Allowable-use levels will continue to be used to trigger livestock movements or removal. Contingency plans need to be made for your livestock, should utilization levels require removal of livestock prior to the end of your permitted grazing season. Please work closely with your assigned rangeland management specialist as you make decisions for your operation.

You are responsible for ensuring that your rider (if you elect to have one) is informed and understands the standards, guidelines, and other management direction in these instructions.

Please review the AOI for consistency with our discussion at the annual meeting, and sign and return it to me. If I do not receive a signed copy from you within two weeks, this AOI will serve as the final copy approved by the District Ranger.

/s/ Dana Harris
Dana Harris
New Meadows District Ranger

05/28/2025
Date

Konnyr Marek
Permittee

Date

Bill & Catherine Marek
Permittee

Date