

**Revised 7/22/2025 – Change in Cougar Creek Grazing Route**  
 2025 Annual Operating Instructions  
 Grassy Mountain, Vance Creek, Hershey/Lava, Little French Creek,  
 Josephine, 20-Mile, Cougar Creek, Slab Butte,  
 Brundage, Bill Hunt, and Jughandle Sheep Allotments  
 McCall and New Meadows Ranger Districts, Payette National Forest

These Annual Operating Instructions are for implementing grazing management activities on the above listed allotments for the 2025 grazing season. These instructions were developed with the participation of the livestock permittee on April 30, 2025. The interdisciplinary resource personnel and livestock permittees who participated in development of this plan are:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
1. Soulen Livestock Company	Permittee (Harry & Philip Soulen)
2. Soulen Livestock Company	Permittees' Foreman (Cesar Allon)
3. Dennis Benson	McCall District Ranger
4. Brian McMorris	Range Specialist (PNF)
5. Ryan Waite	Idaho Department of Lands
6. Delaney Lane	Range Specialist (BNF)
7. Matt Morehead	Range Program Manager (BNF)

**SOULEN LIVESTOCK COMPANY ALLOTMENT PERMITTED USE:**

<u>ALLOTMENT</u>	<u>NUMBER &amp; CLASS</u>	<u>SEASON</u>
Brundage S&G, Bill Hunt S&G, Cougar Creek S&G, Slab Butte S&G, Jughandle S&G, and 20-Mile S&G	6000 - Sheep, ewe/lamb or mature Variable Numbers, 32 - Horses, Variable Numbers	7/10 to 10/15 Variable Season
Van Wyck Holding Pasture	10000 - Sheep, ewe/lamb or mature Variable Numbers, 32 - Horse, Variable Numbers	5/15 to 11/30 Variable Season
Van Wyck Stock Driveway	10000 - Sheep, ewe/lamb or mature Variable Numbers 32 - Horse, Variable Numbers	5/15 to 11/30 Variable Season

**SOULEN LIVESTOCK COMPANY 2025 AUTHORIZED USE**

<u>ALLOTMENT</u>	<u>NUMBERS &amp; CLASS</u>	<u>SEASON</u>
Cougar Creek S&G	1000-Sheep ewe/lamb	7/12 to 9/23
Brundage/Bill Hunt/*20-Mile S&G S&G	1000-Sheep ewe/lamb	7/10 to 9/24
Slab Butte S&G	1000-Sheep ewe/lamb	7/10 to 9/22
*Jughandle S&G**	1000 –Dry band	7/17 to 10/15
Slab Butte S&G	1500-Sheep mature	9/25 to 10/15
Brundage/Bill Hunt S&G	1500-Sheep mature	9/24 to 10/15
Above Allotments	16-Horse	7/10 to 10/15
Van Wyck Pasture S&G	4000-Sheep ewe/lamb	1 day spring
Van Wyck Pasture S&G	16-Horse	1 day spring & 2 days fall

Van Wyck Pasture S&G	4200-Sheep mature	2 days fall
Van Wyck Driveway S&G	4000-Sheep ewe/lamb	3 days spring
Van Wyck Driveway S&G	16-Horse	3 days spring
Van Wyck Driveway S&G	4200- Sheep mature	2 days fall
Van Wyck Driveway S&G	16-Horse	2 days fall

*\*Not all of the area within these allotments is authorized for domestic sheep (eastern 75% of 20-Mile and northern 10% of Jughandle is NOT authorized).*

*\*\*Jughandle: Non-use – Personal Convenience was taken in 2015, and 2016 You may take two more years of non-use personal convenience through 2025.*

The numbers in the ewe/lamb and dry bands may vary as long as they are not over the authorized head months for the 2025 Authorized season.

The Grassy Mountain S&G, Hershey Lava S&G, Little French Creek S&G, Josephine, and Vance Creek S&G Allotments are not authorized for domestic sheep grazing because they have been designated as unsuited for domestic sheep grazing by the July 2010 Record of Decision for the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and Forest Plan Amendment Identifying Suitable Rangeland for Domestic Sheep and Goat Grazing to Maintain Habitat for Viable Bighorn Sheep Populations (FSEIS ROD).

The permittee will do on/off counts for all bands authorized onto the Payette NF. The Forest Service is planning to be present when the sheep are trailed on to and off Forest Service-administered lands. Permittee will notify Forest Service personnel so arrangements can be made to meet with the permittee for the on/off count.

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 grazing fee of \$0.27/HM must be paid prior to livestock entering Forest Service-administered lands. This bill is due five (5) days prior to the earliest turnout date. The New Meadows Office must receive confirmation from Lockbox that payment has been made prior to livestock entering Forest Service-administered lands. **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. Consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service has been completed on the allotments with listed species. Mitigation measures have been designed to reduce adverse effects.

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 the 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.

### **Livestock Rotations**

The rotation schedule below is a general outline of grazing for the 2025 grazing season.

#### **Cougar Creek – revised 7/22/2025**

**The band will access the allotment at the south end on the East Fork of Fisher Creek. The band will move northwest of Granite Lake and continue north through lower portions of Deep Creek, Camp Creek, and Cougar Creek. The band will then loop back utilizing the upper portions of these drainages. If needed they will graze the eastern most part of the Slab Butte S&G allotment. There will be no double grazing where this band grazed earlier or one of the other bands grazed. The sheep will then trail to Sater Corral for shipping lambs approximately September 23.**

#### **Slab Butte**

The sheep will graze north up the Fisher Creek drainage on the west side of the drainage. The band will loop back once the sheep reach Fisher Creek Saddle and graze south on the east side of the Fisher Creek drainage. Sheep are not authorized on the north side of the ridge at Fisher Creek Saddle. They are not authorized to graze in areas the Cougar Band grazed. Shipping will be at Sater Corrals approximately September 22.

#### **Brundage/Bill Hunt/20-Mile**

This band will graze from the south to north through the Brundage and Bill Hunt Allotments. This band is not authorized to graze within the developed portion of the Brundage Mountain Resort. This includes most of the area accessed by the ski lifts from approximately the Northwest Passage run south and east including the Lakeview Bowl. Then this band will trail

through past Granite Lake to Warren Wagon Road. You will need to keep sheep out of the Upper Payette Lake designated campground. Once on Warren Wagon Road the sheep will begin grazing towards Pearl Lake. Once at the top of the drainage the sheep will graze back south to Warren Wagon Road. The majority of Outlet Creek is available for watering. No double grazing is allowed when trailing back down. The sheep will then graze back to the Bill Hunt allotment where they will ship lambs at Sater Corrals approximately September 24. This band is allowed on the road in the northern most portion of the Fall/Brush Creek S&G Allotment to trail to and from the Twenty Mile Allotment. The Twenty Mile Band is not authorized to double graze or graze where the Fall/Brush band grazes on the Fall/Brush Creek S&G Allotment.

### **Jughandle**

This band will enter through the northwestern end of the allotment around Shaw Twin Lakes area. The ridge between Shaw Twin Lakes and Boulder Lake is closed to bedding. The band will then graze south towards the Kennally and Paddy Flat area. Livestock will not be allowed to salt, or bed in the plantations around Paddy Flat. After grazing around this area the band will then graze north towards Louie Lake. They will graze off the allotment through the Louie Lake area around October 15 or once allowable use standards are met whichever comes first.

### **Brundage/Bill Hunt/State Dry Band**

After shipping of the lambs at Sater Corrals a dry band will be created. This band will graze the Bill Hunt/Brundage/State Land from north to south. They will trail off Forest through Bear Basin. If the ewe/lamb band already grazed an area the dry band will not graze the same area. The sheep will be required to trail to a new area or trail off lands administered by the Forest Service. This band is not authorized to graze within the developed portion of the Brundage Mountain Resort. This includes most of area accessed by the ski lifts from approximately the Northwest Passage run south and east including the Lakeview Bowl.

### **Slab Butte Dry Band**

After shipping of the lambs at Sater Corrals this dry band will graze areas of the Slab Butte Allotment that the ewe/lamb band did not graze. The band will then trail off Forest through Bear Basin. The band must stay on the sheep trail as the band moves south to Bear Basin. This band is not authorized to graze within the developed portion of the Brundage Mountain Resort. This includes most of the area accessed by the ski lifts from approximately the Northwest Passage run south and east including the Lakeview Bowl.

### **Trailing Instruction**

Sheep will be trailed on the Van Wyck Driveway and then onto their respected allotments. The permittee is authorized this year to trail 4 bands of sheep on the Van Wyck Driveway in the spring and 2 larger dry bands in the fall. Sheep are held in the Van Wyck Pastures on Forest Service administered lands adjacent to Cascade Reservoir. The permittee is only authorized to have 4 ewe/lamb bands in the spring for one day and 2 dry bands in the fall for two days on the Forest portion of the Van Wyck Pasture. Prior to use, the permittee will contact the Boise National Forest Range Specialist (208) 914-4682 with the exact dates the trailing and pasture use will occur.

The ewe/lamb bands will begin entering the Brundage Allotment July 10, or later depending on range readiness. Sheep will then trail to their assigned areas except the Brundage/Bill Hunt/20-Mile band will start grazing this area. The band is not authorized to graze within the developed portion of the Brundage Mountain Resort. This includes most of the area accessed by the ski lifts from approximately the Northwest Passage run south and east including the Lakeview Bowl. When going to the 20-Mile allotment the band will trail around Granite Lake to the Warren Wagon Road. This band will then trail to the Pearl Creek and Outlet Creek drainages to start grazing.

The Cougar, and Slab Butte bands will trail to the allotments via the designated trailing route north of the Little Ski Hill. This route gives the bands access to Bear Basin. Based on private land developments the trail may need adjusted from previous years. The bands will then trail towards Hartley Meadows and Sater Meadows. It is critical to keep the bands moving to lessen the impact to the trailing route. The sheep will trail off Forest using the same trail as when they came on Forest. The only exception would be the Bill Hunt/Brundage Dry Band who can graze areas not previously grazed.

\*All bands must keep moving while trailing to their respected allotment or off lands administered by the Forest Service. They are not authorized to be in an area for more than one day during the trailing process unless they have Ranger approval.

**When trailing through non-Forest Service administered lands (State, BLM, and Private) you will need to contact/coordinate with the appropriate owner. The Forest service only permits your use on Forest Service Administered Lands.**

Livestock are not to bed on the designated recreation trails when trailing thru Bear Basin. Bands are not authorized to graze within the developed portion of the Brundage Mountain Resort. This includes most of the area accessed by the ski lifts from approximately the Northwest Passage run south and east including the Lakeview Bowl. This area is heavily used by the recreating public. It is important to continue to work together to reduce conflicts with the public and other.

**Resources to Monitor**

Ridge between Shaw Twin and Boulder Lake – Jughandle S&G Allotment

West slope of Jughandle Mountain- Jughandle S&G Allotment

Exclosure in Sater Meadows

**Management Decision**

Minimize impacts to soil erosion associated with livestock grazing. Work with range specialist.

Minimize impacts to soil erosion associated with livestock grazing. Work with range specialist.

Closed to trailing, bedding, and grazing

**Allowable Use/Mitigation Measures**

The following allowable use criteria and mitigation measures are to be followed for all grazing activities. There will be Forest Service personnel monitoring these standards throughout the

grazing season along with any long-term vegetation monitoring that may be collected this grazing season.

1. Sheep will be allowed annual once over grazing except for designated sheep driveways, travel routes, or where specifically authorized. Sheep are to move to the next unit or leave the allotment after 45% use in riparian areas and 40% use pre-seed ripe or 50% use post-seed ripe in uplands. When the permittee observes proper use standards being reached, the livestock will be moved to the next area or off the Forest Service-administered lands. The permittee will notify the Forest Service when this happens.
2. Sheep watering is limited to one time per location
3. One night per bed site.
4. Bedding of sheep in plantations will be prohibited until plantation trees have grown to a size that reduces their susceptibility to damage from livestock.

### **Salting Requirements**

Salting is restricted to the following:

1. No less than 0.25 mile from water and not to be placed in meadow bottoms.
2. Only at bed grounds.
3. Contained and not placed directly on the ground.
4. Unconsumed salt will be removed from the site.

### **Other Management Requirements**

Implement the Emergency Response Plan (ERP) (Updated May 13, 2025). Actions taken are to ensure separation between bighorn sheep and domestic sheep.

Domestic sheep or goat grazing may only be permitted where separation from bighorn sheep can be maintained. If separation cannot be maintained, permitted domestic sheep and goat grazing shall be prohibited (RAST11).

The Payette National Forest will notify permittees immediately of any known stray or domestic sheep according to the ERP (Updated May 13, 2025).

The permittees herders will be required to document at least once a day the location of the domestic sheep with a SPOT device. When the herder uses the SPOT device to mark the daily location they must be standing with the sheep. This location will be recorded by the Forest Service (see SPOT Operating Plan for more details). The Forest Service will provide one SPOT device with batteries per band. The permittee and herders will be trained in the use of the SPOT device at turnout. If the SPOT device provided to the permittee is broken or lost because of negligence, the permittee will be responsible for replacing it. In addition to the SPOT device there will be one logbook per band. The permittee will be responsible for turning in a logbook form to the New Meadows or McCall Ranger Districts throughout the summer at least every seven (7) to fourteen (14) days. The logbook form will document any total counts, marker counts, losses, additions, scattering events, or big horn sheep observed. The Forest Service will go over the information being collected in the logbook at turnout. If the permittee would like to meet before turnout to go over the SPOT device or logbook, they can contact the Forest Service.

Herders will count marker sheep (black, horned, belled, other distinguishing feature, etc.) daily to assure that no small groups of sheep have separated from the main band. Counting will be noted in the logbook.

If dipping of sheep becomes necessary, the permittee will contact the District Range personnel to determine an appropriate site. The permittee will implement a closed system and haul all effluent off Forest Service-administered lands.

Livestock are not authorized to bed or salt on Forest System trails.

The permittee is responsible for ensuring there is no trash left behind when moving sheep camps.

### **MAINTENANCE OF RANGE IMPROVEMENTS**

The permittee is required to provide the materials and labor during routine maintenance. 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 material availability. Please notify Forest Service staff if you have any improvements that are in a condition in which they may require reconstruction within the next several years so the improvement can be reevaluated. Shipping corrals are maintained just prior to shipping dates. Portions of the corrals are temporary and are not maintained at an earlier date to avoid vandalism.

Corrals will be utilized at Sater Meadows for shipping.

### **MONITORING OF THE ANNUAL LIVESTOCK GRAZING ACTIVITY**

The herder folder currently provides actual use information for each unit grazed.

### **MULTIPLE USE COORDINATION**

1. Crews will be working on clearing Clow Point from the work that was done 2 years ago.
2. Sloan Point GNA Project may have logging clean-up this summer. Logging should be complete. This would be south of the Paddy Flat road.
3. If there is damage to Forest System trails by the permittee's livestock, the permittee will be required to repair or pay for it to be repaired.
4. Pay close attention to recreationists when trailing thru the Bear Basin trails. It is important to be cautious as this area has become a popular place for people to ride bicycles.
5. IMTUF100 is scheduled for September 20 and 21. It is planned to be based out of Jug Mountain Ranch and the race route covers much of the McCall Ranger District east of the Warren Wagon Road. The general area runners will be in are Jug Mountain, Boulder Lakes, Lake Fork, Fall Creek, Crestline, Duck Lake, Snow Slide, and back to Lake Fork and Boulder Lake.
6. Granite Goose project is in the planning phase. The project boundary is roughly from Association Cabin to Warren Wagon Road south to Bear Basin

7. There could potentially be some mining activity just off the Brundage Road.
8. There may be spring burning west of the Goose Lake road and north of Hwy 55.
9. There may be Fall burning in the Ecks Flat, Rock Flat, and Moorehead Flat area.
10. The Forest Service will notify you if anything comes up throughout the summer.

## **SPECIAL MANAGEMENT**

In the event a designated mitigation measure fails to protect a species listed under the Endangered Species Act (Chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull trout), a change in authorized grazing activity will occur. The change could be as simple as moving the sheep out of the area to a requirement for the sheep to be moved off the allotment. If this situation arises, the Forest Service will be contacting you to discuss the situation.

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.

If proper use grazing levels are reached, then livestock are to be moved to the next grazing area or off 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.

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.

## **VOLUNTARY**

In addition to these instructions, the permittee has identified other management actions that will be voluntarily implemented this year.

1. Remove sick or physically disabled domestic sheep from the band. If a sheep is no longer able to keep up with the band, it will be killed or removed from the allotment.
2. Use a minimum of 2 guard dogs per band.
3. Bands will be fully counted in locations where counting can be accomplished and when bands change major geographic locations (i.e. moving from one major drainage to another). Due to changing conditions such as precipitation, thunderstorms, water availability, wildfires, predation events, forage availability, etc., areas in which full counts are conducted will be adjusted as the grazing season proceeds. Dates in which counts are completed will be documented in the logbooks.
4. Each pack string will carry binoculars to improve their ability to spot bighorn sheep.

## **REQUIRED**

The following are management actions that the permittee discussed in detail with District Rangers and Range Management Specialists at the AOI meeting. These actions require implementation during the 2025 grazing season for one or both of the following reasons: 1) to meet the intent of the Emergency Response Plan and 2) to reduce the likelihood of stray domestic sheep and goats.

1. Each band will have either a satellite phone, cell phone, radio, or other similar and effective communication device (Send or Spot) that is in functioning order. Functioning order is defined as operable and not “dead” or having battery life adequate to make contact (per Emergency Response Plan, Updated May 13, 2025). Any of the required communication equipment may be used to notify the permittee that the emergency response plan is being activated.
2. If the herders or pack strings spot any bighorn sheep while grazing on the Forest, they will adjust their grazing path according to the Emergency Response Plan (Updated May 13, 2025) and haze the bighorns out of the area to minimize the possibility of direct contact.
3. The permittee will immediately report any bighorn sheep sightings according to the Emergency Response Plan (Updated May 13, 2025).
4. Predator attacks, primarily wolf attacks, may create a risk for a straying event. If a predator attack results in stray domestic sheep, the permittee will immediately implement the Emergency Response Plan (Updated May 13, 2025).

