

**2008 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS
FOR THE
INDIAN MOUNTAIN C&H ALLOTMENT**

These Annual Operating Instructions are a guide for implementing grazing management activities on the **Indian Mountain C&H Allotment** for the 2008 grazing season. This plan was developed with participation of the livestock permittees at the Annual Operating Instruction meeting held at the Council Ranger District Office on March 25, 2008. This plan is made part of the Term Grazing Permit as specified in Part 2, Number 8 (a) of the permit.

These instructions are a guideline for grazing management. It is necessary to contact the Forest Service if there are any changes or additions to these instructions through out the grazing season. Refer to Part 2 of your term grazing permit for general terms and conditions which apply to these Annual Operating Instructions.

Grazing fees of \$ 1.35/HM must be paid before livestock are authorized to enter the National Forest. Payment must be made to: USDA Forest Service, P.O. Box 894183, Los Angeles, California 90189-4183. The Council District Office must receive confirmation from the Citibank Lockbox that payment has been made prior to cattle entering the Forest.

AUTHORIZED USE:

<u>Permittee</u>	<u>Forest Service #s</u>	<u>Private & State #s</u>	<u>Season</u>
James, Carol & Robert Wolfe	86 cow/calf pairs		7/1 – 10/15
James & Carol Wolfe	196 cow/calf pairs		7/1 – 10/15
Sutton Livestock, Inc.	66 cow/calf pairs		7/1 – 10/15
Steve Sutton	108 cow/calf pairs	6 Pvt	7/1 – 10/15
Weldon & Virginia Branch	592 cow/calf pairs	45 Pvt & 11 State	7/1 – 10/15
Weldon E. & Weldon R. Branch	118 cow/calf pairs		7/1 – 10/15
Sutton Livestock, Inc.	157 cow/calf pairs		7/1 - 10/15
J.W. Holmes & Sons	128 cow/calf pairs		7/1 – 10/15
Ogle-Legg Cattle Co.	91 cow/calf pairs		7/1 – 10/15
Bob Scwenkfelder	36 cow/calf pairs		7/1 – 10/15
S.S. Cattle Co.	180 cow/calf pairs		7/1 – 10/15
S.S. Cattle & Sutton Livestock	0 cow/calf pairs	156 Western Pacific Timber	7/1 - 10/15

TERMS AND CONDITIONS PERTAINING TO SEASON OF USE AND LIVESTOCK NUMBERS:

The District Ranger may modify the season of use and livestock numbers permitted on any given year. The season of use is especially dependent upon weather conditions (annual precipitation) which influences annual forage production and range readiness. The District Ranger's authority to modify term grazing permitted use is further described in Part 2, Section 8 (b) & (c) of your 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 must be a minimum of 6 inches in height and out of the boot stage. Arrowleaf balsamroot should be in bloom or past bloom. All animals must be off the Forest by October 15, 2008.

These dates are tentative and may vary according to range conditions and utilization levels.

Notify the Forest Service at least 3 days before you turn onto the allotment.

Actual Use: The permittee is required to complete an "actual use" form, which includes a record of livestock losses and the permittee's maintenance costs. The form is for convenience. Any format that provides the information requested is acceptable.

Credits: All requests for refunds or credits for unused portion of grazing fees for Forest System Lands must be received in the Council Ranger District office by March 1, following the grazing season.

GRAZING PRESCRIPTION AND LIVESTOCK ROTATIONS:

The utilization standards you will be responsible for meeting are from the Biological Opinion for the Weiser River Watershed, issued by the Fish and Wildlife Service on May 5, 1999, page 62 item 7 mitigation measures states: "In bull trout habitat, residual stubble heights within riparian areas shall be at least 6 inches for key representative riparian graminoid species (grasses, rushes, sedges, etc.) at the time cattle are moved from a unit. No more than 30% use by weight on upland type grasses which occur on floodplains or 40% use where stream temperatures are functioning adequately shall be permitted. No more than 25% of the annual growth (i.e. current season's leaders, not existing plant material) of woody species shall be browsed...."

Allowable Use Standards

The following are specific utilization standards from the July 2003 Forest Plan. Utilization percentages are by weight and are the maximum allowed. The Forest Service will invite the permittees to go along when monitoring is going on in this allotment.

RAST01 - Maximum forage utilization of representative areas within each pasture shall not exceed the values shown at the end of the growing season. Variation in utilization standards in order to achieve specific vegetative management objectives shall occur with a site-specific or project-level decision according to direction in FSM 1922.5.

a) Riparian Areas: Maximum 45 percent use or retain a minimum 4 inch stubble height of hydric greenline species, whichever occurs first.

b) Upland Vegetative Cover Types: Early season or season long pastures – 40 percent use. Vegetative slow growth, after seed ripe conditions, or late season pastures – 50 percent use.

In cattle allotments where riparian area restoration is an objective (Upper Little Weiser River and Anderson Creek subwatersheds), grazing systems should be designed to incorporate the following parameters where appropriate (RAGU02):

- a. Provide residual vegetative cover (at least 6 inches of hydric vegetation) either through regrowth or rest treatments for at least 75 percent of the years in a rotation cycle.
- b. Reduce the duration of riparian area grazing periods where needed. Grazing period reduction may be especially needed in the fall where riparian deciduous woody species are an important riparian vegetation component.
- c. Design grazing periods to take advantage of favorable seasonal livestock dispersal behavior (examples: spring use of uplands, due to wet riparian conditions, late fall upland use, due to cold temperatures, poor dispersal during “hot” season).
- d. Incorporate sufficient growing season rest to provide good vigor, physiological needs, and regeneration of all riparian plants.
- e. Where deciduous trees and shrubs are important in the composition, modify the frequency of grazing periods, reduce the grazing duration, or reduce grazing intensity to levels that provide for recovery/maintenance of healthy diverse trees and shrubs.

The Little Weiser River and Middle Fork Weiser River are listed on the Idaho State 303(d) impaired water quality list and have been identified in the Forest Plan in the Management Area 3 Weiser River Objective 0318 for improvement of water quality. **Please be aware, on these two rivers you are required to maintain a 6 inch residual stubble height on hydric greenline species to be measured at the end of the growing season, not the end of the grazing season.**

When an area reaches allowable use levels the cattle will be moved and kept from returning to that area. If cattle are in the final area of the rotation sequence and utilization standards are reached, then they will have to be removed from the allotment.

Livestock in units outside the season of use or on an allotment other than the one permitted, is a violation of the terms and conditions of the Term Grazing Permit.

Salting

Salting is restricted to the following:

- No less than ¼ mile from water, and not be placed in meadow bottoms.
- Placed at a minimum distance of 100 yards from roads and out of sight from roads, if possible.
- Should be moved yearly unless present salt ground is located in a rocky area where no vegetation grows.
- Unconsumed salt will be removed from the site.
- ¼ mile from timber plantations with trees less than 15 feet tall. If this can't be accomplished, the District Range and Reforestation personnel will work with you to find acceptable locations.
- Recommend use of containers and rocky areas.

Grazing Rotation:

Jim Wolfe's cattle will turn out July 1 and Robert Wolfe's cattle on July 1 in the Mill Creek area. After about a week, they will be moved down Four Bit Road to the old logging road that heads back to the Lost Fork area and pushed on to the top by August 15. The rest of the cattle will be moved up the Loop road and graze that area and be on top by August 15. Approximately October 1-5 cattle will be gathered and brought back over the top and down to the Mill Creek and Grizzly Creek areas and removed from the Forest by October 15 or when utilization is met.

Sutton Livestock, Inc. (former Casa Del Norte permit) cattle will turn out in the Mill Creek area also. They will graze higher on Four Bit Creek and up to the top of the mountain by August 15. They will then be moved back over the top by approximately October 1-5, and down to Mill Creek and Grizzly Creek until October 15 or when utilization is met.

Branch will turn out cattle on Smith Ridge and Grouse Creek at the corral on the Little Weiser River. Cattle will graze Smith Ridge, Grouse Creek, Little Weiser, and Horsethief Basin. The cattle will move through Cougar Basin, Cold Springs Ridge, Mica Saddle, Weiser River slope, and Anderson Creek. And cattle left behind will be gathered and moved up around August 1. By October 1 cattle will be started off the east side of the mountain and moved off the allotment by October 15 or when utilization is met. Cattle will be kept out of the north country to assist Sutton & Schwenkfelder from getting into the burned area.

Ogle will turn out of the Legg property adjacent to the allotment and push cattle through the burned area to graze with Holmes, utilizing the Mica Creek and Hubbard Basin areas. No one is authorized to graze in the burned area until at least September 15. **Cattle falling off into the burned area or staying there will be removed from the Forest immediately.** Cattle will be removed from the allotment by October 15.

Holmes will turn out in South Grays Creek, and move from King Hill Creek to Indian Mountain Lookout. July 25 the cattle will be moved to Mica Ridge and the head of Little Weiser River. August 15 cattle will be moved to Upper Hubbard Basin. September 30 the cattle will be started back down to Grays Creek and King Hill Creek, and off the allotment by October 15 or when utilization is met.

SS Cattle Company and Sutton Livestock will run 156 cow/calf pairs permitted by Western Pacific Timber on their property within the Middle Fork Weiser River area.

396 pair of cattle belonging to **Schwenkfelder and Sutton** will utilize a four area, deferred rotation strategy, grazing areas that were not affected by the Grays Creek Fire prior to mid-September. These authorized livestock numbers do not include Potlatch private land numbers in the Middle Fork Weiser River, which are not permitted on NFS lands. It is imperative you prevent your private land permitted livestock from trespassing on the Council Mountain NFS lands, as the Council Mountain Allotment FS permittee is grazing a limited area also. I expect you to work with that permittee to manage your livestock. Ogle and Holmes will run their livestock together outside of the burned area the entire grazing season. They will push their cattle further south than normal, as agreed by the Indian Mountain Cattle Association at the April 12, 2008 meeting.

From approximately June 29-July 6, turnout will be through the gate between Fall Creek and North Fork Grays Creek and livestock trailing will occur quickly through Area 1 to the Bear Gap area where they will overnight outside of the burned area, staggered at least 1 day between Sutton & Schwenkfelder cattle to allow more control of livestock during the move. Existing roads and trails will be used as depicted on your Appendix II map, avoiding the main roads as much as possible to prevent conflicts with logging related traffic. Trailing is expected to be accomplished within 2-3 days, with an additional 3-4 days to pick up stragglers and separated pairs if required.

From approximately July 7-20, Area 2 will be primarily utilized. Supplement stations will be moved at least 300 yards between 10-14 days within the use area to facilitate distribution and prevent residual trailing impacts. Livestock drift into Areas 3 and 4 will be allowed, but drift to the burn area or Area 1 will be controlled or cattle removed.

From approximately July 21-August 17, Area 3 will be primarily utilized. Supplement stations will be moved at least 300 yards between 10-14 days within the use area to facilitate distribution and prevent residual trailing impacts. Livestock drift into Area 4 will be allowed, but drift to the burn area or Areas 1 and 2 will be controlled or cattle removed.

From approximately August 18-September 7, Area 4 will be primarily utilized. Drift into the burn area or back into Areas 1-3 will be controlled or cattle removed.

From approximately September 8-21, trail livestock in manageable groups to upper un-burned portions of Area 1 (Bear Gap).

From approximately September 22-October 15, upon approval by the Forest Service, distribute livestock within the burned area where low to moderate grazing will take place in low and moderate burn intensity areas of the burn after seed has set, and the grasses have gone dormant as the cattle return home. All cattle found on the Middle Fork road below Warm Springs Creek after September 1, 2008 will be taken home. All efforts will be made by you to keep cattle out of the high intensity burn areas and tree plantations at all times, as no mechanical damage to seedlings in the plantations is permitted.

MAINTENANCE OF RANGE IMPROVEMENTS:

All range improvements must be maintained 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 material availability. Those projects to which the permittee contributes normally receive higher priority for funding by the Forest Service.

Maintenance of spring developments is vitally important to the health of your livestock and to the grazing allotment. If you are aware of spring developments that require reconstruction or extensive maintenance, please discuss this with your Rangeland Management Specialist.

2008 RANGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS:

Because the minimum allowable residual stubble height of 6 inches and/or 45% forage utilization was not met in 2003, 2004, and 2005 in the exclosures on the big meadow in the Little Weiser headwaters (LW EXC 2) and both sites on Anderson Creek (AN EXC 1 & 2), per consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service on April 14, 2006, it was agreed the permittees would have these three exclosures set up by the on-date of July 1, or as soon as the snow banks have melted off to allow set-up.

The permittees are required to set up and ride the bull trout spawning habitat exclosures daily to maintain, repair, keep cattle out of and/or remove cattle from, beginning August 15th. The permittees are responsible for these exclosures.

2008 range improvement projects include those carried over from 2006:

- The FS will look to see if any cattle guards are available to be put in by Tamarack Store on the Middle Fork Road. It is ultimately the permittees/Valley County responsibility to do this.
- Royce Schwenkfelder will reconstruct the Sugarloaf spring. The FS will provide a spring box & pipe. Coordination with the FS is required for any backhoe use.
- The FS will look at putting in a spring development in the Four Bit area if time and funding permit. Sensitive plant, wildlife, and archaeology surveys will need to be conducted first. At this time this project is not funded.

MONITORING OF THE ANNUAL LIVESTOCK GRAZING ACTIVITY:

We are requiring you to report actual use information for each unit grazed because we are required to report this grazing use to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). If you have any questions completing the form, please call Maura at 208-253-0100. **These forms need to be returned no later than November 1, 2008.**

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT

In the event a designated mitigation measure fails to protect a species listed under the Endangered Species Act, a change in the authorized grazing activity will occur. If proper utilization levels are reached, then livestock will be moved to the next grazing area or off the forest. If livestock grazing does not comply with the terms and conditions of these Annual Operating Instructions, then the Forest Service policy and procedures dealing with administrative permit actions will be followed.