

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

These Annual Operating Instructions are a guide for implementing grazing management activities on the **Council 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>
Bill & Gordon Copher	125 cow/calf pairs		6/20 – 10/15
Motichka Farms	75 cow/calf pairs		6/20 – 10/15
Tom Gibbons & Dennis Heck	239 cow/calf pairs		6/20 – 10/15
Dan Swain	100 cow/calf pairs		6/20 – 10/15
Marlin Wolfe	139 cow/calf pairs		6/20 – 10/15
Wes Hudman	100 cow/calf pairs	23 State	6/20 – 10/15
Mink L & L	175 cow/calf pairs		6/20 – 10/15
Alvin Yantis	160 cow/calf pairs		6/20 – 10/15
Jack Yantis	46 cow/calf pairs	8 State	6/20 – 10/15
Tom Barry/Grays Creek	138 cow/calf pairs		Non Use

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 grazing prescriptions are designed to meet the resource needs of the soils and vegetation. For drainages which support habitat for the Chinook Salmon (threatened species under the Endangered Species Act), it is necessary to develop prescriptions that eliminate any adverse impacts to the salmon habitat. Fisheries Biologists will complete Biological Assessments on this grazing activity to ensure that any known and/or potential effects have been eliminated. The known or potential problem areas have been identified below, along with the respective mitigation measures designed to eliminate each adverse effect.

1. Resource Concern: Little Salmon River drainage in section 31.

Mitigation Measures:

1. Proper forage use criteria of a minimum herbage stubble height of 6 to 8 inches in riparian areas and maximum utilization on upland areas of 30% is commensurate with a high level of riparian area/ stream bank protection.
2. No salt will be allowed within the Little Salmon River drainage.
3. Grazing season and numbers of livestock within the Little Salmon River drainage will be documented in the Actual Use form.
4. No more than 10% of mechanical disturbance to the stream banks will be allowed cumulatively over time.

2. Resource Concern: Vick Creek drainage in section 22 above the Forest boundary.

Mitigation Measure: Maintain Forest boundary fence to eliminate Council Mountain Allotment livestock from entering this area.

3. Resource Concern: Big Creek drainage along Blue Bunch Ridge in sections 5, 8, 17, 21, 27.

Mitigation Measures:

1. Proper forage use criteria of a minimum herbage stubble height of 6 to 8 inches in riparian areas and maximum utilization on upland areas of 30% is commensurate with a high level of riparian area/ stream bank protection.
2. No salt will be allowed within the Big Creek drainage.
3. Grazing season and numbers of livestock within the Big Creek drainage will be documented in the Actual Use form.
4. No more than 10% of mechanical disturbance to the stream banks will be allowed cumulatively over time.
5. The 1994 Blue Bunch Ridge fence will be maintained per the Memorandum of Understanding to eliminate unauthorized use and enhance management of permitted livestock.

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.

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 East Fork Weiser River subwatershed – Beaver Creek), 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.

East Branch Weiser River and Middle Fork Weiser River are listed on the Idaho State 303(d) impaired water quality list and has 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:

Bill & Gordon Copher: June 20 cattle will turn out in above the East Fork Ditch, in order to rest Spring Creek. Approximately July 1, the cattle will be moved up the East Fork Weiser River to Dewey Creek and the lower end of Joker Creek. On August 5 the cattle will be moved into the Elsberry Spring and Switchback Spring area and up to Blue Bunch Ridge. Cattle will return home by way of Bench Creek and the East Fork Weiser River through Shingle Creek and off the

Forest by October 15. **As long as the Forest Service is setting up, maintaining, and letting down the Shingle Flat enclosure, no overnighting of livestock is permitted.**

Motichka Farms: June 20 turn out 50 pair on Filly Creek and Pin Creek. Turn out 25 pair on Dry Beaver. The 50 pair will move out July 15 to the Fire Gulch area and upper Dry Beaver, Approximately August 1 the cattle will be moved to the Blue Bunch and Red Point area. They will then move along the Boise line September 15 to the north end of Beaver Creek Riparian Demonstration Area until October 1. Livestock will be removed from the Forest by October 15.

The 25 pair from Dry Beaver Creek turnout will move up Beaver Creek, staying outside of the enclosure, July 1 for approximately 10 days and continue on to the burned area at the head of North Fork Creek. September 15 start down North Fork Creek and arrive at the south end of the Beaver Creek Riparian Demonstration Area October 1. Livestock will be removed from the Forest by October 15.

Utilization of the Beaver Creek Demonstration Area enclosure for more than 14 days is not authorized.

Hudman: 16 pair and 1 bull will be turned out June 20 in Fourth Gulch, moving to Dry Beaver and the Bench Creek area. The remaining livestock will be turned out in Pin Creek and moved toward Gaylord Creek to Dry Beaver then to the Blue Bunch springs area. Livestock will be removed from the Forest by October 15.

Alvin Yantis: 100 pairs will be turned out at Thompson Corner and moved up the ridge to the south fork of Wood Gulch on June 20. The cattle will be moved from Wood Gulch to Cookhouse Gulch and graze along the contour road. August 1 move livestock through the contour fence and up along the ridge at the base of Council Mountain, and over, utilizing Granite Basin and the head of Deseret Basin and off the Forest by October 15.

60 pairs will move through the mouth of Larkspur over the saddle into the head of Log Cabin Creek utilizing this area for the summer, and then off the Forest by October 15.

Salt will not be placed in Deseret or North Cottonwood Creek. Cattle may drift through these areas.

Jack Yantis: June 20 the cattle will be turned out on Fort Hall Ridge moving up to Cutoff Saddle, North Mill Creek, Cold Spring Creek, and down the East Fork Weiser River over the stock driveway home by October 15.

Mink Land & Livestock: 175 pair of cattle will be turned out on June 20 in Sheep Creek and Dutch Oven areas that were not affected by the Grays Creek Fire. The cattle will utilize resources in this area until after July 4. They will be pushed up around the head of Warm Springs Creek and into Bucks Basin and Lake Basin, staying out of the fire perimeter. After September 1 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 through Crystal Creek and the lower end of Cabin, Boulder and Bar Creeks. All cattle found on the

Middle Fork road below Warm Springs Creek after September 1 will be taken home. All efforts will be made to keep cattle out of the high intensity burn areas and tree plantations. Livestock must be removed from the allotment by October 15.

Tom Gibbons/Dennis Heck, Marlin Wolfe, and Dan Swain: Cattle will turn out in Lester Creek, Grossen Creek, Camp Creek, and South Fork Mill Creek drainages. The area will be utilized until approximately August 15, if allowable use has not been met. Cattle will proceed up North Fork Cottonwood Creek through the drift fence on the contour road up Larkspur Gulch, to the headwaters of Dewey Creek and on up to No Business moving through Deseret Cabin, past the enclosure through Squaw Flat and over to No Business. Bring cattle home through Squaw Flat and Granite Basin, and off the Forest by October 15.

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.

The Forest Service and permittees will look at rebuilding the Bluebunch spring that is on the side slope (the one next to the road works). This will depend on time and funding. The Forest service will provide the materials and the permittees will provide the labor.

Alvin Yantis will need to call Brant Petersen, Recreation Specialist, at 549-4224 about putting up a no camping sign by road jct. #199 & 234 to close it to camping from Oct. 10 – 20. This is so the permittee can move cattle across the Cottonwood Creek Bridge and off the allotment.

2008 RANGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS:

The permittees are required to ride the bull trout spawning habitat enclosures twice per week to maintain, repair, keep cattle out of and/or remove cattle from. The permittees are responsible for these enclosures. The Forest Service is responsible for the Tom Barry permit fences for 2008.

The drift fence at the cattleguard below Shingle Flat has been reconstructed by the FS and is the responsibility of the permittees grazing in the vicinity. The Shingle Flat enclosure has been rebuilt as originally designed. Until the permittees set it up, maintain it, and let it down, **no overnight use is authorized!**

Range improvements identified for construction per the Council Mountain Environmental Assessment include:

Development of a spring in Fire Gulch. Please contact Maura to identify the location.

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.