



File Code: 2210

Date: June 20, 2008

The following letter will document your meeting with Rixey Jenkins on May 8, 2008 and serve as your Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the 2008 grazing season.

AUTHORIZED USE:

The North Swauger S&G allotment will be grazed under the schedule for Year 4 of 4 in your grazing permit. The South Swauger S&G allotment will be grazed under the schedule for Year 6 of 8. The 2008 grazing season for South Swauger S&G should be Year 1 of 8. A change was made to allow the By-Day watershed in the Upper and Lower Yaney Units to be rested.

<u>ALLOTMENT</u>	<u>UNIT (NAME/NUMBER)</u>	<u>NUMBER/CLASS</u>	<u>DATES</u>
North Swauger	Swauger/3	1000 ewes/400 lambs	1 st 7/27-
	East Fork/4	1000 e /400 l	2 nd
	Upper Mack/1	1000 e /400 l	3 rd 8/10
	Lower Mack/2	REST	REST
South Swauger	Lower Patterson/3a	1000 ewes/400 lambs	1 st 7/6-
	Lower Long Valley/2a	1000 e /400 l	2 nd
	Lower Sario/1a	1000 e /400 l	3 rd 7/26
	Lower Yaney/4a	REST	REST
	Upper Sario/1b	1000 e /400 l	4 th 8/11-
	Upper Long Valley/2b	1000 e /400 l	5 th
	Upper Patterson/3b	1000 e /400 l	6 th 8/28
	Upper Yaney/4b	REST	REST

The upper units of South Swauger S&G will not be used until after August 1st.

ALLOWABLE USE:

The allowable use of forage is based on the current year's growth of key species.

South Swauger S&G allotment:

Riparian sites:



In meadows that are in early seral status (an early stage of succession in a plant community or vegetation type, generally characterized by plant species that are adapted to colonizing disturbed areas with a high proportion of bare soil) livestock utilization of grass and grass-like plants must be limited to **30 percent (or minimum six-inch stubble height)**.

In meadows that are in late seral status (fifty percent or more of the relative cover of the herbaceous layer is late seral with high similarity to the potential natural community, a diversity of age classes of hardwood shrubs is present, and regeneration is occurring) livestock utilization of grass and grass-like plants must be limited to a maximum of **40 percent (or minimum four-inch stubble height)**.

In riparian areas browsing on mature riparian shrubs (including willow and aspen) is not to exceed **20 percent** of the annual leader growth and is not to exceed more than **20 percent** of individual seedlings.

In meadows that are **degraded** (such as those in early seral status with a greater than **ten percent** meadow area in **bare soil and active erosion**) **total rest** from grazing is required until they have recovered and have moved to a mid or late seral status.

Livestock grazing will be modified or suspended on meadow ecosystems when it is determined that ecological status is moving in a downward trend.

The upper By-Day watershed on the South Swauger S&G allotment has more restrictive allowable use standards because of the presence of Lahontan cutthroat trout. Use of herbaceous species within the riparian zone must not exceed 30% of the current year's growth. Use of shrub species (willows and aspen) must not exceed 20% of the twig length of the current year's growth. Utilization of herbaceous plants in the upland sites must not exceed 40% of the current year's growth and streambank disturbance must not exceed 10%.

North Swauger S&G allotment:

Aspen, Sagebrush, Mountain brush, and Grassland sites:

Maximum of **55 percent** use of annual growth of key herbaceous species.

Maximum of **50 percent** use of current annual growth of shrubs.

All allotments:

Streambank Disturbance (except By-Day Creek Watershed)

Maximum of **20 percent** disturbance along the stream reach.

Maximum of **40 percent** use of grass species in aspen, sagebrush, and mountain sagebrush sites.

It is your responsibility to monitor utilization and ensure that the allowable use standards are not exceeded. You are responsible for determining when allowable use has been reached and to move or remove livestock from the allotment to prevent exceeding these standards. The Forest Service is responsible for monitoring your compliance with the allowable use standards.

Because we do not know the ecological condition of every meadow located within the allotment, please err on the side of caution when monitoring utilization on riparian species. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Rixey.

RANGE IMPROVEMENTS:

All range improvements listed in part three of your grazing permit must be maintained before livestock enter the allotment. The standards for maintenance listed in part three must be followed when maintaining improvements.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT:

Graze the allotments using open herding in a once over pattern. Do not bed or noon sheep in aspen stands or in the same place more than once during the grazing season. Do not bed or noon sheep within 100 yards of water or meadows. Salt must be placed at least ¼ mile from water, meadows, trails, and roads used by the public.

Herder's camps must be kept clean at all times. All garbage and debris associated with managing your sheep on the National Forest must be removed. Dead sheep must be moved at least 100 yards from water, roads, and trails. If you or your herders spot a wild fire, please report it to the Interagency Dispatch Center in Minden, NV at **(775) 883-5995**.

You must notify my staff at least 48 hours before trailing your sheep across National Forest System lands which are not listed in your term permit or across areas listed in your permit that are outside of the scheduled use pattern listed above. A crossing permit is not required to trail your sheep from Huntoon Meadows to Walters Ranch, but you must notify my staff 48 hours prior to trailing. For any other trailing you must contact Rixey to determine a suitable route and to obtain a trailing permit.

As a reminder, please complete the actual use and improvement maintenance forms and return them to my office no later than November 30, 2008.

Allotments that have been combined in terms of management are not necessarily reflected in the annual bill for collection. Numbers and seasons in your grazing bill reflect the total head months of use on permitted allotments, but not necessarily the planned use on the ground. In cases where the bill differs from these instructions, the Annual Operating Instructions are the authorized use patterns to be implemented on the ground.

Invasive weeds are becoming a serious threat to the welfare of our rangelands. Your assistance is needed to identify new outbreaks of weed populations and to prevent the establishment of weeds on the forest. Pay particular attention to areas where stock are concentrated such as loading/unloading areas, water developments, and salting areas. A Noxious Weed Free Hay order has been implemented on our forest. This requires any hay that is brought onto the National Forest must be certified free from noxious weeds. All livestock entering the National Forest are recommended to be fed **Certified Noxious Weed Free Forage** for at least 2 days prior to entering the forest. Pelletized feed is not affected by this order.

As a reminder, approval of requests for permittee convenience nonuse is not automatic and the authorized officer should discuss the reasons for the nonuse request with the permittee. Approval of a request for permittee convenience non-use must be in writing and signed by the authorized officer. Full or partial permittee convenience nonuse may be approved by the authorized officer for no more than three consecutive years and not more than four years in any ten year period.

Grazing fees for the 2008 season are the same as last year. The fee is \$0.27 per head month.

Payment of your grazing bill is due five days prior to your earliest turnout date to allow time for processing. As a reminder the Forest Service is required to give permittees a minimum of 30 days to pay you grazing fees. The Forest Service is requesting that permittees schedule their AOI meeting a minimum of 35 days prior to their earliest on date to provide adequate time to plan for the upcoming grazing season. Thank you for meeting this requirement by scheduling your meeting early.

OTHER:

On May 21-22, we had a Monitoring Workshop for permittees in Bridgeport at Memorial Hall. An invitation letter was sent out. Sorry you were unable to attend.

Ingrid and Rixey are currently collecting vegetation data for the Sierra Basin Grazing Project EIS. During the NEPA process, consultation will be conducted with Fish and Wildlife Service regarding Lahontan Cutthroat Trout.

Trailing sheep from the Sario Ranch to the Green Creek area was discussed. When the sheep reach the Honeymoon Flat area, they should enter private lands to reach the BLM land.

The fuels treatment on North Swauger Creek is in the pre-planning process now. Formal planning will begin in 2009 and implementation will start in 2010.

Please use Rixey as your primary contact for your grazing permit. If you have any questions regarding this AOI or your grazing permit, contact Rixey at (760) 932-5850.

Sincerely,

/s/ Kim Clemons (for):
CHERYL F. PROBERT
District Ranger

Encl: Actual Use and Improvement Maintenance Forms