



File Code:

Date: June 13, 2008

This letter documents authorization for the Labrosse unit of the Rickey S&G allotment and will serve as your annual operating instructions for the 2008 grazing season on the Rickey S&G allotment.

Rickey S&G authorized use: 700 e/l, 06/28-09/20- (These dates reflect a 10% suspension in season of use due to non-compliance with terms and conditions of your term grazing permit).

Use is to begin in the Labrosse Unit and continue onto the Rickey Unit of the allotment. Failure to grazing the allotment in this order is a violation of the terms and conditions of your Term Grazing Permit. Appropriate *permit action* will be taken if this grazing strategy is not followed. Once your sheep have left the Labrosse Unit, they are **not** allowed to return, for any reason.

As you know, the Final Recovery Plan for Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep was released in February 2008. Section E of that plan has very specific guidance. This direction includes closure of the Labrosse Unit of the Rickey S&G allotment. The Forest prepared a Biological Assessment in regards to the proposed grazing use on the Labrosse Unit of the Rickey S&G allotment. The determination was made that the proposed action within, near and/or associated with the Labrosse Unit of the Rickey S&G allotment will have no effect on Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep within the Northern Recovery Unit.

As you know, by-day creek is home to Lahontan cutthroat trout, which are listed as a threatened species. The biological assessment/biological opinion provides for rest to by-day creek every four years. By-Day creek was scheduled for rest this grazing season; therefore sheep are not allowed with $\frac{1}{4}$ **mile of By-Day creek**. My office will follow up with compliance throughout the grazing season.

MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

In order to reach the no effect determination, the following two minimizing measures are applicable to the Labrosse Unit of the Rickey S&G Allotment:

- 1) In order to fully document the actual season of use, the permittee agrees to notify the District Ranger or Natural Resource Officer by telephone or in person, at least 48 hours before entering and exiting the Labrosse Unit.
- 2) The permittee will conduct an on and off count to document the total number of domestic sheep on the unit. This number will include the number of ewes and lambs placed on the allotment. The permittee will provide the District Ranger or Resource Staff Officer with this number within 24 hours of conducting the count.

Allotment maps and management requirements, including improvement maintenance, salting, camping, and bedding for the Rickey S&G allotments have previously been provided to you.

Range improvements listed under part three in your term permit must be maintained before livestock enter allotments. The maintenance standards, also listed in part three of your permit,



must be followed when maintaining improvements. Range improvements **must** be maintained even when there is **non-use** on an allotment; **for whatever reason**.

Sheep may use a bedding/nooning area no more than **once** per season. "Good bedground management" was highlighted in your 1974 Sheep Management and Development Plan. We discussed with you areas that district resource personnel observed during the 2007 grazing season.

Place salt at least ¼ mile from water, roads, and trails. If there are specific areas that require salt placement outside these guidelines, you must obtain approval from this office prior to salting. Haul dead livestock at least **100** yards from roads, trails, and water. All garbage and debris associated with managing your livestock on Forest Service allotments must be removed from the National Forest.

If you or your employees spot a wildfire, report it immediately to the Interagency Dispatch Center in Minden, NV at **(775) 883-5995**. As a reminder, if the Bridgeport Ranger District enters into fire restrictions during 2008, this restriction applies to your operation as well.

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.

Standards and guidelines applicable to your allotment include the following:

On the Rickey S&G (NOT including By-Day Creek Drainage) allotment:

Disturbance of meadow-associated **streambanks** and natural lake and pond **shorelines** is **not to exceed 20 percent** of the stream reach or **20 percent** of the natural lake or pond shoreline.

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 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.

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.

You are responsible for determining when allowable use has been reached and for moving your sheep to the next unit to be used or off the allotment when the last unit has been grazed. The Forest Service is responsible for monitoring your compliance with allowable use standards. If you need assistance determining forage use or streambank disturbance levels, contact Amy and she will help you.

If you have questions, or need additional copies of any of this information, please contact Amy.

REPORTING

Allotment summary forms, for reporting actual use and maintenance costs are included. Please complete these forms and return them to this office by November 15, 2008. Thank you for returning last year's actual use and improvement maintenance forms in a timely manner.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT

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.

As a reminder, approval of requests for permittee convenience non-use 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 by the authorized officer. Full or partial permittee convenience non-use 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.

Payment of your grazing bill is due five days prior to your earliest turn out date to allow time for processing. As a reminder the Forest Service is required to give permittees a minimum of 30 days to pay your 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.

Amy Baumer will continue to administer your permit. Please continue to use her as your contact on the district.

I trust that you will contact me any time you have a question so that we may keep our communication open. Thank you for continuing to work with us on the Bridgeport ranger district. If you have any questions on the management of the above allotment, please feel free to contact myself or Amy at 760-932-5852.

Sincerely,

/s/ Cheryl F. Probert
CHERYL F. PROBERT
District Ranger