



File Code: 2210
Date: 5/20/2008

This letter will document the meeting held between Dwain Chichester, Ingrid Drieling, and on April 25, 2008 and serve as your Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the 2008 grazing season on the Mount Jackson C&H and Sardine C&H allotments. The authorized use for each allotment will be as follows:

AUTHORIZED USE:

<u>Allotment</u>	<u>Number of Stock</u>	<u>Season</u>
Mount Jackson C&H	76 cows/calves	7/1-10/15
Sardine C&H	125 cows/calves	7/16-9/15

The grazing use on each allotment is season long with continuous use. The District Ranger must approve any use outside the authorized numbers and season listed above in advance. The boundaries of Sardine C&H allotment are not completely fenced. Cattle drift outside the allotment boundary will be controlled through management. Permitted use and grazing management for the Little Walker C&H allotment will be covered in the AOI for the Little Walker C&H allotment.

ALLOWABLE USE:

Mt. Jackson C&H:

- * Riparian plant communities can be grazed a maximum of 55% of the current annual growth of key herbaceous species (grass and grass-like species) and a maximum of 30% of the current annual growth of key shrub species (willows).
- * Upland sites (sage and mountain brush plant communities) can be grazed a maximum of 45% of the current annual growth of key grasses and 30% of the current annual growth of young aspen trees.
- * A maximum of 20% streambank disturbance along any natural stream is allowed.

Sardine C&H:

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 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.
- ✘ 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.
- ✘ Livestock grazing will be modified or suspended on meadow ecosystems when it is determined that ecological status is moving in a downward trend.
- ✘ Pesticide application to livestock is prohibited within riparian conservation areas and critical aquatic refuges.

Upland sites:

- ✘ Sage and mountain brush plant communities can be grazed a maximum of 45% of the current annual growth of key grasses and 40% of the current annual growth of bitterbrush.

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 phone Ingrid.

In areas of Yosemite toad habitat, livestock are excluded from standing water and saturated soils in wet meadows and associated streams and springs occupied by Yosemite toads or identified as "essential habitat" in conservation assessment for the Yosemite toad during the breeding and rearing season. If fencing of the area is impractical, grazing will be excluded from the entire meadow until the meadow has been dry for two weeks. Wet meadows are defined as relatively open meadows with low to moderate amounts of woody vegetation that have standing water on June 1 or for more than two weeks following snow melt. If these conditions do not persist in the meadow for more than two weeks, grazing will only be allowed in those portions of the meadow where dry conditions exist.

The management of Yosemite Toads on the Sardine C&H allotment was discussed. Amphibian surveys were conducted on the Sardine allotment during 2001. Yosemite toads were found on the allotment near Leavitt Lake, Latopie Lake, Koenig Lake, and along McKay Creek in Sardine Meadows. Cattle seldom use the allotment around the Latopie and Koenig lakes, however they do use Sardine Meadows and a small meadow surrounding portions of Leavitt Lake. In the past electric fences were used in Sardine Meadows to fence out the areas utilized by toads and minimize livestock impacts to the species. I understand you plan to continue using electric fence in 2008. In order to mitigate impacts to Yosemite toad around the small meadow surrounding Leavitt Lake, cattle will not be allowed to congregate around the lake, but will be moved through the area enroute to Kennedy Canyon.

RANGE IMPROVEMENTS

Range improvements listed in your permit must be maintained to standards listed in Part 3 of your term grazing permit prior to livestock entering the allotments. If an improvement is inaccessible prior to the on date, you must notify staff in my office prior to livestock entry into the allotment. It is your responsibility to maintain the drift fences separating the Mt. Jackson and Sierra Blanca allotments on even numbered years. F.M. Fulstone maintains these fences on odd numbered years. It is also your responsibility to maintain the fence between the Mt. Jackson and Frying Pan-Murphy Creek allotment on even numbered years. Todd Sceirine maintains this fence on odd numbered years.

There are at least two water troughs in the north end of the Mt. Jackson allotment that have been installed on meadows. Our current Forest Plan direction calls for water troughs to be moved off of meadows when they are replaced so if and when these troughs are replaced, they will be located in areas away from the meadows.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT

Forms for recording your actual use and range improvement maintenance costs are included with this plan. Please complete and return the forms by November 1, 2008.

Salt must be placed at least ¼ mile from water, (springs, seeps, and streams), roads, and trails. If you have questions about the placement of salt, contact Ingrid in my office and she will locate suitable sites with your input. Dead livestock must be moved at least 100 yards from water and from roads and trails used by the public. All garbage associated with managing the allotments must be removed from National Forest system lands. If you see a wildfire, please contact the Minden Interagency Dispatch at **(775) 883-5995**.

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 is concentrated such as loading/unloading areas, water developments, and salting areas. We have implemented a Noxious Weed Free Hay order on our Forest. This will require any hay that is brought onto the National Forest to 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.

The grazing fee is \$1.35 per head month the same as last year.

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 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.

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 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.

Other:

We will again be collecting vegetation data for the Sierra Basin Grazing Project, which includes Mt. Jackson & Sardine. If you would like copies of the data collected on your allotments please call our office and we will provide those to you.

Ingrid Drieling will be checking on the availability of a replacement trough for the Mt. Jackson C&H allotment.

If you have any questions regarding these instructions or any aspect of grazing on the National Forest, please call Ingrid Drieling at (760)932-5808 or Amy Baumer at (760) 932-5852.

Sincerely,

CHERYL F. PROBERT
District Ranger

Encl: actual use and maintenance forms