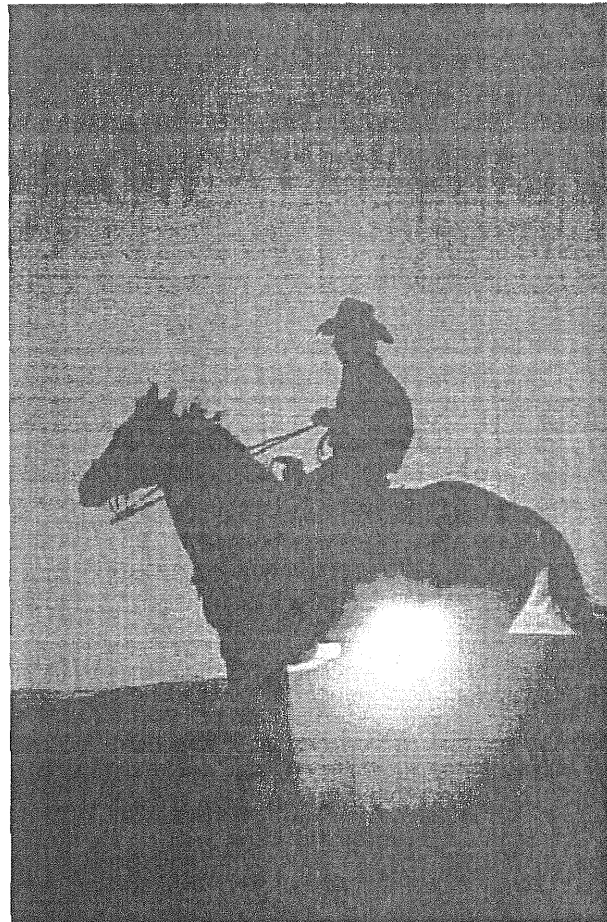


BEAVERHEAD-DEERLODGE NATIONAL FOREST

STOCK MANAGEMENT PLAN



April 18, 2003

BEAVERHEAD-DEERLODGE NATIONAL FOREST
STOCK MANAGEMENT PLAN
for pack and saddle stock and related gear

PURPOSE

This plan establishes guidelines for management of horses, mules, and other pack animals that will be used on official business by employees of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. Policy for saddles and other gear related to this use is included. The term "stock", as used in this plan, refers to involved animals. "Gear" refers to saddles, blankets, bridles, and other gear.

HERD SIZE

Pack and saddle stock are routinely used in range, wildlife, recreation, fisheries, trails and other programs requiring back country travel on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge. A base level of need will be established on each district as recorded in stock records and projections, including projected funding levels. However, funding in all of these programs have fluctuated significantly over time. The short field season, coupled with lack of readily available pasture on some districts and winter feeding costs has significant impacts on suitable herd size and related funding for Forest Service owned animals.

Forest Service ownership will maintain a herd size on each district such that each animal is used, as a minimum, one day per week average during the field season. During periods of unusual activity, or when specific project needs or funding levels exceed the normal need for FS-owned animals, units will rent stock from commercial outlets, borrow animals from other FS units, or make arrangements with employees to use animals they own.

ACCEPTABLE ANIMAL CHARACTERISTICS

Topography on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge varies significantly. Stock use varies from an individual using stock alone for extended periods, or riding in large groups that may include animals of varying temperament and ability. All stock must be capable of adapting to this variation. We are well into a period when few employees possess significant experience in the use of pack and saddle stock, especially for extended use in rough terrain. Only animals with a gentle, patient nature that are willing to adapt their gait to match terrain and the pace set by others riding in a group will be acceptable for ownership by the Forest. Gaited animals are acceptable, and may even be preferable in some instances, provided these animals meet the other characteristics noted. Animals that routinely are hard to catch or load, or have a history of becoming hard to manage for "novice" riders are not acceptable for purchase. In the event that the Forest unknowingly acquires such an animal, it may be given one chance to be retrained to meet these requirements. If the training proves unsuccessful, the animal will be sold as unsafe for use by Forest employees. Line officers have ultimate responsibility for this decision. Animals that tend to stumble or become overly excited in unpredictable situations will be considered unsafe.

Animals will not be over 12 years old or under 4 years old at time of purchase. Geldings should generally be purchased for horses. Mares may be considered if they have been spayed. Purchase

stock from local breeders and traders whenever possible. Districts may purchase animals up to \$3000. Purchases should be coordinated with the Forest Stock Coordinator. Cost associated with transportation will be considered in the total cost. Stock will not be purchased from employees or their immediate family under any circumstances. Procurement from former employees must be reviewed for possible conflicts of interest and approved in accordance with Department Regulation 5000-6. Purchasers will ensure that all animals have adequate brand inspections and health certificates before they are purchased.

Stamina adequate to cover 20 miles per day in fairly rough terrain for several days at a time will be required. Stock should weigh between 1000 to 1300 pounds, depending upon the size of anticipated riders and packs. Horses that weigh more can add up to unacceptable weights for hauling vehicles, although they may be justified for larger employees or where heavy packs are needed. Lighter animals may not hold up under extensive use by heavy employees or packs, but may be acceptable for lighter employees. Document rationale for purchasing any animal not meeting these weight guidelines.

Each animal will be monitored separately concerning its ability to meet demands as it ages. Generally, horses subject to hard use should not be kept past 20 years of age, and mules past 25 years.

ADDITIONAL DIRECTION FOR PURCHASING PACK AND SADDLE STOCK

Per FSH 6309.32 and FSAR Part 4G13, the role of horse experts and purchasing officials is as follows:

- a. Canvass prospective vendors regarding the availability of stock and visit first those vendors who respond with the lowest prices.
- b. For purchases under \$2,500, it is optional for purchasing official to accompany the horse expert(s); for purchases over \$2,500, the purchasing official must accompany the horse expert(s).
- c. The purchasing official ensures that: the procurement is properly executed; the procurement decision takes into account price and other procurement requirements; transportation and health inspection arrangements are made properly; and the bills of sale are prepared along with purchase documents.

LIVESTOCK RECORDS

Basic records will be maintained on each FS owned animal, including use records. Use records will be maintained on all animals, regardless of ownership, to address liability and insure that use justifies related expense.

FOREST SERVICE OWNED ANIMALS

A separate file will be maintained on each animal. Appendix A through D includes examples of recommended records to be maintained. This file should include the veterinary history, shoeing

and other maintenance records for each animal. An annual use record will be included (See Appendix D).

LEASED ANIMALS

The livestock lease agreement will include value and liability rates that will be used should the animal be injured or destroyed during official use. Utilization, as well as shoeing and veterinary records will be kept for these animals.

Commercially rented animals may be used to supplement Forest Service stock as needed for special projects, assuming a rental source can be found. If a commercial source is not available, rental from employees may be approved by the Forest Supervisor. Rental animals may be used when FS owned animals are not available on the District or nearby units when they are needed. Only experienced riders should handle rented stock for the first week of use, since they may possess unpredictable and unknown traits at the time of rental. Use of a rental agreement is needed for commercially rented animals.

PERSONAL PREFERENCE

The personal preference approval form with the employee will indicate use period and frequency of use. Restrictions for payment of damage to privately owned livestock used for personal preference are stated in FSH 6509.11h, Sec. 33.2, which limits payment for damage to an employee's livestock to \$50.00

The personal preference use fee is offset by the costs of feed and care while livestock are actually in use. Since the use fee is offset by feed and care there is no reimbursement.

Government furnished pasture will not be provided in lieu of a use fee. As a general policy when use of employee owned stock is justified, the following policy will be used:

Employee owned stock shall be transported to the work station by privately owned transportation, the stock can then be transported to the work site and back to the station by government transportation.

Approval for personal preference use must be given by the District Ranger for District use, unless the animals in question belong to the District Ranger, in which case the Forest Supervisor will approve the use. The Forest Supervisor or acting will approve personal preference use for S.O. staff animals.

Normal gear will not be transferred with an employee, unless the receiving unit is willing to exchange similar gear for the equipment in question. Customized gear may be transferred with an employee, providing the employee will be making substantial use of stock in their new official assignment. Transfer of such property requires the written approval of both losing and gaining offices before shipment. This gear will remain U.S. Government property at the time an employee retires, or moves to a position not requiring significant stock use.

Saddles, blankets, bridles and other gear paid for using government funds are U.S. Government property, not personnel property, and will be accounted for as such. No funds in excess of the normal cost on the commercial market for similar gear will be paid for such gear. Custom made gear is not necessary unless an employee has specific physical characteristics making customization necessary. Such purchases will be justified in writing for these employees.

GEAR

Each unit that owns or uses livestock on a routine basis where the above records will be maintained will designate a "Stock Manager". The unit stock manager will review the log used for that unit annually, by January 1, and at other times if animal use appears low, to evaluate use of all stock on that unit. The review will cover all animals owned by the government, rented, or furnished by employees to ensure that use averaged at least one day per week while they were being boarded by the government during the normal use period (field season). If FS owned animals do not meet this use intensity, continued ownership will either be reviewed to see how to increase use and decrease dependency on animals from other sources, or the animal should be declared surplus. Arrangement will be made to lease animals only for the period of need so that animals are used at least one day per week during the lease period.

RECORD MAINTENANCE

Private trucks and trailers should not be used for official business except on rare occasions when government equipment is not available.

Records must be kept on private horse use (see Appendix D)

Those private animals whose shoeing, vet, and feed bills are covered by the government should be used exclusively for government business. If these animals are used for private business or recreational use during the sign up period, the owner should bare the maintenance expenses.

In order to qualify for feed, shoeing, and vet compensation, private stock must be used at least twice a week for official government business during the sign up period. If animals are used less than this amount, use will be considered incidental. In this situation, animals should be transported to and from government pasture or holding facilities between use periods, and said expenses will not be covered.

CLARIFICATION OF PRIVATE HORSE USE

DISPOSAL OF STOCK AND GEAR

Reasons for disposing of stock deemed unsafe or too old for service will be documented in sufficient detail so others can easily determine why the animal was sold. Both stock and gear will become old and unserviceable over time if used as intended. Ensure that description of defects for which animals are recommended for disposal are professional and suitable for the Property Management Officer to make an adequately informed decision. This may require a veterinarian's statement about proper disposal of an animal.

Gear may be declared unserviceable when continued use endangers either stock or rider, and cost of repair exceeds 35% of the purchase of new equipment.

PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION

Horses, mules and other livestock: All government owned stock shall be branded with "US" on the left hip. This brand has been registered for use by the US Forest Service in Montana.

Gear: All gear will be stamped or marked "US Forest Service", in a conspicuous location so there is no question as to ownership. Difficult items to mark, such as bridles, may be stamped with "US" to indicate ownership.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Horses, mules and similar livestock, along with saddles, are no longer considered sensitive property. Accountability will be maintained as required at the district or unit level by either a stock management person or SSS/BMA. Acquisition or sale of this property will be approved by the appropriate line officer. Districts should keep original Bills of sale, Vet Inspections, and all necessary records for stock purchases/sales. Stock management personnel should coordinate with Property Supply Technician when stock is to be sold, transferred or euthanized so PST can insure that appropriate forms are completed and filed.

STOCK MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

Forest Program Manager

Tom Heintz

ROLE: Oversee development and implementation of Stock Management Plan and Forest-wide training efforts on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.

Forest Stock Coordinator

Grant Godbolt

ROLE: Provide support to eight Ranger Districts on the Forest. This includes providing assistance in locating and purchasing stock; selling and disposing of stock; matching the right horse to the right rider; and working with stock that are not performing to Forest Service standards to determine if they have a place on the Forest or if they should be replaced.

District Coordinators:

Dillon	Brad Weatherd
Wise River	Dale McKnight
Wisdom	Bob Hutton
Butte	Grant Godbolt
Madison	Marianne Klein
Jefferson	Ron Gibson
Pintler – Philipsburg	George McClain
Pintler – Deer Lodge WC	Don Despain

ROLE: Manage all aspects of the stock program on the District including vet, shoeing, feed, pasture, truck, trailer, and gear needs. Assess livestock needs on the District, and organize to fill needs with support of the Forest Stock Coordinator. Evaluate skill level of stock users and provide training as needed to insure rider's skill level is such to provide for a safe situation. Maintain use records for all livestock used on the District on a yearly basis. Annually complete sign up forms for personal stock that will be used for government business.

STOCK MANAGEMENT PLAN APPROVAL

The above Stock Management Plan was approved on April 22, 2003, and will remain in effect until cancelled or amended by the Forest Supervisor.

THOMAS K. REILLY
Forest Supervisor

INSPECTION RECORD

OWNER NAME: _____ LOCATION: _____

ANIMAL'S BREED / COLOR: _____ AGE: _____

SIZE: _____ ASKING PRICE: \$ _____

ATTRIBUTE	GOOD	FAIR	POOR		ATTRIBUTE	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	REMARKS
Balance					Catch				
Feet					Trailer				
Front Legs					Gait				
Back Legs					Faults				
Head					Proud Cut				
Eyes					Hoof Color				
Hip					Other Comments				
Disposition									

BILL OF SALE

I/We _____ on this _____ day of _____, 20____,
do hereby sell and convey unto _____ my/our right, title, and all
interests in the following number, names, and described animals:

SALE PRICE: \$ _____

Signature of Seller

Address of Seller

INVOICE

(Use when vendor lacks invoice)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____, State _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____

To: U.S.D.▲ Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest
 420 ■ Barrett Street
 Dillon, MT 59725
 Phone: (406) 683-3900

Purchase Order No.: _____

ITEM NO	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE	AMOUNT
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

APPROVED BY: _____

Date: _____

STOCK RECORD

ANIMAL NAME: _____ SEX: _____ YEAR OF BIRTH: _____

BREED: _____ COLOR: _____ HEIGHT: _____ WEIGHT: _____

MARKINGS/SCARS/BRANDS: _____

PROPERTY NUMBER: _____ DATE PURCHASED: _____

PURCHASED FROM (name and address): _____

TEMPERMENT: _____

PROBLEMS: _____

REMARKS: _____

(SKETCH ANIMAL TO SHOW IDENTIFYING MARKS)

STOCK USE RECORD

Month: _____ 20__

Re order: _____

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		
Name																																	

SAMPLE



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Beaverhead-Deerlodge
National Forest

File Code: 6320
Route To:

Date:

Subject: Employee Provided Horses and Equipment – Personal Preference

To:

You are hereby authorized to use your horse(s) and related tack and equipment while performing your duties during the _____ field season. The animal(s) description is enclosed.

Our understanding is that horse(s) is provided on a “no charge” basis. The Forest Service, in accordance with FSAR 4G03.670 will provide forage, care and housing when unit is engaged in Forest Service activities.

Be aware that under the Act of March 4, 1919, as amended by the Act of January 31, 1931, reimbursement by the Forest Service for loss or damage to employee’s livestock is limited to \$50.00.

NAME
Title

Enclosure

SAMPLE

SAMPLE

DESCRIPTION OF ANIMALS – EMPLOYEE PROVIDED HORSE(S) AND EQUIPMENT

Age: 13 years old

Description: Bay Gelding

Markings: Bay with black mane and tail

Height: 15.3 hands

Weight: 1100 lbs.

Name: Brumby

Acquisition Cost: \$800.00

Age: 8 years old

Description: Sorrel Gelding

Markings: Sorrel with star on forehead and white rear feet

Height: 15 hands

Weight: 1100 lbs.

Name: Dan

Acquisition Cost: \$800.00

