

3-6-95



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Eagle Lake Resource Area
705 Hall Street
Susanville, CA 96130

In Reply
Refer to:
4320 (CA-026)
CF 042017
March 6, 1995

Dear Twin Peaks Allotment Affected Interest:


Enclosed for your information is the "Twin Peaks Allotment 1995 Annual Plan of Operations for John Espil Sheep Company, Inc. Cattle Operation." It is intended to guide Espil cattle use on the allotment in 1995.

This plan was agreed to at the Twin Peaks Allotment consultation meeting of February 21, 1995, to which all affected interests were invited.

Any questions concerning this plan should be directed to Ken Visser or me at (916) 257-0456 or at the above address.

Thank you for your continued interest in the management of this allotment.

Sincerely,


Linda D. Hansen
Area Manager

Enclosure
As stated

March 1, 1995

TWIN PEAKS ALLOTMENT 1995 ANNUAL PLAN OF OPERATION FOR JOHN
ESPIL SHEEP COMPANY, INC. CATTLE OPERATION

This plan pertains to John Espil Sheep Company, Inc.'s (Espil) 1995 cattle operation on the Twin Peaks Allotment and was agreed to at the Twin Peaks Allotment consultation meeting of February 21, 1995.

The 1995 Espil Twin Peaks Allotment sheep operation will be conducted within the framework of the Twin Peaks Allotment Management Plan as amended in 1992 (AMP) and is not addressed in this Plan of Operation.

Laver Ranches cattle use plan is being developed separately and is not addressed in this Plan of Operation.

1995 PLAN OF OPERATION

A. March and April - Cattle Turnout

1. Lower Smoke Creek Area

On or after March 1, and following determination by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in consultation with Espil and any interested affected interests that soils are sufficiently firm that soils are not "punched" in a significant portion of area, + or - 200 cattle will be put in the Lower Smoke Creek area. The soils ability to resist "punching" will be based on a determination of whether cattle hoofs are likely to sink deep enough into the soil to shear off grass plant roots. Primary consideration for this criterion are areas of vertisol soils and hydric soils.

2. AMP-identified Turn-Out Areas

All areas referred to are within the AMP-identified turn-out area for north pasture turn-out years, i.e. "east of Buffalo Creek and northeast of Burro Mountain." Cattle numbers are approximate. Espil will inform BLM of actual numbers as turn-out occurs.

Following determination that soils are sufficiently firm that soils are not "punched" and that 40 percent of 1994 residual vegetation is present, the following numbers will be turned out in the stated locations, between March 1 and March 10:

- (a) 150 cattle (+ or -) will be put in and around Chimney Rock canyon;
- (b) 150 cattle (+ or -) will be put in and around Crooked Creek, high in the drainage, east of the vertisol soils in this area, as identified by George Wingate of BLM for Espil; and,

- (c) 200 cattle (+ or -) will be put in and around Horse Canyon, high in the drainage, east of the vertisol soils in this area, as identified by George Wingate of BLM for Espil.

If the higher elevation Crooked Creek and Horse Canyon areas are not ready for use based on the soil punching and residual vegetation conditions, then the Crooked Creek herd will be placed in the Chimney Rock Canyon area (in addition to the Chimney Rock Canyon herd) and the Horse Canyon herd will remain at Heller Ranch until the criteria are met.

On or about April 1, the remainder of the cattle (250 + or -) will be put in the Buffalo Hills subdivision, away from the vertisol soils in this area, as identified by George Wingate of BLM for Espil.

In late April, BLM, Espil and any interested affected interests, will jointly inspect the Wilcox Canyon area and the area in the vicinity of Twin Peaks Mountain to Grass Mountain to determine the best area, within the greater area described, depending on forage and water conditions, to put the herd that has been grazing and calving in the Lower Smoke Creek pasture.

[NOTE TO SECTION A: The Lower Smoke Creek, Horse Canyon and Crooked Creek areas were toured on February 22, 1995. Lower Smoke Creek and Horse Canyon met the turnout criteria. Crooked Creek lacked sufficient residual vegetation. Turnout will not occur in Crooked Creek in 1995. Therefore, the Crooked Creek herd will be turned out with the Chimney Rock canyon herd. The Chimney Rock Canyon area will be inspected on March 3, 1995.]

B. May Through October

On or before May 1, the cattle will be moved from the Lower Smoke Creek area north and/or northwest to the preferred area(s) within the Wilcox/Grass Mountain/Twin Peaks area.

Between mid-May and mid-June, cattle grazing in the Buffalo Hills area and Buffalo Creek drainages will be gathered to the Buffalo Ranch, be branded, and be turned out north of the Buffalo Meadows ranch. During early June, 200 cattle (+ or -) from the Buffalo Ranch herd will be pushed to the Stone Corral area and some are expected to drift west from there. When the 40% utilization standard is reached in the North Fork of Buffalo (as stated in the 1992 AMP addendum) the cattle in this area will be pushed north and west.

Once fencing of the South Fork of Parsnip, including the Main Fork Parsnip and a portion of the Main Fork of Buffalo Creek (the "Buffalo/Parsnip Fence" - BLM Proj. No. 5762), is completed, the area enclosed will not be grazed by cattle for the remainder of 1995; the unenclosed portion may be grazed to 60% utilization, at which time cattle will be

moved out of the area.

Also between mid-May and mid-June, BLM will complete the "Middle Fork Buffalo Fence" (BLM Proj. No. 5764) and Espil will complete the fencing around the Norton Place. Once fencing is done, cattle will be pushed from the fenced area of the Middle Fork Buffalo (aka Norton Canyon) and this area will not be used again until fall, when cattle will be trailed through it. Once a 60% use threshold on key grasses and grasslikes is reached on public meadows adjacent to the Norton place, cattle remaining on these meadows will be pushed north and west from the Norton place.

During early June, 200 (+ or -) cattle from the Buffalo Ranch herd will be pushed into the West side of Rowland Mountain in the vicinity of Cottonwood Creek and will be scattered from there to Wire Springs and Rowland Mountain.

Also in June, the remainder of the Buffalo Ranch herd (+ or - 100 cattle) will be pushed towards Paiute Spring and Antelope Basin.

In late June (by June 30), cattle grazing in the Wilcox Canyon and/or Twin Peaks to Grass Mountain area will be pushed to the Black's Mountain/Painter area.

The area between Byers Spring and Horse Corral is a "high traffic" area for wild horses and cattle, and use by both is expected. This area received heavy use by wild horses and cattle in 1994 and BLM removed some horses from the area in late 1994. Espil will have a man stationed at Painter who will be able to move livestock promptly if upland utilization objectives are being approached or exceeded in this area.

Although cattle use in the South Pasture is allowed after July 1 under the terms of the grazing permit, Espil is planning voluntary rest from cattle grazing in the South Pasture in 1995. If, after July 1, and based on resource circumstances, use of the North Pasture needs to be adjusted, consultation will occur among BLM, Espil and any interested affected interests. Alternative use areas in the North Pasture will be considered before use is made in the south pasture.

Cattle grazing the Rowland Mountain area including Cottonwood Creek will be pushed into the Painter Flat area by July 15.

By August, all Espil cattle but the 200 (+ or -) grazing in the Stone Corral subdivision will be in the Painter/Blacks subdivisions.

At the beginning of September, cows grazing in the Painter/Blacks subdivisions without smaller calves will be pushed to the Horn Springs and Wagontire areas. Cows with small calves will remain in the Painter Flat area.

Beginning mid-October, the cattle grazing in the Stone Corral subdivision will be gathered

and pushed through the Middle Fork Buffalo to the Buffalo Meadows ranch. The calves will be weaned and it is projected that 50 to 100 culled cattle will be removed from the allotment at this time. The remaining cattle will be pushed south from Buffalo Meadows to the Salt Desert Area.

C. November through January - Cattle Takeout

At the end of October and during November, cattle will be moved from all other subdivisions to the Salt Desert area via Smoke Creek, the Buffalo Creek drainages, the Buffalo Meadows Ranch road, and other routes. If November weather is mild, it is expected the cattle will remain scattered and will require an extensive gathering effort, resulting in gathering continuing into early December. The goal is to have all the cattle moved into the Salt Desert area by December 1.

During December and January, some cattle will be removed from the Salt Desert area for animal husbandry reasons and all permitted cattle will be off the allotment by January 31.