



File#: 15700-20/MEHMAL

April 18, 2013

John Marshall Mehma

s.22

Re: Approved Range Use Plan (RUP) for RAN073397 E01

Dear John Marshall Mehma:

Please find enclosed an approved Range Use Plan (RUP) for RAN073397 E01 which has been reviewed and signed by the District Manager. This operational management plan outlines your management accountabilities and is integral to the management of your grazing tenure. Please ensure you understand your obligations and keep a copy of the plan for your reference. The plan is valid until December 31, 2017.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this document or other matters related to your RUP or range tenure, please contact Rae Hadow (250-442-4377) or Werner Baliko (250-442-5426) in the Grand Forks Office.

Sincerely,

Margaret Miller  
Resource Clerk

## RANGE USE PLAN

The Minister, pursuant to section 37 of the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, has determined that this range use plan is consistent with the agreement under the *Range Act* that pertains to the plan, and conforms to the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, the regulations and the standards.

This range use plan is associated with the following range agreement

Name: John Marshall Mehmäl, dba/Mehmäl Ranch  
Address:  
Telephone: 522  
E-mail:  
File #: 15700-20/MEHMAL  
Range Agreement #: RAN073397 E01  
Authorized Use: 1220 AUMs  
Range Unit: Overton Moody (5052)

Submitted by Signature: John Mehmäl on Jan 22 2013  
Name: JOHN MEHMAL Date

This plan takes effect: January 1, 2013  
This plan expires: December 31, 2017

Approved: JIM GUIDO on April 11, 2013  
ACTING DISTRICT MANAGER Date  
Garth Wiggill, District Manager  
Selkirk Resource District

Animal Identification

# **OVERTON-MOODY RANGE UNIT**

## **RANGE USE PLAN**



**This plan has been prepared by the Mehmal Ranch with assistance and information supplied from the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations**

**January 2013**

## Background

This range use plan has been prepared to comply with the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and the *Range Planning and Practices Regulations* and outlines the proposed range management of the area north of Highway 3 and within the Overton-Moody Range Unit. This range unit is divided into several pastures, all of which have some component of native grassland ecosystems. This Range Use Plan will attempt to address the stewardship of this unit and its ecology, the forage needs and economics of the Crown Range tenure system but also the critical wildlife values associated with these grasslands.

In addition to this challenge, this plan must address issues and concerns which have arisen since the original plan was signed in 1997. These include:

- Aware of sensitive species WHAs
- Three Lewis' Woodpecker WHAs
- Ungulate Winter Range – no range specific measures
- The Gilpin Grasslands Provincial Park over approximately 850 hectares
- Increasing fragmentation of pastures and loss of access to water by the fencing of private lands within pastures
- Encroachment and ingrowth of Douglas fir into the grasslands
- Unabated increase in population of introduced wildlife species, California bighorn sheep and elk
- Continued working relationship with Nature Trust

The Mehmal Ranch has had range tenure over this unit since the 1930's. Much of what is the spring pasture is their private land. For most of that time, until the late 1990's the native grassland areas were badly infested with noxious weeds such as St. John's wort, diffuse knapweed, Dalmatian toadflax and downy brome. With the recent introduction of some insects and spraying many of these weed species are now under biological control and the native grasses are re-establishing. Many of the fences within the unit that were built by ARDSA in the 1970's and were in disrepair have either been replaced or have been dismantled. In addition the Ranch was responsible for acquiring a Grazing Enhancement Fund award in 1996 to study and stratify the Gilpin Grasslands in order to identify possible candidate areas for Ecosystem Restoration work by re-introducing fire. Several areas and approximately 100 hectares were treated.

With the increasing populations of whitetail deer, California bighorn sheep and elk in addition to increased public demand for land use on the unit, the challenges of trying to operate a successful cow/calf ranch are formidable.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Topic.....   | Page |
|--|------|
| Background.....                                      | 2    |
| Grazing Schedule.....                                | 4    |
| General utilization measures.....                    | 5    |
| Existing Plant communities.....                      | 6    |
| Key areas.....                                       | 7    |
| Measures to address the spread of noxious weeds..... | 7    |
| Measures to address resource objectives              |      |
| • Soil.....  | 7    |
| • Forage.....  | 8    |
| • Water.....   | 8    |
| • Fish.....  | 8    |
| • Wildlife.....                                      | 8    |
| • Biodiversity.....                                  | 9    |
| • Wildlife Habitat Areas.....                        | 9    |
| Maintenance of range developments.....               | 9    |

## GRAZING SCHEDULE

The Mehmäl Ranch

Overton-Moody Range Unit


RAN073397

2013

| Pasture Unit    | Periods of Use   | Numbers and Types      | Total AUMS |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------------|------------|
| Dead Horse      | May 7 – June 15  | 166 cow/calf & 8 bulls | 234        |
| Valentine       | June 16 – July 7 | 166 cow/calf & 8 bulls | 129        |
| Morrissey/Moody | July 8 – Sept 15 | 166 cow/calf & 8 bulls | 410        |
| Gilpin          | Sept 16 – Nov 30 | 166 cow/calf & 8 bulls | 444        |
|                 |                  | PLD                    | 0          |
|                 |                  | Total                  | 1217 AUMs  |

- Dates are approximate and may be altered by actual range readiness, levels of utilization and weather conditions.
- The majority of livestock will be moved within a reasonable time in accordance with the grazing schedule.

- Livestock Identification:

|                        |   |                  |           |
|------------------------|---|------------------|-----------|
| <u>Approved Brand:</u> |  | <u>Location:</u> | Right Hip |
| <u>Tag Colour:</u>     | cows = green, calves = white  | <u>Location:</u> | Right Ear |

## GENERAL UTILIZATION MEASURES

| Species*                        | Common Name          | Range Readiness Criteria-Leaf Stage | Range Readiness Criteria-Height | Stubble Height (cm) |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Grasses</b>                  |                      |                                     |                                 |                     |
| <i>Agropyron spicatum</i>       | Bluebunch Wheatgrass | 4.0                                 |                                 |                     |
|                                 | early spring         |                                     | 20cm/stable soil                | 13                  |
|                                 | late spring          |                                     | 25cm/stable soil                | 15                  |
|                                 | fall                 |                                     | stable soil                     | 9                   |
| <i>Agropyron cristatum</i>      | Crested Wheatgrass   | 3.5                                 | 10cm/stable soil                | 9                   |
| <i>Agropyron subsecundum</i>    | Awned Wheatgrass     |                                     | 12 cm                           | 10                  |
| <i>Aristeda longiseta</i>       | Red Threeawn         |                                     | 12 cm                           | 8                   |
| <i>Bromus inermis</i>           | Smooth Brome         |                                     | 15 cm                           | 9                   |
| <i>Bromus riparius</i>          | Meadow Brome         |                                     | 15 cm                           | 9                   |
| <i>Calamagrostis canadensis</i> | Reedgrass            |                                     | 15 cm/stable soil               | 8                   |
| <i>Calamagrostis rubescens</i>  | Pinegrass            | 2.5                                 | leaves nodding                  | 8                   |
| <i>Dactylis glomerata</i>       | Orchardgrass         | 3.0                                 | 15 cm                           | 9                   |
| <i>Elymus cinereus</i>          | Basin Wildrye        |                                     | 15 cm                           | 15                  |
| <i>Elymus glaucus</i>           | Blue Wildrye         |                                     | 15 cm                           | 12                  |
| <i>Festuca idahoensis</i>       | Idaho Fescue         | 4.0                                 | 10 cm                           | 8                   |
| <i>Festuca scabrella</i>        | Rough Fescue         | 4.5                                 | 20 cm                           | 16                  |
| <i>Koeleria macrantha</i>       | Junegrass            |                                     | 12 cm                           | 10                  |
| <i>Oryzopsis asperifolia</i>    | Mountain Ricegrass   |                                     | flowering                       |                     |
| <i>Oryzopsis hymenoides</i>     | Indian Ricegrass     |                                     | flowering                       | 10                  |
| <i>Phleum pratense</i>          | Timothy              |                                     | 15 cm                           | 9                   |
| <i>Poa compressa</i>            | Canada Bluegrass     |                                     | 12 cm                           | 8                   |
| <i>Poa pratensis</i>            | Kentucky Bluegrass   | 2.5                                 | 10 cm                           | 8                   |
| <i>Poa sandbergii</i>           | Sandberg's Bluegrass |                                     | 8 cm/stable soil                | 5                   |
| <i>Sporobolus cryptandrus</i>   | Sand Dropseed        |                                     | 12 cm                           | 10                  |
| <i>Stipa columbiana</i>         | Columbian Wheatgrass | 4.0                                 | 12 cm                           | 9                   |
| <i>Stipa comata</i>             | Needle and Thread    | 3.0                                 | 12 cm                           | 9                   |

| <i>Stipa spartea</i>         | Porcupine Grass   |  | 12 cm                          | 9                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Trisetum spicatum</i>     | Spike Trisetum    |  | 10 cm                          | 8                         |
| <b>Sedges and Rushes</b>     |                   |  |                                |                           |
| <i>Carex aquatilis</i>       | Water Sedge       |  | 25 cm                          | 20                        |
| <i>Carex atherodes</i>       | Awed Sedge        |  | 25 cm                          | 20                        |
| <i>Carex rostrata</i>        | Beaked Sedge      |  | 25 cm                          | 20                        |
| Species                      | Common Name       | Use Level (%)<br>of current<br>year's growth | Range<br>Readiness<br>Criteria | Stubble<br>Height<br>(cm) |
| <b>Shrubs **</b>             |                   |  |                                |                           |
| <i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i> | Saskatoon         | 10   | n/a                            | n/a                       |
| <i>Ceanothus spp</i>         | Snowbrush         | 10   | n/a                            | n/a                       |
| <i>Cornus stolonifera</i>    | Red-osier Dogwood | 10   | n/a                            | n/a                       |
| <i>Populus tremuloides</i>   | Aspen             | 10   | n/a                            | n/a                       |
| <i>Prunus virginiana</i>     | Chokecherry       | 10   | n/a                            | n/a                       |
| <i>Rose spp</i>              | Rose              | 10   | n/a                            | n/a                       |
| <i>Salix spp</i>             | Willow            | 10   | n/a                            | n/a                       |
| <i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>  | Snowberry         | 10   | n/a                            | n/a                       |

#### Measurements for range readiness,

\* Utilization standards are based on combined use by livestock and wildlife and are set to maintain or improve the plant community. The utility corridors will not be measured as use is traditionally high by both wildlife and cattle and encouraged by the utility companies.

\*\* Overall utilization of shrubs will not exceed 15% of shoots of current year's growth.

Percentages based on the whole area. Some areas will be more heavily browsed such as the utility corridors. Based on height of browse removed it would appear to be caused by elk.

\*\* This allows for incidental livestock use, with the remainder dedicated to wildlife and plant species maintenance. If an issue is raised, efforts should be made through Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations to determine what species of ungulate involved and appropriate action taken.

### Existing Plant Communities

Much of the Gilpin Grasslands are in early seral stage with pockets of mid and some late seral. Year-round heavy grazing in the late 1890's through the early half of the twentieth century led to excessive disturbances and a degraded plant community. This predisposed the entire area to a series of introduced weed invasions that completely dominated the south-facing slopes. St. John's Wort in the 50's and 60's, diffuse knapweed in the 70's and 80's, Dalmatian toadflax in the mid 90's and now sulphur cinquefoil and hoary alyssum threaten the once bunchgrass-rich hillside. An aggressive weed program by the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations co-ordinated with the



Regional District of Kootenay Boundary and the Ministry of Agriculture combined the use of herbicides and the introduction of numerous insect species for the bio-control of these weeds. Despite these efforts, these weeds still infest the slopes, but progress has been made. Encroachment and in-growth by Douglas fir has also had a negative impact on this grasslands ecosystem. However native species are manifesting themselves in increasing numbers in various locations across this landscape. Results of transects inside and outside the exclosures would indicate that the Desired Plant Community on the majority of the south-facing slopes should be composed of varying populations of bluebunch wheatgrass, rough fescue, Idaho fescue, junegrass, balsamroot, various native shrub species including Saskatoon, willows, ninebark and snowberry and a component of lichens and mosses. Tree species dominant on the hillside should be the fire-resistant (i.e. larger diameter) ponderosa pine, Douglas fir and western larch.

More detailed plant community descriptions are available at the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Selkirk Resource District office in Grand Forks. In addition, numerous transects and two grazing exclosures have been established on the Gilpin and data is available.

### **Measures to Address the Spread of Noxious Weeds**

The Mehmal Ranch will cooperate and participate with the Boundary Invasive Species Society efforts to contain the spread of weeds. This will include identification and reporting of new weed threats, assisting with future containment programs, assisting with release of biological control agents, staying on established roadways where possible and grass seed with a suitable mix any disturbances caused by the Mehmal Ranch.

### **Measures to Address Resource Objectives Set By Government**

#### **For Soil**

Grazing and cattle management practices to protect soil properties, minimize erosion, compaction and disturbances and maintain ground cover will include:

- Avoiding spring turnout when soils are extremely wet
- Following range readiness criteria as per General Utilization Measures
- Following the grazing schedule as to range readiness and monitoring
- Maintaining recommended stubble heights as per General Utilization Measures [except hydro corridor]
- Re-vegetating soil disturbances caused by Mehmal Ranch such as water developments, fence or corral construction with a suitable, weed-free mix
- The majority of livestock will be moved within a reasonable time in accordance with the grazing schedule.

### **For Forage**

Grazing and cattle management practices implemented to enhance healthy plant communities and maintain and enhance forage quantity and quality will include:

- Following range readiness criteria as per General Utilization Measures
- Maintaining recommended stubble heights as per General Utilization Measures
- Following the grazing schedule as to range readiness and monitoring.
- Re-vegetating soil disturbances caused by the Mehmal Ranch such as water development, fence or corral construction
- The majority of livestock will be moved within a reasonable time in accordance with the grazing schedule.

### **For Water**

There are two Community Watersheds within the Overton-Moody Range Unit. Grazing and management practices to maintain or improve water resources, riparian areas and associated riparian vegetation will include:

- No salting within 300 meters of watershed boundaries
- No salting within 200 meters of a riparian area
- Following range readiness criteria as per General Utilization Measures
- Maintaining recommended stubble heights as per General Utilization Measures
- Removal of dead livestock within 100 meters of a community watershed after becoming aware of it
- Limiting cattle browsing to 10% of current years growth within a riparian area

### **For Fish**

Riparian areas will be managed to maintain adequate herb and browse vegetation by following range readiness and stubble height criteria.

### **For Wildlife**

The south-facing slopes of the Overton-Moody Range Unit have high ungulate winter range values. Grazing and cattle management practices will maintain or promote sustainable healthy wildlife populations and habitat as well as minimizing disturbance to wildlife and wildlife habitats will include:

- Limiting cattle browsing to 15% of current years growth across the unit

- Within the Lewis' Woodpecker WHAs – browse use to maximum 10%
- No salting or range development construction within 200 meters of identified wildlife habitat areas
- The majority of livestock will be moved within a reasonable time in accordance with the grazing schedule.
- Maintaining recommended stubble heights as per General Utilization Measures

### **For Biodiversity**

Grazing and cattle management practices to conserve biodiversity, maintain native plant community dynamics and encourage the development of desired plant communities will include:

- Following range readiness criteria as per General Utilization Measures
- Following the grazing schedule of the approximate dates
- Maintaining recommended stubble heights as per General Utilization Measures
- Limiting cattle browsing to 15% of current years growth across the unit
- Re-vegetating soil disturbances caused by Mehmal Ranch such as water development, fence or corral construction with a suitable, weed-free mix
- Participating in Ecosystem Restoration projects undertaken by the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and timber licensees

### **Wildlife Habitat Areas**

A number of Wildlife Habitat Areas have been identified within the Overton-Moody Range Unit. In addition to following range readiness, stubble height and grazing schedules, general wildlife measures for identified WHAs will be followed.

### **Maintenance of Range Developments**

A considerable distance of fence is maintained by the Mehmal Ranch yearly. Fences forming pasture boundaries within the Overton-Moody Range Unit are maintained in a functioning state. The “wildlife protection” fence on the north side of Highway 3 is not the responsibility of the Mehmal Ranch. Numerous dug-outs and water developments within each pasture are maintained. Some troughs have been replaced by dug-outs due to theft and vandalism. Two corrals are located in pastures and are maintained by the Mehmal Ranch for cattle management purposes. The ranch will work with timber licensees to help identify possible breaches in range barriers.

### **In Addition**

- An educational program [schools, hunter training, etc] should be started to educate the general public, hunters, recreational users to respect management practices of the grasslands for livestock and wildlife of the area. Also, MFLNR should be allocating resources for signage, interpretative trails, and personnel for these programs.
- Also, that gates, fences, water developments, and water-holes are to be respected and not degraded or destroyed.
- The mentoring of hunters, other resource users, the monitoring of wildlife numbers and plant communities, and the re-introduction of fires for enhancement of the open forest zone be part of this plan with the assistance of the MFLNR, MOE, range users and others.
- Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations is our lead agency for the grazing and all of these programs are to be jointly discussed with and agreed to by the tenure holder and MFLNR
- We will continue working in partnership with Nature Trust and MFLNR Ecosystems Section to improve water within the TNT property

## RANGE USE PLAN

The Minister, pursuant to section 37 of the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, has determined that this range use plan is consistent with the agreement under the *Range Act* that pertains to the plan, and conforms to the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, the regulations and the standards.

This range use plan is associated with the following range agreement:

NAME: John Marshall Mehmal

RANGE AGREEMENT #RAN073397

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