

Glenwood Ranger District

Gila National Forest

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

2007

Dry Creek Allotment #407

Prepared By: _____ Date: _____
District Range Staff

Approved By: /s/ Pat Morrison Date: 3/27/07
District Ranger

Agreed to By: _____ Date: _____
Permittee

Annual Operating Instructions

I. INTRODUCTION

These Annual Operating Instructions document your discussion with George Douds. The permitted stocking for the 2007 grazing season on the Dry Creek Allotment is as follows:

Term Permitted Livestock Numbers

Number and class of livestock	Dates
275 Cattle-Cow/calf	03/01 – 02/28
5 Horses (Saddle)	03/01 – 02/28

Dry Creek Allotment Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Number and class of livestock authorized	Dates Authorized
150 Cattle-Cow/calf	03/01/2007 – 02/28/2008

You applied for 55 cattle and later in the spring you plan on placing another 25-30 head of cattle on the allotment. After we receive payment, you can proceed to graze up to 150 cattle.

Dry Creek Allotment Annual Authorization for 2007

Number and class of livestock authorized	Dates Authorized
55* Cattle-Cow/calf	03/01/2007 – 02/28/2008

* Will make application when ready to place additional cattle on the allotment.

Dry Creek Allotment Annual Authorization for 2007

55	Cow/Calf	TBD	Road Strip
55	Cow/Calf	TBD	Bobcat
55	Cow/Calf	TBD	Cedar Breaks
55	Cow/Calf	TBD	Sandrock
55	Cow/Calf	TBD	#5 (Dry Creek, North)
55	Cow/Calf	03/16/07 – 04/30/07	#3 (Dry Creek, Sheridan)
55	Cow/Calf	04/30/07 – 08/31/07	#4 (Dry Creek, Lower Little Dry)
55	Cow/Calf	TBD	#6 (Dry Creek, North Upper)
55	Cow/Calf	TBD	#7 (Dry Creek, South Upper)
55	Cow/Calf	TBD	Jug (Holding)
55	Cow/Calf	TBD	Gravel Pit (Holding)

TBD = as the grazing season progresses the location of the animal will be moved based, water availability and meeting allowable use levels. AOI will be amended as dates are determined.

All livestock are to be grazed in the pastures on the east side of Highway 180, and no livestock is authorized on the west side of the highway. The above schedule for stocking the allotment depends upon the availability of forage and water. Some flexibility in the above pasture rotation dates will be allowed for justifiable causes such as weather conditions, livestock management needs, and range conditions. If there is a need to deviate from the above pasture rotation schedule by more than 15 days, you must notify the District Ranger of the proposed change in the pasture rotation date and the reason for the change. A deviation from the above schedule of more than 15 days must be approved by the District Ranger verbally or in writing. The District Ranger must be notified 5 days prior to the time livestock enter or leave the Forest if the placing on or removal of livestock is not planned in the above schedule, and more than 10 head are being moved. Failure to do so may result in adverse action against your Term Grazing Permit.

II. MANAGEMENT OF LIVESTOCK

You are responsible for monitoring water availability and forage utilization. It is your responsibility to move your livestock when sufficient water is no longer available or when proper forage utilization is achieved in a pasture. You are responsible for keeping track of and maintaining control of your livestock. In the event your livestock are found to be out of the scheduled pasture, you will be required to find, gather, and return your

animals to the proper pasture as soon as possible. Failure to maintain control of your livestock could lead to adverse action against your Term Grazing Permit.

III. IMPROVEMENT MAINTENANCE

All range improvements assigned in the 10-year Term Grazing Permit should be maintained in a functioning condition. In the event these improvements cannot be brought up to a functioning condition, you should notify this office so we can schedule them for reconstruction as funds become available.

Last year in preparation for grazing cattle this grazing year you cleaned many erosion control structures and stock tanks on the east side of Highway 180.

The district office is offering ½ mile of fence materials on a first come first serve basis for the reconstruction of allotment boundary fences that are beyond repair. You stated you will use the fencing material to reconstruct a portion of 0022OA or 000103 or 000189. Maintenance is your responsibility. If you decide to reconstruct any other fences please contact the district office and designate the portion of fence you wish to rebuild.

Prior to placing livestock on the west side of Highway 180 in the 2008 grazing year, all fences excluding livestock from the San Francisco River have to be inspected and be in functioning condition (cow tight).

You may apply for a free use post and stay permit for the maintenance of fences and corrals on your allotment.

Non-compliance with the instructions set forth in the free use permit could lead to adverse actions taken against your Term Grazing Permit.

IV. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Fire - branding and warming fires should be used with good judgment - not on windy days or during times when fires are specifically restricted. The Glenwood District is planning to allow naturally ignited fires to burn on the district this coming year. We will notify you if we plan to let a fire burn on your allotment.
2. Records - please keep track of materials used, and the days and dollars spent on maintenance of improvements. It is also necessary to keep track of cattle numbers, dates of entering and leaving different pastures, shipping dates, and cattle losses (both grown stock and calves).
3. Heavy Equipment Use - written permission from the District Ranger will be required for any heavy equipment use on the National Forest. Examples of this are cleaning out stock tanks, road maintenance, etc.
4. Credit/Refund - any credit or refund applications for grazing fees must be made as far in advance as possible. Credit/Refund applications are not retroactive and will be approved only if the District Ranger is notified of livestock removal, prior to, or at the time, the livestock are taken off the allotment. You will be required to provide your Social Security number in order for a credit/refund to be processed.

A \$25 administrative fee will be charged for any additional bills for collection that are sent to you due to either late payment or for split billing on seasonal allotments. There is no administrative fee for the normal "split billing" on yearlong allotments. This fee will be collected to pay for the cost associated with issuing an additional bill for collection.

It is necessary for you to write the bill number on your check prior to submitting it to the lockbox. This is necessary to insure that your payment is credited to your account.

5. Short Age Calf Policy - any short-aged calves (calves less than 6 months old on December 31) must be removed from the National Forest by April 1, or you will need to apply for and pay grazing fees for these animals from April 1 to the time they are removed from the National Forest. Calves that are 6 months old or older on December 31 need to be paid for starting January 1.

6. Salting and Supplemental Feeding - the following practices will be adhered to:
 - a. Feeding of energy supplements on National Forest land will not be permitted unless a proven need to use the supplements is shown, and a detailed plan is developed and approved.
 - b. Feeding of hay on National Forest land will not be permitted unless a proven need to use the supplement is shown, and a detailed plan is developed and approved. All supplemental hay must be **certified weed free** hay and you must provide the proper documentation.
 - c. Feeding of vitamin or mineral supplements on National Forest land will be permitted if a detailed plan is approved, or if carried out in conjunction with salting.
 - d. Salting practices will be in agreement with the 10-Year Term Grazing Permit. Salt will be placed in areas of available feed to help draw cattle to them. Salt will not be placed in natural concentrations areas, which receive heavy grazing use. Salt must be placed ¼ mile or further from water.
7. Livestock are to be excluded from the San Francisco River and from Spruce Creek and Big Dry Creek above the confluence of both creeks.

V. ALLOTMENT STATUS

The allotment management plan for this allotment may need some updates to meet forest plan standards and guidelines. At the present time direction for management on this allotment will be documented in these Annual Operating Instructions. The scheduled date for conduct of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process is 2008. Range data collection will begin in the spring of 2007 and a decision is expected October 1, 2008.

VI. OTHER ITEMS DISCUSSED

You indicated that you are in favor of Fire Use on your allotment. The District Ranger will authorize necessary changes to this AOI to accommodate fire management.

VII. SPECIAL MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

As you are aware, forage and water became scarce on most allotments during the past several years. **If forage and/or water availability becomes a problem on your allotment, you may be required to change your management and possibly remove your livestock from the National Forest lands.** Keep track of conditions on your allotment and make plans to reduce or remove livestock if vegetative/watershed conditions could be substantially harmed due to continued grazing during the drought period. Even though there was a good growing season this past summer, it is recommended that restocking of allotments to full numbers not take place until the forage plants regain vigor and new forage plants become established.

VIII. Utilization Monitoring of Key Areas

Monitoring scheduel for 2007

Pasture	Monitoring Date	Allowable Use	Key Area*
Road Strip	TBD	Conservative (31 – 40%)	P1, C9, C6
Bobcat	TBD	Conservative (31 – 40%)	Pasture
Cedar Breaks	TBD	Conservative (31 – 40%)	P5
Sandrock	TBD	Conservative (31 – 40%)	Pasture
#5 (Dry Creek, North)	TBD	Conservative (31 – 40%)	P6,
#3 (Dry Creek, Sheridan)	05/01/07	Conservative (31 – 40%)	C7, and location(s) to be determined,
#4 (Dry Creek, Lower Little Dry)	09/05/07	Conservative (31 – 40%)	P6, C4, P7, and other locations to be determined with the permittee
#6 (Dry Creek, North Upper)	TBD	Conservative (31 – 40%)	To be determined with the permittee
#7 (Dry Creek, South Upper)	TBD	Conservative (31 – 40%)	To be determined with the permittee
Jug (Holding)	TBD	Conservative (31 – 40%)	Pasture
Gravel Pit (Holding)	TBD	Conservative (31 – 40%)	Pasture
Sundial	Concurrent with range data collection	0%	Pasture
Steer	Concurrent with range data collection	0%	Pasture
Estes	Concurrent with range data collection	0%	Pasture
Horse	Concurrent with range data collection	0%	Pasture
Headquarters	Concurrent with range data collection	0%	Pasture
Holding 1	Concurrent with range data collection	0%	Pasture

Additional locations will be determined with permittee involved.

TBD = as the grazing season progresses the location of the animal will be moved based, water availability and meeting allowable use levels. AOI will be amended as dates are determined.

Monitoring of herbaceous forage will be conducted by ocular estimate of use within a pasture (utilization mapping). Verification of ocular estimates will be conducted using common methodology such as weigh/clip, grazed plant numbers, or stubble height. Grazing use will be described and mapped in the following utilization categories.

Qualitative Grazing Intensity Category	Use of Forage by Weight	Qualitative Indicators of Grazing Intensity
Light to no-use	< 30%	Only choice plants and areas show use. There is no use of poor forage plants.
Conservative	31-40%	Choice forage plants have abundant seed stalks. Areas more than a mile from water show little use. About on third to one half of primary forage plants show grazing on key areas.
Moderate	41-50%	Most of accessible range shows use. Key areas show patch appearance with one half to two thirds of primary forage plants showing use. Grazing is noticeable in zone 1-1.5 miles from water.
Heavy	51-60%	Nearly all primary forage plants show grazing on key areas. Palatable shrubs show hedging. Key areas show a lack of seed stalks. Grazing is noticeable in areas over 1.5 miles from water.
Severe	61 +%	Key areas show a clipped or mowed appearance (no stubble height). Shrubs are severely hedged. There is evidence of livestock trailing to forage. Areas over 1.5 miles from water lack stubble height.
Holecheck, J.L. and D. Galt. 2000. Grazing Intensity Guidelines. Rangelands 22(3), pg 11-14.		

If the utilization guideline for the pasture is exceeded on 30% or more of the pasture in any year, livestock will be immediately removed from the pasture. Within a pasture, areas found to exceed allowable use will become key areas for monitoring the following year. The AOI for the next year will be adjusted to correct livestock management practices (distribution, number, timing, salt and water availability, etc.) that may have led to the overuse.

In the event that 30 percent or more of the pasture exceeds the set allowable use in a grazing year, that area will be required to be less than or equal to allowable use the next year. If that same area, or a substantial portion of the same area, exceeds allowable use in two consecutive grazing years the entire pasture will be rested for one calendar year and stocking will be adjusted to balance with forage supplies. If the same area of a pasture exceeds allowable use in two years out of five, the stocking rate and management plan will be adjusted to balance with forage supply.

Monitoring of utilization for woody riparian species will be conducted on a reach basis in identified riparian areas (see table below).

Pasture	Reach description	Herbaceous Riparian Allowable Use	Wood Riparian Allowable Use
Big Dry	Big Dry Creek, from the box down to the Highway 180 bridge.	Conservative (31 - 40%)	25% riparian woody sprouts and saplings heavily hedged in a reach 0%
Big Dry	Big Dry Creek, from the confluence of Spruce Creek and Spruce Creek down to the box.	Conservative (31 - 40%)	25% riparian woody sprouts and saplings heavily hedged in a reach
Big Dry	Spruce Creek and Big Dry Creek above the confluence with Spruce Creek.	0%	0%
Big Dry	Little Dry Creek, entire reach to the Highway 180 bridge.	Conservative (31 - 40%)	25% riparian woody sprouts and saplings heavily hedged in a reach

Livestock are excluded by natural barriers from Spruce Creek and Big Dry Creek above the confluence of Spruce Creek and Big Dry Creek. If allowable use is exceeded on 30% or more of the riparian reach within the pasture, livestock will be removed from the pasture. If that same reach, or a substantial portion of the same reach, exceeds allowable use in two consecutive grazing years the entire pasture will be rested for one calendar year and stocking will be adjusted to prevent overuse of the riparian reach. If the same reach of a pasture exceeds allowable use in two years out of five, the stocking rate and management plan will be adjusted to prevent overuse of the riparian reach.

VIII. APPEAL RIGHTS

This Annual Operating Instruction decision is subject to administrative review, pursuant to 36 CFR 251; and any appeal of this decision must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 251.90 (see attached copy of 36 CFR 251 regulations). In accordance with 36 CFR 251.84, if you file an appeal, I am willing to meet with you to discuss any concerns you may have with my decision. If you file an appeal, you may request an oral presentation in the appeal or at any time prior to closing of the appeal record (36 CFR 251.97). Additionally, if you file an appeal, you may request a stay of my decision in the appeal or at any time prior to closing of the appeal record (36 CFR 251.91).

A notice of appeal must be filed with **Marcia Andre, Forest Supervisor, 3005 E. Camino del Bosque, Silver City, NM 88061**, within 45 days of the date of this decision. A copy of the notice of appeal must be filed simultaneously with **Pat Morrison, District Ranger, Glenwood Ranger District, P.O. Box 8, Glenwood, NM 88039**.

Open and positive communications dealing with these or any other concerns is encouraged. Feel free to contact George Douds or Pat Morrison if you have any questions or problems. We will be happy to discuss allotment management, conditions on your allotments, Forest Plan standards and guidelines, or any other concerns you may have.