

Glenwood Ranger District
Gila National Forest

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

2010

Winchester Allotment #424

Prepared By: _____
District Range Staff

Date: _____

Approved By: _____
District Ranger

Date: _____

Annual Operating Instructions

I. INTRODUCTION

These Annual Operating Instructions document your discussion with Pat Morrison and Allen Graves on December 21, 2009, at the Glenwood District Office. The permitted stocking for the 2010 grazing season on the Winchester Allotment is as follows:

Term Permitted Livestock Numbers

| Number and class of livestock | Dates |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| 100 Cattle-Cow/Calf | 03/01 – 02/28 |

Winchester Allotment Annual Authorization for 2010

| Number and class of livestock | Dates |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| *65 Cattle-Cow/Calf | 03/01 – 02/28 |

* Permittee stocks at less than Term Permitted to protect forage resource and ensure ability to stay within set allowable use levels.

Winchester Allotment Pasture Rotation for 2010

| Class of Livestock | Scheduled Rotation Date | Pasture |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Cow/Calf | 03/01/08 – 02/28/09 | Upper, Grapevine and Thunder. Permittee will achieve seasonal deferment by moving livestock when allowable use rates are approached in specific areas. |
| Cow/Calf | | North Holding |
| Cow/Calf | 3/1/09 – 6/30/09 Not to exceed 60 days* | Little Pasture, private land, Tillie Hall and Pine Cienega wildlife plots. |

* Until allowable use is reached.

The above schedule for stocking the allotment depends upon the availability of forage and water. The allotment is divided into pastures by drift fences and terrain. Cattle are distributed throughout the allotment with some portions of the allotment being deferred during the grazing year. Some flexibility in the above pasture rotation dates is 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.

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.

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 the Range Staff at the Glenwood Ranger District to schedule them for reconstruction as funds become available.

The district 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. Based on your statement, your exterior boundary fences are in satisfactory condition. If you decide to reconstruct any fences please contact the district office and designate the portion of fence you wish to rebuild. You may apply for a free use post and stay permit for the maintenance of fences and corrals on your allotment.

I gave you permission to remove bug kill pine within fence rights-of-way (6 feet either side of fence line) and outside the right of way for a distance from the fence of 1.5 times the height of potential hazard trees. Please buck the tree and remove slash and debris from the fence line. You may salvage wood with an appropriate permit.

You indicated you are in need of gates. Provide the location of the gate and the length of gate to district personnel. As funds become available gates may be purchased and you will be notified when available.

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: In order to close out permit modifications you must provide documentation of materials and labor constituting your contribution to the permit modification.

You must provide documentation of cattle numbers; dates of entering and leaving pastures, shipping dates and cattle losses (grown stock and calves). This information is used to substantiate the carrying capacity of the allotment. The information demonstrates use and the need for forage to meet the economic needs of the county. This information may also be used to establish cause and effect if there is a significant change in calf crop (Example, a wolf pack becomes established near your allotment).

3. Heavy Equipment Use: Please notify district well in advance of any plans to use heavy equipment so that necessary clearances and/or permits can be obtained. You will be notified by the district when you can proceed.

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 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. This fee will be collected to pay for the cost associated with issuing an additional bill for collection. There is no administrative fee for the normal "split billing" on yearlong allotments.

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:

- 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, protein blocks or blue tubs on National Forest land is permitted when used in the same manner as salt.
- 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 within ¼ mile from water and/or in natural concentrations areas which receive heavy grazing use. To aid in the gathering and moving of livestock salt may be placed near water or in corrals within one week of scheduled move date.

V. ALLOTMENT STATUS

The Winchester Allotment has sufficient NEPA and an Allotment Management Plan is in place.

VI. OTHER ITEMS DISCUSSED

You indicated that you are in favor of Fire Use on you allotment. Your concerns will be analyzed at the time the fire is placed into Fire Use. The District Ranger will authorize necessary changes to the AOI to accommodate fire management.

VII. SPECIAL MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

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. The forecast for the upcoming spring and winter is wetter than normal. However, there is no assurance that stock water will recharge. If water becomes a limiting factor, please contact the District to adjust your stocking and rotation.

VIII. UTILIZATION MONITORING OF KEY AREAS

Monitoring schedule for 2010

| Pasture | Monitoring Date | Allowable Use | Key Area |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|---|
| Upper & Thunder | 9/15/09 | Conservative (31- 40%) | ¼ mile South of Winchester tank C3, C4 |
| North Holding | 7/15/09 | Conservative (31- 40%) | C1 |
| North Holding | 7/15/09 | Light (10%) | Sawmill Canyon |
| Grapevine | 9/15/09 | Light (20%) | Winchester Spring, Branding Iron Spring |
| Thunder | 9/15/09 | Light (20%) | Dark Thunder Spring |
| Thunder | 9/15/09 | Light (10%) | Sawmill Canyon |
| Grapevine | 7/15/09 | Light (5%) | Tillie Hall Spring |

Allowable use is defined for specific areas in the Term Grazing Permit. Where not defined by the Term Grazing Permit, allowable use on herbaceous forage is conservative use (31-40%). 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. |
| Holechek, 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 on woody riparian will be conducted in the areas below and concurrently with the associated pasture. (See table below)

| Pasture | Reach description | Allowable Use |
|-----------|---|--|
| Thunder | Dark Thunder Spring | Not to exceed 20% woody riparian heavily hedged. |
| Grapevine | Winchester Spring & Branding Iron Springs | Not to exceed 20% woody riparian heavily hedged. |
| Grapevine | Tillie Hall Spring | Not to exceed 5% woody riparian heavily hedged. |

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.

If unforeseen operational conditions require a change in the management specified in this AOI please contact rangeland management personnel at the Glenwood Ranger District to obtain approval of change(s). Advanced notice of change is requested so that field inspections can be conducted. Verbal approval of changes will be followed with a letter documenting the change. Failure to follow the instructions provided in this AOI, or other instructions (verbal or written) of a Forest Officer may lead to adverse action against your Term Grazing Permit (Part 1, Section 3 of your Term Grazing Permit).

Open and positive communications concerning all AOI content is encouraged. Feel free to contact Allen Graves or me if you have any questions or concerns.