2008 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS
TUSAS ALLOTMENT 622
CARSON NATIONAL FOREST
TRES PIEDRAS RANGER DISTRICT

I. INTRODUCTION/OBJECTIVES

The Tusas Annual Operating Instruction meeting was held on March 7, 2008 at Conejos Peak Ranger District from 1:00-4:30. Tusas attending permittees were Lloyd Reynolds, Rick Reynolds, Carl Smith, Dale Sowards, Dennis Moeller, and Randy Schofield. Forest Service representatives were Benjamin Romero, Wayne Yonemoto and Anna Dominguez.

The Annual Operating Instructions are hereby made part of the Term Grazing Permit. Carson Forest Annual Operating Instructions are posted on the Carson Forest Web site. http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/carson, Natural resources, Range, District, Allotment. Annual Operating Instructions contain items that are guidance criteria addressing proper use of the Tusas allotment. Permittees were advised to review terms and conditions stated on their permits. NEPA for the Tusas Allotment is scheduled to be completed in 2008.

II. ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

A. Weather Report

2003 Rangeland Management Action Plan for the Santa Fe and Carson National Forest will be referred to during 2007 grazing season. The plan stresses communication, permittee involvement, monitoring, range administration, and reference to the Standard Precipitation Index addressing adaptive management during near normal, drought and drought recovery conditions. Permittees are recommended to have a drought contingency plan.

Standard Precipitation Index (SPI) will be used to define drought conditions following the 2003 Rangeland Management Action Plan for the Santa Fe and Carson National Forests. SPI values are available from the Western Regional Climate Center at www.wrcc.dri.edu. The following are indicators in determining drought conditions. Conditions will be determined by the size of the negative number, the larger the negative number, the more severe the drought. Example: SPI values of -0.70 or less for the past month signal drought conditions. SPI values of positive 1.0 or more for the past 12 months signal the end of drought. The following are the 1 and 12 month SPI through the end of January 2008.

1-month SPI through the end of January 2008 is +0.75 to +1.24 (moderately wet)
12-month SPI through the end of January 2008 is -0.74 to 0.74 (near normal conditions)

Tres Piedras precipitation records are referenced in recommendation for Annual Authorized Use. Allotment stocking should adjust with effective precipitation patterns. 2007 spring production was fair, summer rains allowed for cool season green up and good warm season production. 2008 winter and spring effective precipitation is unknown at this time. 2008 spring and summer precipitation patterns will determine adaptive management actions with the objective to maintain/improve forage resources (proper use).

Weather conditions influence Forest fire occurrence and it is recommend that permittees have a fire contingency plan for livestock management. 2008 Fire season is forecasted to be normal based on the National Wildland Significant Fire Potential Outlook Report 1/08-4/08.

Report wildfires to: Tres Piedras Ranger Station at (505) 758-8678 or Carson Dispatch at (505) 758-6208 or (505) 758-6209.

B. Review of 2007 Evaluation Analysis worksheet, inspection reports and permittee monitoring

Due to the fluctuating influences on resource condition, an annual spreadsheet (adaptive management tool) compiling /summarizing chronological allotment management and resource conditions is completed with the permittees. The spreadsheet helps identify/document management objectives for each pasture so that livestock can be used as a grazing tool to maintain enhance range conditions. The spreadsheet:

- Documents permitted, authorized, and actual livestock management data
- Documents current and prior year's objective per pasture so that it can be easily referenced
- Documents qualitative Grazing Response Index, to consider early elk utilization prior to livestock entry, permittee involvement and growing season conditions
- Refers to allotment inspections reports and monitoring studies
- Considers climate data to describe end of season forage condition
- Estimates production/vigor
- Documentation of end of season utilization standards for USFS administrative requirements
- Summarized pasture information is considered in management objective for the following grazing season

On February 16, 2007 Tusas permittees discussed voluntary reduction and requested to finalize decision at a later date. Credit applications were applied to 2007 authorized bill. On 3-9-07 it was decided by District Ranger to authorized 18% reduction of livestock numbers with an on date of 5/15, with no filling in on non-use permits. Letters documenting this decision were mailed separate from the AOI.

On 3-26-07 Tusas Permittees requested a meeting with Tres Piedras District Ranger and Range staff to discuss the 18% authorized reduction. Permittees discussed the economic differences of 15-18% reduction. Tusas permittees did not appeal Tres Piedras District Rangers decision.

Tusas permittees entered the allotment in a staggered herd from 5/17, 5/18, 5/19, 5/23, 6/27 with a total of 21% reduction in AUM in days and number of livestock at the end of the season.

During the 2007 grazing season USFS range staff priorities were completion of the range NEPA analysis therefore; there were minimal inspections on Tusas. 2007 Evaluation analysis worksheet were jointly completed with permittees monitoring report at the 2008 AOI meeting for future monitoring reference.

In the month of August permittees and later the Highway department completed a lane around private property to access the Deer Trail/Biscarra underpass.

9-14-07 Tres Piedras range staff received e-mails from NMGF concerning the slow clean outs of certain pastures.

Livestock exited the allotment on 10/16/07.

Tusas permittees asked for New Mexico Range Improvement task force to review allotment conditions and monitoring program on 11-13-07. NM Range Improvement Task force representatives spent two days reviewing Tusas permittee monitoring points and completed Rapid Assessment Methodology in varying locations. Permittee concerns were existing USFS Parker and cage location used to asses long term trend on the Tusas allotment. It was explained that the Parker locations had been established 1950-1970. These points have historical photos and species composition in which trends are compared. Permittees were concerned that Parkers were read in 2006 a dryer year than 2007. In response to this concern, FS explained that the NEPA schedule required that range condition/trend data collection (existing condition) be completed in 2006, because the NEPA decision would be completed in 2007.

Discussion and explanation of Terrestrial Ecological Unit, TEU in reference to estimated carrying capacity calculations defining full, potential, and non-grazable acres occurred. Varying percentages of use have been estimated to each TEU based on soils, topography and field reviews. 1970 Blue line map shows the full, potential and non-grazable acres and is a reference in TEU potential estimates.

Discussion occurred on HM and AUM calculation and application to the Annual Operating Instructions. It was explained that HM is used for USFS billing and is further used in calculating AUM. AOI documents range of days, HM's and AUM's to be used as a reference scale in adaptive management to response to seasonal resource conditions and maximizing flexibility in pasture rotation.

Discussion occurred on the difference between RAM and Parkers range analysis methodology. Rapid Assessment Methodology, RAM, is used to determine entering and exiting pasture based on forage production, it does not have a scoring procedure. Parker methodology is used to measure long term trend with a score card on species composition by range type. In the future Cover Frequency methodology will replace Parkers.

The Range Improvement Task Force sent the RAM data collected on 11-13-07 to the Tres Piedras Ranger District. Summary compiled measurements from RAM but did not include conclusions.

At the 2008 AOI meeting permittee monitoring report was reviewed completing the 2007 Evaluation analysis worksheet. There are some inconsistencies in actual days of use in the Tusas monitoring report, actual use information submitted by Livestock Association President and seasonal notes from USFS. The spreadsheet will reference the notes submitted by the Livestock Association president to calculate days, HM and AUM per pasture.

Evaluation analysis spreadsheet reflects that the Tusas allotment has fair to good precipitation throughout the growing season reflecting estimated "most of the season opportunity for forage growth." 2007 spring and summer rains allowed for estimated moderate-average to moderate-high forage production throughout the allotment. Permittees estimate that 9/9 pastures met the overall 40% utilization standard with the 21% reduction in Livestock AUM. The permittee/USFS joint completion of the 2007 spreadsheet identified the allotment/pasture management objectives listed below. Allotment rotation schedule is on page 6.

- **Tusas Allotment Overall Objectives**
  1. Follow a deferred rotation in which to allow maximum seasonal rest per pasture. Avoid splitting the herd. Only under moderately-dry conditions with significant herd reductions will a split herd be authorized by District Ranger. Continued authorized reduction in 2008 with 15% AUM, (3% in days and 12% in numbers).
  2. Elk utilization monitoring throughout each pasture should be documented by date on the Evaluation analysis worksheet. Early elk utilization and drought conditions can stunt forage production effecting permitted grazing time and contribute to % utilization at the end of the season. Permittees are recommended to have a contingency plan due to early elk utilization. If elk have utilized the pasture prior to livestock entry and the remaining forage availability is low, other pastures' entry and exits dates may be affected. Tentative rotation schedule within this AOI allows for flexibility in livestock rotation due to unforeseen circumstances. Allotment evaluation analysis spreadsheet has been organized to document factors influencing production/vigor of forage which can be reviewed at the end of the rotation or the end of the grazing season.
  3. Maintenance of range improvements is priority over new construction, any acceptations require District Rangers approval, all Tusas assigned maintenance responsibility are documented on the Working deferred maintenance list that will be mailed with the 2008 AOI. The list will allow permittees to document water availability, prioritize maintenance of dirt tanks, and document all range improvement access routes addressing Travel Management.
  4. Tusas authorized livestock herd objectives are following the tentative scheduled dates, days, HM's and AUM's. Herd management is emphasized during high public use times, (weekends, holidays, and hunting season) to ensure the majority of the livestock are contained within the designated areas.
  5. Permit item to be emphasized is: Part 3 Item 4. <u>Livestock Counting</u> The permittee will notify the District Ranger at least 5 days before livestock enter the National Forest System. If requested by the District Ranger, the permittee will present the livestock for counting prior to entry, and at any time thereafter during the permitted season. The District Ranger may round up and hold for counting all permittee-owned livestock on the allotment.
  6. The Grazing Permittee Instructions for Cattle Operators on Tres Piedras Ranger District is an appendix to the 2008 AOI for permittee reference.

- **East Wheatgrass pasture**, high probability of elk use prior to livestock entry, adjusts days in rotation according to forage utilization conditions prior to livestock entry. Minimize days in pasture for trailing entering and exiting. Due to corral location spring and fall use can not be avoided until another corral is established or intensified herd management occurs.
- **Coyote pasture**, elk spring utilization will determine 2008 rotation. Evaluation of dirt tanks.
- **Martinez pasture**, elk spring utilization will determine 2008 rotation. Evaluation of dirt tanks.
- **Biscarra pasture**, elk spring utilization will determine 2008 rotation. Complete maintenance on watering points to improve distribution. High fence maintenance on Biscarra/Martinez interior fence, permittees stated that in doughty conditions this fence requires high rider reviews.
- **Deer Trail pasture**, minimize HM to allow for probable slow clean out. Improve clean out of pasture, document start and finish. Review for wild horse presence. Evaluate Mormon cricket insect density and locations.

- **Buckhorn pasture-designated elk calving pasture**, complete ocular use before livestock entry to document elk utilization and adjust livestock rotation. Evaluated Mormon cricket insect density and locations. Move livestock off Placer Creek daily, in order to accomplish this goal it is recommended that the rider establishing camp close to Placer Creek to increase effective daily herd management.
- **Posito pasture**, maintain existing watering points. Repair critical boundary fences Between Jawbone and Tusas. Design alternative fence to existing low functioning boundary fence. Increase riders review of gates and livestock due to influences from hunters.
- **Barela pasture**, It is a priority to use this pasture in the fall in 2008. Should review condition of dirt tanks to project water availability in the fall. Increase riders review of gates and livestock due to influences from hunters.
- **West Wheatgrass pasture**, evaluate spring utilization by elk even though this pasture is not scheduled till the end of the season. Project water availability in the fall. Increase riders review of gates and livestock due to influences from hunters.

C. 2008 Range Readiness

2008 range readiness meeting attendance is strongly recommended to review range conditions on 5/8/08 at 10:00 A.M. at Wheatgrass corral. Evaluation of range readiness conditions will determine what adaptive management adjustments are needed addressing proper use.

D. 2008 Grazing Fee and Annual Authorized Use Request

The livestock grazing fee for grazing year 2008 is $1.35 c/c and $.27 e/l on National Forests. 2008 Unauthorized use of National Forests is $2.24 for livestock and $.45 for sheep and goats.

USFS and Tusas permittees discussed reduction in 2008. Permittees requested full numbers based on 2007 summer rains and 2007-2008 wetter winter. USFS reported the current SPI being moderately wet but the 12 month SPI being near normal conditions therefore, requiring similar reduction as 2007 (18%). Permittees did not report their current numbers and did not fully support the 18% reduction as proposed by the USFS, permittees proposed a 10% reduction. This was noted on the 2008 Annual Authorized Use Request Form. District Ranger, Benjamin Romero did not make a decision at the meeting. On 3-14-08 District Rangers decision was to bill Tusas permittees with a 15% reduction in days and numbers. On 3-25-08 Carl Smith, Tusas Livestock Association President was informed of District Rangers decision. 2008 AOI reflects 5 day delay on date at 3% and a 12% reduction in authorized numbers per permittee.

The 2008 authorized livestock and grazing season are no guarantee that grazing can occur for the tentative rotation. Resource conditions may require alterations in rotations or possible early off date.

Table 1-Tusas 2008 permitted/authorized data/Actual data. HM and AUM formula is # of livestock x # of days / 30.416667 (average days in a month) =HM. HM x 1.32 (coefficient for 1000 lb cow/calf) =AUM.

Permitted season 5/17-10/16, 153 days, 1115 c/c, 5608 HM, 7402 AUM.	**2008 Authorized 15% reduction in AUM. 5 day delay on date 5/22-10/16, (3%) 148 days, 982 c/c, (4778 HM, 6307 AUM)**	**2008 Actual season , days, with X c/c (HM, AUM)**
Jerry Duran 37 c/c, 186 HM, 232 AUM	33 c/c, 161 HM, 213 AUM	

Dennis Moeller 111 c/c, 588 HM, 776 AUM	98 c/c, 476 HM, 628 AUM	
Lloyd Reynolds 242 c/c, 1217 HM, 1606 AUM	213 c/c, 1036 HM, 1367 AUM	
Reynolds Ranch 194 c/c, 976 HM, 1,288 AUM	171 c/c, 832 HM, 1098 AUM	
George Smith 170 c/c, 855 HM, 1,111 AUM	150 c/c, 729 HM, 962 AUM	
Dale Sowards 80 c/c, 402 HM, 531 AUM	70 c/c, 340 HM, 448 AUM	
Elwin and Lena Sowards 183 c/c, 921 HM, 1,216 AUM	161 c/c, 783 HM, 1033 AUM	
Ernest Sanchez 98 c/c, 493 HM, 651 AUM	86 c/c, 418 HM, 551 AUM	
Total	982 c/c, 4778 HM, 6307 AUM	

E. Tentative Rotation Schedule

All allotment rotation plans are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances such as lack of water or low forage production. Range Readiness inspection will confirm availability of water and adjust 2008 tentative rotation schedule if needed. The pastures currently have tentative dates with authorized minimum-**goal**-maximum days, HM and AUM. It is the responsibility of the permittee to ensure proper distribution of livestock addressing utilization standard of 20- 40% of annual production. Elk utilization monitoring is recommended so that adjustments to rotation can be made.

Table 2-2008 Tusas Pasture rotation. HM and AUM formula is # of livestock x # of days / 30.416667 (average days in a month) =HM. HM x 1.32 (coefficient for 1000 lb cow/calf) =AUM. AUM and HM are used as a scale of reference.

Pastures	**Permitted 5/17-10/16, 153 days, 1115 c/c (5609 HM, 7404 AUM)** **Minimum-goal-maximum days** **HM** **AUM**	**2008 Authorized 15% reduction in AUM. 5 day delay on date 5/22-10/16, (3%) 148 days, 982 c/c, (4778 HM, 6307 AUM)2008 Tentative dates** **Minimum-goal-maximum days** **HM** **AUM**	**2008 Actual**	**2008 Carson Forest standard of utilization at end of season**
E. Wheatgrass	Trailing--**2**---7 days 36---**73**---257 HM 48---**96**----339 AUM	**5/22-5/23** Trailing-**2**----7 days 32----**65**---226 HM 42---**86**----298 AUM		
Coyote	5--7--**10** days 183--257--**367** HM 241--339--**484** AUM	**5/24-6/2** 5--7--**10** days 161--226---**323** HM 212--298---**426** AUM		
Martinez	7---**14**---21 days 256--**513**--769 HM 338--**677**--1015 AUM	**6/3-6/16** 7---**14**---21 days 226--**452**--678 HM 298---**596**---894 AUM		
Biscarra	5---7----**10** days 183--257--**367** HM 241--339--**484** AUM	**6/17-6/26** 5---7----**10** days 162--226--**323** HM 213--298--**426** AUM		

Deer Trail	34--**35**--40--50 days 1246--**1283**--1466--1833 HM 1645--**1694**--1935--2419 AUM	**6/27-7/31** 34--**35**--40--50 days 1097--**1130**--1291--1614 HM 1448--**1491**--1704--2130 AUM		
Buckhorn	20--**25**--30 days 733--**916**--1100 HM 968--**1209**--1452 AUM	**8/1-8/25** 20--**25**--30 days 645--**807**--969 HM 851--**1065**---1279 AUM		
Posito	10--**15**---25 days 367--**550**--916 HM 484--**726**--1209 AUM	**8/26-9/9** 10--**15**---25 days 322--**484**--807 HM 525---**638**---1065 AUM		
Barela	20--**30**--40 days 733--**1100**--1283 HM 968--**1452**--1283 AUM	**9/10-10/5** 20--**26**--40 days 645---**839**---1291 HM 851---**1107**---1704 AUM		
W. Wheatgrass	Trailing----5---**9**---11 days 36--183----**330**---403 HM 48---241---**435**---531 AUM	**10/6-10/14** Trailing----5---**9**---11 days 32---161---**290**---355 HM 42---213---**382**---468 AUM		
E. Wheatgrass	Trailing--**2**---7 days 36---**73**---257 HM 48---**96**----339 AUM	**10/15-10/16** Trailing-**2**----7 days 32----**65**---226 HM 42---**86**----298 AUM		

F. Monitoring references and Utilization standards

The following list describes priority monitoring data of the Tusas allotment addressing proper use.

7. Tusas 2008 Evaluation analysis worksheet
8. Elk utilization prior to livestock entry date
9. Working deferred maintenance list
10. SPI , weather forecast and water availability
11. Soil moisture depth and temperature
12. Production cages, Parker, and permittee key areas, reviewed with methods listed on the Tres Piedras Monitoring Plan
13. Key forage list per pasture
14. Existing stubble heights on key species--Production/Vigor of key species per pasture at range readiness and end of season

2008 AOI will list ocular descriptions of utilization for permittee reference. Descriptions are obtained from the "Utilization study Data-Ocular Estimate Method, Key Herbaceous Species, Form R3-2200-OEH." Reference to cages will calibrate % utilization estimation.

1. **0-5% utilization**, Rangeland shows no evidence of grazing use: or rangeland has appearance of negligible grazing.
2. **6-20% utilization**, Rangeland has appearance of very slight grazing. Key herbaceous forage plants may be topped or slightly used. Current seed stalks and young plants of key herbaceous species are little disturbed.
3. **21-40% utilization**, Rangeland may be topped, skimmed or grazed in patches. Low value herbaceous plants are ungrazed and 60-80% of the current seed stalks of key herbaceous species remain intact. Most young plants are undamaged.
4. **41-60% utilization**, rangeland appears entirely covered as uniformly as natural features and facilities will allow. 15-25% of the current seed stalks of key herbaceous species remain intact.

No more than 10% of the low value herbaceous forage plants are utilized (Moderate use does not imply proper use)

5. **61-70% utilization**, Rangeland has appearance of complete use. Key herbaceous species are almost completely utilized with less than 10% of the current seed stalks remaining. Shoots of rhizomonatous grasses are missing. More than 10% of low value herbaceous forage plants have been utilized.
6. **81-100% utilization,** Rangeland has mown appearance and there are indications of repeated coverage. There is no evidence of reproduction or current seed stalks of key herbaceous species. Key herbaceous forage species are completely utilized. Remaining stubble of preferred grasses is grazed to soil surface.

Early elk utilization and drought conditions can stunt forage production effecting permitted grazing time and contribute to % utilization at the end of the season. Permittees are recommended to have a contingency plan due to early elk utilization. If elk have utilized the pasture prior to livestock entry and the remaining forage availability is low, other pastures' entry and exits dates may be affected. Allotment spreadsheet has been organized to document these factors influencing production and vigor of forage. Analysis of quantitative/qualitative spreadsheet data is a reference for estimating if standard of utilization at the end of the growing season was met. Utilization is not to exceed 40 % of annual forage production at the end of the year. Riparian utilization standard is 4" stubble height of the annual available forage. The few riparian areas identified in Tusas have been intermittent in the past near normal precipitation years influencing the 4" standard stubble height. Updated maps are necessary to clearly identify riparian areas referencing soil type and existing species composition.

Table 3-Tusas key species stubble heights reference

Key areas	**Pasture** **Key Species requirements for entering pastures**	**Range readiness 5/8/08**	**End of season 10/X/08**	**Estimated production/ vigor** **High 5** **Moderate High 4** **Moderate ave. 3** **Low moderate 2** **Low 1**
	East Wheatgrass			
Cage	Crested wheatgrass 6+" Western wheatgrass 6-8" Blue gramma 1.5"			
Parker	Crested wheatgrass 6+" Western wheatgrass 6-8" Blue gramma 1.5"			
Permittee	Crested wheatgrass 6+" Western wheatgrass 6-8" Blue gramma 1.5"			

Key areas	Pasture Key Species requirements for entering pastures	Range readiness 5/8/08	End of season 10/X/08	Estimated production/ vigor High 5 Moderate High 4 Moderate ave. 3 Low moderate 2 Low 1
	West Wheatgrass			
Cage	Western wheatgrass 6-8” Arizona fescue 8+” Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Blue gramma 1.5”			
Parker	Western wheatgrass 6-8” Arizona fescue 8+” Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Blue gramma 1.5”			
Permittee	Western wheatgrass 6-8” Arizona fescue 8+” Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Blue gramma 1.5”			
	Martinez			
Cage				
Parker	Arizona fescue 8+” Western wheatgrass 6-8” Blue gramma 1.5” Mountain Muhly 6+” Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle			
Permittee	Arizona fescue 8+” Western wheatgrass 6-8” Blue gramma 1.5” Mountain Muhly 6+” Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle			
Key areas	**Pasture** **Key Species requirements for entering pastures**	**Range readiness 5/8/08**	**End of season 10/X/08**	**Estimated production/ vigor** **High 5** **Moderate High 4** **Moderate ave. 3** **Low moderate 2** **Low 1**
	Biscarra			

Cage	Arizona fescue 8+” Western wheatgrass 6-8” Blue gramma 1.5” Mountain Muhly 6+” Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle			
Parker	Arizona fescue 8+” Western wheatgrass 6-8” Blue gramma 1.5” Mountain Muhly 6+” Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle			
Permittee	Arizona fescue 8+” Western wheatgrass 6-8” Blue gramma 1.5” Mountain Muhly 6+” Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle			
	Deer Trail			
Cage	Arizona fescue 8+” Blue gramma 1.5” Mountain Muhly 6+” Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle			
Parker	Arizona fescue 8+” Blue gramma 1.5” Mountain Muhly 6+” Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle			
Permittee	Arizona fescue 8+” Blue gramma 1.5” Mountain Muhly 6+” Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle			
	Buckhorn			
Cage	Arizona fescue 8+” Mountain Muhly 6+” Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle			
Parker	Arizona fescue 8+” Mountain Muhly 6+” Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle			
Permittee	Arizona fescue 8+” Mountain Muhly 6+” Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle			
Key areas	**Pasture** **Key Species requirements for entering pastures**	**Range readiness 5/8/08**	**End of season 10/X/08**	**Estimated production/ vigor** **High 5** **Moderate High 4** **Moderate ave. 3** **Low moderate 2** **Low 1**
	Posito			

Cage	Arizona fescue 8+” Mountain Muhly 6+” Parry Danthonia full bloom Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle			
Parker	Arizona fescue 8+” Mountain Muhly 6+” Parry Danthonia full bloom Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle			
Permittee	Arizona fescue 8+” Mountain Muhly 6+” Parry Danthonia full bloom Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle			
	Barela			
Cage	Arizona fescue 8+” Western wheatgrass 6-8” Blue gramma 1.5” Mountain Muhly 6+” Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle			
Parker	Arizona fescue 8+” Western wheatgrass 6-8” Blue gramma 1.5” Mountain Muhly 6+” Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle			
Permittee	Arizona fescue 8+” Western wheatgrass 6-8” Blue gramma 1.5” Mountain Muhly 6+” Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle			

III. DEFERRED MAINTENANCE

Deferred maintenance assigned in your Term Grazing Permit requires annual maintenance that is to be completed prior to placing livestock in the pasture. Maintenance of existing deferred maintenance is priority over new construction, new construction or reconstruction must have the approval of the District Ranger. Deferred maintenance priorities are allotment boundary fences maintained prior to livestock entry into a pasture or neighboring allotment pasture. Interior fences must be maintained before cattle enter the pasture.

The cost of maintenance is the responsibility of the permittee. Maintenance means returning the improvement to its original functioning working order and using the equivalent material. Additional technical maintenance information and specification guides can be found on the Natural Resource Conservation Service web site at:
http:www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/fotg/intro3.html.
When allotments are in non-use, permittees are responsible for maintenance of allotment improvements referred to in permit deferred maintenance list or working deferred maintenance list.

The working deferred maintenance list will be mailed to the permittees with the 2008 AOI for completion. A working deferred maintenance list has been completed as a management tool addressing the following management objectives:

- Update/correct corporate data to produce accurate new maps
- Update/correct I-web data base reference numbers for future merge with Arc-GIS, NEPA process.
- Organize data by pasture addressing communication with permittees and managers
- Pasture attributes are organized according to type, condition, and maintenance needs
- Document maintenance responsibility
- Reference to watering point condition
- Planning of maintenance with technical assistance from NRCS following an AMP
- Develop maintenance strategies with seasonal conditions especially on dirt tanks
- Complete 2008 Working deferred Maintenance list identifying Road/Trail access route and means of travel for Tusas range improvements

The deferred maintenance list is referenced to prioritize annual maintenance and management objectives. Most of 2007 priorities have been carried over to 2008 as listed below.

A. 2007 Deferred Maintenance Priorities

- Permittees responsible boundary fence maintenance-continued into 2008 grazing season
- Permittees top priority is reconstruction of Tusas-Jawbone boundary fence approximately 2 miles-continued into 2008 grazing season, a design must be completed first.
- Permittees responsible for spring maintenance/repair throughout allotment, Posito, Biscarra, Burned mountain-continued into 2008 grazing season
- USFS, road maintenance for ungulate management- continued into 2008 grazing season
- Continued monitoring for proposed New Mexico Game and Fish carrying capacity improvement – continued into 2008 grazing season
- Continued monitoring for future management proposals throughout the allotment-continued into 2008 grazing season.

B. 2008 Deferred Maintenance Priorities

- Permittees responsible boundary fence maintenance, especially: Tusas/Jawbone allotment boundary fence prior to June 16-Jawbone entry date into Broke Off pasture and Tusas/Spring Creek allotment boundary prior to 6/27 entry date into Deer Trail.
- Permittees top priority is reconstruction design of Tusas-Jawbone boundary fence approximately 2 miles.
- Permittees responsible for spring repair throughout allotment, Posito, Biscarra, Burned mountain
- USFS, road maintenance for ungulate management
- Continued monitoring to improve elk management population #'s
- Continued monitoring for future management proposals throughout the allotment
- Complete 2008 Working deferred Maintenance list identifying Road/Trail access route and means of travel for Tusas range improvements
- Permittees requested State Highway sign:
    - Trucks turning sign on HWY 285 into Wheatgrass corral due increase in traffic and low visibility

C. Travel Management Rule

USFS Travel Management Plan was discussed in 2007. The travel management rule requires each Forest Service administrative unit or Ranger District to designate those, roads trails, and areas open to motor vehicle use. On November 2, 2005, the Forest Service announced final management regulations governing OHV's and other motor vehicle use on national forests and grasslands. On June 8, 2006, Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth approved the agency's schedule for implementation of the travel management rule. The schedule will guide local efforts through 2009 to designate those roads, trails and areas open to motor vehicle use. Range permittee guidelines will be developed and will be part of allotment planning in the future. More information is available on the Carson NF web page at: http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/carson/recreation/travel_mgmt/index.shtml. Permittees can provide comments to USFS regarding:

- Roads or motorized trail that you would like to see remain open as part of the designated system
- Roads or motorized trail that you would like to see closed
- Access routes you believe are necessary to access range improvements and description of how you have been accessing these improvements on working deferred maintenance list
- Roads or motorized trails you would like to see closed to the public but where you could retain adequate access for range operations and maintenance of you range-related facilities.

VIII. APPEAL RIGHTS

This 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. 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 my request an oral presentation in the appeal or at any time prior to closing of 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 the Forest Supervisor, Carson National Forest, 208 Cruz Alta, Taos, New Mexico 87571, Within 45 days of the date of this decision. A copy of the notice of appeal must be filed simultaneously with Tres Piedras District Ranger, who was the deciding officer, and the address for mailing the appeal copy is Tres Piedras Ranger District, P.O. Box 38, Tres Piedras, New Mexico 87577.

Before you file a Notice of Appeal, I would ask that you contact me and then together we would try to resolve any disagreements. I value your experience and knowledge of the allotment and appreciate the opportunity to discuss your concerns. If we cannot reach an agreement, you would exercise your appeal rights. Our discussion would ensure that we both understand the reasons for each of our positions regarding any issues. I look forward to working with you this season. I am confidant that we will work effectively together to manage the resources in a manner that reflects good stewardship of the land and cattle.

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BENJAMIN ROMERO Date
District Ranger

Attachment: Appendix

Appendix

Grazing Permittee Instructions for Cattle Operators on Tres Piedras Ranger District

1. Review the term grazing permit and become familiar with the terms and conditions prior to the grazing season.
2. Only livestock branded as shown on your application are permitted to enter the National Forest. The Forest Service (FS) and the permittees will agree to the counting locations, date, and time. Entering the allotment before your authorized entry date is not allowed until livestock are counted.
3. A Crossing Permit is required whenever livestock enter the National Forest. Crossing the District to/from a grazing allotment is only allowed within the authorized season.
4. Livestock found on other unauthorized allotments or in areas without prior authorization will result in the issuance of a Notice of Noncompliance that may impact your term permit.
5. The Annual operating Instructions (AOI) pasture rotation dates are tentative. Therefore, you must consult with the District Office two weeks before the AOI tentative scheduled rotation dates for discussion and approval of the actual move dates and any AOI adjustments.

Management on the Range

1. The management objective is to obtain proper use throughout the grazeable portions of the range according to the management requirements of the Carson Forest plan.
2. Obtaining the best distribution of cattle on mountain ranges is made difficult because of their natural tendency to gather in openings, watering sites, drainages, riparian areas and meadows. Proper use will be determined by the percent of forage used within key area sites. With proper livestock distribution, a uniform pattern of use would occur. Utilization levels would vary between 20% to 40% (percent dry weight) in pasture key areas, and within the overall pasture's pattern of use.
3. Riding, herding and good salting practices will help. Frequent movement of salt within slight to light use areas is required to improve the pattern of use. Cattle should be moved to less utilized areas and heavier use should be avoided in the bottoms/meadows/openings that contain more desirable herbage.
4. When proper use levels are reached within each pasture, livestock grazing must end and livestock must exit. An early allotment exit would result in a partial refund/credit of the grazing payment. The grazing of more than one pasture at a time must be approved by the District Ranger. All cattle on the allotment would be handled as one herd. Moves between pastures may be handled as drifting moves where gates to the next successive pasture may be opened 2 days before the agreed scheduled move date. The exit pasture that the cattle are leaving must be cleaned-out within 3 days after the scheduled date for moving.

Salting

1. Salt must be placed in each pasture prior to cattle entering the pasture. Salt shall be located at least 0.5 miles to 1.0 miles away from streams, spring, earthen dam stock tanks and other sources of water in order to improve the livestock distribution within the pasture. Salt must be placed to minimize damage to vegetation and soil, within the tree line instead of the middle of openings, in drainages/riparian or near roadways. Regular salt ground sites must not be established.

Range improvement projects

1. Range Improvement Projects assigned in your Term Grazing Permit require annual maintenance that is to be completed prior to placing livestock in the pasture unit. Allotment boundary fences must be maintained before the entry date and interior fences must be maintained before cattle enter the pasture.
2. Acceptable maintenance means returning the improvement to its original functioning working order and using the equivalent material. Particular attention, labor and time must be given to gates within the allotment to make certain that they are serviceable and can be opened and closed easily. The FS does not furnish materials or cost-share for maintenance projects.

3. All lay-down fences should be let-down no later than October 20, or as soon as possible after cattle leave the allotment and adjoining allotments.
4. Construction of new improvements or reconstruction of existing projects must have the approval of the District Ranger. During the AOI meeting and throughout the year suggestions for proposed projects are accepted.

Special Attention Items

1. Written authorization from the District Ranger is required for vehicle travel in road closure areas. All cross-country travel where allowed must not cause ruts or down-cutting in the soil surface. Cross-country vehicular travel when the ground is wet is prohibited. This written authorization is only for vehicle travel necessary for your livestock operation on you allotment. Prudent use of this authority is asked when and where general public use is concentrated. All permittees are encouraged to stay off roadways closed to vehicular travel during hunting seasons.
2. All temporary camps and corrals made or used by permittees or their riders will be cleaned up (left in a sanitary condition) and all materials/trash will be removed from the sites. Temporary camp/corral locations should be discussed with the FS prior to setting up the camp.
3. Riders will be permitted 4 horses or mules per rider for work within the allotment. No untrained horses, colts or other unreadable stock will be allowed.
4. Ear tags ill be provided initially to new permittees on allotments that are tagged. After initial allocation of tags, 10 percent will be provided per grazing season.
5. Please notify the District Ranger with any observations of stray livestock on the National Forest Lands (regardless of the time of year).
6. Move any dead animals to rest no closer than 300 feet from water or roadways.

Report wildfires to: Tres Piedras ranger station at (505 758-8678 or Carson Dispatch at (505) 758-6208 or (505) 758 6209.

If you have any questions please contact the Tres Piedras Ranger District office.