



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Southwestern Region 3
Carson National Forest
Tres Piedras
Ranger District

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**2008 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS
APACHE ALLOTMENT
CARSON NATIONAL FOREST
TRES PIEDRAS RANGER DISTRICT**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Annual Operating Instructions meeting was held on Mar. 28, 2008 at the Conejos Peak Ranger District. Permittees attending the meeting included O. R. Maupin, Andrew Abeyta, Norval Huffaker, Lee Bagwell, Charles Bagwell, and Michael Sanchez. Randy Schofield (Association employee) was also present. Wayne Yonemoto represented the U. S. Forest Service.

The Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) is a decision and appeal document that is made part of the terms and conditions of the Term Grazing Permit. The AOI includes guidance criteria described below that addresses annual resource conditions, livestock numbers, period of use, pasture rotations, monitoring and range improvement projects. The 2003 Rangeland Management Action Plan for the Santa Fe and Carson National Forests continues to be program guidance. The objectives of this strategic action plan continues to be a high priority and emphasizes collaboration, rangeland health, rangeland monitoring, and permittee involvement.

The environmental assessment decision for grazing permit issuance is tentatively scheduled for 2009. The livestock grazing fee is \$1.35/HM (Cattle) and \$0.27/HM (Sheep).

II. CLIMATE

The Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI) will be used to define drought conditions. SPI values are available monthly from the Western Regional Climate Center (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA) at www.wrcc.dri.edu. 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. SPI values of negative 0.70 or less for the past month signal drought conditions. The SPI definition that indicates the end-of-drought is for the SPI values to be positive 1.0 (or higher) for the past 12 months. The SPI for the past 12 months thru February is described as *Near Normal* (-0.74 to +0.74) so the end of drought has not occurred.

The dry weather pattern condition includes the following: Within the Southwest, the NOAA 3-month forecast is for increased chances of below normal precipitation. Mar. through May, 2008, as well as, increased chances of above normal temperatures. The SPI definition that indicates the end-of-drought is for the SPI values to be positive 1.0 (or higher) for the past 12 months. The SPI for the past 12 months thru February is described as *Near Normal* (-0.74 to +0.74) so the end of drought has not occurred. Within the



District, during the periods of Oct. to Dec., 2007 and Jan. to Feb., 2008, there were areas of favorable above normal precipitation and below normal temperatures.

III. 2007 MONITORING REPORT

Review of 2007 Monitoring data

The 2007 monitoring information in the Allotment Study file was reviewed. The allotment was mostly dry through June but forage production improved after the July, August precipitation. Participants discussed areas of average to below average production and average to above average production, range condition and range trend. Utilization guidelines (non-riparian guidelines) in 3 of 4 pastures (refer to 2008 Resource Condition Evaluation, Jan./Feb. Assessment for AOI) was met but improper livestock distribution caused utilization patterns in sensitive areas within the Apache Creek riparian and northern area of Apache to reflect areas above proper use levels. End of season utilization guidelines were met in the Osier, Bonito, Cruces-Toltec pastures and the southern area of Apache. The northern area of Apache was above the proper use level in part because of private cattle trailing through the Apache Creek drainage and using the stateline gate. The Association also uses this trailing route when exiting or entering the pasture from the Apache corral. The riparian guideline was not met in Apache Creek. Dixie Creek, Arkansas Creek, and Osier riparian were not inspected after livestock use but were inspected prior to livestock grazing. Cruces and Bonito riparian areas met the riparian utilization guideline.

AOI Compliance

- End of season upland utilization guidelines were met in the Osier, Bonito, Cruces-Toltec and southern area of Apache. Riparian guidelines were not met in Apache Creek.
- In August, Association strays (50 pairs) were entering the Apache pasture drainage at FR 87H.
- Livestock distribution was improved by herding cattle from the Cruces riparian to the Toltec uplands.

IV. MONITORING

AOI Includes Reference To Following Monitoring Information:

1. Weather update (SPI and temperature)
2. Soil moisture depth
3. Water availability
4. Location of paired annual production/utilization cages with supporting photos and documentation
5. Key site map of the Allotment
6. Key forage list showing
 - a. Vegetation type
 - b. Species list
 - c. Stubble height
 1. Range readiness stubble ht./utilization guidelines
 2. Grazing season monitoring stubble ht./utilization guidelines
 3. End of season stubble ht./utilization guidelines

7. Range readiness documentation
8. Watershed health indicators

Utilization Guidelines

Within each pasture, grazing utilization would occur at 20% to 40% (percent dry weight) of the annual available forage (not to exceed 40%) and would be assessed at the end of the growing season.

(Utilization guidelines in the riparian area includes leaving 4 inches of stubble height of the annual available forage when livestock exit the pasture). When proper use levels are reached within the pasture, livestock will be moved to the next scheduled pasture *unless other management considerations require livestock removal before proper use levels are reached.*

<u>Key Forage Species</u>	<u>Stubble Ht – Inches</u>
Kentucky bluegrass	4
Arizona/Thurber fescue	6
Timothy	6
Mountain muhly	4
Sheep fescue	4
Junegrass	2.5
Muttongrass	4

Monitoring Methods

Other monitoring methods that may be used on the allotment are: Parker 3-Step, Rapid Assessment Method (RAM), Ocular Estimate Method, Ocular Utilization by Dry Weight, Photo Point, Range Trend Plot and Cover-Frequency.

V. AOI MANAGEMENT

Appendix Reference

The Appendix of the AOI, references the permit. The appendix will contain permitted number, (period of use), authorized number (period of use), actual number (period of use); pasture rotation schedule and amendments to the AOI.

2007 Actual Use: 716 c/c; 385 e/l; 6/16 – 9/29 (total 106 days)

Bonito 6/16 – 7/14 (29 days)

Cruces-Toltec 7/15 – 8/9 (26 days)

Osier 8/10 – 9/9 (31 days)

Apache 9/10 – 9/29 (20 days)

2008 Annual Authorized Use Request Form

Credits from previous year (above minimum dollar amount), if applicable, would apply to the current bill. The final livestock numbers and entry date would be determined after range readiness inspections. Therefore, additional billing may be required after the first billing (that reflects the Annual Authorized Use Request form for 717 cow/calf; 385 ewe/lamb; 6/16 – 9/30. (3% (717/743) tentative voluntary reduction in livestock numbers).

AOI Objectives

9. Continue to minimize grazing use in the riparian areas of the allotment with special emphasis on the Cruces riparian in order to meet the riparian standard each grazing season. Continue to herd livestock away from the riparian areas and use salt placement to improve livestock distribution.
10. Herd livestock to the Toltec area immediately upon entering the Cruces-Toltec.
11. Move sheep camps every 7 days to minimize impacts to the area.
12. Monitor riparian areas.
13. Limit number of days in Apache, Cruces-Toltec to 15 to 20 days. Limit Osier and Bonito number of days to 33 days.
14. Prevent Association excess use within Lagunitas and San Antone .
15. Compliance with New Mexico Statewide Regulations, 21.30.6 NMAC, Bovine Trichomoniasis, effective June 17, 2005, becomes a term and condition of the United States Forest Service term grazing permit.”

Concerns of the Association (Also refer to the Project Section)

16. Allotment road maintenance is needed. Roads have erosion and ruts.
17. ATV use is occurring in the wilderness area, (Cruces and Bonito) and Osier Creek area.
18. Lagunitas member is not repairing his assigned maintenance fence section at the area northwest of the trailhead. Members and FS need to inspect the fence section to resolve this issue.
19. Apache Creek drainage is used by private cattle trailing through the stateline gate in the spring and fall. The impacts (high utilization) were worse in fall, 2006. FS needs to change the crossing permit route.

Range Readiness

The range readiness inspection is tentatively scheduled for June 12, 2008.

VI. RANGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS AND MAINTENANCE

The cost of maintenance is the responsibility of the permittee. Term permit projects such as allotment boundary fences, unit boundary fences, cattleguards, stock tanks and other range improvement projects must be maintained prior to the permittee entering the allotment. In addition, when an allotment is in non-use, the permittee is responsible for maintenance of the assigned projects.

Project Status

2007 maintenance projects – Continue repair of the stateline fence, particularly west of the Dixie canyon; Repair Bonito/Cruces fence.

2008 new projects - Construct small holding pens at Apache near top of the meadow with railroad ties/steel panels when CE is completed.

2008 maintenance projects - Repair fence with mainly posts at Apache/Osier, Osier/Cruces.

Future Desired projects – 1) Construct small holding pens at Apache near top of the meadow with railroad ties/steel panels when CE is completed. 2) Reconstruct 1.0 mile

of Bonito/Cruces fence after CE is completed. 3) FS issued 16 rolls of barb wire to Association in 2004 for the stateline fence that have not been installed yet.

Travel Management

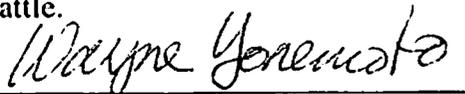
USFS Travel Management Plan was discussed. The travel management rule requires each Ranger District to designate those roads trails and areas open to motor vehicle use. Range permittee guidelines will be developed and will be included in the AOI in the future. A second travel management meeting was held in Tres Piedras on March 21, 2007 (The first travel management meeting was held in Tres Piedras July 11, 2006). Attendees provided comments to the USFS regarding roads or trails that should remain open or closed; and access routes to range improvements that are needed within the allotment. The Association will provide (in writing) a description of the cross country access routes for supplemental salt placement or routes to the various allotment projects (maintenance, gates, or inspection) and number of times the project would be accessed.

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 may 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 the 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 would 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 confident that we will work effectively together to manage the resources in a manner that reflects good stewardship of the land and cattle.



for BENJAMIN ROMERO
District Ranger

5.1.08

Date

Attachment: Appendix

Appendix
 Apache Allotment
 2008

<i>Association Members/Livestock Numbers/Permit – 743 c/c;1385 e/l; 6/16 – 9/30</i>			
Member	Permit Livestock Number (c/c; e/l)	Authorized Number – Tentative 15% reduction	Actual Use
Charles Bagwell	207 c/c;1000 e/l (50 c/c instead of 1000 e/l)	257	
Lee Bagwell	206 c/c; 1000 e/l (50 c/c instead of 1000 e/l)	256	
Norval Huffaker	76 c/c	76	
O. R. Maupin	77 c/c	77	
Michael Sanchez	118 c/c	40	
Ben Breslin	59 c/c	11	
Andrew Abeyta	385 e/l	385 e/l	
Total	1385 e/l; 743 c/c (or 843 c/c and 385 e/l)	717 (of 843) (Range readiness inspection determines the authorized livestock number) (717/743 is a 3% reduction or 717/843 is a 15% reduction)	

2008 Tentative Pastures/Period of Use (6/16 – 9/30; 107 days)

Pasture	Dates Tentative (From – To) (# of days)	Days Tentative (Min. to Max)	Actual Use (# of days and dates)	Reason for Adjustment
Apache	Rotation depends upon the trucking cost and decision about trailing cattle (Ike Maupin and Norval Huffaker) 6/16 – 7/3 (18)	15 to 20		
Osier	7/4 – 8/4 (32)	25 to 35		
Cruces-Toltec	8/5 – 8/24 (20)	15 to 20		
Bonito	8/25 – 9/28 (35)	25 to 35		
Apache	9/29 – 9/30 (2)	2		
Total	6/16 – 9/30; 107 days (Range readiness inspection determines the authorized entry date)			

- 1) After a decision is made about trucking or trailing cattle, a tentative pasture rotation will be determined.
- 2) Possibility of splitting the herd into Bonito and the Cruces-Toltec pastures to decrease the utilization levels in the Cruces riparian.

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, springs, 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 in 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 materials. 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 your 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 unrideable stock will be allowed.
4. Eartags will 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.

Appendix

Grazing Permittee Instructions for Sheep Operators on Tres Piedras Ranger District

6. Review the term grazing permit and become familiar with the terms and conditions prior to the grazing season.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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

5. 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.
6. Use the open herding system of handling sheep for better effect on the range and the sheep. The herder should hold the lead sheep instead of pushing the rear, and train the sheep to spread out and graze contentedly, instead of following the natural tendency of certain leaders in the band to move ahead too rapidly. Practice the open herding system of grazing in order to minimize the trailing and driving directly to and from water sources. Trailing and bunching the sheep should be avoided as much as possible. The herder would bed the sheep in a different location each night, except under exceptional circumstances, and never bed the sheep at camp (which is moved every 7 days). Re-using the bed grounds contributes to the spread of disease and parasites. 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.
7. Riding, herding and good salting practices will help. Sheep should be moved to less utilized areas and heavier use should be avoided in the bottoms/meadows/openings that contain more desirable herbage.
8. 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.

Camp Operation

1. Move camps at least every 7 days. Locate camps to avoid contaminating water supplies. Remove trash and garbage. Leave the camp site clean and use good sanitation practices. Bury all human waste and locate latrines at least 100 feet from surface water.

The Herder

1. The herder will be expected to deal with unexpected emergencies and make day to day decisions. The herder should report conditions and observations that are vital to the sheep operation. The herder must know the allotment boundary and various property boundaries within the allotment in order to avoid unauthorized use or excess use. When applicable, information on adjoining bands of sheep and their routing/bedding will be shared with permittees and their herders.

Salting

5. Salt shall be located at least 0.5 miles to 1.0 miles away from streams, springs, 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 in the middle of openings, in drainages/riparian or near roadways. Regular salt ground sites must not be established.

Range Improvement Projects

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7. 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.
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Special Attention Items

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8. 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.
9. Riders will be permitted 4 horses or mules per rider for work within the allotment. No untrained horses, colts or other unrideable stock will be allowed.

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11. Please notify the District Ranger with any observations of stray livestock on the National Forest Lands (regardless of the time of year).

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