

**2007 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS
TIO GORDITO ALLOTMENT 650
CARSON NATIONAL FOREST
TRES PIEDRAS RANGER DISTRICT**

I. INTRODUCTION/OBJECITVES

The Tio Gordito Annual Operating Instruction meeting was held on March 2, 2007 at Tres Piedras Ranger District from 1:00-2:00pm. Tio Gordito attending permittees were, Lawrence Garcia, Kelvin Huffaker, Alfonso Lovato, Pesciliano Roybal and Jake Vigil. Forest Service representatives were 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 Tio Gordito allotment:

- Documents permitted, authorized and actual livestock management data
- Documents current year's objective per pasture so that it can be easily referenced
- References allotment inspection reports, monitoring studies, evaluation analysis worksheet, working deferred maintenance list, end of season report, and climate reports
- Documents end of season utilization and production/vigor

Permittees were advised to review terms and conditions stated on their permits that were completed after NEPA decision in 1998.

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 2007.

1-month SPI through the end of January 2007 is -0.74 to 0.74 (near normal conditions)

12-month SPI through the end of January 2007 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. 2006 spring production

was stunted due to spring drought conditions, summer rains allowed for cool season green up and good warm season production. 2007 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 recommended that permittees have a fire contingency plan for livestock management. 2007 Fire season is forecasted to be normal.

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

B. Summary of 2006 grazing season

2006 summary references allotment inspection reports, monitoring studies, evaluation analysis worksheet, working deferred maintenance list, end of season report, and climatic reports. Current years management objectives are developed based on 2006 information and 2007 forecasted weather conditions.

On February 15, 2006 Tio Gordito permittees agreed to a 20% reduction in authorized numbers and a 10 day delay on date, addressing resource protection in the 2006 spring drought conditions. Staggered on dates of split herd actual counts are 46% reduction in numbers with a 10 and 14 day delayed on date. 2006 credits were completed. Voluntary adaptive management was practiced addressing intensity of livestock during spring drought conditions. Adaptable management head month calculation was used to calibrate timing in the Tio Gordito allotment with split herd and staggered entry at the end of the year. Head month will be used in the future to calibrate and estimate proper use of Tio Gordito allotment.

2006 low precipitation during spring critical growing season and early elk utilization had an effect on 2006 grass production. Monsoon season in July and August allowed green up on cool seasons and production on warm season forage. Precipitation was sporadic reflective in the water levels in dirt tanks throughout the allotment.

Tio Gordito took a 51% reduction in HM in 2006. The Ocular Estimated Method, Key Herbaceous Species, Form R3-2200 was used to determine that 5/6 pastures did not meet the 20-40% standard of utilization at the end of the year. Contributing factors were spring drought, elk utilization, livestock utilization and distribution.

The following are summarized objectives for 2007 grazing season reviewed with permittees at the AOI meeting on March 2, 2007.

- **Tio Gordito allotment**, range readiness conditions will determine rotation and adaptive management adjustments based upon water availability, forage production, and early elk utilization on cool season forage. It is recommended not to split the herd in 2007 grazing season and follow recommended HM use if resource allows. Document travel management considerations throughout the allotment.
- **Pinon pasture**, it is recommended using this pasture as the opening pasture. If water availability is limited water should be hauled to trick tanks. It is a priority to use trick tanks to increase distribution

and minimize intensity on other pastures addressing drought recovery. Maintain pasture fences prior to cattle use of the pasture.

- **Wheatgrass pasture**, if water availability is limited Wheatgrass pasture and Las Tablas may have to be used together as the second pasture.
- **Red Mesa/Las Tablas Pasture**, need for alternative watering point in this pasture to limit the combined use of Red Mesa and Wheatgrass. Need to review agreements made with USFS and Quivera Coalition for trick tanks. Cool season production/use and water availability will determine 2007 rotation. Maintain pasture fences prior to cattle use of the pasture.
- **Tio Gordito pasture**, the availability of water increases use throughout the year by all ungulates. Review in spring for early elk utilization. It is critical to document elk utilization prior to livestock entry to adjust rotation using the grazing response index monitoring method.
- **Malapias pasture**, private landowners need to be informed of fence responsibilities and livestock management for the Tio Gordito allotment. Deferred maintenance fence # 8009,8010, 8012 boundary fences may not be 100% maintained by private landowners therefore, permittees will have to increase herding to keep authorized livestock in Malapias pasture. Salt on ridges away from boundary to avoid conflict with Highland Estates subdivision. Manage livestock as often as possible to keep livestock within USFS boundary during rotation in Malapias pasture.
- **Sawmill pasture**, 2007 management recommendations are to decrease HM practicing proper use of the allotment and allowing rest from 2006 grazing season.

C. 2007 Range Readiness

Inspection of 2007 range readiness meeting attendance is strongly recommended to review range conditions on 5/9/06 at 9:00 A.M. at Wheatgrass corral. Evaluation of range readiness conditions will determine what adaptive management adjustments are needed addressing proper use.

D. 2007 Grazing Fee and Annual Authorized Use Request

The livestock grazing fee for grazing year 2007 is \$1.35 c/c and \$.27 e/l on National Forests. The reduction in grazing fees is due to increase in the cost of production attributed to higher fuel prices, high loan rate, and equipment expenses, which offset slight increases in prices received, and forage values attributed to private grazing land leasing rates. 2007 Unauthorized use of National Forests is \$4.10 for livestock and \$.82 for sheep and goats.

Tio Gordito permittees discussed voluntary reduction and reported their actual numbers. Individual permittees reduction varies from non-use to 34%, totaling 29% reduction of Tio Gordito permitted numbers.

The 2007 authorized livestock and grazing season is no guarantee that grazing can occur for the tentative rotation. Resource conditions will dictate alterations in rotations or removal from the allotment.

Table 1-Tio Gordito 2007 permitted/authorized data

Permitted season 5/18-10/15, 151 days	2007 Authorized season 5/18-10/14, 151 days with 249 c/c (1236 HM/1631 AUM). Overall 29% reduction	2007 actual season, days, numbers, and HM/AUM Authorized 5/28/06-10/15/06
Peter Casados 34 c/c, 169 HM, 223 AUM	Non-use	
Lawrence Garcia 19 c/c, 94 HM, 124AUM	17 c/c, 84 HM, 110 AUM, 11% reduction	
Clinton and Tyler Huffaker 33 c/c, 164 HM, 216 AUM	20 c/c, 99HM, 131 AUM, 34% reduction	
Kelvin Huffaker 95 c/c, 472 HM, 623 AUM	90 c/c, 447 HM, 590 AUM, 6% reduction	
Alfonso Lovato 7 c/c, 60 HM, 79 AUM	7 c/c, 35 HM, 462 AUM, 0 % reduction	
Edward Lovato 7 c/c, 35 HM, 46 AUM	5 c/c, 25 HM, 33 AUM, 29% reduction	
Preceliano Roybal 14 c/c, 70 HM, 92 AUM	Non-use	
Jake Vigil 140 c/c, 695 HM, 917AUM	110 c/c, 546 HM, 729 AUM, 21% reduction	
Total 349 c/c, 1735 HM, 2288 AUM	249 c/c	

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 2007 tentative rotation schedule if needed. The pastures currently have minimum-**goal**-maximum days, HM and AUM. It is the responsibility of the permittee to ensure proper distribution of livestock addressing utilization standard of 40% of annual production.

Table 2-2006 Pasture rotation

Tentative rotation of pastures	Permitted Minimum-Goal-maximum Days HM AUM	2007 29% reduction by total numbers 249 c/c authorized, 10/15, 151 days	2007 Actual	2007 Carson Forest standard of utilization at end of season
Pinon	20-22---25 229-252-286 302-333-377	20-22---25 164-180-204 216-237-269		

Wheatgrass	1-7-10 11-80-115 15-106-152	1- 7 -10 8- 57 -82 11- 75 -108		
Red Mesa/Las Tablas	30--- 36 ---60 344-413-688 454-545-908	30--- 36 ---60 246- 294 -491 324- 388 -648		
Tio Gordito	20-- 22 -----30 229-252-344 302-332-454	20-- 22 -----30 164- 180 -246 216- 237 -324		
Malipas	30--- 36 ---60 344-413-688 454-545-908	30-- 34 -36---60 246- 278 -294-491 324- 366 -388-648		
6, Sawmill	20-- 22 ---60 229-252-688 302-332-908	20--22-- 30 --60 164-180- 246 -491 216-237- 325 -648		

F. Monitoring references and Utilization standards

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

1. Tio Gordito spreadsheet
2. Elk utilization prior to livestock entry date-Inspection reports, documented on spreadsheet
3. Fence conditions-Deferred maintenance list
4. SPI , weather forecast and water availability- weather record, Deferred maintenance list
5. Soil moisture depth and temperature-Inspection reports
6. Production cages, Parker, and permittee key areas, reviewed with methods listed on the Tres Piedras Monitoring Plan
7. Key forage list per pasture-AOI obtained from 1970 blue line map
8. Key areas reviewed if accessible-Inspection reports
9. Existing stubble heights on key species--Production/Vigor of key species per pasture at range readiness and end of season

Below is a table of key species with stubble heights requirements for pasture entry. It is stressed that stubble heights of key species and utilization are two different ecological concepts. Stubble height is related to:

- The effect of grazing on the physiological response of individual plant-vigor
- The effect of residual vegetation in protecting the soil from wind or water erosion

Utilization will be estimated with the USFS Ocular estimate method by class.

Table 3-Tio Gordito key species requirements

Pastures	Pasture Key Species requirements for entering pastures	Range Readiness 5/2/07	End of season 10/X/07	Estimated production/vigor
	Pinon			
Cage	Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Western Wheatgass 6+” Blue gramma 1.5”			
Parker	Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Western Wheatgass 6+” Blue gramma 1.5”			
Permittee	Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Western Wheatgass 6+” Blue gramma 1.5”			
	Wheatgrass			
Cage	Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Western Wheatgass 6+” Arizona fescue 8+” Blue gramma 1.5”			
Parker	Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Western Wheatgass 6+” Arizona fescue 8+” Blue gramma 1.5”			
Permittee	Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Western Wheatgass 6+” Arizona fescue 8+” Blue gramma 1.5”			
	Red Mesa/Las Tablas			
Cage	Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Western Wheatgass 6+” Arizona fescue 8+” Blue gramma 1.5”			
Parker	Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Western Wheatgass 6+” Arizona fescue 8+” Blue gramma 1.5”			
Permittee	Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Western Wheatgass 6+” Arizona fescue 8+” Blue gramma 1.5”			
	Aguge/Tio Gordito			
Cage	Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Western Wheatgass 6+” Arizona fescue 8+” Blue gramma 1.5”			
Parker	Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Western Wheatgass 6+” Arizona fescue 8+” Blue gramma 1.5”			
Permittee	Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Western Wheatgass 6+” Arizona fescue 8+” Blue gramma 1.5”			

Pastures	Pasture Key Species requirements for entering pastures	Range Readiness 5/2/07	End of season 10/X/07	Estimated production/vigor
	Malipias			
Cage	Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Western Wheatgass 6+” Arizona fescue 8+” Blue gramma 1.5”			
Parker	Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Western Wheatgass 6+” Arizona fescue 8+” Blue gramma 1.5”			
Permittee	Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Western Wheatgass 6+” Arizona fescue 8+” Blue gramma 1.5”			
	Sawmill			
Cage	Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Western Wheatgass 6+” Arizona fescue 8+” Blue gramma 1.5”			
Parker	Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Western Wheatgass 6+” Arizona fescue 8+” Blue gramma 1.5”			
Permittee	Crested Wheatgrass 6+” Western Wheatgass 6+” Arizona fescue 8+” Blue gramma 1.5”			

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 evaluation analysis worksheet has been organized to document these above factors influencing production and vigor of forage. The evaluation analysis worksheet of quantitative/qualitative data is a reference for estimating if standard of utilization was met at the end of the growing season. 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 Tio Gordito are intermittent influencing the 4” standard stubble height. Updated maps are necessary to clearly identify riparian areas referencing soil type and existing species composition.

III. DEFERRED MAINTENANCE

Deferred maintenance assigned in your Term Grazing Permit requires annual maintenance that is to be completed prior to livestock entry. Livestock management emphasizes assigned maintenance for interior and boundary allotment fences to be maintained before livestock entry date.

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 deferred maintenance list. Construction of new improvements or reconstruction of existing projects must have the approval of the District Ranger.

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, (boundary and interior fences, dirt tanks, trick tanks, springs, cattleguards, and corrals) are organized according to type, condition, and prioritization maintenance needs
- Document maintenance responsibility
- Reference watering source conditions, because they influence key areas and rotation
- Following an Annual Management Plan schedule assigned deferred maintenance with technical assistance from NRCS
- Develop maintenance strategies with seasonal conditions. For example, in dry seasons prioritizing critical dirt tanks that need to be cleaned out.

The deferred maintenance list is referenced to prioritize annual maintenance which are listed on the AOI in project status section below.

A. 2006 Deferred Maintenance Priorities

- Completion of prescribed burns in Sawmill pasture
- Wheatgrass fence repair
- Pine tank fence repair
- New gate above Dry Lakes
- Increase water holding capacity by salting existing tanks since salting is a cheaper and more effective in dry conditions

B. 2007 Deferred Maintenance Priorities

- Pinon /Wheatgrass fence needs to be repaired approximately 3 miles
- Tio Gordito/Red Mesa fence maintenance
- Pinon trick tank repair
- Tree thinning project in Sawmill is contributing to decreased livestock distribution. Permittees are asking for management coordination so that livestock can have better distribution pattern.
- Permittees requested increased communication of USFS prescribed burn projects and thinning within the Tio Gordito allotment. They are especially concerned with projects that contribute to decreasing grazable acres per pasture and require additional adjustments to rotation pattern.

C. Travel Management Rule

USFS Travel Management Plan was discussed. 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 over the next four years 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. A Travel Management meeting was held in Tres Piedras on March 21, 2007 from 6:00P.M. to 9:00 P.M. Please 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
- Roads or motorized trails you would like to see closed to public but where you could retain adequate access for range operations and maintenance of your range-related facilities.

VIII. APPEAL RIGHTS

Range managers were informed in January 07 that if an allotment has current NEPA, then appeal language is not needed on the AOI. Allotments with current NEPA operate within the guidelines of the NEPA decision therefore; appeal language has been omitted from Tio Gordito 2007 AOI. The opportunity to appeal management was when the NEPA decision was made. If the allotment has a new permittee appeal rights still follow the NEPA decision.

BENJAMIN ROMERO
District Ranger

Date

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 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.