

**2007 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS
EAST PINON ALLOTMENT 648
CARSON NATIONAL FOREST
TRES PIEDRAS RANGER DISTRICT**

I. INTRODUCTION/OBJECTIVES

The East Pinon Operating Instruction meeting was held on May 29, 2007 at Tres Piedras Ranger District from 10:00-11:00. Dolores Vigil and Rudy Vigil attended. 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 East Pinon allotment. NEPA is scheduled to be completed in 2007.

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 April 2007 is -1.24 to -0.75 (moderately dry conditions)

12-month SPI through the end of April 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 effective precipitation is unknown at this time. 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 recommend 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 worksheets, 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 April 6, 2006 E. Pinon permittees tentatively planned use from 10/15/06-11/30/06 with 18 c/c. Resource conditions improved in mid summer and permittees were authorized use for 7/5/06 to 8/15/06, 41 days with 15 c/c, 21 HM. East Pinon actual use was from 7/24/06 to 8/29/06, 37 days, 18 c/c, 21 HM with a 93% reduction in permitted HM for the allotment. Adaptable management head month calculation will be used to calibrate timing in East Pinon allotment in 2007

End of season reviews were not completed on East Pinon by USFS staff. From review of adjacent areas estimated production/vigor of forage was low for cool seasons and moderate-high for warm seasons due to the pattern of precipitation received. Overall estimated production/vigor of forage was low (moderate). It is estimated that the pasture used met the 20-40% utilization standard by livestock use. All three pastures met the overall standard of utilization of 40% at the end of the year.

The following are summarized objectives for 2007 grazing season reviewed with permittees at AOI. East Pinon has three pastures, A (Servilleta), B (Taoses), C (Tres Orejas), due to incomplete boundaries and poor accessibility to haul water pasture A and B have not been used since to 2002. Pasture C (Tres Orejas) has been used since 2003 at varying seasons due to resource condition.

- **A (Servilleta)** USFS, document update deferred maintenance list for allotment boundary. And flexibility in use.
- **B (Taoses)** USFS, analysis/evaluation of roads in on-going travel management due to the Carson subdivision and unclear Right of Ways, addressing accessibility to the allotment. Evaluation of livestock authorization due to the urban interface.
- **C (Tres Orejas)** USFS, analysis/evaluation of roads in on-going travel management due to the Carson subdivision and Right of Ways, addressing accessibility to the allotment. Review of Tres Orejas pasture before and after livestock use to estimate utilization in 2007.

C. 2007 Range Readiness

Inspection of 2007 range readiness meeting attendance is strongly recommended to review range conditions on 7/5/07 at 9:00 A.M. meeting at permittee base property. 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.

Authorized season of use was discussed. Approximately forty days are needed to complete the 2007 AOI and administrative billing process. East Pinon permittees are authorized 22 c/c from 7/12/07 to 8/27/07, 46 days, 33 HM. A second range review will be conducted if permittees request additional authorized use of the pasture before 8/10/07.

The 2007 authorized livestock and grazing season are no guarantee that grazing can occur for the tentative rotation. Low resource conditions may require alterations in rotations or removal from the allotment.

Table 1-East Pinon 2007 permitted/authorized data/Actual data

Permitted seasons 5/10-6/3, 25 days, 598 e/l, 492 HM 12/1-1/4, 35 days, 598 e/l, 688 HM	2007 Authorized season, days, # c/c (HM/AUM)	2007 Actual season, days, numbers, and HM/AUM
Dolores and Philip TY Montoya	7/12/07-8/27/07 , 46 days, 22 c/c, (33HM, 43 AUM)	
Total permitted 598 e/l, 1,180 HM, 1557 AUM	97 % reduction in permitted use	

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 forage and adjust 2007 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 2-2007 East Pinon Pasture rotation

Pastures	Permitted Minimum-goal-maximum days HM AUM	2007 10/15/06-11/30/06, 47 days with 18 c/c, 28 HM X% Authorized 2007 10/15/06-11/Minimum- goal-maximum days HM AUM	2007 Actual	2007 Carson Forest standard of utilization at end of season
(A) Servilleta	Days need calibration ~393 HM ~518 AUM	Non-use, boundary issues	Non-use	
(B) Taoses	Days need calibration ~393 HM ~518 AUM	Non-use, boundary issues	Non-use	
(C) Tres Orejas	20---50---60 days ~393 HM ~518 AUM	20---50---60 days		

F. Monitoring references and Utilization standards

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

1. East Pinon spreadsheet
2. Prairie dog 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-East Pinon key species stubble heights reference

Key areas	Pasture Key Species requirements for entering pastures	Range readiness 7/5/07	End of season 10/X/07	Estimated production/vigor
	(A) Servilleta			
Cage	Blue gramma 1.5" Western wheatgrass 6-8" Crested wheatgrass 6+''			
Parker	Blue gramma 1.5" Western wheatgrass 6-8" Crested Wheatgrass 6+''			
Permittee	Blue gramma 1.5" Western wheatgrass 6-8" Crested Wheatgrass 6+''			
	B (Taoses)			
Cage	Blue gramma 1.5" Western wheatgrass 6-8" Crested Wheatgrass 6+			
Parker	Blue gramma 1.5" Western wheatgrass 6-8" Crested Wheatgrass 6+''			
Permittee	Blue Gramma 1.5" Western wheatgrass 6-8" Crested Wheatgrass 6+''			
	C (Tres Orejas)			
Cage	Blue gramma 1.5" Western wheatgrass 6-8" Crested Wheatgrass 6+''			
Parker	Blue gramma 1.5" Western wheatgrass 6-8" Crested Wheatgrass 6+''			
Permittee	Blue gramma 1.5" Western wheatgrass 6-8" Crested Wheatgrass 6+''			

Prairie dog 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 prairie dog utilization. Allotment spreadsheet has been organized to document these dynamic 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. There are few-no true riparian areas identified in East Pinon. Dirt tanks 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.

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. Allotment boundary fences must be

maintained before the entry date and 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 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 will be 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
- Document vandalism to range improvements

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

A. 2006-2007 Deferred Maintenance Priorities

- Boundary fence repairs
- 2006 new projects-Pasture C (Tres Orejas) section 25-2 cattleguards (depending on Right of-Way status or .5 miles of new fence.
- Future Projects-Pasture C (Tres Orejas)-Section 36-sagebrush control/seeding

B. Travel Management Plan

USFS Travel Management Plan was discussed. The plan is to asses USFS road accessibility need to classify open and closed roads. The Travel Management Plan began in 2006 and is a five year process. Range criteria for permittee involvement are being developed and will be part of allotment planning in the future. A Travel Management meeting was held in Tres Piedras March 21, 2007 from 6:00P.M. to 9:00 P.M. for permittee opportunity to 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 the public but where you could retain adequate access for range operations and maintenance of your range r-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 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 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 confident that we will work effectively together to manage the resources in a manner that reflects good stewardship of the land and cattle.

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 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.