



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Southwestern Region 3  
Carson National Forest  
Tres Piedras  
Ranger District

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File Code: 2210

Date: March 6, 2006

Tio Grande Livestock Association  
Ruben Sandoval  
13486 County Road 17  
La Jara, CO 81140

Dear Mr. Sandoval,

Your **2006 Annual operating Instructions document** is attached. Please review your grazing permit and become familiar with permit requirements before the grazing season.

Priority for maintenance should be placed on water developments and fences. All existing water developments should be functional prior to livestock entering the allotment. All assigned allotment fences must be maintained prior to livestock entering the allotment, and also during the season.

A permittee monitoring program should be in place prior to the entry date. The placement and reading of rain gages within the allotment is recommended as a consideration in the development of your monitoring program. Mr. Jeff Shawcroft has been monitoring established photo points throughout the allotment since 2002. We would encourage you to keep an actual use record of your livestock, a journal of climate and watershed conditions and a description of noteworthy observations made while conducting routine business on the allotment. Information of a historical nature is also important and should be recorded.

Please keep a record of your maintenance costs, water hauling costs, stock losses, etc. We will be requesting this information along with your actual use record when we compile our use report at the end of the grazing season.

We look forward to working with you this season. If you have any questions regarding the Annual Operating Instructions, please do not hesitate to contact Luciano Sandoval or Wayne Yonemoto.

Sincerely,

ERNESTO HURTADO  
District Forest Ranger  
Encl

# **2006 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS**

## **TIO GRANDE ALLOTMENT 617**

### **CARSON NATIONAL FOREST**

#### **TRES PIEDRAS RANGER DISTRICT**

## **I. INTRODUCTIONS**

The Tio Grande Annual Operating Instruction (AOI) meeting was held on March 2, 2006 at the Conejos Peak Ranger District Conference Room in La Jara, Colorado from 10:00am-12:00pm. Tio Grande Permittees attending the meeting included Jackie Bush, Paul Clark, Lawrence Gallegos, Ruben Sandoval (Association President), Wade Sandoval, Jeff Shawcroft (Range Monitor), John Shawcroft and Christina Wingert (Association Secretary/Treasurer). Representing the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) were Luciano Sandoval, Wayne Yonemoto and Ernesto Hurtado.

The Annual Operating Instructions are decision documents and are made part of the Term Grazing Permit. The following items are guidance criteria that were discussed in order to address proper use of the Tio Grande Allotment.

## **II. WEATHER REPORT**

Attendees to the meeting discussed weather conditions on the Tio Grande Allotment. The Standard Precipitation Index (SPI) is currently being used by the Tres Piedras Ranger District (TPRD) Range program as a guide to determine the weather status of our area. SPI values of positive 1.0 (Moderately Wet) or more for 12 consecutive months-indicates end of drought. The 12-month SPI through the end of February 2006 for our region was -0.74 to + 0.74 (near normal). SPI data indicates that the four month period ending in February was (Very Dry) with values of -1.99 to -1.25. SNOTEL data indicate that nearby major snow courses currently have significantly lower than normal snow pack. National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) forecasts above average temperatures and below average precipitation, through May 2006.

### III. REPORT CARD

#### A. Review of End of Growing Season Report

The 2005 monitoring information has indicated that forage production on most of the Tio Grande pastures was fair to good. By using the ocular utilization estimate method, the following utilization statistics were derived.

<u>Pasture</u>	<u>End of Grazing Season</u>	<u>End of Growing Season</u>	<u>Riparian Standards</u>
Corral-	—	25%	N/A
Lucero Lakes-	—	25%	N/A
Brokeoff-	—	24%	N/A
Tecolote -	—	30%	N
Tio Grande -	—	15% to 20%	Y
Montoya/Placitas-	—	10% to 15%	N/A

#### B. AOI Compliance

- Cisneros Park Spring Project nearly completed and three earthen tanks cleaned out.
- Good pasture clean outs.
- Higher than desired utilization of the Tecolote Riparian area along Nutritas Creek.
- Tio Grande Creek riparian area met the 4” minimum stubble height standard.

### IV. 2006 MANAGEMENT ADJUSTMENTS

#### A. 2006 Management Plan

It was discussed that the 2006 AOI has been edited to have permitted and actual data. The document will reflect:

<b>Table 1</b>		<b>2006</b>		<b>2006 TIO GRANDE PERMITTEE INFORMATION</b>	
<b>TIO GRANDE PERMITTEES</b>	<b>PERMITTED #'S OF c/c</b>	<b>AUTHORIZED #'S OF c/c</b>	<b>ACTUAL #'S OF c/c</b>		
Paul Clark	<b>59</b>	<b>53</b>			
Lawrence D. Gallegos	<b>60</b>	<b>54</b>			
Maclovio Garcia et al.	<b>100</b>	<b>90</b>			
Peter A. & Sarah F. Marquez	<b>76</b>	<b>68</b>			
Reverse S Slash	<b>95</b>	<b>85</b>			
Joseph L. Romero Jr.	<b>60</b>	<b>54</b>			
Donald Sandoval	<b>36</b>	<b>32</b>			
Ruben Sandoval	<b>166</b>	<b>149</b>			
Wade Sandoval	<b>60</b>	<b>54</b>			
John B. Shawcroft	<b>120</b>	<b>108</b>			
Donald J. & Ann M. Shawcroft	<b>95</b>	<b>85</b>			
Tio Grande Assn.	<b>33</b>	<b>30</b>			
John Valdez	<b>53</b>	<b>48</b>			
Edmundo Vigil	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>			
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1021</b>	<b>917</b>			
<b>10% REDUCTION TO ADDRESS RESOURCE PROTECTION</b>					

**B. 2006 ANNUAL AUTHORIZED USE REQUEST**

Tio Grande Permittees have agreed to a 10% voluntary reduction of cow/calf numbers and a 5 day entry delay. The reduction will address the current drought conditions which exist though out most of the region. However, if favorable range conditions are found to exist during range readiness inspections, adjustment will be made to the entry date and/or stocking rate accordingly. Permittees will notify Forest Service officials when cattle are placed or removed from the allotment after the authorized entry date.

**C. 2006 GRAZING FEES**

The livestock grazing fees for FY 2006 are \$1.56 per cattle AUM, \$0.31 per sheep/goat AUM on National Forests. Unauthorized use on National Forests is \$4.83 per cattle AUM and \$0.97 per sheep/goat AUM.

**D. 2006 TENTATIVE ROTATION SCHEDULE**

Permittees reviewed the 2006 proposed rotation schedule. The allotment will be monitored closely throughout the grazing season to adjust days on the rotation schedule.

<b>Table 2 TENTATIVE ROTATION SCHEDULE</b>				
<b>PASTURE ROTATION</b>	<b>RANGE OF DAYS PER PASTURE</b>	<b>PROJECTED DATES ON THE PASTURE</b>	<b>ACTUAL # OF DAYS AND DATES ON THE PASTURE</b>	<b>REASON FOR ADJUSTMENT</b>
	<b>Min. - Max.</b>	<b>From - To</b>		
<b>Corral</b>	6 - 9 - 12	5/20 - 5/28		
<b>Montoya/Placitas</b>	23 - 33 - 43	5/20 - 6/21		
<b>Tio Grande</b>	1 - 3 - 5	6/22 - 6/25		
<b>Tecolote</b>	20 - 30 - 40	6/26 - 7/25		
<b>Brokeoff</b>	28 - 40 - 48	7/26 - 9/3		
<b>Lucero Lakes</b>	25 - 37 - 44	9/4 - 10/10		
<b>Montoya/ Placitas</b>	2 - 4 - 6	10/11 - 10/14		
	<b>TOTAL DAYS</b> <i>148 If range readiness inspection indicates, entry date could be on 5/15/06 and total days would be 153 schedule readjustment.</i>			

**E. Utilization Standards**

The utilization levels on bottomlands and uplands are not to exceed 40% of the annual available forage. The standard utilization level in riparian areas (green zones)

is a 4" stubble height remaining of the annual available forage. Once either of these standards is met, livestock will be moved to the next pasture on the rotation schedule.

## **F. Monitoring Methods**

**2003 Rangeland Management Action Plan** for the Santa Fe and Carson National Forests were issued to permittees. The objectives of the strategic plan continue to be a high priority and emphasize collaboration, rangeland health, range-land monitoring and permittee involvement.

Monitoring methods that will be used on the Tio Grande Allotment are:

- Range readiness, the allotment will be inspected tentatively on 5/4/06 in order to determine the status of range conditions and to make adjustments to the projected stocking rate and entry date for the 2006 grazing season if necessary. Permittee involvement is encouraged.
- Production cages on every unit.
- Parker 3 step
- Rapid Assessment Method (RAM)
- Stubble height measurements
- Permittee photo points
- Grazing Response Index (GRI)
- Ocular estimate method

## **G. NEPA Schedule**

NEPA schedule date, to be determined.

## **H. Management Objectives**

- Limit time spent at Tio Grande Canon to five days to ensure that grazing impacts are held to a minimum along riparian areas.
- Reduce the incidences of livestock trespass from the Tierra Amarilla (T.A.) Grant and other sources.
- Intensify herding efforts to protect the riparian area along Nutritas Creek in the Tecolote Pasture.
- Use Corral Pasture but manage herd to prevent concentrated use in the vicinity of the water source.

## **V. MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS**

Improvements and maintenance are the responsibilities of the permittee. Assigned allotment boundary fences, unit boundary fences, and other structural improvements must be maintained prior to permittee entry onto the allotment. When allotments are in non-use the permittees are still required to maintain improvements. The following are improvements which require special attention during the 2005 grazing season.

- Clean out earthen tanks in Brokeoff Pasture in the Valle Grande area.

- Make repairs to Posito Spring Improvements and dispose of discarded barbed wire in the area.
- Repair spillways on various earthen tanks throughout the allotment.
- A cooperative agreement between Tio Grande, Lagunitas and San Antonio Livestock associations obligates these entities to provide monetary assistance as well as labor to make much needed repairs on this corral.

**Table 3-Proposed Projects**

<b>Old Proposed Projects</b>	<b>Status</b>
Gate at cattleguard between Placitas and San Antonio Allotment, near the culverts.	San Antonio Permittees provided the labor to move the fence to accommodate the gate. The metal gate was issued to the Tio Grande in 2003. All that remains is its installation.
Cisneros Park Spring Improvement	Project nearly completed Dec. 2005 and Jan. 2006. Complex of springs were consolidated increase the spring production, drinkers were set and are holding water. Disturbed areas to be re-habilitated. Completed project to be inspected and approved. Possibility of connecting this improvement to an obscure existing pipeline to the Lucero Lakes Pasture.
Stewart Meadows Water Project	Archeological clearance completed, concerns by the biologist have stalled the process. Interest in this project has been resurrected and alternative funding sources are being sought. Other options may be explored.
<b>New Proposed Projects</b>	<b>Status</b>
Exclosure for Cisneros Park Spring Complex	This project was approved to be completed in conjunction with the spring improvement. Fence specifications to be given to the contactor and materials to be issued
Solar powered pumps to provide cleaner water from the earthen tanks	Discussed
Repair spillways on earthen tanks	Discussion of how such work could increase the water holding capacity of these tanks.
Tio Grande East Boundary Fence	Approximately 4 of the 6 miles of the existing fence were deemed to require reconstruction. Forest Service agreed to provide material for the reconstruction of one mile increments per year until it is completed. To commence on the NE corner of Section 16, T 30N, R 8E headed south. The Tio Grande Association will assume the responsibility for its construction and upkeep.
Boothill Corral Expansion	Project was approved by the Forest service. Materials list was submitted and approved. CE process to begin when field season begins.
Placita Spring Improvement	Discussion on the merits of this watering point.

## **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 is 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 together we could 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 could 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.

ERNESTO HURTADO  
District Forest Ranger