



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 15, 2006

Sublette Allotment  
Leo J. & Geraldine  
5953 County Rd D5  
Antonito, CO 81120

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Trujillo,

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. 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**

## **SUBLETTE ALLOTMENT 600**

## **CARSON NATIONAL FOREST**

## **TRES PIEDRAS RANGER DISTRICT**

### **I. INTRODUCTIONS**

The Sublette Annual Operating Instruction (AOI) meeting was held on February 24, 2006 at the Conejos Peak Ranger District Conference Room in La Jara, Colorado at 1:30 pm. Sublette Permittees attending the meeting included Leo J. Mora Jr. and Phillip L. Trujillo. Representing the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) were Luciano Sandoval and Wayne Yonemoto.

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 Sublette Allotment.

### **II. WEATHER REPORT**

Attendees to the meeting discussed weather conditions on the Sublette 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 Sublette 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>
San Miguel-	—	27%	Uncertain
Toltec-	—	33%	Yes
Atencio -	—	28%	Yes
Santa Rita-	—	23%	Yes

## **B. AOI Compliance**

- Good overall condition of the green zone caused by Atencio Spring at the end of 2005 growing season.
- Green zones or riparian areas on the allotment met the 4” minimum stubble height standard.
- Good pasture clean outs.
- Completion of the upgrade of a section of the Atencio/Santa Rita fence.

## **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 SUBLETTE PERMITTEE INFORMATION</b>	
<b>SUBLETTE PERMITTEES</b>	<b>PERMITTED #'S OF c/c</b>	<b>AUTHORIZED #'S OF c/c</b>			
Leo J. & Geraldine Mora	<b>50</b>	<b>37</b>			
Dale Sowards	<b>56</b>	<b>42</b>			
Benicio & Elsie Trujillo	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>			
Phillip & Theresa Trujillo	<b>40</b>	<b>30</b>			
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>120</b>			
<b>25% REDUCTION TO ADDRESS RESOURCE PROTECTION</b>					

**B. 2006 ANNUAL AUTHORIZED USE REQUEST**

The Forest Service has recommended a 25% 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 authorized 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>San Miguel</b>	18 - 28 - 38	5/30 - 6/26		
<b>Toltec</b>	15 - 20 - 25	6/27 - 7/16		
<b>Santa Rita</b>	34 - 40 - 46	7/17 - 8/25		
<b>Atencio</b>	36 - 46 - 56	8/26 - 10/10		
	<b>TOTAL DAYS 134</b> <i>If range readiness inspection indicates, entry date could be on 5/25/06 and total days would be 139, schedule will be readjusted.</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 5/7/05 in order to determine the status of range conditions and to make adjustments to the projected stocking rate and entry date for the 2005 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 was completed in 1996.

## **H. Management Objectives**

- Continue to protect the forage in the green zones created by the Harmon Potholes and Atencio Spring.
- Prevent the spread of noxious weeds beyond Sublette Corral.
- Identify locations for water developments in the Toltec Pasture.
- In cooperation with Sublette Permittees and the T.P.R.D. Range personnel identify at least one key area per pasture for monitoring purposes.
- Minimize the time spent in the San Miguel pasture in order to improve forage vigor.

## 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 2006 grazing season.

- Special attention to the southern boundary stretch of fence between the Sublette and San Antonio Allotments. Forest Service Officer and permittees must inspect this fence in order to determine its status.
- Clean out and seal various earthen tanks throughout the allotment. Specifically, repair the eroded bank of the Long Canyon earthen tank furthest to the west and nearest to the Toltec Pasture.
- Have Conejos County Road Maintenance crew maintain the barrow ditch from the Forest Road to an earthen tank located in the Santa Rita Pasture.
- Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad need to repair a railroad cattleguard between Santa Rita and Atencio Pastures.

<b>Table 3 Proposed Projects</b>	
<b>Old Proposed Projects</b>	<b>Status</b>
Earthen tank on the west side of the San Miguel Pasture.	Archeological clearance has been completed. Biological clearance needed for project to proceed. Site of the alternate earthen tank must be marked, GPSed for the CE process to begin at the onset of the 2006 field season.
Cattleguard between the Atencio Pasture and Cumbres Allotment	Project completed Nov. 2005
<b>New Proposed Projects</b>	<b>Status</b>
Construction of an earthen tank at Toltec Spring	Discussion about the importance of more water sources in this pasture to improve livestock distribution.
Construction of an earthen tank at a different location in San Miguel Pasture	Discussion and the CE clearance process to begin at the onset of the 2006 field season.
Continue to upgrade the Santa Rita/Atencio fence	Project completed Dec. 2005.
Atencio State-line Fence ¼ mile	Discussion and the CE clearance process to begin at the onset of the 2006 field season.
Expansion of the Sublette Corral to accommodate all of the Sublette cattle during sorting and will include a loading chute and a stray pen.	Discussion and the CE clearance process to begin at the onset of the 2006 field season.

## **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 you 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