



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 8, 2006

San Antonio Livestock Association
Aniceto Lucero
P.O. Box 183
Antonito, CO 81120

Dear Mr. Lucero,

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

SAN ANTONIO ALLOTMENT 609

CARSON NATIONAL FOREST

TRES PIEDRAS RANGER DISTRICT

I. INTRODUCTIONS

The San Antonio Annual Operating Instruction (AOI) meeting was held on February 17, 2006 at the Conejos Peak Ranger District Conference Room in La Jara, Colorado at 1:30pm. San Antonio Permittees attending the meeting included Jasper Casias, Andrew Garcia, Stanley Garcia, Maclovio Garcia (Association Secretary Treasurer), Don Larsen, Aniceto Lucero (Association President), Joe Romero, Jessica Valdez for Rudy Valdez, and Virgil Valdez. Representing the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) were Anna Dominguez, Benjamin Romero, 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 San Antonio Allotment.

II. WEATHER REPORT

Attendees to the meeting discussed weather conditions on the San Antonio 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 San Antonio 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 Utilization</u>	<u>End of Growing Season</u>	<u>Riparian Standards</u>
Chino-	—	25%	N/A
Wheatgrass-	—	40%	N/A
Oso -	—	30%	Uncertain
Hondo-	—	22%	Uncertain
Tanques-	—	31%	N/A
Nutritas-	—	25%	Yes
Ursolo-	— Rested, some excess use was noted.	10%	N/A

B. AOI Compliance

- Higher than desired utilization of the Wheatgrass Pasture at the end of 2005 growing season especially in the vicinity of Laguna Larga.
- The number of San Antonio cattle observed in Stewart Meadows seems to be dwindling year by year.
- Good pasture clean outs.
- Excess use of the Tanques Pasture prior to the official season of use.
- The four inch minimum stubble height standard on the riparian area along El Rio San Antonio was met after the 2005 grazing season.
- Every pasture on the San Antonio Allotment met utilization standards.

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:

Table 1		2006		2006 SAN ANTONIO PERMITTEE INFORMATION	
SAN ANTONIO PERMITTEES	PERMITTED #'S OF c/c	AUTHORIZED #'S OF c/c	ACTUAL #'S OF c/c		
Jasper Casias	55	41			
Felix Gallegos	90 (non-use)	67			
Maclovio Garcia et al	18	13			
Stanley Garcia	115	86			
Don and Lorraine Larsen	50	37			
Los Hermanos Lucero	279	209			
Aniceto Lucero	6	4			
Joseph B. Romero	41	31			
San Antonio Livestock Assn.	29	22			
Rudy Valdez	180	135			
Virgil Valdez	27	20			
TOTALS	890	665			
25% REDUCTION TO ADDRESS RESOURCE PROTECTION		Association permits allow some flexibility in individual authorized numbers as long as the total actual number does not exceed the total authorized number.			

B. 2006 ANNUAL AUTHORIZED USE REQUEST

San Antonio Permittees have agreed to a 25% 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 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.

Table 2 TENTATIVE ROTATION SCHEDULE				
PASTURE ROTATION	RANGE OF DAYS PER PASTURE	PROJECTED DATES ON THE PASTURE	ACTUAL # OF DAYS AND DATES ON THE PASTURE	REASON FOR ADJUSTMENT
	Min. - Max.	From - To		
Ursolo/Chino	17 - 22 - 27	5/22 - 6/12		
Nutritas	19 - 27 - 35	6/13 - 7/9		
Tanques	8 - 14 - 20	7/10 - 7/23		
Hondo	26 - 38 - 44	7/24 - 8/30		
Oso	26 - 34 - 42	8/31 - 10/3		
Wheatgrass	10 - 13 - 30	10/4 - 10/16		
	TOTAL DAYS 148 <i>If range readiness inspection indicates, entry date could be on 5/17/06 and total days would be 153. Rotation dates will change.</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 5/10/05 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 scheduled date to be determined.

H. Management Objectives

- Continue to minimize the incidence of cattle entering and grazing in Stewart Meadows.
- Continue to minimize use in the Wheatgrass Pasture in particular the forage in close proximity to Laguna Larga. This will be accomplished in 2006 by minimizing time spent and also time of season utilized.
- Reduce the incidences of livestock trespass from the Tierra Amarilla (T.A.) Grant and other sources.
- Minimize the excess use in the Tanques Pasture.
- Eliminate the incidence of San Antonio cattle entering the Sublette Allotment.
- Identify and designate a suitable horse pasture with good feed and water in a good central location.
- Permittees/USFS Range Staff to identify at least one key site per pasture

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.

- Repair the Chino Trick Tank.
- Repair the water gap between Oso Pasture and Sublette Allotment.
- Repair the breach in the Casias earthen tank.
- Heavy maintenance on the Oso/Nutritas fence in the vicinity of Casias Tank.
- Remove the abandoned fence that surrounds an earthen tank in the Hondo Pasture.
- Maintain the canal to Chino Lake
- Aid Tio Grande with repairs to Boothill Corral

Table 3 Proposed Projects

Old Proposed Projects	Status
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.
Nutritas/Tanques/Oso ½ mile fence reconstruction	The project was completed in 8/04
New Proposed Projects	Status
Reconstruction of the water catchment at Chino Trick Tank	Discussion about disassembling the existing water catchment and replacing it with a durable synthetic liner. Options to be explored.
Reconstruction of the Wheatgrass/Stewart Meadows at the NW corner of Stewart Meadows. Also construct a new and improved water gap near the culverts. Barriers will be placed in the gaps along the natural barrier (Rio San Antonio rim) at the Ursolo Pasture.	These projects will be carried out by the Forest Service Wildlife.
Wheatgrass/Chino fence to be reconstructed from the tagging corral to the corner near Laguna Larga.	Permittees placed first priority on this project and it was approved by the Forest Service. The CE clearance process will begin at the onset of field season.
Tanques/Nutritas Fence Reconstruction (continued)	Discussion about its importance in keeping cattle out of the Tanques Pasture will have second priority of projects to be worked on.

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