

**2006 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS
JAWBONE ALLOTMENT 649
CARSON NATIONAL FOREST
TRES PIEDRAS RANGER DISTRICT**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Jawbone Annual Operating Instruction meeting was held on March 24, 2006 at Tres Piedras Ranger District from 2:00-4:00. Jawbone attending permittees were, Jake Vigil, Thomas Greigo and Arturo Valdez. Forest Service representatives were Wayne Yonemoto and Anna Dominguez.

II. OBJECTIVES

The Annual Operating Instructions are hereby made part of the Term Grazing Permit. The following items are guidance criteria addressing proper use of the Jawbone allotment.

III. WEATHER REPORT

Standard Precipitation Index (SPI) is a way of measuring drought; negative numbers indicate drought and positive for wet conditions. The SPI is a probability index that only considers precipitation. To be considered out of the drought the SPI has to be near normal conditions for 12 consecutive months. The following are the current and 12 month SPI from February 2006.

1-month SPI through the end of January 2006 is -1.55 below normal

12-month SPI through the end of January 2006 is 0 near normal

Tres Piedras and Hopewell weather station precipitation records are referenced supporting recommended Annual Authorized Use.

Allotment stocking should adjust with prevailing drought conditions.

A. Fire

2006 Fire season is expected to start early and experience above normal fire potential.

Permittees are recommended to have a fire exit plan.

IV. REPORT CARD

A. Review of 2005 End of Season Summary

2005 End of Season Summary report and Jawbone spreadsheet contain 2006 recommendation.

Overall estimated production/vigor of forage was low to low moderate. Combination of early snow pack melt, early wildlife utilization, Mormon crickets, Jawbone grazing time, trespass of private livestock contributed to Hopewell pasture not meeting 40% utilization standard at the end of the year.

Other pastures of the Jawbone allotment met thresholds of 40% standard of utilization, additional use by wildlife, Mormon crickets, and excessive use by adjacent allotments contributed to threshold levels of utilization. Drought compounded the potential production and vigor of overall forage.

NMGF has prioritized Spring Creek and Tusas Wheatgrass pastures for future range project as of 2/2006. Increase in forage carrying capacity on the lower elevation areas can hopefully reduce the wildlife utilization pressure in the higher elevations at critical growing periods.

Due to the dynamic influences on resource condition a spreadsheet (management too) compiling/summarizing chronological allotment management and resource conditions was completed in 2004, 2005 and 2006. The spreadsheet contains allotment management, GRI, estimated production/vigor, and documentation of end of season utilization standards. Allotment monitoring reports support pasture rating in Jawbone spreadsheet. Jawbone spreadsheet helps identify management objectives for each pasture in the attempts to use livestock as a tool to enhance range conditions.

The following are summarized pasture objectives for 2006 which permittees agreed to:

- JAWBONE ALLOTMENT OVERALL, Early monitoring of elk utilization is critical due to the low snow received this winter and dispersed elk herd in the high country utilizing dormant stubble height of forage. Stubble height of dormant forage tends to hold snow and moisture creating a micro-climate insulating new grass from fluctuating spring temperatures. If the stubble height is low it can be a contributing factor to production and vigor of forage. Predicted warmer temperatures may influence the re-occurrence of Mormon cricket infestation. Permittees are asked to observe and document these significant contributors to forage utilizations.
- Hopewell, compare forage growth responses and soil conditions in the snowmobile recreation area vs. areas with low snowmobile activity. Check for trespass from adjacent private land after sheep have leave pasture. Propose to reduce some time of sheep grazing by routing sheep through larkspur infested areas in the Tusas and leafy spurge in the Spring Creek. Tusas has prioritized Jawbone/Tusas Fence for 2 miles in 2006.
- Broke off, Maintenance of responsible boundary fence addressing excessive use. Document evaluation of effectiveness of boundary fence. Due to tentative rotation schedules it is emphasized that USFS and permittees visit Broke off towards the end of grazing season to monitor excessive use. Evaluation of efficiency of boundary fence.
- La Manga, Maintenance of responsible boundary fence to address excessive use.
- Gavilan, Placer Creek snow fence put up at start of grazing season and let down first or second week of October.

B. Review of 2005 Inspection Reports

2005 reports are referenced in making management adjustments and recommendations for the 2006 grazing season documented in Jawbone spreadsheets and 2006 AOI.

V. 2005 AOI

A. AOI reference

The Carson Forest Web site address was submitted to permittees for their reference of Annual Operating Instructions. <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/carson>, Natural resources, Range, District, Allotment.

B. 2006 Annual Authorized Use Request

Jawbone permittees discussed and voluntarily agreed to a 23% reduction in c/c, 24% reduction in Hopewell sheep herd, Gavilan sheep herd reduction is undecided and is dependent on 2006 forage production. Until Gavilan area has a pasture fence it will be a daily challenging for rider to keep cows out.

Reductions were voluntary addressing resource protection. Annual Authorized Use Request forms were signed by attending permittees.

Table 1-Jawbone2006 permitted/authorized data

Jawbone Permittees	Permitted # Class and season 6/16-9/30	2006 Authorized 6/21-9/30 23% reduction in numbers
Greigo Ranches	125 c/c	95 c/c
Jawbone Cattle Co.	84 c/c	76 c/c
Jake Vigil	121 c/c	85 c/c
Total	330 c/c	255
Arturo Valdez	720 e/l 7/1-9/30	550 e/l 7/1-9/30
Crowthers	556 e/l 6/16-7/10	Undecided

C. 2006 Grazing fee

The livestock grazing fee for grazing year 2006 is \$1.56 c/c and \$.31 e/l on National Forests. The reduction in grazing fees is due to the increase in both forage value index (FVI) and beef cattle price index, which are offset by a larger increase in the production price index (PPI).

Unauthorized use of National Forests is \$4.83 for livestock and \$.97 for sheep and goats.

Regulations concerning livestock regulation for 2006 were issued. “Compliance with NM Statewide Regulation, **NMAC 21.30 Bovine Trichomoniasis** effective June 17, 2005 hereby becomes a term and condition of the USFS.

D. Tentative Rotation Schedule

Tentative 2006 rotation schedule was discussed. The following rotation plan is tentative due existing drought conditions. Range Readiness inspection will confirm availability of water and forage conditions. The pastures currently have a range of days from 30-60 days. A goal dates has been established on this AOI.

It is the responsibility of the grazing permittee to ensure proper distribution of livestock addressing utilization standard of 40% of annual production.

Table 2-2006 Jawbone Pasture rotation

Tentative rotation of pastures	Range of days Min-GOAL-Max	2006 Actual rotation and days	2006 Utilization
La Manga c/c	20----40-- 42		
Broke off c/c	30---- 60		
Hopewell e/l	40----90 sheep herd moved every 5-10 days		

Gavilan	15--20--30 sheep herd moved every 5-10 days		
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Table 3-Jawbone key species requirements

Pastures	Key Species	Range Readiness required heights	Range readiness heights
La Manga	Thurber's fescue	12" or more heading out	
	Arizona fescue	8" or more heading out	
	Kentucky bluegrass	Panicle fully open	
Broke off	Thurber's fescue	12" or more heading out	
	Arizona fescue	8" or more heading out	
	Kentucky bluegrass	Panicle fully open	
Hopewell	Thurber's fescue	12" or more heading out	
	Arizona fescue	8" or more heading out	
	Kentucky bluegrass	Panicle fully open	
Gaviln	Thurber's fescue	12" or more heading out	
	Arizona fescue	8" or more heading out	
	Kentucky bluegrass	Panicle fully open	

VI. MONITORING

A. 2003 Rangeland Management Action Plan

2003 Rangeland Management Action Plan for the Santa Fe and Carson National Forest will be referred to during 2006 grazing season. The plan stresses communication, permittee involvement, monitoring, and range administration.

B. Range Readiness Field Meeting

2006 range readiness meeting attendance is strongly recommended due to drought conditions. Range readiness is scheduled for June 2, at 9:00 am Tres Piedras Ranger District. Evaluation of range readiness conditions will determine management adjustments if needed in the forecasted continued drought.

Range readiness inspections will review the following:

1. SPI , weather forecast and water availability
2. Soil moisture depth and temperature
3. Production/Vigor of key species per pasture
4. Existing stubble heights on key species

5. Growing stage of Range readiness species indicators
6. Elk utilization prior to livestock entry date
7. Fence conditions

C. Utilization Standards

Livestock utilization is not to exceed 40 % of annual forage production at the end of the year. Early elk utilization and drought conditions can stunt forage production effecting permitted grazing time in order to meet 40% utilization standard at the end of year (end of growing season). Permittees are recommended to have a contingency plan due to early elk utilization, water availability and possible continued drought conditions.

Tres Piedras Utilization standards in the riparian area (green zones) are 4” stubble height of the annual available forage. The riparian areas identified in Jawbone have been intermittent in the past drought years. These areas should be monitored prior to livestock use to document forage production and wildlife utilization.

Most Green zones are intermittent reaches or constructed dirt tank which collect water as precipitation allows. These intermittent watering areas are the available water for all ungulates. Green zones are sensitive areas and will be monitored to minimize intensity.

D. Monitoring references and methods to use in 2006

8. Jawbone spreadsheet
9. Tres Piedras weather records
10. Standard Precipitation Index (SPI)
11. Allotment watering point availability-2006 deferred maintenance list
12. Soil moisture depth and temperature
13. Production cages reviewed with ocular method
14. Allotment map-2006 deferred maintenance list
15. Key forage list per pasture
16. Methods listed in Tres Piedras Monitoring plan

E. NEPA schedule

NEPA was completed in 2004

VII. MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS

The cost of maintenance is the responsibility of the permittee. Fences, cattle guards, stock tanks, trick tanks must be maintained prior to the permittee entering the allotment. In addition, when allotments are in non-use, the permittees are responsible for maintenance of allotment improvements referred to in deferred maintenance list.

A. 2005 Project Status

- Repair of Lalo tank in Hopwell unit- not completed
- Maintenance and clean out of springs to ensure water flow in La Mange- not completed
- Road maintenance on FR 795,1892,1893 and 356A for allotment access/management-not completed.
- Permittees reconstructed Tusas/Jawbone boundary snow fence in Gavilan

B. 2006 Project Status

- Permittees continued maintenance of boundary fences address excessive use
- Permittees maintenance of springs to ensure water during drought
- Continued monitoring of pastures so that management adjustments can be made.
- Proposed pond in Broke Off, by Potato Lake and private boundary
- Proposed catch pen in Gavilan area for gathering and pushing across HWY 64 to corral
- Road maintenance on FR795,1892,1893 and 356A for allotment access for management
- Spill way repair on Rincon Negro
- Tusas Boundary below Hopewell, Permittees asked if Tusas would consider area exchange with Placer creek?
- Recreation fence around Hopewell lake

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
Acting District Ranger