

**2004 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS
TIO GORDITO ALLOTMENT 632
CARSON NATIONAL FOREST
TRES PIEDRAS RANGER DISTRICT**

I. INTRODUCTIONS

The Tio Gordito Annual Operating Instruction meeting was held on February 11, 2004 at Tres Piedras Ranger District from 1:00pm-4:00pm. Tio Gordito permittees attending the meeting were Lawrence Garcia, Kelvin Huffaker, Alfonso Lovato, Presciliano Roybal and Jake Vigil. Forest Service representatives were Ernesto Hurtado, Wayne Yonemoto, Anna Dominguez, Luciano Sandoval, and Keith Rush. An agenda was issued at the meeting.

II. OBJECTIVES

The Annual Operating Instructions are decision documents and are made part of the Term Grazing Permit. The following items are guidance criteria addressing proper use of the Tio Gordito allotment.

III. WEATHER REPORT

It was discussed that the Standard Precipitation Index (SPI) is a way of measuring drought and is negative for 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 2004.

1-month SPI through the end of February 2004 is +1.25 to +1.99 near normal
12-month SPI through the end of February 2004 is -1.24 to -0.75 moderately dry

It was discussed that allotment stocking should adjust with prevailing drought conditions.

A. Fire

Forest Service reported that much of the interior West is expected to experience above normal fire potential during 2004. The Southwest is the driest area of the West and fire season is expected to start early and has the potential to be comparable to 2002. The combination of hot-dry June and long-term drought could mitigate the benefits from a wet winter and spring.

Report any wildfires to:

Tres Piedras Ranger District	505-758-8678
Taos Zone dispatch	505-758-6208
	505-758-6209
	505-758-6352

IV. 2003 REPORT CARD

A. Review of 2003 Production/Utilization data

2003 Production/Utilization documentation was reviewed. Conditions had improved from 2002.

B. Review of 2003 Inspection Reports

Allotment inspection reports were reviewed. Review of the 2003 reports are used to make management adjustments for the 2004 grazing season.

V. 2004 AOI CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

A. AOI Modifications

The 2004 Authorized Use information will be summarized to reflect: Permitted numbers/season, Authorized numbers/season, Actual numbers/season, and rotation schedule. This documentation will be an appendix to the 2004 AOI since it is updated at the end of the grazing season.

B. 2004 Annual Authorized Use Request

The Tio Gordito Permittees voluntarily rested their allotment for 2002 and 2003 grazing season by sending their cattle to Rowe Mesa, Pecos/Las Vegas Ranger District. The Tio Gordito was scheduled to go to Rowe Mesa for the 2004 grazing season but the Pecos/Las Vegas Ranger District is currently de-stocking Rowe Mesa due to negative effects on forage productivity brought on by the drought. Therefore, the Tio Gordito is scheduled to use their home allotment for the 2004 grazing season.

The Tio Gordito permittees completed the 2004 Annual Authorized Use Request forms agreeing to a overall voluntary 25% reduction addressing resource protection with an entry date of 5/23/04.

C. 2004 Grazing fee

The livestock-grazing fee for FY 2004 is \$1.43 per c/c AUM on the National Forests, an increase of eight cents from last year. The fee for sheep and goats is 29 cents on National Forests. The fee increases are due to the increase in the forage value index (FVI), beef cattle price index (BCPI) and the 2003 prices paid index (PPI).

Unauthorized use on the National Forests is \$4.41 per AUM for livestock and 88 cents for sheep and goats.

D. Tentative Rotation Schedule

The permittees discussed tentative 2004 rotation schedule. They reviewed several proposed rotations which were determined from past rotation history. The 2004 tentative rotation schedule, documented in the AOI appendix, will be confirmed at the Range Readiness Field meeting.

VI. MONITORING

A. 2003 Rangeland Management Action Plan

It was discussed that the 2003 Rangeland Management Action Plan for the Santa Fe and Carson National Forest that was issued at the 2003 AOI will be referred to for the 2004 grazing season. The plan stresses communication, monitoring, range administration and permittee involvement.

B. Range Readiness Field Meeting

Range readiness field meeting is scheduled for 5/14/04 at 9:00am at the Tres Piedras Ranger District Office. Confirmation call will be made prior to 5/14/04. 2004 attendance is strongly recommended due to weather dynamics.

C. Utilization standards

The importance of utilization standards was briefly discussed. Bottomlands and uplands are not to exceed 40% of the annual available forage. Utilization standards in the riparian area (green zones) will be 4" stubble height of the annual available forage. Once either one of these standards is achieved, livestock will be moved to the next pasture on the rotation schedule.

D. Other Monitoring methods

Monitoring information will contain the following:

Weather updates Standard Precipitation Index (SPI)

Soil moisture depth

Water availability

Production/utilization cages

Key site map of the Allotment/ Key forage list

E. NEPA schedule

NEPA is tentative scheduled for completion in 2008.

VII. MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS

The entire cost of improvements and maintenance is the responsibility of the permittee. Assigned allotment boundary fences, unit boundary fences, and other range structural improvements must be maintained prior to the permittee going on the allotment. When allotments are in non-use the permittees are still responsible for maintenance.

A. Project Status

2002 USFS Proposal: Repair on Rest area trick tank.

2002 USFS Proposal: Repair on Owl trick tank.

2004 Dry Lakes II prescribed burn

B. Operation costs

Some operational costs were submitted to the USFS.

VIII. PERMITTEE MANAGEMENT CONCERS

A. Elk Population

Permittees were informed of the NMGF/USFS meeting to be held March 4, 2004 to discuss management.

B. Possible extensive fence repair

Due to weather conditions of wet snows there is a strong possibility of more fence repair before 2004 grazing season.

IX. 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 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 Forest 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.

I would appreciate the opportunity to try to resolve disagreements with you. Therefore, please contact me before you file a notice of appeal. I value your experience and knowledge of the allotment. If we cannot reach an agreement, you may exercise your appeal rights. This will insure that we both understand the reasons for each others position regarding any issues. I look forward to working with you this season. I am confident that together we will work effectively to manage the range resources in a manner that reflects good stewardship for the land and livestock alike.

ERNESTO HURTADO
District Forest Ranger

**2004 TIO GORDITO
ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS
APPENDIX**

Tio Gordito Permittees		
Permitted c/c date/#	Authorized date/#	Actual date/#
5/18-10/15	5/22/04-10/16/04	
Peter Casados 34 c/c	0 c/c	
Lawrence Garcia 10 c/c	10 c/c	
Clinton and Tyler Huffaker 29 c/c	29 c/c	
Kelvin Huffaker 91 c/c	91 c/c	
Alfonso Lavato 8 c/c	8 c/c	
Edward Lovato 3 c/c	3 c/c	
Larry Mcdowel 32 c/c	0 c/c	
Preceliano Roybal 10 c/c	0 c/c	
Jake Vigil 132 c/c	120 c/c	

Rotation Schedule	Min---goal—Max Days	Actual days
1 Wheatgrass	7-----7 -----10	
2 Pinon	20-----22-----25	
3 Malpais	30-----36-----60	
4 Red Mesa/Las Tablas	20-----22-----30	
5 Sawmill	30-----36-----60	
6 Tio Gordito	20-----22-----35	
7 New pasture	7-----7-----10	