

**2003-2004 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS  
CERRO AZUL ALLOTMENT 647  
CARSON NATIONAL FOREST  
TRES PIEDRAS RANGER DISTRICT**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The CerroAzul Annual Operating Instruction meeting was held on October 6, 2003 at the Faut's Transport Office in Taos, New Mexico from 6:00pm-8:00pm. Cerro Azul Permittees attending the meeting were Dean Archuleta, Lloyd Archuleta, Charlie Chacon, Gerald Chacon, Palemon Martinez, Macario Rivera, Tony Valdez Sr., Tony Valdez Jr., and Floyd Valdez. Forest Service representatives were Luciano Sandoval and Wayne Yonemoto.

**II. OBJECTIVES**

The Annual Operating Instructions are decision documents and are made part of the Term Grazing Permit. The following items are **guidance criterion that were** discussed addressing proper use of the Cerro Azul Allotment.

**III. WEATHER REPORT**

Meeting attendees discussed drought conditions on the Cerro Azul allotment for most of the growing season. Production cages show no significant production as of September 4, 2003. Rains have started, but since they began close to the end of the growing season, will there be enough production for grazing to take place on Cerro Azul this grazing season. The permittees asked if a field meeting could be conducted on October 7, 2003 to observe changes in production and to make pertinent decisions about this grazing season.

**IV. 2002 REPORT CARD**

**A. Review of 2003 Production cage data**

2003 production cage data is used as a management indicator for each unit and they are used to develop management strategies. On going drought conditions during the 2003 growing season have caused very low production throughout the allotment.

**B. Review of End of Growing Season Report**

The geographical location of the Cerro Azul allotment allows for a longer growing season. We will be reviewing the allotment at the end of September to monitor any more production.

**V. 2003 AOI CORRECTIVE ACTIONS**

**A. Appendix 1, 2003 Management Plan**

It was discussed that the 2003 AOI has been edited to have permitted and actual data on appendix 1. The appendix is a spreadsheet so that it is a workable document at the AOI meeting and throughout the year. Appendix 1, 2003 Management Plan will record actual data as the season progresses. The Document will reflect:

- Permitted numbers and season
- Authorized numbers and Seasons
- Actual numbers and season
- Rotation schedule
- Amendments

**B. 2003 Annual Authorized Use Request**

Cerro Azul permittees have paid their grazing fees in full. The permittees are issued a February bill for their allotment on March 1 to May 31 and November 1 to February 28.

Permittees agreed to a 40% voluntary reduction on cow/calf numbers as a result of our findings from our October 7, 2003 allotment inspection. The reduction would be classified as resource protection. Permittees gave their projected stocking rate. Appendix 1 reflects the projected stocking rate of 180 c/c.

**C. 2003 Grazing fee**

The livestock-grazing fee for FY 2003 is \$1.35 on National Forests. Unauthorized use on National Forests is \$3.80 for livestock and 76 cents for sheep and goats.

**D. Tentative Rotation Schedule**

Permittees reviewed the 2003 proposed rotation schedule. The allotment will be monitored closely throughout the winter and spring to adjust days on the rotation schedule.

Table 1

Pasture	Estimated Range of Dates	Estimated Range of Days	Actual Days Used	Year End % Utilization
Sandlin	11/1 – 11/30 up to 12/31	30-61 days		
Lemitas	1/1/04-1/31 up to 2/29	31-60 days		
McKenzie	3/1/04-3/31 up to 4/14	31-45 days		
Baranca	4/15/04-5/15 up to 5/31	31-47 days		
		123-212 days		

**VI. MONITORING**

**A. 2003 Rangeland Management Action Plan**

2003 Rangeland Management Action Plan for the Santa Fe and Carson National Forest were issued to permittees at the CerroAzul AOI. The objectives are still the same stressing communication, monitoring, range administration and permittee involvement.

**B. Range Readiness**

Range readiness inspection was scheduled October 7, 2003 at 10:00 am. Permittee involvement was emphasized.

**C. Appendix 3, 2003 Range Conditions**

Range Readiness documentation was described to be Appendix 3, 2003, Range Conditions. This documentation will be issued during range readiness. The documentation will contain the following information:

1. Weather updates (SPI and temperature)
2. Soil moisture depth
3. Water availability
4. Location of paired annual production/utilization cages with supporting photos and documentation

5. Key site map of the Allotment
6. Key forage list showing
  - a. Vegetation
  - b. Species list
  - c. Stubble height
    1. Range readiness stubble height/utilization standards
    2. Grazing season monitoring stubble height/utilization standards
7. Other range indicators

**D. Utilization standards**

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. When either of these standards is achieved, livestock will be moved to the next pasture on the rotation schedule.

**E. Other Monitoring methods**

Other monitoring methods that will be used on the Cerro Azul allotment are:  
 Parker three step  
 Hollecheck Rapid assessment (RAM)  
 Permittee photo points

**F. Permittee Monitoring**

The permittees have begun a monitoring program for the 2002-2003 grazing season and have compiled data for each pasture.

**G. NEPA schedule**

NEPA is scheduled for completion on 2008.

**VII. MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT**

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. Proposed projects**

- \* indicates projects that have been cleared with CE's and can be completed at any time.
- \* McKenzie/Lemitas Cattleguard near the corral (A set of cattleguard grids available)
- \*Lemitas/BLM Cattleguard on Powerline Road
- \*TCLP/Barranca Cattleguard
- \*Water Pipeline extension (800' of 200psi poly pipe available)
- \*Major maintenance of Lemitas/McKenzie fence (used wire and T-posts available at FS boneyard)
  - Lemitas Corral improvement (Guardrail may be purchased depending on price and juniper posts after procuring the proper letter of authorization)
  - 100 acre brush treatment at Barranca (windrow with road grader if the ground freezes sufficiently or just cut the brush)

- Juniper treatment on the upper Sandlin and lower Lemitas pastures (burn individual trees with a terra torch during the winter to prevent a wildfire.)
- Construct earthen tanks on the Lemitas pasture to improve livestock distribution (new legislation does not allow new earthen tanks to exceed 3 acre-ft)

## **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 your cooperation in contacting me and together trying to resolve disagreements before you file any 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 reflect good stewardship for the land and cattle alike.

ERNESTO HURTADO  
District Ranger, Tres Piedras