

2004 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

**BANCOS ALLOTMENT #310
CARSON NATIONAL FOREST
JICARILLA RANGER DISTRICT**

/s/ Mark Catron

03/04/03

District Forest Ranger

Date

INTRODUCTION

On February 26th, 2004 I (Stan Dykes, Range Staff) met with Richard Arnold at the Jicarilla Ranger District to discuss the allotment and the upcoming grazing season. There were several topics discussed. Of primary concern is the ongoing wild horse situation on the allotment. Richard asked when we were going to do something about the horses. I told him we are still working on the Environmental Assessment for gathering horses on the Jicarilla Wild Horse Territory. A decision should be made by the Forest Supervisor in the next 60 days and we expect to be gathering either late summer or fall.

We discussed the condition of the allotment at the present time and the potential for grazing this year. The allotment has improved some since there was moisture this fall however, it is still in poor condition. We looked over the range analysis information that was gathered in September and October this year. All the transects except Mule Canyon were in poor range condition. We looked at photos from transects done in the early 70s and compared them with those taken this fall. In the early 1970, many of the transect areas had been plowed and reseeded and forage production was frequently up to 2000 lbs. per acre. Grazing capacity was estimated at 72 head of cattle for 5 ½ months in 1973 for the Bancos allotment. Currently all the seedings have reverted to heavy sagebrush cover and production this fall ranged from 215 lbs. to 70 lbs. in the same reseeded areas. The decline of seeded stands of grass combined with the drought and wild horse grazing over the last 4 years have had serious impacts on grazing capacity of the allotment. I told Mr. Arnold it appears that the current capacity on the allotment was quit a bit less than the permitted 80 head from 05/16-10/31. We discussed the fact that it would take considerable time for the allotment to recover.

We discussed grazing cattle this year. I did not feel it would be best for the allotment, and Mr. Arnold said he did not have cattle at this time. He said because of the condition of the allotment he would take non-use for resource protection.

Since we are working through the Environmental Assessment process on the allotment I also asked Mr. Arnold if he would be able to go out with me some time over the next month and look at the allotment. He said he could if I gave him some lead time.

Table 1- Authorization

1. AUTHORIZATION					Comments Total Non- Use For Resource Protection
Permittee/Assoc	Permitted	Permitted	Authorized	Authorized	
Richard Arnold	80	05/13 - 10/31	0	0	

Table 2 - Rotation Schedule

2. ROTATION SCHEDULE		
Pasture name	Season of Use	Planned # Days
N/A		

FORAGE UTILIZATION STANDARDS

Grazing use is a critical factor in managing the Bancos Allotment. Even though the allotment will be in non-use we will continue to monitor grazing utilization from horses. We will be using a variety of methods including paired cages, photo points, and ocular estimates of grazing use.

Permittees are invited and encouraged to accompany Forest Service range staff in the field while range condition evaluations are being made.

Within the Bancos Allotment the key forage grasses will include the following species. Stubble height should be kept as a minimum at the following described heights to keep the plants reproducing and in good vigor.

Table 3 - Location, Key grass species, stubble HT.

LOCATION	KEY GRASS SPECIES	STUBBLE HT.
All Units	Western Wheat	4 - 5 in
	Blue Grama	2 – 2.5 in
	Galleta	3 - 4 in.
	Crested Wheatgrass	4 – 5.5 in.

1. MONITORING

2003 Post Season Monitoring

Range transect information was collected on the allotment this fall during September and October. The range transects south of Lion Canyon, north of Buzzard Park and south of Rincon Tank were all in poor range condition. The transect information collected in Mule Canyon showed fair condition with stable trends.

End of grazing season use will be done in March/April since the allotment is grazed year round.

2. Range Improvements

Improvement maintenance is the responsibility of the permittee. All assigned allotment boundary fences, interior pasture division fences, stock tanks, springs, and other structural improvements must be maintained even during periods of non-use.

3. Allotment NEPA status

The Bancos allotment is scheduled for NEPA environmental analysis in 2004 year. We will continue to keep you informed as we work through the environmental analysis process.

Appeal Statement

This Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) is hereby made a part of your Term Grazing Permit

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 the 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 Jicarilla District Forest Ranger, who was the deciding officer and the address for mailing the appeal copy is 664 E. Broadway, Bloomfield, NM 87413