United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Southwestern Region 3
Carson National Forest
El Rito Ranger District

P. O. Box 56
El Rito, New Mexico 87530
505-581-4554
TT/TDD 505-581-4554
FAX 505-581-4556

2004

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS (AOIs)

COMANCHE ALLOTMENT # 00203

ARTURO VALDEZ
P.O. Box 794
TRES PIEDRAS, N.M. 87577

CARSON NATIONAL FOREST
EL RITO RANGER DISTRICT

_____ _____
Permittee ***Date***

_____ _____
District Ranger ***Date***

United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Southwestern Region 3
Carson National Forest
El Rito Ranger District
P. O. Box 56
El Rito, New Mexico 87530
505-581-4554
TT/TDD 505-581-4554
FAX 505-581-4556

Annual Operating Instructions

INTRODUCTION

This AOI is in reference to the discussion you had with Ezequiel Rael on February 18, 2004. The authorized use for the 2004 Grazing Season on the Comanche Allotment is as follows:

AUTHORIZATION

Table 1 –Permittee Information and Season of Use

Permittee Name	Permitted		Authorized		Markings	Remarks Includes a reduction in numbers
	#	Season	#	Season		
Arturo Valdez	**720 e/l**	**4/16 – 5/30 11/1 – 12/31**	**550 e/l**	**5/01 – 5/30**		*24% reduction in numbers and 15-day delayed entry*

Authorized Winter Use on the Comanche Allotment is not reflected on this AOI. Range Readiness and Monitoring Inspections will be conducted in mid-September to determine whether there is sufficient forage to allow winter grazing. If it is deemed that winter use is allowable, the El Rito Range Staff will amend the AOIs to reflect winter use and proper billing will be done.

In addition, the authorized number of sheep and delayed entry date will not change the current term grazing permit, permitted sheep numbers or the permitted season dates. As mentioned previously, the authorized sheep number and delayed entry date is based on drought and range conditions.

All livestock must be scheduled for counting prior to entering the Comanche Allotment. The El Rito range personnel must be notified 5 days prior to the time livestock enter or leave the Forest.

Nonuse applies only to animal numbers. Nonuse of a term permit must be requested in written form for all of the permitted numbers (*Total Nonuse*), or part of the permitted numbers (*Partial Nonuse*). Verbal applications will not be accepted. If a permittee elects to request "*total nonuse*" he/she is still responsible for maintenance of assigned range improvements. Any Nonuse will be recorded as Resource Protection for the 2004 Grazing Season.

A credit/refund application must be completed within a week after placing livestock late on the allotment or removing livestock early. A credit/refund is <u>not</u> automatic but must be requested in writing by the permittee(s) and approved by the District Ranger.

ROTATION SCHEDULE

Due to extreme drought conditions, forage may not be readily available in all pastures. Range readiness inspections will determine pasture rotation.

Table 2 – Pasture Rotation Schedule

Lower Comanche Pasture	TBD
Upper Comanche Pasture	TBD

United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Southwestern Region 3
Carson National Forest
El Rito Ranger District
P. O. Box 56
El Rito, New Mexico 87530
505-581-4554
TT/TDD 505-581-4554
FAX 505-581-4556

FORAGE UTILIZATION

Forage Utilization will be measured in key areas shown on the attached map. Proper utilization of forage is a critical factor in livestock management on the Comanche Allotment. Monitoring will be conducted using a combination of monitoring techniques including, but not limited to, paired cages, photo points, Rapid Assessment Method, and permittee monitoring. Permittees are invited and encouraged to accompany Forest Service Range staff in the field while range condition evaluations are being made.

The following are the Comanche Allotments key forage species:

Table 3- Forage Utilization Standards

Pasture Name	Key Forage Species	Stubble Height
Lower/Upper/East Pasture	Western Wheat	4 –5”
	Blue Grama	2 – 2.5”
	Black Grama	4 – 5”
	Crested Wheatgrass	4 – 5.5”

Total removal of all livestock from the pasture/allotment is encouraged. A five day grace period will be allowed to remove stray(s) permitted livestock from the allotment. **Given the extreme drought conditions with low forage production and water availability, it is highly probable that the allowable use standards will be reached before the scheduled end date for the allotment. Forage conditions will be monitored as the grazing season progresses.**

Regular herding and riding practices are the key to achieving proper livestock distribution on the allotment, and to provide for the fullest use of the grazing season. Salt must be placed out of bottoms, away from water, roads, forest system trails, and recreational sites.

IMPROVEMENT MAINTENANCE

The following projects were completed on the Comanche Allotment during the 2003 Grazing Season:

- New cattle guard was installed at the El Rito/Tres Piedras District boundary.
- Permittee constructed fences around wildlife guzzlers as part of his in-kind match

The following projects are proposed for the Comanche Allotment in 2004:

- Forest Service will finish construction on East Comanche Stock Tank.
- Permittee would like Forest Service to look into possible brush hogging of some areas within the allotment.
- Permittee would like Forest Service to look into securing grants to place two water guzzlers within allotment.
- Permittee will dig a trench around existing guzzlers to prevent erosion of soil under guzzlers.

United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Southwestern Region 3 Carson National Forest El Rito Ranger District | P. O. Box 56 El Rito, New Mexico 87530 505-581-4554 TT/TDD 505-581-4554 FAX 505-581-4556

It is important that you inspect and maintain the assigned fences and water developments in the "*entry pasture*" to a good functioning condition prior to the entry date. All other pasture fences and waters must be maintained prior to livestock movement into the next scheduled pasture(s).

In the event these improvements cannot be brought up to standard, you should notify the range personnel so we can schedule them for reconstruction as funds become available. An inspection of your allotment prior to the entry date will be made to determine if maintenance is adequate.

If you have a need to cut fence stays or posts while you are maintaining your fences on your allotment, you can get authorization to cut these materials by obtaining a Free Use Permit from the range personnel at the El Rito office.

ALLOTMENT STATUS

At the present time direction for management on the allotment is being documented in the AOIs. According to the Carson Forest Plan implementation schedule, an Allotment Management Plan update, developed using the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, has been scheduled for the year 2009.

Open and positive communication is encouraged. Feel free to contact the range personnel if you have any questions or problems. They will be happy to discuss allotment management, on the ground status, Forest Plan standards and guidelines, and possible changes in allotment management.

APPEAL STATEMENT

This 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 Martin Chavez, 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 Diana Trujillo, District Forest Ranger, who is the deciding officer and the address for mailing the appeal copy is P. O. Box 56, El Rito, New Mexico 87530.

I will appreciate if you contact me and together we can try 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 reflects good stewardship for the land and livestock alike.

United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Southwestern Region 3
Carson National Forest
El Rito Ranger District
P. O. Box 56
El Rito, New Mexico 87530
505-581-4554
TT/TDD 505-581-4554
FAX 505-581-4556

ACTUAL USE INFORMATION
COMANCHE ALLOTMENT
2004 GRAZING SEASON

Attachment 1

Pasture	Livestock Number & Class	Planned Use Date on	Planned Use Date Off	Actual Use Date on	Actual Use Date Off	Remarks
Lower						
Upper						

Number of e/l counted on: _____.

Number of e/l lost:_____.

Additional Comments:

Attachment 2

Livestock Class	Poisonous Plants	Predators	Other	Total Losses

United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Southwestern Region 3
Carson National Forest
El Rito Ranger District
P. O. Box 56
El Rito, New Mexico 87530
505-581-4554
TT/TDD 505-581-4554
FAX 505-581-4556

UTILIZATION INFORMATION
COMANCHE ALLOTMENT
2004 GRAZING SEASON

Attachment 3

Pasture	Head Months (HMs)	Animal Unit Months	Allowable Utilization (percent)	Date Monitored	Observed Utilization
Lower					
Upper					

United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Southwestern Region 3
Carson National Forest
El Rito Ranger District
P. O. Box 56
El Rito, New Mexico 87530
505-581-4554
TT/TDD 505-581-4554
FAX 505-581-4556

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTION ADJUSTMENTS
COMANCHE ALLOTMENT
2004 GRAZING SEASON

Attachment 4

Date	Action Item	Action Taken	Initials