

SANTA BARBARA ALLOTMENT #403

Carson National Forest
Camino Real Ranger District

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS 2009

The annual meeting for the Santa Barbara Allotment was held on April 13, 2009, at the District Office at Peñasco, New Mexico. Attending were Manuel Griego, Octavio Griego, Joe Griego, Estevan Lopez, Anthony Esquibel, Pete Contreras, Joseph Rodarte, Andie Sanchez, Antonio Sanchez, and Charlie Sanchez from the Santa Barbara Grazing Association. Sean Kelly represented the Camino Real Ranger District.

These annual operating instructions are hereby made a part of the Term Grazing Permit for the Santa Barbara Grazing Association.

The Camino Real Ranger District and permittees discussed current drought conditions, current snow depth and water content on the allotment; and the outlook on predicted weather patterns for this coming season. Conditions for this year appear positive as seen so far this winter. The full permitted numbers could be grazed this year and any nonuse will be recorded as personal convenience.

Table 1-Permitted and Authorized kind and number

1. Permittee	Number and Kind	Authorized number and kind
Santa Barbara Grazing Association	192 cow/calf, 11 bulls	163 cow/calf, 11 bulls
Pete A. & Gloria M. Contreras	(10 cow/calf)	(0 cow/calf)
Lloyd, Anthony, & Norman Esquibel	(25 cow/calf)	(29 cow/calf, 2 bulls)
Dorothy K. Gonzales	(18 cow/calf)	(0 cow/calf)
Joe G. & Helen Griego	(7 cow/calf)	(11 cow/calf, 1 bull)
Manuel A. Griego	(7 cow/calf)	(18 cow/calf, 1 bull)
Octavio Griego	(12 cow/calf)	(16cow/calf, 1 bull)
Estevan R. Lopez	(10 cow/calf)	(18 cow/calf, 2 bull)
Rutilio A. Martinez	(10 cow/calf)	(13 cow/calf)
Clarence R. Romero	(9 cow/calf)	(0 cow/calf)
Joseph Oliver Rodarte	(4 cow/calf)	(0 cow/calf)
Lee and Betty Maestas	(30 cow/calf)	(0 cow/calf)
Andie R. Sanchez	(27 cow/calf)	(28 cow/calf, 2 bulls)
Charlie F. & Brenda M. Sanchez	(23 cow/calf)	(30 cow/calf, 2 bull)

Table 2. Season of use.

2. Season of Use		
06/01 - 9/30	(122 days)	Santa Barbara

Table 3-Pasture Rotation

3. Pasture Rotation				
Pasture	Dates	Time	Actual use	Utilization%
Santa Barbara (hayfield)	06/01 - 6/04	4 days		
Santa Barbara (bottoms)	06/05 – 6/10	6 days		
West Fork	06/11 – 06/30	20 days		
Middle/East Fork	07/01 – 08/05	36 days		
Indian/Jicarita	08/06 – 08/20	15 days		
Osha/Bear Mtn/Comales	08/21 – 09/20	30 days		
Santa Barbara (bottoms and hayfield)	09/21 – 09/30	10 days		

Adaptive management will continue to be applied to the management of the Santa Barbara allotment which means that the season of use, numbers grazed, and rotation schedules may be adjusted throughout the grazing season based on resource conditions. Range improvements, i.e. fences, will be maintained prior to moving to a different pasture.

4. Maintenance of Improvements

The entire cost of improvements maintenance is the responsibility of the permittee. Assigned allotment boundary fences, pasture division fences, stock tanks, springs, cattleguards, and other range structural improvements must be maintained prior to the permittees going on to the allotment.

5. Other Items of Discussion

The 2008 season went well overall. Stocking the allotment with a 19 percent reduction in numbers allowed the permittees to graze all season long within the utilization guidelines of 40 percent in key areas as monitored by Forest Service employees. Distribution of livestock needs to improve as many areas of the allotment are receiving little or no utilization. Distribution of livestock is key and requires diligent riding from all members. The proposed action undergoing NEPA analysis addresses this issue. Permittees did a good job with maintenance of range improvements on the allotment.

The opportunity of being able to hire a rider and have half his wages paid for by the Quivira Coalition was shared with permittees. Permittees will consider this opportunity. The Camino Real District also discussed opportunities for short-courses being made available and paid for by the Quivira such as range monitoring and low stress livestock handling.

Utilization guidelines for 2009 are 40% of available annual forage in key use areas and 4 inches stubble height in riparian zones. Forage utilization will be measured in key forage areas.

The grazing fee this year is \$1.35 per head month for cattle.

The Grazing Instructions for 2009 were discussed and are the same as in 2008.

Permittees discussed the issue about the fence around the Santa Barbara campground and also the gate to Indian Creek, and asked if the Camino Real District can help with maintenance.

Some discussion on the ongoing NEPA process for this allotment took place. We reviewed the proposed action and provided the association with the Range Specialist Report. Forest Service shared with the permittees, that the Decision Notice has not been signed yet, but is expected soon. The proposed action may be implemented depending on the outcome of the 45 day appeal period, following publishing of the decision notice. Permittees will have several years to complete the new range improvements.

Permittees asked about moving the fence in Bear Mountain and cattleguard to a more useful area which will improve distribution. This area has been flagged on the ground and an archeological survey was complete. Permittees will be notified of when work can begin.

The Camino Real District again encourages permittees to cut the hay meadow prior to Canada thistle setting its seed early in the fall. There has been a visible reduction in the amount of Canada thistle in the last few years.

The Forest service asked permittees to inform the Range Specialists if the private landowners in Las Mochas continue to place salt on the Forest for wildlife viewing. This attracted permitted cattle last summer which could have ended up in the highway.

This District will provide replacement tags this year as needed.

FS discussed with permittees that testing for Trich is not mandatory this year, but is encouraged.

The Forest Service discussed ongoing efforts with the Travel Management Rule. If permittees need to use ATV's and motor vehicles for performing their required maintenance on fences and other range improvements, checking that gates are closed, checking on cattle health and location, and placing salt and mineral supplements; the Forest Service should be able to accommodate with a written letter issued to the permittees. Permittees asked if the private land gates between the Placitas area and the Bear Mountain pasture could be locked. The question was brought to the District Range Staff the next day following the meeting. He explained that the Forest Service can't suggest, ask, or require landowners to lock their gates. That would be a decision they would have to come to on their own.

Priority for Range Betterment work for 2009:

1. Thinning (Cañada Honda)
2. Prescribed burns
3. The Hayfield needs heavy fence maintenance, including some corners and braces.
4. Ripley's point fence needs heavy maintenance, possibly conversion to a "lay down fence".
5. Replace bridge across Santa Barbara River past wilderness boundary.

The Camino Real District will provide up to a quarter mile of fence materials for reconstruction of the fence in Bear Mountain.

Permittees asked about the possibility of seeding in the Comales pasture. The question was also brought to the District Range Staff the next day following the meeting. He explained that the Forest Service could survey the area to determine what native species can be expected to grow there, and depending on funds, seed could be ordered and applied.

Permittees and the Camino Real District will look at the range together to determine range readiness and on-date.

The Camino Real Ranger District would like at least 2 weeks notice prior to any proposed change in management (either season or numbers) so that they can go look at the allotment with the permittees.

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 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, NM 87571, within 45 days of the date of this decision. A copy of the notice of appeal must be filed simultaneously with the Camino Real District Forest Ranger, who was the deciding officer and the address for mailing the appeal copy is P.O. Box 68, Peñasco, New Mexico 87553.