

Glenwood Ranger District

Gila National Forest

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

2006

CEDAR BREAKS #404

Prepared By:

George Douds
District Range Staff

Date: 1/30/2006

Approved By:

Pat Morrison
District Ranger

Date: 1/30/2006

Annual Operating Instructions

I. INTRODUCTION

These Annual Operating Instructions are in reference to the discussion you had with George Douds and Pat Morrison on January 30, 2006, at the Glenwood Ranger District office. The authorized stocking for the 2006 grazing season on the Cedar Breaks Allotment is as follows:

Cedar Breaks Allotment

108	cow/calf	02/15/06 – 03/15/06	North Cedar Breaks
108	cow/calf	03/16/06 – 05/15/06	South Cedar Breaks
108	cow/calf	05/16/06 – 06/15/06	East CCC
108	cow/calf	06/16/06 – 08/15/06	West CCC
108	cow/calf	08/16/06 - 09/15/06	East CCC
108	cow/calf	09/16/06 – 10/15/06	North Cedar Breaks
108	cow/calf	10/16/06 – 12/31/06	South Cedar Breaks
10	horses	03/01/06 – 02/28/07	Community/River

The above schedule for stocking the allotment depends upon the availability of forage and water. Some flexibility in the above pasture rotation dates will be allowed for justifiable causes such as weather conditions, livestock management needs, and range conditions. If there is a need to deviate from the above pasture rotation schedule by more than 15 days, you must notify the District Ranger of the proposed change in the pasture rotation date and the reason for the change. A deviation from the above schedule of more than 15 days must be approved by the District Ranger verbally or in writing. The District Ranger must be notified 5 days prior to the time livestock enter or leave the Forest if the placing on or removal of livestock is not planned in the above schedule, and more than 10 head are being moved. Failure to do so may lead to adverse action against your Term Grazing Permit.

II. MANAGEMENT OF LIVESTOCK

You are responsible for monitoring water availability and forage utilization. It is your responsibility to move your livestock when sufficient water is no longer available or when proper forage utilization is achieved in a pasture. You are responsible for keeping track of and maintaining control of your livestock. In the event your livestock are found to be out of the scheduled pasture, you will be required to find, gather, and return your animals to the proper pasture as soon as possible. Failure to maintain control of your livestock could lead to adverse action against your Term Grazing Permit.

III. IMPROVEMENT MAINTENANCE

All range improvements assigned in the 10-year Term Grazing Permit should be maintained in a functioning condition. In the event these improvements cannot be brought up to a functioning condition, you should notify this office so we can schedule them for reconstruction as funds become available.

You may apply for a free use post and stay permit for the maintenance of fences and corrals on your allotment.

Non-compliance with the instructions set forth in the free use permit could lead to adverse actions taken against your Term Grazing Permit.

IV. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Fire - branding and warming fires should be used with good judgment - not on windy days or during times when fires are specifically restricted. The Glenwood District is planning to allow naturally ignited fires to burn on the district this coming year. We will notify you if we plan to let a fire burn on your allotment.

2. Records - please keep track of materials used, and the days and dollars spent on maintenance of improvements. It is also necessary to keep track of cattle numbers, dates of entering and leaving different pastures, shipping dates, and cattle losses (both grown stock and calves).
3. Heavy Equipment Use - written permission from the District Ranger will be required for any heavy equipment use on the National Forest. Examples of this are cleaning out stock tanks, road maintenance, etc.
4. Credit/Refund - any credit or refund applications for grazing fees must be made as far in advance as possible. Credit/Refund applications are not retroactive and will be approved only if the District Ranger is notified of livestock removal, prior to, or at the time, the livestock are taken off the allotment. You will be required to provide your Social Security number in order for a credit/refund to be processed.

A \$25 administrative fee will be charged for any additional bills for collection that are sent to you due to either late payment or for split billing on seasonal allotments. There is no administrative fee for the normal "split billing" on yearlong allotments. This fee will be collected to pay for the cost associated with issuing an additional bill for collection.

It is necessary for you to write the bill number on your check prior to submitting it to the lockbox. This is necessary to insure that your payment is credited to your account.

5. Short Age Calf Policy - any short-aged calves (calves less than 6 months old on December 31) must be removed from the National Forest by April 1, or you will need to apply for and pay grazing fees for these animals from April 1 to the time they are removed from the National Forest. Calves that are 6 months old or older on December 31, need to be paid for starting January 1.
6. Salting and Supplemental Feeding - the following practices will be adhered to:
 - a. Feeding of energy supplements on National Forest land will not be permitted unless a proven need to use the supplements is shown, and a detailed plan is developed and approved.
 - b. Feeding of vitamin or mineral supplements on National Forest land will be permitted if a detailed plan is approved, or if carried out in conjunction with salting.
 - c. Salting practices will be in agreement with the 10-Year Term Grazing Permit. Salt will be placed in areas of available feed to help draw cattle to them. Salt will not be placed in natural concentrations areas, which receive heavy grazing use.

V. ALLOTMENT STATUS

The Cedar Breaks Allotment has been analyzed through the NEPA analysis process. The resulting decision updates the allotment management to meet forest plan standards and guidelines. This decision along with the terms of your Ten-Year Term Permit and these Annual Operating Instructions provide direction for management on this allotment.

VI. OTHER ITEMS DISCUSSED

You indicated that you are in favor of Fire Use on your allotment. The District Ranger will authorize necessary changes to this AOI to accommodate fire management. You also indicated that you would like all roads to remain open on your allotment for the management of your livestock operations.

VII. SPECIAL MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

As you are aware, forage and water became scarce on most allotments during the past several years and we are having another dry winter season. **If forage and/or water availability becomes even more of a problem on your allotment, you may be required to change your management and possibly remove your livestock from the National Forest lands.** Keep track of conditions on your allotment and make plans to reduce or remove livestock if vegetative/watershed conditions could be substantially harmed due to continued grazing during the drought period. Even though there was a good growing season this past summer it is recommended that restocking of allotments to full numbers not take place until the forage plants regain vigor and new forage plants become established.

VIII. Stubble Height Monitoring of Key Areas

Monitoring will be conducted in partnership with you during the grazing season and will be used to develop the grazing strategy for next year's Annual Operating Instructions. Monitoring will consist of minimum stubble height measurements in key areas, or photo of the key area when key species growth is clearly greater than the minimum stubble height. Stubble heights are to be at least 1.2+ inches on "sodbound" Blue grama, and 2.5+ inches on the "bunchgrass" Blue grama sites.

Pre monitoring: Conducted prior to cattle entry to determine pasture readiness, describe existing conditions, and document stubble-height(s). The Forest Service in cooperation with the permittee will conduct the pre monitoring sessions.

Mid monitoring: Conducted on an informal basis midway through the scheduled use to determine use levels, and adjust time in the pasture if necessary. Mid monitoring will be the primary responsibility of the permittee. Photo documentation is encouraged.

Post monitoring: Conducted as soon as possible upon cattle removal to document residual stubble heights. Post monitoring reports may provide insight for the next scheduled rotation back into the pasture. The Forest Service in partnership with the permittees will conduct the post-monitoring session.

Stubble height measurements (monitoring) will be taken on key species growth from the most recent growing season (current year's growth). The length should be measured in inches, and averaged by plant species measured. The interval for measurement should be every other pace, with measurements taken on the closest key plant species.

An allowable use rate of 20% would be assigned, by grazed-ungrazed plant method, to woody obligate riparian plant species located in Keller Canyon.

If, during the year, you feel that the utilization level is approaching the minimum stubble height, you will need to take some action to stop grazing the area. There are many actions that can be taken, such as pasture moves, locating your livestock on different waters, etc. We will work with you in order to insure that any actions you may take are appropriate and do not compound the problem.

At a minimum, forest personnel will monitor key areas within two weeks before or after livestock leave a pasture. The percent grazing use will be determined at that time. The following dates have been scheduled for monitoring on the allotment. You are highly encouraged to participate in monitoring.

Pasture	Monitoring Date	Min. Stubble Height*	Key Area
North Cedar Breaks	03/16/2006 10/19/2006	1.2 in. Sodbound 2.5 in. Bunchgrass Blue Grama	North CB1, North CB2, North CB3
South Cedar Breaks	03/16/2006 05/09/2006 10/19/2006 01/10/2007	1.2 in. Sodbound 2.5 in. Bunchgrass Blue Grama	South CB1, South CB2, South CB4, South CB5, South CB6
East CCC	05/09/2006 08/16/2006 09/07/2006	1.2 in. Sodbound 2.5 in. Bunchgrass Blue Grama	East CCC1, East CCC2, East CCC3
West CCC	05/09/2006 08/16/2006	1.2 in. Sodbound 2.5 in. Bunchgrass Blue Grama	West CCC1, West CCC2, West CCC3
River	05/09/2006 10/19/2006	1.2 in. Sodbound 2.5 in. Bunchgrass Blue Grama	River 1
Community	05/09/2006 10/19/2006	1.2 in. Sodbound 2.5 in. Bunchgrass Blue Grama	Community 1

* Additional key species can be measured and minimum stubble heights will follow the guidance provided by the U.S.D.A. Forest Service Region 3 office in April of 2003.

If any one key area in a pasture being grazed by livestock is below minimum stubble heights, livestock will be moved to another area of the pasture where stubble heights are greater than the minimum. In the event all remaining key areas in the grazed pasture are at minimum stubble heights, livestock will be required to move to the next scheduled pasture. The option to return livestock to a pasture that has received adequate plant re-growth will be considered if all resource objectives can be met.

VIII. APPEAL RIGHTS

This Annual Operating Instruction 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 (see attached copy of 36 CFR 251 regulations). 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 **Marcia Andre, Forest Supervisor, 3005 E. Camino del Bosque, Silver City, NM 88061**, within 45 days of the date of this decision. A copy of the notice of appeal must be filed simultaneously with **Pat Morrison, District Ranger, Glenwood Ranger District, P.O. Box 8, Glenwood, NM 88039**.

Open and positive communications dealing with these or any other concerns is encouraged. Feel free to contact George Douds or Pat Morrison if you have any questions or problems. We will be happy to discuss allotment management, conditions on your allotments, Forest Plan standards and guidelines, or any other concerns you may have.