



Annual Operating Instructions (AOI)

Allotment: Dark Canyon

Permittees: Josie Aragon, Pedro G. Rael, Edward and Christie Cope

Permit Numbers: 6998, 61168, 61161

1. **Authorization:** Authorized to graze the following in 2006:

| Permittee | Authorized | From | To | Allotment |
|-----------|-------------|--------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Aragon | 14 cow/calf | 5/1/06 | 9/30/06 | Dark Canyon |
| Rael | 14 cow/calf | 5/1/06 | 9/30/06 | Dark Canyon |
| Cope | 0 cow/calf | 3/1/06 | 2/28/07 | Resource Protection Non-use |

2. **Management:**

Dark Canyon 2006 Pasture Rotation:

| Pasture | Time Frame |
|---------|-----------------------|
| South | 5/1-9/30 (all cattle) |
| North | Rest |

Please notify us of cattle movements onto and off of the allotment, as well as refinements that may be needed to enhance the management system. If you identify the need to differ from this management system by more than 15 days, please contact this office at least two weeks in advance so that the district has time to conduct monitoring and assess your request.

In the past you have been granted extensions authorizing you to graze the allotment past 9/30. If you are going to request an extension, please make the request at least three weeks prior to the date your livestock are scheduled to be removed from the allotment so that the district has time to conduct monitoring and assess your request.

3. **Utilization Standards and Monitoring:**

The maximum allowable use level set for the Alexander Allotment is **35%**; in addition stubble heights should not be less than an average of 2.5 inches on blue and hairy grama and 5 inches on side oats grama. Use of browse is not to exceed the **50%** level. Utilization and/or stubble height monitoring will be conducted. Monitoring will be conducted at the approximate midpoint of the scheduled use period and within two weeks before to two weeks after the date cattle are scheduled to leave. If utilization levels are approaching allowable use levels, livestock will be required to be moved to areas within the pasture or other pastures



that are not approaching allowable use levels. In the event that areas not approaching the allowable use are not available, livestock will be removed from the allotment when allowable use rates are met. Management adjustments will be made to the following years Annual Operating Instructions to avoid recurring instances of over utilization. The following dates have been tentatively scheduled for monitoring on the allotment. You are highly encouraged to participate in monitoring with district personnel and/or on your own.

| Pasture | Monitoring date |
|---------|-----------------|
| South | 7/18/06 |
| South | 9/26/06 |

4. Forage Growth and Water Availability:

If forage growth and water availability are not adequate during all or portions of the 2006, total or partial livestock removal from the allotments may be necessary. Part 2, clause 8(c) of the grazing permit provides this option.

5. Range Improvements:

All assigned range developments identified in the Term Grazing Permits must be maintained to a functional status.

In addition, specific maintenance discussed included:

Fences: The permittees propose to partially reconstruct fences #6251 and #6241. Please contact Collin Ewing or Jerry Turner to inquire about the availability of materials and for a permit modification.

Water: The permittees plan to work on the Rael spring development. Please contact Collin Ewing or Jerry Turner to for any needed supplies and permit modification.

A well in TH canyon has also been proposed. The district will begin planning for this project this year.

Advanced planning is needed for authorizing tank cleaning so surveys can be scheduled during the summer months. Please protect natural springs and areas with riparian type vegetation. Drainage bottoms, creeks, springs, and cienegas, where water is available, are most susceptible to livestock concentrations.

6. The Annual Operating Plan/Instructions are a part of the Term Grazing Permit as provided for in Part 3, Section 8. It complies with the standards and guidelines found in the Forest Plan. It also complies with the Endangered Species Act on-going grazing consultation for the Dark Canyon allotment. Any additional information collected during the year may be incorporated into the annual operating instructions.

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 (see enclosed 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 R. Andre, Forest Supervisor, Gila National Forest, 3005 E. Camino del Bosque, Silver City, New Mexico, 88061-7863, within 45 days of the date of this decision. A copy of the notice of appeal must be filed simultaneously with Rogers M. Steed, District Ranger, Reserve Ranger District, at P.O. Box 170, Reserve, NM 87830.

Feel free to contact Collin Ewing or myself at (505) 533-6231 if you have any questions or problems concerning this document.

/s/Rogers M Steed
ROGERS M. STEED
District Ranger

2/15/06
Date