

Glenwood Ranger District

Gila National Forest

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

2007

Copper Creek Allotment #412

Prepared By: _____ Date: _____
District Range Staff

Approved By: /s/ Pat Morrison Date: 2/28/07
District Ranger

Agreed to By: _____ Date: _____
Permittee

Annual Operating Instructions

I. INTRODUCTION

These Annual Operating Instructions document your discussion with George Douds on December 20, 2006, at the Glenwood District Office. The permitted stocking for the 2007 grazing season on the Copper Creek Allotment is as follows:

Term Permitted Livestock Numbers

Number and class of livestock	Dates
80 Cattle-Cow/calf	03/01 – 02/28

Copper Creek Allotment Annual Authorization for 2007

Number and class of livestock authorized	Dates Authorized
80 Cattle-Cow/calf	03/01/07 – 5/31/07 & 11/01/07 – 2/28/08

Whiterocks Allotment Annual Authorization for 2007

Number and class of livestock authorized	Dates Authorized
80 Cattle-Cow/calf	06/01/07 – 10/31/07

Copper Creek Allotment Pasture Rotation

80 cattle	Cow/Calf	03/01/07 – 5/31/07	Silver & Stout Mesa Pastures
80 cattle	Cow/Calf	6/01/07 – 8/15/07	Whiterocks Allotment, Upper Pasture
80 cattle	Cow/Calf	8/16/07 – 10/31/07	Whiterocks Allotment, Lower Pasture
80 cattle	Cow/Calf	11/01/07 – 2/28/08	Bearwallow Pasture
0 cattle	Rest for recovery	03/01/07 – 2/28/08	Indian Creek Pasture

Livestock will not be allowed within the Bearwallow pasture until the following has been completed and inspected:

- The drift fence along Forest road 153 and mineral creek must be constructed (see attached map).
- The portion of fence between the Deep Creek and Copper Creek Allotments that is your responsibility must be maintained (see attached map).

Livestock will not be allowed within the reconstructed enclosure at Lower Bearwallow within Bearwallow pasture.

If any one key area in a pasture being grazed by livestock exceeds utilization on the uplands or heavily hedging of woody riparian plant sprouts/seedlings, livestock will be moved to another area of the pasture where actual use is less than allowable use (ie. Upper and Lower Bearwallows within the Bearwallow pasture). In the event livestock continue to return to areas that have previously met or exceeded allowable use levels, livestock will be required to be moved to the next scheduled pasture. This requirement is necessary to prevent overuse on forage plants.

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 result in adverse action against your Term Grazing Permit.

II. MANAGEMENT OF LIVESTOCK

On 10/20/2006 it was agreed by you and the Forest Service that a three strike rule is in place regarding unauthorized cattle in the Indian Creek pasture and on the Reserve Ranger District. At such time the permittee has been warned/advised by Forest Service Personnel of an unauthorized presence of cattle on Indian Creek pasture and/or the Reserve Ranger District 3 times, it is agreed that all cattle will be removed from the Bearwallow pasture until such time the Forest Service deems appropriate.

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.

District personnel have completed the reconstruction of the Lower Bearwallow enclosure. It is your responsibility to keep this enclosure maintained.

Before livestock enter the Whiterocks Allotment you will have all boundary fences repaired and maintained to a cow tight condition and the Whiterocks pipeline must be in working order before livestock enter the pasture.

On 10/20/2006 you agreed to do the following:

- **Construct up to ½ mile of drift fence along Mineral Creek/ Forest road 153 before livestock enter the Bearwallow Pasture (11/01/2007).**
- **Repair and maintain all fences on your allotment that are your responsibility. The priority fence maintenance you agreed to complete is between the Bearwallow pasture and the Deep Creek Allotment.**
- **Make arrangements for district personnel to inspect the above projects prior to livestock entering the Bearwallow pasture.**

Please come into the district office, sign your permit modification and pick up your ½ mile of fence materials for the above project.

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 hay on National Forest land will not be permitted unless a proven need to use the supplement is shown, and a detailed plan is developed and approved. All supplemental hay must be **certified weed free** hay and you must provide the proper documentation.
 - c. 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.
 - d. 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. Salt must be placed $\frac{1}{4}$ mile or further from water. **Due to heavy use last year and/or areas of a sensitive nature, do not place salt in the areas delineated on the attached map.**

V. ALLOTMENT STATUS

The Copper Creek Allotment Management Plan on this allotment is in need of updates to meet forest plan standards and guidelines. At the present time direction for management on this allotment will be documented in these Annual Operating Instructions. The scheduled date for implementing range National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) on the allotment is 2008.

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.

VII. SPECIAL MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

As you are aware, forage and water became scarce on most allotments during the past several years. **If forage and/or water availability becomes 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. Utilization Monitoring of Key Areas

Monitoring results for 2006 on the Copper Creek Allotment

Pasture	Monitoring Date	Actual Use	Allowable Use	Key Area
Bearwallow	5/19/06	70%	35%	Lower Bearwallow
Bearwallow	5/19/06	60%	35%	Upper Bearwallow

Monitoring results for 2006 on the Whiterocks Allotment

Pasture	Monitoring Date	Actual Use	Allowable Use	Key Area
Upper	2/2/06	5%	35%	C3
Lower	2/2/06	5%	35%	C1
Upper	3/30/06	45%	35%	P5
Upper	3/30/06	25%	35%	C4
Upper	3/30/06	15%	35%	C3
Lower	3/30/06	10%	35%	P2
Lower	3/30/06	5%	35%	P3

Monitoring Schedule on the Copper Creek Allotment for 2007

Pasture	Monitoring Date	Allowable Use	Key Area
Stout Mesa & Silver Peak	5/15/07	Conservative (31- 40%)	C4
Holding 1 & 2 (Claremont)	2/15/08	Conservative (31- 40%)	Entire Pasture
Bear Wallow	2/15/08	Conservative (31- 40%)	C3, Upper & Lower Bearwallow
Indian Creek	7/15/07 & 9/1/07	0%	C1, C2

Monitoring Schedule on the Whiterocks Allotment for 2007

Pasture	Monitoring Date	Allowable Use	Key Area
Upper & Lower	7/1/07 & 10/15/07	Conservative (31- 40%)	C1, C2, C3, C4

Monitoring of herbaceous forage will be conducted by ocular estimate of use within a pasture (utilization mapping). Verification of ocular estimates will be conducted using common methodology such as weigh/clip, grazed plant numbers, or stubble height. Grazing use will be described and mapped in the following utilization categories.

Qualitative Grazing Intensity Category	Use of Forage by Weight	Qualitative Indicators of Grazing Intensity
Light to no-use	< 30%	Only choice plants and areas show use. There is no use of poor forage plants.
Conservative	31-40%	Choice forage plants have abundant seed stalks. Areas more than a mile from water show little use. About on third to one half of primary forage plants show grazing on key areas.
Moderate	41-50%	Most of accessible range shows use. Key areas show patch appearance with one half to two thirds of primary forage plants showing use. Grazing is noticeable in zone 1-1.5 miles from water.
Heavy	51-60%	Nearly all primary forage plants show grazing on key areas. Palatable shrubs show hedging. Key areas show a lack of seed stalks. Grazing is noticeable in areas over 1.5 miles from water.
Severe	61 +%	Key areas show a clipped or mowed appearance (no Stubble height. Shrubs are severely hedged. There is evidence of livestock trailing to forage. Areas over 1.5 miles from water lack stubble height.
Holecheck, J.L. and D. Galt. 2000. Grazing Intensity Guidelines. Rangelands 22(3), pg 11-14.		

If the utilization guideline for the pasture is exceeded on 30% or more of the pasture in any year, livestock will be immediately removed from the pasture. Within a pasture, areas found to exceed allowable use will become key areas for monitoring the following year. The AOI for the next year will be adjusted to correct livestock management practices (distribution, number, timing, salt and water availability, etc.) that may have led to the overuse.

In the event that 30 percent or more of the pasture exceeds the set allowable use in a grazing year, that area will be required to be less than or equal to allowable use the next year. If that same area, or a substantial portion of the same area, exceeds allowable use in two consecutive grazing years the entire pasture will be rested for one calendar year and stocking will be adjusted to balance with forage supplies. If the same area of a pasture exceeds allowable use in two years out of five, the stocking rate and management plan will be adjusted to balance with forage supply.

Monitoring of utilization for woody riparian species will be conducted on a reach basis in identified riparian areas (see table below).

Pasture	Reach description	Management	Allowable Use
Indian Creek	All of Indian Creek drainage.	Rest this year	0%
Bearwallow	Copper Creek within the Bearwallow & Claremont Pastures.	Grazed 11/1/07 – 2/28/08	Not to exceed 25% woody riparian heavily hedged.
Bearwallow	Mineral Creek within the Bearwallow Pasture.	Grazed 11/1/07 – 2/28/08	Not to exceed 25% woody riparian heavily hedged.
Silver Creek & Stout Mesa	Copper Creek within the Silver Creek & Stout Mesa Pastures.	Grazed 3/1/07 – 5/31/07	Not to exceed 25% woody riparian heavily hedged.
Silver Creek & Stout Mesa	Mineral Creek within the Silver Creek & Stout Mesa Pastures.	Grazed 3/1/07 – 5/31/07	Not to exceed 25% woody riparian heavily hedged.

If allowable use is exceeded on 30% or more of the riparian reach within the pasture, livestock will be removed from the pasture. If that same reach, or a substantial portion of the same reach, exceeds allowable use in two consecutive grazing years the entire pasture will be rested for one calendar year and stocking will be adjusted to prevent overuse of the riparian reach. If the same reach of a pasture exceeds allowable use in two years out of five, the stocking rate and management plan will be adjusted to prevent overuse of the riparian reach.

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.