United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests Springerville Ranger District | P.O. Box 760 Springerville, AZ 85938 (928) 333-4372 FAX: 333-4182

File Code: 2210
Date: April 28, 2015

[redacted]

Dear [redacted]:

Enclosed is your 2015 Annual Operating Instruction (AOI) for the Benton Creek and St. Mary Allotments. The pasture rotation schedule and monitoring dates have been identified for your information. The level of authorized use and grazing schedule as indicated in this AOI are based on the best information available at this time. These are subject to change as actual site specific forage conditions and available livestock watering sources are determined at the start of and during the annual authorized season of use.

Allotment boundary and interior fences should be repaired before entering your allotment. It is your responsibility to keep improvements listed in your Term Grazing Permit functional and in good working order. A well maintained fence will keep your herd in the proper pasture and prevents unauthorized use by cattle from neighboring allotments.

If you have any questions and/or comments, please feel free to call me or my Range personnel at (928) 333-4372.

Sincerely,

MARCIA PFLEIDERER
Springerville District Ranger

2015 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS
SPRINGERVILLE RANGER DISTRICT

Allotment Name: St. Mary
Benton Creek

Permittee: [redacted]

Term Permitted Livestock Numbers and dates:

St. Mary	40 c/c	7/01-10/10
Benton Creek	19 c/c	7/01-10/31

Annual Authorization livestock numbers and dates:

St. Mary/Benton Creek	59 c/c	6/15-10/15

Table 1. Pasture rotation schedule for the North Escudilla Allotment

Pasture	Use Period*	Midpoint Date	Number Of Days	Key Species**	Allowable Use Guideline
Old Horse	06/15-07/15	07/01	31	CARE/POA/Fear/Deca/Muwr /Bltr/Mumo	35%
St. Mary/Old Horse	07/16-09/15	08/16	62		
Benton Creek	09/16-09/30	09/23	15	Bogr/Kocr/Fear/Mumo/Pofe	
Home	10/01-10/15	10/07	15		

*Dates will be adjusted if maximum allowable utilization levels in the stocked pastures are reached sooner than anticipated.
**CARE=sedges, POA=bluegrass species, Fear=Arizona fescue, Kocr=Junegrass, Muwr=Spiked muhly, Mumo=Mountian muhly, Bltr=pinedropseed and Bogr=Blue grama. Key species may be adjusted as necessary to reflect those receiving the most grazing pressure based on time of the year.

A. GRAZING STANDARDS AND PRESCRIPTIONS:

Range Readiness Check: Rangeland is generally ready for grazing when the soil has become firm after winter and early spring precipitation, and cool season plants have headed out. This varies from year to year, and readiness checks will be made in advance of the scheduled turn-out date. You are invited to assist or accompany the range personnel as they conduct inspections.

Seasonal Utilization Monitoring: The allowable use guideline for each pasture is shown in Table 1. Livestock grazing utilization monitoring will be conducted in key areas near the midpoint of the grazing period for each pasture. It is your responsibility to take action so that livestock grazing does not exceed the allowable use guidelines. Proper salt placement, hauling water, and herding or riding are recommended. If the problem cannot be corrected with preventative measures, then early exits from the pastures, adjustments in the AMP, stocking levels, or other management or administrative actions may be necessary.

A utilization check at the end of the grazing period for each pasture may be conducted if deemed necessary to identify or correct any resource damage occurring in the allotment. You are invited to participate when any of these checks are being conducted. The appropriate methods or techniques to be used will be from USFS Region 3 Range Analysis Handbook and/or Utilization Studies and Residual Measurements, Interagency Technical Reference, 1996.

The purpose of utilization monitoring is to ensure that herbaceous vegetation is managed to provide for suitable habitat and forage for various wildlife species (i.e. Mexican Spotted Owl and Northern Goshawk prey base), to meet physiological requirements for forage and browse plants, and promote or maintain proper range/watershed conditions.

Early Livestock Removal: The Forest Service recommends to the permittee having an off-the-Forest contingency pasture in the event that persistent drought and/or utilization in excess of AMP/AOI guidelines necessitate early livestock removal from the Forest. Part 1, clause 3 and Part 2, clause 8 (c) of the term grazing permit provides this option.

If a possibility of an early removal exists, Forest Service range personnel, with input from the permittee, will make on the ground, case by case decisions regarding range conditions. Based on the Allotment inspections, Forest Service personnel will make the determination if livestock removal is required for resource protection. The District will consider all resource objectives before taking any actions regarding the above situations.

Maintenance of range improvements: Permittees will maintain assigned maintenance of all range improvements, whether private or government owned, within their Allotment. This is in accordance with Part 3, clause 2 of the term grazing permit.

Permittees will get with the Districts to sign a permit modification and receipt of materials. Range improvements not specifically listed in the improvement program schedule and all ground disturbing activities will not be initiated by the permittee until the Springerville Ranger District has approved proper clearances.

If your neighbor is turning out before you on an adjacent pasture and the boundary fence is your responsibility, this **FENCE MUST BE REPAIRED BEFORE YOUR NEIGHBOR TURNS OUT.**

Fence maintenance and other range improvements required prior to moving livestock onto the Allotment include:

1. All boundary fences on the allotment must be maintained.
2. Fences for adjacent allotments (depend on you as the responsible permittee for maintenance) must be maintained.
3. Interior fences of all pastures must be maintained.
4. Water developments must be in working condition.

Livestock Distribution: Livestock need to be distributed evenly throughout the pasture. A full time rider is strongly encouraged. By herding livestock onto the uplands and other lightly used areas, the grazing pressure on riparian areas and meadows is reduced. To obtain uniform distribution, frequent riding will be necessary to break up concentrations of livestock that bunch-up causing over utilization of forage. Salting and maintaining improvements are also good ways to achieve proper livestock distribution.

Sanitation and Fire Prevention: When an animal is killed or dies from contagious or infectious disease, its carcass must be removed. If the animal dies or is killed in the vicinity of streams, roads, trails, or recreational areas, the carcass must be moved to a points at least 100 yards from live water, or as far as practical when terrain makes that distance impossible, within a reasonable time after discovery.

All vehicles should be equipped with a properly functioning exhaust system. A shovel and axe for use in extinguishing camp and forest fires should be carried. All open camp and branding fires, when

allowed, must have a fire ring down to the mineral soil, and be handled in a safe manner. All State and local fire regulations and restrictions will be observed. Report any fires to the fire dispatcher in Show Low at 928-**537-5305.**

Recreation: Recreation is increasing on the District every year. Recreation users and livestock operators must communicate to minimize conflicts.

Animal Damage: The Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest has an Animal Damage Management (ADM) Plan. Lethal control and preventative techniques may be authorized. Animal damage control methods will require case-by-case assessment and District Ranger approval.

B. GENERAL

1. Grazing bills must be paid in full, fence maintenance must be completed and five days' notice must be given to the Springerville Ranger District prior to turnout date.
2. Sub-leasing is prohibited. You must own the livestock on your Allotment and they must be branded and registered in your name. A current copy of your brand certificate must be on file at the District Office. It is recommended that you also put your brand on the ear tag of your cattle so that District range personnel can identify it under adverse conditions.
3. Track actual use as it occurs by pasture on the enclosed forms and return this form to the Springerville Ranger District at the end of the grazing season. Actual use "as it occurs" means number and dates your permitted livestock are on the Allotment/Forest. It also means numbers and dates of livestock on your Allotment from adjacent range because of broken fences, open gates, or natural barriers that are no longer effective. This information will reflect the carrying capacity of the range, need for additional improvement or possible change of management.
4. Salting and mineral placement
   - ✓ No salting is permitted with ¼ mile of live water or in meadows.
   - ✓ Change salt locations once a week or as needed and use hard ground.
   - ✓ Move creep feeders regularly and change sites every year. No mineral supplement or salt will be placed in Mexican Spotted Owl protected activity centers.
5. Wire gates need to be left open after the grazing season is over. If necessary, reconstruct gates at the first of the year and mid-season in high traffic areas. Makes sure the gates are easy to close for Forest Users (for example, use smooth wire hoop that are snug but not too tight). **"Please Close The Gate" signs are available at the District office.**
6. Horses grazed on the Allotment must be permitted and grazing fees will be billed for each horse. Horses on summer pasture will be rotated with the livestock or be in horse pasture as identified.
7. If you plan to use a camp trailer in conjunction with the livestock operation
   - ✓ You need to inform the Range Staff of the trailer description, license number and of its location.
   - ✓ Trailer holding tanks are not to be emptied directly onto the ground. Sewage dump stations are available at Big Lake Campground, Hoyer Campgrounds, Springerville, and Eagar. Camps should be maintained and kept clean.
   - ✓ Permits to camp in conjunction with livestock operations are extended only to permittees and their paid employees acting within the scope of their employment. Permittees are responsible for cleaning up the site when camps are removed.
8. If the Forest Service requests a late turn out, we will credit pro-rated fees or apply to next year's billing if the amount is less than $75.00. There is an administrative charge and you should pay the bill for collection by due date.
9. **Any livestock left on the Allotment after the "off" date or left in pastures after the rotation date will be in violation of the permit; and subject to be charged at the unauthorized rate.** Therefore, gathering of livestock should begin well in advance of the scheduled removal dates in order to meet this deadline. It is important to anticipate pasture moves in advance.

C. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR INFORMATION

1. Fire Safety Inspection—during fire restrictions you may be required to have your vehicles, ATV(s), equipment, etc., inspected by the Forest Service before going onto to the Allotment. This inspection is a safety precaution to prevent wildfires.

The contact on the Springerville Ranger District is Ron Mortensen or Mark Willis. If you have any questions or concerns they can be reached at (928) 333-4372 or at PO Box 760, Springerville, AZ 85938.