Glenwood Ranger District

Gila National Forest

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

2015

Mule Creek Allotment #414

Prepared By: /s/ DK Brown **Date:** 01/26/2015
District Range Staff

Approved By: /s/ DK Brown for Debbie Cress **Date:** 01/26/2015
District Ranger

Annual Operating Instructions

I. INTRODUCTION

Kendall Brown (Forest Service) met with Timm Haas (permittee) on January 26, 2015 to discuss management of the Mule Creek Allotment during the current grazing year and to plan grazing management for the upcoming grazing season. These Annual Operating Instructions are the result of that discussion.

Term Permitted Livestock Numbers

Number and class of livestock	Dates
200 Cattle-Cow/Calf	03/01 – 02/28
4 Horses – Saddle (not to exceed 24 head months)	03/01 – 02/28

Mule Creek Allotment Annual Authorization

Number and class of livestock	Dates
200 Cattle-cow/Calf	03/01 – 02/28
2 horses (saddle) NTE 24 HM	03/01 – 02/28

Mule Creek Allotment Pasture Rotation

Class of Livestock	Rotation Date	Pasture
Cow/calf	03/01 – 04/15	Walnut (150 head)
Cow/calf	04/16 – 10/15	Wildcat/Sawmill (150 head)
Cow/calf	10/16 – 02/28	Walnut (150 head)
Cow/calf	03/01 – 08/15	Tennessee (50 head)
Cow/calf	08/16 – 09/30	7L (50 head)
Cow/calf	10/01 – 02/28	South Holding (50 head)
Horses (2 Saddle)	03/01 – 02/28	Holding 1 & 2 & Private

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.

III. IMPROVEMENT MAINTENANCE

All range improvements assigned in the 10-year Term Grazing Permit are to be maintained in a functioning condition. In the event these improvements cannot be brought up to a functioning condition, you should notify the Range Staff at the Glenwood Ranger District to schedule them for reconstruction as funds become available.

2015 planned improvement:

- In 2014 permittee cleaned Ball Tank, Bradberry Tank in Wildcat pasture, and East Walnut Tank in Walnut pasture. No proposed new construction or reconstruction is planned for 2015.

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 burns on the district this coming year. We will notify you if we plan to let a fire burn on your allotment.

2. Records: In order to close out permit modifications you must provide documentation of materials and labor constituting you contribution to the permit modification.

You must provide documentation of cattle numbers; dates of entering and leaving pastures, shipping dates and cattle losses (grown stock and calves). This information is used to substantiate the carrying capacity of the allotment. The information demonstrates use and the need for forage to meet the economic needs of the county. This information may also be used to establish cause and effect if there is a significant change in calf crop (Example, a wolf pack becomes established near your allotment).

3. Heavy Equipment Use: Please notify district well in advance of any plans to use heavy equipment so that necessary clearances and/or permits

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 or Tax ID number in order for a 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. This fee will be collected to pay for the cost associated with issuing an additional bill for collection. There is no administrative fee for the normal "split billing" on yearlong allotments.

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:

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, protein blocks or molasses licks on National Forest land is permitted when used in the same manner as salt.

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 within ¼ mile from water and/or in natural concentrations areas which receive heavy grazing use.

V. ALLOTMENT STATUS

The Mule Creek Allotment has been analyzed through the NEPA analysis process. The resulting decision meets Forest Plan standards and guidelines. This decision, along with the terms of your Ten-Year Term Permit, the Allotment Management Plan, and these Annual Operating Instructions provide direction for management on this allotment. Under the Memorandum of Understanding, we are conducting a management study to determine the feasibility and desirability of using Mule Creek Allotment for grazing horses.

VI. OTHER ITEMS DISCUSSED

You indicated that you are in favor of managed Wildland Fire to benefit natural resources on your allotment and you would like fences, pipelines, and other range improvements protected during the fire. You believe the upper country to the west needs to be burned. The District Ranger will authorize necessary changes to this AOI to accommodate fire management.

VII. SPECIAL MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

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.

VIII. UTILIZATION MONITORING OF KEY AREAS

Monitoring schedule

Pasture	Monitoring Date	Allowable Use	Key Area
Tennessee	06/15	Conservative (31 – 40%)	C1, C2, C3, P1, P2, P3, P4

Walnut	06/15	Conservative (31 – 40%)	C1
Sawmill	06/15	Conservative (31 – 40%)	C4, uplands
Wildcat	06/15	Conservative (31 – 40%)	C3, C4, C5, C7
Tennessee/Wildcat	06/15	**Light (30%)**	**Mule Creek drainage**
Sawmill	06/15	**Light (20%)**	**Sun Flower Mesa – C2,**
Sawmill	06/15	**Light (30%)**	**Sawmill Canyon**
7L & Mule	06/15	Conservative (31 – 40%)	Entire pasture
Holding 1 and 2	06/15	Conservative (31 – 40%)	Entire pastures
South Holding	06/15	Light (20%)	South Fork

Allowable use is defined for specific areas (Mule Creek, Sawmill Canyon, Sunflower Mesa, and South Fork) in the Term Grazing Permit. Where not defined by the Term Grazing Permit, allowable use on herbaceous forage is conservative use (31-40%). Monitoring of herbaceous forage will be conducted by ocular estimate of use within a pasture (utilization mapping) at the end of the summer growing season. 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.
Holechek, 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 on woody riparian will be conducted in the areas below and concurrently with the associated pasture. (See Table Below)

Pasture	Reach description	Allowable Use
Sawmill	Sawmill Canyon	30% on herbaceous and not to exceed 30% woody riparian heavily hedged.
Tennessee/Wildcat	Mule Creek	
Wildcat	Coal Creek	

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.

If unforeseen operational conditions require a change in the management specified in this AOI please contact rangeland management personnel at the Glenwood Ranger District to obtain approval of change(s). Advanced notice of change is requested so that field inspections can be conducted. Verbal approval of changes will be followed with a letter documenting the change. Failure to follow the instructions provided in this AOI, or other instructions (verbal or written) of a Forest Officer may lead to adverse action against your Term Grazing Permit (Part 1, Section 3 of your Term Grazing Permit).

Open and positive communications concerning all AOI content is encouraged. Feel free to contact Kendall Brown if you have any questions or concerns.