Glenwood Ranger District

Gila National Forest

2015 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

Winchester Allotment #424

Prepared By: /s/ DK Brown **Date:** 02/02/2015

District Range Staff

Approved By: /s/ Debbie C. Cress **Date:** 02/02/2015

District Ranger

Annual Operating Instructions

I. INTRODUCTION

These Annual Operating Instructions document the discussion between Kendall Brown, Dale Lunt (permittee) & Jayce Lunt (Manager) on February 02, 2015, at the Glenwood District Office. The permitted stocking for the upcoming grazing season on the Winchester Allotment is as follows:

Term Permitted Livestock Numbers

Number and class of livestock	Dates
100 Cattle-Cow/Calf	03/01 – 02/28

Winchester Allotment Annual Authorization

Number and class of livestock	Dates
*65 Cattle-Cow/Calf	03/01 – 02/28

* Permittee stocks at less than Term Permitted to protect forage resource and due to the lack of waters during drought.

Winchester Allotment Pasture Rotation

Class of Livestock	Scheduled Rotation Date	Pasture
Cow/Calf	03/01 – 02/28	Upper, Grapevine, Waterhaul, and Dark Thunder*
Cow/Calf	03/01 – 02/28	North Holding*
Cow/Calf	03/01 – 06/30 Until allowable use is reached (moderate)	Little Pasture, private land, Tillie Hall and Pine Cienega wildlife plots.

***** Until allowable use is reached. Permittee will achieve seasonal deferment by moving livestock when allowable use rates are approached in specific areas.

The above schedule for stocking the allotment depends upon the availability of forage and water. The allotment is divided into pastures by drift fences and terrain. Cattle are distributed throughout the allotment with some portions of the allotment being deferred during the grazing year. Some flexibility in the above pasture rotation dates is 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.

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 should 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.

You will be reconstructing the fence from the southeast corner of your private land to FR 734 and fencing across the existing road that terminates at your private land. This road north of the fence line will be closed to motorized use since you do not require it for access. You also will be reconstructing the drift fence near Grapevine corrals. The District will provide necessary fence materials and a free use post and stay permit for these projects.

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: 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 can be obtained. You will be notified by the district when you can proceed.

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 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 blue tubs 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. To aid in the gathering and moving of livestock salt may be placed near water or in corrals within one week of scheduled move date. Exemptions of this rule are Pig Skin Spring, Tillie Hall, and Pipeline Spring. Salting of these areas enhance cattle distribution on the Winchester allotment.

V. ALLOTMENT STATUS

The Winchester Allotment has sufficient NEPA and an Allotment Management Plan is in place. This AOI implements the 1995 decision.

VI. OTHER ITEMS DISCUSSED

You indicated that you are in favor of Fire Use on your allotment. Your concerns will be analyzed at the time the fire is placed into Fire Use category. The District Ranger will authorize necessary changes to the AOI to accommodate fire management.

You are authorized to remove dead standing trees that pose a risk of falling onto the fence from all fence rights-of way. If you wish to salvage the material produced by such clearing you must purchase a firewood permit.

We will be looking at incorporating the Apache Creek Allotment into the Winchester Allotment per our discussion.

VII. SPECIAL MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

You encourage the District to consider thinning of the PJ and brush and/or burning to reduce densities on the allotment.

VIII. UTILIZATION MONITORING OF KEY AREAS

Monitoring Schedule

Pasture	Monitoring Date	Allowable Use	Key Area
Upper & Thunder	09/15	Conservative (31- 40%)	¼ mile South of Winchester tank C3, C4
North Holding	09/15	Conservative (31- 40%)	C1
North Holding	09/15	Light (10%)	Sawmill Canyon
Grapevine	09/15	Light (20%)	Winchester Spring, Branding Iron Spring
Thunder	09/15	Light (20%)	Dark Thunder Spring
Thunder	09/15	Light (10%)	Sawmill Canyon
Grapevine	09/15	Light (5%)	Tillie Hall Spring
Tillie Hall Wildlife Plot	09/15	Moderate	Tillie Hall Wildlife Plot

Allowable use is defined for specific areas 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). 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 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
Thunder	Dark Thunder Spring	Not to exceed 20% woody riparian heavily hedged.
Grapevine	Winchester Spring & Branding Iron Springs	Not to exceed 20% woody riparian heavily hedged.
Grapevine	Tillie Hall Spring	Not to exceed 5% 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.

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.