Annual Operating Instructions

BUSH CREEK ALLOTMENT
Alpine Ranger District
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest

2014 grazing season

Allotment: Bush Creek
Permittee: [redacted]

Term Permitted Livestock Numbers and dates:

Bush Creek Allotment	11 horses to 27 AUMs*	11/01 to 4/30**
* Livestock numbers will vary between 11 to 27 AUMs annually. **Season of use will be 141 day between November and April.		

Annual Validation livestock numbers and dates:

Bush Creek Allotment	4 Horses/19 AUMs	03/01/2014 to 02/28/2015

1. Annual authorized livestock numbers will be based on existing conditions, available water and forage, and predicted forage production for the year. Adjustments to the annual authorized livestock numbers (not to exceed 27 AUMs) may occur during the grazing year, based on favorable conditions or may be adjusted downward if conditions are not favorable, such as in the case of drought, insects or other environmental factors.
2. The schedule is an estimate, and may be modified at any time during the grazing season if the utilization guidelines, identified below, are met, if water availability is inadequate, or for other resource management reasons.
3. If you are scheduled to rotate livestock to the next pasture, but feel there is adequate forage to sustain them in the current pasture and would prefer to hold off on the rotation, please contact the range personnel, for an inspection and approval.
4. Horses are to be completely removed from a pasture by the off date unless a change has been approved by the District Ranger.

Pasture rotation schedule:

Pasture	Use Period*	Midpoint Date	Number Of Days	Key Species**	Allowable Use Guidelines
Bush Creek Allotment					
Mountain pasture	03/01/14 – 04/30/14	03/30	61	Bogr/Bocu	30-40% Upland
Bush Ck. pasture	11/01/14 – 11/23/14	11/12	23		
Mountain pasture	11/24/14 – 02/28/14	01/10	97		

*Dates will be adjusted if allowable use guidelines in the stocked pastures are reached sooner than anticipated.
**Bogr=blue grama and Bocu=sideoats grama. Key species may be adjusted as necessary to reflect those receiving the most grazing pressure based on time of the year.

GRAZING STANDARDS AND PRESCRIPTIONS

A. ***Key Areas and Allowable Use Guidelines***

The following utilization guidelines will be applied on the Bush Creek Allotment:

1. A management guideline of conservative use of 30-40% in the uplands as measured at the end of the grazing season will be employed to improve vegetative and soil conditions.
2. Range personnel will contact the permittees to coordinate site visits to monitor key areas, when practical. Permittee participation is encouraged. Forage utilization estimates will be consistent with the Forest Service Range Analysis Handbook methodology, and may also include Interagency Technical Reference – Utilization Studies and Residual Measurement, as well as other techniques generally accepted in the field of range management.
3. It is your responsibility to ensure that livestock are managed to meet the allowable use or other standards as stated above.
4. Use exceeding the allowable use or other standards could result in an administrative action such as delay of entry in the following year, changes in the timing of use or the allowable use standards, or other actions designed to allow the plants a chance to recover.

B. ***Areas Excluded from Livestock Grazing***

1. Livestock grazing in the riparian area of the Bush pasture will be deferred until the existing dike along Bush Creek is addressed. Work on the existing dike, other than normal maintenance, would require separate NEPA analysis.
2. You are responsible for ensuring that your livestock do not enter these specified areas. If entry does occur, you are responsible for ensuring prompt removal, in no case later than two days after discovery and/or notification.

C. Monitoring

Implementation Monitoring -- Objective: Insure that the action(s) described in the Decision Document (Environmental Assessment) are implemented accordingly, as scheduled and are in compliance with the Forest Plan standards and guidelines.

A. Ocular Inspection – an ocular inspection of the allotment will be conducted to assess the conditions of the vegetation and soil (ground cover, erosion), and structural improvements.

B. Annual monitoring to adjust or evaluate the timing, intensity, frequency and season of use, and livestock numbers will be conducted during the grazing season (seasonal) and/or at the end of the growing season. This practices adaptive management and makes necessary management changes needed for plant development and recovery. The methods to be used may include, but are not limited *to:*

1. Utilization (Height Weight, Landscape Appearance, Grazed Class etc.) - To assure that conservative maximum use levels of 30%-40% in key areas are being met. Along with

actual use and climate data, these methods measure short-term effects of grazing activities and are used as a basis for adjusting grazing use.

2. Compliance with Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) - The AOI includes pasture rotations, numbers to be grazed, pasture entry and exit dates, improvement maintenance and construction, and general annual allotment operating procedures.

Effectiveness Monitoring – Objectives: Effective monitoring is intended to determine whether management is successful at moving rangeland resource towards desired conditions. The long term health of upland and riparian resources will be monitored in key areas or critical areas on the allotment as written in your AMP.

- The Forest Service will conduct most of the Effectiveness Monitoring on the allotment. You are encouraged to participate and can receive the results of any monitoring.
- You are encouraged to participate and learn to conduct utilization monitoring or camera point monitoring and to share the information with your Forest Officer.

D. Range Improvements

- You are responsible for maintenance of all rangeland improvements assigned to you in your grazing permit.
- Rangeland improvements are to be maintained to a level that fully serves the intended purpose and perpetuates the effective life of each improvement.
- All assigned improvements are to be maintained to standard whether grazing occurs or not.
- All exterior fences must be maintained to standard prior to the earlier turn on date or either yourself or your neighbor on the adjacent allotment. It is your responsibility to coordinate with your neighbor to ensure that the maintenance occurs on time.

E. Special Management Instructions

The following restrictions will be implemented so that management remains in compliance with the Endangered Species Act. The instructions below relate to threatened, endangered, and proposed to be listed species, as well as range/watershed conditions.

- No salt or mineral block may be placed in protected and restricted Mexican spotted owl habitat from March 1 to August 31, and no concentrations of livestock (i.e., corral use, traps, or large gatherings of livestock) and will be strategically placed to help distribute livestock away from water sources, improvements, riparian areas, high use recreation sites and trails, and roads.
- Actual placement will be at least ¼ mile from riparian areas or live water, unless otherwise approved by the Forest Officer in charge. Supplements are a tool to enhance overall livestock distribution and utilization patterns.
- Stock tanks must be surveyed for possible aquatic habitat before earth-disturbing maintenance is authorized.

- A small portion of Steeple Pasture is within designated Mexican Spotted Owl critical habit. To prevent livestock from having direct effects to riparian vegetation development and allow for prey base habitat development, livestock will not have access to riparian habitat.

F. Other Instructions

- The permittee must obtain permission from the District Ranger, before conducting earth-disturbing activities on the National Forest. The Forest Service will arrange inspections of project areas and will prepare appropriate environmental and cultural documents before earth-disturbing activities proceed. These activities include road/earthen tank maintenance, as well as construction /reconstruction of trails, roads, earthen tanks, etc.
- Erosion control measures will be added on the trailing area within the allotment.
- Actual Use Information (Number of livestock and Season of Use). The permittee will keep an accurate record of the number of livestock run on the allotment and entry and exit dates of each pasture grazed.

The Annual Operating Instructions are a part of the Term Grazing Permit as provided for in Part 1, Section 3, and comply with the standards and guidelines found in the Forest Plan. Any additional information collected during the year may be incorporated into the Annual Operating Instructions.

We appreciate your cooperation in the management of the Bush Creek Allotment. If you have any questions regarding these instructions, please contact Ron Mortensen, or myself at (928) 339-5000. Thank you.

I have read and understand these Annual Operating Instructions for the Bush Creek Allotment for the 2014 grazing season.

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[redacted], Permittee Date

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Richard Davalos, Date
District Ranger