

Annual Operating Instructions

COYOTE-WHITMER/TURKEY CREEK ALLOTMENT

Alpine Ranger District
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest

2014 grazing season

1. PASTURE USE SCHEDULE

The following is the grazing rotation schedule:

Herd A (90 head c/c)

Pasture	On	Off	Days	Comments
Turkey Creek	7/1	8/30	61	
Dump	8/31	10/31	62	
Little & Luna Lake	RESTED	RESTED	RESTED	Plan to rest these pastures but they are available to use if for some reason they are needed.

Herd B (135 head c/c)

Pasture	On	Off	Days	Comments
West	7/1	7/31	31	Monitor use on Coyote Creek.
East	8/1	10/31	92	Monitor use on Coyote Creek.
Lookout Holding	Use as needed for putting the cattle on the allotment and taking them off in the fall.			
Whitmer	RESTED	RESTED	RESTED	Wallow Fire High Burn Severity

The schedule above is an estimate, and may be modified at any time during the grazing season if the utilization levels, identified below, are met, if water availability is inadequate, or for other resource management reasons. If allowable use levels are met early in the scheduled pasture, cattle will be rotated into the next pasture or off the Forest. No re-grazing of any pasture will be allowed. Cattle are to be completely removed from a pasture by the off date. Please notify this office when you begin to move cattle and when a pasture rotation is complete.

2. UTILIZATION STANDARDS

The following utilization standards will be applied on the Coyote-Whitmer/Turkey Creek Allotment:

- 20% utilization by weight on riparian forage and browse.
- 40% utilization by weight on upland forage and browse.
- Within Northern goshawk territories, a utilization level in forested areas (includes small openings) of: 20% average by weight of grass and forbs and 40% of browse species.
- Within Mexican spotted owl habitat, in order to maintain prey species habitat needs, a utilization level of 20-40% of forage and browse species.

3. KEY AREA MONITORING

Utilization levels will be checked prior to livestock entering the allotment and near the midpoint, or sooner, of the grazing period for each pasture at key areas. A key area is defined as: *“a portion of range, which because of its location, grazing or browsing value, and/or use, serves as an indicative sample of range conditions, trend, or degree of use seasonally. A key area guides the general area of which it is part”* (Forest Service Region 3 Rangeland and Analysis Management Guide, June, 1997).

Utilization measurements will be taken on key livestock forage plants (key species). Key forage species is defined as:

“1. forage species (plants) whose use serves as an indicator to the degree of use of associated species. In many cases, key species include indicator species and species traditionally referenced as increasers, decreasers, desirables, or intermediates. 2. Those species (plants) which must, because of their importance, be considered in the management program” (Forest Service Region 3 Rangeland and Analysis Management Guide, June 1997).

- Riparian areas will be monitored for use on riparian woody species' current year's leaders, as well as % use, by weight on riparian grasses.
- Upland areas will be monitored for use on perennial grass species.
- Mexican spotted owl protected and restricted habitat will be monitored to ensure that current management is providing cover for rodent prey species, the residual biomass that will support prescribed natural and ignited fires that would reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire in the Forest, and regeneration of riparian trees.

District 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 FS Regional stubble-height standards, as well as other techniques generally accepted in the field of range management.

4. RANGE IMPROVEMENTS

Range improvements must be maintained to standard. It is the permittee's responsibility to ensure that range improvements remain functional. This includes boundary fences in pastures not currently being grazed. Routine maintenance of existing improvements does not require written clearance; however, construction/reconstruction of new improvements must be authorized in writing from this office.

5. 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).
- Stock tanks must be surveyed for possible aquatic habitat before earth-disturbing maintenance is authorized.

6. 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. Do not conduct any earth-disturbing activities on the Forest without written clearance from this office.

Salt must be located at least ¼ mile from water, and preferably on ridges and/or areas of low use. Do not place salt blocks in the same location as the previous year, and locate blocks on hard ground not susceptible to erosion. Supplemental feeding, other than mineral or supplement block is not authorized on the National Forest.

The Annual Operating Instructions are a part of the Term Grazing Permit as provided for in Part 1, Section 3. These instructions comply with the standards and guidelines found in the Apache-Sitgreaves Forest Plan. They also comply with the Endangered Species Act found in the Biological Assessment for the Turkey Creek and Coyote-Whitmer Allotments. Any additional information collected during the year may be incorporated into the Annual Operating Instructions.

I have read and understand the Annual Operating Instructions for the Turkey Creek and Coyote/Whitmer Allotments during the 2014 grazing season.

Tom Paterson, Permittee

Date

Richard Davalos, District Ranger

Date