



File Code: 2230

Date: April 29, 2013

Joseph Auza Sheep Co. LLC  
353 E. Wiley Way  
Casa Grande, AZ 85122

Dear Joseph:

On April 23, 2013, Kendell, John, and Andy met with you to discuss the 2013 Annual Operating Instructions for the Heber-Reno Sheep Driveway and the Long Tom Allotment. Kendell stressed the importance of contacting each District along the Driveway, and he gave you the contacts for each District at the meeting. Kendell also reviewed the Instructions from each District that they provided. They are as follows:

### **Mesa Ranger District**

The permittee is responsible for having their employees follow the stated instructions in the AOI and/or any other additional instructions from Forest Officers concerning use of the driveway. Failure to comply with these instructions will constitute a violation of the Term Grazing Permit and will be dealt with through the administrative process.

- **The permittee will notify the District at least three (3) days PRIOR** to coming onto the District. This will allow the permittee to meet with the District to discuss the following; the intended trailing route, overnight stops, bedding grounds, and when they are planning on entering and exiting the District. Contingency routes and alternate bedding grounds will be identified. This information will be recorded on driveway maps in coordination with District personnel. **If the permittee does not contact the District as directed above, he will NOT be authorized to use the Mesa Ranger District portion of the driveway.**
- The permittee and their herders are required to provide the Forest Service with prompt (within 24 hours) notification of interaction between wild sheep and domestic sheep. Your contact will be Kelly Kessler; (cell) 480.204.0897, (wk) 480.610.3305.
- Sheep will be counted at designated locations along the driveway. Strays will be reported, gathered, and removed from the District within five days.
- Sheep bands will maintain progress on a direct travel route. Herding techniques that promote the movement of sheep steadily in one direction will be used. The permittee will not add stops or camps for the purpose of securing additional forage or period of use on the driveway.
- Herders will confine sheep to the driveway at all times and keep them in a herd not more than one-quarter mile wide while trailing.
- Permittee is required to provide for public safety while trailing the sheep on/across established roads.



- Sheep will be kept out of all riparian areas except when crossing and watering. Herders will avoid allowing sheep to parallel streams to keep them off of the banks. Crossings will be made perpendicular to the stream channel.
- Herders will not bathe themselves or wash their clothes directly in streams.
- Herder camps will be maintained free of trash, and trash will be packed out when camp is moved. All fires, if permitted, will be extinguished prior to leaving camp.
- Supplemental *certified weed-free* hay may be hauled as a main source of feed at each bedding ground. It may also be necessary to haul water to various locations. If watering troughs need to be used, locations of the troughs must receive prior approval by the District range personnel.
- Fences that are cut or wire that is pulled up to access the trailing routes will be repaired immediately in a manner to prevent access by other grazing animals. Repaired fences will be restored to the previous wire spacing within five days. All gates opened to allow passage would be closed once the sheep are through. If a fence is lifted for the sheep bands to pass under, the herders will put the fence back after each passing.
- Range improvements will be in working order prior to sheep arriving at their locations.
- Forage use/utilization levels should not exceed 40 percent on herbaceous perennial vegetation.
- The length of time on the District shall not exceed 8 days per herd.
- Sheep will be kept overnight at Bushnell tanks while on the Diamond grazing allotment. The two new water improvements located south of Bushnell will be avoided.
- To avoid possible contact with bighorn sheep, domesticated sheep will not bed down or be held over within known bighorn sheep habitat.
- To avoid possible contact with bighorn sheep, domesticated sheep using the driveway will trail along the western portion of the driveway between Usery Pass and the Blue Point Bridge on the Salt River.

### **Tonto Basin Ranger District**

- The length of time on the District shall not exceed a total of 10 days.
- The following is a list of the bedding grounds that are to be used on the Tonto Basin Ranger District portion of the driveway:
  - Reno Pass
  - West side of Tonto Creek (no loafing in Tonto Creek Riparian Unit)
  - Breeched tank on top of mountain
- All Sheep that are left behind shall be gathered and removed from the District within 5 days. The permittee will notify the District when removal has been accomplished.
- Supplemental certified weed free feed must be hauled as the main source of feed at each bedding ground. It may also be necessary to haul water to various locations
- Herders will use the same bedding ground for each herd.
- Each herder camp that is used in association with each bedding ground will only be used for two nights (one night to accommodate each herd).
- All camps will be cleaned up prior to moving to the next camp.
- Sheep will be kept in a herd not more than ¼ mile wide.
- Sheep must be kept out of all riparian areas except for crossing and watering.

- Sheep are not to be trailed along the length of riparian areas.
- Fences that are cut or wire that is pulled up to access the trailing route will be repaired or restored to its previous wire spacing within 5 days.
- Use levels must not exceed 50% on herbaceous vegetation.

Please contact Eric Hoskins at the Tonto Basin Ranger District at (928) 467-3236 two weeks prior to the entry onto the District.

### **Pleasant Valley Ranger District**

The Pleasant Valley District is experiencing a dry winter/spring. The Sheep permittee (Auza) will be allowed to cross the District using the driveway but more quickly than in recent years when we had good winter moisture.

- The bands may be allowed to rest 2-3 days (total) at Cline and Mailbox Mesas but will be expected to travel through the remainder of the district at the established pace of 5 miles per day. There will be no stopping on the Potato Butte Allotment.
- The bands will not be combined and will travel at least one day apart.
- There will be no supplemental feeding on the PV District. No salting will be allowed unless done so in leak-proof containers.
- Contact will need to be made with the cattle permittees along the route by Auza, prior to entering each allotment.
- Sheep will not be held at riparian/stream crossings except for incidental watering. No bedding of sheep in those areas.
- Time allowed to cross Pleasant Valley Ranger District will not exceed 7 days, coming or going.

### **Black Mesa Ranger District**

Once the sheep arrive on the Long Tom Allotment the following rotation will be used:

South Unit 9	2000 head	June 1 to July 9
South Unit 6	2000 head	July 2 to August 2
South Unit 5	2000 head	August 3 to August 17
North Unit 6	2000 head	August 18 to September 15

The unit rotation and dates may vary depending on several factors, including weather and forage conditions. A map of the band unit locations is attached. Please use different bedground locations this season and locate them on upland areas and at least ¼ mile from water. Grazing, crossing or bedding shall not occur within riparian areas or meadows such as Long Tom Draw (except to access private land), Jacob Lake, Lakes 1, 2 and 3, Horse Trap Lake, Sandy Lake, and Pinto and Hidden Lakes. The desired utilization level on key species is 30% and John and Andy will work with you on collecting monitoring data. At the time of the meeting you were unsure if you were going to stock the allotment with a second band of sheep, and you said you will let us know by the middle of May.

In summary one band of 2000 sheep are permitted with dates of use by District as follows:

Mesa Ranger District	May 5 to May 13
Tonto Basin Ranger District	May 14 to May 23
Pleasant Valley Ranger District	May 24 to May 31
Black Mesa Ranger District	June 1 to September 15

The contacts for each District include: Kelly Kessler (cell) 480.204.0897(wk) 480.610.3305 for the Mesa RD; Eric Hoskins (928) 467-3236 for the Tonto Basin RD; Don Luhrsen (928) 462-4301 for the Pleasant Valley RD; and Kendell, Andy or John for the Black Mesa RD at (928) 535-7300. This letter will serve as your 2013 Annual Operating Instructions for the Heber-Reno Driveway and the Long Tom Allotment.

Sincerely,

*/s/Christopher J James*  
CHRISTOPHER J JAMES  
Black Mesa District Ranger