

Glenwood Ranger District

Gila National Forest

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

2016

Harden Cienega Allotment #408

Prepared By: /s/ DK Brown **Date:** 01/21/2016
District Range Staff

Approved By /s/ Silas Davidson for Anne L. Casey **Date:** 01/21/2016
District Ranger

Annual Operating Instructions

I. INTRODUCTION

Kendall Brown (Forest Service) met with Dan & Gwen White (permittees) and Sam McDonald (ranch manager) on January 21, 2016 to discuss management of the Hardin Cienega 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
716 Cattle-Cow/Calf	03/01 – 02/28
85 Cattle-Yearlings	03/01 – 10/31
(85) Cattle-Yearlings	01/01 – 02/28
10 Horses-Saddle	03/01 – 02/28

Harden Cienega Allotment Annual Authorization

Number and class of livestock authorized	Dates Authorized
566 Cattle-Cow/Calf	03/01 – 10/30
600 Cattle-Cow/calf	11/01 – 02/28
10 Horses-Saddle	03/01 – 02/28

East Rotation (New Mexico Pastures)

Number	Kind and Class of	Rotation Date	Pasture
209	Cow/Calf	03/01 – 06/30	SI
209	Cow/Calf	07/01 – 02/28	New Mexico

West Rotation (Arizona Pastures)

Number	Kind and Class of	Rotation Date	Pasture
357	Cow/Calf	03/01 – 02/28	Baldy
*	Bull/Heifer	03/01-02/28	Bull
10	Horses	03/01-02/28	Steer/Heifer

*As needed until utilization levels (conservative = 31-40%) are met.

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 Ranger District 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 verbally or in writing. Credit/Refund applications will not be processed unless District personnel have been notified either in advance or at the time of removal of stock.

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 this office so we can schedule them for reconstruction as funds become available.

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. You have indicated that you are in favor of managed fire on your allotment. We will notify you and solicit your input if we have a wildfire on your allotment. Decisions on fire management for the Arizona side will be made by the Clifton Ranger District; decisions on the New Mexico side will be made by the Glenwood Ranger District.

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

You must provide documentation of cattle numbers such as dates of entering and leaving pastures. 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.

5. Salting and Supplemental Feeding:

- a. Feeding of hay or other bulk feeds 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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 environmental analysis for this allotment was completed in 1993. The 1993 decision called for a three pasture rest rotation grazing system. Since 2004, a 4-pasture split herd rest rotation grazing system has been authorized in the AOI. This current grazing system meets the intent of the 1993 decision by providing a calendar year of rest for each pasture during the cool and warm season every other year. We will continue to authorize a flexible grazing system to respond to water and forage availability while ensuring growing season rest and recovery for each pasture.

At the present time direction for management on this allotment will be documented in these Annual Operating Instructions.

A Memorandum of Understanding for Resource Protection has been developed. This MOU will provide flexibility to build the herd slowly, opportunity to empirically determine the size of the sustainable base herd, maintain forage use within allowable use guidelines, and to improve ranch economics by increasing weaning weights. This agreement will be the basis of future environmental analysis and consultation.

VI. OTHER ITEMS DISCUSSED

VII. SPECIAL MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

For the protection of Threatened and Endangered species, the San Francisco River, Mule Creek, Harden Cienega Creek, and Coal Creek have designated exclusion areas.

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

You will be notified when monitoring is to be conducted on your allotment in order for you to be involved.

Monitoring of herbaceous forage will be conducted by ocular estimate of utilization of forage plants within a pasture. When necessary, 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 you observe utilization levels approaching moderate intensity (40% or greater use) you will need to take action for making changes to the grazing in that area. There are many actions that can be taken, such as pasture moves, locating your livestock on different waters, moving of salt and supplements, etc. We will work with you in order to insure that any actions taken are appropriate.

Utilization monitoring will normally coincide with pasture moves of livestock. The percent grazing use will be documented at that time. The following dates have been tentatively been scheduled for monitoring on the allotment. You are strongly encouraged to participate in monitoring.

Monitoring Schedule

Pasture	Monitoring Date	Allowable Use	Key Area
Prospect Baldy	6/01	Conservative (31 – 40%)	C6, C7, C8 (San Francisco River and Coal Creek) C9, C10, C11, P4, P8-P12
SI New Mexico	6/01	Conservative (31 – 40%)	C1, C2, C3 (San Francisco River) C1, C2, P1, P2, P3, P6

Monitoring within riparian will be conducted periodically in the areas below. Cattle are excluded from these areas through a combination of natural barriers and fencing.

Pasture	Reach description	Management	Allowable Use
Prospect	Harden Cienega Creek (reach 1) from T3S, R31, SE ¼ of Section 9 to the San Francisco River. Other reaches of this creek within the allotment are non-riparian and do not apply to riparian management.	Excluded (fencing & geographically)	0%
Prospect	San Francisco River within and/or bordering the allotment boundary.	Excluded (fencing & geographically)	0%
SI	San Francisco River within and/or bordering the allotment boundary.	Excluded (fencing & geographically)	0%
New Mexico	None	N/A	N/A
Bull Pasture	Coal Creek	Excluded (fencing & geographically)	0%
SI	Mule Creek	Excluded (fencing & geographically)	0%

If unforeseen operational conditions require a change in the management specified in this AOI please contact rangeland management personnel at the Glenwood Ranger District. Change requests should be made in advance so that field inspections (if necessary) can be conducted. Approval of changes to this AOI may be verbal or written, depending on the nature of the change requested. Verbal changes will be documented to your file for record keeping purposes. Failure to follow the direction 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.