



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Manti-La Sal
National Forest

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File Code: 2210/2230

Date: June 4, 2016

The Nature Conservancy
Attn: Sue Bellagamba
559 East South Temple
Salt Lake City UT 84102

**CERTIFIED MAIL – RETURN
RECEIPT REQUESTED**

Dear Ms. Bellagamba:

This letter will serve as your Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the Cottonwood C&H Allotment for the 2016 grazing season. This AOI is made part of your Term Grazing Permit consistent with Part 1, item 3 and Part 2, item 8(a). A failure to follow these instructions is a violation of your permit. The AOI complies with the standards and guidelines found in the Forest Plan. **Please read your instructions thoroughly.**

AUTHORIZED USE FOR 2016

Allotment	Numbers	Kind	Class	Season	Permittee	Non-use	
						Resource protection	Personal convenience
Cottonwood	375	Cattle	Cow/Calf	06/09 to 10/15	The Nature Conservancy		
Cottonwood	50	Cattle	Heifers	06/13 to 10/15	The Nature Conservancy		
Cottonwood	5	Horse	Mature	06/16 to 09/15	The Nature Conservancy		

GRAZING SYSTEM AND SCHEDULE

Pasture	Number	Class	Approximate Dates
Trailing Brush Hole	125	c/c	06/09 to 06/15
Trailing up Steven Canyon Rd, through Mormon Pasture & Round Mtn.	300	c/c & heifers	06/13 to 06/20
Big Flat	425	c/c & heifers	06/10 – 07/15
North Long Point*	425	c/c & heifers	07/16 – 08/12
Round Mountain & Big Flat (trail through to Maverick)	425	c/c & heifers	Between 08/10 to 08/30
Maverick**	425	c/c & heifers	08/15 to 09/10
Chippean/Mormon Mtn.	425	c/c & heifers	09/11 to 10/10
Trailing off via Vega	425	c/c & heifers	10/10 to 10/15
Davis	-	-	REST (unless NLP water is an issue)
Mormon Pasture Point	-	-	REST



*A portion of the herd will be moved to Davis unit if North Long Point does not have enough water. **Maverick and Chippean will be used together if there is not enough water on Maverick.

Permitted pack and saddle stock authorized on the allotment for livestock management will not exceed four head. This is separate from the 5 head that is on your permit and you are billed for.

Best Management Practices

The degree grazing affects future forage production and rangeland health will depend upon intensity, frequency and timing of grazing. Providing plants opportunity to grow and adequate recovery from grazing will have a great influence on long term vegetative productivity and rangeland conditions. It is extremely important that the allotment is monitored closely, which may involve an increase in the amount of riding you or your herd manager does.

You took partial non-use for resource protection in 2012 to 2014, which appears to have helped in keeping utilization levels moderate to low in most areas of the allotment. You plan on resting both Davis and Mormon Pasture Point if water is available in North Long Point.

Your allotment should be inspected for range readiness to determine forage growth and fence and water improvement conditions. **The pasture move dates shown above are an estimate, and may change on the basis of actual range conditions.** Situations may develop during the grazing season which requires changes to these instructions. If this becomes necessary, or if you cannot comply with some part of these instructions, contact the District Ranger and obtain approval before initiating changes or deviating from these instructions.

PROPER GRAZING-USE INDICATORS

Utilization standards, such as riparian stubble height and upland utilization, are a couple of the indicators used in achieving or moving towards desired rangeland conditions. This is especially true if the patterns and levels of use have been consistent and repetitive over a number of years. They are also valuable for interpreting the cause of unsatisfactory trends in rangeland conditions and assisting in the determination what adaptive management adjustments (annually or long-term) need to be made for an allotment. They are not the desired conditions or the management objectives themselves. Actual desired conditions and objectives are discussed in the 1986 Forest Plan and/or the Cottonwood Allotment Management Plan.

Utilization indicators are displayed in the Forest Plan and allotment grazing authorization decisions, as a type of performance standards. The term standard implies that some form of management actions will be implemented to resolve an identified problem and provide for meeting the desired condition, goals, and objectives identified in the Forest Plan or Allotment Management Plan. Management actions are typically developed through some form of adaptive management process during Allotment Operation Instruction meetings and/or during the Allotment Management Plan development. Both within-season and end-of-season use indicators or standards, along with other required management practices (such as managing duration and timing of grazing), are a total package that, when implemented and adhered to, will result in a reasonable expectation that long-term desired condition objectives will be achieved.

Desired goals in the 1986 Forest Plan include:

- Bring livestock obligation in line with rangeland carrying capacity
- Maintain upward or stable trends in vegetation and soil condition.

Management Objectives in the 1979 Cottonwood AMP include:

- Achieve a good to excellent range condition in an upward trend so as to provide for a maximum sustained yield of forage.
- Increase desirable species composition, forage production and ground cover on suitable range.

The 1990 Forest Plan Amendment for Range Proper-Use Criteria states proper use as ranging from 40-65% use of upland key species depending on the grazing system applied and from 30-60% use of riparian key species depending season of use. This amendment kept the existing provision that proper use criteria are to be established on an allotment by allotment basis and as given in the AMP and AOIs.

For the Cottonwood allotment proper use criteria in 2016 are:

<u>Upland Areas:</u>	<u>Use of Key Species</u>
Spring/Summer	45-50%
Fall	55-60%
<u>Riparian Areas:</u>	<u>Use of Key Species</u>
Spring (Early and rapid growth)	50-60%
Summer (Moderate growth)	45-50%
Fall (Slow growth)	30-40% or 4-5 inches stubble or regrowth

The intent is not that each pasture unit should be grazed to the maximum level each year. Intensity can be controlled by controlling the duration of time that livestock are grazing an area. In large pasture units, with long duration times (more than 2 to 3 weeks) this can be a challenge. However, some control of duration within a pasture can be done by riding, salting and when possible controlling access to water.

It is your responsibility as the permittee to recognize if use levels are reaching the maximum and promptly move all cattle as necessary. If you need some assistance, or methods and tools for determining proper use, please contact Tina Marian.

If proper use has been reached in the unit being grazed before you are scheduled to move on as planned in this letter, your cattle are to be herded to the next scheduled unit. **When proper use is reached in the last unit grazed, all cattle are to be removed from the allotment, even if this date is prior to the end of your grazing season.** Cattle found on the Allotment before or after the permitted grazing season will be billed at the unauthorized use rate and permit non-compliance actions will be initiated.

You should be aware that Forest Service policy provides that “an authorized officer may require the permittee to monitor and report information on compliance with the grazing permit, allotment management plan and annual operation instructions as a term and condition of your permit.”

To facilitate livestock moves, gates may be opened a few days prior to the scheduled move date only when moving into an adjacent pasture. Gates must be closed and the grazed pasture entirely cleaned of livestock no later than five days following the scheduled move date. **Grazed pastures must be kept clean of livestock following the pasture move.** This is important to plant recovery after being grazed, especially in areas cattle are drawn to.

Please use the Grazing Response Index enclosed in your folder to track duration of use, intensity of use and time of use for each grazing unit. This is a helpful tool in assessing grazing impacts to the range vegetative resources.

IMPROVEMENTS

Since 2006, the Forest Service has entered into structural improvement agreements with each permittee which will continue for this season. The purpose of these agreements and the following inspections is to document how and if range structural improvements are being maintained.

The Sego spring was not maintained as agreed, this must be done before you enter the allotment.

As discussed during your 2016 AOI meeting:

FENCE AGREEMENT: For 2016, you will complete reconstruction of the Cottonwood/Gooseberry boundary fence as shown in the map attached.

SPRING AGREEMENTS: You requested to focus maintaining several springs this year. The six priorities that were agreed to be done (if the FS has the available materials for all of them) are:

1. Crystal Springs (#54093) – increase storage capacity with additional and/or larger troughs
2. NLP rim spring 1 (#54077) – rebuild the spring enclosure and the headbox, replace troughs.
3. NLP rim spring 2 (#54077a) - rebuild the spring enclosure and the headbox, replace troughs.
4. Big Flat Oaks spring – increase storage capacity with additional and/or larger troughs.
5. Round Mtn Trough – (#54094) – reset trough and increase capacity with additional and/or larger troughs.
6. Unnamed Davis unit spring – rebuild enclosure and needs a new trough.

When you complete your fence and spring/pond agreements, you will please fill out and sign the Improvement Agreement Form (pink) that is found in your folder. Please provide photographs of before and after conditions to assist in documenting compliance with maintenance requirements. Contact Tina when you complete your maintenance so she can schedule a timely inspection.

If you fail to bring the above agreed improvements up to standard by **October 15th, 2016** you will not be allowed to stock the allotment in 2017 until the agreement is fulfilled and may receive a notice on non-compliance with the terms of your permit.

Range improvements are essential in ensuring that livestock are well distributed and that Forest standards and guides are met.

- Improvements are to be maintained to standard prior to livestock entering the pasture and that failure to do so is a violation of their permit and action will be taken when violations are documented.
- If improvements have not been maintained, then develop a schedule to bring them up to standard.
- Until all improvements are functional it is not appropriate to authorize full numbers or season of use, unless assurances can be made that utilization standards will not be exceeded.

The maintenance of all structural improvements listed under part 3 of your Term Grazing Permit, Special Terms and Conditions: *Construction and Maintenance of Structural Improvements* is a requirement and should be completed prior to your entry into each pasture. The allotment permittee or permittees are responsible for the maintenance of all structural range improvements on this allotment. For allotments managed by an Association or Herd Manager specific maintenance responsibilities may be assigned to individual permittees by the Association President or Herd Manager.

There are many troughs on the Forest that do not have wildlife escape ramps and are thus not meeting improvement maintenance standards. All troughs on the allotment need to be equipped with a wildlife escape ramp. You can obtain them from the Forest Service office. We understand that this will not all be completed in one year and will be emphasizing getting wildlife escape ramps installed in all troughs over the next few years.

If you wish to use forest products (trees and oak brush) from the National Forest to maintain your fences/spring exclosures on your allotment, you must receive authorization from either the Moab or Monticello Office prior to cutting.

NEPA and PLANNED PROJECTS

The Cottonwood Allotment is scheduled to have an environmental analysis completed. The development of the proposed action and public scoping is planned to begin this summer.

A final decision was issued for the North Elks Veg. Management project last year. It is planned that the aspen exclosure near Sego spring will be completed this year.

There is also plans for a vegetation treatment on Mormon Pasture unit this year.

MISCELLANEOUS

Refer to Special Terms and Conditions in Part 3 of Term Grazing Permit for specific instructions pertaining to maintenance standards for range stock water developments, range fences, corrals, and herding standards.

All permitted livestock must be branded with your registered brand as documented in your Term Permit before they enter the National Forest.

Place salt blocks away from water, roads, meadows and other open areas so as to draw livestock into areas that receive light utilization. When livestock leave a pasture move the salt out of the pasture as well.

You will furnish sufficient riders or herders to achieve proper distribution of livestock.

Certified Weed Free Hay must be used if you do any supplemental feeding of horses on the allotment while gathering or moving cattle.

If you find the need to use mechanical clearing (tractors, bulldozers etc.) of fence lines or to clean ponds or other water improvements, you must have proper archeological clearance and permission from the District Ranger.

Enclosed in your AOI folder you will find an Actual Use Record sheet. As your 2016 grazing season progresses, please fill out this form in detail and return it promptly at the end of the grazing season. There are also extra sheets included in the folder where you are encouraged to document management on your allotment.

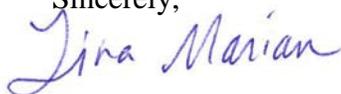
Matt Redd, your herd manager, was given this folder and will receive a copy of these instructions.

PAYMENT OF FEES

The permittee will not allow owned or controlled livestock to be on Forest Service-administered lands unless the fees specified in the Bill for Collection are paid and confirmation of payment through the "lock box" process is received prior to livestock entering NFS lands.

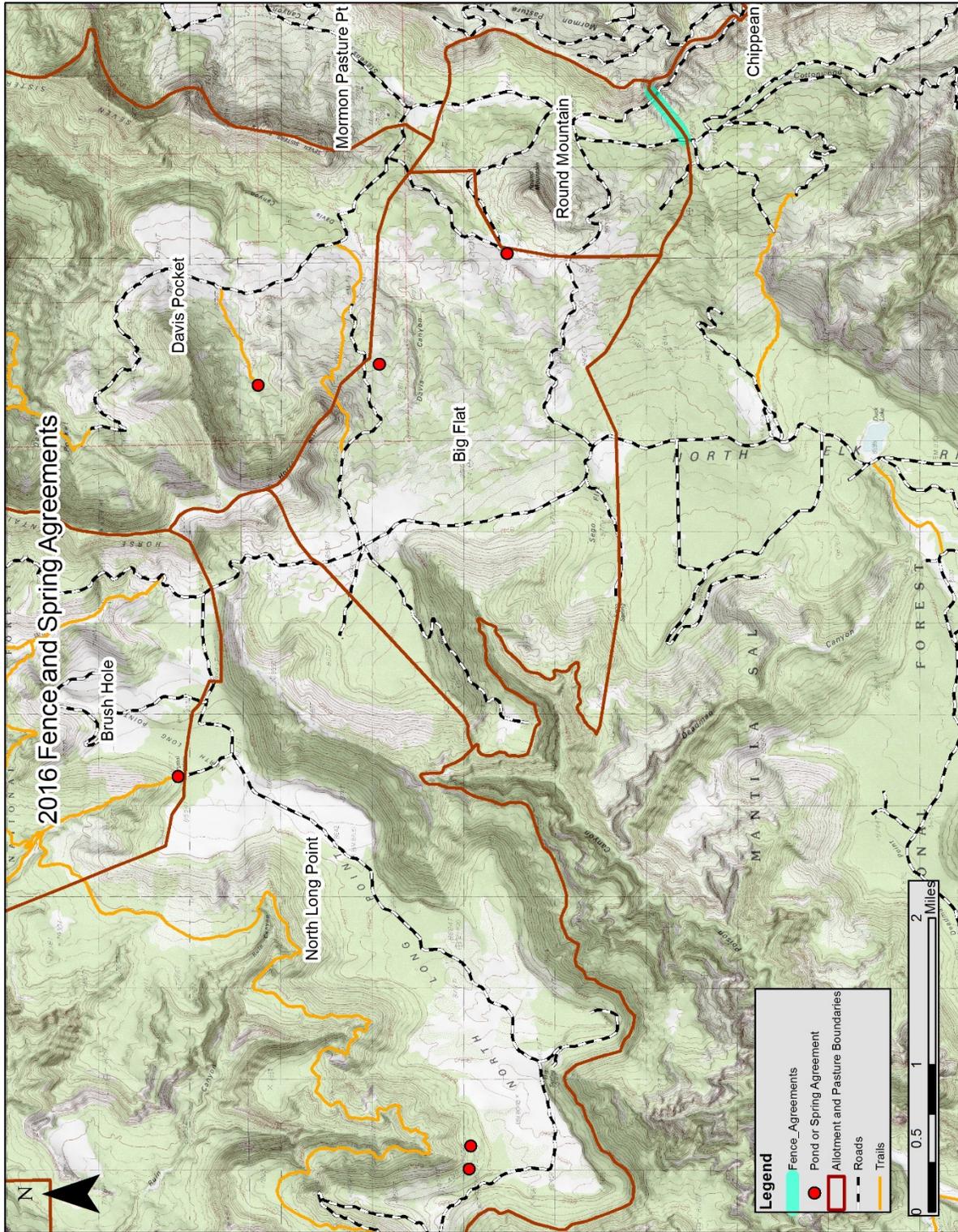
I am looking forward to working with you this summer. Please call Tina Marian (435-636-3368) if you have any questions or if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,



for MICHAEL DIEM
District Ranger

2016 Fence and Spring Agreement



2016 Grazing Plan Map

