United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Manti-La Sal National Forest

Moab/Monticello Ranger District
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Phone # (435) 259-7155
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File Code: 2210/2230
Date: June 20, 2016

Bluff River Ranch, L.L.C.
c/o Gordon Guymon
4085 Eccles
Ogden, Utah 84403

CERTIFIED MAIL – RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Dear Mr. Guymon:

This letter will serve as your Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the West Mountain 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
West Mountain	163	Cattle	Cow/Calf	06/23 - 10/11*	Bluff River Ranch		
West Mountain	20	Cattle	Cow/Calf	06/17 – 10/11*	Meyer Family Trust		
West Mountain	14	Cattle	Yearling	06/17 – 10/11*	Meyer Family Trust		

*During the fall some of the cattle will be on a leased private land inholding, AUMs don't exceed permitted.

GRAZING SYSTEM AND SCHEDULE

There are no designated pastures within the West Mountain allotment. However, you have agreed to manage the herd so as to rotate into different areas of the allotment. This year you will drive the cattle to the Banks area and try and stay there only a short time (about 3 weeks) then to Poso and Trough areas where they will stay till about Sept 1st. The livestock will then be driven down into Allen Canyon in September and be in Allen Canyon/Dry Wash area till gathered and taken off on October 11th. However, there is time spent with some of the herd on the private land in Bayles Ranch area.

Permitted pack and saddle stock authorized on the allotment for livestock management will not exceed four head.

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 plan on running full permitted AUMs this year Management may need to be adjusted depending upon actual conditions on the ground. Because the allotment is only 1 unit, you need to use riding and salting to keep the cattle form overusing any one area. During the meeting last Thursday, you informed Tina that you would like to finalize a permit transfer that has been in the work for several months. She informed you that as the permit and cattle ownership and brands are still in your name and you paid for the bill, you may enter on with the cattle that are owned by you and then you can sell them and transfer the permit if we are not able to complete the transfer before your on date. Once the sell and transfer are completed that new permit holders will be issued a modified Annual Operating Letter.

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 West Mountain 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.
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Management Objectives in the 1983 West Mountain AMP include:

- Increase site productivity and improve watershed conditions.
- Improve upper watersheds in Trough Canyon, Allen Canyon and Dry Wash.

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 West Mountain allotment proper use criteria in 2016 are:

Upland Areas:	**Use of Key Species**
Spring/Summer	**40-45%**
Fall	**50-55%**

Riparian Areas:	**Use of Key Species**
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, <u>even if this date is prior to the end of your grazing season.</u>** 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.

IMPROVEMENTS

FENCE AGREEMENT: For 2016 you agreed to bring to permit standards the Berry Patch fence (#54840 in the permit) as shown on the map attached.

POND or SPRING AGREEMENT: You would like to clean ponds in the Posos area. We agreed to look at which ponds to be done while we look at the possibility of developing water in the area by diverting water from Allen Canyon above the Causeway Rd.

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 **Oct 11, 2016** you will not be allowed to stock the allotment in 2017 until the agreement is fulfilled.

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 area of the allotment. 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

You would like to develop water by diverted water from Allen Canyon into a pipeline with some troughs, you would also like to construct a few gap fences and install a cattle guard to enable the Banks area to be used at a different time of year. Please take the initiative to contact Tina to set up a time to get the locations of these proposed developments in order to progress the project.

You would also like to discuss the options of doing some vegetation treatments in the area. Please contact Tina to set up a time with the District Ranger to have these discussions.

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.

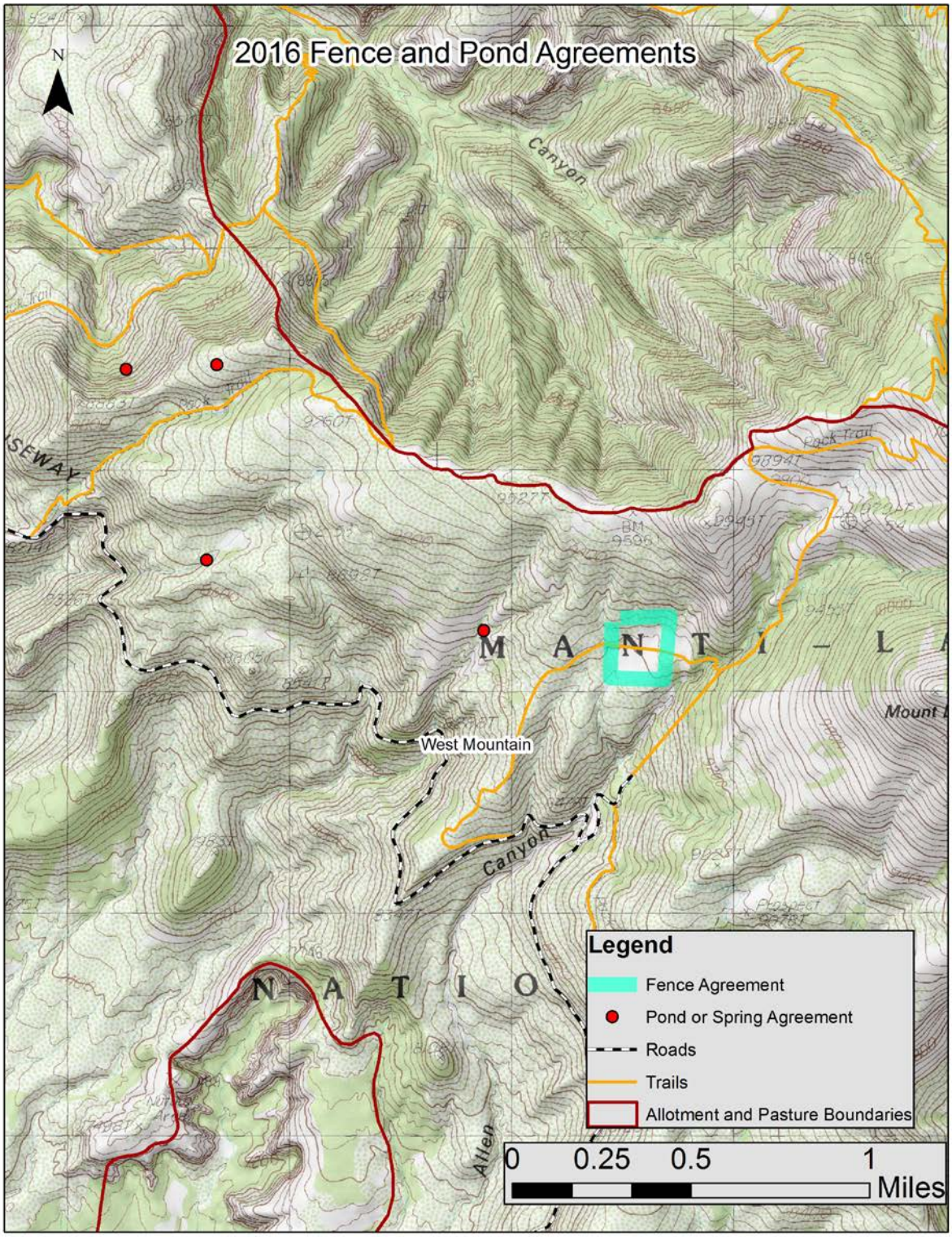
PAYMENT OF FEES

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,

Tina Marian

for MICHAEL DIEM
District Ranger

2016 Fence and Pond Agreements