

Glenwood Ranger District

Gila National Forest

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

2018

Mule Creek Allotment #414

Prepared By: /s/ Andrew Bryant
District Range Specialist

Date: 10/19/2017

Approved By: /s/ Kendall Brown for Erick Stemmerman
District Ranger

Date: 10/19/2017

Annual Operating Instructions

I. INTRODUCTION

Andrew Bryant (Forest Service) met with Russell Slaughter (permittee) on February 1, 2018, to discuss management of the Mule Creek 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
150 Cattle-Cow/Calf	03/01 – 02/28
4 Horses – Saddle (not to exceed 24 head months)	03/01 – 02/28

Mule Creek Allotment Annual Authorization

Number and class of livestock	Dates
150 Cattle-cow/Calf	03/01 – 02/28
2 horses (saddle) NTE 24 HM	03/01 – 02/28

Mule Creek Allotment Pasture Rotation

Class of Livestock	Rotation Date	Pasture
Cow/calf	03/01 – 05/30	Sawmill
Cow/calf	06/01 – 07/30	Wildcat
Cow/calf	08/1 – 9/30	Walnut
Cow/calf	10/1 – 10/30	South Holding
Cow/calf	11/01 – 02/28	Sawmill
Horses (2 Saddle)	03/01 – 02/28	Holding 1 & 2 & Private

Small holding pastures will be used for holding, branding, shipping, doctoring, etc. and horses as needed. Livestock can remain in these pastures until allowable use is reached.

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 are to be maintained in a functioning condition. In the event these improvements cannot be brought up to a functioning condition, you should notify the Range Staff at the Glenwood Ranger District to schedule them for reconstruction as funds become available.

2017 planned improvement (in order of priority):

- Add storage tank (3000 to 5000 gal) and drinker to Sunflower Corral. Permittee will haul water to this when cattle are in corral.

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. We will notify you if we plan to let a fire burn on your allotment.

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 Mule Creek Allotment has been analyzed through the NEPA analysis process. The

resulting decision meets Forest Plan standards and guidelines. This decision, along with the terms of your Ten-Year Term Permit, the Allotment Management Plan, and these Annual Operating Instructions provide direction for management on this allotment.

VI. OTHER ITEMS DISCUSSED

You indicated that you are in favor of managed wildfires to benefit natural resources on your allotment and you would like fences, pipelines, and other range improvements protected during the fire. You believe the upper country to the west needs to be burned. You will be notified if a wildfire occurs and your input will be solicited when management decisions are being made. The District Ranger will authorize necessary changes to this AOI to accommodate fire management.

VII. SPECIAL MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

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 OF KEY AREAS

Allowable use is defined for specific areas (Mule Creek, Sawmill Canyon, Sunflower Mesa, and South Fork) in the 1995 NEPA Decision Notice. Where not specifically defined, allowable use on herbaceous forage is conservative use (31-40%). 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 occur prior to the start of the summer growing season. 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
Walnut & S. Holding	06/30	Conservative (31 – 40%)	Pasture-wide
Sawmill & Wildcat	11/15	Conservative (31 – 40%)	Pasture-wide

IX. TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

The Gila National Forest Travel Management Decision signed in September 2013 was implemented January 1, 2017 on the Glenwood Ranger District. This rule prohibits cross country motorized travel and has restricted all motorized vehicle travel on the Gila National Forest (GNF) to authorized motorized routes only on NFS land.

Some motorized uses are exempt from the prohibitions of the designation process (36 CFR 212.51(a): “Motor vehicle use that is specifically authorized under a written authorization issued under Federal law or regulation” (CFR 212.51(a) (8) is one of the exempted uses. The permittees and/or their employees must comply with all GNF Travel Management regulations, except those allowed under this authorization as described below:

1. The permittees and/or their employees will be authorized for off road or unauthorized travel routes on their specific grazing allotment(s) to carry out the necessary activities for grazing and livestock management. This includes range improvement maintenance and/or reconstruction as designated in their grazing permit, placement of salt or other supplements, and for emergency livestock health purposes.
2. It is prohibited to operate any vehicle off NFS lands, State or County roads in a manner which damages or unreasonably disturbs the land, wildlife, or vegetative resources (36 CFR 261.15(h)). Moist soils are especially susceptible to damage through rutting or compaction; therefore, use of motorized vehicles on saturated soils should be avoided.
3. Utilize roads or trails designated for motor vehicle use to access range improvements, salting grounds, or livestock emergencies where possible. This includes trails and roads open for public use, those specified as “administrative use only”, and keeping within fence rights-of-way while accomplishing fence maintenance where possible.
4. This authorization and associated activities are specific to your grazing permit(s) and allotment management only; recreational use including hunting or game retrieval with motorized vehicles is not authorized.

X. MODIFICATIONS

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.