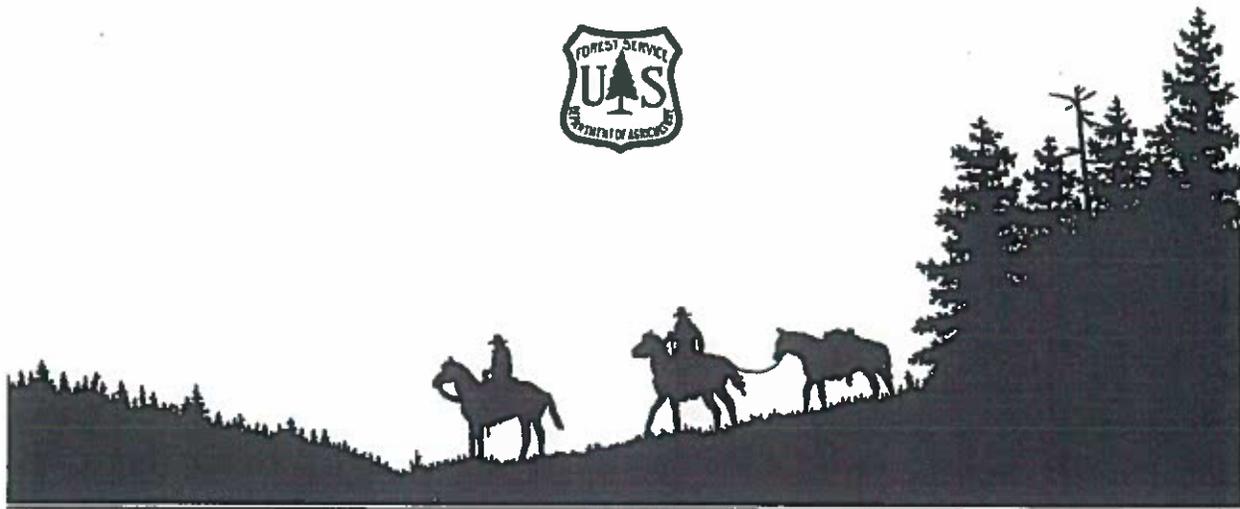


Annual Operating Instructions
Mimbres, Powderhorn, Sapillo, Sheppard
Allotments
2018 Grazing Season

Wilderness Ranger District
Gila National Forest



Agreed to By: Maureen S. Cooper Date: May 11, 2018
Permittee

Prepared By: Allen Graves Date: May 11, 2018
Allen Graves
USFS Wilderness District Range Manager

Approved By: Rachelle Huddleston-Lorton Date: May 11, 2018
Rachelle Huddleston-Lorton,
USFS Wilderness District Ranger

Annual Operating Instructions (AOI)

Allotment: Mimbres (#507), Powderhorn (#508), Sapillo (#509), Sheppard (#510)

Permit Number: 61444

A. Permitted Use

Allotment	Numbers	Type	Season
Mimbres/Powderhorn/Sapillo/Sheppard	235 Cow/Calf	Term	3/1-2/28
Mimbres/Powderhorn/Sapillo/Sheppard	10 Horses	Term	3/1-2/28

B. Authorization

The following is authorized to graze in 2017:

Allotment	Numbers	Type	Season
Mimbres/Powderhorn/Sapillo/Sheppard	Non-Use as per MOU*	Term	3/1-2/28
Mimbres/Powderhorn/Sapillo/Sheppard	Non-Use as per MOU*	Term	3/1-2/28

*This is fourth year of non-use as per 2015 MOU between the permittee and the FS.

C. Counting Livestock

The standard for counting livestock on an allotment is as follows:

1. All livestock six (6) months of age or older at the time of entering the National Forest and all weaned animals regardless of age will be counted against the permitted numbers on the allotment and charged for at the current rate.

D. Non-use

Application for credit or refund must be made in writing and in advance by the Permittee to the District Ranger or District Range Manager using Form FS-2200-0001 (Refund, Credit, or Transfer Application). When it is not possible to be timely in getting to the Wilderness Ranger District Office, the Permittee may phone in to notify the District Ranger or District Range Manager that a request for refund or credit will be submitted soon. The Permittee will then either complete Form FS-2200-0001 (Refund, Credit, or Transfer Application) at the next visit to the Wilderness Ranger District Office, or request for the form to be mailed to the permittee. **Note:** Credit or refund applications will not be processed unless value is \$100.00 or more and the District Ranger or District Range Manager had been notified either in advance or at the time livestock were removed from NFS Lands. Form FS-2200-0001 can be provided in writing to the District Ranger or District Range Manager through postal mail or e-mail, or filled out in-person by visiting the District Office.

E. Management

Pasture Rotation:

Allotment	Pasture	Time Frame
Mimbres/Powderhorn/Sapillo/Sheppard	Kelly/Lower Little McKnight/Heifer	Non-Use MOU

It was agreed that FS Horses would Graze the Kelly pasture in the winter, and will Graze the divide pasture next year.

F. Utilization Standards and Monitoring

1. **Mimbres, Powderhorn and Sapillo Allotments:** the allowable use level will be light to conservative use (30-40%) in accordance with the Decision Memo signed on September 30, 2006 and the Allotments Management Plan June 27, 2008.
2. **Sheppard Allotment:** the allowable use level will be light to conservative use (30-40%) in accordance with the Decision Notice signed on September 28, 2007 and the Allotments Management Plan February 3, 2011.

Key areas and restricted areas (such as owl Protected Activity Centers) will be visited to determine actual grazing use and seasonal use by livestock and wildlife. Monitoring will be conducted within two weeks before or after livestock leave a scheduled pasture. If utilization levels within portions of a scheduled pasture approach allowable use, the Permittee is required to move livestock into areas not approaching allowable use. If livestock cannot be effectively managed away from areas within the pasture that have met allowable use or if utilization objectives are met throughout the pasture prior to scheduled rotation, contact the District Ranger or District Range Manager. Livestock will be moved into the next available pasture within the annual rotation. In the event that forage utilization objectives are met in all available pastures, livestock will be removed from the allotment. Management adjustments may be made to the following years Annual Operating Instructions to avoid recurring situations.

The following dates have been tentatively scheduled for monitoring on the allotment. The Permittee is highly encouraged and invited to participate in monitoring with District personnel and/or independently.

Allotment	Pasture	Tentative Monitoring Date
Mimbres/Powderhorn/Sapillo/Sheppard	All Pastures As Needed	3/1-2/28

G. Forage Growth and Water Availability

Per Part 2, clause 8(c) of the Term Grazing Permit; total or partial livestock removal from the allotment may be necessary if forage growth and water availability are not adequate during all or portions of the current grazing season.

H. Salt and Supplement Policy

Supplemental feeding of livestock is allowed (to strategically manage livestock distribution and forage use) as follows:

1. Place supplements on previously disturbed areas (i.e., borrow pits) or natural bedrock outcrops when possible (supplement sites).
2. Locate supplement sites at least 0.25 mile from waters and key areas except where prior written permission has been obtained from District Ranger.
3. Locate supplement sites where forage is abundant and utilized less than average.
4. Limit supplement types to non-energy feeds such as salt, protein and mineral blocks.
5. Use products that prevent the spread of noxious weeds, there is to be no feeding of hay on National Forest System Lands.
6. Locate salt and supplements beyond view from roads, trails, campgrounds and trailheads.

I. Grazing Restrictions

The Mimbres, Powderhorn and Sapillo allotments includes Mexican Spotted Owl Protected Activity Center's (PAC). In these PAC's the following activities are restricted during the breeding season (March 1-August 31): livestock concentrations or trailing, fence construction, and livestock salting. Routine maintenance of range improvements is allowed.

J. Range Improvements

All assigned range developments identified in the Term Grazing Permit must be maintained to a functional status. It is very important, and required, to continue assigned range improvements maintenance, even while in non-use or partial-use status.

Advance notification, planning and agreement are required for stock tank cleaning and range improvement reconstruction or replacement, including fences and water systems, to evaluate the need for surveys. General maintenance/repair is excluded from this requirement. The District Ranger or District Range Manager must be notified by phone or email in advance (at least 2 weeks, except for emergencies) if these types of work are proposed. The Permittee must wait for agreement from the District Ranger or District Range Manager before proceeding with the work.

Please protect natural springs and areas with riparian type vegetation. Drainage bottoms, creeks, springs, and cienegas, where water is available, are most susceptible to livestock concentrations.

1. Fences: This is the wildlife friendly fence document in its entirety
When constructing new fence or conducting fence maintenance, ensure that fences are wildlife friendly. Wildlife friendly fences also usually lead to fewer damaged fences. The ideal wildlife friendly fence should allow relatively easy passage for wildlife to jump over and crawl through and under, and is highly visible for both ungulates and birds. Fences should be low enough for adult animals to jump. Deer and elk easily tangle their back legs if the top wires are too close together. The bottom wire or rail should be high enough for pronghorn, elk calves and fawns to crawl under. Increasing visibility using a top rail, high-visibility wire, flagging or other visual markers/tags can help ungulates and birds, such as hawks, owls, ducks and geese to better navigate fences. Replace barbed-wire with smooth wire wherever possible. Reduce the number of wires to three, or at most four.

Consistent with recommendations from the NM Department of Game and Fish, wildlife friendly fencing includes a smooth (barbless) bottom strand, at least 16 inches above the ground, wire spacing of 10-15 inches with the top two strands spaced 10-12 inches apart, and a total fence height of no more than 40 inches above the ground. In areas of high big-game use, specifically where game trails cross fences or near fence corners, fences should be built to allow big-game to jump over; the top strand should be smooth or the top strand should be covered with a white, 1 inch PVC pipe or have a drop-down or other passage options.

Wires should be tight with frequent stays to prevent twisting the wires together. Sagging wires and neglected fences create a hazard for both domestic livestock and wildlife.

Remove old fences that are in disrepair or no longer in use. Remove any unnecessary interior fences. Bale and carry away piles of wire. Some recycling centers will recycle old wire.

Contact the Wilderness Ranger District for the availability of materials and for permit modifications.

2. Completed Improvements in 2017

The following range improvements were completed during the past grazing season:

- a. **Fences: #5076 portion was maintained**
- b. **Water Systems**
- c. **Other**

3. Planned Improvements for 2018

The following range improvements (*see maps*) were discussed and planned for this grazing season:

- a. **Fences: Reconstruct 1 mile of fence #5076. Maintain/Reconstruct Steer Trap. Continue to repair, or rebuild fence #5011.**
- b. **Water Systems**
- c. **A water use agreement will be put into place to use water from the private land for watering livestock on the Divide pasture.**

K. Travel Management

The Gila National Forest Travel Management Decision signed in September of 2013 was implemented July 1, 2016 on the Wilderness Ranger District. This rule prohibits cross country motorized travel and has restricted all motorized vehicle travel on the Gila NF to authorized motorized routes only on National Forest 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 may 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. The decision to authorize motor vehicle use will be determined at Annual Operating Instruction meetings. 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 National Forest System, 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.

L. Term Grazing Permit and Compliance

The Mimbres, Powderhorn, Sapillo and Sheppard Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) are a part of the Term Grazing Permit as provided for in Part 3, Section 8. The AOI complies with the standards and guidelines found in the September 30, 2006, Mimbres, Powderhorn and Sapillo Allotments Decision Memo, the June 27, 2008, Mimbres, Powderhorn and Sapillo Allotment Management Plan and in the Gila National Forest Plan. The AOI also complies with the Endangered Species Act on-going grazing consultation for the Allotments. Any additional information collected during the year may be incorporated into the annual operating instructions.