



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Manti-La Sal  
National Forest

Moab/Monticello Ranger District  
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File Code: 2210/2230

Date: June 11, 2014

Wm. E. Palmer Ranch  
c/o Clayton Palmer  
1020 East Flourmill Rd  
Blanding, Utah 84511

**CERTIFIED MAIL – RETURN  
RECEIPT REQUESTED**

Dear Mr. Palmer:

This letter will serve as your Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the Verdure C&H Allotment for the 2014 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.** A copy of these instructions is also being sent to Ellis Palmer.

**AUTHORIZED USE FOR 2014**

| Allotment | Numbers | Kind   | Class    | Season         | Permittee           | Non-use             |                      |
|-----------|---------|--------|----------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
|           |         |        |          |                |                     | Resource protection | Personal convenience |
| Verdure   | 24      | Cattle | Cow/Calf | 06/21 to 09/13 | Wm. E. Palmer Ranch |                     |                      |

**GRAZING SYSTEM AND SCHEDULE**

The Verdure allotment has no designated pastures, yet you should prevent your cattle from overusing particular areas with the use of management tools such as riding, hauling water and salting. This year an electric fence will also be set up to help to keep livestock from concentrating on the east side of the pasture

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

**Management Response to Drought Conditions**

The drought in Utah is predicted to continue into this year (see enclosed). Though the timing of rainfall the past two years in the late summer and fall have kept forage production up on most of the high elevation pastures, several lower elevation pastures that were used first last year or in



2012 were dry and unproductive during the times they were grazed. This usually resulted in moving off the unit earlier than planned or overuse, if livestock were not moved in time. In these areas, the stressed forage resource will still be trying to recover from last year's dry conditions.

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

You are not planning on lowering your stocking rate this year, but will see how dry it becomes and then may need to remove some cattle or move off early. Management may need to be adjusted depending upon actual conditions on the ground. Livestock may need to be removed from the allotment earlier than planned if drought conditions worsen.

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 are tools used in achieving or moving towards desired rangeland conditions. Utilization standards are not the desired conditions or management objectives themselves, they are indicators. Desired conditions and objectives are discussed in the 1986 Forest Plan and/or the Allotment Management Plan.

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 1998 Verdure AMP include:

- Maintain upwards or stable trend in vegetation and soil condition for both uplands and riparian areas.
- Maintain or improve conditions regarding soil compaction, site disturbance, vegetative cover and stream bank stability.

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.

There is a difference between where percentage utilized is applied and where stubble height is applied to determine proper use in riparian areas. Percent utilized is used for plant species that are within the larger riparian area (the area that is influenced by the stream and the water table) but not along the greenline. The greenline is the first perennial vegetation on or near the stream's edge that is at least one foot wide. Stubble height measurements are used to determine proper use along the greenline. The plant species considered are typically water loving species (hydric species) such as sedges.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>For the Verdure allotment proper use criteria in 2014 are:</b> |   |
| <b><u>Upland Areas:</u></b>                                       | <b><u>Use of Key Species</u></b>                |
| <b>Spring/Summer</b>  | <b>40-45%</b>                                   |
| <b>Fall</b>   | <b>50-55%</b>                                   |
| <b><u>Riparian Areas:</u></b>                                     | <b><u>Use of Key Species</u></b>                |
| <b>Spring (Early and rapid growth)</b>                            | <b>50-60%</b>                                   |
| <b>Summer (Moderate growth)</b>                                   | <b>45-50%</b>                                   |
| <b>Fall (Slow growth)</b>   | <b>30-40% or 4-5 inches stubble or regrowth</b> |

It is your responsibility as the permittee to recognize when proper use has been reached and promptly move all cattle as necessary. If you need some assistance, or methods and tools for determining proper use, please contact Tina Marian.

When proper use has been reached in the unit being grazed, 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.

**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.

Thank you for completing and sending in photos of your 2013 fence maintenance agreement.

**FENCE AGREEMENT: Since 2006, all fences on the permit have been part of an agreement; however we will continue doing agreements so as to keep documentation of maintenance current. For 2014, please document the maintenance done and condition of the rest of the south boundary fence as shown on the attached map. This fence was in excellent condition when last inspected in 2008.**

When you complete your fence agreement you must fill out and sign the Improvement Agreement Form (pink) that is found in your folder. I suggest that you provide photographs of before and after conditions to assist in documenting compliance with maintenance requirements. I also encourage you to 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 **September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014** you will not be allowed to stock the allotment in 2014 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 onto 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.

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

## **NEPA and PLANNED PROJECTS**

The timber stewardship contract within the Blue Mtn Ranch is not yet complete and may be continued this fall.

## **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 2014 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,



*for* MICHAEL DIEM  
District Ranger

2014 Fence Agreement

