

EAST FERNANDEZ ALLOTMENT #457

Carson National Forest
Camino Real Ranger District

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS 2014

The annual meeting for the East Fernandez Allotment was held on May 1, 2014, at the Forest Supervisors office in Taos, New Mexico. The Permittees attending were Larry and Jose Mondragon. Melvin Herrera, John Miera and Tamara Malone represented the Forest Service.

These annual operating instructions are hereby made a part of the Term Grazing Permits on the East Fernandez Allotment.

The Camino Real Ranger District and the permittees discussed possible drought conditions, current snow depth and water content on the allotment and the outlook on predicted weather patterns for this coming grazing season. The Southwest Region is experiencing continued drought, so any non-use this grazing season will be considered resource protection non-use. Forest Service and Permittees remain optimistic about grazing this year.

Table 1- Permittee, Permitted and Authorized number and kind.

1. Permittee	Permitted Number and Kind	Authorized Number and Kind
Jose M. Mondragon	6 cow/calf	9 cow/calf
Larry E. Mondragon	7 cow/calf, 1 bull	9 cow/calf, 1 bull

Table 2 - Season of Use

2. Season of Use	
06/20 - 09/30	(102 days)

Table 3 - Pasture Rotation

3. Pasture Rotation				
Pasture	Estimated Dates	Estimated Time	Actual use	Utilization %
East Fernandez	06/20 - 09/30	102 days		

Adaptive management will continue to be applied to the management of the East Fernandez allotment which means that the season of use, numbers grazed and rotation schedules may be adjusted throughout the grazing season based on resource conditions. Assigned range improvements, i.e. fences, will be maintained prior to moving to a different part of the allotment.

4. Maintenance of Improvements

The entire cost of improvements maintenance is the responsibility of the permittee. Assigned allotment boundary fences, division fences, stock tanks, springs, cattleguards, and other range structural improvements must be maintained prior to the permittees going on to the allotment.

5. Other Items of Discussion

The 2013 grazing season went well last year despite severe drought conditions. The allotment was within the utilization guidelines at the end of the grazing season. Forage production was good and vigor of plants looked good throughout the allotment. Distribution of livestock throughout the allotment was good.

The Forest Service discussed concerns with private landowners in Valle Escondido with livestock getting onto private land. The permittee is interested in cooperating with landowners in possibly building a corral to accommodate penning of livestock if needed by private landowners in the occasion that livestock get out, and also cooperating in maintaining fence along private land for keeping their livestock on the forest.

Utilization guidelines for 2014 are 40% of available annual forage in key use areas and 4 inches stubble height in riparian zones. Forage utilization will be monitored in key forage areas. Permittees are responsible for monitoring the allotment, and ensuring adequate distribution.

Grazing Instructions for 2014 are the same as in 2013. Salt away from roads and streams; use herding, salt, fences, and water sources to disperse cattle across the pastures to use the available forage; avoid overuse in key areas.

The grazing fee this year is \$1.35 per head month for cattle.

Permittees and FS will look at the range together to determine range readiness and on-date.

There are some programs offered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) that may provide assistance to permittees to help alleviate hardships brought on by the drought. There may also be opportunity for permittees to apply for equip funds with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to help fund range improvements such as fencing and possible water sources.

The Forest Service discussed ongoing efforts with the Travel Management Rule. The decision has been signed and is immediately. Permittees are encouraged to stay on roads which are open to the public as much as possible. Permittees stated that they need to use ATV's and motor vehicles for performing their required maintenance on fences and other range improvements, checking that gates are closed, checking on cattle health and location, and placing salt and mineral supplements. Forest Service requested that permittees stay on established roads and routes only. The District Ranger requested that ATV's and other motorized vehicles not be driven across open meadows or other locations currently free of system roads or routes (existing two tracks recognized on the ground, but not a Forest Service system road). Trips should be minimized as well as, liberal use by others not necessary for essential range management business.

The Camino Real District will provide tags to permittees as needed.

The Carson NF will be undergoing Forest Plan revision and so permittees are encouraged to get involved in the process. This process may take up to several years to complete and there will be several opportunities for permittees.

Priority for Range Betterment work for 2014:

1. Gathering corral near Valle Escondido. Permittees have a real need for this corral and it may also benefit the permittee on Tienditas.
2. Water developments on East side; earth tanks near La Chosa, new drinker at Mascarenas spring, and repairs at Tecolote spring.
3. Fence to keep cattle out of Valle Escondido and cattleguard.

Water development on the allotment is an important concern to the permittees. FS can provide a green Powder River water trough to replace the drinker at Mascarenas spring.

Forest Service would like at least 2 weeks notice prior to any proposed change in management (either season or numbers) so that they can go look at the allotment with the permittee.

/s/Tamara S. Malone 6/9/2014
District Ranger Date