

RIO PUEBLO/MIRANDA ALLOTMENT #404
Carson National Forest
Camino Real Ranger District

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS 2014

The annual meeting for the Rio Pueblo Allotment was held on March 13, 2014, at the District Office in Peñasco, New Mexico. Attending were Benjamin Cruz, Anthony Gonzales, Kelly Gonzales, and Danny Martinez from the Rio Pueblo Grazing Association. Tammy Malone and Melvin Herrera represented the Forest Service.

These annual operating instructions are hereby made a part of the Term Grazing Permit for the Rio Pueblo Grazing Association.

The Camino Real Ranger District and the permittees discussed forecasted drought conditions, current snow depth and water content on the allotment and the outlook on predicted weather patterns for this coming grazing season. Conditions for this year appear questionable as seen so far this winter. Any non-use below the low end of permitted numbers will be considered resource protection non-use this year.

Table 1- Permitted and Authorized use for Grazing.

1. Permittee	Number and Kind	Authorized Number and Kind
Rio Pueblo Grazing Association	117 cow/calf-155 cow/calf	100 cow/calf
Mr. & Mrs. Benjamin L. Cruz	(73-96 cow/calf)	(20 cow/calf)
Floyd J. Romero	(3 cow/calf)	(0 cow/calf)
Anthony P. Gonzales	(18-25 cow/calf)	(62 cow/calf, 2 bull)
Richard Jr. and Dana Scott	(18-25 cow/calf)	(0 cow/calf)
Danny Martinez	(5-6 cow/calf)	(14 cow/calf, 2 bull)

2. Season of Use

06/01 - 09/30 (122 days)

Table 2-Pasture Rotation

3. Pasture Rotation	Planned		Actual use	utilization %
Pasture	Estimated Dates	Estimated Time		
McGaffey	06/01 – 06/20	20 days		
Vallecitos	06/21 – 07/10	20 days		
Telephone	07/11 - 07/31	21 days		
Middle and Ranchos allot.	08/01 – 09/05	36 days		
Amole	09/06 – 09/30	25 days		
La Junta	rest	0 days		

Adaptive management will continue to be applied to the management of the Rio Pueblo allotment which means that the season of use, numbers grazed and rotation schedules may be adjusted throughout the

grazing season based on resource conditions. Range improvements, ie. fences will be maintained prior to moving to a different pasture.

4. Maintenance of Improvements

The entire cost of improvements maintenance is the responsibility of the permittee. Assigned allotment boundary fences, pasture division fences, stock tanks, springs, cattleguards, and other range structural improvements must be maintained prior to the permittees going on to the particular pasture. Range improvements for the first pasture scheduled will be inspected at the same time as Range Readiness.

5. Other Items of Discussion

The 2013 grazing season was a challenge for permittees due to persistent drought conditions. The entry date was delayed by a week and authorized numbers were also reduced to about 51c/c due to low forage production. Conditions did improve after the monsoon weather pattern set in. Overall key areas throughout the allotment were within the utilization guidelines at end of season.

Forest Service discussed the ongoing acquisition events of Grant property. There have been some delays in the process due to other emerging budget constraints. Permittees expressed concerns with public coming in through the Llano Quemado access and causing resource damage. Forest Service will try to involve law enforcement to help curtail this concern.

Extra herding attention needs to be given to the meadows that get high use by cattle. Better distribution across the pastures can reduce the concentrated utilization.

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 measured in key use areas within the allotment.

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

Permittees and the Forest Service will look at range together to determine range readiness and the actual on-date.

The Carson NF will be undergoing Forest Plan revision and so permittees were 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. This is an opportunity to revisit the research natural area within the La Cueva pasture.

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 Forest Service will continue to work with NM DOT on possible repair of the fence loss caused by the Osha Fire of 2011. Other topics of discussion are maintenance of highway right of way fence and the possibility of the water gap construction in Amole.

Grazing instructions for 2014 are the same as in 2012. 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.

Priority for Range Betterment work for 2014:

1. Reconstruction of McGaffey trick tank. Storage tank was found to be leaking and will need some work to make it functional.
2. Storage tank on trick tank which is north of Forest Road 114.
3. Reconstruction of several spring developments; Tio Maes, Indian Creek, and Apache Spring. Need at least two troughs.
4. Pursue with NMDOT the possibility of a water gap in the HWY 518 ROW near Amole.

The Borrego timber sale has been completed in the Telephone pasture but additional fuelwood projects will continue to take place within the area this season.

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. Permittees also talked about applying for equip funds with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to help fund range improvements such as fencing and possible water sources including a well.

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 5/13/2014
District Ranger Date