

SANTA BARBARA ALLOTMENT #403
Carson National Forest
Camino Real Ranger District

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS 2014

The annual meeting for the Santa Barbara Allotment was held on April 10, 2014, at the Camino Real district office in Peñasco, New Mexico. Attending were Manuel Griego, Octavio Griego, Joe Griego, Joseph Rodarte, Andie Sanchez, Antonio Sanchez, Charlie Sanchez, and Anthony Esquibel from the Santa Barbara Grazing Association. Melvin Herrera and Tammy Malone represented the Camino Real Ranger District.

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

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 conditions. Any non-use this grazing season will be considered resource protection non-use. Forest Service and Permittees remain optimistic about grazing within the range of permitted numbers this year. The 2008 Environmental Assessment of grazing on the allotment took drought into consideration and included several range improvements to improve and maintain conditions.

Table 1-Permitted and Authorized kind and number

1. Permittee	Number and Kind	Authorized number and kind
Santa Barbara Grazing Association	115 cow/calf & 7 bulls to 192 cow/calf, 11 bulls	115 cow/calf, 7 bulls
Pete A. & Gloria M. Contreras	(10 cow/calf)	(0 cow/calf)
Lloyd, Anthony, & Norman Esquibel	(25 cow/calf)	(27 cow/calf, 1 bull)
Dorothy K. Gonzales	(18 cow/calf)	(0 cow/calf)
Joe G. & Helen Griego	(7 cow/calf)	(7 cow/calf, 1 bull)
Manuel A. Griego	(7 cow/calf)	(7 cow/calf, 1 bull)
Octavio Griego	(12 cow/calf)	(14 cow/calf, 1 bull)
Estevan R. Lopez	(10 cow/calf)	(0 cow/calf)
Rutilio A. Martinez Estate	(10 cow/calf)	(7 cow/calf, 1 bull)
Clarence R. Romero	(9 cow/calf)	(0 cow/calf)
Joseph Oliver Rodarte	(4 cow/calf)	(0 cow/calf)
Lee and Betty Maestas	(30 cow/calf)	(0 cow/calf)
Andie R. Sanchez	(27 cow/calf)	(28 cow/calf, 1 bull)
Charlie F. & Brenda M. Sanchez	(23 cow/calf)	(25 cow/calf, 1 bull)

Table 2. Season of use.

2. Season of Use	
06/01 - 9/30	(122 days) Santa Barbara

Table 3-Pasture Rotation

3. Pasture Rotation				
Pasture	Dates	Time	Actual use	Utilization%
Santa Barbara (hayfield)	06/01 - 6/04	4 days		
Santa Barbara (bottoms)	06/05 – 6/10	6 days		
Osha/Bear Mtn/Comales	06/11 – 07/10	30 days		
Indian/Jicarita	07/11 – 07/31	20 days		
Middle/East Fork	08/1 – 09/05	36 days		
West Fork	09/06 – 09/20	15 days		
Santa Barbara (bottoms and hayfield)	09/21 – 09/30	10 days		

Adaptive management will continue to be applied to the management of the Santa Barbara 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, i.e. fences, will be maintained prior to entry into each pasture.

4. Maintenance of Improvements

The entire cost of improvements maintenance is the responsibility of the permittees. Assigned allotment boundary fences, pasture division fences, stock tanks, springs, cattleguards, and other range structural improvements must be maintained prior to entry into each pasture. Range improvements for the Bottoms and Osha pastures will be inspected at the same time as Range Readiness.

5. Other Items of Discussion

The 2013 season was a challenging one due to continuing drought effects on the range. Forage production was slow and below normal causing a delay on the on date early on. End of year monitoring reflected riparian stubble height was greater than 4 inches and utilization on the allotment in several pastures was within the utilization guidelines of 40 percent in key areas as monitored by Forest Service employees. Cattle were well distributed last season and there was even utilization throughout the allotment leaving no extra forage as seen in previous years.

Permittees were wondering if the Forest Service had acquired water rights to irrigate the Hay meadow. This will be looked into.

The Middle Fork drift fences were partly constructed in 2013 (by a youth group working for the Forest Service) with the one in the bottom of the canyon just needing wood stays to complete. The upper fence on the trail will need to be constructed by permittees this year as no one bid on the contract last year. All the fencing material is available on site.

The permittees were concerned with illegal activity in the Bear Mountain pasture such as fences being cut, illegal ATV use, losses of livestock and salt being moved.

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 forage areas.

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

The Grazing Instructions for 2014 were discussed and 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. Permittees mentioned that they did have instances of the public moving their salt or placing salt out for wildlife.

The Camino Real Ranger District again encourages permittees to cut the hay meadow prior to Canada thistle setting its seed early in the fall. There continues to be a visible reduction in the amount of Canada thistle in the last few years. Permittees cut the hayfield last year to keep aspen saplings down but did not produce any hay. They felt like they should not graze the hay meadow if they are delayed in any amount of days.

Permittees were concerned with someone from the public grazing on the lower Bottoms of the allotment with horses for an extended period of time. Forest Service encouraged permittees to report this if observed this summer.

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.

The Camino Real Ranger District will provide replacement tags this year as needed.

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.

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.

Priority for Range Betterment work for 2014:

1. Drift fencing to separate the Bottoms from the Middle/East Fork pastures. The bottom fence just needs stays while the upper one needs to be constructed. The fence at the bottom of the West Fork was completed last year but needs to be extended some more. Fence materials are all on site.
2. Gate for the trail head of the Jicarita trail. Gate needs to be picked up and installed.
3. Ripley point fence done with heavy maintenance but may need extending to the north.
4. Thinning (Cañada Honda)
5. Prescribed burns (Approved in Decision Notice) May burn up to one thousand acres this fall depending on weather conditions.

Permittees and the Camino Real Ranger District will look at the range together to determine range readiness and on-date.

The Camino Real Ranger District 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 permittees.

/s/Tamara S. Malone 5/13/2014
District Ranger Date