



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Southwestern Region 3
Carson National Forest
El Rito Ranger District

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2014

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS (AOIs)

JARITA MESA ALLOTMENT # 00202

**CARSON NATIONAL FOREST
EL RITO RANGER DISTRICT**

/s/ Diana M. Trujillo

Diana M. Trujillo, District Ranger

6/25/2014

Date

Annual Operating Instructions (AOI's)

INTRODUCTION

These Annual Operating Instructions (AOI's) are in reference to the annual meeting you had with Diana Trujillo, Estevan Gallegos, and Joy Sanchez on March 11, 2014. The authorized ear tag color for 2014 is "purple".

Table 1 - Permittee Information and Use

| Permittee Name | Permitted* | | Authorized | | Remarks |
|--|---------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------|---|
| | # | Season | # | Season | |
| Jarita Mesa Livestock Grazing Association | 16 bulls | 5/1 – 10/31 | 16 bulls | 5/15 – 10/31 | |
| Gabriel J. Aldaz | 6 c/c | 5/1 – 10/31 | 6 c/c | 5/15 – 10/31 | |
| Alfonso Chacon Jr. | 45 c/c | 5/1 – 10/31 | 20 c/c | 5/15 – 10/31 | <i>Voluntary partial non-use for resource protection.</i> |
| Jeffrey D. Chacon | 7 c/c | 5/1 – 10/31 | 8 c/c | 5/15 – 10/31 | |
| Sebedeo R. Chacon | 104 c/c | 5/1 – 10/31 | 90 c/c | 5/15 – 10/31 | <i>Voluntary partial non-use for resource protection.</i> |
| Timoteo, Candelaria & Isaac Chacon | 9 c/c | 5/1 – 10/31 | 9 c/c | 5/15 – 10/31 | |
| Celina or Joseph D. Gallegos | 5 c/c | 5/1 – 10/31 | 5 c/c | 5/15 – 10/31 | |
| Isaac & Juan Giron | 25 c/c | 5/1 – 10/31 | 15 c/c | 5/15 – 10/31 | |
| Joe Gurule Jr. | 3 c/c | 5/1 – 10/31 | 3 c/c | 6/01 – 10/31 | <i>Voluntary partial non-use for personal convience</i> |
| Griego Ranch c/o David, Donald & Thomas L. Griego | 57 c/c | 5/1 – 10/31 | 50 c/c | 5/15 – 10/31 | <i>Voluntary partial non-use for resource protection.</i> |
| Diego R. Jaramillo | 22 c/c | 5/1 – 10/31 | 2 c/c | 5/15 – 10/31 | |
| Lorenzo A. Jaramillo | 33 c/c | 5/1 – 10/31 | 34 c/c | 5/15 – 10/31 | <i>Voluntary partial non-use for resource protection.</i> |
| Pena Ranch c/o Bertram, Henry, Michael & Harold Pena | 33 c/c | 5/1 – 10/31 | 34 c/c | 5/15 – 10/31 | |
| Rodarte, Arthur & Isabel | 23 c/c | 5/1 – 10/31 | 18 c/c | 5/15 – 10/31 | <i>Voluntary partial non-use for resource protection.</i> |
| Leonard Jr. & Leonard Torrez | 5 c/c | 5/1 – 10/31 | 5c/c | 5/15 – 10/31 | |
| Elive Valdez Estate | 25 c/c | 5/1 – 10/31 | 20 c/c | 6/01 – 10/31 | <i>Voluntary partial non-use for resource protection.</i> |
| Jerry, Ernesto or Floyd Valdez | 10 c/c | 5/1 – 10/31 | 0 c/c | 5/15 – 10/31 | <i>Total non-use for personal convenience</i> |
| TOTAL | 412 c/c 16 bulls | 5/1 – 10/31 | 319 c/c 16 bulls | 5/15 – 10/31 | 3.6% Reduction due to NEPA Decision in 2010. Overall 27% reduction. |

* Permitted numbers shown represent an 18% reduction that will be implemented over a 5 year period starting with the 2011 grazing season, therefore authorized numbers may be higher than the permitted number.

Range readiness inspections will determine whether range vegetation and soils are ready for grazing. Dates for range readiness inspections were scheduled for April 28, 2014 and May 5, 2014.

All permittees must be in good standing with the Association and in compliance with the permit in order to let cattle onto Forest Service property.

All livestock must be scheduled for counting prior to entering the Jarita Mesa Allotment. The El Rito range personnel must be notified 5 days prior to the time livestock enter or leave the Forest. Any nonuse of a term grazing permit must be requested in written form. Verbal applications will not be accepted. If a permittee elects to request “*total nonuse*” he/she is still responsible for maintenance of assigned range improvements.

A credit/refund application must be submitted within 1 week after placing livestock late on the allotment or removing livestock early. A credit/refund is not automatic but must be requested in writing by the permittee(s) and approved by the District Ranger.

ROTATION SCHEDULE

Distribution of livestock is tentatively planned as follows (actual dates will be based on range readiness):

Table 2 – Pasture Rotation

| | | |
|-------------------------|--|---------------|
| Maton De Encino Pasture | | 05/12 – 05/25 |
| Comanche/La Tetilla | | 05/12 – 06/15 |
| Jarita Pasture | | 05/26 – 08/01 |
| Kiowa Pasture | | 08/02 – 10/31 |

The grazing schedule described above can be changed by the District Ranger when unforeseen circumstances, such as lack of water or overuse occur within the pasture. You may propose changes of pastures outside of the above routing schedule in coordination with this office. A written justification should be submitted by the permittee to this office before a proposal to change the above routing schedule will be acted upon by the District Ranger. The decision made by the District Ranger will be based upon the condition of the range, recommendations of the range staff, and the needs of the permittees. Recommendations of the New Mexico Range Improvement Task Force and Cooperative Extension Service at New Mexico State University are encouraged and will be considered by the District Ranger in making such a determination.

FORAGE UTILIZATION

Forage utilization will be measured in established key areas. Proper utilization of forage is a critical factor in livestock management on the Jarita Mesa Allotment. Permittees are invited and encouraged to accompany Forest Service range staff in the field while range conditions are being evaluated.

Utilization guidelines for the Jarita Mesa allotment are conservative levels of 31-40% use of grazable forage. Utilization will be measured throughout and at the end of the grazing season in key areas.

Riparian stubble heights will be maintained at four inches throughout the grazing season. When riparian areas have been grazed down to four inch stubble height then cattle will be rotated to the next pasture or moved home early.

Within the Jarita Mesa Allotment the key forage species are:

Table 3 – Forage Utilization Guidelines

| Pasture Name | Key Forage Species | Stubble Height | Utilization Guideline |
|---|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Maton de Encino, Comanche & La Tetilla Pastures | Western Wheat | 4 – 6” | 31-40% |
| | Blue Grama | 2 – 2.5” | 31-40% |
| | Carex | 4 – 6” | 31-40% |
| | Crested Wheatgrass | 4 – 6” | 31-40% |
| Jarita Pasture | Arizona Fescue | 6 – 8” | 31-40% |
| | Kentucky Blue | 4 – 6” | 31-40% |
| | Carex | 4 – 6” | 31-40% |
| Kiowa Pasture | AZ/Thurber Fescue | 6 – 8” | 31-40% |
| | Kentucky Bluegrass | 4 – 6” | 31-40% |
| | Carex | 4 – 6” | 31-40% |
| | Western Wheatgrass | 4 – 6” | 31-40% |
| | Blue grama | 2 – 2.5” | 31-40% |
| Riparian Areas | Kentucky Blue | 4 – 6” | 31-40% |
| | Sedges | 4 – 6” | 31-40% |
| | | | |

2013 END OF SEASON MONITORING

Table 4 – Monitoring Data

| Pasture (Key Area) | Species | Actual Stubble Height | Actual Utilization |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Kiowa (Clark) | Carex | 6.5” | 25% |
| Kiowa (Clark) | Kentucky Bluegrass | 5.5” | 20% |
| Kiowa (Alire) | Carex | 4.7” | |
| Kiowa (Alire) | Western Wheatgrass | 4.6” | |
| Kiowa (Varela) | Western Wheatgrass | 4.0” | 40% |
| Kiowa (Varela) | Blue grama | 2.5” | 40% |
| Kiowa (Vagamunda) | Arizona Fescue | 6.0” | |
| Kiowa (Vagamunda) | Kentucky Bluegrass | 4.5” | |
| Kiowa (Vagamunda) | Carex | 6.4” | |
| Jarita (Trujillo) | Blue grama | 4.8” | 13% |
| Jarita (Trujillo) | Carex | 6.8” | 13% |
| Maton De Encino (P/J Converted) | Blue Grama | 3.5” | 30% |
| Maton De Encino (P/J Converted) | Crested Wheatgrass | 5.0” | 30% |
| Maton De Encino (Abrevadero) | Crested Wheatgrass | 4.5” | 40% |
| Maton De Encino (Abrevadero) | Blue Grama | 2.0” | 40% |

In June 2013, cattle belonging to multiple Jarita Mesa permittees were observed grazing throughout the Kiowa pasture well in advance of the authorized entry date of July 1, 2013. It was clear the cattle had

been on the pasture for sometime, salt had been placed in the pasture. Cattle were observed, due to a lack of forage, browsing on brush, juniper, and pine branches. Fortunately, heavy late season rain aided in recovery so that at the end of the season utilization, while pushing the maximum not exceeded in key grazing areas. Distribution will need to improve in 2014. Gathering of wild horses will begin in July 2014. The contractor will rely on the distribution schedule when determining where and when to gather to minimize potential conflicts between horse gathering and grazing. As part of the 2013 end of season monitoring, both Forest Service and NMSU Range Improvement Task Force (RITF) data was used. Continuing efforts from allotment members as they distributed livestock for the grazing season contributed to an overall successful grazing year. We hope distributing livestock continues as a best management practice for a successful 2014 grazing season. It will be important in the 2014 grazing season management efforts continue and cattle be rotated on time and distributed evenly to prevent overutilization in key areas. This year is especially important since drought years have intensified, all of us should be managing for drought and drought recovery. Cattle moving into the upper pastures early, livestock remaining on the allotment after the grazing season ended and fence maintenance were issues with multiple permittees during the 2014 grazing season. Fence maintenance, salt dispersal, range riding and monitoring by the permittees can change utilization for the better.

As discussed in this year's annual operating meeting, proper use of the rotation system and allotment cattle crossing onto adjacent allotments continues to be issue on the Jarita Mesa Allotment. We encourage the permittees to do their best in keeping cattle from moving onto adjacent allotments and from going into the higher pastures early. Rotating cattle out of lower pastures on schedule and movement of all rather than some cattle from pastures as cattle are rotated is needed to ensure proper grazing utilization. Fence maintenance, salt dispersal, range riding and monitoring by the permittees can change utilization for the better.

MONITORING

Monitoring will be conducted in key areas using a combination of monitoring techniques including, but not limited to, paired cages, photo points, Rapid Assessment Method, and permittee monitoring. A key grazing area is a portion of rangeland selected because of its location, grazing or browsing value, or use to serve as a monitoring and evaluation point for range condition, trend, or degree of grazing use. Key areas reflect the overall acceptability of current grazing management over the rangeland and guides the general management of the entire area of which it is a part. The intent of monitoring in key grazing areas is to maintain good to excellent range conditions in key areas while accommodating the needs of wildlife. It is the responsibility of the permittee to ensure proper distribution of livestock to achieve a conservative grazing intensity of 31-40% by weight of annual available forage in key grazing areas. It will be important in the 2014 grazing season that cattle be rotated on time and distributed evenly to prevent over grazing in these key areas.

Permittees and the Range Improvement Task Force are invited and encouraged to accompany Forest Service Range staff in the field while range condition evaluations are being made. Range readiness inspections occurred on **April 28, 2014** and again on **May 5, 2014**. Other monitoring dates are tentatively scheduled for **June 23, August 8, and October 28 & 29, 2014** for "End of Season" monitoring. We will be meeting at the El Rito Ranger District Office at 9:00 a.m. on each of the dates scheduled. Monitoring dates are subject to changes due to weather, fire danger, or unforeseen circumstances. Please contact Estevan Gallegos with any questions regarding monitoring. Your

participation is welcome and encouraged.

Field inspections will be conducted to monitor allowable use and movement of livestock. Both the Forest Service and the permittee are responsible for monitoring use and stubble height on the allotment to manage within specified utilization guidelines. Once allowable use is achieved, livestock must be moved into the next scheduled pasture or off the allotment. The length of season depends on the intensity of management and cooperation between permittees on livestock distribution and moving from pasture to pasture.

If areas within a pasture or the pasture as a whole begin to approach the identified stubble heights, then the remaining key areas will also be monitored and the pasture inspected to determine overall use patterns. This information will be used to determine if cattle need to be re-distributed within the pasture or removed from the pasture.

Distribution patterns, range readiness, cattle numbers, forage use levels, salting practices, and condition of improvements will also be evaluated.

Distribution is the key to achieving proper livestock management on the allotment and to providing for the fullest use of the grazing season. Salt must be placed out of bottoms, away from water, roads, forest system trails, and recreational sites.

IMPROVEMENT MAINTENANCE

The following project has been approved for completion:

- Improve Comanche Well in conjunction with Comanche Allotment
- Improvements to Servilleta Trick Tank
- Improvements to La Tetilla Trick Tank

FENCE MAINTENANCE

All assigned fences and water developments must be maintained and determined to be in good functioning condition prior to the entry date. An inspection of your allotment prior to the entry date will be made to determine if maintenance is adequate. Permittees failing to fulfill maintenance responsibilities will result in cattle not being authorized to enter the allotment.

If you have a need to cut fence stays or posts for fence maintenance you may obtain a Free Use Permit from the range personnel at the El Rito office.

ALLOTMENT STATUS

At the present time direction for management on the allotment is being documented in the AOIs.

An Environmental Assessment for the Jarita Mesa Allotment was completed in 2010. An Allotment Management Plan for the Jarita Mesa Allotment will be completed in 2014.

Open and positive communication is encouraged. Feel free to contact the range personnel if you have any questions or problems. They will be happy to discuss allotment management, on the ground status, Forest Plan standards and guidelines, and possible changes in allotment management.

DROUGHT MANAGEMENT

2014 continues to be exceptionally dry for much of New Mexico with four consecutive years of drought conditions. Climatological information from the New Mexico Drought Task Force, the Western Regional Climate Center and the Natural Resource Conservation Service, along with all of our own personal experiences and observations made it necessary to begin drought coordination early with you. Should drought conditions persist this season, communication between you, the District Ranger, and range staff will become increasingly important. The Carson National Forest is committed to working with you in a joint effort to manage the resources and minimize adverse impacts to your operations. The Forest Service, as well as permittees, will continue to monitor the Standard Precipitation Index (SPI) as addressed in our Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 2209.13. The SPI is a unit of measure that compares recent precipitation values for a period of interest with long term historical values to assess moisture conditions in a given area. In the Southwest Region, anytime the SPI reaches a value of minus 1.00 or less for the preceding 12 month period, grazing allotments should be evaluated for existing drought conditions. Management due to drought will be approached in a collaborative manner between district personnel and permittees. Should drought conditions persist and utilization guidelines are reached through the summer months, you may be required to remove livestock from the grazing allotment prior to October 31, 2014. It is important that communication between the permittees and district personnel continue prior to such decisions.

TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

A travel management decision for the Canjilon, El Rito, and Tres Piedras Ranger Districts of the Carson National Forest was made on December 2, 2010. These districts now have a designated road system with no cross country motorized travel. Consistent with the travel management, El Rito Ranger District has:

- Designated roads, trails, and area open to motor vehicle use by vehicle class and, if appropriate, by time of year (36 CFR 212.51).
- Identified designated roads, trails, and areas on a motor vehicle use map (MVUM) (36 CFR 212.56).
- Prohibited motor vehicle use inconsistent with the designations on the motor vehicle use map, once published (36 CFR 261.13).

Criteria for evaluating and designating routes (36 CFR 212.55) are largely derived from Executive Order 11644.

USFS Travel Management Plan was discussed. The travel management rule requires each Ranger District to designate those roads trails and areas open to motor vehicle use. Range permittee guidelines will be developed and will be included in the AOI in the future. The Forest Service is in year two of a two year educational process for vehicle use, however, permittees are encouraged to come in and get

letters of authorization from the District for off-road access for specific area and time needed.

ATTACHMENT 1
ACTUAL USE INFORMATION
JARITA MESA ALLOTMENT
2014 GRAZING SEASON

Actual Use Table 1

| Pasture | Planned Livestock Number & Class | Planned Use | | Actual Use | | Remarks |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|----------|------------|----------|---------|
| | | Date on | Date Off | Date on | Date Off | |
| Maton de Encino | 163 c/c 9 bulls | 5/12 | 5/25 | | | |
| Comanche/La Tetilla | 136 c/c 7 bulls | 5/12 | 6/15 | | | |
| Jarita | 163 c/c 16 bulls | 5/26 | 6/15 | | | |
| Jarita | 319 c/c 16 bulls | 6/16 | 8/01 | | | |
| Kiowa | 319 c/c 16 bulls | 8/02 | 10/31 | | | |
| | | | | | | |

Number of Head counted on _____.

Number of head lost: _____.

Actual Use Table 2

| Livestock Class | Poisonous Plants | Predators | Other | Total Losses |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------|-------|--------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Additional Comments:

ATTACHMENT 2

**UTILIZATION INFORMATION
JARITA MESA ALLOTMENT**

2014 GRAZING SEASON

Utilization Table 1

| Pasture | Head Months (HMs) | Animal Unit Months | Allowable Utilization (percent) | Date Monitored | Observed Utilization |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Maton de Encino | | | | | |
| Comanche/La Tetilla | | | | | |
| Jarita | | | | | |
| Kiowa | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
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Appendix Grazing Permittee Instructions for Cattle Operators on El Rito Ranger District

Review the term grazing permit and become familiar with the terms and conditions prior to the grazing season.

Only livestock branded as shown on your application are permitted to enter the National Forest. The Forest Service (FS) and the permittees will agree to the counting locations, date, and time. Entering the allotment before your authorized entry date is not allowed until livestock are counted.

A Crossing Permit is required whenever livestock enter the National Forest. Crossing the District to/from a grazing allotment is only allowed within the authorized season.

Livestock found on other unauthorized allotments or in areas without prior authorization will result in the issuance of a Notice of Noncompliance that may impact your term permit.

The Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) pasture rotation dates are tentative. Therefore, you must consult with the District Office two weeks before the AOI tentative scheduled rotation dates for discussion and approval of the actual move dates and any AOI adjustments.

Management on the Range

The management objective is to obtain proper use throughout the grazeable portions of the range according to the management requirements of the Carson Forest plan.

Obtaining the best distribution of cattle on mountain ranges is made difficult because of their natural tendency to gather in openings, watering sites, drainages, riparian areas and meadows. Proper use will be determined by the percent of forage used within key area sites. With proper livestock distribution, a uniform pattern of use would occur. Utilization levels would vary between 20% to 40% (percent dry weight) in pasture key areas, and within the overall pasture's pattern of use.

Riding, herding and good salting practices will help. Frequent movement of salt within slight to light use areas is required to improve the pattern of use. Cattle should be moved to less utilized areas and heavier use should be avoided in the bottoms/meadows/openings that contain more desirable herbage. When proper use levels are reached within each pasture, livestock grazing must end and livestock must exit. An early allotment exit would result in a partial refund/credit of the grazing payment. The grazing of more than one pasture at a time must be approved by the District Ranger. All cattle on the allotment would be handled as one herd. Moves between pastures may be handled as drifting moves where gates to the next successive pasture may be opened 2 days before the agreed scheduled move date. The exit pasture that the cattle are leaving must be cleaned-out within 3 days after the scheduled date for moving.

Salting

Salt must be placed in each pasture prior to cattle entering the pasture. Salt shall be located at least 0.5 miles to 1.0 miles away from streams, springs, earthen dam stock tanks and other sources of water in order to improve the livestock distribution within the pasture. Salt must be placed to minimize damage to vegetation and soil, within the tree line instead of in the middle of openings, in drainages/riparian or near roadways. Regular salt ground sites must not be established.

Range Improvement Projects

Range Improvement Projects assigned in your Term Grazing Permit require annual maintenance that is to be completed prior to placing livestock in the pasture unit. Allotment boundary fences must be maintained before the entry date and interior fences must be maintained before cattle enter the pasture.

Acceptable maintenance means returning the improvement to its original functioning working order and using the equivalent materials. Particular attention, labor and time must be given to gates within the allotment to make certain that they are serviceable and can be opened and closed easily.

Construction of new improvements or reconstruction of existing projects must have the approval of the District Ranger. During the AOI meeting and throughout the year suggestions for proposed projects are accepted.

Special Attention Items

Written authorization from the District Ranger is required for vehicle travel in road closure areas. All cross-country travel where allowed must not cause ruts or down-cutting in the soil surface. Cross-country vehicular travel when the ground is wet is prohibited. This written authorization is only for vehicle travel necessary for your livestock operation on your allotment. Prudent use of this authority is asked when and where general public use is concentrated. All permittees are encouraged to stay off roadways closed to vehicular travel during hunting seasons.

All temporary camps and corrals made or used by permittees or their riders will be cleaned up (left in a sanitary condition) and all materials/trash will be removed from the sites. Temporary camp/corral locations should be discussed with the FS prior to setting up the camp.

Riders will be permitted 4 horses or mules per rider for work within the allotment. No untrained horses, colts or other unrideable stock will be allowed.

Please notify the District Ranger with any observations of stray livestock on the National Forest Lands (regardless of the time of year).

Move any dead animals to rest no closer than 300 feet from water or roadways.

Report wildfires to: El Rito Ranger Station at (575) 581-4554 or Carson Dispatch at (575) 758-6208 or (575) 758-6209.

If you have any questions, please contact the El Rito Ranger District office.