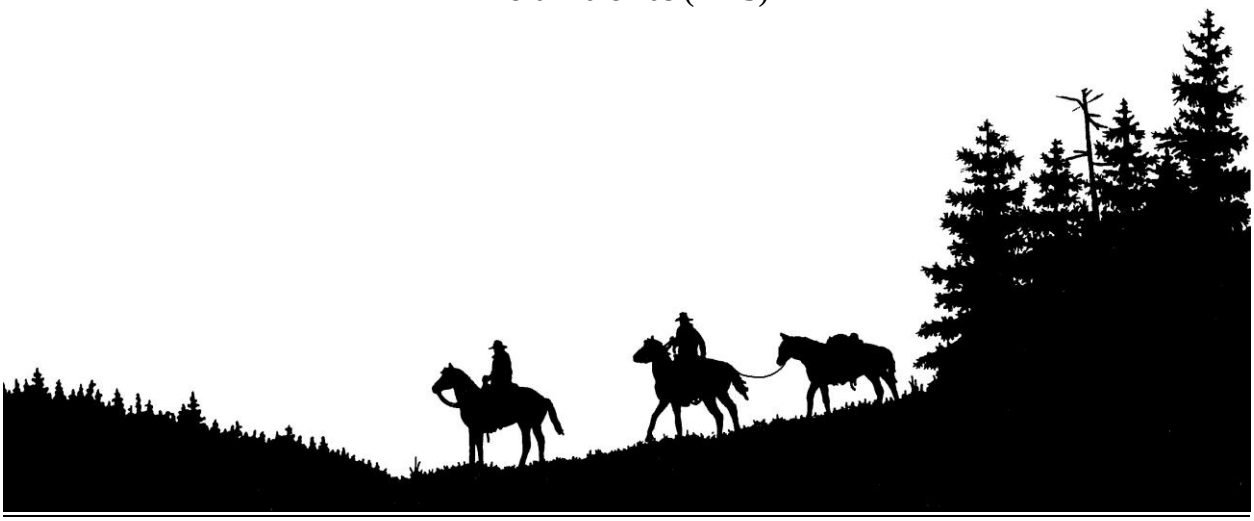
ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

2014

Black Range Ranger District
Gila National Forest

North Palomas (#213)



Prepared By: /s/ Sean Brown Date: 1/10/2014
Range Staff

Reviewed By: /s/ Bob Daugherty Date: 1/10/2014
Permittee

Approved By: /s/ Larry Cosper Date: 1/10/14
District Ranger

BLACK RANGE RANGER DISTRICT

2014 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

North Palomas Allotment

I. INTRODUCTION

These Annual Operating Instructions document your discussion with Shane Shannon and Sean Brown on January 10, 2014 at the Black Range Ranger District Office.

Term Permitted Livestock Numbers

Permittee	Number & Class of Livestock	Dates
Bob & Jennafer Daugherty	136 c/c 2 horses	03/01 – 02/28

Authorized Use

Permittee	**Number & Class of Livestock**	**Dates**
Bob & Jennafer Daugherty	98 c/c 4 horses	03/01 – 02/28

Actual on-dates and off-dates are dependent on range readiness and when allowable use standards are met. The Forest Service may approve changes to the grazing rotation in consultation with you, to address range condition and situations that may occur due to forage condition or weather related circumstances.

Pasture Rotation:

Pasture	**# of cattle**	**Use Period**	**Comments**
Upper	98	03/01 – 06/30	Cattle will be kept in different areas of this pasture at different times using drift fences.
Creek	98	09/01 – 10/31	
East	98	07/01 – 08/31	
Road (Shipping Trap)	98	11/01 – 11/30	
Upper	98	12/01 – 02/28	Cattle will be kept in different areas of this pasture at different times using drift fences.
House	4 Horses	03/01 – 02/28	Livestock will be removed from the pasture if utilization rates are met on the uplands and/or riparian areas.

This pasture rotation schedule will depend on range readiness, available water, weather conditions and permittee needs. Changes to the grazing rotation must be approved by the Forest Officer in advance. An **"amended"** AOI must be developed to reflect the approved changes.

The off-date for a pasture is the date when the livestock are to be fully out of the unit; or in the case of the last pasture, fully off of National Forest system lands. We recognize that moves cannot usually be accomplished in one day. It is your responsibility to begin early movement of livstock to ensure that pastures are clean by the dates specified.

Cattle are to be completely removed from a pasture by the off date. You will be allowed two weeks prior to the off date to begin moving cattle into the next pasture. If two weeks is not adequate, you must request additional time from this office. Please notify this office when you begin to move cattle and when a pasture rotation is complete.

Also we have discussed the possibility of occasionally placing livestock in the riparian demonstration area to aid in your operation during weaning, shipping, pasture rotations, and for doctoring sick cattle. This small pasture may be utilized two or three days at a time with a few head during the aforementioned activities of your operation. Please make this office aware of your activities within this pasture and keep accurate records of your use of this pasture so as to aid in determining appropriate management.

Permittees with livestock in rested units, grazing units outside the season of use, and grazing areas not authorized in advance, will be non-compliant with the terms and conditions of their Term Grazing Permit. Appropriate action, including billing at the unauthorized use rate, may be taken.

It is strongly suggested that livestock be moved before utilization standards are met. If allowable use levels are met early in the scheduled pasture, cattle will be rotated into the next pasture or off the Forest. This should prevent non-compliance of standards, allowing for time to clean the unit of stragglers.

II. MANAGEMENT OF LIVESTOCK

You are responsible for monitoring water availability and forage utilization. It is your responsibility to move your livestock when sufficient water is no longer available or when proper forage utilization is achieved in a pasture. You are responsible for keeping track of and maintaining control of your livestock. In the event your livestock are found to be out of the scheduled pasture, you will be required to find, gather, and return your animals to the proper pasture as soon as possible.

III. IMPROVEMENT MAINTENANCE

All range improvements assigned in the 10-year Term Grazing Permit are to be maintained in functioning condition. In the event these improvements cannot be brought up to a functioning condition, you should notify this office so we can schedule them for reconstruction as funds become available. You may apply for a “Free Use” post and stay permit for the maintenance of fences and corrals on the allotment. Maintenance to standard is required even if you have taken “nonuse”.

Range improvements must be maintained to standard before cattle are allowed into a pasture. It is the permittee’s responsibility to ensure that range improvements remain functional. This includes boundary fences in pastures not currently being grazed. Routine maintenance of existing improvements does not require written clearance; however, construction/reconstruction of new improvements must be authorized in writing from this office.

2014 Improvements Planned (Work or Supplies Needed from 2009 and New Projects)

- Trick Tank in East Pasture
- Reconstruct 1 mile of fence #2106 in Section 24

When improvements have been maintained, please call the Black Range Ranger District and report that maintenance has been completed. If verification is not received from the permittee, inspections will be made. During that inspection, if we find maintenance has not been completed, and livestock are grazing an area unscheduled for use at the time, they will be considered unauthorized. Permittees may be billed for unauthorized use and/or permit action taken for maintenance.

All water developments must provide access and escape to and from water for all types of wildlife. Please contact Sean or Shane for assistance.

IV. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Fire: Branding and warming fires should be used with good judgment - not on windy days or during times when fires are specifically restricted. The Black Range District may allow naturally ignited fires to burns on the district this coming year. We will notify you if we plan to let a fire burn on your allotment.

2. Records: In order to close out permit modifications you must provide documentation of materials and labor constituting your contribution to the permit modification.

You must provide documentation of cattle numbers; dates of entering and leaving pastures, shipping dates and cattle losses (grown stock and calves). This information is used to substantiate the carrying capacity of the allotment. The information demonstrates use and the need for forage to meet the economic needs of the county. This information may also be used to establish cause and effect if there is a significant change in calf crop (Example, a wolf pack becomes established near your allotment).

3. Heavy Equipment Use: Please notify district well in advance of any plans to use heavy equipment so that necessary clearances and/or permits can be obtained. You will be notified by the district when you can proceed. The permittee must obtain permission from this office before conducting earth- disturbing activities on the National Forest. The Forest Service will arrange inspections of project areas and will prepare appropriate environmental and cultural documents before earth-disturbing activities proceed. These activities include road/earthen tank maintenance, as well as construction/reconstruction of trails, roads, earthen tanks, etc. Do not conduct any earth-disturbing activities on the Forest without written clearance from this office.

4. Credit/Refund: Any credit or refund applications for grazing fees must be made as far in advance as possible. Credit/Refund applications are not retroactive and will be approved only if the District Ranger is notified of livestock removal, prior to, or at the time, the livestock are taken off the allotment. **You will be required to provide your Social Security or Tax ID number in order for a refund to be processed.**

A $25 administrative fee will be charged for any additional bills for collection that are sent to you due to either late payment or for split billing on seasonal allotments. This fee will be collected to pay for the cost associated with issuing an additional bill for collection. There is no administrative fee for the normal "split billing" on yearlong allotments.

It is necessary for you to write the bill number on your check prior to submitting it to the lockbox. This is necessary to insure that your payment is credited to your account.

5. Short Age Calf Policy: Any short-aged calves (calves less than 6 months old on December 31) must be removed from the National Forest by April 1, or you will need to apply for and pay grazing fees for these animals from April 1 to the time they are removed from the National Forest. Calves that are 6 months old or older on December 31 need to be paid for starting January 1.

6. Salting and Supplemental Feeding:
Salt should be placed in such a way as to distribute lviestock use throughout the area. Place salt well away (>1/4 mile) from any water sources, or key areas that traditionally receive heavy use such as roads, parks, and riparian areas. Place salt in areas of light use to draw cattle to those areas such as oak thickets or under the aspen, spruce or pine. Salt locations must be moved every year and do not place more than one block in a location. The best distribution can be obtained by scattering one-half block chunks in ares of light use. Salt or supplement will not be placed near areas where such placement is liable to result in conflicts with other Forest users. Pick up your salt after livestock are rotated to the next pasture.

Any hay, straw, or supplemental feed used in association with your grazing permit msut be certified and tagged as free of noxious weeds and/or noxious weed seeds.

V. ALLOTMENT STATUS
These Instructions implement the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) decision for the North Palomas Allotment dated July 21, 2010 and the North Palomas Allotment Management Plan.

VI. OTHER ITEMS DISCUSSED
The District Ranger will authorize necessary changes to this AOI to accommodate fire management.

VII. SPECIAL MANAGEMENT CONCERNS
Keep track of conditions on your allotment. Make plans to reduce or remove livestock if vegetative/watershed conditions could be substantially harmed due to continued grazing. The forecast for the upcoming spring is wetter than normal. If stock water does not recharge, adjustments may be necessary to the rotation plan.

The following restrictions will be implemented so that management remains in compliance with the Endangered Species Act. The instructions below relate to threatened, endangered, and proposed to be listed species as well as range/watershed conditions.

- There are no documentations that identify any protected and restricted Mexican Spotted Owl habitat on the North Palomas Allotment, therefore there are no restrictions regarding the Mexican Spotted Owl.

- Stock tanks must be surveyed for possible aquatic habitat before earth-disturbing maintenance is authorized.

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the Chiricahua leopard frog as a threatened species in 2002. We have completed grazing consultation on your allotment regarding the

effects of livestock grazing on the Chiricahua leopard frog. We determined that livestock grazing will either have no effect or will not adversely affect the Chiricahua leopard frog. As a result of this determination, there were no changes required of your grazing permit. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with this determination. Therefore, consultation has been completed. A copy of this consultation is on file with your local Ranger District.

The Endangered Species Act requires that actions funded or carried out by the federal government go through the consultation process to insure these actions do not jeopardize the continued existence of a listed species. Please notify this office of any planned earth disturbing activities involving riparian areas, dirt tanks, or other sources of open water

VIII. UTILIZATION MONITORING OF KEY AREAS

Monitoring Schedule (Current Management)

Monitoring will be conducted to measure utilization of riparian and upland vegetation throughout the grazing year.

Key areas for monitoring have been identified as riparian areas and transect cluster locations. In addition to the cluster sites, we have identified other upland sites for monitoring, which are listed below.

PASTURE	LOCATION	SPECIES MONITORED
Road	Cluster C-3	Upland grasses
East	Mesa top in SEC 29	Upland grasses
Creek	Cluster C-2	Upland grasses
Upper	Cluster C-1	Upland grasses
Upper	SW ¼ SEC 26	Upland grasses
Allotment-wide	Riparian areas	All riparian species
Allotment-wide	MSO PAC's & habitat	Residual forage on grasses

The idea of a key area is to find a site that is representative of a larger area in which cattle obtain the majority of their required forage resources. Key area monitoring will avoid areas directly adjacent to permanent water sources, cattle trails, roads, and fence lines.

Riparian areas will be monitored for use on riparian woody species as well as riparian herbaceous species.

Upland areas will be monitored for use on perennial grass species.

District personnel will contact the permittees to coordinate site visits to monitor key areas. Permittee participation is encouraged. Forage utilization estimates will be consistent with the Forest Service Range Analysis Handbook methodology, and may also include FS Regional stubble-height standards, as well as other techniques generally accepted in the field of range management and as described in the Allotment Management Plan (AMP).

Your Term Grazing Permit includes the specific maximum allowable utilization levels applicable to your allotment. Allowable use is calculated at a point-in-time. To comply with standards in the Gila National Forest Plan, livestock must be moved to another unit or remove them from National Forest System lands regardless of the time remaining in the grazing season before utilization standards are met.

You are responsible for tracking and complying with your permitted forage use levels. For your convenience, the North Palomas Allotment maximum allowable forage utilization levels are listed below:

The following use standards will be applied on the allotment:

- Riparian areas are not to exceed 25% of current year's growth on woody riparian species; this includes willow and cottonwood.
- Amorpha will manage for plant health and will be observed as an indicator of overall riparian use. No use standard has been set at this time, but a use standard may be implemented if these riparian woody species do not show improvement in growth and vigor. Example: the number of grazed leaders of new growth is greater that ungrazed leaders.
- Upland sites grazed during the growing season are not to exceed 35% of current year's growth, by weight, of perennial grasses.
- Upland sites grazed during the dormant season are not to exceed 40% of current year's growth, by weight, of perennial grasses.

We look forward to working with you and solicit your cooperation and involvement in bringing about sound range and livestock management practices that will enhance all of the allotment's resources. If you have any ideas or suggestions that will improve the management of this allotment, we would like to hear from you.

IX. NEPA AND APPEAL RIGHTS

These Instructions implement the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) decision for the North Palomas Allotment dated July 21, 2010, and are not eligible for appeal under 36 CFR 214.