



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Manti-La Sal
National Forest

Moab/Monticello Ranger District
62 East 100 North
P.O. Box 386
Moab, UT 84532
Phone # (435) 259-7155
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File Code: 2210/2230

Date: June 16, 2015

Bluff River Ranch, L.L.C.
c/o Gordon Guymon
2777 W 2175 N
Clinton, Utah 84015

**CERTIFIED MAIL – RETURN
RECEIPT REQUESTED**

Cc: Wayne Black
147 West 300 North,
Blanding, Utah 84511

Dear Mr. Guymon:

This letter will serve as your Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the West Mountain C&H Allotment for the 2015 grazing season. This AOI is made part of your Term Grazing Permit consistent with Part 1, item 3 and Part 2, item 8(a). A failure to follow these instructions is a violation of your permit. The AOI complies with the standards and guidelines found in the Forest Plan. **Please read your instructions thoroughly.** This AOI will also be sent to your herd manager Wayne Black.

AUTHORIZED USE FOR 2015

Allotment	Numbers	Kind	Class	Season	Permittee	Non-use	
						Resource protection	Personal convenience
West Mountain	122	Cattle	Cow/Calf	06/20 – 10/19	Bluff River Ranches		
West Mountain	15	Cattle	Yearling	06/20 – 10/19	Bluff River Ranches		
West Mountain	24	Cattle	Cow/Calf	06/20 – 10/19	Stephen K. & Bonnie Meyer Revocable Family Trust		
West Mountain	5	Cattle	Yearling	06/20 – 10/19	Stephen K. & Bonnie Meyer Revocable Family Trust		

GRAZING SYSTEM AND SCHEDULE

There are no designated pastures within the West Mountain allotment. However, you have agreed to manage the herd so as to rotate into different areas of the allotment. This year you will drive the cattle to the Banks area and stay there only a short time (2 weeks) then to Poso and Trough areas where they will stay till about Sept 1st. The livestock will then be driven down



into Allen Canyon in September and be in Allen Canyon/Dry Wash area till gathered and taken off on October 19th.

Permitted pack and saddle stock authorized on the allotment for livestock management will not exceed four head.

Management Response to Drought Conditions

The drought in Utah is predicted to continue into this year. However, the Abajo Mountains are at about 95% of normal for precipitation (see attached graph and map). Though the timing of rainfall the past 3 years in the summer and fall have kept forage production up on most of the mid and high elevation pastures, several lower elevation pastures that were used first last year or in the two previous years were dry and unproductive during the times they were grazed. This usually resulted in moving off the unit earlier than planned or overuse, if livestock were not moved in time. In these areas, the stressed forage resource will still be trying to recover from last year's dry conditions.

The degree that drought affects future forage production will depend upon intensity, frequency and timing of grazing this year. Providing plants opportunity to grow and adequate recovery from grazing before, during and after drought conditions, will have a great influence on long term vegetative productivity and rangeland conditions. It is extremely important that the proper use criteria are followed and that the allotment is monitored closely, which may involve an increase in the amount of riding you or your herd manager does.

You plan on running close to full permitted AUMs this year (92%), anything over 90% means you are not in non-use. Management may need to be adjusted depending upon actual conditions on the ground. Livestock may need to be removed from the allotment earlier than planned if drought conditions worsen.

Your allotment should be inspected for range readiness to determine forage growth and fence and water improvement conditions. **The pasture move dates shown above are an estimate, and may change on the basis of actual range conditions.** Situations may develop during the grazing season which requires changes to these instructions. If this becomes necessary, or if you cannot comply with some part of these instructions, contact the District Ranger and obtain approval before initiating changes or deviating from these instructions.

PROPER GRAZING-USE INDICATORS

Utilization standards are one indicator used in achieving or moving towards desired rangeland conditions. Taking into account duration and timing of grazing are also just as important. Utilization standards are not the desired conditions or management objectives themselves, they are indicators. Desired conditions and objectives are discussed in the 1986 Forest Plan and/or the Allotment Management Plan.

Desired goals in the 1986 Forest Plan include:

- Bring livestock obligation in line with rangeland carrying capacity

- Maintain upward or stable trends in vegetation and soil condition.

Management Objectives in the 1983 West Mountain AMP include:

- Increase site productivity and improve watershed conditions.
- Improve upper watersheds in Trough Canyon, Allen Canyon and Dry Wash.

The 1990 Forest Plan Amendment for Range Proper-Use Criteria states proper use as ranging from 40-65% use of upland key species depending on the grazing system applied and from 30-60% use of riparian key species depending season of use. This amendment kept the existing provision that proper use criteria are to be established on an allotment by allotment basis and as given in the AMP and AOIs.

There is a difference between where percentage utilized is applied and where stubble height is applied to determine proper use in riparian areas. Percent utilized is used for plant species that are within the larger riparian area (the area that is influenced by the stream and the water table) but not along the greenline. The greenline is the first perennial vegetation on or near the stream's edge that is at least one foot wide. Stubble height measurements are used to determine proper use along the greenline. The plant species considered are typically water loving species (hydric species) such as sedges.

For the West Mountain allotment proper use criteria in 2015 are:

<u>Upland Areas:</u>	<u>Use of Key Species</u>
Spring/Summer	40-45%
Fall	50-55%
<u>Riparian Areas:</u>	<u>Use of Key Species</u>
Spring (Early and rapid growth)	50-60%
Summer (Moderate growth)	45-50%
Fall (Slow growth)	30-40% or 4-5 inches stubble or regrowth

It is your responsibility as the permittee to recognize when proper use has been reached and promptly move all cattle as necessary. If you need some assistance, or methods and tools for determining proper use, please contact Tina Marian.

When proper use has been reached in the unit being grazed, your cattle are to be herded to the next scheduled unit. **When proper use is reached in the last unit grazed, all cattle are to be removed from the allotment, even if this date is prior to the end of your grazing season.** Cattle found on the Allotment before or after the permitted grazing season will be billed at the unauthorized use rate and permit non-compliance actions will be initiated.

You should be aware that Forest Service policy provides that “an authorized officer may require the permittee to monitor and report information on compliance with the grazing permit, allotment management plan and annual operation instructions as a term and condition of your permit.”

To facilitate livestock moves, gates may be opened a few days prior to the scheduled move date only when moving into an adjacent pasture. Gates must be closed and the grazed pasture entirely cleaned of livestock no later than five days following the scheduled move date. Grazed pastures must be kept clean of livestock following the pasture move.

IMPROVEMENTS

FENCE AGREEMENT: For 2015 you agreed to bring to permit standards the Berry Patch fence (#54840 in the permit) as shown on the map attached.

SPRING AGREEMENT: In 2014, you indicated that you would like Forest Service staff to go with Wayne to look at a spring to see what needs to be done to bring it to standard. It is located west of the cabin and up the trail approximately as shown on the map attached. This is called Wayne spring on the permit and is #54839. We were not able to visit this with you last year but will plan on it this year and have it be the 2015 agreement. You would also like to clean ponds in the Posos area. We agreed to look at which ponds to be done while we look at the possibility of developing water in the area by diverting water from Allen Canyon above the Causeway Rd.

When you complete your fence and spring/pond agreements, you will please fill out and sign the Improvement Agreement Form (pink) that is found in your folder. Please provide photographs of before and after conditions to assist in documenting compliance with maintenance requirements. Contact Tina when you complete your maintenance so she can schedule a timely inspection.

If you fail to bring the above agreed improvements up to standard by **Oct 19, 2015** you will not be allowed to stock the allotment in 2016 until the agreement is fulfilled.

Range improvements are essential in ensuring that livestock are well distributed and that Forest standards and guides are met.

- Improvements are to be maintained to standard prior to livestock entering the pasture and that failure to do so is a violation of their permit and action will be taken when violations are documented.
- If improvements have not been maintained, then develop a schedule to bring them up to standard.
- Until all improvements are functional it is not appropriate to authorize full numbers or season of use, unless assurances can be made that utilization standards will not be exceeded.

The maintenance of all structural improvements listed under part 3 of your Term Grazing Permit, Special Terms and Conditions: *Construction and Maintenance of Structural Improvements* is a requirement and should be completed prior to your entry into each area of the allotment. The allotment permittee or permittees are responsible for the maintenance of all structural range improvements on this allotment. For allotments managed by an Association or Herd Manager

specific maintenance responsibilities may be assigned to individual permittees by the Association President or Herd Manager.

There are many troughs on the Forest that do not have wildlife escape ramps and are thus not meeting improvement maintenance standards. All troughs on the allotment need to be equipped with a wildlife escape ramp. You can obtain them from the Forest Service office. We understand that this will not all be completed in one year and will be emphasizing getting wildlife escape ramps installed in all troughs over the next few years.

If you wish to use forest products (trees and oak brush) from the National Forest to maintain your fences/spring enclosures on your allotment, you must receive authorization from either the Moab or Monticello Office prior to cutting.

NEPA and PLANNED PROJECTS

There has been discussed proposals to develop more water in the Bayles Ranch area and down into Allen Canyon. The GIS information can be collected this year and depending on funding and priorities, the analysis to construct water developments may begin next year.

You would also like to discuss the options of doing some vegetation treatments in the area. Please contact Tina to set up a time with the District Ranger to have these discussions.

MISCELLANEOUS

Refer to Special Terms and Conditions in Part 3 of Term Grazing Permit for specific instructions pertaining to maintenance standards for range stock water developments, range fences, corrals, and herding standards.

All permitted livestock must be branded with your registered brand as documented in your Term Permit before they enter the National Forest.

Place salt blocks away from water, roads, meadows and other open areas so as to draw livestock into areas that receive light utilization. When livestock leave a pasture move the salt out of the pasture as well.

You will furnish sufficient riders or herders to achieve proper distribution of livestock.

Certified Weed Free Hay must be used if you do any supplemental feeding of horses on the allotment while gathering or moving cattle.

If you find the need to use mechanical clearing (tractors, bulldozers etc.) of fence lines or to clean ponds or other water improvements, you must have proper archeological clearance and permission from the District Ranger.

Enclosed in your AOI folder you will find an Actual Use Record sheet. As your 2015 grazing season progresses, please fill out this form in detail and return it promptly at the end of the

grazing season. There are also extra sheets included in the folder where you are encouraged to document management on your allotment.

PAYMENT OF FEES

The permittee will not allow owned or controlled livestock to be on Forest Service-administered lands unless the fees specified in the Bill for Collection are paid and confirmation of payment through the “lock box” process is received prior to livestock entering NFS lands.

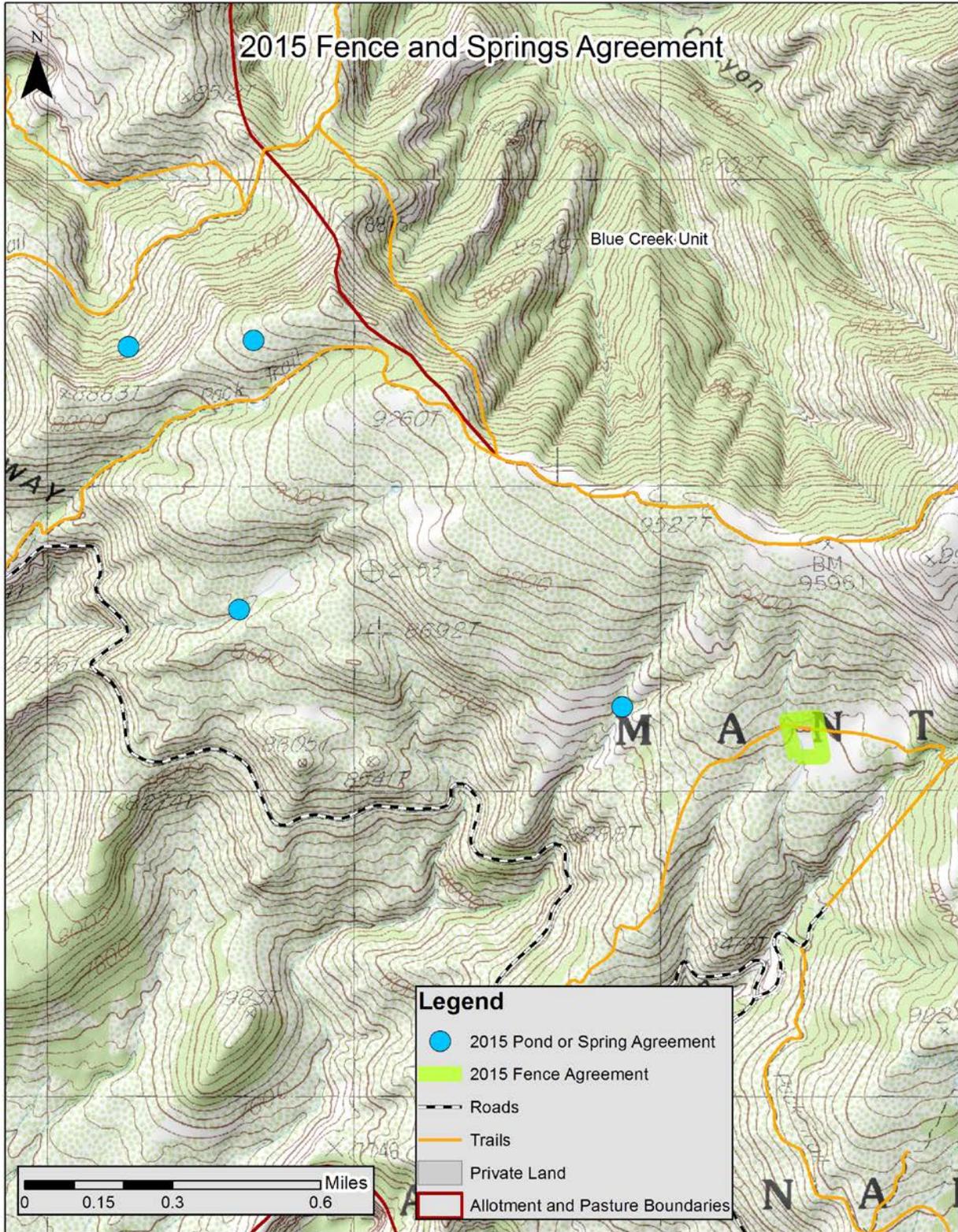
I am looking forward to working with you this summer. Please call Tina Marian (435-636-3368) if you have any questions or if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

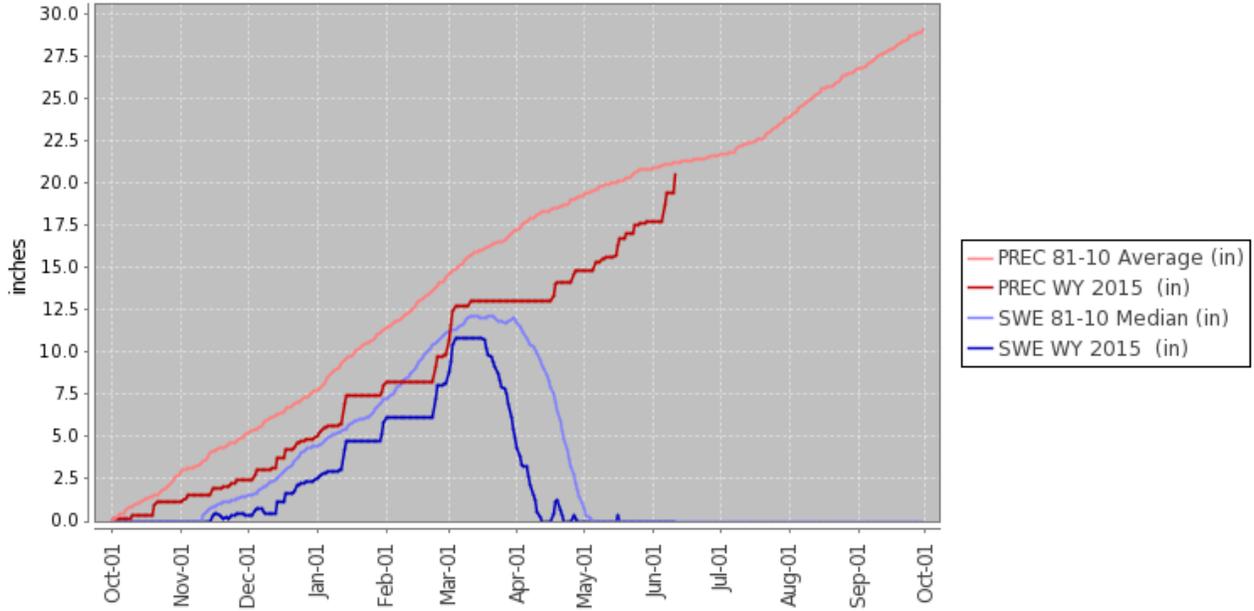


for MICHAEL DIEM
District Ranger

2015 Fence and Spring/Pond Agreements

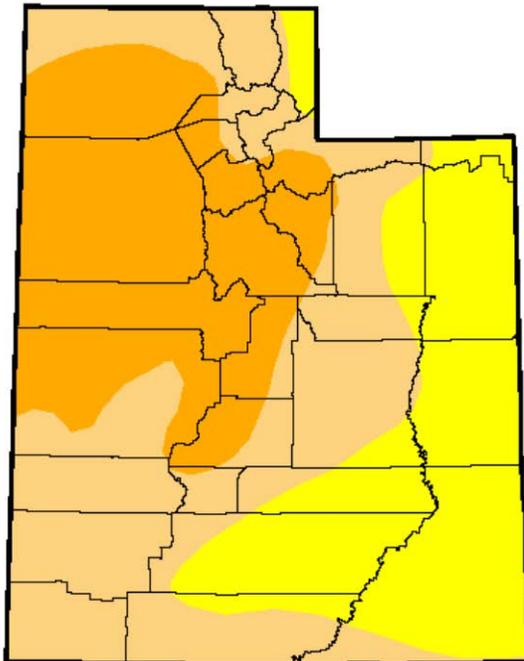


Station (383) WATERYEAR=2015 (Daily) NRCS National Water and Climate Center - Provisional Data - subject to revision
Thu Jun 11 12:55:57 PDT 2015



Total Precipitation almost to average, no precip in March and first part of April, the last few storms have done much to increase total precip for this area. SE Utah still considered to be abnormally dry.

U.S. Drought Monitor Utah



June 9, 2015

(Released Thursday, Jun. 11, 2015)

Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	0.00	100.00	69.53	31.23	0.00	0.00
Last Week 6/2/2015	0.00	100.00	90.63	34.38	9.32	0.00
3 Months Ago 3/10/2015	0.00	100.00	95.11	14.03	1.88	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 12/30/2014	18.93	81.07	58.99	12.98	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 9/30/2014	18.89	81.11	59.30	12.98	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago 6/10/2014	9.08	90.92	72.34	21.87	0.00	0.00

Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

Author:
David Miskus
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC



<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>