



2010

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS (AOIs)

LAGUNITAS ALLOTMENT # 00607

List of Permittees:

Donald Larsen
Ernest Moeller
Wayne Moeller
Rio Vega Ranch, LLC.
Valdez Land & Livestock, LLC.

**CARSON NATIONAL FOREST
TRES PIERDAS RANGER DISTRICT**



Annual Operating Instructions (AOI's)

INTRODUCTION

The Annual Operating Instructions meeting was held on March 18, 2010 at the Conejos Peak Ranger District. Members attending the meeting included, Dennis Moeller and Valdez Land and Livestock, LLC (Armando Valdez). Wayne Yonemoto and Estevan Gallegos represented the U. S. Forest Service.

The Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) is a decision and appeal document that is made part of the terms and conditions of the Term Grazing Permit. The AOI includes guidance criteria described below that addresses annual resource conditions, livestock numbers, period of use, pasture rotations, monitoring and range improvement projects. The 2003 Rangeland Management Action Plan for the Santa Fe and Carson National Forests continues to be program guidance. The objectives of this strategic action plan continue to be a high priority and emphasize collaboration, rangeland health, rangeland monitoring, and permittee involvement.

The environmental assessment decision for grazing permit issuance was completed in 1996. This year's (grazing season) livestock grazing fee is \$1.35/HM (Cattle) and \$0.27/HM (Sheep).

The dry weather pattern condition includes the following. Within the area, the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) 3-month forecast is for increased chances of normal to above-normal precipitation, Feb. through Apr., 2010, as well as, increased chances of normal to above-normal temperatures. The SPI definition that indicates the end-of-drought is for the SPI values to be positive 1.0 (or higher) for the past 12 months. The SPI for the past 12 months thru February is described as *Near Normal* (-0.74 to +0.74) so the end of drought has not occurred. SPI values of negative 0.70 or less for the past month signal drought conditions. The SPI for the past 1-month thru February is described as *Moderately Wet* (+0.75 to +1.24), so 1-month drought conditions are not present. Within the District, during the periods of Oct. to Dec., 2009 and Jan. to Feb., 2010, there were various areas of favorable normal to above-normal precipitation and below-normal to normal to above-normal temperatures.

The authorized eartag color is *orange*. All authorized cattle will be eartagged correctly with the authorized letter/number. The authorized use for the current grazing season is as follows:

Table 1 – Permittee Information and Season of Use (Term Permit/Annual Authorized Use Request Form)

Permittee Name	Permitted		Authorized		Eartag letter	Remarks
	#	Season	#	Season		
Donald Larsen	75 c/c	6/16 – 10/5	75 c/c	6/16 – 10/5	D	
Ernest Moeller	280 c/c	6/16 – 10/5	280 c/c	6/16 – 10/5	L	
Wayne Moeller	104 c/c	6/16 – 10/5	104 c/c	6/16 – 10/5	X	
Valdez Land & Livestock LLC	93c/c	6/16 – 10/5	93 c/c	6/16 – 10/5	T	
Rio Vega Ranch, LLC	373c/c	6/16 – 10/5	283 c/c	6/16 – 10/5	V	



Total	925 c/c, including bulls	6/16 – 10/5 112 Days	925 c/c, including bulls	6/16 – 10/5 112 Days		
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Range readiness is tentatively scheduled for June 8, 2010. Range readiness inspections will determine whether range vegetation and soils meet the criteria for grazing and the final authorized livestock number. We ask that you comply with the NM State Trichomoniasis regulations. All livestock must be scheduled for counting prior to entering the Lagunitas Allotment. Tres Piedras district range personnel must be notified 5 days prior to the time that livestock enter or leave the Carson NF. Nonuse of a term permit must be requested in written form for all of the permitted numbers (*Total Nonuse*), or part of the permitted numbers (*Partial Nonuse*). Verbal applications will not be accepted. If a permittee/member is approved for “*total nonuse*”, the permittee/member is still responsible for maintenance of assigned range improvements.

ROTATION SCHEDULE

Initial distribution of your livestock is tentatively planned as follows (**actual dates will be based on range readiness determination**):

Table 2 - 6/16 – 10/5 (112 days) – Tentative Rotation Schedule

Pasture	Tentative Dates (# of Days)	Days (min to max)	Actual Use	Reason for Adjustments
Beaver	6/16 – 6/24 (9)	7 to 10		
Canon Largo	6/25 – 7/27 (33)	25 to 35		
Olguin	7/28 – 8/16 (20)	18 to 25		
Southfork	8/17 – 9/10 (25)	24 to 29		
Diablo	9/11 – 9/28 (18)	19 to 24		
Beaver	9/29 – 10/5 (7)	7 to 10		
Total (Beaver, Diablo, Southfork, Olguin, Canon Largo) (Olguin, Southfork, Diablo, Canon Largo, Beaver)	112 (Range readiness inspection determines the authorized entry date)			

REVIEW OF 2009 MONITORING DATA

The allotment’s forage production improved after the July, August precipitation. Participants discussed areas of below-average to average production and average to above average production, and utilization guidelines. End of season utilization guidelines of 20% - 40% were not inspected at the end of the growing season in Olguin and Beaver. End-of-season utilization guidelines (non-riparian guidelines) in the 3 pastures (Canon Largo, Southfork, Diablo) were met. (Refer to 2009 Resource Condition Evaluation, Jan./Feb. Assessment for AOI). In fall 2008, a prescribed burn in northern Canon Largo area was conducted reducing fuels loads and old growth in the grassland, however the pasture was grazed. In 2007, Canon Largo was rested for the tentative prescribed burn that did not occur. The end-



of-season inspection of Rio Nutritas indicated that the riparian guidelines were met.

2009 AOI COMPLIANCE

- End of season utilization guidelines of 20% - 40% were met in Canon Largo, South Fork, Diablo.
- Lagunitas excess use occurred in San Antone and Tio Grande.

2009 ACTUAL USE

The Appendix of the AOI, references the permit. The appendix will contain permitted number, (period of use), authorized number (period of use), actual number (period of use); pasture rotation schedule and amendments to the AOI.

885 c/c (4% reduction); ; 6/16 – 10/5 (total 112 days)

Olguin	885 c/c; 6/16 – 7/5 (20 days)
Southfork	885 c/c; 7/6 – 7/30 (25 days)
Diablo	885 c/c; 7/31 – 8/21 (22 days)
Canon Largo	885 c/c; 8/22 – 9/18 (28 days)
Beaver	885 c/c; 9/19 – 10/5 (17 days)

MONITORING

Please contact Tres Piedras RD with any questions regarding monitoring and whether you wish to participate in the annual monitoring of your allotment. Your participation is encouraged. The following monitoring assessments, evaluations and methods may be conducted on the allotment:

- Weather update (SPI and temperature)
- Soil moisture depth
- Water availability
- Reading paired annual production/utilization cages with supporting photos and documentation, Rapid Assessment Method, Cover/Frequency, Parker 3-Step, Grazing Response Index,
- Key site map of the Allotment
- Key forage list showing community type, species list and stubble height
- Range readiness stubble ht./utilization guidelines
- Grazing season monitoring stubble ht./utilization guidelines
- End of season stubble ht./utilization guidelines
- Range readiness documentation
- Watershed health indicators

Monitoring Methods

Other monitoring methods that may be used on the allotment are: Ocular Estimate Method, Ocular Utilization by Dry Weight, Photo Point, or Range Trend Plot.

UTILIZATION GUIDELINES

Within each pasture, grazing utilization would occur at 20% to 40% of the annual available forage (not



to exceed 40%) and would be assessed at the end of the growing season. Utilization guidelines in the riparian area includes leaving 4 inches of stubble height of the annual available forage when livestock exit the pasture. When proper use levels are reached within the pasture, livestock will be moved to the next scheduled pasture *unless other management considerations require livestock removal before proper use levels are reached.*

Table 3 - Key Forage Species:

Pasture Name	Key Forage Species	Stubble Height
Canon Largo/Olguin	Kentucky Blue	4 – 6”
	Muttongrass	4 – 6”
	AZ / Thurber Fescue	6 – 8”
Diablo/ Beaver/ Southfork	Kentucky Blue	4 – 6”
	Sheep Fescue	4 – 6”
	Mt. Muhly	4 – 6”
	Timothy	6 – 8”
Riparian Areas	Red Top	4 – 6”
	Kentucky Blue	4 – 6”
	Sedges	4 – 6”

In order to benefit the pattern of use, total removal of all livestock from the pasture/allotment is required. A 3 day period will be allowed to remove stray(s) permitted livestock from the pasture/allotment. Regular herding and riding management practices are important to achieve proper livestock distribution on the allotment, and to provide for the optimal duration of the grazing period within each pasture or authorized period of use. Salting practices are also described in the cattle operator instructions at the end of this AOI.

AOI OBJECTIVES

- 1) Continue to minimize grazing use in the riparian areas of the allotment with special emphasis on the Beaver riparian in order to meet the riparian standard each grazing season. Continue to herd livestock away from the riparian areas and use salt placement to improve livestock distribution.
- 2) Monitor riparian areas.
- 3) Limit number of days in Beaver to 14 to 20 days.
- 4) Provide rest for herbage in the Canon Largo prescribed burn area when periodic burn maintenance is prescribed. A prescribed burn for the grassland area (1200 acres) was conducted in the fall, 2008. The prescribed burn was conducted under favorable prescription parameters and with adequate dormant ground fuels where the annual production was average to above-average. However, green herbage areas were present and were intermixed with the dormant ground fuels.
- 5) Prevent excess use by Lagunitas cattle within the adjoining allotments. Prevent excess use by Apache cattle into the Lagunitas.
- 6) Examine the fence section (Diablo/Bonito) and sign the Lagunitas/Apache fence maintenance sections. Also, clarify fence maintenance responsibilities between Lagunitas and Apache on the Beaver/Cruces fence section, northwest of the wilderness trailhead.



- 7) Compliance with New Mexico Statewide Regulations, 21.30.6 NMAC, Bovine Trichomoniasis, effective June 17, 2005, becomes a term and condition of the United States Forest Service term grazing permit.”

Annual Authorized Use Request Form

Credits from previous year, if applicable, would apply to the current bill. The current form shows 925 c/c, 6/16 to 10/5. The final livestock numbers and entry date would be determined after range readiness inspections. Therefore, additional billing may be required after the first billing.

PERMITTEE MANAGEMENT CONCERNS (Also refer to the Project Section)

- 1) The Association does not want to rest (full grazing season) the Canon Largo pasture for future prescribed burns. The Association wants to graze the pasture early in the season and then complete the burn in the fall.
- 2) Apache permittee trails out of the Apache allotment into the Lagunitas allotment and takes the Lagunitas cattle along the trail, trailing them and scattering them into the adjoining allotments. Apache and Lagunitas should have similar exit dates so that when Apache trails thru Lagunitas, Lagunitas cattle have already exited. Or Apache Association should always transport cattle by truck and not trail home thru Lagunitas.
- 3) Hunters are cutting the Beaver fence.
- 4) Private fence maintenance is needed at the Fisherman area (Grant boundary).

RANGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS AND MAINTENANCE

Range improvement projects maintenance labor/costs are the responsibilities of the permittee. Term permit assigned projects such as, allotment boundary fences, pasture boundary fences, cattleguards, earthen dam stock tanks, pit tanks and other structural improvements must be maintained prior to permittee entry onto the allotment. When allotments are in non-use the permittees are still required to maintain their assigned improvements.

The following are improvements which require special attention during the 2010 grazing season.

Allotment maintenance projects: FS materials for 0.5 mi. of fence @ Olguin/Nutritas area (south of private 20 acres)

Project Priority (new/maintenance): Repair/reconstruct Lagunitas Corral using FS materials (cattle panels/railroad ties) issued to Association in 2004.

Future Desired Projects

Reconstruct 1.0 mile of Apache Bonito/Diablo fence	Discussed
Replace/repair cattleguard base at Lagunitas campground.	Discussed
Reconstruct 2 miles Canon Largo/San Antone Tanques fence	Discussed



Reconstruct Canon Largo/Beaver fence and Bonito/Beaver fence. Add wood stays to Beaver/Hondo fence.	Discussed
Reconstruct 1 mile of private fence at fisherman's park area (Grant boundary) but because of private status may not approve construction.	Discussed
Construct loading chute/corral/holding pen (200 ft. X 200 ft). at the FR 87/San Antone Watertrap location.	Discussed
Change fence (Olguin/Nutritas) maintenance responsibilities with San Antone Assoc.	Discussed
Tio Grande Assoc. President will contact Lagunitas about repairing 0.3 mi. of fence @ the Grant boundary	Discussed (Contractor maybe Jonathan Bush)
New construction of fence along FR 93 in Olguin to prevent trailing cattle from grazing in Olguin and mixing with Assoc. cattle.	Discussed (EA required)
Association and rider completed heavy maintenance of Bonito/Diablo fence (9 H-brace section) by clearing fallen trees and replacing fence material where needed during 2008.	Completed in 2008.

EXCESS USE AND UNAUTHORIZED USE

Permittees are encouraged to notify the Tres Piedras Ranger District of any known violation by permittees (excess use) or non-permittees (unauthorized use). Grazing permit holders who graze more livestock than authorized will receive a Notice of Non-Compliance, charged an excess use grazing fee, and the term permit may be suspended or cancelled in whole or part

TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

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. A second travel management meeting was held in Tres Piedras on March 21, 2007 (The first travel management meeting was held in Tres Piedras July 11, 2006). Attendees provided comments to the USFS regarding roads or trails that should remain open or closed; and access routes to range improvements that are needed within the allotment

Benjamin Romero, District Ranger

Date



**ACTUAL USE INFORMATION
LAGUNITAS ALLOTMENT
CURRENT GRAZING SEASON**

Attachment 1

Pasture	Scheduled Livestock Number & Class	Scheduled Use		Actual Use		Remarks
		Date on	Date Off	Date on	Date Off	
Beaver (7-10 days)	925 c/c	6/16				
Canon Largo	925 c/c					
Olguin	925 c/c					
Southfork	925 c/c					
Diablo	925 c/c					
Beaver (7-10 days)	925 c/c		10/5			
Options: (Olguin, Southfork, Diablo, Canon Largo, Beaver) (Beaver, Diablo, Southfork, Olguin, Canon Largo)						

Number of Head counted on: _____.

Number of head lost: _____.

Additional Comments:

Table 1

Livestock Class	Poisonous Plants	Predators	Other	Total Losses



Appendix

Grazing Permittee Instructions for Cattle Operators on Tres Piedras Ranger District

1. Review the term grazing permit and become familiar with the terms and conditions prior to the grazing season.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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

1. 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

- 1. 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.**
- 2. 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. The FS does not furnish materials or cost-share for maintenance projects.**
- 3. All lay-down fences should be let-down no later than October 20, or as soon as possible after cattle leave the allotment and adjoining allotments.**
- 4. 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

- 1. 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.**
- 2. 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.**
- 3. 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.**
- 4. Eartags will be provided initially to new permittees on allotments that are tagged. After initial allocation of tags, 10 percent will be provided per grazing season.**
- 5. Please notify the District Ranger with any observations of stray livestock on the National Forest Lands (regardless of the time of year).**
- 6. Move any dead animals to rest no closer than 300 feet from water or roadways.**

Report wildfires to: Tres Piedras Ranger Station at (505) 758-8678 or Carson Dispatch at (505) 758-6208 or (505) 758-6209.

If you have any questions, please contact the Tres Piedras Ranger District office.