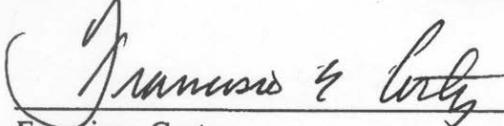
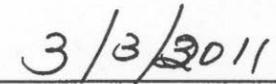


**2011**  
**Annual Operating Instructions (AOI)**  
**Sublette Allotment (00600)**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Francisco Cortez  
Acting District Ranger

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Introduction**

The Annual Operating Instructions meeting was held on February 4, 2011 at the Conejos Peak Ranger District. Permittees that attended the meeting included Ben and Elsie Trujillo, Carlyn Sowards, Joe and Gerri Mora, and Phillip Trujillo. Wayne Yonemoto 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 condition 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 livestock grazing fee is \$1 .35/HM (Cattle).

The dry weather pattern condition includes the following. Within the area, the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) 3-month forecast is the NOAA 3-month forecast is for increased chances of below normal to normal precipitation, Feb. through Apr., 2011, as well as, equal 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 December 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 January is described as Very Dry (-1.99 to -1.25), so 1-month drought conditions are present. Within the District, during the periods of Oct. to Dec., 2010 and Jan. to Feb., 2011, there were various areas of favorable above normal precipitation but also areas of below normal precipitation. Also, below normal to normal to above-normal temperatures occurred.

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

Member Information and Season of Use (Term Permit/Annual Authorized Use Request Form)

Member Name	Permitted (c/c; 5/25– 10/10)	Authorized (c/c, 5/25 – 10/10)	Eartag Letter	Remarks
Leo J. & Geraldine Mora	50	50	V	50
Dale & Orva Sowards Trust	56	56	P	56
Benicio & Elsie Trujillo	15	15	T	15
Phillip & Theresa Trujillo	40	40	L	40
Total	161 c/c (736 HMs, AUMs); 139 days	161 c/c		161c/c; 694 HMs, AUMs; 5/28 – 6/26 (staggered entry) 10/8 (exit)

Range readiness inspections will determine the final authorized livestock number and whether range vegetation and soils meet the criteria for grazing. Range readiness is tentatively scheduled for May 18, 2011.

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. We ask that you comply with the NM State Trichomoniasis regulations. All livestock must be scheduled for counting prior to entering the 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 writing 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 is approved for “total nonuse”, the permittee 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 the range readiness determination):

Tentative Rotation Schedule (5/25 – 10/10, 139 days)

Pasture	Tentative Dates (# of Days)	Days (min to max)	Actual Use	Reason for Adjustments
San Miguel	5/25 – 6/20 (27)	20 - 30		
Toltec	6/21 – 7/18 (28)	35 - 40		
Santa Rita	7/19 – 8/29 (42)	35 - 40		
Atencio	8/30 – 10/10 (42)	35 - 40		
Total	(139) Range readiness determines the authorized entry date; utilization determines the exit date	113 - 153		

## **Review of 2010 Monitoring Data**

The monitoring information in the Allotment Study file was reviewed. The forage production improved after the July, August precipitation (normal to above normal). Participants discussed areas of below average to average production and average to above average production, livestock distribution management and utilization. All pastures had a majority of grazeable acres at average to above average production. Utilization guidelines 20% to 40% (end of season) in each pasture was met. FS monitoring indicated end-of-growing season utilization: San Miguel - 10%; Atencio - 30%; Toltec - 30% to 40 %; Santa Rita - 40%.

## **2010 AOI Compliance**

1. All pastures met the utilization guidelines of 20% to 40% utilization measured at the end of the growing season.
2. Met the riparian standards for the 2010 grazing season in the Santa Rita pasture.

## **2010 Actual Use**

Actual Use: 161 c/c; 5/28 – 10/8, (134 days) (6 % reduction from permit) (Total c/c is 694 HM, AUM; There was a staggered entry by the members.

San Miguel 5/28 – 6/25 (29 days), Total 154 c/c, 138 HM, AUM  
46 c/c, 5/28 – 6/25, 29 days, 44 HM, AUM  
55 c/c, 5/30 – 6/25, 27 days, 49 HM, AUM  
53 c/c, 5/31 – 6/25, 26 days, 45 HM, AUM

Atencio 161c/c, 6/26 – 8/1 (37 days), 196 HM, AUM  
50 c/c + 55 c/c + 56 c/c = 161 c/c

Toltec 161c/c, 8/2 – 8/30 (29 days), 154, HM, AUM  
Santa Rita 161 c/c, 8/31 – 10/8 (39 days), 206 HM, AUM

## **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, Ocular Estimate Method by Class, Ocular Utilization Estimate by Weight, Photo Point, and Range Trend Plot.

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

### **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 areas 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.

### Key Forage Species

<b>Pasture</b>	<b>Key Forage Species</b>	<b>Stubble Height</b>
San Miguel/Atencio	Arizona fescue	6 - 8"
	Kentucky bluegrass	4 - 6"
	Mt. muhly	4 - 6"
Santa Rita/Toltec	AZ/Thurber fescue	6 - 8"
	Kentucky bluegrass	4 - 6"
	Mt. muhly	4 - 6"
Riparian	Kentucky bluegrass	4 - 6"
	Carex	4 - 6"

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. Salting practices are also described in the cattle operator instructions at the end of this AOI.

### **AOI Objectives**

- Rotate pastures to vary the cool and warm growing season rest and allow the opportunity for cool and warm season growth.
- Minimize the time spent in San Miguel in order to improve forage vigor. Monitor all the pastures grazing time in order to improve forage vigor.
- Maintain or improve the riparian green zone forage in the Santa Rita pothole area and the Atencio spring area.
- Improve livestock distribution when initially entering the pasture by moving small groups throughout the pasture, to various salt locations with rider representation from all the permittees. Also, herd/move livestock within the authorized pasture every few days to improve livestock distribution.
- As Sublette allotment permittees, you are authorized to drive (in your work truck vehicle) off of the Forest Service developed roads further than 300 ft. during the performance of your maintenance responsibilities. Aspen fence stays may be removed from allotment areas adjacent to the maintained pasture fences. In addition, ATV transport of materials is allowed. During conditions (moist soil) when your vehicle tires will cause increasing soil surface disturbance and greater negative impacts, you are not authorized to drive beyond or off of the established Forest Service roads or trails. This authorization will expire on 6/30/11 or may change to an earlier expiration date depending on Forest conditions, fire restrictions, seasonal closures or limited accessibility.

### **Permittee Management Concerns (Also refer to the Project Section)**

1. Fuelwood gatherers are cutting fences and ATV cross country travel is extensive. The LEO is needed to patrol the area May to Oct. and especially on weekends/nights. Permittees are worried about theft of calves. Public users are making new 2-tracks within Atencio/Santa Rita. Hunters are placing salt blocks at stock tanks to attract the elk. The elk population requires management to reduce numbers. Elk utilization should be measured. NM Game and Fish needs to assist permittees with funding of new projects that benefit the elk habitat.
2. Construct new water projects to increase the water sources. NEPA process is slow and they have been waiting since 2004 for the San Miguel proposed earthen pit tank. (Note: The District project priority for new pit tanks in drainages is low and the District has approved construction of only 1 new pit tank since 2001. Guzzlers, water catchments (not constructed in drainages) and well pipelines are a higher priority.)
3. BLM permittee did not lay down the 1 mile of fence in fall, 2007, 2008, 2009. The BLM permittee lays fence down in Nov/Dec and Sublette stands fence in May. In the past, Sublette has maintained the 2 miles of fence although Sublette is assigned maintenance on just 1 mile and the BLM permittee is assigned maintenance on the other 1 mile.
4. Toltec entry in 2010 was too late to use the available water sources. Toltec should not be grazed late in the season until new water sources are developed. In Santa Rita, 8 calves were stolen. For the pasture move from San Miguel to Toltec, more riders will be needed. San Antone is not repairing water gaps at Atencio/Santa Rita boundaries.

### **Annual Authorized Use Request Form**

Credits from previous year, if applicable, would apply to the current bill (6% to 10% reduction in numbers and/or days if Feb./Mar. continue to be dry). A staggered entry and exit may occur this year. The final livestock numbers and entry date would be determined after range readiness inspections. Therefore, additional billing may be required after the first billing.

### **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 current grazing season.

- Special attention to the southern boundary stretch of fence between the Sublette and San Antone allotments. Oso/San Miguel boundary fence needs to be maintained.
- Clean out and seal with salt various earthen tanks throughout the allotment. Specifically repair the eroded bank of the Long Canyon earthen tank furthest to the west and nearest to the Toltec pasture. Seal tank in Santa Rita at the Santa Rita/Toltec boundary.
- Conejos County needs to maintain the borrow ditch from the Forest road to an earthen tank located in the Santa Rita pasture.
- Repair Atencio/San Miguel boundary fence, 0.25 mi. T posts; starting at river, north to Bighorn
- Install 8 ft. metal gate at Gato canyon for trailing at San Miguel south boundary
- Replace/Install storage tank (1100 gal.) at Toltec spring

- Repair Atencio/Santa Rita boundary fence, 0.25 mi.
- Narrow Gauge needs to remove several stacks of railroad ties (200 in each stack) placed in 2008

**Previous Projects Completed:**

Reconstructed/maintained Santa Rita/Atencio fence (0.25 mi.); BLM/FS laydown fence (1 mi.); and installed at Toltec spring a 300 gallon drinker and 120 ft. pipeline.	2007 - Completed
Reconstructed/maintained Santa Rita/Atencio fence (.25 mi.); installed a 280 gallon drinker at Toltec spring near Toltec/Santa Rita boundary.	2008 - Completed
Installed a replacement gate (stolen) at the stateline/Bighorn fence.	2009 - Completed
Constructed additional Sublette corral pen and loading chute	2010 - Completed

**Future Projects**

Santa Rita/Atencio fence maintenance/reconstruction	0.3 mi. left (1.25 miles has been worked)
Expansion of the Sublette corral	NEPA completed; addition of 2 pens and loading chute; will assist in accomodating all the Sublette cattle and strays during sorting; design includes railroad ties/metal gates/cattle panels/salvage pipe; construct 1 pen each year; for last pen - need a 10 ft. gate/12 ft. gate , 10 railroad ties, 10 cattle panels
Construction of a new earthen tank in San Miguel; and at Toltec spring	NEPA started in 2004 for San Miguel tank; Toltec spring – 1100 gal. storage tank
Reconstruction/maintenance of Atencio stateline fence	Discussed (3.5 mi.)
Maintenance San Miguel/Atencio stateline fence	Discussed (0.25 mi.)
Maintenance San Miguel/Atencio boundary fence at Bighorn	Discussed (0.5 mi)
Elevate cattleguard/add wings at Atencio by river	Discussed; possibly replace base.
Elevate cattleguard at San Miguel bridge	Discussed; possibly replace with 12 ft grid
Cleanout cattleguard at Atencio/San Miguel boundary	Discussed
Fence at Baldy canyon is needed to keep cattle from trailing out of the pasture	Discussed (20 ft)

Install water gap fence (cable/treated wood panels) at river to replace existing wire fence	Discussed
In 2008, the railroad removed the 3 special cattleguards at the 3 locations where the tracks cross the pasture fences. The grids are 20 ft. X 6 ft.	The 3 grids need to be reinstalled by the railroad.

**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

**National Environmental Policy Act Status for Grazing Permit Issuance**

Direction for management on the allotment is being documented in this AOI and is in conformance with the allotment management plan (AMP). An environmental assessment was completed in 1996 and an AMP was prepared in 2004. Open and positive communication is encouraged. Please contact the range personnel if you have any questions or wish to discuss allotment management objectives, or Forest Plan standards and guidelines.

**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. Scoping letter (dated February 2, 2009) was mailed to the public.

ACTUAL USE INFORMATION

**Sublette Allotment  
Grazing Season**

**Attachment 1**

Pasture	Scheduled Livestock Number & Class	Scheduled Use		Actual Use		Remarks
		Date on	Date Off	Date on	Date Off	
San Miguel	161 c/c	5/25				
Toltec						
Santa Rita						
Atencio			10/10			

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**

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

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. The FS does not furnish materials or cost-share for maintenance projects.

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.

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. 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.

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: 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.