

LUNA-CHACON ALLOTMENT # 406
Carson National Forest
Camino Real Ranger District

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS 2011

The annual meeting for the Luna Chacon Allotment was held on February 24, 2011, at the Fire Department office in Buena Vista, New Mexico. Attending were Martin Romero, Herman, Elizabeth and Megan Romero, Benancio Trujillo, Ernesto Gonzalez, Martin Duran, Benjamin Cruz, Lorraine Hurtado, and Ross Torres from the Luna Chacon Grazing Association. Tammy Malone, Melvin Herrera and Sean Kelly represented the Forest Service.

These annual operating instructions are hereby made a part of each Term Grazing Permit on the Luna-Chacon Allotment.

The Camino Real Ranger District and the permittees discussed possible drought conditions, current snow depth and water content on the allotment and the outlook on predicted weather patterns for this coming grazing season. The Southwest Region is experiencing Moderate to Extreme drought, so any non-use this grazing season will be considered resource protection non-use. The mountainous Luna Chacon Allotment is less affected and is classified as being in moderate drought at the time of the meeting. Forest Service and Permittees remain optimistic about grazing within the range of permitted numbers this year. The 2009 Environmental Assessment of grazing on the allotment took drought into consideration and included management changes and several range improvements to improve and maintain conditions.

Table 1 - Permittee, Permitted and Authorized Number and Kind.

1. Permittee	Permitted Number and Kind	Authorized Number and Kind
Luna Chacon Grazing Assoc.	230 to 288cow/calf & 14 bulls	288 cow/calf 14 bulls
Chacon Group (135 to 169)		
John Abeyta	20 cow/calf	20 cow/calf
Martin M. Romero	21 cow/calf	21 cow/calf
Mr. & Mrs. Benjamin L. Cruz	32 cow/calf	32 cow/calf
Ernesto E. Gonzales	7 cow/calf	7 cow/calf
John Paul Vigil	5 cow/calf	5 cow/calf
Emilie Vigil & J. Lorenzo Vigil	4 cow/calf	4 cow/calf
Herman & Elizabeth Romero	43 cow/calf	43 cow/calf
Manuel Romero	11 cow/calf	11 cow/calf
Benancio Trujillo	26 cow/calf	26 cow/calf
Luna Group (95 to 119)		
Martin and Lucille Duran	33 cow/calf	37 cow/calf
Robert or Janet Garcia	26 cow/calf	30 cow/calf
Lorraine Hurtado	13 cow/calf	17 cow/calf
Andres Martinez	16 cow/calf	0 cow/calf
Ross & Emily Torres	31 cow/calf	35 cow/calf

Table 2 - Season of Use

2. Season of Use	
06/01 - 9/30	(122 days)

Table 3 - Pasture estimated time and actual use and utilization.

3. Pasture Rotation Pasture	Estimated Dates	Estimated Time	Actual Use	Utilization %
<i>Chacon</i>				
Romero Lake	06/01 – 06/15	15 days		
Sardinas	06/16 – 07/25	40 days		
La Presa	07/26 – 09/15	52 days		
Romero Lake	09/16 – 09/30	15 days		
<i>Luna</i>				
Bull Canyon	REST			
Lower Luna	06/01-06/20	20 days		
Upper Luna	06/21-09/20	92 days		
Lower Luna	09/21-09/30	10 days		

Adaptive management will continue to be applied to the management of the Luna/Chacon allotment which means that the season of use, numbers grazed and rotation schedules may be adjusted throughout the grazing season based on resource conditions. Range improvements, i.e. fences, will be maintained prior to moving to a different pasture.

4. Maintenance of Improvements

The entire cost of improvements maintenance is the responsibility of the permittee. Assigned allotment boundary fences, division fences, stock tanks, springs, cattleguards, and other range structural improvements must be maintained prior to the permittees going on to the allotment.

5. Other Items of Discussion

The 2010 grazing season went well overall on Luna and Chacon units with use being within the utilization guidelines. This was due to good production of forage on the allotment. Maintenance of improvements was adequate throughout the allotment. Livestock were well distributed throughout the allotment all season.

Utilization guidelines for 2011 are 40% in key forage areas of annual available forage and 4 inches stubble height in riparian zones. Forage utilization will be measured in key forage areas.

The grazing fee this year is \$1.35 per head month for cattle.

Permittees and the Camino Real Ranger District will look at range together to determine range readiness and specific on-date.

The Forest Service discussed ongoing efforts with the Travel Management Rule. A decision is expected to be signed by the Forest Supervisor during this grazing season. Permittees stated that they need to use

ATV's and motor vehicles for performing their required maintenance on fences and other range improvements, checking that gates are closed, checking on cattle health and location, and placing salt and mineral supplements. Forest Service should be able to accommodate with a written letter issued to the permittees.

After the 2009 Environmental Assessment some management changes and several proposed range improvements were adopted. The Romero Lake pasture will be grazed for a shorter time in the beginning of the season, the Lower Luna pasture will be grazed for a shorter period of time at the end of the season, and the upper Frijoles canyon portion of the Olla Ranchos allotment will be incorporated into the rotation on odd years with the Luna pastures. The Range improvements needing construction are included in the following list.

Priority for Range Betterment work for 2011:

1. Install drift fence between the Upper Luna and La Presa pastures in the area of Forest Road 76.
2. Install a four foot cattle guard, for passage by ATVs, on the road in section 33 where the gate is constantly left open. This is close to the point where the Bull/ Luna fence meets the Olla Ranchos allotment boundary.
3. Construct a drift fence at the bottom of the meadow in the Frijoles annex.
4. Install a drinker in Upper Luna pasture away from the small drainage in Section 5 to maintain vegetative diversity, acceptable soil compaction levels, and better riparian function by concentrating the use away from the drainage.
5. Convert the Larkspur enclosure fence to a lay down fence.
6. Develop a spring to provide an additional water source to relieve pressure on vegetation in the vicinity of Romero Lake.
7. Construct the proposed Trick tank in the Lower Luna pasture between east and west Luna drainages.
8. Construct the proposed Trick tank in the Bull pasture at the head of Maria's canyon.
9. Repair/reconstruct an old spring development at the top of the Bull pasture, including the spring head protection fence, which is currently in disrepair.
10. A cattleguard is needed on the Larkspur Fence (priority) and at the gate on the fence between Sardinias and La Presa units. These cattleguards could be smaller cattleguards to allow ATV traffic.

Permittees were reminded to keep cattle away from the Arizona Willow population in La Presa Pasture as much as possible and avoid placing salt there, about 1 mile above Little Korea. There is a need to maintain a healthy, stable or expanding willow population. The overall health of the riparian community would be the indicator of when or if protection is needed. The environmental assessment called for a wildlife/cattle enclosure fence around it if needed.

Riparian restoration is planned in a portion of Valle De Los Romeros.

The Camino Real Ranger District will provide replacement tags as needed.

The Grazing Instructions for 2011 are the same as in 2010.

The Camino Real Ranger District would like at least 2 weeks notice prior to any proposed change in management so that they can go look at the allotment with the permittee.