

RIO CHIQUITO ALLOTMENT #402
 Carson National Forest
 Camino Real Ranger District

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS 2011

The annual meeting for the Rio Chiquito Allotment was held on May 17, 2011, at the Camino Real Ranger District Office in Peñasco, New Mexico. Attending were, Joe Romero and Archie Velarde from the Rio Chiquito Grazing Association. Tammy Malone, Melvin Herrera and Sean Kelly represented the Forest Service.

These annual operating instructions are hereby made a part of the Term Grazing Permit for the Rio Chiquito Grazing Association.

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 would be considered resource protection non-use. This mountainous district 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 new guidelines to improve and maintain conditions.

1. Permittee	Permit Number and Kind	Authorized Number and Kind
Rio Chiquito Grazing Association	180 cow/calf, 9 bulls	14 cow/calf, 4 bulls
Gene Dominguez	(6 cow/calf)	(0 cow/calf)
Joe Romero	(112 cow/calf)	(5 cow/calf, 3 bulls)
Joyce Sandoval	(5 cow/calf)	(5 cow/calf)
Presiliano Sandoval	(4 cow/calf)	(4 cow/calf, 1 bull)
Archie R. Velarde	(53 cow/calf)	(0 cow/calf)

2. Season of Use	
05/1 - 9/15	(138 days)

Table 1 - Pasture Rotation

<u>3. Pasture Rotation</u>	<u>Planned</u>		<u>Actual use</u>	<u>utilization %</u>
Pasture	Estimated Dates	Estimated Time		
Lower Entrañas	Used by Trampas allotment this year	20 days		
Jacinto Canyon	Rest	0 days		
Cejita (Joe)	05/1 - 09/15	138 days		
Cebadilla	Rest	0 days		
Rio Chiquito	Rest	0 days		
Vallecitos (Gene)	Rest	138 days		
Canada Ancha- Canada Abeyta (Pres, Joyce)	05/1 – 09/15	138 days		

As per conversation on 3/28/2011 at the Trampas annual meeting with permittees, Preciliano and Joyce Sandoval will graze their livestock in the Canada Ancha and use this pasture in combination with their private land and the Canada Abeyta Pasture both on the Trampas Allotment.

4. Maintenance of Improvements

The entire cost of improvements maintenance is the responsibility of the permittees. 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 Discussed

The 2009 grazing year went well on the allotment. Permittees contributed to a good season by volunteering a reduced stocking of the allotment of approximately 15 percent. Utilization was within the utilization guidelines in most key areas as monitored by Forest Service employees. Distribution was better than in 2008 but could have been better in the Cebadilla pasture where there were vast areas which went ungrazed. The two key areas in the Rio Chiquito pasture, Dinner Canyon and Osha Cienega, both looked much better in 2009 than in previous years. Maintenance of range improvements was good.

Grazing Instructions for 2011 were discussed and are the same as in 2000.

With the Environmental Assessment being appealed, guidelines and management will remain the same as in previous years. Depending on the appeal process, and the timing of the outcome, the District Ranger may or may not choose to implement any new aspects proposed in that EA at that time. So for now the utilization guidelines for 2010 are 40% of available annual forage in key use areas and 4 inches stubble height in riparian zones. Use guidelines can be adjusted to 60% use on crested wheat stands west of the highway. Forage utilization will be measured in key forage areas.

The permittees are encouraged to start addressing those issues identified in the analysis that are within their power to address given the infrastructure currently in place. Permittees are also encouraged to observe and share with the Forest Service stubble heights and distribution effects.

Permittees are encouraged to monitor (ie. Forage conditions on their allotment) and provide documentation copies to the Camino Real Ranger District. Permittees informed the Forest Service that both the Range Improvement Task Force and Joe Romero have installed cages for monitoring this year.

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

The issue of NM highway right of way fence maintenance responsibility was discussed. A cattle guard at the transfer station and about ¼ mile of fence is needed along the highway right-of-way to keep cattle in the Vallecitos unit. The highway department has been unwilling to fence the area and the permittee has not stocked livestock for the past few years because of that. The Camino Real Ranger District has sent a letter to the NM Department of Transportation and is hopeful that the situation will be remedied eventually.

As per telephone conversation on 3/16/2010 between Sean Kelly and Ray Chavez, the president of the Trampas Grazing Association, Presciliano and Joyce Sandoval will graze their livestock in the Canada Ancha and use this pasture in combination with their private land and the Canada Abeyta Pasture both on the Trampas Allotment. Ray said it is likely that the Sandovals will be accommodated until the proposed water development is in place, at which time the Trampas association will start using it themselves.

Permittees and Camino Real Ranger District will look at range together to determine range readiness and on-date. Range readiness will be based on the current year's production of the Crested Wheatgrass and capacity of the first pastures, rather than on physiological development of the native plants as has been done in the past. Soil moisture and road conditions will also be evaluated before allowing the cattle to be turned on.

The Forest Service discussed ongoing efforts with the Travel Management Rule. 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, placing salt and mineral supplements, gathering mid and end of season. They also need access to Trampas and Santa Barbara allotments as they occasionally need to go there to find strays. Forest Service should be able to accommodate with a written letter issued to the permittees.

Priority for Range Betterment work for 2011:

1. Reconstruction and expansion of corrals in Lower Entrañas, and Jacinto Canyon.
2. ¼ mile of fence is needed east of highway 76 on the south end of the Cebadilla pasture.
3. Cejita Mesa Trick Tank #1 is leaking from rust holes and needs storage tank replaced.
4. Storage tank for Vallecitos.
5. Burning and thinning projects in Entrañas.

Camino Real Ranger District will provide new tags this year as needed.

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