

RIO PUEBLO/MIRANDA ALLOTMENT #404
Carson National Forest
Camino Real Ranger District

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS 2011

The annual meeting for the Rio Pueblo Allotment was held on January 7, 2011, at the District Office in Peñasco, New Mexico. Attending were Benjamin Cruz and Floyd Romero from the Rio Pueblo Grazing Association. Tammy Malone, Melvin Herrera, Amy Simms and Sean Kelly represented the Forest Service.

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

The Camino Real Ranger District and the permittees discussed forecasted drought conditions, current snow depth and water content on the allotment and the outlook on predicted weather patterns for this coming grazing season. Conditions for this year appear questionable as seen so far this winter. We can expect that the low end of the range of permitted numbers could be grazed this year, but any non-use below that will be considered resource protection non-use.

Table 1- Permitted and Authorized use for Grazing.

1. Permittee	Number and Kind	Authorized Number and Kind
Rio Pueblo Grazing Association	117 cow/calf-155 cow/calf	59 cow/calf
Mr. & Mrs. Benjamin L. Cruz	(109-146 cow/calf)	(50 cow/calf, 2 bull)
Floyd J. Romero	(8-9 cow/calf)	(6 cow/calf, 1 bull)

2. Season of Use
06/01 - 09/30 (122 days)

Table 2-Pasture Rotation

3. Pasture Rotation	Planned		Actual use	utilization %
Pasture	Estimated Dates	Estimated Time		
McGaffey	06/01 – 06/30	30 days		
Vallecitos	07/01 – 07/31	31 days		
Telephone	08/01 - 08/31	31 days		
Amole	08/31 – 09/30	30 days		
Middle and Ranchos allot.	rest	0 days		
La Junta	rest	0 days		

Adaptive management will continue to be applied to the management of the Rio Pueblo 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, ie. 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, pasture 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. Permittees took a 33% reduction from the low end of their permitted range, and grazed only 78 head. Production of forage was good. Forage utilization, was estimated in key areas and use was acceptable in all units. Permittees skipped the Telephone pasture as scheduled and went directly into the Amole pasture. On 9/13/2010 the permittees were instructed to return to the Telephone pasture.

Benjamin Cruz put his 30 Luna Chacon cattle into the Rio Pueblo portion of La Junta for 15 days at the end of the season to avoid a fourth year of significant non-use for personal convenience. This allowed the association to meet the 90% of permitted numbers needed to avoid losing part of the Term Grazing Permit for failure to abide by the general terms and conditions.

Extra herding attention needs to be given to the meadow at the grant gate in the Telephone pasture. Utilization was 30-50% in that meadow in 2010.

A new cattleguard was installed in 2006 between the Olla Ranchos allotment and the La Cueva unit along FR 442. Permittees will need to attach the fence to the wing posts and maintain the fence.

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

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

Permittees and the Forest Service will look at range together to determine range readiness and the actual on-date.

Permittees and the Forest Service discussed the proposed group shelter in Amole Canyon. Permittees expressed their concern about the impact of walk in users of the development during periods when it is not reserved. They predicted litter and vandalism and are concerned about losing calves. They also inquired about the fence location and maintenance. The Forest Service committed to doing the fence maintenance around the group shelter area, and arranged to meet the permittees on site in the spring to coordinate on the fence design and location. By the end of the discussion the permittees gave their support to the project.

The Mica mine reseeding is still vulnerable and Permittees and Forest Service committed to communicating with the Picuris in an attempt to keep a good relationship. Sean Kelly will go inspect the fence in the spring and intends to invite someone from the Picuris Pueblo.

The Forest Service discussed ongoing efforts with the Travel Management Rule. A decision is expected to be signed by the Forest Supervisor sometime during this grazing season. If permittees 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; the Forest Service should be able to accommodate with a written letter issued to the permittees.

Grazing instructions for 2011 are the same as in 2010.

Priority for Range Betterment work for 2011:

1. Reconstruction of McGaffey trick tank. Needs new trough and possibly pipeline from storage tank to trough.
2. Fence reconstruction between the Middle and La Cueva units.
3. Reconstruction of spring developments; Tio Maes, Indian Creek, and Apache Spring
4. Explore possibility of a water gap in the HWY 518 ROW near Amole.

The Borrego timber sale may proceed this summer in the Telephone pasture.

Forest Service 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.