

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS DEL NORTE ALLOTMENT 2003

I. AUTHORIZATION

For the 2002 grazing season, applications for the following were approved:

| | | | |
|----------|----|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Bernal - | 40 | Adult Cattle (c/c) | 06/01/2003 – 10/31/2003 |
| Ortiz - | 27 | Adult Cattle (c/c) | Inactive permit |

Non-use for resource protection (drought) is being granted as follows:

N/A – authorized livestock numbers are within estimated capacity (due to drought) of allotment.

2002 grazing season Actual Use:

| | | | |
|-----------|----|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Jacquez - | 40 | Adult Cattle (c/c) | Total non-use in 2002 |
|-----------|----|--------------------|-----------------------|

The authorized livestock numbers and grazing periods are no guarantee that they will stay on a pasture for the full grazing period or the allotment for the full season. Below average forage production may require that cattle will be removed from the allotment earlier than expected. This decision will be made in cooperation with you and based on the utilization for key species and key areas as outlined in these Annual Operating Instructions.

The rotation plan (Table 1) is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances such as lack of water and forage in the pastures. The Forest Service or the permittee can initiate changes of pastures outside of the above rotation plan in coordination with this office. The permittee or this office must submit a written justification before change is made.

| Table 1. Authorized grazing rotation. | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Numbers of Cattle | Pasture | Grazing Period |
| 40 pair-Bernal | Medio Dia Canyon/Bruce Place | 06/1- 8/15 |
| 40 pair-Bernal | Cochiti Mesa/Del Norte Canyon | 8/16- 10/31 |
| 27 pair-Ortiz | | Inactive permit |

II. UTILIZATION/MONITORING

The proper utilization of forage is a critical factor in livestock management on the Del Norte Allotment. We will be checking levels of use to insure that forage utilization is within recommended levels during the grazing season. Key areas and key species (Table 2) will be monitored within the allotment.

| Site # | Pasture/Key Area Location | Key Grass Species |
|--------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Cochiti Mesa | Kentucky Bluegrass, Mountain Muhly |
| 2 | Pines | Kentucky Bluegrass, Mountain Muhly |
| 3 | Medio Dia | Kentucky Bluegrass, Mountain Muhly |
| 4 | Bruce Place | Kentucky Bluegrass, Mountain Muhly |

Both the Forest Service and the permittee are responsible for monitoring forage use and stubble height on the allotment to ensure that proper use levels are not exceeded. We are primarily concerned with use levels in canyon bottoms where cattle tend to concentrate use on palatable feed. We have identified key areas to be monitored on this allotment (map available upon request from this office). Maximum allowable use is set for a conservative grazing intensity of less than 40% for the Del Norte Allotment. Please refer to the Table 3 below for descriptors to aid in determining forage use levels.

Forage use levels should be monitored periodically by the permittee to aid in determining when livestock should be moved between pastures. **Permittee inspection summary sheets (attached) are provided for your convenience in order to record any of your observations throughout the season. You are highly encouraged to record your allotment visits to aid in documenting allotment conditions.** Forest Service personnel will attempt to visit at least one key area within each grazed pasture during the second half of the scheduled grazing period. If areas within a pasture or the pasture as a whole begin to approach the identified stubble heights (Table 4), actions will need to be taken to limit additional forage use. If use within that key area is approaching allowable stubble heights (in red) then the remaining key areas will also be monitored and the pasture inspected to determine overall use patterns. This information will be used to determine if cattle are to be re-distributed within the pasture or removed from the pasture.

| Qualitative Grazing Intensity Category | Use of Forage by Weight | Qualitative Indicators of Grazing Intensity |
|--|-------------------------|---|
| Light to non-use | 0-30 | Only choice plants (key species) and areas show use. There is no use of poor forage plants |
| Conservative | 31-40 | Choice forage plants (key species) have abundant seed stalks; Areas more than a mile from water show little use: About one third to one half primary forage plants show grazing on key areas. |

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| Table 3 cont. Qualitative characteristics of grazing intensity categories used to characterize New Mexico rangelands (Holechek & Galt, 6/00, Rangelands). | | |
|--|-------|--|
| Moderate | 41-50 | Most of accessible range show use; Key areas show patchy appearance with one half to two thirds of primary forage plants (key species) showing use; Grazing is noticeable 1-1½ miles from water |
| Heavy | 51-60 | Nearly all primary forage plants show grazing on key areas: Palatable shrubs show hedging; Key areas show a lack of seed stalks: Grazing is noticeable in areas over 1½ miles from water |
| Severe | 61+ | Key areas show a clipped or mowed appearance (no stubble ht.): Shrubs are severely hedged; There is evidence of livestock trailing to forage; Areas over 1½ miles from water lack stubble height. |

| Table 4. Grazing intensity guide for mountain grassland rangeland in New Mexico (Holechek & Galt, 6/00, Rangelands). | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|--|--------------------|-----------|----------------|------------------|
| Qualitative Grazing Intensity Category | Use of Forage by Weight | Stubble Height Indicators of Grazing Intensity | | | | |
| | | Arizona Fescue | Western Wheatgrass | Bluegrass | Mountain Muhly | Timber Oatgrass* |
| | ---(%)--- | -----Inches----- | | | | |
| Light to none-use | 0-30 | 8+ | 7+ | 5+ | 5+ | 8+ |
| Conservative | 31-40 | 6-7 | 4-5 | 4-5 | 4-5 | 6-7 |
| Moderate | 41-50 | 5-6 | 3-4 | 3-4 | 3-4 | 5-6 |
| Heavy | 51-60 | 4-5 | 2-3 | 2-3 | 2-3 | 4-5 |
| Severe | 61+ | <4 | <2 | <2 | <2 | <4 |

*Determined by personal observation.

The Forest Service may or may not conduct inspections on the grazing allotment during the on-going grazing period as time and personnel availability allows. Monitoring items such as distribution patterns, range readiness, cattle numbers, forage use levels, and condition of improvements will be evaluated. The range readiness inspection will determine whether range vegetation and soils are ready for grazing.

III. 2002 MONITORING RESULTS

N/A – Allotment not stocked in 2002. Verified through compliance check.

IV. DEVELOPMENT WORK

In order to further develop the allotment, the Forest Service and the permittee have cooperatively agreed to complete the following projects. In general, Range Betterment Funds (derived from the grazing fees) can be used for approximately one-half of the cost of any project. Please be aware that it usually will be necessary to plan projects with at least one year lead time to allow required documentation and to obtain the necessary funding and clearances. Project work agreed to under Cooperative Improvement Modifications are to be completed within established time frames and to the standards attached to and made a part of the agreement unless otherwise modified by the Forest Officer.

1. **Special maintenance projects for this year: Reconstruction of Del Norte/Peralta Boundary fence**

2. **Future FY projects:** Defer until 2005 AMP.

3. **Other Projects Affecting Livestock Management**

The Forest Service in coordination with the permittees will be conducting field analysis (if time and funding allow) this season to determine existing allotment conditions including range condition, improvement condition, and overall livestock management as it relates to other resource uses and concerns. This information will be utilized in an Environmental Analysis (EA) beginning in 2005 to reauthorize livestock grazing and devise an Allotment Management Plan (AMP) that will guide future range and livestock management. This analysis will be conducted together with the adjacent Alamo, Bland, Bear Springs, and Peralta Allotments.

V. SPECIAL MITIGATION MEASURES FOR CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES

Seasonal restrictions (March 1-August 15) on construction activities apply in known breeding areas for threatened and endangered species. Any new construction or reconstruction activities will need to be coordinated with this office. **This does not apply to routine maintenance of existing range improvements.**

VI. MAINTENANCE OF IMPROVEMENTS

Maintenance of improvements i.e. (fences, springs, tanks, wells) should be complete and in satisfactory condition prior to entry date to the specific pasture. Please refer to attached map for your responsibilities. **If your maintenance responsibilities do not meet satisfactory condition you will not be permitted to turn out or your entry date may be delayed.**

VII. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL

This decision is subject to administrative review, pursuant to 36 CFR 251; and any appeal of this decision must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 251.90 (see enclosed copy of 36 CFR 251 regulations). In accordance with 36 CFR 251.84, if you file an appeal, I am willing to meet with you to discuss any concerns you may have with my decision. If you file an appeal, you may request an oral presentation in the appeal or at any time prior to closing of the appeal record (36 CFR 251.97). Additionally, if you file an appeal, you may request a stay of my decision in the appeal or at any time prior to closing of the appeal record (36 CFR 251.91).

A notice of appeal must be filed with Leonard Atencio, Forest Supervisor, Santa Fe National Forest, , at 1474 Rodeo Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505, within 45 days of the date of this decision. A copy of the notice of appeal must be filed simultaneously with John F. Peterson, District Ranger, Jemez Ranger District, P. O. Box 150, Jemez Springs, NM 87025.

The permittee should always ensure that full and sincere attempts to resolve disagreements through working with the District Ranger has occurred prior to filing a Notice to Appeal. The District Ranger is willing to meet with any permittee to discuss any issues related to the action.

/s/ John F. Peterson
JOHN F. PETERSON
District Ranger

04/07/2003
DATE

