

File Code: 2210

Date:

Dear Permittee:

Thank you for meeting with us on May 3, 2003 to discuss the drought, your Annual Operating Instructions (AOI), and the Carson/Santa Fe National Forest Range Management Plan. I look forward to working with you as the new District Ranger for the Pecos/Las Vegas Ranger District.

Please find enclosed a copy of the 2003 AOI for your allotment as was discussed in the meeting. The AOI documents our cooperation in managing the range resource on your allotment. The management for 2003 is based on last year's drought and the need to be conservative in our grazing approach this year to allow for recovery of the range.

Feel free to contact myself, or Michael Luján in Las Vegas with any questions or concerns regarding the 2003 AOI or your range allotment.

Sincerely,

Joseph G. Reddan
District Ranger

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS
Bear Lake Allotment
2003

I. AUTHORIZATION

For the 2003 grazing season, applications for the following were approved:

Permittee	Permitted HMs	<i>Authorized HMs-2003</i>
Rociada Lvstk. Assoc.	87 (25 Bulls, 4 C/c 7/1 to9/30)	<u>42</u> (<u>12</u> Bulls, 6/15 to9/30)
Leroy Aragon	51 (17 C/c 7/1 to9/30)	<u>60</u> (<u>17</u> C/c 6/15 to9/30)
Secundino Aragon Estate	69 (23 C/c 7/1 to 9/30)	Non-Use For Resource Protection
James Atencio	148 (49 C/c 7/1 to9/30)	<u>112</u> (<u>32</u> C/c 6/15 to9/30)
Leopoldo Duran	154 (51 C/c 7/1 to9/30)	<u>42</u> (<u>12</u> C/c 6/15 to9/30)
Silviano & Jerry Gomez	106 (35 C/c 7/1 to9/30)	<u>88</u> (<u>25</u> C/c 6/15 to9/30)
Gilbert Lopez	115 (38 C/c 7/1 to9/30)	<u>210</u> (<u>60</u> C/c 6/15 to9/30)
Roy Lujan	127 (42 C/c 7/1 to9/30)	<u>123</u> (<u>39</u> C/c 6/15 to9/30)
Joe T. Martinez	103 (34 C/c 7/1 to9/30)	<u>25</u> (<u>7</u> C/c 6/15 to9/30)
Joseph K. Martinez	124 (41 C/c 7/1 to9/30)	Non-Use For Resource Protection
Pedro Martinez Estate	64 (21 C/c 7/1 to9/30)	<u>39</u> (<u>11</u> C/c 6/15 to9/30)
Rafael Montoya	67 (22 C/c 7/1 to9/30)	<u>112</u> (<u>32</u> C/c 6/15 to9/30)
Robert D. Ortega Estate	100 (33 C/c 7/1 to9/30)	<u>109</u> (<u>31</u> C/c 6/15 to9/30)
Slim Chance Cattle Co. c/o Ben Nelson	372 (123 C/c 7/1 to9/30)	Non-Use For Resource Protection
TOTAL	1,687 HMs (558 C/c 7/1-9/30)	976 HMs (278 C/c 6/15-9/30)

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. Moves may be made up to 5 days before the scheduled move date and should be completed within 5 days after the move date, unless prior approval is given to adjust the use periods.

Table 1. Authorized grazing rotation.		
Numbers of Cattle	Pasture	Grazing Period
87	South Round Mtn	6/15 to 7/1(RL, RO, LA)
87	North Round Mtn	7/1 to 7/31(RL, RO, LA)
87	Jacks Creek	8/1 to 8/31(RL, RO, LA)
87	Noisy Brook	9/1 to 9/30(RL, RO, LA)
69	South Hamilton Mesa	6/15 to 7/1 (JA, SG, LD)
69	West Hamilton Mesa	7/1 to 8/15 (JA, SG, LD)
69	North Hamilton Mesa	8/16 to 9/15(JA,SG, LD)
69	East Hamilton Mesa	9/16 to 9/30(JA,SG, LD)
92	Upper Pecos	6/15 to 7/1 (ML, RM)
92	Rito Azul	7/1 to 7/31 (ML, RM)
92	Padre/Maestas	8/1 to 8/31 (ML, RM)
92	Las Canovitas	9/1 to 9/30 (ML, RM)
18	Bordo del Medio	6/15 to 9/30 (PM, JM)

12 bulls will be spread out through the pastures based on association application.

II. UTILIZATION/MONITORING

The proper utilization of forage is a critical factor in livestock management on the Bear Lake 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. Maps with the locations of the key areas are attached for your use.

Table 2. Key areas and key species for the Bear Lake Allotment		
Site #	Pasture/Key Area Location	Key Grass Species
1	Lower Hamilton Mesa (Sec. 17)	Arizona fescue, Kentucky bluegrass
2	Lower Bordo del Medio (Sec. 10)	Arizona fescue, Kentucky bluegrass
3	Middle Bordo del Medio (Sec. 3)	Arizona fescue, Kentucky bluegrass

4	Upper Bordo del Medio (Sec. 24)	Arizona fescue, Kentucky bluegrass
5	Rio Valdez (Sec. 33 & 34)	Arizona fescue, Kentucky bluegrass
6	Middle Hamilton Mesa (Sec. 33)	Arizona fescue, Kentucky bluegrass
7	Upper Pecos River (Sec. 14 & 15)	Arizona fescue, Kentucky bluegrass
8	Jarosa (Sec. 16)	Arizona fescue, Kentucky bluegrass
9	Between Jarosa and Maestas (Sec. 21)	Arizona fescue, Kentucky bluegrass
10	Rito del Padre (Sec. 18)	Arizona fescue, Kentucky bluegrass
11	Rito Azul (Sec. 24 & 30)	Arizona fescue, Kentucky bluegrass
12	Above Beatty's (Sec. 6)	Arizona fescue, Kentucky bluegrass
13	Jacks Creek (Sec. 1 & 12)	Arizona fescue, Kentucky bluegrass
14	Round Mountain (Sec. 14)	Arizona fescue, Kentucky bluegrass

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. We have identified key areas to be monitored on this allotment. Maximum allowable use is based on a conservative grazing intensity of less than or equal to 40% utilization on key forage species. 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 the key areas within the allotment 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 (Tables 5), actions will need to be taken to limit additional forage use. If use within a key area is approaching allowable stubble heights (in gray) then the rest of the pasture will also be monitored and 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.

Table 3. Qualitative characteristics of grazing intensity categories used to characterize New Mexico rangelands (Holechek & Galt, 6/00, Rangelands).		
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.
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 5. 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

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. **The grazing permit holder will be informed of and encouraged to participate in these inspections.**

III. 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 your

permit 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.**

VI. 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 (copy available upon request). 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 Gilbert Zepeda, 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 Joseph G. Reddan, District Ranger, Pecos/Las Vegas Ranger District, P. O. Box 429, Pecos, NM 87552.

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.

JOSEPH G. REDDAN
District Ranger

