

**2003 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS (AOI)
SPRINGS ALLOTMENT**

SEASON OF USE

3/1 TO 2/28 (Year Round) with various entry and exit dates

NUMBER AND KIND

343 Head - Cow/Calf operation (Community Allotment)

Permittee	Permitted HMs	Authorized HMs-2003	Actual Use HMs-2002
Padre Springs Lvstk. Assoc.	188 (15 B 3/1 to 2/28, 1 B 3/15 to 11/15)	188 (15 B 3/1 to 2/28, 1 B 3/15 to 11/15)*	188 (15 B 3/1 to 2/28, 1 B 3/15 to 11/15)
Circle ER Partnership	144 (18 C/c 3/15 to 11/15)	101 (13 C/c 3/15 to 11/15)*	144 (18 C/c 3/15 to 11/15)
Roger Friedman	748 (89 C/c 10/16 to 6/15, 9 C/c 6/16 to 10/15)	524 (62 C/c 10/16 to 6/15, 6 C/c 6/16 to 10/15)*	748 (89 C/c 10/16 to 6/15, 9 C/c 6/16 to 10/15)
Richard Montoya	24 (3 C/c 3/15 to 11/15)	8 (1 C/c 3/15 to 11/15)*	18.5 (3 C/c 3/15 to 6/1 1 C/c 6/1 to 11/15)
Mr. & Mrs. Ramon I. Vigil	2772 (231 C/c 3/1 to 2/28)	1800 (150 C/c 3/1 to 2/28)*	2110 (230 C/c 3/1 to 5/1, 200 C/c 5/1 to 10/1, 160 C/c 10/1 to 11/15, 150 C/c 11/15 to 2/28)
TOTAL	3876	2621*	3208.5

* Represents voluntary non-use taken for resource protection by the Spring's permittees.

ADMINISTRATION

1. Grazing fees must be paid before placing livestock on the allotment.
2. Sub-leasing is prohibited. You must own the livestock placed on the allotment. They must be branded and registered in your name. A current copy of your brand certificate must be on file at the District Office.
3. If you elect to take non-use, it must be requested in writing prior to the grazing season. It is also very important to notify district personnel about changes, which may occur during the grazing period.
4. Livestock allowed to enter or remain in the allotment prior to or beyond the specified grazing period, may be considered a violation of your Term Grazing Permit.
5. The District may spot check range improvements assigned to you before the entry date to ensure improvements are in satisfactory condition. Livestock will not be allowed to enter the Forest allotment if assigned improvements are not being maintained to proper standards. Livestock will not be allowed to enter the Forest if fences will not keep livestock where they are placed and also to prevent trespassing.
6. The District, with the input from the permittees, will determine if late entry or early removal is needed for resource protection based on existing conditions.

MAINTENANCE OF IMPROVEMENTS

All assigned range improvements identified in the Term Grazing Permit will be maintained to a functional status. All fences in the entry unit must be in a state of good repair (cow proof), prior to livestock entering the unit to be grazed.

COUNTING AND TAGGING

Counting and inspection of livestock will take place at either permittees personal corral or other adequate holding area. Permittees will notify and provide opportunity for inspection to Kendall Brown at Pecos or Mike Lujan at Las Vegas before moving livestock into or out of the allotment (for seasonal permits) or whenever the cattle are gathered for branding/shipping, etc. (for year-long permits). All new cattle to the allotment (replacements etc.) will be presented for inspection. All permitted livestock will be tagged and branded. Those cattle not tagged or branded will not be allowed to enter the Forest Allotment.

DISTRIBUTION OF LIVESTOCK/RANGE READINESS

Upon entering the forest, it becomes the responsibility of the grazing permittee to assure proper distribution of livestock. Livestock will be moved out of heavy use areas. Permittees are encouraged to move livestock to utilize areas with light or no use. All livestock will be managed as one entire herd. Permittees will move livestock according to available forage within the grazing unit. Range readiness will be based on objectives for each pasture and may be reason for altering the agreed upon pasture rotation schedule (i.e. the promotion of cool season grasses etc). The criteria as set in 2221.3 Range Readiness Standards for the Santa Fe National Forest states that Western wheatgrass will be at least six inches in height prior to livestock entering a pasture during the growing season.

UTILIZATION/MONITORING

The proper utilization of forage is a critical factor in livestock management on the 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 within your allotment are attached.

Table 2. Key areas and key species for the Springs Allotment		
Key Area #	Pasture/Key Area Location	Key Grass Species
1	Padre Springs/west of corral ½ mile	Blue Grama, Western Wheatgrass
2	No Agua/NE ¼ Sec. 36, Northeast of Cañada Tank	Blue Grama, Western Wheatgrass
3	Ortiz/SW ¼ Sec. 7, SW of Ortiz Well ½ mile	Blue Grama, Western Wheatgrass
4	Laguna Seca/N ½ Sec. 21, Near corner of pvt. Land	Blue Grama, Western Wheatgrass
5	Microwave/SW ¼ Sec. 15, W of Ulibarri pvt. Land	Blue Grama, Western Wheatgrass

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 have identified key areas to be monitored on this allotment. Maximum allowable use is set for a conservative grazing intensity of less than or equal to 40% for the Springs 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. 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 (Tables 4 and 5), actions will need to be taken to limit additional forage use. If use within that key area is approaching allowable stubble heights (shaded blocks in table) 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.

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 (Summer Range)	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 (Winter Range)	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 mile from water lack stubble height.

Table 4. Grazing intensity guide for shortgrass-pinyon/juniper rangeland in New Mexico (Holechek & Galt, 6/00, Rangelands). **Winter / Summer Range**

Qualitative Grazing Intensity Category	Use of Forage by Weight	Stubble Height Indicators of Grazing Intensity		
		Blue Grama	Western Wheatgrass	Crested Wheatgrass
	(%)	----- Inches-----		
Light to non-use	0-30	2.5+	7.0+	5.5+
Conservative	31-40	2.0-2.5	4.0-5.0	4.0-5.0
Moderate*	41-50	1.5-2.0	3.0-4.0	3.0-4.0
Heavy	51-60	1.0-1.5	2.0-3.0	2.0-3.0
Severe	61+	<1.0	<2.0	<2.0

* Moderate use allowable during winter dormancy of grasses.

There may be several inspections to the grazing allotment during the grazing period to monitor utilization on key grazing areas. Permittees will be notified of inspection dates and are encouraged to participate. Inspections may also include the checking of assigned range improvements, cattle numbers etc.

SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING

Our policy in the Southwest Region of the Forest Service (R3 SUPPLEMENT 2200-91-1) is as follows:

“The use of supplemental feeds to augment range forage deficiencies of salt, protein, vitamins, and certain other nutrients is an accepted range management practice. The location and use of supplements as a management tool should be included in the allotment operating plan to enhance livestock distribution and to help prevent heavy use in meadows, sensitive riparian areas, and in areas near water.

Supplemental feeding may be approved for use on National Forest System allotments provided it is used as a deficiency supplement, and not in place of forage on over utilized ranges.”

SALT PLAN

No salt is to be placed within a quarter mile of water and ideally no closer than one-half mile. Place salt away from over-utilized areas and roads. Salt placement can be used as a management tool to obtain desired distribution of livestock. Place salt blocks in lightly used areas until allowable forage use is achieved before moving to the next least utilized area. Blocks will be removed when allowable use objectives have been met. Every time blocks are placed on the allotment they will be put on different sites for resource protection. Do not use the same area used in previous years. Placing of blocks should be in areas not susceptible to erosion, such as hard ground. The Forest Service will confiscate improperly placed salt blocks and the permittees will be notified.

DROUGHT

We have experienced drought conditions on the Santa Fe National Forest since 1998. Winter precipitation within the area is below normal again this year. The lack of winter precipitation will limit forage production and water levels already low from previous year's drought. It is important that we continue to pay close attention especially during the critical spring growth for cool season grasses and hope precipitation occurs and continues into the summer months to get good growth out of the warm season grasses. During our February 4, 2003 meeting we discussed and agreed upon a working contingency plan. This plan includes Forest Service and permittees continuing to communicate as we monitor the current drought. District range personnel will make updated information on the drought available to permittees. District range personnel will inform permittees of any **potential** drought programs that come to our attention, such as drought aid (FSA/NRCS), grass banking, or special grazing in the Valles Caldera. The permittees will monitor market conditions to alleviate economic hardships on their part, in case sale of livestock is inevitable due to continued drought. The permittees will also look at the availability of private land grazing leases as an option if additional livestock must be removed from the allotment. As always, before making changes concerning the AOI, please contact Kendall Brown (757-6121) or Mike Lujan (425-3535). We are eager to work together with permittees in these tough times, and in the event of shortened grazing periods or herd reductions, you will be credited for paid grazing fees.

TRESPASS & UNAUTHORIZED USE

Notify the Pecos/Las Vegas Ranger District of any known violation. Grazing permit holders who put on more livestock than permitted will be served with a notice of non-compliance, charged an unauthorized grazing fee, and face possible suspension/cancellation of part or all of their permit. Permit holders who violate any part of their Term Grazing Permit or Annual Operating Instructions will be served with a notice of non-compliance and face possible suspension/cancellation of all or part of their permit. Permittees are encouraged to report all trespass to the District range personnel.

CALF-COUNTER DATE POLICY

The Regional Forester in FSM 2238.11a established the short-age calf policy for the Forest January 31, 1991:

For **yearlong** permits, the following defines "counters" to be paid for:

"Santa Fe N. F. - Calves under 6 months of age on January 1 become counters on March 1".
Calves 6 months or older on January 1 are counters and will be charged for at that time.

For **seasonal** permits, the following defines what will count and be paid for:

"All animals six months of age or older at the time of entering the allotment, those which will become twelve months of age during the grazing season, and all weaned animals regardless of age."

FIRE CONTROL

All fires will be reported to the Pecos/Las Vegas Ranger District at telephone (505) 757-6121 or (505) 425-3534.

APPEAL RIGHTS

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. 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 251.97).

A notice of appeal must be filed with Reviewing Officer Leonard Atencio, Santa Fe National Forest Supervisor, 1474 Rodeo Road, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-7115, within 45 days of the date of this decision. A copy of the notice of appeal must be filed simultaneously with Deciding Officer, District Ranger Joseph Reddan, P.O. Drawer 429, Pecos, New Mexico 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.

PASTURE ROTATION

GRAZING YEAR 2001 – Actual Pasture Use

PASTURE	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
Micro Wave												
No Agua												
Laguna Seca												
Ortiz												
Winter/Bull												
Padre Sprs.												

 Friedman 89 head  Main herd

GRAZING YEAR 2002 - Actual Pasture Use

PASTURE	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
Micro Wave												
No Agua	■	■	■	■						■	■	■
Laguna Seca	▨	▨		■	■				▨	▨	▨	▨
Ortiz	■	■	■					■	■	■	■	■
Winter/Bull									▩	▩	▩	▩
Padre Sprs.					■	■	■	■				

▨ Friedman 89 head ■ Main herd ||||| 35 head only ▩ Bulls only

GRAZING YEAR 2003 – SCHEDULED ROUTING PLAN

PASTURE	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
Micro Wave												
No Agua	■	■	■	■		■						
Laguna Seca	▨	▨		■	■				▨	▨	▨	▨
Ortiz	■	■	■	■							■	■
Winter/Bull	▩	▩	▩	▩					▩	▩	▩	▩
Padre Sprs.							■	■	■	■		

▨ Friedman 89 head ■ Main herd ||||| 35 head only ▩ Bulls only

- *Holding pasture to be used only for working livestock during branding and shipping. Holding Pasture is not to be used as part of the rotation schedule.
- *Only 35 head will be using the Micro Wave Towers Pasture during the time frame shown above.
- *Permittees will have 7 days to clean up a pasture after a move is made.
- *89 head will remain in the Laguna Seca Pasture until April 15, 2002 then the livestock will be managed as one herd.

The rotation schedules shown above are not intended to identify specific dates for rotations but rather identify a general time frame. Livestock movements will be done according to utilization on an area and cattle moved accordingly to prevent over use. Before any changes to rotation schedule are made, permittees must consult with Kendall Brown (757-6121) or Mike Lujan (425-3535).

JOSEPH G. REDDAN
District Ranger