



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Southwestern Region 3
Carson National Forest
Questa Ranger District

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2011

Annual Operating Instructions (AOI)

Valle Vidal Allotment #00720

Carson National Forest

Questa Ranger District

MICHAEL L. CASADOS, ACTING FOR DFR

MAY 31, 2011

JEROME A. MASTEL
Questa District Ranger

Date



Annual Operating Instructions

Introduction

This Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) is in reference to the discussion you had with Michael Casados on February 24, 2011 and during the annual range readiness tour scheduled for May 24, 2011. The authorized use for the 2011 grazing season on the Valle Vidal Allotment is as follows:

Table 1 –Permittee Information and Season of Use

Permittee Name	Permitted # Season		Authorized # & Season		Remarks
Valle Vidal Grazing Association c/o Jose Torres, President	864 c/c	6/1-10/15	695 head of cattle from 6/15-a 15 day delayed entry	10/15-off date	Tentative dates in 2011 subject to change due to on-going drought conditions
Jose Torres	332 c/c	6/1-10/15			
Manuel & Marina Archuleta Revocable Trust	24 c/c	6/1-10/15			
Juan Cisneros	33 c/c	6/1-10/15			
Robert or Billie Abercrombie	48 c/c	6/1-10/15			
Gregorio Marrujo Estate	6 c/c	6/1-10/15			
Lawrence Ortega	21 c/c	6/1-10/15			
Reynolds Ranch	138 c/c	6/1-10/15			
Luciano P. Sandoval	11 c/c	6/1-10/15			
Aquino "Jerry" Gallegos	119 c/c	6/1-10/15			
Antonio Valdez	82 c/c	6/1-10/15			
Elias & Sarah Hurtado	50 c/c	6/1-10/15			
			695 head		80% Active -695 20% Nonuse-169

Management of Livestock



It is the responsibility of the grazing permittee on this allotment upon entering the National Forest Lands to ensure proper distribution of livestock. Livestock will be pushed out of heavy use areas, and encouraged to utilize areas with light or no use. All livestock will be confined to one pasture at a time. Animals will be moved to the next use pasture when the desired level of use is reached.

All livestock must be scheduled to be counted prior to entering Valle Vidal Allotment. The Questa Ranger District must be notified 5 days prior to time livestock enter or leave the Forest. Nonuse applies only to animal numbers. Nonuse is approval to graze less than 90% of the permitted livestock during the permitted grazing season. Nonuse of a term permit must be requested in written form for all the permitted grazing season (Total Nonuse), or part of the permitted numbers (Partial Nonuse). Verbal applications will not be accepted. If a permittee elects to request “total nonuse” or “partial nonuse” he/she is still responsible for maintenance of assigned range improvements and association fees.

A credit/refund is not automatic, but must be requested in writing by the permittee(s) and approved by the District Ranger. Refer to Attachment 1 for documentation of any annual operating instruction adjustments.

Rotation Schedule

Initial distribution of your livestock is tentatively planned as follows (actual dates will be based on range readiness). There will be no livestock on the Valle Vidal Allotment until such time as range conditions improve. Range conditions will be monitored by the grazing permittees and district range personnel to determine when stocking can be authorized.

All livestock will be confined to one pasture at a time. Livestock will be moved to the next use pasture when the desired level or use is reached. All livestock will be handled as one herd and the gates to the next scheduled pasture may be opened a few days prior to the scheduled move.

The pasture in which the livestock are leaving should be cleaned out 7 days after the scheduled date for moving. Livestock are permitted only in those pastures in which they are scheduled to be in at that time. Livestock will use only on pasture at any time. Refer to Attachment 2 for actual use information.

Table 2 – Season of Use (June 1 to October 15)

Note: Pasture Sequence and dates subject to change as the grazing season progresses.

Pasture	Livestock Numbers	Days Planned	Dates	Remarks
McCrystal Eastside	-0-	-0-	-0-	REST IN 2011 FOR BURNING IN FALL OF 2011
Whiteman Vega				



Eastside	-0-	-0-	-0-	Nonuse for June/July due to drought conditions
North Ponil (includes Look Out & Seally Canyon areas) Eastside	-0-	-0-	-0-	Nonuse for June/July
Beatty Lakes Eastside				Nonuse for June/July
Valle Westside	695 HEAD	6/15 to 6/30	16 days of use	1st Use Pasture in 2011
La Belle Westside	695 HEAD	7/1 to 7/15	15 days of use	2nd Use Pasture in 2011
Comanche/La Cueva Westside	695 HEAD	7/16 to 8/22	37 days of use	3rd & 4th Use Pastures in 2011
Beatty Lakes	695 HEAD	8/23 to 10/15	53 days of use	Back to the Eastside for the month of September and about 15 days in October.
Total	695 Head or 80%		121 days of use	

Note: 169 head of total nonuse in 2011 due to on-going drought. Forest Service requested the Association not activate the nonuse in 2011. Therefore, permittees voluntarily took 169 head of nonuse due to dry conditions on the allotment in spring of 2011.

The range readiness inspection(s) will determine the exact date livestock can be moved onto the allotment, and which pasture will be grazed first. (Refer to Attachment 3 & 3-A, Range Readiness Report form FS 6200 28a (5/84) which needs to be completed to document current conditions on the allotment.) Each permittee is encouraged to participate in this decision.



Forage Utilization Standards

Desired Conditions: Forage utilization will be measured in key areas. Key areas will be the only areas used to determine forage utilization by all ungulates. A forage utilization condition of 20 to 40 percent average of native key forage species within each key area is desired.

Maintaining riparian stubble heights of 3 inches or more during the entire growing season on sedges is desired.

Monitor for these standards through key species utilization in key areas and within riparian areas. Key species within the key areas have been identified, and these are what the forage utilization standard will be applied to. The following are the key forage species by vegetation type found.

Table 3 - Key forage species by vegetation type.

Location	Key Grass Species
Pinon Juniper/ Sagebrush	Western Wheatgrass Blue Grama Black Grama Galleta Crested Wheatgrass
Ponderosa Pine	Arizona Fescue Kentucky Bluegrass Mountain Muhly
Mixed Conifer	Arizona/Thurber Fescue Kentucky Bluegrass Oat Grasses
Mountain Meadow	Arizona/Thurber Fescue Kentucky Bluegrass Oat Grasses
Riparian	Red Top Kentucky Bluegrass Sedges

Distribution and Salt Plans: Herding and riding practices are encouraged to achieving proper livestock distribution on the allotment, and to provide the fullest use of the grazing season. Salt must be placed out of bottoms, away from water, roads, forest system trails, and recreational



sites in an effort to distribute animals throughout each pasture and encourage animals to roam throughout. Proper salt placement and monitoring is important in achieving proper distribution. Salt should be placed in areas of historical light use. No permanent salt grounds will be established, once salt is used up, another suitable area will be found for salt, and livestock should be shown where the new salt grounds are. Any salt improperly placed will be picked up by the Ranger, and can be claimed at the district office.

Unauthorized use (trespass) will be subject to Forest Service Regulations. Violations will be handled through the Questa District Office and permitted owners are encouraged to participate or report any such violations.

All grazing Bill for Collections must be paid before placing any permitted livestock onto the National Forest lands.

Monitoring

Both the Forest Service and the permittee are responsible for monitoring use and stubble height on the allotment to manage within specified utilization standards.

If areas within a pasture or the pasture as a whole begin to approach the identified stubble heights, then the remaining key areas will also be monitored and the pasture inspected to determine overall use patterns.

Monitoring items such as distribution patterns, range readiness, cattle numbers, forage use levels, salting practices, and condition of improvement will be evaluated. A District Range Inspection Report will be completed to document what was seen while out on the allotment every time Forest Service range personnel visit the allotment. Refer to Attachment 4, "Range Inspection Report".

Ocular Utilization estimates are done on the allotment using the Ocular Estimate Method, and Key Browse Species. Refer to Attachment 5, "R3-2200-OEB" for this form to be completed. These are done by Forest Service range personnel to document any information gathered during an allotment visit.

Range personnel will also take photographs of key areas, retake any established photo points, read old study plots and/or transects, and conduct utilization/production studies when these are scheduled.

Monitoring by allotment permittees is very important. Visiting and/or having conversations with the permittees about the allotment's forage conditions can be discussed through in person dialogue or by telephone conversations.

Monitoring and compliance inspections are done on range improvements within the allotment and document in our allotment inspections reports. Range improvements information is kept track of in the NRM FS Web System.



Allotment inspections and monitoring is done on horseback within each of the pastures in the allotment. Permittees and Forest Service conduct these inspections together.

Range Improvements

It is important that you inspect and maintain the assigned allotment boundary fences, interior pasture division fences, stock tanks, springs, cattle guards and other structural improvements prior to livestock entering the allotment or pasture. Range improvements in the “entry pasture” must be in good functioning condition prior to the June 1st entry date. All other pasture fences and waters must be maintained prior to livestock movement into the next scheduled pasture(s).

In the event these improvements cannot be brought up to standard, you should notify the range personnel so we can schedule them for reconstruction as funds become available. An inspection of your allotment prior to the entry date will be made to determine if maintenance is adequate.

Table 4 – Range, Watershed, or Permittee Improvement Projects.

Project Name	Kind & Number	Location	Status	Comments
Valle Vidal and RCCLA ABF	Allotment boundary fence (ABF)	West Side	Completed in 2006	Monitor and check for maintenance in 2011
Water Sources	Existing water sources	Allotment wide	On-going	Identify and GPS all existing water sources within the allotment boundaries for future planning. F.S. & permittees to work together on this.
Rincon Windmill	1 existing windmill	East Side	Identified for repair and/or total reconstruction in 2011	Per conversation with Jose T. on 8/28/03 Load of gravel was placed in 2009
Middle Windmill	Recon stocktanks	East Side	Identified for repair and/or total reconstruction in 2011	Per conversation with Jose T. on 8/28/03. Additional trough purchased in and to be installed in 2011
Medcalf Windmill	Recon stocktanks	East Side	Identified for repair and some maintenance.	Per conversation with Jose T. on 8/28/03. Some repair and maintenance on this windmill.
Lookout Windmill	Recon stocktanks	East Side	Identified for repair and/or total	Per conversation with Jose T. on 8/28/03 about this needing reconstruction and will proceed to



			Reconstruction in 2011.	repair when funding becomes available.
Trap Windmill	Recon stocktanks	East Side	Identified for repair and/or total reconstruction	Per conversation with Jose T. on 8/28/03 about this needing reconstruction and will proceed to repair when funding becomes available.
Betty Lakes	Recon stocktanks	East Side	Identified for repair and/or total reconstruction	Per conversation with Jose T. on 8/28/03 about this needing reconstruction and will proceed to repair when funding becomes available.
Fence(s)	ABF & IPF	Allotment wide	Identify fence(s) needing total reconstruction	Per conversation with permittees to help identify those fence(s) either boundary or interior for to get these done when funding becomes available

Fence Maintenance

It is important that you inspect and maintain the assigned fences and water developments in the “entry pasture” to a good functioning condition prior to the June 1st entry date. All other pastures fences and water developments must be maintained prior to livestock movement in to the next schedule pasture(s).

In the event these improvements cannot be brought up to standard, you should notify the range personnel. An inspection of your allotment prior to the entry date will be made to determine if maintenance is adequate.

If you have a need to cut fence stays or posts while you are maintaining your fences on your allotment, you can get authorization to cut these materials by obtaining a Free Use Permit from the range personnel at the Questa Ranger District.

Allotment Status

At the present time direction for management on the allotment is being documented in the Annual Operating Instructions. **An Environmental Analysis (NEPA) and a Decision Notice was signed by the District Ranger on 09/29/2010. 2011 will be the first year of implementation of the EA and Decision Notice for this allotment. Refer to these documents for further information direction.**

Open and positive communication is encouraged. Feel free to contact the range personnel if you have any questions or problems. They will be happy to discuss allotment management, on the



ground status, Forest Plan standards and guidelines, and possible changes in allotment management.

Special Instructions

COUNTING: All livestock belonging to each permittee must be branded (cows/calves & bulls) with permittee of record's individual personal brand(s).

Cattle would be inspected and counted @ the Ring Ranch corrals by Forest personnel or range riders as livestock are unloaded. Actual cattle numbers placed on the Valle Vidal Allotment by permittee will be obtained from the Association President after all livestock have been placed by the Association.

Appeal Statement

This Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) is hereby made a part of your Term Grazing Permit. The annual operating instructions (AOI) give specific direction in the management of this grazing unit. The permitted owners using this allotment are encouraged to provide input in order to bring about proper and continued wise use of these renewable natural resources. Any diversion from this plan may put the Term Grazing Permit in jeopardy. If a change is needed, approval from the District is required.

If you have any questions concerning this plan please let the District Ranger know. Enjoy the use of your National Forest and the grazing unit assigned to you this season.

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 251.91).

A notice of appeal must be filed with the Forest Supervisor, Carson National Forest, 208 Cruz Alta, Taos, New Mexico 87571, within 45 days of the date of this decision. A copy of the notice of appeal must be filed simultaneously with Questa District Forest Ranger, who was the deciding officer and the address for mailing the appeal copy is P. O. Box 110, Questa, New Mexico 87556.

I will appreciate if you contact me and together we try to resolve disagreements before you file any Notice of Appeal. I value your experience and knowledge of the allotment. If we cannot reach an agreement, you may exercise your appeal rights. This will insure that we both understand the reasons for each other's position regarding any issues. I look forward to working



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with you this season. I am confident that together we will work effectively to manage the range resources in a manner that reflects good stewardship for the land and livestock.



Attachment 1: Annual Operating Instruction Adjustments

Date	Action Item	Action Taken	Initials
2/24/11	Annual Permittee Meeting @ 1:30 p.m. with Jose Torres, President	Conduct Annual Meeting with the Valle Vidal Grazing Association to go over 2011 AOI and any permit administration.	
5/24/11	Range Readiness Inspection	Meet at the Ring Ranch @ 10:00 a.m	MLC
6/1/2011	Allotment Inspection	Inspected forage conditions and water sources	MLC
6/7/2011	Allotment Inspection	Forage Conditions	MLC
6/9/2011	Delivery of fencing materials to Clayton Corral	Delivery of materials	MLC
6/15/2011	Deliver of water buffalo for use by the rider for watering his horses	Delivered water buffalo	MLC
6/15/11	Entry onto allotment in 2011	Delayed entry onto the allotment for 15 days. Entry onto the West Side of the allotment due to on-going drought conditions. East Side was not available for grazing.	MLC
6/29/2011	Allotment Inspection and check up with Shawnee M. – Rider	Allotment Inspection and check with Shawnee	MLC



Attachment 2: Actual Use Information

Pasture	Planned Livestock Number & Class	Planned Use Date On	Planned Use Date Off	Actual Use Date On	Actual Use Date Off
McCrystal	No grazing in 2011				
Whiteman Vega	No grazing in 2011				
North Ponil (Includes Look-Out and Seally Canyon areas)	No grazing in 2011				
Beatty Lakes	No grazing in 2011				
Cattle Drive	Cattle drive on 8/23/11 back to the Eastside				
Valle	695 head	6/15	6/30		
La Belle	695 head	7/1	7/15		
Comanche	695 head	7/16	8/23		
La Cueva	695 head	7/16	8/23		

Number of Livestock (Head) counted on _____.

Number of Livestock (Head) lost _____.

Report of Livestock Losses

Livestock Class	Poisonous Plants	Predators	Other	Total Losses



Attachment 3: Range Readiness Report

Allotment: _____

Date: _____

Plant development of major forage species.

Soil moisture status.

Range Ready? _____

Are the fences cow-proof and properly maintained?

Are other range improvements (stock tanks, trick tanks, pipelines, windmills, etc) maintained to permit standards?



Attachment 3-A Title 2200 Range Management

2221.3 – Range Readiness Standards. The following standards will be used on the Santa Fe National Forest and are applicable on the Carson National Forest for determining range readiness:

Grasses

- Kentucky Bluegrass (Popr) - Panicles fully open
- Mutton Bluegrass (Pofe) - Plants maturing
- Western Wheatgrass (Agsm) - Six inches or more in height
- Junegrass (kocr) - Plants heading out
- Timber Oatgrass (DANT) - In full bloom
- Mountain Muhly (Mumo) - Headed out
- Arizona Fescue (Fear) - 8” or more in height, heading out

Grasslike

- Carex spp. (CARE) - Seed Formed

Forbs

- Yarrow (Acla) - Heads evident
- Lupine (LUPI) - Flower buds evident
- Dandelion (TARA) - Most plants seed disseminated
- Low Larkspur (DELP) - Full bloom
- Golden Pea (Thpi) - Full bloom

Browse

- Mountain Mahogany (CERC) - Fully leaved
- Serviceberry (Amut) - Fruit forming
- Aspen (Potr) - Fully leaved – deep green
- Ribes (RIBE) - Flowering 50% or more
- Snowberry (SYMP) - Flower buds evident

Use a combination of species and plants rather than a single plant or species as a guide to range readiness. Apply these standards to representative range areas. These standards have primary application under season-long and simple deferred-rotation grazing systems involving only two pastures.



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Forest Service Manual

January 1969

Santa Fe Supplement No. 2



Attachment 4: Questa Ranger District

YEAR _____

RANGE INSPECTION REPORT _____ ALLOTMENT

Forage condition in _____ unit(s). Photo taken Y or N.

Soil Moisture Conditions on the Allotment.

Overall Range Conditions (Dry or Moist Soil Conditions).

Water Availability on the Allotment.

Deterioration Range Conditions on the Allotment (soil compaction occurring).

Livestock Location (area).

Riparian Conditions (livestock present)

Did permittee attend? Yes or No _____.

