

**2012 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS
TUSAS ALLOTMENT 622
CARSON NATIONAL FOREST
TRES PIEDRAS RANGER DISTRICT**

I. INTRODUCTION/OBJECTIVES

The Tusas Annual Operating Instruction meeting was held on March 8, 2012 at La Jara Library from 1:00-3:00. Tusas attending permittees were Lloyd Reynolds, Rick Reynolds, Brent Sowards, Joe Duran, Kay Smith, George Smith, Ernest Sanchez, and Mr. Bechaver. Forest Service representative were Chris Furr, Wayne Yonemoto, and Anna Dominguez.

The Annual Operating Instructions are hereby made part of the Term Grazing Permit. Carson Forest Annual Operating Instructions are posted on the Carson Forest Web site. <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/carson>, Natural resources, Range, District, Allotment. Annual Operating Instructions contain items that are guidance criteria addressing proper use of the Tusas allotment. Permittees were advised to review terms and conditions stated on their permits. NEPA for the Tusas Allotment was completed 5-12-11. Decision Notice items that are part of the Tusas Term permit reissuance are as follows:

- Permitted livestock will range from 731 to 1,115 cow/calf pairs. The range in numbers reflects actual livestock use during both wet and drought conditions. The lower number represents actual use during the 2002 drought period. Through adaptive management, authorized livestock numbers will be adjusted annually in response to available forage. This will be documented in the annual operating instructions (AOI).
- Currently the Tusas Allotment term grazing permit does not specify number of bulls. Records reflect that bulls have been part of the cow-calf count. Permittees' actual use records for the past eight years show a range of 18-34 bulls. Each permittee brings on a range of 0-6 bulls. The average ratio is 27 cows to 1 bull. Cow to bull ratios are a private livestock operator and livestock association decision. Bulls will continue to be substituted per cow-calf count. Bull counts will be documented in the AOI.
- The grazing pattern will be a nine pasture, rotational (deferred/rest) grazing system (one herd, deferred rest rotation in 8 of 9 pastures must be followed a minimum of 70 percent of the time (7 out of 10 years)). The rotation pattern will be clockwise/counter clockwise in alternating years, starting each year in East Wheatgrass Pasture due to corral location and accessibility to US Highway 285. The alternating season of use will allow for 8 of the 9 pastures to have opportunities for varying periods of rest and forage growth. The remaining East Wheatgrass Pasture would benefit from a 147 to 151 day period of rest in between its use as an entry and exit pasture.
- The permitted season of use on the allotment will typically range from an entry date of May 17 to May 28, with an exit date from September 28 to October 16. The grazing season will typically range from 124 to 153 days. The estimated range in grazing season is based on actual livestock use in both wet and drought conditions. The actual grazing season and pasture entry and exit dates will be determined annually or seasonally based on resource conditions.
- To address resource conditions and conservative utilization objectives, entry dates for East Wheatgrass, West Wheatgrass, and Coyote pastures will typically be May 17 to June 10 and from June 1 to June 15 for the Barela and Martinez pastures.
- Since East Wheatgrass is used as both an entry and exit pasture, use will be limited to a total of six days per season: three days in the spring for cow/calf pairing up and three days in the fall for cattle to

be gathered and sorted prior to exiting. The limitation of days allows for livestock use while maintaining and improving pasture condition.

- There are six adaptive management headings in the AOI which are considered annually by the Tres Piedras Ranger District in the authorization of livestock. Ultimately, authorization of livestock is decided by the District Ranger. The six adaptive management criteria are:
 - Weather conditions.
 - Prior years' evaluation analysis worksheet, inspection reports and permittee monitoring.
 - Current year's range readiness.
 - Current year's authorized livestock numbers and season of use.
 - Current year's tentative rotation schedule.
 - Monitoring references and utilization guidelines.
- The AOI will track and document the effectiveness of livestock herd management. All pastures will have a management objective of moving livestock in an effective manner to avoid concentrated use in any part of the pasture, especially in riparian areas. Effective movement of livestock will improve distribution of grazing effects and help achieve conservative utilization throughout the pastures.
- A conservative grazing utilization guideline of 20 to 40 percent (includes use from wildlife and livestock) measured at the end of the growing season will be a monitoring reference used to help maintain or improve rangeland vegetation condition. Utilization will be monitored throughout the growing season (adaptive management) and at the end of the growing season.
- Conservative grazing guidelines for riparian areas allows vegetation an opportunity to maintain or improve in range condition. A conservative range of 20 to 40 percent utilization and a 4 inch minimum stubble height in riparian areas will be the guideline used to maintain forage while protecting soil and water resources throughout the year. The range of 20 to 40 percent utilization addresses the variety of vegetation species that occur and their different tolerances to grazing. The 4 inch stubble height addresses ground cover protection needed to minimize erosion.
- The following range improvements will be implemented within approximately 3 to 5 years in order to improve water distribution, water reliability, and availability for wildlife and livestock, pending availability of funding. Improvement of watering points will contribute to improved ecological conditions by improving livestock and wildlife distribution and minimizing concentration around limited watering points.
 - Biscara Pasture: Construct one dirt tank below the existing spring box to improve water storage capacity and distribution and to reduce ungulate concentration in Biscara, Middle and Espinosa canyons.
 - Posito Pasture: Construct one dirt tank below the existing spring box to improve water storage capacity, which should improve ungulate distribution in the vicinity of the spring.
 - If riparian area monitoring guidelines are not met within the Placer Creek segment, then a 210 acre enclosure would be constructed within approximately 3 to 5 years to control livestock use within this area.
- Adaptive management guidelines: In order to achieve desired conditions of fair to good range condition with stable to upward trends, and riparian areas with properly functioning stream components, adjustments in the proposed livestock grazing management will be applied as follows. (It is expected that accomplishing a 20 – 40 percent utilization guideline and 4 inch riparian area stubble height guidelines in concert with a rotational grazing system will move the allotment towards these desired conditions.)

Short-term adjustments (within season and year to year through AOIs):

- The actual number of livestock authorized will be adjusted to match available forage, which is directly affected by climatic conditions such as precipitation. Thus, extra attention will be given to evaluating available forage in years when there is a negative standard precipitation index (indicating dryer weather compared to long term average). “ Matching” available forage equates to being able to achieve a 20 – 40 percent forage utilization guideline and a 4 inch riparian stubble height guideline with the authorized timing (pasture dates) and intensity (number) of livestock. Where appropriate, livestock pattern of use will be adjusted through salting and herding.
- Adjustment of stocking dates will be taken as necessary and on a pasture by pasture basis in response to range readiness of each pasture.
- The grazing schedule, and possibly number of livestock authorized, will be adjusted in response to not meeting the 20-40 percent utilization guideline in previous years, in order to give those areas time for vegetation to recuperate.
- The actual number of livestock authorized will be adjusted in response to low herd management (not moving livestock throughout the grazing season and slow clean out of pastures).
- If riparian area guidelines are not being met within the next 3 – 5 years, a fence will be built at Placer Creek creating a 210 acre riparian enclosure to more tightly control the timing of cattle use in that area.

Longer-term adjustments (re-issuance of grazing permit)

- If complete one herd, deferred rest rotation in 8 of 9 pastures cannot be followed 70 percent of the time (7 out of 10 years), then re-evaluation of livestock stocking rate and overall range management system needs to be completed and considered in adjusting the term permit.
- If range condition monitoring scores (Parker 3 Step or alternative such as cover frequency) are less than desired or are not showing improvement towards the desired condition then re-evaluation of livestock stocking rate and overall range management system needs to be completed and considered in adjusting the term permit.
- Adjustments of permitted livestock numbers may occur for not complying with terms and conditions of the term grazing permit, including the AOI and the allotment management plan.

Authorized billing dates will be established at the Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) meeting. The actual entry date will be determined during the range readiness inspection. During the grazing season, pasture rotations/modifications may be made with Forest Service approval. The AOI pasture rotation and pasture range of days are guidelines for grazing season management adjustments. The AOI pasture rotation and period of use addresses utilization standards and may be changed based on current resource conditions.

II. ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

A. Weather Report

2003 Rangeland Management Action Plan for the Santa Fe and Carson National Forest will be referred to during 2012 grazing season. The plan stresses communication, permittee involvement, monitoring, range administration, and reference to the Standard Precipitation Index addressing adaptive management during near normal, drought and drought recovery conditions. We recommend that the permittees have a drought contingency plan.

Standard Precipitation Index (SPI) will be used to define drought conditions following the 2003 Rangeland Management Action Plan for the Santa Fe and Carson National Forests. SPI values are available from the Western Regional Climate Center at www.wrcc.dri.edu. The following are indicators in determining drought conditions. Conditions will be determined by the size of the negative number, the larger the negative number, the more severe the drought. Example: SPI values of -0.70 or less for the past month signal drought conditions. SPI values of positive 1.0 or more for the past 12 months signal the end of drought. The following are the 1 and 12 month SPI through the end of January 2012.

1-month SPI through the end of January 2012 is -0.74 to +0.74 (near normal)

12-month SPI through the end of January 2012 is -1.24 to -0.74 (moderately dry)

2012 precipitation patterns will determine adaptive management actions with the objective to maintain/improve forage resources.

On February 29, 2012 a letter from the Carson Forest Supervisor was sent to initiate drought dialogue with permittees.

B. TUSAS FIRE CONTINGENCY PLAN

Drought conditions influence fire potential throughout the Carson Forest. Tusas Allotment Fire Contingency Plan consists of:

- Permittee contact information and livestock identification addressing communication preparedness.
- The following are elements of the fire contingency plan evolve with adaptive management.
 1. Routes of fire escape, typically following key areas (grasslands)
 2. Dirt tank maintenance prioritization in reference to erosion control
 3. Identifying natural ignitions locations to consider allowing natural burns to occur with monitoring
 4. Strategically identify areas in which fire breaks can be completed to support habitat improvement using fire to produce resilient mosaic ecologies.
- The following are USFS and permittees estimated fire potential per pasture based on vegetation inventory, topography, lightning activity and prevailing wind. The main strategy for emergency evacuation of livestock is to open all gates and lay down all snow fences so that cattle are free to move away from smoke and/or fire.

Tusas Allotment ecological description as it pertains to fire contingency plan for livestock management

| Pasture Acres Elevation | Ecological description/ % cover | *Fire potential *% slopes *Evacuation routes *lightning potential |
|--|---|---|
| East Wheatgrass 1,236 acres 8,310-8,411 Low elevation pasture | Rabbit brush/ 82% Ponderosa pine/16% Intermittent riparian/ 2% | *Moderate to low fire potential due to ecological types * Low % slope. *Grasslands are evacuation routes. *High lightning fire potential |
| West Wheatgrass 2,670 acres 8,411-8,850 Low elevation pasture | Rabbit brush/ 57% Ponderosa Pine/24% Grasslands/17% Intermittent riparian/ 1.8% | *Moderate to low fire potential due to ecological types *Low % slope. *Grasslands are evacuation routes. *High lightning fire potential |
| Coyote 1,823 acres 8,400-8,800 Low elevation pasture | Rabbit brush/ 55% Grasslands/23.5% Ponderosa Pine/17% Intermittent riparian/ 4% | *Moderate to low fire potential due to ecological types *low % slope. *Grasslands are evacuation routes. *High lightning fire potential |
| | | |
| Martinez 2,783 acres 8,800-9,408 Mid elevation pasture | Mixed conifer/45% Grasslands/ 25% Ponderosa Pine/ 23% Intermittent riparian/ 6% | *Moderate fire potential due to ecological types *Moderate % slopes. *Grasslands are evacuation routes. *High lightning fire potential |
| Barela 6,572 acres 8,800-9,695 Mid elevation pasture | Mixed Conifer/ 55% Ponderosa Pine/ 23% Grasslands/ 15% Intermittent riparian/1.8% | *High fire potential due to ecological types *Moderate % slopes. *Grasslands are evacuation routes. *High lightning fire potential |
| Posito 3,861 acres 8,943-9,626 Mid elevation pasture | Mixed Conifer/49% Ponderosa Pine/26% Grasslands/ 18% Intermittent riparian/ 4.7% Spruce-fir/ 2% | *Low to moderate fire potential due to past timber treatments and grasslands *moderate to low % slopes. *Grasslands are evacuation routes. *Moderate lightning fire potential |
| Biscarra 4,531 acres 8,834-9,620 Mid elevation pasture | Mixed Conifer/ 46 % Ponderosa Pine/ 45% Intermittent riparian/ 5% Grasslands/ 2.7% | *High fire potential due to ecological types *High to moderate % slopes *Grasslands are evacuation routes. *Moderate lightning fire potential |
| | | |
| Buckhorn 6,992 acres 9,000-10,000 High elevation pasture | Spruce-Fir/ 37% Mixed Conifer/ 35% Grasslands/16% Intermittent riparian/11% Ponderosa Pine/1.3% | *High fire potential due to ecological types *High % slopes contributing to high potential for aspen stand replacement. *Grasslands are evacuation routes. * Moderate lightning fire potential |
| Deer Trail | Mixed Conifer/ 47% | *High fire potential due to ecological types |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 13,170 acres 9,000-10,192 High elevation pasture | Spruce-Fir/ 40% Grasslands/9.5% Intermittent riparian/5.5 Ponderosa Pine/ .76% | *High % slopes *Limited ingress/egress due to HWY 64. *Grasslands are evacuation routes. * Moderate lightning fire potential |
|---|---|---|

Report wildfires to: Tres Piedras Ranger Station at (575) 758-8678 or Carson Dispatch at (575) 758-6208 or (575) 758-6209.

C. Tusas 2011 End of season report

2011 Authorized use: Tusas permittees authorized livestock changed from billed 10-14%, to voluntary additional 25% resulting in a total reduction of 38% in 2011.

Rotation: Followed a semi counterclockwise pattern: East Wheatgrass/ West Wheatgrass/ Coyote, Martinez /Barela, Posito, Buckhorn, Deer Trail, Biscarra, Martinez/ Coyote/ West Wheatgrass/ East Wheatgrass. 1/9 pastures (Buckhorn) was over days but under HM and AUM.

Utilization standard: Late monsoons lifted the fire closures 8-4-11 and allowed forage to grow. The 40% utilization of cool and warm season grasses was met on all pastures at the end of the growing seasons.

Livestock Adaptable management in response to /Utilization standard-forage and water conditions/Grazing Response Index-elk use/Fire/vegetation vigor: High adaptable management cooperation with Tusas permittees occurred in 2011. USFS and permittees conducted two range readiness field reviews resulting in additional volunteer reduction. During the grazing season permittees attended two additional meetings and three horse back field reviews. High livestock herd management allowed for rapid response to resource conditions and livestock behavior in pasture rotation, (especially upon entry). Tusas permittee employment of Rider, Deb Vernon, for 2009, 2010 and 2011, has been a significant management improvement to the actual use records. Deb Vernon’s high involvement in completing Actual use on AOI and spreadsheet significantly contributed to expanding the descriptions of utilization, Grazing Response Index and the opportunity for forage growth and vigor in conjunction with livestock management.

Water quantity and quality: Water in quantity and quality fluctuated throughout the season. A water availability map was completed to identify adaptable management adjustments. A range of 40-50% of water was available 2011. Poor water quality/quantity influenced adaptable management in 4/9 pastures (56% of the rotation). Pastures or areas with water deficiencies were Tusas ridge, Barela, W. Wheatgrass, Coyote, E. Wheatgrass and temporarily Martinez.

Grazing response Index- elk use: Overall forage production was stunted due to drought conditions especially in the open meadows. In forage utilization inspections, prior to livestock entry, utilization appeared to be 20-40%. Defoliations of grass occurred 2-3 times in all pastures by all ungulates. All pastures appear to have moderate 40-55% intensity based on annual forage production which was stunted due to drought conditions. Lower and mid elevation pastures (one half of the allotment) had little chance for opportunity to grow and higher elevation pastures had some opportunity to grow.

Weather/Fire summary: Dry windy conditions influenced the Carson Forest closures from type I-III from 6/9/11 to 8/4/11. Late weak monsoons began in mid to late July. The forest was in type III

closure to the public from 6/9/11 to 6/29/11, 21 days. 3 fires occurred in Tusas allotment 7/20/11, 8/21/11 and 8/23/11 all lightning started two on Tusas ridge and one on the boundary.

Vegetation vigor: Average for the allotment is 2.3, which is Low moderate forage production and vigor overall.

Priority Maintenance completed: materials for fence repairs were issued; Tire drinker for Biscarra spring tank was delivered. Drinker for horse pasture was delivered, temporary placement of surface cattle guard in Deer Trail. USFS will remove the cattleguard because it is on a non-travel management road closed road), NRCS request for Posito dirt tank design, maintenance assessment for Mesa Tank, maintenance assessment for dirt tank priority for 2012.

D. 2012 Tusas Allotment Management Objectives for USFS

- Complete EA term permit reissuance process.
AMP
Application process— Base property with warranty deed, with most recent tax receipts, brand card demonstrating properly executed and recorded permit documents.
- Follow clockwise rotation, adjust rotation schedule with availability of water, adjust authorized livestock to water and forage resource conditions following a clockwise rotation pattern within the estimated Days/HM/AUM.
- Inform USFS of actual livestock entry date to allow for opportunity to count livestock.
- Inform USFS of actual use recorded on updated AOI,
- Complete the GRI documenting 2012 grazing season.
- Complete priority maintenance responsibility.

E. 2012 Tusas Allotment Adaptable Management Options

2012 Authorized use/Rotation/Utilization standard

2012 authorized recommendations addressing utilization standard are: Complete 2012 annual authorized use request forms considering 2011 drought recovery and current resource conditions with 30% reduction. Management objective of following clockwise deferred rest rotation, within the Tentative days and AUM's described in the AOI. Rotation would be: E. Wheatgrass/Coyote combination due to water and pasture size, Martinez, Biscarra, Deer Trail, Buckhorn, Posito, Barela, W. Wheatgrass, East Wheatgrass.

Water quantity and quality

Adapt rotation and livestock herding to water quantity and quality. A water availability map was completed to identify adaptable management adjustments following the clockwise rotation.

Livestock Adaptable management in response to / Utilization standard—forages and water conditions/ Grazing Response Index-elk use/ Fire/ vegetation vigor

Continuation of high adaptable management in response to resource conditions will require high permittee support to the new rider. New rider will have to learn the boundaries, watering points, high fence priority areas, salting strategy for livestock herding, riparian areas, and community association livestock behavior. It is Tusas permittees responsibility for reporting actual use.

1. Combination of East wheatgrass pasture with Coyote
2. RR inspection in the five pastures to project rotation in reference to forage and water.

3. Conservative authorized livestock to meet permittees objective of seasonal use.
4. Strategically placement of salt to meet 20-40% utilization
5. Complete AOI and GRI as tools to evaluate actual use.
6. Complete priority maintenance list as a evaluating tool for water quality/quantity in consideration of rotation.

Priority Maintenance: Complete Biscarra Spring maintenance, Barela/W. Wheatgrass cattle guard. Remove the Deer Trail/Cow Creek temporary cattle guard. Establish potential grazable acre monitoring points in Buckhorn and Deer Trail.

Noted changes in AOI: New information is the riparian acres per pasture.

F. 2012 Range Readiness

2012 range readiness inspection is scheduled for 5/9/2012 at 9:00 A.M. at Tres Piedras Forest Service. Please make every effort to attend and discuss livestock entry date schedule and proposed HM reduction if any.

G. 2012 Grazing Fee and Annual Authorized Use Request

The livestock grazing fee for grazing year 2012 is \$1.35 c/c and \$.27 e/l on National Forests. 2012 Unauthorized use of National Forests is \$2.24 for livestock and \$.45 for sheep and goats.

The 2012 authorized livestock and grazing season are no guarantee that grazing can occur for the tentative rotation. Resource conditions may require alterations in rotations or possible early off date.

Table 1-Tusas 2012 permitted/authorized date/Actual date. HM and AUM formula is # of livestock x # of days / 30.416667 (average days in a month) =HM. HM x 1.32 (coefficient for 1000 lb cow/calf) =AUM.

| <i>Permitted season</i> | <i>2012 Authorized 17% reduction in numbers, 5/17-10/16, 153 days</i> | <i>RR 5/9/12</i> | <i>2012actual use</i> |
|--|---|------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>5/17-10/16, 153 days, 1115 c/c, 5608 HM 7402 AUM.</i> | <i>4641 HM 6125 AUM.</i> | | |
| <i>Jerry Duran 37 c/c 186 HM 232 AUM</i> | <i>X bulls + X c/c = 33 c/c 166 HM 219 AUM</i> | | |
| <i>Dennis and Myrna Moeller 111 c/c 588 HM 776 AUM</i> | <i>X bulls + X c/c = 100 c/c 503 HM 664 AUM</i> | | |
| <i>Jesse Lloyd and Stella Jenine Reynolds 242 c/c 1217 HM 1606 AUM</i> | <i>X bulls + X c/c = 218 c/c 1097HM 1448 AUM</i> | | |
| <i>Reynolds, Georgina, Ric and Rod 194 c/c 976 HM 1,288 AUM</i> | <i>X bulls + X c/c =175 c/c 880 HM 1161 AUM</i> | | |
| <i>George Smith 170 c/c 855 HM 1,111 AUM</i> | <i>X bulls + X c/c =115 c/c 578 HM 763 AUM</i> | | |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <i>Orva Sowards Trust-c/o Diana Bechaver</i> 80 c/c 402 HM, 531 AUM | <i>X bulls + X c/c =70 c/c</i> 352 HM 464AUM | | |
| <i>Brent and Ruth Ann Sowards</i> 183 c/c 921 HM 1,216 AUM | <i>X bulls + X c/c =147 c/c</i> 739 HM 975 AUM | | |
| <i>Ernest Sanchez</i> 98 c/c 493 HM 651 AUM | <i>X bulls + X c/c =65c/c</i> 326 HM 431 AUM | | |
| Total | 923c/c, 4641 HM, 6125 AUM, 17% reduction in numbers. | | |

H. Tentative Rotation Schedule

All allotment rotation plans are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances such as lack of water or low forage production. Range Readiness inspection will confirm availability of water and adjust 2012 tentative rotation schedule if needed. The pastures currently have tentative dates with authorized minimum-**goal**-maximum days, HM and AUM. It is the responsibility of the permittee to ensure proper distribution of livestock addressing utilization standard of 20- 40% of annual production. Elk intensity monitoring is recommended so that adjustments to rotation can be made addressing resource protection.

Table 2-2012 Tusas Pasture rotation. HM and AUM formula is # of livestock x # of days / 30.416667 (average days in a month) =HM. HM x 1.32 (coefficient for 1000 lb cow/calf) =AUM. AUM and HM are used as a scale of reference.

| Pastures | Permitted 5/17-10/16, 153 days, 1115 c/c (5609 HM, 7404 AUM) Minimum-goal-maximum days HM AUM | 2012 Authorized, 923 c/c, 17% reduction in numbers, 5/17-10/16, 153 days. Minimum-goal-maximum days HM AUM | 2012 Actual use/utilization standard |
|----------------------|--|---|---|
| <i>E. Wheatgrass</i> | <i>Trailing—2---7 days</i> 36---73---257 HM 48---96---339 AUM | Tentative 5/17-5/20, 4 days <i>Trailing-4----7 days</i> 30----121---212 HM 40---160----280 AUM | |
| <i>Coyote</i> | <i>5--7--10 days</i> 183--257--367 HM 241--339--484 AUM | Tentative 5/21-5/26, 11 days 5-----7-----11 days 151--212---333 HM 200--280---440 AUM | |
| <i>Martinez</i> | <i>7---14---21 days</i> *-256--513--769 HM *-338--677--1015 AUM | Tentative 6/1-6/15, 15 days 7-----10---15 days 212---303--455 HM 280---400---600 AUM | |
| <i>Biscarra</i> | <i>5---7---10 days</i> 183--257--367 HM 241--339--484 AUM | Tentative ,6/16-6/25, 10 days 5---7---10 days 151—212--303HM 200—280—400AUM | |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|--|
| <i>Deer Trail</i> | 34-----35-----40-----50 days *-1246--1283--1466--1833 HM *-1645--1694-1935-2419 AUM | Tentative 6/26-7/ 29, 34 days 34-----40 days 1031-----1213 HM 1361----16022 AUM Sullivan~10 Middle ~10 Deer Park~10 North (Cunningham, picnic spring, corduroy)~10 | |
| <i>Buckhorn</i> | 20--25--30--*days *-733--916--1100 HM *-968--1209--1452 AUM | Tentative 7/30-8/28, 30 days 20----25-----30-days 607--758-----910-HM 801--1001-----1201-AUM Placer Creek ~15 days Duran Canyon ~ 15 days | |
| <i>Posito</i> | 10--15*-25 days 367*-550--916 HM 484*-726--1209 AUM | Tentative 8/29-9/7, 10 days 10----15-----20 days 212--455---606 HM 280--600---801 AUM | |
| <i>Barela</i> | *-20--30--40 days *-733--1100--1283 HM *-968--1452--1283 AUM | Tentative 9/8-9/27, 20 days 10---20--30 days 212--606---910 HM 280---801---1201 AUM | |
| <i>W. Wheatgrass</i> | Trailing----5---9---11 days 36--183----330---403 HM 48---241---435---531 AUM | Tentative 9/28-10/ 14 , 17 days Trailing-7-----10----17 days 30-----212---212---515 HM 40-----280---280---680 AUM | |
| <i>E. Wheatgrass</i> | Trailing—2---7 days 36---73---257 HM 48---96---339 AUM | Tentative 10/15-10/16, 2 days Trailing-2----7 days 24---48---166 HM 32---63---219 AUM | |
| | Permitted 5/17-10/16, 153 days, 1115 c/c (5609 HM, 7404 AUM) | 2012 Authorized 17% reduction in numbers, 5/17-10/16, 153 days, 923 c/c, 4641 HM, 6125 AUM. | |

I. Monitoring references and Utilization standards

The following list describes priority monitoring data of the Tusas allotment addressing proper use.

1. 2012 Tusas AOI, Evaluation analysis worksheet and actual use.
2. 2012 Tusas Working deferred maintenance list
3. Tusas production cages, Parkers, and permittee key areas, reviewed with methods listed on the Tres Piedras Monitoring Plan

Estimated ocular utilization descriptions/reference at the end of the year

Descriptions are obtained from the “Utilization study Data-Ocular Estimate Method, Key Herbaceous Species, Form R3-2200-OEH.” Reference to cages will calibrate % utilization estimation.

1. **0-5% utilization**, Rangeland shows no evidence of grazing use: or rangeland has appearance of negligible grazing, (High 5-Moderate high 4)/ (opportunity to grow was most of the season).
2. **6-20% utilization**, Rangeland has appearance of very slight grazing. Key herbaceous forage plants may be topped or slightly used. Current seed stalks and young plants of key herbaceous species are little disturbed, (Moderate high 4)/ (opportunity to grow was most of the season).

3. **21-40% utilization**, Rangeland may be topped, skimmed or grazed in patches. Low value herbaceous plants are ungrazed and 60-80% of the current seed stalks of key herbaceous species remain intact. Most young plants are undamaged, (moderate-average 3), (opportunity to grow was some of the season).
4. **41-60% utilization**, rangeland appears entirely covered as uniformly as natural features and facilities will allow. 15-25% of the current seed stalks of key herbaceous species remain intact. No more than 10% of the low value herbaceous forage plants are utilized (Moderate use does not imply proper use), (Low moderate 2)/ (opportunity to grow was little chance).
5. **61-80% utilization**, Rangeland has appearance of complete use. Key herbaceous species are almost completely utilized with less than 10% of the current seed stalks remaining. Shoots of rhizomatous grasses are missing. More than 10% of low value herbaceous forage plants have been utilized, (Low 2)/ (opportunity to grow was little chance).
6. **81-100% utilization**, Rangeland has mown appearance and there are indications of repeated coverage. There is no evidence of reproduction or current seed stalks of key herbaceous species. Key herbaceous forage species are completely utilized. Remaining stubble of preferred grasses is grazed to soil surface, (Low 1)/(opportunity to grow was no chance).

Utilization is not to exceed 40 % of annual forage production at the end of the year. Riparian utilization standard is 4” stubble height of the annual available forage. The few riparian areas identified in Tusas have been intermittent in the past near normal precipitation years influencing the 4” standard stubble height. Updated maps specifying riparian areas are necessary for herd management and monitoring.

Table 3-Tusas key species stubble heights reference

| <i>Pasture Key species requirements for entering pastures</i> | <i>5/9/12, Range readiness estimated production/vigor</i> |
|--|---|
| <i>East Wheatgrass</i> <i>Crested wheatgrass 6+”</i> <i>Western wheatgrass 6-8”</i> <i>Blue gramma 1.5”</i> | |
| <i>Coyote</i> <i>Arizona fescue 8+”</i> <i>Western wheatgrass 6-8”</i> <i>Blue gramma 1.5”</i> <i>Mountain Muhly 6+”</i> <i>Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle</i> | |
| <i>Martinez</i> <i>Arizona fescue 8+”</i> <i>Western wheatgrass 6-8”</i> <i>Blue gramma 1.5”</i> <i>Mountain Muhly 6+”</i> <i>Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle</i> | |
| <i>Biscarra</i> <i>Arizona fescue 8+”</i> <i>Western wheatgrass 6-8”</i> <i>Blue gramma 1.5”</i> <i>Mountain Muhly 6+”</i> <i>Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle</i> | |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Deer Trail <i>Arizona fescue</i> 8+” <i>Blue gramma</i> 1.5” <i>Mountain Muhly</i> 6+” <i>Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle</i></p> | |
| <p>Buckhorn <i>Arizona fescue</i> 8+” <i>Mountain Muhly</i> 6+” <i>Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle</i></p> | |
| <p>Posito <i>Arizona fescue</i> 8+” <i>Mountain Muhly</i> 6+” <i>Parry Danthonia full bloom</i> <i>Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle</i></p> | |
| <p>Barela <i>Arizona fescue</i> 8+” <i>Western wheatgrass</i> 6-8” <i>Blue gramma</i> 1.5” <i>Mountain Muhly</i> 6+” <i>Kentucky blue grass fully open panicle</i></p> | |
| <p>West Wheatgrass <i>Western wheatgrass</i> 6-8” <i>Arizona fescue</i> 8+” <i>Crested Wheatgrass</i> 6+” <i>Blue gramma</i> 1.5”</p> | |
| <p>East Wheatgrass <i>Crested wheatgrass</i> 6+” <i>Western wheatgrass</i> 6-8” <i>Blue gramma</i> 1.5”</p> | |

Stream miles located within the Tusas Allotment for riparian management

| Stream | Total stream length | Length of stream on Forest Service land within the Tusas Allotment | Length of stream on private land in holdings within the Tusas Allotment boundary |
|--|----------------------------|---|---|
| Rio Tusas (headwaters to confluence with the Rio Vallecito) | 40 miles | 0.7 miles (Deer Trail Pasture trailway/watergap) Arturo’s ’s camp, watering point, horse pasture, | 6.6 miles |
| Rio Vallecitos (headwaters to confluence with the Rio Tusas) | 35 miles | 1.0 mile (Deer Trail Pasture) water gap adjacent to T-Bone ranch. | 0.0 miles |
| Little Tusas (headwaters to confluence with the Rio Tusas) | 14 miles | 1.5 miles (Positos Pasture) - intermittent watering point. | 5.0 miles |

III. PRIORITY MAINTENANCE

Priority maintenance assigned in your Term Grazing Permit requires annual maintenance that is to be completed prior to placing livestock in the pasture. Maintenance of existing deferred maintenance is priority over new construction, new construction or reconstruction must have the approval of the District Ranger. Deferred maintenance priorities are allotment boundary fences maintained prior to livestock entry into a pasture or neighboring allotment pasture. Interior fences must be maintained before cattle enter the pasture.

The cost of maintenance is the responsibility of the permittee. Maintenance means returning the improvement to its original functioning working order and using the equivalent material. Additional technical maintenance information and specification guides can be found on the Natural Resource Conservation Service web site at: <http://www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/fotg/intro3.html>.

When allotments are in non-use, permittees are responsible for maintenance of allotment improvements referred to in permit deferred maintenance list or working deferred maintenance list.

The working deferred maintenance list will be mailed to the permittees with the 2011 AOI for completion of individual permittee responsibility. 2010 priorities not completed have been carried over to 2011 as listed below.

A. 2012 Priority Maintenance

- Range improvements maintenance is priority over new construction, all maintenance using heavy equipment require District Rangers approval. Tusas assigned maintenance responsibilities need to be identified by individual permittee on the Working Deferred maintenance list which will be mailed with the 2012 AOI. Completion of 10% of deferred maintenance is 2012 objective; this would equate to maintenance of 3 springs, Posito, Biscarra, Burned Mountain, and ¼ mile of heavy maintenance on Jawbone or Spring Creek allotment boundary fence. Boundary fence priority will be evaluated with permittees in 2012.

| 2012 Project | Quantity | Description/size | Value | Date issued | Date installed |
|---|----------|------------------|-------|-------------|----------------|
| May 24-2012 Posito dirt tank survey with NRCS | | | | | |
| Completion of Biscarra spring maintenance | | | | | |
| Tusas/Cow Creek boundary fence maintenance | | | | | |
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B. Travel Management Rule

USFS Travel Management Plan was discussed in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and continues into 2012. The travel management rule requires each Forest Service administrative unit or Ranger District to designate those, roads trails, and areas open to motor vehicle use. On November 2, 2005, the Forest Service announced final management regulations governing OHV's and other motor vehicle use on National Forests and Grasslands. On June 8, 2006, Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth approved the agency's schedule for implementation of the travel management rule. The schedule will guide local efforts to designate those roads, trails and areas open to motor vehicle use. Range permittee guidelines will be developed and will be part of allotment planning in the future. More information is available on the Carson NF web page at: http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/carson/recreation/travel_mgmt/index.shtml. Permittees can provide comments to USFS regarding:

- Roads or motorized trails that you would like to see remain open as part of the designated system
- Roads or motorized trails that you would like to see closed
- Access routes you believe are necessary to access range improvements and description of how you have been accessing these improvements
- Roads or motorized trails you would like to see closed to the public but where you could retain adequate access for range operations and maintenance of you range-related facilities.

VIII. APPEAL RIGHTS

Range managers were informed in January 07 that if an allotment has current NEPA, then appeal language is not needed on the AOI. Allotments with current NEPA operate within the guidelines of the NEPA decision therefore; appeal language has been omitted from Tusas 2012 AOI. The opportunity to appeal management was when the NEPA decision was made. If the allotment has a new permittee, appeal rights still follow the NEPA decision.

/s/ Chris Furr
CHRIS FURR
District Ranger

5/10/12
Date

Attachment: Appendix

Appendix

Grazing Permittee Instructions for Cattle Operators on Tres Piedras Ranger District

1. Review the term grazing permit and become familiar with the terms and conditions prior to the grazing season.
2. Only livestock branded as shown on your application are permitted to enter the National Forest. The Forest Service (FS) and the permittees will agree to the counting locations, date, and time. Entering the allotment before your authorized entry date is not allowed until livestock are counted.
3. A Crossing Permit is required whenever livestock enter the National Forest. Crossing the District to/from a grazing allotment is only allowed within the authorized season.
4. Livestock found on other unauthorized allotments or in areas without prior authorization will result in the issuance of a Notice of Noncompliance that may impact your term permit.
5. The Annual operating Instructions (AOI) pasture rotation dates are tentative. Therefore, you must consult with the District Office two weeks before the AOI tentative scheduled rotation dates for discussion and approval of the actual move dates and any AOI adjustments.

Management on the Range

1. The management objective is to obtain proper use throughout the grazeable portions of the range according to the management requirements of the Carson Forest plan.
2. Obtaining the best distribution of cattle on mountain ranges is made difficult because of their natural tendency to gather in openings, watering sites, drainages, riparian areas and meadows. Proper use will be determined by the percent of forage used within key area sites. With proper livestock distribution, a uniform pattern of use would occur. Utilization levels would vary between 20% to 40% (percent dry weight) in pasture key areas, and within the overall pasture's pattern of use.
3. Riding, herding and good salting practices will help. Frequent movement of salt within slight to light use areas is required to improve the pattern of use. Cattle should be moved to less utilized areas and heavier use should be avoided in the bottoms/meadows/openings that contain more desirable herbage.
4. When proper use levels are reached within each pasture, livestock grazing must end and livestock must exit. An early allotment exit would result in a partial refund/credit of the grazing payment. The grazing of more than one pasture at a time must be approved by the District Ranger. All cattle on the allotment would be handled as one herd. Moves between pastures may be handled as drifting moves where gates to the next successive pasture may be opened 2 days before the agreed scheduled move date. The exit pasture that the cattle are leaving must be cleaned-out within 3 days after the scheduled date for moving.

Salting

1. Salt must be placed in each pasture prior to cattle entering the pasture. Salt shall be located at least 0.5 miles to 1.0 miles away from streams, spring, earthen dam stock tanks and other sources of water in order to improve the livestock distribution within the pasture. Salt must be placed to minimize damage to vegetation and soil, within the tree line instead of the middle of openings, in drainages/riparian or near roadways. Regular salt ground sites must not be established.

Range improvement projects

1. Range Improvement Projects assigned in your Term Grazing Permit require annual maintenance that is to be completed prior to placing livestock in the pasture unit. Allotment boundary fences must be maintained before the entry date and interior fences must be maintained before cattle enter the pasture.

2. Acceptable maintenance means returning the improvement to its original functioning working FS order and using the equivalent material. Particular attention, labor and time must be given to gates within the allotment to make certain that they are serviceable and can be opened and closed easily. The does not furnish materials or cost-share for maintenance projects.
3. All lay-down fences should be let-down no later than October 20, or as soon as possible after cattle leave the allotment and adjoining allotments.
4. Construction of new improvements or reconstruction of existing projects must have the approval of the District Ranger. During the AOI meeting and throughout the year suggestions for proposed projects are accepted.

Special Attention Items

1. Written authorization from the District Ranger is required for vehicle travel in road closure areas. All cross-country travel where allowed must not cause ruts or down-cutting in the soil surface. Cross-country vehicular travel when the ground is wet is prohibited. This written authorization is only for vehicle travel necessary for your livestock operation on you allotment. Prudent use of this authority is asked when and where general public use is concentrated. All permittees are encouraged to stay off roadways closed to vehicular travel during hunting seasons.
2. All temporary camps and corrals made or used by permittees or their riders will be cleaned up (left in a sanitary condition) and all materials/trash will be removed from the sites. Temporary camp/corral locations should be discussed with the FS prior to setting up the camp.
3. Riders will be permitted 4 horses or mules per rider for work within the allotment. No untrained horses, colts or other unreadable stock will be allowed.
4. Ear tags will be provided initially to new permittees on allotments that are tagged. After initial allocation of tags, 10 percent will be provided per grazing season.
5. Please notify the District Ranger with any observations of stray livestock on the National Forest Lands (regardless of the time of year).
6. Move any dead animals to rest no closer than 300 feet from water or roadways.

Report wildfires to: Tres Piedras ranger station at (505 758-8678 or Carson Dispatch at (505) 758-6208 or (505) 758 6209.

If you have any questions, please contact the Tres Piedras Ranger District office.