



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Southwestern Region 3
Carson National Forest
El Rito Ranger District

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2012

ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS (AOI'S)

EL RITO LOBATO ALLOTMENT # 00208

**CARSON NATIONAL FOREST
EL RITO RANGER DISTRICT**

Kelly Garcia

District Ranger

April 26, 2012

Date

Annual Operating Instructions (AOIs)

INTRODUCTION

This AOI is in reference to the discussion you had with Ezequiel Rael, Estevan Gallegos, and Diana Trujillo on March 27, 2012. The authorized eartag color is "white" on the El Rito Lobato East Management Area and "blue" on the El Rito Lobato West Management Area. The authorized use for the 2012 Grazing Season on the El Rito Lobato Allotment is as follows:

Table 1 – Permittee Information and Season of Use

Permittee Name	Permitted		Authorized		Eartag #	Remarks Includes a reduction in numbers
	#	Season	#	Season		
Celerino A. Archuleta	21 c/c	5/1 – 11/30	5	5/1 – 11/30	D 1 - 21	<i>Partial Non-use for Resource Protection</i>
Pete C. Archuleta	5 c/c	5/1 – 11/30	5	5/1 – 11/30	P 1 – 5	
Steve Archuleta	17 c/c	5/1 – 11/30	17	5/1 – 11/30	A 1 - 17	
Tony A. Archuleta	11 c/c	5/1 – 11/30	11	5/1 – 11/30	C 1 – 11	
Michael J. Garcia	62 c/c	5/1 – 11/30	0	5/1– 11/30	G 1 – 62	<i>Not entering allotment on May 1. He may enter allotment in fall. Numbers to be determined later.</i>
Gallegos Ranch	80 c/c	5/1 – 11/30	80	5/1 – 11/30	I - 80	
Tony M. Herrera	34 c/c	5/1 – 11/30	0	5/1 – 11/30	H 1 – 34	<i>Non-use for Personal Convenience</i>
J & R Partnership	63 c/c	5/1 – 11/30	0	5/1 – 11/30	81 - 143	<i>Voluntary Total Non-use for Resource Protection</i>
Gabe Lopez	25 c/c	12/1 – 1/31	25	12/1 – 1/31		
Felipe D. Martinez	42 c/c	5/1 – 11/30	42	5/1 – 11/30	147 – 177	
Joe C. Martinez	60 c/c	5/1 – 11/30	31	5/1 – 11/30	178 –237	
Jonathon C. Martinez	65 c/c	5/1 – 11/30	0	5/1 – 11/30	V 1 – 65	<i>Total Non-use for Resource Protection</i>
Ernest R. Suazo	9 c/c	5/1 – 11/30	9	5/1 – 11/30	S 1 – 9	
Triple A Farms, c/o Robert Archuleta	29 c/c	5/1 – 11/30	20	5/1 – 11/30	E 1 – 29	
Zenitram Industries, Inc.	146 c/c	5/1 – 11/30	131	5/1 – 11/30	Z 1 –131	
El Rito Lobato Cattle Association	26 bulls	5/1 – 11/30	26	5/1 – 11/30	B 1 – 26	
El Rito Lobato Del Norte Grazing Association	13 bulls	5/1 – 11/30	8	5/1 – 11/30	246 - 254	<i>Partial Non-use for Resource Protection</i>
TOTAL	669 c/c 39 bulls	5/1– 11/30 Lopez Pasture 12/1 – 1/31	376 c/c 34 bulls	5/1 – 11/30 Lopez 12/1-1/31		

A range readiness inspection will be scheduled on April 25, 2012 for the El Rito Lobato East and West Units and November 27, 2012 for the Lopez Pasture to determine whether range vegetation and soils will be ready for grazing. You are encouraged to join our staff on this and other inspections during the grazing season. We will meet at the El Rito District Ranger Office at 9:00 am on April 25th as well as on November 22nd.

All livestock must be scheduled for counting prior to entering the El Rito Lobato Allotment. El Rito range personnel must be notified 5 days prior to the time livestock enter or leave the Forest. A five day grace period will be allowed to remove stray(s) permitted livestock from the allotment.

Nonuse applies only to animal numbers. Nonuse of a term permit must be requested in written form for all of the permitted numbers (*Total Nonuse*), or part of the permitted numbers (*Partial Nonuse*). If a permittee elects to request partial or total nonuse, he/she is still responsible for maintenance of assigned range improvements.

A credit/refund application must be submitted within a week after placing livestock late on the allotment or removing livestock early. A credit/refund is not automatic but must be requested in writing by the permittee(s) and approved by the District Ranger.

ROTATION SCHEDULE

A rotation grazing season will be developed as part of the Allotment Management Plan. Until such time, distribution of your livestock is planned as follows (actual dates will be based on range readiness):

Table 2 – Pasture Rotation and Authorized Use – El Rito Lobato East Management Area

Pasture	Number of Cattle Authorized	Grazing Period
Perro	153 c/c + 8 bulls	05/01 - 05/31
Portero (including drifting through El Rito North Pasture)	153 c/c + 8 bulls	06/01 - 07/25
La Jara	153 c/c + 8 bulls	07/26 - 09/30
Lower Placitas	153 c/c	10/01 - 10/31
Upper Placitas	153 c/c	11/01 - 11/30

Table 3 – Pasture Rotation and Authorized Use – El Rito Lobato West Management Area

Pasture	Number of Cattle Authorized	Grazing Period
Sage Pasture	198 c/c + 26 bulls	05/01 - 05/15
Manzanares Pasture	0 c/c	05/01 - 05/31
Madera Pasture	198 c/c + 26 bulls	05/16 – 06/15
Comanche Pasture	198 c/c + 26 bulls	06/16 - 07/15
Amarilla Pasture	198 c/c + 26 bulls	07/16 - 08/23
Sierra Pasture	198 c/c + 26 bulls	08/24 – 09/30
Manzanares Pasture	0 C/c	10/01 - 11/30
Sage Pasture	198 C/c	10/01 – 10/31
Perro	198 C/c	11/01 - 11/30
Lopez	25 c/c	12/01 - 01/31

FORAGE UTILIZATION STANDARDS

Forage utilization will be measured in predetermined key areas. We will need your assistance for locating and setting up additional key areas on the allotment to representative of grazable acres. A key grazing area is a portion of rangeland selected because of its location, grazing or browsing value, or use

to serve as a monitoring and evaluation point for range condition, trend, or degree of grazing use. Key areas reflect the overall acceptability of current grazing management over the rangeland and guides the general management of the entire area of which it is a part. The intent of monitoring in key grazing areas is to maintain good to excellent range conditions in key areas while accommodating the needs of wildlife. It is the responsibility of the permittee to ensure proper distribution of livestock to achieve a light to moderate grazing intensity of 20-40% by weight of annual available forage in key grazing areas. We will contact you later this year to obtain your assistance in establishing additional key areas.

Proper utilization of forage is a critical factor in livestock management on the El Rito Lobato Allotment. Monitoring will be conducted using Vegetative Utilization Monitoring. Permittees are invited and encouraged to accompany Forest Service range staff in the field while range condition evaluations are being made. Utilization guidelines for El Rito Lobato Allotment are light to moderate or 20 - 40% use of grazable forage. Utilization will be measured at the end of the growing season in the key areas.

Riparian stubble heights will be maintained at four inches throughout the grazing season. When Riparian areas have been grazed down to a four inch stubble height cattle will be rotated to the next pasture or moved home early.

Table 4. -- MONITORING RESULTS FROM 2011

Pasture	Species Monitored	Utilization Guideline	Actual Utilization
Placitas – South Pasture	Blue grama	20-40%	30%
	Carex	20-40%	30%
Placitas – North Pasture	Blue grama	20-40%	50%
	Carex	20-40%	50%
El Rito North Pasture	Bottlebrush squirrel tail	20-40%	30%
	Blue grama	20-40%	30%
Potrero Pasture	Blue grama	20-40%	31%
	Carex	20-40%	31%
La Jara Pasture	Kentucky blue grass	20-40%	50%
	Carex	20-40%	50%
Perro Pasture	Carex	20-40%	30%
	Blue grama	20-40%	30%
Sage Pasture	Carex	20-40%	30%
	Blue grama	20-40%	30%
Madera Pasture	Blue grama	20-40%	47%
	Carex	20-40%	30%

Comanche Pasture	Western wheatgrass	20-40%	30%
	Blue grama	20-40%	45%
Amarilla Pasture	Kentucky blue grass	20-40%	30%
	Arizona fescue	20-40%	33%
Sierra Pasture	Kentucky blue grass	20-40%	46%
	Arizona fescue	20-40%	46%

Overutilization on several pastures continues to be an issue on the allotment. While there was an improvement from the 2010 grazing season, there is still a need to improve livestock distribution on all pastures. It should be noted that multiple issues contributed to utilization levels including distribution of livestock, elk use, fence conditions, and water availability. Additional monitoring sites in key grazing areas are also needed to give a more complete picture of utilization on the allotment's grazable acres. It will be important in the 2012 grazing season that management efforts be intensified and cattle be rotated on time and distributed evenly to prevent overutilization in key areas. Cattle moving into the upper pastures early, livestock remaining on the allotment after the grazing season ended and fence maintenance were issues with multiple permittees during the 2011 grazing season. Fence maintenance, salt dispersal, range riding and monitoring by the permittees can change utilization for the better. Adjustments in authorized livestock and season of use can be expected in 2013 if similar issues persist and distribution and management of livestock continues to result in excessive utilization.

MONITORING

Field inspections will be conducted to monitor allowable use, and movement of livestock. Permittees are encouraged and invited to participate in these inspections. The dates scheduled for monitoring on El Rito Lobato East Management Unit are: June 19, August 16, September 27 and November 28, 2012 and on El Rito Lobato West Management Unit are: June 20, August 17, September 28, and November 29, 2012. The scheduled monitoring dates for the Lopez Pasture are: January 7 and February 1, 2012. The length of season depends on the intensity of management and cooperation between permittees on livestock distribution and moving from pasture to pasture. Total removal of all livestock from the pasture/allotment is encouraged.

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. This information will be used to determine if cattle need to be re-distributed within the pasture or removed from the pasture.

Monitoring items such as distribution patterns, range readiness, cattle numbers, forage use levels, salting practices, and condition of improvements will be evaluated. Regular herding and riding practices are the key to achieving proper livestock distribution on the allotment, and to provide for the fullest use of the grazing season. Salt must be placed out of bottoms, away from water, roads, forest system trails, and recreational sites. Range readiness inspections will determine whether range vegetation and soils are ready for grazing.

IMPROVEMENT MAINTENANCE

Update on projects discussed at the El Rito Lobato West Allotment AOI meeting in 2012:

- Reseed 200 acres of brushhogged area in Sage Pasture.
- Rio Arriba County will undertake the cleaning and sealing two earthen tanks located in the Arroyo del Chamiso area of the Comanche pasture through a grant secured with Secure Rural Schools Title II funding.
- Permittees have requested a cattleguard near Cholejo Spring
- Reconstruct existing stock tanks (Atascosa and Banco Aragon) in Sierra Pasture (Donald Martinez volunteered to take the lead on this)
- Meet with State Highway Department regarding fences along State Highway 554 *Update: There is new personnel at NMSDOT. We will reinitiate dialogue with these folks this spring to get this project back on track.*
- Check on repairs to Sierra Spring *Update: Please notify Ezequiel or Estevan when ready to do site relocation as archeological clearance will be needed.*
- Will go out with permittees to check on silted tank between Cholejo and Sierra. *Update: Please contact Ezequiel Rael to schedule.*

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 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 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.

If you have a need to cut fence stays or posts while you are maintaining fences on your allotment, you may obtain a Free Use Permit from the range personnel at the El Rito office.

OTHER

Reminder, the permittee(s) must be in "good standing" with the respective association. This includes but is not limited to salt fees, bull fees, range improvement fees, and rider fees. Annual validations and Waiver of Term Grazing Permit(s) will be approved and processed only if permittee is in good standing.

ALLOTMENT STATUS

At the present time direction for management on the allotment is being documented in the AOIs. An Environmental Assessment for the El Rito Lobato East and West Allotments was completed in 2008. An Allotment Management Plan for the combined El Rito Lobato Allotment will be completed in 2012 and will provide management direction for the next 10 years.

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.

**ACTUAL USE INFORMATION
 EI RITO LOBATO EAST MANAGEMENT AREA
 2012 GRAZING SEASON**

Table 6 – 2012 Actual Use Information – El Rito Lobato East Management Area

Pasture	Planned Livestock Number & Class	Planned Use		Actual Use		Remarks
		Date on	Date Off	Date on	Date Off	
Perro	153 c/c + 8 bulls	5/01	5/31			
Placitas-North	153 c/c + 8 bulls	TBD	TBD			May need to be used in conjunction with Perro.
El Rito North	Should be used while drifting cattle toward Potrero pasture					
Potrero	153 c/c + 8 bulls	06/01	07/25			
La Jara	153 c/c + 8 bulls	07/26	09/30			
Placitas-North Pasture	153 c/c	10/01	10/31			
Placitas-South Pasture	153 c/c	11/01	11/30			

Number of Head counted on _____.
 Number of head lost: _____.

Table 7 – 2012 Actual Use Information – El Rito Lobato West Management Area

Pasture	Planned Livestock Number & Class	Planned Use		Actual Use		Remarks
		Date on	Date Off	Date on	Date Off	
Sage	198 c/c + 26 bulls	05/01	05/15			
Manzanares	0 c/c	05/01	05/31			
Madera	198 c/c + 26 bulls	05/16	06/15			
Comanche	198 c/c + 26 bulls	06/16	07/15			
Amarilla	198 c/c + 26 bulls	07/16	08/23			
Sierra	198 c/c + 26 bulls	08/24	09/30			
Perro	198 c/c	10/01	10/31			
Sage	198 c/c	11/01	11/30			
Manzanares	0 c/c	10/01	11/30			
Lopez	25 c/c	12/01	01/31			

Number of Head counted on _____.
 Number of head lost: _____.

Table 8 – 2012 Miscellaneous Information

Livestock Class	Poisonous Plants	Predators	Other	Total Losses

**UTILIZATION INFORMATION
EL RITO LOBATO ALLOTMENT
2012 GRAZING SEASON**

Attachment 1

Pasture	Head Months (HMs)	Animal Unit Months	Allowable Utilization (percent)	Date Monitored	Observed Utilization
El Rito Lobato East Management Area:					
Placitas-South					
Placitas-North					
El Rito North					
Potrero					
La Jara					
El Rito Lobato West Management Area:					
Perro					
Sage					
Madera					
Comanche					
Sierra					
Amarilla					
Manzanares					
Lopez					

Appendix
Grazing Permittee Instructions for Cattle Operators on El Rito Ranger District

Review the term grazing permit and become familiar with the terms and conditions prior to the grazing season.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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

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, springs, 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 in 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.

Acceptable maintenance means returning the improvement to its original functioning working order and using the equivalent materials. 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 FS does not furnish materials or cost-share for maintenance projects.

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.

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

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 your 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.

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.

Riders will be permitted 4 horses or mules per rider for work within the allotment. No untrained horses, colts or other unrideable stock will be allowed.

Please notify the District Ranger with any observations of stray livestock on the National Forest Lands (regardless of the time of year).

Move any dead animals to rest no closer than 300 feet from water or roadways.

Report wildfires to: El Rito Ranger Station at (575) 581-4554 or Carson Dispatch at (575) 758-6208 or (575) 758-6209.

If you have any questions, please contact the El Rito Ranger District office.