



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Southwestern Region 3
Carson National Forest
Tres Piedras Ranger District

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2013
ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS (AOI)
LAGUNITAS ALLOTMENT (00607)
CARSON NATIONAL FOREST
TRES PEIDRAS RANGER DISTRICT

LIST OF LAGUNITAS LIVESTOCK ASSOCIATION MEMBERS:

Donald Larsen
Ernest Moeller (Moeller Ranch LLC-pending)
Wayne Moeller
Rio Vega Ranch

Prepared By:
Anna Dominguez
Anna Dominguez
Rangeland Management Specialist

6/4/13
Date

Approved By:
Chris Furr
CHRIS FURR
District Ranger

6/4/13
Date

Introduction

The Annual Operating Instruction meeting was held on March 15, 2013 at the Conejos Library. Permittees that attended the meeting included Dennis Moeller, Don Larsen, Leroy Martinez and Jeff Martinez. Chris Furr, Wayne Yonemoto, and Anna Dominguez represented the U.S. Forest Service.

The Annual Operating Instruction (AOI) is a decision document that is made part of the terms and conditions of the Term Grazing Permit. The AOI includes guidance criteria described below that addresses annual resource conditions, livestock numbers, period of use, pasture rotations, monitoring and range improvements projects. The 2003 Rangeland Management Action Plan for the Santa Fe and Carson National Forests continues to be program guidance. The objectives of this strategic action plan continue to be a high priority and emphasize collaboration, rangeland health, rangeland monitoring and Permittee involvement.

The livestock grazing fee is \$1.35/HM (cattle).

The dry weather pattern conditions include the following. Within the area, the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) 3-month forecast is for increased chances of below normal to normal precipitation, Feb through April., 2013 as well as, increased chances of normal to above-normal temperatures.

The SPI definition that indicates the end-of-drought is for the SPI values to be positive 1.0 (or higher) for the past 12 months. The SPI for the past 12 months January thru December is described as Moderately Dry (-1.24 to -0.75) so the end of drought has not occurred.

SPI values of negative 0.70 or less for the past month signal drought conditions. The SPI for the past 1-month thru February is described as Near Normal (-0.74 to +0.74), so 1-month drought conditions are present. Within the District, during the periods of Oct. to Dec., 2011 and Jan. to Feb., 2013 there were various acres of favorable to normal to above normal precipitation but also areas of below normal precipitation. Also, below normal to normal, to normal to above-normal temperatures occurred.

The authorized ear tag color is orange. All authorized cattle will be ear tagged correctly with the authorized letter/number. The authorized use for the current grazing season is as follows:

Members Information and Season of Use (Term Permit/Annual Authorized Use Request Form)

Member Name	Permitted (c/c: 6/16-10/5)	Authorized 10% reduction (c/c, 5/25-10/5)	Ear tag letter	Remarks 2013 Actual Use
Donald Larsen	75	67	D	
Ernest Moeller (Moeller Ranch LLC-pending)	280	252	L	
Wayne Moeller	104	94	X	
Rio Vega Ranch	466	420	V	
Total	925 c/c (30406 HMs, 4495 AUMs); 112 days	833 c/c (3067 HM, 4048 AUM); 112 days		

Range readiness inspections will determine the final authorized livestock number and whether range vegetation and soils meet the criteria for grazing. Range readiness will be scheduled June 7, 2013.

Compliance with New Mexico Statewide Regulation, 21.30.6 NMAC, Bovine Trichomoniasis, effective June 17, 2005, becomes a term and condition of the United States Forest Service term grazing permit. We ask that you comply with the NM State Trichomoniasis regulations.

All livestock must be scheduled for counting prior to entering the Allotment. Tres Piedras district range personnel must be notified 5 days prior to the time that livestock enter or leave the Carson NF.

Nonuse of term permit must be requested in writing for all of the permitted numbers (Full Nonuse), or part of the permitted numbers (Partial Nonuse). Verbal applications will not be accepted. If a permittee is approved for "Full nonuse", the permittee is still responsible for maintenance of assigned range improvements.

Review of 2012 Monitoring Data

The monitoring information in the Allotment Study file was reviewed. The forage production improved after the July, August precipitation (normal to above normal). Participants discussed areas of below average to average production and average to above average production, livestock distribution management and utilization. All pastures had a majority of grazeable acres at average to above average production.

Utilization guidelines of 20% to 40% (end of season) in each pasture were met except Olguin pasture. FS monitoring indicated end-of-growing season utilization: Olguin - >40%; Canon

Largo 30-40%; Beaver 25-35%; Diablo 35-40%; South Fork 30-40%. Olguin and Canon Largo riparian did not meet the 4 inch stubble height at the end of the growing season.

2012 AOI Compliance

1. One of five pastures met the utilization guidelines of 20% to 40% utilization measured at the end of the growing season.
2. Two of five pastures did not meet the riparian standards for the 2012 grazing season in Olguin and Canon Largo pastures.

2012 Actual use

Actual use: 925 c/c: 6/16-10/5, 134 days, 0% reduction from permit, totals 3,406 HM, 4,495 AUM

Olguin

925 c/c, 6/16-6/30: (15 days), 456 HM, 602 AUM

Canon Largo

925 c/c, 7/1-8/5 (36 days), 1094 HM, 1445 AUM

Beaver

925 c/c, 8/6-8/26 (21 days), 638 HM, 842 AUM

Diablo

925 c/c, 8/27-9/15 (20 days), 608 HM, 802 AUM

South Fork

925 c/c, 9/16-10/5 (20 days), 608 HM, 802 AUM

Tentative Rotation Schedule

Initial distribution of your livestock in tentatively planned as follows (actual dates will be based on the range readiness determination);

Tentative Rotation Schedule (6/16-10/5, 112 days)

Pasture	Tentative Dates (# of Days)	Days (min to max)	Actual Use	Reason for Adjustments
Olguin	6/16-6/30 (15)	10-15		
South Fork	7/1-8/5 (36)	30-36		
Diablo	8/6-8/26 (21)	15-21		
Beaver	8/27-9/15 (20)	15-20		
Canon Largo	9/16-10/5 (20)	15-20		
Total	(112 days) Range readiness determines the authorized	85-112		

	entry date: utilization determines the exit date.			
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Monitoring

Please contact Tres Piedras RD with any questions regarding monitoring and whether you wish to participate in the annual monitoring of your allotment. Your participation I encouraged. The following monitoring assessments, evaluations and methods may be conducted on the allotment:

Weather updates (SPI and temperature)

Soil moisture depth

Water availability

Reading paired annual production/utilization cages with supporting photos and documentation, Rapid Assessment Method, Cover/Frequency, Parker 3-Step, Grazing Response Index, Ocular Estimate Method by Class, Ocular Utilization Estimate by Weight, Photo Point, and Range Trend Plot.

Key site map of the Allotment

Key forage list showing community type, species list and stubble height

Range readiness stubble ht. /utilization guidelines

Grazing season monitoring stubble ht. / utilization guidelines

End of season stubble ht. /utilization guidelines

Range readiness documentation

Watershed health indicators

Utilization Guidelines

Within each pasture, grazing utilization would occur at 20% to 40% of the annual available forage (not to exceed 40%) and would be assessed at the end of the growing season. Utilization guidelines in the riparian areas include leaving 4 inches of stubble height of the annual available forage when livestock exit the pasture. When proper use levels are reached within the pasture, livestock will be moved to the next scheduled pasture unless other management considerations require livestock removal before proper use levels are reached.

Key Forage Species

Pasture	Key Forage Species	Stubble Height
Canon Largo/Olguin	Kentucky bluegrass	4"
	Mutton grass	4"
	Arizona fescue	6"
Diablo-Beaver/South fork	Kentucky bluegrass	4"
	Mountain Muhly	4"
	Sheep fescue	4"
	Alpine timothy	4"
Riparian	Kentucky bluegrass	4"
	Carex	4"

Total removal of all livestock from the pasture/allotment is required. A 3 day period will be allowed to remove stray(s) permitted livestock from the pasture/allotment. Regular herding and riding management practices are important to achieve proper livestock distribution on the allotment, and to provide for the

optimal duration of the grazing period. Salting practices are also described in the cattle operator instructions at the end of this AOI.

AOI Objectives

- The outstanding National resource Water (ONRW) in New Mexico designation for Cruces Basin Wilderness area stream flows includes Lobo Creek, Escondido Creek, Osha Creek, Diable Creek, Beaver Creek and Cruces Creek. ONRW's (perennial waters) receive the highest protection under the state Water Quality Act.
- Continue to minimize grazing use in the riparian in order to meet the riparian standards each grazing season. Continue to herd livestock away from the riparian areas and use salt placement to improve livestock distribution. Monitor, maintain or improve the riparian green zone forage. Improve livestock distribution when initially entering the pasture by moving small groups throughout the pasture, to various salt locations with rider representation from all members. Also, her/move livestock within the authorized pasture every few days to distribute cattle.
- One herd within each authorized pasture should be maintained throughout the grazing season and good cleanouts of the pastures should occur.
- Provided rest for herbage in the Canon Largo prescribed burn area when periodic burn maintenance is prescribed, possible in 2013. Therefore, Canon Largo will be grazed early in the rotation to allow for the opportunity for growth to occur prior to burning later in the season. A prescribed burn for the grassland area (1200) acres was conducted in the fall, 2008. The prescribed burn was conducted under favorable prescription parameters and with adequate dormant ground fuels where the annual production was average to above-average. However, green herbage areas (high moisture) were present and were intermixed with the dormant ground fuels.
- Prevent excess use by Lagunitas cattle within the adjoining allotments, Apache, San Antone, and Tio Grande. Prevent excess use by Apache or Tio Grande cattle into the Lagunitas. In 2011, Lagunitas cattle entered Tecolote due to a downed tree at fence boundary Olguin/Tecolote.
- Rotate pastures to vary the cool and warm growing season rest and allow the opportunity for cool and warm season growth.
- Monitor the pasture grazing time in order to improve forage vigor
- FS monitoring of the Olguin pasture trailing route to prevent heavy use/intermingling by Grant cattle in the fall.
- As Lagunitas allotment permittees, you are authorized to drive (in your work truck vehicle) off the Forest Service developed roads further than 300 ft. during the performance of your maintenance responsibilities. Aspen fence stays may be removed from allotment areas adjacent to the maintained pasture fences. In addition, ATV transport of materials is allowed. During conditions (moist soil) when your vehicle tires will cause increasing soil surface disturbance and greater negative impacts, you are not authorized to drive beyond or off the established Forest Service roads or trails. This authorization will expire on 10/20/13 or may change to an earlier expiration date depending on Forest conditions, fire restrictions, seasonal closures or limited accessibility.

Permittee Management Concerns (Also refer to the Project Section)

1. In 2012, when exiting, it was difficult to trail Lagunitas cattle along FR 87 by Stewart meadows because Tio Grande cattle were within the enclosures.
2. Inspect Lagunitas/Apache boundary fence for assigned maintenance division review. Initially, the maintenance division of Lagunitas/Apache fence boundary was assigned into 4 fence segments, alternating from the Grant boundary, Apache first segment, then Lagunitas second segment, then Apache third segment, then Lagunitas fourth segment. The new proposed maintenance would be: Grant boundary to an H-brace marker which is 50% would be assigned to one Association, (Apache or Lagunitas); then the remainder of the fence boundary (50%) should be assigned to the other Association. This boundary includes areas of steep slopes with no fence.
3. Review maintenance responsibilities for these 2 segments of boundary fence: 1) Assign Hondo/Beaver fence maintenance by 2 specific segments instead of alternating each year the responsibility for the entire fence line: 2) Assign Canon Largo/Olguin/San Antone fence maintenance by 2 specific segments, north and south of the FR 87 cattleguard, instead of alternating the responsibility for 4 fence segments.
4. Allotment road maintenance is needed. Roads have ruts and are developing gullies.
5. Private fence is down at FR 93 area with Tio Grande boundary so Tio Grande cattle are able to enter Olguin. Private fence needs to be rebuilt/repared. A Lagunitas Association member will inquire about leasing the private land.
6. In 2011, the Olguin private gates were open and Tio Grande cattle were in Olguin before Lagunitas cattle entered the pasture.
7. Evaluate combining San Antone/Lagunitas allotments (develop permanent well waters ion lower pastures, combine pastures, corral a Y)

Annual Authorized Use Request Form

Credits from previous year, if applicable, would apply to the current bill. 2012 full permitted use of 925 c/c for 112 days 3,406 HM, 4,495 AUM occurred. 2013 authorized use is 10% reduction in numbers with estimated early season off date in the range of 4%. The final livestock numbers and entry date would be determined after range readiness inspections.

Range Improvements Projects and Maintenance

Range improvements projects maintenance labor/costs are the responsibilities of the permittee. Term permit assigned projects such as, allotment boundary fences, pasture boundary fences, cattle guards, earthen dam stock tanks, pit tanks, and other structural improvements must be maintained prior to permittee entry onto the allotment. When allotments are in non-use the permittees are still required to maintain their assigned improvements.

The following are improvements which require special attention during the current grazing season.

2013 Project Priority: 1) Continue repair of Olguin/Nutritas fence, (south of the private 20 acres); 2) Lagunitas campground fence maintenance: FS reconstruct west boundary campground fence: and add H brace/gate at FR 87 cattle guard at the Lagunitas campground.

Future projects

Repair/reconstruct Lagunitas corral using FS materials (cattle panels/railroad ties issued to Association in 2004).	Discussed
Reconstruct 1.0 mile of Apache Bonito/Diablo fence	Discussed
Reconstruct 1 mile of fence at Fisherman's Park (Grant boundary)	Discussed-private fence
Improve fence at San Antone Watergate fence/private boundary to create holding pen	Discussed-Bull panels or 5 pipe panel (20 ft. - \$110) total of 600 feet
Change fence maintenance responsibility with San Antone Association at the Olguin/Nutritas boundary	Discussed
New construction of fence along FR 93 in Olguin to prevent trailing cattle from grazing in Olguin and mixing with the association cattle	Discussed (EA required). Cost share construction with the crossing permit holders that trail the driveway. Crossing permit holders
Maintenance for north cattleguard on FR 87A (Beaver)	Discussed
Maintenance of Beaver/Hondo fence	Alternate spring/fall to put up and lay down between Lagunitas/San Antone Association instead of 50-50 division in the spring/fall

Previous Projects Completed

Replace/repair cattleguard base at Lagunitas campground	FS completed in 2012
Repair 0.3 miles of fence at the Lagunitas Grant boundary adjacent to Tecolote	Completed in 2010. (Cost shared with Tio Grande).
Maintain 2 miles Canon Largo/San Antone Tanques fence	San Antone completed 1.0 miles in 2009/0.75 miles in 2010
Association and rider completed heavy maintenance of Bonito/Diablo fence (9H-brace fence section) by clearing fallen trees and replacing fence material where needed.	Completed in 2008

Excess Use and Unauthorized Use

Permittees are encouraged to notify the Tres Piedras Ranger District of any known violation by permittees (excess use) or non-permittees (unauthorized use). Grazing permit holders who graze more livestock than authorized will receive a Notice of Non-Compliance, charged an excess use grazing fee, and the term permit may be suspended or cancelled in whole or part.

National Environmental Policy Act Status for Grazing Permit Issuance

Direction for management on the allotment is being documented in this AOI and is in conformance with the allotment management plan (AMP). An environmental assessment was completed in 4-8-1996 and an AMP was prepared in 11-8-2004. Open and positive communication is encouraged. Please contact the range personnel if you have any questions or wish to discuss allotment management objectives, or Forest Plan standards and guidelines.

Travel Management

USFS Travel Management Plan was discussed. The travel management rule requires each Ranger District to designate those roads trails and areas open to motor vehicle use. Range permittee guidelines will be developed and will be included in the AOI in the future. A second travel management meeting was held in Tres Piedras on March 21, 2007 (The first travel management meeting was held in Tres Piedras July 11, 2006). Attendees provided comments to the USFS regarding roads or trails that should remain open or closed: and access routes to range improvements that are needed within the allotment. Scoping letter (dated February 2, 2009) was mailed to the public.



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Appendix

Grazing Permittee Instruction for Cattle Operators on Tres Piedras 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 non-compliance 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

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 with) 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 pastures. 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 Improvements Projects

Range improvement Projects assigned in your Term Grazing Permit requires 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 the riders will be cleared up (left in a sanitary condition) and all materials/trash will be removed from the sites. Temporary cam/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 untrained stock will be allowed. Ear tags will be provided initially to new permittees on allotments that hare tagged. After initial allocation of tags, 10 percent will be provided per grazing season.

Please notify the district Ranger with any observations of stray livestock on the Nation's Forest Lands (regardless of the time of year). Move any dead animals to rest no closer than 300 feet form water or roadways.

Report wildfires to: Tres Piedras Ranger Station at (575) 758-86778 or Carson Dispatch at (575) 758-6208 or (575) 758-6209. If you have any questions, please contact the Tres Piedras Ranger District office.