



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Southwestern Region 3  
Carson National Forest  
Tres Piedras Ranger District

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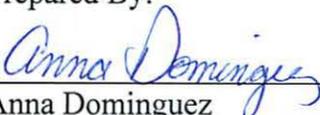
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2013  
ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS (AOI)  
TIO GORDITO ALLOTMENT (00632)  
CARSON NATIONAL FOREST  
TRES PIEDRAS RANGER DISTRICT

LIST OF TIO GORDITO ALLOTMENT PERMITTEES:

Peter Casados  
Lawrence Garcia  
Alfonso Lovato  
Eric and Bryan Vigil  
Presciliano, Reynaldo J. and Morry L. Roybal

Prepared By:

  
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Anna Dominguez  
Rangeland Management Specialist

4-30-13  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Approved By:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
CHRIS FURR  
District Ranger

4/30/13  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Introduction**

The Tio Gordito Operating Instructions meeting was held on February 13, 2013 at the Tres Piedras Ranger District. Tio Gordito members that attended the meeting included Peter Casados, Lawrence Garcia, Alfonso Lovato and Jake Vigil. Wayne Yonemoto and Anna Dominguez represented the U. S. Forest Service.

The Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) is a decision document that is made part of the terms and condition 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 improvement 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, and rangeland monitoring and permittee involvement.

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 thru the end of January 2013 is described as exceptionally Dry (-2.99 to -2.00) 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 the end of January is described as moderately dry (-0.74 to +0.74). Within the District, during the periods of December 2011 to January 2013, there were various areas of favorable normal to above normal precipitation as well as areas of below normal precipitation. Also, below normal to normal to above-normal temperatures occurred.

The livestock grazing fee for 2013 grazing year is \$1.35/HM (Cattle). The authorized ear tag color is yellow. All authorized cattle will be ear tagged with the authorized letter. The authorized use for the current grazing season is as follows:

**Tio Gordito permittee information and Authorized Use**

<b>Tio Gordito has five c/c permit members</b>	<b>Permitted Season, c/c, ear tag color and letter</b>	<b>2013 Authorized use is 41% reduction addressing resource protection adaptive management to drought conditions.</b>	<b>Actual use</b>
Peter Casados	5/18-10/14 34 c/c yellow/PC	5/18-10/14 34 c/c No reduction	
Lawrence Garcia	5/18-10/14 23 c/c yellow/A	5/18-10/14 23 c/c No reduction	
Alfonso Lovato	5/18-10/14 10 c/c Yellow/Brand	5/18-10/14 10 c/c No reduction	
Presceliano Roybal	5/18-10/14 14 c/c yellow/H	5/18-10/14 Non-use 100% reduction	
Eric and Bryan Vigil	5/18-10/14 268 c/c yellow/ L	5/18-10/14 140 c/c 48% reduction	

Initial range readiness inspection will determine the adaptive management in response to resource conditions. Initial Range readiness is scheduled for 5-9-13 at 10:00 am. Range inspections will be conducted throughout the season of use to adjust with the current resource condition.

Compliance with New Mexico Statewide Regulations, 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 a term permit must be requested in writing for all of the permitted numbers (total nonuse), or part of the permitted numbers (partial nonuse). Verbal applications will not be accepted. If a permittee is approved for "total nonuse", the permittee is still responsible for maintenance of assigned range improvements.

#### **Review of 2012 Monitoring Data**

The 2012 monitoring information the Allotment Study file was reviewed. Permittees agreed to a 41% reduction in response to resource condition actual use was 42% reduction. The forage production in the summer of 2012 started slow and then improved in higher elevations pastures of the allotment. A range of production from below to above average occurred due to the isolated summer precipitation. All pastures met the 20%-40% utilization guideline at the end of the authorized grazing season.

- The majority of authorized livestock entered on 5-18-12; the months of May and June were dry. Mineral tubs were in the Pinion. July isolated rains allowed for forage production and water collection in the dirt tanks. There were minimal issues with livestock in Highlands's estate in 2012. Tio Gordito permittees have taken a conservative stocking rate average of 40% over the past 5 years for resource protection. 2012 actual use was 42% reduction. Exceptional precipitation during optimal growing conditions allowed for good seed production in higher elevation pastures.
- High observation of wild horses in the Sawmill and Malpais pastures occurred in 2012. El Rito Ranger District wild horse coordinator was informed.
- Overall forage production was stunted in the spring due to drought conditions especially in the open meadows. All pastures appear to have light 40% utilization based on annual forage production. Sporadic rains allowed for higher elevation pastures forage production but lower elevation pastures received minimal precipitation.
- Fire warning started 5-22-12 due to windy conditions. No forest closures related to fire occurred in 2012. Prescribed burns were 580 acres in Red Mesa/ Las Tablas pastures. The 2012 prescribed burn cleared the black sage and ponderosa pine seedlings.
- Timber funding purchased cattle guard sills to support salvaged cattle guard between Wheatgrass/Malaipas/Tio Gordito. Tio Gordito permittees installed the cattle guard and in kind labor and equipment use costs were compiled. The existing salvage cattle guard

grate was moved to the unauthorized road/gate on FR 97. Permittees completed the installation of new gates on the Tio Gordito corral.

**2012 AOI Compliance**

1. All pastures met the utilization guidelines of 20% to 40% ocular estimated at the end of the growing season.
2. Improved livestock distribution by minimizing livestock from entering Highland estates with the use of salt and herding
3. Tio Gordito, Sawmill and Malpais pastures have incomplete boundaries due to lack of cattle guards. The lack of cattle guards and fair to low fence conditions emphasize the use of salt and herding as the primary tools in keeping livestock in the scheduled pasture.

**2012 Actual Use**

Actual use was slightly staggered herd entry and exit. Staggered herd entry/exit credits were completed for Alfonso Lovato and Jake Vigil had a less cattle number credit. Tio Gordito 2012 total use was HM 1006 and 1323 AUM, a reduction of 42% of permitted. The slightly staggered herd entry and reduction of cattle numbers equates to 1%.

Pinon	172-205 staggged herd entry, 5/18-6/1, 15 days, 97 HM, 128 AUM
Ambrose	non-use
Servilleta	trailing
Wheatgrass/Las Tablas	205 c/c, 6/2-6/30, 29 days, 195 HM, 257 AUM
Sawmill	205 c/c, 7/1-8/20, 51 days, 343 HM, 453 AUM
Malpais	205 c/c, 7/22-8/20, 34 days, 227 HM, 299 AUM
Tio Gordito	205 c/c, 9/24-10/15, 15 days, 141 HM, 186 AUM

**Tentative Rotation Schedule**

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

Tentative Rotation Schedule (5/18-10/15, total days 151)

Pasture	Tentative Dates (# of Days)	Days (min to max)	Actual Use	Reason for Adustments
Pinon	5/18-6/11 (25)	20-25		
Ambrose	Assesment needed			
Servilleta	Assesment needed			
Wheatgrass/Las Tablas	6/12-7/12 (31)	29-31		
Sawmill	7/13-8/16 (35)	20-35		
Malpais	8/17-9/20(35)	30-35		
Tio Gordito	9/21-10/15 (25)	20-25		
Total	(151 days) Range readiness determines the	119-151		

	authorized 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 is 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 includes leaving 4 inches of stubble height of the annual available forage at the end of the growing season. 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**

<b>Pasture</b>	<b>Key Forage Species</b>	<b>Stubble Height</b>
Pinon	Crested wheatgrass	4"
Ambrose	Western wheatgrass	4"
Servilleta	Blue gramma	1.5"
	Sand dropseed	4 "
Wheatgrass/Las Tablas Tio Gordito	Crested wheatgrass	4 "
	Western wheatgrass	4"
	Blue gramma	1.5 "
	Arizona Fescue	6"
Sawmill Malpais	Western wheatgrass	4"
	Blue gramma	1.5"
	Arizona Fescue	6"

	Crested wheatgrass	4''
	Western wheatgrass	4''
	Blue gramma	1.5''
		4''
	Needle and thread	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**

- 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 (days) in order to improve forge vigor.
- Maintain or improve the riparian/green zone forage.
- Improve livestock distribution when initially entering the pasture by moving small groups through the pasture, to various salt locations with livesock herding from all members. Also, herd/move livestock when the authorized pasture every few days.
- Continue to minimize livestock excess use within the Highland Estate.
- As Tio Gordito allotment members, you are authorized to drive (in your work truck vehicle) off of the Forest Service developed roads further than 300 ft. during the performance of your maintenance responsibilities. 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 of the established Forest Service roads or trails. This authorization will expire on 10/20/2013 or may change to an earlier expiration date depending on Forest conditions, fire restrictions, seasonal closures or limited accessibility.
- The completion of the Red Mesa prescribed burn is 125 acres in 2013. Tio Gordito and Spring Creek allotment are undergoing NEPA with proposal of approximately 2,000 acres of treatment in 2014.

**Permittee Management Concerns (Also refer to the Project Section)**

- Permittees have observed increase in Elk use.
- Permittees observed an increase in wild horse presence on the Tio Gordito. They discussed improving monitoring documentation by informing USFS and recording date and location. Documentation of wild horse observation would contain the day number of horses, time, location, and their condition. Each permittee will document their wild horse observation on a log to turn in at the end of the year for reference in requesting prioritization in removing the horses addressing resource protection. Permittees discussed that the horse trapping needs to be strategized in the spring when grass green up is concentrated in certain areas.

- Tio Gordito, Sawmill, and Malpais do not have complete pasture boundary due to lack of cattle guards
- Removal of non-functional fences and use materials to complete heavy maintenance or complete fence along natural boundary with El Rito Ranger District
- Unauthorized use of storage water in trick tanks
- Unauthorized use of water in Servilleta tank
- Long term Non-use of Tio Gordito permit
- Increased hunting, wood hauling and public use—horse riding from Highlands estates leaves the gate open between Malpais and Sawmill increasing the labor for clean out of pastures.
- Private land owners adjacent to Sawmill currently have a poor fence that does not contain the private livestock and is contributing to excess use on the Tio Gordito.

**Annual Authorized Use Request Form**

Credits from the 2012 would be issued to those permittees that it applies to. The sum of 2013 reductions for the Tio Gordito individual permits is 41% in numbers. Actual use was slightly staggered herd entry and exit. Staggered herd entry/exit credits were completed for Alfonso Lovato and Jake Vigil had a less cattle number credit.

**Range Improvement Projects and Maintenance**

Range improvement projects maintenance labor/costs are the responsibilities of the permittee. Term permit assigned projects such as, allotment boundary fences, pasture boundary fences, cattleguards, 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.

**Previous Projects Completed:**

Wheatgrass/Malpais Cattle guard installation	2012-Completed
5 new gate installation on corral	2012-Completed
Wheatgrass/Pinon Surface cattle guard	2012-Completed
Rest area trick tank drinker installation and maintenance	2011-Completed
Coordination the HWY 285 fence replacement and cattle guard replacement	2010-Completed
Wheatgrass/Tio Gordito heavy maintenance.	2010-Completed

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

**2013 Project Priority:**

- Establish cattle guards in Tio Gordito/ Malpais, and Sawmill to maximize clean out efficiency in the fall.
- Removal of Red mesa fence and supplies used on El Rito boundary drift fence areas
- Alter the design of the Sawmill/Malpais gates so that they remain closed.
- Clean out ditch going to dry lakes
- Repair the remaining 5 gates on the Tio Gordito corral
- Complete long term history of Tio Gordito permittee non-use

**Future Projects**

Removal of Red Mesa fence and supplies used on El Rito boundary drift fence areas.	Discussed
Establish cattle guards in Tio Gordito/Malpais, and Sawmill	Discussed
Alter the design of the Sawmill/Malpais gate so that they remain closed	Discussed
Clean out ditch going to dry lakes	Discussed
Repair the remaining 5 gates on the Tio Gordito corral	Discussed
Complete history of Tio Gordito permittee non-use.	Discussed
Private/USFS heavy fence maintenance, Highlands Estates and Rio Tusas	Discussed
Removal of Dry Lakes timber cattle guard and re-established on pasture boundary to contain pasture	Discussed
Capturing of wild horses on Tio Gordito allotment	Discussed

**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 03/20/1998 and an AMP was prepared on 11/08/2004. 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. A scoping letter (dated February 2, 2009) was mailed to the public.

ACTUAL USE INFORMATION

**Tio Gordito Allotment  
Grazing Season**

**Attachment 1**

Pasture	Scheduled Livestock Number & Class	Scheduled Use		Actual Use		Remarks
		Date on	Date Off	Date on	Date Off	
Pinon	207 c/c	5/18-6/11 (25)				
Ambrose		Assesment needed				
Servilleta		Assesment needed				
Wheatgrass/Las Tablas	207 c/c	6/12-7/12 (31)				
Sawmill	207 c/c	7/13-8/16 (35)				
Malpais	207 c/c	8/17-9/20(35)				
Tio Gordito	207 c/c	9/21-10/15 (25)				

Number of Head counted on: \_\_\_\_\_.

Number of head lost: \_\_\_\_\_.

Additional Comments:

**Table 1**

Livestock Class	Poisonous Plants	Predators	Other	Total Losses





United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

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## Appendix

### Grazing Permittee Instructions 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 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

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

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 unreadable stock will be allowed. 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.

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: Tres Piedras Ranger Station at (575) 758-8678 or Carson Dispatch at (575) 758-6208 or (575) 758-6209. If you have any questions, please contact the Tres Piedras Ranger District office.