



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)
EAST PINON ALLOTMENT (00648)
CARSON NATIONAL FOREST
TRES PIEDRAS RANGER DISTRICT

EAST PINON PERMITTEE:

Dolores and Phillip Ty Montoya

Prepared By:

/s/Wayne Yonemoto
Wayne Yonemoto
District Range Staff

Apr. 23, 2013
Date

Approved By:

/s/Chris Furr
CHRIS FURR
District Ranger

Apr. 30, 2013
Date

Introduction

The Annual Operating Instructions meeting was held on Mar.21, 2012 at the Carson NF SO parking lot. Dolores Montoya (permittee) and Rudy Vigil attended the meeting. Wayne Yonemoto represented the U. S. Forest Service.

The Annual Operating Instructions (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 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, rangeland monitoring and permittee involvement.

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

The dry weather pattern condition includes 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 Apr., 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 February, 2012 thru January, 2013 is described as Extremely 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 January is described as Near Normal (-0.74 to +0.74), so 1-month drought conditions are partially present. Within the District, during the periods of Oct. to Dec., 2012 and Jan. to Feb., 2013, there were various areas of favorable normal to above normal precipitation but also areas of below normal precipitation. Also, below normal to normal to above-normal temperatures occurred.

The authorized eartag color is white. All authorized cattle will be eartagged correctly with the authorized letter/number. The authorized use for the current grazing season is as follows:

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

Permittee Name	Permitted	Authorized	Actual Use	Remarks
Dolores and Phillip Montoya	@ full implementation (163 – 203 AUMs) For example, @ 30 c/c, 47 to 156 days	11 c/c, 5/15 – 6/30		
(A)Servilleta	29 HM, 38 AUM			Will Haul Water; boundary fence maintenance by non permittees; permittee will

				inspect and notify if interested in grazing 7/1 – 7/14
(B)Taoses	14 HM, 18 AUM	Nonuse, boundary fence maintenance by non permittees		
(C)Tres Orejas	53 HM, 70 AUM	11 c/c, 5/15 – 6/30, 47 days		
Total	3 pastures – 96 HM; 127 AUM; 30 c/c; 5/15 – 6/30; 47 days; 46 HM, 61 AUM (30 to 48 days)	Feb./Mar. conditions may indicate a reduction in the initial Mar. grazing bill; (Range readiness inspection determines the authorized livestock number)		

Range readiness inspections will determine the final authorized livestock number and whether range vegetation and soils meet the criteria for grazing. Range readiness is tentatively scheduled for May 1, 2012.

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 (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.

Rotation Schedule

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

Tentative Schedule (5/15 – 6/30), 47 days)

Pasture	Tentative Dates (# of Days)	Days (min to max)	Actual Use	Reason for Adjustments
(A)Servilleta	Possibly 7/1 – 7/14	--		
(B)Taoses	Nonuse	--		
(C)Tres Orejas	5/15 – 6/30 (Various season of use/period options include: 6/15 (7/1) to 7/31 or 8/15 – after seedripe of cool season grasses; 10/1 to 11/30 – dormant period grazing)	40 - 47		

Total	(5/15 – 6/30) Range readiness determines the authorized entry date; utilization determines the exit date	47 days		
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Pastures A and B may not be grazed until infrastructure is completed for dormant or other season of use. Pasture C requires a 0.5 mi. new boundary fence because existing 0.5 mi. boundary fence has 3 segments that have been cut with no gates or gates have not been closed by residents or users. Resource conditions may require alterations in the grazing system, period of use or cattle removal from the allotment. A rangeland evaluation will be required if the permittee requests additional authorized use of pasture C or requests to graze pasture A or B.

Review of 2012 Monitoring Data

The monitoring information in the Allotment Study file was reviewed. The forage production improved after the late 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. The permittee was not able to haul water to pasture C. Cattle trailed from HQ water to pasture C. The permittee evaluated pasture C in October and forage production was average to above average. Utilization guideline (end of season) was met in pasture C, Tres Orejas – 0 to 20%. Pastures A and B were not grazed.

2012 AOI Compliance

- Utilization guidelines 20% to 40% (end of season) was met in the scheduled pasture A.
- Improving livestock distribution in the big sagebrush openings by salting in the pinyon/juniper areas that are as from the water sources as possible.

2012 Actual Use

Because of the permittee not being able to haul water and the issue with maintaining the boundary fence/gates, pasture C was grazed 8/6 – 8/13, but the permittee did not notify the FS in writing to request nonuse and nonuse was not approved. Prior to entry, the boundary fence to the north required maintenance by the permittee to be completed. Once completed, the FS would then inspect the fence maintenance for compliance. The permittee did complete the maintenance repairs that were required.

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 update (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 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
(A)Servilleta	Blue grama Western wheatgrass Crested wheatgrass	1.5” 4 “ 4”
(B)Taoses	Blue grama Western wheatgrass Crested wheatgrass	1.5” 4” 4”
(C)Tres Orejas	Blue grama Western wheatgrass Crested wheatgrass	1.5” 4” 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 following are summarized objectives for the current grazing season and were reviewed with the permittee at the AOI meeting.

- Within pastures, areas would be rotated by herding or frequent movement/placement of salt blocks, and by the availability of water sources. Rotate pastures to vary the cool and warm growing season rest and allow the opportunity for cool and warm season growth.
- Place salt in the pinyon/juniper and move location frequently, as far from water sources as possible. (Salt would be placed at a minimum distance of 0.5 to 1.0 mile from water)
- Meet utilization guidelines by proper livestock distribution.
- Pastures A and B have not been grazed since 2002 due to incomplete boundaries and poor access to haul water. Since 2003, pasture C has been grazed various years when water has been hauled by the permittee. Pasture A – As stated in the EA/Decision Notice (9/27/07), no grazing by livestock would occur before the Jun./Jul., 2008 Botanical survey for *Astragalus ripleyi* within 1168 acres (TEU 119). If plants are found, then the following mitigative measures would be implemented: livestock grazing would occur

only one of three years; or no livestock grazing until after full seed development (possibly May/Jun./Jul. period). In response to drought, resting Pasture A more than one of three years may be required.

- Pasture B – cattleguards may be required for cattle grazing, since users are leaving gates open.
- Pasture C boundary fence and gates are incomplete. In the past, gates have been left open by users. Gates are needed at 3 locations on the 0.5 mile Tres Orejas road or move location of the 0.5 mi. fence to the western side of the north/south road. Permittee will complete fence maintenance on the north side of pasture C prior to entry and notify the District Office for project maintenance inspection. The Santos allotment’s Aguaje pasture is being included in the pasture C boundary because the topography makes it difficult for Santos’ sheep to graze the area. (Taos County doesn’t blade the southern road into pasture C from Montoya road. But the road is being bladed by a resident.)

From 2007 Decision Notice/FONSI

Authorize use during any season of the year for appropriate duration and intensity to meet management objectives, while remaining within utilization guidelines and within the capacity calculations of each pasture that is to be used. The season of use will be determined on a yearly basis through the annual operating instructions.

Implement a flexible grazing management system, which identifies a “probable starting management” (Table 2), but which allows for adjustments to meet management objectives (e.g., changing season of use, number and/or kind of livestock, period of use or number of days, entry or exit dates, grazing system or annual rotation of pastures, and livestock distribution). Full implementation of the flexible grazing management system is dependent upon construction of the infrastructure necessary to apply the system, especially for cattle grazing. Hence, full numbers of cattle animal unit months (AUMs) will not be allowed until the necessary infrastructure is in place. Partial implementation could occur on a pasture by pasture basis. In any given year, only the AUMs associated with the pastures that are actually being used will be allowed.

Summary of Grazing Management for this Decision:

	East Pinon
Type of Livestock Permitted	Cattle (cow/calves) &/or Sheep (ewes/lambs)
Permitted Season of Use*	Variable seasons, throughout year
Estimated Capacity: Cattle AUMs*	203 – 254
Estimated Capacity: Sheep AUMs*	254 – 311

* Actual numbers and season of use authorized on a given year are negotiated annually depending on prior year grazing intensity, Standard Precipitation Index (an indicator of anticipated current year forage production and water availability), range readiness, management goals and objectives, previous year’s monitoring guidelines or prescriptions, watershed health, livestock distribution assessments, allotment management plan compliance, range condition, range trend, plant vigor, monitoring interpretation and evaluation, and pastures to be used in a given year.

Probable Starting Management

A 1-pasture grazing system (Pasture 648 C) utilized by 20 cow/calves during the dormant season between Oct 1 – Nov 15, or after seed ripe for cool season species between June 15/July 1 – July 31 (70 AUMs), depending on range readiness. This area will initially be rested during the warm season plants' growing season to improve vigor of this component. To fully implement a 3-pasture system, it will likely require some fencing along pasture boundaries and/or hauling water. There are stock tanks within Pasture A, but they haven't held water in recent years. Fencing and water are the limiting factors.

Permittee Management Concerns (Also refer to the Project Section)

- Improve distribution by: salting, herding, interior fences, developing water sources.
- Research status of Section 25, pasture C, road (0.5 mi.). Taos County maintains Montoya road (west road from Upper Rim road) but does not maintain road from T to the south to Tres Orejas or the pasture C (0.5 mi. road). Permittee may need to construct a new fence adjacent to the 0.5 mi. road for the pasture C boundary or 2 cattleguards may be needed on the main road. LEO inspected the cut fence and FS road that was bladed by a landowner. Also, determine if road at the white gate, Section 36, pasture C is a ROW to Mr. Abeyta.
- Permittee is interested in exchanging: 1) East Pinon pasture A for Servilleta allotment's pastures B and C or 2) the Salvador allotment interest (El Rito District) for Servilleta allotment's pasture G. Permittee is interested in changing Santos/East Pinon (pasture C) boundary to the Aguaje drainage route. Permittee will check status of NM state lease in section 36, pasture B.
- Continue allotment boundary fence maintenance assignments that includes adjacent landowners/lessees but review with cooperators for future alterations.
- 2011 - Section 36 illegal juniper cutting. A landowner at the Carson Reservoir area fenced a public access road to the FS Aguaje that the permittee used to access that portion of the allotment.

Annual Authorized Use Request Form

Credits from previous year, if applicable, would apply to the current bill (reduction in numbers and/or days if Feb./Mar. continue to be dry). As stated above, Nonuse must be requested in writing and be approved by the District Ranger in order for credit to be issued. The final livestock numbers and entry date would be determined after range readiness inspections. Therefore, additional billing may be required after the first billing.

Range Improvement Projects And Maintenance

Within pasture C, the permittee would not enter until permittee maintenance responsibilities are met. FS/permittees will inspect the projects for compliance prior to entry/bill issuance. 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.

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

- Pasture C – Maintain boundary fence/gates before entering. H brace/fence at the main

road needs to be repaired. FS/permittee will inspect project maintenance before entering for compliance.

Previous Projects Completed:

Pasture C boundary fence/gate maintenance	2006 - 2008 - Completed
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Future Projects

Pasture C – 2 cattleguards or new relocated boundary fence (0.5 mi.) depending upon status of FS road (0.5 mi.)	Discussed (2007 EA analysis); clearance required
Pasture C – Sagebrush control/seeding in section 25/36	Discussed (2007 EA analysis); clearance required
Pasture A – Sagebrush control/seeding in section 25/31/6	Discussed (2007 EA analysis); clearance required
Pasture B – Sagebrush control/seeding in section 36	Discussed (2007 EA analysis); clearance required

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 2007 and an AMP was prepared. 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 (TM) Plan was discussed and the TM 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 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 unrideable stock will be allowed. Eartags 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 (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.