



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Southwestern Region 3  
Carson National Forest  
El Rito Ranger District

P. O. Box 56  
El Rito, New Mexico 87530  
(575) 581-4554  
FAX (575) 581-4556

**2013**

**ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS (AOIs)**

**ESCONDIDO ALLOTMENT # 00205**

**CARSON NATIONAL FOREST  
EL RITO RANGER DISTRICT**

*/s/ Diana M. Trujillo*

---

District Ranger

6/26/2013

---

Date

# Annual Operating Instructions (AOI's)

## INTRODUCTION

These Annual Operating Instructions are in reference to the discussion you had with Estevan Gallegos and Diana Trujillo on February 26, 2013 and are hereby made a part of your Term Grazing Permit. The authorized eartag color is "orange". The authorized use for the 2013 Grazing Season on the Escondido Allotment is as follows:

**Table 1 – Permittee Information and Season of Use**

Permittee Name	Permitted		Authorized		Eartag #	Remarks
	#	Season	#	Season		
Griego Ranches	71 c/c	5/23 – 10/15	65 c/c	5/25 – 10/15	1 - 71	

All livestock must be scheduled for counting prior to entering the Escondido Allotment. El Rito district range personnel must be notified 5 days prior to the time livestock enter or leave the Forest.

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). Verbal applications will not be accepted. If a permittee elects to request "total nonuse" he/she is still responsible for maintenance of assigned range improvements.

A credit/refund application must be completed 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.

Season dates are dependant on range readiness inspections. Dates for range readiness inspections have been scheduled for May 16, 2013. You are welcome and encouraged to attend. We will be departing the El Rito Ranger District at 9:30 am.

All livestock must be scheduled for counting prior to entering the Escondido Allotment. The El Rito range personnel must be notified 5 days prior to the time livestock enter or leave the Forest.

## ROTATION SCHEDULE

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

**Table 2 - Rotation Schedule:**

Felipito Pasture	05/25 – 06/30
Lower Pasture	07/01 – 07/22
Upper Pasture	07/23 – 10/15

**FORAGE UTILIZATION GUIDELINES**

Forage utilization will be measured in predetermined key areas. We will need your assistance for locating and setting up these key areas. The Forest Service will contact the permittees later in the spring and summer to set these key areas. Proper utilization of forage is a critical factor in livestock management on the Escondido 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 the Escondido allotment are light to conservative 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 3 – Forage Utilization/ Stubble Height Guidelines**

Pasture Name	Key Forage Species	Stubble Height	Utilization Guideline
Felipito/Lower/Upper	AZ/Thurber Fescue	6 – 8”	20 – 40 %
	Parry’s Oatgrass	6 – 8”	20 – 40 %
	Kentucky Bluegrass	4 – 6”	20 – 40 %
	Carex	4 – 6”	20 – 40 %
Riparian Areas	Kentucky Blue	4 – 6”	20 – 40 %
	Sedges	4 – 6”	20 – 40 %

**MONITORING RESULTS FROM 2012**

**Table 4. Monitoring Results from 2012**

Pasture	Species	Utilization Guideline	Actual Utilization
Lower	Arizona Fescue	20-40%	30%
Lower	Kentucky Bluegrass	20-40%	35%
Felipito	Arizona Fescue	20-40%	30%
Felipito	Kentucky Bluegrass	20-40%	40%
Upper	Kentucky Blugrass	20-40%	30%
Upper	Arizona Fescue	20-40%	50%

Distribution of livestock needs to improve on the allotment as some areas are receiving little use while others are receiving heavy use. At the end of the 2012 grazing season utilization was met in areas that were monitored in the three pastures. 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. It will be important in the 2013 grazing season that cattle be rotated on time and distributed evenly to prevent over grazing in these key areas. Proper fence maintenance, salt dispersal, range riding and monitoring by the permittees can greatly change the numbers for the better. Adjustments in authorized livestock and season of use could result if distribution and management of livestock results in excessive utilization.

## **MONITORING**

Monitoring will be conducted in key areas using a combination of monitoring techniques including, but not limited to, paired cages, photo points, Rapid Assessment Method, and permittee monitoring. 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 conservative grazing intensity of 20-40% by weight of annual available forage in key grazing areas. It will be important in the 2013 grazing season that cattle be rotated on time and distributed evenly to prevent over grazing in these key areas.

Monitoring dates are tentatively scheduled for July 8, and August 12, and October 18, 2013 for "End of Season" monitoring. Monitoring dates are subject to changes due to weather, fire danger, or unforeseen circumstances. Please contact Ezequiel Rael or Estevan Gallegos with any questions regarding monitoring. Your participation is welcome and encouraged. We will be meeting at the El Rito Ranger District office at 9:30 for each of the dates. Field inspections will be conducted to monitor allowable use, and movement of livestock. Both the Forest Service and the permittee are responsible for monitoring use and stubble height on the allotment to manage within specified utilization standards.

Field inspections will be conducted to monitor allowable use, and movement of livestock. Both the Forest Service and the permittee are responsible for monitoring use and stubble height on the allotment to manage within specified utilization standards. Once allowable

use is achieved, livestock must be moved into the next scheduled pasture or off the allotment. The length of season depends on the intensity of management and cooperation between permittees on livestock distribution and moving from pasture to pasture.

Once allowable use is achieved, livestock must be moved into the next scheduled pasture or off the allotment. The length of season depends on the intensity of management and cooperation between permittees on livestock distribution and moving from pasture to pasture. 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 also be evaluated. Distribution is the key to achieving proper livestock management on the allotment and to providing 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.

## **IMPROVEMENTS**

The following projects have been scheduled for implementation:

- Two earthen tanks – pending funding.
- 60'x60' pipe corral – pending funding.

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 the 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 your fences on your allotment, you can get authorization to cut these materials by obtaining a Free Use Permit from the range personnel at the El Rito office.

## **TRESPASS AND UNAUTHORIZED USE**

Notify the El Rito Ranger District of any known violation. Grazing permit holders who put on more livestock than authorized will be served with a notice of non-compliance, charged an unauthorized grazing fee, and face possible suspension/cancellation of all or part of their permit. Permittees are encouraged to report all trespass to the District range personnel.

## **ALLOTMENT STATUS**

Direction for management on the allotment is being documented in the AOI.

An Environmental Assessment for the Escondido allotment was completed in 2007. An Allotment Management Plan was also completed in 2007 and provides management direction for the allotment.

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.

## **DROUGHT MANAGEMENT**

2013 continues to be exceptionally dry for much of New Mexico, a third consecutive year of drought conditions. Climatological information from the New Mexico Drought Task Force, the Western Regional Climate Center and the Natural Resource Conservation Service, along with all of our own personal experiences and observations made it necessary to begin drought coordination early with you. Should drought conditions persist this season, communication between you, the District Ranger, and range staff will become increasingly important. The Carson National Forest is committed to working with you in a joint effort to manage the resources and minimize adverse impacts to your operations. The Forest Service, as well as permittees, will continue to monitor the Standard Precipitation Index (SPI) as addressed in our Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 2209.13. The SPI is a unit of measure that compares recent precipitation values for a period of interest with long term historical values to assess moisture conditions in a given area. In the Southwest Region, anytime the SPI reaches a value of minus 1.00 or less for the proceeding 12 month period, grazing allotments should be evaluated for existing drought conditions. Management due to drought will be approached in a collaborative manner between district personnel and permittees. Should drought conditions persist and utilization guidelines are reached through the summer months, you may be required to remove livestock from the grazing allotment prior to October 31, 2013. It is important that communication between the permittees and district personnel continue prior to such decisions.

## **TRAVEL MANAGEMENT**

A travel management decision for the Canjilon, El Rito, and Tres Piedras Ranger Districts of the Carson National Forest was made on December 2, 2010. These districts now have a designated road system with no cross country motorized travel. Consistent with the travel management, El Rito Ranger District has:

- Designated roads, trails, and area open to motor vehicle use by vehicle class and, if appropriate, by time of year (36 CFR 212.51).

- Identified designated roads, trails, and areas on a motor vehicle use map (MVUM) (36 CFR 212.56).
- Prohibited motor vehicle use inconsistent with the designations on the motor vehicle use map, once published (36 CFR 261.13).

Criteria for evaluating and designating routes (36 CFR 212.55) are largely derived from Executive Order 11644.

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 Motor Vehicle Use Map will be provided to permittees for education and use. The Forest Service is in a two year educational process for vehicle use, however, permittees are encouraged to come in and get letters of authorization from the District for off-road access for specific area and time needed.

**ACTUAL USE INFORMATION  
ESCONDIDO ALLOTMENT  
2013 GRAZING SEASON**

**Attachment 1**

Pasture	Planned Livestock Number & Class	Planned Use		Actual Use		Remarks
		Date on Off	Date	Date on Off	Date	
Felipito	65 c/c	05/25	06/30			
Lower	65 c/c	07/01	07/22			
Upper	65 c/c	07/23	10/15			

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

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

Additional Comments:

**Table 1**

Livestock Class	Poisonous Plants	Predators	Other	Total Losses

**UTILIZATION INFORMATION  
ESCONDIDOALLOTMENT  
2013 GRAZING SEASON**

Attachment 2

<b>Pasture</b>	<b>Head Months (HMs)</b>	<b>Animal Unit Months</b>	<b>Allowable Utilization (percent)</b>	<b>Date Monitored</b>	<b>Observed Utilization</b>
Felipito					
Lower					
Upper					



## Appendix

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

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

### Management on the Range

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

## Salting

1. Salt must be placed in each pasture prior to cattle entering the pasture. Salt shall be located at least 0.5 miles to 1.0 miles away from streams, 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

2. 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.
3. 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 may or may not furnish materials or cost-share for maintenance projects.
4. 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.
5. Construction of new improvements or reconstruction of existing projects must have the approval of the District Ranger. During the AOI meeting and throughout the year suggestions for proposed projects are accepted.

## Special Attention Items

1. Written authorization from the District Ranger is required for vehicle travel in road closure areas. All cross-country travel where allowed must not cause ruts or down-cutting in the soil surface. Cross-country vehicular travel when the ground is wet is prohibited. This written authorization is only for vehicle travel necessary for your livestock operation on 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.
2. All temporary camps and corrals made or used by permittees or their riders will be cleaned up (left in a sanitary condition) and all materials/trash will be removed from the sites. Temporary camp/corral locations should be discussed with the FS prior to setting up the camp.
3. Riders will be permitted 4 horses or mules per rider for work within the allotment. No untrained horses, colts or other unrideable stock will be allowed.
4. Please notify the District Ranger with any observations of stray livestock on the National Forest Lands (regardless of the time of year).
5. 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.