

**Forest Service Handbook
Service Wide - Washington Office
Washington, DC**

**Forest Service Handbook 2209.13 – Grazing Permit Administration Handbook
Chapter 60 – Records**

Amendment: 2209.13-2023-3

Effective date: June 30, 2023

Duration: This amendment is effective until superseded or removed.

Approved by: Troy Heithecker, Associate Deputy Chief, National Forest System

Date approved: June 28, 2023

Responsible Staff: Forest Management, Range Management, and Vegetation Ecology (FMRMVE)

Last Change:

Superseded Document(s): 2209.13_60, Amendment 2209.13-2005-10, September 09, 2005; 2209.13,60 Contents, Amendment 2209.13-92-1, August 03, 1992; 2209.13,60, Amendment 2209.13-92-1, August 03, 1992

Digest: Following is an explanation of the changes throughout the directive by section.

This amendment revises requirements and procedures to maintain paper copy grazing permit administration records and adds new requirements and procedures necessary for establishing and maintaining electronic grazing permit records and reporting.

Section 61: Establishes this code to provide responsibilities for establishing and maintaining grazing permit records.

Section 61.1: Changes the caption from “Case File” to “Electronic Records” and revises the direction to be specific to electronic records.

Section 61.2: Changes the caption from “Permanent Summary Record” to “Hard Copy Records” and removes references to obsolete forms, FS-2200-3, FS-2200-8, and FS-2200-9 (card records). Also removes reference to contract numbers when referring to a grazing permit.

Section 62: Establishes this code to add new direction concerning maintenance of permanent grazing permit case files (2230) and identifies the specific documents to be included in a permanent grazing permit case file.

Section 62 – Exhibit 01: Adds Exhibit 01 to display the grazing permit file contents and recommended file organization for Regions 1-6.

Section 62 – Exhibit 02: Adds Exhibit 02 to display the grazing permit file contents and recommended file organization for Regions 8 and 9.

Section 63: This section, previously reserved, adds direction for establishing and maintaining permanent grazing allotment (2210) folders.

Section 63 – Exhibit 01: Adds Exhibit 01 to display the allotment file contents and recommended file organization for Regions 1-6, 8 and 9.

Section 64: Establishes this code to add new direction for creating and maintaining grazing allotment improvement (2240) folders as accompanying and supplementing folders to the individual grazing allotment (2210) folders.

Section 64 – Exhibit 01: Adds Exhibit 01 to display the allotment improvement file contents and recommended file organization for all Regions, when separate Improvement folders (2240) are created for removing extensive improvement records from the individual 2210 Allotment folder.

Section 65: Creates code to summarize direction concerning maintenance, retention, and disposal of permanent grazing case files.

Section 66: Inserts a new Section called “Requests for Records under the Freedom of Information Act,” to describe the Freedom of Information Act and serve as an easily-accessible source for rangeland management professionals to respond to requests for grazing records under the Freedom of Information Act.

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61 - Kinds of Records

The guidance contained in this chapter is pertinent to grazing permit records (FSM 2230), as well as for grazing allotment records (FSM 2210) and range improvement records (FSM 2240). Records should be maintained in electronic and hard copy (printed paper version of electronic copy) versions as appropriate.

The authorized officer is responsible for:

1. Establishing and maintaining permanent grazing permit and allotment case files and reference hard copy records;
2. Establishing and maintaining electronic grazing permit and allotment records using current corporate data systems;
3. Assuring that rangeland and grazing permit-related information is maintained in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) consistent with established standards;
4. Continuing maintenance of hard copy and paper records where electronic formats are not available or applicable, and/or where a hard copy version of a document needs to be retained;
5. Maintaining all historic grazing permit and allotment records; and
6. Maintaining permanent electronic and reference hard copy records related to grazing agreements.

The permanent grazing permit and allotment case files created by the Forest Service is the electronic copy. Hardcopy grazing permit and allotment case files may be maintain for administrative use and marked as “reference”. Grazing permit and allotment case files are part of Forest Service official records. It is important to maintain official records (regardless of media) in accordance with FSM 6230.

61.1 - Electronic Records

Corporate electronic data systems include databases, information management systems, and GIS layers functioning within the corporate environment to support grazing permit administration and rangeland management.

Rangeland information is stored and displayed using several different corporate data systems such as: Rangeland Information Management System (RIMS), Forest Service Activity Tracking System (FACTS), and GIS. The authorized officer is responsible for ensuring that appropriate rangeland and grazing permit related information is maintained in the appropriate system of record.

Electronic records including GIS maps and associated information may be printed and placed within hardcopy reference files (such as, grazing permit and allotment case files) and used for administrative purposes. All printed records and maps should be titled and dated.

References, specific instructions in the use of corporate data systems, and GIS are available through online help systems, agency intranet websites, and technical reference guides. Technical references and on-line help systems are frequently updated to reflect system changes and enhancements as they occur; check to make sure you're working with the latest version.

61.2 - Hard Copy Records

The authorized officer is responsible for the continued maintenance of hard copy (paper) reference records if kept for administrative use. Reference files may include items relevant to the grazing permit and allotment such as allotment inspections, permittee correspondence, monitoring, inventory, analysis, maps, and associated records. In addition, the authorized officer is responsible for the maintenance of all historic hard copy grazing permit and allotment records.

62 - Official Grazing Permit Files

The file designation for grazing permit files is 2230. The official permanent file is the electronic file. The authorized officer is responsible for ensuring that the permanent file is maintained. Depending on delegation of authority, this is usually at the District Ranger but may be at the Forest/Grassland Supervisor. Reference copies may be maintained in hardcopy form for administrative use and marked as "reference". If used, all reference files must also be kept up to date.

The grazing permit file contains the records of administrative actions related to a grazing permit. It is important that all documents, letters, and other records related to a grazing permit be retained in the permanent electronic files. Correspondence that is created and stored as electronic files may also be printed and retained in the reference file as a hard copy with signatures.

The permit record shall be retained after the termination of the grazing permit as directed by FSH 6209.11, chapter 40. Retain records pertinent to long-term management of the allotment indefinitely. The Rangeland Information Managements System will be used to maintain historical permit information and pull permit summaries when needed.

A permit case file (file designation 2230) must be created and maintained for each permittee (see FSH 6209.11). Keep authorizing documents, supplements, and amendments in a current file as long as the permit is active. Also retain any/all other written information that supplements, amends, or in any way changes the status of the permit or that may have a bearing on future decisions regarding the permit.

The reference permit case file should be built using a 6-section folder, with documents filed chronologically and with the more recent documents in front of the older documents, unless otherwise specified below. The permanent permit file should be subdivided into the following categories:

1. Grazing permit with any modifications on top;
2. Application for the grazing permit with all supporting legal documents;
3. Waiver(s), with any escrow waiver placed on top;
4. Permit modifications for improvement construction (until completed);
5. Bills for collection and annual applications/authorizations; and
6. Correspondence by and between the authorized officer and the permit holder.

See Exhibit 01 for a more detailed list of contents to be used for grazing permit files in Regions 1-6 (and the national grasslands in Oklahoma and Texas in R8).

62 - Exhibit 01

2230 - Grazing Permit Files for Direct Permits¹ in Regions 1-6 (and the national grasslands in Oklahoma and Texas in R8)

Side 1

- Permit Modifications (if any)
- Term Permit (FS-2200-10) (Allotment Map and Improvement Maintenance List from the 2210 folder are attached)
- Managerial Agreement (if any)
- Designation of Agent (if any)

Side 2

- Application for Term Permit
- Ownership Deed(s)
- Base Property Map(s)
- Qualification Ratings (if any)

¹ For national grassland and national forest units issuing grazing agreements, Association permit folders contain the grazing agreement and exhibits, rules of management, articles of incorporation, by-laws, annual grazing fee computations and bills for collection, and correspondence. Associations keep similar 2230 folders for each member (see sec. 62.2 and Chapter 20 of this Handbook).

- Bill(s) of Sale
- Brand registrations (and renewals)
- Articles of Incorporation
- Other legal documents
- Ownership Statement (FS-2200-25)

Side 3

- Escrow Waiver(s) (keep current escrow waiver on top and the file flagged)
- Waiver(s)

Side 4

- Permit modifications for range improvement work (when improvement is completed, enter data on the appropriate Allotment tab in RIMS, move the modification to the 2210 folder (or a 2240 folder, with GIS records included)

Side 5

- Bills for Collection
- Annual Applications/Authorizations
- Applications for Non-use (if any)

Side 6

- Correspondence
- Annual and routine correspondence
- Notices of noncompliance (NONCs) and any records of permit actions
- Telephone, e-mail, and personal contact records are usually included here, but can be duplicated in the 2210 folder as well

When a 10-year term permit expires and becomes inactive, and a new 10-year permit is issued to the same entity, file the new permit on top of the old one (do not start a new 2230 permanent folder).

When a folder becomes too full, all out-of-date documents, including permit modifications for completed and accepted improvement work, should be moved to a Historical Folder set up in the same format as shown above, and labeled, for example: "Smith, John E. 1974-2003."

Since Regions 8 and 9 have Non-Competitive and Competitive Bid permits, their file structure varies from the rest of the National Forest System and is outlined as shown in Exhibit 02.

62 - Exhibit 02

2230 - Grazing Permit Files for Direct Permits² in Regions 8 and 9 (excluding the national grasslands in Oklahoma and Texas in R8)

Side 1

- Permit Modifications (if any)
- Term Permit (FS-2200-10) (Allotment Map and Improvement Maintenance List from the 2210 folder are attached)
- Original Application for Term Permit
- Ownership Deed
- Base Property Map
- Managerial Agreement (if any)
- Designation of Agent (if any)

Side 2

- Fee Credit Agreements
- Receipts
- Documentation of inspection and accomplishment

Side3

- Allotment Inspections

Side 4

- Bid Prospectus and Bids

Side 5

- Bills for Collection
- Applications for Non-use

Side 6

- Annual and routine correspondence
- NONCs and any records of permit actions

² For national grassland and national forest units issuing grazing agreements, Association permit folders contain the grazing agreement and exhibits, rules of management, articles of incorporation, by-laws, annual grazing fee computations and bills for collection, and correspondence. Associations keep similar 2230 folders for each member (see sec. 62.2 and Chapter 20 of this Handbook).

- Telephone, e-mail, and personal contact records can be included here, in the 2210 folder, or both
- Annual Operating Instructions may be duplicated here from the 2210 folder

62.1 - Grazing Association-Issued Grazing Permit Files

Where the Forest Service has entered into a grazing agreement with a grazing association: it is the responsibility of the grazing association to establish and maintain the hard copy association grazing permit files; a hard copy permanent summary record of member grazing permits issued by the grazing association to its members; and any other records related to authorized activities occurring on the allotments as described within the grazing agreement. Grazing associations should use section 62 of this chapter as a guide for establishing and maintaining associated grazing permit files.

The grazing agreement specifies that the association is responsible for establishing and maintaining eligibility and qualification records for all members issued association grazing permits by the association. See Chapter 20 of this Handbook for a description of grazing associations' record keeping requirements and requirements related to what must be included in association rules of management.

The grazing agreement shall also specify that the Forest Service shall have free and unfettered access to inspect and copy these documents and permanent summary records related to the grazing use authorized by the grazing agreement, that copies (where requested) shall be provided to the Forest Service without charge, and that failure to comply with these requirements shall be grounds for cancellation or suspension of the grazing agreement. See chapter 20 of this Handbook for more information regarding grazing agreements.

The authorized officer retains responsibility for maintenance of the records related to the grazing agreement and management of the allotment(s).

63 - Official Allotment Files

Each allotment will have a file designated as 2210, Allotment Case Files (see FSH 6209.11). The reference allotment case file should be built using a 6-section file folder and information should be filed in the format shown in Exhibit 01.

In some instances, only one historical hard copy allotment folder exists. Do not transfer or dispose of the hard copy records prior to scanning relevant documents to avoid losing such things as historical Allotment Boundary Descriptions, original Grazing Allotment Analysis Summary Sheets, chronological historical maps, and early transect readings with locations. Units should scan relevant historical documents from the existing hard copy case files and place them in the permanent electronic record. An electronic copy of these documents on a Forest Service server serves as the permanent record.

63 - Exhibit 01

2210 Allotment Files

Side 1

- Allotment Management Plans (retain previous AMPs under current AMP)
- Allotment Boundary Descriptions
- Grazing Capacity Determinations

Side 2

- Allotment Maps (latest on top)
- Analysis Summary Sheet(s)
- Analysis Transect Data

Side3

- Annual Operating Instructions (retain last few years under current – move older AOIs to Historical Folder, if needed)

Side 4

- Modifications for improvement work (moved here from 2230 permit folder once completed, or to the 2240 folder if preferred)
- Range Improvement Summary Sheet(s)

Side 5

- Planning Documents (allotment NEPA decisions and project-level for individual improvements; large analysis documents are filed electronically in NEPA project folders)
- Implementation Monitoring Records
- Actual Use Records

Side 6

- General Allotment Correspondence

For national grassland and national forest units issuing grazing agreements, Associations keep similar 2210 folders for each allotment. See Chapter 20.

All implementation and compliance monitoring should be maintained with effectiveness monitoring as the combination of these data sets is invaluable for making management decisions. Implementation monitoring includes, but is not limited to, annual indicators such as utilization/stubble height, inspection reports and photos, actual use, staff field notes and emails by year. Allotment files should be made available to the permittee.

Effectiveness monitoring includes, but is not limited to, analysis summary sheets including grazing capacity estimates and calculations, production/utilization surveys, Parker summaries and data sheets, current monitoring such as cover-frequency data sheets and summaries.

63.1 - Permanent Allotment Summary Record

At a minimum, the following records should be contained in the permanent allotment file to provide a complete historical record of allotment use and condition:

1. Inspection records documenting allotment use under a grazing permit;
2. Monitoring records documenting effect of livestock grazing on the resource;
3. Inventory and analysis information; and
4. Maps, photos and other information documenting the use of rangelands for livestock grazing and other purposes.

64 - Official Rangeland Improvement Files

The file designation for rangeland improvement files is 2240. Some allotments may be relatively small or have relatively few existing rangeland improvements (such can be the case on sheep allotments), so the 2210 allotment file is the logical place to maintain all information regarding rangeland improvements.

In some cases, because of the large number of existing improvements or large volume of information, some regions and forests/grasslands have chosen to separate all range improvement records from the remainder of the 2210 file and to create a separate 2240 file for each allotment.

When separate files are created, the 2240 file should be set up in the standard 6-section file folder and should contain the following information as shown in Exhibit 01.

64 - Exhibit 01

2240 Allotment Range Improvement Files

Side 1

- Allotment Improvement Report – RNGR201L
- Permit Improvement Report(s) – RNGR202L
- Range Improvement Project NEPA (when needed)

Side 2

- Allotment Improvement Map
- Completed Improvement Permit
- Modifications (newest on top)

Side3

- Water Systems:
 - Springs, collection units, troughs
 - Wells, windmills, pumps (include solar units), pipelines, tanks, overflows
 - Dams, dugouts, trick tanks, guzzlers, etc.
- Water Rights and/or Permits (copy of official FSM 2540 records)

Side 4

- Fences:
 - Permanent (boundary, division)
 - Temporary (electric)
- Corrals, Exclosures
- Other Improvements
- Invasive species treatments
- Seeding
- Prescribed burns
- Others

Side 5

- Historic Improvement Inventories
- Deferred Maintenance Reports
- Deferred Maintenance Records

Side 6

- Correspondence

65 - Maintenance, Retention and Disposal of Official Grazing Permit Files

For instructions regarding the maintenance, retention and disposal of permanent grazing permit, allotment, and rangeland improvement files, refer to and follow the procedures set forth in FSH 6209.11.

The following is a summary of retention types for the files as provided within FSH 6209.11:

1. Allotment folders (2210) are called permanent records and should be maintained and retained for the period described within FSH 6209.11.
2. Permit folders (2230) are called temporary records and should be retained for the period described within FSH 6209.11.
3. Permanent rangeland improvement (2240) records are temporary records and should be retained for the period described within FSH 6209.11. All pertinent information should be entered in the electronic database of record (RIMS).

66 - Requests for Records Under the Freedom of Information Act

Agencies within the Executive Branch of the Federal government, independent regulatory agencies, and some components within the Executive Office of the President are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), virtually any person can make a request for any reason and records must be made available to the public except to the extent they contain information that is specifically exempted from disclosure or specially excluded from the Act's coverage in the first place. The nine exemptions of the FOIA describe specific categories of information that are protected from disclosure.

FOIA requests must be made in writing and immediately referred to a designated FOIA Service Center at the Washington Office, Regional Office, or Forest for tracking and processing. See [Forest Service FOIA](#) and FSH 6209.13 for additional information.

The Privacy Act of 1974 establishes a code of fair information practices that govern the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of information about individuals that is maintained in systems of records by Federal agencies. The Privacy Act gives American citizens and lawfully admitted aliens for permanent residency a greater say in the way records about them are kept and eliminates needless intrusions on personal privacy through the keeping of extraneous records. The Privacy Act assures individuals on whom information is collected that:

- There are not Federal government personal recordkeeping systems whose very existence are secret.
- Federal personal information files are limited to those that are clearly necessary.

- They will have an opportunity to see what information about them is kept and to challenge its accuracy.
- Personal information collected for one purpose not be used for another purpose without their consent.
- If disclosures are made, they will find out to whom they were made, for what purpose and on what date.

For more information, please refer to the Forest Service's FOIA and Privacy website at: [Forest Service FOIA Privacy Act](#).