

2024 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

Quemado Ranger District Gila National Forest

Luna Allotment

Prepared By: _____
District Range Specialist

Date: _____

Approved By: _____
District Ranger

Date: _____

Annual Operating Instructions

I. INTRODUCTION

Randall Chavez (Forest Service) met with the (Permittee) on Thursday February 29th, 2024, to discuss management of the Luna Allotment during the current grazing year and to plan grazing management for the upcoming grazing season. These Annual Operating Instructions are the result of that discussion.

Term Permitted Livestock Numbers:

Permittee	Number & Class of livestock	Dates
	226 Cow/Calf	04/15 – 10/31

Authorized Use:

Permittee	Number & Class of livestock	Dates
	226 Cow/Calf	04/15 – 10/31

Pasture Rotations:

Grazing Herd A

Number & Class of Livestock	Rotation Date	Pasture
78 Cows	05/15 – 07/31	Turner Peak
78 Cow/Calf	08/1 – 10/31	San Francisco

Grazing Herd B

Number & Class of Livestock	Rotation Date	Pasture
35 Cows	05/15 – 7/15	Swapp
50 Cow/Calf	7/16 – 10/31	Stone Creek
43 Cows	05/15 – 7/15	Hy Clark
50 Cow/Calf	07/16 – 10/31	River

Grazing Herd

Number & Class of Livestock	Rotation Date	Pasture
40 Cow/Calf	09/01 -10/31	Russell

* Pastures that are scheduled for holding and/or doctoring can be used for these purposes until allowable use is reached.

** Turn out standards well need to be met before authorization is given to use Stone Creek and River Riparian Pastures. Stone Creek and River Riparian Pastures also have a riparian utilization guideline of 25%. If riparian use in these pastures approaches 25% these pastures would be removed from use for the remainder of the grazing season.

The above schedule for stocking the allotment depends upon the availability of forage and water. Some flexibility in the above pasture rotation dates will be allowed for justifiable causes such as weather conditions, livestock management needs, and range conditions. If there is a need to deviate from the above pasture rotation schedule by more than 15 days, you must notify the Ranger District of the proposed change in the pasture rotation date and the reason for the change. A deviation from the above schedule of more than 15 days must be approved verbally or in writing. All Credit and Refund requests require approval from the District Ranger. Only preapproved requests for Resource Protection Non-Use are eligible for Credit (IV. General Instructions 4.Credits and Refunds).

II. MANAGEMENT OF LIVESTOCK

The permittee is responsible for monitoring water availability and forage utilization and moving livestock when sufficient water is no longer available or when proper forage utilization is achieved in a pasture. The permittee is responsible for keeping track of and maintaining control of livestock. In the event livestock are found to be out of the scheduled pasture, it is required to find, gather, and return those animals to the proper pasture as soon as possible.

III. IMPROVEMENT MAINTENANCE

All range improvements assigned in the Term Grazing Permit are to be maintained in a functioning condition. In the event these improvements cannot be brought up to a functioning condition, you should notify the Range Staff at the Quemado Ranger District to schedule them for reconstruction as funds become available.

Pending Approval: The following requests for maintenance have been made and require additional analysis and/or clearances prior to approval.

- Develop water on southwest side of Stone Creek; thinking Trick tank
- Look at adding pastures from Laney Allotment to Luna Allotment
- Treat and burn north side of San Francisco Divide
- Treat and burn state line area on Hy Clark
- Replace fence between Sawmill/Kiehne and Adair – COMPLETED 2023
- Replace fence between Swapp and Dry Blue
- Pipeline from Adair/Sawmill storage tank – COMPLETED 2023

Please note that maintenance of range improvements or any other activity that involves any physical ground disturbance must have prior approval from the District Ranger.

IV. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Fire: Branding and warming fires should be used with good judgment - not on windy days or during times when fires are specifically restricted. If there is an emerging wildfire on the allotment, we will notify you and elevate your concerns regarding the fire

management.

2. Records: In order to close out permit modifications you must provide documentation of materials and labor constituting your contribution to the permit modification.

You must provide documentation of cattle numbers such as dates of entering and leaving pastures. This information is used to substantiate the carrying capacity of the allotment. The information demonstrates use and the need for forage to meet the economic needs of the county. This information may also be used to establish cause and effect if there is a significant change in calf crop (Example, a wolf pack becomes established near your allotment).

3. Heavy Equipment Use: Please notify district well in advance of any plans to use heavy equipment so that necessary clearances and/or permits can be obtained. You will be notified by the district when you can proceed.

4. Credit/Refund: Any credit or refund applications for grazing fees must be made as far in advance as possible. Credit/Refund applications are not retroactive and will be approved only if the District Ranger is notified of livestock removal, prior to, or at the time, the livestock are taken off the allotment. All Credit and Refund requests require approval from the District Ranger. Only preapproved requests for Resource Protection Non-Use are eligible for Credit.

In an effort to address administrative needs to process additional bills and credits the Quemado Ranger District has established a minimum guideline of 10 percent of permitted numbers for midseason adjustments in livestock numbers.

5. Salting and Supplemental Feeding:

- a. Feeding of hay or other bulk feeds on National Forest land will not be permitted unless a proven need to use the supplement is shown, and a detailed plan is developed and approved. If approved all supplemental hay must be certified weed free hay and you must provide the proper documentation.
- b. Feeding of vitamin or mineral supplements, protein blocks, molasses licks, etc on National Forest land is permitted when used in the same manner as salt.
- c. Salting practices will be in agreement with the 10-Year Term Grazing Permit. Salt and supplement will be placed in areas of available feed to help draw cattle to them. Salt and supplement will not be placed within ¼ mile from water and/or in natural concentrations areas which receive heavy grazing use.

V. SPECIAL MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

Keep track of conditions on your allotment. Make adaptive management plans and contact the district range management staff if vegetative/watershed conditions could be substantially harmed due to current management.

No livestock grazing is allowed within the Dry Blue riparian area. On the third occasion livestock are found in the Dry Blue riparian area, livestock will be required to be removed from the Dry Blue pasture and moved to the next scheduled pasture identified

in the annual operating instructions. It is imperative that the riparian area be ridden at least once per week while livestock are in the Dry Blue pasture to ensure livestock are not utilizing the riparian area.

It is crucial that while livestock are in the River and Stone Creek pastures, light to conservative utilization is not exceeded and that livestock do not congregate within the riparian area. In addition to the 35% utilization standard on herbaceous species, these pastures have an allowed utilization of 25% on woody riparian plants. In the event utilization standards are met and/or livestock congregate in the riparian area then livestock will need to be moved to the next scheduled pasture. **Livestock use in the River and Stone Creek pastures is currently not authorized for this grazing season.**

VI. UTILIZATION MONITORING

Utilization monitoring will normally coincide with livestock moves between pastures or from the forest. You are encouraged to participate in monitoring conducted on the allotment.

The Decision Notice dated December 13, 1999 established key area forage utilization guidelines of 35% allowable use. Within riparian areas that contain woody riparian plants, utilization is limited to no more than 25%.

Utilization guidelines for Luna Admin. North Pasture 40% allowable use and South Pasture 35% allowable use.

If you observe utilization levels approaching these guidelines you will need to take action for making changes to the grazing in that area. There are many actions that can be taken, such as pasture moves, locating your livestock on different waters, moving of salt and supplements, etc. We will work with you in order to insure that any actions taken are appropriate.

VII. TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

The Gila National Forest Travel Management Decision signed in September 2013 was implemented in 2016 on the Quemado Ranger District. This rule prohibits cross country motorized travel and has restricted all motorized vehicle travel on the Gila National Forest (GNF) to authorized motorized routes only on NFS land.

Some motorized uses are exempt from the prohibitions of the designation process (36 CFR 212.51(a): "Motor vehicle use that is specifically authorized under a written authorization issued under Federal law or regulation" (CFR 212.51(a) (8) is one of the exempted uses. The permittees and/or their employees must comply with all GNF Travel Management regulations, except those allowed under this authorization as described below:

1. The permittees and/or their employees will be authorized for off road or unauthorized travel routes on their specific grazing allotment(s) to carry out the necessary activities for grazing and livestock management. This includes range improvement maintenance and/or reconstruction as designated in their grazing permit, placement of salt or other supplements, and for emergency livestock health purposes.

2. It is prohibited to operate any vehicle off NFS lands, State or County roads in a manner which damages or unreasonably disturbs the land, wildlife, or vegetative resources (36 CFR 261.15(h)). Moist soils are especially susceptible to damage through rutting or compaction; therefore, use of motorized vehicles on saturated soils should be avoided.
3. Utilize roads or trails designated for motor vehicle use to access range improvements, salting grounds, or livestock emergencies where possible. This includes trails and roads open for public use, those specified as “administrative use only”, and keeping within fence rights-of-way while accomplishing fence maintenance where possible.
4. This authorization and associated activities are specific to your grazing permit(s) and allotment management only; recreational use including hunting or game retrieval with motorized vehicles is not authorized.

VIII. MODIFICATIONS

If unforeseen operational conditions require a change in the management specified in this AOI please contact rangeland management personnel at the Quemado Ranger District. Change requests should be made in advance so that field inspections (if necessary) can be conducted. Approval of changes to this AOI may be verbal or written, depending on the nature of the change requested. Verbal changes will be documented to your file for record keeping purposes.

Contact Randall Chavez at (575) 773-4678 or Randall.Chavez@usda.gov with any questions or concerns.