

Annual Operating Instructions

Wedgewood Allotment

Black Range Ranger District, Gila National Forest

2003 grazing season

1. PASTURE USE SCHEDULE

We have approved your application to graze 12 head of cattle on the Wedgewood Allotment. Total cattle numbers for the Wedgewood Allotment are not to exceed 12 head. The following is the grazing rotation schedule for the Wedgewood Allotment which we developed at our annual validation meeting:

<i>PASTURE</i>	<i>ON</i>	<i>OFF</i>	<i>NUMBER</i>
Wedgewood	11/01/03	02/28/04	12

The schedule above is an estimate, and may be modified at any time during the grazing season if the utilization levels, identified below, are met, if water availability is inadequate, or for other resource management reason. If allowable use levels are met early in the scheduled pasture, cattle will be rotated into the next pasture or off the Forest. Cattle are to be completely removed from a pasture by the **OFF** date. Please notify this office when you begin moving cattle and when a pasture move is complete.

2. UTILIZATION STANDARDS

The following utilization standards will be applied on the Wedgewood Allotment:

- Riparian areas are not to exceed 25% of current year's growth on woody riparian species, by leader.
- Upland sites grazed during the growing season are not to exceed 35% of current year's growth of perennial grasses.
- Upland sites grazed during the dormant season are not to exceed 40% of current year's growth of perennial grasses.

3. KEY AREA MONITORING

Because of the small size of the Wedgewood Allotment, it is not practical to establish individual key areas. Therefore, all primary rangeland within the allotment will be considered key for utilization monitoring. Utilization monitoring will avoid areas directly adjacent to permanent water sources, cattle trails, roads, and fence lines.

Upland areas will be monitored for use on perennial grass species. Utilization levels will be set at 40 % on primary forage species of perennial grasses. District personnel will contact the permittees to coordinate site visits to monitor key areas. Permittee

participation is encouraged. Forage utilization estimates will be consistent with the Forest Service Range Analysis Handbook methodology.

4. RANGE IMPROVEMENTS

Range improvements must be maintained to standard before cattle are allowed into a pasture. It is the permittee's responsibility to ensure that range improvements remain functional. This includes boundary fences in pastures not currently being grazed. Routine maintenance of existing improvements does not require written clearance, however, construction/reconstruction of new improvements must be authorized in writing from this office.

No new range improvements are planned for the Wedgewood Allotment at this time. If the need for range improvement materials arises during the grazing season, please contact this office.

5. SPECIAL MANAGEMENT INSTRUCTIONS

The following restrictions will be implemented so that management remains in compliance with the Endangered Species Act. The instructions below relate to threatened, endangered, and proposed to be listed species as well as range/watershed conditions.

- Stock tanks must be surveyed for possible aquatic habitat before earth-disturbing maintenance is authorized.

6. OTHER INSTRUCTIONS

The permittee must obtain permission from the District Ranger, before conducting earth-disturbing activities on the National Forest. The Forest Service will arrange inspections of project areas and will prepare appropriate environmental and cultural documents before earth-disturbing activities proceed. These activities include road/earthen tank maintenance, as well as construction/reconstruction of trails, roads, earthen tanks, etc. **Do not conduct any earth-disturbing activities on the Forest without written clearance from this office.**

Salt must be located at least ¼ mile from water, and preferably on ridges and/or areas of low use. Do not place salt blocks in the same location as the previous year, and locate blocks on hard ground not susceptible to erosion. Supplemental feeding, other than mineral or supplement block, is not authorized on the National Forest.

On yearlong ranges, calves under six months of age on January 1st are not counted against the authorized numbers until March 31st. By April 1st, these calves must be removed from the Forest or counted against the authorized numbers.

The Annual Operating Instructions are a part of the Term Grazing Permit as provided for in Pat 3, Section 8. These instructions comply with the standards and guidelines found in the forest Plan, including the 1996 Forest Plan Amendment. They also comply with the Endangered Species Act found in the Biological Assessment for the Wedgewood Allotment. Any additional information collected during the year may be incorporated into the Annual Operating Instructions.

This decision is subject to administrative review, pursuant to 36 CFR 251; and any appeal of this decision must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 251.90 (see enclosed copy of 36 CFR 251 regulations). In accordance with 36 CFR 251.84, if you file an appeal, I am willing to meet with you to discuss any concerns you may have with my decision. If you file an appeal, you may request an oral presentation in the appeal or at any time prior to closing of the appeal record (36 CFR 251.97). Additionally, if you file an appeal, you may request a stay of my decision in the appeal or at any time prior to closing of the appeal record (36 CFR 251.91).

A notice of appeal must be filed with Marcia Andre, Forest Supervisor, Gila National Forest, at 3005 E. Camino Del Bosque, Silver City, NM 88061, within 45 days of the date of this decision. A copy of the notice of appeal must be filed simultaneously with Maria T. Garcia, District Ranger, Black Range Ranger District at 1804 Date Street, Truth or Consequences, NM 89701.

We appreciate your cooperation in the management of the Wedgewood Allotment. If you have any questions regarding these instructions, please contact Jeff Rivera, Rangeland Management Specialist (505)894-6677. Thank you.

Sincerely,

MARIA T. GARCIA
District Ranger