

Annual Operating Instructions
Mackey Allotment
Black Range Ranger District, Gila National Forest
2004 grazing season

1. PASTURE USE SCHEDULE

We have approved your application to graze 45 head of cattle on the Mackey Allotment with 45 head in non-use for personal convenience. Total authorized cattle numbers for the 2004 grazing season on the Mackey Allotment is 45 head, with 45 head in non-use. If at any time, during the 2004 grazing season, you wish to add livestock to the allotment, please contact this office to obtain the necessary authorization. Cattle numbers may not exceed 90 head for the 2004 grazing season. The 2004 grazing season will be your second year of non-use for personal convenience. You have up to three consecutive years of personal convenience non-use. On the fourth year, the allotment must be stocked to the full permitted numbers or the non-use status changed from personal convenience to resource protection. If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Ron Mortensen at (505) 894-6677.

At our annual validation meeting we developed a “scatter-strategy” for a pasture use schedule. Under this system cattle will be distributed amongst all pastures simultaneously, based on individual pasture capacities, to account for drought conditions and subsequent limited available water.

This pasture use schedule 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 reasons. If allowable use levels are met early in the scheduled pasture, cattle will be redistributed amongst the remaining pastures where adequate forage is available, or removed from the Forest.

2. UTILIZATION STANDARDS

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

- Riparian areas are not to exceed 25% of current year's growth on woody riparian species.
- 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

At our annual validation meeting, key areas for monitoring were identified as riparian areas and transect cluster locations.

The idea of a key area is to find a site that is representative of a larger area in which cattle obtain the majority of their required forage resources. Key area monitoring will avoid areas directly adjacent to permanent water sources, cattle trails, roads, and fence lines.

- Riparian areas will be monitored for use on riparian woody species' current year's leaders.
- Upland areas will be monitored for use on perennial grass species.

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, and may also include FS Regional stubble-height standards, as well as other techniques generally accepted in the field of range management.

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.

Portions of fence #R02296 is in need of reconstruction. Please let us know when you are ready to begin this project and we will provide you with the materials that you need.

You have informed us that Jaralosa Stock Tank (imp. #002021), Ant Stock Tank (imp. #002323), & O bar O Stock Tank (imp. #002326) are in need of being cleaned out. The archaeological surveys have been complete for these three projects. We will need to make sure that aquatic habitat surveys are in place and initiate a permit modification before any work is started on these projects. We have also discussed placing bentonite in the Jaralosa Tank. Please keep us informed as to when the tank dries up and we will try and provide you with the bentonite to put inside the tank.

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.
- The Chiricahua leopard frog was listed as a threatened species in 2002 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. We have completed grazing consultation on your allotment regarding the effects of livestock grazing on the Chiricahua leopard frog. We determined that livestock grazing will either have no effect or will not adversely effect the Chiricahua leopard frog. As a result of this determination, there were no changes required of your grazing permit. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with this determination. Therefore, consultation has been completed. A copy of this consultation is on file with your local Ranger District.

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 Part 1, Section 3. 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 Mackey 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 Tammy Randall-Parker, District Ranger, Black Range Ranger District at 1804 Date Street, Truth or Consequences, NM 89701.

We appreciate your cooperation in the management of the Mackey Allotment. If you have any questions regarding these instructions, please contact Ron Mortensen, Rangeland Management Specialist, or myself at (505)894-6677. Thank you.

Sincerely,

TAMMY RANDALL PARKER
District Ranger