



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Reserve Ranger District
505.533.6231

P.O. Box 170
Reserve, NM 87830-0170
FAX: 505.533.6605

File Code: 2210, 2230

Date: March 17, 2003

Edward and Christie Cope

Dear Edward and Christie,

Enclosed is your Grazing Year 2003 Annual Operating Plan/Instructions. Also enclosed is a copy of our monitoring calendar for the **Dark Canyon** Allotment. You are encouraged to participate in any monitoring that we do on the **Dark Canyon** Allotment. We will call you in advance of our monitoring trips to remind you. If you cannot make it, and you would like to participate, please contact us in advance and we will work with you on re-scheduling the trip. I have also enclosed information concerning several USDA programs that could provide drought assistance to eligible grazing permittees on National Forests.

As always if you have any questions or comments please contact Ted McArthur or myself.

Sincerely,

ROGERS M. STEED
District Ranger

Allotment: Dark Canyon Allotment



Permittee: Edward and Christie Cope

1. **Authorization:** Authorized to graze the following in 2003:

Number and class	Dates Authorized
42 Cattle (cow/calf)	6/1/03 to 11/30/03

2. **Management:**

Pasture	Time Frame	Comment
North Pasture	6/1-11/30	

Please notify us of cattle movements onto and off of the allotment, as well as refinements that may be needed to enhance the management system.

3. **Utilization Standards and Monitoring:**

During the 2003 grazing season, we will begin the process of changing from utilization percentages to a combination of stubble heights and utilization percentages.

Allowable use is the percentage of use that will be allowed on key grass and browse species. This use will be measured in the key monitoring areas for the **Dark Canyon** Allotment. The scheduled rotation, grazing season, and livestock numbers are indicated in Section 1 of these Annual Operating Plan/Instructions. **Adherence to utilization levels is mandatory and should be the limiting factor in adjusting grazing management.** Adjustments in numbers, rotation schedule, or season of use will be made if allowable use standards are met. Cattle will be moved to the next scheduled pasture or off the allotment when these forage utilization standards are met. The option to return livestock to a pasture that has received adequate plant re-growth will be considered if all resource objectives can be met.

The maximum allowable use levels set for the **Dark Canyon** Allotment will be **35%**; in addition stubble heights should not be less than an average of 3 inches on blue and hairy grama and 5 inches on side oats grams. Use of browse is not to exceed the **50%** level. Use levels will be monitored in key areas. The location of these is currently being verified. You are welcome to join us as we establish the permanent monitoring transects for gathering the stubble height data. Attached is a copy of our tentative monitoring plan for the **Dark Canyon** Allotment for the 2003 grazing season. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Ted McArthur or Jerry Turner at the office (505) 533-6232.

The **Dark Canyon** Allotment includes Mexican Spotted Owl Protected Activity Centers (PAC). In these PAC's the following activities are restricted during the breeding season of

the Owl (March 1-August 31): livestock concentrations or trailing, fence construction and maintenance, and livestock salting.

If utilization is found to exceed 35% and/or stubble height requirements at any time during the use period on any one key area, livestock must be removed from the key area, restricted area, pasture or allotment.

4. **Range Improvements:**

Fences: Please let us know if any fences are beyond reasonable repair and are in need of reconstruction.

Water: Advance planning is needed for authorizing tank cleaning so surveys can be scheduled during the summer months. If the pipelines and troughs are beyond reasonable repair, we are willing to work with you to replace them. Please protect natural springs and areas with riparian type vegetation. Drainage bottoms, creeks, springs, and cienegas, where water is available, are most susceptible to livestock concentrations.

5. **The Annual Operating Plan/Instructions** are a part of the Term Grazing Permit as provided for in Part 3, Section 8. It complies with the standards and guidelines found in the Forest Plan. It also complies with the Endangered Species Act as found in the Biological Assessment and/or on-going grazing consultation for the **Dark Canyon** 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 R. Andre, Forest Supervisor, Gila National Forest, 3005 E. Camino del Bosque, Silver City, New Mexico, 88061-7863, within 45 days of the date of this decision. A copy of the notice of appeal must be filed simultaneously with Rogers M. Steed, District Ranger, Reserve Ranger District, at P.O. Box 170, Reserve, NM 87830.

Open and positive communications dealing with these or any other concerns is encouraged. Feel free to contact Ted McArthur or myself if you have any questions or problems. We will be happy to discuss allotment management, conditions on your allotments, Forest Plan standards and guidelines, or any other concerns you may have. ***We appreciate your management and the work you have already done in improving these conditions.***

Approved _____ Date _____
ROGERS M. STEED
District Ranger