



File Code: 2230

Date: June 7, 2024

Walnut Creek Ventures, LLC
c/o Heber and Carrie Robbs
2911 Bull Pen Road
Camp Verde, AZ 86322

Dear Heber and Carrie,

This document serves as your 2024 Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the Fossil Creek Allotment. This AOI is part of your Term Grazing Permit as provided for in Part 2, section 8(a).

I. AUTHORIZED LIVESTOCK NUMBERS/PERIOD OF USE/APPROVED NON-USE

Your 2024 Authorized Use Request has been approved and you are authorized the following Livestock Numbers and Periods of Use:

13 Mile Rock	
Number of head	Dates
248 cow/calf	3/01/24-2/28/25
19 bulls	3/01/24-2/28/25
6 horses	3/01/24-8/31/24
Fossil Creek Allotment	
Number of head	Dates
178 cow/calf	3/01/24-2/28/25
14 bulls	3/01/24-2/28/25
6 horses	9/01/24 -2/28/25

II. GRAZING SCHEDULE

Changes from the grazing schedule will be made only with prior Forest Service approval.

The following is the planned grazing sequence for the 2024 grazing year:

Pasture Name	Planned Grazing Period	Livestock Numbers
Fossil Creek-Main Cow Herd		
Mud Tanks/Hog Back	10/23 to 12/15/2023	178 cows
10 Mile Unit-Basin/Funnel/Sycamore	12/16 to 2/15/2024	178 cows
Doren's Defeat/Grass Patch	2/16 to 4/15	178 cows
Lower and Upper Ed's Point	4/16 to 6/15	178 cows/14 bulls
Pine/House/Tin Can/Manzanita	6/16 to 9/15	178 cows/14 bulls



Salmon Lake North and South	9/16 to 10/15	178 cows/14 bulls
Rafter	10/16 to 10/20	178 cows/14 bulls
Pasture Name	Planned Grazing Period	Livestock Numbers
13 Mile Rock-Main Cow Herd		
Fossil Creek – Tanque Aloma	11/15 to 12/20/2023	272 Cows
Winter	12/21 to 3/05/2024	272 Cows
Heifer	3/06 to 3/15	272 Cows
Wingfield East	3/16 to 4/11	272 Cows/19 bulls
Wingfield West	4/12 to 4/30	272 Cows/19 bulls
Wingfield East	5/01 to 5/04	272 Cows/19 bulls
Heifer/Winter	5/05 to 5/12	272 Cows/19 bulls
Tanque Aloma/Holding	5/13 to 5/31	272 Cows/19 bulls
Maverick Basin	6/01 to 7/01	272 Cows/19 bulls
Wilbur/Good Enough/Tom's	7/02 to 9/01	272 Cows/19 bulls
Tule	9/02 to 9/15	272 Cows/19 bulls
Meadow Canyon	9/16 to 10/01	272 Cows/19 bulls
Tin Canyon	10/02 to 10/15	272 Cows/19 bulls
Shipping	10/16 to 10/20	272 Cows/19 bulls
Rafter	10/21 to 10/22	272 Cows/19 bulls

Rested Pastures for the 2024 Grazing Season: Upper Wilderness, Lower Wilderness

The Annual stocking level (annual authorized livestock numbers and dates) are considered approximate. The actual dates and numbers may change due to many variables. Annual stocking level is based on current and expected forage production. The planned use period in a pasture and livestock numbers can/should be adjusted if conditions change (either shortened or lengthened, depending on forage availability but not in excess of the permitted numbers and utilization in key areas).

III. STRUCTURAL RANGE IMPROVEMENTS

Range Improvement Maintenance

Range improvements assigned to you for maintenance have been identified in red on the permit maps of your term grazing permit. These improvements are to be fully maintained annually to comply with permit requirements (Part 2, section 8i). Any maintenance you perform must conform to the standards specified by your District Rangeland Management Specialist. The grazing permittee is responsible for all maintenance materials, supplies and equipment necessary to properly maintain all range structural improvements. The Forest may replace range structural improvement materials and/or supplies at the end of the improvement's life; when maintenance and repair is no longer feasible to keep the improvement properly maintained and functioning.

New fence projects will be implemented only with prior approval and after a successful completion /clearance of both biological and archeological surveys from Forest Service personnel.

New fencing will be done to USFS standards and guidelines.

Please note that you must notify the District Rangeland Management Specialist at least 60 days prior to beginning any maintenance work that requires the use of heavy equipment (i.e. maintenance of earthen stock tanks).

Scheduled for Projects/Maintenance GY 2024:

Project Location	Project	Date for Completion
Chalk Springs pasture	Fix and replace electric fence	Fall/winter 2024

IV. NON-STRUCTURAL RANGELAND IMPROVEMENTS

Currently there are no non-structural range improvements.

V. SALTING AND PROTEIN BLOCK PRACTICES

Proper salt and protein block location can be a good tool to aid in livestock distribution and they will be used in a manner to spread livestock utilization throughout the pasture. A detailed description of the Coconino National Forest Salting and Supplemental Feeding policy can be found in Part 3 of your term grazing permit; (See AMP and Term Grazing Permit for the complete list of the guidelines.)

Page 9 of the Term Grazing Permit: Salt or mineral supplement locations should be rotated annually and avoid areas where livestock concentrations could cause excessive vegetation trampling, soil loss or disturbance to sensitive species or habitats. These areas would include habitat that supports Mexican spotted owls, northern goshawks, rare plants, riparian vegetation, meadows or locations closer than ¼ mile from a water source.

VI. PORTABLE WATER HAULING

Temporary sites for portable haul water may be needed and should be used as necessary to assist in livestock distribution. Sites need to be approved before troughs are placed on site, may need archeological clearance. All troughs need to follow the same conditions as if they were permanent; like wildlife ramps/logs, placed on flat ground, etc. (see page 8 of Term Permit).

VII. DROUGHT MANAGEMENT

To aide in determining the initial livestock numbers the Standard Precipitation Index (SPI) and the US Drought Monitor Report was discussed. The SPI and the US Drought Monitor showed our area in a Moderate drought. It was agreed that due to the above factors as well as that with the current precipitation conditions and the fact that there was abundant forage left over at the end of the growing season the livestock numbers would remain at present numbers unless the allotment moves into a negative drought status.

See Allotment Management Plan (AMP)

VIII. GRAZING STRATEGY

The management of livestock pasture moves will be based on both a plant forage phenology scheme of management and proper allowable grazing use. Pasture rotations would be planned at the onset of spring, but may be modified later in response to environmental changes, such as drought or a wet season.

Livestock pasture moves will be completed within a five (5) day period, where feasible, and livestock will be actively herded from one pasture to the other. Once a pasture move occurs, cattle are not authorized to graze outside the newly occupied pasture. In the event cattle escape the assigned pasture (i.e. pasture gates left open, cattle guards become filled, cut fences, etc.), the permittee will return the cattle to the correct pasture in a timely manner. Preventing livestock from grazing adjacent allotments, your allotment's rested pastures, or from re-grazing previously used pastures is the permittees responsibility.

Permitted livestock (cow/calf/heifer/bull) will be run together as a single herd until the bulls are removed from the cow herd while utilizing a deferred rotation. Gates are to be left open at water-lots when cattle leave a pasture if not used by the neighboring pasture.

IX. RESOURCE MONITORING

Allowable Grazing Intensity/Utilization Guidelines

Grazing Intensity

Grazing intensity is defined as the amount of herbage removed through grazing or trampling during the grazing period. Grazing intensity would be managed to allow for the physiological needs of plants, as a result, the planned use period indicated in the Grazing Schedule (section II) in a pasture may be lengthened or shortened depending on forage intensity in key areas.

Forage Utilization

Utilization is defined as the proportion or degree of current year's forage production that is consumed or destroyed by animals (including insects). It is a comparison of the amount of herbage left compared with the amount of herbage produced during the year. Utilization is measured at the end of the growing season when the total annual production can be accounted for and the effects of grazing in the whole management unit can be assessed. This allowable use level includes both livestock and wildlife. If use levels in key areas exceed the maximum allowable use before livestock enter a pasture, the pasture will not be used.

Upland areas

A maximum allowable intensity/utilization level in upland areas is 40% on key species.

Riparian Areas

A maximum allowable intensity/utilization level in riparian areas is 40% on key grass species.

A maximum allowable utilization level of 20% on key woody species is acceptable if all three classes of riparian vegetation are present. If the mid-age class is absent, the maximum allowable utilization level on key woody species will be limited to 5%.

Permittee Monitoring

The permittee will document the following items on the enclosed Actual Use Form during the 2024 grazing year: 1) Actual Grazing Period; 2) Actual Livestock Numbers.

****It is very important that this Actual Use form be completed and submitted to your Rangeland Management Specialist at the end of the grazing year.**

The permittee is encouraged to participate in the monitoring.

X. MITIGATION MEASURES FOR SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

There are two (2) grazing mitigation documents that include grazing mitigation measures for the Mexican spotted owl and the Chiricahua leopard frog. Please review and familiarize yourself with these required grazing measures; Forest Service personnel will field check your compliance with these mitigation requirements. (See AMP)

XI. FIRE

Please use caution during all ranch activities that could potentially start a fire. All ranch vehicles must be equipped with an axe, shovel, and water bucket. All open camp and branding fires require a ten foot fire ring cleared down to mineral soil.

During periods of critical fire danger the Forest Supervisor may declare a Red Flag Alert or issue other special orders. Under these conditions, the building or use of fires, the use of power saws, heavy equipment, ATV's and other motorized equipment may be prohibited on Forest Service land. All Federal, State and Local fire restrictions and regulations must be observed.

Report all fires to the Coconino National Forest Fire Dispatch Office (928-527-3552). Cooperation in the reporting, prevention, and suppression of fires will be expected as specified in Part 2, section 10 of your Term Grazing Permit.

XII. MOTOR VEHICLE RESTRICTIONS

On May 1, 2012, the Coconino National Forest began implementation of the Travel Management Rule. The Travel Management Rule requires the designation of roads, trails, and areas open to motor vehicle use and these routes are identified on the Motor Vehicle Use Map. Implementation of the Travel Management Rule requires active management of all motorized use, including use related to permitted grazing activities.

Motorized travel off the designated road system, including off-road access, by grazing permit holders will be based on the need to carry out required management practices necessary to comply with the terms and conditions of the Term Grazing Permit.

Grazing permittees that do not obtain a Restricted Road, Trail and Off-Road Administrative Use Permit are required to operate motorized vehicles only on the designated road system. Operating a motorized vehicle off the designated road system without a valid Restricted Road, Trail and Off-Road Administrative Use Permit will result in the immediate issuance of a Notice of Non-Compliance for violating the terms and conditions of your Term Grazing Permit (Part 2, Section 8a). A Notice of Non-Compliance may result in Term Grazing Permit suspension or cancellation proceedings. Legitimate motorized use off the designated road system, including off-road access,

for conducting activities required under the Term Grazing Permit will be authorized under a Restricted Road, Trail and Off-Road Administrative Use Permit. (See Permit)

If you have any questions or wish to discuss anything further, contact Kathy Sevy at (928) 203-7537, Donna Fouts at (928) 203-7530 or Noelle Resignolo at (928) 203-7517.

Sincerely,

Wendy Peterson 6/10/2024

for ALEX SCHLUETER
Acting District Ranger

