



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Cave Creek
Ranger
District

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File Code: 2210

Date: January 25th 2017

T-Link Ranches, Inc

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Dear (b) (6)

The following are your 2017 annual operating instructions (AOI) for the Blackjack and New River grazing allotments. These instructions have been developed from collaboration with you and in consideration of Forest Service Handbook 2209.13, Tonto National Forest Plan, associated National Environmental Policy Act analysis, Allotment Management Plan and available information describing range conditions.

Authorized Use

The following table describes authorized livestock numbers per grazing unit, anticipated use dates, and proposed monitoring dates. Please request a change in this schedule well in advance of the proposed dates. Please, maintain and submit records that indicate your compliance to permitted use.

Allotment	Grazing Unit	Dates of Use	Tentative Monitoring Date	Authorized Livestock	Rationale/Comments
Blackjack Allotment					
Blackjack	Triple Tanks	January 1 st March 31 st	February 15 th and April 5 th	140 Cows 10 Horses 30 Bulls 90 Yearlings	Livestock will be added to the allotment starting March 1 st .
Blackjack	Blackjack	April 1 st June 15 th	May 10 th and June 20 th	Up to 405 cows 20 horses 35 bulls	Livestock will be intensively monitored this year to determine potential capacity.
Blackjack	Ricon	April 1 st June 15 th	May 10 th and June 20 th	Up to 405 cows 20 horses 35 bulls	
Blackjack	Lockwood	June 15 th September 15 th	August 1 st and	Up to 405 cows 20 horses	



			September 20 th	35 bulls	
Blackjack	Lime Creek	September 15 th December 31 st	October 25 th and January 3 rd	Up to 405 cows 20 horses 35 bulls	
New River Allotment					
New River	Cooks Mesa	March 1 st July 31 st	February 15 th , May 10 th , August 1 st	80 Cows 10 bulls 10 horses	Initial stocking of the Allotment as required by the MOU.
New River	Grapevine	August 1 st December 31 st	August 1 st , October 18 th , January 3 rd	80 Cows 10 bulls 10 horses	
New River	River		TBD	80 Cows 10 bulls 10 horses	Back up if needed for fall of 2017.

Monitoring:

Upland utilization is measured at the end of the growing season in key areas for key forage species. This information, along with vegetation condition, forage plant production and vigor, soil and watershed condition, will be used to make informed management recommendations concerning pasture moves and stocking rates.

Riparian utilization in key reaches is measured during growing season to verify residual vegetation is present for streambank protection during flow events.

Grazing intensity will be evaluated during the growing season to make necessary changes needed for plant development and recovery.

Vegetative Use Guidelines:

Grazing will be managed so conservative use levels are achieved over the long-term in pasture key areas. It is your responsibility as permittee to take action so that livestock grazing does not exceed vegetative use thresholds. Please arrange for an allotment inspection if seasonal vegetative use of available forage approaches these thresholds.

Vegetation	Use Threshold
Upland herbaceous species	30-40% of current year's growth
Upland browse species	50% of current year's growth
Riparian herbaceous species	Limited to 40% of plant species biomass and maintain 6-8 inches of stubble height on deergrass

Riparian woody species	Limited to 50% of leaders browsed on upper 1/3 of plants up to 6 feet tall
Stream banks (if applicable)	Limited to less than 20% alteration of alterable stream banks
Mexican Spotted Owl PAC's (where applicable)	20% optimum-40% maximum
Annual Grasses	50% current year's growth

Range Improvement Maintenance:

All range improvements must be maintained to Forest Service standards before cattle will be allowed to enter the units. You must receive verbal concurrence for each project before work can begin except routine maintenance (e.g. cleaning dirt tanks, maintaining fence, restoring pipe). It is your responsibility to be aware of and comply with fire restriction.

The following table describes 2017 authorized range improvement projects.

Pasture	Location	Description of Work	Clearances Needed
Multiple	Multiple	Fences on the New River Allotment will be reconstructed to F.S. Standards	No new disturbance is authorized, fences must remain within the original footprint of the existing fence line
Multiple	Multiple	Cleaning out Dirt Stock Tanks	Multiple stock tanks on the Blackjack and New River Grazing allotments are planned to be cleaned, No new disturbance to access these tanks is authorized without prior approval. All work must be coordinated through the district.

Salting:

In most cases, salt must be located no closer than ¼ mile from streams, rivers, riparian areas, trails, and known archaeological sites.

Supplements and Attractants

Protein blocks, nutritional supplement, and other attractant may be authorized.

Supplemental Feeding:

No supplemental feeding is authorized.

Weeds

Invasive plants threaten ecosystem health and grazing resources. Please assist us in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive plants.

If you have any questions, please contact Eric Hoskins, Rangeland Management Specialist, at (928) 467-3236.

Sincerely,



MICAH GRONDIN
District Ranger

CC: Eric Hoskins
Keenan Bender
Ina Yazzie