

File Code: 2210
Date: March 1, 2018

T-Link Ranches, Inc
Grazing Permittee

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Dear **(b) (6)**

The following are your 2018 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.

2016 Annual Operating Instructions (AOI)

Allotment: Blackjack
Permittee: T-Link Ranches, Inc.
Permit Numbers: 12165, 12166

Authorized Use:

Permittee	Numbers	Type	Season
Blackjack Allotment			
T-Link Ranches, Inc.	405 Cow / Calf	Term	3/1 - 2/28
T-Link Ranches, Inc.	35 Bulls	Term	3/1 - 2/28
New River Allotment			
T-Link Ranches, Inc.	140 Cow / Calf	Term	3/1 - 2/28

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.

The cattle will be split into two herds on Blackjack and two herds on New River in order to better distribute use across the pastures.



Allotment	Grazing Unit	Dates of Use	Tentative Monitoring Date	Authorized Livestock	Rationale/Comments
Blackjack Allotment North Herd 205 C/c 17 B					
Blackjack	Cedar Mtn.	March 1 st April 30 th	April 1 st and May 10 th	205 Cows 10 Horses 17 Bulls 90 Yearlings	
Blackjack	Triple Tanks	May 1 st Sept 30 th	July 30 th and October 5 th	205 Cows 10 Horses 17 Bulls	
Blackjack	Homes	October 1 st February 28 th	December 15 th and March 5 th	205 Cows 10 Horses 17 Bulls	Livestock will be intensively monitored this year to determine potential capacity.
Blackjack Allotment South Herd 200 C/c 18 B					
Blackjack	Blackjack	March 1 st June 30 th	April 30 th and July 10 th	200 cows 18 bulls	
Blackjack	Rincon	July 1 st August 30 th	July 30 th September 5 th	200 cows 18 bulls	
Blackjack	Lime Creek	September 1 st February 28 th	November 15 th March 5 th	200 cows 18 bulls	
New River Allotment Main Herd 140 C/c					
New River	Grapevine	March 1 st April 30 th	April 1 st , May 10 th	Up to 200 cows	
New River	River Pasture	May 1 st September 30 th	July 1 st , October 10 th	Up to 200 cows	
New River	New River	October 1 st February 28 th	December 15 th March 5 th	Up to 200 cows	
New River	Cottonwood and N. Canyon				Back up if needed for fall of 2018.

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

Feral Cattle:

You are authorized to work together with your neighboring permittees to gather any unbranded or unauthorized cattle on your allotments. Coordinate with the brand inspector to confirm they are not branded before taking them to sale. Please keep Keenan Bender informed on the status of any unbranded or unauthorized cattle you find on your allotments.

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). We will make every effort to notify you of upcoming fire restrictions but it is your responsibility to be aware of and comply with these restrictions.

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.

Salt and Supplement Policy

Supplemental feeding of livestock is allowed (to strategically manage livestock distribution and forage use) as follows:

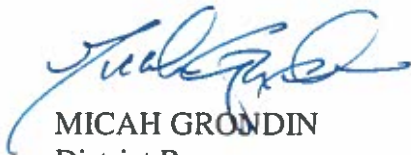
- a) Place supplements on previously disturbed areas (i.e., borrow pits) or natural bedrock outcrops when possible (supplement sites).
- b) Locate supplement sites .25 mile or more from waters and key areas except where prior written permission has been obtained from the District Ranger.
- c) Locate supplement sites where forage is abundant and utilized less than average.
- d) Limit supplement types to non-energy feeds such as salt, protein and mineral blocks.
- e) Use products that prevent the spread of noxious weeds. Feeding of hay on National Forest System Lands is prohibited.

Invasive Plants:

Invasive plants threaten ecosystem health and grazing resources. Please assist us in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive plants. If you see a plant you do not recognize, please document it and submit it to the District for identification.

If you have any questions, please contact Keenan Bender, Rangeland Management Specialist, at (480) 595-3331.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Micah Grondin".

MICAH GRONDIN
District Ranger