

**CLIFTON RANGER DISTRICT
APACHE/SITGREAVES NATIONAL FOREST
ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS (AOI)**

**Baseline-Horsesprings
2023-2024**

I. PERMITTED USE:

The following table illustrates the number of livestock and season of use permitted on the Baseline-Horsesprings Allotment as per Term Grazing Permit # 03010329 issued on January 31, 2017.

KIND	CLASS	NUMBERS	AUM	SEASON OF USE
Cattle	Cow/Calf	100	900	09/01 to 05/31
Cattle	Yearling (9-18 month)	405	2552	09/01 to 05/31
Horse	Horse or Mule	5	72	03/01 to 02/28

II. AUTHORIZED USE:

The following numbers and classes of livestock are authorized to graze on the Baseline-Horsesprings Allotment this year.

KIND	CLASS	NUMBERS	AUM	SEASON OF USE
Cattle	Cow/Calf	10	120	04/01/23 – 02/28/24
	Yearling	5	60	04/01/23 – 02/28/24
	Bull	1	14	04/01/23 – 02/28/24
	Total Head:	16	194	
Horse/Mule	Mature	0	0	04/01/23 – 02/28/24

The Clifton District is currently doing a Section 18 review of the Baseline/Horesprings 1997 Allotment NEPA in preparation of re-initiation of Section 7 Grazing Consultation. Management objectives in reference to Grazing Intensity, Timing and Season of Use have been examined and it has been determined that the effects analyzed in reference to the resource concerns identified will be met with these instructions. The allotment is currently permitted for up to 3019 AUM in a 8 month grazing period. These instructions authorize up to 1700 AUM for 12 months. Out of the 7 pastures normally rested for 3 months every year, 5 will be rested during the growing season. The stocking level is actually lighter. Use levels on key species at key areas of 30-40% range, (except for Black Mountain and Eagle 0-30%) will still be the trigger to determine pasture durations.

In addition; Per handbook 2209.13 R3 Supplement, 2013 section 16.12: Season of use extended from 8 month to yearlong authorizing AUM's of approximately 1572 AUM's which is 1447 AUM's less of the 3019 AUM maximum, therefore based on this as well as same prescribed use levels it is in my professional judgement that this modification is within the scope of the most recent NEPA Analysis. (V. Voelker, Clifton District Ranger) Duration of livestock use per pasture may be adjust annually, within stocking rates, dependent on monitored residual forage availability, key areas, the previous season, and effectiveness of the management program. Additionally, entry and removal dates are dependent upon monitoring, environmental concerns and/or livestock management consideration.

III. ROTATION SCHEDULE: (Livestock use is authorized as follows in the pasture rotation schedule. Deviations from this must be made in advance and amended in the AOI.

Actual dates may vary (+ or – 5 days) dependent on utilization levels, range conditions and time required moving livestock.

PASTURE	NUMBER	SEASON OF USE	GRAZING INTENSITY	KEY AREA	KEY SPP
Cemetery	16	4/1 – 4/15/23	31% - 40%	N/A	
Forest Service Pasture North	16	4/16 – 5/1/23	31% - 40%	N/A	
Forest Service Pasture South	16	5/1 – 5/15/23	31% - 40%	N/A	
Clay Canyon Trap	16	5/16 -5/21/23	31% - 40%	N/A	
South Bear Canyon	16	5/22 – 7/1/23	31% - 40%	S6	BOGR
Eagle	16	7/2 – 8/1/23	31% - 40%	S9	BOGR
East	16	8/2 -10/1/23	0% - 30%	S14	HIBE, BOGR
Black Mountain	16	10/2 – 11/15/23	0% - 30%	S8, S4	HIBE, BOHI
North Bear Canyon	16	11/16 – 01/01/24	31%-40%	B-C1, B-C2	BOHI, BOCU
North Water Loop	16	01/02 – 01/22/24	31% - 40%	B-C4	BOCU, HIBE
South Water Loop	16	1/23 – 02/28/24	31% - 40%	S2, S3	BOCU, HIBE

*** Water system issues may result in an amended AOI.

IV. ALLOWABLE USE STANDARDS (Grazing Intensity) See Appendix for management strategies.

Allowable use of forage is based on the amount and kind of forage on the allotment, plant needs, range condition, trend, and grazing management strategy. Duration, frequency, and timing may be manipulated within the grazing schedule to meet allowable use standards. Grazing intensity may be described in terms herbage removed during the grazing and/or growing period, or as a utilization level at the end of the growing period. Removal of leaf material, when the plant is actively growing can affect root growth which in turn affects future leaf growth. Sufficient leaf area is essential to support plant functions through photosynthesis.

The allowable use levels for this allotment are established for key areas and key species by pasture for the time period livestock are in a pasture. The use on key species in key areas should be used as an indicator to the length of the grazing period allowed in each pasture. The establishment of the utilization standards is consistent with 36 CFR 222 regulations, FSM 2210 and 2230, and FSH 2209.21.

For simplicity, key areas are generally considered as follows: 1) full capacity rangeland located on ridgetops/mesas within a ¼ mile from available water sources; 2) canyon bottoms/riparian areas with free flowing water or springs regardless of distance from water; 3) any area containing full capacity range with erosive soils and insufficient/marginal vegetative ground cover to protect the soil; and/or 4) areas containing critical habitat, whether occupied, suitable and unoccupied, or potentially suitable habitat, for threatened, endangered, or proposed species that are of concern to the Forest Service.

Key areas have been designated in cooperation with the Forest Service and the current or past permittee

Grazing Intensity is discussed by Holechek and others (Holechek, Jerry L., Rex D. Pieper, and Carlton H. Herbel. 2004. Range Management, Principles & Practices. Prentice Hall, page 248):

Table 3. Qualitative characteristics of grazing intensity categories used to characterize New Mexico rangelands (Holechek & Galt, 6/00, Rangelands).		
Qualitative Grazing Intensity Category	Use of Forage by Weight	Qualitative Indicators of Grazing Intensity
Light to non-use	0-30	Only choice plants (key species) and areas show use. There is no use of poor forage plants
Conservative	31-40	Choice forage plants (key species) have abundant seed stalks; Areas more than a mile from water show little use: About one third to one half primary forage plants show grazing on key areas.
Moderate	41-50	Most of accessible range show use; Key areas show patchy appearance with one half to two thirds of primary forage plants (key species) showing use; Grazing is noticeable 1-1½ miles from water
Heavy	51-60	Nearly all primary forage plants show grazing on key areas: Palatable shrubs show hedging; Key areas show a lack of seed stalks: Grazing is noticeable in areas over 1½ miles from water
Severe	61+	Key areas show a clipped or mowed appearance (no stubble ht.): Shrubs are severely hedged; There is evidence of livestock trailing to forage; Areas over 1½ miles from water lack stubble height.

Describing Grazing Intensity (FSH 2209.13 – GRAZING PERMIT ADMINISTRATION HANDBOOK CHAPTER 90 – RANGELAND MANAGEMENT DECISIONMAKING. See **Appendix for species specific stubble height**.

Grazing intensity may be described in terms herbage removed during the grazing and/or growing period, or as a utilization level at the end of the growing period. It is important to clearly define how intensity is being viewed and described. Removal of leaf material, when the plant is actively growing can affect root growth which in turn affects future leaf growth. Sufficient leaf area is essential to support plant functions through photosynthesis. Heavy to severe intensity or utilization can affect current plant development and growth, as well as growth during subsequent growing seasons.

V. ADMINISTRATION

1. The permittee will record actual use as it occurs; including livestock numbers and dates your permitted livestock are in a pasture. This information will be reported at the next annual or semi-annual operating instruction (AOI) meeting.
2. Any change or deviation from this Annual Operating Instructions is to be coordinated and confirmed in advance with the District in an AOI amendment. Additionally, as per terms and conditions of the grazing permit, the permittee shall provide 5 days' notice of moving livestock on or off the allotment. Credit or refunds generated are based upon this documentation. If emergency conditions require making a change immediately, the permittee will notify the District as soon as practical.
3. Livestock remaining in pastures beyond the specified rotation date, that are allowed to drift between pastures, or grazing in rested pastures may be considered a violation of your Term Grazing Permit.
4. Livestock should be moved (before, with notification) and/or when forage utilization objectives have been met or within 1 week of planned rotation dates, unless changes have been confirmed with District Range personnel.
5. The District may spot check range improvements before the entry date to insure improvements are in a satisfactory condition. Livestock will not be allowed to enter pastures if assigned improvements are not maintained to proper standards. Livestock are not allowed to enter pastures if fences will not keep livestock where they are placed.

VI. SALT AND MINERAL BLOCK

Typically, salt or mineral blocks are not to be placed within a quarter mile of water or drainage bottoms. With District Ranger approval, salt may be placed closer than a quarter of a mile to water for specific purposes. Salt will be used to attract cattle to areas of a pasture typically not utilized and or for soil/range condition treatment purposes. Blocks may be removed by the District if found near water, over-utilized areas, meadow bottoms or roads. Feeding and/or supplements such as molasses are not authorized, unless on a case by case for specific purposes and approved by the District Ranger.

VII. MONITORING

Monitoring and evaluation is an essential aspect of good rangeland management. Monitoring and evaluation can be described as the gathering of information so the manager knows what is happening to rangeland resources and why. The intent of monitoring and evaluation is to test the success of the management strategy and if needed, make adjustments. The following types of monitoring can be collected and will be used by the Forest Service for management decisions.

1. Forage Production
2. Forage Utilization/ Stubble Height measurements.
3. Photo Points
4. Condition of Improvements
5. Actual Use
6. Grazing Response Index
7. Precipitation.

VIII. RANGE IMPROVEMENT CONSTRUCTION / MAINTENANCE

The permittee will maintain all range improvements that are assigned for maintenance on pages 11 – 14 of the Term Grazing Permit. Reconstruction or new improvements requires written authorization by the District Ranger through a Permit Modification. When improvements are completed the permittee will inform District Range personnel to schedule an inspection. Before using machinery to clean any pond within defined wildlife habitat, the permittee is required to give the District Office at least 45 days advance notice so that the tank can be inspected for threatened or endangered species. All work involving the use of heavy equipment will be accomplished only after prior approval of the District Ranger.

Current Year Improvement Scheduled		YEAR	2020 - 2021
Improvement Type / ID #	Completion Date	Description/Comments	Status Done /Date

IX. PROTECTION

The permittee, his agents and employees, when acting within the scope of their employment, and his contractors and subcontractors will protect the land and property of the United States, waived private land and other land under jurisdiction of the Forest Service covered by and used in conjunction with this permit. Protection will include taking all reasonable precautions to prevent, make diligent efforts to suppress and report promptly all fires on or endangering such land and property. During periods of high fire danger, branding fires will be allowed by permit only.

X. ALLOTMENT INSPECTIONS

Forest personnel may conduct periodic brief inspections of pastures within the allotment at any time to verify actual use, improvement conditions, or other non-range related activity. The permittee will be notified and invited to participate on extended (3-5 days) inspections.

XI. PERMIT CONDITIONS

This Annual Operating Instructions is hereby made a part of the Term Grazing Permit as provided for in Part 2, Section 8(a). It complies with the standards and guidelines found in the Forest Plan.

Failure to comply with any of the terms and conditions specified in Parts 1, 2, and 3 of your Term Grazing Permit may result in suspension or cancellation, in whole or in part, after written notice. This is found in Part 1, Section 3, of your permit.

VINCENT VOELKER Digitally signed by VINCENT
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DISTRICT RANGER