



**Date:** April 21, 2024

This document serves as your 2024 Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the Big Springs allotment. This AOI is part of your Term Grazing Permit as provided for in Part 2, section 8(a) and in Part 3, section 4.

**I. AUTHORIZED LIVESTOCK NUMBERS/PERIOD OF USE**

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

<u>Big Springs:</u>	2000 Sheep (Ewes)	06/01 to 09/30
	50 Sheep (Rams)	06/01 to 06/30

Any changes to the 2024 authorized livestock numbers will requires that you file an additional Authorized Use Request. Be advised that the Forest Service will need a minimum of 45 days to assess resource conditions and process a supplemental grazing bill for additional livestock. Please contact your Rangeland Management Specialist (Joey Dahms) prior to making any decisions regarding increased livestock numbers.

**II. GRAZING SCHEDULE**

The following is the planned grazing sequence and planned livestock numbers for the 2024 grazing period. Sheep camp move dates shown are an estimate and may need to be amended based on actual conditions.

Changes from the grazing schedule will be made only with Forest Service approval. The planned use period may be shortened or lengthened depending on forage availability and utilization in key areas. Additionally, adjustments in the planned livestock numbers and rotations may be necessary depending on weather and resource conditions.



## Sheep Herd

	<b>Rotation Number</b>	<b>Sheep Camp</b>
<b>Big Springs Allotment</b>	1	Buck Springs
	2	Big Springs
	3	Pancho Viejo
	4	Deadhorse Tank
	5	Pomeroy Spring
	6	KA Hill

### **III. DROUGHT MANAGEMENT**

Drought is an inevitable occurrence in the southwestern United States. Both the Forest Service and grazing permittees must plan for drought as a normal part of management. During periods of drought, the following management actions may be necessary:

1. Stocking levels may need to be reduced. Reductions may be necessary prior to the permitted season of use and/or during the permitted season of use.
2. Season of use may need to be shortened. Depending on the severity of the drought and the stocking level, a reduced grazing season may be necessary.
3. Pasture use periods may need to be shortened. Pastures will not be regrazed during the same grazing season and this may ultimately result in an early exit from the allotment.
4. Utilization and/or seasonal (grazing intensity) standards may need to be reduced. Depending on the severity of the drought and the stocking level, reduced utilization standards will likely result in shortened pasture use periods and may ultimately result in an early exit from the allotment.
5. Lack of livestock water, or poor distribution of livestock water, may result in reduced pasture/allotment use periods. Depending on forage conditions, this effect may be mitigated by hauling water to temporary livestock watering facilities.
6. Allotment Management Plan direction for pasture requiring rest or deferment will be followed. Livestock use of planned rested pastures due to drought will not be authorized.

### **IV. ALLOWABLE UTILIZATION STANDARDS**

For all allotments the maximum allowable use will be 40% utilization in key areas and livestock

will be moved to the next area when grazing intensity approaches this conservative level. The allowable use level is the utilization level permitted by both livestock and wildlife.

## **V. SEASON UTILIZATION**

A light to conservative seasonal utilization guideline of up to 40% will be used within grazed pastures on the allotments. Seasonal utilization is defined as the amount of herbage removed through grazing or trampling during the grazing period. Seasonal utilization will be measured at the end of each pasture's livestock grazing period.

The seasonal utilization guideline will be the primary factor in determining when livestock need to move to the next grazing unit; but other factors such as climatic conditions, opportunity for plant growth, and previous year's utilization level will also be considered. Annual reductions in the seasonal utilization guideline may be made based on resource conditions.

## **VI. RESOURCE MONITORING**

### **Forage Utilization**

Forage utilization within each pasture will be monitored and the allowable utilization standards (section IV) and the seasonal utilization guideline (section V) will be enforced. This may result in earlier pasture moves than indicated in the Grazing Schedule (section II). Forage utilization monitoring will occur at locations within pastures using the "key area" concept. Key areas are defined as "...a portion of range, which because of its location, grazing or browsing value, and/or use, serve as an indicative sample of range conditions, trend, or degree of use seasonally. A key area guides the general management of the entire area of which it is a part." Key areas will generally have the following characteristics: they will be approximately 20 to 50 acres in size; they will be located on productive soils with slopes less than 15%; they will have a plant community that is representative of the larger area; and they will generally be located 0.25 to 1.0 miles away from livestock water sources.

Forage utilization monitoring and its specific application to your allotment should be discussed with your Rangeland Management Specialist. Permittee participation in utilization monitoring is encouraged.

### **Permittee Monitoring**

The permittee will monitor and document the following items on the enclosed Actual Use and Forage Utilization Monitoring Form: 1) Actual Grazing Period; 2) Actual Livestock Numbers; and 3) Average Utilization of all forage species at two different time periods; just prior to livestock entering the pasture, and immediately after livestock leave the pasture. **It is very important that this monitoring be completed during the time frames specified, and that the Forage Utilization Monitoring Form is submitted to your Rangeland Management Specialist at the end of 2024 grazing period.**

## **VII. MITIGATION MEASURES FOR SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES**

There are no threatened and endangered species or critical habitat within the allotment. No mitigation measures are currently required for listed Federal, State, and Forest Service special status species. However, sensitive plant surveys will be completed in suitable habitat before construction of any new range improvements. Surveys will not be necessary if the construction will occur in an area that is disturbed, such as existing roads and ditches or existing earthen tanks. Coordination with the South Zone Botanist may occur if any sensitive plant species are located.

## **VIII. RANGE IMPROVEMENTS**

### **Construction of New Structural Range Improvements**

No construction of new structural range improvements has been requested or approved for this grazing season.

### **Removal of Structural Range Improvements**

No removal of structural range improvements has been requested or approved for this grazing season.

### **Existing Structural Range Improvements**

Permittee will work on maintenance needs on the eastern boundary of the allotment (bordering Garland Prairie and Bellemont allotment).

Structural range improvements assigned to you for maintenance are listed in your Term Grazing Permit and are also identified on the allotment map. These improvements are to be fully maintained annually to comply with permit requirements (Part 2, section 8i and Part 3, section 3a). 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 will 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. **Please note that you must notify your Rangeland Management Specialist at least 60 days prior to the beginning of any maintenance work that requires the use of heavy equipment.**

## **IX. SALTING, PROTEIN BLOCKS AND USE OF HAY AS A SUPPLEMENTAL FEED**

### **Salting and Protein Blocks:**

Proper salt and protein block location can be a good tool to aid in livestock distribution. They will be used in a manner to spread livestock utilization throughout the pasture. The following guidelines will be used when placing salt and protein blocks:

1. In general, salt and protein blocks should not be placed within ¼ mile of water. Locate salt/protein blocks where forage is abundant and utilized less than average.
2. Salt and protein blocks will not be placed in areas of depleted range, erosive soils, or sensitive plant or animal species. Areas of sensitive plant or animal species will be identified by your Rangeland Management Specialist and included in each year's AOI.

3. Limit supplement types to non-emergency feeds such as salt, protein, and mineral blocks. No more than three blocks (50 lb. blocks) of salt/protein will be placed at any location at any one time.
4. Salt/protein will not be placed at the same location twice during the same grazing season.
5. The use of portable salt/protein block containers is encouraged but not mandatory.

#### Supplementing with Hay:

This practice may be approved for use on all Kaibab National Forest allotments provided the following criteria are being met:

1. A deficiency supplement during sustained unusual heavy snow/ice events. This criterion is a Best Management Practice (BMP).
2. Only certified weed-free hay may be authorized to prevent the spread of noxious weeds. This criterion is a BMP.
3. Supplemental feeding will not be used in place of forage if forage runs low within a pasture. This criterion is a BMP.
4. This practice will only be allowed for a specific location and time under the authority of the District Ranger (FSM 2200 Range Management Chapter\_Zero Code-2204.3 Item 2).

#### **X. PORTABLE WATER HAULING**

Temporary sites for portable haul water may be needed and should be used as necessary to assist in livestock distribution. The following requirements will apply to portable haul water locations:

1. Coordinate with your Rangeland Management Specialist to identify portable water haul locations for individual pastures prior to the grazing period.
2. To aid in livestock distribution, the portable water haul locations should generally be in areas of light forage utilization.
3. Generally, portable water hauls locations will not be located at sites used in previous years.
4. Portable water hauls will not be located in areas of depleted range, erosive soils, or sensitive plant or animal species.
5. Portable water haul locations will be moved when the desired forage utilization levels have been reached.
6. Portable haul water storage tanks and trough will be removed when livestock leave the pasture.

## **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 requires 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, ATVs 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 Williams District Office at (928) 635-5200 or the Kaibab National Forest Supervisor's Office at (928) 635-8200.

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 USE/RESTRICTIONS**

On July 9, 2010, the Kaibab National Forest began implementation of the Travel Management Rule (TMR). The TMR requires the designation of roads, trails, and areas open to motor vehicle use and these routes area identified on the Motor Vehicle Use Map. Implementation of the TMR 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. Examples of required management practices include, but are not limited to: the repaid and maintenance of structural range improvements; transport and placement of mineral and protein supplement; herding of livestock; and tending to sick or injured animals. Legitimate motorized use off the designated road system, including off-road access, for conducting activities required under the Term Grazing Permit will be authorized as follows:

1. **For motorized use with ATVs, UTVs, motorcycles, and full-size pickup or smaller vehicles (curb weight less than 8,000 pounds):** Grazing permittee must obtain a grazing allotment specific Restricted Road, Trail and Off-Road Administrative Use Permit. Motorized vehicles use off the designated road system will be limited to only that use which is necessary for compliance with the terms and conditions of the Term Grazing permit.
2. **For motorized use with larger vehicles (curb weight greater than 8,000 pounds or larger than a full-size pickup) or any heavy equipment:** Grazing permittee must obtain a site specific Restricted Road, Trail, and Off-Road Administrative Use Permit. Motorized vehicle use off the designated road system will be limited to only that use which is necessary for compliance with the terms and conditions of the Term Grazing Permit.
3. **To request site specific Restricted Road, Trail, and Off-Road Administrative Use**

**Permit**, the grazing permittee must provide their Rangeland Management Specialist with the project details a minimum of 30 days prior to the proposed starting date for the permit.

4. A copy of the approved Restricted Road, Trail, and Off-Road Administrative Use Permit must be with the vehicle operator while operating the vehicle off the designated road system.
5. A Permit Placard must be attached to all permitted vehicles while operating off the designated road system.
6. Off-Highway vehicles (ATVs, UTVs, and motorcycles) used for conducting activities required under the Term Grazing Permit must be licensed and permitted in accordance with Arizona State Law.
7. The Motor Vehicle Use Map for the Kaibab National Forest identifies certain roads as “Roads Open to Highway Legal Vehicles Only”. These roads are open only to motor vehicles licensed under State law for general operation on all public roads within the state. Grazing permittee operating motor vehicles on these roads must comply with the legal requirements. Operating a motor vehicle off the designated road system to avoid the legal requirements of “Roads Open to Highway Legal Vehicles Only” is not permitted.
8. Grazing permittees will utilize motorized vehicles off the designated road system in a manner that will not result in damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, wildlife, heritage, or other forest resources.
9. Failure to comply with the conditions of the Restricted Road, Trail, and Off-Road Administrative Use Permit may result in the immediate cancellation of the Restricted Road, Trail, and Off-Road Administrative Use Permit and may result in the issuance of a Notice of Non-Compliance for violation of the terms and conditions of your 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. Operation of 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.

**XIII. PERMITTEE REVIEW**

On May 10th, 2024, Joey Dahms and Wade Biakeddy met and discussed the 2024 Annual Operating Instructions for the Big Springs Allotment. You have reviewed and agreed with these instructions.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss anything further, please feel free to contact Joey Dahms (928) 635-5621 or [joseph.dahms@usda.gov](mailto:joseph.dahms@usda.gov).

Sincerely,

DEBRA MOLLET  
District Ranger

cc: Joseph Auza