



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Tonto Basin  
Ranger  
District

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File Code: 2210

Date: December 6, 2022

Tamara G. Smith Irrevocable Trust  
Black Mesa Allotment  
8020 W. Gibson Ranch Rd.  
Payson AZ, 85541

Dear (b)(6)

The following are your 2023 annual operating instructions (AOI) for the Black Mesa grazing allotment. 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.

Grazing Unit	Dates of Use	Tentative Monitoring Date	Authorized Livestock	Rationale/Comments
Baker	Current- February 28 <sup>th</sup> 2023	March 7 <sup>th</sup>	50 Cows 2 Bulls	
Black Mesa	March 1 <sup>st</sup> May 31 <sup>st</sup>	June 7 <sup>th</sup>	50 Cows 3 Bulls	
Chalk	June 1 <sup>st</sup> October 31 <sup>st</sup>	November 7 <sup>th</sup>	50 Cows 3 Bulls	
Baker	November 1 <sup>st</sup> Next AOI	Next AOI	50 Cows 3 Bulls	
North Willow	March 1 <sup>st</sup> August 31 <sup>st</sup>	September 7 <sup>th</sup>	30 Cows 1 Bull	



Braddock or Sweed	September 1 <sup>st</sup> Next AOI	Next AOI	30 Cows 1 Bulls	
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**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
Streambanks (if applicable)	Limited to less than 20% alteration of alterable streambanks
Mexican Spotted Owl PAC's (where applicable)	20% optimum-40% maximum
Annual Grasses	50% of 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 2023 range improvement projects.

Pasture	Location	Description of Work	Clearances Needed
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Braddock	Braddock Well	Install pump in existing well	
Baker	Boundary Fence	Install 1.25 miles new fence to replace burned fence	
Braddock	Salt River boundary	Construct new fence at the Salt River boundary	Needs site visit and review by F.S. to confirm location and use authorization.
Chalk	Corral	Realign shoot at the Chalk Corral	

**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 (480) 435-5563.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Jeremy Plain  
District Ranger

CC:

(b)(6)