



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Cave Creek Ranger District

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File Code: 2210/2230
Date: January 19, 2023

Blackjack and New River Permittee

Dear Karen Fletcher.

On Monday December 12th, 2022, you met with Matt Kilford, Kimberly Cole, and I to discuss your 2023 Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for Blackjack and New River Allotments.

Your AOI is attached. If changes are needed to your rotation and/or management concerns exist, please contact the District Range Staff in advance to adjust your AOI.

Monitoring of forage conditions and water availability will continue over the next several weeks and into the monsoon season. A second AOI meeting may be needed to adjust management in response to resource conditions.

The AOI is made part of your Term Grazing Permit as specified in Part 2, Number 8(a) of the permit and supersedes your 2022 AOI. If you have any questions, please contact Matt Kilford at (480) 595-3331 or Kimberly Cole (928) 642-6118.

Sincerely,

MICAH GRONDIN
District Ranger



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2023 Annual Operating Instructions

Blackjack / New River

This AOI is a guide for management for the 2023 grazing year. The pasture rotation and numbers discussed are as follows:

Pasture	Numbers	Dates
<i>New River North Herd</i>		
Willow Spring	58 C/C, 6 Bulls	Feb 28 - Sept 01
Moore's Gulch	58 C/C, 6 Bulls	Sept 02 - Feb 29
<i>New River South Herd</i>		
Grapevine	303 C/C, 33 Bulls	Present - Feb 01
River	303 C/C, 33 Bulls	Feb 02 - June 01
North Canyon	303 C/C, 33 Bulls	June 02 - Oct 01
Cooks Mesa	303 C/C, 33 Bulls	Oct 02 - Feb 29
<i>Blackjack Herd</i>		
Steer	332 Yearlings	January 01 - Feb 01
Lockwood	332 Yearlings	Feb 02 - May 01
Cedar Mountain	330 C/C, 32 Bulls, 10 Horses	Feb 28 - April 15
Triple Tanks/Homes	330 C/C, 32 Bulls, 10 Horses	April 16 - Aug 15
Bull	330 C/C, 32 Bulls, 10 Horses	Aug 16 - Oct 15
Blackjack & Rincon	330 C/C, 32 Bulls, 10 Horses	Oct 16 - Feb 29

A one-week buffer is allowed on either side of the date to get cattle moved from one pasture to the next. If additional time is needed it must be discussed and approved by the Forest Service prior to the move date.

Management

Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines applicable to Blackjack/New River livestock grazing will be followed (Forest Plan, p. 24).

- Salt and/or supplements will be placed where forage is abundant and current grazing use levels are low. Salt and/or supplements will not be placed any closer than one quarter mile from available water, recreation sites, or designated trails except where prior written approval had been obtained from the District Ranger. No salting will occur within or adjacent to identified heritage sites. Salt will be removed from pastures when cattle have left an area, and not placed within a pasture until the cattle arrive. Additionally, salt will not be placed in the same location(s) each year.
- Troughs will be left full of water and operational year-round for wildlife accessibility, unless in limited circumstances where extreme freezing conditions may damage facilities.
- When entering the next scheduled pasture, all livestock will be removed from the previous pasture within two weeks (dependent on terrain) and will ensure that enough time is allowed to remove livestock to meet the pasture move date(s).
- You will ensure all infrastructure is in functioning condition prior to entering the next scheduled pasture.

Primary goals are to improve resource conditions on the New River Allotment. Based on this goal, management objectives are:

- To achieve distribution of cattle over the full capacity range.
- To obtain, but not exceed allowable use levels of 30% of current year forage production by weight during summer grazing, and 45% utilization during winter grazing in key areas. The Forest Service will work with T-Link in identifying these key areas.
- To provide summer seasonal rest for each grazing unit on a scheduled basis to allow both herbaceous and woody riparian species to meet their physiological growth and reproduction requirements.

Forage utilization will be managed at a level corresponding to light to moderate intensity to provide for grazed plant recovery, increases in herbage production and retention of herbaceous litter to protect soils. Blackjack/New River utilization is as follows.

FORAGE TYPE	USE LEVELS
Uplands Herbaceous Growing Season	30% of current year's forage production
Uplands Herbaceous Dormant Season	45% of utilization during winter grazing in key areas
Uplands Woody	50% of current years growth

Riparian Herbaceous	40% of plant species biomass (any Species) and Maintain 6-8 inches of stubble height
Riparian Woody	50% of leaders browsed on upper 1/3 of plants up to 6' tall.

- If use levels are reached before schedule move dates, livestock will be moved to the next scheduled pasture. If all pastures have been utilized before the end of the grazing season livestock will be removed from the allotment until the start of the next growing season.

You are encouraged to participate in all monitoring activities. Please keep records of actual use and movement dates to provide to the district range staff at the annual authorization meeting each year.

Improvements

You shall maintain all range improvements that are assigned for maintenance in the Term Grazing Permit. You must receive district approval prior to bringing heavy equipment onto the Forest. Any maintenance or reconstruction will be confined within original site disturbance and construction design.

Blackjack & New River Allotment Improvement Work 2023		
Improvement Type	Improvement Type	Work Period and Notes
Dirt/Earthen Tank	Brushy Tank	Work with District Range Specialist on access to Brushy Tank
New Water Systems	All approved water projects listed in 2018 Decision Memo for Blackjack and New River Allotment Water Project.	