



File Code: 2230

Date: March 9, 2009

Elk Springs Ranch, LLC
P.O. Box 50445
Parks, AZ 86018

Dear Dan & Gail:

This letter details your Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the 2009-2010 grazing season on the Dog Knobs and Elk Springs Grazing Allotments as discussed at our February 27, 2009 Annual Validation Meeting held at the Williams Ranger District Office.

1. Season of Use and Numbers to be Grazed

Your 2009 annual validation and billing period will allow for the following period of use with the following numbers allowed:

46 cattle (cow/calf) from April 1, 2009 through January 31, 2010

2. Pasture Sequence

The following is the pasture grazing sequence for the 2009 grazing season:

Pasture Name	Dates	Number of Days
W-Triangle	April 1 – May 10	40
Dog Knobs North	May 11 – July 25	76
RS	July 26 – September 4	40
Miller	September 5 – September 20	15
Webster	September 21 – October 20	30
Flannigan*	October 21 – December 4	45
Dog Knobs South	December 5 – January 31, 2010	60

* **Flannigan Pasture** burned in the 2008 Marteen Fire, and will only be grazed once sufficient recovery of forage has occurred. The Forest Service will monitor conditions and notify you if forage conditions prohibit animals from entering Flannigan Pasture.

Grazing Periods and Number of Days in each pasture are tentative, and subject to adaptive management. It may be necessary to adjust the pasture rotation and/or the number of days spent in each pasture based on the amount of available forage, grazing intensity (i.e., animal demand and level of defoliation), forage utilization, water availability, and livestock distribution. It is important for both the Permittee and Forest Service personnel to notify each other promptly if it appears that an adjustment to this schedule is necessary. It is a permit violation to make changes to the Grazing Schedule without first notifying and receiving approval from the Forest Service.



It is the Permittee's responsibility to actively herd livestock from one pasture to the next, and should occur within 5 days of the scheduled off-date for that particular pasture. If the Permittee can not meet this time frame, the Permittee should contact the Forest Service before this period has expired to request an extension.

3. **Range Improvements**

The Permittee must follow the Heavy Equipment Policy (amended December 2008) before starting any work that involves soil disturbance.

Maintenance of Range Improvements

Rangeland Improvements should be inspected and maintained on an annual basis. All fences should be maintained to standard before livestock enter a pasture.

- 1) Permittee is proposing road work on access road leading to Pinyon Trick Tank.
- 2) Forest Service/permittee is proposing fence maintenance/rebuild in areas burned in the 2008 Marteen Fire.

No additional projects have been identified at the time of this writing. As needs arise, please contact your permit administrator.

Construction of New Range Improvements

No specific projects have been identified at the time of this writing. As needs arise, please contact the Forest Service.

4. **Livestock Distribution**

Livestock distribution may be improved by using water hauls, waterlot controls, salt and supplement stations, and/or herding.

The following apply to portable water hauling:

- a) Coordinate with your grazing permit administrator prior to the grazing period to identify portable water haul locations for individual pastures.
- b) Provide wildlife escape ramps in water troughs and open metal storage tanks. The Kaibab National Forest may supply ramps given supplies are available.
- c) Remove portable haul water storage tanks and troughs when livestock leave the pasture.

The following apply to the use of salt and supplements:

- a) Place salt in portable containers, rather than directly on the ground, in order to protect the soil.
- b) Remove the salt and supplements when the livestock leave the pasture.

Appropriate locations for portable water troughs and salt/supplement stations are:

- a) At least ¼ mile away from permanent water.
- b) Areas of light forage utilization. Moving the water or salt/supplement when the Allowable Use Standard has been met is recommended.

- c) Alternate sites than were used the previous year.
- d) On soils that are not fragile, eroding, or susceptible to erosion.
- e) On sites that are not in wetlands or drainages.
- f) On sites that are not in Mexican Spotted Owl protected or restricted habitat.
- g) On sites that do not have populations of rare plants, if known.

Gates in waterlot fences should be left open for wildlife, unless closed on a temporary basis to facilitate cattle distribution in the pasture.

5. Drought Management

Permittees are strongly encouraged to voluntarily reduce numbers of animals during drought periods. Allowable Use Standards will be met much earlier during the Grazing Period if the drought persists. If the Permittee is authorized to stock full numbers during drought periods, livestock may be required to move through the pastures more quickly and removed from the allotment at an earlier date if carrying capacity (i.e., Animal Unit Months (AUMs) available) is reduced due to low forage production.

6. Allowable Use Guidelines

The Allowable Use Standards for the Elk Springs – Dog Knobs Allotment are 35% during the growing season and 40% during the dormant season in the key areas. Livestock must be moved to the next pasture or off the allotment when use reaches: 1) Moderate Grazing Intensity in the key areas from April 1 through August 30 to provide opportunity for re-growth; and 2) Conservative Grazing Intensity in the key areas from September 1 through January 31 when there is little opportunity for re-growth. Allowable Use Standards in Mexican Spotted Owl Protected, Restricted, and Critical Habitat, and Northern Goshawk foraging habitat (home range) are reduced to an average of 20% or Light Grazing Intensity with no more than 35-40% use (Conservative to Moderate Grazing Intensity, following guidelines above) within any given area.

Mexican Spotted Owl Protected and Critical habitat is found in the south one third of the Elk Springs Allotment. A map can be provided upon request.

Northern Goshawk habitat (territory or home range) is found throughout the Elk Springs Allotment, with most occurring in the south one half. A map can be provided upon request.

7. Grazing Intensity Monitoring and Recordkeeping

Permittees are encouraged to estimate and record Grazing Intensity in each pasture during the permitted Grazing Period. It is preferred that Grazing Intensity be estimated for preferred forage species in key areas that are located at least ¼ mile away from water or salt/supplement stations, and that are preferred by livestock within each pasture.

Preferred data to collect include:

- pasture name
- dates of actual use
- type and class of livestock
- number of livestock
- approximate location of key area

- Grazing Intensity class
- date of observation

If Permittees are not familiar with methods of estimating Grazing Intensity, we will arrange for training on an individual or group basis upon request.

Contact

If you have any questions or wish to discuss anything further, please feel free to contact Rangeland Management Specialist Jason Stevens at (928) 635-5625 (jasonstevens@fs.fed.us), or FAX at (928) 635-5680.

Sincerely,

/s/ Martie Schramm
MARTIE SCHRAMM
District Ranger

cc: Elizabeth M Otero