



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Apache-Sitgreaves
National Forests
Alpine Ranger District

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Alpine, AZ 85920
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File Code: 2210

Date: June 14, 2010

Ginger Cheney
LWJ Ranches
P.O. Box 528
Springerville, AZ 85938

Dear Ginger:

Enclosed are two copies of your 2010 Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the Beaver Creek, Fishhook-Steeple Mesa, and Bobcat-Johnson Allotments. Please, sign both copies, retain one for your operation and return the other one to our office in Alpine for our records. The pasture rotation schedule and monitoring dates have been identified for your information. The level of authorized use and grazing schedule as indicated in this AOI are based on the best information available at this time. These are subject to change as actual site specific forage conditions and available livestock watering sources are determined at the start of and during the annual authorized season of use.

The allotment boundary and interior fences should be repaired before entering your allotment. All the maintenance responsibilities listed in your Term Grazing Permit are your responsibility to keep in a functional condition. A well maintained fence will keep your herd in the proper pasture and prevents unauthorized use by cattle from neighboring allotments.

If you have any questions and/or comments, please feel free to call me or my Range personnel at (928) 339-5000 or (928) 333-4372.

Sincerely,

RICHARD DAVALOS
District Ranger

Enclosures



**BOBCAT-JOHNSON C&H, FISHHOOK-STEEPLE MESA C&H, AND
BEAVER CREEK C&H ALLOTMENTS**

Alpine Ranger District
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
2010 Grazing Season

I. PASTURE USE SCHEDULE

I have approved your application to graze up to 42 head of cattle on the Bobcat-Johnson Allotment, up to 39 head of cattle on the Fishhook-Steeple Mesa Allotment, and 81 head of cattle on the Beaver Creek Allotment.

Allotment	Pasture	On	Off	Number/Class
Fishhook-Steeple Mesa	Steeple and Bear (Sweetie Cyn.)	03/01/10	05/31/10	39 c/c
Bobcat-Johnson	Lower Bobcat	03/01/10	05/31/10	37 c/c
Foote Creek	Foote Creek Winter**	03/01/10	05/31/10	5 bulls (+15 <u>WY</u> bulls)
Bobcat-Johnson	No, Mid, So YJ Heifer	03/01/10	05/31/10	As needed for calving and holding
Fishhook-Steeple Mesa	KP, Pinare, and E. Bull holding pastures	03/01/10	05/31/10	As needed for calving and holding
Bobcat-Johnson	Buckalou*	6/01/10	6/30/10	81 c/c
Beaver Creek	Bardman*	7/01/10	9/18/10	81 c/c
Beaver Creek	West Beaver	9/19/10	10/20/10	81 c/c
Bobcat Johnson	Nolan	10/21/10	2/28/11	37 c/c
Bobcat Johnson	Muddy	10/21/10	2/28/11	As needed for calving and holding
Bobcat Johnson	Upper Bobcat**	10/21/10	2/28/11	5 bulls (+15 <u>WY</u> bulls)
Fishhook-Steeple Mesa	Fishhook, Foote and Bear (Sweetie Cyn.)	10/21/10	2/28/11	39 cows
Fishhook-Steeple Mesa	Pinare Holding, E. Bull, KP Holding, Bear (Bear Canyon),	10/21/10	2/28/11	As needed for calving and holding
Bobcat-Johnson	No, Mid, So YJ Heifer	10/21/09	2/28/10	As needed for calving and holding

* Resource conditions on these pastures will be specifically checked prior to cattle entry and during the season to determine if the planned grazing period is appropriate.

**Bulls to be combined with WY permitted bulls to facilitate a cow/calf operation in the Mexican Wolf Recovery area, and minimize calf depredation.

The level of authorized use and grazing schedule as indicated in this AOI are based on the best information available at this time and are subject to change as actual site specific forage conditions and available livestock watering sources are determined at the start of, and during, the annually authorized season of use.

The schedule above is an estimate, and may be modified at any time during the grazing season if the utilization levels, identified below, are met, if water availability is inadequate, or for other resource management reasons. If allowable use levels are met early in the scheduled pasture, cattle will be rotated into the next pasture or off the Forest. If you are scheduled to rotate livestock to the next pasture, but feel there is adequate forage to sustain them in the current pasture and would prefer to hold off on the rotation, please contact my range personnel, or myself for an inspection and approval. No re-grazing of any pasture will be allowed. Cattle are to be completely removed from a pasture by the off date. Please notify this office when you begin to move cattle and when a pasture rotation is complete.

2. UTILIZATION STANDARDS

The following utilization standards will be applied on the Bobcat-Johnson and Fishhook-Steeple Mesa and Beaver Creek Allotments:

- 40% use, by weight of current year's growth, on upland perennial grass species.
- 40% use, by number of growing leaders, on upland browse species.
- 45% use, by weight of current year's growth, on riparian grass species.
- 45% use, by number of growing leader's, on riparian browse species.
- Within Northern goshawk territories, a utilization level in forested areas (includes small openings) of: 20% average by weight, not to exceed 40% in any one area, on grasses and forbs.
- Within Mexican spotted owl habitat, in order to maintain prey species habitat needs, a utilization level of 20-40%.

3. KEY AREA MONITORING

Utilization levels will be checked prior to livestock entering the allotment and near the midpoint, or sooner, of the grazing period for each pasture at key areas. A key area is defined as:

"a portion of range, which because of its location, grazing or browsing value, and/or use, serves as an indicative sample of range conditions, trend, or degree of use seasonally. A key area guides the general area of which it is part" (Forest Service Region 3 Rangeland and analysis Management Guide, June, 1997).

Utilization measurements will be taken on key livestock forage plants (key species). Key forage species is defined as:

"1. Forage species (plants) whose use serves as an indicator to the degree of use of associated species. In many cases, key species include indicator species and species traditionally

referenced as increaser, decrease, desirables, or intermediates. 2. Those species (plants) which must, because of their importance, be considered in the management program” (Forest Service Region 3 Rangeland and Analysis Management Guide, June 1997).

- Riparian areas will be monitored for use on riparian woody species’ current year’s leaders, as well as % use, by weight on riparian grasses.
- Upland areas will be monitored for use on perennial grass species.

Mexican spotted owl protected and restricted habitat will be monitored to ensure that current management is providing cover for rodent prey species, the residual biomass that will support prescribed natural and ignited fires that would reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire in the Forest, and regeneration of riparian trees and shrubs.

District personnel will contact the permittees to coordinate site visits to monitor key areas, when practical. Permittee participation is encouraged. Forage utilization estimates will be consistent with the Forest Service Range Analysis Handbook methodology, and may also include FS Regional stubble-height standards, as well as other techniques generally accepted in the field of range management.

4. RANGE IMPROVEMENTS

Range improvements must be maintained to standard before cattle are allowed into a pasture. It is the permittee’s responsibility to ensure that range improvements remain functional. This includes boundary fences in pastures not currently being grazed. Fences must remain in a state that prevents the passage of cattle. Routine maintenance of existing improvements does not require written clearance; however, construction/reconstruction of improvements must be authorized in writing from this office.

5. SPECIAL MANAGEMENT INSTRUCTIONS

The following restrictions will be implemented so that management remains in compliance with the Endangered Species Act. The instructions below relate to threatened, endangered, and proposed to be listed species, as well as range/watershed conditions.

- No salt or mineral block may be placed in protected and restricted Mexican spotted owl habitat from February 1 to August 31, and no concentrations of livestock (i.e., corral use, traps, or large gatherings of livestock).
- Stock tanks must be surveyed for possible aquatic habitat before earth-disturbing maintenance is authorized.

6. OTHER INSTRUCTIONS

The permittee must obtain permission from the District Ranger, before conducting earth-disturbing activities on the National Forest. The Forest Service will arrange inspections of project areas and will prepare appropriate environmental and cultural documents before earth-disturbing activities proceed. These activities include road/earthen tank maintenance, as well as construction/reconstruction of trails, roads, earthen tanks, etc. Do not conduct any earth-disturbing activities on the Forest without written clearance from this office.

Salt must be located at least ¼ mile from water, and preferably on ridges and/or areas of low use. Do not place salt blocks in the same location as the previous year, and locate blocks on hard ground not susceptible to erosion. Supplemental feeding, other than mineral or supplement block is not authorized on the National Forest.

The Annual Operating Instructions are a part of the Term Grazing Permit as provided for in Part 1, Section 3, and comply with the standards and guidelines found in the Forest Plan. They also comply with the Endangered Species Act found in the Biological Assessment for the Bobcat-Johnson, Fishhook-Steeple Mesa, and Beaver Creek Allotments. Any additional information collected during the year may be incorporated into the Annual Operating Instructions.

I have read and understand these Annual Operating Instructions for the Bobcat-Johnson, Fishhook-Steeple Mesa, and Beaver Creek Allotments during the 2010 grazing season.

Permittee

Date

Castle Creek Pasture of Beaver Creek Allotment,

Season of use 7/15 to 10/31:

1. Summer Pasture
2. Castle Creek Pasture - rested GY2009. Would like to enter 6/1.
3. Chiricahua Leopard frog likely to occupy, by no survey.
4. MSO would not likely to adversely affect call.
5. Apache Trout – no grazing in Fish Creek.

Buckalou Pasture (Castle Pasture) of Bobcat Johnson Allotment,

season of use 11/1 to 6/14 :

1. Winter Pasture
2. Chiricahua Leopard frog likely to occupy, but but no survey.
3. MSO would not likely to adversely affect call.
4. Spikedace – No Take or Reasonable & Prudent measures.
5. Loach Minnow- Restriction in the Blue River

Allotment Management Plan:

1. Management is based by utilization
2. Entry is based on range readiness
3. Utilize adaptive & flexible management
4. Contact District prior to cleaning out tanks

Recommendation:

1. Check for range readiness.
2. Both pastures are located at around 8,000 feet in elevation. Only a fence separates them.
3. Grazing would not impact any T&E species in Castle Pasture.
4. Grazing utilization will kept within the allowable use guidelines, 40% upland and 45% in riparian areas.
5. Allow Buckalou Pasture to rest entire grazing season. Usually gets grazed at the same time every year.
6. Buckalou was rested part of the 2009 grazing season.
7. Forage utilization has been within allowable use guidelines in Buckalou Pasture.
8. Castle Pasture was rested for the entire 2009 grazing season.
9. Alleviate livestock and wolf conflict.
10. Utilize adaptive & flexible management to benefit the resources.

Virginia Yazzie-Ashley

Range Staff

May 18, 2010