



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Apache-Sitgreaves
National Forests
Black Mesa Ranger District

P.O. Box 968
Overgaard, AZ 85933
(928) 535-7300
FAX: (928) 535-5972

File Code: 2230
Date: April 13, 2015

Joseph Auza Sheep Co. LLC
353 E. Wiley Way
Casa Grande, AZ 85122

Dear Joseph:

On April 13, 2015, Andy and John met with you to discuss the 2015 Annual Operating Instructions for the Heber-Reno Sheep Driveway and the Long Tom Allotment. Andy reviewed the instructions provided by each of the three districts along the driveway. These instructions are included as part of this AOI. You are planning on using the driveway with one band of 2000 head of sheep with the following entry dates for each District:

Ranger District	Entry dates
Mesa	May 4
Tonto Basin	May 12
Pleasant Valley	May 22

Below describes the Annual Instructions provided by each district that the Heber-Reno Driveway crosses. These instructions are to be followed in accordance with each district:

Mesa Ranger District

The permittee is responsible for having their employees follow the stated instructions in the AOI and/or any other additional instructions from Forest Officers concerning use of the driveway. Failure to comply with these instructions will constitute a violation of the Term Grazing Permit and will be dealt with through the administrative process.

- **The permittee will notify the District at least three (3) days PRIOR to coming onto the District. This will allow the permittee to meet with the District to discuss the following; the intended trailing route, overnight stops, bedding grounds, and when they are planning on entering and exiting the District. Contingency routes and alternate bedding grounds will be identified. This information will be recorded on driveway maps in coordination with District personnel. If the permittee does not contact the District as directed above, he will NOT be authorized to use the Mesa Ranger District portion of the driveway.**



- The permittee and their herders are required to provide the Forest Service with prompt (within 24 hours) notification of interaction between wild sheep and domestic sheep. Your contact will be Kelly Kessler; (cell) 480.204.0897, (wk) 480.610.3305.
- Sheep will be counted at designated locations along the driveway. Strays will be reported, gathered, and removed from the District within five days.
- Sheep bands will maintain progress on a direct travel route. Herding techniques that promote the movement of sheep steadily in one direction will be used. The permittee will not add stops or camps for the purpose of securing additional forage or period of use on the driveway.
- Herders will confine sheep to the driveway at all times and keep them in a herd not more than one-quarter mile wide while trailing.
- Permittee is required to provide for public safety while trailing the sheep on/across established roads.
- Sheep will be kept out of all riparian areas except when crossing and watering. Herders will avoid allowing sheep to parallel streams to keep them off of the banks. Crossings will be made perpendicular to the stream channel.
- Herders will not bathe themselves or wash their clothes directly in streams.
- Herder camps will be maintained free of trash, and trash will be packed out when camp is moved. All fires, if permitted, will be extinguished prior to leaving camp.
- Supplemental *certified weed-free* hay may be hauled as a main source of feed at each bedding ground. It may also be necessary to haul water to various locations. If watering troughs need to be used, locations of the troughs must receive prior approval by the District range personnel.
- Fences that are cut or wire that is pulled up to access the trailing routes will be repaired immediately in a manner to prevent access by other grazing animals. Repaired fences will be restored to the previous wire spacing within five days. All gates opened to allow passage would be closed once the sheep are through. If a fence is lifted for the sheep bands to pass under, the herders will put the fence back after each passing.
- Range improvements will be in working order prior to sheep arriving at their locations.
- Forage use/utilization levels should not exceed 40 percent on herbaceous perennial vegetation.
- The length of time on the District shall not exceed 8 days per herd.
- Sheep will be kept overnight at Bushnell tanks while on the Diamond grazing allotment.
- To avoid possible contact with bighorn sheep, domesticated sheep will not bed down or be held over within known bighorn sheep habitat.
- To avoid possible contact with bighorn sheep, domesticated sheep using the driveway will trail along the western portion of the driveway between Usery Pass and the Blue Point bridge on the Salt River.

Tonto Basin Ranger District

- a. The length of time on the District shall not exceed a total of 10 days.
- b. Use levels should not exceed 40% on herbaceous
- c. The following is a list of bedding grounds that are to be used on the Tonto Basin Ranger District portion of the driveway:
 - ✓ Reno Pass

- ✓ West side of Tonto Creek (no loafing in Tonto Creek Riparian Unit)
- ✓ Breeched tank on top of mountain
- d. All sheep that are left behind shall be gathered and removed from the District within 5 days. The permittee will notify the District when removal has been accomplished.
- e. Supplemental feed must be hauled as the main source of feed at each bedding ground. It may also be necessary to haul water to various locations.
- f. Herders will use the same bedding ground for each herd.
- g. Each herder camp that is used in association with each bedding ground will only be used for two nights (one night to accommodate each herd).
- h. All camps will be cleaned up prior to moving to the next camp.
- i. Sheep will be kept in a herd not more than ¼ mile wide.
- j. Sheep must be kept out of all riparian areas except for crossing and watering.
- k. Sheep are not to be trailed along the length of riparian areas.
- l. Fences that are cut or wire that is pulled up to access the trailing route will be repaired or restored to its previous wire spacing within 5 days.
- m. All gates opened to allow passage would be closed once the sheep are through.

Please contact Eric Hoskins, Range Staff Officer for the Tonto Basin Ranger District, at (928) 467-3236 one week prior to the entry onto the District.

Pleasant Valley Ranger District

1. Maximum amount of time on the District is 10 days.
2. The main use areas will be Mailbox Mesa, Cline Mesa, Bar X country north of Walnut Creek and McInturf.
3. There will be no bed grounds on the Potato Butte allotment.
4. There will be no bed ground within the fenced wildlife plot at Clay Spring in Naeglin Canyon
5. If multiple bands will be move across the district then each band must be a minimum of 1 day apart
6. Sheep will need to be bedded at least ¼ mile from water.
7. No bed ground will be used more than once.
8. Utilization levels should not be allowed to exceed 40% on herbaceous vegetation.
9. If fire restrictions are in effect on the Pleasant Valley district at the time of your crossing, then they will apply to your use of the driveway
10. All gates will be left closed behind each band, and any fences modified by your herders must be repaired immediately.
11. Contact must be made with Range Staff Doug Ruppel at 602-291-4651 or 928-462-4321, at least 1 week prior to your entry onto the Pleasant Valley Ranger District portion of the driveway
12. These instructions will apply to your travel across the Pleasant Valley district both going to the north and returning to the south.

Black Mesa Ranger District

Once the sheep from the driveway arrive on the Long Tom Allotment, the following rotation will be used for that band of sheep:

<u>Unit #</u>	<u>Head</u>	<u>Dates</u>
South 9	2000	June 1 to June 12
South 1	2000	June 13 to June 23
South 2	2000	June 24 to July 2
South 3	2000	July 3 to July 12
North 1	2000	July 13 to August 28
North 2	2000	August 29 to September 15

The unit rotation and dates may vary depending on several factors, including weather and forage conditions. A map of the unit locations is attached. Please use different bedground locations this season and locate them on upland areas and at least ¼ mile from water. Grazing or bedding shall not occur within riparian areas or meadows such as Long Tom Draw (except to access private land), Jacob Lake, Lakes 1, 2, and 3, Horse Trap Lake, Sandy Lake, Pinto and Hidden Lakes. The desired utilization level on key species is 30% and John will work with you on collecting monitoring data.

This letter will serve as your 2015 Annual Operating Instructions for the Heber-Reno Driveway and the Long Tom Allotment. If you have any questions contact Kendell, John, or Andy at (928) 535-7300.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER J JAMES
Black Mesa District Ranger