



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Peaks
Ranger District

5075 N. Highway 89
Flagstaff, AZ 86004-2852
Phone: (520) 526-0866
Fax: (520) 527-8288

File Code: 2230

Date: 7/10/02

Navajo Department of Agriculture
c/o John Blueyes
P O Box 4889
Window Rock, AZ 86515

Dear John Blueyes:

This is your 2002 Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the Peaks Allotment. These Annual Instructions are a part of your term grazing permit as indicated in Part Two. In addition, this letter is to document actions that need to be taken this year to keep the Forest Service and this allotment in compliance with previous commitments from environmental assessments, allotment management plans and guidelines and recommendations for rare wildlife and plant species, including those that are threatened or endangered.

The Peaks Allotment consists of 165,339 acres northwest of Flagstaff, Arizona. These acres lie in the north and northeast corner of the Peaks Ranger District of the Coconino National Forest. The allotment surrounds the San Francisco Peaks and extends to the northern boundary of the Coconino National Forest. The grazing system is an eleven pasture deferred rest rotation system. The tundra and inner basin of the San Francisco Peaks are closed to grazing. The southwestern portion of the allotment, including Hart Prairie, is currently not used for cattle grazing.

This allotment contains plant community types from the tundra to pinyon-juniper. The dominant community type is pinyon-juniper/blue grama in the northern and eastern portions of the allotment. The next most dominant community type is ponderosa pine/bunchgrass surrounding the San Francisco Peaks. Riparian vegetation does exist on the allotment but is not accessible to livestock.

The allotment contains the following Land Management Plan Management Areas:

- MA 1-Wilderness
- MA 3-Ponderosa Pine and Mixed Conifer
- MA 4-Ponderosa Pine on greater than 40%
- MA 5-Aspen
- MA 6-Unsuitable Timber Land
- MA 7-Pinyon Juniper on less than 40% slopes
- MA 8-Pinyon Juniper on greater than 40% slopes
- MA 9-Mountain Grassland
- MA 10-Transition Grassland

- MA 12-Riparian
- MA 13-Cinder Hills
- MA 15-Developed Recreation Sites
- MA 16-Inner Basin
- MA 17-Research Natural Area
- MA 18-Elden Environmental Study Area

The following is a list of Best Management Practices (BMP's) developed for this annual operating plan.

- One of the main goals for livestock grazing practices on this allotment is to maintain or improve the quality of water.
- The location, timing, and intensity of livestock grazing activities should be controlled with objectives of achieving soil cover to prevent accelerated erosion and to protect water quality.
- Structural range improvements, such as fences, water developments, trails and corrals, should be planned, constructed and utilized in a manner to enhance or maintain water quality.
- Land treatments to manage vegetation or practices to reduce erosion should be planned, implemented and maintained to minimize adverse impacts on water quality.
- Livestock management activities, such as parasite control, feeding and salting, should be done in a manner to protect water quality.
- Monitor and enforce permittee compliance with terms and conditions of the grazing permit.
- Manage livestock grazing within (TES unit 55) meadows and riparian areas at an intensity that will improve vegetation ground cover (primarily the litter component) and improve species diversity of perennial grasses.

The term grazing permit information along with the 2002 grazing schedule is listed below for this allotment.

<u>Permittee Name</u>	<u>Permit Type</u>	<u>Season</u>	<u>Permitted No.</u>
Navajo Tribe of Indians	Term	5/22-10/15	1200 cows/calves&bulls

<u>Pasture Name</u>	<u>Use Dates</u>	<u>Total Days</u>	<u>Total Number</u>
Kendrick	5/22-6/20	29	1200 cows
Saddle Mountain	6/21-7/11	21	1200 cows
Kelly	7/12-8/1	21	1200 cows
Badger	8/2-8/22	21	1200 cows
Missouri Bill	8/23-9/11	19	1200 cows
Headquarters	9/12-10/7	26	1200 cows
Holding/Shipping	10/8-10/15	7	1200 cows

The pasture move dates shown above are an estimate, and may need to be changed on the basis of actual range conditions. Please monitor actual conditions closely, and notify the Forest Service promptly if it appears that livestock will need to be moved sooner or later than estimated above. Grazing dates will be adjusted for this year's soil and vegetation readiness. Field checks in key forage areas such as meadows and riparian areas will be made prior to scheduled entry dates. Dates may be adjusted only with prior approval of the Forest Officer.

To facilitate livestock moves, gates may be opened two days prior to the scheduled move date only when moving into an adjacent pasture. Gates must be closed and grazed pasture entirely cleaned of livestock no later than five days following the scheduled move date. Grazed pastures must be kept clean of livestock following the pasture move.

Salt or mineral supplement locations should be rotated annually and avoid areas where cattle concentrations could cause excessive vegetation trampling, soil loss or disturbance to sensitive species or habitats. These areas would include habitats that support Mexican spotted owls, northern goshawks, rare plants, riparian vegetation, meadows or locations closer than 1/4 mile from a water source. The enclosed map shows the general location of these areas that are not obvious on the ground. This map does not include all obvious sensitive areas like all meadows, riparian areas or water sources.

No prairie dog control (i.e., poisoning or shooting) is allowed in association with this permit.

Monitoring will be conducted in partnership with the permittee on a regular basis during the grazing season and will be used to develop next years Annual Operating Instructions that states when livestock are to be moved and how grazing patterns are to be changed during the grazing season. It is important this year for you to help us with monitoring of your grazing permit. With present and future downsizing in the Forest range program your assistance in monitoring will become increasingly more important. This monitoring generally includes compliance with your annual operating, livestock utilization and overall range condition and trends.

Utilization monitoring will be conducted throughout the year in every livestock grazed pasture following the protocol set up in the attached worksheet. In addition, key site and key species monitoring, to further conform to the Coconino Forest Plan, will be conducted at the following sites on the Allotment:

<u>Management Area</u>	<u>Pasture</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Key Species</u>
ponderosa pine	Railroad	Southwest portion of pasture	squirreltail, blue grama wheatgrass

The allowable level of total utilization on herbaceous and woody vegetation is 35% maximum and 35% average use in ponderosa pine (including pine/oak), aspen and mixed conifer. Livestock utilization of woody vegetation in riparian areas may not exceed 20%. This will ensure proper protection and management of resources on this allotment.

Adjustments in numbers, rotation schedule or season of use will be made if allowable use standards are exceeded. The option to return livestock to a pasture that has received adequate plant regrowth will be considered if all resource objections can be met. To achieve the desired allowable use, it is important to have proper livestock distribution.

No new range improvements are scheduled for this year on this allotment.

Refer to the attached map for the areas that are excluded from cattle grazing during the 2001-grazing season. All fences must be maintained to ensure cattle stay out of these areas. You must monitor these areas to ensure cattle do not enter them. If cattle enter these sites immediate action must be taken to remove them.

AOI's are appealable and subject to review under 36 CFR 251.

If you have any questions please call Katherine Sanchez or Mike Hannemann at 526-0866 at the Peaks District Office.

Sincerely,

Gene Waldrip
District Ranger

I have reviewed and agree with these Annual Operation Instructions.

John Blueeyes