

**SAFFORD RANGER DISTRICT
CORONADO NATIONAL FOREST
ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTION (AOI)
Polecat Allotment
2024 Grazing Year**

I. **PERMITTED USE:** The following table illustrates the number of livestock and period of use permitted on the Polecat Allotment as per Term Grazing Permit #504136.

| KIND | CLASS | TERM PERMIT | | PERMITTED PERIOD OF USE | Allotment |
|--------|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| | | Numbers | HM's | | |
| Cattle | Cow/Calf | 17 | 204 | 3/1-2/28* | Polecat (448) |
| | Total | 17 | 204 | ON/OFF | |

*ON/OFF permit provided that not more than 52 Cattle use 41% of National Forest under full term.

II. **AUTHORIZED USE:** Actual dates may vary dependent upon climatic conditions, potential fires, when utilization levels are reached, and time required to move cattle. The following numbers and classes of livestock are authorized to graze on the Polecat Allotment:

| KIND | CLASS | NUMBER | HMs | PROPOSED SEASON OF USE | Allotment/Pasture |
|--------|--------------|-----------|------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Cattle | Cow/Calf | 17 | 204 | 03/01/2024-02/28/2025 | Polecat |
| | Total | 17 | 205 | ON/OFF | |

III. **Administration**

The following procedures will be followed:

1. Grazing fees must be paid before placing livestock on the allotment.
2. Give the District at least 5 days' notice before placing livestock on the allotment.
3. Sub-leasing is prohibited. Livestock placed on the allotment must be owned by the permittee and branded with the permittee's registered brand. A copy of the brand certificate must be on file at the District Office.
4. The permittee will record actual use as it occurs including livestock numbers and dates permitted livestock are in a pasture. This information will be reported before the next annual operating instruction meeting.
5. Any change or deviation from this Annual Operating Instructions is to be coordinated and confirmed at least 14 days in advance with the District. If emergency conditions require making a change immediately, the permittee will notify the District as soon as practical.
6. Election to take non-use, needs to be requested in writing at least 30 days prior to the grazing period.
7. Livestock left on the allotment after the "off" date may be considered a violation of your Term Grazing Permit and will be charged for at the commercial rate.

8. Livestock allowed to remain in pastures beyond the specified rotation date, allowed to drift between pastures, or allowed in a rested pasture may be considered a violation of your Term Grazing Permit.
9. Livestock should be moved by the planned rotation dates or when forage utilization objectives have been met.
10. The District may spot check improvements such as fences and water systems before the entry date to insure they are in satisfactory condition. Livestock may not be allowed to enter the Forest if improvements are not maintained appropriately.
11. The District, with input from the permittee, will determine the entry date or early removal date if needed for resource protection based on existing conditions.
12. The permittee will notify the Safford District Office 30 days prior to cleaning dirt tanks.

IV. Allowable Use

The scheduled rotation, grazing season, and livestock numbers are indicated in Section I of this Annual Operating Provision. Adjustments in numbers, rotation schedule, or season of use will be made if allowable use standards are exceeded. Cattle will be moved to the next scheduled pasture or off the allotment when these footage utilization standards are met. The **maximum** allowable use is:

Woodland, Chaparral and Grasslands- 40%

Riparian areas- 40%

This use will meet northern goshawk guidelines and management conditions of the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service that pertain to Mexican spotted owl critical habitat.

V. Mitigation Measures

In order to conform to U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service requirements for a may affect, not likely to adversely affect critical habitat for the Mexican spotted owl, the following management conditions will be implemented:

1. Mineral supplement sites in Mexican spotted owl suitable, capable and foraging habitats will be regularly rotated to reduce trampling and grazing impacts to vegetation.
2. Monitor forage to insure forage use does not exceed the maximum use levels.

VI. Livestock Distribution and Salting

The primary objectives are to obtain uniform distribution and proper utilization of forage over those portions of the allotment that cattle can utilize. Cattle will be moved into normally dry areas where feed is available, and water is present.

Salt and protein supplement can be used as a tool to obtain better distribution. Salt is to be placed at least one-quarter to mile from water and away from areas where cattle may tend to congregate such as drainage bottoms and by gates. Suggested locations are ridges, knolls, benches, low saddles or gentle slopes. Blocks should be placed in areas before livestock are moved onto the unit. Blocks may be removed by the District if found near water, over-utilized areas, riparian bottoms or roads. Each time blocks are placed on the allotment they should be put on a different site. Blocks will be placed on hard ground not susceptible to erosion.

VII. Monitoring

Monitoring and evaluation are an essential aspect of good rangeland management. Monitoring and evaluation can be described as the gathering of information, so the manager knows what is happening to rangeland resources and why. The intent of monitoring and evaluation is to test the success of the management strategy and if needed, make adjustments.

Besides participating with the District in collecting monitoring data the permittee is encouraged to also collect monitoring information on their own. If you would like to collect your own data, the District can provide the necessary equipment and training to assist with this effort. Common implementation monitoring includes forage production, forage utilization, photo points, condition of improvements, actual use and precipitation data.

VIII. Range Improvement Construction/ Maintenance

The Forest Service may spot check range improvements before the entry date to ensure improvements are in a satisfactory condition. Livestock will not be allowed to enter pastures if assigned improvements are not maintained to proper standards. Livestock will not be allowed to enter pastures if fences will not keep livestock where they are placed. All troughs should have water when livestock are not present and be equipped so that small animals can safely enter and exit. Normal maintenance of improvements on your allotments is your responsibility and should be done as needed.

New range improvements and all ground disturbing activities will not be initiated until proper clearances have been obtained. When improvements are completed, the permittee will inform District Range personnel to schedule an inspection. All work involving the use of heavy equipment will be accomplished only after prior approval by the District Ranger.

| Current Year Improvement Schedule | | | YEAR | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Permit Mod # | Improvement Type / ID # | Completion Date | Description/Comments | Status Done /Date |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

IX. Short-Age Calf Policy


The short-age calf policy for the Forest was established January 31, 1991, by the Regional Forester in FSM 2238.11a. For seasonal permits, the following defines what will count and be paid for:

All animals six month of age or older at the time of entering the allotment, those animals which will become twelve months of age during the grazing seasons, and all weaned animals regardless of age.

X. Permit Conditions

This Annual Operating Instruction is hereby made a part of the Term Grazing Permit as provided for in Part 2, Section 8(a). It complies with the standards and guidelines found in the Forest Plan.

Failure to comply with any of the terms and conditions specified in Parts 1, 2, and 3 of your Term Grazing Permit may result in suspension or cancellation, in whole or in part, after written notice. This is found in Part 1, Section 3, of your permit.


 Christian Larson, Acting District Ranger

2/13/24
 Date