



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Prescott National Forest
Verde Ranger District

300 East Highway 260
Camp Verde, AZ 86322
Phone: (928) 567-4121
TDD: (928) 443-8001
Fax: (928) 567-1179

File Code: 2230
Date: April 2, 2024

Dear Mr. Smith,

This document serves as your 2024 Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the Rice Peak Allotment. This AOI is part of your Term Grazing Permit as provided for in Part 2, section 8(a).

I. AUTHORIZED LIVESTOCK NUMBERS/PERIOD OF USE/APPROVED NON-USE

Your 2024 Authorized Use Request has been approved and you are authorized the following livestock numbers and periods of use:

120 Adult Cattle (cow/calf)	6/01/2024-10/15/2024
6 Bulls	6/01/2024-10/15/2024

II. GRAZING SCHEDULE

Annual stocking level (annual authorized livestock numbers and dates) are considered approximate. The actual dates and numbers may change due to many variables. The annual stocking level is based on current and expected forage production. The planned use period in a pasture and livestock numbers can/should be adjusted if conditions change, either shortened or lengthened, depending on forage availability but not in excess of the permitted numbers and utilization levels in key areas.

Changes to the grazing schedule will be made only with prior Forest Service approval

The following is the planned grazing sequence for the 2024 grazing season:

PASTURE NAME	PLANNED GRAZE PERIOD	LIVESTOCK NUMBERS
2 (South)	6/01-7/15	120C/6B
Indian Creek	7/16-8/26	120C/6B
3 (East)	Trail Through	120C/6B
1 (North)	8/27-10/15	120C/6B

Rested Pastures for the 2024 Grazing Season: 3 (East)



III. RANGE IMPROVEMENTS

Range Improvement Maintenance

Range improvements assigned to you for maintenance have been identified in red on the permit maps of your term grazing permit. These improvements are to be fully maintained annually to comply with permit requirements (Part 2, section 8i). Any maintenance you perform must conform to the standards specified by your District Rangeland Management Specialist. The grazing permittee is responsible for all maintenance materials, supplies and equipment necessary to properly maintain all range structural improvements. The Forest may replace range structural improvement materials and/or supplies at the end of the improvement's life; when maintenance and repair is no longer feasible to keep the improvement properly maintained and functioning.

New projects will be implemented only with prior approval and after a successful completion and clearance of both biological and archeological surveys from Forest Service personnel.

New fencing will be done to USFS standards and guidelines.

****Please note that you must notify the District Rangeland Management specialist at least 60 days prior to beginning any maintenance work that requires the use of heavy equipment (i.e. maintenance of earthen stock tanks).**

Location	Project	Completion
Indian Creek/ 1 (North)/3 (East)	Maintain allotment boundary fence with Sycamore Holding pasture and Sycamore Cabin Admin Site	7/16/2024
Indian Creek	Monitor troughs for excessive overflow and adjust accordingly	5/15/2024
Indian Creek	Maintain Indian Creek Riparian Exclosure	On-Going
Indian Creek	Work with USFS trough/pipeline from 22 Mesa	10/15/2024

IV. RESOURCE MONITORING

Allowable Grazing Intensity/Utilization Guidelines

Grazing Intensity

Grazing intensity is defined as the amount of herbage removed through grazing or trampling during the grazing period. Grazing intensity would be managed to allow for the physiological needs of plants, as a result, the planned use period indicated in the Grazing Schedule (section II) in a pasture may be lengthened or shortened depending on forage intensity in key areas.

Forage Utilization

Utilization is defined as the proportion or degree of current year's forage production that is consumed or destroyed by animals (including insects). It is a comparison of the amount of herbage left compared with the amount of herbage produced during the year. Utilization is measured at the end of the growing season when the total annual production can be

accounted for and the effects of grazing in the whole management unit can be assessed. This allowable use level includes both livestock and wildlife. If use levels in key areas exceed the maximum allowable use before livestock enter a pasture, the pasture will not be used.

Upland Areas:

A maximum allowable intensity/utilization level in upland areas during the growing season is 35% on key grass species (perennial), up to 50% on key grass species during the dormant season, and 50% of available growth leaders of shrubs. In the Tobosa pastures, 8" stubble height must be left for antelope fawning cover.

Riparian Areas:

A maximum allowable intensity/utilization level in riparian areas is 40% on key grass, rush, and sedge species, and a maximum allowable utilization level of 20% of available growth leaders on key woody species under 6 feet.

Permittee Monitoring

The permittee will document the following items on the enclosed Actual Use Form during the 2024 grazing year: 1) Actual Grazing Period 2) Actual Livestock Numbers.

The permittee is encouraged to participate in Intensity and Utilization Monitoring.

***It is very important that the Actual Use Form is completed and submitted to your Rangeland Management Specialist at the end of the grazing year.**

V. SALTING AND PROTEIN BLOCK PRACTICES

Proper salt and protein block location can be a good tool to aid in livestock distribution and they will be used in a manner to spread livestock utilization throughout the pasture. A detailed description of the Prescott National Forest Salting and Supplemental Feeding policy can be found in Part 3 of your term grazing permit on page 5.

Page 5 of the Term Grazing Permit: Do not place mineral or salt within one-fourth (1/4) mile of water including riparian areas for the purpose of management of livestock is prohibited. This includes the use of salt to gather livestock.

VI. PORTABLE WATER HAULING

Temporary sites for portable haul water may be needed and should be used as necessary to assist in livestock distribution. Sites need to be approved before troughs are placed on site, may need archeological clearance. All troughs need to follow the same conditions as if they were permanent; like wildlife ramps/logs, placed on flat ground, etc.

VII. DROUGHT MANAGEMENT

To aid in determining the initial livestock numbers the Standard Precipitation Index (SPI) and the US Drought Monitor Report was discussed. The SPI and the US Drought Monitor showed our area is currently in non-drought status (SPI value 0). The on-going drought

recovery was emphasized by USFS personnel as being a top grazing management concern and that utilization and distribution was key to success.

See Allotment Management Plan (AMP)

VIII. GRAZING STRATEGY

The management of pasture moves will be based on both a plant forage phenology scheme and proper allowable grazing use. Pasture rotations would be planned in the spring but may be modified later in response to environmental changes, like drought or a wet season.

Livestock pasture moves will be completed within a five (5) day period, where feasible, and livestock will be actively herded from one pasture to the other. Once a pasture move occurs, cattle are not authorized to graze outside the newly occupied pasture. In the event cattle escape the assigned pasture (i.e. pasture gates left open, cattle guards become filled, cut fences, etc.), the permittee will return the cattle to the correct pasture in a timely manner. Preventing livestock from grazing adjacent allotments, your allotment's rested pastures, or from re-grazing previously used pastures is the permittee's responsibility.

Permitted livestock (cow/calf/heifer/bull) will be run together as a single herd until the bulls are removed from the cow herd. Gates are to be left open at waterlots when cattle leave a pasture if not used by the neighboring pasture.

IX. FIRE

Please use caution during all ranch activities that could potentially start a fire. All open camp and branding fires require a ten-foot fire ring cleared down to mineral soil.

During periods of critical fire danger, the Forest Supervisor may declare a Red Flag Alert or issue other special orders. Under these conditions, the building or use of fires, the use of power saws, heavy equipment, ATV's and other motorized equipment may be prohibited on Forest Service land. All Federal, State and Local fire restrictions and regulations must be observed.

Report all fires to the Prescott National Forest Fire Dispatch Office at 928-777-5700. Cooperation in the reporting, prevention, and suppression of fires will be expected as specified in Part 2, section 10 of your Term Grazing Permit.

X. TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

The Prescott National Forest designated a system of roads and trails that are open to motor vehicle use in 1989 through Forest Plan Amendment #4. Motor vehicle use off the designated road system by the permit holder to conduct activities associated with administration of the term grazing permit is allowed under the terms and conditions of the term grazing permit.

XI. PERMIT CONDITIONS

These Annual Operating Instructions are a part of the Term Grazing Permit as provided for in Part 2, Section 8(a). They comply with the standards and guidelines found in the Forest Plan. Failure to follow 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. (Refer to Part 1, Section 3, of your permit.)

If you have any questions or wish to discuss anything further, please feel free to contact Amanda Sacek at (520) 345-3489.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Todd Willard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "T".

TODD WILLARD
District Ranger

