



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Tonto Basin
Ranger
District

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File Code: 2210

Date: February 28, 2024

Earnhardt Ranches LLC
Schoolhouse Allotment

(b) (6)

Dear Hal Earnhardt:

The following are your 2024 annual operating instructions (AOI) for the Schoolhouse grazing allotment. These instructions have been developed from collaboration with you and in consideration of Forest Service Handbook 2209.13, Tonto National Forest Plan, associated National Environmental Policy Act analysis, Allotment Management Plan, and available information describing range conditions.

Authorized Use

The following table describes authorized livestock numbers per grazing unit, anticipated use dates, and proposed monitoring dates. Please request a change in this schedule well in advance of the proposed dates. Please, maintain and submit records that indicate your compliance to permitted use.

Grazing Unit	Dates of Use	Tentative Monitoring Date	Authorized Livestock	Rationale/Comments
Center	Current- February 29 th	March 11 th	52 Cows 14 Bulls	
Lake	March 1 st April 14 th	April 23 rd	135 Cows 15 Bulls	
Schoolhouse	April 15 th May 31 st	June 10 th	135 Cows 15 Bulls	Yearlings will be removed by May 15 th
Corner	June 1 st July 14 th	July 22 nd	135 Cows 15 Bulls	
Horse and Steer	July 15 th August 31 st	September 9 th	135 Cows 15 Bulls	
Pinon	September 1 st October 15 th	October 23 rd	135 Cows 15 Bulls	



Cut Cover	October 16 th November 30 th	December 9 th	135 Cows 15 Bulls	
Monument	December 1 st Next AOI	Next AOI	135 Cows 15 Bulls	

Monitoring:

Upland utilization is measured at the end of the growing season in key areas for key forage species. This information, along with vegetation condition, forage plant production and vigor, soil and watershed condition, will be used to make informed management recommendations concerning pasture moves and stocking rates.

Riparian utilization in key reaches is measured during growing season to verify residual vegetation is present for streambank protection during flow events.

Grazing intensity will be evaluated during the growing season to make necessary changes needed for plant development and recovery.

Vegetative Use Guidelines:

Grazing will be managed so conservative use levels are achieved over the long-term in pasture key areas. It is your responsibility as permittee to take action so that livestock grazing does not exceed vegetative use thresholds. Please arrange for an allotment inspection if seasonal vegetative use of available forage approaches these thresholds.

Vegetation	Use Threshold
Upland herbaceous species	30-40% of current year's growth
Upland browse species	50% of current year's growth
Riparian herbaceous species	Limited to 40% of plant species biomass and maintain 6-8 inches of stubble height on deergrass
Riparian woody species	Limited to 50% of leaders browsed on upper 1/3 of plants up to 6 feet tall
Streambanks (if applicable)	Limited to less than 20% alteration of alterable streambanks
Mexican Spotted Owl PAC's (where applicable)	20% optimum-40% maximum
Annual Grasses	50% of current year's growth

Range Improvement Maintenance:

All range improvements must be maintained to Forest Service standards before cattle will be allowed to enter the units. You must receive verbal concurrence for each project before work can begin except routine maintenance (e.g. cleaning dirt tanks, maintaining fence, restoring pipe). It is your responsibility to be aware of and comply with fire restriction.

The following table describes 2023 range improvement projects.

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Pasture	Location	Description of Work	Clearances Needed
Highway	83 Pit	Finish Fence around 83 pit	All clearances complete.
Schoolhouse	83 Corral	Fence 1 mile along 83 to corral	Arch, wildlife
Pinyon	Existing Water system	Repair pipeline and put in Trough	None, project is replacement of existing improvement
Honey Butte	Honey Butte Bowl	Construct ½ mile drift fence	Arch, wildlife

Salting:

In most cases, salt must be located no closer than ¼ mile from streams, rivers, riparian areas, trails, and known archaeological sites.

Supplements and Attractants

Protein blocks, nutritional supplement, and other attractant may be authorized.

Supplemental Feeding:

No supplemental feeding is authorized.

Weeds

Invasive plants threaten ecosystem health and grazing resources. Please assist us in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive plants.

If you have any questions, please contact Eric Hoskins, Rangeland Management Specialist, at (480) 435-5563.

Sincerely,



Jeremy Plain
District Ranger

CC: Eric Hoskins
Crystal Martinez
Ina Yazzie