
File Code: 2210
Date: May 4, 2023

Babbitt Ranches, LLC.
c/o Billy Cordasco
Post Office Box 520
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001

Dear Mr. Cordasco:

This document serves as your 2023 Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the Slate Mountain and Wild Bill Allotments. This AOI is part of your Term Grazing Permit as provided for in Part 2, section 8(a). Please review all sections of this AOI and contact your Rangeland Management Specialist if you have any questions.

I. AUTHORIZED LIVESTOCK NUMBERS/PERIOD OF USE

Your 2023 Authorized Use Request has been approved and you are authorized the following Livestock Numbers and Periods of Use:

Slate Mountain Allotment	350 Cattle (Cow/Calf)	5/17 – 9/30
Wild Bill Allotment	225 Cattle (Cow/Calf)	6/12 – 9/30

Additionally, non-use has been authorized for the following under the category of resource protection: 350 number of head on the Slate Mountain Allotment and 302 number of head on the Wild Bill Allotment.

The 2023 authorized livestock numbers and authorized period of use were determined referencing the Western Regional Climate Center 12-month Standardized Precipitation Index (Northeast Division, Arizona; Climate Division 2) and allotment inspections conducted prior to the grazing season.

Any change in the 2023 authorized livestock numbers will require that you file an additional Authorized Use Request. Be advised that the Forest Service will need a minimum of 45 days to assess resource conditions and process a supplemental grazing bill for additional livestock.

Please contact your Rangeland Management Specialist prior to making any decisions regarding a change in livestock numbers.

II. GRAZING SCHEDULE

The following is the planned grazing sequence for the 2023 grazing period. The pasture move dates shown are an estimate and may need to be amended based on actual conditions.



Slate Mountain Allotment

Pasture	Planned Graze Period	Livestock Numbers
Maverick	5/17 – 7/16	350
Babbitt	7/17 – 9/30	350

Wild Bill Allotment

Pasture	Planned Graze Period	Livestock Numbers
House	6/12 – 8/6	225
Arkansas	8/7 – 9/30	225

Changes from the grazing schedule will be made only with Forest Service approval. The planned use period in a pasture may be shortened or lengthened depending on forage availability and utilization in key areas. Livestock pasture moves will be completed within a ten (10) day period and livestock will be actively herded from one pasture to another. It is imperative that once a pasture move occurs, the livestock remain within the designated pasture. For various reasons (i.e. pasture gates left open, cattleguards not maintained, cut fences, etc.), cattle may stray from the designated pasture.

Preventing livestock from grazing adjacent allotments, your allotment's rested pasture, or re-grazing previously used pastures is the permittee's responsibility.

III.DROUGHT MANAGEMENT

Drought is an inevitable occurrence in the southwestern United States. Both the Forest Service and grazing permittees must plan for drought as a normal part of management. During periods of drought, the following management actions may be necessary:

1. Stocking levels may need to be reduced. Reductions may be necessary prior to the permitted season of use and/or during the permitted season of use.
2. Season of use may need to be shortened. Depending on the severity of the drought and the stocking level, a reduced grazing season may be necessary.
3. Pasture use periods may need to be shortened. Pastures will not be re-grazed during the same grazing season, and this may ultimately result in an early exit from the allotment.
4. Utilization and/or seasonal utilization (grazing intensity) standards may need to be reduced. Depending on the severity of the drought and the stocking level, reduced utilization standards will likely result in shortened pasture use periods and may ultimately result in an early exit from the allotment.
5. Lack of livestock water, or poor distribution of livestock water, may result in reduced pasture/allotment use periods. Depending on forage conditions, this effect may be mitigated by hauling water to temporary livestock watering facilities.
6. Allotment Management Plan direction for pastures requiring rest or deferment will be followed. Livestock use of planned rested pastures due to drought will not be authorized.

IV.GRAZING STRATEGY

Graze livestock using a deferred rotation grazing system for the five-month grazing period. The management of livestock pasture moves in this allotment will continue to be based upon allowable forage utilization standards.

V.ALLOWABLE UTILIZATION STANDARDS

Upland and Non-Riparian Areas

The maximum allowable level of utilization on herbaceous and non-riparian woody vegetation is 35%. This allowable use level is the utilization level permitted by both livestock and wildlife. Utilization is defined as the proportion or degree of current year's forage production by weight that is consumed or destroyed by animals. It is a comparison of the amount of herbage left with the amount of herbage produced during the year. Utilization will be measured at the end of growing season (typically October or November) when the total annual production can be accounted for and the effects of grazing in the whole management unit can be assessed

Riparian Areas

There are no riparian areas in either the Slate Mountain allotment or the Wild Bill allotment.

VI.SEASONAL UTILIZATION

A light to moderate seasonal utilization guideline of up to 50% will be used within grazed pastures on the allotments. Seasonal utilization is defined as the amount of herbage removed through grazing or trampling during the grazing period. Seasonal utilization will be measured at the end of each pasture's livestock grazing period.

The seasonal utilization guideline will be the primary factor in determining when livestock need to move to the next pasture; but other factors such as climatic conditions, opportunity for plant growth, and previous year's utilization level will also be considered. Annual reductions in the seasonal utilization guideline may be made based on resource conditions.

VII.RESOURCE MONITORING

Forage Utilization

Forage utilization within each pasture will be monitored and the allowable utilization standards (section V) and the seasonal utilization guideline (section VI) will be enforced. This may result in earlier pasture moves than indicated in the Grazing Schedule (section II).

Forage utilization monitoring will occur at locations within pastures using the "key area" concept. Key areas are defined as "...a portion of range, which because of its location, grazing or browsing value, and/or use, serve as an indicative sample of range conditions, trend, or degree of use seasonally. A key area guides the general management of the entire area of which it is a part." Key areas will generally have the following characteristics: they will be approximately 20 to 500 acres in size; they will be located on productive soils with slopes less than 15%; they will

have a plant community that is representative of the larger area; and they will generally be located 0.25 to 1.0 miles away from livestock water sources.

Forage utilization monitoring and its specific application to your allotment should be discussed with your Rangeland Management Specialist. Permittee participation in utilization monitoring is encouraged.

VIII. MITIGATION MEASURES FOR SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

There are no threatened and endangered species or critical habitat within the allotment. No mitigation measures are currently required for listed Federal, State, and Forest Service special status species.

IX. RANGE IMPROVEMENTS

Construction of New Structural Range Improvements

There are no new structural range improvements scheduled for construction this year.

Reconstruction of Existing Structural Range Improvements

Reconstruct 1 to 2 miles of the existing allotment boundary fence in the North Wild Bill pasture. The fence segment to be reconstructed begins where the allotment boundary fence intersects Forest Road 171 and then extends to the northeast for approximately 1 to 2 miles. Existing fence will be removed, and a new 4-wire barbed/smooth wire fence will be constructed. Fence will be constructed to standards provided by the Forest Service. Material for this project will be supplied by the Forest Service and the permittee will provide the labor to remove the existing fence and construct the new fence. Permittee will also be responsible for properly disposing of the old fence material. No work may begin on this project until the appropriate clearances have been obtained and authorization is received from the Forest Service.

Removal of Structural Range Improvements

No removal of structural range improvements are planned for this grazing season.

Existing Structural Range Improvements

Structural range improvements assigned to you for maintenance are listed in your Term Grazing Permit and are also identified on the allotment map. 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 will 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. **Please note that you must notify the District Rangeland Management Specialist at least 60 days prior to the beginning of any maintenance work that requires the use of heavy equipment.**

X.VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Vegetation restoration work identified in the Slate Mountain Pronghorn Habitat Restoration Phase III Project may continue this year. Project details are contained in the Decision Memo for the Slate Mountain Pronghorn Habitat Restoration Phase III (signed April 6, 2010, by Flagstaff District Ranger Mike Elson). Permittee will notify your Rangeland Management Specialist prior to beginning any work on this project.

XI.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. The following guidelines will be used when placing salt and protein blocks:

1. In general, salt and protein blocks should not be placed within ¼ mile of water.
2. Salt and protein blocks will not be placed in areas of depleted range, erosive soils, or sensitive plant or animal species. If applicable, areas of sensitive plant or animal species will be identified by your Rangeland Management Specialist and included in each year's AOI.
3. No more than three blocks (50 lb. blocks) of salt/protein will be placed at any location at any one time.
4. Salt/protein will not be placed at the same location twice during the same grazing season.
5. The use of portable salt/protein block containers is encouraged but not mandatory.
6. Within the Hochderffer pasture, salt/protein block containers will not be placed within aspen stands or in areas that will encourage cattle to travel through aspen stands. This will help reduce trailing and promote aspen regeneration.

XII.PORTABLE WATER HAULING

Temporary sites for portable haul water may be needed and should be used as necessary to assist in livestock distribution. The following requirements will apply to portable haul water locations:

1. Coordinate with the District Rangeland Management Specialist to identify portable water haul locations for individual pastures prior to the grazing period.
2. To aid in livestock distribution, the portable water haul locations should generally be in areas of light forage utilization.
3. Generally, portable water haul locations will not be located at sites used in previous years.
4. Portable water hauls will not be located in areas of depleted range, erosive soils, or sensitive plant or animal species.

5. Portable water haul locations will be moved when the desired forage utilization levels have been reached.
6. Portable haul water storage tanks and troughs will be removed when livestock leave the pasture.

XIII. FIRE

Please use caution during all ranch activities that could potentially start a fire. All ranch vehicles should be equipped with a firefighting tool (shovel, axe, pulaski, etc.) and water or an ABC dry chemical fire extinguisher. 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, ATVs 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 Flagstaff Ranger District Office at (928) 526-0866 or to the Coconino National Forest Supervisors Office at (928) 526-0600.

Cooperation in the reporting, prevention, and suppression of fires will be expected as specified in Part 2, section 10 of your Term Grazing Permit.

XIV. MOTOR VEHICLE USE/RESTRICTIONS

On May 1, 2012, the Coconino National Forest began implementation of the Travel Management Rule. The Travel Management Rule requires the designation of roads, trails, and areas open to motor vehicle use and these routes are identified on the Motor Vehicle Use Map. Implementation of the Travel Management Rule requires active management of all motorized use, including use related to permitted grazing activities. Motorized travel off the designated road system, including off-road access, by grazing permit holders will be based on the need to carry out required management practices necessary to comply with the terms and conditions of the Term Grazing Permit. Examples of required management practices include but are not limited to the repair and maintenance of structural range improvements; transport and placement of mineral and protein supplement; herding of livestock; and tending to sick or injured animals. Legitimate motorized use off the designated road system, including off-road access, for conducting activities required under the Term Grazing Permit will be authorized as follows:

1. **For motorized use with ATVs, UTVs, motorcycles, and full-size pickup or smaller vehicles (curb weight less than 8,000 pounds):** Grazing permittee must obtain a grazing allotment specific Restricted Road, Trail and Off-Road Administrative Use Permit. Motorized vehicle use off the designated road system will be limited to only that use which is necessary for compliance with the terms and conditions of the Term Grazing Permit.
2. **For motorized use with larger vehicles (curb weight greater than 8,000 pounds or larger than a full-size pickup) or any heavy equipment:** Grazing permittee must obtain a site-specific Restricted Road, Trail and Off-Road Administrative Use Permit. Motorized vehicle

use off the designated road system will be limited to only that use which is necessary for compliance with the terms and conditions of the Term Grazing Permit.

3. To request site specific Restricted Road, Trail and Off-Road Administrative Use Permit, the grazing permittee must provide their Rangeland Management Specialist with the project details a minimum of 30 days prior to the proposed starting date for the permit.
4. A copy of the approved Restricted Road, Trail and Off-Road Administrative Use Permit must be with the vehicle operator while operating the vehicle off the designated road system. A Permit Placard must be attached to all permitted vehicles while operating off the designated road system.
5. Off-Highway vehicles (ATVs, UTVs, and motorcycles) used for conducting activities required under the Term Grazing Permit must be licensed and permitted in accordance with Arizona State law.
6. The Motor Vehicle Use Map for the Coconino National Forest identifies certain roads as “Roads Open to Highway Legal Vehicles Only”. These roads are open only to motor vehicles licensed under State law for general operation on all public roads within the state. Grazing permittees operating motor vehicles on these roads must comply with the legal requirements. Operating a motor vehicle off the designated road system to avoid the legal requirements of “Roads Open to Highway Legal Vehicles Only” is not permitted.
7. Grazing permittees will utilize motorized vehicles off the designated road system in a manner that will not result in damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, wildlife, heritage, or other forest resources.
8. Failure to comply with the conditions of the Restricted Road, Trail and Off-Road Administrative Use Permit may result in the immediate cancellation of the Restricted Road, Trail and Off-Road Administrative Use Permit and may result in the issuance of a Notice of Non-Compliance for violation of the terms and conditions of your Term Grazing Permit.
9. Grazing permittees that do not obtain a Restricted Road, Trail and Off-Road Administrative Use Permit are required to operate motorized vehicles only on the designated road system.
10. Operating a motorized vehicle off the designated road system without a valid Restricted Road, Trail and Off-Road Administrative Use Permit will result in the immediate issuance of a Notice of Non-Compliance for violating the terms and conditions of your Term Grazing Permit (Part 2, Section 8a). A Notice of Non-Compliance may result in Term Grazing Permit suspension or cancellation proceedings.

XV. PERMITTEE REVIEW

On May 4, 2023, in person, you discussed the 2023 Annual Operating Instructions for the Slate Mountain and Wild Bill Allotments with William Gray. You have reviewed and agreed with these instructions.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss anything further, please feel free to contact William Gray at (480)-547-9058 or at William.Gray@usda.gov.

Sincerely,

**NICHOLAS
MUSTOE**

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NICHOLAS MUSTOE
Deputy District Ranger