



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Tonto Basin
Ranger
District

28079 N HWY 188
Roosevelt, AZ 85545
Phone: 602.225.5395
Fax: 602.225.5354

File Code: 2210

Date: December 15, 2023

Mark and Chris Cline
P.O. Box 179
Tonto Basin, AZ 85553

Dear Mark and Chris Cline:

The following are your 2024 annual operating instructions (AOI) for the Tonto Basin NW 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 |
|----------------|---|---------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Lemon | Current December 31, 2023 | January 23 rd | 105 Cow/Calf 4 Bulls 103 Yearlings | |
| Upper Sycamore | January 1, 2024 March 31 st | April 8 th | 105 Cow/Calf 4 Bulls 103 Yearlings | |
| Lower Sycamore | April 1 st May 31 st | June 10 th | 105 Cow/Calf 4 Bulls | |
| Park Creek | June 1 st August 14 th | August 22 nd | 105 Cow/Calf 4 Bulls | |
| Buena Vista | August 15 th October 31 st | November 8 th | 105 Cow/Calf 4 Bulls | |
| Ord | November 1 st Next AOI | Next AOI | 105 Cow/Calf 4 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.

| Pasture | Location | Description of Work | Clearances Needed |
|----------------|----------------------|---|--|
| Long Mesa | South End of Pasture | Place temporary trough within pasture for better distribution | Archeological, Biological reviews needed |

| | | | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Multiple | 2021 Tonto Basin NW Range Projects | Three projects combined as one – Fence, Corral and Pipeline | Approved in 2021 all clearances complete. |
| Long Mesa | South end of pasture | Spring development to trough @ Chubb Thickett | Archeological, Biological, and Hydrological reviews needed |
| Kayler | China Berry | Place permanent tank for better livestock distribution | Archeological, Biological, and Hydrological reviews needed |

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