

4.4.6.1 – Permitted Livestock Grazing Operational Controls

Aspect/Impact Combination: Permitted Livestock Grazing. Potential impacts included: Species of Concern, Water and Vegetative Diversity.

The Forest Service is required to evaluate potential effects of permitted livestock grazing in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA analysis considers legal, policy and regulatory requirements that must be incorporated into project design. The project-specific NEPA decision document (i.e. Decision Memo, Decision Notice, or Record of Decision) is conducted for both the permitting of use and the administration of that use. A grazing permit is a document authorizing the use of permitted livestock to use NFS lands or other lands under Forest Service control.

Range Allotment Management Plans (RAMPs) are typically the planning document that specifies how grazing allotment(s) will be managed including; season of use, number and class of livestock, any needed noxious weed treatments, provisions to protect other resources, and associated facilities (fences, pipelines, troughs, cattleguards, etc.) needed to implement the grazing management strategy. Range Allotment Management Plans for the Comanche and Cimarron National Grasslands were developed for the management of multiple allotments. The Forest Service utilizes Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) as the formal mechanism for communicating and documenting Forest Service expectations for how the permit will be managed by the permittee during each grazing season. Typically, AOIs identify fees, special instructions, season of use, number of animals, pasture rotation, general standards, guidelines and requirements, monitoring and maintenance agreements for structural improvements or rangeland development projects, billing, etc. The Permittee can be an individual, but on the National Grasslands there are also Grazing Associations and Grazing Districts with multiple members that utilize multiple livestock grazing allotments. The requirements of the RAMPs generally reflect Land Management Plan requirements and manual direction, also conveyed directly through the AOI for livestock grazing association and grazing district members.

Operational Controls described below apply to Permitted Livestock Grazing implemented through a Grazing Permit (Grazing Agreement). The more formal process described below will be effective upon final approval and “turn-on” of the EMS.

Step 1 – Identifying standards for the administration of livestock grazing agreements.

Identify the standards applied to grazing permit administration that are derived from the RAMP, the livestock Grazing Agreement, Rules of Management, and the Land Management Plan. The Rangeland Management Specialist and or Range Technician is responsible for ensuring these standards are correctly applied to the Annual Operating Instructions. See appendix (note 1) for reference to review manual rules and policies related to grazing.

What:	Identify standards for livestock grazing permit administration for individual or groups of allotments especially as it pertains to species of concern, water and or vegetative diversity.	
Who:	District Rangeland Management Specialist or Range Technician	
How:	These standards are developed by incorporating direction from the RAMP, grazing agreement, rules of management, and/or land management plan.	
When:	Prior to Annual Operating Instructions.	

Step 2 – Preparing Annual Operating Instructions (AOI).

Annual Operating Instructions are written and approved and have specific details for livestock operations. The Rangeland Management Specialist and/or Range Technician are responsible for ensuring that the standards for the administration of livestock grazing are conveyed and correctly applied. See appendix (note 1) for references to review manual rules and policies related to grazing. Grazing Association or Grazing District board is expected to pass this information in the AOI to the individual members.

What:	Preparing and approving AOI.	
Who:	District Rangeland Management Specialist or Range Technician and District Ranger	
How:	Incorporate and share annual instructions to grazing association and its members.	
When:	Annually prior to livestock turn-on	

Step 3 – Range readiness procedures

Determine if each range allotment meets criteria for range readiness as identified in the RAMP for the allotment(s) prior to turn on.

What:	Review allotment(s) to see if they are projected to meet range readiness criteria set forth in the RAMP.	
Who:	District Rangeland Management Specialist or Range Technician	
How:	Incorporate season dates into Annual Operating Instructions to the permittee or grazing associations based on range readiness results.	
When:	Annually prior and up to livestock turn-on.	

Step 4 – Implementation, Inspection and Enforcement of Grazing Permits

General direction related to inspection and monitoring, including documentation, to monitor species of concern, water and vegetative diversity. Rangeland analysis transects are conducted in accordance with the Rangeland Analysis and Monitoring Training Guide and weblink is available for review in the appendix (note 2). Inspection elements are described in the RAMPs analysis and conducted by the district Rangeland Management Specialist and/or Range Technician. Utilization standards, which typically become inspection elements, are described in RAMPs. Annual Operating Instructions may adjust rotation dates and livestock numbers to address environmental issues (i.e. drought) and other resource needs. The schedule for these inspections is decided by the district Rangeland Management Specialist and/or Range Technician, often in coordination with the wildlife biologist or other district resource staff, depending on resource protection needs. Inspection forms are used to check on maintenance of allotment improvements. Once inspected the Forest Service Infrastructure database (INFRA) is updated. The primary objective of this database is to provide a uniform system for collection, storage, and retrieval of information used in the management of National Forest System range and related resources.

A General checklist form may be used by the range staff to maintain subsequent records for monitoring transects. At the district office, a hardcopy is placed in the monitoring files under file code 2200. If there is a need for correspondence with the permittee regarding range permit administration, it is kept in the respective permit folder filed under file code 2230.

If a permit violation is noted, the authorized officer may do one of the following or both: under the informal process, verbally explain the violation to the grazing association/grazing district and then put written documentation of the conversation in the permit file. The grazing association/grazing district have rules that direct response and correction of any violation stated by Forest Service personnel. If action is not taken to correct the violation, the Forest Service then initiates a formal process which is the second method of addressing a permit violation.

The only official copy of this file is the one on-line in the Pike/San Isabel National Forest and Cimarron/Comanche National Grasslands website. Before using a printed copy, verify that it is the most current version by checking the document issue date on the PSICC NF website.

Approved by: Robert J. Leaverton

Under the formal process, the District Ranger communicates the violation by official letter to the grazing association/grazing district. Then the grazing association/grazing district will follow the process identified in the Terms and Conditions in the Rules of Management attached to the Grazing Agreement (grazing association or grazing district).. To review CFRs that provide direction in handling violations, see references documented in note 3 of appendix.

What:	Implementation, inspection and enforcement of grazing permits	
Who:	District Ranger, Rangeland Management Specialist , Range Technician, or other Forest Service employee	
How:	Inspect and document permittee allotment conditions to ensure compliance with all standards identified in the permit.	
When:	During the period of time when the permit is valid.	

Appendix

Note 1: Rules and policies governing the administration of Forest Service grazing permits are found in Forest Service policy, Manual (FSM 2200)

(<http://www.fs.fed.us/im/directives/dughtml/fsm2000.html>) and Handbook (FSH 2200)

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Note 2: http://fsweb.r2.fs.fed.us/rr/range/rangeland/ecosystem-mngmt/RAMTG_PDF/0-Begin%20RAMTG.pdf

Note 3: 36 CFR 222, subpart A and C, gives the authority to administer the grazing and livestock permitting system.