



FSH 2209.13 - GRAZING PERMIT ADMINISTRATION HANDBOOK

CHAPTER 60 - RECORDS

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Approved:

Associate Deputy Chief

Date Approved:

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New Document	2209.13_60	17 Pages
Superseded Document(s) by Issuance Number and Effective Date	2209.13_60 (Amendment 2209.13-2005-10, 09/09/2005)	13 Pages
	2209.13,60 Contents (Amendment 2209.13-92-1, 08/03/1992)	1 Page
	2209.13,60 (Amendment 2209.13-92-1, 08/03/1992)	2 Pages

Digest: This amendment revises requirements and procedures to maintain paper copy grazing permit administration records and adds new requirements and procedures necessary for establishing and maintaining electronic grazing permit records and reporting.

61 - Establishes this code to provide responsibilities for establishing and maintaining grazing permit records.

61.1 - Changes the caption from “Case File” to “Electronic Records” and revises the direction to be specific to electronic records.

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Digest--Continued:

61.2 - Changes the caption from “Permanent Summary Record” to “Hard Copy Records” and removes references to obsolete forms, FS-2200-3, FS-2200-8, and FS-2200-9 (card records). Also removes reference to contract numbers when referring to a grazing permit.

62 - Establishes this code to add new direction concerning maintenance of official grazing permit case files (2230) and permanent summary records and identifies the specific documents to be included in an official grazing permit case file.

62 - Exhibit 01 - Adds Exhibit 01 to display the grazing permit file contents and recommended file organization for Regions 1-6.

62 - Exhibit 02 - Adds Exhibit 02 to display the grazing permit file contents and recommended file organization for Regions 8 and 9.

63 - This section, previously reserved, adds direction for establishing and maintaining official grazing allotment (2210) folders.

63 - Exhibit 01 - Adds Exhibit 01 to display the allotment file contents and recommended file organization for Regions 1-8.

63 - Exhibit 02 - Adds Exhibit 02 to display the allotment file contents and recommended file organization for Region 9.

64 - Establishes this code to add new direction for creating and maintaining grazing allotment improvement (2240) folders as accompanying and supplementing folders to the individual grazing allotment (2210) folders.

64 - Exhibit 01 - Adds Exhibit 01 to display the allotment improvement file contents and recommended file organization for all Regions, when separate Improvement folders (2240) are created for removing extensive improvement records from the individual 2210 Allotment folder.

65 - Changes this code to combine direction concerning maintenance, retention, and disposal of official grazing case files and permanent summary records into one section.

66 - Inserts a new Section called “Requests for Records under the Freedom of Information Act,” to describe the Freedom of Information Act and serve as an easily-accessible source for rangeland management professionals to respond to requests for grazing records under the Freedom of Information Act.

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61 - KINDS OF RECORDS

The guidance contained in this chapter is pertinent to grazing permit records (FSM 2230), as well as for grazing allotment records (FSM 2210 and FSH 2209.16) and range improvement records (FSM 2240). Records should be maintained in electronic and hard copy (printed paper version of electronic copy) versions as appropriate.

The authorized officer is responsible for:

1. Establishing and maintaining official grazing permit and allotment case files and hard copy records;
2. Establishing and maintaining electronic grazing permit and allotment records using current corporate data systems;
3. Assuring that rangeland and grazing permit-related information is maintained in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) consistent with established standards;
4. Continuing maintenance of hard copy and paper records where electronic formats are not available or applicable, and/or where a hard copy version of a document needs to be retained;
5. Maintaining all historic grazing permit and allotment records; and
6. Maintaining electronic and hard copy records related to grazing agreements.

The official grazing permit and allotment case files created by the Forest Service is the paper copy. Grazing permit and allotment case files are part of Forest Service official records. It is important to maintain official records (regardless of media) in accordance with FSM 6230.3.

61.1 - Electronic Records

Corporate electronic data systems include databases, information management systems, and GIS layers functioning within the corporate environment to support grazing permit administration and rangeland management.

Rangeland information is stored and displayed using several different systems such as: Rangeland Information Management System (RIMS), Forest Service Activity Tracking System (FACTS), and GIS. Tabular data are maintained in FACTS for all non-structural range improvement activities and in RIMS for all other range-related data. Spatial data are maintained and stored in GIS layers. In addition, the Planning Appeals and Litigation System (PALS) tracks site-specific allotment National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) accomplishment. The authorized officer is responsible for assuring that appropriate rangeland and grazing permit related information is maintained in the appropriate system of record.

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Paper records and printed maps of GIS information are created and retained as part of permanent permit and allotment records for current use and historical purposes. All printed records and maps should be titled and dated.

References, specific instructions in the use of corporate data systems, and GIS are available through online help systems, agency intranet websites, and technical reference guides. Technical references and on-line help systems are frequently updated to reflect system changes and enhancements as they occur; check to make sure you're working with the latest version.

The use of computer tablets is becoming a common method of collecting inventory and monitoring information. In most instances, data are stored in an electronic format on the local unit; these data can then be linked to an appropriate data system such as GIS. Regardless of how collected, this information, including all raw data, analysis, assessments, and summaries, should be filed hard copy and electronically in the appropriate locations.

Information should be housed in the database of record but frequently backed up on external hard drives in order to avoid potential data loss.

61.2 - Hard Copy Records

The authorized officer is responsible for the continued maintenance of hard copy (paper) records. Relevant to the grazing permit and allotment, retain such items as allotment inspections, permittee correspondence, monitoring, inventory, analysis, maps, and associated records in hard copy format in addition to the electronic files (refer to folder exhibits later in this chapter). In addition, the authorized officer is responsible for the maintenance of all historic hard copy grazing permit and allotment records.

62 - OFFICIAL GRAZING PERMIT FILES (2230)

The official record is kept at the authorized officer's location. Depending on delegation of authority, this is usually at the District Ranger's office but may be at the Forest/Grassland headquarters. A backup file may be maintained at the other location in case the official file is lost. An electronic copy of the official record can be kept on a Forest Service server as an option to back up these critically important files. All backup files must also be maintained and up to date.

The grazing permit file is the only official record of administrative actions related to a grazing permit. It is important that all documents, letters, and other records related to a grazing permit be retained in the official files for that grazing permit. Correspondence that is created and stored as electronic files shall also be printed and retained in the official file as a hard copy with signatures. With the rapid change in technology, both in hardware platforms and software applications, the ability to maintain and retain accurate long term electronic records diminishes with time; therefore, retain essential historical information as part of the official hard copy permit file.

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The official paper permit record shall be retained after the termination of the grazing permit as directed by FSH 6209.11, chapter 40. Electronic records, in the corporate databases, must be periodically archived electronically. Retain records pertinent to long-term management of the allotment indefinitely.

Each Permittee will have a Permit Folder designated as 2230, Permit Case Files (*see* FSH 6209.11, chapter 40). Keep authorizing documents, supplements, and amendments in a current file as long as the permit is active. Also retain any/all other written information that supplements, amends, or in any way changes the status of the permit or that may have a bearing on future decisions regarding the permit.

The official 2230 permit file shall be the 6-section folders, with documents filed chronologically and with the more recent documents in front of the older documents, unless otherwise specified below. The official permit file should be subdivided into the following categories:

1. Grazing permit with any modifications on top;
2. Application for the grazing permit with all supporting legal documents;
3. Waiver(s), with any escrow waiver placed on top;
4. Permit modifications for improvement construction (until completed);
5. Bills for collection and annual applications/authorizations; and
6. Correspondence by and between the authorized officer and the permit holder.

See Exhibit 01 for a more detailed list of contents to be used for 2230 grazing permit files in Regions 1-6 (and the national grasslands in Oklahoma and Texas in R8).

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62 - Exhibit 01

**2230 - Grazing Permit Files for Direct Permits* in Regions 1-6
 (and the national grasslands in Oklahoma and Texas in R8)**

Side 1	Side 2
Permit Modifications (if any) Term Permit (FS-2200-10) (Allotment Map, Allotment Management Plan, and Improvement Maintenance List from the 2210 folder are attached) Managerial Agreement (if any) Designation of Agent (if any)	Application for Term Permit Ownership Deed(s) Base Property Map(s) Qualification Ratings (if any) Bill(s) of Sale Brand registrations (and renewals) Articles of Incorporation Other legal documents Ownership Statement (FS-2200-25)
Side 3	Side 4
Escrow Waiver(s) (keep current escrow waiver on top and the file flagged Waiver(s))	Permit modifications for range improvement work (when improvement is completed, enter data on the appropriate Allotment tab in RIMS, move the modification to the 2210 folder (or a 2240 folder, with GIS records included))
Side 5	Side 6
Bills for Collection Annual Applications/Authorizations Applications for Non-use (if any)	Correspondence Annual and routine correspondence NONCs and any records of permit actions Telephone, e-mail, and personal contact records are usually included here, but can be duplicated in the 2210 folder as well

* For national grassland and national forest units issuing grazing agreements, Association permit folders contain the grazing agreement and exhibits, rules of management, articles of incorporation, by-laws, annual grazing fee computations and bills for collection, and correspondence. Associations keep similar 2230 folders for each member (*see* sec. 62.2 and Chapter 20 of this Handbook).

When a 10-year term permit expires and becomes inactive, and a new 10-year permit is issued to the same entity, file the new permit on top of the old one (do not start a new 2230 official folder).

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When a folder becomes too full, all out-of-date documents, including permit modifications for completed and accepted improvement work, should be moved to a Historical Folder set up in the same format as shown above, and labeled, for example: “Smith, John E. 1974-2003.”

Since Regions 8 and 9 have Non-Competitive and Competitive Bid permits, their file structure varies from the rest of the National Forest System and is outlined as shown in Exhibit 02.

62 – Exhibit 02

2230 - Grazing Permit Files for Direct Permits* in Regions 8 and 9
(excluding the national grasslands in Oklahoma and Texas)

Side 1	Side 2
Permit Modifications (if any) Term Permit (FS-2200-10) (Allotment Map, Allotment Management Plan, and Improvement Maintenance List from the 2210 folder are attached) Original Application for Term Permit Ownership Deed Base Property Map Managerial Agreement (if any) Designation of Agent (if any)	Fee Credit Agreements Receipts Documentation of inspection and accomplishment
Side 3	Side 4
Allotment Inspections	Bid Prospectus and Bids
Side 5	Side 6
Bills for Collection Applications for Non-use	Annual and routine correspondence NONCs and any records of permit actions Telephone, e-mail, and personal contact records can be included here, in the 2210 folder, or both Annual Operating Instructions may be duplicated here from the 2210 folder

* For national grassland and national forest units issuing grazing agreements, Association permit folders contain the grazing agreement and exhibits, rules of management, articles of incorporation, by-laws, annual grazing fee computations and bills for collection, and correspondence. Associations keep similar 2230 folders for each member (*see* sec. 62.2 and Chapter 20 of this Handbook).

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62.1 - Permanent Permit Summary Record

Historically, a card file was maintained annually as a permanent summary record for each permit. For the most part, the information contained on these card records has been supplanted by information contained in the corporate databases. Therefore, the card file permanent summary record is no longer required (FS-2200-3 for private land permits, FS-2200-8 for cattle and horse permits and FS-2200-9 for sheep and goat permits, now all obsolete), but all other existing historical records must be retained.

With the rapid change in technology, both in hardware platforms and software applications, the ability to maintain and retain accurate long-term electronic records diminishes with time. Therefore, retain essential historical information in hard copy format. The authorized officer is responsible for the maintenance of the historic permanent record for each grazing permit. The authorized officer shall maintain a hard copy of all information currently in the electronic corporate database.

At a minimum, the following records should be contained in the hard copy and electronic official permit file. These records provide a link between the official permit file and electronic information, assure a complete historical record, and assure that permit information is retained as data systems are upgraded. Most of the following information currently resides in corporate data systems:

1. The name and address of the permit holder;
2. The permit number used to identify the grazing permit;
3. The total amount of permitted grazing use by allotment authorized by the permit in a grazing season; this figure shall be shown in animal unit months (AUMs) and may also be shown in head months (HMs);
4. The fees paid by the permit holder for the total amount of authorized grazing use (HMs) in each grazing season (*see* item 3 above);
5. The total amount of the actual grazing use by pasture (subunit) within an allotment that occurred in a grazing season. This figure should also be shown in HMs or AUMs;
6. Where applicable, if credit is approved when the amount of actual grazing use in a grazing season (*see* item 5 above) was less than fees paid by the permit holder for the amount of grazing use authorized (*see* item 5 above). Refunds are not granted; any credit approved shall be reflected by a calculated deduction on the next grazing bill (usually for the next grazing season);
7. Additional charges owed by the permit holder for grazing excess livestock which exceed the amount of grazing authorized by the permit; and

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8. Inspection records documenting compliance with the grazing permit.

6.2.2 - Grazing Association-Issued Grazing Permit Files

Where the Forest Service has entered into a grazing agreement with a grazing association, it is the responsibility of the grazing association to establish and maintain the official hard copy association grazing permit files and hard copy permanent summary record with respect to the member grazing permits issued by the grazing association to its members, as well as management of the allotments within the Association's administrative boundary.

The grazing agreement specifies that the association is responsible for establishing and maintaining eligibility and qualification records for all members issued grazing permits by the association (*see* Chapter 20, sec. 24 (rules of management) of this Handbook).

The grazing association will also be responsible for maintaining an official record of the management of the allotment(s) under their responsibility. The grazing agreement shall also specify that the Forest Service shall have free and unfettered access to inspect and copy the documents contained in the official grazing permit files and permanent summary records related to the grazing use authorized by the grazing agreement, that copies (where requested) shall be provided to the Forest Service without charge, and that failure to comply with these requirements shall be grounds for cancellation or suspension of the grazing agreement. See chapter 20 of this Handbook for more information regarding grazing agreements.

The authorized officer retains responsibility for maintenance of the electronic records related to the grazing agreement and management of the allotment(s).

63 - OFFICIAL ALLOTMENT FILES (2210)

This section contains direction on maintaining allotment records.

There is usually only one copy of official allotment folders. Do not close them out or lose such things as historical Allotment Boundary Descriptions, original Grazing Allotment Analysis Summary Sheets, chronological historical maps, and early transect readings with locations. An electronic copy of these documents on a Forest Service server is a good way to backup these documents for future use. All backup files must then also be kept current.

Each allotment will have a folder designated as 2210, Allotment Case Files (*see* FSH 6209.11, chapter 40). A 6-section file folder should be used, and information should be filed in the following format, as applicable (Exhibit 01). Exhibit 01 is used in Regions 1-6.

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63 - Exhibit 01

2210 - Allotment Files (Regions 1-6)*

Side 1	Side 2
Allotment Management Plans (retain previous AMPs under current AMP) Allotment Boundary Descriptions Grazing Capacity Determinations	Allotment Maps (latest on top) Analysis Summary Sheet(s) Analysis Transect Data
Side 3	Side 4
Annual Operating Instructions (retain last few years under current – move older AOIs to Historical Folder, if needed)	Modifications for improvement work (moved here from 2230 permit folder once completed, or to the 2240 folder if preferred) Range Improvement Summary Sheet(s)
Side 5	Side 6
Planning Documents (allotment NEPA decisions and project-level for individual improvements; large analysis documents are filed electronically in NEPA project folders) Implementation Monitoring Records Actual Use Records	Correspondence

* For national grassland and national forest units issuing grazing agreements, Associations keep similar 2210 folders for each allotment. See Chapter 20.

All implementation and compliance monitoring should be maintained with effectiveness monitoring as the combination of these data sets is invaluable for making management decisions. Implementation monitoring includes, but is not limited to, annual indicators such as utilization/stubble height, inspection reports and photos, actual use, staff field notes and emails by year. This should be made available to the permittee.

Effectiveness monitoring includes, but is not limited to, analysis summary sheets including grazing capacity estimates and calculations, production/utilization surveys, Parker summaries and data sheets, current monitoring such as cover-frequency data sheets and summaries.

All Permanent Transect Records (such as inventory or long-term monitoring plots) may need to be maintained in separate folders because of their size. An electronic copy of these documents

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on a Forest Service server is a good way to back up these documents for future use. All backup files must also be kept current.

The current file folder should contain all recent records. All older records should be moved to a Historical Folder set up in the same format as described above, and labeled, for example: "Porcupine Creek Allotment 1997-2005."

Because Regions 8 and 9 have need to maintain a number of different and additional documents in the allotment folders, their 2210 allotment folders are organized as shown in Exhibit 02.

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63 - Exhibit 02

2210 - Allotment Files (Regions 8 and 9)*

Side 1 - Environmental Analyses	Side 2 - Plans
Environmental Analysis Biological Opinion Miscellaneous NEPA documents Old Environmental Analysis	Allotment Management Plan Monitoring Plan with Maps Range Improvement Inventories Numbers Allotment Boundary Descriptions Grazing Capacity Determination sheet(s) Coop-Agreements, Grazing Fee Credit Agreements
Side 3 - Graphics	Side 4 - Inventory
Current Allotment Map Aerial Photos List of Photos	Vegetative Inventories Heritage Inventories Threatened and Endangered Inventories MIS Inventories Other Inventories
Side 5 - Field Monitoring	Side 6 - Allotment History
Rotation Schedules and Allotment Inspection Notes Recurring Studies Recurring Photo Points Actual Use Records	Old Allotment Management Plans Old Allotment Boundary Descriptions Old Aerial Photos Old Photos Written Histories

* For national grassland and national forest units issuing grazing agreements, Associations keep similar 2210 folders for each allotment (*see* Chapter 20 of this Handbook).

63.1 - Permanent Allotment Summary Record

At a minimum, the following records must be contained in the official allotment file. These records provide a link between the official allotment file and electronic information, assure a complete historical record, and assure that allotment information is retained as data systems are upgraded. Most of the following information currently resides in corporate data systems:

1. Inspection records documenting allotment use under a grazing permit;
2. Monitoring records documenting effect of livestock grazing on the resource;
3. Inventory and analysis information; and

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4. Maps, photos and other information documenting the use of rangelands for livestock grazing and other purposes.

64 - OFFICIAL RANGE IMPROVEMENT FILES (2240)

Some allotments may be relatively small or have relatively few existing rangeland improvements (such can be the case on sheep allotments), so the 2210 allotment folder is the logical place to maintain all information regarding existing rangeland improvements.

In some cases, because of the large number of existing improvements or large volume of information, some regions and forests/grasslands have chosen to separate all range improvement records from the remainder of the 2210 folder and to create a separate 2240 folder for each allotment.

When separate folders are created, the 2240 folders should be set up in the standard 6-section file folder and should contain the following information as shown in Exhibit 01.

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64 - Exhibit 01

2240 - Allotment Range Improvement Files

Side 1	Side 2
Allotment Improvement Report – RNGR201L Permit Improvement Report(s) – RNGR202L Range Improvement Project NEPA (when needed)	Allotment Improvement Map Completed Improvement Permit Modifications (newest on top)
Side 3	Side 4
Water Systems: Springs, collection units, troughs Wells, windmills, pumps (include solar units), pipelines, tanks, overflows Dams, dugouts, trick tanks, guzzlers, etc. Water Rights and/or Permits (copy of official FSM 2540 records)	Fences: Permanent (boundary, division) Temporary (electric) Corrals, Enclosures Other Improvements Invasive species treatments Seeding Prescribed burns Others
Side 5	Side 6
Historic Improvement Inventories Deferred Maintenance Reports Deferred Maintenance Records	Correspondence

If the Improvement folder gets too thick, all outdated documents, including permit modifications for completed and accepted improvement work, should be moved to a Historical Folder set up in the same format as shown above, and labeled, for example: “2240 Beardtongue Allotment Improvements, 1974-2003.” An electronic copy of these documents on a Forest Service server is a good way to backup these documents for future use. All backup files must also be kept current.

65 - MAINTENANCE, RETENTION AND DISPOSAL OF OFFICIAL GRAZING PERMIT FILES AND PERMANENT SUMMARY RECORDS

For general information regarding the maintenance of official grazing permit files and permanent summary records, see FSH 6209.11, chapter 20.

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For general information regarding the retention and disposal of official grazing permit files and permanent summary records, see FSH 6209.11, chapter 30.

Specific information for retention and disposal of grazing permit, allotment, and improvement folders is also found in chapter 30:

1. Allotment folders (2210) are called permanent records and should be maintained and retained indefinitely.
2. Permit folders (2230) are called temporary records and should be retained for up to 75 years. The file contents should be transferred to the Federal Record Center 10 years after the file is closed.
3. Permanent (2240) improvement records should be retained for 10 years. All pertinent information should be entered in the electronic database of record (RIMS), and the file contents transferred to the Federal Record Center at the end of the 10 year period.

66 - REQUESTS FOR RECORDS UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

Agencies within the Executive Branch of the Federal government, independent regulatory agencies, and some components within the Executive Office of the President are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), virtually any person can make a request for any reason and records must be made available to the public except to the extent they contain information that is specifically exempted from disclosure or specially excluded from the Act's coverage in the first place. The nine exemptions of the FOIA describe specific categories of information that are protected from disclosure.

FOIA requests must be made in writing and immediately referred to a designated FOIA Service Center at the Washington Office, Regional Office, or Forest for tracking and processing. See <https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/foia> for additional information.

The Privacy Act of 1974 establishes a code of fair information practices that govern the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of information about individuals that is maintained in systems of records by Federal agencies. It gives citizens the right to:

1. See records about [one]self, subject to the Privacy Act's nine exemptions (see below);
2. Amend that record if it is inaccurate, irrelevant, untimely, or incomplete; and
3. Sue the government for violations of the statute including permitting others to see [one's] records unless specifically allowed by the Act.

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66.1 - Grazing Permittee Requests for Information

The 2210 allotment folder(s) on which the permittee is authorized to graze and the 2240 range improvement folder(s) for all improvements on the allotment(s) are also available to the permittee upon request. Refer to FSH 6209.13 for detailed information regarding the FOIA process, and be familiar with the names of your local, regional and national FOIA coordinators.