

GREER ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

CURRENT PERMIT AND NEPA HISTORY

The July 7, 1998 Environmental Assessment (EA) and the March 23, 1999 Decision Notice (DN) for the Greer Allotment Management Plan is incorporated by reference into the Special Terms and Conditions. Since the DN was signed, there have been various changes to the Greer Allotment, summarized below:

1. On March 6, 2000, The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) acquired the Term Grazing Permit for the Greer Allotment. On March 16, 2000, RMEF waived the Eastside, Cold Springs, Lakes and Hoyer Pastures to the Forest Service. The Eastside and Cold Springs Pastures were added to the Voigt Allotment and the Lakes and Hoyer Pastures were withdrawn from grazing to minimize recreation conflicts.
2. On October 20, 2000, RMEF waived Bull, Hall and Benny Creek Pastures to the Forest Service in favor of Sheep Springs Sheep Company. These pastures and the adjacent Mount Baldy Wilderness Area (also withdrawn from grazing, see DN, page 3) were added to the Sheep Springs Allotment. The remainder of the Greer Allotment was waived to the Forest Service in favor of South Fork Properties and Bob and Sug Peters on October 23, 2000

Subject to the above DN this portion of Part 3 constitutes the Allotment Management Plan for the Greer Allotment identified in Part 1.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ALLOTMENT

The Greer Allotment is located five miles southeast of Springerville, Arizona. The allotment contains 18,323 acres. The elevation ranges from approximately 7,450 to 9,424 feet. It is made up of two topographically disjunctive sides that are separated by the town of Greer and the Greer Lakes recreation area. The two sides lie to the southwest and the northeast. The southwest side of the allotment is covered primarily by ponderosa pine and mixed conifer forest interspersed with pine bunchgrass grassland and intersected by various gentle to steep-walled drainages; Hall, Benny and Rosey Creeks. It is bounded on the east by the West Fork of the Little Colorado River and the town of Greer. The northeast side of the allotment has more rugged terrain. Vegetation types here range from pinyon-juniper woodland and shortgrass prairie at the lower elevations to ponderosa pine and mixed conifer forest and pine bunchgrass grassland at the higher elevations. It is bisected by the Little Colorado River and the South Fork of the Little Colorado River. Common herbaceous species at the lower elevations are blue grama, pine dropseed, sedges, muttongrass, mountain muhly and Arizona fescue. Common woody species are one-seed, Utah and Rocky Mountain juniper, pinyon pine and ponderosa pine. Common herbaceous species at higher elevations are Arizona fescue, mountain muhly, pine dropseed, muttongrass, sedges and spike muhly. Common woody species are ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, blue and engelmann spruce, gambel oak, aspen, wild currant and skunkbrush sumac. Alder, willow, sedges, hairgrass, bluegrass, Rocky Mountain iris and rushes are common in riparian or wet meadow areas.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- a. Balance permitted livestock use with allotment capacity (page 29 of EA).
- b. Improve watershed and soil condition (pages 29 and 33 of EA).
- c. Establish utilization standards and season of use that will provide for the physiological needs of the vegetation (pages 99, 126-127 of EA, 1 of DN).
- d. Improve vegetation and range condition (pages 31 and 32 of EA).
- e. Increase density and distribution of cool-season forage species (pages 31 and 32 of the EA).
- f. Achieve PFC in riparian areas within 10 years. Riparian areas are in satisfactory condition or better with an upward trend. Woody riparian vegetation exhibits a diversity of age classes (page 32 of EA).

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The livestock operation will consist of a single cowherd. The allotment will be grazed with a rotational deferred grazing system. The new number of livestock and season of use are:

- The permitted number of livestock is 200 cow/calf pairs
- The season of use is June 15 to October 31.

The livestock operation will consist of a single cowherd. The opportunity to rest a pasture is an option and will be evaluated annually. The allotment will be divided into low and high elevation pastures (EA, Section II Map 6). The low elevation pastures will be considered the pastures in and around the Greer Basin including Fish Creek, South Fork, Bigelow and Upper and Lower Skullduggery Pastures. Lower Skullduggery and Bigelow (as currently fenced) are near occupied Southwest Willow Flycatcher (SWWF) nests and will not be grazed until after August 1 due to SWWF management objectives. High elevation pastures will be considered those pastures to the southwest and above the Greer Basin. The first pasture entered will be rotated within the grazing schedule every year.

Cattle will be trailed to the allotment in the summer and in the fall. Trailing in the summer and fall with the main herd typically occurs in one day or less. In the first part of the grazing season when cattle are scheduled to graze the low elevation pastures, the cattle will enter the allotment through either the Fish Creek or South Fork Pastures and then to the first pasture in the low elevation grazing sequence. Depending on the grazing sequence in the high elevation pastures, cattle will be trailed up the Milky Way or Pole Knoll Trails when going to high elevation pastures west of the WFLCR, or the Wonderland Trail when going to high elevation pastures east of the WFLCR (EA, Section II, Map 6). The different trail routes are necessary for two reasons; 1) as a measure to reduce trailing through Sheep Crossing Exclosure when going between high elevation pastures on the east and west sides of the WFLCR and, 2) provide a practical, direct route from the low elevation pastures to the first pasture in the high elevation grazing rotation without impact to the SWWF nest sites in the Greer Basin.

For high elevation grazing rotations east of the WFLCR, the Wonderland Trail will be used. Cattle will be rotated between the South Fork and North Bigelow Pastures (when constructed), and moved to the Upper Skullduggery Pasture by trailing up the road (FR 87B) leading from the Greer Sanitary District treatment facility to the Wonderland Road (FR 245) in the vicinity of Wonderland Trap. At that point, cattle will be trailed a half mile up the existing Wonderland Livestock Trail to the Upper Skullduggery Pasture. Going to high elevation pastures west of the WFLCR involves trailing up Forest Road 87B as discussed above, to River Reservoir, and crossing the LCR below the reservoir dam to the Milky Way Trail north of Hoyer Campground. The Milky Way Trail follows Forest Trail 331 from Squirrel Springs along a ridge between Hall and Rosey Creeks to the Bull Pasture. The trailing for the Milky Way and Wonderland Trail will occur during the latter part of the critical season for SWWF and within two miles of a nest site however, this is the quickest and most direct method to trail cattle to the high elevation pastures. This trailing scenario is a significant reduction in the previous amount of trailing in the Greer Basin. A final trailing sequence involves the Pole Knoll Trail. The Pole Knoll Trail will be used to move from lower elevation pastures to higher elevation pastures when Fish Creek Pasture is used in the early season. The Pole Knoll Trail goes from the Fish Creek corrals west along State Highway 260 then south along Forest Road 112. In the fall, after completing the grazing sequence in the high elevation pastures cattle will be trailed back down to the Greer Basin along FR 87 to graze the low elevation pastures that were deferred for the SWWF critical season. Livestock will then be trailed to the West Fish Creek and Fish Creek Pastures in preparation for sorting and shipping. Final shipping will be accomplished at the Fish Creek corrals and trap.

STANDARDS AND PRESCRIPTIONS

Range Improvements - Water. The permittee has certain improvements assigned for maintenance on page 6 in this permit. These improvements are on National Forest System lands within the allotment. The improvements include both stock tanks and springs. Issuance of this grazing permit and the permittee's acceptance of the permit does not convey ownership of a water right to the permittee(s) but allows the use of a portion of it within terms of the appropriation. The Forest has filed for water rights on these waters with the State of Arizona. Grazing domestic livestock may not be possible without these water rights. The Forest will retain ownership of the water rights for current and future grazing permittees as well as for wildlife and recreation consumptive needs. Ownership of the water rights will assure that the use of the water will be appurtenant to the land and will be available for both current and future grazing permittees.

Range Readiness. Livestock will not be permitted to graze until vegetation and soil conditions are ready. Readiness checks will be made in advance of the scheduled entry date. They will be conducted on designated key forage species in key areas, being done with the permittee whenever possible.

Allowable Use. Allowable use is based on the amount and kind of forage on the allotment, plant needs, and range condition and trend. Forage utilization will be based on the monitoring of key areas as outlined in the Monitoring Plan. The maximum allowable forage use is 25% on poor range, 35% on fair and 40% on good condition range. The maximum allowable forage use for riparian areas in unsatisfactory condition is 25%. The maximum allowable forage use for riparian areas in satisfactory condition is 45%. A map of the key areas will be placed in the Annual Operating Plan.

The permittee will take action to ensure proper livestock distribution occurs and that forage use levels are not exceeded. If forage use continues above the desired use level, adjustments in the Term Grazing Permit, allotment management plan, or other management actions will be necessary.

Management Practices. The management emphasis is to have riparian areas in satisfactory condition. Livestock will not be moved between pastures or allotments along the length of riparian areas except on approved routes specified in the annual operating plan. Approval will be granted only where it is determined that there is no alternative route and it can be shown that riparian areas will not be damaged.

The scheduled rotation, grazing season, and livestock numbers will be in the annual operating plan. Adjustments in numbers, rotation schedule, or season of use will be made if allowable use standards are exceeded. Cattle may be moved to the next scheduled pasture or off the allotment when forage utilization standards are exceeded.

Mexican Spotted Owl. Mineral supplement sites in their suitable, capable, and foraging habitats will be regularly rotated to reduce trampling and grazing impacts to vegetation. There may be other activities to avoid in protected activity centers. Specific direction for management activities will be shown in the annual operating plan.

MITIGATION MEASURES

1. Livestock will not graze the Sheep Crossing riparian enclosure to eliminate direct livestock impacts to Arizona willow (EA, Section II, pages 35-59; Arizona Willow Conservation Agreement and Strategy - 1995).
2. The development and implementation of a watershed restoration project in Benny Creek on the Greer allotment (EA, Section IF, pages 10-11, and Section II, pgs 35-59).
3. Livestock will not graze the Sheep Crossing riparian enclosure that contains approximately ½ mile of potentially suitable SWWF habitat (EA, Section II, pgs 35-59; Biological Assessment for the Greer Allotment - 07/10/98; Concurrence by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service via the Guidance Criteria - 09/18/98).
4. Cowbird trapping, initiated in 1997, will take place annually during the SWWF critical season. Traps will be placed at the River Reservoir Nest Site and at the Greer Nest Site (EA, Section II, pages 35-59;

Biological Assessment for the Greer Allotment - 07/10/98; Concurrence by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service via the Guidance Criteria - 09/18/98).

5. Grazing will not occur within two miles of SWWF nest sites before 07/31, except for two pastures (Upper Skullduggery and Westside). Westside and Upper Skullduggery Pastures are considered ecologically disjunctive from the Greer Nest Sites, being on a high plateau (~1000 ft) above them and moderately to heavily timbered (EA, Section II, pages 35-59; Biological Assessment for the Greer Allotment - 07/10/98; Concurrence by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service via the Guidance Criteria - 09/18/98).
6. Drift fences will be constructed across the South Fork of the Little Colorado River (SFLCR) at the boundary between South Fork Pasture on Greer Allotment and West Mexican Hay Pasture on the adjacent Pool Corral Allotment. This will protect small meadow areas within SWWF Critical Habitat along the SFLCR and portions of the South Fork MSO PAC on the Pool Corral Allotment from being over-utilized by Greer Allotment livestock (EA, Section II, pages 35-59; Biological Assessment for the Greer Allotment - 07/10/98; Concurrence by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service via the Guidance Criteria - 09/18/98).
7. The grazing system will revolve around two principle objectives; 1) the critical season for SWWF, which is April 1-July 31, and 2) low elevation and high elevation pastures relative to proper timing of use and distance from occupied SWWF nests. The grazing system will split the grazing season into thirds, with the first third of the season running from June 16 through August 1, which coincides with the latter part of the critical period for SWWF and the final two thirds of the season, outside of the critical period, beginning on August 1 and going to October 31. The season is split in this fashion to avoid the potential of permitted livestock grazing and trailing attracting brown-headed cowbirds (EA, Section II, pages 35-59, and Section II, Map 6; Biological Assessment for the Greer Allotment - 07/10/98; Concurrence by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service via the Guidance Criteria - 09/18/98).
8. Implementation of a grazing utilization standard of 25% on willows and Kentucky bluegrass applied once each year along the South Fork of the Little Colorado River in the South Fork Pasture (EA, Section II, pages 35-59; Biological Assessment for the Greer Allotment - 07/10/98; Concurrence by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service via the Guidance Criteria - 09/18/98).
9. Livestock will not graze the area immediately around the town of Greer (Greer Town Site) to prevent conflicts with local residences, summer homes and businesses (EA, Section II, pgs 35-59).
10. This decision will implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) that apply to the activities listed above to maintain/improve water quality and prevent accelerated soil erosion (EA, Appendix D).

RANGE DEVELOPMENT CONSTRUCTION/RECONSTRUCTION

To fully implement this Allotment Management Plan, structural developments will be constructed to improve the distribution of livestock, reduce forage use in key areas and improve existing resource conditions (Table 1). Existing range developments throughout the allotment will be reconstructed as necessary (Part 3 of the Term Grazing Permit). All fence construction and reconstruction will utilize smooth wire on the top and bottom strands.

Table 1. Greer Allotment planned range developments – construction/reconstruction (pages 42-45 of EA).

DEVELOPMENT	UNITS	LOCATION	CONSTRUCTION RESPONSIBILITY	WHEN	MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY
Fence (new)	0.5 mi.	Upper/Lower Skullduggery Pasture boundary drift fence, Sec. 5, 7 & 8, T7N, R28E	USFS materials/ Permittee labor	As funding permits	Permittee
Fence (new)	1.0 mi.	Bigelow/South Fork Pasture boundary drift fence, Sec. 30 & 31, T7N, R28E	USFS materials/ Permittee labor	As funding permits	Permittee
Gates (new)	4	Replace wire gates in Greer Lakes recreation area, Sec 1, 2, T7N, R27E & Sec. 36 & 35, T7N, R27E	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	Permittee
Fence (new)	1.5 mi.	North/South Bigelow Pasture division fence, Sec. 30 & 31, T8N, R28E	USFS materials/ Permittee labor	As funding permits	Permittee
Fence (new)	0.5 mi.	Bigelow Pasture boundary drift fence, Sec. 31 & 36, T8N, R27E	USFS materials/ Permittee labor	As funding permits	Permittee
Fence (new)	0.5 mi.	South Fork Pasture boundary fence, Sec. 23, 24 & 26, T8N, R27E & Sec. 19, T8N, R28E	USFS materials/ Permittee labor	As funding permits	Permittee
Fence (reconstruct)	0.5 mi.	U. Skullduggery/South Fork Pasture boundary drift fence, NE ¼, Sec. 30 T8N, R28E	USFS materials/ Permittee labor	As funding permits	Permittee
Fence (new)	0.5 mi.	Greer/Cross Bar allotment boundary drift fence, Sec. 8 & 17, T7N, R28E	USFS materials/ Permittee labor	As funding permits	Permittee
Fence (new)	1.0 mi.	Westside/Railroad Pasture division fence, Sec. 15 & 22, T7N, R27E	USFS materials/ Permittee labor	As funding permits	Permittee
Cattleguard	1	On FR 87 at Westside/Railroad division fence, NW¼ of the NW¼, Sec. 22 T7N, R27E	USFS materials/ Permittee labor	As funding permits	Permittee
Pipeline/drinker	0.5 mi.	From Bull Springs in Bull Trap to Westside Pasture, Sec. 15 & 16, T7N, R27E	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	Permittee
Erosion Control Structures	10-15	Benny Creek Drainage, Sec. 15, 21 & 22, T7N, R27E	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	USFS
Road Closure	1 mi.	Westside Pasture, Sec. 15, T7N, R27E	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	USFS

Table 1. Greer Allotment planned range developments – construction/reconstruction (pages 42-45 of EA).

DEVELOPMENT	UNITS	LOCATION	CONSTRUCTION RESPONSIBILITY	WHEN	MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY
Road Closure	2 mi.	Westside Pasture, Sec. 22 & 28, T7N, R27E	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	USFS
Road Closure	1 mi.	In area of Hobson Tank, Sec. 8 & 17, T7N, R28E	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	USFS
Grassland vegetation treatment (tree thinning)	500 ac.	Areas within Fish Creek Pasture being invaded by ponderosa – to be determined	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	USFS
Grassland vegetation treatment (tree thinning)	700 ac.	Areas within Bigelow Pasture being invaded by ponderosa – to be determined	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	USFS