



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Tonto National Forest
Tonto Basin Ranger District

28079 N. Az Hwy 188
Roosevelt, AZ 85545
Phone: 928.467.3200
Fax: 928.467.3239

File Code: 2230
Route To: (2230)

Date: December 2, 2009

Subject: Dagger and A Cross Allotments Term Grazing Permit

To: Forest Supervisor Gene Blankenbaker

Dear Gene,

The district has been approached by several people in the last three years inquiring about the term grazing permit for the Dagger and A Cross Allotments, which are currently vacant. Based upon improving resource conditions, my conversation with (b) (6) and a review of their application, I decided to issue the term grazing permit for the Dagger Allotment to them on September 23, 2009. The permit was issued with special conditions described in Part 3 to address range improvement repairs and resource concerns which will be more fully described and analyzed through a 2013 Environmental Assessment.

(b) (6) own sufficient base property (10 acres with livestock facilities) within the boundaries of the Dagger Allotment and meet the requirements outlined in FSM 2231.2 and FSH 2209.13 (12) for permittee eligibility. Their base property also meets the requirements outlined in FSH 2209. They have completed an Application for Term Grazing Permit (FS 2200-16) and submitted copies of their brand certificate and legal property description.

I used the term grazing permit grant process as described in FSH 2209.13 (21) to determine who would be the proper candidate for this permit. I considered the following:

1. *Present permittees on the allotment within upper limit restrictions and base property requirements:* the allotments do not have a current permittee; the agency holds the permit at this time.

2. *Permittees on other allotments up to the upper limit and to the extent they meet base property requirements:* (b) (6) permittee on the Campaign Allotment, has expressed an interest in acquiring the Dagger Allotment permit. He is currently above upper limits and therefore ineligible for consideration.

(b) (6) permittee on the Armer Mountain Allotment, has expressed an interest in acquiring the A Cross Allotment permit. (b) (6) has not had (b) (6) permitted numbers reduced but has taken non-use on (b) (6) current grazing allotment for the past several years. (b) (6) cited a need for additional grazing capacity in order to create an economically viable operation. I sent (b) (6) a letter on September 18, 2009 documenting (b) (6) request and informing (b) (6) that I would issue the A Cross Allotment permit to (b) (6) with the condition that (b) (6) bring improvements on both allotments up to standard and develop a plan with the District for returning livestock to the allotments.

(b) (6) former permittees on the Dagger and A Cross Allotments, also expressed an interest in the allotment. The base property (b) (6) described during (b) (6) inquiry does not meet agency requirements and would require (b) (6) to truck livestock many miles for handling between the allotments and (b) (6) property. (b) (6) was sent a copy of the Application for Term Grazing Permit in April 2009 but has not returned it to the district.



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(b) (6) permittee on the Pleasant Valley District, expressed an interest in grazing on a portion of the Dagger Allotment. The Tonto Basin and Pleasant Valley Range Staff and I met with (b) (6) on September 22, 2009 to discuss (b) (6) need. At this meeting (b) (6) expressed interest in using 1-2 Dagger pastures that contain a large portion of the perennial forage available for livestock use and are important to livestock management on the allotment. I told (b) (6) I preferred to keep the allotment intact to provide a viable operation to our qualified applicants. I agreed to provide (b) (6) a portion of one pasture temporarily while (b) (6) works to improve (b) (6) existing allotments for additional capacity through the development of water sources. (b) (6) was satisfied with this agreement and will assume responsibility for range improvements associated with the portion of this pasture. (b) (6) has use of this pasture for the next five years, and then it will be returned to the Dagger Allotment with associated responsibilities being transferred to the (b) (6). This is the length of time (b) (6) felt was needed to recapture his investments.

(b) (6) permittee on the Dutchwoman Allotment, expressed an interest in grazing the A Cross Allotment. (b) (6) has not validated full numbers on the Dutchwoman Allotment since the 2002 drought and has not expressed any interest in increasing the numbers (b) (6) is currently authorized to graze. (b) (6) also has (b) (6) base property for the Dutchwoman Allotment up for sale.

(b) (6) permittee on the Globe Ranger District, also expressed an interest in grazing the A Cross Allotment. (b) (6) wife has not validated full numbers on their allotment since the 2002 drought and therefore does not have a demonstrated need for the A Cross Allotment.

3. *Owners of livestock now on ranges administered by BLM to the extent that the BLM ranges need adjustments provided for in the MOU dated November 5, 1966, within upper limit restrictions and base property requirements:* I know of no such need from BLM lands in our general vicinity.

4. *New applicants who are eligible and qualified:* this is the category that I am choosing to use by selecting (b) (6) as the next term grazing permittees for these allotments.

(b) (6) ranch manager for a grazing allotment on the Globe Ranger District, expressed an interest to Ernie Gipson (Globe Range Staff) about acquiring a vacant allotment. (b) (6) interest came very late in the grant process and his base property is not close to the Dagger Allotment for practical management of this allotment.

Based upon the results of this grant process, (b) (6) best meet the requirements for a term grazing permit. They are long-time members of the community who have invested significant time and energy into developing their base property and its amenities. Their base property is located within the Dagger Allotment which will facilitate their ability to actively manage the allotment. I believe they will bring diversity and innovation to the Tonto Basin grazing program through improvement and proper management of the Dagger grazing allotments. I also believe that issuing the permit at this time will allow Mr. and Mrs. Sowers to take advantage of programs such as EQIP to help them begin the significant range improvement repairs they are faced with.

Please call if you have any questions about this process and my decision.



LOUISE D. CONGDON
District Ranger

cc: Debbie C Cress, Donal Luhrsen