

# VOIGT ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

## CURRENT PERMIT AND NEPA HISTORY

The May 15, 1998 Environmental Assessment (EA) and the March 23, 1999 Decision Notice (DN) for the Rudd Creek Summer and Voigt Allotment Management Plans are incorporated by reference into the Special Terms and Conditions. Since the DN was signed, there have been various changes to the Voigt Allotment, summarized below:

1. On March 16, 2000, RMEF waived the Eastside and Cold Springs Pastures of the Greer Allotment to the Forest Service. The Eastside and Cold Springs Pastures were added to the Voigt Allotment Term Grazing Permit on June 6, 2000.
2. On July 16, 2001, Harold and Amelia LeSueur waived the Voigt Term Grazing Permit back to the Forest Service in favor of South Fork Properties Limited Partnership and Bob and Sug Peters. They were issued the Voigt Allotment Term Grazing Permit that same day.

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

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ALLOTMENT

The Voigt Allotment is located approximately fourteen miles southeast of Springerville, Arizona. The allotment contains 8,421 acres. The elevation ranges from approximately 9,110 to 10,430 feet. The Allotment is bounded on the north by the West Fork of the Little Colorado River. The East Fork of the Little Colorado River bisects the Allotment from west to east. Terrain is mostly gentle rolling hills on the east side. The west side of the Allotment is much steeper and rugged where the allotment contains a portion of the Mount Baldy Wilderness Area. The primary vegetation types on the allotment are pine bunchgrass grassland and mixed conifer forest. Common herbaceous species are Arizona fescue, mountain muhly, pine dropseed, muttongrass, sedges and spike muhly. Common woody species are ponderosa pine, douglass fir, blue and engelmann spruce, gambel oak, aspen, wild currant and skunkbrush sumac. Alder, willow, sedges, hairgrass, bluegrass, Rocky Mountain iris and rushes are found in riparian or wet meadow areas.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- a. Balance permitted livestock use with allotment capacity (page 25 of EA).
- b. Improve watershed and soil condition (page 25 and 28 of EA).
- c. Establish utilization standards and season of use that will provide for the physiological needs of the vegetation (page 113-114 of EA, 1 of DN).
- d. Improve vegetation and range condition (page 27 and 28 of EA).
- e. Increase density and distribution of cool-season forage species (page 27 and 28 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 28 of EA). Riparian areas are at PFC per monitoring in 2210 files, NRST and UofA monitoring.

## 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 and 6 horses
- The season of use is July 1 to October 20.

The livestock operation will consist of a single herd cowherd. The Allotment will be grazed with a 5-pasture deferred grazing system. Permittee owned horses will be grazed between three small traps: Lee Valley, Cabin, and Little Horse (when fenced).

Cattle will be trailed or trucked to the Allotment. Since the current Voigt permittee holds the Term Grazing Permit, cattle may be trailed from or to the high elevation Greer pastures across Sheep Crossing. If they are coming to or from the lower elevation Greer pastures, they may use the Wonderland Trail after August 1. The cattle will be trucked or gathered to the newly moved Voigt Corral.

#### 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. The grazing utilization standard (herbaceous and woody vegetation) for riparian areas along the EFLCR within the Home and Phobes Pastures of the Voigt Allotment will be 25% until proposed riparian pastures are constructed. Once the pastures are completed, livestock will be excluded from the riparian area along the length of the EFLCR within the Voigt Allotment (Biological Assessment for Voigt & Rudd Creek Summer Allotments, 07/09/98; Concurrence by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service via the Guidance Criteria, 09/18/98; and Arizona Willow Conservation Agreement and Strategy, 1995). Riparian areas are at PFC per monitoring in 2210 files, NRST and UofA monitoring.
2. Livestock will not graze the Little Horse Pasture of the Voigt Allotment until riparian pasture enclosure fencing is completed (Biological Assessment for Voigt & Rudd Creek Summer Allotments, 07/09/98; Concurrence by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service via the Guidance Criteria, 09/18/98; and Arizona Willow Conservation Agreement and Strategy, 1995). Paired enclosures were constructed in 2009, one for elk and one for livestock, for monitoring.
3. Livestock will not graze the Phelps and Lee Valley Pastures of the Voigt Allotment. The majorities of these two pastures are located in the Mount Baldy Wilderness Area and contain the headwaters of the EFLCR and Hall Creek (Biological Assessment for Voigt & Rudd Creek Summer Allotments, 07/09/98; Concurrence by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service via the Guidance Criteria, 09/18/98; and Arizona Willow Conservation Agreement and Strategy, 1995). Both of these pastures are no longer part of the Voigt allotment.
4. 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 C).

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. Voigt Allotment planned range developments – construction/reconstruction** (pages 37 and 38 of Rudd Creek/Voigt EA and page 44 of Greer EA).

DEVELOPMENT	UNITS	LOCATION	CONSTRUCTION RESPONSIBILITY	WHEN	MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY
Fence (new)	12.0 mi.	Riparian Corridor Fencing, throughout the Allotment, see Term Grazing Permit Map	Cooperative – USFS & AZGFD	As funding permits	Permittee
Fence (new)	1.5 mi.	New Allotment Interior Fence, R27E	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	Permittee
Fence (new)	0.3 mi.	New holding trap at Voigt Cabin, Sec. 3, 4, 9 & 10, T6N, R27E	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	Permittee
Fence (removal)	6.0 mi.	Old Allotment interior fence that is unneeded with new fence, throughout the Allotment	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	Permittee
Spring Development (new)	0.25 mi. (fence) 0.3 mi. (pipe)	Construct enclosure around unnamed spring, add a drinker, Sec. 35, T7N, R27E	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	Permittee
Spring Development (reconstruct)	0.3 mi. (pipe)	Trap Springs reconstruction, add drinker across drainage, Sec 1, T6N, R27E	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	Permittee
Spring Development (new)	1.0 mi. pipe	Develop Trail and Day Springs (adjacent to each other) in Eastside Pasture and place a drinker in Phobes and Eastside Pastures, SW¼, Sec. 26, T7N, R27E	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	Permittee
Spring Development (new)	50 ft.	Install 50 ft. of pipe and a drinker at Tommie Spring, NE¼ of the NW¼, Sec. 11, T6N, R27E	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	Permittee

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<b>DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>UNITS</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>CONSTRUCTION RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>WHEN</b>	<b>MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY</b>
Spring Development (new)	0.25 mi. (fence) 0.5 mi. pipe	Install exclusion fence and drinker at Sugar Spring, SW¼ of the NW¼, Sec. 11, T6N, R27E	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	Permittee
Spring Development (new)	0.25 mi. (fence) 0.5 mi. pipe	Install exclusion fence and drinker at Dump Spring, SE¼ of the NE¼, Sec. 10, T6N, R27E	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	Permittee
Stock tank (maintenance)	6 tanks	Maintain or reconstruct Fir, Turkey, Road, Trap, Elk and Voigt #6 stock tanks, throughout the Allotment	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	Permittee
Fence (reconstruction)	3.0 mi.	Phelps Research Natural Area Fence, Sec 9 & 10, T6N, R27E	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	USFS
Fence (new)	0.25 mi.	Protection of unnamed spring and willow stand, NW¼, Sec. 2, T6N, R27E	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	USFS
Arizona willow plantings		Plant willow cuttings along the banks of the East Fork of the Little Colorado River, throughout the Allotment	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	USFS
Fence (reconstruction)	200 ft.	Reconstruct the range study plot, NW¼, Sec. 3, T6N, R27E	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	USFS
Road (obliteration)	0.8 mi.	Obliterate road and low water crossing, N½ Sec. 3, T6N, R27E	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	USFS
Culvert (new)	1	Install culvert in the East Fork of the Little Colorado River, NW¼, Sec. 2, T6N, R27E	USFS materials, equipment & labor	As funding permits	USFS
Fence (new)	1.0 mi.	To divide Eastside Pasture into Eastside and Cold Springs Pastures, Sec. 34, T7N, R27E	USFS materials, Permittee labor	As funding permits	Permittee