

Decision Notice  
& Finding of No Significant Impact  
**Anita, Cameron, and Moqui Allotment Management Plan  
Revisions**

USDA Forest Service  
Tusayan Ranger District, Kaibab National Forest  
Coconino County, Arizona

## **Decision and Reasons for the Decision**

### **Background**

Prior to the development of a proposed action in March 2004 an analysis team reviewed all the available resource information found for the Anita, Cameron, and Moqui Allotments related to range, watershed, and wildlife resources. These allotments are located on lands administered by the Tusayan Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest, in Ecosystem Management Units 8, 9, and 10. These allotments encompass approximately 260,000 acres within the District.

The purpose of the proposed action is to authorize continued livestock grazing through issuance of a permit, improve the cool-season grass production, increase browse habitat, and expand existing ground covers thereby improving watershed conditions. This action responds to 36 CFR 222 Subpart A, 222.2 (c) which requires the Forest Service to make forage available for livestock under direction contained in the Land Management Plan for the Kaibab National Forest. In addition, Section 504 (a) of the Rescission Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-19) requires the agency to establish and adhere to a schedule for completion of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis and decision on all allotments.

The environmental assessment (EA) documents the analysis of four alternatives, including No-Action, to meet this need for Anita/Cameron Allotments; and three alternatives, including No-Action for the Moqui Allotment.

### **Anita/Cameron Allotments**

#### **Decision**

Based upon my review of all alternatives, I have decided to implement Alternative 1 for the two allotments.

Alternative 1 calls for the following items:

1. Combine both allotments into a single grazing unit to improve efficiency of the ranching operation and reduce the amount of time livestock are allowed to graze in a pasture.
2. Issue a term grazing permit that allow from 3600 to 7860 animal unit months annually (600 head to 1,310 head of livestock) for a six-month summer grazing period. The level of stocking within that range of livestock numbers in any given year would be dependent

on annual forage production in full capacity rangelands and the resulting utilization levels that occur. Other connected actions include the following:

- A. Implement a rest-rotation grazing strategy where 20 percent of the ponderosa pine/Gambel oak and 20 percent of the pinyon pine/juniper or shrub grassland ecosystems are excluded from grazing each year in order to promote regeneration of grass species, thereby improving the overall carrying capacity of the project area and improving watershed conditions. This would also promote desirable levels of litter for prescribed fire activities.
- B. Adjust the season of use from yearlong to summer seasonal with the use period being approximately May 1 to October 31 in any given year in order to increase browse plants in the winter rangelands and improve the frequency of cool season grasses. These approximate dates could vary based on monitoring of range readiness conditions and forage utilization levels.
- C. Change the class of livestock from yearlings to cow/calf to improve the economics of the ranching operation.
- D. Reconstruct 21.5 miles of forest boundary fence adjacent to the Navajo Nation.

#### **Reason for Decision**

I have chosen Alternative 1 because it benefits wildlife, especially mule deer, antelope and elk by eliminating winter grazing. Low/height cover will improve in not only the browse habitat but in other grasslands as well and also the ponderosa pine ecosystem 0 to 15 percent slope. The shifting to summer grazing will improve browse conditions on approximately 29,000 acres of land in the fourwing saltbush/winterfat ecosystem. It also improves range and watershed conditions within a range going from 17,000 acres to 32,000 acres over the next 10-years. This alternative will also maintain the stability of the ranching operation under term grazing privileges. This alternative meets both the issues related to improvement in range, watershed, and wildlife resource conditions plus providing the opportunity for the ranching lifestyle to be maintained.

The inclusion of adaptive management will allow the Agency to range livestock numbers and season of use to assure the actual utilization remains at or below the allowable and the appropriate deferment and rest periods are maintained. This alternative meets requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (CFR 1500 to 1508), Threatened and Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, the 1995 Rescission Act, and the Multiple Use - Sustained Yield Act of 1960.

I have decided not to implement Alternative 2 as it does not meet our purpose and need nor the Forest Plan goal and objective of maintaining ranching operations. In addition, I decided not to execute Alternative 3 because continued winter use by livestock would hamper regeneration of native browse plants, which are favored by wildlife. Alternative 4 meets our purpose and need, however, it is unavailable for selection at this time.

#### **Moqui Allotment**

#### **Decision**

Based on my review of the alternatives I have decided to implement Alternative 1 for the Moqui Allotment. Alternative 1 would maintain the current class of livestock (yearlings), season of use (summer), and rotation strategy (deferred). A range of authorized numbers going from 50 percent of current (280 yearlings) to 100 percent (560 yearlings) would be approved.

Adjustments in livestock season of use, utilization levels, and rotation strategy would occur based on monitoring of utilization and changes in range conditions. Additional connected actions include reducing livestock allowable use standard to 30 percent in key areas and 20 percent allowable targeted to the full capacity lands found in the upland landscape positions.

### **Reason for Decision**

I have selected Alternative 1 as this action will improve range related resource conditions, low/height cover, and ground cover percentages from the current level of 11,920 acres to 19,975 acres over the next 10-years. Alternative 1 gives us the flexibility to vary livestock use according to variations in forage production. This alternative addresses the issues related to improvement in range, watershed, and wildlife resources while still maintaining the opportunity for ranching. This alternative also meets requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (CFR 1500 to 1508), Clean Water Act, Threatened and Endangered Species Act, the 1995 Rescission Act, and the Multiple Use - Sustained Yield Act of 1960.

I have decided not to implement Alternative 2 as it does not meet our purpose and need nor the Forest Plan goal and objective of maintaining ranching operations. In addition, I decided not to execute Alternative 3 as it does not give us enough flexibility to respond to drought or modify the grazing to improve cool-season grass densities.

### **Adaptive Management**

Adaptive management is included in Alternative 1 for Anita/Cameron and Moqui Allotments and could include the following adjustments if monitoring indicates desired conditions are not being met:

1. Authorized livestock numbers would be adjusted annually to meet existing capacities of the allotments. This variation would normally be between the previously identified minimum and maximum number for the Anita/Cameron and Moqui Allotments. Under extreme drought conditions, authorized livestock numbers could drop below the minimum.
2. The on and off dates could be modified within the allotments. Later livestock entry dates and earlier livestock removal dates on the allotments would occur in order to promote the growth and reproduction of desired herbaceous plants. Changes in on/off dates would be required if utilization levels on primary forage grasses exceed allowable levels, the frequency of these plants drops, or suitable progress toward desired vegetation conditions does not occur.

### **Alternatives considered but not selected**

In addition to the selected alternative, I considered three other alternatives. A comparison of these alternatives can be found in the EA on pages 19 and 20.

### **Alternative 2 – No Action for the Anita, Cameron, and Moqui Allotments**

This alternative is required by regulation (CFR 1502.8) and would eliminate grazing by domestic livestock from the project area. This action responds to the issue related to grazing impacts and improved vegetation conditions, habitat quality, and soil resources.

### **Alternative 3 – Current Action**

#### **Anita/Cameron Allotments**

This alternative maintains the grazing activities undertaken by the permittee over the last 10-years. It would authorize a yearlong season of use though the class of livestock and numbers would vary considerably. Yearlings, cow/calf pairs, or both would be authorized with approved numbers ranging between 10 to 40 percent of the current term permitted numbers with an average considered 385 adult livestock, yearlong. Livestock classes would be combined into one herd and moved between pastures within either allotment. A deferred rotation grazing strategy would be employed with an allowable use standard of 40 percent for grass species and 55 percent for browse plants. This alternative addresses the sustaining the ranching lifestyle issue by maintaining the yearlong season of use and also addresses the issue regarding resource impacts by authorizing low levels of livestock numbers or none at all during years of poor livestock water.

#### **Moqui Allotment**

Alternative 3 would approve seasonal grazing from approximately May 7 to October 21 in any given year with 560 head approved under a deferred rotation grazing strategy. The class of livestock would be yearlings with an allowable use standard set at 40 percent of the current years growth being authorized. This alternative responds to the issue of ranching sustainability and economic viability.

### **Alternative 4**

#### **Anita/Cameron Allotments Only**

This alternative was designed to address the significant issues related to improvement in vegetation and watershed values and enhancement of wildlife habitat, while still maintaining the ranching lifestyle. In order to provide for increased flexibility in the Forest-grazing program, these allotments would be used on a temporary basis when forage and water conditions are adequate. No term grazing permits would be issued and only temporary grazing allowed. This alternative was designed to reduce the amount of water hauling to the greatest degree possible. Specific connected actions include:

- 1) Variable number and season of use not to exceed 7,860 animal unit months or 1,310 adult livestock for 6 months. Though the lower elevation rangeland is targeted for increased emphasis by eliminating winter use by domestic livestock to improve the browse density, winter grazing could be authorized if resource inspections note increased vigor and reproduction of browse species and when conflicts with native wildlife would not occur.
- 2) Reconstruct 21.5 miles of allotment boundary adjacent to the Navajo Nation.
- 3) To promote grass plants, improve watershed conditions and provide improved habitat for wildlife, utilization standards would be reduced to 35 in the key areas (grassland or shrub/grasslands at least ¼ mile from dependable water sources). A 20 percent allowable use

value would be assigned to the full capacity lands found in the uplands outside of the alluvial bottomlands.

The use of these allotments on an intermittent basis, when forage and water are adequate, would provide flexibility in the Forest-wide grazing program when permittees are in nonuse status. We would have an area that livestock use could be authorized and the permittee could maintain their herd. We believe it would also benefit wildlife, range, and watershed resources by allowing use only under conditions when distribution would be optimum and utilization rates at or below the allowable.

### **Alternatives Considered and Dropped from Detailed Study**

Alternative 5 would authorize the current term permitted number, yearlong, under a deferred grazing strategy for the Anita and Cameron allotments. The current authorized number for the Anita and Cameron units is 666 and 1200 yearlings, respectively. Converted to adult livestock the Anita allotment would be permitted 465 head and the Cameron allotment would be authorized for 845 head. This alternative was not carried forward for study since it exceeds the livestock capacity of the allotments by at least 50 percent and would lead to utilization levels above the allowable. This action would not meet the purpose and need and if implemented would cause unacceptable resource impacts to the project area.

Alternative 6 would change the season of use to summer, implement a rest-rotation grazing strategy and change the class of livestock to sheep. This alternative could pose a disease threat to desert bighorn sheep in the Grand Canyon National Park and therefore was dropped from further consideration.

## **Public Involvement**

As described in the background, the need for this action arose in at the conclusion of the plan to project analysis in April 2004. A proposal to revise the allotment management plan was listed in the Schedule of Proposed Actions in March 2004. The proposal was provided to the public and other agencies for comment during scoping for 30 days starting on May 18, 2004. In addition, July 2004 a summary of the environmental assessment was mailed to members of the public and other agencies for a 30-day notice and comment period. We received five comment letters from the public. A summary of the initial scoping effort and other supporting information concerning this proposal is found in the project record.

Responses received from the public during the formal notice and comment period were taken into consideration in this environmental assessment; comments and Agency replies can be found in the project record. This comment period began one day after the legal notice was published in the paper of record (Arizona Daily Sun), which was July 10, 2004 and was closed on August 9, 2004.

Using the comments from the public and other agencies, the interdisciplinary team identified several issues regarding the effects of the proposed action. Main issues of concern included the effect of the proposed action on range, watershed, and wildlife values and ranch economics. To address these concerns, the Forest Service created the alternatives described above.

## Finding of No Significant Impact

After considering the environmental effects described in the EA, I have determined that these actions will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment considering the context and intensity of impacts (40 CFR 1508.27). Thus, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. I base my finding on the following:

- A. Context: The setting of this proposed action is local as it pertains to short and long-term effects on both human and natural resources. The effects of this project are limited to the Tusayan Ranger District.
- B. Intensity:
  1. My finding of no significant environmental effects is not biased by the beneficial effects of the action.
  2. There will be no significant effects on public health and safety through the implementation of Alternative 1. The adherence to best management practices (pages 17, 18, and 19) will prevent degradation of watershed values. These practices have proven effective in maintaining adequate ground cover on other allotments within the forest and maintain water quality above standards.
  3. There will be no significant effects on unique characteristics of the area. I have reviewed the biological evaluation and effects analysis and have concluded that the severity of impacts within the allotments resulting from implementation of Alternative 1 is low to nonexistent. Those areas considered unique include Hull Cabin and the Grand Canyon National Park and are excluded from livestock activity since they are fenced out. The reduction in stocking by 50 to 80 percent will reduce any potential impact by livestock to cultural resources to low levels (pages 78 through 80). There are no ecologically critical areas such as prime farmlands, wetlands, or wild and scenic rivers (pages 22, 23, and 34) found in the project area.
  4. The environmental impacts of this project are known and there has been little controversy over the effects. Concerns expressed by interested publics have been disclosed or mitigated through application of best management practices and deferment or rest schedules that provide for the growth of native plants [see effects analysis in the EA pages 30 to 34 (watershed), 43 to 54 (wildlife), and pages 65 to 71 (range)].
  5. We have considerable experience with the types of activities to be implemented. The effects analysis shows that the impacts are not uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risk. We have undertaken numerous allotment management plan revisions including the Hat Allotment (1992), Smoot/Moritz (1993), Double A (1995), Partridge Creek (1995) and Rain Tank (1997); all of these allotments have been monitored for improved rangeland health. The increases in rangeland health as disclosed in this effects analysis are based on those former studies and the monitoring that has occurred.

6. The action is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, because it is similar to decisions regarding grazing within other allotments found on this forest. Alternative 1 calls for either a standard deferred (Moqui) or rest-rotation grazing strategy (Anita/Cameron) with light stocking levels, generally high deferment success on native plants, and low utilization standards. Based on other management plan decisions I expect fully that range, watershed, and wildlife values will improve as predicted.
7. There will be cumulative impacts and these are found in the EA on pages 33, 51, 70, 78, and 80. Though no potential is foreseen by the Forest Service in the implementation of Alternative 1 to infect the Desert Bighorn Sheep in the Grand Canyon National Park there are sheep grazing adjacent to the forest on the Navajo Nation, and the potential for infection will always exist.
8. The action will have no significant adverse effect on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The only listed site, Hull Cabin, is excluded from grazing. The action will also not cause losses or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources, as grazing stocking levels are being reduced by a minimum of 50 percent and possibly as high as 80 percent on the Anita/Cameron (pages 78 through 80) and no increase projected for Moqui.
9. The action will not adversely affect any endangered or threatened species nor its habitat as none are identified within the project area (page 38). Improvements in wildlife habitat are predicted as the selected alternative reduces stocking levels, eliminates winter grazing on Anita/Cameron, and provides for the growth requirements of native plants (pages 34 to 54).
10. The action will not violate Federal, State, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. Applicable laws and regulations were considered in the EA. The action complies with the National Forest Management Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. It is consistent with the Kaibab National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. Public involvement has occurred during project planning, and potential environmental effects were considered and documented in the EA pages 21 to 78.

## **Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations**

This decision to authorize livestock grazing on the Anita/Cameron and Moqui Allotments under Alternative 1 is consistent with the intent of the Kaibab National Forest Plan's long-term goals and objectives listed on pages 17-20. The project conforms to the land and resource management plan standards and incorporates appropriate land and resource management plan guidelines identified for producing forage for wildlife and livestock on a sustained yield basis (Kaibab Land and Resource Management Plan, pages 22 to 61).

In addition to consistency with those laws already addressed above, this decision also complies with the following additional laws:

Endangered Species Act of 1973 that requires maintenance and promotion of habitat critical to the continued existence of plants and animals that are listed. Though there are no threatened or endangered species found within the project area Alternative 1 will promote wildlife habitat features.

Sensitive species have been identified and analysis completed as required by direction found in the National Forest Management Act and Forest Service Manual (2670). The analysis demonstrates that the projected effects of Alternative 1 will be positive with increased habitat quality predicted for these species.

The National Forest Management Act of 1976 require that decisions implementing forest plans make several specific findings including consistency with the individual plan and resource protection. Implementation of Alternative 1 for both the Anita/Cameron and Moqui Allotments will provide for improved resource conditions for range, watershed, and wildlife values and promote an improved environmental situation within the allotments. This decision is consistent with the Kaibab Forest Plan and provides the necessary resource protection.

Clean Water Act of 1977 (as amended). This Act was created to restore and maintain the integrity of waters. The Forest Service complies with this Act by incorporating Best Management Practices (BMP's) into project implementation. These BMP's are designed to improve or protect the soil and water resources (see EA pages 17 and 18).

Federal Land Policy and Management Act. The regulations found in 36 CFR 251 guide the issuance of permits, leases, and easements under this Act. Permits, leases, and easements are granted for occupancy, use, or crossing of National Forest System lands when the need for such is consistent with planned uses and Forest Service policy and regulations. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), as amended by the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978, requires consultation and coordination with the permittee in the development of the allotment management plan. This has occurred during project planning (see EA page 11).

The project area includes 2,500 acres within the boundary of the Grand Canyon National Game Preserve located within the Anita Allotment. Approved in June 29, 1906 by the Senate and House of Representatives and Proclaimed as such on June 23, 1908 by President Theodore Roosevelt.

The Grand Canyon National Game Preserve is targeted towards the protection of game animals. Probably more to big game such as the North Kaibab deer herd. The selection of Alternative 1 for the revision of the Anita, Cameron, and Moqui Allotment Management Plans would be beneficial to deer, elk, and pronghorn antelope by elimination of livestock grazing in the winter rangeland. Additional benefits will be gained through anticipated increases in both grass and forb plants in the grasslands and ponderosa pine ecosystems. Therefore, the activities associated with the revision of these allotment management plans on the Tusayan Ranger District are not in violation of the Grand Canyon National Game Preserve's original intent.



## Implementation Date

If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period. When appeals are filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of the last appeal disposition.

## Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is subject to appeal for administrative review by written notice pursuant to 36 CFR 215. Holders of livestock grazing permits may appeal this decision under 36 CFR 215 or 251, but not both. A written notice of appeal must be filed within 45 days after publication of the legal notice of this decision. The appeal period begins the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice in the *Arizona Daily Sun* (Flagstaff, AZ). The appeal must be filed (regular mail, fax, email, hand-delivery, or express delivery) with the Appeal Deciding Officer. Written appeals must be submitted to:

Appeal Deciding Officer  
Kaibab National Forest  
800 South Sixth Street  
Williams, Arizona 86046-2899

Appeals may be faxed to the Appeal Deciding Officer at (928) 635-8208. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered appeals are 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), and Word (.doc) to [appeals-southwestern-kaibab@fs.fed.us](mailto:appeals-southwestern-kaibab@fs.fed.us). The appeal must have an identifiable name attached or verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature may serve as verification on electronic appeals. Please put the project name in the "subject" line.

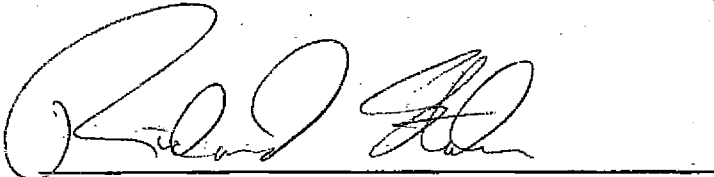
In accordance with 36 CFR 215.14, the appeal must include:

1. Appellant's name and mailing address, with a telephone number, if available;
2. Signature or other verification of authorship upon request;
3. When multiple names are listed on an appeal, identification of the lead appellant and verification of the identity of the lead appellant upon request;
4. The name of the project for which the decision was made, the name and title of the Responsible Official, and the date of the decision;
5. The regulation under which the appeal is being filed;
6. Any specific change(s) in the decision that the appellant seeks and rationale for those changes;
7. Any portion(s) of the decision with which the appellant disagrees, and explanation for the disagreement;
8. Why the appellant believes the Responsible Official's decision failed to consider the substantive comments; and

9. How the appellant believes the decision specifically violates law, regulation, or policy.

**Contact**

For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact David G. Brewer, Kaibab National Forest, 800 South 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Williams, Arizona 86046-2899.



Richard Stahn  
District Ranger  
Tusayan Ranger District

10/08/04  
Date

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