


Bull Tank Allotment Management Plan

Safford Ranger District
Coronado National Forest

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Agreed to By:  Date: 02-12-10
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Description

The Bull Tank Allotment is located on the east side of the Galiuro Mountains. It is a small allotment consisting of 8,704 acres, of which 4,824 are classified as capable for livestock grazing. Areas classified as "not capable" primarily consist of steep slopes in the upper elevations of the allotment. Fifty cattle graze yearlong on the Bull Tank allotment using a 7-pasture deferred rest rotation grazing system which includes 370 acres of deeded land.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of this plan is to maintain a healthy ecosystem on the forest, meet the needs and desires of the American public, and provide the Permittee's family an opportunity to utilize the forage resource in an environmentally sensitive and cost effective manner. This will be accomplished through pursuit of the following objectives:

- A. Use best management practices to maintain a healthy ecosystem.
- B. Improve animal husbandry practices to improve pounds of beef production while minimizing impacts on the plant resource. Utilization of forage source will not exceed 45%.
- C. Maintain or enhance habitat conditions for resident wildlife by improving ground cover and riparian conditions.
- D. Maintain soil condition.
- E. Maintain or improve visual quality of grazing allotment, through improvement of livestock management, maintaining range improvements and improving plant density and diversity.
- F. Manage livestock impacts to meet Coronado N.F. Land Management Plan Objectives for riparian areas.
- G. Continue to maintain water sources for wildlife when cattle are not scheduled in pasture.

Management Strategy

The management of the Bull Tank Allotment will be a seven pasture coordinated ranch plan grazing system. The grazing schedule is presented graphically on the attached form. There are six pastures on the forest and one on private land that cattle are permitted to graze; Knob Hill, Little Bull Tank, Buckskin, Bull Tank, Upper North Ash, Lower North Ash, and Bells Private Land. One pasture on private land is coordinated into the rotation with a total of 50 head of cattle. This situation presents the opportunity to coordinate grazing over the whole operational land base in order to improve management. Implementation of this AMP and will be documented in the Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) developed in coordination between the Forest Service and the permittee. The AOI will set forth the maximum permissible grazing use authorized for the upcoming grazing season, the planned sequence of grazing, improvements to be constructed, reconstructed, or maintained, allowable use or other standards to be followed by the permittee, and required monitoring for the grazing season.

Terms and Conditions of the Biological Opinion

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service completed the Final Biological Opinion on the Continuation of Livestock Grazing on the Coronado National Forest in October 2002. The Service concluded that grazing on the Bull Tank Allotment as proposed in this AMP may affect, likely to adversely affect the Lesser Long Nosed Bat, and may affect, not likely to adversely affect the Chiricahua leopard frog. The grazing system will help mitigate the effects of grazing on the LLNB.

Livestock Distribution

Distribution of livestock within each pasture will attempt to minimize concentration of animals and the resulting overgrazing of "soft" areas. Methods to be used to improve distribution are placement of salt and protein supplement in areas of good feed; at least ¼ mile from water sources, horseback movement of cattle, control of waters where feasible, and use of existing fences.

Range Improvements

Improvements:

Add water storage tank to existing well and install solar pump system on private land, rip in one mile of 1 1/4 inch black plastic pipe, add two drinkers and place 5,000 gallon plastic water storage tank between Ramon and Bull Tank Pastures.

Range Improvement Maintenance Schedule

It is scheduled in 2010 to maintain Upper Ash Spring & Lower Ash Spring to a functional condition. Replace two miles of 1 1/4 267 psi black plastic pipe. Maintain one and half mile of black plastic pipe to functional condition and replace existing water storage with a 5,000 gallon black plastic storage tank. In 2011 it is scheduled to replace the pipeline from North Ash Water Storage to a water trough in Lower North Ash Pasture.

A list of current range improvements assigned to the permittee is attached with this document along with a map showing the location of each improvement and key study area. It is the permittee's responsibility to keep range improvements in a good working manner.

Monitoring

Progress towards the goals of this plan and the Coronado National Forest Land Management Plan will be monitored through periodic range inspections by the permittee,

Forest Service, and other interested parties. Key areas have been selected for monitoring annual forage utilization (see attached map). The District Range Staff and the permittee will jointly monitor key areas in each pasture as the pasture is grazed to assure that forage use levels in individual pastures are maintained within the established limits of 45% use of the current year production in uplands and 50% use in riparian areas.

Cattle should be distributed throughout the pasture to prevent areas of overuse. Normally, when any key areas begin to reach the stated use objective and/or areas of heavy use are apparent throughout the pasture, it will mean that cattle will need to be moved. Utilization of the key area will be compared to overall pasture conditions to determine if it is time to move livestock from the pasture. This determination will be made in coordination with the permittee. If a determination is made that livestock must be moved to the next designated pasture and if evaluations of forage conditions in the next pasture indicate insufficient forage, then the livestock will be moved off the Forest.

Pace Frequency Transects, and permanent photo points will be used to document soil and vegetative condition and trend. Periodic production and utilization studies will further evaluate range capacity. The monitoring aspect will be to determine if the applied management is or is not leading to or meeting the Forest Plan objectives and goals. Should this monitoring show trends that are not moving toward or meeting forest plan objectives, replanning or stocking adjustments will be initiated. The permittee will be invited to assist in all monitoring procedures.

Flexibility

Minor adjustments to this plan in response to changing weather, prescribe burns, etc., will be made through agreement between the District Ranger and the Permittee and will be appropriately documented. Significant changes will require a written amendment to this plan.

Attached Documents

- A. Grazing schedule
- B. Map of Allotment

