

Allotment Management Plan

For Logan and Bardshare pastures in the Goat Peak allotment that are now a part of Cienega Allotment

USDA Forest Service
Verde Ranger District, Prescott National Forest
Yavapai County, Arizona

Introduction

On 01/27/2011 a Decision Notice was signed for the Goat Peak grazing allotment. Two pastures of this allotment would be combined with the existing Cienega allotment. In 9/15/1995 a Decision Notice and FONSI was done for the Cienega Grazing allotment. This AMP is a modification to that document and the existing Allotment Management Plan date 6/25/1985.

The allotment surrounds the community of Cherry, Arizona in the northwestern portion of the District approximately nine miles west of Camp Verde, Arizona (see allotment map in Appendix 1). The allotment is bordered by the Verde allotment on the east, the Cienega allotment on the south, the Bottle allotment on the west and the Jerome allotment on the north. Elevations range from 4900' to 5,890'. The allotment is characterized by rolling hills and intervening draws with both perennial and intermittent portions of Cherry Creek. The vegetation consists of oak and manzanita chaparral with scattered pinyon/juniper woodland, and riparian vegetation in the Cherry Creek riparian corridor.

The original Goat Peak Allotment contains approximately 6,067 acres of National Forest System land in four pastures. The Goat Peak Pasture is approximately 2,729 acres in size; the Cherry Pasture includes 1,986 acres; the Bardshare Pasture 357 acres, and the Logan Pasture 995 acres. The Goat Peak Pasture has been added to the Bottle Allotment under an analysis conducted for the Bottle Allotment and a decision that was issued on November 2, 2010. The proposal being analyzed here for the remaining pastures on the Goat Peak Allotment would result in the Cherry Pasture being closed to livestock grazing and the Logan and Bardshare Pastures to be authorized for grazing and administratively added to the neighboring Cienega allotment with no resultant increase in the number of permitted livestock for that allotment. For the purposes of this analysis, the project area consists of the Logan, Bardshare, and Cherry Pastures encompassing approximately 3,338 acres.

The Goat Peak Allotment has previously been permitted for 96 cattle year-round, however, it has been vacant and in non-use for the last 20 years. Recently recorded rangeland inventory data indicate that resource conditions on the allotment meet Prescott National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986, as amended; Forest Plan) goals and standards.

The Goat Peak Allotment has a history dating back to the turn of the century. Originally, this area was grazed as the Cherry Creek Community Allotment (boundaries unknown), Grazing District No. 5. Early use involved many Cherry community ranchers, a series of increases and reductions, trespasses and transfers before solidifying into the Goat Peak Allotment in 1934 to William J. Godac with 80 cattle year long (CYL), along with the Logan Allotment in 1927 to Hugh Allen, with 26 CYL. The Goat Peak and Logan Allotments (Modern day Goat Peak Allotment) have been grazed for some years with 20 CYL and 60 CYL respectively for a total of 80 CYL.

Desired Condition & Resource Objectives

The desired conditions and resource objectives for resources and infrastructure on this grazing allotment, based on the Forest Plan and the work of the Interdisciplinary Analysis Team, include:

Range Management:

- rangeland management that can respond to local or national demands for livestock production while maintaining air, soil and water resources at or above minimum local, State or Federal standards.
- range administration that provides for the maintenance of satisfactory rangeland management status with a static or upward apparent trend.
- Identify key ungulate forage monitoring areas. These key areas will normally be one-quarter to 1 mile from water, located on productive soils on level to intermediate slopes, and be readily accessible for grazing. Size of the key forage monitoring areas could be 20 to 500 acres. In some situations such as high mountain meadows with perennial streams, key areas may be closer than one-quarter mile from water and less than 20 acres. Within key forage monitoring areas, select appropriate key species to monitor average allowable use.
- Manage to bring all grazing allotments to satisfactory management by the end of the first decade (1986-1995). Satisfactory management occurs on allotments where management actions are proceeding according to a schedule (allotment management plan), which leads to fair or better range condition with an upward trend.
- Manage livestock grazing to achieve soil and water protection objectives. Make use of cost effective range improvements and management techniques.
- Control livestock grazing through management and/or fencing to allow for and favor adequate establishment of riparian vegetation and elimination of overuse.
- Implement grazing systems and/or methods that will advance the ecological objectives for riparian dependent resources, and require sufficient recovery rest to meet the physiological needs of the plants and plant associations.
- Eliminate yearlong grazing in riparian areas.

- Manage range resources in Management Area 3 – Chaparral, to realize maximum livestock production and utilization of forage allocated for livestock use consistent with maintaining the environment and providing for multiple use of the range. Substantial increases in new structural and nonstructural developments are made to help achieve these objectives.

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Soils, Watershed and Riparian Areas:

- Protect and improve the soil resource.
- Restore all lands to satisfactory watershed condition.
- Give riparian-dependent resources preference over other resources.
- Improve all riparian areas and maintain in satisfactory condition.
- Maintain riparian communities by providing water for wildlife and livestock away from sensitive areas.
- Through the use of best management practices (BMPs), the adverse effect of planned activities will be mitigated and site productivity maintained.
- Construct adequate exclosures to protect key riparian areas from livestock grazing where rest rotation or time control grazing fails to provide adequate protection to the riparian areas.

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Wildlife, Rare Plant, Fish & Aquatic Species Management:

- All water developments will consider small game and nongame needs and escape devices.
- All fencing will be to wildlife standards and consider local species' needs.

Grazing Management

A. Permitted Numbers, Season of Use, and Animal Months

Permittee	Permit Type	# of Livestock	Season of Use	Animal Months
Dan Zied Zied Revocable Family Trust	Term (10 years)	16 - 40 (cow/calf)	Year-long	Ranging from 16 to 40 Animal- Unit- Months ¹

The period of grazing and the stocking numbers on NFS lands will be determined by monitoring, designated in the Annual Operating Instructions and authorized in the Bill for Collection.

¹ Animal-Unit-Month (AUM) is the amount of oven-dry forage required by one mature cow of about 1,000 pounds, either dry or with a calf up to six months of age, or their equivalent, for a standardized period of 30 animal-unit-days.

B. Grazing Management and Allowable Use

Grazing Management

Apply deferred rotation in these 2 pastures in conjunction with 7 pastures and 1 holding pasture of the Cienega allotment.

Re-entry into a pasture will be allowed as part of the rotation following additional vegetation growth.

Allowable Use

Site	Utilization levels
Upland sites	Upland forage (growing season) – 31-40% Upland forage (non-growing season) – 41-50% Upland Browse – 50- 60%
Riparian	Riparian Woody - 20% Riparian Herbaceous – 4-8” stubble height

The herbaceous plant utilization levels above represent the percentage of last season’s growth, if grazed during the dormant season, or the percentage of the current season’s growth, to date, if grazed during a growing period (relative or seasonal utilization).

Livestock grazing during the summer (warm-season, typically July -September), would be managed at Conservative (31-40%) use intensity on key herbaceous species identified within key areas on the allotment.

Livestock grazing prescribed use levels outside of the summer forage growing seasons would be managed at a Moderate (41-50%) use intensity on selected key herbaceous species within key areas on the allotment.

Livestock grazing prescribed use levels would be managed at Moderate (41-50%) use intensity on selected upland key browse species current leader growth at any given time during the year. 20% allowable use of current year’s production on selected key riparian woody species (willow, cottonwood, ash and alder). These use prescriptions would apply at any time of the year that livestock are in the riparian area. Riparian herbaceous 4-8” stubble height.

Application of standard management practices such as salting, herding, and controlling access to water to achieve proper distribution or lessen the impact on areas which are sensitive or are natural concentration areas will be applied by the permittee.

Protein, salt, and other supplements will not be placed within ¼ mile of water or any identified sensitive plant population. New improvements (e.g. pipelines, troughs, tanks, or fences) will be designed to avoid adverse impacts to any such populations.

Annual Operating Instructions will be prepared each year in cooperation with the permittee to allow for consideration of current allotment conditions and management objectives. This AOI will detail the current season's grazing schedule, the stocking level, the improvement maintenance needs, needed improvements, and the allowable use levels on key forage and browse species.

C. Rangeland Improvement Program

Adaptive management would allow for the construction of rangeland improvements if they have been identified and are determined, through monitoring, to be necessary for achieving resource objectives. However, if some or all improvements are not implemented, the upper limits of permitted livestock numbers may not be achievable.

1. Install approximately .75 miles of new allotment boundary fence, running east-west along the south side of Cherry Creek on the northern boundary of the Logan Pasture. This fence will be in two segments, .75 miles long and 30 feet long, and tying in to natural barriers.
 2. Redevelop spring improvements at Bardshare and Hance Springs. This may include spring boxes, pipeline, troughs and fencing of the spring source. Exclosure fencing will be designed and constructed to protect important riparian vegetation while still providing for livestock watering.
- All new or reconstructed fencing will be built to accommodate wildlife passage using a 4-strand fence with a smooth bottom wire 18 inches off the ground and a total fence height of 42 inches or less.
 - All new or reconstructed water developments will include wildlife access and escape ramps.
 - Cooperation of the permittee will be sought to make stock water supplies available for wildlife needs during critical periods, if water is available at the sources (e.g. storage tank).
 - The permittee will ensure that structural range improvement maintenance is completed to standard; that livestock do not enter the allotment or a pasture prior to the approved entry date; that livestock are removed from pastures and the allotment as specified in the AOI; and that livestock do not enter or re-enter pastures that either have already been grazed, or that are planned for rest.

¹ Travel Way – Any transportation facility that allows vehicle passage of any sort, that came into existence without plans, design or standard construction methods, that is not maintained or signed and has a very low traffic volume.

D. Maintenance Responsibility

Existing improvements are shown on the allotment map and range improvement inventory sheets of the permit.

All maintenance must be done annually whether the allotment is actually grazed or not.

Maintenance must occur throughout the season and cannot be a one time action.

Damage resulting from big game, wind, other acts of nature, or human caused actions, must be repaired in a timely manner so as to ensure the integrity of the structures.

All maintenance of exterior fences must be completed prior to turn on each year. *(It is the responsibility of the permittee to ensure that the necessary coordination occurs between adjacent allotments to ensure maintenance is completed in a timely manner).*

E. Drought Management

Perennial grasses and major browse species need deferment/rest in order to provide time to recover from drought induced stress.

Move cattle when utilization in pastures is met. If removal of livestock is necessary, they may be authorized to return to the allotment once conditions improve; meaning sufficient recovery from the effects of drought stress has occurred and there has been enough herbaceous production to support livestock numbers. Potential return of livestock will be evaluated no earlier than the summer growing season.

Monitoring and Evaluation

A. Implementation (Compliance) Monitoring

--- Periodic field checks will be conducted by the Forest Officer and/or the grazing permittee to measure forage use to determine if allowable use levels are being reached and determine any needed pasture movements.

(Monitoring of allowable use on key forage species in key areas is the joint responsibility of the Forest Service and the permittee. Although the Forest Service will make every effort to assist the permittee in ensuring compliance with standards, the permittee has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the allowable use standards are met).

--- Periodic field checks will be conducted by the Forest Officer to assess vegetation health and trends as well as soil function to identify needed adjustments in season of use and/or livestock numbers.

Field Checks will include informal inspections, formal inspections, and permittee compliance monitoring. The purpose of periodic monitoring of short-term indicators is to determine:

1. If individual plants have had an opportunity to recover, grow and reproduce following grazing impacts.
2. If sufficient residual forage remains at the end of the growing season to provide for other resource values or requirements such as soil productivity, wildlife habitat, and dormant season use.
3. If maintenance or improvement of rangeland conditions are indicated.
4. If management adjustments are warranted for the following season to provide for the physiological needs of primary forage species and other resources identified as concerns.
5. If soils and riparian areas are maintaining or moving toward desired conditions.
6. If critical areas are moving toward desired conditions.

Informal Inspections

Informal inspections conducted by the Forest Officer will be made as the opportunity arises, such as when the Forest Officer is working in the area or is passing through the allotment.

The permittee will be notified by telephone of any significant observations needing immediate attention. Significant observations will be documented in writing by the Forest Officer and a copy of the inspection notes will be sent to the permittee in a timely manner.

Formal Inspections

Formal inspections conducted by the Forest Officer will be made as time and competing duties allow with an attempt to inspect each of the pastures.

The permittee will be requested to accompany the Forest Officer during the inspections. Significant findings from these inspections will be documented in a letter or inspection report sent to the permittee in a timely manner.

Permittee Compliance Monitoring

The permittee will:


- Monitor the allotment continuously throughout the grazing season to determine current resource conditions and to ensure the terms of the permit are being met.
- Document all findings through notes, photographs, or other means decipherable by the Forest Officer
- Share monitoring information with the Forest Officer, and
- Coordinate with the Forest Officer to resolve any problems that arise.

B. Effectiveness Monitoring

Monitoring, according to a Monitoring Plan to be established in the Allotment Management Plan, to evaluate the success of management in achieving the desired objectives will occur within key and critical areas or on permanent transects at an interval of 10 years or less. Initial baseline information will be collected on this allotment. Effectiveness monitoring may also occur if data and observations from monitoring of short-term indicators suggest a need for additional information.

Permitee Review / Agreement

Reviewed by/ agreed to


Permittee

Date

10/6/2011

Forest Officer Approval

Approved By


Celeste Gordon, Verde District Ranger

Date

10/6/2011

Clintega Allotment

