

Copper Creek Allotment Management Plan

Safford Ranger District  
Coronado National Forest

Prepared By:  Date: 11/30/10  
Chuck Duncan, Range/Watershed Staff

Agreed to By:  Date: 11-30-10  
Sombrero Butte Cattle L.L.C., Allotment Permittee

Approved By:  Date: 11-30-10  
Kent C. Ellett, District Ranger

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### Description

The Copper Creek Allotment is located in the northwest end of the Galiuro Mountains, Coronado National Forest. The allotment is 3,882 acres, of which 1,916 acres are rated at full capacity. Topography is fairly gentle rolling hills leading up to some very rough terrain. The elevation ranges from approximately 4,600 feet in the west end to 6,200 feet in the east. The climate is typical of the semi-desert region with precipitation fall as rain during the summer and fall seasons.

Purpose: To implement the NEPA Decision Notice dated 05/24/06 which selected the alternative to graze livestock on the Copper Creek Allotment from 11/01 to 01/31 with 120 cattle (360AM's), with a private land permit for 15 cattle from 11/01 to 01/31 (45 AM's) for a total of 405 AM's annually.

### 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 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 Copper Creek Allotment will be dormant winter season use from 11/1 to 1/31 with 135 cattle, actual dates and numbers of head may vary up 405 AM's. The grazing schedule is presented graphically on the attached form.

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 Copper Creek Allotment as proposed in this AMP will have no effects on the listed threatened and endangered species.

Livestock Distribution

Distribution of livestock within each pasture will attempt to minimize concentration of animals and the resultant overgrazing of "soft" areas. Tools to improve distribution will be 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

No new improvements are planned at this time; however, existing structural range improvements will be repaired or reconstructed to the degree necessary to achieve management objectives and move the allotment area toward desired conditions.

Range Improvement Maintenance Schedule

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 40% 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.

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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

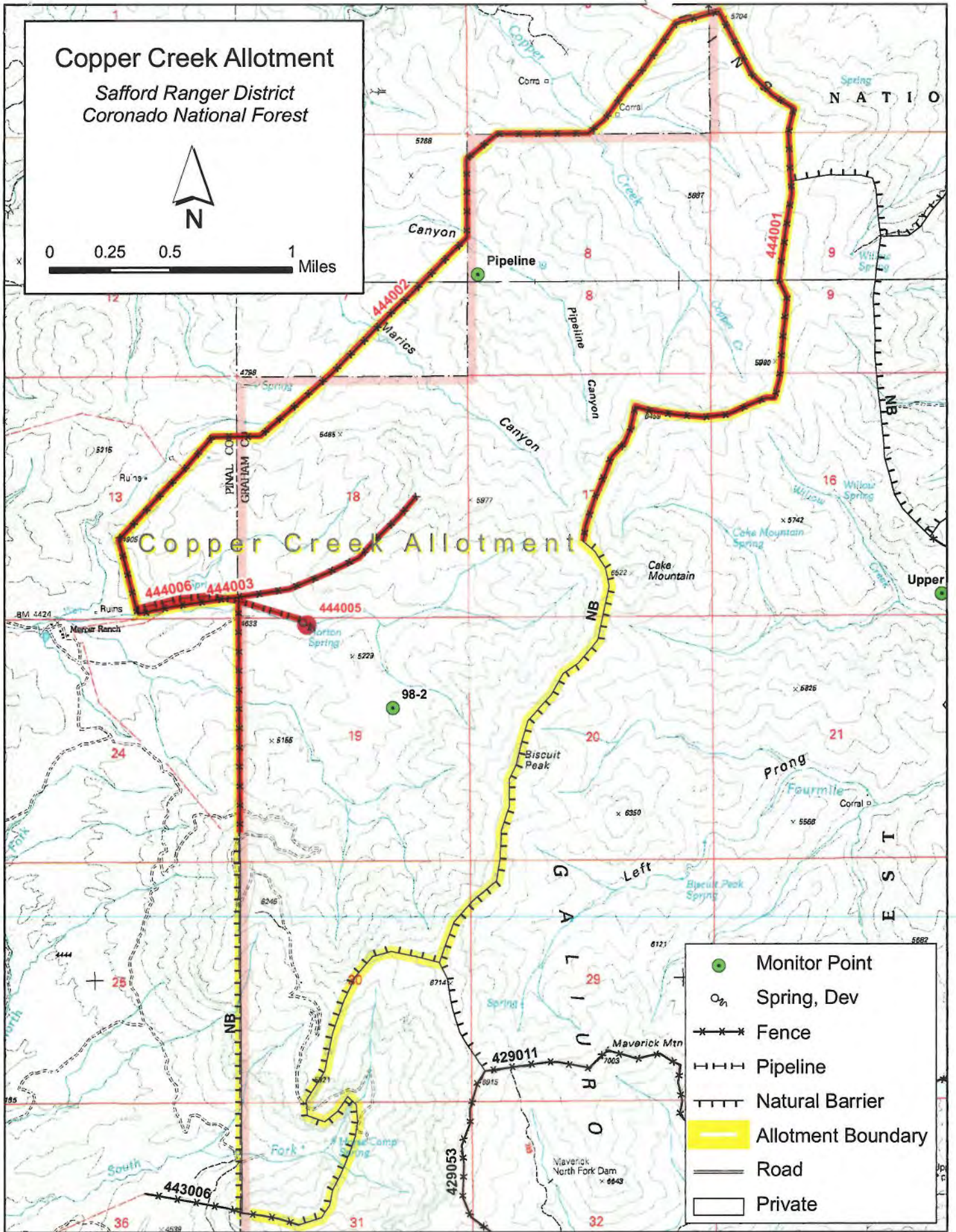


# Copper Creek Allotment

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0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



- Monitor Point
- Spring, Dev
- Fence
- Pipeline
- Natural Barrier
- Allotment Boundary
- Road
- Private