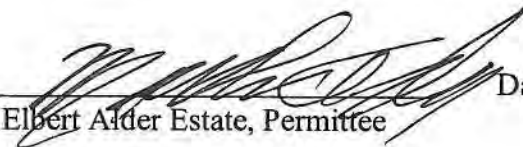


Foster Allotment Management Plan

Safford Ranger District
Coronado National Forest

Prepared By:  Date: 3/2/08
Chuck Duncan, District Range Staff

Agreed to By:  Date: 3/2/08
Elbert Alder Estate, Permittee

Approved By:  Date: 3-17-08
Toni Strauss, District Ranger

Description

Foster: Located on the north side of the Santa Teresa Mountains, the Foster Allotment contains 3,670 acres, of which 1,576 acres are classified as capable for livestock grazing. Areas classified as "not capable" primarily consist of steep rocky slopes in the upper elevations of the allotment. The permitted number is for 30 cattle winter dormant season use (11/01 to 4/30) and 10 head on/off yearlong for a total of 300 Animal Months (AM's). The allotment is in part an On/Off grazing permit which allows no more than 50 cattle having access to Forest Service administered land. The grazing period for the on/off portion is from 03/01 to 02/28. The land controlled by the permittee together with the forest form a natural grazing unit.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of this plan is to maintain a healthy ecosystem on all land the permittee grazes, 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.
- C. Use annual operating instructions to limit utilization of forage species in designated key areas of the seasonal portion to 45%. The utilization of vegetation on the on/off portion is limited to 40%.
- D. Maintain or enhance habitat conditions for resident wildlife by improving ground cover and riparian conditions.
- E. Stabilize soils in areas that are currently eroding.
- F. Maintain or improve visual quality of grazing allotment, through improvement of livestock management, maintaining range improvements and improving plant density and diversity.

Management Strategy

The management of the Foster Allotment is for 30 cattle winter dormant season use (11/01 to 4/30) and 10 on/off yearlong for a total of 300 Animal Months (AM's). The allotment in part is an On/Off grazing permit which allows no more than 50 cattle have access to Forest Service administered land authorized year round in conjunction with grazing on adjacent state and private lands. Implementation of this AMP 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. Effects specific to the Foster Allotment were evaluated November 2007. It was concluded that grazing on the Foster Allotment as proposed in this AMP will have no effect on any threatened or endangered species.

Livestock Distribution

Distribution of livestock within the Foster Allotment 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

No new improvements are scheduled at this time.

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).

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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 40% use of the current year production in uplands. Cattle should be distributed throughout the allotment to prevent areas of overuse.

Pace Frequency Transects, and permanent photo points will be used to document soil and vegetative condition and trend. Periodic production 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.

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. Map of Allotment showing range improvements and key areas for monitoring

