

ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN  
GOVERNMENT PRAIRIE ALLOTMENT  
WILLIAMS RANGER DISTRICT – KAIBAB NATIONAL FOREST

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Agreed to  
and Reviewed By: *Bob Taylor* Date *1/29/2013*  
Bob Taylor, Bob Taylor Farming, LLC

Approved By: *Martie Schramm* Date *1/29/13*  
Martie Schramm  
District Ranger, Williams Ranger District

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Allotment Management Plan was developed following a decision on the Environmental Assessment for Bellemont, Chalender, and Government Prairie Grazing Allotments, signed by Martie Schramm, Williams District Ranger, on September 28, 2007.

Government Prairie Allotment is located near the community of Parks on the Williams Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest. The allotment includes approximately 12,250 acres of Forest Service lands and includes the central portion of the Government Prairie grassland, Klostermeyer Hill, and Fortynine Hill. Rural subdivisions of Parks are located on the west side of the allotment, and Brannigan Park is located in the southeast portion of the allotment.

## 2. BACKGROUND

The current permit for the Government Prairie Allotment authorizes a maximum of 265 adult cattle and 1,599 AUMs. The permitted grazing period is from June 15 to October 31. The allotment is divided into seven grazing pastures. The grazing system currently used is a deferred rest-rotation system (the Mineral Oaks North and South Pastures are managed as one unit). Current management results in livestock grazing up to 48 days in each pasture.

Table 1. Government Allotment; Pastures and Acres

Pasture	USFS Acres	Average Grazing Period - Days
Brannigan	3,407	46
East Prairie	2,082	49
McDermitt	3,140	33
Mineral Oak North	642	47
Mineral Oak South	1,270	50
NW Prairie	811	19
SW Prairie	902	19
<b>Allotment Total</b>	<b>12,251</b>	<b>139 Days Permitted</b>

## 3. DESIRED CONDITIONS

The overall desired condition is maintenance of sustainable ecosystems within and surrounding the Government Prairie Allotment in which livestock grazing does not impair important ecosystem functions, such as providing habitat to support abundant wildlife populations and maintain biodiversity, providing high-quality water resources, maintaining soil stability and productivity, and maintaining vegetation diversity and productivity.

Specific desired conditions that apply to the Government Prairie Allotment include the following:

### *Vegetation*

- Maintain a stable to upward trend in total plant cover and range condition.
- Provide for a diversity of cool and warm season plants and maintain a stable to upward trend in cool season grasses.
- Protect Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive plant species from adverse effects caused by livestock grazing and grazing management activities.
- Eradicate or control as many existing populations of noxious weeds as possible and prevent new introductions of noxious weeds caused by livestock management activities.

### *Soils and Watershed*

- Minimize erosion caused by livestock grazing and grazing management activities by maintaining a stable to upward trend in soil condition and maintaining or reducing percent bare ground across each allotment.
- Protect watershed resources such as ephemeral lakes and ephemeral stream channels and downstream water bodies from adverse effects caused by livestock grazing and grazing management activities.

### *Wildlife*

- Maintain sufficient levels of cover and forage throughout and at the end of the grazing period to support abundant wildlife populations.
- Protect Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive wildlife species from adverse effects caused by livestock grazing and grazing management activities.

### *Recreation and Heritage*

- Manage livestock grazing to minimize adverse effects on recreation activities and developments.
- Protect heritage resources from adverse effects caused by livestock grazing and grazing management activities.

## **4. MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Livestock grazing is authorized on the Government Prairie Allotment under the terms and management prescriptions described below.

- Permitted livestock would remain at 265 adult cattle, but grazing period would be changed from May 25 through October 10 to June 15 through October 31. The delayed on-date is designed to promote greater development of cool season grasses during spring. Grazing period length would be the same (139 days), so maximum AUMs would remain at 1,599.

**5. RESOURCE PROTECTION MEASURES** - The Annual Operating Instructions will incorporate specific and/or additional measures as needed per the adaptive management strategy.

1. Manage grazing intensity to not exceed **Moderate Use** category during the growing season, and to not exceed **Conservative Use** category at or near the end of the growing season when the potential for plant regrowth is limited.

The average growing season for the Williams Districts is:

March 15 - August 30: early to middle part of growing season; adequate re-growth is possible\* after grazing. \* *Adequate re-growth is not guaranteed during drought years.*

September 1 - November 15: end of growing season; not enough time for adequate re-growth after grazing

November 16 - March 14: dormant season; minimal to no growth

**Moderate Grazing Intensity:**

- Approximately equal to a maximum of 50% Utilization (grazing and trampling) of forage standing crop (current and previous years' growth) at the end of the growing season (November 15).
- Most of the accessible range shows some use.
- Areas between 1 mile to 1 ½ miles from water show some use.
- There is little evidence of livestock trailing to forage.
- Good forage plants have some seed stalks left (15-25% of stalks remain).
- About ½ to 2/3 of the good forage plants show some use.
- Some young plants show damage.
- Less than 10% of the poor forage plants are utilized.

**Conservative Grazing Intensity:**

- Approximately equal to a maximum of 40% Utilization (grazing and trampling) of forage standing crop (current and previous years' growth) at the end of the growing season (November 15).
- Rangeland may be topped, skimmed, or grazed in patches.
- Areas greater than 1 mile from water show little use.
- There is no evidence of livestock trailing to forage.
- Good forage plants have abundant seed stalks (60-80% of stalks remain).
- 1/3 to ½ of good forage plants have been grazed in key areas.
- Most young plants are not damaged.
- Poor forage plants are not grazed at all.

These grazing intensity categories can be exceeded in limited areas where livestock concentrate: a) within 1/4 mile of water developments (including temporary water hauls) and salt and supplement stations; and b) within 1/10 mile of pasture gates.

2) Consider a variety of factors related to drought when making decisions on annual authorization of livestock numbers and grazing period, including:

- amount and timing of current-year and previous-year precipitation received at weather stations nearest to each allotment,
- current-year and previous-year forage production as they contribute to current standing forage, c) estimates of current-year and previous-year grazing intensity,
- current and projected amount and distribution of water available to livestock (Howery 1999, Forest Service 2006).

3) Permittees must distribute livestock throughout the suitable grazing areas of each pasture using appropriate methods, including placement of salt and supplements, water hauling, or herding.

4) Livestock will not be allowed to graze at ephemeral wetland sites when soils are wet. Soils will be considered wet for 10 days following disappearance of standing water. At that time, soils will be assessed for saturation and range readiness.

5) Follow applicable Best Management Practices for range management from the *Soil and Water Conservation Practices Handbook* (Forest Service Handbook 2509.22) to minimize soil and watershed impacts caused by livestock grazing and grazing management activities. The following are the primary practices for this allotment:

- Monitor ground conditions before and during any future construction activities to avoid wet ground conditions that can negatively affect soil condition and water quality.
- Grazing systems are alternatively rested and grazed in a planned sequence.
- Grazing at a level that will maintain enough cover to protect the soils and maintain or improve the quantity and quality of desired vegetation. This practice will be applied through the utilization guidelines.
- Fencing to improve cattle management, control access, prevent soil loss, and improve water quality. Fencing was not designed to prevent soil loss and improve water quality.

6) Follow applicable direction in the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for Integrated Treatment of Noxious or Invasive Weeds* to minimize the risk of new weed infestations caused by livestock grazing and grazing management activities. Relevant direction includes:

- Consider weed prevention and control practices in the management of grazing allotments;
- Minimize transport of weed seed into and within allotments;
- Maintain healthy, desirable vegetation that is resistant to weed establishment;
- Minimize ground disturbance;
- Promote weed awareness and prevention efforts among range permittees.

## 6. MONITORING

The Forest Service and/or the permittee will monitor grazing intensity in each grazed pasture at least once a year. Multiple key areas have been designated on maps and in GIS, and additional key areas may be designated. In addition to key areas, grazing intensity will be monitored in forested areas, including Mexican spotted owl Critical Habitat.

Various methods will be used to evaluate grazing intensity, including one or more of the following (and/or new methods as they become available): determination of forage utilization,

amount of forage standing crop remaining at the end of the grazing cycle, percentages of grazed and ungrazed plants, plant stubble heights, litter or carryover vegetation from previous years, and visual appearance (Holechek and Galt 2000, Holechek and Galt 2004, Holechek et al. 2004: pages 195-196 and 248-251).

In addition to implementation monitoring conducted by the Forest Service, permittees would be required to monitor grazing intensity in each pasture and avoid exceeding grazing intensity levels specified above in Resource Protection Measures #1 (form attached). Coordination between the permittee and the Forest Service will be encouraged to help the permittee accurately determine grazing intensity. In addition, permittees would provide the Forest Service with actual use records for each pasture at the end of each grazing season, including:

- Number, class, and type of animal;
- Grazing period; and
- Estimate of average grazing intensity at key areas on departure from pasture.

Effectiveness monitoring determines whether management practices are effective in moving the allotment toward desired conditions. Effectiveness monitoring is designed to determine the trend toward or away from desired conditions for vegetation resources, soil and watershed resources, and wildlife resources.

Range condition and trend monitoring will be conducted on the allotment using Parker Three-Step clusters, Pace Frequency transects, and Paced transects. Parker Three-Step clusters and Pace Frequency transects will be read approximately every 10 years. Paced transects will be read at approximately 5 year intervals.

## 8. RANGE IMPROVEMENTS

### 1) Existing Structures

Range improvements (fencing, waters, handling facilities, etc.) are critical components of any grazing management plan. All range improvements assigned to the permittee (Improvement Maintenance Responsibilities, page 11) need to be maintained in order to facilitate proper management of the allotment.

**Permittees are required to follow the District's Heavy Equipment Policy prior to beginning any ground disturbing activities which may require an archaeological survey and/or wildlife clearances.**

No heavy equipment use will be authorized until:

- a) We receive your request for heavy equipment use in writing;
- b) Your request includes the name of the tank(s) to be cleaned, their range improvement number, and/or a legal description, and/or include a map of the improvement;
- c) It includes a detailed description of the work to be done;

- d) Your request includes a timeframe for completion, an original signature and date;
- e) No work will begin until we get necessary clearances (archaeology, wildlife, NEPA, etc), and provide you with a written authorization for the work, including an agreement to the extent of work.
- f) The Forest Service will provide you with a list of certified Archaeologists and NEPA consultants that you may wish to use to expedite the process.

As you may know, our staff may not be able to respond to your requests in a timeframe that meets your needs, so the earlier you can get them in the better. Our preference would be to get that list from you no later than at your annual validation meeting in the spring. Better yet would be in the fall so that we can budget days for the various resource specialists in the new fiscal year.

## 2) New Construction

No new range improvements have been identified in the NEPA process for the Government Prairie Allotment.

## 9. MITIGATION MEASURES

The following mitigation measures apply to the Government Prairie Allotment.

### **Mexican Spotted Owl and Northern Goshawk**

Pine-oak forest considered Mexican spotted owl Restricted Habitat occurs in the Government Prairie Allotment. A known goshawk nest area is located within the allotment.

Management requirements for the Mexican Spotted Owl and the Northern Goshawk require that forage and habitat be maintained in a healthy condition for owl and goshawk prey species which are small mammals and various birds. Such conditions are generally met if forage utilization in forested areas and the small meadows under 200 feet in width does not exceed 40% and averages 20%. The permittee will take action so livestock grazing does not exceed these use levels. Actions may include: salt placement, water control, and herding or riding. If continued forage use above desired levels occurs, adjustments in the Allotment Management Plan, stocking level, or other management or administrative actions may be necessary. A map of Mexican Spotted Owl and Northern Goshawk habitat on the allotment will be provided.

### **Heritage Resources**

- Livestock management practices that concentrate cattle, such as placement of salt and construction of water developments, would be located so that there are no effects to heritage resources.
- Should any unrecorded prehistoric or historic archaeological sites be encountered within this allotment, they should be reported to the South Zone Archaeologist.

- Rock shelters considered archeological sites would be monitored. If cattle are using these sites for shelter and impacting the site, the shelter should be excluded from future livestock grazing.
- Should any tribes identify any plants within the allotments having traditional importance, rangeland specialists and South Kaibab heritage staff would work together to ensure that grazing management is allowing for natural regeneration of such plants.

## **10. FLEXIBILITY/ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT**

It is imperative that flexibility and adaptive management be considered when following this allotment management plan. Adjustments to the grazing sequence may be necessary due to weather constraints (i.e. precipitation patterns favor or do not favor certain portions of the allotment), or management activities in an allotment or pasture (P/J treatment or prescribed burning).

There may also be a need to vary livestock numbers to meet objectives. Drought may force the reduction of livestock numbers while on the other hand additional numbers above term permit may be appropriate in certain situations.

**Improvement Maintenance Responsibilities for Government Prairie Allotment #0051**

<b>Improvement Name</b>	<b>Imp. Number</b>	<b>Units in Place</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Gov't Mtn/Gov't Prairie Fence	2023	2.4	
Spitz Hill/Gov't Prairie Fence	2132	1.5	From gate south to SW corner of SW Prairie Pasture, then E for 1/2 mile
Gov't Prairie/Coconino NFB	2146	2.5	
Old 66 ROW Fence	2149E	1.0	
Old 66 ROW Fence	2149W	3.0	
Oak Hill Pasture Fence	2150	0.3	
McDermitt Pasture Fence	2151	2.0	
Oak Hill Corral	2152	1.0	
South Tank	2153	1.0	
Stump Tank	2155	1.0	
McDermitt Corrals	2157	1.0	
McDermitt Spring	2158	1.0	
RR Tank	2159	1.0	
Saddle Tank	2160	1.0	
Brannigan Tank	2161	1.0	
E. Prairie/Brannigan Fence	2221	1.5	
NW/SW/E. Prairie Pasture Fence	2222	2.2	
Pipeline Division Fence	2244	1.0	
Pipeline Tank Waterlot	2245	1.0	
West Pasture Division Fence	2246	1.0	
Triangle Fence	2247	0.5	
Pipeline Tank	2253	1.0	
Corner Tank	2254	1.0	
Mineral Springs	2255	1.0	
Levi Tank	2306	1.0	
Mineral Tank	2307	1.0	
Forty-nine Tank	2310	1.0	
El Paso Tank	2311	1.0	
Prairie Tank	2382	1.0	
Prairie Tank Waterlot	2383	1.0	
Gov't Knolls Trick Tank	2384	1.0	
Gov't Knolls Trick Tank Pipeline	2385	1.5	
Section 14 Tank	2387	1.0	
Forty-nine Tank Waterlot	2389	1.0	
Section 14 Tank Fence	2408	0.4	
BB Tank	2416	1.0	
Spitz Spring/Mineral Fence	2432	0.3	
Spitz/Gov't Prairie Fence	2438	1.5	East side of FR 141 in Parks
Spitz/Mineral Drinker & Pipeline	2440	1.0	

