

**2021 Telegraph Fire –
Jones Grazing Allotment
AOI Modification**



**Mesa Ranger District, Tonto National Forest,
Maricopa County, Arizona**

Prepared by: Matthew Kilford Date: 11-1-2021
Matthew Kilford
Rangeland Management Specialist

In consultation with and agreed to by:
[Signature] Date: 11/1/21
Jones Allotment Grazing Permittee
Page Cattle Co.

Approved by: [Signature] Date: 11/3/21
Matthew Lane
Mesa Ranger District

Approved by: _____ Date: _____
Adam Bromley
Globe Ranger District

Emergency Wildfire Grazing Management Plan

This modification to the Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for Page Cattle Co. is in response to the 2021 Telegraph Fire that started in Superior, AZ. This modification will address stocking rate, timeframes and use by allotment while allowing a season of growth on herbaceous species within the burned Jones Allotment area. This AOI is a guide for management of the Tortilla and Reavis Allotments located on Mesa Ranger District for the 2021-2022 grazing year (GY). This plan is made part of your Term Grazing Permit as specified in Part 2, Number 8(a) of the permit and supersedes your 2021 AOI.

Objective and Authority

Our objective is to minimize grazing impacts within recently burned areas of Telegraph Fire on the Jones Allotment while providing forage a growing season of rest to maintain a viable ranching operation. We will do this by utilizing an active vacant allotment on Mesa Ranger District with a short-term authorization under FSH 2209.13, an administrative change to authorize the use of available forage when drought or other emergency situations exist. The current existing permittee will follow the recommendations made in this modification. We will also be employing adaptive management strategies at a reduced capacity to weather current droughty conditions that have been relieved by recent monsoon moisture. The permittee will follow the management actions made in this modification for the 2021-2022 grazing season. This modification was approached in a collaborative manner with other specialists and the permittee to address threatened and endangered species concerns. Mitigation measures and requirements identified from that review are listed in *Rotation Schedule and Permittee Responsibilities* section below.

Background and Allotment Information

The Telegraph Fire was reported to the Tonto National Forest on Friday, June 4th, 2021 at 1300 hours. The approximate location was one and a half miles southeast of Superior and believed to be human caused. When the wildfire was 100% contained, it had burned 180,757 acres over private, state, BLM and Tonto National Forest lands.

Jones Allotment (RMU 26) of Region 3, TNF, Globe Ranger District

Permit issued to Page Cattle Co, Steve Brophy, president, and holder of Jones Allotment Term Grazing Permit # 12168 issued on 1/12/2015 for the following AUMs:

NUMBER	LIVESTOCK		PERIOD OF USE		GRAZING ALLOTMENT
	KIND	CLASS	FROM	TO	
180	Adult	Cow	3/1	2/28	Jones

Jones Allotment Total Acres 11,735, consist of 10 pastures with the following amounts:

UNIT_NO	SUB_NO	SUB_NAME	GIS_ACRES
26	001	Cherry Flat	1,220
26	002	Gary	123
26	003	Russel	720

26	004	<i>Grande</i>	781
26	005	<i>Deep</i>	687
26	006	<i>Azurite</i>	538
26	007	<i>Blondy Lower</i>	931
26	008	<i>Nolan</i>	1,270
26	009	<i>Blondy Upper</i>	1,067
26	010	<i>Villa Bar</i>	4,398

*Units are in acres and have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Acres pulled from GIS and NRM applications. Pastures bold and italicized have burned in the 2021 Telegraph Fire. Not all pastures are grazed per the 1984 Allotment Management Plan.

Pre-Fire Conditions Jones Allotment

Monitoring and utilization have been documented on the Jones allotment in various ways over the past several decades. Production was measured in 2013, 2014, 2016 & 2017 as well as tracking of long-term vegetation composition, cover, and type. Parker 3 steps were conducted previously as recently as 2004. Utilization was conducted in March of 2021, with excellent perennial grass habitat occurring in the lower half of this allotment and low (10%) utilization occurring end of season. An environmental assessment has not been conducted since prior to 1984 (Unknown date), so current ecological conditions would be more aptly described in recent University of Arizona-extension Production (previously mentioned) as well as USFS district inspections in 2004, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2016, 2016 and 2021. Trend data will not be compared over a 55-year period to determine the average as methodology during this period has changed. Not all plants or locations have been documented, as data is focused on prominent and non woody species. Shrubs and trees have not been included in these conditions, because current production methodology does not take them into account for range readiness. However, the upper half (elevation) of the Jones allotment certainly is dominated by palatable woody species as the main source of forage for cattle. Remaining data can be found in the 2210 Jones Allotment files.

Tortilla and Reavis Allotment Information

Tortilla Allotment (RMU 00094), Reavis Allotment (RMU 00089) of Region 3, TNF, Mesa Ranger District.

Allotment Analysis was conducted in 1984 and Environmental Assessment was completed in October of 1985. The original Allotment Management Plan was approved June 6, 1986. Letter dated December 8, 1988 from district ranger, stated a need to conduct a Categorical Exclusion to revise the allotment AMP. Tortilla/Reavis current Allotment Management Plan (AMP) was signed December 5, 1990 and made part of term grazing permit for Reavis and Tortilla Allotments. The AMP outlines specific management techniques described below:

The 1990 AMP providing the following information/goals on stocking rates for Tortilla and Reavis.

- Range analysis was completed on both allotments in 1984 to 1985 and includes descriptions of various vegetation types and condition of forage resource.
- Approximately 90% of tortilla allotment and 75% of the Rivas allotment are within the Superstition Wilderness. A detailed description of the allotments and their environments is contained in the environmental assessment for management.

- The allotments are run as a yearling operation, with grazing on both allotments from 11/1 to 06/15. The term grazing permit is for 800 yearlings on Tortilla Allotment and 1000 yearlings on Reavis Allotment.
- Management controls livestock numbers that livestock uses within present grazing capacity. Improvements are minimal and constructed only to the extent needed to protect and maintain the range resource.
- Management actions and tools will be utilized to move livestock from areas of upper elevations, chaparral and grasslands, that will be utilized first and as the season progresses, livestock will be gradually moved to lower elevation areas where they are to arrive in the Sonoran Desert areas in time to take advantage of the annual grass and forb production before they exit the allotment.
- Shipping papers will be required for all livestock entering and leaving the allotments.
- Salt will be placed at least 1/4 mile from water developments, trails, roads, and riparian areas as shown on the management plan map. All salt will be removed by the June 15th exit date.

Tortilla and Reavis Allotment consist of grazing pastures with the following acres:

Total Acres 69,314

UNIT_NO	SUB_NO	SUB_NAME	GIS_ACRES
00089	001	Reavis	39,980
00094	001	Tortilla	29,334

*Units are in acres and have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Acres pulled from GIS and NRM applications.

Current vegetation conditions for Tortilla and Reavis allotments have not been recorded in a while. The allotment has gone the last 30 years un-grazed on a regular basis besides for stray cattle. Portions of the Allotment had burned in the 2018 Woodbury Fire but has fully recovered including some relief from the recent droughty conditions from the onset of a heavy monsoon moisture events. Crop production and residual herbaceous species has been above average and in good condition (apparent trend). This authorization is allowing 7.5 months of winter-use, providing rest to burned areas of the Telegraph Fire.

Recommendations for the Rest of 2020 GY

It is recommended to adjust the 2021 and 2022 annual operating Instructions for Jones Allotment due to the Telegraph Fire. The recommended adjustments to schedule and numbers are as follows:

Pasture	Stocking Rate	Timing	Guidelines
Reavis (MRD)	150 C/C	11/01 to 06/15	Official AZDA or Self-Cert AZDA shipping papers will be used to count number of animals entering and exiting the allotment. This will guarantee removal from the grass bank at the end of season. Because no pastures exist for Reavis, Season of use will follow the recommendations of the 1990 AMP where livestock will be trailed to higher elevations (chaparral/grasslands), slowly shifting to lower elevation areas utilizing

			spring annual growth. Salt, Mineral and Waters will aid to keep livestock within that specific area at that time.
Tortilla (MRD)	150 C/C	11/01 to 06/15	Official AZDA or Self-Cert AZDA shipping papers will be used to count number of animals entering and exiting the allotment. This will guarantee removal from the grass bank at the end of season. Because no pastures exist for Tortilla, Season of use will follow the recommendations of the 1990 AMP where livestock will be trailed to higher elevations (chaparral/grasslands), slowly shifting to lower elevation areas utilizing spring annual growth. Livestock will also be kept east of sections 10, 15, 22, and 27 of T 2N, R 10E to keep livestock from moving into Tortilla Creek west of Tortilla trailhead. Temporary fences, Salt, Mineral and Waters will aid to keep livestock within that specific area at that time.
TBD Jones Allotment (GRD)	180 C/C	06/15 to 22/28	TBD

Permittee Responsibilities

All aspects of Parts 1, and 2, including applicable Special Terms and Conditions of Jones Allotment Permit, will be made part of the short-term authorization for Tortilla and Reavis Allotments. The permittee and people working for the permittee will be responsible for adhering to these permit terms and conditions. The permittee will also be responsible for any maintenance of improvements within Tortilla and Reavis allotments in-order to turn out and keep livestock within those allotments. Current Status of those improvements are mixed conditions and Page Cattle Co. will address improvements needing attention.

The season of use for Tortilla and Reavis will be ran as one unit consisting of 150 C/C pairs for a seven-month season (11/01/2021 to 06/15/2022). This will be a short-term authorization to utilize vacant allotments as a grass bank to provide rest for a seasonal growth period within the burned area of Telegraph Fire. This recommendation took into account of avoiding introduced populations of Gila Topminnow (*Poeciliopsis occidentalis*) within Tortilla Creek perennial pools west of Tortilla Trailhead (T&E concerns). This authorization will also follow the rotation described in the 1990 AMP where use will focus in higher elevations from November to March and then begin to shift to lower elevations from March to June.

Grazing will be managed to achieve the goals of forest conditions. It is the responsibility as permittee to take action so that livestock grazing does not exceed vegetative use thresholds. Please communicate

with district range personnel if there is a concern of available forage and that livestock need to move. Adaptive management will be used for management objectives to lessen the impact on livestock within the area. Salting locations, improvement standards and daily management guidelines listed in the Jones Permit will be made part of the short-term authorization of Tortilla and Reavis Allotments.

Standard conservative guidelines will be used for allowable use, those levels are as follows:

Vegetation	Use Threshold
Upland Herbaceous	30-40% of current year's growth.
Upland Browse	50% of current year's growth.
Riparian Herbaceous	Limit to 40% on plant species biomass for Deer Grass and maintain 6-8" of stubble height of emergent species such as rushes and sedges.
Riparian Woody	Limited to 50% of leaders from current year's growth.

District range personnel will periodically check Tortilla Creek west of Tortilla Trailhead to ensure livestock are staying out of the avoidance area. District range personnel will also periodically check utilization to ensure appropriate management is occurring.

Adaptive Management Strategies for Burned Area Re-Authorization

Strategies for re-authorizing livestock grazing onto Telegraph Fire burned areas, will be handled by Globe District Range personnel.

In the months following this AOI modification, there may be post burn reports for each pasture affected by Telegraph Wildfire and their current assessment along with apparent trend. These are to be used as a tool for restocking purposes and amendments to grazing management practices designated in AOI's. Mesa Ranger District will not conduct these assessments and will not adjust management for Tortilla and Reavis Allotments based on their results (e.g., extension in the season of use).

Allotment Tracking

This modification will be made part of Jones Allotment permit file and attached to Tortilla and Reavis Allotments permit file and 2210 monitoring folders. A temporary folder will be created for permit purposes on Mesa Ranger District, so that tracking of this short authorization is completed and documented.