


**Lop Ear Allotment
Allotment Management Plan**

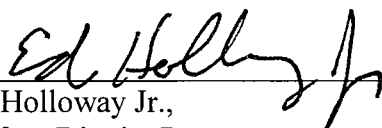
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest
Clifton Ranger District

November, 2019

Permittee Review / Agreement

Reviewed by/ agreed to  Date 12-9-09
Permittee
Jan Schwann

Forest Officer Approval

Approved By  Date 12-9-2019
Ed Holloway Jr.,
Clifton District Ranger

Introduction

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was conducted to assess management of livestock grazing on 14 allotments, including the Lop Ear allotment as part of the Stateline Range NEPA project. A Decision Notice (DN) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed on November 21, 2019 with Alternative 2 – Proposed Action being the selected alternative.

The purpose of the Lop Ear Allotment Management Plan (AMP) is to provide direction regarding the management of livestock grazing on the Lop Ear allotment consistent with the November 21, 2019 NEPA Decision. This AMP will become a part of Part 3 of the Term Grazing Permit. This AMP describes how the selected alternative will be implemented.

The Lop Ear allotment consists of approximately 3,268 acres. It is located between Hwy 78 and the state line between Arizona and New Mexico and is administered by the Clifton Ranger District of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests.

Goals and Objectives of Management

Desired conditions are aspirational. They are descriptions of goals to be achieved at some time in the future and expressed in general terms and are timeless in that they do not have a specific date to be completed. The desired conditions for the Lop Ear allotment are to move towards and eventually achieve the following:

- Watershed and soil conditions are either being maintained at or are improving towards a satisfactory rating where the potential exists. A satisfactory condition rating denotes soils and watershed attributes are functioning properly and normally. Resource values that depend on soil and watershed functionality are being adequately maintained and desired vegetative outputs are being produced within the natural range of variability for the potential vegetation type.
- Rangeland and watershed conditions that are stable or improving. Rangeland conditions are considered stable or improving when species composition and site protection indicators (such as ground cover) are similar to what is expected for the site based on the current understanding of plant community dynamics or are trending upward.
- Habitat conditions contribute to the recovery of federally listed species.
- Riparian zones are maintained at or improving to properly functioning condition.
- Cultural resources are not negatively impacted by livestock grazing and associated activities.
- Livestock grazing activities contribute to the social, economic, and cultural diversity and stability of rural communities.

Grazing Management Strategy

Permitted Numbers and Period of Use

Permitted numbers will remain at 60 cattle during the winter dormant season from November 1 through April 30 and 30 cattle through the growing season from May 1 through October 31 for up to 539 animal unit months (AUMS).

Actual stocking levels, timing and duration of use in the two pastures of the allotment will vary annually. Except on a trial basis, actual numbers, timing, intensity, duration, and frequency of use will stay within the permitted sideboards and not exceed the limits authorized in the November 21, 2019 NEPA decision.

Adaptive Management

Livestock grazing will be managed using an adaptive management strategy that is sustainable or regenerative in concept to provide flexibility to adapt management to changing circumstances. The purpose is to apply sustainable agriculture management principles that is beneficial to the production and the ecology of the environment.

Adaptive management provides flexibility to adapt management to changing circumstances. It uses monitoring results to make adjustments. If monitoring indicates that resource objectives are not being achieved, management may be modified in cooperation with the permittee.

Adaptive management allows the Forest Service to adjust the timing, intensity, frequency and duration of grazing; the grazing management system, and livestock numbers.

Minor changes to range improvements may occur as needed, such as a short fence or pipeline extension or the addition of a trough or storage tank to an existing water system. Any new structural improvements will have heritage and biological clearances completed prior to implementation and all forest plan standards and guidelines will be followed.

Planned management activities, annual authorized livestock numbers, grazing schedules and adjustments will be described and approved in the Annual Operating Instructions.

Grazing Timing, Frequency and Duration

The duration and season of grazing use for each pasture may vary annually to provide periodic growing season rest or deferment for plant recovery. Typically, each pasture will be used for a few months at a time, followed by longer rest periods with livestock not reentering a pasture until after the grass has time to set seed or adequately recover.

The timing of grazing may also vary to provide sufficient rest, particularly following drought or fire events. Sufficient rest is typically the amount of time needed for grasses to fully grow and set seed following a grazing or fire event. However, under some circumstances, longer rest periods may be needed depending on the weather, level of use, fire severity, or other disturbance event.

Timing and frequency of pasture use may be determined by, but not limited to, utilization levels, forage conditions, water availability, herd management, previous season of use, expected future use and management objectives.

Pasture moves will be planned with the permittee's input each year through the development of annual operating instructions. Annual operating instructions may be modified as needed during the year to address changing conditions.

Grazing Intensity

Grazing intensity is measured by the utilization of palatable herbaceous forage plants. It is not a management objective but may be used with other information to make management adjustments and decisions. Utilization is expressed in terms of the current year's production removed and therefore is measured at the end of the growing season. Seasonal utilization measurements may be useful as one indicator, along with consideration of other factors, for moving livestock to another pasture.

Utilization of key forage species may be monitored through a pasture-wide reconnaissance or measured in key areas or critical areas. Grazing intensity on woody browse is typically measured by percent leaders browsed below 6 feet on trees and shrubs.

Upland key areas are to represent management effectiveness over the entire pasture and are generally not located near water, roads, or bed grounds but should be in areas that receive substantial use. Upland key areas are usually at least ¼ mile from water and located on productive soils where grazing use occurs.

The following utilization standards apply to the Lop Ear allotment:

- Conservative utilization levels (31 to 40%) of upland and riparian herbaceous and browse species.
- Conservative utilization levels (31 to 40%) of riparian woody species in areas that are properly functioning. -Non-use to Light utilization levels (0 to 30%) of riparian woody species in areas that are not functioning properly.
- Within southwestern willow flycatcher and western yellow-billed cuckoo suitable habitat, average use as grazing intensity will not exceed 35 percent of palatable, perennial grasses and grass-like plants in uplands and riparian habitats. Woody utilization will not exceed 40 percent on average.

Stubble height standards may be used. Targeted stubble heights will correspond to the light and conservative intensity levels described above.

Consistent patterns of utilization in excess of utilization standards will be used as a basis to modify management practices or take administrative actions necessary to reduce utilization in subsequent grazing seasons.

Livestock Distribution Aids and Animal Husbandry

Salt or supplement will be placed at least ¼ mile from all water sources and riparian areas, away from roads, high-use recreation areas, or other known livestock concentration areas except for land and resource treatment purposes. Salt or supplement should be placed and moved to less utilized areas. No salting will occur within or adjacent to identified heritage resources.

PREFER TO
CONSIDER TO
COVERAGE
LOW - MAY
LAW STUBBLE
TO DOWN
PREFER
SALT
J.C.S.

J.C.S.

Feeding of hay or other feed is limited to feeding livestock temporarily confined to corrals and holding facilities or in emergency situations as approved by the Line Officer. Forage certified to be weed free or commercially processed should be used.

Annual Operating Instructions

On an annual basis, the Forest Service personnel and permittees will jointly prepare annual operating instructions prior to each grazing year. Annual operating instructions authorize the actual season of use and number of livestock that will use the allotment for that given year, up to the permitted numbers. They also disclose the planned sequence of pastures moves, improvements to construct or maintain, utilization levels and other guidelines. Since livestock numbers are anticipated to fluctuate on a year-to-year basis using adaptive management, a reduced level of grazing for resource protection will be within permitted numbers and non-use agreements will not be necessary.

Range Improvements

The following additional improvements are to help with the more effective management of the resource with no proposed increase in permitted livestock numbers. In addition, minor changes may be implemented as needed, such as a short fence or pipeline extension or the addition of a trough or storage tank to an existing water system. They are not required to be installed but may be installed as time and funding allows and may be contingent upon additional biological or cultural clearances.

An exclusionary fence to protect a cultural resource site will be installed in accordance with Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) consultation SHPO-2018-181611475661, approved on March 29, 2019. An Archaeologist will be present to oversee fence location. Fence will be buck-and-pole to avoid damage to any unknown/unidentified subsurface deposits.

IS THIS REALLY A GOOD IDEA JCS

Pasture Name	Improvement Name	Cultural Resource Survey and Clearance	Lop Ear Allotment Description and Location
Badlands	Water development	Surveyed and can be implemented. See Report 2016-03-01-00084.	Install a 0.25-mile pipeline, storage tank, and trough in T5S, R31E, Section 1 NE and T4S, R32E Section 31 SW.
Cold Springs	Water development	Additional Inventory Required. See Report 2017-03-01-00005.	Install approximately 1 mile of pipeline from a well on the permittees adjacent private land to a new storage tank and trough in the southwest corner of the allotment in T5S, R31E, Section 12 SW.
Cold Springs	Park Trick Tank	Surveyed and can be implemented. See Report 2009-03-01-00084.	Install a trick tank near Park Tank (#3300) in T5S, R32E, Section 6 SE.
Cold Springs	Park Tank	Surveyed and can be implemented. See Report 2009-03-01-00084.	Install a water lot fence around Park Tank (#3300) in T5S, R32E, Section 6 SE.

Range improvements will be maintained by the permittee. Livestock will not be placed on the allotment or moved into pastures if range improvement maintenance requirements are not met. Forest Officers will periodically inspect assigned improvements for compliance with

maintenance standards. Failure to properly maintain range improvements may be cause for suspension or cancellation action to be taken against Term Grazing Permit privileges.

A permit modification will be prepared for new range improvements and/or reconstruction. Normal fence and water system maintenance does not require prior approval. Stock tanks need to be surveyed by a Wildlife Biologist prior to being cleaned or repaired.

Permittee maintenance responsibilities of improvements is listed in the Term Grazing Permit and illustrated on the allotment map.

Monitoring

The objective of monitoring is to determine whether management is being properly implemented and whether the actions are effective at achieving or moving toward desired conditions. Permittees will be encouraged to participate in monitoring activities. There are two types of monitoring: implementation and effectiveness.

Implementation Monitoring

Per handbook direction, implementation monitoring will occur on an ongoing yearly basis and may include, but not be limited to, such items as 1) actual use in each pasture; 2) condition of range improvements; 3) seasonal utilization, annual utilization, or stubble heights; or 4) other annual monitoring that may be important in site-specific situations (R3 supplement, Forest Service Handbook 2209.13, chapter 90, 2016).

Utilization measurements will be made by following, but not limited to, procedures found in:

- Rangeland Analysis And Management Training Guide (USDA Forest Service 2013)
- Interagency Technical Reference (ITR) 1734-3: Utilization Studies And Residual Measurements
- Principles of Obtaining and Interpreting Utilization Data on Rangelands (Smith et al. 2007)

Utilization will be monitored on key forage species that are palatable to livestock and whose use serves as an indicator of the degree of use of associated species. They are species which, because of their importance, are considered in the management program. Utilization of key forage species may be monitored through a pasture-wide reconnaissance or measured in key areas. Utilization on non-grass species (forbs, shrubs, and trees) may also be measured if appropriate for the site, such as monitoring use on riparian browse.

Over time, changes in resource conditions or management may result in changes in livestock use patterns. As livestock use patterns change, new key areas may be established and existing key areas may be modified or abandoned.

Effectiveness Monitoring

Long-term monitoring documents whether management actions are having the expected maintenance of, or progress towards, achieving resource management objectives and may be both qualitative and quantitative. Effectiveness monitoring will typically occur at 5-year to 10-year intervals but may occur more often as needed.

Examples of effectiveness monitoring include, but are not limited to, dry weight rank, pace transects, line intercept, pace quadrat frequency, cover frequency, terrestrial ecosystem surveys, riparian surveys, soil and watershed condition assessments and repeat photography.

Effectiveness monitoring will typically occur at established permanent monitoring points.

Monitoring may follow procedures described in, but not be limited to, the following:

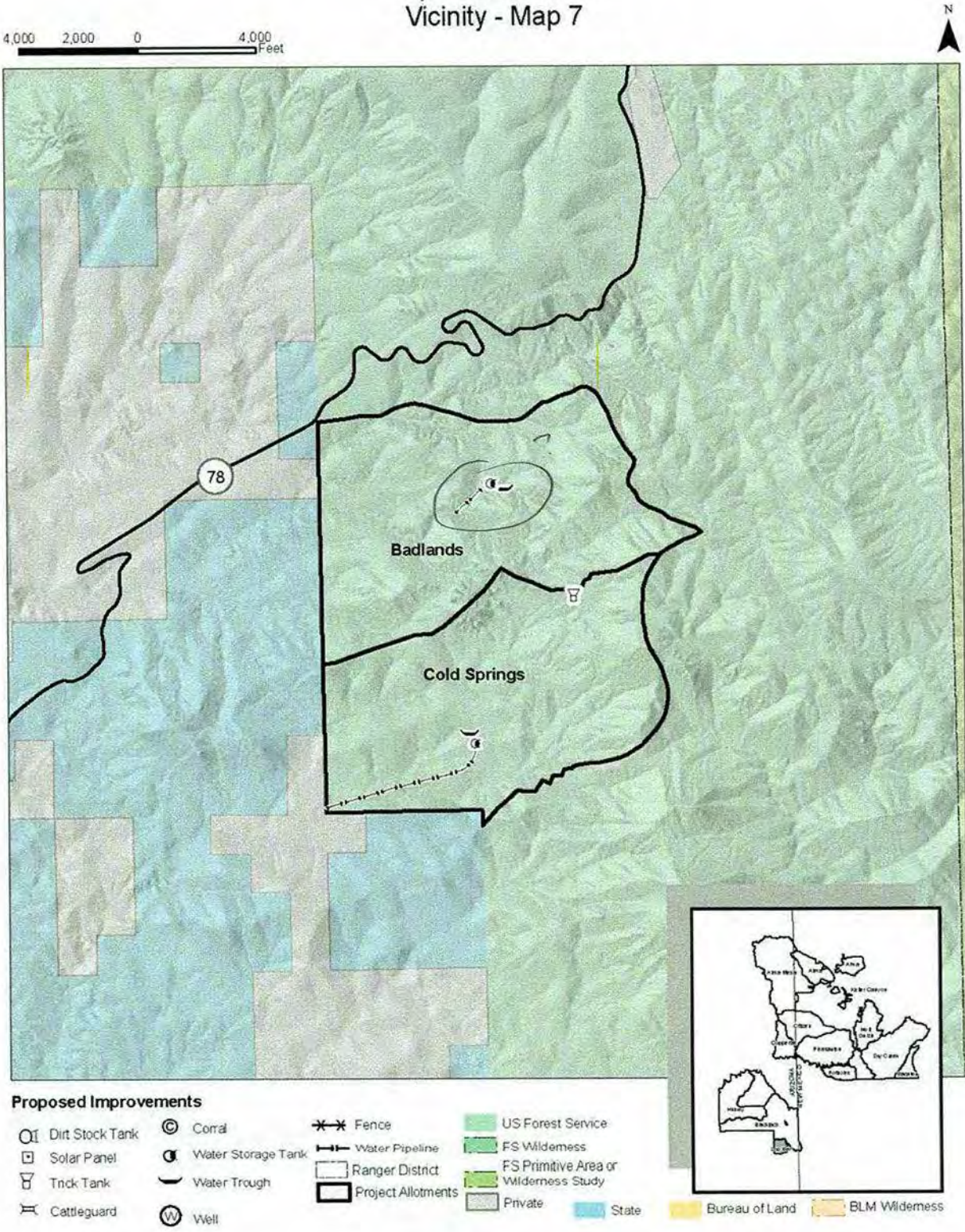
- Interagency Technical Reference (ITR) 1734-4: Sampling Vegetation Attributes
- Some Methods for Monitoring Rangelands, University of Arizona Extension Report # 9043, 1997.
- Rangeland Analysis and Management Training Guide (USDA Forest Service 2013)
- Monitoring Manual for Grassland, Shrubland and Savanna Ecosystems- USDA/ARS Jornada Experimental Range
- Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health TR 1734-6
- Region 3 Stream Inventory Handbook and the Riparian Area Survey and Evaluation System (RASES)
- Region 3 Stream Inventory Handbook. 2003.
- Monitoring the Vegetation Resources in Riparian Areas. GTR – 47. 2000
- Rapid Assessment Methodology RITF Report # 58
- A User Guide to Assessing Proper Functioning Condition and the Supporting Science for Lotic Areas. TR 1737-15 1998
- Process for Assessing Proper Functioning Condition for Lentic Riparian – Wetland Areas. TR 1737-11 1994

References:

- Principles of Obtaining and Interpreting Utilization Data on Rangelands AZ1375 05/2007.
- The Grazing Response Index: A Simple and Effective Method to Evaluate Grazing Impacts. *Rangelands* 21(4) 3-6,1999.
- Grazing Management Processes and Strategies for Riparian – Wetland Areas. TR 1737-20 2006.
- Terrestrial Ecological Unit Inventory Technical Guide: Landscape and Land Unit Scales GTR Report WO-68. 2005.
- Terrestrial Ecosystems Survey of the Apache Sitgreaves National Forests.
- Existing Vegetation Classification and Mapping Technical Guide Version 1.0. GTR Report WO-67. 2005.
- Rangeland Management Before, During and After Drought AZ1136 07/1999.
- Appendix H of the Region 3 cultural resources programmatic agreement (USDA Forest Service 2007).

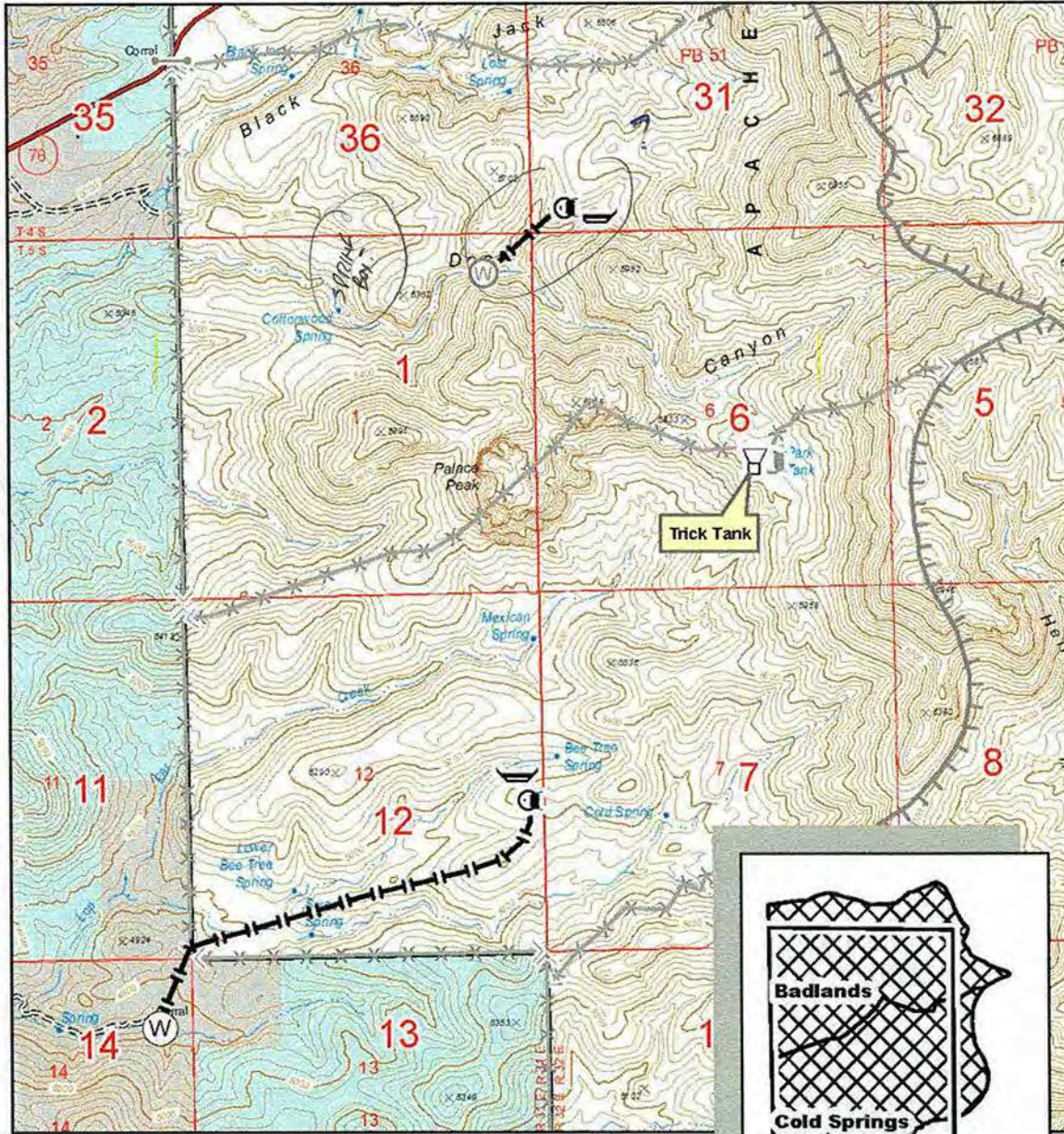
Maps

Lop Ear Allotment
Vicinity - Map 7



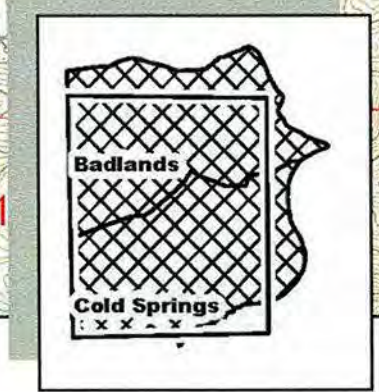
Lop Ear Allotment Proposed Water Improvements Map 7.1

1,000 500 0 1,000 Feet



- Proposed New Improvements**
- ☐ Water Storage Tank
 - ☐ Solar Panel
 - ⊖ Water Trough
 - ⊖ Trick Tank
 - ⊖ Well
 - ⊖ Corral
 - ⊖ Cattleguard
 - ⊖ Dirt Stock Tank
 - ⊖ Fence
 - ⊖ Water Pipeline

- Existing Improvements**
- ⊖ Water Storage
 - ⊖ Well
 - ⊖ Corral
 - ⊖ Water Trough
 - ⊖ Cattleguard
 - ⊖ Gate
 - ⊖ Water Guzzler
 - ⊖ Solar Panel
 - ⊖ Building/Storage
 - ⊖ Windmill
 - ⊖ Private
 - ⊖ State



- ⊖ Natural Barrier
- ⊖ Fence
- ⊖ Water Pipeline
- ⊖ Road
- ⊖ Trail
- ⊖ Wilderness/ Primitive Area