

MURPHY
ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Nogales Ranger District
Coronado National Forest
Santa Cruz County, Arizona

Prepared by:
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Date:

Reviewed by:
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Cumming Revocable Trust, Permittee

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Approved by:
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Date:

Allotment Description and Background

The Murphy grazing allotment contains approximately 9,250 acres of National Forest System lands along the east side of the Atascosa mountains, with elevations ranging from 3,600 to 5,670 feet. Approximately 6,230 acres are suitable for grazing.

The Forest Plan identifies three management areas on the allotment.

Management Area 1 (Javelina Canyon, Fresno Canyon above Fresno Spring, Leone Canyon - non-bottom area) emphasis is for visual resources and semi-primitive dispersed recreation. This area is generally unsuitable for livestock grazing. It has no permitted use assigned to it.

Management Area 4 emphasis is for a sustained harvest of livestock forage and fuelwood, while maintaining and improving game animal habitat.

Management Area 7 (Fresno Canyon, Negro Canyon, Peck Canyon) emphasis is for unique resources (riparian areas). Livestock grazing is permitted under specific circumstances.

Current Range Management

Livestock use on this allotment is by two permits. One is issued to Circle 5 Ranch Incorporated for 153 head, year-round. The second is issued to Cumming Revocable Trust for 97 head, year-round. All cattle are managed as a single herd.

Present management consists primarily of a permittee designed rest rotation grazing pattern that utilizes mountain pastures during the cool months and lower pastures during the warm months. Actual rotation dates are based on ecologic conditions within each pasture and Forest Service/Permittee goals.

Goal:

Manage livestock to obtain sustainable multiple use resource objectives that are compatible with the standards and guidelines in the Forest Plan and the principles of ecosystem management.

Objectives:

Maintain or improve watershed condition throughout the allotment.

Improve range condition in lower pastures.

Maintain or improve range condition in mountain pastures.

Improve riparian condition in Fresno, Peck and Negro canyons.

Meet or exceed cultural resource management objectives.

Meet or exceed threatened, endangered and sensitive species management objectives.

Grazing Program

The deferred rotation pattern on the Murphy allotment will be adjusted within one year of approval of this plan. The actual rotation sequence will be included in each year's annual operating instructions. The following items will be considered during annual operating instruction development:

Livestock will be excluded from the areas identified as Fresno, Hidden and Lower Camp Loco pastures, from April 1 until after dispersed water sources and green grasses exist in the uplands in response to summer rains, each year.

During a season when desirable native species are dormant and Lehman lovegrass is desirable as livestock forage, the 55 percent utilization level may be exceeded provided, this area receives rest during the following summer growing season.

Water and/or forage availability may require minor adjustments in livestock movement patterns.

Maximum utilization levels will be established for each pasture annually, based on management objectives and season of use. Livestock will be removed from a pasture before the maximum utilization level is reached in key areas.

Salt and supplement blocks will be used to help control livestock movements. Both will be placed away from water and other low areas where livestock tend to congregate. Salt and supplement areas will be moved periodically to help move livestock, to keep utilization levels within desired levels and to limit destabilization of soil structure.

Range Improvements

Structural

The following improvements should be (re)constructed with FS materials and Permittee labor within three years of the approval of this plan.

Angus/Middle Mesa division fence (212016) - new construction

Angus/Hidden division fence (212027) - new construction

Camp Loco division fence (212028) - new construction

Fresno Spring (212004) - replace pipeline to new trough at Fresno Corral (212001).

Routine maintenance of existing improvements will occur.

Non-Structural

Mesa Mesquite Control - The FS will mechanically reduce the mesquite canopy to a level that represents 1-5 percent canopy cover within a treatment area of approximately 300

acres. Preference will be given to native species in any seeding activities. This is a maintenance activity for a previously treated (ripped) area within the Mesa pastures.

Monitoring

Key areas will be identified in each pasture and these areas will be used to monitor ground cover and species composition, density, dispersion and production. Key area designations may be changed to reflect adjustments in management.

Riparian areas will be monitored by visual observations and photographs documenting stand density, age-class diversity and recruitment.

Utilization will initially be monitored by the Permittee and a Forest officer. After both parties believe the Permittee is competent to visually monitor the areas, s/he will be responsible for monitoring and determining livestock movements.

Annual inspections will be completed by a Forest officer to ensure desired management goals and objectives are being attained.

Administrative Decisions

The District Ranger will determine the class of permitted livestock, number of permitted livestock and season of use; based on resource issues, management objectives and the management goal. The District Ranger will review these decisions periodically (annual minimum) and make any adjustments necessary to guarantee consistency with the Coronado Forest Land Management Plan, this allotment management plan or any new legal requirements.