

Allotment Management Plan

Perkinsville

USDA Forest Service

Chino Valley Ranger District, Prescott National Forest

Yavapai and Coconino Counties, Arizona

Introduction

The 51,315 acre Perkinsville Allotment is located approximately 15 - 25 miles northeast of Chino Valley extending from the top of Woodchute Mountain on the south, down to the Verde River at Perkinsville, then north to the base of the Mogollon rim and east to the Forest Boundary along Sycamore Creek. The Verde River flows for almost two miles through the center of the allotment and near the allotment's south boundary for several more miles. Elevations on the allotment range from 3900 ft. at the Verde River to 7000 ft on Woodchute Mountain.

Pinyon-juniper woodlands are found on a majority of the allotment with some inclusions of grasslands and the generally narrow band of riparian vegetation bordering the Verde River and Sycamore Creek.

Approximately 19,500 acres (38%) of the allotment is considered capable of supporting grazing and of those acres, 13,850 acres are in satisfactory Rangeland Management Status (RMS). Most of the unsatisfactory status acres are indicated by downward trend in alluvial grassland areas easily accessed from the currently limited stock water sources.

This Allotment Management Plan implements the decision (supported by the Chino Grazing Project Environmental Assessment) made by the Chino Valley District Ranger on February 2, 2004.

Objectives

Maintain both the current diversity in under story species composition and vegetative ground cover on the 13,850 capable acres currently in satisfactory RMS.

Decrease the amount of bare soil by increasing the perennial grass basal area and litter on the 5650 acres of alluvial grasslands and areas with sandstone parent material that are in unsatisfactory RMS through summer growing season deferment.

Improve soil function to enhance soil conditions.

Ensure that structural improvements distribute livestock throughout the acres capable of supporting livestock grazing and facilitate rotation of pastures.

Grazing Management

A. Permitted Numbers, Season of Use, and Head Months

Permittee	Permit Type	# of Livestock	Season of Use	Head Months
Tom Perkins	Term (10 years)	Variable - cow/ calf + horses	10/15 - 06/15	Not to exceed 3192

The period of grazing and the stocking numbers on NFS lands will be determined by monitoring, designated in the Annual Operating Instructions and authorized by the District Ranger and annual fees paid in the Bill for Collection process.

Stocking may vary over the course of a year, but grazing will not exceed 3192 animal months.

Up to 60 animal months of the total annual authorized animal months can be grazed by horses.

After range structural improvements (water and fencing) are completed on the allotment's north-side and there is a measured increase in basal area of perennial grasses on the alluvial grasslands and sandstone soils, the annual authorization will allow year-round (01/01 to 12/31) grazing for 266 cow/calf pairs.

B. Grazing Management and Allowable Use

Grazing Management

Apply deferred rest rotation among all pastures.

The grazing management system on the north side of the allotment and the large pasture on the allotment's south side will change after full permitted numbers (266 head of cow/calf pairs) and yearlong season of use are restored. The new grazing system of rest rotation will be alternate years of full-rest on the north-side of the allotment and the large pasture on the allotment's south side. This period of full-rest rotation grazing will occur during the summer growing season (June 15 to October 15 annually). These changes will occur following the completion of all proposed range structural improvements and a measured increase in basal area of perennial grasses on the alluvial grasslands and sandstone soils, as described above in A.

Livestock moves in and out of Loco Flat and Little Black Mesa will be based on a standard of maintaining an average 9" stubble height during April and May each year.

The Verde River corridor will not be used for grazing. However, livestock may be herded across the river at specified crossing sites. *(A Forest Service Biologist will annually assess the river-crossing sites prior to any crossing activity to assess any potential adverse affect to T&E species. If the assessment indicates possible adverse affects will occur, crossings will be denied).*

Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) will be prepared each year in cooperation with the permittee to allow for consideration of current allotment conditions and management objectives. This AOI will detail the season's grazing schedule, stocking levels, maintenance responsibility, needed improvements, and use levels of key forage species.

Application of standard practices such as salting, herding, and controlling access to water to achieve proper distribution or lessen the impact on areas which are sensitive or are natural concentration areas will be applied by the permittee.

Troughs or mineral supplements will not be placed within ¼ mile of any identified sensitive plant population and new improvements (e.g. pipelines, tanks, or fences) will not go through any such population.

All new or reconstructed fencing will be built to accommodate wildlife passage using a 4-strand fence with a smooth bottom wire 18 inches off the ground and a total fence height of 42 inches.

All new or reconstructed water developments will include wildlife access and escape ramps.

Cooperation of the permittee will be sought to make stock water supplies available for wildlife needs during critical periods.

Livestock will not use grazing units within 1/4 mile of the Perkinsville or other bald eagle nest site when eggs and/or young chicks (<3 weeks old) are present in the nest; this period typically occurs from February through March – but has atypically been known to occur as late as April 15th.

In addition, the permittee has proposed construction of structural range improvements to help restrict livestock use during this critical eagle nesting period. The proposal suggests construction of approximately one (1) mile of division (rim drift) fence along the Sycamore Stock Trail and one (1) cattle guard on the Sycamore Road, Forest Road (FR) 70. These improvement proposals will require additional NEPA by the Ranger District.

No round-ups, drives, or construction activities (e.g. fence building) will occur within 1/4 mile of any bald eagle roost site during roosting October through March.

Livestock drives through Loco Flat from 4/15 to 5/31 will avoid the Flats east of the County Road.

Allowable Use

Site	Use of Herbaceous Plants	Use of Shrubs
Upland sites with soils not derived from sandstone	40% on key forage plants in key areas at the time livestock are moved from the pasture	40% of leaders
Upland sites with soils derived from sandstone	30% on key Forage plants in key areas at the time livestock are moved from the pasture	40% of leaders

Both herbaceous plant utilization levels above represent the percentage of last season's growth, if grazed during the dormant season, or the percentage of the current season's growth, to date, if grazed during a growing period (relative or seasonal utilization).

C. Rangeland Improvement Program

Four phases of range structural improvements have been approved:

- 1). **North Pasture (first) well, storage tank, troughs;**
 - A. One (1) well with associated storage tank and two (2) troughs.
- 2). **North Pasture fence;**
 - A. Three and one-half (3.5) miles of fence will be installed splitting the north-side pasture as located on the ground and approved by the Forest Officer in Charge. This fence is contingent upon a successful well drilling which produces dependable water source.
- 3). **South Pastures (second) well, two (2) storage tanks, troughs;**
 - A. The sharing of a well with the Muldoon Allotment, two (2) storage tanks, four and one half (4.5) miles of overland pipeline with five (5) drinkers, will be installed as located on the ground and approved by the Forest Officer in Charge.
- 4). **Little Black Mesa Trick Tank;**
 - A. One (1) trick tank, one apron, storage tanks and one (1) trough will be installed on Little Black Mesa as located on the ground and approved by the Forest Officer in Charge.

D. Maintenance Responsibility

Existing improvements are shown on the allotment map and range improvement inventory sheets of the permit.

--- All maintenance must be done annually whether the allotment is actually grazed or not.

--- Maintenance must occur throughout the season and cannot be a one time action.

--- Damage resulting from big game, wind, other acts of nature, or human caused actions, must be repaired in a timely manner so as to ensure the integrity of the structures.

--- All maintenance of exterior fences must be completed prior to turn on each year. *(It is the responsibility of the permittee to ensure that the necessary coordination occurs between adjacent allotments to ensure maintenance is completed in a timely manner).*

E. Drought Management

Perennial grasses and major browse species need rest in order to provide time to recover from drought induced stress.

Keep livestock numbers appropriate to climatic and rangeland conditions and move cattle when utilizations in pastures are met. If removal is necessary, livestock may be authorized to return to the allotment once conditions improve; meaning sufficient recovery from the effects of drought stress has occurred and there has been enough herbaceous production to support livestock numbers. Potential return of livestock will be evaluated no earlier than the summer growing season.

When cattle are not in a pasture please ensure water is available for wildlife and escape ramps are in place in troughs.

Monitoring and Evaluation

A. Implementation (Compliance) Monitoring

--- Periodic field checks will be preformed by the Forest Officer to identify needed adjustments in season of use and/or livestock numbers.

--- Periodic field checks will be conducted by the Forest Officer and the permittee to measure forage use to determine if allowable use levels are being reached and determine any needed pasture movements.

(Monitoring of allowable use on key forage species in key areas is the joint responsibility of the Forest Service and the permittee. Although the Forest Service will make every effort to assist the permittee in ensuring compliance with standards, the permittee has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the allowable use standards are met).

--- Periodic field checks will be conducted by the Forest Officer to assess vegetation health and trends as well as soil function.

Field Checks will include informal inspections, formal inspections, and permittee monitoring.

Informal Inspections

Informal inspections conducted by the Forest Officer will be made as the opportunity arises, such as when the Forest Officer is working in the area or is passing through the allotment.

The permittee will be notified by telephone of any significant observations needing immediate attention. Significant observations will be documented in writing by the Forest Officer and a copy of the inspection notes will be sent to the permittee in a timely manner.

Formal Inspections

Formal inspections conducted by the Forest Officer will be made as time and competing duties allow with an attempt to inspect each of the pastures.

The permittee will be requested to accompany the Forest Officer during the inspections. Significant findings from these inspections will be documented in a letter or inspection report sent to the permittee in a timely manner.

Permittee Monitoring

The grazing permittee will:

- Monitor the allotment continuously throughout the grazing season to determine current resource conditions and to ensure the terms of the permit are being met.
- Document all findings through notes, photographs, or other means that are decipherable by the Forest Officer
- Share monitoring information with the Forest Officer, and
- Coordinate with the Forest Officer to resolve any problems that arise.

It is the responsibility of the permittee to ensure:

- That maintenance of improvements is completed on time and to standard.
- That livestock do not enter the allotment or a pasture prior to the approved entry date.
- That livestock are removed from pastures and the allotment as specified, and
- That livestock do not enter or re-enter pastures that either have already been grazed, or that are planned for rest.
- That allowable use levels are met in each pasture used.

B. Effectiveness Monitoring

The permittee is encouraged to participate in any effectiveness (e.g. long term condition and trend) monitoring and evaluation conducted on the allotment.

Permittee Review / Agreement

Reviewed by/Agreed to *Thomas Y. Perkins* Date 7/31/09
for Thomas Y. Perkins, Perkinsville Allotment Permittee

Forest Officer Approval

Approved By *Linda F. Jackson* Date 7/31/09
Linda Jackson, Chino Valley District Ranger