



File Code: 2210

Date: Jan. 04, 1999

Jeff Burgess
1922 E. Orion Street
Tempe, AZ 85283

Dear Mr. Burgess:

This letter is in response to your letter of November 28, 1998 regarding livestock management on the Rak Allotment, which is located on the west slope of the Chiricahua Mountains. In reference to you and your party hunting expedition in Stanford Canyon, seeing three bucks over the weekend can be considered fortunate. As you may well not know, Stanford Canyon is quite dry and there is not much of a deer population in the area.

Standford, Pridham, and John Long Canyons are three different pastures in the Rak Allotment, and used strictly 08/01- 10/31. Permit is for 400 cattle and 25 bulls from August 01 to April 30 for a total of 3825 Animal Months (AMs). Allotment Management Plan (AMP) calls for a deferred-rest rotation where-by one the three canyons is rested every year and 400 cattle or less are divided between the two canyons. From November 01 to April 30 cattle are grazed in Rucker Basin which is composed of five large pastures, three small pastures, and four traps. Two of the pastures are rested each season and cattle herd is rotated amongst the six pastures and traps.

As part of their term grazing permit, permittees are required to maintain those range improvements on the allotment assigned to them. The upper storage tank has deteriorated to where it doesn't hold water and we like to replace it this coming season. The lower storage is to where the spring is piped to presently. Sometimes these waters are disconnected in order to draw cattle out of a pasture or allotment during gathering. But you are correct one of the reasons these range improvements are developed is to draw cattle away from riparian areas and canyon bottoms. In this case it is hard to do when the developed water is in the bottom of canyon.

The Rak Allotment is scheduled for revision of AMP in the year 2000. At this time a environmental assessment will be prepared to analyze the grazing situation on the Rak Allotment, as well as to re-evaluate the stocking numbers. Those intrested public will be notified as to the initiation of the process. A copy of the present AMP is enclosed.

At present we will confirm with permittee, Larry Phillips as to why cattle were beyond the grazing season and lack of water in lower tank. If he confirms this, we may bill him for excess use or ask him to reduce stocking by similar amount next season. As to lack of water in lower tank, we'll consider reason and act accordingly. To improve management we have asked Mr. Phillips to volunteer some non-use in the three canyons between August and November. You may know that we can not reduce a permittee term permit without going through the NEPA process, especially if he or she is against it. Lastly make sure permittee complies with his permit and Annual Operating Instructions.



-You mentioned the two masonry dams above the storage tanks been completely filled with sand and gravel, and being unable to provide water to tanks. The system works on the concept of a cistern where-by water seeps down through the sand and gravel into a cistern attached to the pipe that is connected to the storage tanks. In a canyon such as this it is near imposible to keep the dams clean with so much natural material flowing down these drainages. One thing we may do to increase the water holding capacity of the two dams, is to raise the height of these two dams.

In regards to your question of the road into the wilderness. This road was constructed into Stanford Canyon this summer as part the Forest Service and Arizona Game & Fish initiative to provide public access to the Chiricahua Mountains. The wilderness boundary is west of the road circle and not east. If you like to discuss this matter of wilderness trespass, I suggest you speak with Bryant Smith, District Wilderness Coordinator; since he was lead person on road project.

Thank you for your letter and we'll keep you on the list for the Rak Allotment AMP revision.

Sincerely,



MARCELLO MARTINEZ

Range/Watershed Staff

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