USDA

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Allotment Management Plan

Sitgreaves Allotment

Williams Ranger District
Kaibab National Forest
Arizona

Prepared By:

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12/18/14
Date

Agreed to By:

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Permittee

12-18-14
Date

Appoved By:

Danelle D. Harrison
District Ranger
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12/18/14
Date

I. Introduction and Background Information:

The Sitgreaves Allotment is located on the Williams Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest. The allotment is approximately 20,410 acres, respectively and is bordered on the west by State Highway 64 and lies on one to two miles north of Interstate 40. The allotment is in Ecosystem Management Area (EMA) 2 and Arizona Game and Fish Department Game Management Unit (GMU) 7 west. The Sitgreaves Allotment contains the western slopes of Sitgreaves Mountain, and topographic features such a Poquette Hill, Radio Hill, Fues Hill, and Bald Mountain.

The Sitgreaves Allotment is dominated by a ponderosa pine forest community (64%). Other vegetative communities present on the Sitgreaves Allotment include: prairie grassland (29%), mixed conifer forest (4%), mountain grassland (2%), and pinyon-juniper woodland (1%). Dominant grass species on the allotment include: Blue Grama, Arizona Fescue, Mountain Muhly, Pine Dropseed, and Bottlebrush Squirreltail. Common shrub and herbaceous species include Rabbitbrush, Broom Snakeweed, Ceanothus, Pussy Toes, Sandwort, Globemallow, and Buckwheat.

II. Purpose and Objectives:

The purpose of this Allotment Management Plan (AMP) is to implement the September 15, 2005 Sitgreaves Allotment NEPA Decision Notice. This AMP will be incorporated into, and be made part of, the current and any future Term Grazing Permit(s) that authorize livestock grazing on this allotment. This AMP as called for in the September 15, 2005 Sitgreaves Allotment Decision Notice, provides for flexibility of the yearly stocking rates and scheduled allotment use periods on the Sitgreaves Allotment in order to be responsive to annual fluctuations in resource conditions and permittee requirements. Annual adjustments in management will be developed with permittee input and documented in the Annual Operating Instructions (AOI).

The objectives of this Allotment Management Plan (AMP) are to:

1. Maintain or improve range conditions on the allotment by limiting the grazing use of forage plants to conservative or moderate levels and by providing periods of growing season rest or deferrement for forage plants.
2. Maintain watershed conditions at current levels on the allotment by managing for the ecological site potential level of herbaceous ground cover and allowing for residual plant materials to accumilate.
3. Maintain the current proper functioning riparian conditions at the springs/seeps on the allotment by not salting or placing supplements near the springs/seeps and by providing growing season rest or deferment for the pasture where these spring/seeps are located.
4. Manage for possible drought conditions by maitaining forage plants at, or near, their highest potential for growth (vigor) and reserving unused forage when possible.
5. Implementing the approperate mitigating measures that are currently, or in the future, determined to be necessary.

III. Management:

Stocking Level and Class of Livestock

The September 15, 2005 Decision Notice for the Sitgreaves Allotment found the capacity of the allotment to be up to 1,531 AUM's from May 15 to October 31 annually. This would be equivalent for up to 278 cattle, cow/calf. The current or any future Term Grazing Permit(s) for this allotment will authorize 1,531 AUM's from May 15 to October 31 annually, equivalent for up to

278 cattle, cow/calf. The class of livestock authorized to graze on the allotment will include mature cows (with or without un-weaned calves), replacement heifers, weaned or yearling steers, and bulls. All of the above mentioned classes of livestock, except for the un-weaned calves under 6 months of age, will be considered as permitted livestock for billing and accounting purposes.

Frequency and Timing

The Sitreaves Allotment will be managed with a three pasture deferred-rotation system. Under this grazing system, livestock use within each pasture would be seasonally deferred, and all three pastures would be used each year with an average grazing period of 38 days in each pasture. With a seasonal deferment, each pasture is grazed first in the rotation one out of every three years. This would provide spring growing season rest to each pasture two years out of every three. Reducing the average grazing period would decrease the potential for grazing regrowth of imprtant cool season grasses and provide additional recovery time. This management is expected to improve the vigor and density of the cool season grasses and the overall condition and trend of the allotment.

Mitigation Measures

- Regardless of the normal scheduled season of use, the livestock-accessible portions of the Duck Lake ephemeral wetland will not be stocked when soils are "wet" (other than the stock tank itself). Soils will be assessed ten days after the disappearance of standing water for saturation and range readiness.
- No human activities or construction actions associated with livestock grazing will occur in Mexican Spotted Owl Protected Activity Centers on the Sitgreaves Allotment during the breeding season (March 1 through August 31).
- Construction of the pit tank near Shultz Pass will be built to meet scenic integrity objectives (SIO) for SIO-2, so that the structure is not evident to the casual observer.

Note: Additionally, there is "standard management measures" implemented for this allotment (EA, Chapter 1).

Use of Supplements

When there is a need to provide supplements to the livestock authorized on the allotment the following practices will be followed:

a. Locate supplement sites 0.25 mile or more from waters except where prior written approval has been obtained from District Ranger.

b. Place salt and mineral supplements where forage is abundant and current grazing use levels are low. Supplements should not be place at any one location more than once during the grazing season to prevent the concentration of livestock.

c. Limit routine supplement types to salt, protein, and mineral blocks to reduce risk of spreading noxious weeds and to reduce the risk of creating areas of concentrated livestock use.

d. If there is a need to feed energy supplements such as grain, hay, surplus milk products, ethanol production by-products or molasses based products; a supplemental feeding plan will need to be developed and approved by the District Ranger prior to placing these energy type supplements on National Forest lands.

IV. Improvements:

As specified in the current Term Grazing Permit(s) and any future grazing permits, the permittee will be required to maintain all assigned range improvements.

- Remove 1.6 miles of fence (two sections) in the Wade Pasture.
- Maintain all current range infrastructures to a satisfactory condition, such as fences and waters developments.
- Ensure all future range fence reconstruction would be designed as wildlife friendly including appropriate installation of elk crossings, use of smooth bottom wire, standard spacing to prevent entrapment, maximum height limits, and locations.
- Ensure all future range water developments would be designed as wildlife friendly including wildlife escape ramps and provide access to wildlife on existing and proposed water troughs.

Any construction or reconstruction of range improvements on this allotment by the permittee will be authorized as a modification of the Term Grazing Permit, which is the standard policy and procedure for doing this type of work.

V. Monitoring and Inspections:

- Monitoring of utilization in key areas will be conducted in each pasture at the end of the growing season to ensure compliance with the established utilization standard.
- Using utilization cages, fenceline contrasts, and ocular estimates, grazing intensity will be assessed in key areas at least once during livestock use in each pasture. This is to assure that grazing intensity is not exceeded and to aid in identifying timing of cattle rotation through pastures.
- Within Mexican Spotted Owl habitat, grazing intensity monitoring will occur prior to livestock entering, during livestock use, and when livestock leave the pasture to assure that grazing intensity is limited to light use.
- Parker clusters will be read approximately every 10 years to determine range condition and trend.
- Paced transects will be done at approximately 5 year intervals to assess range condition.

Allowable Utilization

The average allowable utilization in key areas on the allotment will be a conservative use of 35%. The average allowable utilization in the upland areas and within Mexican Spotted Owl habitat will be a light use of 20%.

If any one key area in a pasture being grazed by livestock exceeds a conservative use of 35% utilization on the allotment or an average light use of 20% utilization in the upland areas and within Mexican Spotted Owl habitat, livestock will be moved to another area of the pasture where actual use is less than allowable use. If all the remaining key areas are at maximum allowable use, livestock will be required to be moved early to the next scheduled pasture or even off the allotment if the allowable use is exceeded throughout.

VI. Revisions:

This plan is intended to be flexible and may be revised if the objectives and goals are not being met or management changes are necessary to meet required changes in policy, regulations or laws.

Any revision of this AMP will be carried out in close cooperation with the permittees.

VII. Attachments:

The established key areas for utilization checks and the improvements to be maintained/ reconstructed or newly constructed are shown on the allotment map attached to this AMP and Term Grazing Permit.