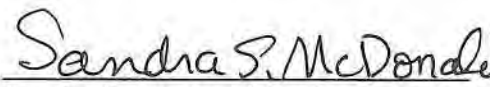


South Ash Creek Allotment Management Plan

Safford Ranger District  
Coronado National Forest

Prepared By:  Date: 7/26/06  
Chuck Duncan, Range/Watershed Staff

Agreed to By:  Date: 8-14-06  
John R. McDonald, Allotment Permittee

Agreed to By:  Date: 8-14-06  
Sandra S. McDonald, Allotment Permittee

Approved By:  Date: 8/21/2006  
William A. Schuckert, District Ranger

### Description

The South Ash Creek Grazing Allotment is located on the east side of the Galiuro Mountains. It is a small allotment consisting of 1,920 acres of rangeland of which 744 acres are full capacity range. The South Ash Canyon drains into the Sulphur Springs Valley watershed. The full capacity area consists of South Ash Canyon bottom and rough and broken slopes to the west. The climate is typical of the semi-desert region with precipitation falling as rain, with some snow during the winter.

### Goals and Objectives

The goal of this plan is to maintain a healthy ecosystem on the forest, meet the needs and desires of the American public, and provide the Permittee an opportunity to utilize the forage resource in an environmentally sensitive and cost effective manner. This will be accomplished through pursuit of the following objectives:

- A. Use best management practices to maintain a healthy ecosystem.
- B. Improve animal husbandry practices to improve pounds of beef production while minimizing impacts on the plant resource. Utilization of forage source will not exceed 45%.
- C. Maintain or enhance habitat conditions for resident wildlife by improving ground cover and riparian conditions.
- D. Maintain soil condition and stabilize soils in areas that are currently eroding.
- E. Maintain or improve visual quality of grazing allotment, through improvement of livestock management, maintaining range improvements and improving plant density and diversity.
- F. Manage livestock impacts to meet Coronado N.F. Land Management Plan Objectives for riparian areas.
- G. Continue to maintain water sources for wildlife when cattle are not scheduled in pasture.

### Management Strategy

The management of the South Ash Creek Allotment will be a three-pasture winter seasonal allotment (11/1 to 3/31). The grazing schedule is presented graphically on the attached form.

## Terms and Conditions of the Biological Opinion

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service completed the Final Biological Opinion on the Continuation of Livestock Grazing on the Coronado National Forest in October 2002. The Service concluded that grazing on the South Ash Creek Allotment as proposed in this AMP may affect, likely to adversely affect the Lesser Long-Nosed Bat, and may affect, not likely to adversely affect the Chiricahua leopard frog. The grazing system will help mitigate the effects of grazing on the LLNB.

## Livestock Distribution

Distribution of livestock within each pasture will attempt to minimize concentration of animals and the resultant overgrazing of "soft" areas. Tools to improve distribution will be placement of salt and protein supplement in areas of good feed at least ¼ mile from water sources, horseback movement of cattle, control of waters where feasible, and use of existing fences.

## Range Improvements

No new improvements are planned at this time; however, existing structural range improvements will be repaired or reconstructed to the degree necessary to achieve management objectives and move the allotment area toward desired conditions.

## Range Improvement Maintenance Schedule

A list of current range improvements assigned to the permittee is attached with this document along with a map showing the location of each improvement and key study area. It is the permittee's responsibility to keep range improvements in a good working manner.

## Monitoring

Progress towards the goals of this plan and the Coronado National Forest Land Management Plan will be monitored through periodic range inspections by the permittee, Forest Service, and other interested parties. Key areas have been selected for monitoring annual forage utilization (see attached map). The District Range Staff and the permittee will jointly monitor key areas in each pasture as the pasture is grazed to assure that forage use levels in individual pastures are maintained within the established limits of 45% use of the current year production in uplands and 40% use in riparian areas. Cattle should be distributed throughout the pasture to prevent areas of overuse. Normally, when any key areas begin to reach the stated use objective and/or areas of heavy use are apparent throughout the pasture, it will mean that cattle will need to be moved.

Utilization of the key area will be compared to overall pasture conditions to determine if it is time to move livestock from the pasture. This determination will be made in coordination with the permittee. If a determination is made that livestock must be moved to the next designated pasture and if evaluations of forage conditions in the next pasture indicate insufficient forage, then the livestock will be moved off the Forest.

Pace Frequency Transects, and permanent photo points will be used to document soil and vegetative condition and trend. Periodic production and utilization studies will further evaluate range capacity. The monitoring aspect will be to determine if the applied management is or is not leading to or meeting the Forest Plan objectives and goals. Should this monitoring show trends that are not moving toward or meeting forest plan objectives, replanning or stocking adjustments will be initiated. The permittee will be invited to assist in all monitoring procedures.

#### Flexibility

Minor adjustments to this plan in response to changing weather, prescribe burns, etc., will be made through agreement between the District Ranger and the Permittee and will be appropriately documented. Significant changes will require a written amendment to this plan.

#### Attached Documents

- A. Grazing schedule
- B. Map of Allotment



