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STONE SPRINGS

ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Nogales Ranger District
Coronado National Forest
Pima County Arizona

Prepared by:
BARRY L. IMLER, Rangeland Management Specialist

Date:

Reviewed by:
OCOTILLO RANCHES, INC., Permittee

Date:

Approved by:
CANDACE W. ALLEN, District Ranger

Date:

Allotment Description and Background

The Stone Springs grazing allotment contains approximately 8,775 acres of National Forest land along the northwest side of the Santa Rita mountains, with elevations ranging from 3,800 to 6,186 feet. It was created in 1978, when the Stone Springs and Fagan grazing allotments were combined into a single allotment.

The Forest Plan identifies one management area on the allotment. Management Area 4 emphasis is for a sustained harvest of livestock forage and fuelwood, while maintaining and improving game animal habitat. Although mapped within this management area, Stone Spring, Sycamore and various minor canyons should be managed with attention to the existing riparian resources.

Current Range Management

Livestock use on this allotment is by a permit issued to Ocotillo Ranches Inc. The maximum allowable annual use is 1200 Animal Unit Months (AUMs).

Present management consists of a rest rotation pattern. Yearling grazing occurs during winter and spring, and is alternated annually between the Stone Springs and Fagan pastures. There was no grazing during the 1993-94 grazing season.

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.

Maintain or improve range condition.

Maintain or improve riparian condition.

Meet or exceed cultural resource management objectives.

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

Grazing Program

Current management will be continued. The maximum allowable use will not exceed the most recent estimate of capacity; currently 2,792 AUMs.

The following items will be considered during grazing instruction development at the annual permit validation meeting:

Water and/or forage availability may require minor adjustments in annual grazing seasons.

There will be two pastures included in the rotation schedule:

Stone Springs - This pasture contains 3,013 suitable acres within 4126 total National Forest System acres. Major forage species include: curly mesquite, sideoats grama, slender grama, sprucetop grama, hairy grama, plains lovegrass, Santa Rita three-awn, cane beardgrass and green sprangletop. Ocotillo and mesquite occur frequently.

Fagan - This pasture contains 3,137 suitable acres within 4,649 total National Forest System acres. (This includes 379 suitable acres of 450 total National Forest System acres included in a smaller, primarily private land, pasture immediately west of the main Fagan Pasture. This small pasture is considered part of the Fagan Pasture for rotation purposes.) Major forage species include curly mesquite, sideoats grama, hairy grama, plains lovegrass and Santa Rita three-awn. Major browse species are range ratany and false mesquite.

Each pasture will be grazed and rested in alternate years.

Each pasture will receive no more than 50% utilization, by dry weight, of annual production in key areas (see monitoring). Livestock will be removed from a pasture before key area utilization reaches 50%.

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 and to keep utilization levels within desired levels.

Range Improvements

There will be no new improvements on this allotment.

None of the existing improvements will be reconstructed.

Routine maintenance of existing improvements will occur.

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.