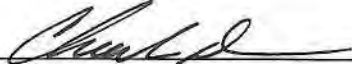



Sunset Allotment Management Plan

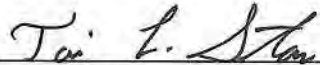
Safford Ranger District
Coronado National Forest

Prepared By: 
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Date: 3-3-08

Agreed to By: 
Aaron Palmer, Allotment Permittee

Date: 3-3-08

Approved By: 
Toni L. Strauss, District Ranger

Date: 3-3-08

Description

The Sunset Grazing Allotment is located on the east side of the Galiuro Mountains. It is a small allotment consisting of 1,938 acres of rangeland, 1,509 of which are full capacity range. Topography is fairly gentle rolling hills leading up to some very rough terrain. Elevations range from 4,600 feet in the east to 6,500 in the west. The climate is typical of the semi-desert region with precipitation fall as rain during the summer and fall seasons.

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's family 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 40%.
- C. Maintain or enhance habitat conditions for resident wildlife by improving ground cover and riparian conditions.
- D. Maintain or improve present soil condition.
- 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 Sunset Allotment is managed under a three pasture deferred rest rotation system. Permitted livestock number is 20 cattle year long (3/1 to 2/28). The rotation schedule is presented graphically on the attached form. Moving dates are approximate and will be varied according to the physiological stage of forage plants, climatic conditions and utilization levels. The Sunset Allotment will be permitted 25 cattle yearlong (03/01 to 02/28) if for three consecutive years of full use (20 cattle yearlong) show that utilization levels do not exceed 32% of key forage species, thus demonstrating that the allotment can support a 20% increase ($20/25=.8$ or 80%; $100\%-80\%=20\%$) (80% of 40 % allowable use =32%). Range condition must also show a static or upward trend.

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 Sunset Allotment as proposed in this AMP may affect, likely to adversely affect the Lesser Long Nosed Bat. 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 resulting overgrazing of "soft" areas. Methods to be used to improve distribution are 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.

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 40% 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, ^{prescribed} ~~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

