

Tonto Basin
Allotment Management Plan

Tonto Basin Ranger District

Tonto National Forest

Region III

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TONTON BASIN
ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Allotment Description and Background

The Tonto Basin allotment encompasses over 127,000 acres northwest of Theodore Roosevelt Lake. It is bordered on the north by the Buzzard Roost, Del Shay, and Greenback allotments; on the south by the 7/K and Roosevelt Lake; on the west by the Sunflower and in the center lies the Walnut allotment. The elevation is from 5,500 feet in the northeast section next to the 7/K division on the flat plateau, to 2,200 feet along the shore of Roosevelt Lake. Vegetation consists primarily of chaparral type that drops off into the semi-desert grasslands or benchlands along Tonto Creek. There are some pockets of mixed conifer (mostly Ponderosa Pine) at the very highest elevations on the allotment. Topography consists of rolling mountains with areas that are steep and rough. Soils are shallow and mostly a sandy loam with some heavy clay pockets located on various portions of the lower benches and tops of ridges. The Tonto Basin Allotment is situated on the Tonto Basin Ranger District, Tonto National Forest in Gila County, Arizona.

The present permittee understands the importance and necessity of meeting Land Management Plan goals and objectives through the Integrated Resource Management process as presently directed by the Forest Supervisor.

Ranch and Livestock Operation

The Tonto Basin Allotment is strictly a cattle operation. This consists of a Hereford breed commercial cow-calf herd. Mother cows are kept yearlong. Calves are usually weaned in the fall, but kept over until late spring or early summer to take advantage of the late winter and early spring annuals in the desert ecosystem.

The George T. Cline Equity Trust currently has a permit for 533 cattle plus 386 yearlings.

In the past, livestock management has been accomplished through the annual operating plan. This usually involved grazing the higher elevations during the hot months and movement towards lower elevations during winter months. Throughout the years, water developments, springs, wells, dirt tanks, etc. have been constructed on the allotment to aid in various livestock distribution problems. At this time, the divided fence and Walnut Allotment boundary fence, serve as pasture fences, with the rough terrain contributing to a few natural pastures.

Management Goals and Objectives

The basic goal of this management plan is to improve resource conditions on the Tonto Basin management unit while maintaining a viable livestock operation. Based on this goal, the management objectives, as described in the Environmental Assessment associated with this document are:

- Move existing condition in the direction of meeting the desired condition description. This includes: improving herbaceous ground cover, canopy cover of woody species and species diversity in the Desert Scrub, Pinyon/Juniper/Oak Woodland, High Desert, and Riparian communities, and improve habitat such that it meets the needs of Gambel's quail, neo-tropical migratory birds, most insectivorous bat species, Lowland Leopard Frog, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Gila topminnow, and the Gila Roundtail Chub.

-In order to accomplish the above, the following short term goals were established to be met within a ten year period after the decision had been made to implement this management plan:

- all necessary improvements needed are in place and in working order.
- Riparian areas throughout the allotment are responding to the new grazing strategy. There is an increase in ground cover in these areas by 5-10%. There is also an increase in the number of seedlings and saplings of the desired woody plants.
- There is an increase in herbaceous ground cover on the uplands (high desert, higher elevations of the Desert Scrub) by 2-5%. Desirable herbaceous plants are starting to move down into the lower elevations.
- Ground cover in the uplands and riparian areas continue to improve. Habitat needs for those species dependent upon riparian areas are improving. Saplings of desired riparian plants are well established and there is still strong evidence of regeneration of these species.

Grazing System and Schedule

The grazing strategy to be implemented by the George T. Cline Equity Trust consists of 3 units, with ten pastures and two holding pastures. These three units will be grazed with one herd of cattle each. The Mountain Unit will have 3 pastures, plus a holding pasture. Each pasture will be grazed every year for 2 to 4 months with 7 to 9 months of rest. The Middle Unit will have four pastures. Grazing periods are for 2 to 4 months, and rest periods vary from 5 to 12 months. The Lake Unit consists of three pastures, plus a holding pasture. Pastures will be grazed for 2 to 4 months, with rest periods of 3 to 9 months. Grazing treatments will change through the year and by season. The technical advantage of this system is the improved amount of annual growing season rest which it affords.

The grazing schedule and intended numbers of cattle in each unit are displayed on form R3-2200-18.

The grazing schedule is intended to be flexible enough to allow for minor shifts in livestock movements between units to adjust for moisture conditions and available water. Major changes or shifts in movement dates must be jointly agreed upon by the permittee, and the District Ranger.

Implementation of each unit grazing system will occur upon installation of necessary water developments and fences. Any changes in current management practices will be jointly agreed upon and documented in the annual operating plan of instruction..

Range Development and Improvements

Fencing and extensive water developments are critical to the effectiveness of this management plan. Range developments and improvements will be constructed under permit modification using the following procedure:

- 1) Forest Service and permittee (or representative) will locate improvement or development on-the-ground and flag the site.

- 2) Forest Service will prepare needed documentation and permit modification authorizing the work for any additional work not included in the Environmental Assessment associated with this Plan.
- 3) Upon completion of the work and acceptance by the District Ranger, the permittee will provide the Forest Service an itemized invoice of his costs associated with the improvements.

Generally, range improvements will be a cost-share effort between the Forest Service and the permittee. Due to the Central Arizona Project, Plan 6, certain projects will be funded in part by the Bureau of Reclamation. A separate schedule attached itemizes the improvements along with the share to be paid or supplied by the government and that of the permittee.

Each improvement will be constructed under permit modification which will outline specific details of cost-share and details of construction. When funding limitations exist in any fiscal year, water developments will have priority over fence construction.

Range Improvement Schedule

See appendix - Range Improvement Schedule

Range Improvement Maintenance

The attached list of range improvements will be maintained by the permittee to a functional standard throughout the life of this plan. These are in addition to those specified in the Term Grazing Permit. Emphasis will be placed on maintaining allotment boundary fences and maintaining existing spring developments.

The use of heavy equipment such as crawler tractors must be approved in advance by the District Ranger.

Cleaning dirt stock tanks is considered a maintenance item and will require only advance notice via a phone call. Any major work which significantly alters the structure, spillway or increases the original capacity of the tank is considered reconstruction and will require a joint on-site inspection to determine the extent of the work to be done.

General Management Considerations

A. Actual Use Records

The permittee will keep accurate accounting of cattle numbers entering each unit and the length of time the unit was grazed. These records will be presented to the District at the end of each grazing season.

B. Annual Operating Plan

The Annual Operating Plan will be the action plan that implements management decisions for the current year. These instructions will serve as a working understanding with the permittee for carrying out actions described in the management plan. The annual plan will outline items of permittee responsibility such as salting, range improvement construction and maintenance, and livestock movement between units.

C. Followup Action and Monitoring

Follow-up action and monitoring will be consistent with the Interdisciplinary Review Team's Monitoring plan for Plan 6 allotments and base data collected prior to new management agreements. Vegetative sampling associated with the Monitoring Plan will be conducted in 1996. The purpose of this is to determine the effectiveness of the management plan in terms of livestock distribution and location of range developments. The effective implementation of this management plan and the availability of adequate waters in the different grazing units will improve both the resource conditions and grazing capacity on the Tonto Basin Allotment.

Reports of the monitoring results will be sent to the Bureau of Reclamation. The status of new improvements, whether completed and/or their progress, will be noted after the four year monitoring review and the preparation for the modification of the 5-year plan. The status of these improvements is important when determining their usefulness and effectiveness as it pertains to the monitoring results.

D. Biological Assessment and Evaluation Follow-up Action

Recommendations by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concerning the Biological Assessment and Evaluation will be followed. If any range improvement locations are not as specified in the BA&E, the Fish and Wildlife service must be consulted as to the impacts of the change.

BA&E No.	Project Name	Project Type	Description	FS Resp.	Perm. Resp.	Other
None	Twin Butte Pasture Fence	Conv. 4-strand barbed wire fence	Construct 2.5 miles fence to FS and wildlife specifications	BOR \$6250 Materials	Labor	
None	Conway Spring Extension	Pipeline	Construct 4 miles black pipe with 4 troughs and fittings	BOR \$6740 Materials	Labor	
None	Journigan Spring Extension	Pipeline	Construct 2 miles black pipe with 2 troughs and a storage tank with fittings and cement	BOR \$4870 Materials	Labor	
None	Twin Butte Extension	Pipeline	Construct .25 miles black pipe with 1 trough and fittings	BOR \$620 Materials	Labor	
None	Horse Range Spring Extension	Pipeline	Construct .5 miles black pipe with 1 trough and fittings	BOR \$960 Materials	Labor	
None	Cline Mesa Fence	Conv. 4-strand barbed wire fence	Construct 3.5 miles of fence to FS and wildlife specifications	BOR \$8750 Materials	Labor	
8	Journigan Fence	Same as above	Construct 3 miles of fence to FS and wildlife specifications	BOR \$7500 Materials	Labor	
10	Methodist Fence	Same as above	Construct 3 miles of fence to FS and wildlife specifications	BOR \$7500 Materials	Labor	
None	Piston Pump	Pump	1 Pump	BOR \$5000 Materials		
9	Cactus Butte Pipeline	Pipeline	Construct 1 mile of black pipe with 1 trough and fittings	BOR \$1810 Materials	Labor	

BA&E No.	Project Name	Project Type	Description	FS Resp.	Perm. Resp.	Other
3	Bear Head Fence	Conv. 4-strand barbed wire fence	Construct 3 miles of fence to FS and wildlife specifications	RBF \$7500 Materials	Labor	
2	Clover Fence	Same as above	Construct 2 miles of fence to FS and wildlife specifications	RBF \$5000 Materials	Labor	
24	Turkey Creek Trap	Same as above	Construct 1.58 miles of fence to FS and wildlife specifications	RBF \$3950 Materials	Labor	
25	Turkey Creek Spring Development	Spring Development	Develop a spring including 660 feet of black pipe and 1 trough with fittings	RBF \$440 Materials	Labor	
26	Bear Head Trap	Conv. 4-strand barbed wire fence	Construct 1.58 miles of fence to FS and wildlife specifications	RBF \$3950 Materials	Labor	
27	Bear Head Spring Development	Spring Development	Develop a spring including 660 feet of black pipe with 1 trough and fittings	RBF \$440 Materials	Labor	
6	Corner Corral	Steel Corral	Construct a corral with pipe and sucker rod	RBF \$7500 Materials	Labor	
5	Lower Division Fence	Conv. 4-strand barbed wire fence	Construct 5 miles of fence to FS and wildlife specifications	RBF \$12,500 Materials	Labor	
4	Oak Fence	Same as above	Construct 2 miles of fence to FS and wildlife specifications	RBF \$5000 Materials	Labor	
9	Cactus Butte Pipeline Storage Tank	10,000 gal steel storage tank	Construct 1 steel rim, 10,000 gal storage tank including cement base	RBF \$1500 Materials	Labor	