

Allotment Management Plan

Sand Flat Range Allotment

USDA Forest Service

Prescott National Forest

Chino Valley Ranger District,

Yavapai and Coconino Counties, Arizona

Introduction

The 23,111 acre Sand Flat Allotment is located approximately 26 miles northeast of Chino Valley between the Upper Verde River and the Mogollon Rim. Nearly 2 miles of the Verde River forms the allotment's southern most boundary. Elevations on the allotment range from 4000 ft. at the Verde River to 5600 ft along the Rim. The allotment is directly south of the Tule Allotment on the Kaibab National Forest, which is utilized as summer/fall pasture in a total grazing management regime.

Pinyon-juniper woodlands are found on a majority of the allotment with small inclusions of grasslands and the generally narrow band of riparian vegetation bordering the Verde River.

11,786 acres (51% of the allotment) are considered capable of supporting grazing. Of those acres, approximately 76% or 8,957 acres are in satisfactory Rangeland Management Status (RMS).

This Allotment Management Plan implements the decision (supported by the Chino Grazing Project Environmental Assessment) made by the Chino Valley District Ranger on February 2, 2004.

Objectives

Maintain both the current diversity in understory species composition and vegetative ground cover on the 8,957 capable acres currently in satisfactory RMS.

Increase the diversity of perennial grass species and vegetative ground cover on areas treated to reduce juniper canopy density with very low vegetative ground cover and open canopied pinyon-juniper communities that are currently in unsatisfactory RMS (2,829 acres).

Improve soil function to enhance soil conditions.

Ensure that structural improvements distribute livestock throughout the acres capable of supporting livestock grazing and facilitate a rotation grazing management system.

Grazing Management

A. Permitted Numbers, Season of Use, and Head Months

Permittee	Permit Type	# of Livestock	Season of Use	Head Months
Bill and Nancy Shew	Term (10 years)	280 - 300 cow/calf pairs + 20 horses	Winter/Spring 12/15 – 5/15	1,400 – 1,500 <i>100 - Horses</i>

The period of grazing and the stocking numbers on NFS lands will be determined by monitoring, designated in the Annual Operating Instructions and authorized by the annual grazing application and validated by payment grazing fees designated within the Bill for Collection.

Saddle horses will be grazed for one and one-half (1.5) months (6 weeks) within the established season of use depicted above.

B. Grazing Management and Allowable Use

Grazing Management

The existing three (3) pastures will be used in a rotation that alternates spring deferment between Mexican and Witty Tom Pastures. An additional bull/horse pasture will be used on a limited duration basis.

The Verde River corridor will not be used for livestock grazing.

Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) will be prepared each year in cooperation with the permittee to allow for consideration of current allotment conditions and management objectives. This AOI will detail the current season's grazing schedule, the stocking level, improvement maintenance needs, needed improvements, and the allowable use levels of key forage and browse species.

Application of standard management practices such as salting, herding, and controlling access to water to achieve proper distribution or lessen the impact on areas which are sensitive or are natural concentration areas will be applied by the permittee.

Protein, salt, and other supplements will not be placed within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of water or any identified sensitive plant population and new improvements (e.g. pipelines, troughs, tanks, or fences) will not go through any such population.

All new or reconstructed fencing will be built to accommodate wildlife passage using a 4-strand fence with a smooth bottom wire 18 inches off the ground and a total fence height of 42 inches or less.

All new or reconstructed water developments will include wildlife access and escape ramps.

Cooperation of the permittee will be sought to make stock water supplies available for wildlife needs during critical periods, if water is available at the sources (e.g. storage tank).

No round-ups, drives, or construction activities (e.g. fence building) will occur within 1/4 mile of any bald eagle nest site when eggs and/or young chicks (<3 weeks old) are present in the nest.

No round-ups, drives, or construction activities (e.g. fence building) will occur within 1/4 mile of any bald eagle roost site during roosting December through April.

The permittee will ensure that structural range improvement maintenance is completed to standard; that livestock do not enter the allotment or a pasture prior to the approved entry date; that livestock are removed from pastures and/or the allotment as specified in the AOI; that livestock do not enter or re-enter pastures that have already been grazed, or that are planned for rest.

Allowable Use

Site	Use of Herbaceous Plants	Use of Shrubs
Upland sites	40% on key forage plants in key areas at the time livestock are moved from the pasture	40% of leaders

The herbaceous plant utilization levels above represent the percentage of last season's growth, if grazed during the dormant season, or the percentage of the current season's growth, to date, if grazed during a growing period (relative or seasonal utilization).

C. Rangeland Improvement Program

One (1) well with accompanying storage tank, pipeline, and drinker will be installed as located on the ground and approved by the Forest Officer. (See Attached Map for approximate locations).

Two (2) trick tanks will be installed in Mexican Pasture as located on the ground and approved by the Forest Officer. (See Attached Map for approximate locations).

Conduct heavy maintenance on 10 earth stock tanks in order to bring them up to functioning standards as approved by the Forest Officer. (See Attached Map for approximate locations and attached list for proposed completion dates).

Approximately one-half (1/2) mile of gap fence along the Verde River breaks is authorized but need not be installed unless livestock drift from the uplands to the Verde River.

D. Maintenance Responsibility

Existing improvements are shown on the allotment map and range improvement inventory sheets of the permit.

All maintenance must be done annually whether the allotment is actually grazed or not.

Maintenance must occur throughout the season and cannot be a one time action.

Damage resulting from big game, wind, other acts of nature, or human caused actions, must be repaired in a timely manner so as to ensure the integrity of the structures.

All maintenance of exterior fences must be completed prior to turn on each year. *(It is the responsibility of the permittee to ensure that the necessary coordination occurs between adjacent allotments to ensure maintenance is completed in a timely manner).*

E. Drought Management

Perennial grasses and major browse species will be rested in order to provide time to recover from drought induced stress.

Move cattle when utilization in pastures is met. If removal of livestock is necessary, they may be authorized to return to the allotment once conditions improve; meaning sufficient recovery from the effects of drought stress has occurred and there has been enough herbaceous production to support livestock numbers. Potential return of livestock will be evaluated no earlier than the summer growing season.

Monitoring and Evaluation

A. Implementation (Compliance) Monitoring

Periodic field checks will be conducted by the Forest Officer and/or the grazing permittee to measure forage use to determine if allowable use levels are being reached and determine any needed pasture movements.

(Monitoring of allowable use on key forage species in key areas is the joint responsibility of the Forest Service and the permittee. Although the Forest Service will make every effort to assist the permittee in ensuring compliance with standards, the permittee has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the allowable use standards are met).

Periodic field checks will be conducted by the Forest Officer to assess vegetation health and trends as well as soil function to identify needed adjustments in season of use and/or livestock numbers.

B. Field Checks:

Field Checks will include informal inspections, formal inspections, and permittee compliance monitoring.

Informal Inspections

Informal inspections conducted by the Forest Officer will be made as the opportunity arises, such as when the Forest Officer is working in the area or is passing through the allotment.

The permittee will be notified by telephone of any significant observations needing immediate attention. Significant observations will be documented in writing by the Forest Officer and a copy of the inspection notes will be sent to the permittee in a timely manner.

Formal Inspections

Formal inspections conducted by the Forest Officer will be made as time and competing duties allow with an attempt to inspect each of the pastures. The permittee will be requested to accompany the Forest Officer during the inspections. Significant findings from these inspections will be documented in a letter or inspection report sent to the permittee in a timely manner.

C. Permittee Compliance Monitoring

The permittee will:

- Monitor the allotment continuously throughout the grazing season to determine current resource conditions and to ensure the terms of the permit are being met.
- Document all findings through notes, photographs, or other means that are decipherable by the Forest Officer.
- Share monitoring information with the Forest Officer, and
- Coordinate with the Forest Officer to resolve any problems that arise.

D. Effectiveness Monitoring

The permittee is encouraged to participate in any effectiveness (e.g. long term condition and trend) monitoring and evaluation conducted on the allotment.

Permittee Review / Agreement

Reviewed by / Agreed to Bill Shiew, Nancy Shiew Date 10-19-2010
Bill and Nancy Shiew, Sand Flat Permittees

Forest Officer Approval

Approved by Linda Jackson ADR Date 10-22-10
Linda Jackson, Chino Valley District Ranger