

Allotment Management Plan

V - Bar

USDA Forest Service
Verde Ranger District, Prescott National Forest
Yavapai County, Arizona

Introduction

The V-Bar Allotment is situated approximately 7 miles southeast of Mayer, Arizona and involves approximately 20,736 acres of Prescott National Forest acres.

Topography is mainly rolling hills and flats with a few step sided drainages supporting grasslands/desert shrub vegetation types. Soils are of basaltic origin with montmorillonitic clays prevalent east of I-17 where the dominant vegetation is tobosa grass and granitic parent material soils supporting moderate to heavy density stands of mimosa mixed with grama grasses, aristidas, curly mesquite, cane bluestem, and sand dropseed on the west side.

In general species composition on the allotment is near potential and has exhibited good vigor and health. Riparian areas associated with several drainages exhibit good to moderate vigor.

Pronghorn antelope frequent the area east of the I-17 corridor on the semi-desert grassland flats, and in lesser numbers on the west side of I-17.

This Allotment Management Plan implements the decision (supported by the V-Bar Livestock Grazing Project Assessment) made by the Verde District Ranger on September 28, 2007, and supersedes the previous AMP signed on 7/24/2009.

Objectives

- Continue to improve/maintain soil conditions by striving to attain/maintain effective litter and vegetative basal area (vegetation ground cover).
- Continue to manage for a diverse population of flora that provides for watershed health, wildlife habitat, and forage for herbivores.
- Continue to maintain the hydrologic system necessary to maintain state water quality standards

Grazing Management

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

Permittee	Permit Type	# of Livestock	Season of Use	Head Months
Orme Ranch Inc. Enoch Malouff, Manager	Term (10 years)	Variable – based on allotment conditions and management objectives	Yearlong – 25 pasture holistic	Variable – based on allotment conditions and management objectives

The period of grazing and the stocking numbers on NFS lands will be determined by monitoring resource conditions, designated in the Annual Operating Instructions, and authorized in the Bill for Collection.

B. Grazing Management and Allowable Use

Grazing Management

Apply a holistic grazing management strategy in the 25 National Forest pastures on a yearlong basis (although this may be less in some years).

A forage inventory process will be used to determine each year's available forage. This inventory will give an estimate of how many animal days of feed exist per acre. This number then will be multiplied by the number of acres available which in turn will give the available animal days in a pasture. Then, based on the allotment's landscape and production goals, objectives that include consideration for wildlife needs, water cycling opportunities, and drought reserve feed will be established for the grazing season.

In the event that the allotment management strategy changes from HM to a traditional rest rotation, grazing will continue with a reduced number of pastures (possibly 4 or more). Timing of pasture moves would be dictated by utilization monitoring and management objectives specified in the allotment management plan.

Annual Operating Instructions 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, the improvement maintenance needs, needed improvements, and the allowable use levels on key forage and browse species.

Application of standard management practices such as salting, herding, and controlling access to water to achieve proper distribution 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. But at times salt may need to be placed near water to get the impacts needed to reach desired conditions. New improvements (e.g. pipelines, troughs, tanks, or fences) will be designed to avoid adverse impacts to any such populations.

All new or reconstructed permanent 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. Electric fence can be built with the bottom wire being a minimum of 16 inches from the ground.

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).

The permittee will ensure that structural range improvement maintenance is completed to standard; follow pasture rotations specified in the AOI that are agreed to with the permittee.

Allowable Use

Site	Use of Herbaceous Plants	Use of Trees/Shrubs
Upland sites	35% in pastures used during the growing season (sufficient re-growth and plant recovery of grazed herbaceous forage plants is expected prior to the end of the growing season). Use in pastures during slow growth and the dormant season will be 50% (little to no re-growth of grazed herbaceous forage plants is expected prior to the end of the grazing season)	50% of available leaders
Riparian	40% of current year's growth	20% of current year's growth

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).

Use in pastures under the HM management strategy during slow growth and the dormant season can exceed traditional standards of 50% but no detriment to plants will be allowed. The planned period of use for the time control grazing area is specified by the current grazing control chart. Numbers and season of use may vary from year to year and will be specified and approved by annual operating plans and a bill for collection.

Re-entry into a pasture will be allowed as part of the rotation (HM or rest rotation) following additional vegetation growth.

C. Rangeland Improvement Program

No new improvements are proposed under this management plan.

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 in to that pasture 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 need deferment/rest 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; identify needed adjustments in livestock use patterns, measure forage, assess vegetation health/trends, the effects of animal impact determine any needed pasture movements.

(Monitoring to determine current resource conditions and to ensure the terms of the permit are being met. is the joint responsibility of the Forest Service and the Permittee.)

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.

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 decipherable by the Forest Officer
- Share monitoring information with the Forest Officer, and
- Coordinate with the Forest Officer to resolve any problems that arise.

B. 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 Todd Willard Date 3/24/23
Orme Ranch, Inc.

Forest Officer Approval

Approved By Todd Willard Date 4/5/23
Todd Willard, Verde District Ranger