

Allotment Management Plan
Old Camp
USDA Forest Service
Chino Valley Ranger District, Prescott National Forest Service
Yavapai County, Arizona

Introduction

This Allotment Management Plan (AMP) is a direct result of the Environmental Assessment and subsequent Decision Notice/Finding of No Significant Impact (DN/FONSI) September 29, 2015.

The Old Camp allotment is located about 25 miles northwest of Prescott. This allotment is bordered on the south by the Smith Canyon Allotment, on the west by the Williamson Valley Allotment, and on the north by the Hitt Wash Allotment. The allotment encompasses 6,626 acres. The terrain is gently rolling over the entire allotment. Elevations range from a low of 4,690 near Williamson Valley Wash to 4,970 near the southwest corner.

Precipitation is bi-modal with monsoon events occurring during the summer and a period of precipitation occurring within the winter season with a high degree of variation from year to year. Summer (monsoon) precipitation is highly variable geographically within any season, much more than is the winter. Average annual precipitation across the allotment varies somewhat with elevation and with location and is generally in the range of approximately 13 to 15 inches.

Vegetation on the allotment consists mainly of pinyon-juniper woodlands and grasslands. The understory varies from dense chaparral, to mixed shrubs and grasses, to woodland/grassland mix. Canopy cover from shrub species is moderately to extremely thick in some locations to the extent that herbaceous forage is reduced or absent. A portion of the forage base of the allotment is provided by desirable browse species such as turbinella oak with mountain mahogany, deerbrush, and skunkbush found in smaller quantities. Perennial grasses can be locally abundant, especially in juniper woodlands that have been previously thinned. Important forage grasses on the allotment include blue grama, sideoats grama, threeawns, sand dropseed, and squirreltail.

Site-specific Resource Protection Measures

The management objective for TEUI 461 in the South Pasture is to promote management activities that do not exacerbate a decline in soil function. Conservative utilization levels (35-45%) would allow for retention of vegetative cover and provide for sustained plant health. Providing growing season deferment by managing the pasture rotation schedule would also provide for the health of existing herbaceous plants. No juniper thinning treatments are being proposed in this analysis, so areas of dense juniper are likely to remain in a stable state in regards to herbaceous plant cover. Existing gullies in TEUI 461 may be treated by cutting adjacent juniper trees and piling in the gully or using rocks to create small structures to trap and retain sediment.

The management objective for TEUI 434 in the East Pasture is to promote management activities that do not exacerbate a decline in soil function. Conservative utilization levels (35-45%) would allow for the retention of 55-65% of the herbaceous plant cover and provide for sustaining the health and vigor of the herbaceous plants. Existing gullies in TEUI 434 in the South Pasture may be treated by cutting adjacent juniper trees and piling in the gully or using rocks to create small structures to trap and retain sediment. To achieve improvement in perennial grass cover, conservative utilization levels are proposed and a rotation system would be employed to provide growing season deferment.

The management objective for TEUI 481 in the North Pasture is to maintain vegetation cover and spatial distribution and promote the retention of litter within the plant interspaces, and reduce the level of soil compaction. Concentrated cattle use in TEUI 481 should be avoided by not placing salt or supplement in these areas, and the pasture should not be used when soils are wet (winter, early spring). Existing gullies in TEUI 481 in the North Pasture may be treated by cutting adjacent juniper trees and piling in the gully or using rocks to create small structures to trap and retain sediment.

In the event that the above resource protection measures do not accomplish site-specific resource objectives, additional management options may be implemented. These measures will be designed to address site-specific resource concerns and may include, but are not limited to, such things as temporary fencing, electric fencing, drift fences, additional livestock enclosures, water pipelines, storage and troughs; reconstruction of non-functional improvements and construction of new improvements such as spring boxes, drift fences, and water gaps.

Grazing Management

Permitted numbers, Season of Use and Animal Months

| Number of Livestock | Season of Use | Animal Unit Months |
|--|---------------|------------------------------------|
| Authorize 30- 45 head of adult cattle yearlong | Yearlong | Not to exceed 540 AUM ¹ |

The period of grazing and the stocking numbers on NFS lands will be determined by monitoring, designated in the Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) and authorized in the Bill for Collection. 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, the improvement maintenance needs, needed improvements, and the allowable use levels on key forage and browse species.

Yearlong grazing within 4 main pastures: North, West, East, and South, and a smaller holding pasture named the Jordan pasture. The pastures would be grazed in a deferred rotation grazing system whereby growing season rest or deferment is provided in each pasture.

Adaptive management is designed to provide sufficient flexibility to allow livestock management to address changes in climatic conditions, seasonal fluctuations in forage production, and other dynamic influences on the ecosystem in order to effectively make progress toward or maintain desired conditions of the rangeland and other resources. Under the adaptive management approach, regular/annual monitoring of short-term indicators determines if there is a need for administrative changes in livestock management. If monitoring indicates that progress toward desired conditions is not being achieved on the allotment, management will be modified. Modifications can include adjustments in timing, intensity, and duration of grazing. Timing is the time of year the livestock are present in a pasture. Intensity is the degree to which forage is removed through grazing and trampling by livestock. Duration is the length of time livestock are present in a given pasture. These modifications would be made through administrative decisions such as: the specific number of head stocked on the allotment annually or in a particular season; the class of animals stocked (cow/calf pairs vs. yearlings, steers or heifers, etc.); specific dates of grazing; livestock herd movement; and periods of rest, deferment, or non-use of portions or all of the allotment for an appropriate period of time, as conditions warrant. Such changes will not result in exceeding the AUMs authorized for livestock use that is included in the selected alternative.

Rangeland Improvement Program

Construction of New Range Improvements:

Construction of the following new structural improvements has been approved to address resource concerns. These improvements are intended to aid in the achievement or maintenance of desired resource conditions by improving livestock distribution. The Forest Service will work in collaboration with the Permittee, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and other partners as the opportunity presents.

- Provide additional water sources in each pasture (see attachment 1):
 - Construct a well, storage tank, and trough in the North Pasture, in the north half of section 6.
 - Construct water catchment aprons, storage tanks, and troughs (trick tanks) in the following locations:
 - West Pasture, the enter of section 18
 - East Pasture, the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 20
 - South Pasture, the center of sections 30

Maintenance Responsibility

The Term Grazing Permit includes a list of all improvements which the permittee will continue to maintain at a level that effectively provides for their intended uses and purposes. Range improvements will be inspected periodically during the term of the permit to document condition. Annual Operating Instructions (AOIs) will identify range improvements in need of maintenance. Existing improvements may be replaced as conditions warrant.

Access to Improvements

Authorization for cross-country motorized travel is provided for the permittee to administer the livestock operation and maintain improvements under the terms and conditions of the Term Grazing Permit.

Annual authorization for actions implementing management direction in the Allotment Management Plan (AMP) will be included in the Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) , such as a description of the anticipated level of cross-county travel, travel needed for improvement maintenance, new improvement construction, or reconstruction of existing improvements. The permittee may conduct road maintenance activities on forest system roads and trails to facilitate access to or maintenance of improvements. Maintenance will be done to Forest Service standards and permitted under a road use permit.

All authorizations for cross-country motorized travel are subject to existing regulations intended to protect natural and/or heritage resources. Cross-country travel is not allowed when such travel would cause unacceptable resource damage. Approval is granted at annual authorization meetings or on a case by case basis.

Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to evaluate whether grazing management is making progress towards meeting desired resource conditions, two types of monitoring will be conducted:

1. Implementation monitoring will be conducted by the Forest Service, with possible assistance from the permittee, and may include but is not limited to the following: livestock actual use data, compliance

with pasture rotation schedules, grazing intensity evaluations during the grazing season (within key and critical areas), utilization at the end of the growing season (within key areas), and visual observations of vegetation and ground cover.

2. Effectiveness monitoring to evaluate the success of management in achieving the desired objectives will occur within key areas at an interval of ten (10) years or less. A smaller subset of key areas may be evaluated that are in the areas needing improvement as identified in the EA. Areas already meeting desired conditions can be visually assessed to determine if conditions are being maintained. Effectiveness monitoring may also be conducted if data and observations from implementation monitoring (annual monitoring) indicate a need. This type of monitoring can include species composition, plant cover, frequency or density, and/or vegetative ground cover monitored at key areas and at areas identified with site-specific resource concerns. Both qualitative and quantitative monitoring methods can be used. Methods for monitoring and inventory that are standard, accepted protocols can be found in the following publications: Region 3 Rangeland Analysis and Management Training Guide (USDA 2013 revised), Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health (Technical Reference 1730-37, 2010), and the Guide to Rangeland Monitoring and Assessment (Smith et al. 2012).

Monitoring activities would be focused on those resources that need improvement or where there is a concern for an important habitat type. For this project, monitoring would be conducted in TEUI map unit 461 in the South Pasture, TEUI 434 in the East Pasture, and TEUI 481 in the North Pasture to make sure that the residual vegetative cover remaining after grazing is sufficient to allow for improvement of the soil resource. Key grazing areas will be visited after the grazing season to monitor utilization levels so that satisfactory vegetation conditions are maintained. Attachment 2 shows key areas where monitoring will occur.

Permittee Review / Agreement

Reviewed by/ agreed to Lauren R. Lue Date 01/20/16
Permittee

Forest Officer Approval

Approved By Chris Thiel Date 1/22/2016
Chris Thiel, Acting Chino Valley District Ranger