Allotment Management Plan

Chino Valley

Chino Valley Ranger District,

Prescott National Forest

USDA Forest Service

Yavapai County, Arizona

Introduction

The Chino Valley Allotment is characterized by topographic steep uplands dominated by pinyon-juniper woodlands. Dominant grass species include: blue, black, and sideoats grama, needle and thread, New Mexico feather fingergrass, and various dropseeds. Soils are primarily of limestone parent material and, although variable, soil and herbaceous conditions are generally good.

Objectives

Desired conditions for this project are derived from the general Prescott Forest Plan goals of "managing forest lands with a primary emphasis on healthy, robust environments with productive soils, clean air and water, and diverse populations of flora and fauna.

Resource goals and objectives on the Chino Valley Allotment are:

- 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.

Grazing Management

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

Allotment	Grazing System	Grazing Season	Head Months	Equivalent Cattle
Chino Valley	7 month duration continuous grazing	Winter 11/1 – 5/31	Up to 336	Up to 48

- **Permitted Use:** This plan incorporates management flexibility by providing a range of allowable numbers (up to 336 head months) that reflects variations in resource conditions and management objectives over time. It also allows for adjusting duration, timing and frequency of allotment/pasture use based on monitoring of forage availability, utilization, and resource conditions. Generally stocking would be adjusted within the range of numbers, although stocking could be less than the range in any given year to allow for extreme fluctuations of weather and available forage. Specific numbers of livestock (not exceeding equivalent permitted use) would be authorized in the yearly Bill for Collection.

- **Duration**: Grazing will be permitted on a seasonal basis (11/1 – 5/31) of seven months on the allotment, but may be less in some years. Specific dates of use will be determined using an adaptive management process based on monitoring of resource conditions and comparison to management objectives.

- **Intensity**: Forage utilization on upland forage 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). Utilization on upland shrubs will be 50% of available leaders.

- **Frequency and Timing**: Management systems will continue to incorporate growing season deferment in order to provide for grazed plant recovery and maintenance/improvement of species diversity. Timing of livestock moves will be dictated by utilization monitoring and management objectives identified above. 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. The AOI will detail the season's grazing schedule, the stocking level, maintenance needs, needed improvements, and allowable use levels of key forage and browse species.

B. ***Improvement Construction Specifications & Maintenance Responsibility***

Existing improvements are shown on the allotment map and range improvement inventory sheets of the Chino Valley Allotment Term Grazing 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" (allotment entry) 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).*

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 water troughs will include wildlife access and escape ramps.

C. ***Livestock Distribution Aids***
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 ¼ mile of water or any identified sensitive plant population.

D. ***Drought Management***
During extended or severe periods of drought, perennial grasses and major browse species may need rest in order to provide time to recover from drought induced stress. Move cattle when utilization in pastures is met. If complete removal is necessary, livestock 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.

E. ***Adaptive Management***
If monitoring indicates that resource objectives are not being achieved, management will be modified in cooperation with the permittee. Adaptive management allows the Forest Service to adjust: the timing, intensity, frequency and duration of grazing; the grazing management system, and livestock numbers. If adjustments are needed, they are implemented through the Annual Operating Instructions. Adaptive management will also allow for the optional construction of rangeland improvements if they have been identified and are determined, through monitoring, to be necessary for achieving resource objectives. Construction of new improvements will require additional site-specific clearances and must be coordinated with District range staff.

Mitigation Measures and Best Management Practices

The following mitigation measures and best management practices are included in this AMP to avoid or minimize effects to soil, water, and wildlife. Practices include but are not limited to:

- Preparation of annual operating instructions with the permittee to allow for consideration of current allotment conditions and management objectives.

- Periodic field checks to assess vegetation health and trend as well as soil function.

- Cooperation with permittee to provide stock water for wildlife needs during critical periods, if water is available at the sources (e.g. storage tank) and livestock rotations would not be disrupted.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Two types of monitoring will be used, implementation and effectiveness monitoring. Both qualitative and quantitative monitoring methods will be used in accordance with the Interagency Technical References, Region 3 Rangeland Analysis and Management Training Guide, and the Region 3 Allotment Analysis Handbook.

1. **Implementation monitoring** will be conducted periodically by the Forest Service and/or permittee and may include but is not limited to: livestock actual use data, grazing intensity evaluations during the grazing season, and visual observation of vegetation and ground cover. *(Monitoring of allowable use on key forage species 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).*

2. **Effectiveness monitoring** will be conducted to evaluate the success of management in achieving the desired objectives and will occur within key areas on permanent transects at an interval of ten (10) years or less. Effectiveness monitoring may also be conducted if data and observations from implementation monitoring (annual monitoring) indicate a need.

Permittee Review / Agreement

Reviewed by/Agreed to _____ Date 10/14/17
Howard Charney, Chino Valley Permittee

Forest Officer Approval

Approved By _____ Date 12-8-2011
Linda Jackson, Acting Chino Valley District Ranger