

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : The Files

2210
DATE: October 2, 1961

FROM : Charles R. Ames, Range Staffman

SUBJECT: Surveys and Plans - Deer Creek Allotment

September 26 and 27 was spent riding the Deer Creek allotment in company with Supervisor Doran, Ranger Dan Williams, GDA Jack McCombs, and Permittee Charlie Prude.

We rode the Kennedy Peak trail and down Corral Canyon into Rattlesnake, up to the Powers Mine to Grassy Ridge, up Grassy Ridge to the lookout trail, down to Powers Garden where we spent the first night.

There has been a good growing season and conditions were much improved over the way this area looked last March. The Kielburg pasture has a good growth of perennial grasses and the tank is nearly full of water. Mr. Prude had placed 28 cows and calves in this pasture about the first of September.

The vicinity around Corral Canyon Spring showed evidence of some utilization and several cows and calves were seen in this area.

The Grassy Ridge region is up out of the primary range and showed little evidence of use. To develop water in this area to make it usable for livestock would require some sort of a "trick" tank in the vicinity of the old '57 burn.

The second day we rode up Springfield Canyon over to Mailbox Canyon down to the vicinity of the old tank. This area shows heavy past use. As this is an old tank, it was the only water in this area dating from years back. Mr. Prude has built a new cement damn, now about two years old, just south of Mailbox. This tank caught some water this summer and is now being used by stock for the first time since it was built. This should relieve some of the pressure on the Mailbox Canyon.

We proceeded on to Pipestem Canyon down to its confluence with Rattlesnake, back up Rattlesnake Creek and up to Sycamore Basin trail. The cement dam in Sycamore Basin was full. This area showed evidence of fairly heavy use but had a fair cover of grass at this time. In Sycamore Creek there was evidence of considerable sheet erosion apparently due to heavy rainfall as some areas showed excessive washing on the hillsides.

We crossed over the divide on the Aravaipa Valley side along the face of the mountain to Mud Springs. This area showed considerable recovery from the heavy use it showed last March. The browse throughout the area showed good leader-growth during this growing season, however all browse showed considerable evidence of moderate to heavy hedging.

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We returned to the Deer Creek cabin that night. At this point we had a discussion with Mr. Prude relative to management and numbers on the allotment. The preference at present is 250 cattle yearlong plus 50 cattle temporary. As a result of an inspection a year ago, again last March and this one we told Mr. Prude that we did not feel the 50 head temporary could be permitted any more. We discussed various means of moving cattle to get some type of deferred rotation grazing on the allotment relieving the use on the north and south Home pasture and Mud Springs unit during the growing season. Mr. Prude's present practice is to remove about 60 of the normal 150 cattle running in this area during the growing season. While this helps some, very little improvement will occur as long as there are any cattle in this area during July and August. We discussed the possibility of constructing a drift fence between Mailbox and Pipestem to give an additional unit in the Rattlesnake area. Also, another addition was proposed to fence between Corral and Douglas Canyons across Rattlesnake, to better distribute the use in upper Rattlesnake. This would provide three units in the Rattlesnake area and four units on the east portion of the allotment which would include north and south Home pastures, Mud Springs and Sycamore Basin.

We all agreed it would probably work best to use two separate herds of cattle rather than try to rotate all stock among these units. The cattle presently using the Rattlesnake area are more use to the rough country and would distribute themselves much more satisfactorily. The cattle using that portion of the allotment east of the Kennedy ridge divide are use to soft country and could better be rotated among these four units.

Mr. Prude is following the salt plan as directed by Ranger Williams. Mr. Prude was most cooperative in trying to improve the management and somewhat reluctantly agreed to the elimination of the 50 head temporary stock.

The next morning Ranger Williams again discussed this with Mr. Prude and tentatively agreed to remove the temporary stock this fall pending the market price of cattle. Rather than force Mr. Prude into a hardship sale, we agreed to spread the reduction over a two year period if necessary.

The morning of the 28th we covered the north and south Home pasture units. These two pastures showed a decline in productivity over the past three years. Although showing a fairly good cover of sod in most of the area, the grass was of low vigor and predominately curly mesquite with patches of snakeweed and other noxious plants and annuals in the inter spaces.

Very little game was observed on the entire trip particularly on the Rattlesnake area. Most of the deer were confined to the Aravaipa Valley slope of the Galiuro mountains.

Ranger Williams is to work up a tentative management plan with Mr. Prude to improve the management on this allotment.

CRAmes:mn
cc: Willcox

