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Production-Utilization Study  
Deer Creek Allotment  
1977

INTRODUCTION

The Deer Creek Allotment production-utilization survey was conducted the week of March 14-18, 1977, by Cecil Sims, District Ranger; Andy Travers, Range Conservationist; and Chuck Duncan, Range Technician. Permittee Mike Isley accompanied two days. Refer to map for route of travel.

The Deer Creek Allotment is run by Mike Isley as part of his Deer Creek Ranch. The ranch consists mainly of national forest land, total gross area of the allotment is 33,863 acres; 160 acres of this are alienated land and 200 acres are included in the administration pasture. Of the 33,503 net acres, 18,142 acres were classed as non-range; the suitable area is 15,361 acres.

The history is sketchy from 1917 to 1930. Permits were issued for numbers ranging from 595 head down to 272 head. The permit was waived from Graham County Cattle Company to M. O. Sims in 1930, with reductions made to 221 cyl. In 1933-35 inspections were made each year with no use found on the Rattlesnake area of the allotment. Inspections of 1939-40 of the same area reflect no use with the range showing improvement. In 1943 the Rattlesnake area was reopened for grazing with a preference of 250 head on the entire Deer Creek allotment. The preference remained at 250 until 1956; at this date 50 head temporary were granted. In 1962 the 50 head temporary were dropped. Preference numbers have remained at 250 cyl to present date.

Past production-utilization studies indicate the allotments carrying capacity to be under that of present permit numbers. With the exception of a narrow strip along the northeast edge of the allotment, classed as open grass land, all the remaining area is very rough. The problem areas are in the vicinity of permanent waters. Due to topography of the area, cattle are forced to use the canyon bottoms as passways. Also, permanent waters are located in canyons.

Precipitation during the 1976 summer and fall period were light. Consequently, forage production during summer growing seasons were less than average. Refer to enclosure 1 for cattle encountered during survey. Also, one white-tail deer was encountered during the weeks ride.

DISCUSSION

The Deer Creek Allotment is located within two management zones. The Galiuro Wilderness, a special management zone approximately 21,735 acres, covers the major portion of the allotment. The remainder of the allotment

approximately 12,128 acres, is in the woodland management zone.

The Galiuro Wilderness management area was established by Congress in order to protect its natural beauty from man. The natural beauty is especially affected by cattle. Any overgrazing would seriously detract from the natural beauty. In order to minimize the affects of overgrazing, the maximum allowable utilization has been set at 35 percent in the Galiuro Wilderness management plan.

The Galiuro Wilderness management plan also clearly states that salt locations should be changed at least once annually. Place salt in locations which are not easily visible from system trails and in no case closer than one hundred feet from system trails.

Reference is made to allotment production-utilization map for results of the survey.

The overall condition of the allotment is fair. Those areas of lower elevation and canyon bottoms were poor to very poor condition. The upper elevations of the allotment are in good condition, supporting a good population of forage grasses and some desirable browse species.

The condition of the range water and development/improvements at the time of the survey were as follows: Oak Creek Spring and pipeline are in good condition; Mud Springs and pipeline are in good condition with plenty of water; cement dam in lower Horse Canyon 3/4 full; cement dam in Sonora Basin had plenty of water in potholes below the dam; Corral Springs had good water; Corral Dam by Kennedy Peak nearly full of water, with no livestock use; Kielberg cement dam, water seeping out and water in potholes; Grassy Ridge Tank had some water in it; Powers Garden Spring and pipeline, low, running 1/2" of water; Southfield Canyon Spring, plenty of water; Coffee cement dam, dry; Juniper Spring is running water; cement dam in lower Pipestem Canyon was full of water; spring in upper Pipestem had plenty of water.

The only salts observed on the allotment was in the bottom of Rattlesnake Canyon near trail to Sonora Basin, and along trail to Southfield Spring. I talked to Mr. Isley about his method of salting. I explained to him of the importance of placing his salt away from water and canyon bottoms, and the need for placing it on ridges and saddles where feed is good. I explained that failure to comply with the salting policy is a violation of the terms of his permit.

#### SUMMARY:

The Deer Creek Allotment is poorly managed. Permittee is a hard worker but needs to concentrate more on livestock management.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop new management plan for the allotment. For example, put small bunches in separate areas, or deferred rotation.
2. Permittee must be held to 35 percent utilization maximum in wilderness area.
3. Permittee not to use Forest Service horse pasture at the Powers Garden Administration Site.



Cattle Encountered on Deer Creek Allotment  
March 14-18, 1977

<u>Pasture Name</u>	<u>No. of Cattle Observed</u>
North home	26
South home	--
Oak Creek	11
Mud Springs	20
Kennedy	--
Upper Sycamore	--
Middle Sycamore	5
Lower Sycamore	20
Sonora	3
Pipestem	26
Mailbox	4
Southfield	3
Lower Rattlesnake	10
Upper Rattlesnake	--
Horse Canyon	21
Brushy corral & Douglas	27
Holdout Spring	--
Kielberg-Grassy Peak	20

-ENCLOSURE I-