

**2007 Fish Creek, Trail Creek, Hurst Canyon,
North Fork and Park Creek S&G
End of Season Report**

Actual Use Dates:

Allotment	Date on National Forest	Date off National Forest	Number of Ewes	Number of Lambs
Trail Creek	7/2	7/22	894	1210
Trailing through Fish Cr	7/23	7/23	894	1210
Trail Creek	7/28	8/1	1006	0
Hurst Canyon	8/2	9/12	1006	0
Trail Creek	9/13	9/17	1006	0
Fish Creek	7/3	7/20	475	0
Park Creek	7/3	7/9	922	1300
Trailing to North Fork	7/14	7/15	922	1300
North Fork	7/16	8/14	1200	0
Trailing to Park Creek	8/15	8/15	1200	0
Park Creek	8/16	8/26	1200	0

Forage Harvested:

Allotment	Total HM's Permitted	Total HM's Harvested
Fish Creek	3156	311
Trail Creek	2525	949
Hurst Canyon	4374	1389
Park Creek	1775	646
North Fork	3252	1183
Trailing between Park Creek and North Fork		100

Fish Creek allotment was visited on 07/31, 08/06, 08/15 and 08/31. Park Creek and North Fork allotments were inspected on 8/10 8/15, 9/20, 9/25 and 10/24. These inspections included livestock placement checks, forage utilization, and improvement inspections.

The precipitation information for the District is included in the table below. While this information is collected at the office in Mackay and is not specific to your allotment areas, it does give a good idea of the available moisture on the District. The totals for 2007 are compared to the average total precipitation by month for Mackay from the Desert Research Institute website for 1931-2005. The low precipitation levels and early warm temperatures caused vegetation to mature at a faster rate this year, two to three weeks ahead of normal in many areas. This caused upland vegetation to dry out at a faster rate and made these grasses less desirable to your livestock.

Month	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Total
Precipitation (in inches)	0.03	0.48	0.59	0.48	0.36	1.07	0.17	0.46	0.88	1.19	5.71
Average Precipitation 1931-2005	0.78	0.60	0.61	0.68	1.09	1.34	0.93	0.80	0.67	0.57	8.07

The warmer, drier conditions caused livestock to utilize woody browse species heavier than in normal precipitation years. This use was seen across the district as a whole. A browse standard of 50% is included in your permit and should be watched carefully in the future. While this standard has not been focused on by range specialists in the past because minimal use of woody browse by livestock was observed, browse on willows, aspen, and riparian shrubs is an important consideration especially in dry years. Generally speaking, livestock began to shift to woody browse species as the four inch stubble height on grasses and sedges was met which could be used as an indicator for riders/ permittees to move livestock in the future. Using this tool to adjust movement dates could avoid overuse or missing end of season standards for herbaceous and woody species in these riparian areas during years of low precipitation.

There were several reports of cattle finding their way to the private land in Fish Creek and cattle permittees responded to these reports in a timely manner. Please continue to communicate with Leadbelt and BLM permittees to reduce conflicts along allotment and federal/private boundaries. Since a continuous boundary fence does not exist between cattle and sheep allotments, some conflict along this boundary is expected. Options are being considered and recommendations from all permittees involved are encouraged to reduce this conflict. Any new improvements require written analysis and clearance prior to implementation and there is not a timeline for completion of such documentation.

The Forest Service will be monitoring in 2008 for the purpose of completing NEPA documentation on your sheep allotments in the coming years. If you have any questions or comments on the information we are planning to collect to complete this analysis, please contact your range specialist or the district ranger.