

**2007 END OF SEASON REPORT
ANTELOPE ALLOTMENT**

TERM GRAZING PERMIT				AUTHORIZED USE				ACTUAL USE			
NO.	ON DATE	OFF DATE	H.M.	NO.	ON DATE	OFF DATE	H.M.	NO.	ON DATE	OFF DATE	H.M.
958	7/01	10/15	3370	768	7/01	10/15	3370	768	07/01	09/28	2143*

* 256 pairs did not enter the allotment until 07/11 and 200 pair left the forest on 9/21.

UNIT DATES AND UTILIZATION RESULTS:

ACTUAL GRAZING SCHEDULE			ALLOWABLE USE	ACTUAL USE
UNIT NAME	ON DATE	OFF DATE	RIPARIAN/BROWSE	RIPARIAN/ BROWSE
Burnt Hollow	09/15	09/28	50% (4 in)/ 50%	4 inches/ 74%
Bear Creek	09/02	09/14	50% (4 in)/ 50% 50% (upland)	4 inches/ 45% 10-20%
Smiley Meadows	08/12	09/01	50% (4 in)/ 50%	4 inches/ 46%
Iron Bog	07/22*	08/11	50% (upland)	30-45%
Dry Canyon	07/01	07/21	50% (4 in)/ 50%	4 inches/ 74%

* 256 pairs were placed in Iron Bog on 07/11, while the rest of the herd was moved there on 07/22.

Allotment inspections were conducted on the following dates: 03/26, 05/09, 06/08, 06/21, 07/10, 07/12, 07/19, 07/23, 08/07, 08/10, 08/14, 08/15, 08/31, 09/05, 09/11, 09/18, 09/21, 09/26, 09/27, 10/15, 10/29. Allotment inspections include cattle location checks, long term vegetation monitoring and utilization monitoring.

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 cattle 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. In general, cattle 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 cattle 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.

Due to dry conditions and limited watering sources, cattle were moved through the allotment more quickly than usual and resulted in cattle leaving the forest 18 days early. This decision was based on in season use being met along riparian areas and water limitations causing cattle to sit on the streams. Discussions and a field trip with the range specialist have been ongoing to consider locations for conversion of dirt tanks to troughs in order to remedy some of the water limitations on Antelope Allotment as a whole. The ability of the Forest Service to complete the necessary analysis to install these troughs has yet to be determined and we will notify you if/when we are able to proceed.

As a whole the livestock use on Antelope Allotment for 2007 was at an acceptable level for grasses and sedges with no key areas exceeding the 4 inch stubble height standard in your permits. Woody browse standards were exceeded in Burnt Hollow and Dry Canyon (Marcroft Canyon) and these areas should be watched carefully in the future to ensure that overuse is not continued. The browse use is measured within 3 feet of the greenline on both sides of the creek with only those plants at 5 feet tall or less being considered for cattle browsing. Some meadows have extensive woody browse away from the greenline that was used at a heavier level and these areas should be watched carefully by permittees and range specialists to prevent unacceptable use in the future. In addition, dry meadows on benches along creeks should be left with patchy use patterns to avoid overuse of these areas. Your range specialist may be placing cages in some of these dry meadows to better gauge growth of vegetation and actual use by livestock in these areas in the future.

The rider, Eric Maxwell, did a good job of keeping the cattle moving and the majority of the herd in the correct pasture. There were several occasions when small groups of cattle were seen in the wrong pasture, in the Iron Bog Campground and in the Research Natural Area (RNA) below the campground. This activity needs to be reduced in the future through additional backriding by the permittees. The campground fence and the RNA fence are the responsibility of the Forest Service, however should your cattle damage these fences, it is in your best interest to do minor maintenance to prevent your cattle from repeatedly entering these restricted areas and/or contacting our office to inform us when the fences are down. While you employ a full time rider who does a good job of managing the main herd, it is still the responsibility of the permittees to ensure that all cattle are kept in the appropriate pasture through backriding and cleaning those pastures that have already been used. This is especially important on the Antelope Allotment due to a lack of boundary fences between some pastures.

The herd was split between two pastures in July and while this was allowed for 2007, these actions should not occur without speaking with your range specialist to get approval to do so. Moving to a pasture early, staying in a pasture late or splitting your herd are all actions that must be approved by the Forest Service prior to the action taking place. Range improvements should continue to be maintained to the specifications outlined in your term grazing permit. Please contact our office if you have any questions about these requirements.

In addition, the electric fence in Smiley Meadow should be put up and electrified prior to cattle entering this pasture. The electric fence should be maintained for the duration of the season to ensure that minimal use by livestock occurs on the meadow. While the use levels in your permit have not been exceeded in the meadow in the last two seasons, lighter use of this area is preferred. We hope to improve the effectiveness of this electric fence through conversion of two or three dirt tanks to troughs in this pasture however a timeline for completing the written analysis and implementing these water improvements has not been determined. Additional options are being considered and your recommendations for improving the management of Smiley Meadow are encouraged.

The Forest Service is in the process of completing an environmental analysis on your allotment and others in Antelope Valley. If you have any questions or comments on the information we are collecting to complete this analysis, please contact your range specialist or the district ranger.