

**2008 END OF SEASON REPORT
ANTELOPE ALLOTMENT**

PERMITTED USE				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	812	7/01	10/15	2788	800	07/01	10/15	2657*

*on and off dates were variable. See descriptions below.

UNIT DATES AND UTILIZATION RESULTS:

ACTUAL GRAZING SCHEDULE			ALLOWABLE USE	ACTUAL USE	
UNIT NAME	ON DATE	OFF DATE	RIPARIAN	RIPARIAN	BROWSE
Burnt Hollow	07/01*	07/17	4 inches	9 inches	Moderate
Bear Creek	07/17	08/14	4 inches	7 inches	N/A
Smiley Meadows	08/14	09/04	4 inches	N/A	N/A
Iron Bog	09/04	09/25	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dry Canyon	09/25	10/15**	4 inches	N/A	N/A

*396 cow/calf pairs and 10 bulls came on Forest on 07/01, 90 cow/calf pairs and 3 bulls came on Forest on 07/04, 76 cow/calf pairs came on 07/08 and 225 cow/calf pairs came on Forest on 07/09.

**120 cow/calf pairs and 6 bulls left the Forest on 10/07, 349 cow/calf pairs and 7 bulls left the Forest on 10/14, and 318 cow/calf pairs left the Forest on 10/15.

UPLAND UTILIZATION DATA			
UNIT NAME	ALLOWABLE USE	SPECIES MEASURED	ACTUAL USE
Burnt Hollow	50%	Bluebunch wheatgrass	8.6 %
Burnt Hollow (2)	50%	Idaho fescue	2.2 %
Bear Creek	50%	Bluebunch wheatgrass	3.3 %
Bear Creek (2)	50%	Bluebunch wheatgrass	8.6 %
Smiley Meadows	50%	Idaho fescue	5.5 %
Iron Bog	50%	Bluebunch wheatgrass	10.2 %
Iron Bog (2)	50%	Bluebunch wheatgrass	9.9 %
Dry Canyon	50%	Idaho fescue	5.0 %
Dry Canyon (2)	50%	Bluebunch wheatgrass	11.3 %

Allotment inspections were conducted on the following dates: 06/30, 07/01, 07/02, 07/08, 07/14, 07/15, 07/17, 07/22, 07/24, 07/28, 07/29, 08/04, 08/08, 08/11, 08/18, 08/20, 08/21, 08/26, 09/05, 09/08, 09/12, 09/19, 09/22, 09/23, 09/25, 10/01, 10/02, 10/06, 10/07, 10/08, 10/14, 11/14 and

11/20. Allotment inspections include cattle location checks, long term vegetation monitoring, utilization monitoring (in season and end of season), and other permit compliance checks. 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 2008 are compared to the average total precipitation by month for Mackay from the Desert Research Institute website for 1931-2005.

Month	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Total
Precipitation (in inches)	2.26	0.28	0.78	0.11	0.39	0.47	0.00	1.01	0.18	0.55	6.03
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

Due to normal or above normal snowfall, a late spring was experienced in the Antelope Valley including the Antelope Allotment. Snow was still present on Smiley Mountain well into July and vegetative growth was visibly slowed by the cool soil conditions. This coupled with lower than average precipitation during the active growing season caused limitations to the growth potential of herbaceous and woody vegetation. Despite the late growth, many upland grasses and sedges dried out earlier than expected due to drier soil conditions.

A browse standard of 50% is included in your permit and should be watched carefully. 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 begin to shift to woody browse species as the four inch stubble height on grasses and sedges is met which could be used as an indicator for riders/ permittees to move cattle. Using this tool to adjust movement dates could avoid overuse or missing end of season indicators for herbaceous and woody species in these riparian areas during years of low precipitation. In 2008, limited growth on browse species and minimal use by livestock was observed by range specialists on the Antelope allotment.

As a whole the livestock use on Antelope Allotment for 2008 was at an acceptable level for grasses and sedges with no key areas exceeding the 4 inch stubble height annual indicator in your permits. Some meadows have extensive woody browse species away from the greenline that should be watched carefully by permittees and range specialists to prevent unacceptable use. 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. Those cages placed in 2008 were not placed by Forest Service personnel.

There were some management issues that surfaced on the Antelope Allotment in 2008, that will need to be addressed and corrected in the 2009 grazing season. It is the permittees' responsibility to provide their full time rider with a copy of the Annual Operating Instructions and inform them of requirements in term grazing permits. This includes distances that salting

locations should be from water and maintenance schedules and building specifications for improvements. The range specialist informed the rider of some of these regulations in 2008 after finding several instances where noncompliance with these regulations was apparent, but seemingly unintentional. Violations were quickly remedied and no action was taken. Letters of noncompliance or other action may be taken against your permit for future violations of this kind.

While the rider, Kay Mays, did a good job of keeping the cattle moving and the majority of the herd in the correct pasture when she was present, there were several occasions when her presence was not apparent. On days when the full time rider is not scheduled to be on the allotment or is not present for whatever reason, it is the permittees' responsibility to ride to ensure proper cattle placement and distribution. 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 or are to be used later in the rotation. This is especially important on the Antelope Allotment due to a lack of boundary fences between some pastures. There were several occasions when groups of cattle were seen in the wrong pasture and a warning letter was sent to all permittees to inform you of the issue and provide an opportunity to correct the problem prior to taking action against your permits. The issue was corrected and no additional action was taken.

Use of ATVs is not a permissible means of herding cattle cross country or traveling cross country to salt or perform annual improvement maintenance. Motorized vehicles are to remain on designated open routes on National Forest Lands unless written permission from the district ranger is provided under specific circumstances. There are no special motorized travel permissions associated with your permit and you should adhere to the current travel plan.

There was one report of cattle getting into the Iron Bog Campground and the Research Natural Area (RNA) below the campground in 2008. It is believed that a gate was left open by recreation users to allow your cattle to enter the restricted area. They were removed promptly upon notification and this is appreciated. 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. The campground fence was replaced in 2008 and necessary maintenance on the RNA fence was completed early by Forest personnel which also helped to reduce conflict.

Regular communications between permittees and range specialists is absolutely necessary to the success of grazing management on the Antelope Allotment and is a requirement in your term grazing permits. Deviation from schedules or plans that are set in the Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) must be discussed with and approved by your range specialist prior to changes occurring on the ground. This includes but is not limited to any changes in the rotation, duration of grazing in a pasture, or number of livestock placed on the allotment. The Antelope Allotment is managed under a deferred rotation system and following the schedule in your AOI is crucial to maintain the desired conditions and improve conditions where necessary.

If you do not plan to bring livestock on Forest on the specified on date, you also need to notify your range specialist of the change. If you choose to place livestock on an allotment later than the approved on date, you cannot place additional livestock above the number authorized in your name to “make up” the authorized use without district ranger approval.

If management issues arise during the grazing season, it is important to contact your range specialist and discuss these concerns or problems so that everyone knows and understands the daily happenings on the allotment. Without these communications, it is impossible to retain the flexibility and collaboration needed for grazing systems on the National Forest and increases the risk that action be taken against your term grazing permit for management decisions made without approval by appropriate Forest personnel.

Range improvements should continue to be maintained to the specifications outlined in your term grazing permit. This includes the installation of shut off valves and or float systems in all troughs in order to prevent dewatering of upland springs associated with your trough systems. These upgrades to your troughs will be required prior to livestock entering this allotment in 2009. The range specialist will need to visit the sites to document completion of these upgrades for our records and recommend additional upgrades necessary on a case by case basis.

A decision memo is pending for the new trough project in the Smiley Meadow pasture (old pond conversion). Upon signing of this documentation, materials can be provided to permittees to take to the location during winter months by snow machine. Other motorized travel to the area will not be authorized to get materials to the site. The range specialist will need to meet you on site prior to starting construction to approve placement and design of the trough system and spring fence. Upon completion of construction the range specialist will need to complete a site visit to verify completion of the project to standard and collect any additional information necessary for our records. At that time, the new trough will be added to your term grazing permit through a permit modification and will fall under existing maintenance requirements set in your permit.

Converting the electric fence in Smiley Meadow to a barbed wire let down fence has been discussed and we are prepared to move forward with this work under a few conditions.

1. Materials will need to be taken to the site in winter months by snow machine to reduce impacts of motorized vehicles to the area. Any additional materials needed should be taken in on horseback in the spring/summer. Additional motorized travel to Smiley Meadows will not be authorized for this project.
2. Actual placement of the new fence will need to be approved on site by the current range specialist for the Antelope Allotment. This may include adjusting boundaries slightly to better fit current wildlife requirements for fence specifications in meadow areas.
3. The fence will need to be put up no more than one week prior to cattle arriving in the Smiley Meadow pasture and let down no later than two weeks after cattle leave this pasture. These dates will be more specifically outlined in your Annual Operating Instructions to fit the rotation schedule for each year.

4. The changes in type of fence and adjustments in maintenance and management requirements of this fence will be added to your term grazing permits as a modification and will require your signature.

The Forest Service is in the process of completing an environmental analysis on your allotment and others in Antelope Valley. As we near making a decision on this analysis, a meeting will need to occur between permittees and range management personnel to develop a new Allotment Management Plan (AMP) for the Antelope allotment. This needs to be a collaborative process as the AMP will outline the desired livestock management for the next ten years and how livestock use and change in resource conditions will be monitored and used to make adjustments to management as necessary. Improvement maintenance schedules, construction specifications and a list of any potential future projects will also be outlined. If you have any questions or comments on the process or information we are collecting to complete this analysis, please contact your range specialist or the district ranger.