

TUSHAR ALLOTMENT COLLABORATION

Pine Creek Fencing and Livestock Control

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Roughly 23 miles of boundary and interior fencing is now in place on the Pine Creek Allotment. The earliest fence built seem to be the Forest boundary fence that was constructed *circa* 1939. Much of this existing fence is still in use but requires a considerable amount of maintenance each year. The newest fence is the Sulphurbeds fence, # 03-3555, which was converted from an electric fence to a standard 4-wire barbed wire fence.

Each pasture is fenced with a fence running east from the western forest boundary to a natural barrier on its eastern edge. Cove Creek pasture has the most complete fence but even this pasture still relies on natural barriers to control livestock. Obviously, no pasture is completely fenced on all boundaries.

The permit holders on this allotment have tried using electric fencing for the Wildcat and Sulphurbeds fences, but almost constant vandalism has continued to defeat the integrity of this fence type.

Over the last 20 odd years the popularity of the off-highway vehicle, or ATV, has increased dramatically. The allotment is a popular big-game hunting destination and each year provides many hunter days. The increase in hunting is also causing significant problems with maintaining adequate livestock control. The ATV riders frequently leave gates open, or in some cases simply cut the fences to gain access to certain areas. The new Little North Creek fence, built in 1999 and 2000, has had at least 3 locations vandalized by ATV riders. Over the last 10 years several full size and ATV cattle guards have been installed to stop the problem of gates being left open. The only solution is to install additional guards in selected locations but even this is not an adequate solution.

Fence priorities

Generally, the fences on the allotment are in acceptable condition as long as they continue to receive frequent maintenance. However, the Mud Springs Ridge fence (#03 4585 Wildcat-Pine Creek pasture fence) needs to be converted from electric to a standard 4-wire barbed wire fence. This may involve some re-alignment and adding additional bracing but it would improve the livestock control between the two pastures. The fence also is in a fairly isolated location so that only a few gates would be required. One area that needs consideration is above Cold Springs where the trail crosses the fence to Oak Side hill spring. This is an area of high livestock concentrations and the gate seems to be habitually left open. The fence line may be re-routed to allow access to the small aspen area

or a small walk-thru gate or cattle guard installed that would allow easy access but effectively control cattle.