

EVALUATING GRAZING SYSTEM OPTIONS

Tippetts-Myers Ranch

Lynn Myers, Lewellen, NE

Three considerations when building a systems level ranch plan are:

- 1) Drought Plan
- 2) Grazing Plan
- 3) Transition Plan

These three are different and separate subject areas, but all they are intertwined... you can't build one without the others when you use a GPS to guide your operation or ranch.

Your GPS consists of:

- Goals... our goals.
- Philosophy... property ability, personal ability.
- System... your grazing and operation plan.

Grazing system must fit you and your resources. It must be flexible and adaptable to whatever situation occurs during the year, but yet be sustainable over the long haul and optimize what you and your resources can produce.

Our grazing system is built with a drought plan in place.

Plan A: Trigger dates of June 4 to July 4. It provides us the flexibility to destock beginning June 4. These populations receive consideration when destocking in Plan A:

- Fall cows
- Fall calves and yearlings
- Dry cows

Plan B: Trigger date of mid-July. These populations receive consideration when destocking in Plan B:

Early wean old cows and poor genetic cows and those with defects (eyes, udders, etc.)
Custom grazed cows and heifers removed from ranch

Plan C: Trigger dates of late August-September. This population receives consideration for destocking in Plan C:

- Wean rest of calves early. We normally deliver calves October 15-20 rotated through winter just like summer move every 30 days.

Considerations you must look at to achieve sustainability in all areas:

- Pregnancy rate
- Length of breeding season
- Performance and rate of gain
- Time of year calving and breeding
- Basic marketing plan and target dates
- What you can stand labor wise
- Cost and need of infrastructure
- Do you want to maximize or optimize in one area of your operation? How does that affect the other areas?

When you consider these questions, you have a framework to build your whole ranch plan. That plan should include a way to monitor.

One tool we use to monitor/develop our grazing system is SanDRIS. SanDRIS helps us optimize year-to-year changes in pasture-use sequences that minimize the effects of grazing and drought stress. This tool is based on the three variables that have the greatest collective effect on warm-season tallgrass response to grazing on Sandhills prairies: (1) season of defoliation, (2) timing and quantity of precipitation, and (3) quantity and distribution of residual herbage at the end of the growing season.

You can't know where you are going if you don't know where you've been and where you are at.

Here is our plan...

All grazing pastures, whether leased or owned, in deferred rotation. Generally no longer than 30 days in pasture during growing season; deferred every third year for full growing season. Meadow grounds are rotated on owned ground in a two-year program. The very lowest or heart ground is hayed every year. The high ground part of each meadow is hayed one-half one year while the other half rests, then reversed the next year. Meadows are usually lightly grazed sometime during the winter. In drought, they may be used more heavily, but not beyond 50% of the grass is taken off. The meadows are in the maps that show black, which indicate our home place and Marie's. These also show the pastures on these units that are primarily for winter use and rotated using the 30-day rule; not varied in use sequence since it is a non-growing use period.

Normally we leave more than 50% of grass in pasture in the good years. This becomes our reserve for use in drought when we go to 50% use.

Our cows are split into two bunches. Herd A is young cows that are first- and second-calvers. Herd B is older cows that are third-calvers and up. Rotation is shown on separate maps. Herd C is a custom grazed herd of cows. These we can destock with 30 days' notice. This is part of the flexibility plan to give us more for our own cows, if needed.

The Hines map is the same program as Herd C. These are custom grazed yearling heifers that we can destock with 30 days' notice.

We graze our own replacement heifers on the Thornton pasture.

We also have fall grazing on Crescent Lake Wildlife Refuge to supplement our grass.

Each year we monitor our pastures with GPS photo point in September using Sandris and then enter the data in our grazing records.

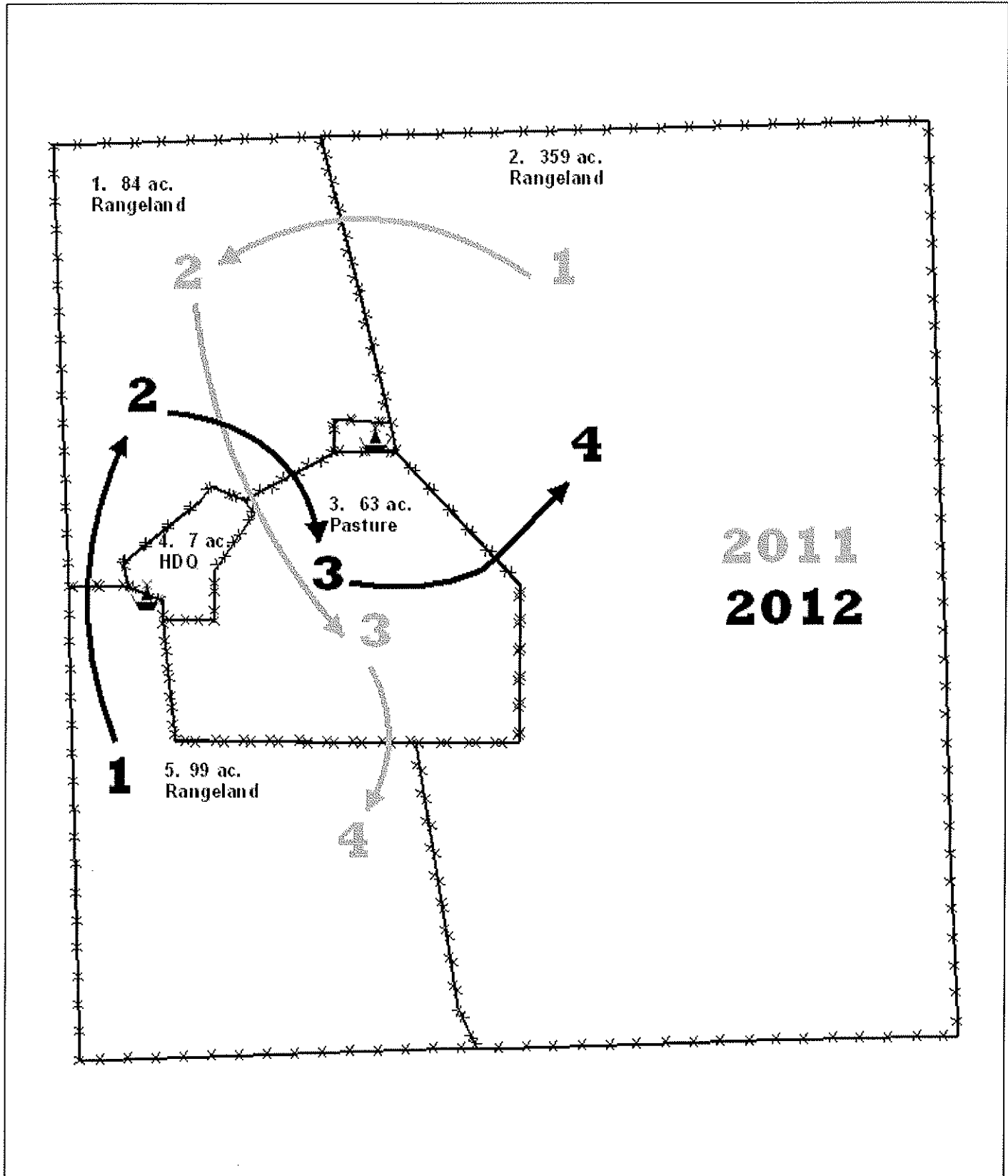
Transition to the next generation is a consideration in all areas of management. It plays into the long-term sustainability of the ranch. A lot of work, communication, and compromise will be vital to its success.

The Myers Families:
Lynn and Marlene
Creston and Family
Carissa and Family


CONSERVATION PLAN MAP




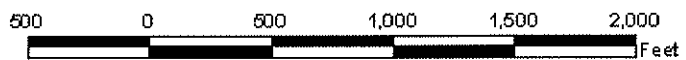
THORNTON RANCH



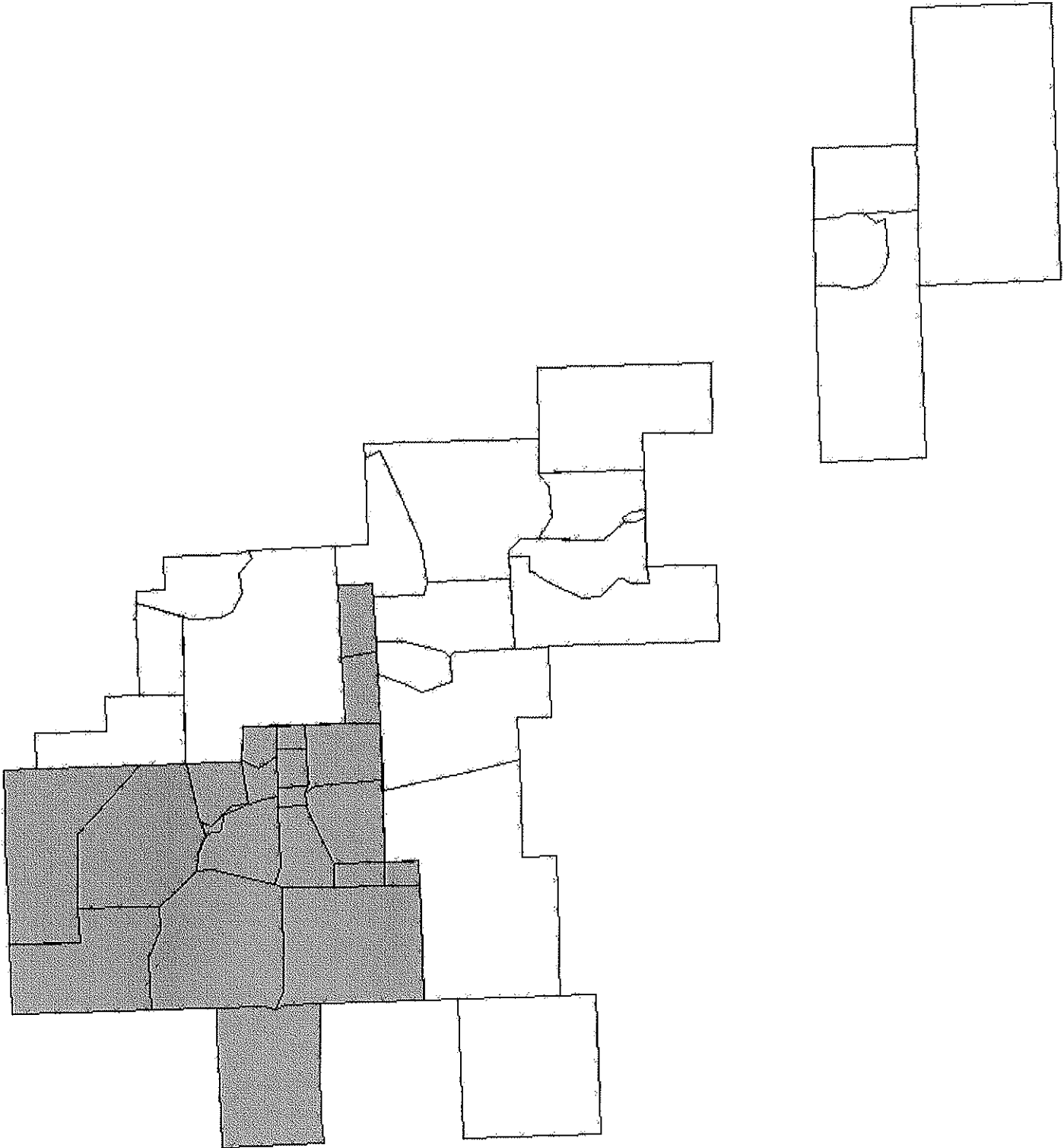
Legend

 Fences



 Wells and Tanks



TIPPETTS-MYERS RANCH LLC



Legend

-  TIPPETTS-MYERS RANCH LLC
-  FERRELL CATTLE CO- BUGGYPOLE RANCH



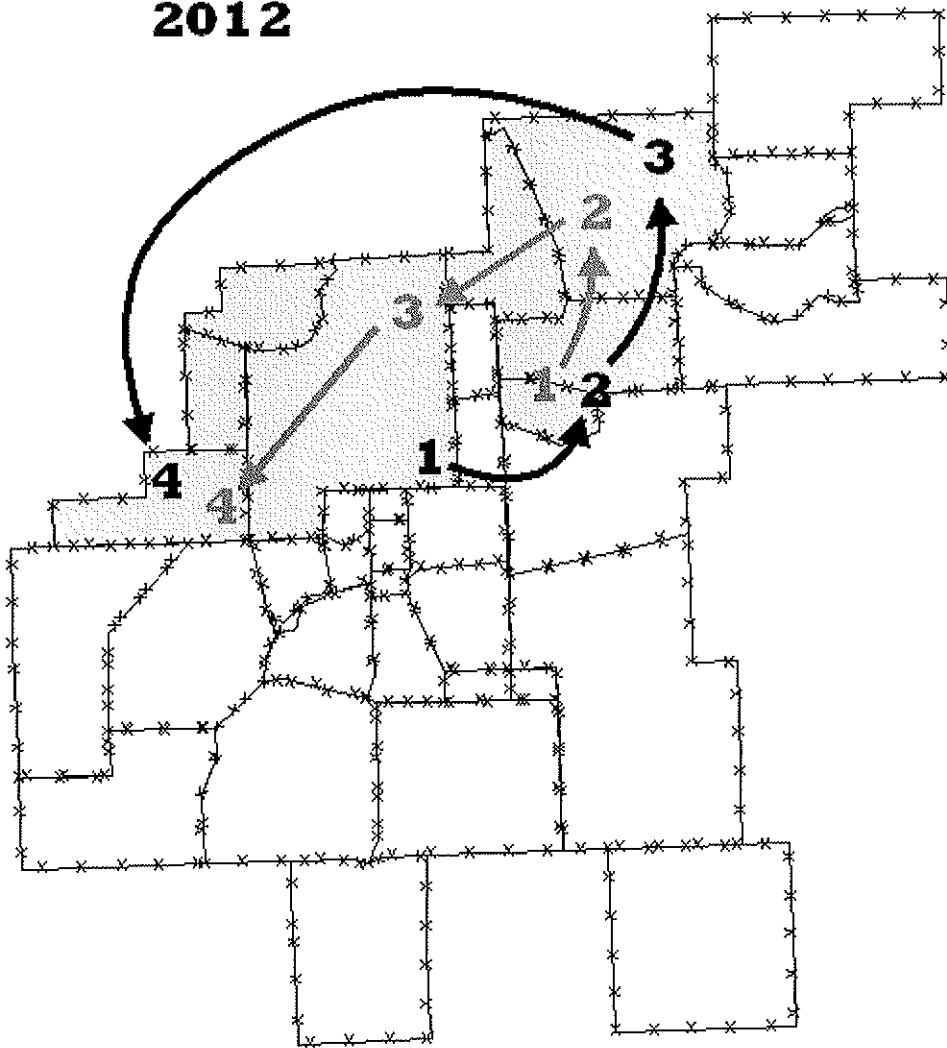
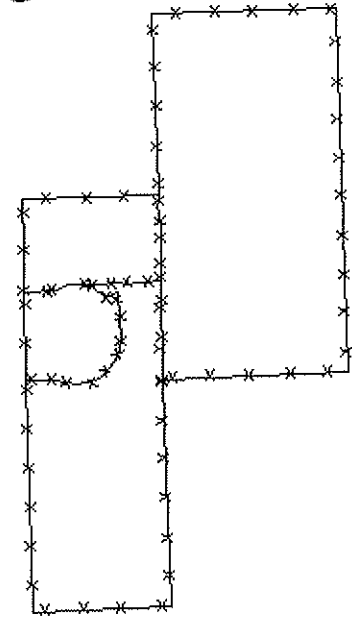
TIPPETTS-MYERS RANCH LLC



BUGGYPOLE RANCH HERD A

2011

2012



Legend

- TIPPETTS-MYERS RANCH LLC
- FERRELL CATTLE CO- BUGGYPOLE RANCH
- Buggypole Ranch Herd A



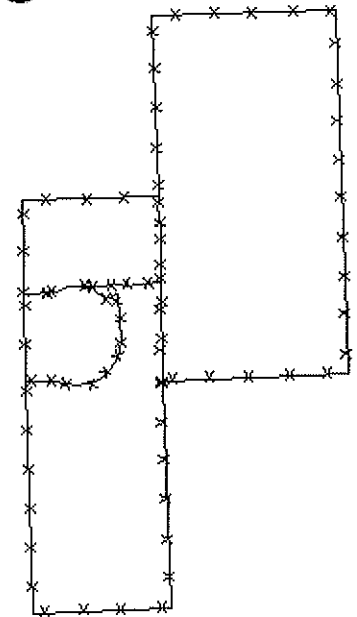
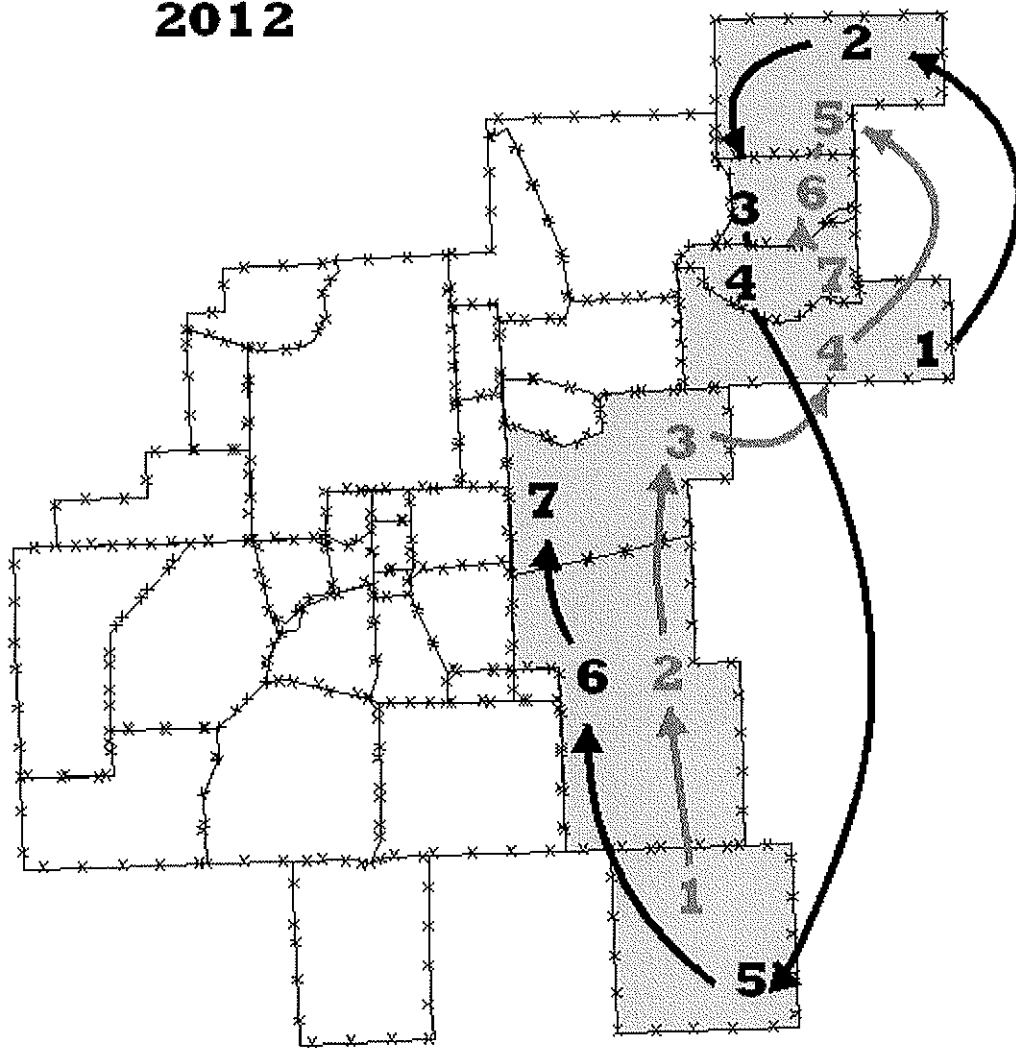
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


BUGGYPOLE RANCH HERD B

2011

2012



Legend

-  TIPPETTS-MYERS RANCH LLC
-  FERRELL CATTLE CO- BUGGYPOLE RANCH
-  Buggypole Ranch Herd B



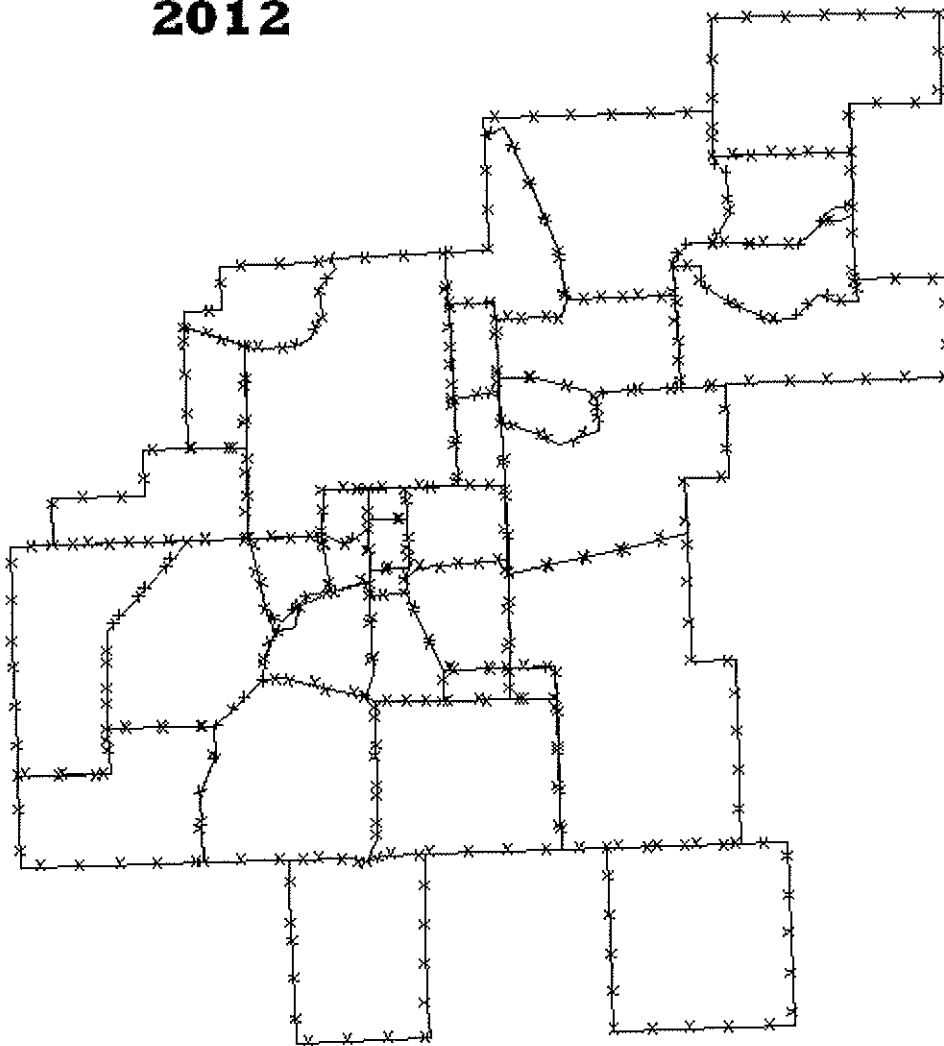
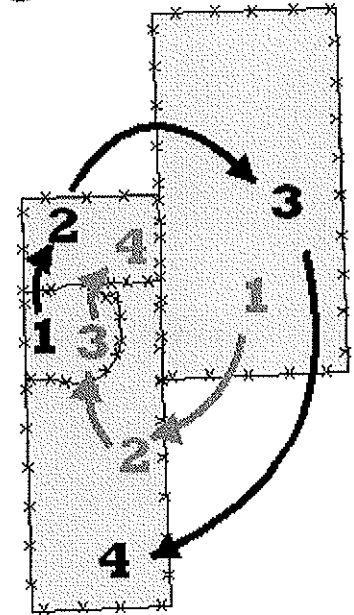
TIPPETTS-MYERS RANCH LLC






BUGGYPOLE RANCH HERD C

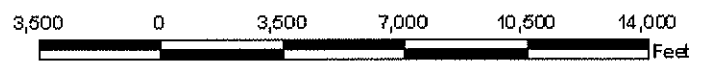
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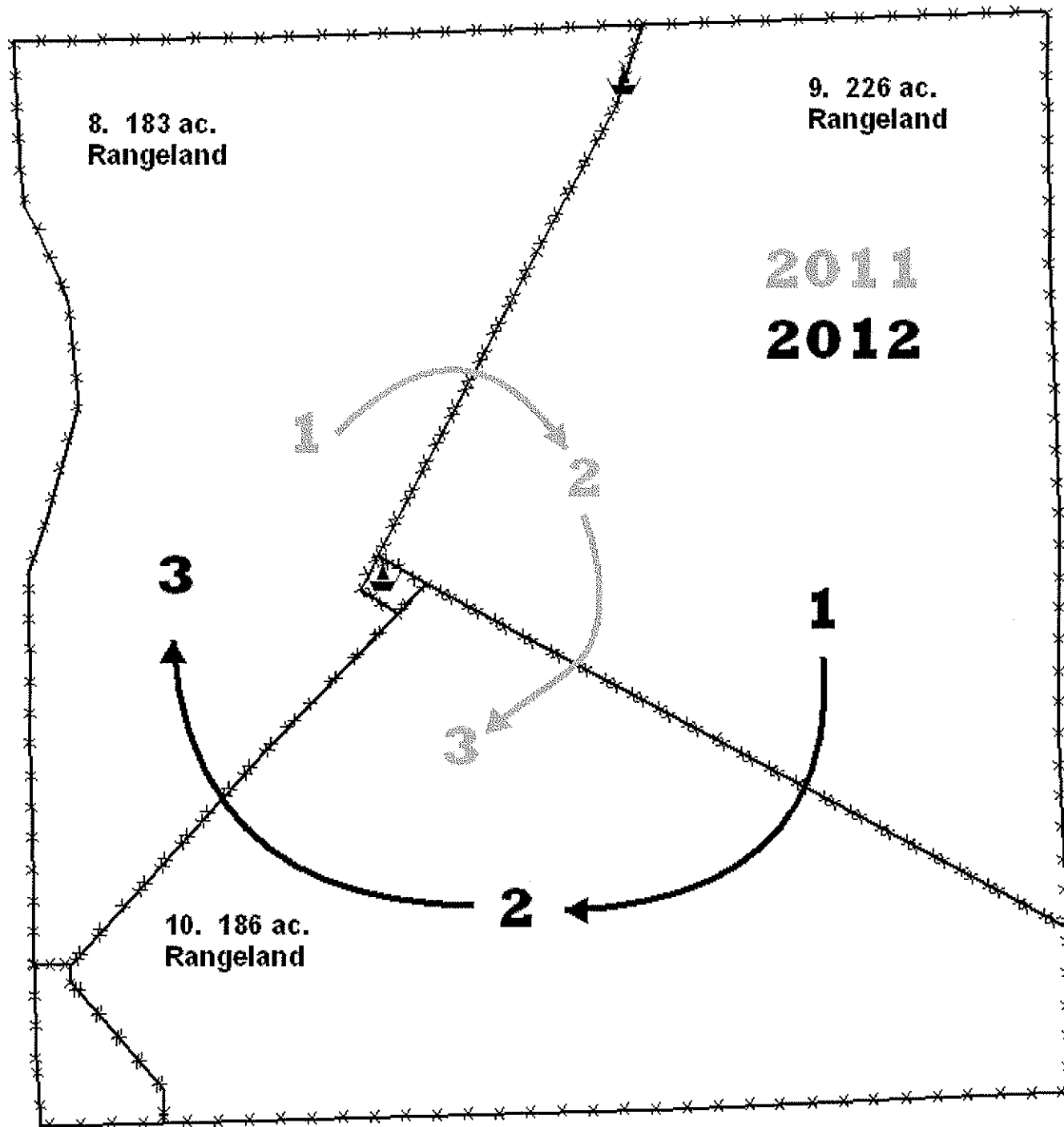
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-  TIPPETTS-MYERS RANCH LLC
-  FERRELL CATTLE CO- BUGGYPOLE RANCH
-  Buggypole Ranch Herd C





TIPPETTS MYERS RANCH - HINES



2011
2012

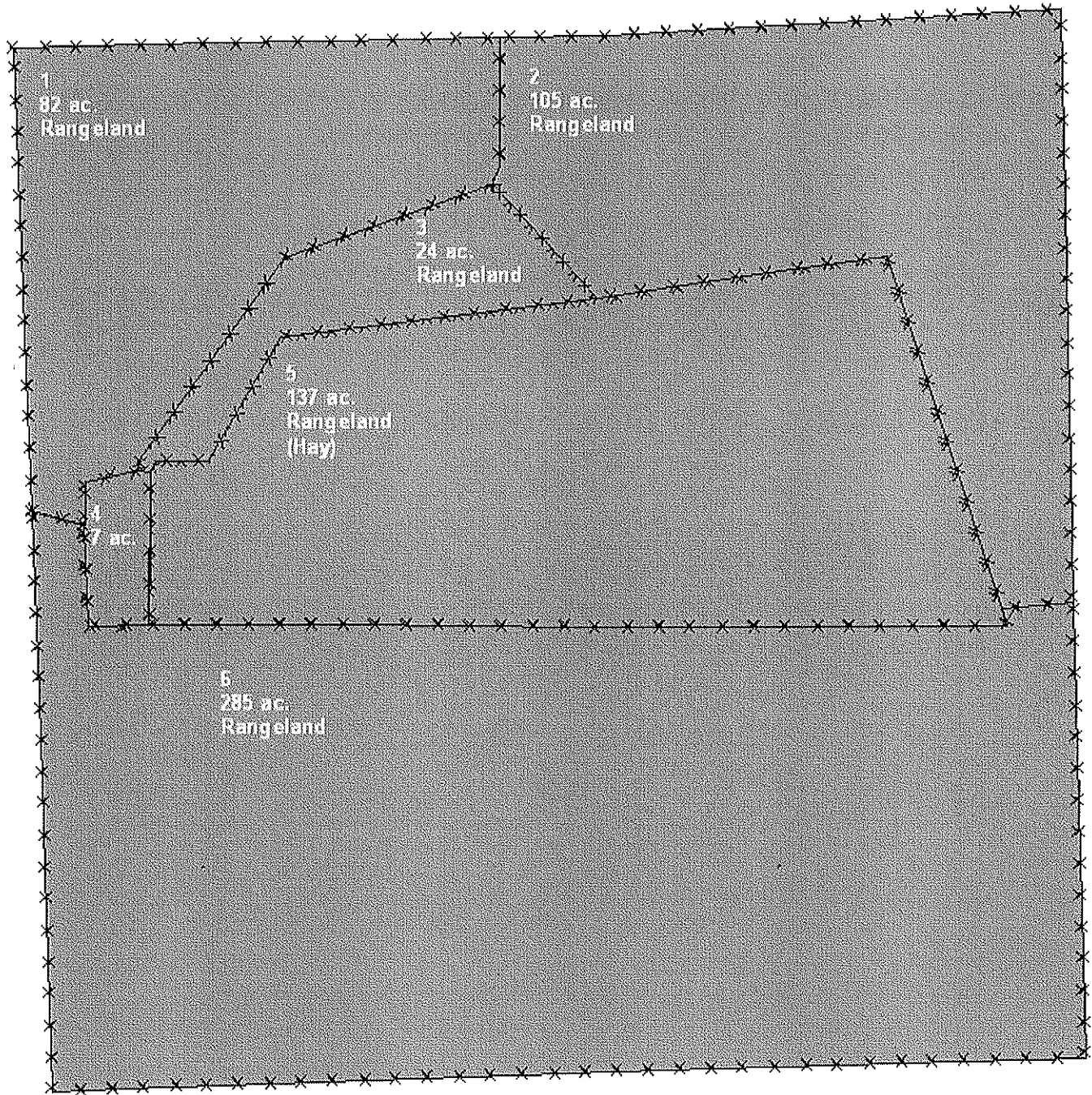
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- Fences
- wells





TIPPETTS MYERS RANCH - MARIES



Legend

- Fences
- wells

