

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HABITAT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE
HABITAT ENHANCEMENT AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL**

Game Branch / HPC Project Number: 14-507

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: 76 Ranch Solar Project and Wildlife Waters

Region and Game Management Unit: 31

Local Habitat Partnership Committee (LHPC):

- Safford

Was the project presented to the LHPC?

YES NO

Has this project been submitted in previous years? YES NO

If Yes, was it funded? YES NO → **Funded HPC Project #(s):**

Project Type:

Brief Project Summary: This 2014 request for funds is to help defray the cost of installation on systems to supply wildlife and livestock with water in the northern portion of the 76 Ranch. The ~71,000 acre ranch is located at the northern end of the Sulphur Springs Valley and encompasses portions of the south and west sides of the Pinaleno Mountains. The proposed water development project consists of (1) well, (4) solar pumps, 5+ miles of pipeline, (4) 10,000 gallon storage tanks and (7) 500 gallon livestock/wildlife water troughs. Water for the systems will be supplied by a proposed well at Underwood, an existing well and storage at Cedar Springs and an exploratory well located in the Sheep Wash Pasture. These water systems are part of a larger venture between the ranch owner and NRCS which consists of 40,000 additional gallons of storage, 9 additional water troughs and over 10 additional miles of pipeline. Components of this HPC application will help defray the ranch's cost to install solar pumping systems on the 4 water sources and install an additional pipeline and trough. Solar power will be installed at Underwood Well, Cedar Storage Tank, Cedar Well and the exploratory well in Sheep Wash Pasture. Dedicated wildlife drinkers will be added along each pipeline. HPC Funds will be used to augment rancher and NRCS dollars for installation of solar power at each pumping location (Cedar Well, Cedar Storage, proposed well at Underwood, and the exploratory well in Sheep Wash Pasture), and an additional 1500' of pipeline and the wildlife guzzlers. The ranch owner will supply labor, equipment and some materials for pipeline and wildlife trough installation. The previous HPC grant was focused on getting water for wildlife on the southern portion of the ranch to benefit mule deer and antelope. This application is focused on the upper portion of the ranch (mule and white tail deer). This project will improve mule deer and whitetail deer habitat by ensuring safe, unrestricted access to water and will enable the use of unoccupied or underused deer habitat in GMU 31.

Big Game Wildlife Species to Benefit: Mule Deer, Whitetail Deer, Turkey, javalina, various small game and non-game species.

Implementation Schedule (Month/Day/Year):

Project Start Date:

6/2015

Project End Date:

12/31/2015

Environmental Compliance:

NEPA Completed: Yes No N/A

Projected Completion Date: _____

State Historic Preservation Office - Archaeological Clearance:

Yes No N/A

Projected Completion Date: 6/2015 _____

Arizona Game and Fish Department EA Checklist: N/A

To be Completed by: _____

Projected Completion Date: _____

PROJECT FUNDING		
Special Big Game License Tag Funds Requested:	\$ 33,168	
Cost Share or Matching Funds: NRCS EQIP Contract (portion of total contract that is applicable to funding request); rancher	\$ 104,830 NRCS \$ 32,250 rancher	
Total Project Costs:	\$ 170,248	
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION		
Applicant (please print): Amy Humphrey for Gila Valley NRCD	Address: 267 N. 8 th Ave; Suite B Safford, AZ 85546	E-mail: amy.humphrey@az.usda.gov
Telephone: 928.651.4456		Date: 8/4/2014
AGFD Contact and Phone No. (If applicant is not AGFD personnel): Devin Skinner		
Project has been coordinated with: Devin Skinner, John Bacorn, Jay Whetten, NRCS, HPC committee and the AZ Mule Deer Foundation.		

NEED STATEMENT – PROBLEM ANALYSIS:

Water for wildlife and livestock on the project portion of the ranch are limited to dirt tanks, pot hole water and ephemeral springs. Water is available seasonally and many portions of the pastures in this area of the ranch are not well watered. A weak well at Cedar Spring was recently “re-drilled” and will become a reliable source of perennials water. None of the dirt tanks/potholes/springs in this area of the ranch hold water perennially. Habitat for big game wildlife species (mule and whitetail deer) is limited by lack of water sources. The project will supply water to wildlife and livestock in an area where water distribution is less than desired. This project will also help to manage livestock grazing in a manner that will favor forbs and shrubs that are preferred for cervid dietary requirements.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

The objective of this proposal is to install a water system that will benefit wildlife habitat on this portion of the ranch. Mule Deer and Whitetail Deer will benefit by being ensured safe access to water and the ability to use GMU 31 habitat that pre-project, is under used.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND STRATEGIES:

1. A Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP) for the 76 Ranch has been written and signed by AZ Game and Fish Department (AZGF), AZ Association of Natural Resource Conservation Districts (AZNRCD), Jay B Whetten (ranch owner), USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the land ownership agencies within the boundaries of the ranch which include the USDA Forest Service (FS), and Arizona State Land Department. Through an inventory of the ranch, resource concerns and practices needed to “fix” them were identified. The project that is proposed for funding in this grant application has been identified as a “high” need for the ranch for multiple reasons that include the improvement of wildlife habitat, both in facilitating proper grazing strategies to improve vegetative cover as well as opening up the area for targeted wildlife species which include mule and whitetail deer by providing them with a perennial water source.
2. The 76 Ranch Solar Project consists of installing approximately 6 miles (31,680 feet) of 1 ¼”

poly pipe that will supply water to 40,000+ gallons held in storage and (10) water troughs over 3 separate project areas.

PROJECT LOCATION:

T8S., R.22E, multiple sections, please see attached maps at the end of the application.

LAND OWNERSHIP AT THE PROJECT SITE(S):

(if the project area is private property, please state specifically and provide the landowner’s name)

- Private and State Land

IF PRIVATE PROPERTY, IS THERE A COOPERATIVE BIG GAME STEWARDSHIP or LANDOWNER AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LANDOWNER AND THE DEPARTMENT?

YES[] NO[X] N/A[] not for this section of the ranch. There is good access without having to have an agreement.

HABITAT DESCRIPTION:

Evergreen woodland savannas with Mexican blue oak, Emory oak, and turbinella oak are the dominant species and cane beardgrass, sideoats grama, blue grama, Texas bluestem, plains lovegrass, sprucetop grama, threeawns, and needlegrass characterize the understory.

ITEMIZED USE OF FUNDS:

Special Big Game License Tag Funds

Equipment, Labor, Administrative, Material	Special Big Game License Funds Requested
(3) Solar pumping plants @ \$5,000 cost share = \$15,000.00 (2) solar pumping plants @ \$7,500 cost share = \$15,000.00 (3) wildlife waters @ \$500 = \$1500.00 1600’ of pipe @ .63/foot & (1)800 gallon trough = \$1668.00	\$33,168.00

Cost Share or Matching Funds (for volunteer labor rates please refer to the worksheet below)

Equipment/Labor/Administrative/Materials	Entity	Funds
29,060’ of pipeline; (1) well; 40,000 gallons of storage; (3) solar pumping plants; troughs	USDA NRCS	\$104,830
Installation costs for pipeline, storage; troughs above cost share match; wildlife waters installation.	Ranch Owner	\$32,250
PROJECT TOTAL:		\$170,248

LIST COOPERATORS AND DESCRIBE POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION:

Funding for the project will come from a variety of sources including: the ranch owner, NRCS, and HPC. Funds are itemized below.

1. USDA NRCS: \$55,506 cost share on pipeline, storage, troughs and a well and solar pump on the Underwood System. \$49,324 cost share on pipelines, storage, troughs and solar pumps on the Cedar and Cedar to Kennedy Falls water systems.
- b. HPC: itemized in table above.
- c. Private land owner: funds to match unfunded portion of labor/material on all items, Sheep Wash pasture system including pipeline, trough, and pipeline appurtenances; installation of wildlife guzzlers.

Archeological clearance assistance.

d. AZ State Land Department: archeological clearances on state land. Approval of range improvement request.

WOULD IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROJECT ASSIST IN PROVIDING, MAINTAINING, OR FACILITATING RECREATIONAL ACCESS?

YES NO N/A

PROJECT MONITORING PLAN:

As mentioned above, there is a Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP) 76 Ranch. One of the objectives of this CRMP is to identify monitoring locations on State and Private land that will be visited each year.

PROJECT MAINTENANCE:

As a condition of the EQIP contract, maintenance shall be performed for the lifespan of all practices by Bonita Cattle LLC (76 Ranch).

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT TO BE FILED BY:

Amy Humphrey

WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (*please use the worksheet below*):

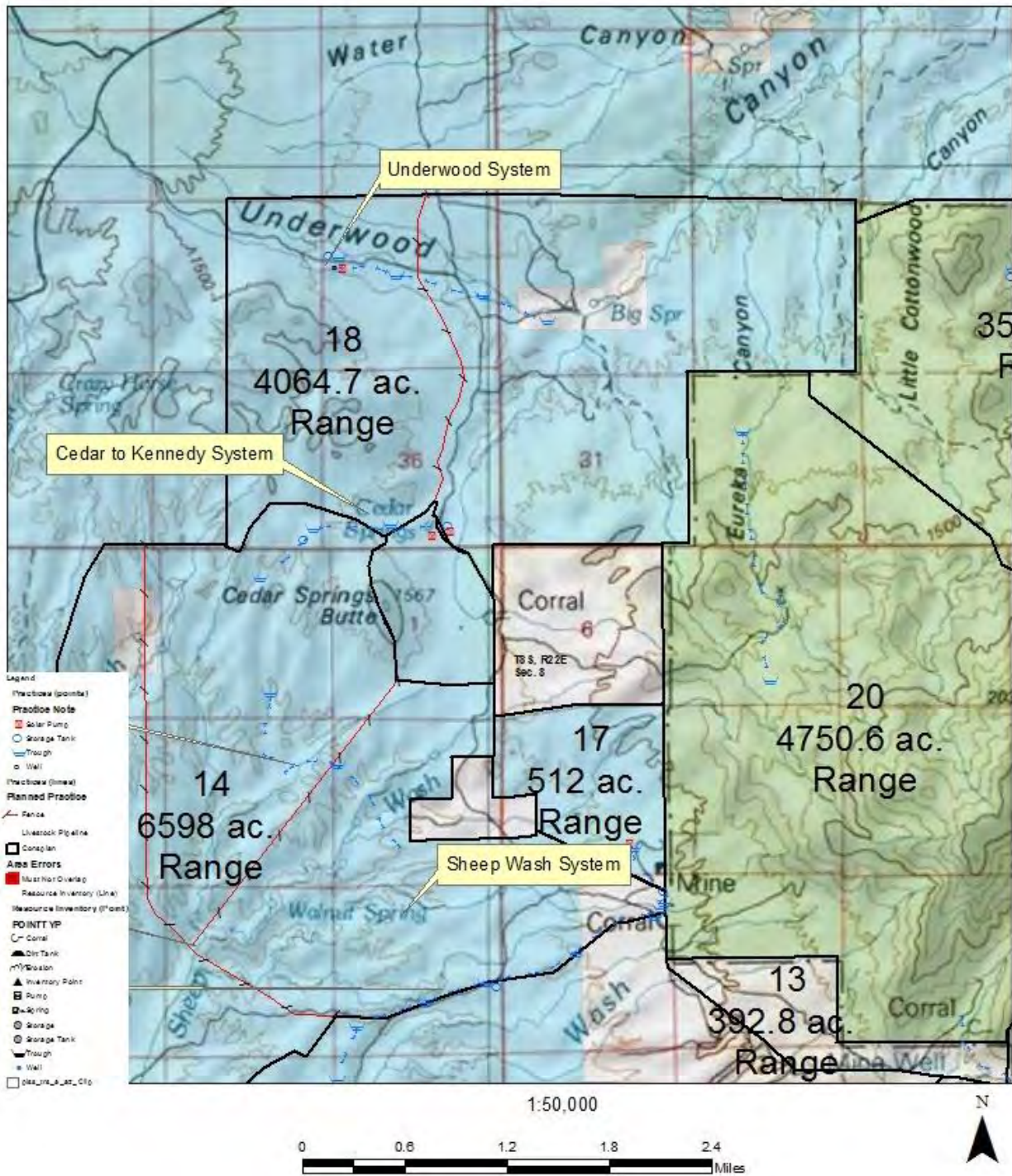
ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT **WATER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET**

PROJECT TITLE: 76 Ranch Solar Project and Wildlife Waters

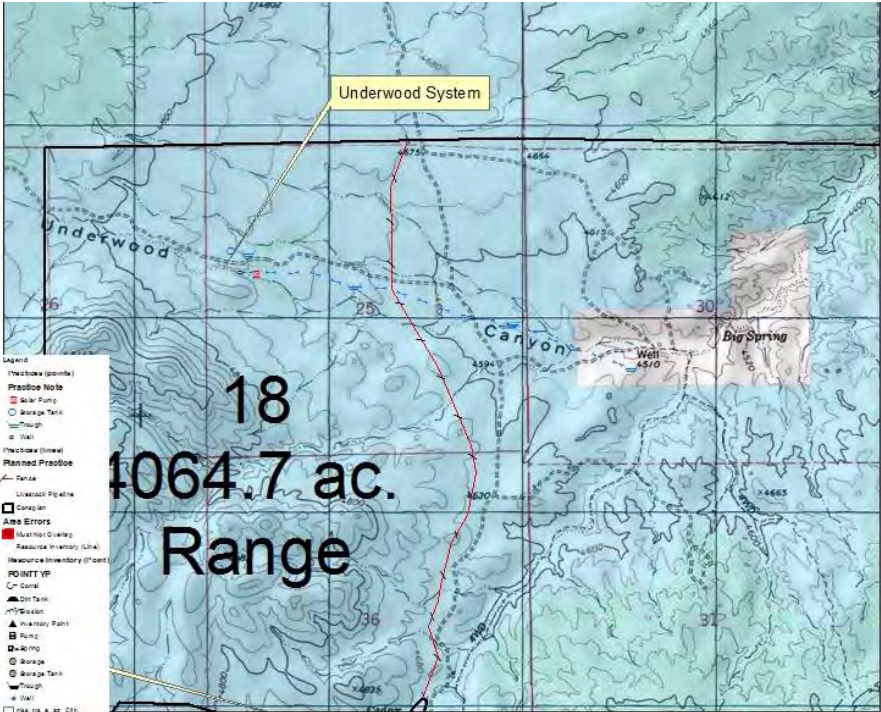
- 1) **Is the water development listed as a priority in the most recent “Wildlife Water Development Annual Implementation Schedule?”**
Yes
- 2) **Please list the Development Branch personnel and date coordinated with for this project.**
Devin Skinner (several visits in 2013-2014)
- 3) **What is the estimated annual inches of precipitation for the area? (mark one)**
2-4 4-6 6-8 8-10 10-12 12-14 14-16 >16
- 4) **Is there a perennial water source available to big game within four miles of this project?**

YES (please complete #5 below) NO (skip #5 below)
- 5) **For the accessible, perennial water source nearest this project:**
Name of water source: Cedar Spring well and various seasonal sources.
Type of water source (catchment, spring, dirt tank): well supplies intermittent water.
Ownership of water source: private
Distance in miles from project: 4 and included in project. Owner deepened well in February 2014 to establish a more permanent water source for this portion of the ranch. Sheep Wash Exploratory well does not have a pump on it and has not been pumped for many years.
- 6) **Is the target wildlife species a result of transplant efforts? YES NO**
- 7) **Please list any special land management status for the project site (i.e. Wilderness, National Park, National Monument). If private land, list landowner.**
Private land is owned by Bonita Cattle LLC (Jay & Jennifer Whetten) who own and operate the 76 Ranch.
- 8) **Please provide the following information about access to the proposed site:**
Type of access (mark one): 2x4 vehicles 4x4 only foot only**
**If foot access only: Distance in miles: _____ Approximate hiking time: _____
-- Does access to this site require crossing private or tribal lands? YES NO
-- Please describe any restrictions to public access:
- 9) **Please list below (or on a separate sheet) the material type and dimensions of each component proposed to be added, modified, or repaired.** All practices will be designed and installed to NRCS standards and specifications. As-Built designs can be attached to the checkout/final report documentation.
- 10) **Was a site visit completed? Yes No**
If Yes, please list personnel that attended and date.
Devin Skinner/Amy Humphrey/Scott Stratton/Jay Whetten – numerous visits. Terry Herndon site visit in the early fall of 2013 (we drove through when touring the upper portion of the previous 76 Ranch HPC project).

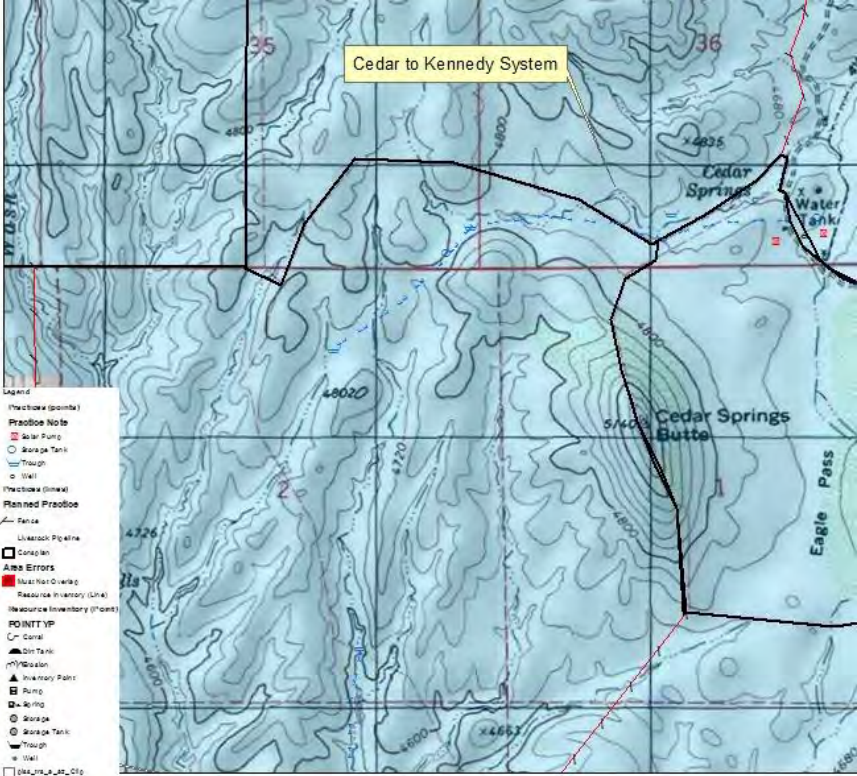
MAPS



Map 1. Underwood, Cedar and Sheep Wash project locations.



Map 2. Underwood system



Map 3. Cedar Springs Well to Kennedy Storage and Trough system.



Map 4. Sheep Wash system.