



DECISION MEMO
BEAVER TEMPORARY FENCE

U.S. FOREST SERVICE

APACHE-SITGREAVES NATIONAL FORESTS, CLIFTON RANGER DISTRICT

GREENLEE COUNTY, ARIZONA

T 1 S, R 31 E, SECTION 36; T 1 S, R 32E, SECTIONS 6, 31, AND 32

BACKGROUND

Rebuilding the fence on the ridge in the Maple Charlie Moore Pasture on the Alma Mesa Allotment is necessary for resource management and cattle management. The Maple Charlie Moore Pasture covers approximately 20 square miles. Remnants of old fencing can be found on this ridge. However, records of this fence have not been verified in allotment records looking back last 50 years.

When in use, cattle tend to disperse throughout the entire pasture, but consistently graze and stay on the easily accessible areas which negatively impacts resources. Without the ability to cordon cattle into a particular area, foraging areas, that are not as easily accessed, are underutilized. Routinely, a portion of the herd drifts north of the ridge into Six Shooter area of the pasture. Because of the pasture-wide dispersal, the permittee's ability to withhold areas for seasonal use are limited.

Because the pasture is so large, gathering the herd is a very long, labor intensive, and an ineffective endeavor leaving some cattle missed in the round-up in the pasture for a year or more.

This fence, approximately three miles long, is a temporary measure until a permanent fence is built. A permanent fence is proposed at this time and undergoing analysis under the Stateline NEPA process (Decision expected in mid-year, 2019). If this project is determined to have no negative impacts (or impacts that can be mitigated), during the NEPA process, it will be converted to a permanent fence. If any necessary mitigations cannot be implemented the temporary fence will be removed.

The Proposed route of the Beaver Temporary fence- Figure 1 below.

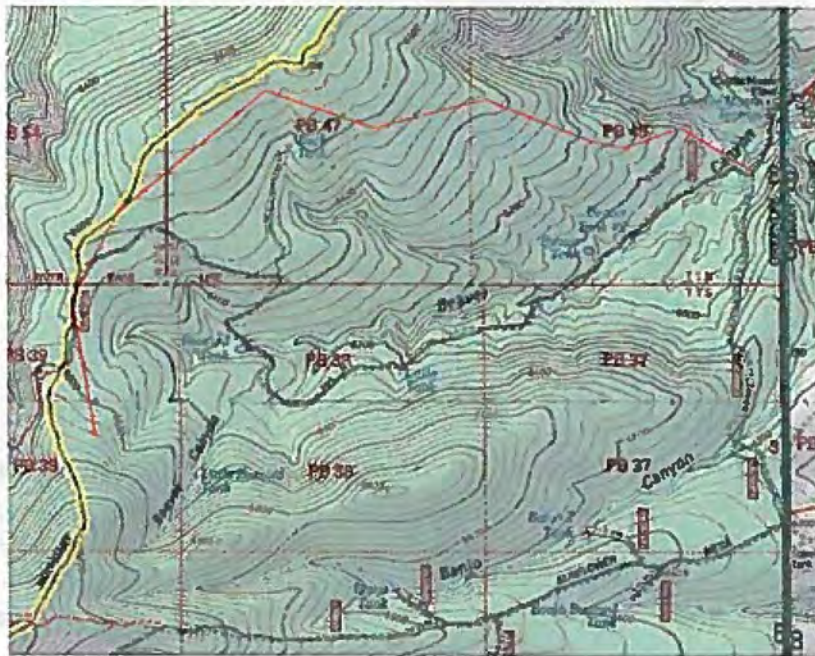


Figure 1

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this project is to aid in grazing management and allow a more even utilization of the Maple Charlie Moore pasture. It is anticipated this fence will greatly aid in meeting current resource, operational, and wildlife concerns.

DECISION

I have decided the construction of a temporary fence will be authorized. This temporary fence will have only three strands of wire; a barbed top and middle wire and a bottom smooth wire. The top wire will measure 42 inches from the ground and the bottom smooth wire will be 16 inches to 18 inches from the ground. The middle barbed wire will be evenly spaced (13 inches or 12 inches respectively) between the top and bottom wire.

The t-posts used for the fence will be 5 ½ feet tall, including bracing and stretch posts. No holes will be drilled for t-post placement. Very minimal saw work for removing vegetation to get the fence wire stretched and in place is authorized at this time. Trees greater than 6 inches dbh, (as measured at 4.5 feet from the ground), and greater than 2 feet on either side of the fence line will not be cut. If trees of 6 inches dbh or greater are within the fence line route, they may be used as posts provided protective measures to the tree are instituted.

Live trees should never have nails or staples driven into them or have wire wrapped around them without being protected. Live trees used in the fence line will be protected by slabs of wood

secured around the tree with wire (16g Ty-wire is adequate). Fence wire is then stapled to the slab.

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement, (EIS), or an environmental assessment, (EA), because it is a routine action as described in FSH 1909.15, 31.2.9: *Implementation or modification of minor management practices to improve allotment condition or animal distribution when an Allotment Management Plan is not in place.*

I find that there are no extraordinary circumstances that would warrant further analysis and documentation required in an EA or EIS; thus, categorical exclusion, (CE), documentation is appropriate in this situation. In making this determination, Pursuant to 36 CFR 220.6, I took into account the following resource conditions as identified in agency procedures that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances might exist:

- There are No Effects to any federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species.
- Timing and duration of project implementation, (February-April), and measures to prohibit removal or damage to larger trees/shrubs will be minimally disturbing to migratory birds and their habitat.
- Floodplains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds are not present.
- The project is outside of congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas.
- Portions of the fence project are in the Natural Landscape Management Area and Inventoried Roadless Area. However, no reconstruction, or new construction of roads are proposed. The project is consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for the Natural Landscape Management direction. (Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests LMP 2015).
- The project is not in a Research Natural Area (RNA).
- Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas: The proposed action has been analyzed and the project area has been surveyed for cultural resources. There are no concerns. Clearance to proceed was recommended by Clifton Ranger District Heritage specialist.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This action has been added to the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests Schedule of Proposed Actions. Additionally, this action was internally scoped based on the narrow, short-term and temporary nature of the project.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

This decision is consistent with the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests Land Management Plan (the Forest Plan), Forest Service Policy, and other management considerations. The project was



designed in conformance with the Forest Plan and other federal and state law, policy, and direction applicable to the resources present in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests.

Implementation of this decision will not violate any Federal, State, or local laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment including:

- *Clean Water Act*, as amended
- *Endangered Species Act of 1973*, as amended
- *American Antiquities Act of 1906* and *Historic Preservation Act of 1966*
- *Executive Order 13186 of 2001, Migratory Bird Treaty Act*

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OPPORTUNITIES

This decision is not subject to notice, comment, or appeal.

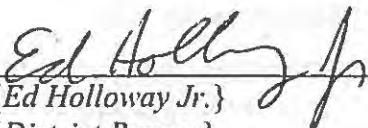
As a result of the President signing into law the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 (Pub. L. No. 113-76) and the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Farm Bill) (Pub. L. No. 113-79), the Forest Service will no longer offer notice, comment, and appeal opportunities pursuant to 36 CFR 215 for categorically excluded projects.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

This decision is expected to be implemented immediately upon my approval in this Decision Memo and authorized in a range improvement Permit Modification for the Alma Mesa Allotment. Specifications of this action will be attached.

CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: Ed Holloway, Clifton District Ranger, 928-687-8601 or by email at eholloway@fs.fed.us.



{Ed Holloway Jr.}
{District Ranger}
{Clifton Ranger District}

2/13/18
Date



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