



DECISION MEMO
BAR X 2012 TRICK TANKS
U.S. FOREST SERVICE
TONTO NATIONAL FOREST
PLEASANT VALLEY RANGER DISTRICT
GILA COUNTY, ARIZONA

BACKGROUND

The Project action involves installing four new trick tanks; Grasshopper, Haigler, Cross Y, and Lower Dry Creek Trick Tanks. Each trick tank will have a 50' X 50' apron with two 5,000 gallon storage tanks attached. A four wire fence would be built around the apron to keep livestock and vehicle use out. The apron would be built using a backhoe to clear the site. Soil would be bermed up around the edges of the apron to facilitate collection of water. The apron material will be a poly liner normally used to line dirt tanks. Poly-pipe would be above ground from the apron to the storage tanks. From the storage tanks, a poly-pipe will be run above ground to drinking trough(s).

Excess water from the storage tanks will run through an overflow piped underground a minimum of 20' from the storage tanks and then above ground to a natural drainage. Water to the trough will be regulated by a ball/float valve.

Grasshopper Trick Tank and Lower Dry Creek Trick Tanks will have one drinking trough servicing their respective pasture. Haigler Trick Tank will have a four strand barbed wire fence constructed around the storage tanks and drinking troughs to form a trap which will service three pastures; Grasshopper, Haigler, and Westhole Pastures. Cross Y Trick Tank will have two drinkers servicing Cross Y Pasture and Bar X Pastures.

DECISION

I have decided to implement the construction of four trick tanks on the Bar X Allotment. The four trick tanks are Grasshopper, Haigler, Cross Y, and Lower Dry Creek Trick Tanks. The four trick tanks will be a cost share with Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The trick tanks will be constructed to NRCS and Forest Service (FS) specification.

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA). The applicable category of actions is identified in agency procedures as Section 339 of the 2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act. This category of action(s) is applicable because: 1) The project is within Category 1909.15.31.2 (9) that includes "Implementation or modification of minor management practices to improve allotment condition or animal distribution when an Allotment Management Plan is not yet in place". The current Allotment Management Plan for the Bar X Allotment was approved on 06/11/1984. This AMP is no longer valid, and the revision process is underway to update the AMP so that it is compliant with current laws, regulations, and policies.

I find that there are no extraordinary circumstances that would warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS. I took into account resource conditions identified in agency procedures that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances might exist:

- Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species – A site specific Biological Assessment and Evaluation was completed and approved on 3/12/2012. There are no significant effects to listed, proposed, or Forest Service sensitive species.
- Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds – Wetlands are defined in Executive Order 11990, and Floodplains are defined in Executive Order 11988. There are no effects on flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds.
- Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas – None of the described trick tank construction occurs within such designated areas.
- Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas – The proposed trick tanks do not occur within an inventoried roadless area.
- Research natural areas – The proposed trick tanks do not occur within a research natural area.
- American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites – See “Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas” below.
- Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas – A 100% archaeological survey was completed December 6, 2011 and the Forest Supervisor approved the clearance on January 27, 2012.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This action was originally listed as a proposal on the Tonto National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions and updated periodically during the analysis. Internal coordination for the projects occurred with the following Forest Service personnel: Denise Ryan, Zone Archeologist; Julia Camp, District Wildlife Biologist; Jeremy Human, District Fuels Specialist; Norm Ambos, Forest Soil Scientist; Lynette Mason, Forest Hydrologist; and Chris LaCosse, District Recreation Specialist.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

This decision is consistent with the Tonto National Forest Land Management Plan. The project was designed in conformance with Section 339 of the 2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act and

the Tonto National Forest land and resource management plan as required by the National Forest Management Act. The project is in conformance with forest plan objectives and complies with all applicable laws and regulations, some of which are summarized below:

- Forest Plan Consistency (National Forest Management Act) – This project is consistent with the management direction of the Tonto National Forest Land Management Plan, as amended, for Management Area 5G.
- Management Indicator Species – Management Indicator Species (MIS) Analyses were completed for this project and approved on 3/12/2012. No significant impacts to these species are anticipated.
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act – In compliance with this Act, the Wildlife Biologist has considered effects to migratory bird species, and has determined that project actions will have no adverse effects on these species. The District Wildlife Biologist completed the Migratory Bird Analyses on 3/12/2012.
- Clean Water Act – Best Management Practices will be followed during project implementation to ensure protection of soil and water resources, in compliance with this Act.
- National Environmental Policy Act – This Act requires public involvement and consideration of potential environmental effects. The entirety of documentation for this decision supports compliance with this Act.
- Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960; Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974; Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, particularly authorization of livestock grazing permits for a ten-year period required Sec. 402 (a)&(b) (3) and 36 CFR 222.3; and National Forest Management Act of 1976; all exhibiting congressional intent to allow grazing on suitable lands.
- Forest Service policy on rangeland management (FSM 2202.1, FSM 2203.1).
- Federal Regulation [36 CFR 222.2 (c)], which states that National Forest System lands will be allocated for livestock grazing and these allotment management plans will be prepared consistent with land management plans, and the Clean Water Act of 1948, Clean Air Act of 1955, Endangered Species Act of 1973, and 13186 (Conservation of Migratory Birds), and National Historic Preservation Act 1966, as amended.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW (APPEAL) OPPORTUNITIES

This decision is not subject to administrative appeal under 36 CFR 215.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

This project can be implemented immediately upon receipt of approved project design and signature of an approved permit modification.

CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: Sean Brown, Range Specialist, of the Pleasant Valley Ranger District, PO Box 49, Young , AZ, 85554; (928) 462-4320



Donal Luhrsen
District Ranger

3/15/2012
Date

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