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## **Decision Memo**

### **Bathtub Corral**

USDA Forest Service  
Tonto National Forest  
Tonto Basin Ranger District  
Gila, Arizona

The Bathtub Corral project on Tonto Basin Ranger District is located at Horseshoe Canyon Pasture, near Forest Road 1709, approximately six air miles northeast from the town of Tonto Basin, AZ (See map at the end of this document).

### **Project Background**

The Del Shay Allotment located on the Tonto Basin Ranger District is permitted for 127 Cows/bulls and 10 horses year-round and 126 yearlings from January 1<sup>st</sup> until May 31<sup>st</sup> with an Allotment Management Plan signed in December of 1994. The basic goal of the management plan is to maintain or improve resource conditions on the Del Shay Allotment while maintaining a viable livestock operation.

The Horse Pasture is one of the largest pastures on the Del Shay Allotment and ranges in elevation from 2900 feet to over 5800 feet. The pasture has limited water sources and only one small holding facility in the far northwestern corner. Due to the steep rugged terrain gathering livestock can be challenging but is needed to ensure proper pasture rotations and rest. Cattle are typically gathered as they come into the limited water locations and then pushed downhill towards the Bull Pasture of the holding pen in the Northwest section of the pasture.

### **Project Purpose**

The primary purpose of this project is to add a small corral with a trigger gate that allows livestock to use the water trough at this location while in the pasture but then can be trapped in the corral and hauled out of the pasture when the pasture needs to be rested. The need is to comply with direction in the Allotment Management Plan to ensure adequate rest of the pasture through implementation of a rest rotation in order to continue moving the allotment towards our desired conditions.

### **Decision**

I have decided to construct a corral which will be approximately 65 by 70 feet with at least one trigger gates and two additional drift fences. The corral will be constructed using materials that are resistant to fire as much as possible and no additional ground disturbance beyond what was authorized and flagged is allowed. During development of the proposed action, information was collected about forest resources within the project area. My decision is designed to avoid and/or minimize impacts to these resources, and comply with other laws, regulation, policy, and the land management plan. This project would incorporate best management practices.



## Reasons for Categorically Excluding the Proposed Actions

My assessment is that this proposal falls within the actions listed in *36 CFR 220.6 - Categorical exclusions* that are excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement. This category is found in 36 CFR 220.6(e)(9). This category of action(s) is applicable because the project involves only minor agricultural management practices to increase protection of the grazing area and increase water supply.

I have determined that there are no extraordinary circumstances associated with this project that would preclude the use of this category. This determination is based on the absence or the negligible level of adverse effects on the following resource conditions:

- a. **Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species** – If the mitigations and design features are implemented as directed in this decision, there is no impact to species that would preclude the use of a categorical exclusion.
- b. **Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds** – No floodplains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds will be impacted.
- c. **Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas** – No Congressionally designated areas are within the boundaries of the project.
- d. **Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas** – No inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas are within the boundaries of the project.
- e. **Research natural areas** – No research natural areas are within the boundaries of the project.
- f. **American Indian religious or cultural sites; and archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas** – If the mitigations and design features are implemented as directed in this decision, there is no impact to cultural resources that would preclude the use of a categorical exclusion.

## Public Involvement

On 04/01/2023 the project was posted to PALS.

## Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

*The National Forest Management Act of 1976 (Public Law 104-33, as amended)* requires the U.S. Forest Service to provide for biological diversity on National Forest Service lands consistent with overall multiple-use objectives and to maintain viable wildlife populations in the planning area.

I have determined that this project complies with the 2023 Tonto National Forest Land Management Plan (land management plan). The project was designed in conformance with the land management plan's desired conditions, standards, and guidelines, and other federal and state law, policy, and direction applicable to the resources present in the Tonto National Forest. This determination is based on the absence or the negligible level of adverse effects on the following resource conditions:

- a) Forest Plan identified Species of Conservation Concern. None of these species are in the project area.



- b) Forest Plan identified Riparian Management Zones (RMZ). None of these are in the project area.
- c) Forest Plan identified Recommended Wilderness Areas and Eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers. None of these are in the project area.
- d) Forest Plan identified recommended research natural areas and recommended botanical areas. None of these are in the project area.

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

## Implementation Date

This project is not subject to administrative review and can be implemented immediately as detailed in this decision.

## Contact

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: Eric Hoskins, Rangeland Management Specialist, Tonto Basin Ranger District Roosevelt Arizona at [eric.hoskins@usda.gov](mailto:eric.hoskins@usda.gov).

**JEREMY PLAIN**  
 Digitally signed by JEREMY PLAIN  
 Date: 2024.06.17 15:21:38 -07'00'

Jeremy Plain  
 District Ranger

Date

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# Appendix A

