

Decision Memo

Brown Creek Riparian Improvement

*Lakeside Ranger District
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
Southwestern Region
USDA Forest Service
Navajo County
Arizona*

I. Decision and Rationale

It is my decision to build an estimated 2.5 miles of 4-strand barbed fence, 0.3 mile of "buck and pole" fence, remove 0.5 mile of existing fence and install one 12 foot cattleguard on the Lake Mountain Allotment. Two replacement waters will also be installed, at least one of which will include a water catchment apron with its associated underground metal storage tank and drinker. The project area is located in sections 14 and 15 of T9N R24E (See attached map). The purpose of the action is to enhance riparian vegetation on Brown Creek to exclude livestock grazing and provide alternate sources of water.

This decision fits Category 9- implementation or modification of minor management practices to improve allotment condition or animal distribution when an Allotment Management Plan is not yet in place; and Category 6- Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities which do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than one mile of low standard road construction (Service level D, FSH 7709.56). No extraordinary circumstances, which would preclude this decision have been identified. Therefore, I have excluded this action from preparation of an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

The following mitigation measures will be implemented to minimize potential environmental impacts

- 1) Reseed disturbed areas after construction activities
- 2) Conduct cultural clearance prior to ground disturbance
- 3) Slash from trees cut for right-of-way will be lopped and scattered
- 4) Install a smooth bottom wire 16 inches above the ground

II. Public Involvement and Scoping

Grazing permittees on the affected allotment were contacted to discuss the project. Personal contacts were made with personnel from the Arizona Game and Fish Department and with the Forest Riparian Coordinator.

III. Findings Required by Other Laws

The project is consistent with the goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests' Land Management Plan (pages 15, 83, 155, 159, 160).

Threatened and endangered species were evaluated. A BA&E which is in the project record determined a "no affect" for the black-footed ferret, peregrine falcon, Mexican spotted owl, bald eagle, Little Colorado spinedace, and southwestern willow flycatcher.

The project does not involve commercial timber harvest.

IV. Implementation Date

This project may be implemented immediately after my approval in this Decision Memo.

V. Appeal Rights

This decision is not subject to appeal in accordance with 26 CFR 215.8(a) (4).

VI. Information Contact Person

For additional information concerning this decision, contact Clay Baxter or Ed Collins at R.R. 3, Box B-50, Lakeside, AZ 85929, or at (520) 368-5111.



Edward D. Collins
District Ranger
Lakeside Ranger District

3/25/99

Date

Categorical Exclusion Biological Assessment and Evaluation

"Brown Creek Riparain Improvement"
Lakeside Ranger District
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
Southwestern Region, USDA Forest Service
Lakeside, Arizona

1. Proposed Action:

The project consists of building approximately 2.5 miles of 4-strand barbed fence, 0.3 miles of "buck and pole" fence, removal of 0.5 mile of existing wire fence and installation of one 12 foot cattle-guard on the Lake Mountain Allotment. Two replacement waters will also be installed, at least one of which will include a water catchment apron with its associated underground storage tank and drinker. The project is located in sections 14 and 15 of T9NR24E (see attached map).

2. Category:

31.2(6)- Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities which do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than 1 mile of low standard road construction and 31.2(9)- implementation or modification of minor management practices to improve allotment condition or animal distribution when an Allotment Management Plan is not yet in place (service level D, FSH 7709.56).

3. Species Identification:

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status
<i>Canis lupis</i>	Mexican gray wolf	Endangered
<i>Mustela nigripes</i>	black-footed ferret	Endangered
<i>Pantera onca</i>	jaguar	Endangered
<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>	Southwestern willow flycatcher	Endangered
<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>	American peregrine falcon	Endangered
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	American bald eagle	Threatened
<i>Strix occidentalis lucida</i>	Mexican spotted owl	Threatened
<i>Lepidomeda vittata</i>	Little Colorado River spinedace	Threatened
<i>Charadrius montanus</i>	Mountain plover	Proposed Threatened

4. Habitat:

Species	Occupied Habitat present	Unoccupied suitable /critical habitat present	No suitable/critical habitat present
<i>Canis lupis</i>	No	Yes	n/a
<i>Mustela nigripes</i>	No	No	Yes
<i>Pantera onca</i>	No	Yes	n/a
<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>	No	No	Yes
<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>	No	Yes	n/a
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	No	Yes	n/a

Species	Occupied Habitat present	Unoccupied suitable /critical habitat present	No suitable/critical habitat present
<i>Strix occidentalis lucida</i>	No	Yes	n/a
<i>Lepidomeda vittata</i>	No	Yes	n/a
	No	No	Yes

5. *Effects:*

Species	Occupied habitat affected	Suitable/critical habitat affected
<i>Canis lupis</i>	No	No
<i>Mustela nigripes</i>	No	No
<i>Pantera onca</i>	No	No
<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>	No	No
<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>	No	No
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	No	No
<i>Strix occidentalis lucida</i>	No	No
<i>Lepidomeda vittata</i>	No	No
<i>Charadrius montanus</i>	No	No

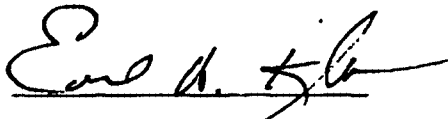
6. *Finding:*

(X) I find that the proposed action will have no effect on any threatened or endangered species.

() I find that the proposed action may affect (list species) and recommend the action not be categorically excluded.

7. *Signatures and date*

a. Prepared and Reviewed By:



Earl H. Klein
District Wildlife Biologist

3/9/99

Date