

Decision Memo Chub Mountain Pipeline

USDA Forest Service, Southwest Region, Tonto National Forest
Tonto Basin Ranger District, Gila County, Arizona
(T6N, R12E, Sections 16, 21, 22, 27, 33, 34)

Decision

It is my decision to authorize construction of a pipeline on the Greenback Allotment. The pipeline will be approximately three and a half miles in length and will allow for water to be pumped from the private property along FS 3296 and 1417 to three separate pumping stations with three 3000 gallon poly tanks at each station. This pipeline will provide reliable water in the First Basin, Second Basin and Methodist Pastures of the Greenback Allotment, rather than relying on fluctuations of the seasonal water sources that currently provide water to these pastures.

Access to the project areas will be along existing Forest Service road 3296 and 1417 for materials and labor. The pipeline will be laid above ground and any galvanized steel used, must be painted and maintained to blend into the surrounding landscape. Pipelines will be laid approximately 50' away from roadways and where possible not be evident to the average observer to comply with the National Forest Landscape Management Handbook. Troughs will be installed with wildlife access and escape ramps and must meet Forest Service and NRCS standards. The storage tanks will be placed on level ground with a suitable foundation and must be either tied down or will be required to maintain a suitable water level to act as a ballast to secure the storage tanks. Only limited brush trimming will be authorized to implement this project. Construction of this project must be coordinated with District range staff and constructed in accordance to Forest Service Range Improvement Standards. Disturbance is to be minimal and only in areas covered by the site-specific archeological clearance (# 2012-12-15 and 2012-12-75).

I have concluded that this action may be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or an environmental assessment. It is within one of the categories identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 36 CFR 220.6. The project is within Category 32.2 (9) that includes implementation or modification of minor management practices to improve allotment condition or animal distribution. There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the action as defined in the next paragraph.

Public health and safety will not be affected by this action. There are no know significant irreversible resource commitments or irretrievable losses to wildlife habitat, soil productivity, forage production, or water quality. No known cultural resources will be affected. A site-specific archeological clearance (#2012-12-15 and 2012-12-75) has been completed in conjunction with forest archeologists and was approved by the Forest Supervisor. A site-specific Biological Evaluation has been completed and approved (Analysis #2012-306). The proposal will not take place on steep slopes or on highly erosive soils. There are no wetlands or floodplains within the project area.

Public Involvement

Design of the project was coordinated with NRCS, the permittee for the Greenback Allotment and Forest Service specialists including Range, Biology, and Heritage. A notice for public comment was published in the Payson Roundup on May 11th 2012.

Findings Required by Other Laws

The project is in Management Area 6J identified in the Tonto National Forest Land Management Plan (USDA 1985, as amended). The management emphasis for this area is to manage for a variety of renewable natural resources with primary emphasis on wildlife habitat improvement, livestock forage productions, and dispersed recreation. The design of this project is consistent with the standards and guidelines of the Land Management Plan. Effects to Management Indicator Species (MIS) were evaluated (Analysis #2012-306). A biological evaluation was prepared (BE #2012-306) and found no effect to any Threatened or Endangered Species in compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

There are no inventoried roadless areas within the project area. Best Management Practices will be followed during project implementation in compliance with the Clean Water Act.

Implementation

If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period. When appeals are filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of the last appeal disposition.

Administrative Review or Appeal

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to regulations at 36 CFR 215. Individuals or organizations who provided comment or otherwise expressed interest in the proposed action during the comment period may appeal. Interest expressed or comments provided on this project prior to or after the close of the comment period do not have standing for appeal purposes. Submit appeals to: Appeal Deciding Officer, Kelly Jardine, District Ranger, 28079 N. HWY 188, Roosevelt, AZ, fax #928-467-3239. If hand delivered, the appeal must be received at the above address during business hours (Monday - Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm), excluding holidays. Electronic appeals may be submitted in to: appeals-southwestern-tonto@fs.fed.us. Electronic documents must be in .doc, .docx, .rtf, .txt, or .htm formats only. The appeal must have an identifiable name attached or verification of identity will be required. Names and addresses of appellants will become part of the public record. A scanned signature may serve as verification on electronic appeals.

Contact Person

Further information about this decision can be obtained from, Eric Hoskins at the Tonto Basin Ranger District, 28079 N State Hwy. 188, Roosevelt, AZ, 85545.

Signature and Date

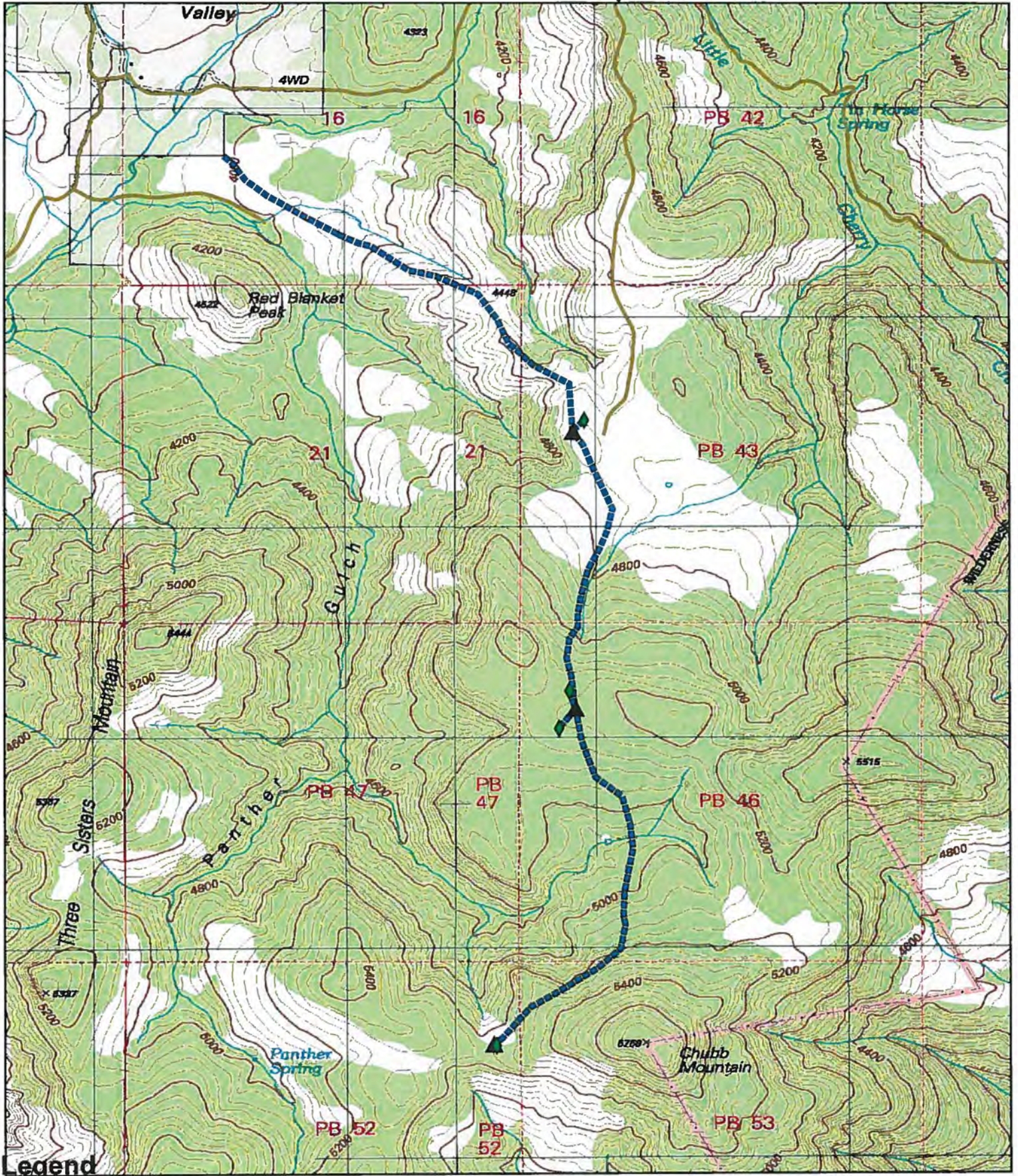


KELLY L. JARDINE
District Ranger



Date

Chubb Mountain Pipeline



Legend

- ◆ Trough
- ▲ Storage Tanks
- Pipeline

1:24,000

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

