



Decision Memo

Clover to Schell Pipeline Extension Project

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

Background

The Tonto Basin Ranger District is proposing a structural range improvement project on the Armer and Dutchwoman Grazing Allotments on the Tonto Basin Ranger District. The proposed project is located in Township 4 N, Range 13 E Section 8. See Map in Purpose and Need on line at; <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57297>

Purpose and Need

The purpose and need for this project is to provide additional reliable water sources for livestock and big game and to employ the water sources to more evenly distribute livestock over the allotment. The proposed action includes the installation of structural improvements to facilitate management of livestock. The need is also to comply with direction found in the Tonto National Forest, Land and Natural Resource Management Plan, to move the condition of the allotments toward the desired condition.

Proposed Action

The proposed action would include the installation of a 1 inch to 1.25inch diameter HDPE pipeline above ground from an existing water source to in the Clover Pasture. 3 new drinkers in the Shell Middle Pasture would receive the water from the pipeline

Design Features

All pipelines would be laid above ground with an ATV minimizing ground disturbance. Trough sites would be hand leveled prior to setting the troughs and the finished troughs would have a wildlife escape ramp and functioning float.

Once installations are complete all debris and construction materials would be removed from the sites. Future maintenance activities will be the responsibility of the permittee and would include regular inspections.



Decision

It is my decision to authorize the implementation of The Clover to Schell Pipeline Extension Project as presented in the Proposed Action section of this document. The proposed action employs standard conservation measures and design features for the maximization of resource protection and minimization of disturbance.

Reasons for Categorically Excluding the Proposed Actions

My assessment is that this proposal falls within the categories of actions listed in the Forest Service *National Environmental Policy Act Handbook (FSH)* that are excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement. This categorical exclusion is found in FSH 1909.15, Section 32.2(9) *“Implement or modify minor management practices to improve allotment condition or animal distribution when no Allotment Management Plan is in Place.”*

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** – According to the Tonto National Forest District Biologist, the proposed actions are not anticipated to have negative effects on any of these species. BAE #20-TBRD-002, 02/24/2020.
- b. **Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds** – According to the Tonto National Forest Hydrologist, the project does not affect perennial streams, springs, mapped riparian vegetation, or mapped floodplains. The area of surface disturbance is very small and water resources related permits are not required.
- c. This project will not take place within any congressionally designated areas such as **Research Natural Areas, Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, National Recreation Areas, Inventoried Roadless Areas or Potential Wilderness Areas**.
- d. **American Indian religious or cultural sites; and archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas** – The Forest Archeologist has made a determination of no adverse effect and clearance for the project was approved by the Forest Supervisor. IS&A 2019 12-96, 04/22/2021.

Public Involvement

This action was scoped publicly through April 23, 2020. Feedback received from internal scoping included no issues or potential extraordinary circumstances. Project details and map can be reviewed on-line at; <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57297>.



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 the Forest Plan and other federal and state law, policy, and direction applicable to the resources present in the Tonto National Forest. *The National Forest Management Act of 1976* (Public Law 104-33, as amended) requires the 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. The Forest Plan discloses forest wide standards and guidelines and management area direction.

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 appeal. I anticipate implementing this project immediately.

Contact

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: Eric Oswald, Tonto Basin Ranger District, 28079 N Hwy 188, Roosevelt, AZ 85545, eric.oswald@usda.gov, 602-225-5359.

KELLY JARDINE

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Date: 2021.05.04 05:55:57 -07'00'

KELLY L. JARDINE
Tonto Basin District Ranger

Date

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