



Decision Memo

Dutch Tin Extension

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

The Dutch Tin Extension project on Tonto Basin Ranger District is located on the Dutchwomen Grazing Allotment, near the FS Route 60, approximately 5 air miles Northeast from Roosevelt (See map at the end of this document).

Project Background

The Dutchwoman (E) Allotment on the Tonto Basin Ranger District is permitted for 175 Cows and 96 yearlings with an Allotment Management Plan signed in 1993. The basic goal of the management plan is to improve resource conditions on the Dutchwoman Allotment while maintaining a viable livestock operation. Some of the management objectives identified include:

- Accommodate riparian recovery on Salome Creek
- Improve management to increase the area of distribution of livestock from 40% to 80-90% of suitable acres on the allotment using Forest Service Guidelines and Standards.
- Achieve proper use of rangeland to improve vegetation on a greater percentage of allotment acreage to improve rangeland resource objectives.
- Use smaller pastures and more intense grazing for a shorter time period as a tool to accomplish more unified distribution.
- Manage livestock to achieve multiple use resource objectives while maintaining an economical livestock operation.

Management seeks to optimize production and utilization of forage allocated for livestock use consistent with maintaining the environment and providing the multiple use of the range. From all existing range and livestock management technology, practices may be selected and used to develop cost effective methods for achieving improved forage supplies and uniform livestock distribution and forage use. Cultural practices may be combined with fencing and water developments to implement complex grazing systems and management methods.



Project Purpose

The project was designed in conformance with the 2023 Tonto National Forest Land Management Plan (land management plan's) desired conditions, standards, and guidelines. Specifically, these desired conditions and guidelines for water management on the allotment apply.

Riparian Ecological Response Units (RERU)

Desired Conditions (RERU-DC)

01 Riparian plant communities consist mostly of native species, provide habitat, and help maintain temperatures necessary for maintaining populations and dispersal of both aquatic and terrestrial species.

Guidelines (RERU-G)

02 Livestock management practices should allow riparian vegetation to recover. Plant development or recovery sufficient to sustain healthy riparian areas should occur following each livestock use period.

Rangelands, Forage and Grazing (GRZ)

Desired Conditions (GRZ-DC)

02 Rangelands are resilient to disturbances, fluctuations, and extremes in the natural environment (e.g., fire, flooding, drought, climate variability).

03 Livestock grazing allows for healthy, diverse plant communities, satisfactory soil and water conditions and sustains the quality and quantity of fish and wildlife habitat.

Guidelines (GRZ-G)

03 Drought preparedness should be emphasized in allotment management plans and may include flexible stocking rates/livestock classes, flexible rotation schedules, and other strategies for dealing with climate variability.

The purpose of this project is to add additional water sources to the Bull Mountain pasture on the Dutchwoman East Allotment to improve livestock distribution and expand structural livestock holding features to facilitate livestock management.

Decision

I have decided to approve the proposed actions listed above.

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 and includes the following for resource protection:

- Initiate a management method that meets animal husbandry requirements of livestock and provides proper stocking and vegetative management.
- Provide structural improvements for management of livestock and range resources.
- Provide protection for the riparian area.



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 it will improve quality of the riparian area and increase the water supply for the livestock.

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** – The water use for the project shall not exceed what has already been allocated, 0.23 acre-feet.
- c. **Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas** – None of these areas are affected.
- d. **Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas** – None of these areas are affected.
- e. **Research natural areas** – No research natural areas are affected.
- 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 07/12/2023, the Dutch Tin Extension Project was posted to the PALS website.

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. No further discussion of this is necessary.
- b) Forest Plan identified Riparian Management Zones (RMZ). No further discussion of this is necessary.



- c) Forest Plan identified Recommended Wilderness Areas and Eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers. No further discussion of this is necessary.
- d) Forest Plan identified recommended research natural areas and recommended botanical areas. No further discussion of this is necessary.

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, 28097 Highway 188, Roosevelt, AZ, 85545, 480-435-5563.

JEREMY PLAIN

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Date

District Ranger

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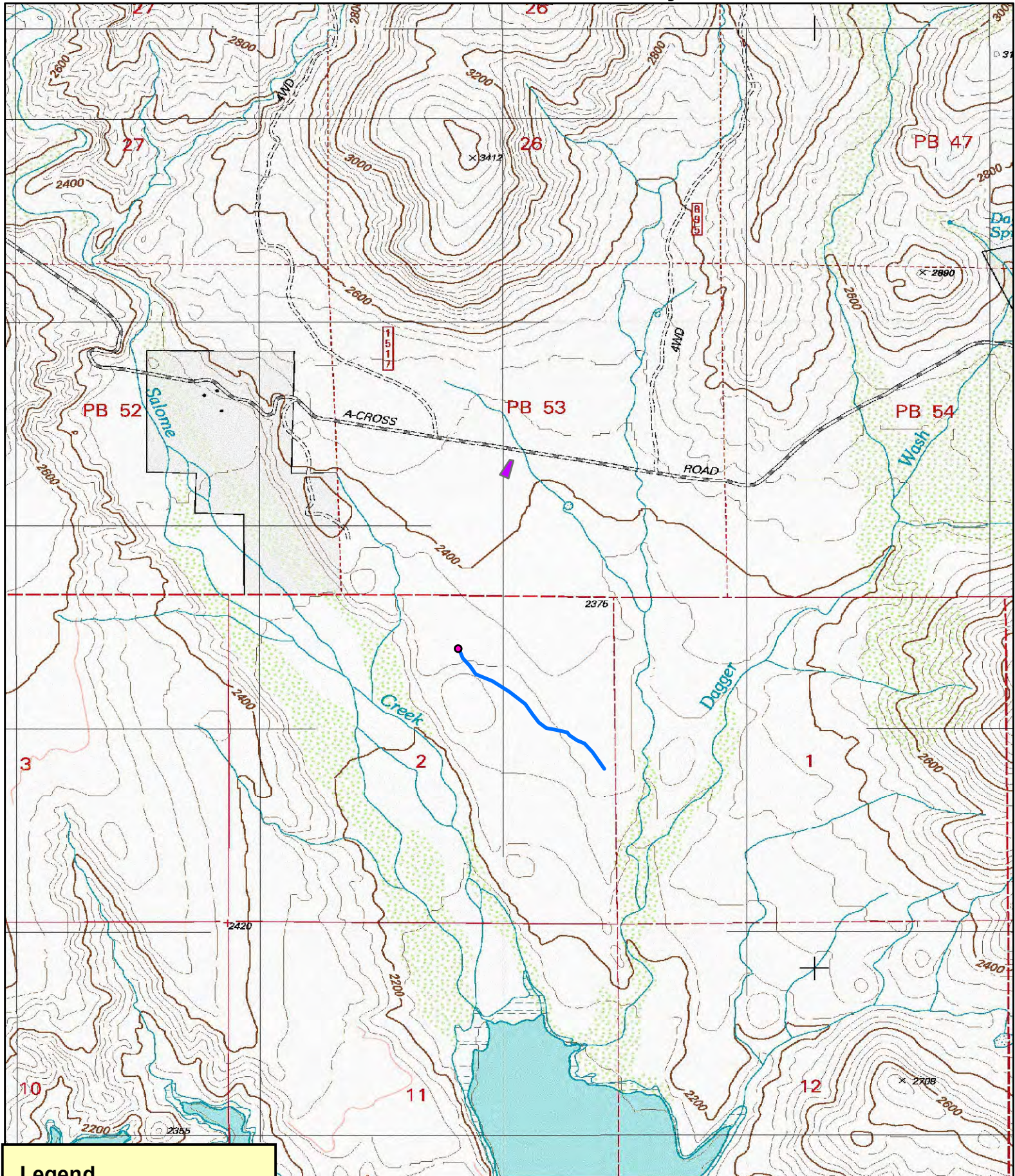
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Appendix A

(See Attached Dutch Tin Extension Project Map)

Dutch Tin Extension Project



Legend

- Dutch Tin Trough
- Dutch Tin Pipeline Extension
- Dutch Tin Corral Extension

