



# Decision Memo

## French Gap and Mesa Pipelines

### USDA Forest Service Safford Ranger District Graham County, AZ

#### Background

The Safford Ranger District was approached by the livestock permittee on the Horse Mountain and Four Mile Allotments to consider two (2) small pipeline projects; one involving relocation of a pipeline and the second involved a pipeline extension.

**Horse Mountain Allotment:** Relocate a section of the Mesa Pipeline (#426020) that runs between the Steel Rim (#426019) and Peach Tree tank (#426027) in order to supply reliable water from the pipeline by avoiding road disturbance and erosion. Pipeline is located in T8S, R19E, Sec 14 on the Horse Mountain allotment.

**Four Mile Allotment:** Extend the Lower French Gap pipeline (425053) from Lower French Gap storage (425054) up Forest Service Road (FSR) 6608J to Four Mile storage (425040) which is located at the French Gap Corrals (425022). This project will take place in the NW ¼, Section 15, R. 19 E., T. 8 S on the Four Mile allotment.

#### Decision

I have decided to relocate a section of the Mesa pipeline and to extend the Lower French Gap pipelines.

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA). The applicable category of actions is identified in agency procedures as 36 CFR 220.6(e)(5): Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities that do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than 1 mile of low standard road construction. This category of action is applicable because the proposed action would improve wildlife habitat by providing additional, year-round water sources

I find that there are no extraordinary circumstances that would warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS. I took into account resource conditions identified in agency procedures that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances might exist:

- ◆ Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species – Maintenance to existing structures and minimal ground disturbance. No TES species or habitat are likely to be affected.
- ◆ Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds -The proposed project area does not fall within a municipal watershed. Portions of the project may fall within floodplains



and wetlands, however, effects would be negligible so long as implementation is done according to Forest Service standards using best management practices.

- ◆ Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas - The proposed project is not located in a wilderness, wilderness study area, national recreation area, research natural area, or inventoried roadless areas, therefore there will be no impact to these areas.
- ◆ Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas - 0.5 miles away from closest inventoried roadless area.
- ◆ Research natural areas - none present in the project area.
- ◆ American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites – Consultation for previous projects in the area identified no traditional cultural properties.
- ◆ Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas – Archeological surveys in the area identified no archeological sites or historic properties.

## Public Involvement

This action was originally listed as a proposal on the Coronado National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions in 2020 and updated periodically during the analysis.

## Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

**National Forest Management Act**-This decision is consistent with the 2018 Coronado National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The project was designed in conformance with land management plan direction for the Safford Ranger District, Galiuro Ecosystem Management Area, and forestwide management of Animals and Rare Plants, and Range Management.

**Endangered Species Act** - The District Wildlife Biologist has determined that the proposed action would have no effect any Federally Listed, Threatened, Endangered species or Designated Critical Habitat.

**National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)** - The Forest Archaeologist has determined that no historic properties would be affected by the proposed action and that consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office is not required.

## Administrative Review (Appeal) Opportunities

This decision is not subject to an administrative review or objections pursuant to 36 CFR 218.20.

## Implementation Date

Implementation of this project may take place immediately upon issuance of this decision.

## Contact

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: Gwen Dominguez, Range Staff, Safford Ranger District, 928-965-8545.



*George Garcia*

George Garcia  
District Ranger

*1/4/2021*

Date

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