

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM
HABITAT ENHANCEMENT AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL**

PROJECT INFORMATION	
Project Title: McDonald Ranch Access/Tank Repair Project	Project No.
Region/GMU: 5/30A	HPC: Safford
Project Type: Water development (repair 3 tanks)/Sportsman's Access	
<p>Project Description: All three of these water tanks are located on the Bill McDonald Ranch in the Southeast portion of Game Management Unit 30A just west of the Arizona-New Mexico State line. All three tanks need to be cleaned out so they can hold water for the entire year. Currently two tanks are dry and the third is expected to be dry by approximately May 30, 2009. Once the tanks are cleaned out and restored to 100% holding capacity they are expected to hold water year round. There is no perennial water source in this area. The closest source of water to any of these tanks are other earthen tanks on the McDonald Ranch and adjacent ranches; however, these tanks can not be relied on for a year round source of water. Cottonwood Creek and Sycamore Creek run primarily in the rainy seasons depending on the quantity and duration of rainfall events.</p> <p>As part of this HPC project, the rancher, Bill McDonald, agrees to continue to allow access to his ranch to Sportsmen for an additional 3 years.</p> <p>Wildlife Species to Benefit: Mule deer, whitetail deer, javelina, quail, dove, and non game birds and mammals, etc.</p>	
Possible Funding Partners:	
Implementation Schedule: Beginning: Summer 2009 Completed: Fall 2010	NEPA Compliance: (if applicable) N/A Completed: Yes ___ No ___ Projected Completion Date:
PROJECT FUNDING	
SBG Funds Requested: \$ 15,000	
Cost Share Funds: \$ 3000 (Rancher will cover any excess costs if they occur to complete the project).	
Total Project Costs: \$ 18,000	
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION	
Applicant: Duane Aubuchon Telephone: 520-384-2203	Address: 555 N. Greasewood Rd. Tucson, AZ 85745
AGFD Contact and Phone No. (If applicant is not AGFD personnel)	
Coordinated with:	Date:

Applicant's signature:	Date:
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**SEND COMPLETED APPLICATIONS TO:
Game Branch
5000 West Carefree Highway
Phoenix, AZ**

WAS PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE LOCAL HPC? YES _____ NO X

Safford HPC Chairman and Facilitator have reviewed the project.

HAS PROJECT BEEN SUBMITTED IN PREVIOUS YEARS? IF SO WAS IT FUNDED?

No/No

NEED STATEMENT/PROBLEM ANALYSIS:

All three of these water tanks are located on the Bill McDonald Ranch in the Southeast portion of Game Management Unit 30A just west of the Arizona-New Mexico State line. All three tanks need to be cleaned out so they can hold water for the entire year. Currently, two tanks are dry and the third is expected to be dry by approximately May 30, 2009. Once the tanks are cleaned out and restored to 100% holding capacity they are expected to hold water year round. There is no perennial water source in this area. The closest source of water to any of these tanks are other earthen tanks on the McDonald Ranch and adjacent ranches; however, these tanks can not be relied on for a year round source of water. Cottonwood Creek and Sycamore Creek run primarily in the rainy seasons depending on the quantity and duration of rainfall events. The springs seen on the map (appendix B) have proven not to be perennial.

In January 2009, the district wildlife manager conducted a helicopter survey for deer and javelina in this area. The survey block was loosely bounded by the McDonald Ranch Road to the North, the Arizona-New Mexico State line to the east and Geronimo Trail to the West. In 31 minutes of survey time, 32 white tailed deer and 12 javelina were observed. During this flight, no waters, other than the rancher's earthen tanks were observed. The district wildlife manager also conducted ground surveys along Geronimo Trail and North of the McDonald Ranch Road and classified 3 additional groups of white tail deer. Wood Canyon, Thomas, and Pendleton Tanks are critical to local wildlife population especially in the dry months of the year when Cottonwood Creek and Sycamore Creek are not running. These three tanks will benefit mule deer, white tail deer, and javelina as they occur in the transition zone between mule deer and white tail deer habitat. Small game and nongame animals will also benefit from this project. Beyond the scope of this project, the district wildlife manager would recommend the pursuit of additional water developments in the higher elevations of the Peloncillo Mountains along the Arizona-New Mexico state line.

Until recently, Bill McDonald has had an access agreement with the Department. This agreement recently expired and currently there are no funds available through the access program to renew agreements, despite the ranchers request that we do so. The McDonald Ranch consists of 2054 acres private land, approximately 9,500 acres leased State Trust land, and approximately 10,500 acres leased Federal lands (Forest Service/BLM). Due to the checker boarded nature of land ownership in this area, large portions of public lands would be inaccessible without permission from the rancher. As part of this HPC project, the rancher, Bill McDonald would agree to continue to allow access on his ranch to Sportsmen for a period of three years.

The McDonald Ranch provides a great deal of recreation to Arizona sportsmen and Mr. McDonald has worked diligently with the Department to further its mission of conserving and enhancing Arizona's wildlife and providing wildlife recreation. Bill McDonald has decided not to lock gates even after conflicts with non-Sportsman groups despite pressure from other local landowners and he is currently working with the Department and NRCS to perform a habitat improvement project on the ranch which would benefit deer and pronghorn antelope. Additionally, the Department has used the McDonald Ranch to release nuisance black bears. Currently, Bill McDonald continues to allow access on his ranch and work with the Department despite the expiration of his most recent access agreement. Game Management Unit 30A has very little public lands and maintaining access is an ongoing challenge for Department personnel. The Department has cultivated positive working relationships with some landowners in this area. It is critical that these relationships and agreements be maintained in order to maintain and increase lands available to sportsmen as well as to allow the Department to effectively manage out wildlife resources.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Improve water availability for deer, javelina, quail, dove, and non-game birds and mammals etc.
- Improve deer fawn survival by providing much needed water.
- Increase current water developments storage capacity to prevent tanks from going dry during the hottest parts of the year when no other water is available.
- Secure access for Sportsmen for a period of three years.

PROJECT STRATEGIES:

- Use large front end loader to dredge out tanks thereby increasing storage capacity (all three tanks).
- Repair damaged tank wall (Thomas Tank).
- Lower a portion of the tank berm to prevent future damage to Thomas Tank during high flow events.

PROJECT LOCATION: McDonald Ranch

Coordinates for each tank:

Wood Canyon Tank: N 31° 27.044' W 109°06.196'

Thomas Tank: N 31°25.892' W 109°08.275'

Pendleton Tank: N 31° 25.091 W 109° 07.124'

LAND OWNERSHIP AT PROJECT SITE (Please state specifically if PRIVATE PROPERTY and provide landowner's name):

Wood Canyon Tank is on private land owned by Bill McDonald. Thomas Tank and Pendleton Tank are both on State Trust Land. Bill McDonald currently holds the grazing lease for these State lands and would obtain any applications for treatment and cover coordination with the Arizona State Land Department.

IF PRIVATE PROPERTY, IS THERE A STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LANDOWNER AND THE DEPARTMENT?

Until recently, Bill McDonald has had an access agreement with the Department. This agreement recently expired and currently there are no funds available through the access program to renew agreements, despite the ranchers request that we do so.

The McDonald Ranch consists of 2054 acres private land, approximately 9,500 acres leased State Trust land, and approximately 10,500 acres leased Federal lands (Forest Service/BLM). Due to the checker boarded nature of land ownership in this area, large portions of public lands are not accessible without permission from the rancher.

If this HPC proposal is funded the rancher, Bill McDonald, has agreed to continue allowing access on his ranch for an additional three years. Currently, there are no funds available to renew the access agreement through the access program.

HABITAT DESCRIPTION:

Varied. Includes: Sonoran desert grassland, Upper Sonoran desert (mesquite, acacia, prickly pear), Juniper-Oak Woodlands

ITEMIZED USE OF FUNDS:

Thomas Tank- \$3,000
Pendleton Tank- \$6,000
Wood Canyon Tank- \$9,000

LIST COOPERATORS AND DESCRIBE POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION:

The cost for this project is based on a project estimate by a private contractor. It is possible that the expenditures for this project will exceed the estimate. If this should occur the rancher has agreed to cover any costs above the \$18,000 estimate in order to complete the project. AGFD expenditures will not exceed \$15,000.

PROJECT MONITORING PLAN:

The rancher will supervise the private contractor and monitor the project during construction. An AGFD employee will conduct a site visit at the completion of the project.

PROJECT MAINTENANCE:

If needed, the rancher will provide maintenance for this water catchment.

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT TO BE FILED BY:

Duane Aubuchon, Arizona Game and Fish Department

WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (see attached worksheet):

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT **WATER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET**

PROJECT NAME: McDonald Ranch Access/Tank Repair Project

- 1) **Is the water development listed as a priority in the most recent “Wildlife Water Development Annual Implementation Schedule?”** No

- 2) **Please list the Development Branch personnel and date coordinated with for this project.**
N/A Project will not require any development branch personnel for construction, monitoring or repair.

- 3) **What is the estimated annual inches of precipitation for the area? (mark one)**
 2-4 4-6 6-8 8-10 10-12 12-14 14-16 >16

- 4) **Is there a perennial water source available to big game within four miles of this project?**
 YES (please complete #5 below) NO (skip #5 below)

- 5) **For the accessible, perennial water source nearest this project:**
Name of water source:
Type of water source (catchment, spring, dirt tank, etc.):
Ownership of water source:
Distance in miles from project:

- 6) **Is the target wildlife species a result of transplant efforts?** YES NO

- 7) **Please list any special land management status for the project site (i.e. Wilderness, National Park, National Monument, etc). If private land, list landowner.**

This project will occur on the private lands owned by Bill McDonald and State Trust lands leased by the McDonald Ranch for their operation.

- 8) **Please provide the following information about access to the proposed site:**
Type of access (mark one): 2x4 vehicles 4x4 only foot, horseback, or helicopter only**
**If foot access only: Distance in miles: Approx. hiking time:

-- **Does access to this site require crossing private or tribal lands?** YES NO

-- **Please describe any restrictions to public access:** None currently. The rancher allows public access on most of his private lands and across private lands to public lands. A small portion of private land near the rancher’s residence is locked off; however, the rancher routinely allows a limited number of sportsmen to cross this section of private to access lands behind the residence during white tail and javelina hunting seasons.

- 9) **Please list below (or on a separate sheet) the material type and dimensions of each component proposed to be added, modified, or repaired.**

Refer to itemized use of funds list

10) Was a site visit completed? Yes No If Yes, please list personnel that attended and date.

Alicia Jontz, May 9, 2009

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

(Please complete the report and forward to Game Branch
within 30 days of the completion of the project. THANK YOU!)

Project Title: _____

Project number: _____

GMU: _____

Project Coordinator (IF NOT APPLICANT): _____

Agency: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Project Completion Date _____

COOPERATING AGENCIES AND/OR CONSERVATION GROUPS, LANDOWNERS, ETC.:

PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

PROJECT RESULT ACTIONS:

(List practices implemented as a result of project, i.e. area rested from grazing for 2 yrs., season recommendations revised based on new distributions, data received from project, etc.)

COMMENTS ABOUT THE PROJECT:

(Please list updates, reports, concerns, suggestions)

MAINTENANCE/MONITORING SCHEDULE (from this point on): WHO and WHEN?

PHOTO: (Please attach)

Appendix A: Access Stewardship Cost/Benefit Analysis

Unit 30A

Bill McDonald Ranch Access- The agreement for the Bill McDonald Ranch is a short term access agreement. This agreement will ensure public access into the private, state, and federal lands within the ranch. The following chart shows the average economic expenditure per day spent by sportsman to calculate the estimated annual economic benefit of this project.

The daily financial values are based on information from the 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

BENEFITS:

<u>Big Game Hunting:</u>	\$80/day, 210 big game hunters, Estimate 3 days per hunter @	\$50,400/yr
<u>Small Game Hunting:</u>	\$51/day, 45 small game/predator Hunters, 1 day @	\$2,295/yr
<u>Wildlife Watching:</u>	\$43/day, 15 watchers, 1 day @	\$645/yr

ESTIMATED ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO THE PUBLIC AND/OR WILDLIFE FROM THE PROPOSED PROJECT:

\$50,400
\$ 2,295
\$ 645
\$53,340/yr X 3 years = \$160,020

DEPARTMENT INVESTMENT:

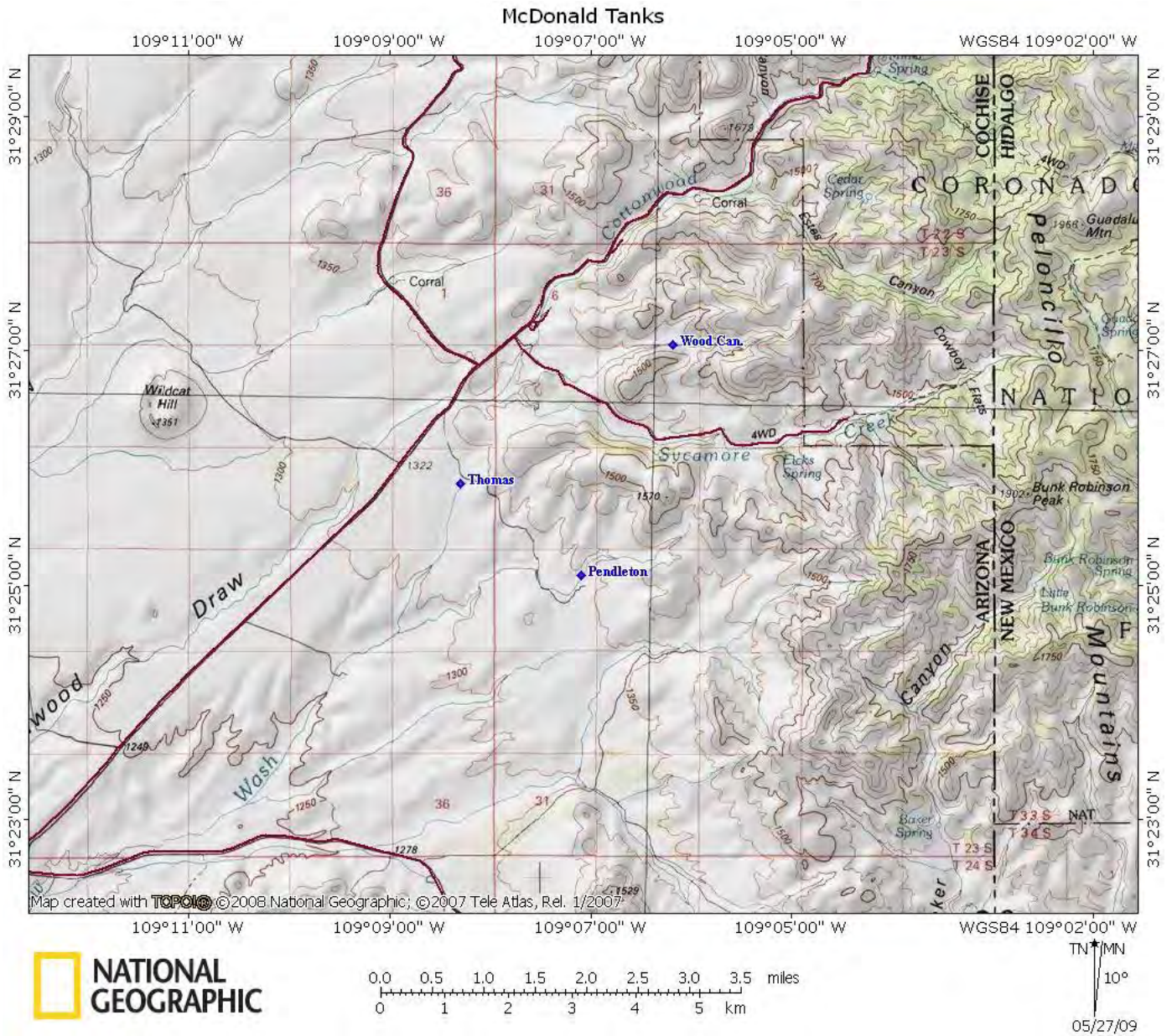
Total Department expenditure on project not to exceed \$15,000.

Actions include:

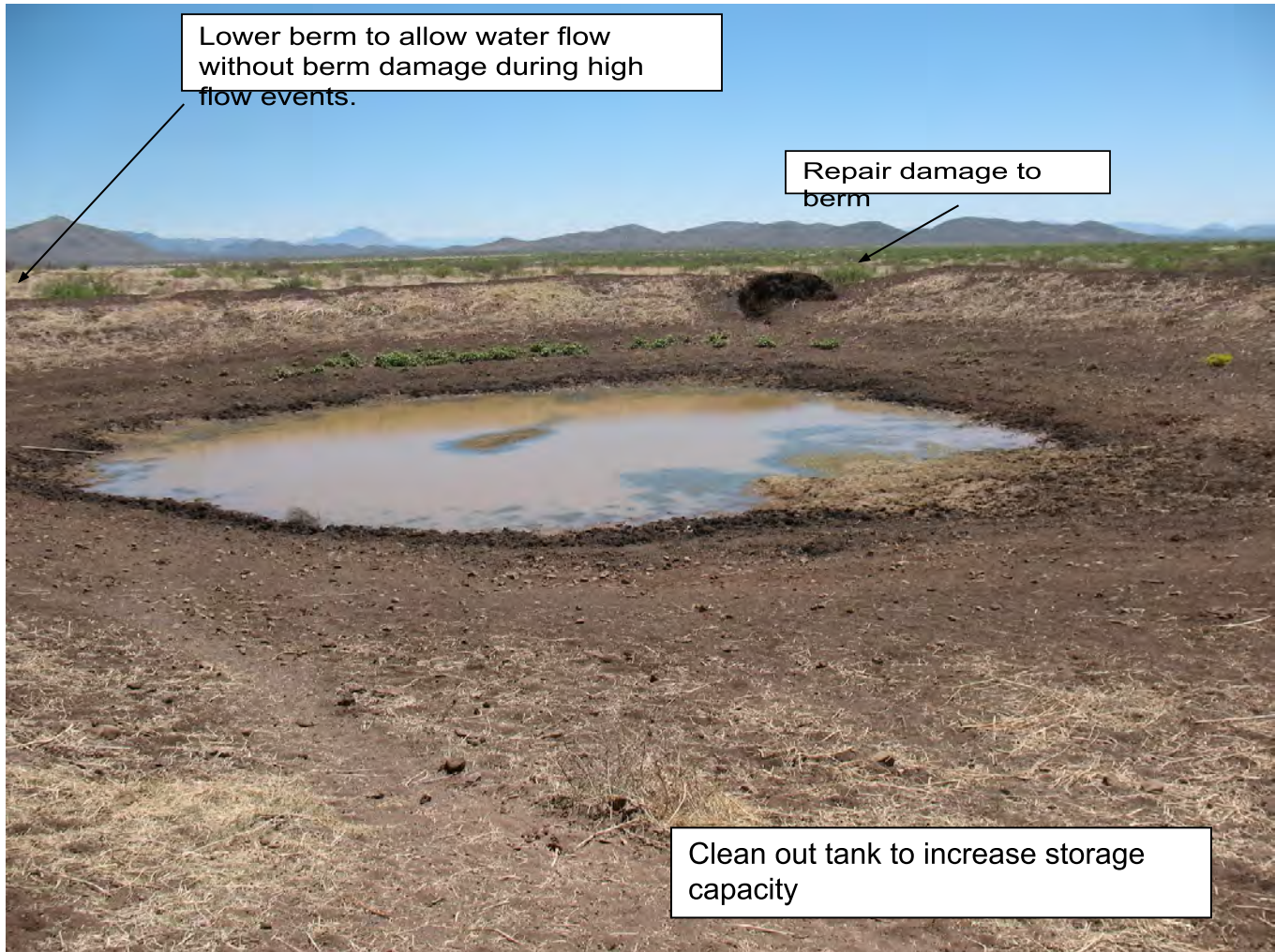
- 1.) Provide funding to the landowner to clean out 3 dirt tanks used by wildlife.

Cost/Benefit Ratio: The total costs are recovered in the first year for an 8.9:1 ratio.

Appendix B: Project Area Map



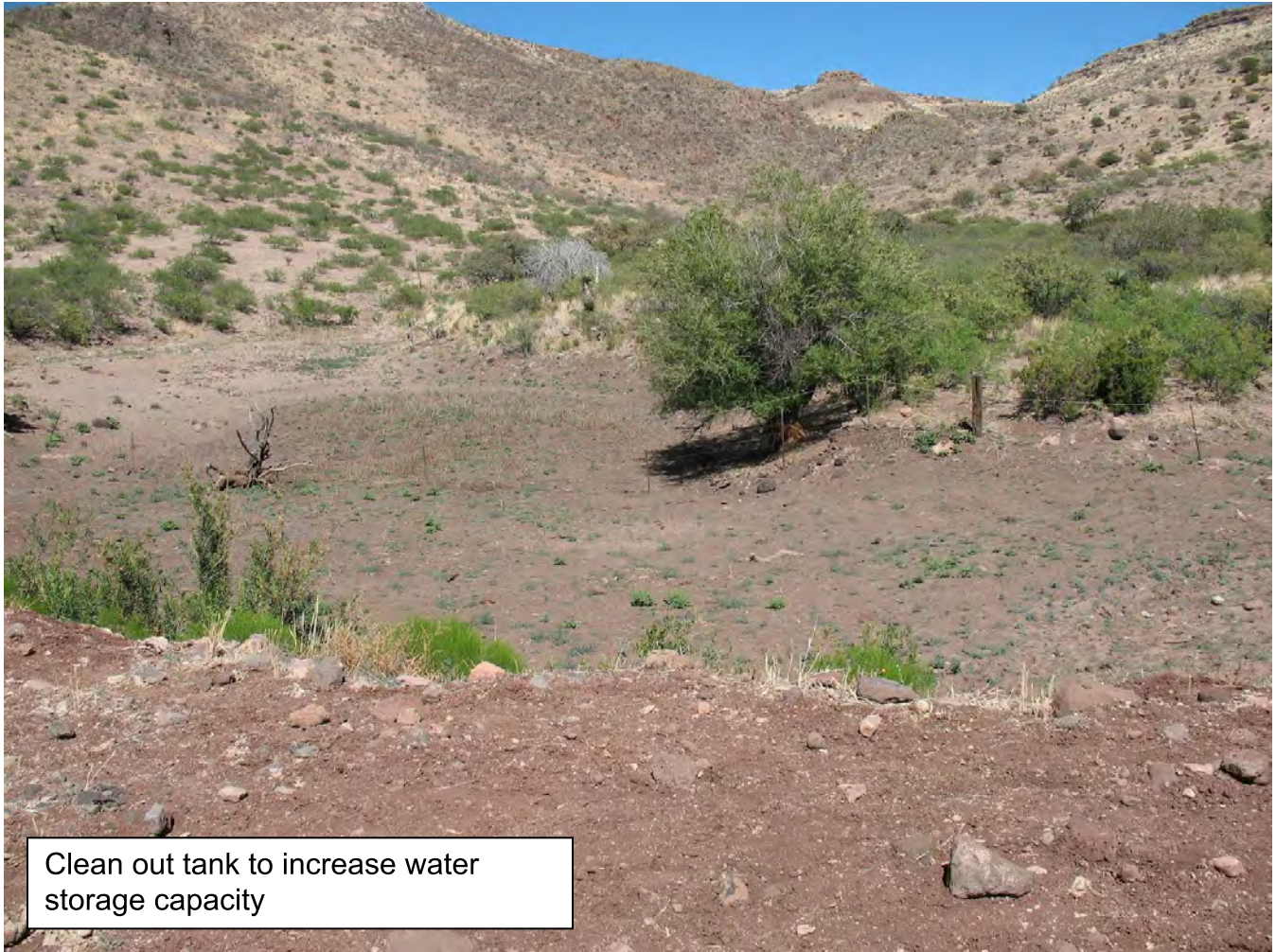
Appendix C: Photos



Thomas Tank



Pendleton Tank



Wood Canyon Tank