



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Safford Field Office  
711 14th Avenue  
Safford, AZ 85546-3321

In reply refer to:

(520) 348-4400

1790/4120.1

(04337)

September 30, 1997

Dear Interested Party:

The Safford Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has completed an environmental assessment for the High Lonesome Ranch and Learning Center Management Plan. A copy of the plan, environmental assessment and decision record is enclosed.

The proposed action has been selected for implementation. The proposed action will manage the High Lonesome Ranch using the Holistic Resource Management (HRM) process as described in the attached plan. The management plan for the ranch was developed through a collaborative team effort which included personnel from the Bureau of Land Management, Arizona Game and Fish Department, the Center for Holistic Resource Management, the New Mexico State Land Office, the ranch owner and others.

This project was initiated in 1993 at the request of Jim Deal the owner of the High Lonesome Ranch. At that time the BLM agreed to investigate opportunities to improve resource conditions on the ranch through the application of the HRM process. The holistic goal and management plan for the ranch was developed during a series of 16 formal meetings attended by a variety of interested people in addition to state and federal agency personnel. Individuals participating in these meetings became familiar with the ranch, issues and resources, through discussions and field tours.

If you are adversely affected by this decision, you may appeal the decision to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR, Part 4. If an appeal is taken, your notice of appeal must be filed in this office (at the letterhead address) during the 30 day period that ends at 4:30 PM, October 28, 1997. You, as the appellant, have the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

If you wish to file a petition pursuant to 43 CFR 4.21 for a stay of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice of appeal. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

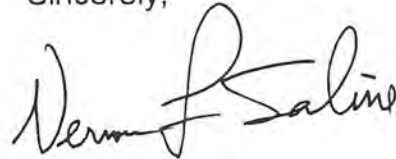
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Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and the appropriate Office of the Solicitor (see 43 CFR 4.413) at the same time the original documents are filed with this office.

If you have question please contact Bill Brandau at the BLM Safford Field Office (520) 348-4400.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vernon L. Saline". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "V".

Vernon L. Saline  
Program Manager,  
Planning and Monitoring

Enclosure

## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT/DECISION RECORD

I have reviewed this environmental assessment including the explanation and resolution of any potentially significant impacts. I have determined that the proposed action with the mitigation described below will not have any significant impacts on the human environment and an EIS is not required. I have determined that the proposed action is in conformance with the approved land use plans. It is my decision to implement the proposed action with the mitigation measures identified below.

### MITIGATING MEASURES

1. Grazing planning and biological monitoring will be used to adjust management action to meet the changing needs of the resource base. Critical management considerations will be evaluated a minimum of 2 times per year and the grazing plan will be done taking into account these management considerations. Biological monitoring will be conducted at least twice a year by the on-site managers. Continuous observation of all pastures' condition will be carried out to ensure what was planned for in the grazing plan is actually happening on the ground.
2. Intensive monitoring will be conducted by BLM and New Mexico State Lands, in order to support and/or identify potential faults in the monitoring conducted by the on-site managers and help anticipate potential problems in advance so management actions can be planned to avoid them.
3. Fence design will be done so as to eliminate as many gates as possible on well traveled roads, and to minimize disruption to recreationists throughout the ranch.
4. Increased livestock numbers over permitted use will be authorized under temporary non-renewable license and phased in over time. This gives time to observe the response of the resource to the implemented management.
5. Three of the wells on the ranch will be coupled together in the water system so overuse of ground water at any one well will be avoided. A fourth well may be incorporated in to the system if needed.
6. Well monitoring will be done to anticipate any problems.
7. Small erosion control structures may be employed to reduce erosion and/or enhance drainage function and improve water cycle.
8. Livestock use will be done at the level and in the manner practiced in accordance with the Peloncillo Wilderness Management Plan and Wilderness Interim Management Policy.
9. The use of fire will be monitored closely to determine it's effects.
10. A minimum of 9.5 miles of four and five strand barbed wire fence will be removed. All new fencing will be one or two strand electric fence with the exception of the weaning trap and fencing of cultural sites.

11. Care will be taken to assure that a mosaic of ground cover is available in sufficient quantities throughout the allotment to assure a variety of wildlife habitat.

- 12. Locations of developments that will cause livestock to congregate or surface disturbance will be inventoried for cultural resources prior to construction and if cultural resources are found they will be avoided or improvement mitigated.

13. No facilities (drinking tanks, corrals) will be constructed within 50 meters of cultural sites.

14. Cultural sites with in-situ features, spatial patterning, or diagnostic artifacts considered significant shall be fenced to exclude cattle.

15. Continue to locate, record, evaluate, and provide appropriate protection to cultural sites on the High Lonesome Learning Center Project.

16. The BLM and AG&F biologists will continue to identify areas on the ranch that are important wildlife habitat and these areas will be incorporated into the grazing plan.

17. BLM and AG&F biologists will continue to work with the management planning to ensure that specific habitat is either improved or maintained.

18. The larger number of pastures will reduce the likelihood of running into livestock. Hunting and other recreation will be one of the considerations when doing grazing planning. Livestock can be moved away from areas where recreationists are most likely to be during certain times of the year.

19. The allotment can return to traditional stocking level and management at any time as the result of monitoring and evaluations.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Official

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Appendix - 1:** Highlonesone Ranch and Learning Center Allotment Management Plan

**Appendix - 2:** Comment letters

**Appendix - 3:** Response to comments