

Decision Memo
Klondike Water System
Globe and Tonto Basin Ranger Districts
Tonto National Forest
Gila County, Arizona

Background

The Klondike Water System is a project that includes the Poison Springs Allotment on the Tonto Basin Ranger District and the Hicks Pike Peak Allotment on the Globe Ranger District.

The Poison Springs Allotment on the Tonto Basin Ranger District has been in a non-use status for a number of years. As livestock were moved back onto the allotment, it became clear that additional water sources were needed in the Klondike Pasture. Water sources within the Klondike Pasture are limited to two seasonal dirt stock tanks and the dry Summit Well. To ensure sufficient water is available and deter livestock from concentrating at a few water sources, rather than distributing themselves throughout the pasture, additional water sources would be needed. The legal location of the project is: Township 3 North, Range 14 East, Section 32 and 33 and Township 2 North, Range 14 East, Sections 3, 4 and 10.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to evenly distribute cattle while on the Poison Springs Allotment and provide livestock with additional reliable water sources when the seasonal dirt stock tanks are dry. The need is to comply with direction found in the Tonto National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and move the Allotment from less than satisfactory condition toward our desired condition.

Proposed Action

The proposed action for the Klondike Water System Project includes installing a solar powered pumping system on the Devore Well that is located in the Hicks Pike Peak Allotment. This pumping system would supply water to a new, 10,000 gallon storage tank on the Poison Springs Allotment through 1 ½ inch diameter HDPE pipe. The new storage tank would gravity feed one new trough close to the tank, two new troughs in the Klondike pasture and one new trough on the Hicks Pike Peak Allotment through 1 inch diameter HDPE pipe.

The pipelines would be installed above ground, just off of the old roadway for concealment from casual observers. A rubber tired loader would be used to clear necessary vegetation and level the sites for the storage tank and troughs prior to placement. The troughs would have escape ramps for wildlife and functioning floats. The solar panel for the pumping system would be located on the storage tank at the Devore Well site or a structure at that site.

Decision

It is my decision to authorize the implementation of the Klondike Water System Project as written in the Proposed Action section of this document. The decision includes the following design features for resource protection:

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- Minimizing vegetation disturbance to only tank and trough sites
- Limiting soil disturbance with use of rubber tired loader for installation
- Use of solar power for water pumping system
- Use of an old, existing road for ingress and egress

Reasons for Categorically Excluding the Proposed Actions

I have concluded that this proposed permitted action 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, Chapter 32.2 (9): "*Implementation or modification of minor management practices to improve allotment condition or animal distribution when an allotment management plan is not yet in place.*"

- a. 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:
- b. Federally-listed threatened, endangered and/or Region 3 sensitive species or designated critical habitat. BE (07/24/2017) concluded no significant effects.
- c. Floodplains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds: The IDT concluded that the project will have no effect on these resource areas, therefore no discussion is warranted.
- d. Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas. The project area is outside any of these areas, and therefore the IDT concluded that no discussion is warranted.
- e. Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas: The project area is outside any of these areas, and therefore the IDT concluded that no discussion is warranted.
- f. Research natural areas. The project area is outside any of these areas, and therefore the IDT concluded that no discussion is warranted.
- g. American Indian religious or cultural sites; and archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas. Heritage Resource clearance date; 07/27/2017. The Forest Archaeologist concluded 'no heritage resources present.'

Public Involvement

A scoping letter was sent out to 20 local agencies, individuals and organizations describing the proposed action. Nine individuals were scoped internally either through the CE Checklist, scoping letter or both. There were 8 responders providing approximately 20 individual comments. One response was of a neutral, informative nature, 2 were positive and supportive and 5 were negative, overall, but focused on

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who would pay for the installment of the pipeline and a general displeasure with authorizing grazing in the Sonoran Desert, both of which are outside the scope of the actions covered in this decision.

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

This decision is consistent with the Forest Plan, Forest Service Policy, and other management considerations. 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 NF. 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. 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 including:

- *Clean Water Act, as amended*
- *Clean Air Act, as amended*
- *Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended*
- *American Antiquities Act of 1906 and Historic Preservation Act of 1966*
- *Executive Order 13186 of 2001, Migratory Bird Treaty Act*
- *Executive Order 12898 of 1994, Environmental Justice*
- *Executive Order 11988 Floodplain Management*
- *Executive Order 11990 Protection of Wetlands*

Implementation

This project is not subject to appeal. I anticipate implementing this project immediately.

For additional information, contact Kelly L. Jardine, District Ranger, Tonto Basin Ranger District at 602-225-5301, kjardine@fs.fed.us or 28079 N. AZ Hwy 188, Roosevelt, AZ 85545.



NEIL BOSWORTH
Forest Supervisor

9/25/17

Date

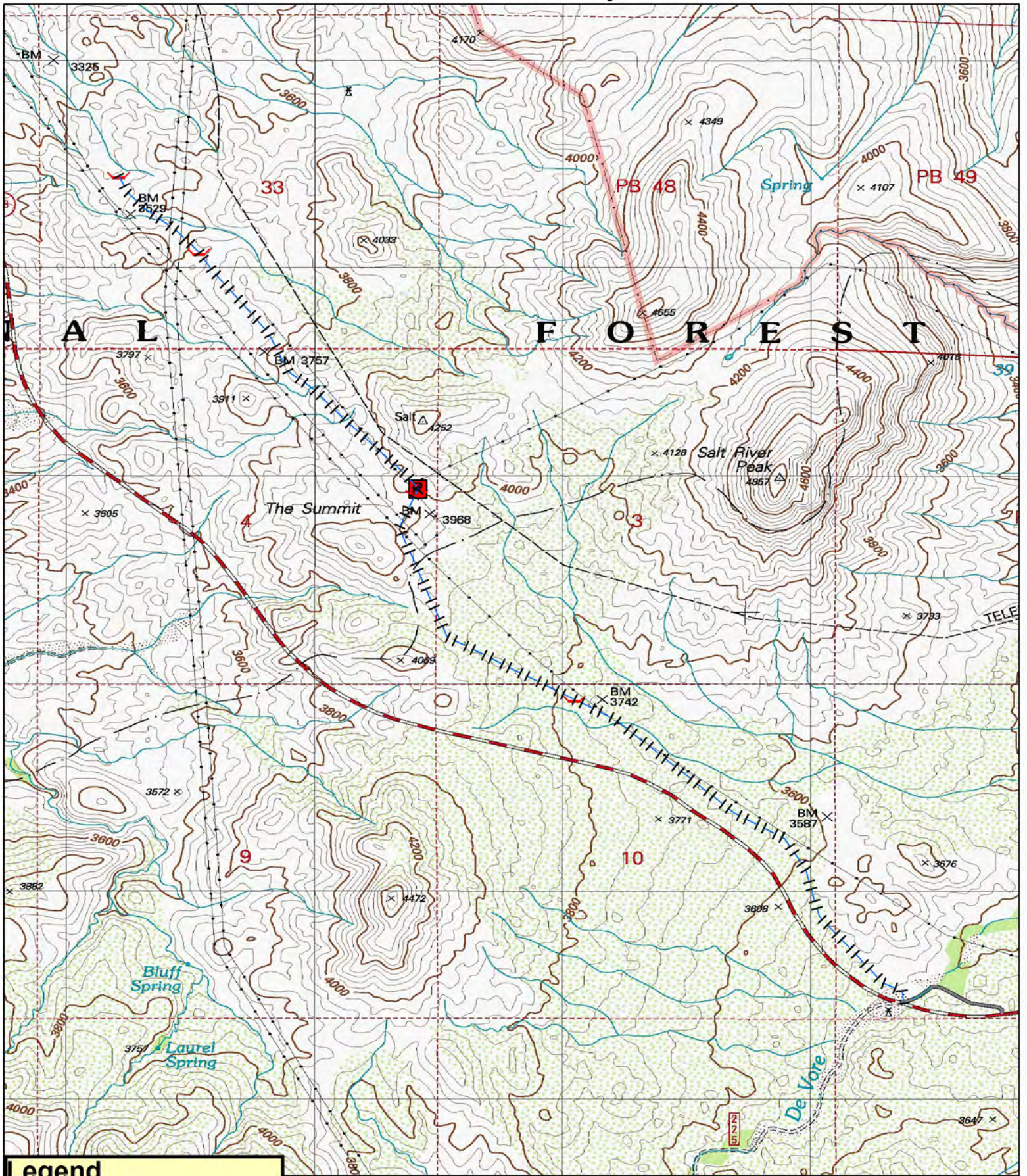
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Klondike Water System



Legend

- HHHHHHHH Pipeline
- Trough
- Storage Tank

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