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# Decision Memo

## Pasture Fence Realignment on the Radium Allotment

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

The Pasture Realignment project on Globe Ranger District is located on the Radium allotment, near Forest Service Roads 594 and 2619, a few air miles north from Globe, Arizona. The legal location of the project is Township North, Range 15 East, Section 22, 27. (See project map in Appendix A).

### Project Background

The Radium allotment is authorized/permited to graze using a deferred rest grazing system. However, water sources are not currently adequate or available where they are needed to fully implement this grazing strategy. With the current dry conditions, earthen stock tanks and seasonal springs have dried up, causing uneven grazing patterns. Specifically, in Jasper and Upper Ash pasture. This does not allow for livestock to disperse across the pasture, causing high grazing pressure while available forage across the rest of the pasture goes unutilized.

### Project Purpose

Currently, Radium allotment range improvements are not adequate to implement a proper rotational strategy. Cattle are not able to disperse across the pastures, causing uneven use. This project will allow for better livestock distribution which will in turn maintain or improve forest resources in compliance with the current 1985 Tonto National Forest Plan.

Specifically, on the Radium allotment, we need to supply additional water for livestock in Jasper and Upper Ash pastures to enhance livestock distribution.

### Decision

I have decided to supply additional water for livestock in the in Jasper and Upper Ash pastures where it is not presently available due to minimal spring water production. Specifically, I have decided to install a short section of fence to allow an existing corral with available water to be accessed by cattle in Upper Ash pasture. Forest Service Road 594 will be used to access the fence line. Fence will be built by hauling materials to the construction site by foot or horseback. Some minimal vegetation may be cleared with a chainsaw.

Once the fence section is installed, it will become a maintenance responsibility of the term grazing permit holder. This project does not change any maintenance level or designation of Forest Service system roads.

### Design Features

This project will comply with Best Management Practices and the following design features to minimize or eliminate effects to other resources:

- Top wire on all range fences should be kept at 42 inches in height, and bottom wire should be smooth and 18 inches above ground.
- Wire gate tension should be sufficient to prevent gate from sagging and still be easily opened and closed. Gate loops are made of smooth wire, not barbed wire.
- If chainsaw is used, provide a spill kit to contain and minimize any spills or leaks.
- Prior to construction, Globe Wildlife Biologist will identify sensitive agave and will flag for avoidance.

## Reasons for Categorically Excluding the Proposed Actions

My assessment is that this proposal 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 category is found in 36 CFR 36.2 (9). This category of the action is applicable because this allotment has been added to the Recissions schedule and an allotment analysis is expected in the future.

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:

- Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species** – A biological evaluation was completed March 5, 2021. Sensitive agave may be present within the project area. However, since this species will be flagged and avoided during construction, they will not be affected.
- Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds** – None of these resources are located within the project area. No further discussion is warranted.
- Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas** – None of these resources are located within the project area. No further discussion is warranted.
- Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas** – None of these resources are located within the project area. No further discussion is warranted.
- Research natural areas** – None of these resources are located within the project area. No further discussion is warranted.
- American Indian religious or cultural sites; and archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas** – The project area was surveyed for these resources in 2021, and the Forest Archaeologist has determined there will be no effects from this project.

## Public Involvement

On January 11, 2022, a scoping letter was mailed out to 19 individuals and organizations outlining the proposed action. One responsive comment letter was received from Western Watersheds Project. The commenter is concerned with whether livestock grazing should be authorized on the allotment under current conditions and includes factors that the forest should consider when making that determination.



This project does not address authorization of the allotment<sup>1</sup>; it only addresses the provision of water to address movement of permitted cattle in compliance with the current authorization.

## Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

This decision is consistent with the Tonto National Forest Land Management Plan. 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 National Forest. *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 provides planning components that this decision complies with, including standards and guidelines.

## 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: A. Jamie Wages, Rangeland Management Staff, Globe Ranger District, 7680 South Sixshooter Canyon Globe, Arizona 85501, 480-291-4500.

02/02/2022

Adam Bromley  
Globe District Ranger

Date

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<sup>1</sup> This allotment is on the Recissions Schedule for future analysis at which time the forest will consider these and other factors to determine if livestock grazing should be reauthorized.

# Appendix A

