

Decision Memo

Todd Water Storage and Pipeline

USDA Forest Service
Verde Ranger District, Prescott National Forest
Yavapai County, Arizona
T. 12N, R. 3E, Sec. 32

Background

The Todd Grazing Allotment is located in section 32, 33, and 34, T.12N, R3E on the Verde Ranger District of the Prescott National Forest in the Aqua Fria Grasslands (see map attached). This project is initiated to install a pipeline, storage tank and troughs in Sec. 32 of the allotment. Livestock had previously relied on water in Ash and Dry Creeks. However, Ash and Dry Creeks have recently become increasingly unreliable and are currently more seasonal than permanent. This has forced the permittee to depend on a water haul set up on the FDR 68C. The lack of permanent water has hampered the management of these pastures. The permittee will pump water from a well on his private land adjacent to the Forest to a storage tank in pasture 1A. A storage tank and trough will be placed in this pasture and a pipeline will extend into 1B pasture with a trough attached. This permanent water will provide increased flexibility in managing this pasture by creating year round water and improved distribution as compared to the current water haul. In addition, wildlife, especially antelope will benefit from this permanent water in the pasture, so they can water on an open mesa, lessening chances of predation.

Decision

I have decided to implement the pipeline, storage tank and two troughs. The two troughs will be placed with wildlife escape ramps.

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or an environmental assessment because the project is within the context of activity defined under category 9 of FSH 1909.15 section 31.2 - implementation or modification of minor management practices to improve allotment condition or animal distribution when an Allotment Management Plan is not yet in place.

The increasingly seasonal nature of Ash Creek and associated impacts on management of the allotment were not foreseen when grazing was authorized on this allotment on September of 2007. Except as specified in the project description above, this decision in

no way modifies the duration, intensity, or frequency and timing of grazing management on this allotment.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances which would warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS. I considered the following resource conditions in making this determination:

1. Federally listed or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service Sensitive species – There will be no effects on threatened or endangered species or critical habitat as none exists.
2. Floodplains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds – The project is not projected to substantially impact floodplains, wetlands. There are no municipal watersheds in the project area.
3. Congressionally designated areas – There is no wilderness, wilderness study areas or national recreation areas within or in proximity to the project area.
4. Inventoried Roadless Areas – The project is not part of an inventoried roadless area.
5. Research Natural Area – The project is not part of a Research Natural Area. There are no Research Natural Areas on the forest.
6. Native American religious or cultural sites – The project area has not been identified as having Native American significance as a religious or cultural site.
7. Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas – The undertaking will have no adverse effect.

Public Involvement

Scoping was conducted with Forest Service staff, Wade Albrecht (Arizona Game & Fish and NRCS) and Bert Teskey (Todd permittee). No concerns were identified.

Findings Required by Other Laws

This decision is consistent with the Prescott National Forest's Forest Plan as required by the National Forest Management Act.

Forest Plan Consistency: This decision is consistent with direction the Prescott Forest and Land Management Plan as required by the National Forest Management Act. The project is in conformance with forest plan management direction.

National Historic Preservation Act: A Heritage resource survey for this project has been completed. The project will not adversely affect any heritage resources.

Endangered Species Act: This decision has been evaluated in regards to the Endangered Species Act as documented in the Wildlife specialists report Biological Evaluation. The project will have not effect on T&E or sensitive species or critical habitat.

Environmental Justice: The project area is not within a concentrated area of low income, high unemployment, or high poverty. Therefore, there will be no disproportionate impacts to low income or minority populations.

Implementation Date

This project will be implemented on or after date of signature.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

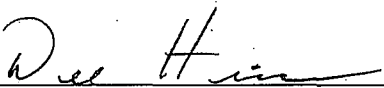
This decision is not subject to administrative appeal.

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this decision, contact:

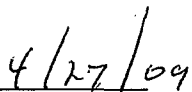
Tim Mabery, 928-567-1121, Verde Ranger District,

P.O. Box 670, Camp Verde, AZ 86322



DEE HINES

Verde District Ranger



Date

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Todd Allotment

