

# ADEQ

## Quarterly Report/Budget Report

### July-September

#### **Narrative Progress Report**

The Gila Box Conservation Area Livestock Deterrent Fence has been a collaborative effort on behalf of the Noland Ranch, AZDEQ, AZG&F and the BLM. All applicable permits & clearances were met by Noland Ranch and the BLM in preparation for this fence reconstruction. Fence material and labor was purchased and contracted through **Jr's Fencing of Morenci, Az**. The AZG&F department obligated matching funds for this project from funds dedicated to wildlife protection. This funding provided for the purchase of materials in the amount of \$22,200. When we first wrote this grant this amount was sufficient for all of the material but has since become inadequate due to the rise in price of almost everything. The remainder of the material was purchased by the Noland Ranch and was added to the project as matching funds for the amount of \$13,729.23. AZDEQ has supplied the majority cost of labor at \$15,000 per mile, while the Noland Ranch supplied \$2,000 per mile in matching funds.

Hauling and packing of the material began in early August, most of which was delivered to the site by mule & horse. Construction of the fence commenced on August 19, 2008 and was accomplished in three phases or campsites. Oversight on all aspects of the project was administered by Noland Ranch managers. The fence line was completed October 8, and passed BLM inspection October 14.

Gila & Eagle watershed meetings as well as BLM permittee meetings were used to communicate our plan and actions to the public.

The biggest problems faced by this project were the inaccessibility and remoteness of the location. Everything was delivered and inspected by horseback with limited access by 4-wheeler or off-road vehicle. The contracting company was not deterred, bringing more pack animals than what was initially planned, and completing the fence in less time than originally thought.

#### **Monitoring Reports**

Having completed the deterrent fence the Noland Ranch now has the complete control of the movement of livestock from Turtle Mountain into the Gila & Bonita River's. With the exclusion of livestock drifting from Turtle, the river bottoms have and will continue to benefit from the diminished presence of cattle.

A forage production analysis of perennial grasses has been performed by the Noland Ranch throughout the Gila & Bonita riparian corridors prior to completion of this project. Several more forage & utilization monitoring trend plots will be implemented in the spring and summer of 2009. This forage and utilization data will be used in conjunction with the parameters measured by the BLM & the University of AZ: Water Temperature,

pH, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, T. Coli form/E. coli, stream morphology, tree density, tree stem/diameter, shrub % cover, foliage height and ground cover.

Since the completion of this project these have been and will continue to be an immeasurable amount of good derived from the effects of this collaborative effort.

### **Education Evaluations**

Feedback received from participants involved in this project has been very supportive. Beginning with the AZG&F, we have received great support in our efforts to remove livestock from the affected area. Bighorn Sheep is a high priority for the Game & Fish and this species is probably the most greatly benefited by this project. It has been expressed widely by many AZG&F officials the benefits this fence will have on the immediate population of Bighorn Sheep as well as the countless number of species, some endangered that inhabit the Conservation area.

The BLM has been another very involved participant in this project and have also been very supportive in our efforts to restrict livestock from The Gila Box Riparian National Conservation Area (RNCA). Noland Ranch also works jointly with the BLM in an effort to restrict cattle from entering the Gila from another BLM allotment, by means of a water gap across Eagle Creek at the confluence of the Gila River.

The feedback is telling us that the state & federal officials approve and support our efforts of protecting rivers & streams. From now on we will be more effective as ranch owners & caretakers of the land. We are more aware than before of water quality issues and their causes. Noland Ranch now knows how to create & implement a project to solve any potential or existing water problems. I feel us as ranchers are leading as an example to others who should be more aware of their water problems.

### **Public Involvement**

During the project period Noland Ranch was able to involve the community on several occasions. We attended and participated in the Upper Eagle Creek, Gila Watershed meetings, and BLM, FS permittee meetings. At these meetings we presented by way of Power Point the concerns and solutions we had for the current water conditions. We educated the public about nonpoint pollutant sources and the likely causes. Grazing plans, alternate water sources, and fencing were some ways we expressed would help them to improve management of their ranches. During this implementation we encountered ranchers with concern about working in conjunction with government agencies to protect wildlife and water quality. What evolved were ranchers having a better understanding for the ADEQ and similar government agencies. They understood that ADEQ and similar agencies were not the enemy and much could be accomplished through partnership. Keeping water quality issues at hand in everyday practices will maintain a higher level of commitment. Communicating these practices to others will keep the community active.