

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**LAKE HAVASU FIELD OFFICE
Wildlife Water Improvement – Red Cliff
La Paz County, AZ
DOI-BLM-AZ-C030-2013-044-EA**

Background

The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) has identified the need to redevelop Red Cliff wildlife water catchment with another collection point. This structure was originally constructed in 1990 in a wash. The old structure was 3 fiberglass sausage tanks with float valves that were later replaced. The existing structure is a 4500 gallon fiberglass ring tank with paired pipelines reaching upstream to a small concrete dam to form the collection point. The fiberglass water trough is gravity fed and replaced the old float valve system. Red Cliff is the only AGFD artificial wildlife water within the Gibraltar Wilderness. The Gibraltar Wilderness was established in November 1990.

Determination

On the basis of the information contained in the Wildlife Water Improvement – Red Cliff Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-AZ-C030-2013-044-EA), I have determined that the Proposed Action does not constitute a federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required.

This finding is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the *context* and *intensity* of the impacts described in the EA.

Context

The AGFD proposes to construct a new collection point and feed line to increase the amount of water collected during rain events. Experience has shown that using small drainages with relatively large diameter feed lines allows the collection of short duration intense rain events that are relatively common rather than relying on the large and sustained rain events required by the existing structure. Two existing fences would be extended to a rock bluff to reduce the ability for livestock to access the water trough. All exposed pipe and manmade materials will be camouflaged using dyes, or paints. The entire project is estimated to take approximately 3 days to complete, sometime between January 1 and April 1, 2014. All work would occur during daylight.

Intensity

1) Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

The improvement of this wildlife water would allow for additional collection of water during rain events, therefore improving water availability for bighorn sheep, mule deer, bobcat, and other wildlife species. During the two day construction period, there may be short term, negligible effects to wildlife, primarily noise and access to the water development. No long term effects would occur.

2) The degree to which the Proposed Action affects public health or safety.

The improvement of this wildlife water would not impact public health or safety.

3) Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

The project area is located on public lands administered by the Lake Havasu Field Office. There are no farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, culturally important, or ecologically critical areas in the project area.

4) The degree to which the effects on the quality of human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

During internal scoping, it was determined public scoping was not needed for this improvement project. The Proposed Action is improving an existing feature, therefore additional impact will be minimal.

5) The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

There are no highly uncertain or unique or unknown risks in implementation of the Proposed Action.

6) The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

The Proposed Action would not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects. Any other actions would be subject to separate analysis under NEPA.

7) Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

A cumulative effects analysis was conducted as part of the EA, and it determined that there were no cumulatively significant effects associated with the selected alternative.

8) The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss of destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

BLM has made the determination that the project would not affect historic resources.

9) The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

There would be no expected impacts to threatened and endangered wildlife and plants, because they are not present in the project area. Desert tortoise may be temporarily displaced for the three days during construction of the additional collection point. No active tortoise dens are located in the project area. Future disturbance from water hauling activities would be reduced. The proposed action will increase the availability of permanent water which will be beneficial to California Leaf Nosed bat which is the only other special status specie that occur within three miles of the project.

10) Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

The Proposed Action is in conformance with the Lake Havasu Field Office Resource Management Plan. The action does not violate any known federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

FONSI

I have reviewed this environmental assessment including the discussion of environmental impacts. I have determined that the Proposed Action with the mitigation measures described below will not have any significant impacts on the human environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. I have determined that the proposed project is in conformance with the approved land use plan.

\\s\Kimber Liebhauser Authenticated by Jennifer House
Kimber Liebhauser
Field Manager,
Lake Havasu Field Office

3/14/2014
Date