



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

January 27, 2004

Larry Sears, District Ranger
Mogollon Rim Ranger District
HC 31, Box 300
Happy Jack, AZ 86024

Subject: Bar T Bar and Anderson Springs Allotment Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) [CEQ # 030544]

Dear Mr. Sears:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Draft EIS for the Bar T Bar and Anderson Springs Allotment Plan. Our review is pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. Our detailed comments are enclosed.

EPA supports the comprehensive approach to management of Bar T Bar and Anderson Springs Allotments as well as the efforts of the Coconino National Forest to incorporate comments received from the public and the work with the Diablo Trust. The issues raised during the scoping period for the proposed action aided in the development of the Forest Supervisor preferred alternative, Alternative 5. This alternative addresses the issues raised regarding impacts to wetlands and fence construction in prime antelope habitat. EPA supports selection of Alternative 5 over Alternative 3, the proposed action. We rate the DEIS as LO, Lack of Objections. Please see the enclosed "Summary of Rating Definitions" for a detailed explanation of EPA's rating system.

EPA suggests that the Final EIS include a detailed watershed map that identifies all the waterbodies within the project area. In addition, Mitigation No. R6 notes that forage utilization levels in key areas will be monitored to allow for proper use and protect vegetation. More information regarding the specific monitoring measures and an established time frame should be included. Heavy grazing in the allotments has led to a reduction in the diversity and vigor of cool and warm season forbs and soil conditions that are impaired or unsatisfactory. As a result, EPA requests that more information be included for determination that a rest/rotation program on the Anderson Springs Allotment and a reduction in maximum utilization levels, as described in Alternative 4, are not economically feasible.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this Draft EIS. When the Final EIS is released for public review, please send one copy to the address above (mail code: CMD-2). Questions regarding this letter should be directed to Summer Allen, the lead reviewer for this project at (415) 972-3847 or allen.summer@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

/S/Lisa B. Hanf, Manager
Federal Activities Office

MI# 003611

Enclosures:
Summary of Rating Definitions