

REC'D OCT 15 2019

Paul M. and Amy C. Sabol



October 10, 2019

Certified Mail  
Return Receipt Requested

Neil Bosworth  
Tonto National Forest Supervisor  
2324 E. McDowell Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85006

Re: Bar X and Driveway Grazing Authorization

Dear Mr. Bosworth:

We strongly object to the Bar X and Heber-Reno Sheep Driveway Grazing Authorization project on the Tonto National Forest, Pleasant Valley Ranger District in Gila County, Arizona Final Environmental Assessment (FEA), Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Draft Decision Notice. We previously submitted comments by email to Jeff Sturla on April 5, 2019 and July 2, 2019 regarding this project. Our objections are based on the following:

1. Impacted areas, particularly the Colcord and Haigler allotments have been either completely closed or severely restricted to grazing since the 1970s pursuant to Forest Service studies done at that time which reasoned continued cattle grazing could not be sustained without significant destruction of the environment and wildlife habitat. Re-opening the areas to over 500 head of cattle, more than were authorized before the closure, without clear delineations regarding where those cows will be grazing when and for how long during each year will once again have an extremely deleterious effect on the environment and wildlife habitat causing the animals to either die or go elsewhere. Further, such a decision will solely benefit the Bar X at the expense of the wildlife and quiet enjoyment of those public lands for all other stakeholders.
2. Page 38 of the Forest Service September 2019 Final Environmental Assessment states, "Through the development of the EA, the Forest Service determined that the action will not be significant as these subdivisions have always been within an active grazing allotment." That statement is untrue with respect to the communities of Colcord Estates and Ponderosa Springs where cattle grazing has been closed by the Forest Service for approximately 40 years due to the negative environmental impact determined by Forest Service studies conducted during the 1970s.
3. While homeowners in the impacted areas can fence private property, the potential for dangerous human-cow encounters on private as well as public lands and roadways increases with the number of grazing cattle. Cows may generally appear docile, but they

are large often unruly animals known to break down fences and charge unwitting humans. Allowing 500+ cows to graze in and around large, well established private communities and on Forest Service lands enjoyed by a great number of hikers, campers, fishers and hunters without even requiring notification of exactly how many cows will be where or when is unreasonable and is very likely to result in people being hurt.

We most urgently and respectfully request that you reconsider the proposed decision and implement a plan that more equitably addresses the concerns of all the impacted stakeholders. We had hoped such a plan could fall somewhere between Options A and B listed in the most recent Environmental Assessment which, at a minimum, would significantly reduce the proposed number of grazing cows and require early public notification of when they will be grazing where. If a compromise cannot be considered, "Option A) No Action/No Grazing" should be chosen to preserve the environment including the forest animal population and satisfy the concerns of the majority of stakeholders over the desire of only one. We love the Forest Service lands and wildlife surrounding our little cabin in the Colcord Homesites. We would hate to either see them destroyed or worry about injury due to 500+ grazing cows.

Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to contact us anytime.

Most sincerely,

Paul M. Sabol & Amy C. Sabol

cc: Jeremy Plain,  
Acting District Director

Jeffrey Sturla,  
Range Staff, Tonto National Forest Payson and Pleasant Valley Ranger Districts

Debbie Cress,  
District Ranger, Payson Ranger District

Post M. A. Amy/C. Seftel

CERTIFIED MAIL



7018 1130 0001 0969 1432



1000



85006

U.S. POSTAGE PAID

OCT 10, 19

AMOUNT

\$6.85

R2305H129309-05

Wendy Lawrence  
Joint Medical Debt Repayment  
2324 E. McDowell Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85006

REC'D OCT 11 2019

8500632496 0018

