

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
3501 Mesa Village Drive  
Alamogordo, NM 88310  
575-437-3100

April 3, 2017

Elizabeth A. Humphrey, District Ranger  
c/o Ciara Cusack  
Sacramento Ranger District  
PO Box 288, #4 Lost Lodge Rd.  
Clondcroft, NM 88317

RE: NMMJM Habitat Projects – Sacramento

Dear Ms. Humphrey:

The proposal for this project aims to protect critical habitat, improve riparian condition and improve water quality within the Sacramento Grazing Allotment by constructing exclosure fencing and construct additional water developments for livestock and wildlife. These structural developments should aid in improving resource conditions on the allotment over time. However, are there other projects that will look at the allotment as a whole or watershed scale type projects to aid in what this project aims to achieve? Are there treatments (erosion control, headcut stabilization) in the adjacent tributaries to the Rio Penasco and Wills Canyon that will be considered in this project or another project? Will invasive species be considered in the development of this project?

1. To protect critical habitat: exclosure fencing and development of additional water for livestock and wildlife should aid in the protection of critical and occupied habitat for the NMMJM. Will there be a reference condition or benchmark that will be used to measure improvements or degradation of habitat after the fences and water developments have been installed? Will adjustments be made accordingly? Will all exclosure fences become permanent?
2. To improve riparian condition: will access points within the exclosure fencing be strategically placed to allow for ease of livestock and wildlife crossing and access to water? Access points should be strategically placed and be in sufficient size to allow livestock and wildlife to cross stream channel and should not be in boggy areas or in areas with very steep slopes. The construction of additional livestock handling facilities and water should increase the distribution of livestock and wildlife. The livestock handling facilities should aid in livestock management and allow for more management flexibility. To maximize the use of these livestock handling facilities, water developments should be developed within or in close proximity to these facilities. The facilities and water developments should be prioritized according to the maximum benefit

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for livestock, NMMJM, and other wildlife.

3. To improve water quality: will the access areas within the exclosure fencing have hardened access to minimize sedimentation and further resource damage? What will be used to measure an improvement in water quality?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amalia A. Montoya".

Amalia A. Montoya  
South Area Rangeland Management Specialist  
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service