

O.K. DITCH COMPANY

P.O. BOX 3037

CAMP VERDE, AZ 86322

To: Sandy Watts and/ or Acting Regional Forester, Southwestern Region, 333 Broadway SE,
Albuquerque, NM 87102

From: OK Ditch Co., PO Box 3037, Camp Verde, AZ 86322; 928.202.1471 (Todd Scantlebury)

Subject: Objection to Land Plan amendment proposed for 2018 Coconino Forest Plan to Accommodate
Federal No.: YYV-0(209)Z, Yavapai County No.: 1722601 (Verde Connect)

Date: Aug 18, 2020

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on and object to the proposed Land Plan amendment. We have attached a letter sent to FHWA in which the OK Ditch requested, and later received, recognition as a Consulting Party under Section 106 of the NHPA Consultation. While we are pleased to be "at the table" to discuss the short portion of the OK Ditch that would be directly affected by the proposed project (the 4-lane bridge would pass directly over the OK Ditch's 3rd spillway), we are writing to object to the proposed Land Plan amendment, because it would affect approximately 2.5 miles of the Ditch and its dam located on NF lands (see map, page 10, of above attached letter to FHWA).

The OK Ditch was established in 1876 (and more knowledgeable folks, like CNF Archaeologist Peter Pilles, believe 1873). OK Ditch dirt track, access roads – originally for horses, mules and wagons, and later trucks and excavation equipment – were created prior to the establishment of the NF and are not designated FS roads, though FS roads may intersect them. These tracks would be visible to drivers using the proposed bridge and roadway, and we are concerned that these drivers or others could access, with some minimal effort, both the dirt tracks and OK Ditch. While we will be working with FHWA and the County to limit access, using fence and sign postings, within the project area, we believe the proposed Land Plan amendment should also contain wording and provisions for protecting and prohibiting access to the remaining 2.5 miles of OK Ditch, including the OK Ditch dam and access tracks on both sides of the Ditch. The FS knows all too well what damage and liability such "attractive nuisance" water features can induce.

We look forward to discussing these points with you in person and arriving at solutions that will not only protect the historic OK Ditch but also visitors to our National Forest.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

Robert Kovacovich, President

8-18-20

Date

[Redacted Signature]

Todd Scantlebury, Vice President

8/18/20

Date

[Redacted Signature]

Zach Wolfe, Secretary/ Treasurer

8-18-2020

Date