



## SCOPING NOTICE AND OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

### PROPOSED WELL AND PIPELINE DEVELOPMENT ON WISE MESA AND NEGRO TANK

#### *Dear Friends and Neighbors of the Coronado National Forest:*

I am writing today to let you know about a proposed well and pipeline development project at two locations on the Nogales Ranger District: Wise Mesa and Negro Tank. The Forest proposes to drill two wells, one at each location, and tie them into existing pipelines that provide water for livestock and wildlife on two grazing allotments. The project sites are located within Townships 22 and 23 South, Range 12 East in Santa Cruz County, Arizona (see enclosed maps).

We are about to begin a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review of the proposed project by defining the scope of the impacts analysis. During scoping, we ask the public to help us identify issues and concerns related to the proposed action. Public input is vital because it is integrated into our environmental impacts analyses and may be used in the development of mitigation and alternatives to the proposed action. Information on how you can comment on this proposal or obtain further information is provided below.

#### **BACKGROUND**

At present, a pipeline on Wise Mesa supplies water to the Ramanote grazing allotment on the south side of Peck Canyon. This allotment is permitted for 331 head of cattle yearlong. Another pipeline near Negro Tank supplies water to the Murphy grazing allotment on the north side of Peck Canyon, which is permitted for 213 head of cattle yearlong. In addition to watering livestock, both pipelines supply year-round water for wildlife.

Currently, the Rio Rico Utilities municipal water system provides water to the two pipelines. The proposed action is needed because the grazing allotment permittees, the Forest Service and Rio Rico Utilities have agreed it would be practical to terminate the connection with the municipal system and develop an alternate source of water for the allotments.

#### **PROPOSED ACTION**

The Forest Service proposes to drill two water production wells at an estimated depth of 300 feet, one on the south end of Wise Mesa near Ramanote Canyon and one just north of Negro Tank. Access to each site would be on existing roads.



Well-drilling would be accomplished under contract by a licensed well driller using truck mounted drilling equipment. Pipeline installation would require the use of a trencher or heavy equipment to bury the pipe where feasible.

The Forest Service would conduct site visits as needed and obtain well permits from the Arizona Department of Water Resources prior to authorizing the well drilling.

After the existing water supply connection with Rio Rico Utilities has been disconnected and capped, new HDPE pipelines would be installed underground, to the extent possible, to connect the wells to the existing pipelines that serve the allotments. Existing lateral lines would be extended several miles to provide water over a greater area, and several troughs would be added. Solar photovoltaic panels would be installed at each well to provide power to pumps, and several poly-storage tanks would be added.

Proposed wells and new pipeline routes would be surveyed for heritage resources prior to any ground disturbing activities. Most of the new pipelines would be sited along the edge of existing roads where the ground has been previously disturbed.

## **YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT**

The Coronado National Forest values public input during the NEPA review process. Your comments about this proposal may be submitted to us in writing by U.S. mail, facsimile, or hand-delivery; electronically by email; and orally, by telephone or in person at the District office. To be most useful in our NEPA review, comments should be submitted to us within 30 calendar days following your receipt of this notice.

Our mailing address is Nogales Ranger District, 303 Old Tucson Road, Nogales, AZ 85621. Facsimiles may be sent to (520) 281-2396. Please include your full name and address and project title (Wise Mesa/Negro Tank Wells) with your comments. Electronic (email) comments may be submitted to us at [comments-southwestern-coronado@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southwestern-coronado@fs.fed.us). Please submit email comments in any of the following ways: text of your email, in a Microsoft Word (.doc) attachment, or in rich-text format (.rtf). Please include “Wise Mesa/Negro Tank Wells” in the subject line.

Oral comments may be provided by telephoning Mr. Sean Lockwood at (520) 761-6014 from 7:00 a.m. through 5:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday, excluding Federal holidays, or by making a personal visit to the Nogales District Office.

For additional information about this project, please contact Mr. Lockwood at the number above or at [slockwood@fs.fed.us](mailto:slockwood@fs.fed.us). Questions about the NEPA review process may be directed to Forest NEPA Coordinator Andrea Campbell at (520) 388-8352 or [awcampbell@fs.fed.us](mailto:awcampbell@fs.fed.us).

*Thank you for your interest and participation<sup>1</sup> in the activities of the Coronado National Forest.*

Sincerely,

*/S/ KENT C. ELLETT*

KENT C. ELLETT  
District Ranger

Enclosures: Map of Project Area

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<sup>1</sup> *Comments and personal information associated with them, such as names and addresses, become part of the Administrative Record of this NEPA review. As such, they may be made available to a third-party upon request under the authority of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Personally identifying information is protected by the Privacy Act. If you do not wish for your personal information to be released under the FOIA, you may choose not to include it with your comments. Alternatively, you may request an exemption from FOIA with your comment submittal. Should you choose the latter, you will be informed by the Forest Service as to whether or not your request qualifies for an exemption. If it does not, you would be afforded the opportunity to resubmit your comments without personal information or to withhold them altogether.*