



# United States Department of the Interior



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In Reply Refer to:  
AESO/SE  
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November 21, 2013

Jim Upchurch, Forest Supervisor  
Coronado National Forest  
300 West Congress Street  
Tucson, AZ 85701

Dear Mr. Upchurch:

Thank you for your correspondence of October 25, 2013, received on October 28, 2013. This letter documents our review of the reinitiation of the Continuation of Livestock Grazing on the Coronado National Forest Biological and Conference Opinion (BCO) for allotments located in Graham, Cochise, Santa Cruz, Pima, and Pinal counties, Arizona, in compliance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). Your memorandum concluded that the proposed action may affect, but are not likely to adversely affect, proposed jaguar (*Panthera onca*) critical habitat. We concur with your determinations and provide our rationale below. This letter constitutes our Conference Report related to informal conference for the proposed jaguar critical habitat designation.

## Description of the Proposed Action

A complete description of the proposed action is found in the BCO, October 25, 2013, letter, and the Ongoing Livestock Grazing Activities in Jaguar Proposed Critical Habitat on the Coronado National Forest Wildlife Biological Assessment (BA). The proposed continuing action includes livestock grazing and livestock management.

All or portions of seventy-eight Coronado National Forest (NF) allotments overlap proposed Critical Habitat Units 1 (Baboquivari), 2 (Atascosa), 3 (Patagonia), 4 (Whetstone), or 5 (Peloncillo) (78 FR 39237). A total of 488,571 acres of proposed jaguar critical habitat are located in CNF allotments.

## CONCLUSION

We have analyzed the effects of the actions as presented in the BCO, your October 25, 2013, letter, and the BA. We concur that the proposed action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, proposed jaguar critical habitat for the following reasons:

- Effects to the Primary Constituent Element of proposed jaguar critical habitat (PCE) regarding adequate levels of prey will be insignificant because any changes to prey habitat are likely to be localized, and not expected to significantly change prey availability throughout the areas where jaguars occur.
- The PCEs regarding connectivity to Mexico, rugged terrain, human population density, major roads, or stable nighttime lighting will not be affected by the proposed action.
- The PCE regarding the availability of water sources within 20 km (12.4 mi) will not be affected because no naturally occurring water sources will be eliminated and jaguars will not be excluded from any natural or livestock water sources. We anticipate that water will be available and well distributed as long as grazing allotments are active.
- Effects to the PCE related to percent canopy cover in Madrean evergreen woodland and semidesert grassland from the proposed action will be insignificant because:
  - a. Livestock grazing will not affect tree canopy cover. Only herbaceous vegetation, and possibly a minor amount of shrub vegetation, will be affected.
  - b. Structure installation and maintenance will possibly have minor impacts on tree canopy cover, but these impacts will only be in the locations of the structures and will not change the level of canopy cover in the general area.

Therefore, we conclude that the proposed action will not destroy or adversely modify proposed jaguar critical habitat. No recommendations to reduce adverse effects are necessary because the proposed action will maintain the necessary PCEs for jaguar critical habitat.

In the future, you may request, in writing, that we confirm this conference report as a concurrence under section 7 of the ESA if the proposed jaguar critical habitat is designated, if we find there have been no significant changes between the proposed and final jaguar critical habitat determinations, and the proposed action has not changed.

Thank you for your continued coordination. No further section 7 consultation is required for this project at this time. All requirements of the existing BOs and concurrences remain in effect. Additionally, the reinitiation criteria of the BOs also remain valid. Should project plans change, or if information on the distribution or abundance of listed species or critical habitat becomes available, this determination may need to be reconsidered.

In all future correspondence on these projects, please refer to the appropriate consultation number for the allotment in question. We also encourage you to coordinate the review of this project with the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Should you require further assistance or if you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please contact Mark Crites at (520) 670-6150 (x229) or Scott Richardson (x242).

Sincerely,

*/ s / Scott Richardson for*  
Steven L. Spangle  
Field Supervisor

cc (hard copy):

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