



United States Department of the Interior

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Arizona Ecological Services Office

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Phoenix, Arizona 85021-4951

Telephone: (602) 242-0210 Fax: (602) 242-2513



In reply refer to:

AESO

October 2, 2015

Mr. James W. Crosswhite
EC Bar Ranch
Post Office Box 44
Nutrioso, Arizona 85932

Dear Mr Crosswhite:

The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) would like to thank you for your commitment and hard work in recovering the portion of Nutrioso Creek that flows through the EC Bar Ranch near the Town of Nutrioso, Arizona. Since purchasing the EC Bar Ranch in 1996, you have implemented numerous habitat-improvement projects on Nutrioso Creek and adjoining upland pastures. Your efforts to construct elk-proof fencing, incorporate rotational livestock grazing, and plant willow and cottonwood trees has helped to protect and enhance stream banks and restore three miles of Nutrioso Creek.

On December 19, 2003, you entered into a Safe Harbor Agreement with our agency for the enhancement and restoration of habitat for the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher (willow flycatcher) and the threatened Little Colorado spinedace (spinedace) in Nutrioso Creek on your property. Prior to your acquisition in 1996, historic overgrazing and poor range management had caused Nutrioso Creek to become a deeply incised stream channel throughout the ranch, which resulted in loss of habitat for spinedace as well as other native fish and aquatic species. Channel incision and overuse by elk and livestock also caused a loss of riparian vegetation needed by willow flycatchers. Your habitat improvement work has greatly improved riparian and aquatic conditions and the EC Bar Ranch now supports the largest spinedace population on Nutrioso Creek, as well as high-quality willow flycatcher habitat.

As you know, we listed the New Mexico meadow jumping mouse (jumping mouse) as an endangered species in 2014, primarily as a result of riparian habitat degradation and loss. Previously, all known jumping mouse locations in Arizona were on the nearby Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests. Because you allowed researchers from Northern Arizona University to survey the EC Bar Ranch in August 2015, we now have new information regarding the jumping mouse. The surveys on the EC Bar Ranch resulted in two visual sightings and one capture of jumping mice. This is significant because it is currently the only documentation of jumping mice occupying private land in Arizona, and represents new location information for the species. Jumping mice presence on the EC Bar Ranch is indicative of the land stewardship you have implemented. We anticipate that, due to its functioning riparian system, the EC Bar Ranch

will continue to provide habitat important to jumping mouse conservation and recovery, and will serve as a corridor to link jumping mouse populations both up and downstream of your property.

Thank you for conserving the rare and ecologically significant resources of Arizona. We sincerely appreciate your efforts and look forward to working with you in the future. Please feel free to contact the Service if we can be of any assistance in your ongoing habitat restoration and management.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Spangle", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Steven L. Spangle
Field Supervisor

ecc: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Shaula Hedwall, David Smith, Greg Beatty)