



**USDA  
Forest Service**

**REPORT OF INVESTIGATION**  
(Reference FSH 5309.11)

Case/File Number  
**16-03-9143377**

Controlling Office <b>Region 3, Law Enforcement &amp; Investigations</b>	Investigating Office <b>Region 3, Law Enforcement &amp; Investigation</b>
Case Type <b>Government Property</b>	Investigative Period From: <b>June 28, 2016</b> To: <b>July 18, 2016</b>
Case Status <b>Solved – Referred (Administrative)</b>	Report Type <b>Report of Investigation</b>
Case Name <b>Clifton R.D. Government Livestock Deaths</b>	Investigated By <b>Brent Robinson, Special Agent #443</b>

**SYNOPSIS**

- On May 26, 2016 Clifton RD, Apache-Sitgreaves NF government stock animals (2 horses and 1 mule) were transferred from the Clifton RD office corrals back to the Rattlesnake Administrative Pasture. Between May 26, 2016 and June 24, 2016, the gravity-fed spring water system pipe broke and failed to deliver water to the drinking troughs on the pasture, and the livestock went without water for an unknown, but prolonged time period. During this time period, no employees from the Clifton RD visited the pasture to check the welfare of the animals.
- On June 24, 2016, Clifton RD range employee Tyler MCCAFFERTY and a volunteer (Christopher DEHOFF) visited the administrative pasture to check the welfare of the animals. They found the water trough and reserves dry, the upstream permittee's troughs dry, and searched for the animals. They located the mule deceased, and could not initially find the horses on the 340 acre pasture. MCCAFFERTY returned to the office, informed his District Ranger (TELLES) and then returned to the pasture where he located one of the two horses also deceased.
- Notifications of the government livestock deaths were made June 24, 2016 to ASNF leadership and staff elements. The second horse was located deceased on the administrative pasture the next day by the neighboring permittee, Darrell BINGHAM, who had been alerted to look for animal and to check the integrity of the water line and spring source. BINGHAM found two breaks in the water line and repaired them the evening of June 24, 2016. When I, SA B. Robinson arrived to the pasture on June 29, 2016, the water was flowing and the trough and reserve were holding significant water. I located and photographed the deceased animals, noted dehydration and predation, and saw no other physical reason for their deaths.
- Many Clifton RD employees were interviewed and the conclusion arrived at was that a failure of a known problematic water system had occurred and went unnoticed by employees responsible for the care of the government livestock. No welfare checks had been accomplished for 4 weeks during the hottest month of the year. Contributing to this unfortunate outcome was a compilation of past practices, unknown policies, poor communication, failure of leadership, local fire conditions, and accretion of duties to an inexperienced employee.

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Prepared By: <u>Brent Robinson</u>	<u>July 18, 2016</u>
Signature	Date
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