

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Bryce Canyon National Park

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IN REPLY REFER TO:

L54 (BRCA-RM)

March 19, 1998

Memorandum

To: Resource Management Files

From: Douglas Neighbor
Resource Management Specialist, Bryce Canyon National Park

Subject: Riggs Spring Exclosure

Currently, trespass livestock (cattle) are entering the exclosure and creating a quagmire. Resource Management staff decided the removal of the Riggs Spring exclosure and revegetation of the site would be a good service project for an Eagle Scout. An alternative service project would be to rehabilitate the Riggs Spring exclosure.

Riggs Spring is located on T 38S, R 4W, Sec. 32, SW1/4, NW1/4, SW1/4. According to pictures (1986), the exclosure is approximately 20 feet by 40 feet with one V-style opening to provide access for hikers. The exclosure is constructed with eight to twelve inch diameter aspen logs. Inside the exclosure is a cement collection box (approx. 4' X 2') with a galvanized pipe valve system. Exiting the collection box is a buried black plastic waterline (4,455') which exits the southeast boundary of the park into a stock tank on Dixie National Forest.

To clarify water rights issues related to Riggs Spring, I contacted Jeff Hughes, WRD - Denver. Jeff Hughes consulted (per communication) Bill Hansen, other WRD staff, and Solicitor staff (unofficial) to determine the course of action needed to remove the exclosure. Jeff's recommendations were to contact the Utah State Engineer's Office to determine water rights, and to contact Dixie National Forest to determine which grazing permittees might be using the stock tank on USFS property.

The State Engineer's Office - Water Rights at Richfield was contact. According to their records, the nearest appropriated water right is Yovimpa Spring. Jeff Hughes stated that since Riggs Spring was never appropriated, it reverts to federal reserve water rights. However, Jeff Hughes stated although Riggs Spring is a federal reserve water right, someone using the stock

tank outside the park may have a claim due to usage and maintenance of the water system.

Evan Boshell, Dixie National Forest, was contacted to determine grazing permittees on sections south and east of the park boundary. He stated no permits were issued for the past several years, nor are any expected to be issued in the near future. While talking with Evan Boshell, we discussed trespass livestock impacts on Riggs Spring. He stated that the majority of the trespass cattle are from BLM allotments south and east USFS property due to the lack of fencing along their boundary. In addition, Evan stated he has never seen the waterline in operation, however he would like to have it in operation for wildlife purposes at the stock tank. I stated that the Bryce Canyon NP would like to have Riggs Spring free flow for wildlife purposes without the waterline in place.

It is my understanding if the park chooses to remove the Riggs Spring enclosure, collection box, and waterline, we can do so without any community relations or legal repercussions. My recommendation is to remove the Riggs Spring water development system, revegetate impacted area, and let the spring free flow for wildlife purposes. I suspect if the spring were free flowing, the area would revert to a wet meadow similar to upper Podunk Creek near Yovimpa Pass. However, this could affect backcountry use since water may not be available for the Riggs Spring campsite and group site. Certainly, further discussion is needed before any action is taken.

Douglas S. Neighbor

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