

Decision Memo

Glady Methanol Injection System

USDA Forest Service, Eastern Region
Greenbrier Ranger District, Monongahela National Forest
Pocahontas and Randolph Counties, West Virginia

I. Decision To Be Implemented

A. Description of Decision

I have decided to authorize Columbia Gas Transmission (Columbia) to install underground pipe for a pressurized methanol injection system for natural gas lines on the Greenbrier Ranger District of the Monongahela National Forest (MNF). This project will take place within the Glady Natural Gas Storage Field in Pocahontas and Randolph Counties, West Virginia (see attached map).

B. Purpose and Need

Hydrate (hydrocarbon ice) forms in natural gas pipelines because of the high pressure in the pipelines. This ice can form year-round. Methanol reduces hydrate formation within the natural gas pipeline system; reduces corrosion in the pipes; makes it easier to remove fluids from the pipes; and conditions gas during withdrawal operations from the Glady Storage Field.

There are currently 47 active wells in the Glady Field. Most, but not all, of the sites have underground tanks that feed methanol to high-pressure above-ground bottles. These bottles then gravity-feed the methanol to the natural gas pipelines. The underground methanol tanks are refilled by truck at each site. Getting methanol to the well sites involves frequent trips to the well sites, along with snow plowing roads when necessary. It is labor-intensive and time-consuming.

The new computerized, pressurized system will feed methanol to 35 well sites. Methanol will be stored at the Glady compressor station, which is not on National Forest System (NFS) land, in three 5,000 gallon storage tanks. The compressor station will act as a centralized pump location, sending out pressurized methanol from the storage tanks at the station to the field sites.

The new system will:

- Reduce the need to transport methanol by trucks to the well sites.
- Reduce the need for on-site methanol storage.
- Increase the consistency with which the natural gas pipelines are treated.
- Reduce the risk of resource damage from spilling methanol from trucks during transport and transfer to underground tanks at the sites.
- Reduce potential resource damage on roads by decreasing truck traffic and snowplowing.

- Improve safety by decreasing truck traffic and handling of methanol.

C. Project Description

Columbia will install a pressurized methanol system within the next two years. Below is a summary of the activities and methods.

Activities include:

- Underground installation of pipelines, all within existing access roads or pipeline rights-of-way. Approximately 15.95 miles of steel 2-inch line and 7.7 miles of steel 1-inch line will be installed. The 2-inch lines will be used on the main right-of-way, with 1-inch lateral lines going to the well sites.
- Use and maintenance of the methanol injection system; and
- Restoration of excavated areas.

Methods: Columbia plans to ditchwitch what they can for easier and quicker installation. Other places will be excavated with a tracked excavator. They will directional drill as many of the stream crossings as possible. Other streams will be crossed using the “dry ditch” method found in their Environmental Construction Standards book (Columbia Gas Transmission, January 2006). This book also contains additional information on trenching, erosion control, restoration, spill prevention and containment, etc. There will be no “wet ditch” techniques used on this project.

Additional Project Details: This project has been designed to meet applicable state and federal laws and regulations, Forest Service policy and directives, and Forest Plan standards and guidelines. Additional project details and requirements are contained in the document “Glady Methanol Injection System - Design Criteria & Conditions”, which is in the project record. That document contains additional project details that are important in the implementation of this project and in the determination that a Categorical Exclusion is appropriate for this project. Some of the items explain how Forest Plan standards and guidelines will be implemented. Other items reiterate measures required by the Corp of Engineers or contained in Columbia Gas Transmission’s Environmental Construction Standards book (2006). That document also contains the seed mix that will be used to revegetate the rights-of-way.

II. Reasons for Categorically Excluding the Decision

Decisions may be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment when they are within one of the categories identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 7 CFR part 1b.3 or one of the categories identified by the Chief of the Forest Service in Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.15 sections 31.1b or 31.2, and there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the decision that may result in a significant individual or cumulative effect on the quality of the human environment.

I have concluded this decision is appropriately categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment as it is a routine activity

within a category of exclusion, and there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the decision that may result in a significant individual or cumulative effect on the quality of the human environment. My conclusion is based on information presented in this document and the entirety of the project file.

A. Category of Exclusion

The decision is categorically excluded because it is within the category of exclusion identified in Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.15, Chapter 30, Section 31.2(2): “Additional construction or reconstruction of existing telephone or utility lines in a designated corridor.” Implementation of this project will result in the underground installation of additional lines next to existing natural gas lines, within existing access roads or pipeline rights-of-way.

B. Relationship to Extraordinary Circumstances

The extraordinary circumstances have been reviewed and are summarized below. Additional details are contained within the project record. Therefore, I find that no extraordinary circumstances exist.

1. Federally listed threatened and endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species.

a. Aquatic Wildlife: There are no federally listed threatened or endangered aquatic species or designated critical habitat within or near the project area. There are no aquatic species proposed for federal listing or proposed critical habitat within or near the project area. Therefore, there will be no adverse effects to threatened or endangered aquatic species or their habitat as a result of this project..

Six Regional Forester’s sensitive species of fish and one species of amphibian have the potential to occur within the streams and tributaries of both the East Fork Glady Fork and West Fork Greenbrier River within the project area and downstream.. It is expected that this project may impact individuals, but is not likely to lead to loss of viability or a trend toward federal listing for pearl dace, Cheat minnow, New River shiner, Kanawha minnow, candy darter, Appalachian darter, and eastern hellbender.

b. Terrestrial Wildlife: This project will have no effect on any listed species (US Fish & Wildlife Service, 2005). There are no proposed species or critical habitat. While the presence of several sensitive species cannot be discounted, the nature of the activity and anticipated impacts are such that the potential impacts are discountable.

c. Botany: The project will have no effect on any threatened or endangered plant species. For Regional Forester's Sensitive Species, the project may impact individual Appalachian blue violets, but is not likely to lead to loss of viability or a trend toward federal listing. For all other sensitive plant species, the project will have no impacts.

2. Floodplains, Wetlands, or Municipal Watersheds

- a. Floodplains: Short segments of mapped and un-mapped floodplains adjacent to streams will be crossed by the pipeline installation. No substantial adverse effects to floodplain functions or to flood elevations will occur as a result of this project.
- b. Wetlands: Approximately 19 emergent wetlands are crossed by the pipeline installation. No substantial adverse effects to wetland functions or values will be expected as a result of this project.
- c. Municipal Watersheds: None of the streams draining the project area is a designated municipal water supply. There are no municipal water intakes near the streams within the project area, and none are included in the State's list of Public Water Supplies. This pipeline project will have no impact on municipal watersheds or water supplies.

3. Congressionally Designated Areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas.

- a. Wilderness: There are no congressionally designated wilderness areas within the project area. Laurel Fork North and Laurel Fork South Wildernesses are located to the east of the project area and should not be affected by this project.
- b. Wilderness Study Areas: There are no Wilderness Study Areas within the project area and none that will be affected by this project.
- c. National Recreation Areas: There are no National Recreational Areas within the project area. The Spruce Knob - Seneca Rocks NRA lies to the east of the project area and should not be affected by this project.

4. Inventoried Roadless Areas

There are no inventoried roadless areas within the project area. The Gaudineer Inventoried Roadless Area is located to the west of the project area and will not be affected by this project.

5. Research Natural Areas

There are no Research Natural Areas within the affected area. Therefore, there will be no impacts to Research Natural Areas as a result of this project.

6. American Indian and Alaska Native Religious or Cultural Sites

There are no tribal trust or ceded lands in the proclamation boundary or in West Virginia. There are no federally recognized Indian tribes in West Virginia. Therefore, there will be

no impacts to any American Indian or Alaska Native religious or cultural sites as a result of this project.

7. Archaeological Sites, or Historic Properties or Areas

This decision complies with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This decision will have no effect on any historical or cultural sites (Calabrese 2007).

8. Other Extraordinary Circumstances

No other extraordinary circumstances related to this project were identified.

III. Public Involvement

This project was first included in the October 1, 2006 Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) for the Monongahela National Forest. One request for additional information on this project was received. No comments were received on the project. Internal scoping with resource specialists started in January, 2007.

IV. Findings Required By And/Or Related To Other Laws and Regulations

My decision will comply with all applicable laws and regulations. I have summarized some pertinent ones below that are not discussed above.

Forest Plan Consistency (National Forest Management Act): This Act requires the development of long-range land and resource management plans. The Monongahela National Forest Plan was approved in 2006, as required by this Act. The Act requires all projects and activities to be consistent with the Plan. The Plan has been reviewed in consideration of this project. This decision is responsive to guiding direction contained in the Plan. This decision is consistent with the standards and guidelines contained in the Plan.

Environmental Justice (Executive Order 12898): This Order requires consideration of whether projects would disproportionately impact minority or low-income populations. This decision complies with this Act. This decision is not expected to adversely impact minority or low-income populations.

National Environmental Policy Act: This Act requires public involvement and consideration of potential environmental effects. Public involvement is described in section III above. The entirety of documentation for this decision, including the project file, supports compliance with this Act.

Federal Cave Resources Protection Act: No known cave resources will be affected by this decision.

V. Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is not subject to administrative review or appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.12.

VI. Implementation Date

This decision may be implemented immediately. Columbia plans to begin implementation in June of 2007, and expects to have it finished by late summer. If necessary, the project could continue in 2008.

VII Contact Person

Further information about this decision may be obtained from Kristine Vollmer during normal office hours (weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.):

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VIII. Signature of Responsible Official and Date

/s/ Lauren Turner
 LAUREN TURNER
 Greenbrier District Ranger
 Monongahela National Forest
 Responsible Official

6/22/2007
 Date

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