



Flathead National Forest

Media Release

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Contact: Denise Germann
(406) 758-5252
(406) 249-1714 cell

Natural Gas Pipeline Proposal Deferred on Flathead National Forest

The Flathead National Forest has suspended work on an environmental impact statement (EIS) for a proposal by NorthWestern Energy to construct and operate approximately 12 miles of new natural gas pipeline on the Hungry Horse Ranger District.

NorthWestern Energy recently informed the forest that the company's implementation of the Kalispell Line Valve 5 to 6 Loop Pipeline Project has been deferred for three years due to recent analyses indicating "this project is not needed until the 2012 or 2013 heating season." Work will resume on the environmental analysis when NorthWestern Energy is prepared to move forward with the project.

The proposed project would increase capacity and supply, as well as maintain reliable natural gas service to the Kalispell and Flathead Valley area. The proposal was submitted to the forest earlier this year for consideration as an amendment to the company's existing special-use permit. The proposal includes the installation of a new underground loop pipeline that generally parallels U.S. Highway 2 between Marias Pass on the Continental Divide westward to an existing natural gas valve near the confluence of Bear Creek and the Middle Fork of the Flathead River.

When NorthWestern Energy reinitiates the analysis for the project, public comments will again be solicited to help develop issues, concerns and possible alternatives. Contact information received on the previous public involvement effort this past summer will be used at that time. Contact Project Manager David Ondov with the Flathead National Forest at (406) 758-5364 for additional information.

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