

NOTICE OF DECISION

REBUILD OF THE LIBBY (FEC) TO TROY SECTION OF BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION'S LIBBY TO BONNERS FERRY 115-KILOVOLT TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

RECORD OF DECISION

Kootenai National Forest

On July 30, 2008, Forest Supervisor Paul Bradford made a decision to issue a Special Use Permit to Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) for implementation of the Proposed Action with the Kootenai River crossing realignment as analyzed and documented in the Rebuild of the Libby (FEC) to Troy Section of BPA's Libby to Bonners Ferry 115-kilovolt Transmission Line Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The existing transmission line corridor crosses 63.4 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands in Montana administered by the Kootenai National Forest within Lincoln County.

Two rebuild alternatives and three realignment options were analyzed, along with a no action alternative in the FEIS.

It is the appellant's responsibility to provide sufficient project- or activity-specific evidence and rationale, focusing on the decision, to show why my decision should be reversed. The appeal must be filed with the Appeal Deciding Officer in writing. At a minimum, the appeal must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14. If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period. When appeals are filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of the last appeal disposition.

If an appeal is received on this project, there may be informal resolution meetings and/or conference calls between the Responsible Official and the appellant. These discussions would take place within 15 days after the closing date for filing an

appeal. All such meetings are open to the public. If interested in attending any informal resolution discussions, please contact the Responsible Official or monitor the following website for postings about current appeals in the Northern Region of the Forest Service:

http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/projects/appeal_index.shtml.

A copy of the Record of Decision is available on the Kootenai National Forest website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/kootenai/projects/projects/bpa-line/index.shtml>. This document is also available on a Compact Disc (CD) or in hardcopy from the Forest Supervisor's Office. A copy of the FEIS is available on the Bonneville Power Administration website at:

http://www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/Libby/.

For further information on this decision or to request a copy of either document, contact John Gubel, Forest Environmental Coordinator, (406) 283-7774, email: jgubel@fs.fed.us, or Leslie McDougall, Libby Ranger District NEPA Coordinator, (406) 283-7568.

This decision will allow BPA to rebuild the 17-mile-long Libby-Troy section of the existing transmission line at the same voltage (115 kV) with the same number of circuits (one) as described in Chapter 2 of the FEIS. A total of 171 new structures will be installed, with structures ranging from 60 to 105 feet tall. Approximately 14 miles of existing access roads for the transmission line will be improved, and about 4.5 miles of new access roads will be constructed. BPA will rebuild this section of line using a combination of wood and steel H-frame and single pole structures. BPA will also acquire additional transmission line corridor width through new easements or permitted areas in some sections to bring the corridor up to BPA's minimum width standards for 115-kV transmission line operation. The rebuild will add approximately 5 acres to the total NFS lands currently permitted as the corridor is widened from 60 to 80 feet over approximately 2 miles of existing corridor. Helicopters will be used for constructing the rebuilt line, except in the Big Horn Terrace and Pipe Creek residential areas, where all construction will occur from the ground. The Kootenai River crossing realignment option will move the Kootenai River line crossing about 0.75 mile

east of the existing crossing and require acquisition of new easements and permitted areas. The realignment over the Kootenai River would decrease ownership on NFS lands from 7 acres on the existing corridor to 6 acres on the new corridor. This decision includes two project-specific amendments to the Kootenai Forest Plan to allow: the removal of snags (cavity habitat) which present a hazard to the transmission line over approximately 6 acres of Management Area (MA) 10; and the reduction of the visual quality objectives over approximately 6 acres of MA 17.

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215. A written appeal, including attachments, must be submitted within 45 days following the publication date of the legal notice of this decision in the Daily Inter Lake, Kalispell, Montana. It is the responsibility of the appellant to ensure their appeal is received in a timely manner. The publication date of the legal notice of the decision in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Appellants should not rely on date or timeframe information provided by any other source. Paper appeals must be submitted to:

USDA Forest Service,
Northern Region
ATTN: Appeal Deciding Officer
P.O. Box 7669
Missoula, MT 59807

or

USDA Forest Service,
Northern Region
ATTN: Appeal Deciding Officer
200 East Broadway
Missoula, MT 59802
(Office hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.)

Electronic appeals must be submitted to: appeals-northern-regional-office@fs.fed.us. Faxed appeals must be submitted to: FAX: (406) 329-3411. In electronic appeals, the subject line should contain the name of the project being appealed. An automated response will confirm your electronic appeal has been received. Electronic appeals must be submitted in MS Word, Word Perfect, or Rich Text Format (RTF).