



News Release

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Forest Service
Lewis and Clark National Forest
P.O. Box 869
Great Falls, MT 59403-0869

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jennifer Woods
(406) 791-7765

COMMENTS SOUGHT ON GAS PIPELINE EA

Forest Service officials are releasing for public review and comment an Environmental Assessment (EA) for a proposal by NorthWestern Energy to build a natural gas transmission loop south of US Highway 3-7 miles southwest of East Glacier, Montana, beginning July 1, 2006. Approximately 2.6 miles of the pipeline will be on the Lewis and Clark National Forest and 0.2 miles will be on private land. The EA is available on the Lewis and Clark National Forest internet web site at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/lewisclark/>.

The proposed 12-inch pipeline will be installed adjacent to an existing 8-inch natural gas transmission line, which has reached capacity because of population growth in the Kalispell and Flathead Valley areas. The 8-inch line, built in 1962, will remain in operation. NorthWestern Energy proposes to use an existing, permitted right-of-way. A temporary 50-foot wide working right-of-way will be needed to install part of the new line, with a 30-foot maintenance right-of-way after construction. Also, approximately 1.9 miles of access road will need to be constructed. Following completion of the project, the new road will be removed and restored to original contours and condition. NorthWestern Energy will implement erosion control and noxious weed prevention measures and will comply with all environmental mitigation requirements.

The public may send written comments on the proposal to LCNF Supervisor Lesley W. Thompson, Bison Creek Loop Natural Gas Pipeline Project, PO Box 869, Great Falls, MT 59403. Electronic comments may be submitted to comments-northern-lewisclark@fs.fed.us. E-mail subject line must contain the name of the project (Bison Creek Loop Natural Gas Pipeline). Comments must be postmarked by March 27, 2006.

For more information on the environmental analysis, call forest NEPA coordinator, Jennifer Woods, (406) 791-7765.

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