

**DECISION NOTICE AND
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
APS GRAY WOLF/WASTE MANAGEMENT 12 KV POWER LINE
U.S. FOREST SERVICE
GRAY WOLF LANDFILL SITE
PRESCOTT NATIONAL FOREST
YAVAPAI COUNTY, ARIZONA**

With this Decision Notice, the Prescott National Forest will authorize an amendment to Arizona Public Service's (APS) existing Master Special Use Permit so that they may construct, operate, and maintain a 6.43-mile-long underground 12 kilovolt (kV) distribution line to service Waste Management of Arizona, Inc.'s Gray Wolf Regional Landfill facility. This decision is based on the Responsible Official's review of the need for the project, the environmental analysis (attached), and other factors. The Responsible Official also determines whether the environmental impacts are significant and so would warrant preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

The significance of environmental impacts must be considered in terms of context and intensity. This means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human and national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. In the case of a site-specific action, significance usually depends upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Intensity refers to the severity or degree of impact. (40 CFR 1508.27)

CONTEXT

The area that would be directly affected by the powerline would primarily be the 20-foot wide corridor along the 6.43 linear miles of powerline, for a total of approximately 16.5 acres of disturbance. The powerline would be visible over a somewhat larger area from State Route 169. This is an area where evidence of development is common and other powerlines are present.

INTENSITY

The intensity of effects was considered in terms of the following:

1. **Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that, on balance, the effect will be beneficial.**
Consideration of the intensity of environmental effects is not biased by beneficial effects

of the action. The project will have beneficial effects and only minor, if any, adverse effects.

2. **The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.** There will be no significant effects on public health and safety because construction, operation, and maintenance activities would comply with all safety standards and practices. (See EA page 17)
3. **Unique characteristics of the geographic area, such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.** There will be no significant effects on unique characteristics of the area, because there are no unique characteristics of the project area. (See EA page 9)
4. **The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial. There is no known credible scientific controversy over the impacts of the proposed action. This type of project is common throughout the United States and the impacts are well known.
5. **The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.** The Agency has considerable experience with actions like the one proposed. The analysis shows the effects are not uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risk.
6. **The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.** The action sets no precedents. It is not a decision in principle about a future consideration. The power line would allow the Gray Wolf facility to expand, but there are no known plans currently for such expansion. If the facility were to occur, it is highly unlikely that it would result in significant effects.
7. **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.** The cumulative impacts are not significant. The action is not related to any other actions, though it would allow the Gray Wolf facility to expand, if needed, in the future. Such expansion would not be expected to have significant impacts. (See EA pages 8-17)
8. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of**

Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. The action will have no significant adverse effect on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, because there are no such sites or features in the project area. The action will also not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources because there are no such sites or features in the project area (See EA page 15-16)

9. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.** The action will not adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, because there are no threatened or endangered species nor their critical habitat. The area is within the northernmost reaches of potential habitat for Morafka's desert tortoise, a candidate species, but no evidence of tortoises was discovered and it is unlikely that any of these animals exist within the project area. (See EA pages 12-14)
10. **Whether the action threatens to violate Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.** The action will comply with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. Applicable laws and regulations were considered in the EA (see EA pages 8, 12, 13, and 17). The action is consistent with the Prescott National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan. (See EA page 5)

After considering the effects of the actions analyzed, in terms of context and intensity, I have determined that these actions will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

DECISION

The Gray Wolf Regional Landfill facility is not on the power grid and solar panels and temporary generators they currently use do not reliably provide enough power generation to operate the facility adequately or allow for growth of the electrical infrastructure necessary for landfill and hauling operations. The proposed 12kV distribution line would provide a more reliable consistent power source to meet current and future power needs of this facility which serves Yavapai County. This action responds to the goals and objectives outlined in the PNF Land and Resource Management Plan and Forest Service policies for special use authorizations.

Based upon my review of the APS Gray Wolf/Waste Management 12 kV Power Line project Environmental Assessment (EA), I have decided to approve the permit for the construction and maintenance of the line.

DECISION RATIONALE

The APS Gray Wolf/Waste Management 12 kV Power Line EA documents the environmental analysis and conclusions upon which this decision is based.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This action was originally listed as a proposal on the Prescott National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions in October of 2011 and updated periodically during the analysis. On December 19, 2011, a scoping packet was sent to six agencies or government organizations and 24 individuals/private entities. Residents along SR169 from Old Cherry Road to the Gray Wolf Landfill were included on this mailing list. The scoping packet contained a letter detailing the project, a map, and a comment form. The scoping letter and map were also posted on the PNF website.

On May 31, 2012, a notice of the 30-day opportunity to comment was published in the Prescott *Daily Courier*. There were no comments submitted during that comment period. A list of agencies, organizations, and individuals contacted or consulted is located on page 18 of the EA.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

This decision is consistent with the Prescott National Forest Land Management Plan. The project was designed in conformance with land management plan direction related to the issuance of special use permits for utilities.

The Purpose and Need for the project and the Environmental Assessment were considered. I determined these actions will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment, and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will not be prepared.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW (APPEAL) OPPORTUNITIES

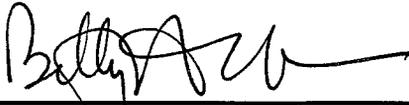
Because no non-supportive comments were received during the 30-day comment period, this decision is not subject to administrative appeal.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

Because this decision is not subject to administrative appeal, implementation can begin immediately.

CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: Rich Della Porta at 28-443-8013, or by email to rdellaporta@fs.fed.us.



7/3/12

Betty Mathews,

Date

Forest Supervisor,

Prescott National Forest

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