Decision Notice

Town of Mountain Village Waterline Extension Project

USDA Forest Service

Norwood Ranger District, Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests

San Miguel County, Colorado

Introduction

The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Town of Mountain Village (TMV) Water Line Extension Project proposal documents the analysis of one alternative (proposed action) to authorize the proposed water line extension project by issuing a construction permit and amending the existing special use permit (SUP). My decision is based on the results and findings of the EA, a review of resource specialist reports, a review of the responses to public comments, and a review of the 1991 Revision of the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests (Forest Plan), and a review of all pertinent laws, regulations and policy.

The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) documents and supports the determination that my decision will not result in a significant impact on the human or natural environment and therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required.

Decision

I have decided to authorize activities described in the EA. My decision incorporates design features identified in the EA and included here.

My decision will authorize the following activities located in Section 3 T. 42N, R. 9W, Sec. 10 and 11 of the NMPM in San Miguel County, Colorado. See Map 1 of the EA for the project area map:

1. Constructing approximately 10,190 linear feet (LF) of a waterline within a 50-foot wide permit area on National Forest Service (NFS) lands. This waterline will connect two existing water tanks (the San Joaquin and Wapiti tanks) which are part of the existing public water system. The remainder of the waterline (approximately 3,720 LF) would be on land owned by TMV or TSG Ski & Golf, LLC (TSG). An agreement exists between TSG and TMV to allow TMV to use land owned by TSG.
2. Installing one micro-hydro generator directly adjacent to the San Joaquin tank on NFS lands to produce electricity. The generator is exempt under FERC regulations.
3. Installing necessary connectors and valves to connect the waterline to the existing water tanks and the micro-hydro generators.
4. Amend TMV's special-use permit to document the items listed above.

Construction Period

Construction is planned between April and October, 2015. The waterline will be constructed using traditional trenching or boring techniques. Boring techniques may be used in the vicinity of Lift 5 and the Prospect Creek crossing to avoid wetlands. Rock hammering or blasting may be needed in certain, limited areas. Ground disturbance associated with the installation will be limited to the 50-foot permit area. All activities associated with this project will employ best management practices and other design criteria designed to protect National Forest resources. These measures are included as part of the proposed action and can be found in the Operating Plan.

Rationale for Decision

My decision, as stated in Chapter 1 of the EA, to authorize the TMV Water Line Extension Project is needed to provide better water flow for domestic and fire protection purposes. This project will result in improved water transmission efficiencies and power generation. Implementation of my decision can be achieved in an environmentally responsible and safe manner.

Public Involvement

This project was first listed in the GMUG Schedule of Proposed Actions on August 27, 2014. The proposal was provided to the public and other agencies for comment during the formal public comment period from August 27, 2014 to September 26, 2014. Two written comments were received on the proposed project from TSG and citizen, Romey Glenn. TSG supports the project and requested coordination and use of BMPs so the project does not interfere with their activities, including operations and maintenance activities. The letter from Romey Glenn raised concerns generally outside the scope of this project and this Environmental Assessment. The concerns were related to the presence of development in the project area.

Issues

Based on comments from the public, local governments and the USFS, no key issues were identified that would lead to the development of alternatives. Non-key issues that were analyzed in detail but did not lead to a modification of the proposed action are:

- The need to coordinate the construction of the project so as to not interfere with other activities in the ski area including recreation, special events, and planned construction and maintenance activities.
- The need to implement BMPs for erosion and sediment control.

Project Implementation

This decision was subject to the predecisional administrative review process pursuant to 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B. No objections were filed during the objection period. This decision may be implemented immediately upon signing of the Decision Notice.

Further Information

For further information on this decision, contact Dee Closson, US Forest Service, PO BOX 388, 1150 Forest Street, Norwood, CO 81423, phone (970) 327-4341.

April 28 2015
Date

Scott G. Armentrout
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Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre
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