

DECISION NOTICE
AND
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
QUESTAR MAIN LINE 3 WEBER CANYON REPLACEMENT PROJECT

USDA Forest Service
Salt Lake Ranger District, Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest
Davis and Morgan Counties, Utah

INTRODUCTION

This document details my decision regarding a proposal from Questar Pipeline (Questar) to replace approximately 3.26 miles of existing natural gas pipeline located within a utility right-of-way that crosses National Forest System land in Weber Canyon, Davis and Morgan counties, Utah (see Figure 1). In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and this agency's regulations on its implementation, the potential environmental impacts of this proposal were assessed and documented in an Environmental Assessment (EA) released concurrent with this decision. The EA is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND

Questar was granted a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity under Section 7(c) of the Natural Gas Act by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in the early 1960s to construct, operate, and maintain the Main Line 3 pipeline. The Main Line 3 pipeline exists within a ROW administered by the Forest Service and authorized under Forest Service authorization SLC401210. The entire Main Line 3 pipeline extends approximately 37.6 miles across private, county, state, and federal land from Questar's Coalville Station to Questar's Sunset Gate Station. Main Line 3 supplies natural gas to the Wasatch Front of northern Utah.

The FERC allows for replacement activities under Subpart F of 18 CFR § 157.208, or pursuant to the authority of 18 CFR §284.3(c), under authority of a blanket certificate holder. Replacement activities are subject to certain cost and environmental requirements. If project costs and environmental requirements are met, the FERC allows a pipeline company to proceed automatically. If costs for the replacement activities exceed the automatic project cost limits, then a prior-notice filing is required to be submitted to the FERC. Based on Main Line 3 project cost estimates, Questar would need to file a prior notice application with the FERC. In addition, Questar must obtain the requisite environmental clearances.

DECISION

My decision is to authorize the Proposed Action, which consists of construction and reclamation activities associated with the replacement of 3.26 miles of 16-inch natural gas pipeline within an existing utility ROW, as detailed in section 2.3.1 of the EA.

RATIONAL

My decision is based on the analysis in the EA and supporting project record, which documents a thorough review of relevant information and on how the Proposed Action best met the purpose and need for action and addressed the main environmental issues identified through scoping and interdisciplinary review.

This decision to authorize the Proposed Action will allow Questar to continue providing a safe supply of natural gas to customers along the Wasatch Fronts and improve their operational reliability. Alternative means of transporting the needed supply of natural gas to the Wasatch Front other than continuing to use the existing ROW are not economically or environmentally viable. Adverse public comment was not received during the scoping period. I believe that my decision to authorize the Proposed Action and associated mitigation is consistent with and serves to implement the goals and objectives outlined in the Forest Plan.

REQUIRED MITIGATION

In addition to project design features and best management practices, Questar has incorporated the following mitigation measures into the Proposed Action to ensure the potential for impacts to the environment is minimized or avoided. Questar must also notify the Forest Service at least 45 days prior to implementation to schedule a preconstruction meeting.

Vegetation Resources

- Reclamation practices established in the Proposed Action will be implemented. Soils will be stabilized through use of erosion control mats and other control measures, and reseeded will use certified USDA Seed Lab seed mixes and at Forest Service-approved amounts. Reclamation will occur immediately following construction. Reclamation success will be monitored and reported to the Forest Service annually for a minimum of three years.
- A weed management plan, included as part of the Proposed Action (Appendix A, EA), will be implemented to control the spread of existing weeds and prevent new infestations. Questar will work with the Forest Service, Davis and Morgan Counties and other permit holders on a long term monitoring, inventory and treatment program for the treatment of noxious weeds within the ROW for the life of the permit.

Geology and Soils Resources

- A geotechnical inspector will be on-site throughout project activities. Temporary retaining walls will be placed within ROW where workspace is narrow and in areas of potential instability. Unstable features above ROW will be dislodged prior to pipeline replacement activities.
- Roughing of seed bed prior to seeding will reduce compaction and enhance revegetation efforts.
- Temporary and permanent erosion control structures will be placed to prevent soil loss. Temporary retaining walls and erosion controls such as waddles made of synthetic materials and silt fences will be used during construction and maintained through successful revegetation of disturbed areas. Erosion control mats will be placed on disturbed areas following seeding.

Water Resources

- The project will operate under conditions of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Permit (SWPPP). The project will be authorized by a Utah Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (UPDES) General Permit.
- Construction Best Management Practices and erosion controls will be used to minimize the potential for sediment transport.
- Jurisdictional water ways will be protected by additional stipulations provided by the USACE in a PCN-NWP-12.

Fish and Wildlife

- A survey for nesting migratory birds will be conducted within two weeks of the commencement of construction activities. The survey area will include the construction corridor and access roads including a 100-foot buffer on each side, and the staging areas and a 300-foot buffer on each side.

A survey for nesting raptors within 0.5 mile of the project area will also be conducted. If active nests are found, an appropriate disturbance-free buffer would be established and a biological monitor would be placed to watch for signs of disturbance. Further coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would occur as needed. The ROW would be reclaimed immediately following pipeline replacement.

- Implementation of reclamation activities and the weed management plan will mitigate disturbance and return the ROW to an improved condition from pre-construction over the long-term due to planned weed control.
- BMPs and erosion controls will be implemented during and after construction to prevent impacts to aquatic systems.

Air Quality

- Fugitive dust will be controlled under Questar's Fugitive Dust Control Plan.

Public Health and Safety

- A geotechnical inspector will be on-site throughout construction activities. Temporary retaining walls will be placed within the project ROW where workspace is narrow and in areas of potential instability. Unstable features above project ROW will be identified and dislodged prior to pipeline replacement activities.
- Questar will follow directives provided by Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) that will be based on a project-specific traffic control plan. The UDOT directives will include the closure of one I-84 eastbound lane for approximately 0.5-mile through the duration of construction.
- Questar will submit engineering plans (that meet AREMA standards) to Union Pacific Railroad for review and approval prior to construction. Questar would meet safety requirements of Union Pacific Railroad following the review.
- The project Fire Prevention and Control Plan will be implemented at all times during the project to prevent or suppress accidental fires.
- Local emergency response agencies would be contacted prior to shut-down and clearing of existing pipeline. Following installation of replacement pipeline, hydrostatic testing would ensure pipe is sealed and can withstand required pressure of natural gas.
- Only crews trained in the handling of asbestos would perform the pipeline removal. These pipe joints would be wrapped in plastic and loaded onto trailers for hauling to a certified disposal site. All pipeline coating would be bagged and removed from the project ROW. All permits and state ordinances required for the handling of this material would be strictly adhered to.
- Other construction wastes (e.g. garbage) generated at the site would be handled following BMPs directing the proper storage, clean-up, and timely removal from the project site.

Scenic Resources

- Erosion controls and reclamation will be concurrent with construction activities to prevent gully formation and mass wasting events. The existing bench contour will be maintained.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

No Action Alternative

Analysis of the No Action alternative is necessary to provide an accurate contrast with the Proposed Action. Under the No Action alternative, the Main Line 3 pipeline would not be replaced and no ground disturbing activities would occur. Customers along the Wasatch Front rely on natural gas, primarily for heating homes in the winter. Main Line 3 is a primary supplier of natural gas for the Ogden region, but the pipeline is nearly 50 years old and is scheduled for replacement in accordance with standard system

maintenance practices. If this pipeline was not replaced, this critical peak demand supply would be at continually increasing risk for safety and reliability concerns. Should this source be interrupted during the peak demand months, a significant loss of natural gas service would be experienced in this region.

No other alternatives requiring in-depth analysis were suggested through interdisciplinary review and scoping on this Proposed Action or identified through the initial analysis of environmental effects.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

In accordance with Forest Service notice and appeal regulations (36 CFR 215.5), the UWCNF prepared a Notice of Proposed Action addressing implementation of the Questar Main Line 3 Weber Canyon Replacement Project and providing instructions for submitting comments. On March 29, 2013, the notice which summarized the Proposed Action and invited comments regarding the scope of this EA was electronically mailed and/or delivered via U.S. mail to 47 agencies, organizations, and individuals on the project-specific mailing list. The notice was also posted on the UWCNF website and a legal notice was published in the Salt Lake Tribune on March 29, 2013, initiating the 30-day comment period. An information workshop/open house was held April 17, 2013, at the Weber County Library.

The 30-day scoping period closed on April 27, 2013. One comment was received and provided information regarding potential crossings on their private land and did not provide any adverse comments. The scoping notice is available at the SLRD Office in Salt Lake City, Utah in the project record.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

This Finding of No Significant Impact incorporates by reference the project record, including specialists' reports and the Biological Evaluation and Biological Assessment. After carefully considering the environmental effects described in the EA, I have determined that my decision will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment considering the context and intensity of impacts (40 CFR 1508.27). Thus, an environmental impact will not be prepared on this action. I base my finding on the following:

1. The beneficial effects of the action do not bias my finding of no significant environmental effects.
2. There will be no significant effects on archaeological, cultural, and historic resources. Project elements have been designed to avoid or minimize potential impacts on vegetation, soils and geology, water, fish and wildlife, air, public health and safety, and scenic resources.
3. There will be no significant effects on unique characteristics of the area. No unique characteristics were identified during project analysis.
4. The effects on the quality of the human environment are not highly controversial. There is no known scientific controversy over the impacts of this project.
5. The environmental analysis shows the effects are not uncertain (EA Chapter 3) and do not involve unique or unknown risk.
6. The decision will not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects.
7. The cumulative impacts are not significant (EA Chapter 3).
8. The decision will not have significant adverse effects on districts, sites, highway, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historical Places. This action will not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources (EA section 3.8).
9. The decision will not adversely affect threatened or endangered species or habitats determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (EA sections 3.4 and 3.7 as well as the Biological Assessment prepared for this project).
10. The decision will not violate federal, state, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

My decision to authorize the Proposed Action is consistent with the intent of the Forest Plan. The project was designed in conformance with land and resource management plan standards and incorporates appropriate land use and resource management plan guidelines. The project area lies within the Weber Canyon utility corridor, a one-mile wide designated special use utility corridor that allows for underground, overhead and surface utility placement.

Findings related to other laws and regulations are summarized below:

Clean Water Act of December 27, 1977 – My decision will not affect the existing high quality water flowing through the area.

Executive Order 11990 of May 24, 1977 – My decision will have no adverse effects to wetlands and is therefore in compliance with E.O. 11990.

Executive Order 11988 of May 24, 1977 – My decision will have no adverse effects to floodplains.

Endangered Species Act of December 28, 1973 – Based on information disclosed in the Biological Assessment it has been determined that this decision will have no adverse effects to populations of endangered or threatened species of fish, wildlife and plants.

Executive Order 13186 of January 10, 2001 – My decision is in compliance with this Executive Order for the Conservation of Migratory Birds.

Executive Order 13112 of February 3, 1999 – This decision incorporates the implementation of a weed management plan. My decision will therefore not increase the spread of invasive plant species.

American Antiquities Act of 1906 and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 – There would be no effects to any historic properties relative to this decision.

Prime Farmland, Rangeland and Forest Land (Secretary of Agriculture Memorandum 1827) – There is no prime farmland or grazing allotments affected by the project.

Civil Rights Act of July 2, 1964 – There would be no adverse effects to groups or individuals protected under the federal Civil Rights Act.

Executive Order 12898 of February 16, 1994 “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice on Minority Populations and Low-income Populations” – No minorities or low-income populations were identified during public involvement activities that would be affected by this decision.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL

The only comment received during the scoping period on the project provided information regarding potential crossings on private land and did not contain any adverse comments. The Responsible Official (Forest Supervisor), based on the discussions above under public involvement, has determined that this decision is not subject to appeal based on 36 CFR 215.12(e)(1).

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

Implementation of the decision may begin once all mitigation measures are met.

CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact Steve Scheid, Salt Lake Ranger District, 6944 S. 300 E., Salt Lake City, UT 84121, 801-733-2-689, or sscheid@fs.fed.us.



DAVID C. WHITTEKIEND
Forest Supervisor

9/25/13

Date

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FIGURE 1 - PROJECT MAP

