



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Kootenai National
Forest

31374 US Highway 2
Libby, MT 59923



Montana Department of
Environmental Quality

PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

File Code: 1950
February 25, 2009

Dear Interested Party,

The Kootenai National Forest (KNF) and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) have completed the Montanore Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS). The Montanore Project is a proposed copper and silver underground mine located about 18 miles south of Libby near the Cabinet Mountains of northwestern Montana. Either a Summary or the full Draft EIS is enclosed for your review and comment. Three mine alternatives and a No Action Alternative (No Mine) and four transmission line alternatives and a No Action Alternative (no transmission line) are analyzed in detail.

The KNF and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) will use this information to determine whether to issue approvals necessary for construction and operation of the Montanore Project. The KNF's preferred mine alternative is Alternative 4, Agency Mitigated Little Cherry Creek Impoundment Alternative, provided it could be permitted by the Corps. The mine is currently covered by an existing state operating permit. Therefore, the DEQ did not identify a preferred mine alternative. The DEQ will use this information to determine whether to revise the existing state operating permit for the mine and to authorize construction of the transmission line. The DEQ selected Alternative D, Miller Creek Transmission Line Alternative as the preferred transmission line alternative. Public acceptance of a transmission line is one criterion used to locate a transmission line. Thus, identification of Alternative D is tentative, pending public comment. The Bonneville Power Administration will use the information to decide whether to build a new substation and loop line, and to provide power to its customer, Flathead Electric Cooperative, which would provide power to the mine.

Your comments will be invaluable to the agencies as they prepare the Final EIS and Record of Decision. Comments must be postmarked or received 90 days from the date the Notice of Availability of the DEIS is published in the Federal Register. The Notice of Availability will be published on February 27, 2009 and the 90-day comment period will end on May 28, 2009.

Written comment can be submitted to Bobbie Lacklen, Kootenai National Forest, 31374 U.S. 2 West, Libby, MT 59923-3022, or by email to: r1_montanore@fs.fed.us, or to DEQ at: deqmontanoreEIS@mt.gov. Comments can also be faxed to (406) 283-7709, or hand-delivered to either the KNF or the DEQ between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

As outlined in 36 CFR 215.13, only those who submit timely comments will be accepted by the Forest Service as appellants following the release of the Montanore Project Final EIS and Record of Decision. Comments must be specific to the proposed activities and area being analyzed. Comments should include: (1) name, address, telephone number, and organization represented, if any; (2) title of the document on which the comment is being submitted; (3) specific facts and supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider; and (4) signatures.



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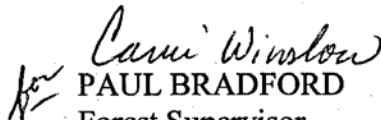
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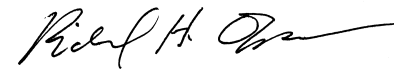


All comments become part of the public record associated with this project, and are available for public review, along with the name(s) of the commenter(s). Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR 215.12.

Thank you for taking time to be involved with the Montanore Project. For more information or to request a copy of the Draft EIS, please contact one of the Project Coordinators, Bobbie Lacklen, 406-283-7681, or Bonnie Lovelace, MT DEQ, PO Box 200901, Helena MT 59620, by phone at 406-444-1760 or by email at blovelace2@mt.gov.

Sincerely,


PAUL BRADFORD
Forest Supervisor


RICHARD H. OPPER
Director, DEQ

enclosure