



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
September 19, 2011

Dear Interested Party,

The Kootenai National Forest (KNF) and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) have issued the Montanore Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS). 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 SDEIS is enclosed for your review and comment.

The KNF and the DEQ issued a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Montanore Project on February 27, 2009 for public comment. In response to public comment, the agencies revised the agencies' mine alternatives (Alternatives 3 and 4) and transmission line alignments (Alternatives C, D, and E). Most of the changes to the mine alternatives addressed issues associated with water quality. The agencies' proposed monitoring and mitigation plans (Appendix C) also were revised. The transmission line alignments were modified primarily to avoid effects on private land. The SDEIS contains a discussion of only those resources affected by a change in the transmission line alignments, or where additional analysis was completed. Public comment is solicited on these changes. To avoid confusion between the transmission line alignments presented in the Draft EIS and those presented in the SDEIS, the agencies designated the revised transmission line alternatives as Alternatives C-R, D-R, and E-R.

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 3, Agency Mitigated Poorman Impoundment Alternative. 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 agencies selected Alternative D-R, 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-R 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. Flathead Electric Cooperative would be the retail supplier of 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 45 days from the date the Notice of Availability of the SDEIS is published in the *Federal Register*. The Notice of Availability will be published on or about September 23, 2011.

Written comment can be submitted to Lynn Hagarty, Kootenai National Forest, 31374 U.S. Hwy 2, 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.

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.

A public meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 25, 2011 to allow the public to ask resource specialists questions and to obtain comment on the SDEIS for the Montanore Project. The meeting will be held in the Ponderosa Room at the Libby City Hall, 952 E. Spruce St., Libby, MT. The meeting will begin at 5:00 p.m. with an open house, followed by a public hearing at 6:30 p.m.

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, Lynn Hagarty, 406-283-7642, 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
KNF Supervisor



RICHARD H. OPPER
Director, DEQ

Encl.