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File Code: 1950  
December 15, 2015

Dear Interested Party,

The Kootenai National Forest (KNF) and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) have issued a Joint Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) for the Montanore Project, a proposed copper and silver underground mine located about 18 miles south of Libby near the Cabinet Mountains of northwestern Montana. A CD of the Joint Final EIS and appendices is enclosed. If you requested a hard copy it will be sent to you within approximately two weeks. The document can be downloaded from the Forest Service's web page (<http://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/kootenai/landmanagement/projects>) or the DEQ's web page (<http://deq.mt.gov/eis.mcp>). The document will be available to view at the KNF Supervisor's office in Libby, Montana (MT), the DEQ office in Helena, MT, the Mansfield Library (the University of Montana), and local libraries in Libby, Heron, and Thompson Falls, MT, and Sandpoint and Clark Fork, Idaho.

The KNF and DEQ issued a Draft EIS for the Montanore Project on February 27, 2009, for public comment. In response to public comment, the agencies revised the mine alternatives (Alternatives 3 and 4) and transmission line alignments (Alternatives C, D, and E) and issued a Supplemental Draft EIS on October 7, 2011. On April 1, 2015, the KNF issued a Final EIS and a Draft Record of Decision (ROD) to provide for a pre-decisional objection process in compliance with 36 CFR 218. The Joint Final EIS includes responses to comments on the Draft EIS and Supplemental Draft EIS and incorporates changes based on those responses. The Joint Final EIS also includes revisions made as part of the Forest Service objection process. The document describes the Proposed Action and a number of alternatives to the Proposed Action. All action alternatives meet the purpose and need for the project (summarized in Section 1.2.3 of the Joint Final EIS). The document also describes the potentially affected environment and discloses the potential environmental consequences of implementing the Proposed Action or alternatives to the Proposed Action.

The KNF has identified Mine Alternative 3 (the Agency Mitigated Poorman Impoundment Alternative) and Transmission Line Alternative D-R (the Miller Creek Transmission Line Alternative) as its preferred alternatives in the Joint Final EIS. The KNF will set forth its final decision and rationale in its ROD. Pursuant to 40 CFR 1506.10, the KNF will issue its ROD no less than 30 days from the publication of the Notice of Availability of this Joint Final EIS in the Federal Register. Notice of the decision will be published in *The Missoulian* (Missoula, Montana), the paper of record for the KNF.

DEQ has identified Mine Alternative 3 and Transmission Line Alternative D-R as its preferred alternatives in the Joint Final EIS. DEQ will set forth its final decision and rationale in its ROD. Pursuant to ARM 17.4.620, DEQ may issue its ROD no less than 15 days from the transmittal of this Joint Final EIS to the public, the Environmental Quality Council, and the office of the Governor. DEQ has decided to issue its ROD no sooner than January 29, 2016. Notice of DEQ's

mine and transmission line decisions will be posted on DEQ's website and included in the KNF's notice of its decision in *The Missoulian*.

Postcards will be sent notifying all those who received the Joint Final EIS that the agencies' RODs are available on the agencies' websites. Thank you for taking time to be involved with the Montanore Project. For more information, please contact one of the Project Coordinators: Lynn Hagarty, Kootenai National Forest, 31374 US 2, Libby, MT 59923-3022, 406-293-6211; or Craig Jones, Director's Office, DEQ, 1520 East Sixth Avenue, Helena, MT 59620-0901, 406-444-0514.

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Savage  
Forest Supervisor  
Kootenai National Forest



Tom Livers  
Director  
Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Encl.: CD: Joint Final EIS