



Forest
Service

Monongahela National Forest

200 Sycamore Street
Elkins, WV 26241
304-636-1800

File Code: 1920/2720

Date: January 14, 2015

Route To:

Subject: Scoping for Atlantic Coast Pipeline Site Survey and Testing

To: Interested Parties

Atlantic Coast Pipeline, LLC has applied for a special use permit to conduct site survey and testing on the Monongahela National Forest. These surveys would occur along a 17.1 mile long segment of their proposed pipeline which would cross the Monongahela National Forest in Randolph and Pocahontas Counties.

At this time we are seeking comments specifically related to the site survey and testing activities identified in their application to decide whether to issue a permit for these activities.

BACKGROUND

Atlantic Coast Pipeline, LLC is a joint venture comprised of subsidiaries of Dominion Resources, Duke Energy, Piedmont Natural Gas, and AGL Resources that is proposing to construct and operate approximately 551 miles of a natural gas transmission pipeline referred to as the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP). If the project is approved, Dominion Transmission, Inc. (Dominion) is the contractor who would build and operate ACP on behalf of the joint venture. The proposed pipeline is intended to deliver natural gas from supply areas in West Virginia to Virginia and North Carolina.

Atlantic Coast Pipeline, LLC has pre-filed (Docket #PF15-6) with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) under Section 7(c) of the Natural Gas Act. FERC will be the lead agency and will conduct an in-depth environmental analysis, with many opportunities for public comment, prior to deciding on the need for the pipeline. If FERC would determine the pipeline is needed, the Forest Service would make a separate determination whether to issue a right-of-way permit to construct, operate, and maintain a natural gas pipeline on the Monongahela National Forest.

PROJECT LOCATION

The Atlantic Coast Pipeline site survey and testing project area in the Monongahela is approximately 2,000 feet wide by 17.1 miles long, being 4,145 +/- acres on the Greenbrier Ranger District in Randolph and Pocahontas Counties. This area crosses Cheat Mountain. Maps and project information may be viewed under the Atlantic Coast Pipeline site on the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest webpage at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/gwj>. (Although this scoping letter is only for the Monongahela portion of site survey and testing work proposed by Atlantic Coast Pipeline, LLC, the project overall traverses both the Monongahela and the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. In order to keep all relevant information for the entire pipeline proposal, a single web site is being used.)



PROPOSED ACTION

Dominion Resources, as a subsidiary of Atlantic Coast Pipeline, LLC, is seeking a 12-month planning permit under the Forest Service's Special Use Authorization regulations (36 CFR§ 251, Subpart B) for the purpose of conducting activities such as field routing; and environmental, cultural resource, and civil surveys along a 300-foot-wide survey corridor within a 2,000-foot-wide study corridor where the proposed pipeline route crosses the Monongahela National Forest (see enclosed map for general location.) The surveys would be conducted by Dominion and its consultants Natural Resource Group, LLC and GAI Consultants Inc.

The project area consists of lands within three Management Prescriptions (MP) identified in the Monongahela National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (2006 as revised in 2011.)

MP 3.0 - Vegetation Diversity Emphasis

MP 4.1 – Spruce and Spruce-Hardwood Ecosystem Management Emphasis

MP 6.1 – Wildlife Habitat Emphasis

The Forest Plan allows the survey activities identified below within these management areas. All would be pedestrian surveys.

Routing Survey – This would be a reconnaissance survey to address pipeline engineering requirements; provide a route upon which the company believes a pipeline can be safely constructed; and/or avoid sensitive resources within the 2,000-foot-wide study corridor. Minor amounts of brush could be removed with hand tools in order to navigate the route. GPS readings, biodegradable survey ribbon, and survey stakes (to be removed after all of the surveys are completed) would be used to identify the proposed centerline for the other survey crews.

Environmental Survey - This would include a wetland and waterbody delineation survey using visual observations of vegetation composition, hydrology, and soil samples at selected locations within 300 feet of the routed centerline. GPS readings and biodegradable ribbon would mark wetland perimeters and high water marks of water bodies. Identification of potential suitable habitat for sensitive species, including federally listed threatened and endangered species, would be recorded with GPS readings. Invasive plant species would also be documented. No flora or fauna would be collected.

Cultural Resources Survey – This would be a reconnaissance and shovel testing survey within 300 feet of the routed centerline using field methodology, data recording, and documentation in compliance with all state and federal guidelines for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Civil Survey – This would be a recording of GPS readings of the proposed centerline and other features along the route within 300 feet of the centerline. Minor amounts of brush could be removed using hand tools to provide line of sight and a travel path for survey equipment. Brush cutting would be limited to saplings or limbs less than 2 inches in diameter. PK nails, biodegradable flagging, and plastic pin flags would be used as needed, then removed.

Access for the Surveys – No vehicles would be used except to access the corridor using public and existing Forest Roads.

NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION

These surveys are collectively necessary to determine the feasibility of the of the proposed route and to collect environmental and cultural resources data to aid the Forest Service in making future decisions on whether or not to allow the construction and operation of the proposed natural gas transmission line on the Monongahela National Forest. If construction is ultimately allowed, the survey information will also inform the Forest Service of specific locations to avoid or where impacts to sensitive resources must be reduced.

DECISION TO BE MADE

The Forest Supervisor is the responsible official who will decide whether to issue a temporary (one year or less) special use permit to allow the identified survey activities to occur within the identified study and survey corridors on National Forest System lands within the Monongahela National Forest.

A decision to authorize or deny the proposed special use is expected to be completed by spring of 2015. If authorized, implementation would begin shortly after the decision.

When the Decision Memo is available a formal public notice will be given in the form of a legal notice, which will be published in both *The Pocahontas Times*, and *The Elkins Inter-Mountain*. Individuals or organizations who previously provided comments on this project or who indicated that they would like additional information on this project will also be notified.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

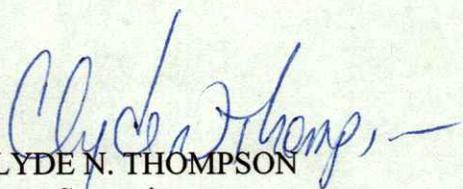
We welcome comments in regards to this request for a temporary (one year or less) site survey and testing special use permit. Allowing these survey activities does not mean that we are allowing the construction of a pipeline across the Monongahela National Forest. FERC is the lead agency who will prepare the environmental analysis for possible construction of the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline and who will provide additional opportunities to comment in the coming months. The Forest Service is preparing a categorical exclusion (CE) document for the environmental analysis for the temporary survey and site testing permit, in accordance with regulations 36 CFR § 220.6(e)(8), subject to public involvement and the determination that no extraordinary circumstances exist for these survey activities.

Please provide your comments by February 13, 2015. There are several options for providing comments. Hand-delivered comments must be received within our normal business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Comments may be faxed to our office at 304-637-0582 with the subject line at Atlantic Coast Pipeline Survey Permit Comments. Comments may be mailed to Monongahela National Forest, Attn: Atlantic Coast Pipeline Survey Permit Comments, 200 Sycamore Street, Elkins, WV 26241.

Comments may also be mailed electronically to our office at: comments-eastern-monongahela-greenbrier@fs.fed.us Please include the project name (Atlantic Coast Pipeline Survey Permit Comments) in the subject line of the e-mail. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format

such as an e-mail message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), Portable Document Format (pdf), or Word (.doc) – compatible document.

I look forward to your comments and participation in the management of the Monongahela National Forest.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Clyde N. Thompson" with a horizontal line extending to the right.

CLYDE N. THOMPSON
Forest Supervisor
Enclosure



Dominion

Atlantic Coast Pipeline Project

Monongahela National Forest

-  Study Corridor
-  Monongahela National Forest
-  Sheet Index
-  State Boundary
-  County Boundary



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This information is for informational purposes only.