



Forest Service

George Washington &
Jefferson National Forests
5162 Valleypointe Pkwy.
Roanoke, VA 24019
(540) 265-5100

www.fs.usda.gov/gwj/



News Release

Media Contact: JoBeth Brown (540) 265-5100
jobethbrown@fs.fed.us

Forest Service Seeks Comments on Authorizing Surveys for the Proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline on the Jefferson National Forest

(January 21, 2015) Roanoke, VA-- The Forest Service is seeking comments on whether to allow surveys on a 2-mile segment of the Jefferson National Forest for the proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline in Giles and Montgomery counties, Virginia, and Monroe County, West Virginia. Proposed environmental surveys include surveying wetlands, water, soil, and suitable habitat for sensitive species, including federally listed threatened and endangered plants and animals. Surveys will also record and document cultural resources and invasive species. The Forest Service will use public comments and an environmental review to decide whether to issue a permit for the environmental and cultural resource surveys on the Jefferson National Forest. Comments are being accepted through Friday, February 13, 2015.

“The information gathered from these surveys are necessary to make future decisions on whether or not to allow the construction and operation of the proposed pipeline on the Jefferson National Forest,” states Forest Supervisor Tom Speaks. “If allowed, the survey information will inform us where to avoid or reduce the impacts to sensitive resources.”

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Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC is currently surveying private and public land to determine routing feasibility, and identify environmental and cultural resources along the proposed 286-mile route. If the results of the private and public land surveys determine that the proposed route is feasible, then the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) will conduct an in-depth environmental analysis, with many opportunities for public comments, prior to deciding on the need for the pipeline.

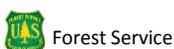
“It is important to remember that allowing these survey activities does not mean we are allowing the construction of a pipeline,” reminds Speaks. “At this time, we are seeking comments on survey activities; additional opportunities to comment on the specific route and construction of the proposed pipeline will be provided by the FERC in the coming months.”

“If the FERC determines the pipeline is needed, the Forest Service will make a separate determination whether to issue a right-of-way permit to construct, operate, and maintain a natural gas pipeline on National Forest System lands. The Forest Service will use the FERC’s environmental analysis and public process to inform our decision,” explains Speaks.

Activities associated with the proposed surveys include:

- Survey crews walking the corridor. No vehicles will be used except to access the corridor using public and existing Forest Roads.
- Flagging will be placed along the center-line.
- Using hand tools to remove minor amounts of brush to navigate the route; saplings or limbs removed will be less than two inches in diameter.
- Placing biodegradable survey ribbon, flagging, survey stakes, and pin flags within the corridor and removed after all surveys are conducted.
- Conduct test pits for wetland surveys and shovel tests for cultural resource surveys. Soil will be replaced each day prior to leaving the sample site.
- Identification and documentation of cultural resources, sensitive species habitat, and invasive species. No flora, fauna, or cultural resources will be removed.

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Comments may be submitted by:

Email: comments-southern-georgewashington-jefferson@fs.fed.us

FAX: (540) 265-5145

Mail or Hand Deliver:

USDA Forest Service
Mountain Valley Pipeline Survey Comments
5162 Valleypointe Parkway
Roanoke, VA 24019

Hand-delivered comments must be received during our normal business hours of Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

More information, including maps and specifics of survey activities can be found on our website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/gwj/> or by calling (540) 265-5100.

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