



Forest Service

George Washington &
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News Release

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Forest Service Seeks Comments on Authorizing Surveys for Additional Routes for the Proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline

(March 13, 2015) Roanoke, VA-- The Forest Service is extending the comment period on whether to allow surveys for the proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline. We recently received requests to survey two additional areas including a 5.3-mile segment and a 6.1-mile segment, crossing the Jefferson National Forest in Craig, Montgomery, and Roanoke counties, Virginia and Monroe County, West Virginia. We will continue to accept comments on the original proposed 2.13-mile segment on the Jefferson National Forest in Giles and Montgomery counties, Virginia and Monroe County, West Virginia. Comments already submitted will be evaluated, so there is no need to resubmit comments. However, those that did not comment on the original proposed route can submit comments on the any of the proposed areas.

A third route was not included because crosses the Brush Mountain East Wilderness in Craig County and the Jefferson National Forest Plan stipulates survey permits are not allowed in Wilderness.

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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 Thursday, April 2, 2015.

“The information gathered from these surveys is needed for federal agencies to make informed decisions on whether or not to allow the construction and operation of the proposed natural gas pipeline, and if allowed, to avoid, or reduce the impacts to sensitive resources” explains Forest Supervisor Tom Speaks.

“It is important to remember that allowing these survey activities does not mean we are allowing the construction of a pipeline,” reminds Speaks. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), as the lead federal agency, will hold public meetings and solicit comments on the construction of the proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline. FERC will conduct an in-depth environmental analysis on private and public lands, with many opportunities for public comments.

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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.

Comments must be received by April 2, 2015 and 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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