

DECISION MEMO

**USDA Forest Service R-8
Ozark National Forest
Mt. Magazine Ranger District
Logan County, Arkansas**

***ROSS EXPLORATIONS, INC.
GOODSON #1-34 TIE-IN PIPELINE PROJECT***

I. DECISION

It is my decision is to grant a special use permit to Ross Explorations, Inc. to install a gas pipeline on Forest Service land.

This activity is in Section 34, T7N, R25W of the Mt. Magazine Ranger District. This site is located approximately four miles southwest of Subiaco, Arkansas, in Logan County. See the attached map for the location.

The proposed pipeline on Forest Service land will connect a planned section of pipeline on private property to a planned and approved section of pipeline on Forest Service land. The permanent permitted right-of-way for the pipeline on Forest Service land will be approximately 800 feet in length by 30 feet in width. Permitted pipeline right-of-way will be measured out from the back slope, fill slope, or ditch of the roadway, whichever applies. Total disturbed acres will be approximately 0.6 acres.

A 4-inch or less in diameter pipeline will be buried with 36 inches of cover unless in solid rock, in which case the cover will be 24 inches with Forest Service approval. Construction will be done with machinery such as a trackhoe. Merchantable trees in the right-of-way will be marked and sold to Ross Explorations, Inc. Ross Explorations, Inc. will be required to chip, haul off or burn or otherwise dispose of right-of-way clearing debris. The right-of-way clearing will be fertilized, seeded with wildlife seed mixtures, and mulched to Forest Service standards.

Ross Explorations, Inc. will be responsible for any associated tree mortality along the pipeline corridor for a period of three years. This would include Ross Explorations, Inc. removing dead/dying trees as designated by the Forest Service as a safety hazard along the linear route.

Above-ground set locations shall be identified by the operator and approved by the Forest Service prior to installation. The sets shall be painted in approved colors including those required for safety.

Pipeline specifications and mitigation measures would be included in the permit. Construction is expected to begin upon approval from the Forest Service.

II. REASONS FOR CATEGORICALLY EXCLUDING THE DECISION

I find the proposed action can be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment because it fits category 31.2 (3), [(36 CFR 220.6(e)(3)] described in Forest Service Handbook id_1909.15-2009-1, April 17, 2009. This category is for “approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of National Forest System lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land.” This decision will result in a special use permit that requires approximately 0.6 acres of land.

The categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects which may significantly affect the environment. I considered: 1) Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, and Forest Service sensitive species; 2) floodplains, wetlands, and municipal watersheds; 3) congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas; 4) inventoried roadless areas; 5) research natural areas; 6) American Indians and Alaska Native religious and cultural sites; and 7) archaeological sites and historic properties or areas.

III. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Scoping for this project began with the mailing of the proposed action to adjacent landowners and interested citizens on August 23, 2010. This list included letters to nine Native American Tribes and the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. The scoping package contained a description of the proposed action, a map depicting the proposed action, and a comment form. A total of 35 letters were mailed.

A copy of the proposed action letter was posted on the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/oof/ozark/projects/planning/magproject.html>.

This project was also listed in the 4th Quarter FY 2010 Schedule of Proposed Actions and posted on the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/oof/ozark/projects/planning/spa.html>.

One comment was received as a result of this scoping and is part of the project file.

IV. FINDINGS RELATED TO OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

This project is consistent with the objectives of the Revised Land and Resources Management Plan for the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OR APPEAL OPPORTUNITIES

This decision is not subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.12(f).

VI. IMPLEMENTATION DATE

This decision may be implemented immediately.

VII. CONTACT PERSON

Further information about this decision can be obtained from Vicki Weindel, NEPA Coordinator, Mt. Magazine Ranger District, P.O. Box 511, Paris, AR 72855; (479) 963-3076; fax (479) 963-8055; e-mail: vweindel@fs.fed.us.

VIII. SIGNATURE AND DATE

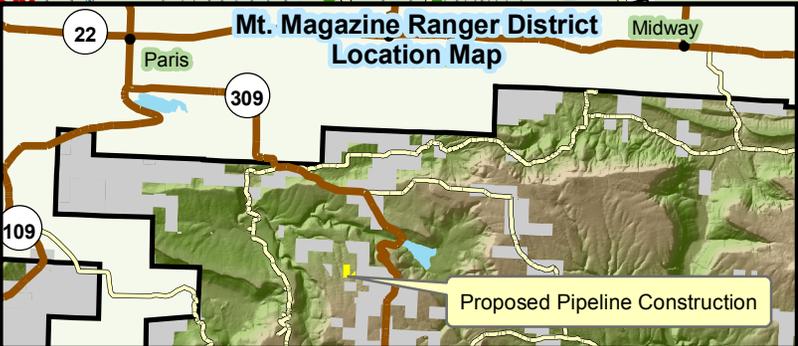
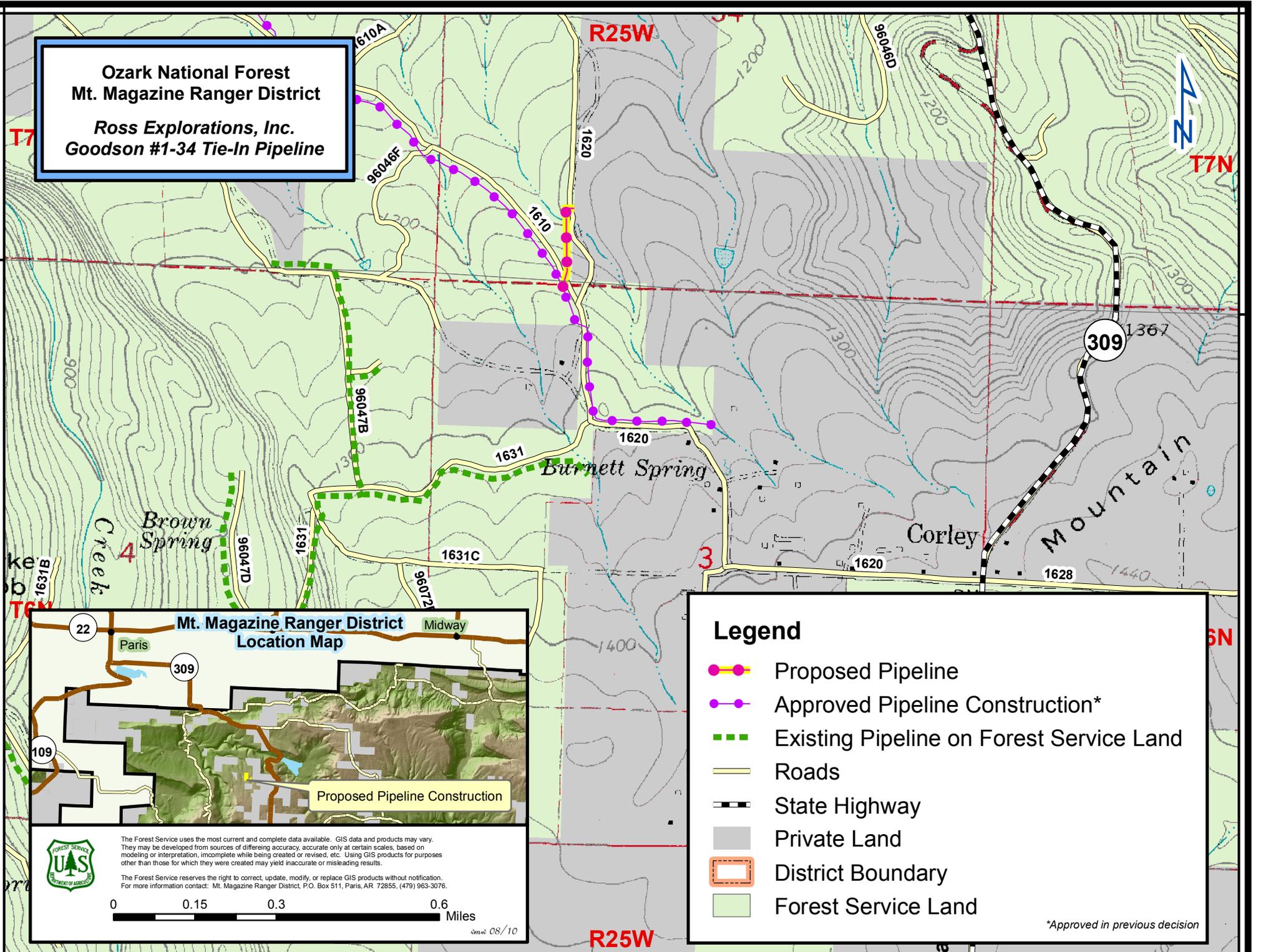
/s/ Rob Kopack
ROB KOPACK
Deputy District Ranger

09/14/10
Date

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Ozark National Forest
 Mt. Magazine Ranger District
 Ross Explorations, Inc.
 Goodson #1-34 Tie-In Pipeline



Legend

- Proposed Pipeline
- Approved Pipeline Construction*
- Existing Pipeline on Forest Service Land
- Roads
- State Highway
- Private Land
- District Boundary
- Forest Service Land



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0 0.15 0.3 0.6 Miles

08/10

*Approved in previous decision