DECISION NOTICE AND FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Neely Underground Powerline Easement

Prepared By
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
October 22, 2007

I. Proposal

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) proposes to grant a non-exclusive easement in T5N, R13W, Section 19, SE4 within the Stuart Mill Bay Fishing Access Site to Diana B. Neely for an underground powerline to her property. The powerline will run underground from an existing power pole and transformer to the applicants property to serve a pump station. The pump station will provide water to the applicant's property and to several additional existing residences within the applicants property boundary (see attached map). The source of the water is a high volume spring located on the applicants property.

The easement encompasses 0.179 acres (15 feet x 52 feet), and is buried under a road in an existing subdivision consisting of four inholdings, each surrounded by land managed by FWP (see attached map). The subdivision is distinct from the residences located on the applicants land, and will not be served by the pump station.

Because of previous disturbance to the site, an archaeological survey was not conducted. If any archaeological artifacts are discovered during powerline installation, construction will be stopped until the Montana State Historic Preservation Office has been contacted. Vegetative reclamation of the site will be completed by the landowner requesting the easement.

The Neely property is served by power along the county road. However, to run underground power from the county road to the applicant's pump station would significantly disturb existing wildlife habitat. An overhead line would negatively affect the viewshed. The proposed location for the easement disturbs no native vegetation, and runs under a road and existing powerline disturbance.

II. Selected Alternative

FWP recommends that the adoption of the Buried Line Installation Alternative. This alternative would disturb minimal land (0.179 acres), all of which has been either recently or historically disturbed by the existing powerline or the road.

Other alternatives either did not address the request for the powerline (No Action Alternative), or had greater impacts on the local area and environment.

III. Summary of Public Comment

The EA was posted to the FWP website on October 5, 2007. A notice was published in the Montana Standard (Butte) on October 5 and 7, 2007. Comments were accepted until October 18, 2007. No public comment was received on the EA.

IV. Modifications to the Environmental Assessment

Modifications to the Draft EA are deemed to be unnecessary.

V. Decision

After review of the proposal, it is my decision to issue an underground powerline easement.

I find there to be no significant impacts associated with this action. The completed EA and the Decision Notice provide an appropriate level of analysis.

Mack Long
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