

**Environmental Decision Notice:**  
**Montana-Dakota Utilities' Miles City 2 Project**  
**Easement Amendment**

September 10, 2020

Prepared By:  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
1420 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Helena, MT 59620-0701

**INTRODUCTION:**

Currently, the town of Miles City, Montana receives power from one transformer and one transmission line. Montana-Dakota Utilities Co. (Montana-Dakota) proposes to create a redundant power source for the town, which would entail:

- Removing existing transmission line and constructing new transmission line, some of which would cross property owned by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MT FWP) property at the Miles City Fish Hatchery.

Montana-Dakota has submitted an Application for Interconnection to WAPA. WAPA's action is to consider and respond to Montana-Dakota's interconnection request in accordance with the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) Tariff (WAPA is a member of SPP) and the Federal Power Act. If WAPA grants Montana-Dakota's interconnection request, WAPA would install a variety of electrical equipment (a circuit breaker, disconnect switches, take-off structures, transformers, bus/control/protection equipment, and capacitor) within the Miles City 2 Substation. The portion of the application specific to MT FWP is for a new 60-kilovolt (kV) above ground Right-of-Way across 8.65 acres of the Miles City Fish Hatchery (Exhibit A).

**MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT PROCESS:**

FWP is required to assess impacts to the human and physical environment under the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). This Decision Notice is part of the EA process evaluating the impacts associated with the proposed new transmission line and amended easement requested by Montana-Dakota Utilities.

**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:**

Stakeholders were notified of the availability of the draft EA and opportunity to comment on the document in the following manners:

- Public notice was published in the Miles City Star on October 4, 11, 18, and 25, 2019.

- Public notice on the MT FWP webpage, available at the following link:  
<http://fwp.mt.gov>.
- Public notice on the WAPA website, available at the following link:  
[www.wapa.gov/regions/UGP/Environment/Pages/MDUMilesCity.aspx](http://www.wapa.gov/regions/UGP/Environment/Pages/MDUMilesCity.aspx).
- Letters mailed to individual landowners and other stakeholders within and adjacent to the project area.

The Agencies coordinated their review with 30 other Federal, State and local governments, including:

- Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Montana Department of Agriculture
- Montana Department of Transportation
- Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
- Custer County Commissioners
- Custer County Planning and Floodplain Office
- Custer County Weed Management Department
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- Montana Department of Environmental Quality
- Montana Historical Society
- Custer County Public Health Department

The comment period was extended for 30 days. FWP received 7 comments during the comment period. A summary of comments received, and responses is included in Appendix A of the EA.

DECISION NOTICE:

In accordance with the Environmental Assessment process, a decision must be rendered by FWP which addresses the concerns and issues identified for this proposed action. FWP finds there to be no significant impacts on the human and physical environments associated with this project. Therefore, it is concluded that the Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis, and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

After review of this proposal, it is the decision of FWP to accept the draft Environmental Assessment as supplemented by this Decision Notice and changes herein as final, and to recommend proceeding with the proposed 60-kV Right-of-Way across 8.65 acres of Miles City Fish Hatchery.

The Final Environmental Assessment may be viewed on FWP's Internet website:  
<http://www.fwp.mt.gov> or be obtained from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region 7 Headquarters, P.O. Box 1630, Miles City, MT 59301, (406) 234-0900.

  
 Jay Pravec  
 Hatchery Bureau Chief  
 Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

9-10-20  
 Date

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