



**DECISION NOTICE:**

# **Missoula Electric Cooperative Easement for Cyr Powerline Expansion**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Region 2  
3201 Spurgin Road, Missoula MT 59804; Phone 406-542-5500  
November 2021

## **DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposed to grant a conveyance of a perpetual easement for Right of Way (ROW) to Missoula Electric Cooperative, Inc. (MEC), for buried and/or overhead powerlines across 1.01 acres of land owned by FWP on Upper Osprey Fishing Access Site (FAS) in the Cyr area of Mineral County, Montana. The proposed project involves upgrading an existing overhead powerline and installation of 175 feet of new underground powerline. The purpose of the project is to rebuild the existing powerline from single phase to three phase, which will provide needed capacity at the end of this line where the load has grown rapidly due to development. The profile view of the new system would not change from the existing profile.

Anticipated impacts of the project include minor soil disturbance for the new underground powerline and some noise and other effects of using heavy machinery during construction. This work could disturb wildlife and users of Upper Osprey FAS. These disturbances would be temporary and minor but are expected to occur on an intermittent basis in perpetuity, as MEC conducts maintenance and other needed work on the powerline.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

Alternative A: No Action. Under the No Action Alternative, FWP would not agree to grant MEC the requested easement. Under this scenario, MEC could lose the opportunity to increase capacity for this powerline, which could negatively impact MEC customers.

Alternative B: Proposed Action. Under the Proposed Action, FWP would grant the requested easement to MEC for the purposes of upgrading and expanding the existing powerline from single phase to three phase, thereby increasing its load-carrying capacity.

## **PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess potential impacts of its proposed actions to the human and physical environments, evaluate those impacts through an interdisciplinary approach, including public input, and to make a decision based on this information. FWP released a draft environmental assessment (DEA) for public review of this proposal on September 4, 2021 and accepted public comment for 30 days until October 4, 2021.

Legal notice of the Missoula Electric Cooperative Easement for the Cyr Powerline Expansion draft EA was published once each in the *Independent Record*, *Missoulian*, and the *Mineral Independent* newspapers. A statewide News Release announcing the project and opportunity for review was distributed September 4, 2021 to a standard list of media outlets interested in FWP issues.

FWP mailed copies and email notifications of the draft EA's availability to adjacent landowners and interested individuals, groups and agencies. The draft EA was also available for public review on FWP's web site (<http://fwp.mt.gov>, "Public Notices") from September 4, 2021 through October 4, 2021. Comments could be submitted by mail or email to Region 2 FWP.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

### **Summary of Public Comment**

FWP did not receive any public comment on the proposed action.

## **CHANGES MADE TO THE DRAFT EA**

Based on the absence of public comment, FWP will not be making any changes to the Missoula Electric Cooperative Easement for Cyr Powerline Expansion draft EA and the EA will be made final.

## **DECISION**

Based upon the Draft EA and the applicable laws, regulations, and policies, I have determined that the proposed action will not have significant negative effects on the human and physical environments associated with this project. Therefore, I conclude that the EA is the appropriate level of analysis, and the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is unnecessary.

FWP did not receive any public comment on the proposed action, no concerns were raised that brought the environmental analysis into question. Therefore, the draft EA constitutes the final EA.

Based on the analysis in the draft EA and the absence of any public comment, I have selected the "Proposed Action" (Alternative B). I will recommend to the Director of Fish, Wildlife and Parks that FWP grants the requested easement so the proposed project can move forward as described in the EA.



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Randy Arnold  
Region 2 Supervisor  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

11/19/21

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Date