



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Columbine Ranger District
San Juan National Forest

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<http://www.fs.usda.gov/sanjuan>

File Code:

Date: January 24th, 2024

Dear Interested Party,

The pre-decisional draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the *Spring Creek Pipeline and Associated Fruitland Coal Gas Drilling Project* is available for a second comment period for 30 days for your comment and review. The EA, including maps, is available for download from the San Juan National Forest (SJNF) website at:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/sanjuan/?project=63036>

The San Juan National Forest would like to honor requests from previous commenters to allow more time for review and public input on this project, as well as make all requested project information available for the full duration of the 30-day comment period.

BACKGROUND and NEED

The project area is located within the Spring Creek area of the HD Mountains of the SJNF, Columbine Ranger District, in La Plata and Archuleta Counties, Colorado (see attached map). The southern end of the proposed pipeline is located approximately 6.5 miles southeast of Bayfield, Colorado, and the proposed pipeline travels in a northeast direction. The legal description of the Proposed Action includes the following:

Sections 22, 27, 31, 32, 33, and 34, Township (T) 34 North (N) Range (R) 6 West (W), New Mexico Principal Meridian (NMPM), La Plata County Colorado; and

Sections 14, 23, and 26 T34N R6W, NMPM, Archuleta County Colorado.

The purpose of the project is to respond to Catamount's application to further develop their valid and existing federal oil and gas leases in the most environmentally responsible way. This would be completed in a manner consistent with applicable laws, regulations, policies, and lease stipulations; the SJNF Land and Resource Management Plan; the 2006 Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Northern San Juan Basin Coal Bed Methane Project; mitigation measures outlined in the Surface Use Plan of Operation (SUPO); and appropriate Best Management Practices. The proposed Spring Creek Pipeline would transport gas from the San Juan Basin, thus helping meet the public's need for natural gas and alleviating pipeline capacity issues in the area.

Public and Tribal involvement has been on-going since the fall of 2019 through scoping letters and emails, presentations to the northern San Juan Basin Stakeholders, and listing on the San Juan National Forest's *Schedule of Proposed Actions*. Internal and external scoping revealed concerns about impacts from the proposed action to air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, cultural resources, geology and mineral resources, public health and safety, soils and vegetation,



water resources, and wildlife; specifically, mule deer and elk. These impacts are analyzed in the EA.

PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action is the Forest Service approval of a Surface Use Plan of Operations (SUPO) for expansion, operation, and maintenance of the existing Pargin Mtn UT #2 (API#: 05-007-06098) well pad; Forest Service issuance of a Special Use Permit (SUP) for construction, operation, and maintenance of the 8.4-mile natural gas and produced water pipeline system; Forest Service issuance of a permit for road reconstruction, use, snow plowing, and maintenance; BLM issuance of Sundry Notice for the recompletion of the existing Pargin Mtn UT #2 CBM well; BLM approval of seven Applications for Permit to Drill for new CBM wells from the existing Pargin Mtn UT #2 well pad. The entire proposed action is located on SJNF lands.

The entirety of the project would be implemented in phases over several years, depending on available budgets, contractor schedules, weather conditions, and other unpredictable factors.

HOW TO COMMENT

Written comments concerning this proposed action will be accepted for 30 days following publication of a legal notice in the *Durango Herald*; if published as anticipated, comments will be accepted through January 16th, 2024. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period. Regulations prohibit extending the length of the comment period; it is the responsibility of commenters to ensure that their comments are received in a timely manner.

Written comments can be submitted in one of the following ways:

The preferred method is to submit electronic comments through an on-line comment form at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/sanjuan/?project=63036>

or

Postal, delivery service, or hand delivered to: **Spring Creek Project EA Comments, Columbine Ranger District, P.O. Box 439, 367 Pearl Street, Bayfield, CO 81122.** Comments may be delivered to the Columbine Ranger District between the hours of 8:00am-4:30pm Mon-Fri, excluding holidays.

or

Comments may be **faxed to: Spring Creek Project EA Comments at (970) 884-2428.**

This project falls under objections regulations at 36 CFR 218, subparts A and B. In order to object to the upcoming decision that will result from this analysis, a person must have previously submitted timely, specific written comments which are within the scope of, and have a direct relationship to, the proposed action during the public comment periods. For this project, the comment period being announced at this time is the last chance to establish eligibility to object.

Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to object later must submit a written comment containing the information requirements in 38CFR218.25(a)(3), including the project title, name and postal address of the individual or entity submitting the comment, and either sign the comment or verify identity upon request. Objections must be based on previously submitted timely, specific written comments regarding the proposed project, unless based on new information arising after the designated comment opportunity. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection.

After comments are analyzed and responded to, the final EA, a draft Decision Notice, and instructions on how to object will be provided to those who commented.

You may obtain additional information about this project or request a hard copy of the EA by calling the Columbine Ranger District at (970) 884-2512 or Forest Geologist James Blair at (970) 882 6856.

Thank you for your interest in the project.

Sincerely,

NICK GLIDDEN
Columbine District Ranger

