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PATH impact focus of meeting

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By [Ed Waters Jr.](#)

The potential impact of the Potomac Appalachian Transmission Highline was the focus of a scoping meeting Wednesday at Tuscarora High School.

Morgan Elmer, project manager for a combined team of National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service personnel, said the event was to give residents a chance to see the impact through posters, maps and talks with team members.

Elmer said similar meetings in Virginia and West Virginia earlier this week drew about 100 guests.

While only about 2.5 miles of park and federal forest land would be part of the PATH route, the team questioned the visual, environmental, cultural and safety impacts to park sites.

"We are completely independent on this," said Elmer, who came from Denver with the National Park Service to oversee the scoping meeting. She said the meetings this week were one of three phases planned. The team would return in the fall after collecting feedback from visitors and later in the year make a formal environmental impact statement in the Federal Register.

Elmer said that the federal government can restrict Allegheny Power and American Electric Power, who are jointly planning the 275 mile, \$2.1 billion project, from coming on government land. But even if the route is changed around parks, the impacts could still exist.

The combination of park service and U.S. Forest Service is unusual. David Ede, a forest planner for the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia, said it was the first time in his 30 years with forest service that he had seen such teamwork.

Members of Sugarloaf Conservancy and Citizens Against the Kemptown Electric Substation, who are opposed to PATH, had displays and gave brochures to visitors.

Doug Colafella, a manager for external communications for Allegheny Energy, attended the event and said the information presented was accurate. Colafella said the utility companies would work with the park and forest services on potential impacts as part of the lengthy process of PATH.

The project is under review in Maryland by the Public Service Commission, but has not been approved.

Besides the Monongahela National Forest, other parks represented at Wednesday's event were Harpers Ferry, Appalachian National Scenic Trail, C&O Canal and Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail.

Comments were taken Wednesday night by team members and written comments may be made to parkplanning.nps.gov/appa or mailed to: PATH EIS Planning Team, Denver Service Center-Planning, P.O. Box 25287, Denver, CO 80225.

Please send comments to [webmaster](#) or contact us at 301-662-1177.

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Photo by Sam Yu

Morgan Elmer, a project manager for the National Park Service, organized the open meeting Wednesday at Tuscarora High School on the proposed PATH electric transmission line.