

## Proposed CenturyLink Microwave Radio Antenna Tower in St. Mary

### Background

The project is part of a larger statewide Montana Public Service Commission requirement mandating CenturyLink to upgrade telecommunications capabilities at its rural exchanges (including St. Mary) in Montana. Telecommunication internet service offered in the St. Mary area is limited to cellular modem and satellite services and does not include the faster and larger capacity DSL broadband service for resident, visitor and government internet use. To bring the telecommunication capacity in the St. Mary area to a modern standard, CenturyLink (the local telecommunication provider) has requested permission from the National Park Service (NPS) to install a new microwave antenna tower and dish. The new tower and dish would provide DSL service to the greater St. Mary area and improve the reliability and speed of internet access.

The new tower would be located next to the existing NPS telecommunication building at the St. Mary administrative and maintenance area in Glacier National Park (GNP). It would be an approximately 80-foot tall, three-legged steel lattice structure supported on a concrete footing. Existing NPS radio communication equipment and the CenturyLink microwave dish would be co-located on the tower. The NPS's existing 50-foot radio tower would be removed. The new tower would be designed to provide a direct line of sight to the CenturyLink Divide Mountain transfer station and accommodate NPS equipment for 360 degree radio coverage.

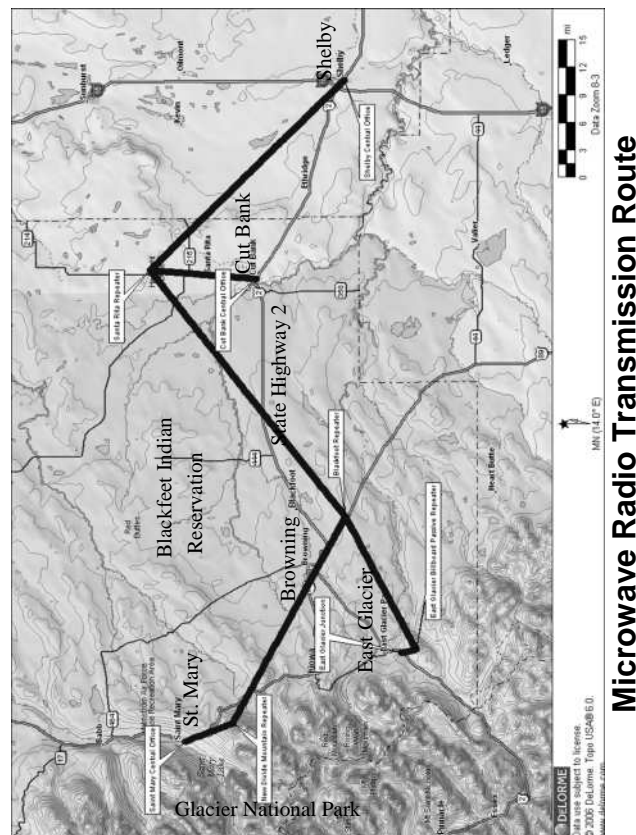
CenturyLink currently maintains a telecommunication equipment building at the site under a NPS special use permit. The microwave dish signal would be routed to the existing CenturyLink equipment building.

### Background Continued

The new tower and dish would be the end point of a new microwave radio transport system originating in Shelby, Montana. The project is also anticipated to provide improved radio system coverage to the NPS internal communication system in the St. Mary developed area and backcountry.

### Objectives

- Support state-wide initiative to upgrade telecommunication facilities in small rural exchanges.
- Conduct work in such a way that impacts to GNP resources are minimized.
- Conduct work so GNP radio communication capabilities would not be interrupted.



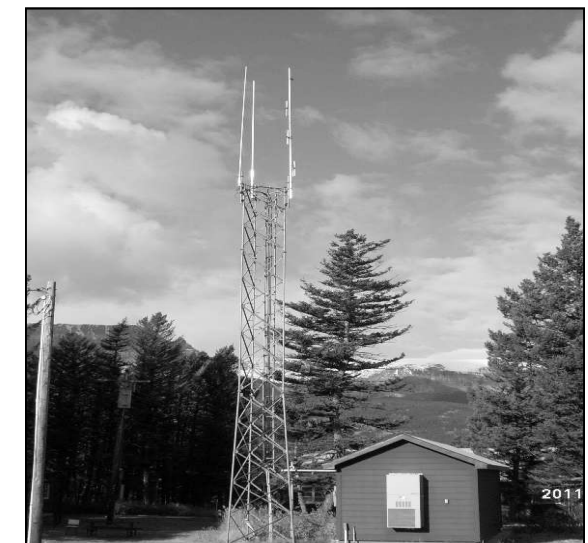
## Alternatives Identified to Date

- *No Action*—Telecommunication capabilities would not be upgraded.
- *Proposed Action*—Construct an approximately 80-foot tall tower with a CenturyLink 6-foot diameter microwave dish and one to three NPS antennas. The existing NPS 50-foot tower at the St. Mary administrative and maintenance area would be removed.

## Concerns and Issues

- Potential impacts to Historic National Register properties in GNP.
- Impacts to the Divide Creek floodplain.
- Changes to visitor experience and aesthetics in the St. Mary area.
- Changes to visual resources and the viewshed.

### Existing NPS 50-foot tower and radio antennas



## Your Participation

Scoping is the first step that involves the public in the environmental assessment process. Due to your interest in Glacier National Park, we are informing you about this proposed project and requesting your comments. No public meetings are scheduled at this time. We will review your comments to ensure we are addressing all the possible resource issues and alternatives. There will be another opportunity for your review and comment when the environmental assessment is completed and released.

Please provide comments by  
**January 27, 2012**

### Submit your comments:

Post your comments at:  
[www.parkplanning.nps.gov/glac](http://www.parkplanning.nps.gov/glac)  
or

Send your comments to:  
**Superintendent Glacier National Park**  
**Attn: St. Mary Tower Proposal**  
**P.O. Box 128**  
**West Glacier, MT 59936**



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Glacier National Park  
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U.S. Department of the Interior



Glacier National Park  
Montana

## PUBLIC SCOPING

**Proposed CenturyLink  
Microwave Radio Antenna  
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## Environmental Assessment



Proposed Tower Location  
in St. Mary

[www.nps.gov/glac](http://www.nps.gov/glac)