



United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service
P.O. Box 168
Yellowstone National Park
Wyoming 82190

IN REPLY REFER TO:

L7617(YELL)

CERTIFIED

NOV 07 2013

Ms. Mary Hopkins
Wyoming State Historic Preservation Officer
2301 Central Avenue
Barrett Building, 3rd Floor
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002

Dr. Mark Baumler
Montana State Historic Preservation Officer
Montana Historical Society
P.O. Box 201201
Helena, Montana 59620-1201

Subject: Electric Transmission/Distribution System Communication and Automation Plan
Environmental Assessment

Dear Ms. Hopkins and Dr. Baumler:

The National Park Service (NPS) is proposing to implement a plan to upgrade Northwestern Energy's (NWE) existing electrical service and infrastructure within and adjacent to Yellowstone National Park. The project would improve electrical reliability, reduce impacts to visitors and park operations resulting from outages, and improve safety for NPS and NWE personnel. The project would also meet the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Narrowing Bandwidth Mandate, which went into effect on January 1, 2013. This project is an undertaking in accordance with 36 CFR 800, the implementing regulations for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and we request your review and concurrence with our determination of effect. We previously wrote to you during the scoping period for this project and have attached a copy of that correspondence for your convenience (enclosure 1). The park has developed an environmental assessment (EA) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, which analyzes impacts resulting from the proposal, including impacts to historic properties (enclosure 2).

NorthWestern Energy, an investor-owned utility that provides electricity and natural gas in the northwest quadrant of the United States, has provided electrical power to Yellowstone National Park since the late 1950s using 50 kilovolt (kV) and 69 kV aerial and buried transmission lines. Much of NWE's existing power infrastructure in the park has not been updated since the 1950s and is prone to frequent outages because of the remote nature of the park, inhospitable terrain, climate, and tree cover near transmission lines. Additionally, the park's system lacks modern