

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Theodore Roosevelt National Park**



**U.S. Department of Agriculture  
U.S. Forest Service  
Dakota Prairie Grasslands**

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## **Replacement of a Communications Tower in Theodore Roosevelt National Park and U.S. Forest Service Access Road Improvement**

**Environmental Assessment  
December 2005**

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## Environmental Assessment: Abstract

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### Replacement of a Communications Tower in Theodore Roosevelt National Park and U.S. Forest Service Access Road Improvement

#### Summary

This environmental assessment (EA) was prepared to evaluate the potential impacts on the physical and human environment that could result from the proposed action and alternatives to that action. The proposed action is the issuance of a right-of-way permit by the National Park Service (NPS), Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP), and the issuance of a Private Road Special Use Permit by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Forest Service (FS), Dakota Prairie Grasslands (DPG), Medora Ranger District. The proposed permits would be issued to Badlands Cellular of North Dakota LP doing business as (dba) Verizon Wireless (Verizon Wireless) to replace an existing radio tower (currently supporting a NPS radio repeater) with a telecommunications tower, and to install a pre-fabricated equipment shed adjacent to an existing equipment shed in the TRNP. Verizon Wireless also would reconstruct and maintain approximately 1.6 miles of National Forest System Road (NFSR) #730A-2 on National Forest System (NFS) land in Sections 17 and 18, T140N, R102W, Billings County, North Dakota. This EA evaluates the impacts of the proposed action and the no action alternative on physical, biological, heritage and cultural, and social resources.

#### Public Comment

If you wish to comment on the EA, you may mail comments to the name and address below. This EA will be on public review for 30 days. Please note that names and addresses of people who comment become part of the public record. **If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment.** The entirety of any submission from an organization, business, or individual identifying himself/herself as a representative or official of an organization or business will be made available for public inspection.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is an environmental assessment (EA) for the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) National Park Service (NPS)—the lead agency—and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Forest Service (FS)—a cooperating agency. It assesses potential environmental, social, and economic impacts on the natural and human-made environments that would result from implementing the proposed action or no action alternative.

The proposed action is to issue permits allowing (1) replacement of an existing radio tower (currently supporting a NPS radio repeater) with a telecommunications tower, and (2) installation of a pre-fabricated equipment shed adjacent to an existing equipment shed in the Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP), in the Little Missouri Badlands, west-central North Dakota (NPS 2004). The existing radio tower currently supports NPS communications equipment; the proposed tower replacement would support both NPS communications equipment and Badlands Cellular of North Dakota LP doing business as (dba) Verizon Wireless (Verizon Wireless) cellular telephone equipment. The proposed action also includes reconstruction and future maintenance of approximately 1.6 miles of National Forest System Road (NFSR) #730A-2 on National Forest System (NFS) land in Sections 17 and 18, T140N, R102W, Billings County, North Dakota. Verizon Wireless and its contractors would be responsible for management and cost of all proposed construction work and long-term maintenance of the road and proposed facility. This analysis will help the NPS, TRNP, and the FS, Dakota Prairie Grasslands (DPG), Medora Ranger District decide whether to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) and whether to issue to Verizon Wireless a right-of-way permit (responsibility of NPS) and a Private Road Special Use Permit (responsibility of FS).

The purpose of the proposed action—issuance of right-of-way and Private Road Special Use Permits by the NPS and FS, respectively—is to ensure installation of the proposed telecommunications system in a manner that will not conflict with the goals and purposes of the TRNP and DPG. The proposed action would satisfy the growing demand for commercial and personal communication in the area by providing high capability, digital voice and data transmission via cellular telephones. Meeting this demand requires installation of state-of-the-art telecommunication and antenna facilities.

Impacts on the physical, biological, heritage and cultural, and social resources of the project area and region are assessed, including:

- Physical resources: ecological and watershed settings, soil and water resources, and air quality (including noise)
- Biological resources: vegetation; wildlife and fisheries; and threatened, endangered, and sensitive species
- Heritage and cultural resources
- Social resources: wilderness, scenery resources, transportation and roads, and recreation.

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BMP	Best Management Practice
CAA	Clean Air Act
CCC	Civilian Conservation Corps
CE	Cumulative Effect
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
dba	Doing Business As
DM	Departmental Manual
DO	Director's Order
DoH	Department of Health
DOI	U.S. Department of the Interior
DPG	Dakota Prairie Grasslands
EA	Environmental Assessment
Earthworks	Earthworks Archaeology & Environmental Investigative Services
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Environmental Site Assessment
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FR	Federal Register
FS	Forest Service
FSH	Forest Service Handbook
FSWEPP	Forest Service Water Erosion Prediction Model
LRMP	Land and Resource Management Plan
MA	Management Area
MS #	Survey Code Number
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NASIS	National Soil Information System
ND	North Dakota
NDGF	North Dakota Game and Fish Department
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFMA	National Forest Management Act
NFSR	National Forest System Road
NFS	National Forest System
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NOI	Notice of Intent
NPS	National Park Service
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
PSD	Prevention of Significant Deterioration
REC	Recognized Environmental Condition
S&G	Standards and Guidelines
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
SITS #	Site Number
TECM	Temporary Erosion Control Measures
Tetra Tech	Tetra Tech EM Inc.
TRNP	Theodore Roosevelt National Park
U.S.	United States
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
Verizon Wireless	Badlands Cellular of North Dakota LP doing business as Verizon Wireless
WEPP	Water Erosion Prediction Model