

## **APPENDIX A: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

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This appendix presents the public involvement process used by the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) National Park Service (NPS), and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Forest Service (FS) while developing this environmental assessment (EA) of potential environmental, social, and economic impacts resulting from the proposed action and alternatives.

### **Dakota Prairie Grasslands Upgrade of Forest Service Road #730A-2 by Badlands Cellular of North Dakota LP dba Verizon Wireless Scoping Comment Summary**

This summary presents information about the public scoping and involvement process for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Assessment (EA) examining the proposed upgrade of existing National Forest System Road (NFSR) #730A-2 by Badlands Cellular of North Dakota LP doing business as (dba) Verizon Wireless (Verizon Wireless). The NFSR is managed by the FS, which conducted internal scoping in September 2004 and began external scoping on September 30, 2004. On this date, the FS sent a public scoping letter to 56 interested individuals and organizations. The letter included a description of the proposed action and contact information for submitting comments. The public scoping period for this project ended on October 30, 2004. Comments were received by regular mail from the following respondents:

- Mr. Roger Myers, Medora, North Dakota
- Ms. Jesse Hanson, North Dakota Parks and Recreation, Dickinson, North Dakota
- Mr. L. David Glatt, North Dakota Department of Health, Dickinson, North Dakota.

Comments received were analyzed by coding each statement by subject, comment type, and disposition. This analysis was conducted using Microsoft Access database software. The sections below summarize the content analysis of the public comments received for scoping (NEPA) on the proposed project, including the following:

- Issues raised by the public considered in detail as impact topics
- Other issues raised by the public not considered in detail, with rationale
- Alternatives suggested by the public.

#### **I. Key Issues Considered in Detail**

Issues are questions or statements about the relationship between the proposed action and the natural or cultural environment. Examining issues requires describing the relationship between a proposed action and the environment (NPS 2004). Issues do not specify the context, potential impacts, or intensity of potential impacts; issues simply state that a relationship exists between the proposed action and specific environmental, cultural, and social resources, and are used to determine impact topics examined in the EA. Table 1 presents the issues identified during the scoping process and the impact topics related to each issue and examined in the EA.

Key issues are used to formulate alternatives, prescribe mitigation measures, or analyze environmental consequences. These issues are key because of the extent of their geographic distribution, the potential duration of their effects, or the potential intensity of interest or resource conflict (FS 2004). Based on review and analysis of the public and internal scoping comments received, no key issues are associated

with the proposed action. Therefore, the issues identified above and their relationships to specific resource topics serve as the basis for the analyses presented in the EA.

**TABLE 1-1  
ISSUES AND IMPACT TOPICS RELATED TO EACH ISSUE**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Impact Topics Related to Each Issue</b>
Potential impacts on the long-term integrity of natural systems and processes	Ecological Setting Watershed Setting Soil Resources Water Resources Air Quality and Noise Vegetation Wildlife and Fisheries Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species
Potential impacts on traditional land uses	Ecological Setting Watershed Setting
Potential impacts resulting from erosion and soil compaction	Soil Resources Water Resources Transportation and Roads
Potential impacts on water bodies, floodplains, and riparian habitat	Water Resources Wildlife and Fisheries
Potential impacts on air quality and natural soundscapes	Air Quality and Noise
Preservation and protection of threatened, endangered, and sensitive species	Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species
Potential impacts on the long-term integrity of cultural, historic, and archeological resources	Heritage and cultural resources
Potential impacts on viewsheds	Scenery Resources
Potential impacts on traditional recreational activities	Recreation Transportation and Roads

## **II. Issues Not Considered in Detail with Rationale**

Other issues not considered in detail are those identified by the agencies or by the public but not used in the environmental analysis for various reasons (FS 2004). The following are other issues raised by the public and the rationale for not considering them in detail in the EA.

1. The North Dakota Natural Heritage Inventory has limited rare species information from the project area. For your information, we do have records for the occurrence of *Stephanomeria tenuifolia* (narrow-leaved wirelettuce) and *Fraxinus pennsylvanica* – *Ulmus Americana/Symphoricarpos occidentalis* forest (Western floodplain forest) in sections adjacent to the project area, indicating that the habitat in the project area may be suited for these species or other rare, threatened, sensitive, or endangered species. (North Dakota Parks and Recreation.)

*The environmental analyses conducted for the environmental assessment will include the specific affected environment and will address potential impacts on rare, threatened, sensitive, and endangered species.*

2. Regarding any reclamation efforts, we recommend that any impacted areas be revegetated with species native to the project area. (North Dakota Parks and Recreation.)

*Revegetating with native species is a standard requirement for all ground disturbing activity.*

3. As far as the gate is concerned, I use that trail to fix fence and to feed cattle and would plan to be able to continue to do so. (Mr. Roger Myers.)

*The FS decided not to install the previously proposed locked gate, and the road would be open to the public. Additional transportation issues will be considered in the environmental analyses.*

4. Care is to be taken during construction activity near any water of the state to minimize adverse effects on a water body. This includes minimal disturbance of streambeds and banks to prevent excess siltation, and the replacement and revegetation of any disturbed area as soon as possible after work has been completed. Caution must also be taken to prevent spills of oil and grease that may reach the receiving water from equipment maintenance, and/or the handling of fuels on the site. Guidelines for minimizing degradation to waterways during construction are attached. (North Dakota Department of Health.)

*The proposed project is not located near any stream or water body. Potential effects on water resources will be examined in the EA. However, at this time, no effects on water resources would be anticipated due to the distance between such resources and the proposed project location.*

5. Projects disturbing one or more acres are required to have a permit to discharge storm water runoff until the site is stabilized by the reestablishment of vegetation or other permanent cover. Also, cities may impose additional requirements and/or specific best management practices for construction affecting their storm drainage system. Check with the local officials to be sure any local storm water management considerations are addressed. (North Dakota Department of Health.)

*Given the type and location of the proposed project, stormwater discharge is not thought to be of concern. Potential effects on water resources will be examined in the EA. If a stormwater discharge permit is found to be required, the permittee (Verizon Wireless) would be responsible for obtaining all necessary permits prior to construction.*

6. Noise from construction activities may have adverse effects on persons who live near the construction area. Noise levels can be minimized by ensuring that construction equipment is equipped with a recommended muffler in good working order. Noise effects can also be minimized by ensuring that construction activities are not conducted during early morning or late evening hours. (North Dakota Department of Health.)

*Construction stipulations require all equipment to meet fire and safety codes, which include use of properly maintained mufflers. Also, the nearest residences are located about 1 mile from the proposed project construction. Potential effects resulting from noise will be examined in the EA. However, at this time, little or no effects on those residences are anticipated due to the distance between the residences and the proposed project location.*

7. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may require a water quality certification from this department for the project if the project is subject to their Section 404 permitting process. Any additional information which may be required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under the process will be considered by this department in our determination regarding the issuance of such a certification. (North Dakota Department of Health.)

*The proposed project is not located near any stream course or surface water body; therefore, a Section 404 permit would not be required.*

### **III. Alternatives Suggested by the Public**

No additional alternatives were suggested by the public.

**I approve these significant and non-significant issues for the environmental analysis.**

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**Ronald W. Jablonski, Jr.**  
**Medora District Ranger**

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**Date**

**Dakota Prairie Grasslands**  
**Upgrade of Forest Service Road #730A-2 by Badlands Cellular of North Dakota LP dba Verizon**  
**Wireless**  
**Range of Alternatives**

The following presents the range of alternatives for the Environmental Assessment (EA) examining the proposed upgrade of existing National Forest System Road (NFSR) #730A-2 by Badlands Cellular of North Dakota LP doing business as (dba) Verizon Wireless (Verizon Wireless). Alternatives to be studied in detail and alternatives considered, but rejected from further study, are presented.

**Alternatives to be Studied in Detail**

1. No Action: Under this alternative, the Forest Service would not issue to Verizon Wireless a Private Road Special Use Permit for reconstruction and future maintenance of NFSR #730A-2, located on National Forest System (NFS) land in Sections 17 and 18, T140N, R102W, Billings County, North Dakota. Therefore, the proposed road reconstruction and maintenance activities would not occur and the proposed cellular tower reconstruction on National Park Service (NPS) lands likely would not occur. Public access to the road would be maintained.
2. Proposed Action: Under this alternative, the Forest Service would issue to Verizon Wireless a Private Road Special Use Permit for reconstruction and future maintenance of NFSR #730A-2, located on NFS land in Sections 17 and 18, T140N, R102W, Billings County, North Dakota. Verizon Wireless and their subcontractors would then upgrade approximately 1.6 miles of NFSR #730A-2, which accesses a communications tower located within the Theodore Roosevelt National Park and currently proposed for reconstruction. The proposed road upgrade involves reconstructing a 12-foot travel way with safety turnouts, undertaking a minor realignment to accommodate grade concerns, spot surfacing with gravel, and installing culverts to accommodate ditch drainage concerns.

**Alternatives Considered but Rejected from Detailed Study**

Verizon Wireless considered one other alternative to the proposed and no action alternatives, which was to locate the telecommunication equipment (tower and pre-fabricated equipment shed) on a site other than the one proposed and considered in the EA. A specific, alternative site was not identified because it was determined during the planning stage of the project that building a new tower site on other public or privately-owned land would cause significant, negative impacts on the scenery and viewsheds of the region. Verizon Wireless determined that replacement of an existing tower, rather than building a new one in a different location, would minimize impacts on the region while simultaneously meeting the needs to expand telecommunications service. Therefore, Verizon Wireless submitted an application for the necessary permits from the NPS and FS to implement the proposed action analyzed in the EA.

After receipt of the application by Verizon Wireless, the NPS and FS considered including a locked gate for NFSR #730A-2 on FS lands, under the proposed action. However, the proposed action was modified and the gate was eliminated from consideration for several reasons, including: (1) no gated roads currently are on the Medora Ranger District and the FS does not want to create a precedent for installing gates on roads, (2) placing a gate on a road can sometimes draw more attention to the area (for example, during hunting season), (3) current traffic use of the road is limited, and (4) private citizens require access to exercise grazing permits.

**I approve this Range of Alternatives to be considered in the environmental analysis.**

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**Ronald W. Jablonski, Jr.**  
**Medora District Ranger**

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**Date**