



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

P.O. Box 168
Mammoth, Wyoming 82190-0168



H3015(YELL)

CERTIFIED

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Dr. John M. Fowler, Director
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
401 F Street Northwest, Suite 308
Washington, D.C. 20001-2637

Subject: Telecommunications Project, Mt. Washburn, Fishing Bridge, Grant, Canyon, and Old Faithful developed areas, Yellowstone National Park, Park County, Wyoming

Dear Dr. Fowler:

The National Park Service (NPS) has received a permit application from Verizon Wireless to improve and upgrade telecommunications infrastructure on Mt. Washburn, the telecommunications hub for the park, and at other developed areas in the park. The purpose of this project is to improve safety for personnel maintaining the telecommunications and two-way radio equipment on Mt. Washburn; mitigate concerns over too much infrastructure affixed to the exterior of a historic structure; and address a severe shortage of telecommunications bandwidth in the park that is currently limiting park operations, visitor safety, and visitor experience. New antennas would also be installed to improve poor cellular telecommunication services in the Old Faithful, Grant, Fishing Bridge, and Canyon developed areas of the park.

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) regulations, 36 CFR Part 800.1, the NPS is affording you this opportunity to comment on this undertaking.

The proposed project areas, simulations, and specifications are presented in the enclosures.

Proposed Actions:

Mt. Washburn

- The new structure on Mt. Washburn would be constructed from steel lattice supports that would surround the east, north, and west sides of the existing fire lookout. It is designed to accept relocation of

multiple antennas currently attached to the historic fire lookout building. Lattice structures have a greater degree of visual transparency than monopoles and allow views of the background landscape (Map 1).

- New microwave antennas would also be installed and concealed in two separate vaults placed adjacent to existing concealed telecommunications microwave antennas.
- Many existing antennas would be removed from the historic building and some new antennas would be placed on the free standing steel lattice structure.

Fishing Bridge

- The existing telecommunication tower at the Fishing Bridge developed area is structurally inadequate to support proposed new equipment - a microwave antenna.
- A new steel lattice tower would be constructed at the same height and adjacent to the existing telecommunication tower. The proposed tower would be painted a non-reflective color that would blend into the surrounding landscape.
- As determined by visual simulation testing, the proposed tower location is obscured from public view by distance and existing vegetation and is obscured from the Grand Loop Road by mature trees and understory. See Map 3 and enclosed visual simulations.

Canyon

- The existing telecommunication tower at the Canyon developed area is structurally inadequate to support proposed new equipment, microwave and cellular phone antennas.
- One new tower would be constructed directly adjacent to the existing telecommunication tower. The proposed tower would be a 95-foot tall monopole camouflaged with artificial pine boughs to allow it to blend into the surrounding forest.
- The proposed tower would be approximately 25 feet taller than the existing telecommunications tower so that the antennas can reach above the forest canopy and provide sufficient cellular coverage to the developed area. This design meets the park's goal to provide better cellular service to the Canyon developed area while limiting spillover into the backcountry in accordance with the objectives of Yellowstone's Wireless Communications Services Plan.
- The new tower at Canyon would be camouflaged to ensure that it is not visible from the nearest Yellowstone road, which is one-half mile away. Cellular antennas on this structure would occupy only one of three possible sectors to limit spillover to the backcountry (Map 2). As determined by visual simulation testing, the proposed tower location is obscured from public view by distance and existing vegetation (see enclosed visual simulations).

Grant and Old Faithful

At Grant, a microwave antenna would be affixed to the existing telecommunications tower. At the Old Faithful developed area, existing leased telephone company data circuits will supply the towers with increased bandwidth for voice and data. These proposed telecommunications upgrades at Grant and Old Faithful would necessitate no ground disturbance (Map 4). Project specifications for these towers and structures and visual simulations are enclosed for your review.

Historic Properties:

The NPS has determined that the following cultural resources are within or near the area of potential effect: Yellowstone National Park has identified eight historic properties and/or properties determined eligible for nomination for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) within or near the APE for the proposed telecommunications infrastructure project, including one National Historic Landmark. These consist of the Grand Loop Road Historic District (48YE520), Mt. Washburn Fire Lookout (48YE946), Chittenden Road Historic District (48YE826), Canyon Service Area Historic District (48YE999), Fishing Bridge Museum National Historic Landmark (48YE686), Fishing Bridge Historic District (48YE675), the South Entrance Road Historic District (48YE823), and 48YE304, a prehistoric lithic scatter with a buried cultural level.

In addition, archaeological surveys of the direct APE were completed by the park between 1995 and 1998 that encompassed the direct APE for this project at the Canyon and Fishing Bridge developed areas. Based upon this work, we have identified one archaeological site in the immediate vicinity of the direct APE, specifically 48YE304, which is just north of the proposed footprint of the new tower at Fishing Bridge. Based on test excavations, 48YE304 was determined eligible for nomination to the NRHP under Criterion D. Although 48YE304 is not within the direct APE, the park plans to have a professional archaeologist meeting the Secretary of Interior's Standards monitoring all ground disturbing actions conducted for installation of this tower.

A brief summary description of each identified historic property is enclosed, as well as maps of the spatial relationship between the historic properties and the APE and visual simulations for each action. We have begun consultation with the Wyoming SHPO and our associated Native American tribes. The proposal will be open for public comment for 30 days. The NPS will continue to provide project information to you. If you have further questions or need more information, please contact Tobin Roop, Cultural Resources Branch Chief, at (307) 344-2224. Additional information regarding the project can be found at the NPS Planning, Environment & Public Comment website: <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/mtwashburn>.

Sincerely,

Daniel N. Wenk.
Superintendent

Enclosures: (All enclosures are available at: <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/mtwashburn>)

Summary Statement; Historic Properties within and adjacent to the APE

Map 1 - Mt. Washburn Historic Properties Map

Map 2 - Canyon Cell Tower Historic Properties Map

Map 3 - Fishing Bridge Historic Properties Map

Map 4 - Grant Collocation Historic Properties Map

Mt. Washburn Visual Simulations; Mt Washburn, Canyon, Fishing Bridge, Grant

Mt. Washburn Project Specifications; Mt Washburn, Canyon, Fishing Bridge, Grant

bcc (w/o enclosures)

Central Files

Supt. Files

Bret De Young

L Tobin Roop

Zehra Osman

Jennifer Carpenter

Alicia Murphy

Amy Palliente (electronic version only)

Lindsay Robb

Patrick Kenney

Nancy Ward

Mike Finken

Pete Webster

Tami Blackford

Beth Horton

Doug Madsen

Tom James

John Darr

Erik Oberg

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