



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of the Superintendent
47050 Generals Highway
Three Rivers, CA 93271-9651

(559) 565-3341 phone
(559) 565-3730 fax
<http://www.nps.gov/seki>

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

Scoping Notice

For Immediate Release – December 17, 2008

Contact Christine Smith: (559) 565-3105

The National Park Service is Requesting Comments from the Public for a Proposed Wireless Tower in Kings Canyon National Park

The National Park Service (NPS) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed construction of an eighty foot cellular tower on Park Ridge near Grant Grove within Kings Canyon National Park. The NPS is required by the Telecommunications Act of 1996 to consider all applications for the installation of cellular equipment on NPS lands. The EA will address alternatives in compliance with the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and NPS Reference Manual 53, for the proposed development including a no action alternative which would not permit construction of a wireless tower.

The National Park Service is soliciting input from organizations, agencies, and individuals as part of the scoping process. The purpose of scoping is to identify the range of issues to be addressed in the EA as well as potential alternatives for the project. The public is invited to direct concerns or comments regarding this project to the Park in writing by sending an e-mail to seki_planning@nps.gov, or through the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/seki>, or mailed to: Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Planning and Compliance Office, 47050 Generals Highway, Three Rivers, CA 93271-9651. Please include the phrase “Wireless Tower” at the top of your comment or in your e-mail subject line.

Scoping comments are requested by January 21, 2009. Once the scoping period concludes, all comments submitted will be considered, and a range of alternatives will be developed. The public, agencies, and other interested parties will have an opportunity to review and comment on the range of alternatives before they are finalized.

Before including an address, phone number, email address or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment including your personal identifying information may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Anonymous comments will not be accepted.

NEPA PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Anticipated Project Milestones (include):

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| • Project Initiation: | May 2008 | • Publication in Federal Register: | February 2009 |
| • Analysis & Consultation: | August 2008 | • Public Review of EA: | March 2009 |
| • Public Scoping: | December 2008 | • Final Decision Document: | May 2009 |
| • EA Preparation: | January 2009 | | |

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Background for the Proposed Wireless Tower in Kings Canyon National Park

Current Conditions on Park Ridge

Park Ridge is an established telecommunications site for Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Current structures on Park Ridge include:



Telecommunications equipment on Park Ridge *NPS photo archive*

- a 20' fire lookout tower
- a 10'x10' concrete block structure containing NPS communications equipment and back up power generator
- a 40' lattice tower with NPS telecommunications transmission equipment
- a 30' tower on top of the NPS communications equipment building, containing a passive reflector used for landline service operated by Verizon California
- an 8'x8' concrete block structure belonging to the United States Forest Service and containing USFS radio equipment and backup power generator
- a 40' lattice tower with USFS radio transmission equipment

Note: Both the USFS and Verizon California structures are installations which are managed under permit by the NPS.

Proposed Additions to Park Ridge

Verizon Wireless has submitted an application to the NPS proposing the construction of an eighty foot tower on Park Ridge in Kings Canyon National Park, in order to achieve their coverage objective which includes a portion of the Generals Highway and Highway 180 in the vicinity of the Grant Grove area.

The proposed issuance of a right-of-way permit by the NPS to Verizon Wireless would include an 80 foot tall monopole tower with panel antennas and microwave dishes. Ground radio equipment, associated air conditioning units and an emergency backup generator powered by propane fuel, stored in a prefabricated shelter approximately 12 feet x 30 feet in size. A 500 gallon propane tank would be installed on site to operate the generator.



Photo Simulation of view from Buena Vista trail provided by Verizon Wireless.

The project would impact approximately 25 feet x 58 feet of previously undisturbed land, leveling the surface and/or covering the surface with a matting foundation. Concrete foundations would be placed for the tower and service building. The disturbance would remove manzanita and chinquapin shrubs.

An access road is already in place to service the fire lookout tower and other telecommunications facilities that currently exist at Park Ridge. It is anticipated that no additional excavation of the access road would be necessary for either construction activities or subsequent maintenance of the new telecommunications facility.