



United States Department of Agriculture

TUSAYAN EAST WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS SITES

Finding of No Significant Impact & Decision Notice



Forest Service

Kaibab National Forest

Tusayan Ranger District

May 2016

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Tusayan East Wireless Communications Sites

Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

USDA Forest Service
Tusayan Ranger District
Kaibab National Forest
Coconino County, Arizona

Introduction

This Decision Notice (DN) documents my decision to implement Alternative 4, a 120 foot tall lattice tower at the Grandview Communications Site with all the other components of Alternative 2 (Proposed Action) for the Tusayan East Wireless Communications Sites Project and the reasons for my decision. I reached this decision after careful consideration of the alternatives analyzed in the Environmental Assessment (EA) and comments from the public, Tribes, and other agencies. The Forest Service (FS) prepared an EA for the Tusayan East Communications Sites Project in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant laws and regulations. The EA discloses the direct, indirect and cumulative environmental impacts that would result from the alternatives. Additional documentation, including more detailed analyses of project-area resources, may be found in the project record located at the Kaibab Forest Supervisors Office in Williams, AZ.

Background

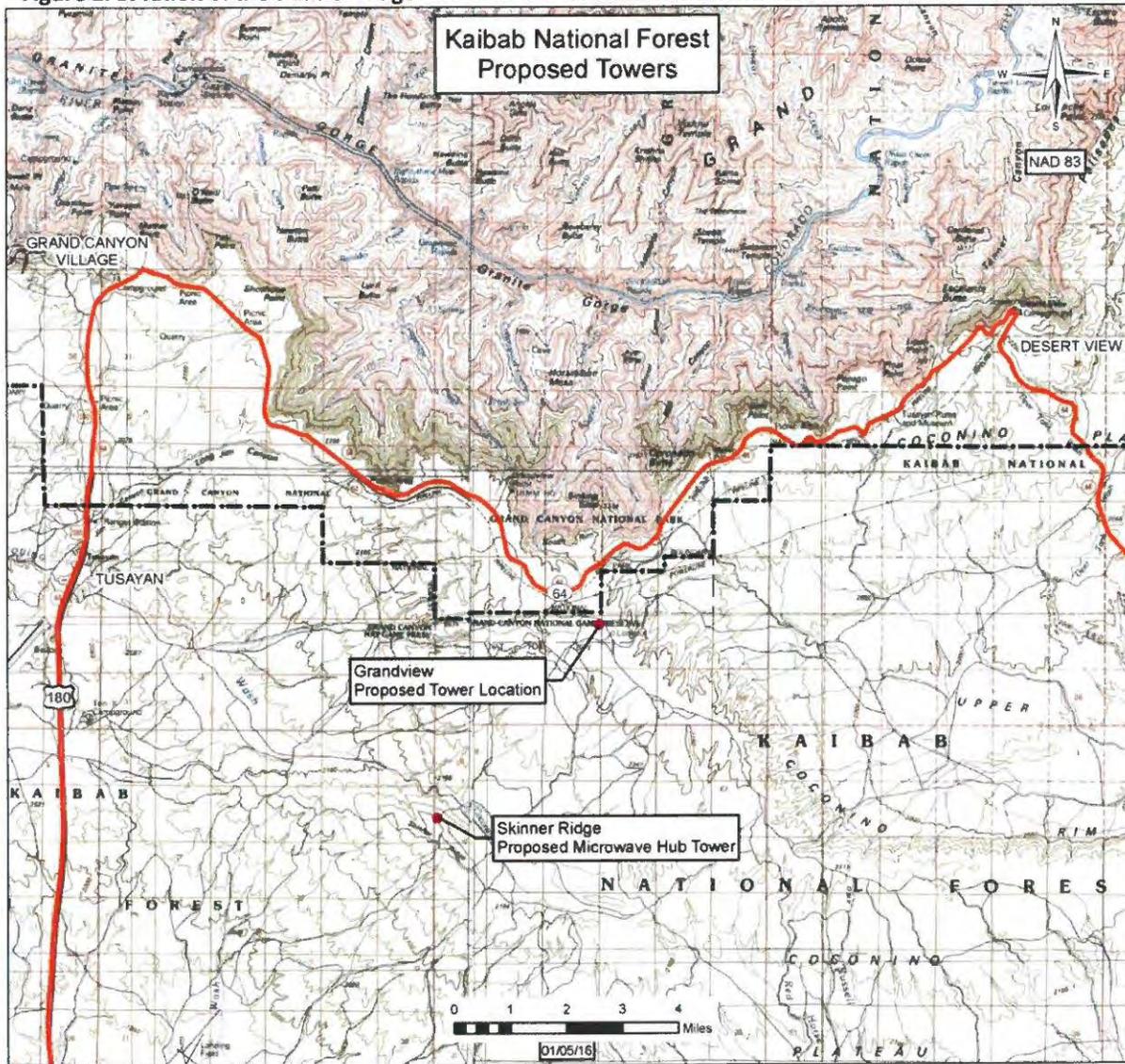
This decision authorizes establishment and construction of wireless and microwave communications tower facilities at the Skinner Ridge and Grandview communications sites on the Tusayan Ranger District on the Kaibab National Forest (KNF). This decision also includes the approval for issuance of a Special Use Authorization to DW Tower LLC for the use and maintenance of these facilities, and implementation of a Communications Site Management Plan.

In response to competitive interest expressed by other wireless industry facility providers to develop the proposed sites, KNF issued a prospectus in June of 2014 to solicit proposals from the wireless communications industry to improve wireless services in the Tusayan area and the SR 64 corridor. The prospectus offered the successful applicant(s) the opportunity to pursue an application for development of two new communications facilities located on the Tusayan Ranger District at sites identified in the Kaibab Forest Plan as proposed for such uses. In September 2014, KNF selected a proposal and awarded potential development opportunities for both sites to DW Tower LLC. The Communications Sites Facilities are located as follows:

Skinner Ridge Microwave Hub Site, within Section 7, T29N, R4E, Gila and Salt River Base Meridian, in the Tusayan Ranger District, KNF (Figure 1), and,

Grandview Wireless Communications Site, within Section 28, T30N, R4E, Gila and Salt River Base Meridian, in the Tusayan Ranger District, KNF (Figure 1)

Figure 1. Location of the Skinner Ridge Microwave Hub Communications Site.



Purpose and Need

This proposal is needed because the public and government agencies have come to expect reliable wireless telephone and internet service for general use and emergencies while traveling major transportation corridors and visiting major recreation destinations. The increasing use of evolving wireless technologies such as smart phones, tablets, and internet services provided by wireless carriers are creating need for additional communications facilities. The SR 64 corridor north of Valle on the KNF, through the Town of Tusayan and Grand Canyon National Park (GCNP) from Grand Canyon Village to Desert Tower (East Rim Drive) are currently not receiving adequate or reliable wireless service from any of the providers.

The Forest Service has been given direction from Congress and the President to facilitate implementation of the Nation's strategy for wireless communications. On August 10, 1995, President Clinton released a memorandum entitled "Facilitating Access to Federal Property for the Siting of Mobile Services Antennas." In this memorandum, the following is stated:

Upon request, and to the extent permitted by law and where practicable, executive departments and agencies shall make available, Federal Government buildings and lands for the siting of mobile service antennas.

On February 8, 1996, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 was enacted, giving further direction to Federal agencies. In response to the memorandum and the Telecommunications Act, the General Services Administration released a bulletin listed in the Federal Register on June 16, 1997, titled "Placement of Commercial Antennas on Federal Property." This bulletin provides general guidelines and processes for implementation of President Clinton's memorandum. Regarding granting of siting requests, the bulletin states:

Requests for the use of property, rights-of-way, and easements by duly authorized telecommunications service providers should be granted unless there are unavoidable conflicts with the department's or agency's mission, or current or planned use of the property or access to that property.

The Tusayan East Wireless Communications Sites project is a key component of a broad effort by the FCC licensed wireless carriers to design and implement new wireless communications facilities that would improve governmental and personal wireless communication services in the Town of Tusayan, KNF, and the SR 64 corridor through the GCNP south rim, where such services are currently not available and/or reliable. The proposed action responds to the need for additional colocation towers to provide antennae space for the FCC licensed carriers to broadcast and receive cellular telephone signals (coverage tower site) from the public and governmental users in the SR 64 corridor and Tusayan areas.

The Skinner Ridge Communications Facility is a key component of the developing regional wireless communications system. This tower site was selected due to its strategic location offering high elevation, lack of terrain obstructions, line of sight to existing microwave locations and planned wireless towers in the area. Skinner Ridge's primary purpose would be that of a microwave hub for the wireless carriers providing signal backhaul out of the GCNP and Tusayan areas to landline fiber optics in the Williams and Flagstaff areas.

Propagation studies and wireless customer complaints show that the area on the SR 64 corridor east of Grand Canyon Village to Desert View is currently not receiving adequate or reliable wireless service (see EA Chapter 3, Wireless Service Affected Environment).

The proposed Skinner Ridge facility located on National Forest System lands would provide a needed new link and paths to expand wireless backhaul capacity. Figure 2 shows how the proposed Skinner Ridge facility links the existing and planned tower sites in the Tusayan area with the carriers' switching facilities in Flagstaff. The proposed Skinner Ridge Tower would effectively supplement existing backhaul paths and provide an additional microwave link between existing and planned wireless sites in the Tusayan area with landline telephone systems.

The wireless industry plan for the area includes new coverage tower sites located on the SR 64 corridor from the Town of Tusayan east to Desert View, where current wireless service is unreliable or completely lacking. The proposed Grandview Cell Tower facility located on the KNF south of GCNP would provide wireless service to the SR 64 corridor between existing and planned towers at Grand Canyon South Rim Village and Desert View. The proposed Grandview tower would connect via microwave to the Skinner Ridge Microwave Tower. Figure 2 shows the location of the proposed Grandview Tower in relation to the other planned and existing tower sites in the Tusayan area.

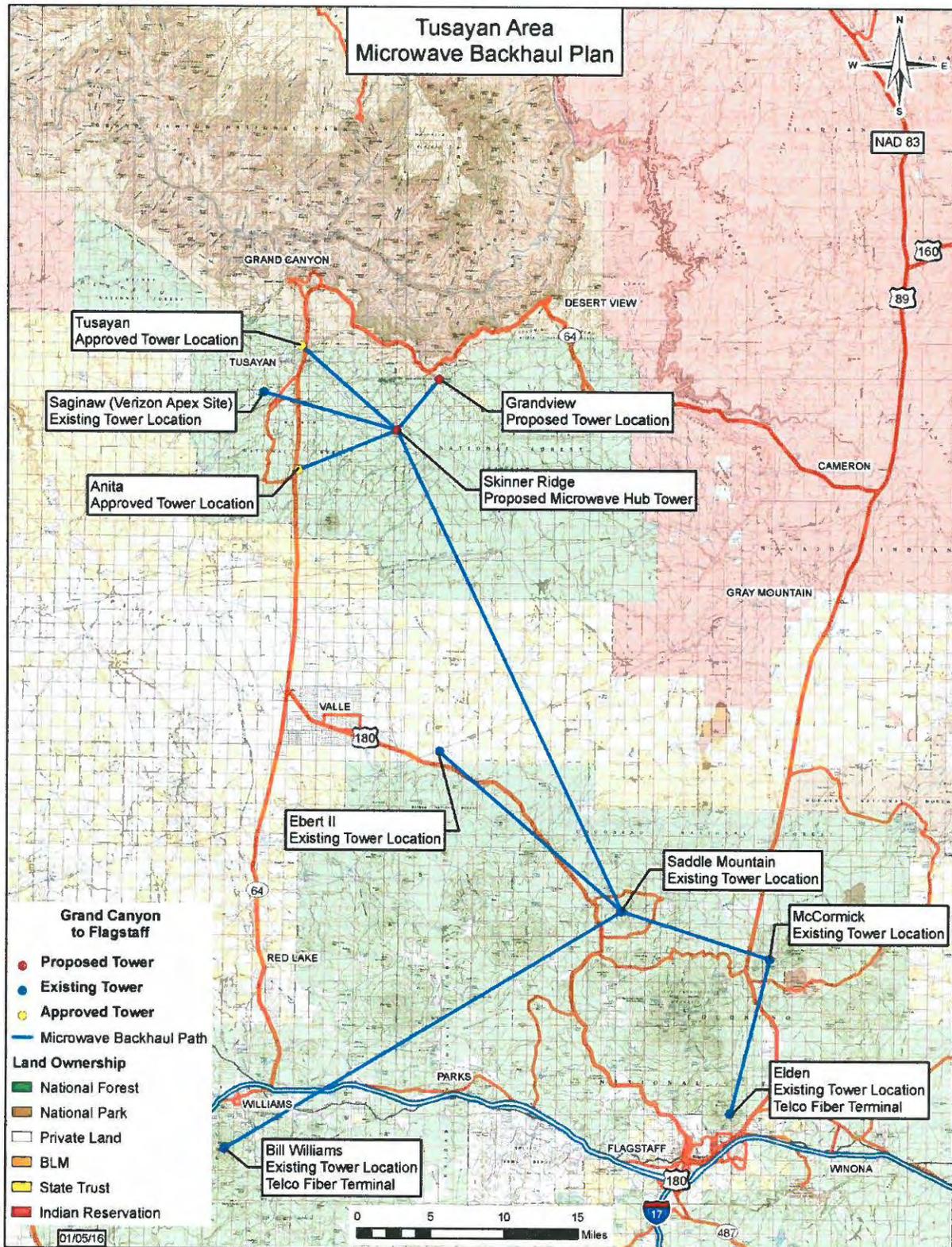


Figure 2 – Microwave Backhaul Map.

Alternatives Considered

Alternatives were assessed for their ability to reasonably respond to the purpose and need for action. This section describes, compares, and provides the rationale for each alternative identified and considered for the Tusayan East Wireless Communications Sites EA. This section defines the differences between each alternative, demonstrating the basis for choice that was provided to the decision maker and the public during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Alternatives are primarily compared based on design and effects to environmental, social and economic factors.

Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would mean that no towers or associated construction would be authorized at the proposed communications sites.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

Skinner Ridge Communications Site

The Skinner Ridge Communications Site is located within Section 7, T29N, and R4E Gila and Salt River Meridian (see Figure 1). Construction, operation, and maintenance of the site would include the following activities:

- Construction of a 125 foot tall self-supporting lattice tower. (Appendix C of the EA)
- Construction of a 60 foot by 12 foot radio equipment building. The building would have a maximum height of 10 foot. (Appendix C of the EA)
- Installation of a solar hybrid power system which would include solar panels and a generator. The proposed solar hybrid power system would be approximately 66 solar panels covering approximately 600 square feet at full build-out.
- The tower, equipment building, and solar power system would be enclosed in a 100 feet by 100 feet compound surrounded by a 6 foot tall chain link fence.
- Clearing of all vegetation within the 100 feet by 100 feet area (0.25 acre lease area).
- Issuance of a Forest Service Communications Site Lease to authorize construction and operation of the proposed facility for a 20 year term.
- Implementation of a Communications Site Management Plan.

Access Route

Proposed access to the site would be via FR 302 east from SR 64 in Tusayan for approximately 9 miles to FR 343 and east for approximately 1.5 miles to the top of Skinner Ridge, (see Figure 1). An existing primitive road FR 343G provides access close to the site approximately 340 feet to the northeast. A driveway, approximately 100 feet long connecting FR 343G and the site would be constructed. No new authorizations are anticipated for use of SR 64 or FR 302/343 as SR 64 is a State Highway and FR 302 and 343 are part of the KNF road system open to public use. Construction of the 100 foot long driveway would require authorization from KNF. The existing roads proposed for access (FR 302, 343, 343G) are of adequate standard for site construction and operational access.

Grandview Communications Site

The proposed Grandview communications facility would be located west of FR 310 approximately 380 feet to where trees would block views from the road, and areas east of the road (Coconino Rim

Roadless Area and the Arizona Trail), within Section 28, T30N, and R4E, Gila and Salt River Meridian (see Figure 1). Construction, operation, and maintenance of the site would include the following activities:

- Construction of a 110 foot tall free standing monopole tower (Appendix B of the EA).
- The site is designed to accommodate anticipated wireless communications needs within a 100 foot by 100 foot area for the foreseeable future.
- Construction of two radio equipment buildings approximately 24 feet by 25 feet in initial buildout. Buildings would be a maximum of 10 foot high. Two additional buildings approximately the same size could be added at full build out (Appendix B of the EA). There are currently four FCC licensed carriers active in this area. Full buildout would occur when remaining carriers budgeted for construction at this location.
- Power would be provided from an existing overhead distribution line located inside the GCNP, approximately 1 mile north of the tower site. The power would be run underground approximately 1,650 feet on GCNP land and 2,945 feet on National Forest System lands for a total of 4,595 feet south from the existing overhead power line within the existing road prism of FR 310 to FR 310F. The portion of the power line on National Forest System lands would follow existing KNF designated transportation corridors.
- The tower and equipment buildings would be enclosed in a 100 feet by 100 feet compound surrounded by a 6 foot tall chain link fence.
- Clearing of all vegetation within the 100 feet by 100 feet area (about 0.25 acre lease area) would be required.
- Issuance of a Forest Service Communications Site Lease to authorize construction and operation of the proposed facility for a 20 year term.
- Implementation of a Communications Site Management Plan

Access Route

Proposed access to the Grandview Site would be via SR 64 to FR 310 to FR 310F, (see Figure 1). Access requires travel on FR 310 inside GCNP. Use of that portion of the road would be coordinated and authorized with GCNP. No new authorizations are anticipated for use of SR 64 or FR 310 as SR 64 is a State Highway and FR 310 is part of the KNF road system open to public use. Access requires extension of FR 310G approximately 190 feet (maximum 0.1 acres of disturbance) and minor upgrading of approximately 400 linear feet of the existing two track road (FR 310F). The 400 feet of primitive road can be used "as is" except for minor re-construction to add aggregate road surfacing material and install drainage features to address potential soil erosion and ensure a firm driving surface. The lease holder would install drainage and erosion control features as part of use and extension of FR 310F road to ensure proper road drainage and reduce accelerated erosion and runoff. Upgrades of FR 310F and extension would require authorization by KNF as part of the lease. The existing Forest Road (FR 310) proposed for access is of adequate standard for site construction and operational access. Existing roads are generally not of adequate standard for construction, operation and maintenance of the proposed facility if wet conditions are present. The lease holder would not anticipate needing to perform regular snowplowing and therefore does not propose to upgrade or maintain the roads to all weather standards.

Alternative 3: A 110 Foot Tall Monopole Tree Tower at the Grandview Communications Site

Alternative 3 would use a 110 foot tall monopole simulated tree tower designed to look like a ponderosa pine tree. Alternative 3 is designed to respond to visual issues by disguising the tower to make it resemble a ponderosa pine tree so it blends with the surroundings. All other components

associated with the facility including equipment buildings, power, access, fencing, and compound size are identical to those proposed under Alternatives 2 and 4. The facility design concept is displayed in Appendix B of the EA. Construction, operation, and maintenance of the site would be the same as the activities listed in the Proposed Action. The proposed Skinner Ridge Communications Site facility would be the same as Alternative 2.

Alternative 4: A 120 Foot Tall Lattice Tower at the Grandview Communications Site

Alternative 4 would authorize construction of a 120 foot tall lattice tower at the Grandview Communications Site. It addresses Issue 4 that the 110 foot tower in the Proposed Action at Grandview is insufficient in height to fully meet wireless service objectives in that area; it represents the alternative that provides the most potential communications user colocation opportunities. The tower facility design concept is displayed in Appendix B of the EA. All other components associated with the facility including equipment buildings, power, access, fencing, and compound size are identical to those proposed under Alternatives 2 and 3 except that it would be a lattice tower design 120 feet tall. See Appendix A-2 in the EA for lattice design representation. Construction, operation, and maintenance of the Grandview and Skinner Ridge Communications Sites would be the same as the activities listed in the other action alternatives, except, that the Forest Service Communications Site Leases would be issued for a 30 year term instead of 20 years. Thirty years is the maximum timeframe a lease can be issued for.

Decision

Based on my review of the Tusayan East Wireless Communications Sites Environmental Assessment (EA), comments from the public, Tribes, and other agencies, I have decided to authorize construction of communication site facilities at the Skinner Ridge and Grandview sites as described under Alternative 4, a 120 foot tall lattice tower at the Grandview Communications Site and the other components of Alternative 2 (Proposed Action), from here on, referred to as the selected alternative. My decision will also authorize issuance of a Special Use Authorization to DW Tower LLC for the use and maintenance of these facilities.

Description of Approved Alternative

The selected alternative meets the purpose and need for the Tusayan East Wireless Communications Project because it will provide a needed new link and paths to expand wireless backhaul capacity by constructing the Skinner Ridge Communications Site. The Grandview Tower will provide wireless service to the SR 64 corridor between existing and planned towers at Grand Canyon South Rim Village and Desert View. The proposed Grandview tower will connect via microwave to the Skinner Ridge Microwave Tower.

The selected alternative includes the following:

Skinner Ridge Microwave Hub Site:

- a) Construction of a 125 foot tall self-supporting lattice tower.
- b) Construction of a 60 foot by 12 foot radio equipment building. The building will have a maximum height of 10 foot.
- c) Installation of a solar hybrid power system which will include solar panels and a backup propane powered generator. The solar hybrid power system will be approximately 66 solar panels covering approximately 600 square feet at full build-out (Appendix C of the EA).
- d) The tower, equipment building, and solar power system will be enclosed in a 100 feet by 100 feet compound by a 6 foot tall chain link fence.

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- e) Clearing of all vegetation within the 100 feet by 100 feet area (approximately 0.25 acre lease area).
 - f) Issuance of a Forest Service Communications Site Lease to authorize construction and operation of the proposed facility for a 30 year term.
 - g) Access to the site will be via FR 302 east from SR 64 in Tusayan for approximately 9 miles to FR 343 and east for approximately 1.5 miles to the top of Skinner Ridge. An existing primitive road, FR343G, provides access close to the site approximately 340 feet to the northeast. A driveway, approximately 100 feet long, connecting FR343G and the site will be constructed.

Grandview Wireless Communications Site:

- a) Construction of a 120 foot tall free standing lattice tower.
- b) Construction of a 60 foot by 12 foot radio equipment building. The building will have a maximum height of 10 foot.
- c) Power will be provided from an existing overhead distribution line inside the GCNP located approximately 1 mile north of the tower site.
- d) The power will be run underground approximately 4,595 feet from the existing overhead power line on FR 310 for 1,650 feet inside the GCNP. The power line will continue for 2,945 feet on National Forest System lands, to the communications facility following FR 310 to FR 310G. The underground distribution line will be placed in a conduit within the existing FR 310 road disturbance profile. All construction activities associated with installation of the underground power line will be confined to within the existing impacted FR 310 and FR 310G road prism. The portion of the power line occurring on NPS land will require separate authorization from the GCNP. Coordination between the Forest Service and the NPS has occurred throughout the process and will continue through implementation.
- e) The tower and equipment buildings will be enclosed in a 100 feet by 100 feet compound by a 6 foot tall chain link fence.
- f) Clearing of all vegetation within the 100 feet by 100 feet area (approximately 0.25 acre lease area) will be required.
- g) Issuance of a Forest Service Communications Site Lease to authorize construction and operation of the proposed facility for a 30 year term.
- h) Access to the site requires travel on FR 310 inside GCNP. Use of that portion of the road will be coordinated and authorized with GCNP. Access requires extension of FR 310G approximately 190 feet (maximum 0.1 acres of disturbance) and minor upgrading of approximately 400 linear feet of the existing two track road (FR 310F). The 400 feet of primitive road can be used "as is" except for minor re-construction to add road surfacing material and install drainage features to address potential soil erosion and ensure a firm driving surface. The lease holder will install drainage and erosion control features as part of use and extension of FR 310F road to ensure proper road drainage and reduce accelerated erosion and runoff. Upgrades of FR 310F and extension will require authorization by KNF as part of the lease.

Project Design Features

The following design criteria were developed to reduce impacts to scenery, biological resources, and soils:

Skinner Ridge Project Design Features

- All galvanized shiny surfaces including the tower, ice bridges, antennae support structures, and chain link fencing will be painted dark green or treated with a product called Natina Steel to mitigate shiny reflective surfaces on the tower and chain link fence. Natina Steel (a.k.a. galvanized metal stain) is used to create a rustic brown finish on galvanized surfaces that will not fade, crack, or peel over time from sun exposure. Natina Steel reacts with the zinc in galvanized metal and quickly (over 1 to 3 weeks depending on sunlight and heat intensity) creates a natural rustic brown patina to better blend galvanized surfaces/structures into surrounding terrains.
- The proposed tower is limited to 125 feet above ground height (AGL). This reduces the amount of tower above the tree canopy and thereby limits the locations where the tower can be seen in the immediate area of the tower, eliminates all or most long distance views of the tower, and eliminates the need for lighting required by the FAA. An FAA “Determination of no Hazard to Air Navigation” was made and received by DW Tower on April 23, 2013 verifying there will be no need for lights or other mitigation if the towers remain at or below the proposed heights.
- All microwave dishes and antennae will be painted a dark green color that matches the color of the forest canopy.
- The equipment shelters and compound will only have switch activated outdoor lighting that will be used only when necessary to perform emergency repairs or maintenance.
- The equipment shelter and propane tanks will be painted Forest Service (FS) dark brown. This color has been used by the FS on signs and buildings and blends in with the forest background well.
- The tower location is, for the most part, screened from views from FR 343 and the areas of concern by existing tree cover and vegetation. The proposed tower is located approximately 350 feet northeast of FR 343.

Grandview Project Design Features

- The tower height will be limited to 120 feet AGL, limiting the portion of the tower that will be silhouetted above the surrounding tree canopy in potential views from SR 64 and GCNP. In addition, the Grandview tower will not require lighting by the FAA. (FAA “Determination of No Hazard to air navigation” dated 10/28/14, verifying there would be no need for tower lights).
- All galvanized shiny surfaces including the tower, ice bridges, antennae support structures, and chain link fencing will be treated with a product called Natina Steel to mitigate shiny reflective surfaces on the tower and chain link fence.
- All microwave dishes and antennae will be painted a dark green color that matches the color of the forest canopy.
- The equipment shelters and propane tanks will be painted FS dark brown. This color blends in well with the forest background and has been used successfully many times on tower sites on National Forest System lands.
- To address dark sky concerns the equipment shelters and compound will only have shielded switch activated outdoor lighting that will be used only when necessary to perform emergency repairs or maintenance.
- The tower will be located approximately 380 feet west of FR 310 where trees will block views from FR 310.

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- The tower will be located approximately 1600 feet northwest of the Grandview Lookout facility and Arizona National Scenic Trail (see Figure 1). The tower location takes advantage of tree screening to limit potential views of the tower from the Grandview Lookout and cabin area, the trailhead, and from the Arizona National Scenic Trail west of Grandview. The communications tower will be visible from the top of the Grandview lookout tower, but not from ground level.
 - A common microwave system will be required at the Grandview Communications Site to reduce the number of dishes on the tower, thereby reducing the size of the tower and visual impacts.

Stipulations for Access Road Use for the Skinner Ridge Site

The lease holder will implement the following mitigation measures as part of any KNF authorization for use of FR 302, FR 343, and FR 343G.

- a) The lease holder will participate with the Forest Service, commensurate with use, in road maintenance activities in accordance with KNF standards to that portion of FR 302 and FR 343 that is used for communications site access. The lease holder will remedy any road damage caused by site construction or tenant access.
- b) The lease holder will maintain the 340 linear feet of FR 343G needed for access and the 100 foot long driveway in accordance with FS Southwestern Region 3 minimum standards for a single lane 12 foot wide fair weather road.
- c) In general, the FR 343G and the driveway will be re-shaped so that the centerline is crowned. The blading will proceed in an orderly fashion by successive passes with a grader parallel to the road centerline, progressing from the lower side to the upper side of the roadway and back across. In the process, all ruts shall be filled and a crown formed on the roadway creating a 12 foot wide travel surface.
- d) The lease holder would not anticipate needing to perform regular snowplowing and therefore does not propose to upgrade FR 343G to all weather standards or improve FR 302 and FR 343. If snowplowing is necessary because of an emergency repair situation, the KNF will be contacted and a case specific permit will be obtained from KNF by the lease holder.
- e) The lease holder will be responsible for repairing any road damage to FR 302, FR 343, or FR 343G resulting from emergency snowplowing or wet weather site access by the lease holder or tenants.
- f) The lease holder will contact KNF whenever winter access is needed for emergency maintenance. If the roads are snow free and firm, access will be via wheeled vehicles. If the roads are closed because of snow cover, access will be by over-snow vehicles only.
- g) The lease holder will install a gate in accordance with Forest Service specifications on FR 343G near the FR 343 if determined to be desirable by the Forest Service.

Stipulations for Access Road Use for Grandview Site

The lease holder will implement the following mitigation measures as part of any KNF authorization for use of FR 310 and FR 310F.

- a) The lease holder will participate with the Forest Service, commensurate with use, in road maintenance activities to that portion of FR 310 that is used for communications site access. The lease holder will remedy any road damage caused by site construction or tenant access.
- b) The lease holder will reconstruct and extend FR 310F by blading and installing drainage features; and by adding road surfacing material where needed to ensure a firm and stable travel way. In general, FR 310F would be re-shaped so that the centerline is crowned. The

blading will proceed in an orderly fashion by successive passes with a grader parallel to the road centerline, progressing from the lower side to the upper side of the roadway and back across. In the process, all ruts will be filled and a crown formed on the roadway.

- c) The lease holder will maintain FR 310F to FS Southwestern Region 3 minimum standards for a single lane fair weather road.
- d) The lease holder does not anticipate needing to perform regular snowplowing and therefore does not propose to upgrade the roads to all weather standards. If snowplowing is necessary because of an emergency repair situation, the KNF will be contacted and a case specific permit will be obtained by the lease holder.
- e) The lease holder will be responsible for repairing any road damage resulting from emergency snowplowing to access the communications site.
- f) The lease holder will contact KNF and GCNP whenever vehicular winter access is needed for emergency maintenance. If the roads are snow free and firm, access will be via wheeled vehicles. If the roads are closed because of snow cover, access will be by over-snow vehicles only.
- g) The lease holder will install a gate in accordance with Forest Service specifications on FR 310F at the intersection of FR 310 if determined to be desirable by the Forest Service.

Project Design Features for both Skinner Ridge and Grandview Design that Reduce Impacts to Wildlife

- The lease holder will monitor the construction site for goshawks. If a goshawk is seen it will be reported to KNF and appropriate measures will be stipulated by KNF and applied to construction activities.
- Tower design will incorporate features (no guy wires or lights) to minimize the risk of accidental collision into the tower by birds.
- The project will implement the following conservation measures for condors:
 1. At least one week prior to the beginning of any human project-related activity, a KNF biologist will contact the Peregrine Fund to identify condor locations and type of behavior or activity in or near the activity area. If multiple activities are undertaken within a similar timeframe, condor activity will be monitored by a biologist during that period. Educate all crews about the potential for condors to arrive on-site, and the appropriate actions to take. The lease holder would provide a qualified biologist to perform these tasks if approved by KNF.
 2. The need to alter implementation schedules, adjust work areas, or take other appropriate action will be evaluated by a forest biologist and applied when condor nesting near a project site becomes an issue, on a case-by-case basis. The important factor is rapid notification to avoid condor or human injury, and appropriate steps to allow project continuation without interfering with condor behavior.
 3. To prevent water contamination and potential condor poisoning, the district-approved vehicle fluid-leakage and spill plan will be adhered to. The plan will be reviewed by the district biologist for adequacy in addressing condors.
 4. If condors arrive and remain in, or very near, human activity areas, the following actions will be taken:
 - Elevate the awareness of crews working in the area of the potential for condors to visit an area.
 - Educate crews working in the area of potential visitation by condors and how to

respond.

- Project workers and supervisors will be instructed to avoid interaction with condors and to contact the appropriate personnel immediately if and when condor(s) occur at a project site.
- If a condor occurs at the project site, only federally permitted personnel will employ techniques to cause the condor to leave the site as necessary. The particular project activity will temporarily cease if injury of a condor is imminent until a biologist can assess the situation and determine the correct course of action.

Project sites will be cleaned up at the end of each work day (i.e., trash disposed of, scrap materials picked up) to minimize the likelihood of condors visiting the site. District staff will complete a site visit to ensure adequate clean-up measures.

5. A portion of the construction for the buried power line would occur on GCNP (1,650 feet). That portion of the project would require clearance and authorization by the NPS. Any design features or mitigation required for condors or other wildlife not addressed by Forest Service requirements will be included in NPS permitting and authorization. NPS will also be notified if there are sightings of wildlife that require agency notification and/or that could affect wildlife resources on the GCNP.

Project Design Features at both Skinner Ridge and Grandview that Reduce the Impacts of Noxious Weeds

- The lease holder will inventory and document noxious and invasive plant infestations before construction begins and report findings to the KNF.
- The lease holder will ensure that all construction equipment will be pressure washed to remove any soil or vegetative material before entering KNF lands
- The lease holder will inspect the roadway leading into the communication sites and communications area of disturbance annually during the growing season to detect establishment of invasive species.
- The lease holder will remove any invasive/noxious weed species infestations from the lease area and surrounding area of disturbance that become established after construction by implementing a treatment plan developed by the lease holder and approved by KNF.
- The lease holder will monitor the site for invasive/noxious weeds for 2 years following construction.
- For the portion of the buried power line project that would occur on GCNP (1,650 feet), applicable design features, mitigation, and onsite monitoring requirements would be stipulated through the NPS authorization, clearance and permitting process.

The EA and subsequent FONSI concluded that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was not needed because there will be no significant impacts

Decision Rationale

After review of the EA and the Response to Comments, I have determined that Alternative 4 best meets the purpose and need of the Tusayan East Wireless Communications Sites project.

Alternative 4 is the selected alternative because it will establish improved wireless communication and microwave backhaul capacity in the SR 64 corridor, including Tusayan and the East Rim Drive areas of the GCNP in a manner that: (1) is consistent with applicable laws, orders, standards, practices, and guidance, including the Forest Plan, and (2) protects environmental and visual

resources to the greatest extent practicable.

Alternative 4 was chosen because it meets the purpose and need, addresses important resource issues identified internally, by the ID Team, and during the comment period; and represents the best balance of social, economic, and environmental interests as identified through laws and regulations for special uses and resource protection.

Alternative 4 is responsive and compliant to the August 10, 1995 Congressional and Presidential memorandum, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and the General Services Administration's bulletin issued in the Federal Register on June 16, 1997, titled, "Placement of Commercial Antennas on Federal Property" to facilitate use of government lands and buildings for the siting of mobile service antennas. The bulletin encourages requests for the use of property, right-of-way, and easements by duly authorized telecommunications service providers to be granted, unless there are unavoidable conflicts with the department's or agency's mission, or current or planned use of the property or access to that property. The EA has not identified any conflicts with department or agency mission or current or planned use of the property.

Alternative 1-No Action does not authorize establishment and construction of the two communications sites, and represents no change from current condition. No additional wireless communications facilities will be constructed continuing the current state of poor to no wireless service in Tusayan and the SR 64 corridor, including the east rim drive area of GCNP.

I did not select Alternative 1 (No Action) for the following reasons:

1. The No Action Alternative – Alternative 1, does not meet the Purpose and Need for the project. Wireless personal communication services in Tusayan and along the SR 64 corridor are currently unavailable and/or unreliable, and Alternative 1 would do nothing to change this undesirable condition.
2. Implementing the No Action Alternative will result in continued none to poor wireless communication services in the area which could result in longer response time to emergency services and limited internet/cellular opportunities to the traveling and recreating public, and the surrounding rural area.

While all of the action alternatives considered and analyzed in the EA would meet the purpose and need to improve wireless communications in Tusayan and the SR 64 corridor, Alternative 4 is preferred over Alternatives 2 and 3 because it best addresses the issues as identified and analyzed in the EA.

Issue 1: Scenery may be degraded by new communication towers in the Grandview and Skinner Ridge viewsheds possibly conflicting with Scenery Management System Objectives for Scenic Attractiveness – Typical.

Issue 2: Scenery may be degraded by new communication towers in the Grandview and Skinner Ridge viewsheds conflicting with Scenery Management System for special status objectives Distance Zones – Foreground Concern Level Moderate.

Issue 3: Communications towers at Grandview and Skinner Ridge may not meet Scenic Integrity Objectives (SIO's) for a "high" classification because they would not be "visually subordinate" to the forest landscape as required.

Issue 4: Another wireless service provider and potential multi-user occupant is concerned that a lower antennae position at the proposed Grandview Tower might not provide adequate service, and that at least a 120 foot tall tower would be needed to provide satisfactory services. They asked that an alternative be considered for a taller tower.

I also considered these resources analyzed for visual effects in the EA:

-
1. Visual effects on the Arizona Trail.
 2. Visual effects on the Coconino Rim Roadless Area.
 3. Visual effects on the Grandview Lookout and Grandview Cabin Sites which are listed on the National Register for National Historic Places.
 4. Visual effects on the Red Butte Traditional Cultural Property (TCP).
 5. Visual effects to the Grand Canyon World Heritage Site and GCNP, including the East and West Rim Drives, Desert View Drive, the North Rim, the East Rim, Desert View Cultural Landscape, the historic Grand Canyon entrance on the south rim, and the portion of the buried power line on the Park.

The selected alternative addresses the effects to the visual resource and is most compliant with KNF Forest Plan direction for Scenic Integrity Objectives (SIO's) and Scenery Management System Objectives, (SMS) for landscape visibility categories that include Foreground Concern Level Moderate, and Highway Corridor SIO – High. (See Table 2.1, Comparison of Alternatives in the EA). Scenic Attractiveness Category Typical is compliant with the KNF Recreation Opportunity Spectrum and Scenery Management System Guidebook.

Skinner Ridge Site: The 125 foot tall lattice tower at Skinner Ridge is the same for all of the alternatives and meets SIO and SMS objectives with only minor deviation to the general landscape and is within tolerances for all of the SIO/SMS categories. Alternative 4 is consistent with Kaibab Forest Plan SIO objectives due to the use of mitigation measures to minimize visual impacts such as restricted height, colors, strategic location.

Meets objectives for SMS Scenic Attractiveness Category of Typical. The 120 foot tall lattice type tower in Alternative 4 has slightly more effect than Alternatives 2 and 3 in close-up views due to the additional height of the tower and wider profile. In long distance views from GCNP, the lattice tower appears least visible of the alternatives because of the open nature of the lattice tower and effects of light refraction.

Meets objectives for the SMS Landscape Visibility Moderate classification. This alternative has more effect than Alternatives 2 and 3 in close-up views due to less blending with the surrounding tree vegetation. The lattice tower may be less evident from long distance views from GCNP.

Highway Corridor Scenic Integrity Objectives (SIO) – This alternative creates the most visual deviation of the 3 action alternatives in close-up views and less deviation in the landscape in long distance views from GCNP. Mitigation includes restricted height, colors, strategic location.

Issue 4 – Wireless Service - Grandview – This tower best meets the purpose and need by providing higher and more antenna positions for wireless carriers and other communications uses.

Grand Canyon National Park – Grandview Communications Site

The communication tower would be least evident in long distance views from GCNP due to narrower or smaller tower components (legs, cross braces) with open spaces between and the greater effects of light refraction on those smaller components. This would be the least consistent alternative in regards to form, line, color, and texture of the surrounding landscape.

Cultural Resources - Grandview Communications Site

- a) **Effects to historic Grandview Lookout Tower**
- b) **Effects to historic Grandview Cabin**
- c) **Effects to Red Butte TCP**
- d) **Effects to East Rim Drive and Desert View Drive Cultural Landscapes.**

This tower is similar to Alternative 2, with no discernable difference at ground level viewing. It would create the most deviation in the view from the top of the stairs of the Grandview

Lookout Tower.

There is no effect to the Red Butte TCP as the towers are too distant to be detectable from the surrounding tree vegetation.

This alternative has the lowest, long distance visual impact as infrastructure recedes into the background reducing adverse effects at Grand Canyon overlooks along SR 64 (Est Rim Drive/Desert view Drive Cultural Landscape Areas.)

Recreation – Grandview Trail - Scenic Trails, Effects to the Arizona National Scenic Trail

This tower would only be visible in one location on the trail for a short duration for a typical hiker or mountain biker. The taller lattice tower is slightly more noticeable than the 110 monopole and more noticeable than the simulated tree tower.

Effects to the Coconino Rim Roadless Area – There would be no effect. Neither tower would be seen from the Coconino Rim.

Wildlife – There will be minor and short term disturbance effects from the eight to ten weeks of construction noise. Long term, there would be generator noise for five minutes once each month for equipment testing. Because the generators are located inside the equipment building, the noise is muted and would only be discernable from no more than a few hundred feet. Disturbance effects to wildlife would be negligible in the long term.

My decision is based on consideration of the best available science.

Public Involvement

The Forest Service consulted individuals, entities, tribes, and other Federal, State and local agencies during the development of the EA. The Proposed Action was provided to the public, Tribes, and other agencies for comment during scoping in January 2015. A total of 68 physical addresses received hard copy mailings.

In addition, the Forest conducted consultation with federally recognized tribes and scoping of tribal communities (See EA Chapter 4 - Consultation and Coordination). Several tribes voiced concerns over potential impacts to the Grand Canyon and the Red Butte Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) and were sent copies of the visual analysis upon request.

Agency comments were also received from the National Park Service at Grand Canyon National Park addressing concerns for visual effects to the National World Heritage Site, including West and East Rim Drives, Desert View Drive, North Rim, the East Rim and Desert View Cultural Landscapes and effects from the portion of the buried power line that would occur on the Park. The Park's concerns and comments were considered and included in the visual analysis, (see EA, Chapter 3).

One organization and one business commented. The interdisciplinary team reviewed and summarized all comments in a Scoping Report located in the project record. Several issues were identified based on the comments, and alternatives to address the issues were developed as a result of the public, Tribal, and agency scoping effort.

A list of those who were sent the Proposed Action, but did not provide comments or feedback, can be found in the project record. The project proposal was listed in the quarterly published and online versions of the Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) since April of 2015.

The selected alternative was developed internally with the help of the applicant, and based on public comments. Consultation letters were sent to the Havasupai Tribe, Hopi Tribe, Hualapai Tribe, the Navajo Nation, the Yavapai-Prescott, and the Pueblo of Zuni. There were no additional concerns beyond those expressed in scoping these were addressed in the analysis (i.e., Red Butte Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) and cultural resources). The analysis

determined no effect to the TCP or any physical cultural resources.

As part of the public involvement process, a 30-day comment period on the draft EA was initiated with a legal notice published in the Arizona Daily Sun on February 23, 2016, which ended on March 23, 2016. Two comments from the GCNP were received.

The GCNP asked that the visual simulation analysis be reviewed to confirm that the proposed Grandview Tower could only be seen from View Points 1, 2, and 3 along SR 64, and to add the clarification to the Final EA. The GCNP also asked that the historic entrance station at the GCNP and KNF boundary be identified and addressed in the Final EA.

The visual analysis was reviewed and additional information has been included in the Final EA Chapter 3 of the Visual Analysis that confirms that the only known potential views of the tower are from the general area of Photo Simulation View Points 1, 2, and 3.

The historic guard station at the boundary of the park and the forest on Forest Road 310 has been added to the Cultural Resources Section in Chapter 3 of the Final EA. The station is located opposite of the road from any construction activities and would not be affected by the project.

The comments made during the comment period are summarized in the Response to Comments document included in the project record.

Required by Other Laws or Regulations

The planning and decision making process for this EA was conducted in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, policies and plans. This section briefly describes my findings regarding the legal requirements most relevant to this decision.

National Environmental Policy Act. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to complete detailed analyses of proposed actions that significantly affect the quality of the human environment. The Act's requirement to prepare an environmental analysis is designed to provide decision-makers with a detailed accounting of the likely environmental effects of a proposed action prior to adoption and to inform the public of (and encourage comments on) such effects. The Final EA analyzes the alternatives and displays the environmental effects in conformance with NEPA standards. The procedural requirements of the NEPA have been followed.

National Forest Management Act. The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) amends the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (RPA) and sets forth the requirements for Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plans) for the National Forest System. The project was reviewed against the direction in the current Kaibab National Forest Land Management Plan (Forest Plan, 2014), and 36 CFR 219.17(b)(3). My decision is consistent with Forest Plan as documented in the resource sections in Chapter 3 of the EA and in "Rationale for My Decision". There is not a need to amend the Forest Plan to allow implementation of this decision.

The **Endangered Species Act (ESA)** (16 USC 1531 et seq.) requires that any action authorized by a Federal agency does not jeopardize the continued existence of a threatened or endangered species, or result in the destruction or adverse modification of the critical habitat of such species. Neither of the proposed Skinner Ridge or Grandview Communications Sites are located within designated Critical Habitat for any listed species. Both the Skinner Ridge or Grandview Communications sites are located within the nonessential experimental population area designated for the California condor. There is no suitable nesting habitat in the project vicinity. Design features that implement the Condor Conservation Measures are included at both sites. Proposed activities at both the Skinner Ridge and Grandview Communications Sites could have minimal effects during construction due to noise disturbance to the California condor, however, the

proposed communications sites are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the California condor because the population is a 10(j) population and the Condor Conservation Measures.

The selected alternative is consistent with the **Clean Air Act** because it is not anticipated to cause disproportionate adverse human health or environmental effects related to air quality. Any air quality impacts as a result of implementing this decision are not expected to exceed the Federal and State ambient air quality standards because impacts will be minimal, local, short term, and will not cause regional changes to air quality.

The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. All golden and bald eagles, regardless of status, are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Project activities at the Skinner Ridge and Grandview Communications Sites are not expected to cause any long term impact to bald or golden eagles or require a take statement under the Bald and Golden Eagle Act for either species. Potential minor effects that could occur from sporadic generator noise and short term disturbance during construction activities have been analyzed in the EA at page 92 – 94.

Forest Service Sensitive Species. Forest Service Sensitive Species considered in the analysis include the Northern Leopard Frog, Bald Eagle, Northern goshawk, Allen's lappet-browed bat, Pale Townsend's big-eared bat, spotted bat, and burrowing owl. Sensitive plants considered include the Arizona phlox, Mt. Dellenbaugh sandwort, Tusayan (Disturbed) rabbitbrush, Arizona leather flower and Grand Canyon Rose. As disclosed in Chapter 3 of the EA, pages 95 – 102 the project activities associated with this decision are not expected to impact Northern Leopard Frog, Bald Eagle, Northern goshawk, or burrowing owl. The project may impact individual bats of all three species considered, but are not likely to cause a trend toward listing or loss of viability. The project will have no effect on sensitive plants, as no sensitive plants are found on the project site.

Management Indicator Species. The wildlife section of Chapter 3, pages 102 and 103 in the EA contains descriptions of each of the management indicator species (MIS) identified for consideration, which include the Grace's warbler and the western bluebird. Vegetation clearing actions were considered for effects on these species. Due to the small area to be cleared actions associated with this decision will not result in changes to MIS forest-wide population or habitat trends.

Executive Order 13186 (Migratory Birds) requires that an analysis be made of the effects of Forest Service actions on Bird Species of Concern listed by Partners in Flight (PIF), important bird areas (IBA) identified by PIF, and important over-wintering areas. The project is not located within a designated Important Bird Area (IBA). However, all of the GCNP is a Globally Important Bird Area located north of the project. It is also an important raptor migration passageway.

No important over-wintering areas are located within or near the project.

The wildlife specialist analyzed the effects of the communications sites and towers on migratory bird species and found that the clearing of the tree vegetation to be done at the sites in the selected alternative could potentially result in incidental take of the black-throated gray warbler and pinyon jay if the trees contain a nest. It is unlikely that more than one nest per species could occur in this small area due to bird territory size.

Birds can collide with any man made structure when in flight, including buildings, towers, fences, and vehicles. Alternative 4 meets USFWS communication tower guidelines to minimize impacts to birds, including self-supporting (no guy wires) towers, co-location of facilities, and minimizing vegetative clearing through facility positioning. Both of the proposed facilities would be fenced. Neither proposed tower would have lighting, so the hazard of night time collisions is minimal. The species of concern that are at risk of collision are the night-migratory songbirds:

Cordilleran flycatcher, olive-sided warbler, and Grace's warbler. Due to the relatively short height of the proposed towers, there is a lower risk of collision when compared to tall (500 feet or taller) towers. No mortality is expected at the proposed Skinner Ridge Tower or the proposed Grandview tower based on multi-year monitoring of six similar communication towers (un-guyed, unlit towers) in northern Arizona that reported zero to a small fraction of fatalities per tower per year. (Derby 2006).

One snag greater than 15" dbh (diameter at breast height) would be cut at the proposed Skinner Ridge Site. No cavities were observed in it or any trees that would be cut so it is unlikely that any incidental take would occur for the juniper titmouse (an obligate cavity nester). None of the other species would be impacted because they are associated with habitat that is not affected by the project at either proposed communications site. Tower design would incorporate features (no guy wires) to minimize the risk of accidental collision into the tower by birds.

There is a possibility of unintentional take of individuals, but these sporadic incidents, should they occur, would not lead to a decline in migratory bird populations.

Archeological Resources Protection Act; American Indian Religious Freedom Act; Executive Order 11593 (Cultural Resources), and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires Federal agencies to consider the potential effects of an agency decision on historic, architectural, or archaeological resources that are eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and to afford the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment. Potential impacts to archaeological and historic resources have been evaluated in compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA. Based on the resource protection measures the selected alternative will have no adverse effect on cultural properties and values. The Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has been consulted and concurred with the determination of no adverse effect on January 11, 2016.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

After considering the environmental effects described in the EA, I have determined that the actions described in the selected alternative will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human, biological, or physical environment, considering the intensity or severity of impacts within the context of the communications sites. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. As required by NEPA, I evaluated the selected alternative in both its context and intensity. The following is my rationale for reaching a FONSI determination after considering the factors required for significance of intensity determinations under 40 CFR 1508.27:

Context

I have determined that the selected alternative is limited in context. The Forest is approximately 1.6 million acres. The activities described in the selected alternative would be confined to approximately 0.7 acres of ground disturbing activity on the Forest, or a little less than .01% of the Forest's land base. Furthermore, the portion of the Forest where the communications sites occur includes no natural water or wetland features, and few wildlife concerns. Effects were considered on the GCNP north of the project, and on important historical sites near the Grandview Tower site, and were determined to be minor and not substantial. The ground disturbing effects from this project will primarily be localized to the two communication sites. Visual landscapes, aesthetic and cultural were considered and analyzed in detail. The visual effects from the project on the landscapes are minor and not substantial when the entire visual landscape is considered, and design features have been included to additionally lessen any minor effects identified.

Intensity

My decision to authorize construction and permitting of the Skinner Ridge and Grandview Communications Sites is a site-specific action that by itself does not make international, national,

regional or statewide decisions. The scope of the selected alternative is specific to the communications sites. The following discussion is organized around the ten intensity factors described in the NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1508.27) as they pertain to the context of the Tusayan East Wireless Communications Sites under the selected alternative:

1. Neither beneficial nor adverse effects are significant.

Direct, indirect and cumulative effects of the communications sites activities on various resources are disclosed and discussed in Chapter 3 of the EA (pages 32 - 120) and the associated project record. This decision is based on consideration of the effects to visuals and other resources on the Forest and the nearby GCNP, and Tribal concerns. With proper mitigation and design features, effects to the visual resource on the Forest and GCNP, wildlife or other resources on the area near the communications sites and in the surrounding visual landscape are minor and not substantial. Although there are some potential effects to resources as described in the EA (pages 32-120), they are not expected to be significant.

2. There will be no significant effects on public health and safety.

The selected alternative is not expected to affect public health and safety because no long-term public safety problems are anticipated from implementing the selected alternative. No broad public health or safety issues were raised during the scoping or analysis processes, and no unusual actions are proposed that might lead to issues within the project boundary. Communication with emergency services and recreating public on the Forest and GCNP will be enhanced, improving public health and safety.

3. There will be no significant effects on the unique characteristics of the area, such as historic or cultural resources, designated park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers or ecologically critical areas (research natural areas).

The selected alternative will not cause any loss or destruction of historic resources, cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers or ecologically critical areas. There are no designated park lands or prime farmlands in the communications sites.

The boundary with GCNP is near the Grandview Tower site, and a buried power line will be installed in an existing roadway within the park. Because the construction of the powerline would be coordinated with GCNP, no impacts are expected. Coordination with the GCNP has occurred throughout the process, and the analysis thoroughly considered potential impacts to GCNP resources.

Historic and cultural resources are numerous on the Forest and are present near the communications sites, including the Grandview Fire Lookout Tower and Cabin, the Red Butte Traditional Cultural Property, and the associated Cultural Resource Visual Landscapes. These resources were thoroughly considered and analyzed for effects and because the extent of the ground disturbance is low and the footprint of the project site has had complete survey, it was determined that this decision will result in no adverse effects to historic and cultural resources identified on or near the communications sites (pages 113-117 of EA). The Arizona State Historic Preservation Office concurred with the Forest's assessment (page 99 of EA).

There are no wetlands, wild and scenic rivers or ecologically critical areas on the communications sites. The selected alternative will not cause significant effects to the unique characteristics of the area.

4. The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial.

The effects of implementing this proposal on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial. Expected environmental effects were analyzed and disclosed in Chapter 3 of the EA (pages 32-120). This analysis represents the judgment and expertise of natural resource management professionals. Though some members of the public are opposed to cell towers on public lands, this action is not highly controversial within the scientific context of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Furthermore, there is little controversy on this specific proposal as to the effects on the quality of the human environment. The degree of possible effects on the human environment is not highly uncertain, nor are there unique or unknown risks involved.

The effects of communications sites are well known. The effects described in the EA (pages 32-120) represent the judgment of experienced natural resource management professionals using the best available scientific and commercial information.

5. The degree of possible effects on the human environment is not highly uncertain, nor are there unique or unknown risks involved.

The effects of the selected alternative on the human environment are not highly uncertain, nor do they involve unique or unknown risks. The effects described in the EA (pages 32-120) represent the judgment of experienced natural resource management professionals using the best available scientific and commercial information.

6. The action is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects.

The selected alternative is not precedent-setting, and establishment and maintenance of communications sites is a routine activity. The Agency has considerable experience with communication towers like the ones proposed. The analysis shows the effects are not uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risk, and does not represent a precedent for land use. This decision does not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. Any future actions not authorized by this decision will be evaluated through the NEPA process with opportunities for public comment and administrative review.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

The cumulative impacts to different resource areas are discussed and disclosed in Chapter 3 of the EA (pages 32 - 120). None of the effects are determined to be cumulatively significant. This decision will allow for more effective, efficient and beneficial wireless services in the area. While this decision may include impacts to some resources, these impacts are not expected to result in a cumulatively significant impact due to the mitigation and design features incorporated to reduce effects and place the towers in strategic locations to minimize visual effects.

8. The action will have no significant adverse effect on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Historic and prehistoric resources are numerous on the Kaibab National Forest and occur within and near the communications sites area, and known cultural resource concerns associated with communications sites in the area such as the Grandview Lookout Tower and

Cabin and the Red Butte Traditional Cultural Property and the visual landscapes associated with these features were considered in the analysis in the EA (pages 113 – 117). The selected alternative will not have an adverse effect on significant scientific, cultural or historic resources. The Arizona State Historical Preservation Office concurred with the Forest’s assessment that the selected alternative will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in, or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This concurrence is documented in the project record.

9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

The Kaibab National Forest’s wildlife specialist investigated the potential effects of the selected alternative to endangered, threatened, proposed, and candidate species and proposed and designated habitat (page 81 - 105). No endangered, threatened, proposed, or candidate species or proposed or designated habitat occurs on the communications sites; however, potential effects were considered for condors, bald and golden eagles, goshawks and several bat species. This decision is not expected to result in impacts to any endangered, threatened, proposed, or candidate species or proposed or designated critical habitat. If condor, goshawk or eagles should be observed in the area, numerous safeguards and mitigation actions have been included that direct actions to be taken and notifications of the proper agencies, including the nearby GCNP, to be made.

10. The action will not violate any Federal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

The selected alternative is consistent with applicable Federal, State, and local laws for protecting the environment. The selected alternative fully complies with KNF Forest Plan. More information on relevant laws and regulations are discussed in the “Required by Other Laws and Regulations” section of this notice.

Forest Plan Consistency

My decision on this project is based on a review of the record that shows consideration of relevant scientific information, best available science, including responsible opposing views, and as appropriate, the acknowledgement of incomplete or unavailable information, scientific uncertainty, and risk. This decision is consistent with the desired condition, standards, and guidelines of the Kaibab National Forest Plan.

As required by NFMA Section 1604(i), I find this project to be consistent with the Forest Plan.

Administrative Review Opportunities

Objection under 36 CFR 218

The Tusayan East Wireless Communications Project implements a project consistent with an existing land management plan and is not authorized by HFRA; thus it is subject to 36 CFR 218 subparts A and B. Objections, including attachments, must be in writing and filed (regular mail, fax, e-mail, hand-delivery, express delivery, or messenger service) with the Objection Reviewing Officer (36 CFR 218.8) within 45 days following the date of publication of a legal notice announcing the Opportunity to Object in the Arizona Daily Sun. The publication date of the legal notice in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection (36 CFR 218.5 (c)). Those wishing to object should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Objections will only be accepted from those who have previously submitted specific written

comments during designated opportunities for public comment (36 CFR 218.5(a)). Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted specific written comments regarding the proposed project or activity and attributed to the objector, unless the issue is based on new information that arose after the opportunities to comment (36 CFR 218.8 (c)).

Objections must meet content requirements of 36 CFR 218.8(d) and include:

- (1) Objector's name and address as defined in §218.2, with a telephone number, if available;
- (2) Signature or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for electronic mail may be filed with the objection);
- (3) When multiple names are listed on an objection, identification of the lead objector as defined in §218.2. Verification of the identity of the lead objector must be provided upon request or the reviewing officer will designate a lead objector as provided in §218.5(d);
- (4) The name of the proposed project, the name and title of the responsible official, and the name(s) of the national forest(s) and/or ranger district(s) on which the proposed project will be implemented;
- (5) A description of those aspects of the proposed project addressed by the objection, including specific issues related to the proposed project; if applicable, how the objector believes the environmental analysis or draft decision specifically violates law, regulation, or policy; suggested remedies that would resolve the objection; supporting reasons for the reviewing officer to consider; and
- (6) A statement that demonstrates the connection between prior specific written comments on the particular proposed project or activity and the content of the objection, unless the objection concerns an issue that arose after the designated opportunities for comment (see paragraph (c) of this section).

Objections, including attachments, may be filed by mail, hand-delivery, express delivery, or messenger service (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., excluding holidays) to:

Regional Forester, Cal Joyner (Reviewing Officer) Attn: Objections, Tusayan East Wireless Communications Project, US Forest Service, Southwestern Region, 333 Broadway SE, Albuquerque, NM 87102, Via fax: (505) 842-3800, or in electronic format via e-mail to: objections-southwestern-kaibab@fs.fed.us. Electronically filed objections must be submitted in a format such as an e-mail message, Word (.doc), rich text format (.rtf), plain text (.txt), portable document format (.pdf), or hypertext markup language (.html) formats. Please include "Tusayan East Wireless Communications Project" as the subject matter in the correspondence heading.

Objections, including names and addresses, will become part of the public record and may be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

Incorporation of documents by reference is permitted only as provided in §218.8(b). It is the objector's responsibility to ensure timely filing of a written objection with the reviewing officer pursuant to §218.9. All objections are available for public inspection during and after the objection process.

Project Implementation

Implementation of the project may begin on or after five business days following signing of the decision if there is no objection. Some project activities occur on NPS jurisdiction and require NPS permitting. Those activities will be coordinated in advance with the NPS and scheduled accordingly. •

Copies of the Environmental Assessment and Contact for Further Information

Copies of the EA are available from the Kaibab Forest Supervisors Office, Williams, Arizona 86046-9122. Electronic versions of the EA as well as other project record related documents are available online at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=46212>.

Conclusion

On the basis of the information and analysis contained in the EA and all other information available as summarized above, it is my determination that adoption of the management direction reflected in my decision does not result in significant impacts.

Contact Person

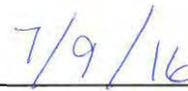
Additional information regarding the Tusayan East Wireless Communications Sites project can be obtained from Sheila Sandusky, Realty Specialist, Kaibab National Forest by mail at 800 South 6th Street, Williams, AZ 86046, by phone: (928)635-8200, or via email at ssandusky@fs.fed.us

Responsible Official's Decision

Through my signature, I am making the decision to implement Alternative 4, a 120 foot tall lattice tower at the Grandview Communications Site with all the other components of Alternative 2 (Proposed Action), as described in the Environmental Assessment for the Tusayan East Wireless Communications Sites project and summarized in this Decision Notice.



HEATHER PROVENCIO
Forest Supervisor
Kaibab National Forest



Date

References

Derby, C.

2006 Bird and Bat Fatality Monitoring of Six Un-guyed, Unlit Cellular Telecommunication Towers within the Coconino and Prescott National Forests, Arizona: 2006 Season Results. Western EcoSystems Technology, Inc. Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001.