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Contact Adrienne Freeman: (559) 565-3131

Wireless Communications Tower Approved at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

Pacific West Regional Director Jonathan Jarvis has approved the installation of a wireless telecommunications facility on Park Ridge, near Grant Grove, within Kings Canyon National Park.

The environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed project was available this summer for a 30-day public review and comment. The EA analyzed two alternatives, including the no action alternative. The selected alternative is the installation of the telecommunications facility, including an 80-foot-tall monopole tower with antennas, a prefabricated single-story building beside the tower for equipment storage, and a stand-by generator. The tower will provide wireless communication and internet coverage along a portion of the Generals Highway and State Highway 180 in the vicinity of Grant Grove, Grant Grove Village and Wilsonia in Kings Canyon National Park, and to some remote areas within the park and the surrounding Sequoia National Forest. Cell phone coverage in the area will likely lead to improved communications for National Park Service operations, and may result in improved visitor and resident safety.

The National Park Service (NPS) is required by the Telecommunications Act of 1996 to consider all applications for the installation of cellular equipment on NPS lands. The NPS is currently preparing the permit for the telecommunications facility. Once the permit is finalized, Verizon hopes to install the cellular tower in spring 2010.

Both the EA and FONSI are available online at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/seki>.
Printed versions are available by contacting Environmental Protection Specialist Nancy Hendricks at 559-565-3102 or by email at SEKI_Planning@nps.gov.

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