



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Canyon Lakes
Ranger District

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Date: January 11, 2009

Greg Vickerman
Director, Technology Services Department
Larimer County Government
PO Box 1190
Fort Collins, CO 80522-1190

Dear Mr. Vickerman:

As requested in your letter of December 8, 2009, the Forest Service will resume processing the County's application for a new public safety radio communication site on Middle Bald Mountain. My understanding from your letter and county meetings is that the County would first like to conduct engineering studies to obtain cost estimates before moving forward with the larger National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis of designating a communication site on Middle Bald Mountain.

With that in mind, the County should complete and submit an application (enclosed) for a special use permit to conduct those studies. To be efficient, I would evaluate issuing one permit to authorize the range of studies and associated activities you might chose to perform. I can anticipate that the County might want to gather cost information related to the following:

- Specific building location (a change in site substrate could affect cost)
- Tower location (similar to the above)
- Tower anchoring requirements and methods
- Communication site access route and the standard needed for construction, operations, and maintenance
- Power line route and type of construction (i.e. buried line or overhead line)

To facilitate processing an application for studies related to the above, when completing the application describe the activities you would like to perform, particularly if they are ground disturbing. Please be specific about the type of data to be collected; when you would like to conduct the studies; the type of equipment to be used; access routes required to gather the data; and any ground or vegetation disturbing activities anticipated during these studies (e.g. soil sampling or rock boring). Keep in mind that data gathered during the engineering studies could be used in the larger NEPA analysis.

Additionally, scoping comments received in 2007 and 2008 identified a possible alternative site location—that of going up the Poudre Canyon. As a result, the County might want to obtain cost information for establishing a series of communication points within Poudre Canyon. If you anticipate needing to gather any information on National Forest System land within the canyon, those activities can also be described in your special use permit application.



Please be advised that under current regulations, a cost recovery fee will be assessed for Forest Service staff time needed to process the engineering studies application. A separate cost recovery fee will be determined for the larger NEPA project should the County chose to move forward with that process.

If, after analyzing the data from the engineering studies, the County chooses to proceed with the NEPA analysis for designating a communication site on Middle Bald Mountain, we will assist the County in developing a Statement of Work and deliverables for a third-party NEPA contractor. That Statement of Work will need to include a new scoping effort and a review of past information and data for inclusion in the analysis.

For your information, to date we have not been provided with all of the biological and other resource data that was collected in 2008. Some of that data likely could be used for required specialist analysis for authorization of the engineering studies or for the larger NEPA project. If we do not obtain the data or it is not available, it will have to be reacquired either by our specialists or by other qualified resource specialists.

I look forward to coordinating with the County as we move forward with the processing of your application. Please contact Carol Kruse at 970-295-6663 with any questions regarding the application process or the overall project.

Sincerely,



KEVIN W. ATCHLEY
District Ranger

Enclosure

cc: Oscar Martinez, Karen Roth, Carol Kruse