



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 61409
Vancouver, WA 98666-1409

TRANSMISSION SERVICES

February 8, 2019

In reply refer to: TEP-CSB-2

To: People interested in the Willow Creek Summit and Windy Devil Communication Station Project

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to develop two communication stations in Custer County, Idaho – one near the existing Willow Creek Summit Communication Site on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and one near the existing Windy Devil Communication Site on US Forest Service (USFS) land. This letter explains the proposal, outlines the environmental review process and schedule, and requests your comments.

Proposal: At Willow Creek Summit in the BLM's Challis Field Office unit, BPA would partner with Custer Telephone Cooperative, Inc. (CTCI) to build a 0.5-acre communication station consisting of an equipment building, a 100-foot tall steel-lattice tower, a propane fuel storage pad, and about 3-miles of fiber optic cable buried along the existing access road. The station would be located adjacent to existing similar communication facilities.

At the USFS Windy Devil site in the Salmon-Challis National Forest's Lost River Ranger District, BPA would build a communication station similar to the one at Willow Creek—a 0.5-acre station with an equipment building, an 80-foot tall steel-lattice tower, a propane fuel storage pad, and improvements to about 1-mile of existing access road. The station would be located about 1,600 feet from existing communication facilities at Windy Devil.

Line-of-sight microwave data transmission paths would be maintained (trees would be removed where needed) between the new stations and another communication station and electric substation in the area (Grouse Peak Communication Station and Lost River Substation).

USFS and BLM offices are reviewing the permit applications for the project from BPA and CTCI. The communication stations would help transmit BPA's VHF radio communications for two-way hand-held radios operated by field personnel in the area, as well as provide for electrical transmission system communications. The project would decrease the chance for radio communication loss in emergencies and during regular electrical transmission system operation and maintenance.

Environmental Review: To understand the potential environmental impacts of the proposal, BPA, in coordination with the BLM, is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA). The analysis will be used by the agencies to help make decisions regarding the proposal. The EA will describe anticipated impacts to natural and human resources and include mitigation measures that would help avoid or minimize impacts. We are asking for your comments to help determine the issues that should be addressed in the

EA. Potential issues identified to date include Priority sage grouse habitat, wintering elk habitat, vegetation including trees, and viewsheds. The proposed schedule for the EA process is as follows:

Comment scoping period	February 8, 2019 – March 8, 2019
Draft EA available for public comment	Late summer 2019
Final EA	Spring 2020
Finding of No Significant Impact (if warranted)	Spring 2020
If decision to build, construction start	Summer 2020

How to Comment: Let us know if you have concerns about particular resources, or questions about the project. We will consider information we receive to help develop the EA. Please send your comments by **March 8, 2019** and **reference the Willow Creek Summit and Windy Devil Communication Stations**. All comments will be available on the project website at www.bpa.gov/goto/WillowCreekWindyDevil. Choose the way you would like to comment:

Mail:	Bonneville Power Administration Public Affairs – DKE-7 P.O. Box 14428 Portland, OR 97291-4428	Toll-free: 800-622-4519 FAX: 503-230-4019 Online: www.bpa.gov/comment
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Please indicate on the enclosed postcard whether or how you would like to receive the EA when it is available.

For More Information: If you have questions about the project, please call Charley Majors at 360-619-6683, or vcmajors@bpa.gov, or toll free at 800-282-3713. If you have questions regarding the environmental review, please contact Mike O’Connell, Environmental Protection Specialist, at 503-230-7692, or mjoconnell@bpa.gov.

Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,

/s/ V. Charley Majors

V. Charley Majors
Transmission Project Manager

Enclosures:

- Project Map
- Comment Form
- Return Envelope
- Reply Card