



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Coconino  
National Forest,  
Supervisor's Office

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Flagstaff, AZ 86001-2529  
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File Code: 1950-1

Date: August 3, 2004

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed is the Lowell Observatory's Discovery Channel Telescope Environmental Assessment for your review and comment.

The proposed action best meets and is consistent with Lowell Observatory's stated mission. Very few sites within the continental United States possess the essential characteristics that would justify the cost of building and operating a modern telescope. This site has demonstrated an extraordinary combination of astronomically related qualities, access to nearby existing infrastructure, and the ability to use previously disturbed land. The astronomical qualities include exceptionally clean unpolluted air, stable atmospheric conditions thousands of feet above the site, dark skies, and numerous clear nights. In addition, the proximity of a paved road, electrical power, and the opportunity to share facilities at the Happy Jack Ranger Station reduces the cost of development and disturbance of new land.

Mitigation measures and project design have been developed to minimize or remove negative environmental effects. For the reasons above, I am considering the proposed action as my Preferred Alternative. I have not yet made a decision on this proposed project.

This is considered the official Notice and Comment period for this project, per 36 CFR Part 215.3(a). If we do not receive any substantive comments or if we receive only supportive comments, there will be no appeal period following the completion of the EA and my subsequent decision (36 CFR 215.12(1)). Public comments (written, oral, facsimile, hand-delivered or electronic) on the Environmental Assessment will be accepted for 30 days following the date of publication of a legal notice in the Arizona Daily Sun. You must provide substantive comments during this official 30-day comment period, as described above, to have standing to appeal the decision when it is made. If you provide substantive comments to this EA, you will receive the Decision Notice (DN) when finalized. Regulations prohibit extending the length of the comment period.

It is the responsibility of the persons providing substantive comments to submit them by the close of the comment period. Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to appeal must provide the following information:

1. Name and address and telephone number.
2. Title of the document on which comment is being submitted.
3. Specific facts or comments on the proposed action, along with supporting reasons that the Responsible Official should consider in reaching a decision.



Please mail written comments to: Larry Sears, District Ranger, Mogollon Rim Ranger District, Coconino National Forest, *'Lowell Observatory's Discovery Channel Telescope Environmental Assessment'*, HC 31 Box 300, Happy Jack, Arizona 86024, phone (928) 477-2255, FAX 928-527-8218. Electronic comments must be sent to [comments-southwestern-coconino@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southwestern-coconino@fs.fed.us)

Carol Holland is the project leader and the contact person for this analysis and can be reached at the Blue Ridge Ranger Station at 928-477-2255 if you desire additional information. Additional copies of the environmental assessment are also available at the Coconino National Forest Supervisors Office, the Happy Jack Information Center and at [www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino/nepa/index.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino/nepa/index.shtml)

Thank you for your time and interest in your National Forest.

Sincerely,

/S/ JOSEPH P. STRINGER for  
NORA B. RASURE  
Forest Supervisor

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Parts 215. . Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any persons may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only limited circumstances, such as to protecting trade secrets.

