



File Code: 1950

Date: March 25, 2014

Dear Interested Public:

Matney Knob is a communication tower site on the Sylamore Ranger District. Repeaters mounted on a 60' tower enable radio communications in the vicinity for Baxter County's Office of Emergency Management, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and the Arkansas Forestry Commission. The existing communication tower has been in use since 1959; its condition and that of the equipment associated with it do not adequately support this use and will not accommodate any additional repeaters.

The Sylamore Ranger District is proposing that Baxter County's Office of Emergency Management be allowed to construct a new self-supporting 190' tower and associated structures on the Matney Knob site; when the new tower is completed, the existing tower will be removed. The name of this project is the ***Matney Knob Tower Project***.

Please note that neither private lands nor the rights of private land owners will be affected.

Why is this project being proposed?

The purpose of this project is to provide conditions that support a safe and high-quality communications environment in the vicinity of Matney Knob.

Where is the proposed project area?

Matney Knob is located within T18N-R13W Sec. 12 in Stone County, AR as shown on the attached vicinity map. The proposed project area is accessed via Forest Service Road 1104A. The new tower will be constructed where an old Forest Service fire tower once stood; the former tower site is recommended not eligible for listing the National Register of Historic Places. It is anticipated that the use area will require less than 1 acre of National Forest System land.

What are we proposing?

This proposal has been designed to comply with the requirements of the Forest Plan as well as all federal, state and local laws. It involves the following activities:

- Erect a new, 190' self-supporting tower upon a 6 foot x 6 foot x 6 foot concrete pillar.
 - The new tower will provide spots for at least six repeaters.
- Build a 10 foot x 10 foot building with temperature control to house radio equipment.
- Route power underground from an existing power pole to the new site.
- Install a back-up propane generator and propane tank.
- Fence the communication site.



- Issue a special use permit or other formal agreement allowing Baxter County's Office of Emergency Management to operate and maintain the tower and its associated structures and to use and maintain Forest Service Road 1104A.
- Use mechanical treatments (mowing, felling, mulching) to remove woody encroachment from the use area.
- Decommission the existing 60' tower on the site; all traces of that tower and associated structures will be removed, and the site it occupied will be restored to original or better condition.

Alternatives currently being considered

Alternatives currently being considered for this project include 1) the No Action Alternative in which conditions will remain the same at the Matney Knob communication site, and 2) the Proposed Action as described in this letter.

Anticipated level of analysis

The Forest Service has made a preliminary determination that 1) the proposed action falls within the following category of actions listed in regulations at 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 220.6 that are excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement, and 2) there are no extraordinary circumstances that would preclude use of this category.

FSH 1909.15, Chapter 30, § 32.2 (3) (vi): *“Approval, modification or continuation of minor special uses of National Forest System lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land. (vi) approving an additional telecommunication use at a site already used for such purposes”* [36 CFR 220.6(e)(3)]

My decision will not be subject to administrative review; however, before I make a decision on whether or not to approve this action, I want to invite you to comment on it. I am particularly interested in hearing from you if you have any concerns or information related to this proposal that I should consider.

I will consider all comments that I receive including those submitted anonymously, but only those who provide contact information will be notified of my decision. Please note that all comments received, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project and will be available for public inspection.

How to comment

Comments need to be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and include supporting reasons for me to consider. While it isn't required that you provide your daytime phone number with your comment, I'd greatly appreciate you doing so as I'd like to speak with you directly if you any concerns.

Please send written comments to me by April 28, 2014: James R. McCoy, District Ranger, 1001 East Main, Mountain View, AR 72560. Written comments may also be submitted via facsimile (870-269-3000) or may be hand-delivered at our office between 7:30 am and 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc, .docx) to comments-southern-ozark-stfrancis-sylamore@fs.fed.us. Please state "Matney Knob Tower Project" in the subject line when providing electronic comments, or on the envelope when replying by mail.

If you have questions

If you have questions relating to this proposal or want more information about it, please contact District NEPA Coordinator Jan Franks at 870-269-3228 extension 3234 or 870-213-6340.

Thank you for your interest in the management of the Sylamore Ranger District.

Sincerely,

/s/ James R. McCoy
JAMES R. MCCOY
District Ranger, Sylamore-St. Francis Ranger
Districts

jlf
Attachment (1)

