

**DECISION NOTICE
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
AND
TOIYABE NATIONAL FOREST
LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN
AMENDMENT**

***Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center
Communications Infrastructure Upgrades Project***

**USDA Forest Service
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
Bridgeport Ranger District
Mono County, California**

Background

The Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center (MWTC) operates under special use authorizations on the Bridgeport Ranger District, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. In August 2006, MWTC submitted a proposal to upgrade their communications infrastructure by replacing existing, or constructing new communications towers and associated equipment, at six locations on National Forest System land: Mean Peak, Sweetwater, Masonic, Silver Creek, Lost Cannon Creek, and Little Wolf Creek.

This Decision Notice/Finding of No Significant Impact documents my decision as the Responsible Official to authorize MWTC to upgrade their communications infrastructure at the six proposed locations after issuance of special use authorizations. In addition, this decision amends the Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP, 1986) to allow use of the Masonic Mountain electronic site to also include the US Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, and also designates three new communications sites at the proposed Silver Creek, Lost Cannon Creek, and Little Wolf Creek sites. My decision is based upon the analysis documented in the *Environmental Assessment for Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Communications Infrastructure Upgrades, August 2010* (EA) and associated project record.

The Forest Service has been given direction from the President and Congress to facilitate implementation of the Nation's strategy for wireless communications.

- Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of October 21, 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1761-1771) authorizes the use of National Forest System lands for telecommunications uses.

- On August 10, 1995, President Clinton released a memorandum entitled "Facilitating Access to Federal Property for the Siting of Mobile Services Antennas." The memorandum requires, upon request, and to the extent permitted by law and where practicable, that executive departments and agencies make available, Federal Government buildings and lands for the siting of mobile service antennas.
- The Telecommunications Act of 1996 (47 U.S.C. 332), Section 704(c) requires Federal agencies to facilitate the development and placement of telecommunications equipment on buildings and land they manage, when placement does not conflict with the agency's mission or current or planned use of the property.
- In response to the Telecommunications Act and presidential memorandum, the General Services Administration released a bulletin stating that requests for the use of property, right-of-way, and easements by duly authorized telecommunications service providers should be granted unless there are unavoidable conflicts with the department's or agency's mission or current or planned use of the property or access to that property ("Placement of Commercial Antennas on Federal Property" [Federal Register, June 16, 1997])
- The Department of Defense (DoD) and USMC Land Mobile Radio Initiative's goal is to enhance Marine Corps Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP) capabilities and provide Land Mobile Radio (LMR) communications. This will also facilitate mutual aid operations with local communities. The current MWTC radio communications system is not compliant with the LMR.
- The National Incident Management System (NIMS) mandate contained in Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 serves to enhance the ability of the United States to manage domestic incidents by establishing a single, comprehensive national incident management system, designed to cover the prevention, preparation, response, and recovery from terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies. The current MWTC radio communications system is not compliant with NIMS. The implementation of the system would allow all levels of government throughout the nation to work efficiently and effectively together.

Communications sites are addressed in Forest Service policy (Forest Service Handbook [FSH] 2709.11, Chapter 90 [9/30/2009]). Section 90.3 requires that communication sites be designated as such in a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) decision document, including, among others, a LRMP amendment (Attachment 2).

Communications sites are one of the special uses recognized in the Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP, 1986). The LRMP designated communication sites at Mean Peak, Sweetwater, and Masonic. The Masonic site was limited to Forest Service use only. This decision amends the LRMP to allow use of the Masonic Mountain electronic site to also include the US Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center. This decision also designates three new communications sites at the proposed Silver Creek, Lost Cannon Creek, and Little Wolf Creek sites.

Purpose and Need

The current MWTC radio communications system is not compliant with the Department of Defense (DoD) and USMC "Land Mobile Radio Initiative" (LMR) or the National Incident Management System (NIMS) mandate contained in Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5. Two existing towers, installed in the 1980s at Mean Peak and Sweetwater, use multiple, very high frequency (VHF) radio nets. The geographic coverage provided by these systems does not adequately cover MWTC's 44,932-acre limited-use area. In addition, the current coverage does not extend to other authorized use areas east of the Sweetwater area to Hawthorne Army Depot. With the current coverage of 50 percent (%), communication capability is compromised and emergency response is slow. Many of the training operations at MWTC are potentially dangerous due to treacherous terrain and inclement weather, leaving training units vulnerable to emergency situations with poor radio connectivity.

The purpose of the project is to bring the current communications system into compliance with LMR and NIMS, providing a more robust safety and communications network for personnel training, mission critical users, and first responders over portions of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, adjacent public lands, and the Hawthorne Army Depot utilized by MWTC.

Decision

After reviewing the EA, public comments, and project record documents, I have decided to implement the Proposed Action, as described in the EA (pp.2-1 – 2-15) Figure 2-1 and summarized below. My decision will designate new sites as Forest Service Communication Sites (FSH 2709.11, 91[2]). The proposed action may be implemented following the appropriate appeal period, administrative approval of communications site management plans and engineering plans by the Forest Service, and the issuance of special use authorizations to MWTC in accordance with the standards and guidelines in the communications site management plans.

The Proposed Action is to upgrade communications infrastructure for MWTC use on the Bridgeport Ranger District by authorizing MWTC to 1) replace communications towers and associated facilities at the existing Mean Peak, Sweetwater, and Masonic designated communication sites, and 2) construct three new communications towers and associated facilities within the MWTC limited-use area, described below:

1. **Silver Creek** (Figure 2-2, B-1): The undesignated and undeveloped Silver Creek site is located on a small, rocky hill overlooking the MWTC intensive-use area and will be the primary communications facility for MWTC, connecting MWTC headquarters with the other MWTC communications facilities. The tower site complex will be situated in a project area measuring 30' x' 72' (0.05 acres) and include a 70' tall 3-legged steel lattice tower with antennas and video security cameras, backup generator with 500 gallon propane tank, and equipment shelter, all mounted on concrete pads and surrounded with perimeter fencing. Facilities at the Silver Creek site will be

powered by commercial utilities routed from an existing power pole near the site, which may require an additional line to supply adequate power. The additional line will be installed by the utility company on the existing power pole and authorized by amendment to the utility company's special use authorization. Site access will be provided by existing unpaved designated Forest Service road 32059 and existing unpaved non-forest system road PM10R. No new road construction or reconstruction is authorized by this decision. Site-specific maintenance during construction may be authorized with prior notification.

2. **Masonic** (Figure 2-3, B-2): The Masonic site is an existing Forest Service communications site currently designated in the LRMP (p.IV-118) as "Forest Service use only", located on a hilltop known as Masonic Peak northeast of Bridgeport, California. The existing communications facility will be removed and new facilities will be configured for shared use between MWTC and the Forest Service. The communications facility at Masonic will provide connectivity from MWTC to points eastward, including the Hawthorne Army Depot in Hawthorne, Nevada. The tower site complex will be situated in a project area measuring 48' x' 72' (0.079 acres) and include replacement of the existing FS tower and equipment shelters with a 70' tall 3-legged steel lattice tower with antennas and video security cameras, backup generator with 500 gallon propane tank, and equipment shelter, 60 by 20-ft planar solar array mounted on 6 ft concrete piers, all mounted on concrete pads and surrounded with perimeter fencing. Site access will be provided by existing unpaved designated Forest Service road 32243. No new road construction or reconstruction is authorized by this decision. Site-specific maintenance during construction may be authorized with prior notification.

3. **Mean Peak** (Figure 2-4, B-3): The Mean Peak site is an existing Forest Service communications site designated in the LRMP (p.IV-101) as joint Forest Service and MWTC use on a relatively barren, rocky hilltop, permitted to MWTC under a special use authorization. Mean Peak is proposed as a core repeater site to connect Silver Creek with points north of the MWTC intensive-use area. The existing FS/MWTC communications facility will be removed and new facilities will be configured for shared use between MWTC and the Forest Service. The tower site complex will be situated in a project area measuring 48' x' 72' (0.079 acres) and include replacement of the existing FS towers and equipment shelter with a 70' tall 3-legged steel lattice tower with antennas and video security cameras, backup generator with 500 gallon propane tank, and equipment shelter, 60 by 20-ft planar solar array mounted on 6 ft concrete piers, all mounted on concrete pads and surrounded with perimeter fencing. Site access will be provided by existing unpaved designated Forest Service road 32059B continuing to a rough, unfinished non-forest system road PM18A which is drivable to the site. No new road construction or reconstruction is authorized by this decision.

Site-specific maintenance during construction may be authorized with prior notification.

4. **Sweetwater** (Figure 2-5, B-4): The Sweetwater site is an existing Forest Service communications site designated in the LRMP (p.IV-117). The site is situated on a broadly rounded hilltop with rocky outcrops. The existing MWTC communications facility will be removed. Replacement of the current facility will extend the range of the communications system of the MWTC intensive-use area to the east, allowing connectivity with the Masonic site. The tower site complex will be situated in a project area measuring 48' x' 72' (0.079 acres) and include replacement of the existing MWTC towers and equipment shelter with a 70' tall 3-legged steel lattice tower with antennas and video security cameras, backup generator with 500 gallon propane tank, and equipment shelter, 60 by 20-ft planar solar array mounted on 6 ft concrete piers, all mounted on concrete pads and surrounded with perimeter fencing. Site access will be provided by existing unpaved designated Forest Service road 32167. No new road construction or reconstruction is authorized by this decision. Site-specific maintenance during construction may be authorized with prior notification.

5. **Lost Cannon Creek** (Figure 2-6, B-5): The undesignated and undeveloped Lost Cannon Creek site is a rocky mountain peak with sparse, low vegetation, in the northern region of the MWTC limited-use area. The site will provide coverage for the northern portion of the MWTC limited-use-area. The tower site complex will be situated in a project area measuring 48' x' 72' (0.079 acres) and include a 70' tall 3-legged steel lattice tower with antennas and video security cameras, backup generator with 500 gallon propane tank, and equipment shelter, 60 by 20-ft planar solar array mounted on 6 ft concrete piers, all mounted on concrete pads and surrounded with perimeter fencing. Site access will be provided by foot or helicopter, as the site is located in an inventoried roadless area and the Forest Road system does not provide access to the site. During construction, a temporary staging area for helicopter landing and takeoff would be sited in flat areas with little plant cover within the surveyed project area, defined by the approximate location of a 48 by 72-ft communications site complex and an additional 100-ft buffer zone for a total of 1.5 acres. No new road construction or overland vehicle travel is authorized by this decision.

6. **Little Wolf Creek** (Figure 2-7, B-6): The undesignated and undeveloped Little Wolf Creek site is on a rugged, local peak with rocky substrate in the western region of the MWTC limited-use area. The site will provide coverage for the southwestern extent of the MWTC limited-use area. The tower site complex will be situated in a project area measuring 48' x' 72' (0.079 acres) and include replacement of the existing MWTC towers and equipment shelter with a 70' tall 3-legged steel lattice tower with antennas and video security cameras, backup generator with 500 gallon propane tank,

and equipment shelter, 60 by 20-ft planar solar array mounted on 6 ft concrete piers, all mounted on concrete pads and surrounded with perimeter fencing. Site access will be provided by existing unpaved designated Forest Service Road 32062 and by non-forest system road PM30, with the remaining 0.25 mile accessible by helicopter and foot traffic. During construction, a temporary staging area for helicopter landing and takeoff will be sited in flat areas with little plant cover within the surveyed project area, defined by the approximate location of a 48 by 72-ft communications site complex and an additional 100-ft buffer zone for a total of 1.5 acres. No new road construction or reconstruction is authorized by this decision. Site-specific maintenance during construction may be authorized with prior notification.

The Forest Service will issue MWTC a special use authorization in the form of a communications lease for each facility, with a maximum term up to 30 years (FSH 2709.11, Chapter 10). MWTC's use will be authorized as a private mobile radio service (PMRS - 806), which is defined as a FCC-licensed private mobile radio systems primarily used by a single entity for the purpose of mobile internal communications and the communications equipment directly related to the operation, maintenance, or monitoring of the use. The communications service cannot be sold to others and is limited to the user. (FSH 2709.11.90 Exhibit 01).

My decision includes implementation of all proposed Best Management Practices (BMPs) minimizing impacts of the development. These include construction and maintenance BMPs addressing migratory birds; soil and erosion; noxious weeds; cultural resources; riparian area avoidance; sage grouse protection; size and structure of microwave dishes; colors of towers, antennae, microwave dishes, and antenna support structures; and road maintenance (EA, p.2-14 – 2-15). The selected actions, including the BMPs, are attached to this Decision Notice (Attachment 1).

My decision modifies communications site direction in the 1986 *Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan* (LRMP) to allow use of the Masonic Mountain electronic site to also include the US Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center. My decision also designates three sites (Silver Creek, Lost Cannon Creek, and Little Wolf Creek) as new communication sites.

Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 2709.11 Chapter 90 (WO Amendment 2709.11-2009-9, effective September 30, 2009) identifies Forest Service policy regarding Communications Site Management.

- Section 90.3.1 requires that "Communications sites must be designated in a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) decision document. The designation may be reflected in a separate NEPA decision document or in a land management plan (LRMP) or amendment or revision to a LRMP". My decision to allow MWTC use modifies existing LRMP constraints that limit electronic use of the Masonic Communication Site to "Forest Service use only". As such, it constitutes a "nonsignificant amendment" to the LRMP (36 CFR 219.8). Further documentation of that amendment is included as Attachment 2.

- Designation of the three new communications sites does not require an LRMP amendment. Section 91(4 & 5) identifies site designation components. Those components are summarized in Attachment 3.

Rationale for my Decision

The Proposed Action best meets the Purpose and Need of this project by upgrading the MWTC communications infrastructure to provide a more robust safety and communications network for personnel training, mission critical users, and first responders in compliance with the DoD and USMC Land Mobile Radio Initiative and the National Incident Management System mandate contained in Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5. The selected communications system will be used primarily by MWTC personnel and training units. The system will allow emergency communication between MWTC and other agencies and will not be open to personal radio users in the general public.

The primary environmental concerns associated with this proposal are visual quality, impacts to biological resources and impacts to inventoried roadless areas (EA, pp.1-6 - 1-7). The selected alternative includes site selection and design features to minimize potential impacts to these and other resources. These features are described in detail in the EA, and are attached to this Decision.

Additionally, the EA addressed environmental consequences to other resources, including, among others, threatened, endangered, and sensitive wildlife and plant species; management indicator species (mule deer); invasive plants; cultural resources; and water/riparian habitats (EA, pp.17-44). In all cases, impacts of the Proposed Action are minimal.

All practical means to avoid or minimize environmental harm have been adopted in the design of the selected alternative. My conclusion is based on a review of the project record that shows a thorough analysis using the best available science. The resource analyses in the EA and record identify effects analysis methodologies, reference scientific sources which informed the analysis, and disclose limitations of the analysis.

I have determined that the relatively negligible impacts to resources are offset by the positive impacts to safety of MWTC training units and personnel.

Alternatives Analyzed in Detail

Three alternatives were analyzed in the EA. A comparison of these alternatives can be found in the EA (p. 2-1 – 2-16).

Selected Alternative – Proposed Action

This alternative is described above in the “Decision” section and Attachment 1 of this document. Additional detail is located in the EA and the project record. This alternative best meets the purpose and need of upgrading MWTC communications infrastructure. The six proposed repeater sites were identified because they could provide 100 percent

radio coverage of the MWTC training areas, to include the Hawthorne Army Depot. The Proposed Action would supply signal redundancy through a digital backbone and a high-capacity microwave transmission system for reliable communications capability for MWTC.

Alternative 1

This alternative would be identical to the Proposed Action except that no new communication sites would be developed within Inventoried Roadless Areas. Under this alternative the Silver Creek, Masonic, Mean Peak, and Little Wolf Creek sites would be developed as discussed above; however, communication sites would not be developed at Lost Cannon Creek site, and the MWTC communications facilities would not be replaced at the Sweetwater Communications Site, but would keep the existing tower installed in the 1980s. This alternative does not fully meet the purpose and need of upgrading MWTC communications infrastructure, nor bring the current communications system into compliance with LMR and NIMS. The remaining 4 proposed repeater sites and inadequate capability at Sweetwater would not adequately cover MWTC's 44,932-acre limited-use area nor portions of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, adjacent public lands, and the Hawthorne Army Depot utilized by MWTC. The desired cover of 100 percent (%) would not be reached, and communication capability and safety is compromised and emergency response is slow.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action alternative, current management plans would continue to guide management of the project area. There would be no new telecommunication sites authorized at the Silver Creek, Lost Cannon Creek, and Little Wolf Creek proposed sites nor upgrade of existing communications facilities at Masonic, Mean Peak or Sweetwater. This alternative does not meet the purpose and need of upgrading MWTC communications infrastructure, nor bring the current communications system into compliance with LMR and NIMS. The existing communications capabilities of the current communications facilities at Sweetwater and Mean Peak do not adequately cover MWTC's 44,932-acre limited-use area nor portions of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, adjacent public lands, and the Hawthorne Army Depot utilized by MWTC. With the current coverage of 50 percent (%), communication capability and safety is compromised and emergency response is slow. Many of the training operations at MWTC are potentially dangerous due to treacherous terrain and inclement weather, leaving training units vulnerable to emergency situations with poor radio connectivity.

Public Involvement

The project was first listed in the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) on April 4, 2008. A "Notice of Proposed Action/Opportunity to Comment" was mailed to 163 individuals, groups, agencies, and tribes on March 29, 2008. A legal notice of the 30-day comment period was published in the Reno Gazette-Journal on April 4, 2008. Seven responses were received. Of

these, four were either favorable or expressed no concerns regarding the communications sites. Concerns expressed in the remaining three include the following:

- visual quality
- impacts to biological resources
- impacts to inventoried roadless areas
- perceived connected actions between proposed action and other continuing MWTC military training activities, and cumulative impacts.

Forest Service responses to these concerns are summarized in the EA (pp.1-6 – 1-7, pp.5-1 – 5-4, Issues and Alternatives Appendix A, and Matrix of Effects to Wilderness Qualities or Attributes Appendix E). The decision was made to only bring the first three of these forward as significant issues, which were analyzed in the EA. The fourth concern was determined to have been outside the scope of this EA and not connected to the purpose and need. There will be no increase in the MWTC coverage area or increase in training operations tempo associated with the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action would support current training operations through improved communication and safety and the number of personnel, training days, or training intensity would remain consistent with current use of the MWTC. I have considered each of these concerns, and addressed the primary concerns in my decision rationale.

Finding of No Significant Impact

After considering the environmental effects described in the EA and project record, I have determined that the selected actions will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment, considering the context and intensity of impacts (40 CFR 1508.27). Thus, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. This is based on the environmental effects documented in the EA, and its associated project record, in consideration of the following factors:

1. My finding of no significant environmental effects is not biased by the beneficial effects of the actions. *Adverse impacts from the project are negligible (EA, pp.4-1 – 4-6)*
2. There will be no significant detrimental effects on public health and safety. *Rather, consistent with the purpose and need for this project, the selected actions will improve safety, communications and emergency response at MWTC (EA, p.4-5).*
3. There will be no significant effects on unique characteristics of the geographic area. *No park lands or prime farmlands exist in the project area encompassing the approved communication sites. No historic or cultural sites eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places exist (EA, p. 4-14). No surface waters or wetlands are located at the sites. Although the Silver Creek site is within 320 ft of the Silver Creek riparian corridor, a Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment critical aquatic refuge (CAR), and Silver Creek is a tributary to the West Walker River (recognized as “eligible” for potential federal designation as a Wild and*

Scenic River [USFS 2005a]), and designated in the California State system)), *Standard construction BMPs and spill prevention measures (Attachment 1 of this decision) are expected to protect downslope water quality in Silver Creek (EA, p.4-4).*

No significant impacts to inventoried roadless areas are expected to occur. The Sweetwater and Lost Cannon Creek sites are located in the Fales and Iceberg-Mill Creek Inventoried Roadless Areas, respectively. The Sweetwater site is just beyond the margin of an existing forest road. This forest road at Sweetwater is a "cherry stem," or a small road corridor that extends into the larger block of roadless area. Lost Cannon Creek is located within an inventoried roadless area without a cherry stem approaching the project site. The sites at Masonic, Mean Peak, Little Wolf Creek, and Silver Creek are not within inventoried roadless areas. The effects of the Proposed Action to wilderness attributes and characteristics of these roadless areas were evaluated using the matrix found in Appendix E of the EA. The Sweetwater site has an existing access road and would have construction traffic leading to the site, but this traffic would only occur during tower installation. In addition, the Sweetwater site has existing communications infrastructure at the site and no changes to wilderness qualities or characteristics of the roadless area would occur (Appendix E). The construction of the proposed tower at the Lost Cannon Creek site would affect the natural and undeveloped qualities of the immediate site. However, the modification would be restricted to a relatively small area (48 ft by 72 ft) in comparison with the surrounding land, and no new roads would be built and no trees would be removed. The proposed tower would not affect the overall size, shape, or access to the roadless area. Therefore, the Proposed Action is not expected to significantly impact roadless areas.

4. The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial. *While the project itself may be controversial to some, there is no known scientific controversy over the impacts of the project.*
5. The effects analysis shows the effects are not uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risk. *The environmental effects of the selected actions are typical of other communication sites located on the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.*
6. The actions are not likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects. *Should future actions be proposed, a new, NEPA-compliant evaluation of their site-specific environmental effects and project feasibility would be initiated. Five of the six communication sites and all communication facilities are approved for use by federal government entities only.*
7. Cumulative impacts of this project are not significant. *Cumulative effects are documented in the EA (pp.5-1 – 5-4).*

8. The actions will have no significant adverse effect on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The action will also not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. *No historic or cultural sites eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places exist in the project area (EA, p. 4-14).*
9. The action will not adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species act of 1973. *No endangered or threatened species or likely habitat were found to occupy any of the individual project sites or the immediate surrounding area. Biological resources would not be significantly affected by the Proposed Action. (EA, pp.4-6 – 4-13)*
10. The action will not violate Federal, State, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. *Applicable laws and regulations were considered in the EA and project record (see Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations, below).*

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

I find that my decision is consistent with relevant laws, regulations, and policy, including:

National Forest Management Act:

The selected alternative complies with the Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, including the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment. LRMP Forest-wide Standards for Special Uses (p. IV-62) and relevant Management Area special uses and facilities direction (pp. IV-101-102 and IV-117-118) are particularly relevant. In addition, the selected alternative adopted project design features consistent with resource protection standards designed to protect cultural resources, soil and water, wildlife and fisheries, visual quality, and lands special uses.

Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA):

The selected alternative complies with Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of October 21, 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1761-1771) which authorizes the use of National Forest System lands for telecommunications uses.

Telecommunications Act of 1996:

The selected alternative complies with the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (47 U.S.C. 332), Section 704(c) which requires Federal agencies to facilitate the development and placement of telecommunications equipment on buildings and land they manage, when placement does not conflict with the agency's mission or current or planned use of the property. In response to the Telecommunications Act and presidential memorandum , the General Services Administration released a bulletin stating that requests for the use of property, right-of-way, and easements by duly authorized telecommunications service providers should be granted unless there are unavoidable conflicts with the agency's

mission or current or planned use of the property or access to that property ("Placement of Commercial Antennas on Federal Property" [Federal Register, June 16, 1997])

Endangered Species Act:

The site surveys in conjunction with literature and input from resource agency biologists were also used to determine the potential occurrence of each species and/or its habitat. Based on field observations in 2007 and 2008 and a review of existing data, no federally listed species were identified on or near the project sites and no likely habitat for federally listed species is present in the project areas. The BE/BA dated July 2009 concluded that no federally listed or candidate species or their potential habitat occurs within or in the vicinity of any proposed site, therefore the Proposed Action would have **no effect** on any federally listed or candidate species. Most special status species in the Bridgeport Ranger District were eliminated from further review because no suitable habitat occurs near the proposed project areas. With the actions to be undertaken, including conditions and mitigation measures as described herein, I find that the legal requirements of the ESA have been satisfied.

Environmental Justice (Executive Order 12898):

As documented in Chapter 3, my decision will have no disproportionate effect on minority populations or low-income populations.

National Historic Preservation Act:

In 2004-2007, engineering-environmental Management, Inc. (e²M) conducted cultural resources surveys in order to assess existing conditions at the proposed sites. Of the proposed locations, only Silver Creek and Little Wolf Creek were proposed to have the potential for newly discovered cultural resources, though all of the project locations were examined for evidence of cultural resources materials. According to the State of California Office of Historic Preservation (CA SHPO) letter dated March 20, 2009, the State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with the Forest Service's finding that this project will have no adverse effects to historic properties. With the actions to be undertaken, including conditions and mitigation measures as described herein, I find that the legal requirements of the NHPA have been satisfied.

Clean Water Act:

Based on discussions in chapters 3 and 4 of the EA and the project record, this decision is consistent with the Clean Water Act and amendments. A Lahontan Water Quality Board NPDES permit may be required for construction. All six proposed sites are located at ridgetops and peaks, well away from floodplains and flood hazard areas. Standard construction BMPs and spill prevention measures would be implemented as described in Attachment 1 at all the sites to manage storm water runoff and water quality, including that within the Silver Creek Critical Aquatic Refuge (CAR), and West Walker River.

Clean Air Act:

Based on discussions in chapters 3 and 4 of the EA and the project record, and as a result of modeling, the calculated total emissions resulting from estimated construction

emissions associated with the Proposed Action would be below the *de minimis* levels for CAA conformity; therefore, even if the project area was considered a nonattainment or maintenance area, a formal conformity determination would not be necessary and no significant impacts to air quality would occur. Emissions associated with operational activities are considered minor and would not significantly impact air quality. This decision is in compliance with the Clean Air Act, which defines the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for various sources of pollutants that must be met to protect human health and welfare, including visibility.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Executive Order:

This decision is in compliance with the act, subsequent Executive Order 13186, and memorandum of understanding between the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service and USDA Forest Service, which provides for the protection of migratory birds. According to the Wildlife Specialist Report, August 2008, the proposed action would have minor, insignificant impacts on migratory bird species and would not affect their status or management on the National Forest. In addition, the proposed communication sites would be constructed in accordance with the USFWS *Guidance on the Siting, Construction, Operation, and Decommissioning of Communications Towers* (USFWS 2000), as described in the BMPs in Attachment 1.

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act:

Within the project area, this decision will not affect the potential eligibility, classification, listing, or Outstandingly Remarkable Values under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. No surface waters or wetlands are located at the proposed sites, although the Silver Creek site is within 320 ft of the Silver Creek riparian corridor, a Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment critical aquatic refuge (CAR), and Silver Creek is a tributary to the West Walker River, which is recognized as "eligible" for potential federal designation as a Wild and Scenic River [USFS 2005a]), and designated as a wild and scenic river in the California State system. The sites at Mean Peak, Little Wolf Creek, Lost Cannon Creek, Silver Creek, and Sweetwater are part of the West Walker River hydrologic unit, but are not located on streams or tributaries.

Executive Order 11990 of May 1977 (Wetlands):

In compliance with this order, the EA and the project record confirm that the decision complies with EO 11990 by utilizing standard construction BMPs and spill prevention measures. This order requires the Forest Service to take action to minimize destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands. No surface waters or wetlands are located at the proposed sites, although the Silver Creek site is within 320 ft of the Silver Creek riparian corridor, a Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment critical aquatic refuge (CAR), and Silver Creek is a tributary to the West Walker River (recognized as "eligible" for potential federal designation as a Wild and Scenic River [USFS 2005a]), and designated in the California State system). The remaining sites at Masonic, Little Wolf Creek, Mean Peak, Lost Cannon Creek, and Sweetwater are well away from any surface water bodies, CARs, or Wild and Scenic River corridors. Standard construction BMPs and spill prevention measures as described in the BMPs in Attachment 1 would be implemented

at all locations, and are expected to be adequate to protect downslope water quality, including that within the Silver Creek CAR, and West Walker River.

Executive Order 11988 of May 1977 (Floodplains):

The EA and project record confirm that the decision complies with EO 11988 by maintaining floodplain integrity. This order requires the Forest Service to provide leadership and to take action to (1) minimize adverse impacts associated with occupancy and modification of floodplains and reduce risks of flood loss; (2) minimize impacts of floods on human safety, health, and welfare; and (3) restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values served by flood plains. This order is not applicable as floodplains or wetlands are not in the project vicinity and would not be affected.

Implementation Date

If no appeals are filed during the 45-day appeal period, implementation of this decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period. If appeals are filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of the last appeal disposition. Implementation begins with administrative approval of communications site management plans and engineering plans by the Forest Service, and the issuance of special use authorizations to MWTC, which is required before construction can begin.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR Part 215 or 251.

36 CFR 215

Under 36 CFR 215, only individuals or organization who submitted comments or otherwise expressed interest in the project during the comment period may appeal. The appeal must be filed (regular mail, fax, email, hand-delivery, or express delivery) with the Appeal Deciding Officer, the Regional Forester, at Appeal Deciding Officer, Intermountain Region USFS, 325 25th Street, Ogden, Utah 84401, or by fax to 801-625-5277, or by email to appeals.intermtn-regional-office@fs.fed.us. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered appeals are: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic appeals must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to appeals.intermtn-regional-office@fs.fed.us. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to an electronic message, a verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature is one way to provide verification.

Appeals, including attachments, must be filed within 45 days from the publication date of this notice in the Reno Gazette Journal, the newspaper of record. Appeals and attachments received after the 45 day appeal period will not be considered. The publication date in the Reno Gazette Journal is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal.

Individuals or organizations who submitted comments during the comment period specified at 36 CFR 215.6 may appeal this decision. The notice of appeal must meet the appeal content requirements at 36 CFR 215.14. It is the appellant's responsibility to provide sufficient project or activity-specific evidence and rationale focusing on the decision, to show why my decision should be reversed.

36 CFR 251

The applicant, Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center (MWTC) may appeal this decision under 36 CFR 251. If MWTC chooses to appeal under these regulations, they may not appeal under 36 CFR 215.

Appeals must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Deciding Officer within 45 days of the date of the written notice of this decision. This date is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. The Appeal deciding Officer is the Regional Forester. The methods by which an appeal may be sent to the Appeal Deciding Officer are listed above.

The appeal must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14. At a minimum, an appeal must include the following:

- Permittee/Applicant name, mailing address, and daytime phone
- Statement of how the Permittee/Applicant is adversely affected by the decision
- Specific references to any law, regulation, or policy believed to be violated and the reason for such an allegation
- A statement as to whether and how the Permittee/Applicant has tried to resolve the issue(s) being appealed with the Deciding Officer, the date of any discussion, and the outcome of that meeting or contact
- Statement of the relief sought. Permittee/Applicant may include a request for oral presentation and/or a request for stay of implementation.

Contacts

Additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, may be obtained by contacting Jolene Williams, Project Manager, (760) 932-5820, jolenewilliams@fs.fed.us, or Kathleen Lucich, Planning Staff Officer, (775) 352-5322, klucich@fs.fed.us.

/s/ Jeanne M. Higgins

9/20/2010

JEANNE M. HIGGINS
Forest Supervisor
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest

Date

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Attachment 1
Selected Alternative (Proposed Action)
Design Features/BMPS

The proposed communications infrastructure upgrade will be constructed in three phases. Phase I will link the Sweetwater, Mean Peak, and Silver Creek sites. Phase II will link the Little Wolf Creek and Lost Cannon Creek sites. Phase III will link Mean Peak to Masonic, providing connectivity further to the east of MWTC into Hawthorne Army Depot (Figure 1).

Construction crews and equipment will access the developed sites by vehicle and foot traffic as necessary. Major site components such as the equipment shelter and tower will be delivered to the sites via flatbed truck, or helicopter for Little Wolf Creek and Lost Cannon Creek. Concrete will be delivered via concrete truck or mixed on site, depending on the access route. If access roads allow it, a crane may be used to erect the tower. A compact tractor may be used for site leveling and site prep for piers and concrete foundations. Construction activity at each site will involve a small amount of site clearing and cut and fill to provide a level surface for the site complex. Concrete pads and piers may require soil and bedrock excavation to a depth of approximately 5 ft. Equipment staging and storage activities will be accommodated within the proposed site area. The site area is defined as the 48 by 72- ft site complex plus a 33-ft buffer zone (approx. 0.4 acre) to accommodate variation in the general site design and is where actual ground-disturbing activities will occur.

At the undeveloped sites (Little Wolf Creek and Lost Cannon Creek), no road access is available. No new roads will be constructed; instead helicopters will be used to transport construction supplies. A small helicopter will be used to transport personnel and small tools. A temporary staging area for helicopter landing and takeoff will be accommodated within the surveyed project area and will be sited in flat areas with little plant cover whenever feasible. A larger helicopter will be used for heavy equipment, concrete, and structural elements and will pick up and drop off equipment with cables without landing at the construction site. The surveyed project area is defined by the approximate location of a 48 by 72-ft communications site complex and an additional 100-ft buffer zone for a total of 1.5 acres. Proposed construction will require approximately 72 days for each site, with only 42 days of actual ground activities involving personnel (EA, Table 2-2).

Design features and BMPs will be implemented to reduce or avoid potential impacts to resources that could result from construction of the proposed project. In general, the project, including all construction related activities, is required to comply with federal, state, and local laws, guidelines, or standards specific to each resource (i.e. water quality, soils, cultural or biological resources, etc.). Any necessary project permits as required by these laws will be obtained. These are expected to include: Mono County Building Permits and Lahontan Water Quality Board NPDES permits. All project activities will comply with the applicable forest-wide standards and guidelines and BMPs

as described in the Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and amendments (USFS 1986, 2001a, 2004a).. The Forest Service will review and approve each site-specific engineering site plan before issuance of special use authorizations. The special use authorization must be issued before construction can begin.

Migratory Bird Construction BMPs

To avoid direct and indirect impacts to migratory birds, removal of vegetation will occur outside the bird breeding season. If vegetation removal is scheduled to occur during the nesting season, then a qualified biologist will survey the area prior to initiation of construction. If active nests are located, then a buffer will be established around the nests and the area avoided until the nests are no longer active. The size of the buffer is dependent on the identified nesting species and will be determined by the biologist in consultation with the FS.

All towers will be 70-ft tall, significantly less than the 199-ft maximum height recommended by the USFWS, and less than the original requested height of 160-ft in the initial proposal.

Towers will not use guy wires (which would constitute an additional hazard to birds) for support.

Antennas and microwave dishes will be equipped with bird protection devices.

Antennas will be equipped with bird protection devices as specified in FSH 2709.11 Chapter 90 and will not be equipped with guy wires (which would constitute an additional hazard to birds) for support.

Goshawk BMPs

The locations of all goshawk PACs will be noted on maps supplied to the helicopter contractor responsible for the transport of equipment and personnel to the Little Wolf Creek and Lost Cannon Creek sites during the short period of proposed construction activities.

Helicopters will avoid all known goshawk PACs and will not overfly any goshawk PAC

Rare Plants BMPs

No staging or parking will occur in occupied habitat for Bodie Hills draba that occurs along access roads 300 m east of the Masonic site.

Occupied habitat for Bodie Hills rockcress at the Masonic and Sweetwater sites will be flagged and avoided. No ground disturbing activities, staging areas, vehicular traffic or parking will occur in these areas. Surveys to flag the boundary of these locations will occur when the plant is visible for surveys (June and July).

Soil and Erosion Construction BMPs

To minimize erosion or sedimentation potential, the following Soil and Erosion Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be implemented at each site:

Construction equipment movement will be restricted to pre-designated access areas and existing roadways.

The access roads will be maintained by the project proponent in a way to minimize erosion due to concentrated flows.

Travel will be minimized on roads during wet periods. If soil moisture will cause rutting by construction equipment (greater than 2 inches in depth for a length greater than 25 feet), movement of construction equipment within access roads will cease for a period of 48 hours.

Servicing and/or refueling of construction equipment will not occur on NFS lands.

Oils and chemicals will be hauled to an approved site for disposal to prevent oil products from entering into groundwater or waters of the United States. Spills are not expected, but should they occur, they will be addressed immediately. Any spills exceeding standard levels will warrant the notification of the appropriate agency.

Standard construction BMPs from the USFS, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and American Public Works Association (APWA) will be implemented by the construction contractor. BMPs will be designed to minimize aqueous transport of sediments and any potential contaminants from the construction and staging areas. BMPs used during construction activities may include but will not be limited to implementation of perimeter silt fencing, mulch, and/or stockpile coverings. Permanent BMPs will address the marginal increase in impervious cover that each site will produce, potentially including soil stabilization, revegetation, and ditches/swales to aid infiltration.

Following construction, disturbed areas will be revegetated and erosion control BMPs will be implemented to stabilize soil and encourage plant growth.

Noxious Weed Construction BMPs

Special construction specifications, as outlined in FSM 2000 National Forest Resource Management Chapter 2080, will be used to reduce or eliminate the potential for noxious weed introduction into the project area. These requirements include, but are not limited to:

Before construction equipment moves into a project area, the project area will be evaluated and noxious weeds will be treated as necessary.

Washing the body, undercarriage, and tires of all construction equipment used for road construction and reclamation prior to entering the project area.

Exclusive use of certified weed-free hay for erosion control and mulch treatments.

Re-establish vegetation on bare ground caused by ground-disturbing activities to minimize noxious weed infestation and spread. Revegetation will use native material where appropriate and available.

Construction equipment must be washed before entering NFS land to prevent the introduction of exotic species and should be washed as soon as practical after leaving.

Cultural Resource Construction BMPs

In the event archaeological artifacts or heritage sites are inadvertently discovered during construction, earthwork must be halted in that area and the Forest Service archeologist contacted to review and clear the site before activities may resume.

Visual BMPs

The towers, antennas, and equipment shelters will be painted a non-reflective shade as specified in FSH 2709.11, Chapter 90 and the Visual Resources Report (KTU+A 2008) to meet VQOs. All paint colors will be approved by the Forest Service during engineering plan review.

All towers will be 70-ft tall, significantly less than the 199-ft maximum height recommended by the USFWS, and less than the original requested height of 160-ft in the initial proposal, in response to concerns about visual quality.

Communications Site Management Plan

As required under FSH 2709.11 Special Uses Handbook Chapter 90, 2, all designated communications sites must have a current communications site management plan that is consistent with in the applicable LRMP and must provide site-specific direction and guidance to Forest Service personnel, the communications site users, and the public. This document contains the day-to-day operations of each site and will be provided by the USFS under separate cover.

Attachment 2

Amendment to the Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Communications Infrastructure Upgrades

September 20, 2010

Communications sites are one of the special uses recognized in the 1986 *Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan* (LRMP). Jeanne M. Higgins Forest Supervisor, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, signed a *Decision Notice/Finding of No Significant Impacts* (DN/FONSI) on September 20, 2010 to modify communications site direction in the LRMP for the Masonic Communication Site, based upon the analysis documented in the *Environmental Assessment for Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Communications Infrastructure Upgrades*. Her decision to allow MWTC use at the site modifies existing LRMP constraints that limit electronic use of the Masonic Communication Site to "Forest Service use only". As such, the Forest Supervisor's decision constitutes a "non-significant amendment" to the LRMP (36 CFR 219.8; Forest Service Manual 1926.51).

The 1986 *Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan* p. IV-117 for "Facilities, J01(D) states "Maintain the Masonic Mountain and Desert Creek Peak electronic sites for Forest Service use only". Consistent with the Forest Supervisor's September 2010 decision, replace that management direction with the following:

"Maintain Desert Creek Peak electronic site for Forest Service use only. Allow use of the Masonic Mountain electronic site to also include the US Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center".

Attachment 3

Designation Components for Silver Creek, Lost Cannon Creek, and Little Wolf Creek Communication Sites

Communications sites are one of the special uses recognized in the 1986 *Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan* (LRMP). The Forest Supervisor, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, has documented the project decision regarding six communication sites on the Bridgeport Ranger District (Masonic, Silver Creek, Lost Cannon Creek, Little Wolf Creek, Mean Peak, and Sweetwater) in the *Decision Notice/Finding of No Significant Impacts* (DN/FONSI), based upon the analysis documented in the *Environmental Assessment for Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Communications Infrastructure Upgrades*. The project decision designating three sites, Silver Creek, Lost Cannon Creek, and Little Wolf Creek (Table 1), as new communication sites is consistent with Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 2709.11 (WO Amendment 2709.11-2009-9, effective September 30, 2009). Section 90.3.1 requires that "Communications sites must be designated in a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) decision document. The designation may be reflected in a separate NEPA decision document or in a land management plan (LRMP) or amendment or revision to a LRMP".

FSH 2709.11, Section 91(4 & 5) identifies site designation components to be analyzed. The analysis of those components is summarized below.

In addition, FSH 2709.11, Section 92 addresses the preparation of Communications Site Management Plans. The Plans (to be developed) will contain the principles and technical standards adopted in site designation, and provide more detailed direction delineating the types of uses that are appropriate at the site and the technical and administrative requirements for management of the site.

TABLE 1. COMMUNICATIONS SITES DESIGNATIONS

Communications Site Name	Ranger District	Acres	Legal Description	Site Designation	Restrictions	Expansion Permitted
Silver Creek	Bridgeport	.05	T6N R22E Sec 13	Governmental Entities Only	Federal Government only	No
Lost Cannon Creek	Bridgeport	.08	T7N R22E Sec 24	Governmental Entities Only	Federal Government only	No
Little Wolf Creek	Bridgeport	.08	T6N R22E Sec 30	Governmental Entities Only	Federal Government only	No

FSH 2709.11 Section 91(4) Site Designation Analysis Components

a. Demand for the sites.

The current MWTC radio communications system is not compliant with the Department of Defense (DoD) and USMC “Land Mobile Radio Initiative” (LMR) or the National Incident Management System (NIMS) mandate contained in Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5. Two existing towers, installed in the 1980s at Mean Peak and Sweetwater, use multiple, very high frequency (VHF) radio nets. The geographic coverage provided by these systems does not adequately cover MWTC’s 44,932-acre limited-use area. In addition, the current coverage does not extend to other authorized use areas east of the Sweetwater area to Hawthorne Army Depot. With the current coverage of 50 percent (%), communication capability is compromised and emergency response is slow. Many of the training operations at MWTC are potentially dangerous due to treacherous terrain and inclement weather, leaving training units vulnerable to emergency situations with poor radio connectivity.

The purpose of the project is to bring the current communications system into compliance with LMR and NIMS, providing a more robust safety and communications network for personnel training, mission critical users, and first responders over portions of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, adjacent public lands, and the Hawthorne Army Depot utilized by MWTC.

Improved communications will provide for greater safety for MWTC users and improve the quality of the training experience at MWTC. The Proposed Action will bring the current communications system into compliance with DoD directorates and reasonable safety standards. The proposed communications system will be used primarily by MWTC personnel and training units. The system will allow emergency communication between MWTC and other agencies and will not be open to personal radio users in the general public.

b. Alternate locations considered.

Pinegrove Communications Site:

The Pinegrove Communications site is a designated communications site with a Forest Service only communications facility located in the Nevada portion of the Bridgeport Ranger District, several miles northeast of MWTC. This site was considered for development to provide a microwave link from MWTC eastward to Hawthorne Army Depot. Pinegrove was originally identified as a potential site because commercial power is available, which would eliminate the need for the solar array. However, Pinegrove is 20 to 30 miles from the main towers at MWTC and the MWL path clearance is marginal.

The Masonic site was identified as a stronger option for the communications link to Hawthorne Army Depot. Masonic is an existing designated communications site for Forest Service use only with infrastructure in the area. Although Masonic has no commercial power available, the site is a shorter link from MWTC with better path clearance and additional coverage for LMR. The link and path clearance provided by Masonic will allow for smaller antennas and shorter towers. Because the Masonic site provides more favorable site development conditions, with comparable or lesser intrusion into the visual environment than Pinegrove, the Pinegrove Site was considered but eliminated from further discussion/analysis in this EA.

Little Wolf Creek:

An alternative location for the Little Wolf Creek site was considered but eliminated during the planning process. The alternative site is located approximately 250 ft downslope of the proposed site described above. The alternative site was initially identified as a candidate because it is located near a mountain peak and provides a line of sight to the tower network. However, the site was found to be occupied by rock outcrops with dense forest cover. Tree clearing and removal of the rock outcrops would have been required to accommodate site development.

The proposed Little Wolf Creek site, approximately 250 ft upslope from the alternative site, provides a more suitable footprint area for site development. Forest cover is less dense and rocky outcrops are not as limiting for development. Line of sight is available from the proposed site as well. Because the proposed site provides equivalent capability with more favorable site development conditions, the alternative location was considered but eliminated from further discussion/analysis in this EA.

c. Availability of suitable non-Federal land.

Non-federal lands were researched prior to the proposal to the USFS. There are no private lands located to serve the purpose and need of the MWTC Private Mobile Radio Service tower coverage.

d. Compatibility of the types of communications uses that may be located at the site.

There are no other communications uses located at Silver Creek, Lost Cannon Creek, and Little Wolf Creek. Currently only Forest Service operates at Masonic and both Marine Corps and Forest Service operate at Mean Peak. Silver Creek, Lost Cannon Creek, Little Wolf Creek, Mean Peak, and Masonic are designated for federal governmental entities use only. Sweetwater Communications Site is designated as a low power, non-broadcast communications site, with five other permittees. All future uses at Sweetwater must be designed, operated and maintained so as not to physically or electronically interfere with the senior uses. If new uses deteriorate the receiving/transmitting operation of existing uses, the new use may be required to institute at their expense; additional studies, equipment upgrades, frequency isolation, or physically separate themselves from the existing uses.

e. Interference from other users and other sites.

There are no other communications uses located at the 3 new sites. Forest Service has communications facilities at Masonic and Mean Peak. Silver Creek, Lost Cannon Creek, Little Wolf Creek, Mean Peak, and Masonic are designated for federal governmental entities use only.

The Sweetwater Communications Site is designated as a low power, non-broadcast communications site. All future uses at Sweetwater must be designed, operated and maintained so as not to physically or electronically interfere with the senior uses. If new uses deteriorate the receiving/transmitting operation of existing uses, the new use uses may be required to institute at their expense; additional studies, equipment upgrades, frequency isolation, or physically separate themselves from the existing uses. Interference with law enforcement and emergency communications shall be corrected immediately. Operation of equipment covered by this site plan shall not interfere with Forest Service radio or electronic operations already in existence on National Forest System lands within two miles of each Communications Site. The user causing this interference shall at their own expense take all actions necessary to prevent or eliminate the interference. If they do not eliminate the interference within ten days after receipt of notice from the Forest Service to do so, their use will be terminated. If electromagnetic noise becomes an issue, noise thresholds shall be established and incorporated as an amendment to the site plan. The cost of such analysis is the responsibility of the lease holders.

f. Areas of coverage

Figure 1 illustrates the areas of coverage by the proposed tower sites.

g. Signal paths

Figure 1 illustrates the signal paths by the proposed tower sites.

h. Relationship to other sites.

Figure 1 illustrates the spatial and coverage relationships to existing and proposed tower sites in the area.

i. Management guidelines for the area, including visual quality objectives.

Silver Creek

According to the U.S. Forest Service Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986), this communications site is proposed within Management Area 4 – Walker. Management emphasis is directed toward the amenity values of wildlife, dispersed recreation, developed recreation, and water quality in the major Cannons and along the highways. The Visual Quality Objective (VQO) for this site is Partial Retention. The Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) is Moderate.

Masonic

According to the U.S. Forest Service Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986), this communications site is located within Management Area 6 – the Bridgeport Pinyon-Juniper area. Management emphasizes key values of wildlife, dispersed recreation, and grazing. Management also provides for the orderly exploration, development and reclamation of mining resources in a manner that minimizes effects on range, wildlife, cultural resource and recreation values (U.S. Forest Service, 1986). The Visual Quality Objective (VQO) for this site is Retention. The Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) is High.

Mean Peak

According to the U.S. Forest Service Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986), this communications site is proposed within Management Area 4 – Walker. Management emphasis is directed toward the amenity values of wildlife, dispersed recreation, developed recreation, and water quality in the major Canyons and along the highways. The Visual Quality Objective (VQO) for this site is Retention. The Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) is High.

Sweetwater

According to the U.S. Forest Service Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986), this communications site is located within Management Area 6 – the Bridgeport Pinyon-Juniper area. Management emphasizes key values of wildlife, dispersed recreation, and grazing. Management also provides for the orderly exploration, development and reclamation of mining resources in a manner that minimizes effects on range, wildlife, cultural resource and recreation values (U.S. Forest Service, 1986). The Visual Quality Objective for this site is Modification. The Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) is Low.

Lost Cannon Creek

According to the U.S. Forest Service Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986), this communications site is proposed within Management Area 4 – Walker. Management emphasis is directed toward the amenity values of wildlife, dispersed recreation, developed recreation, and water quality in the major Canyons and along the highways. The Visual Quality Objective (VQO) for this site is Modification. The Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) is Low.

Little Wolf Creek

According to the U.S. Forest Service Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986), this communications site is proposed within Management Area 4 – Walker. Management emphasis is directed toward the amenity values of wildlife, dispersed recreation, developed recreation, and water quality in the major Canyons and along the highways. The Visual Quality Objective (VQO) for this site is Modification. The Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) is Low.

j. Suitability of the site for the intended use.

Computer analysis and on-location surveying of these sites has indicated that these sites will provide the intended RF coverage of both the MCMWTC training area and the adjacent mutual aid service area. These sites will contain the entire infrastructure essential to sustain the communications elements installed at the hilltops including equipment shelters, power systems and antenna towers as well as utilizing existing Forest Service roadways and minimize environmental impacts while serving the purpose and need. The key parameters used for site selection were natural resources, existing infrastructure and road access, and engineering specifications. Candidate sites were selected to avoid, to the maximum extent possible, critical resource areas, cultural resource sites, and wilderness areas. In addition, candidate sites that are generally free of large trees and dense vegetation were selected, reducing the amount of clearing and environmental disturbance that may be required.

FSH 2709.11 Section 91(5) Site Designation Components

a. A legal and geographic description of the site, including the site name.

See Table 1

b. A topographical depiction of the site boundary.

See Figures B-1 through B-6

c. A determination of the largest community or Ranally Metro Area (RMA) served by the site.

This site does not serve a Ranally Metro Area (RMA). The largest community is Bridgeport, CA. The population is currently less than 25,000 and is therefore Zone 9.

d. A designation of the category (broadcast or non-broadcast) and limitations on communications uses at the site.

The designation of the category non-broadcast and the limitations on communications uses at the site is governmental entities. The site designation is "Governmental Entities only."

e. A determination of the other categories or types of communications uses that may or may not be allowed at the site. The Special Use Codes below are an individual appropriate use code indicating the type of use which will be allowed at the site.

Private Mobile Radio Service	806
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A noise floor level that must be met by all current or future communications users at the site.

