

DECISION MEMO

CenturyTel Fiber Optic Line Installation Special Use Permit

Fremont-Winema National Forests
Bly Ranger District and Chiloquin Ranger District
Klamath County, OR

PROPOSED ACTION: The Bly District Ranger and Chiloquin District Ranger are proposing to issue a special use permit allowing CenturyTel to install a fiber optic line across National Forest lands. The permit will cover line burial along Highway 140 near Bly Mountain (Chiloquin Ranger District), aerial line suspension along Highway 140 between Bly and Beatty (Bly Ranger District), and fiber/copper phone line burial on the Bly Ranger Station (Bly Ranger District). CenturyTel is installing fiber optic line to link the communities of Bly and Bonanza. The legal descriptions for the areas of activity on National Forest lands are Sections 2 and 11, T37S, R11E, Sections 23 and 24, T36S, R13E, and Section 34, T36S, R14E.

SCOPING: General public scoping was started by placing the proposed project in the Winter 2003-2004 Winema Schedule of Proposed Actions. Klamath Tribal Directors were contacted on April 8, 2004, to initiate Tribal scoping. A public scoping letter was mailed on April 8, 2004. The mailing list of individuals and organizations contacted is on file in the project record. There was one issue raised by the Bly Community Action Team in a letter to the Bly District Ranger dated May 3, 2004. They are concerned that fiber line burial may damage pavement within the Bike and Pedestrian Path along Highway 140 from the Bly District compound to the Bly Community Park. Since this path begins at the northern edge of the compound and does not cross National Forest land it is outside the scope of this decision. This has been communicated to the Bly Community Action Team.

DECISION AND REASON FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION: We have reviewed the interdisciplinary analysis and have decided to allow issuance of the special use permit to proceed. This permit allows CenturyTel to install fiber optic and copper phone lines across National Forest lands on the Bly and Chiloquin Ranger Districts. The fiber installation will aid in improving voice and data communications for the public living in the Bly, Beatty and Bonanza areas. The permit is expected to be issued in June 2004.

Silt fences will be required along Highway 140 between construction activity and a stream channel on the section near Bly Mountain. This should minimize sediment entering the stream in the event of thunder storm activity during installation.

Cultural resource monitors will be used during any construction activities located on the Bly Ranger District compound and for the portion along Highway 140 near Bly Mountain. The aerial suspension work along Highway 140 between Bly and Beatty will not require a cultural resource monitor.

This action falls within FSH 1909.15 Section 31.2, Category 2, "Additional construction or reconstruction of existing telephone or utility lines in a designated corridor."

No extraordinary circumstances exist that might cause the action to have significant effects; therefore, the action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement. Based on the environmental analysis and past experience, the effects of implementing this action will be of limited context and intensity and will result in little or no effects to either the physical or biological components of the environment.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS: This action is consistent with the management direction, including standards and guidelines, as outlined in both the Fremont and Winema Forest Land and Resource Management Plans as amended, and the Final Environmental Impact Statement documenting the analysis for the Plans. This action will comply with requirements of the Clean Water Act.

No significant impact is expected on cultural resources or Proposed, Endangered, Threatened, or Sensitive (TES) species.

No significant impact is expected on parkland, floodplains, wetlands, prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers or ecologically critical areas. There are no anticipated significant impacts on consumers, minority groups, American Indians, women or civil rights. There are no anticipated significant impacts to Treaty and trust responsibilities with the Klamath Tribes.

There are no known significant indirect, cumulative, or unavoidable adverse effects on the environment. There is no threat to public health or safety. Implementation of this proposal meets the resource protection requirements of 36 CFR 219.17.

APPEAL OPPORTUNITIES/IMPLEMENTATION DATE: Pursuant to 36 CFR 215.4(a) this decision is not subject to requirements for Notice and Comment. This decision is not subject to appeal, pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 215.12(f). This decision may be implemented immediately.

CONTACT PERSON: Questions regarding this decision should be directed to Catherine Callaghan, Land Use Administration, Fremont-Winema National Forests, 541-947-6326.

_____**Orlando Gonzales**_____

___6/3/2004___

ORLANDO GONZALES
District Ranger
Bly Ranger District

Date

_____**Richard Ragan**_____

___6/3/2004___

RICHARD RAGAN
District Ranger
Chiloquin Ranger District

Date