



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718

September 17, 2011

To: Governor's Office, Mike Volesky, State Capitol, Room 204, P.O. Box 200801, Helena, MT 59620-0801
Environmental Quality Council, State Capitol, Room 106, P.O. Box 201704, Helena, MT 59620-1704
Dept. of Environmental Quality, Metcalf Building, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901
Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation, P.O. Box 201601, Helena, MT 59620-1601
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:

Director's Office	Parks Division	Lands Section	FWP Commissioners
Fisheries Division	Legal Unit	Wildlife Division	Design & Construction

MT Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, P.O. Box 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1202

MT State Parks Association, P.O. Box 699, Billings, MT 59103

MT State Library, 1515 E. Sixth Ave., P.O. Box 201800, Helena, MT 59620

James Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, P.O. Box 1184, Helena, MT 59624

Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624

George Ochenski, P.O. Box 689, Helena, MT 59624

Jerry DiMarco, P.O. Box 1571, Bozeman, MT 59771

Montana Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 1175, Helena, MT 59624

Wayne Hurst, P.O. Box 728, Libby, MT 59923

Jack Jones, 3014 Irene St., Butte, MT 59701

Todd Tash, 1532 Highway 278, Dillon, MT 59725

John Erb, 540 Skyline Drive, Dillon, MT 59725

Harris Wheat, P.O. Box 711, Dillon, MT 59725

Paul Godecke, 2312 MT Highway 91 South, Dillon, MT 59725

Roscoe Pilon, 1425 Carrigan Lane, Dillon, MT 59725

Tom & Becky Miller, 1250 Carrigan Lane, Dillon, MT 59725

Beaverhead County Commissioners, County Courthouse, 2 South Pacific St., Dillon, MT 59725

Beaverhead Outdoors Association, P.O. Box 1401, Dillon, MT 59725

Skyline Sportsmen Association, P.O. Box 173, Butte, MT 59701

William Armstrong, 457B Thomsen, Dillon, MT 59725

Rick Hartz, Beaverhead County Planner, 2 South Pacific, Dillon, MT 59725

Brian Ertz, Western Watersheds Project, 126 S Main St., Ste B2, PO Box 1770, Hailey, ID 83333

Scott March, Beaverhead County Fire Warden, 2 South Pacific, Dillon, MT 59725

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Decision Notice has been prepared for the Centurylink/Qwest Fiber-Optics Cable installation and easement at the Point of Rocks Fishing Access Site. The project authorizes the installation of a fiber-optic cable through Point of Rocks FAS Upstream Parcel. Ninety-four individuals or organizations provided comments during a 14-day comment period ending October 14, 2011.

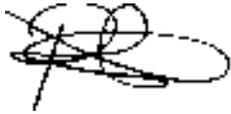
It is my decision to proceed with the proposed project, with no change to the Draft EA.

Questions regarding this Decision Notice should be mailed to:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Point of Rocks Comments
1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman MT 59717-5496

Or e-mailed to: rheagney@mt.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick J. Flowers', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Patrick J. Flowers
Regional Supervisor

Attachment



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Region Three
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1400 South 19th Ave
Bozeman, MT 59718

October 17, 2011
Decision Notice for:

Point of Rocks Fishing Access Site Proposed Fiber-Optic Easement Draft Environmental Assessment

Proposed Action

Centurylink/Qwest is requesting an easement from FWP to install a fiber-optic cable through Point of Rocks FAS Upstream Parcel. The proposed action is an easement granted by FWP. The easement would allow Centurylink/Qwest to bury a fiber-optic cable in the easement area. Centurylink/Qwest is building its fiber-optic cable to provide upgraded communications infrastructure to Yellowstone National Park and the communities of Gardiner and West Yellowstone located in southwest Montana. In addition, this infrastructure allows for future growth and upgrade potential for the entire Paradise Valley.

Montana Environmental Policy Act

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment on September 30, 2011.

Public comments on the proposed project were taken from September 30, 2011 through October 14, 2011. The EA was mailed to 40 groups and individuals.

Summary of Public Comment

FWP received ninety four (94) comments regarding the proposed action; ninety two (92) comments supported the proposal, two (2) comments opposed the proposed action.

Summary of Comments supporting the proposed project: ninety two (92) total.

“I am writing to request that Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks approve the easement request for Century Link. Allowing Century Link to complete their installation of fiber optic lines is critical to maintaining basic communications services to the area.”

“My comment for this is in the positive and hope that the Montana Fish and Wildlife will allow the fiber optic cable to be installed.”

“I am in favor of granting the easement.”

FWP Response: Duly Noted

Summary of Comments opposing the proposed project: two (2) total.

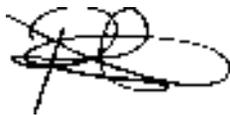
“I stand firm to (no doubt) be one of the few NOT WANTING to have Internet available to the public in the park.”

“Please say No to fiber optic cable. I was a seasonal employee at Yellowstone National Park. It was great not to have internet, TV or cell phones 24/7. It was wonderful to enjoy the serenity of the park. It also allowed more conversations between people.”

FWP Response: After analyzing the potential impacts of this project on the Point of Rocks FAS as well as the broader implications of the projects purpose of providing updated communication services to the greater Yellowstone area, we find that the minimal impacts that may be incurred with the placement of the fiber-optic cable across the FAS would be negligible and overshadowed by the necessity of remote communities who require a reliable conveyance of information for public safety, commerce and individual household communications. We also accept and understand the greater needs of the community for infrastructure improvement and upgrade potential.

Decision

Based on the Environmental Assessment, public comment, and FWP evaluation, it is my decision to proceed with the proposed action, Alternative A, as described in the Point of Rocks Fishing Access Site Proposed Fiber-optic Cable Easement Draft Environmental Assessment. This alternative allows the placement of a fiber-optic cable across the Point of Rocks FAS.



Patrick J. Flowers
Regional Fish & Wildlife Supervisor
