

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT, FONSI AND DECISION RECORD

**BLM, Bishop Field Office  
351 Pacu Lane, Suite 100  
Bishop, CA 93514**

**EA Number:** CA-170-06-29

**Lease/Serial/Case File No.:** CACA 047944

**Proposed Action Title/Type:** Cellular/PCS Poleta Canyon  
Communication Site

**Location of Proposed Action:** MDM, T. 7 S., R. 33 E.,  
Section 13, NW1/4NW1/4NE1/4.

**Applicant (if any):** New Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC.

**Plan Conformance:** The proposed action is subject to the Bishop Resource Management Plan, approved March 25 1993. The proposed action has been reviewed and is in conformance with the plan.

### **Need for Proposed Action:**

T-Mobile currently has a cellular communication site at Poleta Canyon utilizing a 40' lattice tower and a small equipment shelter. This site was built by Cingular Wireless about 5 years ago. In 2005, Cingular Wireless sold many of their cellular sites to T-Mobile, Poleta was one of those sites. In May 2005 New Cingular Wireless (NCW), previously known as Cingular Wireless, requested a cell site at Poleta Canyon.

New Cingular was informed by the BLM that the T-Mobile site was a joint use facility and NCW had to use that facility for their new communication facility. NCW contacted T-Mobile concerning a new use and proposed adding a 20' section of tower to the existing tower. This additional section was needed for antennae separation and micro-wave dishes. NCW also proposed an additional shelter since T-Mobile's shelter did not have enough space for NCW's cell/PCS use. T-Mobile responded that they did not believe that the tower could handle another 20' section with the associated antennae and micro-wave dishes. T-Mobile also indicated that the required engineering review for the extra tower section would not be completed soon due to the recent cellular acquisition work load of previous months. T-Mobile indicated that it was not interested in providing space in their shelter or increasing the height of the tower.

New Cingular Wireless contacted the BFO and reported the discussions with T-Mobile. NCW indicated that their network build-out schedule required that the Poleta site be up and running by end of 2005, even asking for permission to install a temporary facility in

the interim. As a result of the T-Mobile impasse, NCW's amended their original application and proposed a new tower and shelter. Originally NCW proposed a mono-pole but later changed the design to lattice for stability and visual concerns. In order to complete their network for the Bishop area, NCW has applied for a joint-use communication site at Poleta since T-Mobile's site can not be utilized.

### **Description of Proposed Action:**

The proposed action would be the issuance of a 30-year joint-use communication site lease for a cellular and PCS use at the existing Poleta Canyon comm site on Redding Canyon road east of Bishop.

The site would be built on previously disturbed ground on the south side of the T-Mobile site. The site would consist of: a 80 foot tri-leg self-supporting lattice galvanized tower, not painted; a 10' by 20' pre-built equipment shelter or built on-site with brown color, an additional 10' by 20' equipment shelter would be installed if another carrier is added to the site; concrete slab for shelter; 30' by 48' chain-link fencing with double gate on the ROW perimeter; generator set with propane tank (tank set back on east edge of site); cable bridge from shelter to tower; the shelter will have a GPS/E911 antennae mounted on wall at roof line (3' high); the tower will have two cellular/PCS antennae sets; a future carrier cellular antennae set; two 6-8' diameter micro-wave dishes; and a future pair of 6-8' diameter micro-wave dishes. All equipment located on the tower would be painted gray and any antennae or dish covers would be gray. Tower would not be lit.

The site would be slightly graded for leveling with any dirt sidecasted to the east. Tower base would be either three 8' by 3' diameter cores filled with reinforced concrete or a monolithic reinforced concrete slab measuring 8' by 8' by 6' deep. Excavated dirt would be used for leveling site. Power is already on site and would be extended underground for this use. Construction would begin as soon as authorization is granted and would take two months. Access to the site in on existing dirt roads and can be accessed from the west and east. No cross-country travel is needed.

Site would be managed per the Draft Poleta Communication Site Plan. The Plan will be finalized in summer of 2006.

### **Environmental Impacts:**

The proposed action is not within a Wilderness, Wilderness Study Area, Area of Critical Environmental Concern, nor Wild and Scenic River corridor, and there will be no effects on any lands so designated.

Air quality will not be affected. The proposed action is within the Owens Valley federal nonattainment area. The action will not result in the emission of PM<sub>10</sub>.

There will be no impact to listed or sensitive species. There are no known listed or sensitive species or habitats within the proposed action area.

There will be no impacts to prime farm lands, flood plains, nor water quality (including ground or surface waters).

There will be no disproportionate impacts to low income or minority groups, per Executive Order 12898 (2/11/94).

### ***Cultural resources***

The Poleta site has already been inventoried for cultural resources when T-Mobile constructed their facility. Archeologist has been consulted.

### ***Visual resources***

The proposed action area has a VRM Class IV rating. Class IV is defined as, contrasts may attract attention and be a dominant feature of the landscape in terms of scale however the change should repeat the basic elements. The proposed action meets VRM Class IV.

The proposed action would add an additional shelter and tower to the Poleta communication site. The lattice tower would mimic the existing lattice tower and both shelters would be similar except that the new shelter would be brown.

The site is considered to be exceptional for siting communication towers due to the immediate background of the steep rugged White mountain range behind the site. The site is about 5 miles southeast of the City of Bishop. The critical viewpoints are Hwy 395 and Bishop. The proposed facility can not be recognized either from Hwy 395 or Bishop due to extended distance and the lattice towers blending into the tan-brown dissected drainages behind the site.

Two photo simulations show the existing T-mobile facility and the proposed NCW facility. View 1 is taken from the site access road looking west at the site and View 2 is taken from Redding Canyon road looking northwest at the site. Both shoots show the effect of distance and backdrop causing the site to diminish in visual effect. This effect would be very pronounced when the site is viewed from the west looking east. The tower would blend into the White mountain drainage patterns and shadows.

### ***Vegetation***

No impact. The site is already bare.

### ***Invasive, non-native species***

Site does not have invasive or non-native species. It is not expected that noxious plants will populate the site since the site has been without vegetation for 20 years.

### ***Wildlife habitat***

Although not within mule deer or tule elk habitat areas, individuals may be present during construction and would be temporarily displaced. No impact to wildlife.

### ***Minerals***

There are no known mining claims of record covering the site.

### ***Economic Impacts***

#### Viability of the Proposed Development

The proposal is viable and the market can support this additional use.

#### Impacts to the Community and to the Tribe

The community will have an additional cellular/PCS carrier for service. Cingular is already in the Bishop market. No impact to Tribes.

#### Benefits of Being a Non-Gaming Tribe

Not Applicable

### ***Environmental Justice***

The site is about 5 miles southeast of Bishop. There are no houses in the area.

### ***Hazardous Materials***

Propane tank would be fenced and secured. No other hazmat is anticipated.

### ***Gaming***

Not Applicable.

### ***Consistency with County Planning***

Inyo County has a communications facility ordinance, but it does not apply to Federal property. The proposal would not affect any county plans.

### ***Impacts to County Infrastructure***

The facility would be taxed by Inyo County under possessory interest. The County tax revenue increase is unknown.

### ***Impacts to Local Community***

The community will have an additional cellular/PCS carrier for service. Cingular is already in the Bishop market and the site would improve Cingular's service area.

### ***Adherence to Local, State and Federal Environmental Ordinances / Laws***

The proposal is consistent with all ordinances and laws.

### ***Discussion of Trust Status, Federal Trust Responsibilities, Tribal Sovereignty***

Not Applicable.

### ***Land Uses / Realty / Rights-of-way***

The issuance of a communication site lease is consistent with BFO RMP and the is within the guidance of the Draft Poleta Communication Site Plan.

### ***Cumulative effects***

The site would have a cumulative effect of adding an additional cellular tower in the Bishop area. Currently, the cellular coverage around Bishop is spotty with outlying areas having poor or inconsistent coverage. The Cingular site should provide improved cellular reception for the Bishop community. Bishop has only two towers in the City with four towers on the far perimeter. The Bishop area has not been built-out and additional cell/PCS sites are needed.

### **Description of Mitigation Measures and Residual Impacts:**

1. Site to be managed under the Draft Poleta Canyon Communication Site Plan.
2. This will be authorized as a joint-use facility.
3. Extension of existing power utility will be underground.
4. All equipment added to the tower will be painted gray and all antennae or dish covers will be gray.
5. Excess dirt from excavation can be used for site leveling. Side-casting to the east boundary of site must be minimized. Excess dirt can be spread on previously disturbed areas. No side casting to the west due to visual concerns.
6. If the lattice tower design does not meet BLM's anticipated visual aspect of the constructed tower, the BLM has the option of having NCW paint the tower.
7. Standard cultural resource protection stipulation to be applied.

No residual impacts.

### **Implementation Monitoring:**

The Bishop Realty Specialist or staff will monitor the construction.

### **Effectiveness Monitoring:**

None planned.

**Persons/Agencies Consulted:**

Donna Mueller  
Pete Ferraro  
Martin Doubek

Consultant, SRES Corp  
Consultant, Infranext Corp.  
Project Manager, Omni Design Group

**Preparer(s):**

Larry Primosch  
Donna McMullen  
Kirk Halford

BLM, Realty Specialist  
BLM, Lands Technician  
BLM, Archeologist

**Date:** April 26, 2006

**Reviewed By:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Environmental Coordinator**

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**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT/DECISION RECORD**

I have reviewed this environmental assessment including the explanation and resolution of any potentially significant environmental impacts. I have determined that the proposed action with the mitigation measures described below will not have any significant impacts on the human environment and that an EIS is not required.

There will be no effect on threatened or endangered species as a result of the action.

I have determined that the proposed project is in conformance with the Bishop Resource Management Plan, which was approved March 25, 1993. This plan has been reviewed, and the proposed action conforms with the land use plan terms and conditions as required by 43 CFR 1610.5.

It is my decision to issue a 30-year communication site lease to New Cingular Wireless for a cellular/PCS facility. The facility to be constructed per the designs submitted with their application. The mitigation measures identified below are incorporated in the lease.

It is in the public interest to grant a communication site lease to New Cingular Wireless in order to expand their network for the Bishop area. New Cingular Wireless tried to locate at the T-Mobile facility, but it was determined that the facility could not be utilized for NCW's proposed use. The new facility will allow for additional users and will improved cellular and PCS coverage for the Bishop area. The Bishop area can support another tower and additional carriers. The new tower and shelter will allow the Poleta site to accommodate up to four users.

**Mitigation Measures/Remarks:**

1. Site to be managed under the Draft Poleta Canyon Communication Site Plan.
2. This will be authorized as a joint-use facility.
3. Extension of existing power utility will be underground.
4. All equipment on tower will be painted gray, antennae or dish covers will be gray.
5. Excess dirt from excavation can be used for site leveling. **Side-casting to the east boundary of site must be minimized.** Excess dirt can be spread on previously disturbed areas. **No side casting to the west (visual concerns).**
6. If the lattice tower design does not meet BLM's anticipated visual aspect of the constructed tower, the BLM has the option of having NCW paint the tower.
7. Standard cultural resource protection stipulation to be applied.

**Authorized Official:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Field Manager, Bishop Field Office