

United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Northeastern States Field Office  
LLES003420

Douglas Point Cell Tower Removal

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CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION/DECISION  
DOCUMENTATION  
NEPA #: DOI-BLM-ES-0030-2014-0010-CX

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**Date:** October 2014

**Type of Action:** Temporary Use Permit  
Section 302, Federal Land Policy and Management Act

**Serial Number:** MDES-057993

**Location:** Maryland  
Douglas Point, Parcel A  
Charles County, Maryland

**Project Acreage:** 1.0 acres

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## CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION/DECISION DOCUMENTATION

1. **Proponent:** Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services (MIEMS)  
State of Maryland

**NEPA #:** DOI-BLM-ES-0030-2014-0010-CX

**Project Name:** Douglas Point Cell Tower Removal

**Case File Number:** MIES-057993

**Case Established:** August 4, 2014

**Location:** Maryland  
Douglas Point, Parcel A  
Charles County, Maryland

2. **BLM Field Office:** Eastern States, Northeastern States Field Office, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

3. **Authority:**

Section 302 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA): Short term revocable authorization to possess and use public lands for a fixed period of time.

Department of Interior, Departmental Manual 516 DM 11.9 Actions Eligible for a Categorical Exclusion (CX), J Other (10):

Removal of structures and materials of no historical value, such as abandoned automobiles, fences, and building, including those built in trespass and reclamation of the site when little or no surface disturbance is involved.

4. **Project Description:** The proposed action would remove an abandoned cell tower and associated equipment from a communications site on the Douglas Point property previously operated by the proponent prior to the acquisition of the land by the Bureau of Land Management in 2001. The guyed cell tower was built in 1986 and was used for state and county emergency services until it was replaced by a new facility constructed in 2009 on state-owned land. The tower on Federal land has not been used since the new state facility was placed in operation.

The tower proposed for removal is located on Parcel A, 200 feet north of an existing trail/road that begins at Route 224 and ends at the Potomac River State Handicapped-Accessible Duck Blind. The trail, the 200 foot access to the tower, and the surrounding area represent previously disturbed land that has been maintained for access to the Duck Blind, servicing the tower facilities, and as a recreational trail.

The 368 foot tower will be taken down in sections using a small winch. Each section will be lowered within the fenced area and loaded on a truck with a bobcat. The guy wire paths are partially cleared and will be used as a path for the bobcat to remove the metal rod anchor to below grade. A 26 foot rollback truck will carry materials off the site. The generator, shipping container, old military communications shelter, fence, concrete pad, tower, and guy stations will be removed. Work will take place within previously disturbed areas. Additional gravel will be used, if necessary, to stabilize the trail/road during removal and for repair if any ruts develop.

The area will be allowed to re-vegetate naturally after the removal of the structures and materials. Vegetation consists of hardwoods with a dense canopy and leaf litter but little ground cover. The work is estimated to take approximately one week but this could change depending on weather conditions. Because the existing trail and area around the site is wide enough to allow trucks and equipment sufficient access for removal without additional ground disturbance, little or no new surface disturbance will be involved to remove the tower and equipment.

5. **PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW:** The proposed action is in conformance with the Lower Potomac Coordinated Management Plan dated April 2004 (Plan). The 2004 Plan recognized the need to allow the continued use of an existing tower for the transmission of emergency radio signals by MIEMS and Charles County (page 2-3), however the Plan identified this area as a right-of-way (ROW) avoidance area. Since the tower is no longer in use, removal of the tower is in conformance with the Plan because no new ROWs could be issued for the facility.

6. **DEPARTMENTAL EXCEPTIONS AND CRITICAL RESOURCE VALUES CHECKLIST:**

The action described above generally does not require the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA), or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), as the proposal has been found to not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment. The proposed action has been reviewed to determine if any exceptions apply (as stated in 516 Department of Interior Manual). See below.

	Yes	No
Have significant adverse impacts on public health or safety: removal of the abandoned tower that requires continued maintenance and compliance with Federal Communications Commission and Federal Aviation Administration requirements is in the best interest of public health and safety.		X
Have significant impact on such natural resources, and unique geographic characteristics such as historic or cultural resources, park, recreation or refuge lands, wilderness areas, wild or scenic rivers, national natural landmarks, sole or principal drinking water aquifers, prime farmlands, wetlands, floodplains, national monuments, migratory birds, and other ecologically significant or critical areas: use		X

of a previously disturbed trail/road and area around the cell tower for access to remove structures should not have an adverse effect on historic resources. The trail/road was surveyed in 2007 and the site identified closest to the tower found low artifact density with a portion of a handmade brick, two wrought nails and a retouched quartzite flake with unclear function. To mitigate potential impacts if additional discoveries are made, an observer will be present during removal of the tower and equipment.		
Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources: the area is used for passive recreation and the removal of an unused cell tower will not impact available resources. Removal of materials will be limited to approximately 5 business days and a portion of the trail may temporarily close to hikers when the tower is dismantled.		X
Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks: removal of the tower and equipment will be limited to the trail/road and immediate area already disturbed by the communication facility. No new disturbance outside of the immediate area is authorized and therefore the activity does not have potentially significant environmental effects.		X
Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects: the removal of an existing structure will have no impact on future decisions for the land because the area is identified in the land use plan as a ROW avoidance area.		X
Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects: there are no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects of removing an abandoned cell tower within a previously disturbed area.		X
Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office: the tower and equipment are not eligible for listing on the National Register; a site closest to the tower identified in a 2007 survey found low artifact density with unclear function that would not qualify for listing on the National Register.		X
Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species: there are no listed species or critical habitat in the area that will be impacted by the removal of the tower and equipment. Migratory birds could be in the area but removal activities will be limited in scope and no critical habitat will be impacted. The area consists of a highly dense hardwood canopy with limited ground vegetation.		X
Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment: no laws will be violated by the removal of an abandoned cell tower.		X
Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations: removing the tower would not have a disproportionate impact on low income or minority populations or any other group because the services provided by the tower have been replaced by the construction of a new tower on state –owned		X

land.		
Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites: there are no Indian sacred sites along the trail and in the area that will be accessed to remove the tower.		X
Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species: there are no noxious or non-native species within the project area and equipment will be washed before entering the site to avoid the introduction of species.		X

**7. I CERTIFY THAT NONE OF THE DEPARTMENTAL EXCEPTIONS LISTED IN PART 6 ABOVE APPLIES TO THIS ACTION.**

Prepared by: Carol Grundman Date: 10-17-14  
 Carol Grundman  
 Realty Specialist

Reviewed by: Kurt J. Wadzinski Date: 10/17/2014  
 Kurt Wadzinski  
 Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Reviewed by: Kyle Schumacher Date: 10/17/2014  
 Kyle Schumacher  
 Acting Assistant Field Manager, Natural Resource

**Decision:**

This action is covered by one of the Bureau of Land Management's categorical exclusions, developed pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. I have evaluated the action relative to the 11 criteria listed above and have determined that it doesn't represent an exception and is therefore, categorically excluded from further environmental analysis. The proposed action is in conformance with the approved land use plan, and will not involve any significant adverse environmental effects. The proposed action will have no effect on the President's Energy Policy and a Statement of Adverse Energy Impact is not required.

Approved by: Randall C. Anderson Date: 20 OCT 14  
 RANDALL C. ANDERSON  
 ACTING FIELD MANAGER  
 Dean Gettinger, Field Manager  
 Northeastern States Field Office

## **EFFECTIVE DECISION DATE**

This decision is appealable in accordance with 43 CFR Part 4. This decision is effective upon signing by the authorized officer and shall remain in effect pending an appeal (43 CFR Part 2801.10(b)).