



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Umpqua  
National  
Forest

Umpqua National Forest  
2900 NW Stewart Parkway  
Roseburg, Oregon 97470  
(541) 672-6601 FAX 957-3495

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**File Code:** 1950

**Date:** February 25, 2009

Dear Interested Citizen:

Enclosed is a copy of the Watson Ridge Communication Site Project Draft Decision Memo (DM). The proposal is to issue two special-use permits to PacifiCorp Energy for installation of the powerline and the construction and operation of the communication site. The site would be constructed on top of Watson Ridge in an existing shelterwood unit; approximately 11 green trees and six snags ranging in diameter at breast height (dbh) from 12 inches to 36 inch dbh (four over 30" dbh) would need to be felled to construct the communication site. A spur road of approximately 1,200 ft would be constructed from existing Forest road 121 to access the site. Approximately 30 green trees and 23 snags (ranging from 10 inches to 34 inches dbh. with five trees over 30" dbh) would need to be cut for spur construction. A chain link fence with constantine wire on top would be installed surrounding the site for security. Inside the fencing would be sited a building to house electronic equipment, back-up generator, 140 ft microwave tower, and propane tank. Power would also be provided to the site via a new trench from existing lines near Clearwater 1 forebay. Additional information and/or copies of the Draft Decision Memo can be obtained by contacting Pam Sighting at the number listed below. This project is located in matrix lands and the legal description is T26S, R4E, Section 28, Willamette Meridian.

Comments must be submitted to District Ranger Bill Gamble, Diamond Lake Ranger District, 2020 Toketee Ranger Station Road, Idleyld Park, OR 97447, (541)-498-2531, fax (541)-498-2515. The District Office is open from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. Electronic comments must be submitted to: [comments-pacificnorthwest-umpqua-diamondlake@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-pacificnorthwest-umpqua-diamondlake@fs.fed.us). As the Responsible Official, the District Ranger will accept oral, electronic, and written comments during the comment period, which ends 30 days from the date this notice is published in the Roseburg News Review, the official newspaper of record. It is the responsibility of all individuals and organizations to ensure their comments are received in a timely manner. For electronically mailed comments, the sender should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgement from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgement of the receipt of the comments, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means. This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 215.11. Appeals must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14. Individuals or organizations who submitted comments or expressed an interest in the project during the comment period may appeal. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who only submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Part 215.

Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision



regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without names and addresses.

Additional information and/or copies of the proposal can be obtained from Pam Sighting, (541)-957-3342, email [psighting@fs.fed.us](mailto:psighting@fs.fed.us), at the Forest Supervisor's Office, 2900 NW Stewart Parkway, Roseburg, Oregon 97471; the Supervisor's office is open from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays.

I want to encourage you to review and comment on this project. If you have questions regarding this project, please contact me or Pam Sighting, at the numbers listed above. Thank you for your continued interest in the Watson Ridge Communication Site Project.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Bill Gamble*

Bill Gamble  
District Ranger

Enclosure



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

Forest Service

Pacific  
Northwest  
Region



# **Watson Ridge Communication Site**

**Umpqua National Forest**

**Diamond Lake Ranger District**

**Draft Decision Memo**

**February 2009**



## ***Introduction and Project Location***

This Decision Memo documents the analysis by the Diamond Lake District Ranger of the issuance of a special use permit for the construction of the proposed Watson Communication Site (com site) and issuance of special use permits associated with the use and maintenance of the com site.

The proposed Watson Communication Site (com site) would be constructed and operated by PacifiCorp Energy on the Diamond Lake Ranger District, Umpqua National Forest. The special use permit for operation would be issued for a duration of 20 years. The com site would facilitate PacifiCorp Energy's real time monitoring and control through-out operations of the North Umpqua Hydroelectric Project (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission [FERC] 1927 Project), licensed October 2005. This project is located in matrix land allocations and the legal description is T26S, R4E, Section 28, Willamette Meridian.

## ***Purpose and Need, Proposed Action***

Compliance with the new FERC requirements as outlined in the FERC license, PacifiCorp Energy requires upgrades to the monitoring, control and communication systems within the North Umpqua Hydroelectric Project including the ability to control and communicate collected data to the PacifiCorp Hydro Control Center (Toketee) and Emergency Command Center (Portland, OR) on nearly real-time basis. Construction, permitting and operation of the proposed Watson Ridge Communication Site facility would meet this requirement by improving and upgrading Project monitoring, communications and controls to provide widespread protection of environmental resources, while minimizing construction and other environmental impacts.

PacifiCorp is upgrading hydrological monitoring sites with a new fiber optic network within the Project area. The need to communicate the collected hydrological data to the Hydro Control Center and the Emergency Command Center resulted in engineering design work to evaluate a number of potential radio telemetry sites (*Evaluation for Solutions for Meeting PacifiCorp's North Umpqua FERC Requirements*, December 2006). This design work determined microwave as the most effective and efficient way to make the connection to the PacifiCorp Hydro Control Center and Emergency Command Center because of it's ability to provide the high-bandwidth link needed for remote control communications between the Project area communications infrastructure and PacifiCorp's corporate network out side the Project area. Microwave sites would also allow for gathering radio telemetry from hydrological monitoring sites across the Project area. Radio telemetry is cost effective and the least invasive way to monitor and control multiple sites along PacifiCorp's many miles of canals and flumes where monitoring sites and drainage control equipment have been installed.

The Proposed Action is to issue a special use permit for the construction of the communication facility and associated infrastructure (access road, power line, communication building, security fencing) on Watson Ridge and a permit for the maintenance and operation of the com site.

The com site would be constructed on top of Watson Ridge in an existing shelterwood unit that was logged approximately 15 years ago. Approximately 11 green trees and six snags ranging in diameter at breast height (dbh) from 12 inches to 36 inch dbh (four over 30" dbh) would need to be felled and removed for siting of the com site. The site would require a foot print of approximately 100 ft X 100 ft. A chain link fence with constantine wire on top would be installed surrounding the site for security. A building to house electronic

equipment, back-up generator, 140 ft microwave tower, and propane tank would be located inside the fenced area. The 140 ft microwave tower would provide a direct route to the existing Mt. Scott communication site with relay to PacifiCorp Energy's corporate network at Lane Mountain communication site.

Connected to the development of the com site is the construction of an access road and establishment of powerline connection. Access to the site requires construction of a spur road approximately 1,200 ft long off the existing Forest Road 121. The access road would be surfaced (rocked) as per Forest Service standards to reduce erosion potential and provide for safe, reliable access. Approximately 30 green trees and 23 snags would need to be cut and removed. Tree size ranges from 10 inches to 34 inches dbh with five trees over 30" dbh.

All cut trees would be decked and used for other mitigation projects such as wetland creation/enhancement projects as required in the Settlement Agreement or sold through a timber sale by the USFS. Root wads and other woody debris from tree removal would be transported off the site or stockpiled for use in future stream restoration or wetland enhancement projects.

Power would be provided from an existing overhead power distribution lines near the Clearwater 1 forebay. The powerline would be buried in a trench 18" wide and three feet deep along the existing road prisms of Forest roads (FS) 300, 4780, and 100 for approximately five miles total. The proposed powerline would cross over the top of the Mowich Creek culvert in the roadbed avoiding disturbance to the Mowich Creek riparian area. The proposed powerline would leave the Forest 100 road and cross an existing 25 year old plantation up to the com site due to an existing rock bluff further up the FS 100 road, where blasting would be required to bury the powerline. Concrete vaults (33 total) measuring four ft. by four ft. would be installed approximately every 900 ft and riser poles would be installed approximately every 2,000 to 2,500 ft. The vaults would be used as access points to pull the powerline up the entire distance to the com site in one continuous piece. The risers would be used to isolate faults and expedite conductor change-out when power failures occur.

The Douglas County Board of Commissioners supports the com site construction as they are interested in using the tower location for antennas to link to the Douglas County Emergency Communications System via Mt Scott.

### ***Decision Framework***

This project is proposed to provide for the permitted construction, use and operation of the Watson Communications Site in order to allow real-time monitoring information and operation of the North Umpqua Hydroelectric Project. After the 30-day comment period, I will decide whether or not to issue the Watson Ridge Communication Site Special Use Permits to allow construction and connected actions related to developing the com site as described or with modifications, and for the use and operation of the site under a special use permit if established. Currently, I find that the actions proposed comply with management direction in the Umpqua National Forest Plan, as amended, and are consistent with relevant law, policy and regulation.

## ***Findings as Required by Law, Policy and Regulation***

### ***Finding of Consistency with Applicable Forest Service Management Direction and the National Forest Management Act***

Based on my review of the interdisciplinary analysis for this project, I find that the project is consistent with the standards, guidelines, and amendments of the Umpqua National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan and is therefore consistent with the National Forest Management Act. This finding includes all of the following determinations documented in the specialists' reports for this project:

This project will not prevent attainment of the goals and objectives of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy.

This project is consistent with the Standards and Guidelines in the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan, as amended and the 1990 Umpqua National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended.

The com site tower may be seen from state highway 138 traveling west. Using computer modeling simulations, the tower may be seen for approximately four seconds in the far ground. The com site is located approximately 8.5 miles from the highway. The tower will be constructed of hot dip non-reflective galvanized steel to reduce visibility. As per regulations of the Federal Aviation Administration, a blinking red light will not be required to be sited on top of the tower which should further reduce visibility.

Therefore, I find that the Watson Communication Site special use permits are consistent with all applicable Forest Service management direction.

### ***Finding of Consistency with State Historic Preservation Office Policies***

Based on my review of the heritage resource report, I find that the project is consistent with the National Historic Preservation Act.

### ***Finding of Non-Jeopardy to Endangered, Threatened or Sensitive Species and No Adverse Effect to Species Covered Under the Fisheries Conservation and Management Act***

The District Fisheries Specialist has determined that this project would have no effect on any listed species or their critical habitat, no effect on Essential Fish Habitat, and no impact on any sensitive species. This project complies with the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

The District Wildlife Biologist has determined that this project would have no effect on threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat, and no impact on Management Indicator or Survey and Manage Species. This project may impact individuals or their habitat, but will not likely contribute towards a Federal listing or cause a loss of viability to the population or species for no species on the R6 Regional Forester's sensitive species list. Therefore, I find that the Watson Communication Site does not jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species. The access to the site from December 1 through April 30 would only be allowed in emergency situations by permit from the Diamond Lake Wildlife Biologist and the District Ranger since the area traveled to the site is winter range habitat.

The District Botanist has determined that this project would have no effect on threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat, and no impact on Survey and Manage Species. This project may impact individuals or their habitat, but will not likely contribute towards a Federal listing or cause a loss of viability to the population or species for no species on the R6 Regional Forester's sensitive species list.

### ***Finding of the Absence of Adverse Effects to Extraordinary Circumstances***

Scoping to determine the presence or absence of potential effects on extraordinary circumstances occurred in the January 2009 *Umpqua National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions*; no requests for information or statements of interest were received. Based on my review of the interdisciplinary analysis and lack of public comments, I find that this project does not adversely affect any of the extraordinary circumstances listed in 1909.15, 30.3(2). Specifically, I find that this project does not adversely affect: (a) endangered or threatened species or their critical habitats, or any Forest Service sensitive species; (b) floodplains, wetlands or municipal watersheds; (c) Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness or National Recreation Areas; (d) inventoried roadless areas; (e) Research Natural Areas; (f) Native American religious or cultural sites, or archaeological or historic properties and sites.

### ***Finding of Consistency with All Applicable Federal Laws and Regulations***

Based on my review of the actions associated with this project and all applicable specialists' reports, I find that the project is consistent with the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, National Forest Management Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act. Therefore, I find that the Watson Communication Site is consistent with applicable Federal laws and regulations.

### ***Finding of Exclusion from Further National Environmental Policy Act Analysis***

Based on my review of (1) the actions associated with this project; (2) the environmental consequences documented in the interdisciplinary analysis; (3) the consistency of this project with applicable laws, regulations, and management direction; (4) the non-jeopardy to endangered or threatened species or heritage resources; and (5) the absence of adverse effects to extraordinary circumstances; I find that this project is not significant in either context or intensity (40 CFR 1508.27) and that no extraordinary circumstances are associated with these projects (FSH 1909.15). I also find that this project will produce no adverse environmental effects, individually or cumulatively, on the physical, biological, or social components of the human environment. Therefore, I find that the Watson Ridge Communication site special use permits are categorically excluded from analysis in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement (40 CFR 1508.4 and FSH 1909.15, Chapter 31.2, Part 1) and that the appropriate categories of exclusion are Category 3 and 12 as identified in Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Chapter 31.2.

### ***Appeals***

This decision is subject to administrative appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.



### ***Project Implementation***

This decision shall be implemented in accordance with Forest Service regulations contained in Title 36 CFR, Part 215. Implementation may occur immediately following the 45 day appeal period of the signed Decision Memo.

### ***Contact Person***

For additional information concerning this decision, contact Pam Sighting; phone number 541-957-3342; email address [psighting@fs.fed.us](mailto:psighting@fs.fed.us).

***Site Map  
Attachment***

# Attachment 1 – Site Vicinity Map

