

From: [Pearson, Georgina](#)
To: [Mazzu, Linda](#)
Cc: [Heather Rice](#)
Subject: Re: Opportunities for feedback: Verizon Cell Tower
Date: Monday, July 8, 2019 9:32:49 AM

Thank you Linda for passing on these comments.

The comments from Peter and Moyle are well taken, assuming to build a cell tower was the course of action - one of the action alternatives.
It is quite another thing to ask yourself, the basic question of: Is a cell tower needed at all? - the No Action alternative.

Jessica makes some very good points.

I had some similar thoughts before reading her comment.

Here is my brief response/comments:

- Bryce is a unique park in many ways. It is a small park in a remote area, yet because of its size developments adjacent to the boundaries are not that far away - Bryce Canyon City and Tropic, which makes it seem not so remote. Granted they are small rural communities, but they have robust cell towers. I have lived in parts much more isolated because of limited access or communication capabilities with the outside world.
- In the time I lived at Bryce I never had any problem using my cell phone, which is serviced by ATT. I could get service on the rim trail or any other main developed zone of the park. At my residence I never had problems using my cell phone either, plus I paid for WiFi through another provider so that was not a problem either. Now with fiber optic cable we should have lightening speed service at all the major structures within the developed zone for employees and visitors.
- Having cell service in my opinion in a National Park, especially a park that has recommended wilderness, is a luxury and a service we are not mandated to provide. Meaning, would having cell service really enhance a visitor's experience or just allow them to do social media right then and there instead of waiting a few minutes when they are closer to the Lodge, VC, or Bryce Canyon City? It is really a convenience thing. Should we be promoting visitor expectations to have cell service in every national park? One of the things that sets apart National Parks from other city or county or even most state parks is that sense of naturalness, wild, solitude, undeveloped, peaceful and quiet experience that is harder and harder to find in today's techno/wired society that wants everything now and gets mad if we don't get it. What did our founding fathers of the NPS say about managing national park resources? - Something like: "a vignette of primeval America" - or before European man came to America and started really changing the natural world instead of living with it at the Native Americans did. I know this has been a controversial issue for many decades - the idea of what is protection or preservation of the resources supposed to look like - at what point in time of the past are we to protect the park? This is pretty straight forward sometimes with historic parks or battlefields, but not so much with most natural park units.
- The other uniqueness of Bryce also involves the human element, the historic structures and initial development of the park in the 1920s and 30s. Providing a recreational experience in a natural environment within the context of a historical scene - does that really include cell towers and high speed service?

- I also understand we want to provide safety for employees and visitors, but the LEO rangers have made it clear that a cell tower is not needed to continue to provide the high level of visitor services, including emergency rescue, that we currently provide.
- Jessica makes another very good point - the potential to set a precedent of allowing future cell towers to invade the more "remote" parts of the park. Setting a precedent is something that should be considered in the context of NEPA as well.
- In the end, the NEPA process and Draft EA have not made a compelling case to me that would justify the need for a cell tower in Bryce Canyon National Park.
- The park is pretty small acreage wise as far as natural park units go, so I believe we should try to protect what is left in an undeveloped manner that provides a great visitor experience without all the technological conveniences of a city or developed area.

Linda: Thanks for allowing staff to provide input. This is important and valuable information from the people that live here and spend more time in the park than a visitor. Getting their perspective helps give a more balanced view as opposed to (b) (5)

[REDACTED]

Gina

On Mon, Jul 8, 2019 at 8:16 AM Mazzu, Linda <linda_mazzu@nps.gov> wrote:
comment

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Sunderland, Jessica** <jessica_sunderland@nps.gov>
Date: Mon, Jul 1, 2019 at 7:52 AM
Subject: Re: Opportunities for feedback: Verizon Cell Tower
To: Mazzu, Linda <linda_mazzu@nps.gov>

With regards to emergency response, I found out over the weekend that any phone has the capability to call 911, even those not contracted through a provider. This means that even without cell phone coverage, a person could still dial 911 in case of an emergency.

Sources:

https://www.911.gov/frequently_asked_questions.html
<https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/911-wireless-services>

On Thu, Jun 27, 2019 at 6:57 PM Sunderland, Jessica <jessica_sunderland@nps.gov> wrote:

Hi Linda,

Eric and Cindy have strongly encouraged me to compose this email and express my concerns about building a Verizon Tower in the Park. First, I'd like to address coverage in the park. For me personally, I don't get great cell phone service anywhere but I have Sprint which is known to be poor in this area. However, I get enough service to send and receive text messages consistently throughout the park which would be enough to reach out to

someone in case of an emergency.

I realize that being able to call 911 in case of an emergency is a concern for some visitors to the park as well. Even so, with an increase in personnel on the trails including PSAR, the VSAs, and backcountry patrols, I feel we have made it increasingly easy for visitors to contact us in an emergency situation. In addition, it seems that the majority of our medicals come from the main amphitheater where cell reception is fairly decent already.

Some, in favor of the tower, have expressed concerns for having internet access, but again I feel that we have made other efforts to mitigate this issue. We already offer free WiFi to visitors and NPS staff/volunteers at the Visitor Center, and most employees living in the park have access to internet in or near their residences. With the addition of the fiber being installed currently, internet access should increase to Historic Housing and the Lodge. This would also allow visitors and employees to make phone calls via WiFi. It seems that this in combination with the addition of the Tropic tower, the need for a tower within the Park boundary is greatly reduced if not eliminated altogether.

My main concern, though, is that we would once again be expanding our footprint. Bryce Canyon is such a small (in area, not visitors) park with several small towns surrounding its boundary that we shouldn't feel the need to build the tower *here* in the Park. If we allowed a tower to be built near main operations, it would likely be only a matter of time before suggestions to build another tower farther south (increasing availability from Bryce Point to Rainbow) would start to surface. As a person who enjoys being 'off the grid', part of the allure of hiking in remote areas like Bryce Canyon is being able to leave technology behind. Each of these small projects we approve have a compounding effect, impacting our natural areas and reducing the inherent quality of the Park.

We may have needed to strongly consider Verizon's proposition several years ago, but with recent additions to the Park, maybe it's just not necessary anymore.

Also, as kind of a side note, you mentioned that a new tower would provide little benefit to areas under the rim or south of Bryce Point, so visitors using the Under-the-Rim trail would not benefit. I do, however, have a suggestion to offer more safety and security to those using our backcountry trails. I think the installation of backcountry log boxes would be greatly beneficial at each of our backcountry trailheads. This would allow visitors to sign in and provide an itinerary before heading down trail. This would be especially beneficial to those visitors who are day hiking and don't purchase a permit.

Thank you for putting this up for discussion and encouraging everyone to use their voice to the benefit of the Park.

On Tue, Jun 25, 2019 at 5:21 PM Mazzu, Linda <linda_mazzu@nps.gov> wrote:

Hello again, I'm still hoping to get your feedback on this important project. There's two opportunities available.

- 1) We will discuss it again at Thursday's project meeting
- 2) You can provide your feedback via email.

Here's a short summary about the Cellular Telecommunications Tower with Power and