

Washington County Public Safety Radio Communications System
National Park Service/Keep Tryst Site
 Wednesday, August 30, 2007

Attendees

<u>County</u>	<u>National Park Service</u>
Pete Loewenheim – Project Manager	Lynne Wigfield - NPS-CHOH Compliance
Tina Rupert – Admin. Assistant, WCDPW	Dennis Frye – NPS-HF Chief Cultural Resources
Ray Parker – Project Mgr. Motorola	Bill Hebb – NPS-Res. Manager
James Jenkins – Lead Engineer	Andrew Lee – NPS Harper’s Ferry
Bob Kirk – MH Consulting	Will Kenyon – NPS-CHOH
Kim Sebastian, KCI Technologies	Don Brown – NPS Appalachian Trail
Richard Geidel, RPA – KCI Technologies	David Reus – NPS Appalachian Trail

Meeting began at 1:15 PM with introduction of attendees.

Lynne Wigfield stated that she was not certain that the tower would not be seen from certain locations even though the crane and balloon were not visible, due to foliage, gray sky, white crane and blue balloon.

The view from the various sites/photos were reviewed:

1. **Stone Fort on Maryland Heights** – Dennis Frye stated that the tower would be visible from there in the winter. The Stone Fort was built there because it was the highest point and is not just for scenic purposes, there is enormous historic significance. Donated by Washington County Historic Society and Maryland.
2. **100 Pounder Battery on Maryland Heights** - Crane was visible. The ell tower is visible, but blends in better because it is green and lower. The tower will not be white, it could be camouflaged.
3. **Scenic Overlook at Loudon Heights** – Crane was partially visible from higher location, View from Scenic Overlook. Naked eye view is not very visible. NPS thinks it’s more visible than shown on photo.
4. **Chimney Rock** site dismissed morning of balloon test.
5. **Jefferson Rock** – Crane is hidden by Maryland Heights regardless of foliage. This is one of the most historic sites in the park. NPS is not sure if the mountain or the foliage is blocking the view. The tower might be visible in winter.
6. **Lockwood House** - Crane is hidden by Maryland Heights regardless of foliage
7. **St. Peters Church Patio** - Crane is hidden by Maryland Heights regardless of foliage
8. **The Point** - Crane is hidden by Maryland Heights regardless of foliage

9. **Shenandoah River Shoreline from Bridge Street** – visible. This is representative of many sites along the river. In some areas it is blocked.
10. **Virignius Island Cotton Mill Ruins** - Visible in winter, foliage will block in summer.
11. **Appalachian Trail – 340 Bridge across Shenandoah** – crane is visible against the ridge.
12. **Potomac Wayside Rest Area** – the crane obscured by foliage. This is not the view the NPS intended. They were looking for a view from the riverfront, not the bridge. Entering MD from VA it will be visible, pretty much anywhere on 340.
13. **Murphy Farm** - Crane is hidden by Maryland Heights regardless of foliage.
14. **Bolivar Heights** – 4 or 5 miles away, probably not viewable from very beginning.
15. **Cavalier Heights Visitor Center Patio** – Hidden by foliage and possibly by the ridge. Not sure if it would be visible even without foliage, due to distance.
16. **Short Hill Dam Intake Ruins** – Could see it, probably more than on the photo.
 - 16a. **Short Hill – Rock Out Crop** – Crane is visible.
17. **Short Hill - Buzzards Rock** – Crane is visible on and off depending on location and foliage. NPS will be concerned with entire ridge. The crane is visible from along the ridge.
18. **Weaverton Cliffs** – Crane is visible against ridge.
19. **Heffner Scenic Property** – crane is visible against the sky.
20. **Lyons Property** – next to site. Crane is visible.
21. **Snyder Scenic Property** – Visible. Scenic easement owned by government.

Heffner, Lyons and Snyder Properties could all become part of the park. Some are undeveloped.

Dave Reus NPS stated that the images in the report don't necessarily capture what is out there. A photo from Weverton Cliffs was shown. Your eye is drawn to crane because of its vertical linear feature.

Pete Loewenheim questioned the location of the sun on most of these pictures. It was not cloudy at the time that Pete was there. It was hazy in the morning, and cleared up in the afternoon.

The National Geographic Book on the Appalachian Trail shows Weverton Cliffs on front cover. This is the location of Appalachian Trail Headquarters.

Dennis Frye commended everyone on getting to these sites and on the composition of booklet.

Richard Geidel, KCI, stated that from many of these locations, the crane and tower would be visible against the hills or fields and against the sky on some. There were only three sites where the backdrop was not the ground.

James Jenkins discussed coverage requirements and maps, and why this site was selected. Three coverage maps were passed around. The first map indicates nine sites and did not include Keep Tryst. This coverage was unacceptable to Washington County because of the large “open” no-coverage area at the Southern point of the County. James Jenkins then looked at many sites in the area. Keep Tryst was the best site, save one that was not owned by Washington County. The second map shows coverage in South County with the Keep Tryst site included (10 site system). The third map shows coverage from just the Keep Tryst site.

James Jenkins stated that other sites were not feasible because of the interference they would cause within the system itself. The 85’ tower mentioned by the NPS would not be feasible because someone is already at the top and we would have to go lower. James looked at public land and private properties and the only one feasible was up on the ridge and would be more visible. The tower may be lower, but all antennas would need to clear the tree line. Antennae are staggered for separation.

Pete Loewenheim reminded everyone that the Washington County boundary does include the Potomac River and that Washington County is responsible for life safety in that area. There are a significant number of calls in the river area, cliffs, Appalachian Trail, and during the annual run through here. This area was a very important area for coverage.

The NPS is aware of the need for communications in this area and supports the need; they are just debating the location and mechanism for achieving it. If the engineering supported it, would Washington County be willing to use Federal land, with the understanding that the Federal government would continue to own it.

The County wanted to have as much control as possible of sites. The County has equipment on a federal site now, and is not having very good luck now.

The NPS understands that it is in the best interest of all the parks represented and understands the need. Dennis Frye stated that none of the (NPS) likes the current solution of a tower at Keep Tryst.

Pete Loewenheim inquired about the radio technician from Denver that NPS has mentioned in a previous meeting. The County is willing to talk and make this work, and Gary Smith from Motorola requested contract information for that office, but did not receive the information in the response.

Will Kenyon stated that the NPS does not have any sites right now (existing) that would help with this situation; the NPS is partnered up with the County as much as possible. Jefferson County is covering this area now and they are putting another site in. This is the system the NPS is going on.

Andrew Lee questioned whether all alternates been looked at, such as reducing the antenna count? James Jenkins stated that the antenna count has been reduced as much as possible for County’s system.

James Jenkins will look at the Jefferson County sites, but he believes they will cause destructive interference in the system, which is why the Loudon Heights site could not be used.

Several federally owned sites were discussed. Bolivar Heights would be out of question due to the requirement of enough space for an equipment shelter. Grandview School sits very high. The backside of Interpretive Design Center (IDC) is a possibility. The Nash Farm fronts the river at a high elevation – northwest of Grandview School, owned by NPS, but not really visited. Shadowing may be a problem for Sandy Hook from Nash Farm site.

Pete Loewenheim stated that the County would require twenty-four hour access to any site. NPS stated that this should not be a problem. The NPS can show the Grandview School site when the meeting breaks up.

What kind of agreement would the County have to enter into with the NPS? It is usually a cooperative agreement. This is a fairly involved process reviewed by attorneys on both sides. There is a compliance process, minimum of environmental assessment. NPS would work through WV SHPO, whom the NPS has a very good relationship with. One agreement covers all three parks, would be the NPS process, environmental assessment with a public meeting. All review documents would be posted on web and the public can send comments in. It will be just one process. How long does this process take? Environmental assessment process – minimum of 6 months. Documents would be written with NPS guidelines.

The microwave must have straight shot to one of the County's other sites. May be able to hit Sharpsburg Water Tank or Lambs Knoll?

Dennis Frye stated that the NPS was not trying to be evasive when Gary Smith's letter was received, requesting information on the radio technician from Denver. The NPS just wanted to see what the balloon test revealed.

Pete Loewenheim stated that the crane being white exacerbated its visibility in some of the photos. The lower brown color of the crane blended in as well as the existing cell tower on the site. A photo simulation of an actual tower replica would be more representative.

Motorola will need to do engineering on the federal sites. County approval on any new site would most likely be above the Division of Public Works level. It would probably go to the Board of County Commissioners level. If there is an extra cost involved, that is a whole new ball game.

Dennis Frye stated that the NPS would like to work with County, rather than obstruct or destruct you (the County's project), to get the coverage needed. The NPS has been dealing with tower issues for over 10 years, and has always been able to reach some kind of an agreement. The current proposal for Keep Tryst destroys everything the NPS has worked for in the last 10 years.

Motorola needs the coordinates of the federal sites. NPS will provide the coordinates to the four sites. James Jenkins will get coverage, etc. information together and this group will reconvene and go over what the sites provide.

The NPS requested a longer lead-time (notification) for next meeting.

October 4th @ 1:00 PM was set as a tentative date/time for the next meeting. Tina Rupert will check Joe Kroboth's schedule.

Meeting adjourned at 3:15 PM.