

## Tips for Completing Cell Tower Projects in Montana:

With the recent increase of new cell tower construction and collocations in Montana, we are also seeing an increase in Section 106 submissions that do not meet our standards. This is an issue not only for our office as it takes a significant amount of time to review these undertakings, but is an issue for you, the consultants, and the companies that hired you. The message that eventually gets to the FCC in Washington D.C. is that Section 106 is delaying the progress of cell tower deployment, when in truth it is the submittal of incomplete work to our office that is causing the delay.

To aid you with your FCC submittals, we have come up with a list of tips that address the most common errors. Please be aware that this is not a comprehensive document on how to consult with the MTSHP. Information on the Section 106 consulting process in Montana can be found at <http://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/Archaeology/ConsultingWith>. If you are new to Montana, we highly recommend reading it before starting any Section 106 work.

### GENERAL

- Section 106 work **MUST** be completed by an individual who is Secretary of the Interior qualified. If you do not know what that means, you are not qualified.
- If the tower or collocation is located on a reservation, the cultural report must be submitted to the appropriate THPO for concurrence.
- We **DO NOT** provide concurrence after-the-fact. If the tower was already built or the collocation went up before 106 was completed, we will not provide you with a letter of concurrence.
- **EDIT YOUR WORK!** Most of the problems that we see are from sloppy work.
- If we have asked for additional information and you are submitting a revised cultural report, please do not resubmit the TCNS 620 or 621 forms.

### RECORD SEARCH

- For all cell towers and collocations, record searches must be completed **BEFORE** completing fieldwork.
- Cultural records staff have 15 days to respond to record search and site form requests, so **plan accordingly**. If possible, they will complete a rush order, but there are accompanying fees.
- The information that you receive in your record search, and the date you received it, need to be included in the cultural report.

### FIELDWORK

- Your fieldwork should include both the direct APE and visual APE.
- The direct APE includes not just the tower location, but any staging areas and access roads.
- Photos from eligible or listed cultural resources within the visual APE should be taken looking towards the tower. **DO NOT TRESPASS**. If you cannot access the property, please get as close as possible. While we do not require these photos, they go a long way in helping explain No Effect or No Adverse Effect determinations.

- **All field photos should have date stamps.** Unfortunately, there have been instances where consultants are using photos provided by the cellular companies and not actually completing the fieldwork. If you are located some distance from Montana, and cannot make the journey to complete the fieldwork, there are local consultants that you can hire (<http://mhs.mt.gov/Portals/11/shpo/docs/Consultants.pdf>).
- If you choose not to complete a Class III inventory for a cell project, be prepared to explain your reasoning in the cultural report. If it is questionable whether a survey is necessary or not, contact our office and discuss the project with us.
- Just because you decided that a Class III inventory of the direct APE was not necessary, does not mean that you do not have to complete fieldwork for the visual APE.
- Unless discussed with our office prior to submittal, using Google Earth images in lieu of actually visiting the site will not be accepted.

## CULTURAL REPORT

- A report that contains relevant project information and a discussion of potential effects on cultural resources **MUST** be submitted in addition to the FCC 620/621 form.
  - This is NOT an archaeological report that you only submit if you completed a survey or dug shovel probes, this is required for all new tower and collocation submittals to our office.
- Guidance for cultural resource reports can be found on our website, within our Consulting with Montana SHPO document (see website above).
  - For cell tower reports, we strongly recommend having a section for both an assessment of the Direct APE and Visual APE.
- Visual Assessment – If your conclusion for the undertaking is No Adverse Effect to eligible cultural resources within the visual APE, DO NOT just write a sentence saying that. You must document your reasoning for this effect determination.
- Maps
  - Must show the direct APE, visual APE and ALL cultural resources within both APEs regardless of eligibility.
  - The direct APE must be clearly delineated and not just a dot on the map, or pointed to by an arrow.
  - Try to keep the maps at a scale of 1:24,000. If they are zoomed out too far we will ask for replacements before we will complete our review.
- Photo Sims – We love photo sims, especially if your tower will be in an area with a lot of eligible cultural resources. They are not required, but can go a long way in helping us to understand your effect determination.

## SUBMITTING MATERIALS

- Review of your submittal will not be completed by our office until we have received the following items, so to avoid delays, we recommend submitting all required material the first time.
  - Cover letter
  - CRABS form ( <http://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/Forms> )

- Digital copy of the cultural report
  - GIS shapefiles
- A digital copy of the report and the GIS shapefiles can be submitted with the hard copy of the report on CD or jump drive, or through the Montana file transfer service (<https://transfer.mt.gov/>) to mtshpo@mt.gov. If you will be using the file transfer service, please make sure to put in your cover letter the date the digital information was submitted to our office.
- Once all materials have been received by our office, we have **30 DAYS** to complete our review. If possible, we will work with you to help you meet your deadlines, but do not expect an expedited review.

## FINAL TIP

- READ the FCC Section 106 guidelines!!!

If you have any questions about the information provided in this document, you can call or email me at 406-444-0388 or [jbush2@mt.gov](mailto:jbush2@mt.gov) .