NOTICE OF PREPARATION

FOR AN INITIAL STUDY/ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

FOR THE CHANNEL ISLANDS TELECOMMUNICATION PROJECT

PROJECT APPLICANT: Channel Islands Telephone Company

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) as the State Lead Agency, and the National Park Service (NPS) as the Federal Lead Agency, are preparing a joint Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (IS/EA) for the Channel Islands Telecommunication Project, and would like your views regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be addressed in the IS/EA. This IS/EA will be used by both the CPUC and the NPS when considering approvals for this project.

The project description, location, and probable environmental effects, which will be analyzed for the project, are attached.

According to State law, the deadline for your response is 30 days after receipt of this notice, which establishes a response deadline of the close of business on November 20, 2009. The CPUC and NPS would appreciate an earlier response, if possible. Please identify a contact person, and send your response to:

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Jeffrey Smith
Project Manager, RMT, Inc.
Date: October 21, 2009

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN INITIAL STUDY/ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE CHANNEL ISLANDS TELECOMMUNICATION PROJECT

October 21, 2009

Introduction

PURPOSE OF THE INITIAL STUDY/ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The purpose of an IS/EA is to inform decision-makers and the general public of the environmental effects of proposed projects that an agency may implement or approve. The IS/EA process is intended to provide information sufficient to evaluate a project and its potential for significant impacts on the environment; to examine methods of reducing adverse impacts; and to consider alternatives to the project. The IS/EA for the proposed project will be prepared and processed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In accordance with the requirements of CEQA and NEPA, the IS/EA will include:

- A summary of the project,
- A project description,
- A discussion of the project's consistency with relevant plans, goals, and policies,
- A description of the existing environmental setting, potential environmental impacts, and mitigation measures,
- Alternatives to the project as proposed, and
- Environmental consequences, including (a) any significant environmental effects which cannot be avoided if the project is implemented; (b) any significant irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources; (c) the growth inducing impacts of the proposed project; and (d) cumulative impacts.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Location and Existing Development

The Channel Islands Telephone Company (CITC) proposes to install cellular telecommunication infrastructure on the five islands that make up the Channel Islands National Park. These islands are located off the coast of Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties in southern California, and include:

- Anacapa Island;
- San Miguel Island;
- Santa Barbara Island;
- Santa Cruz Island; and
- Santa Rosa Island.

The CITC is proposing to install the cellular telecommunication infrastructure at 17 project locations on the five islands, as listed in Table 1 and shown in Figure 1.

Table 1: Site Locations for Telecommunication Infrastructure Installation

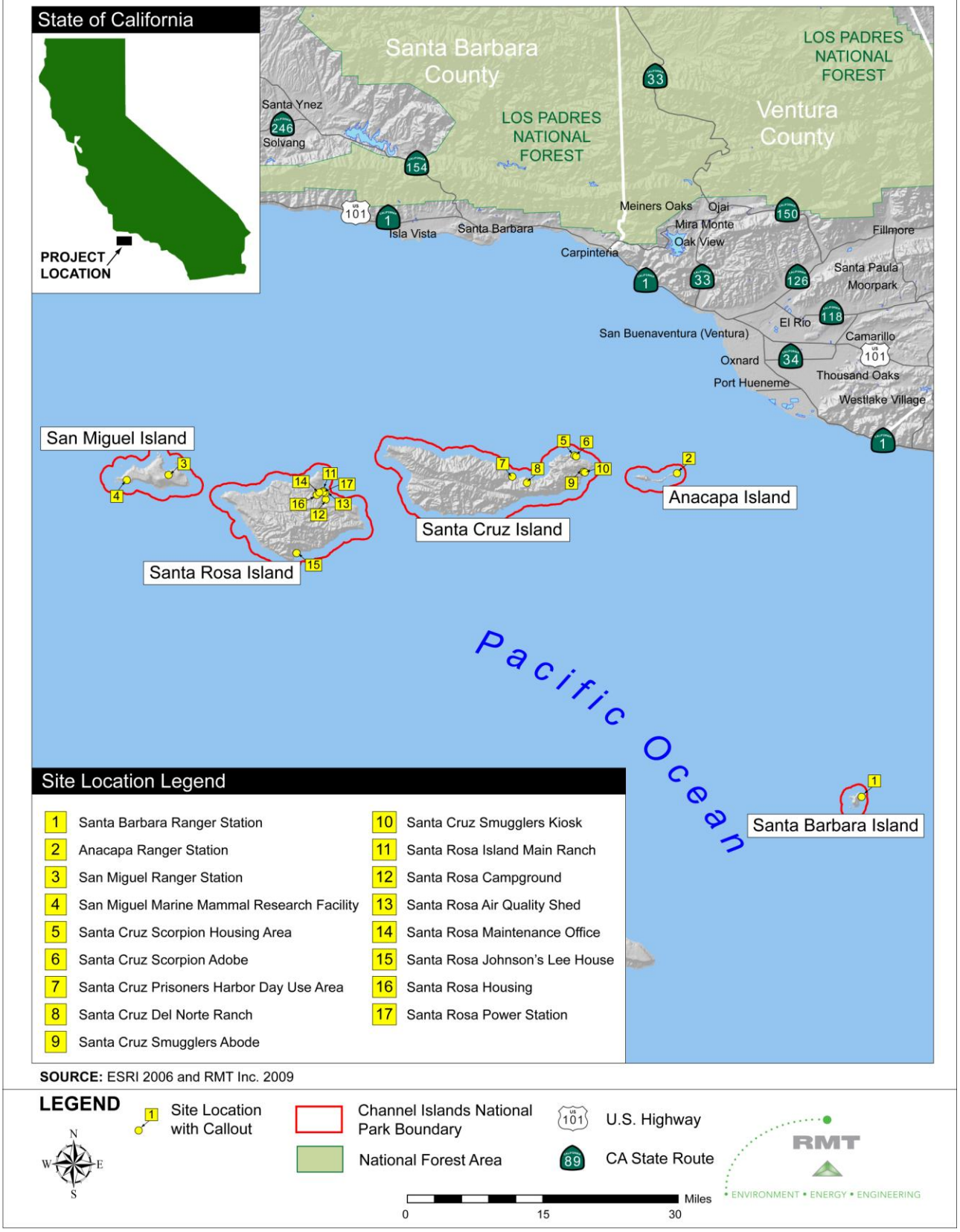
No.	Location Name
1	Santa Barbara Island Ranger Station
2	Anacapa Island Ranger Station
3	San Miguel Island Ranger Station
4	San Miguel Island Marine Mammal Research Facility
5	Santa Cruz Island Scorpion Housing Area
6	Santa Cruz Island Scorpion Adobe
7	Santa Cruz Island Prisoners Harbor Day Use Area
8	Santa Cruz Island Del Norte Ranch
9	Santa Cruz Island Smugglers Abode
10	Santa Cruz Island Smugglers Kiosk
11	Santa Rosa Island Main Ranch
12	Santa Rosa Island Campground
13	Santa Rosa Island Air Quality Shed
14	Santa Rosa Island Maintenance Office
15	Santa Rosa Island Johnson's Lee House
16	Santa Rosa Island Housing
17	Santa Rosa Island Power Station

Transportation to Project Locations

Construction and installation of the proposed telecommunications equipment would require bringing teams of construction workers, telecommunications equipment, and tools to each of the 17 project locations. Equipment and materials would be shuttled from the mainland to the intended island via boat or airplane, depending on the site location. The applicant intends to shuttle all materials from the mainland to the islands using normally scheduled NPS boat trips. The applicant would use a privately chartered boat in the event that NPS boats are not running at desired dates or times, are unavailable, or additional trips are needed beyond typically scheduled boat trips. In most cases, NPS vehicles would convey the materials from the boat landing site to the installation sites. A helicopter would be chartered to carry the materials from the boat landing site to the installation sites in those cases where NPS vehicles are not available or where there are no roads to the installation site. It is anticipated that NPS vehicles would be available to access most locations and that helicopter use would be rare.

Accommodations are not available on the islands for the construction workers except in cases of emergency, such as when inclement weather prevents a return trip to the mainland. Temporary

Figure 1: Proposed Project Site Locations



overnight accommodations can be provided at most of the ranger stations on the five islands in such circumstances.

Because accommodations are not readily available on the islands, construction workers would commute to and from the mainland daily, using regularly scheduled NPS boat trips. The uncertainty of available boat trips could affect the size of installation crews. A two-person installation crew would typically be used for equipment installation at each location. A three-person crew would be used for equipment installation over a shorter time period if the boat schedules were to restrict the time available at a given site due to logistical reasons.

It is possible that no regularly scheduled NPS boat trips would be available during the necessary window of construction for one or more sites. In this situation case, the applicant would charter a private boat for the two- or three-person construction team. Construction workers also could occasionally travel to the islands by helicopter; particularly for those sites that may be difficult to access by boat, but helicopter rental would be the transportation method of last resort, and is anticipated to be put to minimal use in this project.

Staging Areas

Cleared areas that are paved, covered with gravel, or covered with packed and cleared earth exist at each location and would be available for equipment staging. These cleared areas are considered fully disturbed areas and part of existing NPS facilities. No ground disturbance would be required for the staging of telecommunications equipment.

Construction Crew and Schedule

Each of the 17 sites would require between two and two and one-half working days for a two-person crew to complete equipment installation. The hours of construction may vary each day due to NPS boat schedules, but would generally be approximately 8 hours a day. Construction crew members would return to the mainland at the end of each day, and return to the island on the next available boat to continue or finish construction at each site. Therefore, the entire installation process would require between 34 and 42.5 work days to complete using only two-person crews. Construction activities would take place over approximately four months due to the irregular schedule of NPS boats and the likelihood of construction interruptions due to inclement weather.

Construction Activities

Construction equipment would include a ladder and hand tools, including battery-operated power tools. All standard telecommunication facilities proposed (described below) would be mounted on existing structures using screws and brackets.

Only one site would require ground disturbance. Location no.2 on Anacapa Island would require a minor amount (approximately 20 linear feet) of hand-trenching to connect new cables into existing NPS conduits. At all other locations, equipment would be mounted on exterior and interior walls or roofs of existing buildings and structures. No ground disturbance would occur at these remaining 16 sites.

Purpose and Need for the Project

The proposed project is needed because NPS staff currently has limited ability to communicate between locations on the Channel Islands and with personnel and other contact points on the mainland. The islands have a very high frequency (VHF) radio system that allows communication among radio-equipped ranger stations on the five islands. There is also satellite internet service at some ranger stations that allows secure access to government internet provider (IP) addresses on the mainland. NPS personnel also possess cellular telephones; however, cellular service is unreliable because the islands are at the outer limit of the cellular service area. As such, the location of the islands makes cellular telephone service unreliable on some parts of the islands and wholly absent on others. Recreational visitors to the islands have no land-line telephone access and little to no cellular telephone reception.

The proposed project would provide cellular telephone service at all ranger stations, fire stations, campground sites, residences, and runways on the five islands, as well as at all portions of the islands within an approximately 0.5-mile radius of each of the 17 proposed facility locations. The new service is intended to be consistent and reliable, with a reliability of 99.99999 percent, meaning that service will be available at these locations 99.99999 percent of the time.

The purpose of the proposed telephone service is to provide:

- Improved communication for NPS staff, researchers, residents, and recreational visitors between the five islands, as well as between the islands and the mainland;
- Communication in the case of an emergency or accident to allow for swifter emergency response; and
- Improved real-time reporting of weather data to allow for more accurate travel predictions, which will reduce unnecessary and/or aborted boat and aircraft trips to and from the islands for both NPS and commercial/recreational vehicles.

Proposed Project Elements

Fifteen project locations (all except location nos. 7 and 10) would require installing the following standard telecommunication facilities on the exterior of existing structures:

- A new or replacement Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) two-way satellite dish antenna, typically roof-mounted and approximately 6 feet in diameter;
- A new omni-directional antenna, a cylindrically-shaped antenna approximately 17 inches long and 2 inches in diameter, typically roof- or pole-mounted;
- A new dual-band Yagi antenna, a triangularly-shaped antenna approximately 15.5 inches long and 10.5 inches wide at the base, typically pole-mounted;
- Up to ten new or replacement solar panels, high-efficiency photovoltaic (PV) modules composed of poly-crystalline cells; these solar panels would measure approximately 39 inches wide by 52 inches long by 3 inches thick, produce 176 watts each, and be either roof-mounted or mounted on existing solar panel frameworks; and
- A new pico cell telecommunications box, measuring approximately 13 inches long, 11 inches wide, and 2 inches thick, and typically wall-mounted.

These pieces of equipment would be mounted on poles, exterior walls, or roofs of existing structures using screws and brackets. Solar panels would be installed in either an existing or a new frame structure. Where poles do not currently exist for mounting antennas, a new pole would be attached to a building exterior using screws and brackets.

The project also would involve installing the following equipment on the interior of the existing structures at 15 of the 17 project locations (all except location nos. 7 and 10):

- New or replacement solar panel batteries stored on a battery rack, allowing for a minimum of five days of energy storage; and
- A new or replacement VSAT modem.

All 17 project locations would include installing a GSM (global system for mobile communications) solar payphone. These payphones would be wall- or post-mounted, and would include their own 15- to 35-watt solar panel and battery. The NPS requested that any and all GSM payphones are installed on existing structures only, and in areas with visitors. All 17 of the proposed project locations comply with these general NPS requirements.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The proposed project has the potential to cause significant impacts, based on the results of the pre-field investigation and preliminary field surveys. Table 2 includes a preliminary list of potential project impacts. Additional studies have been and will be conducted in support of the impact analysis for the IS/EA. It is likely that mitigation would be required for some impacts. It is the applicants' intent to mitigate significant impacts.

PUBLIC AND AGENCY COMMENTS

The purpose this Notice of Preparation (NOP) is to solicit input from the public and agencies about the scope of analysis to be included in the IS/EA. This NOP is being circulated for a 30-day review period. Please send your comments regarding the scope and content of the EIRIS/EA along with the name and address of an appropriate contact person to:

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Table 2: Preliminary List of Potential Environmental Impacts of the Channel Islands Telecommunication Project

Environmental Impact Category	Potential Environmental Impacts
Aesthetics	▪ Affect the viewshed by the addition of the proposed telecommunication infrastructure
Agriculture, Land Use, and Recreation	▪ Temporary interruption of recreation activities during project construction ▪ Compatibility with land use regulations and guidelines
Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases	▪ Violate an air quality standard during construction activities ▪ Contribute substantially to an existing air quality violation in San Mateo County ▪ Contribute to the generation of greenhouse gases
Biological Resources	▪ Impacts to special status species from construction activities ▪ Impact to local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources
Cultural Resources	▪ Construction activities could potentially destroy or disturb paleontological resources, human remains, or historic or cultural resources.
Geology, Soils, and Seismicity	▪ Increase erosion due to soil disturbance (location no. 2 only)
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	▪ Transport and use of hazardous materials (batteries for the solar panels) could create a significant hazard ▪ Increase the risk of wildfires during project construction
Hydrology and Water Quality	▪ Contaminate groundwater and storm water runoff from accidental spills of hazardous materials during project construction
Noise	▪ Expose people to noise levels in excess of local standards due to construction activities ▪ Expose people to a substantial increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity during project construction
Public Services and Utilities	▪ Construction of the proposed telecommunication infrastructure would increase the demand for public services (such as emergency services and fire and police protection) and utilities (water, sewer, power, etc.)
Transportation and Traffic	▪ Construction traffic could increase traffic-related hazards ▪ Construction traffic could degrade local streets beyond pre-project conditions

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