

Agency Official 106 Effect Report

Installation of Verizon Cable Connection for Lake Wilderness Subdivision

**U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial National Military Park
120 Chatham Lane
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22405**

Purpose

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial National Military Park was authorized by an act of Congress on February 14, 1927 (44 Stat. 1091). The purpose of the park, as stated in the act, is “to commemorate the Civil War battles of Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania Court House, Wilderness, and Chancellorsville, including Salem Church...and to mark and preserve for historical purposes the breastworks, earthworks, gun emplacements, walls, or other defenses or shelters used by the armies on the said battles...and together also with additional land as the Secretary of War may deem necessary for monuments, markers, tablets, roads, highways, paths, approaches, and to carry out the general purposes of this Act.” The legislation further states that the park shall “...open, construct, and repair such roads, highways, paths, and other approaches as may be necessary to make the historical points accessible to the public and to the students of said battles...” By Executive Order 6166 in 1933 the park was transferred to the Department of the Interior to be administered by the National Park Service.

Need

Lake Wilderness is a residential subdivision located on the Wilderness Battlefield. It is divided into two sections, sandwiched between is a small strip of National Park Service land. Verizon, a communications company, currently serves the community but needs to upgrade and improve its service. In order for this to occur, Verizon needs to run a new fiber-optic cable line across National Park Service land on the Wilderness Battlefield.

Description

The park proposes to allow Verizon to install a fiber-optic cable across approximately 950 linear feet of National Park Service land. The cable will be installed using directional boring, whereby two pits would be excavated at either end of the proposed connection and the cable would be installed by directly boring under the park property at a depth of two feet below grade. The directional boring will occur under National Park Service land to the north of the Orange Plank Road (Route 621) corridor. This will connect existing cables at Calvary Court and Sabre Court in Lake Wilderness. The cable will be bored over top of a water line, buried to a depth of three feet, which was installed in 2009 by the Lake Wilderness subdivision. Archaeological testing of the area was completed in advance of that project and no significant resources were discovered.

Property Description

A. Major Physical Components

1. Wilderness Battlefield – The area of the proposed project lies along the northern edge of Orange Plank Road (Route 621). The project area is within a mixed hardwood forest setting and is surrounded by privately held low-density single-family housing and farmland.

B. Historical Significance

1. Wilderness Battlefield – The area was the scene of intense combat between Union and Confederate forces during the 1864 Battle of the Wilderness. On May 5 and 6, the Orange Plank corridor was the location of repeated attacks and counterattacks by both armies. The park land in this area was acquired in the 1930's for the establishment of a pedestrian trail that connected Orange Plank Road with Orange Turnpike (Route 20) to the north. This pedestrian trail is no longer advertised for visitor use and the location of the proposed fiber-optic cable crossing receives little to no visitation.

C. Archaeological Resources

1. Wilderness Battlefield – An archaeological test of the route of the proposed fiber-optic cable was conducted in 2010 when the site was being investigated for a waterline. The testing failed to identify any artifacts or significant resources. The report is filed both at the park and with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources: Brad McDonald, *Phase I Archaeological Identification Survey of a Proposed 8-inch Water Line Corridor in the Lake Wilderness Subdivision, Spotsylvania County, Virginia* (2009) – VDHR #2009-0882

Description of Alternatives

Alternative A – No Action

This option would continue to provide Verizon service to local residents, but would contribute to the lack of efficiency of the overall telephone, Internet and cable television system.

Alternative B – Install Verizon Fiber-optic Cable Along Orange Plank Road

Under this option, Verizon would extend its fiber-optic cable south from both subdivision sections to Orange Plank Road, and then extend along National Park Service lands that border

the road to complete the connection. Under this option, the intrusion on park property would involve 1200 linear feet, a greater amount of land than Alternative D and would not be accomplished through directional boring and would involve a greater amount of ground disturbance and displacement of soil.

Alternative C – Install Overhead Fiber-optic Cable Across National Park Service Land from Calvary Court to Sabre Court

Under this option, the park would allow Verizon to install a fiber-optic cable across approximately 950 linear feet of National Park Service land. The cable would be hung from overhead power poles. Under this option, power poles and overhead lines would be introduced into the wooded landscape. It would also require more maintenance and put the line at greater risk of outage due to downed lines during storms.

Alternative D – Install Fiber-optic Cable Across National Park Service Land from Calvary Court to Sabre Court (Preferred Alternative)

Under this option, the park would allow Verizon to install a fiber-optic cable across approximately 950 linear feet of National Park Service land. The cable will be installed using directional boring, whereby two pits would be excavated at both ends of the proposed connection, and off NPS land, and the pipe would be installed by directly boring under the park property at a depth of two feet below grade. This will connect the two existing fiber-optic cables at Calvary Court and Sabre Court in Lake Wilderness.

Mitigation Measures

In 2009, archaeological testing was conducted for the proposed project area. This was in advance of a waterline that was installed at a depth of three feet. No significant resources were discovered.

Assessment

It is the opinion of the park that the preferred alternative will have some impact on park property. However, the impact will be minimal and will have “no adverse effect” on the historic resources.

Park Consultation

The proposal will undergo the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The proposal will be circulated to the park's Section-106 advisor for archaeology.

The proposal will go through a 30-day public comment and review period. During that time, the proposal was posted on the National Park Service Planning, Environmental, and Public Comment System (PEPC). The park contacted, and solicited comments from, representatives of interested organizations such as the University of Mary Washington's Department of Historic Preservation, the Friends of Wilderness Battlefield, the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, Spotsylvania County, and the Pamunkey Indian Tribe.

The proposal will be sent to the State Historic Preservation Office (Virginia Department of Historic Resources) for a 30-day review.

Report Prepared By

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