



# GREEN BANK OBSERVATORY



## NSF Environmental Impact Statement and Section 106 Consultation for Proposed Changes to Green Bank Observatory Operations

### Green Bank Observatory Operations

#### What is the Proposed Action?

NSF is conducting scoping meetings to obtain feedback on proposed operational changes due to funding constraints at Green Bank Observatory (GBO). A range of alternatives is being considered for evaluation in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). These alternatives will be refined through continued public input, with preliminary alternatives that include the following:

- Continued NSF investment for science-focused operations (No-Action Alternative)
- Collaboration with interested parties for science- and education-focused operations with reduced NSF-funded scope
- Collaboration with interested parties for operation as a technology and education park
- Mothballing of facilities (suspension of operations in a manner such that operations could resume efficiently at some future date)
- Deconstruction and site restoration

#### What is NEPA?

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires federal agencies to consider the potential environmental consequences of proposed actions on the environment prior to making final decisions. The NEPA review process is intended to provide the public with an opportunity to comment and provide input into those decisions. On October 19, 2016, NSF announced the beginning of the scoping process and solicitation of public comments to identify issues to be analyzed in an EIS. The purpose of the public scoping process is to determine relevant issues that will influence the scope of the environmental analysis, including identification of viable alternatives. Additional opportunities for public participation will be available throughout the process.

#### What is Section 106?

NSF also intends to initiate consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) to evaluate potential effects on historic properties, if any, as a result of the proposed action. Section 106

of the NHPA requires federal agencies to consult with interested parties and the State Historic Preservation Officer regarding potential effects of their proposed actions on nationally significant historic properties.

#### Who owns, funds, and manages Green Bank Observatory?

NSF owns GBO and provides funding via a Cooperative Agreement with Associated Universities, Inc. (AUI), for its operation and maintenance for the benefit of research communities. On October 1, 2016, GBO was separated from the NSF-funded National Radio Astronomy Observatory. This separation follows a plan that was first communicated to the research community by NSF on March 22, 2013, in Dear Colleague Letter NSF 13-074. The Breakthrough Prize Foundation provides additional funding to AUI to support research in the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence at GBO. Other GBO funding partners include the NANOGrav Project (through a separate NSF funding line) and West Virginia University. GBO is the anchor and administrative site of the 13,000-square-mile National Radio Quiet Zone.

#### EIS Timeline

**Scoping Comment Period: October 19 through November 25, 2016**

- *Public meetings November 9, 2016, at 3:00pm-5:00pm and 6:00pm-8:00pm  
Green Bank Science Center*

**Draft EIS target release: Spring 2017**

- *45-Day Comment Period on Draft EIS*
- *Public meetings on Draft EIS*

**Final EIS target release: Fall 2017**

**NSF Record of Decision target release: Winter 2017-18**

#### How to Submit Comments

Scoping comments will be accepted through November 25, 2016, and may be submitted during the public meetings or by:

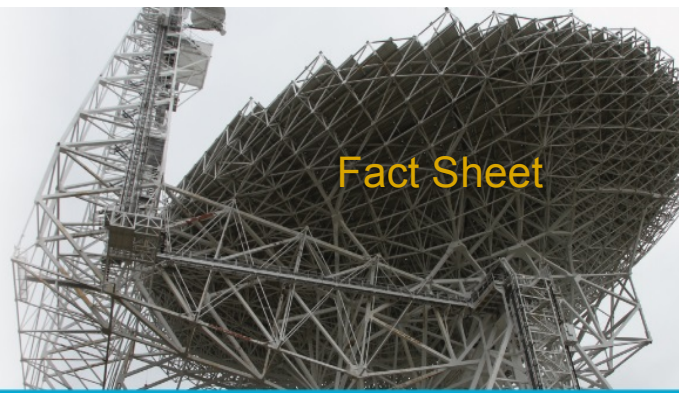
**Email:** [envcomp-AST-greenbank@nsf.gov](mailto:envcomp-AST-greenbank@nsf.gov)

**Mail:** Ms. Elizabeth Pentecost, National Science Foundation, Division of Astronomical Sciences, Suite 1045, 4201 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22230.

**Additional information will be posted throughout the EIS process at [www.nsf.gov/AST](http://www.nsf.gov/AST)**



# GREEN BANK OBSERVATORY



Fact Sheet

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### Site Plan

