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Governor

STATE OF NEW MEXICO
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION

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January 18, 2017

Ms. Elizabeth Pentecost National Science Foundation
Division of Astronomical Sciences
4201 Wilson Blvd. Suite 1045
Arlington, Virginia 22230
spenteco@nsf.gov

Re: NEPA Analysis for Proposed Changes to Sacramento Peak Observatory Operations, Sunspot, NM

Dear Ms. Pentecost;

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) is in receipt of the December 20, 2016 correspondence including Historic Cultural Properties Inventory Forms (HCPI) for 65 evaluated buildings and structures. NSF requested that HPD concurrence with the determination that two telescopes at Sacramento Peak Observatory are individually eligible for inclusion in the NRHP and that 63 historic of 65 structures comprise a National Register Historic District. NSSF also requested concurrence that there are no known archaeological sites on the Sacramento Peak Observatory property.

HPD Archaeologist Andrew Zink and Architectural Historian Steven Moffson visited the site in November to determine the scope of resources eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Places. Following the site visit, HPD concluded that the significance of the property is as an historic district with a formally design landscape by a major New Mexico architect which includes the two telescopes. Therefore, the resources should be evaluated as a designed landscape comprised of these telescopes, 63 contributing structures, and the roads, open spaces, playgrounds, wells, retaining walls along with other landscape features not yet inventoried or evaluated. Lincoln National Forest is in the process of preparing a National Register Nomination for the historic district. HPD recommends that NSF document the designed landscape features on Laboratory of Anthropology Forms available at:

<http://www.nmhistoricpreservation.org/documents/arms-documents.html>

In addition, the historic context of the designed landscape should be researched and provided.

Please be advised that determining individual significance of any features or structures is not the recommended approach to the determination of eligibility for this nationally significant property.

While visiting the observatory grounds in November, HPD Archaeologist Andrew Zink observed what appeared to be several isolated foundations without superstructures. Due to time constraints and the visit's focus on the standing buildings, Andrew was not able to identify these features but believes their presence could indicate that historic archaeology within the planned landscape could be present and should be taken into account.

Although no prehistoric archaeology is expected within the observatory grounds, HPD will not be able to comment on whether or not additional archaeological survey is needed until the entirety of the land that is changing management (which HPD recognizes as the Area of Potential Effects (APE) for these types of undertakings) can be compared to what is on record as having been previously surveyed in the New Mexico Cultural Resource Information System (NMCRIS) and Forest Service databases' records. HPD requests that the NSF provide documentation showing the entirety of the land that will be undergoing changes in management.

HPD has been informed that the Forest Service has not received copies of the HCPI forms. It is advisable that the Bill Sapp of the Lincoln National Forest receive copies of all documentation submitted to this office.

We look forward to continued consultation regarding this nationally significant property.

Sincerely,

Barbara Zook, RA
Architectural Projects Reviewer

Cc: Bill Sapp, PhD, Lincoln National Forest, USFS