



Landscape Architects, Architects,  
Engineers, and Planners, P.C.

February 7, 2018

Honorable Chairman William Rice and Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals  
Village of Nelsonville  
258 Main Street  
Nelsonville, NY 10516

Re: Visual Resource Assessment  
Proposed Wireless Telecommunications Facility  
15 Rockledge Road  
Nelsonville, NY

Dear Honorable Chairman and Zoning Board of Appeals Members:

Saratoga Associates is writing on behalf of Homeland Towers, LLC regarding the proposed 110 foot tall monopine telecommunications tower and associated equipment at the above referenced address. Saratoga Associates prepared the Visual Resource Assessment (VRA) submitted for this project. A Visual Resource Assessment Report dated June 2, 2017, a letter dated November 15, 2017 summarizing the findings of the November 4, 2017 balloon test, and a letter dated December 19 addressing various public comments have been previously submitted to the ZBA.

A number of additional comments were received during the public comment period concerning potential visual impact. To address substantive comments and further supplement the record we offer the following information.

**January 31, 2017 Balloon Test**

The Nelsonville ZBA requested a second balloon visibility test be conducted to allow the general public additional opportunity to observe potential project visibility. This balloon test was conducted on January 31, 2018. On this date one four-foot± diameter red balloon was raised to an elevation of approximately 110 feet above grade (top of balloon). The balloon was tethered at a survey stake identifying the center of the proposed tower.

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The weather on January 31 was partly sunny with good visibility. Winds were light at the time the balloon was aloft. The balloon was launched at 8:05 am and remained aloft until approximately 1pm. The balloon was stable and generally maintained the desired horizontal and vertical position for the duration of the float.

### **Supplemental Photo Simulations**

With the balloon in the air Saratoga Associates visited several locations that have been the subject of substantive public comment. These locations include:

Hudson Highlands State Park Hiking Trails - Saratoga Associates hiked the yellow (Undercliff) trail from Nelsonville to the intersection with the white (Washburn) trail, and continuing on the along the white trail to the summit of Bull Hill. Even with leaves off the trees unobstructed views in the direction of the project site were extremely limited. Only one trail location was found with an unencumbered view of the balloon. This was a rock outcropping along the yellow trail approximately ½ of the way from the Nelsonville trailhead to the trail's intersection with the white trail. A photo simulation of the proposed monopine tower from this location is provided as Figure 2. Although several scenic vistas of the Hudson Highland region were found, no other vantage point with a direct view of the project site was identified along this route.

Constitution Marsh Audubon Center and Sanctuary– Saratoga Associates visited the Audubon Center trail to Constitution Marsh. The balloon was not visible from any location along the trail or from the marsh Boardwalk. A photograph from the marsh boardwalk is provided as Figure 3.

Village of Cold Spring Waterfront – Saratoga Associates walked the Hudson River waterfront from Dockside Park to Foundry Dock Park. The balloon was not visible from any location along the Cold Spring Waterfront. A photograph from the public pier in Cold Spring is provided as Figure 4.

Storm King Highway Scenic Byway (NYS Rte. 218) – Saratoga Associates attempted to drive the Storm King Highway Scenic Byway but found the road closed to traffic on January 31, 2018.

Although a balloon was not being flown at the time, Saratoga Associates had previously taken photographs from several locations along this scenic byway on April 11, 2017.

From the Storm King Mountain scenic overlook the project falls behind Bull Hill and is fully screened. Figure 5 illustrates the view from the scenic overlook.

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As the byway proceeds south toward West Point a line-of-sight around Bull Hill is possible. However, dense roadside vegetation substantially encumbers distant views. Figure 6 illustrates the view from the closest and most exposed roadside vantage point where a line-of-sight is possible. From this location the proposed monopine is virtually indistinguishable, even during leaf-off season.

Hudson River – To represent project visibility from the Hudson River line-of-sight profiles are provided as Figure 7. The locations of these lines-of-sight are provided on Figure 1, Location Map.

A line-of-sight to the proposed 110 foot tall monopine tower is possible from a short stretch of the Hudson River – approximately 5,000 linear feet of the navigable channel north of Constitution Island to Cold Spring and approximately 1,200 linear feet south of Constitution Island (refer to land cover viewshed area identified in Figure 1).

Line-of-sight profiles demonstrate that from most affected locations on the river the top of the proposed tower will remain below background ridgelines. From all affected river vantage points the distance to the proposed monopine is greater than 1 mile. Combined these factors will render the stealth monopine difficult to discern from on-water and west shore vantage points.

Cold Spring Cemetery – Supplemental photographs are provided as Figures 8A-8G and a supplemental photo simulation is provided as Figure 8I from the Cold Spring Cemetery to more thoroughly describe potential project visibility. While the proposed 110 foot tall monopine tower will be visible from certain areas in the northern portion of the Cold Spring Cemetery, the photographs demonstrate that visibility is substantially less from the southern sections. Moreover, in areas of the cemetery where views exist, the line-of-sight is frequently interrupted by existing evergreen trees. Such view screening will be significantly greater throughout the cemetery during the summer season when existing deciduous trees provide additional screening.

The results of the January 31, 2018 balloon test are consistent with the findings and conclusions of the June 2, 2017 Visual Resource Assessment. Photographic documentation of the balloon test, line-of-sight profiles and photo simulations demonstrate that the proposed 110 foot tall monopine tower is either fully screened, well camouflaged and/or visually subordinate to the wider landscape within view from Hudson Highlands State Park and locations on and around the Hudson. Although visible from the Cold Spring Cemetery, such views are frequently interrupted by existing evergreen and deciduous trees.

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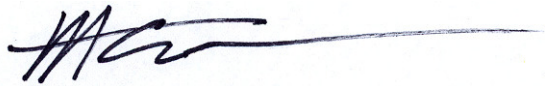
Visual impact is defined by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation as follows:

“Aesthetic impact occurs when there is a detrimental effect on the perceived beauty of a place or structure. Mere visibility, even startling visibility of a project proposal, should not be a threshold for decision making. Instead a project, by virtue of its visibility, must clearly interfere with or reduce the public’s enjoyment and/or appreciation of the appearance of an inventoried resource.”<sup>1</sup>

“Significant aesthetic impacts are those that may cause a diminishment of the public enjoyment and appreciation of an inventoried resource, or one that impairs the character or quality of such a place”.<sup>2</sup>

Based on the limited project visibility identified in this supplemental assessment, it is reasonable to conclude that the proposed telecommunications tower will not create a detrimental effect on the studied resources, nor will it cause the diminishment of public enjoyment and appreciation of these places. As such the proposed Project will not result in an adverse visual impact.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Allen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matthew W. Allen, RLA

Principal

**SARATOGA ASSOCIATES**

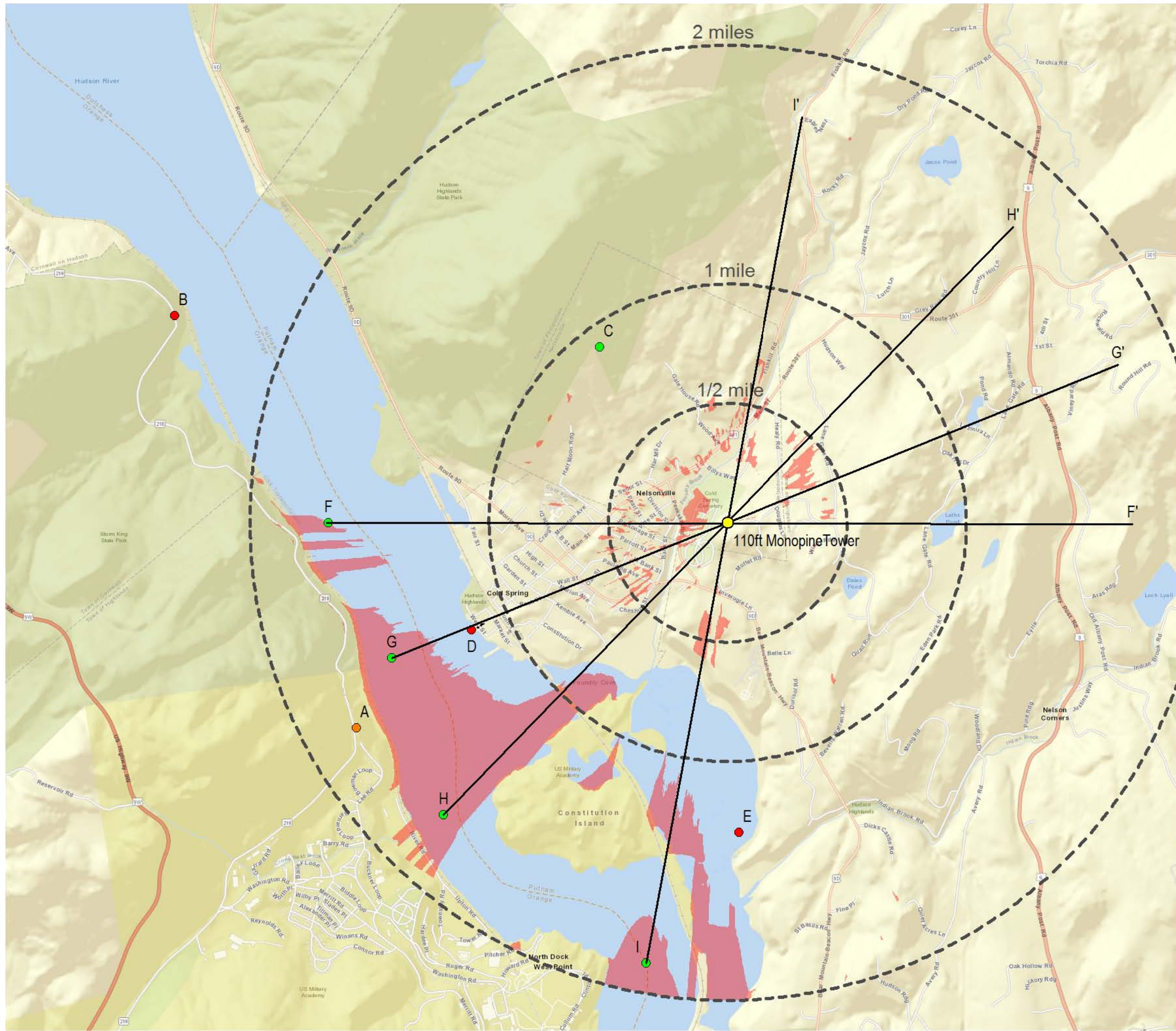
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<sup>1</sup> NYS DEC Program Policy for Assessing and Mitigating Visual Impact, DEP-00-2, July 31, 2000, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> NYS DEC p. 5.



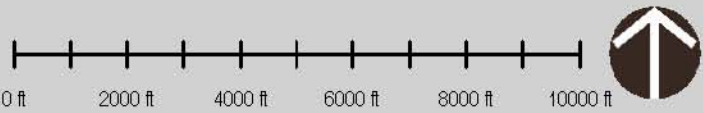


**LEGEND**

- Land Cover Viewshed Area  
(Includes existing vegetation and structures)
- Study Location - Tower Not Visible
- Study Location - Tower Visible
- Study Location - Tower Visible (Seasonal)
- F - F' Hudson River Line-of-Sight Profile

Note: Viewshed areas are not definitive. Viewshed mapping provides a general understanding of where the proposed project is theoretically visible based on regional topographic, forest and building cover data sources.

The "Land Cover" condition viewshed area includes the screening effect of intervening vegetation and buildings. Vegetated areas and buildings were manually digitized from 2016 one-foot resolution digital orthoimagery. All digitized tree cover is assumed to be 50 feet tall and all digitized buildings are assumed to be 25 feet tall.



**FIGURE 1**  
**LOCATION MAP**

Visual Resource Assessment  
Proposed Telecommunications Tower



Nelsonville Site (NY170)  
15 Rockledge Road  
Nelsonville, NY





Photograph Information

Date:	January 31, 2018
Time:	10:55am
Focal Length:	50mm (film equivalent)
Camera:	14.2mp Nikon D3100 DSLR
Photo Location:	41° 25' 58.8000" N 73° 57' 04.4424" W
Distance:	0.91 miles
Visibility:	Visible

Figure 2

Simulated Condition  
Photo C - Hudson Highlands State Park - Yellow Trail

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Visual Resource Assessment  
PROPOSED TELECOMMUNICATIONS TOWER



Nelsonville Site (NY170)  
15 Rockledge Road  
Nelsonville, NY





Photograph Information	
Date:	January 31, 2018
Time:	11:38am
Focal Length:	50mm (film equivalent)
Camera:	14.2mp Nikon D3100 DSLR
Photo Location:	41° 24' 12.5503" N 73° 56' 25.0954" W
Distance:	1.3 Miles
Visibility:	Screened

Top of tower behind trees  
in this location

**Figure 3**

Simulated Condition  
**Photo E - Constitution Marsh Sanctuary Boardwalk**

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Visual Resource Assessment  
**PROPOSED TELECOMMUNICATIONS TOWER**



Nelsonville Site (NY170)  
15 Rockledge Road  
Nelsonville, NY





Photograph Information	
Date:	January 31, 2018
Time:	1:16am
Focal Length:	50mm (film equivalent)
Camera:	14.2mp Nikon D3100 DSLR
Photo Location:	41° 24' 12.5503" N 73° 56' 25.0954" W
Distance:	1.2 Miles
Visibility:	Screened

Figure 4

Simulated Condition  
Photo D - Cold Spring Waterfront

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Visual Resource Assessment  
PROPOSED TELECOMMUNICATIONS TOWER



Nelsonville Site (NY170)  
15 Rockledge Road  
Nelsonville, NY





Photograph Information	
Date:	April 11, 2017
Time:	3:06pm
Focal Length:	50mm (film equivalent)
Camera:	14.2mp Nikon D3100 DSLR
Photo Location:	41° 26' 06.2388" N 73° 59' 07.8096" W
Distance:	2.5 Miles
Visibility:	Screened

**Figure 5**

Simulated Condition  
**Photo B - Storm King Highway Scenic Byway - Storm King Mountain Overlook**

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Visual Resource Assessment  
**PROPOSED TELECOMMUNICATIONS TOWER**



Nelsonville Site (NY170)  
15 Rockledge Road  
Nelsonville, NY





Photograph Information	
Date:	April 11, 2017
Time:	2:58pm
Focal Length:	50mm (film equivalent)
Camera:	14.2mp Nikon D3100 DSLR
Photo	41.40994012° N
Location:	73.97121640° W
Distance:	1.75 Miles
Visibility:	Indistinguishable

Figure 6

Simulated Condition  
Photo A - Storm King Highway Scenic Byway

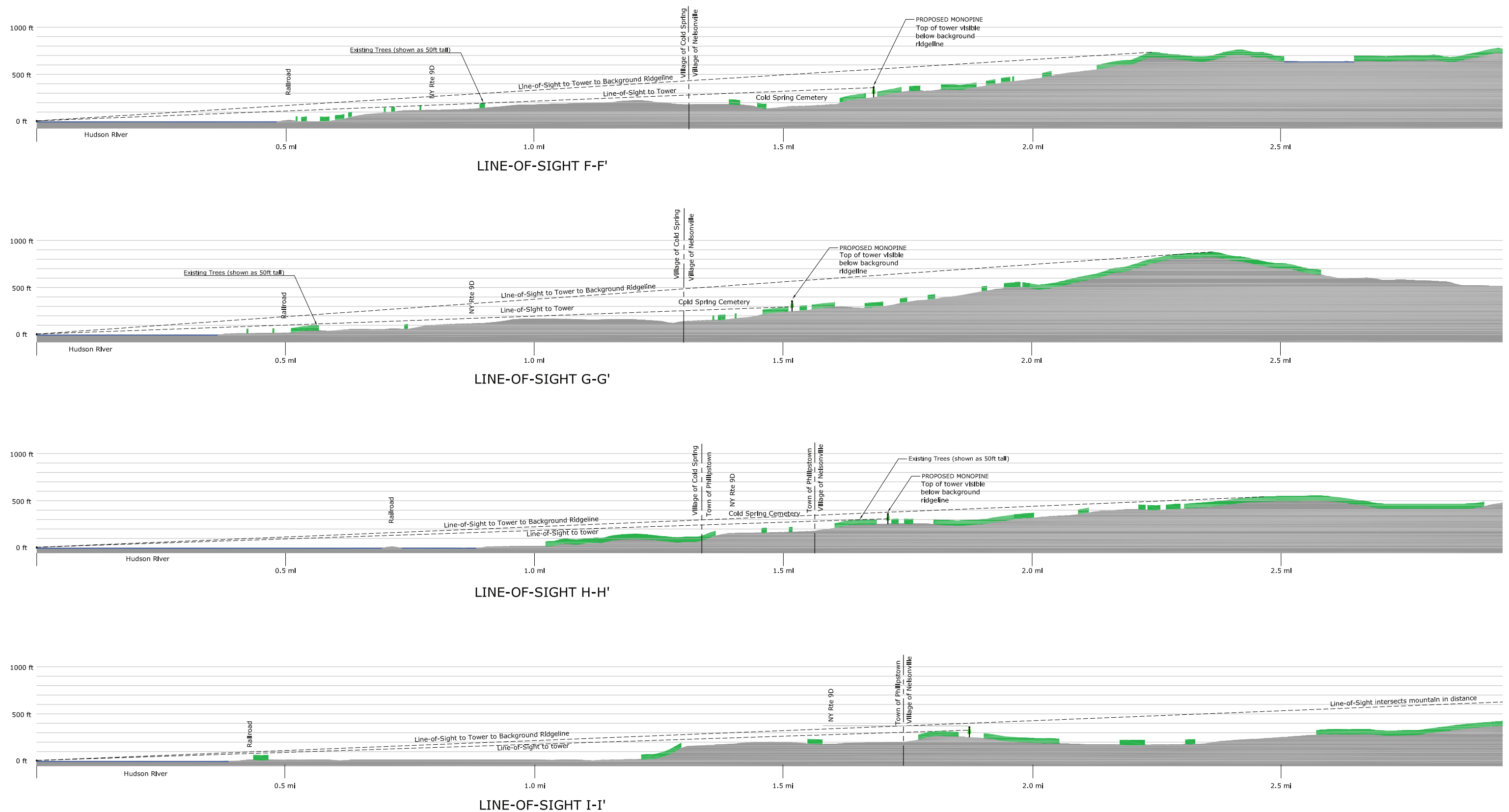
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Nelsonville Site (NY170)  
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**Figure 7**

Line-of-Sight Profiles  
Hudson River Viewpoints

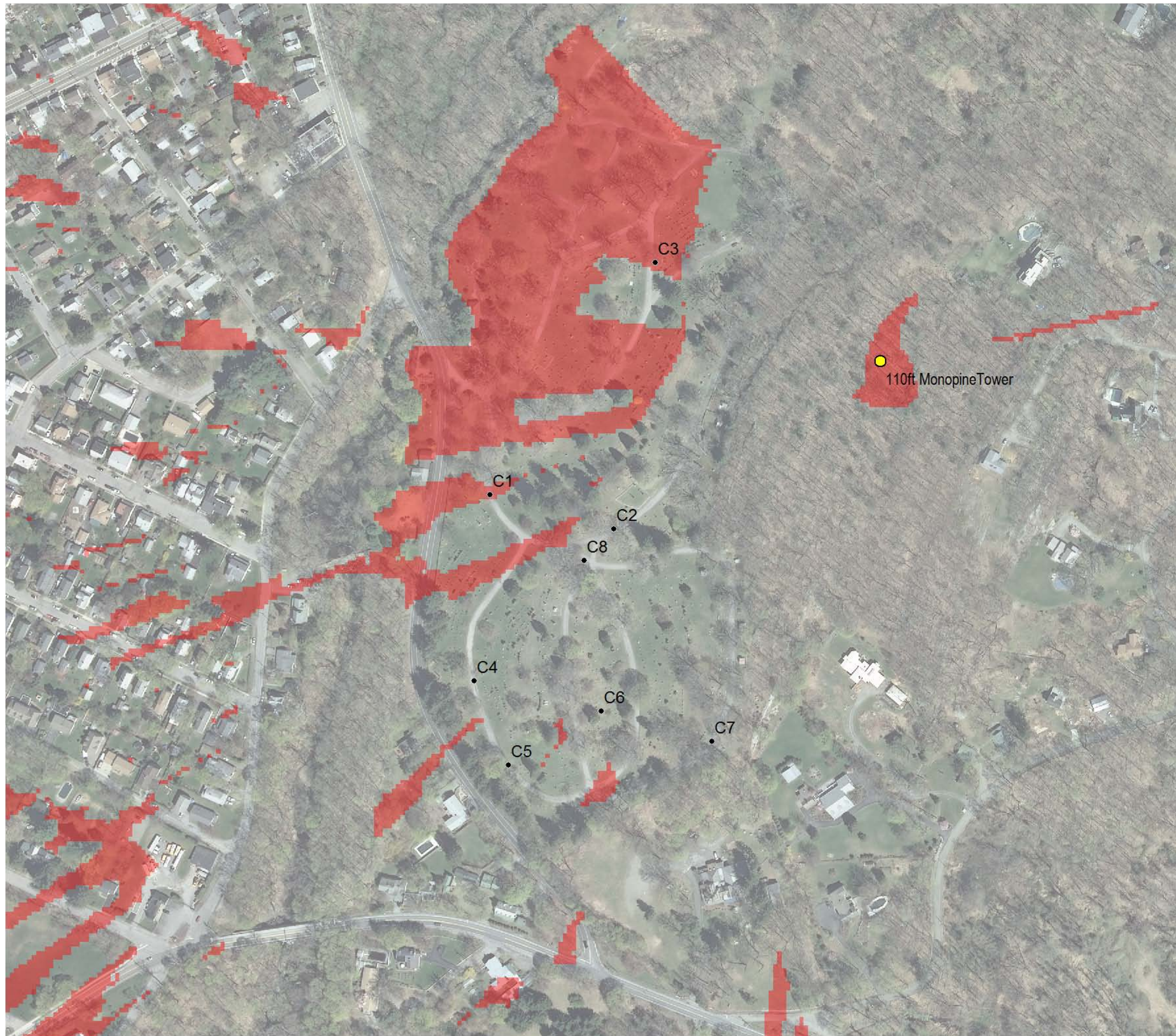
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Nelsonville Site (NY170)  
15 Rockledge Road  
Nelsonville, NY





## LEGEND

- Land Cover Viewshed Area  
(Includes existing vegetation and structures)

Note: Viewshed areas are not definitive. Viewshed mapping provides a general understanding of where the proposed project is theoretically visible based on regional topographic, forest and building cover data sources.

The "Land Cover" condition viewshed area includes the screening effect of intervening vegetation and buildings. Vegetated areas and buildings were manually digitized from 2016 one-foot resolution digital orthoimagery. All digitized tree cover is assumed to be 50 feet tall and all digitized buildings are assumed to be 25 feet tall.

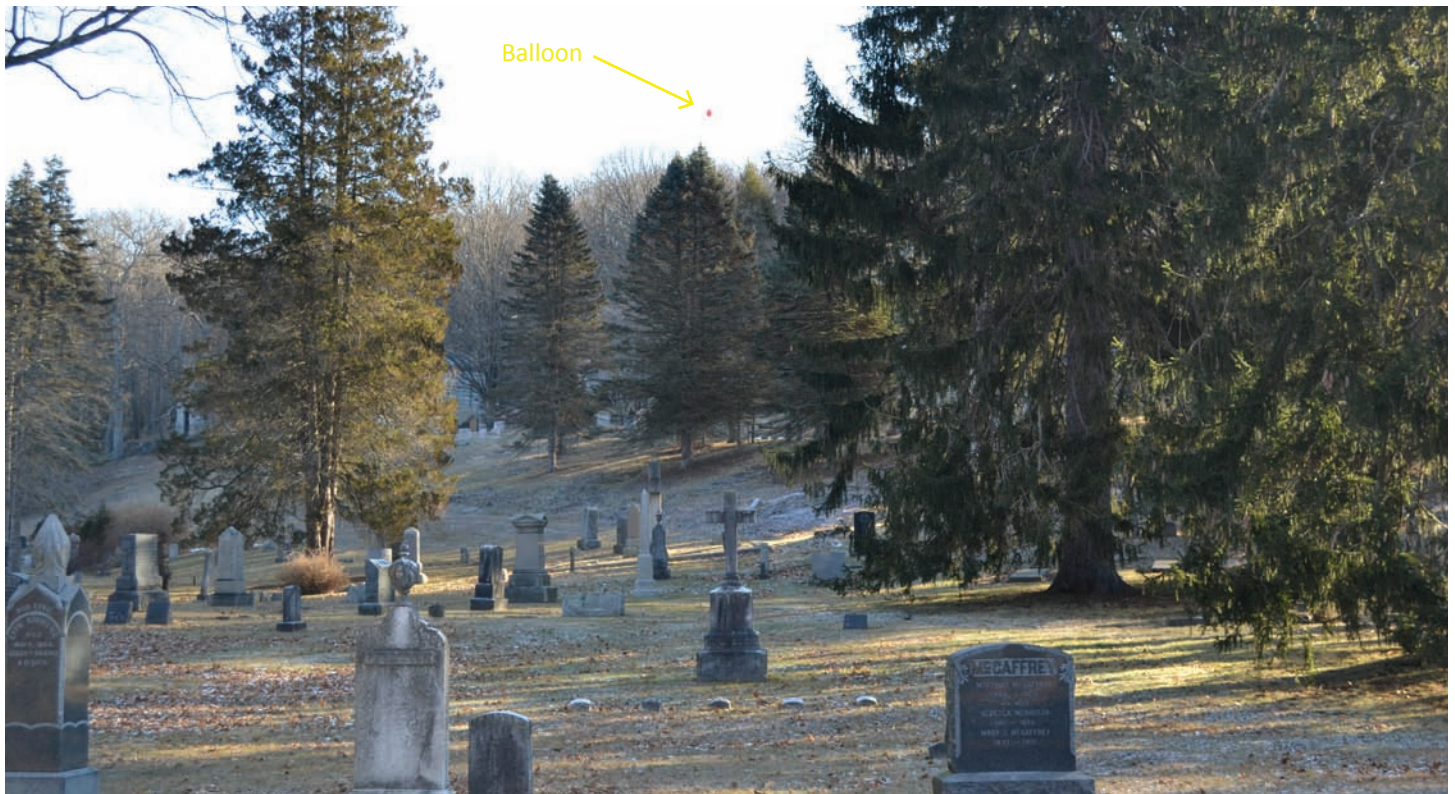


FIGURE 8A  
COLD SPRING CEMETERY PHOTO LOCATION MAP  
Visual Resource Assessment  
Proposed Telecommunications Tower



Nelsonville Site (NY170)  
15 Rockledge Road  
Nelsonville, NY





VPC1 - Cold Spring Cemetery - Balloon Visible



Near VPC1 - Cold Spring Cemetery - Balloon Screened by Evergreen





VP C2 - Cold Spring Cemetery - Balloon partially visible through deciduous trees



VP C3 - Cold Spring Cemetery - Balloon partially visible through deciduous trees





VP C4 - Cold Spring Cemetery - Balloon partially visible through deciduous trees



Near VP C4 - Cold Spring Cemetery - Balloon screened by evergreen

Figure 8D  
PHOTO LOG  
Visual Resource Assessment  
**Proposed Telecommunications Tower**





VP C5 - Cold Spring Cemetery - Balloon partially visible through deciduous trees

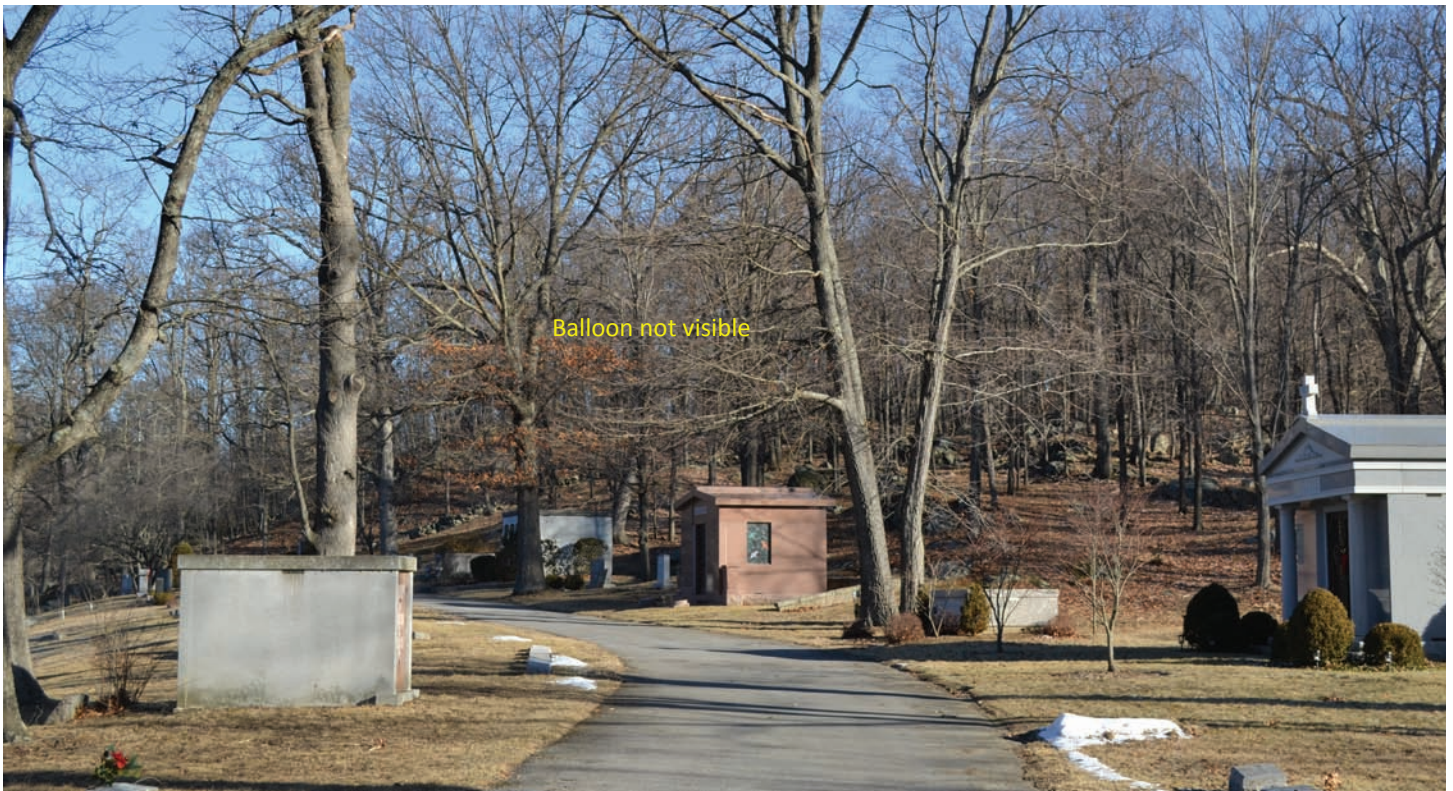


Near VP C5 - Cold Spring Cemetery - Balloon screened by evergreen





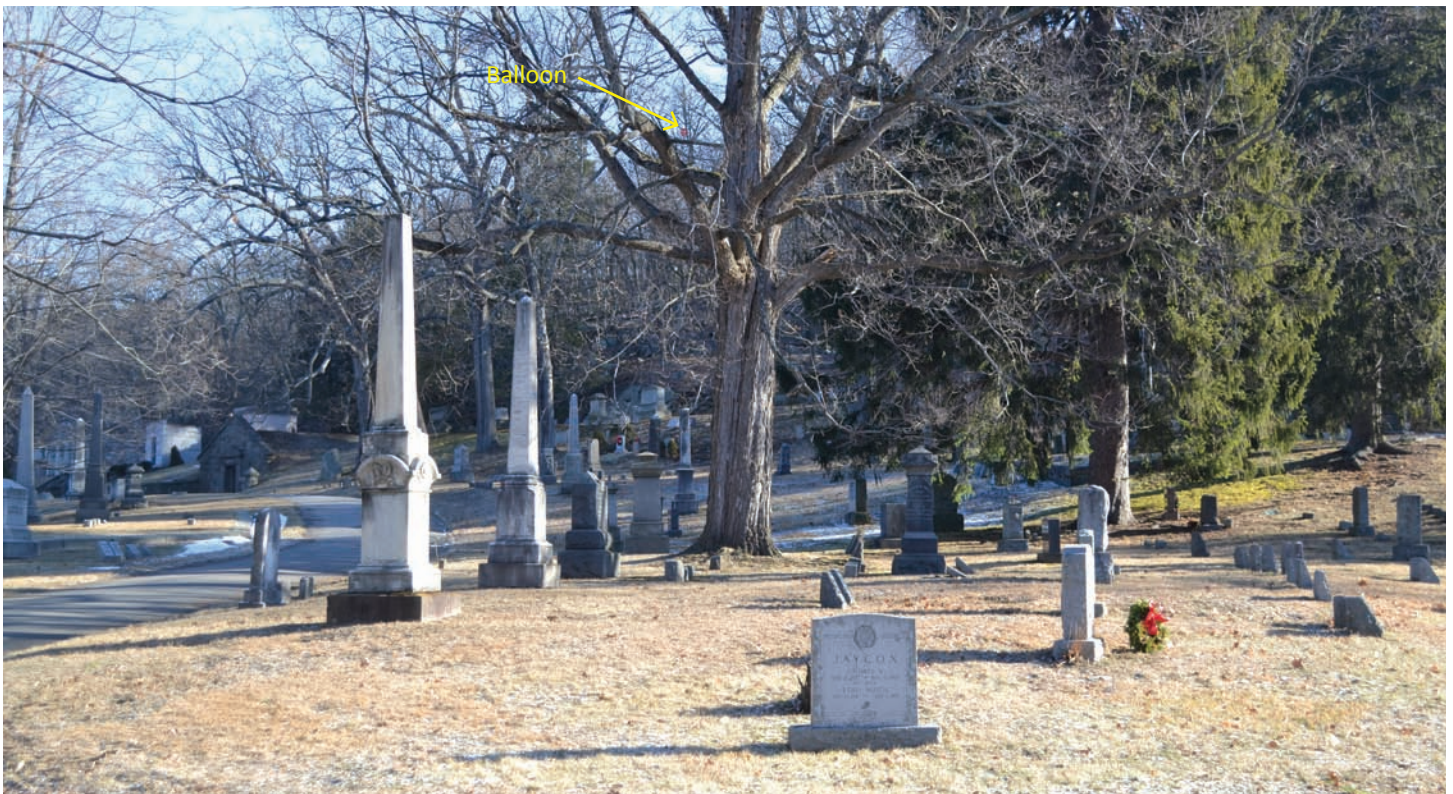
VP C6 - Cold Spring Cemetery - Balloon partially visible through deciduous trees



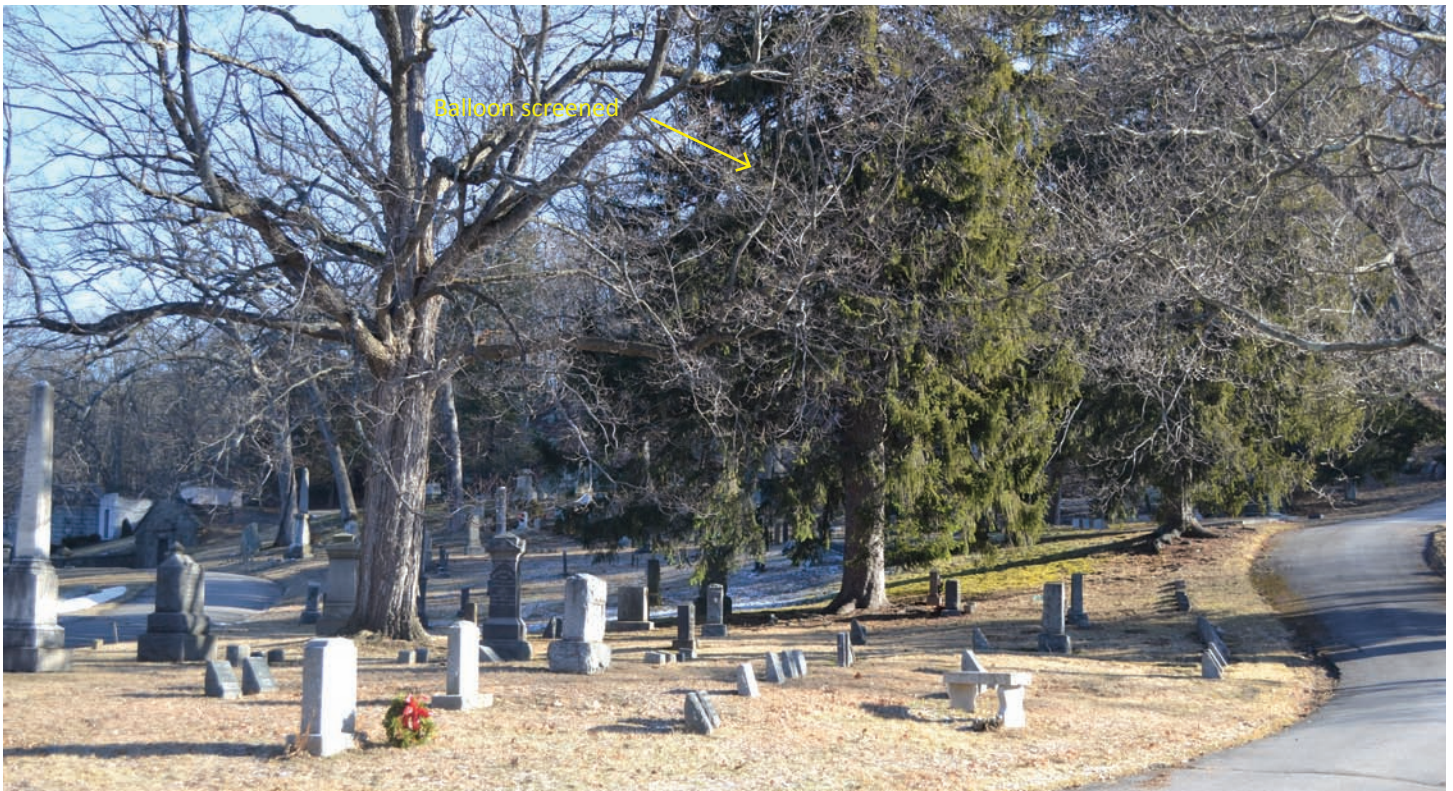
VP C7 - Cold Spring Cemetery - Balloon not visible through deciduous trees

Figure 8F  
PHOTO LOG  
Visual Resource Assessment  
**Proposed Telecommunications Tower**





VP C8 - Cold Spring Cemetery - Balloon partially visible through deciduous trees



Near VP C8- Cold Spring Cemetery - Balloon screened by evergreen





Photograph Information	
Date:	January 31, 2018
Time:	10:02am
Focal Length:	50mm (film equivalent)
Camera:	14.2mp Nikon D3100 DSLR
Photo Location:	41° 25' 17.3000" N 73° 56' 39.4" W
Distance:	940 feet
Visibility:	Visible

Figure 8I

Simulated Condition  
Photo C1 - Cold Spring Cemetery

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Visual Resource Assessment  
PROPOSED TELECOMMUNICATIONS TOWER



Nelsonville Site (NY170)  
15 Rockledge Road  
Nelsonville, NY