



Garfield County Planning

P.O. Box 160, Garfield County Public Works, Pomeroy, WA 99347 509-843-1301
www.co.garfield.wa.us

REVISED NOTICE - February 26, 2009
Supersedes Previous Notices

Public Notice of Determination of Significance, Lead Agency Status and Request for Comments on Scope of EIS: Lower Snake River Wind Energy Project Garfield County CUP #012609

Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for development of wind energy facilities with a capacity of approximately 800 MW in Garfield County and 630 MW in Columbia County.

Enclosed is a copy of a Determination of Significance (DS) and Request for Comments on Scope of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Garfield County CUP #012609. A Notice of Application has been provided by separate legal notice. If you require additional information, please contact our office. The full project file is available for review at the Garfield County Public Works Department.

Written comments may be submitted to the Garfield County Public Works Department, Planning Division, no later than April 3, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. Comment forms, notices and project information are available at Garfield County Public Works or may be downloaded at www.co.garfield.wa.us. Two open houses are scheduled for March 4, 2009 from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Pomeroy High School in Pomeroy, WA and a second open house will be on March 5, 2009 from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Seneca Building in Dayton, WA. The public is encouraged to attend any of the open houses, which will have representatives from Garfield County and from Ecology and Environment, Inc. available to answer questions on the Environmental Scoping Process. Also, representatives from the Wind Energy Developers will be on site to answer general questions about the Wind Energy Project. Attendees will be provided informational packets and comment forms and may also submit written comment forms on the scope of the EIS at the open houses. Persons interested in attending ongoing public meetings and receiving notices should contact Garfield County Public Works Department so they can be added to the contact list. Please refer to the attached Determination of Significance and Request for Comments on Scope of EIS for more information. Please contact our office if you have any questions at (509) 843-1301.

**DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON
SCOPE OF EIS**

Date: February 26, 2009

Project: Lower Snake River Wind Energy Project, Garfield County CUP #012609

Applicants and Addresses:

RES America Developments, Inc. (acting as Blue Sky, LLC), Attn: Nicole Hughes, 700 SW Taylor, Suite 210, Portland OR 97205

And

Puget Sound Energy, Inc., Attn: Larry Tornberg, PO Box 97034, PSE-09N, Bellevue WA 98009-9734

Location of Proposal: Proposed Wind Resource Areas (WRAs) within Garfield and Columbia Counties, are depicted on attached map (Figure 1). Currently, the only CUP under review is located in Garfield County, see description of proposal for further information.

Lead agency: Garfield County Public Works Department, Walter (Grant) Morgan, P.E., Director/County Engineer

Environmental Consultant: Ecology and Environment, Inc., Attn: William Richards, 720 Third Avenue, Suite 1700, Seattle, Washington 98104, (206) 624-9537.

Proposal: The applicants have submitted a conditional use permit (CUP) application to Garfield County for construction and operation of the Lower Snake River Wind Energy Project (the Project). A portion of the Project lies in Columbia County. At this point a CUP application has not been filed in Columbia County. Columbia County will conduct its own permitting and environmental review processes as it deems appropriate at such time as an application for development of a wind energy facility is sought by Applicants in Columbia County.

The Applicants have agreed that a Determination of Significance be issued and an Environmental Impact Statement be prepared which considers the impacts associated with the CUP Application submitted to Garfield County as well as

incorporate as much environmental information as is known about the Columbia County Wind Resource Areas (WRAs) so that potential environmental impacts, including cumulative impacts, of wind development within these WRAs can be assessed at the earliest possible time. The Project is comprised of four Wind Resource Areas (WRAs) Dutch Flats, Kuhl Ridge, Oliphant Ridge, and Tucannon. The Project has been divided into WRAs for purposes of display and evaluation of resources, and should not be considered as separate projects, but as parts of the overall Project defined herein. The Project will be built in phases, with the first phase proposed to begin in 2010. Construction phases may occur solely within defined WRAs or may be comprised of shared facilities and infrastructure within adjacent WRAs. The first phase of construction will occur in Garfield County, though the WRAs within which this construction will occur has yet to be determined.

Description of Project: The Project is comprised of wind turbines installed in strings, which are connected by underground and overhead collector lines. The Project also includes supporting infrastructure including transmission lines, substations, step-up transformers, operations and maintenance facilities, temporary construction staging areas and temporary and permanent roads as needed to access the facilities. Support facilities, including transmission lines, roads, temporary construction staging areas, and operations and maintenance facilities will be developed to support multiple construction phases to the maximum extent possible. The Project will be interconnected to the Little Goose-Lower Monument transmission line operated by Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). A new substation, to be included in this permit application and constructed by Bonneville Power Administration, will be sized to accommodate additional regional energy development. BPA will independently initiate the NEPA process and issue a Record of Decision (ROD) at their discretion and schedule.

Garfield County WRAs: Kuhl Ridge, Dutch Flats, Oliphant Ridge

The Kuhl Ridge, Dutch Flats, and the Garfield County portion of the Oliphant Ridge WRA include approximately 51,696 acres of leased lands (a map of the proposal is attached hereto as Figure 1), of which less than 1% will be permanently disturbed. These WRAs have the potential to generate approximately 800 MW of electricity from approximately 444 wind turbines. The final number of turbines depends upon the generation capacity of the actual turbines ultimately selected for the project.

- The WRAs are comprised of the following estimated number of turbines:
 - Oliphant (approximately 139 turbines)
 - Kuhl Ridge (approximately 222 turbines)
 - Dutch Flats (approximately 83 turbines)
- The turbines will be arranged in strings and connected by an underground and overhead 34.5 kilovolt (kV) electrical collector cable system.

- Each WRA will include up to two substations.
- The Project will be interconnected at a new substation to be built by the Bonneville Power Administration.
- The Project will include the improvement of existing county and private roads and the construction of approximately 63 miles of new access road. Additionally, temporary roads may be needed during construction, which will be restored to their original condition upon completion of construction.
- Each WRA within the Project will be supported and operated by up to two operations and maintenance facilities.
- The Project will require temporary construction staging areas.

Columbia County WRAs: Oliphant Ridge, Tucannon

Approximately 43,205 acres of land, as depicted on the map attached hereto as Figure 1, are under lease by the Applicants in Columbia County. Applicants believe that these lands may be capable of supporting the development of up to **632 MW** of electricity, although a more precise assessment would require additional investigation and assessment that has not been completed at this time. It is projected that less than 1% of the Columbia County project area will be permanently disturbed.

Infrastructure for future development of the Columbia County WRA's could include:

- The WRA's are comprised of the following estimated number of turbines:
 - Oliphant (Columbia County Portion) (Approximately 65 turbines)
 - Tucannon (Approximately 286 turbines)
- Turbines arranged in strings and connected by an underground and overhead 34.5 (kV) electrical collector cable system.
- Up to 3 substations.
- Interconnection would likely be to the substation to be built in Garfield County by the Bonneville Power Administration.
- Improvement of existing county and private roads as well as construction of new access roads. Additionally, temporary roads may be needed during construction, which will be restored to their original condition upon completion of construction.
- Up to 2 operations and maintenance facilities.
- The Project will require temporary construction staging areas.

As stated above, no permit is being sought in Columbia County for any wind energy facility at this time. At such time as the Applicants seek to develop any wind energy facilities in Columbia County, as described in general above or otherwise, Columbia County will conduct its own permitting and any additional environmental review that may be required of such proposals.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action (proposal described above) include:

1. No action

Scoping: The lead agency has identified, at a minimum, the areas described below for focus in the EIS. Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS. You may comment on alternatives, mitigation measures, probable significant adverse impacts, permits and licenses or other approvals that may be required.

Natural Environment (as defined in WAC 197-11-444)

Earth: Slopes; soil infiltration; potential geological hazards; gravel pits; soils; grading

Air: Air quality impacts during construction and operations

Water (surface; ground; water runoff): Drainage and runoff

Plants and Animals: Avian, terrestrial species; habitat; wildlife and habitat connectivity

Energy and natural resources: agricultural crops

Built Environment (as defined in WAC 197-11-444)

Environmental health: Noise during construction and operations

Land and shoreline use: Relationship to existing land use plans; recreational use

Visual Resources: light and glare; visual impacts

Historic and cultural preservation: prehistoric and historic artifacts; archaeology

Transportation: Road construction and upgrades, construction traffic management, and operations vehicle use

Public services and utilities: communications; water/storm water

Other areas of focus: may also include areas of urban environmental concern as specified in RCW 43.21C.110, elements of WAC 197-11-448 and the elements as defined in an environmental checklist (WAC 197-11-960 and 197-11-440 and 197-11-444).

Socioeconomics: Population and housing, economy and environment

Cumulative Impacts

This is a preliminary list and may be adjusted following scoping.

Comment deadline: All scoping comments must be received by the Garfield County Public Works Department, Planning Division, no later than April 3, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. No verbal comments will be accepted. Written comment forms will be available at the Open Houses, at the Auditor's Office in the Garfield County Courthouse, at the Garfield County Public Works Department and on the County's web site at www.co.garfield.wa.us

Comments on the scope of the EIS may be mailed and directed to:

Garfield County Public Works Department, Planning Division: Walter (Grant) Morgan, P.E., SEPA Official, PO Box 160, Pomeroy, WA 99347. (509) 843-1301

Public Open Houses: Two open houses are scheduled for March 4, 2009 from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Pomeroy High School in Pomeroy, WA and a second open house will be on March 5, 2009 from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Seneca Building in Dayton, WA. The public is encouraged to attend any of the open houses, which will have representatives from Garfield County and from Ecology and Environment, Inc. available to answer questions on the Environmental Scoping Process. Representatives from the Wind Energy Developers will also be on site to answer questions about the project proposal itself. Attendees will be provided informational packets and comment forms may also be submitted on the scope of the EIS at the open houses.

Responsible Official: Walter (Grant) Morgan, P.E. Garfield County Public Works Director/County Engineer

Date: ___02/25/09_____

Signature ___Original Signed By: Walter G. Morgan_____

There is no right of an administrative appeal of this Determination of Significance to Garfield County. Per RCW 43.21C.075, any agency or person may appeal this DS to the Garfield County Superior Court. You should be prepared to specify the basis for the appeal and the errors to be asserted. Appeal periods for issuance of a SEPA Determination of Significance may be limited by general statutes of limitation or the common law pursuant to WAC 197-11-690(4)(f). Aggrieved parties are encouraged to contact the Garfield County SEPA Responsible Official at PO Box 160, Pomeroy, WA 99347 or (509) 843-1301 for more information on the appeal process.
Publication dates: March 4th and 11th, 2009