

# Whistling Ridge Energy Project

## Draft Environmental Impact Statement

May 2010



Cooperating Agency:  
State of Washington, Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council



# **Whistling Ridge Energy Project**

**Draft Environmental Impact Statement  
DOE/EIS-0419**

***Bonneville Power Administration  
Washington Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council***

**May 2010**

## Whistling Ridge Energy Project

**Responsible Agencies:** Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC), Washington State Environmental Policy Act ; U.S. Department of Energy; Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

**Title:** Whistling Ridge Energy Project, DOE/EIS - 0419

**State Involved:** Washington

**Abstract:** Whistling Ridge Energy LLC (Applicant) proposes to construct and operate the Whistling Ridge Energy Project, an approximately 75-megawatt (MW) wind turbine facility, about seven miles north of the City of White Salmon in Skamania County, Washington. This wind project would be located on an approximately 1,152-acre site that is currently private commercial forest land. The wind project would consist of up to 50 wind turbines that could each range in size from 1.2 to 2.5 MW, an Operations and Maintenance facility, an electrical substation, underground collector lines and systems, and other ancillary facilities. Approximately 7.9 miles of existing roads would be improved and 2.4 miles of new roads would be constructed to provide access for project construction and operation. The Applicant has proposed to begin project construction in the second quarter of 2011, with the goal of having construction completed and commercial power production initiated by May 2012.

The Applicant has submitted an application to EFSEC for site certification that would allow the Applicant to construct and operate its proposed wind project. The Applicant also has requested interconnection of the project to BPA's regional transmission system at a point along BPA's existing North Bonneville-Midway 230-kilvolt (kV) transmission line that passes through the wind project site. EFSEC must decide whether to issue the requested site certificate to the Applicant, and BPA must decide whether to allow the requested interconnection to its transmission system. Accordingly, this Draft EIS addresses the proposed action of granting project approvals, as well as a No Action alternative in which EFSEC and/or BPA would not grant these approvals and the proposed wind project therefore would not be built.

The proposed project could result in temporary impacts to soils, air quality, water resources, noise levels, vegetation, wildlife, visual resources, cultural resources, and transportation during construction. During operation, impacts to noise levels, wildlife, and visual resources could occur. Mitigation measures are identified in the Draft EIS to reduce or avoid these impacts where feasible.

**Public comments on the Draft EIS are being accepted through July 19, 2010.**

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Appendix B Geotechnical Report

Volume II:

Appendix C Wildlife Reports

- Vegetation Technical Report: Saddleback Wind Project (CH2MHill, no date) (Appendix C-1)
- Wetland Delineation Report, Saddleback Wind Energy Project (CH2MHill 2007) (Appendix C-2)
- Rare Plant Survey Report: Saddleback Wind Project (CH2MHill 2003) (Appendix C-3)
- Baseline Avian Use Surveys of the Project in Fall 2004, Summer 2006, and winter-spring 2008-2009 (West Inc. 2009a) (Appendix C-4)
- Final Report, Northern spotted owl, western gray squirrel and northern goshawk surveys conducted for the Whistling Ridge Wind Energy Project (Turnstone 2004) (Appendix C-5)
- 2008 Final Report, Results of northern spotted owl, western gray squirrel and northern goshawk surveys conducted for the Whistling Ridge Wind Energy Project. (Turnstone 2008) (Appendix C-6)
- 2009 Report, Results of northern spotted owl, western gray squirrel and northern goshawk surveys conducted for the Whistling Ridge Wind Energy Project. (Turnstone 2004) (Appendix C-7)
- Bat Acoustic Studies for the Whistling Ridge Wind Resource Area in 2007 (West Inc. 2008; Appendix C-8), 2008 (West Inc. 2009b; Appendix C-9), and 2009 (West Inc. 2009c; Appendix C-10)

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

μPa	micropascals
AADT	average annual daily traffic
APE	area of potential effects
Applicant	Whistling Ridge Energy LLC
bgs	below ground surface
BMPs	best management practices
BP	before present
BPA	Bonneville Power Administration
CAA	Clean Air Act
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CPE	Columbia Plateau Ecoregion
CRL 40	Commercial Resource Land 40
CSA	Conservation Support Area
CTED	Community, Trade and Economic Development
DAHP	Department of Archeological and Historic Preservation
dB	decibels
dba	A-weighted decibels
dBG	G-weighted decibels
DNR	Department of Natural Resources
Ecology	Washington Department of Ecology
EDNA	Environmental Designation for Noise Abatement
EFSEC	Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	US Environmental Protection Agency
FCRTS	Federal Columbia River Transmission System
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FL 20	Forest Land 20
For/Ag-20	Resource Protection
GIS	Geographic Information System
GMA	General Management Area
Hz	Hertz
I-84	Interstate 84
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
kV	kilovolt
KVA	Key Viewing Area

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kW	kilowatt
kV	kilovolt
L <sub>10</sub>	noise levels equaled or exceeded 10 percent of a measured time interval
L <sub>50</sub>	noise levels equaled or exceeded 50 percent of a measured time interval
L <sub>90</sub>	noise levels equaled or exceeded 90 percent of a measured time interval
L <sub>dn</sub>	day-night average sound level
L <sub>eq</sub>	equivalent sound level
LHA	Landslide Hazard Areas
L <sub>max</sub>	maximum L <sub>eq</sub>
L <sub>min</sub>	minimum L <sub>eq</sub>
LOS	level of service
mG	milligauss
MOCA	managed owl conservation area
MP	milepost
mph	miles per hour
msl	mean sea level
MVM	million-vehicle-miles
MW	megawatt
MWh	megawatt hours
NAT	Natural
NCASI	National Council for Air and Stream Improvement
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOC	Notice of Construction
NOI	Notice of Intent
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWI	National Wetland Inventory
NPCC	Northwest Power and Conservation Council
ODEQ	Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PCBs	polychlorinated biphenyls
PM	particulate matter
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	particulate matter 2.5 micrometers diameter and smaller
PSD	Prevention of Significant Deterioration
PUBFh	palustrine unconsolidated bottom, semi-permanently flooded, impounded
PUD	Public Utility District
PWL	sound power level

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R-10	Residential 10
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
RES-20	Rural Estates 20
ROD	Record of Decision
rpm	revolutions per minute
RPS	Renewable Portfolio Standard
RV	recreational vehicle
SCC	Skamania County Code
SCFD3	Skamania County Fire District No. 3
SDS	SDS Lumber Company
SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act
SMA	Special Management Area
SOSEA	spotted owl special emphasis area
SPCC	Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasure
SPL	sound pressure level
SR	State Route
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
TMP	Transportation Management Plan
Turnstone	Turnstone Environmental Consultants, Inc.
UNM	Unmapped
USC	United States Code
USFS	US Forest Service
USFWS	US Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	US Geological Survey
V	volts
WAC	Washington Administrative Code
WDFW	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
WNHP	Washington Natural Heritage Program
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation