

Maiden Wind Farm DEIS Comments from public meeting in Prosser on April 23, 2002

- I saw the project on the news last night and want to learn more.
- I think this project is a good thing because it is a clean form of energy.
- I am interested in having a wind farm on my property.
- We've been in favor of wind power and have been trying to get wind power in the area since 1984.
- I am in favor of wind power on my land.
- Renewable resources -- DEIS says people want it, but doesn't it cost about 20% more?
- I prefer wind to polluting technologies, but prefer hydro to wind. Good hydro, that is.
- I can't understand the people who are against it; they don't want nuclear, they don't want dams ...
- Get started!
- I am concerned about one company coming in and potentially blocking other companies from doing wind projects.
- Don't want properties not leased by the developer to be studied in the EIS.
- What kind of foundations will be used?
- Will you study building new access roads?
- Interested in working on project.
- Concerned about 5,000 foot setback from GMA.
- Define special status species.
- Mitigation banking for BPA and other projects is preferred. This piecemeal approach to mitigation will hurt us. It is a large tract of land to split up.
- In Benton County, sage brush/shrub-steppe takes 40-50 years to grow. In Grant County, it would take 10-15 years because they have more precipitation. Temporary impacts to sage brush/shrub-steppe really aren't temporary in this area.
- Are there any standard bird surveys?
- Will you look at visual impacts on neighbors, as well as on property owners who want the wind farm?
- What do the locals think of the aesthetics?
- I drive from here to Walla Walla and it makes me want to cry -- I don't like all those turbines. I wish we had some viewing corridors of shrub steppe.
- If I'm going to have to look at them, I might as well sign up and have them on my land.
- Distance from highway makes this location preferable to Stateline.
- People are worried about the view but they'll get used to it.
- At what level is tribal participation?
- Benton County is the fastest growing area in Washington. There are a lot of examples around here of responsible development.
- We need wind power to survive in these times of farming.
- This wind project will be good for our local economy!
- WDFW did not see their scoping letter in the agency correspondence appendix.

April 10, 2002

BPA Communications
P.O. Box 12999
Portland, OR 97212

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter provides comments to the Maiden Wind Farm draft NEPA/SEPA Environmental Impact Statement DOE/EIS-0333. The Washington Natural Heritage Program inventories and maintains a database of rare plants and high quality ecosystem types in Washington.

The current status of the bunchgrass steppe and shrub steppe ecosystem in Washington is declining in area and in condition. Over 50% of this habitat's original range has been converted to agriculture, urban or industrial areas. Of the remaining original shrub steppe habitat, less than 10% appears in good or better condition. These statistics demonstrate the degree of concern directed at any conversion of natural/seminatural shrub steppe or steppe to other uses.

Much of the northern edge of the proposed wind farm is adjacent to the Rattlesnake Research Natural Area on the Hanford National Monument. That natural area contains some of the best examples of native bunchgrass steppe and shrub steppe communities in the state, as well as, in the inland Pacific Northwest. The proposed wind farm is partially located in a natural/seminatural habitat corridor between the Monument and the Yakima Firing Range, another stronghold of natural, native bunchgrass ecosystems.

The western half of the proposed The Maiden Wind Farm is located in natural/seminatural vegetation. Although we do not have recent inventory information of that specific area, inspection of photographs in Figures 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, and 12 and habitat descriptions of rare plant habitat in the Eagle Cap Consulting, Inc. "An investigation of the rare plant resources associated with the Maiden Wind Farm - Benton and Yakima counties, Washington" technical report (2002) indicate a continuation of high quality natural vegetation from Hanford south on to adjacent land and occurrence of native bunchgrass steppe communities on the project area.

The increasing rarity of this habitat for a large number of plant and animal species and the location of the proposed wind farm in a corridor between two large landscapes of native natural habitat raises concern over the direct conversion native habitat along the path turbine installation.

RECEIVED BY BPA PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT LOG#: MW/EIS-0333
RECEIPT DATE: APR 11 2002

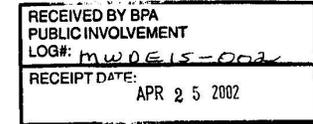
I recommend 1) the proposed turbine locations within natural habitat be completely avoided or minimized by placing turbines and associated transmission and maintenance roads to those areas currently converted to agriculture or non-native plant species, 2) the project be coordinated with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife in minimizing the effects of turbines on shrub steppe and steppe wildlife species, and 3) wherever native vegetation is disturbed and where it is converted to turbine pads or roads, an equivalent area be restored with native species from adjacent seed sources.

I support the development of alternative energy sources with minimal impact of the natural heritage values. Thank you the opportunity to comment on this project.

Sincerely,

Rex C. Crawford, Ph.D.
 Natural Heritage Ecologist
 P.O. Box 47014
 Asset and Protection Division
 Washington Department of Natural Resources
 Olympia, WA 98501-7014
 360-902-1749

January 31, 2002
 To: Kent McHenry
 CC: File
 From: Dan Tamsky



Review comments, Maiden Wind Farm (MWF).

Who in Yakima County Public Works has discussed MWF impacts with the proponent's project team?

Lewandowski Road is the only Yakima County road discussed in the EIS. I do not know of any other Yakima County – maintained roads that could be used to reach the MWF site. The first 370 feet of Lewandowski Road east of SR 241 have a bituminous surface treatment. The remaining 1.48 miles of county road are gravel or dirt. Lewandowski is not dust abated (per Matt Petrusiewicz 2/5).

A 24 – hour traffic count was taken just east of the state highway intersection between about 1:30 PM 8/17/2000 and 1:00 PM 8/18/2000 (Thursday and Friday).

The accident records in the County Road Information System (CRIS) database cover 1985 – 1997. Only one accident was reported in that period.

Paragraph	EIS	Comment
3.9.3.1	"This gravel 35-mph roadway turns into a private road at Sulphur Springs Ranch."	There is no posted speed limit on Lewandowski Road. The general county speed limit of 50 MPH applies. Safe travel speed would vary by location, weather, and road conditions.
	"The afternoon rush hour (4 p.m. to 5 p.m.) is assumed to be the period in which the maximum amount of traffic is experienced."	The results of the traffic count on August 17 –18, 2000, suggest that the peak period would be much earlier (2:30 – 3:30 PM).
3.9.4.1		The evaluation criteria look OK.
	"Construction...finish before dusk, limiting the number of vehicles during peak hour traffic periods..."	It is likely that construction worker travel will peak at the same time as general and school bus travel on Lewandowski Road.
3.9.4.2	"... because background traffic on these roads is very low, it is likely that the LOS would be C or better when project traffic is added to existing conditions"	LOS is not appropriate for discussing impacts on an unpaved road. Dust would become intolerable long before the vehicle – carrying capacity of the road was reached.
Table 3.9-3	Peak Hour Vehicle Trips = 269	Would all trips use every road? How long would each road be used for site access? Clearly the peak number of

		trips will not occur on every road for the entire construction period.
Mitigation		The mitigation measures appear generally adequate. There may not even be any houses or crops close enough to Lewandowski Road to be adversely affected by dust. However, I am concerned about the visibility problem that could be created by up to 200 vehicles using a gravel road within 15 minutes or so. Dust could create a safety hazard for construction traffic. The contractor should consider requiring workers to park at the end of pavement to eliminate this danger.

Table 3.9-1 entry for Lewandowski Road

Source	Classification	No. of Lanes	Annual Average Daily Traffic Volume	Hourly Design Capacity	PM Peak Hour Volume (not seasonally adjusted)	PM Peak Hour LOS
EIS	Arterial	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Yakima County CRIS	Rural Access	2 - width 18 to 32 feet	193 (year 2000)	does not apply to gravel road	31 (2:30 - 3:30 PM 8/17/2000)	does not apply to gravel road

B O N N E V I L L E P O W E R A D

RECEIVED BY BPA
 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT
 LOG#: MWDEIS-003
 RECEIPT DATE:
 " " MAY 02 2002

Maiden Wind Farm

"I'd Like to Tell You . . ."

1. I think the environmental analysis would be better if: more wind machines were put in the areas of the state, saving the burning of coal & oil to produce our electric needs. the wind will be always with us. maybe not coal & oil deposits.

2. Other environmental resources you should consider: Using the manure of the large dairies to make electricity, also how about the tides of the Ocean.

3. Please consider these ideas for lessening impacts: Why not thin out our National Forests, using all the dry trees, etc as if we don't do something, we will lose all our timber land one of these days to wild fires. they use bark, etc at Kettle Falls, Wa to generate electricity.

4. I have these other comments: Put the young people, like the "CCC"s back into the woods, thinning trees, making fire break creating ponds, hiking trails, using all the waste to generate power, and having work for the young people in the big cities.

(If you need more space, please use the back.)

Please put me on your project mailing list. (You are already on the mailing list if you received a letter or the Maiden Wind Farm EIS or Summary in the mail.)

Name: Victor E Robert
 Address: 9 So 55th Ave
Yakima, Wa 98908

Please mail your comments by May 15, 2002 to:

Bonneville Power Administration
 Public Affairs Office - KC-7
 P.O. Box 12999
 Portland, OR 97212



Maiden Wind Farm EIS

Telephone comment by Ginny Kuehn
5/13/02

RECEIVED BY BPA PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT LOG#: MWDEIS-004
RECEIPT DATE: MAY 13 2002

Steve Smith
Benton County WA

Comment on the Maiden Wind Project here in Benton and Yakima counties.

I feel that the wind machines which are being paid for by taxpayers and members of BPA is not cost effective and it is not a reliable source of power and I feel that it is a waste of our monies.

That is my comment. Thank you.

Maiden Wind Farm EIS

RECEIVED BY BPA PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT LOG#: MWDEIS-005
RECEIPT DATE: MAY 13 2002

Telephone comment by Ginny Kuehn
5/13/02

Rich Dorset
1901 South Roccas Road
Prosser, WA

Just read an article on the editorial page of the Prosser paper that opposes the wind farm that is apparently being considered as been approved to be installed on Rattlesnake. What the author of the article is saying it is a get green power is not going to be economically feasible. It will be just an additional cost to us as consumers. I am definitely opposed to it. We should only be pursuing projects that are truly viable economically and not political and not someone's social agenda..

Kuehn, Ginny -KC-7

From: Paul Boynton [boynton@u.washington.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2002 10:12 AM
To: Comment@bpa.gov
Cc: Gephart, Roy E; 'rdnewman@uci.edu'; Trotman, Ken/SEA
Subject: Maiden Wind Farm, comment on DEIS

RECEIVED BY BPA
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT
LOG#: MWDEIS-006
RECEIPT DATE:
MAY 14 2002

We are pleased to note that the concerns of the University of Washington, the University of California Irvine, and Battelle Pacific Northwest National Laboratories regarding the possible seriously detrimental impact of the proposed Maiden Project on research funded by the National Science Foundation and being carried out at the Battelle Gravitation Physics Laboratory have been acknowledged in the DEIS.

To avoid confusion in subsequent discussions and correspondence, we would ask that you correct the EIS to correctly record the official name of our facility on the Hanford site at each reference to the Battelle Gravitation Physics Laboratory (BGPL).

We have not electronically searched the DEIS document, but have found the following occurrences of the incorrect reference "Battelle Gravitation Research Observatory (BGRO)" which should be changed to read "Battelle Gravitation Physics Laboratory (BGPL)":

- 1) Table S-1 (pages S-7 and S-8)
- 2) Text on pages 3-5. [Where you should also note that the BGPL is 6 miles east of the Maiden Project site, not northeast; and that it is located in a former "NIKE" missile bunker, not "NIK".]
- 3) Text on page 3-7

Thank you in advance for correcting these errors. -Paul Boynton

Paul Boynton
Professor of Physics
University of Washington

Kuehn, Ginny -KC-7

From: Doug Packard [dc-pack@worldnet.att.net]
Sent: Wednesday, May 15, 2002 11:28 AM
To: comment@bpa.gov
Subject: Rattlesnake Mountain Wind Machines

RECEIVED BY BPA
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT
LOG#: MWDEIS-007
RECEIPT DATE:
MAY 15 2002

I am opposed to the wind machine project on Rattlesnake Mountain. I have recently driven the I-5 corridor through California and witnessed the incredible visual blight of the three major wind machine projects (Palm Springs area, Tahatchipie(sp) Pass, & the Altamont Pass) on that route. The effect is dominating and overwhelming ugly. The fact that Govt. subsidies are awarded to the developers for these projects makes their presence all the more repugnant.

The Tri-City area is all ready a financial victim of misguided Govt. benevolence in the form of the WPPS fiasco, why double the negative effect by creating new victims of a visual blight as well.

I have driven through the Altamont twice in the last four years and in both cases over half of the units were not rotating, apparently because it is not economical to maintain or repair some of the older units. Is that what we will face here as well?

Rattlesnake Mountain will make a very large white elephant indeed.

Doug Packard
1310 Winslow
Richland, WA 99352

Maiden Wind Farm

Telephone comment by Ginny Kuehn
5/15/02

John Becker
John Becker & Associates
Kennewick, WA

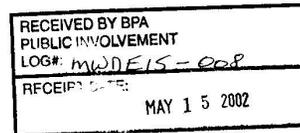
Phone number (509)-736-0638.

I have been interacting with different BPA people for months and months. I am probably one of the top five or six people in the wind energy business in the world and I have been involved since the 80's. I have said over and over that this is one of the dumbest projects that I have heard putting the wind projects in Rattlesnake and putting wind in period. The federal subsidies will not be there and they not sufficient to offset the cost.

It is not that you won't have wind a third of the time, maybe you will have some wind a third of the time, but I doubt that you will have full rated power maybe 5 or 6 percent of the time, maybe 8 percent at the stretch. I have tried over and over to tell people that there is a lot of data available, there is a lot of information available. This is another WPPSS, a super WPPSS, the bond offering was a mistake, was a mistake to put the wind turbines in. I tried my best to interact with the right people, but, the right people are the ones that are politically involved and think we want to go with wind and the people that are involved with the projects certainly want to see this project go. It is a serious mistake.

I will be happy to donate any of my time or services or anything else if someone wants to do an analysis of it, I have tons of data. I was the original flow wind person in California. We put 509 vertical axes and 220 horizontal axes turbines in and now they are all scrapped.

Most of the other projects that we have been involved with over the years have been dead-ended. That was in a much healthier power environment than we have right now. I don't know who else to tell, I don't want to go public on it or go to the press like the little article this morning she was right on that article. I am available to talk to anybody about it at anytime. It is a significant error I think it is a tactful error and I think it sounds like good politics, but in truth is not going to be, the environmentalists are going to kill you on it for one thing and when you get to the economics of it all one has to do is look at the past experience of the other wind projects and the current economic situation and you can pencil it out and it does not make sense.



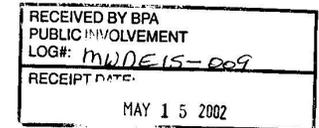
Maiden Wind Farm

Telephone comment by Ginny Kuehn
5/15/02

Mike Rauch
(509) 582-2695

Was urged by my daily paper to put in my comments about the wind project on Rattlesnake. I am definitely in favor of it.

Anywhere we put a wind generator is good. The more the better.



Maiden Wind Farm

Telephone comment by Ginny Kuehn
5/15/02

RECEIVED BY BPA PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT LOG#: MWDEIS-010 RECEIPT DATE: MAY 15 2002

Herb Johnson
Pasco, WA

(509)545-8643

I am calling regarding the Washington wind proposal to windmills on Rattlesnake. I don't see the need for it. We are canceling gas-fired power plants all over the country and all over Washington and Oregon. So why do we need the windmill power? If I had a vote today I would vote against it.

Maiden Wind Farm

Telephone comment by Ginny Kuehn
5/15/02

RECEIVED BY BPA PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT LOG#: MWDEIS-011 RECEIPT DATE: MAY 15 2002

Geraldine McDonnell
152 Hills West Way
Richland, WA 99352

(509)627-1948

I protest building the wind farm at Rattlesnake Hills by Washington Winds.

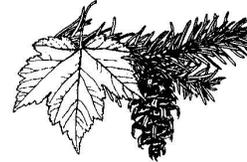
Maiden Wind Farm

Telephone comment by Ginny Kuehn
5/15/02

(NO Name)
Registered Voter
Used to work for the Corps of Engineers

I want to vote against the power generators on Rattlesnake Mountain. I don't think we need them right now. I think it should be carefully studied to make sure it doesn't involve bird migratory patterns and I think some visual pollution needs to be done. The project sneaked upon us.

RECEIVED BY BPA PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT LOG#: MWDEIS-012
RECEIPT DATE: MAY 15 2002



Washington Native Plant Society
Appreciate, Conserve, and Study Our Native Flora

7400 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, Washington 98115
(206) 527-3210

May 14, 2002

Sarah T. Branum
Environmental Specialist – KEC-4
Bonneville Power Administration
PO Box 3621
Portland, OR 97208-3621
sbranum@bpa.gov

RECEIVED BY BPA PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT LOG#: MWDEIS-013
RECEIPT DATE: MAY 15 2002

Mike Shuttleworth
Benton County Planning and Building Dept
1002 Dudley Avenue
Prosser, WA 99350
mike_shuttleworth@co.benton.wa.us

Dear Ms. Branum and Mr. Shuttleworth:

Thank you for considering the following comments regarding the Draft NEPA/SEPA EIS for the Maiden Wind Farm (Benton County, WA; March 2002). We have limited our comments to two major issues.

There appears to be an inconsistency in the number of acres that will be impacted by the project and require mitigation. The amount of 'priority shrub-steppe habitat' permanently and 'temporarily' displaced are 57.5 and 174.4 acres, respectively.¹ These acreages do not include the damages to the vegetation type referred to in the document as 'grassland-steppe,' which would double the amount of land requiring mitigation (adding 57.2 acres permanently displaced and 187.0 acres temporary disturbed). The grassland-steppe acreages are included in the following section of the same table, but the reader is referred back to the vegetation section for specific mitigation measures. It therefore appears that damage to grassland-steppe is not being considered for mitigation.

Damages to both 'shrub-steppe' and 'grassland-steppe' types should be mitigated. To quote from the document's description of grassland-steppe, it 'provides cover, breeding habitat, and forage for a variety of bird and wildlife species,' and 'like the shrub-steppe, the grassland-steppe is subject to grazing, with habitat quality varying from poor to good.'² While the Draft EIS states that much of the area identified as grassland-steppe is dominated by non-native cheatgrass and bulbous bluegrass, it also states that varying amounts of native grasses and forbs also occur, and that scattered sagebrush patches may be present. The document does not

¹ Table S-1 'Potential Impacts and Mitigation of the Proposed Maiden Wind Farm', Section 2. Vegetation.

² Table 3.3-3, page 3-23.

³ Page 3-15. Also see Table 3.3-1, page 3-14.

contain an assessment of the amount of grassland-steppe in good and poor quality, nor is the condition mapped or described spatially.

While we have not been to the project site, our considerable experience in the region suggests that the low cover of sagebrush species in the area mapped as grassland is probably because it burned more recently than adjacent areas that were mapped as shrub-steppe. If that is the case, the distinction between shrub-steppe and grassland-steppe (with patches of sagebrush) may hold little meaning. That is, the distinction may not necessarily point to differences in quality or diversity of habitat in the long-term, although it is convenient to map areas with shrub separately from areas without because it is a feature visible on an aerial photo. Some of the better quality habitat in the area may in fact be in the steeper areas, particularly areas that have Idaho fescue. The presence of cheatgrass, even its dominance, and the lack of shrubs should not automatically dismiss the vegetation type from an area's importance on a landscape scale. Please review this matter carefully. Rex Crawford, ecologist with the Washington Natural Heritage Program, may be able to assist in clarifying this issue.

The second major problem we have with the Draft EIS is the inadequacy of the proposed mitigation measures for disturbances to native habitat. As proposed, there is the potential for net loss of habitat, with protection afforded to the mitigated sites only for 'the life of the project.' It is not acceptable that mitigation for damage to steppe habitat, particularly on publicly owned land, be only temporary. If it is completely unavoidable, habitat destruction or degradation on public land should be mitigated with acquisition of permanently protected land. We suggest that funds gained for mitigating project disturbances be at least partially channeled to the Trust Land Transfer Program (DNR), or other such program, for the permanent protection of habitat on publicly owned land.

Finally, we suggest that heavy fines be imposed for disturbance to sites flagged as sensitive, such as for rare plants, habitat, wetlands, etc. during construction activities. Driving machinery and being involved with construction makes it difficult many operators, working in a different scale and time frame, to have a balanced appreciation of the habitat they are impacting. Levying fines may make it easier for operators to pay close attention to the impact of their actions.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or if we can clarify our comments.

Thank you,

Debra Salstrom and Richard Easterly
Conservation Committee
Washington Native Plant Society

Kuehn, Ginny -KC-7

From: Pam Hedges [pamhedges@charter.net]
Sent: Wednesday, May 15, 2002 9:43 PM
To: comment@bpa.gov
Subject: Wind

RECEIVED BY BPA PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT LOG#: MWDEIS-014 RECEIPT DATE: MAY 16 2002

Please do not build wind mills on Rattlesnake. I have admired Rattlesnake for the nine years we have lived here. I do not want that profile distorted by an unnecessary project, especially one that will have to use public funds in order to be built!

Sincerely,
Pam Hedges
509-946-8692

5/16/02