

## 6. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

This chapter includes information on public involvement activities and coordination with agencies, tribes and other organizations that has occurred to date in the preparation of the Desert Claim Wind Power Project EIS.

### 6.1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement is a process by which interested and affected individuals, organizations, agencies, Indian tribes and governmental entities are consulted and included in the decision-making process. Through this process, members of the local community and other parties potentially affected by the proposed action have been given an opportunity to voice concerns, identify issues, suggest approaches to the EIS analysis, and express their opinions. Formal opportunities for public involvement in the Desert Claim environmental review process included scoping, a public open house, and review of the Draft EIS. In addition, Kittitas County received and maintained records of public comment of various forms (e.g., letters and telephone comments) throughout the EIS process.

The activities described below are those conducted or sponsored by Kittitas County specifically in support of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process for the County's review of the Desert Claim proposal. Apart from the County's public involvement effort, Desert Claim Wind Power LLC/*enXco* has independently conducted its own public information and outreach efforts. These have included meetings with various organizations and individuals, review of information at the applicant's local office, tours of comparable wind energy facilities and publication of information on the Desert Claim proposal.

#### 6.1.1 EIS Scoping

Desert Claim Wind Power LLC/*enXco* submitted an application for development of a wind energy facility to Kittitas County on January 28, 2003. In response, the County determined that the proposal would be likely to have a significant adverse effect on the environment and that an environmental impact statement (EIS) would be required under SEPA (RCW 43.21C.030 (2)(c)) and the Kittitas County SEPA ordinance. On April 23, 2003 Kittitas County issued a Determination of Significance (DS)/Scoping Notice documenting this finding and requesting comments on the scope of the EIS. The notice identified the proposed scope of the EIS, the time and place for a public meeting to obtain input, and a date for submittal of written comments. The DS/scoping notice was published in both local newspapers and in the Washington Department of Ecology's SEPA Register. The DS/scoping notice was also distributed directly to Kittitas County's mailing list for the Desert Claim project, which includes adjacent property owners and interested agencies, organizations and individuals.

The DS and request for scoping comments informed interested parties that comments on alternatives, probable significant adverse impacts and licenses and approvals that may be required must be received by May 23, 2003. To facilitate public input in determining the scope of the EIS, Kittitas County held a public scoping meeting in Ellensburg on May 7, 2003. Approximately 35 to 40 people attended the meeting, and 22 provided verbal comments concerning the scope of the EIS. In addition to the verbal comments at the scoping meeting, Kittitas County received comments on the scope of the EIS in letter form (including letters transmitted by facsimile), as electronic mail messages, and as written comments recorded on comment forms submitted at the scoping meeting. Kittitas County's EIS consultant team reviewed the entire body of scoping

comments, identified the comments with respect to the topic or environmental issue addressed, and grouped the comments by similar topic area. The input from the scoping process was used to guide the development of the Draft EIS.

### **6.1.2 Open House**

On September 24, 2003 the County sponsored an afternoon/evening open house in Ellensburg to provide an opportunity to exchange information about the proposed wind project. The County and the EIS team provided multiple stations with preliminary information available concerning the SEPA process, water resources and wetlands, fish and wildlife resources, land use, aesthetics, noise, health and safety, and transportation. A draft *Scoping Report* – summarizing prior scoping comments and the working scope for the Draft EIS – was available at the meeting. Comment sheets were also available to allow attendees to ask questions or provide additional scoping information. Approximately 65 to 70 people visited the open house at some time during the session. Staff from the EIS team collected nine comment forms at the open house, and recorded other comments or questions on flip charts.

### **6.1.3 Review of the Draft EIS**

Public and agency review of the Draft EIS began officially when Kittitas County filed the Draft EIS with the Washington Department of Ecology on December 15, 2003. Notices that the EIS was available for review were published in the SEPA Register and in the *Ellensburg Daily Record* and the *Northern Kittitas County Tribune*. The SEPA rules provide for a minimum period of 30 days for public review of the Draft EIS; because the Desert Claim EIS is lengthy and complex, however, Kittitas County allowed for an extended 45-day review period (ending January 30, 2004). To facilitate review of the Draft EIS, Kittitas County held a public meeting in Ellensburg on January 20, 2004 to take verbal comment on the Draft EIS.

Kittitas County received 78 items with written comments by the close of the Draft EIS review period. Thirty (30) speakers provided testimony at the public meeting, which was recorded on audiotape, and that audiotape was used to develop a written transcript of the meeting. The County's EIS team reviewed all written comment records and testimony statements from the public meeting. Specific passages from the letters and testimony that constituted comments on the Draft EIS were marked with vertical bars in the margin of the letter or statement. The EIS team identified a total of 940 discrete comments among the 78 written submittals and 30 testimony statements. Individual comments were grouped into issue categories based on the nature of the subject matter and the section of the Draft EIS the comment addressed. Through the review and categorization of the comment contents, the County established 22 separate issue categories (19 of which addressed the substantive content of the Draft EIS and 3 of which addresses non-SEPA issues) and identified a total of 181 individual issues.

All review comments on the Draft EIS have been considered and addressed in the preparation of the Final EIS. The EIS team revised the Draft EIS content as necessary in response to comments. Supplemental technical analyses were conducted as necessary to meet additional informational needs, update the Draft EIS content and/or address unresolved issues. Responses to the issues raised in the Draft EIS review comments are provided in **Chapter 5** of the Final EIS, and the comments themselves are reproduced in **Appendix I**.

## **6.2 AGENCY CONSULTATION**

As the lead agency under SEPA, Kittitas County has the responsibility for the development of this EIS. The Planning Division of Kittitas County Community Development Services directed the preparation of the EIS. The Planning Division coordinated with other branches of Kittitas County government as necessary during the EIS process.

The location for the proposed Desert Claim Wind Power Project is within unincorporated Kittitas County, and Kittitas County has sole jurisdiction over the environmental review and land use approval processes for the proposal. Other agencies or entities will have jurisdiction over permits that would be required to construct and operate the project, and/or have expertise concerning elements of the environment addressed in the EIS. Consequently, Kittitas County has coordinated with these entities in the development of the EIS documentation, and some of the agencies with jurisdiction and/or expertise submitted review comments on the Draft EIS.

Kittitas County and its consultants on the EIS team coordinated on a formal and informal basis with a wide variety of agencies and other organizations throughout the EIS process. Agency coordination activities occurred in conjunction with scoping for the EIS, follow-up on definition of issues or approaches to analysis of issues in the EIS, requests for information, clarification of management policies, and planning efforts related to mitigation. Coordination activities conducted or sponsored by Kittitas County for the EIS have included the following agencies and organizations outside of Kittitas County government:

- U.S. Department of Energy, Bonneville Power Administration
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S.D.A., Natural Resources and Conservation Service
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Federal Communications Commission
- Yakama Nation
- Colville Confederated Tribes
- Washington Department of Communities, Trade and Economic Development
- Washington Department of Ecology
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Washington Department of Health
- Washington Department of Natural Resources
- Washington Employment Security Department
- Washington Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
- Washington Office of Financial Management
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Washington State Patrol
- City of Ellensburg
- City of Cle Elum
- City of Roslyn
- Kittitas County Fire District 2
- Kittitas County Hospital District 1
- Kittitas County Public Utility District
- Kittitas Reclamation District

Staff from Kittitas County Community Development Services and the EIS consultant team also coordinated with other entities associated with Kittitas County government as needed throughout the EIS process.