

FACT SHEET

Project Title Desert Claim Wind Power Project

Proposed Action The proposed action consists of development of a 180-megawatt (MW) wind energy facility by Desert Claim Wind Power LLC on 5,237 acres of privately-owned land in unincorporated Kittitas County. Approval to implement the proposed development would require four related actions by Kittitas County: (1) adopting a site-specific amendment to the Comprehensive Plan land use map designation (a sub-area plan with an overlay) to designate the project area as a Wind Farm Resource overlay district; (2) rezoning the site, in conformance with the Kittitas County Zoning Code, as a Wind Farm Resource Overlay Zoning District; (3) issuing a Wind Farm Resource development permit for the proposed project; and (4) executing a development agreement setting forth standards and conditions for development, including mitigation measures.

Desert Claim Wind Power LLC, a Washington limited liability company wholly owned and managed by *enXco, Inc.*, submitted an application dated January 28, 2003 to Kittitas County Community Development Services for permits necessary to construct and operate a wind energy facility. The proposed project would be located on leased lands within a project area of 5,237 acres approximately 8 miles north of the City of Ellensburg, the county seat for Kittitas County.

The applicant's objective is to develop a commercially viable wind energy facility with a nameplate capacity of at least 180 MW that would deliver renewable energy to the Pacific Northwest. The facilities, construction process and operation and maintenance for the proposed project are summarized below.

Facilities

Wind energy production includes five basic functions of electricity generation, energy transfer, power collection, substation and transmission. The specific facilities proposed to accomplish these functions for the Desert Claim project include:

- a maximum of 120 wind turbines, each with a capacity to generate 1.5 megawatts (MW) of electricity, for a total project generation nameplate capacity of 180 MW;
- each turbine would include a freestanding, tubular-steel tower approximately 213 feet high, supporting a nacelle housing the generator, gear box and three-bladed rotor;
- each rotor blade would be approximately 126.5 feet in length, for a maximum total rotor diameter of 253 feet;
- the maximum total height for the turbines would be 340 feet;
- towers would be anchored to steel and concrete foundations extending from 8 to 42 feet below the ground surface;
- the generator in each turbine nacelle would produce electricity at 575

- volts;
- a transformer mounted on a concrete pad near the base of each turbine would raise the voltage from 575 volts to 34.5 kilovolts (kV);
- 34.5-kV underground (or above ground where necessary) power collection cables connecting all of the turbines;
- a fenced substation (or possibly two) occupying 1 to 2 acres, with transformers to step the voltage up from 34.5 kV to 115 or 230 kV for transmission;
- several hundred feet or up to several miles of 115- or 230-kV transmission line from the substation to the regional transmission system;
- five free-standing, lattice-steel meteorological towers up to 212 feet in height within the project area;
- a network of project roads, with a graveled travel surface of 15 to 20 feet in width, to provide vehicle access to the base of each tower; and
- an operations, storage, and repair facility occupying about 1 acre located near the project substation or in an area zoned for industrial use within or near Ellensburg.

Construction Process

Construction of the proposed project is estimated to require approximately 9 months. Approximately 120 to 150 workers would likely be employed at the project site at some time during the construction period. A Temporary Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan would guide ground-disturbing activities and stormwater management during construction, and disturbed areas would be revegetated following construction. A Construction Traffic Management Plan would address transportation and access concerns during the construction period.

Operation and Maintenance

Desert Claim LLC would operate and maintain the wind energy facility throughout its useful life, which is assumed to be 30 years. Electricity generated by the project would be sold to power marketing entities, such as the Bonneville Power Administration; local and regional public utilities, such as the Kittitas County PUD and the Grant County PUD; and/or regional investor-owned utilities, such as Puget Sound Energy and Avista. Power from the project would ultimately be distributed by utilities to their customers. The project would employ approximately 10 full-time staff for operations and maintenance. Long-term operation and maintenance activities would include the following functions:

- round-the-clock monitoring of project output and performance;
- controlling turbine operations as necessary to meet scheduled power deliveries and implement scheduled outages for scheduled turbine maintenance;
- performing periodic, routine testing and maintenance of the turbines;

- on-site equipment repairs in response to malfunctions or regular maintenance;
- patrolling the project area to ensure security and monitor on-site conditions;
- periodic maintenance of project access roads; and
- implementing the project noxious weed control plan.

Alternatives

Three alternatives to the proposal are analyzed in the EIS. *Alternative 1* consists of a comparable wind power project development on an alternative site in eastern Kittitas County, termed the Wild Horse site. This alternative is included in the evaluation to provide a benchmark for comparison of the potential levels of environmental impact from wind farm development. The conceptual plan for this alternative is based on the wind energy facility proposed for the site by Zilkha Renewable Energy, which has requested the Washington Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council to evaluate the proposed Wild Horse Wind Power Project. The Wild Horse site is proposed for development by another applicant, and is not available to *enXco*.

Alternative 2 involves the hypothetical development of a comparable wind energy facility at another alternative site in Kittitas County – the Springwood Ranch site (located near Thorp, west of the proposed Desert Claim project). This alternative is also included in the evaluation to provide Kittitas County decision makers with a benchmark for comparing the potential impacts of wind farm development at a different site in the County, and at a different scale of development. The Springwood Ranch site is not available to *enXco* and could not be used to implement the proposed action. The planning process and criteria used to identify the sites for Alternatives 1 and 2 are described in the EIS. Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 do not meet the SEPA definition of a “reasonable alternative” for a variety of reasons discussed in the EIS.

No Action assumes that the proposal would not be implemented, but that the project area for the proposed action would be available for a variety of land uses permitted by the existing zoning. Future uses could include incremental development of relatively large lots for rural residential use.

Location of Proposal

The 5,237-acre project area for the proposed Desert Claim Wind Power Project spans portions of two townships in the north-central area of unincorporated Kittitas County (Township 19 North, Range 18 East and Township 19 North, Range 19 East). The eight non-contiguous properties that comprise the project area generally lie to the north of Smithson Road, to the west of Wilson Creek Road, and to the east of Howard Road. The southeastern parcels of the project area are located south of the Bonneville Power Administration high-voltage transmission line corridor, while the northwestern parcels extend to within one-half mile of the Wenatchee National Forest. The center of the project area lies approximately 8 miles north of the City of Ellensburg.

Proponent Desert Claim Wind Power LLC, 304 South Water Street, Suite 101, Ellensburg, WA 98926

Date of Implementation A decision by the Kittitas County Board of Commissioners on the Desert Claim application is expected in the last quarter of 2004. If approved, construction could start in early spring of 2005.

Lead Agency Kittitas County Community Development Services, Planning Division.

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Required Permits & Approvals Kittitas County
Comprehensive Plan Amendment/Potential Sub-Area Plan Adoption
Wind Farm Resource Overlay Zoning District Approval
Wind Farm Resource Development Permit
Development Agreement
Critical Areas review
Right-of-Way Use Permits

State of Washington Agencies
Hydraulic Project Approval
Nation Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit (for construction stormwater management)
Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation review (if cultural resources to be disturbed during construction)

Federal Agencies
Section 404/Wetlands Permit

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**Type/Timing of
Subsequent
Environmental
Review**

No subsequent environmental review would be required for the development addressed in the EIS and the January 2003 development activities application submitted by Desert Claim Wind Power LLC. If the applicant proposed to develop additional phases of project facilities or to replace the turbines in the future, those proposals would be reviewed for consistency with the analysis and conclusions in this EIS to determine if any supplemental environmental review is necessary, pursuant to the SEPA Rules.

**Location of
Background
Information**

Kittitas County Community Development Services
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Date of FEIS

August 16, 2004

Issuance

Cost of DEIS

Copies of the Final EIS are available for review at the public libraries in Cle Elum, Roslyn, Ellensburg, Kittitas and Yakima, and at the Central Washington University Library in Ellensburg. Copies of the Final EIS may be reviewed or purchased at the Kittitas County Community Development Services office in Ellensburg. The cost for printed (paper) copies of the Final EIS documents is as follows:

Volume 1:	\$40.00
Volume 2:	\$25.00
Both Volumes:	\$65.00

The EIS is also available on Compact Disc free of charge and may be reviewed on Kittitas County's website (www.co.kittitas.wa.us).