

Traditional Use Study of the Horse Heaven Wind Farm Project, Benton County, Washington Executive Summary

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) Cultural Resources Protection Program (CRPP) conducted research on the traditional uses surrounding the proposed Horse Heaven Wind Farm project for Scout Clean Energy resulting in a report entitled *Traditional Use Study of the Horse Heaven Wind Farm Project, Benton County, Washington* prepared by Dr. Jennifer Karson Engum, Cultural Anthropologist. The purpose of this study was to document traditional use and identify historic properties of religious and cultural significance to the CTUIR within and in the vicinity of the project area. The CRPP conducted a comprehensive investigative study of the project area in the traditional homelands of the CTUIR. Available ethnographic literature was supplemented by oral history interviews, providing cultural context derived from members of the affected community based on personal and family history.

The project area is located in Benton County in southeast Washington and lies within the ceded aboriginal boundaries of the CTUIR in the Horse Heaven Hills region. The proposed project is located approximately 4 miles southwest of the Tri-Cities urban area. The proposed project will include a maximum of 244 wind turbines spanning east-west approximately twenty-four miles along a high ridge line between Benton City and Finley, Washington.

The area holds a unique tribal history and contains resources that have drawn the CTUIR to the area since time immemorial. The *Walúlapam*, *Weyúletpu*, and *Imatalamláma* came to this area to live, camp, gather traditional foods and medicinal plants, fish, hunt, trade, and graze horses, as well as impart traditional knowledge in the form of legend stories derived from the surrounding environment.

The oral history investigation conducted for this study documented twenty-one First Foods that were observed or expected to be seen within the project area and adjacent areas during field excursions with tribal informants conducted there. If restoration work is planned in the future within the project area, it should include food plants used by the CTUIR. The project area is located where native plants, including the CTUIR's First Foods, continue to grow unabated in small pockets. Scout Clean Energy should consider native plant restoration goals for lost First Foods on the Horse Heaven Wind property and conduct an ethnobotanical study of the project area with the suggested goal of creating an agreement to provide access to tribal members to gather these foods in the future.

Twenty-one native place names identified for this study hold significance to the project area and lie within the viewshed of the project area. These place names are associated with ancient use and knowledge of the land and beliefs about the *Walúlapam*, *Weyúletpu*, and *Imatalamláma*'s culture and the nature of the world.

In particular, this project will have an adverse effect on two historic properties of religious and cultural significance to the CTUIR located on, adjacent to, and within the larger viewshed of the Horse Heaven Wind Farm project: *Kúsipamá* and *Piyuušmaamí Púštáy*.

Historic properties identified within and near the project area should be considered potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as historic properties of religious and cultural significance to the CTUIR. The Horse Heaven Wind Farm Project area has been and continues to be critically tied to the CTUIR's history, religion, and ongoing culture.

Due to the long term use of the area, it is possible that burials could be encountered within the project area when ground disturbing activities occur. Burials of *Weyúletpu*, *Imatalamláma*, and *Walúlapam* ancestors are considered sacred. A cultural resource monitor should be on site to monitor during any ground disturbing activities of this project. It is also recommended that an inadvertent discovery plan be developed before ground disturbing activities begin for this project.

Multiple elder informants did not agree with the construction of the wind farm in this location for several reasons: the loss of access to First Foods procurement areas, specific legend sites that would be effected by the project area, adverse effects to wildlife, and the loss of an unencumbered view for storytelling sites and for identifying landmarks in the larger viewshed. To address these concerns and mitigate for their adverse effects, options such as the following should be considered:

- Create access for tribal members to continue traditional practice of procuring First Foods in the project area and create protections for the natural resources located there.
- Due to loss of opportunities to pass on the teaching of legends in-situ in the project area and the resulting effect on the next generations, off-site mitigation could include education and outreach work to assist in the perpetuation of these stories by other means.
- Regarding the impacts to the viewshed, the CRPP supports the eventual removal of the wind farm infrastructure when it is no longer functional. An agreement with the Tribes could be reached in anticipation of a time when the wind farm would be considered for disassembly in future years, in order to remove defunct turbines and restore the landscape and viewshed after the life of the turbines or project as a whole has come to a close.

Mitigation actions such as these would help to resolve concerns held by the tribal elder and community member informants who participated in this study. In sharing their knowledge and concerns, they are speaking for the ancestors who once inhabited the project area and speaking for future generations, so they may continue to know its significance.