



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Twin Falls District
Burley Field Office
Cassia County, Idaho**

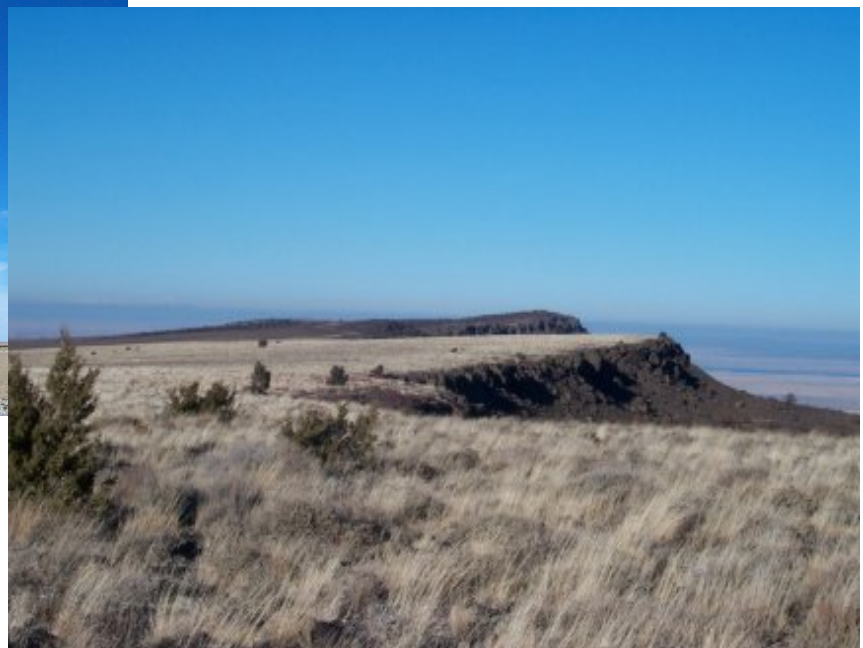
FES 06-07

March 2006



**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
FOR THE PROPOSED COTTEREL WIND
POWER PROJECT**

**AND PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN
AMENDMENT**



**Volume 1:
Main Text**

**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE
PROPOSED COTTEREL WIND POWER PROJECT AND
PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT**

Prepared for

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Twin Falls District
Burley Field Office
Cassia County
15 East, 200 South
Burley, Idaho 83318

Serial Number IDI-33676

On behalf of

Windland, Inc
Suite 804A
10480 Garverdale Court
Boise, ID 83704

and

Shell WindEnergy, Inc.
Suite 1042
910 Louisiana
Houston, TX 77002

March 2006



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Burley Field Office
15 East 200 South
Burley, Idaho 83318
(208) 677-6641

<http://www.id.blm.gov/offices/burley>

In Reply Refer To: IDI-33676 (ID 220)

March, 2006

Dear Interested Reader:

Enclosed for your perusal is the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Cotterel Wind Power Project and Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendment (FEIS)*. The Applicant, Windland, Inc., in partnership with Shell Wind Energy, Inc. (a subsidiary of the Royal Dutch/Shell Group), has submitted a right-of-way application to the Bureau of Land Management, Twin Falls District, Burley Field Office (BLM), requesting to build a 190-240 megawatt, wind-powered electrical generation facility on the ridgeline of Cotterel Mountain, roughly 15 miles east of the city of Burley, and situated between the towns of Albion and Malta, located in Cassia County, Idaho.

A Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendment is included in this FEIS. The proposed project and action alternatives are not in conformance with the BLM *Cassia Resource Management Plan, 1985 (Cassia RMP)* which does not allow the granting of rights-of-way in the proposed project area. Therefore, the Cassia RMP must be amended if an action alternative is selected.

Based on the analysis of the proposed action and alternatives to the proposed action, the reader is being informed that the **proposed decision is to amend the Cassia RMP by implementing Alternative C, Modified Proposed Action**. A complete description of Alternative C and all other alternatives can be found in this FEIS. In addition, the FEIS presents comments received on the DEIS/Draft Plan Amendment and associated responses to those comments.

This FEIS was prepared in accordance with the *National Environmental Policy Act, 1969 (NEPA)* and with applicable laws and regulations passed subsequent to NEPA. It is intended to provide the public and agency decision makers with a complete and objective evaluation of impacts, beneficial and adverse, resulting from the Proposed Action and all reasonable alternatives.

No decision on the Proposed Plan Amendment will be made for at least 30 days after the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publishes its Notice of Availability (NOA) of this FEIS/Proposed Plan Amendment in the **Federal Register**. BLM regulations (43 CFR 1610.5-2) state that any person who participated in the planning process and has an interest that may be adversely affected may protest the proposed decision that would be implemented on BLM administered land. The proposed decision which may be protested is the Proposed Plan Amendment. The protest must be filed within 30 days of the date that the EPA publishes its NOA. Protests must address the proposed decision to amend the Cassia RMP. Protests regarding proposed decisions affecting BLM administered lands must be in writing and filed with the BLM Director. Protests may raise only those issues that were submitted for the record during the planning process. Email and faxed protests will not be accepted as valid protests unless the protesting party also provides the original letter by either regular or overnight mail postmarked by the close of the protest period. Under these conditions, the BLM will consider the email or faxed protest as an advance copy, and it will receive full consideration. If you wish to provide the BLM with such advance notification, please direct faxed protests to the attention of the BLM Protest Coordinator at (202)452-5112 and emails to Brenda_Hudgens-Williams@blm.gov. Please direct the follow up letters to the appropriate address provided below. To be considered complete, your protest must contain at minimum, the following information: (1) The name, mailing address, telephone number and interest of the person filing the protest; (2) a statement of the issue or issues being protested; (3) a statement of the part or parts of the Proposed Plan Amendment being protested; (4) a copy of all documents addressing the issue or issues that were submitted during the planning process by the protesting party or an indication of the date the issue or issues were discussed for the record; and (5) a concise statement explaining why the Director's proposed decision is believed to be wrong. A protest merely expressing disagreement with the Director's proposed decision without providing any supporting data will not be considered a valid protest.

All written protests must be sent to one of the following addresses: Regular Mail, Director, WO-210/LS-1075, Bureau of Land Management, Attn: Brenda Hudgens-Williams, Department of the Interior, P.O. Box 66538, Washington, DC 20035, or Overnight Mail, Director, WO-210/LS-1075, Bureau of Land Management, Attn: Brenda Hudgens-Williams, Department of the Interior, 1610 L Street NW, Suite 1075, Washington, DC 20036.

To be considered timely, your protest must be postmarked no later than the last day of the protest period. Though not a requirement, it is suggested that protests be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested. You are also encouraged, but not required, to forward a copy of your protest to the project manager at the following address: Scott Barker, Project Manager, Bureau of Land Management, 15 East 200 South, Burley, Idaho 83318.

This may allow the BLM to resolve the protest through clarification of intent or discussion with the protestor. Please note that protests, including names and street addresses are available for public review and/or release under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Individual respondents may request confidentiality.

Respondents who wish to withhold their name and/or street address from public review or from disclosure under FOIA must state so prominently at the beginning of the written correspondence. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representing organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Following resolution of any protests of the proposed decision, a record of decision (ROD) will be signed by the Assistant Director of the Bureau of Land Management. A NOA of the ROD will be published in the **Federal Register** and through local news media.

For further information, you may contact Scott Barker at (208) 677-6678; fax (208) 677-6699; or email scott_barker@blm.gov.

Thank you for your interest and participation in this analysis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth E. Miller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some overlapping letters.

Kenneth E. Miller
Burley Field Office Manager

**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
FOR THE PROPOSED COTTEREL WIND POWER PROJECT AND
PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT
BURLEY, CASSIA COUNTY, IDAHO**

Lead Agency: U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Twin Falls District
Burley Field Office, Burley, Idaho

Cooperating Agencies: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Bonneville Power Administration
Idaho Department of Lands
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Cassia County Commissioners

Participating Agency: Idaho Department of Fish & Game

Tribal Governments: Shoshone-Paiute Tribes
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes

Responsible Official: Assistant Director
Bureau of Land Management
Washington, D.C.

Further Information: Ken Miller, Field Office Manager or
Scott Barker, Project Manager
BLM Burley Field Office
15 East, 200 South
Burley, Idaho 83318
(208) 677-6641
e-mail: ken_miller@blm.gov
scott_barker@blm.gov

ABSTRACT: Windland, Inc., a Boise-based, private wind energy development company has submitted a right-of-way application to construct, operate and maintain a wind energy facility along the Cotterel Mountains near the towns of Albion, Malta, and Burley, in Cassia County, Idaho. Windland, Inc. is co-developing the project with Shell WindEnergy, Inc., (a member of the Shell Group). The proposed wind energy facility would occupy approximately 16 miles of ridgeline along Cotterel Mountain, consist of a single linear north-south string of turbines situated primarily on public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management, Burley Field Office, Burley, Idaho. There is a small amount of Idaho State Land and privately-owned land associated with the proposed project.

This Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has been completed which analyzes four alternatives in detail: Alternative A (No Action); Alternative B (Proponent's Proposed Action); Alternative C (Modified Proposed Action); and Alternative D (Minimum turbine string action). Other agencies may tier to this analysis for any decisions they may make associated with this proposed project.

Alternative C has been identified as the preferred alternative after having considered the environmental impacts to public lands and the opportunities for use of those lands, which would benefit the most people over the longest term.

This FEIS also contains a proposed amendment to the Cassia Resource Management Plan, 1985, that could amend the plan to allow for the granting of a right-of-way for the development of a wind energy facility. Both the analysis disclosed in the FEIS and the proposed plan amendment are available for comment.

DISCLAIMER

National Environmental Policy Act Disclosure Statement
Bureau of Land Management Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Cotterel Mountain Wind Power Project

The President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations at 40 CFR 1506.5 require that consultants preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) execute a disclosure specifying they have no financial or other interest in the outcome of the project. The term "Financial interest or other interest in the outcome of the project" for the purposes of this disclosure is defined in the March 23, 1981, guidance "Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ's National Environmental Policy Act Regulations," 46 FR 18026-18038 at Questions 17a and b.

"Financial or other interest in the outcome of the project" includes "any financial benefits such as promise of future construction or design work in the project, as well as indirect benefits the contractor is aware of (e.g., if the project would aid proposals sponsored by the firm's other clients)." 46 FR 18026-18038 at 18031.

In accordance with the above-referenced regulatory requirements, URS Group, Incorporated has prepared this Final EIS on behalf of the Bureau of Land Management and declares no financial or other interest in the outcome of the proposed project.

Certified by:



March 10, 2006

Clive Mecham
Vice President

Date

URS Group, Incorporated
1750 Front Street, Suite 100
Boise, Idaho 83702

