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Contact: Christina Lilienthal
(541) 416-6889

BLM Releases Plan for the West Butte Wind Power Project

Prineville, Ore. – Today the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Prineville District is making the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the West Butte Wind Power Right-of-Way Project available to the public. A Record of Decision (ROD) will be issued authorizing, denying, or granting the right-of-way, no sooner than 30-days after publication of the Environmental Protection Agency's notice of filing of the Final EIS.

In the summer of 2009, West Butte Wind Power LLC submitted an application to improve, construct, and operate an access roadway and transmission line across BLM-managed public lands. The right-of-way requested is 3.9 miles long and would provide a permanent access road; a pole-mounted 115-kilovolt (kV) electrical transmission line; a 14.4-kV electrical utility line; and a fiber optic communication line. The right-of-way request is associated with a proposed wind farm development on private lands adjacent to the BLM near Prineville, Oregon.

The proposed project consists of up to 52 wind turbines providing a maximum of 104 megawatts of generating capacity. The wind farm would also require infrastructure to support the generation and transmission of power. Because access through BLM lands must be secured to construct and operate the project, and since BLM provides the only reasonable access to the project area, the BLM is required to analyze the effects of the project in its entirety.

Public scoping to evaluate the right-of-way and proposed actions were initiated in the fall of 2009. Based on comments received, the BLM determined that an EIS was the appropriate level of analysis needed. A summary of the comments and the BLM's response to the comments is available on the project web site within Appendix F of the EIS. Additional information about this planning process is available online at:

http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/prineville/plans/wbw_power_row/

About the BLM: The BLM manages 245 million acres of public land known as the National System of Public Lands. The lands are primarily located in 12 Western states, including 75 million acres in Alaska. With a budget of about \$1 billion, the bureau also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

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