

OR/WA BLM Renewable and Non-Renewable Energy

Rights-of-Way, Leases, and Withdrawals

Short Summary

Excluding Project Descriptions

June 30, 2013

Here is a brief statistical summary of energy right-of-way grants, leases, and withdrawals on BLM lands (and U.S. Forest Service lands for pipeline ROWs, geothermal leases, and some Federal Energy Regulatory Commission hydropower withdrawals) in Oregon and Washington (OR/WA). Project descriptions and map references are excluded here. This short version is for statistical and contact information only. It covers these energy categories: wind, electrical transmission, geothermal, hydro, biomass, solar, tidal/wave, oil and gas, coal bed natural gas, oil and gas pipelines, coal, and uranium. **More detailed project information can be found in the “Long Summary” text. That summary, along with location maps, can be found at OR/WA BLM’s energy website via this web link: <http://www.blm.gov/or/energy> .**

RENEWABLE ENERGY

WIND

Right-Of-Way (ROW) grants are required for wind testing or development structures, or electrical transmission lines to be erected on public lands. ROW requirements are described in the 43 CFR 2800 ROW Regulations.

In Oregon, as of June 30, 2013, there were 4 authorized (44,960 acres) plus one pending (15,826 acres) wind testing ROW in Oregon, for a total of 60,786 acres. This represents a 45% wind testing acreage decrease from February 2013. There were also three pending wind farm development ROWs (34,208 acres). This represents a 265% wind farm development acreage increase in Oregon from February 2013. There is also one authorized wind farm (108 acres) in Oregon, Lime Wind, which began operation in December 2011.

In Washington there was one authorized wind testing ROW and one pending wind farm development ROW occupying the same project area, Saddle Mountain West (22,096 acres). So the net acreage change for wind testing and development between February 2013 and June 2013 in Washington is essentially zero.

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TRANSMISSION

As of January 9, 2013 there were 983 authorized and 56 pending electrical transmission ROWs across both Oregon and Washington. There are three proposed major transmission lines involving BLM lands in Oregon: Boardman to Hemingway 500 kV, North Steens 230 kV, and West Butte 115 kV. Permitting and development of the Cascade Crossing project was suspended on June 3, 2013. And there are two transmission lines in Washington: the proposed Vantage to Pomona Heights 230 kV line and the authorized McNary -John Day 500 kV line.

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GEOHERMAL

Leases are required to explore for or develop geothermal resources on public lands. Leasing requirements are described in the 43 CFR 3200 Geothermal Leasing Regulations.

As of June 5, 2013 there were 78 federal geothermal leases encompassing 102,484 acres in Oregon, a 2% acreage decrease since May 2012, and four leases encompassing 8,436 acres in Washington representing no change over the same period. There have also been 15 parcels nominated for leasing, 6 in Oregon (11,452 acres) and 9 in Washington (35,480 acres). Three of these are on BLM land; the remaining 12 are on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) land.

There is one enhanced geothermal system (EGS) pilot demonstration project and four potential exploration projects associated with these leases. AltaRock's EGS and Ormat's Twilight exploration project are at Newberry Crater in central Oregon. Ormat is proposing two exploration projects at Glass Buttes also in central Oregon. PGE is considering exploration at Mt. Hood, Oregon, and Gradient Resources is considering an exploration project at Mt. Baker in northwestern Washington. There is also industry interest in exploring for geothermal resources on BLM lands near Vale, OR.

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HYDROPOWER

Apparently all of the hydroelectric power project withdrawals on BLM lands are characterized as "nonfederal" and come under the jurisdiction of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

As of May 2013, the **State of Oregon** had 46 nonfederal hydroelectric projects active with the FERC. Of those 46 projects, 20 include BLM lands or interest (e.g. unreserved mineral estate). Of those 20 projects 40% (8 projects) are currently in the preliminary permit stage; 35% (7 projects) are licensed and operating; 10% (2 projects) are being decommissioned; 10% (2 projects) are in the licensing process and 5% (1 project) is being relicensed.

As of May 2013, the **State of Washington** had 74 nonfederal hydroelectric projects active with the FERC. Of those 74 projects, 15 include BLM lands or interest (e.g. unreserved mineral estate). Of those 15 projects, 13% (2 projects) are currently in the preliminary permit stage; 80% (12 projects) are licensed; and 6% (1 project) is in the licensing process.

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BIOMASS

As of January 2013 there were 19 woody biomass stewardship projects administered by the Oregon-Washington (OR/WA) BLM. These projects provided the raw material to support the production of heat, power, engineered wood fuel, or ethanol at 41 facilities across OR/WA. In fiscal year (FY) 2012 over 77,000 green tons (GT) of biomass were sold from these projects.

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SOLAR

As of June 30, 2013 there were no solar projects on BLM lands in Oregon or Washington, and no solar ROW applications had been received.

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TIDAL/WAVE

As of June 30, 2013 there were no tidal/wave energy projects involving BLM lands in either Oregon or Washington, and no transmission ROW applications connecting any tidal/wave project had been received. However, the Reedsport Wave Energy Project, whose transmission line will cross federal land, was recorded in BLM's LR2000 lands record system. It may be of interest to those BLM districts that border the Oregon coast.

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NON-RENEWABLE ENERGY

OIL & GAS

Leasing reforms introduced by this administration have placed a priority on the exploration and development of existing leases and the relinquishment of idle ones.

Apparently as a consequence of that policy, as of June 18, 2013 there were only 2 leases (3,804 acres) in Washington, a 98% acreage decrease since May 29, 2012; and 112 leases (188,391 acres) in Oregon, a 27% acreage decrease over that same period. The majority of the leases are located in the Vale District (106 leases, 172,839 acres). And Prineville has 6 leases encompassing 15,552 acres. No leases are being explored or developed at this time.

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COAL BED NATURAL GAS

The coal-bearing sandstones and siltstones of the Coos Basin are estimated to form a section approximately 6,600 feet thick. The Basin has multiple seams of coal (many which contain methane gas) and it is estimated that up to 160,000 onshore acres in the Coos Basin are prospective for both conventional and coal bed natural gas (CBNG) production. Industry has expressed an interest in these resources as recently as 2007.

Total in-place gas is estimated to be 1.2 trillion cubic feet (tcf). Permeability tests showed at least 580 billion cubic feet (bcf) are recoverable under new technology and the impetus of industry interest. Future tests may increase this volume. Exploration has revealed exceptionally high gas content in two areas and studies estimate the average gas in place at approximately 10 bcf per section. This compares favorably to existing natural gas from coal operations elsewhere in the United States and Canada. For example, the sub-bituminous coals of the Powder River Basin in Wyoming hold 2 to 4 bcf of gas per section.

Scattered occurrences of low-grade coal are known along the eastern and western sides of Washington and Oregon. These units are probably too immature and too small to ever be economically mined, but they may provide targets for undiscovered coal-bed natural gas resources.

The bottom line here is although the potential for CBNG development exists, no applications for the exploration or development of these resources have been received by the BLM as of June 30, 2013.

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OIL & GAS PIPELINES

There are two major pipelines that cross BLM lands in Oregon, the Ruby Pipeline, in south-central Oregon, went into service on July 28, 2011; and the Jordan Cove LNG/Pacific Connector Gas Pipeline, which is being proposed to extend the Ruby Pipeline across southwestern Oregon to an export/import facility at Coos Bay on the Pacific coast. There is an unnamed pipeline that runs generally SW and NE from Bend, OR, and another to the north of Vale, OR that runs NW. The database showing pipelines crossing BLM lands in Washington is under review and consequently no information about them is available at this time.

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COAL

BLM administers two Federal coal leases (OR-6527 and WA-04322) encompassing 521 acres at the TransAlta Centralia Coal Mine LLC (TCCM). This operation is located about six miles northeast of Centralia, Washington. TCCM is the Federal lease holder, and owner of this surface mine and adjacent power plant. The mine ceased production and began reclamation in October 2006. Initial shutdown was related to slope stability problems created by a nearby 6.8 magnitude earthquake in February 2001. But Washington State has since passed legislation banning coal fired plants by 2025. Meanwhile, the company has initiated a project to recover fine-coal from a number of coal refuse settlement ponds at the site and it was approved by OSM in February 2012. Mining of this fine-coal is expected to begin sometime in 2014. It will be used by the plant until it is converted to natural gas. The Federal Government will collect royalties from this coal.

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URANIUM

In September 2011, a representative from Oregon Energy, L.L.C. (formally Uranium One), met with local citizens, and county and state officials, to discuss the possibility of opening a uranium oxide (“yellowcake”) mine in Malheur County. Oregon Energy is interested in developing a 17-Claim parcel of land known as the Aurora Project through an open pit mining method. Besides the mine, there would be a mill for processing. The claim area occupies about 450 acres and is also referred to as the “New U” uranium claims.

On May 7, 2012, Oregon Energy LLC made a presentation to the BLM outlining its plans for development for the mine.

The Vale District has agreed to work with ODFW on mitigation for the “New U” uranium claims, which are located in core sage grouse habitat. Although the lands encompassing the claims have been designated core, the area is frequented by rock hounds and hunters, has a crisscrossing of OHV roads, and other significant land disturbance from the defunct Bretz Mercury Mine, abandoned in the 1960s.

However, by the fall of 2012 the company said that it was putting its plans for the mine on hold until the uncertainty surrounding sage grouse issues were resolved.

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