



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Kemmerer Field Office
312 Highway 189 North
Kemmerer, Wyoming 83101-9711

**SCOPING NOTICE
BRIDGER BUTTE WIND POWER, LLC.
BRIDGER BUTTE WIND ENERGY PROJECT
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Kemmerer Field Office**

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Bridger Butte Wind Power, LLC, has filed an application for a right-of-way for a 138 kV transmission line in support of a wind energy project located within the jurisdictional boundary of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Kemmerer Field Office area. The project is known as the Bridger Butte Wind Energy Project. The project area, where turbines would be located, comprises approximately 13,286 acres. (see attached map). The project area is located in the area surrounding Bridger Butte, on the I-80 Corridor, Uinta County, Wyoming (Townships 14 and 15 North, Ranges 116 and 117 West, 6th P.M.) The phased development of the project could result in a maximum build out of a 180 megawatt (MW) electrical generating facility consisting of up to 120, 1.5 MW turbines. The project is proposed for two phases, Bridger Butte Wind Power I and Bridger Butte Wind Power II, which would both be supported by the proposed transmission line.

The right-of-way application for the transmission line proposes a new substation located in section 25, Township 15 N., R. 117 W., and would connect to the existing Painter-Naughton substation, located in section 33, T. 16 N., R. 118 W. The transmission line would cross both private and public lands.

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING PLANS AND DOCUMENTS

Record of Decision and Associated Land Use Plan Amendments for the Wind Energy Development Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on BLM-Administered Lands in the Western United States (2005) - The Record of Decision (ROD) amended land use plans including the Kemmerer Resource Management Plan (1984). The decision implements a comprehensive wind energy development program to administer the development of wind energy resources on BLM-administered public lands. The decision established policies and best management practices for the administration of wind energy development activities and established minimum requirements for mitigation measures. BLM released wind energy policy for implementing the ROD and guidance for processing right-of-way applications for wind energy projects on public lands (WO IM 2009-043).

Kemmerer Resource Management Plan (1984) - The Kemmerer Resource Management Plan (RMP) provides management direction for resources contained within the Kemmerer Field Office area. The objectives applicable for this proposal include managing public land to support the goals and objectives of other resource programs and respond to public demand for land use authorizations. Public lands will be made available for rights-of-way with the exception of defined exclusion and avoidance areas.

Use Authorizations – The use authorizations (i.e., right-of-way) for the transmission line will be processed in accordance with the Federal Land Policy Management Act, Title V (43 U.S.C.1761), regulations at 43 CFR 2800.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) Based on a review of the proposal submitted by Bridger Butte Wind Power, LLC, and applicable BLM policy including a review of the programmatic EIS/ROD, implementing policy (IM 2006-216), the BLM has determined an environmental assessment (EA) will be prepared that will tier to and incorporate applicable sections of the programmatic EIS. The EA will address the proposed action and reasonable alternatives including a no action alternative. The EA will analyze the impacts of issuing the right-of-way for the transmission line. As the transmission line is not necessary without the wind turbines, and the electricity generated by the wind turbines cannot be produced without the transmission line, it has been determined that the two projects are interdependent. As the turbines are a connected action to the transmission line, the effects of the wind turbines are considered indirect effects of the BLM action and must be analyzed as effects of the BLM action. If, after the analysis has been completed for the EA, a finding of no significant action cannot be achieved, an Environmental Impact Statement will be initiated.

One element of NEPA is public scoping. Public scoping is done to assist BLM in determining the scope of the analysis, including-

- Identify reasonable alternatives to the proposal.
- Identify cumulative (foreseeable) actions within and adjacent to the project area.
- Identify preliminary issues for consideration and those issues that meet the criteria defined in the Handbook 1790-1 (see <http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/nepa.2.html>) shall be analyzed in the analysis.
- Identify potential mitigation.

This scoping notice has been prepared to enable government agencies, interested parties, and the general public to participate in and contribute to, the analysis process. Public input is important in establishing the scope of issues for analysis. The BLM encourages public participation.

IDENTIFIED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Wind energy is a new program to local residents and the KFO area. We are seeking the public's help in determining preliminary issues and have provided some examples to help you think about what is important for you. These examples are not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather to serve as a starting point for determining potential issues. Once potential issues have been identified, the BLM will consider them as outlined above.

What would be the potential impact (effect) of the proposal/alternatives on –?

Wildlife

- Crucial winter range for pronghorn antelope
- Key/core habitat for sage-grouse
- Pygmy rabbit habitat

- Raptor nesting and hunting habitat
- Mortality to raptors, migrating passerine birds, and bats
- Low level flights for census counts

Socio-Economics

- Employment (job creation or displacement)
- Effects on the communities at large – little/no benefit but subject to impacts of the proposal
- Traffic and transportation requirements
- Vandalism

Air Quality/Health

- Dust
- Increased dust on health of individuals sensitive to dust
- Emissions of air pollutants from construction associated with the installation of the turbines
- Increased winter access
- Turbine icing or failure (falling debris)

Viewshed and Recreation

- Turbines on the community views (turbine simulation)
- BLM Class IV visual resource management class
- Recreation (e.g., hunting, sightseeing, etc.)

Grazing/Rangeland

- Loss of vegetation
- Vegetation quality due to dust
- Fire
- Transportation
- Surface disturbance required to transport/construct turbines and associated facilities
- Winter and year round access to area due to winter maintenance

Cultural/Native American Resources

- National Historic Trails
- Native American concerns
- Eligible historic/prehistoric sites

Paleontology

- Vertebrate fossils

Other

- Cathodic protection on pipelines or other existing facilities
- Electromagnetic interference with existing radio towers and microwave reflector facility
- Aeronautical hazards

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM

Based upon current understanding of issues, concerns, and opportunities, an interdisciplinary team will be made up of the resource specialists within the Kemmerer Field Office/Wyoming State Office, and cooperating agencies that request to be involved in the NEPA process.

MEETINGS AND COMMENTING TIME LINES

Open House/Presentation: The BLM will host an open house where the company will present their proposal.

Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2009

Place: Mountain View Town Hall, 405 Highway 414, Mountain View, Wyoming

Time: 6:00 to 8:00 pm

Government agencies, the public, and other interested parties are encouraged to participate during the environmental analysis process to help in identifying alternatives to be considered, issues or concerns that should be assessed, mitigation opportunities, and any other comments or ideas to help ensure that the analysis process is comprehensive.

Written comments must be postmarked or submitted via email by June 3, 2009. Any comments postmarked after this date will not be given consideration. The BLM will not accept faxed comments. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other identifying information in your comment, please be advised that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask the BLM to withhold your personal identifying information in your comment, we cannot guarantee we that will be able to do so.

Please submit your scoping comments to: Bureau of Land Management, Kemmerer Field Office
Attn: Bridger Butte Wind Energy Project, 312 Highway 189 North, Kemmerer, Wyoming 83101.
Email: **WYMail_kemmerer@blm.gov**

If you have questions, or if you want to be added or removed from our mailing list, please contact the Kemmerer Field Office at 307-828-4505 or email us at the address above.