

# RADAR RIDGE WIND PROJECT:

Clean Renewable Energy for the Community



The proposed Radar Ridge Wind Project is an effort to develop a clean, renewable energy resource that is ecologically friendly and economically wise. The project partners are four public utilities—Pacific County PUD, Grays Harbor PUD, Mason County PUD No. 3, Clallam County PUD and the project developer Energy Northwest, a Joint Operating Agency that provides electricity, at cost, to public utilities and municipalities. The four not-for-profit consumer-owned public utility districts serve approximately 120,000 residential, business and industrial customers in Western Washington.

## Background:

In 2006 voters passed I-937, the renewable portfolio standard (RPS), which established requirements for the proportion of non-hydro renewable energy and conservation larger utilities must provide their customers. I-937, now known as the Energy Independence Act, defined which renewable resources would be considered “eligible” toward meeting the requirements and only recognized purchases of qualifying renewable energy generated within Washington, Idaho, Oregon and parts of Montana.

In response to the new requirements, the project partners explored the opportunity to invest in a new wind energy generation project in Western Washington that would meet state RPS requirements while promoting jobs and economic development in an area of state that has historically experienced high unemployment.

Among all the viable commercial wind resources documented in Western Washington, Energy Northwest identified the project site in Pacific County as having the lowest potential environmental impact. The site is located near Naselle, on Washington State Department of Natural Resources land currently being used for a variety of industrial activities.

## The Project:

The project, on Washington State Department of Natural Resources land, could generate up to 82 megawatts of electricity; enough energy to power approximately 18,000 homes. It is expected to include up to 32 wind turbines on towers at a height of approximately 262 feet. It could be in operation as early as late 2011.

## Development Benefits of Radar Ridge Wind Project:

There are many benefits to developing the project at this location. The key benefits are:

- The project site is geographically situated near the populations that will use the power. This proximity reduces the loss of valuable power during transmission from the project to the participating utilities and by-passes the growing congestion on the regional transmission grid.
- The electrical transmission interconnection is relatively close by and will only require a very small length of new overhead power lines thereby minimizing additional risk to birds/bats.
- There is adequate capacity on the existing transmission system to accommodate the project.
- The project brings economic development to areas of the Washington State hard hit by economic decline in recent years.
- The project brings additional revenue to the State Trust, primarily for the benefit of the State Capitol facilities and University trust.
- The Project site is “winter peaking” meaning it is expected to produce more power in winter than summer. Most utilities in the Northwest are winter load peaking utilities, including the four public utility district participants. This means that peak power production will occur when it is needed most.
- The site is already being used for industrial activity including logging, gravel quarry operation and commercial communications facilities. Roads to serve these operations have been developed and support regular vehicle traffic.

## For more information:

Liz Anderson  
Community and Government  
Relations Director  
Grays Harbor PUD  
office: (360) 538-6232  
cell: (360) 590-2800  
Landerson@ghpud.org



# RADAR RIDGE WIND PROJECT:

Clean Renewable Energy for the Community

## An Environmentally Responsible Approach:

The project partners are taking an environmentally responsible approach to developing the Radar Ridge Wind Project to ensure the potential ecological impacts are known and minimized. The partners are working in cooperation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources.

A draft conservation plan and independent study results assessing potential impacts on marbled murrelets at the project site was submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service September 4, 2009. The plan, prepared by nationally recognized experts, concluded the proposed Radar Ridge Wind Project would have minor or insignificant impacts on marbled murrelets, and other wildlife populations in the area.

The independent studies, on which the draft conservation plan is based, were prepared by Western EcoSystems Technology, Inc. and Hamer Environmental, nationally recognized as a marbled murrelet expert. The findings indicate the proposed project site has low passage rates over the ridge top for all bird and bat species, including birds of prey, migratory birds and the marbled murrelet. The study was conducted in consultation with state and federal wildlife agencies and their published guidelines.

The study's specific findings included:

- Conservative estimates indicate less than one marbled murrelet would be harmed each year as a direct result of the Radar Ridge Wind Project.
- Surveys of marbled murrelet flight patterns show very low activity through areas over the ridge top near the proposed wind turbine locations. Even so, a high proportion of the passage rates were at an elevation higher than the wind turbine blades.
- Habitat at the project site is unsuitable for marbled murrelet nesting because of past and present forest management practices and land use, which resulted in no old-growth forest in the area.
- Adequate buffer exists between the project area and potentially active marbled murrelet-nesting habitat nearby. The coexistence of the project within the marbled murrelet conservation zone should not significantly hinder conservation and recovery.

## Project Support:

Senator Brian Hatfield (D-Raymond) sponsored Senate Joint Memorial 8001 in the 2009 State Legislature, which passed both houses unanimously. The Memorial was sent by the legislature to President Obama signaling their strong bi-partisan support for renewable energy development. Legislative support helps the public power community continue to provide affordable, environmentally responsible power for Northwest ratepayers. In addition, the Energy Independence Act started as an initiative of the people. It clearly directs utilities to invest in development of specific renewable resources including wind projects.

## Summary:

The project partners have long recognized the benefits of well-planned and responsible renewable energy investments. Development of any renewable resource requires careful economic analysis of costs and benefits to ensure the project is a wise investment for ratepayers and good scientific data and analysis that will result in a project that is sensitive to the environment. The project participants are committed to developing renewable energy project's that can provide clean energy and drive our local economy while caring for the environment.

### Clallum County PUD

Port Angeles, WA

### Grays Harbor PUD

Aberdeen, WA

### Mason County PUD No.3

Shelton, WA

### Pacific County PUD

Raymond, WA

### Energy Northwest

Richland, WA

