

Forest releases Draft Environmental Impact Statement on wind project

RUTLAND, VT (Sept. 11, 2008) - The Green Mountain National Forest released, for public comment, their Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Deerfield Wind Project in the Towns of Searsburg and Readsboro. The Deerfield Wind Project is a proposal to construct and operate a wind energy facility on public lands adjacent to the existing Green Mountain Power facility currently operating on private land.

"Our role is to determine the environmental impacts of the project and decide if this is the best place for this project at this time," said Forest Supervisor Meg Mitchell who explains that public comment is an important part of the National Environmental Policy Act process. Comments from the Draft EIS will help the Forest make their final decision. The Final EIS will be released after the Forest reviews comments and further evaluates the project.

The Forest is evaluating several alternatives in their DEIS, including the original proposal from Iberdrola, the project proponent, of 17 new generation 2.0 to 2.1 megawatts turbines about 385 feet tall, ground to blade tip. The total energy production capacity of the project would be 34 to 35.7 megawatts. Depending upon the technology available at implementation, it is estimated that this site will be capable of producing enough electricity to meet the annual needs of about 16,000 average homes.

Two other action alternatives are being considered; development of the east ridge only; and an alternative with reduction of 3 turbines on the west ridge. The Forest Service has not identified a preferred alternative at this point; they are waiting for more information from the public comment period and results from the on-going review by the Vermont Public Service Board.

The Vermont Public Service Board and the Forest Service are using separate processes to evaluate the proposal. These processes are running concurrently so the PSB and the Forest can share data and information. To be constructed, the project has to be approved by both.

"Alternative energy is very important when looking at the future of Vermont's energy portfolio," said Mitchell, "It is our responsibility to take a hard look at every alternative energy proposal we receive and carefully weigh the costs and benefits within a public process."

The DEIS is currently available on the Green Mountain National Forest website at:

http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/greenmountain/htm/greenmountain/links/projects/deerfield_wind.htm

The Forest Service will be receiving comments through the end of November. The Forest will hold an open house during the comment period to share and gather information and comments.

Comments can be sent to:
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