

Beech Ridge Wind Farm Project EIS - Public Scoping Meeting Summary
August 9, 2010
Rupert, West Virginia

Notes recorded by Joanna Morsicato, Jeff Schwierjohann, and Steve Hall

Presentation given from ~1820-1900; comments from ~1900-1930

Meeting Introductions and slides 1-5: Laura Hill, USFWS, Elkins Field Office

Beech Ridge Energy Overview, Project History and Phase Description with slides 6-14:
Erik Duncan, Beech Ridge Energy LLC

NEPA Process Summary with slides 15-21: Steve Hall, Stantec Consulting

HCP and ITP definitions, Public Involvement Opportunities and Comment Moderator
with slides 22+: Laura Hill

Public Comments: Fifteen individuals commented. Names were not provided.

1. *Comment- Were bats killed at Beech Ridge yet? Question on turbine speeds?*
Response – Hill: The site has not been monitored yet. Two other locations have been monitored. Erik Duncan noted wind turbine speed is usually 17 rpm even if it looks slow.
2. *Comment – Have any bats been found on this project?*
Response- Hill: Neither of the endangered bats have been found in the immediate area and there are a couple of caves within 9-12 miles of the project.
3. *Comment – We are holding up this project because maybe a bat would come through?*
Response – Hill: Unfortunately there is now a law suit involved.
4. *Comment – Were any Indiana bats killed by wind turbines?*
Response – Hill: Indiana bats, one was killed in Indiana. Five hundred bats have been killed (where?), but no Indiana or Virginia big-eared killed to date.
5. *Comment – Concerns are: delayed employment, no bats killed and wasteful spending, 67 turbines are running so what are we concerned about? We need a proper perspective.*
6. *Comment – WNS (white nose syndrome) is a bigger threat, what about caving?*
Response – Hill: WNS is new, started in NY and is spreading, killing large numbers of bats, it's a fungus. Bats are waking up and using fat reserves, flying out at the wrong time due to the fungus. Cavers may spread it on their boots or maybe it is spreading bat-to-bat.

7. *Comment about person who filed lawsuit – unclear.*
8. *Comment – Food chain is not there for bats at this high altitude.*
Response – Hill....
9. *Comment – Extensive:*
- *For the EIS take air photos, use Westvaco maps and tree types. 80% of the trees are less than 10” at breast height and not roosting habitat?*
 - *Also temperatures on the ridge are in the 50’s – doubt that temperature range is conducive to bats?*
 - *Check cave elevations – greater than 900’ level and no bats?*
 - *FWS should take a bold step – like Field office in Region 3 – make an elevation rule. Westvaco cuts timber in these areas?*
 - *Project at greater than 3000’ shouldn’t worry about bats.*
 - *Review Rainelle Power Plant EIS; very informative*
- Response – Hill: Please submit detailed comments in writing.

10. *Comment – Project Support:*

- *Consider economic impact – region needs jobs*
- *BRE– wonderful corporate citizen*
- *Need alternative energy for our county*
- *Wind farm technology is in early stages*
- *What if animals can adapt themselves? (God will tend to his creatures)*
- *Project is environmentally conscious*
- *Need an elevational standard*

Applause followed commenter speech.

Response – Hill: Please submit detailed comments in writing.

11. *Comment - Will FWS look at elevations – 3-dimensional assessment?*

Response – Hill: Elevations are identified for maternity areas and that doesn’t mean bats don’t fly at higher or lower elevations. We do look at elevations – higher elevations are usually lower risk areas for bats.

12. *Comment – Not seen one bat although they are hard to see at night.*

13. *Comment – bats are not the problem – it’s people and drugs. People growing pot and cooking meth are against the project and have formed an organized opposition using the environment as an arguing point (i.e., they don’t care about env., just want their drug refuge undisturbed).*

Laura Hill closed the meeting and invited written comments from all who attended.