

Beech Ridge Wind Farm Project EIS

WELCOME Public Scoping Meeting

Rupert Community Center
604 Nicholas Street
Rupert, WV 25984

6p.m. – 9 p.m.
August 9, 2010

Beech Ridge Energy LLC



Stantec

Meeting Agenda

- ▶ Introductions – U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- ▶ Project History – Beech Ridge Energy LLC
- ▶ EIS & Scoping Process – Stantec Consulting
- ▶ HCP and ITP Explained – U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- ▶ Public Comment Opportunities – U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



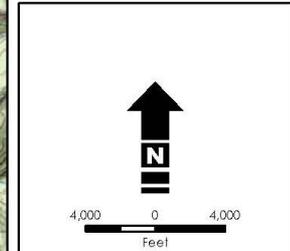
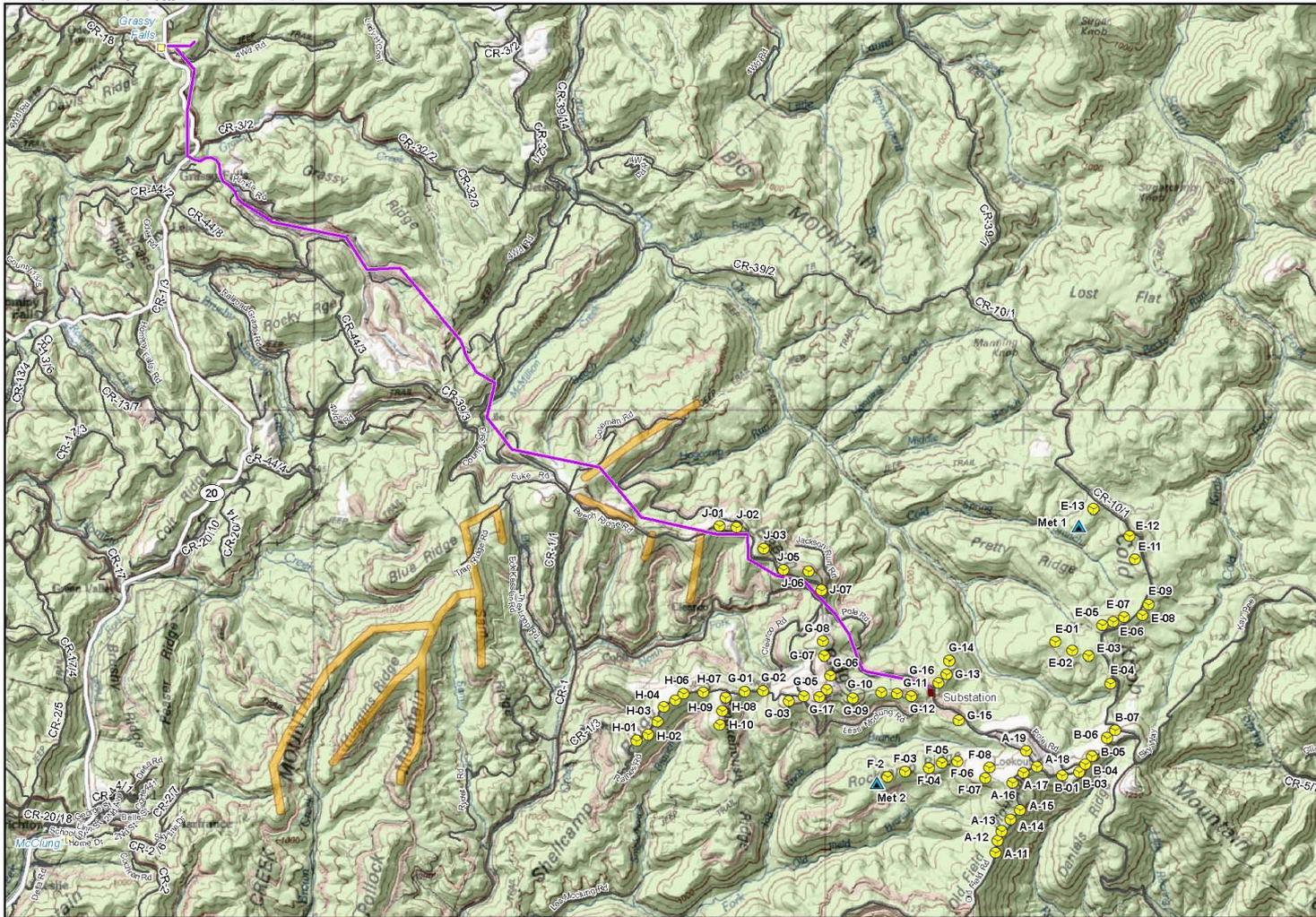
Project Notice of Intent

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is gathering information needed to prepare an **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)** on the proposed **Incidental Take Permit (ITP)** and associated **Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)** for the Beech Ridge Wind Farm Project in Greenbrier and Nicholas Counties, West Virginia.



Beech Ridge Wind Farm Project

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Legend

- Substation Location
- Turbine Location
- Met Tower Location
- Transmission Line
- Secondary Road
- Local Road
- Substation Location
- Potential Expansion Areas

Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project

Beech Ridge Wind Energy Center, Greenbrier County, West Virginia

Figure 1.2
August 03, 2010

**Beech Ridge
Energy LLC**

One South Wacker Drive, Suite 1900
Chicago, Illinois 60606
(312) 224-1400

Indiana and Virginia big-eared Bats

- ▶ **Indiana Bat** and the **Virginia Big-Eared Bat** are listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act
- ▶ Range includes southeastern U.S.
- ▶ Wind turbines running at night can cause bat mortality
- ▶ The Habitat Conservation Plan can mitigate project impacts



Beech Ridge Energy Overview

- ▶ *Developer, owner, and operator* of large scale wind energy generation projects
- ▶ One of the *top 5* wind energy developers in North America based on number of constructed projects (over 2500 MW of operating wind farms)
- ▶ Largest *independent* wind energy developer in the U.S.



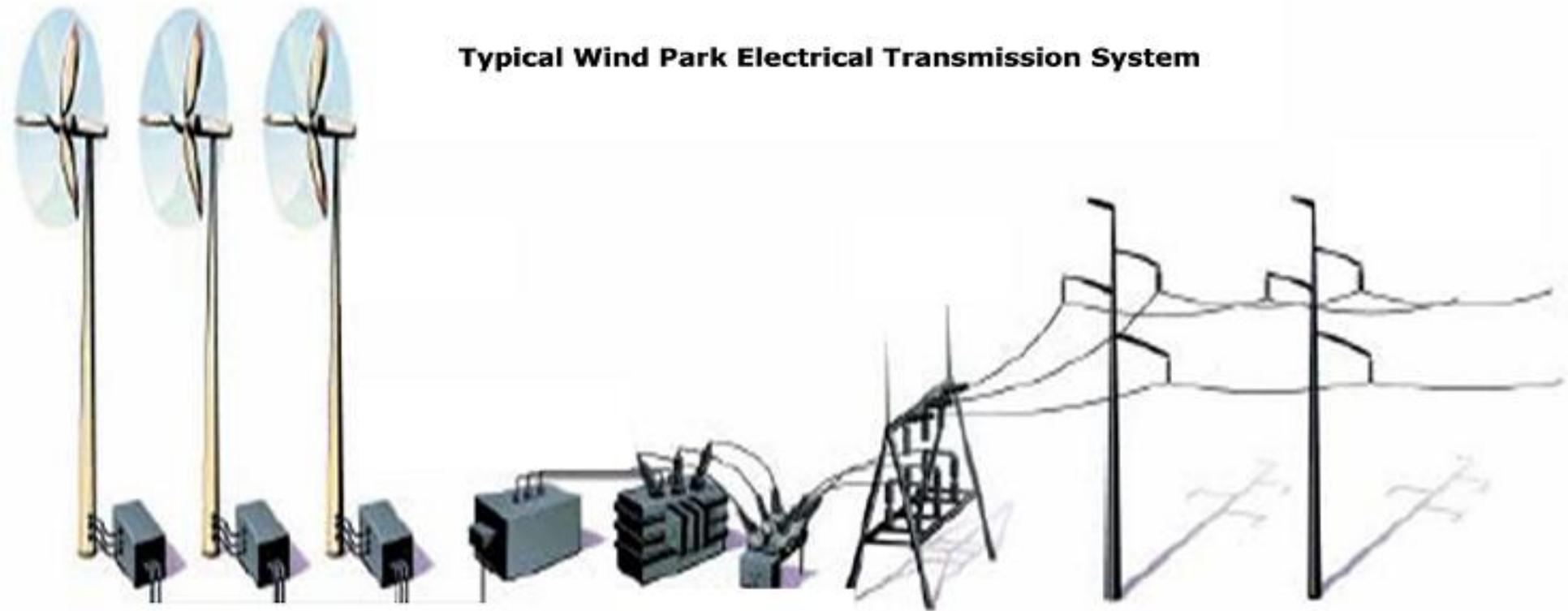
Wind Energy Benefits

- ▶ Economically competitive
- ▶ New crop for landowners & no water use
- ▶ National security attributes (indigenous)
- ▶ Inexhaustible (renewable)
- ▶ Environmental benefits (no emissions)
- ▶ Fuel is free; reduces risk of volatile fossil fuel prices

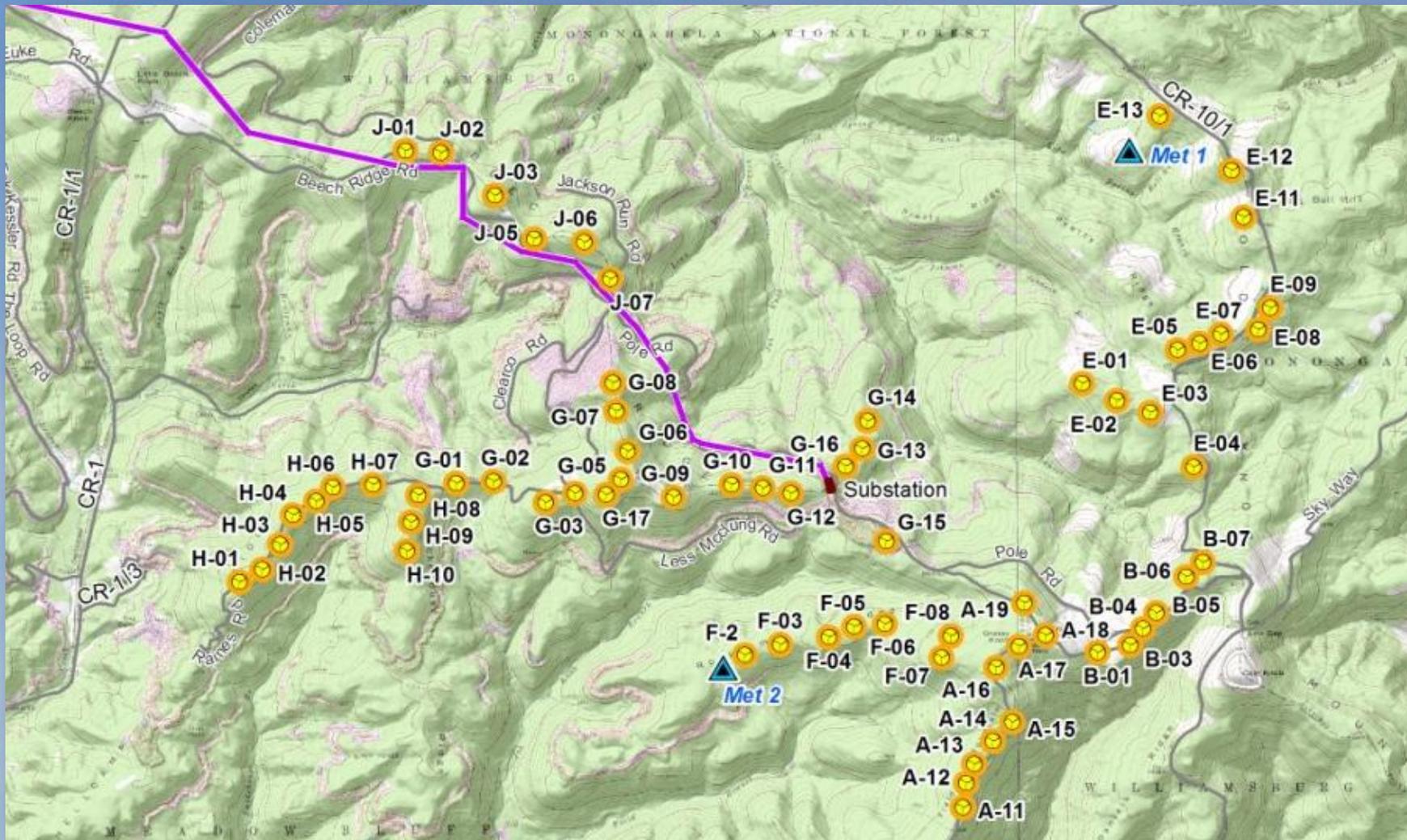


Typical Wind Project

Typical Wind Park Electrical Transmission System



Existing Turbine Locations



Project Site Selection Goals

- ▶ Wind resource
- ▶ Proximity to existing transmission
- ▶ Need for wind-generated electricity
- ▶ Willing landowner
- ▶ Compatible existing land uses (include timber production and coal mining)
- ▶ Few environmental issues



Beech Ridge Project History – 1

- ▶ Privately Funded Project
- ▶ Siting Certificate issued in August 2006 by WV Public Service Commission (WVPSC) after detailed review
- ▶ Project in compliance with local, state, and federal laws
- ▶ On February 13, 2009, the WVPSC authorized construction of the project
- ▶ Phase I project construction began



Beech Ridge Project History –2

- ▶ June 2009 – Lawsuit against Beech Ridge & Invenergy for the possible “take” of endangered bats
- ▶ December 2009 – U.S. District Court instructed Beech Ridge & Invenergy to apply for an ITP
- ▶ Settlement – 24 turbines withdrawn due to proximity to bat hibernacula, 67 turbines okayed with operations restrictions



Phase I – Existing Project

67 turbines with access roads, transmission line and power collection system – with operations restrictions

- ▶ 24 hours/day – Nov 16 – Mar 31
- ▶ ¼ hour after sunrise to ½ hour before sunset April 1 – Nov 15

Beech Ridge Energy Goal: extended nighttime hours during non-winter months per HCP & ITP

10 of the 67 turbines to be completed by August 2010.

Phase II – Next Phase

Construct and operate 33 additional turbines

Beech Ridge Energy Goal: Construct up to 33 additional turbines

- ▶ Operate 24 hours/day – Nov 16 – Mar 31
- ▶ Operate nighttime hours during non-winter months per HCP & ITP

Project commitments include operations & maintenance as well as decommissioning



What is NEPA?

- ▶ National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
- ▶ Federal agencies must conduct environmental reviews for proposed federal actions
- ▶ Consider impacts on social, economic, biological and physical environment
- ▶ Include interagency cooperation and public participation



Why is an EIS being prepared?

The federal action:

- ▶ approval of HCP
- ▶ issuance of an ITP for the take of endangered bats
Indiana bat and Virginia big-eared bat

Service determined that an EIS is an appropriate level of review for this project.

Detailed environmental review of the federal action, public scoping, public comment periods on the draft and final EIS, and the involvement of other agencies.

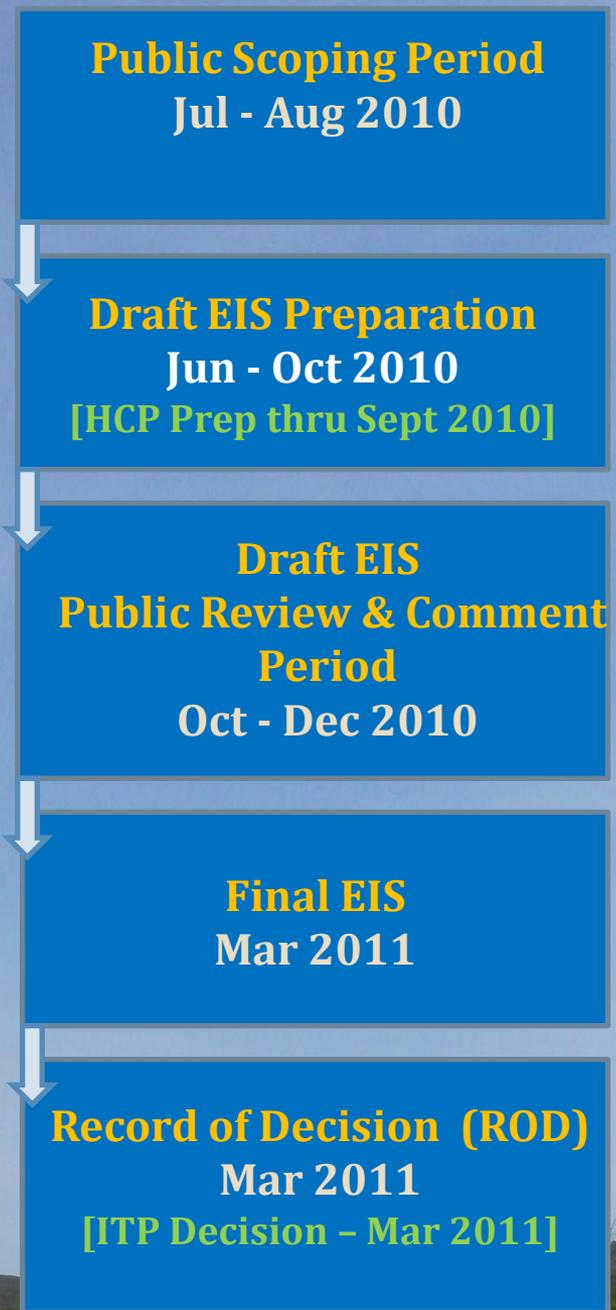


Tentative Schedule

EIS will:

- ▶ Analyze Impacts of Approving the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)
- ▶ Analyze Impacts of Issuing the Incidental Take Permit (ITP)

**US FWS
Biological
Opinion on
ITP**



EIS Process

- ↓ Purpose and Need
- ↓ Scoping – Public & Agency Meetings
- ↓ Data Collection
- ↓ Alternatives Development & Analysis
- ↓ Environmental Impact Analysis
- ↓ Preparation & Publication of Draft EIS
- ↓ Public & Agency Review & Meetings
- ↓ Preparation & Publication of Final EIS
- ↓ Preparation of Decision Document (Record of Decision)

What's Included in an EIS?

- ▶ Executive Summary
- ▶ Purpose and Need
- ▶ Alternatives Analysis
- ▶ Affected Environment
 - Social and Economic Resources
 - Natural Resources
 - Physical Resources
- ▶ Environmental Consequences
 - Construction and Operation Impacts
 - Cumulative Impacts
- ▶ Impacts Avoidance, Minimization & Mitigation



What is Scoping?

Scoping is the first phase of public involvement in an EIS. It is a part of the process by which the Agencies gather information regarding the:

- ▶ Proposed Action
- ▶ Alternatives to be considered
- ▶ Significant issues to be analyzed
- ▶ Possible mitigation measures
- ▶ Availability of data relevant to the analyses
- ▶ Interested individuals and organizations and their specific concerns

What Alternatives Will Be Analyzed?

- ▶ The Proposed Action
- ▶ The No Action Alternative (No ITP)
- ▶ Additional Alternative Variations:
 - *Covered activities*
 - *Curtailment of wind turbine operations*
 - *Locations, amount & types of conservations*
 - *Permit duration, monitoring permit effectiveness*
- ▶ Additional alternatives that may be identified through the public scoping process

What's an HCP?

Habitat Conservation Plan – designed to minimize and mitigate harmful impacts of the proposed project on the endangered species.

- ▶ Identifies: impacts, feasible alternatives – if any, and solutions to minimize and mitigate impacts
- ▶ Includes monitoring proposal



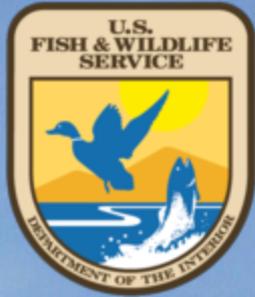
**Must Accompany
Incidental Take Permit**

What's an ITP?

Incidental Take Permit –allows the lawful take of an endangered species (*mortality of listed bats associated with wind turbine operations*) without fear of incurring civil and criminal penalties, incidental to carrying out an otherwise lawful activity (*operating wind generation facility*)

- ▶ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will monitor project for compliance effectiveness
- ▶ ITP can be suspended or revoked in all or in part for failure to comply

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Mission: to work with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

Goal for the Beech Ridge Wind Farm Project – To ensure the long-term survival of federally listed species through protection and management within the context of this project

Public Involvement Opportunities

- ▶ Public Scoping – July 22, 2010 to August 23, 2010
- ▶ Scoping Meeting – August 9, 2010
- ▶ Tentative Draft EIS Review and Comments – October/November 2010
- ▶ Tentative Public Comment Meeting on Draft EIS – November 2010



Project Website

<http://www.fws.gov/westvirginiafieldoffice>

- ▶ Information on the EIS process
- ▶ Information on wind energy resources and technologies
- ▶ EIS-related documents
- ▶ Project schedule and project updates
- ▶ Online comment forms
- ▶ Email notification sign-up
- ▶ Contact information

How to Provide Scoping Comments

There are 3 ways to provide scoping comments:

- ▶ At this scoping meeting
- ▶ Via the project website:
<http://www.fws.gov/westvirginiafieldoffice>
- ▶ Via mail

Scoping comments will be accepted through August 23, 2010.



Comments Requested

Relevant Information Concerning:

- ▶ Indiana & Virginia big-eared bats, unlisted bats & birds
- ▶ Wind power – bat & bird interactions
- ▶ Current or planned activities in the subject area and their possible impacts on environment and resources
- ▶ National Register of Historic Places listed or eligible properties
- ▶ Direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of alternatives
- ▶ Adequacy and advisability of proposed minimization and mitigation measures
- ▶ Post-construction monitoring techniques
- ▶ Other environmental issues

Thank You
For Coming
to the
Beech Ridge Energy Farm
Project Public
Scoping Meeting

