

Project Name : Landowner Wind Energy Associations

Location: Southeastern Wyoming

Project Goals:

- To promote, facilitate and implement wind energy development in Southeastern Wyoming
- Inform and educate landowners about wind energy development
- Stimulate local economies
- Promote Locally led wind energy development projects
- Create a market for wind energy development
- Diversify local agriculture operations
- Provide a clean energy source for the nation



Landowners tour a local wind farm near Glenrock Wyoming

Background:

In 2006, several landowners in Platte County requested assistance from the Southeastern Wyoming RC&D Council in creating a new commercial wind energy development model. The landowners wanted a model that was driven and supported by local people and promised to facilitate much larger scale development with less time spent, more cooperation from landowners, and greater benefits to both developers and local communities. Conventional development methods raise many concerns among landowners and other members of rural communities. In most regions the process is driven by interests that are not from the community and lack transparency in how they are dealing with the array of community members. To address these concerns, landowners began working together as a single entity to explore their wind energy development potential and to foster support from their neighbors. They began to recognize the benefits of working together and eventually created Limited Liability Corporations now called Landowner Wind Associations (LWAs). The LWAs proactively took steps to learn more about wind energy and collected additional information to include wind quality data, transmission access and capacity, available wind energy markets, environmental impacts, landowner and community support in their local area. By working together and educating themselves, LWAs positioned themselves to successfully market their wind energy resource and are currently providing a leadership role on how wind energy will be developed in their local communities. The Southeastern Wyoming RC&D Council was instrumental in the development of this model and continues to facilitate, inform, educate, and promote locally led wind energy projects throughout the western states.

Project Partners:

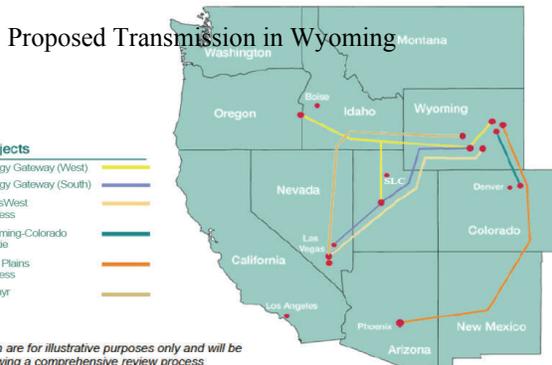
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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Districts • NRCS • University of Wyoming | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wyoming Governor's Office • Wyoming Business Council • Wyoming Infrastructure Authority |
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Project Sponsors:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Districts • NRCS • Town of Wheatland • Platte County Commissioners • County Planning Office | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platte County Weed and Pest • Wyoming Rural Development Council • Wyoming Livestock Roundup • Goshen County Commissioners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rock Mountain Farmers Union • Town of Torrington • University of Wyoming • Town of Glendo • Platte County Economic Dev. |
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Project Strategy: The creation of a LWA begins with a group of landowners in close proximity to one another that share an interest in identifying the boundaries of land suitable for commercial-scale wind development. Once the boundaries are identified the initial group of landowners reaches out to all landowners in the boundary area to foster greater landowner interest. The LWA then incorporates into a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC) and members collectively take steps to learn more about wind energy and collect additional information about their land. A steering committee is formed that holds meetings with all potential association members and invites technical, legal, and financial experts to present to the group. A LWA of multiple landowners is held together through an operating agreement. The agreement stipulates such terms at the number of years they will work together (normally two), number of votes each member is granted (e.g. one voter for each 320 acres in the Association boundaries), member financial contribution (e.g. \$0.10 per acre/annually located in the boundaries), and the process for accepting a developer's proposal which terminates the agreement. The agreements are relatively short and simple (about 5 pages) and clearly stress their primary purpose to utilize collective bargaining strategies to solicit and market wind energy resources. The second critical document necessary is the request for proposals (RFP). The RFP is the primary document that enables an association to effectively market their wind resources. It is this document that gives the landowner a much greater sense of control. The RFP forces the wind developers to compete and it weeds out the perceived "land grabbers" who are seeking to only tie up land. Each LWA distributes an RFP to 60 developers and receives approximately 4-10 completed proposals or "offers." LWAs are an innovative model in the West that is effectively and efficiently bringing rural communities together to support each other and advance wind energy. The LWAs provide an approach for landowners to become pro-active in the development process and capitalize on their wind resources through a collaborative effort. Developers see direct benefits from the large blocks of land they can work with for selecting the best turbine locations; strong landowner and local community support; and development steps completed such as wind assessment data and local wind siting regulations.



Project Accomplishments:

- Formed eleven (12) Landowner Wind Associations covering over 700,000 acres and involving over 300 landowners
- Conducted over 50 wind energy workshops
- One (1) LWA has signed a contract and the remaining LWAs are in negotiations with developers
- Assisted transmission builders in proposing two (2) large power lines in the area
- Provided assistance in developing the Platte County Wind Siting regulations
- Other surrounding states have adopted our model with over 40 LWAs in operation across the West
- Formed the Renewable Energy Alliance of Landowners (REAL) to unify the LWAs in Wyoming

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