



August 5, 2009

Oregon

## **Environmentalists oppose Oregon wind farms**

Environmental groups in Oregon have united to oppose the construction of new wind farms in the foothills of the Blue Mountains.

One county is listening to their concerns. Umatilla County Planning Commission members intend to hear an amendment to the community's Comprehensive Plan that could ban future wind power developments from certain areas.

“[The amendment] doesn't say the intent is to limit windmills,” said Tamra Mabbott, planning director for Umatilla County. “But that would be an effect” of the proposal.

### **Common-Sense Environmentalism**

Richard Jolly, spokesperson for the leading opponent of local wind farms, the Blue Mountain Alliance, said the proposal to restrict wind power developments has nothing to do with a NIMBY (not in my back yard) attitude and everything to do with common-sense environmentalism.

“People who say it's NIMBYism, they need to come over and take a look at the issues,” Jolly said. “We're not against wind energy. We're just saying that where you site it needs to be looked at. And to put them in the foothills of the Blue Mountains, we have a lot of issues. There are water issues, delicate soils, runoffs. It is a critical wintering range for deer and elk.”

### **Destroying Critical Habitat**

Mike Denny, conservation chair of Blue Mountain Audubon, said the booming interest in wind power that has swept Oregon in the past few years is reminiscent of California's gold rush days, as the federal government boosts its tax credits for development of alternative energy.

“The Blue Mountain Audubon Society has been a strong supporter of wind energy, ... [and] we have had a long-term agreement established with all the wind energy companies that have built farms overlooking the Walla Walla Valley,” Denny said.

“This agreement is that the wind industry stays out and away from the foothills of the Blue Mountains due to the fact that the western face ... is a major migration corridor for native protected birds ... and with development [there is] a very high probability that avian mortality rates will be extremely high,” Denny added.

The agreement was honored in the past, but now “several companies have snuck in and tried to secretly tie up the area for wind energy,” Denny said.

Denny said his group also opposes the site development because the western face of the mountain “is a very poor wind resource” and the small amount of power that could be generated is not worth the risk to birds, bats, and the environment.

*Cheryl K. Chumley (ckchumley@aol.com) is a 2008-09 journalism fellow with the Phillips Foundation.*

[heartland.org](http://heartland.org) <sup>[1]</sup>

September 2009

---

URLs in this post:

[1] [heartland.org](http://heartland.org):

**[http://www.heartland.org/publications/environment%20climate/article/25801/Environmentalists\\_Oppose\\_Oregon\\_Wind\\_Farms.html](http://www.heartland.org/publications/environment%20climate/article/25801/Environmentalists_Oppose_Oregon_Wind_Farms.html)**

---

This article is provided as a service of [National Wind Watch, Inc.](http://www.wind-watch.org/news/)

<http://www.wind-watch.org/news/>

The use of copyrighted material is protected by [Fair Use](#).