

PMC-ef2a

201011

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
EERE PROJECT MANAGEMENT CENTER
NEPA DETERMINATION**



RECIPIENT: WINData, Inc

STATE: MT

PROJECT TITLE : Use of real-time off-site observations as a methodology for increasing forecast skill in prediction of large wind power ramps one or more hours ahead of their impact on a wind plant

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-PS36-09GO99009	DE-EE0001388	GFO-0001388-002	EE1388

Based on my review of the information concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (authorized under DOE Order 451.1A), I have made the following determination:

CX, EA, EIS APPENDIX AND NUMBER:

Description:

B3.1 Onsite and offsite site characterization and environmental monitoring, including siting, construction (or modification), operation, and dismantlement or closing (abandonment) of characterization and monitoring devices and siting, construction, and associated operation of a small-scale laboratory building or renovation of a room in an existing building for sample analysis. Activities covered include, but are not limited to, site characterization and environmental monitoring under CERCLA and RCRA. Specific activities include, but are not limited to:

Rational for determination:

WINData, Inc., in Glacier County, Montana, is proposing to use federal funding for the installation of two met towers at separate locations. On December 21, 2009, DOE NEPA made a conditional determination with a hold on Task 3, met tower installation, for the project associated with GFO-10-013. The two met towers were installed prior to this evaluation. In review of this project, after installation, DOE has determined that the impacts associated with this project are less than significant.

This NEPA determination applies to authorizing federal funding for the met towers only.

WINData is currently collecting meteorological data from sensors mounted on a 60 meter tilt-up mast with guy wires at sites 1401 and 1402. Both sites are situated on a large plateau stretching east from the Rocky Mountains. Both properties are currently used for dry farming and cattle grazing. Neither site is located near a wetland or a USFWS designated critical habitat.

Each met tower has a 400 watt wind turbine used to power the batteries for the data loggers. The turbines are 10 feet tall, and the rotor is approximately 3 feet in diameter. All equipment will be removed during the fourth quarter of 2011.

Met tower 1401, installed on March 9, 2010, is located at 48.452196 -113.19037, near East Glacier, Montana, bordering Glacier National Park. The site is located adjacent to the Glacier Electric Cooperative substation and the 7200kV transmission line. The site is accessible through a locked steel gate, jeep trails and Highway 2 to the north. Met tower 1402, installed on October 11, 2010, is located at 48.9685 -113.129086, in northern Montana, two miles south of the Canadian border. The closest town, Babb, is about 15 miles south-west from the site. The site is accessible through a series of wire gates, jeep trails and State Highway 464 to the south.

On February 23, 2011, DOE NEPA initiated informal consultation with Katrina Dixon from USFWS. USFWS could not concur with DOE regarding the level of impact of the project because the project had already been constructed. There are threatened and endangered species, including the grizzly bear, Canada lynx and grey wolf in the general area. There are no listed threatened and endangered avian species in the area. Due to the temporary nature of this project and because there are no threatened or endangered avian species, DOE has determined that the impacts associated with this project are less than significant. In an effort to mitigate potential impacts to avian species, USFWS Lou Hanebury suggested that bird diverters be installed on the met tower guy wires to make them more visible. WINData installed the guy wires on both met towers.

WINData consulted with the Blackfeet Tribe for the installation of the two met towers. On December 29, 2010, WINData received two, Ordinance 90-A permits from the Blackfeet Tribe, one for each site. Permit numbers include:

078-10 and 079-10-2. The terms and conditions of the permit ensure that activities during the construction and life of the project will not diminish water quality, habitat for fish and wildlife; interfere with navigation or other lawful recreation; create a public nuisance; create a visual impact determined by the Tribal Council; or alter the characteristics of the area.

In view of the information provided by the State and the recipient, DOE has determined that the impacts related to the proposed project are anticipated to have negligible effects on the human and natural environment. The proposed project is consistent with actions outlined in B3.1 (site characterization and environmental monitoring) and is, therefore, categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination for this award

Insert the following language in the award:

Note to Specialist :

This NEPA determination applies to authorizing federal funding for the met towers only.

Cristina Tyler 3.23.2011

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature: _____

Kimberly Hill
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: _____

3/29/2011

FIELD OFFICE MANAGER DETERMINATION

Field Office Manager review required

NCO REQUESTS THE FIELD OFFICE MANAGER REVIEW FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:

- Proposed action fits within a categorical exclusion but involves a high profile or controversial issue that warrants Field Office Manager's attention.
- Proposed action falls within an EA or EIS category and therefore requires Field Office Manager's review and determination.

BASED ON MY REVIEW I CONCUR WITH THE DETERMINATION OF THE NCO :

Field Office Manager's Signature: _____

Field Office Manager

Date: _____