'1.0 INTRODUCTION\n\n1.1 Overview and Background\n\nThe Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project (the Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project) is located in Greenbrier and Nicholas counties, West Virginia (Figure 1.1), approximately 5 miles (8 km) northwest of the town of Trout, approximately 7 miles (11 km) north-northwest of Williamsburg, and approximately 9 miles (14 km) northeast of downtown Rupert, West Virginia. The Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project consists of two phases. Phase I consists of 67 existing turbines and associated structures; Phase II will consist of up to 33 additional turbines and associated structures. Beech Ridge Energy LLC owns and operates Phase I of the Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project. A separate business entity, Beech Ridge Energy II LLC, will construct, own and operate Phase II of the Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project. Beech Ridge Energy LLC and Beech Ridge Energy II LLC are jointly referred to in this Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) as "BRE." Both Beech Ridge Energy LLC and Beech Ridge Energy II LLC are wholly-owned subsidiaries of Invenergy Wind LLC and are separate companies with management control over their respective phases of the Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project. Beech Ridge Energy LLC and Beech Ridge Energy II LLC are applying as co-permittees for an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) for the Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project. Together Beech Ridge Energy LLC and Beech Ridge Energy II LLC will be jointly responsible for implementing the terms and conditions of the Habitat Conservation Plan, Incidental Take Permit, and the Implementing Agreement (IA).\n\nThe Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project consists of several primary components, including wind turbines, access roads, transmission and communication equipment, storage areas, and control facilities. Sixty-seven wind turbines have been constructed and are operational. Beech Ridge Energy LLC and Beech Ridge Energy II LLC propose to construct and operate up to an additional 33 turbines. The Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project is located on a 63,000-acre tract owned by MeadWestvaco. Beech Ridge Energy LLC and Beech Ridge Energy II LLC leased over 27,000 acres and additional road rights-of-way from this landowner. Only a small portion of the leased area will host wind farm facilities. It is anticipated that the area of direct land use for the 100 turbines, access roads, substation, and the operations and maintenance (O&M) facility will be approximately 71 acres.\n\nBeech Ridge Energy LLC has acquired the necessary land rights to construct and operate the existing 67-turbine portion of the Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project and Beech Ridge Energy LLC\'s associated facilities from MeadWestvaco. Beech Ridge Energy LLC has acquired the necessary land rights to develop and permit the Project expansion from MeadWestvaco and is in the process of obtaining the necessary authorizations to construct and operate the Project expansion. In August 2006, the West Virginia Public Service Commission (WVPSC) granted Beech Ridge Energy LLC and Beech Ridge Energy II LLC a siting certificate to construct the Project. The Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project as initially approved included up to 124 1.5-megawatt (MW) turbines totaling 186 MW of total nameplate generating capacity. \n\nThe Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project has since been scaled back in the context of settlement negotiations and is now limited to 100 turbines totaling up to 186 MW of generating capacity. Initial construction began in April 2009, and the Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project first began commercial operation in March of 2010. The Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project is being developed in two phases—a 67-turbine phase (already constructed) (Phase I) and an expansion phase (Phase II) where up to 33 additional turbines will be constructed after issuance of an Incidental Take Permit.\n\nFull construction of the Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project and implementation of the Habitat Conservation Plan will provide substantial benefits to the local area, region, and country. The Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project will: \n\n1. Create up to 150 construction jobs utilizing local available workers for a period of 6-8 months; \n2. Employ three full-time wind turbine technicians, bringing the total Beech Ridge Energy staff to 10 quality technical positions with an average starting annual salary of $35,000 with full benefits; \n3. Pay an estimated $200,000 or more per year in taxes to the county, bringing the total for the expanded project to over $600,000 per year; and \n4. Pay an estimated $200,000 per year in taxes to the State of West Virginia. \n5. Between taxes and salaries, not to mention direct spending, the Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project will contribute over $1,000,000 to the local, regional and state economies. \n\nAnother benefit is that at full build-out, the Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project will produce enough energy annually to power about 48,000 homes. Beech Ridge Energy LLC and Beech Ridge Energy II LLC estimate that Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project construction and operation will likewise avoid the emission of over 7 million metric tons of carbon dioxide from coal-fired generation over the life of the Project, based on an average off-set of 0.74 metric tons of carbon per megawatt-hour of wind energy production (PJM 2009), and an estimated 9.7 million megawatt hours of electricity produced over the 20-year life-of-project.\n\nBeech Ridge Energy LLC and Beech Ridge Energy II LLC are now applying for Incidental Take Permits for the Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project, pursuant to Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), as amended (16 United States Code [U.S.C.] 1531 et seq.).'