

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
5705 Grant Creek Road
Missoula, Montana 59808

September 7, 2015

Dear Sir or Ms.:

I am a member of the RMEF and my father listed your organization in his will as the place to donate money in his behalf.

I am writing regarding a specific project, the Boardman to Hemingway 500 KV transmission line, planned to go through Union County, Oregon. This transmission line will negatively impact one of the most important elk calving and habitat areas in the country next to Jackson Hole Wy. This is according to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife biologist who visited the area.

The transmission line is planned to go up the middle of the 4 mile ridge called "Cowboy Ridge" located on the 7,000 acre Elk Song Ranch in Union County, Oregon. The owner, Brad Allen, Phone 541-962-9127, has pleaded with the developers to spare this ridgeline and surrounding habitat from the transmission line, but his pleas have fallen on deaf ears.

Oregon is losing thousands of acres of habitat to wind developments and transmission lines due to the "green energy" lobby. Developers are only being required to mitigate for the actual footprints of the developments (the bottom area of the transmission poles) on habitat in spite of rules requiring mitigation for quality impacts.

Cowboy Ridge is an absolute jewel in terms of elk habitat. I have spent time in this area. There are hundreds of head of elk using the area. It provides large open areas of prime natural vegetation, Rock Creek flows down one side of the ridge, it has small stands of timber and vegetation for cover, there are several large wallows along one side of the ridge, and at least one pond for water. There are multiple escape ridges that can allow the elk to move out of the area instantly if they are threatened and the owner does not graze cattle in the area. Elk use this ridge year round, and hundreds of elk calve here. The current owner has as his primary focus the protection of the habitat for elk.

If there is any habitat that the RMEF should be trying to save from the impacts of the development and transmission of wind and solar energy, this is it. I urge you to make evaluation of the value of the area as habitat and protection of it a priority immediately.

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Please respond to this letter regarding any plans to become involved in the planned destruction of this critical habitat.

I am ccing this letter to Mr. Allen. I strongly encourage you to have a representative contact Mr. Allen or myself and arrange to have a representative visit "Cowboy Ridge". I am confident that Mr. Allen would be more than happy to take you on a tour. You will find the area incredible with hundreds of elk utilizing it year round.

Sincerely,

Irene Gilbert, Member, RMEF
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Cc: Brad Allen
Union County Commissioner Jack Howard