

## Public invited to meeting about proposed activities at TransAlta Centralia Mine

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SEATTLE--The public is invited to a "scoping" meeting about proposed mining activities at the TransAlta Centralia Mine in Lewis County. The meeting will be held from 5 to 8 p.m. on April 18 at the Chehalis Courthouse, 351 N.W. North Street in Chehalis.

The purpose of the meeting is to assist the U.S Army Corps of Engineers and the state Department of Ecology define issues, public concerns, alternatives, and the depth to which they should be evaluated in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The two agencies are the federal and state leads for the environmental review of the proposed project and together will prepare the project's EIS.

In completion of mining activities at its existing Pit 7 mine, TransAlta proposes to remove an estimated 9.58 million tons of coal from 2007 through 2010. The proposed action would involve continued coal mining at Pit 7 in areas of previous coal extraction and completion of Pit 7 mining activities through an approximately 108-acre area across portions of Packwood Creek to access 6.34 million tons of coal reserves.

TransAlta would use the coal to help fuel the adjacent power plant it owns. The power plant is capable of generating 1,404 megawatts of capacity to provide electricity to an equivalent of 750,000 households in the greater Washington region, according to TransAlta.

As part of its mining activities, TransAlta also proposes to reclaim the site, which would replace and restore affected streams and wetlands. In addition, TransAlta proposes to provide any additional wetland and stream mitigation that would be needed to replace any lost wetland functions not addressed by the reclamation plan.

A public comment period during this scoping period on the project runs through May 8, 2006. During this time, the Corps and Ecology invite federal agencies, state and local governments, Native American Tribes, and the public to participate in the scoping process by providing written comments and/or by attending the public scoping meeting. The agencies have identified the following as probable major topics to be analyzed in depth in the draft EIS: wetland and streams including fish and wildlife habitat functions, surface water quality, surface water drainage and detention effects, mitigation, and cumulative impacts. Both written and oral scoping comments will be considered in the preparation of the draft EIS.

Written comments on the scope of the EIS or requests for information should be mailed to:

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