



March 3, 2022

Welcome to this month's issue of ***Solar Newsbriefs***, brought to you by the Washington State University Energy Program. Please feel free to forward this issue to those of your colleagues interested in solar energy. For archives of past *Solar Newsbriefs*, visit <http://www.energy.wsu.edu/solarnewsbriefs.aspx>

Oregon News

Blue Marmot Wants to Settle with Lake County

After initially filing a notice of intent to appeal with the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals EDP Renewables has filed a request with LUBA to pause the appeal and offer a “settlement” with Lake County regarding the proposed solar facility. Blair Matocha, senior communications manager for EDP Renewables, said the company filed the pause on the LUBA appeal “in an effort to engage the Lake County Commissioners and offer a settlement outline that the company believes addresses issues the landowners and Commissioners had.” —Kevin Winter, *Lake County Examiner*, Feb. 9, 2022:

https://www.heraldandnews.com/news/local_news/blue-marmot-wants-to-settle-with-lake-county/article_7310ce77-dcd7-5c88-b2a1-99ac9b0a360e.html

Solar Panel Project in Awbrey Butte Dog Park Receives Mixed Reactions

An array of solar panels is being built on city-owned land near Awbrey Butte. While the project is not a substantial one in size, it is overtaking part of an off-leash dog park and some local are not pleased. The new solar panel array will take up just under 5,000 square feet of the dog park, but to some owners' dismay, it is one less place their pups get to roam—Meghan Glova, *Central Oregon Daily News*, Feb. 9, 2022: <https://centraloregondaily.com/solar-panel-project-in-awbrey-butte-dog-park-receives-mixed-reactions/>

Washington News

[40 kW Solar System Installed December 2021 at Community Non-Profit in Spokane]

Congratulations to Transitions, a community organization that provides supportive transitional housing to women and children experiencing homelessness in Spokane WA, for the **installation of 40kW of rooftop solar**. The energy generated from the solar installation will offset energy costs for all building residents. With Spark Northwest assisting on grant finding and project planning, the project was also supported by amazing community partners at Gonzaga Sustainable Energy and Re-Volv, and the installation team at Dynamic Solar. The project is great example of how local, sustainable energy can enable organizations to be sustainability leaders and to invest more back into their mission—Spark Northwest, *Newsletter*, [Feb. 2022]: <https://mailchi.mp/sparknorthwest/feb22-newsletter?e=90de65a21e>

WA Wind Power Farms may Conflict with Habitat Preservation Projects

The Horse Heaven Hills south of the Tri-Cities are a patchwork quilt of shrubs, bushes and grasses a few inches to 6 feet in height. “The best way to see shrub-steppe is to lay down to look into it. ... It’s as complex as the rain forests on the Olympic Peninsula,” said Mike Ritter, a wildlife biologist with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. As a state biologist, Ritter focuses on the effects turbines and solar farms have on birds and animals—John Stang, *Crosscut*, Feb. 4, 2022:

<https://crosscut.com/environment/2022/02/wa-wind-power-farms-may-conflict-habitat-preservation-projects>

Aurora Solar Plans Solar Project in Asotin Washington State

[Aurora Solar](#), a Portland-based company is interested in leasing 2,631 acres south of Clarkston, Washington, for a solar project in Asotin. The solar venture, which is owned by Avangrid Renewables, will be in Clarkston Heights next week to get public comments on the project and will have a town hall meeting to propose it. The project is being planned for privately-held agricultural property three miles southwest of Clarkston and one mile west of Asotin, on a plateau above the Quail Ridge Golf Course—

Construction Review Online, Feb. 5, 2022: https://constructionreviewonline.com/news/aurora-solar-plans-solar-project-in-asotin-washington-state/?utm_source=Energy+News+Network+daily+email+digests&utm_campaign=b4b1cfba54-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_05_11_11_44_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_724b1f01f5-b4b1cfba54-89350008

Celebrating Two Student-Centered Sustainability Projects

Two student-centered, environmentally focused projects will help lower energy costs and carbon footprints in Spokane. The ribbon-cutting ceremony for newly installed solar panels at Transitions, a Spokane nonprofit supporting women and children experiencing homelessness, took place on Jan. 29, while the Gonzaga Center for Climate, Society and the Environment launched a window-weatherization program for students in the Logan Neighborhood—Gonzaga News Service, *News, Events & Stories*, Feb. 4, 2022:

<https://www.gonzaga.edu/news-events/stories/2022/2/4/weatherization-and-solar-panel-projects>

Solar Project Devised by Highline High School Students Wins District Approval

Members of Highline High School’s Environmental Club got the official green light last week to proceed with their plan to build a 100-kilowatt solar array on the roof of the school’s new building in Burien, marking a major milestone in the student-led renewable energy project—Ben Adlin, *Seattle Emerald*, Feb. 7, 2022:

<https://southseattleemerald.com/2022/02/07/solar-project-devised-by-highline-high-school-students-wins-district-approval/>

Greenbacker Expands into Washington with Solar Portfolio Purchase

Greenbacker Renewable Energy said that it has, through a subsidiary, purchased a 20MW pre-operational solar portfolio from TUUSSO Energy, a Seattle-based utility-scale solar developer. The portfolio's three 6.7MW projects are Greenbacker's first assets in Washington, and all of the projects, which have been dubbed Camas, Penstemon, and Urtica, are located in Kittitas County, southeast of Seattle. While each installation is still under development, Greenbacker shares that they are all expected to reach commercial operation in 2022, and each project has a long-term power supply agreement in place—Tim Sylvia, *pv magazine*, Feb. 10, 2022: <https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2022/02/10/greenbacker-expands-into-washington-with-solar-portfolio-purchase/>

Solar Bill could Provide Tax Breaks to Panel Manufacturers

A bill proposed by Sen. Judy Warnick, R-Moses Lake, to give tax breaks to companies seeking to build solar panels in Washington is expected to get a hearing in the Senate Ways and Means Committee. The bill would extend a targeted 43% business and occupation tax cut for manufacturers of solar panels and components another five years past the original expiration date of 2027 to 2032—Charles H. Featherstone, *Columbia Basin Herald*, Feb. 16, 2022: <https://columbiabasinherald.com/news/2022/feb/15/solar-bill-could-provide-tax-breaks-panel-manufact/>

Energy from the Sun will Help Power this Pierce County School. Here is the Plan

Eatonville School District is expecting some upgrades this summer. The school district received a \$165,292 grant from the state Department of Commerce to install solar panels at Eatonville High School. The state allocated \$3.5 million in grants for solar panel projects across the state, according to a Jan. 12 news release—Angelica Relente, *News Tribune*, Feb. 15, 2022:

<https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/community/puyallup-herald/ph-news/article258182133.html>

Judy Hallisey: Legislation Opens Up Opportunities for Solar in State

Washington's solar industry is booming, but this hasn't reached equitably across our communities, and often has unintended consequences for natural and working lands. One bipartisan bill at the Washington state Legislature seeks to make progress in addressing these two challenges of the solar boom—Judy Hallisey [Kittitas Audubon Society], *The Spokesman Review*, Feb. 16, 2022:

<https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2022/feb/16/judy-hallisey-legislation-opens-up-opportunities-f/>

Puget Sound Energy Issues RFP Prioritizing Small Businesses and Community Based Organizations

Puget Sound Energy has issued an RFP (request for proposals) to secure 129 MWs of Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) eligible resources focused on distributed solar, distributed battery storage, and demand response. Through this RFP, PSE is looking to acquire a portfolio of Distributed Energy Resources (DERs) that meets the targets outlined in its first Clean Energy Implementation Plan (CEIP) filed in Dec. 2021—Submitted by Puget Sound Energy, *Thurston Talk*, [Feb. 17, 2022]:

<https://www.thurstontalk.com/2022/02/17/puget-sound-energy-issues-rfp-prioritizing-small-businesses-and-community-based-organizations/>

Opinion: State Considers Clean Energy Equity Program

Washington's solar industry is booming. The end of 2021 saw a record number of residential, commercial, and utility-scale solar projects installed, in part due to the solar investment programs designed by the state of Washington in 2005 and again in 2017. Homeowners and building owners who install solar see their electricity costs plummet and enjoy the clean energy the sun provides to keep their homes and workspaces warm and comfy while simultaneously reducing their reliance on the fossil fuels that contribute to climate change—Beth Doglio and Ben Silesky, *South Seattle Emerald*, Feb. 23, 2022: <https://southseattleemerald.com/2022/02/23/opinion-state-considers-clean-energy-equity-program/>

Puget Sound Energy Awards Nearly \$1 Million in Solar Installation Grants

[Puget Sound Energy](#), through its [Green Power](#) and [Solar Choice](#) programs, has awarded \$954,418 in grant funding to 13 organizations and tribes across its electric service area to install new solar projects. Recipients range from local non-profits, housing authorities and tribal entities serving low-income and Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) community members. In addition to saving recipients money on their utilities, the projects will serve to further clean energy in the region—Submitted by Puget Sound Energy, *Thurston Talk*, March 1, 2022: <https://www.thurstontalk.com/2022/03/01/puget-sound-energy-awards-nearly-1-million-in-solar-installation-grants/>

National News

Equitable Solar Access Strategies under Development by DOE-Backed Program

Round three of the Solar Energy Innovation Network, a program backed by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), is underway, with eight teams across the U.S. selected to participate. The teams will explore underserved communities and strategies to encourage equitable access to residential and commercial solar. In the Portland area, a team of solar ambassadors is being built by the Energy Trust of Oregon, designed to increase solar awareness in Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities. The team will also be developing incentive programs for solar-related energy retrofits and home upgrades—Ryan Kennedy, *pV magazine*, Feb. 22, 2022: <https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2022/02/22/equitable-solar-access-strategies-under-development-by-doe-backed-program/>

U.S. Targets 5 Million Community Solar Households, \$1 Billion in Savings by 2025

The National Community Solar Partnership, a Department of Energy (DOE) program, set an ambitious goal of enabling enough community solar projects to power the equivalent of 5 million households, and achieve \$1 billion in combined energy bill savings. This goal aligns with the DOE's greater target of 100% clean electricity by 2035 and places a focus on ensuring that American citizens can meaningfully access the benefits of the energy transition—Ryan Kennedy, *pV magazine*, Feb. 25, 2022: <https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2022/02/25/us-targets-5-million-community-solar-households-1-billion-in-savings-by-2025/>

Deploying Solar with Wildlife and Ecosystem Services Benefits (SolWEB)

On March 1, 2022, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced the Deploying Solar with Wildlife and Ecosystem Services Benefits (SolWEB) funding opportunity, which will award \$10 million for innovative solutions and strategies that maximize benefits and minimize impacts to wildlife and ecosystems from solar energy infrastructure. For more information, including an informational webinar to be held March 8, 2022 see DOE, Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, March 1, 2022: <https://www.energy.gov/eere/solar/articles/funding-notice-deploying-solar-wildlife-and-ecosystem->

[services-benefits-solweb](#)

Agrivoltaics

Grazing Sheep Increase Carbon Sequestration up to 80%, while also Benefiting Fixation of Soil Nutrients under Solar Panels

In a recent presentation, titled [Managed Sheep Grazing Can Improve Soil Quality and Carbon Sequestration at Solar Photovoltaic Sites](#), researchers from Temple University investigated the effects of periodic sheep grazing on soil properties. Micro and macro nutrients, carbon storage, and soil grain size distribution at six commercial solar PV sites were compared to undisturbed control sites—John Fitzgerald Weaver, *pv magazine*, Feb. 7, 2022: <https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2022/02/07/grazing-sheep-increase-carbon-sequestration-up-to-80-while-also-benefiting-fixation-of-soil-nutrients-under-solar-panels/>

Made in the Shade: The Promise of Farming with Solar Panels

President Biden has set a goal of cutting U.S. greenhouse gas pollution by at least half (from 2005 levels) by 2030 and achieving net-zero emissions in the electricity sector by 2035. If the country is to meet these targets, solar power is going to have to play a big part—Jeff Turrentin, NRCC, Feb. 23, 2022:

<https://www.nrdc.org/stories/made-shade-promise-farming-solar-panels>

Energy Resilience

Remote, Island, and Isolated Communities: Apply Today for ETIPP

Remote, island, and isolated communities that experience challenges related to frequent energy disruptions and threats to energy infrastructure can now apply to the [Energy Transitions Initiative Partnership Project \(ETIPP\)](#). Through ETIPP, communities take the first step in transforming their energy systems and increasing energy resilience using strategic energy planning and analysis to investigate solutions that address their specific challenges. Interested applicants are encouraged to review the application guidelines and eligibility criteria on the [ETIPP application webpage](#), register for the [ETIPP Webinar](#) (Feb. 16, 12 p.m. MST), and contact an ETIPP regional partner with questions. Applications are due by April 15, 2022. For more information: <https://www.nrel.gov/state-local-tribal/etipp-technical-assistance.html>

Recycling

Inside Clean Energy: Recycling Solar Panels Is a Big Challenge, but here's Some Recent Progress

German researchers said this week that they have taken silicon from discarded solar panels and recycled it for use in new ones. This is a positive step for dealing with the coming mountain of waste from solar power, but it is just one part of dealing with a complicated challenge. Cells are the little squares, usually blue, that you see arranged in a tile pattern on solar panels—Dan Gearino, *Inside Climate News*, Feb. 10, 2022: <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/10022022/inside-clean-energy-solar-recycling/>

Conferences

ASES Solar 2022: Energy Transition with Economic Justice: Albuquerque, NM June 21-24, 2022 and Online

Registration is OPEN for the 51st Annual National Solar Conference, SOLAR 2022. They are partnering with their New Mexico Chapter, the [New Mexico Solar Energy Association](#) (NMSEA), who is celebrating 50 years

of achievements at this conference. Register by March 31 to receive significant early bird discounts. For more information and to register: <https://ases.org/conference/>

Want to Contribute? If you have information on events, publications or other solar topics that you would like mentioned in an upcoming issue of Solar Newsbriefs, please contact Anne Whitney at whitneya@energy.wsu.edu

While every URL in Solar Newsbriefs is checked for accuracy prior to distribution, URLs may change, and servers may temporarily fail to connect to working URLs.

If any of your colleagues would like to be added to the distribution list to receive Solar Newsbriefs, or you would like to be omitted from this distribution list, please email your request and contact information to solarnewsbriefs@energy.wsu.edu.

This material is based upon work supported by the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) under the Solar Plus Strategies for Oregon and Washington award number DE-EE0007665.

This report was prepared as an account of work sponsored by an agency of the United States Government. Neither the United States Government nor any agency thereof, nor any of their employees, makes any warranty, express or implied, or assumes any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed, or represents that its use would not infringe privately owned rights. Reference herein to any specific commercial product, process, or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the United States Government or any agency thereof. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the United States Government or any agency thereof.