



NaturEner



Montana Audubon

**NaturEner Rim Rock Wind Farm and Montana Audubon  
Announce Major Wind Farm Changes to Limit Impact to Sensitive Raptor Habitat  
and the Signing of an Historic Memorandum of Understanding**

**San Francisco, CA/Helena, MT – August 16, 2012** NaturEner USA, LLC (NaturEner), a San Francisco-based wind energy development company and Montana Audubon announced today major changes to the Rim Rock Wind Farm in direct response to concerns over raptors and their habitat. Kevin Rim, in north central Montana, has been known to harbor up to 60 active nests of 10 raptors species in a given year. The Rim Rock Wind Farm is currently under construction on private lands near to, and west of, the Kevin Rim. At the urging of Montana Audubon, NaturEner voluntarily agreed to relocate each of 25 wind turbines to provide a buffer of approximately ½ mile from historic and active raptor nests. This commitment was made after the project design was finalized, financing completed, and actual construction had begun. In addition, NaturEner and Montana Audubon have entered into an historic Memorandum of Understanding which reflects an unprecedented level of cooperation and commitment between a wind energy company and a wildlife conservation organization.

The Rim Rock Wind Farm, which was conceived in 2005 and for which preliminary construction work was begun in August, 2011, is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2012, with a name-plate rated capacity of 189 megawatts and a total expected annual electrical generation of approximately 662,000 MWh, enough energy to power 60,000 average U.S. homes each year.

As the project was being developed, Montana Audubon voiced concern over whether the turbine locations as designed would be sufficiently distant from historic raptor nests to limit the potential for displacement and/or disturbance of one of the most active raptor nesting areas in Montana. Although the land-based wind energy guidelines developed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) did not specify a setback distance, NaturEner was aware of the concerns and consulted with both the USFWS and Montana Audubon in an effort to find common ground regarding the planned turbine placement. After numerous meetings and the desire of both NaturEner and Montana Audubon to find an acceptable solution to minimize potential impact to these sensitive bird species, the final design plan was changed.

“Montana Audubon applauds the response of NaturEner,” said Steve Hoffman, Executive Director of Montana Audubon. “They listened to our recommendations, and agreed to relocate 25 wind turbines in the Rim Rock wind project. These changes have occurred late in the process, after construction had begun and at great expense to NaturEner.”

The Memorandum of Understanding signed by both parties memorializes the efforts of both NaturEner and Montana Audubon to provide a framework of understanding between the two organizations that has as its

fundamental objectives: regional economic development, an environmentally sustainable clean energy project, and the preservation of wildlife and its habitat. The MOU also provides the structure for cooperation and understanding between Rim Rock and Montana Audubon for additional wildlife studies and an opportunity to coordinate regional issues of mutual interest relating to wind energy development.

“NaturEner recognizes the valuable contributions and recommendations of Montana Audubon during the development of the Rim Rock project, particularly its advice and counsel regarding wind turbine setback requirements from historic and existing raptor nests,” said José M. Sánchez Seara, Chief Executive Officer of NaturEner Rim Rock Wind Energy, LLC.

A copy of the press release and the Memorandum of Understanding will be posted on both websites: [www.naturener.net](http://www.naturener.net) and [www.mtaudubon.org](http://www.mtaudubon.org).

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### **About NaturEner**

NaturEner Energy Canada Inc. and NaturEner USA, LLC are wholly-owned subsidiaries of Spain-based Grupo NaturEner, S.A. Together, they have developed renewable energy facilities in three different countries comprising mini-hydro, solar photovoltaic, and utility-scale wind.

NaturEner owns and operates the combined 210 MW Glacier Wind 1 & 2 projects, located near Ethridge, Montana, and is currently constructing the 189 MW Rim Rock Wind project, located near Kevin, Montana. The Rim Rock Wind project will be interconnected with the Montana-Alberta Tie Line, and is expected to begin producing clean renewable energy by the end of 2012.

NaturEner manages and integrates the production from its Glacier projects through its wind-only Balancing Authority, Power Watch. NaturEner’s Operations Center is a fully enabled, state-of-the-art, 24/7 facility, developed for the purpose of supporting both commercial and operational functions for NaturEner’s operating projects and transmission assets.

Further information about NaturEner is available at [www.naturener.net](http://www.naturener.net) .

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### **About Montana Audubon**

The Mission of Montana Audubon is to promote appreciation, knowledge, and conservation of native birds, other wildlife, and natural ecosystems to safeguard biological diversity for current and future generations. Founded in 1976, Montana Audubon has built effective programs in public policy, education, and bird conservation to serve its members and Montana's nine community-based Audubon Chapters.

Further information about Montana Audubon is available at [www.mtaudubon.org](http://www.mtaudubon.org) .

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