

The past and future

Puget Sound Energy's Hopkins Ridge Wind Facility is nestled between three bygone communities. Many years have passed since Turner, Marengo, and Covello were bustling hubs of activity. The land between these communities was home to a number of homesteaders.

Today, only a few of the once numerous structures still stand to remind us of those who first settled in the area. At Hopkins Ridge, we have the unique opportunity to view the early history of Columbia County, in addition to witnessing history being made as the wind facility complements the landscape, producing clean, renewable energy.

Historical sites around Hopkins Ridge Wind Facility



1. Turner Cemetary

Only one of many cemeteries in the county, Turner Cemetery dates before the turn of the century. The land for the cemetery was left by Ben Turner, one of the original homesteaders in the area. The earliest marked burial is that of Pliza Sproat Wilson who passed away in February 1873. Interestingly, of the 45 marked burials in the cemetery, only one is a Turner.

2. McDowell

Within the large grove of trees sit the remains of a garage and chicken shed. The two buildings were part of a larger complex including a barn across the road from the stand of trees.

3. Vannice/Thronson

Luther Vannice and his family settled at the present location after searching several days for a place to homestead. They lived in a cabin until the large house, which can still be seen today, was built. In addition to the house, many structures are still standing, such as a brick shop, barns and a greenhouse. The larger of the two barns is an impressive structure; it has a large cement watering trough that is self-fed from a nearby spring. The Vannice homestead was acquired by the Thronsons in the late 1930s.

4. John Gwinn Homestead

Just a shadow of its former glory, the John Gwinn farm was once a thriving homestead. Settled in the late 1800s, the farm consisted of a large barn, machine shed, and two-story house; a shop was added in later years. Built in the old way, the barn uses pegs instead of nails. All that remains of the homestead is the old machine shed and a cistern farther up on the hill.

5. Hinchliff

The Hinchliff farm, originally homesteaded in 1872 by the current owner's great-grandfather James Anderson, has been in the family for more than 135 years. The homestead, eventually consisting of 500 acres of farm ground and 300 acres of pasture, was passed on to Anderson's daughter Myrtle and her husband Thompson Hinchliff in 1917 at the time of James's death. In addition to growing a large garden, the Hinchliffs raised their own livestock, making their farm self-sufficient like many others at the time. Myrtle continued to reside on the homestead until the early 1970s. She was the last person to live on the farm.

6. Keystone

Willis Thronson, an immigrant from Norway, homesteaded Keystone in the late 1800s. The Keystone home was a large, beautiful house which was greatly admired by travelers on the old stagecoach trail. Unfortunately, the house burned down in the 1930s while Willis's grandson Carlos was living in it. Today, nothing remains of the once glorious Thronson house.



More information

The Hopkins Ridge Wind Facility, owned and operated by Puget Sound Energy, is the utility's first wind farm. With construction beginning in March 2005, the turbines became fully operational in November 2005.

Economic stimulus generated from jobs and leasing income for landowners benefits the local area. PSE's wind facility contributes more than \$800,000 in tax revenue annually.

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