



**Statement before the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission**

**In regard to the 2013 Puget Sound Energy Integrated Resource Plan, Colstrip Units 1,2,3 and 4**

**Docket #120767**

**Presented by Rob Smith, Northwest Regional Director, NPCA**

**At UTC Open Meeting, Olympia, WA**

**October 10, 2013**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission,

My name is Rob Smith and I am the Northwest Regional Director for the National Parks Conservation Association. NPCA is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to protecting our national parks. We have more than 840 thousand members and supporters across the United States, including more than 26,000 in Washington State.

I'm speaking here today because air pollution from the Colstrip coal-fired power plant degrades the air quality in particular at Yellowstone and Theodore Roosevelt national parks. This pollution is harmful to neighboring communities, park visitors and park resources including visibility, wildlife and habitat.

As you can see in the first display, the Colstrip coal plant is surrounded by national parks and federal wilderness areas, all within range of its pollution drift. These areas are required by the federal Clean Air Act to have air quality free of human-caused haze pollution. Nearby industrial pollution sources like Colstrip are required to install the Best Available Retrofit Technology to limit haze-causing pollutants.

**Northwest Regional Office**

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The State of Montana has not acted. The plant owners have resisted major cleanup. The Environmental Protection Agency has not yet proposed a level of cleanup which the law clearly requires. The EPA itself estimates that, with current trends, it will take until the year 2163 to reach naturally occurring visibility conditions at Yellowstone National Park – a full century beyond what the Clean Air Act requires. This is not what Congress intended nor what people expect for our nation’s first national park. And this level of pollution is simply not necessary -- improved pollution control technology exists and has been installed on similar plants across the country, and it should be done so here.

As the other display demonstrates, the Colstrip plant is a giant polluter. It dwarfs the emissions of the next 9 largest industrial facilities in Montana – combined – in tonnage of haze causing pollution. The Colstrip plant cannot continue to operate business-as-usual.

NPCA will continue to challenge inadequate pollution control measures until our national parks are on track to achieve the clean air they both deserve and are required by law to have for the use and enjoyment of everyone.

There is another reason I am here today, too, and that’s in defense of Washington State’s national parks including North Cascades, Mt. Rainier and Olympic. Their snow and ice are melting at increasing rates due to global warming. Every ton of coal burned aggravates these conditions and brings closer the day when we may no longer see existing snowfields and glaciers in our mountain parks, nor enjoy the benefits of full flowing watersheds throughout the year.

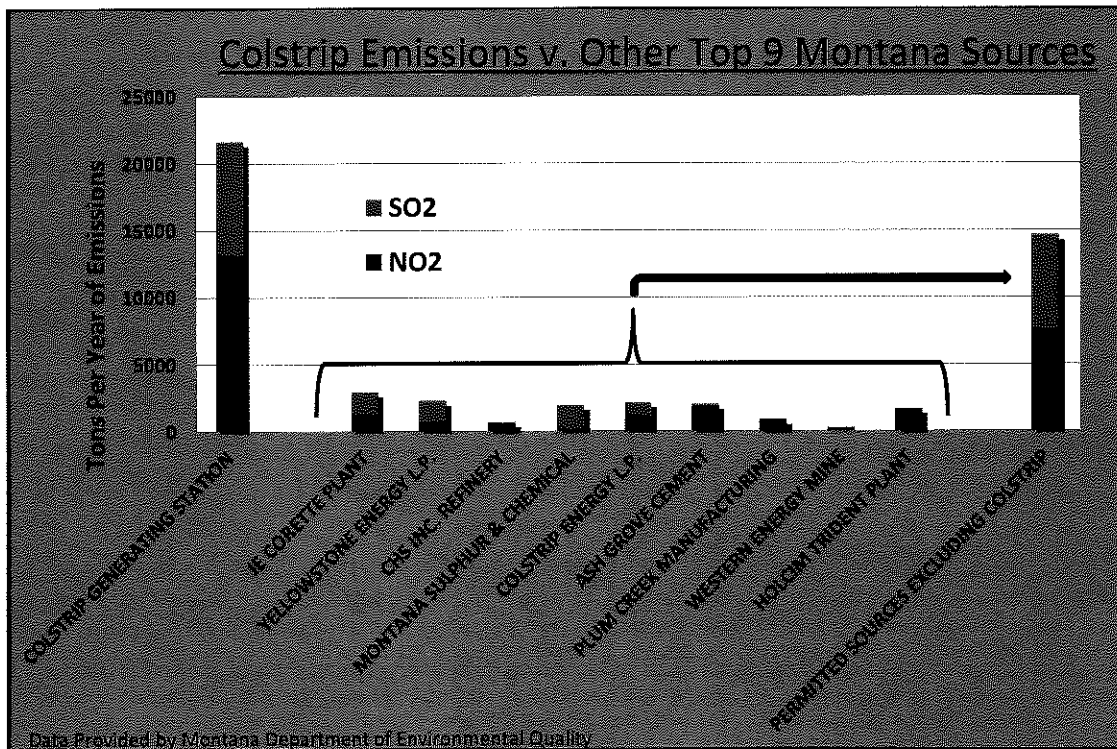
Allowing coal plants like Colstrip to run with inadequate pollution controls in effect subsidizes their operation by sacrificing our shared atmosphere. That harms all of us and commits future generations to a world which is less than what we have inherited. That is not in the long term public interest of Washington State residents, or anyone else.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak here today.

# Colstrip Generating Facility, Montana



- ⚠ Colstrip generates 2,100 Megawatts of electricity from coal.  
= Enough power for 2 Seattles
- ⚠ The plant generates approximately 15 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> every year.  
= Emissions from 3 Million passenger cars
- ⚠ As shown in the chart below, Colstrip's emissions of SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> are greater than the next 9 sources in Montana *combined*.  
→ Colstrip's NO<sub>2</sub> emissions are **2x** that of the next 9 sources combined.



- ⚠ Approximately 800 acres at Colstrip are occupied by toxic coal ash waste ponds. Groundwater contamination from these leaking storage facilities has already resulted in a \$25 million settlement. Additional litigation is on-going.
- ⚠ Much of the most easily accessible coal has already been excavated from the strip mine adjacent to the facility and mining costs are therefore expected to rise in the near future.

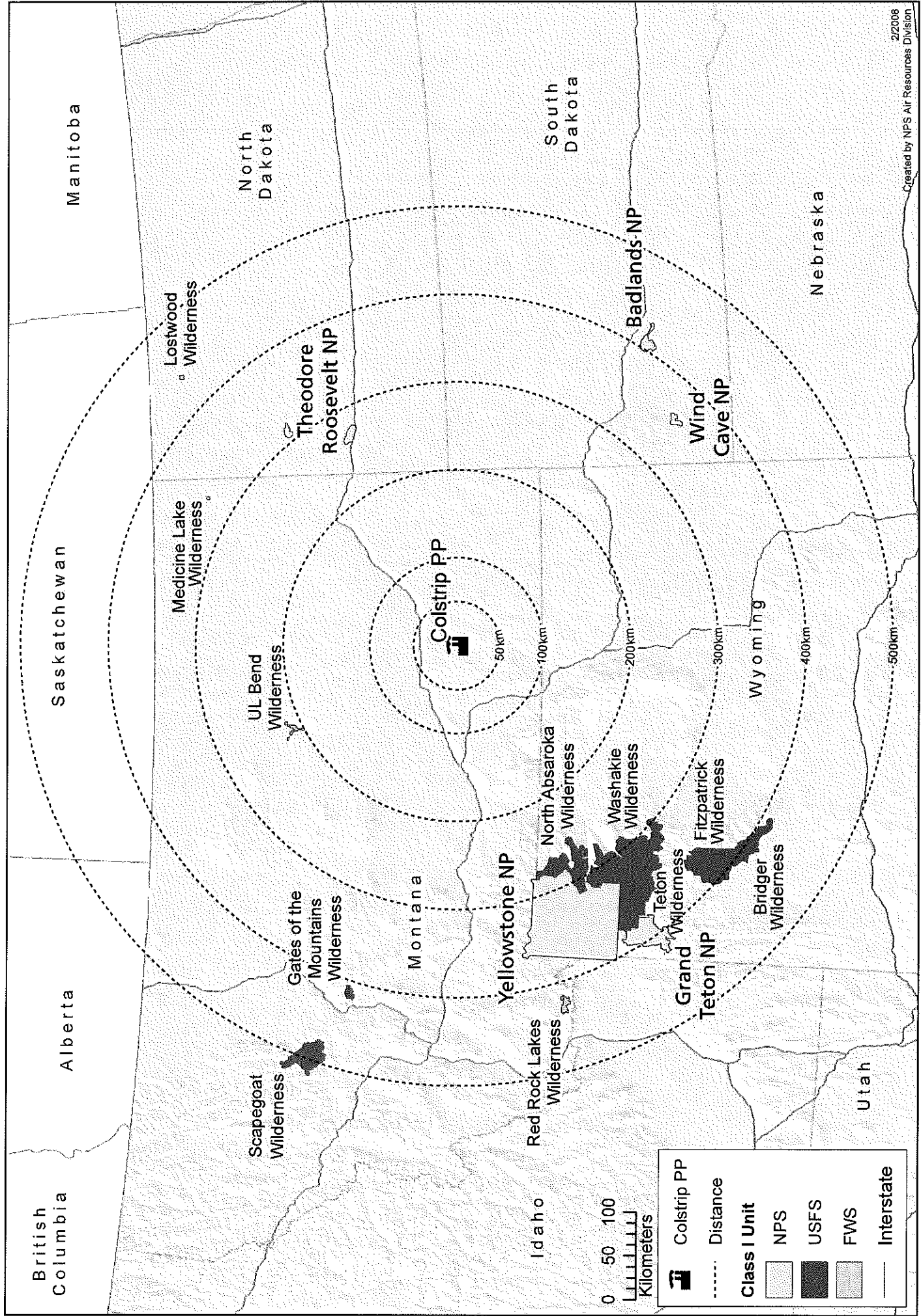


Strip Mine at Colstrip

For more information, go to: <http://www.sierraclub.org/coal/coalfreepse/>



# Class I Areas within 500km of Colstrip PP



0 50 100  
Kilometers

Colstrip PP

Distance

**Class I Unit**

NPS

USFS

FWS

Interstate

