

3.7 LAND AND SHORELINE USE

3.7.1 Land Use Patterns

3.7.1.1 Affected Environment

Kittitas County

Kittitas County is located east of the Cascade Mountains, in the geographic center of Washington State. The County covers 2,297 square miles (1,470,272 acres) of mostly forested land, pasture, and unimproved grazing land. Urbanized land comprises less than 2 percent of the County (Kittitas County, 2003). Prominent natural features in the County include east Snoqualmie Pass, the Yakima River, Keechelus Lake, Kachees Lake, and Cle Elum Lake. In addition, Wanapum Lake runs north to south and forms the eastern boundary of the County. The Wenatchee Mountains serve as the County's northern backdrop, particularly in and around the City of Ellensburg. Mt. Rainier and Mt. Adams are visible to the southwest.

Cities within Kittitas County include Cle Elum, Ellensburg, Kittitas, Roslyn, and South Cle Elum. Unincorporated communities include Easton, Liberty, Ronald, Thorp and Vantage. The majority of cities and unincorporated towns are located along Interstate-90 and U.S. Highway 97, which intersect west of Ellensburg (see **Figure 2.2**).

Land ownership is divided among private (approximately 41 percent), state (approximately 18 percent), and federal (approximately 41 percent) interests. The largest land owners are the Plum Creek Timber Company, Boise Cascade Corporation, Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), U.S. Forest Service, and the Yakima Training Center¹ (Kittitas County, 2003).

Major land uses are shown in **Table 3.7-1**. Timber harvesting occurs primarily to the north and west at higher elevations. As elevation decreases, rural residential and agricultural uses predominate. A system of irrigation canals, supported by water from the Yakima River, runs through the lower elevations and provides water to local agricultural crops. The predominant agricultural crops include wheat, oats, potatoes, and hay (WASS, 1996).

Table 3.7-1
Land Use in Kittitas County

Land Use	Acreage	Percent of Total Acreage
Commercial Forest	661,773	45
Rural	359,704	24
Commercial Agriculture	357,808	24
Public Recreation	81,562	5
Other	25,723	2
Total	1,481,600	100

Source: Kittitas County, 2003.

Table Notes: Total use differs from individual uses due to rounding.

¹ The Yakima Training Center is a federal military training reservation located in southeastern Kittitas County (164,000 acres) and eastern Yakima County.

As shown in **Table 3.7-2** below, the most extensive zoning classifications county-wide are Commercial Forest, Commercial Agriculture, Forest and Range and Agriculture-20. Approximately 97 percent of the County's land area is within these classifications. The Forest and Range and Agriculture-20 designations characterize the project site and the surrounding area; these designations encompass 27 percent of the county's total area. The primary purpose of these designations is to preserve farmland from encroachment and to protect agricultural activities (Ag-20 zone), and to encourage natural resource management and discourage development and subdivisions (Forest and Range zone). Rural residential uses are permitted in both zones but the predominant land use is rangeland.

**Table 3.7-2
Kittitas County Zoning Designations and Acreage**

Zoning Designation	Acres
Residential-2	44
Suburban	3,314
Suburban II	296
Agricultural-3	17,574
Agricultural-20	112,343
Rural-3	22,450
Commercial Agriculture	357,728
Limited Commercial	22
Planned Unit Development	861
Master Planned Resort	5,914
General Commercial	144
Highway Commercial	35
Light Industrial	148
General Industrial	912
Forest and Range-20	292,235
Commercial Forest-80	672,407
Liberty Historic District	17
Total	1,486,476

Source: Kittitas County, 2003.

Throughout the last decade, growth in the County has resulted in increased development of rural residential uses and subdivisions, and a reduction in forest and agricultural areas. This shift in land use has been the result of general economic growth; migration from the populated areas west of the Cascades; and changes in land management practices or restrictions in the harvesting of forestlands. From 1998 to 2002, there were applications for a 153 residential short plats (less than 4 lots) and 10 plats (greater than 4 lots). By early October of 2003, there were more requests for subdivisions than during the entire year of 2002². **Table 3.7-3** shows the trend in subdivision applications over the last 5 years.

² 44 short plats; 10 plats (Kittitas County, 2003).

**Table 3.7-3
Kittitas County Subdivision Applications, 1998 to 2002**

Year	Short Plats (less than 4 lots)	Plats (greater than 4 lots)	Total
1998	21	2	23
1999	24	3	27
2000	34	2	36
2001	36	0	36
2002	38	3	41
Total	153	10	163

Source: Kittitas County, 2003.

Desert Claim Project Vicinity

The project vicinity which is used to characterize local land use is generally defined as the area within approximately 5 miles of the project boundary. This area is rural in character and extends north into the foothills of the Wenatchee Mountains, west toward the U.S. Highway 97 and State Route 10, east to rural residential and rangeland areas, and south toward Bowers Field (airport) and the City of Ellensburg. Land uses are characterized using County land use and zoning maps, aerial photo interpretation and direct observations.

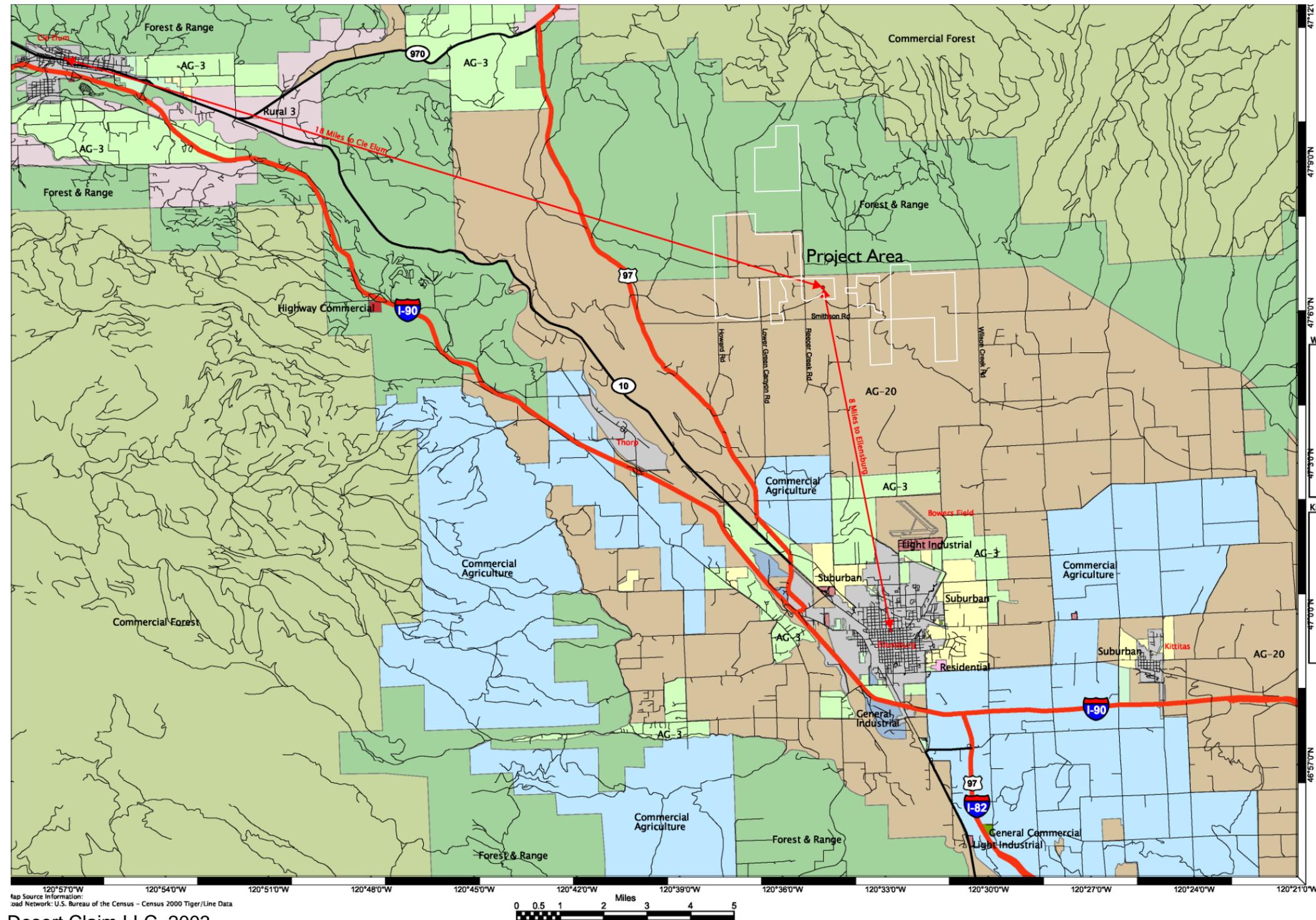
The lands surrounding the proposed site are characterized by a gently sloping landscape that gradually increases in elevation from the south to the north. In general, forested areas are located to the north, while agricultural and rural residential uses predominate in the immediate area of the proposed site and to the south toward the Ellensburg Urban Growth Area (UGA).

The majority of land within 1 mile of the project area is privately owned and generally consists of rangeland and residences. An estimated 83 residences lie within one-half mile of the project boundary³. Housing densities within this area occur at one dwelling unit (du) per 20 acres in the Forest and Range zone, while the Agricultural-20 zone allows for two dwelling units per 20-acre parcel. In the higher elevations to north of the central project area, single-family dwelling units occur along ridges and valleys. **Figure 3.7-1** shows zoning designations in the project vicinity.

The Sun East community is located within less than 1 mile to the north and east of the project area. The community is located on roughly 6,000 acres, beginning just north of the BPA transmission lines on Robbins Road (just over one-half mile from the project boundary in this area) and extending up the slopes of Table Mountain via a system of private, unimproved roads. The Sun East Property Owners Association serves community interests. The community consists of approximately 170 lots, 22 year-round residents and a number of landowners who maintain cabins for seasonal or weekend use. Housing densities within this area are generally one dwelling unit per 20 acres.

Further south, within the Ellensburg UGA, housing is developed at densities ranging from 1 du per 10 acres in the Ag-20 zone, to 1 du per 7,200 sq. ft. in the Residential zone. Subdivision development has occurred at the south end of Reecer Creek Road. The most recent subdivision application submitted to Kittitas County within the Ellensburg UGA could include up to 209 units on 56 acres, if approved. This property is zoned Residential, which permits 7,200 sq. ft. minimum lot size. Use of City public services is required within this zone.

³ Estimate based on partial ground reconnaissance and aerial photography research.



Source: Desert Claim LLC, 2003



Kittitas County Desert Claim Wind Power Project EIS

Figure 3.7-1
Zoning Designations

WDNR administers roughly 5 parcels, each up to 640 acres in size, which are located adjacent to the site. WDNR also maintains mineral rights on approximately 160 acres of private property, located in the north-central area of the proposed site.

The U.S. Forest Service manages lands approximately one-half mile to the north of the project area, within the Cle Elum Ranger District of the Wenatchee National Forest. The immediate area is used for recreation and commercial forestry. Recreational activities are especially prevalent in the Lion Rock area, which can be accessed from the south via Reecer Creek Road.

U.S. Highway 97 runs in a northwest-southeast direction within 1.5 miles of the southwest corner of the proposed site and connects communities in Chelan County via Blewett Pass with I-90 and the communities of Kittitas County. Within and around the project area, several rural two-lane roads provide access to local agricultural operations, residences, recreation, and the electrical transmission lines. Some of these roads pass through the project area, while others dead-end into the site. The north-south roads serving the proposed site include Reecer Creek Road, Lower Green Canyon Road, Pheasant Lane, Robins Road, and Wilson Creek Road. Roads running east to west include Smithson Road and Charlton Road.

Desert Claim Project Area

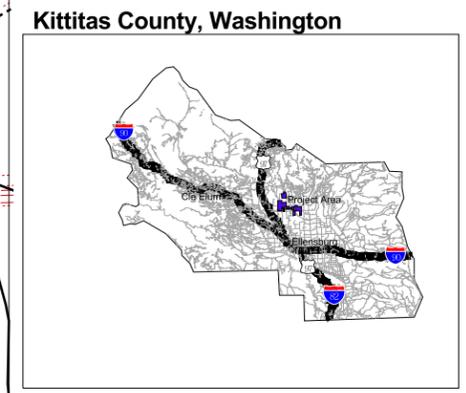
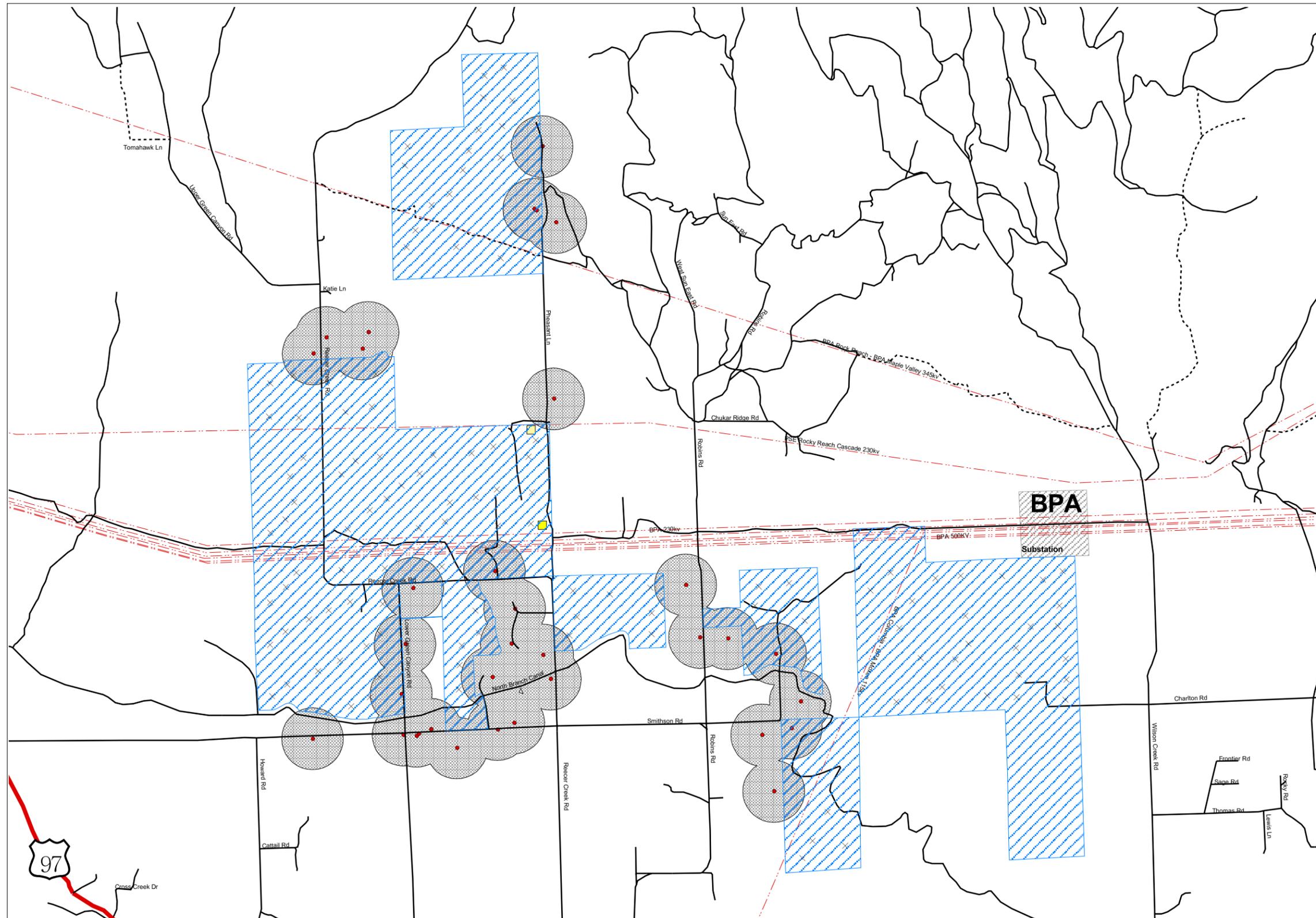
The Desert Claim project area is located approximately 8 miles north of the City of Ellensburg and contains approximately 5,237 acres. The land is in large, non-contiguous parcels owned by 8 private landowners (see **Figure 2.3**). WDNR maintains mineral rights on the northern-most 160-acre parcel within the project area. The proposed project area is approximately 5.5 miles from east to west and approximately 5 miles from north to south, with the majority of property concentrated in a northwest and southeast orientation.

Consistent with the applicable zoning, existing land uses on the proposed site generally include grazing, feed crop production, and rural residences. The North Branch Canal follows the southern edge of the site and traverses through a 320-acre portion of the project to the southeast, providing irrigation water to this area of the Kittitas Valley. Other possible uses, if granted through landowner permission, include outdoor recreation (i.e., snowmobile and horseback riding).

Eight high-voltage transmission lines either directly cross or are adjacent to the project area. Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) owns and operates six lines, while Puget Sound Energy (PSE) owns and operates the remaining two lines. BPA's 133-acre regional substation is located directly to the north of the project area's eastern boundary.

As shown in **Figure 3.7-2**, 32 residences (including 1 abandoned trailer) are located either within the project area or within 1,000 feet of the project boundary. Approximately 8 residences are located within the boundary of the project area. An updated ground survey was conducted for the Final EIS to verify the number of residences.

Section 3.4.1.1 identified the distribution of vegetation cover types within the project area. **Table 3.7-4** summarizes the vegetation data by general land use category. Well over half of the project area is rangeland, consisting of shrub steppe and riparian shrub areas. Grasslands, which could also be considered range area, account for another 37 percent of the project area. Relatively little of the project area is cultivated land, primarily irrigated hay meadows.



Legend

- × Turbine Location
- Project Area
- Alternative Substation Locations
- Interstate and U.S. Routes
- State Routes
- Local and County Roads
- Primitive Roads
- Regional Transmission Lines
- BPA Substation
- Project Road Network

Source: Desert Claim LLC, 2003



Kittitas County Desert Claim Wind Power Project EIS

Figure 3.7-2
Residences Within 1,000 Feet of Project Area

**Table 3.7-4
Project Area Land Use**

Land Use Type	Approximate Acreage	Percent of Project Area
Cultivated	252.3	4.8
Developed	26.5	0.5
Grassland/wet meadow	1,937.1	36.9
Forest	103.9	2.0
Rangeland	2,903.1	55.5
Water	23.4	0.5
Total	5,237.3	100

Wild Horse (Alternative 1) Site

The Wild Horse site is located in the east-central portion of Kittitas County, approximately 14 miles east of Ellensburg and 4 miles north of I-90. The site includes uplands at the eastern margin of the Kittitas Valley and slopes that drain eastward to the Columbia River north of Vantage. Based on the boundary of the lands proposed for development of the Wild Horse Wind Power Project, the site for Alternative 1 contains approximately 5,000 acres.

Whiskey Dick Mountain, with a maximum elevation of 3,842 feet, is the dominant terrain feature of the project site for Alternative 1. The remainder of the site and the surrounding area consists of a relatively flat plateau with steep-sided drainages cut into the terrain. The shrub-steppe cover type is the predominant vegetative cover in the area.

The lands within the Wild Horse site are predominantly in private ownership, and all of the private lands are held by one owner. Three sections (approximately 1,920 acres) of State lands administered by WDNR are included within the site. The area adjacent to the site has a similar ownership pattern.

The Wild Horse site is within an area designated as Rural under the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan. All of the area within the site itself is zoned as Forest and Range (FR). A portion of the prospective transmission line route for interconnection with a nearby BPA transmission line crosses lands zoned as Ag-20. The site is currently used as rangeland, under grazing leases executed by the present owner. The only existing structures on the site consist of several meteorological towers and a communications facility on Cribb Peak, a point on the eastern end of the ridge formed by Whiskey Dick Mountain.

Lands adjacent to the Wild Horse site to the south and west have a similar character and are also used as rangeland. Cultivated agricultural areas are located farther (generally 3 to 5 miles) to the west. To the north and east, the site is bordered primarily by resource lands managed as wildlife habitat by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). These include the Schaake Wildlife Area to the east and southeast, and the Quilomene Wildlife Area to the north and northeast.

There are no existing residences located within the boundaries of the Wild Horse site or on the adjoining lands. A small number of seasonal cabins scattered along the upper reaches of Parke Creek, to the north/northwest of the site, are the closest residences to the site. Farm or ranch residences and small pockets of rural residential development are located at the eastern edge of the Kittitas Valley, about 3 miles or more from the Wild Horse site.

Springwood Ranch (Alternative 2) Site

The Springwood Ranch property is located directly to the northwest of Thorp, between I-90 and the Yakima River, in Lower Kittitas County (see **Figure 2-16**). The L.T. Murray Wildlife Recreation Area, managed by WDFW, is located to the southwest of the Springwood Ranch property⁴. The Iron Horse State Park/John Wayne Trail (accessible at Easton, Cle Elum and Thorp) crosses the project site along the Yakima River in the northern area and bisects the southern area (to the southeast away from the River). The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission manages the trail and its 100-foot right-of-way.

Lands immediately adjacent to the Alternative 2 site are privately owned, with the exception of the I-90 right-of-way along the southern boundary of the property. The site borders the northern edge of the Thorp UGN and the Taneum Subarea. The Taneum Subarea is approximately 4,500 acres in size and situated to the south of I-90. The Thorp UGN is approximately 1,065 acres in size and located north of the freeway. Both areas primarily include rural residential and agricultural land uses. Thorp is also a historical transportation, milling and trading site. The UGN contains a small central commercial and higher-density residential area, similar to the rural communities in the Upper County.

The site consists of two landform types, termed the Thorp Prairie and the Thorp Lowlands. The Thorp Prairie comprises the northern part of the Springwood Ranch. It consists of rolling grassland terrain and steep slopes along the Yakima River. The Thorp Lowlands, in the southern part of the ranch, include less dramatic slopes and have primarily been utilized for agricultural and range land. Terraces near the Yakima River have been leveled and cultivated, and grazing livestock have been kept on the property periodically. There are no existing residential land uses.

The Springwood Ranch and surrounding areas are designated Commercial Agriculture and Rural in the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan, and are zoned Forest and Range-20 and Agriculture-20.

3.7.1.2 Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

Direct Impacts

Construction and Decommissioning

Existing land uses within the project area — agricultural, rural residential, electrical transmission and forestry—would continue during construction. Some uses could experience temporary disruptions in access and experience proximity impacts, such as construction noise and dust. Truck traffic, earthwork, and other construction activities could temporarily reduce or interfere with some normal agricultural and grazing activities within portions of the project area for the approximate 9 month construction period. If project construction occurred in phases, each phase would last approximately 9 months. The effect would be to extend the total duration of temporary disturbance from project construction, but to reduce the intensity or magnitude of impacts for any individual phase. Construction-related land use impacts would still be temporary, localized and low in magnitude, and overall project impacts during construction would remain insignificant in a phased-construction scenario.

⁴ Approximately 320 acres of the Springwood Ranch site (in Sections 4 and 5 of Township 18 North, Range 17 East) are included within the authorized boundary of the L.T. Murray Wildlife Recreation Area (U.S. Forest Service, 1990), but are privately-owned lands.

During construction of the wind turbines and associated facilities, approximately 348.5 acres of land would be temporarily disturbed. During operations, 82.4 acres, or 1.6 percent, of the project area would be used for wind farm facilities and infrastructure (i.e., the permanent project footprint). See **Section 2.2.2** for a detailed description of the wind project infrastructure.

Decommissioning of the wind farm operation would result in land use impacts similar to those described for the construction phase. A limited area of land would be disturbed during dismantling of project facilities, similar to the area required for their construction. All disturbed areas would be restored as near as possible to their original condition through grading and planting.

Once the wind farm operation was removed, the lands formerly occupied by project facilities could be used as allowed under applicable zoning and comprehensive plan designations and regulations.

Operation and Maintenance

The Proposed Action is assumed to operate for 30 years, which is the useful life of a wind turbine. Direct impacts to land use would consist of the conversion of a portion of the project area – approximately 82.4 acres dispersed over the entire 5,237 acre site – from existing agricultural/range uses to use for energy production. This area would be temporarily removed from agricultural use. The proposal would not permanently displace or lead to the conversion of existing land uses. Existing residential uses would not be directly displaced, but would be located proximate to wind turbines and other facilities.

Rural residential and agricultural activities would generally continue. Agricultural activities, such as livestock grazing and feed production, would continue to take place around wind turbines and other facilities; the presence of these features is not expected to significantly impact the ability to carry out existing activities. Some temporary disruptions could occur during construction.

A wind farm is considered a “utility” use per KCC 17.61 and is not characterized as an “industrial” use as that term is defined in the County’s zoning code. As such, the proposal would be generally compatible with the broad pattern of rural uses that occur on site, adjacent to the site and in the surrounding area. It would also be generally compatible with ongoing agricultural activities. In terms of land uses and land use patterns, industrialization of the area would not occur as a result of the proposal.

The proposed wind turbines would be significantly larger than surrounding structures. While this difference in scale would generate visual impacts (see **Section 3.10**), it would not inherently conflict with rural land use patterns. Many agricultural activities include associated large structures and mechanical/industrial equipment; such appurtenances may be considered to be a characteristic or element of rural character.

Wind turbines would be significantly greater in scale than nearby rural residential uses, and some degree of incompatibility or conflict would exist, particularly as to some adjacent, individual properties. However, the extent of potential conflicts should be considered in the larger context of the pattern of land uses in the project area. Resource uses, such as agriculture and forestry, predominate in Kittitas County’s rural area. These uses commonly include the presence of large structures and equipment (although not as large or extensive as the proposal), and operations that involve intensive activities and generate off-site impacts. These effects are inherent in resource uses and are often part of a rural land use context. Although the size and visibility of the turbines (discussed in Section 3.10 of this EIS) would be larger

than typical rural resource uses, wind farm operations are not inherently more intensive than other resource activities in terms of noise and associated land use impacts.

Wind turbines would be located at least 1,000 feet from existing residences and 487 feet from the project area boundary, public rights-of-way, adjoining non-project property lines, existing utility transmission corridors and the KRD canal. Individual wind turbines would be separated by a distance of two or more rotor diameters (approximately 1,000 feet) to provide for proper operation and safety. Creating a greater separation between turbines and existing residences – particularly adjacent to the central portion of the site, where there is a cluster of residences – could reduce perceived impacts to these residents. It would not, however, change the overall effect on rural land use patterns, which is not seen as significant.

Indirect Impacts

Indirect land use impacts include changes that the proposal, either alone or in combination with other uses, could contribute to or create pressure for. Examples include the attraction of supporting, secondary or spin-off activities; a tendency to discourage some types of land uses because of direct or perceived impacts; and the potential to attract or cause a proliferation of similar land uses. Visual and aesthetic impacts are considered in **Section 3.10** of this EIS.

The proposal would not attract supporting land uses or generate secondary or spin-off development. The number of full-time employees associated with the proposal is small and the turbines would be dispersed across a large area. The proposed use would not generate significant traffic or generally create the types of conditions that would create demand for commercial or industrial uses nearby. Transmission lines are already located proximate to the site. Similarly, the proposal would not attract significant numbers of non-resident workers. In-migration would be insignificant and would not result in significant demand for housing or services.

If the proposal were considered to be incompatible with or discouraged residential land uses in the immediate area, such effect would have both adverse and potentially positive aspects. Some nearby rural residential uses that viewed the wind facility as incompatible with their desired lifestyle, or who did not want to experience the changes or impacts that would occur, could possibly seek to relocate. This would be an adverse impact to these property owners. However, it would also reflect a conscious choice on their parts, since they would not be displaced by adverse land use impacts. Most surrounding lands are zoned and used for agriculture, and rural residential uses may currently compete with agricultural activities as a land use to some degree. As noted previously, increased residential growth in the County has occurred on lands used for agriculture. The proposal could indirectly support agriculture if it supported existing agricultural activities and thereby discouraged conversion of agricultural lands to residential use in the immediate area. On the other hand, if the proposal tended to disrupt or discourage the continuation of agricultural activities, it would adversely affect this land use. Based on the preceding discussion, however, wind energy production is seen as generally compatible with rural resource uses and with ongoing agricultural operations. The property owners who are leasing land for wind facilities would, as far as is known, continue existing agricultural activities. The revenue associated with these private leases could help support continuation of farming and reduce the financial pressure to convert to a non-resource use.

The proposal is not expected to significantly or adversely affect land uses within the City of Ellensburg or its Urban Growth Area (UGA). A wind farm would not present a physical barrier to future UGA expansion, if such an expansion were otherwise appropriate based on GMA criteria. If a wind farm

encouraged continuation of rural, agricultural uses and discouraged suburbanization, it could indirectly “harden” the UGA boundary to some degree and make expansion to the north less desirable. This effect, if it occurred, would also tend to encourage preservation of rural areas and agricultural lands. The proposal would be visible from some locations within the City; please refer to the discussion in Section 3.10 of the Draft EIS.

Potential indirect effects on economics and property values are not required in an EIS pursuant to the SEPA rules (WAC 197-11-448). A separate report summarizing research on these issues is available from Kittitas County.

The potential for other wind power projects to locate in the general area, or elsewhere in Kittitas County, would depend primarily on the presence of sufficient wind resource. Other relevant factors influencing wind energy location decisions include availability of sites of sufficient size and characteristics, willing land owners, and access to adequate transmission facilities. It is these criteria, not the existence of the Desert Claim project, that would influence the likely location of other wind power facilities. Other sites in Kittitas County with the potential for wind power are discussed in Chapter 2 of this EIS.

Kittitas County’s adopted process for reviewing and approving wind resource projects involves evaluation and rezoning of individual sites and proposals. It does not determine the size, location or permitted number of wind facilities in advance of a proposal. Any other wind power projects approved, therefore, are assumed to be consistent with relevant County criteria, including land use compatibility.

3.7.1.5 Impacts of the Alternatives

Alternative 1: Wild Horse Site

Direct Impacts

Direct land use impacts from construction and decommissioning of a wind power project at the Wild Horse site under Alternative 1 would be similar to those described previously for the Desert Claim proposal. The existing use of the project site as rangeland would be able to continue during the construction period, although there would be temporary disruptions of access and use as a result of construction activities. Normal grazing use within portions of the site could be displaced for up to approximately 9 months. Overall, construction activities would temporarily disturb approximately 349 acres of the site, as described in **Section 2.3.1**.

Decommissioning of Alternative 1 would result in similar temporary disturbance impacts. All disturbed areas would be restored to their original condition following removal of project facilities, and would be available for uses consistent with the comprehensive plan and zoning designations.

Long-term operation of the project under Alternative 1 would result in the conversion of approximately 153 acres from grazing use to energy production use. The existing use would continue on the remainder of the site not contained within the footprint of the permanent project facilities. No residential uses would be displaced or otherwise directly affected.

A wind-energy facility developed under Alternative 1 would be considered as a “utility” use under County land use provisions. While general types of utility uses are common in rural areas and are permitted by Kittitas County regulations, wind energy facilities are permitted only if the required permits

are granted by Kittitas County. A wind energy project at the Alternative 1 site would need the same land use approvals as those described for the Desert Claim project. Considered as a type of land use, Alternative 1 would be generally compatible with typical rural uses and with the ongoing agricultural activity that predominates in the area of the Wild Horse site. No significant conflicts with existing land use patterns would occur.

Indirect Impacts

Alternative 1 would not attract supporting land uses or generate secondary or spin-off development. The number of full-time employees associated with the proposed project is small and the turbines would be widely dispersed. The proposed use would not generate significant traffic or generally create the types of conditions that would create demand for commercial or industrial uses nearby. Transmission lines are already located proximate to the Wild Horse site. Similarly, Alternative 1 would not attract significant numbers of non-resident workers. In-migration would be insignificant and would not result in significant increased demand for housing or services. The Wild Horse site and the adjacent lands are characterized by shrub-steppe vegetation used for grazing, while intensive agricultural and rural residential uses are located several miles distant from the site. Therefore, indirect impacts on existing land uses from Alternative 1 would likely be negligible or non-existent.

Alternative 2: Springwood Ranch Site

Direct and indirect land use impacts would generally be the same in type as those described for the Proposed Action and Alternative 1, but less in magnitude because of the smaller project footprint for Alternative 2. Approximately 30 acres of (primarily) grasslands would be converted to wind energy facility use, while existing grazing activity would be temporarily displaced or disturbed on approximately 125 acres. As discussed further in **Aesthetics (Section 3.10)**, under Alternative 2 wind turbines would be significantly closer and more visible to drivers on I-90 than would be the case for the Proposed Action.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, on-site agricultural and rural residential activities would continue for the foreseeable future; current Ag-20 and Forest and Range zoning would likely continue. The potential for residential development in the project area, permitted by existing zoning, and the potential for conflicts with existing agricultural activities, would continue. For the approximately 4,000 acres zoned as Ag-20, the potential exists for development of up to 400 residential lots over this area. Conversion to rural residential uses could displace existing uses and affect rural character over time.

3.7.1.6 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts for all elements of the environment are addressed in **Chapter 4**.

3.7.1.7 Mitigation Measures

Increasing turbine setbacks from the residences adjacent to the central portion of the site could reduce visual and proximity impacts to these residents. Similarly, increasing setbacks from property boundaries, as proposed in the modified project configuration, could reduce impacts to these property owners. As noted in Chapter 2 of the Final EIS, the applicant has modified the proposed turbine configuration to

provide setbacks from residences, property boundaries, road rights-of-way, transmission facilities, and the KRD canal. Other impacts discussed would not be significant and do not warrant mitigation.

According to Kittitas County’s regulations for wind farms (KCC 17.61A.010), which are discussed in section 3.7.2.1. below, the Board of County Commissioners’ decision on a wind farm application will address the issue of land use compatibility. The Board must decide whether a proposed wind farm location is suitable, protects the public health, welfare, safety and quality of life, and ensure compatible land uses in the vicinity.

3.7.1.8 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

The scale of the wind turbines would be significantly larger than other land uses; this contrast is unavoidable because of the nature of wind power facilities. Effects on overall land use patterns in the project area would not be significant. Impacts to residences located proximate to the turbines could be reduced, but not eliminated, through increased setbacks.

3.7.2 Relationship to Land Use Plans, Policies and Regulations

3.7.2.1 Local

Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan (1996, as amended)

In 1996, Kittitas County adopted a Comprehensive Plan consistent with the requirements of the State Growth Management Act. The plan contains the County’s goals for managing growth and development over a 20-year period (1996 to 2016). It includes general goals and policy statements for five major elements, including: land use, housing, transportation, capital facilities, and utilities. Land Use and Utility policies are most relevant to the proposal and summarized and discussed below.

Land Use

Summary: The Land Use section includes designations and policies for guiding land use in the County. Land use designations establish general locations for specific land use and development activities throughout the County. The project area and much of the surrounding area is designated as Rural in the Comprehensive Plan, except for areas to the north and northwest of the project area, which are designated as Commercial Forest. The Plan identifies the importance of natural resource activities, as they contribute to the County’s economic base.

Chapter 8, Section 8.5, of the Comprehensive Plan states, “Rural lands in Kittitas County are now, and have historically been, a mix of resource lands, rural neighborhoods, and varied developments scattered throughout the county.” The Plan’s goals, policies, and objectives (GPOs) for land uses on rural lands are “established in an attempt to prevent sprawl, direct growth toward the Urban Growth Areas and Nodes, provide for a variety of densities and uses, respect private property rights, provide for residences, recreation, and economic development opportunities, support farming, forestry and mining activities, show concern for shorelines, critical areas, habitat, scenic areas, and open space while keeping with good governance and the wishes of the people of Kittitas County and to comply with the GMA and other planning mandates.” The following GPO’s apply to the development of wind resource farms:

- GPO 8.5 Kittitas County recognizes and agrees with the need for continued diversity in densities and uses on Rural Lands.*
- GPO 8.9 Projects or developments, which result in the significant conservation of rural lands or rural character, will be encouraged.*
- GPO 8.11 Existing and traditional uses should be protected and supported while allowing as much as possible for diversity, progress, experimentation, development, and choice in keeping with the retention of Rural Lands.*

The Comprehensive Plan states that utilities using natural resources may be appropriate in rural areas:

The economy of our rural community has traditionally been based on natural resource activities and Kittitas County encourages and supports their continuation in Rural Lands.... Economically viable farming and logging may occur with or beyond the state designated areas but more and more it is necessary to supplement income from outside sources in order to support natural resource operations. Other businesses and economic growth can be realized without sacrificing our rural character.

Discussion: Development of the proposed project (or Alternatives 1 or 2) would be generally consistent with the above GPOs and the intent of the Comprehensive Plan. The proposed project would not directly change or replace existing uses of the site (agriculture) or affect the pattern of rural uses in the surrounding area. Wind farms are a relatively new and innovative type of energy (or utility) use that would support economic growth and generate revenues to Kittitas County and junior taxing districts (refer to the Fiscal Impact discussion in this EIS). As noted in the *Land Use* discussion above, the proposal could indirectly contribute to the continuation of agricultural activities, and would be generally compatible with the pattern of uses in the rural area. Kittitas County categorizes wind farms as a utility use, not as an industrial activity. (Refer to the definitions of “utilities” and “industrial uses” in the Glossary of Terms (Appendix A) of the Comprehensive Plan.) Even if considered to be an industrial use, however, wind farms would not be considered “urban growth” as that term is used in the Growth Management Act; please see the discussion of the Growth Management Act below.

Utilities

Summary: The Utilities section of the Comprehensive Plan identifies the general location and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities, including but not limited to, electrical lines, telecommunication lines, and natural gas lines. Generally, the goals, policies, and objectives seek to promote the maintenance of current information on existing and proposed facilities; plan for expansion or improvement of utility systems; encourage coordination between jurisdictions and utility providers; and ensure the proper placement and appropriateness of utility siting.

The Comprehensive Plan was amended in December 2002 to include a provision for wind farms, as follows:

- GPO 6.1 The County should promote the joint use of transportation rights-of-way and other utility corridors consistent with the underlying private property rights and easement limitations.*

- GPO 6.32 Electric and natural gas transmission and distribution facilities may be sited within and through areas of Kittitas County both inside and outside of municipal boundaries, UGAs, UGNs, Master Planned Resorts, and Fully Contained Communities, including to and through rural areas of Kittitas County.*
- GPO 6.34 Wind farms may only be located in areas designated as Wind Farm Resource overlay districts in the Comprehensive Plan. Such Wind Farm Resource overlay districts need not be designated as Major Industrial Developments under Chapter 2.5 of the Comprehensive Plan.*

The Comprehensive Plan also articulates the County's policies for addressing regional energy demands and energy production goals, including the following:

- GPO 6.7 Decisions made by Kittitas County regarding utility facilities will be made in a manner consistent with and complementary to regional demands and resources.*
- GPO 6.8 Additions to and improvements of utilities facilities will be allowed to occur at a time and in a manner sufficient to serve growth.*
- GPO 6.13 The County should coordinate with utility providers.*
- GPO 6.18 Decisions made regarding utilities facilities should be consistent with and complementary to regional demand and resources and should reinforce an interconnected regional distribution network.*

Discussion: The proposal (or Alternatives 1 or 2) would be located within the Rural Area, which is consistent with the Plan's policies, and would produce electricity to meet regional energy demands. Please refer to the discussion in Chapter 2 of this Draft EIS regarding a recent RFP by Puget Sound Energy and other regional utilities, including Avista and PacifiCorp, to acquire wind power as part of their plans for meeting the region's projected energy demand. The proposal would connect to an existing electric transmission line; proximity to a transmission line is a criterion for siting wind energy facilities (see the discussion of alternative sites in Chapter 2). Electricity generated by wind turbines would be collected through cables that run above or below the ground in the project area or within utility rights-of-way to an on-site substation. Most power collection lines would be located within the project area.

Since wind farms are considered to be utilities, not industrial uses, the relationship of the proposal to industrial land use policies in the Comprehensive Plan is not considered to be relevant.

Kittitas County Zoning Code (Title 17)

Summary: The Zoning Code implements the Comprehensive Plan and regulates the use and development of all property within the unincorporated area. The site is located within Kittitas County's designated Rural Area (see **Figure 3.7-1**).

Wind farms are permitted within Kittitas County only through application of the County's Wind Farm Resource Overlay Zone, modification of the Comprehensive Plan Land Use map, and execution of a development agreement (KCC, Chapter 17.61A). The overlay zone permits wind energy resources in addition to uses permitted in the underlying zoning classification (Agriculture-20 and Forest Range); it

does not change the underlying land use. The intent of the code's provisions is to provide for the recognition and designation of properties located in areas suitable for wind energy production, while protecting the welfare of the public and ensuring compatibility between nearby land uses.

Please also refer to the preceding discussion of Comprehensive Plan policies for utilities and wind farms.

Discussion: The project (or Alternative 1 or 2) would conform to Kittitas County land use requirements, and would require an amendment to the Zoning Code. The amendment would involve the designation of Wind Farm Resource Overlay District. The development agreement would include standards for wind turbines (location, number, size and setback) and other facilities; mitigation measures; and other development conditions deemed necessary to protect surrounding properties, communities, or the County as a whole.

Kittitas County Critical Areas Ordinance (Title 17A)

Summary: Kittitas County's Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO, KCC 17A.03.045) sets forth the requirements for protecting frequently flooded areas, aquifer recharge areas, wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, and geologically hazardous areas. The County also considers the following areas (not classified as critical areas) during the permit review process: agriculture, erosion hazard areas, groundwater, landslide hazard areas, seismic hazard areas, and mine hazard areas.

Wetlands: Wetlands are areas inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Kittitas County has adopted a 'zero net loss' wetlands policy. "Zero" or "no" net loss does not mean that no impacts to wetlands can occur. Rather, it means that wetland impacts must be compensated for to ensure that no *net* reduction in wetland functions and values will occur; wetland subtractions may be offset by wetland additions, for example. The Critical Areas regulations require buffers of 50 to 200 feet for Type 1 wetlands, 25 to 100 feet for Type 2 wetlands, and 20 to 80 feet for Type 3 wetlands.

Discussion: The Desert Claim site contains areas of wetlands that could be impacted by project facilities, as does the site identified for Alternative 2; wetland impacts would not be expected under Alternative 1. Please refer to the discussion in **Section 3.4** of this Draft EIS. Information contained in the Draft EIS would be used to determine the location of project elements (turbines, etc) and to avoid or minimize impacts to wetlands. Wetland impacts would be mitigated as permitted by adopted critical area regulations.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas: These areas include wetlands, big game winter range, riparian habitat and habitats for species of local importance (based on WDFW designations). Riparian areas are prioritized according to stream type, with buffers ranging from 10 to 200 feet from the ordinary high water mark. Terrestrial habitat is protected according to State and federal direction and local importance.

Discussion: Please refer to the discussion of potential impacts and mitigation measures in **Section 3.4** of this Draft EIS. Using information contained in the Draft EIS, the applicant will review and potentially modify the location of turbines and other facilities (i.e., micro-siting) to avoid or minimize disturbance to shrub-steppe habitat, riparian, and wetland communities. Disturbance of protected habitat would be minimized and/or compensated for through restoration and enhancement.

Agriculture: Agricultural land is defined to include livestock raising, crop cultivation and harvesting, irrigation and drainage ditches, and farm roads. The County has adopted GMA minimum guidelines for classification and designation of agricultural lands, and has established an interim commercial agricultural zone (CAZ). Non-farm uses are discouraged in farm areas; incentives and support for farmers are a significant component of the designation.

Discussion: As discussed in the Land Use section above, the project area lies within the Ag-20 zone. None of the Desert Claim project area is within the CAZ, nor are the lands within the sites for Alternative 1 or 2. Use of the area for wind energy facilities would not displace or interfere with existing agricultural uses (hay and other feed-crop production and livestock grazing). The North Branch Canal would continue to provide irrigation for these activities.

Kittitas County Shoreline Master Program

Summary: Kittitas County’s Shoreline Master Program (SMP) was adopted in March, 1975 and approved by the Department of Ecology in September 1995. The SMP regulates “substantial development” (i.e., \$5,000 or more in value) within 200 feet of designated “shorelines.” Shorelines subject to the SMP include specific rivers, streams and lakes, and wetlands and floodways associated with such water bodies.

The overall goal of the program is to promote a pattern of shoreline use that will minimize conflicts, preserve a high quality environment, and leave open the greatest number of options for future generations of shoreline users. The program’s standards and requirements are implemented through the County’s substantial development permit process.

The SMP includes: goals concerning shoreline use (e.g., economic development, recreation, public access); use activity policy statements (e.g., utilities, agriculture); environment designations (Urban, Rural, Conservancy and Natural categories); and shoreline regulations (setbacks, etc. for various use activities).

Discussion: The project area does not contain and is not within 200 feet of any designated shorelines. The provisions of the SMP are, therefore, not applicable to the proposal. The same condition applies to the site for Alternative 1. The project site defined for Alternative 2 includes designated shorelines of the Yakima River, but project construction activity under this alternative would not occur within the shoreline zone.

3.7.2.2 State Policies and Regulations

Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A) (1990)

Summary: Enacted in 1990, the Growth Management Act (GMA) establishes state policy to plan and manage growth. Jurisdictions subject to GMA must prepare and adopt: county-wide planning policies; comprehensive land use plans containing specified elements and embodying state-wide goals; regulations consistent with those plans; capital facilities plans for utilities and transportation systems; and programs designating and regulating critical and sensitive areas (including agricultural and forest lands, wetlands, steep slopes, and critical habitat). Counties must designate “urban growth areas,” which are areas already characterized by urban growth and within which future growth is encouraged. Cities are included within urban growth areas and are generally expected to accommodate the majority of growth.

GMA goals generally consist of: directing growth to urban areas; reducing sprawl; providing efficient transportation systems; promoting a range of residential densities and housing types, and encouraging affordable housing; promoting economic development throughout the state; protecting private property rights; ensuring timely and fair processing of applications; maintaining and enhancing resource-based industries; encouraging retention of open space and habitat areas; protecting the environment; involving citizens in the planning process; ensuring that public facilities are provided at adequate levels concurrent with planned development; and preserving lands with historical and archaeological significance.

County Comprehensive Plans must address rural development issues. Measures in the plan must protect rural character by: (1) containing or controlling rural development; (2) assuring visual compatibility of rural development with the surrounding rural area; (3) reducing the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low density rural development; (4) protecting critical areas; and (5) protecting against conflicts with the use of agricultural, forest and mineral resource lands. “Rural development” is defined in the GMA as development outside urban growth areas and outside resource lands. It may include a variety of uses and densities (RCW 36.70A.030 (15)). At the time GMA was adopted, there were no wind energy facilities in Washington State. Such facilities are not addressed in the statute directly.

“Urban growth” is defined to mean “growth that makes intensive use of land for the location of buildings, structures and impermeable surfaces to such a degree as to be incompatible with the primary use of the land for the production of food, other agricultural products...or the extraction of mineral resources, rural development and natural resource lands...” (RCW 36.70A.030 (17)).

Discussion: Kittitas County modified its Comprehensive Plan and zoning code in 2002 in anticipation of potential wind resource development applications. The County’s adopted process includes project-specific amendment of the Comprehensive Plan Land Use map, rezoning and a development agreement before wind energy resources are permitted anywhere in the County. Project specific mitigation measures and development conditions would help ensure that GMA’s rural policies are achieved.

Growth Management Hearings Board decisions were reviewed to identify any direction regarding the range of uses permissible in rural areas; as noted previously, no wind power facilities had been constructed in Washington at the time the GMA was enacted and this use is not addressed directly in the statute. A review of published digests of decisions of the Eastern Washington Growth Management Hearings Board identified several instances where the Board reiterated the GMA’s prohibition against locating urban uses within rural areas, or discussed the flexibility and limitations provided to “limited areas of more intensive rural development pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070 5)(b)(v)) (e.g., *Whitaker v/ Grant County, No. 99-1-0019*). No discussion of the range of uses considered “rural” was identified, however.

The Central Puget Sound Growth Management Hearings Board did address this question generally in *Vashon-Maury, et al v. King County (No. 95-3-0008)*. In that decision, the Board first interpreted GMA’s rural provisions to mean that permitted land uses must be compatible with the land use *pattern* in the immediate vicinity of a proposed use and the rural character of that pattern, rather than solely with the use of an individual parcel (Id. at 1289). The Board went on to say that “rural character” has both a functional and visual component. The functional component was related to whether the proposed use was rural because it was “dependent on a rural setting.” If rural lands or uses on those lands would be interfered with by impacts of the proposed use, the use would be considered incompatible. Similarly, if

the proposed use “unduly disrupted or altered” the visual character of the rural landscape, it would be considered incompatible. This was seen as related to the degree to which the proposed use blends in or sticks out, which in turn is related to the intensity of development (Id. at 1289).

The Central Puget Sound Board also acknowledged that there could be legitimate rural uses that might meet the GMA definition of “urban growth,” which would be “an absurd result.” It fashioned a “general rule,” therefore, that would permit an intensive use if it was dependent, by its nature, on being in a rural area and was compatible with the functional and visual character of rural uses on the immediate vicinity (Id. at 1290).

The proposal (or Alternative 1 or 2) would not be characterized as “urban growth” as that term is defined in the GMA. While wind turbines are large structures, the proposal would not involve significant amounts of buildings, structures or impermeable surfaces (approximately 82 acres, or 1.6 percent of the entire 5,237 acre site), and, as discussed above, would not displace or significantly interfere with the primary use of land, or the predominant land use pattern in the project vicinity, for rural and agricultural activities. These lands are not designated as agricultural, forest or mineral resource lands of long-term commercial significance. Even if turbines were considered to be “urban growth”, however, the nature of wind power energy systems requires that large areas of land be used to locate turbines. Such facilities are, therefore, functionally dependent on a rural setting and cannot as a practical matter be sited in urban areas. In both Europe and the U.S., wind facilities are typically sited in rural areas. As discussed in the Land Use section, the proposal would be compatible with the overall rural land use pattern; some conflicts with individual parcels of property would occur. To the extent that the location of turbines discouraged future residential development, it would help conserve the project area for agriculture. Visual impacts and compatibility are addressed in **Section 3.10** of the Draft EIS. Critical areas would be avoided where possible; any identified impacts would be mitigated. Overall, the County’s project-by-project review process would enable it to determine the effects of wind energy facilities and to control rural impacts.

Indian Sites and Resources Act; Indian Graves and Records Act

Summary: The Indian Sites and Resources Act (RCW 27.53) and the Indian Graves and Records Act (RCW 27.44) address cultural resources pertaining to the Indian history within the State of Washington. RCW 27.53 prohibits the disturbance or excavation of historic or prehistoric archaeological resources on state or private land without a permit. RCW 27.44 prohibits knowingly disturbing a Native American or historic grave.

Discussion: The proposed action (or Alternative 1 or 2) contains a number of ground-disturbing activities that have the potential to directly impact cultural resources within the project area. Ground-disturbing activities would occur at most stages of project development, including construction of roads, tower foundations, power collection systems, substations, operations and maintenance facility, and other project features. See **Section 3.6** for an analysis of existing cultural resources and potential impacts within the project area.

Washington Scenic Highways Act

Summary: The Scenic and Recreational Highway Act (Chapter 47.39 RCW), enacted in 1967, designated a system of scenic and recreational highways throughout the State. Segments of more than 60 highways in Washington have been designated as part of the scenic and recreational highway system. Designated

scenic highways in Kittitas County include SR-97, from the junction with SR-10 north to the junction with SR-2 near Leavenworth, and SR-10, beginning at the Teanaway junction and east to SR-97. Scenic highway designation typically results in the preparation of a scenic corridor management plan to provide policy guidance regarding local land use regulations, such as comprehensive plan policies and zoning designations.

Discussion: The Desert Claim project area would be visible from the south portion of SR-97 and along SR-10 from the Teanaway junction east to SR-97. The site for Alternative 2 would also be visible from both highways, and at a considerably closer viewing distance. Please see **Section 3.10** of the Draft EIS for a detailed analysis of the project's visual impacts on area viewpoints. Scenic corridor management plans have not been prepared for the SR-97 or SR-10 highway corridors. Designation of routes as scenic highways under RCW 47.39 does not establish regulatory authority or standards relating to visual resource conditions within view of scenic highway corridors.

3.7.2.3 Federal Policies and Regulations

Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1533) (1973), Bald Eagle and Golden Eagle Protection Act (1940)

Summary: The Endangered Species Act (ESA) requires the protection and recovery of threatened and endangered species. ESA is administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries for species with ocean habitats or for anadromous fish species, and by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for all other species. NOAA and USFWS designate critical habitat for species which are identified as threatened or endangered or which are listed as potentially threatened or endangered. Section 7 of the ESA requires federal agencies to assess the effect of their proposed actions on listed species and consult with NOAA and/or USFWS, as applicable. Section 9 makes it unlawful to 'take' endangered species. Take is defined to include harm, harassment, and habitat modification or degradation. Section 10 enables interested parties to obtain a regulatory certainty (i.e., a take permit) in exchange for voluntary measures that conserve protected animals. 'Incidental take' or 'enhancement of survival' permits lawful activities that might unintentionally harm a species to proceed under a habitat conservation plan, candidate conservation agreement, or a safe harbor agreement.

The Bald Eagle and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BEPA) protects the bald eagle and golden eagle and imposes its own prohibition on any taking of these species. As defined in BEPA, 'take' is defined by actions to pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest or disturb these species.

Discussion: **Section 3.4** of this Draft EIS addresses potential impacts to plants and wildlife that are listed, or are candidates for listing, as threatened or endangered and that may occur on or near the Desert Claim project area, or within the project areas for Alternatives 1 and 2. Bald eagles are known to use the area within and around the Project area and are listed as Threatened under the ESA. Golden eagles have a moderate potential for use of the site and are classified as a State Species of Concern.

National Historic Preservation Act (PL 90-577) (1966)

Summary: The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) protects historic sites and values (in cooperation with other nations, states, and local governments) as federal policy. It generally establishes a grants program to states for historic preservation and requires federal agencies to consider the effects of

their actions on historic resources. Agencies can require private interests to pay costs of protecting archaeological and historic resources. Historic resources are identified by literature searches, sample evaluation, and site surveys.

Federal criteria provide a useful way to measure the scientific or historic value of properties. Properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Places generally must be at least 50 years old, possess integrity of physical characteristics, and meet at least one of four criteria of significance. The criteria are discussed in detail in **Section 3.6**.

Discussion: No sites within or adjacent to the project area are known to be listed on or proposed for listing on the National Historic Register. The Kittitas County Historical Site record indicates a homestead (the Robbins Homestead or Springfield Farm) located within the project area. Heritage resources identified in the field survey for the Desert Claim project include 13 prehistoric sites, 19 historic sites, 28 historic isolates (locations with fewer than 5 artifacts) and 48 prehistoric isolates. A preliminary assessment of resource significance for these sites identified 13 sites as likely to be significant, including 8 historic sites, 4 prehistoric resources and 1 site with both historic and prehistoric components within the project area. Evidence of potentially significant agriculture/settlement heritage resources includes the Morrison Homestead, Springfield Farm, Roan Farm, White Ranch, Hodges Residence, the North Branch Canal and miscellaneous historic farm structures and debris. Prehistoric resources include lithic scatters that represent the manufacture and sharpening of stone tools or activities associated with short-term camps. Potential project impacts on these resources and associated mitigation measures are addressed in **Section 3.6**.

Ethnographic data indicate that three Yakama villages were located within a few miles of the Desert Claim project area. People of these villages would have utilized the land for hunting, plant gathering, and traditional activities. See **Section 3.6** of this Draft EIS for further discussion of historic features within the project area, and within the sites for Alternatives 1 and 2.

National Scenic Byways Program

Summary: The National Scenic Byways Program is currently authorized by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21, 1998; 23 USC 101). The Program provides for the designation of roads that have outstanding scenic, historic, cultural, natural, recreational and archaeological qualities as All-American Roads or National Scenic Byways. Jurisdictions along designated roads are given priority for discretionary highway projects, planning and design grants. The Program does not place restrictions on land use within scenic corridors. In Washington State, the Department of Transportation administers the highway selection process. The Federal Highway Administration approves selections and related grants.

Discussion: In 1998, I-90 from Seattle to Thorp was designated as a National Scenic Byway. The Desert Claim project area is at least partially visible from I-90 at Thorp. The Alternative 2 site adjoins I-90 and most of the site is visible from the freeway. Refer to **Section 3.10** of this Draft EIS for further discussion of visual impacts.

Wenatchee National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan

Summary: The Wenatchee National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan was adopted in 1990; it was amended in April 1994 by the Record of Decision (ROD) for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl. The

1994 ROD directed the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to develop and implement a scientifically credible comprehensive plan for providing late-successional forest within Adaptive Management Areas (AMA) and protecting the critical connective link in north-south movement of organisms (USFS, 1994)⁵. In November 1997, the Record of Decision for the Snoqualmie Pass AMA for the Wenatchee and Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forests was adopted; the 1997 ROD outlines a comprehensive management plan for the area (USFS, 1997b). The plan establishes direction for managing the ‘checkerboard’ forest lands within the AMA, but does not authorize site-specific actions.

Discussion: The proposed project area does not lie within the Wenatchee National Forest boundary and does not include national forest lands. The same condition applies to the sites defined for Alternatives 1 and 2. Therefore, national forest plans and policies are not directly applicable to the proposal.

⁵ AMAs were selected by US land management agencies to provide opportunities for innovation and a range of technical challenges, from an emphasis on restoration of late-successional forest conditions and riparian zones to integration of commercial timber harvest with ecological objectives.