



State of Washington

Department of Fish and Wildlife

South Central Region – Ellensburg District Office, 201 North Pearl, Ellensburg, WA 98926

Phone: (509) 925-1013, Fax (509) 925-4702

March 8, 2006

Chris Taylor
Director of Development
Horizon Wind Energy LLC
53 SW Yamhill Street
Portland, OR 97204

Subject: Whiskey Ridge Wind Power Project - Draft Protocol for Wildlife and Habitat Surveys

Dear Chris:

We have completed our review of the Whiskey Ridge Project Wildlife and Habitat Survey protocol. I apologize that this has taken so long to reply to your request. In general the protocol is satisfactory and we agree with how the overall strategy addresses the particular needs of this site. We do have some requests for modifications to the sensitive species surveys and sage grouse surveys, which I have detailed below.

Sensitive Species Surveys – Shrub-steppe Obligates

Generally we agree that proposed May 1st- June 15th time period for surveys is appropriate. However, at present we are expecting a cooler, later spring which could affect breeding timing. WEST, Inc. should consider local conditions and make adjustments to the timing as appropriate. For sage sparrows and sage thrashers in particular, surveys should be conducted between the hours of 1 hour before sunrise to 2 to 3 hours after sunrise - depending on the temperature. We recommend surveys be repeated at least once at each location, however repeating the surveys two or more times would be better.

Sage Grouse Surveys

WDFW requests that Horizon include helicopter surveys for sage grouse leks in the protocol. Locations of lek sites are somewhat predictable based on vegetation. Leks can consist of several males, which with favorable lighting and a bit of good fortune, can be quite visible. Surveys should be done between March 15th and April 15th, ½ hour before sunrise to 2 hours after sunrise. We request that WEST, Inc. stay in contact the US Army Yakima Training Center (YTC) biologists this spring to determine when the male attendance at the large YTC leks is peaking. We expect that would be the best time to do the aerial searches with the greatest likelihood of detection.

Chris Taylor
July 1, 2005
Page 2 of 2

Sage grouse brood surveys, should be done during June through mid-July. Our data indicate that median hatch dates on the YTC range between the last week in April and 3rd week in May and the median date is around the second week of May. In late July, and definitely by 1 August, the hens and broods begin to form fall flocks. At that time, the chicks are difficult to distinguish from adults when in large flocks. Our experience has been that finding broods is difficult. Hens with broods occupy a variety of habitats and they are highly dispersed across the landscape. In some western states where sage-grouse numbers are still high, brood surveys have been effective in late summer where the birds congregate near agricultural fields. In Washington, we do not have such high numbers of birds.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the protocol.

Sincerely,

Brent D. Renfrow
District Habitat Biologist

Cc: Ted Clausing, WDFW
Edd Bracken, WDFW
Perry Harvester, WDFW