

3. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

This chapter of the EIS is organized into 14 sections, 13 of which describe baseline conditions for the respective elements of the environment, document the expected environmental impacts of the proposed action and the alternatives, and identify mitigation measures pertinent to those impacts. The last section of this chapter, Section 3.14, addresses cumulative impacts.

The affected environment is addressed first in each section at a level of detail sufficient to allow an overall understanding of baseline conditions. For most elements, the geographic focus of this discussion is the project area for the proposed KVVWPP. In addition, information on baseline conditions relevant to the Swauk Valley Ranch and Springwood Ranch, labeled as off-site alternatives 1 and 2 respectively, is included.

Subsequent material presents the expected environmental consequences of the proposed action. Impacts are outlined for the two proposed action alternatives and the No Action Alternative. Because Alternatives 1 and 2 involve similar actions at different project sites, impacts for these alternatives are generally compared to those for the proposed action.

Information on existing conditions and expected impacts for the proposed action is primarily based on the KVVWPP Application for Site Certification (Sagebrush Power Partners LLC 2003a) and studies prepared in support of the application. Additional information used to evaluate the potential impacts has been referenced.

The KVVWPP Applicant does not have access to and control over the sites defined for Alternatives 1 and 2 and EFSEC did not perform site-specific studies for those offsite alternatives to support this EIS. Instead, EFSEC relied on existing, readily available information applicable to each alternative. Information on existing conditions and potential impacts for the two proposed action alternatives is integrated from the KVVWPP Draft Supplemental EIS (EFSEC 2004a) and is primarily based on information contained in the Wild Horse Wind Power Project Off-Site Alternatives Analysis (Jones and Stokes 2004a) and Wild Horse Wind Power Project Off-Site Alternatives Impact Analysis (Jones and Stokes 2004b).

After publication of the KVVWPP Draft Supplemental EIS, the Wild Horse Wind Power Project Draft EIS and Final EIS (EFSEC 2004a, 2004b) and Desert Claim Wind Power Project Final EIS (Kittitas County 2004) were published. These documents function as additional sources of information for the offsite alternatives analysis.

The discussion of mitigation measures is similarly divided into measures that apply to the proposed action and those that apply to the alternatives. No site-specific applications for wind power facilities have been filed for the Swauk Valley Ranch or Springwood Ranch sites (Alternatives 1 and 2, respectively) and detailed analyses of potential impacts at these sites have not been performed. Therefore, site-specific mitigation measures for Alternatives 1 and 2 cannot be identified. However, brief statements regarding general mitigation requirements are included for these two alternatives.