

Shepherds Flat South

Department Responses to Comments on the Request for Amendment #1

On November 4, 2009, the certificate holder submitted a “Request to Amend the Site Certificate for Shepherds Flat South” (Request for Amendment #1). The Department issued a public notice on the amendment request and accepted comments through December 11, 2009. The Department received comments from the persons and agencies listed below. In the table that follows, the Department has summarized the issues raised in the comments and has provided a response.

- Reviewing Agencies
 Joe Misek, Oregon Department of Forestry
 Sarah Kelly, Oregon Department of State Lands
 Jerry Sauter, Oregon Water Resources Department
 Rose Owens, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
 Todd Hesse, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
- Public Comments
 Johnson Meninick, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
 Marisa Meyer and Gary Miller, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Leslie Nelson, The Nature Conservancy

Comment	Response
<u>Reviewing Agency Comments</u>	
Joe Misek, Oregon Department of Forestry (letter)	
The Oregon Department of Forestry noted that the proposed facility does not appear to affect forest land.	
Sarah Kelly, Oregon Department of State Lands (email)	
“A wetland delineation was approved by our Department on 11/10/09. However, I could not tell if the approved delineation included the additional areas added by the amendment. The delineation may need to be amended to include these new areas.”	[1] The delineation did not include a proposed new transmission line crossing of Eightmile Canyon or the end-run of the transmission corridor between the previously-approved SFC site boundary and Slatt. Condition 72 requires avoidance of impact on Eightmile Creek. Proposed Condition 103 would require a preconstruction survey of lands not previously surveyed for wetlands and other waters of the State and avoidance of any jurisdictional waters found in those areas.
“The applicant should check with the Eastern Region Manager, Randy West, to ensure that no access agreements are required from State Lands for the project to move forward.”	[2] The certificate holder has consulted with Randy Wiest. The SFS site is located on private land. No access agreements from DSL are necessary.
Jerry Sauter, Oregon Water Resources Department (letter)	
The amendment raised no issues of concern.	
Rose Owens, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (email and letter)	
“ODFW continues to be concerned about cumulative impacts in the Columbia Plateau Ecoregion from the ever-increasing numbers of wind projects, as well as from other development, which result in ever-increasing avian and bat fatalities and native habitat loss. ODFW would like to engage ODOE, as well as other interested parties (e.g., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the wind	[3] The Department supports further discussions with all interested parties to clarify concerns about cumulative effects and to develop appropriate recommendations for the Siting Council.

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<p>industry) in discussions about how recommendations about cumulative impacts, that were included in the Oregon Columbia Plateau Ecoregion Wind Energy Siting and Permitting Guidelines, could collectively be implemented.”</p>	
<p>“ODFW would recommend that the Applicant complete surveys for any sensitive, threatened or endangered species that have potential to inhabit the portions of the new amended site boundary that has not been previously surveyed during the original application or during the Saddle Butte surveys.”</p>	<p>[4]</p> <p>The amendment request includes information about surveys for sensitive, threatened and endangered species that were performed in 2009 for the proposed Saddle Butte Wind Park (Request for Amendment #1, Appendix 1 and Attachment 1). These surveys covered approximately 4,830 acres of the 5,640 acres proposed to be added to the SFS site. Approximately 785 acres of the expansion area lies within the previously-approved SFC site boundary. Approximately 25 acres has not been surveyed. The Department recommends modification of Condition 86 to require pre-construction surveys for threatened, endangered and sensitive wildlife species as recommended by ODFW.</p>
<p>“ODFW would like more clarification on the Washington ground squirrel surveys that were completed on the new lands in suitable habitat within 1000 feet of all ground-disturbing activities in the new areas. It is unclear what criteria (scat, burrows, alarm calls, visible sightings, etc.) the Applicant used to determine WGS presence. ODFW would also recommend that the Applicant complete a second survey in those areas that are inside the micro-siting corridors that had potential WGS holes prior to construction. Most of the other projects have utilized a two-survey system to determine presence of WGS that includes two surveys conducted in a perpendicular pattern during the same year. ODFW would also recommend that surveys be completed between March 20 to June 1. This is the time frame when the juveniles are most active and easiest to locate.”</p>	<p>[5]</p> <p>WGS surveys were conducted in 2009 in suitable habitat within the site of the proposed Saddle Butte Wind Park (Request for Amendment #1, Appendix 1 and Attachment 1), which included 4,830 acres that is now proposed to be added to SFS. The Department discussed this comment with ODFW to clarify the “two-survey” search protocol. Recommended revisions to Condition 86 would require pre-construction surveys in suitable habitat for WGS in 2010, during the time when the WGS are active, using a two-survey protocol acceptable to ODFW.</p>
<p>“ODFW recommends that raptor nest surveys be completed within a 2-mile radius of the new project area. The amendment does not state how large of a buffer was surveyed for the nest search that was completed. ODFW also recommends that the Applicant show the locations of inactive nests that were located during the study that have a potential to be used by raptor species of concern.”</p>	<p>[6]</p> <p>Raptor nest surveys of the Shepherds Flat Wind Farm area (including the previously approved SFS site) plus a 2-mile buffer were conducted in 2003. (<i>Final Order on the Application for the Shepherds Flat Wind Farm</i> (July 25, 2008), p. 107). Condition 88 requires the certificate holder to conduct pre-construction surveys, using a protocol approved by ODFW, to determine whether there are any active nests of Swainson’s hawk, ferruginous hawk or burrowing owls within a half-mile of any areas that would be disturbed by construction. Condition 83 incorporates the <i>Wildlife Monitoring and Mitigation Plan</i>. The plan includes short-term and long-term raptor nest monitoring in the area within the SFS site plus a 2-mile buffer.</p>
<p>“ODFW recommends that the Applicant address any changes in acreage and habitat classifications that will arise from changing the wind farm layout to the proposed amended layout. The habitat mitigation plan for the project will need to be adjusted to show any changes in impacts to habitat quantity or quality (categorization) that will arise from the proposed amendment.”</p>	<p>[7]</p> <p>The certificate holder provided a habitat assessment for the SFS site, including the areas proposed to be added by this amendment. In the present order, Table 3 shows the “typical layout” habitat impacts and Table 4 shows the “maximum” habitat impacts. Condition 29 requires the certificate holder to provide a habitat assessment</p>

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	based on the final design configuration before beginning construction. The <i>Habitat Mitigation Plan</i> , which is incorporated in Condition 85, describes how the final size of the habitat mitigation area is determined based on the final design habitat assessment.
Todd Hesse, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (email)	
"The proposed amendment does not raise any water quality issues for the Department of Environmental Quality if the conditions of the construction permit are met."	
<u>Public Comments</u>	
Johnson Meninick, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (letter)	
"Although this project is located on private land, the proposed wind turbines are going to be connected to Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) transmission lines and substations. Furthermore, the power generated from the wind turbines is going to be used by the general public. Therefore, we ask that you follow federal guidelines outlined in the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and consult with Tribes (the Yakama, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Warm Springs, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Umatilla, and Nez Perce) in order to be in compliance with the Native American Religious Freedoms Act."	<p style="text-align: center;">[8]</p> <p>BPA, as a federal agency, may have obligations under the NHPA and the American Indian Religious Freedoms Act. The Siting Council is not a federal agency, and the project is not funded in whole or in part under the direct or indirect jurisdiction of a federal agency. Therefore, those laws do not directly apply. Nevertheless, the certificate holder has conducted surveys for cultural resources for the previously-approved site (<i>Final Order on the Application for the Shepherds Flat Wind Farm</i> (July 25, 2008), pp. 118-122). The cultural resource surveys were conducted in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and with the two tribes identified by the Commission on Indian Services, specifically the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Conditions 43, 44 and 45 ensure protection of cultural resources, including additional cultural resource surveys in any areas that would be disturbed by construction that were not previously surveyed.</p> <p>The certificate holder responded to this comment, in part, as follows: "While we sympathize with the concerns of the Yakama, we must point out that construction and operation of SFS will not in any way change Tribal access to any lands to which the Tribes now have access. The site of SFS is privately owned and has been in the hands of the current landowners since 1918. The land is fenced in part, posted against trespass, and has not been used by Native Americans within the memories of four generations of the current landowners' family."¹</p>
"Please have a professional archaeologist or Tribal representative survey access roads, staging areas, proposed tower locations for cultural material and generate a report to be reviewed by all interested parties."	<p style="text-align: center;">[9]</p> <p>The certificate holder has agreed to provide to the Yakama Nation copies of the cultural resource reports pertaining to the SFS site.</p>
Marisa Meyer/Gary Miller, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (e-mail and letter)	
"Consistent with the Guidelines [2008 Oregon Columbia Plateau Ecoregion Wind Energy Siting and Permitting Guidelines], the Projects should provide information on	<p style="text-align: center;">[10]</p> <p>The Guidelines are intended to be "voluntary" and "do</p>

¹ Email from Patricia Pilz, January 2, 2010.

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<p>the available data on wildlife impacts associated with existing wind projects and activities within the general area of the Projects and the anticipated cumulative impacts of the Projects. The Projects' cumulative impacts assessment should include information on previous habitat loss, fragmentation, degradation, wildlife displacement and mortality data from adjacent wind projects, and an estimation of the additional cumulative impact of the proposed Project on a limited number of key species (i.e., ferruginous hawk, grasshopper sparrow) that could be adversely affected by additional mortality or are highly sensitive to disturbances or habitat loss.”</p>	<p>not in any way supersede or delegate current regulation at the state and federal level” (Guidelines, p. 4). The Guidelines address “five sequential phases.” The first phase, “Macrositing,” occurs before a developer applies for a permit from the siting authority and is intended to “identify conflicts that may make a project prohibitively difficult to permit from a wildlife perspective before significant investment is made by project developers” (Guidelines, p. 8). SFS is well beyond this phase. The Council has already issued a permit (the site certificate), and the certificate holder has made significant investment in the project.</p> <p>The Guidelines do not directly address the site certificate process or site certificate amendments, although the activities described under the second phase, “Pre-Project Assessment,” seem applicable to permitting or amendment of a permit (Guidelines, pp. 10-13). The other three phases discussed in the Guidelines, “Micrositing,” “Construction” and “Operational Monitoring,” apply only after a permit has been issued.</p> <p>The certificate holder has provided information on the cumulative wildlife impacts relevant to SFS that is consistent with the “Pre-Project Assessment” recommendations in the Guidelines. A cumulative impacts analysis was included in the site certificate application for the Shepherds Flat Wind Farm (WEST, <i>Avian and Bat Cumulative Impacts Analysis, Shepherds Flat Wind Project, Gilliam and Morrow Counties, Oregon</i>, March 2007). The Council has previously addressed the cumulative impacts of the facility (<i>Final Order on the Application for the Shepherds Flat Wind Farm</i> (July 25, 2008), pp. 79-85, and <i>Final Order on Amendment #1 for the Shepherds Flat Wind Farm</i>, September 11, 2009, pp. 40-41).</p> <p>The proposed amendment would expand the SFS site to allow for a larger micrositing area and an optional transmission line route. Nevertheless, significant cumulative impacts of the proposed facility would be reduced, as discussed in Section IV.3(g) of the Proposed Order.</p> <p>The amendment proposes an alternate route for the 230-kV interconnection transmission line. If the certificate holder selects Option B for construction, the length of the transmission line for SFS would be reduced. Under the typical layouts proposed, the cumulative length of 230-kV transmission lines for SFN, SFC and SFS would decrease under Option B.²</p>
<p>“Specifically, we recommend ODOE collaboratively design, fund, and implement cumulative impact analysis for the Columbia Plateau Ecoregion and establish a central data repository for bird, bat and habitat monitoring data collected from wind development sites.”</p>	<p>[11]</p> <p>See response [3] above. The resources necessary to implement the cumulative analysis and central data repository recommended by the USFWS are currently unavailable.</p>
<p>“the Service recommends complete surveys for birds, bats, and other wildlife species and their habitats be implemented (as outlined in the Guidelines) for portions</p>	<p>[12]</p> <p>The certificate holder has provided information about</p>

² Request for Amendment #1, Section III, p. 1.

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<p>of the new amended site boundaries that have not been previously surveyed.”</p>	<p>wildlife and wildlife habitat in Appendix 1 of the Request for Amendment #1. This information included a report on wildlife surveys conducted in May and June 2009 within the site of the proposed Saddle Butte Wind Park (Attachment 1). These surveys covered approximately 4,830 acres of the 5,640 acres proposed to be added to the SFS site. Approximately 785 acres of the expansion area lie within the previously-approved SFC site boundary. Wildlife surveys have been done in this area, as described in the <i>Final Order on the Application for the Shepherds Flat Wind Farm</i> (July 25, 2008), pp. 90-94.</p> <p>Of the remaining 25 acres that would be added to the SFS site by this amendment, 8.8 acres lie within the site of the County-approved Pebble Springs Wind Project. PPM Energy (Iberdrola Renewables, Inc.) conducted surveys for wildlife species and habitats in 2006 throughout the Pebble Springs site (Pebble Springs Wind Project Conditional Use Permit Application, pp. 29-44).</p> <p>Additional wildlife surveys are included in the <i>Wildlife Monitoring and Mitigation Plan</i> that is required by Condition 83. Pre-construction raptor nest surveys are required by Condition 88. The Department recommends modification of Condition 86 to require pre-construction surveys for threatened, endangered and sensitive wildlife species in areas not previously surveyed.</p>
<p>The USFWS recommends that the certificate holder “conduct a two-survey system to determine presence of Washington ground squirrels in the project areas within 1000 feet of all ground-disturbing activities. The two survey system should include two surveys conducted in a perpendicular pattern during the same year between March 20 to June 1 (this timeframe is when the juveniles are most active). Surveyors should look for burrows, scat, sightings, vocal alarms, and burrows without scat. Surveys should be conducted in all potential habitats.”</p>	<p>[13]</p> <p>The Guidelines do not specify the protocol suggested by the comment. Nevertheless, the certificate holder has agreed to conduct a preconstruction survey for WGS using a protocol approved by ODFW in the areas not previously surveyed.³ The Department recommends modification of Condition 86 to address preconstruction surveys for WGS in suitable habitat.</p>
<p>The USFWS recommends that the certificate holder “conduct two years of pre-project surveys to obtain baseline information on any eagle nests found during raptor nest surveys. Information on eagle nest productivity; use of feeding, roosting, nesting or wintering areas; eagle movements in relation to each proposed turbine location (including an analysis of spatial use in relation to rotor swept zone); numbers of eagles moving through the project area; movements in relation to meteorological conditions; and phenology of movements should be observed and documented. Eagle movement studies should include more intense observations (at least 20 days for two years during nesting season (June through early October) when adult eagles and their fledged young are most active). Information on migrating eagles should be collected as part of raptor migration surveys (see next recommendation below).”</p>	<p>[14]</p> <p>The Guidelines recommend “one full season of raptor nest surveys” (Guidelines, p. 11). The Guidelines do not mention “movement studies.”</p> <p>The SFN, SFC and SFS sites lie within the previous site boundary of the Shepherds Flat Wind Farm (SFWF). Two years of raptor nest surveys were conducted within the SFWF site plus a 2-mile buffer in 2003 and 2004 (SFWF Application Supplement, Exhibit P, p. 13). A golden eagle nest was found on a metal power pole near Willow Creek and Rhea Road outside the site boundary. A second golden eagle nest was found in 2007 within a 1,000-foot buffer outside the SFWF site boundary (SFWF Application Supplement, Attachment P-5a, p. 5).</p> <p>In addition, avian use surveys were conducted between 2002 and 2004. There was only one sighting of a bald eagle. Golden eagles were observed with relatively low frequency – less than 6 percent of all surveys (SFWF Application, Attachment P-1, Table 6).</p>

³ Email from Patricia Pilz, January 13, 2010.

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	<p>The 8.8 acre Option B transmission corridor between the SFC site boundary and the BPA Slatt substation lies within the site of the Pebble Springs Wind Project. In 2006, PPM Energy conducted a raptor nest survey of the Pebble Springs site and a 2-mile buffer. No eagle nests were found (Pebble Springs Wind Project Conditional Use Permit Application, p. 33). In discussing the potential impact of the facility on golden eagles, PPM Energy noted: "no eagle fatalities have been documented at any of the completed modern wind farms in the Pacific Northwest. Based on relatively low use of the site by golden eagles and the lack of eagle mortality at existing Pacific Northwest wind farms, it is unlikely Pebble Springs would have any significant impact on golden eagle populations in the area" (Pebble Springs Wind Project Conditional Use Permit Application, p. 39). The same can be said for SFS.</p>
<p>"Prior to "micrositing" the projects' turbines, information collected above on eagle migration and movement data should be analyzed to develop a quantitative risk assessment of the likelihood of incidental take of bald and golden eagles (including disturbance, disruption, injury, and death) (16 V.S.C. 668-668c; 50 CFR Part 22; and National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines). If the quantitative risk assessment suggests that incidental take of eagles is likely, the applicant should employ "micrositing" measures for the projects' turbines to fully avoid any incidental take of eagles. If the risk assessment suggests that incidental take of eagles is not likely, but important eagle feeding, roosting, nesting or wintering areas are nearby or migratory eagles frequent the project areas, then monitoring of eagle nests and any turbine-related injury or mortality is recommended throughout the life of the projects to periodically reassess risk to eagles as protected under the BGEPA."</p>	<p>[15]</p> <p>The Guidelines do not mention "eagle migration" studies.</p> <p>Based on the available fatality data for other wind energy facilities in the region, the risk to eagles from these facilities appears to be low. (WEST, <i>Avian and Bat Cumulative Impacts Analysis, Shepherds Flat Wind Project, Gilliam and Morrow Counties, Oregon</i>, March 2007 (SFWF Application Supplement, Exhibit P, Attachment P-6, p. 16)).</p> <p>Condition 87 requires specific micrositing measures to reduce the risk of turbine-related injuries to avian species.</p> <p>The certificate holder is required to conduct raptor nest monitoring for the life of the facility, as described in the <i>Wildlife Monitoring and Mitigation Plan</i> (WMMP) that is incorporated in Condition 83. Additional mitigation may be required if the analysis of nesting data indicates a reduction in nesting success or nest usage by Swainson's hawks, golden eagles, ferruginous hawks or burrowing owls.</p> <p>Under the terms of the WMMP, if the fatality monitoring shows more than 0.09 raptor fatalities per megawatt of facility capacity, additional mitigation may be required.</p>
<p>"Conduct two years of bat acoustic surveys and/or sampling using a combination of Pettersson bat detectors and AnaBat bat detectors. Surveys should be designed to determine bat migratory patterns and any patterns in local movements through the project areas. The hoary bat (<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i>) and silver-haired bat (<i>Lasionycteris noctivagans</i>) appear to be at the greatest risk from collision with wind turbines and other turbine-associated mortalities in the Pacific Northwest, and should therefore be the main bat species surveyed. Information on the migratory and local movements of silver-haired and hoary bats are required information for the micrositing phases of the projects. The use of</p>	<p>[16]</p> <p>The Guidelines recommend bat surveys "using best available standards if determined to be necessary after consultation with resource agencies."</p> <p>The Council has not required bat acoustic surveys for any previous wind project due to the relatively low fatality rate for bats in the region (1.43 per MW per year).⁴ Although most reported fatalities of bats at wind projects in the region have been fatalities of hoary bats (<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i>) and silver-haired bats (<i>Lasionycteris noctivagans</i>), neither of these species are listed as threatened or endangered. The fatalities occur primarily</p>

⁴ WEST, *Avian and Bat Cumulative Impacts Analysis, Shepherds Flat Wind Project, Gilliam and Morrow Counties, Oregon*, March 2007, p. 12.

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<p>AnaBat is a good approach for long-term monitoring of bat activity levels and does achieve a general understanding of general bat activity. However, with the use of AnaBat there is a loss of signal resolution, limiting species discrimination to species groups (e.g., 50k Myotis, 40k Myotis, etc.) or genus level identification. Additionally, the standard for collecting acoustic bat data in the Pacific Northwest (i.e., Oregon bat grid effort, etc.) is primarily time expansion data (collected with Pettersson detectors); therefore, it is desirable to maintain consistency in acoustic data collection methods whenever possible. The Service recognizes the cost and skill acquisition to convert from AnaBat detectors to Pettersson detectors may be more than a small inconvenience; however, funding for the conversion could be built in to the projects' funding or into future projects. Therefore, we recommend a combination of both the Pettersson bat detectors and AnaBat detectors be used to conduct the pre-project bat acoustic surveys.”</p>	<p>during migration in August and September. These species are not resident in the project area, and they are not listed as Strategy Species in the region (ODFW, <i>Oregon Conservation Strategy</i> (2006), Columbia Plateau Ecoregion, p. 163).</p> <p>The certificate holder is required to conduct fatality monitoring, as described in the <i>Wildlife Monitoring and Mitigation Plan</i> (WMMP) that is incorporated in Condition 83. If the fatality monitoring shows more than 2.5 bat fatalities per megawatt of facility capacity, additional mitigation may be required.</p>
<p>“The Service recommends a dedicated technical advisory committee (TAC) be established, for each of these three projects, to review monitoring results and make recommendations regarding any additional mitigation and monitoring requirements. Members of the TAC should include representatives from (1) Morrow or Gilliam County; (2) the applicant; (3) landowner within the Project boundary; (4) ODFW, (5) the Service; and (6) non-vested member of the general public. Additionally, a non-vested, non-voting individual should be appointed to take notes at TAC meetings.”</p>	<p>[17]</p> <p>The certificate holder may establish a TAC but is not required to do so. Condition 83 requires the certificate holder to implement a <i>Wildlife Monitoring and Mitigation Plan</i>. Under the Plan, the certificate holder must report the wildlife monitoring data and analysis to the Department. Although not explicit in the Plan, the information reported to the Department is a matter of public record. Any local government, landowner, state agency, federal agency or member of the public may comment on the monitoring reports and make recommendations to the Council. Authority to require any additional mitigation or monitoring lies with the Council, subject to the terms of the site certificate.</p>
<p>“The Service recommends the ODFW Habitat Mitigation Policy, as outlined in the Guidelines, be implemented.”</p>	<p>[18]</p> <p>The ODFW habitat mitigation policy (specifically OAR 635-415-0025) is incorporated in the Council’s Fish and Wildlife Habitat Standard.</p>
<p>“Any changes to the habitat classifications and/or acreages from the new site boundaries will need to be addressed by the applicants. In addition, the mitigation plans for the Shepherds Flat Central, Shepherds Flat North, and Shepherds Flat South Wind Projects will have to be updated with the new information from the change in the site boundaries.”</p>	<p>[19]</p> <p>The certificate holder has provided a revised habitat assessment of the SFS site, including the areas that would be added by this amendment (Tables 3 and 4 in the present order). The Department recommends revisions to the <i>Habitat Mitigation Plan</i> (Attachment C), based on estimated maximum habitat impacts of the facility. Under the terms of the Plan, the size of the required mitigation area will be determined based on the final design configuration of the facility. Condition 29 requires the certificate holder to provide a habitat assessment based on the final design configuration before beginning construction. The certificate holder has identified an area that would accommodate the habitat mitigation area requirements of all three of the Shepherds Flat facilities. ODFW has approved the suitability of the area (<i>Final Order on the Application for the Shepherds Flat Wind Farm</i>, July 25, 2008, p.111).</p>

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Leslie Nelson, The Nature Conservancy (email and letter)	
<p>“Because of the extensive macrositing modifications, we feel strongly that these changes should undergo the same level of review and scrutiny as would be required under a new application, including public meetings and sufficient comment period.”</p>	<p>[20]</p> <p>The amendment process follows the rules adopted by the Siting Council, including opportunity for public comment on the amendment request as received and a separate comment period on the Department’s Proposed Order. The process includes opportunity to request a contested case and to seek judicial review.</p>
<p>“We request that the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council work with the Certificate Holder to ensure that all areas that are added to the footprint of any of the three projects be thoroughly assessed for impacts to habitat and wildlife resources. Habitat and wildlife surveys in new areas should be done to the same standards as if this were a new project.”</p>	<p>[21]</p> <p>The areas proposed to be added to the SFS by this amendment must comply with the same standards as were applied to the previously-approved site.</p>
<p>“Use of environmental assessment data from the proposed Saddle Butte Wind Park in the amendment process is not appropriate for determining the Shepherds Flat subproject impacts. Saddle Butte Wind Park has not undergone Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council review nor has it been approved.”</p>	<p>[22]</p> <p>The amendment proposes an expansion of the SFS site, including 4,830 acres of land within the site of the proposed Saddle Butte Wind Park and 785 acres within the previously-approved SFC site. Wildlife surveys were done for the Saddle Butte area (Request for Amendment #1, Attachment 1) and are appropriate for the Council to consider to the extent that the studies address areas that are now proposed to be added to SFS.</p>
<p>“All portions of the subprojects that indicate recent Washington ground squirrel activity, even those where no squirrels were observed in the current year, should be classified as Habitat Category 1 and no construction activities should occur within the standard buffer for that habitat category.”</p>	<p>[23]</p> <p>The Council will follow ODFW guidance in characterizing habitat essential to WGS as Category 1. Condition 86 requires avoidance of impact on Category 1 habitat. The certificate holder’s classification of habitat has been reviewed by ODFW. Condition 29 requires a pre-construction habitat assessment based on the final design configuration. The certificate holder must consult with ODFW in making this assessment.</p> <p>Based on ODFW recommendations, the Department proposes a revision of Condition 86 to require a pre-construction survey for WGS in areas of suitable habitat on lands outside the previously-approved SFN, SFC and SFS sites that lie within 1,000 feet of any area potentially disturbed by facility construction. If any Category 1 WGS habitat is found, the revised condition would require an additional 1,000-foot exclusion buffer beyond the Category 1 area during construction.</p>
<p>“If the Certificate Holder had followed the Voluntary Wind Siting Guidelines for the Columbia Plateau in Oregon (as developed by ODFW, DOE, USFWS, RNP, and other groups including The Nature Conservancy) some of our concerns with these amendments would have been alleviated. The Guidelines specifically point out that all macrositing should be done in the first stage of project development, prior to an application being submitted. The Guidelines do allow for minor changes in siting, but adding several thousand new acres to the Central and South Projects is not minor.”</p>	<p>[24]</p> <p>See response [10] above regarding the Guidelines. The Guidelines “do not in any way supersede or delegate current regulation at the state and federal level.” The Guidelines do not directly address the site certificate process or site certificate amendments.</p> <p>The amendment process follows the rules adopted by the Siting Council. The rules allow for the expansion of the site boundary of any energy facility by amendment. The Council has previously approved site-expansion amendments for Klondike III, Leaning Juniper II and the Stateline Wind Project.</p>

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<p>“Horseshoe Bend Wind, LLC requests two new transmission corridors and the addition of 4,855 acres of new land to the Shepherds Flat South project area - more than a 40% increase over the original project size. The environmental assessment used for Shepherds Flat Central's was also applied to Shepherds Flat South. The data regarding mammals and avian species mirrored that of Shepherds Flat Central's. It is acknowledged that the Shepherds Flat South project area lies within ½ mile of Willow Creek, but the amendment asserts that the distance and elevation makes inhabitation by significant amphibians or reptiles unlikely. The amendment concludes that no new risks to significant mammal, bird, amphibian, reptile, insect or fish species can be attributed to the addition of the proposed new lands to the project. However, again, we do not feel the Saddle Butte data is sufficient to defend this assertion, nor is it appropriate to use it.”</p>	<p>[25]</p> <p>Although the amendment would add 4,855 acres of new land (lying outside the previously-approved site boundaries of SFN, SFC and SFS), it would also remove 1,123 acres from the site boundary. The net expansion would be 4,517 acres, including 785 acres lying within the previously-approved site boundary of SFC. The area within the site boundary would increase by 40 percent. The permanent footprint of facility components, however, would <i>decrease</i> by 7 percent.</p> <p>More than 80 percent of the land that would be occupied by facility components is previously-disturbed land, predominantly Category 6 habitat. No facility components or temporary construction disturbance would affect Category 1 or Category 2 wetland or riparian habitat.</p>
<p>“Of the new lands, 19% has not been previously disturbed by agriculture and contains a wide variety of native plants. Sixteen significant vascular and two significant nonvascular plant species are known to exist within the project's eco-region. Of these species, none were identified during area surveys. However, a seep was found on the new lands that may be suitable for disappearing monkeyflower, dotted smartweed, hepatic monkeyflower, and porcupine sedge. A survey of the vegetation found at the seep did not identify any members of these species, but due to the scarcity of wetland features in the region, loss of seep habitat could not be easily replaced in a mitigation parcel. The seep itself warrants protection, and we note that it was appropriately assigned to habitat Category 1 WL.”</p>	<p>[26]</p> <p>A 0.02-acre wetland (seep) was identified in the Aquatic Contracting wetlands and waters delineation survey for the Saddle Butte Wind Park. The wetland lies within the lands proposed to be added to the SFS site by this amendment (Request for Amendment #1, Appendix 1, Map K). The certificate holder has classified the wetland as Category 1 habitat. The wetland lies approximately 500 feet from a County road and at least 1,650 feet from the nearest potential construction disturbance (Request for Amendment #1, Appendix 1, pp. 5-6).</p> <p>Condition 86 requires the certificate holder to avoid disturbance of “all seeps, riparian areas and vernal pools” as well as all Category 1 habitat.</p>