



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor



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**To:** Energy Facility Siting Council

**From:** Sarah Esterson, Senior Policy Advisor

**Date:** December 11, 2020

**Subject:** Summit Ridge Wind Farm Survey Updates

**Attachments:** Attachment 1: Raptor Nest and Plant Survey Results

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The Summit Ridge Wind Farm Certificate requires that following the certificate holder's completion of surveys required under the site certificate, the Oregon Department of Energy (Department) must present the results of those surveys and any required consultations at the next regularly scheduled Council meeting. This staff report presents the results of recently completed surveys by the certificate holder and the necessary consultations as required under Condition 2.14.

## Threatened and Endangered Plants

Site Certificate Condition 10.13 states:

Prior to the beginning of construction of the facility the certificate holder shall perform new field surveys for threatened and endangered species following the survey protocol set forth in the Northwest Wildlife Consultants Memorandum regarding Endangered and Threatened Plant Species and Raptor Nest Surveys dated October 17, 2014. The certificate holder shall report the results of the field surveys to the Department, ODA and ODFW. If the surveys identify the presence of threatened or endangered species within the survey area, the certificate holder shall implement appropriate measures to avoid a significant reduction in the likelihood of survival or recovery of the species, as approved by the Department, in consultation with ODA and ODFW.

In compliance with Condition 10.13, the certificate holder performed new field surveys following the survey protocol set forth in the Northwest Wildlife Consultants, Inc. (NWI) Memorandum Regarding Endangered and Threatened Plant Species and Raptor Surveys dated October 17, 2014 (October 17 memo). The site certificate holder reported the results of the new field surveys to the Department via memorandum dated July 10, 2020. Prior to conducting the new field surveys, the certificate holder conducted a literature review to determine whether there were any changes in species status regarding plants potentially occurring near the facility and if there were any new species added. As explained in the

July 2020 plant memo, the original literature review, conducted in preparation of the application for site certificate, yielded a list of 19 plant species of concern with the potential for occurrence within the leased lands associated with the facility; of those 19 plant species identified, one was a state threatened species (Tygh Valley milk-vetch) and four were state candidate species (dwarf evening-primrose, diffuse stickseed, hepatic monkey-flower, and Henderson's ryegrass). According to the July 2020 plant memo, the updated literature review resulted in no species status changes and no new species of concern were added to the list of species necessary for inclusion in the supplemental plant survey.

Consistent with the October 17 memo, within 200 feet of the Phase 1 facility construction, on June 5 and July 15, 2020, the certificate holder conducted a survey in all areas with habitat potentially suitable for Tygh Valley milk-vetch, dwarf evening-primrose, diffuse stickseed, hepatic monkey-flower, and Henderson's ryegrass. None of the identified plant species were encountered during the 2020 survey.

The Department provided ODA the July 2020 plant memo for review and comment.

### **Raptor Nests**

Condition 10.14 of the site certificate states:

The certificate holder shall conduct two (2) seasons of raptor nest surveys with at least one (1) season of the surveys occurring prior to the beginning of construction. The raptor nest surveys shall be conducted following the instructions set forth in the Raptor Nest Survey Protocol for Summit Ridge Wind Farm included as Attachment B to the First Amended Site Certificate. The certificate holder shall report the results of the field surveys to the Department and ODFW. If the surveys identify the presence of raptor nests within the survey area, the certificate holder shall implement appropriate measures to assure that the design, construction and operation of the facility are consistent with the fish and wildlife habitat mitigation goals and standards of OAR 635-415-0025, as approved by the Department, in consultation with ODFW.

Consistent with Condition 10.14, the certificate holder conducted raptor nest surveys following the guidelines set forth in the Raptor Nest Survey Protocol. The Raptor Nest Protocol was a component of the October 17 memo and was approved by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). The site certificate holder reported the results of the raptor nest surveys to the Department via memorandum dated June 17, 2020.

As explained in the June 2020 raptor memo, a ground based survey was conducted for above-ground raptor nests on May 28, 2020 and aerial based survey conducted on June 5, 2020. According to the June 2020 raptor memo, a raptor biologist surveyed all suitable nesting substrates within a 0.5 mile of Phase 1 facility components (0.8 mile of access road). Based upon the ground based survey, the site certificate holder documented three active raptor nests within the survey area; one was a pair of red-tailed hawks and two were common ravens. In addition, one inactive stick nest was found. Consistent with the previous raptor nest surveys conducted in preparation of the application for site certificate, no special status raptor species were found breeding within the 2020 raptor nest survey area. The Department provided ODFW the June 2020 raptor memo for review and comment.



Northwest  
Wildlife  
Consultants, Inc.

## MEMORANDUM

Date: July 20, 2020

To: Steven Ostrowski, Summit Ridge Wind, LLC

From: Rick Gerhardt and Karen Kronner, Wildlife Biologists  
Northwest Wildlife Consultants, Inc.

Subject: Summit Ridge Wind Farm 2020 Rare Plant Survey

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Construction of the Summit Ridge Wind Farm will begin in 2020 with the upgrading of approximately two miles of an existing private road that will be used as a project access road. The private road to be upgraded lies entirely within the existing approved site boundary (EFSC 2019). The private road begins on the east side of Roberts Market Road (a public road) approximately one mile north of the junction of Roberts Market Road, Wrentham Market Road, and Summit Ridge Road. The upgrading of the first two miles of this private road constitutes the Phase 1 "Start of Construction" effort, which warrants a resurveying for rare plants within 200 feet of the road upgrade activities.

### Permit Condition 10.13:

Prior to the beginning of construction of the facility the certificate holder shall perform new field surveys for threatened and endangered species following the survey protocol set forth in the Northwest Wildlife Consultants Memorandum regarding Endangered and Threatened Plant Species and Raptor Nest Surveys dated October 17, 2014. The certificate holder shall report the results of the field surveys to the Department, ODA and ODFW. If the surveys identify the presence of threatened or endangered species within the survey area, the certificate holder shall implement appropriate measures to avoid a significant reduction in the likelihood of survival or recovery of the species, as approved by the Department, in consultation with ODA and ODFW. [Amended Final Order on Amendment 1 IV.H.2.2]

Surveys for rare plants were conducted by NWC personnel in 2009 (Gerhardt et al., 2010), in 2015 (Gerhardt, 2015), and again in 2016 (Gerhardt, 2016). In order to ensure that the understanding of the affected area remains as current as possible, Summit Ridge Wind, LLC contracted Northwest Wildlife Consultants, Inc. (NWC), which conducted the original surveys, to resurvey in 2020 the area within 200 feet of the proposed road upgrade for the single state threatened and the four state candidate plant species identified (Gerhardt et al., 2010) as having the potential to occur in the Project area. This memorandum summarizes the pre-field review and results of the 2020 survey.

### Methods and Target Species

Methods are described in the ecological baseline studies and impact assessment and in the site certificate application for the Summit Ridge Wind Power Project (Gerhardt et al., 2010; LotusWorks, 2010). Prior to the original field surveys, a literature review yielded a list of 19 plant species of concern with the potential for occurrence within leased lands associated with this Project; of these, one was a state threatened species and four were state candidate species (Appendix C, Gerhardt et al., 2010). Among the 111 species of

vascular plant species recorded on the project (Appendix E, Gerhardt et al., 2010), none of these listed or candidate species were found, and none of the 19 species of concern were found. Moreover, no suitable habitat was believed to occur on the Project for three of the four candidate species, and there was low likelihood of occurrence for the remaining candidate species (dwarf evening-primrose) or the threatened species (Tygh Valley milk-vetch).

Prior to the 2020 survey, another literature review was conducted to determine whether there were any changes in species status regarding plants potentially occurring near Summit Ridge and if there were new species added. This review included the national plants database (USDA, 2019) and the Oregon Biodiversity Information Center (ORBIC, 2019). As a result of this review, there were no species status changes and there were no new species of concern added to the list of target species for the supplemental plant survey.

The 2020 rare plant survey was conducted on June 5 and July 15. Within 200 feet of the road upgrade, a survey was conducted in all areas with habitat potentially suitable for the target species. The habitat north of the road upgrade is dryland wheat; that south of the road upgrade is a mix of rabbitbrush/buckwheat shrub steppe and native perennial grassland. Target plant species were Tygh Valley milk-vetch (state threatened) and dwarf evening-primrose, diffuse stickseed, hepatic monkey-flower, and Henderson's ryegrass (all state candidate species).

### Results

None of the target plant species were encountered. Since the original surveys were conducted in 2009, there has been no substantive change in land management practices, and the extensive wildfires that occurred in 2018 were not expected to enhance the potential of the area for these rare native plant species. Therefore, there was very low likelihood that the plant species of concern had colonized portions of the Project since the 2009 survey or since supplemental surveys were conducted in 2015 and 2016.

### References

- Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC). 2019. Summit Ridge Wind Farm Final Order. Dated August 23, 2019.
- Gerhardt, R. 2015. Summit Ridge 2015 supplemental rare plant survey. Prepared for LotusWorks, Vancouver, Washington. Prepared by Northwest Wildlife Consultants, Inc., Pendleton, Oregon.
- Gerhardt, R. 2016. Summit Ridge 2016 rare plant survey. Prepared for Summit Ridge Wind Holdings, LLC, Vancouver, Washington. Prepared by Northwest Wildlife Consultants, Inc., Pendleton, Oregon.
- Gerhardt, R., R. Gritski, and B. Anderson. 2010a. Ecological baseline studies and impact assessment for the Summit Ridge Wind Power Project, Wasco County, Oregon, consolidated report. Prepared for LotusWorks, Vancouver, Washington. Prepared by Northwest Wildlife Consultants, Inc., Pendleton, Oregon.
- LotusWorks—Summit Ridge I, LLC. 2010. Site Certificate Application. Submitted to Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council on August 24, 2010.
- Oregon Biodiversity Information Center (ORBIC). 2019. Threatened or endangered plant species list for the Deschutes Basin. <https://inr.oregonstate.edu/sites/inr.oregonstate.edu/files/2019-rte-vascs.pdf>. Accessed July 14, 2020.
- US Department of Agriculture (USDA). 2019. The PLANTS Database. National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA. <http://plants.usda.gov>. Accessed July 14, 2020.

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SRWOPS Condition 10.13 Precon Raptor Nest Survey 2020-07-07

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Attachment 5\_Figure 1. Summit Ridge 2020 Raptor Nest Survey

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Northwest  
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## MEMORANDUM

Date: June 17, 2020

To: Steven Ostrowski, Summit Ridge Wind, LLC

From: Karen Kronner and Bob Gritski  
Northwest Wildlife Consultants, Inc.

Subject: Summit Ridge Wind Farm 2020 Raptor Nest Survey for Road Upgrade

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### Background

#### *2009-2016*

As part of comprehensive wildlife, habitat and plant studies conducted in association with the proposed Summit Ridge Wind Farm Project (Project), surveys for nests of raptors were conducted in 2009 (Gerhardt et al., 2010), 2015 (Gerhardt, 2015) and in a smaller area in 2016 (Gerhardt, 2016). The methods and results were previously submitted.

#### *2020*

Some Project construction will be conducted in 2020. This report was prepared in support of the Phase I "Start of Construction" activities identified to us by Summit Ridge Wind, LLC and in accordance with Addendum 4 of the Summit Ridge Wind Farm Site Certificate (EFSC 2019a). Phase 1 "Start of Construction" effort consists of the upgrade of approximately two miles of an existing private road that will be used as a future project access road for subsequent turbine erection. The upgraded private road is entirely within the existing approved site boundary. Access to the private road begins on the east side of Roberts Market Road (a public road) approximately one mile north of the junction of Roberts Market Road, Wrentham Market Road and Summit Ridge Road and then proceeds across all private land. This report summarizes the methods and results of the 2020 raptor nest survey conducted between May 28 and June 8.

### 2020 Methods

The Project permit conditions 10.13 and 10.14 specify requirements for wildlife surveys to be conducted "prior to the start of construction". Raptor nest surveys are addressed in 10.14 (EFSC 2019a and b).

- 10.14. The certificate holder shall conduct two (2) seasons of raptor nest surveys with at least one (1) season of the surveys occurring prior to the beginning of construction. The raptor nest surveys shall be conducted following the instructions set forth in the Raptor Nest Survey Protocol for Summit Ridge Wind Farm included as Attachment G to the Final Order on Amendment 4. The certificate holder shall report the results of the field surveys to the Department and ODFW. If the surveys identify the presence of raptor nests within the survey area, the certificate holder shall implement appropriate measures to assure that the design, construction and operation of the facility are consistent with the fish and wildlife habitat mitigation goals and standards of OAR 635-415-0025, as approved by the Department, in consultation with ODFW.  
[Final Order on ASC, Condition IV.G.2.8; AMD1; AMD4]

The 2020 nest survey methods followed the protocol as described in Attachment G to the Final Order on Amendment 4 (EFSC 2019b).

In 2020 ground-based surveys were conducted for above-ground active and inactive raptor nests on May 28 and an aerial survey occurred on June 5. Biologists surveyed all suitable nesting substrates (trees, rock formations/cliffs, transmission lines, and other structures) within 0.5 miles of the road upgrade route (Figure 1). All nests were recorded with a hand-held Global Positioning System unit. This included all previously known and potential nests and active nests. To determine whether a nest was active or inactive, biologists relied on clues that included behavior of adults and presence of eggs, young, or whitewash. Nests built by common ravens (whether active or inactive) and other potentially suitable stick nests were also recorded, since these could be used by raptors in future breeding seasons.

#### 2020 Results

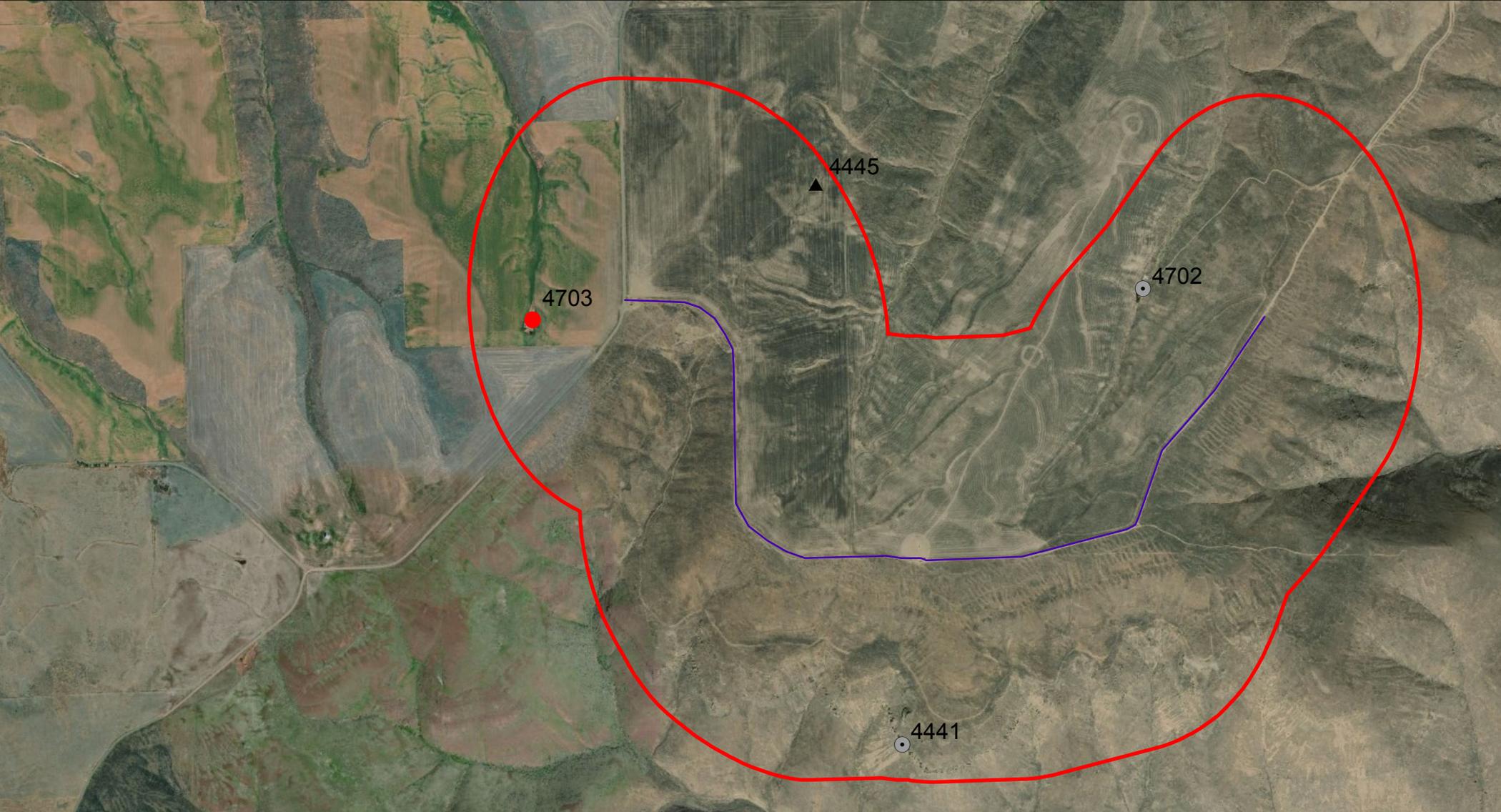
One active raptor nest was found on May 28, occupied by a red-tailed hawk pair. Young were present and assumed to have fledged by the June 5 survey (none present). Two active common raven nests were found; one on a rock formation, one in a building. One inactive stick nest (previously used by a raptor or raven) was found on a transmission line tower. Figure 1 provides the three active locations and the inactive nest. No federal or state threatened or endangered or ODFW designated sensitive status raptor species were found breeding within the 2020 raptor nest survey area.

#### References

- EFSC (Energy Facility Siting Council). 2019a. Summit Ridge Wind Farm Fourth Amended Site Certificate. Dated August 23, 2019.
- EFSC. 2019b. Summit Ridge Wind Farm Final Order. Dated August 23, 2019.
- Gerhardt, R. 2016. Summit Ridge 2016 raptor nest survey. Prepared for Summit Wind Holdings, LLC. Prepared by Northwest Wildlife Consultants, Inc. June 25, 2016.
- Gerhardt, R. 2015. Summit Ridge 2015 supplemental raptor nest survey. Prepared for LotusWorks, Vancouver, Washington. Prepared by Northwest Wildlife Consultants, Inc.
- Gerhardt, R., R. Gritski, and B. Anderson. 2010. Ecological baseline studies and impact assessment for the Summit Ridge Wind Power Project, Wasco County, Oregon, consolidated report. Prepared for LotusWorks, Vancouver, Washington. Prepared by Northwest Wildlife Consultants, Inc., Pendleton, Oregon.

Figure 1. Summit Ridge Wind Project 2020 Raptor Nest Survey

*Submitted Separately*



**Figure 1. Summit Ridge Wind Project 2020 Raptor Nest Survey**

**Nests**

- Red-tailed Hawk
- Common Raven
- ▲ Inactive
- Road Upgrade
- Survey Area



Study conducted by  
Northwest Wildlife Consultants, Inc.



Map date: June 15, 2020

