Avian Monitoring Update for ESFSEC – September 17th, 2013

- Stantec Consulting has completed the second year of avian fatality monitoring and raptor nest searches for the Kittitas Valley Wind Farm.
- The fatality survey consisted of standardized fatality searches conducted at each of the 48 turbines for the first two years of operation. Each turbine was searched approximately once every 2 weeks during the spring and fall migration periods and approximately once every 4 weeks during winter and summer non-migratory periods. Additionally, searcher efficiency and carcass removal trials were conducted during each of the 4 search seasons.
- The raptor nest search entailed an aerial survey within 1 mile of the project area during the spring breeding season, and follow-up ground surveys.
- A Technical Advisory Committee meeting was held on June 26th to discuss the results. TAC members provided verbal and written feedback that was incorporated into revised reports.
- The estimate of mortality by avian type was as follows:
    - Bat mortality was estimated at 13 in Year 2 and 32 in Year 1. This compares to a predicted range of 17-59 evaluated in the project EIS. Bat mortality estimates at KVWPP are at the lower range of wind farms within the Columbia Plateau and were below the mean.
    - Bird (non-raptor) mortality was estimated at 155 birds in Year 2 and 108 in Year 1. This compares to a predicted range of 110-237 evaluated in the project EIS. Bird mortality estimates at KVWPP are in the lower range of wind farms within the Columbia Plateau and were generally below the mean.
    - Raptor mortality was estimated at 3 in year 2 and 10 in Year 1, however, due to small sample sizes interpreting results is cautionary. This compares to a predicted range of 2-3 evaluated in the project EIS. Raptor mortality estimates were in the mid-range of wind farms within the Columbia Plateau.
- Raptor nest surveys in 2013 resulted in the identification of eight confirmed active nests, compared with seven in 2011 and 2002.
- No further standardized avian fatality or raptor nest searches are scheduled, although the project's Wildlife Incident Reporting System will be implemented for the life of the project.