Wild Horse Wind Facility
Technical Advisory Committee
2018 Update

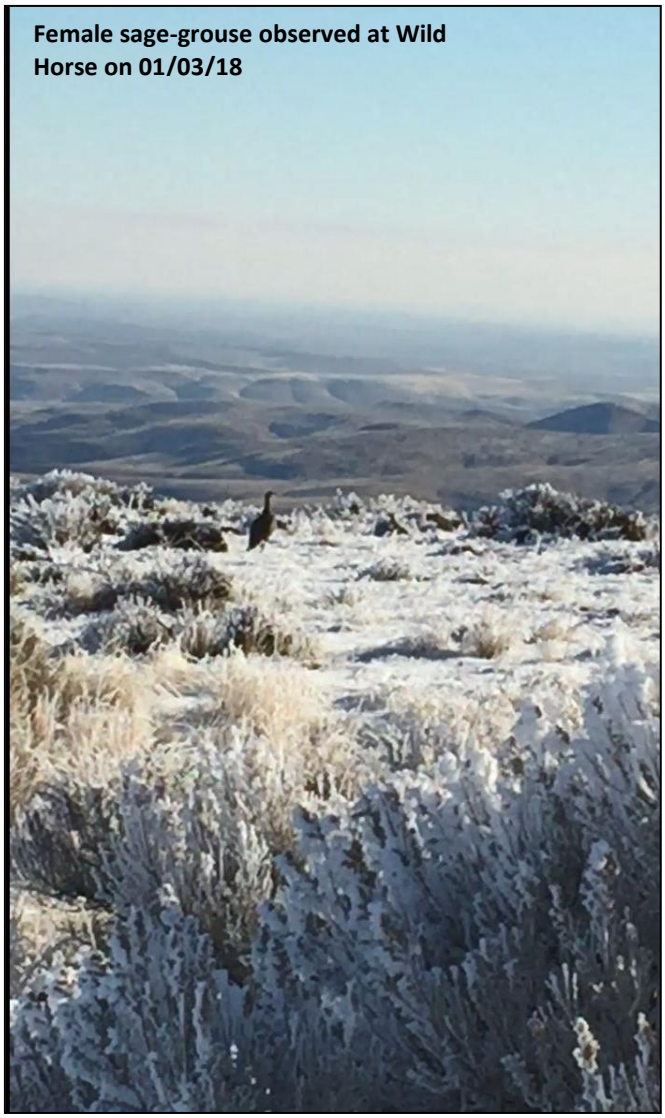
Female sage-grouse observed at Wild Horse on 12/27/17

PSE PUGET SOUND ENERGY

Sage-Grouse Observation and Conservation Measures

Sage-Grouse Observation

On December 27, 2017, a sage-grouse was observed incidentally within 200 feet of turbine D31 directly adjacent to the site access road on WDFW property. At the time of the observation, the weather conditions included temperatures below freezing, fog, and no wind. Video was captured of the sage-grouse and emailed to Mike Schroeder, WDFW, who confirmed it was a female sage-grouse (Attachment 1 – Video).



Female sage-grouse observed at Wild Horse on 01/03/18

On January 3, 2018 the sage-grouse was observed again in the same location. At the time of the observation, the weather conditions included temperatures below freezing, clear skies, and no wind. This observation was also captured on video.

Fence Removal

To date, approximately six miles of unnecessary fencing and barbed wire have been removed from the project area to reduce the potential for wildlife collisions.

Fence Marking

All fencing (approximately 20 miles) required for grazing has been marked with visibility markers to reduce the potential for collisions. The markers are holding up very well and show no sign of deterioration.

Raven Nest Removal

No inactive or active raven nests have been identified on PSE structures within the project boundary.

Sage-Grouse Nesting & Brood-Rearing Habitat Improvements

The 2017 sage-grouse habitat monitoring report is attached for your review (Attachment 2). This is the 2nd annual monitoring report. In 2017, PSE contracted with a Third Party, Beck Botanical Services, to complete the field work and collect data for the annual monitoring report. PSE continued to work with Beck Botanical Services in 2018, completing the two surveys on May 30th and July 18th. The results of these surveys will be provided to the TAC in the 2018 monitoring report. Monitoring of the sage-grouse nesting and brood-rearing habitat area will continue through 2020 in accordance with the Sage-Grouse Nesting & Brood-Rearing Habitat Restoration and Management Plan.

Grazing Management and Springs Development/Restoration

During the last TAC meeting on May 31, 2017, Tip Hudson (WSU Extension) provided a comprehensive review of the CRM grazing management plan, monitoring results, and trends of utilization data collected from the project area. He also reviewed the CRM grazing schedule for the next 5 years (2017-2021). During the meeting, TAC members unanimously voted to approve the 5 year grazing plan as presented by Tip.

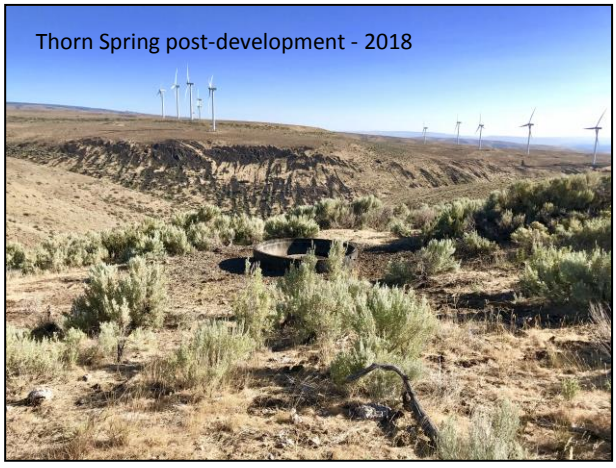
The 2017 Grazing Monitoring Report prepared by Tip is attached for your review (Attachment 3). This report includes monitoring results from the 2017 utilization measurements and observations in the Wild Horse paddocks. If you have any questions about this report please contact Tip Hudson at tipton.hudson@co.kittitas.wa.us.

In support of the Wild Horse Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) goals, PSE and the Stingley Ranch partnered in 2009 to redevelop 11 springs throughout the project area to provide water for livestock and wildlife. This included protection of cultural resources, installation of filter fabric and gravel pads (hardened areas) below watering tanks, replacement of old watering tanks, installation of wildlife escapes, installation of overflow pipes into existing channels, and installation of temporary exclusionary fencing during livestock grazing. Following redevelopment, PSE contracted with BFI Native Seeds to develop and implement site specific plans for restoring the areas around the springs at Wild Horse, which included planting native vegetation (plugs and seeds) to accelerate habitat recovery and development of long-term weed management.

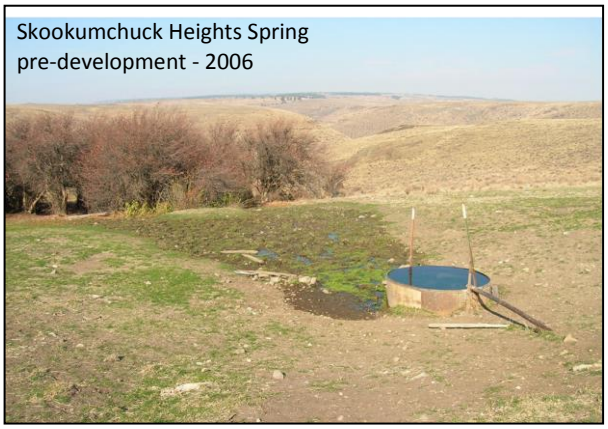
Visual observations of the springs indicate that redevelopment, restoration activities, and annual weed management have been successful at improving the overall health of the springs and providing water for both livestock and wildlife. Annual maintenance and management of the springs include:

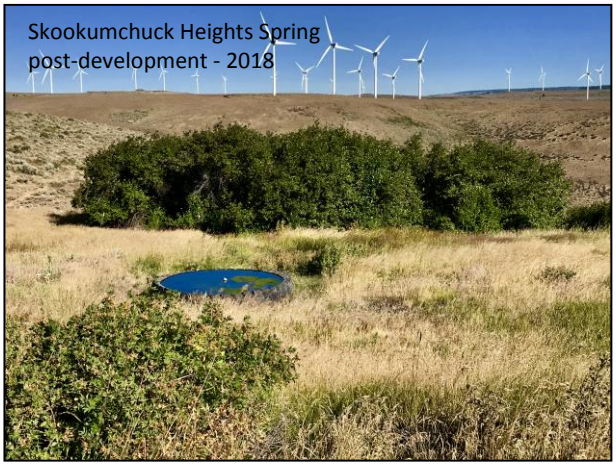
- Cultural resource monitoring to ensure rock cover around tanks are intact and sufficient for protection of cultural resources;
- Maintenance of tanks/piping – cleaning out plugged overflow pipes to prevent water spilling over side of tanks;
- Maintenance of wildlife escapes; and
- Installation of temporary fencing during grazing season to protect riparian habitat associated with the springs.

Thorn Spring Restoration



Skookumchuck Heights Spring Restoration





Habitat Restoration and Weed Management

In 2012, Wildlands Inc. completed 5 years of post-construction habitat restoration monitoring as required by the EFSEC Site Certification Agreement. Results from their final report concluded that total vegetative cover in restored areas had risen steadily and native plants (both seeded and volunteer) continue to outnumber non-native plants, indicating that native vegetation is successfully out-competing non-native species in restored areas. In years following the 2012 monitoring, visual observations indicate that restoration activities, erosion control, and weed management combined with light grazing have helped to increase vegetative cover and improve overall site conditions.

In accordance with PSE's aggressive noxious weed management program, invasive weeds are chemically treated throughout the year, primarily in late spring/early summer and early fall. Treated species include thistles, whitetop, knapweeds, and other invasives on the Kittitas County Noxious Weed List. Areas treated include roadsides, underground cable corridors, transmission line routes, solar facilities, fill slopes, cutbanks, substation, springs, and the visitor center. In addition, cheatgrass is treated with a pre-emergent herbicide (Plateau), as needed throughout the entire project area.

Eagle Conservation Plan and Permit

The final draft of the Eagle Conservation Plan (ECP) and revised draft Environmental Assessment (EA) were submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on January 23, 2018. Next steps are for the USFWS to complete the EA and initiate the NEPA process. PSE will notify the TAC/EFSEC and provide a link to the ECP/EA when the USFWS begins the public review and comment period. Following public review and comment, USFWS will make a determination of whether to issue an eagle incidental take permit.

In June 2017, PSE signed a Settlement Agreement (SA) with the USFWS to resolve the four eagle fatalities at Wild Horse. The terms of the SA are consistent with the Chief's Directive, and include providing funding for Research and Development of Detect and Deter Technology and providing regular updates to the USFWS during the term of the SA. The SA covers past take, as well as interim take occurring during the ECP process up to the date of eagle permit issuance.

Wildland Fire

At 9:00am on Monday, July 2nd a PSE employee noticed smoke coming from between the A-line and B-line turbines in a rocky ravine on DNR land. PSE called 911 immediately and Kittitas Valley Fire and Rescue responded within 20 minutes with two water trucks, two off-road tanker trucks, and approximately 16 responders. The fire was contained within one hour and was fully extinguished within two hours. The estimated size of fire damage is approximately two acres. The DNR sent a fire investigator to determine the cause of the fire, but his investigation was inconclusive. Wind speeds that morning measured at 37 mph, with temperatures at 48°F. Lightning was detected in the area the previous week.

Questions and Comments

If you have any questions and/or comments regarding this annual update please contact Jennifer Diaz at 509-964-7813 or jennifer.diaz@pse.com.