

Horse Heaven PTAG

Meeting 11 Minutes

Thursday, October 23, 2025

9:00 am to 12:00 pm PST – Presentation and Discussion

1:00 to 5:00 pm PST – Site Tour and Closing

Location: Hampton Inn Kennewick at Southridge (3715 Plaza Way, Kennewick, WA 99338)

Meeting Objectives

- Review and understand Project redesign based on EFSEC’s decision regarding Spec-5
- Review and discuss additional wildlife plans
- Understand progress to date and next steps with the Spec-13 Pronghorn Study Plan
- Tour locations of the proposed development site

Meeting Agenda

Time (PT)	Item	Leads
8:30 to 9:00 am	Light breakfast and coffee	All
9:00 to 9:15 am	Welcome, Opening Remarks and Housekeeping	Jamie Damon, Kearns & West
9:15 to 9:20 am	Review PTAG Process to Date	Jamie Damon, Kearns & West
9:20 to 10:30 am	Spec-5 EFSEC Updates and Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Redesign and Technology • Discussion/Q & A 	Dave Kobus, Scout Troy Rahmig, Tetra Tech
10:30 to 10:40 am	Break (approximate timing)	All
10:40 to 11:10 am	Hab-1 Wildlife Movement Corridor Plan Spec-12 Townsend’s Ground Squirrel Plan	Troy Rahmig, Tetra Tech
11:10 am to 12:00 pm	Spec-13 Pronghorn Study Plan Updates and Next Steps	Troy Rahmig, Tetra Tech Mark Nuetzmann, Yakama Nation Mike Ritter, WDFW
12:00 to 12:15pm	Board the bus	All
12:15 to 12:45 pm	Drive to Link Ranch	All
12:45 to 1:45 pm	Lunch and Overview of Project Redesign Site Tour at Link Ranch	Dave Kobus, Scout Troy Rahmig, Tetra Tech
1:45 to 2:00 pm	Board the bus	All
2:00 to 4:30pm	Site Tour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin at Link Ranch and end at Hampton Inn 	Dave Kobus, Scout All

Time (PT)	Item	Leads
4:30 to 5:00 pm	Closing and Next Steps	Jamie Damon, Kearns & West

WELCOME OPENING REMARKS AND HOUSEKEEPING

Jamie Damon, Facilitator, Kearns & West, opened the meeting and welcomed PTAG members and observers.

Present PTAG members and observers included:

- Members
 - Adam Fyall, Benton County
 - Tim Hayes, Independent Ecologist
 - Don McIvor, Independent Ecologist
 - Mark Nuetzmann, Yakama Nation
 - Andrew Pinger, Scout Clean Energy
 - Troy Rahmig, Tetra Tech
 - Mike Ritter, WDFW
 - Jessica Wadsworth, Local 348
 - Dana Ward, Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society
 - Chris Wiley, Wiley Ranches and Bubba Wiley Wheat
- Alternates
 - Andrea Brown, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
 - Emily Grabowsky, WDFW (virtual)
 - Dave Kobus, Scout Clean Energy
 - Dr. Ed Rykiel, Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society
- Observers
 - Don Bain, wpd-USA
 - Sean Greene, EFSEC (virtual)
 - Jim Woodward, Washington DNR Product Sales and Leasing Division (virtual)

Absent PTAG members and observers included:

- Members
 - Colleen Moulton, USFWS
 - Andrew Wildbill, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Alternates
 - Jeff Kozma, Yakama Nation
 - Michelle McDowell, USFWS

Present members of the technical resource and facilitation teams included:

- Charissa Verdoorn, Scout Clean Energy (technical resource)
- Madeline Damon, Tetra Tech (virtual)
- Karl Kosciuch, Tetra Tech (virtual)
- Jamie Damon, Kearns & West (facilitation team)

- Colin Baker, Kearns & West (facilitation team)

Absent members of the technical resource and facilitation teams included:

- Pat Landess, Scout Clean Energy (technical resource)

Jamie then reviewed participation guidelines and meeting objectives and agenda. Dave Kobus, Scout, previewed the plan for lunch at the Link Ranch.

REVIEW PTAG PROCESS TO DATE

Jamie previewed a timeline for the Site Certificate Agreement (SCA) and the PTAG's process and key achievements to date.

Dave shared that the SCA allows for certain activities to move forward during the appeal process, such as convening the PTAG. He also pointed out that the SCA timeline is slightly behind its original schedule, including the EFSEC decision on Spec-5. Scout had anticipated EFSEC's decision earlier in the summer, but it was delayed for various reasons by EFSEC until October 15. He explained that Scout's Spec-5 proposal was approved with changes and in its redacted form, which included details related to nest locations.

Jamie added that EFSEC had Spec-5 on its meeting agendas for several months over the summer and asked Sean Greene, EFSEC, if he wanted to add any additional context.

Sean agreed with Dave and Jamie's characterization of the process and timing to date and added that preparing the Council for a decision was a time-consuming process that included staff review of materials, staff briefings of Council and Council deliberations.

Dave shared anticipated next steps with the appeal process. Within one week of this meeting, the Superior Court would be provided the record supplementation documents from EFSEC to conduct a bench hearing to determine when to send the appeal to the State Supreme Court. When this occurs, a 21-day comment period would start, and then comments would be resolved by the Superior Court. He explained the Supreme Court's next session is in late November, so Scout is aiming to provide the Supreme Court with the information it needs as soon as possible. Dave noted that the appeal may not be resolved until summer 2026.

Dr. Ed Rykiel, Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society, asked for a brief overview of the content of the appeal.

- Dave explained that interveners with status (as filed during adjudication) had the opportunity to appeal a permit issued by the State of Washington within 60 days of issuance. The appeal in this case includes three interveners and primarily contains objections to process and decisions of the permitting authority. The Supreme Court will decide on these issues and is required by statute to only consider legal process and considerations (not special expertise on scientific issues) and to render a decision as expeditiously as possible.
- Ed asked about the outcomes of any previous appeal decisions.
- Dave noted that the previous two appeals have been rejected, so the permit was allowed to proceed.
- Ed asked if the decision of the Supreme Court could affect PTAG.
- Dave responded that it is unlikely because Scout, EFSEC, and the Governor's Office believe that Scout has followed the permit process as intended. Scout is hoping for an outcome similar to the past two appeals.

- Ed asked about outcomes if the Supreme Court rendered a decision not in line with previous decisions.
- Dave shared that Scout would pivot and find another path for success.

Dave shared that during the appeal process, Scout can continue to advance the Project redesign process. When there are items subject to PTAG review that could impact redesign, Scout will bring those to the PTAG as soon as possible. He added that the PTAG will review the redesigned Project, which could be done virtually or may require another in-person meeting. Dave noted that EFSEC staff has limited capacity, so Scout is doing its best to support them. He shared that if the Supreme Court's ruling were to require action on Scout's part, it may take several months to make necessary updates. He explained that once pre-construction reviews are complete, EFSEC will render its ultimate decision and announce a construction start date. Scout is aiming for early to mid-summer of 2027 for this decision so that construction can begin in 2027.

Jim Woodward, Washington DNR Product Sales and Leasing Division, asked how the current administration's One Big Beautiful Bill Act that passed over the summer might affect this Project.

- Dave explained that it is a complex issue, and Scout is working to make sure the Project can still take advantage of federal incentives. Developers can do this by pursuing an "allowable alternative," which includes starting construction on site, e.g. installing roads and foundations or ordering major pieces of equipment and starting to assemble them. Scout has ordered the main power transformers for the Project, giving Scout safe harbor to start construction. This safe harbor window gives Scout 4 years to complete construction, which will arrive soon. Dave added that Scout has ordered equipment in advance because issues with commodities and supply chains have delayed some orders by up to 4 years (compared to a typical 1.5 years).

Jamie highlighted the significant work and accomplishments of the PTAG to date. She reviewed the PTAG's approach to reviewing SCA requirements, noting those that were complete, in progress, and those not yet started.

Troy Rahmig, Tetra Tech, noted that "All other Species-Specific conditions, Management Plans, etc." under Priority 3 addressed multiple mitigation measures despite only being displayed as one item. He also noted that the items marked as "in progress" were largely contingent on Spec-5 and are being addressed currently or will be in the near future.

Dave added that Spec-5, though shown as complete on the slide, is technically not yet complete because the ferruginous hawk management plan still needs to be updated and shared with EFSEC for approval. He requested that the slides be updated to reflect this. *[follow up item]*

Jamie asked if the group had questions or comments.

Andrew Pinger, Scout, asked for confirmation that the PTAG's role is to review the Wild-1 post-construction fatality monitoring plan.

- Troy confirmed this.

SPEC-5 EFSEC UPDATES AND NEXT STEPS

Dave shared that EFSEC approved the finalization of resolution 357, which addresses the required ferruginous hawk nest setbacks per Spec-5. He shared that the resolution provides detail on the Council's process, including

addressing public comments received and making its decision on the nest setbacks. He noted that the resolution should be available on the EFSEC website soon.

Dave disclosed that the next steps regarding Spec-5 include submission of the management plan to EFSEC. Scout will also be working with EFSEC during the Project redesign to ensure the Project meets all Spec-5 requirements and is outside of nest setbacks.

Dave shared that EFSEC made a final determination on 43 of 44 nests. Despite Scout's request to allow infrastructure in the area around the [REDACTED] nest, EFSEC did not render a decision on the nest because no Project infrastructure was evaluated to be built in that area in the Project's original application. This nest will retain a 2.0-mile setback. He explained that 38 of the nests received a 0.6-mile setback, and 5 nests received 2.0-mile setbacks, including the 5 nests the PTAG had previously discussed: [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED].

Mike Ritter, WDFW, asked if the 1.0-mile setback around [REDACTED] for cultural protections was retained.

- Dave responded that it was, but that it is not in the presentation because it is not a requirement under Spec-5.

Dave shared that due to the 5-nest cluster with 2.0-mile setbacks, the originally proposed East Solar Area is no longer buildable, and the smaller wind turbine layout eliminated 53 wind turbines. An additional 31 wind turbines were excluded for reasons not related to Spec-5, e.g. the 1.0-mile cultural setback around [REDACTED], fire setbacks, etc. He emphasized that these setbacks exclude primary infrastructure components only, not the connectivity between primary infrastructure components. Examples of excluded primary infrastructure include wind turbines, solar areas, battery storage (except for on the east side of the Project Area, which was exempted from Spec-5). Dave encouraged other PTAG members to keep in mind that Scout has flexibility regarding connectivity infrastructure as it discusses other mitigation plans.

Jamie asked Scout to clarify underground versus overhead connectivity infrastructure.

- Dave explained that there may be some overhead infrastructure. The 5-nest cluster creates a long stretch between the two sides of the Project, and Scout has not yet determined if overhead connectivity would be needed in that area. He added that overhead micro-siting for overhead infrastructure is approved there.

Tim Hayes, independent ecologist, asked if Scout is required to build overhead lines consistent with the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC) guidelines.

- Dave shared that Scout is required to have a bird and bat conservation strategy for the site, which will include bird and bat policies.
- Andrew added that the policies are meant to eliminate electrocution and collision risk.

Troy then reviewed a series of maps of the Project. The first map overlaid the original Project layout of wind turbine locations and micro-siting corridors with the ferruginous hawk nest and other exclusion areas and potential overhead (green lines) and underground (blue lines) micro-siting corridors. Troy pointed out that the solar area was proposed on the east side in the original Project application, but it is not shown on the maps.

The second map displayed the exclusion areas with the remaining wind turbines, solar, and transmission siting from the original Project layout (primary infrastructure removed from exclusion areas).

The third map showed the remaining primary infrastructure and transmission siting from the original Project layout with the exclusion areas removed from the map. Troy noted that this map provides the clearest view of the wind turbines that are allowable based on EFSEC's decision regarding Spec-5. He highlighted the gap in the middle of the Project where wind turbine locations are no longer present but micrositing corridors for collection and connectivity remain. He noted that the locations of the collection and connectivity lines may change as the design progresses.

Dr. Rykiel asked if the loss of 84 wind turbines and the East Solar Area compromised the Project.

- Dave responded that Scout has been working hard to successfully design a viable Project. He explained that the previously evaluated micrositing corridors give Scout some flexibility with wind turbine and transmission locations, like shoulders on a road allow drivers to move out of the way if there is an obstruction in the roadway. He shared that Scout has evaluated about 11,500 acres of disturbance and believes that there is a pathway to a successful Project with the current Project permit, even considering the exclusion areas.

Dr. Rykiel followed up asking if the Project would remain financially viable.

- Dave shared that Scout's engineers are working to design a Project that both produces sufficient electricity and is financially viable. He shared that Scout will still need to select all the necessary equipment, and the permit allows Scout to optimize the site based on available equipment, technology, and pricing.

Dave corrected a statement he had made at previous PTAG meetings that Scout is considering relocating wind turbines lost to exclusion areas to previously non-leased land along the perimeter and within the Project Area, stating that Scout is aiming to design a successful Project within the existing permit parameters.

Don McIvor, independent ecologist, asked if Scout is considering larger wind turbines to maximize power generation, given the removal of many wind turbines from the original design.

- Dave explained that the SCA allows for up to 222 wind turbines with a maximum blade-tip-height of 671 feet. Scout is following the market and suppliers, which are developing prime wind turbine models for the future.

Troy reflected on the PTAG's early consideration of Spec-5 due to EFSEC approval requirements and implications on the Project redesign. He noted that now that the Project footprint is more solidified, the PTAG can more easily address other mitigation measures.

Dave confirmed that the maps discussed earlier show the Project's likely layout.

Troy asked Dave to discuss design impacts on solar facilities, noting that the East Solar Area was removed due to Spec-5 nest setbacks.

Dave explained that Scout is now focusing on solar on the west side of the Project Area, adding that Scout may revisit solar on the eastern side at a later date. He shared that the Project will be built in phases, and Scout will choose how to sequence those phases based on the eventual offtake customer. In the current application, solar is permitted in two locations on the west side, both 250 MW layouts. One of the locations is near the Webber Canyon substation that the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is building to connect to the Tri-Cities electric grid. Construction of this BPA substation is starting this fall and will tie into the Tri-Cities near

Badger Road and Interstate 82, near an existing substation. Scout intends to build a solar substation next to the solar areas and to build a wind turbine substation in the area with overhead lines tying into the BPA substation.

Troy added that a substation will still be built on the eastern side of the Project near Interstate 82 and the [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] nests. He noted that wind turbines and a solar array were originally designed to be built near this substation, but now that there will not be any solar power generation near the substation, power from the western side of the Project will be collected to fulfill generation requirements for this substation.

Dave clarified that BPA requires Scout to build a 350-MW substation to interconnect with this BPA switchyard being built. He explained that one of the impacts of the 2.0-mile setbacks for the 5-nest cluster is that there will need to be longer transmission and collection lines to bring western wind turbine generation to this substation. He noted that the green lines on the map represent overhead lines to collect power at the Bofer Canyon substation from the western wind turbines.

Tim asked if the 230-MW transmission line currently exists or if it will be built.

- Dave responded that Scout would build it.

Mike asked if there is an existing substation for BPA at Bofer Canyon Road.

- Dave explained that BPA will build a new Bofer Canyon substation and Scout will build the substation at Bofer Canyon Road to be able to tie into the new BPA substation. He added that the substation on the west side of the Project is federalized, meaning BPA will build it regardless of the Horse Heaven Project.

HAB-1 WILDLIFE MOVEMENT CORRIDOR PLAN

Troy previewed these plans by noting that EFSEC's decision on Spec-5 will influence other SCA conditions, including Hab-1 and Spec-12. He shared that these two plans are similar with some overlap. He noted that these have not been shared with PTAG yet, and they will be sent after this meeting for PTAG review. [*follow up item*]

Troy reviewed the text of Hab-1 from the SCA to provide context and highlighted two main points:

- (1) Specific wildlife movement corridor models must be used to develop the Plan, and
- (2) Measures must be implemented to minimize impacts in wildlife movement corridors, and a rationale must be provided for infrastructure within the corridors (along with a way to quantify impacts on the corridors to inform mitigation).

Troy then reviewed the specific requirements of the plan, included on slide 20 in the meeting presentation.

Dave added that the expertise among the PTAG would be greatly beneficial to the development of the Hab-1 Plan.

Troy explained the rationale for placement of infrastructure within wildlife movement corridors, in other words, why the Project cannot avoid the corridors altogether. He shared that the Project avoids them as much as possible, but there are some locations where it is unavoidable for connectivity, e.g. transmission lines and service roads. He clarified that the amount of primary infrastructure in wildlife movement corridors was

reduced significantly due to the Spec-5 nest exclusion areas, though some does still exist. He shared that these existing pieces of infrastructure will be minimized to only what is essential to the Project, and Scout will pursue opportunities to consolidate them as much as possible. Because these are mostly linear features, e.g. roads or interconnection lines, they can sometimes be collocated.

Troy also shared that the Project is subject to requirements to minimize impacts during the construction process, e.g. speed limits on service roads, road and Project signage, etc. He added that the site tour would include areas in medium to high modelled linkage wildlife movement corridors, e.g. near the [REDACTED] ferruginous hawk nest. Troy noted that much of the area that is modelled as wildlife corridors contains wheat production and existing infrastructure, e.g. roads. As such, Hab-1 will weigh the impacts from the Project relative to a baseline of the current conditions. He also shared that impacts during construction, when more activity will be occurring in the area, will be different than during operations, which would mostly include occasional maintenance activities.

Chris Wiley, Wiley Ranches and Bubba Wiley Wheat, noted that most other plans required by the SCA are species specific and asked if Hab-1 is generalized or in reference to a specific species.

- Troy explained that Hab-1 is general, adding that the model wildlife corridors referenced in the SCA is based on 8 to 10 species. There are models for individual species that were then consolidated into a single more generalized model. He also shared that habitat connectivity is species-dependent, e.g. connectivity is very different for a pronghorn versus a lizard. The SCA contains specific language about bottomless culverts, e.g., with consideration to areas with stream crossings or drainage, which does not exist in the Project Area, but might be for a specific species or resource and is considered best practices. He asked if Mike Ritter had anything to add.
- Mike noted the 3 primary species the model is based on include mule deer, ground squirrels, and jack rabbits; however, lizards are not considered.
- Andrew shared that the model referenced 12 species, including those that do not exist in the area such as salamanders and beavers.

Dr. Rykiel asked for additional information on the wildlife corridor models.

- Troy offered to share the model with the PTAG after the meeting. *[follow up item]* He shared that it is slightly outdated and was created by the Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group.
- Dr. Rykiel asked for clarification about species-specific models.
- Troy explained that the model combines species-specific models into a more generalized model.

Troy displayed a map showing the original wind turbine layout with the wildlife movement corridor overlay, explaining that the different colors signify different levels of the importance of connectivity on the landscape: green is “medium,” orange “high,” and red is “very high.” He pointed out that most of the modelled linkages in the Project Area are listed as “medium” or “high,” with areas of “very high” just to the northwest of the Project Area. He clarified that the SCA specifically mentions “medium,” “high,” and “very high” and does not consider corridors of “low” importance. The first map shows the original Project layout.

Troy then showed another map reflecting a potential Project redesign factoring in the setbacks now required by Spec-5, with the wildlife movement corridor overlay. He indicated that in the north-south wildlife movement corridor shaded in orange and green in the central part of the Project there are now fewer wind turbines compared to the original layout due to nest exclusion areas. Troy shared that these two maps were not in the

meeting packet but that a map showing the wildlife exclusion areas would be shared with the PTAG after the meeting. *[follow up item]*

Troy shared that the Hab-1 plan will summarize direct and indirect impacts to the wildlife movement corridors, identify infrastructure removed as minimization as part of the Project redesign, and the existing Project infrastructure, including permanent and temporary impacts on areas.

Don McIvor asked about gaps in the wildlife movement corridors in the center of the map.

- Troy suggested that these gaps were wildlife movement corridors designated as “low” importance but noted that he would have to look into it to confirm. *[follow up item]* He added that the model is a “least cost path” model, in which distance plays a factor, meaning that it considers resistance landscape on a map and determines the path of least resistance for wildlife. He suggested that the gaps on the map could include agricultural land as opposed to better habitat, e.g. grassland, nearby.

Jim Woodward requested the wildlife corridor maps and slide deck be shared with virtual participants. This was done during the meeting.

Dr. Rykiel asked how the wildlife corridor movement model was validated.

- Troy offered to follow up with this information. *[follow up item]*
- Mike added that the process to develop the wildlife movement corridors involved a significant stakeholder process.

Tim asked for confirmation that the wildlife movement corridors displayed on the maps are modelled and not verified by field study and/or surveys.

- Troy confirmed this.

Troy noted that Hab-1 is confined to areas where the Project would encroach into wildlife movement corridors. He compared the impacts on wildlife corridor linkages from the original Project layout with the impacts to the updated layout, including:

- Original Layout
 - 21 wind turbines in medium linkages and 10 in high linkages, none in very high linkages
 - 980 acres in medium linkages, 316 acres in high linkages, none in very high linkages
- Updated Layout
 - 7 wind turbines in medium linkages and none in high linkages
 - 235 acres in medium linkages, 10 acres in high linkages, none in very high linkages

Troy highlighted that the updated layout includes an 86% reduction in medium linkages and a 97% reduction in high linkages.

Troy provided context on the Habitat Mitigation Plan that was submitted with the original application and was later finalized and included in the SCA. This Plan is based on habitat types in terms of how impacts are quantified, and mitigation ratios are attached to the different habitat types, which, in turn, is used to develop a final mitigation plan for when the Project is built and final acreages are known. This Habitat Mitigation Plan discusses the importance of mitigation in areas that benefit wildlife movement, Townsend’s ground squirrels, and ferruginous hawks. During the original application process the Project team had contemplated mitigation in locations that would benefit wildlife movement, ferruginous hawks, etc., so the plans being discussed today

tie back to the original mitigation plan. Troy offered to share the original Habitat Mitigation Plan for reference.
[follow up item]

Troy noted that impact measurement will be based on comparisons of required baseline surveys before construction and surveys conducted after construction. However, Hab-1 mitigation will be based on models due to requirements of the SCA and before surveys have occurred, and field surveys will occur later. Operational impacts, e.g. animal strikes with vehicles, will be reported. Minimization would also occur during construction and operations.

Tim pointed out the mention of “mitigation” on slide 24 in the presentation and asked how that relates to compensatory mitigation.

- Troy confirmed that compensatory mitigation is tied back to the original Habitat Mitigation Plan for any impacts to any habitat. Mitigation also must also occur in locations that support wildlife movement, which modelling will be used to justify.

Troy shared that the SCA also considers restoring habitat, including natural habitat and agricultural land, to pre-Project conditions after the Project is decommissioned.

Dr. Rykiel asked if habitat restoration requirements consider the impacts of climate change.

- Troy proposed that the requirements would likely have to take into account climate change by necessity.

BREAK

The PTAG took a break at 10:30 am.

SPEC-12 TOWNSEND’S GROUND SQUIRREL PLAN

Troy reviewed the text of Spec-12 in the SCA and highlighted two components:

- (1) The Certificate Holder must avoid habitat loss within Townsend’s ground squirrel habitat concentration areas (HCAs), as well as known colonies.
- (2) If Project components are required in habitat concentration areas (rated as medium or greater) or near known colonies, the Certificate Holder shall prepare a species-specific management plan.

Troy noted that the pre-construction surveys include field surveys of the Townsend’s Ground Squirrel, including surveys next spring. If colonies are noted within micro-siting corridors during those surveys, those will be included in this process. There are no known colonies in the Project Area as of yet. He explained that they second key component of Spec-12 above is to ensure that a management plan would be in place if colonies were found during pre-construction surveys.

Troy noted that, similar to wildlife corridors, the Project is mostly designed around HCAs for the Townsend’s ground squirrel. However, there may be instances of disturbance especially from overhead and/or interconnection lines. Because of the Spec-5 exclusion areas, however, most primary infrastructure is outside of the HCAs. Troy observed that as the various SCA requirements (e.g. Spec-5, Hab-1, Spec-12, etc.) layer on

top of each other, the impacts being discussed are overlapping, or occurring in the same locations, but affecting different resources.

Troy discussed proposed measures to reduce potential impacts. He shared that there will be an attempt to consolidate linear features and minimize ground disturbance as much as possible. Troy explained that overhead transmission lines do not create as much of a disturbance as underground lines; however, overhead lines could create a greater disturbance for raptors, which will be weighed during micro-siting. Additionally, speed limits on construction traffic will be imposed. Finally, restoration to pre-Project conditions after decommissioning is required.

Troy shared that the species is only above ground for a few months out of a year, depending on temperatures, and are underground the remainder of the year. There are considerations related to this species characteristics in Spec-12 as well.

Troy shared two maps of species habitat concentration models in the Project Area. The first map displayed the original Project layout with Townsend's ground squirrel HCAs and the second map displayed the redesigned Project layout with the species' HCAs. He explained that the modelling was conducted several years ago and was based on locations of known colonies and habitat associates. The SCA requires consideration of HCAs rated "medium" and higher, which the maps display.

Referring to the second map, Troy pointed out that primary infrastructure was moved out of the central area in the Project where a medium HCA exists. A significant amount of primary infrastructure was also removed from the high HCA in the northern parts of the Project, with the exception of one wind turbine. Troy noted that, overall, almost all primary infrastructure has been pulled out of HCAs. There are still linear features through some areas, e.g. roadways and transmission lines, that follow mitigation plan requirements.

Dana Ward, Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society, asked if the Townsend's ground squirrel is nocturnal.

- Troy responded that they are not, and the survey protocol is to survey them in the morning, since they return underground as the day warms up.

Dr. Rykiel asked if they are prey for ferruginous hawks.

- Troy affirmed that they are.

Troy highlighted on the second map the area featuring the cluster of 5 ferruginous hawk nests with 2.0-mile setbacks in the central region of the Project and noted medium HCAs that exist just south of the Lease Boundary near the nest cluster.

Mark Nuetzmann, Yakama Nation, noted that high and very high HCAs occur immediately outside the northern boundary of the Project area, bordering it almost perfectly. He asked if that delineation was intentional or by chance.

- Troy answered that the HCAs reflect data from the model but that he was not certain if the model is related to property boundaries in addition to land use. He surmised that if low HCAs were displayed on the map, they would be present within the Lease Boundary.
- Dave pointed out that the medium HCAs in and near the central region of the Project are close to Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land.
- Troy added that land use is the primary consideration in the HCA model and noted that some of the medium HCA areas were once shrubsteppe but are now wheat fields.

Dave asked Chris to explain why CRP land is disappearing in the area.

- Chris shared that CRP is usually based on 10-year contracts, at the end of which the landowner renegotiates with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). CRP compensation is not as competitive as it was 10 to 20 years ago. Farming practices have also changed. In the past, when ground was more highly erodible, land would be placed into CRP to prevent the loss of topsoil. Now, however, with other farming practices like no-till, the loss of topsoil is not as much of a concern and that land can be farmed again. Considering these factors, along with CRP parcels failing inspection due to stricter USDA grass guidelines and the costs of reseeding, many farmers are deciding that placing the land back into wheat production is a better option.
- Andrew asked if payment rates track with inflation.
- Chris shared that rates have declined compared to 20 years ago.
- Troy added that there have been changes in land use in the area over time, with areas that were CRP for decades now being put back into wheat production.

Troy compared the impacts of the original Project layout with the impacts of the updated layout, highlighting that the Project went from 7 wind turbines and 199 acres in medium HCAs to no wind turbines and no acres in medium HCAs and from 32 acres in high HCAs to 12 acres in high HCAs. He shared that because of interconnected lines and roads, there is a requirement to create a mitigation plan, which will also be important in case colonies are found during spring surveys. He anticipates that both direct and indirect and permanent and temporary impacts to the species would be rather small. Troy added that the Project's larger compensatory mitigation plan identifies the species as a mitigation siting criterion.

Dave asked if a colony could be relocated.

- Mike shared that it is not possible.
- Troy added this was originally discussed but that most agree that it is not possible. Work to move colonies of similar species, e.g. the California ground squirrel, has occurred but that was primarily to benefit other species, e.g. burrowing owls, and colony relocation is likely not an option with the Townsend's ground squirrel.

Tim asked how the species is affected by seasonal rains and if there are population boom and bust cycles.

- Mike responded that he was not sure.
- Troy was also not certain but posited that the species would likely be impacted by rains, especially on a dry landscape like in the Horse Heaven Hills.

Dr. Rykiel asked if the species attracts rattlesnakes.

- Troy was not certain but presumed that they likely would because most burrowing species attract rattlesnakes with the tunnel systems they build.

SPEC-13 PRONGHORN STUDY PLAN UPDATES AND NEXT STEPS

Troy opened by sharing that the other Tetra Tech employees who have been involved with the development of Spec-13 Pronghorn Study Plan were attending this meeting virtually. He then provided an overview of the process to date and the technical working group that had convened over the summer, which included PTAG members from the Yakama Nation and WDFW, as well as other staff from those entities.

Troy explained that the SCA requires coordination with PTAG on Spec-13, and the Study Plan is in a good place for the full PTAG to weigh in. He shared that due to the long-term nature of the proposed study, he would suspect that the Study Plan will evolve over time. Currently, the goal is to launch the study with full PTAG involvement, and then the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which will replace the PTAG once construction is complete, would be involved in the long term.

Troy reviewed the Spec-13 text in the SCA, sharing that the intent is to understand seasonal pronghorn antelope occurrence and use of the Project Area before construction and during operation to document the change, if any, of pronghorn antelope presence, abundance, and habitat use within the Lease Boundary area. He summarized by saying that it is known that pronghorn are on the landscape within the Lease Boundary Area, and the Study Plan is meant to determine if the construction and operations of the Project have an impact on their use of the landscape within the Lease Boundary Area.

Troy reviewed the 3 primary objectives of the Study Plan and noted recent relevant literature, which was shared with the PTAG before the meeting (“Ungulate use before and after utility-scale solar development,” Sawyer et al., 2025).

- 1) Objective 1: Document seasonal presence (location) and a minimum herd count of pronghorn in the Lease Boundary during pre-construction, during construction, and post-construction.
 - a. Troy noted that some of the metrics that the technical working group have used to describe the terms in the language of this objective have evolved over the course of the conversations with the group. He explained that this is on purpose because there are some limitations to what can be done on the landscape, so the Project team is seeking to be deliberate about what can be accomplished with the study, including documenting seasonal presence and minimum herd count. The goal is to report on as many individuals as are found, which is in line with standard methodology and how WDFW and the Yakama Nation currently conducts bi-annual surveys.
- 2) Objective 2: Document patterns of use over time prior to construction and operation of the Project and then relative to construction and operations activities by monitoring a subset of the herd using GPS collars.
 - a. Troy shared that this objective would entail placing GPS collars on a subset of the herd to observe how they behave during the various stages of the Project. He noted that collaring is a serious undertaking that can result in some mortality of individuals.
- 3) Objective 3: Quantify location, duration, and intensity of construction and operation activities, using pre-determined activity categories, in order to have finer resolution of mechanisms that could influence pronghorn during construction and operations.
 - a. Troy shared that other studies considering the impacts of renewable energy projects on pronghorn have struggled with capturing impacts during the construction phase, resulting in a gap in the literature. The Spec-13 Study Plan will attempt to consider the locations of construction activity occurring relative to the locations of collared individuals and determine if construction activity itself has an impact on the species.

Troy provided an overview of the procedure to determine presence and abundance, including conducting bi-annual surveys (already done by WDFW and the Yakama Nation) to track minimum herd count over time. He shared that the Study Plan proposes replicating these surveys seasonally (4 times per year) to better understand seasonal use, which is a SCA requirement. Troy explained that aerial surveys are inherently risky

for the surveyors, so the Study Plan proposes transitioning to camera systems on unmanned aerial vehicles as the technology develops over time. Given current technology, the Study Plan notes that the aerial surveys will start with manned aircraft, but that Tetra Tech has been researching emerging camera and drone technology.

Troy added that WDFW is working with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) on a Columbia whitetail deer study using fixed-wing aircraft with belly cameras that use thermal imaging to document deer. He referenced images produced with these cameras in the presentation, which uses artificial intelligence (AI) imaging technology that creates scores for images to determine if the image includes a deer, if the image score is above a specific threshold. The Study Plan anticipates transitioning to this type of technology once it is ready to be successfully implemented for pronghorn in the Horse Heaven Hills.

Mike observed that seeing Columbia whitetail to the west of the Project area would be difficult to see with the naked eye, but that pronghorn might be easier to see in the Project area due to more contrasting colors. He agreed with Troy that manned aerial surveys present a safety risk and noted that the Study Plan would require many flights, so transitioning to drones with this technology would be beneficial.

Troy added that the imaging technology allows for more accurate herd counts.

Dr. Rykiel asked how seasonality would be defined for this study.

- Troy explained that seasons would be defined by solstices, which tracks well with the pronghorn lifecycle.

Tim asked if the existing Yakama Nation and WDFW survey data would be used as a control for determining minimum herd counts.

- Troy responded that the data from these surveys would be used. The data dates back to winter 2015 and shows that the herd population has steadily increased over time. He shared that the topic of a control group has come up with the technical working group as well, out of a desire to determine if the Project is the cause of potential changes seen in pronghorn behavior and activity. The Project team has anchored on a similar approach to the Sawyer et al. 2025 paper that focuses on the locations of animals relative to permanent infrastructure on the landscape and then adding in the construction activity component. Troy shared that the technical working group has discussed the possibility of expanding the study to consider animals outside of the Lease Boundary; however, collaring outside of the Lease Boundary presents a logistical challenge. Scout has access agreements with private landowners within the Lease Boundary Area, which allows them to collar animals. Outside of the Lease Boundary, to the west is the Yakama Nation Reservation, where collaring could potentially be done, but would also be outside the scope of the requirements of Spec-13.
- Mike shared his perspective that the Study Plan should follow the text of the SCA, which states that the Study should focus on pronghorn within the Lease Boundary. He noted that the technical working group agreed to collar 30 individuals. Achieving that quantity of collaring could be difficult within the Lease Boundary alone, which influenced some of the conversation with the technical working group about expanding beyond the Lease Boundary.
- Mark shared that the minimum requirements of the SCA are to conduct the study within the Lease Boundary, but it does not need to be confined to it. He shared Mike's concern about being able to collar the 30 animals solely within the Lease Boundary.

Dr. Rykiel asked how it was decided to collar 30 animals if the size of the herd is unknown.

- Troy explained that the size of the herd is known based on previous surveys, and the most recent survey from earlier this year indicated a minimum herd size of 337 animals. The decision to collar 30 animals was largely based on logistical considerations. Troy explained the process for collaring animals: helicopters would fly across the landscape searching for pronghorn, and if a high concentration of them is within an area, then quite a few can be collared. He shared that the intention is to collar as many as possible at the outset of the study, and then to collar additional animals over time as needed. He explained that females would be collared in the wintertime because by spring, the females are taking care of young, and it is best to avoid causing undue stress on the young animals or their mothers, but that collaring in the summer is possible, according to a collaring company.

Dr. Rykiel asked if the collaring plan was informed by the Sawyer et al. 2025 study.

- Troy responded that it was partially informed by it, especially related to the ways that study created distance bands around a solar project. With this Project, there would be multiple points of potential disturbance, e.g. solar installations, wind turbines, concentrations of construction activity, etc., that would each be identified as an area of interest and create distance bands around them to report out the counting rate.

Troy then reviewed the data outputs from Sawyer et al. 2025 to provide examples of similar types of data the Study Plan would generate. He explained that the study considered one solar installation, noting that the Spec-13 Study Plan would consider multiple areas of activity. Referencing a graph displaying the percent of pronghorn locations versus their distance to the solar installation, Troy shared that approximately half as many animals spent time within 3 kilometers of the solar installation post-construction compared to pre-construction. Troy then presented the same data on sets of spring and summer maps, noting that reductions in use during these seasons were the most dramatic. He explained that the Spec-13 Study Plan is intended to develop a similar study, combined with more frequent minimum herd counts.

Chris asked if the study will have a preference for monitoring animals within a vicinity of the proposed solar sites.

- Troy answered that animals will be collared within the Lease Boundary, wherever they can be found, regardless of proximity to a proposed solar site, and that all collaring will occur [REDACTED]. Once the animals are collared, they will be monitored wherever they move, even if they move outside of the Lease Boundary. Troy noted that the locations of the two proposed solar sites on the west side of the Project Area are between the [REDACTED] and most of the [REDACTED], which will likely provide a solid representation of how the animals are interacting with the solar sites. Troy also reminded the PTAG that the solar installations would be on agricultural land, which pronghorn use as habitat, but it is not considered the animal's primary habitat.

Mark asked if the Study Plan will have fewer location fixes when pronghorn leave the Lease Boundary.

- Troy responded that, originally, the plan was to have collars provide 12 location fixes each day (aka, 1 location fix every 2 hours). A virtual fence around the Lease Boundary would have allowed for fewer location fixes to be taken outside the Lease Boundary to save costs. However, further research into pricing revealed that location fixes would not be as expensive as previously believed, so the Project team is considering collecting more location fixes, including 12 fixes regardless of animal location.

Tim asked for confirmation that there has never been a study like this for a wind project.

- Troy confirmed this and added that studies like this have only been done for solar and oil and gas projects in Wyoming.

Dr. Rykiel noted there is a large population of pronghorn in Wyoming.

- Troy agreed, sharing that much of Wyoming is an area of high seasonal migration for pronghorn. The geography of the Horse Heaven Hills, by contrast, confines pronghorn somewhat, with the interstate to the east, the Tri-Cities to the north, and the river to the south. The area is not a migration corridor like parts of Wyoming, but animals do move through the region, mostly east-west but not north-south.

Mike shared his perspective that the Study Plan has been deliberated and is well-reasoned.

Tim shared his experience with wind turbine projects in Wyoming with high populations of pronghorn: immediately after construction pronghorn did not return to the area, but after seed was planted for mitigation purposes, pronghorn returned. He added that the animals use the shadows of the wind turbines for shade.

- Chris shared that he has seen pronghorn use the shadows of telephone poles in the summer for shade.

Troy provided further details about the Study Plan and next steps in the process to finalize it. He shared that the draft Study Plan discusses methods and contemplates data analysis, though it could still evolve based on the data collected and ongoing input. Troy shared that collaring will be conducted this winter, and 1 to 2 years of baseline data will be collected before construction begins. The study team will consider the most effective ways to analyze collaring data as it is collected, and the technical working group will continue to contribute as well.

Mark asked for more information about the timeline for collaring and EFSEC consideration and approval of Spec-13.

- Troy responded about collaring, sharing that WDFW recommended several collaring companies, and one has been identified as the best fit. He noted that one constraint for starting collaring in December of this year is their arrival timeline, which could push collaring back to February 2026. Regarding EFSEC, the Study Plan would be sent to EFSEC and the EFSEC director would likely use her delegated authority for approval, as opposed to a Council decision. This process would be faster than a Council decision. Collaring will likely proceed this winter, and then the finer details of the Study Plan could happen simultaneously.

Dave asked if the collaring company indicated a preference for winter.

- Troy confirmed this.

Chris asked if the number of individuals and their location is documented when aerial surveys are conducted for minimum herd counts.

- Troy confirmed that both pieces of information are collected. He pointed out that previous bi-annual surveys include maps of areas of higher concentrations of animals. He shared that the surveys will also try to collect other information, e.g. female vs male individuals.

Dr. Rykiel asked if developing drone and AI technologies would be an element of this study.

- Troy explained that developing these technologies would not fall into the purview of this study. However, if these technologies progress and are reliable, the study would transition surveys to using drones and AI technology.
- Dr. Rykiel remarked that machine learning requires significant data inputs for models to be effective.

- Troy shared that this learning is being conducted largely in Wyoming.
- Dr. Rykiel asked if the PTAG would be informed in the future if the surveys were to transition to drone and AI technologies.
- Troy confirmed that either the PTAG or the TAC would be informed, depending on the timing of the technologies' development.

Mike asked Chris if he observes pronghorn often.

- Chris responded that he sees them daily, adding that his property is on the west-central side of the Project Area. He shared that he has noticed trends with the numbers and sexes of animals.
- Mike asked if Chris thought collaring 30 animals would be possible within the Lease Boundary.
- Chris shared that if done in December and a substantial herd of approximately 70 animals is present, then it would be possible. The animals group into larger herds during winter.
- Troy added that the project team had anticipated collaring to take many days, which could still occur, but the team is hopeful it will not take that long. He added that the requirement to capture and collar the animals within the Lease Boundary while also avoiding private landowners not participating in the Project will be a challenge.
- Chris asked if the collaring helicopters can herd the animals back onto land within the Lease Boundary.
- Troy shared that it could be possible, but that helicopters will fly in ways to avoid houses and livestock, making that more difficult.

Mark asked if Scout would issue a press release about the Study Plan and collaring, adding that members of the public will notice when collaring starts.

- Dave appreciated the input.

Chris asked for the rationale for collaring only females.

- Troy answered that females are often at the center of the herd structure when the animals group up in larger herds in the wintertime. Additionally, females are considered a better index of the herd's usage of the landscape, and collaring females is standard practice with these types of surveys.
- Mike added that females are more resource dependent because they tend to move around more than males in order to find food for their young.

Dana asked about any measures in place to prevent a private landowner from changing the use of their land that could prevent the placement of Project infrastructure, e.g. building a large housing development or planting crops.

- Dave shared that Scout would prepare signed agreements with landowners that document the locations of Project infrastructure and clauses that require those areas to not be obstructed for the life of the Project. Dave explained that the landowners will be able to use their land however they would like, but they cannot obstruct specific locations. The leases will stay intact during the course of the Project, and areas of improvement are identified.

LUNCH AND OVERVIEW OF PROJECT REDESIGN SITE TOUR AT LINK RANCH

The morning session of the meeting ended several minutes early, so Troy conducted the overview of the site tour at the hotel. He shared that the first stop would include lunch would take place at the Link Ranch, which

is located within the Project Area and would allow the PTAG to observe a part of the Project Area that they did not see during the last site tour in March. He shared that the area to the north of the house on the ranch are mapped for wildlife movement corridors. Dave showed the approximate location of the Link Ranch on a map of the Project.

Troy shared that Stop 2 would be at the top of McBee Road in an area that the PTAG visited during the last site tour. The Project team thought it would be good to revisit this area now that the solar installations have moved to the western side of the Project Area and given its proximity to the [REDACTED] ferruginous hawk nest that EFSEC did not render a decision on.

Troy noted that Stop 3 would include driving near the [REDACTED] ferruginous hawk nest, which was active earlier this year. It is located in the middle of the 5-nest cluster and the wildlife migration corridor. The Project team wanted the PTAG to see the baseline conditions in this area where overhead transmission lines could be sited.

Stop 4 along Bateman Road would be in an area east of Interstate 82 within an exclusion area around a nest with 5 wind turbines to be sited outside of the 2.0-mile exclusion area.

Stop 5 would be at the top of Jump Off Joe Butte and within the Nine Canyon Wind Project. This stop would provide a sense of what the area would look like once wind turbines are built for the Horse Heaven Project and also provides a sense of what the east side of the Project Area looks like.

SITE TOUR

Lunch and the site tour occurred from approximately 12:30 to 4:30 pm.

SITE TOUR DEBRIEF

After the site tour concluded, the group returned to the hotel and conducted a debrief.

Tim reflected that during the first site tour in March, he noted to himself that the land near Chris' house on the west side of the Project Area would be ideal for solar because of its flatness and lack of intact habitat, and now solar is being proposed in the area.

- Dave shared that that area has a rock gravel bed, which will be beneficial for pilings for the solar installation, compared to the deeper soil on the east side of the Project Area where solar was originally proposed.
- Dr. Rykiel asked if the gravel bed was volcanic rock or river rock.
- Dave responded that it is river rock.
- Dana pointed out a large granite erratic rock along the road near the start of the site tour.

Dana asked if the 2.0-mile setbacks remove the entirety of the proposed eastern solar site, or just parts of it.

- Dave shared that the setbacks remove the entire buildable part of solar on the east side of the Project Area. Additionally, that area has airspace restrictions, and wind turbines have priority over solar. Scout had considered redesigning the Project to bring solar power in from even further east, which could still be considered in the future.

Troy reflected on the size and scale of the Project, especially from east to west.

Dr. Rykiel shared that the site tour helped him understand the rationale for various Project design considerations.

- Dave shared that he had been concerned that the tour would be repetitive so was glad to hear that it was beneficial.
- Mark agreed with Dr. Rykiel, adding that the first tour contained a lot of information and was a little overwhelming because of the size and scope of the Project, so this second site tour allowed him to more fully grasp the Project.

Jamie appreciated driving along [REDACTED] because the PTAG had spent a significant amount of time discussing the active nest in that area and because the area was not featured on the previous tour.

Dave noted that farmers in the area will farm as much land as possible, and the topography provides the little bit of habitat that exists.

Jamie then reviewed next steps for the PTAG. The twice monthly email updates will continue. The PTAG will also review the Spec-13 Pronghorn Study Plan. Jamie asked Troy if the Spec-13 technical working group would meet again.

- Troy shared that the Study Plan was sent to the PTAG and the technical working group, but that he has not received any feedback on it yet. The technical working group would likely meet again, but the timing is not confirmed yet. The Project team will resend Spec-13 and keep the PTAG updated about collaring. *[follow up item]*

The PTAG will also review Hab-1 Wildlife Movement Corridor Plan and Spec-12 Townsend's Ground Squirrel Plan, which will both be sent to the PTAG in the coming weeks. *[follow up item]*

The PTAG may need a virtual meeting to review the above Plans in early 2026, depending on the level of comments provided. The Project team will keep PTAG updated. *[follow up item]*

Troy shared that the Spec-5 Management Plan, which was originally included in the Spec-5 Facilitator Report, has been updated with acreages to determine the amount of permanent and temporary impacts, and it would be sent to EFSEC soon.

Dave shared his desire for these plans to be finalized and shared with EFSEC for approval, and the PTAG can convene to finalize these plans either virtually or in person if warranted.

Jamie noted that when the Project is completed, the PTAG will sunset and the TAC will replace it. Several PTAG members may roll on to the TAC and others may not.

Jamie asked for feedback from the group on the PTAG process and offered to receive feedback individually if preferred. She reminded the group that the PTAG was created at the request of EFSEC, and a PTAG had never been convened before, so it has been a learning process.

Dr. Rykiel shared that he has been very satisfied with the process.

Dana approved of the process and appreciated Chris' participation to provide a perspective from a local landowner. He acknowledged that there are landowners who oppose the Project, so he appreciated hearing a different perspective.

- Dave shared that there are many landowners that are hesitant to be open about the participation in the Project and appreciated Chris' involvement to share information about and a perspective on the Project that were not being shared.

Tim shared his initial scepticism about the financial viability of the Project after EFSEC rendered its decision on setbacks for the 5-nest cluster, bifurcating the Project. He was impressed that Scout was working to find a successful path forward.

- Dave appreciated Tim's comments. He shared that despite the challenges the Project has faced, the market has indicated to Scout that the Project should move forward. The region is in need of more power generation that projects like this one will provide.

Don McIvor approved of the process to date.

Jamie closed by appreciating the participation and communication of the PTAG members, with nearly 100% participation at every meeting and active engagement during and between meetings.

FOLLOW UP ITEMS

Project and Facilitation Teams

- Update the slides to reflect that Spec-5 is still in progress [complete]
- Share Hab-1 and Spec-12 with PTAG for review. [complete]
- Share wildlife movement corridor model and more information about how it was validated. [complete]
- Share maps displaying wildlife exclusion areas. [complete]
- Confirm if gaps in wildlife movement corridors in the meeting presentation maps are areas of "low" importance. [confirmed, complete]
- Share the original Habitat Mitigation Plan for reference.
- Keep PTAG updated on the status of pronghorn collaring.
- Keep the PTAG updated about planning the next PTAG meeting in early 2026

PTAG Members and Observers

- None