

Montague Wind Power Facility: Revegetation Plan

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I. Introduction

This plan describes methods and standards for restoration of areas disturbed during the construction of the Montague Wind Power Facility (MWPF), excluding areas occupied by permanent facility components (the “footprint”).¹ The objective of revegetation is to restore the disturbed areas to pre-disturbance condition or better. The site certificate for the facility requires restoration of these areas. This plan has been developed in consultation with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

The site certificate describes the area of disturbance anticipated during construction of the MWPF. The affected area includes cultivated or otherwise developed agricultural land (cropland) as well as areas of grassland, shrub-steppe habitat and other habitat subtypes (wildlife habitat areas). The intensity of the construction impact will vary. In some areas, the impact will be relatively light, but in other areas, heavy construction activity will remove all vegetation, remove topsoil and compact the remaining subsoil. Where vegetation has been damaged or removed during construction, the certificate holder must restore suitable vegetation. In addition, the certificate holder shall maintain erosion and sediment control measures put in place during construction until the affected areas are restored as described in this plan and the risk of erosion has been eliminated. The plan specifies monitoring procedures to evaluate revegetation success of disturbed wildlife habitat areas. Remedial action may be necessary for wildlife habitat areas that do not show revegetation progress. Additional mitigation may be necessary if revegetation is unsuccessful.

II. Description of the Facility Site

The facility is located in Gilliam County, Oregon. The facility site is on private agricultural land used primarily for wheat and hay farming and livestock grazing. The majority of the facility components are located on four primary soil types: the Olex Unit, the Ritzville Unit, the Warden Unit and the Willis Unit. Soils are typically well-drained, moderately permeable, fertile silt loams formed in loess deposits. The area receives between approximately 9 and 14 inches of precipitation annually, most of which occurs between October 1 and March 31.

The site is within the Columbia Plateau physiographic province. The facility is located on an upland plateau at elevations ranging from approximately 530 feet to 1,520 feet. Most of the native vegetation within the site boundary has been modified by historic and ongoing livestock grazing and past wildfires.

The general land cover types are Developed, Exposed Rock, Grassland, Shrub-steppe and Woodland. Specifically, functional, mature sagebrush (big sage) shrub-steppe and juniper woodland habitat is patchy, occurring in specific locations within the site boundary. Sagebrush (big sage) shrub-steppe is found on deep soils in patches throughout the site and higher quality habitat is usually found on slopes or in draws that have been avoided for agricultural

¹ This plan is incorporated by reference in the site certificate for the Montague Wind Power Facility and must be understood in that context. It is not a “stand-alone” document. This plan does not contain all mitigation required of the certificate holder.

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1 development. Juniper woodland habitat is present in portions of the site, but individual juniper
2 trees are scattered sparsely in other habitats. Recent wildfires have removed some juniper trees in
3 the Eightmile Canyon area. Riparian woodland habitat within the site is limited to one narrow
4 intermittent linear course in Eightmile canyon. Rabbitbrush/Snakeweed shrub-steppe habitat is
5 the most prevalent native habitat type within the site. Rabbitbrush/Snakeweed shrub-steppe is
6 more prevalent in the north, west and middle portions of the site, with smaller patches distributed
7 throughout much of the site. Native perennial grassland is also present throughout much of the
8 north, middle and south portions of the site.

9 **III. Revegetation Methods**

10 The certificate holder shall begin restoration of disturbed areas as soon as possible after
11 completion of facility construction activity in the area to be restored. The certificate holder shall
12 restore areas of disturbance by preparing the soil and seeding using common application
13 methods. The certificate holder shall use mulching and other appropriate practices to control
14 erosion and sediment during facility construction and during revegetation work. The certificate
15 holder shall restore topsoil to pre-construction condition. The certificate holder shall select the
16 seed mix to apply based on the pre-construction land use, as described below. For affected
17 juniper woodland areas, planting young juniper trees may be preferred over seeds. The certificate
18 holder shall consult with ODFW as described in Section V below regarding appropriate seeding
19 or planting according to site-specific restoration needs.

20 **1. Seed Planting Methods**

21 Planting should be done at the appropriate time of year to facilitate seed germination,
22 based on weather conditions and the time of year when construction-related ground disturbance
23 occurs. The certificate holder shall choose planting methods based on site-specific factors such
24 as slope, erosion potential and the size of the area in need of revegetation. Disturbed ground may
25 require chemical or mechanical weed control before weeds have a chance to go to seed. Two
26 common application methods are described as follows.

27 (a) Broadcasting

28 Broadcast the seed mix at the specified application rate. Where feasible, apply half of the
29 total mix in one direction and the second half of mix in the direction perpendicular to first half.
30 Apply weed-free straw from a certified field or sterile straw at a rate of two tons per acre
31 immediately after applying seed. Crimp straw into the ground to a depth of two inches using a
32 crimping disc or similar device. As an alternative to crimping, a tackifier may be applied using
33 hydroseed equipment at a rate of 100 pounds per acre. Prior to mixing the tackifier, visually
34 inspect the tank for cleanliness. If remnants from previous hydroseed applications exist, wash
35 tank to remove remnants. Include a tracking dye with the tackifier to aid uniform application.
36 Broadcasting should not be used if winds exceed five miles per hour.

37 (b) Drilling

38 Using an agricultural or range seed drill, drill seed at 70 percent of the recommended
39 application rate to a depth of ¼ inch or as recommended by the seed supplier. Where feasible,
40 apply half of the total mix in one direction and the second half of mix in the direction
41 perpendicular to first half. If mulch has been previously applied, seed may be drilled through the

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1 mulch provided the drill is capable of penetrating the straw resulting in seed-to-soil contact
2 conducive for germination.

3 **IV. Restoration of Cropland**

4 The certificate holder shall seed disturbed cropland areas with wheat or other crop seed.
5 The certificate holder shall consult with the landowner and farm operator to determine species
6 composition, seed and fertilizer application rates and application methods.

7 Cropland areas are successfully revegetated when the replanted areas achieve crop
8 production comparable to adjacent non-disturbed cultivated areas. The certificate holder shall
9 consult with the landowner or farmer to determine whether these areas have been successfully
10 revegetated and shall report to the Oregon Department of Energy (Department) on the success of
11 revegetation in these areas.

12 **V. Restoration of Wildlife Habitat Areas**

13 The certificate holder shall seed all disturbed grassland, shrub-steppe, juniper woodland
14 and other wildlife habitat subtype areas that are not cropland or other developed lands. The
15 certificate holder shall consult with ODFW and the landowner to determine the appropriate seed
16 mix and application rate for these areas, including a combination of grasses, forbs, shrubs and
17 juniper trees based on the characteristics of the affected area. The mix should contain native
18 species selected based on relative availability and compatibility with local growing conditions.
19 Seed mix selection should consider soil erosion potential, soil type, seed availability and the need
20 for using native or native-like species. The certificate holder shall obtain approval of the
21 composition of the seed mix from the Department. The certificate holder shall use seed provided
22 by a reputable supplier and complying with the Oregon Seed Law. The certificate holder shall
23 determine the number and size of the juniper tree plants based on the professional judgment of a
24 qualified biologist after a ground survey of actual conditions. The certificate holder shall obtain
25 young native species trees from a qualified nursery or suitable transplants from MWPF
26 construction zones.

27 **VI. Monitoring**

28 **1. Revegetation Record**

29 The certificate holder shall maintain a record of revegetation work for both cropland and
30 wildlife habitat areas. In the record, the certificate holder shall include the date that construction
31 activity was completed in the area to be restored, a description of the affected area (location,
32 acres affected and pre-disturbance condition), the date that revegetation work began and a
33 description of the work done within the affected area. The certificate shall update the
34 revegetation records from time to time, as revegetation work occurs. The certificate holder shall
35 provide copies of these records to the Department at the time of submitting the annual report
36 required under the site certificate.

37 **2. Monitoring Procedures**

38 The certificate holder shall monitor the revegetation of wildlife habitat areas as described
39 in this section, unless the landowner has converted the area to a use inconsistent with the success
40 criteria. The certificate holder shall employ a qualified investigator (an independent botanist or

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1 revegetation specialist) to examine all non-cropland revegetation areas to assess vegetation cover
2 (species, structural stage, etc.) and progress toward meeting the success criteria described below.

3 Weed Control

4 A qualified investigator shall inspect each revegetation area on an annual basis during
5 the first five years following initial seeding to assess weed growth and to recommend weed
6 control measures. The investigator shall report to the certificate holder, the Department and
7 ODFW following each inspection, describing weed growth and the success of control measures.
8 Based on the Year 5 report (described below), the certificate holder shall confer with the
9 Department and ODFW to develop a weed control plan for subsequent years.

10 Wildlife Habitat Recovery

11 After the first growing season following initial seeding and juniper planting (Year 1), a
12 qualified investigator shall inspect each revegetation area to assess revegetation success based on
13 the success criteria and to recommend remedial actions, if needed. The qualified investigator
14 shall reinspect these areas at two years and at four years after the first inspection (Year 3 and
15 Year 5). The investigator shall report to the certificate holder, the Department and ODFW
16 following each inspection. The report shall include the investigator's assessment of whether the
17 revegetated areas are trending toward meeting the success criteria and any remedial actions
18 recommended.

19 Based on the Year 5 report, the certificate holder shall confer with the Department and
20 ODFW to develop an action plan for subsequent years. If an area is not trending toward meeting
21 the success criteria at Year 5 and has not been converted by the landowner to an inconsistent use,
22 the certificate holder may propose remedial action and additional monitoring based on an
23 evaluation of site capability. As an alternative, the certificate holder may conclude that
24 revegetation of the area was unsuccessful and propose appropriate mitigation for the loss of
25 habitat quality and quantity. The certificate holder shall implement the action plan, subject to the
26 approval of the Department.

27 The certificate holder's qualified investigator shall evaluate whether a wildlife habitat
28 area is trending toward meeting the success criteria by comparing the revegetation area to a
29 reference area. In consultation with ODFW, the investigator shall choose reference sites near the
30 revegetation area to represent the target conditions for the revegetation effort. The investigator
31 shall select one or more reference sites that closely resemble the pre-disturbance characteristics
32 of the revegetation area as indicated by site conditions, including vegetation density, relative
33 proportion of desirable vegetation and species diversity of desirable vegetation. "Desirable
34 vegetation" means those species included in the seed mix or native or native-like species,
35 excluding noxious weeds. The investigator shall consider land use patterns, soil type, local
36 terrain and noxious weed densities in selecting reference sites. It is likely that different reference
37 sites will be needed to represent different pre-disturbance habitat conditions of the disturbed
38 areas.

39 During the monitoring visits in Year 1, Year 3 and Year 5, the certificate holder's
40 qualified investigator shall compare the revegetation area to the selected reference sites, unless
41 some event (such as wildfire, tilling, or intensive livestock grazing) has changed the vegetation
42 conditions of a reference site so that it no longer represents the pre-disturbance conditions of the

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1 revegetation area. If such events have eliminated all suitable reference sites for a revegetation
2 area, the investigator, in consultation with ODFW, shall select one or more new reference sites.

3 Within each revegetation area, the investigator shall evaluate the progress of wildlife
4 habitat recovery in comparison to the reference sites. The investigator shall evaluate the
5 following site conditions (both within the revegetation area and within the reference sites):

- 6 • Degree of erosion due to disturbance activities (high, moderate or low).
- 7 • Vegetation density.
- 8 • Relative proportion of desirable vegetation as determined by the average number of
9 stems of desirable vegetation per square foot or by a visual scan of the area, noting
10 overall recovery status.
- 11 • Number of surviving juniper trees and overall vigor, height of tree and the extent of
12 branching.
- 13 • Species diversity of desirable vegetation.

14 The certificate holder shall report the investigator's findings and recommendations
15 regarding wildlife habitat recovery and revegetation success on an annual basis to the
16 Department (as part of the annual report on the facility) and to ODFW.

17 **3. Success Criteria**

18 In each monitoring report to the Department, the certificate holder shall provide an
19 assessment of revegetation success for all previously-disturbed wildlife habitat areas. A wildlife
20 habitat area is successfully revegetated when its habitat quality is equal to, or better than, the
21 habitat quality of the reference site as measured by the site conditions listed above. Juniper
22 planting will be considered successful when, in the investigator's judgment, one in five has
23 survived.

24 When the Department finds that the condition of a wildlife habitat area satisfies the
25 criteria for revegetation success, the Department shall conclude that the certificate holder has met
26 its restoration obligations for that area. If the Department finds that the landowner has converted
27 a wildlife habitat area to a use that is inconsistent with these success criteria, the Department
28 shall conclude that the certificate holder has no further obligation to restore the area for wildlife
29 habitat uses.

30 **4. Remedial Action**

31 After each monitoring visit, the certificate holder's qualified investigator shall report to
32 the certificate holder regarding the revegetation progress of each wildlife habitat area. The
33 investigator shall make recommendations to the certificate holder for reseeding or other remedial
34 measures for areas that are not showing progress toward achieving revegetation success. The
35 certificate holder shall take appropriate action to meet the objectives of this revegetation plan.
36 On an annual basis as part of the annual report on the facility, the certificate holder shall report to
37 the Department the investigator's recommendations and the remedial actions taken. The
38 Department may require reseeding or other remedial measures in those areas that do not meet the
39 success criteria.

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1 If a wildlife habitat area is damaged by wildfire during the first five years following
2 initial seeding, the certificate holder shall work with the landowner to restore the damaged area.
3 The certificate holder shall continue to report on revegetation progress during the remainder of
4 the five-year period. The certificate holder shall report the damage caused by wildfire and the
5 cause of the fire, if known.

6 **VII. Amendment of the Plan**

7 This Revegetation Plan may be amended from time to time by agreement of the
8 certificate holder and the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council (“Council”). Such amendments
9 may be made without amendment of the site certificate. The Council authorizes the Department
10 to agree to amendments to this plan. The Department shall notify the Council of all amendments,
11 and the Council retains the authority to approve, reject or modify any amendment of this plan
12 agreed to by the Department.