

WAC 463-60-332 Natural environment—Habitat, vegetation, fish and wildlife. The application shall describe all existing habitat types, vegetation, wetlands, fish, wildlife, and in-stream flows on and near the project site which might reasonably be affected by construction, operation, decommissioning, or abandonment of the energy facility and any associated facilities. For purposes of this section, the term "project site" refers to the site for which site certification is being requested, and the location of any associated facilities or their right of way corridors, if applicable. The application shall contain the following information:

(1) Assessment of existing habitats and their use. The application shall include a habitat assessment report prepared by a qualified professional. The report shall contain, but not be limited to, the following information:

(a) A detailed description of habitats and species present on and adjacent to the project site, including identification of habitats and species present, relative cover, density, distribution, and health and vigor;

(b) Identification of any species of local importance, priority species, or endangered, threatened, or candidate species that have a primary association with habitat on or adjacent to the project site;

(c) A discussion of any federal, state, or local special management recommendations, including department of fish and wildlife habitat management recommendations, that have been developed for species or habitats located on or adjacent to the project area;

(2) Identification of energy facility impacts. The application shall include a detailed discussion of temporary, permanent, direct and indirect impacts on habitat, species present and their use of the habitat during construction, operation and decommissioning of the energy facility. Impacts shall be quantified in terms of habitat acreage affected, and numbers of individuals affected, threatened or removed. The discussion of impacts shall also include:

(a) Impacts to water quality, stream hydrology and in-stream flows;

(b) Impacts due to introduction, spread, and establishment of noxious or nonnative species;

(c) Impacts and changes to species communities adjacent to the project site;

(d) Impacts to fish and wildlife migration routes;

(e) Impacts to any species of local importance, priority species, or endangered, threatened, or candidate species;

(f) Impacts due to any activities that may otherwise confuse, deter, disrupt or threaten fish or wildlife;

(g) An assessment of risk of collision of avian species with any project structures, during day and night, migration periods, and inclement weather;

(h) An assessment for the potential of impacts of hazardous or toxic materials spills on habitats and wildlife.

(3) Mitigation plan. The application shall include a detailed discussion of mitigation measures, including avoidance, minimization of impacts, and mitigation through compensation or preservation and restoration of existing habitats and species, proposed to compensate for the impacts that have been identified. The mitigation plan shall also:

(a) Be based on sound science;

(b) Address all best management practices to be employed and setbacks to be established;

(c) Address how cumulative impacts associated with the energy facility will be avoided or minimized;

(d) Demonstrate how the mitigation measures will achieve equivalent or greater habitat quality, value and function for those habitats being impacted, as well as for habitats being enhanced, created or protected through mitigation actions;

(e) Identify and quantify level of compensation for impacts to, or losses of, existing species due to project impacts and mitigation measures, including benefits that would occur to existing and new species due to implementation of the mitigation measures;

(f) Address how mitigation measures considered have taken into consideration the probability of success of full and adequate implementation of the mitigation plan;

(g) Identify future use of any manmade ponds or structures created through construction and operation of the facility or associated mitigation measures, and associated beneficial or detrimental impacts to habitats, fish and wildlife;

(h) Discuss the schedule for implementation of the mitigation plan, prior to, during, and post construction and operation;

(i) Discuss ongoing management practices that will protect habitat and species, including proposed monitoring and maintenance programs;

(j) Mitigation plans should give priority to proven mitigation methods. Experimental mitigation techniques and mitigation banking may be considered by the council on a case-by-case basis. Proposals for experimental mitigation techniques and mitigation banking must be supported with analyses demonstrating that compensation will meet or exceed requirements giving consideration to the uncertainty of experimental techniques, and that banking credits meet all applicable state requirements.

(4) Guidelines review. The application shall give due consideration to any project-type specific guidelines established by state and federal agencies for assessment of existing habitat, assessment of impacts, and development of mitigation plans. The application shall describe how such guidelines are satisfied. For example, wind generation proposals shall consider *Washington state department of fish and wildlife Wind Power Guidelines*, August 2003, or as hereafter amended. Other types of energy facilities shall consider department of fish and wildlife Policy M-5002, dated January 18, 1999, or as hereafter amended.

(5) Federal approvals. The application shall list any federal approvals required for habitat, vegetation, fish and wildlife impacts and mitigation, status of such approvals, and federal agency contacts responsible for review.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 80.50.040 (1) and (12). WSR 04-21-013, amended and recodified as § 463-60-332, filed 10/11/04, effective 11/11/04. Statutory Authority: RCW 80.50.040. WSR 92-23-012, § 463-42-332, filed 11/6/92, effective 12/7/92.]