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522 Notre Dame Court, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009, 307-631-4536, www.wafwa.org

WAFWA Range-wide Plan Impact Buffer Guidance December 8, 2015

Problem Statement

The Range-wide Plan specifies the impact buffer distances for a set of potential development types, but this list is incomplete. In many cases, there is no direct scientific information to determine the effect of these developments on lesser prairie-chickens. WAFWA needs a consistent way to determine impact buffers for any type of development that is not already specified within the Range-wide Plan.

Solution

The Range-wide Plan specifies a series of criteria to define these impact buffers. These criteria include noise levels (75 dB), structure height (150 feet), and facility size (5 acres). WAFWA will use those same criteria to define impact buffers for any development type that is not specified within the Range-wide Plan or in prior adaptive management changes to that plan based on the following table:

Noise & Height	Facility Size	
	<5 acres	≥5 acres
	Centroid Buffer	Facility Boundary Buffer
<75 dB/<150'	200 m	200 m
≥75 dB/<150'	400 m	400 m
<75 dB/≥150'	667 m	667 m
≥75 dB/>150'	667 m	667 m

Each of these criteria and the resultant impact buffer distances may be adjusted based on emerging science, as approved by the committee process defined in the Range-wide Plan.

Development, Review and Approval Process

This issue was first raised by several participant companies noting that the industrial facility impact type was a catch-all category that included a variety of different impacts that could have a variety of different effects on lesser prairie-chickens and their habitat. WAFWA committee members first discussed this idea during the LPC Science Subcommittee Quarterly Meeting on June 25, 2015 in a discussion of how the Range-wide plan might address impact buffers for small substations. The consensus of that group was that WAFWA should avoid creating impact buffer distances on an individual basis for any new impact type that might arise. The Science Subcommittee recognized the lack of specific scientific information on the effects of many development types for LPCs. David Klute then suggested that the RWP already contained guidelines for impact buffers based

on noise levels, structure height and facility size and suggested that we utilize those to define additional buffer distances within the industrial facility. The subcommittee agreed that this was a reasonable approach to address this issue.

Based on that discussion in June, WAFWA staff (Sean Kyle and Mike Houts) drafted an initial proposal and brought it back before the Science Subcommittee on September 30, 2015. The Subcommittee reviewed that proposal and made their recommendation to the Advisory Committee Advisory Council that the proposal be accepted.

The Advisory Committee reviewed the recommendation of the Science Subcommittee on October, 27, 2015. They concurred with the Science Subcommittee's recommendation and passed it to the LPC Initiative Council for review.

The Lesser Prairie Chicken Initiative Council reviewed the recommendation from the Advisory Committee on December 8, 2015 and approved it by a unanimous vote. The Council asked that the information documenting the development, review and approval process in this section be added to the document.