

Wildlife Survey Report Eagle Rock Enrichment Facility



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Introduction

North Wind, Inc. was contracted by AREVA Enrichment Services LLC (AES) to conduct preconstruction monitoring for wildlife within the proposed Eagle Rock Enrichment Facility (EREF) located in Bonneville County, Idaho. The purpose of the survey was to characterize wildlife use of the EREF in late fall/early winter as part of the ecological monitoring program described in Section 6.3 of the EREF Environmental Report.

Methods

North Wind Wildlife Biologist, John Michalak, with support from William Harding, conducted wildlife monitoring within the EREF property to document direct observations and signs of wildlife. Searches consisted of walking transects in three locations of the EREF property. These locations were preselected during the preparation of the EREF Environment Report and are shown in Figure 3.5-1 of that report. The two northern sites are located in sagebrush steppe vegetation and the central site is located in more in more disturbed habitat near the proposed entrance road right of way. Each transect was about one mile long and spacing between transects was kept between 0.25 and 0.5 miles (see Figure 1).

The surveys were conducted on October 20, 21, and 22, 2010. The surveys were conducted twice each day. Evening surveys began 1.5 hours before sunset and continued until 0.5 hours after sunset. Morning surveys followed the same transect as the night before and began 0.5 hours before sunrise and continued until 1.5 hours after sunrise. Sunrise was around 7:50 am and sunset was around 6:35 pm. The evenings and mornings were clear, cool (40-50°F), with low humidity (~25%), and winds less than 3 mph. The days were quite mild for this time of year, reaching a high in the low 60s.

Survey Results

Transects walked in the northern part of the property yielded clues from scat as to which animals have been on the property. A number of wildlife signs were noted as shown on Figure 1. Roughly ten coyote dens were located and recorded. Most of which showed signs of fresh digging and new scat near the hole (see Figure 2). Single scat locations for coyotes were also found, indicating that there is a presence of coyotes in that area of the property. Greater sage-grouse use of the area was also evident from the pellets and cecal casts found. Many old pellets were found and a sage-grouse hen was flushed during one of the evening surveys. Her location was approximated to be at the end of transect one. A clocker was found during one of the morning searches indicating the possibility of a sage grouse using this area for nesting. Grouse will hold their bowel movements while on the nest and then release “clockers” near the nest location (see Figure 3). However, no nest was found in the area. Other birds seen using the area included horned larks and northern harriers. The harriers seemed to be hunting based on their low, darting flying behavior. Big game using the property, as identified by scat, include pronghorn, deer, and elk (Figure 4).



Figure 2. Coyote den with fresh scat at entrance.



Figure 3. Sage grouse clocker found in northern part of property.



Figure 4. Elk scat found in northern part of property.

The transects walked near the road held slightly less species diversity. There was a noticeable difference in the habitat in this area, with most of the area comprised of crested wheatgrass instead of sagebrush. Mouse burrows were seen throughout the transect (see Figure 5), as well as some coyote burrows. Scat indicates that pronghorn are also using the area. During the survey, a cottontail and jack rabbit were flushed from their hiding spots. About ten horned larks were seen flying overhead during the survey near the road. A weasel was seen earlier in the day (outside the specified survey times) by the potato barns near the southern extent of the property.



Figure 5. Rodent burrows found near road.

Photographs of other wildlife signs observed during these surveys are shown on the following pages.



Mouse scat pile



Sage-grouse and cottontail pellets



Coyote den



Coyote scat near den



Coyote den and scat



Coyote scat



Pronghorn scat



Coyote scat



Coyote den



Coyote den (one of three holes)



Coyote den (partially collapsed)



Pronghorn scat



Cottontail pellets



Sage-grouse pellets



Coyote scat



Coyote scat



Coyote den



Sage-grouse pellets and cecal cast



Sage-grouse pellets



Sage-grouse pellets and cecal cast