

**COLUMBIA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**STAFF REPORT**  
January 26, 2026  
Conditional Use Permit

**HEARING DATE:** February 2, 2026

**FILE NUMBERS:** CU 25-169

**PROJECT PLANNER:** Deborah S. Jacob

**APPLICANT:** Austin Mann, NW Natural (NWN)

**OWNERS:** Weyerhaeuser Timber Holdings, Claruth Inc., Wilna Inc., Franbea Inc.

**LOCATION:** The subject property does not have a situs address, but is located off Miller Station Road near Mist, Oregon

**MAP ID NUMBERS:** 7500-00-04500/04700/04800/05000

**ACCOUNT NUMBERS:** 25544/25546/25547/25549

**ZONING:** Primary Forest (PF-80)

**SIZE:** 1,326-acres +/-

**REQUEST:** To install a total of four (4) new well pads at the Mist Underground Natural Gas Storage Facility. Three (3) for injection/withdrawal and one (1) well pad for observation/monitoring.

**APPLICABLE REVIEW CRITERIA:**

**Columbia County Zoning Ordinance (CCZO) Sections:**

<b>Section 500</b>	<u>Primary Forest (PF-80)</u>
<b>Section 1190</b>	<u>Big Game Habitat Overlay</u>
<b>Section 1503</b>	<u>Conditional Uses</u>

**Columbia County Comprehensive Plan Sections:**

<b>Part IV</b>	Forest Lands
<b>Part X</b>	Economy
<b>Part XIII</b>	Transportation - PIPELINES
<b>Part XVI</b>	Goal 5 - Open Space, Scenic and Historic Areas and Natural Resources - Article VII: ENERGY SOURCES GOALS AND POLICIES

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council (“OEFSC”) issued the original site certification for the existing Mist Underground Natural Gas Storage Facility (“Mist Facility”) in 1981 and has, over the past 4.5 decades, approved thirteen Site Certificate Amendments since. These Amendments have authorized the applicant, NW Natural (NWN), to access naturally existing underground gas reservoirs and to construct and operate the Miller and Mist Facility Compressor Stations’ attendant equipment including gathering lines, access roads, and monitoring and injection/withdrawal wells. Each of these Amendments also identified the conditions under which OEFSC and the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) would approve NWN’s new operations to process, store and distribute naturally occurring underground gas from existing reservoirs within the Mist Facility boundary.

The OEFSC is responsible for overseeing the development of large electric generating facilities, high voltage transmission lines, gas pipelines, radioactive waste disposal sites, and other energy related projects. This state-level oversight of energy facilities helps ensure that Oregon has an adequate energy supply while protecting Oregon’s environment and public safety. A proposed energy facility must undergo a thorough review and meet the council's siting standards to receive Site Certificates. Standards cover issues such as land use, environmental impacts, noise concerns, and cultural and archeological artifacts. If the OEFSC approves a site certificate, the developer is authorized to construct and operate the facility. After issuing a site certificate, the OEFSC has ongoing regulatory authority over the construction and operation of the facility.

The applicant submitted a OEFSC Final Order for the most recent 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment for the Mist Underground Natural Gas Storage Facility dated January 17, 2025 (“OEFSC Final Order”) which details the OEFSC approval of NWN’s current requested changes proposed for the Mist Resiliency Project. This expansion includes the development of four existing, but depleted, underground natural gas storage reservoirs, the construction of approximately 2.6 miles of underground natural gas pipelines, replacement of an existing underground powerline, development and use of 4 laydown areas, and the expansion of the existing Miller and the North Mist Compressor Stations. The North Mist Expansion Area OEFSC Final Order identifies the 4 well pads reviewed under the current proposal will serve the Newton, Medicine and Stegosaur depleted underground natural gas storage reservoirs.

Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 520.095(15) grants DOGAMI broad authority to regulate oil and gas operations including the authority to “*regulate the underground storage of natural gas and the drilling and operation of any wells required therefor.*” The 1993 amendments to provisions in ORS 469.300 (11) (a) (I) (i-ii) expressly excluded underground storage reservoirs, injection, withdrawal and monitoring wells and wellhead equipment from OEFSC’s jurisdiction and regulation of these components, including well pads, now fall under DOGAMI’s and Columbia County’s authority.

## **SUMMARY:**

The applicant, Northwest Natural (NWN), is proposing to install a total of four (4) well pads. Three (3) injection/withdrawal (IW) well pads (two new well pads and one modification of an existing well pad) and one (1) observation/ monitoring (OM) well pad. These new well pads will allow

NWN to construct and operate twelve (12) new gas storage wells as part of their Mist Facility. Seven of these new wells will be IW wells and five will be OM wells. The three IW well pads will be connected to the compressor stations with underground transmission pipelines while the single OM well pad will not have any pipelines.

Well pad name	Location (Map ID No.)	# of Wells at site	Affected area	Additional Information
STEGOSAUR	7500-00-04800	4	87,120 <sup>2</sup>	Modification of existing
NEWTON	7500-00-05000	4	87,120 <sup>2</sup>	New
MEDICINE (IW)	7500-00-04500 & 04700	3	65,340 <sup>2</sup>	New
MEDICINE (OM)	7500-00-04500	1	21,780 <sup>2</sup>	New

According to the submitted application materials, the Mist Facility allows NWN to balance relatively constant pipeline gas supplies with widely fluctuating market requirements by injecting gas into IW wells during off-peak periods and withdrawing gas when demand exceeds available supplies from other suppliers. The Mist Facility contains naturally occurring underground natural gas storage reservoirs which NWN has retrofitted over the past 4 decades to allow pipeline quality natural gas underground injection, storage and withdrawal in response to fluctuating market supplies and demand.

Removal of trees and other vegetation will be limited to the immediate area of well pads and any maintenance of the access road. The subject and adjacent properties are all large timber properties that are used for forest management. This area has little to no public facilities available and is within the Mist-Birkenfeld Fire Protection District service area.

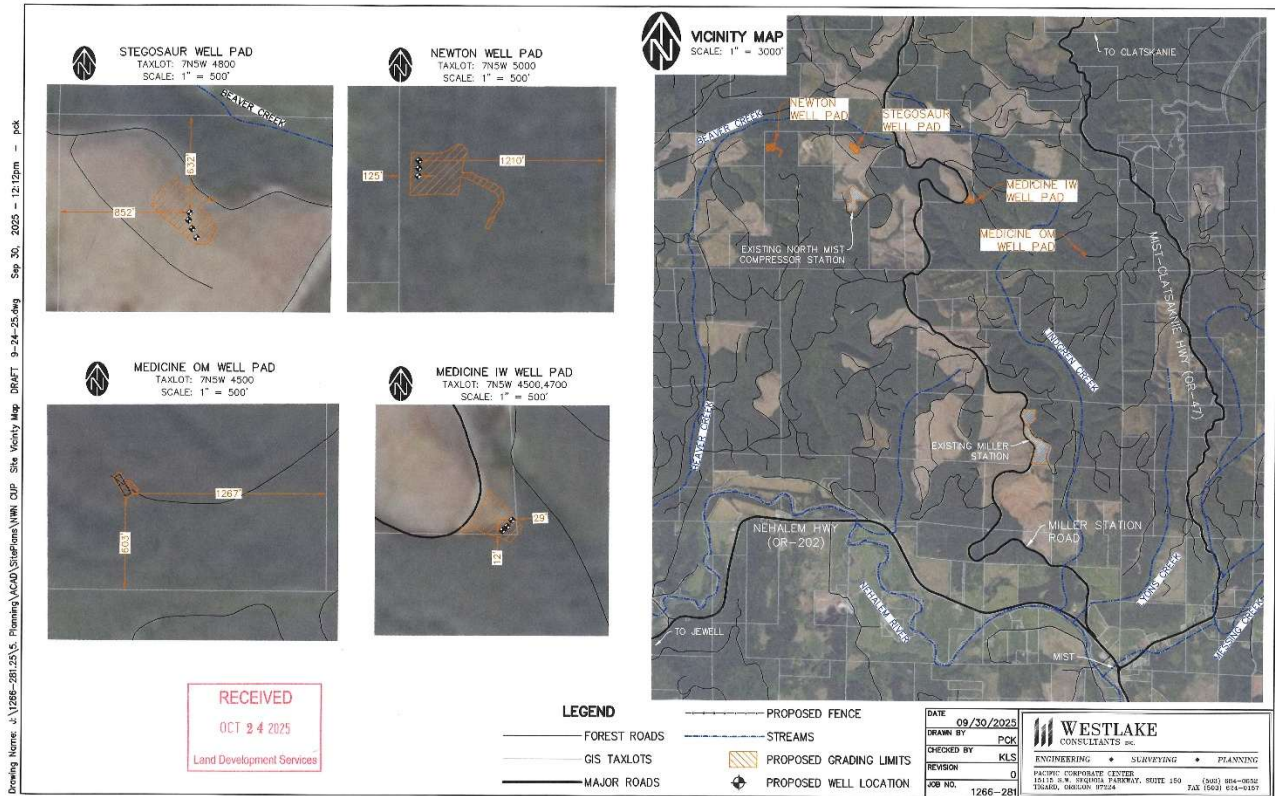
The Clatskanie-Quincy CPAC Beak Maps verify these properties are within a Major Big Game Habitat Area.

According to the FEMA FIRM No. 41009C0125 D, the well pads are not located in any identified special flood hazard areas.

There are no riparian areas associated with fish bearing and non-fish bearing streams identified in the Oregon Department of Forestry Stream Classification Maps. Likewise, according to the Oregon Department of State Lands Wetlands Inventory Maps there are no wetlands identified near the well pad locations.

The remainder of this report will address the extent to which the four (4) new well pads and related development proposed complies with the applicable provisions of the Columbia County Zoning Ordinance (CCZO) and Columbia County Comprehensive Plan.

## Submitted Vicinity Map showing locations of well pads



## The North Mist Compressor Station



## **FINDINGS ADDRESSING HOW THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH THE RELEVANT REVIEW CRITERIA OF THE CCZO:**

### **Section 500 PRIMARY FOREST ZONE – 80 (PF-80)**

#### **505 Conditional Uses.**

The following conditional uses may be allowed subject to the general review standards and process in Sections 1503 and 1603 of the Zoning Ordinance. All authorized uses and permanent structures shall also meet the applicable standards listed in Sections 506, 507, and 508 of the Zoning Ordinance and all other local, state, and federal laws pertaining to these uses.

- .2 Exploring, mining and processing of oil, gas, or other subsurface resources, as defined in ORS Chapter 520 and the mining and processing of mineral and aggregate resources as defined in ORS Chapter 517.

**Finding 1:** Natural gas is a subsurface resource in Columbia County consistent with the definitions in Chapter 520 of the Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS). Mining, extracting and processing of subsurface resources may be permitted in the PF-80 Zone as a Conditional Use. The current proposal has been appropriately submitted and properly reviewed in conformance with the relevant requirements identified in this section and the procedural requirements of Section 1603. Analysis of compliance with the requirements of Section 1503 (Conditional Uses) is addressed further herein. CU 25-169 does not propose the construction of any dwellings or habitable structures, therefore, the provisions of Sections 506 and 507 of the CCZO do not apply to this analysis and review.

#### **508 General Review Standards.**

The Planning Director or hearings body shall determine that a use authorized by Sections 504 and 505 meets all of the following requirements:

- .1 The proposed use will not force significant change in, or significantly increase the cost of, accepted farming or forest practices on agriculture or forest lands;

**Finding 2:** The location of the proposed IW and OM wells and well pads presented for CU 25-169 will occur in areas that are already developed with other natural gas production and storage facilities. As stated in the Background Section of this report, all existing facilities have been previously approved by Columbia County, OEFSC and DOGAMI. The Mist Facility has been in operation for 4.5 decades with no evidence of impediment to active forest management practices occurring on the subject and adjacent properties. The applicant, NWN, is a leaseholder on the subject properties and as such, has developed a successful longstanding cooperative work relationship with the land owners who are simultaneously conducting their forestry operations. There is no evidence that the mining and extraction of subsurface resources use, which has been occurring on the subject properties for 4.5 decades, has caused any significant changes in, nor has it significantly increased the cost of conducting forestry practices on the subject and immediately surrounding properties. The proposal was noticed to neighboring property owners within 750' of the boundaries of the subject properties. Most of those properties are in common ownership of those entities that own the subject properties. The nearest property in other ownership (6500-00-00600 /



Tax account 25096) is located approximately one-half mile south of the “Medicine” IW well pad located on subject properties 7500-00-04700 & 04500. No return comments were received.

For the reasons identified above, staff finds that the current proposal, which modifies an already approved and existing use, will not force a significant change in, or significantly increase the cost of, accepted farming or forest practices on the subject and surrounding agriculture or forest lands.

#### **New well pad locations**



The applicant also describes the following ways in which the proposal requested for CU 25-169 will not interfere with nor detract from forest and farm uses:

- The IW and OM well pads will be constructed in cleared areas as shown in the above photographs. Those areas range between .50-acres to 2-acres in size.
- Well pads will be accessed from existing logging roads to the extent practicable.
- Tree removal will be limited strictly to the immediate area of the well pads and will be coordinated with the surface property owners.
- Temporary construction activities associated with pad construction and well drilling will also be coordinated with the landowners to ensure there are no conflicts with ongoing forest practices.

For these reasons, staff finds that the proposal presented for CU 25-169 will not force significant changes in nor significantly increase the cost of accepted farming or forest practices on the subject or adjacent properties consistent with the requirements of this Section.

- .2 The proposed use will not significantly increase fire hazard or significantly increase fire suppression costs or significantly increase risks to fire suppression personnel;

**Finding 3:** The current proposal will not result in significant increases to fire hazards nor fire suppression cost, or risks to fire suppression personnel because they will continue using the following measures they have used for past activities:

- The applicant will ensure the Mist Birkenfeld Fire District approves all accesses to the well sites prior to commencing any drilling.
- The cleared areas will provide adequate fire breaks ensuring that well drilling and operations will not increase fire risks.
- The applicant will inform the Mist Fire District's personnel of the dates that well drilling will commence and be completed.
- The wells and pipeline facilities have numerous safety features including relief valves, fusible plugs and automatic shutdown system consistent with the minimum requirements of the Oregon Fire Code and OEFSC Siting Standards.

The purpose of this coordination with the Mist Birkenfeld Fire District is to give these agencies opportunity to locate and inspect the site as well as the equipment operating on the site for fire safety. Once the inspection is completed, the fire district compiles the information into a packet to help fire district personnel know where to respond and what to expect in case of emergencies.

Upon notice of the proposal, the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) - Columbia Unit Forester, Jasen McCoy, stated that NWN and property owners shall be required to meet the legal requirements of notifying the OR Department Forestry - Columbia Unit, for Power Driven Machinery (PDM) which are required year-round from ODF.

The requirement to notify ODF when PDM related activities are scheduled to occur, and confirmation from the Mist - Birkenfeld Fire District that adequate emergency access and fire suppression measures are taken, will be made conditions of approval. Staff finds that the current proposal will not significantly increase fire hazards on the subject and adjacent properties nor will they increase fire suppression costs for personnel all of which are consistent with the provisions of this Section.

- .3 A waiver of remonstrance shall be recorded with the County Clerk certifying that the owner will not remonstrate against or begin legal action or suit proceeding to cause or persuade the owner or operator of any farm or forest lands to modify the conduct of legal and accepted farm or forest operations; and

**Finding 4:** The applicant is not the owner of the properties on which the wells and well pads will be drilled and installed. NWN holds a lease on the subject properties and all activities associated with the facility are conducted with the full agreement of the property owners. As previously identified, the nearest property not in common ownership with the subject properties is located approximately half a mile from the nearest development site proposed in this application. Neither the applicant nor Planning Staff anticipate that the landowners would remonstrate against or cause

legal action to modify their own forest practices. Consequently, staff finds this criterion in Section 508.3 of the CCZO does not apply to the current proposal.

- .4 The proposed use is consistent with requirements contained in the Comprehensive Plan or implementing ordinances, including, but not limited to, regulations which apply to flood hazard areas, development within the Willamette River Greenway, development in forested areas or development in significant resource areas, such as riparian, wetlands or slide-prone areas.

**Finding 5:** The CCZO provides land use regulations and standards to implement the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. The current proposal is consistent with applicable sections of the CCZO as addressed throughout findings within this staff report. Such findings address Conditionally Permitted Uses in the PF-80 Zoning District, General Review Standards, as well as Standards of Development relevant to Overlay Zones such as flood hazard areas, riparian corridors and big game habitat. There are no flood hazards or riparian corridors within close proximity to any proposed well pads, all of which will be higher than 900 feet elevation on ridges and hills well above any of this mountainous area's small drainage ways. As such, as long as the proposal is found to comply with all applicable sections of the Zoning Ordinance, it will also comply with the requirements of the Comprehensive Plan. Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan is discussed and evaluated for **Finding 13** of this report where the criteria of CCZO Section 1503.5 (F) are addressed.

## **Section 1190 BIG GAME HABITAT OVERLAY**

### **1193 Development Siting Standards:**

[...]

- C. Road development shall be minimized to that which is necessary to support the proposed use and the applicant shall utilize existing roads as much as possible.
- D. The owner/occupant of the resource parcel shall assume responsibility for protection from damage by wildlife.

**Finding 6:** Existing logging roads will be used for access to the extent practical, while installing and maintaining access to well pads associated facility. A condition of approval will require the applicant to assume responsibility for any damages to the site from wildlife as one condition of approval. Staff finds that the proposal complies with the requirements of this section, these requirements will become ongoing conditions of approval.

- 1194** The County shall notify the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) of all proposed uses or development activities which require a permit and are located in Major or Peripheral Big Game Habitat. The County will consider the comments and recommendations of ODFW, if any, before making a decision concerning the requested use or activity.

**Finding 7:** The project site is within a Major Big Game Habitat Area as shown on the Clatskanie-Quincy CPAC BEAK Map. On 1/13/2026, Staff provided ODFW with notification of the current proposal, consistent with the requirement of this Section. As of the date of this report, ODFW has



not returned any comment. Columbia County has demonstrated compliance with this interagency requirement, as stipulated by this Section.

### **1503 CONDITIONAL USES:**

**.5 Granting a Permit:** The Commission may grant a Conditional Use Permit after conducting a public hearing, provided the applicant provides evidence substantiating that all the requirements of this ordinance relative to the proposed use are satisfied and demonstrates the proposed use also satisfies the following criteria:

A. The use is listed as a Conditional Use in the zone which is currently applied to the site;

**Finding 8:** As previously addressed herein, where the criteria of Section 500 were addressed, natural gas is a subsurface resource in Columbia County consistent with the definitions in ORS Chapter 520 and the mining, extracting and processing of subsurface resources may be permitted in the PF-80 Zone through the review and approval of a Conditional Use Permit by the Planning Commission [CCZO Section 505.2]. Staff finds the proposal submitted for the current proposal is consistent with the requirement of this section.

B. The use meets the specific criteria established in the underlying zone;

**Finding 9:** The criteria relevant specifically to the PF-80 zone, Section 508 – General Review Standards, were previously addressed herein and the proposal was found to demonstrate compliance or feasibility for compliance, with conditions of approval.

C. The characteristics of the site are suitable for the proposed use considering size, shape, location, topography, existence of improvements, and natural features;

**Finding 10:** The four (4) development sites range in size from 21,780<sup>2</sup> to 87,120<sup>2</sup> and the subject properties are comprised approximately 1,327 acres of land area. There are existing facilities on the subject properties as reviewed and approved through previously issued Conditional Use Permits and the collection and storage of natural gas at the NWN facility for approximately 4.5 decades indicates that the site has demonstrates suitability. As well, the nearest location of proposed development to any adjacent property not in common ownership with the subject properties is approximately one-half mile away.

D. The site and proposed development is timely, considering the adequacy of transportation systems, public facilities, and services existing or planned for the area affected by the use;

**Finding 11:** The application states that the proposed use will not require any new public facilities or services. The contractors will use private logging road to access the site from Highway 47 and 202 and from existing County Roads. Existing private logging roads will be used to access the new storage and monitoring facilities, and underground pipelines are installed adjacent to these traveled surfaces. Where public roads are used, the small number of vehicle trips associated with these new uses will not place inappropriate burdens on these existing roadways nor will the new wells require improvements to the existing transportation or public facilities and services in this rural remote

area of the county. The development, or expansion of existing development, is timely as it is necessary to support production and provision of service of a utility used by many of the businesses and residents of Columbia County. Consequently, staff finds that the current proposal demonstrates compliance with the provisions of this section.

- E. The proposed use will not alter the character of the surrounding area in a manner which substantially limits, impairs, or precludes the use of surrounding properties for the primary uses listed in the underlying district;

**Finding 12:** The applicant's response identifies that many uses are authorized in the PF-80 Zoning District, many of which are permitted outright because they focus on the propagation, harvesting and management of forest and farm products in ways that will help to preserve and protect the conservation of air, water and natural resources as well as fish and wildlife management. New well pads and IW and OM wells do not require the construction of permanent structures and any tree removal will occur only as needed to ensure adequate fire safety during construction, storage and transportation of natural gas activities as permitted and authorized by the OEFSC and DOGAMI. As previously addressed herein, the nearest location of proposed development to any adjacent property not in common ownership with the subject properties, is approximately one-half mile away. Due to this removed proximity and the requirement for the applicant to comply with the permitting requirements of those identified agencies, staff finds that the proposal will not alter the character of the surrounding area in a manner which would substantially limit, impair, or preclude the use of surrounding properties for the primary uses listed in the PF-80 zone district.

- F. The proposal satisfies the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan which apply to the proposed use;

**Finding 13:** The relevant provision of the Columbia County Comprehensive Plan are identified below. The analysis in this finding addresses how the proposal satisfies the goals and policies of each relevant section.

#### **Part IV – Forest Lands**

**GOAL:** To conserve forest lands for forest uses.

**POLICIES:** It shall be the policy of Columbia County to:

- 1. Conserve forest lands for forest uses, including:

- A. The production of trees and the processing of forest products;

The proposal presented for CU 25-169 is consistent with the goal identified in this section of the Comprehensive Plan - to conserve forest land for forest uses. Although this use is a subsurface resource, there has been no demonstrated impact to commercial timber production or processing thereof, in the approximately 4.5 decades that the facility has been operating. Access to the well pads and wells are from existing logging roads and removal of any trees will be only those necessary, to maintain clear access and the areas surrounding the well pads and associated facility. Activities necessary for tree removal, well drilling and installing underground pipelines are coordinated with the surface property owners to ensure no conflicts arise between ongoing forest

practices on the subject and adjacent properties. All properties within the Mist Facility have maintained their ongoing forest operations and none of the subject and surrounding properties have ceased forest management activities due to conflicts with the simultaneous site activities associated with natural gas exploration, production, storage and transport. For these reasons, staff finds that the proposal is consistent with Part IV – the Forest Lands Section of the County Comprehensive Plan.

## **Part X – Economy**

### **GOALS:**

1. To strengthen and diversify the economy of Columbia County and insure stable economic growth.
2. To utilize Columbia County's natural resources and advantages for expanding and diversifying the economic base.

**POLICIES:** It shall be a policy of the County to:

1. Encourage the creation of new and continuous employment opportunities
2. Encourage a stable and diversified economy.

The Economy Goals of Columbia County are to strengthen and diversify it in ways that will ensure stable economic growth and to utilize the County's natural resources for expanding and diversifying its economic base. The Mist Facility has been a significant contributor to the Columbia County Economy since discovery of the resource in 1979 and has allowed NWN to balance relatively constant pipeline gas supplies with widely fluctuating market requirements. Natural gas production and storage in this area not only creates jobs but also provides reliable and local energy for this region. For these reasons, staff finds that the proposal is consistent with Part X – the Economy Section of the County Comprehensive Plan.

## **Part XIII – Transportation**

### **PIPELINES**

**GOAL:** The creation of an efficient, safe, and multi-modal transportation system to serve the needs of Columbia County residents.

### **POLICIES:**

9. Restriction of the location of new pipelines and high voltage transmission lines to within existing rights-of-way will be encouraged whenever possible.

Page 195 of the comprehensive plan provides: *“A newer pipeline has been built by Northwest Natural Gas and connects the gas field at Mist with the main pipeline near Clatskanie. The line carries a maximum capacity of 50 million cubic feet per day.”* The current proposal is related to this facility specifically called out in the Comprehensive Plan. The applicants will develop any new underground pipelines within existing rights-of-way whenever possible. For these reasons,

staff finds that the proposal is consistent with Part XII – the Transportation - PIPELINE Section of the County Comprehensive Plan.

## **Part XVI - Goal 5 - Open Space, Scenic and Historic Areas and Natural Resources**

### **Article VII: ENERGY SOURCES GOALS AND POLICIES**

**GOAL:** To protect deposits of energy materials in the County and prevent injury to surrounding lands and residents.

**POLICIES:** It is the policy of the County to:

1. Rely on DOGAMI to require that wells are drilled, cased, and plugged in such a manner as to ensure public safety.

The proposed wells are subject to the regulatory requirements of DOGAMI and their Oil, Gas and Geothermal Regulatory and Reclamation Program which are, in turn, designed to ensure that natural gas processing activities are conducted in ways that ensure conservation of the resource, protection of the environment including groundwater resources.

IW well pads will be constructed in cleared areas ranging between .5 and 2-acres in size while the cleared OM well pad will not exceed 0.5 - acres. Removal of trees and other vegetation will be limited to the immediate drill pad and any necessary access roads. Staff finds the production of energy materials and necessary measures to prevent injury occurring on surrounding lands and to residents are handled through required permits conforming to federal, state and local regulations. For these reasons, staff finds that the proposal is consistent with Statewide Planning Goal 5 and Part XVI, Article VII – the Energy Sources Section of the County Comprehensive Plan.

## **Part XVII - Air, Land, and Water Resources**

**GOAL:** To maintain and improve land resources and the quality of the air and water of the County.

**POLICIES:** It shall be the policy of Columbia County to:

1. Work with the appropriate State and Federal agencies to insure that State and Federal water, air, and land resource quality standards are met.

This Part of the Comprehensive Plan identifies environmental consequences for sensitive ecosystems which may occur from land disturbance and water source pollution from activities associated with drilling, storing and transporting natural gas. The proposed activities included in this review are not in the immediate vicinity of any identified sensitive and/or protected water resources. The applicant states that the proposed uses will have little to no effect on air and water quality because any approval issued by Columbia County will require compliance with the applicable federal and state environmental regulatory agency requirements, including, but not limited the following agencies that are identified in OEFSC Final Order:

- Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

- Public Utility Commissioner
- Department of Consumer and Business Services
- Department of Transportation
- Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industry
- Oregon Department of Fish Wildlife
- Oregon Department of Forestry

All of these agencies' requirements are designed to protect against fish, wildlife and human habitat destruction as well as to minimize water, land, and air pollution. Further, Planning Staff's review of the OEFSC Final Order also verified that NWN developed a Construction Wildfire Mitigation Plan for the Mist Resiliency Project that was amended and approved by EFSC in August 2024.

The applicant identifies that when natural gas production ceases, all wells will be abandoned as approved by the state, allowing all sites to be returned to their original states. Provided all federal, state and local regulatory permits are obtained as required by a condition of approval, staff finds that the proposal will not result in any permanent surface, air, or water damage to the subject and adjacent properties and is demonstrated to be consistent with Part XVII – the Air, Land, and Water Resources Section of the Comprehensive Plan.

For the reasons addressed herein, and with applied Conditions of Approval, staff finds that the current proposal will satisfy the identified parts of the Columbia County Comprehensive Plan.

Continuing with Columbia County Zoning Ordinance Section 1503.6:

G. The proposal will not create any hazardous conditions.

**Finding 13:** Staff finds that any potentially hazardous conditions resulting from the drilling, transportation and processing of natural gas within the Mist Facility will be mitigated by permitting requirements of the regulating federal, state and local agencies, as previously addressed throughout this staff report. As mandated by the OEFSC Final Order. For these reasons, staff finds that the current proposal demonstrates feasibility for compliance with this section, and a compliance will be ensured through a condition of approval requiring the applicant to obtain all applicable federal, state and local agency permits and follow the associated compliance programs and reporting requirements thereof.

**COMMENTS RECIEVED:**

- Columbia County Building Official:  
*Has no objections to the proposal, provided the applicant submit a Site Development Permit and obtain any necessary building permits, including electrical, mechanical and plumbing permits.*
- Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF):  
*ODF asks that Landowner/Operator meet legal requirements of notifying for Power Driven Machinery (PDM) within the Oregon Department of Forestry – Columbia Unit. Routine line maintenance using power driven machinery (year-round) can be noticed as "County Wide*

*Activity”. Some projects are more of a fire risk, while others are low fire risk depending on the time of year, weather, topography, and flammable material near the site. A PDM is required year-round from ODF, Additionally, there are extra requirements during fire season.*

*The applicant can work with the Stewardship Forester for the area for potential consideration of fire equipment waivers.*

- As of the date of this staff report, no comments have been received from the following agencies who were sent notice of the proposal:

Mist Birkenfeld Fire District / West Oregon Electric / Mist Birkenfeld CPAC / Oregon Department of Geology and Minerals (DOGAMI) / Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW)

- As of the date of this report, no comments have been received from neighboring property within the 750’ notice area, who received notice of the proposal as required by statute.
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### **CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATION TO PLANNING COMMISSION:**

Based upon Staff’s research and investigation of the subject and surrounding properties and the findings included in this Staff Report, Staff recommends the Planning Commission **APPROVE** this request to drill four (4) new well pads and site IW and OM wells and associated infrastructure as presented in CU 25-169, subject to the following conditions:

### **RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:**

1. **EXPIRATION:** This permit shall become void four (4) years from the date of the final decision. If the development reviewed and approved through this application has not begun on the property, in substantial compliance with the conditions set forth herein, an extension may be granted by the Planning Manager if requested in writing with the appropriate fee before the expiration date [CCZO Section 509.7].
2. **UNDERGROUND PIPELINE CONSTRUCTION:** Any new pipelines should be constructed within existing rights-of-way to the extent that it is practical and possible.
3. **COLUMBIA COUNTY BUILDING PERMITS:** The applicant shall coordinate with the Columbia County Building Official to submit/apply for all building permits deemed applicable by the Building Official. Including but not limited to; Site Development Permits for earth movement (grade and fill) and any necessary electrical, mechanical and plumbing permits.
4. **PRIOR TO COMMENCING OPERATIONS:** The applicant shall obtain the necessary permits from all federal, state and local agencies identified in the OEFSC Final Order.



5. **PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF OPERATIONS:** The applicant shall submit verification from the Mist-Birkenfeld Fire Protection District, demonstrating satisfaction of adequate emergency access and fire suppression measures to Land Development Services.
6. **ONGOING ODF NOTICING FOR ACTIVITIES INCLUDING POWER DRIVEN MACHINERY (PDM):** The Applicant must coordinate with ODF and meet the legal requirements of notifying for Power Driven Machinery (PDM) within the Oregon Department of Forestry – Columbia Unit.
7. **RESPONSIBILITY FOR WILDLIFE DAMAGE:** The applicant and property owners shall assume responsibility for any damages from wildlife to the well pads and associated infrastructure the sites.