



# **BLISS WIND REPOWERING PROJECT**

**MATTER NO. 23-03030**

**16 NYCRR § 1100-2.10 Exhibit 9**

**Cultural Resources**

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## ACRONYM LIST

APE	area of potential effect
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CRIS	Cultural Resource Information System
kV	kilovolt
MW	megawatt
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NYCRR	New York Codes, Rules and Regulations
OPRHP	Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
PIA	project impact area
SR/NRHP	State Register/National Register of Historic Places
WSP	WSP USA, Inc.
ZVI	zone of visual impact

## GLOSSARY TERMS

Key terms used frequently in this Application are defined below:

**Applicant:** Means Valcour Bliss NewCo, LLC.

**Existing Facility:** Refers to the existing 100.5-megawatt (MW) wind energy facility and its components located in the Town of Eagle, Wyoming County, New York, and commonly known as the Bliss Windpark.

**Facility Site:** Refers to those privately owned parcels under option to lease, purchase, create an easement, or other real property interests with the Applicant on which all Repowered Facility components will be sited, including roads, collector lines, and interconnection with the electrical grid.

**Limits of Disturbance:** Refers to the portion of the Facility Site that will necessarily be utilized to facilitate construction and operation of the Repowered Facility, including temporary workspaces.

**Repowered Facility:** Refers to the Bliss Wind Repowering Project, an approximately 110.5 MW wind energy generation facility located in the Town of Eagle, Wyoming County, New York, that will consist of new wind turbines, access roads, buried electric collection lines, collection substation facility improvements, temporary laydown and parking, permanent meteorological towers, and an aircraft detection lighting system tower. The Repowered Facility will reuse other existing aboveground components, including overhead collection lines, access roads, an operations and maintenance building, a 34.5-kilovolt (kV) to 115 kV collection substation; and a point of interconnection switchyard station owned by National Grid.

**Study Area:** Refers to the area evaluated for specific resource identification and/or resource impact assessment. The size of this area is appropriate for the target resource and takes into account the project setting, the significance of the resource or impact being identified or evaluated, and the specific survey distances included in 16 New York Codes, Rules, and Regulations Part 1100. Unless indicated otherwise in a specific exhibit, the Study Area represents the area within a 5-mile radius of the Facility Site.

**16 NYCRR §1100-2.10 Exhibit 9 Cultural Resources**

Exhibit 9 Information	Found in Section
<b>Exhibit 9 shall contain:</b>	
a. A study of the impacts of the construction and operation of the Facility, interconnections and related facilities on archeological/cultural resources within the project impact area, including:	
1. A summary of the nature of the probable impact on any archeological/cultural resources identified, addressing how those impacts shall be avoided or minimized;	9.1.1
2. If required pursuant to section 1100-1.3(h) of this Part, a Phase IA archeological/cultural resources study for the proposed Facility;	9.1.2 Appendix 9-B
3. If required pursuant to section 1100-1.3(h) of this Part, a Phase IB field study for the proposed Facility;	9.1.3 Appendix 9-C
4. If required by the Phase I study results, as determined pursuant to section 1100-1.3(h) of this Part, a Phase II site evaluation study to assess the boundaries, integrity and significance of identified cultural resources;	9.1.4 Not Applicable
5. An Unanticipated Discovery Plan that shall identify the actions to be taken in the unexpected event that resources of cultural, historical, or archaeological importance are encountered during the excavation process. This plan shall include a provision for work stoppage upon the discovery of possible archaeological or human remains and be prepared by a professional archaeologist in accordance with the NYAC standards.	9.1.5 Appendix 9-D
b. A study of the impacts on historic resources within the project impact area, including the results of field inspections, a review of the statewide inventory of historic property, and consultation with local historic preservation groups and federal/state-recognized Indian Nations to identify sites or structures listed or eligible for listing in the State or National Register of Historic Places within the PIA, including an analysis of potential impact on any standing structures which appear to be at least fifty (50) years old and potentially eligible for listing in the State or National Register of Historic Places, based on an assessment by a qualified individual.	9.2 Appendix 9-E

## 9.0 EXHIBIT 9 – CULTURAL RESOURCES

### SUMMARY OF EXHIBIT

On behalf of Valcour Bliss NewCo, LLC (the Applicant), WSP USA, Inc. (WSP) conducted archaeological surveys and an architectural reconnaissance survey of the Facility Site in accordance with the cultural resource study requirements of 16 New York Codes, Rules and Regulations (NYCRR) § 1100-2.10. The Applicant consulted with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) to develop the scope and methodology for the completed cultural resource studies for the Facility Site (see Table 9.1-1 and Appendix 9-A). The cultural resources reports and associated communications and consultations are summarized within this exhibit. The completed cultural resources studies included archaeological surveys and an architectural reconnaissance survey of the Facility Site. Archaeological and architectural studies may use different study areas, also known as the areas of potential effect (APEs). The archaeological APE is defined as the archaeologically sensitive geographic area(s) associated with proposed ground-disturbing activities. The architectural resources APE, however, is defined as the geographic area(s) within which a project may directly or indirectly change the character or use of historic properties. This includes land disturbances, indirect land disturbances, and visual impacts. The architectural APE, therefore, consists of the zone of visual impact (ZVI), which is the viewshed within an area extending 5 miles from the Facility Site boundaries.

WSP conducted a Phase IA archaeological survey including background research, a pedestrian reconnaissance, and a sensitivity model for terrestrial wind farms as outlined by the OPRHP. Archaeological sensitivity was based on 2020 guidance from the OPRHP to prepare the Phase 1B survey work plan. On February 7, 2025, WSP responded to OPRHP comments on the Phase 1A. On March 12, 2025, the OPRHP provided additional comments on the Phase 1A. The Applicant anticipates that OPRHP will approve the Phase 1A and concur with the proposed workplan for the Phase 1B archaeological testing. WSP conducted the Phase IB archaeological survey between September 30 and October 11, 2024. The OPRHP is reviewing the Phase 1B Report. The Applicant anticipates that the OPRHP will concur with the finding that no further study is required.

WSP conducted the architectural survey of historic resources, including background research and a reconnaissance field inspection, on January 6 and 7, 2025. The Facility Site is located in the Town of Eagle, and the ZVI extends to the towns of Arcade, Java, Pike, and Wethersfield, Wyoming County; the towns of Centerville and Hume, Alleghany County; and the town of Freedom, Cattaraugus County, New York. WSP surveyed 30 resources, 25 of which had been previously surveyed. WSP surveyed five additional properties that appeared to be eligible for listing in the State Register/National Register of Historic Places (SR/NRHP). Of the 25 previously surveyed individual resources in the APE, one is listed in the NRHP, 11 had been determined eligible, and 13 had been recorded with an undetermined SR/NRHP status. The historic resources survey was submitted through the Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS) on February 7, 2025. The OPRHP is reviewing the Historic Resources Report. The Applicant anticipates that the OPRHP will concur with the finding that no further study is required.

## **9.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES (16 NYCRR § 1100-2.10(a))**

### **9.1.1 Summary of Impacts and Avoidance Measures (16 NYCRR § 1100-2.10(a)(1))**

The archaeological APE focused on archaeologically sensitive areas associated with proposed ground-disturbing activities. In addition, 16 NYCRR § 1100-1.2(bk) defines the project impact area (PIA) as the geographic area or areas within which the proposed undertaking may cause any change, beneficial or adverse, in the character or use of an identified archaeological site, historic resource, or cultural property. For this analysis, the PIA is considered the same as the APE for archaeological resources.

The OPRHP recommends that the archaeological APE for terrestrial wind projects include areas of ground disturbance, including wind turbine sites, office and maintenance facilities, staging areas, new access roads, trenches 3 feet or wider of any depth, meteorological towers, and areas of grubbing and grading. The OPRHP does not consider areas where no grading or grubbing is required, including perimeter fencing and utility poles if their associated poles are driven or screwed into the ground, to be part of the archaeological APE.

Pursuant to 16 NYCRR § 1100-1.3(h), the Applicant initiated consultation regarding the Repowered Facility with the OPRHP regarding archaeological resources. Table 9.1-1 lists the consultation correspondence related to archaeological and historic resources during project development. Appendix 9-A provides copies of the correspondence listed in Table 9.1-1.

On behalf of the Applicant, WSP conducted the surveys required by 16 NYCRR § 1100-1.3(h) for archaeological resources that demonstrate that the design of the Repowered Facility avoids any impacts on archaeological and cultural resources. The Repowered Facility will replace the existing 67 wind turbines with up to 34 wind turbines and will use certain portions of the Existing Facility Site and Existing Facility components to avoid and minimize impacts on sensitive resources. The Repowered Facility will reuse other existing aboveground components, including overhead collection lines, access roads, buildings, and an electrical interconnection facility, thus avoiding and minimizing new construction. The Phase IB archaeological survey did not recover any artifacts, features, or archaeological sites.

The Applicant will avoid and minimize impacts on archaeological resources through the use of an Unanticipated Discoveries Plan as described in Section 9.1.5 that identifies the actions to be taken in the unexpected event that archaeological resources are encountered during construction, including provisions to stop work in the vicinity of the archaeological finds until those resources can be evaluated and documented by an archaeologist.

**Table 9.1-1 Cultural Resources Correspondence**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Sender</b>	<b>Recipient(s)</b>	<b>Content</b>
<b>Archaeological</b>				
<b>A-1</b>	September 24, 2024	Sydney Snyder, Scientist, Archaeology, OPRHP	WSP	Phase IA archaeological survey guidance
<b>A-2</b>	February 3, 2025	Sydney Snyder, Scientist, Archaeology, OPRHP	WSP	Response to Submission 8 - Phase IA
<b>A-3</b>	March 12, 2025	Sydney Snyder, Scientist, Archaeology, OPRHP	WSP	Response to Submission 9 - Phase IA
<b>Historical</b>				
<b>H-1</b>	December 24, 2024	Amber Courselle, Architectural Historian, WSP	SHPO	Submittal of Historic Resource Survey Methodology through CRIS
<b>H-2</b>	January 13, 2025	Campbell Higle, Historic Preservation Specialist, OPRHP	WSP	Approval of methodology / ZVI and request for Trekker survey
<b>H-3</b>	January 16, 2025	Amber Courselle, Architectural Historian, WSP	Lorraine Wagner, Eagle Town Historian	Initial request for information on historic properties within the APE
<b>H-4</b>	February 7, 2025	Amber Courselle, Architectural Historian, WSP	SHPO	Submittal of Historic Resource Survey through CRIS
<b>H-5</b>	March 5, 2025	Robyn Sedgwick, Historic Site Restoration Coordinator, SHPO	WSP	Request for further information for Historic Resources Survey

**Key:**

APE = area of potential effect

CRIS = Cultural Resource Information System

OPRHP= Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

SHPO = State Historic Preservation Office

WSP = WSP USA, Inc.

ZVI = zone of visual impact

### **9.1.2 Phase IA Archaeological/Cultural Resources Study (16 NYCRR § 1100-2.10(a)(2))**

The Phase IA Archaeological Survey (1) defines the APE relative to archaeological resources based on the anticipated area of disturbance; (2) determines whether previously identified archaeological resources are located in the APE; and (3) proposes a methodology to identify additional archaeological resources within the APE, evaluate their eligibility for the SR/NRHP, and assess the potential effect on those resources. The Phase IA report was prepared by professionals who satisfy the qualification criteria per the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Archaeology (36 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Part 61) and in accordance with applicable portions of the OPRHP Phase I Archaeological Report Format Requirements (OPRHP 2005).

Appendix 9-B provides the Phase IA archaeological survey report required pursuant to 16 NYCRR § 1100-1.3(h). After the pedestrian survey, WSP determined that 18.59 hectares (45.95 acres) of the Facility Site were sensitive for archaeological resources. On February 7, 2025, WSP responded to OPRHP comments on the Phase 1A. On March 12, 2025, the OPRHP provided additional comments on the Phase 1A. The Applicant anticipates that OPRHP will approve the Phase 1A and concur with the proposed workplan for the Phase 1B archaeological testing.

### **9.1.3 Phase IB Archaeological Survey (16 NYCRR § 1100-2.10(a)(3))**

Appendix 9-C provides the Phase IB Archaeological Survey Report for the presence or absence of archaeological resources within the archaeological APE required pursuant to 16 NYCRR § 1100-1.3(h) prepared by WSP.

The APE for direct effects is defined as the areas where soil disturbance will occur during construction. The OPRHP wind farm guidance recommends subsurface Phase IB archaeological testing only in areas of proposed significant ground disturbance, including wind turbine sites, office and maintenance facilities, staging areas, new access roads, trenches 3 feet or wider of any depth, meteorological towers, and areas of grubbing and grading (OPRHP 2023). WSP conducted the Phase IB survey concurrently with the development of the final layout, so subsurface testing occurred in the Facility Site, including some areas with little or no proposed disturbance. Therefore, the Phase IB fieldwork methodology included the APE for direct effects, as well as additional acreage outside of the APE for direct effects.

The Phase IB Archaeological Survey Report indicates that the survey did not identify any pre-Contact or post-Contact cultural material within the APE. Trace amounts of modern cultural material were identified and discarded. No archaeological sites were designated. The OPRHP is reviewing the Phase 1B Report. The Applicant anticipates that the OPRHP will concur with the finding that no further study is required.

### 9.1.4 Phase II Archaeological Survey (16 NYCRR § 1100-2.10(a)(4))

The Phase 1B survey did not identify any archaeological sites recommended for a Phase II site evaluation study to assess the boundaries, integrity, or significance of identified cultural resources.

### 9.1.5 Unanticipated Discoveries Plan (16 NYCRR § 1100-2.10(a)(5))

Appendix 9-D provides the Unanticipated Discoveries Plan, which identifies the actions to be taken in the unexpected event that resources of cultural, historical, or archaeological importance are encountered for excavations during construction.

## 9.2 HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY

### 9.2.1 Architectural Reconnaissance Survey

Appendix 9-E provides the Historic Resources Report of the survey and findings required pursuant to 16 NYCRR § 1100-2.10(b) prepared by WSP. Table 9.1-1 lists the consultation correspondence related to historic resources during project development. Appendix 9-A provides copies of the correspondence in Table 9.1-1.

The architectural survey identifies potential historic properties to determine the potential for adverse effects on such properties. Historically significant resources are defined herein to include buildings, districts, objects, structures, and/or sites listed in the SR/NRHP, as well as properties that the OPRHP has formally determined are eligible for listing in the SR/NRHP. The historic architectural APE was defined in consultation with the OPRHP, and in accordance with the OPRHP *Wind Energy Development Above-Ground Historic Resources Survey Work Recommendations* (OPRHP 2023). The architectural APE consists of the ZVI, which is the viewshed (i.e., areas with visibility of the Repowered Facility) within an area extending 5 miles from the Facility Site boundaries. The architectural APE encompasses the full extent of any visual impacts on historic properties from the Repowered Facility. On behalf of the Applicant, WSP conducted the survey of historic architectural resources, including background research and reconnaissance of the APE on January 6 and 7, 2025, in the Towns of Arcade, Eagle, Java, Pike, and Wethersfield, Wyoming County; the Towns of Centerville and Hume, Alleghany County, and the Town of Freedom, Cattaraugus County, New York. The architectural historians who performed the investigation meet or exceed the standards specified in 36 CFR 66.3(b)(2) and 36 CFR 61.

The background research, survey, and reporting were conducted in accordance with guidelines and recommendations established by the following:

- The OPRHP *Wind Energy Development Above-Ground Historic Resources Survey Work Recommendations* (OPRHP 2023).
- New York Public Service Law Article VIII (Siting of Renewable Energy and Electric Transmission) and its implementing regulations also known as 16 NYCRR Part 1100.

- The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.
- NRHP *Bulletin 24: Technical Information on Comprehensive Planning, Survey of Cultural Resources, and Registration in the National Register of Historic Places*, and NRHP *Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation; Procedures for the Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties* (36 CFR 800).
- The Procedures for Determining Site Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places (36 CFR 60 and 63).
- New York State Environmental Quality Review Act.
- The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Archaeology and Historic Preservation (USDOI 1983).

The survey included resources in the APE that appeared to be 50 years old or older. Properties previously SR/NRHP-listed, SR/NRHP-eligible, or undetermined for listing were resurveyed. Properties previously determined not eligible for listing were assumed unchanged from previous surveys and were not resurveyed. Only properties that appeared to be SR/NRHP-eligible were recorded. Each property was surveyed using high-resolution digital photographs and the CRIS Trekker portable application. The resources were then evaluated according to the National Register Criteria for Evaluation to determine eligibility for the SR/NRHP (which have the same criteria).

The background research identified 25 previously surveyed properties in the APE. Of these, one was previously NRHP-listed, 11 were determined individually eligible for listing in the SR/NRHP, and 13 are recorded with an undetermined SR/NRHP status. WSP recommends that two previously determined eligible properties and 10 previously undetermined properties be deemed not SR/NRHP eligible. One previously undetermined property was inaccessible, and is recommended to remain undetermined. WSP recommends no changes to the status of the remaining previously listed and determined eligible historic properties. WSP surveyed two additional properties that appeared eligible for listing in the SR/NRHP.

The Repowered Facility will have no physical impacts on identified historic properties. The Repowered Facility will reduce the number of existing wind turbines and will reuse other existing aboveground components, including overhead collection lines, access roads, buildings, and an electrical interconnection facility. Analysis of possible visual effects on historic resources determined that the APE consists mostly of forested areas surrounding the Facility Site with a rural landscape characterized by wooded lots, agricultural fields, and medium-sized hills, with scattered residential development and several small hamlets and crossroad settlements. The OPRHP is reviewing the Historic Resources Report. The Applicant anticipates that the OPRHP will concur with the finding that no further study is required.

### **9.2.2 Consultation with Local Historic Preservation Agencies and Federal/ State-Recognized Indian Nations**

Table 9.1-1 lists the consultation correspondence related to historic resources during project development. Appendix 9-A provides copies of the correspondence in Table 9.1-1. WSP submitted a letter requesting information on historic properties within the APE of the Repowered Facility to Lorraine Wagner, Eagle Town Historian, via email. No response from Ms. Wagner has been received to date.

In accordance with 16 NYCRR § 1100-1.3(h)(1), WSP reviewed the potential PIA to determine whether the statewide archaeological inventory map identified any areas of archaeological sensitivity that will warrant outreach to Indian Nations. No Indian Nation structures or sites listed or eligible for listing in the SR/NRHP were identified in the PIA or through OPRHP consultations.

### **9.3 UNIFORM STANDARDS AND CONDITIONS**

There are no applicable Uniform Standards and Conditions for this exhibit.

### **9.4 REFERENCES**

Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). 2023. *Wind Energy Development Above-Ground Historic Resources Survey Work Recommendations*. On file with WSP USA.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2005. *Phase I Archaeological Report Format Requirements*. New York State Historic Preservation Office, Waterford, New York. August 2005.

U.S. Department of the Interior (USDOI). 1983. *Archaeology and Historic Preservation: Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines*. Federal Register, Part IV, 48(2):44716-44742. Annotated version showing later technical and officially adopted revisions available from the National Park Service's preservation laws, regulations, and standards webpage. [http://www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/arch\\_stnds\\_0.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/arch_stnds_0.htm).