

# National Wind Coordinating Collaborative

Monthly Update

## NOVEMBER 2010

### WILDLIFE

#### EIGHTH WIND WILDLIFE RESEARCH MEETING HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL

On October 19-21, over 340 academics, researchers, federal and state officials, NGO representatives, and industry professionals attended the eighth Wind Wildlife Research Meeting, hosted by the NWCC in Lakewood, Colorado. We have received extremely **positive feedback** on the meeting, which is a testament to the hard work of the volunteers, planning committee, moderators, speakers, poster presenters, and staff. The high-quality of the presentations and posters indicates advances being made on wind-wildlife interaction research.

To place the presentations and posters into the context of the larger wind industry, the meeting opened with a **Setting the Stage** session featuring panelists from agencies, industry, and a conservation organization addressing policy and discussing their priorities related to wind-wildlife interactions.

During the three days, participants heard over 30 speakers present on the latest applied technical research related to the fatality impacts to birds and bats, impacts to wildlife habitat and behavior, modeling, cumulative and landscape-scale impacts, on-site mitigation techniques and technology, and offshore wind and wildlife issues. In addition to the sessions and panels, the meeting featured 30 posters on additional wind-wildlife research.

To close the meeting, the American Wind Wildlife Institute coordinated a **Research Priorities Panel**. Speakers from each session summarized what they heard during the meeting and identified gaps that need to be addressed moving forward, with the ultimate goal of translating research results into policy. The main take aways from this panel included the following:

- While research on estimating fatalities was most prevalent at the meeting, additional focus is needed to standardize methods to allow study results to be compared from year to year and across sites.
- A number of studies focused on impacts to bats, indicating a current trend in research focused on increasing the understanding of bat behavior and wind development impacts on bats.
- Several presentations focused on habitat and behavior impacts, presenting site- and species-specific studies. Further research is needed to determine if the results found in these studies are applicable on a broader scale and to better understand disturbance and avoidance behaviors of species of concern.
- Cumulative impacts are difficult to determine, because documenting populations, much less effects, are extremely difficult. Because of the difficulty in determining cumulative impacts, even for well-understood species, the more appropriate question may be whether we need to understand relative effects or can focus on resilience.
- Models cropped up throughout the meeting. There is a need for a carefully planned tool-kit of models, each with a clearly defined objective and statement of assumptions and data limitations. The implications of uncertainty in assumptions and data should be tested thoroughly. There is also a need for simple models bridging the gap between science and practical decisions. Simple models can always be improved as we gain understanding of both the practice and the science.
- On-site mitigation techniques including curtailment and deterrence are being tested, but the findings need to be fine-tuned and related to the realities of turbine technology and effectiveness. Off-site mitigation and facility layout techniques need to be evaluated and studied more thoroughly.
- Continuing offshore research is needed to increase our knowledge base. Land-based technologies and techniques need to be assessed for applicability to offshore research, and standard protocols need to be developed for gathering data. Because offshore studies are more difficult than land-based research, we may need to develop alternative ways to facilitate decision making.

At the end of this panel, participants were asked to think about how to bridge gaps across agency, industry, and scientific arenas through continued deliberation and dialogue.

The formal **proceedings** from the meeting will be available on the NWCC website in early 2011. The full meeting agenda, presentations, posters, and other final meeting materials can be found [here](#).

#### WILDLIFE WORKGROUP CORE GROUP MEETING NEXT STEPS

On October 22, 2010, members of the Wildlife Workgroup Core Group, designated alternates, and observers convened in Colorado. Attendees discussed feedback and next steps from the Wind Wildlife Research Meeting VIII, considered specific workgroup activities for 2011, and learned from the Department of Energy about the development of plans for the future of the NWCC. A meeting summary is under development and will be circulated when it is available.

Because many members of the Wildlife Workgroup Core Group were not in attendance at the meeting, a final work plan of activities for the workgroup in 2011 has not yet been developed. Potential activities have been sent to members of the Wildlife Workgroup along with a survey for members to indicate their priority activities for the Wildlife Workgroup to undertake in 2011. Priority activities will be established based on votes received from Core Group members and other interested parties. Based on the results of the survey, a draft work plan will be developed for review and approval by the Wildlife Workgroup Core Group, NWCC Steering Committee, and the Department of Energy.

#### PRESS RELEASE ON KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY GREATER PRAIRIE CHICKEN STUDY

On October 27, 2010, the NWCC's Wildlife Workgroup Grassland and Shrub Steppe Species Subgroup Grassland Community Collaborative (GCC) released a press release with updates on the current study being conducted by researchers at Kansas State University on greater prairie chickens. The collaborative research effort was initiated in 2006 to establish whether there are effects from wind structures to prairie chickens in the Midwest. The research team is focusing current research efforts around the Meridian Way Wind Farm, a 201-megawatt wind facility recently built in north central Kansas. Effects of rangeland management on productivity of prairie chickens were discovered before turbines were erected. New data from ongoing monitoring since completion of construction could be used to improve siting guidelines for wind power facilities in Kansas.

To read the complete press release, please click [here](#).

#### THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY FORMING NEW RENEWABLE ENERGY WORK GROUP

The Wildlife Society is forming a Renewable Energy Work Group. The work group will promote an understanding of renewable energy projects (solar, biofuels, wind, etc.) and potential issues with wildlife. The work group will host a workshop at the annual conference (in Hawaii in 2011) and possibly a field trip of renewable energy projects in Hawaii.

In order to meet the charter requirements, the group must have 32 more members. They are asking wildlife professionals to join this working group. If you wish to be a volunteer as well, then please let them know. However, the immediate need is membership. To join the work group, one must become a member of The Wildlife Society (\$69 annual membership fee) and pay \$5 for dues to the work group.

Please contact Brian Boroski (membership coordinator) or Tim Green (Renewable Energy Work Group Chairman) for further information:

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### TRANSMISSION

#### TRANSMISSION UPDATE FEATURES PRESENTATION ON NEW SITING TOOL TO SPATIALLY REPRESENT PUBLIC OPINION

The NWCC's November Transmission Update featured a presentation by David Solan, Director of The Energy Policy Institute (EPI) at The Center for Advanced Energy Studies at Boise State University. Dr. Solan provided an update on the development status of an Arc GIS mapping tool that will add public opinion data to other typical land use data layers, such as geospatial and environmental data. This tool will enable policymakers, developers and stakeholders to identify potential optimized transmission paths. The team of researchers from Boise State, Idaho State, and the Idaho National Laboratory initiated the three-year project in June 2010.

The open-source mapping tool will use risk-based public survey data. EPI is currently developing 30-40 survey questions for the tool, which will ask for opinions on viewsheds, generation sources, and similar issues rated on a one-to-five scale. The phone survey will target stakeholders such as landowners, environmental groups, and wildlife groups, particularly those in the urban/rural interface. Survey data will then be inputted into the tool to create a layer for a GIS map. During the webcast, Dr. Solan solicited feedback on the stakeholder survey process and existing tools and surveys that may inform their approach. To view the presentation, which contains Dr. Solan's contact information, please click [here](#).



#### NOVEMBER DATES TO REMEMBER

**NWCC Strategic Planning Discussion**

November 16, Phoenix, AZ

#### DECEMBER DATES TO REMEMBER

**NWCC Transmission Update Briefing**

Thursday, December 2, 1:00-2:00 EST

**NWCC Steering Committee Call**

Thursday, December 16, 1:00-2:00 EST

#### ARE YOU REGISTERED TO RECEIVE EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS FROM NWCC ACCORDING TO YOUR INTERESTS?

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