



Grassland Shrub Steppe Species Sage-grouse Research Collaborative

Background

The Sage-grouse Research Collaborative (Collaborative) was formed under the National Wind Coordinating Collaborative Wildlife Workgroup's Grassland Shrub Steppe Species Subgroup (GS3C). The Collaborative was formed to coordinate studies examining the potential impacts of wind development on sage-grouse across their range with the goal of informing wind development and sage-grouse management strategies.

Objectives

The Collaborative is governed by an Oversight Committee focused on achieving the following:

1. Convene federal, regional, state, industry and NGO representatives in support of focused research to increase efficiencies and leverage funding to maximize research conducted to better understand potential impacts of wind development to sage-grouse across their range.
 - The Oversight Committee will raise funds to support independent investigators in conducting research.
 - The Oversight Committee will engage a pool of technical experts to provide advice in development of research questions and protocols, evaluation of research proposals and on-going monitoring of research.
2. Informed by advice from technical experts:
 - Develop coordinated research questions and protocols and monitor implementation of replicated studies across the sage-grouse range to foster predictability of impacts from wind development on sage-grouse.
 - * For the foreseeable future, the collaborative will primarily address research gaps regarding the impacts of wind turbines and associated infrastructure on sage-grouse.
 - Summarize study results and coordinate a comprehensive analysis of impacts across the sage-grouse's range, ensure completion of peer-reviews for studies, and conduct outreach to disseminate results.
4. Support development of the science needed to inform federal and state agency wind development stipulations and mitigation strategies while accommodating the need for adaptive management as new findings occur.



Oversight Committee

Zachary Bowen
U.S. Geological Survey

Christina Calabrese
Horizon Wind Energy

Karyn Coppinger
Invenergy

John Emmerich
Wyoming Game & Fish Dept

Bradley Fedy
Colorado State University

Scott Gardner
California Dept of Fish & Game

Patrick Gilman
U.S. Dept of Energy

Joseph Grennan
RES Americas

Tom Hemker
Idaho Dept of Fish and Game

Nicole Hughes
Element Power

Christy Johnson-Hughes
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Joe Kiesecker
The Nature Conservancy

Holly Michael
Oregon Dept of Fish and Wildlife

Sophie Osborn
Wyoming Outdoor Council

Rich Rayhill
Ridgeline Energy

Brian Rutledge
Audubon Wyoming

Jim Sedinger
University of Nevada

Robin Sell
BLM Colorado State Office

Karin Sinclair
NREL (Technical Monitor)

*Including turbines, meteorological towers, guyed wires and short haul transmission within the annual home range of sage-grouse being studied.



Wind energy is a clean, affordable and reliable domestic energy source that results in much-needed job creation and a reduction in our nation's greenhouse gas emissions, yet many of the western states that have some of the greatest wind resource potential also happen to be where sage-grouse are present. The USFWS designation of sage-grouse as a Candidate Species under the Endangered Species Act coupled with the current lack of data regarding impacts from wind energy to sage-grouse is creating a virtual standstill in new wind development in these states.

The Collaborative recognizes the need for immediate and high-quality data collection to determine the impacts of wind energy development on the species. Research results will fill a current data gap; providing the information needed to help advance wind energy development and inform protection/management of sage-grouse.

Fundraising Goals

The Oversight Committee has estimated that this research effort will cost approximately \$250,000/per year/per study. Ideally studies should run 8-10 years to ensure lag effects in population response are captured, bringing the longer-term total to approximately \$10 million for four replicated studies. The Oversight Committee recently released a research Request for Proposals and hopes to select researcher teams this fall.

Given the urgency of this matter and the overall scale of research required, the Oversight Committee is currently working to identify as many potential funding sources as possible within all relevant sectors.

Contacts:

Please contact Facilitators

Jennifer Bies

jbies@kearnswest.com

or

Abby Arnold

aarnold@kearnswest.com

for more information about the
GS3C Sage-grouse Collaborative
or to donate funds.



Photo credit: DOE/NREL

The **National Wind Coordinating Collaborative** provides a neutral forum for a wide range of stakeholders to pursue the shared objective of developing environmentally, economically, and politically sustainable commercial markets for wind power in the United States. For more information about the NWCC go to <http://www.nationalwind.org>.