

Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife News

June 1, 2012

Around the Nation & World...

The American Wind and Wildlife Institute released a white paper, ***Eagles and Wind Energy: Identifying Research Priorities***, written by Taber D. Allison. The white paper summarizes information about the population status and trends of bald and golden eagles, reviews anthropogenic sources of eagle mortality, and identified potential mitigation options and research topics.

(http://awwi.org/uploads/files/AWWI_White_Paper_Eagles_and_Wind_Energy_May_2012.pdf)

Tracking bear behavior near proposed wind project. Vermont Fish and Wildlife officials have been tracking bear movements before construction of a wind farm proposed in what is considered critical habitat. (<http://www.wcax.com/story/18570455/tracking-bear-behavior-near-proposed-wind-project>)

Native American tribes join environmental, recreation and hunting organizations to call for a moratorium on "fast-tracking" massive energy projects on public lands. Concerns over the DOI "fast-tracking" of energy projects on public lands include impacts to cultural and natural resources and exclusion of stakeholders during the process. (<http://thesunrunner.com/2012/05/15/native-american-tribes-join-environmental-recreation-and-hunting-organizations-to-call-for-a-moratorium-on-fast-tracking-massive-energy-projects-on-public-lands>)

Bats

Disease wiping out bats hits new species, spreads west. On May 29, 2012, the USFWS announced that white-nose syndrome (WNS) was found in endangered gray bats in Tennessee. The fungus was first identified in 2010, but the disease was just confirmed. No deaths of gray bats have been recorded from WNS yet, but there is great concern for gray bats because they live in caves year-round and maybe more susceptible to WNS. (<http://usnews.msnbc.msn.com/news/2012/05/29/11939375-disease-wiping-out-bats-hits-new-species-spreads-west>).

Journey of Little Brown Bats Tracked by Chemical 'Fingerprinting'. Researchers from Michigan Tech's School of Forest Resources and Environmental Science used stable hydrogen isotopes to help predict the summer locations of colonies of Little Brown Bats. (<http://www.redorbit.com/news/science/1112545265/journey-of-little-brown-bats-tracked-by-chemical-fingerprinting/>). The Ecological Society of America has a preprint of scientific article, *Batcave catchment areas: using stable isotopes (δD) to determine the probable origins of hibernating bats.* (<http://www.esajournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1890/11-1438.1>).

Wind

Wind Energy Facts from AWEA 2011 Annual Market Report. The American Wind Energy Association released its 2012 annual market report in mid-April. (<http://cleantechnica.com/2012/04/15/wind-energy-facts-from-awea-2011-annual-market-report/>).

Energy Department Releases New Land-Based/Offshore Wind Resource Map. The Energy Department recently released a new wind resource map compiled by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and AWS Truepower that combines land-based with offshore resources: *United States – Land-Based and Offshore Annual Average Wind Speed at 80 m*. (<http://apps1.eere.energy.gov/wind/newsletter/detail.cfm/articleId=69>).

FERC Approves Rock Island Clean Line Transmission Project. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) gave approval to Clean Line for negotiating transmission service agreements with potential customers of the Rock Island Clean Line transmission project. The Rock Island Clean Line is a 500-mile overhead high voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission line that has been proposed to run from northwest Iowa to an area near Morris, Illinois. If built, the project will deliver 3,500 megawatts of wind energy resources from Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota and Minnesota to communities in Illinois and other states to the east, areas that have a strong demand for clean, reliable energy. (<http://www.windforillinois.org/news/ferc-approves-rock-island-clean-line-transmission-project.html>).

Action Items

Wind Wildlife Research Meeting IX, Call for Abstracts. The National Wind Coordinating Collaborative and American Wind Wildlife Institute **Wind Wildlife Research Meeting** will be held on November 27-30, 2012 in Denver, CO. Topics of interest for the meeting include assessing direct and indirect effects on wildlife and their habitats, evaluating approaches used to avoid and minimize impacts, testing the efficacy of mitigation and conservation measures, and considering the context of wind energy development among other energy choices. Because the USFWS recently released the *Land-based Wind Energy Guidelines*, they will be a central theme in the conference. (<http://www.nationalwind.org/issues/wildlife/researchmeetingix.aspx>).

Service Extended the Comment Period to Revise Eagle Permit Regulations. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has extended the comment period on the proposed rule, published on April 13, 2012, to revise the regulations governing permits for nonpurposeful take of Golden Eagles and Bald Eagles where the take is associated with, but not the purpose of, an activity. The comment period for Changes in the Regulations Governing Eagle Permitting will now close **July 12, 2012**. For more information visit: <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/BaldAndGoldenEagleManagement.htm>

Tools

New Interactive Web Map to Help Reduce Bird Mortality from Wind Development. The American Bird Conservancy released a new, interactive web-based map covering the entire U.S. The map uses Google Earth as a viewer. Included on the map are wind development **bird** risk, Department of Energy average wind speeds, and all wind turbines and associated meteorological tower proposals to the FAA. (<http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/releases/120503.html>). **NOTE:** The Nebraska Game and

Parks Commission, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other resource professionals developed a Nebraska-specific map looking at the sensitivity of wildlife habitats to wind energy development. It is highly recommended that you use the *Wind Energy and Nebraska's Wildlife* map for Nebraska information (<http://snr.unl.edu/renewableenergy/wind/tools.asp#map>).

U.S. EPA Launches Innovative New Tools to Determine Solar and Wind Energy Potential on Contaminated Lands. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory have developed new tools designed to test underutilized sites and contaminated land for solar and wind energy potential. The alternative energy "decision trees" leverage NREL's knowledge of renewable energy technologies and EPA's experience in returning contaminated lands to productive use. The *Wind Energy Decision Tree* is a useful tool not only for projects on contaminated lands but also for general siting. (http://www.windpoweringamerica.gov/filter_detail.asp?itemid=3558).

Around Nebraska...

Broken Bow Wind project will generate electricity, jobs, land lease payments. Trucks carrying wind turbine parts will become a common sight on roads in Nebraska. Construction of the Broken Bow Wind project is scheduled for completion in November. According to the press release, construction activities will create an estimated at \$5.6 million in state sales tax revenues. Nebraska Public Power District has a 20-year power purchase agreement for the electricity from the 80-megawatt capacity project. That's enough energy to meet the needs of about 25,000 homes. (http://www. Kearneyhub.com/news/local/broken-bow-wind-project-will-generate-electricity-jobs-land-lease/article_fdb815f0-9c00-11e1-930b-0019bb2963f4.html).

Crofton Bluffs dream comes true. After several years on the drawing table, the Edison Mission Group (EMG) and the Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) are working together to complete the Crofton Bluffs project. When completed, it will provide enough wind energy to the NPPD grid to supply electricity to 14,000 homes and NPPD has a 20-year contract to purchase the power. (http://www.norfolkdailynews.com/news/crofton-bluffs-dream-comes-true/article_c62590ee-9850-11e1-aeaa-001a4bcf6878.html).

Check out the **Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife Project website** at: <http://snr.unl.edu/renewableenergy/wind/> and **Wind Energy and Wildlife news** at: <http://www.scoop.it/t/wind-energy-and-wildlife>

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