

Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife News

November 6, 2012

It has been almost a month since I sent the last newsletter. There are a number of national articles of interest and an unprecedented number of Nebraska articles.

Thank you to everyone who attended the Wind – Wildlife Session at the Nebraska Wind Conference. Select presentations from that session will be posted on-line soon.

A new handout, [Navigating the Wildlife Consultation Process: Wind Energy in Nebraska](http://snr.unl.edu/renewableenergy/download/Navigating%20the%20Consultation%20Process.pdf) contains agency contact information, a list of the guidance documents for Nebraska, and a suggested timeline are included on the handout. Please check it out (<http://snr.unl.edu/renewableenergy/download/Navigating%20the%20Consultation%20Process.pdf>).

Around the Nation & World...

Wind and Wildlife

[Expert: San Diego Wind Farm May Devastate Eagle Population.](#) A California eagle biologist says that a wind power project in eastern San Diego County may pose a serious threat to golden eagles in the Anza Borrego region. In comments on Tule Wind's avian and bat protection plan, submitted October 19 to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), biologist Jim Wiegand -- Vice President of the wildlife protection group Save the Eagles International -- charged that the project will kill or injure more golden eagles than its formal planning documents suggest, and that the species is already on the verge of extirpation in Eastern San Diego County. (<http://www.kcet.org/news/rewire/wind/expert-tule-wind-farm-may-devastate-eagle-population.html>).

[First Wind Submits New, Smaller Bowers Wind Project Proposal.](#) Champlain Wind LLC, a project company of [First Wind](#), an independent U.S.-based wind energy company, has submitted an application to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for a revised 48 megawatt (MW) Bowers Wind project that has 40 percent fewer turbines than an earlier proposal. Several public health groups, neighboring landowners, environmental organizations, and sportsman associations have pledged their support for the revised project. (<http://finance.yahoo.com/news/first-wind-submits-smaller-bowers-122600999.html>).

[Eagle advocates worry about wind turbine effects on birds.](#) Eagle experts came to Rochester from the Eagle Nature Foundation with worries about lead and its potential effect on eaglets and wind power and potential disruption to nesting sites. (<http://postbulletin.com/news/stories/display.php?id=1513209>).

[UK: Gannets and Offshore Renewables.](#) With European member states committed to obtaining 20% of their energy from renewables by 2020, the number of offshore wind, wave and tidal developments is increasing, potentially putting pressure on marine life. Seabirds could be affected in many ways, including through loss of foraging habitat, and collision with wind turbines. Gannets visited nine sites earmarked for

offshore renewables, suggesting these birds could be affected by development in these areas. (<http://www.offshorewind.biz/2012/11/02/uk-gannets-and-offshore-renewables/>).

[Vermont wind project gets bat permit](#). The owner of a commercial wind project in Vermont has been issued a special permit allowing for possible fatalities of bats, some of which are endangered species in the state. The permit issued by the [Vermont Agency of Natural Resources](#) allows for fatalities for a maximum of four little brown bats, one Northern Long-Eared Bat, one Tri-Colored Bat and one Eastern Small-Footed Bat. (<http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Vermont-wind-project-gets-bat-permit-3970781.php>).

[Wind turbine pressure change kills bats, research may help prevent future deaths](#). Keinath and Abernethy were looking for bats to tell them which, if any, species called the area home. Land managers can use that information to negotiate where turbines are placed and even when they run to prevent more casualties. (http://trib.com/news/updates/wind-turbine-pressure-change-kills-bats-research-may-help-prevent/article_24b620cf-9e69-58e1-b638-32499d9ef11f.html).

Wildlife

[Lesser Prairie Chicken Listing Postponed](#). Last week the Obama administration postponed the decision to list the [lesser prairie chicken](#) under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) until the end of November. (<http://news.wildlife.org/featured/lesser-prairie-chicken-listing-postponed/>).

[Bats in the News – Sexy Bats](#). Bats, it seems, tend to think about sex a lot – even when they're busy hunting insects or dodging obstacles in the dark. That, *Discovery News* reports, is the conclusion of a study by University of Ulm scientists who found that the echolocation calls bats use for navigation and foraging "also contain information about sex, which helps the flying mammals to acquire and keep mates." (<http://www.batcon.org/index.php/media-and-info/e-newsletter.html?task=viewArticle&ArticleID=1272>).

[Research focuses on bats at Idaho National Lab](#). "We're trying to gather a baseline of how many and what species of bats frequent the site," Edwards said. "We're also trying to figure out (which bat species are) using the caves." But the contractor for wildlife research on the DOE site — Gonzales-Stoller Surveillance — isn't collecting data simply to further its research. They're collecting it in preparation for an onslaught of disease. (<http://idahobusinessreview.com/2012/11/05/research-focuses-on-bats-at-idaho-national-lab/>).

Wind

[AEA Study: Removing Big Wind's 'Training Wheels'](#). A [new report](#) released today by the American Energy Alliance (AEA) concludes that wind energy is a mature industry whose growth has rendered the federal wind Production Tax Credit (PTC) an obsolete government hand-out that should be allowed to expire. (<http://www.americanenergyalliance.org/2012/10/aea-study-removing-big-winds-training-wheels/>).

The complete report can be found here: <http://www.americanenergyalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Dismukes-Removing-Big-Winds-Training-Wheels.pdf>

[New Report: Wind Energy Yields Major Environmental and Public Health Benefits for Colorado](#). Wind energy in Colorado each year saves a billion gallons of water while avoiding emissions of air pollutants equivalent to that produced by half a million cars, according to a report released today by Environment Colorado. (<http://www.environmentcolorado.org/news/coe/new-report-wind-energy-yields-major-environmental-and-public-health-benefits-colorado>).

[NREL expansion could add 60 turbines to wind center south of Boulder](#). Environmental assessment begins Thursday for 305-acre site northwest of Rocky Flats. Plans are in the works for a potential large-scale expansion of the National Wind Technology Center, the nation's premier wind energy research facility known for its towering, white windmills on the southern periphery of Boulder County. (http://www.denverpost.com/business/ci_21900843/nrel-expansion-could-add-60-turbines-wind-center?source=rss).

Action Items

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have reopened the public comment period for the draft Midwest Wind Energy Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan Within Eight-State Planning Area. To ensure consideration, they request written comments on or before December 3, 2012. (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-10-03/pdf/2012-24401.pdf>).

[BOEM seeks public input for Atlantic wind area assessment](#). The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is requesting public comment on an environmental assessment (EA) for an area in federal waters off Massachusetts where commercial wind energy development would take place. (<http://www.rechargenews.com/energy/wind/article326664.ece>).

[BOEM Announces Availability of Environmental Assessment for Wind Energy Area Offshore Massachusetts](#). Comments may be submitted via BOEM's website at: <http://www.boem.gov/About-BOEM/Public-Engagement/Public-Engagement-Opportunities.aspx> (click on the "Open Comment Documents" link) or mailed to: Office of Renewable Energy Programs, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, 381 Elden Street, HM 1328, Herndon, Virginia 20170-4817. (<http://www.boem.gov/BOEM-Newsroom/Press-Releases/2012/Press10312012.aspx>).

Upcoming Events

The **[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. (<http://www.nationalwind.org/issues/wildlife/researchmeetingix.aspx>). The **Draft Agenda** is

available at:

http://www.nationalwind.org/assets/research_meetings/NWCC_Research_Meeting_Agenda_Draft_09-21-12_.pdf

Around Nebraska...

[Coalition: Now is the time to invest in wind energy](#). Nebraska could add thousands of new jobs, lower its electric bills and improve the health of its citizens if it built more wind energy projects by 2030, a coalition of local energy leaders said Thursday. (http://journalstar.com/news/state-and-regional/nebraska/coalition-now-is-the-time-to-invest-in-wind-energy/article_ca400727-4033-5e90-82eb-524667c8e0ac.html).

[Report: Nebraska wind power would boost economy](#). Nebraska is trailing its neighbors in wind-energy development and missing an opportunity to add jobs to the state economy while producing a cleaner form of energy, according to a report released Thursday. A group of lawmakers and environmental advocates unveiled the report as they argued that Nebraska is well-positioned to tap wind as a renewable energy resource. (<http://finance.yahoo.com/news/report-nebraska-wind-power-boost-142355381.html>).

The report, **[Securing Nebraska's Energy and Economic Future: Creating Jobs, New Economic Opportunities and Health Benefits through Productive Investments in Wind Energy and Energy Efficiency](#)**, can be found

here: <http://www.sierraclub.org/windworks/downloads/Securing-NE-Energy-Economic-Future-2012-10-18.pdf>.

[In the wind? Work could stall without tax credit](#). Vavra is president of the Saline County Wind Association, a grass-roots group made up of 260 members representing 60,000 acres that may be suitable for wind energy development. The group has tried to attract a developer without success. A company that showed interest has since left the wind industry, and discussions with several others have gone nowhere. (http://journalstar.com/news/state-and-regional/federal-politics/in-the-wind-work-farm-could-stall-without-tax-credit/article_09f4e5dd-60dd-5824-bea2-191e5e8f0a31.html).

[Gov. Heineman hopes for extension of wind-power tax credit](#). Gov. Dave Heineman gave conditional support to extending the federal tax credit for wind power Monday after speaking at the Nebraska Wind Conference. (<http://www.omaha.com/article/20121023/NEWS/710239937/1707>).

[Nebraska: New wind farm highlights PTC decision](#). An article in yesterday's edition of the [Kearney \(Neb.\) Hub](#) newspaper tells the story of what a single wind farm is doing for a community and state, and what's on the line as Congress considers whether to extend the federal wind energy Production Tax Credit (PTC). (http://www.awea.org/blog/index.cfm?customel_dataPageID_1699=19108).

[Last wind farm for a while?](#) With Broken Bow farm dedication of 50 turbines, it could be if tax credit lapses. (http://www.kearneyhub.com/news/local/last-wind-farm-for-a-while/article_92594dec-187e-11e2-a69e-001a4bcf887a.html).

[Expanding Nebraska's Wind Farms](#). Nebraska's sitting on an untapped gold mine, and it comes in the form of harnessing wind power. According to the resource assessment from the National Renewable Energy Lab, Nebraska's wind resource could power the state's current electricity needs 120 times over. Gov. Heineman said he won't put a limit on the number of wind farm developments, but said "It will take many years to develop it to its fullest potential but you're going to see more and more wind farms in Nebraska." (<http://www.nebraska.tv/story/19991683/expanding-nebraskas-wind-farms>).

[Wind turbine catches fire at Crofton Bluffs wind farm](#). A turbine caught fire at the Crofton Bluffs wind farm in northeast Nebraska on Wednesday evening. The fire was put out and no one was injured, according to a statement from the owner, Edison Mission Energy in Nebraska. (<http://journalstar.com/news/local/e23fa77a-1dfc-5395-b757-f32af2e83af6.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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