



Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife News

July 2, 2013

The **Rainwater Basin Joint Venture** science staff has developed models and decision support tools for strategic habitat conservation and planning.

Projects include:

- Landscape Level Habitat Use by Trumpeter Swans
- Whooping Crane Conservation Plan for the RWB Region
- Ferruginous Hawk and Golden Eagle Habitat Suitability Indices

And Many More!!

All GIS projects can be found at: <http://rwbjv.org/rainwater-basin-joint-venture/gis-projects/>

Around Nebraska...

[County board approves wind farm, Koch road projects.](#) Two agreements related to county road maintenance and improvements were approved by the Gage County Board of Supervisors Wednesday. The first, a road use and maintenance agreement with the Steele Flats Wind Project, was carried over from an April approval of the project, Gage County Attorney Roger Harris said, after the county “overlooked” signing the document. (http://beatricedailysun.com/news/local/county-board-approves-wind-farm-koch-road-projects/article_acb05185-3d81-5746-b702-f85c8dffca64.html).

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service awards grants to 28 states for work on deadly bat disease.](#) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced grant awards totaling \$950,694 to twenty-eight states for white-nose syndrome (WNS) projects. State natural resource agencies will use the funds to support research, monitor bat populations and detect and respond to white-nose syndrome, a disease that afflicts bats. Nebraska was one of the states awarded a grant. (http://www.kxlo-kbcm.com/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1472:u-s-fish-and-wildlife-service-awards-grants-to-28-states-for-work-on-deadly-bat-disease&catid=10:news-pod&Itemid=114).

Around the Nation & World...

Wind and Wildlife

[Wind industry and enviros team up to study bird deaths.](#) Amid [growing controversies](#) over [birds killed by turbines](#), a handful of big wind energy companies are teaming up with conservationists to pool data that could help address the problem. (<http://grist.org/news/wind-industry-and-enviros-team-up-to-study-bird-deaths/>).

[Wind farms touted as 'green' energy source but have impact on birds.](#) Touted as a green solution to feed our nation's hunger for energy, wind farms are also blamed for killing millions of birds. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates 440,000 birds are killed nationwide each year by wind farms. The number is expected to reach one million per year by 2030. Some environmental groups, which often cheer on renewable energy, have criticized the wind industry for not doing more to protect birds. (<http://www.katu.com/news/local/Wind-farms-green-energy-impact-on-birds-213903851.html>).

[On the Mortality of Eagles and the Unintended Consequences of Wind Turbines.](#) Unfortunately, in this new age of energy independence, sometimes that elevated perspective of a soaring eagle comes at a mortal price. The eyes of an eagle can become so focused on the earth below that these great birds will miss the dangers of man-made obstructions hindering their flight path. (<http://ivn.us/history-unsun/2013/06/30/on-the-mortality-of-eagles-and-the-unintended-consequences-of-wind-turbines/>).

[GMP Wants Permit To Kill Endangered Bats.](#) How much is a little brown bat worth? According to Green Mountain Power's calculation, about \$1 million a year. The utility has asked for a state permit to kill four of the endangered creatures a year at its 21-turbine Lowell wind project. GMP says if it has to follow all the protections needed to spare every bat from getting thrashed by the turbine blades, it would cost the utility \$4 million a year in reduced power output. (<http://digital.vpr.net/post/gmp-wants-permit-kill-endangered-bats>).

[Wind farms seek federal OK to kill eagles, pissing off both left and right.](#) It's not easy to unite the right-wing Heartland Institute and bird-loving environmentalists. But that's what some wind energy developers appear to be doing by proposing to the federal government that they be allowed to kill bald eagles and other protected species with their turbines. (<http://grist.org/news/wind-farms-seek-federal-ok-to-kill-eagles-pissing-off-both-left-and-right/>).

[Analysis - Wind industry responds to rising eagle deaths.](#) The FWS, which investigates deaths of the species, protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA), has "credible evidence" of 85 eagle deaths at 34 wind farms in ten states since 1997. However, five of these investigations are current and most of the fatalities have been in the past three years, according to Scott Flaherty, deputy assistant regional director of external affairs at FWS. This is due to the growing number of wind farms, he said. (<http://www.windpowermonthly.com/article/1186511/analysis--wind-industry-responds-rising-eagle-deaths>).

[Minnesota regulators have pulled the plug on a Goodhue County wind farm proposal.](#) The eagles in Goodhue County won a victory Thursday. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission pulled the plug on a controversial wind energy project that was stalled for years by a fierce and well-organized local opposition that successfully used its potential impact on eagles to help derail it. (<http://www.startribune.com/politics/statelocal/212398821.html>).

[More than Megawatts](http://www.defendersblog.org/2013/06/more-than-megawatts/). As America moves to cut emissions of carbon pollution and reduce [climate change](#), we will need to move away from fossil fuels and rely on renewable sources of energy. But it's important to remember that it takes more than megawatts to be good stewards of our planet. (<http://www.defendersblog.org/2013/06/more-than-megawatts/>).

[Let's not martyr the white-throated needletail to the anti-wind cause](http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/blog/2013/jun/28/white-throated-needletail-wind-turbines?CMP=tw_t_gu). The death of any bird is tragic, but when it comes to climate change we are talking about extinction of whole species. (http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/blog/2013/jun/28/white-throated-needletail-wind-turbines?CMP=tw_t_gu).

[Interior Department gives OK for wind-power project in Mohave County](http://cronkitenewsonline.com/2013/06/interior-department-gives-ok-for-wind-power-project-in-mohave-county/). The Department of the Interior on Friday approved a 500-megawatt wind-power farm near Kingman. Godfrey said overall footprint of the project was reduced by 19 percent to protect golden eagle habitat and to reduce visual and noise impact on the Lake Mead National Recreational Area. An eagle nesting area on Squaw Peak was placed off-limits, and no turbine will be closer than a quarter-mile to private property. (<http://cronkitenewsonline.com/2013/06/interior-department-gives-ok-for-wind-power-project-in-mohave-county/>).

[Washington Supreme Court Hears Wind Farm Case](http://www.nwpr.org/post/washington-supreme-court-hears-wind-farm-case). The Supreme Court of Washington Thursday heard arguments in a case about a controversial wind farm in the Columbia River Gorge. Then-Governor Chris Gregoire approved the project more than a year ago. Environmentalists say it will harm wildlife, recreation, and scenic views. (<http://www.nwpr.org/post/washington-supreme-court-hears-wind-farm-case>).

Wildlife

[Nature Conservancy Confirms Bat Visitors at Artificial Cave](http://www.wildlifeacoustics.com/company/news/257-nature-conservancy-confirms-bat-visitors-at-artificial-cave). In early October 2012, [The Nature Conservancy](#) put the finishing touches on a daring gamble to save America's bats from the epidemic of White Nose Syndrome (WNS). Based on data from the first year's operation, that gamble is paying off. (<http://www.wildlifeacoustics.com/company/news/257-nature-conservancy-confirms-bat-visitors-at-artificial-cave>).

Wind

[Energy Department, NREL Announce New Research Center to Boost Clean Energy Technologies on a Smarter Grid](http://apps1.eere.energy.gov/news/progress_alerts.cfm/pa_id=898). The Energy Department and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) today announced the Energy Systems Integration Facility (ESIF) in Golden, Colorado, as the latest Energy Department user facility and the only one in the nation focused on utility-scale clean energy grid integration. (http://apps1.eere.energy.gov/news/progress_alerts.cfm/pa_id=898).

[Location May Stymie Wind and Solar Power Benefits](http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=location-may-stymie-wind-and-solar-power-benefits). Wind farms and solar installations are often located in places where they will have the least impact on climate and health, a report finds. (<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=location-may-stymie-wind-and-solar-power-benefits>).

For the complete article by Kyle Siler-Evans et al., [Regional variations in the health, environmental, and climate benefits of wind and solar generation](http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2013/06/19/1221978110.abstract), was published in PNAS. (<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2013/06/19/1221978110.abstract>).

Tools

[Wind Turbine Ordinances](#). This page [lists 135 state and local wind turbine ordinances](#). State and local governments and policymakers can use this collection of example wind turbine ordinances when drafting a new wind energy ordinance in a town or county without existing ordinances. (<http://www.windpoweringamerica.gov/policy/ordinances.asp>)

[USFWS Wind Energy Development Information Website](#). This website provides value tools such as **wind energy training materials, other tools, and announcements**. Check it out at: <http://www.fws.gov/windenergy/index.html>.

Other

[Climate Change and President Obama's Action Plan \(the infographic\)](#). President Obama has announced a series of executive actions to reduce carbon pollution, prepare the U.S. for the impacts of climate change, and lead international efforts to address global climate change. (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/share/climate-action-plan>).

Upcoming Events

Wind Energy Training Series for Voluntary Land-based Wind Energy Guidelines - Part 2. July 31, 2013, 2-4 p.m. ET. E-mail windbroadcast@fws.gov with the subject "register" to register for this broadcast. To check out the first broadcast, go to: http://www.fws.gov/windenergy/wind_training/wind_training.html.

Annual Central Mountain Plains Section Meeting (The Wildlife Society) will be in Cedar City, UT on August 12-15, 2013. The focus of the conference will be on 3 major issues: Human-Wildlife Conflict Management, Refuge and Riparian Ecology and Management, and Energy Development and Wildlife Management. For more information: <http://wildlife.org/CMP/>.

America's Grasslands Conference will be held August 12-14th in Manhattan, Kansas. *America's Grasslands: The Future of Grasslands in a Changing Landscape* will bring together researchers, natural resources professionals, farmers and ranchers, policy experts, and conservationists to discuss the conservation of North America's grasslands and the opportunities and outlook for these vital ecosystems in a changing landscape. Included as a topic of interest is "Energy development and grasslands."

The Wildlife Society Annual Conference will be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin October 5-10, 2013. For more information: <http://wildlifesociety.org/>.

Sixth Annual Wind Conference will be held in Lincoln, NE on November 13-15, 2013. This year's theme is "Harvesting Nebraska's Potential." For more information and to register: <http://nebraskawindconference.com/>.

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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