



Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife News

November 8, 2013

Sixth Annual Wind Conference will be held in Lincoln, NE on November 13-15, 2013. This year's theme is "Harvesting Nebraska's Potential." There will be a **wind-wildlife session** featuring Nebraska-based research and findings (see attached pdf). For more information and to register: <http://nebraskawindconference.com/>.

Around Nebraska...

[Nebraska lawmakers look again at wind energy.](#) Lawmakers are once again looking for ways to attract wind-energy producers to Nebraska. (<http://www.mysanantonio.com/business/energy/article/Nebraska-lawmakers-look-again-at-wind-energy-4930219.php>).

[Nebraska is a loser in the wind-energy boom.](#) It's hard to find anywhere in America that's windier than Nebraska, where sweeping flat lands offer little to break up the gusts. So why isn't the state dotted with turbines? (<http://grist.org/news/nebraska-is-a-loser-in-the-wind-energy-boom/>).

[Nebraska legislators pushing for wind energy.](#) According to the American Wind Energy Association, Nebraska is ranked fourth nationally for the potential for wind power. Yet, Nebraska sits in the middle-of-the-pack when it comes to the capacity of wind power. Or how much wind power it can currently produce. With the rising cost of coal nationwide, state legislators are pushing for new legislation which would allow

the state to take advantage of wind as a big natural resource instead of having to turn to other states to import coal. (<http://www.kvnonews.com/2013/11/nebraska-legislators-pushing-for-wind-energy/>).

[Heineman to open annual wind conference](#). Gov. Dave Heineman will open the sixth annual Nebraska Wind Conference on Nov. 13-15 at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel in Lincoln. Heineman will address this year's theme "Harvesting Nebraska's Potential" on Nov. 13 by discussing the benefits of wind and solar energy on the state's economy. (http://journalstar.com/news/local/heineman-to-open-annual-wind-conference/article_3729be6c-4dc6-510d-a900-4672957d3b1f.html).

[Nebraska Wind Conference Set for Nov. 13-15](#). The program for the sixth annual Nebraska Wind Conference features well-known national and local experts in the wind and solar energy fields. "Harvesting Nebraska's Potential" is scheduled for November 13-15 at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel in Lincoln. (<http://www.1011now.com/home/headlines/Nebraska-Wind-Conference-Set-for-Nov-13-15-229591641.html>).

[Professor wants to track bats in Nebraska](#). Bats tend to get a bad reputation in scary movies, but at least one professor is watching out for bats in Nebraska and wants to find where they hang out. (<http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Professor-wants-to-track-bats-in-Nebraska-4931639.php>).

[On Wings And A Prayer: Nebraska Sandhills Prairie Grouse Hunting](#). This short video shows some of the amazing scenery of the Nebraska Sandhills. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Zx39neGztc>).

Around the Nation & World...

Wind and Wildlife

[Groups map migrating bird stopover points in Wyoming](#). Most birds migrate much higher than the deadly tips of wind turbine blades. It's during takeoff and landing when they face the biggest perils, said Wendy Estes-Zumpf, zoologist with the [Wyoming Natural Diversity Database](#). (http://trib.com/news/state-and-regional/groups-map-migrating-bird-stopover-points-in-wyoming/article_3a8953e1-569c-5449-ad00-0582a9102635.html).

[Wind farms harm Wyoming birds](#). On the subject of wind farms, the objective is to prevent or reduce global warming. This is accomplished by wind electric energy taking the place of electricity produced by coal fired power plants. To reach this objective, wind farms will bring our existing wildlife populations to the verge of extinction. (http://trib.com/opinion/letters/wind-farms-harm-wyoming-birds/article_8eddb634-bec4-5de3-830e-b09f7cf7d782.html).

[Saving the Earth While Killing Some Protected Birds](#). Regarding Robert Bryce's "[Fighting Climate Change by Killing Eagles](#)" (op-ed, Oct. 11): While all forms of energy have some type of impact on the environment, wind offers the lowest-impact, most environmentally benign energy technology available to us today. Plus, wind attracted \$25 billion in private investment last year and is supported by the major conservation organizations and Americans nationwide (71% per Gallup). (<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304402104579149492879773288>).

[THEIR VIEW: Labeling bat as endangered will affect energy development](#). On Oct. 2, the United States Department of Interior (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) published its proposal to list the “northern long-eared bat” as an endangered species throughout its entire range. The agency noted that it did not have sufficient information to determine whether it would designate any areas within the bat’s range as “critical habitat.” (<http://wvrecord.com/arguments/263771-their-view-labeling-bat-as-endangered-will-affect-energy-development>).

[Fowl Play: Wind Farms Unfairly Targeted by Fossil Fuel Industry](#). As addressed in an earlier post, wind energy does not cause population level threats to birds and accounts for an extremely small percentage of unnatural avian mortality. In fact, wind energy (void of air and water pollution) is considered to be one of the lowest-impact electricity resources. (<http://blog.cleanenergy.org/2013/11/05/fowlplay/>).

[All Trick, No Treat: How Wind Turbines Kill Bats and Hurt Farmers](#). One of the realities of life is that all actions have consequences and all actions have tradeoffs. Wind power is no exception, especially with regard to environmental issues. Wind power is seen as a clean source of energy, but what is frequently not seen is that wind turbines kill a lot of bats. (<http://canadafreepress.com/index.php/article/58930>).

[Councillors 'disgusted' by Navitus Bay windfarm over concerns about migratory birds](#). COUNCILLORS say they are “disgusted” by the controversial Navitus Bay Wind Farm plans because of the potentially destructive impact on migratory birds. If approved, the Navitus Bay project will result in a maximum of 218 wind turbines up to 650ft high within an area that incorporates four Sites of Special Scientific Interest and three sites for protected birds. (http://www.bournemouthcho.co.uk/news/districts/bournemouth/10779334.Councillors_disgusted_by_Navitus_Bay_windfarm_over_concerns_about_migratory_birds/).

[Comment Period Extended on Controversial Wind Eagle Take Permit](#). Here's another ripple from October's shutdown of the federal government: the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service has pushed back the deadline for public comments on a Northern California wind project's application to be allowed to kill eagles. (<http://www.kcet.org/news/rewire/wildlife/comment-period-extended-on-controversial-wind-eagle-take-permit.html>).

[Let's Be "Smart From the Start" With Solar, Wind on Public Lands](#). America's Western public lands are home to some of the best hunting, fishing and wildlife habitat in the world. They're part of what define America's outdoor heritage and fuel our outdoor recreation economy, responsible for about [6.1 million jobs and \\$646 billion](#) in spending yearly. These same lands, however, also provide some of the best wind and solar resources our county has to offer. (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ann_morgan/lets-be-smart-from-the-start_b_4175435.html).

[US Wind Turbines Kill Over 600,000 Bats A Year \(And Plenty Of Birds Too\)](#). Wind turbines killed hundreds of thousands of bats in 2012 in the United States, according to an article by Mark Hayes of the University of Colorado. Hayes took the number of dead bats from 21 wind turbine locations and inferred the number of nationwide bat deaths, arriving at the conservative estimate of 600,000 bats killed in 2012. But the real toll, Hayes notes, may be as high as 900,000. (<http://www.isciencetimes.com/articles/6286/20131108/wind-turbines-kill-600000-bats-birds-every-year.htm>).

Wildlife

[Black-footed Ferret](#). On October 23, 2013, the Service issued a permit for the Black-footed Ferret (BFF) Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement (SHA), created in cooperation with State, Tribal, Federal, and local partners in 12 states, including Nebraska. This SHA provides opportunities for private and Tribal landowners to volunteer their lands as sites for reintroduction of this endangered species without affecting their land-use activities beyond mutually agreed-upon measures. It also extends these assurances to surrounding non-participating lands and other landowner interests via a Section 7 Biological Opinion (BO) for the SHA. (<http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/mammals/blackfootedferret/>).

[Black-Footed Ferret Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement](#). U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Black-footed Ferret Recovery Program. (<http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/mammals/blackfootedferret/BFF%20FO%20FnI%20SHA%20102313.pdf>).

[White-Nose Syndrome Fungus is Worse Than We Thought for Cave Bats](#). Bat populations are declining across the United States, plagued by a fungus known as white-nose syndrome. Deadly to these mammals, white-nose syndrome can impact entire bat colonies. Now, though, scientists have discovered that the fungus is worse than they realized; there's very little that might stop the organism from spreading further and persisting indefinitely in cave bats. (<http://www.scienceworldreport.com/articles/10550/20131029/white-nose-syndrome-fungus-worse-thought-cave-bats.htm>).

[Nutritional Capability of and Substrate Suitability for *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*, the Causal Agent of Bat White-Nose Syndrome](#), Daniel B. Raudabaugh and Andrew N. Miller, PLOS One. (<http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0078300>).

[Forest Service Puts Out 'Bat' Signal for You to Get Involved](#). Synonymous with a superhero signal in the sky and silhouettes hanging upside down in a darkened cave, bats inspire a long-standing fascination, and with good reason: Bats are vital to healthy ecosystems and human economies world-wide. (<http://blogs.usda.gov/2013/10/28/forest-service-puts-out-bat-signal-for-you-to-get-involved/>).

[Bat research finds new species in Southeast Alaska](#). Researchers have discovered a bat species in Southeast Alaska that wasn't previously known to inhabit the area. Biologists from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game also discovered that two of the other five species known to live in the area have a larger range than they previously realized. (http://www.newsminer.com/news/alaska_news/bat-research-finds-new-species-in-southeast-alaska/article_b682e2f2-45a8-11e3-9d49-0019bb30f31a.html).

[Service Announces Public Hearings for the Gunnison Sage-Grouse](#). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today the scheduling of three public information sessions and public hearings on proposals to protect the Gunnison sage-grouse (*Centrocercus minimus*) under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and to designate 1.7 million acres of critical habitat for the species in southwestern Colorado and southeastern Utah. (http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/pressrel/2013/11012013_gusgHearings.php#.UnPzuf-mFgY.twitter).

[U.S. agency backs prairie chicken plan](http://www.abqjournal.com/287583/news/nm-news/us-agency-backs-prairie-chicken-plan.html). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has backed a plan by five state wildlife agencies to conserve the lesser prairie chicken, whose habitat in southeastern New Mexico is threatened. The plan created jointly by New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Colorado calls for financial incentives to landowners who manage their lands in ways that protect the species and offers a framework to mitigate the damaging effects of development on the birds. (<http://www.abqjournal.com/287583/news/nm-news/us-agency-backs-prairie-chicken-plan.html>).

Wind

[New Insight Into Air Flow Patterns Of Wind Turbine Arrays](http://cleantechnica.com/2013/10/30/new-insight-air-flow-patterns-wind-turbine-arrays/). In a somewhat surprising new discovery, researchers from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's Department of Mathematical Sciences have found that changes in air flow patterns within wind turbine arrays can occur that result in wind energy becoming available from a rather unexpected direction — from below. (<http://cleantechnica.com/2013/10/30/new-insight-air-flow-patterns-wind-turbine-arrays/>).

[Staggering Turbines Improves Performance 33%](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/10/131030185159.htm). Research into the best ways to arrange wind turbines has produced staggering results -- quite literally. (<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/10/131030185159.htm>).

[US senators unveil federal 25% renewable power bill](http://www.platts.com/latest-news/electric-power/washington/us-senators-unveil-federal-25-renewable-power-21751103). Two US Senate Democrats on Tuesday unveiled a bill requiring utilities to generate 25% of their electricity from renewable energy sources, including wind and solar, by 2025. (<http://www.platts.com/latest-news/electric-power/washington/us-senators-unveil-federal-25-renewable-power-21751103>).

[Wind Power Has Dramatically Cut Global Warming Pollution In The U.S.](http://cleantechnica.com/2013/10/28/wind-power-dramatically-cut-global-warming-pollution-u-s/) As required by Congress, the [EPA recently released](#) annual greenhouse gas data “detailing carbon pollution emissions and trends broken down by industrial sector, greenhouse gas, geographic region, and individual facility.” (<http://cleantechnica.com/2013/10/28/wind-power-dramatically-cut-global-warming-pollution-u-s/>).

[Winds of change](http://discover.umn.edu/news/environment/wind-power-helps-make-agriculture-more-sustainable). In mid-July, the center officially launched a process believed to be one-of-a-kind, which takes the energy from wind, converts it to hydrogen, and then to ammonia that can be used as fertilizer on surrounding farmlands. (<http://discover.umn.edu/news/environment/wind-power-helps-make-agriculture-more-sustainable>).

Transmission

[If landowners get annual payments for wind turbines, why not transmission lines?](http://www.midwestenergynews.com/2013/10/23/if-landowners-get-annual-payments-for-wind-turbines-why-not-transmission-lines/) For the large metal tower constructed on his land, one farmer will receive annual payments for as long as it stands. His neighbor, however, whose land is divided by a string of vertical structures, gets a more modest one-time payment. (<http://www.midwestenergynews.com/2013/10/23/if-landowners-get-annual-payments-for-wind-turbines-why-not-transmission-lines/>).

[Western Wind and Solar Integration Study](http://www.nrel.gov/electricity/transmission/western_wind.html). The Western Wind and Solar Integration Study, one of the largest regional solar and wind integration studies to date, explores the question: Can we integrate large amounts of wind and solar energy into the electric power system of the West? (http://www.nrel.gov/electricity/transmission/western_wind.html).

Other

[Secretary Jewell Offers Vision for Conservation, Balanced Development, Youth Engagement in National Press Club Speech](http://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/secretary-jewell-offers-vision-for-conservation-balanced-development-youth-engagement-in-national-press-club-speech.cfm). Calls on Congress to protect and support nation's lands and waters; Issues first Secretarial Order to establish Department-wide mitigation strategy to ensure efficiency, consistency, conservation in infrastructure development. (<http://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/secretary-jewell-offers-vision-for-conservation-balanced-development-youth-engagement-in-national-press-club-speech.cfm>).

[Improving Mitigation Policies and Practices of the Department of the Interior](http://www.doi.gov/news/loader.cfm?csModule=security/getfile&pageid=380602). Purpose. The Department of the Interior is entrusted with overseeing Federal lands for the benefit of current and future generations. This includes advancing safe and responsible development of our abundant energy resources which bolsters our energy security, and promoting the conservation of our Federal lands and natural resources for generations to come. (<http://www.doi.gov/news/loader.cfm?csModule=security/getfile&pageid=380602>).

Tools

[Crucial Habitat Assessment Tools](http://westgov.org/initiatives/wildlife/crucial-habitat-assessment-tools). The Western Governors' Wildlife Council is creating the Western Wildlife Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (CHAT) for public release in December, 2013. While not intended for project-level approval, CHAT is designed to reduce conflicts and surprises while ensuring wildlife values are better incorporated into land use decision-making, as well as large-scale conservation projects. [Watch a webinar](http://westgov.org/initiatives/wildlife/crucial-habitat-assessment-tools). (<http://westgov.org/initiatives/wildlife/crucial-habitat-assessment-tools>).

Funding Opportunities

[Playa Lakes Joint Venture \(PLJV\) Conoco Phillips Grant Program](http://www.pljv.org/partners/funding/conocophillips). The PLJV ConocoPhillips grant program funds projects that address the PLJV mission within the Joint Venture's boundaries (see map). Funding is available for proposals in three categories — habitat conservation, research, and outreach — with the majority of the funding dedicated to habitat conservation projects. (<http://www.pljv.org/partners/funding/conocophillips>).

Upcoming Events

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

NWCC Research Webinar: Recently-Released Research on Wind Energy and Grassland Birds & Ducks will be on Wednesday, November 20, 2013 from 3:00-4:00 p.m. ET. Go to the website to sign-up. (<http://www.nationalwind.org/issues/wildlife/2013researchwebinars.aspx>).

AWEA Wind Project Siting Seminar will be held in New Orleans, LA January 29-30, 2014. For more information: <http://www.awea.org/events/Event.aspx?EventID=21659&navItemNumber=5647>.

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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