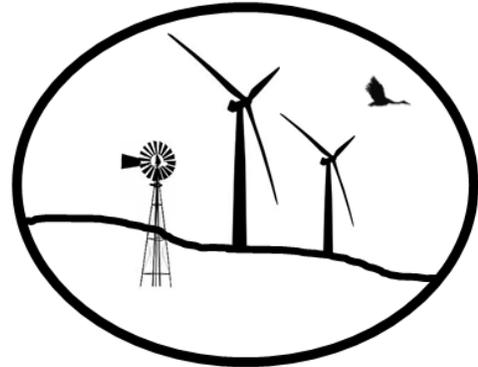


Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife News

January 26, 2015



Around Nebraska...

It is Legislative Session time again! The first day of the 2015 session was on January 7, 2015. Several bills related to energy and transmission have been introduced. Please let me know if I have missed any relevant bills. The [Nebraska Legislative Bills](#) are listed at the end of the message.



REGISTER TO JOIN US MARCH 4th DURING SPRING MIGRATION

Experience why wind energy is not a great fit everywhere in Nebraska. The Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife Project is coordinating an event complete with observing thousands of waterfowl and cranes in the rivers, wetlands, and fields of Central Nebraska, lectures from area biologists, and time to learn more about how and why guidance materials are developed and projects are reviewed in Nebraska.



See attached flyer for more information.

REGISTER: contact windwildlife@unl.edu.



[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Proposes Special Rule to Focus Protections for Northern Long-Eared Bat](#)

In response to the rapid and severe decline of the northern long-eared bat – a species important for crop pest control – the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing a special rule under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) that would provide

the maximum benefit to the species while limiting the regulatory burden on the public.

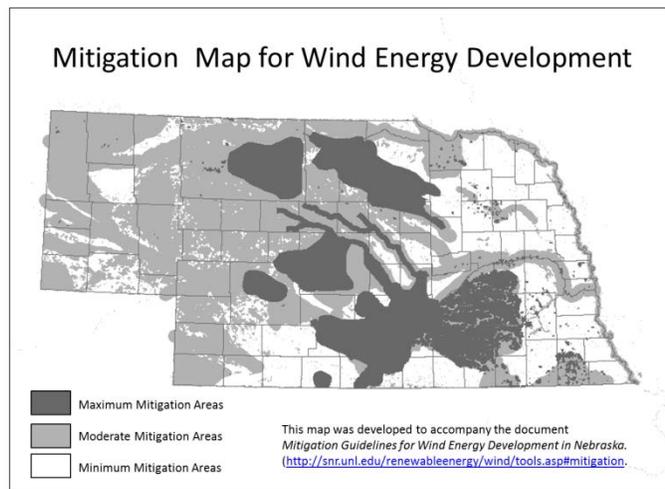
If finalized, the rule, under section 4(d) of the ESA, would apply only in the event the Service lists the bat as “threatened.” The Service’s proposal will appear in the *Federal Register* Jan. 16, 2015, opening a 60-day public comment period. (<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/news/765.html>).

COMMENTS REQUESTED: [MITIGATION GUIDELINES FOR WIND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT IN NEBRASKA](#)

The [Mitigation Guidelines for Wind Energy Development in Nebraska](#) were developed to standardize the mitigation process.

Wind energy developers will be provided a better idea of what mitigation, if any, will likely be recommended for wind energy facilities developed in different parts of the state. The Guidelines were developed by representatives from a variety of stakeholder groups and now, we want your input.

The document is currently in working draft format. All comments submitted to windwildlife@unl.edu in the next six months will be compiled. Updates will be made in April 2015.



Questions? Contact Caroline Jezierski @ 402-472-8188 or windwildlife@unl.edu.

<http://snr.unl.edu/renewableenergy/wind/tools.asp#mitigation>

[Senators seek to capitalize on Nebraska wind energy.](#) A group of senators says Nebraska is losing in the nationwide push for renewable energy. The senators announced proposals Friday to cultivate and market wind energy in the state. (<http://www.wral.com/senators-seek-to-capitalize-on-nebraska-wind-energy/14363685/>).

[Public invited to wind forum in Cortland on Tuesday.](#) The Center for Rural Affairs and Lancaster County Farmers Union will host a free wind information forum Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. at the community center in Cortland. Virginia Meyer, rural organizer for the center, said topics such as property taxes, economic development, effect on wildlife and payments to landowners will be addressed. Forum panelists include Ross Knott, president and CEO of Petersburg State Bank in Petersburg; Caroline Jezierski, Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife Project coordinator at the University of Nebraska School of Natural Resources; and David Vavra, chairman of the Saline County Wind Association. (http://journalstar.com/news/local/public-invited-to-wind-forum-in-cortland-on-tuesday/article_2c563de8-eeae-5bb7-bd29-0960a51243fc.html).

[Learn how LES evaluates wind energy projects at workshops.](#) Lincoln Electric System will host two workshops on how it evaluates renewable energy projects. At the workshops, Scott Benson, manager of resource and transmission planning, will discuss the basics of power purchase agreements, how LES forecasts savings in power costs, the benefits of having a diverse wind portfolio and

more. (http://journalstar.com/news/local/learn-how-les-evaluates-wind-energy-projects-at-workshops/article_619f6162-3666-5eaa-a25a-d62430ec3a0d.html).

Local View: Wind energy for property tax relief. I'm chairman of the Grand Prairie Landowners Group, and for the past seven years we have been working with our wind energy development company to bring a 400 megawatt wind farm to our area. It's been a long road traveled but we will be proceeding with construction this year. When completed the Grand Prairie Wind Energy Project will be the largest wind project in the state, and along with that it will bring some staggering economic numbers. (http://journalstar.com/local-view-wind-energy-for-property-tax-relief/article_bd3d7105-3984-5a7a-9633-d82cd340e95d.html).

Letter, 1/10: Push for wind energy. I wholeheartedly second the Sunday Lincoln Journal Star's judgment on LES ("Editorial, 12/28: LES achieves uncommon feat," Dec. 28). In just two years, while saving its customer owners boxcar-loads of money, LES's management has nimbly moved to diversify its energy portfolio so that a whopping 48 percent of its electricity will be coming from clean, renewable sources by 2016. (http://journalstar.com/news/opinion/mailbag/letter-push-for-wind-energy/article_79ef3f46-e285-52cc-9a48-5e44fee7d3e8.html).

Nearly 1,600 sign petition opposing Sandhills power line project. A petition with nearly 1,600 signatures of people opposed to a 220-mile-long power transmission line across the Sandhills was submitted Thursday to the Nebraska Public Power District. Save the Sandhills, a grassroots group challenging the \$361.5 million project, gathered the signatures to supplement opposition testimony during recent public hearings hosted by NPPD, said Aaron Price, whose family's ranch would be affected by the project. (<https://www.wind-watch.org/news/2014/12/14/nearly-1600-sign-petition-opposing-sandhills-power-line-project/>). NOTE: This article is from December, but I missed posting it then.

Local View: More sure than ever: It's us. As "What We Know," a report from the American Association for the Advancement of Science, concludes, we are "one of the most resourceful and innovative societies in the world." We can fight climate change and protect our way of life without sacrificing -- and instead, growing -- our economy. (http://journalstar.com/news/opinion/editorial/columnists/local-view-more-sure-than-ever-it-s-us/article_6f7c1d29-0f49-5335-9d66-7e2df6da961b.html).

Watching sandhill cranes on Nebraska's Platte River. Late-winter getaways usually involve someplace warm. But witnessing one of the world's great animal migrations — right in our own country — is well-worth a little shivering. Besides, those shivers stop at the miraculous sight of these huge-winged birds filling skies and river sandbars. (http://www.roanoke.com/life/travel/watching-sandhill-cranes-on-nebraska-s-platte-river/article_06174357-f65e-567d-92d6-aa894be7493d.html).

The Sandhills' own prairie grouse are a Nebraska treasure. Nebraska's Sandhills — the last bastion of North American prairie grouse. Two species, sharptails and prairie chickens, inhabit these ancient dunes, but it's the latter that is particularly dependent on this region for survival. (http://www.theindependent.com/sports/the-sandhills-own-prairie-grouse-are-a-nebraska-treasure/article_8ee26eee-9b9b-11e4-8ee4-dfa62e1854a6.html).

MS Assistantship for Bat Research. The Nebraska Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit at the University of Nebraska is seeking an MS research assistant to determine the distribution and habitat preferences of the northern long-eared bat across the state. **See attached flyer for more information.**

Post-Doctoral Research Associate: Wildlife Acoustics – Nebraska. This position will support a collaborative research project involving several faculty and graduate students. Responsibilities include spatial analysis of acoustical data collected during a project investigating landscape-level responses of greater prairie-chickens to wind energy development. (<http://wfscjobs.tamu.edu/jobs/post-doctoral-research-associate-wildlife-acoustics-nebraska/>).

Around the Nation & World...

Wind and Wildlife

[The Wildlife Society Takes Field Trip to Casselman Wind Farm.](#) Last October, we welcomed attendees of The Wildlife Society (TWS) conference to our Casselman Wind Farm, in Pennsylvania, for a first-hand look at the science of wind and wildlife interactions. The TWS conference is one of the largest annual gatherings of wildlife professionals, students and supporters in North America. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rU-s4Vkl-w&feature=youtu.be>).

[Amazon Cloud Gets a Little Greener with Indiana Wind Farm Deal.](#) Under pressure from greens, Amazon Web Services – the online retail giant’s market-leading cloud business – is moving to clean up its carbon act. Early last year, after a long process, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued an incidental take permit to Fowler Ridge, including the planned fourth phase. It’s basically an acknowledgment that some bats will be killed at the wind farm, but requires the operators take various measures “to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse impacts. (<http://breakingenergy.com/2015/01/20/amazon-cloud-gets-a-little-greener-with-indiana-wind-farm-deal/>).

[Wind farms a danger to wildlife.](#) Onshore wind energy construction and operation can have significant negative effects on local and regional biodiversity, according to a report released by the Queen’s University Belfast. (<http://www.hvnplus.co.uk/news/wind-farms-a-danger-to-wildlife/8674531.article?blocktitle=LATEST-NEWS&contentID=2339>).

[Scottish offshore faces bird threat.](#) The RSPB has mounted a legal challenge to Scottish government consent for four offshore wind farms totalling 2284MW in the Outer Forth and Tay off the country’s east coast. The bird charity is seeking a judicial review in the Court of Session in Edinburgh over permission granted last October for four Scottish Territorial and Round 3 wind farms. (<http://renews.biz/82139/scottish-offshore-faces-bird-threat/>).

[Environmental assessment supports offshore wind farms.](#) The Department of Interior announced Thursday that an environmental assessment has put offshore wind farms a step closer to becoming a reality off the northern Outer Banks and two other locations along the North Carolina coast. (<http://outerbanksvoice.com/2015/01/23/environmental-assessment-supports-offshore-wind-farms/>).

Wildlife

[Fungus threatens bats where they sleep.](#) It likes dark and dank caves and skipped across the Atlantic Ocean less than a decade ago to take up residence and sap the life out of the bats that once found the caves perfect for sleeping out the long winters. In October 2013, the U.S. Division of Fish and Wildlife proposed inclusion of the northern long-eared bat on the list of endangered species. That proposed listing, and the resulting restrictions on humans, clashed head-on. (<http://www.njherald.com/story/27935262/fungus-threatens-bats-where-they-sleep>).

[Appearance of baby California condor surprises wildlife experts.](#) A pair of California condors have produced a baby, surprising wildlife experts who said on Friday the endangered raptors had managed to secretly mate outside their careful monitoring. (<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/10/us-usa-california-condor-idUSKBN0KJ01H20150110>).

Wind

[Wind Farm Simulation Reveals Important Design Clues](http://www.hpcwire.com/2015/01/14/wind-farm-simulation-offers-important-design-clues/). With renewable energy sources like solar and wind power set to become much more cost-effective over the next ten years according to recent studies out of Finland and the EU, interest in the space is building. (<http://www.hpcwire.com/2015/01/14/wind-farm-simulation-offers-important-design-clues/>).

[Wind Energy Output: Clearing the Air](http://theenergycollective.com/onclimatechange/policy/2182131/clearing-air-wind-power-output). Loss of output from wind turbines as they age is roughly in line with that from other technologies. Looking at an earlier claim that deterioration is much more rapid than this provides useful lessons for spotting erroneous results that could distort policy debates. (<http://theenergycollective.com/onclimatechange/policy/2182131/clearing-air-wind-power-output>).

Other

[Go Nuclear to Save the Whales?](http://www.takepart.com/article/2015/01/06/nuclear-power-really-our-greenest-option-65-scientists-say-so) In the 1970s, the environmental movement rallied around cries of "No new nukes" and "Save the whales." Now a group of the world's leading conservation biologists are making a new plea: More new nukes—lots of them—to save whales and other wildlife threatened by [global warming](#). (<http://www.takepart.com/article/2015/01/06/nuclear-power-really-our-greenest-option-65-scientists-say-so>).

[Conservationists 'appalled' at Rampisham Down solar farm](http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-dorset-30840491). Conservationists have said they are "appalled" by a decision to grant planning permission for a solar farm on a "nationally important wildlife site". (<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-dorset-30840491>).

[To reduce electricity use, tell people about asthma](http://conservationmagazine.org/2015/01/to-reduce-electricity-use-tell-people-about-asthma/). Do you know how much energy your laptop uses while you leave it plugged in all night? How about your television or coffee maker? Or even a single light bulb? More importantly, do you care? You should care, because energy production has some serious health implications. It's been associated with premature death and with maladies like cancer, chronic bronchitis, asthma, and other respiratory diseases. The less energy you use, the less energy needs to be generated, and the healthier your community might be. At least, that's the idea. (<http://conservationmagazine.org/2015/01/to-reduce-electricity-use-tell-people-about-asthma/>).

Upcoming Conferences

[Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference](http://www.midwestfw.org/index.html) will be in Indianapolis, IN on February 8-11, 2015. (<http://www.midwestfw.org/index.html>).

[Rainwater Basin Joint Venture Informational Seminar](http://rwbjv.org/2014/12/rwbjv-info-seminar-is-february-10-2015/) will be in Grand Island, NE on February 10, 2015. The annual one-day seminar focuses on research and management relevant to the Basins. (<http://rwbjv.org/2014/12/rwbjv-info-seminar-is-february-10-2015/>).

[2015 Nebraska Chapter of The Wildlife Society \(NETWS\) Annual Meeting](http://drupal.wildlife.org/nebraska/) will be in Ogallala, NE on February 26, 2015. (<http://drupal.wildlife.org/nebraska/>).

[The North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference](http://www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=348:north-american-conference-10&catid=37:NAWNRC&Itemid=61) will be in Omaha, NE on March 8-13, 2015. (http://www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=348:north-american-conference-10&catid=37:NAWNRC&Itemid=61).

[AWEA Wind Project Siting Seminar](http://www.awea.org/events/Event.aspx?EventID=30886&SubSectionID=6678&navItemNumber=656) will be in Austin, TX on March 10-11, 2015. (<http://www.awea.org/events/Event.aspx?EventID=30886&SubSectionID=6678&navItemNumber=656>).

Conference on Wind energy and Wildlife Impacts will be in Berlin, Germany, March 10-12, 2015. (<http://www.cww2015.tu-berlin.de/>). Presentation titles are now available at: http://www.cww2015.tu-berlin.de/menue/oral_poster_presentations/parameter/en/.

The 45th Annual Audubon's Crane Festival will be in Kearney, NE, March 19-22, 2015. (<http://nebraskacranefestival.org/>).

The Effects of Noise on Aquatic Life. The fourth International Conference on "The Effects of Noise on Aquatic Life" will take place in Dublin, Ireland, July 10-16, 2016. (<http://www.an2016.org/>).

Tools

WGA launches RAPID Toolkit to speed, streamline siting and permitting of transmission lines. Western Governors have rolled out the **RAPID Toolkit**, an online tool that streamlines the challenge of siting and permitting transmission lines in the West. The online tool is the culmination of a multi-year effort by Western Governors to tackle the challenge of transmission line siting and permitting. (<http://westgov.org/news/298-news-2014/847-wga-launches-rapid-toolkit-to-speed-streamline-siting-and-permitting-of-transmission-lines>).

Nebraska Legislative Bills

LB117 - *Change provisions relating to energy financing contracts*. Introduced by Haar on January 9, 2015; Referred to Revenue Committee on January 12, 2015. A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to energy; to amend sections 66-1062, 66-1064, 66-1065, and 66-1066, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska; to redefine terms; to change provisions relating to energy financing contracts between energy service companies and governmental units; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the original sections. (http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=24434).

LB407 - *Change and eliminate provisions relating to certified renewable export facilities as prescribed*. Introduced by Haar on January 16, 2015; Referred to Natural Resources Committee on January 20, 2015. A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to public power; to amend sections 70-1001.01 and 70-1014.02, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2014; to eliminate provisions relating to criteria for approval of certain facilities as prescribed; to harmonize provisions; to repeal the original sections; and to outright repeal section 70-1028, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2014. (http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=24692).

LB412 - *Change provisions relating to the Rural Community-Based Energy Development Act*. Introduced by Mello on January 16, 2015; Referred to Natural Resources Committee on January 20, 2015. A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to Rural Community-Based Energy Development Act; to amend sections 70-1907, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and 70-1903, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2014; to redefine a term; to change requirements for project developers; and to repeal the original sections. (http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=24483).

LB423 - *Change a renewable energy tax credit*. Introduced by Nordquist on January 16, 2015; Referred to Revenue Committee on January 20, 2015. A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to revenue and taxation; to amend section 77-27,235, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2014; to change a renewable energy tax credit; and to repeal the original section. (http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=24475).

LB583 – *Require a state energy plan*. Introduced by Schilz on January 21, 2015; Referred to Natural Resources Committee on January 23, 2015. A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to the State Energy Office; to require a state energy plan; and to provide powers and duties. (http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=25072).

The Wildlife Society Renewable Energy Working Group – LinkedIn. Connect with other resource professionals involved in renewable energy – wildlife work. To join, go to: http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=4433729&trk=my_groups-b-grp-v, click Join.

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>.

To unsubscribe to this listserv:

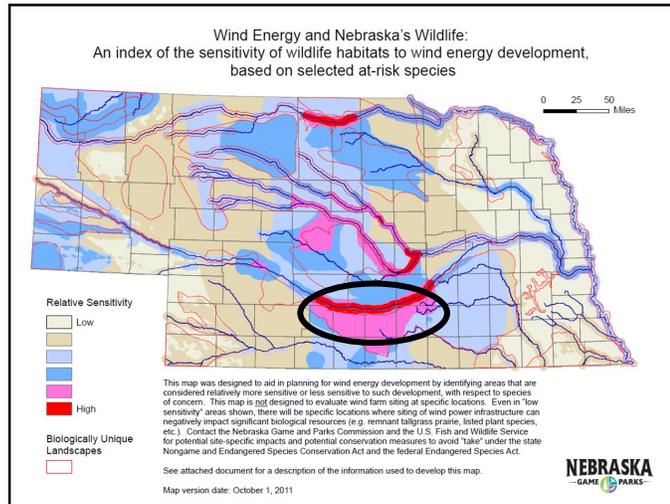
Send an e-mail message to: LISTSERV@UNL.EDU

In the Message Field (NOT Subject): UNSUBSCRIBE wind_wildlife

Spring Migration Event 2015



The narrowest part of the Central Flyway is in Nebraska.

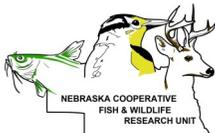


The largest area of high relative sensitivity to wind energy, the **Central Platte River** and **Rainwater Basin**, is visited each spring by millions of waterfowl. Nearly one-half million Sandhill cranes roost in the shallows of the Platte River.

Join us **March 4th** to learn more about why some areas in Nebraska are more important to wildlife and less suited to wind energy development.



Sandhill cranes in flight. Photo by TJ Fontaine.



Schedule at a glance:

- Meet at Rowe Sanctuary
- Spend the morning touring the Rainwater Basins learning about the unique landscape that supports millions of waterfowl during spring migration
- Lunch at the Crane Trust
- Presentations and question answer sessions with local natural resource experts to learn more about Nebraska's wildlife and habitats
- Return to Rowe Sanctuary for dinner and sunset waterfowl and crane viewing from blinds along the river
- Return to Lincoln or Omaha or stay locally for a day of exploration on your own

Balancing wind energy operation and siting with wildlife conservation is important in Nebraska. Learning more about the risks of wind energy to wildlife and habitat in areas in the state will provide all stakeholders with a better understanding of how and why guidance materials are developed and projects are reviewed.

Contact Caroline at windwildlife@unl.edu to register.



Snow geese at Funk Lagoon. USFWS photo.

MS Graduate Research Assistantship
Bat Distribution and Habitat
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, School of Natural Resources
Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit

Salary: 18,000/year + tuition waver, health, and dental.

Start Date: 5/01/2015

Apply By: 2/15/2015

The proposed federal listing of the Northern long-eared bat has exposed gaps in our knowledge of bat species in Nebraska. We are seeking master's candidates to conduct acoustic sampling to determine the distribution and habitat preferences of bats in Nebraska. The student will be advised by Craig Allen of the Nebraska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit within the School of Natural Resources, University of Nebraska-Lincoln (<http://snr.unl.edu/necoopunit>).

This research assistantship includes an \$18,000/ year salary, tuition waver, and health/dental benefits (<http://health.unl.edu/studentblue>). Fees are projected to be approximately \$2000 / year (<http://studentaccounts.unl.edu/example-student-2014-2015-academic-year>)

The projected start date is May 1st with field work beginning in June. Applications will be evaluated as they are received.

Qualifications:

Students should have BS in ecology, wildlife biology, or similar field and competitive GRE scores & GPA. A strong desire and ability to conduct field work in remote locations and manage field technicians and equipment is required. A clean driving record (<6 points) is mandatory.

Strong GIS and spatial analysis skills are beneficial. Experience conducting acoustic bat surveys is preferred.

Please submit a CV and cover letter in a single pdf to allencr@unl.edu with the subject "NE bat distribution" by February 28, 2015

