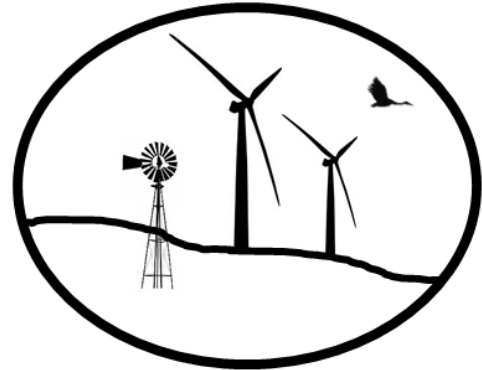


Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife News

March 25, 2015



Around Nebraska...

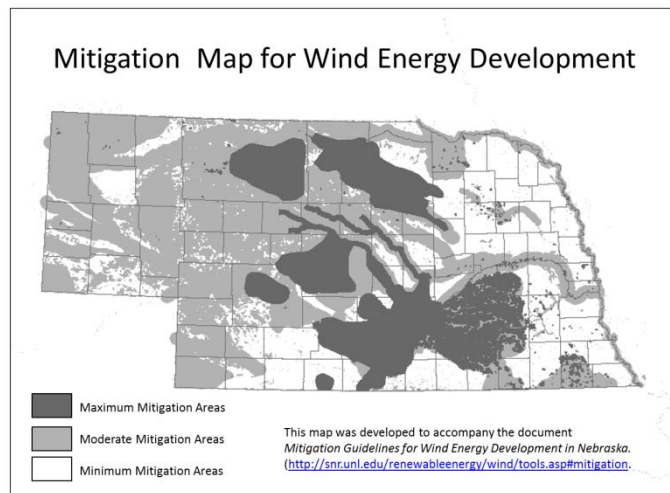
It is Legislative Session time again! The first day of the 2015 session was on January 7, 2015. Several bills related to energy and transmission have been introduced. Please let me know if I have missed any relevant bills. The [Nebraska Legislative Bills](#) are listed at the end of the message.

COMMENT DEADLINE MARCH 31, 2015: [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 by March 31, 2015 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>

Meeting topic: Proposed wind farm. An informational meeting has been scheduled for anyone who is interested in the wind turbine farm proposed by NEXEra Energy Resources. The meeting is set for 7 p.m. Thursday, March 26 at East Butler High School in Brainard. (http://columbustelegram.com/banner-press/news/meeting-topic-proposed-wind-farm/article_a04a4c27-25ac-5cca-96be-607073b49bba.html).

Another meeting slated for wind farm. NextEra Energy Resources reported a large turnout at its March 18 meeting for landowners. The company invited landowners to the informational meeting, which was an early step in NextEra's wind turbine project planned for parts of Butler and Saunders

counties. (http://www.wahoo-ashland-waverly.com/news/another-meeting-slated-for-wind-farm/article_ec1ac636-d30b-11e4-a168-a3140b305b52.html).

Letter, 3/17: On children and wind energy. If the young children could vote, they would unanimously vote for the wind turbines. Their “noise” and reflections of the sun would seem miniscule to the real threats to children’s health from the Hallam Sheldon station. (http://journalstar.com/news/opinion/mailbag/letter-on-children-and-wind-energy/article_cee187d7-1d30-5762-9e93-b437dbd43209.html).

Editorial, 3/11: Wind energy rules can help. It was probably inevitable that one day there would be a push to update Lancaster County zoning regulations in the era of wind energy. Such regulations are common in other parts of the country where wind turbines are more common. (http://journalstar.com/news/opinion/editorial/editorial-wind-energy-rules-can-help/article_11d285bf-aa6c-5f50-aa91-d155c243f013.html).

Gage, Lancaster counties merge wind efforts. Setback requirements, shadow flicker, ice thaw and health issues were all concerns raised during the first in a series of meetings concerning wind farm regulations. Officials from Gage and Lancaster counties held their first of seven public meetings concerning wind farm regulations Thursday evening at the Roca Community Center. More than 20 members of the public joined the 20-person working group of invited officials to discuss regulations. (http://beatricedailysun.com/news/local/gage-lancaster-counties-merge-wind-efforts/article_58e77b1a-2fdf-501f-87d3-76ce695c5e1a.html).

Buckeye wind farm starting to take shape. With each passing truck, the dust from the chalk Buckeye Road billowed skyward much as the wind turbines will soon. There's a flurry of activity surrounding what will be the massive Buckeye Wind Energy Project -- a project that eventually will have the capacity to produce 200 megawatts of electricity from Kansas winds, according to information supplied by Invenergy spokeswoman Alissa Krinsky. NOTE: Although this wind farm is not located in Nebraska, Lincoln Electric System has a power purchase agreement for this facility. (<http://hdnews.net/news/buckeyewind031515>).

Editorial, 3/18: Solar not feared in Lincoln. A story in the Sunday Journal Star served to dramatize the difference between private utility companies across the country and the Lincoln Electric System, owned by the public. (http://journalstar.com/news/opinion/editorial/editorial-solar-not-feared-in-lincoln/article_71a42abc-ce98-5c54-895b-e271f39db8eb.html).

Some ranchers uneasy about power line’s Sandhills route. Some Nebraska ranchers in the Sandhills remain uneasy about a planned high-voltage power line that is expected to cross part of the environmentally sensitive region. (http://norfolkdailynews.com/news/some-ranchers-uneasy-about-power-line-s-sandhills-route/article_57370f48-c663-11e4-adb9-af5b737e1707.html).

Around the Nation & World...

Wind and Wildlife

Insufficient Sampling to Identify Species Affected by Turbine Collisions, Beston et al. 2015, The Journal of Wildlife Management. Abstract: We compared the number of avian species detected and the sampling effort during fatality monitoring at 50 North American wind facilities. Facilities with short intervals between sampling events and high effort detected more species, but many facilities appeared undersampled. Species accumulation curves for 2 wind facilities studied for more than 1 year had yet to reach an asymptote. The monitoring effort that is typically invested is likely inadequate to identify all of the species killed by wind turbines. This may understate impacts for rare species of conservation concern that collide infrequently with turbines but suffer disproportionate consequences from those fatalities. (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jwmg.852/epdf>).

[Take permit ruling favors local wind farm project.](http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/news/local/take-permit-ruling-favors-local-wind-farm-project/nkc4K/) A U.S. District Court judge ruled a federal agency was within its rights). when it issued a take permit to a proposed Champaign County wind farm that critics said could harm an endangered bat. (<http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/news/local/take-permit-ruling-favors-local-wind-farm-project/nkc4K/>).

[Altamont wind farm's permit extended despite fear of bird deaths.](http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Alameda-County-supervisors-extend-Altamont-wind-6156642.php) The [Alameda County Board of Supervisors](#) voted Tuesday to extend permit rights for [Altamont Winds](#) Inc. to operate in the Altamont Pass, despite charges by environmentalists that the company's technology is outdated and will unnecessarily kill nearly 2,000 birds. (<http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Alameda-County-supervisors-extend-Altamont-wind-6156642.php>).

[Wind farm plans change; PSC conducts hearing on Merricourt Wind Farm project.](http://www.jamestownsun.com/news/state/3704257-wind-farm-plans-change-psc-conducts-hearing-merricourt-wind-farm-project) Changes to the plans for the Merricourt Wind Farm prompted a hearing by the North Dakota Public Service Commission Thursday. The hearing also included information that incidental take permits were being sought for up to four piping plovers and one whooping crane over the 30-year life of the project. (<http://www.jamestownsun.com/news/state/3704257-wind-farm-plans-change-psc-conducts-hearing-merricourt-wind-farm-project>).

[A Much Welcomed Boost in Wind Wildlife Research Funds.](http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/kumekubo/a_much_welcomed_boost_in_wind.html) The [President's Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Request](#) for the Department of Energy's Wind Energy Program includes [\\$12.4 million](#) to "improve the understanding of risks to sensitive wildlife species and develop technologies that can mitigate those risks." This is an important acknowledgement of the nexus between wildlife issues and wind energy development. (http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/kumekubo/a_much_welcomed_boost_in_wind.html).

[Injunction sought over alleged wind turbine threat to eagles, other protected species in Upper Peninsula.](http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2015/03/injunction_sought_over_alleged.html) An Upper Peninsula group has filed for an injunction to stop construction of power-generating wind turbines on Lake Michigan's northern shore that it says pose a risk to endangered species of migrating birds. (http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2015/03/injunction_sought_over_alleged.html)

Wildlife

[Study: Loss of large predators tips ecosystem balance.](http://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/unltoday/article/study-loss-of-large-predators-tips-ecosystem-balance/) A new study has linked the size of predators atop a food chain with the ecological chain reaction triggered when they leave the head of the table. (<http://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/unltoday/article/study-loss-of-large-predators-tips-ecosystem-balance/>).

[Birds In Danger: Could \\$15 Stamp Help?](http://gearjunkie.com/upland-bird-stamp) If you've ever hunted waterfowl in the United States, you were legally required to purchase a Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, known broadly as a Federal Duck Stamp. They raise a LOT of money for waterfowl. A group of conservation-minded hunters has now proposed a similar stamp for upland game birds, some of which have seen precipitous population drops in recent years due largely to habitat destruction. (<http://gearjunkie.com/upland-bird-stamp>).

[Wyoming To Protect Greater Sage-Grouse Population.](http://www.nawindpower.com/e107_plugins/content/content.php?content.14041) Thanks to a first-of-its-kind [conservation bank](#) restricting energy development across a large swath of central Wyoming land, the greater sage-grouse can breathe a little easier. (http://www.nawindpower.com/e107_plugins/content/content.php?content.14041).

Wind

[Department of Energy Releases Report on Collaborative Study of Future of Wind Energy in America.](#) The Department of Energy (DOE) today announced the release of its much-anticipated "Wind Vision" report – a collaborative, comprehensive peer-reviewed analysis of the future of wind energy in

America. (<http://www.realestaterama.com/2015/03/12/department-of-energy-releases-report-on-collaborative-study-of-future-of-wind-energy-in-america-ID026188.html>).

[Wind Vision: A New Era for Wind Power in the United States](#). With more than 4.5% of the nation's electricity supplied by wind energy today, the Department of Energy has collaborated with industry, environmental organizations, academic institutions, and national laboratories to develop a renewed Wind Vision, documenting the contributions of wind to date and envisioning a future where wind continues to provide key contributions to the nation's energy portfolio. (http://energy.gov/windvision?utm_source=wdxch&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=windvision15).

[FACT SHEET: Wind Vision Report Highlights Long Term Benefits of Investing in America's Wind Energy Industry](#). (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/03/12/fact-sheet-wind-vision-report-highlights-long-term-benefits-investing-am>).

[Secretary Jewell Offers Vision for Balanced, Prosperous Energy Future](#). Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell lays out the Department's priorities for strengthening our nation's economy with a balanced, prosperous energy future over the next two years. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cYXVDGsv91A>).

[IRS sets 2016 wind farm in-service deadline for PTC eligibility](#). The Internal Revenue Service on March 11 said developers who started construction on a wind farm before the end of 2014 will be eligible to claim the production tax credit as long as the facility is placed in service before the end of 2016. (<https://www.snl.com/Interactivex/article.aspx?CdId=A-31631005-13623>).

[Virginia gets country's first wind energy research lease in federal waters](#). Virginia is the first state in the country to secure a wind energy research lease to build and operate turbines in federal waters, Gov. [Terry McAuliffe](#) announced Tuesday. The agreement with the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) will enable Dominion Virginia Power to move forward with its plans to erect a pair of 6-megawatt test turbines on the Outer Continental Shelf, about 24 nautical miles east of the Virginia Beach shoreline. (<http://www.dailypress.com/news/science/dp-nws-wind-turbines-governor-20150325-story.html>).

[Why GM Wants To Buy Wind Energy](#). For those who love downplaying or discounting renewable energy as something on the fringe of mainstream economic interests, General Motors' recent decision to back construction of a [Mexican wind farm](#) should come as a wake-up call. (<http://www.forbes.com/sites/heatherclancy/2015/03/24/why-gm-wants-to-buy-wind-energy/>).

Other

[Obama to sign order cutting U.S. government greenhouse gas emissions](#). U.S. President [Barack Obama](#) will sign an executive order on Thursday that sets a goal for the U.S. government to cut its greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent by 2025, the White House said. Although the federal government accounts for only 0.7 percent of net U.S. emissions, it is the single largest energy consumer in the United States, according to the White House. Meeting the goal would cut 21 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions from 2008 levels, it said. (<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/19/us-usa-obama-carbon-idUSKBN0MF0Z620150319>).

[Solar Arrays at Airports: Do they increase birdstrike risks?](#) Which is riskier for airports—a solar array or a grassy field? To better understand how the land around airports might affect the risk of bird-aircraft collisions, USDA Wildlife Services' [National Wildlife Research Center](#) (NWRC) researchers and partners recently compared bird use at solar arrays and grasslands at airports in Arizona, Colorado, and Ohio. (<http://wildlife.org/solar-arrays-at-airports-do-they-increase-birdstrike-risks/>).

[Solar in California's urban areas could provide 5 times the power the state needs](#). The amount of energy that could be produced through solar equipment constructed on or around existing infrastructure in California would easily exceed the state's demands, according to [a new](#)

study. (<http://www.computerworld.com/article/2897288/solar-in-californias-urban-areas-could-provide-5-times-the-power-the-state-needs.html>).

[New Funding Opportunity to Develop Larger Wind Turbine Blades](#). The Energy Department today announced \$1.8 million in funding for the development of larger wind turbine blades that will help capture more power from wind resources and increase the efficiency of wind energy systems. This funding will support the [research and development](#) of technological innovations to improve the manufacturing, transportation, and assembly of wind turbine blades longer than 60 meters. Larger blades that can be installed on wind turbines with taller hub heights will help facilitate the deployment of the next generation of multi-megawatt wind turbines. (<http://energy.gov/eere/articles/new-funding-opportunity-develop-larger-wind-turbine-blades>).

[Renewables generate 100% of Costa Rica's power so far in 2015](#). All of Costa Rica's generated electricity so far this year, total of 75 days, has been from renewable sources, said the Costa Rican Institute of Electricity (ICE), quoting data from the National Electricity System (SEN). (<http://renewables.seenews.com/news/renewables-generate-100-of-costa-ricas-power-so-far-in-2015-469057>).

Upcoming Conferences

[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>).

Webinars

[WINDEXchange Webinar: Overcoming Wind Siting Challenges: Overview and Wildlife](#). Siting issues are a complex and challenging aspect of turbine installations for developers. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) is finishing research on national siting considerations this spring, and other agencies and organizations have created tools designed to help support wind siting decisions. (http://apps2.eere.energy.gov/wind/windexchange/filter_detail.asp?itemid=4739).

Nebraska Legislative Bills (updates in red)

[LB117](#) - *Change provisions relating to energy financing contracts*. Introduced by Haar on January 9, 2015; Referred to Revenue Committee on January 12, 2015; Notice of Hearing for March 4, 2015; Statement of Intent and Fiscal Note. 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; Notice of Hearing for March 4, 2015; Statement of Intent and Fiscal Note; **Haar priority**

bill (March 11, 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; Notice of Hearing for February 20, 2015; Statement of Intent, Committee Statement, and Fiscal Note; Placed on General File on March 4, 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; Notice of Hearing for February 25, 2015; Statement of Intent and Fiscal Note; **Nordquist priority bill (March 12, 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; Notice of Hearing for February 11, 2015; Statement of Intent and Fiscal Note. 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>.

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