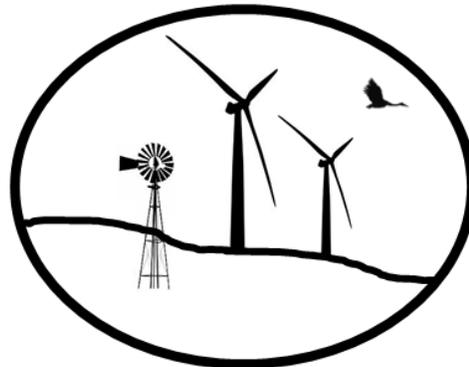


Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife News

April 21, 2015



Around Nebraska...

Nebraska Legislative Bills

It is Legislative Session time again! Several bills related to energy and transmission have been introduced. The [Nebraska Legislative Bills](#) and updates are listed at the end of the message.

[Developing state energy plan gets initial OK](http://journalstar.com/legislature/developing-state-energy-plan-gets-initial-ok/article_45293ec7-c893-5bbe-91dd-efdf0c658289.html). The Legislature on Monday gave first-stage approval to a bill that calls for development of a state energy plan that includes an assessment of the economic costs of compliance with federal regulations to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. (http://journalstar.com/legislature/developing-state-energy-plan-gets-initial-ok/article_45293ec7-c893-5bbe-91dd-efdf0c658289.html).

[Midlands Voices: State can help lead new energy age](http://www.omaha.com/opinion/midlands-voices-state-can-help-lead-new-energy-age/article_224f1674-a8c5-5e68-8bf9-fd3702daf0c6.html). In Nebraska, it is Public Health Month. Now, more than ever, concerns about the environment and public health are co-mingled. The American Public Health Association has for the first time listed climate change and public health as a legislative priority. It has become abundantly clear that what is good for the environment is good for human health. It is also clear that the environment and the economy are not enemies. (http://www.omaha.com/opinion/midlands-voices-state-can-help-lead-new-energy-age/article_224f1674-a8c5-5e68-8bf9-fd3702daf0c6.html).

[Midlands Voices: Nebraska should have a carbon rule](http://www.omaha.com/opinion/midlands-voices-nebraska-should-have-a-carbon-rule/article_e422ea86-d81c-5aa8-9806-e978c7ad4ef6.html). A recent study published by the University of Nebraska concluded that climate change could have a serious impact on Nebraska's economy, especially farming. It is expected to affect water demand, groundwater withdrawals and aquifer recharge, resulting in water scarcity in some areas. If we want to control climate change, curbing carbon dioxide emissions will be essential. But we won't succeed without emission-free nuclear power playing a key role in electricity production. (http://www.omaha.com/opinion/midlands-voices-nebraska-should-have-a-carbon-rule/article_e422ea86-d81c-5aa8-9806-e978c7ad4ef6.html).

[Letter, 4/11: Opposed to wind farm](http://journalstar.com/news/opinion/mailbag/letter-opposed-to-wind-farm/article_e8f04a59-e3fb-5bcb-9e27-a45a2006f382.html). With regard to the proposed Hallam wind farm, I have been doing some serious research and have learned a lot about wind farms and wind power. (http://journalstar.com/news/opinion/mailbag/letter-opposed-to-wind-farm/article_e8f04a59-e3fb-5bcb-9e27-a45a2006f382.html).

[Steele Flats neighbor not impressed](http://columbustelegram.com/banner-press/news/steel-flats-neighbor-not-impressed/article_07dfc57c-19f5-5b08-8c7d-3a0c8cffb7cd.html). When wind blows with force on the Great Plains, it's loud enough to drown out the sound made by giant wind turbines. But on a day of light wind, conditions that make you want to go outdoors, Randy Saathoff said, that's when turbines can be annoying. Under these low wind speeds, a turbine creates sort of a "woosh." And it seems like the wooshes will never end. (http://columbustelegram.com/banner-press/news/steel-flats-neighbor-not-impressed/article_07dfc57c-19f5-5b08-8c7d-3a0c8cffb7cd.html).

[Power Review Board delays decision on state's first commercial solar energy farm](#). The Nebraska Power Review Board was not ready on Friday to approve the state's first commercial solar energy project proposed by the Lincoln Electric System. The four-member board has statutory authority to approve or deny a project based on public convenience and necessity, economics and feasibility and unnecessary

duplication. (http://journalstar.com/news/local/power-review-board-delays-decision-on-state-s-first-commercial/article_be96577a-8be5-52a1-a55b-b9448441d4fc.html).

[NPPD partners with California firm in becoming first U.S. utility to produce electricity from hydrogen](#). In a push to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, the Nebraska Public Power District is planning what's believed to be the first electric plant in the country powered by clean-burning hydrogen. (http://www.omaha.com/news/nebraska/nppd-partners-with-california-firm-in-becoming-first-u-s/article_b4d4039e-e51d-11e4-bec9-0b6fd4e04c0e.html).

[Rising rate hikes prompt some NPPD customers to look to other states' providers for power](#). Nebraska has lost its place among the top 10 lowest-cost electricity states after recent big price hikes. Average residential rates have gone up over 20 percent since 2008, even after adjusting for inflation. (http://www.omaha.com/news/nebraska/rising-rate-hikes-prompt-some-nppd-customers-to-look-to/article_d99e15f9-e41d-58dc-8c3d-ac03c7cc36ec.html).

[Rate hikes jolt Nebraska's power edge](#). Nebraska remains the only state in America where every watt of electricity is delivered by nonprofit, customer-owned utilities — a structure that historically has offered Nebraskans some of the nation's lowest energy costs. But look at how much Nebraska's public utilities have recently been raising electric rates and the results are, well, a little shocking. (<http://dataomaha.com/bigstory/news/rate-hikes-jolt-nebraskas-power-edge>).

Wind – Wildlife Position

[Post-doctoral Research Associate: Wind Energy and Wildlife Analyst](#). This is a non-tenure leading post-doctoral research associate position established for a period of one year with Dr. Larkin Powell and Dr. Mary Bomberger Brown at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Continuation of this position beyond one year is contingent upon the availability of grant funding and satisfactory accomplishment of assigned responsibilities, up to a maximum of 18 months. (<http://www.conservation-careers.com/job/post-doctoral-research-associate-wind-energy-and-wildlife-analyst/>).

Around the Nation & World...

Wind and Wildlife

[2014 Wind Wildlife Research Meeting X Proceedings](#). These Proceedings capture and summarize the work of nearly 100 presenters on a wide array of wind-wildlife topics being addressed by industry, policy-makers, conservation groups, and scientists. Major focus areas include technologies for detecting and deterring wildlife, assessing risk to eagles, and assessing mechanisms to avoid and minimize impacts on bats. (https://nationalwind.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/AWWI-NWCC-WWRM-X_Proceedings_Final.pdf).

[Energy Department Announces New Projects to Help Protect Wildlife at Wind Energy Plants](#). The Energy Department today announced more than \$1.75 million for five projects that will develop and demonstrate technologies to reduce the potential impacts of wind farms on sensitive bat species. This funding will support projects in two research categories. Projects in the first category will focus on innovative early-stage technology development—advancing proof-of-concept designs, and developing and testing technology prototypes. (<http://energy.gov/eere/articles/energy-department-announces-new-projects-help-protect-wildlife-wind-energy-plants>).

[Ontario wind farm halted by endangered turtles crossing the road](#). A turtle that insists on crossing a road has put a stop to a massive wind-energy development in Eastern Ontario. The Ontario Court of Appeal ruled on Monday that a 324-hectare, nine-turbine wind farm proposed for the south shore of Prince Edward County puts a population of endangered Blanding's turtles at risk of dying out in that region's wetland. The risk is posed not by the wind farm itself but by 5.4 kilometres of roads to and from the site. Experts said the turtles, which range widely as part of their natural life cycle, would inevitably try

to cross those roads, exposing them to vehicles, predators and human poachers. (<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/ontario-wind-farm-halted-by-endangered-turtles-crossing-the-road/article24040374/>).

[Bat listing's impact on wind industry yet to be determined](#). Wind-farm operations in some instances will be more complicated and costly as a result of the federal government's [announcement last week](#) that it will list the Northern long-eared bat as a threatened species. However, more changes might be coming that could give the industry greater flexibility. (<http://www.midwestenergynews.com/2015/04/08/bat-listings-impact-on-wind-industry-yet-to-be-determined/>).

[Federal Government Protects Bat, Angers Industry](#). They may not be the most attractive creatures in the world, and they scare the life out of many people, but you have to feel bad for the bat. Millions of them are dying across the Northeast, the Midwest and parts of the South, from a disease called White Nose Syndrome, named for a white fungus that crusts their faces. (<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2015/04/11/398820065/federal-government-protects-bat-angers-industry>).

[Birds Vs. Blades: Wind Power's Threat To The Sage Grouse](#). A chicken-sized game bird native to western sagebrush has become the subject of the biggest conservation project in U.S. history. Efforts to keep the greater sage grouse off the endangered species list stretch across 11 states from North Dakota to California. It is a complex balancing act between saving critical ecosystems while at the same time protecting the region's key industries. Energy development is a key threat to the sage grouse, and some western conservationists are speaking out most urgently against a power source often thought of as one of the greenest — wind farms. (<http://insideenergy.org/2015/04/19/birds-vs-blades-wind-powers-threat-to-the-sage-grouse/>).

[Wind Turbines Kill More Birds Than BP Oil Spill](#). Environmentalists are highlighting the disaster by pointing to the 800,000 birds that have died because of the spill in the five years since the disaster, but activists have been eerily silent about the fact that way more birds have been killed by wind turbines — a supposedly “eco-friendly” energy source. (<http://dailycaller.com/2015/04/20/wind-turbines-kill-more-birds-than-bp-oil-spill/>).

Wildlife

[Natural Bat Bacteria Could Provide Cure for Killer Fungus](#). A naturally occurring bacteria found on some bats could be the key to fighting a deadly fungal disease affecting the flying mammals around the world. (<http://wildlife.org/natural-bat-bacteria-could-provide-cure-for-killer-fungus/>).

[Bacteria Isolated from Bats Inhibit the Growth of Pseudogymnoascus destructans, the Causative Agent of White-Nose Syndrome](#), by Joseph R. Hoyt, et al. 2015. PLOS ONE. (<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0121329>).

[Bat conservation agreement signed by U.S., Mexico and Canada: Outdoor Insider](#). For the first time, the U.S., Mexico and Canada have formally agreed to increase coordination and cooperation across North America to conserve bat species. (http://blog.pennlive.com/pa-sportsman/2015/04/bat_conservation_agreement_sig.html).

[Environment: Bat-killing disease spread into Iowa](#). Bat-killing white-nose syndrome has spread into Iowa, state wildlife officials confirmed this week, announcing that the deadly fungal disease was found on three bats near a cave entrance in Des Moines County (two little brown bats and one northern long-eared) and on four little brown bats collected in Van Buren County this winter. (<http://summitcountyvoice.com/2015/04/17/environment-bat-killing-disease-spread-into-iowa/>).

[Fish and Wildlife rules Bi-State population of greater sage-grouse doesn't need ESA protection](#). Western Governors applauded the decision announced today by Interior Secretary Sally Jewell in Reno, Nev., where she was joined by Western Governors' Association Chairman and

Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval, California Natural Resources Agency Secretary John Laird, and other partners. (<http://westgov.org/news/340-news-2015/938-fish-and-wildlife-rules-bi-state-population-of-greater-sage-grouse-doesn-t-need-esa-protection>).

[Success reported in first year of lesser prairie chicken conservation](#). A year after the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the lesser prairie chicken as threatened, the first annual report finds conservation efforts have been successful. (http://www.mrt.com/business/oil/article_c019701a-e557-11e4-80af-fbb6d3dc18cc.html).

Wind

[Wind energy blows US emissions onto right track for 2025 target](#). Is Uncle Sam going green at last? US carbon emissions from power stations this year are set to be the lowest for 20 years, [as decrepit coal-fired power plants shut](#) and clean wind farms and less-dirty natural gas plants replace them. (<http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn27361-wind-energy-blows-us-emissions-onto-right-track-for-2025-target.html#.VTaxDyGrRph>).

[NREL and partners review key issues and lessons learned from U.S. wind integration studies](#). As a complement to the Department of Energy's (DOE) recently released [Wind Vision](#) report, a new paper summarizes the lessons learned from actual power systems operational practice, along with some of the most relevant and comprehensive wind integration studies conducted during the past several years. (<http://www.windpowerengineering.com/featured/business-news-projects/nrel-and-partners-review-key-issues-and-lessons-learned-from-u-s-wind-integration-studies/>).

[Want More Wind And Solar Energy? Invest A Lot More In The Grid](#). Want to increase the use of green energy and reduce the level of harmful emissions? Invest heavily in the grid to both modernize and expand it, which will accomplish such aims while also building the US economy. (<http://www.forbes.com/sites/kensilverstein/2015/04/13/want-more-wind-and-solar-energy-invest-a-lot-more-in-the-grid/>).

[How Permitting, Zoning Issues Differ for Distributed Wind](#). Distributed wind is the use of wind turbines primarily used for onsite or local community electricity generation. For example, that can be a wind turbine at someone's home or a community turbine on school property. Distributed wind turbines are typically smaller than the utility-scale turbines that make up wind farms, according to Karin Wadsack, Northern Arizona University College of Engineering, Forestry and Natural Sciences Project Director. She explains some of the permitting and zoning issues relevant to distributed wind. (http://apps2.eere.energy.gov/wind/windexchange/filter_detail.asp?itemid=4872).

Other

[What Americans Think About Climate Change in Seven Maps](#). Researchers at Yale have unveiled [a new interactive map](#) that estimates public opinion on global warming right down to the county level. (<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-04-06/what-americans-think-about-climate-change-in-seven-maps>).

[Q&A: How states can work together on Clean Power Plan](#). Despite a promise by congressional Republicans to kill federal carbon regulations being finalized this summer, the author of a new report says that most states have begun planning to comply with them. (<http://www.midwestenergynews.com/2015/04/17/qa-how-states-can-work-together-on-clean-power-plan/>).

[Obama wants billions to 'modernize' energy infrastructure](#). The Obama administration released a report Tuesday calling for billions of dollars to "modernize" and "transform" the nation's energy infrastructure. The plan comes from the findings in the first installment of the Energy Department's "[Quadrennial Energy Review](#)," which it hopes to write every four years. (<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/239489-obama-administration-seeks-to-modernize-energy-infrastructure>).

Announcements

[Service Protects Northern Long-eared Bat as Threatened Species under Endangered Species Act with Interim 4\(d\) Rule.](#) The listing becomes effective on May 4, 2015, 30 days after publication of the final listing determination in the Federal Register. (<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/nlba/>).

[USFWS Approved Automated Acoustic Bat ID Software Programs.](#) Specified versions of the programs identified below are approved by the Service for use in 2015 and beyond for presence/probable absence surveys for Indiana bats (*Myotis sodalis*). These programs have been independently tested by USGS researchers and passed the Service's standardized test/validation process.

1. BCID Program (version 2.7b or newer)
2. EchoClass (version 3.0 or newer)
3. Kaleidoscope® Pro (version 2.2.2 or newer)

(<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Endangered/mammals/inba/surveys/inbaAcousticSoftware.html>).

[Iberdrola Renewables Seeks Applicants for Wildlife Grants.](#) Iberdrola Renewables announced it is seeking applicants for its 2015 Wildlife Protection Program (WPP) grants. The company's ongoing "Legacy of Caring" campaign for wildlife and habitat awards WPP grants to avian rehabilitation groups. These partners play an important role in rehabilitation, community education and scientific understanding of birds of prey. (http://www.yourrenewablenews.com/iberdrola+renewables+seeks+applicants+for+wildlife+grants_114363.html).

[USGCRP Climate & Health Assessment.](#) Climate change threatens human health and well-being [in many ways](#). The draft report, The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment (available to download below), was developed by USGCRP's [Interagency Group on Climate Change and Human Health](#) as part of the [sustained National Climate Assessment](#) and as called for under the President's [Climate Action Plan](#). Public Comment Period Now Open. (<http://www.globalchange.gov/health-assessment>).

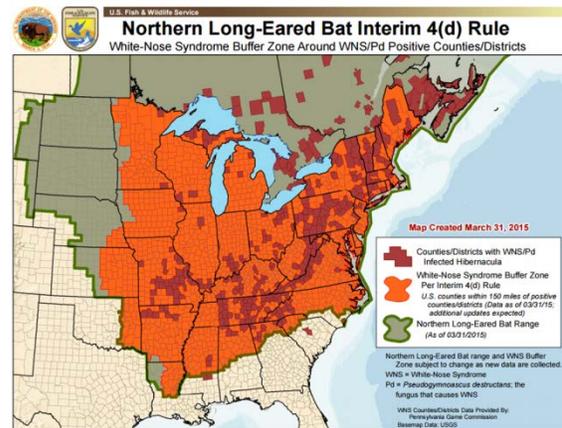
Upcoming Conferences

[AWEA Wind Power Conference & Exhibition.](#) May 18-21, 2015. Orlando, FL. (<http://www.windpowerexpo.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

[Landsat on AWS.](#) The [Landsat](#) program is a joint effort of the [U.S. Geological Survey](#) and [NASA](#). First launched in 1972, the Landsat series of satellites has produced the longest, continuous record of Earth's land surface as seen from space. AWS has made Landsat 8 data freely available on Amazon S3 so that anyone can use our on-demand computing resources to perform analysis and create new products without needing to worry about the cost of storing Landsat data or the time required to download it. (<http://aws.amazon.com/public-data-sets/landsat/>).



[US Solar & Wind Associations Release Renewable Energy Handbook](http://cleantechnica.com/2015/03/31/us-solar-wind-associations-release-renewable-energy-handbook/). Two US renewable energy associations, the American Wind Energy Association and the Solar Energy Industries Association, have jointly published a handbook that details how states can incorporate renewable energy into their plans to comply with US policy regulations. (<http://cleantechnica.com/2015/03/31/us-solar-wind-associations-release-renewable-energy-handbook/>).

[WGA launches RAPID Toolkit to speed, streamline siting and permitting of transmission lines](http://westgov.org/news/298-news-2014/847-wga-launches-rapid-toolkit-to-speed-streamline-siting-and-permitting-of-transmission-lines). Western Governors have rolled out the [RAPID Toolkit](http://westgov.org/news/298-news-2014/847-wga-launches-rapid-toolkit-to-speed-streamline-siting-and-permitting-of-transmission-lines), 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

[Webinar #3: Understanding Avian Collision Rate Modeling and Discussing what this Means in a Population Context at Land-Based and Offshore Windfarms](http://tethys.pnnl.gov/events/webinar-3-understanding-avian-collision-rate-modeling-and-discussing-what-means-population). Wind farms can impact birds through collisions, barrier effects and displacement and habitat loss. Of these, collisions have attracted the most attention as the effects of direct mortality are considered to have the greatest potential to impact bird populations. (<http://tethys.pnnl.gov/events/webinar-3-understanding-avian-collision-rate-modeling-and-discussing-what-means-population>).

[WINDEXchange Webinar: Overcoming Wind Siting Challenges: Overview and Wildlife](http://apps2.eere.energy.gov/wind/windexchange/filter_detail.asp?itemid=4739). 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, * indicates Senator Priority Bills)

[LB117](http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=24434) - 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](http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=24692)** - 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); **Senator Priority Bill** (March 12, 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](http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=24483) - 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); Placed on General File and Revenue filed AM1103 (pending) on April 2, 2015; **Committee Statement; Senator 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).

***LB469** - *Provide procedures and reporting requirements relating to a state plan on carbon dioxide emissions and require a strategic state energy plan.* Introduced by Smith on January 20, 2015; Senator Priority Bill; Advanced to Enrollment and Review Initial on April 20, 2015. A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to the environment; to define terms; and to provide powers and duties to the Department of Environmental Quality relating to the development of a state plan for regulating carbon dioxide emissions. (http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=24978).

AM833 – *Amends LB469 to include LB583; March 11, 2015.*
(<http://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/104/PDF/AM/AM833.pdf>).

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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