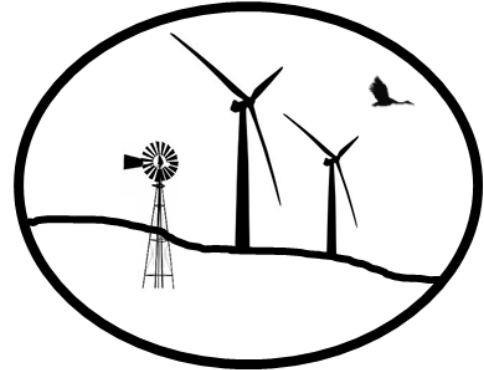


Wind Energy and Wildlife News

September 1, 2015



Around Nebraska...

[**Development Review Commercial Wind Energy Text Amendment**](#). Link to the Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Commission website with information about the recent planning actions for wind energy.

[**Wind turbine rules scaled back**](#). The Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Commission on Wednesday rejected controversial provisions of proposed rules to govern wind turbines in the county. The regulations address noise, setbacks from homes and property, lighting, shadow flicker and the eventual decommissioning of towers.

[**War over wind energy far from over**](#). While controversial proposed rules to govern wind farm development in Lancaster County have been dialed back, the fight over the turbine regulations is far from over. Wind energy developers and people who don't want turbines as neighbors are now turning their attentions to the Lancaster and Gage county boards. The Lancaster County Board is expected to take up the issue next month, and it has final say on the regulations. The Gage County Board has been discussing amending regulations there but has yet to draft a formal proposal.

[**Backers of wind & solar energy tax credits plan to try, try again**](#). A Nebraska agricultural group is working with state legislators on a proposed tax credit for wind and solar energy projects. The effort fell short of passing last session but backers of the incentives say they'll try again in 2016.

[**Backers of wind power, solar seek tax credits**](#). With Nebraska facing pressure to meet more stringent federal emission requirements, renewable energy advocates will push again next year for a state tax credit aimed at wind farms and solar projects.

[**Letter, 8/30: Regulate wind farms**](#). Every county in Nebraska should be developing regulations on how to deal with wind turbine farms now before it is too late. Our state needs to address the long-range permanent environmental damage that these wind farms will do to our landscapes. Some of these wind farms contain thousands of turbines covering miles and miles.

[**8th Annual Nebraska Wind and Solar Conference and Exhibition**](#). November 4-5, 2015. Omaha, NE. Since 2008, volunteers from farmer and rancher organizations, state agencies, public power utilities and higher education professionals have shaped this educational networking conference and exhibition to advance the wind and solar industry of Nebraska. The conference has included top quality speakers and timely presentations.

[**Graduate Research Assistantship – Bat habitat: Nebraska Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit**](#). During the past few years, we have received grant funding to bring graduate students on to help us learn more about bat distribution, habitat use, and migration in Nebraska. The research the students are conducting will be useful in siting and mitigation for wind energy as well as other resource management decisions. I am happy to announce that we have a Master's level Graduate Assistantship for motivated



student with interest in bat ecology, habitat modeling, landscape ecology. Student will conduct state-wide sampling of bats utilizing acoustic detectors, and use resulting data to construct habitat specific range maps for Nebraska to aid in Nebraska bat management. Student will additional help create a monitoring network using citizen-scientists that will be a legacy for the future and provide data to the NABat National Bat Monitoring effort. Successful applicant will join a team of ecologists working to understand bat habitat use and movements in Nebraska.

[The 2015 National Bat Blitz will be August 27 – September 3, 2015.](#) A simple ‘net your backyard’ style, everyone who can to participate is encouraged to net for 1-2 nights at your favorite spot (or two or three!). This year, and future years, we are also encouraging everyone to place a bat detector in an appropriate place near their net site. In addition to gathering an interesting nationwide dataset for the early fall, the event is designed to promote bat conservation and raise educational opportunities for both the public and biology students. While not required, we are encouraging everyone to invite students, friends, or even the public out to net for the night. Register your event at: <http://go.unl.edu/batblitz>. For more information, contact **Michael Whitby** (michael.whitby@gmail.com)

[FEATURED DESTINATION: CHERRY COUNTY, NEBRASKA.](#) Sandhills. Now there’s a term guaranteed to evoke universal excitement among water enthusiasts. Add “Nebraska” to the equation, and it’s a safe bet that corn, cows and cactus come to mind long before paddling. It’s not where you’d look for one of the 10 best canoeing rivers in the United States. Yet, there it is. In 1991, The Congress of the United States designated 76 miles of Cherry County’s Niobrara River as a National Scenic River, right there in north-central Nebraska. Backpacker magazine named this section among the top 10 float rivers in America.

[Nebraska rancher shares his passion for shortgrass prairie.](#) A factor in the ranch's success is the durability of the prairie, which has withstood eons of drought and deluge and the trample of a billion bison hooves since the end of the last Ice Age.

Around the Nation & World...

Wind and Wildlife

[Request for Information on Detection and Deterrence Technologies.](#) AWWI has made available a Request for Information (RFI) regarding available and in-development technologies intended to detect and deter birds and/or bats in the vicinity of wind turbines. The purpose of this RFI is to gather information about detection and deterrence technologies; specifically the state of research and product development around the detection and deterrence of birds and bats with the goal of reducing wind turbine collision fatalities and minimizing effects on project operation.

[Three dimensional tracking of a wide-ranging marine predator: flight heights and vulnerability to offshore wind farms.](#) IR Cleasby et al. 2015. Journal of Applied Ecology. The use of conventional flight height estimation techniques resulted in large underestimates of the numbers of birds at risk of colliding with wind turbines. Hence we recommend using GPS and barometric tracking to derive activity-specific and spatially-explicit flight heights and collision risks. Our predictions of potential mortality approached levels at which long-term population viability could be threatened, highlighting a need for further data to refine estimates of collision risks and sustainable mortality thresholds. We also advocate raising the minimum permitted clearance of turbine blades at sites with high potential collision risk from 22m 51 to 30m above sea level.

Policy

[FACT SHEET: President Obama Announces New Actions to Bring Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency to Households across the Country.](#) President Obama is committed to taking responsible steps to address climate change, promote clean energy and energy efficiency, drive innovation, and ensure a cleaner, more stable environment for future generations. That is why at Senator Reid's National Clean Energy Summit later today, he is announcing a robust set of executive actions and private sector commitments to accelerate America's transition to cleaner sources of energy and ways to cut energy waste.

[What the President's Clean Power Plan Means for Wildlife.](#) If we do not work now to curb the impacts of climate change on species, one in six wildlife species could face extinction in the next 75 years. This is an outcome that is simply unacceptable. Fortunately, the CPP gives us an opportunity to come together to ensure that our children and grandchildren live in a world that is not missing turtles, frogs and polar bears, along with hundreds of other species.

[Wyoming Gov. Mead launches Western Governors' Endangered Species Act Initiative.](#) Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead, Chairman of the Western Governors' Association (WGA), announced his Chairman's Initiative: the Western Governors' Endangered Species Act Initiative. This initiative is intended to take a hard look at the ESA – where has it been successful and where are changes needed. This effort will invite participation from a broad spectrum to come up with good information and useful recommendations.”

Wildlife & Habitats

[Habitat Fragmentation Causes a Hot Problem for Wildlife.](#) The negative effect some species feel from habitat fragmentations may have more to do with temperature changes than anything else, according to ongoing studies. In fact, temperature could explain why some species go extinct with fragmentation or deforestation in general, according to Kika Tuff, a graduate student in the ecology and evolutionary biology department at the University of Colorado Boulder.

[2015 Population Estimates for Indiana Bat \(*Myotis sodalists*\) by USFWS Region.](#) Estimates are primarily based on winter surveys conducted in January and February of 2015 at known Priority 1 & 2 hibernacula throughout the species' range. Additional data from Priority 3 and 4 hibernacula were included when available. In 2015, 99% of the range-wide population was hibernating in sites that had been confirmed or were suspected of having WNS.

Wind

[No need to panic, but more research is needed on climate change.](#) Record low winds earlier this year in key US wind states have raised concerns about the effects of climate change on existing and future global wind developments. The little research that has been done has found some wind variability both regionally and seasonally.

[The Intersection of Water, Energy and Climate.](#) While renewable energy is widely acknowledged as an important tool to mitigate climate change, its role in water conservation is not so recognized. Water is an essential ingredient in the energy production process.

[Multi-criteria Analysis of Offshore Wind Energy Site Suitability in North Carolina.](#) A Thesis by Kelsey Lauren Gregg, June 2015. This study utilizes public comment data and GIS layers for key exclusion variables used to define WEAs. By treating variables of interest as distinct layers, GIS was used to identify variations in the suitability in the ocean space off North Carolina's coastline. By analyzing wind feasibility while taking into consideration site-specific mitigation techniques, four site suitability maps were developed: environmental, economic, social, and overall site suitability.

[Mitigate Redevelopment Environmental Risk Through Team Collaboration](#). Too many property development firms or property owners have found themselves in the unfortunate position of having to manage “surprise” environmental issues during their projects. The key to keeping a project moving as smoothly as possible on an environmentally challenging property is risk mitigation through frequent team communication and collaboration early in the redevelopment process.

Other

[Science Isn't Broken](#). COMMENTS: Reading the results of scientific studies can sometimes be frustrating: results from one study vary from other studies, the statistics can be confusing, etc. This article addresses some of the challenges of science. It does contain some explicit language.

After the deluge of retractions, the stories of fraudsters, the false positives, and the [high-profile failures](#) to replicate landmark studies, some people have begun to ask: “[Is science broken?](#)” I’ve spent many months asking dozens of scientists this question, and the answer I’ve found is a resounding no. Science isn’t broken, nor is it untrustworthy. It’s just more difficult than most of us realize. We can apply more scrutiny to study designs and require more careful statistics and analytic methods, but that’s only a partial solution. To make science more reliable, we need to adjust our expectations of it.

Bat Week 2015 Bat House Building Challenge (see attached). On October 31, 2015 join us in our goal to build a record of 5,000 bat houses in the USA and Canada all in one day! Sign up as a host site. Contact Danielle Todd, Organization for Bat Conservation, at dtodd@batconservation.org.

[Great Plains Regional Technical Input Report](#), Ojima et al. 2015, Island Press. Great Plains Systems and Climate Change assesses how the Great Plains social-ecological system has been shaped by changing climate conditions and how future projections of climate change will result in a need for further adaptation and preparedness. This effort is part of the 2014 United States Global Change Research Program National Climate Assessment as required by the United States Congress.

[In Clash of Greens, a Case for Large-Scale U.S. Solar Projects](#). Weaning the U.S. economy off fossil fuels will involve the wide deployment of utility-scale solar power. But for that to happen, the environmental community must resolve its conflict between clean energy advocates and those who regard solar farms as blights on the landscape.

Tools

[New Mapping Tool Shows Woody Encroachment in LEPC Habitat](#). A new woody encroachment data layer — available through the Southern Great Plains Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (CHAT) web map — provides a broad-scale planning tool for resource managers to more effectively target Lesser Prairie-Chicken (LEPC) habitat improvement strategies.

[Free Learning Sources for GIS and Geospatial Analysis](#). Here is a list of FREE learning sources, including GIS software training courses and tutorials, applied learning materials, workshops and webinars related to GIS and/or Geospatial analysis, etc. All of them are Free of Cost .

Upcoming Conferences & Trainings & Webinars

[Call for Abstracts: AWEA WINDPOWER 2016 Conference & Exhibition](#). The American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) is soliciting abstracts until September 8th. Abstracts should demonstrate the dynamic and technologically advanced nature of the wind energy industry.

Maine Ocean & Wind Industry Initiative Webinar Recordings.

Electric Transmission 101 Workshop. October 6-8, 2015. Grand Rapids, MI. This workshop is designed to train state fish and wildlife agency and federal agency personnel who review and comment on electric transmission line projects. This will be a good opportunity for state and federal agency staff to meet members of the electric utility industry and better understand the planning and design process for electric transmission. Register at the following link: <http://www.cvent.com/d/xrqc4y/4W>.

8th Annual Nebraska Wind and Solar Conference and Exhibition. November 4-5, 2015. Omaha, NE. Since 2008, volunteers from farmer and rancher organizations, state agencies, public power utilities and higher education professionals have shaped this educational networking conference and exhibition to advance the wind and solar industry of Nebraska. The conference has included top quality speakers and timely presentations.

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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In the Message Field (NOT Subject): UNSUBSCRIBE wind_wildlife