

USDA Forest Service Update

July 2011

SUBJECT: Renewable Energy Development



Topic

Wind-Wildlife Research Needs to Support Federal Land Management Agencies for Renewable Energy Development.

Issue

How to strengthen, leverage and align science expertise of Federal agencies in the support and scaling up for renewable energy development on all lands.

Summary/Key Points

- Defining valuable Science and Technology deliverables in support of scaling up renewable energy development.
- Monitoring: focus on pre and post construction as well as monitoring during construction.
- Consistent implementation of monitoring and adaptive management principles to allow for meta-analysis of wind project impacts and mitigation options.
- Leveraging Federal agencies science and technology expertise to research cumulative impacts of wind projects and inform adaptive management at landscape scales.

Background

Congress established the Office of Science and Technology Policy in 1976 with a broad mandate to advise the President and others within the Executive Office of the President on the effects of science and technology on domestic and international affairs. The 1976 Act also authorizes OSTP to lead interagency efforts to develop and implement sound science and technology policies and budgets, and to work with the private sector, state and local governments, the science and higher education communities, and other nations toward this end.

A new Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP)-led effort will focus on applied science and technology related to wind-wildlife management situations to strengthen knowledge and protocols for integrated resource management actions within and across landscapes. The broader scope of this new interagency group is to enable information sharing and collaboration on research, methodologies, and development of decision making tools that could improve the Federal government's ability to support responsible and robust growth of renewable energy. This OSTP group will support the proactive agenda of the newly formed Council on Environmental Quality, Dept. of Interior, and Dept. of Energy co-led *Interagency Action Team on Renewable Energy and Transmission*.

OSTP has convened several meetings of subject matter experts from USDA Forest Service, DOI Fish and Wildlife Service, and DOI Bureau of Land Management to scope and prioritize potential work topics of wind energy impacts to society, the environment, and government operations. Recently, a draft proposal was developed that would establish a federal agency renewable energy siting/wildlife working group to:

- 1) Demonstrate a risk assessment-evaluation tool, set of tools, and/or set of criteria underlying decision processes, (here after the term "decision tool" or "tools" may refer to any or all of these) that the federal agencies will confidently stand by,

- 2) Determine, in a prioritized order, the critical research needs common to the Federal and State agencies to form a common roadmap for decision tools. Such tools should include, but are not limited to, use in assessing landscape and site risk assessment, preliminary efforts to assess potential cumulative impacts from wind development (at the turbine, project, regional and national levels), and how seasonal and inter-annual climatic variations are changing wildlife and habitat use patterns.

Contact

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