

**Landscape/Habitat Subcommittee of the
Wind Turbine Guidelines Advisory Committee
Telephone Conference – April 1, 2008**

Draft Summary

Participants:

Abby Arnold, Facilitator	René Braud	Robert Robel
Mike Daulton	Aimee Delach	Rob Manes
Rich Rayhill	Jo Ann Mills, FWS	Rachel London, FWS
John Cecil, Audubon	Dave Stout, FWS	Brian Obermeyer
Caitlin Coberly		

The group reviewed the purpose statement, and Rob Manes and Rich Rayhill volunteered to take another look at it and share their edits/comments with the subcommittee on the next conference call:

Possible purpose of this Subcommittee:

- Review various landscape mapping tools and how these tools characterize status of the habitats, accuracy of the tools to assess the habitats, accuracy of the tools to characterize individual species' habitat needs, including cumulative impacts, strategies for developing the tools, and guidelines for applying the tools.
- Make recommendations on what use of information would be and what use should not be.
- Develop tools that can be used to identify areas where wind energy development and wildlife interests may be incompatible.
- Assess techniques and develop recommendations for user-friendly habitat and landscape mapping approaches that are unbiased, objective, inexpensive, and expeditious.

The subcommittee heard from John Cecil, Rob Manes, and Brian Obermeyer on various tools used to assess and manage wildlife at a landscape level. A summary of these presentations are attached to this summary.

Discussion:

The subcommittee discussed what they wanted to bring forth to the full Committee – a recommend tools, or a recommend protocol to address landscape/habitat? It was decided by those on the call that the subcommittee will develop options for use of existing tools. Some ideas that were mentioned included:

- ✓ Establish protocols for how to use the tools/maps/habitat (incorporating tiers)
- ✓ Develop a standard of rigor for applying available tools

- ✓ Develop criteria to define levels of risk
- ✓ Use maps to engage in conversation about how/whether to develop (e.g. NWI, TNC, IBA)
- ✓ Developers should first consult with FWS on existing tools
- ✓ Available information can further development plans/lack of information informs developers of potential for additional level of effort
- ✓ Service guidelines should point developers to individual state guidelines, maps where available, other resources such as state DNRs, national heritage inventories
- ✓ Once in a sensitive area, siting should accommodate wildlife/habitat concerns

Next Steps:

- ✓ Briefing on GAP database
- ✓ Briefing on FWS IPAC database
- ✓ **Preparation for April 23-24 meeting**
 - Review and comment on purpose statement and prepare report to full Committee at April 23-24 meeting (Rob/Rich)
 - Develop quick summary of IBA, TNC, NWI (Rachel)
 - Suggest protocols for how to use these tools (Rob/Kate)
 - Pros and cons for prioritizing sites. (Mike/René)
 - The group will try to meet the **evening of April 22** to prepare their report
- ✓ **Next call is April 14 at 10:00 am EST**
 - **Call-in Number: 703-358-2020**
 - **Conference ID: 2491**

Attachment

Summary of Presentations: April 1, 2008 Conference Call Landscape/Habitat Subcommittee

Report on Important Bird Areas (Jon Cecil, National Audubon)

- Identify, protect, and conserve most important sites for bird populations
- Engage communities – local involvement in areas important for birds, coordinated nationally.
- Audubon partnering with Bird Life International (global organization)
- IBAs have three categories
 - State
 - Continental
 - Global significance
- Sites are assessed, surveyed and managed using an adaptive management approach
- Globally or continentally significant areas, threatened and endangered species habitat may not be appropriate for wind development.
- Category criteria is detailed on website.
- IBAs in 41 states, 151 globally significant sites. (hope to have 800 GBAs, 1500 Continentally IBAs)
- Website includes program description and searchable database (portions not public)
- Accomplishments: Summaries of IBAs, working lands analysis.
- Next Steps: Build volunteer base, move towards consistent State implementation of assessment and site selection.
- *Questions:*
 - Suggestions for setbacks: Really is site specific.
 - Who should developers interact with regarding IBA program in each state: www.audubon.org/bird/iba contact page lists coordinators in most states
 - What time frame do you use for completing the states: Determined by funding levels. Target is end of 2010.

Report on TNC Efforts (Rob Manes, Brian Obermeyer, The Nature Conservancy)

- Development of TNC maps of ecological intactness for KS and OK
- Maps developed at request of wind industry – representation of where ecologically important areas exist
- Used landscape maps to identify areas to avoid. Data used includes:
 - Whooping Crane areas
 - Bat concentration areas
 - Lesser and greater prairie chicken habitat
 - Mixed, tall and short grass
 - GAP data
- Landscape maps show intact (undeveloped) landscapes
 - 2,000 acres, ½ mile width minimum
 - Areas of concentrations of prairie fragments
- Some use of legal boundaries based on request from legislators to discern areas on-the-ground; however is less scientific.
- TNC, in cooperation with Audubon and AWWI, will develop maps for Central US within 3-6 months
- Experience: developers are interested in this tool and are already using it.