

2017 Kansas Environmental Conference

Environmental Impacts of Wind Development and Operations

KDWPT

- **KDWPT Responsibility**
 - **Kansas Nongame and Endangered Species Act 1975**
 - **Threatened and Endangered species, Species In Need of Conservation**
 - Ranges from birds, bats, reptiles, fish, invertebrates
 - **Designated Critical Habitat**
 - Diverse species list = many habitats
 - Native rangeland to streams
 - Regulatory authority to protect these habitats
 - Action Permits issued if impacts to Designated Critical Habitat are possible
 - Permit conditions seek to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to listed species and habitat
 - **“Crucial” wildlife habitats**
 - Not legally designated but recognized as important
 - Reduction in quantity or quality of the habitat threatens wildlife populations and biodiversity, often difficult to replace or mitigate
 - Playas, wetlands, streams, riparian areas, native prairie or woodlands, etc.
 - **KDWPT managed properties**
- **Siting and infrastructure**
 - **Many resources available to assist in planning process**
 - Guidelines from USFWS and others
 - Kansas Natural Resource Planner
 - New landcover dataset?
 - **Strongly encourage development in previously disturbed areas**
 - **DCH**
 - Again, diversity of habitats
 - Prairie most frequently encountered in wind proposals
 - Stream crossings
 - **Crucial habitats**
 - **KDWPT managed areas**
 - **Migration corridors**
 - **Known lek locations**
- **Data and information**
 - Much of research has been species-centric or a small suite of species
 - There are entire taxonomic groups we know next to nothing about in regard to potential wind energy impacts/effects

- Need more community-level, landscape scale research to inform future development
- **Coordination Process**
- **KDWPT advocates for coordination between project developers, KDWPT, and USFWS as early in the process as possible.**
- **Strong preference for joint meetings between the entities about to keep everyone “in the loop”, because of overlapping species listings and the many direct and indirect impacts to wildlife/habitat which may occur with wind energy development construction and operation.**
- **All new wind farms disturb more than an acre during construction, and thus, must obtain a KDHE Construction Stormwater Permit. As designated by the *Kansas Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act* of 1975 and K.S.A 32-961 all projects in KS which require state or federal permits must also request an environmental review for KDWPT.**
 - **Unless supported by a letter of concurrence from KDWPT, we do not consider developer meeting notes from an initial project introduction meeting to rise to the level of “project-specific” coordination, per the KDHE Construction Stormwater Permit application. To fully assess whether the project may impact wildlife, a full review of the project—including the location of turbines, roads, meteorological towers, etc.—must be conducted. KDWPT respectfully requests that other agencies forego issuance of their permits unless robust project coordination is evidenced by a letter of concurrence that large impacts are not expected or a letter denoting that an environmental review has been completed. Projects which are well-sited in disturbed habitat without proximate occurrences of T/E species or DCH may not need to submit full project layouts to obtain release from permitting requirements.**
- Coordination is generally initiated by developers prior to other permit applications and before on-ground siting studies take place.
- During initial discussion of the project, KDWPT will ask for some general information to allow us to input the project in our database. This can be most easily be accomplished by the developer filling out a permit application and submitting it to our review request email address along with a map, shapefile, or Google Earth .kmz of the general project boundary. Obtaining this information allows us to give the project a number in our tracking log and a place to store future correspondence within our project database.
 - KDWPT requests that any materials which will be presented during initial meeting be provided to the coordinating ecologist at least one week prior to the meeting date—allowing the ecologist time to familiarize themselves with the area and investigate to allow time to familiarize
 - If a company refuses to cooperate with requests for information needed to complete an environmental review, KDWPT will submit letters to applicable agencies and county zoning officials. The letters will describe: any meeting dates/project correspondence KDWPT has had with project developers, specific concerns KDWPT has with a proposed project, and any additional information which KDWPT has requested from the project developer.
- KDWPT believes that these projects are large enough that multiple coordination meetings may need to take place. An introductory meeting can help agency staff

familiarize themselves with the site and company. During that meeting or subsequent follow up, on-site survey needs and methods can be discussed. KDWPT then advocates for follow up meetings to hear what data was obtained through those survey efforts.

- KDWPT requests that all consultants obtain Collection Permits and survey data be shared with us to provide additional occurrence data as part of our Natural Heritage Inventory.
- KDWPT requests that post-construction mortality data be shared with KDWPT ESS to inform future decisions in the vicinity.

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