

**Programmatic Biological Assessment Species Consistency Evaluation Form  
Upper Great Plains Region Wind Energy Development Program  
Impact Information and Consistency Determination**

**Greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*)**

Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

**Best Management Practices**

- All general BMPs, as stated in the final *Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Upper Great Plains Region Wind Energy Program* and table 4.5-1 of the final *Programmatic Biological Assessment for the Upper Great Plains Region Wind Energy Program*, will be implemented where appropriate, during each phase of the project (i.e., site characterization, construction, operations, and decommissioning). Although not all-inclusive, several of the more important BMPs for the conservation of this species follow.
  
- Select equipment with the lowest noise levels available and no prominent discrete tones, when possible.
- All vehicles traveling within and around the project area should operate in accordance with posted speed limits.
- If a transformer becomes a noise issue, a new transformer with reduced flux density generating noise levels as much as 10–20 dB lower than National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA) standard values could be installed. Alternatively, barrier walls, partial enclosures, or full enclosures could be adopted to shield or contain the transformer noise, depending on the degree of noise control needed.
- Instruct employees, contractors, and site visitors to avoid harassment and disturbance of wildlife, especially during reproductive (e.g., courtship and nesting) seasons. Pets should not be allowed on the project area.
- Initiate habitat restoration of disturbed soils and vegetation as soon as possible after construction activities are completed. Restore areas of disturbed soil using weed-free native grasses, forbs, and shrubs (sage brush), in consultation with land managers and appropriate agencies such as State or county extension offices or weed boards.
- Develop a plan for control of noxious weeds and invasive plants (i.e., cheat grass) that could occur as a result of new surface disturbance activities at the site. The plan should address monitoring, weed identification, the manner in which weeds spread, and methods for treating infestations. Require the use of certified weed-free mulching.
- Access roads, utility and transmission line corridors, and tower site areas should be monitored regularly for the establishment of invasive species, and weed control measures should be initiated immediately upon evidence of the introduction of invasive species.

**Species-Specific Avoidance Measures**

- Conduct preconstruction evaluations and/or surveys in areas of potential occurrence to identify suitable habitat, known core population areas, and lek locations within project boundaries.
- Do not site turbines, access roads, transmission lines, or other project facilities within greater sage-grouse core habitats in Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota or within State-defined greater sage-grouse connectivity areas in Montana.
- Outside of core areas in Montana, do not site turbines, access roads, transmission lines, or other project facilities within 4 mi (6.4 km) of sage-grouse leks. (There are no known greater sage-grouse occupied habitats outside core areas in North and South Dakota.)

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**Species-Specific Minimization Measures**

For projects that encompass occupied sage-grouse habitat outside of core areas in Montana:

- Contact Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Statewide Habitat Coordinator (406-444-3377) to obtain sage-grouse distribution information in early planning stages for the wind farm to determine how best to site facility structures to avoid sage-grouse habitat to the extent possible.
- Avoid placing meteorological towers or turbines, and restrict surface use activities within 4 mi (6.4 km) of active sage-grouse leks.
- Do not use guy wires for turbine or meteorological tower supports. All existing guy wires should be marked with approved bird flight diverters.
- Do not build new fences within 1.25 mi (2 km) of occupied leks (unless unavoidable, then mark fence with bird flight diverters). Remove or mark existing fences with approved fence bird flight diverters.
- Disturbed areas around turbines in shrub/grassland habitat used by sage-grouse should be maintained to allow a shrub cover >10 percent and grasses greater than 6–7 in. (16–18 cm) tall to improve nest success.
- Limit the number of access roads through sagebrush to decrease fragmentation of habitat.
- Limit noise at active lek perimeters to 10 db above ambient or maximum of 34 db.
- Bury all project-related collector and distribution lines, if practicable.
- Do not place overhead power lines in suitable sage-grouse nesting habitat located within 4 mi (6.4 km) of a known lek.
- Mark new overhead power lines that traverse or are located within 0.25 mi (0.4 km) of occupied sage-grouse habitat with approved bird flight diverters.
- Report all incidents of mortality or injury from wind facility construction and operation to the appropriate USFWS Ecological Services Field Office and State Wildlife offices.

**Impact Information**

Project within county with recorded greater sage-grouse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	
Preconstruction evaluations conducted with USFWS?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	Dates: _____
Parties involved: _____					
Suitable habitat, core population areas, or leks in or near project footprint?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	
Distance from suitable habitat:	_____			Miles	
Distance from core areas:	_____			Miles	
Distance from leks:	_____			Miles	
Has habitat been surveyed to protocol?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	Dates of survey: _____
Result of survey:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Occupied (species detected)		<input type="checkbox"/>	Not occupied (species not detected)
New underground distribution/collector lines proposed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	
New overhead distribution/transmission lines proposed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	
Distance from a known lek:	_____			Miles	
Distance from occupied sage-grouse habitat:	_____			Miles	
Marking with bird flight diverters proposed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	
Meteorological towers proposed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	
Guyed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	
Marked with approved bird flight diverters?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	
Fences (old or new) in occupied habitat?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	
Marked with approved fence bird flight diverters	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	
Map of project footprint and species habitat attached?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	

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**Effects**—Explanation of consistency determination with programmatic effects determination of "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" or "no effect":