

EIS for the Great Plains Wind Energy HCP WELCOME

Agency Scoping Meeting



GREAT PLAINS WIND ENERGY
Environmental Impact Statement **Habitat Conservation Plan**

Meeting Agenda

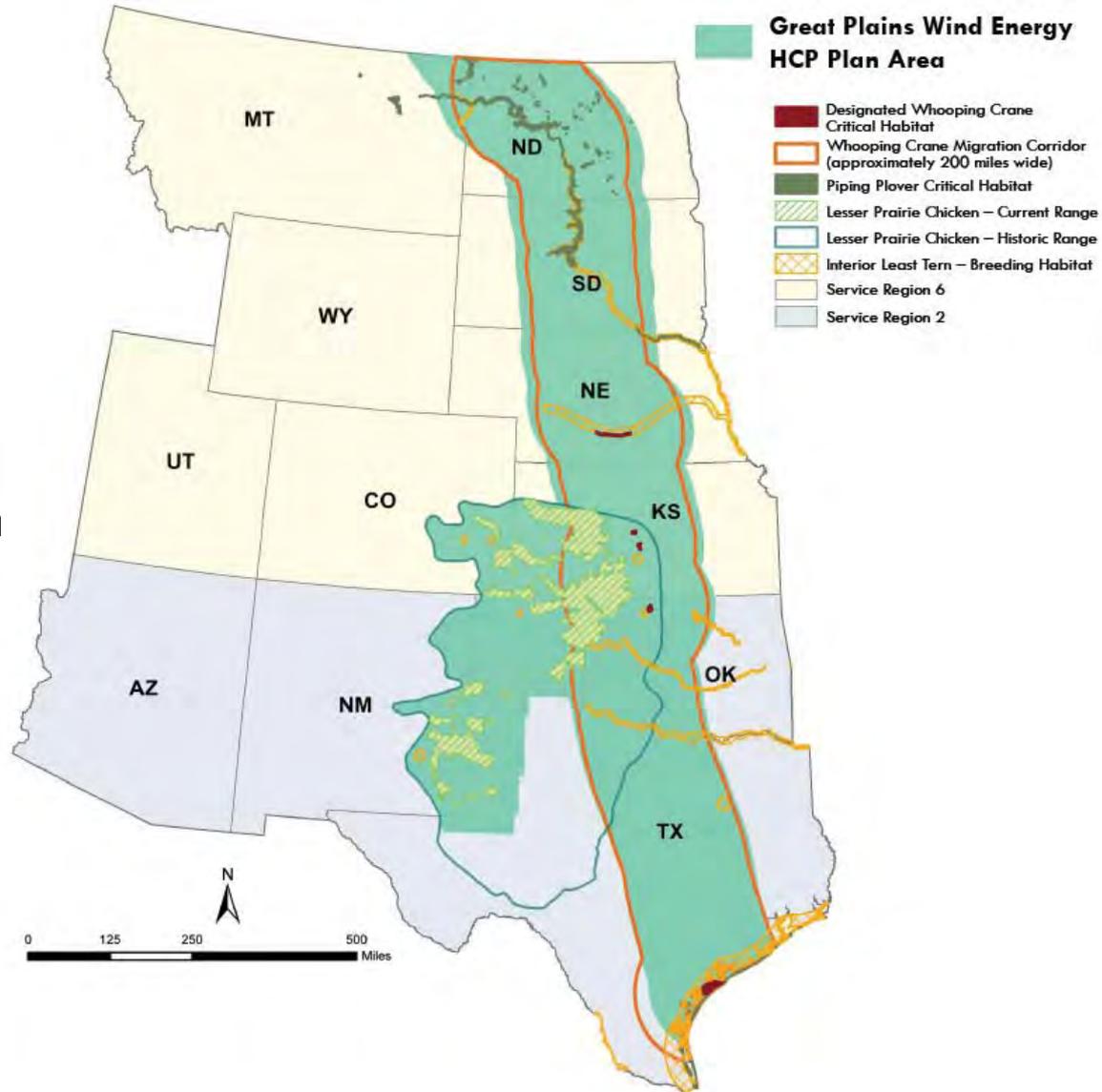
- Introductions
- Presentation
- Questions/Answers
- Open Discussion



What is the project?

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on a proposed application for an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) and associated Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).

The proposed ITP would include certain federally listed and candidate species within portions of nine states.



Who is Developing the HCP?

A group of 19 wind energy companies, the Wind Energy Whooping Crane Action Group (WEWAG), in coordination with the Service and state wildlife agencies is developing the Great Plains Wind Energy HCP and will be the applicant for the ITP.

- Acciona North America
- Allete
- Alternity Wind Power
- BP Wind Energy
- Clipper Wind Energy
- Competitive Power Ventures, Inc.
- Duke Energy Renewables
- Element Power
- enXco
- EDP Renewables North America
- Iberdrola Renewables
- Infinity Wind Power
- MAP Royalty
- NextEra Energy Resources
- Own Energy
- RES Americas
- Terra-Gen Power, LLC
- Trade Wind Energy
- Wind Capital Group



What species are being considered for coverage?

Species being considered for inclusion in the HCP include certain species listed as federally threatened or endangered—or having the potential to become listed during the life of the HCP—and having some likelihood of occurring within the proposed Plan Area.

Additionally, Species Take Avoidance Measures (STAMs) are being developed for many other species.



Whooping Crane
(*endangered*)



Lesser Prairie-Chicken
(*candidate*)



Piping Plover
(*threatened*)



Interior Least Tern
(*endangered*)



What is NEPA?

- **The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** of 1969 established a national environmental policy with goals for the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of the environment. It also established a process for environmental impacts to be evaluated as an integral part of any major Federal action.
- **Key goals of NEPA are to:**
 - › Help Federal agency officials make well-informed decisions about agency actions
 - › Provide a role for the public and other agencies in the scoping process
- **The EIS process will comply with:**
 - › NEPA and implementing regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508)
 - › Other applicable regulations, including the Endangered Species Act and other Federal, state, and local regulations and statutes
 - › The Department of Interior's and Service's procedures for compliance



Key Definitions from the Endangered Species Act (ESA), Sections 9 and 10



Take

To harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect any fish or wildlife species listed under ESA as endangered or threatened.

Incidental Take

Take that is incidental to, and not the purpose of, the carrying out of an otherwise lawful activity.

Permit Issuance Criteria

Upon receiving the permit application, the Service must consider the following issuance criteria (detailed in Section 10(a)(2)(B) of the ESA)

- The applicant is fully qualified per the general permit criteria.
- The taking will be incidental.
- The applicant will, to the maximum extent practicable, minimize and mitigate the impacts of such taking.
- The applicant will ensure that adequate funding for the HCP will be provided.
- The taking will not appreciably reduce the likelihood of survival and recovery of the species in the wild.
- The applicant will ensure that other required measures will be provided.
- The Service has received such other assurances as may be required that the HCP will be implemented.



What is an HCP?

- ESA Section 10 requires that WEWAG develop an HCP in order to apply for an ITP.
- An HCP is a document that describes, among other things, the steps the applicant will take to minimize and mitigate the impacts of the proposed taking to the maximum extent practicable.

HCP
Habitat
Conservation
Plan

EIS
Environmental
Impact
Statement

ITP
Incidental
Take
Permit



What is an EIS?

- The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the Service to prepare an EIS for any major Federal action with the potential to significantly affect the quality of the human environment.
- The EIS will address public and agency comments and analyze the potential impacts resulting from the proposed HCP and ITP, as well as any reasonable alternatives.

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What is an ITP?

- If the Service determines that the HCP and other application materials meets the ESA section 10(a) issuance criteria for an ITP, the Service must issue the ITP.
- An ITP permits “incidental take” of listed species occurring in connection with otherwise lawful activities. Such take must be minimized and mitigated to the maximum extent practicable.
- An ITP holder is authorized for incidental take and will be allowed to legally proceed with an activity for the duration of the permit as long as they are compliant with the terms of the HCP and ITP.



What will the EIS Address?

- Potential impacts associated with the proposed HCP and the issuance of an ITP, including:
 - › biological
 - › physical
 - › and/or social impacts on the human environment
- Ways of reducing the potential impacts of the HCP/ITP
- Any reasonable alternatives to the proposed action



What alternatives will the EIS analyze?

- **The “Proposed Action” Alternative**

- › The “Proposed Action” alternative includes the issuance of an ITP (as supported by an HCP).
- › *4 options are currently being considered for the structure of the ITP. One of these options may be considered as part of the proposed action, while the other options may be considered as part of additional alternatives.*

- **The “No Action” Alternative**

- › The Great Plains Wind Energy HCP would not be developed or permitted in a programmatic manner. Individual companies or projects would seek incidental take coverage independently.

- **A reasonable range of alternatives to be considered for analysis in the EIS may include:**

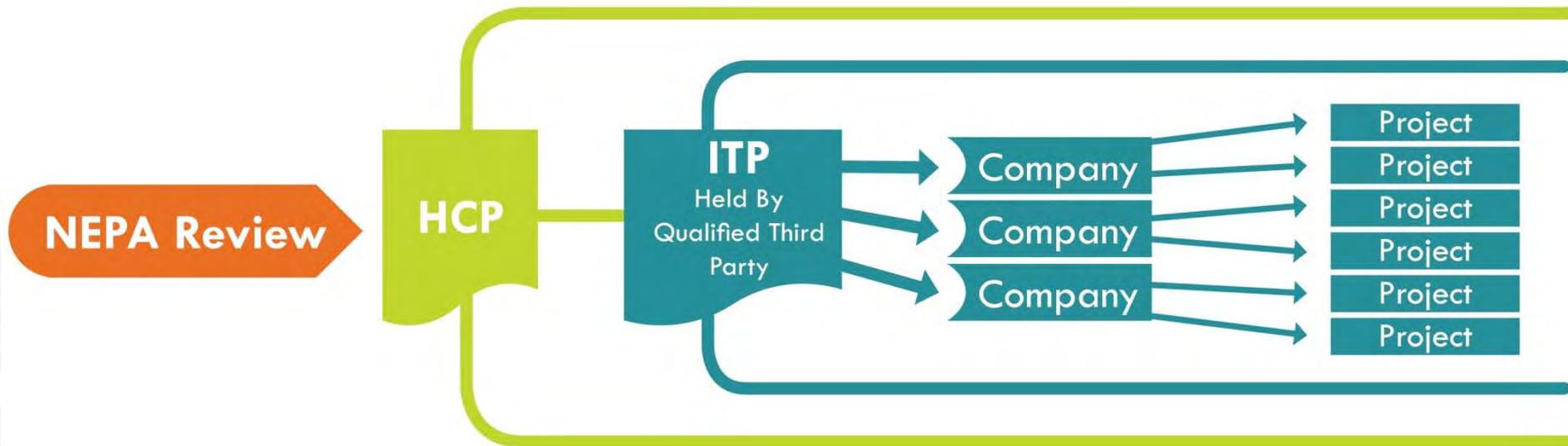
- › A modified list of species
- › Differing land-coverage areas
- › Variation of development activities
- › Variation of conservation measures



Permitting structures that may be considered as part of the Proposed Action Alternative

Programmatic HCP:

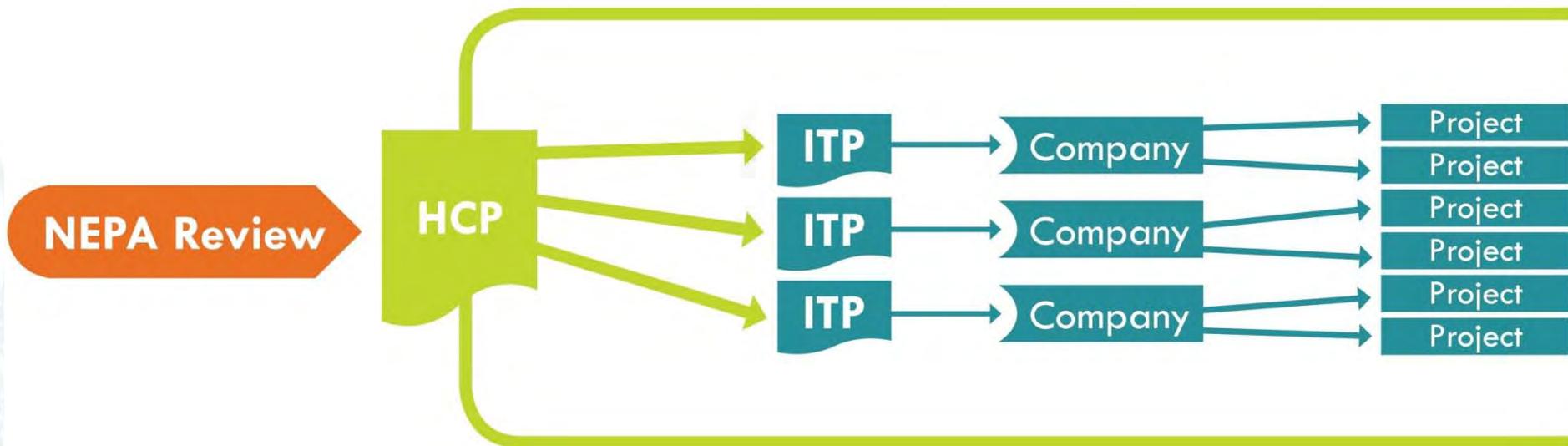
One HCP and one ITP (administered by a qualified third party) for multiple WEWAG companies and projects.



Permitting structures that may be considered as part of the Proposed Action Alternative

Umbrella HCP:

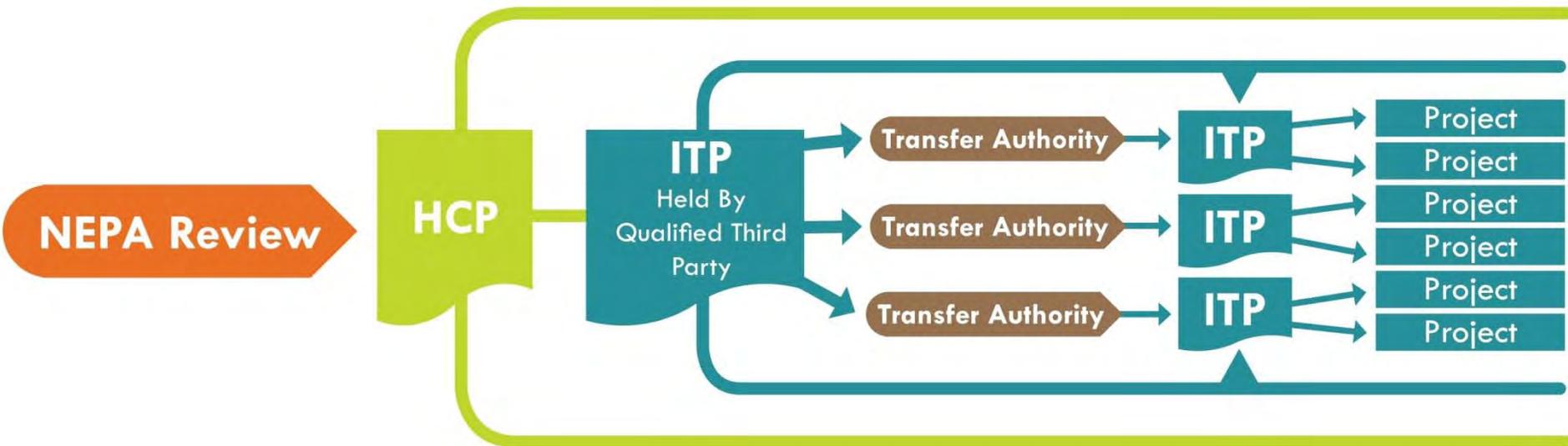
One HCP with a separate ITP issued to each WEWAG company. Each company-specific ITP would need to meet issuance criteria and be consistent with the Final EIS/ROD and Section 7 Consultation under ESA.



Permitting structures that may be considered as part of the Proposed Action Alternative

Primary Permit HCP:

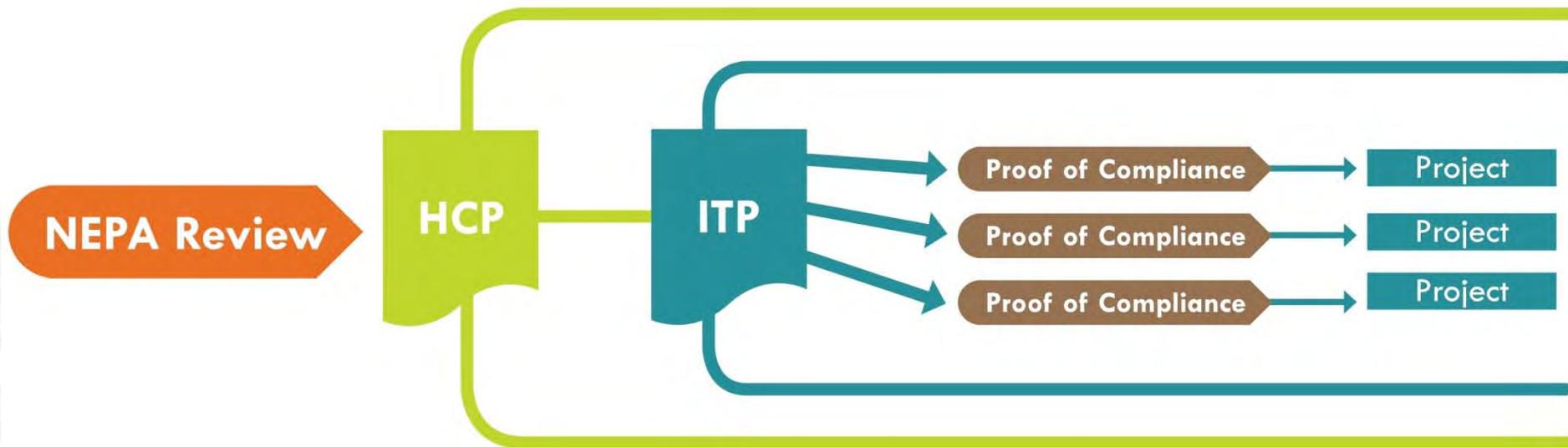
One HCP with one initial ITP (held by a qualified third party) from which authorization is transferred to separate WEWAG project ITPs through review by both the third party and the Service. Each company-specific ITP would need to meet issuance criteria and be consistent with the Final EIS/ROD and Section 7 Consultation under ESA.



Permitting structures that may be considered as part of the Proposed Action Alternative

Co-Permittee HCP:

One HCP with one ITP under which all members of WEWAG are named co-permittees. Prior to initiating a project, a co-permittee must submit proof of compliance with the ITP to the Service.

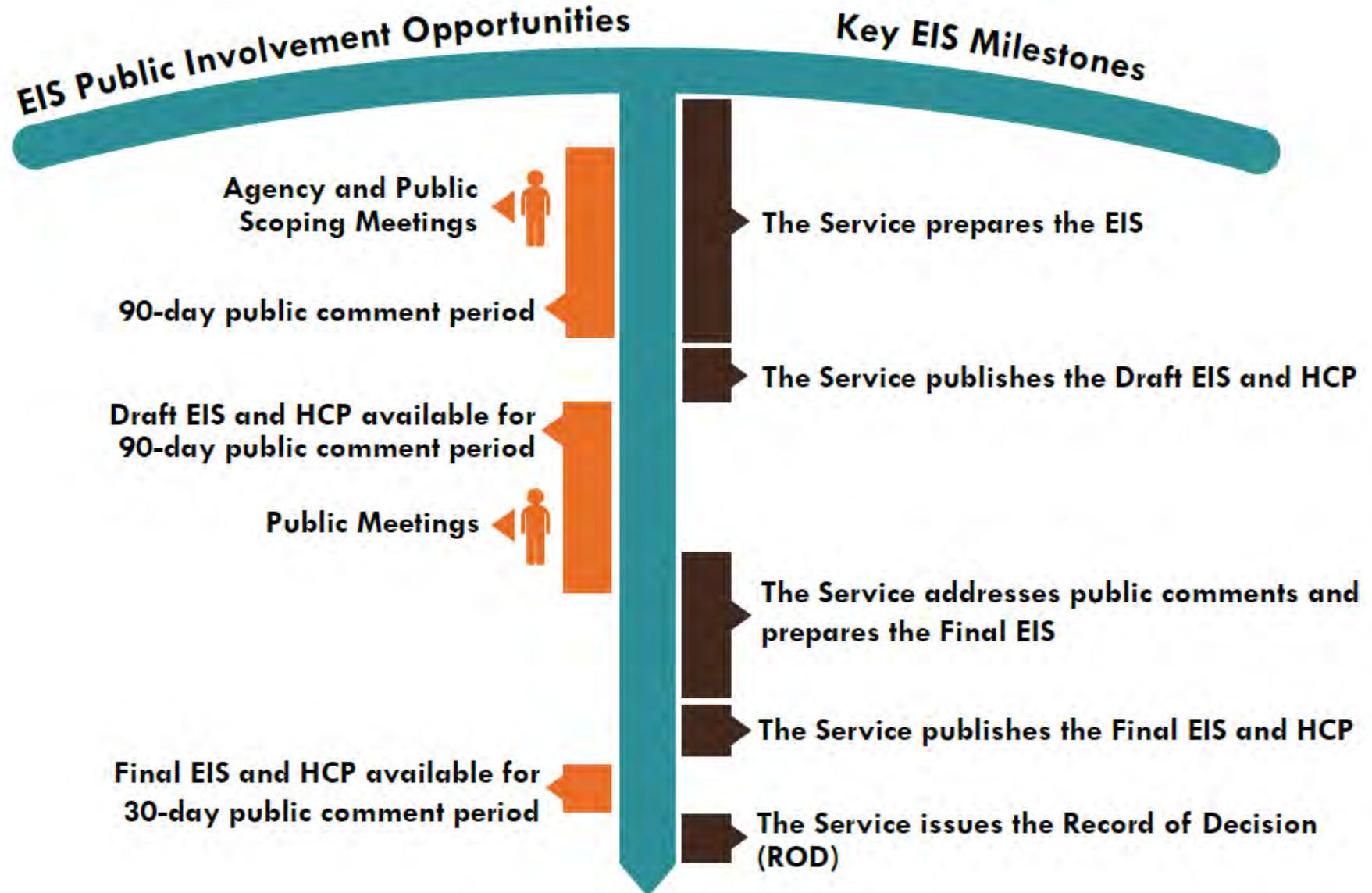


What kind of issues will the EIS analyze?

- Air quality (including greenhouse gas emissions)
- Archaeology
- Architectural history
- Aviation/airspace
- Biological resources (including vegetation, wildlife, threatened and endangered species and their habitat)
- Hazardous materials and solid waste management
- Human health and safety
- Hydrology
- Infrastructure (including new wind transmission connections)
- Land use (including prime and unique farmland)
- Noise and vibration
- Physiography/topography (including geology)
- Recreation (including hunting)
- Sites of religious and cultural significance to tribes
- Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice
- Soils
- Special status species
- Surface waters and floodplains
- Transportation (including new access roads)
- Utilities
- Visual resources and aesthetics
- Water quality
- Wetlands and waters of the U.S.
- **Other issues and resources identified throughout the scoping period**



What is the Timeline for the EIS?



What is EIS scoping?

Established by NEPA, scoping is an **early and open phase in the EIS** process intended to provide interested or affected parties **an opportunity to express concerns, ideas, and comments**, which will help the Service identify and prioritize the issues and alternatives to be analyzed in the EIS.

How can you participate during and after scoping?

- There are several opportunities to participate throughout the EIS process:
- Participate in scoping and public meetings
- Provide written comments via mail, email, or fax
- Review and comment on the Draft EIS document when it is published
- Review and comment on the Final EIS document when it is published

ALL SCOPING COMMENTS ARE DUE BY OCTOBER 12, 2011



How can you submit a comment?



Leave a comment at this meeting, or via:

Email: WindEnergyHCPComments@fws.gov

Mail: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Attention: Laila Lienesch
P.O. Box 1306
Albuquerque, NM 87103-1306

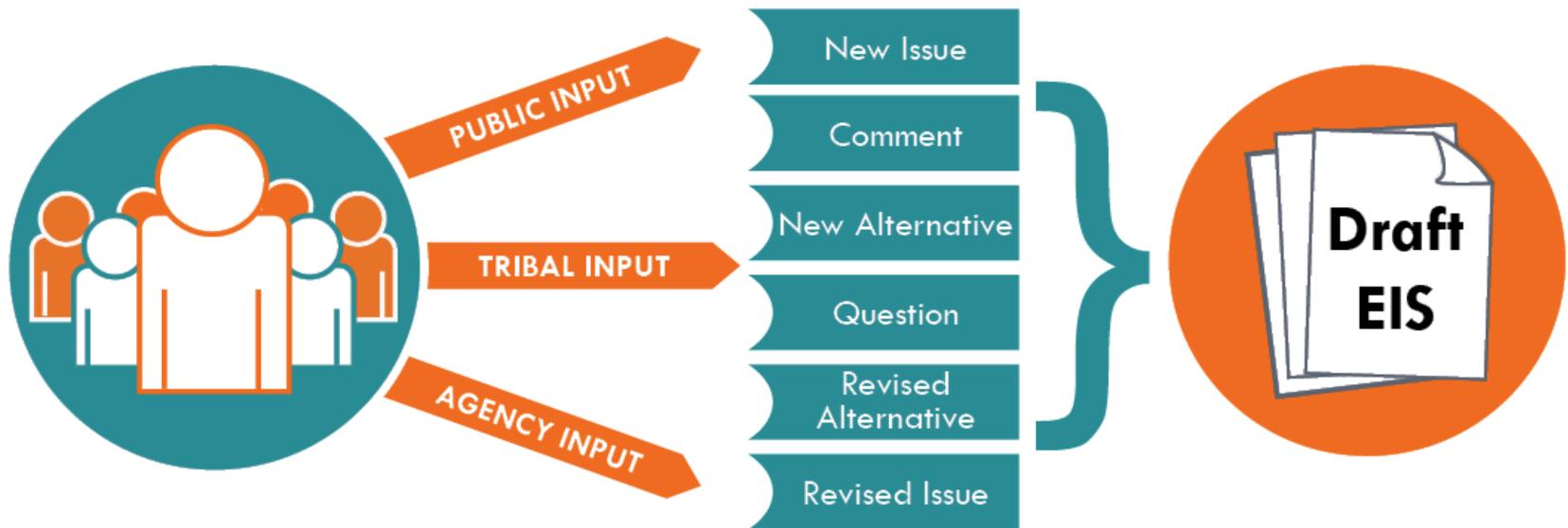
Phone: 505-248-6494 (Laila Lienesch)

Fax: 505-248-6922 (Attention: Laila Lienesch)



How will your input be used?

The feedback we receive during the scoping process will be used to refine the scope of the EIS and highlight issues important to the public and Federal, state, local, and tribal agencies.



More information about the project

For more information, visit:

www.fws.gov/southwest

or contact Laila Lienesch

505-248-6494; laila.lienesch@fws.gov



Questions and Discussion

- Questions?
- Comments?
- Discussion...

