

**Wind Turbine Advisory Committee  
Information Planning and Consultation System (IPaC) Briefing  
Webcast Summary**

**March 6, 2009**

- Abby Arnold, *facilitator*, welcomed FAC members, alternates, technical experts, and the public and went over groundrules for the webcast. Dave Stout, *USFWS/Committee DFO and Chairman.*, introduced the presenter, Michael Horton, *USFWS Division of Endangered Species, National Section 7 Coordinator.*
- Arnold told the FAC members that they will be asked at the next webcast to decide whether they would like to hold the June meeting in Austin, Texas. She also clarified that the FAC will be developing two different products: policy recommendations directed to the Secretary of the Interior, as well as guidance directed to wind developers.
- Horton explained that the FWS began developing the IPaC system in order to move a large number of projects more efficiently through the Endangered Species Act permitting and compliance process, and to make natural resource information more readily available to project proponents. The powerpoint presentation on IPaC is available at:  
[http://www.fws.gov/habitatconservation/windpower/wind\\_turbine\\_advisory\\_committee.html](http://www.fws.gov/habitatconservation/windpower/wind_turbine_advisory_committee.html), and the IPaC system can be accessed at <http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>.
- Stout stated that a “module” for wind energy on IPaC can be developed in stages to cover more and more regions of the country depending on interest from the wind industry and on availability of funding. Horton noted that the FWS has made a commitment to accelerate the development of IPaC.
- Horton answered questions from FAC members, alternates, and technical experts during the webcast, and the public submitted questions and comments electronically, some of which were read aloud by the facilitator, as time allowed.

Questions:

- What is the point at which the IPaC process goes “offline” and directly to interpersonal contacts with the FWS?
  - A: The process starts online, then the project proponent contacts the field office, and they work together to assess the site and put together the appropriate documents. The level of interaction would depend on many factors, including how routine the activity is. FWS biologists continue to be part of the consultation process.
- If project proponents adopt the recommended BMPs, does this automatically qualify them as being unlikely to adversely affect the site?

- Is IPaC set up so that both the project proponent and the federal agency can enter information about a project at same time?
  - A: IPaC is set up for any development activity and any project proponent, not just for projects with a federal nexus. The FWS biologists enter information about specific projects through a different, internal FWS database called the Tracking and Integrated Logging System (TAILS), and the project proponent enters information into IPaC. These two databases are shared through the FWS Environmental Conservation Online System (ECOS) database, but a FWS biologist can't change the information that the project proponent enters into IPaC. The TAILS database *responds* to what is entered into IPaC. Eventually there will be an environmental baseline tracking system that links all of these databases. If a project proponent doesn't want FWS storing their information on a project, it can be housed on their hard drive and provided when entering the IPaC system.
  
- Can project proponents conduct a trial run for a site before they are sure they want to proceed with the project, and then enter it into IPaC later once it sited?
  - A: Yes, a project proponent may design several different projects on IPaC to see what their different impacts might be.
  
- Will IPaC include state listed species?
  - A: Yes, at a future date; the FWS plans to begin coordinating with the states towards end of 2009.
  
- Who inputs a site's data from recording and monitoring into IPaC? Is there any oversight, especially to determine whether best management practices (BMPs) should be revised?
  - A: The project proponents self-report and the FWS reviews and evaluates some of the results, which are shared through the ECOS database.
  
- Are Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) and post-construction monitoring of specific BMPs entered into IPaC as well?
  - A: Yes, HCPs that have specific BMPs can be entered into IPaC and followed up on.
  
- Will IPaC generate information for the broader Section 7 range even if the species may not actually be located throughout that region?
  - A: Yes, IPaC will cover the entire habitat range for Section 7 species.
  
- How is wind energy going to interface with IPaC?
  - A: Projects do not have to have a federal nexus to use IPaC. Wind energy is another development sector that could be added to the system.

- Will IPaC provide lists of other potential projects in a project area?
  - A: IPaC is not yet linked to a permitting database, but they hope to develop this capability.
- How does IPaC help with the development of environmental assessments?
  - A: IPaC will ask a series of questions related to impacts, project design, etc, and stores this as an information packet. FWS hopes to develop template environmental assessments or environmental impact statements that the user can input this information into.
- To what extent will FWS be able to protect the confidentiality of data requests?
  - A: They are confidential.

Other Questions:

- Where is the species list derived from?
- Does the IPaC system offer a way to address differences between state and federal recommendations concerning certain species?