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To: "midwestwindhcp@fws.gov" <midwestwindhcp@fws.gov>
cc: "Mcclendon, Danny D MVS" <Danny.D.Mcclendon@usace.army.mil>
Subject: MSHCP for Wind Energy Projects (UNCLASSIFIED)

09/27/2012 02:42 PM

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Caveats: NONE

Rick Amidon,

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District is taking the lead on providing comments on the subject proposal. However, due to the number of Corps Districts involved, as well as our Divisions and Headquarters, our letter will not arrive by the due date of October 1, 2012. However, comments will be sent as soon as possible.

If you have any questions please contact me at (314) 331-8574 or my email address.

Thanks.

Danny

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Caveats: NONE



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
ST. LOUIS DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
1222 SPRUCE STREET
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI 63103-2833

OCT 4 2012

Operations, Readiness,
and Regulatory Division
Regulatory Branch

Mr. Rick Amidon
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecological Services
5600 American Boulevard West, Suite 990
Bloomington, Minnesota 55437-1458

Dear Mr. Amidon:

I am responding to Mr. Richard Nelson's letter dated August 30, 2012, regarding the intent of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to develop a Midwest Wind Energy Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) for all or parts of the eight states in the USFWS Midwest Region. More specifically, you have requested information and comment from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) on the planning process, permitting approach, biological aspects of the interaction of wind facilities and species, and any information that interested parties would like to offer.

It is my understanding that you have sent a similar letter to my fellow District Commanders in the Rock Island and Chicago Districts of the Corps. The following Corps Districts have geographic boundaries within the eight state region proposed in your study: St. Louis, Rock Island, Memphis, St. Paul, Kansas City, Omaha, Little Rock, Chicago, Louisville, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Detroit, and Huntington. Therefore, all of these Corps Districts within the study area should be involved in the development of the MSHCP and will be able to provide specific information for Section 404/10 Regulatory permitting and any potential impacts to Corps regulated resources, as this process develops. Due to the limited information in your letter, and Federal Register Notice of Intent, it is difficult to provide specific comments at this time. However, discussions among the Corps Districts listed above, identified the following comments:

a. We assume that this MSHCP will be a programmatic document, with a programmatic Incidental Take Permit (ITP), that would preclude the need for the Corps to enter into formal consultation with the USFWS. This topic will need to be discussed in detail.

b. In regards to currently listed endangered and threatened species, the USFWS will need to develop consistent standards and conditions between the different states and regions. In addition, there will need to be in-depth discussions about what are "covered species" and the process of adding additional species that are not currently listed or proposed for listing.

c. The MSHCP will need to define if the study will include off-shore as well as land-based wind facilities and impacts.

d. Clarification will be needed regarding what various development activities would be associated with wind energy projects and how those activities will be addressed in the MSHCP. This will be especially important in identifying tree clearing, construction of access roads, substations, transmission lines, and river and stream crossings, any of which could affect Corps reviews for Section 404/10 permits or other impacts to Corps properties.

Your letter indicated that the USFWS anticipates the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed MSHCP. If the Corps is requested to become a Cooperating Agency for the EIS, then much more detailed comments and input will be generated from that effort. At this time the point of contact for the St. Louis District is Mr. Danny McClendon of my Regulatory Branch. He can be reached at the above address, or at (314) 331-8574. We will coordinate with the other Corps Districts, Divisions, and Headquarters to determine the most efficient way to work together as partners, and to provide you points of contact for this study.

Thank you for requesting our input into this important regional endeavor. Should you have any questions, please contact my Executive Assistant, Ms. Julie Ziino at 314-331-8016 or me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C.G. Hall". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Christopher G. Hall
Colonel, U.S. Army
District Commander