



MidAmerican Energy Company Wind Energy Facilities Public Scoping Meeting

The USFWS encourages you to provide written comments on the following topics:

- ◆ Reasonable alternatives (what could MEC or the USFWS do to avoid or minimize take?)
- ◆ Mitigation measures (what should be done to offset the impacts to covered species?)
- ◆ Likely significant adverse impacts (what important issues should be analyzed in the EIS?)
- ◆ Any other data or information that should be included in the EIS

Project Team in Attendance

Amber Schorg, USFWS
 Kraig McPeck, USFWS
 Jenny McIvor, MidAmerican
 Terry VanDeWalle, Stantec
 Molly Gillespie, Stantec



Question or Comments?

For questions or comments this evening, you may talk to any of the Project Team in attendance. Additional comments can be submitted using the comment forms provided.

Questions, concerns or comments you have about the NEPA process and your participation may be sent to:

Ms. Amber Schorg
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Rock Island Ecological Services Office
 1511 47th Avenue
 Moline, Illinois 61265
 309-757-5800 x222
 amber_schorg@fws.gov

Visit <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/rockisland/te/index.html> for more information and copies of presentations and handouts.

Public Meeting Locations and Dates

Public scoping meetings are being held at the following locations and times:

Online—

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/rockisland/te/index.html>

May 10, 2016 (1-2 PM)

Council Bluffs Public Library
 May 17, 2016 (5:30 - 7 PM; presentation at 6 PM)
 40 Willow Avenue
 Council Bluffs, IA 51503
 Phone: (712) 323 - 7553

FFA Enrichment Center
 May 18, 2016 (5:30 - 7 PM; presentation at 6 PM)
 1055 SW Prairie Trail Parkway
 Ankeny, IA 50023
 Phone: (515) 965—7372



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NEPA Process and Schedule

Scoping

Issue Notice of Intent in Federal Register

April 2016

Conduct Public Scoping Meetings

May 2016

Compile Scoping Comments

June 2016

Data Collection and Analysis to Evaluate Alternatives

June 2016

Draft EIS

Prepare and Release Draft EIS

Spring 2017

Hold Public Hearings

Spring 2017

Final EIS

Respond to Comments on Draft EIS

Summer 2017

Prepare and Release Final EIS

Fall 2017

Record of Decision (ROD)

USFWS makes Final Decision

Winter 2017

Why are we here?

MidAmerican Energy Company (MEC) is preparing an application to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) for the endangered Indiana bat, threatened northern long-eared bat, little brown bat, and bald eagle (the covered species).

USFWS is the lead federal agency overseeing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental review process for the issuance of a take permit. Under the NEPA process, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared to document the program purpose and need and alternatives, and to assess the environmental impacts associated with the program.

Representatives from USFWS are available to explain the NEPA process and take public comments. Comments provided at this meeting, and other comments provided during the scoping period, will help USFWS to determine the scope of the EIS and to focus on the environmental resources most important to the public. MEC representatives are also present to discuss the proposed program and alternatives.

National Environmental Policy Act

The NEPA of 1969, as amended, requires federal agencies (the USFWS in this case) to evaluate and disclose the effects of their proposed actions (issuance of an ITP in this case) on the natural and human environment. The NEPA process is intended to help federal agencies make decisions that are based on an understanding of potential environmental consequences, and take actions that protect, restore, and enhance the environment. NEPA regulations provide the direction to achieve that purpose.



Why is the program needed?

MEC has installed more than 4,000 megawatts (MW) of wind generation capacity in Iowa and continues to develop wind projects across the state.

To address potential impacts to covered species at MEC's Iowa wind-energy facilities, MEC is currently developing a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).

Endangered Species Act: Section 9 of the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) prohibits “take” of federally-listed fish and wildlife. Take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture or collect, or attempt to engage in any such conduct”. The USFWS may issue permits to authorize “incidental take” under section 10(a) of the ESA provided the following ITP criteria are met:

- ◆ The taking will be incidental to an otherwise lawful action;
- ◆ The applicant will, to the maximum extent practicable, minimize and mitigate the impact of such taking;
- ◆ The applicant will develop a proposed HCP and ensure that adequate funding for the plan will be provided;
- ◆ The taking will not appreciably reduce the likelihood of the survival and recovery of the species in the wild; and
- ◆ The applicant will carry out any other measures as required by the Secretary of the Interior.

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act: The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) prohibits take and disturbance of eagles and their nests. The USFWS may extend take authorization through an ESA permit provided the applicant meets the terms of the ITP and is in full compliance with BGEPA.

Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs)

An HCP is the mechanism by which a “take” permit by a non-federal entity is obtained. HCPs are planning documents required as part of an ITP application. The required elements of an HCP are:

- ◆ Impacts that will likely result from the taking;
- ◆ Steps the applicant will take to minimize and mitigate such impacts, and the funding that will be available to implement such actions;
- ◆ Alternative actions to the taking the applicant considered and the reasons why such alternatives are not being utilized;
- ◆ Other measures required by the Secretary of the Interior.

The HCP then must address the project impacts, which requires:

- ◆ Defining the plan area;
- ◆ Collecting and synthesizing biological data for the covered species;
- ◆ Identifying which activities proposed are likely to result in incidental take;
- ◆ Quantifying the anticipated levels of take.

HCPs can apply to both listed and non-listed species, including candidates or species proposed for listing.

HCP Process

- Define Plan Area
- Generate Species List
- Gather Biological Data
- Proposed Activities
- Determine Significance of Anticipated Incidental Take
- Develop Draft HCP
- Complete Draft HCP and Draft NEPA Document
- Public Comment Period
- Final HCP and Final NEPA Document
- USFWS Decision
- ITP Issued

Five-Point Policy

The Five-Point Policy clarifies elements of the HCP program and directs that the following elements be addressed during the development of an HCP:

1. Biological goals and objectives, which define the expected biological outcome for each covered species;
2. Adaptive management, which includes methods for addressing uncertainty and also monitoring and feedback to biological goals and objectives;
3. Monitoring for compliance, effectiveness, and effects;
4. Permit duration, which is determined by the time-span of the project and designed to provide the time needed to achieve biological goals and address biological uncertainty; and
5. Public participation according to the NEPA.

Covered Species

The MEC Wind Energy Facilities HCP addresses incidental take of four covered species:

- Indiana Bat:** federally endangered, range includes portions of southern Iowa
- Northern long-eared bat:** federally threatened, range is state-wide
- Little brown bat:** not presently listed but may be in the future, range is state-wide
- Bald eagle:** not ESA listed but protected under BGEPA, range is state-wide



Covered Activities: the HCP will potentially cover construction, operation, maintenance and repair, decommissioning and reclamation, and repowering of commercial wind energy projects in Iowa, as well as management of compensatory mitigation lands and monitoring activities.



Plan Area: the State of Iowa

