

**USFWS Virtual Public Meeting for the Northern Long-eared Bat  
Reclassification from Threatened to Endangered**

**Virtual Public Meeting Transcript**

**April 7, 2022, 6:00-8:30pm Central Time**

00:00:03.179 --> 00:00:15.480

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Hello everyone I 'd like to welcome you all to the US Fish and Wildlife Service's virtual public meeting for the proposal to reclassify the northern long-eared bat from threatened to endangered.

00:00:15.900 --> 00:00:23.700

EMPSi - Megan Stone: We're going to give folks a few minutes here to join the meeting and then we'll begin in the PowerPoint presentation shortly, so please stay tuned.

00:00:24.240 --> 00:00:36.810

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I do want to note that closed captioning will be available in a moment by selecting the closed caption icon at the bottom of your Zoom screen if you are using the Zoom web platform or Zoom app on your computer.

00:01:11.820 --> 00:01:21.120

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Welcome everyone to tonight's meeting. We're going to give folks a few more minutes to join the webinar so please stay tuned and we will begin the presentation shortly.

00:01:21.570 --> 00:01:33.930

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Again, I do want to note that closed captioning will be available in a moment by selecting the closed caption icon at the bottom of your Zoom screen if you're using the Zoom web portal or Zoom app on your computer.

00:01:34.710 --> 00:01:43.800

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And, before we begin, I'd like to call everyone's attention to the Service's northern long-eared bat species page listed at the bottom of the slide.

00:01:44.250 --> 00:01:58.980

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Today's presentation and recording will be found at that address, and we'll add this link to the Zoom chat as well. For those joining by phone that link is [www.fws.gov/](http://www.fws.gov/)

00:01:59.700 --> 00:02:14.460

EMPSi - Megan Stone: species/northern-long-eared-bat-myotis-septentrionalis

00:02:15.390 --> 00:02:34.980

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And I'm going to spell that out again for everyone- www.fws.gov backslash species S-P-E-C-I-E-S backslash northern N-O-R-T-H-E-R-N

00:02:35.370 --> 00:03:05.730

EMPSi - Megan Stone: dash long L-O-N-G dash eared E-A-R-E-D dash bat B-A-T dash myotis M-Y-O-T-I-S dash septentrionalis S-E-P-T-E-N-T-R-I-O-N-A-L-I-S. And again we're going to give folks just a few more seconds to join the webinar.

00:03:27.000 --> 00:03:38.520

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Again. Hello everyone, we're going to go ahead and get started with our meeting today. My name is Megan Stone, a contractor for the US Fish and Wildlife Service

00:03:39.840 --> 00:03:45.390

EMPSi - Megan Stone: and we would like to thank you all for joining us- we appreciate your time and participation.

00:03:46.680 --> 00:03:56.850

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And I'm going to be one of your meeting facilitators today. Additionally, I have several members of the US Fish and Wildlife Service with me on the meeting today

00:03:57.240 --> 00:04:10.860

EMPSi - Megan Stone: who will be answering your questions and listening to your public comments, including members of the Region Three Management Team, such as Lori Nordstrom, Region Three assistant regional director for ecological services

00:04:11.730 --> 00:04:22.710

EMPSi - Megan Stone: and Shauna Marquardt, field supervisor of the Minnesota-Wisconsin ecological service field office. Here is our expected agenda for the meeting tonight:

00:04:23.310 --> 00:04:36.210

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I will first go over some brief ground rules for tonight's meeting. Then the Fish and Wildlife service will provide a

PowerPoint presentation on the proposed listing which will last approximately 30 minutes.

00:04:37.050 --> 00:04:51.780

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Then, the Service will answer any questions you may have about the proposed rule for about 60 minutes and in a question-and-answer session. We will then begin our verbal public comment portion of the meeting, starting at 7:30pm central time.

00:04:52.830 --> 00:04:58.320

EMPSi - Megan Stone: The verbal public comment portion of the hearing will last until 8:30pm central time.

00:04:58.800 --> 00:05:06.330

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And to be clear, the Service has several subject matter experts available to answer questions during the Q & A portion of the meeting,

00:05:06.840 --> 00:05:16.800

EMPSi - Megan Stone: but when the formal public hearing begins at 7:30 central time the comments are collected for the record, and the Service staff are not responding to these comments tonight.

00:05:17.430 --> 00:05:26.970

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All comments received during this public hearing and the open public comment period will be fully considered by the Service before any final rule is published.

00:05:31.620 --> 00:05:36.570

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Before we get started with the presentation, I'm going to go over some ground rules for the meeting.

00:05:37.140 --> 00:05:44.400

EMPSi - Megan Stone: First, this meeting is being recorded as part of the record and the recording will be posted to the US FWS website.

00:05:44.940 --> 00:05:49.800

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Second, your microphones and videos will be turned off for the duration of the meeting today.

00:05:50.220 --> 00:06:01.650

EMPSi - Megan Stone: You will only be unmuted if and when I unmute you during the question-and-answer session if you are a phone caller or for the verbal public comment portion of the meeting, if you are commenting.

00:06:02.370 --> 00:06:07.500

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Questions will be addressed during the question-and-answer session after the PowerPoint presentation.

00:06:08.070 --> 00:06:16.410

EMPSi - Megan Stone: We will do our best to address the questions in the order they come in to allow everyone an opportunity to voice their questions. Instructions for

00:06:16.860 --> 00:06:23.190

EMPSi - Megan Stone: how to submit questions electronically during the session will be provided after the Service's presentation.

00:06:23.670 --> 00:06:36.450

EMPSi - Megan Stone: We will allow those joining by computer to submit questions electronically, and those joining by phone to submit questions verbally, as they do not have access to the chat feature to submit questions electronically.

00:06:37.380 --> 00:06:50.250

EMPSi - Megan Stone: After the question-and-answer session, we will then move on to the verbal public hearing portion of the meeting, during which we will accept further public comments from participants who have joined tonight's meeting.

00:06:50.880 --> 00:07:04.020

EMPSi - Megan Stone: If you registered before the start time of today's meeting and indicated that you want to offer verbal public comment tonight, you are on our list of pre-registered commenters and will be called on during the public comment portion.

00:07:04.560 --> 00:07:12.870

EMPSi - Megan Stone: If you registered after the meeting started, we will do our best to reserve some time for you to have an opportunity to offer your verbal public comment today.

00:07:13.650 --> 00:07:18.330

EMPSi - Megan Stone: If we have time remaining after we have gone through our list of pre-registered commenters,

00:07:18.720 --> 00:07:33.840

EMPSi - Megan Stone: we will open the verbal public comment portion of the meeting up to anyone who would like to offer a verbal public comment today who has not already done so, regardless of whether you

selected yes or no to commenting when you registered for today's meeting.

00:07:35.070 --> 00:07:47.610

EMPSi - Megan Stone: If you do not get the opportunity to offer your verbal public comment tonight, written public comments can be submitted electronically at regulations.gov or via hard copy and we'll send that

00:07:48.150 --> 00:07:57.720

EMPSi - Megan Stone: information out in the chat in a moment here. Both the website and mailing addresses will also be given at other points in today's presentation.

00:07:58.350 --> 00:08:10.740

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And we do want to remind everyone that the comment period will be open through May 23<sup>rd</sup> and we will provide further information on how to submit your written public comments after the presentation.

00:08:11.730 --> 00:08:24.960

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I will now turn it over to Jill Urtrup, who is the recovery lead for the northern long-eared bat, and she is going to lead us through the US Fish and Wildlife Service's PowerPoint presentation. Over to you, Jill.

00:08:29.010 --> 00:08:35.070

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Thank you, Megan. I wanted to turn my camera on just briefly just to introduce myself quickly.

00:08:36.390 --> 00:08:50.730

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Again, my name is Jill Utrup, and I am with the US Fish and Wildlife Service in the Minnesota-Wisconsin ecological services field office. We really appreciate you joining us tonight, and with that I'll stop sharing my video and get started.

00:08:55.860 --> 00:09:07.080

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Alright, so this presentation is intended to be an information sharing session where we describe the rationale that led us to the decision to propose up listing the northern long-eared bat throughout its range.

00:09:07.740 --> 00:09:19.290

Jill Utrup - USFWS: I will also talk about what the Fish and Wildlife Service has planned as follow up to the proposal, as well as

opportunities for stakeholders and partners to provide comments and feedback that we can consider as we

00:09:19.650 --> 00:09:24.720

Jill Utrup - USFWS: coordinate internally and externally, leading to our final decision later this year.

00:09:27.690 --> 00:09:28.020

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Next slide.

00:09:31.350 --> 00:09:38.430

Jill Utrup - USFWS: The northern long-eared bat is a wide-ranging bat species found in 37 states and eight provinces in North America.

00:09:39.000 --> 00:09:46.620

Jill Utrup - USFWS: It typically overwinters in caves or mines, known as hibernacula, and spends the remainder of the year in forested habitats.

00:09:47.160 --> 00:09:56.220

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Sensitive life stages for the bat are the time in summer when groups of females roost in trees called maternity roosts with their single offspring, or pup,

00:09:56.790 --> 00:10:05.160

Jill Utrup - USFWS: and when they are overwintering in hibernacula. The northern long-eared bat forages nocturnally and consumes a tremendous amount of insects nightly.

00:10:06.300 --> 00:10:07.110

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Next slide please.

00:10:11.280 --> 00:10:23.310

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Since some of you might not be familiar with the history of northern long-eared bat, I wanted to share an overview of the timeline of events since the original listing. We listed the northern long-eared bat as Threatened in 2015

00:10:24.810 --> 00:10:30.450

Jill Utrup - USFWS: because of the impacts for white-nose syndrome, a disease of hibernating bats that I will explain in a later slide.

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Jill Utrup - USFWS: Threatened means the species is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

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Jill Utrup - USFWS: Threatened designations allow us to define the measures necessary for the conservation of the species through section 4(d) of the Endangered Species Act,

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Jill Utrup - USFWS: so in 2016 we published a 4(d) rule that clarified these measures, as well as activities that would not be prohibited given the threat was white-nose syndrome.

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Jill Utrup - USFWS: The Fish and Wildlife Service was litigated over the Threatened determination shortly after listing in 2015

00:11:11.490 --> 00:11:21.870

Jill Utrup - USFWS: and in 2020 the court remanded that determination back to us with a court-ordered deadline for a new proposed and final by November of 2022.

00:11:22.830 --> 00:11:36.720

Jill Utrup - USFWS: If the currently proposed action is finalized, we would reclassify the northern long-eared bat as an endangered species, and because 4(d) rules are not available for Endangered species, we would remove its species specific 4(d) rule.

00:11:37.680 --> 00:11:45.330

Jill Utrup - USFWS: The species' current status of threatened with a 4(d) rule will remain in place until the final rule becomes effective.

00:11:46.380 --> 00:11:47.220

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Next slide please.

00:11:50.880 --> 00:12:01.740

Jill Utrup - USFWS: The Fish and Wildlife Service completed a Species Status Assessment, or SSA, in 2021 that informed our proposal to reclassify the northern long-eared bat as endangered.

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Jill Utrup - USFWS: Based on analysis of data submitted by partners, evaluation of the species needs and threats, and projected future

abundance and distribution, we determined the northern long-eared bat needs definition of Endangered,

00:12:15.300 --> 00:12:21.540

Jill Utrup - USFWS: which is "in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range."

00:12:22.920 --> 00:12:23.760

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Next slide please.

00:12:27.210 --> 00:12:34.140

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Results with the SSA indicate that the primary driver influencing the decline of the northern long-eared bat is white-nose syndrome,

00:12:34.620 --> 00:12:40.770

Jill Utrup - USFWS: a disease of bats caused by an invasive fungal pathogen that attacks bats when they are hibernating.

00:12:41.340 --> 00:12:55.500

Jill Utrup - USFWS: White-nose syndrome causes hibernating bats to become active when they should not be and prematurely expend their winter fat reserves. This disease is responsible for the deaths of millions of bats of multiple species.

00:12:57.720 --> 00:12:58.770

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Next slide please.

00:13:01.830 --> 00:13:13.950

Jill Utrup - USFWS: The threat of white-nose syndrome is not new but has been the foremost stressor on the northern long-eared bat for more than a decade and is the basis for our proposal to list the species as endangered.

00:13:14.790 --> 00:13:23.340

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Pd, the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome, is present at 99 to 100% of hibernacula for northern long-eared bat.

00:13:24.120 --> 00:13:37.170

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Since it was first detected in New York in 2006, the range of Pd in North America has increased steadily, primarily via bat-to-bat or bat-to-environment-to-bat transmission.

00:13:37.920 --> 00:13:50.910



Jill Utrup - USFWS: Pd or white-nose syndrome is currently presumed or confirmed in 41 states and eight Canadian provinces. You can see the red "X" indicating where it was first discovered in New York state

00:13:51.420 --> 00:13:59.640

Jill Utrup - USFWS: and the continuum of cold warm colors shows how it has spread to the west in just 15 years. Next slide please.

00:14:03.300 --> 00:14:12.420

Jill Utrup - USFWS: The results of our assessment also show that since the emergence of white-nose syndrome, northern long-eared bat abundance and distribution have decreased dramatically.

00:14:12.900 --> 00:14:25.740

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Abundance has declined by 97 to 100% across 79% of the entire range since listing as threatened, and 91% of winter colonies have fewer than 100 individuals.

00:14:26.430 --> 00:14:33.600

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Current and future projection projections indicate continued downward population trends. By 2030,

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Jill Utrup - USFWS: which is approximately one generation for this species, range wide abundance of the northern long-eared bat is predicted to be declined by 95% and spatial extent is projected to decline by 75% compared to the historical addition.

00:14:51.390 --> 00:14:59.610

Jill Utrup - USFWS: The northern long-eared bat's ability to recover from these low abundances is limited given their low reproductive output of one pup per year.

00:15:01.200 --> 00:15:02.190

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Next slide please.

00:15:05.040 --> 00:15:11.370

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Since before listing the northern long-eared bat in 2015, the Service has taken a proactive approach

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Jill Utrup - USFWS: to the conservation of the species and managing the threat of white-nose syndrome and other stressors. We developed the white-nose syndrome National Plan in 2011

00:15:21.570 --> 00:15:33.180

Jill Utrup - USFWS: to guide partners in managing the disease and work collaboratively with researchers and land managers to explore innovative solutions and approaches that address mortality concerns.

00:15:33.720 --> 00:15:45.540

Jill Utrup - USFWS: We've worked with industry and agency partners to develop practical avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures where project related impacts to the species are likely to occur.

00:15:46.260 --> 00:15:54.870

Jill Utrup - USFWS: And, together with USGS and other partners, we launched the North American Bat Monitoring Programs, a multi-national, multi-agency coordinated program

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Jill Utrup - USFWS: that implements a monitoring framework to assess status and trends in bat populations, allowing us to measure not only the impact of stressors like white-nose syndrome,

00:16:05.940 --> 00:16:10.020

Jill Utrup - USFWS: but also the effect of the actions we're taking to address those threats.

00:16:10.650 --> 00:16:25.890

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Many of the protective actions we've taken since the species was listed as threatened will continue to be relevant to the conservation of species if it is listed as endangered and more attention and focus will be directed to managing the risk to surviving populations.

00:16:27.000 --> 00:16:27.480

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Next slide.

00:16:30.240 --> 00:16:43.290

Jill Utrup - USFWS: The Service leads the collaborative response to white-nose syndrome in the United States, coordinating with over 150 partnering agencies, organizations, and institutions to implement the national response plan.

00:16:44.040 --> 00:16:52.410

Jill Utrup - USFWS: The white-nose syndrome national plan provides a framework for coordinating and managing the investigation and response to white-nose syndrome.

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Jill Utrup - USFWS: Developed as a multi-species recovery plan, it outlines a strategy to address key research management objectives and provides the framework for state, federal, and tribal coordination to address the threat of white-nose syndrome

00:17:08.250 --> 00:17:14.910

Jill Utrup - USFWS: to hibernating bats. We support research and management actions through annual grant programs

00:17:15.360 --> 00:17:24.870

Jill Utrup - USFWS: including development of management strategies to reduce impacts with treatments aimed at slowing disease spread and improving bat survival.

00:17:25.710 --> 00:17:39.990

Jill Utrup - USFWS: To date, we have awarded more than \$46 million to states, tribes, federal agencies, research institutions, and non-governmental organizations collaborating to advance our knowledge and tools available to fight the disease.

00:17:41.520 --> 00:17:42.480

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Next slide please.

00:17:45.270 --> 00:17:51.330

Jill Utrup - USFWS: The fungus that causes white-nose syndrome is established in a large part of North America and unlikely to go away.

00:17:51.930 --> 00:18:00.060

Jill Utrup - USFWS: The fungus will continue to spread affecting more bat species. Unfortunately, there is no single solution to treat or cure this disease,

00:18:00.600 --> 00:18:08.940

Jill Utrup - USFWS: but the situation will require a multi-faceted approach that incorporates diverse techniques to combat the fungus and help bats survive.

00:18:09.900 --> 00:18:15.990

Jill Utrup - USFWS: The Service and our partners are working on a suite of tools to meet a variety of management opportunities.

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Jill Utrup - USFWS: These tools aim to reduce the amount of the fungus in bat roosts and on bats using sprays of natural or synthetic compounds or using specific wavelengths of light that are harmful to the fungus.

00:18:29.700 --> 00:18:40.080

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Various conditions can be changed or controlled to make it more difficult for the fungus to survive and grow or to make hibernation and healing less demanding for bats.

00:18:40.680 --> 00:18:53.670

Jill Utrup - USFWS: We have supported researchers with USGS and partners to develop a vaccine that has been tested in the field to determine how well it can improve bats abilities to survive and fight off infections.

00:18:54.600 --> 00:19:10.410

Jill Utrup - USFWS: In addition to these direct treatments, we have also developed a variety of resources to help reduce risks from other activities like removing that from residences, maintaining bridges that serve as bat roosts, and providing rehabilitation care to sick bats.

00:19:12.000 --> 00:19:12.930

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Next slide please.

00:19:17.910 --> 00:19:26.850

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Because of their extremely low abundance due to white-nose syndrome, bat populations that survived the disease are vulnerable to impacts from many other threats.

00:19:27.360 --> 00:19:35.970

Jill Utrup - USFWS: The threats assessed in the Species Status Assessment or SSA included wind-energy related mortality, habitat loss, and climate change.

00:19:36.390 --> 00:19:44.070

Jill Utrup - USFWS: These stressors can have compounding impacts on the surviving bats, especially if they affect sensitive life stages.

00:19:44.520 --> 00:19:49.830

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Threats from wind energy and climate change are projected to increase in coming years.

00:19:50.550 --> 00:19:58.170

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Wind energy-related mortality can be a stressor that exacerbates the impacts of white-nose syndrome at local and regional levels.

00:19:58.710 --> 00:20:07.710

Jill Utrup - USFWS: While the cause of far less mortality than white-nose syndrome, wind-energy related mortality of northern long-eared bat has been documented.

00:20:08.340 --> 00:20:18.690

Jill Utrup - USFWS: There are many ongoing efforts to improve our understanding of bat interactions with wind turbines and explore strategies for reducing that mortality at wind facilities.

00:20:19.680 --> 00:20:26.160

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Temporary or permanent habitat loss may occur throughout all stages within the species' range.

00:20:26.730 --> 00:20:33.810

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Typical impacts to northern long-eared bat from habitat loss occur in a local scale to individuals and, potentially, colonies.

00:20:34.530 --> 00:20:45.870

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Impacts vary depending on the timing, location, and extent of the disturbance or removal and can be alleviated through the implementation of standard best management practices.

00:20:47.040 --> 00:20:52.290

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Northern long-eared bat is considered to have range wide exposure to the impacts of climate change

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Jill Utrup - USFWS: but there are differences across the range and potential magnitude and intensity of impacts, as well as range wide differences and the potential resiliency of bat populations in the face of climate change.

00:21:05.370 --> 00:21:24.030

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Several climate change related factors may impact bats, including changes in hibernation and mortality from extreme drought, cold, or excessive rainfall. This complexity makes the impact of climate change difficult to characterize but overall negative impacts are indeed anticipated.

00:21:25.200 --> 00:21:26.190

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Next slide please.

00:21:28.680 --> 00:21:38.430

Jill Utrup - USFWS: The Service is taking a thoughtful and strategic approach to coordination around proposed regulatory changes and thinking realistically about the risk to surviving bats.

00:21:38.730 --> 00:21:49.350

Jill Utrup - USFWS: We will continue to use the tools available under the Endangered Species Act to allow projects compatible with conservation to move forward and provide regulatory predictability.

00:21:50.370 --> 00:22:02.340

Jill Utrup - USFWS: We have many years of collective experience with the species as well as other endangered bats such as Indiana bats, gray bats, Virginia big-eared bats, and Ozark big-eared bats

00:22:02.790 --> 00:22:15.420

Jill Utrup - USFWS: and we're able to leverage that experience, with lessons learned, and available tools, including conservation measures, best management practices, and other practical means that protect sensitive life stages.

00:22:15.930 --> 00:22:25.890

Jill Utrup - USFWS: In many cases, northern long-eared bats and other forest-dwelling bats have been part of consultations and conservation plans that address the needs of that beyond a single species.

00:22:26.910 --> 00:22:42.600

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Two examples of coordination that are existing or in-development are a programmatic consultation with the US Forest Service that includes northern long-eared bat as a covered species, along with tri-colored bat, Indiana bat, and little brown bat.

00:22:43.680 --> 00:22:54.570

Jill Utrup - USFWS: This will streamline consultations on 30 national forests. There's also an established Federal Highway Administration, Federal Railroad Administration and Federal Transit Administration consultation

00:22:54.990 --> 00:23:02.130

Jill Utrup - USFWS: that covers both Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat that already streamlines consultations for transportation projects.

00:23:03.930 --> 00:23:04.830

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Next slide please.

00:23:08.460 --> 00:23:15.660

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Again, if the currently proposed action is finalized, we were to reclassify the northern long-eared bat as an endangered species,

00:23:16.110 --> 00:23:22.200

Jill Utrup - USFWS: and because 4(d) rules are not available for Endangered species, we would remove it's species-specific 4(d) rule.

00:23:22.890 --> 00:23:40.800

Jill Utrup - USFWS: The species' current status of threatened with a 4(d) rule will remain in place until the final rule becomes effective. For projects that will be completed prior to a potential final rule becoming effective in December of 2022, no further consultation is necessary.

00:23:42.450 --> 00:23:47.310

Jill Utrup - USFWS: The consultation process remains as it has been since 2016.

00:23:48.420 --> 00:23:53.100

Jill Utrup - USFWS: If the project will not be completed before the potential rule goes into effect

00:23:54.720 --> 00:24:03.690

Jill Utrup - USFWS: and the federal agency retains discretion over the action, re-initiation, or consultation could be necessary for projects that may affect the species.

00:24:04.290 --> 00:24:12.060

Jill Utrup - USFWS: We're developing guidance over the next several months for partners and stakeholders that addresses how and when re-initiation is recommended.

00:24:13.050 --> 00:24:21.330

Jill Utrup - USFWS: If you have specific questions now about your proposed project, we recommend checking in with your respective state Ecological Services Field Office for recommendations.

00:24:21.930 --> 00:24:30.660

Jill Utrup - USFWS: And we can include a link in the chat to that website where you can access contact information for your respective field office for your state.

00:24:33.570 --> 00:24:34.410

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Next slide please.

00:24:37.530 --> 00:24:46.770

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Our immediate next steps following the proposal will be to take comments through the public comment period and tonight's virtual public information meeting and hearing.

00:24:47.340 --> 00:25:01.500

Jill Utrup - USFWS: During the next eight months, we will be working internally and with partners to frame the conservation approach that focuses on surviving populations of northern long-eared bats and to develop additional tools and guidance to assist partners and stakeholders.

00:25:03.180 --> 00:25:04.050

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Next slide please.

00:25:07.890 --> 00:25:19.650

Jill Utrup - USFWS: The 60-day public comment period is open now and interested parties can submit comments through regulations.gov or by mail through May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

00:25:20.340 --> 00:25:30.240

Jill Utrup - USFWS: You can also provide your comments later tonight during the public hearing portion of tonight's meeting. You can find more information on the Service's northern long-eared bat website.

00:25:32.670 --> 00:25:33.570

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Next slide, please.

00:25:37.560 --> 00:25:44.880

Jill Utrup - USFWS: In order to best to help us with internal and external coordination, here are some ideas regarding the kind of input we're looking for.

00:25:46.080 --> 00:25:54.060



Jill Utrup - USFWS: We really appreciate your attention tonight, and with that I will now turn it back over to Megan to go through instructions for the question-and-answer portion of the meeting.

00:25:55.380 --> 00:25:59.670

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you so much, Jill. I'm going to go ahead and share my screen here again.

00:26:11.880 --> 00:26:21.480

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right, again, my name is Megan Stone with EMPSi, and I am going to be the moderator for the question-and-answer session and public comment session tonight.

00:26:21.960 --> 00:26:32.100

EMPSi - Megan Stone: We're going to begin the Q-and-A portion of this meeting. This Q-and-A portion will last approximately 60 minutes. The intent of this question-and-answer session

00:26:32.490 --> 00:26:39.600

EMPSi - Megan Stone: is to answer any substantive questions you have for the US Fish and Wildlife staff on the proposed listing.

00:26:39.930 --> 00:26:46.230

EMPSi - Megan Stone: We ask that you keep any questions related to the scope of the northern long-eared bat reclassification.

00:26:46.650 --> 00:26:55.110

EMPSi - Megan Stone: If you submitted your question when you registered for the meeting, please note that you will need to resubmit your question via the chat or over the phone.

00:26:55.590 --> 00:27:04.470

EMPSi - Megan Stone: We will do our best to answer the questions in the order they are received. I will first go over instructions for how to submit a question using the chat function

00:27:04.950 --> 00:27:22.350

EMPSi - Megan Stone: if you are using the Zoom web platform or Zoom App. After we've gone through questions submitted via the Zoom web platform or Zoom app chat feature, we will move on to participants calling in over the phone who would like to ask the question, so please stay tuned for those instructions.

00:27:23.790 --> 00:27:28.860

EMPSi - Megan Stone: At this time, if you have a question and you're using the Zoom web platform or Zoom App,

00:27:29.220 --> 00:27:38.430

EMPSi - Megan Stone: please go ahead and click on the chat icon at the bottom of your Zoom screen. If you hover your mouse over the bottom of your Zoom screen that chat icon should appear.

00:27:38.790 --> 00:27:47.700

EMPSi - Megan Stone: You may need to exit your full screen view in Zoom to see the chat icon. I've included a graphic on the screen of where you can find that chat icon.

00:27:48.150 --> 00:27:52.950

EMPSi - Megan Stone: You can then type your question in the chat box and please send it to Hosts and Panelists.

00:27:53.460 --> 00:28:02.550

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I will then read the question aloud for all participants to hear and a US Fish and Wildlife Service staff member will respond to your question aloud.

00:28:03.390 --> 00:28:14.700

EMPSi - Megan Stone: We will try to answer questions in the order they are received. Please note that there may be a pause between asking your question and a US Fish and Wildlife Service staff member answering your question.

00:28:17.250 --> 00:28:18.600

EMPSi - Megan Stone: We will now move on

00:28:19.620 --> 00:28:27.030

EMPSi - Megan Stone: to some instructions for participants calling in through the phone who would like to ask a question. So if you're calling in through the phone,

00:28:28.350 --> 00:28:38.580

EMPSi - Megan Stone: you can please press \*9 to raise your hand to let staff know you have a question. When it is your turn, I will identify you by the last four digits of your phone number.

00:28:39.060 --> 00:28:46.020

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I will then unmute you so that you can ask your question. Again, a US Fish and Wildlife Service staff member

00:28:46.770 --> 00:28:59.010

EMPSi - Megan Stone: will then respond to your question aloud. You may be muted on your end- if that is the case, we will prompt you to unmute yourself by pressing \*6. So with that we're going to go ahead and get started

00:29:00.780 --> 00:29:07.860

EMPSi - Megan Stone: with our questions coming in through the chat feature and then after we've reached the end of those we will move to our raised hands.

00:29:10.440 --> 00:29:28.170

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright, it looks like our first question is from Wesley Miller- Have the BMP's, for folks listening that's Best Management Practices, around habitat been developed? And we are going to turn that over to Jon.

00:29:41.520 --> 00:29:42.750

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Jon can you hear us?

00:29:47.220 --> 00:29:49.590

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: Yes, sorry about that.

00:29:51.390 --> 00:29:54.090

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: Um Shauna is going to be taking this question. So sorry.

00:29:57.030 --> 00:30:00.660

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Oh, thanks. Alright we're going to move to Shauna for that answer.

00:30:02.190 --> 00:30:10.140

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: Yeah, thanks. So, Shauna Marquardt, project leader in the Minnesota-Wisconsin ecological services field office.

00:30:11.130 --> 00:30:29.850

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: The question on the best management practices and the most readily available information- there is a document called Beneficial Forest Management Practices for White-nose Infected Bats and so it's voluntary guidance for land managers and woodland owners and it's specific to

00:30:30.900 --> 00:30:37.110

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: all the white nose affected, so not just northern long-eared bats, but there's good information there for others. And we're trying to put a

00:30:38.130 --> 00:30:43.920

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: link to that document in the chat- I think it will be applicable to several questions that we get this evening.

00:30:47.460 --> 00:30:59.850

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great. Thank you, Shauna. Our next question in the chat is- Which states currently have or are in the process of developing HCPs for forest management?

00:31:03.930 --> 00:31:06.900

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And we will turn that over to Shauna.

00:31:11.130 --> 00:31:19.590

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: Yeah, at this time, there are several states that are developing Habitat Conservation Plans or HCPs.

00:31:20.370 --> 00:31:27.900

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: I'll try to name them, I might have to rely on some of the other panelists to refresh my memory: Pennsylvania, Missouri...

00:31:28.470 --> 00:31:49.710

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: And then there is lake states HCPs which has three states: Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. I believe that is it, others on the call did I forget any of the states developing HCPs for forestry? Indiana also has an HCP as well.

00:31:52.920 --> 00:32:03.780

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great. Thank you, Shauna. Our next question in the chat is- Curious to know what conditions must be satisfied in order to change the bats designation.

00:32:06.420 --> 00:32:10.350

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And Shauna do you want to answer that one?

00:32:14.220 --> 00:32:15.420

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: I can jump in on this one.

00:32:16.680 --> 00:32:17.250

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: Go head Jon.

00:32:17.790 --> 00:32:27.780

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: Hi, yeah hi. I'm Jon Jaka I work for the US Fish and Wildlife Service headquarters office in Washington DC, but I am actually right down the road from Shauna and

00:32:28.920 --> 00:32:40.620

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: and Jill in Minnesota but I work remotely out of DC so yeah that's a great question. It's a little difficult to answer. So we can be, after rule is finalized, we can be petition to

00:32:41.430 --> 00:32:47.340

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: change that status at any point in time, but we would need to receive new information that will lead us to believe

00:32:47.730 --> 00:33:02.160

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: that status changes warranted and there's not necessarily a set of conditions like that can be laid out that needs to be met for that to happen. We would have to reevaluate the species status given that new information and then the managers,

00:33:02.670 --> 00:33:12.660

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, would then have to apply the policy decision about whether or not it meets the definition of threatened or endangered or not warranted at that time.

00:33:13.080 --> 00:33:24.630

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: Again, so we can be petitioned to down list or deal a species at that time, but that petition is only valid if we get additional information that we had not considered before.

00:33:28.320 --> 00:33:29.700

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great. Thank you, Jon.

00:33:31.410 --> 00:33:31.890

Alright.

00:33:33.360 --> 00:33:36.000

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Our next question is a pretty long one.

00:33:38.070 --> 00:33:45.600

EMPSi - Megan Stone: The question says- The potential impact to this reclassification will be heavily dependent on future guidance that is developed,

00:33:46.050 --> 00:33:51.030

EMPSi - Megan Stone: the protocols that are updated, and the tools that are provided to us as partners and stakeholders.

00:33:51.450 --> 00:34:09.420

EMPSi - Megan Stone: It appears that this detailed information is not going to come out until after this public comment period closes on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Can you clarify if there is a public participation process associated with the development of those guidelines' protocols and tools? And we'll turn that over to Jill.

00:34:12.750 --> 00:34:15.000

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Yeah, thanks Megan. Good question. So.

00:34:16.320 --> 00:34:24.540

Jill Utrup - USFWS: In general, you know, what we are asking, we are looking for input from the public in developing some of these guidelines and protocols and what

00:34:25.020 --> 00:34:47.640

Jill Utrup - USFWS: the public and just all different types of audiences are looking at to see. We recommend that if you have suggestions or additional questions to if you can submit those to our Twin Cities email box, which is twincities@fws.gov and we can include that in the chat as well.

00:34:49.650 --> 00:34:51.330

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great, thank you Jill.

00:34:52.800 --> 00:34:55.110

EMPSi - Megan Stone: We will be sure to paste that in the chat here.

00:34:56.640 --> 00:35:15.390

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Our next question is- At what stage is the Lake States HCP (habitat conservation plan) at and when will a decision be made on that plan? The second question here is, when will critical habitat be designated? And we're going to turn that over to Shauna.

00:35:18.870 --> 00:35:19.710

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: Thanks, Megan.

00:35:20.760 --> 00:35:29.820

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: Shauna Marquardt, again, so the Lake States HCP is- the applicants are developing a draft HCP.

00:35:30.780 --> 00:35:42.690

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: The exact timeline for that- it is probably best to reach out directly with your respective state DNR if you were in Michigan, Wisconsin, or Minnesota and ask them those details but

00:35:43.200 --> 00:35:55.860

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: I believe a draft is close to being finalized at this point. And then for the critical habitat question Megan, the second part, I'm going to send that back over to Jon.

00:35:57.450 --> 00:36:07.140

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: Yeah, great question. So we were sued as Jill had mentioned on the northern long-eared bat listing to determination. We were required to revisit the status of the species

00:36:07.470 --> 00:36:21.660

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: and that's what we're in the process of, complying with that order right now. So in terms of the critical habitat, we would refer folks to the not prudent finding published in Federal Register in 2016 that has the most up to date information on critical habitat right now.

00:36:23.940 --> 00:36:25.710

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great Thank you Jon and Shauna.

00:36:27.060 --> 00:36:36.600

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright, our next question is: WNS affects multiple bats species-is that right? and we're going to turn that over to Jon.

00:36:39.180 --> 00:36:41.430

Jonathan Reichard - USFWS: Hi everyone. I'm Jon Reichard. I work with

00:36:41.700 --> 00:36:44.790

Jonathan Reichard - USFWS: the Fish Wildlife Service's National White-nose Syndrome Response.

00:36:45.930 --> 00:36:57.870

Jonathan Reichard - USFWS: That is correct- there are 12 species that we have confirmed get white-nose syndrome. They have a wide range of severity of the disease. Some heavily affected, like the

00:36:58.620 --> 00:37:08.550

Jonathan Reichard - USFWS: northern long-eared bat and some get white-nose syndrome, technically, but do not seem to experience mortality or severe infections.

00:37:09.390 --> 00:37:22.770

Jonathan Reichard - USFWS: Beyond that, there is an additional six species that have been in contact with *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*, the fungus, and did not seem to get infections from that fungus exposure.

00:37:25.470 --> 00:37:25.830

Jonathan Reichard - USFWS: Great.

00:37:26.040 --> 00:37:27.210

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you, Jonathan.

00:37:28.470 --> 00:37:46.290

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright, our next question is: How will relisting the bats affect activities such as bat removal from buildings, tree removal, general construction, and transportation activities? How would that differ from the current 4(d) rule?

00:37:47.580 --> 00:37:51.240

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And we are going to turn that over to Shauna.

00:37:53.760 --> 00:38:05.850

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: Yeah, there are several parts to that question, and I'll do my best to answer those. So the first part, how will it affect bat removal from buildings.

00:38:07.110 --> 00:38:20.190

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: That will not preclude people from removing bats from their houses and to affect any situations for protecting human health and safety, and there are

00:38:20.910 --> 00:38:35.220

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: some acceptable management practices for wildlife nuisance operators and we can also post that in the chat that was developed, similar to the forestry BMPs developed by the white-nose syndrome team.

00:38:35.790 --> 00:38:53.760

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: It's the national response team so specific to bats that are affected by white-nose syndrome. Other parts of this



question about tree removal, general construction, and transportation-  
So those are a bit different I think that I'll

00:38:55.740 --> 00:39:14.970

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: reserve the transportation part and prep  
Karen to answer that in a second, but for tree removal nothing changes  
in the immediate term. So during this proposal period between now and  
when a final rule becomes effective, which would be

00:39:16.110 --> 00:39:26.700

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: one month after publication date. So as Jill  
mentioned in the presentation, we are set to publish a final decision  
in November. If the

00:39:27.510 --> 00:39:45.630

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: endangered uplisting moves forward that  
would be effective sometime in December, like late December, but  
between now and then agencies are consulting just as they would if it  
was 2016 up to now. So that part doesn't change.

00:39:46.800 --> 00:39:59.700

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: We're working on a series of tools to  
streamline consultation for projects that would be ongoing beyond  
December and folks might be familiar with

00:40:00.180 --> 00:40:11.400

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: that transportation consultation and Karen  
can discuss that and that determination just a little bit more, but  
that's a streamline tool that you might be familiar with.

00:40:12.540 --> 00:40:15.300

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: As far as how it will differ from the  
current 4(d)-

00:40:16.500 --> 00:40:28.110

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: those streamline tools for the 4(d) rule  
would go away but we're working in the meantime to replace those with  
other tools to serve a similar function but to represent the  
endangered

00:40:28.590 --> 00:40:38.670

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: designation that is proposed for northern  
long-eared bat. So I will pause there, and Karen do you mind filling  
in a bit on the transportation activities?

00:40:40.230 --> 00:40:50.970

Karen Herrington - USFWS: Sure. Thanks Shauna. I'm Karen Herrington. I'm the field supervisor in the Missouri ecological services field office. I'll pop my camera off while I answer that question.

00:40:52.380 --> 00:41:04.170

Karen Herrington - USFWS: So, among the programmatic consultations that Shauna mentioned, we have one that covers transportation projects.

00:41:06.090 --> 00:41:23.280

Karen Herrington - USFWS: With a suite of agencies, including the Federal Highway Administration, and we are currently in the process of working with the transportation agencies to update that consultation and we intend to have it in place

00:41:24.330 --> 00:41:29.010

Karen Herrington - USFWS: by the time it's needed at the end of December- that's the goal.

00:41:30.750 --> 00:41:42.960

Karen Herrington - USFWS: There is currently- that consultation is currently in place, and it has a key associated with it in our

00:41:43.380 --> 00:41:59.130

Karen Herrington - USFWS: IPAC system for those of you that are familiar with using that, we intend to replace it when the consultation is updated. The target is by the time we need it at the end of December. If the decision is made to

00:42:00.630 --> 00:42:01.950

Karen Herrington - USFWS: list the species as endangered.

00:42:05.070 --> 00:42:16.500

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great. Thank you, guys. Our next question is: You said in your presentation that the wind energy problem can be mitigated by best management practices.

00:42:16.920 --> 00:42:28.710

EMPSi - Megan Stone: But the report published on the topic doesn't say that it says that the effectiveness has not been documented. Wouldn't it be better to not build big wind turbines in bat habitat? And that.

00:42:29.880 --> 00:42:36.090

EMPSi - Megan Stone: person gave us a link to that report, so we have that and we're going to turn that over to Shauna.

00:42:39.360 --> 00:42:45.480

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: I think, so we have been working with various wind energy partners over

00:42:46.200 --> 00:42:59.820

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: many years, especially in the eastern United States because the Indiana bat that occurs in those states, and so there are many HCPs, Habitat Conservation Plans, that are finalized, are in development. And

00:43:00.540 --> 00:43:11.850

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: the point of those HCPs and the other tools of the Endangered Species Act are to make products compatible with conservation and compatible with recovery of species.

00:43:12.930 --> 00:43:23.820

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: You know, technology changes rapidly and there's a lot of emphasis and focus on how to minimize bat impacts by wind turbines and there has been progress and I

00:43:24.480 --> 00:43:31.890

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: didn't have a chance here to check out that report that was dropped in the question, but we'll do that for sure and,

00:43:32.580 --> 00:43:45.180

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: you know, work on providing some additional guidance to wind industry partners if they're interested and there'll be some more information on just kind of what risk is so.

00:43:46.740 --> 00:43:53.910

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: Companies are interested in the voluntary habitat conservation plan and incidental take process then

00:43:55.260 --> 00:44:06.990

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: we'll be able to share a little bit more about gauging risk and have those conversations. But we do know that there are some methods that are effective and so there's been good progress there in the last few years.

00:44:10.380 --> 00:44:11.760

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great Thank you.

00:44:13.020 --> 00:44:22.440

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright, our next question is: What are the implications for forest management if you do not have an HCP? And we're going to turn that over to Jill.

00:44:23.700 --> 00:44:23.940

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great.

00:44:23.970 --> 00:44:24.780

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Thank you Megan.

00:44:26.040 --> 00:44:44.700

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Yeah, so an uplisting to endangered, as we mentioned during the presentation, would remove the 4(d) rule and the exemption of certain activities under the rule, including those involving forest habitat modification, so you know we're definitely aware of the concern

00:44:45.990 --> 00:44:55.170

Jill Utrup - USFWS: that this change would cause for a variety of partners and stakeholders involved with forestry related actions and tree removal.

00:44:55.620 --> 00:45:06.600

Jill Utrup - USFWS: So, we will be working through the next several months to develop guidance, as I think we've already mentioned to partners, we'll provide this to partners and stakeholders.

00:45:07.410 --> 00:45:20.910

Jill Utrup - USFWS: As well as our field offices in the range of the northern and this will be done before the end of the year and address kind of a broad suite of different kind of activities, including forest management.

00:45:22.110 --> 00:45:40.080

Jill Utrup - USFWS: In the meantime, there are some existing resources that may be helpful. We recommend people review the BMP document that Shauna mentioned earlier, the Beneficial Forest Management Practices. If we haven't added that link to the in the chat, yet we can make sure to do that here.

00:45:41.670 --> 00:45:44.940

Jill Utrup - USFWS: I also see here we can put-

00:45:46.500 --> 00:46:02.760

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Oh, and also, if you would like to reach out to your local field office about specific activities, if you have questions again feel free to follow up if you have questions or specific questions as well, enlisting our twin cities email box.

00:46:04.800 --> 00:46:05.310

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Thank you.

00:46:05.880 --> 00:46:06.720

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you, Jill.

00:46:08.070 --> 00:46:19.500

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Our next question is: You mentioned projects completed before December 2022 can use the 4(d) rule and avoid consultation. Does "completed" suggest permitted or

00:46:19.500 --> 00:46:24.300

EMPSi - Megan Stone: constructed by December 2022? We're going to turn that over to Karen.

00:46:26.850 --> 00:46:38.880

Karen Herrington - USFWS: Okay for the most part we mean constructed by December of 2022 and really, it's when the final decision is effective.

00:46:40.860 --> 00:46:51.870

Karen Herrington - USFWS: There is a bit of a caveat there for federal agencies where a federal agency still retains discretion.

00:46:52.620 --> 00:47:12.600

Karen Herrington - USFWS: So if it's permitted and not constructed, but the federal agency doesn't have any discretion over the action, then there is no need to re-initiate consultation. Again, referencing the tools that we plan to have in place, one of them will be-

00:47:14.790 --> 00:47:29.400

Karen Herrington - USFWS: The goal is to have at least one of them available prior to December of 2022 so we can start referring people to that new streamline consultation process and so more to come on that.

00:47:32.130 --> 00:47:33.390

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great Thank you.

00:47:34.650 --> 00:47:51.270

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Our next question is: Does the Fish and Wildlife Service have a plan to deal with all the ongoing projects that will need to reinitiate formal consultation to continue? That could involve thousands of formal consultations. And we're going to turn that over to Karen.

00:47:54.270 --> 00:47:58.290

Karen Herrington - USFWS: Yeah, we are working on that plan right now.

00:47:59.520 --> 00:48:12.780

Karen Herrington - USFWS: We are making good progress. We expect to do something agency by agency and we're currently working on a strategy like that for the Forest Service. And, as I mentioned earlier,

00:48:13.500 --> 00:48:26.700

Karen Herrington - USFWS: the Transportation Agency is as well, and we expect to have more conversations with other agencies as time goes on, so we're working on it, we're aware of the issue and we're trying to meet the need.

00:48:29.790 --> 00:48:31.260

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great. Thank you.

00:48:32.640 --> 00:48:44.790

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Our next question is: There is a Lake States Habitat Conservation Plan being submitted and considered by the state of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan to allow a take of bats

00:48:45.180 --> 00:49:02.340

EMPSi - Megan Stone: and allow sustainable forestry projects to continue in absence of a 4(d) rule. If there is a gap between listing and acceptance of an HCP, what is the process to continue sustainable forest management in the interim? And we're going to turn that over to Shauna.

00:49:06.810 --> 00:49:19.920

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: Yeah, thank you. I apologize for the sirens in the background, it is severe weather awareness month and they're testing sirens in the Minneapolis area. So for the Lake States HCP's,

00:49:21.120 --> 00:49:37.680

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: If there is a gap, I think the best way is just to get in contact with the local field office. There's a lot of variables that go into evaluating risk and the reasonable certainty of

take and so it's really hard to provide a standard answer for that, but

00:49:39.180 --> 00:49:52.020

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: I think the DNRs are on a good track to finish that HCP. But if it does happen to be a gap, just please reach out to the field office and we will provide the best assistance we can.

00:49:54.720 --> 00:49:55.440

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you.

00:49:56.670 --> 00:50:08.460

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright, our next question is: How will utility trimming be affected? This question includes timing restrictions, diameter restrictions,

00:50:08.970 --> 00:50:20.370

EMPSi - Megan Stone: habitat requirements, mitigation measures. If these details are not known, when will they be released and when will they take effect? And we'll go with Karen.

00:50:22.260 --> 00:50:22.710

Great.

00:50:23.760 --> 00:50:41.490

Karen Herrington - USFWS: In most cases, we anticipate efforts to conserve the northern long-eared bat will have no or minor implications for utility right of way, maintenance and we've talked about the variety of tools that we're working on to

00:50:42.690 --> 00:50:45.630

Karen Herrington - USFWS: streamline Endangered Species Act compliance,

00:50:47.640 --> 00:50:54.000

Karen Herrington - USFWS: I suspect that we'll have the guidance on the kinds of things that you're mentioning

00:50:55.110 --> 00:50:58.260

Karen Herrington - USFWS: later this year, potentially in the fall.

00:51:02.550 --> 00:51:04.140

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great. Thank you so much.

00:51:05.700 --> 00:51:23.460

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Our next question is: When might we see proposed rule to list tricolored bat? Some of us are managing large landscape that will be impacted by uplisting of northern long-eared bat and probable listing of tricolored and little brown bats and we need to plan on getting

00:51:24.810 --> 00:51:29.370

EMPSi - Megan Stone: ahead of this. And Jonathan, would you like to take a crack at that?

00:51:29.850 --> 00:51:39.330

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: Yeah, I can take that one. Yeah so, I can't say anything about a proposed rule I'm not sure that there will be a proposed rule for that one. We are in the process of developing

00:51:40.200 --> 00:51:50.100

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: a status assessment for that species or we have developed a draft status assessment for that species, and we were petitioned down at some time ago, and we are on track to be able to.

00:51:51.150 --> 00:52:05.670

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: publish a 12-month finding which could either be not warranted finding, threatened finding, an endangered finding or a warranted but precluded finding. So those are all the options that could happen, and we are on track to complete that by the end of the fiscal year so that's-

00:52:07.530 --> 00:52:18.060

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: The end of that would be October of 2022. So we're on track to make that but all we know is it's going to be a 12-month finding. We don't know which direction that's heading.

00:52:21.330 --> 00:52:22.590

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great Thank you Jon.

00:52:24.090 --> 00:52:28.800

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Oh great our next question in the chat is:

00:52:31.410 --> 00:52:32.550

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Why was the bat...

00:52:33.660 --> 00:52:47.610



EMPSi - Megan Stone: Sorry, there was a typo here. Why was the bat listed as threatened, despite the fact that it is declined in its core range by over 90% since 2006? And Jill would you like to answer that one.

00:52:48.840 --> 00:52:50.310

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Sure, I can answer that one.

00:52:51.360 --> 00:53:10.950

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Yeah, so at that point, it did not meet the definition of an endangered species, so, in part, we looked at kind of the threats to the species, as we have kind of in this latest proposal, and at that point, you know, we looked at threats, especially white-nose syndrome.

00:53:11.970 --> 00:53:21.450

Jill Utrup - USFWS: And at that point the white-nose syndrome had not spread throughout the range of the species and so that kind of played into our decision at that point.

00:53:25.650 --> 00:53:27.690

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great Thank you Jill.

00:53:28.860 --> 00:53:43.080

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Our next question is, is there a pathway for a mechanism, other than an HCP for the USFWS to issue an ITP for direct mortality from when energy other than an HCP?

00:53:43.680 --> 00:53:53.220

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Something that would perhaps direct resources to where it's needed, such as WNS research funding? And we'll turn that over to Karen.

00:53:55.830 --> 00:54:02.970

Karen Herrington - USFWS: So typically, there isn't any federal agency role in

00:54:04.140 --> 00:54:06.300

Karen Herrington - USFWS: wind development.

00:54:07.710 --> 00:54:30.420

Karen Herrington - USFWS: So there is not a federal nexus to do a Section 7 consultation, it's a private development action which are covered by incidental take permits under Section 10 of the Endangered

Species Act or Habitat Conservation Planning. So, the answer is no, there's not another

00:54:31.830 --> 00:54:39.000

Karen Herrington - USFWS: pathway or mechanism to issue take coverage from impacts from wind turbines.

00:54:41.970 --> 00:54:52.800

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great. Thank you and next question is: I'm not sure if this question qualifies based on the moderator's request to keep it directly related to designation,

00:54:53.610 --> 00:54:59.940

EMPSi - Megan Stone: however, I complete Environmental Review Records for Kane County, Illinois investments.

00:55:00.870 --> 00:55:12.210

EMPSi - Megan Stone: in parentheses HUD: CDBG, HOME end parentheses. One of my jobs to determine whether or not a project may affect the habitat of the northern long-eared bat

00:55:12.660 --> 00:55:20.520

EMPSi - Megan Stone: and other listed species. Questions I must answer include distance from known hibernaculums.

00:55:21.300 --> 00:55:36.360

EMPSi - Megan Stone: My question is, will the Midwest region attempt to provide accessible data or tools such as updated maps of known location so we can make informed decisions to avoid disturbing known habitats? And we're going to turn that over to Jill.

00:55:38.550 --> 00:55:47.880

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Thanks, Megan. Yeah, so the long and short of it is we are indeed working to update the species range map for the current...

00:55:49.050 --> 00:55:58.650

Jill Utrup - USFWS: our current branch map yeah for the species, and as we are for many cc's actually with them that are currently listed or their proposed for listing.

00:55:59.700 --> 00:56:13.680

Jill Utrup - USFWS: So that's something that we're just kind of starting, we're hoping to kind of have that effort finished up

hopefully around the same time that we finish up the other guidance protocols documents that we're working on right now.

00:56:15.090 --> 00:56:15.600

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Thanks Megan.

00:56:16.890 --> 00:56:17.460

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you.

00:56:18.600 --> 00:56:34.830

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright, our next question is: The northern long-eared bat 4(d) key is no longer available on the USFWS webpage. How do we evaluate projects between now and the listing without the key? And we'll turn that over to Karen.

00:56:37.230 --> 00:57:00.780

Karen Herrington - USFWS: yeah, thanks for that question. We recently, the Fish and Wildlife Service recently underwent a migration to a new web platform, and so a lot of our links are no longer working. We can potentially send that information out after the meeting tonight, however

00:57:01.950 --> 00:57:09.150

Karen Herrington - USFWS: the IPAC system has a key built within it too.

00:57:10.560 --> 00:57:20.760

Karen Herrington - USFWS: So the northern long-eared bat 4(d) is now part of our IPAC system and that you can go directly there, and hopefully someone can post that in the chat.

00:57:22.350 --> 00:57:28.860

Karen Herrington - USFWS: You can go directly there to evaluate projects between now and the time a final decision is effective.

00:57:31.320 --> 00:57:34.800

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great, thank you Karen. The next question is:

00:57:35.970 --> 00:57:45.990

EMPSi - Megan Stone: If the northern long-eared bat is uplisted to endangered would a revision of the 2022 survey guidelines be necessary? And we're going to turn that over to Jill.

00:57:48.210 --> 00:57:59.220

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Thanks Megan. Um yeah in fact actually the survey guidance has actually been updated recently and is publicly available, we can

00:57:59.700 --> 00:58:13.470

Jill Utrup - USFWS: include- we can add that link in the chat as well. So the guidelines have been updated not only for Indiana bats, but also for northern long-eared bat. We have attained some additional

00:58:14.190 --> 00:58:26.940

Jill Utrup - USFWS: data that helped us to inform our level of effort for both miss net and acoustic surveys for the northern long-eared bat so we can add that to the chat here shortly. Thanks for the question.

00:58:28.920 --> 00:58:29.610

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you.

00:58:30.630 --> 00:58:46.980

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right, our next question is: Are the bats that have died since 2015 considered new information that would be considered in the decision about listing the northern long-eared bat as endangered? And we're going to turn that over to Jon Reichard.

00:58:50.940 --> 00:59:08.790

Jonathan Reichard - USFWS: Hey thanks. Yes, so when we conducted the Species Status Assessment, there was a data request that went around for all available data that was collected 2021 and 2020 so all information that came in

00:59:10.470 --> 00:59:16.740

Jonathan Reichard - USFWS: before 2015 and from 2015 until 2021 was considered in the status assessment.

00:59:20.610 --> 00:59:25.320

Jonathan Reichard - USFWS: And that would include colony counts and declines and colonies

00:59:26.850 --> 00:59:27.720

Jonathan Reichard - USFWS: from mortality.

00:59:29.370 --> 00:59:29.730

Jonathan Reichard - USFWS: Thanks.

00:59:30.390 --> 00:59:31.170

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thanks Jon.

00:59:33.030 --> 00:59:33.780

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright.

00:59:35.310 --> 00:59:53.250

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Our next question is: Following up on a previous Transportation PBO question- will there be substantive changes to the Programmatic Consultation D-key, or is the changes Karen referred to just the elimination of the 4(d) D-key? And we'll turn that over to Karen.

00:59:55.530 --> 01:00:05.490

Karen Herrington - USFWS: Yes, thanks for the question. I'm not sure I exactly understand what you're asking so feel free to type again in the chat if I don't answer your question directly.

01:00:06.540 --> 01:00:18.900

Karen Herrington - USFWS: What I think you're saying is there is currently a Programmatic Consultation D-key, determination key, for the Federal Highways Programmatic Consultation,

01:00:19.830 --> 01:00:34.350

Karen Herrington - USFWS: it's going to stay in place until the consultation is updated to reflect the endangered status, if indeed that is the final decision we make.

01:00:34.860 --> 01:00:52.440

Karen Herrington - USFWS: So, the existing key stays in place for transportation projects and then we're working on the update to that consultation, and I don't yet know how substantial those changes will be that's kind of in progress.

01:00:54.120 --> 01:01:04.620

Karen Herrington - USFWS: When it's done, it will be posted to replace the existing key. Again if I didn't answer that directly feel free to chat any clarification.

01:01:07.320 --> 01:01:16.230

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great. Thank you. Our next question is: What does 'take' mean? And we're going to go over to Jonathan Jaka for that one.

01:01:17.280 --> 01:01:27.870

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: Yeah, sorry folks so we get buried in are Endangered Species Act terminology and we kind of forget to define it

sometimes. So take is a term directly in the Endangered Species Act in there

01:01:28.080 --> 01:01:33.090

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: so they didn't want to say just killing of species when referring to threatened or endangered, so they

01:01:33.420 --> 01:01:52.320

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: use a more a broader term, and this is directly from the accurate term take means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or attempt to engage in any such conduct. So that's what take is, it's broader than just killing.

01:01:55.830 --> 01:01:56.550

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thanks Jon.

01:01:58.830 --> 01:01:59.910

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright.

01:02:01.050 --> 01:02:10.500

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Our next question is: For wind projects that are in a late development stage or already operational and have the potential to impact the northern long-eared bat,

01:02:10.890 --> 01:02:19.140

EMPSi - Megan Stone: does the US Fish and Wildlife Service have any guidance or recommendations for how those projects should proceed with assessing/minimizing/

01:02:19.620 --> 01:02:34.200

EMPSi - Megan Stone: mitigating impacts? Is it likely that these projects will need to conduct additional monitoring to assess potential risk and prepare an HCP/apply for an ITP? And we'll turn that over to Shauna.

01:02:35.790 --> 01:02:41.520

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: Thanks Megan. Yeah, it's very project specific, so I would say

01:02:42.600 --> 01:02:54.120

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: the best guidance that I can provide is just reach out to your field office again, you know, describe to them the project area where it is, and I think they can best help you

01:02:54.930 --> 01:03:07.890

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: gauge risk and the potential reasonable certainty of take to know if there's any additional monitoring or what kind of assessments might need to be done.

01:03:09.390 --> 01:03:21.090

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: If they're already operating in an area of Indiana bats, it's likely they're already doing some avoidance and minimization, so those things can be taken into account as well, or if there's an existing HCP.

01:03:22.020 --> 01:03:40.080

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: There are some mechanisms to cover potential incidental take but gauging the risk and it's really a kind of site-specific things, so reach out to your field office and, yes, we will likely be providing guidance, but you can potentially start talking to them before the fall.

01:03:43.020 --> 01:03:44.670

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great. Thank you so much.

01:03:46.110 --> 01:03:54.870

EMPSi - Megan Stone: The next question we have is: In the Species Status Assessment report for the northern long-eared bat dated March 22, 2022,

01:03:55.230 --> 01:04:00.480

EMPSi - Megan Stone: several habitat requirements are noted for the northern long-eared bat in spring and summer,

01:04:00.930 --> 01:04:09.750

EMPSi - Megan Stone: with the special focus on the importance of interior, older forest with large diameter trees, abundant cavities,

01:04:10.110 --> 01:04:21.720

EMPSi - Megan Stone: and complex for structures such as standing snags. However, the portion of the assessment that deals with threats to northern long-eared bat and strategies for their recovery,

01:04:22.020 --> 01:04:29.490

EMPSi - Megan Stone: only mentions the extent of tree cover as a metric for forest health rather than forest age and forest structure.

01:04:29.880 --> 01:04:45.090

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Can you please explain this apparent disconnect between the assessment of habitat needs and the assessment of threats and conservation strategies? And we will turn that over to Jill. Let me know if you need me to repeat any of that.

01:04:46.530 --> 01:04:47.940

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Yeah, thanks Megan.

01:04:49.020 --> 01:04:54.570

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Yeah, I'll take a stab at this. So basically, I mean we do acknowledge that,

01:04:55.710 --> 01:05:07.230

Jill Utrup - USFWS: you know, the northern long-eared bat is a bit of a generalist in terms of some of the tree species that it has been found using. So in in general it

01:05:08.670 --> 01:05:21.270

Jill Utrup - USFWS: has been found in more interior forests, in part, do likely to kind of its feeding strategy. It uses both kind of hawking and gleaning, so hawking is catching insects in flight

01:05:21.690 --> 01:05:34.410

Jill Utrup - USFWS: and gleaning is actually gleaning insects or invertebrate prey off of vegetation. So yes, they often are found in these interior forest, but they also are found in more edge habitat as well

01:05:35.880 --> 01:05:41.820

Jill Utrup - USFWS: and can be found out in the open too and feeding across and in more open water bodies.

01:05:43.170 --> 01:05:45.690

Jill Utrup - USFWS: So yeah, I guess in terms of

01:05:47.910 --> 01:05:57.150

Jill Utrup - USFWS: the disconnect I think that, as far as the threats, we were a little bit more broad in terms of kind of the overall

01:05:57.480 --> 01:06:08.610

Jill Utrup - USFWS: impact of habitat loss to the species and didn't really, we didn't necessarily narrow down into the specifics, in terms of types of trees that mean, you know-



01:06:09.390 --> 01:06:20.400

Jill Utrup - USFWS: You know, as far as loss of habitat if that makes sense. So hopefully I'm interpreting your question correct. Please, please let us know in the chat if there's anything you need clarification on.

01:06:21.450 --> 01:06:22.140

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Thanks Megan.

01:06:23.280 --> 01:06:24.000

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you, Jill.

01:06:25.350 --> 01:06:28.530

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright, our next question is:

01:06:31.290 --> 01:06:37.620

EMPSi - Megan Stone: As a comparison species, after being listed as endangered, how has the Indianan

01:06:39.030 --> 01:06:40.860

EMPSi - Megan Stone: bat numbers improved?

01:06:42.000 --> 01:06:44.880

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And we are going to get that to Shauna.

01:06:46.230 --> 01:06:54.540

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: Yeah, they're asking about the Indiana bats. Um that's one of the first species that was listed under the Endangered Species Act and

01:06:54.840 --> 01:07:03.690

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: the thing to think about there is that the reason for listing is quite different than we're talking about today with normal northern long-eared bat so

01:07:03.960 --> 01:07:21.420

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: Indiana bat wasn't the white-nose issue, it was largely disturbance to hibernacula that cause a decline and so, you know, we knew what needed to happen to reduce that disturbance in the winter, to protect maternity colonies and so.

01:07:22.560 --> 01:07:38.580

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: we've been doing that for years, and with the help of our partners and the numbers increased, and so we were

seeing positive progress with recovery leading up to white-nose syndrome and then Indiana bat is also a white-nose syndrome affected species so it's

01:07:39.930 --> 01:07:46.770

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: kind of put the brakes a little bit on those increases, but we know there's some tried and true things to do to help

01:07:47.250 --> 01:07:58.020

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: just generally hibernating bats and we spent a long time doing that, with Indiana bats. I can't give you an exact number, but I can tell you that numbers improved leading up to white-nose syndrome.

01:08:00.570 --> 01:08:00.990

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great.

01:08:01.140 --> 01:08:01.890

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you.

01:08:02.940 --> 01:08:05.280

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Our next question in the chat and

01:08:07.620 --> 01:08:08.310

EMPSi - Megan Stone: let's see here.

01:08:11.670 --> 01:08:21.840

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Which agencies and facilities (federal or state) are responsible for preserving specimens where dead bats were found and salvaged during surveys?

01:08:23.250 --> 01:08:26.670

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And Shauna would you like to take that one?

01:08:30.060 --> 01:08:31.620

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: Can you please read that question again?

01:08:32.190 --> 01:08:42.030

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Sure it's: Which agencies and facilities (federal or state) are responsible for preserving specimens where dead bats were found and salvaged during

01:08:43.050 --> 01:08:44.850

EMPSi - Megan Stone: surveys? And I know

01:08:45.960 --> 01:08:53.070

EMPSi - Megan Stone: that you had shared a link about that, but is there anything else you'd like to add, and we can post that link again as well.

01:08:54.420 --> 01:09:02.730

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: Yeah, that really is a matter of coordination with the state conservation agency, and then the local field office.

01:09:04.380 --> 01:09:14.580

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: We were trying to develop a repository for salvaged bats, so that they can be used for the best scientific purposes, but I may need to follow up on that one.

01:09:15.210 --> 01:09:28.170

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: And feel free to send an email reminder to that twincities@fishandwildlifeservice.gov email address, and we can follow up and that's as good as I can do with that question at this point.

01:09:28.920 --> 01:09:32.130

Jonathan Reichard - USFWS: Definitely. I can weigh in here a little bit as well.

01:09:32.160 --> 01:09:46.830

Jonathan Reichard - USFWS: The USGS National Wildlife Health Center tracks mortality events with any wildlife, including bats, and so they would be the place to contact about reporting

01:09:48.060 --> 01:09:55.740

Jonathan Reichard - USFWS: carcasses that are observed in locations and potentially collecting and storing them or having them tested.

01:09:57.900 --> 01:09:59.580

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: Great thanks Jon.

01:10:02.910 --> 01:10:03.960

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Yeah, thank you both.

01:10:05.280 --> 01:10:07.350

EMPSi - Megan Stone: It looks like we've actually reached

01:10:08.460 --> 01:10:22.830

EMPSi - Megan Stone: the end of our questions that have been submitted via the chat feature so now, if anyone would like to raise their hand and provide a question, you're welcome to do so for our phone callers specifically.

01:10:24.150 --> 01:10:32.760

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And it looks like we do have our first phone caller with their hand raised Darien Siddall. I'm going to go ahead and

01:10:34.320 --> 01:10:35.910

EMPSi - Megan Stone: unmute you now Darien.

01:10:41.190 --> 01:10:42.240

Darien Siddall: Yes, can you hear me?

01:10:42.630 --> 01:10:44.820

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Yes, we can hear you go ahead.

01:10:44.850 --> 01:10:47.460

Darien Siddall: Right um you mentioned the

01:10:48.630 --> 01:10:58.620

Darien Siddall: the programmatic agreement with the FHWAFS which you're updating and that was actually mentioned in an earlier session as well.

01:10:59.670 --> 01:11:10.170

Darien Siddall: Um, how will the reclassification affect existing bridge structures, where the northern long-eared bat may hibernate or roost?

01:11:10.530 --> 01:11:17.820

Darien Siddall: They can squeeze in and hibernate and roost in very small cracks, some of them as big as a you know, a quarter.

01:11:18.150 --> 01:11:29.400

Darien Siddall: So, I was just wondering how will that affect, you know, bridge structures and you know, if we're trying to or if a transportation agency is trying to do, repairs or anything like that and maintenance.

01:11:29.880 --> 01:11:35.970

Darien Siddall: How would that reclassification affect those, or would that be part of the FHWA programmatic agreement?

01:11:39.180 --> 01:11:43.410

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great. Thank you, Dan. I'm going to go ahead and place you back on mute.

01:11:46.080 --> 01:11:50.460

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright, and we are going to give that question to Karen.

01:11:52.950 --> 01:12:07.290

Karen Herrington - USFWS: Thanks for the question there, and some of this is not yet worked out, but I can say that the current consultation with the transportation agencies does cover

01:12:08.130 --> 01:12:18.930

Karen Herrington - USFWS: bridge structures, existing brick structures, and includes some techniques to survey the bridge structures. I suspect that

01:12:19.470 --> 01:12:35.700

Karen Herrington - USFWS: will remain in there and I think I hear what you're saying about those surveys could be complicated by the small spaces that northern long-eared bat can get into, so we'll consider your question and appreciate you bringing it up.

01:12:39.060 --> 01:12:40.080

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you, Karen.

01:12:41.220 --> 01:12:47.100

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right, it doesn't look like we have any more raised hands at the moment, but again... Oh, I see

01:12:48.210 --> 01:12:59.940

EMPSi - Megan Stone: a new raised hand and I did want to just note that it looks like we have about 17 minutes left in the question-and-answer session. We'll do our best to circle back to

01:13:00.810 --> 01:13:12.510

EMPSi - Megan Stone: the two new questions we got in the chat but for now we're going to let our phone callers have an opportunity. So I see that a caller has his hand raised. Zach, I'm going to go ahead and unmute you now.

01:13:17.190 --> 01:13:18.240

Zack Porter: Thank you. Can you hear me?

01:13:18.780 --> 01:13:19.740

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Yes, we can.

01:13:20.040 --> 01:13:33.060

Zack Porter: Okay terrific, I actually just raised my hand here to clarify a question. One of the Fish and Wildlife Service experts there was responding to a question that I had asked earlier about

01:13:34.080 --> 01:13:43.680

Zack Porter: a strange disconnect in the assessment between what are, you know, important requirements of the northern long-eared bat or roosting habitat.

01:13:45.060 --> 01:13:53.160

Zack Porter: But those requirements are not represented in the assessment of current conditions and strategies for recovering the bat,

01:13:53.700 --> 01:14:02.070

Zack Porter: and the comment, the response focused on how these bats are generalists in terms of the tree species that they make use of and

01:14:02.340 --> 01:14:14.850

Zack Porter: I understand that they are generalists in that way, but they are not generalists from what the literature says in terms of their requirements for mature and old forest on the landscape which is noticeably absent from

01:14:15.510 --> 01:14:25.410

Zack Porter: almost all of their all range. And so my question is more to do with forest structure and forest age not tree species, not forest composition.

01:14:25.830 --> 01:14:33.720

Zack Porter: And it was a mystery to me as I read through the assessment why in the assessment of habitat needs there's a clear connection to

01:14:34.050 --> 01:14:50.400

Zack Porter: older forests and in the current conditions and opportunities for you know conservation, there was no mention of

mature forests and old forests and strategies to recover these elements in the landscape so I'm hoping that somebody could help me understand why that was missing. Thank you.

01:14:51.480 --> 01:14:57.420

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you. So I'm going to go ahead and place you back on mute now and we're going to turn that over to Jill.

01:14:59.010 --> 01:15:09.900

Jill Utrup - USFWS: And thanks Megan and thanks for the follow up on that question. Yeah, so we did- you're correct and we did go into a little bit more detail in the need section of SSA.

01:15:11.010 --> 01:15:19.170

Jill Utrup - USFWS: In terms of yeah, the habitat needs for the species. Now in the threats section, and when we go over the threats within a species status assessment,

01:15:19.920 --> 01:15:33.150

Jill Utrup - USFWS: we are not necessarily, we're not saying that the threats that we identified within that to say, are the only threats to the species. So, in general, you know we're really looking at kind of those threats that we have some more solid

01:15:33.720 --> 01:15:47.910

Jill Utrup - USFWS: information, whether it's more qualitative or quantitative and so the threats that we identified- we did identify habitat loss, but we did not go into kind of the level of detail that you're mentioning.

01:15:48.960 --> 01:16:06.480

Jill Utrup - USFWS: And in terms of recovery and kind of conservation long term, that's not necessarily included kind of in the SSA document at this point and we identify conservation measures that may impact the species more generally and broadly, but we don't go into that level of detail

01:16:07.530 --> 01:16:10.530

Jill Utrup - USFWS: as far as the specifics, if that helps.

01:16:11.580 --> 01:16:12.570

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Thanks again for your comment/

01:16:13.710 --> 01:16:14.130

Jill Utrup - USFWS: question.

01:16:15.930 --> 01:16:16.680

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you, Jill.

01:16:19.890 --> 01:16:20.880

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right.

01:16:24.240 --> 01:16:26.280

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Looks like we do have

01:16:28.920 --> 01:16:31.020

EMPSi - Megan Stone: one question in the chat.

01:16:32.580 --> 01:16:46.710

EMPSi - Megan Stone: This question is: Does the service consider the probability of a bat being harmed during a timber harvest? Given populations have been reduced up to 99% due to WNS,

01:16:47.040 --> 01:16:58.110

EMPSi - Megan Stone: and that most states harvest less than 1% of the forest acres each year. And considering bats are generalists the odds of harming about are fairly low by timber management.

01:17:02.040 --> 01:17:02.790

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And

01:17:03.840 --> 01:17:06.810

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Jill to do you want to try and address that one?

01:17:08.940 --> 01:17:11.520

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Actually Shauna too. Either way.

01:17:13.740 --> 01:17:16.110

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: Jill go ahead and I can follow up.

01:17:16.470 --> 01:17:25.320

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Yeah, feel free to chime in Shauna. Yeah so, we do acknowledge, I mean, given the rarity of the species on the landscape, at this point

01:17:25.740 --> 01:17:41.940

Jill Utrup - USFWS: that the chance for take is very low, at this point. However, you know, we are coming up again. We, you know as we kind of discussed, we are developing, you know, a variety of different guidance documents and



01:17:42.780 --> 01:17:49.290

Jill Utrup - USFWS: working on some of these programmatic consultations and to ensure that, you know any

01:17:50.730 --> 01:17:56.400

Jill Utrup - USFWS: ongoing projects, whether it's forestry related projects or others

01:17:57.540 --> 01:18:07.590

Jill Utrup - USFWS: are covered or not causing take and are able to continue to operate and still conserve the species. Shauna feel free to chime in.

01:18:08.730 --> 01:18:23.850

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: Yeah, Jill I think that's great. I think, you know, moving forward you're right- the landscape for white-nose affected bats, just population wise is really different and that's part of the Services' deliberations. You know, what is

01:18:24.330 --> 01:18:33.420

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: reasonable certainty of take, not just for forestry, but for a lot of other activities and so that's going to be part of, you know, guidance moving forward. As Jill mentioned,

01:18:34.260 --> 01:18:45.900

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: you know, we don't have a magic equation, but we do the best that we can to use the best information available and try to make those estimates and assessments when possible.

01:18:48.390 --> 01:18:59.370

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great thank you both. All right, and we do have a few more questions in the chat and I don't see any hands raised right now, but for our phone callers-

01:18:59.880 --> 01:19:16.290

EMPSi - Megan Stone: We do have around 11 minutes left in the question-and-answer session. If you'd like to raise your hand, you can do so by pressing \*9 on your phone keypad. Until we get some raise hands, we do have a few questions in the chat.

01:19:17.310 --> 01:19:23.430

EMPSi - Megan Stone: One person asked: Will the earlier slide show be publicly available? And we will have

01:19:24.720 --> 01:19:32.760

EMPSi - Megan Stone: the recording and the PowerPoint available at some point and can provide a link to where that will be available.

01:19:34.380 --> 01:19:34.950

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right.

01:19:36.060 --> 01:19:44.220

EMPSi - Megan Stone: With that our next question is: What kind of information are you looking for from public comments in support of the reclassification?

01:19:46.320 --> 01:19:48.510

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And we'll go over to Shauna for that one.

01:19:53.730 --> 01:19:56.100

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: Actually I'm going to turn that over to

01:19:57.150 --> 01:19:59.670

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: Jon Jaka, if you don't mind filling that one Jon.

01:20:00.600 --> 01:20:09.690

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: Yep, no thanks. Um yeah that's a great question, thank you for asking that. So we are looking for new information that we didn't consider in the

01:20:10.440 --> 01:20:16.980

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: analysis that we already have and so there's a list and I'm sorry I don't remember all of them, but there's a list of

01:20:17.250 --> 01:20:25.860

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: information that we would be seeking and the at the beginning of the proposed rule, but I should say here, you asked "in support" of the reclassification.

01:20:26.370 --> 01:20:32.430

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: We will acknowledge all the kind of the votes for and against, but we really only can

01:20:33.270 --> 01:20:42.990

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: make any sort of changes to our decision based on like additional scientific information so that we will fully consider all votes in support of the classification.

01:20:43.200 --> 01:20:58.410

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: We're really looking for scientific information that we don't already have and again there's a list of the information or some of that some specific information asks that we have at the at the beginning of the proposed rule which you can find on regulations.gov.

01:21:00.480 --> 01:21:01.350

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you Jon.

01:21:02.370 --> 01:21:07.980

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right, right now we have three questions left in the chat, but I did see that

01:21:09.660 --> 01:21:11.250

EMPSi - Megan Stone: a participant named

01:21:12.840 --> 01:21:30.660

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Lori I believe had briefly raised her hand and I just wanted to make sure if she had a question Lora Kemp if you'd like to ask a question and raise your hand, please feel free. We do want to make sure that phone callers get the opportunity to ask those questions.

01:21:33.270 --> 01:21:47.100

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right, and with that we'll try and answer these last three here before the end of our question-and-answer session at 7:30pm central time.

01:21:48.270 --> 01:21:58.950

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Our next question is: if the northern long-eared bat is listed as endangered in a project within its range requires a permit that includes a Section 7 consultation,

01:21:59.340 --> 01:22:15.240

EMPSi - Megan Stone: is it reasonable to assume that protections would be similar to Indiana bats such as seasonal tree clearing restrictions, mist netting etc.? And we are going to turn that over to Karen.

01:22:18.030 --> 01:22:33.210

Karen Herrington - USFWS: Yeah, thanks for that question. We're in the thick of developing all of the guidance now, I think it's reasonable to assume that it's similar, it will be similar to Indiana bats, but not the same. The species are

01:22:33.690 --> 01:22:39.780

Karen Herrington - USFWS: different and have different needs and we just haven't defined the details, yet, but we're working on it.

01:22:42.390 --> 01:23:01.950

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you. Alright our next question says: The last two questions show the need for clarification in the BMPs to preserve some percent of mature trees and snags specifically. Will this be considered and updated to close the gap or disconnect? And we'll turn that to Shauna.

01:23:04.680 --> 01:23:17.910

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: Yeah, I think, you know, the science and our recovery planning efforts is probably where these two things will merge. It's not a matter of updating the SSA necessarily,

01:23:19.440 --> 01:23:29.070

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: but these kinds of things moving forward if the final decision is an endangered determination and these kinds of things,

01:23:30.180 --> 01:23:41.340

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: you know, they're part of sustainable forest management, and you know the practices that we know are necessary for maintaining forest on the landscape.

01:23:42.300 --> 01:23:56.070

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: You know, I don't know that will get as far as a prescription for exact number of snags- that's not even something that we've done for other endangered bat species, so I don't want to say that that specific detail will be included,

01:23:57.240 --> 01:24:05.190

Shauna Marquardt - USFWS: but there will likely be some, you know, again best practices. The level of prescription is not clear at this point.

01:24:07.920 --> 01:24:24.630

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Okay, thank you. All right, our last and final question in the chat right now is: Are there any survey protocols for spring and fall when bats are migrating between the roost and hibernacula? And we're going to turn that to Jill.

01:24:26.520 --> 01:24:27.300

Jill Utrup - USFWS: Thanks Megan.

01:24:28.320 --> 01:24:34.980

Jill Utrup - USFWS: I think, as I mentioned earlier in response to one of our other questions, that we do have the Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat

01:24:35.460 --> 01:24:47.700

Jill Utrup - USFWS: survey guidelines that are available, and that includes information for surveys that may be conducted kind of outside of the typical timeframe as well, so.

01:24:48.450 --> 01:24:56.370

Jill Utrup - USFWS: again, we can include that information or that link in the chat: the guidance. It's a very thorough document, and there are several

01:24:57.660 --> 01:25:02.430

Jill Utrup - USFWS: accompanying documents as well with that survey guidance.

01:25:04.650 --> 01:25:04.950

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great.

01:25:04.980 --> 01:25:05.820

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you, Jill.

01:25:07.500 --> 01:25:09.180

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Already, it looks like we've

01:25:10.410 --> 01:25:22.140

EMPSi - Megan Stone: addressed all the questions that we've received in the chat and oh, here we go, a new one. Looks like we do have five more minutes, so we can go ahead and try and answer that.

01:25:23.340 --> 01:25:33.060

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Our next question is: If uplisted, is there a strategy to assist the field offices in responding to the probable increase of consultation requests?

01:25:35.340 --> 01:25:39.870

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And that one came in pretty fast, but is there anyone who wants to take that one on?

01:25:42.720 --> 01:25:44.910

Karen Herrington - USFWS: Sure Megan this is Karen I can take that one.

01:25:46.380 --> 01:25:51.390

Karen Herrington - USFWS: Yes indeed, we are working on a strategy to assist the field offices.

01:25:52.260 --> 01:26:05.340

Karen Herrington - USFWS: And we have- it's kind of a multi-pronged approach to do that. So our first priority is to work on those ongoing projects that won't be complete by the time we make a final decision.

01:26:06.150 --> 01:26:20.550

Karen Herrington - USFWS: And then our next priority is to help with guidance for future projects moving forward. So that's among the things that we've been referencing that we're working on. And I appreciate you pointing it out, though, because

01:26:21.600 --> 01:26:24.180

Karen Herrington - USFWS: we do expect a lot of consultations.

01:26:28.020 --> 01:26:36.360

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great. Thank you. We have one more question that just popped up here, and so we have three more minutes- we'll try and answer that one.

01:26:37.560 --> 01:26:48.900

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Are there any upcoming listing status changes expected for other federally listed threatening endangered species, specifically the grey bat? And we're going to turn that to Jonathan Jaka.

01:26:50.550 --> 01:26:59.940

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: Yes, so I don't know specifically for the gray bat but there's a plan to finalize a five-year review

01:27:00.450 --> 01:27:07.530

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: in 2023. I don't know about status change for that one- I don't work on a species, but I know the plan to finalize the five-year review

01:27:08.220 --> 01:27:17.910

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: in 2023 and what I can say about a couple of bat species that I know- not necessarily statuses but like we mentioned before tricolored bat we are

01:27:19.410 --> 01:27:34.140

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: on the path to complete a 12-month finding for that one by FY 22 and we are also on a path to complete a status review for the little brown bat by FY 23 and I'm going to share a link in the

01:27:35.340 --> 01:27:43.140

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: chat here that shows- it's our National Listing Work Plan. So for everything that we're working on there's deadlines for

01:27:43.740 --> 01:27:58.050

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: when we're shooting to have those things completed. So there's probably other bats on there as well. I don't know about deadlines for all of them, but those are the few that I can tell you right off the top of my head and like I said I'll share that link with you all right now as well.

01:28:01.710 --> 01:28:03.000

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great thanks Jon.

01:28:04.230 --> 01:28:20.280

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And last but not least, I think this will be the last one we answer, before moving on to our public comment session, we do have a hand raised from Elaine Faletra. Elaine I'm going to go ahead and unmute you now. Oh looks like you lower your hand.

01:28:21.930 --> 01:28:22.590

EMPSi - Megan Stone: um.

01:28:23.790 --> 01:28:24.720

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right.

01:28:29.610 --> 01:28:31.680

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Well, with that, I think

01:28:32.850 --> 01:28:35.760

EMPSi - Megan Stone: we can move into the public comment portion now.

01:28:37.200 --> 01:28:40.740

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: Megan Could I just- this is Jon- may I say one more thing very quickly?

01:28:41.100 --> 01:28:41.910

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Yeah, of course.

01:28:42.210 --> 01:28:45.570

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: I just want to restate and I'm sharing it in the in the chat again,

01:28:46.140 --> 01:28:49.530

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: that website for the northern long-eared bat, which I just shared.

01:28:49.740 --> 01:29:02.640

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: There was a lot of questions about like "Is this being recorded?" "Is this going to be posted here or there?" You should be able to find almost every single piece of information within that website, linked there somewhere. So like we talked about how you need to make-

01:29:03.690 --> 01:29:15.480

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: submit public comments to regulations.gov and you know the Federal Register is there, so everything that we talked about should be linked through that website. You should be able to find your way to whatever you're looking for through that, so I just want to

01:29:16.530 --> 01:29:18.210

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: reiterate that for everyone on the call.

01:29:19.950 --> 01:29:31.590

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you so much for that, Jon. All right with that we're going to officially close our question-and-answer session and move into the public comment portion.

01:29:35.160 --> 01:29:42.660

EMPSi - Megan Stone: It's currently 6:30 mountain time so 7:30 central time right now and we're going to officially start.

01:29:43.890 --> 01:29:51.150

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Again, this verbal comment portion of the meeting, along with your comments, is being recorded as part of the official

01:29:51.660 --> 01:30:04.290

EMPSi - Megan Stone: record. As a reminder, your camera and mic control settings are restricted during this time. You will only be



able to talk if and when you are unmuted, so please remember to speak when prompted.

01:30:05.490 --> 01:30:14.730

EMPSi - Megan Stone: The US Fish and Wildlife Service wants to hear from all members of the public who are interested in voicing their comment. So we will be using the following guidelines today.

01:30:15.420 --> 01:30:22.050

EMPSi - Megan Stone: First, be mindful of the length of your comment so that everyone who wants to speak has an opportunity to do so today.

01:30:22.710 --> 01:30:37.080

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Currently, we've had 24 people pre-register to comment and given that number of people we've decided to implement a two-minute timer for each public commenter, and so we will have a timer on screen

01:30:38.640 --> 01:30:58.800

EMPSi - Megan Stone: and we will start that when you begin your comment and then we ask that you try to wrap up your comments within two minutes. If time allows there may be an opportunity to comment a second time if the folks who pre-registered are

01:30:59.940 --> 01:31:06.120

EMPSi - Megan Stone: not wanting to provide a comment today and then after we move through those folks we will

01:31:07.470 --> 01:31:11.370

EMPSi - Megan Stone: try to address any other comments.

01:31:12.720 --> 01:31:18.090

EMPSi - Megan Stone: The second thing we want to remind you is please be respectful of others and their viewpoints.

01:31:18.660 --> 01:31:28.890

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Third, please refrain from using profanity. Passion is welcome in your comment, but policy requires that we mute anyone who uses inappropriate language

01:31:29.190 --> 01:31:44.250

EMPSi - Megan Stone: because we are recording this meeting and others may be live streaming, so please avoid inappropriate language. If that does happen, we will provide a reminder before unmuting the person to try again using words acceptable to all ages.

01:31:48.390 --> 01:31:58.680

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I'm now going to read through the instructions for those participants who indicated, they wanted to offer verbal public comment when they pre-registered for today's meeting.

01:31:59.310 --> 01:32:14.940

EMPSi - Megan Stone: We have a list of these participants. Comments will be accepted in the order that people registered. Again if you are registered before the start time of today's meeting, and you are on that pre-registered list.

01:32:16.380 --> 01:32:29.400

EMPSi - Megan Stone: We will also display the name of the commenter who is next in line. When you hear us call out your name, please use the raise hand feature, so that we know you're available and ready to offer your comment.

01:32:29.940 --> 01:32:40.110

EMPSi - Megan Stone: You can access the raise hand feature by clicking on either the reactions icon or the participants list icon which are both located at the bottom of your Zoom screen.

01:32:40.590 --> 01:32:45.960

EMPSi - Megan Stone: If you wave your mouse back and forth across the bottom of your Zoom screen these icons should appear.

01:32:46.320 --> 01:32:58.740

EMPSi - Megan Stone: You may need to exit out of full screen view to see these icons. You can then select the raise hand feature located either in the reactions icon or at the bottom of your participants

01:32:59.190 --> 01:33:05.250

EMPSi - Megan Stone: list or, if you are calling through the phone, please press \*9 to access the raise hand feature.

01:33:05.820 --> 01:33:11.460

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Once you've raised your hand, you will then be unmuted so that you can provide your verbal public comment.

01:33:11.940 --> 01:33:18.180

EMPSi - Megan Stone: You may be double muted- if that's the case I will prompt you to unmute yourself on your end so that we can hear you.

01:33:18.720 --> 01:33:31.470

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And we'll ask you to please spell out your first and last name for the record, before you're providing your verbal public comment, and if you are representing an organization or group, so please say so during your comment.

01:33:32.730 --> 01:33:42.900

EMPSi - Megan Stone: After you have provided your comment, we will mute you and move on to our next commenter. Again, once we worked our way through the current list of pre-registered commenters,

01:33:43.560 --> 01:33:50.910

EMPSi - Megan Stone: if we have time, we will move on to those who registered after the start time of today's meeting who selected they wanted to offer comment.

01:33:51.480 --> 01:33:56.070

EMPSi - Megan Stone: If we still have time remaining after we have worked our way through those participants,

01:33:56.460 --> 01:34:04.650

EMPSi - Megan Stone: we will open the verbal public comment portion of today's meeting to anyone who would like to offer a comment today who has not already done so.

01:34:05.070 --> 01:34:15.240

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And again, we have over 20 pre-registered commenters, so we have implemented a two-minute time limit to ensure that everybody has an opportunity to speak tonight.

01:34:15.720 --> 01:34:28.620

EMPSi - Megan Stone: But we do really want to remind folks that the comment period is open through May 23rd and if you are not able to provide your comment tonight, we really appreciate any written comments.

01:34:29.190 --> 01:34:37.080

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And we will again post that information and where you can mail those to, or the way you can submit them through [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov).

01:34:40.110 --> 01:34:54.180

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And here on the screen I have included some graphics to show where the Zoom reactions icon is where you can raise your hand and the Zoom participants icon, which is another way to raise your hand.

01:34:56.640 --> 01:35:06.420

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And with that we are going to officially begin the public comment portion. I'm going to stop sharing my screen

01:35:11.250 --> 01:35:15.900

EMPSi - Megan Stone: and start sharing on this commenter slide. Perfect.

01:35:17.400 --> 01:35:21.750

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright, our first pre-registered commenter is Dennis Krusac.

01:35:23.460 --> 01:35:34.320

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Dennis if you're on the call with us and could you- oh there we go, I see that you've raised your hand. I'm going to go ahead and unmute you now Dennis.

01:35:39.750 --> 01:35:40.260

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Hi there.

01:35:41.340 --> 01:35:42.000

Dennis Krusac: Can you hear me?

01:35:42.390 --> 01:35:58.740

Dennis Krusac: Yes, we can hear you. Dennis Krusac D-E-N-N-I-S last name is K-R-U-S-A-C. I just want to state that the US Forest Service fully supports the status change in northern long-eared bat

01:35:59.280 --> 01:36:13.770

Dennis Krusac: from threaten to endangered but we haven't seen all of the data that you have for the Species Status Assessment. What we have seen, and what we have anticipated for months is that the species warrants the status change.

01:36:14.790 --> 01:36:24.210

Dennis Krusac: And we just look forward to the continued partnership with Fish and Wildlife Service as we work to conserve this species and other listed species on the national forest lands.

01:36:25.440 --> 01:36:25.890

Dennis Krusac: Thank you.

01:36:28.110 --> 01:36:35.070

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great, thank you for your comment, Dennis. I'm going to go ahead and place you back on mute and lower your hand.

01:36:36.870 --> 01:36:49.980

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright, our next pre-registered commenter is Justin Zoladz. Justin if you're on the call with us, can you please access that raise hand feature to let us know that you would like to provide

01:36:51.030 --> 01:36:52.590

EMPSi - Megan Stone: your verbal public comment.

01:36:58.260 --> 01:37:07.890

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I don't see that Justin has his hand raised but we'll give him a few more seconds and I'll check to see if he is in our attendees list.

01:37:09.360 --> 01:37:10.320

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright, it looks like

01:37:11.460 --> 01:37:23.850

EMPSi - Megan Stone: he is not on the call with us so we're going to move to our next commenter Noel Lerner. Noel if you're on with us, can you please access that raise hand feature to let us know you're ready to provide your comment.

01:37:28.560 --> 01:37:34.170

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And I also don't see that we have Noel on the call with us, but we will circle back to him

01:37:35.430 --> 01:37:40.350

EMPSi - Megan Stone: if possible, once we get through this list of pre-registered commenters.

01:37:41.490 --> 01:37:52.080

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Our next pre-registered commenter is Timothy O'Hara. Timothy if you can go ahead and access that raise hand feature, I do see you on our participants list.

01:37:55.320 --> 01:37:59.370

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Perfect I'm going to go ahead and ask you to unmute them.

01:38:04.080 --> 01:38:09.360

Timothy O'Hara: Hey Megan. I'm not sure how I got on the list, but I don't have any thoughts at this time. I'll submit written comments.

01:38:11.940 --> 01:38:14.640

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Okay, thank you, Timothy we'd appreciate that.

01:38:16.440 --> 01:38:22.470

EMPSi - Megan Stone: We are going to move on to our next commenter which is Ronin St James.

01:38:24.450 --> 01:38:27.990

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Ronin if you're on, could you please access that raise hand feature?

01:38:30.780 --> 01:38:37.350

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And I don't see that Ronin is on our participants list at the moment but, again, we will

01:38:38.520 --> 01:38:39.690

EMPSi - Megan Stone: go back to him.

01:38:41.010 --> 01:38:48.840

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And I do see that our next pre-registered commenters Zach Porter does have his hand raise so I'm going to go ahead and unmute you know Zach.

01:38:51.900 --> 01:38:53.760

Zack Porter: Thank you, can you hear me?

01:38:53.820 --> 01:38:54.540

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Yep, we can hear you.

01:38:54.900 --> 01:39:04.590

Zack Porter: Great. Good evening, my name is Zack Porter. Z-A-C-K P-O-R-T-E-R and I'm the Executive Director of Standing Trees, which is a

01:39:05.010 --> 01:39:15.810

Zack Porter: nonprofit organization based in Montpelier, Vermont that works to protect and restore forest on new England's public lands, with a focus on Vermont and New Hampshire. I'd like to just make a few comments tonight.

01:39:16.890 --> 01:39:32.070

Zack Porter: I mentioned earlier, and I'll mention it again now that the recommendations for actions that should be taken to conserve the species do not mention anything about the habitat requirements of the northern long-eared bat for mature and old forest.

01:39:33.150 --> 01:39:42.750

Zack Porter: It is mystifying to me why the assessment does not look at forest age and forest structure. Within your assessment document

01:39:43.110 --> 01:39:53.040

Zack Porter: you can see that, that's on page 17, typically roost singly or maternity colonies underneath bark or more often in cavities or crevices of live trees and snags."

01:39:53.520 --> 01:40:10.680

Zack Porter: On page 26, mature forests are an important habitat type for foraging northern long-eared bat. On page 144, the availability of ample suitable roosts may be one of the most limiting resources for bats as they adapt to climate change. And Jung et al 2004,

01:40:11.820 --> 01:40:18.240

Zack Porter: consistent with other studies, there was a demonstrated association between foraging northern long-eared bat and old growth white pine stands.

01:40:19.080 --> 01:40:25.500

Zack Porter: Just on and on, there is so much literature pointing to the requirements of northern long-eared bat for old forests,

01:40:25.920 --> 01:40:33.540

Zack Porter: and yet we have almost no old forests in the United States period, and especially in New England here, where I live and work.

01:40:34.230 --> 01:40:43.740

Zack Porter: Vermont conservation design a State produced document says that functionally there are no old forests in the state of Vermont and the same is true for most of this bat's

01:40:44.310 --> 01:40:52.140

Zack Porter: range, so the greatest efficiency in terms of habitat is not tree covered, it is forest structure and forest age.

01:40:52.560 --> 01:41:04.680

Zack Porter: And I hope that as this process moves forward, you will identify strategies to recover natural old forest conditions that this bat needs. Thanks and I look forward to the next phase of this process.

01:41:08.760 --> 01:41:14.580

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you for your comment, Zack. I'm going to go ahead and place you back on mute and lower your hand.

01:41:18.570 --> 01:41:23.100

EMPSi - Megan Stone: With that we're going to move to our next public commentary Derrick Spinks.

01:41:24.240 --> 01:41:30.300

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Derrick if you're on with us, can you please access that raise hand feature to let us know you're ready to provide your comment.

01:41:37.140 --> 01:41:48.420

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I don't see that Derrick has hand is raised right now or that he's in our participants list, so we'll go ahead and move to our next commenter and circle back to him later.

01:41:57.000 --> 01:42:03.360

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And I do want to give everyone a reminder, we can't see the names of some callers but if I call on you,

01:42:03.810 --> 01:42:15.570

EMPSi - Megan Stone: and you are in fact the person I'm calling on- I just can't see you in the participants list because you're calling in via phone, please feel free to chat us and raise your hand as well.

01:42:17.280 --> 01:42:35.610

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright, with that our next commenter is Michael Treve. Michael, if you're on the phone with us, you can press star nine to raise your hand, or if you're in our participants list you can go ahead and use the participants list to access that raise hand feature.

01:42:39.120 --> 01:42:40.800

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Okay, we will wait a few seconds here.

01:42:44.370 --> 01:42:50.280

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And I don't see that we have any raised hands so we're going to move to our next commenter.



01:42:51.690 --> 01:43:04.500

EMPSi - Megan Stone: who is Marytheresa Mazzuca. Mary, if you're on the phone with us, please access that raise hand feature by pressing star nine- I don't see that you're in our participants list.

01:43:10.500 --> 01:43:21.150

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right, we can circle back to Mary again once we reach the end of this list. Our next pre-registered commenter is Lora Kemp.

01:43:22.740 --> 01:43:26.130

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great I see your hand raised Lora. I'll go ahead and unmute you now.

01:43:31.170 --> 01:43:41.220

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I am getting an error on my screen Lora, that says that I can't allow you to talk because you're using an older version of Zoom.

01:43:42.810 --> 01:43:45.150

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Would you be willing to

01:43:46.770 --> 01:44:01.530

EMPSi - Megan Stone: chat your comment to us and we can read it aloud or another option is you can update your Zoom and rejoin the meeting and we're happy to circle back to you. I'm sorry about that.

01:44:05.760 --> 01:44:08.160

EMPSi - Megan Stone: So, we will touch base with you

01:44:09.660 --> 01:44:21.480

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Lora and there's also the opportunity to call in. So at the bottom of the screen, you can see, the call-in number there 346248779.

01:44:22.530 --> 01:44:33.240

EMPSi - Megan Stone: If you call in then you'll get a prompt to enter the webinar ID, which is also listed there on the screen so that's another great option, but we will follow up with you

01:44:34.230 --> 01:44:47.310

EMPSi - Megan Stone: and hope that you can either update your Zoom or rejoin. With that we'll move to our next public commenter Eric Mannweiler. Eric, I see your hand raised so I will unmute you now.

01:44:50.520 --> 01:44:57.360

Eric Mannweiler: Yeah, hi my name is Eric Mannweiler that's E-R-I-C and M-A-N-N-W-E-I-L-E-R.

01:44:58.440 --> 01:44:58.710

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thanks.

01:45:01.260 --> 01:45:01.770

Eric Mannweiler: What's that?

01:45:02.370 --> 01:45:03.690

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Oh, I was just saying thank you.

01:45:03.960 --> 01:45:04.530

Eric Mannweiler: Oh you're.

01:45:04.710 --> 01:45:05.730

EMPSi - Megan Stone: You can begin your comment.

01:45:05.940 --> 01:45:12.210

Eric Mannweiler: Great thanks yeah just that we can find

01:45:13.590 --> 01:45:29.880

Eric Mannweiler: that the species gets listed as endangered and here in Indiana where I live, I want to echo some of the previous concerns of trying to preserve old forests, I think, both in the state and.

01:45:31.050 --> 01:45:36.540

Eric Mannweiler: and national forests here in Indiana. We haven't done a great job of preserving

01:45:37.680 --> 01:45:44.580

Eric Mannweiler: old forests and deep forest habitats for this bat and many others, so thank you all.

01:45:47.910 --> 01:45:52.170

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great, thank you for your comment, Eric. I'm going to go ahead and place you back on mute.

01:45:53.880 --> 01:46:03.840

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright, our next pre-registered commenter is Eileen Drescher- Eileen. Oh there we go I see your hand raised. I'll go ahead and unmute you now.

01:46:07.110 --> 01:46:07.680

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Hi there.

01:46:08.100 --> 01:46:28.290

Eileen Drescher: Hi my name is Eileen Drescher E-I-L-E-E-N D-R-E-S-C-H-E-R and my question is has there been any studies to indicate that the EMI coming from all of these new solar farms that we're seeing across the country affecting the bats at all beyond what is happening with the

01:46:29.790 --> 01:46:30.870

Eileen Drescher: white-nose syndrome.

01:46:34.110 --> 01:46:51.120

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you for your comment, Eileen. I'm going to go ahead and place you back on mute and lower your hand. We have moved into the public comment portion of the meeting, but we do want to assure you that your question will be recorded as part of the record.

01:46:53.580 --> 01:47:08.280

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right, with that we're going to move to our next pre-registered commenter Richard Jones. Richard, if you can go ahead and access that raise hand feature to let us know you're ready and if you're a phone caller you can press \*9 to raise your hand.

01:47:13.200 --> 01:47:18.570

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I don't see that we have Richard on with us right now, so we will also circle back to him.

01:47:20.460 --> 01:47:28.050

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Our next pre-registered commenters Ned Kelly. Ned if you're on with us, can you please access that raise hand feature?

01:47:29.190 --> 01:47:34.170

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I don't see you on our participants list so if you are phone caller, please press star nine.

01:47:35.610 --> 01:47:37.410

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And I'll give you a few seconds here.

01:47:41.790 --> 01:47:49.170

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right, I not seeing any raised hands, so we'll move to our next pre-registered commenter Marsha Parlow.

01:47:51.510 --> 01:47:55.200

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right, great Marsha, I see your hand raised, I'll go ahead and unmute you now.

01:47:59.520 --> 01:48:06.630

Marsha Parlow: Yes, I would like to say at this time I don't have any verbal comments, maybe reserved for written comments at a later date.

01:48:08.250 --> 01:48:10.080

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Okay, thank you Marsha.

01:48:12.330 --> 01:48:14.550

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I'll go ahead and place you back on mute now

01:48:16.170 --> 01:48:17.940

EMPSi - Megan Stone: and lower your hand.

01:48:20.340 --> 01:48:26.850

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright, our next commenter as Eliza Donahue. Eliza I'm going to go ahead and unmute you now.

01:48:28.860 --> 01:48:36.090

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Hi there, thank you. Can you hear me? Yeah, we can hear you it's a little bit quiet, but we can still hear you. Great.

01:48:36.150 --> 01:48:47.760

Eliza Donoghue: I'll speak up. My name is Eliza Donahue it's spelled E-L-I-Z-A and Donahue is D-O-N-O-G-H-U-E, and I am Director of Advocacy of Maine Audubon

01:48:48.330 --> 01:48:57.840

Eliza Donoghue: and we are very supportive of shifting the federal listing status from threatened to endangered. However, as has been discussed earlier,

01:48:58.380 --> 01:49:04.530

Eliza Donoghue: we recognize that this listing could pose some challenges for forest managers and landowners.

01:49:05.370 --> 01:49:13.650

Eliza Donoghue: We believe that it's imperative that the US Fish and Wildlife service develop a strategy for addressing these concerns.

01:49:14.490 --> 01:49:27.180

Eliza Donoghue: Here in Maine where approximately 95% of the state is forested it's going to be challenging for forest landowners and managers to know when a survey is needed before cutting, when to delay harvesting,

01:49:27.840 --> 01:49:40.800

Eliza Donoghue: and when to start stop harvesting without clear and reasonable guidelines and we're feeling confident, based on what we've heard from US Fish and Wildlife service today that good guidance is going to be

01:49:41.880 --> 01:49:44.250

Eliza Donoghue: developed and we encourage you

01:49:45.270 --> 01:49:49.260

Eliza Donoghue: to continue in that vein. Thank you very much.

01:49:51.030 --> 01:49:52.890

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you for your comment, Eliza.

01:49:53.910 --> 01:49:58.830

EMPSi - Megan Stone: We're going to go ahead and place you back on mute and lower your hand.

01:50:00.630 --> 01:50:01.410

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright.

01:50:03.330 --> 01:50:09.030

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Our next pre-register commenter is Annette Smith and Annette if you're on with us

01:50:10.050 --> 01:50:20.490

EMPSi - Megan Stone: via the phone, you can press \*9 to raise your hand. I don't see that you are on our participants list, right now, so I'll give it a moment here.

01:50:25.140 --> 01:50:29.910

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright, we can move to our next commenter and circle back to Annette.

01:50:31.350 --> 01:50:36.240

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Our next commentary Cheryl Joy Lipton and I'm going to go ahead and unmute you now Cheryl.

01:50:38.430 --> 01:50:38.910

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Hi there.

01:50:39.300 --> 01:50:40.830

Cheryl Joy Lipton: Hello, can you hear me?

01:50:41.550 --> 01:50:45.360

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Yeah, we can hear you. Can you spell your first and last name for the record?

01:50:45.630 --> 01:50:59.790

Cheryl Joy Lipton: Yes, my name is Cheryl Joy Lipton, its C-H-E-R-Y-L J-O-Y L-I-P-T-O-N and I'd like to say that the northern long-eared bat is threatened

01:51:00.150 --> 01:51:10.890

Cheryl Joy Lipton: not only from white-nose syndrome and hibernacula but also from the loss of its food supply due to the decrease of insects and decreasing loss of the summer habitat.

01:51:12.090 --> 01:51:31.410

Cheryl Joy Lipton: Insect biomass and biodiversity has been on a dramatic downward trend with biomass reducing by about one to 2% per year over the past three decades, and this is having an effect on declining populations and biodiversity of insectivorous species, just like the long-eared bat.

01:51:32.730 --> 01:51:42.000

Cheryl Joy Lipton: There's a continuous decrease in interior species and in old growth forest

01:51:42.750 --> 01:51:53.790

Cheryl Joy Lipton: and trees, of the age and structure that this bat needs for summer roosting- the northern long-eared bat has a strong association with large blocks of old forest.

01:51:54.150 --> 01:52:10.410

Cheryl Joy Lipton: And it's suffering from forest fragmentation and from logging, not only from forest conversion, but the current common forest management activities are also generally reducing the necessary habitat for this species and keeping land in forest

01:52:11.820 --> 01:52:20.550

Cheryl Joy Lipton: is only sufficient to help this species, if the forests are fulfilling its habitat requirements.

01:52:21.540 --> 01:52:42.780

Cheryl Joy Lipton: Edge habitats- open areas that are created through the many different treatments in harvesting will reduce optimal roosting areas and foraging habitat. It's a cavity roosting bat that uses cavities and crevices of live and dead trees and also the exfoliating bark of dead trees.

01:52:43.830 --> 01:52:50.070

Cheryl Joy Lipton: In a study of Morgan Monroe and yellow wood State Forest in Indiana, maternity roost tree locations were in

01:52:50.640 --> 01:53:00.510

Cheryl Joy Lipton: unharvested forest more often than trees within harvested areas and in areas containing more vegetation obstruction for the foraging.

01:53:01.020 --> 01:53:05.580

Cheryl Joy Lipton: Due to the needs of this bat, young forests are not suitable habitat,

01:53:06.150 --> 01:53:17.640

Cheryl Joy Lipton: as they typically switch roost trees every few days and the distance between those trees is also typically short, so therefore they require a group of trees or a large forest area.

01:53:18.090 --> 01:53:32.310

Cheryl Joy Lipton: And this, they are an interior species, not an edge species, they require old growth forest. It's a species that needs old growth or mature forests with vertical complexity and more tree species diversity.

01:53:32.880 --> 01:53:33.600

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And Cheryl

01:53:33.690 --> 01:53:40.950

EMPSi - Megan Stone: you have reached the end of your two minutes, so we will ask by you wrap up your comment, but we may have time to circle back to you.

01:53:41.460 --> 01:53:56.850

Cheryl Joy Lipton: Okay, can I have a 10 seconds? Habitat is this becoming more threatened because of the increased use of biomass for energy and heat a resulting in bigger impact on older and mature forests.

01:53:59.160 --> 01:54:02.520

Cheryl Joy Lipton: So we've a third in the past hundred years.

01:54:03.210 --> 01:54:06.750

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you Cheryl. I'm going to go ahead and place you back on mute

01:54:08.070 --> 01:54:11.130

EMPSi - Megan Stone: and we will lower your hand.

01:54:14.760 --> 01:54:24.690

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right, we're going to move to our next pre-registered commenter Elizabeth Nichols. Elizabeth if you're on with us, can you please access that raise hand feature?

01:54:25.800 --> 01:54:29.040

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And I do see that you are in our participants list.

01:54:38.640 --> 01:54:49.590

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I'm going to go ahead and unmute you Elizabeth just in case you aren't able to access that raise hand feature. I'll ask you to unmute and so you should get a prompt on your screen.

01:54:56.460 --> 01:55:06.300

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And if you don't want to provide a comment anymore, you're welcome to deny that prompt and so with that we'll move to our next pre-registered commenter.

01:55:08.460 --> 01:55:11.820

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Lorraine McCosker.

01:55:13.830 --> 01:55:18.390

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Lorraine, if you can go ahead and access that raise hand feature to let us know you're ready.

01:55:19.500 --> 01:55:26.040

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I don't see it will rain in our participants list so if you are one of our phone callers you can press \*9

01:55:27.180 --> 01:55:28.650

EMPSi - Megan Stone: to raise your hand.

01:55:35.130 --> 01:55:44.490



EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright, we are going to move to our next pre-registered commenter Emma Steele. I see that Emma has her hand raised so I'll ahead and unmute you now.

01:55:48.960 --> 01:55:57.420

Emma Steele: Thank you for the opportunity to present these comments, my name is Emma Steel spelled E-M-M-A last name S-T-E-E-L-E.

01:55:57.780 --> 01:56:07.920

Emma Steele: And I am here, speaking on behalf of the Indiana Forest Alliance, a nonprofit organization founded in 1998 to research and advocate for Indiana's native hardwood forest ecosystem.

01:56:08.490 --> 01:56:15.930

Emma Steele: I am here to express our adamant support for the proposed reclassification of the imperiled northern long-eared bat as an endangered species.

01:56:16.290 --> 01:56:22.860

Emma Steele: For the sake of time, I will not be going in depth on the following points, but we will provide full detail and documentation in our forthcoming written comments.

01:56:23.280 --> 01:56:28.020

Emma Steele: White-nose syndrome has ravaged northern long-eared bat populations, with Indiana being no exception.

01:56:28.350 --> 01:56:37.590

Emma Steele: The Indiana Department of Natural Resources recognizes a whopping 98% decline in the state's northern long-eared bat population. Since the emergence of white-nose syndrome in Indiana

01:56:38.190 --> 01:56:44.310

Emma Steele: magnifying the impacts of white-nose syndrome is the additional stressor of habitat loss and degradation within the state of Indiana.

01:56:44.700 --> 01:56:53.340

Emma Steele: Northern long-eared bat rely on snags and trees with cavities and crevices as summer roosting habitat particularly important to the successful reproduction of the species.

01:56:53.730 --> 01:57:02.610

Emma Steele: This preferred roosting habitat is most commonly found in older mature forests that have experienced minimal to no disturbance, such as that from logging.

01:57:03.030 --> 01:57:13.110

Emma Steele: The Indiana Division of Forestry has failed to set aside or protect adequate portions of the state's public forests to provide this essential habitat to this rapidly declining species,

01:57:13.410 --> 01:57:18.600

Emma Steele: undoubtedly magnifying the stressors that are pushing the northern long-eared bat to the edge of extinction.

01:57:19.110 --> 01:57:27.450

Emma Steele: The current threatened status of the northern long-eared bat and the accompanying 4(d) rule has not provided the push necessary for the state's agencies to create an adequate

01:57:27.690 --> 01:57:34.110

Emma Steele: and enforceable plan to protect the habitat northern long-eared bat rely on for their summer roosting activities.

01:57:34.470 --> 01:57:40.890

Emma Steele: Reclassification of the northern long-eared bat to endangered species status was proposed nearly 10 years ago in 2013,

01:57:41.220 --> 01:57:54.180

Emma Steele: but our leaders fail to act- take action to protect the species at that time. As a result, we have watched millions of northern long-eared bat perish and the time since. We have already lost a decade in the fight to save the species

01:57:54.390 --> 01:57:56.040

Emma Steele: and failure, now...

01:57:56.130 --> 01:58:04.980

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Emma, you have reached your allotted time, so we will ask that you wrap up your comments and then we may be able to circle back to you if time allows.

01:58:05.040 --> 01:58:10.440

Emma Steele: All right, 10 seconds. Failure to act now, by reclassifying the species as an endangered

01:58:11.130 --> 01:58:24.360

Emma Steele: species means we may lose the last chance we have to keep the northern long-eared bat- until 15 years ago one of the most common bats in the United States on the planet at all. We encourage you to move forward with this reclassification. Thank you.

01:58:26.580 --> 01:58:33.150

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you Emma, we appreciate your comment. I'm going to go ahead and place you back on mute now.

01:58:36.810 --> 01:58:52.800

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right, our next pre-registered commenter is Pete Hanebutt. Pete if you're on the call with us, please access that raise hand feature if you're on the phone, you can press \*9. I don't see you in our participants list right now.

01:58:53.910 --> 01:58:56.010

EMPSi - Megan Stone: So we'll give that a few seconds here.

01:58:59.670 --> 01:59:03.660

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right, we will move on to our next pre-registered commenter.

01:59:06.270 --> 01:59:13.860

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Dan Roach. Dan if you are on with us, can you access that raise hand feature to let us know that you're ready.

01:59:15.030 --> 01:59:18.480

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And if you're one of our phone callers you can press \*9.

01:59:23.820 --> 01:59:31.350

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I don't see any raise hands at the moment, so we'll move to our next pre-registered commenter James Gore.

01:59:33.000 --> 01:59:42.240

EMPSi - Megan Stone: James if you're on, you can access that raise hand feature by pressing \*9 if you're on the phone with us because I don't see you on our participants list.

01:59:45.960 --> 01:59:47.700

EMPSi - Megan Stone: We'll give that a few seconds here.

01:59:53.430 --> 02:00:12.480

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right, with that, I think we have reached the end of our pre-registered commenters and we're going to go ahead and

quickly call out the names for those folks who did pre-register but weren't available to provide their comment when we initially called on them.

02:00:14.790 --> 02:00:17.580

EMPSi - Megan Stone: So, our first

02:00:18.960 --> 02:00:29.880

EMPSi - Megan Stone: pre-registered commenter who we didn't have a chance to speak with was Justin so I'm going to go ahead and see if Justin is in our participants list, and it looks like he still

02:00:30.900 --> 02:00:40.170

EMPSi - Megan Stone: hasn't joined us so we'll call out our next pre-registered commenter who didn't have a chance, and that was Noel Lerner.

02:00:44.490 --> 02:00:53.190

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I don't see that, Noel has joined either, so we'll call on our next commenter Ronin St. James.

02:00:56.070 --> 02:01:02.250

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Ronin if you're joining by phone, you can press \*9 to raise your hand. I don't see you in our participants list.

02:01:03.750 --> 02:01:13.380

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And I don't see any raised hands, so we'll move to our next pre-registered commenter who was Derrick Spinks.

02:01:16.380 --> 02:01:18.930

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And I don't see that Derrick has joined, but I

02:01:22.530 --> 02:01:25.890

EMPSi - Megan Stone: would encourage him to press \*9 if he's joining by the phone.

02:01:28.860 --> 02:01:35.610

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright, our next pre-registered commenter we didn't have a chance to hear from was Michael Treve.

02:01:39.060 --> 02:01:47.220

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And I don't see that Michael has joined us, so we will move to Mary Theresa Mazucca.

02:01:49.710 --> 02:01:51.930

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And I don't see that she's joined us either.

02:01:53.250 --> 02:02:00.270

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Mary if you're on you can access the raise hand feature by pressing \*9. Until then

02:02:01.380 --> 02:02:01.950

EMPSi - Megan Stone: we

02:02:03.180 --> 02:02:11.910

EMPSi - Megan Stone: will move to our next commenter who was Lora Kemp. I'm going to go ahead and try and allow you to talk now Lora to see if you were able to

02:02:12.660 --> 02:02:28.080

EMPSi - Megan Stone: update your Zoom or call in, and I see that I'm still getting the same issue, so, if you would like to provide a comment feel free to use the phone and call in with that number at the bottom of the screen and then enter the webinar ID.

02:02:30.360 --> 02:02:31.380

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right.

02:02:33.270 --> 02:02:38.040

EMPSi - Megan Stone: With that, our next commenter that we didn't hear from was Richard Jones.

02:02:42.330 --> 02:02:49.110

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And I'll check if he's joined us. I don't see Richard on our list or hands raised

02:02:50.250 --> 02:02:56.670

EMPSi - Megan Stone: from any of our phone callers, so we will move to our next commenter Ned Kelly.

02:02:59.340 --> 02:03:08.520

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And again don't see that Ned joined us or a phone caller with their hand raised so we will move to our next commenter.

02:03:09.540 --> 02:03:22.890

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Annette Smith. Annette if you're on with us now, you can go ahead and access that raise hand feature, via star nine on your phone if you're a phone caller. I don't see Annette is with us in the participants list.

02:03:24.660 --> 02:03:32.610

EMPSi - Megan Stone: So we will move to Elizabeth Nichols, and I'll check for her hand.

02:03:34.200 --> 02:03:35.640

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I do see that Elizabeth

02:03:37.890 --> 02:03:43.560

EMPSi - Megan Stone: is on with us. Elizabeth if you'd like to provide your comment, you can go ahead and access the raise hand feature.

02:03:51.120 --> 02:03:52.140

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right.

02:03:54.720 --> 02:04:00.810

EMPSi - Megan Stone: We will move to our next commenter Loraine McCosker.

02:04:06.030 --> 02:04:07.980

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright, and

02:04:09.180 --> 02:04:25.740

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I also don't see Pete has joined the call so with that we've reached the end of our pre-registered commenters and if they end up joining, they're welcome to raise their hand but, at this time, we're going to go ahead and open it up to the rest of the public.

02:04:27.420 --> 02:04:29.370

EMPSi - Megan Stone: So if you have a comment

02:04:30.510 --> 02:04:32.310

EMPSi - Megan Stone: feel free to raise your hand.

02:04:33.900 --> 02:04:41.790

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I do know that Elaine has her hand raised again, and she did already provide a comment so we're going to go to..

02:04:42.900 --> 02:04:45.630

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Oh, it looks like Mary briefly raised her hand but

02:04:48.330 --> 02:04:53.820

EMPSi - Megan Stone: we will give it a second just to see if anyone who hasn't already provided a comment wants to.

02:05:03.360 --> 02:05:04.680

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right, I do see that.

02:05:07.320 --> 02:05:21.120

EMPSi - Megan Stone: we don't have any raised hands, and again we've opened this meeting up to the rest of the folks who maybe registered but didn't register to provide a comment when they signed up so with that

02:05:22.140 --> 02:05:26.490

EMPSi - Megan Stone: we can go ahead and give Elaine a second chance.

02:05:31.590 --> 02:05:32.880

Elaine Faletra: Okay hi.

02:05:33.480 --> 02:05:34.110

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Hi Elaine.

02:05:35.580 --> 02:05:37.140

Elaine Faletra: It's so obvious to me, so

02:05:38.220 --> 02:05:52.200

Elaine Faletra: it's obvious that old growth riparian areas are areas optimal for this bat, so what programs do the Forest Service run to help to preserve the old growth forests? That's it, so that's my question.

02:05:54.510 --> 02:05:58.860

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you Elaine, I will go ahead and place you back on mute

02:05:59.910 --> 02:06:01.470

EMPSi - Megan Stone: and lower your hand.

02:06:04.920 --> 02:06:12.990

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And we do want to remind you that even though we aren't answering questions anymore, that will be recorded as part of the record in your comment.

02:06:13.800 --> 02:06:31.020

EMPSi - Megan Stone: So at this time we've moved through all of our pre-registered commenters and anyone who would like to provide a comment is welcome to do so. We will be listening until 7:30 so we currently have 24 minutes left, and we will stay on until that

02:06:32.040 --> 02:06:36.000

EMPSi - Megan Stone: time to listen to your comments so feel free to raise your hand.

02:07:30.840 --> 02:07:43.080

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Folks if you'd like to provide a comment you can access the raise hand feature in Zoom or you can press \*9 if you're calling in via phone and we will be here for another

02:07:44.220 --> 02:07:47.730

EMPSi - Megan Stone: 22 minutes so we're happy to hear any comments you have.

02:08:32.340 --> 02:08:36.090

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I do you see in the chat that we got a message from Mary Bookwalter

02:08:37.110 --> 02:08:38.430

EMPSi - Megan Stone: letting us know that

02:08:39.780 --> 02:08:56.190

EMPSi - Megan Stone: she was trying to input the webinar ID and wasn't able to join. So Mary in case you'd like to provide a public comment, right now I'll allow you to unmute, and you'll get a prompt on your screen if you'd like to provide a comment.

02:08:59.850 --> 02:09:09.240

Mary Bookwalter: Well, thank you very much. My name is Mary Bookwalter, Indiana. Lora Kemp is a friend of mine and I'm sorry she can't join us tonight

02:09:10.290 --> 02:09:13.620

Mary Bookwalter: with the same issue I seem to be having with you.

02:09:15.690 --> 02:09:16.020

Mary Bookwalter: The...

02:09:17.520 --> 02:09:21.960

Mary Bookwalter: I'm amazed and delighted to hear the number of comments



02:09:23.040 --> 02:09:31.890

Mary Bookwalter: requesting the listing of the species and the acknowledgement that they're long overdue and I am also a member of the Indiana Forest Alliance and

02:09:32.370 --> 02:09:44.220

Mary Bookwalter: I'm older and have seen quite a bit of destruction in my life of many things and I just am grateful that so many others are pointing out to the

02:09:44.760 --> 02:09:58.410

Mary Bookwalter: Fish and Wildlife Service that this older habitat. We do hope that you address this, the need for it in Indiana- the public forests represent about 3% of our entire forest base.

02:09:59.550 --> 02:10:11.400

Mary Bookwalter: This is not in these trees, as you well know, were purchased they were not just taken by fear, and so we think that they should be saved and

02:10:12.660 --> 02:10:14.730

Mary Bookwalter: we'd like to see these species,

02:10:16.020 --> 02:10:23.130

Mary Bookwalter: they'll never rebound, we'd just like to see the concern for them extended places they live and give them the opportunity

02:10:23.910 --> 02:10:32.760

Mary Bookwalter: to do so. Thank you again and Lora I'm sorry she can't be with us tonight for some technical reason. She lives in our

02:10:33.360 --> 02:10:48.300

Mary Bookwalter: own Putnam state forest area, and this is a place under great attack, as is most all of our 50 state forests. Thank you very much, have a good evening and good luck in your endeavors we all want to do this good work, for me too, thank you, good night.

02:10:49.080 --> 02:10:50.610

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you for your comment, Mary.

02:10:55.080 --> 02:10:57.420

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I'll go ahead and place you back on mute here.

02:11:03.780 --> 02:11:12.270

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And if anybody else would like to provide a public comment feel free to raise your hand using star nine or the participants icon.

02:11:42.360 --> 02:11:49.950

EMPSi - Megan Stone: We will be on accepting comments... Oh, I see a new raised hand from Zack Porter. I will go ahead and place you off mute now Zack.

02:11:54.480 --> 02:12:03.480

Zack Porter: Thank you, and I do appreciate the extra chance to comment here, please let me know if there's somebody else who wants to comment, since I have commented previously.

02:12:03.900 --> 02:12:12.960

Zack Porter: I do want to just thank all of you for being here tonight and being really generous honestly with your time. I've been to a lot of public meetings.

02:12:13.230 --> 02:12:24.420

Zack Porter: I think you've conducted this virtual public meeting better than just about any other virtual public meeting I've been to over the last couple of years. You've been incredibly generous and gracious and giving people lots of opportunity to speak.

02:12:25.110 --> 02:12:33.300

Zack Porter: So I'm yeah, I just want to note that, and I did just want to take the opportunity, since we're together here, and I wish we could be,

02:12:33.990 --> 02:12:47.550

Zack Porter: you know, meeting face to face and getting to know one another but I'll take the chance to say that you know there's a common misunderstanding in our eastern forests and I'll speak particularly about New England that,

02:12:48.720 --> 02:12:58.200

Zack Porter: you know, there are- like the greatest threat to New England forests is the conversion of forests to other uses.

02:12:58.680 --> 02:13:09.660

Zack Porter: And there have been multiple studies, all of which I will submit to you in written comments that point to how the greatest disturbance event

02:13:10.470 --> 02:13:15.330

Zack Porter: on the New England landscape is logging. It's not wind throw, it's not,

02:13:16.050 --> 02:13:27.630

Zack Porter: it's not disease, it's not insects, it's not fire, it's logging and more than half of all tree mortality on a volume basis in northeastern US forests is from logging.

02:13:28.140 --> 02:13:48.450

Zack Porter: And, as a result, you know of our landscape history of total clearing, less than one 10th of 1% of New England forests are old growth, less than one 10th of 1% are original forests and today only 3% of regional forests are managed to allow trees to simply grow old.

02:13:49.620 --> 02:13:54.660

Zack Porter: 3%, so we are looking at an opportunity here, as has been noted

02:13:55.380 --> 02:14:05.160

Zack Porter: where on both private and public lands but I'll say as many have commented previously, I think, especially on public lands, we have an opportunity to help this bat recover.

02:14:05.730 --> 02:14:18.240

Zack Porter: The most mature forests that we have left in New England are on our public lands, state and federal, and this is a huge opportunity for not just this species recovery, but the recovery of a number of species.

02:14:19.410 --> 02:14:22.650

EMPSi - Megan Stone: We will ask you to wrap up your comments, just in case there

02:14:23.160 --> 02:14:27.720

EMPSi - Megan Stone: is anyone else who hasn't had a chance to speak who might last minute.

02:14:29.400 --> 02:14:31.860

EMPSi - Megan Stone: So if you could wrap that up, we would appreciate it.

02:14:32.640 --> 02:14:39.150

Zack Porter: Yeah, no I just I'll just say I think it's critical, you know as you move forward here the assessment made it clear that,

02:14:40.110 --> 02:14:45.960

Zack Porter: to date, it looks like you've only been looking at tree cover. Tree cover is not a proxy for forest health.

02:14:46.650 --> 02:14:52.350

Zack Porter: So we need to be looking at forest structure and forest age, in addition to tree cover.

02:14:52.770 --> 02:15:03.840

Zack Porter: And it's been shown over and over again that it's tree- it's the structure and age that really matter when it comes to supporting New England's native biodiversity, including the northern long-eared bat. So thank you again, I really appreciate your time today.

02:15:04.560 --> 02:15:07.950

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great. Thank you, Zack. We'll go ahead and mute you now

02:15:10.710 --> 02:15:22.680

EMPSi - Megan Stone: and lower your hand. Um it looks like we have about 15 minutes left for the public comment portion of tonight's meeting, and we do want to encourage anyone who would like to provide a comment

02:15:24.270 --> 02:15:31.020

EMPSi - Megan Stone: to raise their hand. If you have any questions, you can submit those as part of the record in your comment.

02:15:32.190 --> 02:15:33.300

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And we'll be here.

02:16:21.360 --> 02:16:37.140

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright, I don't see any raise hands, but just a reminder, you can access the raise hand feature if you're a phone caller by pressing \*9 and if you're on via the Zoom web App you can go to your participants icon.

02:16:39.150 --> 02:16:44.190

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Looks like we have a raised hand from Mary. We'll go ahead and unmute you now Mary.

02:16:51.000 --> 02:16:53.160

Mary Bookwalter: Thank you again, an also

02:16:55.020 --> 02:17:06.960

Mary Bookwalter: so, echoing and Mr. Zack Porter but as a member of the Indiana Forest Alliance, I like to- I would say you have been most gracious this evening and I'm very grateful, thank you and

02:17:07.710 --> 02:17:23.430

Mary Bookwalter: I would like to include thanks to Mr. Daniel Krusak, who invited himself or identified himself as a member of the National Forest Service and I, I just wish he worked here in Indiana at the Hoosier National Forest

02:17:24.450 --> 02:17:31.170

Mary Bookwalter: His sentiment, we could use here because it's a place where there's two now recent

02:17:32.070 --> 02:17:40.560

Mary Bookwalter: logging projects going on, one has been remanded by a federal district judge back to the forest for reconsideration, unfortunately, not for

02:17:41.430 --> 02:17:57.570

Mary Bookwalter: the NEPA not for the preservation of that habitat but we're not looking at segmentation and Lake Monroe reservoir for 125,000 citizens. It's still- we have high hopes that you're that you're Endangered Species

02:17:58.710 --> 02:18:10.380

Mary Bookwalter: Act will prevail one day here. But thank you again for that and I just want to say we're very grateful and I'm grateful that you will endeavor to preserve

02:18:11.730 --> 02:18:15.810

Mary Bookwalter: the northern long-eared bat. Thank you, good night.

02:18:16.230 --> 02:18:17.160

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you, Mary.

02:18:18.210 --> 02:18:19.800

EMPSi - Megan Stone: We appreciate your comment.

02:18:28.890 --> 02:18:39.960

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right, we have around 10 minutes left on the public comment portion of tonight's webinar. If anybody would like to provide a comment, please feel free to do so.

02:18:53.850 --> 02:19:05.070

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And if anyone would like to provide written comments, those can be submitted by May 23 through regulations.gov or by mail and we will post those links in the chat.

02:19:45.660 --> 02:19:52.740

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alrighty, I do see that we have one hand raised. Elaine Faletra has raised her hand. I'll go ahead and unmute her now.

02:19:56.400 --> 02:20:18.120

Elaine Faletra: Hi, I'm not an expert in this field, but you know we really don't know much about old growth forests in New England, because they are lacking, we have like Zack said, what? Less than 1%, 0.1 percent or whatever he said, less than 1% so

02:20:19.860 --> 02:20:25.470

Elaine Faletra: my goal would be to create some list, just set some forest aside where we know we have the bat

02:20:26.220 --> 02:20:39.420

Elaine Faletra: we know that they have been there. You've done your echo location studies, you know they're there, let's just say okay, let's preserve these 500 acres that we own as a National Forest Service

02:20:40.890 --> 02:20:46.200

Elaine Faletra: and preserve it and study it, it will, it will be great and that's my comment.

02:20:49.950 --> 02:20:53.280

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you Elaine I will now go ahead and place you back on mute.

02:20:58.740 --> 02:21:11.220

EMPSi - Megan Stone: All right, if anybody else would like to submit a public comment you can do so by pressing \*9 if you're a phone caller or using the same participants list and navigating to the raise hand icon.

02:21:12.570 --> 02:21:15.690

EMPSi - Megan Stone: We do have a little bit of time left here in our meeting.

02:21:23.640 --> 02:21:30.000

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright, I do see a hand raised from John Brabant. John I'm going to unmute you now.

02:21:35.310 --> 02:21:35.850

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Hi there.

02:21:36.450 --> 02:21:37.890

JOHN BRABANT: hi well, thank you.

02:21:39.360 --> 02:21:41.160

EMPSi - Megan Stone: first and last name for the record.

02:21:41.760 --> 02:21:42.960

JOHN BRABANT: John Brabant.

02:21:45.240 --> 02:21:46.380

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thanks John. Go ahead.

02:21:46.950 --> 02:21:53.640

JOHN BRABANT: Yeah, and related to old growth forests and national forests in wilderness areas.

02:21:54.600 --> 02:22:05.040

JOHN BRABANT: There was a wind turbine project that was permitted- I think it's the first ever and maybe the only one ever been allowed in a federal wilderness area and it happened in Vermont.

02:22:05.820 --> 02:22:17.670

JOHN BRABANT: And I would request that you give consideration to banning or not allowing any future wind turbine developments on either federal parklands

02:22:18.150 --> 02:22:25.590

JOHN BRABANT: or wilderness areas and to the extent possible federal lands at all until you know more or how to protect

02:22:26.400 --> 02:22:40.980

JOHN BRABANT: bat species, all bat species that are placed at risk by these projects, as well as a raptors which we are now finding are

being significantly impacted by these projects and that's the end of my comment. Thank you.

02:22:42.540 --> 02:22:43.380

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Thank you John.

02:22:51.510 --> 02:22:52.200

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright.

02:22:53.730 --> 02:22:54.300

EMPSi - Megan Stone: It's

02:22:56.370 --> 02:22:59.730

EMPSi - Megan Stone: 7:23 mountain time, 8:23.

02:23:00.930 --> 02:23:02.010

EMPSi - Megan Stone: central time

02:23:04.440 --> 02:23:18.960

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I think. Sorry if I got that wrong but regardless, we have seven minutes left in our public comment period, and if you guys would like to provide a public comment, feel free to access the raise hand feature

02:23:21.510 --> 02:23:34.050

EMPSi - Megan Stone: and if you would rather submit written comments that would be greatly appreciated and we posted in the chat where you can submit written comments, either through regulations.gov or mailing them.

02:23:37.680 --> 02:23:39.780

EMPSi - Megan Stone: And we'll go ahead and post that link

02:23:41.070 --> 02:23:52.110

EMPSi - Megan Stone: where you can find the recording after this meeting in the chat as well, and that will be a great resource and have project updates and information.

02:24:50.070 --> 02:24:54.030

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Looks like we bought about five minutes here left in our comment portion.

02:24:56.370 --> 02:25:05.220



EMPSi - Megan Stone: If anyone else would like to provide a public comment and hasn't done so already feel free to raise your hand.

02:26:02.730 --> 02:26:20.850

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Alright looks like we have around four minutes left in the meeting. I do see that we've got a chat asking if we could have one individual comment from someone else, if that individual wants to raise their hand feel free to do so.

02:26:29.160 --> 02:26:39.060

EMPSi - Megan Stone: I don't see any hands raised, but again, if you would like to raise your hand, you can press \*9 if you're joining on the phone or you can use the participants list.

02:27:20.430 --> 02:27:32.190

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Well we have around three minutes left if anyone wants to come on and provide one last comment- anyone we haven't heard from yet tonight please feel free to raise your hand.

02:28:31.980 --> 02:28:44.280

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Looks like we don't have anyone else who would like to provide a comment and has raised their hand so at this time I'm going to turn it back over to Jonathan Jaka for some closing remarks.

02:28:46.830 --> 02:28:55.110

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: Yeah, thank you very much, thank you very much for the team at EMPSi and if you could actually one more time, please post the

02:28:55.830 --> 02:29:02.100

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: northern long-eared bat website again, you should be able to find any information on there from what we-

02:29:02.610 --> 02:29:09.750

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: The presentation that we're giving tonight, the recording and then there should be links there as well for like regulations.gov

02:29:10.260 --> 02:29:18.600

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: of the proposed rule and a lot of the things that we're working on will go up there, as we create them and thank you for adding that website again.

02:29:18.900 --> 02:29:28.530

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: And so, on behalf of my colleagues of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. I want to again thank everyone from the public for participating in the question-and-answer session and the public hearing.

02:29:28.860 --> 02:29:40.410

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: And as a reminder, as well as you can see, on the screen, the public comment period goes through May 23<sup>rd</sup>. So please, if you didn't get a chance, or you thought of something after this feel free to submit further comments to regulations

02:29:40.890 --> 02:29:49.320

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: or via the mail at the address given on the presentation there and was also in the chat a of couple times,

02:29:49.890 --> 02:30:00.630

Jonathan Jaka - USFWS: mailing address as well as will be on that website. So again, thank you everyone from the public, we really appreciate you taking the time and your interest in the northern long-eared bat and its conservation, thank you.

02:30:03.690 --> 02:30:06.660

EMPSi - Megan Stone: Great. Thank you everyone will go ahead and end the meeting now.