

# Navigating the Wildlife Consultation Process



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# Introduction

- Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) is responsible for protecting and managing wildlife and natural habitats
  - Work proactively with developers
  - Address wildlife concerns during the site selection and planning phase
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# Overview of Consultation Process

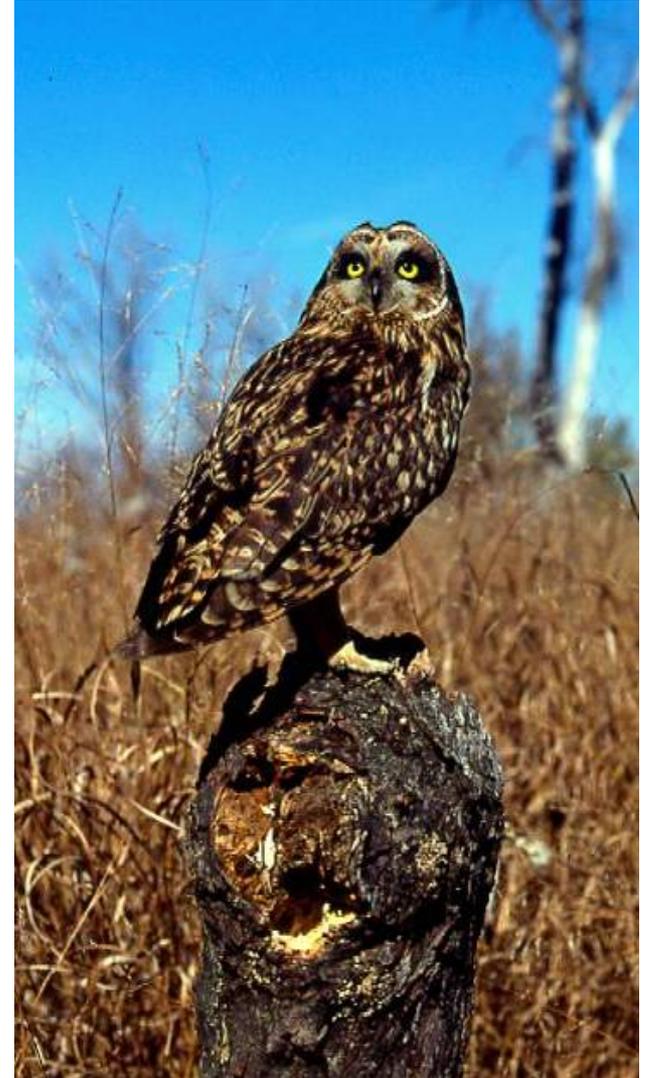
1. Encourage pre-siting review
2. Review guidance documents
3. Contact agency personnel & submit project information for review
4. Meetings and/or site visits
5. Develop survey methods
6. Conduct 2 years of pre- and post-construction surveys & submit reports
  - in some cases more than 2 years may be needed

# 1. Pre-siting Review



# 2. Review Guidance Documents

- Guidelines for Wind Energy and Wildlife Resource Management\*
- USFWS Land-Based Wind Energy Guidelines
- Wind and Wildlife Map\*
- Avian Assessment Guidance \*
- Bat Assessment Guidelines (in draft)



\* <http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/wildlife/windwildlife.asp>

# 2. Review Guidance Documents

- Guidelines for Wind Energy and Wildlife Resource Management in Nebraska
  - The Nebraska Wind and Wildlife Working Group
  - Purpose: provide consistent statewide guidance for the development of wind energy projects that avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to wildlife and their habitats in Nebraska
  - Does not substitute for a site specific review

<http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/wildlife/windwildlife.asp>

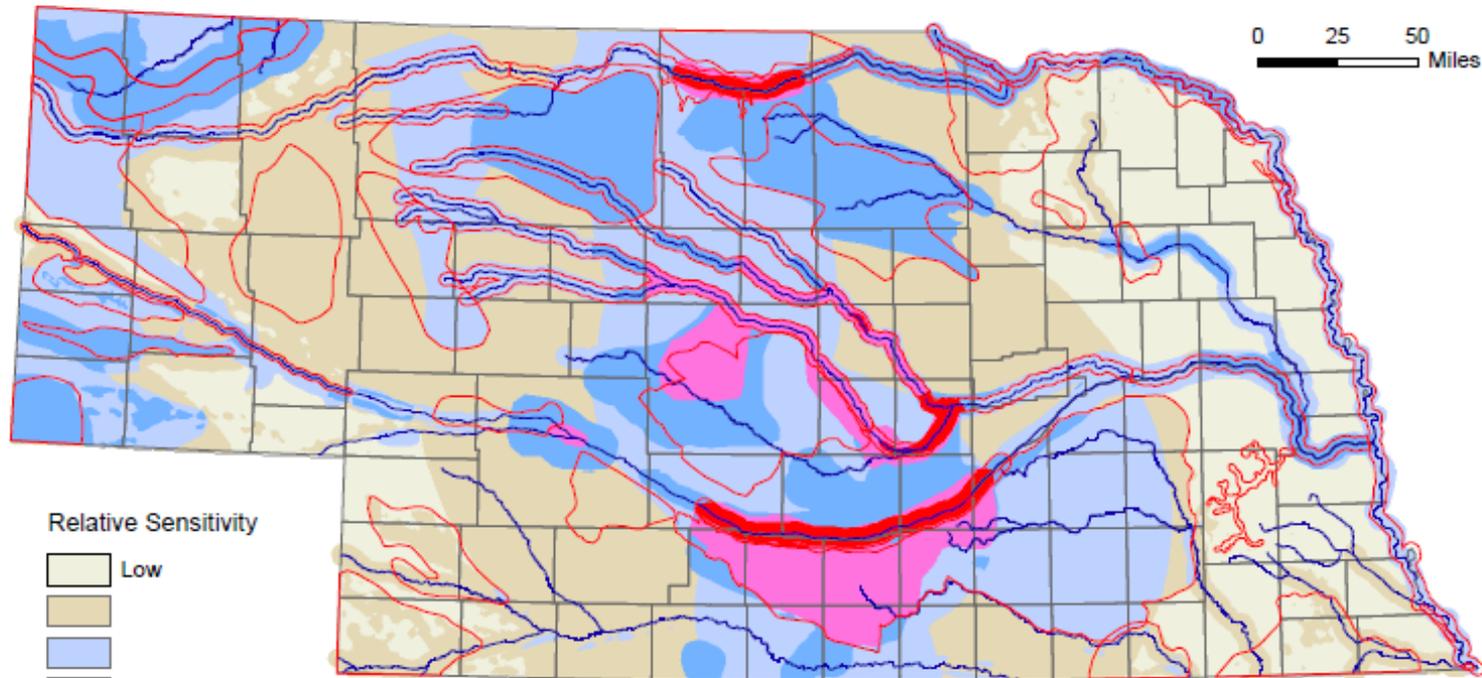
## 2. Review Guidance Documents

- Guidelines for Wind Energy and Wildlife Resource Management in Nebraska
  - Pre-construction site assessment
  - Practices to avoid and minimize impacts to wildlife
  - Post-construction operational monitoring
  - Mitigation for long-term habitat impacts
  - Research

<http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/wildlife/windwildlife.asp>

# 2. Review Guidance Documents

Wind Energy and Nebraska's Wildlife:  
An index of the sensitivity of wildlife habitats to wind energy development,  
based on selected at-risk species



Relative Sensitivity



Biologically Unique  
Landscapes



This map was designed to aid in planning for wind energy development by identifying areas that are considered relatively more sensitive or less sensitive to such development, with respect to species of concern. This map is not designed to evaluate wind farm siting at specific locations. Even in "low sensitivity" areas shown, there will be specific locations where siting of wind power infrastructure can negatively impact significant biological resources (e.g. remnant tallgrass prairie, listed plant species, etc.). Contact the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for potential site-specific impacts and potential conservation measures to avoid "take" under the state Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act and the federal Endangered Species Act.

See attached document for a description of the information used to develop this map.

Map version date: October 1, 2011



<http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/wildlife/windwildlife.asp>

# 2. Review Guidance Documents



- Assist with designing surveys & reporting
  - Whooping Crane
  - Mountain Plover
  - Breeding Bird
  - Nesting Raptor
  - Prairie Grouse
- Produce defensible results
- Make sound decisions
  - Location & Mitigation

<http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/wildlife/windwildlife.asp>

# 2. Review Guidance Documents

## Avian Assessment Guidance

- Two years pre- and post-construction surveys
- Allow flexibility with methods
  - Still want to estimate detection probabilities and corrected densities
- Species specific surveys
- Specific surveys in migratory corridors or stop-over locations



# 3. Contact Agency Personnel and Submit Project Information

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Martha Tacha



- Location, timeframe, size, number & type of turbines, substations, transmission lines, access roads, temporary concrete plants, etc.

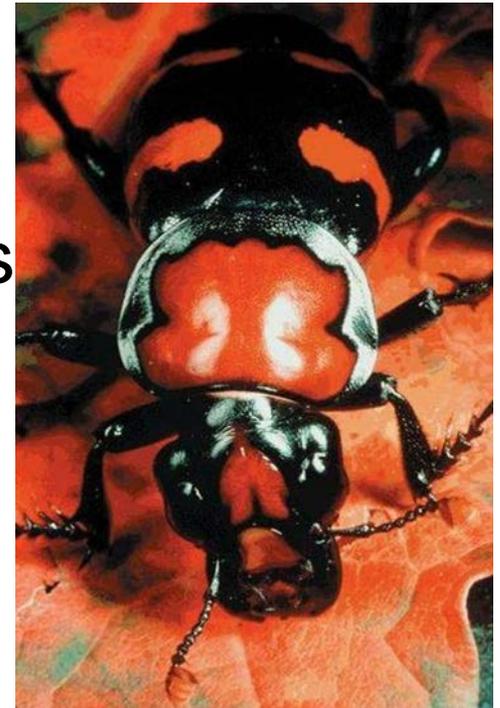
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- Environmental Review
  - Endangered & Threatened Species
  - Other At-risk Species and Communities
  - Federal laws
  - Recommendations
- Allow **at least** 30 days for review

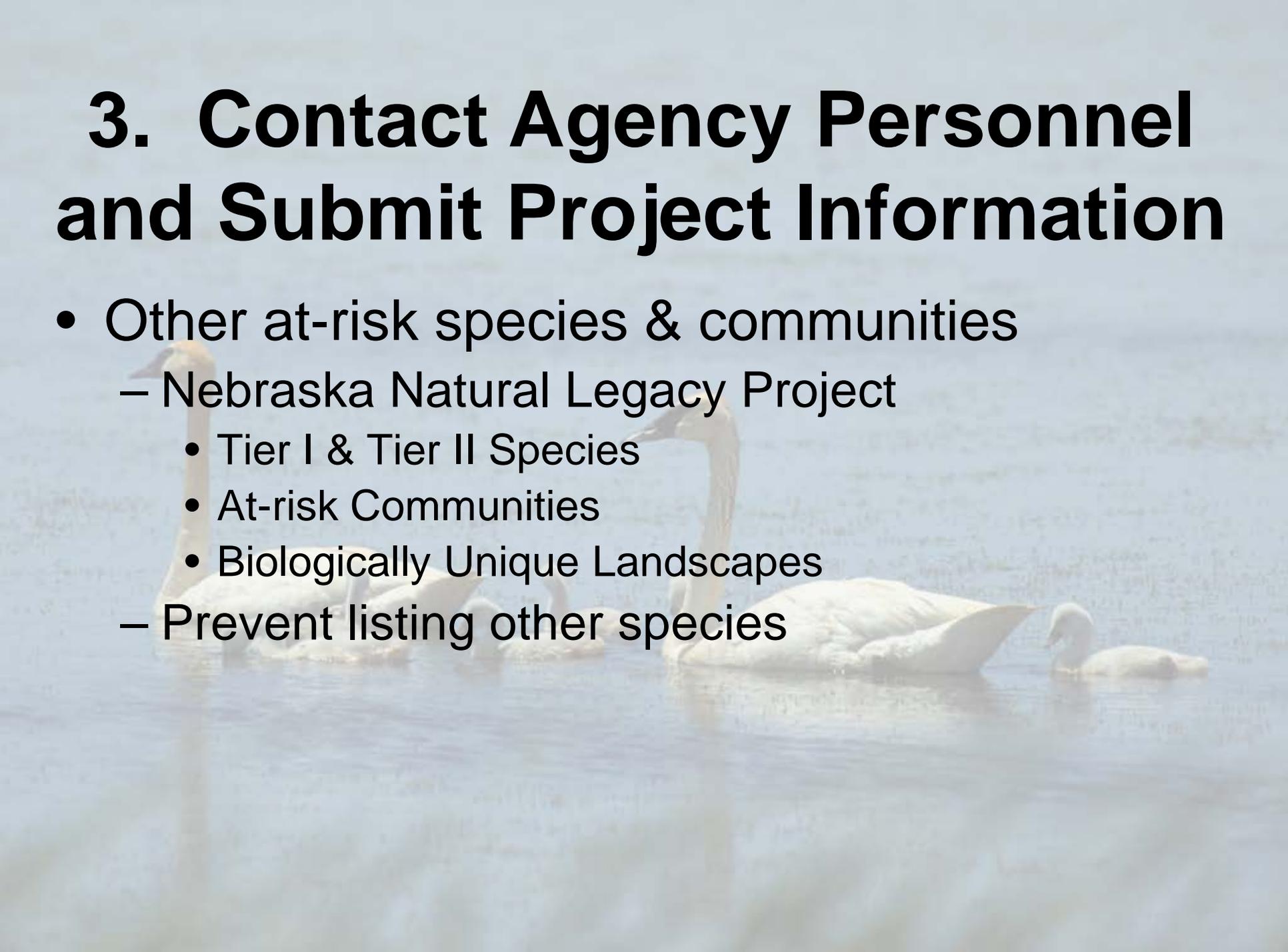
# 3. Contact Agency Personnel and Submit Project Information

- Endangered and Threatened Species
  - Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act (Neb. Rev. Stat. 37-801 to 811)
  - 27 state-listed species
  - “Take” is prohibited
  - Consultation with state agencies
    - Power Review Board
    - NDEQ
    - etc...



# 3. Contact Agency Personnel and Submit Project Information

- Other at-risk species & communities
  - Nebraska Natural Legacy Project
    - Tier I & Tier II Species
    - At-risk Communities
    - Biologically Unique Landscapes
  - Prevent listing other species

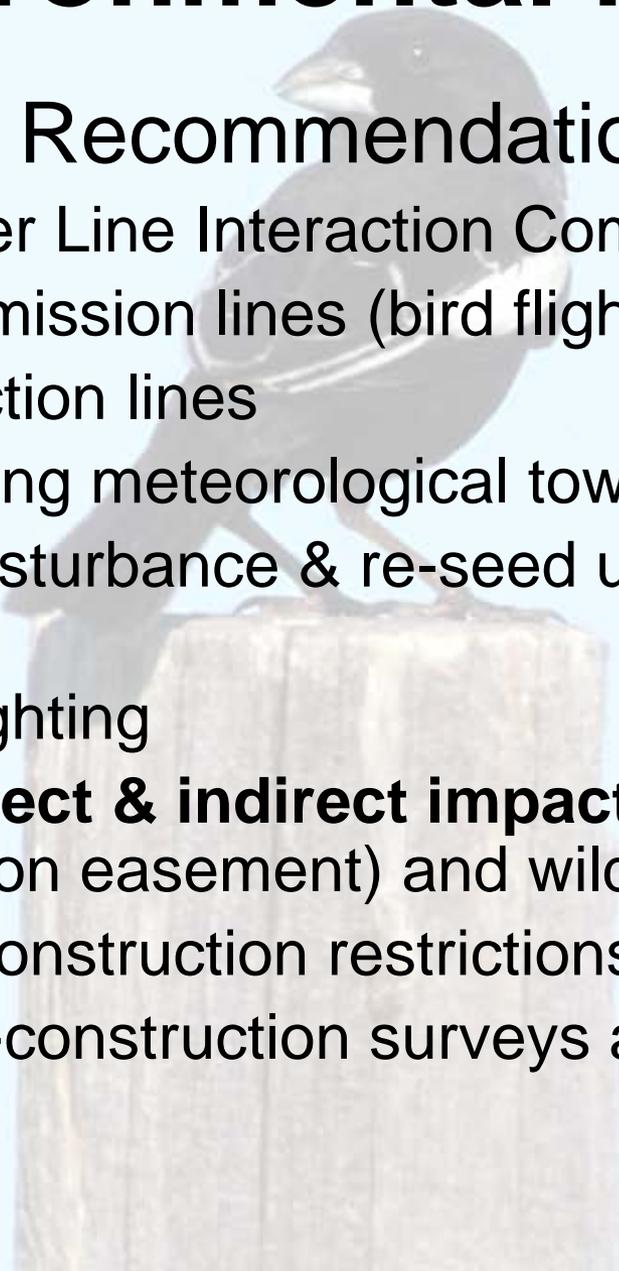


# 3. Contact Agency Personnel and Submit Project Information

- Species Protected Under Federal Laws
  - Endangered Species Act
  - Migratory Bird Treaty Act
  - Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act



# Environmental Review



- “Standard” Recommendations
  - Avian Power Line Interaction Committee standards
  - Mark transmission lines (bird flight diverters)
  - Bury Collection lines
  - Free-standing meteorological towers
  - Minimize disturbance & re-seed using native, local ecotypes
  - Minimize lighting
  - Mitigate **direct & indirect impacts** to native habitats (conservation easement) and wildlife
  - Seasonal construction restrictions
  - Pre & Post-construction surveys and mortality studies

## **4. Meetings and Site Visits**



**Plan**

**4 – 6 weeks**

**in advance**

# 5. Develop Survey Methods

- E&T species, birds, bats, etc.
- Submit to agency personnel by March 1 or at least 1 month prior to start of survey period



# 6. Conduct Surveys & Submit Reports



- 2 years pre- and post-construction surveys
- **MAY NEED MORE in some cases**
- Submit reports to agency personnel

# Summary

- Encourage pre-siting review
- Review guidance documents
- Contact agency personnel and provide project information for initial review early in the planning phase
- Schedule meetings and/or site visits
- Develop survey methods
- Conduct two years of pre- & post construction surveys and submit reports

# Summary

- Involve NGPC & USFWS to avoid impact to sensitive species & communities
- Plan Ahead (review and surveys)
- Utilize tools and guidance documents
- Work together to avoid and minimize impacts to wildlife





**Thank You!**  
**Any Questions?**

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