



North Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society



"Dedicated to the wise use of all North Dakota's natural resources."

November 4, 2009

The Wildlife Society is an International, nonprofit, scientific and educational organization composed of wildlife professionals, students, and laypersons active and interested in wildlife research, management, and administration. The North Dakota Chapter of the Wildlife Society (Chapter) is an active affiliate with 336 members. The Chapter is specifically concerned with approaches to effective management of North Dakota's plant and wildlife communities.

The Chapter looks favorably upon the development of green energy resources, that is, those developments that use renewable energy sources while maintaining ecological sustainability in the physical locations where the development occurs. The Chapter promotes a balanced approach to promoting wind technology in North Dakota, an approach that does not negatively impact native habitats and wildlife populations dependent on those habitats. The Chapter also recommends that traditional energy development (oil, gas, and coal) be conducted in an environmentally responsible manner that requires developers to use the best available technologies and environmental standards to safeguard North Dakota's air, lands, waters, and wildlife for the continued and future use and enjoyment of its citizens.

Following are the major issues and concerns of the Chapter related to energy development:

1. Impacts to wildlife habitats, specifically, grasslands, both native and tame, and wetlands. Impacts include loss, fragmentation, and degradation.
2. Concomitant impacts to wildlife, particularly; grassland dependent species already in decline. Population losses may be significantly exacerbated due to loss, fragmentation, or degradation of habitats.
3. Cumulative impacts across the state from numerous activities.
 - Cumulative effect of all the various forms of energy development, including, but not necessarily limited to wind, biofuels, oil, gas, and coal.
 - Cumulative effects of energy-related infrastructure development, including transmission lines, roads, pipelines, and waste disposal facilities.
 - "Additive" cumulative direct impacts (habitat loss and fragmentation) with indirect impacts (mortality due to such structures as turbines, transmissions lines, and guy wires).
 - Cumulative effects of past, current, and future energy developments.
 - Long term detrimental impacts to habitats and wildlife populations affect North Dakotans' quality of life, traditional way of life, cultural heritage, and economic returns in the form of outdoor recreation and ecotourism.

4. In cases where energy development occurs on grasslands or wetlands, mitigation and voluntary conservation strategies for habitat loss and wildlife impacts are appropriate and desirable.
5. The science pertaining to the impacts of energy development on wildlife and their habitats is incomplete. It is important to encourage and/or require energy developers to engage in pre- and post-construction studies of the impacts of energy development and potentials to avoid or mitigate such impacts.
6. The Chapter generally supports the current Public Service Commission (PSC) decommissioning regulations, and would like to ensure they are not weakened. Examination of the current bond requirements for sufficiency is encouraged to ensure taxpayers do not someday become responsible for restorations.

The Chapter would like to interact with the PSC in a positive and productive manner in ways that are helpful to the PSC. There are many future generations of North Dakotans' that will benefit tremendously from the thoughtful and deliberate actions the PSC can take to ensure the viability of the State's abundant wildlife populations and their habitats.