

**NOTES | 2/22/2010 Conference Call****Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area Scientific Review Committee**

Prepared by the Center for Collaborative Policy

Reviewed and approved by the SRC

**All SRC Members Present****Discussion Topics****SRC Formation of 2-Member Field Rating Subcommittee****Preparing for Field Rating Visit****Consider Revision to SRC Charter****Meeting Outcomes**

- An SRC field rating subcommittee of Shawn Smallwood and Jim Estep will conduct field rating of unrated turbines March 8-10. Sue Orloff is available to fill in for Jim Estep if work is required on March 11.
- The SRC approved a revision to its Charter to allow SRC members to accept privately funded work outside the Alameda County portion of the APWRA (previous language did not allow such work within the entire APWRA, including areas outside Alameda County).

**Action Items**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
CCP	2/26	Post updated relocation guidelines document
CCP	2/26	Post revised charter
Shawn Smallwood	2/26	Develop draft data form for turbine rating field visit
CCP	2/26	Post draft data form
Shawn Smallwood and Jim Estep	2/28	Meet to develop/discuss draft data form
Monitoring Team	3/8	Make available maps and spreadsheets of fatality data for turbines to be visited
Shawn Smallwood and Jim Estep	3/8-3/10	Turbine rating field visits
Monitoring Team	2/23	Provide KB data sheets to SRC Monitoring Team Liaison Subcommittee (Julie Yee and Shawn Smallwood)

**Next Meeting**

Date: Conference Call Meeting, March 1, 2010

Agenda:

- SRC Review of Draft Data Form for Field Rating Subcommittee
- Discussion of methods for towers without mortality data

## **SRC Formation of 2-Member Field Rating Subcommittee**

### **Related Documents**

#### **[P70 SRC Hazardous Turbine Relocation Guidelines draft 1-03-08](#)**

Sandra Rivera of Alameda County explained that, based on SRC discussion at the January in-person meeting, SRC members were willing to have a two-member SRC subcommittee conduct field rating of non-rated APWRA turbines as long as the full SRC had input on and approval of the methods used to conduct the rating. The goal is to conduct the field rating ASAP to identify turbines rated 9 and 10, which would be recommended for immediate removal.

SRC members said they believe it is important to rank all the turbines, not just those that would be rated 9 or 10, as it is necessary to have a context for the higher-ranked turbines, and the process requires examining all turbines not previously rated.

SRC members sought clarification on the defined area for the field visit, in order to assess the amount of work necessary. Previously, the SRC rated more than 600 turbines, a set that had been identified by the Monitoring Team from a larger set of monitored turbines through review of mortality data from the current study, the baseline study, Sue Orloff's study and WRRS data. SRC members also rated other turbines in the same string of those turbines they were rating and other strings where potentially high risk turbines were encountered during the field survey, so some non-monitored turbines have been rated. The SRC visited about 800 turbines.

It was determined that the aim is to rate all remaining unvisited and unrated turbines.

For this visit, Sue Orloff recommended not utilizing her data because of its age and likely changes in turbine configuration since its collection.

The Monitoring Team calculated that roughly 340 turbines were never monitored and have no SRC ranking. (SRC members have questioned whether this is an accurate estimate, believing the number is too low.)

SRC members recommended that, rather than separating out turbines with or without data, it would be more efficient to make a systematic sweep from one end of the Altamont to the other, skipping those already ranked. In order to avoid a bias and incorporate insights, a preferable approach might be to rank half of the south portion, then half of the north, then the second half of the south, and then the second half of the north, or use a similar proportional method.

### **Public Questions and Comment**

Emre Ergas of NextEra asked, given the significant search history, whether it would make sense to parcel out monitored turbines with no fatalities, as that could be sufficient evidence of a low rating.

SRC members responded that this would hold true for current study data, but configurations may have changed since baseline data. In addition, it just may be more efficient to move systematically across the Altamont. The fatality data could be factored into the evaluation during field visit work.

### **Subcommittee Selection**

SRC members determined that two members are available for Monday-Wednesday March 8-10: Shawn Smallwood and Jim Estep. If it appears that the field visit will take more time, or one of these two SRC members has a change in availability, Sue Orloff said she might be able to participate for one or two days. It was stressed that, in order to have consistency, at least one of the original team members performing the evaluations should stay for the entire evaluation.

NextEra representatives said they would work off line to coordinate with the other Altamont companies to arrange access for the subcommittee.

## **Preparing for Field Rating Visit**

### **Process/Methodology for Rating Remaining Turbines**

SRC members said it will be important to use a form to tabulate data, as it will be much more difficult to rate these turbines without consistent data for all the turbines.

Shawn Smallwood agreed to develop a first draft of the data form for review by other members of the SRC and the Monitoring Team. The data form will be a simple checklist based on Section 3 of the P70 Relocation Guidelines, and incorporating as well insights he has gained about bird behavior in relation to topography from his work at Tres Vaqueros.

It was noted that it will be important to record clearly the criteria that subcommittee members observe, so that there is more information available for those reviewing the rating process after-the-fact.

### **Public Questions and Comment**

Emre Ergas asked if it would be possible to conduct this sort of analysis through review of topographic maps

SRC members said, yes, many of the characteristics could be seen from a topo map. However, some conditions, such as presence of derelict turbines, gaps in rows, and clusters of trees, and features that affect bird behavior, are not available on maps. In addition, it can be easier to see the features and get a sense of the gestalt of the environment in person. Jesse Schwartz of the Monitoring Team said he looked into how much of this analysis could be automated through a GIS model, and believes the work of putting together the model, given the complexity of the model and the lack of some current data sets, would probably be more expensive than having SRC members conducting a field visit.

### **Identification of Data for Unrated Turbines**

#### **Next Steps**

- Brian Karas of the Monitoring Team said he will prepare an updated map for the field visit that shows the following data:
  - String monitored (baseline and current study data)
  - Whether surveyed by the SRC
  - Hazardous turbine and Tier rankings
  - Fatality data for three focal species (golden eagle, red-tailed hawk, American kestrel) including surrogate species for each one (for example, all buteos)
- The Monitoring Team will seek to provide printed maps with clear data, with additional data available via spreadsheets from a laptop.

- Facilitators will post the most recent version of the P70 Relocation Guidelines, as an outdated version is on the SRC website.

## **Consider Revision to SRC Charter**

### **Related Documents**

#### **[P1\\_SRC Charter](#)**

Sandra Rivera of Alameda County said the current SRC Charter states that SRC members cannot do privately funded work in the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area. Shawn Smallwood has been approached by NextEra to do siting work for repowered turbines in the Contra Costa County portion of the APWRA, where Alameda County has no jurisdiction. The language reads:

SRC members will not accept any research or monitoring work related to the issue of bird or bat collisions with wind turbines within the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area unless the project is funded by public tax dollars. SRC members are free to work for companies that operate in APWRA in other geographic locations.

The question for the SRC is whether its intent is to disallow private work in the Alameda County portion of the APWRA, or the entire APWRA.

SRC members said they were comfortable defining the restructuring as applying to only the Alameda County portion of the APWRA, the geographic region that is the direct function of the SRC.

One SRC member raised the idea of loosening the restriction further, to allow any activities related to repowering, as it appears that the SRC is not going to be involved with repowering.

Another SRC member would consider individual private work in the Alameda County APWRA, if related to repowering, to be a conflict of interest. It would not be a conflict of interest if the SRC as a body was asked to conduct repowering work. Since the longevity of the SRC is unclear, these potential conflicts of interest (or the appearance of conflicts) should be avoided.

SRC members sought clarification on whether repowering is within or outside of the scope of the SRC and the Conditional Use Permits.

### **Public Comment**

Mike Boyd of CARE, one of the settling parties, said the initial permit was for repowering, so repowering has always been within the purview of the SRC.

Sandra Rivera said the role of the SRC in relation to repowering at this point has not been clearly laid out. There are currently discussions on what the adaptive management program will be, so this issue is likely to be clarified soon. At a minimum, the SRC would continue as long as the CUP remains in its current form.

Participants confirmed that at any point, the SRC could be asked to consider a particular case in relation to one of its members and the Charter language.

## **SRC Agreement on Revised Charter Language**

The SRC agreed to the following language change:

SRC members will not accept any research or monitoring work related to the issue of bird or bat collisions with wind turbines within the Alameda County portion of the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area unless the project is funded by public tax dollars.

## **Next Steps**

The SRC will hold a conference call meeting at 9 AM on March 1 (noon Eastern Time) to review the draft data form for the turbine rating field visit.

- Shawn Smallwood and Jim Estep will meet prior to the meeting to review the draft form.
- The form will be posted on the SRC website on February 26.
- The Monitoring Team should be able to complete the KB Study data sheets on February 22 in order to deliver them to the SRC Monitoring Team Liaison Subcommittee of Julie Yee and Shawn Smallwood.

### **ATTENDEES**

#### **SRC**

Joanna Burger  
Jim Estep  
Sue Orloff  
Shawn Smallwood  
Julie Yee

#### **Identified Public**

Renee Culver  
Emre Ergas  
Jim Hopper  
Joan Stewart

#### **Staff**

Sandra Rivera, Alameda County  
Gina Bartlett, CCP  
Ariel Ambruster, CCP

#### **Consultants**

Brian Karas  
Jesse Schwartz