

## **NOTES | 5/29/2008 Conference Call**

### **Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area Scientific Review Committee**

Developed by the Center for Collaborative Policy

Reviewed & Approved by the SRC 8/14/2008

#### **Discussion Topics**

**Update 2008 Monitoring Team Report:** *Monitoring Team provided update on delays related to baseline data and creating public database*

**2008 Monitoring Report Analyses**

**SRC Meeting Preparation: Burrowing Owl Pilot Study & Background Mortality Study**

#### **Meeting Date**

The SRC expressed frustration that an in-person SRC meeting originally scheduled for 5/29/2008 was canceled. County staff, the monitoring team principal investigator and SRC facilitator canceled the meeting without consulting the SRC. They cancelled the meeting because the next version of the 2008 Monitoring Report is delayed and because the County does not need the SRC recommendations on additional studies with budgets until late July.

The SRC had recommended the May meeting timeframe during its April meeting to develop research recommendations and a change on the quality assurance / quality control element of the monitoring program. The SRC considers these recommendations instrumental to obtain the information needed to achieve the 2005 Board of Supervisors' and 2007 settling parties' goals and mandate. The Monitoring Team's budget is exhausted, and the SRC anticipates that the Board will decide on the avian monitoring program budget at its upcoming meeting. The SRC's recommendations need to be prepared as scientific research proposals along with budget details. The SRC feels that an in-person meeting is necessary to complete these recommendations. County staff representative Sandra Rivera assured the SRC that the SRC could defer its meeting and still submit its recommendations in time for the Board's consideration.

The canceled meeting was rescheduled for June 13, during the call, but was ultimately held July 8-9, 2008.

#### **Update 2008 Monitoring Team Report**

##### **Related Documents**

[M25 Decision Tree for Cause of Death](#)

[M26 Decision Tree for Bird Fatality Data Filtering](#)

To compare the 2008 monitoring results to the baseline established by the settlement agreement, the Monitoring Team (MT) has been preparing the raw fatality data from the baseline 2004 CEC study to fit the 2008 Monitoring Report database format. The MT developed a decision-tree for data inclusion/exclusion, which the Scientific Review Committee (SRC) and the public reviewed in April 2008. This data preparation has yielded delays in preparing the final 2008 Monitoring Report.

The database will ultimately be available publicly. However, the transfer has proved challenging: search dates and other variables require data reformatting. Turbines need standardized labels. Ensuring that the data accurately represent what's in the field is also critical.

The SRC feels that the report should be as complete as possible before the MT releases it.

### 2008 Monitoring Report Analyses

The SRC discussed its February 2008 recommendation (see box) to conduct analyses using the 2004 CEC and the 2008 Monitoring Report assumptions. The SRC made this recommendation before the decision-tree for data inclusion/exclusion was developed and presented. The reason to conduct the analyses with the 2004 assumptions was because the baseline was based on those same assumptions. However, now that the MT is using the decision-tree approach and has realized the degree of effort that would be required analyzing both assumptions, the MT and SRC agreed that the analysis using the 2004 assumptions would not be necessary. However, if the MT finds substantial differences from the baseline, the MT and the SRC may need to revisit this. Using the decision tree on data could potentially change the baseline number.

#### Excerpt from [P78 SRC Meeting Summary Feb 2008](#)

The SRC agreed that there will be four analyses in the baseline comparison:

- One analysis would use all data from 2004 and 2008 extrapolated to the entire APWRA.
- A second analysis would consider only turbines searched in both the 2004 and 2008 studies, which represent about 20% of Altamont turbines.
- Each of these analyses would be developed twice, once using 2004 assumptions and once using 2008 assumptions, to ensure matched comparisons since the baseline established by the settling parties is based on the 2004 study.

### SRC Agreement on 2008 Monitoring Report Analyses

The SRC agreed that there will be two analyses in the baseline comparison, each using the 2008 assumptions.

- One analysis would use all data from 2004 and 2008 extrapolated to the entire APWRA.
- A second analysis would consider only turbines searched in both the 2004 and 2008 studies, which represent about 20% of Altamont turbines.

### Relative Abundance

The next 2008 Monitoring Report will include comparisons of mortality estimates to relative abundance data.

### Public Comment

The Kestrel / Burrowing Owl Report and Seasonal Shutdown report will come out in July 2008.

The MT budget is scheduled to go before the supervisors in July. The contract is through August 1, but the funding will run out. The County can extend the contract and add some funds to prevent work interruption while providing some interim funding.

### Burrowing Owl Pilot Study

*Thermal Imaging:* The thermal imaging loaner equipment is arriving today free of charge. The MT, Renee Culver and several SRC members will test it tonight. Weekly rental is \$1500; monthly rental is \$5000.

**Sample Size:** Julie Yee met with Lee Neher and Shawn Smallwood. She was able to use data from studies conducted by Jack Barclay and East Bay Parks. She was able to simulate data sets based on a series of different sample sizes and calculate the associated margins of error. She graphed the relationships

between margin of error and sample size, for three different hypothetical plot shapes and sizes. That information will be used to determine sample size.

Jim Estep and Shawn Smallwood will have the scope for the cost of telemetry ready for the next meeting.

**Correction Factor (QA/QC) Study Design & Scope**

The scavenger removal / searcher detection correction factor alternative approach is a priority for the next meeting.

**Background Mortality**

The SRC will consider a map developed by Lee Neher with all the ridges with potential sites to examine background mortality.

The SRC discussed using burrowing owl presence as one of the factors to consider when selecting sample sites. Having burrowing owl presence in at least some of the background mortality sites might further the understanding of burrowing owl background mortality. Identifying sites and addressing background mortality for burrowing owls may have to wait until burrowing owl behavior is better understood through the burrowing owl study.

**ATTENDEES**

**SRC**

Jim Estep  
Joanna Burger  
Julie Yee  
Shawn Smallwood  
Sue Orloff

**Identified Public**

Joe Barnes  
Renee Culver  
Bill Damon  
Emre Ergas  
Jim Hopper  
Jay Haugton  
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**Monitoring Team**

Brian Latta  
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Sandra Rivera,  
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