

# Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area Scientific Review Committee Charter & Consensus Building Guidelines

SRC Approved 12/5/06  
Modifications Made 5/14/2008 and Approved 7/9/2008; Modifications Made & Approved 2/22/10

## **Purpose and Goals**

The purpose of the Scientific Review Committee is to provide independent review and expertise on research and study related to wind energy production and avian behavior and safety. To this end, the goals of the group are to:

- Provide a neutral forum for open dialogue among experts in the field with different perspectives;
- Reach agreement on analysis and interpretation of data; and
- Ensure sound and objective scientific review of avian safety strategies.

## **Membership**

The SRC consists of five members, each of whom is appointed by one of the following interests:

- Permittees (i.e. wind farm companies or turbine operators and their personnel)
- Environmental community
- County Planning Department
- California state agency (California Energy Commission or Department of Fish & Game)
- Federal resources agency (US Fish & Wildlife Service)

In the event that only one state or federal resource agency nominates a representative, a fifth representative shall be appointed by the Board of Supervisors to represent the public-at-large.

While appointed by these interests, SRC members are asked to strive to be objective in reviewing and providing guidance on science related to its charge. The SRC is not asked to represent the interests who appointed him or her. (See Conditional Use Permits Attachment D, Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area Scientific Review Committee, September 22, 2005)

If a member has to end his or her service on the SRC, the body who originally nominated that member can designate his or her successor.

## **Structure and Organization**

### **Scientific Review Committee**

The SRC will be the primary body seeking consensus on the best methods and tools to improve scientific understanding in Altamont Pass. The SRC will be a consensus-

seeking body that forwards its recommendations to the Alameda County Planning Director.

### **Alameda County**

The Planning Director is authorized through the conditional use permits on wind farm operations to make decisions related to the permits arising from SRC recommendations. The Planning Director reports to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors.

The County of Alameda is actively seeking the advice of the SRC. The SRC will operate with assistance from Planning Department staff and a facilitator. The SRC will have a collegial working relationship with the Avian Monitoring Consultants and will advise the monitoring consultants as to its protocols, activities and analyses.

### **Wind Power Working Group and Web Site**

The Wind Power Working Group will provide a public forum in which the SRC can seek understanding of public concerns and share its recommendations. The SRC will distribute information through the email listserv and through the web site ([www.AltamontSRC.org](http://www.AltamontSRC.org)). The SRC will hold workshops designed with the WPWG in mind and rely on its members, as well as members of the public, to identify questions and help frame research as it moves forward. The SRC will post all meeting announcements, recommendations, reports and related research on its web site.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Scientific Review Committee**

As part of membership, SRC members agree to:

- Arrive at each meeting fully prepared to discuss the issues on the agenda. Preparation would include reviewing meeting summaries, research and background materials, data and technical information, and draft documents distributed in advance of each meeting.
- Develop a problem-solving approach in which they consider the interests and viewpoints of all committee members, in addition to their own.
- Create, support, encourage, and maintain a productive, collegial environment to analyze and improve science related to wind energy production and avian safety.
- Strive to be objective and impartial in evaluating and improving the research under its purview.
- Disclose any relevant relationships, professional or contractual, with stakeholders active in Altamont Pass or other entities with a relationship to wind energy or avian mortality. Disclose any activities that could be *perceived* as a conflict of interest.

### **Convener**

The Alameda County Planning Department, as convener, agrees to:

- Organize SRC meetings and ensure that meetings are efficient
- Manage contracts for facilitation and the avian monitoring technical consulting team.

- Ensure work is completed in a timely fashion.
- Oversee public and media outreach for the SRC.

### **Facilitator**

In cooperation with the SRC, the facilitator from the Center for Collaborative Policy will design SRC meetings and guide the overall process toward achieving its mutually agreed-upon purpose and goals. The facilitator will:

- Formulate the agenda and desired outcomes for all meetings based on input of members and facilitate those proceedings.
- Identify and synthesize points of agreement and disagreement for the written meeting summaries.
- Assist in building consensus among members.
- Ensure compliance with all ground rules.
- Serve as a confidential communication channel for members and observers who wish to express views privately because they do not feel comfortable doing so in front of the group.
- Advocate for a fair, effective, and credible process, but remain impartial with respect to the outcome of the deliberations.

### **Attendance and Meeting Schedule**

Given the volume of information to be considered, regular attendance by members is essential. The facilitator will work with members to coordinate meeting dates when all can attend.

The SRC will likely meet four times during the first year and three times during subsequent years for 2-3 days per meeting.

### **Communication**

#### **Media**

Members are asked to speak only for their organization or themselves when asked by external parties, including the media, about the SRC, unless there has been a formal adoption of a statement, concepts, or recommendations by the SRC. Stakeholders will refer media inquiries to Chris Bazar or Sandra Rivera and reserve freedom to express their own opinions to media representatives. Participants should be careful to present only their own views and not those of other participants of the committee. The temptation to discuss someone else's statements or position should be avoided.

#### **Decision Makers**

The Alameda County Planning Director, in cooperation with the facilitator, will provide periodic updates on SRC activities and progress to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors.

## Public Engagement and Transparency

The SRC, in cooperation with the facilitator, will organize public workshops at key milestones to share information and understanding gained through SRC deliberations and to seek public input to frame discussions and examination of scientific issues as the SRC begins to tackle an issue.

All SRC meetings are subject to the Brown Act and will be open to the public. However, stakeholders recommend that everyone attend the public workshops designed specifically for their input. Summaries from each SRC meeting, including attendance, will be posted as soon as the SRC is able to approve them.

The SRC will make the research and data that it is examining available on the SRC web site [www.AltamontSRC.org](http://www.AltamontSRC.org).

## Decision-Making

- 1) **Consensus as the Fundamental Principle:** The SRC shall strive for consensus (agreement among all participants) in all of its decision-making. Working toward consensus is a fundamental principle.
- 2) **Definition of “Consensus”:** Consensus means that all committee members either fully support or can live with the decision or overall direction. In reaching consensus, some members may strongly endorse a particular proposal while others may accept it as "workable." Others may be only able to “live with it.” Still others may choose to “stand aside” by verbally noting a disagreement, yet allowing the group to reach a consensus without him or her if the decision keeps the SRC moving forward. Any of these actions still constitutes consensus.
- 3) **Less than 100% Consensus Decision Making:** The SRC is consensus seeking and shall not limit itself to strict consensus if 100% agreement among all five members cannot be reached after all interests and options have been thoroughly identified, explored, and discussed. Less-than-consensus decision-making shall not be undertaken lightly. If, after full exploration, the SRC is still unable to reach consensus, as defined above, the SRC will forward its recommendation with a full explanation of the area of disagreement to the Planning Director.
- 4) **Decision Outcomes.** All reports and products of the SRC will reflect the consensus recommendations of the SRC. All agreements and negotiated outcomes will be reflected in SRC products and ultimately be submitted as recommendations to the Alameda County Planning Director. If the Planning Director decides to share the recommendations of the SRC with any other body, including the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, the Director will forward the recommendations intact accompanied by the advice or input of the Planning Department.

## How Meetings will be Conducted

The SRC will abide by these agreed-upon guidelines to create constructive interaction. Members and the facilitator can cooperatively revise these guidelines when necessary to support the continued success of the group.

- ▶ **Assume good will:** Members will work under the assumption that all members are participating in good faith.
- ▶ **Agree to uncertainty:** This refers to the need for everyone to have good information. Members will provide pertinent information to the group. Tentative or sensitive data will be respected as such.
- ▶ **Listen with open mind:** Members will listen and openly discuss issues with others who hold diverse views and recognize that all ideas and points of view have value.
- ▶ **Active problem solving:** Members will view disagreements as problems to be solved rather than battles to be won.
- ▶ **Avoid editorials:** Members will refrain from ascribing motives or intentions to other participants.
- ▶ **Respect:** Members will respect the integrity and values of other participants. Members will absolutely refrain from any personal attacks.

During the meetings, the SRC agrees to:

- Honor time.
- Use conversational courtesy.
- Keep pagers and mobile phones silent during meetings and return calls during breaks.
- Appreciate humor, but not engage in humor at the expense of others.

### Ground Rule Enforcement

Enforcing the ground rules is the joint responsibility of the SRC, any observers, staff, and the facilitator.

### Conflict of Interest

The SRC adheres to guidelines set forth by *The National Academies Policy on Committee Composition and Balance and Conflicts of Interest*. *Conflict of Interest* means any financial or other interest which conflicts with the service of the individual because it (1) could significantly impair the individual's objectivity or (2) could create an unfair competitive advantage for any person or organization. Members agree to these guidelines.

Members will openly disclose any known or potential conflicts of interest related to the work of the Scientific Review Committee. The facilitator will set aside time at each SRC meeting for this purpose.

Members of the SRC will not be able to peer review one's own work; however, members can actively engage in discussions to identify and improve research methods used in their own studies.

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. SRC members are free to work for companies that operate in APWRA in other geographic locations.

### **Agendas**

The facilitator and chair will develop the agenda in consultation with members, who will provide feedback at the end of each meeting.

### **Meeting Summaries**

Center for Collaborative Policy staff (facilitator or notetaker) will prepare meeting summaries for SRC review and approval. The summaries' primary function will be to assist the SRC in documenting its progress, agreements, and action items.

### **Consultation with Other Experts**

In cooperation with the facilitator, the SRC may determine that its work would benefit from consulting with other experts in some sort of scientific symposium to address a particular issue. In this case, the SRC will work together with the facilitator to identify the appropriate experts and format for engaging their expertise.

### **Amendments to this Charter**

The SRC may use its decision-making procedure, identified above, to adopt changes to this Charter.