

## NOTES | 1/20/2011 Conference Call

### Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area Scientific Review Committee

Prepared by the Center for Collaborative Policy is no  
Reviewed & Approved by the SRC.

#### All SRC Members Present

#### Discussion Topics

CalWEA Study & Contra Costa Turbines  
Meeting Summaries Approval  
QAQC Field Implementation Update

#### Meeting Outcomes

- The SRC agreed to end monitoring of Contra Costa turbines [north of Vasco Road] at the end of February, provided a cost savings is realized;
- The SRC majority agreed to at least a half-mile buffer between monitored turbines and CalWEA turbines.

#### Next Meeting

Conference Call Meeting, February 3, 2011, 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

#### CalWEA Study & Contra Costa Turbines

##### Related Documents

[P193 – NextEra CalWEA Study Area & Monitored Contra Costa Turbines](#)

Facilitator Ariel Ambruster introduced a map NextEra produced to help with today's discussion ([P193 – NextEra CalWEA Study Area & Monitored Contra Costa Turbines](#)) which shows monitored and nonmonitored turbines in and near Contra Costa County, as well as the current CalWEA study turbines in Contra Costa County.

Monitoring Team Project Manager Doug Leslie asked for SRC members to consider a proposal that the Monitoring Team discontinue monitoring in Contra Costa County, in conjunction with the CalWEA study being limited to Contra Costa turbines. This would solve the problem of attempting to coordinate monitoring and study locations between the monitoring program and CalWEA. NextEra has issued the public draft of its EIR, which shows the Contra Costa turbines being removed in summer 2011. [Doug Leslie clarified in an e-mail after the conference call meeting that the Monitoring Team would discontinue monitoring Contra Costa turbines north of Vasco Road, but might continue monitoring Contra Costa turbines south of Vasco Road.]

Renee Culver of NextEra, who is involved in the CalWEA study, said Bill Warren-Hicks, the lead for the study, was not available to participate in the day's conference call meeting. In his stead, she said that CalWEA's current plan would include moving to other strings in Contra Costa to collect more data, hinging on the SRC's decision.

Brian Karas, who is participating in the CalWEA study outside of his work on the Monitoring Team, said CalWEA will be at the strings shown on the map for six weeks. If all birds and bats are removed, they could start at other strings, which would help provide variability in topography and vegetation height. The study would never use more than six strings at one time.

Sandra Rivera of Alameda County said the County has not yet formalized its relationship with the CalWEA study in an agreement. The two parties have had discussions to ensure that the two studies not interfere with each other.

### **SRC Questions and Discussion**

One SRC member said the change would save some money that could be put into other studies. In response, Doug Leslie said he has not calculated the amount of money that would be saved.

Another SRC member felt that a quarter-mile buffer between the two studies was not adequate.

An SRC member asked for clarification about whether the proposal would apply to all turbines in Contra Costa County. Brian Karas said there are five Contra Costa sites: Buena Vista, which has been repowered; North Winds, which has not been monitored since the baseline study; Vasco Caves; Tres Vaqueros, which are nonfunctional - there are observations but no monitoring, and repowering is proposed there; and Vasco Winds, which NextEra is proposing now to repower.

### **Public Comment**

Joan Stewart of NextEra said NextEra hopes to remove the Contra Costa turbines by the end of summer, and would like to move them earlier, if possible. The removal will be very fast. This would apply to all of the turbines shown within the gray outline on the map in P193.

### **SRC Agreement on Ending Monitoring of Contra Costa Turbines**

SRC members unanimously agreed with the proposal to end monitoring of Contra Costa turbines [north of Vasco Road], given that NextEra plans to remove the turbines, so that it would not be possible to get a complete bird year (October through September) of fatality data.

Their agreement was given, provided that the following occurs:

- Monitoring continues until the end of February.
- A cost saving is realized with the elimination of monitoring these turbines, which can be used for other studies.

### **Buffer between Monitored and CalWEA Turbines**

Brian Karas said the CalWEA study is putting out eight cowbirds and six bats, which would equate with 600 grams of meat, or about half of a red tailed hawk.

While not all SRC members supported the need for a buffer, the SRC agreed to at least a half-mile buffer between monitored turbines and CalWEA study turbines.

Some SRC members didn't believe the placed carcasses would provide enough material to produce any swamping effect, or provided any scientific basis for the need for a buffer. One SRC member supported a half-mile buffer as a way to keep separation between the two studies. Other SRC members were willing to support the buffer idea.

Jesse Schwartz of the Monitoring Team said in analysis, the Team could pay attention to scavenger removal as a quality control measure, looking at the relationship between variations in numbers of fatalities and potential changes in scavenging. Some SRC members did not believe that there would be a detectable signal.

Brian Karas said the CalWEA study report will include a list of turbines where carcasses were placed.

## **Meeting Summary Approval**

### **Related Documents**

[P170 SRC Meeting Summary June 2010](#)

[P181 SRC Call Notes 6-29-10](#)

[P182 SRC Meeting Summary July 2010](#)

[P185 SRC Call Notes 7-22-10](#)

[P187 SRC Call Notes 9-28-10](#)

The SRC approved P170, P182, P185 and P187 with no changes. The SRC approved P181 with one change: on page 2, last paragraph, “logistical” was changed to “logistic.”

## **QAQC Field Implementation Update**

Jesse Schwartz of the Monitoring Team gave an update on implementation of the QAQC study, which began in October. The Monitoring Team is dealing with small numbers, about 10 birds per bird group per rotation. There is not yet sufficient data to detect any differences.

An SRC member had asked for the item to be placed on the agenda to make SRC members aware of a potential budget/logistical issue. The SRC had asked that the carcasses being left in the field as part of the QAQC study be carcasses "of known age," meaning fresh carcasses. However, there have not been many available fresh carcasses, so partial carcasses and feather piles are being used. It appears that there may be some logistical issues on the horizon involving the QAQC study. Since increasing the number of carcasses left in the field increases the workload of the Monitoring Team and potential logistical difficulties, her feeling is that it is not as important to place feather piles and partial carcasses, so that might be an area for cost savings. This might be an issue that may be resolved with further QAQC rotations.

Doug Leslie of the Monitoring Team said this is an issue that SRC members can think about between now and the next conference call meeting.

## Wrap Up and Next Steps

### Public Comment

Joan Stewart of NextEra asked when Sue Orloff's burrowing owl behavior study proposal would be available. In response, facilitator Ariel Ambruster said Sue was waiting for the Monitoring Team to review her draft, to make sure the budget numbers are practical before it goes out for review. It should be available soon.

### Next conference call meeting:

February 3, 2011, 10:30 AM- 12:30 PM (1:30-3:30 PM Eastern Time)

### Next in-person meeting:

February 16-17

Tentative topics:

- Burrowing owl study
- Detection Probability (QAQC) Study Update
- Final monitoring & 09-10 reports status update

## ATTENDEES

### SRC

Joanna Burger  
Jim Estep  
Sue Orloff  
Shawn Smallwood  
Julie Yee

### Consultants

Doug Leslie  
Brian Karas  
Jesse Schwartz

### Identified Public

Renee Culver, NextEra  
Chris Dreiman, enXco  
Jim Hopper, AES/SeaWest  
Joan Stewart, NextEra

### Staff

Sandra Rivera, Alameda County  
Ariel Ambruster, CCP