

Idaho Department of Fish and Game



Technical Assistance Role in Wind Energy Development

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IDFG Mandate



- The Department is the State agency entrusted with the statutory authority to preserve, protect, and perpetuate the wildlife and fishery resources of the state, and provide supplies for hunting, fishing, and trapping. *Idaho Code 36(103)*

IDFG Direction

GOAL—Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat--Sustain Idaho's fish and wildlife and the habitats upon which they depend.

GOAL—Fish and Wildlife Recreation -- Meet the demand for fish and wildlife recreation.

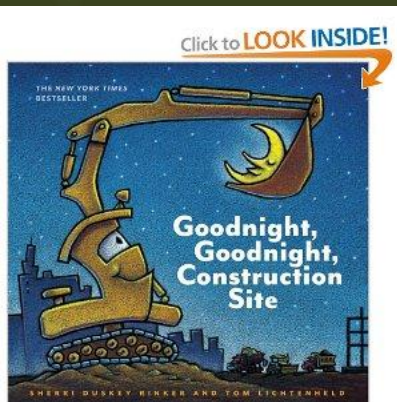


IDFG Direction regarding Technical Assistance

- "it is part of the role and responsibility of the Department in fulfilling its mission of protecting, preserving and managing wildlife to provide comments, whether required by law, solicited or volunteered, about proposals concerning their effects to wildlife and wildlife habitat and how any adverse effects might be mitigated."



IDFG Commission Adoption 2011



IDFG Technical Assistance

- “it is part of the role and responsibility of the Department in fulfilling its mission of protecting, preserving and managing wildlife to provide comments, whether **required by law, solicited or volunteered**, about proposals concerning their effects to wildlife and wildlife habitat and how any adverse effects might be mitigated.” *IDFG Commission Adoption 2011*
 - *IDFG is seldom, if ever, **required** by law to provide comments. Federal laws do require ‘request for information’ from IDFG.*
 - *IDFG is often **solicited** for our opinion.*
 - *IDFG may **volunteer** technical assistance and technical services.*

IDFG Technical Assistance

- “it is part of the role and responsibility of the Department in fulfilling its mission of protecting, preserving and managing wildlife to provide comments, whether required by law, solicited or volunteered, about proposals concerning their **effects to wildlife and wildlife habitat** and how any adverse **effects might be mitigated.**” *IDFG Commission Adoption 2011*
 - *Effects to wildlife and habitat –*
 - *Informed through research*
 - *Informed by experience in Idaho*
 - *Guided by a common sense approach*
 - *How effects are mitigated –*
 - *Avoid, Minimize, Mitigate*

IDFG Technical Assistance - Example

- For our purposes today we will discuss what a Technical Assistance request regarding Wind Energy MIGHT look like.
- *Keep in mind, counties require variable routes during permitting.*

IDFG Technical Assistance – Wind Energy Development

- An example of how Technical Assistance works in reference to Wind Energy Development.
 1. *IDFG may receive a call or letter from a wind project developer, usually their consultant.*
 2. *Staff will determine if enough information is present in the application and documentation to offer technical assistance.*
 3. *Staff will usually meet with the consultant and/or tour the site.*
 4. *Staff will analyze the status of the project (scoping, permitted, completed) and gauge our appropriate level of response.*
 5. *Technical Assistance information will be developed based upon several factors:*



IDFG Technical Assistance – Wind Energy Development

- An example of how Technical Assistance works in reference to Wind Energy Development.

5. Technical Assistance information will be developed based upon several factors:

- I. Status of the project – is it planning, or completed*
- II. Audience requesting assistance – developer/consultant, decision-maker, or interested party*
- III. Resources affected & potential to avoid or minimize*
- IV. Potential for mitigation*
- V. Discussion with other natural resource managers.*



IDFG Technical Assistance – Wind Energy Development

- Effects to Wildlife and Habitats:

 - Big Game:*

 - Potential for reduced use of habitat on a long-term basis (i.e., winter range)*

 - Construction disturbance during critical periods*

 - Operations and maintenance disturbance*

 - Potential for fire, noxious weed infestations.*



IDFG Technical Assistance – Wind Energy Development

- Effects to Wildlife and Habitats:

 - Upland Game:*

 - Potential loss of habitat or willingness to use habitat – i.e. Ground Lekking Birds like sage grouse*

 - Potential for Direct Mortality through strikes (birds)*

 - “footprint” loss of habitat – burrowing, terrestrial animals*

 - Possible increased mortality due to human access (roads, lines)*



IDFG Technical Assistance – Wind Energy Development

- Effects to Wildlife and Habitats:

 - Bats:*

 - Direct mortality through strikes*

 - Attracted to turbines during migration*

 - Continental-Scale migration routes show many moving through Idaho*



IDFG Technical Assistance – Wind Energy Development

- Effects to Wildlife and Habitats:

Raptors:

Blade strikes during foraging and migration

Reduced recruitment to adulthood, therefore reproduction



Summary - Reminders



- IDFG has **NO AUTHORITY** regarding the development or siting of wind energy projects.
- IDFG provides **Technical Assistance, in an advisory capacity** to other decision-makers.



Summary - Reminders

- IDFG comments on effects to the **resources we manage**, NOT whether the project is approved or denied.
- IDFG Technical Assistance on wind energy projects is reviewed at the **Director's Office** level and is coordinated through the Governor's **Office of Energy Resources**.
- IDFG Does comment on a project's:
 - **effects to wildlife and wildlife habitat**
 - **Mitigation potential and strategy**

~End~