

Midwest Landscape Initiative Wind Working Group

Action Plan Summary 2020-2025

The MLI Wind Working Group provides a safe space for natural resource agencies to

identify what impacts to avoid or minimize

identify ways to avoid or minimize impacts

develop acceptable guidelines for siting and operations to avoid or minimize negative impacts

to wildlife from wind energy development.

The Midwest Landscape Initiative (MLI) Steering Committee identified goals to enhance coordination and collaboration to avoid, minimize, or offset the direct and indirect negative impacts of wind power generation on wildlife and the surrounding environment. The Steering Committee directed the convening of the government-only MLI Wind Working Group (WWG) to advance these goals. The WWG conducted a needs assessment among primarily state and federal stakeholders focused on informing the WWG's Action Plan by gathering insights on (1) evolving needs and opportunities for short-, mid-, and long-term WWG tasks identified in the WWG Draft Charter (Appendix A), and (2) how the WWG can best organize to advance these tasks. This resulting 5-year Action Plan will be managed by the Wind Working Group (WWG) and evolved based on incremental findings and progress across annual activities.

Get Involved

While the WWG is a government-only group, cooperation and coordination with wind energy and permitting entities remains central. As relevant to MLI WWG objectives, events or subgroups may be convened including external stakeholders. Wind development and permitting entities will also benefit from the outputs of the WWG and through subsequent engagements with the participating state and federal agencies. To stay connected, please contact the facilitation team via Rebecca Beauregard @ rbeauregard@kearnswest.com.

Action Plan Summary

↑ Planning Horizon of less than one year

Objective 1: Identify what resources are most critical to avoid and minimize impacts to wildlife for the Midwest

Action: Develop an inventory characterizing and aggregating site-specific and state maps.

Action: Coordinate with AFWA Energy Wildlife Policy Committee advancing development of shared regional research priorities through member briefings and updates from those involved in both activities.

Action: Facilitate a WWG / American Wind Wildlife Institute (AWWI) briefing to hear updates on the AWWI research database and related activities.

Action: Organize presentation / panel or other activities during partner's conferences and events.

Objective 2: Synthesize and share existing best practices across the region and with other regions

Action: The WWG will compile a BMP inventory comprised of information from pre-and-post-construction monitoring data, surveys, survey monitoring data, state wind position statements, and aspects of the WEGs.

Action: Coordinate meeting among AFWA survey state respondents to 1) hear overviews of state regulatory or internal processes; and 2) explore interest in standing up a community of practice / peer group to meet monthly / bi-monthly to share updates and explore topics of shared interest.

Year 0-1



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Year 0-1
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Objective 3: Identify the literature, studies, and information relevant to wildlife and natural resource impacts resulting from wind development and the measures that can offset those impacts

Action: Define “mitigation approach”, develop repository framework and populate resource with examples of mitigation approaches.

Objective 4: Maintain working relationships with wind companies and permitting entities so that as science and understanding of impacts improve, we can have continued engagement to lessen or offset impacts to natural resources

Action: Refresh on models for each state’s wind development process with natural resource agency engagement. Conduct a crosswalk exploring how reviewers engage with which stakeholders at which points in

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Years 1-3
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Planning Horizon of 1-3 years

Objective 1: Maintain relationships with wind companies and permitting entities so that as science and understanding of impacts improve, engagement continues to lessen or offset impacts to natural resources

Action: WWG agenda / case study series exchanging examples of offsets. WWG will develop framework to explore. May include guest presenters.

Action: Develop WWG talking points communicating reviewer preferences and expectations for engaging with developers throughout the wind project lifecycle.

Action: Conduct outreach using talking points, including potential WWG hosted events, and presentations / panels for industry audiences (e.g., AWEA.)

Objective 2: Generate a synergy of mitigation strategies used by states across the region

Action: Facilitated conversations with industry leaders related to avoidance / site selection and mitigation. Engage AWEA and other potential partners to hear presentations on industry practices before projects are proposed.

Action: WWG agenda series focused on exploring needs and potential scoping for developing a suite of technologies, conservation approaches, and mitigation strategies and related guidance tailored for the MLI geography and considering a framework allowing application across site, state, and regional scales.

Action: Convene a cumulative impact assessment methodology subcommittee.

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Years 3-5
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Planning Horizon of 3-5 years

The WWG will reprioritize activities for the planning horizon of 3-5 years based on accomplishments and outcomes from short-term and near-term priorities.

Objective 1: Maintain working relationships with wind companies and permitting entities so that as science and understanding of impacts improve, we can have continued engagement to lessen or offset impacts to natural resources.

Action: Continue WWG activities initiated in years 0-3 based on their continued value-add. Identify and initiate new long-term activities annually as needed.