

**Programmatic Biological Assessment Species Consistency Evaluation Form
Upper Great Plains Region Wind Energy Development Program
Impact Information and Consistency Determination**

Whooping crane (*Grus americana*)

Project Name: _____

Company: _____

Best Management Practices

- All general BMPs, as stated in the final *Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Upper Great Plains Region Wind Energy Program* and table 4.5-1 of the final *Programmatic Biological Assessment for the Upper Great Plains Region Wind Energy Program*, will be implemented where appropriate, during each phase of the project (i.e., site characterization, construction, operations, and decommissioning). Although not all-inclusive, several of the more important BMPs for the conservation of this species follow.
- The use of guy wires on meteorological towers shall be avoided or minimized. Any needed guy wires shall have guys appropriately marked with approved bird flight diverters.

Species-Specific Avoidance Measures

For projects that occur within the portion of the whooping crane migration corridor that encompasses 95 percent of historic sightings:

- Conduct preconstruction evaluations and/or surveys to identify wetlands that provide potentially suitable stopover habitat and areas of occurrence within project boundaries.
- Do not site turbines, transmission lines, access roads, or other project facilities within 1 mi (1.6 km) of wetlands that provide suitable stopover habitat or within 5 mi (8 km) of the Platte or Niobrara Rivers in Nebraska.
- Do not site turbines, transmission lines, access roads, or other project facilities within 5 mi (8 km) of designated critical habitat.

Species-Specific Minimization Measures

For projects that occur within the portion of the whooping crane migration corridor that encompasses 95 percent of historic sightings:

- Place approved bird flight diverters on the top static wire on any new or upgraded overhead collector, distribution, and transmission lines within 1 mi (1.6 km) of suitable stopover habitat.
- Establish a procedure for preventing whooping crane collisions with turbines during operations by establishing and implementing formal plans for monitoring the project site and surrounding area for whooping cranes during spring and fall migration periods throughout the operational life of the project (or as determined by the local USFWS field office) and shutting down turbines and/or construction activities within 2 mi (3.2 km) of whooping crane sightings. Monitoring can be done by existing onsite personnel trained in whooping crane identification. Specific requirements of the monitoring and shutdown plan will be determined during preconstruction evaluations. Sightings of whooping cranes in the vicinity of projects will be reported to the appropriate USFWS field office immediately.
- Instruct workers in the identification and reporting of sandhill and whooping cranes and to avoid disturbance of cranes present near project areas.
- The acreage of wetlands that are potentially suitable migratory stopover habitat located within a 0.5 mi (0.8 km) radius of turbines may be mitigated based upon site-specific evaluations.

