

PMC-ND

(1.08.09.13)

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
OFFICE OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY
NEPA DETERMINATION**

**RECIPIENT:** Biodiversity Research Institute**STATE:** ME**PROJECT TITLE:** Stereo-Optic High Definition Imaging: A New Technology to Understand Bird and Bat Avoidance of Wind Turbines

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-FOA-0000978	DE-EE0006803	GFO-0006803-002	GO6803

Based on my review of the information concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (authorized under DOE Order 451.1A), I have made the following determination:

CX, EA, EIS APPENDIX AND NUMBER:

Description:

B3.3 Research related to conservation of fish, wildlife, and cultural resources

Field and laboratory research, inventory, and information collection activities that are directly related to the conservation of fish and wildlife resources or to the protection of cultural resources, provided that such activities would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on fish and wildlife habitat or populations or to cultural resources.

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide federal funding to Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) to test, and analyze results from tests of, a high definition camera and near infrared illumination (nIR) lighting system for use in helping to understand the risk that wind turbines present to birds and bats.

This award previously received a NEPA determination (GFO-0006803-001; CX A9 and B3.6; 12/01/2014) for Task 1 and Task 7 activities which included camera tests in a laboratory and associated project reporting. This NEPA review is for Tasks 2-6 as described below.

Task 2 activities include placing two camera systems and an acoustic recording unit (ARU) at a subset of 38 locations listed in question 2b of the EQ-1 in order to passively collect visual and audio data to evaluate the camera system capabilities. Final location of 15-20 sites would be selected from the list in question 2b, and is contingent on ice-out dates and bat and eagle presence. There would be an observer conducting point counts in concert with the video and audio monitoring at each site. Task 2 field testing of equipment would occur over a 12-week period. Camera and ARU equipment used for testing the nIR technology would be left overnight for up to 20 nights throughout the 12 weeks. Each camera system consists of two ultra-high definition cameras that are offset to create a three-dimensional view. The camera system would use nIR technology allowing detection of diurnal and nocturnal animal movements. The maximum dimensions of each camera system are 6.6 feet long by one foot wide by 4.6 feet high. Both camera systems would be placed in an enclosed seven foot by fourteen foot trailer for transport and then on a wheeled cart to place the cameras in specific areas.

Task 3 activities include placing both camera systems and an ARU at an operational wind turbine owned and operated by Sun Edison at the Rollins Wind farm in Lincoln, Maine for a three to six month period. The camera would be placed on the ground, or on a small platform at the base of the turbine.

Tasks 4-6 would involve the analyzing of data gathered during the field tests, and would take place at BRI and University of Maine facilities.

There would be no physical interaction with wildlife and BRI would use existing roads and paths to reach public access and permitted private access sites for testing. The proposed project activities are not intended to elicit a response or otherwise alter wildlife behavior. Due to the temporary, passive nature and minimal footprint of the equipment, there are not expected to be any adverse impacts to threatened and endangered species, wetlands or floodplains as a result of the proposed project. All permissions and permits required to conduct equipment testing at field sites will be obtained prior to beginning work. It is not expected that ground disturbance would be required to conduct equipment testing; therefore, any activities that would require any level of ground disturbance must complete additional NEPA review.

Based on review of the project information and the above analysis, DOE has determined that Task 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 activities would not have a significant individual or cumulative impact to human health and/or environment. DOE has determined these activities are consistent with actions contained in DOE categorical exclusion B3.3 "Research related to conservation of fish, wildlife, and cultural resources" and are categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination for this award

Insert the following language in the award:

If you intend to make changes to the scope or objective of your project you are required to contact the Project Officer identified in Block 11 of the Notice of Financial Assistance Award before proceeding. You must receive notification of approval from the DOE Contracting Officer prior to commencing with work beyond that currently approved.

Note to Specialist :

Wind Program

This NEPA determination requires a tailored NEPA provision. Please include the following language in the NEPA provision:

This NEPA determination applies to the activities described in the SOPO (DE-EE0006803, Feb. 13, 2015) at the sites listed below only. Any changes to activities or sites will require additional NEPA review.

Acadia National Park, ME
 Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge, NH
 Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, MA
 River Point Conservation Area, Falmouth, ME
 City of Bath Landfill, ME
 City of Augusta Landfill, ME
 Two private residences in Maine (see latitude and longitude in EQ-1)
 Coastal public/private access sites in Falmouth, ME
 Coastal public/private access sites in South Portland, ME
 Coastal public/private access sites in Cape Elizabeth, ME
 Coastal public/private access sites in Scarborough, ME
 Coastal public/private access sites in Old Orchard Beach, ME
 Public/private access points, Eastern River between Rte 128&197, Dresden, ME
 Bowdoinham Boat Ramp, Merrymeeting Field, ME
 Public/private access points on the Androscoggin River within Brunswick, ME
 Public/private access points along the Kennebec River corridor within Gardiner, ME; Pittston, ME; Augusta, ME; Waterville, ME ; Winslow, ME ; and Hallowell, ME
 Public/private access points, Messalonskee Lake, ME
 Public/private access points Damariscotta Lake, Nobleboro, ME and Newcastle, ME
 Public/private access points to the St. George River between Route 1 and Route 90, Warren, ME
 Public/private access points along the Penobscot River corridor within Mattawamkeag, ME; Chester, ME; Winn, ME; Lincoln, ME; Woodville, ME; Medway, ME; and East Millinockett, ME
 Public/private access points on the Androscoggin River Corridor within Livermore Falls, Livermore, ME
 Public/private access points on the Sebasticook River corridor, Winslow, ME; Benton Falls Dam, ME

Rollins Wind Farm, Lincoln, ME

Review completed by Logan Sholar, 03/18/2015

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature: 
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 3/25/2015

FIELD OFFICE MANAGER DETERMINATION

Field Office Manager review required

NCO REQUESTS THE FIELD OFFICE MANAGER REVIEW FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:

- Proposed action fits within a categorical exclusion but involves a high profile or controversial issue that warrants Field Office Manager's attention.
- Proposed action falls within an EA or EIS category and therefore requires Field Office Manager's review and determination.

BASED ON MY REVIEW I CONCUR WITH THE DETERMINATION OF THE NCO :

Field Office Manager's Signature: _____
Field Office Manager

Date: _____