

## Melissa Schmit

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**From:** Gates, Natalie <natalie\_gates@fws.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 31, 2016 11:14 AM  
**To:** Melissa Schmit  
**Cc:** Connie Mueller@fws.gov;silka.kempema@state.sd.us  
**Subject:** Re: Crocker Wind Farm Update

Hey Melissa, thank you for the project update.

Perhaps Silka or Connie have additional info, but I'm not aware of any concerns on the northern part of your new boundary that aren't also on the southern area we drove during our site visit: native prairie and other grasslands, grassland nesting birds, wetlands, waterbird concentrations, potential listed species habitat...

Connie can speak to this with more detail than I, but the numerous grassland/wetland easements in and surrounding the project area generally indicate relatively high value for wildlife. GFP has indicated the project area is a hot spot for migrating waterfowl. Thus there may be a relatively greater risk to trust resources at this location compared to more agriculturally dominated areas of the state.

If the project moves forward, we recommend siting turbines on disturbed (cropland) areas as much as possible, avoiding placement of turbines where they may pose a relatively greater risk (e.g. near/between large bodies of water), and offsetting impacts to migratory bird habitats (if impacts to such habitats are unavoidable).

If adverse impacts to listed species may occur, separate (formal) section 7 consultation will be required (cannot use the WAPA/USFWS programmatic BA).

-Natalie

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On Tue, Aug 30, 2016 at 4:46 PM, Melissa Schmit <[Melissa@geronimoenergy.com](mailto:Melissa@geronimoenergy.com)> wrote:

Connie, Silka, and Natalie –

I wanted to provide you with an update on the Crocker Wind Farm. To meet market demand and accommodate landowners we are planning to expand the project boundary to the north. The decision to expand north into easement land was also in response to the Upper Great Plains Wind Energy Programmatic EIS Record of Decision ([http://plainswindeis.anl.gov/documents/docs/USFWS\\_UGP\\_Wind\\_PEIS\\_ROD\\_Signed.pdf](http://plainswindeis.anl.gov/documents/docs/USFWS_UGP_Wind_PEIS_ROD_Signed.pdf)) as we plan to utilize the EIS for the easement exchange process. I have attached a map highlighting the area we are targeting. The timeline for the project remains the same and we are working with WEST to add point count locations to capture fall migration. The April 2016 stick nest surveys did not identify any eagle nests within the proposed expansion and no eagle minutes have been recorded for the project to date. Formal notifications of this boundary expansion will be sent once it has been