



ENVIRONMENTAL & STATISTICAL CONSULTANTS

408 West 6th Street, Bloomington, IN 47404
Phone: 812-339-1756 • www.west-inc.com

BLACK DIAMOND SOLAR PROJECT

Agency Coordination Meeting with IDNR
April 6, 2020

ATTENDEES

- Travis Brown (WEST)
- Meredith Rodriguez (WEST)
- Stephanie Fowler (Swift Current Energy)
- Dave Fowler (Swift Current Energy)
- Daniel Sheehan (Swift Current Energy)
- Steve Battaglia (Westwood)
- Kelly Allen (IDNR)
- Nathan Grider (IDNR)
- Adam Rawe (IDNR)

MEETING OBJECTIVE

WEST, Westwood, and Swift Current Energy attended a webinar with IDNR to discuss the Black Diamond Solar Project in Christian County, Illinois. The primary intent of the meeting was to review the Project, provide an update on wildlife studies done to date and proposed avoidance and mitigation measures for Kirtland's snake, and discuss an IDNR recreational easement on the Project.

MINUTES

1. Company and Project Introduction
 - a. Swift Current Energy has developed projects in Maine, Ohio, Illinois, Texas, Louisiana, and is currently working on a project in Kentucky.
 - b. The Black Diamond Solar Project is in Christian County, 14 miles southeast of Springfield, and is proposed to be up to 299MW, with a proposed construction start date of October 2021 and proposed COD of June 2022.
 - c. Land cover is predominantly cultivated crops, 5.5% deciduous forest and <0.1% woody wetland and open water
2. Raptor Nest Surveys
 - a. WEST completed raptor nest surveys within 0.5 mile of the Project boundary in March 2020
 - b. Fourteen potential raptor nests were recorded. Nests were predominantly red-tailed hawk nests. No bald eagle nests were recorded.
3. Summary of Kirtland's Snake Habitat Surveys and Results
 - a. WEST completed field habitat mapping in the fall of 2019.
 - b. All potential habitat is restricted to the margins of the Project site. Potential habitat in the southern portion of the Project was removed with the last boundary change.
 - c. Swift Current has adopted a series of voluntary measures to follow during pre-construction and post-construction to minimize and avoid potential impacts to



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Kirtland's snake. These measures include removal of debris and vegetation prior to construction with oversight by a biological monitor, installation of silt fencing, restriction of seasonal mowing, and use of wildlife friendly erosion control.

3. IDNR Recreational Easement

- a. A title search on the property returned records of three existing easements with the IDNR.
- b. Swift Current noted that the current easement is described by elevation. They would like an agreement that allows them to build on the northern peninsula of the Project, and would not impact the existing boat launch or need access to the Project via the access road for the boat launch.
- c. Westwood will prepare a kmz and maps of the area, and Swift Current will forward this information, along with the easement documentation, along to IDNR.

4. General Discussion and Questions

- a. Kirtland's snake
 - i. IDNR noted that there is a University of Illinois professor who has been studying Kirtland's snake at Sangchris Lake as a study site, and asked about the potential to partner with the Project.
 - ii. IDNR noted that the avoidance and mitigation measures look good, and asked if potential habitat areas were avoided. WEST confirmed that the potential layouts avoid all suitable habitat for Kirtland's snake.
 - iii. Regarding vegetation management, IDNR noted that a consideration of time of day may be beneficial if mowing needs to occur during the months when Kirtland's snake is active.
- b. Vegetation Management
 - i. IDNR asked what Swift Current's plans are regarding vegetation management at the Project, and noted that panel shading needs to be taken into consideration, along with mowing guidelines for snakes.
 - ii. IDNR noted that the pollinator scorecard has been finalized for the state; if the conditions are met, the Project could qualify to be a pollinator friendly solar farm. Swift Current expressed interest in working with IDNR to determine a compatible long-term option for vegetation cover.
- c. Incidental Take Authorization
 - i. IDNR noted that Swift Current has the option to pursue an incidental take authorization for the Project, which could be written to cover both construction and operation.
 - ii. IDNR noted that Swift Current is employing a lot of avoidance measures, but that take can never be 100% ruled out as a possibility, and it is impossible to say how a case would be handled, as each take action is up to the discretion of law enforcement.
 - iii. Swift Current asked if additional mitigation would be required, or if additional measures would need to be taken to pursue an incidental take authorization. IDNR indicated that coordination with the University of Illinois professor would likely be considered mitigation.



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ACTION ITEMS:

1. Swift Current to provide easement language and kmzs and maps of easement to IDNR land management team.
2. Swift Current to provide maps of potential layout in relation to potential Kirtland's snake habitat to IDNR T&E wildlife team.
3. IDNR to send Swift Current and WEST contact information for professor at University of Illinois.
4. IDNR to send Swift Current and WEST pollinator scorecard.