

Renewable energy on public lands:

10 ways to be smart from the start

In the West, common sense is as abundant as the wind and sun – and sportsmen suggest using all three as our country rapidly develops its renewable energy sources.

Hunters and anglers realize how important energy is, and we support renewable energy development on Western public lands. We want it done thoughtfully, however, to conserve fish and wildlife habitat and water quality. And, given our passion for the land, sportsmen want a voice in shaping renewable energy strategy.

In the rush to tap new energy sources, it's important to do it the right way and in the right places. That way, we won't repeat the mistakes of poorly planned oil and gas development that continues to threaten some of the West's cherished public lands, including special places

where families have hunted and fished for generations.

Developing renewable energy responsibly means using common sense. That means locating the huge fields of solar panels and rows of 300-foot windmills on already developed landscapes. It means putting new power lines close to existing ones. Above all, it means using the latest scientific information to safeguard the sage grouse, pronghorn antelope and mule deer most affected by renewable energy equipment.

As our country taps the promise of wind and solar energy, the Sportsmen for Responsible Energy Development coalition encourages government officials to adopt the following 10 guidelines to help preserve America's outdoor legacy.



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1 Give sportsmen a voice in decision making

Open and transparent processes that encourage public input on important decisions, such as where to locate renewable energy projects, distribution facilities and transmission lines, are essential.

2 Protect roadless backcountry, National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges and local and state public lands

Prioritize renewable energy development for disturbed or occupied land where energy infrastructure might already be in place.

3 Conserve important fish and wildlife habitat

Game-bird habitat, trout streams, deer and elk winter range, migration corridors and fragile wetland and riparian habitats should not be inordinately sacrificed for renewable energy development projects.

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4 Consult with state fish and wildlife officials first

Development and permitting decisions affecting fish, wildlife and sporting recreation on federal public lands should be made in formal and documented consultation with state fish and wildlife agencies.

5 Rely on the latest science

All decisions about renewable energy development projects should use the best-available scientific information on fish, wildlife and water resources. Emerging science about impacts to critical fish and wildlife resources must be used to reach sound development decisions.

6 Strengthen the permitting and leasing process

Existing processes using rights-of-way or special-use authorizations are insufficient. Leasing and permitting for renewable projects should be an open process that: protects public land; recognizes the value of fish, wildlife and recreation; considers the cumulative effects of development; and balances the multiple uses of these lands.

7 Monitor impacts to fish, wildlife and water

A well-designed and adequately funded monitoring program is critical to determine if impacts are occurring and to make adjustments when effects on fish, wildlife and water resources exceed predetermined thresholds.

8 Mitigate damage and reclaim affected land and water

A fund should be established from permit revenues to ensure that damage to fish and wildlife habitats is avoided, minimized or mitigated.

9 Comply with all relevant environmental laws

To protect the resources on public lands, renewable energy development must abide by all local, state and federal policies and laws, including the National Environmental Policy Act, Federal Land Policy and Management Act, National Forest Management Act, Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act and Resource Conservation Recovery Act.

10 Hold industry accountable for development costs

To help the federal government effectively manage energy development on public lands, industry needs to cover all costs related to the permitting process, including the time of state and federal wildlife professionals.

SPORTSMEN FOR Responsible Energy Development

Sportsmen for Responsible Energy Development is a coalition of more than 500 businesses, organizations and individuals dedicated to conserving irreplaceable habitats so future generations can hunt and fish on public lands. The coalition is led by the National Wildlife Federation, Trout Unlimited and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership.

For more information, visit www.Sportsmen4ResponsibleEnergy.org.

Guidelines also endorsed by:

- American Sportfishing Association
- Berkeley Conservation Institute/Pure Fishing
- Quality Deer Management Association
- The Wildlife Society
- Wildlife Management Institute
- Wild Sheep Foundation

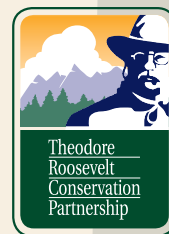


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