



AMERICAN WIND WILDLIFE INSTITUTE STRATEGIC PLAN

*Solving the Wind-Wildlife Challenge to Achieve
a Sustainable Energy Future*



Updated Fall 2020

INTRODUCTION



AWWI’s collaborative approach is fundamental to producing credible, trustworthy, independent science that develops solutions for wind energy and wildlife that can inform public and private sector decision making and be applied on the ground. This strategic plan sets forth our goals and objectives to meet the challenges ahead for the next three to five years.

We are at a pivotal moment in efforts to conserve our nation’s natural resources and combat climate change by expanding the use of renewable energy. The Biden-Harris administration is advancing ambitious clean energy and conservation goals, including achieving a carbon pollution-free power sector by 2035 and a net-zero emissions economy by 2050, as well as conserving 30% of U.S. lands and oceans by 2030. Achieving these outcomes will

require significant collaboration among diverse stakeholders that share similar values but have different interests and priorities.

While onshore wind energy remains our primary focus, it is now understood that if we are to meet our country’s electricity needs while also significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions, offshore wind and utility-scale solar will also have to increase. This strategic plan outlines a vision to continue to strengthen and expand our onshore wind-wildlife program, and to explore growing AWWI’s research program to help offshore wind and solar be deployed in ways that protect wildlife and their habitat. AWWI’s verified model of commitment to sound science, transparent information sharing, and convening across sectors is ideally suited to support this growth. While we explore opportunities to diversify our scope, we remain fully committed to reinforcing and expanding our ability to produce professional, quality results for land-based wind power.

In tandem with the ongoing support of our dedicated Partners and Friends, we look forward to continuing to deliver value for our stakeholders and the renewable energy-wildlife community as we work together to achieve our common goals.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Abby Arnold".

- Abby Arnold, AWWI Executive Director



I. OVERVIEW

AWWI provides a platform for collaboration across the wind wildlife stakeholder spectrum to conduct scientific research to advance the responsible deployment of wind energy and mitigate climate change.

Vision: Expansion of renewables and the conservation of wildlife are mutually dependent and obtainable goals. Stakeholders have the knowledge and tools to site and operate renewable energy facilities on a scale that is sustainable by combining renewable energy deployment with wildlife conservation goals.

Mission: Founded in 2008 by leaders in the wind industry, wildlife management agencies, and scientific and conservation organizations, AWWI envisioned forging a sustainable, scientific foundation for wind energy to reach its potential while achieving measurable conservation benefits, including combating climate change. We remain fully committed to our **mission: *facilitating timely and responsible development of wind energy while protecting wildlife and wildlife habitat.***



Model

- 1. Understand Risk and Document What We Know:** regularly analyzing and publishing summaries of what we know and prioritizing questions to address, built on a thorough review of literature and data analyses informed by the **American Wind Wildlife information Center**.
- 2. Set Priorities and Produce Solutions:** maintaining and updating a **National Research Plan** that sets priorities based on review of literature and close collaboration with key stakeholders (including AWWI Partners and Friends, the scientific community, and the regulatory community); setting priorities allows us to focus our resources on the highest priority challenges and develop solutions that optimize conservation of species and production of clean power.
- 3. Apply Results:** through **outreach, education, and engagement**, working to ensure key decision makers have the information, tools, and strategies they need, as well as providing a multi-stakeholder forum to address and solve complex challenges.
- 4. Secure Funding: utilizing a flexible funding model** designed to secure foundational funding to support core activities while providing mechanisms for individual funders to support specific projects, within the National Research Plan priorities, that are of most interest to them.

STATE OF THE SCIENCE
& ASSESS RISK

IDENTIFY RESEARCH
PRIORITIES

DEVELOP &
APPLY SOLUTIONS

OUTREACH,
IMPLEMENTATION,
FORUM FOR EXCHANGE

Looking Ahead: The results of AWWI's work has proved successful in making great strides in supporting the expansion of onshore wind development while conserving wildlife and wildlife habitat, but more is needed to fully accomplish our mission and realize our vision. Further, with the support from key partners, the AWWI model could be applied to the expanding and dynamic renewables field more broadly while reinforcing and growing our core work on onshore wind and wildlife.

II. CURRENT FOCUS: ADDRESS ONSHORE WIND AND WILDLIFE CHALLENGES

This Strategic Plan provides the blueprint to achieve AWWI's vision by working towards the following goals:

a. Fund and Complete National Research Plan Priority Projects

The AWWI [National Wind Wildlife Research Plan](#) outlines a suite of specific projects that, if funded and completed over the next three years, will provide the industry and permitting agencies with credible, cost-effective, and science based solutions to wind-wildlife challenges.

Specific goals include:

- Improve avoidance and minimization strategies to reduce bat and bird collision risk.
- Identify and focus research that reduces impacts to species sensitive to habitat disturbance.
- Develop strategies and science to optimize project siting and minimize wildlife and habitat impacts.
- Develop and implement impact assessment and mitigation alternatives that reduce risk to sensitive species and enhance conservation.

b. Enable Application Through Outreach, Communication, and Education

AWWI will continue to serve as the leading technical source and conduit for credible, science-based information. Our work will promote the acceptance and application of results, inform policy making, improve outreach efforts and communication, and provide opportunities for cross sector relationship-building, understanding, and collaboration.

Specific goals include:

- Facilitate Partner and Friend engagement with key decisionmakers to promote trust, acceptance, and application of results; where possible find new, effective, and efficient ways to improve relationships and exchange of information.
- Disseminate and socialize tools and research results to inform decision making that achieves desired conversation outcomes.
- Provide forums for education and dialogue on state of science, research results, solutions, and key questions and issues to promote their acceptance and application, inform policy making, improve communication, and provide opportunities for cross sector relationship-building, understanding, and collaboration.



c. Secure Funding to Ensure a Sustainable Organization

To maintain AWWI's onshore program, continued investment will be needed to increase our impact and enhance our sustainability. In order to raise the level of capital investment needed to conduct additional research – while remaining flexible and responsive to changing policy and market demand for our products and work – AWWI is identifying strategies to diversify scope while building on these traditional funding approaches to maintain and strengthen our core program.

Specific goals include:

- Maintain and strengthen current funding sources (industry, WWRF, NGOs, government, foundation, individual donors).
- For onshore, maintain and ideally expand funding by adding new partners and friends and categories of participation.
- Identify offshore wind and solar wildlife/habitat/natural resource priority research questions and develop research programs and associated outreach strategies. Identify unique structural features of each of these markets and consider how restructuring AWWI will accommodate these features, while maintaining fidelity to the well-established strong onshore wind research program.

d. Strengthen the Sustainable and Flexible Operating Model

To accomplish our goals, AWWI's governance and operations will need to support both sustaining the current onshore wind research program and be flexible to accommodate new markets and business strategies. We will adopt a 'modular' approach to growth that provides the organization with the necessary leadership and fiduciary role and is also flexible to accommodate new entrants into the organization if AWWI expands renewables scope.

Specific goals include:

- Board
 - Regularly assess the membership and governance structure of AWWI for effective and efficient representation, fundraising, and operations, and adjusting aspects as needed if AWWI enters new research and application program areas.
- Staff and Operations:
 - Maintain and as needed add to our talented, expert staff, with a focus on increasing diversity and inclusion and expanding our in-house expertise in new areas.
 - Continually improve support systems for staff, including providing an equitable and inclusive workplace and professional development and growth opportunities in the areas relevant to achieving our goals.
 - Improve management structures and support for leadership to accommodate changes in staffing and programs over time.
 - Continually improve our financial tools and operational systems to accommodate changes in program structure and funding sources.

III. EXPLORE AND IF FEASIBLE EXPAND SCOPE: OFFSHORE WIND AND SOLAR

e. Increasing our Impact and Sustaining our Mission through Expanded Scope

Recognizing the dynamic marketplace for various sources of renewable energy and the need to scale these resources up quickly to address climate challenge while protecting wildlife, AWWI will explore how to increase resources and capacity to meet the increasing demand for research and solutions to wildlife and habitat risk associated with siting and operating solar and offshore wind facilities. The successful model developed to address onshore wind can be expanded to cover offshore wind and solar to ensure science continues to drive conservation and development/operational decisions in the renewable energy space.

This approach will further increase our impact and enhance our sustainability by:

- Addressing renewables-wildlife research, outreach, and education priorities over the long term as the generation and use of renewable energy expands.
- Continuing to deliver and strengthen our brand for independent, credible, and peer-reviewed science.
- Providing the renewable development and conservation communities with a trusted resource for information, with key decision makers and stakeholders continuing to look to AWWI to develop solutions to difficult problems.
- Improving our financial resiliency and operational agility to continue our existing suite of priorities while addressing new challenges and opportunities.

f. Offshore Wind and Wildlife

Building on AWWI's experience as the only independent wind and wildlife organization in the U.S., AWWI is exploring how we can serve and support offshore wind decision makers and support deployment of offshore wind while protecting wildlife and habitat.

Specific goals include:

- Determine if other organizations are interested in partnering to establish an offshore wind and wildlife research program under the AWWI umbrella, and if so, develop and execute a business plan.
- Address organizational changes that would be needed, and financial feasibility of expanding to address offshore and wildlife/habitat issues.
- As a part of this expansion, consider changes needed to AWWI's governance and outreach, communication, and education program to enable application of results for offshore wind and wildlife challenges.

g. Solar and Wildlife

As solar generation development expands, questions remain regarding the impacts of solar project development on wildlife and new challenges have emerged. Increasingly companies who participate in AWWI have asked whether AWWI could work on solar-wildlife and other natural resource issues that need research support. In response, AWWI will explore with current partners and other interested parties how AWWI could provide value in solar-wildlife/habitat and possibly other natural resource research areas and develop a program to address issues suited to AWWI's expertise in catalyzing and conducting research and outreach to key decision makers.

Specific goals include:

- Consult with AWWI Partners and Friends and others about their interest and potential research needs.
- Determine if other relevant organizations are interested in partnering to establish a solar and wildlife/natural resources program under the AWWI umbrella.
- If there is sufficient need and interest, create a business plan/value proposition that would address organizational/governance changes that would be needed and the financial feasibility of expanding to address solar and wildlife/habitat issues; secure funding to develop a solar program in collaboration with existing organizations, so that AWWI's program is tailored to the unique needs of solar wildlife and other relevant issues and provides credible, independent science-driven results for decision makers.



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