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APLIC Issues New Guidelines to Protect Sage-Grouse

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 29, 2015) - The Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC) today released a new guidance document titled, [*Best Management Practices for Electric Utilities in Sage-Grouse Habitat*](#). The new manual identifies best practices and provides specific guidance to help electric utilities, electric cooperatives, federal power administrations, wildlife agencies, and other stakeholders protect sage-grouse and their habitats.

While this manual is the first to address sage-grouse in the context of the electric utility industry, it follows the framework of APLIC's other avian protection manuals, including *Reducing Avian Collisions with Power Lines: State of the Art in 2012*, *Suggested Practices for Avian Protection on Power Lines: State of the Art in 2006*, and the *2005 Avian Protection Plan Guidelines*.

In 2012, APLIC convened a group of utility, federal, and state agency partners to develop Best Management Practices (BMPs) that aid in addressing siting and ongoing operation and maintenance concerns and help to conserve sage-grouse and their habitats.

"This document adds to the foundation of APLIC manuals and also supports APLIC's mission statement to lead the electric utility industry in protecting avian resources," said APLIC Chair Mike Best, Avian Protection Plan Program Manager for PG&E.

"These best practices provide a new tool for electric utilities that operate in states with sage-grouse," said Sherry Liguori, Avian Program Manager for PacifiCorp and former APLIC Chair. "Just like the Avian Protection Plan Guidelines have offered a framework for utilities to address bird interactions with power lines, the sage-grouse best practices present techniques that utilities can implement to minimize impacts on sage-grouse and their habitats, while still providing safe, reliable service to customers."

The voluntary BMPs are intended to provide consistent and implementable actions that comply with and enhance sage-grouse-specific conservation measures, recommendations, and requirements contained within federal and state management plans. These BMPs are not intended to replace or conflict with existing agency plans, but rather to provide additional details specific to electric transmission and distribution infrastructure and related actions. The BMPs were categorized under various activities conducted by utilities and also were aligned with potential threats identified in the 2013 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Conservation Objectives Team Report.

"These BMPs add tools to the toolbox for the use of sage-grouse habitats while minimizing possible impacts to the species," said San Stiver, Sage-Grouse Coordinator for the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA). Stiver noted that "scientists from WAFWA member states participated in the development and completion of the BMPs."

Formed in 1989, APLIC is a voluntary partnership among the electric utility industry, wildlife resource agencies, and conservation groups. APLIC and its partners work together to understand the causes of bird-power line collisions and electrocutions, and to develop ways of preventing bird mortalities, as well as associated power outages. APLIC's focus in recent years has expanded to address avian concerns associated with the construction of new electric transmission infrastructure.

The sage-grouse BMPs, as well as other APLIC guidance documents, are available at www.aplic.org.

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The Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC) leads the electric utility industry in protecting avian resources while enhancing reliable energy delivery. APLIC was formed in 1989 to address whooping crane collisions with power lines. Since its inception, APLIC has expanded to address a variety of avian/power line interactions including electrocutions, collisions, nests, and construction activities. APLIC members include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Edison Electric Institute, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Rural Utilities Service, Electric Power Research Institute, U.S. Department of Energy Power Marketing Administrations, and more than 50 electric utilities/energy companies in the U.S. and Canada.