



Western EcoSystems Technology, Inc.

# News from the WEST, Inc.

Summer 2009



2003 Central Avenue  
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001  
Phone: 307.634.1756  
Fax: 307.637.6981  
Email: admin@west-inc.com  
www.west-inc.com

## Inside this issue:

<i>Russian Scientist to Visit WEST, Inc.</i>	2
<i>Employee's Community Service Work</i>	3
<i>WEST, Inc. Recent Publications</i>	3
<i>New Staff Member joins WEST, Inc</i>	4
<i>Conferences/Workshops by WEST, Inc. Employees</i>	4
<i>Green Tip: Pack a Waste-Free Lunch</i>	5
<i>WEST, Inc. Featured in Newspaper Article</i>	5

## Simpson Ridge Greater Sage-Grouse Telemetry Study



**Greg Johnson and Chad LeBeau** process a hen sage-grouse at Simpson Ridge

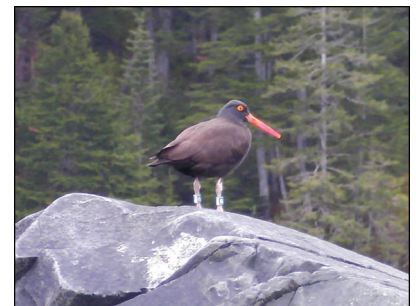
Much debate has occurred recently regarding the potential impacts of wind-energy facilities on prairie grouse, including greater sage-grouse. The greater sage-grouse has been petitioned for listing as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act, and numerous wind energy facilities have been proposed within the range of the sage-grouse in the western U.S. Therefore, it is imperative that we learn how these birds respond to wind energy so that sound decisions can be made with respect to siting wind energy facilities in sage-grouse habitat.

Due to lack of research, however, it is currently unknown how sage-grouse, which are accustomed to a relatively low vegetation canopy, would respond to numerous wind turbines hundreds of feet taller than the surrounding landscape. Some scientists speculate that such a skyline may displace greater sage-grouse hundreds of meters or even miles from their normal range. If birds are displaced, it is unknown whether, in time, local populations may become acclimated to elevated structures and return to the area.

*Sage-Grouse Study to pg 2*

## Black Oystercatchers in Prince William Sound, Alaska

WEST, Inc. was recently contracted by the Chugach National Forest to help develop a long-term monitoring program for black oystercatchers (*Haematopus bachmani*) in Prince William Sound, Alaska. The black oystercatcher is a larger black bird with a long bright red bill and eye-ring (**see photo**) that nests in the rocky intertidal zones of western North America. The black oystercatcher is listed as a "species of high concern" in the U.S. National Shorebird Conservation Plan, a Focal Species for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, a Chugach National Forest Management Indicator Species and an Alaska Region Sensitive Species. The Chugach National Forest has been monitoring black oystercatcher nesting locations in Prince William Sound since 1999. WEST, Inc.'s **Ryan Nielson** recently spent 7 days in Prince William Sound participating in a trial survey using newly developed protocol.



*Sage-Grouse Study from pg 1*

Also, it is unknown how wind energy development may affect sage-grouse demographics such as nest success, brood success, survival, and ultimately, population growth.

To help address this information gap, *WEST*, Inc. is currently conducting the first large-scale study to assess response of greater sage-grouse to wind energy development. In early April 2009, *WEST*, Inc. trapped and attached radio collars to 75 female sage-grouse near Simpson Ridge in Carbon County, Wyoming. *WEST*, Inc. has been monitoring the locations of these birds since then from the ground and fixed-wing aircraft to determine home ranges, nesting and brood-rearing areas, and survival rates. The study area includes two proposed and one existing wind-energy facilities. The general approach is to compare greater sage-grouse habitat selection and demographics on proposed wind energy development and reference areas pre versus post-construction to determine if wind energy development influences grouse distributions or population growth. The presence of an existing wind energy facility in the project area will also allow information to be obtained on sage-grouse response to wind turbines the first study year. In addition to the telemetry portion of the study, we are also monitoring the number of males on 12 strutting grounds, or leks, located on or within four miles of the project area. The study is planned to last up to seven years to ensure adequate data are obtained on long-term effects on sage-grouse after the wind energy facilities are completed.

The Simpson Ridge Sage-Grouse Telemetry Study is being managed by *WEST*, Inc., with **Greg Johnson** serving as the Project Manager. Matt Holloran with Wyoming Wildlife Consultants is also working with *WEST*, Inc. on this project and has been instrumental to its success. **Troy Rintz, Chad LeBeau, Greg Leighty** and **Jamey Eddy** from the *WEST*, Inc.'s Laramie Office have been conducting fieldwork. Funding for the study is being provided by: Horizon Wind Energy, primary funding source; Iberdrola Renewables, providing radio telemetry collars; and the Shirley Basin/Bates Hole Local Sage-Grouse Working Group, flight time for the project. *WEST*, Inc. recently received a \$100,000 grant from the Department of Energy for this study, and this money will become available in July. Additional sources of funding are currently being sought to ensure the long-term success of this important project.



*Male sage-grouse on lek (photo by Mike Lockhart)*

## Russian Scientist to Visit *WEST*, Inc.



**Dr. Nickolay (Nick) Ilyich Markov**, Senior Researcher, Institute of Plant and Animal Ecology, Urals Branch of the Russian Academy of Science, will be visiting *WEST*, Inc. and the University of Wyoming, from August 9 to September 10, 2009.

His interests include the ecology of Wolf (*Canis lupus* L.) in the Western Caucasus, Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa* L.) in the Middle Urals, and European Badger (*Meles* sp.) in Siberia.

If you are interested in visiting with Nick while he is in the US, please contact **Lyman McDonald** at [lmcdonald@west-inc.com](mailto:lmcdonald@west-inc.com).

To visit the Institute of Plant and Animal Ecology, Urals Branch of the Russian Academy of Science go to: <http://www.uran.ru>



## WEST, Inc. Publications

Durner, G. M., D. C. Douglas, **R. M. Nielson**, S. C. Amstrup, **L. L. McDonald**, I. Stirling, M. Mauritzen, E. W. Born, Ø. Wiig, E. DeWeaver, M. C. Serreze, S. E. Belikov, M. M. Holland, J. Maslanik, J. Aars, D. A. Bailey, and A. E. Derocher. 2009. Predicting the 21<sup>st</sup> century distribution of polar bear habitat from general circulation model projections of sea ice. *Ecological Monographs* 79:25 – 58.

Jones, S.L., C.S. Nations, S.D. Fellows, and **L.L. McDonald**. 2008. Breeding Abundance and Distribution of Long-billed Curlews (*Numenius americanus*) in North America. *Waterbirds* 31(1): 1-14.

Good, R., **R.M. Nielson**, **L.L. McDonald**. 2009 Results of 2006 and 2007 Survey of Golden Eagles (*Aquila Chrysaetos*) in the Western United States. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Report (Final Report, 2009)

For a list of additional **WEST, Inc.** publications, reports, articles and proceedings please visit:

[www.west-inc.com/reports.php](http://www.west-inc.com/reports.php)

## WEST, Inc. Employee's Passion to Help Others

**Tia Farmer** of **WEST, Inc.** has found a new passion with ShelterBox, the international solution to disaster shelter relief. It is a tough, green plastic box containing a tent and ancillary equipment designed to enable a family of up to 10 people survive for at least six months.

Made to a unique design using high quality materials, ShelterBox tents are suitable for a wide range of conditions. Other items may include insulated ground sheets, thermal blankets, a multi-fuel stove, cooking equipment, tools, mosquito nets, water containers etc. Exact contents will depend upon local conditions and what is most needed.

ShelterBox works directly with local organizations in countries where disasters have occurred, in partnership with other aid agencies and through the International Rotary Network. Since operations began in January 2001, ShelterBox has helped over 800,000 people and worked in more than 52 countries – responding to earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, tsunamis, wars, volcanoes etc.

The volunteer teams often oversee the distribution of boxes to individual recipients – making sure aid gets directly to those people who need it most. Feed the Children has called ShelterBox “the best disaster relief tool” they have seen in their 20 years of experience.

For more information you can contact Tia Farmer at [tfarmer@west-inc.com](mailto:tfarmer@west-inc.com) or you can visit: [www.shelterbox.org](http://www.shelterbox.org)



# WEST, Inc. Welcomes New Staff Member

## Zapata Courage-Research Biologist-Waterbury, VT

Zapata joined WEST in May of 2009 as a Research Biologist in the Vermont Office. Prior to employment with WEST, Inc. Zapata received her B.S. in Conservation Biology from the University of Vermont in 1998. She interned in Kenya with the School for Field Studies, focusing on wildlife management and habitat assessment. While in Kenya, she also volunteered her time with the Lammegier (White-Bearded Vulture) reintroduction project. She is an Education Specialist with the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. Zapata has also worked for the USDA Forest Service continuing a long-term non-invasive monitoring program for mid-sized carnivores. Zapata's primary responsibilities with WEST, Inc. will be monitoring bats and the nocturnal migration patterns of birds. She will also coordinate seasonal field technicians and assume a variety of administrative responsibilities within the Vermont office.



For a listing of other WEST, Inc. Staff biographies visit: <http://www.west-inc.com/personnel.php>

## 2009 Conferences & Workshops Attended by WEST, Inc. Staff

- **Ryan Nielson** (Biometrician/Project Manager) presented *Estimating habitat selection when GPS fix success is less than 100%* at the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Western States and Provinces Deer and Elk Workshop on April 28th, 2009 in Spokane, Washington.
- **Kenton Taylor** (Wildlife Biologist/Project Manager) and **Kristen Chodachek** (Biologist) attended the 10th Annual Energy Expo in Gillette, Wyoming; June 3-4, 2009. This expo featured several hundred exhibitors related to energy development. Exhibitors included representatives from industry, private consultants/contractors, as well as state and federal agencies.
- **Jeff Gruver** (Bat Specialist/Project Manager), **Donald Solick** (Wildlife Biologist/Bat Specialist), and **Wally Erickson** (Biometrician/Senior Manager) attended the Western Bat Working Group, April 13-15, 2009 in Austin, Texas. The focus of this workshop is the wind energy and bats. While there the respective presentations were made: **Jeff and Wally:** *Post-Construction Fatality Studies and Lessons Learned: West and Midwest; Pre-Construction Tools:* **Jeff:** *Deployment of Acoustic Equipment and Key Findings;* **Wally: *Study Design Issues and Field Biases in Mortality Estimation in Wind Facilities* **Donald:** *Use of Marine Radar to Study Bat Emergence and Movement Patterns.***
- **Jeff Gruver** (Bat Specialist/Project Manager) attended the Midwest Bat Working Group May 7-8, 2009 at Indiana State University in Terre Haute, Indiana. This was the first annual meeting of this group designed to discuss and work on regional and National problems regarding bats. While at this conference Jeff presented *Pre and Post-Construction Studies of Bats at Wind Farms.*
- **Jeff Gruver** (Bat Specialist/Project Manager) also attended the 2nd Annual Meeting of the Great Lakes Wind Collaborative, June 10-11, 2009 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. While there he presented *Post-construction Studies at the Blue Sky Green Field Wind Project.*



## WEST, Inc. Locations and Contact Information

### Corporate Headquarters

2003 Central Avenue  
Cheyenne, Wyoming, 82009  
307.634.1756  
*Nadine Wilson*

### Midwest-West Region

Bloomington Branch Office  
804 North College, Suite 103  
Bloomington, Indiana 47403  
*Rhett Good*

### Laramie Branch Office

200 South 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Suite B  
Laramie, Wyoming 82070  
*Trent McDonald*

### Pacific Northwest Region

Walla Walla Branch Office  
5 West Alder, Suite 234  
Walla Walla, Washington 99362  
*Jay Jeffrey*

### NE/Mid-Atlantic Region

Waterbury Branch Office  
P.O. Box 60  
Waterbury, Vermont  
*David Tidhar*

### Midwest-East Region

Bismarck Branch Office  
4007 State Street, Suite 109  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58503  
*Clayton Derby*

## WEST, Inc. Featured in Newspaper Article

The Laramie Boomerang ran an article which highlighted WEST, Inc.'s work with sage-grouse. The article which ran May 26, 2009, titled "Biologists Studying Turbines' Effect on Grouse", featuring WEST, Inc. biologist **Greg Johnson**.

This article helped bring to the attention of the general public, the work that WEST, Inc. and others including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, are doing to study the effects of the development of wind turbines on sage-grouse. This study will, in the words of **Greg Johnson**, "...come up with some real data that can be used to hopefully site wind energy facilities so that grouse impacts can be avoided."

## Green Tip: Pack a Waste-Free Lunch

A waste-free lunch means there is no packaging that needs to be thrown away once finished. Nothing other than fruit peels or cores/pits. The best way to reduce waste is not to create any to begin with.

### Lunch Waste Facts:

In the US, we discard 2.5 million plastic bottles every hour

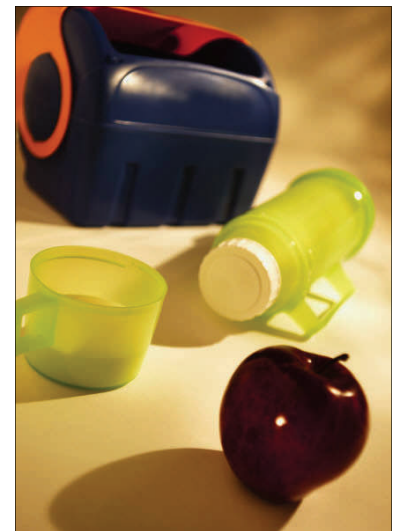
We also throw away 25 billion Styrofoam cups every year in the US

Most inorganic trash retains it's weight, volume and form for at least four decades

In the time it takes you to read this sentence, more than 50,000 12 oz. aluminum cans were made

### Five Simple Ways to Create a Waste-Free Lunch:

1. Pack lunch in a reusable carrier (cloth bag or lunch box)-**better** than a throw away bag
2. Pack food into reusable plastic containers-**better** than baggies, foil, or foam
3. Use a thermos or PBA-free plastic bottle for drinks-**better** than single use cartons or cans
4. Pack a cloth napkin that can be washed and reused-**better** than a paper napkin
5. Use real silverware that can be washed and reused-**better** than plastic forks, spoons and knives



{ source: [www.globalstewards.org](http://www.globalstewards.org) }

\*WEST, Inc., as an environmentally friendly company, produces only an electronic version of its newsletter.

\*For additional information on any story contained within this newsletter you can contact WEST, Inc. at 307.634.1756 or [marketing@west-inc.com](mailto:marketing@west-inc.com).