



The Empire District Electric Company d/b/a Liberty

Case No. ER-2024-0261

Office Public Counsel Data Request - 1240

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Response Date: 2025-06-26

Request No. 1240

Witness/Respondent: Shaen Rooney

Submitted by: Manzell Payne, manzell.payne@opc.mo.gov

REQUEST:

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS TO WIND FACILITIES

Please list all environmental mitigation projects, investments, or efforts (acoustic deterrent systems, radar systems) taken by the Company at each wind facility. For each, please include:

- a. Location and description
- b. Date initiated
- c. Costs
- d. Purpose and expected outcome
- e. How each environmental effort was funded

RESPONSE:

- A. Empire currently owns Buffalo Quarry Conservation Bank, located in Southwest MO. Buffalo Quarry is home to a large maternity colony of gray bats (endangered species). Empire purchased this property to protect the gray bat and created the conservation bank to create mitigation credits that Empire anticipated it would need to operate North Fork Ridge and Kings Point Wind. Empire is currently in the process of protecting two of its other properties in Southwest Missouri for the protection of the Tricolor bat. It is Empire's understanding, after conversations with the USFWS and private consultants, that the Tricolor is likely to be listed during the operational life of the windfarms. The Company's proactive approach to creating the permittee responsible mitigation needs, will prevent the requirement for the Company's windfarms to curtail at avoidance of the Tricolor bat until a new permit can be obtained. The permit issuance would likely take more than one year.

- B. Buffalo Quarry Conservation Bank was established on 05-21-2024. The study for the tricolor bat habitat was started in June 2024.
- C. Total cost for the creation of Buffalo Quarry Gray Bat Conservation Bank was approximately \$1.4 million.
- D. The purpose of these mitigation opportunities is to help reduce the overall cost of compliance to customers. Buffalo Quarry is the only active gray bat mitigation site in the country. Without the creation of the bank, at this time there would be no third-party from whom to purchase credits. It is anticipated that Buffalo Quarry will provide all the gray bat mitigation credits required for Kings Point Wind and North Fork Ridge. The properties for the tricolor bat should cover a majority of the required mitigation credits. Empire is currently working on finding other properties and partners to cover the remaining mitigation credits.
- E. Funding for both Buffalo Quarry and the Tricolor habitat study was provided through Empire's annual budget.