



Eco Awareness Society Newsletter

“The human spirit needs places where nature has not been rearranged by the hand of man.”

Author Unknown

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No. 9



Bailey's Brook, Nova Scotia

Annapolis County Adopts Go-Slow Approach to Wind Turbines

Nova Scotia – In March, Annapolis County Council passed an interim wind turbine bylaw “designed to allow council a year to study the issue of wind turbines before allowing development throughout the county”. “Annapolis County Warden Peter Newton said the new interim by-law is not meant to prohibit wind farm development but to allow council time to develop a bylaw that is appropriate for the county and ensure residents have input into the decisions.” [1]

Laurie McGowan in a letter to *The Annapolis County Spectator* wrote, “People don’t move to this area to look at mega quarries, mega landfills, or mega wind farms. Councillor Pat McWade said it best when stating it is the soul of this area that people connect to, that the sight planes and the nature around us has to be treated as a commons – something shared by all of us – when deciding where huge wind generators can not go.” [2]

She goes on to write, “**I applaud the Annapolis County councillors and warden...they showed wisdom in adopting the precautionary principle over a few people making money at perhaps everyone else’s expense.**” [2]

([1]Merchant: Wind Farm Law Stifles Growth, Gordon Delaney, The Chronicle Herald, March 29, 2010 [2] Commending the County on Wind Turbine Go-Slow Tactic, Laurie McGowan, The Annapolis County Spectator, April 7, 2010)

Quebec’s Environmental Review Agency Slams Wind Project

Quebec – A report by Quebec’s environmental review agency slams a proposed wind project in central Quebec for shutting local residents out of the planning process. The 100-megawatt Erable wind farm is scheduled to go into production next year near St. Ferdinand, 200 kilometres east of Montreal.

The report by the Bureau d’audiences publiques sur l’environnement (BAPE) said the 50 wind turbines, which are 138 metres tall, would affect residents’ living environment by altering the landscape and replacing nature’s soundtrack with the swishing of blades... “doubts persist about the economic benefits of the project” for local communities, noted the 158-page report by commissioner Lucie Bigue... **The wind farm also could lower real-estate values and hurt tourism, added the report...**

Wind-power projects should respect the principles of the province’s sustainable-development law, which requires local residents to take part in decision-making, notes the report’s conclusion. “Participation of communities in the planning and decision-making process constitute a key factor in whether or not to permit the building of a wind project, particularly in an inhabited area,” it said. “The promoter has taken the risk of implanting its project in an inhabited rural area without involving the public from the first planning stages,” it added.

...over the past year, Quebec’s big leap into green energy has run into turbulence. Plans for a 68-megawatt wind farm in Ste. Luce in the Lower St. Lawrence region were cancelled last year in the face of local opposition. Residents of the Charlevoix region have been fighting a 74-megawatt wind farm near a provincial park that is a nesting place for endangered golden eagles.

Pierre Seguin, a spokesperson for...a citizens’ group that opposes the wind farm, welcomed the report. “This project has caused a lot of suffering,” said Seguin, adding 40 local residents have sought treatment for stress-related health problems related to the conflict over the wind farm.

Jean-Claude Simard, a professor of philosophy and the history of science at CEGEP de Rimouski and Universite du Quebec a Rimouski, said the report marks a turning point in the wind-energy debate. **Until now, local residents’ complaints over the impact of large wind projects have rarely been heard, he said.** “This is the most severe criticism of a wind project we have heard from BAPE,” he added.

(Excerpt from “Wind Power Generates Turbulence”,
Marian Scott, The Gazette, May 4, 2010)

“Wind farms don’t live up to the hype that they are an environmental saviour and a serious alternate energy source, and the effects they can have on their neighbours are so serious it means they should not be allowed to get away with the exaggerated claims.

Peter McGauran, Austrian Senate

Who Owns the View?

Who really owns the view and the wildlife of Nova Scotia? What are their value?

While a landowner has certain rights with regard to their land use, once that use results in a significant and tangible loss to others, then those rights cease. This is the accountability that comes with property rights. An individual's right "to do as they please" stops when they allow an industrial wind power plant to devalue their neighbours property and quality of life.

Wind power plants throughout the world are turning out to have a devastating effect on wildlife and the natural environment. The impacts of industrial wind plants sited on ridgelines are greater than those sited on flat land. The contours of the mountains can magnify sound in unpredictable ways. The environmental impacts to wetlands, streams, wildlife corridors, forest fragmentation, bats and eagles are also far greater on ridges.

At the climate summit in Copenhagen in December 2009, the Copenhagen Accord declared that worldwide felling of forests must stop, that the conservation of forests contributes to increased reduction of CO2 and that forests are part of the solution to climate change.

As we rush to build wind power projects all over Nova Scotia in an attempt to help save the Earth from climate change, we are permanently degrading that same environment in the process.

We must not liquidate the greatest assets we have in Nova Scotia in the pursuit of expediency, and without critical thinking. **Europe has been building industrial wind power plants for decades yet studies show there is no significant reduction in greenhouse gases [CO2], they do not reduce fossil fuel use, they do not increase employment and they do not lower energy costs.** When critical thinking and science is applied, wind does not hold up to the scrutiny. If we are to be "green", then any "green" technology must be both responsible and sustainable. Wind is neither.

In Denmark, wind turbines are considered an industrial use. Once we have turned the ridgelines of Nova Scotia into industrial sites, who will take pride in this province? After we have exploited the very countryside we claim to love, what tourist would come here? Is this the "footprint" we will leave for future generations?

The views and wildlife of Nova Scotia are owned not only by everyone in the vicinity of the Glen Dhu project and all other wind projects, but also by those who value Nova Scotia's scenic beauty. This is its value and the very reason so many of us came here or returned or never left.

Complacency now will have a devastating affect for generations to come.

Disease and Wind Turbines Menace Bat Population

Ontario - While the bat will never make nature's cute and cuddly list, it is a vital part of the ecosystem and its population is being threatened on a number of fronts. Large numbers of bats have reportedly been killed and injured by wind turbines, and a disease called "white nose syndrome" threatens to kill bats by the hundreds of thousands.

To point out an immediate benefit of the bat is to consider that a single small brown bat can, in an hour, consume up to 1,000 mosquitoes that otherwise might be buzzing around our heads or gorging on our blood. A nursing mother bat eats more than her own body weight nightly – up to 4,500 insects...

White nose syndrome was detected for the first time in Ontario – in the Bancroft, Minden area – earlier this month. Meanwhile, it is being held responsible for killing hundreds of thousands of bats in the northeastern U.S...The condition is dubbed white nose syndrome because some affected bats have visible rings of white fungus around their faces...

In the meantime...A University of Calgary bat mortality study, conducted between 2006 and 2008, determined that the vast majority of bats found dead below turbines near Pincher Creek, Alberta, suffered severe injuries to their respiratory systems consistent with a sudden drop in air pressure – called barotraumas – that occurred when the animals got close to turbine blades.

The study showed that 90 per cent of the bats examined after death showed signs of internal hemorrhaging consistent with barotraumas, while only about half of the bats showed any evidence of direct contact with the blades...

One of the most extensive studies of the effects wind turbines have on bats was carried out at a 42-turbine facility in West Virginia. One finding was that bats that had just experienced a near-miss with a moving blade, would linger at the site rather than fly away.

This behaviour has led to speculation, with no confirmation, that the bats' sense of echolocation...radar that detects obstacles – is confused by either, or both, the movement of the blades and/or the ultrasound they emit...

(Excerpt from "Disease, Wind Turbines Menace Bat Population", Dan Pelton, Orangeville Citizen, March 25, 2010)

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"The notion that the wind industry is predominantly made up of small, environmentally conscious operations is one that must be quickly dispelled.

These are large, corporate-scale utility companies, not unlike coal and oil conglomerates...with a checkered environmental track record to date."

George Fenwick, President, American Bird Conservancy

You Don't Have to Live Near Them to be Affected

West Virginia - I live near the Backbone Mountain Wind Project. **I would like all your readers to know that you do not have to be within sight of wind turbines for them to have an impact on you and your home and daily life.**

The Backbone wind turbines are four miles from my home, with hills in between us, but I can still hear them. The trees that were cut to clear the path for them to be built nine years ago still lie in heaps rotting on the ground around them.

The wildlife that once was abundant in the area has moved out and the water run off down hill from them has drastically changed. This causes flooding, land erosion and property loss for miles below the viewshed of the turbines.

To further add insult to injury, people should realize that once you produce that 1 percent of energy that the nation uses from wind, there then has to be transmission lines to pipe the electric to where the power companies want it to be purchased. You have further land loss from that, further eyesores, further forest fragmentation and disruption.

I wish it was all being done for something that truly did have the environmentally friendly, economically practical and sustainable results that we as a country should be striving for today.

Wind turbines are not all they are said to be in any of these areas, and a small amount of homework will educate citizens on the truth of them.

For example, a turbine's life expectancy is only 25 years. They cost several million to remove when they expire, but removal is not in the electric companies's contracts.

Yet, 25 years from now, when the iron skeletons of them stand there old and unusable, the forests and land around them will still not have grown back to its previous glory. Quite the opposite, the path must be kept cut, and sprayed with chemicals... which brings in a whole new issue to talk about in woodland forests...

Paula Stahl, Cumberland Times-News, January 30, 2009

Virginia Approves Ridgeline Protection Ordinance

Virginia - In February, the Tazewell [Virginia] County Board of Supervisors approved the motion for a tall structure ordinance. "A large crowd that jammed the administration offices...erupted into applause after the so-called ridgeline protection ordinance was passed."

"The people in my district have spoken very, very clearly," said vice chairman David Anderson. "Ninety percent of the people in my district want to see a ridgeline ordinance."

"The ordinance essentially prohibits the construction of structures more than 40 feet in height along certain protected ridgelines." The deciding vote was cast by Southern

District board member Mike Hymes. "Hymes said too many questions remain unanswered regarding the impact of the turbines on nearby real estate and property values."

"After thorough review, I am convinced that the tall structures could do undue harm to our environment, our economy and our future economic possibilities without an assurance of best value, best use and best outcome," Hymes said.

(Quotes from "No to Windmills: Board Blocks Tazewell Turbine Project",

Charles Owens, Bluefield Daily Telegraph, February 2, 2010)



Skunk

Skunks are about the size of an adult house cat. Males and females look alike, but males are usually larger. The lifespan of a skunk is 2-4 years. Up to 90% of young skunks die in their first winter. Mother skunks give birth to litters of two to ten young each year, usually in May. The babies follow their mothers around for several months, leaving in late July or early August.

Skunks generally spend their daylight hours asleep in underground burrows. These burrows often come from other animals such as ground hogs. Skunks will also live in hollow logs or even abandoned buildings.

Skunks are considered a valuable wildlife resource and beneficial to farmers and gardeners because they consume large numbers of small rodents and insects. They are nocturnal foragers and will eat small rodents, insects, reptiles, amphibians, carrion, grubs, fruits, and vegetables.

When a skunk feels that it is being threatened, it raises its tail and expels a fine spray that can reach up to five metres. Skunks can spray with great accuracy. A skunk's spray is an oily liquid produced by glands under its large tail. The prominent markings and colour of a skunk serve as a warning to potential predators. Young skunks can spray as early as seven weeks of age. Skunks also spray to mark their territory.

Skunk populations fluctuate regularly and while there are striped skunks on mainland Nova Scotia, there are no skunks on Cape Breton Island.

Rush to Wind, Harmful to Eagles

Ontario – The people pushing industrial wind farms won't be too happy once this gets out, but one of their machines killed a bald eagle in Ontario last summer. The official cause of death: "Blunt force trauma," according to Scott Petrie, a PhD waterfowl biologist who says he was "privy to the results" of the autopsy. "They're trying to keep it hush-hush," he says of government biologists.

Petrie says the bird was killed in the Erie Shores Wind Farm, a installation of 66 land-based turbines south of Tillsonburg...he calls the loss of the eagle "very significant. If I was an eagle biologist I'd be screaming from the rooftops." But he does think the casualty should convince the province and its swarm of eager wind farm developers to slow down their mad rush to remake the electrical grid.

He'd like some research done before thousands of wind towers form a barrier of whirling blades across the south end of the province. Without some sober second thought about wind farms, Petrie warns, Ontario might be committing the province's ecosystem to cascading and unpredictable long term changes..."Nobody is talking about the cumulative effects of these things. Nobody is talking about siting them properly. There are some places they should never be built..."

(Excerpt from "Mad Rush to Wind Energy",
Chris Vander Doelen, The Windsor Star, April 15, 2010)

Editor's Note

The above wind facility has been operating only a year. Nine nesting pairs of bald eagles were documented in the area. The loss of one bald eagle from a nesting pair represents the loss of a nesting site as bald eagles mate for life. Killing or harassing a bald eagle is a chargeable offence, yet no charges were laid in this matter and no mitigation measures were put in place to protect the remaining eagles.

The Coast Looks at Wind

Nova Scotia - Bruce Wark, one of the few investigative journalists in Nova Scotia, wrote an editorial in the April 29-May 5, 2010 issue of *The Coast* titled "*A Mighty Wind: The province's tough new renewable energy targets also target the health of rural residents*". A detailed version of this excellent editorial, along with footnotes can be viewed at thecoast.ca.

The following letter appeared in the online comments to Mr. Wark's article:

The Eco Awareness Society is a non-profit organization whose mission is to uphold these principles: that "a subset of society should not be forced to bear the cost of a benefit for the larger society", that a landowner's right to full use and enjoyment of their property be upheld and not taken or hindered for public or private use or development, without just compensation, and that any policy or development with regard to the environment and landscape of Nova Scotia be shown to be effective and based on the principals of environmental sustainability and stewardship of our precious resources.*

*Based on the *Canadian Charter of Rights* and the *Fifth Amendment, U.S. Constitution*

Hello to Nova Scotia

I'm from Germany and my wife and me are going to leave this country, because of that wind madness. We have over 25.000 wind turbines in Germany with an installed capacity of more than 27 GW. That is cir. 30% more than the capacity of our nuclear power plants... The nuclear power plants produce 25% of our needed energy, the wind turbines only 6.6%. And the price for this 6.6%? In 2009 german energy customers had to pay cir. 4 billion Euro (over 5 billion \$) for wind energy, money that is missing in other parts of life. Over 2 million birds are killed every year by wind turbines. People fall ill by wind turbines (Jutta and I have insomnia, tinnitus and Jutta was in hospital, because of heart rhythm disorder; we are living 320 to 600m besides 6 windturbines for the last 15 years).

But back to our emigration plans. Our first thought was Nova Scotia, because weather and landscape is very similar to ours. Than we read about the story of the d'Entremont family from Lower West Pubnico. About wind farms in Pictou County and the plans to destroy Digby Neck.

Could you imagine, what will happen to the migration routes of the birds? We see it every spring and autumn... And don't forget: birds are killed by the blades of the turbines. The same will happen in Nova Scotia.

Another problem is the infrasonic and its disturbance for the whales. Nova Scotia has established a green tourism especially with whalewatching. The soundpollution underwater will scare away the whales and thus the income of many people. Again back to our emigration plans: it seems, Nova Scotia is not the place, we want to spend our old age...

Marco Bernardi, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany

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**Teacher:** George Washington not only chopped down his father's cherry tree, but also admitted it. Now, Louis, do you know why his father didn't punish him?

**Louis:** Because George still had the axe in his hand.

EAS newsletter is published monthly by the Eco Awareness Society and distributed free of charge. All work is done on a volunteer basis. Membership is \$10. yearly. If you would like to become a member or for more information on EAS, please contact any of the following members:

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