APPENDIX E

Media Releases

NEWS

- Home
- Editorial
- Letters to the Editor
- Death Notices
- **Archives**

ADVERTISING

- Rates and Information
- Weekly Classifieds

CONTACT

- Subscribe
- Web Links
- Contact Information

Archives

First Nations take firm stance versus wind farm project at public meeting

by Lindsay Kelly
March 24, 2010

Province rejects hunt camps as dwellings needing turbine setbacks

LITTLE CURRENT-The United Chiefs and Councils of Manitoulin (UCCM) made a clear stand against the Northland Power wind farm at a public meeting on Monday night, declaring their continued opposition to the project until appropriate consultation has been made with Island First Nations.

A legal requirement of the Ontario government, as proclaimed by the Supreme Court of Canada, consultation "has been ignored and continues to be ignored," said Shining Turtle, Whitefish River First Nation chief and UCCM tribal chair, reading from a statement prepared in advance by the UCCM. "As long as the government of Ontario continues to ignore the First Nations, the chiefs will remain opposed to the project."

Repeated requests for discussions with the First Nations have gone unheeded, the UCCM contends, yet the chiefs remain willing to co-operate on the many outstanding issues on Manitoulin, Chief Shining Turtle said. In the meantime, the chiefs "now have no option but to oppose development on Manitoulin Island."

Northland Power president John Brace responded by indicating that the company welcomes the opportunity to sit down to negotiations with the First Nations.

"It was clear to me from what you said that there are issues that are primarily focussed on the Ontario government," he said. "We sincerely want to take you up on your statement of sitting down and talking and going through the appropriate processes of working with the First Nations associated with the project, just as we want to sit down and work with the non-First Nations people on this project."

The issue, say the chiefs, could be solved easily by simply sitting

Keyword Search ...

MONTHLY ARCHIVES

- April, 2010
- March, 2010
- February, 2010
- January, 2010
- December, 2009

down with the province to undergo negotiations, and the UCCM has established a Consultation and Accommodation Framework table, which outlines how resolution can be achieved. "It's a very simple process," said Chief Shining Turtle, noting that even though Wikwemikong was not present at the meeting, that First Nation remains in support of its fellow reserves.

Through this process, the chief is optimistic that issues such as the long- and short-term impacts of the turbine project, as well as the health impacts, could be addressed, if only the province would sit down to discuss them. The chiefs "again invite interested parties and representatives to come to the table and settle all concerns and grievances," the UCCM statement concluded.

Northland Power project manager Rick Martin said the company recognizes the frustrations the UCCM feels regarding the need for consultation but suggested that the duty to consult has been placed on the company, and it is eager to engage the First Nations affected by the project.

"We're trying hard to establish meaningful consultation with the First Nations," he emphasized. "There are some items with that process that are certainly difficult to address, as the First Nations feel there's a duty to consult with the Crown. We recognize that and respect their feelings about that; at the same time, the duty to consult has been assigned to us and it's something we have an obligation to attempt to address."

But the Northland project continues to irk more than just Island First Nations. Ray Beaudry, who is a founding member of the Manitoulin Coalition for Safe Energy Alternatives (MCSEA), was angry that a recent decision about the definition of a receptor-which his group had argued should include hunt camps-has been altered in favour of the wind industry.

Late last year, residents opposed to the project began taking out building permits in an effort to stall or shut down the project, which would span a wide swath of land outside Little Current, encompassing McLean's Mountain and the bluff above Honora Bay. If a dwelling was going to be built on a piece of land, the theory went, Northland would have to maintain the required 550-metre setbacks and the project would have to be altered.

But this newest definition, released by to Northland via letter from Doris Dumais, director of the Ministry of the Environment's (MOE) approvals branch last Friday, removes any possibility that the permits will affect the project's outcome.

"It does not seem likely that these buildings will be used for overnight accommodation and thus will not be considered noise receptors," writes Ms. Dumais, who goes on to say that the MOE expects public consultation to take place regarding this issue.

In a follow-up letter issued on Monday, Ms. Dumais further

elaborates, noting that the initial definition for a noise receptor was not intended to apply to hunt camps, or other buildings used temporarily.

"The main purpose of establishing the setback prohibitions in sections 54 and 55 or O.Reg 359/09 was in consideration of long-term exposure to noise," she writes. "Given the temporary use of hunt camps, there is limited potential for long-term exposure to noise from wind turbines or transformers."

It is also noted that for vacant land, the setback point begins at the centre of the land.

But Mr. Beaudry argues that the MOE changed these regulations after the public complained about the setback distances, and that with "every item we identified, the minister of the environment, with Northland Power, changed the rules to suit the wind company."

"It's very upsetting," he said, "especially for people with hunt camps."

Mr. Martin acknowledged the earlier tactic by residents to take out building permits as a way to "close the project down, or set it back," but he said he personally asked for clarification on the definition of a receptor due to inconsistency about it in the past.

"There's been some variation on how it's been described in the past," he said. "It's been a dwelling, it's been a residence, it's been a variety of different things and the last description was an overnight residence, and so the question became do seasonal camps and hunt camps be considered residences?"

Clarification was required for determining turbine layout, he said, and more consultation will be done before any final decisions are made.

"We have to talk to owners of camps and get historical usage-that will be part of our renewable energy approvals process-but there seems to be some clarification on what a receptor really is," he added.

Calling it "administrative and procedural unfairness," Mr. Beaudry said the landowners will now review the criteria brought forward by the ministry and ensure their hunt camps and seasonal dwellings fit the description.

He also maintains that the ministry does not indicate what will happen for people who want to build on their land in the future. Landowners along Perch Lake sideroad are uncertain whether they will be issued a building permit, and guaranteed safety, if they want to build after the turbines go up.

"That responsibility is going to fall on the municipality, whether they issue you a building permit or not, but Northland Power is saying it's okay to build there," he said. "It's not their call; it's

going to be the municipality."

The entire process is sketchy, according to Al Ryan, who views the varying reports from Northland over the life of the project as suspicious.

"Since June I've been able to download four different maps showing the locations of the turbines on McLean's Mountain, and tonight there's a fifth map on the table that has a brand-new turbine on it," he said. "So the consistency of these locations keeps altering all the time, and from application to application. I would be wary no matter where you are on McLean's Mountain where a turbine might actually be located when it's finally finalized."

Mr. Martin contends, however, that "we're actually down a turbine or two," and emphasizes that "turbines have been moved from various areas to both meet the REA (Renewable Energy Act) requirements and the noise setbacks, as per the REA requirements, and we've been listening to the comments that people have been making and the concerns."

Mr. Beaudry vows that MCSEA and fellow concerned landowners will not end their lobby here. They plan to follow up to make sure the issue of building on vacant land is recognized by the MOE, as well as ensure that current hunt camp owners aren't left in the cold.

Overall, he was disappointed with the procedural hurdles he says the group has had to face time and again just to be dealt with fairly and appropriately.

"We identified the issues, and we had to go through the process, but it's hard to get answers," he lamented. "We can't seem to get answers; the wind company gets the answers before the public does, so how can we respond to it? The legislation and the commissions will be given before we have a chance to do something about it to protect our land."

Though the detractors may have been more vocal Monday night, the project still maintains a steady level of supporters as well. Landowner Brad Wilkin, who has between four and five wind turbines proposed for his land, believes this is an excellent way in which to boost the economies of Little Current and the Island as a whole.

"They want economic development and here it's going to be over a million dollars pumped into the economy," he reasoned. "So you put in a multiplier effect of even four-that's $4 million."

For an economically depressed area like Manitoulin, the influx of tax dollars, the promise of jobs and the potential boost to tourism all point to the project as being a success. He suggests that the negative aspects alleged about wind turbine projects have been grossly exaggerated, and that a more balanced approach is

required for the project.

"One of the things, always, is you've got to be a little optimistic," he argued. "When you go around and check on the Internet and pick out all the bad stuff and throw out all the good stuff, you get a very jaundiced view of it; there are both sides to the story."

The very day of the meeting, Mr. Wilkin said a Northland representative on his land measured the wind at 47 decibels without, to his mind, a negative audible effect. The government-regulated noise level is acceptable at a level of 40 decibels, so "if the wind is blowing at 47, how are you going to hear it at 40?" he reasoned.

The information presented at Monday's meeting and the discussions surrounding it simply reinforced his belief that the wind project will be a benefit to the community, and he points to the in-depth research done by Northland, as well as first-hand field trips to wind farms in the US, PEI and southern Ontario, where farmers who had turbines on their properties "will tell you it's the best thing they've ever had."

"People say they're going to scare away tourists," he said, "but when we went to PEI to check the wind farm there, lo and behold, they told us that they had to build a restaurant there because so many people were coming to see it."

He hopes that a similar scenario will play out on Manitoulin, along with the needed jobs that the project would provide.

"Everybody has to leave the Island for jobs and then they come back and retire," he said. "It would be nice to keep some of our young people right here."

Following the consultation on Monday, the company will gather the comments received and do a final tweaking of its plan before submitting it to the province for approval in April. From there, Mr. Martin noted, Northland will provide any clarification requested by the MOE and await a feed-in-tariff contract from the Ontario Power Authority before moving forward.

While he was pleased with the turnout for the meeting, and optimistic for future positive dialogue with First Nations, the community, and landowners, he is encouraging further discussions and said he is open to meeting and talking with anyone at any time.

He's confident that, if the naysayers are given time, they will see the project as less intrusive than they initially believed it to be, and said he earnestly looks forward to maintaining a positive, beneficial relationship with community.

"In time, I would hope that the community and the company work together and realize the economic benefits for the community, for the farmers, the new jobs being developed in the

area, and when it's all said and done that everybody appreciates the efforts we did despite the negativity that was in the community."

Next >

Letters February 17, 2010

Collective voice will ensure ministry hears opposition to wind farm
Attendance is urged at upcoming Northland Power information meeting

To the Expositor:
Wind turbine noise, including low-frequency noise, may cause annoyance, stress and sleep disturbance. This is acknowledged by a report sponsored by the American Wind Energy Association and Canadian Wind Energy Association and representatives of the government of Ontario.

The word "annoyance" may mean many things to many people. In medical terms annoyance is considered a risk to human health.

Health Canada states, "The most common effect of community noise is annoyance, which is considered an adverse health effect by the World Health Organization."

The World Health Organization states specifically about noise-induced annoyance: "Sleep disturbance and annoyance are the first effects of night noise and can lead to mental disorders. The effects of noise can even trigger premature illness and death."

Sleep disturbance is known to lead to serious medical conditions. According to the World Health Organization symptoms of sleep disturbance may include: poor performance at work; fatigue; memory difficulties; concentration problems; motor vehicle accidents; mood disorders (depression, anxiety); alcohol and other substance abuse; cardiovascular disease; respiratory disease; renal, gastrointestinal, and musculoskeletal disorders; obesity; impaired immune system function; and a reported increased risk of mortality.

Experts say that "impairments of early childhood development and education caused by environmental pollutants such as noise may have lifelong effects on academic achievement and health....The scientific community agrees that there is sufficient and consistent research evidence to show that chronic exposure to environmental noise leads to impaired cognitive function and health in children" (World Health Organization, 2005).

Researchers have documented that sleep disturbance tends to be the number one health complaint from victims of wind turbines (Harry, 2007; Pierpont, 2009; Nissenbaum, 2009).

Sleep expert Dr. Chris Hanning states, "In my expert opinion, from my knowledge of sleep physiology and a review of the available research, I have no doubt that wind turbine noise emissions cause sleep disturbance and ill health" (Hanning, 2009).

In Ontario an increasing number of victims are reporting adverse health effects from exposure to industrial wind projects. Many families have abandoned their homes to restore or protect their health. This cannot be denied.

While industry representatives may claim Ontario has "strict requirements," this information does not seem to be supported by recent observations. The Ontario Ministry of Environment (MOE) states in a letter: "There is currently no scientifically accepted field methodology to measure wind turbine noise to determine compliance or non compliance with a certificate of approval limits."

In addition, conservative computer modelling techniques are used in project planning, with the stated intention of keeping audible sound below 40 dBA. However, actual levels in Ontario are allowed to exceed 50 dBA (a difference of 10 dBA is a tenfold increase in acoustic energy). Because the noise is low frequency and in some cases pulsing, it may in fact be more noticeable indoors.

These facts raise concerns about sound levels near family homes and the MOE's ability to measure and enforce its guidelines relating to wind projects. Despite acknowledgment of deficiencies in the ability to measure audible and low-frequency noise,

existing wind developments continue to operate, projects continue to be built, and approvals for future projects continue to be granted.

The Maine Medical Association calls for regulatory changes for the wind energy industry in order to protect human health by avoiding, among other things, "unreasonable noise and shadow flicker effects."

Preliminary findings of a controlled study (Mars Hill, Maine) by a respected colleague of mine, Dr. Michael Nissenbaum, on potential health effects concludes that adults living within 1,100 metres of industrial wind turbines suffer high incidences of chronic sleep disturbances and headaches, among other somatic complaints, and high incidences of new onset mood disorders compared to a control group living 5,000-6,000 metres away.

Many jurisdictions around the world are beginning to realize that, for the wind energy industry to be a successful contributor to the green energy mix, projects will have to be built in such a way that the health of local rural-dwelling families is protected. In our province alone, 49 municipalities have now called for a moratorium until safe guidelines can be established. Fortunately in Ontario and elsewhere in North America there is room for both people and their energy transforming equipment to coexist! Here is an example of legislation currently being proposed for Vermont (and likely to be proposed for Maine). Imagine if we could convince the government to adopt these protective statutes here!

1. One and one-quarter miles from an occupied building, if the elevation change between the wind turbine and the occupied building is equal to or less than 500 feet.
2. Two miles from an occupied building, if the elevation change between the wind turbine and the occupied building exceeds 500 feet.
3. One-half mile from the closest boundary of the parcel on which the wind turbine will be located.
4. One-third of a mile from any public highway or right-of-way and from any above-ground utility line or facility. However, this subdivision shall not apply to an electric line that directly connects a wind turbine to a substation or other utility facility.
5. No plant shall be located so as to generate post-construction sound levels that exceed preconstruction background sound levels by more then 5 dBA.
6. Low frequency sound limit. The LCeq and LC90 sound levels from a wind turbine at the receiving property shall not exceed the lower of either: an LCeq-LA90 greater than 20 dB outside any occupied building; or a sound level of 50 dBC (LC90) from a wind turbine, without other ambient sounds, for a parcel the closest boundary of which is located one mile or more from a state highway or Class 1 or 2 town highway, or of 55 dBC (LC90) for a parcel with a boundary closer than one mile to such a highway.
7. General sound limit. Sound from a plant subject to this section shall not exceed 35 dBA within 30 metres of any occupied building.

The New York Times reports, "The available riches and patchy controls in the wind industry are luring a rogues' gallery of corrupt politicians and entrepreneurs trying to literally create money from thin air." Many concerned citizens in this municipality have expressed their concerns about the effects of the McLean's Mountain power project and have been disappointed with the answers they have received from our elected officials and from the industry. It is imperative that we all take the time to attend the upcoming meeting and resubmit our concerns to Northland Power before the March 21 deadline. It is only in this way that the ministry will continue to recognize the considerable opposition to this project. We should all lobby the government to ensure that independent third-party health studies are completed before the approval of any more industrial wind turbine projects. Further information is available on our local website MCSEA.ca and on the medical information website windvigilance.com.

Roy Jeffery, MD
McLean's Mountain

Paved cycling lanes would promote tourism, reduce carbon emissions
European countries offer a model for bike-friendly infrastructure

To the Expositor:
I would like to add a few points to the discussion about a bicycle lane for Highway 6 south of Little Current. Since building a cottage on the Island nearly 40 years ago, I have enjoyed several cycle rides with family and friends, some of whom belong to the Touring Section of Sudbury Cycle Club. For most of these we chose the less busy roads of the interior of Manitoulin, but after becoming a permanent resident 10 years ago, I have used Highway 6 more often. Fortunately it is rare to encounter an impatient driver who resents having to avoid a cyclist, and most are courteous and considerate. However, it would only take one lacking these qualities to end my cycling days.

Obviously a double stream of traffic travelling at highway speeds produces a situation where drivers have less room to negotiate and usually makes it wise for the cyclist to move over to the rough ground of the shoulder. Likewise, if a peek in one's rear-view mirror shows that an overtaking vehicle is too close, moving to the shoulder is the lesser of two evils. However, this is not a comfortable place to ride. Shoulders slope at variable angles, are often rutted, and contain broken glass, leading to punctures.

This experience contrasts with the situation in some countries in Europe where separate lanes are frequently provided both in the town and in the country. This is particularly true of Holland and makes cycling there sheer bliss, not to mention an inexpensive way of getting about. In common with many Canadians I have also enjoyed similar cycling holidays in Belgium, France and Germany over the past 20 years.

If it is really desirable to promote tourism on Manitoulin, combined with better physical fitness and without adding to carbon emissions, what better way could there be than providing a paved bicycle lane which would be safer and more convenient for all?
Jim Strong
White's Point

Residents shouldn't have to pay twice for Mindemoya water service
Handling of drain issue will influence vote in upcoming election

To the Expositor:
The taxpayers of Anglin Survey in Mindemoya have just paid off their debenture for our sewers, water, and drainage, which is working just fine, so, as the saying goes, "if it's working, don't fix it."

Now Mindemoya's administration has the nerve to want us to pay for the Yonge Street development and other private enterprises involving sewer, water, and drainage problems. We paid for our sewer, water, and drainage, so it's only fair that those who need it or want it pay for it.

In my opinion, it's a waste of time attending public meetings. Most of the time the powers that be have already decided the outcome and it never seems to go in the public's favour-it's just following a legal procedure.

Those who instigated the complaints regarding drainage, etc. should pay for the study as well as the actual work.

Elections are coming up and I will not be voting for anyone on this current council.
Willard Taylor
Mindemoya

< Previous Next >

Neighbours of turbine sites await ruling on defintion of dwellings requiring setbacks

Lindsay Kelly
February 03, 2010

MANITOULIN-Opponents of the Northland Power wind farm proposed for McLean's Mountain could lose their last chance at blocking the project when the ministry of the environment introduces new guidelines for designating receptors.

Receptors are the structures by which developers measure the setbacks from turbines; these generally mean houses and, in some cases, hunt camps. In an effort to thwart, or at least delay, the Northland project, landowners in the area have been securing building permits through the town at a cost of $600 each. The theory is that more receptors would require more setbacks, causing Northland to rethink its layout or junk the plan altogether. Now, the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) is tweaking the definition of a receptor, which may not include some hunt camps, and could make it easier for companies like Northland to move their plans forward.

"I contacted the MOE and they informed me that there is a draft definitions page added to the 2008 noise guidelines for wind farms document," explained Ray Beaudry, an opponent of the plan and a founding member of Manitoulin Coalition for Safe Energy Alternatives (MCSEA).

While the MOE did not explicitly suggest that these changes were being made as a response to benefit the Northland project, Mr. Beaudry noted that the landowners on Manitoulin are the only people he knows of in the province to take out building permits for this purpose. He estimates the placement of between eight and 10 turbines could be affected by these building permits.

In addition, supplemental information as part of the renewable energy approval (REA) draft document, which is posted on Northland's website, indicates that "the company will be obligated to maintain a minimum 550-metre setback from all sensitive noise receptors and meet required noise levels at these locations. The need to consider hunt camps as noise-sensitive receptors is being discussed with the MOE."

Contact with the MOE's approvals branch for clarification could not be made by press time.

As part of this process, the MOE must post the new receptor definitions page on the environmental bill of rights (EBR) registry. At that point, the public will have 30 days to comment before the MOE drafts a final document. As of Monday, the draft had yet to be posted.

This most recent turn of events is frustrating to the landowners who believe more tests should be done about the health effects of wind turbines before projects like Northland's go ahead.

"It seems like everything favours the wind industry and if [the wind industry] requests that a hunt camp isn't a receptor, that seems to be the way the ministry makes their decisions," Mr. Beaudry lamented.

However, the landowner suggested that residents could still make their hunt camps fit the definition of a receptor, pointing out that they won't know what that is until the ministry posts the draft online.

But when it is made public, the definitions document could have huge implications for landowners.

"If people can't afford to make that change then they could be out the $600 they spent," Mr. Beaudry said. "Or-I'm not sure what stage they're at-but if the building that they started doesn't fit the designation, then their building would be within the 550-metre limit of the turbine."

Mr. Beaudry said that many people still are unaware that their existing hunt camps might not qualify under these new guidelines, but he vows that MCSEA will "do our best to inform the people."

Northland Power released its REA earlier this month and is planning to hold a final public information session in the spring. Their wind farm calls for 43 turbines generating 77 megawatts of power under a 20-year power-purchase agreement through the Ontario Power Authority's Feed In Tariff (FIT) program.

The estimated startup of operations is as early as January 2011.

< Previous **Next >**

Northland Power's final report ready for scrutiny

The Expositor
January 27, 2010

Wind farm developer's last hurdle to satisfy provincial demands

LITTLE CURRENT-Northland Power has published a new report on its wind project, as required through the province's Renewable Energy Approval (REA) process, that expands upon the earlier Environmental Screening Report (ESR) filed this summer.

The draft REA package, available in PDF format through the Northland website (www.northlandpower.ca) or as a printed version at the Northeast Town office and library, was issued on January 18, with a 60-day review period to follow.

"It's a public document," said Rick Martin, project manager for the proposed McLean's Mountain Wind Farm. "Part of it is a concordance that refers back to the ESR, because that information is still accurate and relevant, but there is a different order required by the REA and several extra documents."

Among the new supplementary material is a construction schedule, a plan detailing how the road-building and turbine-installation phases will be carried out in an environmentally responsible manner, and a decommissioning plan.

As well, the report includes a table citing comments that were submitted to Northland following the public meeting this summer, along with the company's responses to these complaints and inquiries.

A detailed map is further provided in the report, depicting "all applicable REA setbacks that have been met for the draft wind-farm layout," according a letter from Mr. Martin that accompanies the submission. "The setbacks include the distances from proposed wind turbines to the important features within the project area boundary, such as residences and natural features."

Once the REA consultation process is complete, a comprehensive report on this dialogue will be completed, Northland indicates. "The consultation report will include a summary of communication and consultation activities conducted with the public, government agencies and Aboriginal communities, and will include responses to comments received," writes Mr. Martin.

Presuming there is no hiccup and the province grants a leave to construct, Northland envisions the project beginning before the snow flies this year. Construction of access roads and turbine foundations would take place in the fall of 2010, with electrical interconnection and commissioning to follow in the spring of 2011.

The company plans to install 43 turbines generating a combined 77 megawatts of electricity. This would be supplied to the grid via a 115-kilovolt transmission line crossing overland for 10 kilometres, and a submarine cable running under the channel to connect with the Hydro One station at Goat Island.

Comments on the report are welcomed until March 18. They should be submitted in writing to McLean's Mountain Wind Farm Project, Box 73, Little Current, Ont., P0P 1K0, or by email to **rickmartin@northlandpower.ca.**

< Previous **Next >**

AOK First Nation opposes wind farm on health grounds

Jim Moodie
January 20, 2010

Demands 2-2.5 km setback of turbines from reserve boundary

AUNDECK OMNI KANING-As Northland Power, with input from the Northeast Town, finalizes its plan for a 43-turbine wind farm at McLean's Mountain, nearby Aundeck Omni Kaning (AOK) has made it known through a recent band council resolution (BCR) that the First Nation is firmly against the project.

A copy of the BCR, approved by AOK council on January 12, was distributed late last week to the mayor and council of Northeastern Manitoulin and the Islands, along with a cover letter from AOK Chief Craig Abotossaway.

The leadership of AOK "feels that such a project is not supported by the appropriate information, such as health studies (and) setbacks, to base a sound decision with respect to the overall project," writes Chief Abotossaway. "Therefore, the council of Aundeck Omni Kaning is vehemently opposed to any such project development."

The resolution states that AOK "categorically opposes Northland Power's wind-farm project proposal until such time as all encroachments of noise, low-frequency noise, health effects issues, and environmental concerns that will affect the health of our membership is (sic) addressed and to our satisfaction."

That position is "regrettable," according to Northland representative Rick Martin, particularly since, in his view, his company has not only gone to great lengths to meet all of the provincial requirements regarding health and environmental concerns, but has made a concerted effort to engage AOK, and other First Nations, in the planning process.

"We've repeatedly asked First Nations to meet with us and communicate their concerns," he said. "We've sent letters, as required by the Renewable Energy Act process, and invited them to meet with us, but we've received no response."

The business development manager believes this cold shoulder owes to one instance last year when Northland was unable to produce some documents that were requested by the United Chiefs and Councils of Manitoulin (UCCM). He said it was simply a case of not having the material ready at the time, but it was perceived as a snub-something Northland's president, John Brace, tried to clear up through a letter of apology.

That olive branch evidently had little impact, as communication between the UCCM communities and Northland has not resumed since, but Mr. Martin maintained it's not for lack of trying on the power company's part. "I find it extremely important to get input from First Nation neighbours," he said. "Nobody knows the lay of the land better than they do. And my great-grandmother is Cree, so I'm not anti-First Nation by any means."

In the AOK resolution, the First Nation's chief and council cite a number of reasons for opposing the project, including the community's responsibility "as stewards of the land, valuing the natural environment and all living things."

In particular, the First Nation feels "the setbacks identified in the project (don't) meet the health and safety of the natural environment and lands surrounding our territories." And "as such, we demand studies be conducted and implemented to assess the effects and uncertainties before industrial wind turbines are constructed next to the Aundeck Omni Kaning territories."

More specifically still, AOK is asserting that buffers of 2-2.5 kilometres-as it argues is common in "various European countries around the world"-must be maintained between any turbine and the boundary of the First Nation.

That's about four times the distance that Northland is presently required keep its towers from dwellings, let alone the border of a neighbouring reserve. According to the terms of the Green Energy Act, turbines must be 550 metres from any home.

Mr. Martin said AOK's expectation regarding setbacks is new to him. "I've never seen this, and in all the discussions we've had

with the Ministry of the Environment, it's never been raised."

If such a demand has merit due to a treaty stipulation or any other agreement worked out between First Nations and the federal government, he said he's prepared to entertain the request, but he needs more information. "If it's accurate, I need to know," he said.

If it's just a preference, based on perceived threats from audible and sub-audible turbine noise, Mr. Martin is confident that the First Nation community needn't require a bigger buffer from the turbines than has been mapped out for any other part of the project area.

He points to a study that was recently completed by an expert panel for both the Canadian and American Wind Energy Associations (CanWEA and AWEA) concerning the noise emitted by wind turbines and its alleged health impacts.

The report, issued in December, found that "there is no evidence that the audible or sub-audible sounds emitted by wind turbines have any direct adverse physiological effects," according to the executive summary of the study.

Additionally, the report concluded that "ground-borne vibrations from wind turbines are too weak to be detected by, or to affect, humans," and that "there is no reason to believe, based on the levels and frequencies of the sounds and the panel's experience with sound exposures in occupational settings, that the sounds from wind turbines could plausibly have direct adverse health consequences."

Mr. Martin concedes that the study was funded by the wind-power industry, but insists that is no reason to disregard it, as the report's authors are all experts in the field (they include a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada in medical microbiology, and a professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Western Washington University, among other scientists versed in acoustics, audiology, and health), and their findings were delivered in an impartial manner.

As far as the Northeast Town is concerned, the wind farm remains a welcome development, as long as a few issues regarding use of municipal roads, and some other lingering questions regarding the project's impact on local infrastructure and services, are ironed out, according to Mayor Jim Stringer.

"Discussions are ongoing, and we have to finalize an agreement on roads use," he said. "We're looking at the nuts and bolts of how road allowances will be used, for both a transmission line and access to turbines."

The municipality has worked on agreements of this nature before, he said, albeit on a much smaller scale. "This is more complicated," admitted the mayor.

Still, he's optimistic that a satisfactory arrangement can be worked out. Northland was committed to providing information this week that would assist the town in hammering out a mutually acceptable deal.

"It's pretty specific what we're asking for," he said. "It's primarily to do with roads and other services." Part of the proposed route for the Northland transmission line would follow Gammie Street and Harbour View Road in Little Current, he noted, and it's essential for the town that this part of the development won't put undue pressure on municipal resources or impact the existing sewer and water lines in the area.

Presuming these details can be sorted out, without the municipality being on the hook for a major expense or headache, Mr. Stringer feels the development can only be a positive one for the area.

In terms of tax revenue, "the estimate is $90,000 to $100,000 annually," he said. That figure is based on "a value that the province comes up with, times the amount of energy each turbine generates." And while this ratio could change down the road, subject to a variety of factors, Mr. Stringer said "there's no indication that it would decrease. We assume it would remain at that number for 20 years."

That injection of revenue would represent a 3-percent increase to the town's tax base, said the mayor, adding that, if it was available this year, it would have nullified the increase in taxes that will collectively be borne by ratepayers (whose payments are poised to go up 3 percent, due to reassessment, even though the town isn't hiking the rates).

As for AOK's opposition to the development, Mayor Stringer said he and the other members of his council have received copies of the resolution, and will take it under advisement, but believes there is no compulsion to respond at the council level, unless a member of council makes it an issue demanding attention.

"As far as I understand, this is presented as information," he said. "It's possible some of the councillors supportive of the MCSEA (Manitoulin Coalition for Safe Energy Alternatives) position could choose to put a motion of support on the table, but last time this group approached council, they were not supported, so I'd be surprised if that would happen now."

The AOK position could, however, end up protracting the process for Northland to gain a final leave to construct from the province, as adequate consultation with First Nations, and the resolution of concerns in this regard, is one of the criteria for approval.

< Previous **Next >**

Northeast council demands more detail from Northland

Lindsay Kelly
January 13, 2010

NORTHEAST TOWN-Too much information is missing from a status report on the McLean's Mountain wind farm for councillors to provide a proper review, says a preliminary report presented by staff at a recent council meeting.

The review is a requirement for any wind project developer under the Green Energy Act; the proponent must provide the town with a municipal consultation form at least 90 days before the public meeting. A package including a map outlining the scope of the project and project activities was submitted to the town on December 16; however, in a municipal response drafted a week later, the town indicates that important information is missing from the package.

"At this time the municipality has only been provided with the draft project description report," it reads. "We have not received the design and operation report, the construction plan report, or the decommissioning plan report, so we cannot provide the municipality's comments on those areas. The process of municipal consultation cannot be completed until those reports are received and can be reviewed for comment."

The three-and-a-half-page document lists several concerns, such as the placement of towers near water and sewer lines, the lack of an agreement for road use with Northland, and a concern that the turbines' construction and operation will not interfere with the town's emergency radio communications infrastructure.

In addition, the document cites the town's concerns surrounding marine tourism and ongoing negotiations with First Nations. "The installation of submarine lines or towers will require two crossings of the municipal shoreline road allowance, which is still subject to land claims by First Nations," the documents reads. "The channel is also used heavily by boat traffic, including cruise ships, which is critical to the municipality's tourism sector, so it is essential that the 'crossing' be designed to be as unobtrusive as possible and not interfere with boat traffic."

There were a number of complaints surrounding municipal roads, including providing proper drainage, getting permission from property owners for any road expansion required, and details about insurance, engineering and a traffic management plan. Perhaps most significant is the fact that "there is no agreement in place with the proponent permitting the use of municipal roads."

The town also believes Northland must consult with other businesses and organizations, such as Hydro One and the CBC, which have infrastructure in the area, and that all construction must adhere to the town's building codes.

At the time of its writing, the document was in draft form, and councillors were being given time to study the reply to Northland before bringing it back for discussion at the next committee meeting on January 21.

In its initial request, Northland Power had asked that Northeast Town council waive the 90-day consultation period "in light of the positive discussions between Northland Power Inc. and NEMI regarding the proposed project," but later rescinded that request and replaced it with the current one that outlines the review process.

An outstanding question remains to be answered: when does the 90-day review period start? But staff committed to confirming that point before council reconvened, and also suggested that the municipal solicitor would be consulted to provide advice. Preliminary response from council expressed doubt about the feasibility of the project at this time.

"There's so many things in this document we've been given, I can't even see how this thing will even go forward," commented Councillor Bill Koehler. "There's lots of things that have to complied with."

Councillor Melissa Peters noted the absence of a number of supporting documents that were to be included in the package and agreed that the council could not move forward until they were provided. "Are they not part of what we have to comment on?" she queried.

CAO Dave Williamson indicated that additional requests would be made to Northland Power to acquire the missing information for review prior to the next meeting.

< Previous **Next >**

Rick Martin
PROJECT MANAGER

MANITOULIN WIND NEWS
COLUMN ARCHIVES

In December 2010, a regular column started to appear in the Expositor, written and paid for by the McLean's Mountain Wind Farm project to be sure residents had access to facts, references and expert sources, verified by an existing project team. We have had many positive comments about the quality and readability of the information. If you have missed any of these columns or would like copies of past columns, an archive has been prepared. We can email them to you or you can come to the project office and pick up copies for yourself. Feel free to make suggestions for further topic areas. Let's keep communications open.

December 15, 2010
WIND ENERGY IS CLEAN ENERGY
Why wind energy is coming to Manitoulin Island.

December 22, 2010
TURBINES ON MANITOULIN LANDSCAPE
Why and how wind turbines will bring green energy to Ontario and to Manitoulin Island.

January 12, 2011
WIND SOUNDS
Facts about wind turbine sounds.

January 19, 2011
WIND & WILDLIFE
Proactive approach to wind and wildlife impact on Manitoulin Island.

January 26, 2011
PROPONENT RESPONSIBILITIES
Three levels of government requirements and monitoring.

February 2, 2011
IMPACT ON ADJACENT LANDS
Green Energy Act guidelines, setbacks and MPAC studies.

February 9, 2011
TURBINE LOCATIONS
Turbine location process and use of Wind Rose.

February 16, 2011
THE RENEWABLE ENERGY ACT
Renewable Energy Approvals process and requirements charted.

February 23, 2011
FIRST NATIONS PARTNERSHIP
50-50 Partnership with Mnidoo Mnising Power, McLean's Mountain Wind Farm and other energy ventures explained.

March 2, 2011
WE'VE HEARD YOU: NEW LOOK
Impact of community input on five turbine removals.

March 9, 2011
LOCAL IMPACT DURING CONSTRUCTION
Survey team begins road routes for construction using GPS and LiDAR.

March 16, 2011
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
Positive role of engaged farmers and landowners.

March 23, 2011
TRUE COST OF RENEWABLE ENERGY
Addressing myths related to expense of renewables.

March 30, 2011
ECONOMICS OF WIND
Wind energy proving competitive when factoring in benefits and long-term needs.

April 6, 2011
CHANGING WIND TECHNOLOGY
History of wind energy and technological advances in blades and towers.

April 13, 2011
WIND FARM PROJECT UP DATE
Status report on development plans.

April 20, 2011
ROLE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS
Influence you can bring to a project.

April 27, 2011
EFFECT OF TALLER TURBINES
Reducing number of turbines and wind sound.

May 3, 2011
AGRICULTURAL LAND & TURBINES
Wind is compatible with agricultural land use.

McLean's Mountain Wind Farm
PROJECT OFFICE
13 Worthington Street
Little Current
Call us at 705-368-0303

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"Published Weekly On the Largest Freshwater Island In The World"
Wednesday, December 15, 2010

MANITOULIN WIND NEWS

WIND ENERGY IS CLEAN AND RELIABLE

By Rick Martin, Senior Manager, Business Development,
Wind Energy and Project Manager,
McLean's Mountain Wind Farm for Northland Power Inc.

What do you know about wind energy? What do you know about wind projects under development here on Manitoulin? What's been the source of that information? For many, we turn to the local paper for our news. This new weekly column is being written and paid for by the McLean's Mountain Wind Farm project to be sure you have a source of facts, references and information that can be verified by an existing project team.

There have been many public meetings over the past few years about the project, but not everyone can make the time to come out to such sessions. We want to bring the facts and project milestones directly to your attention through this column.

Wind power is not new. However, it is new to Ontario and relatively new to North America. Wind power is clean power. Wind is one of the most reliable sources of renewable energy. Wind is part of the global movement to reduce reliance on carbon-based sources of energy and to help us harness the forces of nature on our planet to deliver the power we need for our current and future energy needs. Wind, like solar, has become a critical component to any nation's move to more sustainable energy plans.

In 2003, Ontario had 19 coal units and just 10 wind turbines; today, the province has over 700 wind turbines and has shut down four coal units, without disruption to the power grid. At the current rate of wind installation, the province plans to close two additional coal units in 2011. By 2014, all Ontario coal units are scheduled to be shut down. That's a big change. The speed of the change has concerned many. In need not; it is being well-monitored by regulatory bodies. Most European countries have been using wind power for centuries. It's an accepted part of their energy infrastructure.

It is important for the people of Manitoulin to know that wind energy is very reliable when turbines are strategically positioned, as they are on the McLean's Mountain project. Manitoulin is blessed with unique geography. We are on the windward side of the North Channel, at one of the narrowest spots, creating a natural advantage that makes the wind resource more consistent and ideal for responsible harvesting to the benefit of the power system.

Over the last 10 years, data collection on the McLean's Mountain site has verified a consistent, unique wind resource while also serving to identify ideal turbine sites to maximize wind capture and minimize environmental impact. Responsible has been the defining word in guiding the project's development.

Attention has also been paid to aesthetics and to landowner concerns with the McLean's Mountain Wind Farm meeting or sometimes exceeding provincial requirements and turbine setbacks well beyond the 550 metre minimum. There are simulations available that can show you exactly what the turbines will look like once erected and what you will or will not see from key vantage points. Many opportunities for community and First Nations input have been an on-going part of Northland's obligation to meet government requirements.

The NEMI Council has been well informed and supports the wind farm development. Making Manitoulin a producer of clean, reliable energy will result in economic investment in the community leading to prosperity, job creation and energy security. Wind power is about stepping forward into a more sustainable model of energy delivery and in stepping up to protect our environment. That fits with, not contradicts, NEMI economic development plans.

NEXT WEEK: TURBINES ON MANITOULIN LANDSCAPE

NORTHLAND POWER

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Wednesday, December 22, 2010

Letter to the Editor

As a participating landowner in the McLean's Wind Power Project, this last 1 ½ years has certainly been interesting. Electricity is a commodity we all take for granted. The second it goes out – 'Oh no, what happened?' How long before it comes back on is the normal response. Since electricity has come to the Island it has been supplied by coal, water and nuclear energy. Every one of these has their very own issues. The price of energy is going up all of the time. If you add up the costs of the various charges on your bill, you will quickly see the actual true cost of power is between 17 and 18 cents. This is the actual cost of energy in most areas in Canada and U.S. when all hidden costs are actually revealed.

We have an opportunity here to generate our own power on the Island with a completely renewable resource – wind. This generation has been occurring world-wide for more than 40 years now. There is a substantial benefit to the whole community through leases with landowners, additional taxes and very good paying jobs in construction and the actual operation of the power project.

I have had many consultations with landowners and residents in other wind farm locations before and after my involvement with Northland. The one common viewpoint is that wind generation certainly provides the opportunity for hidden agendas. Whether it is those looking to make a name for themselves in political circles, making a career out of litigation or even just making a very good income from speaking engagements – many have latched on. The opportunity also exists for those who wish to get back at regulators for perceived slights/rejections of other plans, those who do not qualify for a turbine location or do not want to see hydro lines. For many detractors the main issue is visual. While most don't mind them and some actually see turbines as architectural marvels, there are those who do not. That is fine, everyone is allowed an opinion. Let's just state that and leave out the silly nonsense. As many have said "Imagine if our fore-fathers had acted this way. We would still be running around barefoot and living in caves with this attitude." There would be no vehicles (too noisy and dangerous), no hydro/telephone poles, no communication towers, bridges, towers, and the list goes on.

Study after study from all around the world for 30+ years has shown that turbines can be an annoyance for some. A new street light, a barking dog, the erection of fence, cutting of a tree, etc. can also be an annoyance. If one cannot accept and adapt to that change, yes you can become very sick and suffer health effects from these annoyances.

Northland Power has asked the landowners to not engage the opposition, feeling that everyone would see through the opposition's claims. However, there are two sides to every story and both sides should be told. The benefits to the community in terms of jobs & taxes are undeniable. The benefits to reducing our carbon output are also.

Brad Wilkin

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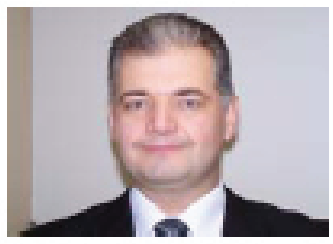
"Published Weekly On the Largest Freshwater Island In The World"
Wednesday, December 22, 2010

MANITOULIN WIND NEWS

TURBINES ON MANITOULIN LANDSCAPE



By Rick Martin,
Senior Manager, Business Development, Wind Energy
Project Manager, McLean's Mountain Wind Farm
Northland Power Inc.

Have you seen a wind turbine in an Ontario location? Do you know the ideal geography to support a turbine? Where would you go to experience a wind turbine in operation? Many people have made decisions about wind power and wind turbines without experiencing them first-hand. The turbines look big and maybe even imposing in pictures posted on websites and in newspaper stories, but to see them in operation, harnessing the earth's wind, is a majestic moment.

The McLean's Mountain Wind Farm project is strategically positioned to gain maximum benefit of the prevailing winds. It will not harm the majesty of the Manitoulin landscape. The turbines will stand proudly as a tribute to the Island's unique gift of ample natural resources. In a future article, we will share the location of each turbine, but for now the focus is on why and how the turbines are bringing green energy solutions to our island.

Our goal is to provide facts on the project and on wind power to you through this weekly column. There are no secrets about the project. Several public meetings have been hosted and the office is not off-island, but well located on 13 Worthington Street in the heart of Little Current, and open to all. Your questions will be answered.

Renewable or green energy is a choice. It's proving to be a difficult choice for some. The fact is the province has made the choice to increase renewable energy because it is cleaner and has fewer concerns than nuclear and fossil-based options. Wind energy generates no air emissions. Wind energy does not contribute to smog, acid rain or climate change.

Adding wind to the province's energy mix is smart and it is the right thing to do. Plus, adding wind energy to the mix also helps preserve another precious, natural resource – water. Some hydroelectric power plants, if managed improperly, could interrupt existing water flows. Other than an occasional washing of turbine blades, wind farms do not need water to operate.

It is difficult to hear people define themselves as environmentalists and in the same breath deny wind power as a green energy solution. Wind power can also be helpful in preserving and protecting traditional use of rural lands from other forms of development.

The Manitoulin landscape includes local water resources, farm lands, hunting camps and beautiful areas that will continue as is despite the coming wind turbines. Wind energy doesn't interfere with more rural lifestyles in fact the additional new tax revenue can be used for local initiatives safeguarding community priorities.

The plan, and it is public, is to have the McLean's Mountain Wind farm co-exist with Manitoulin landmarks and landscape. A wind turbine is big, and the visual impact of the turbines are addressed in the planning stages of a wind energy project. The computer modeling programs are available to permit you to see exactly what the landscape will look life once the wind turbines are installed. Come take a look.

Next Week: Wind Sounds

NORTHLAND POWER

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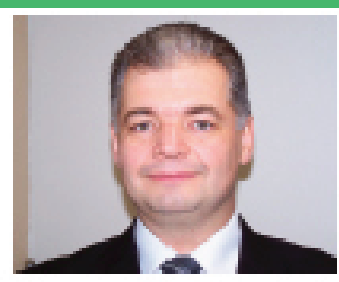
MANITOULIN WIND NEWS

WIND SOUNDS



By Rick Martin,
Senior Manager, Business Development Wind Energy
Project Manager, McLean's Mountain Wind Farm
Northland Power Inc.

Who measures the sound of wind? How does the sound of wind compare to other daily noises? Have you ever heard a modern wind turbine's blades spinning? Well, if you want to hear wind power, you would have to be closer than 300 meters for the sound to register for human hearing. Maybe, that's not what you've heard.

According to electronic readings taken in numerous studies, validated and accepted by the Ministry of the Environment, at 300 meters a turbine has the same impact on human hearing as a whisper does. Regardless, the regulated requirement for a 550 metre distance from closest receptor – residential house -- will ensure wind sounds do not impact residents.

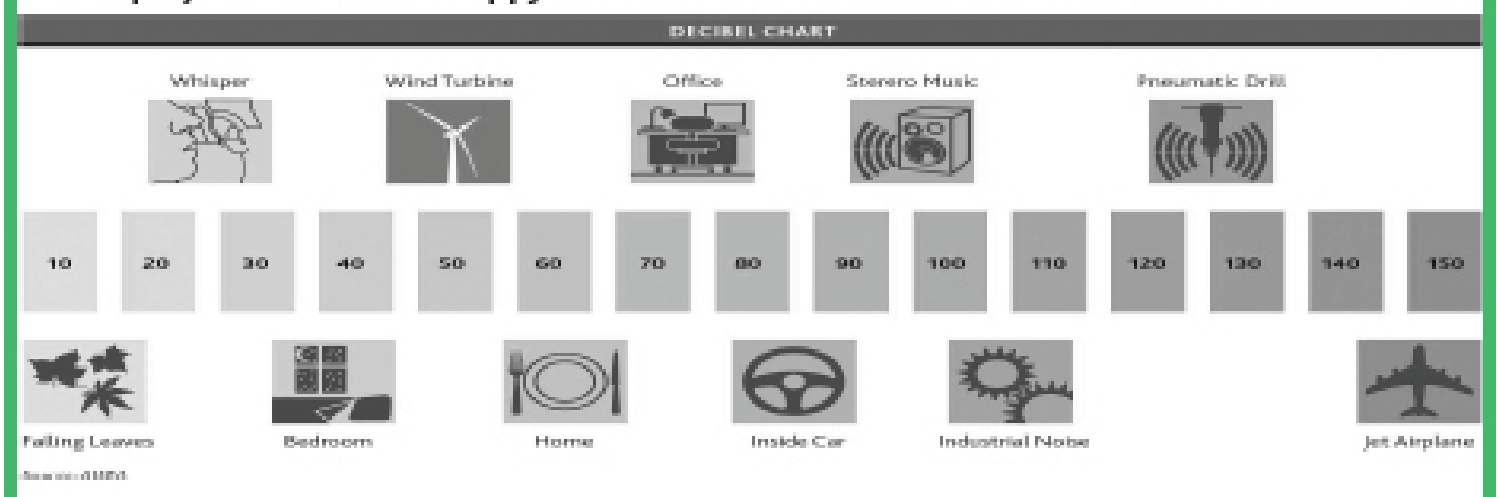
The mechanical sounds of the turbine will often be quieter than the wind itself as it blows through the trees. The goal is that the McLean's Mountain Wind Farm turbines will never overtake the natural serene sounds of Manitoulin Island.

Information describing wind turbines as being loud and annoying may be based on much older downwind models. With the benefit of the latest technology, we will be employing the much more effective and quieter upwind turbine model.

There's also some noise about wind turbine sounds leading to health problems. This is simply not true. Numerous studies have displayed, time and time again, that well constructed wind farms have no discernible impact on nearby communities, and, that noise is not an issue. What studies? You can find well-respected journal and scientific studies on wind sounds including the often-cited presentation titled The Health Impact of Wind Turbines by Dr. David Colby, Public Health Unit Medical Officer for Chatham-Kent in South-Western Ontario.

Ontario's Minister of Health and Long Care, Deb Matthews recently addressed the issue of health concerns related to wind turbines, stating, "We have done a very thorough, comprehensive review of health effects [and] there is no evidence, whatsoever, that there is an issue related to turbines."

There is a lot of misinformation out there regarding wind-generated energy. We want you to have all facts. We have data from sound testing, done here on the Island, as part of the wind project that we'd be happy to share. Please contact us and come visit us at the office.



NEXT WEEK: ENERGY TRANSITION IN NEMI

NORTHLAND POWER

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Letter to the Editor

GETTING IT RIGHT: RIGHT TIME, RIGHT PLACE

"Hey Bruce, what are you going to do about the wind turbines coming to Manitoulin," asked a resident the other day.

I thought I'd submit this letter to the Expositor because may of you many be asking yourselves what members of Council have done, will do and are able to do when a development like this comes to NEMI. I am not submitting this letter on behalf of Council nor my colleagues. I can tell you what I've done and why I have taken the position of supporting wind energy.

When you accept the position of municipal Councillor, you put the collective interests of the community-served ahead of individual and personal interest. Every matter that comes before a Councillor or Council is met first with the best interest test. Best interest is bundled under the umbrella of sustainability. What sustains, nurtures and has the potential to grow and/or benefit our collective interests? What helps create jobs here, ensures future opportunities for our children and keeps us safe and prosperous? Unlike other levels of government we are not dictated by politics from a political party. The real politics before a municipal government come mostly from local citizen lobby groups with particular interests.

Like all municipalities, we were aware of the provincial government's decision and promise to take us off coal. We were aware that there would be a shift to renewable energy – wind, solar and water. It is not a secret that Manitoulin Island has an abundance of wind. The McLean's Mountain Wind Farm project is not the only potential wind energy development for the Island. The truth is the wind farm passes the best interest test. It is clean and green. It is emissions-free. The site simulations demonstrate that most of us will see very few turbines. The Ministry of the Environment requirements are stringent and well monitored. The Minister of Health and the Chief Medical Officer of Ontario assured us there are no health impacts. The studies done and the mitigation to accommodate wildlife and birds are thorough. The economic benefits, the job and training benefits are defined and favourable.

Landowners with property that could be part of the turbine location siting will benefit and that will support and augment the income of many local farmers. I am on the public record for potentially benefitting from turbines that might be placed on my property. I have excused myself from Council debates on the wind farm accordingly to protect against any real or perceived conflict of interest. Regardless, I approached the issue of wind turbines coming to the Island in the same manner any development under consideration would be tested. I did my homework. I am informed and my decision is an informed one. Wind energy is not an unknown technology. Wind turbines have been part of many European landscapes and are a trusted source of energy in many countries such as Holland, Germany, Denmark and others. Renewable energy is part of Ontario's future and part of Manitoulin's future too.

We have a collective duty to protect the environment. Getting off fossil fuel is long overdue. Manitoulin environmental stewardship is important and shifting to wind power is a responsible and conscientious act. The wind farms can be incorporated into NEMI tourism plans. The Island's role in green energy can be part of our branding of the region. This is the right time for renewable energy. Manitoulin is the right place for wind power projects. The job of getting it right for us all is part of provincial policies and regulations.

The winds of change are blowing and Manitoulin Island is now able to harness that wind for the benefit of all.

Councillor Bruce Wood

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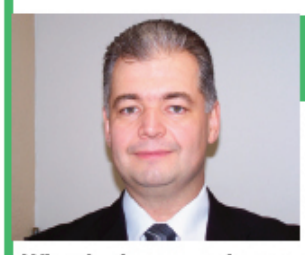
MANITOULIN WIND NEWS

WIND AND WILDLIFE



By Rick Martin,
Senior Manager, Business Development Wind Energy
Project Manager, McLean's Mountain Wind Farm
Northland Power Inc.

What is the normal rate of migratory bird deaths per year (excluding the thousands of ducks, geese and other game birds shot during the annual hunting season)? What is the average bird death rate from wind turbines or other sources? Who monitors bird fatalities and what is being done to lessen the impact of modern society on flocks? All good questions and all relevant to current discussions on the impact of wind turbines as the province moves to renewable energy sources.

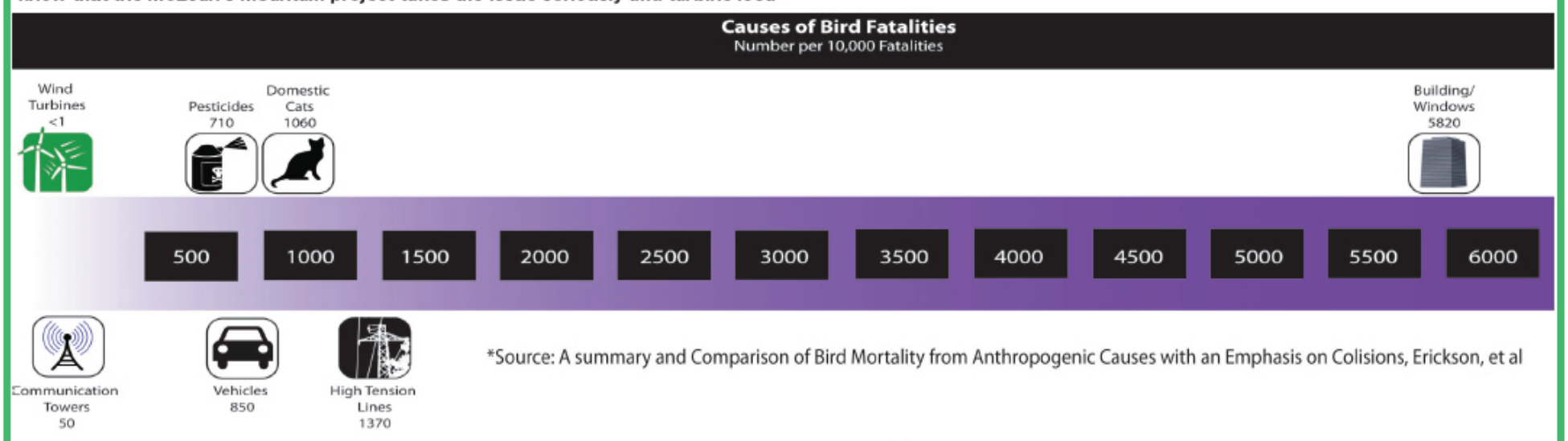
Well, like most things, there are several sources and many studies on the topic. The first thing to know is that a well-sited wind farm makes a difference in minimizing the risk to birds. Other forms of wildlife are not impacted by wind farms. Horses, cows, deer can all be seen grazing and resting in close proximity to turbines with no apparent distress. The concern related to bird deaths is a priority for any wind farm developer and mitigation is mandatory. Northland is required to engage in a post construction multi-year bird monitoring program that is reviewed by the Ministry of Natural Resources. The flip side to the concern is that wind farms are also part of the climate change solution providing emissions-free energy that benefits birds and all wildlife, as well as ourselves. The truth is comprehensive site assessment studies are done and years of data collected on migration routes in advance of securing appropriate wind farm sites and initial permits. Monitoring continues once the turbines are erected and the wind farm operations are underway.

I want to share the data we have on bird deaths related to wind farms and to let you know that the McLean's Mountain project takes the issue seriously and turbine location will reflect our best efforts to minimize the effects on birds. Dillon Consulting has completed multi-season bird survey studies for the McLean's Mountain Wind Farm project . According to Don McKinnon, Dillon's Environmental Manager, these included: spring surveys (in 2005 and 2008), June breeding bird surveys (2007 and 2008), fall migration surveys (2004) and winter surveys (in 2007). Additional surveys were conducted in 2010 that were focused on select bird Species at Risk (e.g. common nighthawk, whip-poor-will). Further, attempts have been made to locate the turbines outside of sensitive habitat areas. The bulk of the turbines are located outside of interior forest habitat and significant wetland habitat has been avoided, in fact most turbines are now well set back from wetland boundaries.

Some independent studies cite the potential death of two birds per year per turbine. Birds collide with other structures such as communications towers (50), pesticides (710), vehicles (850), domestic cats (1,060), high tension hydro lines (1,370), and building windows (5,820), particularly high-rise buildings lit up at night. Wind turbines account for less than 1 fatality per 10,000 according to the Erickson chart which is provided below. The chart demonstrates migratory bird fatalities at 10,000 per year in urban cities as a standard measure. You will see from the chart that the highest risk to birds is crashing into buildings and windows.

Bat fatalities are a focus of new research using video and thermal imagery to help the energy industry gain insights into flight patterns, predatory and roosting behaviours.

We are taking a proactive approach when it comes to wind and wildlife on Manitoulin Island. Feel free to contact us or come in to the office to review the data and plans prepared.



NEXT WEEK: PROPONENT RESPONSIBILITIES

NORTHLAND POWER

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Opinion Editorial

LITTLE CURRENT HISTORY ANCHORED BY GEOGRAPHY

By Residents and Friends of Manitoulin Wind

It may be time for some of us quiet folks to speak up to remind us about the past. We didn't depend on tourism in the old days. Wind power coming to our Island isn't scary. As some have said clearly in letters to the Expositor, status quo is not an option. Change is inevitable. Embracing it is the best remedy.

This Island has a history linked to coal and the old industrial era of shipping, lumber and iron ore. We didn't worry about whistles blowing, trains rumbling, ship horns blasting, cranes swinging and creaking -- all pretty much non-stop. We were a hub of activity and jobs.

If there isn't a scientific measure for annoyance, there most certainly appears to be clear indication it is linked to one's individual tolerance for, or intolerance of, change.

Our geography has defined our economy. It still does.

Many of the families that have lived here for generations will recall with fond memories how the landscape of the Island and of Little Current was dominated by huge loading towers, the Inco iron ore pellet loader and the multi-storied steel crane that served our coal dock. These were huge structures. As big as wind turbines? Maybe. They were certainly more visible.

Little Current and Manitoulin were part of Ontario's reliance on coal as a fuel, as a source of energy and as a critical ingredient to keeping the smelting furnaces going at Inco. Now, we will be an important part of Ontario's efforts to get off coal.

Do you know what it sounds and looks like when a channel is dredged? Well, it's a noisy process with blasting and scraping and digging and more blasting.

Some of us had jobs in the dredging that led to work on the St. Lawrence and other major dredging projects in central and eastern Canada. It was hard work, but good work.

There were no environmental assessments in those days. The channel was dredged to provide 22 feet of depth to permit freighters to enter and deliver ship loads of coal. In record time, our waterways were filled with large commercial ships loading and unloading coal and other industrial supplies.

The Algoma Eastern Railway brought prosperity to our Island. It built the swing bridge during 1912 and 1913. In 1929, the coal facility was tripled in size by filling in the open water between the coal dock and the commercial dock. Men shoveled tons of coal into 30-car trains. There were roughly seven trains a day taking coal to Inco. The coal unloader was dismantled in 1966 and replaced by an iron ore pellet loader. Each of the 30-cars per train then contained 75 tons of iron ore pellets headed to Sudbury. The pellet loader was removed in 1999.

The Railroad was another source of good jobs and jobs that took many back and forth out of this region to many destinations. All aboard? We were. These were jobs that topped up farmer incomes.

Agriculture was strong. The cattle business was a big business and, in fact at one point, we held the record for the largest one day cattle sales in all of North America.

The North Shore Timber company kept sawmills buzzing thanks to all the ways to transport the lumber.

The quarries were busy crushing silica and conveyors hauled the quarry treasure into sea-going vessels.

The sounds of all this enterprise were heard clearly for miles and miles. No one complained. Youth had many sources of good paying jobs working for the railways, the shipping companies, the lumber camps, the farms and some learned to be hoist operators and dredgers.

We have wind the same way we have a harbour. It's geography's gift.

Renewable energy is the future and wind farms will be part of going green and clean when it comes to energy. So, the quality, the force and the capacity of wind on Manitoulin will bring a new, quieter, cleaner source of economic activity to us. It will take us off coal.

Wind brings us a new role in 21st century Ontario. Don't be annoyed. Our history and now our future again served by our geography. Let's make it work.

This is the collective view of the following who met to discuss why our neighbours and fellow residents seem concerned about wind power coming to Manitoulin.

Prepared with comments and memories from Bud Wilkin, Patricia Wilkin, Brad Wilkin, Audrey Jones, Bruce Wood, Pat Wood, Ed Ferguson, Connie Ferguson.

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MANITOULIN WIND NEWS

PROPONENT RESPONSIBILITIES

By Rick Martin,
Senior Manager, Business Development Wind Energy
Project Manager, McLean's Mountain Wind Farm
Northland Power Inc.

Wind proponents must consult and comply with numerous federal and provincial bodies, including those listed in the sidebar provided.

Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
Natural Resources Canada
Environment Canada
Department of Fisheries and Oceans
CN Rail
Department of Indian and Northern Affairs
NAV Canada
Department of National Defense
Canadian Coast Guard
CBC
Radio Advisory Board of Canada
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs
Ontario Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure
Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture
Ontario Ministry of Transportation

Who ensures the wind farm is built to the highest safety standards? Will government make the developer report on environmental issues? Who protects the local taxpayer from being stuck for any resulting or unforeseen expenditures?
When it comes to development of the wind farm, you want to know who is responsible for what and that it is fair, reasonable and enforceable.

When a developer comes to a community with a project of this type, common practice dictates that additional reasonable and related expenses that arise are the responsibility of the developer and not the taxpayer. Under the Green Energy Act many responsibilities, previously born by the municipality, have now been assumed by the province. As no doubt you have noticed, through communications surrounding this project, the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) is taking the lead on ensuring that the project meets strict guidelines. Under that MOE umbrella, various Ministries are consulted and take significant roles. The resulting guideline is called the Renewable Energy Assessment.

The McLean's Mountain Wind Farm has and accepts many responsibilities that are mandatory, closely monitored throughout the project lifespan from pre-construction, to during and post construction that includes penalties for non compliance.

Some commitments between the municipality and the wind developer do remain. The municipality continues to maintain control over construction and layout of municipal road allowances. Subsequently, McLean's Mountain Wind Farm has entered into a "Road User Agreement" with NEMI. Promises have been made and Northland Power will honour them. What are they?

They include a full financial compensation package linked to the extra work that results from the municipality's role. In addition, Northland Power's wind farm project has already covered NEMI legal costs related to completion of the Road User Agreement.

As well, the proponent, in this project, will carry commercial general liability insurance worth $10 million per incident covering potential legal liability due to installation and operation of equipment.

As the project advances, we at McLean's Mountain Wind Farm will keep the community informed of progress and any expected interruptions affecting local traffic and roadways.

There has been some talk about abandonment of turbines or equipment in the event of termination of the OPA contract or its expiry. Rest assured, this is NOT the case. A clear responsibility under the Renewable Energy Assessment is that the company provides a realistic decommissioning plan that includes removal of the project components within a specified time.

We are pleased to have committed to the creation of a community fund of $10,000 annually throughout the 20-years of operation. A committee will be formed with municipal and proponent representation to distribute these funds appropriately.

The McLean's Mountain Wind Farm has and will continue to cooperate fully with the municipality of NEMI. Every effort will be made to bring a positive impact to the region of Manitoulin Island.

I hope this dispels any concerns about the possible local burden of this project.

If you have any further questions related to the responsibilities of the company please, do not hesitate to contact us. Come in to visit us at the office so we can go over your concerns directly and in greater detail.

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NEXT WEEK: IMPACT ON ADJACENT LANDS

NORTHLAND POWER

Northland Power, in business since 1987, develops and operates clean and green power generation projects, mainly in the provinces of Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan.

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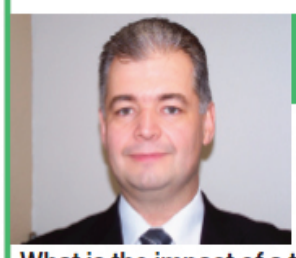
MANITOULIN WIND NEWS



IMPACT ON ADJACENT LANDS

By Rick Martin,
Senior Manager, Business Development Wind Energy
Project Manager, McLean's Mountain Wind Farm
Northland Power Inc.

What is the impact of a turbine landscape on local farm properties? Landowners with turbines on their property are compensated, but what about the impact on adjacent landowners? How can you independently measure the impact on property values from wind farms? For many, there are pocket-book concerns about wind energy projects. It is important to discuss these matters using relevant, recent facts and data.

Turbines do not stop local farmers from usual land use practices. In fact, climate science and agricultural experts recently reported on research in Midwestern (USA) farm fields, under turbines and adjacent to wind farms, that demonstrates positive impacts. What are they? The turbines are helping crops stay cooler and dryer, are fending off fungal infestations and measurably improving field microclimates. University researchers Gene Takle and Julie Lindquist claim, in the simplest sense, a wind turbine is nothing more than a tall tree with a well-pruned stem when it comes to their role as agricultural shelters in a field. More research on turbines and farming is underway. The research is being conducted independent of any wind industry developers.

The 550-metre setback from existing receptors is a mandatory Ministry of the Environment (MOE) requirement for the developer, but is not incorporated in the provincial Building Code for new home construction. The McLean's Mountain Wind Farm project has met and exceeded this setback as a way of mitigating neighbour concerns. The Green Energy Act and new rules issued on January 1, 2011 make it clear that once the turbine layout is publicly announced the presence of the wind farm should be factored into future applications for building permits and severances.

The Green Energy Act includes guidelines on vacant adjacent lands. As of the January 1, 2011 amendments, a 550-metre setback must exist from an area that might be built on in a traditional manner. If the building is yet to be designed, we assume that you will build according to the custom of existing buildings in the area. Very likely, as is the case on McLean's Mountain, dwellings are generally built near the front of the properties along the roadway, so this is what is used as the logical area of construction.

NEXT WEEK: TURBINE LOCATIONS

Many claim property values are negatively affected by wind turbine landscapes. That could be reflective of individual perspectives, but to be fair there has to be, and now there is, an independent assessment of property value impacts.

A study was done in the Chatham-Kent area in accordance with the Appraisal Institute of Canada's standards. As well, we consulted a realtor of record in a community north of Sault Ste. Marie about property values since a wind farm was built there. Information from both reports is available at the McLean's Mountain Wind Farm office or from the Internet. In both areas there is a sufficient volume of property sales in close proximity to the wind farms to make statistically reliable conclusions. The report refers to the work done on the study area as a "ground-truthing" exercise.

There was no indication that wind farms negatively affect rural property market values. This position was reinforced by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC). MPAC relies on the market to indicate what influence a factor such as wind turbines may have on a property's value. MPAC does this through the ongoing study and analysis of the market including the investigation of sales transactions. MPAC's analysis of sales does not indicate that the presence of wind turbines that are either abutting on or in proximity to a property has either a positive or negative impact on its value.

Right now, here on the Island, we are dealing with fear of the unknown or change. This, when fueled by misinformation, causes anxiety. We are not building a nuclear station. We are harnessing nature's precious resource of wind and we are being respectful to the environment in the process.

Wind power is renewable and it is respectful of the realities of climate change, air quality and the need for clean energy sources.

If you have any further questions related to property values or the potential impact of the wind farm on you, please do not hesitate to contact us. Come in to visit us at the office so we can go over your concerns directly.

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