

## Wind Power and Tourism

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### *Documents Included:*

*Wind Mountain*, Cape Cod Times, May 12, 2002

<http://www.capecodonline.com/special/windfarm/windmountain12.htm>

*Tourism That Blows*, Atlantic City Weekly, January 26, 2006

<http://www.acweekly.com/view.php?id=3731>

Madison County, NY Tourism Website: Attractions – Energy

<http://www.madisontourism.com/showmem.php?category=Attractions&subcat=Energy>

Nature & Technology in Perfect Harmony – North Cape, Prince Edward Island Tourism

[http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/tou\\_nccd06.pdf](http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/tou_nccd06.pdf)

*Tourists “Not Aware” of Wind Farms* – Ipsos MORI survey for British Wind Energy Assn.

<http://www.mori.com/polls/2002/windfarms.shtml>

*Survey of NEK Visitors Finds Tourism Won't Be Hurt by Windfarm* – Renewable Energy Vermont

<http://www.revermont.org/press/neksurvey.pdf>

*Wind Farms and Tourism* – Australian Wind Energy Association

<http://www.thewind.info/downloads/tourism.pdf>

# CAPE COD TIMES

## Wind mountain

Perched on a ridge in the Green Mountains, these wind turbines generate power and attention, but little discontent

By [JOHN LEANING](#)  
STAFF WRITER

May 12, 2002

SEARSBURG, Vt. - By the side of a dirt road halfway up a remote mountain, the headstones in the Crosier cemetery march in even rows over a grassy hilltop.



■An old cemetery lies at the base of the ridge near the Searsburg Wind Power Facility. The facility churns out enough power for 2,000 homes.  
(Staff photos by STEVE HEASLIP)

White marble headstones, with names and dates worn by the harsh northern climate, cast faint shadows in the weak spring sunshine, and the wind whispers through the still-bare tree branches in the surrounding hills.

Pure Vermont beauty. But with an interesting spin.

Beyond the cemetery, on top of the mountain, about 2,800 feet above sea level, are 11 giant windmills, each with three black blades turning slowly in the May breezes.

This is the Searsburg Wind Power Facility, owned by the Green Mountain Power Corp., a public, for-profit regulated utility in Vermont.

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Completed in 1997, the \$11 million facility was built with \$4 million in grants from the federal Department of Energy and the Electric Power Research Institute, and the balance by Green Mountain Power.

With a capacity production of six megawatts, the Searsburg wind plant, located off Route 9 between Brattleboro and Bennington in southern Vermont, is one of the largest in the East, and provides electricity for approximately 2,000 Vermont homes each year.



■An unanticipated side effect of the Searsburg wind farm is its tourist draw. Officials of the southern Vermont town say they've had to build a parking lot for visitors.

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The electricity goes into the grid that supplies power throughout New England, so locals don't directly benefit from the low-cost energy.

And although the turbines are incongruous with the pastoral Vermont setting, local residents asked about the wind farm, the unusual juxtaposition of modern technology with ancient mountains in a rural environment is old news.

"I work around here every day. They don't bother me," said Peter Janovsky, Searsburg's highway commissioner, during an interview last week. "There's no noise from them or nothing. And they're cheap. But we don't get any of the power."

It was the end of his lunch break. Tipping back in a chair in the town highway barn, one end of which doubles as the hamlet's town hall, with the smells of diesel and crankcase oil pervading the air, Janovsky said the windmills have proven to be a steady tourist attraction since they were built in 1997.



■Former Cape resident Barbara Bennert, on the deck of her Wilmington, Vermont home, can see the wind farm on a ridge about five miles away. She said the sight doesn't bother her. "I'm all for alternative energy," she said.

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"I thought they were pretty interesting. They haven't bothered anybody," he said, noting that one Florida resident who owned land on Route 8 below the wind farm worried that his property values would decline, so he sold out.

But a new house on Route 8, the dirt road leading to the substation and access road to the wind farm, was built looking right at the windmill, so at least for that homeowner, the view of these giant windmills turning gracefully on the hilltop was a plus, not a detraction.

One reason for the hilltop location is its remoteness, and relative distance from any homes. The nearest house is at least a half-mile away.

Before the wind farm, Janovsky said maybe 10 cars a day traveled Route 8 in the summer.

"Now there are 80 a day in the summer, I'll bet. They come from all over. That's why they built a parking lot there," he said.



■ One of two turbine blades struck by lightning remains at the Searsburg wind plant and is a curiosity to visitors.

Told about the proposed 170 turbine wind farm for Nantucket Sound, with turbines more than twice the height of Searsburg's 198-foot-tall windmills, Janovsky chuckled and said, "Well, you're a lot lower."

Told that some opponents of the Nantucket Sound wind farm worried it would hurt Cape Cod's tourist industry, the highway commissioner shook his head.

"It not gonna scare them any if they are anything like here," he said.

Last week, a bus tour of 35 Cape Codders arrived at the wind farm at for a tour organized by the Cape & Islands Self-Reliance Corp., which supports the Nantucket Sound project.

On top of the mountain, standing next two turbines that were shut down as a safety precaution during the tour, the group listened and watched as the other nine massive, towering machines whirled in the wind along a narrow dirt access road.

They made a swooshing sound as the blades turned 29 revolutions per minute, in the 20 mph breeze.

"I think these things are very promising," said Robert Bigalow, of Falmouth, a retired engineer in the energy field who is now Falmouth's representative to the Cape Light Compact.

"I went because I didn't know, and I wanted to see them. I thought they were absolutely beautiful. I thought I was at the ballet, to some degree," said Jane Coogan, of Mashpee. She supports the Nantucket Sound proposal, provided it passes the necessary environmental reviews.

She acknowledged the noise from the turbine blades was not something she would want to listen to 24 hours a day, but she also pointed out no one in Searsburg lived near enough to the turbines to hear anything. The same would be true out on the sound, she said.

### **Project yields information**

The Searsburg project is the product of more than three decades of study by Green Mountain Power.

Yet the Searsburg facility is still a research facility, said Martha Staskus, who works with Vermont Environmental Research Associates, the consulting firm which planned and oversaw construction, and now manages the plant for Green Mountain Power.

The location presented unique challenges for the engineers. Just getting the large pieces of equipment up the mountain was a feat.

Because of the winter weather, the turbine's hydraulic systems had to be retrofitted with heaters after they froze up in the bitter cold.

To withstand the danger of ice buildup, the 66-foot-long rotor blades are made of black fiberglass. The black absorbs heat, even during the winter, enough to shed heavy sleeves of ice that would otherwise stop or even break the long, tapered blades.

Staskus said aside from weather problems, the plant has been in operation about 95 percent of the time when there is wind. Breezes need to be at least 10 mph for the turbines to start generating juice, but the wind dips below that speed only about 5 percent of the time.

Lightning strikes have proven problematic, however, with two different strikes since 1997 damaging turbine blades. The damaged blades are kept at the site, resting on wood blocks.

### **Satisfying state reviews**

While it took 30 years to find the right site, it took another year or so to complete the environmental review and facility siting reviews required under Vermont law.

Issues such as wildlife habitat destruction, interference with wildlife movements, migratory, songbird and raptor concerns and visual impact dominated studies and meetings.

The site, on a 35-acre parcel, part of a 500-acre tract of private property, is surrounded by the Green Mountain National Forest.

The wind farm location is also in the middle of an area populated by black bears.

The bears are not endangered, but Vermont wildlife officials imposed strict limitations on human intrusion into the area, to minimize contact with the bears.

"Everything around here is a bear corridor," scoffed Janovsky, who has hunted deer and moose in the rugged countryside for 30 years.

Most game, he said, don't spend time on the ridge line, with or without the turbines. They go where the food is, several hundred feet lower.

And continuing studies show that the black bear comings and goings since the construction of the wind farm has increased.

Scientists speculate that may be due to clearing from the construction, which has allowed berry bushes to grow, providing a food source for bears.

Because of Vermont's stiff environmental laws protecting its scenic vistas, Green Mountain Power had to go through a tough review permitting process to get a "certificate of public good" to locate the wind farm on the ridgeline, with the turbines and blades rising about 160 feet above the tree line.

Green Mountain Power has a 99-year lease on the 35-acres, and pays taxes - \$153,995 last year - on its utility equipment to Searsburg. The company also pays annual rent and a percentage of profits based on production to the landowner, who lives in New Hampshire. Green Mountain Power officials refused to divulge the amount of those payments to the landowner.

### **Support and reservations**

In pre- and post-construction surveys of the project involving local year-round and seasonal residents, concerns about the visual aesthetic of the turbines were near the top of everyone's list.

Interestingly, in the post-construction survey, on a scale from one (very supportive) to five (very unsupportive) support for the project increased from about 2 to 1.5. And when asked if they would support doubling the number of turbines, the pre-construction response of 2.25 increased to about 1.8.

"I wish to hell they'd put up more, and cut out the nukes," Janovsky said.

Across the valley, on another ridge line, Barbara Bennert and her husband, Robert, live in a converted log cabin. Their view from the bedroom, kitchen and deck is straight at the turbines in the distance, about eight miles away.

"No, I have no reservations about the windmills. I'm of Dutch ancestry," said Barbara Bennert.

"I'm all for alternative energy, but I don't want to see it like California," she said, referring to massive wind farms, mostly in the desert or high mountain passes.

Bennert and her husband once lived in Harwich. Their son was a 1987 graduate of Harwich High School, and she remembers well the beaches on Nantucket Sound.

When told of the Nantucket Sound wind farm proposal, she said, "I'd probably have a lot of thoughts on that. I probably would not be in favor of it if there were that many, that close to Cape Cod. The Cape has enough problems as it is now," she said.

At Dot's Restaurant in Wilmington, the year-round hangout for locals, where blue plate specials fill you up for cheap, and the counter service is always friendly, waitress Shirley Sullivan perked her ears when she heard of the Nantucket Sound project.

"That sounds like a good idea," she said, adding that most people don't pay much attention anymore to the towers just down the road in Searsburg.

"Will there be a keeper of the windmills? That sounds like a good job to me," she said with a grin.

## COVER STORY

## Tourism that Blows

Could Atlantic City's new Wind Farm be the resort's next tourist attraction?

by [Molly Golubcow](#)



The Chinese ingeniously used them to pump water 4,000 years ago, Don Quixote foolishly tilted at them, and Van Gogh meticulously painted them. What are these machines that have captivated the hearts of artists and the minds of engineers for centuries? The answer, my friends, is currently blowing in the wind right off the Atlantic City coast. New Jersey's first utility-scale wind farm, located on the Atlantic County Utility Authority's (ACUA) wastewater treatment facility, went live on Dec. 12, 2005.

The wind farm, consisting of five steel turbine towers, is visually quite dramatic. Like monuments with movable parts, these giants offer some interesting statistics, (*see figure on opposite page*).

If these statistics are not impressive enough, the wind farm is a "powerhouse" for alternative energy. Rather than burn fossil fuels, the wind farm will produce enough energy to power approximately 3,800 homes — replacing the need for an estimated 24,000 barrels of oil per year. Translating that into electricity means the 8 megawatt (MW) wind plant will generate an estimated 40,800,000 kilowatt hours of clean electricity annually for New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.

In addition to the ecological pluses, the wind farm is also being eyed as a potential tourist attraction for Atlantic City. Clearly visible from the Atlantic City Expressway and the White Horse Pike, the towers will be seen by the 35 million visitors a year flocking to Atlantic City's casinos and beaches. According to Paul Gallagher, vice president of the ACUA, the Atlantic City wind farm may become "One of the most photographed and discussed wind turbines in the country, maybe the world."

Gallagher feels that the proximity of the wind farm to major roads and businesses will impress and educate the public's perception of alternative energy. Based on how many visitors a year currently visit the ACUA environmental park in Egg Harbor Township, the ACUA anticipates even "bigger" interest in the wind farm.

To educate the public, the ACUA hopes to establish a user-friendly control room at the wind farm offering a number of video displays for visitors. In addition, an observation area at the front gate, a scenic overlook, and informational kiosks are also part of future tourist attraction plans. Authority officials are also hoping a pedestrian boardwalk that will run behind the Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa will offer a beautiful view of the wind farm.

Although some may argue that a wind farm is not a tourist magnet, current studies show the contrary. For example, California's Palm Springs wind farm offers daily tours marketing their excursion as the "Ultimate Power Trip" to almost 12,000 curious tourists every year. Denmark, the leading country in the world using and exporting wind energy, experienced a 25-percent increase in tourism in or around their wind power farms.

Research also indicates that popular vacation locales around the world with wind farms have not experienced a loss in tourism. Instead, people who came to vacation were curious and eager to spend money visiting the wind-power sites, buying T-shirts and other souvenirs, as well as being photographed with the giants. On a local note, Atlantic County Executive Dennis Levinson touted that the wind farm is "Renewable, it's clean, it's the future ... And if they don't work, they're a helluva tourist attraction."

Atlantic City, differing from other sites around the country, has been quick to embrace the wind farm idea. Although many people are philosophically in favor of alternative and clean energy, the "not in my backyard" mentality became a problem in some areas. However, most AC residents and local politicians were quite excited about the wind farm project.

Anthony Cox, president of the Venice Park Civic Association, described the view from his neighborhood as "pretty cool." Local real estate agents are also impressed by a recent study that concluded that property values of homes with views of wind turbines rose faster than those of nearby homes without such views. Can you imagine the new Borgata and Harrah's marketing brochures? *Rooms With Views of The Wind Farm Will Blow You Away! It's a BREEZE at the Borgata*, etc. etc.

So, it seems like the Atlantic City wind farm is a win(d) win(d) situation — cleaner, efficient energy and a definite draw for tourists. Who in Atlantic City can ask for more? In 1911, the Million Dollar Pier offered tourists the opportunity to take a spin on a carousel, 1978 produced the whirl of the roulette wheel, and 2005 was the year a fair and profitable wind began to blow for the environment and the Atlantic City economy.

*For more information, visit these Atlantic County Utility Authority sites:*

*[http://www.acua.com/alternative/a\\_projects\\_dsply.cfm?id=214](http://www.acua.com/alternative/a_projects_dsply.cfm?id=214). Or the link to the ACUA Web cam page where you can watch the turbines: [http://www.acua.com/alternative/a\\_projects\\_dsply.cfm?id=275](http://www.acua.com/alternative/a_projects_dsply.cfm?id=275)*





Attractions	Dining/Night	Shopping	Golf and Sports	Outdoors	Services	Travel Info	Membership
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**Upcoming Events:**

Jul 10—Aug 10  
Oneida: Drama Camp for Kids

Aug 4—Aug 20  
Cazenovia: The Wit's End  
Players present: Assassins

Aug 7—Aug 23

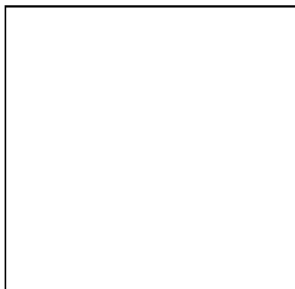
[Complete Listings](#)

**Site Search**



**Madison County Tourism:**

PO Box 1029, Brooks Hall,  
1st Floor, US Rt. 20  
Morrisville, NY 13408  
(315) 684-7320  
Toll-Free: (800) 684-7320  
Fax: (315) 684-7348  
info@madisontourism.com



**Attractions—Energy**

**Canastota 13032**

**Fenner Wind Power Project** Peterboro Rd.  
Canastota, NY 13032  
800-684-7320  
[www.fennerwind.com](http://www.fennerwind.com)  
The site of twenty windmills that create clean and green energy. Group tours are available by request.

**Madison 13402**

**Madison Wind Power Project** Stone Rd.  
Madison, NY 13402  
315-893-7970  
800-684-7320  
Madison is the site for seven windmills that create clean and green energy. The windmills at 1.65 megawatts which are the largest in the US. Group tours are available by appointment.

# Nature & Technology in Perfect Harmony



**North Cape**, home to a host of unique attractions, located at the Northwestern tip of Prince Edward Island on the **North Cape Coastal Drive**. *Once you get here you'll never want to leave!*

**The Reef at North Cape** Longest natural rock reef in North America - the site of many early shipwrecks - you can walk out onto the reef at low tide and witness the "meeting of the waters" as the Gulf of St Lawrence and the Northumberland Strait converge as the tide moves back in. Ideal spot for seal watching!

**Atlantic Wind Test Site & Wind Farm** For more than twenty years the Atlantic Wind Test Site has been Canada's national wind R&D centre. The site is currently testing the largest wind mill in North America and together with the wind farm produces 5% of PEI's energy!

**Wind Hydrogen Village** North Cape is home to a demonstration wind-hydrogen village to explore the prospects of hydrogen and wind energy.

**Wind Energy Interpretive Centre** New interactive displays and visual presentations dedicated to wind energy and the special technology to harness it. Visitors can also explore the colourful history of North Cape and its people.

**North Cape Gift Shop & Island Welcome Centre** One stop souvenir shop, local handcrafts, and information!. Ask about our Tip to Tip promotion! Phone 882-2991.

**Wind & Reef Restaurant** Dine on succulent seafood while enjoying your panoramic view of the ocean and reef below! Reservations recommended, Phone 882-3535.

**Black Marsh Nature Trail** The only coastal nature trail with bilingual interpretive signage in Prince Edward Island. Learn more about the area's history, local fishing and the unique coastal ecology.

**North Cape Lighthouse** Constructed in 1866 it remains one of the most important lights on PEI, warning ships of the 2 mile long rock reef.

**Tignish Heritage Inn & Gardens** While in the area stay at the Tignish Heritage Inn and enjoy the beautiful gardens. 1-877-882-2491 or locally 882-2491. [www.tignish.com/inn](http://www.tignish.com/inn) email: [heritageinn@tignish.com](mailto:heritageinn@tignish.com)



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## Tourists 'Not Aware' Of Wind Farms

31 October 2002

Most tourists to Argyll are not aware that there are wind farms in the area, and half of those who are aware don't know their exact location, according to research by MORI Scotland. The survey, which was commissioned by the Scottish Renewables Forum and the British Wind Energy Association, assessed tourists' awareness and perception of wind farms in the area, to see how wind farm development might affect tourism in Scotland.

When asked if they are aware that there are wind farms in Argyll, three in five tourists (60%) say they are not. Of those who are aware, half (52%) do not know where in Argyll the farms are. Around one in four (23%) correctly cite Beinn an Tuirc as a location, and one in five (20%) Beinn Ghlass. Half of these (49%) have actually seen the wind farms.

When asked whether the presence of wind farms had a positive or negative effect on their impression of Argyll as a place to visit, over half (55%) of respondents maintained that it had a generally or completely positive effect, while one in three were ambivalent (32%). Less than one in 10 (eight per cent) felt that it had a negative effect.

Most tourists (80%) say they would be interested in visiting a wind farm if it were opened to the public with a visitor centre, with over half (54%) saying they would be "very interested".

### Client Contacts



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### Ipsos MORI Scotland Contact

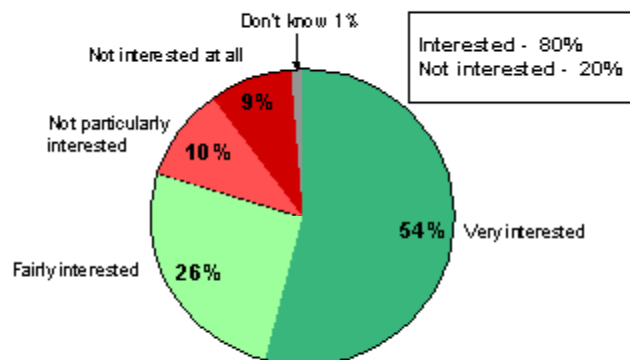
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[Maps of Ipsos MORI locations](#)

### Visiting Windfarm/Visitor Centres

Q *If a windfarm in Argyll were to open to the public with a visitor centre showing information about how it works, to what extent would you be interested in visiting it on this or another trip to the area?*



Base: All respondents (307)

Source: MORI

### Technical details

MORI interviewed 307 tourists face-to-face in five locations - Tarbet, Inverary, Oban, Campbeltown and Lochgilhead - during the weekends of 21 – 23 and 27 – 29 September 2002.

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For Immediate Release: October 21, 2003

## **Survey of NEK Visitors Finds Tourism Won't Be Hurt by Windfarm**

MONTPELIER – According to a new survey, 95 percent of visitors to Vermont's Northeast Kingdom would not be deterred from further visits by the existence of a proposed four-turbine windfarm.

And of visitors who ski, 92 percent said they would ski in the same region if the wind turbines were located on the nearby ridgeline.

These are some of the findings of a new survey conducted for East Haven Windfarm, which is proposing a four-turbine demonstration project atop East Mountain in the town of East Haven, VT. The survey, conducted by the Institute for Integrated Rural Tourism, contradicts claims by windfarm opponents that wind turbines would hurt tourism in the Northeast Kingdom.

“The more evidence we gather, the more we are convinced that wind turbines do not drive people away from an area,” said Mathew Rubin, president of East Haven Windfarm. “In fact, we believe that our project will become a tourist attraction itself, and we're planning facilities to accommodate visitors.”

The survey asked questions of 102 visitors at the Waterford and Lyndon information centers off Interstate 89 on five separate days to find out if visitors would be deterred from visiting the area if the East Mountain Demonstration Project were to be built.

Visitors were told of the windfarm proposal and asked for their reaction. Respondents were shown a photographic simulation of how the wind turbines would appear from the town of Burke and asked whether that would deter them from visiting or skiing in the region. When survey respondents were asked to view the photo simulation along with the question: “Would the presence of these four wind towers deter you from visiting this region of Vermont?” 95 percent said no.

Some 68 percent of the respondents said they ski and of those, 92 percent said they would continue to ski in the area if wind turbines were located there. Sixty-three percent of the respondents said they had seen a windfarm in the past. Many had seen large installations in West Texas, Germany, Minnesota, New Zealand and California.

Visitors responding to the survey came from around the US as well as from overseas and had numerous destinations within Vermont including Barton, Newport, Burlington, Stowe, Greensboro, Woodstock, Middlebury, St. Johnsbury and Jay Peak. Thirty-two percent of those surveyed had been to Vermont 10 or more times, 28 percent had visited Vermont from 2-4 times, 5 percent of the respondents had visited Vermont between 5 and 10 times, and 35 percent of the respondents were first time visitors.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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AUSTRALIA'S PEAK BODY FOR THE WIND ENERGY INDUSTRY

## WIND FARMS AND TOURISM

**THE ISSUE:** Because wind turbines are sometimes sited in landscapes which possess high scenic value, their impact on tourism has from time to time been questioned. Research from overseas and anecdotal evidence within Australia indicates that wind developments do not negatively influence tourism, and may in fact be having a positive effect.

*"For over two years, we have operated tours at the Codrington wind farm, and in that time have welcomed many thousands of visitors, many of whom have come to the area specifically to visit the wind farm. We have only seen positive local economic benefits resulting from the existence of the Codrington wind farm... No technology is perfect, but a wind farm is one way of contributing to our energy needs, and at the same time to reducing greenhouse gas production and the associated climate change that may irrevocably change our coast line and way of life in the future if we do not take some action now."*

**Tim and Carmel Brady to the Moyne Gazette, 18/9/2003, p. 2**

### SUMMARY

Wind turbines are new feature in the Australian landscape, and much media attention has focussed on how they might impact tourism in regions with high scenic value. Of course, sensitive development through judicious planning is vital to ensure valuable landscapes are maintained. This is why the Australian Wind Energy Association is working with the Australian Council of National Trusts to develop mutually agreed methodologies for assessing landscape values. There are no Australian studies to substantiate the occasional claim that wind farms will harm tourism. On the contrary, initial polls and anecdotal evidence in Australia indicate the opposite may be true: wind farms are more likely to attract tourists. Wind farm visitor centres around the country are clocking thousands of visits, and tourism operations are springing up around wind farms.

Overseas evidence backs up this trend. New in-depth research from Scotland performed in a highly scenic area with a high density of wind farms indicates that tourists are much more likely to be attracted than put off by the knowledge that there are wind turbines in the area. In Denmark, a small country with the world's highest wind turbine development (6,000 turbines), tourism has grown 50% since 1980 and wind farms are thought to have had no negative effects on the tourist industry. Critically, public opinion there about turbines is unchanged, in that most Danes still want more wind farms.

### BREAKDOWN OF ISSUES & RESEARCH

#### International research

**Scotland:** An independent 2002 survey<sup>1</sup> performed by MORI (Market & Opinion Research International) and commissioned by BWEA and the Scottish Renewables Forum provides strong evidence that wind farms do more to benefit than harm tourism. MORI interviewed tourists visiting Argyll and Bute, Scotland, an area chosen because it currently has the greatest concentration of wind farms in Scotland. Furthermore, the area also has a tourism industry reliant on the area's high landscape value. Almost half (48%) of the respondents who came to the area reporting doing so for the scenery (as opposed to 10% who said they came for music festivals, the next most reported reason).

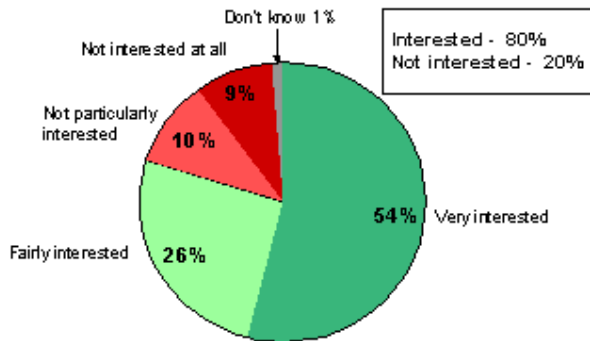
Forty percent of tourists interviewed were aware of the existence of wind farms in the area and when asked whether this presence had a positive or negative effect, two in five (43%) maintained that it had a positive effect, while a similar proportion (43%) felt it made no difference. Less than one in ten (8%) felt that it had a negative effect. This means that the majority of tourists who knew about the wind farms came away with a more positive image of the area because of their presence.

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<sup>1</sup> Tourist Attitudes Toward Windfarms, MORI summary report, September 2002; available at <http://www.bwea.com/pdf/MORI.pdf>

### Visiting Windfarm/Visitor Centres

Q If a windfarm in Argyll were to open to the public with a visitor centre showing information about how it works, to what extent would you be interested in visiting it on this or another trip to the area?



Base: All respondents (307)

Source: MORI

When respondents were asked whether the presence of wind farms in Argyll made any difference to the likelihood of them visiting the area, 91% said it made no difference. Importantly, twice as many people said they would be “more likely” to visit again than the amount who would be “less likely” to visit. Finally, tourists were asked to what extent they would be interested in visiting a wind farm if it were opened to the public with a visitor centre. The majority, (80%) would be interested with over half (54%) “very interested”. Around one in five are “not interested”.

These data show that tourism and wind farms can co-exist, and that wind farms can actually have a positive impact on tourism, by helping promote a positive image of an area and by encouraging repeat visits. The high interest in going to a wind farm visitor centre reflects the strong trend in increasing environmental awareness of the public and in particular underscores the public’s desire to learn more about what is actually being done to help reduce our reliance on fossil fuels.

**Denmark:** The birthplace of the wind industry, Denmark is a good case study because it is also the world's largest wind industry and has been installing turbines since 1980. This small country, the size of Tasmania, has 6000 turbines giving it the highest density of wind turbines of any nation. (This density is unlikely to be repeated in any other country since newer wind turbines are more powerful than the majority operating in Denmark and fewer are needed to generate the same amount of energy.) Yet tourism in Denmark has increased by some 50% since 1980. While there are no systematic studies, wind farms appear to have had no major impact on the country’s tourism whatsoever – positive or negative. It has been noted, however, that in general wind turbines tend to be good tourist attractions when they are new in an area.<sup>2</sup>

The general opinion amongst the industry is that wind farms are not perceived as a problem for tourism in Denmark. Wind farms are used for marketing in certain areas of Denmark, particularly to the German market, where the public is known to have a high level of interest in both environmental issues and new technology. Hotels, guest houses, and camp sites may use wind turbines for “green tourism” promotion.

Despite a six-fold growth since 1991 in the share of wind power to electricity consumption, a 2001 poll indicates 65% of the Danes still believe that it is a good idea to increase the share of wind energy in the Danish electricity supply -- exactly the same share of the population as in two previous opinion polls taken five and ten years earlier. People who

<sup>2</sup><http://www.scotexchange.net/Downloads/windfam/Section%20D.%20Overseas%20Case%20Studies.pdf>

Investigation into the potential impact of wind farms on tourism in Scotland – final report. Prepared for: VisitScotland, Prepared by: NFO System



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live near wind turbines are on average even more favourable towards wind energy, with a score of more than 80% in favour of wind energy.<sup>3</sup>

### Related Research

Research on public attitudes to wind farms underscores the above findings that the majority of people believe wind farms add value to an area.

**Neighbours of Wind Farms:** A recent Scottish Executive survey of residents near wind farms found that their opinion of the sites became more positive after it became operational. This independent study carried out by MORI found high levels of acceptance and overwhelming support for wind power, with support strongest amongst those who lived closest to the wind farms<sup>4</sup>. A total of 1,810 adults were interviewed by telephone in early 2003. All respondents lived within a 20 km zone of the 10 operational wind farms that have nine or more turbines.

People are three times more likely to say that they feel that their local wind farm has had a generally positive impact on the area (20%) as they are to say it has had a negative impact (7%). Many hold mixed views (51%), or express no opinion at all (22%). People living within 5 km of the local wind farm hold the most positive views, with 45% saying that they think the overall impact has been positive, and 6% saying they think it has been negative.

A majority (54%) would support an expansion of their local wind farm by half the number of turbines again, while one in ten is opposed (9%).

**Property Prices:** New, government-funded research from the USA provides further evidence that wind farms do not erode the land values and seem to increase the value of nearby properties more quickly. In May, 2003 the Renewable Energy Policy Project (REPP) released results from an extensive and extremely thorough study that answers the serious charge that wind farms might reduce property prices<sup>5</sup>. REPP did a total of thirty analyses on ten large wind farm projects. They found that for the great majority of projects the property values actually rose more quickly in the view shed (the area within five miles of the turbines) than they did in the comparable community. Moreover, values increased faster in the view shed after the projects came on-line than they did before, and increased faster than comparable properties not in the view shed.

### Australian Research

Thus far little research on wind farms' effect on tourism has been carried out in Australia. However, polling carried out by AusPoll for Pacific Hydro echoes recent UK research that wind farms are likely to have a net positive effect on tourism. There is also ample anecdotal evidence in Australia to show that wind farms have positive tourism potential.

**Polls:** An AusPoll survey conducted in 2001 for Pacific Hydro on the Portland Wind Energy Project, Victoria showed that 94% of Portland residents described wind generators as "interesting" and 74% as "graceful". In a separate AusPoll survey, when asked, "Specifically thinking about the tourism impact of building windmills would you be more or less likely to visit a coastal area for a holiday or day trip if there were electricity generating windmills in the area", 36% of Victorians surveyed said yes, 55% indicated that it would make no difference while only 8% said they would be less likely to visit the area.

**Tourist Industry Support for Clean Energy:** Notable tourism bodies, namely the South Australian Tourism Alliance and the Victorian Tourism Industry Council, have signed onto a statement demanding 10% new renewable energy by 2010 by expanding the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target. Currently about 70% of new renewable energy projects are wind farms.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Danish Wind Industry Association website: <http://www.windpower.org/en/faqs.htm#anchor295666>

<sup>4</sup> Public attitudes to wind farms: A survey of local residents in Scotland; Scottish Executive Social Research, 2003. Available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/environment/pawslr.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> The effect of wind development on local property values; Renewable Energy Policy Project Analytical Report, May 2003. Available at: [http://solstice.crest.org/articles/static/1/binaries/wind\\_online\\_final.pdf](http://solstice.crest.org/articles/static/1/binaries/wind_online_final.pdf)

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## Australian Wind Tourism Examples

The following summarises some effects of wind farms on tourism in Australia.

**Esperance, WA:** The Salmon Beach (recently closed) and Ten Mile Lagoon wind farms were included in the Esperance Tourist Bureau information and visitor guides and were visited by about 50,000 people each year (SKM, 2001). Road counters to the Ten Mile Lagoon wind farm were measuring 80 cars per day.

**Albany, WA:** The Albany Wind Farm is considered by many to be a wonderful tourism attraction, so much so that it has been featured on Channel 7 Great Outdoors Show. Planning is underway for a Wind Discovery Centre at the Albany Wind Farm, with the aim to build a world class centre to attract additional tourists to the Albany region, with facilities possibly operating at the site early next year. According to the city's economic development manager, John Berry, traffic counters suggest about 100,000 people visited the wind farm last year. The site has "the potential to be a premier WA tourism icon based on the sheer size of the structures and magnificent coastal setting..." (Albany Advertiser 31/1/03)

<http://thegreatoutdoors.com.au/display.php?location=WA&ID=2961>

**Codrington, Victoria:** The Codrington wind farm currently attracts 50,000 visitors per year. For those who want to stop and take a look, a tour company has been specifically set up to meet tourism demands, and site tours are run up to six times a week. In addition, West Coal Rail has offered day tours of the wind farm (WCR, 2003).

**Atherton Tablelands, Queensland:** The Windy Hill Wind Farm on the Atherton Tablelands was visited by approximately 30,000 cars in the first three months of operation, and a local company includes the wind farm in its regional tour itinerary (AusWEA, 2002).

**Ararat, Victoria:** The Ararat Rural City Council and a private operator are planning to harness the tourism potential of Pacific Hydro's Challicum Hills Wind Farm. This will include interpretive signage and provision of a safe place for motorists to pull over and learn about the wind farm. This is needed to reduce the chance of accidents that might be caused due to drivers being distracted as they pass the impressive structures. A private operator has spent 12 months preparing for tours into the hills with the generators. (Stawell Times News-Ararat Advertiser 9/9/2003)

**Woolnorth, Tasmania:** Following the success of the public open days that saw 7,000 people visit the Woolnorth Wind Farm, Hydro Tasmania has contracted tour operator Woolnorth Tours to conduct one hour, half-day and full day tours of the wind farm (HT, 2002a). Liberal leader Rene Hidding called upon the Tasmania government to push for wind farm tourism, and to establish a Centre for Excellence in Renewable Energy and Visitor Interpretation Site near the wind farm, which "would become a major drawcard for the region and capitalise on increased visitor arrivals on the Spirit of Tasmania vessels," according to Mr. Hidding, who also added, "this wind farm has the potential to be a "must see" tourism attraction..." (Mercury, Hobart, 9/8/2003, p.11).

**Crookwell, NSW:** The Crookwell Wind Farm open day was attended by 400-500 people. Since then tourists have travelled to the wind farm both as individuals and interest groups.

**Toora, Victoria:** Stanwell Corporation established the Toora Wind Visitors Information Centre in the main street of Toora. Over 5,000 visitors have signed the visitors log book between September 2002 and April 2003. It is estimated that many more people visited the wind farm as the Toora Information Centre was only open 20 hours a week during that time. The Toora Information Centre is a regular stop for three tour companies to Gippsland.  
<http://www.toorawind.com.au/windfarm.htm>

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