

# Evidence of Wind Farms as Tourism Draws

There is considerable evidence to demonstrate that wind farms in a number of U.S. and international sites have become tourism draws. There is also information demonstrating some positive impacts are observable in New Hampshire.

- 1) Anecdotal information obtained as the result of Iberdrola's presence in Lempster suggests that the Lempster Wind Farm has contributed to an increase in tourism in the area, and has increased the level of interest in the Town. Town officials and some area businesses report increased numbers of visitors, and many requests for information about the wind farm. Lempster Wind produced a brochure on area attractions which includes basic facts about the wind farm. These brochures have been in high demand, as both the Town of Lempster and the nearby general store have asked for additional copies a few different times. In addition, Lempster Town Hall employees have commented that they receive many inquiries regarding the wind turbines and that people perceive the wind farm to be an area attraction. VisitNH produces a brochure titled "New Hampshire's Wine & Cheese trails" which depicts driving tours in New Hampshire of the many wineries in the state. The brochure specifically suggests visiting the Silver Mountain Winery located in Lempster as part of a "Valley Vineyards" scenic driving tour.
- 2) The Mountain View Grand Resort in Whitefield, NH is recognized as one of the most "eco-friendly" hotels in New Hampshire. 100% of their energy is produced through onsite wind power generation and their advertising prominently displays their wind turbine demonstrating the growing emphasis on eco-tourism and sustainability.
- 3) A report issued by Renewable Energy Vermont states that "the Mt. Snow Haystack Regional Chamber of Commerce reported that of those who made inquiries, about 10% asked for information about the turbines in Searsburg." Many other wind farm sites are listed as local "tourist attractions." Some sites plan for and encourage tourism, with visitor centers, educational and informational programs, the opportunity to climb wind towers to enjoy the "spectacular views," and even "the unique experience of staying overnight [at] an operating wind farm" at one Minnesota facility.
- 4) A California Adventure travel company actively promotes windfarm tours, featuring three tours daily, with prices starting at \$35<sup>1</sup>.
- 5) The state of California also has a commercially produced post card which features four prominent windfarms in the state. The postcard is distributed throughout the San Joaquin Valley and can be found in restaurants, hotels, and shopping centers from Tehachapi to San Francisco. As many as 15,000 have been distributed.

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<sup>1</sup> (<http://caladventures.com/listings/windfarmtoursnone/>)

- 6) In some instances, wind farms have actually served to generate a new tourism economy. In Michigan, tours have been created to address consumer demand and interest. The tours are highly successful and have generated waiting lists. They promote 10 sites as “best windmill viewing locations”. In the town of Elkon, Mi., enthusiastic town supporters began holding Wind Turbine Day each summer. Wind Turbine Day offered driving tours, bicycle tours, and booths about alternative energy and more.



- 7) In Madison County, New York, the town of Fenner has created **The Free (Fenner Renewable Energy Education) Center** as a grass-roots organization formed to educate the public on the benefits of renewable energy and other sustainable practices. The center is designed to provide a focal point for the thousands of tourists who drive to the town to see the wind farm that has been operational since 2001.
- 8) Atlantic City wind turbines have become a tourist attraction at the town’s wastewater treatment facility, with about 15,000 people per year attending one of the many tours they offer. Of equal importance is the fact that the Atlantic City Convention and Visitors Authority recognizes the wind farm as a recognized tourist attraction, and some hotels offer rooms that feature views of the wind turbines.
- 9) In Lowville, NY, a year major bicycle race starts at Maple Ridge Wind Farm amongst the 198 wind towers (each 230 foot tall) in the Tug Hill Plateau area of Lewis County. You have a choice of a community 10 mile or the full 46 mile course, and a choice to run a mountain or cyclocross bike. "Race with the Wind is a fabulous event for our area," Bethany J. Yost, Frontier's general manager in Lowville, said in the release. "It showcases our natural beauty, renewable energy and opportunities for healthy recreation."
- 10) The 2,650 mile Pacific Crest Trail, ranked the 10th best hiking trail in the country, passes directly through The Tehachapi Wind Farm, with around 5,000 wind turbines, and the Manzana Wind Farm, another Iberdrola Wind Farm. The Kern-Kaweah chapter of the Sierra Club leads a hike on the Pacific Crest Trail every year in May to spotlight a little-known section of the trail as well as the 3,500 wind turbines in the Tehachapi Pass. The event marks the 28th year of the annual spring hike. More than 800 people, from children to octogenarians, have taken the six-mile walk across Cameron Ridge since the event was first launched.
- 11) In the state of Maine, The Stetson Wind Snowmobile Ride-In, is a tour of Maine wind farms put on by the wind power company First Wind and local groups. The tour is

designed to kick-start the creation a 590-mile circuit of existing trails that would connect Maine's viewing points of power projects.

- 12) In Scotland, Scottish Power Renewables, an Iberdrola Company has built the Whitlee Farm Visitor Center. Located on the edge of the UK's largest windfarm, the Visitor Centre is the place to learn all about renewable energy and is the access point to over 130kms of trails for cycling, walking and other outdoor activities.
- 13) The UK's first commercial wind farm in Cornwall received 350,000 visitors in its first 10 years of operation. An energy center was opened at the site in 2001 and received 50,000 visitors in its first year. In Swaffham, Norfolk, tourists queue to climb the wind turbine tower to the viewing platform at the top.
- 14) McCamey, Texas is the self-proclaimed "Wind Capital of Texas" and identifies the town's identity with wind trubines. The town is listed in the Texas Travel Guide 2013 as the Wind Energy Captial of Texas. The McCamey Chamber of Commerce hosts "Wind Energy Capital of Texas Cook-off and Festival" in September and prominently features pictures of wind turbine as an identity element of the town.

