

**THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
SITE EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

Docket No. 2015-02

Re: Antrim Wind Energy, LLC

PRE-FILED TESTIMONY OF MARY E. ALLEN

1 **Q: Please state your name and address.**

2 A. Mary E. Allen, 21 Summer St., Antrim, New Hampshire.

3

4 **Q. What is the purpose of this testimony?**

5 A. To provide the NH Site Evaluation Committee with a description of the 34,500-acre
6 Supersanctuary project, developed beginning in 1985 under the leadership of the Harris
7 Center for Conservation Education, and to show the Supersanctuary's relationship the
8 Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership, a two-state regional conservation effort that started
9 in 2003.

10

11 Both projects bring together individual landowners and nonprofit organizations to
12 create and preserve a significant wildlife corridor with regional impacts spanning two
13 states (New Hampshire and Massachusetts). These regional efforts represents a
14 significant long-term investment in creating an invaluable public asset and offer a prime
15 example of a "public interest" benefit that has been ongoing since 1985.

16

17 In spite of their clear importance, neither of these long-term conservation projects were
18 widely examined in the prior NHSEC hearings on Antrim Wind Energy's project. My co-
19 intervenor (Charles Levesque) and I believe the NH Site Evaluation Committee should be
20 aware of – and take into careful consideration – both projects and view them through a
21 lens of "public interest."

22

23 **Q. How long have you lived in Antrim?**

1 A. Since February, 1975 ... 41 years

2 **Q. Could you briefly describe your work experience and education?**

3 A. I was a journalist for 24 years and worked for several New Hampshire newspapers,
4 including the Concord Monitor, The Keene Sentinel and the former Monadnock Ledger
5 (now the Ledger-Transcript of Peterborough). I held various positions at those
6 publications including: reporter, copy editor, assignment editor, local news editor and
7 editorial writer.

8

9 In my last job, in Keene, I was in charge of the local news coverage and was responsible
10 for assigning, editing stories, and training the six full-time local news reporters. One of
11 the areas I coordinated was the newspaper's environmental reporting.

12

13 I received my bachelor's degree from Syracuse University in education. In addition,
14 I earned 36 graduate hours in guidance and counseling at Syracuse University.

15

16 **Q. What is your experience with municipal and community boards in New**
17 **Hampshire?**

18 A. I served on the Antrim Board of Adjustment for 12 years (as clerk and later as
19 chairman). I served for 12 years as a Supervisor of the Checklist for Antrim and was
20 chairman during my last six-year term. I was an alternative on the Antrim Planning
21 Board for two years.

22

1 I was appointed to terms on two Master Plan committees for Antrim; a term on the
2 Antrim’s Capital Improvement Plan committee; and I have served for several years as a
3 member of the Antrim Scholarship Committee.

4

5 On a regional level, I was elected to and served two three-year terms on the Contoocook
6 Valley Regional School Board (which has 13 representatives from nine towns). In
7 addition, I am currently a director for the Contoocook Housing Trust, a nonprofit
8 housing trust with 13 properties in four local towns.

9

10 **Q. What is the Harris Center’s Supersanctuary? How did you learn about it?**

11 A. I first learned about the Supersanctuary in 1996 when I was assigned to write a
12 Sunday feature story for The Keene Sentinel (Allen, exhibit 1).

13

14 According to H. Meade Cadot, the retired director of the Harris Center, the term
15 “sanctuary” was borrowed from the de Pierrefeu family, which donated 600 acres,
16 including most of the land around Willard Pond, to the Audubon Society of New
17 Hampshire in the late 1960s. Willard Pond is adjacent to the proposed site for Antrim
18 Wind Energy’s nine-turbine wind energy facility.

19

20 The 600-acre tract around Willard Pond became one of the prime anchors for the
21 Supersanctuary project in the mid-1980s and it continues to be at the heart of that
22 conservation program.

23

1 **Q. What is the goal of the “Supersanctuary?”**

2 A. The goal of the Supersanctuary is to protect the uplands watershed area between the
3 Merrimack and Connecticut rivers from becoming further fragmented by residential and
4 commercial development and to preserve larger tracts of unspoiled land that are so
5 important for the region’s recreational and tourist economy.

6

7 Even with “clustered” housing developments that were becoming popular in the 1980s,
8 large mammals were left without enough wild areas to hunt, breed or survive. The
9 Supersanctuary’s goal is to create large tracts of contiguous parcels to form corridors for
10 migrating animals and habitat for large mammals. Breeding songbirds and larger
11 migratory birds also feel the pressure of residential development and benefit from large
12 tracts of undeveloped land.

13

14 The Supersanctuary is an on-going project of the Harris Center for Conservation
15 Education, a NH non-profit organization that promotes environmental and conservation
16 education.

17

18 **Q. How does the Supersanctuary work?**

19 A. The Supersanctuary is best described as a “mosaic” or patchwork of conservation
20 efforts. It is neither a private or public “park” but a network of the private tracts that
21 are most often open to the public for hunting, fishing, snowmobiling and/or hiking.

22 Forest management is frequently practiced on Supersanctuary parcels, including
23 selective logging.

1 While the nonprofit project partners own many thousands of acres and directly
2 safeguard it for the public interest, the majority of the Supersanctuary land has
3 remained in private hands with conservation easements. Conservation easements have
4 been donated to or bought by a variety of public and private conservation groups,
5 including NH Fish and Game, New England Forestry Foundation, the Harris Center, the
6 Nature Conservancy, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, and the
7 local town conservation groups. These groups have a core mission to protect “public
8 interest” for the benefit of residents and landowners of this region.

9

10 Each tract of the Supersanctuary arrived at that status through one of several legal
11 methods: gift, willed land gifts, bargain sales, conservation easement, deed restrictions
12 and mutual covenants (see “Protecting land for nature can take many forms,” the boxed
13 sidebar in Allen, Exhibit 1)

14

15 **Q. How big is the Supersanctuary?**

16 A. When the Keene Sentinel article was published, almost 20 years ago, the
17 Supersanctuary had a total of 8,380 acres.

18

19 As of 2016, the Harris Center reports that 34,500 acres are now protected, with the
20 Harris Center either owning outright (in fee) or managing 22,500 acres of that 34,500.

21

22 **Q. How is the Supersanctuary project related to the Quabbin-to-Cardigan**

23 **Partnership?**

1 A. The Supersanctuary’s network of protected acreage falls within the Quabbin-to-
2 Cardigan Partnership (Q2C) parameters, as described in Chris Wells’ pre-filed testimony
3 to the NH Site Evaluation Committee.

4
5 The map of the Q2C portion in Antrim (see Wells testimony) shows the overlap and the
6 position of the conserved Supersanctuary properties within the boundary of the Q2C
7 project.

8
9 **Q. Why is this information important to the NH Site Evaluation Committee?**

10 A. The Supersanctuary and the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership’s protected public
11 access corridor are major land conservation efforts in a region that spans two states and
12 includes the uplands watershed area where Antrim Wind Energy LLC’s proposes to
13 build a large-scale wind energy facility.

14
15 The essential problem is this: A large-scale wind facility, with nine 488-foot tall
16 turbines, ridgetop roadways with extensive clearing on either side, and perimeter
17 fencing stretching for several miles is at odds with the stated public interest goals of
18 both the Supersanctuary or the Q2C Partnership and is also inconsistent with the Antrim
19 Open Space Conservation Plan discussed in Charles Levesque’s pre-filed testimony.

20
21 Further, the proposed wind energy facility will create an industrial “island” in the midst
22 of thousand of acres of protected land:

- 1 • At the southern border of Antrim Wind Energy’s leased land is the 34,500-acre
2 Supersanctuary.
- 3 • Directly to the north, the 5,513-acre Peirce Reservation land (owned by the
4 Forest Society and the Sweet Water Trust) extends into Stoddard and includes
5 valuable wildlife habitat.
- 6
- 7 • To the northwest of the AWE lease, the 11,500-acre Andorra Forest, located
8 mostly in Stoddard, includes a 2,600-acre wilderness area known as Wildcat
9 Hollow. That important tract is intended to be “forever” wild and which has been
10 allowed to return to a natural state.

11

12 Permitting Antrim Wind Energy to erect the tallest wind turbines yet in the state, and
13 which will be the tallest man-made structures in New Hampshire to date, will create a
14 barrier that large mammals and migrating birds will have to negotiate around or avoid.
15 In addition, the nine wind turbines will significantly change the public experience when
16 using and enjoying these natural areas that heretofore were untouched by commercial
17 facilities, let alone large-scale and highly visible ones. This will defeat 50 years of
18 conservation efforts, and financial sacrifice, in a key area of public interest.

19

20 And while Antrim Wind Energy’s offer to off-set the development of its industrial wind
21 farm with other conservation land or grants is laudable, it does not negate the fact this
22 proposed wind energy facility will be on a critical uplands ridgeline and will be highly
23 visible for members of the public using the nearby protected areas.

1 **Q. Do you see a conflict in the need for renewable energy as a public interest and**
2 **the public interest involved in conserving lands on and around an uplands ridge?**

3 A. I believe there is a clear conflict.

4

5 Although it is possible to describe both the Supersantuary and the Q2C efforts in terms
6 of the number of acres protected, it is not possible to put a price tag on decades of efforts
7 by landowners who willingly entered into contracts to protect their land for “the greater
8 good” of protecting a key uplands watershed. There has been a significant monetary
9 commitment by those landowners, who either donated land or their rights, to achieve a
10 shared public interest.

11

12 Meanwhile, Antrim Wind Energy’s proposed facility is a for-profit business that is free to
13 sell its energy to the highest bidder. And, while the State of New Hampshire has set a
14 goal of encouraging renewable energy sources, this is not a publically-owned venture
15 created to serve the public interest.

16

17 The NH Site Evaluation Committee must weigh whether adding a 28.8 megawatts
18 capacity wind energy facility (with, so far, publicly undisclosed wind resources) to New
19 England’s electricity pool has a greater public interest benefit than 50 years of effort by
20 local landowners and conservation groups to protect a key watershed and a vital wildlife
21 corridor.

22 **Q. Does this conclude your pre-filed testimony?**

23 A. Yes

1
2
3
4

Exhibit List

MA Exh A Keene Sentinel article

Draft

The Sunday Sentinel

197th year, No. 295

December 8, 1996

Special introductory price: \$1.00

Newsstand price: \$1.25

Elbow room sought for animals

By MARY ALLEN
Sentinel Staff

HANCOCK — No highway signs mark the boundaries of the Supersanctuary. It doesn't show up on a road map. And you can't get directions to it at a gas station.

The cluster of protected properties is a concept — not a place. Most people in Antrim, Hancock, Harrisville and Nelson have never heard of the Supersanctuary and don't know it's right in their backyard.

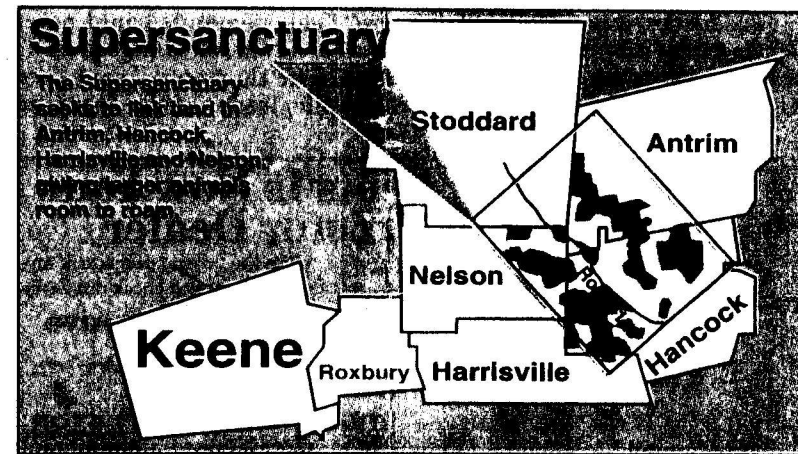
But the black bears, moose, fishers and bobcats know it. The Supersanctuary's hardwood for-

ests, ledges, ponds and swamp are very real to them — an 8,380-acre hunk of their home range that gives the larger species room to roam.

And people who know the region's backwoods know it, too, but maybe not by that name. The area is crisscrossed with hiking and snowmobiling trails, fishing ponds and deer-hunting grounds. Foresters cut the trees; farmers mow hay on the open fields near rivers and streams.

The Supersanctuary isn't a

(See SUPERSANCTUARY / A-5)



SENTINEL GRAPHIC

Supersanctuary would give animals

(Continued from A-1)

quiet place; it's teeming with life. And that's the whole idea.

A Supersanctuary?

The best way to understand the Supersanctuary is to look at the map at the Harris Center for Conservation Education in Hancock.

Like a patchwork quilt with bits of green here and there, the Supersanctuary blankets sections of Antrim, Hancock, Harrisville and Nelson and marks the uplands watershed area between the Merimack and Connecticut rivers.

The green patches indicate property that are protected from development. Much of the land is still privately owned, but those three dozen families have given away or voluntarily sold their development rights. Deeds to a dozen other parcels belong to conservation groups, including the N.H. Fish and Game Department, the New England Forestry Foundation, the Harris Center, the Nature Conservancy, the Society for Protection of N.H. Forests, the Audubon Society of New Hampshire and the town of Hancock.

The term "Supersanctuary" was coined by H. Meade Cadot, director of the Harris Center. Cadot started using the word in the mid-1980s, when development pressures threatened to fracture large pieces of undeveloped land.

"We borrowed the word 'sanctuary' from the de Pierrefeu family," Cadot says. The family owned most of the land around Willard Pond, a tiny unspoiled lake just over the Hancock town line in Antrim. The 600-acre-plus de Pierrefeu Willard Pond Sanctuary was donated to the National Audubon Society in late 1960s and later transferred to the Audubon Society of New Hampshire.

The Willard Pond property became one of the anchors for the Supersanctuary project in 1985, Cadot says.

Land development pressure was at its peak then. A record number of private landowners and conservation groups began restricting development rights. The map of lands neighboring the Harris Center filled with green dots.

But few of them connected in any meaningful way, Cadot says, a problem Cadot and conservationists call fragmentation. And that was troubling.

Fragmentation

Fragmentation has been a hot topic in the conservation world for the past 10 to 15 years, says Mark R. Ellingwood, a biologist with the wildlife division of the N.H. Fish and Game Department.

When large tracts of land are developed, the impact often seems limited to just one area. But wildlife experts like Ellingwood say there's a lot more at stake.

An example: a road for a six-lot housing development built through a pristine 50-acre wood lot. The roadbed takes up 3 or 4 acres and each house about an acre of cleared land. The rest of the forest is left in its natural state.

To the untrained eye, that might seem like a good thing. Ten acres get used for development and 40 acres are left for wildlife.

But just one black bear can range 100 square miles, Ellingwood says. Moose often roam 10 square miles and the bulls can travel miles in search of a mate.

Breaking up a 50-acre lot does more than take 10 acres from the animal's range — it fragments it. There may be plenty of open land left, but the new road could prevent the bear from getting to a good winter den site, or the moose from reaching food. The result: The bear or moose move on, searching for a larger unspoiled tract.

Even smaller mammals suffer from fragmentation, Ellingwood says. Young fishers often migrate 30 miles from their birthing range after they reach adulthood; bobcats also need a range of several square miles to prosper.

And nonmammal species can be hard hit — literally. Salamanders and turtles put it all on the line when they cross highways to reach breeding grounds; many don't make it.

And finally, not even winged creatures are completely safe. Cadot says several species of songbirds, including migratory types like the Magnolia Warbler, use isolated pockets of intact North American forests for their breeding sites. If a housing development or a shopping mall pops up in that pocket, the songbirds search elsewhere for nest sites.

A patchwork quilt

The easiest way to describe the Supersanctuary project is what it's not.

■ It is not all public land. It's a mix of about three dozen parcels, all protected from development but by several methods (see related story). Public agencies, such as town conservation commissions and N.H. Fish and Game, control some of the land; others are privately owned.

■ It is not a wilderness area. While most of the land is protected from development, timber harvesting, farming and recreation are allowed — even encouraged.

■ It is not a tax drain. Only land that's publicly owned, by the state or a town, is totally off the tax rolls. Privately owned parcels may qualify for a lower rate under N.H. current use tax regulations. The land is taxed as it is currently used — as a tree farm, wood lot, farm or recreation area. The rate is lower than for unrestricted property, but landowners still pay a yearly property tax to their towns.

The Harris Center pays taxes on its 1,000-acres-plus at the current use rate. Other conservation groups have different arrangements with local towns, but also contribute to the tax rolls.

Development pressure led to the birth of the Supersanctuary concept.

In the early 1980s, the Harris Center became a local land trust as part of its teaching-by-doing approach to land stewardship. The center became a clearinghouse for information on land conservation and an oversight agency for some easements.

As landowners and town officials moved to protect open space, Cadot noticed a pattern.

Three substantial tracts of land near the center were protected: the Willard Pond tract owned by the Audubon Society; Keene State College's Louis Cabot Preserve with its undeveloped lake frontage on Nubanusit Lake and Spoonwood Pond in Hancock and Nelson; and the state-owned lands on Bald Mountain in Antrim and Carpenter's Marsh in Hancock.

more room to roam

In addition, conservation efforts had preserved large tracts in Stoddard, just north of the Harris Center — including the privately owned 10,000-plus acre Andorra Forest and the 5,000-acre Peirce Reservation owned by the Forest Society. To the south, the a huge land surrounding Mount Monadnock is owned by the state and the Forest Society.

The idea for the Supersanctuary was born, says Cadot, as a way to create greenbelt corridors for wildlife.

"The long-term goal became creating a bridge between these protected pockets," Cadot says. "We were working on the cluster around here and looking for ways to tie them to the clusters north and south — a sort of supercluster."

"It's a fantastic project," says Richard Ober, a spokesperson for the Society for the Protection of N.H. Forests. "We are recognizing there are a lot of opportunities to link and expand conservation land."

While projects such as the Supersanctuary try to link protected land, the object isn't to keep people out of the picture.

"We aren't talking about locking land up," Ober says. "The idea is to keep the land productive but leave it protected."

Cadot says the Harris Center acts as a catalyst for the Supersanctuary project.

When a prime parcel on Spoonwood Pond went on the market, the Harris Center helped neighbors pull together to raise the money to buy it. A total of 54 contributors joined that effort, Cadot says.

And when the owners of a lot on Osgoed Mountain were willing to sell their land at a bargain price, 19 contributors pitched in to raise the cash need for the sale.

And the Harris Center took an active role in helping secure grants from the Land Conservation Investment Program. That program, which ran from 1987 to 1993, helped preserve 100,876 acres in the state before it ended.

Financed by a combination of public tax dollars and private donations — and using public funds to leverage land donations — the land program helped save a mosaic of land in Southwest New Hampshire. Some of those parcels included a maple sugarbush in Acworth, 1,253 acres of productive woodlands on Little Monadnock Mountain; and prime wetlands in Hancock, Dublin and Marlborough.

Bellwethers of success

Does the Supersanctuary concept work?

Ellingwood says one of the best indicators of success is whether populations of large mammals hold steady.

"Black bear and moose are a good standard to work with," Ellingwood says. "They act as a bellwether to the well-being of other plants and animals."

All animals have diverse needs — food, shelter, water and a habitat that's relatively free enough from the pressures of mankind. If those needs are being met, the population stays stable or rises.

Moose are increasing in southwest New Hampshire. They're frequently sighted along Routes 9 and 123 in the Supersanctuary area.

Black bear-sightings have also increased, Ellingwood and Cadot say. They aren't as numerous as moose, but Ellingwood says bear numbers are up notably in this region.

Intense conservation efforts in the Hancock area have brought other visitors, Cadot says. The Harris Center allows hunting on most of its property, but asks hunters to register with the office.

Cadot says the registration log tells a surprising story. Many hunters come to Hancock from the Nashua area.

"The trend surprised me at first," says Cadot. "We had thought most of the hunters would be from around the Hancock area."

What Cadot discovered was Nashua hunters — many who hunted with their fathers or uncles in the city limits when they were young — had found their former hunting grounds gobbled up by housing developments and mini-malls.

"Nashua used to be like Peterborough is now," Cadot says. "It's changed from a rural area to a suburban one within the lifetimes of these hunters."

All development isn't bad, Cadot says. The trick is knowing what's the best use for a parcel of land, not what will bring the most money when it goes on the market.

The ledges, swamps, ponds and woodlands in the Supersanctuary area aren't the best sites for large-scale development, Cadot says. "What we're trying to do is create an environment that gives all of us — mankind and animals — enough room to roam."

Protecting land for nature can take many forms

By MARY ALLEN
Sentinel Staff

Protecting open land can be done through several legal methods. Most gifts, sales, easements and restrictions are permanent. If the land is sold again, the agreements are binding on the new owners too.

This list of land conservation options is taken from guidelines prepared by the Society for Protection of N.H. Forests:

Gifts of land to a conservation organization or land trust. If the organization's board of directors accepts the gift, the property becomes part of its permanent holdings. A gift can be tailored to allow the donor to continue to live on the land.

In some cases — with consent of the donor — the gift land may be resold with conservation restrictions. The proceeds from

these restricted sales benefit the group's other land protection projects.

Willed land gifts. Leaving land to a conservation group in a legal will allows the owner to manage the property during his or her lifetime, while ensuring it will not be developed in the future. A lawyer should be consulted about the right way to donate land in a will.

Bargain sale. If a landowner is willing to sell his property for less than "fair market" value, sometimes the difference between the market price and the bargain price can be taken as a tax deduction.

Under a bargain sale, the landowner approaches a conservation group with an offer. If the group can come up with that purchase price, the deal is made. Funds for the bargain purchase can be raised in special fund-

raising drives or taken from the group's land acquisition account.

Conservation easement. Land ownership extends to the soil, minerals, trees and vegetation on the property and the owner has certain legal rights to use those resources. A conservation easement is a binding agreement between a landowner and a conservation group. The owner keeps the land and its natural resources, but gives up the right to uses such as mining and commercial or residential development.

The conservation group, acting as grantee, agrees to monitor the use of the land to make sure it stays in forestry or agricultural use. The owner can live on the land, sell it or pass it on to heirs but the easement remains in effect forever.

Deed restrictions. An owner can place deed restriction on

land that is being sold to another. The restrictions spell out what activities will be allowed on the property and which ones are prohibited. The seller can "retain" the restrictions and monitor the use of the land to make sure the restrictions are not violated. However, N.H. state law suggests that restrictions are stronger if they are handed over to a public entity or a conservation group as a conservation easement.

Mutual covenants. Landowners and their neighbors may agree to voluntarily impose restrictions on the uses of their land. The restrictions are binding on current and future owners, but they run only for a specified period of time. For example, covenants are often set up by waterfront owners who share common concerns about land use around the body of water.