

# CONCERNED CITIZENS OF CATTARAUGUS COUNTY

Volume 17, Issue 1

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February 2009

## EVERPOWER IN ALLEGANY: INDUSTRIAL WIND FARM PROPOSAL

By Gary Abraham, Esq., CCCC Attorney

Everpower Renewables is a recent startup company whose proposal for a 32-turbine wind farm in the Chipmonk area south of the Village of Allegany has proceeded furthest of a half-dozen wind farm proposals around the county. Other proposals have been discussed in Ashford, Carrollton, Farmersville, Freedom, Hinsdale, Little Valley, Machias, Yorkshire and the Town of Olean.

CCCC is not opposed to the development of wind energy. However, we have concerns based on the imbalance between noise impacts in very quiet communities that result when industrial wind turbines are sited too close to homes, and the poor performance of commercial wind plants. None of the wind projects proposed in Cattaraugus County would provide electricity to the communities that would host them. Instead, the electricity is provided to the regional electric grid. The only benefit to the community is through a portion of a "payment in lieu of taxes" (PILOT), since the projects are exempt from property tax. Most of the PILOT money comes from our state and federal income taxes.

The question is whether this transfer of public money is enough to justify disturbing neighbors of the project, potentially devaluing their property, and damaging the environment with intrusive road building and equipment. Each turbine must be erected with a 500-ton crane and mounted on over one million pounds of cement as much as 12 feet below ground. Access roads for the crane must have at least 10 feet of gravel base. Local roads must be repaired after the project is built. Clearly, these are major industrial projects that should not be sited in areas where residents expect to avoid such things.

The National Academy of Sciences recently issued a report on "Environmental Impacts of Wind-Energy Projects," urging that the benefits of commercial wind energy be weighed against its burdens. Among the Academy's conclusions: "Wind energy will contribute proportionately less to electricity generation in the mid-Atlantic region than in the United States as a whole,

because a smaller portion of the region has high-quality wind resources than the portion of high-quality wind resources in the United States as a whole." The wind industry says Class 4 winds or better (of seven classes) are needed for a viable wind project. NYSEERDA commissioned a wind resource map for the entire state of New York showing Class 4 winds are limited to off shore along the Great Lakes and Long Island, and only a few isolated areas of land. There are no Class 4, 5 or 6 winds, common in the Midwest, in Cattaraugus County. However, newer wind turbines can operate in Class 3 winds because they are very high, reaching higher elevated wind velocities. In Allegany, Everpower proposes turbines 505 feet high at the upper reach of the turbine blades. This is 200 feet higher than the Statue of Liberty.

As a result of the poor land-based wind resources in New York, no operating wind farm in the state (there are a half-dozen so far) has generated more than 20% of its rated capacity. Thus, Everpower's proposed 32 turbines, each rated at 2.5 megawatts (MW), can at best be expected to generate 16 MW. To put that in perspective, the coal-fired Huntley power plant in Tonawanda has a rated capacity of 100 MW and runs at a 70% capacity or better. New York's hydro- and nuclear-power plants have a similar rated capacity and operate at over 90%.

More importantly, wind power relies on conventional power plants that can be ramped up or down in response to electricity demand or the integration of other generators on the grid. In fact, when the wind picks up and wind turbines start pumping electricity into the grid, natural gas and hydro power plants must be ordered to slow down. But they can't be dispensed with because, when the wind dies down, conventional plants must be ramped up. That's why wind power displaces very little CO<sub>2</sub>. The National Academy of Sciences projects that wind power could displace about 2.25% of U.S. anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2020.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## UPDATE ON WEST VALLEY CLEANUP

On November 25<sup>th</sup>, DOE/NYSERDA issued a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Decommissioning and/or Long-Term Stewardship at the West Valley Demonstration Project and Western New York Nuclear Service Center. Proposed alternatives are:

**1. Sitewide Removal** – Site facilities would be removed; environmental media would be decontaminated; all radioactive, hazardous and mixed waste would be characterized, packaged and eventually shipped off site.

**2. Sitewide Close-In-Place** – Most facilities would be closed, larger inventories of long-lived radionuclides would be isolated, the tank farm and burial grounds would be managed in place.

**3. Phased Decisionmaking** (preferred by DOE) – DOE does say, "Under this alternative, **decommissioning** would be completed in two phases." However, Phase 1 would include removal of foundations, slabs or pads, the Main Process Building, source of the plume and lagoons. No decommissioning would be conducted for the Tank Farm, NDA or SDA during this phase. Phase 2 decision process would begin sometime within the next 30 years. At this point,

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- Everpower in Allegany
- West Valley Cleanup
- CAFOs
- Emerald Ash Borer

### MACHIAS WIND LAW

#### Public Hearing

7:00 PM

Monday, March 9, 2009

Machias Fire Hall

**THE GOAL OF CCCC** is to keep the citizens of Cattaraugus County informed with up-to-date data on all environmental issues affecting the area.



### Officers:

President:

Lois Ann Zendarski

Vice President:

David C. Amsler

Treasurer:

Marie Comstock-Johnson

Secretary:

Barry Miller

### NEXT CCCC MEETING

**Thursday, March 5**  
**7:00 PM**

The Pines  
2245 W. State Street  
Olean NY 14760

Check our web site or your local newspaper for dates and locations for all of our meetings

## WEST VALLEY CLEANUP

(continued from page 1)

there is no commitment to decommissioning under this phase.

**4. No Action** – No action towards decommissioning would be undertaken. Continued management and oversight would continue.

There is a 6-month comment period ending June 8, 2009. Public informational meetings and hearings will be held by the DOE as follows:

- ▶ **March 31, 2009 6:00-9:00pm** - Seneca Nation of Indians, William Seneca Building, 12837 Rte 438, Irving, NY
- ▶ **April 1, 2009 6:30-9:30pm** - Ashford Office Complex, 9030 Route 219, West Valley, NY
- ▶ **April 2, 2009 6:30-9:30pm** - Clarion Hotel - McKinley's Banquet & Conference Center, S-3950 McKinley Parkway, Blasdell, NY

Another DOE Quarterly Public Meeting will be held in early May, about 30 days before the end of the comment period. For more information, see <http://www.westvalleyeis.com> ■

## CONFINED ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATIONS (CAFOs): WHY WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THEM

By Lois Ann Zendarski, President, Concerned Citizens of Cattaraugus County

Our country has experienced a changeover from family farms to more specialized farming techniques. Instead of families raising their own foods, factory farms have become more the rule. The trend had been going towards fewer larger farms for several decades. Recent agriculture census studies are showing that there has been a 4% increase in smaller farms over the past 5 years. However, factory farms or CAFOs (confined animal feeding operations) are of great concern.

CAFOs house and feed a large number of animals in confined areas for 45 days or more during any 12-month period. Because they are typically never pastured, the animals' manure is stored in open ponds in liquified form and sprayed on land by tankers. The Federal government requires these types of farms to develop a nutrient management plan regarding contamination of surrounding surface and ground water.

With an estimated 240,000 feeding operations, manure production is a staggering 500 million tons. These feeding operations are beginning to be seen as a health and environmental concern.

Those who work with livestock are likely to develop health problems, including chronic and acute respiratory illnesses and musculoskeletal injuries, and may be exposed to infections that cross from animals to humans. Those who live near CAFOs complain of odors and insects. Poultry and pig manure are especially known to migrate into groundwater.

Animals confined to small areas are more likely to become ill and in order to curb massive outbreaks, CAFO owners give their animals antibiotics. The antibiotics pass through the animal and into their manure, thus

contaminating the soils with the drugs. Cows may be given hormones to produce more milk, therefore subjecting humans to unnecessary hormones in their foods.

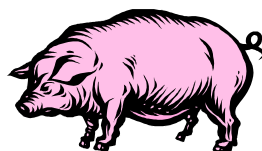


According to the Centers for Disease Control website:

Pollution in manures from CAFOs may contain:

- Antibiotics, which may contribute to the development of antibiotic-resistant pathogens
- Pathogens, such as parasites, bacteria, and viruses, which can cause disease in animals and humans
- Nutrients, such as ammonia, nitrogen, and phosphorus, which can reduce oxygen in surface waters, encourage the growth of harmful algal blooms, and contaminate drinking-water sources
- Pesticides and hormones, which researchers have associated with hormone-related changes in fish
- Solids, such as feed and feathers, which can limit the growth of desirable aquatic plants in surface waters and protect disease-causing microorganisms
- Trace elements, such as arsenic and copper, which can contaminate surface waters and possibly harm human health

The EPA is continuously studying the health risks to humans regarding manure coming from confined animal feed operations. ■



## EVERPOWER IN ALLEGANY

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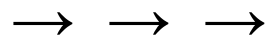
When they are operating, measurements have shown the jet engine-like noise from wind turbines results in about 50 decibels over a mile away. (They're actually quieter close up.) The noise is magnified for those, like the Chipmonk neighbors, who live in a valley below turbines sited on the ridge above. Turbine noise is doubly magnified under stable atmospheric conditions, where winds are blowing at turbine height but are calm at ground level. Then there is no masking noise from the wind, and the turbulent layer of air above acts as a ceiling trapping the turbine noise in the calm air below.

More importantly, background sound levels in a place like Chipmonk are about 25 decibels. The state Department of Environmental Conservation has a guide for assessing noise impacts that says community complaints can be expected when sound levels increase 6 decibels or more above background. An increase of 20 decibels is classified as "intolerable."

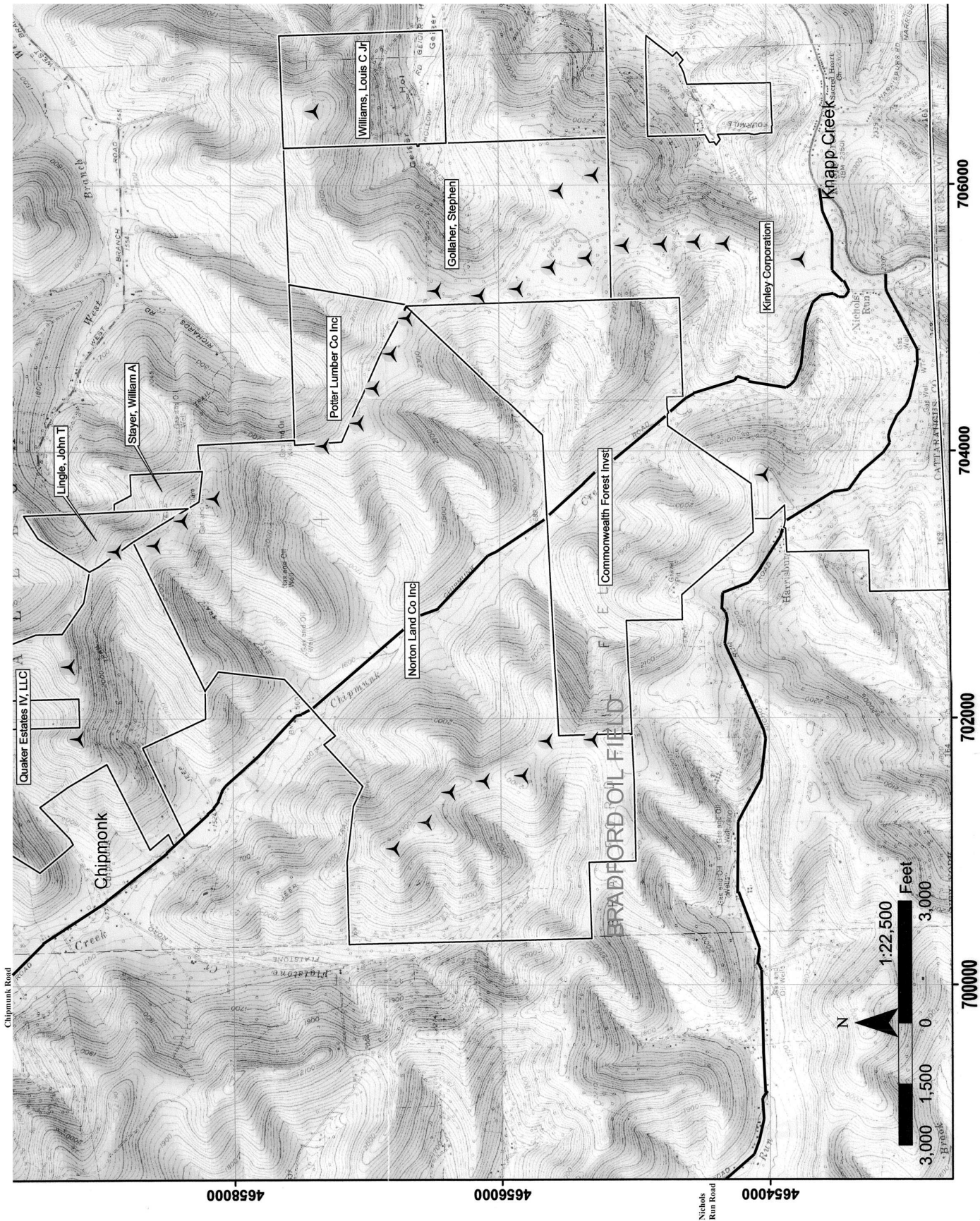
Wind developers around the state have submitted noise studies that measure background sound with the wind blowing. They get results near 50 decibels, but this is junk science. Acoustic standards require wind noise and other temporary noises to be excluded from measurements of background sound. Unless a town reviewing such a study hires its own acoustic expert to take independent measurements in accordance with acoustic standards, the town is unlikely to see the sleight of hand. But the evidence at wind farms around the world confirms that complaints about excessive noise accompany almost every project, after the developer has assured the community that the project would have no significant noise impacts.

If wind farms can be sited so they don't harm people, we're all for them. They don't produce much electricity, and with current technology they're not very reliable, but the nation needs to utilize all the renewable energy sources we have. However, we shouldn't have to sacrifice rural communities' peace and quiet to do so.

## CHIPMONK AND ROCK CITY ARE NOT AN INDUSTRIAL PARK!



Map on page 3 shows Everpower wind farm development in Chipmonk neighborhood south of Village of Allegany. Wind turbine locations are indicated by 3-bladed propellers.



EVERPOWER WIND FARM  
in Chipmonk Road area south of Village of Allegany, Cattaraugus County

## BEWARE THE EMERALD ASH BORER

By Barry Miller, Secretary, Concerned Citizens of Cattaraugus County

### DO NOT MOVE FIREWOOD FROM ITS PLACE OF ORIGIN!

Years ago, chestnut trees succumbed to a blight. Then Dutch elm disease wiped out our beautiful elm trees. Now there is a threat to our native white ash.

Native to Asia, the emerald ash borer is a small, bright green, wood-boring beetle that has already destroyed millions of ash trees in the U.S. Shipping pallets apparently brought the borer to Michigan on the shores of Lake Erie. It was first detected in 2002. Since then it has been causing problems in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and even in Western Pennsylvania and Ontario.

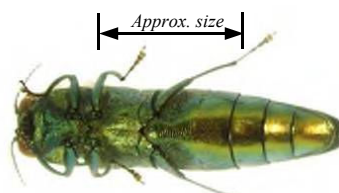
During the summer, adult emerald ash borers emerge from small, D-shaped holes in the ash tree bark and begin eating the leaves. They soon fly away looking for more food and mates, traveling distances of 50 feet or even a mile. Female borers lay their eggs in the bark. The larvae burrow under the bark and eat their way through the cambium in winding S-shaped tunnels. Affected ash trees first show dieback in the crown and later may put out sprouts near the base of the trunk. The tree's nutrient path is interrupted and the tree slowly dies.

To prevent the spread of this borer, strict quarantines have been set up in affected areas

of Michigan. Movement of ash trees, ash wood and any hardwood firewood from a quarantined area is prohibited. A nursery shipped some uninspected trees to Maryland just south of Washington, D.C. A year later, emerald ash borers were discovered in those trees. All ash trees within a radius of one mile were removed. So far, the situation there seems to be under control.

New York State is still free of this pest, but eastern Ohio and an area near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, are already infected. Any firewood imported from these areas would start an uncontrollable epidemic here. New York has a ban on wood movement and State parks warn campers to not bring their own firewood. If wood is inadvertently brought to a campground, it should be burned completely. ■

SPREAD THE WORD!  
SAVE OUR ASH TREES!



*Emerald Ash Borer (shown oversize)*

**YOUR SUGGESTIONS AND  
CONTRIBUTIONS WILL HELP  
CCCC IN ITS WORK  
TO PROTECT THE  
NATURAL BEAUTY AND  
ENVIRONMENT OF  
CATTARAUGUS COUNTY**

CCCC welcomes your suggestions and comments on these and any other matters you feel we should be monitoring.

You can contact us on the web at  
[www.concernedcitizens.homestead.com](http://www.concernedcitizens.homestead.com)

or  
Google Concerned Citizens of  
Cattaraugus County

or write to:

Concerned Citizens of Cattaraugus  
County  
P.O. Box 23  
Franklinville, NY 14737

## CONCERNED CITIZENS OF CATTARAUGUS COUNTY NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

**Yes, I want to help in the work of Concerned Citizens of Cattaraugus County!**

- ☐ \$30.00 – Group/Organization
- ☐ \$20.00 – Individual/Family
- ☐ \$12.00 – Senior/Student

*Please make check payable to:*

**Concerned Citizens of Cattaraugus County**

*Mail to:*

**Concerned Citizens of Cattaraugus County**

**P. O. Box 23**

**Franklinville NY 14737**

*Note: Many employers provide matching contributions—please check with your Human Resources Department.*

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