



ON THE WIND

Spring 2020
Volume 4: Issue 1

Our Mission

Save Our Allegheny Ridges (SOAR) serves as a resource for communities grappling with the complexities of industrial wind development.

Our Purpose

We are organized for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes to help communities understand the impact of industrial development on forested ridges.

Our Goals

We provide information on siting and regulatory processes to govern development, so citizens know how to protect natural resources and community health.

NEED HELP?

CONTACT US AT

www.SaveOurAlleghenyRidges.org



President's Message

Tussey Mountain in Bedford County, Pa. (photo above) was once slated for an industrial wind project, but most of the ridge top is owned by the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Fortunately, the Commissioners signed a resolution on April 24, 2018 that places a moratorium on all future wind development on State Game Lands in Pennsylvania.

Kudos to the Pennsylvania State Game Commissioners!

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Save Our Allegheny Ridges

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SOAR relies on Membership, Conservation Grants, and Grassroots Donations to fund our programs. We do not accept donations from fossil fuel companies.

Donate via check or PayPal. If check, mail to SOAR P. O. Box 178 Everett, PA 15537. If PayPal, donate via: <https://paypal.me/SOAR2006>

SOAR is a tax-exempt, not-for-profit, educational organization as described in 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations are deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

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Breaking News!!!

A BIG WIN FOR PENN FOREST CHAPTER

The Carbon County Court of Common Pleas has ruled in favor of the residents fighting a wind project proposed by Atlantic Wind, which would destroy globally rare habitat on 3 forested mountains: Stony, Pohopoco, and Call Mountains in Penn Forest Township. The Judge ruled that Atlantic Wind could not prove they would be able to meet the ordinance requirements regarding noise limits and that a wind project would create a second principal use on Bethlehem Authority's land, which is leased to Atlantic Wind. Penn Forest's zoning allows only one principal use and the current one is the production of drinking water to thousands of people in the City of Bethlehem area.

We are absolutely thrilled with the Judge's decision. The fight is not over, though, since Atlantic Wind filed a second application to build a wind project in most of the same area, but with fewer number of turbines that would only affect Pohopoco and Call Mountains. That application is before the same judge and we hope he will use the same legal decisions to deny this second application.

Congratulations to A. Christopher Mangold and Chris Nilsen, co-chairs of the Penn Forest Chapter of Save Our Allegheny Ridges, as well as all the other Penn Forest Chapter members. Hundreds of residents dedicated many hours and donated significant funds to fight this project since it was first proposed in April, 2016.

It's been a tough four years and the fight is not over, but this legal decision is very encouraging. We hope it gives folks added incentive to continue donating to Save Our Allegheny Ridges (SOAR) as we anticipate more legal challenges.

Please send donations to SOAR for Penn Forest. Donations are needed for future legal fees when Atlantic Wind appeals. Make the check payable to SOAR but write Penn Forest on the memo, or use PayPal.

Living with Turbines - John Terry

In the early years of the 2000s, an energy development company proposed a 60+ turbine industrial wind project for the mountain ridge adjacent to my property. In those days, a company could recoup about one third of their renewable energy investment from the government. This made wind speculation a nearly foolproof investment in their eyes. It also made me very interested in researching the downside of wind speculation. My late wife and I traveled coast to coast over several years, visiting and photographing wind energy facilities. I've learned a lot in my visits, but here are my first thoughts about living with turbines as neighbors.

Let me state, for the record, that I don't doubt that our life on Earth is threatened by global climate change caused by us. I am a believer in renewable energy. My children drive all-electric or hybrid cars and one has a roof of solar panels. I live on a large piece of forested property. I want to believe Google when they tell me that my trees absorb CO2 emissions equal to 125 cars each year.

From my home and driveway, I can see six wind turbines (one with a blinking red light), about a mile and a quarter to the west, on a ridge slightly higher than mine. The turbines have given me a new insight into weather, wind direction and speed, but they have polluted a view which I have no doubt will decrease the value of my land when my kids sell it after I'm no longer around.



Living with Turbines, continued - John Terry

From my distance, I have no problem with shadow flicker (I've only noticed it once in 7 or 8 years, and it only lasts for a few minutes). What was once the quietest place I'd ever been at night, now can have a low-level droning sound. The turbines are a minor nuisance, like a neighbor's incessantly barking dog.

Let's face it, wind energy companies are really no different from other industries. They're out to make a buck. They can profit by gaining your confidence and manipulating your priorities. They do generate electricity, but how much, and at what cost? The wind here blows at its strongest in the winter, January through March. It is not steady, and some days it doesn't blow at all. In the "off season", April through October, the wind's velocity is much weaker. And in May through September, it is not unusual to see the turbines stopped entirely, or operating very slowly for brief periods of time, measured in minutes not hours.

There are two reasons for this. One is that with no wind they can't operate. The other is that they have to predict when they will be able to send electricity to the grid. To prevent unnecessary wear and tear, they shut the wind operation down, perhaps to "save energy." Remember they are doing this for profit, not altruism. This facility does have several shipping containers filled with tiny "AA" sized batteries which can store electricity for several minutes which help even out the grid, but don't function to save excess electricity. So, my question for the day is: Who benefits most from my neighbor's turbines, the environment (in an area known for mountains and tourism) or the wind farmers (whose turbines don't improve with age)?

Electricity in Pennsylvania - Tom Kuehl

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), in 2018 Pennsylvania trails only Texas and Florida in electricity generation and leads the nation in transmitting electricity outside its borders. With its 200-year history of coal mining, it's not surprising that Pennsylvania is the nation's #3 coal producer. With the more recent development of natural gas extraction from Marcellus Shale, Pennsylvania is second only to Texas in natural gas production. Pennsylvania is also a leader in nuclear electrical generation, ranking second in the nation to Illinois. In 2018, nuclear was the leading provider of electrical generation – 40%, followed by natural gas at 36% and coal at 18%. Renewables such as wind, solar, biomass and hydropower provided less than 5%. In 2010, coal-fired generation accounted for 48% and natural gas provided 15%. Coal is declining as old plants are closing under regulatory pressure and the majority of new generation is fueled by natural gas.

On the basis that carbon emissions from the burning of fossil fuels contribute to global warming, the Federal Government has long been in the business of providing tax incentives for solar and wind renewable energy generation. The investment tax credit (ITC) for home solar installation costs has been in place since 2005 and, under the current extension, continues through 2022. The Production Tax Credit (PTC) for wind began in 1992 and provided the

Electricity in Pennsylvania, continued - Tom Kuehl

principal incentive for industrial wind development in Pennsylvania which has scarred, and still threatens, our Allegheny Ridges. If not extended, the PTC will phase out beginning in 2022 and expire entirely in 2024. The credit is 2.3 cents per kilowatt hour, which is roughly one third of the retail price I am currently paying for electrical generation on my Bedford Rural Electricity bill. The Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that the cost to tax payers in 2019 is \$4.7 billion for the PTC. As the PTC extends 10 years into the operation of a wind installation, that cost to US taxpayers will continue through 2029. A testy debate on the benefit to the American public on the environmental improvement is ongoing. A study by the Texas Public Policy Foundation reported that between 2007 and 2019 just 15% of the largest wind development companies raked in \$19 billion from the PTC program.

While taxpayers are sharing the cost of the PTC, there are Pennsylvania-based regulations that could very well put the cost squarely on electricity consumers in the form of higher electrical bills. On January 8, 2019, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf issued Executive Order 2019-01: Commonwealth Leadership in Addressing Climate Change and Promoting Energy Conservation and Sustainable Governess. The Order reestablishes the Governor’s Green Government Council and orders and directs that, “The Commonwealth shall strive to achieve a 26 percent reduction of net greenhouse gas emissions statewide by 2025 from 2005 levels, and an 80 percent reduction of net greenhouse gas emission by 2050 from 2005 levels.” The Order went on to direct the Commonwealth agencies to operate under certain guidelines to further the targeted reductions. More details on the “GreenGov Council are found [here](#).

Editor’s Note: Renewable energy development must be regulated using strict environmental standards that protect forested ridges and watersheds. Without proper siting, the health of wildlife and human communities is at risk. Save Our Allegheny Ridges has reviewed dozens of municipal ordinances that regulate wind projects; very few provide sufficient setbacks and noise limits. Contact Save Our Allegheny Ridges if you’d like us to review your municipal ordinance.

SAVE OUR ALLEGHENY RIDGES PA CHAPTERS & LOCATION

Friends of Bedford County Mountains	Bedford County
Friends of Jacks Mountain	Mifflin and Huntingdon Counties
Penn Forest	Penn Forest Township, Carbon County
Save Broad Mountain	Packer Township, Carbon County
Save Laurel Ridge	Cambria and Somerset Counties
Save Shaffer Mountain Again	Somerset County

Chapter Updates - Contact SOAR to get involved

www.SaveOurAlleghenyRidges.org

Friends of Bedford County Mountains: Bedford County

In 2019, **CPV Kettle Wind** approached 3 townships that intersect on the top of Dunning/Evitt's Mountain in Bedford County: Bedford, South Woodbury, and East St. Clair . The western side of the mountain and valley below are listed in the National Registry as the Dutch Corner Historic Agricultural District due to its historic and scenic character. A portion of the mountain is also designated as a Natural Heritage Area of global significance. The affected community is implementing a plan to save this ecological and historically rich area.

Friends of Jacks Mountain: Mifflin and Huntingdon Counties

Residents successfully stopped a large wind project proposed by **E.ON** that would impact both Stone and Jacks Mountain, but another proposed wind project on Jacks is considered pending by **Wpd**, the company that bought **Volkswind** in 2016. However, outreach by chapter members educated residents who then denied access to the top of the mountain. **Wpd** lists the project as "in development," so vigilance continues.

Penn Forest: Carbon County See page 2 for the latest update.

Save Broad Mountain: Carbon County

Zoning Hearing Board Hearings will soon be over and then the ZHB will decide the fate of **Broad Mountain Power's** push to build 22 wind turbines up to 656 feet tall on Broad Mountain - a major scenic landmark in Packer Township. Broad Mountain is the source of 5 exceptional value watersheds and 3 high quality watersheds that would be damaged by development. Residents are working hard to protect their treasured trout streams; donations are desperately needed.

Save Laurel Ridge: Cambria and Somerset Counties

The short-lived plan in late 2018 by **Competitive Power Ventures (CPV)** to build turbines on the watershed owned by the Greater Johnstown Water Authority was quickly squashed by organized residents and Rep. Frank Burns. Upper Yoder Township Supervisors are revising the ordinance to better regulate industrial development.

Save Shaffer Mountain Again: Somerset County

A project planned for Berwind's property (10,000 acres) on the Allegheny Front was quietly withdrawn from the PJM Grid by **Invenergy** in 2019. Three test towers were also removed, but the company has never publicly acknowledged the termination. Shade Township did amend their ordinance to provide better protection for residents, but Ogle Township refused to do so. A new transmission line built by First Energy heightens the risk for future wind development. The Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society maintains a hawk watch on Shaffer Mountain, which is renowned for its large numbers of migrating Golden Eagles. The Allegheny Front is still at risk!

We Need Your Support!

As a 501(c)3 organization, SOAR depends on tax-deductible donations to support our work. Membership dues help to cover costs associated with the website, insurance, printing expenses, postage, and other operating costs. No one in Save Our Allegheny Ridges earns a salary or gets reimbursed for travel expenses. Unlike many other non-profits, we do not deduct any fees from donations that cover chapter expenses.

If you have not renewed your membership this year, or in recent years, since wind development is no longer an immediate threat in your area, we hope you will consider renewing your interest and support so that SOAR can continue to protect communities and forests from development.

Join us to help protect forested ridges and communities in Pennsylvania.

Membership is per Individual or Family and needs to be renewed annually.



Little Brown Bat: \$10 (students only)



Small-footed Bat: \$25 - \$99



Osprey: \$100 - \$199



Indiana Bat: \$200 - \$499



Bald Eagle: \$500 - \$999



Golden Eagle: \$1,000 and above

Make check payable to "SOAR" and mail to:

Save Our Allegheny Ridges

P.O. Box 178

Everett, PA 15537

OR Renew at <https://paypal.me/SOAR2006>



**Don't Forget to indicate if
your donation is for a
Chapter or for Membership**

Save Our Allegheny Ridges

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Address Service Requested

SOAR has Helped Communities Save Nine Mountains from Industrial Wind Projects
...and protected thousands of acres of forest, wildlife habitat, watersheds....and countless
animals and plants. Human Communities have also benefitted.

