# 1.0 DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

# 1.1 **PROJECT SUMMARY**

Champlain Wind, LLC (Champlain; the applicant) has proposed construction of the Bowers Wind Project (Project), a utility-scale wind energy facility with an installed generating capacity of up to 48 megawatts (MW) to be located south of Route 6 in Carroll Plantation, Penobscot County, and Kossuth Township, Washington County (Appendix A, Figure 1). The Project will include up to 16 turbines, associated access roads, up to one permanent 90-meter meteorological (met) tower, a 34.5-kilovolt (kV) electrical collector system, an express collector line, an electrical substation, and an Operations and Maintenance (O&M) building and other potential ancillary improvements associated with the foregoing.

The turbines will be constructed on two ridges in the Project area: Bowers Mountain in Carroll Plantation, and portions of Dill Hill in Kossuth Township (Exhibit 1A). Multiple turbine models are being evaluated for the civil and electrical design described in this permit application, including Siemens turbines, assuming up to 16 SWT-3.0-113 turbines, with a maximum height of 136 meters (446 feet), and Vestas turbines, assuming up to 16 Vestas V112 3.0-MW turbines, with maximum height of 140 meters (459 feet). This permit application considers the greatest impact aspects of the various candidate turbine models, providing analysis of the tallest turbines for visual, shadow flicker and public safety analyses, the highest sound output turbines for sound assessment, as well as the largest turbine pad footprint. For these sections, this application describes the aspects of Vestas turbines.

A 34.5-kV electrical collector line will collect power from each turbine along the summit, and will then travel north in an "express collector" line for 5.2 miles, from the Project site to a proposed substation located adjacent to Line 56 (Exhibit 1B). The substation will "step up" the power to 115 kV so it can connect to Line 56, an existing 115-kV transmission line, owned by Evergreen Gen Lead, LLC, an affiliate of Champlain. Line 56 will accept the power from the Project without the need to update the capacity of the line. Existing roads will be used for temporary construction access to the electrical collector (Exhibit 1B).

Access roads will connect each turbine location and will provide construction and maintenance access. Roads will include 3.0 miles of new 24-foot access roads and 4.0 miles of new 35-foot crane paths, both of which will be maintained by the applicant (Exhibit 1A). The O&M building will be up to a 7,000 square foot building, located north of Route 6, adjacent to the express collector line (Exhibit 1A).

The Project will also include up to one 90-meter permanent meteorological (met) tower. The project design depicts two candidate locations for permanent met towers, and this application includes the clearing associated with one location. Up to one permanent met tower will be constructed, and may be installed before turbines are erected. In addition, up to two temporary 90-meter met towers may be placed at or near turbine locations before the turbines are erected. These temporary towers will be removed prior to the completion of construction.

# 1.2 PROJECT PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

Development of a viable wind energy project depends on fundamental factors such as characteristics of the wind resource, access to transmission and compatibility with existing land uses. The Project is located within the area designated as expedited for wind permitting, which, from a landscape level, is an area identified as appropriate for wind power development. Within the expedited area, the Project is specifically sited to maximize energy generation while minimizing impacts to ecological and environmental resources. When choosing the Project location, Champlain considered the quality of the wind resource, site geography and construction ease, compatibility with existing land uses, costs and logistics of delivering power, and environmental impacts. Strong local support from residents in Carroll Plantation and Kossuth Township was an additionally important factor.

The Project has the capacity to generate significant renewable energy (approximately 157,000 MWh per year) at the proposed location while also being located in a low-elevation area (ranging from 700 to 1,200 feet). The low-elevation location allows for construction and operation of a Project that avoids sensitive high-elevation ecological resources, including, for example, subalpine communities and other rare natural communities. The Project is located in close proximity to an existing 115kV transmission line, thereby eliminating the need to construct lengthy new infrastructure to connect the Project to the electrical grid. The Project has also been located away from residents, with the majority of seasonal dwellings located more than a mile from turbines. As a result, the Project avoids concerns over sound impacts, which have been an issue in other wind energy projects.

As described below, the Project has minimal environmental concerns. There are no rare, threatened or endangered species in the Project area and no mapped or rare habitats within the Project vicinity. The Project does not impact any significant vernal pools and has insignificant impacts to wetlands. With the exception of minimal clearing to the upland buffer of one Inland Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitat, there are no impacts to Significant Wildlife Habitat such as Deer Wintering Areas.

The Project is also compatible with the existing landowner timber harvesting practices. Wind energy projects provide an alternative source of economic value to landowners during a time when value derived from timber and fiber production continues to decline. After construction is complete, the landowner will be able to continue forest management activities. The proximity of the Project to other privately-owned working forests would not decrease the economic value of those lands. A recent report on the future of forests in Maine described wind turbines as "[c]apital intensive to build but have no fuel costs, meaning that leasing space for them can bring major benefits to landowners. Like carbon storage but in a more tangible way, windpower creates additional value for landowners and helps preserve the larger forest economy."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Keeping Maine's Forests: A Study of the Future of Maine's Forests, November 2009. Coordinated and managed by the Center for Research on Sustainable Forests, University of Maine.

# 1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

From 2009 to 2012, a variety of site-specific surveys were conducted to assess the natural resources present in the vicinity of the Project. In addition, information used to characterize the existing resources included consultation with state and federal agencies and review of available databases and published information. Environmental studies conducted for the Project include acoustic bat surveys in the spring, summer, and fall, nocturnal migration use surveys in the spring and fall, daytime raptor migration surveys in the spring; desktop assessment of potential flights for eagle nests and great blue heron nests in the spring; desktop assessment of potential lynx habitat; wetland delineations and "in season" vernal pool surveys; soils evaluation; and a rare, threatened, and endangered plant species survey.

Other reports and surveys include an analysis of historic architecture; Euro-American and Pre-Contact archaeology; shadow flicker analysis; and sound analysis. Reviewing agencies did not identify any issues associated with environmental impacts of the 2011 project application. The results of all these surveys were reviewed and updated reports are included in this application for the current project design.

# 1.4 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Project has been carefully designed in a location and manner to avoid or minimize potential ecological impacts. First, the Project is located in low-elevation forest, where the predominant forest type is a commonly occurring, Beech-Birch-Maple Forest. Second, the Project avoids impacts to other sensitive resources or habitat. It is not located within any Critical Habitat for any federally-listed species, and no bald eagle nests are located within four miles of any proposed turbine locations. As described in Section 7, the Project design includes approximately 3.78 acres of wetland clearing: 0.14 acre of permanent wetland fill; 125 linear feet of stream impact for culvert replacements; and minor impact to an Inland Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitat (IWWH), including 0.14 acres of upland clearing. No other Significant Wildlife Habitat, Deer Wintering Areas, Significant Vernal Pools or habitat for rare, threatened or endangered species, including the Northern Bog Lemming, the Roaring Brook Mayfly or the Spring Salamander will be impacted by the Project. The Project includes 34 acres of permanent clearing, of which 33.2 acres will be new impervious surface. An additional 185 acres will be cleared during construction and allowed to revegetate. Impacts to avian species, raptors and bats are expected to be consistent with other projects in Maine. In addition, in response to requests from Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW), Champlain has proposed to curtail wind turbines during conditions when previous studies have shown that bats are active and when existing Maine-based post-construction fatality data indicates that the potential for bat mortality is greatest.

Unlike most types of development, there are concrete environmental benefits associated with wind energy. Electricity generated from wind energy produces zero air or water pollution and

displaces generation from more costly and polluting sources. Maine and the region have set aggressive greenhouse gas reduction goals to protect public health. State and regional experts, including ISO-New England, have concluded that these goals cannot be met without significant additions of wind power and other renewable energy sources in Maine and elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> As described in Section 22, the Project could annually avoid an additional 66,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, as well as 70 tons of NO<sub>x</sub> and 190 tons of SO<sub>2</sub>.

# 1.5 STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

Community and stakeholder outreach is a critical component of First Wind's development process. This extends to the communities most affected by a project, as well as groups that may have concerns with or be opposed to a project. Champlain has conducted significant community outreach in Carroll, Kossuth, and neighboring communities, as well as with significant area landowners. Informal town meetings were supplemented with formal public meetings on different topics with individual invitations mailed to every town resident or landowner. In addition, the Project Developer, Neil Kiely, has regularly attended Monday night office hours at the Carroll Town Offices (the only time it is open) to answer questions about the project.

Public Meetings for Bowers Wind

- February 8, 2010: Introductory Meeting at Carroll Plantation Town Offices. Notice letters sent to every landowner listed on the tax records.
- May 22, 2010: Meeting on potential tax impacts held at Carroll Plantation Town Offices followed by general Q&A on the project. Notice letters sent to every landowner listed on the tax records.
- July 23, 2010: Open house meeting staffed with internal and external subject matter experts held at Lee Academy in Lee, Maine. Notice letters sent to every landowner listed on the Lakeville tax records which included direct contact information for Neil Kiely. Postcards sent to every landowner listed on the tax records for Carroll Plantation and Kossuth Township. Advertisements placed in the Lincoln News and posters posted at the Smith General Store, the Lakeville Town Offices and the Lakeville Transfer Station.
- February 23, 2011: Open house meeting staffed with internal and external subject matter experts held at Carroll Town Hall, Carroll Plantation, Maine. Notice letters sent to every landowner listed on the Carroll and Kossuth tax records.
- September 20, 2012: MDEP Public Informational Meeting held at Carroll Town Hall. Notice published and mailed to project abutters and invitations sent to every landowner in Carroll and Kossuth.

As a result of these efforts, as well as numerous informal conversations, residents in the communities that host and are most proximate to the Project were able to make an informed decision to support the Project. In Carroll Plantation, the support was demonstrated by a town vote to formally support the project in 2011 and to approve a Community Benefit Agreement negotiated by a committee formed for that purpose. In Washington County, the County

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> ISO-New England 2008 Regional System Plan, page 83.

Commissioners had the County Manager speak in support of the Project. More recently, a Petition in support of the project has been circulating in Carroll and Kossuth, and a significant portion of landowners and residents in those communities have indicated their support for the Project.

Champlain has also consulted with the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot Tribes, two of the largest landowners in the Project area. Specifically, the Passamaquoddy Tribe holds significant lands along the shoreline of Junior, Scraggly, Shaw, and Sysladobsis lakes, and the Penobscot Tribe holds significant lands along the shoreline of Sysladobsis Lake. In the case of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, Champlain engaged in an intensive and lengthy consultation process that enabled Champlain to successfully resolve concerns previously expressed by the Passamaquoddy Tribe. Specifically, Champlain has agreed that upon two weeks prior written notice from the Passamaquoddy Tribe, Champlain will suspend operation of the Project for up to four hours on up to four days per calendar year during observance of cultural ceremonies of the Tribe. The Passamaquoddy have indicated that they do not believe visibility of the Project will negatively impact their traditional uses of the lakes, including for fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, camping and hiking (Appendix B).

Champlain has also consulted with the New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF), a non-profit land conservation organization that holds the conservation easement on 342,000 acres of land located to the south of the Project (the Sunrise Conservation Easement). NEFF provided a letter of support stating that the principal purpose of the easement is to protect the land from residential development and to allow the landowner to practice sustainable forest management activities, and that it had no objection to the siting of wind-generation facilities on the nearby land proposed for the Project (Appendix B).

# 1.6 SUMMARY OF PROJECT CHANGES

The Project described in this application includes 16 turbines, a project design that has been significantly revised and reduced in scope from the 27-turbine Project originally reviewed by the Land Use Regulation Commission ("Commission") in 2011 (Appendix A, Figure 2). The Project is located approximately 17 miles north of the Grand Lake Stream area, which is a destination for fishing, hunting, and other activities. During the initial review, commercial sporting camp owners and Maine guides operating out of Grand Lake Stream expressed concerns about the Project's visibility over area lakes and the potential impact of such visibility on recreational uses. Those concerns, coupled with limited objective data on recreational use of the Project area scenic lakes and how the Project would affect those uses, led the Commission to deny the original Project. Champlain carefully considered the concerns expressed by stakeholders and regulators during that review of the original project when developing the revised Project design. As described below, Project modifications have been made specifically to reduce visual impact on scenic lakes and to obtain objective data on the impact of remaining visibility on scenic quality and recreational users of such lakes.

The current project design has been revised to avoid and minimize the effects of the Project on visual and cultural resources, and to maximize benefits for local communities. By using a newly-available turbine model, Champlain was able to reduce the project size from 27 turbines to 16 turbines,<sup>3</sup> a forty percent reduction. This will substantially reduce the footprint of the Project as well as the visual impacts. Champlain also removed particular turbines to increase the distance of the nearest turbine to the closest scenic lake, Shaw Lake, to greater than three miles, thus reducing the scenic impact on that resource. In addition, the project layout also reduces the angle of view where turbines are seen from scenic lakes, further minimizing impacts.

The access roads and summit electrical collector line have been adjusted for the 16-turbine layout. The locations of the express collector corridor, Operations & Maintenance building, and substation remain the same as in the previous design. Because all of these components are located to the north of the project, there is no visibility from scenic lakes to these portions of the Project.

As described in Section 30, Champlain also conducted additional surveys of recreational users of the area to build upon existing data in order to evaluate potential impacts of the Project on those users. These surveys included: (a) "post-construction" intercept surveys of recreational users of Baskahegan Lake to learn if the presence of the 55-turbine Stetson Mountain Wind Farm, which is visible from 90 percent of the lake, influenced visitation to, scenic quality, and enjoyment of the lake; and (b) "pre-construction" surveys of recreational users of Project area lakes to characterize recreation use, user perceptions, impact on enjoyment, and likelihood of repeat visitation. The results of both of these surveys were reviewed and summarized by Dr. Kevin J. Boyle, a recognized expert in the fields of survey methodology and in evaluating public preferences for Maine's natural resources. His review of the survey results indicated that the Project would not have an unreasonable adverse impact on users, and while some people may fear plans for a wind farm prior to its construction, the data show that the Project is not going to have a significant adverse impact on recreational use and enjoyment of the Project area scenic lakes.

Finally, in response to specific concerns identified about impacts of lighting seen at night, Champlain proposes to utilize an innovative radar-assisted lighting system to reduce the effects of nighttime lighting. This is the first project in Maine to propose this type of lighting system, and it is designed to essentially eliminate the effects of turbine nighttime lighting.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> One of the turbine hub heights being considered for the Project is 84 meters. This represents a change from the original Project, where either turbine type used would have 80 meter hub heights. All visual impacts associated with the revised Project have been conservatively evaluated using the potential 84 meter hub height.

Appendix 1: Maps

Figure 1: Project Location Map

Figure 2: Comparison of 2011 Project with Current Project Design





Figure 2: Comparison of 27-turbine project design with current 16-turbien project design

Appendix 2: Letters of Support

Passamaquoddy Tribe

**New England Forestry Foundation** 



Passamaquoddy Tribe Joint Tribal Council

Motahkmikuk (207) 796-2301 Sipayik (207) 853-2600



September 14, 2012

Patricia W. Aho, Commissioner Maine Department of Environmental Protection 17 State House Station 28 Tyson Drive Augusta, Maine 04333-0017

# Re: First Wind, LLC Permit Application

Dear Commissioner Aho:

We are writing to inform you that the original concerns and opposition we addressed with the Department regarding First Wind, LLC's wind power project have been addressed to our satisfaction. As you may recall, we raised several serious issues about ceremonial, traditional and cultural impacts this project had on our land.

The Passamaquoddy Tribe has a long tradition of environmental stewardship and we care deeply about the land. We have continously used the lands in this region and have always balanced our needs with those of the plants and animals and other inhabitants and users of the resources. We expect no less from any other developers of the land.

First Wind, LLC responded strongly and favorably to the Tribe's concerns and the Tribe now stands in support of the project it once opposed. We do not believe that the visibility of the turbines in the reconfigured Project will negatively impact our traditional uses of our lands and the lakes they surround including the recreational uses of fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, camping and hiking. More importantly, we do not believe it will interfere with our cultural ceremonies. We believe that this project is an appropriate new use that can co-exist with the existing uses in this area.

Sincerely. Name: Joseph Socobasin Title: Tribal Chief

Name: Reuben "Clayton" Cleaves Title: Tribal Chief



Conserving New England's forests since 1944

September 20, 2010

Mr. Fred Todd Land Use Planner – LURC 22 State House Station Augusta, Maine 04333

Re: Proposed Rule Number 2010-P211 - Champlain Petition Rule

Dear Mr. Todd,

The New England Forestry Foundation, Inc. (NEFF), a non-profit land conservation organization, holds a conservation easement on land owned by Typhoon LLC in the southern third of Kossuth Township. The principle purposes of the conservation easement, which covers a total of approximately 342,000 acres in Washington and Penobscot Counties, are to protect the land from residential development and to allow the landowner to practice sustainable forest management activities.

NEFF has no objection to the siting of wind-generation facilities near land conserved by the subject conservation easement. Consequently, NEFF supports the revised petition to add portions of Kossuth Township to the expedited area for wind energy development.

Yours sincerely,

Mitury Seah

Whitney Beals Director of Land Protection

cc: Wagner Forest Management for Typhoon LLC

**Appendix 3: Application Forms** 

Site Location of Development

Natural Resources Protection Act

# SITE LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION 38 M.R.SA. §§481-490

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2. Applicant's Mailing Address:	129 Midd Portland,	le Street, ME 0410	3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor )1		7. Agent Addr	t's Mailing	g	30 Park Drive Topsham, ME 04086				
3. Applicant's Daytime Phone #:	207-228-6	207-228-6888				t's Daytim e # :	ie	207-279-1199				
4. Applicant's Fax #: (if available)						t's Fax #	:					
5. Applicant's <i>e-mail address</i> (license will be sent via e-mail)	s: nkiely@firstwind.com				10. Agen (license e-mail	nt's <i>e-mai</i> will be se	<i>l address</i> nt via	joy.prescott@stantec.com				
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#### FORM A PAGE 2 08/08

#### <u>IMPORTANT</u>: IF THE SIGNATURE BELOW IS NOT THE APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE, ATTACH LETTER OF AGENT AUTHORIZATION SIGNED BY THE APPLICANT.

By signing below the applicant (or authorized agent), certifies that he or she has read and understood the following :

### **CERTIFICATIONS / SIGNATURES**

"I certify under penalty of law that I have personally examined the information submitted in this document and all attachments thereto and that, based on my inquiry of those individuals immediately responsible for obtaining the information, I believe the information is true, accurate, and complete. I am aware there are significant penalties for submitting false information, including the possibility of fine and imprisonment. I authorize the Department to enter the property that is the subject of this application, at reasonable hours, including buildings, structures or conveyances on the property, to determine the accuracy of any information provided herein.

Signed: Their	Title Maine Wind Holdings, Date: 10-1-12						
Notice of Intent to Comply with Maine Construction General Permit	With this Site Law application form and my signature, I am filing notice of my intent to carry out work which meets the requirements of the Maine Construction General Permit (MCGP). I have read and will comply with all of the MCGP standards.						
	If this form is not being signed by the landowner or lessee of the property, attach documentation showing authorization to sign.						
	Signed Quein Date: 10/1/12						

NOTE: You must file a MCGP Notice of Termination (Form K) within 20 days of completing permanent stabilization of the project site.

#### CERTIFICATION

The person responsible for preparing this application and/or attaching pertinent site and design information hereto, by signing below, certifies that the application for development approval is complete and accurate to the best of his/her knowledge.

Signature: 197	Re/Cert/Lic No.:
	Engineer
Name (print): Joy Prescott	Geologist
1.1.1.	Soil Scientist
Date:	Land Surveyor
	Site Evaluator
	Active Member of the Maine Bar
	Professional Landscape Architect
	Other

"I hereby authorize the DEP to send me an electronically signed decision on the license I am applying for with this application by emailing the decision to the address located on the front page of this application (see #5 for the applicant and #10 for the agent). *Do not sign if you elect to "opt out" or receive the decision via regular mail.* 

Signed (Applicant)	Date: 101112
and/or Signed (Agent)	Date: 10/1//2

### APPLICATION FOR A NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION ACT PERMIT → PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT IN BLACK INK ONLY

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	Attn: Neil Kiely					Attn: .				JOY Pr	oy Prescott				
2. Applicant's Mailing Address:	129 Middle Street, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Portland, ME 04101					6. Agent's Mailing Address:			30 Parl Topsha	rk Drive ham, ME 04086					
3. Applicant's 207-228-6888 Daytime Phone #:						7. Agent's Daytime 207-279-1199 Phone #:									
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#### PAGE 2 08/08

### <u>IMPORTANT</u>: IF THE SIGNATURE BELOW IS NOT THE APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE, ATTACH LETTER OF AGENT AUTHORIZATION SIGNED BY THE APPLICANT.

By signing below the applicant (or authorized agent), certifies that he or she has read and understood the following :

### **DEP SIGNATORY REQUIREMENT**

### **PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT**

Authority: 33 USC 401, Section 10; 1413, Section 404. Principal Purpose: These laws require permits authorizing activities in or affecting navigable waters of the United States, the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, and the transportation of dredged material for the purpose of dumping it into ocean waters. Disclosure: Disclosure of requested information is voluntary. If information is not provided, however, the permit application cannot be processed nor a permit be issued.

### **CORPS SIGNATORY REQUIREMENT**

USC Section 1001 provides that: Whoever, in any manner within the jurisdiction of any department or agency of the United States knowingly and willfully falsifies, conceals, or covers up any trick, scheme, or disguises a material fact or makes any false, fictitious or fraudulent statements or representations or makes or uses any false writing or document knowing same to contain any false, fictitious or fraudulent statements or entry shall be fines not more than \$10,000 or imprisoned not more than five years or both. I authorize the Corps to enter the property that is subject to this application, at reasonable hours, including buildings, structures or conveyances on the property, to determine the accuracy of any information provided herein.

### **DEP SIGNATORY REQUIREMENT**

"I certify under penalty of law that I have personally examined the information submitted in this document and all attachments thereto and that, based on my inquiry of those individuals immediately responsible for obtaining the information, I believe the information is true, accurate, and complete. I authorize the Department to enter the property that is the subject of this application, at reasonable hours, including buildings, structures or conveyances on the property, to determine the accuracy of any information provided herein. I am aware that there are significant penalties for submitting false information, including the possibility of fine and imprisonment.

Further, I hereby authorize the DEP to send me an electronically signed decision on the license I am applying for with this application by emailing the decision to the address located on the front page of this application (see #4 for the applicant and #8 for the agent)."

Date: NT/APPLICANT len Mine

NOTE: Any changes in activity plans must be submitted to the DEP and the Corps in writing and must be approved by both agencies prior to implementation. Failure to do so may result in enforcement action and/or the removal of the unapproved changes to the activity.

(blue)

**Exhibit 1A: Mountaintop Civil and Electrical Plans** 

Exhibit 1B: Express Collector Electrical Plans and Substation Plans