

My name is David Tobey. I'm a resident of Grand Lake Stream, where for virtually all of my adult life I have stitched together a living from the area's rich natural resources. As for many of my neighbors, that's meant being a Master Maine Guide, a professional trapper, a commercial fisherman, and a logger.

During this time I've served as Assessor for the town of Grand Lake Stream, President of the Maine Professional Guides Association, President of the Grand Lake Stream Guides Association, member of IF&W Guides Advisory Board and a founding board member of the Downeast Lakes Land Trust.

I've accumulated a vast knowledge of the region and its natural resources, in part by involvement in the organizations I've mentioned, but primarily by being in the local woods or on the local waters *every day of the year*.

History of the Region

There is more written and oral history of this place among the lakes and woods of northern Washington County than I or anyone could speak of in a short address.

So I'll try to provide a few snapshots in time of events important to us all.

In early times the Chain of Lakes in view of the Bowers Project were used for transportation as native people made a living from the abundant and diverse natural resources. The native people were the first guides for visitors who came to the region for the extraordinary fishing these lakes provided.

Over time very little has changed in certain respects. Thanks to proper stewardship and conservation measures, this region of Maine still boasts the highest concentration of guides and sporting camps in our state. This is a clear indication that the health of the resource remains intact. This did not happen by accident, though: our mentors, including tribal Guides, carefully taught us how to manage and conserve our treasured woods and waters. This stewardship has left the wilderness qualities and scenic resources intact. This would not be the case if the Bowers project were to move forward.

An Overview of the project area

Bowers Mountain lies at the headwaters of the West Branch of the St. Croix Watershed. The lakes in that watershed are among very few to hold the original landlocked salmon. Downstream we can find one of the first landlocked salmon hatcheries in our state. Today this hatchery provides 80% of the purest strain of

landlocked salmon stocked in all of Maine. The land and protected shores around these lakes are all part of an unparalleled Maine conservation effort, one that started in Grand Lake Stream, and a village whose existence depends on the chain of lakes that reach north to the Bowers project.

Grand Lake Stream is a town that chose to design its own destiny, recruiting partners to assist in its effort to protect the natural resources crucial to its present existence and its future dreams. The locally conserved land, over 350,000 acres' worth, is part of a contiguous 1.3 million-acre block in our region. Right now, friends and neighbors are working to conserve yet another 22,000 acres on the east shore West Grand Lake, all in the view shed of Bowers Mountain. This effort – because of its economic, environmental and recreational values – has been ranked by the U.S.F.S. Forest Legacy Program as the Number One Conservation Project *in the entire nation*.

Of special concern here too is another project in the making: a landscape-sized, riparian-based, contiguous whitetail deer wintering area. Crucial to its establishment are connecting wildlife corridors. The northern end of this far reaching deer management area is firmly rooted in the 8 mile zone around Bowers Mtn. It encompasses land along both the St. Croix and Machias River watersheds, and upon completion will probably be the largest contiguous deer wintering area in all of Maine, which will provide immense benefits to *all* wildlife and fish in the area. Another important segment of our resource based economy.

An important concern in any effort to restore the whitetail deer population is predation, particularly by the coyote, universally acknowledged as the worst predator to the state's herd. The Commissioner of IF&W is planning action to reduce coyote numbers to help the deer. It is a known fact that coyotes are most effective when they hunt by line of sight, especially in areas that have been deforested. The long straight transmission lines on Bowers Mountain, along with access roads and sites cleared for turbines will only aid the predators and further contribute to decreasing the downeast deer herd. Newly created open areas located so close to a huge, cooperative regional effort to create a contiguous corridor of habitat would negatively impact the effectiveness of such work.

Grand Lake Stream

This small village at the south end of the chain of lakes in view of Bowers Mountain has been a destination for many generations of outdoor enthusiasts. There are twelve lodges in the area with approximately 30 working guides; just the fishing season alone runs from ice out to mid October. It is known worldwide for its recreational fishing, mostly in the chain of lakes south of Bowers Mountain. Lakes nationally and internationally known not only for the fantastic fishing, but for the beautiful undeveloped landscape within which fishing takes place. If the

scenic character of the area within 8 miles of the Bowers project is degraded, the area available for this high quality fishing in a beautiful setting is decreased and the economic draw to the region will suffer a loss.

On a typical day, many fishermen leave GLS in a northerly direction, spending most of that day in Junior Bay, Junior Lake, Norway Lake and Scraggly Lake within the 8 mile area affected by the proposed Bowers Mtn. project. The most sought after and popular fish is the smallmouth Bass. The most productive spots for our bass fishing are the southern shores of all these lakes and coves. Should the Bowers Mountain wind project go through, guides will be completely unable to keep the industrial wind mills to the north out of their clients' sight.

Needless to say, most of our clients and visitors come to our area in order to get away from the industrial, commercial world they live in. They are looking for a place where local culture, tradition and the natural resources have remained unspoiled and unchanged. In short, they are not just looking for a fish on the line, but rather for a total experience. As guides paddle them along the shore they gain a wealth of knowledge about the region, its fish and wildlife, and whatever else an intact and healthy natural resource contains. They may look ahead to see a mink working the shoreline or a moose or deer drinking or feeding at the edge of a lake, a pair of loons guarding their nest, an eagle teaching her young to fend for themselves. Or an Osprey diving to get a fish. The natural resources of the Bowers Mtn. area are currently positioned in a remote region free from significant

human impacts. Such an industrial intrusion would spoil the remote brand of the area upon which our economy relies. Clients come to this area because of the undeveloped character and scenery. Several have told me stories about going to other places but, have stopped because of the intrusion of development and man made structures. Many clients expect and love the dark night sky. Because of the size of the watershed some leave in pre-dawn light or return after sunset. Flashing lights from the wind project would totally destroy that experience.

All these precious values, and not merely fish rising to an insect hatch, are threatened by industrial wind towers in the view shed. Many of our visitors first beheld the wonders of this watershed when their ancestors brought them here for the first time. They have created a bond with the region's unique character, a relationship so special that they feel part of the region's culture, traditions and natural environment. Most have also, in one way or another, been part of the nationally recognized conservation effort to protect this part of Maine and its way of life. It is their appreciation for the region as it is now that continues to draw them here. They are the folks who support Washington County's tourism trade, which is the most stable component in the overall downeast economy. Without their continued support the future of the economic foundation of the region would be in jeopardy.

It is no doubt hard to explain to those unfamiliar with our wild surroundings what a difference a project of the sort proposed for Bowers Mountain will make to

visitors, a difference profound enough as in my opinion to discourage many from returning, the way they have for years and in some cases generations. To look at a pristine cove with a deep green mountain behind it is the sort of thrill that is more and more rare in our urbanized and industrialized world. To put so much as a single cell phone tower or even a utility pole at the height of land is to taint that experience significantly, even if there be a moose or a deer or a loon in the frame. To position mammoth wind turbines in that scenery simply will destroy the esthetic and emotional responses I have so often witnessed as a guide; the sense of refreshment that has attracted our clients for decades will be unavailable.

Summary

In Downeast Maine we have already done our share to support clean energy. To the north of Route 6 we have sacrificed several mountaintops to the development of 55 wind turbines largest effort in New England, along with many miles of transmission lines. We have already lost resource-based jobs because of permanent loss of habitat, notably as a result of the large utility corridor to our south in central Washington County. We see clearly negative effects to wildlife when large tracts of woodland are fragmented by gas and transmission lines. I personally have lost valuable habitat in these two areas that I traditionally used for trapping, hunting and guiding. For every thousand acres of managed forest in

Maine, represents 2.9 jobs in the forest products industry. For every thousand acres we permanently take out of growth, therefore, means taking jobs away from 2.9 people who work in this significant industry.

The lakes around Grand Lake Stream are the focus of successful conservation projects designed to support our economy. The positive things that have lately happened in Washington County far out-weigh any assumed benefits from improperly placed wind apparatus on Bowers Mountain.

I feel very lucky to be one of many in this region to make a living being a responsible steward of these lakes, streams and woods. I'm committed to leaving it a better place, if anything, than it was when I began my adult career as a Guide, Hunter, Trapper and Fisherman. My efforts toward leaving so great a legacy, as the one I received, may be the most important thing I can do as a member of this scenic wilderness area, this state and even this Planet. So Commissioners I strongly urge you to, not allow the improperly placed Bowers Mtn. Wind Project.