

Promising Practices



Energy Co-operatives

Pukwis Energy Co-op Collaborates with Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation to Develop Wind Power

Windfall Ecology Centre is a non-profit environmental organization and social enterprise that focuses on renewable energy as well as water and energy conservation. As part of its mandate to engage individuals and communities in environmental action, it developed the Pukwis Energy Co-op, a major stakeholder in the Pukwis Community Wind Project.¹ The project is located on Georgina Island on Lake Simcoe, in the Northern part of York region in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).



Investors can take part in the project by joining the Pukwis Energy Co-op for a one-time fee of \$25 and then purchasing a minimum of 10 \$100 preference shares. The annual return averaged over the project's 20 year lifespan—is expected to be 10%.² The Co-op is made up of individuals from the GTA and it owns 49% of the Pukwis Community Wind Park, with the Pukwis Wind Partner I Inc. (fully owned by the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation) owning 51%.³ The joint venture raised funds for the development of the wind turbines through the "co-operative share offering enabled by the *Green Energy and Green Economy Act* and by traditional

commercial loans backed by a long term power purchase agreement with the Ontario Power Authority."⁴

The project has been in development since 2003 and is now coming to life. The first phase of the project is the installation of 10 wind turbines that each have a 2 megawatt (MW) capacity. **Phase 1 is expected to generate 53,094 megawatt hours (MWh) of electricity a year or enough to power 7,500 homes and displace 15,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases annually.**⁵ The 20 MW system will be completed and ready to run in 2012,⁶ and will be followed by the next phases of the wind farm, which are projected to increase the farm's capacity to 54 MW.⁷

Each kilowatt hour (kWh) generated by the wind turbines will be sold to the Ontario Power Authority through the Feed-In-Tariff (FIT) program for \$0.15, which includes an 11% premium for the project having significant Aboriginal involvement. The contract also stipulates that the price will increase based on the Consumer Price Index. **Approximately \$159 million will be generated through the 20 year FIT contract.**⁸



Chippewas of Georgina Island Chief Donna Big Canoe and Councillor William McCue say the wind project is bringing awareness about alternative energy to their community. They opted for the **community ownership model** for wind energy rather than

leasing their land to developers as they wanted the community to be involved in and in control of the decision-making process.⁹

Numerous jobs will be created for residents through the Pukwis project, in such areas as construction (including site preparation), operations and maintenance, and management of the co-operative. The project presents opportunities for Chippewas of Georgina Island to be trained as wind technicians, who are in great demand across Ontario. **The Chippewas of Georgina Island will also be sharing their experiences and lessons learnt with other First Nations communities** to encourage them to build their capacity to take on their own renewable energy initiatives.¹⁰

As Brent Kopperson, Executive Director of the Windfall Ecology Centre, says, "Pukwis is a first of its kind project which will serve as an example of how diverse communities can come together to develop and own local renewable energy projects."¹¹

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This Promising Practice was brought to you by Ecology Ottawa on behalf of the **Community Energy Network of Eastern Ontario** Encouraging the uptake of renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives

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The Network gratefully acknowledges the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation



References:

- ¹ Ontario Sustainable Energy Association (OSEA). "Brent Kopperson, Windfall Ecology Centre." *OSEA*. Nd. http://www.ontario-sea.org/Page.asp?PageID=924&ContentID=1040&AA_PrintFriendly_Mode=True. Accessed June 2011.
- ² Association of Power Producers of Ontario (APPRO). "Pukwis Co-op one of the first to get a FIT contract." *APPRO Magazine*. June 2010. http://magazine.appro.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1004&Itemid=44. Accessed June 2011.
- ³ Windfall Ecology Centre. "Pukwis Community Wind Park." *Clean Air Partnership*. July 14 2010. <http://www.cleanairpartnership.org/files/Windfall%20NSCCN%20July%202014%202010.pdf>. Accessed June 2011.
- ⁴ Supra note 2.
- ⁵ Supra note 3.
- ⁶ Kopperson, B. Email communication. 13 June 2011.
- ⁷ Supra note 2.
- ⁸ Supra note 3.
- ⁹ Big Canoe, D. & McCue, W. "Why Community Wind for Georgina Island?" *Pukwis Energy Co-op*. Nd. http://windfallcentre.ca/pukwis/index.php?st=1&s=About_Pukwis&p=Why_Community_Wind_answers&t=ip. Accessed June 2011.
- ¹⁰ Supra note 3.
- ¹¹ Supra note 2.

