

Bill Cundiff

From: Robert Anders
Sent: Friday, July 01, 2011 5:48 PM
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Subject: turbine fires

[Wind Watch: Forest fires and wind turbines: The danger no one is talking about](#)



June 30, 2011
Maine, Opinions

Forest fires and wind turbines: The danger no one is talking about

By Clyde MacDonald, Special to the BDN, bangordailynews.com 29 June 2011

Despite all that has been written about wind power, a vitally important issue has barely been mentioned. When turbines fail, blades may fall to the ground or send fragments that land up to a mile away. Turbines often catch fire, and when they do they often send flaming shards into fields and forests. Much has been said about the short-term jobs created in preparing turbine sites, but almost nothing about job losses from turbine-caused fires in our paper mills, sawmills and other forest-dependent industries.

Official information on the number and severity of turbine-induced forest fires remains largely secret and unavailable. Nonetheless, there are [scattered media reports](#) ^[1] and one thorough description of the safety record of the [Caithness USA Wind corporation](#) ^[2] with installations in the northwest. That one corporation experienced 110 serious wind turbine fires over a 20 year period, but there is no mention of whether some of those fires may have spread to adjacent areas.

Similarly, media references to 43 turbine fires, mostly in the U.S. and Europe, merely state “no details.” Many [references](#) ^[3] do contain brief statements, such as that 22 fires were caused by lightning strikes, but again, no references to those fires spreading far from the sites. Only 25 of the reports mention that turbine fires had spread to fields and forests.

In California, one such fire burned 68 acres, another 220 acres, and in Palm Springs several “spot fires” had been generated in surrounding areas. In Hawaii, 95 acres were burned. Australia lost 80,000 acres of forests located mostly in a national park. Spain lost nearly 200 acres from one fire. A comment on a German fire mentioned that “burning debris” from a turbine had traveled several hundred meters from the site. In Holland, three burning blades from a mere 270-foot tower cast a 50-foot flaming shard 220 feet from the site.

The most dramatic report emanated from Wales where “great balls of fire” landed more than 150 yards away, causing a hillside to burn. Fearing more forest fires, an Australian province enacted a law banning placements of wind towers near wooded areas. Yet, in heavily forested Maine, all of our wind power sites have been approved without even considering that turbines have often caused forest fires.

It requires little imagination to foresee that 400-foot blazing turbines, located in the most heavily winded areas along steep mountain slopes, could easily shoot flaming debris into wooded areas.

Mere fire engines cannot douse turbine fires. In every report, firefighters had to allow the turbine fires to burn themselves out. All they could hope to do was prevent the fires from spreading to other areas. In Australia, California and Germany, massive firefighting equipment evidently came from nearby areas.

That 220-acre California fire had been contained by 45 firefighters, two helicopters and two bulldozers. The 69-acre fire was contained with the help of 15 fire engines, four hand crews and four planes. A 5-acre California fire was extinguished by six fire engines, three water trucks, two helicopters, two tanker planes, a bulldozer and three hand crews.

URLs in this post:

[1] scattered media reports: <http://power-shift.org/wind-turbine-fire>

[2] Caithness USA Wind corporation:

<http://www.caithnesswindfarms.co.uk/accidents.pdf>

[3] references : <http://whenwindturbinesgobad.blogspot.com/>

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