

## **State Report: Sheffield Wind Project Construction had No Adverse Impact on Nearby Streams**

*Report issued from Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Biomonitoring and Aquatic Studies Program studied local streams from 2006 to 2011*

**Sheffield, VT – February 15, 2011** – [First Wind](#), an independent U.S.-based wind energy company, today announced that the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) Biomonitoring and Aquatic Studies Program has issued a report with the results of a series of water quality tests that found that construction of the Sheffield Wind Project had no adverse impact to the water quality and aquatic life of cold-water streams near the project.

The study, which spanned from 2006 to 2011, looked at aquatic life forms as indicators of water quality in five streams adjacent to and downslope of the Sheffield Wind Project in Sheffield, VT. The report measured “biological integrity” – an index of ecological health based on the condition of aquatic life (macroinvertebrate) and fish populations – both before and after the construction of the Sheffield Wind Project.

The state conducted pre-construction tests in 2006, 2009 and 2010, and then post-construction tests in September of 2011. A copy of the report can be found online by visiting the following [link](#).

According to the report, “Four of the five stream reaches sampled in the fall of 2011 maintained an *excellent to very good* level of biological integrity of the macroinvertebrate community. These streams showed little to no change in most of the eight primary biometrics over the three to four years sampled.”

This independent agency study shows that water quality in the area potentially affected by construction of the Sheffield Wind Project remained good or better in most locations, despite extensive runoff in 2011 due to Tropical Storm Irene and other major storms.

“When we built the Sheffield Wind project, we took extra care to ensure that important water resources were protected,” said Josh Bagnato, Environmental Permitting and Compliance Manager of First Wind. “These results are particularly important as concerns had been raised that surface water quality could be degraded as a result of wind farm construction. These results show that with careful construction and monitoring of natural resources, wind projects can be built in a way that protects natural resources while delivering clean energy with no harmful emissions.”

Located in the Town of Sheffield in the Northeast Kingdom, the Sheffield Wind Project is comprised of 16 Clipper Liberty 2.5 MW turbines, and generates enough power for about 15,000 homes in Vermont.

“As someone who used to monitor stream health and aquatic species diversity, it’s wonderful to see renewable energy projects prove their weight in gold: clean, local energy, benefiting the environment in every way possible, and with no long-term fuel cost, because wind is free,” said Gabrielle Stebbins, Executive Director of Renewable Energy Vermont, Vermont’s renewable energy trade association.

The Sheffield Wind Project also has several cutting-edge environmental mitigation and conservation measures that surpass even the most stringent industry standards. One of these measures is an intricate system of 27 retaining pools designed to catch and clean storm water. In addition, the project features smaller roads than most utility-scale wind projects to adapt to the more mountainous terrain, and protection of approximately 2,700 acres surrounding the project to benefit bears and other wildlife, as well as recreational uses.

A traditional fossil-fuel plant of the same scale as the Sheffield Wind Project would burn 61,000 tons of coal and emit more than 45,000 tons of carbon dioxide. The project has been operational since October 2011 and has delivered more than 22 million kilowatts of clean power to 16,500 homes in the region since that time.

#### **About First Wind**

First Wind is an independent wind energy company exclusively focused on the development, financing, construction, ownership and operation of utility-scale wind projects in the United States. Based in Boston, First Wind has wind projects in the Northeast, the West and in Hawaii, with the capacity to generate up to 750 megawatts of power and projects under construction with the capacity to generate up to an additional 195 megawatts. For more information on First Wind, please visit [www.firstwind.com](http://www.firstwind.com) or follow us on Twitter [@FirstWind](https://twitter.com/FirstWind).

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#### **For more information, contact:**

John Lamontagne

Director, Communications

P: 617-960-9521, M: 781-856-2111

[jlamontagne@firstwind.com](mailto:jlamontagne@firstwind.com)

[www.firstwind.com](http://www.firstwind.com) Twitter: [@firstwind](https://twitter.com/firstwind)