



Second Nat

Martha's Vineyard has been at the forefront of the green movement for decades, preserving the island's stunning scenery and nautical heritage for residents and visitors alike. But will proposed wind turbines in Nantucket Sound change the face of this New England enclave?



BY STEPHEN JERMANOK

One stroll searching for seashells on Gay Head Beach as the sun splashes across the multicolored clay cliffs and you'll quickly understand why some American presidents want to spend their lone summer holiday on Martha's Vineyard. The natural splendor extends out to sea, where sailors tack in the distance and fishermen throw out their lines to catch their share of fighting stripers (striped bass) and blues (bluefish). It only makes sense that Vineyard locals would want to preserve this beauty as they ardently support conservation, sustainable building, local farming and other eco-friendly initiatives.

Yet, of late, some people on the island have made news with their small but very vocal opposition to one of the pillars of the green movement: wind farms. The Cape Wind project would generate some 75 percent of all the energy used on Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket and the whole of Cape Cod. Opponents question whether tourism, boating, fishing and birding would be affected by the 130 giant turbines.

"Martha's Vineyard is perceived as a fairly liberal place, and a lot of people who support other green issues and are very passionate about the environment don't support Cape Wind," says Beth Daley, a science writer for *The Boston Globe*, who's been covering the Cape Wind controversy since its inception in 2001. "Most locals use the water in a really fundamental way—either for their livelihood, like fishing, or for pleasure—and they feel that Nantucket Sound is sacred ground that shouldn't be messed with by a private developer," she says.



For a green travel guide to Martha's Vineyard, visit arrivemagazine.com and click "Exclusive Content."

ure

Clockwise from top: Menemsha Harbor in Chilmark; rendering of proposed wind turbines in Nantucket Sound; biking is a popular form of transportation; the lighthouse at Chappaquiddick; Oak Bluffs' gingerbread houses on the northeast shore; fresh flowers at the Farmers Market in West Tisbury.





“It doesn’t take much traveling up and down the East Coast to see that Martha’s Vineyard has done a sensational job of protecting itself.”

The Coast Is Clear

Seven miles off the coast of Massachusetts, the land on Martha’s Vineyard is cherished just as much as the surrounding ocean. In the midst of a housing boom in 1986, voters approved a 2 percent surcharge on all real estate transactions. The extra cash could then be used by the newly formed Land Bank Commission to purchase property throughout the island. So far, nearly 3,000 acres have been preserved, including beachfront, fields, farms, woodlands and wetlands.

With the added effort of other conservation groups, such as the Sheriff’s Meadow Foundation, the Trustees of Reservations, the Nature Conservancy and the Massachusetts Audubon Society, more than 35 percent of the island has now been conserved. Visitors can go sea kayaking on remote Poucha Pond as part of a Trustees-guided tour and spot osprey feeding their young in oversized nests, head to the marsh in Cedar Tree Neck Sanctuary for an early-morning birding jaunt, or pedal around the island on one of the many bike trails. More than likely, you’ll be admiring the sea and farmland, not urban sprawl.

“It doesn’t take much traveling up and down the East Coast to see that Martha’s Vineyard has done a sensational job of protecting itself,” says James Lengyel, executive director of the Land Bank Commission.

Grass Roots

The conservation efforts have led to some unusual alliances. When the Vineyard Golf Club was in its planning



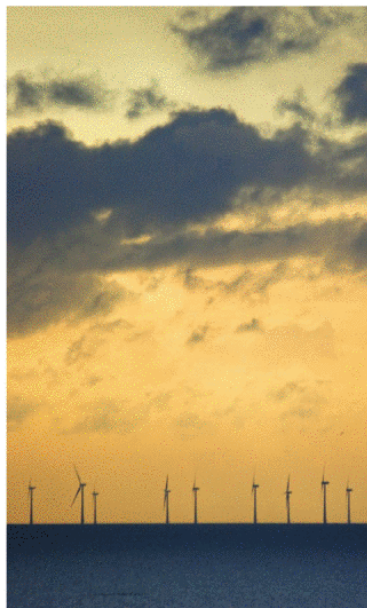


Right: A staple for Nantucket fisherman; lobster. Below: A functioning wind farm off the coast of Great Britain.

stages, the developers wisely formed a partnership with the Sheriff's Meadow Foundation. Water quality and amount of use are important issues on the Vineyard, especially because the island's sole source of water is a single underground aquifer. By forging this strategic pact, the course won approval from the governing body and opened in May 2002. The only stipulations were that the club had to limit water use to 150,000 gallons per day and use an all-organic turf-care regimen—not exactly the ideal conditions for creating that emerald green Augusta look.

"I was a little nervous, to be honest with you," says course superintendent Jeff Carlson. "No one had ever done this without any pesticides." He's had to deal with brown patches on the greens, called dollar-spot disease, weeds, grubs, and worst of all, a large skunk population, which loves to dine on the grubs.

As in the movie *Caddyshack*, in which Bill Murray's character tries to track down and destroy a mischievous gopher, Carlson has hired a local who zips around the golf course at night wearing night vision goggles to trap skunks. Overall, however, the clientele, who pay a hefty fee to become members, have been happy with the links-style course.



"They don't like the grub damage. They don't particularly care for the weeds," Carlson says. "But, in general, their attitude is fabulous."

Island Warming

Close by, in Edgartown, Mass., Brian Nelson just installed a solar energy and

hot water system for the chic Atria, a popular restaurant with "one of the most outstanding restaurant wine lists in the world," according to *Wine Spectator* magazine.

Until recently, Nelson had been working with geothermal energy, but he notes that digging a series of looped pipes 6 to 10 feet underground is almost impossible on the Vineyard's rocky terrain. As the co-owner of Nelson Mechanical Design, a firm that offers heat-delivery systems for homes on the island, Nelson now guides his customers to a more affordable air-to-air heat pump that works in colder climates by taking the stored solar energy in the air to heat a home.

"We're always trying to steer our clients toward the green options. Each year, they're getting better and better, with far more efficiency at less cost," says Nelson. "Green building here is very robust, with a highly educated clientele."

Nelson's goal, like many on the island, is to make the Vineyard all-electric, thereby eliminating the dependency on fossil fuels. He's currently working on a proposal to construct a wind turbine that, combined with solar energy and air-to-air pumps, will offset the energy load of 21 farms. Farming has always been an essential part of

the island economy. When you wander around the Vineyard, it's hard not to stop for the homegrown veggies and fruits at Morning Glory Farm, milk in old-fashioned bottles at Nip 'N' Tuck Farm, or a bouquet of wildflowers, which you can go out and cut at Whippoorwill Farm.

The Taste of Success

The Vineyard recently launched an Island Grown Initiative, to ensure that its long-standing commitment to agriculture continues well into the future. The local harvest is laid out in all its glory each week at West Tisbury Farmers Market. Every Saturday morning and Wednesday afternoon during the height of summer, farmers from around the isle bring their goodies to Old Agricultural Hall in the center of town.

They're joined by local chefs to create a culinary extravaganza. Grab your produce, homemade pies, fresh-baked breads, jams and cheese, but also stop for Vietnamese spring rolls washed down with wheatgrass juice. Or better yet, follow Brian Nelson's lead to Atria, where chef Christian Thornton is known for taking the freshest local ingredients and throwing them on the menu. Expect the organic local field greens to be just picked from the farm and the tuna to have been recently caught in the ocean.

Mark Rodgers, communications director for Cape Wind, understands that some people on the island do not take so kindly to big turbines in their backyard. "We have a lot of support on Martha's Vineyard, and we're gratified by that," Rodgers says. "But we're also grown-ups and I think, to be realistic in this day and age, any large infrastructure project, especially an energy project of any kind, is going to have opposition."

Many fears were allayed by a recent U.S. Minerals Management Service study, which stated that the wind farm would have little or no impact on tourism, birding and fishing. The permitting process is now almost complete, and Rodgers hopes to begin construction and have the wind farm up and running by 2011. In the meantime, isolated by the Atlantic, the Vineyard continues to strive for a sustainable balance that can only enhance its appeal. 🍃

KAREN LEAF

NEW at the Convention Center

FOUR POINTS
BY SHERATON

Philadelphia City Center

1201 RACE STREET

PHILADELPHIA, PA 19107

215.496.2700

WWW.FOURPOINTS.COM



Atlantic Stars
HOTELS & CRUISES

Spectacular Spring Packages



Newport | Martha's Vineyard | New York | Miami Beach

Premier locations, landmark properties

For more information please call us at 401-855-5015 or visit

atlanticstars.com