

I am a resident of Mars Hill, whose personal life and community life have been severely impacted by the nearby UPC Wind plant.

Here is my story:

My husband and I had moved away from Mars Hill, and our retirement dream was to come back to old friends, peace, quiet and country living. The first year after building our house back here was heaven. The quiet was so complete that we thought we had gone deaf. The wildlife on our lawn was so much fun.

We had heard about the windmills, but when we asked how they would affect us if we bought the land, the town manager told us we wouldn't even see them, much less hear them because they were going to be on the front of the mountain.

We believed him. That was our biggest mistake. At the time, we had no idea that the town fathers had not even read the application that they had co-signed, nor hired a lawyer to explain it to them. They had no idea what they had agreed to. They believed everything UPC had told them.

The biggest lie of all was that there would be no noise, or you had to be within 500 feet to hear anything. I believe that is still the propaganda.

We had one winter of quiet solitude, then with the spring came giant bulldozers, and cranes took over our mountain. Roads three lanes wide were being cut through the trees. Blasting began. We never knew when they were going to blast. The windows shook and the ledge would land on our lawn because they wouldn't use mats. The heavy equipment would start up before daylight and go late in the night.

What a shock it was to all of us when they blasted away the whole end of the mountain. The giant scar got bigger and bigger. Then were more huge scars across our beautiful mountain. The whole terrain was being devastated.

When we saw the huge circles of raped land across the top of the mountain where generations of people had skied, hiked, picnicked, held sunrise services on Easter morning, hunted and four-wheeled, we knew we had been badly lied to and life around Mars Hill mountain as we had known it was gone. The beauty and the access to the ridges would never be again.

A close friend of ours wanted to buy 10 acres of land from us for a house lot. After he saw what was happening, he decided he definitely did not want to live with the windmills in his front yard. Sadly, we agreed with him. Unfortunately, our dream of maybe some extra retirement money was gone.

The massive white giants started turning and were on line in March 2007. Our lives greatly changed that day. We had been upset over the blasting and the devastation of the

mountain and the eyesore, but nothing compared to the noise. As they added more windmills on line, the louder it got.

If we got up in the middle of the night, we couldn't get back to sleep. We closed the windows, the doors, had the furnace running and the drumming never stopped. On a foggy or snowy day, it was always worse. Our TV flickers with each turn of the blades.

We both spent those winter nights roaming around the house because we couldn't sleep. Then, the less we slept, the angrier we would become because of the situation. When I went out the front door, a sense of rage would hit me that I have never known before. Even after 30 years of teaching, raising two boys and going through a divorce has never produced the kind of rage I feel when those windmills are pounding.

When our autistic, seizure-prone granddaughter comes to visit, we spend no time outdoors due to the shadowing effects and the strobing effects. The shadowing and strobing red lights are known to induce seizures. My husband and I have both had depression from sleep deprivation and worries about investments of land, etc. Insomnia has become a way of life for me. We are still on medications for these problems.

We are by nature, outdoor people. Most of our days were spent outdoors with gardening, the dog or just drinking tea on the porch. Now we have to do what we have to and head inside and turn up the TV. We have had no choices. We have had this lifestyle forced on to us.

When they start talking about tax breaks for the townspeople, ours amounted to \$151; we have lost our lifestyle forever. The windmill people are paying three to four mills to the town for taxes. We are paying 20 mills. So yes, our lifestyle is greatly changed. Dreams of solitude and financial plans have been changed. We now have a choice — put up with it, hate it but get used to it, or sell at a greatly reduced price or not at all. Suck up the loss and move.

If we had our privacy invaded, been harassed or had trespassers on our land, it would be illegal. Because it is just noise, all we can do is live with it. If you live within two to three miles, I pity you because of the noise. If you live within 50 miles, I pity you because of the eyesore.

One more thing — if you use your ridge for recreational uses that will be gone. We are not allowed on that mountain at all. All access trails are gated or chained, with no trespassing signs everywhere, even along the top of the mountain, just in case someone does get up there. They will tell you it is up to the landowners that they rent from, but that is another lie. Even with signed permission slips from the owners, try to find a way up.

You will have a hard time to fight these because our government receives money. Our state is 100 percent for wind power for bragging rights that Maine is a forerunner in “green” and the Department of Environmental Protection works for the state and its boss

is the governor. The DEP added an extra five decibels to the acceptable noise level so UPC would be in compliance to the application. Politics is a hard thing to fight.

But, one thing is for sure! Once they are up and running, no matter what you do, they are not coming down until they fall down, and certainly never in my lifetime.

We are not against wind power but strongly feel turbines have to be placed where the impact is less. They should never be within five miles of a dwelling. Also, money should be put in escrow to remove them when their earning power is gone or they are too expensive to repair. I worry about Maine becoming a windmill bone yard because no small town will ever be able to afford to remove them.

By Carol Cowperthwaite

[Waldo County Citizen](#)

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