

CONTACT: Cynthia Grippaldi
Center for Ecological Technology (CET)
112 Elm Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201
413-445-4556 ext. 25

CET announces schedule of wind energy tours

The Center for Ecological Technology (CET) has announced the 2008 annual schedule of tours of Green Mountain Power Corporation's renewable energy wind facility in nearby Searsburg, Vermont and the new Zephyr wind energy turbine at Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort in Hancock, MA.

The wind energy facility located on Searsburg Mountain was the one of the first commercial-scale wind power facilities constructed in the northeast. Since 1997, eleven 550-kilowatt wind turbines have been producing electricity. Tours are led by the Vermont Environmental Research Associates (VERA) and volunteer tour guides. The free guided tours cover topics ranging from selecting the site, public acceptance, how the technology works, wildlife protection, and the potential for wind power in this region. The first tours are scheduled for Tuesday, July 15 at 10 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 1 p.m., and 2:30 p.m.

"This is a unique opportunity to visit a wind energy facility that produces as much as 14 million kilowatt-hours of renewable energy annually. Seeing the turbines up close gives visitors a chance to better understand a clean and locally based method of energy production," said Nancy Nylen, associate director of CET. "The tours also give residents from communities that are considering wind power a chance to learn and see firsthand what's involved."

During the tours, participants learn about issues that may affect the energy future of the region and enjoy ample opportunity to ask questions. The Searsburg wind facility is only open for tours on a limited basis between July and October due to protection of black bear habitat.

More summer tour dates are scheduled for Wednesday, August 6 and Saturday, August 23. Fall tours are planned for Wednesday, September 10; Saturday, September 20; and Wednesday, October 8. Space is limited on each tour. Reservations are accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis by contacting CET at 413-445-4556 ext. 25 or by emailing cynthiag@cetonline.org. Confirmation and directions to the site will be provided.

CET is also helping to coordinate tours of the Jiminy Peak Zephyr turbine in Hancock. This 1.5-megawatt turbine provides approximately 33% of Jiminy Peak's annual electrical demands. When Jiminy Peak installed Zephyr they became the first mountain resort in North America to make their own wind power. Upcoming tour dates are Saturday, July 19; and three Saturdays in August. More tour dates of the Zephyr turbine are scheduled into the fall. The Zephyr tours are \$9 per person and involve a strenuous hike approximately 1/4 of a mile from the top of the Grand Slam chairlift and walking back down. Reservations are required and may be made by calling (413) 738-5500 ext. 3760. For more information visit green.jiminypeak.com.

Support for the renewable energy tours comes from the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust. CET is an equal opportunity service provider and is funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.