

Black Oak Wind Farm Landscaping Plan

The Enfield Wind Law calls for a Landscaping Plan to be included in any wind project proposal. The entirety of the law reads:

A written plan depicting existing vegetation and describing any areas to be cleared and the specimens proposed to be added to provide landscaping or screening.

As described more fully in the Draft and Final EIS, and in the Final Findings Statement under Agricultural Resources, construction of the Approved Project will result in temporary disturbance to 58 acres of land, and permanent conversion to built facilities of 4 acres of land. Two turbines will be sited in wooded land, and five turbines will be sited in active agricultural fields currently producing corn, pasture, and hay.

The landscape management of agricultural fields is governed by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, the NYS DEC Invasive Species Management Plan, the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, and the landowner's preferences. Collectively, these plans and guidelines dictate that topsoil will be stockpiled on-site during construction, invasive species will be prevented from establishing or spreading, and once topsoil has been replaced after construction, it will be seeded and mulched with the farmer's preferred species to transition back to productive agricultural land.

The cleared land around turbines located in forest will be seeded to perennial native grasses, and mowed annually or grazed by livestock to maintain the areas as low-growing vegetation. Due to the large setbacks of both forest-sited turbines, the foreground from any public viewpoint will already be screened with the existing 40' tall trees between public roads and the base of any turbines. Further screening with vegetation is therefore not possible.

The substation will be fenced with chain link fence, and padlocked. Utility tariffs (regulations) do not allow screening of substation fences with vegetation, in the interest of security of the facility. Therefore, there will be no screening vegetation planted around the substation fences. The substation area itself will be topped with 12" of gravel as per utility tariffs. All electrical cables will be buried underground, and trenches re-seeded to perennial grasses.

Long-term maintenance of vegetation is performed by the landowners managing their crops in the agricultural fields, and by Black Oak staff or their subcontractors for the forested sites.

Seed mixes used to revegetate areas will vary slightly across the site, depending on time of year of planting, degree of slope, and landowner preference. Cropland will be returned to active field crop production. Pasture will be sown to a grazing mix of the landowner's preference, such as Seedway's Pro-Dairy Pasture mix, which is 25% orchardgrass, 20% perennial ryegrass, 15% festulolium, 15% timothy, 10% branch root alfalfa, 0% red clover, and 5% ladino white clover. For forest and fallow field areas, fast-covering erosion control mixes should be used, such as Roundstone Native Seed Co's Mix #200, with a blend of creeping red fescue, red top, foxtail millet, ladino clover, trefoil, partridge pea, and lespedeza.