LOUGH EA WINDFARM PROPOSAL GOES TO PLANNING

A proposal by VENTUS ENERGY *www.ventusenergy.net* to construct a wind-farm near Lough Ea was submitted to Clare County Council for planning permission on 10th April. Lough Ea is located in the Slieve Aughty mountains approximately 6km from Feakle, Co. Clare. The wind-farm is to consist of eight 3MW turbines built on what is currently an area of semi-mature coniferous plantation owned by Coillte. The Slieve Aughties are a preferred wind-farm location according to the *2005 East Clare Development Plan www.clare.ie.*

Ventus Energy commissioned a detailed Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS acknowledges a number of issues raised by the proposed location, especially the impacts on local residents and on the tourism/amenity values of the area. The rich and diverse flora and fauna of upland mountain bog also get special attention in part due to the close proximity of ***Maghera Mountain Bog NHA 002442***, ***Glendree Bog SAC 001912*** and an internationally important local Hen Harrier population. With the exception of the issue of noise pollution for local households, the EIS finds only positive or neutral impacts for all issues considered in the report.

The power output from the proposed facility is modest (approximately 6MW of power under average wind conditions, as compared to the 915MW delivered by Moneypoint power station in County Clare.) Nevertheless it is a conspicuous development visible from wide areas of Counties Clare and Galway. At an average base elevation of 300m, the maximum tip height of the turbines will exceed the summit of nearby Maghera mountain at 400m.

The detailed planning and environmental impact statements are available for inspection at the planning offices of Clare County Council, Kilrush Road, Ennis planning application number 07-962. They merit careful scrutiny. The latest date for submissions/observations is 15th May. The planning decision may only be appealed on the basis of a submission made prior to this date.

Press Release