

# You'll Toast Your Bread in the Blood of Owls

December 11, 2011 By [Doug](#) [12 Comments](#)

A long time ago, in a universe far, far away I confess I was the President of a local Liberal Party Provincial Association in the Province of Ontario. I was also on the provincial board of directors for the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. This made me a minor bit player on the stage, but I was young, with enthusiasm and a growing contact-list. A “person of potential” as the line goes.

Agriculture was in a state of flux and the family farm was under heavy siege. It was the time of the serious decline of the small family farm to be replaced by the family mega-farm with one farm absorbing its neighbors in order to survive.

As a “backroom” person-in-training, I set out with a few other farm types in the party to walk a simple policy up the political agenda. We wanted a provincial committee to properly evaluate small farm opportunities and financial options so our smaller farms might continue to be viable. (As an example, I closed down the cream and hog side of mine and focussed strictly on nursery work).

I took on the task of creating the wording and documents and assembling local and regional support. The regional meeting passed our resolution and then the provincial annual meeting added it to the party's official platform. It became official Liberal party policy and part of the platform.

We were on our way.

A few months later, I happened to be at a meeting where the provincial party president was in attendance. Buttonholing him, I volunteered to sit on the committee. His response was the premier didn't want to do anything about this.

Process ended.

Not the time to do anything indeed, like evaluate alternatives for family farms, because of a decision by one man (whether it was actually the Premier or the President just blowing me off – the result was the same) Six to eight months of working with grass roots members and farmers officially ended in that moment.

So did my involvement with political parties – democratic only when out of power. This brief brush with a peek inside the real process turned me off the process for life. Rightly or wrongly, I became a cynical observer.

A current example is the fact that the current Liberal premier Dalton McGuinty, wants to build a killing field of 525-foot tall industrial wind turbines on our world-wide designated, bird habitat. Our small Amherst Island is home to 23-26 endangered species all sorts of creatures, it is the winter hunting ground for arctic owls (the Amazing Snowy, the tiny Boreal and the largest owl – the Great Gray) as well as northern raptors such as Kestrels. The island is also the nexus for the eastern migration route for songbirds and they arrive here in the spring by the (quite literally) millions.

The bird kill from the spinning blades will be massive. And yet, Dalton McGuinty tells us this will be a green energy project, good for our environment and the number of birds killed will be “acceptable”.



Snowy Owl

“Owl Woods” on Amherst Island ([google it](#)) is the winter hunting ground for these amazing birds and I can’t even begin to tell you how incredible it is to watch snowy owls swooping over the nearby fields. I’ve never seen a reclusive Boreal owl (they’re really tiny) but I’ve seen the Great Gray with its 6-foot wingspans on the hunt. I also know the unspoken locations for the endangered short-eared owl but I’m not going to speak of that here; suffice it say I’ve walked those areas and watched them hunt and play.

Four giant turbines are planned for the hunting fields immediately adjacent to Owl Woods. The birds will leave their roosts and fly directly to the spinning blades. (Moving

somewhere at the speed of 70-80 meters per second – the blades cover almost a football field a second) Two 525-foot tall turbines are planned immediately adjacent to the nesting and hunting areas for the short-eared owl. The owl swooping flight pattern is sure to bring them into contact with these football-length blades ensuring incredible kill rates. We're planting industrial turbines right next to nests and roosting areas. This company will likely have to apply (as one did for the next door project) for an "exemption" allowing them to kill any number of each of the endangered species with impunity.

Here my two worlds collide again – another bit of political expediency overcoming common sense. There's a political expediency and stubbornness on the part of yet-another Liberal premier. And another group – God's creatures – are going to pay the price this time.

There's a rational way to develop and site green energy projects and it is indeed quite possible industrial wind turbines will fit into this planning in some way. But putting them in the major breeding ground for this number of endangered species isn't rational nor even moral in my opinion.

And yet, this green energy "solution" is beloved by politicians and city consumers. You'll heat your waffle iron in the blood of our owls. And that's all right with you?



Boreal Owl – you can compare its height with that of the leaves

