

Group testing wind on North Shore

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The Cook County Local Energy Project is working with Arrowhead Electric Cooperative in eyeing North Shore sites to test wind resources for possible wind turbines.

Under consideration are Bogus Lake, Lutsen Mountains, Murphy Mountain and Trestle Pine Lake.

The local energy group is working with bird researchers from the Natural Resources Research Initiative at the University of Minnesota-Duluth and already has taken one suggestion to heart: Stay clear of the ridge closest to the lake to avoid the busiest bird routes.

"There are the scenic issues and bird migration issues and

transmission line issues. ... We're trying not to blow by any of these as we do our homework," said Jim Boyd, chairman of the local energy group's wind energy working group.

Older studies showed generally low wind speeds along North Shore hills. But a more recent study found some North Shore hilltops had the same or even higher average wind speeds as Buffalo Ridge, the area of southwestern Minnesota where hundreds of wind turbines are producing electricity.

One of the highest wind speeds was found on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation. But Boyd said the remote North Shore lacks transmission lines to move electricity created in the area.

