

**NUVISTA'S MISSION IS...**to improve the energy economics in rural Alaska by creating energy generation and transmission infrastructure to serve, connect, and enable the region to attain affordable, long term energy sustainability and self-sufficiency.



## Staying in Touch

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[www.ferc.gov](http://www.ferc.gov) Project: P-14369

**A NONPROFIT ENERGY CO-OP ESTABLISHED TO SERVE NATIVE ALASKAN COMMUNITIES...**Nuvista's first commitment is to the long-term health of the region. This means working together to be sure the proposed Chikuminuk Lake Hydroelectric Project only moves forward if it leaves the region better off than it is today.



### Energy Star

Nuvista will highlight individuals, organizations, and projects working to improve the energy future of rural Alaska. Do you know an "ENERGY STAR"? To nominate an energy star, send an e-mail to [pmurphy@NuvistaCoop.org](mailto:pmurphy@NuvistaCoop.org).

### Energy Saving Tip

Did you know that you can save up to \$14 per year, for every 60W inefficient incandescent bulb you replace with energy saving bulbs? If you replaced 15 bulbs in your home that equates to \$210 each year.

### Nuvista's Commitments

**We will keep people informed.**  
Stay tuned to future newsletter updates or check our website for more information about Nuvista and all of our projects.

### We will meet with stakeholders.

We are working on a meeting schedule for the upcoming year. Let us know if you would like us to come to your community for a community round-table meeting.

### We will incorporate suggestions and new information gathered.

We will change course if needed to make sure our work matches community and regional needs and values.

## Nuvista Explores New Energy for Southwest Alaska

Nuvista Light and Electric Cooperative, a nonprofit electric co-op established to serve Native Alaskan communities, is investigating the feasibility of a proposed hydroelectric project at Chikuminuk Lake. We want to learn if this project could help sustain the region's economic health, cultural traditions, and our subsistence and modern lifestyles.

Last year Nuvista received State funding to start studying this potential project. Nuvista is just beginning conversations with communities, tribes, organizations and residents within the Calista and Bristol Bay regions as well as state and federal agencies. At this early stage, field studies are limited to helicopter aerial surveys, exploratory walks supported by float plane, and boat trips on the Allen River. Our team is diligently following all the State Park rules for this area. This means no powered boats, no helicopter landings and no shovels.

Many questions need to be answered before anyone will know if this project is a feasible, low impact solution to the region's energy challenges. If initial studies do not reveal serious physical or environmental hurdles, additional work will evaluate the amount and distribution of power.

One thing we do know is that western Alaska needs sustainable, affordable and reliable energy solutions. Energy conservation and alternative sources like hydro, wind, and biomass are clearly part of this solution. We look forward to continuing this discussion, sharing what we learn, and working together to help our communities survive and thrive. Please contact me or visit our website ([www.NuvistaCoop.org](http://www.NuvistaCoop.org)) with any questions.

Thanks,  
Elaine "Chicky" Brown



June 2012, a team of specialists begin to explore the potential project area.



# Chikuminuk Lake Hydroelectric Project - Just Getting Started

## WHAT WE’VE BEEN HEARING

This spring Nuvista sponsored open houses in Dillingham and Bethel and also presented at a Wood–Tikchik State Park Management Council meeting. These events aimed to provide information at the earliest stages of the project, and most important, to get some feedback from people in the region. The meetings were well attended and lively; questions and views ranged from strong support to substantial concerns. Some of the questions asked include:

- **Environmental Impacts** - Will the project harm salmon and other fish? What about impacts on caribou and other animals? What will be the impact of power lines on birds, on aviation?
- **State Park Impacts** - Is it appropriate to develop a hydropower project within the boundaries of Wood–Tikchik State Park? How might the project affect recreation and views?
- **Impact on Energy Prices** - How quickly can the project be developed? How much will the project reduce prices for electricity? Which communities will receive the power?

These are good questions, many of which we cannot yet answer. Before committing to the project, Nuvista wants honest answers to all these questions. The process to get answers is just beginning. Starting this summer (2012) teams of biologists, hydrologists, engineers and other specialists will begin field work looking at every dimension of the project. The underlying natural systems, the watershed and fish, the human use of the area. This remote site was chosen because there are no known salmon in the lake, and seasonal recreation and subsistence use is limited. The new data we gather will help us understand the lake ecosystem, amount of power that could be generated, and how this power might be able to be distributed. As we gather data and begin to learn more about Chikuminuk Lake and the surrounding area, we will share what we learn with you, in this newsletter and on our website. Please contact us if you have more questions you would like us to answer.



Electricity costs for rural businesses are 3-4 times what urban businesses pay. This threatens the economic health of rural Alaska.

**“If our villages are going to survive and prosper, if we’re going to hold onto our subsistence way of life, we need to look for new, local sources of energy”**

Bethel open house meeting participant, Spring 2012

Electricity in rural Alaska relies almost entirely on burning fossil fuels. Moving toward renewable, local energy sources that do not emit climate-changing greenhouse gases is a primary goal for Nuvista.



Regional meetings in 2010 singled out wind and hydro as preferred energy options. Above, a crew installing windmills in Kwigillingok.



Preserving our villages and way of life means embracing change. We must protect our subsistence resources and the natural world; at the same time, we need new and sustainable energy solutions that support quality of life and a prosperous local economy.



Up to 47% of household income goes to energy in some remote Alaskan villages.

“Remote households with the lowest incomes face the highest cost burden.”  
– Commonwealth North, *Energy for a Sustainable Alaska: The Rural Conundrum*

## A Start at Answering Your Questions

**Q: Have alternatives to hydroelectric been explored?**

A: In meetings in the YK region, hydroelectric was selected by residents as a promising option; the Alaska State Legislature provided an appropriation to begin feasibility studies. Coal has been studied, but was rejected by residents due to concerns about emissions and dust. In stream hydrokinetic power is being studied. The hurdles to overcome are debris damaging the mechanism, and potential fish impacts. Geothermal is not a viable option because of the limited size of area hot springs. Continued use of diesel is an option, but diesel is very expensive and carbon emissions are of significant concern. Wind power is being constructed and used in much of rural Alaska; however, a downside is power is unavailable when the wind is not blowing. Wind and hydroelectric power are good partners; with a new transmission grid, power from multiple sources, including wind generation, could work together.

In addition, energy efficiency measures have recently increased in rural Alaska with the hope of reducing energy consumption.

**Q: What about the State Statutes and regulations that say a hydroelectric project is not an authorized development in Wood–Tikchik State Park?**

A: If the investigations that are just starting suggest the project may be feasible, then the statutes and regulations governing the Park would have to be changed to allow for hydroelectric development at Chikuminuk Lake.

**Q: Will the Project hire residents of Western Alaska?**

A: Alaskan companies will be working on field studies for the next two years. As this work moves ahead, the consultants will begin looking for local partners to assist with field work. The large majority of local hiring would happen during construction if the project progresses to this stage. The project would also create jobs for operation and maintenance of project-related facilities.

**Q: How will the public stay informed about the Project?**

A: Nuvista, the project sponsor, recognizes this project will not go forward without wide public understanding and public support. Beginning this summer, Nuvista will be meeting with communities, organizations and villages to review progress and gather public views.



Visit Nuvista’s website, [www.NuvistaCoop.org](http://www.NuvistaCoop.org), for regular updates on times and locations of upcoming meetings in the region. You can also subscribe to receive regular e-newsletter updates by contacting [tanya@agnewbeck.com](mailto:tanya@agnewbeck.com).