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EDWARD F. MARONEY PHOTO  
*The Barnstable Patriot*

**WAITING TO BE HEARD** – *The respective Mashpee and Aquinnah Wampanoag tribal historic preservation officers, Chuckie Green and Bettina Washington, wait to speak at a public meeting on whether Nantucket Sound qualifies as a “traditional cultural property.”*

From the Barnstable Patriot:

Wampanoag leaders celebrate bond with Sound

Indian: It's the Eye of the Holy Serpent Mound, on which you're standing.

Wagon Boss: It's a beaut!

Indian: No, it's a mound.

Wagon Boss: And right purty, too. Er –can you move it?

Indian: But – why?

Wagon Boss: Railroad's comin' through. Right now!

Firesign Theatre Smarting from editorial commentaries that dismissed their religious and cultural ties to Nantucket Sound as unimportant when stacked against the perceived need to build the Cape Wind project, two Wampanoag tribal members spoke up this week.

Chuckie Green, tribal historic preservation officer of the Mashpee Wampanoag and Bettina Washington, who holds the same position for the Aquinnah, joined a meeting Nov. 23 at Cape Cod Community College to examine the question, “Is Nantucket Sound a ‘Traditional Cultural Property?’” The main speaker was archaeologist Dr. Thomas King, who literally wrote the book on documenting such properties for the National Park Service. While all agreed that such a listing for the Sound was a no-brainer, King made the point that, if the federal government follows the full consultative route with the parties involved, it could still green-light the project even if the Sound is accorded a special status.

Green and Washington spoke of the ancient history of their people on Horseshoe Shoal, which they dated back 13,000 years. Washington noted that the Wampanoag, known as the People of the First Light, are accorded respect by tribes across the country for being the ones to welcome the sun each morning. “It defines our place on Turtle Island,” she said.

“The Sound has a strong religious attraction,” Green said. “That morning sunrise is part of our ceremonies. Putting a large, lighted power plant in the middle of the situation would be detrimental to our culture.” Green said the Wampanoag are not latecomers to participation in the project's review, but added that the tribe's comments have been ignored. He said there are better sources of wind energy than Horseshoe Shoal in the area, and that the Wampanoag are willing to work with the developer on moving the project. “We are not Johnny-come-latelies,” Washington said. “That nobody listened to us is not our fault.”

King, who started his remarks by revealing that he'd never been on Cape Cod and had “no position” on Cape Wind, led a quick survey of federal regulation, stressing that listing on the National Register alone would not protect Nantucket Sound from development.

Perhaps the most thought-provoking moment came when King showed a slide of a beautiful lake surrounded by low mountains and asked if anyone could identify the site. “It's the Sea of Galilee,” he said. “A little group of folks called Christians believe that their leader walked around on it.”

After the cultural comparison, King reeled off a list of locations that had been designated as traditional cultural properties. He paid particular attention to the Comanche nation's revered Medicine Bluff near Fort Sill, Okla. He said the Army started to build a training center some distance from the bluff, but the Comanche said the installation would interfere with their views to and from the bluff, and the courts upheld their claim. King said the Army “walked away” from the project.

As far as the question of whether Cape Wind will be approved, King said, “I think it's probably a political call.”