

Lands and People

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New transmission line equals secret subsidy for BC Liberal supporters

By Will Horter

If a major lightning storm was going to hit ground somewhere in the province of BC, you would want to know about it.

Well, a major electricity transmission project is moving ahead and no one has heard about it.

Recently Dogwood Initiative learned that the BC government is secretly considering a proposal to use \$120-\$400 million in taxpayer money to build a new 287 kilovolt power line in northwestern BC, up Highway 37 from Meziadine Junction

The resource companies pushing the transmission line claim their project will generate over \$2 billion in investment. Perhaps. But the real question is who benefits and who loses?

The economics are simple. The companies profit by getting government to use taxpayers' money to build infrastructure that primarily benefits the companies. The profits go to the directors, officers and shareholders. The government gets a relatively small return in taxes.

Electricity is really just organized lightning.

-George Carlin

to Dease Lake (and perhaps further).

Why? To promote the interests of a few mining promoters, who, over the last ten years, have collectively donated over \$440,000 to the BC Liberal party.

The proposal of this crew of resource companies wants the citizens of BC to pay for the infrastructure they need to make tens of billions of dollars.

These companies claim it is an economic development scheme. It is, but the wrong kind. Their proposal is based on an antiquated, but simple economic development model—"publicize" the costs and "privatize" the profits.

And the local people pay the costs in reduced quality of life, environmental degradation, and associated social ills.

The proposed grid extension along Highway 37 is a classic example of this failed model. The new power line would create a literal gold rush (and coal, copper, and coalbed methane rush) in the Stikine and Skeena watersheds, opening up the region for more mining schemes. This rush would dramatically change the economy and environment of northwestern BC.

One of the companies, *bc Metals*, projects it can produce 1.18 million ounces of gold and

Transmission subsidies continued **page 3**

DOGWOOD INITIATIVE was founded by First Nations, environmentalists, and community and labour leaders.

Our mission is to help British Columbians exercise local control to create healthy and prosperous communities

in this issue

Transmission line subsidies	1	Dieting Harper Style	7
Editors Note: What we do?	2	Filming and Fighting for the Cathedral	8
News Briefs	3	Overcoming Obstacles	10
The Waters of Telkwa	4	Dogwood Deals	11
Telkwa on the Front Line	5	Office Wish List	11
Canada: An ecological scofflaw?	6	Staff and Volunteer Update	12

Editors Note: What we do

By Charles Campbell



What is Dogwood Initiative? Answering that question is one of the challenges we face. We don't "sound-bite" well.

When I was a volunteer I joined some lengthy discussions about how to get our message across succinctly. We eventually got it down to one paragraph.

It starts like this: "Dogwood Initiative helps British Columbians exercise local control to create healthy and prosperous communities." Not bad, but how clear a picture can we get from a few words?

Our actions stand on the firm belief that communities by right may govern themselves and that democracy is dependent on an active and engaged citizenry. The trend seems to be for the locus of power and decision-making to move further from the communities in which most people live. Power is displaced: it circulates in a privileged realm, outside of real places where real people live and work.

In an era of ever-increasing globalization much of the power to make decisions rests with financial markets. How can local citizens engage the transnational, national and provincial decision-makers that decide the future of their communities?

That is the question Dogwood Initiative has set out to answer. Although 94% of BC is public land, logging, mining, and oil and gas interests control over 80% of it through long-term licences. Environmental deregulation, corporate consolidation, and tax policies that create incentives to replace people with machines have further eroded communities' ability to decide their future.

Nevertheless, there are mechanisms that can put power back in the hands of local communities. Finding and using these mechanisms to create a sustainable future is what Dogwood is all about.

In Northern BC, we are working with First Nations that are intent on stopping seven oil and gas projects and associated tankers proposed for BC's north coast. The legal clout of First Nations with land claims in the area and strong public opposition to lifting the 34-year-old moratorium on tankers in the Inside Passage are creating delays and financial risk for the likes of Enbridge's Gate-

way pipeline. Dogwood is working to notify Enbridge's investors of these risks. By doing so we can leverage the power of the financial markets to enable northern communities and First Nations to define their own future.

In the Bulkley Valley (see pages 4-5) and other areas facing proposed coalbed methane developments, we are countering the government's fast-tracking of coalbed methane by helping local citizens learn about the potential impact of coalbed methane extraction on their environment and lives. We are holding the Government's farcical consultation process to account and making sure the voice of the local community is heard.



Province-wide, our efforts to understand why the present government pursues policies that prioritize short-term corporate gain over long-term community benefit has led us to produce a database of contributions to political parties and seek campaign finance reform. These efforts—as well as our work on community forests, the relationships we are building with the ethical investment community and the alliances we have helped

create among First Nations. —are all geared at levelling the playing field and restoring power to local people.

These issues have motivated communities to organize and stand up for their rights. As they do so they are also entering into a larger debate about community control, climate change and national energy policies.

The story of Dogwood Initiative is the story of individuals and communities effecting positive change, not only locally but also in the global context. Tomorrow can be a better day. But it's up to us to make it happen. ☘



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Transmission subsidies continued from page 1

1.85 billion pounds of copper, worth over \$7 billion at today's commodity prices, at its proposed Red Chris mine. *Nova Gold* boasts of recoverable amounts of over 5 million ounces of gold, 92 million ounces of silver and 6.5 billion pounds of copper worth over \$27 billion.

bc Metals is the lead promoter for the new transmission line and is pulling out all the stops to pressure government to fork over the cash. Within days of getting an environmental assessment certificate for the Red Chris mine just 18km south of Iskut, the company began whining that the project wasn't economical without a taxpayer-financed transmission line.

The lack of public process illustrates the continued

contempt the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources has for British Columbians. The Ministry seems to see consultation and public participation as mere obstacles. And, despite the boom in fossil-fuel and mineral prices, the government wants to subsidize these unsustainable industries with hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer money.

This disconnection is why communities throughout British Columbia are standing up against subsidized coalbed methane, coal-fired power, and independent power projects.

Once people become aware of the potential impacts of the Highway 37 transmission project, you can expect the uproar to begin. We'll keep you informed. ☒

News Briefs

Enbridge Gateway—Enbridge's proposed 1,123km pipeline to transport oil sands crude to Kitimat is floundering as First Nations opposition mounts.

The Carrier Sekani have sued the federal government for failing to consult and the Wuikinuxv-Kitasoo-Nuxalk Tribal Council recently demanded that the project be cancelled and "truly sustainable ways found to meet the energy... needs of all Canadians."

Citing the sinking of the BC Ferry, the coastal nations oppose the project because of "significant risks to the health and sustenance of the marine environment." They said, "The thought is terrifying of far larger ships filled with [fossil fuels] travelling in all weather conditions and navigated by crews with far less experience than BC Ferries in our complex waterways."

Because of the growing risk Enbridge still hasn't signed long-term shipping contracts to supply the pipeline with tar sands crude.

The Minister of the Environment announced on September 29 that the project was being referred to a joint National Energy Board/Canadian

Environmental Assessment Agency review.

If the proposal goes ahead it will necessitate eliminating the 34-year-old moratorium on Tanker traffic in BC's ecologically sensitive Inside Passage. More than 75% of BC voters oppose tankers in these waters.



First Nations act to prevent more of these in the Inside Passage.

Sacred Headwaters—Tahltan elder Lillian Moyer was arrested on Sept 9 after *bc Metals* won an injunction against Tahltan protesting its proposed gold/copper mine. The Tahltan say the proposed open-pit operation south of Iskut would violate sacred ground, threaten traditional hunting land and ruin fisheries.

Softwood Lumber—Criticism continues to escalate about the Softwood Lumber deal implemented October 12. The *Globe and Mail's* Gordon Gibson

claims the 'softwood sellout' was rushed through by an inexperienced Harper administration giving the US protectionist lobby \$500 million and a deal that caps Canadian imports.

The *Centre for Policy Alternatives* says the deal will likely spur the export of raw logs leading to more job losses and mill closures in BC. There have also been claims that the deal will provide the Bush administration with a \$450 million slush fund in the run up to congressional elections in the US.

Being Caribou won the Best Science, Technology, Nature, Environment or Adventure Documentary at the 21st annual *Gemini Awards*. *Being Caribou*, which documents filmmakers Karsten Heuer and Leanne Allison's five month journey on foot following the migration of the endangered porcupine caribou heard, was screened at our *Strength in Community Festival* in May.

Coming up Roses—Dogwood Initiative's former Capacity Director, Moira Campbell, has just launched her first solo CD, *Coming up Roses*, a beautiful collection of bittersweet songs that range from folk to stylish pop. Check out www.moirasings.com for her B.C. tour dates. ☒



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photo: Jim Simonelli

The Waters of Telkwa

Jim Simonelli talks about the threat to the life blood of his community

by Charles Campbell

When Jim Simonelli opens his door and looks out over the Telkwa River he sees an area of pristine natural beauty. Jim is surrounded by snow-capped mountain ranges and a myriad of lakes and streams. As a fishing guide, Jim earns much of his livelihood from the salmon and steelhead spawning in the streams that feed the nearby Bulkley River. “It hasn’t been a great year for guiding” he confides. “The river is low, and the steelhead population has been affected by the sockeye fishery which opened early in September.”

But a single off year isn’t what has him worried. Jim’s property is located on a proposed tenure for coalbed methane development.

Jim is one of the Bulkley Valley residents with a lot to lose if the government grants a tenure to extract coalbed methane to Outrider Energy, a Calgary company that wants to drill here. “The oil and gas industry is young in BC, and there aren’t enough safeguards in place... There is a lot of risk and very little benefit to local residents”.

There is a lot that makes Jim love living in Telkwa. He proudly proclaims that the crystal clear water from his well is better than any bottled water. “Neither the company nor the government can guarantee me that my well water won’t be contaminated,” he says. “They haven’t even done the baseline studies.”

Water Quality

The effect of coalbed methane extraction on water quality is one of Jim and his community’s chief concerns. The methane is held in coal deposits by water pressure. To extract it, companies pump water from that seam, then compress the freed gas and pipe it to market. The waste water is often highly saline and toxic. It is the disposal of this water that worries Bulkley Valley residents. The

extraction process has also been known to lower the water table in an area and could pose a problem for wells.

Outrider Energy promises to try and mitigate the effects of waste-water disposal by reinjecting the water into the ground rather than allowing it to flow into fish-bearing streams as is permitted by the regulations. Neither the company nor the government will guarantee this response would prevent contamination of streams or seepage into drinking well water. “This is the ‘new-and-improved’ method, but it’s unproven,” says Jim. Coalbed methane operations have never yet co-existed with salmon and trout habitat. “Why would we want to risk our fishery for little or no reward?”

Poor Consultation

The government consultation process is a source of frustration for many Bulkley Valley residents, who feel the government is ignoring their concerns and pushing coalbed methane regardless of the community’s view. These sentiments came to a head at a public forum organized by *Citizens Concerned About Coalbed Methane* (see *article next page*). Members of the community opposed the project, citing water contamination, landscape degradation, and a flawed public process. The agitated crowd also demanded to know whether the decision to say no to the development rested with them. Yvette Wells, the assistant deputy minister of marketing, aboriginal and community relations, represented the government. She evaded the question, saying the decision was for cabinet.

“The government seems intent on going ahead regardless of what we say,” Jim commented. “The tenure they’re giving out means a company has a right to put a well on my land. I can’t say no.”



Mountains of mud at a CBM exploration site in Fernie

Communities say no

There may be a good reason that the government is reluctant to engage the community in meaningful consultation. The more people know about coalbed methane extraction, the worse it looks. In addition to the risk to drinking water and fish habitat, coalbed methane has been a major blemish on the landscape of other regions. Extensive networks of roads, pipelines and noisy compressors operating 24/7 are required to extract the methane and get it to market. Even relatively small test wells drilled in areas such as Fernie have left a mountain of mud and devastation (*see photograph*).

Development of coalbed methane in BC has been stalled by local communities. In September, *Shell* was forced to abandon its coalbed methane exploration for the second year running due to the continued resistance of the Tahltan. Fernie and Hat Creek have been successful in preventing the granting of tenures. In 2003 the *Union of BC Municipalities* called for a province-wide moratorium on coalbed methane until stronger regulations were implemented.

Jim explains what he sees as a raw deal for the community, with profits going to Calgary, taxes collected by Victoria, and the local area left with a big mess. He complains further how the terms of the tenure don't require Outrider to post a bond against any potential damage.

I ask Jim what he loves about living in Telkwa. The natural beauty, the down to earth people, the steelhead run; all compete to be top of his list. "If the development is granted, though, we'll be leaving... My wife feels the same way." Jim's wife is a native of the Bulkley Valley and has lived there all her life. Jim is approaching his twelfth year in the area.

Long may they remain. ☒

Telkwa on the Front Line

By *Citizens Concerned about CBM*

The new front line for coalbed methane in British Columbia is the quiet village of Telkwa, located in the Bulkley Valley just south of Smithers. There, the BC government and *Outrider Energy*, an upstart Calgary company, have clashed with a concerned residents group over a proposed coalbed methane field just outside the Village limits.

"When folks learned what the coalbed methane industry has done to other communities across North America, it was clear they didn't want to have anything to do with it," says Lori Knor, who lives in the tenure area and has been organizing efforts to inform people about the development's likely impacts.

Knor's group, *Citizens Concerned About Coalbed Methane*, has been busy since it first heard about the potential sale of the project's tenure. They started by holding a video night in Telkwa, which was attended by 60 people. Then, they hosted a public forum in nearby Smithers, which brought together a panel of proponents and critics to discuss the risks and benefits of coalbed methane. Almost 400 people showed up, packing the house.

One after another, residents at the forum stepped to the microphone to voice their concerns. They cited the potential for water contamination. The fragmentation of the rural landscape by pipelines, roads, and wells. The lack of effective regulations to protect the community's values. The risk to the Skeena River's wild salmon.

They asked questions, too, and received little in the way of satisfactory answers. Feedback forms distributed

Get involved
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at the event revealed strong opposition to the project, with 204 of 226 respondents opposing the project. Only one person expressed support.

A survey circulated by the group to gather residents' feedback has found 97% in opposition to the project with 1400 people responding to date. These survey results will be submitted to government as evidence of the community's lack of support for coalbed methane. The group also held a rally attended by over 400 people on October 21, which received province-wide media coverage.

The fact that the BC government has failed to convince a single BC community to roll out the welcome mat for coalbed methane might explain why it's pouring unprecedented resources into marketing the Telkwa project. The Ministry of Energy and Mines has an entire community relations division working on it and Premier Gordon Campbell even granted an interview to the local paper for the purpose of extolling the project's benefits.

Knor says it's not making the project any more popular in the eyes of residents.

"Coalbed methane development promises little for this community, yet at the same time, threatens our Valley's most important assets." ☒

Canada: An ecological scofflaw?

By David R. Boyd

These are troubled times for Canadians clinging to the myth that Canada is an environmental leader. Our dismal domestic record on issues ranging from climate change to endangered species has been comprehensively criticized by many commentators, ranging from David Suzuki to the *Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development*.

However, Canada's role in sabotaging and opposing international environmental agreements has, until now, largely escaped notice.

The many areas in which Canada is deliberately undermining international efforts to protect the environment include critical issues such as climate change, bottom trawling in the oceans, trade in toxic substances, and the human right to clean water.

Other examples include Canada's opposition to a meaningful global treaty on forest conservation and our cheerleading for genetically modified organisms despite the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

Climate change is the most profound environmental challenge facing humankind. Back in the late 1980s, Canada was at the forefront of raising alarms about the impact of skyrocketing greenhouse gas emissions on the planet. We quickly ratified the *UN Convention on Climate Change* in 1992. Since then, Canada has been more obstructive than constructive.

Under Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, the federal government made a big deal about ratifying the Kyoto Protocol. However, Liberal governments did little to live up to our commitment, resulting in Canadian emissions rising by 30 per cent over a period of time when we had promised they would fall.

There is now a strong possibility that Canada will be the only nation that fails to fulfill its obligations under Kyoto, as we are by far the furthest from our 2012 target.

Worse yet, Canada has blocked international efforts to take stronger action to address climate change.

For example, in the negotiations prior to last year's *G-8 Summit* in Scotland, Canada opposed proposals to establish international minimum standards for the fuel efficiency of vehicles and the energy efficiency of buildings. Canada also opposed European proposals to place a special tax on air travel.

On the marine front, decades ago Canada was one of the instigators of the landmark Law of the Sea Convention.

Despite this important treaty, the world's oceans are in deep trouble, suffering from the adverse effects of climate change, pollution, and over fishing.

There are ongoing international negotiations aimed at eliminating the most destructive form of fishing, called

bottom trawling. Biologists describe it as bulldozing the ocean floor, wiping out corals and sponges that, ironically, provide crucial habitat for the fish being caught.

Canada is one of a handful of nations that opposes efforts to ban bottom trawling on the high seas. Why? Because the federal government fears that a bottom trawling ban on the high seas might translate into an end to such trawling in Canadian waters, something we do with reckless abandon.

Asbestos is a hazardous substance that causes a rare form of cancer called mesothelioma, lung cancer, and a degenerative lung disease called asbestosis.

All types of asbestos have been banned by many nations including Australia and all 25 countries in the *European Union*. However, efforts to place limits on the export of asbestos, pursuant to an international treaty called the Rotterdam Convention, have been unsuccessful.

The major opponent to restricting trade in this hazardous substance? Canada, one of the world's leading asbestos exporters.

More than 90 per cent of Canadian exports head for developing nations like India and the Philippines where health and safety regulations either don't exist or aren't enforced. In effect, Canada is exporting a product that

Canada... continued page 7



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Canada... continued from page 6

will result in thousands of deaths in Asia, Africa, and South America — deaths from a product that we deem unsafe for use in Canada.

For more than a decade, there have been international negotiations about recognizing that people have a basic human right to clean water.

Only one nation in the world repeatedly votes against resolutions that would recognize water as a basic human right. Canada. Why? There is paranoia in some parts of the federal government that recognition of a right to water might be used somehow to force Canada to give away some of our precious water.

Who should Canadians blame for this litany of debacles that erodes our formerly proud environmental reputation?

The usual cliché trotted out by environmentalists points the finger at a lack of political will. This is an intellectually lazy response. Canadians elect the politi-

cians who approve these policies, pay the salaries of the bureaucrats who implement them, and work for or purchase products from the corporations whose lobbyists push these irresponsible policies.

In a free and democratic society, the buck stops with the people. As Dr Seuss wrote in his timeless book *The Lorax*, “Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”

Unless Canadians change our voting, consumption, and behaviour patterns to make our actions consistent with our values, Canada’s dismal environmental record is exactly what we deserve. ☒

Article originally published in Toronto Sun

David R. Boyd, is an environmental lawyer, author, and a Trudeau Scholar at the University of British Columbia and member of Dogwood Initiatives Advisory Round Table.

DiETING HARPER STYLE

By Will Horter

I’m embarrassed to say both Canada and I need to lose a few pounds. I would be healthier if I sweated off the twelve pounds I have added since 1990. Canada has a bigger challenge. Collectively we need to chop at least 240 million tonnes a year from our carbon emissions by the end of 2012.

To address our weight issues will require Canada and I to discipline our respective relationships to carbon: carbohydrates for me and carbon emitting fossil fuels for our beloved country.

Lets evaluate the merits of climate change proposals as diet plans.

I’m sad to say that so far I’m doing better than my country. While my weight has fluctuated over the last few years, I have dropped twenty pounds by reducing my portion size, cutting my beloved carbohydrates, and exercising more. It has required personal discipline.

In contrast, Canada’s carbon emissions have increased by a whopping 24% driven mostly by failures to conserve electricity, expansion of the tar sands and the failure to improve fuel efficiency in automobiles. Canadians are among the most wasteful per capita users of energy (ranked 5 out of 54 developed countries). And our politicians lack the discipline to move beyond rhetoric to solutions.

If we want to live a healthy life on a healthy planet, both Canada and I have to do better with our diets.

I plan on being better with sweets and exercising more.

What is Canada’s plan? The so-called “Clean Air Plan”, is more accurately described as Stephen Harper’s

“eat more to lose weight” diet. It is the kind of diet that might be inviting to overweight carb addicts in the supermarket check out aisle, but it is unlikely to lead to reducing carbon emissions.

The Conservative’s “intensity-based emission targets” are absurd when viewed through the diet lens. It is the equivalent of me saying if I work harder, and spend more time at the office, I am allowed to eat more. My proportion of food eaten to work done (the intensity) would go down, but my weight would inevitably go up. This isn’t speculation; I tried this diet in the late 1990s and gained a lot of weight in all the wrong places.

But Canada, and the world, can’t afford to delay losing carbon weight with half baked fad diets.

The ersatz *Clean Air Act* and the upcoming *BC Energy Plan* illustrate that our governments are out of step with our priorities, and with the climate crisis facing us. Like many of us they need help with their diet.

Back in January, just before the federal election, Dogwood Initiative commissioned a poll to identify the BC public’s energy priorities. The Mustel Group poll of 500 people showed that over 8 in 10 (86%) BC residents say that when it comes to energy policy, Canada’s top priority should be alternatives like solar and wind power (57%), and energy efficient technologies that conserve power (30%) rather than new sources of oil (8%).

If we are serious about our commitment to reduce emissions to 6% below our 1990 levels (Kyoto), then we need to get serious about the carbon in our national diet. Climate change scientists say we need to exceed Kyoto targets in order to prevent massive human caused change

Continued on page 11



photo: Lisa Ambus

Filming and Fighting for the Cathedral

an interview with Richard Boyce *By Helena Mahoney*

Richard Boyce is a freelance documentary filmmaker living just outside of Parksville on Vancouver Island. After completing a bachelor's and master's degrees in film production, he has begun to use film as a tool to create social, political, and environmental change. He has worked on numerous projects dedicated to protecting the last pristine rainforests on the Island through his production company Island Bound Media Works. Over the last six years Richard has been involved with the protection of Cathedral Grove, an old growth area on Vancouver Island just east of Port Alberni.

Helena Mahoney: *How did you get involved with the fight to save Cathedral Grove from the slated parking lot?*

Richard Boyce: Well, I've lived in the area of Cathedral Grove most of my life and it's always been one of those places I've taken friends and family to see the big trees. It's right on the highway, so it is easy to access. The Douglas Fir trees there are just magnificent. They're anywhere up to 600 and 800 years old. The area is still basically in the same state it was in thousands of years ago. Unfortunately, the forest has been logged all around it, so its protection has been depleted.

The rainforest works as a whole, not as individual trees or areas. Since the Cameron valley was cut it allows wind through, blowing down the trees that are still standing. When the government threatened to put a parking lot

in, they placed it in the most sensitive part of the park. They placed that proposal where there had been a huge wind throw in 1997. Thousands of trees fell down. Subsequently, Weyerhaeuser came in and took those trees away, so there is a huge funnel that is pointed right at the standing trees which we know as Cathedral Grove. ... That grove is basically so old and so gnarled and flooded out that it's very susceptible to wind and now that this funnel is pointed at it, a lot of the trees have fallen down.

HM: *You were a founding member of the Friends of Cathedral Grove. How did you help stop the development of the parking lot?*

RB: The *Friends of Cathedral Grove* started in 2001, to try to prevent the parking lot from being put in, and to try to get a public hearing or a public assessment so the government would reconsider placing it in the most sensitive area of the flood plain of the Cameron river. We called on government to move the proposed lot somewhere else, or to at least investigate other alternatives. And so the *Friends of Cathedral Grove* have been lobbying that government for the past four or five years. Of course, the government just went in and tried to put in the parking lot anyway. As a result, there has been a two-year protest camp equipped with platforms in the trees, in the canopy, 150 to 200 feet up. We've successfully prevented the parking lot so far.

HM: *How were the activities in Cathedral Grove different from regular industrial logging activities?*

RB: Well, it's kind of different because it is not just crown land that is being leased to a logging company to be logged. This is very different because there is a park there and the government is actually destroying part of the park to make way for more parking. This issue isn't really about the environment, nor is it really about the forests. It's more about transportation and tourism.

So what's really ironic is that the Ministry of Transportation has made no comments, has not really been

HM: *What other alternatives exist for Cathedral Grove to exist in relationship to human society?*

RB: When Europeans did show up, they built a railway. That railway is still there and it's inactive right now. Local people, particularly in Port Alberni, would like to see the Grove become a tourist destination. You could use the old steam train in Port Alberni to take an excursion to Cathedral Grove, and people could go for a walk there. Those types of things are alternatives: utilizing different areas of the park and expanding the park so that it saves the entire valley, including the lake and both sides of

This is a very sacred place...it's a perfect opportunity to combine the provincial park with First Nations education...

involved in this whole process, and so there has been no public debate about what the crux of the issue is, which is transportation. It's also about the remaining rainforest on the Island and the rest of British Columbia, because Cathedral Grove is one of the only low, bottom-valley Douglas Fir forests that is still standing and is easily accessible. It can draw a million visitors a year, whereas the other rainforests that still have Douglas Fir on a bottom valley are so remote and so isolated that even the logging companies can't get to them yet. Otherwise they'd be logged ... I think that it basically comes down to the government putting the environment at the very bottom of the rung.

HM: *How is Cathedral Grove significant for First Nations?*

RB: Cathedral Grove was very significant for First Nations. They've been going there for hundreds of years, and they've left a lot of culturally modified trees in the area. They've also spoken to the fact that this is a sacred place. So, because it's in a park, it's a perfect opportunity to combine the provincial park with First Nations education and giving people an opportunity to observe some of the things that went on here before white people showed up.

the lake, so that tourism can flourish in the area. Somehow government has to deal with the issue of parking, but more than just parking, actually driving. There are other potential places to put the road and other opportunities that exist that the government isn't even willing to look at.

This interview was held in February of 2006. Since then, the boundaries of protection for Cathedral Grove have yet to be written into legislation. This year's fall session of the legislature has been cancelled, and the government continues to put off any confirmation concerning the park's protected future. To find out more, visit: www.islandlens.blogspot.com.

Richard's next project is to make a film about East Creek, one of the last six pristine watersheds remaining from the original 91 on Vancouver Island. For more information, or to view other projects of his, check out: www.islandbound.ca. ☒



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Overcoming Obstacles

Community Forests need a level playing field to thrive

By Will Horter

Like the little engine that could, the growing community forest movement in BC is succeeding despite formidable obstacles.

This summer, after many years of hard work by dozens of committed community activists, both Harrop-Procter and Likely-Xats'ull were offered long-term community forestry agreements. Robin Hood, manager of the Likely-Xats'ull Community Forest and president of the BC Community Forest Association (see our September newsletter) was pleased with the new licence, proclaiming "our town is alive again."

Replacing the five-year pilots with new 25-year agreements will provide stability for communities like Likely and Harrop-Procter. The agreement will help them implement plans to create jobs, build wealth and sustain their forests.

The new, longer-term agreements are great news, but community forests still face formidable obstacles.

Government's forest policies continue to hobble community forests. BC's forestry laws and policies are skewed to favour high-volume, low-value industrial logging over community-friendly and environmentally focused initiatives. Recent changes to forestry laws have exacerbated this distortion, promoting more control of public forests by fewer companies, and massive salvage logging,

Community forests do not own their own mills. They are "market loggers" selling wood to mills and artisans. But without a competitive log market in BC, most community forests are forced to sell to the nearest large mill. The consolidation in the industry facilitated by Liberal policies has worsened this problem—Western Forest Products controls nearly half the logs on public forest lands; Canfor now controls almost 12% of the cut. New incentives promoting mega mills have made community forests the captives of a few customers—the major companies. The problem is worse in the Interior, where prices are further distorted by the large surplus of timber attacked or killed by beetles.

Despite these entrenched obstacles, the movement for local control of forests continues to grow. Hundreds of communities have expressed interest in community forests. Over the summer the BC government announced that Powell River, Wells Gray and Prince George will be the latest of 24 communities to be offered longer-term community forest licences.

Likely-Xats'ull and Harrop-Procter are modelling new approaches to community-friendly forestry. Unlike the big logging corporations that pursue profits at virtually any cost, community forests are grassroots community economic development organizations. They create more local jobs and promote forestry that is seeking to be culturally, ecologically, and economically sustainable.

Operating under a hostile regulatory regime, they seek to create the greatest socio-economic benefit possible for their communities, while maintaining a vibrant forest over the long term.

While they have similar licences, the focus of each community forest differs:

- *The Harrop-Procter Community Forest*—BC's only community forest with ecosystem-based plans in place—covers about 10,900 hectares between the Purcell and Selkirk Mountains east of Nelson. The Harrop-Procter Co-op works with local sawmill owners and remanufacturing businesses to produce rough-cut lumber and home finishing materials, which support local manufacturing jobs.
- *The Likely-Xats'ull Community Forest* is a joint project of the Soda Creek Indian Band and the community of Likely. Together they manage 12,000 hectares of public forest in the Cariboo between Williams Lake and Quesnel, 70 km east of Highway 97. The project has an allowable annual cut of 15,000 cubic metres and uses the revenue to build a tourism infrastructure focused on the area's history and surrounding wilderness.
- The tenure of the *Powell River Community Forest* is used to enhance recreation and tourism resources while providing wood for local furniture, flooring, cabinet, and specialty-cut lumber manufacturers.
- In Prince George, the community forest will concentrate on logging up to 12,000 cubic metres of beetle-killed trees from 4,000 hectares of public forest land within municipal boundaries to provide a buffer against fire.

The *BC Community Forest Association* (BCCFA) has also been active over the past few months promoting the interests of communities that are either managing or striving to establish community forests. Building on their success in getting an 85% stumpage reduction, BCCFA representatives recently met with academics and government staff to address key issues facing community forests: mountain pine beetle, tenure, governance, and valuation of the benefits of community forest management.

The efforts of the hundreds of BC community forests activists are beginning to pay off, but many further reforms are needed to level the playing field and allow community forests to thrive. They need your support. ☒

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Dieting... continued from page 7

in climate and ecosystems. We need to drastically reduce the consumption of carbon emitting fossil fuels as well as their production.

Which brings us to Alberta, the tar sands and our lack of a national energy policy. Canada has had no national energy policy for many years. Instead, oil and gas companies, Bay Street brokers and Ralph Klein's cronies, have been de facto setting the energy agenda in our country with little leadership in Ottawa or Victoria. As a result, our policy appears to be, if someone thinks they can make money from some energy proposal, go for it.

Catering to its core Alberta supporters, Mr. Harper's government is pushing numerous mega-projects that will add more carbon weight to our countries already obese energy physique. So the Mackenzie Valley pipeline (with \$500 million in subsidies promised), twinning the road to the tar sands (with \$150 million in subsidies promised) and Enbridge's Gateway pipeline are being fast tracked. All with no public debate about our national energy priorities.

And Gordon Campbell's government in Victoria is no better. The *Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources* recently disclosed over \$242.5 million in subsidies being given to oil and gas companies (accounting for just five of the over a dozen subsidy programs BC offers to the oil industry). Minister Neufeld is the lead cheerleader for rescinding the 34-year-old Moratorium on tankers and coastal drilling as well as the Enbridge Pipeline, and other tanker dependant proposals, that could open up BC's fragile inside passage to fossil fuels.

It is clear that our politicians, addicted to the sweet taste of oil and gas revenues, are unlikely to become disciplined dieters voluntarily. They need help to ensure they stick to the diet, and don't continue to binge.

It is up to us as Concerned Canadians to hold our political leaders to account. We need to engage politically, to change our voting, consumption, and behavior patterns to align them with our values. We need to help progressive leaders bring the "before" picture into better focus, and make the "after" picture more than just a pipe dream. ☒



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Frogfile - quote promo code: "Dogwood 1" and receive a 10% discount for first time orders of office products for Dogwood supporters. frogfile.com

Office Wish List

Dogwood Initiative office is in need of a few supplies. If you have any of these cluttering your home or office, please consider donating them to us. We would give them a new home and put them to good use.

- lockable 4-drawer filing cabinet
- computer desk
- coat hangers
- corkboards
- bookshelves
- UPS (uninterrupted power supply)
- surge protector
- 3-line telephone (Nortel Networks)
- air purifier
- 1.5m wide table or shelf

If you would like to donate any of the above items, please contact Mabel Chong at 370-9930 ext. 21 or mchong@dogwoodinitiative.org



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Staff and Volunteer Update

As 2006 winds down, Dogwood Initiative is gearing up for a bustling year. There have been many new faces bringing lively energy to our office.

We would like to welcome four new volunteers. After reading an article about Dogwood Initiative in *Monday Magazine* about our political contributions database, Gord Warrenchuk was inspired to volunteer to help put it together.

Anne Mathers is helping us overhaul our contact database, Sarah Grayce Marsden, a newly called lawyer, is volunteering her time to help us as a Research Assistant and Aaron Henderson is applying his technical mind to keep our computers running.

Helena Mahoney has also returned to Dogwood to help as a writer and researcher (see *article page 8*).

Joining our Board are Brad Grundy, Treasurer, Taylor Bachrach and Jennie Milligan. Brad is a Chartered Accountant and Certified Internal Auditor. Currently the Senior Financial Officer for the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance, Brad was previously the Treasurer of the *Sierra Club of Canada-British Columbia Chapter*.

Taylor is a communications consultant living and working in Smithers, BC. He specializes in creating brand identity, e-mail marketing, strategic writing, and media relations solutions for clients. Jennie has worked for the *Environmental Youth Alliance* and *Sierra Legal Defence Fund*. She is currently working as an articling student at a small law firm in downtown Victoria.

Our office has also experienced a growth spurt. J. Scott, our new Development Director, joins us with her rich background of experience from the *Sierra Club*, *Focus Magazine*, and the *Sooke Harbour House*. A committed activist, J. is one of the founding members of Victoria's *Values-based Business Network*. Joining Dog-

wood Initiative as the Office Manager is Mabel Chong. After a year of teaching in Quebec, she recently returned to Victoria. Mabel brings her experience in the non-profit sector in projects, administrative and volunteer co-ordination.

A long-time Dogwood volunteer, Charles Campbell is now on staff as the Communications Co-ordinator. He brings a background in the fine arts, design, and working with youth in diverse communities.

We would like to thank our continuing volunteers for their time and commitment. We could not have come so far without you.

*Get involved! Share your skills! Join our team
by volunteering! For more information
on volunteering, please call:
Mabel Chong at (250) 370-9930 ext. 21 or
e-mail mchong@dogwoodinitiative.org.*



Development Director, J. Scott (centre) with Dogwood volunteers Aaron Henderson & Anne Mathers



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