

Riding the Pipeline • Saving Granite Bluffs • Canada-China Agreement

Special Issue  
on Co-ops  
Environmental News from BC and the World

# Watershed *Sentinel*



November - December 2012  
Newstand Price \$4.95

## Defend The Coast



HARPER:  
Our coast  
is not  
for sale

Co-ops for  
Social Change

Line 9 - Shipping Tar Sands East  
Lifting Oppression - Living Room Dialogues



# TRAVELLING



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 FMI [lmime@telus.net](mailto:lmime@telus.net)

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 Antigonish International Film Festival  
[www.antigonishfilmfest.org](http://www.antigonishfilmfest.org)  
 Location: Cody International Institute,  
 StFX University FMI [croy@stfx.ca](mailto:croy@stfx.ca)

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**Winnipeg, Manitoba**  
 Global Justice Film Festival  
[www.globaljusticefilmfestival.ca](http://www.globaljusticefilmfestival.ca)  
 Location: University of Winnipeg  
 FMI [mcic@mts.net](mailto:mcic@mts.net)

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[www.terracefilmfestival.weebly.com](http://www.terracefilmfestival.weebly.com)  
 Location: Skeena Jr. Secondary - Drama Room  
 FMI: [Kasia.kistows@upguelph.ca](mailto:Kasia.kistows@upguelph.ca)

**February 1 - 2, 2013**  
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 FMI [www.worldcommunity.ca](http://www.worldcommunity.ca)



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## GUEST EDITORIAL

# A World Where We Care

I have been mulling over what stands out to me from the October Council of Canadians Sinking the Harper Agenda conference in Nanaimo, and I keep coming back to the wonderful gift of Chief Douglas White's welcoming address around the theme of "A world where we can still care for each other." The theme is a powerful frame for looking at all the social and environmental justice we seek: A World Where We Can Still Care For Each Other. What a powerful antidote to the Harper agenda. What a powerful frame for viewing the whole of what we seek and are in such peril of losing.

My heart swells when I think of the implications of these simple words. I think of all we have lost, believing ourselves to be isolated monads of economic self interest, destined for no greater calling than the vain glory of having pilaged the precious gift of life in its diversity and magnificence and despoiled this beautiful planet.

A World Where We Can Still Care For Each Other – and our planet – not as objects to be consumed but as beautiful, dignified, deserving of our love, admiration, and caring. It just sticks to my heart and feels warm and natural and comfortable there – to think of a world where we can still care for each other. Why not! Why anything else?

When I hear Chief White's words, I know, as ontological truth that reverberates to the depths of my soul, others still share that dream/feeling. And I think we can turn this whole Harper thing around and head in the opposite direction if we just – a whole lot of us – let those ten words and all their implications seep into how we talk with each other and how we relate to our fellow creatures and beautiful world.

A World Where We Can Still Care For Each Other. May it be so. May the simple act of saying so simply and powerfully – as self-evident truth – reawaken our dreams and commitment to a whole different way of seeing ourselves, others and this beautiful planet than what is presented by the vision of the Harper/Corporate Agenda.

*Norm Reynolds, Courtenay BC, November 2012*

# Thank You

Many thanks to those who responded to our donor letter campaign. We truly appreciate your generosity, and a copy of the *Watershed Sentinel* is on its way to the friends you gave us.

If you have a friend who you think might be interested in a copy of the *Watershed Sentinel*, send along their mailing info and we'll send them a copy free of charge, with a note from you.

Contact: [circ@watershedsentinel.ca](mailto:circ@watershedsentinel.ca)

Our next issue won't roll off the press until early January so we wish you a safe and warm winter and a very merry holiday!

*Delores Broten*



# Around The World

Compiled by Susan MacVittie

## Protecting Navigation, Not Water

In October, the federal government introduced a budget measure that replaces the 1882 *Waters Protection Act* with a new *Navigation Protection Act*. Transport Minister Denis Lebel suggested the changes could ease the burden on companies seeking approval for new industrial projects such as oilsands development or mining extraction.

The last budget implementation law, adopted in July, eliminated 3,000 federal environmental assessments, gave government new tools to investigate environmental groups, weakened protection of endangered species, and limited public participation in consultations and reviews of proposed industrial projects.

—*Vancouver Sun*, October 22, 2012

## Cesium in Fish Off Fukushima

Radioactive cesium levels in fish caught off the coast of Fukushima haven't declined in the year following Japan's nuclear disaster, a signal that the seafloor or leakage from the damaged reactors must be continuing to contaminate the waters – possibly threatening fisheries for decades. 40% of the groundfish – cod, flounder, and halibut – are above the limit for food consumption.

Given the 30-year half-life of cesium-137, this means that even if these sources (of contamination) were to be shut off completely, the sediments would remain contaminated for decades to come.

—*newssentinel.com*, October 27, 2012

## China Bows to Protest

After protests by thousands of citizens over pollution fears, a local Chinese government relented in October, agreeing that a petrochemical factory, a subsidiary of Sinopec, would not be expanded. However, protesters refused to stop, demanding authorities release those being held inside.

The demonstration in wealthy Zhejiang province is the latest this year over fears of health risks from industrial projects. Chinese who have seen their living standards improve have become more outspoken against environmentally risky projects in their areas.

—*Associated Press*, October 27, 2012

## Mining Activists Shot

Protesters gathered in front of the Canadian embassy in Mexico City to express outrage at the growing death toll of community activists opposing Canadian mining in Mexico. A Mexican couple who led the struggle against a mine owned by Canadian firm MAG Silver, were shot dead in October.

—*Council of Canadians*,  
October 22, 2012

## Protesting GM Alfalfa

In October, National Farmers Union members gathered outside a Canadian Seed Trade Association workshop to protest industry plans to release GM alfalfa in Ontario. Harvested as hay, alfalfa is used as high-protein feed for dairy cows, beef cattle, lambs, poultry and pigs. It is also used to build nutrients in the soil, making it important for organic farming. GM Roundup Ready soybeans, canola and corn are widely grown in Canada, but alfalfa is a perennial crop that is widely distributed.

—*Canadian Biotechnology Network*,  
October 19, 2012

## Pallas's Cat Discovered



Camera traps captured the first-ever photographic evidence of Pallas's cat in Bhutan's Wangchuck Centennial Park. The species, which is listed as near threatened, has never before been documented in the region.

Pallas's cat, also known as manul, is a primitive species that has changed little in more than five million years and is defined by a strikingly flat head with high-set eyes and low-set ears that enable it to peer over rocky ledges in search of prey. The cat is threatened by poaching for its fur and fat and organs for medicinal value.

—*World Wildlife Fund*,  
October 29, 2012

## Improved Hydropower

A Watershed Watch Salmon Society report, the first of its kind in BC, details the environmental effects and planning of river diversion projects. *Tamed Rivers: A Guide to River Diversion Hydropower in British Columbia* is a scientifically-referenced and peer-reviewed document that will assist decision makers and citizens. It is available online.



[www.watershedwatch.ca](http://www.watershedwatch.ca)

—*Watershed Watch Salmon Society*,  
October 19, 2012

# From Our Readers

## Run of River Projects

Just reading your excellent article; “Run of River - Hydroelectric Projects in BC Create New Gold Rush.” ([www.watershedsentinel.ca/content/run-river-hydroelectric-projects-bc-create-new-gold-rush](http://www.watershedsentinel.ca/content/run-river-hydroelectric-projects-bc-create-new-gold-rush))

Has there been an update on the above article on Independent Power Producers in the province? I live on the Sunshine Coast and an outfit wants to put in place five more IPPs, after they created a disaster in Narrows Inlet. We are worried!!!

We are worried!!!

*Vel Anderson, Sunshine Coast, BC*

## E&N Railroad

Beyond some minor scheduling changes I have not seen any actual comprehensive or realistic plan to make the island railway viable. As it exists now the railway is and will always be a drain on the taxpayer. Nevertheless vocal support exists for maintaining it while the opposition (if it exists) is fairly silent. I want to suggest a way of

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Send your musings and your missives to:

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making the railway more viable and actually a major tourist attraction for the whole Island. Build a bike path alongside it, the whole length and breadth. Linking communities, used for long or short commutes by bicycles, walkers, runners, skateboarders, rollerbladers, etc.

Recently a friend and I rode our bikes to Victoria from Buckley Bay for my birthday. On this two-day trip we patronized local business all the way down, including a farm bed & breakfast, a hotel, restaurants, convenience stores, a wine store, and a couple of coffee houses. We discovered some wonderful local businesses on the way. Preparing for the trip I spent money at two local bike shops and clothing stores.

We didn't ride home though, we were picked up and driven home. How great it would have been to be able to hop on the train home. A yearly pass could be sold to people who want to use it to help pay for the building and maintenance of it. People could hop on with their bikes and have a mode of transportation when they arrive at their destination. The options are endless with this scenario, only limited by imagination and willingness to work together as a large community for the good of the Island.

*Marie Gaudreau, Fanny Bay, BC*

## Vaccine Chemical Kids

In “Protecting Children,” Bruce Lanphear MD, MPH admits that, rather than vaccines, “the single greatest factor in reducing death rates and improving life expectancy was altering the environment to make it inhospitable to infectious agents.” But he fails to acknowledge that vaccine ingredients and contaminants such as mercury, aluminum, MSG and formaldehyde, i.e., chemicals deliberately allowed easy access to the human bloodstream, are an obvious possible source of many chronic conditions suffered today. This is especially true for children because during the critical first 2-3 years when their brains are rapidly developing, their blood/brain barriers are weak. And, between 2-18 mos old, most Canadian children are injected with thirteen to twenty taxpayer funded vaccines. Learn more at [www.vran.org](http://www.vran.org)

*Suzanne Lawson, Tofino, BC*



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# Defending The Coast

by Susan MacVittie

When First Nations, dressed in regalia and beating drums and singing, slowly paraded through the crowd that had gathered in front of the Provincial Legislature in Victoria for Monday's Defend Our Coast rally, I knew it was going to be an empowering day.

Despite being an overcast and chilly Monday, thousands of people flooded to the Parliament lawn to hear BC First Nations and others passionately speak out against pipeline projects and oil tankers in BC.

Like any good rally there were costumes, music, signs and banners.

One action saw hundreds of people carrying a giant black banner, measuring 235 metres, the size of a super tanker, encircling the grounds of the BC Legislature.

The "radicals" included people from all walks of life and all ages.

One older woman held a simple green piece of paper that read, "This is my first protest banner, but NOT MY LAST!"

It was a message that was repeated throughout the day: People are committed to stopping pipelines and tankers in BC.

And it wasn't just those tree-hugging hippies speaking out.

One after another, First Nation leaders took the mic and spoke passionately about protecting the land and our democratic rights. They were joined by NDP and Green Party elected members, BC Teachers Federation, Canadian Federation of Students, Maude Barlow from the Council of Canadians, Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union and environmental groups.



## Victoria Rally Strengthens Solidarity

tion to tankers on the coast is a much broader discontent with the way our social and political systems are working. People are angry about the decisions that degrade and destroy the foundation of life on Earth. When government should have

stepped forward to protect Canadians and the environment, ours gutted Canada's environmental laws."

Enbridge is the catalyst for an unsettled feeling that has been brewing as Canadians witness the erosion of environmental regulations and democratic rights under the autocratic leadership of Harper. It's about stopping the legal free reign given to international corporations who line their pockets with our resources.

When Grand Chief Stewart stated, "If necessary we will fight this at the barricades on the land itself."

The crowd roared their approval in response and the chant, "The people united, will never be defeated" echoed over Victoria Harbour.

It didn't matter if the Legislature sat empty (the BC government decided not to return to work this fall), or fat cats in Ottawa and China were making back room deals, because the symbolism of bringing First Nations, politicians, labour, environment and a host of other organizations and citizens together to work towards a cause is in itself a powerful movement. And that is empowering.

As one sign read, "Chairman Harper, We Won't Let You Sell Our Coast To China!"

No matter how many laws Harper tries to quietly pass through Parliament without a proper debate, as he is trying to do with the Canada-China Trade Agreement, and no matter how silent the media remains, as has been happening with the glaring omission of reporting on the Trade Agreement, people are raising their voices and coming together to oppose the Northern Gateway Pipeline and others.

**When government should have stepped forward to protect Canadians and the environment, ours gutted Canada's environmental laws.**

Dave Coles, national President of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union, was met with cheers when he described the pipeline as a, "job-killer, not a job creator" and exclaimed, "don't let anyone tell you there is a divide between the labour movement and the environmental movement. If they do they're lying to you. We are united!"

His union represents many of the workers affected and he said he was there to "say unequivocally, our union stands against this pipeline!"

As David Suzuki and Executive Director of Coastal First Nations Art Sterritt wrote in the *Globe & Mail*, "Underlying the widespread opposi-



Exploring the land in the way of the Northern Gateway Pipeline

Daniel Sikorskyi



Paul Fletcher



Esther Strubos

by Paul Fletcher

What started out as a thought early in 2012, became a sojourn into pipeline resistance when my fellow photographer, Daniel Sikorskyi, and I hopped on our motorcycles this past summer to travel a circular journey through BC and Alberta, exploring the land in the way of the proposed Northern Gateway Pipeline (NGP).

My project was to photograph people holding signs so that their voices could be seen. Daniel was going to focus on capturing the story of our journey and the amazing landscapes around us. We also were curious to find out what it really meant to be an enemy of Canada through the eyes of fellow Canadians.

Our first few days were spent rubber-necking the amazing landscapes of southern British Columbia as well as getting our bodies accustomed to long days in the saddle.

**In Golden** we did our first “voices” shoot with Darcy Dolan, a public works employee with the city of Golden. Her words, “If other countries want our oil, let them figure how to get it and they pay for it. Not Canada,” were a fine start for our project.

**Next stop Calgary**, the Stetson clad city at the heart of the oil money game. There we met with Andrew Nikiforuk, author of *Tar Sands*, a book that inspired both of us to get more involved in the oil energy issue. His words, “Is greed a vision?” fit well with our Alberta experience where many are employed within the oil industry and have the toys to show it.

Calgary to Edmonton took us through the back valleys and prairies, where signs of oil activity blended with the crop landscapes. Our route also took us through a fierce thun-

derstorm that offered us the option of being blown off the road or fried on the spot by lightning. After two hours and many quarters in a Three Hills Laundromat, we ventured out again, ducking into saloons and hotel bars when the rain started. Not surprisingly, opinions rarely drifted from supporting the pipeline.

**In Edmonton** we met Casey O’Byrne, a proponent of sustainable growth in the oil industry through “green” industrial parks. His words reflect his business, “We need another market for upgraded oil. Upgrade here!” Outside of Edmonton we talked to locals in the local Morinville Hotel. Kevin Hittinger said, “Let the oil flow, start laying pipe.”

## IS GREED A VISION?

His good friend, Ray White, was more pessimistic, saying, “It’s going whether we like it or not, Harper will make it happen.” Outside, Joe, sitting on his ultra customized Harley, talked about being employed in the oil industry. His words reflected his income, “Ride the Pipe. Let it flow. We depend on the oil industry for our livelihood.”

**We cruised through Bruderheim**, the start of the NGP, and found one resident on the street who said he had heard of the pipeline but had no idea where it was starting. In Redwater we chatted with a waitress, originally from BC, who refused to be filmed due to the nature of her customers. The beer fridge behind her said it all, with stickers stating strong opinions about environmentalists and their causes.

**In Whitecourt**, Kathleen from Rig Radio interviewed us. A short

time later we were sitting across from Mayor Trevor Thain, an ardent supporter of Northern Gateway. His final words were, “The Northern Gateway Pipeline will be (if constructed) an economic benefit to all of Canada, not just Alberta and BC.”

**Stopping for gas in Fox Creek**, we were challenged by Russ Neil, a BC expatriate, happily employed as a heavy-duty mechanic. His words, “I’m Pro,” reflected his burly, short opinion of pipeline resistance. In Grande Prairie, long-time resident, Dr Liam McGowan used his sign to say, “Slow Down! Do it Right,” reflecting a common opinion that oil development should not be a head-long rush into resource exploitation.

**Bonanza, in northwest Alberta**, is the land of pipeline terrorism and sour gas poisonings, and the place where faucets can catch fire. Ralph Oe, a local farmer, writes, “Why are we giving away our resources?” His wife Susan is more blunt writing, “Why is the ‘system’ sacrificing Safety of people and the Environment for short term economic Gain?”

Back in BC, we motor down to **Tumbler Ridge** and end up having a chance meeting with Mayor Darwin Wren as he nursed a beer in the local legion. He had strong views about the importance of economic diversity but was hesitant to offer an opinion on the NGP passing south of town. Standing later at the base of one of the many newly minted wind turbines, we were overwhelmed by their size and their potential to move us away from our oil-driven economy.

Continued on Page 8 ⇨

## ← *The Pipe continued*

**Arriving in Prince George,** we met up with our video team members who were exploring a similar project tentatively called “Voices from the Pipe.” Together we met many more against the pipeline, including artist Nigel Fox who wrote, “No one in BC wants this proposed pipeline.”

Heading west the voices against NGP grew stronger. **In Fort St James,** local Tl’azt’en Nation band members Kirby Johnnie and Ron Winger wrote respectively, “Enbridge pipeline is Not welcome here in BC. Go Home!” and “Not against oil industry! Against lack of capacity in oil industry.”

**In Vanderhoof,** we met some long distance motorcyclists from Hamilton who said, “Keep it Clean.”

**In Burns Lake,** barista Katie Nugent wrote, “Protect our environment. No Enbridge,” and visitors from Prince Rupert said, “Keep the water Clean. Protect our environment. We choose Life Over Dollars.” In Houston, wedding guest Tera Brooks wrote, “I am not a radical. I care about the community I live in and you should too. Stand up and fight. No to Enbridge!”

Stopping to photograph the large No Enbridge banner hanging from a bridge over the Bulkley River’s **Moricetown Canyon,** we chat by the roadside with Bob Morris, a former Moricetown resident who clearly voices his opposition, “We’re not going to benefit from the Enbridge



Paul Fletcher



Paul Fletcher

Driving around the bay we arrive in Kitimaat Village, where we photograph Rosanne Haas from Haida Gwaii. Her words expressed the thoughts of many when she wrote, “Save our wilderness. No Pipeline.”

Our last mainland shoot was with Angela Gony, a First Nations artist and server in the famous Dolly’s Fish and Chip shop in **Prince Rupert.** She shared the opinion of many of her people when she wrote, “Oil spillage means no fish. No fish will affect my livelihood.”

pipeline going through. We want to avoid a disaster.”

Next we drop in on Roy Henry Vickers, a world famous artist living near **Kispiox.** His words are echoed in a t-shirt design of his making, “Oolican oil, not Alberta’s dirty oil.” His son Wakas shares the family sentiment saying, “No Enbridge, we need our salmon.” Ya Ya, an artist living in Kispiox, has short words for Enbridge saying, “Enbridge Keep Out.”

Arriving at the end of the pipeline in **Kitimat,** we photograph Barb Robson, a local business owner who penned, “I do not agree with the pipeline.” A few doors down from Barb’s business is the Enbridge project office, where Lucy stands watch over models and propaganda. Our conversation is short with little hope of reaching a common ground.

**Taking the ferry back** to Vancouver Island from Prince Rupert, we sailed down some of the waters that could see super tankers one day. Many of the people who we spoke to had no knowledge of the project and were aghast to think that sensible heads would ever consider putting such an important place at risk for the sake of dollars that will one day line corporate pockets.



For the larger story visit [www.ridethepipe.ca](http://www.ridethepipe.ca) or on Facebook at Ride the Pipe

Paul Fletcher is a professional photographer and photography teacher and published a book on Somenos Marsh in 1998. Daniel Sykorskyi is an award winning photographer/chiaroscuroist.



# Have You Heard?

Compiled by Susan MacVittie and Delores Broten

## Kitimat LNG Delayed

Apache has delayed its decision on the Kitimat Liquid Natural Gas pipeline project proposed from the BC interior to the coastal community of Kitimat. Analysts are blaming the decision on the recent move by some players in the energy industry to sell natural gas to Asia at low North American prices, rather than the world price, which is determined as a percentage of the price of oil.

—*Wall Street Journal*, October 19, 2012

## BC Denies Mine

Lake Babine Nation says the BC government has made the right decision in denying Pacific Booker Minerals the ability to proceed with its copper-gold Morrison Mine proposal, 65km north-east of Smithers.

Morrison Lake is home to a genetically distinct population of sockeye salmon that are critically important to the Lake Babine Nation.

—*greenpages.ca*, October 7, 2012

## Texas Pipeline Blockade

The Tar Sands Blockade, a grassroots coalition of Texans opposed to the Keystone XL pipeline, mounted a tree-house blockade on September 24, holding up construction of TransCanada's \$7 billion pipeline to bring tar sands oil from Canada for global markets. Although SLAPP suits have been launched against landowners and protestors, police-state tactics have been used against protestors, and big media have been ignoring the action, the blockade continues.

—*consortiumnews.com*,

October 26, 2012



## Canada - China

### Investment Agreement

By the time you read this, the *Canada-China Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (FIPA)* may be a done deal.

On September 9, Prime Minister Stephen Harper signed the Canada-China Agreement and did not announce it to Parliament until September 26. With no press release or technical briefing, the deal was set for automatic approval on November 2. No vote or debate was to take place in the House. The Agreement will be in force for 31 years, yet the Conservatives only tabled the document in the House for 21 sitting days. The Green Party, NDP and Liberals have asked for debate but it has been denied. Citizens were asked to contact their MPs and the press to request debate.

The most controversial aspects of the Agreement are that it:

- Like NAFTA, allows Chinese companies (including state-owned enterprises) to sue the Government of Canada over decisions that can limit or reduce their expectation of profits.
- Allows Chinese investors to sue Canada outside of Canadian courts. Special arbitrators would make the decisions.
- Limits right to be heard. Only the federal government is allowed to take part in the arbitration process, not provincial governments or Canadian companies, even if their interests are affected.

An October 16, 2012 Angus Reid poll reports three out of four Canadians believe that foreign governments should not be able to control resources on Canadian soil, and most Canadians want the Harper government to block the purchase of the Calgary-based Nexen oil and gas firm by a Chinese state-owned corporation.

For updated information check the Green Party website or Leadnow.ca

## Doctors On Uranium

Physicians for Global Survival (Canada) agrees with Quebec Environment Minister Daniel Breton's decision to impose a moratorium on uranium exploration and to launch a Best Practices process regarding uranium mining in Quebec. British Columbia and Nova Scotia have already enacted a moratorium on uranium exploration and use.

—*Physicians for Global Survival*,

October 23, 2012

## Ocean Engineering Nixed

When Old Masset village joined with geoenvironmental entrepreneur Russ George to dump iron filings in the Pacific Ocean off Haida Gwaii to encourage plankton growth, international criticism for reckless experimentation was quick to follow. The Council of the Haida Nation was also quick to "Let it Be Known" that the action did not have the approval of Hereditary Chiefs and Council.

—*www.haidanation.ca*,

October 18, 2012

# Living Room Dialogues

by Mike Bell

How do you motivate citizens to take action to stop resource development projects that will seriously harm the environment and local economies? Sierra Club Comox Valley and other environmental and citizen groups have been wrestling with this problem for many months.

The projects in question are the development of coal mines in Vancouver Island's Comox Valley and the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline carrying tar sands bitumen to the BC coast. Both of these struggles have implications well beyond the province.

To defeat these projects we first adopted a strategy of consciousness-raising. We organized large public meetings and rallies, wrote countless letters to the media, circulated petitions, did our research and published the results. Once the people know the facts, we thought, they will swing into action.

But it didn't work out that way. Though we raised consciousness, it usually didn't result in sustained citizen action. And that's the problem. We needed a new approach – one that linked consciousness-raising to action. So we came up with the idea of living room dialogues.

These are small, face-to-face discussion circles in neighbourhood homes where folks get together to share their concerns and motivate one another to take action. We learned this approach from the work of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire.

In the 1960s, Freire taught literacy to folks suffering under repressive colonial regimes in Brazil. He developed a unique approach to working with “the oppressed.” He rejected the “banking method” of teaching where students were seen as “empty minds” into which the teachers poured knowledge. Instead, he developed a small group, dialogic approach where students and teachers learned together. Their visual aids – their PowerPoints – were what they saw and experienced in the streets, in the rural areas and in their own lives: repressive regimes and social, economic and cultural destruction. The key to Freire's approach was not only to help learners recognize the situations in which they were living but to move them from consciousness-raising to what he called *conscientização* – taking action to bring about change.

We recognize that there is a great difference between the life of peasants in Brazil living in poverty and the more affluent (by comparison) folks living in a technologically advanced Canadian society. But there are also some striking similarities that raise questions in our minds.

If Freire used his approach to teach literacy, could we use it to teach Earth Literacy?

Colonialism, by definition, is the exploitation of a country's resources. With the federal government developing a pipeline to sell to the Chinese the oil resources

## From Consciousness Raising to Citizen Action

es that belong to all Canadians – are we not experiencing a new form of colonialism?

Are not the “oppressors” our own governments in cahoots with large resource corporations that are taking our resources without any social contract or concern for the damaged environments in which we will continue to live?

And are we – and in particular the First Nations – not being oppressed as citizens, having our rights taken away and even being threatened if we speak out against this injustice?

Today Freire's approach is being adopted in different political and economic environments in countries around the world. We can adopt it in our communities. Here are some of the key points of Freire's approach.

### The situation of the oppressed.

1. The poor in Brazil – mostly illiterate peasants – are being oppressed and dehumanized by their oppressors – unjust governments and corporations stealing their land or their country's resources. For the most part peasants are unaware of what is happening to them. They simply accept their lot. This is the way life is.

2. The oppressors sometimes feel threatened by the opposition of the peasants. They indulge in a false generosity and “buy the peasants off.”

3. When the oppressed manage to gain some authority, often on the basis of false generosity, they often adopt the model of their oppressors and become oppressors of their own people. In order for this struggle to have meaning, the oppressed must not,

For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them.

- Aristotle,  
Nichomachean Ethics

People never think their way into a new way of acting. They act their way into a new way of thinking.

- Erich Fromm

in seeking to regain their humanity (which is a way to create it), become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but, rather restorers of the humanity of both.

4. Key to the control by the oppressors are generative themes that provide a context and justification for actions. These themes promote certain values, rules and modes of behavior that determine how things should be done. Today we would refer to these generative themes as cultural/political ideologies. Some examples are colonialism, corporate capitalism, socialism and Marxism.

5. For the most part the oppressed do not recognize or become aware of the generative themes. They do not see the world around them the way it is. They see the world the way they are.

6. The oppressed tend to be very individualistic. They are concerned about themselves and their families. Life is a fight for survival. Often they don't think in terms of the community.

7. The oppressed often have a fear of responsibility. They get 'locked into' their own situation. Accepting responsibility is risky and might lead to further repression. They adopt a "devil we know" attitude.

### So how can we adopt and apply the methodology of Paulo Freire?

We begin by recognizing some similarities and dissimilarities with our situation.

1. Many people do not sense that they are experiencing some kind of oppression. They may not have thought about what is happening around them or they may agree with the decisions taken by the government in power – even when these decisions might affect them adversely. There is no common ground (poverty, illiteracy) that joins them together.

2. For the most part ideologies

(Freire's generative themes) are invisible to people on a day-to-day basis. They do not see a change in legislation (example: the federal government's Bill C38) as being either good or bad. It just "is."

3. There is a perception, deeply imbedded in our culture, that if something is legal it is also just and fair.

## We needed a new approach. One that linked consciousness-raising to action.

4. There is a perception that in a democracy the people who are elected "will take care of us." Folks may also believe that we as individuals can influence our elected officials and they will reflect our interests. They are unaware that politicians are more influenced by experts – staff, consultants, lawyers, resource companies – whose "educated expertise" must take priority over the interest of ordinary citizens.

5. One of the consequences of technology and the development of integrated systems is the phenomenon of "de-skilling"—perhaps our equivalent of illiteracy. People see themselves as uninformed and are often reluctant to go up against the experts who know more about "the subject" than they do.

6. There is a cultural reluctance to speak out and express one's opinion because this may result in criticism from the community. They adopt the mantra that "we have to go along to get along."

7. People have a growing sense of helplessness when they discover the relationship between governments and large, wealthy resource extraction corporations, many of which contribute to political campaigns.

8. In our extremely individualistic culture many people are less

concerned about what is happening in the community than how proposed changes will affect their individual lives and lifestyles (housing values, taxes, jobs, personal finances).

9. In our society many people do not reflect upon their rights as citizens. They simply take them for granted. (Note the large number of people who do not bother to vote.) This lack of reflection is reinforced by the growing lack of respect for politicians and the number of people who declare that "I am not political."

10. Typically when government takes away citizens' rights, they "sell" what they are doing as necessary for the economy or "in the national interests of the country." They use taxpayers' dollars in the media to trumpet their actions. They attack those who oppose them as radical and un-Canadian. They often justify their decisions by claiming they are based upon solid science when they are not.

11. Citizens expect their governments to be fair, objective and honest. For the most part they are willing to give them the benefit of the doubt. They do not recognize that once governments have decided upon a policy, government staff and experts are expected to toe the line.

12. When people realize that their governments are making decisions that are not in their best interests they often decide to "throw the bums out" in the next election. But often, for reasons stated above, they are reluctant to engage in the work needed to support a better slate of candidates.

### An approach to Living Room Dialogue organizing

Paulo Freire did not leave us a step by step method to organize small group sessions. He recognized that each local situation is different and

Continued on Page 12 ➡

↳ *Living Room continued*

approaches must be developed on an individual basis. But he did leave us some ideas about how to proceed.

## Step One.

A small group of neighbours is invited into a home. The invitation should be relatively neutral. "Come and tell us what you think about the Raven Coal Mine." Though some folks may be in favour of the mine, the majority will either be opposed to it or in need of more information before making up their minds. The group animator begins by explaining the purpose of the meeting. He/she asks people in turn to share their thoughts and feelings. The animator's role is to make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.

## Step Two.

As the conversation continues, (or if it doesn't continue and needs a bit of a jolt) the facilitator asks probing questions that seem appropriate in light of the conversation. "Do you have any concerns about Baynes Sound and the shellfish industry, or about water tables, or jobs, or health, or acid drainage, etc?"

## Step Three.

In the final step the animator asks what, if anything, the participants want to do about their concerns. He or she has at hand a number of suggestions (help us get invitations into other homes, phone or write your elected politicians, sign a petition, volunteer your time, etc.) There may be a need for some visuals, a map, or handouts

depending upon what the facilitator feels is needed.

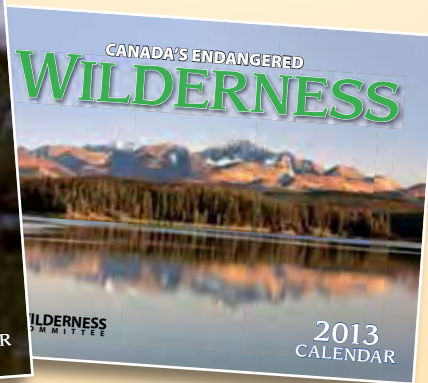
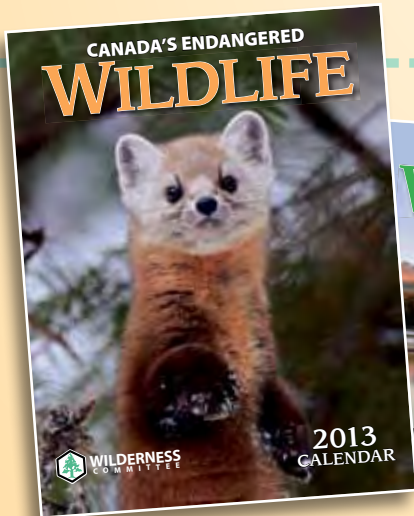
Will this small scale almost individualistic approach work? It has worked before.

Years ago, a reporter asked Cesar Chavez, the famous organizer of farm workers in California, "How do you organize?" Chavez said, "First you talk to one person, then you talk to another." "No, really," the reporter said, "How do you organize?" Chavez responded, "First you talk to one person, then you talk to another."



Mike Bell is Chairperson of the Comox Valley Sierra Club and a management consultant. He works in the Arctic with Inuit and Dene organizations.

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# THE SOLUTION AROUND US

Amidst the impassioned and fevered discussions in the virtual world about the perils of our human, hubris-induced situation, multitudes of dire predictions foretell chaos, mass starvation, and the breakdown of governance. In these gloomy circles, it has gone unnoticed that the United Nations declared 2012 the International Year of the Co-operative. The theme for the international year is “Co-operative Enterprises Build a Better World,” and the UN thinks co-ops can help with the soft landing we are seeking at the end of the oil-based growth economy, with its feverish climate.

The reasons are not hard to find, and may be just as unexciting as buttered bread. That is, fresh buttered bread when you are very hungry.

Co-operatives can offer a democratically governed method of local self-help, one focused, as the International Co-operative Alliance says, “on human need not human greed, where the members, who own and govern the business, collectively enjoy the benefits instead of all profits going just to shareholders.”

In this feature section, we take a brief look at co-operatives in Canada, just to remind you that sometimes the solutions are all around us.

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# STATEMENT ON THE CO-OPERATIVE IDENTITY

The Statement on the Co-operative Identity was adopted at the 1995 General Assembly of the International Co-operative Alliance (<http://2012.coop/welcome>) held in Manchester on the occasion of the Alliance's centenary. The Statement was the product of a lengthy process of consultation involving thousands of co-operatives around the world.

**Definition:** A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

**Values:** Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others.

**Principles:** The co-operative principles are guidelines by which co-operatives put their values into practice.

## THE SEVEN CO-OPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

*Plain language translation by the Ontario  
Co-operative Association [www.ontario.coop](http://www.ontario.coop)*

one vote) and co-operatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.

### **3rd Principle: Member Economic Participation (No free rides)**

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. They usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

### **4th Principle: Autonomy and Independence (Self-control, no parents)**

Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.

### **5th Principle: Education, Training and Information (Share, learn, grow)**

Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public – particularly young people and opinion leaders – about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

### **6th Principle: Co-operation Among Co-operatives (Together everyone achieves more)**

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional, and international structures.

### **7th Principle: Concern for Community (Building strong communities)**

While focusing on member needs, co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

### **1st Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership (All welcome - no pressure)**

Co-operatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

### **2nd Principle: Democratic Member Control (One member = one vote)**

Co-operatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member,

—Adopted in Manchester (UK) 23 September 1995

# A SAMPLING

## OF THE VARIETY OF CO-OPS IN BC



by Dawn Paley

### Chek TV: From Canwest Failure to Co-op

**Who?** Investors from Vancouver Island and employees of Chek TV.

**What?** An employee owned TV station, the only one of its kind in North America.

**When?** Chek was BC's first TV station, first broadcast December 1, 1956. Slated to shut down in August, 2009. First broadcast as an employee owned station: September 1, 2009.

**Where?** Victoria, BC.

**Why?** After bouncing between

the CBC, CTV and Canwest, Chek TV was slated to be shut down in early 2009. The public's response was strong in calling for the continuation of the channel.

**How?** Forty employees put down an initial \$15,000 each to purchase Chek. Later, Vancouver Island investors signed on, transforming Chek into an island owned and operated station.

### Modo: Car Sharing on a Roll in Vancouver

**Who?** Founded by 16 people sharing two cars as the Vancouver

Co-operative Auto Network. Today Modu has thousands of members in Metro Vancouver alone.

**What?** Providing hundreds of safe, affordable co-operatively-owned vehicles in and around Vancouver, which members can use for various lengths of time depending on their needs.

**When?** Founded in 1997, Modu was the first car-sharing co-op on the continent.

**Where?** Metro Vancouver.

**Why?** Being able to borrow a car when you need one instead of owning a car reduces costs as well as cutting down on greenhouse gas emissions and vehicles in an already congested urban setting.

**How?** Individual members buy a \$500 refundable share in Modu or pay a \$50 annual fee, then pay hourly and by kilometre for vehicle use.

### Sointula Co-operative Association: Oldest Consumer Co-op in Western Canada

**Who?** Finnish Settlers.

**What?** A consumer co-op that sells health food, organic food, groceries, liquor, hardware and gas.

**When?** The Sointula Co-operative Association was founded in 1909 and is still active today.

**Where?** Sointula, a village on Malcolm Island, just off the coast of Port MacNeill in the Queen Charlotte Strait.

**Why?** After an attempt to found a utopian colony failed, the Finnish settlers on Sointula set up a co-op as a way to provide supplies to islanders while maintaining economic benefits in the village.

**How?** Each family paid \$100 to become a member, and the co-op was founded with an eye to the Rochdale Principles, which emphasized fairness, equity, equality, education and transparency for members.

**Harmac Pacific: Employees bring Mill Back from the Brink**

**Who?** Permanent employees at Harmac Pacific.

**What?** A worker owned mill supplying high quality pulp to the global market.

**When?** Mill re-started as a co-op on October 3, 2008 after owner went bankrupt earlier that year.

**Where?** Nanaimo, BC.

**Why?** Instead of losing their jobs when the owner went bust, the mill workers re-organized the structure of their workplace horizontally and invested in the long-term stability of their employment.

**How?** Two hundred of the mill's 530 employees invested \$25,000 over

a three-year period. Together with three investors – all small, local businesses involved in forest products – they bought the mill out.

**Co-op Housing Federation of BC: A Roof over our Heads**

**Who?** Members of approximately 260 housing co-ops.

**What?** CHFBC represents the interests of people living in co-op housing, to promote increased and improved co-op housing, and to share co-op principles more widely.

**When?** Founded in 1982.

**Where?** Throughout BC, from Fort St. John to Castlegar to Victoria.

**Why?** Faced with rising housing prices as well as substandard

construction, people living in co-op housing decided they needed their own advocacy group in order to promote their interests and push for an expansion of affordable and safe co-operative housing.

**How?** Members purchase a share in their housing co-op and pay a monthly amount to the co-op, which is a non-profit. Shares range from \$1000 to \$7000. Most housing co-ops have mixed housing, meaning that some members pay market price, while others receive a subsidy based on their income.



## CO-OPERATIVES AND CREDIT UNIONS IN CANADA

The federal government website, [www.Canada2012.coop](http://www.Canada2012.coop), boasts that Canada's 9,000 co-operatives and credit unions can be found in virtually every sector of the economy and touch the lives of millions of Canadians. Collectively, they have some 18 million members, more than 150,000 employees and control assets of more than \$330 billion.

"No matter where you live in Canada, you're likely to find co-operatives. You can be born with the help of a health care co-op and buried by a funeral co-op. In between, you can work in a worker co-op, live in a housing co-op, eat food produced by agricultural co-ops and buy that food at a retail co-op. You can send your children to a day care co-op, do all your banking at a credit union and purchase your insurance from an insurance co-op."

**The 9,000 co-ops in Canada include:**

- **More than 2,200 housing co-operatives which are home to about 250,000 individuals.**
- **More than 1,300 agricultural co-ops.**
- **More than 650 retail co-operatives.**
- **Nearly 900 credit unions and caisses populaires with close to 11 million members.**
- **About 450 co-ops offering child care or early childhood education.**
- **More than 600 worker (employee-owned) co-ops with a total membership of over 13,000.**
- **More than 100 health care co-operatives.**

Thirty-five per cent of the world's maple syrup is produced by co-operatives in Quebec.

Canada has one of the highest per capita credit union memberships in the world. According to the World Council of Credit Unions, 46.2 per cent of the economically active population are members of a credit union or caisse populaire.

The survival rate of co-ops is higher than that of private sector companies. A 2008 study in Quebec found that 62 per cent of new co-ops are still operating after 10 years, compared with 44 per cent for other traditional businesses.

—[www.canada2012.coop/en/co-operatives\\_in\\_canada](http://www.canada2012.coop/en/co-operatives_in_canada)

# CO-OPS FOR SOCIAL



# CHANGE

*Although Canadian co-operative membership is extremely high on a global scale, the organizations tend to be less socially active than in Latin America*

by Dawn Paley

Co-operatives are falling back into favour as a way to organize for sustainable economic alternatives and social change.

Though Canada has one of the largest co-operative movements in the world, it is – with some exceptions – a rather conservative sector, which has drifted away from grassroots organizing.

“There’s something on the order of a third of all Canadians that have a membership in a co-op ... we’re talking about hundreds of billions of dollars of assets, Canada has one of the biggest co-op movements anywhere in the world, and the worker co-op movement here is tiny,” said Hazel Corocan, the Executive Director of the Canadian Workers Co-op Federation. The Canadian Co-operative Association reports that there are approximately 9,000 co-ops in Canada, together employing 155,000

people and serving over 18 million members.

Diversity within the co-op sector in Canada makes generalizations difficult. Beyond the

bylaws and a yearly meeting, it is hard to think of many parallels between, for example, small-scale workers’ co-ops, and credit unions with hundreds of billions of dollars in assets. Over the past years, the Harper government has taken an axe to many of the financial supports the government was providing to co-ops to start up and maintain their operations.

“My sense is that there’s growing interest in the worker co-op movement ... The interest is growing but the availability of supports is, in most places, harder,” said Corocan, who pointed out that the federal government department devoted to co-operatives had their personnel slashed from 94 staffers to 15.

## Co-ops During Quebec Tumult

Over the course of 2012, residents of Québec, and especially of larger urban areas like Montreal and Quebec, have lived through the most

intense and tumultuous student strike in Canada. The sustained activities on the streets of Quebec raised the question of whether or not the co-op sector could have, in some way, helped the student movement.

Dru Oja Jay lives in Montréal, where he is active in two co-ops, the Media Co-op and *Journal Ensemble*, a magazine dedicated to covering the co-operative movement in Quebec.

“There isn’t anything magical about co-operatives that make them inherently better than other organizations in this or any other context, but I think that having a democratic structure, and the expectation of accountability that comes with member-owned structures can tilt the balance in favour of popular mobilizations,” said Jay.

In Jay’s opinion, the co-op movement had the potential to do more to support the student and social strike that lasted over six months.

“In Quebec, there’s a prevailing de-politicization among people active in co-ops,” Jay told *Watershed Sentinel*. “People have bought into the idea that businesses are not political to a large extent.” This indicates that many of those running co-operatives have chosen to do so as much for economic reasons as for any other motivations.

“There are, however, important currents that run counter to this, especially among younger and people more recently active within the co-op movement,” said Jay.

## Alternative Spaces

Indeed, though they don't carry the same weight as the powerhouses of the co-op movement, there are many co-operative projects in Quebec creating alternative spaces for socialization and creation.

The Media Co-op and *Journal Ensemble* attempted to respond to the movements in the streets during the strike with special coverage dedicated to the strike. The Media Co-op launched a special website for strike coverage, which, in the spirit of cooperation, aggregated news, images and videos being posted across various media into a single page, based on hash tags. “The Media Co-op had some good moments; we were able, I think, to expose a lot of people in English Canada to what is going on in Quebec in a level of detail that they weren't getting from other media,” said Jay. “That said, the expectations should be higher. We should be able to respond to events like this with comprehensive, coordinated, and well-promoted coverage; that's why organizations like the Media Co-op exist.”

During the strike, Nicolas Falcimaigne, president of *Journal Ensemble* and a member of the board of the Association of Independent Journalists of Quebec, wrote an op-ed in *Journal Ensemble* about the role of Quebec's co-operative sector and the effects of Law 78, a “special law” passed to control dissent, criminalize protests, and force the students back to school. “Isn't it time that the co-operative movement, this economic giant, stands up politically to defend the rights of its 8.8 million members,



the citizens?” he asked in the piece, which was circulated among Quebec's 3,300 co-operatives.

“Interesting fact,” wrote Falcimaigne in an email to *Watershed Sentinel*, “Not a single reader answered that question.” The co-op movement in Quebec did not take a position on the strike, but that doesn't mean that there weren't co-ops whose members were in support.

## Worker Co-ops

About 60 kilometres from Montréal is the Coop les Jardins de la Résistance (Gardens of Resistance Co-op), a workers' co-op founded in 2009 by activists looking to find ways to live from producing and cultivating organic food.

“The majority of members of our co-op are either activists or people who are very close to activism in Montreal, some are involved in activist groups, I myself am a Wobbly,” said Niko, a gardener and member of the co-op. “There's not that many activist activities that take place out in the country. One of our members started screening Cinema Politica movies here in Ormstown where we live.”

When the student strike took off in the spring, there was little by way of produce to donate in support of the movements in the street. Individual

Shift urban cargo delivery is a Vancouver worker co-operative that launched its downtown delivery service in August 2011. Shift is replacing truck deliveries with greener cycle-based technologies. At a worker co-operative, like Shift, it is the workers who have equal ownership of the business. At Shift, new employees must go through a 6-month probation period before they can apply for membership. Once they are accepted, they must pay off a membership share, an investment which they receive back in full once they leave the co-op. In return, every member becomes a co-owner, can vote for the board of directors, is consulted on any major decisions affecting the coop, receives medical benefits, and can eventually share in the profits.

members of the co-op traveled to the city and participated in demonstrations, particularly the evening pot and pan demos. But over time, and after a busy harvest, they also found ways to support the strike directly.

“Right now there is a network at the University of Quebec in Montreal in solidarity with the students who are doing extra sessions, to make up for the winter sessions, so they don't always have time to work, so we have made some small vegetable donations for those students, that's what the co-

Continued on Page 20 ➔

↔ *Change continued*

operative has done,” said Niko. “But it was more the personal investment of the workers of the co-op, rather than the co-op itself.” The ability to earn a decent wage and self-manage their hours allowed the five members of Jardins de la Résistance to be able to participate in the strike.

Then there’s Café Touski, on Ontario Street in Hochelaga, a neighbourhood in Montreal, which is run horizontally through general assembly. “Proof, if any was needed, that workers are able to organize themselves without having to bend to the orders of some boss,” according to the Café’s statement on operating as a co-op. During the student strike, Touski’s was an important place for meetings and discussions among those involved in the movement against tuition increases and austerity policies more generally.

Though the co-op movement at large was not actively supporting the student strike, these exceptions confirm the possibility that exists within co-operative organizations when progressive people are involved. This phenomenon extends far beyond Quebec to the rest of Canada, the US, and elsewhere, where there are many co-ops dedicated specifically to nurturing social movements.

**Co-ops for Social Change**

Radical Routes, a UK based network of co-operatives, houses activists and promotes the creation of workers co-ops. There are 26 housing co-ops active as full members of the network, as well as nine workers co-ops, and another 17 associate members.

“We are working towards taking control over our housing, education and work through setting up housing and worker co-ops, and co-operating as a network,” reads Radical Routes’ website. Other progressive co-ops include bicycle shops, bookstores like Vancouver’s Peoples Co-op Books, and artist co-ops like Pittsburgh based Just Seeds.

“I think in the rest of the world the co-op sector is not as establishment-oriented as it is in Canada. Even in the US the credit unions seem to be more progressive than they generally are here,” said Corocan. “In Europe, in Japan, in Latin America, it’s different.”

In Latin America, workers’ co-operatives flourish where others fear to tread, and where people on the ground take direct action and organize into structures that have the potential to last, and empower their members financially and otherwise.

Take the Zapatistas, for one.

“In the Los Altos region, the Zapatista communities sell organic coffee through two of their own co-operatives and women embroiderers formed co-operatives to market their handicrafts and eliminate the greedy and racist intermediaries in the nearby commercial center of San Cristobal de Las Casas,” writes Raul Zibechi, who chronicles Latin American social movements, in his 2012 book *Territories in Resistance*. “There are co-operatives and libraries in all the Caracoles [Zapatista base communities] and in some there are cobblers, bicycle workshops, cafes, and other services.”

Co-operatives have functioned in factories where the bosses walked away from the shop, as was the case after the economic crisis in Argentina, documented, for example, by Naomi Klein and Avi Lewis in their 2004 film *The Take*.

Co-ops are also a prime site of autonomous neighbourhood organizing in Venezuela. While the international media focuses on Hugo Chávez, people on the ground in cities and towns across the country have reclaimed the means of production by organizing co-operatively, and taken local political control through the creation of local councils. “Here the middlemen who keep the profits are cut out, and people produce co-operatively, much as they do everything else in the territory,” according to Andrés Antillano, an organizer with an Urban Land Committee in Caracas.

Camila Piñeiro Harnecker, a professor specializing in co-ops based in Havana, Cuba, estimated that there were between 30,000 and 80,000 co-ops in Venezuela in 2008, up from only 1,000 in 1998. Most of these co-ops, she writes, were formed after 2003, as part of a process to reshape the Venezuelan economy. She points out that the experiences of co-operatives in Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina

**Co-ops around the world**



The International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) is an independent, non-governmental organisation that unites, represents and serves co-operatives worldwide. ICA members are international and national co-operative organisations from all sectors of the economy, including agriculture, banking, consumer, fisheries, health, housing, industry, insurance and tourism.

Currently, the ICA has member organisations from almost 100 countries, representing approximately 1 billion individuals worldwide. Around 100 million people work for a co-op globally.

and Venezuela show that co-ops can be more efficient than capitalist businesses.

### Human Development

But the benefits co-operatives extend to their members can go beyond the balance sheet.

In her book *Co-operatives and socialism: A Cuban perspective*, Piñeiro explains: “The efficiency of co-operatives is greater still if we take into consideration all of the positive outcomes inherent in their management model, which can be summarised as the full human development of its members and, potentially, of local communities. The democratic abilities and attitudes that co-operative members develop through their participation in its management can be utilised in other social spaces and organizations. Moreover, genuine co-operatives free us from some of

the worst of the negative externalities (dismissals, environmental contamination, loss of ethical values) generated by enterprises oriented towards profit maximisation rather than the satisfaction of the needs of their workers.”

Attempting to track the concrete support of co-ops for social movements will never capture the entirety of the potential for co-ops to make change. The impacts happen on a day-to-day basis, empowering members of co-ops – even those which are not inherently political – with skills and abilities that allow them to participate more actively in other social spaces, including in times of social protest.

Some of Canada’s largest co-ops, like credit unions and retailers like Mountain Equipment Co-op, have memberships into the millions. But this doesn’t necessarily mean that all members are participating in the manner described by Piñeiro.

Indeed, for Jay, measuring a

co-op by its size may not be the most astute gauge of its potential to make change. “Co-ops are subject to the same manipulations as small power-holding groups use to undermine democracy in other venues,” he told *Watershed Sentinel*. “Like any democratic organization in a hierarchical society, the trick is mobilizing people. I think that a major step towards that is organizing people into affinity groups and other small-scale structures that give people the space to talk about what they want to do, and feel empowered to do it.”

What’s important, he says, is that co-ops be small enough to have a conversation, and big enough to accomplish something.



Dawn Paley is an editor-member of the Media Co-operative. She is based in Mexico, where she is at work on her first book.

## 10 REASONS WHY CO-OPS ROCK

1. Co-operatives are democratic businesses and organizations, equally owned and controlled by a group of people. There are worker co-ops, consumer co-ops, producer co-ops, financial co-ops, housing co-ops, and more. In a co-operative, one member has one vote.
2. Because co-operatives are democratically owned by community members, co-ops keep money (and jobs) in their communities.
3. Co-operatives aren’t a far off theory. Co-operatives offer achievable and practical solutions to many economic, environmental, and social problems that can be implemented right now.
4. Co-ops aren’t charity; they’re empowering means for self-help and solidarity.
5. Members of co-operatives equally share the burden in hard times and equally share the benefits in good times.
6. Co-operatives are more resilient in economic downturns and in impoverished communities. When other businesses may shut down or lay off workers, co-op members pull together to work out solutions.
7. Co-operatives are an international movement. There are thousands upon thousands of co-operatives around the world that are making major differences locally and globally.
8. Co-operatives strive to make people’s lives, communities, and economies more just, equitable, and democratic.
9. There’s no one right way to do a co-op. They can be flexible to fit different community and individual needs. There are big co-ops with thousands of members, and there are small co-ops with 3 members.
10. Co-operatives are viable and just alternatives for meeting our economic and social needs in contrast to corporations that exploit people and the planet.

—Poster available from the Toolbox for Education and Social Action, <http://toolboxfored.org/>

# FOOD CO-OPS AND GMOs

## Being the Change Just Got Harder

by Lucy Sharratt

The proliferation of genetically engineered (also called genetically modified or GM) ingredients is an extremely complex challenge that's set to frustrate and test any food co-op, but the co-op model itself is uniquely placed to face this challenge head-on and make sense of it for customer-members and the community at large. In fact, food co-ops in Canada are charting a path through an industrialized food system riddled with GM foods. This groundbreaking work is made possible by the reciprocal relationships inside the co-op community, including customer-member participation in the value-based decision-making at the heart of the co-op.

Food co-ops are daring to tread where few other retailers are willing to go on the issue of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and community support and engagement is required for these difficult steps forward. Co-op members have a unique stake in the co-op's choices and a unique voice in its decisions. Members are invested in the co-op and the co-op in its members. This dynamic reciprocity is needed to help navigate through such an emotional and logistically complicated issue as GMOs in our food. All the tools (and limitations) of a co-op come in to play and are tested by this issue.

GMOs are prohibited in organic farming, but many "natural" food products contain GM ingredients. As the health food sector has grown, so has the integration of GM canola, corn and soy ingredients. Customers

*Without mandatory labelling of GM foods, food co-ops have picked up the gruelling work of investigating each product, and each ingredient, that comes through the door.*

cannot make assumptions that local and "natural" foods are non-GM and food co-ops are finding themselves in the position of explaining many contradictions in the food system.

Many food co-ops focus on healthy and ecological food options and interpret their mandates as requiring a strong position against GMOs. The Kootenay Country Store Co-operative's mission (Nelson BC), for example, is to "promote community involvement by cultivating a co-operative, sustainable, organic way of life."

Handling the enormity of the challenge of GMOs, however, can be backbreaking, and heartbreaking. Without mandatory labelling of GM foods, food co-ops have picked up the gruelling work of investigating each product, and each ingredient, that comes through the door. The Big Carrot in Toronto started this work in the late 1990s after conversations with customers on the store floor flagged concern over GMOs. At that time it was hard to conceive of the current high level of GM infiltration, via processed food ingredients and animal feed.

Maintaining vigilance over products is now only marginally easier with organic certification and the advent of a new North American "Non-GMO Project Verified" seal. Some non-GM or organic ingredients, such

as soy lecithin for example, are hard to source. Even in the health food sector many food manufacturers are reluctant or unwilling to switch to non-GM ingredients that can require new recipes or squeeze more from slim profit margins.

### Co-ops' Responsibilities

For the Kootenay Co-op and the Big Carrot, the challenge of GMOs has brought the co-op's responsibilities into sharp focus. The common experience is one of striving to provide the best for members. "We've always focused a lot of time and energy on providing non-GMO, local and organic products, and supporting educational and political campaigns to keep GMOs out of Canada" said Jocelyn Carver, Marketing Manager at the Kootenay Co-op, "and yet, it doesn't feel like enough. Keeping up with this issue, feeling confident that we're well-informed and able to make good decisions about next-steps requires doing a lot of homework on an ongoing basis ... and the learning curve is steep."

The reality is that co-ops are engaging in advocacy campaigns against GMOs while still carrying many products with GM ingredients on the shelves. This struggle is inevitable in the process of moving towards a non-GM store. How to communicate this contradiction to members is an unusual conundrum that relies on the trust and engagement of the community. As Jocelyn Carver said, "We need to let our customers know how

pervasive GMOs are throughout the food industry, including the fact that some are in the food on our shelves. It's uncomfortable, because you're disclosing something about your product that isn't ideal ... conventional grocery stores don't offer that kind of transparency. But it's at the core of what makes the Co-op different."

No corporate retailer would critically examine their products in public; this is what food co-ops are doing. The resulting process and dialogue challenges the entire community in a complex and long process of change making. "Our customers have a high level of trust and we feel very deeply the need to communicate honestly with our members about food issues like GMOs. We don't do that lightly but it's critical and needs to be done," said Carver.

Both the Kootenay Co-op and The Big Carrot have a long history of engaging with their members on the GM issue, providing information and non-GM food choices, and this history creates expectations that need to be managed and balanced with the limitations of what the food system can provide at any given time, and what co-ops can achieve. However, it is those same expectations that keep co-ops constantly making changes and moving closer to the change that members want to create in the world.

It's common that those who make strides to improve are held to a higher standard, and so it is with food co-ops who constantly innovate within their capacity to change and build community. Large grocery chains operate without the same accountability to the community and, in response, community expectations of corporate retailers are very low compared to those of the local co-op. The food co-op however is expressly designed to enable people to take more control in the food system and collectively build new expectations together.



Ester Strijbos

**Grocery chains may dither over whether or not they should rule out GM sweet corn for 2013; food co-ops and smaller community stores can decide to source a wide variety of non-GM foods and are expected to do so.**

In addition to providing more and better food choices, busy food co-ops are also stimulating community discussion about the food system and GMOs. Co-ops often provide members with access to information and educational opportunities. Staff education and proactive community awareness is a huge part of moving an issue like GM forward but co-ops cannot research and advocate alone which is where other local and national groups like the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network can help. "It's important to be an expert to some degree if you're going to take responsibility for educating customers and members," said Carver. "Our customers shop here for a wide spectrum of reasons and we need accessible information to meet people where they are at, and in a way that is galvanizing and not guilt-inducing."

When we strive to be the change we want to see in the world, we come up against contradictions that can frustrate us and can become obstacles to further change. It would be easy for

a small co-op to feel defeated by the enormity of the challenge of GMOs but food co-ops are navigating the most complex issues in our food system with integrity and determination. The genuine struggle to provide non-GM choices needs to be understood as an ongoing and uneven process. As Carver described, "What are we going to say about who we are in the face of this issue that is so hot and so important? We need to be able to say something thoughtful and clear. This will take some time. We want to be careful and build a response to GMOs that will guide us for a number of years so we are not just reacting to the latest news."

Large grocery chains have little incentive to remove products from shelves for ethical reasons, especially since such a move only invites further demands from customers. While grocery chains may dither over whether or not they should rule out GM sweet corn for 2013, food co-ops and smaller community stores can decide to source a wide variety of non-GM foods and are expected to do so. In this way, food co-ops are at the forefront, with the organic and small farmers and companies who supply them, of fighting back GM foods. "A grocery chain can do outreach, market, and choose a campaign but they are not owned by their consumers and those consumers can't hold them to account," said Jocelyn Carver, "On a daily basis our members hold us to our mission which is why we all want to work here. We all want to be held to account to make the best possible choices according to our values."



Lucy Sharratt is the Coordinator of the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, [www.cban.ca](http://www.cban.ca)

# Cortes Forestry Update

by Susan MacVittie

In September, the Cortes Community Forestry Co-operative (CCFC) and Klahoose First Nation, working together as the Cortes Forestry General Partnership (CFGP), submitted a Community Forest Application to the BC Ministry of Forests. This groundbreaking application will solidify a forest management plan on Cortes Island crown lands – which make up about 40% of the Island. Once issued, a 25-year tenure will be held and managed by a corporation set up to equally represent the Klahoose First Nation and the Cortes Community Forest Co-operative (an organization representing the non-native Cortes community).

The fate of crown land on Cortes Island has long been a concern to the community and the vision of the Cortes Community Forest Co-op is to use eco-forestry principles to manage the forest in a manner that maintains its biodiversity, productivity and regeneration capacity.

Membership in the Co-op is open in a non-discriminatory manner to any individual over the age of 16 and to any corporation or cooperative that is willing to support the aims of the Co-op:

- to manage the Cortes Community Forest Agreement in conjunction with the Klahoose First Nation for the benefits of all residents of Cortes Island,
- to encourage local processing and value-adding of timber,
- to distribute funds generated by the CF activities to local organizations.

Co-op membership is \$25 and each member shares equal responsibility for attending meetings, keeping themselves informed and participating in the decision making and election of members to the Board of Directors.

From the start, the CFGP agreed to share the cost of applying for and receiving the tenure, develop the required Forest Stewardship Plan and create access to the first areas proposed for harvest to the point where revenue was generated and the undertaking became self sustaining. The original budgeted amount was \$120,000. The Klahoose had



**This groundbreaking application will solidify a forest management plan on Cortes Island crown lands**

Photos by Richard Jensen

access to half the funds and the Co-op founders chose to generate \$60,000 through the sale of membership shares and Investment Shares (\$500 each, non-interest, non-dividend bearing). With incredible support from the Cortes community, the Co-op was able to raise the full amount and no sources of funding were required from outside the organization.

Once the Community Forest application is approved, the intent of the CFGP is to harvest and sell timber from the Community Forest with priority given to local businesses. Any profits that are made from harvest and sale of timber are to be split equally between the Partners. Twenty years in the making, the submittal of the Community Forest Application is a testament to the hard-working and committed community of Cortes Island.


## Privately Managed Lands

Meanwhile, discussions with Island Timberlands over their 2,700 acres of privately managed forest lands on Cortes Island have come to a standstill.

While Island Timberlands conceded in pulling 600 acres near Carrington Bay, known as The Children's Forest, and 70 acres called Whaletown Commons, off the cut-block for sale to the Cortes community, the company is not interested in co-operating with the Cortes Community Forest Co-operative or meeting proposed eco-system based logging practices.

Island Timberlands are expected to log this winter.





# Cohen Reports Out for Sockeye

*Recommends End to DFO Role Promoting Fish Farms*

by Delores Broten

On October 31 in Vancouver, Judge Bruce Cohen released the results of his three year, \$25 million dollar inquiry into the disappearance of ten million or more sockeye salmon from the Fraser River run in 2009 and the fate of the Fraser sockeye runs in general. The inquiry, despite its strict rules of access, had showcased marine science on water quality, fish farms, sea lice, and salmon viruses and examined more than three million pages of documents, mainly from the government of Canada.

Response to the report among wild salmon fans was positive. The Pacific Salmon Foundation noted that the report was clearly intended to be provocative, and “called a spade a spade.”

The report called for a freeze on fish farm expansion in the Discovery Islands off Vancouver Island, and their withdrawal by 2020, or earlier if any evidence of harm to the juvenile Fraser sockeye emerges earlier.

## Site Fish Farms to Protect Wild Stocks

The Commissioner concluded that salmon farms along the sockeye migration route in the Discovery Islands have the potential to introduce exotic diseases and to aggravate endemic diseases which can have a negative impact on Fraser River sockeye. “Mitigation measures should not be delayed in the absence of scientific certainty,” he said.

Any fish farms that do not meet location criteria should be promptly removed or relocated, he said. “DFO should seek to approve only the best sites to avoid the negative impacts on wild stocks, rather than the best sites to provide farmed salmon,” he said.

## Conflict of Interest

Most importantly, Judge Cohen called for an end to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans’ (DFO) conflict of interest between promoting salmon farms and regulating them. The Commissioner recommended that DFO no longer be responsible for promoting salmon farming as an industry and farmed salmon as a product. “As long as DFO has a mandate to promote salmon farming, there is a risk that it will act in a manner that favours the interests of the salmon farming industry over the health of wild fish stocks,” he said.

Cohen emphasized that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans should fully implement and fund both the 2005 Wild Salmon Policy and the 1986 Habitat Policy. “DFO should develop and publish a detailed implementation plan as set out in the Wild Salmon Policy and, without further delay, honour its commitment to implementation,” he noted. “The goals of the Habitat Policy and its No Net Loss principle are sound and should be retained.”

Nonetheless, Cohen noted that although the inquiry uncovered ex-

tensive information about potential causes for the decline of Fraser River sockeye, it also demonstrated how much is still unknown about individual stressors as well as cumulative effects and delayed effects.

The Commissioner also commented on recent amendments to the environmental assessment process and the Fisheries Act. “I find the thrust of some of these amendments to be troubling,” said Commissioner Cohen. “Many experts have emphasized the importance of protecting fish habitat, promoting biodiversity and adopting ecosystem-based management practices. However, the recent amendments to the Fisheries Act appear to be taking DFO in a very different direction.”

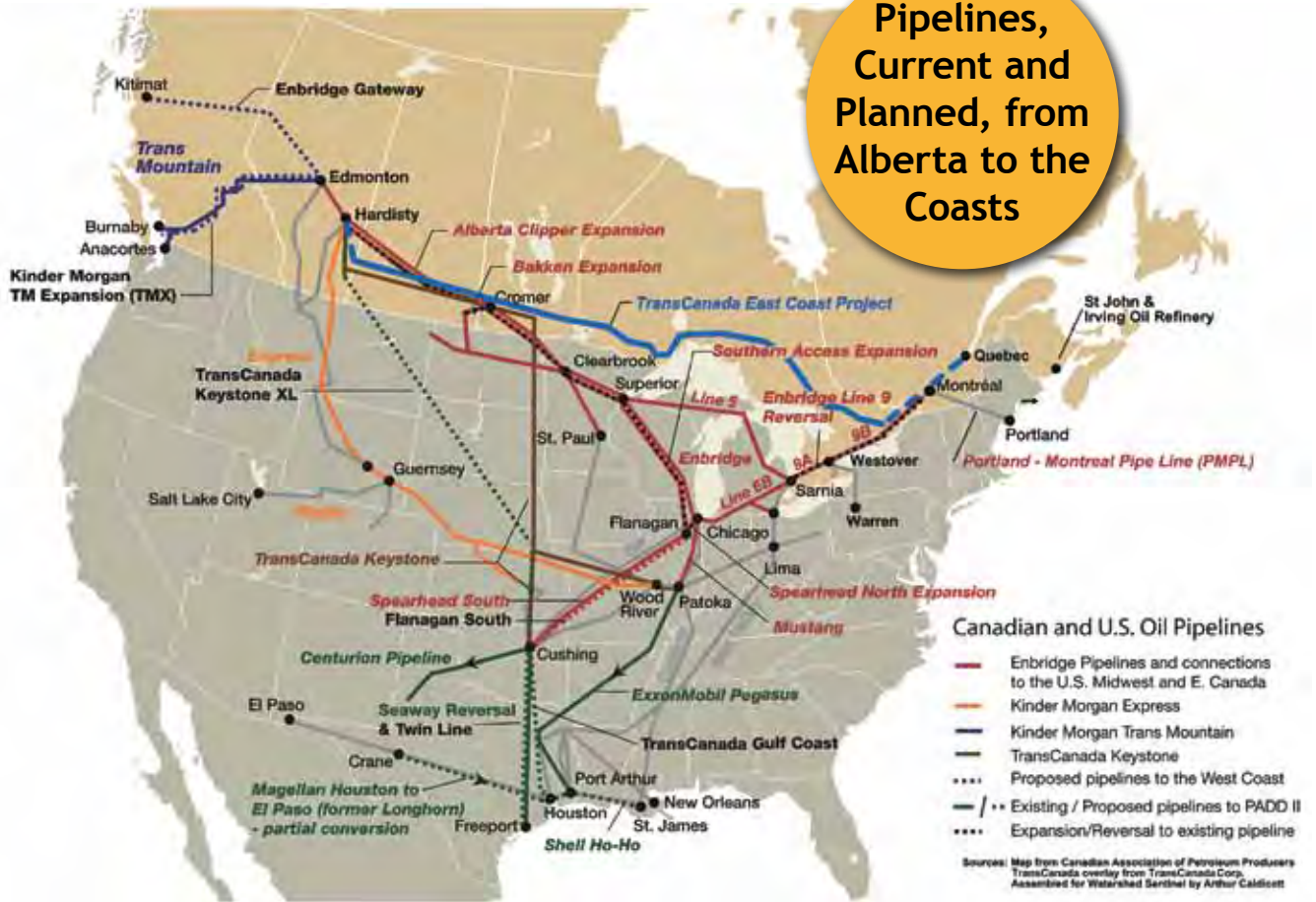
Because British Columbia is in the middle of the process of renewing fish farm licenses, fish defender Alex Morton immediately launched a petition requesting that all such license renewals be put on hold (See [www.change.org/NoSalmonFarmLeases](http://www.change.org/NoSalmonFarmLeases))

The final report of the Cohen Commission is available online at [www.cohencommission.ca](http://www.cohencommission.ca).



*Photo by Andrea Pokrzywinski*

## Pipelines, Current and Planned, from Alberta to the Coasts



# Upstream / Downstream Shipping Tar Sands Crude East

*Enbridge's Line 9 is at the heart of the plan to supply tar sands crude to Irving Oil*

by Joyce Nelson

In a move that could cost him significant political support, federal NDP leader Thomas Mulcair has endorsed controversial west-to-east pipeline proposals that would move tar sands crude from Alberta through Ontario and Quebec to Atlantic Canada and points beyond.

During a Sept. 28, 2012 speech to the Canadian Club of Toronto, Mulcair said, "Let me be clear, New Democrats support recent proposals to increase West-East pipeline capacity.

This is an initiative, led by industry, that will pay economic dividends for every region of our country: new markets for [tar sands] producers in the West, high-paying value-added jobs and lower energy prices in the East." Mulcair called this a "pro-business common sense solution."

With a bottleneck of crude at the storage hub in Cushing, Oklahoma; pricing discounts for diluted bitumen (dilbit) at US Midwest refineries; and strong opposition to tar sands export pipelines in both BC and the US, the industry has seized upon "eastern

access" to Atlantic tidewater as a solution. Canada's top two pipeline/utilities companies – Enbridge and TransCanada Corp. – are each developing plans to pipe crude east, while environmental groups across Ontario, Quebec and New England have been gearing up for a major fight on the issue.

### The "Wrong Product"

Ironically, only hours before Mulcair's speech, Alberta Federation of Labour president Gil McGowan is-

sued a press release (Sept. 27) stating: “The bottom line is Alberta is selling the wrong product [dilbit]. The glut of bitumen on the market is a result of bitumen looking for appropriate refineries. If the product was SCO [synthetic crude oil], we could be selling the product to any refinery in North America.” As well, many pipeline safety issues could be avoided (see March-April 2012 *Watershed Sentinel*).

Tar sands producers generally produce either “synthetic crude,” which has passed through an on-site upgrader, or dilbit, which is raw bitumen thinned with lighter petroleum products and proprietary chemicals. With increased production over the last few years, tar sands producers (which are mostly foreign-owned) are now piping out more dilbit in order to cut their costs. According to Alberta Energy, there are only five operating upgraders in Alberta, and in 2011, “about 57% of oil sands production was sent for upgrading to synthetic crude oil within Alberta,” a percentage that will rapidly decline as production vastly increases. Over the next decade, tar sands producers reportedly plan to triple the amount of dilbit they pipe.

On July 23, 2012, the US National Academy of Sciences began hearing expert briefings on whether dilbit increases the risk of pipeline spills, as environmentalists claim.

Gil McGowan’s point is a crucial one: not all refineries in North America can handle dilbit, nor can all refineries in eastern Canada (see page 28). That fact is significant to understanding who would benefit from “eastern access” pipelines plans.

### Line 9 Reversal

Enbridge is now moving quickly on a plan to pipe tar sands crude through Ontario, Quebec, and New

England to Atlantic tidewater in Portland, Maine. From there it would be shipped by tankers to refineries in the US and elsewhere.

In May 2012, Enbridge announced a \$3.2 billion expansion of its North American pipeline system, including expansion of its Lakehead system which pipes dilbit from Alberta to US Midwest refiners. Some of that dilbit also reaches refineries

## Over the next decade, tar sands producers reportedly plan to triple the amount of dilbit they pipe.

in Sarnia, Ont. via Enbridge’s Line 5 (which brings dilbit from Superior, Wisconsin, across northern Michigan to Sarnia), and Line 6B (which pipes dilbit from Chicago across Michigan to Sarnia). Both Line 5 and Line 6B extend from the tar sands across Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba before entering the US at Superior, Wisc. According to *rabble.ca* (Sept. 11, 2012), in Sarnia “tar sands are already being refined [by Imperial Oil and Suncor] at an estimated rate of 225,000 barrels per day.”

It was Enbridge’s Line 6B that ruptured in Michigan in 2010, spilling 20,000 barrels of dilbit into the Kalamazoo River. During repairs, Enbridge has quietly been increasing the

capacity of that pipeline to 500,000 barrels per day (bpd).

Enbridge also intends to reverse Line 9, which currently carries 240,000 barrels per day of imported conventional oil from Montreal to Sarnia. On July 27, Canada’s National Energy Board granted approval for the reversal of a portion (9A) of Line 9 between Sarnia and Westover, Ont. (where an oil hub is located that diverts crude to Imperial Oil’s refinery in Nanticoke, Ont. and to Pennsylvania refineries).

Enbridge intends to file for the reversal of the remaining portion (9B) between Westover and Montreal this autumn. On Oct. 23, Enbridge filed a document with the NEB showing it plans to increase the capacity of Line 9 to 300,000 bpd and switch it to carrying “heavy crude,” which includes tar sands oil.

In order for tar sands crude to reach the Atlantic, another pipeline – the Portland/Montreal Pipe Line (PMPL – which brings imported conventional oil from Portland, Maine to Montreal) – would also have to be reversed. The PMPL passes through Quebec, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.

The Portland/Montreal pipe is majority-owned by Imperial Oil and Suncor. Officials with PMPL have reportedly been in talks for over a year to reverse that line.

*Continued on Page 28* ⇨



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## ⇐ Downstream continued

Enbridge also intends to export tar sands crude from Portland, Maine. According to the *Globe & Mail* (June 1, 2012), “In a recent conversation with *Streetwise*, Stephen Wuori, Enbridge’s president of liquids pipelines, said his company believes it can export crude from the US without consequence. Asked if it would be possible to send oil to international markets from Maine, he said the answer is yes.”

More recently, the *Globe & Mail* reported (Sept. 6, 2012) that Enbridge “has met with officials from refineries in Quebec City and Saint John to discuss their appetite for Western Canadian crude. Companies could barge oil from Montreal to Quebec City, and then perhaps ship it by rail to Saint John.”

### TransCanada’s Mainline to the East Coast

TransCanada Corp.’s natural gas Mainline runs 14,000 kilometres from the Alberta/Saskatchewan border to where Quebec meets Vermont. The Mainline, which pipes natural gas to Ontario, has been operating at only half-capacity in recent months because of competition from US shale gas. Canadian Natural Resources Ltd.

## The Irving Refinery in Saint John buys about \$10 billion per year of imported conventional oil, refines it, and then sends most of it south of the border.

and others have been urging the company to switch to carrying crude in its gas Mainline

TransCanada Corp. is also one of the owners of Ontario nuclear power-generator Bruce Power, which has been pushing the nuclear option for tar sands/energy production in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

TransCanada Corp. has not disclosed much about its west-to-east pipeline project, but recently *Globe & Mail* reporters Nathan Vanderklippe and Shawn McCarthy provided (Sept. 6, 2012) some details on “a massive \$5.6 billion new pipeline system that would carry large volumes of western

crude to refineries in Ontario, Quebec, and beyond.”

Their news report states: “The East Coast project described to [us] by industry sources would involve converting roughly 3,000 kilometres of underused natural gas pipe – the Mainline is made up of a series of parallel pipes – into oil service. It would also involve building at least 375 kilometres of new pipe from Hardisty, the Alberta oil hub, to the Mainline at Burstall, Sask., and from near Cornwall [Ont.], at the other end, to Montreal. Another 220 kilometres would be required to reach Quebec City. Oil could be loaded onto ocean-going vessels either on the St. Lawrence River, or destined for American refiners via Portland, Maine, through a pipeline [PMPL] to Montreal whose flow could be reversed.... The TransCanada proposal would send 625,000 barrels a day across the country to Montreal, Quebec City and potentially Saint John, NB, where Irving Oil Ltd. runs a large refinery. Tanker exports could then also take the crude to Europe or Asia.”

In late July 2012, RBC Capital Markets urged that TransCanada Corp. stop focussing on the controversial Keystone XL pipeline to Texas and instead convert its Mainline to carry 900,000 barrels per day of tar sands crude to Sarnia, and then use

### Operating Refineries in Eastern Canada (\*barrels per day)

Refinery	Company	Location	Capacity bpd*
North Atlantic Refinery	Korea National Oil Corp.	Come By Chance, Nfld.	115,000
Imperial Oil Refinery	Imperial Oil	Dartmouth, NS	89,000
Irving Oil Refinery	Irving Oil	Saint John, NB	300,000
Suncor Energy Refinery	Suncor	Montreal, Que.	160,000
Levis Ultramar Refinery	Valero Energy Corp.	Quebec City, Que.	215,000
Nanticoke Refinery	Imperial Oil	Nanticoke, Ont.	112,000
Sarnia Refinery	Imperial Oil	Sarnia, Ont.	115,000
Sarnia Refinery	Suncor Energy	Sarnia, Ont.	85,000
Corunna Refinery	Shell Oil	Corunna, Ont.	72,000

Enbridge's Line 9 to move it to Montreal.

So potentially, more than 1.4 million barrels per day of tar sands crude could be piped through southern Ontario and Quebec – the most populated area of Canada – to points east. The industry considers “eastern access” pipelines to be in addition to projects like Northern Gateway.

### Upstream/Downstream

Refining is currently considered a financially viable business in North America mainly for companies that both produce (“upstream”) and refine (“downstream”), largely because they can buy dilbit and other feedstock cheaply and then sell the refined petroleum products for a high price internationally.

In the tar sands, companies with both upstream/downstream facilities in North America include Imperial Oil, Suncor, Shell, Husky, Valero, Marathon, ConocoPhillips, Cenovus, BP, and Flint Hills Resources/Koch Industries. Many of these companies have already invested billions to convert their refineries in the US Midwest and Gulf Coast for processing tar sands crude.

In 2010, Royal Dutch Shell closed its Montreal refinery and converted it into a fuel storage terminal. Imperial Oil put its Dartmouth, NS refinery up for sale on May 17, 2012, but is also considering converting it into a storage terminal. By the terms of its sale to Korea National Oil Corp., the North American Refinery in Newfoundland only refines the province's offshore oil, with most of its refined petroleum products exported to the US. As of March 2012, Shell is considering upgrading bitumen at its Ontario refinery and Suncor is considering the same thing for its Montreal refinery. The resulting “synthetic crude oil” would still have to go to another re-



## Enbridge has been planning its “eastern access” pipeline since at least 2008.

finery to be made into products like gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel.

Peter Boag, president of the Canadian Petroleum Producers Institute – which represents the refining and marketing sector – told the *Globe & Mail* (Sept. 6, 2012), “Significant changes to the crude diet to really ramp up the volumes of western-based heavier crudes in Eastern Canada is going to require some significant investment in refinery reconfiguration.” As Gil McGowan put it, Alberta is selling “the wrong product.”

### The Irving Empire

According to the University of Calgary's Jack Mintz (*Financial Post*, Dec. 18, 2011), the only refinery on the Atlantic that can currently process “heavy sour diluted bitumen [dilbit]” is “the Irving Refinery” in New Brunswick. Otherwise, he said, “this type of crude cannot be processed in eastern North America.”

Enbridge has been planning its

“eastern access” pipeline since at least 2008. On March 11, 2008, Reuters reported that “Enbridge Inc. is looking at moving oil sands crude to the US Northeast and Eastern Canada,” and quoted Enbridge CEO Patrick Daniel: “If we move to reverse Line 9 [in Ontario], that could come before [Northern] Gateway [in BC]. If it is a large volume, 400,000 barrels a day, [Northern] Gateway would come first.”

In 2011, Enbridge appointed to its board a director of Irving Oil, which now owns 50 per cent of an oil terminal in Portland, Maine.

The *Globe & Mail* reported (Aug. 23, 2012) that Irving Oil “unveiled a proposal three years ago to build [another] 300,000 barrels-a-day [refinery] facility to serve the northeast United States,” and later partnered with BP on the idea – which is currently shelved. According to the same newspaper (Sept. 6, 2012), the Irving Refinery in Saint John buys about \$10 billion per year of imported conventional oil, refines it, and then sends “eighty per cent of the plant's production” south of the border.

Obviously, tar sands producers like Canadian Natural Resources Ltd. – which owns no downstream refineries – are eyeing that annual \$10 billion in hopes that it will be used to buy crude piped east. Canadian Natural Resources Ltd. plans to greatly increase its tar sands production to one million barrels per day over the next decade. Frank McKenna – the former premier of New Brunswick and a current director of Canadian Natural Resources Ltd. – has been one of the most vocal proponents of west-to-east pipelines from Alberta, and has called for a new oil pipeline from Montreal to Saint John.

In mid-July, Canada's Parliamentary Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural

Continued on Page 30 ➔

↳ *Downstream continued*

Resources (with 7 Conservative and 5 Liberal members) endorsed west-to-east tar sands pipelines as a “nation-building” project.

Besides Frank McKenna and the Senate Committee, other outspoken proponents include Derek Burney (a director of TransCanada Pipelines Ltd.), Eddie Goldenberg (a lawyer with Calgary law firm Bennett Jones), the “ethical oil” people, and now the NDP’s Thomas Mulcair. Some commentators consider the west-to-east pipeline plans to be the centre of Alberta Premier Alison Redford’s “national energy strategy.”

But the plans by Enbridge and TransCanada Corp. seem largely to be

## Enbridge also intends to export tar sands crude from Portland, Maine.

a strategy for Big Oil to get a higher price for dilbit by export via the Atlantic – most likely to the US Gulf Coast, where their downstream profits would be highest.

Environmental organizations across Quebec, Ontario, and New England, along with some First Nations and landowner organizations

residing along Line 9, have been rallying in opposition to these west-to-east pipeline plans.

All this is happening mainly because the Alberta government is too timid and subservient to require that all tar sands production be upgraded or refined on-site. Instead, it keeps allowing Big Oil to pipe out more and more of “the wrong product.” As a result, tar sands pipelines will continue to be fought across North America.



Joyce Nelson is an award-winning freelance writer/researcher and the author of five books.

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# Paper from Waste Straw

Paper made from agricultural waste is good news for forests and for farmers

by Delores Broten

Prairie Pulp & Paper's Step Forward Paper™ is the first widely available wheat straw-based copy paper in Canada, made from 80% wheat straw fibre with 20% Forest Stewardship Council® certified wood fibre. It is now sold at all Staples stores.

A recent study commissioned by the company and publicized by the environmental non-profit Canopy, which has been working on eco-paper markets for years, compares Step Forward Paper™ with other copy paper types in North America. Results demonstrate that wheat straw-based paper and 100% recycled copy papers have the lowest environmental impact across the seven indicators studied.

However, when using a weighted ranking system for environmental indicators that places greater importance on climate change, Step Forward Paper™ is the best-performing copy paper type studied, with the lowest overall environmental impact.

Fifty per cent of the harvested Canadian boreal forest is currently used to produce paper products. "A key solution to protecting our world's species and climate is finding fibre that doesn't come from our last remaining ancient and endangered forests," said Amanda Carr, Campaign Director with Canopy.

Step Forward is presently made at a facility in India but Jeff Golfman, president of Prairie Pulp & Paper, says, "Our goal is to establish a market that will support our plans to build a new state-of-the-art facility in the Canadian prairies, which will in turn enable us to produce this straw paper with an even smaller footprint."

The Step Forward manufacturing facility is one of the only elemental chlorine free (referred to as ECF) facilities in India, using chlorine dioxide in its bleaching process. Prairie Pulp & Paper's future plans for producing 100% agricultural residue paper in Canada include a Total Chlorine Free (called TCF) process.

Canopy says there is enough leftover straw in North America every year to meet many of our paper needs without logging our ancient forests, and the market is there: "Our straw paper market survey has already quantified an annual demand for 800-thousand tonnes of straw paper products. We need business and government to put the infrastructure in place to seize this opportunity."

◆  
*Research Report: Comparative Life Cycle Study of Step Forward Paper™, Prairie Pulp & Paper, October 2012*  
[www.prairiepaper.com](http://www.prairiepaper.com)



## REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- ❑ Of the seven impact categories studied, Step Forward Paper™ has the lowest life cycle environmental impacts with regard to non-renewable energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, wastewater volume and aquatic acidification
- ❑ Step Forward Paper™ is approximately 50% less energy intensive than virgin tree-based paper
- ❑ In each category studied, Step Forward Paper™ performed better than 30% recycled and virgin tree paper types
- ❑ One ream of Step Forward Paper™ copy paper (a 500-sheet package) represents a savings of 2.7 kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalent (kgCO<sub>2</sub>e) when compared to typical North American virgin-tree based copy papers
- ❑ Purchasing Step Forward Paper™, instead of virgin tree-based paper, saves one acre of forestland from being cut down for every nine cases sold
- ❑ Transportation from India to Canada represents only 12% of Step Forward's life cycle emissions
- ❑ Every hectare of wheat cropland in Manitoba can produce enough straw for 1.5 tonnes of straw paper annually
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# Stewarding Granby Granite Bluffs

by Margaret Steele and Angelica Herlihy

Last winter, two residents of the Granby Valley, north of Grand Forks, BC, were hiking up the trail to the Granby Bluffs, like they have done nearly every day for the last several years. As the trail dipped down toward the creek, they were shocked to discover survey flagging tied to trees alongside the creek bed. It turned out that the flagging had been placed there by a geologist on behalf of North America Stone Inc. (NAS).

They then discovered that NAS had filed an application for a permit to extract a bulk sample of up to 10,000 tonnes of granite from the Granby bluffs. Although the site contains a stream bed and is in a community watershed, the application submitted by NAS indicated no activities would take place in a community watershed and there would be no proposed stream crossings or work in or around water. This is clearly not the case.

Alarmed, residents of the area got in touch with the Ministry of Energy and Mines and were told that, since the application was “only for a sample,” there was no requirement for an environmental assessment or public

consultation. As more residents became aware of the application, more and more concerns were raised.

The Granby Valley is part of the endangered Kettle River watershed. The area is environmentally sensitive, being a narrow wildlife corridor for elk, mule deer, white tail deer, cougar, coyotes, wolves, black bears and grizzly bears. Local residents found evidence of red-listed plant species growing on the site and sighted a nighthawk with chicks in the area.

The residents of the Granby Valley are the stewards of these lands and waters. They are convinced that if they had not noticed the flagging near the stream, if they had not found evidence of the red-listed cup clover, if they had not recorded the location of the nighthawk, that the NAS application would have been approved by now. The residents have been urging the Minister of the Environment to use the authority vested in him under the *Environmental Assessment Act* to conduct a full environmental review of the area and consider designating the area a park due to its environmental sensitivity. There has been no re-



sponse to date to these requests.

This raises questions of who is responsible for protecting the public interest? It used to be that government was mandated to protect the public interest, but the BC Mineral Tenure Act protects the interests of the geologists and the mining companies. If the government cannot protect the interest of the public, it is time for citizens themselves to claim their rightful inheritance to these lands and waters and to accept their responsibility to steward these resources for future generations.



The authors are members of The Friends and Residents of the North Fork, a grass roots organization dedicated to protecting and preserving the Granby Valley.



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# NDP To-Do List

## *Environmental and Economic Ideas to Transform British Columbia*

by Jim Cooperman

Governments and industry often use the classic sustainability model of the three-legged stool and the importance of keeping each leg – economic, social, and environmental – strong. This is a false analogy because a stool needs a firm foundation to stand on and that foundation is the environment. We cannot have a healthy economy nor can we enjoy a healthy society if the environment is not healthy.

Since 2001, British Columbia has shifted far away from the principles of environmental sustainability due to the current government's focus on resource exploitation. The BC Liberals have done so much damage, that if the NDP returns to power, it will be difficult for them to solve many of the problems. The corporations and the one-percenters have benefited, whether it was through the BC Rail decision, the give-away of our streams through the ruin of rivers projects, the handing over of our forests to the major forestry corporations, or the subsidies to oil and gas.

Two of the guiding principles used by the BC Liberals, when they gutted government oversight of the environment and forests, were “results-based” and “professional reliance.” Well, the results have been mostly a failure and that is no wonder, as all that we can rely on professionals to do is get the results that their employers demand. It has been the foxes looking after the proverbial henhouse for over a decade and the public needs to know what has happened and what



needs to be done to ensure that their land and resources are being sustainably managed.

### **BC Hydro, Pipeline and Gas**

Of all the damage that has occurred under the Liberals, perhaps the most serious and the most difficult to fix is what they have done to BC Hydro. The issues are far more than mismanagement, as there has been a deliberate effort to transfer the wealth and benefits from the BC public to private corporations. The public is

**The BC Liberals have done so much damage, that if the NDP returns to power, it will be difficult for them to solve many of the problems.**

now faced with massive debts and continuous rate increases.

One of the biggest threats to environmental sustainability in British Columbia is from the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline, due to the likely spills in northern salmon watersheds and on the rugged coastline. However, even when the federal government eventually approves it, chances are it will never get built, as the First Nations will stall it in the courts.

Less known are the problems associated with the plans to build lique-

fied natural gas plants. First of all, the gas development is no longer benign as fracking has become a major environmental concern. Groundwater is getting poisoned. The amount of water needed is monumental. Fracking has been shown to cause an increase in the number of earthquakes. The need for electricity is growing exponentially and the exploration and development is causing habitat fragmentation. No wonder there is a moratorium on fracking in Quebec and other jurisdictions. It is imperative that there be an inquiry into fracking to ensure this controversial practice is only allowed where there are minimal impacts.

The power needed for liquefied natural gas plants is also monumental. A Site C dam equivalent amount of power is needed to run just one plant. The way BC Hydro is structured now, with guaranteed low rates for industry, means that residential users would get stuck with the bill to pay for natural gas export. And most important, although exporting the gas brings higher revenue for the large corporations, it threatens the energy security for British Columbians. What good is it if we export most of our gas in the next few decades and, when we need the gas for our own energy needs, there are not be sufficient supplies left?

There is a solution now available for both the problems with BC Hydro and the problems we could face exporting natural gas. A company in the US called Bloom Energy has invented a new power plant that uses a fuel cell that can be powered by natural gas or other types of fuel. It takes up very little space, is very efficient, and produces electricity for half the cost of any other method. There is no power loss through transmission lines, as the plants are situated next to where the energy is used.

**Forests**

The next largest issue of concern is what has happened to BC's forests. Years of work went into the *Forest Practices Code*, but it was quickly trashed after the BC Liberals were elected. The industry controlled government then shrank the forest service and handed forest management over to the companies. When the climate change-fuelled beetle epidemic hit, the logging rates went through the roof. Now after a decade of mismanagement, continued overcutting, disastrous forest fires, and raw log exports, so much has been thrown at the proverbial fan that government oversight has nearly ceased functioning.

Through it all, the land use plans were maintained, which was one of the crowning achievements of the 1990s. And now in desperation, there are plans afoot to basically burn the furniture by logging the protected riparian, old growth and scenic areas in order to keep the mills in the Cariboo running a few months longer. These plans must not be gutted – which is the position taken already by the professional foresters, the mayors of these logging towns, and the environmental community.

Plans are needed to revitalize our forests, help workers, help communities and improve protection of environmental values like fish and wildlife, clean water and carbon sinks. A new forestry act is necessary that will revive government oversight and once again allow the public to have input into planning. We need to reinvest in forestry: with proper inventories; a revitalized reforestation program where it makes ecological sense to replant; reforms to the tenure system that ensure logging rights are connected to job creation; revival of smaller tenures that provide more jobs per cubic metre; and a value-added program that works to create more jobs per cubic metre logged. Land use plans need

The only way we can ensure a healthier economy is to improve protection of British Columbia's magnificent environment.

to be reviewed and improved. Efforts are also needed to re-connect communities and young people to our forests and to nature, through outdoor education programs, summer camps, interpretive programs and work projects.

**Priorities**

Since there is not room to cover all the important issues, here are some priorities.

- The Jumbo Glacier Resort in the East Kootenays must be axed and one of the simplest ways would be to nix the expensive road construction that would cost the public many millions of dollars in upkeep and maintenance.
- Funding should be restored to the Ministry of Environment so staff can adequately protect habitat, prevent pollution and ensure there is proper compliance and enforcement.
- The environmental assessment process needs an overhaul, as it obviously is not working, considering the approval of the destruction of Fish Lake
- Mineral tenure reform must ensure that environmental, community, First Nations and private land values are respected.
- We need better protection of water, including groundwater, wetlands and riparian areas.
- The need for effective endangered species legislation continues to be a priority.
- Revisions of the Local Government Act, that took power away from local governments, should be repealed

so they have the ability once again to safeguard their communities from inappropriate development.

- Subsidies must end for the oil and gas sector. The additional revenue could help fund projects that benefit the environment and the economy.

The only way we can ensure a healthier economy is to improve protection of British Columbia's magnificent environment. The major challenge for the next BC government will be to reverse the impacts from over a decade of mismanagement of both the environment and the economy by a political party whose main focus has been to enrich the corporations at the expense of all British Columbians. We can do it, especially if we all work together as a team; environmentalists, workers, youth, academics and seniors to build a better society based on equity, justice, fairness, and true ecological and economic sustainability principles.



This article was adapted from a speech presented to an NDP Regional Conference. Read the entire speech at [www.shuswapassion.ca](http://www.shuswapassion.ca).

Jim Cooperman is president of the Shuswap Environmental Action Society

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Next issue January 2013

by Joe Foy

My grandmother was born in Vancouver in the early 1900s. A lot of things were different back then – but a lot of things were the same too. One thing she always said was that it used to rain an awful lot in the month of November.

My father was born in Vancouver in the early 1930s. He told me that it used to rain like crazy in November. Out in Surrey around that time, the last stand of old growth forest at Green Timbers had just been logged. Logging had started in the Fraser Valley in the 1880s, and by 1930 the really big trees were pretty much gone. But in Langley's Glen Valley, the Township had taken over a block of second growth forest – which had sprouted after the giants had been cut down – for only a dollar (most likely because its owners could no longer afford to pay the taxes on it).

I was born in the early 1950s in Langley. We lived on a chicken farm. And it still rained a heck of a lot in November.

By then, a few more blocks of forest in Glen Valley had been taken over by the Langley Township and people figured this area made a good country park – kind of like Vancouver's Stanley Park, only without the signs and paved trails. They named it McLellan Park. But it was not an official government-sanctioned park. It was a people's park, and the people cared for it.

My kids were born in Langley in the 1980s. By this time, a freeway network spanned the valley and the Skytrain was being built in the city. Housing subdivision projects were popping up like fields of mushrooms all over the place.

My grandchildren were born in Langley and Burnaby in the late 2000s. The Skytrain had spread like a vine, and the bike-ways had too. The freeway was stuffed up a lot. The jade green forests, where they still existed, were fine places to go for a quiet walk.

Then, this summer I got a phone call. Some folks from Langley's Glen Valley had just found out that their McLellan Park, the very same forest



that had been in the Township's hands since the 1930s, was being put up for sale. The reason – The Township Council had passed a resolution during an in-camera meeting back in September 2011 to build various community facilities and to sell off the Township-owned forest lands in Glen Valley, in order to at least partially fund the construction.

We were less than a day's travel from our city homes – but our camp was a room with a different view

People were caught by surprise. They got busy. They gave themselves a name – Watchers Of Langley Forests (WOLF). Over the summer WOLF cleared trails through McLellan Park's endangered forest, which totals about 26 acres comprised of two five-acre and two eight-acre parcels of land. They convinced the Township Council to hold off on selling the forest for a few months at least.

WOLF also came up with new ways to entice people to come and hike their trails to see the endangered forest. In late October, they hosted an artists' gathering called Art in the Park. Poets, musicians, dancers and writers came together in a wonderful celebration of this place that has been handed down

through the generations. Even though it was almost November, the rain held off that day.

But now WOLF has been told that they have to come up with \$3 million before December 17 of this year, or the first block of forest will be sold off.

I think that's just plain wrong. The people of Langley already own this forest and have loved it and protected it for many years. They should not be required to buy it back in order to pass it along to future generations.

If you agree with me, you can learn more on-line at: <http://mcllellanpark.blogspot.ca/>

Write a letter to Langley Township's Council and encourage them to let this beautiful evergreen forest live on to time-travel into the next generation – and beyond.



Joe Foy is Campaign Director for the Wilderness Committee, Canada's largest citizen-funded membership-based wilderness preservation organization.

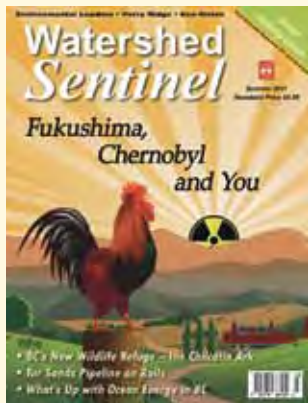
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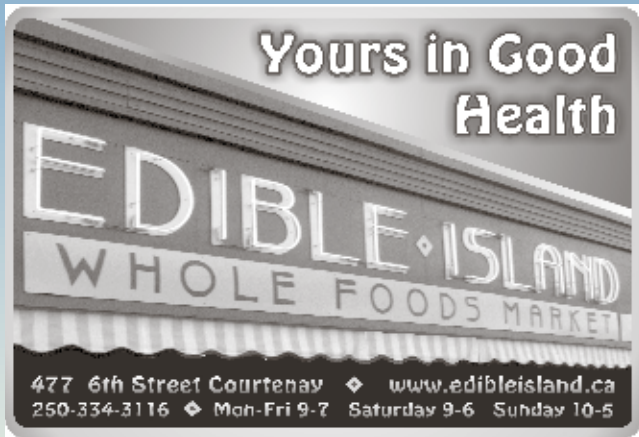
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