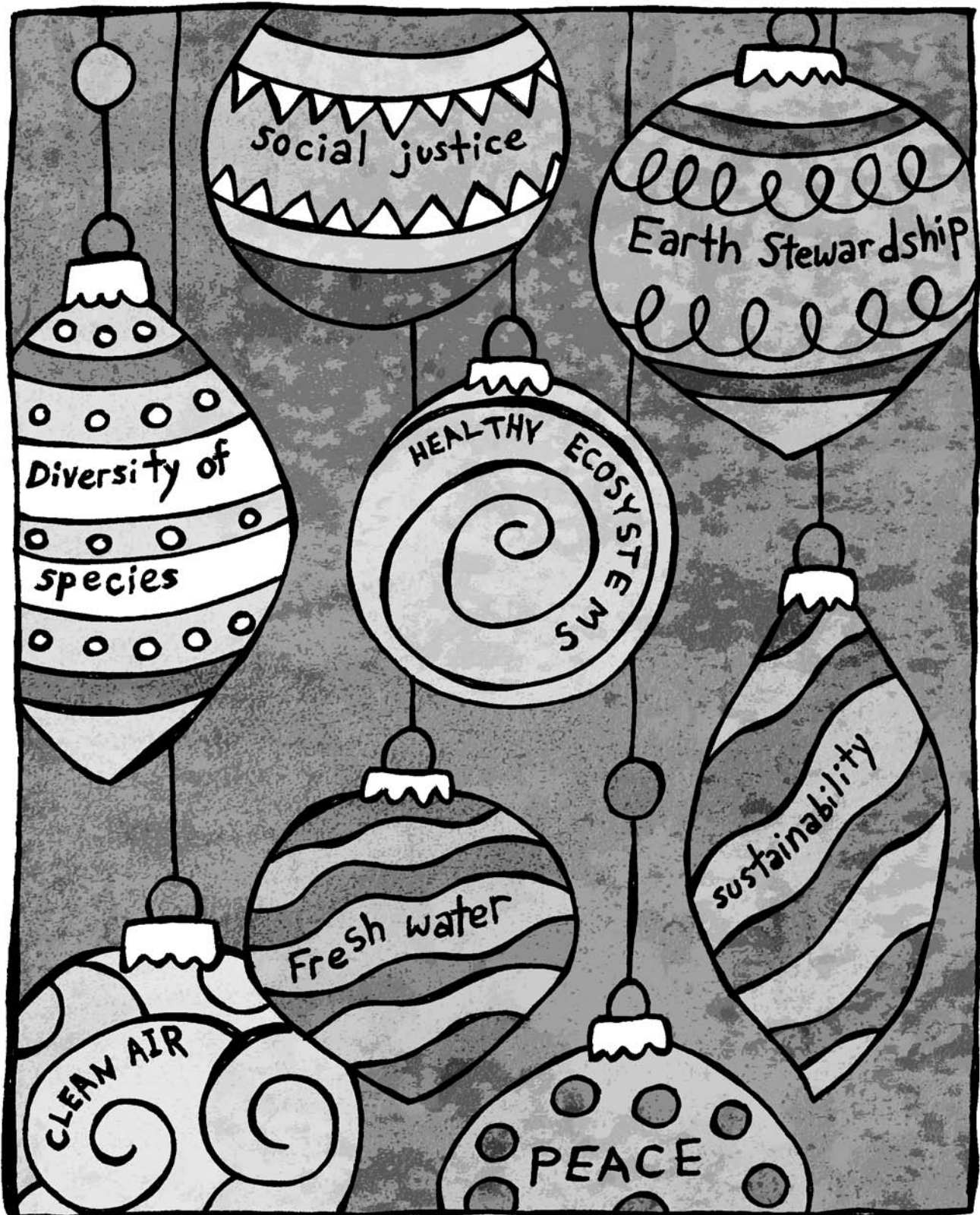


Walk Softly

Newsletter of the
Yukon Conservation Society
Winter 2011



Inside: • 'Tis the season! • Middle McIntyre Creek • The future of energy in the Yukon

HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING, the sustainable choices

As I was reading the Suzuki Foundation newsletter recently, a picture of a shrimp ring leaped out at me. No, I thought, surely the DS newsletter isn't advocating purchasing shrimp. Quite the opposite. The column "Queen of Green" includes tips for greening your holidays and cautions AGAINST serving shrimp. Shrimp farms seriously impact coastal environments and threaten the livelihoods of local fishers. Not to mention the increased risk from tsunamis where shrimp farms have replaced the protective coastal mangroves.

But what to serve instead?

I went looking for local products, available now, which can grace your table when entertaining during this holiday season. My search widened to natural products without a harmful environmental impact.

Information I picked up while at the Monterey Bay Aquarium in California called Seafood Watch is available on the web at seafoodwatch.org. While I was travelling, I had the little cards with me to inform my shopping choices. The West Coast guide lists Arctic Char (farmed) among the best choices. A feather in our Yukon hats as HERE is where it is farmed. It is available whole from the Icy Waters facility on the Fish Lake road weekdays between 9 am and 4 pm. The Deli on Hansen Street also has char as well as smoked salmon from the Taku.

Many of the best choices on the list are farmed: clams, mussels, oysters, scallops, tilapia (US), and rainbow trout. Among the best wild choices are Alaska wild salmon, halibut and troll or pole caught albacore, skipjack and yellowfin tuna.

Robbyn's on the Alaska Highway just south of the South Access has a good selection of seafood which includes some of the items listed as "best choices" in the guide: halibut and king crab from Alaska, and fresh sockeye salmon from the Stikine and smoked salmon from Port Hardy.

What else can we consider a good environmental choice for our holiday table?

Local beef which, being grass fed is a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, is available at Riverside Grocery in single frozen packages from Farmers 3. Call Barbara Drury at 668-1045 to order 25 pound packages (about the size of a brown paper shopping bag) with burger, steaks and roasts, from the Drury Farm west of Whitehorse on the Alaska Highway

Unfortunately local elk is scarce right now. If you have some in your freezer, you will be one of the lucky ones to serve this local product. Stacey's Butcher shop on Wann Road in Porter Creek does have Alberta elk and bison in fresh and frozen packages. The Deli has sausages produced from bison and reindeer. While not from local animals, generally these farmed "game" animals carry a lower hormone and environmental footprint than domestic animals.

Why not include a colourful potato made with red skinned Yukon grown potatoes. They are available in the produce section of the major grocery stores. A tip of the hat to those retailers for making this local product available throughout the winter.



If you are a berry picker, you will have summer's bounty stored away for the sweets section of the buffet. Our low bush "cranberries", prized as lingon berries in Scandinavia, is a versatile fruit that can be added to many desserts or stand on its own merits as sauce or "cherry" pie. And this was a pretty good year for raspberries if you got to the patch before the bears.

Wild mushrooms were plentiful this year, too. If you have some frozen, they can add flavour to the sauce for fish or meat.

As we prepare our holiday meals, let us take a moment to thank the farmers who work so hard to produce food for our tables. And give yourself a pat on the back for the environmentally friendly choices you have made to feed friends and family.

Happy holiday entertaining.

Mary Whitley

Passion and Commitment: Protecting Middle McIntyre Creek

This holiday season I'm sure many would wish to celebrate a City Council decision to protect Middle McIntyre Creek from development. We would discuss with friends and family our visions for the area as a park in perpetuity and perhaps start to talk about restoration projects, boardwalks to protect sensitive wetlands, informative signage and maybe even an interpretive centre where students, visitors and locals could learn about local plants and wildlife. To work off the chocolates and big dinners, we would take a walk alongside frozen ponds and through the snowy forests of Middle McIntyre Creek, finally able to fully relax in this area knowing the struggle was over and that, with careful stewardship, the land will continue to nurture and inspire generations to come.

We're not there yet.

However, as the City's determination to develop Middle McIntyre Creek has grown, so too has the determination of the community of people who reject the destructive, short-term vision epitomized by the proposed Porter Creek-D subdivision and accompanying roads.

The Yukon Conservation Society has been working closely with the Friends of McIntyre Creek, the Takhini North Community Association and the Porter Creek Community Association to protect Middle McIntyre Creek from development.

The first protest by these organizations in this most recent round of negotiations was formal resignation from the Porter Creek-D Working Group, citing concerns about lack of genuine consultation.

The next move was to hold our own Open House at the same time as the City's Porter Creek-D Open House, and make sure all sides of the story were told. The estimated attendance at these two Open Houses was 300 people. At the end of the night, the City's information boards were covered with yellow sticky notes; the vast majority of these comments expressed deep concern over the proposed subdivision and roads in Middle McIntyre Creek.

During the three-week public input period that followed, over 500 comments were submitted to the City (including those gathered at the Open House). These comments drew on personal experiences and professional opinion to illustrate the value of Middle McIntyre Creek to wildlife and humans alike, carefully question the rationales provided by the City for developing the area and provide insightful alternatives.

A Petition to Protect Middle McIntyre Creek was circulated and collected over 350 signatures. This petition will be presented by the NDP to the Yukon Legislature on December 7th, 2011.

Protecting Middle McIntyre Creek also became one of the primary issues leading up to the December 1 by-election: eight of the thirteen candidates were in favor of protecting the creek from the proposed developments. And the successful candidate, Kirk Cameron, was one of these eight candidates. This means that on December 12th, we assume that at least one of the City Councilors will vote "no" to proceeding with planning for the proposed Porter Creek D subdivision and roads connecting Mountainview Drive and Porter Creek with the Alaska Highway.

Whatever decision City Council reaches on December 12th, we'll have our work cut out for us: either to move forward to establish permanent protection for Middle McIntyre Creek or continue to fight the proposed developments as the planning process moves into the next stage. What we can take comfort in this holiday season is that there is a large group of passionate, committed people who are up for the challenge.

Christina Macdonald



Walk Softly

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Editorial

Karen Baltgailis

2011 has been an exciting year for the Yukon's environment.

The Yukon Supreme Court dismissed Western Copper's appeal of the Yukon Water Board decision not to issue a water license for the proposed Carmacks Copper sulfuric acid heap leach mine. This important win for the Water Board, Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation and YCS is an indication that poorly planned mines should not expect an automatic rubber stamp.

Yukon Energy Corporation is consulting widely on an array of ideas to increase the territory's energy production. While YCS has major concerns about many of these proposals, this new emphasis on public consultation seems to mark a positive change in approach for YEC. There is concern though over whether YEC is actually listening at these consultations or just going through the motions. YCS will continue to be vigilant to ensure the environment is not sacrificed for the sake of cheap power.

David Suzuki added his voice to the call for Peel protection, and the Peel campaign reached out to national audiences with articles in the Toronto Star, Globe and Mail, and Canadian Geographic.

The territorial election featured an unprecedented focus on the environment. We had a standing room only crowd at our election Environment Forum, the future of the Peel watershed was a top issue, and the NDP, Liberals and Green Party all supported protecting the Peel and McIntyre Creek.

Parties that campaigned on protecting the Peel watershed and McIntyre Creek earned 60% of the popular vote. The Yukon Party, which did not state its position, won the majority of seats with 40%. However in the three ridings most affected by the Peel planning process, Liberal and NDP candidates that support the Final Recommended Plan for the Peel Watershed were elected.

In the City of Whitehorse by-election 8 out of 13 candidates, including the top four contenders, all supported protecting Middle McIntyre Creek from roads and housing.

Clearly the majority of Yukon people are not persuaded that all of our natural areas need to be filled with mines, roads and subdivisions in order for us to prosper.

In February or March 2012 the final consultations on the Peel Watershed Land Use Plan will occur. It is likely that the future of Middle McIntyre Creek will also be decided early in the New Year. It will be important for all of us to remind decision-makers that they are accountable to the majority of Yukon people who care about our land, water and wildlife. 2012 promises to be another interesting year!

Not-so-tragic Commons

The term “Tragedy of the commons” was coined in 1968 by G. Hardin to describe how individuals accessing a common-pool resource would inevitably deplete it. The analogy he used has become a classic for students of economics and ecology alike: a mythical pasture is used by multiple herdsmen for grazing their cattle. As long as human and animal populations are relatively low, life is good. When peace and prosperity allow numbers to approach the maximum the pasture can support, we run into trouble. Each of our herdsmen looks out for himself: he gets the profits of increasing his herd, but shares the negative impact with everyone else. As each stands to gain much more than he could lose by each addition, all the herds will grow until the pasture is destroyed by overgrazing.

Sound familiar? Salmon stocks, caribou herds, and old-growth forests might all bear testament to the accuracy of this theory. As our population keeps climbing, this idea appears scarily relevant - and government and even intergovernmental regulation may appear increasingly necessary to keep us in check. However, there is an implicit assumption in Hardin’s theory that makes it unsuitable for many situations: it assumes that each person makes decisions with only self-interest in mind, and denies them the faculties of communication and co-operation.

Mainstream research since 1968 in economics, psychology, and ecology shows many alternatives to this unavoidable “tragedy”, including the 2009 Nobel Prize in Economics to Elinor Ostrom for “demonstrating how common property can be successfully managed by user associations”. Her work shows that when certain conditions exist, including good communication, people can and do come to arrangements that support the long-term sustainable use of resources.

In this country, the status quo gives government control over the resources we presume to ‘share’ with other citizens, on the assumption that they will take better care of them than we would if left to our own devices. Considering the current state of our democracy, and with the knowledge that the commons are not, in fact, inevitably tragic, we have little excuse to shirk responsibility where it is offered us.

The alternatives to government and corporate control over our resources require us to be hopeful rather than cynical; and to allow ourselves and others to take responsibility - there are countless examples around the globe of groups of diverse people coming together and discovering that their common values can form the basis of successful management of resources they share. We already have many advisory councils in the Yukon – what if they had real power? What if the Peel Watershed Commission’s decision did not have to wait for government approval?

In our increasingly globalised world, constant connectivity can perversely prevent users of a resource base from interacting as human beings. Take away that ability and we revert to the fated decline of Hardin’s paper. By creating and supporting conditions in which people have the opportunity to communicate and be invested in the resources they use, we can create a different future. Viva la devolucion!

Kim Melton

8 Keys to a Successful Commons

Advice on how to govern our commons by Nobel winner Elinor Ostrom.

1. Define clear group boundaries.
2. Match rules governing use of common goods to local needs and conditions.
3. Ensure that those affected by the rules can participate in modifying the rules.
4. Make sure the rulemaking rights of community members are respected by outside authorities.
5. Develop a system, carried out by community members, for monitoring members’ behavior.
6. Use graduated sanctions for rule violators.
7. Provide accessible, low-cost means for dispute resolution.
8. Build responsibility for governing the common resource in nested tiers from the lowest level up to the entire interconnected system.

This list was adapted for America: The Remix, the Spring 2010 issue of YES! Magazine, from Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action, edited by Elinor Ostrom, 1990.

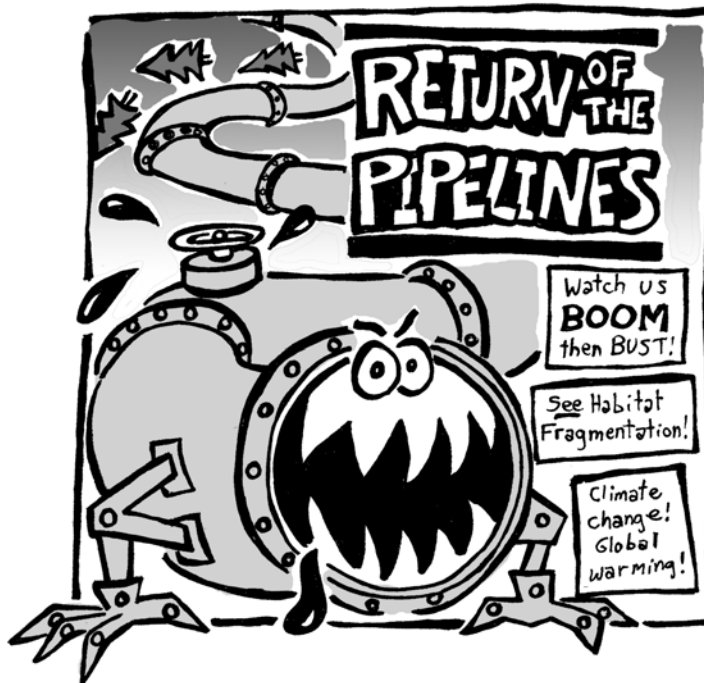
OIL, PIPELINES AND THE YUKON

If you follow the news, you will have heard of the unprecedented protests over the Keystone XL pipeline project – you know, the one that would ship bitumen from Alberta’s tar sands to refiners in Oklahoma and Texas. Astonishingly, these protests actually seem to have had an effect and the project has been put off for at least a couple of years. The response by Alberta, Canada and the oil companies was rage and fury. They are now putting forth an increased effort to build an even crazier line to the BC coast.

Canada is a major oil exporter; that is, we are a net exporter of about a million barrels a day and we need a market right? Well it is not so simple – over 40% of Canada’s consumption is imported! Mostly from Venezuela and the Middle East. This is the same as a province like PEI exporting a million tons of potatoes a year but importing half of the potatoes they actually eat from Idaho.

So why would we want to build pipelines that run either south to the US or west towards China when demand exists to the east in Canada? We know the world has run out of cheap oil (which is the only reason the Tar Sands are an economically viable source of oil). We know that the global oil supply chain is vulnerable. We know that modern civilization is entirely dependent on cheap energy to keep it running. We might assume that Canada is energy independent – but it is not, at least the Eastern half of the country (and the North) are not. We are beholden to the whims of the international oil market, just like the United States.

So logical questions would be: Why not build a pipeline to Eastern Canada? Why would we not refine the tar into oil here rather than ship it to Texas or China to be refined there? Amazingly, the unrefined tar is so thick that it has to be diluted with – get this – imported light oil to get it to flow at all.



The answer is that it makes economic “sense” to the oil companies – they would not need to build longer, more expensive lines to the East – and it even makes a weird economic sense in Canada – unless there is a disruption in the global oil supply chain.... kind of like what happened when Libya imploded. Or like when the Americans invaded Iraq... Next time there is an oil supply emergency, Canada will be rationing fuel, just like all the other oil importing nations, but uniquely amongst the oil exporting nations.

There are two main reasons for this: The international oil companies have written our energy policy and we have signed away our ability to direct our oil production under NAFTA. (Mexico declined to sign this provision).

If we had true energy sovereignty, we could set our fuel price independently of world markets – like the OPEC countries do – or we could set up a sovereign wealth fund with the profits from our exports – like Norway does, and like Alberta used to do.

Much of the fight against the Keystone XL project has centred on the stupendous environmental destruction and pollution the Tar Sands produce and the threat to the world of the extra high levels of Green House Gasses produced. Yet in Canada, we should be fighting these projects because our nation’s resources are being sold off at the expense of our future energy security.

To bring things down to a local level, what does the Yukon’s energy strategy say about energy independence? Well guess what, it emphasizes rapid development of oil and gas, for export so we can be “independent of Ottawa”. Fortunately, Yukon’s Oil and Gas reserves appear to be so marginally economic that no one is falling over themselves to build a pipeline here. Yet. If a viable oil or gas deposit does come on line, do you suppose the cost of fuel would go down here? Do you suppose the Yukon Government would set up a savings account for the royalties?

Sebastian Jones

NO END IN SIGHT



Recently a lot of attention has been focused within the City of Whitehorse on new proposed subdivisions.

Whistle Bend and Porter Creek D spring to mind.

But while everyone's attention has been focused on these developments, and deservedly so because of the extent of the observed and potential impacts, our good friends over at the Government of Yukon have also been busily developing subdivisions.

At the outer northern limits of the greater Whitehorse region, just shy of Deep Creek, a new rural subdivision is going in.

Known as Grizzly Valley it will initially host about thirty lots each about five hectares in size.

Following the Yukon River downstream to Dawson, there will be twenty new industrial lots in the Yukon's former capital.

Over on the shores of Destruction Bay there are five rural residential lots up for sale.

Nearby in Haines Junction there are plans to soon have 49 rural residential and 3 multi-family lots available.

The list goes on.

There is no denying that the Yukon's population is increasing.

And a lot of people that move to the Yukon want to live 'the dream'.

That is a nice house in the middle of the boreal forest, with neighbors out of sight and mind, but all still within driving distance of work and shopping.

And don't forget that we all want acres of unspoiled and undeveloped wilderness surrounding our isolated properties.

But those days are over.

If everyone lives on five hectares in the boreal forest there is no unspoiled and undeveloped wilderness because each five hectare lot is immediately adjacent to another five hectare lot.

Far better to compact housing, say thirty houses, each on one acre lots, surrounded by 120 hectares of undeveloped and common land than thirty houses each on a five hectare lot with this subdivision sprawling over 150 hectares.

This way large common areas of boreal forest would be preserved for all to enjoy, and there would be some preservation of existing ecosystems.

Instead, the system of creating large rural lots is fragmenting the boreal forest.

It is also causing the Yukon to experience rural residential sprawl.

Those government departments that plan new subdivisions have to get a handle on the sprawl.

Otherwise the Yukon will be just like down south, with miles and miles of adjacent private property lots, all fenced off.

This is bad for people as it denies everyone the use of the 'commons' of the boreal forest.

It is also bad for the boreal forest and wildlife because it fragments it and destroys it as a valid ecosystem.

The Yukon is a wonderful and different place to live. Let's keep it that way and not repeat the sprawl of down south.

- Lewis Rifkind (who lives downtown in a medium density condominium complex, if you must know)

The End of Recycling?

Raven Recycling is giving a dire warning to Yukon Energy about its proposal to burn garbage and recyclables to create energy.

“If a Waste-to-Energy (WTE) facility is brought in now, it could mean the dismantling of the current recycling industry and undermine any momentum to participate in the 3Rs – Reduce, Reuse and Recycle,” says Joy Snyder, Executive Director of Raven Recycling.

But isn't this a win-win: you solve the garbage crisis AND create energy?

“This is not clean green energy,” said Bryna Cable in her presentation to the folks at YEC's Waste-to-Energy Charette, “you still have to go back and make all of those materials from scratch.” Every new product made uses significantly more energy than the energy you might get from it, even when you factor in transportation.

Plus, Whitehorse is not like other communities. Communities that have considered WTE use it to handle their residual waste after recycling and composting, not before.

Currently, the City of Whitehorse diverts only 19% of a possible 76% of their waste. In the absence of strong regulations and programs to divert waste, WTE will burn recyclables and threatens to become our primary waste management option.

Both the Yukon Government and the City of Whitehorse have a goal of 50% waste diversion by 2015 and Zero Waste by 2040. “In order to reach those targets, we need a clear waste management plan that isn't driven just by an energy plan,” explained Joy Snyder.

Pat McInroy, owner of P&M Recycling, adds: “People want to recycle and the recycling industry wants to grow. You simply cannot build a healthy recycling industry if you spend all of your money and effort burning recyclable material.”

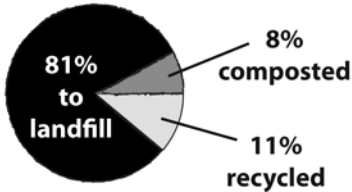
And money we will spend. YEC estimates this facility will cost \$30 million+ and will produce somewhere between 1.7 and 2.2MW of power. That is only about 3-4% of our energy needs.

For all of these reasons, “Even if you could make [incinerators] safe, you could never make them sensible” – Dr. Paul Connett, Professor of Chemistry at St. Lawrence University

Check out ravenrecycling.org for the Top 10 Reasons to say NO to Incineration.

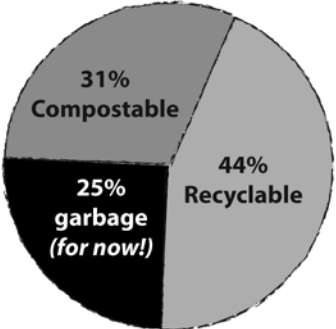
Bryna Cable, for Raven Recycling

Currently in Whitehorse, we divert only **19%** of our waste.




Category	Percentage
to landfill	81%
recycled	11%
composted	8%

It's possible to divert up to **75%**.



Category	Percentage
Recyclable	44%
Compostable	31%
garbage (for now!)	25%



Is burning the best use of these resources?

No!

besides the expense,
the pollution,
the loss of jobs and opportunities,
incineration is a waste of energy!

Once something is burned we need to go back and make a whole new product from scratch. This uses *waaaaay* more energy than the smidgen that can be recovered from burning it.

“Better late than never?” or “Too little too late?”

Base line monitoring in the White Gold district of central Yukon

White Gold is the name given to the area centred on the confluence of the White and Yukon rivers where the fabled mother lode has probably been discovered by the fabled Sean Ryan. If you could see a time lapse film of claims staking in the area, you would have seen a few dozen claims metastasize into a series of blobs that joined up so that now, three years later, a swathe of Yukon extending from Dawson City, through the Klondike Gold Fields, south over the Stewart River to Carmacks is almost completely staked. Most of this land now has mining land use permits issued.

The folks at YESAB are tasked with assessing the impact of all this exploration activity, and presumably, will soon need to assess the impacts of the mines that could follow. Aside from being almost overwhelmed by the number of applications, the biggest problem they have is that there is essentially no base line knowledge of the ecology of this area. No proper studies of moose, sheep, caribou, deer, fresh water fish, migratory birds, resident birds, vegetation, rare plants, salmon, forests, lichens, water availability, not even the weather has been studied. Without this knowledge it is very hard to properly assess the effects of proposed activities.

In Yukon, the folks tasked with knowing these things are the Regional Biologists. This area is covered by two biologists, one in Mayo and one in Dawson. The Canadian Wildlife Service covers migratory birds and Fisheries and Oceans covers salmon.

On November the 23rd, the Dawson RRC hosted a public meeting along with the local YESAB office and the Regional Biologists (For some reason, the Regional Land Use Planning folks did not come). They asked the public for input into their ideas about what to study and where. YG has ponied up some money to do these studies which will focus on moose, caribou, sheep, rare plants, fur bearers and raptors. Nobody thinks this will be perfect, but it will be a big improvement over the present situation.

But there is a bigger problem; we are only playing catch up here. Go back to the time lapse film and pan out to include more of the Yukon and you would see these blobs of claims appearing, growing and joining up over most of the Yukon south of Dawson. There is a swathe of claims in a belt hard up against the southern boundary of the Peel Watershed north of Mayo; it looks like a wave poised to break over the ridge into the valleys to the north.

There is no reason to think this

movie is over; if one extrapolates linearly, not assuming exponential growth as in the recent past, these blobs of claims will join up, new blobs will appear and grow and we shall be faced with the same situation we have in the White Gold area over most of the Central Yukon. We badly need a plan of how to deal with this; Regional Land Use Planning is underway in the Dawson Region, which does not cover the entire study area, but most of Yukon will not see Regional Land Use Planning for years. Proper fish and wildlife and habitat studies are very expensive. Not as expensive as developing a major mine, but not chump change either.

How can we fund these studies? It is time to impose an environmental fee on claims, on exploration permits that would be dedicated to gathering base line data.

Sebastian Jones



Energy Coordinator report

By Anne Middler

In the last little while most of my work has been around keeping up to date with Yukon Energy Corporation's proposed plans to increase the Yukon's energy capacity.

Waste-to-Energy

YEC is investigating a plan to burn garbage to generate electricity and heat in a yet to be determined district system. Only a few years ago YCS and partners succeeded in changing the Yukon Government's harmful policy of burning garbage in open trenches or burning vessels at community dumps. The current garbage burning proposal is on a larger scale and the burning would take place in a more controlled manner.

In some ways this looks like an attractive proposal ... use feedstock that is readily available (even a problem some might say) and prevent garbage from being landfilled where it could contaminate groundwater and release methane. That said, we do still have substantial issues with the proposal. As much as proponents claim air emissions are a non-issue with the proposed technology, it is our understanding that "clean" emissions require "source controls". This means we need to keep dangerous materials, like batteries for example, out of the garbage bins and Waste to Energy (WtE) facility. Considering how difficult it is to keep the city's green compost bins free of contamination from plastic, propane bottles, recycling, etc., we can assume that it may be even more difficult to keep traditional yet hazardous-if-burned garbage out of the gray bins.

Raven Recycling makes the important argument that locations in Europe that have WtE facilities always started with recycling programs and brought in WtE to deal with residuals. Raven argues that because the Yukon has an immature solid waste management system, investment in a WtE facility would compete for the recycling resource, prevent investment in the creation of a more effective recycling system (blue box, Materials Recovery Facility, etc), and undermine zero waste goals and the 3Rs by eroding the social capacity for waste reduction and diversion.

Morrison Hershfield (the consultant looking into both WtE and biomass for YEC) admits in its report that more energy is saved through recycling materials than is produced through a waste-to-energy facility. The volume and caloric content of the available waste in the Yukon is marginal, and may be reduced in the future through Extended Producer Responsibility and other increased diversion efforts. A WtE facility may be able to use waste biomass from the lumber industry or right-of-way clearing to supplement

feedstock, but the Yukon's milling industry is so small that this would be a minor input. YEC is considering supplementing garbage for a WtE facility with beetle or fire killed trees logged specifically for that purpose. YEC is moving forward on this plan and has put out a request for proposals for waste-to-energy technologies.

Biomass – wood for electricity and heat

YEC is also investigating a biomass plant with an installed capacity of up to 25 MW (the bigger, the more economically viable, they argue) which would require an intensive forestry industry that harvests trees to burn in a combined heat and power facility. The perception that a fire killed or beetle killed forest is "dead" or "waste" and must be "salvaged" through logging is erroneous. Firewood harvesting is being done responsibly on a small scale in these areas for local use, but an intensive large scale forest industry would increase access for recreation vehicles, hunters and other ungulate predators into the wilderness. Intensive harvest could also damage soil and new growth, and prevent the natural succession of healthy forests. YCS won't support a large-scale biomass plant, but may support one or several small scale local plants close to the feedstock with a small and sustainable logging industry to generate electricity and heat for a community. At the recent biomass mini charrette, many of those attending agreed that because of the limited forest plans and policies in place among many other reasons, small scale plants are the place to start.

Marsh Lake Enhanced Storage

YEC is studying potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts of changing the water management on the southern lakes to improve the efficiency of the Whitehorse Rapids dam in winter. YEC wants to store more water behind the Lewes River dam in the fall (increasing their full supply level by 30 cm) and also increase the drawdown on their low supply level by ten centimeters in the spring. (This is a new addition to the enhancement storage concept). Studies recently showed that 70% of the time the southern lakes are hydrologically connected. This means that a shoreline water level increase at Army Beach would be the same increase at Bennett Beach in Carcross and all spots in between. The increased springtime drawdown would not affect shorelines throughout the lakes system, as water levels are low.

Enhancement projects are worth looking at. When all the information is available, YCS will determine whether to support this or whether the environmental impacts are too costly to justify the small energy output.

Mayo Lake Enhanced Storage

To make Mayo B economic, YEC is relying on a one meter increased drawdown on Mayo Lake. Because of insufficient information, that part of the Mayo B project proposal was removed from the YESAB application that was approved. YEC is still undergoing studies and putting together an adaptive management plan that would attempt to mitigate negative impacts to fish and fish habitat resulting from using more water from Mayo Lake and changing the shoreline. YCS has been against this increased drawdown since it was first proposed because we feel that it will have negative consequences to the lake ecosystem and will harm fish. In the past, we encouraged YEC to look at the economics of the project without the drawdown in case it was not approved during the YESAB or Yukon Water Board process. The drawdown will soon be in front of YESAB. We must be prepared for YEC to claim we would prefer to burn diesel than support “clean hydro power.”

YCS would love to get behind a YEC project. However, it doesn't appear that any of YEC's proposed projects respect ecological limits. Whether it happens through an Independent Power Producer and net metering policy, or whether YEC changes its tune, YCS wants to see and will continue to push for the development of small-scale, distributed, decentralized, and low-impact energy projects that respect the local environment and community.

Energy Efficiency Synergy.

One thing that YCS holds out hope for is a Demand Side Management (DSM) plan. Yukon Energy Corporation (YEC), Yukon Electrical Corporation Limited (YECL) and the Energy, Mines and Resources (EMR) Department of Yukon Government have representatives on a DSM team looking to put together an efficiency and conservation plan to present to the Yukon Utilities Board (YUB). The YUB ordered the utilities to look seriously at DSM and YCS recently had a glimpse into how this planning is going.

We recognize it may be new territory – a public utility, a private utility and a government department working together – but progress is slow.

In mid-November, the utilities hosted a workshop to talk about findings from its “Conservation Potential Review” that was tasked with learning how Yukon people, businesses, commercial and government sectors currently use electricity and how this use could be reduced.

The first day addressed potential electricity saving technologies for residences, such as block heater timers, power bars, energy star washing machines, etc. The second day focused on commercial technologies (lighting, etc) and the third day looked at the potential savings to the grid through customer generated renewable energies.

Some of the technologies look promising, but few if any were “economic” in the sense that their cost per kilowatt hour came in less than the cost of creating new generating sources (estimated to be 35cents per kWh for hydro and 30 cents per kWh for diesel). Very few came in under the customer cost of electricity because they had too long a payback for customers to make the initial purchase/effort.

DSM incorporates many things. YCS will promote this plan to be wide ranging and far reaching. YCS would like to see territory-wide improved building standards – especially for new houses and condo developments that plan to use electricity for heat.

Territory-wide Emissions Reduction Target

Where the synergy comes in is the Territorial-wide Emissions Target Advisory Working Group, which YCS is a part of. Ultimately, the goal of this exercise is similar to DSM planning.

“A Yukon-wide GHG emissions target will show our commitment to reducing our contribution to climate change, yet still allows for responsible growth of our population and development of our resource based industries.” (YG Climate Change Action Plan 2009)

The group tries to predict the future regarding how much growth and carbon-intensive resource extraction could happen. You can bet that the Chamber of Mines is at the table suggesting several large and small scale mines will operate at the same time. There are many potential game changers – such as an Alaska Highway pipeline, an Eagle Plains gas development, a large hydro project, and a grid or rail connection. Regardless, it is our hope that any strategy emerging from this emissions target exercise serves to reinforce and build on the DSM plan happening at the same time.

YCS will be at the table trying to entrench conservation and efficiency, and encourage policy changes like requiring mine camps be built to high standards of efficiency.

It is everyone's responsibility to conserve electricity – individuals, businesses, and governments. In this energy deficit when we are often burning diesel to meet demand, we need to do whatever we can to reduce our waste of energy.

First Annual Yukon Youth Winter Eco Ball

Wed, Dec 28th, 2011, 7 pm

Mt. McIntyre Recreation Centre

Tickets \$30 (for 19+ ages).

A sophisticated, entertainment-filled, sustainable and educative evening – the perfect post Christmas, pre New Year's pick-me-up, compete with winter spirits, music, comedic relief, wicked dance moves, guest speakers, and delicious (good-for-the-planet) hors d'oeuvres. Hosted in support of the Yukon Conservation Society. Tickets can be purchased from the Birdhouse Café, across from the Yukon Theatre on Wood Street. Additional info: go to facebook



Kluane Park Management Board

Interested in Becoming A Member?

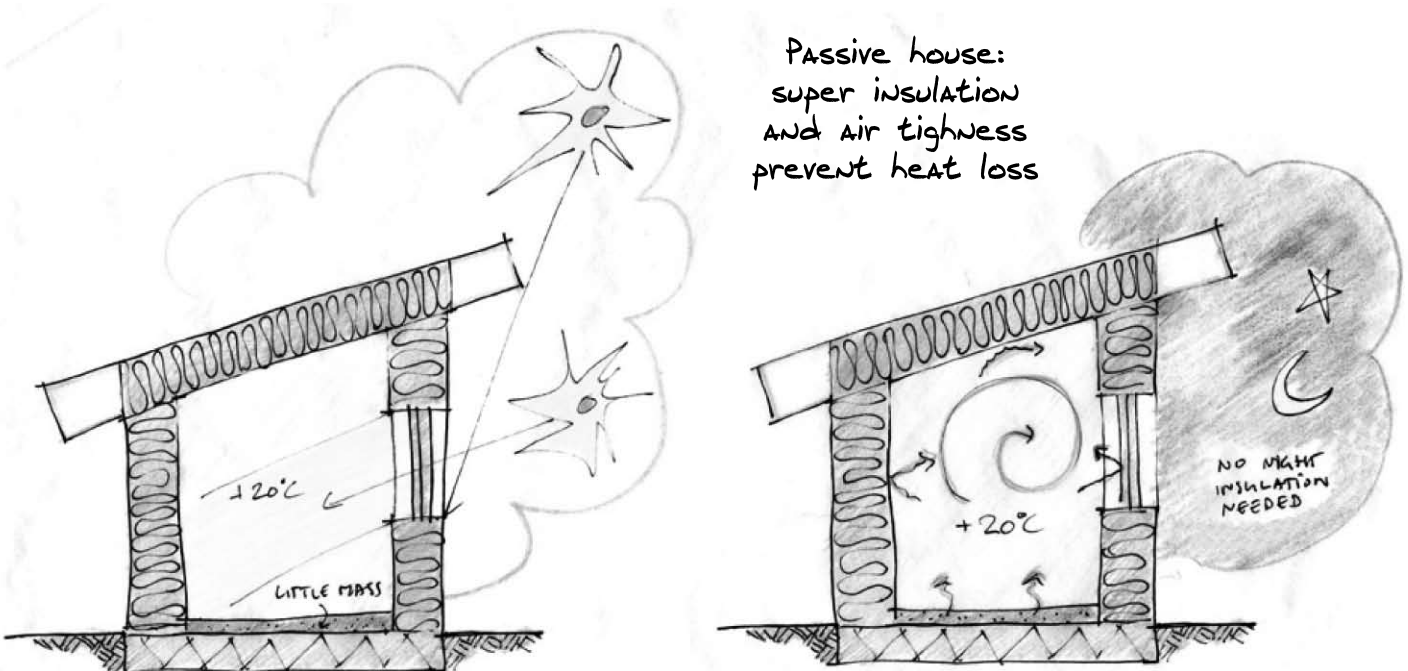
Deadline December 30th, 2011

The Board is an advisory body that provides advice to elected representatives and officials of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Kluane First Nation and Kluane National Park & Reserve on matters regarding priorities for research, ancillary projects and initiatives, and development and management of the Park in the context of Chapter 10 of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and Kluane First Nation Final Agreements. For further information, or to submit an expression of interest, please contact: Sean Sheardown, Superintendent Kluane National Park and Reserve, Tel 867-634-2329 ext 205 sean.sheardown@pc.gc.ca.

Canadian Passive House Institute

Certification Training Course January 17 – 21, 2012 Whitehorse

This is a one week intensive course in passive house design and construction. Passive House is the world's most ambitious and scientifically verified route to sustainable buildings; achieving 80 – 90% energy savings over conventional construction...they are future-proof, healthy and affordable. A \$500 bursary provided by the Energy Solutions Centre is available to the first 18 eligible registrants. For more information contact tony@kaza.yk.ca or visit <http://passivehouse.ca>.



Real World Planning

A few years ago, I was given the rare privilege of working with some world class scientists and thinkers about global warming; I was hired to lead the development of a climate change adaptation plan for Dawson City. You can see the plan now on the NCE website and I sometimes get enquiries from researchers about it. The City of Dawson, however, has never acknowledged its existence. You cannot find it on the City of Dawson's website.

When I led public meetings, I would sometimes start with a slide showing a map of the world in the year 2100, speculating how it would look four degrees warmer. In this slide, originally produced by Discover magazine, there were winners and losers. By and large Canada was a winner and Yukon particularly so but only if, and this is a big IF, we do not run out of cheap energy. We HAVE run out of cheap energy (recall when oil was \$40 a barrel?), thus we will ALL be losers and the slide should not be viewed as a picture of a world four degrees warmer, but rather one of a world of one billion people.

We have heard recently that the planet has just passed the seven billion people mark, so it might seem alarmist to predict such a pessimistic future.

At the time, I was often criticized for this approach- there was no guarantee the world would even warm by four degrees, let alone that we would run out of cheap energy.

So five years later, what is happening? We are grossly exceeding our highest predictions of carbon emissions – this means that the worst case scenarios produced by the IPCC in 2007 were too optimistic: we will likely warm by MORE than the maximum in the projections (six degrees); energy is no longer cheap and shows zero prospects of being cheap ever again.



We really are on our way to a world of one billion people – or even fewer, many analysts say that 200-300 million people is the true sustainable population. So the burning question becomes: How do we reach this number? Do we do this the easy way (relatively) and plan a gradual decent, or do we wait for the inevitable natural checks and balances to do it for us the hard way? What planning exists for shrinking populations and reduced consumption?

One way to think of this is like retirement planning – if you have a well paying job you are expected to save a portion of your income to draw down on when you no longer work. If have no work or earn a low income, you need to prepare for a reduced income. If you plan well, your standard of living can be maintained as your income declines. This is what we, as a society, need to do.

How do our Yukon politicians face these issues? In the recent election, our government promoted a growing population and more economic activity as automatically desirable and parlayed a recent trend upwards into a third term in office. They flat rejected the concept of a resource extraction tax that would form a saving account.

Another example is the actions of the City of Whitehorse regarding the Porter Creek subdivision expansion. Out goes geothermal and district heating (“we’ll look at it next phase”), in goes another road (study after study shows that more roads leads to more traffic), out goes the opportunity to invest in a wilderness level green space close to downtown. For some bizarre reason, we are now investing in a subdivision that will rely on asphalt roads for cars, 900 sq ft minimum house sizes using excessive amounts of our precious energy, for an assumed 10,000 extra people, and this is considered good planning!

It is alarming that we the people have yet to “get it”, it is, however, terrifying that our government does not get it. Where is the planning for a shrinking economy, planning for a stable or declining population, for using less energy, for preserving vital ecosystem services? It is clear that there is a desire for these things; look at the parallel meeting held by YCS, the Porter Creek and McIntyre Creek folks to counter the COW spin on whether to pave McIntyre Creek.

Why then, do we keep electing these people? Why is it considered political suicide to advocate a smaller population and a smaller economy? Could it be that we are secretly willing to trade short term gain for long term pain? Are we, deep down in the darkest pits of our souls, relieved that the reactionaries are still in power? Is it after all somewhat comforting? Yahoo! - I’ve still got my job! Yahoo! my house is worth more! – Do you actually have golden handcuffs? Can you afford to live in your house should your job end? There is a lot of “habitat in Yukon, maybe we could pave McIntyre Creek?

Sebastian Jones

Giving without the guilt.

As the festive period approaches, many of us will consider not only the message of the season but how to avoid the consumerism and commercialism that seems to blight this time of year. Cheap manufacturing, planned obsolescence and a desire to have to most up-to-date electronics is placing an increasing strain not only on our wallets, but on our planet's precious resources. Our throw-away society packs landfills with indestructible plastics and heavy metals, leaving a legacy that will endure for millennia.

But there are ways to reduce your environmental footprint this Christmas.



Offer yourself or a personalised service. Give a card offering to chop firewood, clear the drive, babysit or any number of tasks that would brighten someone's day or give them a much needed break.

Home or handmade. These are excellent and unique gifts. Homemade jams or preserves, baking, artwork, Christmas ornaments or toys for the kids will be enjoyed all the more knowing it was your time and effort that went into them.

Regift. Give something useful that you don't need or use much anymore. We all have things around the home that we've outgrown or simply don't use much. Maybe there's something that a friend has always admired that you're willing to regift. Hosting a gift exchange can be a fun way to get together during the holidays.

Charitable gifts. Consider buying your family, friends or colleagues a goat, source of fresh water, or education for those in need throughout the world. Or make a donation to their favourite charity. There are a number of excellent causes.

Gardening gifts. Give packs of seeds (preferably from your garden), cuttings or homemade compost to a new or established gardener. Add planting advice or recipe cards for the perfect gift.

Ethical gifts. If you feel the need to buy a gift then consider purchasing from ethical, Fair Trade or green sources such as Ten Thousand Villages.

There no limits to alternative gifting, other than your imagination. And if you're looking for inspiration there are plenty of web sites full of ideas. Happy Holidays.

Jim Taggart

looking for green products or services in Whitehorse?



The Green Guide is an online search tool for green products and services in Whitehorse.

The 2012 edition even includes a Smartphone App!

Join the growing **WHITEHORSE GREEN GUIDE**

If you are a Whitehorse business or organization that offers green products or services, then join the Whitehorse Green Guide for free!

Visit the website to complete a survey starting January 2nd, 2012. The survey closes February 28th. Window stickers will be distributed soon after to show your participation in the Guide.

www.taiga.net/whitehorsegreenguide

For more information: greenguide@yukoncollege.yk.ca

The Whitehorse Green Guide is a partnership between:

- The Northern Climate Exchange (Yukon College)
- The City of Whitehorse
- The Energy Solutions Centre
- Raven Recycling
- The Climate Change Secretariat
- The Yukon Technology Innovation Centre
- Yukon Government

YES! I want to help protect the Yukon's environment and support the Yukon Conservation Society!

I'd like to make a tax deductible gift!

\$50 \$100 \$500 \$1000 \$ Other _____

Sign me up as a 2012 member! Memberships are activated on day of receipt for a 1 year period and include a subscription of the *Walk Softly* newsletter.

\$10 student \$25 individual \$40 family

\$25 subscriber (receive *Walk Softly* without membership rights)

Save Paper! Do not send me newsletters. Please notify me by email when they are available for download from your website. My email address: _____

I am donating \$100 or more so I get a free YCS membership for the year!

but I do not want a free membership.

PAYMENT METHOD: Total \$ _____

Cheque enclosed (payable to Yukon Conservation Society)

I am putting it on my VISA:

I'd like to make a monthly donation of \$ _____ on my VISA:

VISA # _____ Expiry date ____/____

Signature for VISA: _____

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTAL CODE _____

PHONE _____

Yes, add me to the Yukon Conservation Society's members email list (I want to receive up to two emails a month on Yukon issues or Yukon Conservation Society activities).

EMAIL _____

Mail your form to
Yukon Conservation Society,
302 Hawkins Street,
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 1X6



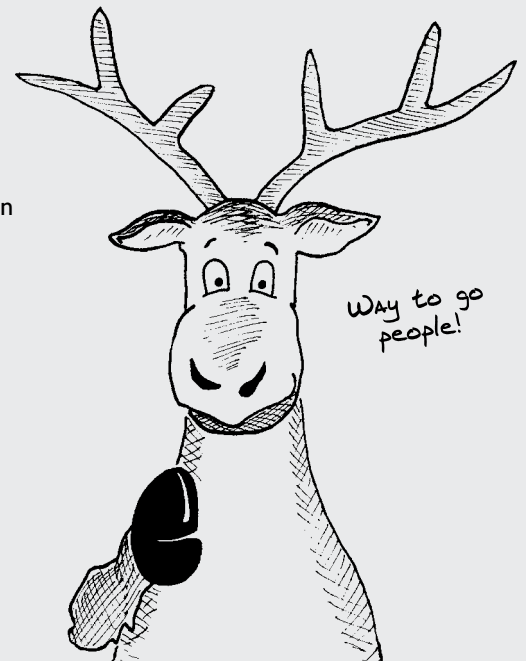
Yukon Conservation Society



Kudos to our hard-working and dedicated volunteers! The Yukon Conservation Society wouldn't be the vibrant, active organization it is without your help!

Anat Tal
Mary Amerongen
Tanya Handley
Bob van Djiken
Nick de Graff
Joshua Hunt
Mary Whitley
Shawn O'Dell

Chris LeBlanc
Mark Daniels,
Tammy Hamilton
Joan Turner
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Kate Moylan
Bruce Bennett
Bev Gray
April Lies
David Neufeld
Greg Hare
Sally Robinson
Tara Stehelin
Pat Joe

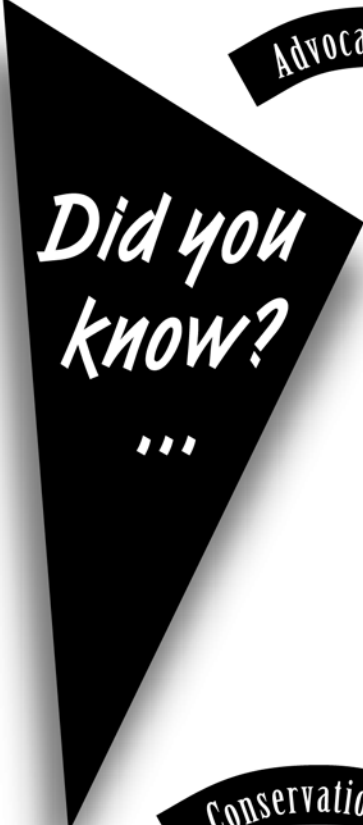




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Advocacy  Research  Environmental Education  Planning  Consultation



Did you
know?
...

At 54,000 square miles, the Alberta Tar Sands deposits are over twice the size of the Peel Watershed (26,000 square miles)!

Congratulations to the Kitchen-Kuiack household of Marsh Lake for successfully taking part in the Canadian-Geographic Energy Diet Challenge and for doing such a stellar job of sharing what they learned. Check out the website to read their winning story and all the fun action they took to reduce their energy consumption.

<http://energydiet.canadiangeographic.ca>

Conservation  Sustainable Communities  Grassroots  Non-profit  Volunteers