

Walk Softly

Newsletter of the Yukon
Conservation Society
September 2000



INSIDE: Forest Management Planning ♦ Placer Mining Review ♦ Gasoline Facts ♦ Power of the Vote

What's Happening at YCS?

Good-bye Lorill!!

In July we said good-bye to a mainstay at YCS. Lorill Crees, Office Coordinator, has gone back to school leaving Lisa Taylor in her place. Good luck Lorill, and all the best. See page 4.

Off to Moscow

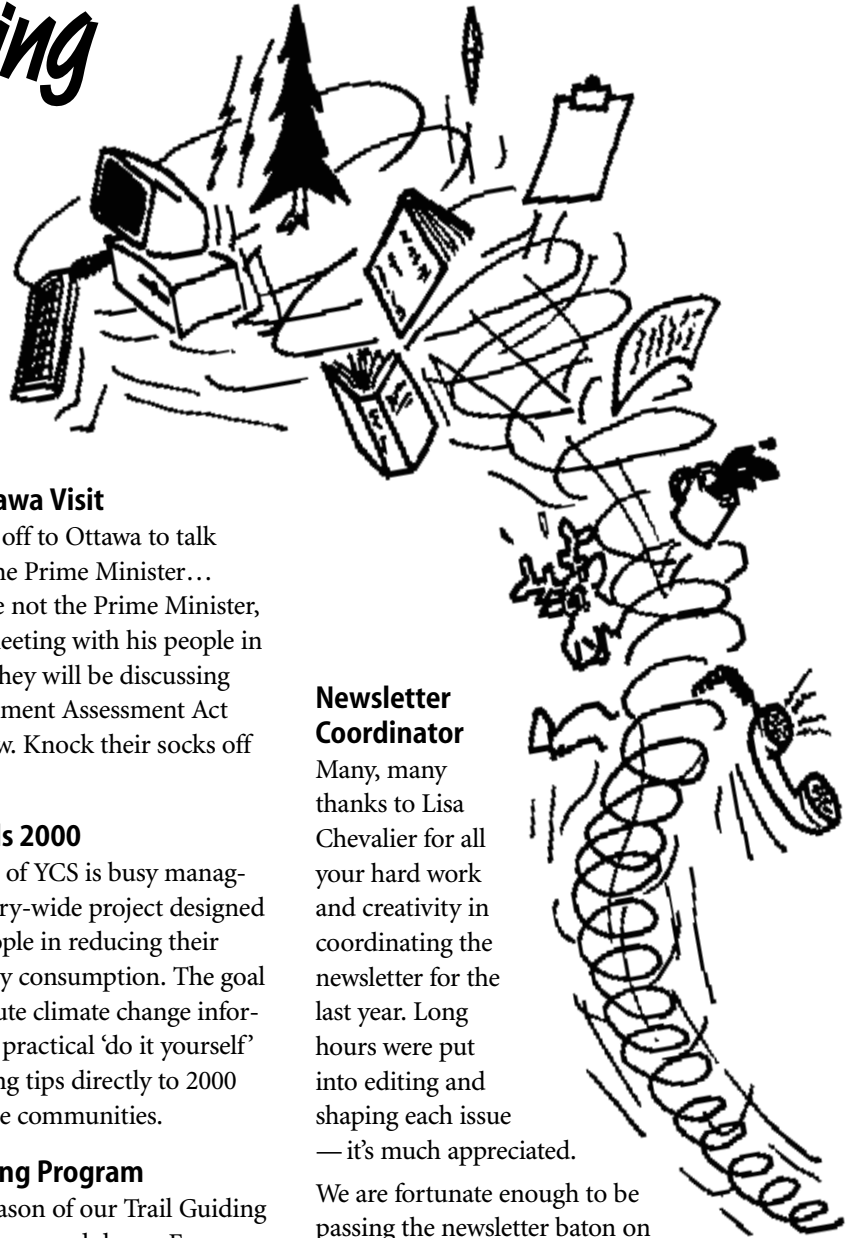
Our very own Karen Baltgailis has been invited to attend the Taiga Rescue Network Conference in Moscow this September. It's a credit to the strong reputation she has created for herself and YCS in the forestry circles. Have fun Karen!

Thank you! Thank you!

Through Lorill's initiative, much appreciated assistance from J.P. Pinard, and through Polarcom's generous support, YCS will be sporting two brand spanking new computers and four upgraded computers. Polarcom installed the network, free of charge, and YCS is now ready for printing and receiving e-mail. No more line ups or races to the computer! Yahoo!! Isn't life great?!

YCS Family Day

On August 5th Angela Walkley of YCS and Katimavik hosted a great Family Day out at the Quartz Road Wetland. More than 100 people came out to walk the trail and participate in events from a scavenger hunt to painting a mural. Hats off and many thanks to Angela and the Katimaviktims for all their hard work!



DAP – Ottawa Visit

Christine is off to Ottawa to talk DAP with the Prime Minister... okay, maybe not the Prime Minister, but she is meeting with his people in his office! They will be discussing the Development Assessment Act Legal Review. Knock their socks off Christine!

House Calls 2000

Craig Olsen of YCS is busy managing a territory-wide project designed to assist people in reducing their home energy consumption. The goal is to distribute climate change information and practical 'do it yourself' energy saving tips directly to 2000 homes in the communities.

Trail Guiding Program

The 20th season of our Trail Guiding program has wound down. Even with the consistently wet weather it's been another successful season. The hikes were well attended. We received lots of positive feedback thanks to the leadership of Lori Schroeder, Coordinator, and the enthusiasm of the Trail Guides (Kerri, Greg, Trenna and Lesya). Great job you guys!

For info on the Fall Education Series see article on page 13 of this issue.

Newsletter Coordinator

Many, many thanks to Lisa Chevalier for all your hard work and creativity in coordinating the newsletter for the last year. Long hours were put into editing and shaping each issue — it's much appreciated.

We are fortunate enough to be passing the newsletter baton on to Hazel Buffalo Robe. Hazel brings considerable desktop publishing experience with her, lots of ideas and enthusiasm. Welcome aboard Hazel!

We're looking for your submissions!

YCS welcomes newsletter submissions and letters to the editor. Deadlines are the first of February, May, August and November. It's a great way to be heard!



What's They Done Fer' Ya — Eh?

The Coming Federal Election...

"I Kiss the Hand That Slaps Me Senseless"

Spirit of the West, 1991 album: *Go Figure*, song: *Far too Canadian*

While Back East at a family gathering, I looked over and wondered at our dinner guest, and in particular, where the fire in his eyes had gone. He wasn't talking about locking up polluters anymore — something that he did for the feds — his conversation was all about the conferences he was going to. As I stirred about for the salad croutons I couldn't help but wonder where that fire had got to... it was *not* in his eyes.

I couldn't say I was surprised; our guest was one of a dwindling band of survivors. A survivor of the federal cuts that began in 1995, biting the federal environment department almost in half. I'd been to conferences with people I'd worked with before the cuts and had not recognized them, so stressed and care-worn they were. And they were the lucky ones who'd survived competing against their colleagues for dwindling numbers of jobs, pitting friend against friend.

So I ate the croutons, and asked for the iced tea, and nodded politely, biding my time. And then over dessert, I tried once again, to convince him to retire early and

come over to the non-governmental world of environmentalists... to retire from what has become the Dark Side of government.

Now that may sound extreme, but it seems pretty close to reality in my books. An ugly spiral of staff cuts means there are no trained staff available to find polluters, and once a polluter is found, there are no resources to build legal cases against them (It could hamper economic growth, you see).

"...so what are you doing when you work there?" Hence the chatter about conferences, instead of enforcement... "Want some more tea?"

Please think about him, and think about the current government's environmental record when you vote in the federal election this fall.

paul davis

Editor's Note: Since this issue went to press, many City of Whitehorse residents have found they were missed on the city's electoral list. The city's electoral list can be checked at the Whitehorse Public Library, or at City Hall. If you signed the Argus Mall petition, you must be on the city electoral list to have your signature counted. Forms are at the library and City Hall if you were missed. So, check that list!

Thank you Volunteers!

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

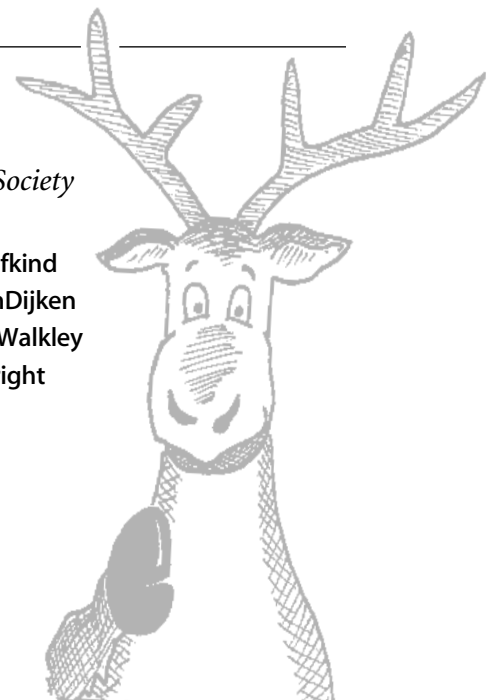
Mike Blower	Paul Davis	Colin McDowell	Lewis Rifkind
Beverly Brown	Teresa Earle	Bryna McKechnie	Bob VanDijken
Linsey Campbell	Alice Hartling	Sue Moodie	Angela Walkley
Jill Campion	Tanya Handley	Suzanne den Ouden	Sally Wright
Paul Dabbs	Marlene Jennings	J.P. Pinard	

Katimavik Interns:

Gabriel, Garrett, Ashley & Shannon

Theme Hike Presenters:

Sue Moodie	Angela Walkley	Karen Baltgailis
Trix Tanner	Grant Lowey	Bruce Bennett



Farewell Snapshots of Lorill, Welcome Lisa

Lisa Taylor:

I haven't known Lorill long, however it became clear to me very early on, how central she has been to the running of YCS. She has done a great job!

Two things stand out for me about Lorill:

1) Over the last six months or so she has spent much time lobbying for the Office Coordinator position for less work and more time in which to do it. And it happened. Lorill did the work to make the position more manageable and I reap the benefits — thanks Lorill!

2) She said her good-byes and left the job on July 26th, however we were beginning to wonder if she was actually leaving after the fourth or fifth good-bye scene a week later. I think it's an indication of what this place has meant to her as well.

All the best Lorill — you will be missed!

Lori Schroeder:

Oh, I miss the smells of Lorill's lunches (and the occasional nibble). The brightly clad little man-o-war ship cresting the waves of panic that sometimes ripple through the office. I miss her wacky sense of humour.

Her efficiency is legendary. We now have our own server, 2 new computers and 3 phone lines with fancy phones. I still haven't figured out what all those buttons do. All part of Lorill's legacy. We miss you.

Fortunately, we have a new office coordinator, Lisa, who seems to be dealing well with the constant movement of people, ideas and things through the YCS office. She's doing a fabulous job of holding it all together. Looking forward to working with you more, Lisa.

Karen Baltgailis:

When the hiring team was developing questions for the new Office Coordinator applicants, they asked if there were any they'd missed. I suggested: "What kinds of snacks do you keep in your right hand desk drawer?" This wasn't added to the list, so now we are forced to supply our own Wasabi peas, chocolates, and trail mix. (Of course, since Lisa didn't know providing munchies was in the job description, she just does stuff like getting us

flowers — also quite acceptable!) Not only did Lorill pull us through with emergency rations, she bailed us out of countless computer crisis', telephone tangles, fax failures and email nightmares — while at the same time developing funding applications, figuring out YCS finances, and welcoming the public. All of this without getting cranky or stamping her little black army boots too often.

Of the four trucks YCS staff drive to work, Lorill's was always recognizable by the skid marks where she screeched into the parking space. The numerous bruises and lacerations on her body attest to the fact that her mountain biking is carried out at a similar velocity. This whirlwind pace is also evident in Lorill's work habits. Often as I left the office at 5:30 or 6:00 she would still be at her desk. Guiltily, I would suggest she was working too hard — especially since she was only supposed to be working 30 hours a week. "Don't worry about it," she'd say. "I'm just filling in time 'til I go to two meetings tonight — YDEC and Frostbite." One wonders whether Lorill escaped to Vancouver to lighten her volunteer load for a while. I don't know, though — I hear rumours that she's offered to be on some organization's board already...





Editorial

Walk Softly

is published by the Yukon Conservation Society for members and subscribers. Memberships and information about the Society can be obtained by phoning the YCS at (867) 668-5678, (fax 668-6637), by writing to Box 4163, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 3S9, or by visiting the YCS office at 302 Hawkins Street, Whitehorse.

email: ycs@polarcom.com

We welcome newsletter submissions and letters to the editor. Deadlines for submissions are Feb 1, May 1, Aug 1, and Nov 1.

Views expressed in *Walk Softly* are not necessarily those of the Society.

Publications Mail Agreement number 4154991
Changes of address or undeliverable copies should be sent to YCS at Box 4163, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 3S9

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The end of summer, while evoking melancholy in some, has always been a time I enjoy. This year is no exception as YCS heads full steam ahead into the fall with a successful summer behind us. In the environmental movement, we often measure success by what *did not* happen — no long term forest tenures were allocated without proper planning in place. No roads were built in Tombstone Park. Nobody felt that chaining themselves to something was their only option.

In terms of great things that *did* happen, our Trail Guiding program was the most successful in years. As I write this, with a few days left until the program is over, our participant numbers are close to those of 1998, the Yukon's Centennial year! And we had record rainfall! Much of this success is thanks to all the hard work and good cheer of Greg, Trenna, Kerri, Lesya, and of course Lori their fearless leader.

Another great thing that happened was the arrival of Lisa, our new Office Coordinator. She is making herself at home behind the big grey desk. With every new person our organization changes a bit, shifts a little, and reflects new energy, ideas and input. As always, what keeps smiles on our faces as we bounce along the rocky road of Yukon environmental advocacy is the dedication of the folks who are part of YCS. This includes volunteers, donors, folks who slip us the odd brown envelope, board members, and all you lovely people who call us to say keep up the good work.

christine cleghorn



Why We Need Forest Management Planning

In the six short years since forestry started to boom in the Yukon, every creek, river and watershed in an 80 mile stretch along the Alaska Highway around Watson Lake has been logged. These areas include the Rancheria, Garden Creek, Cosh Creek, Contact Creek, Irons Creek, Scobie Creek, and the Liard and the Hyland Rivers. All of this logging has been done without any kind of landscape level planning. The cumulative effects have never been assessed or taken into account because environmental screening has only happened at a permit

by permit level. The landscape around Watson Lake is badly fragmented, and DIAND is running out of accessible wood.

Garden Creek is one of the hardest hit areas. This is the MacDonald family trapline, and as I flew over it recently I thought how heartbreaking it must be for them to have seen the forest they have traditionally used for generations, change to a moth eaten, roaded patchwork in just a few years. Watson Creek is the only intact watershed left close to Watson Lake, and the only part of the MacDonald

family trapline that hasn't been destroyed. The family is trying to ensure that a significant portion of this watershed will be withdrawn from logging, and that where logging happens, it will be planned to ensure connectivity, access management, and sustainability. Liard First Nation is currently negotiating a forest management planning process with DIAND and for the first time this kind of planning stands a good chance of happening.

Impacts to the Rancheria Caribou Herd winter range also highlight the need for landscape level planning. The winter range has been hard hit by logging because soil conditions allow for summer logging, and proximity to Watson Lake makes log hauling cheaper. This year DIAND Forest Resources allocated 60,000 cubic meters in the Allegretto Lake portion of the winter range, and Forest Resources' idea of planning for the caribou in the future was to produce a Resource Report (logging plan) for the area. Fortunately a trans-boundary planning process for the Rancheria Herd has now been agreed to by the Kaska, British Columbia and the Yukon. But it will take up to two years to develop a management plan for the herd and we may still have to fight to prevent logging until this is completed.





Then there is the La Biche Forest Ecosystem Network (FEN) — the area that was supposed to be withdrawn from logging under a 1996 CEAA mitigation. DIAND is still stalling on this, although a technical team has come up with proposed final boundaries for the network. The proposed network is tiny — only 183 square kilometers — but it is crucial. The La Biche is home to plant and animal species that occur nowhere else in the Yukon, many of which are at the northern limit of their range. The proposed FEN is by no means pristine anymore — it includes a lot of clear cuts. British Columbia logging companies have their eye on the large aspen in the region, and over the past years the spruce has been logged steadily and shipped to Ft. Nelson. Last year DIAND tried to allocate cutting permits within the proposed FEN boundaries, but they were forced to withdraw those permits when the Kaska threatened to sue over permits issued on their proposed settlement land.

DIAND argues that area-based forestry tenures (Timber Harvest Agreements) are the answer to the problems associated with the current haphazard permitting system. It's true that THAs are part of the solution — companies will be required to do long range plans for their whole THA area. But each THA holder will be planning in isolation from the rest of the landscape. As we have stressed again and again over the past year, broad, landscape level planning has to happen before long term THAs are allocated. A connected network of candidate protected areas, key habitat, and areas important for traditional uses and wilderness tourism has to be withdrawn before THAs are issued.

It's still hard to say how seriously DIAND is taking the need for landscape level planning before developing long term THAs. They now seem to acknowledge the need for real consultation, and maybe with the South Yukon Forest Corporation in such dire financial straits there won't be so much pressure for an immediate long term THA. The best-case scenario for forestry in the southeast would be as follows:

- Conduct, this fall, a 'mini-landscape level planning' consultation process in the southeast, for short term (maximum 5 year) THAs.
- Initiate immediately a Yukon wide process to develop criteria for long term THAs, desired types of THAs, and a forest industry strategy for the Yukon. This would include a feasibility study to determine what kind of value-added industry has the best chance of success.
- Begin Landscape level planning for the southeast immediately.
- Issue Long term THAs in the southeast to value-added companies after the landscape level planning, long term THA criteria, and industrial strategy are complete.

The southeast Yukon has been hardest hit by logging so far and it is under the most pressure, but of course there is interest in THAs in other parts of the Yukon as well. With good planning other communities can avoid the kind of carnage that has happened around Watson Lake and in the La Biche. And with good planning we can have a stable forest industry on a scale that maintains all the other forest values.

karen baltgailis





By The Time You Read This

...**W**e may well be in a federal election. Didn't I just vote this winter, you say? Well, if you're a Yukoner, and an environmentalist, hopefully you did vote in the territorial election. And sometime this fall, it will be the fed's turn. Depending on whose crystal ball you look through, it might be a late fall election, or a quickie 6 week campaign starting in late August. Catching many of us out on the land, trying to scoop up berries, and stay out of the way of wildlife desperate to pile-on-the-calories for the coming winter...

But all that's taken care of, right? Like, isn't there this new automatic voter's list with computers that talk to each other? Well, yes, in theory. You're supposed to automatically be on the Elections Canada list when you update your health card or motor vehicle licence. But there's a good bet that not everything will work — computers being what they are — so it will be important to check to make sure that your name (and any other eco-voters in your house) are actually on the voter's list.

Bof! You say, my vote won't matter, it's a big house of commons, and it's far away in Ottawa...Not!

The reality is that as a territory we all are governed by federal programs far more than those who live in a province. Indian and Northern Affairs tests our water — that's federal. Fisheries and Oceans says who can and can't mess up river bottoms and fish habitat — that's federal. And the whole oil business is almost exclusively federal where pipelines cross from the US into Canada and back again. Even our constables, the RCMP, are federal — so it matters who is in power in Ottawa, and it matters more here than in most places in Canada.

Ok, so what do I do? Well, make sure you're on that electoral list for a starter.

You'll definitely have a choice, as at least three political parties say they'll run candidates for the Yukon's one and only Member of Parliament in Ottawa. But how do I choose, you say?

It's not too hard — if you're reading your newsletters from YCS and its partner eco-organizations then you'll have a pretty good idea of what the issues are. The tricky part is finding out what the various parties and leaders have actually done for the environment when they've been in power or sitting in the House of Commons. And to get there, don't be too shy to ask questions in the All-Candidates Meetings. You could even wear a YCS t-shirt or one that has caribou on it, so that even if you don't get

to ask a question, they know that you're voting on behalf of the four-leggeds, who don't get to vote.

And this sure is the year when people figured out that what we do to the environment gets done to us. The Walkerton water quality disaster showed that environmental service cuts, designed to serve up tasty tax cuts to suburban Ontario people, could be lethal. It was also a year where the federal government awoke from its long slumber (some would say 'coma!') on tackling global warming and urban air pollution. You'll have to figure out whether the actions of these governments, and of the opposition parties, are true awakenings, or convenient death-bed repentance's just before an election.

But it's only one Member of Parliament, you say, why bother? But while it may only be one seat in a 300 odd seat House of Commons, it could well be the deciding one seat that forms a majority or a minority government — yup, right here in the Yukon. The reality is that the party that gets the 151st seat, is the government, for the next four years — and five years if they want to push it. So what, you say, my vote won't count! But count it will, as Yukon elections are razor-thin affairs where three candidates are within a handful of votes of each other, and re-counts by judges often settle elections! And this time, the whole country may be that way.

What! You say, like the Yukon?! Yes — there's reason to believe that the rise of the Canadian Alliance Party, which will compete with the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party for right-wing voters, may split the vote in three — meaning a federal minority government, where at least one party has to make an agreement with another to share power.

Horrors you say! Minority governments! How unstable! Yup, just like most of Europe, and for us environmentalists, not such a bad thing. As those unstable minority governments have to worry more about losing their coalition partners, and thus, they actually have to listen to those whom they govern.

That's us.

So, yes, it is worth getting on the new-fangled Permanent Voter's List this year — and checking to make sure that you're on it. That same list may even be re-used by the City of Whitehorse for the city council and Mayor elections in October.

paul davis



High Octane



Over the past couple of years, I've diligently bought high octane gas for my '87 Escort. I even occasionally tried to convince various friends and relatives to follow suit. I would tell them that even though it cost them a bit more each tank, it worked out as cost effective because it was better for their car and they'd make up for it with slightly better mileage. The big reason for converting them was that I thought higher octane fuel burns cleaner. Cleaner burning means less pollution.

At times, I can be quite convincing regardless of the facts but thinking it would help my argument to have a few more facts at my fingertips, I thought I'd check out what information there was on the internet. I even said, "Hey, I'll write an article about the benefits in the YCS newsletter and convince even more people!" Imagine my dismay when it turns out there is no cleaner burning effect!

Higher octane fuel can be better for your car perhaps but even that seems open to debate. For example, it might make your car run smoother but that can just be a cosmetic effect and really you should deal with the actual problem. Gasoline with ethanol in it, like the fuel that Mohawk sells, does burn cleaner than straight gas. (For the average Canadian vehicle using a 10% ethanol-blended gasoline: CO is reduced by over 30%; toxics are reduced by 10 to 20%; and greenhouse gas emissions are reduced by up to 10%).

I don't know where I got the idea initially (although lots of people were quick to tell me, "Yeah hey, I heard that too."), but the idea of paying a bit more to assuage my dirty habits appealed to me. (Maybe that's just me...) I guess I was hoping for a technological fix to save me from my environmental faux pas.

There is certainly room for some "technological fixes" in the industry. Current vehicles only burn about a 1/3 of every litre of fuel they require and the rest is wasted. On the Natural Resources Defence Council website, (<http://www.nrdc.org/earthsmartcars>), you can sign a petition trying to encourage the car industry to build less polluting vehicle. According to them, there are already lots of ways cars could be made more efficient and cleaner but the industry just isn't evolving.

So it comes down to the old standby: the best way you can reduce your contribution to air and water pollution,

traffic congestion, and the depletion of non-renewable natural resources is DRIVE LESS. This can be accomplished by choosing clean transportation options such as biking and walking, carpooling, and efficient public transportation whenever possible.

When you do drive, here are some ways to reduce your impact:

- Plan your trips and reduce the time your vehicle runs. Much of the pollution your vehicle generates occurs during cold starts, when the engine has been off for 90 minutes or longer. Combining errands keeps an engine warm, and reduces cold-start emissions. Even better, by parking once in a central location and walking to accomplish several errands, you lessen the total distance travelled and minimize the number of times you start your engine.
- Accelerate and decelerate smoothly and gradually. Jack-rabbit accelerations consume up to 50% more fuel and generate 100 times as much carbon monoxide and hydrocarbon emissions when compared to slow, steady accelerations. In traffic, anticipate stops and starts for traffic lights and changing traffic speeds to maintain a constant speed and minimize brake use.
- Avoid excessive speeds. Driving at 110 km/h instead of 90 km/h uses up to 25% more fuel and creates up to 25% more pollution.
- Avoid hauling unnecessary loads. Extra weight decreases fuel economy and increases pollutant emissions. Place luggage and cargo inside rather than on the roof to maintain an aerodynamic profile and minimize drag.
- Keep your car well tuned. Vehicles only become more polluting with neglect.
- Change your oil regularly and keep your tire pressure at optimum.

The more you think on these issues, the more you long for a quick fix. I think the trick to avoiding a complete throwing up of the hands and an "it's all beyond me" attitude is to take it slow. Every time you bike to work, or stuff all your friends into one vehicle to go to a movie, or walk through all your downtown errands, you are reducing pollution. Concentrate on making small changes in the way you do things and bigger ones will follow.

tanya handley

Placer Mining

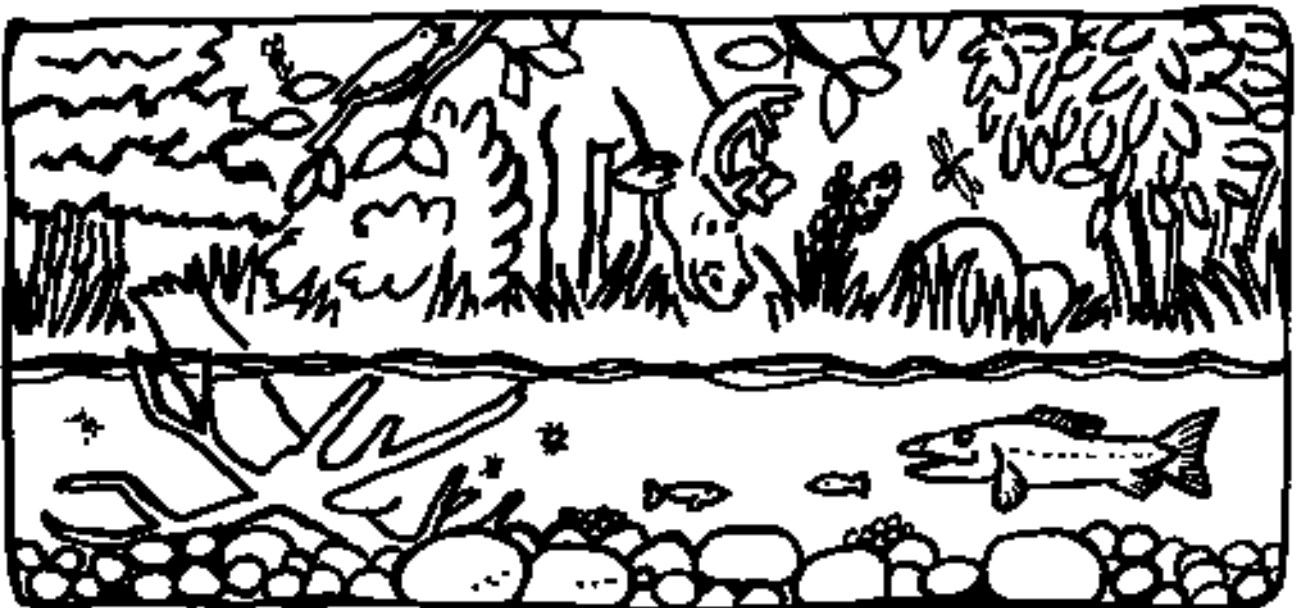
“Placer” is a Spanish word that means “a place where gold can be recovered from gravel,” so placer mining is the technique of recovering gold from gravel. In the Yukon, however, this can also mean forest destruction, sediment-choked streams, degradation of fish habitat, direct physical harm to fish, and watered-down environmental safeguards in the name of protecting an industry whose contribution to the Yukon economy might not be as great as it seems.

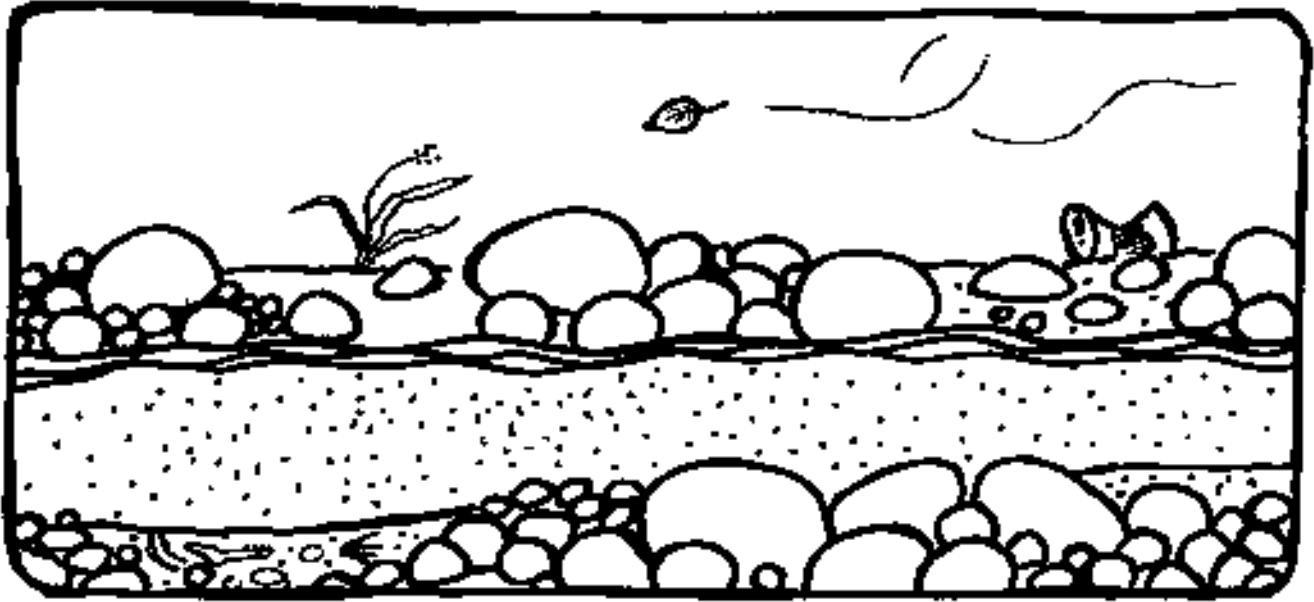
Placer mining is the process of retrieving solid gold chunks from in-stream gravel by using water and gravity. Vegetation and topsoil are stripped, gravel is excavated, screened and washed through a sluicibox. This process allows gold to settle while washing out gravel, sand and clay. The water used for this purpose is most often pumped from a stream, and the streambed is included in the land that is excavated for gold. Though gold retrieval from placer mining has changed to become more efficient compared to 100 years ago, the mining methods causing stream and forest destruction have not, and today’s practices may actually cause more harm.

One of the environmental concerns with placer mining is riparian forest destruction. The forest “riparian zone” is the vegetation that grows along rivers and streams. Though they make up a small proportion of the overall landscape, riparian eco-systems are a critical source of biodiversity, providing preferred habitat for a rich assort-

ment of plant, bird and animal life. Riparian vegetation is as important to fish as to terrestrial animals. Leaves, conifer needles and insects that fall into the water are part of the food chain that provides plenty of aquatic invertebrates for fish to eat. Trees that fall into the water create pools and shelter that fish favour because of the slower current and plentiful food. Root systems also function to stabilize banks, keeping sediment release to a minimum. Reclamation efforts are undertaken after the stream has been mined, but reclamation has not always been enough to restore the streams or the forests back to their original productivity and huge scars are left on the landscape. Other industries have not been given this special authorization to strip the riparian zone from streams and rivers, for example forestry companies are expected to have a minimum 10 to 30-meter buffer between their cutting operations and water-bodies.

Of equal concern but receiving less public attention, is sediment release, fine grained particles. Sediment is known to cause harm directly to fish and fish habitat. Sediment can cause siltation of gravel areas, rendering them unfit spawning habitat, or if eggs are present already, the eggs can be smothered. A fish may also suffer reduced feeding efficiency, damaged gill filaments and avoidance of habitat with sediment-filled waters. Placer miners in the Yukon enjoy the highest allowable sediment effluent levels in the developed world. In New Zealand,





placer miners are allowed a maximum of 10 mg/l of sediment discharge from their operations. In BC (with the exception of the Atlin area), the maximum allowed is 75 mg/l. On certain streams in the Yukon, the maximum legal level is as high as 1850 mg/l.

Allowable sediment discharge levels from placer operations are set by the Yukon Placer Authorization (YPA) for each stream where mining operations occur. These discharge levels are determined based on the value of fish habitat present in the stream, but the high levels of sediment discharge allowed overwhelmingly favour a healthy placer operation rather than healthy fish habitat. To further accommodate placer mining operations, the fish habitat values in a stream can be “deferred” under this authorization, or in YPA words there is a “foregoing of the productive capacity of the stream.” This means that the YPA allows placer mining to become a priority use in creeks over spawning or rearing habitat for fish.

This destruction is justified by the supposed high benefit placer mining gives the Yukon economy, but the actual contribution is not clear. There is some concern that many miners do not actually live in the Yukon for most of the year and take their earnings elsewhere, leaving the destruction behind for year-round residents to deal with. This destruction could have serious effects to other important economies in the Yukon, including tourism. A recent polling of water licenses indicates that less than 25% of the registered placer miners had confirmed year-round Yukon addresses.

The placer mining industry has a powerful lobby here in the Yukon and its interests are not easily ignored by government agencies, DIAND and DFO, which are responsible for mining regulations. The Yukon Placer Authorization, which approves placer mining activities, is scheduled for review in the fall of 2001. This review is a chance for the public, governments, and placer miners to develop better ways for placer mining to continue in the Yukon, and at the same time build in respectful practices to protect our Yukon environment and fish habitat.

sue moodie

Erica Fielder of Fort Bragg, California

regularly stands still on Main

Street. Because by standing still,

you: reduce air pollution, slow the

cutting of trees, stop consuming,

avoid throwing things away, halt the

race, and remember what you forgot.

The Trail Guiding Season

Our trail guiding season is over once again. Despite the wet, wet, wet summer we've had a great season. Here are some comments from hikers who joined our tours:

"Thanks so much Kerri. Divine walk. Many thanks."

Dave & Chrissie Evans Wales, UK

"Great historical walk — very informative and friendly guides — loved "Sam Steele" monologue!!!"

Chris & Manuela Friesen Vancouver, BC

"Wonderful interpretation! A highlight of our Yukon trip."

Ian Forsyth Delta, BC

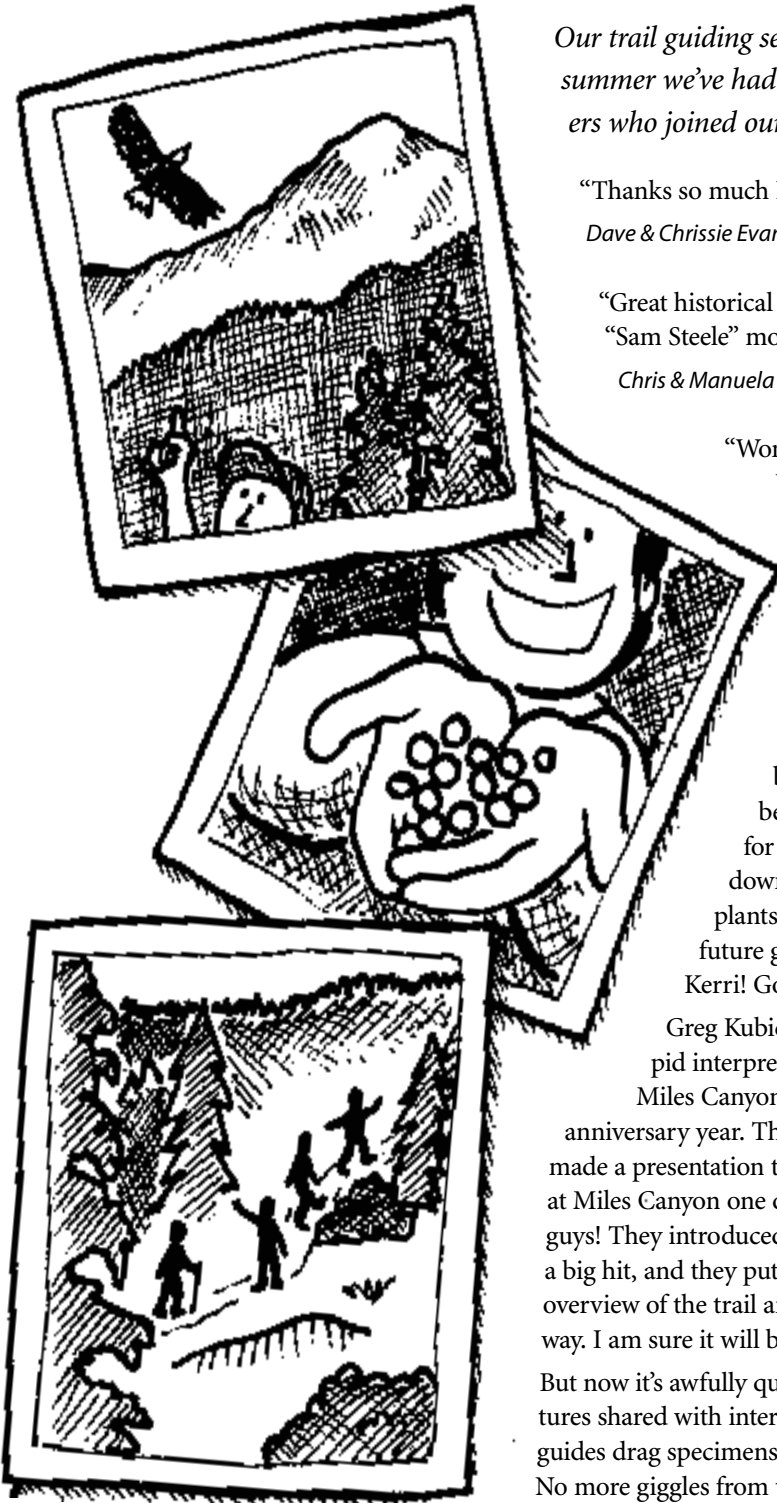
Kerri Klein did a bang up job of taking the hikes out of the YCS office. Highlights included: leading a group of 10 people from Australia, England, Germany and the States up above Fish Lake for the day; watching an immature bald eagle scavenging by Hidden Lakes, then dropping a beer can at our feet from the air; seeing monkeyflowers for the first time by McIntyre Creek; taking a 3 block downtown tour with Bruce Bennett to nibble on the edible plants. Kerri also put together a great resource manual for future guides. We miss your smile and spirit in the office, Kerri! Good luck in your last year in school.

Greg Kubica, Trenna Munro and Lesya Battersby were our intrepid interpreters out at Canyon City. They led more people through Miles Canyon this year than any other year aside from 1998, the anniversary year. This was largely due to their outreach. For instance, they made a presentation to a group of cadets that happened to be doing exercises at Miles Canyon one day. I'm sure they didn't know what hit them. Way to go guys! They introduced a Sam Steele skit out at Canyon City this year that was a big hit, and they put together a training video for future guides. It's a great overview of the trail and what you can expect to see and interpret along the way. I am sure it will be very helpful for next year's guides.

But now it's awfully quiet around the office. No more daily updates on adventures shared with international travellers. No more, "What's this plant?" as the guides drag specimens back for me to identify (a favourite pastime of mine). No more giggles from the basement. I miss them. The summer as a whole was:

"Wonderful beyond belief."

Marlyne MacDonald Australia





Dinosaurs to Driftwood

The Yukon Conservation Society's Fall Speaker Series

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

7:15 PM, *Alpine Bakery Conference Room*

How the Yanks do it – Mining in Alaska

Amy Crook, Alaska rep for the Center for Science in Public Participation, will talk about mining in Alaska. What can we learn from their experiences?

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

7:00 PM, *Yukon Inn, Fireside Room North*

Dinosaur Tracks in the Yukon!

Dr. Roland Gangloff, Alaskan paleontologist, will tell us about the dinosaur tracks found recently at Whiskey Lake, near Ross River. Who was here before us?

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

7:00 PM, *Yukon Inn, Fireside Room North*

Driftwood Homes

When your only wood source is driftwood, how do you build a home? Anne Jensen, archaeologist with the Ukpeagvik Inupiat Corporation Sciences Division in Barrow, Alaska, will illustrate traditional home building techniques on the North Slope with stories and slides.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1

2:00 PM, *Whitehorse Public Library Meeting Room*

Movies for Green Kids

Moms, dads and tots are invited to come watch some of the best of environmental movies. Have you ever seen the Lorax in action? Now you have a chance.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4

7:00 PM, *Yukon Inn, Fireside Room North*

House Calls Minimize Oil & Gas Development

Craig Olsen will discuss his energy conservation program, House Calls, and how it can help you reduce oil and gas consumption. Lewis Rifkind will talk about the state of oil and gas development in the Yukon. Do we have a chance to influence it in our own homes?

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11

7:00 PM, *Yukon Inn, Fireside Room North*

Boreal Forest Eco Certification

Marcelo Levy, director of standards development for the Forest Stewardship Council for Canada, will bring us up to date on the state of certification of sustainable forestry practices in the Yukon.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15

2:00 PM, *meet at the YCS office,*

302 Hawkins, carpooling encouraged

A New Wind Turbine on Haeckel Hill

Join JP Pinard on a visit to Haeckel Hill to view the wind turbine that was erected this summer. It's bigger and more powerful. Is it just the beginning?

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25

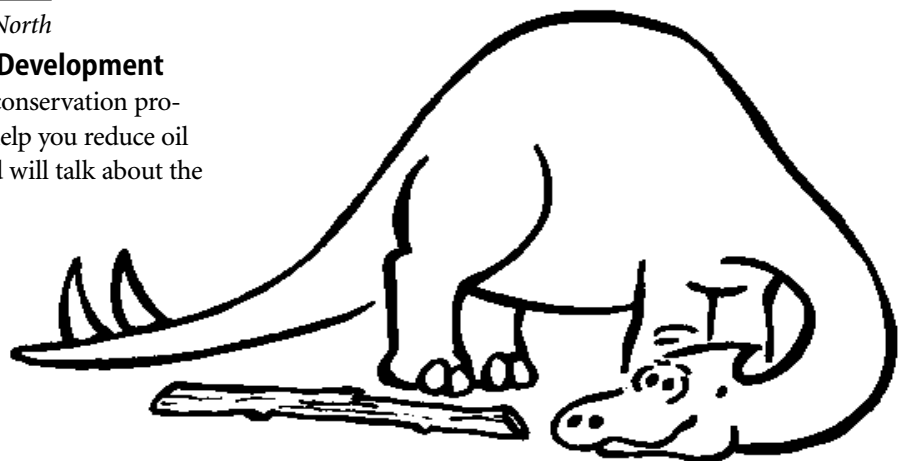
7:00 PM, *Beringia Centre*

Movies, Media and Messages

A wonky medley of movie excerpts and guest speakers will illuminate messages you hadn't even dreamed of when you first watched "Tank Girl," "Husky Don't Cry" and "Waterworld."

The venues haven't been finalized yet, so keep an eye out for posters around town and ads in the newspaper. Look forward to seeing you this fall.

lori schroeder
Trail Guide Coordinator



BOOK REVIEW

A Review of Bernd Heinrich's

Mind of the Raven

(Cliff Street Books, 1999), 356 pp.

What about those birds that sound like they have marbles in their mouths? *Mind of the Raven* explores the world of ravens from the perspective of New England biologist Bernd Heinrich. The book is a collection of anecdotes, stories, experiments, and hypotheses about why ravens are so... well... ravenish. Partnerships, social webs, communication, relationships with wolves, and morality are all explored through experimentation, observation, and a touch of humour.

Before you are too far into the book, you will realize that Heinrich's experiments are hardly appropriate for the Yukon setting. Dragging pork lungs into the woods to attract ravens, then sitting behind a blind for hours waiting for them to arrive sounds a bit like setting yourself up as bear bait to me. But reading the book has enabled me to better understand the activities of ravens in my backyard. A few nights ago I was outside just before dusk and heard the familiar swishing noise of a raven flying overhead. Looking up I counted 16 ravens streaming northward. I turned to my friend and cockily stated that they were juveniles heading to their roost for the night. Armed with 29 chapters worth of raven information, I could have postulated all night about the behavior we had just witnessed.

Heinrich marvels at the intelligence of ravens. Having raised several, he has astute observations about their development and learning that convincingly supports his theory that ravens think, act, and react cleverly and shrewdly. In my mind his most illustrative testament to their intelligence is the ability of a bird raised in captivity to partner with a 'wild' bird and survive in the wild. After researching the relationships between wolves and ravens, Heinrich refers to ravens as wolf-birds and believes that the two species share a relationship that is much deeper than most people think: Wolves tearing open their prey, eating and then moving on to rest for awhile provides ravens with an ample food supply. Taking this one step further, ravens can spot suitable prey for wolves from the air and lead the wolves to it. Sounds crazy? I was convinced.

Thanks to this book I am a better observer. I listen to the different sounds ravens make while communicating and know if they are hungry, anxious, or just chatty. I appreciate the place they have in the ecosystem. The world of ravens is an interesting one, and Heinrich is an excellent tour guide.

christine cleghorn

Miss Environmental Manners

Dear Miss Environmental Manners,

As I stroll out to my outhouse, I am struck by a sudden urge to pee on my compost pile. Is this bad?

Signed,

Lost on the Garden Path in Headacres



Gentle Reader,

To pee or not to pee, that is your question.

Luckily the answer is easily found if we glance back to the beginning of life on earth.

Why exactly do you think the Garden of Eden was so lush? Nitrates, my friend!

Adam and Eve knew what they were doing when they failed to build an outhouse and instead let their effluent fertilize the soil.

Urine happens to be high in nitrates, which our Yukon soil is generally in need of. I know a woman (who is regarded as normal by most who know her) who has given a whole new meaning to the phrase "a row of peas in the garden." Needless to say, vegetable envy is rife in her neighborhood.

Piddle away, my friend! Your compost will be all the richer and the world a better place.

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!

(free membership with a donation of \$100 or more)

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

Sign me up as a 2000 member (or renew my current membership).

Membership includes getting *Walk Softly* newsletter four times a year.

Memberships run January to December.

\$10 student \$15 individual \$25 family
 \$25 subscriber (receive *Walk Softly* without membership rights)

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

I am donating \$1000 or more so I get a YCS lifetime membership!

PAYMENT METHOD: Total \$ _____

Cheque enclosed (payable to Yukon Conservation Society)
 I'd rather charge 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,
 Box 4163, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 3S9

I Love My Mine — to the tune of "I Walk the Line" by Johnny Cash.

I keep a close watch on this mine of mine. I keep the army all around it all the time. I get real angry when those pesky natives whine. Because it's fine, I love my mine. I knew who I would be when I was 8 years old. When I was teased I'd call Captain Plutonio. Now that Big Mountain ain't so damn big anymore! Because it's kind, I love my mine. [Can you dig it?] Oh sure it may not be the baddest mine you'll see. It ain't no Freeport McMoRan or Peabody. It's just my valiant work for all humanity. Oh, Cyanide! I love my mine. [Well, I shore do love gravel.] I find it very, very easy to be rich. I watch my children playing in my giant ditch. Oh, they're so cute covered in that leaden grime! Now they're quarantined. I love my mine. Oh give me land, lots of land where I can strip my soul. Where the metal's heavy and consumption's out of control. Old St. Peter called but I put him on hold. Let's drink some wine. I love my mine. [You can fence me in though, that's all right. I'm OK with fences.] I take it with




me nearly everywhere I go. It gets the once-over from all the CEOs. My golden belt buckle reads 'hi-ho hi-ho'. I'm the studly kind. I love my mine. I start my day with a bowl of fresh cobalt. I'll need energy for the OPM assault. Plus the activists will try to make me halt. So? I might be fined. I love my mine. [Eh, these guitar strings gotta come from somewhere you know!] My father's father used to farm my barren land. But all those complicated trees got out of hand. I blame my mother for my strange fetish for sand. It's so sublime... I love my mine. [Mmmmm...Silicon...] Soon the globe will be trembling with fright. My aluminum fist smashing everything in sight. And I'll be the first on Mars when we run out of Bauxite. The Universe will be MINE! I love my mine. Ingots in line... I love my mine. Dumb by design... I love my mine.

SOURCES: USA Decay — Money Makes Our World Go Round website; music: Johnny Cash; lyrics and guitar: Casey Connor; vocals: Casey Connor and Samsara.

Yukon Conservation Society

Box 4163, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 3S9



-  With each 4 oz hamburger made from rainforest beef 67 square feet of forest is destroyed.
-  One North American does 20 to 100 times more damage to the planet than one person in the "third world". One rich North American causes 1,000 time more destruction.
-  It would take 20 billion dollars each year to provide safe drinking water and sewage disposal to everyone on the planet. That represents 4% of the world's annual military expenditure.

