

Walk Softly

Newsletter of the Yukon
Conservation Society
March 1999



Local selective logger Ken Fleet with Timber Tim and Major

INSIDE: Forestry ♦ Faro's Legacy ♦ Tombstone Park ♦ DAP Update

What's Happening at YCS?

Funding for Forestry Slide Show

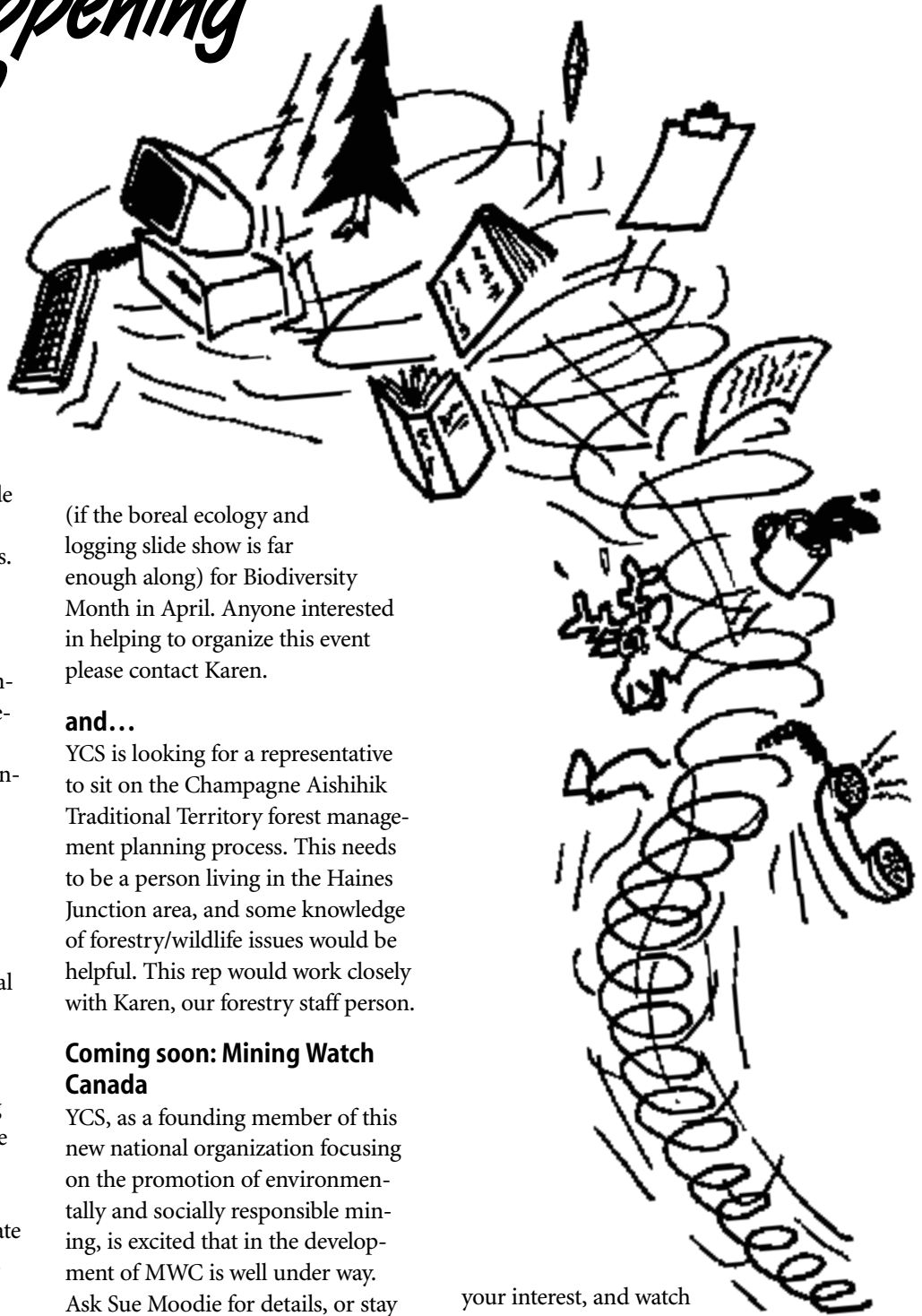
Between Mountain Equipment Co-op Environment Fund and the Yukon Forestry Training Trust Fund, YCS has so far received \$9,200 toward the creation of a slide show about boreal forest ecology and appropriate logging techniques. We're hoping for about another \$7,000 from the Body Shop Charitable Foundation. The slide show is primarily intended for communities involved in forest management planning, but it will also be useful for schools and public presentations.

Global Forest Watch Canada Meeting

In February Karen Baltgailis attended a three day Global Forest Watch meeting in Winnipeg. Global Forest Watch Canada is putting together an alternative 'State of the Forests Report' to counter government reports that make everything look rosey. YCS and CPAWS will be working together to produce a Yukon feature article showing that since logging in the southeast to date has been almost all on sites classed as 'good', the Timber Supply Analysis should not include 'poor' sites as a potential timber source.

Volunteers Wanted:

We'd like to put together a forestry video night and/or slide show event



(if the boreal ecology and logging slide show is far enough along) for Biodiversity Month in April. Anyone interested in helping to organize this event please contact Karen.

and...

YCS is looking for a representative to sit on the Champagne Aishihik Traditional Territory forest management planning process. This needs to be a person living in the Haines Junction area, and some knowledge of forestry/wildlife issues would be helpful. This rep would work closely with Karen, our forestry staff person.

Coming soon: Mining Watch Canada

YCS, as a founding member of this new national organization focusing on the promotion of environmentally and socially responsible mining, is excited that in the development of MWC is well under way. Ask Sue Moodie for details, or stay tuned for the launch.

Mining Committee

The Mining Committee will be starting up soon, after a period of inactivity. Call or drop by to express

your interest, and watch this space for information about future meeting times. Priorities and agendas will be determined.



Timber Harvesting Agreement Update

Kaska Forest Resource's THA expires May 1, 1999, and the company is applying for another 10 year term. As you probably know, KFR did not fulfill many of the conditions of their last THA — conditions like building a mill, drastically reducing log exports, and developing a viable business plan. The KFR THA is not the only THA that hasn't had its conditions enforced. The 1996 Liard First Nation Training Society was supposed to use cutblock sizes that reflected gap dynamics for the area, and teach trainees alternative methods. Instead standard faller-buncher clear cutting was taught and used. Evidently THA conditions could not be legally enforced because of the way the 30 year old THA document was worded, so DIAND is now drafting a new legal document.

Until now THAs have also not been included in the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act's inclusion list. In fact, the KFR THA did have a CEAA screening, and their annual operating plans were CEAA screened as well. But there was no legal obligation to do so. The CEAA inclusion list is now being revised to specifically include THAs.

So what is happening with the new KFR THA application? It will cover only the area of the current THA, so KFR has to determine how much wood is left for a sustainable harvest. Then they will draw up their new Forest Management Plan, which goes through a preliminary 'adequacy review' by DIAND. Then the Forest Management Plan goes through a CEAA screening and a one month public input process. DIAND has asked KFR to give a public presentation on the Forest Management Plan in Watson Lake.

What should we be looking for when the KFR THA Forest Management Plan comes up for review?

We need to take a hard look at the numbers and make sure the proposed annual cut really is sustainable. We should make sure the lowland White Spruce isn't liquidated — if it hasn't been already! There should be no need for log exports since the South Yukon Forest Corp mill can easily take everything KFR produces. And there should be an analysis of the site specific and cumulative ecological effects of logging in the THA so far.

DIAND expects that KFR will apply for a new THA area in addition to the current one at some point in the future. And several other proponents have expressed interest in THAs as well, though none have started the official application process yet. By March Forest Resources plans to have ready a policy document that outlines a new THA application procedure. The procedure will probably include a review both of the proposed area and of the specific Forest Management Plan.

While longer term tenures do have some advantages, there is a major problem with THAs as DIAND currently conceives of them: they are not included in the Timber Supply Analysis. That means that proposed THAs will be over and above the amount of timber that has been determined to be ecologically sustainable to harvest. In addition, the TSA limits the timber supply within the next ten years to sub-watersheds with existing access. Since they're not included in the TSA any new Timber Harvesting Agreements will likely be proposed for sub-watersheds that don't currently have access, possibly necessitating an area by area fight to defend untouched wilderness.

karen baltgailis

Volunteers are needed to participate in a preliminary field study to survey and document mycorrhiza from a wide variety of ecosystems in Yukon. (MYCORR — WHAT? Mycorrhiza are fungi which help trees to assimilate nutrients and protect against disease.) Soil disturbance from fire

or logging can destroy mycorrhizal fungi, with serious consequences for regeneration. Volunteers are needed for one and three day trips from late May to August. Training provided. Call Usha at 633-6415.

A Burning Issue

Early last December the Hillcrest Community Association hosted a public meeting to discuss forest fires and the potential risk in the Hillcrest/Granger area. The Association was looking for community support for a demonstration project that would involve cutting out trees and undergrowth in a target area over the slope between the two neighbourhoods. Representatives from the City of Whitehorse and DIAND's Forest Resources were there. Among the residents from the Hillcrest/Granger area who packed the room the concern about the risk of forest fire was high but many were also concerned about rushing ahead with the project. The 'green' area around and between these neighbourhoods is part of the reason they have chosen to live where they do, so residents want any plans for change to be carefully thought out and explained.

Some questions which required detailed answers were:

- What is the rationale?
- Why was this particular spot considered appropriate for a demonstration project?
- What areas are high risk, how have they been assessed?
- What is the City's Master Plan?
- How would the work be done and by whom?
- How would the ecosystem be affected?
- What is being done to educate the public about fire prevention?

At the end of the meeting the Hillcrest Association felt they did not have enough community support to apply for funding for the demonstration project at this time. However, a similar proposal will probably go ahead at Yukon College with CDF funds, as part of a student research project.



Forest resources (DIAND) has completed a 'risk assessment report' for Whitehorse, Watson Lake, and Haines Junction, and has available a series of forest inventory maps (1:50,000 scale) which indicate areas where crown fires would be more likely to spread. Based on this information the department hopes to work with rural residential communities in risk assessment, giving home owners guidance with looking at their own properties and also making themselves available to do on-site assessments.

The City of Whitehorse is planning to do some community education and consultation based on the Forest Resources assessment report. The meeting last December in Hillcrest made it clear that although city residents are concerned about the forest fires and their properties, they also care very much about their green spaces. Some Hillcrest/Granger residents will be getting together to talk about their concerns. If you are interested please call Karen at the YCS office.

julie frisch

Just a reminder for everyone that the annual general meeting is coming up on March 31, 7:30 pm at the Alpine Bakery. Anyone wanting to nominate themselves or another worthy soul please send their name in for consideration to the YCS nominating committee. A few lines of text boasting the person's merits and usefulness on the board would be great too. Please phone the office or send by email to the nominations committee.



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 3T3,
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.

ycs board of directors

paul davis

teresa earle

alice hartling

craig olsen

lewis rifkind

jennifer staniforth

angela walkley

andrew williams

sally wright

jennifer ellis, executive director

rosa brown, office coordinator

workers on this issue

sherri billowits christine cleghorn

rosa brown tanya handley

paul mantle

printed on recycled paper



Last December, the Mining Land Use Regulations were finally passed for both hard rock and placer mining. After a century of no land use regulations for mineral claims activities in the Yukon, it should have been a time for celebration at YCS.

However, the process of getting these regulations in place was a frustrating learning experience.

As has been discussed in many a newsletter before this one, YCS was very involved in working on getting land use rules in place. The first half of the 1990s saw many rounds of discussions, a consensus report with industry, government, the Council of Yukon First Nations and YCS, and then many broken promises. We withdrew our support for the earlier report. We called for changes to the final regulations, to bring them into line with new federal commitments to sustainable development and the broadly supported Whitehorse Mining Initiative.

But the federal minister, first Ron Irwin, then Jane Stewart, continued to wave the 1992 consensus report in our face saying we signed off on it, it was the guiding document that could not be amended if peace was to be kept. They ignored the changes that did occur such as the waiving of industry's commitment to consultation in advance of entering the regulatory system or failing to treat acid generating sulphide ores differently. They ignored broken commitments of quick implementation.

They "overlooked" the imbalance of concerns. While industry and government supported the new proposals, environmental organizations, outfitters, co-management bodies, trappers, First Nation governments and the Council of Yukon First Nations called for many changes.

These calls happened during a 1995 consultation, which occurred after the Umbrella Final Agreement forever changed the requirements for consultation. They came during the Standing Committee hearings on changes to the mining acts in 1996. They were followed up yet again in 1998 during the gazetting – the public review – of the mining land use regulations.

And not a change was made. This is consultation? Is this what signatories to the UFA envisioned? How many different voices have to raise the same concerns before they are considered valid?

So while it is a relief that there will finally be some level of land use regulations for mineral claim activities, it is hard to be excited about changes that are already outdated and weaker than other Canadian jurisdictions.

But more than that, it is disheartening and frustrating to have been held hostage to a six year old signature and to witness the complete farce of subsequent "consultation" processes. And they wonder where I get my dose of cynicism from...

jennifer ellis

The Rockin', Rip Snortin' Membership Canvass!

Early December. Mary Poppins-like newcomer to the world of YCS, Karen Baltgailis, is keen on an intimidating initiative. She thinks that YCS volunteers should, get this, go door-to-door through Whitehorse and ask whatever complete stranger, rabid placer miner, or chainsaw lugging 2x4 whittler comes to the door if they want to become members of YCS!

That won't work, we say. A little too intrusive, we say. What if someone yells at us, we say. Turns out the easy going exterior masks the persuasive powers of a woman who just won't give up until she has a number of still twitching "volunteers" roped into the canvassing schedule. She's hard to say no to. One volunteer only escaped

by dislocating her ankle. Karen had to be convinced of the difficulties of running wheelchairs through snow... Imagine our surprise when the canvass turned out to be a rip-snorting success: 53 new members totalling \$1,109 after only one week! And not a single person was yelled at or injured!

A true confession by the initially much less than enthusiastic Cameron Eckert: *"Tanya dragged me canvassing on Friday night. Karen and Joy were there just in case I tried to escape. Actually, I found I could walk quite easily in leg irons. We went door-to-door in Riverdale. At one point, I spotted an odd sculpture on somebody's doorstep — after Tanya gave me a sharp smack to the back of my head, I realized that it was a miner's drill bit. Too late, we'd already rung the doorbell. OK, we waited 3 seconds — nobody home; lets go!!!"*

Truth is, in a sick sort of way, I enjoyed the door-to-door escapade. On Friday night, the four of us covered about three streets in Riverdale and snagged six new memberships for YCS. Therefore, a quick but conservative calculation indicates that we could have flogged at least 50 memberships in Riverdale alone had we the person-power to cover the whole neighbourhood.

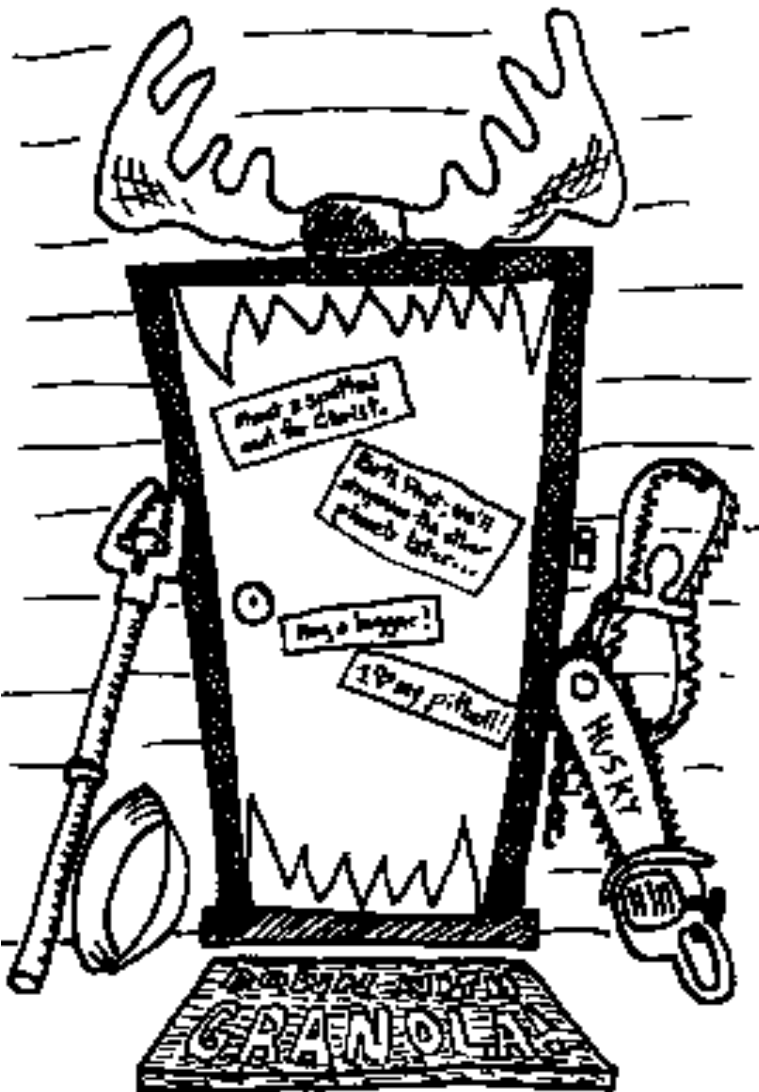
The bottom line: In my 6 or so years of involvement with YCS, I've never seen an initiative quite like this one and I'm sold. Great work Karen!

Not everyone was quite as enthused as Cameron (he doesn't get out much...), but it just wasn't that bad and it was impressive to see how high YCS's profile is. Certainly everyone had heard of us and our efforts and, whether they agreed or not, they were all quite civil. The canvass covered about 8 blocks in Takhini, 10 blocks in Riverdale, and 6 blocks in Hillcrest (18 memberships in Hillcrest in one night with 4 canvassers!). The Whitehorse world is still very much our oyster in terms of future canvassing that we may want to do.

And the final word goes to our whip-cracking, leather-wearing, ever-so-convincing mistress of the membership drive, Karen Baltgailis: *Thanks soooooo much to all of you who made it possible: Craig, Marlene, Janne, Sue, Julie, Karen Baxter, Jocelyne, Elizabeth, Tanya, Joy and Cameron, and Sally and Richard in their own necks of the woods. What tough, dedicated, articulate people!!!!*

Thank-you Karen!

tanya handley





DAP update

Never has one YCS issue evoked so many plays on words...though work on sewage issues in Whitehorse and Dawson might be a contender. The lawyer we hired to do a legal analysis of the draft Yukon Development Assessment Act was very DAPper. I kept DAPping right along, wading through the legislation, organizing a workshop with other interested folks, writing submissions and letters requesting extensions to the consultation on the whole DAP thing.

After a broad call for more time to digest and comment on DAP, the public was granted a one month extension to get submissions in. Our lawyer, Rod Northey from Toronto, produced a very constructive critique of the draft legislation for YCS and CPAWS (Yukon). Both our groups used this as the basis for our submissions and supplemented it with individual letters highlighting additional concerns. We also circulated a "Key Issues" paper to help the three governments negotiating this legislation, and other interested groups, First Nations and individuals, understand what our major concerns with the draft are.

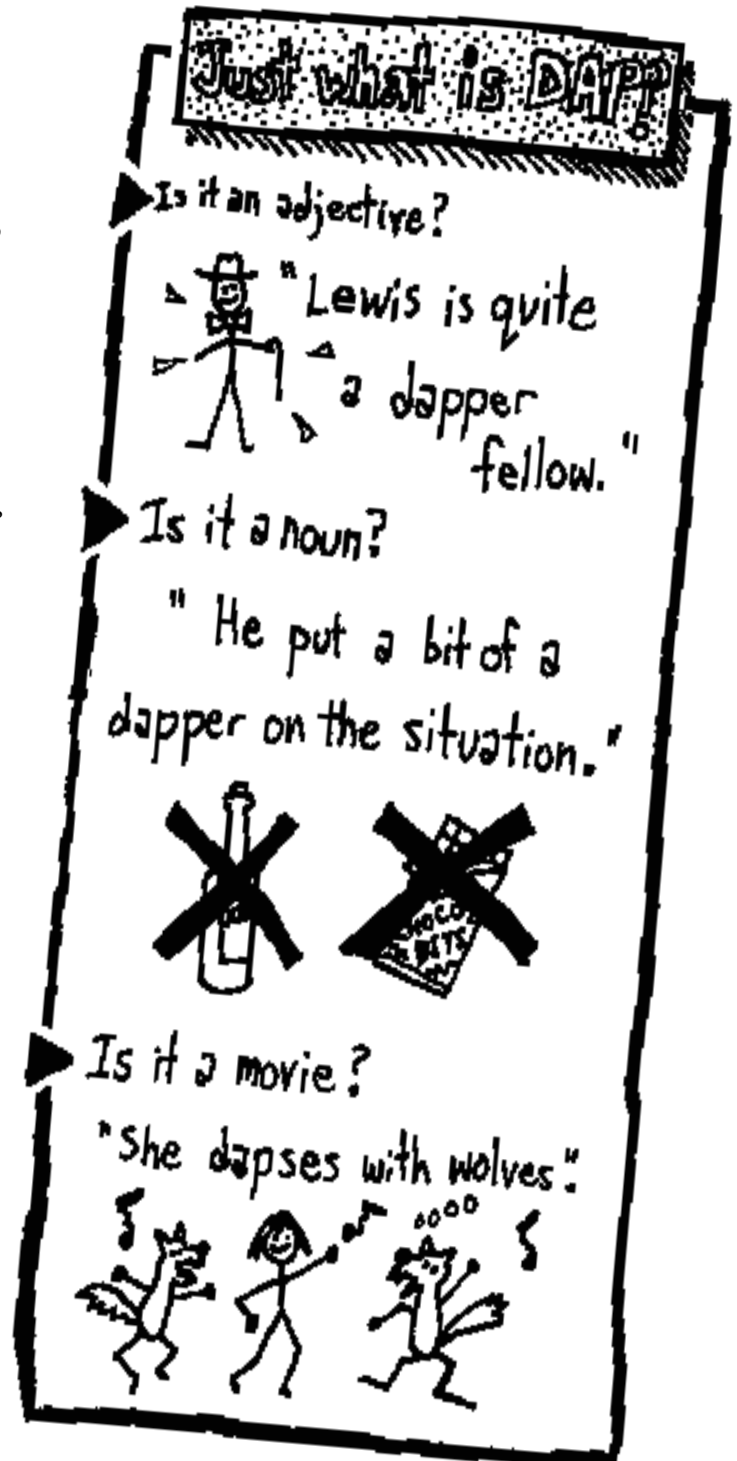
Most of the concerns outlined in the last issue of *Walk Softly* (December 1998) regarding public involvement, enforcement and monitoring, the assessment of plans, discretion in decision making and timelines remain the same. An additional and very substantive issue is the definition of what gets assessed in the first place. We believe it is critical that the definition of a "Project," something that will get assessed by the DAP process, covers off everything that has the potential to have significant effects on the environment. The proposed inclusion/exclusion list approach is neither effective nor consistent with the Umbrella Final Agreement.

The three parties are now back to the negotiating table. In part, they are reviewing the public's input and discussing if and how they should continue public discussions on this comprehensive piece of legislation. Pressure to bring in stakeholders, Renewable Resource Councils and others may result in a public workshop on some of the key issues of concern. YCS and others are also calling for the next draft of the legislation to be put out for another round of public comment prior to tabling in the federal House of Commons.

If you are interested in getting involved in this issue or would like a copy of our Key Issues paper

or the detailed legal analysis, please contact Jennifer at the YCS office.

jennifer ellis



Not Another Oil Boom

“It’s only exploration,” we’re told, via the media, from a big oil company gathering in Calgary. Oil in the North, and this time, no Berger Commission like in the 1970s to ask people in the communities what they feel.

There’s long been a feeling amongst northern environmentalists that smaller oil field players must be ‘stalking horses’ with some links to the huge oil companies like ARCO or BP in Alaska. But nobody’s had time to do the research, so we’re just left with no proof, but the feeling that somehow the re-opening of Northern Cross’s wells, and the recently-announced exploratory drilling, are somehow part of a greater pattern.

And indeed they are. As wilderness is a shrinking thing on this blue planet. And I can’t help but be struck by a strong sense of *deja vu*.

An embarrassingly-long time ago, I was a researcher looking into the workplace safety issues for offshore oil exploration in Atlantic Canada for my MA thesis.

Now, at first glance, oil at sea and here in the Yukon, don’t seem to be linked. But they are. Isolated areas of the Yukon, and out on the North Atlantic hold in common the general absence of government regulation and control. The inspectors usually have to fly in on company flights, so that everything is ‘spic and span’ by the time they get there. No surprises; or at least not ones that people plan for...

As I asked questions and took photos all over offshore oil rigs and search and rescue ships and aircraft, I was always haunted by the surprise nobody had planned for; the ODECO Ocean Ranger marine disaster, which claimed almost a hundred lives before the rig’s wreck



was laid to rest on the seabed.

The Royal Commission reports were compelling, as were my nightmares; upside down in a sinking helicopter full of cold seawater. But what was even more disturbing was the ‘quick get rich’ culture around oil exploration. Workers so hung-over they couldn’t open escape hatches on helicopters, or zip their own survival suits up. The two guys who died painting a rig right in harbour when the cable holding up their work platform ran off of the end of the crane spool in a senseless, preventable accident. Illicit moonshine stills made of copper pipes by rig plumbers. Or the empty

cigarette packets I found on the derrick, where explosive gases were always present...

What capped it for me was the wonky oil company decision to tow a jack-up rig across the North Atlantic during the winter storm season. With the life-boats welded to the decks “so they wouldn’t get lost.” And how it took near superhuman courage on the part of two government inspectors to get those life-boats put back in their launching davits where they belonged. Where the entire crew was saved by those life-boats a week later, when, predictably, their rig capsized and sank. By the grace of God, and by the guts of those two inspectors, nobody died.

So when I hear about oil exploration in the Yukon, I wonder what mistakes the industry will make here. And I wonder how many will pay the price with their lives. Or with the death of their culture, displaced by quick bucks. Then I ask myself why we weren’t all asked for our views about this activity on public lands.

paul davis



BOOK REVIEW

Paul and Anne Ehrlich *the population explosion*

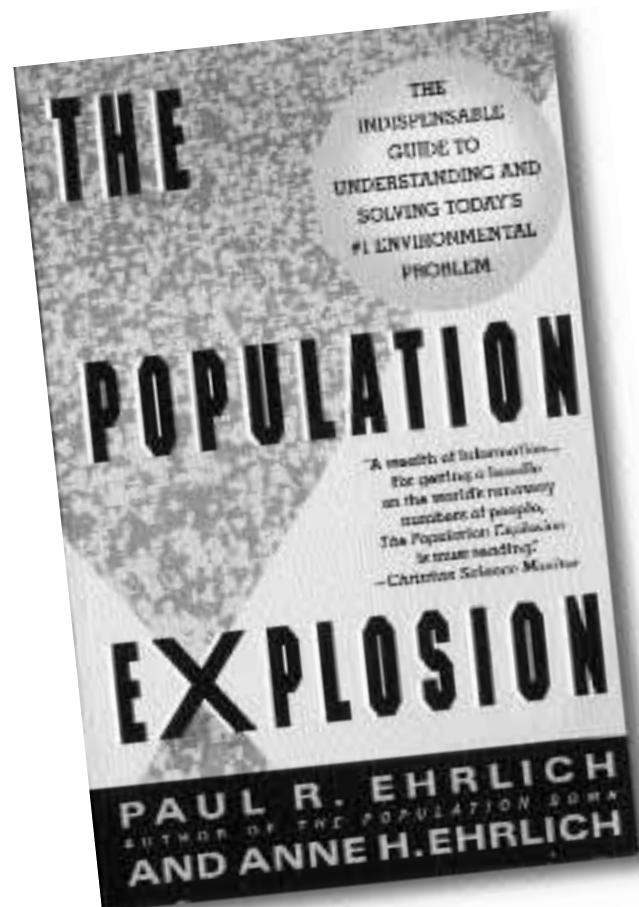
Touchstone, Simon & Schuster, 1990, 320 pp., ISBN 0-671-73294-3

Concerned about the environment? Thinking about starting a family? WAIT! Read *The Population Explosion* by Paul and Anne Ehrlich before making any life-altering/creating decisions! Being surrounded by a vast landscape that is largely unpopulated here in the Yukon, it is sometimes difficult to relate to the population problem. This makes *The Population Explosion* an especially important book for Yukoners to read, as we do not have daily contact with the situation in the way that people living in densely populated and polluted nations do. As the book indicates, the actual problem does not have to do with land area, but rather the contribution to environmental degradation each individual will make during his/her lifetime. The authors' point out that the level of affluence one is born into is a key factor in the amount of damage that being will cause. As dwellers of a First World Country, we are the largest contributors to the damage. We can take credit for up to eighty percent of the carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere, as well as a large part of the responsibility for deforestation, both of which lead to further serious environmental problems. According to the report, a baby born in the United States represents 13 times the destructive impacts on earth ecosystems and the services they provide as one born in Brazil, 140 times one in Bangladesh or Kenya, and 280 times one in Chad, Rwanda, Haiti or Nepal.

The authors clearly illustrate the links between increasing population and the rise in environmental degradation. Among other topics, they discuss how population has contributed to acid rain, ozone depletion, ocean pollution, the rise of epidemics and the potential demise of the human race. They also point out the important connection between climatic change and an increasingly vulnerable food supply. Much attention is given to the food topic, including discussion about the effects that the green revolution and biotechnology have on agriculture around the world. The myths that technology will save us, and that the sea will provide us with an infinite food supply are quickly dispelled.

Is it all starting to sound hopeless? Well, no fear, *The Population Explosion* is full of suggestions to turn the situation around! An excellent feature of this book is the useful suggestions made in the last chapters about how we, as individuals and as a society, can work to make a change. Some controversial issues, such as abortion and the Catholic Church's view regarding population are discussed here, with sample letters suggesting whom to write to in order to initiate change. Steps we can make in our everyday lives to help decrease the growing population and its negative impacts are also covered. This includes education through schools and the media about the rate of population growth and its impacts. So...educate yourself! Read *The Population Explosion*.

julie kokelj



Timber Supply Analysis Update

How much timber is really out there in the Yukon's forests? How much is accessible? How much of it is economically feasible to extract? What can be logged without seriously impacting other forest users, both human and non-human? After several months of public consultation the Timber Supply Analysis that is supposed to answer these questions is now into its second draft. YCS has submitted comments based on the critique by Herb Hammond commissioned by YCS and the Teslin Tlingit Council, and consultations with biologists and CPAWS. The following is a summary of our comments on the first draft of the TSA.

Planning and Research are Lacking:

YCS recommends that for the next several years a conservative approach be taken to the Timber Supply Analysis until at least the following have been completed: forest management, wildlife, land use and economic planning for the southern Yukon Forest Management Units; the protected areas network; First Nations land claims; comprehensive inventories of forests and wildlife; research regarding forest regeneration in the Yukon; research on the effects of salvage logging after large natural disturbances; and thorough monitoring of previously logged areas in the Yukon to assess effects on wildlife, regeneration and non-timber uses of the forest.

Until all this is done, from both a social and an environmental point of view there are too many unanswered questions. If an unrealistically high harvest level is set now, it will create expectations and encourage unwise investments, making it very difficult to reduce the cut later. It makes far more sense to keep timber supply estimates and allocations at a conservative level until all the necessary research and planning is in place.

Specific Land Withdrawals:

The draft TSA already removes the Beaver River watershed from the timber supply. This area contains the last remaining contiguous stand of alluvial white spruce in the Yukon, and is a potential protected area under the Yukon Protected Areas Strategy. Needless to say our submission supports the withdrawal of the Beaver watershed. We also recommend the withdrawal of other key areas including:

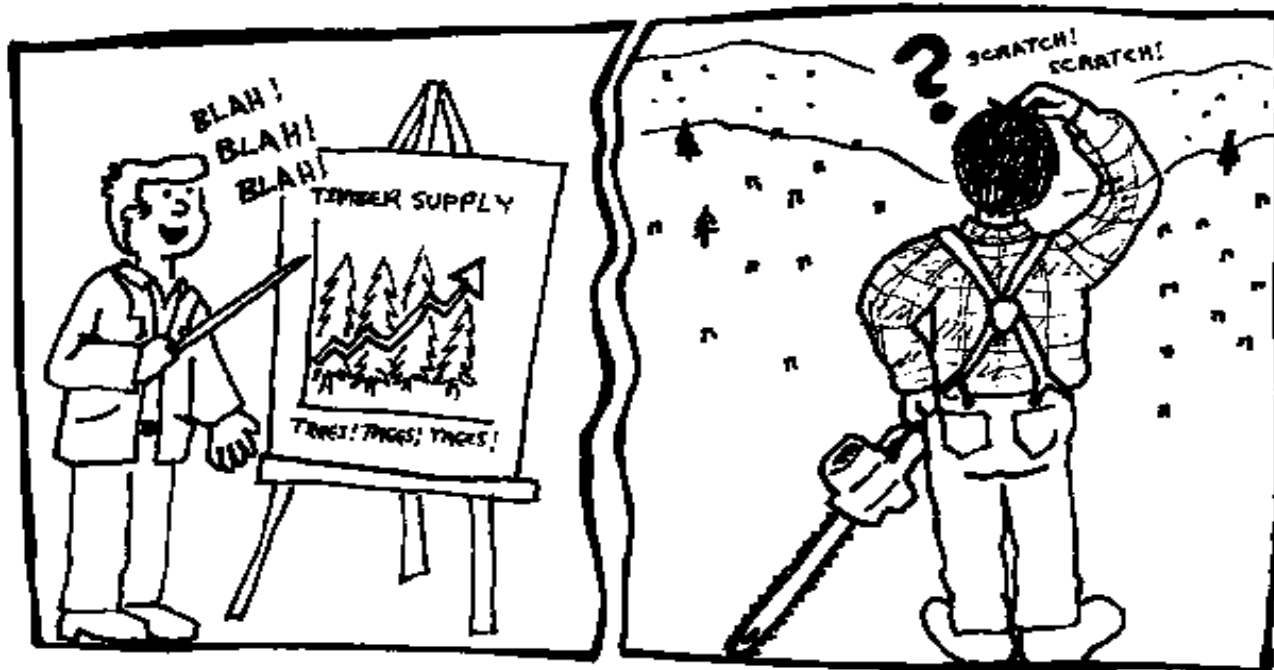
- ▶ The Forest Ecosystem Network which has been outlined by the LaBiche/Beaver Ecosystem Technical group.
- ▶ The Coal River watershed should be withdrawn since it has been identified as a potential candidate area within

the Liard Basin Ecoregion under the Protected Areas Strategy. There is also a proposed 80,000 ha. Special Management Area under land claims in this area.

- ▶ The proposed Special Management Areas at Francis Lake (200,000 ha.) and Tarfu and Snafu Lakes (75,000 ha.).
- ▶ The protected area which is being considered for Kusawa Lake. This is also the South Lakes Caribou Herd winter range.
- ▶ The proposed Wolf Lake National Park feasibility study area.
- ▶ The winter range of the Rancheria, Wolf Lake and Southern Lakes Woodland Caribou herds.

Other Assumptions Which Would Lower TSA Numbers:

- ▶ Approximately 80% of the sites included in the draft TSA are 'Poor Productivity Sites' where trees are between 10 and 15 meters tall at 100 years of age. Due to ecological sensitivity and poor economic returns from these sites, they are not suitable for industrial development. These poor sites should be removed from the TSA land base.
- ▶ The draft TSA sets the utilization standard at a minimum diameter at breast height of 15 cm. (6 in.) Industry clearly prefers much larger diameter wood — so far in the southeast Yukon almost all timber production has been centered on stands classed as large sawlogs. Large sawlogs only make up about 6% of the southeast Yukon's timber supply, and likely this figure is even lower in other FMUs. YCS recommends changing the utilization level in the TSA from a minimum breast height diameter of 15 cm. (6 in.) to 20 cm. (8 in.).
- ▶ The TSA assumes a 3 pass system with 3 meter green-up. This will result in an overall conversion to much younger age classes than now exist in the southern Yukon. For example, on good spruce sites, immediately after the third pass the oldest trees remaining would only be 60 years old. The green-up height and age needs to be considerably increased to allow for the development of mature and old growth stands.
- ▶ The minimum harvest ages are too low to ensure that the natural age distribution of the forest is maintained. For example, the minimum harvest age of good spruce is 100 years, whereas the draft TSA does not define spruce as old until it reaches 140 years of age. In some



places there are good spruce sites where major stand replacing events may only occur every 250 years. Clearly, converting old growth stands to early and intermediate stages will create a very different ecosystem. The natural range of several stages across the southern Yukon could be maintained by raising the minimum harvest ages in the TSA, and/or modeling only selection logging systems (and therefore lower harvest ceilings) in old growth.

- ▶ The TSA makes the excellent assumption that logged sites will be occupied by pioneer species like willow for some years before commercially valuable coniferous trees begin to grow. However long regeneration delays are only assumed for about a quarter of the good and medium sites, and half of the poor sites. Because of the Yukon's harsh growing conditions, and the lack of data about regeneration after logging here, Hammond recommends applying the maximum regeneration delay to all sites.
- ▶ The draft TSA withdraws an average yearly area which will be lost to forest fires, but then reduces this burn area by 25% to account for live trees within fire boundaries. It is true that about 25% of the forest within large fires' boundaries is skipped. However individual live trees and 'islands' of unburned forest are essential habitat and seed pools for the re-colonization of the burn. Individual green trees and 'islands' must not be logged.
- ▶ The draft TSA does not include the current Kaska Forest Resources Timber Harvesting Area. The area of any THAs must be included in the TSA; it should not

be left to THA proponents to determine the timber supply in THAs.

- ▶ Riparian forests are critical winter habitat for a multitude of species, as well as travel corridors and rare old growth ecosystems. At least 75% of the remaining alluvial forests near major water bodies should be protected from logging. There should be no new access to riparian forests.
- ▶ The draft TSA assumes standard clear cutting across the board. But in the light of the Forest Strategy's commitment to ecosystem-based management, and considering the fact that the natural disturbance pattern on the majority of good sites is small gap dynamics, the TSA should model individual and group selection cutting systems for the parts of the southern Yukon where large natural disturbances are not the norm.

The next draft of the TSA will come out in the spring. Hopefully it will be considerably lower than the first draft's approximately 400,000 cubic meters. The TSA is supposed to be revisited every year or two in the future, so as research and planning falls into place it should be possible to adjust it. But it is vital to insist that, no matter what the timber supply is deemed to be this time around, that amount of wood does not have to be allocated. The Timber Regulations state that the available wood may be allocated, not that it must be allocated. The Annual Allowable Cut is a social decision to be made by the people of the Yukon, and the Timber Supply Analysis is only a tool to help make that decision.

karen baltgailis



Ddhah Ch'aa Tat

A original people captured the power of Tombstone mountain when they named it Ddhah Ch'aa Tat, "among the sharp, ragged rocky mountains." Wind, water and glacial ice have shaped these granite pinnacles into horns and sheer rock walls. Stair-step tarns and hanging lakes mirror the sky. The Tombstone Mountains are one of the Yukon's best-known and most cherished landmarks.

As part of the Yukon Protected Areas Strategy and the Trondek Hwech'in Land Claims final agreement, the first Yukon Territorial Park will be established in the Tombstone Mountain/Blackstone Uplands area. A local planning team will recommend the size and the boundaries for the park to the Yukon cabinet this fall.

About 1000 square kilometres have been set aside by the government under interim protection for consideration. This area is closed to development including mineral claim staking; however two-thirds of that did not receive protection until October, 1997. By that time, a local company had rushed in and staked several claims in the area. Some of these are right along the border of the smaller protected core. This company has applied for winter road access in order to begin exploration and development. A mine or road here would ruin the park.

An adjoining area in the Cloudy Range, Seela Pass, Blackstone Uplands and east of the Dempster Highway at North Fork is vital for a meaningful park but has received no protection. This area needs to receive interim protection now and be included in the future park boundary.



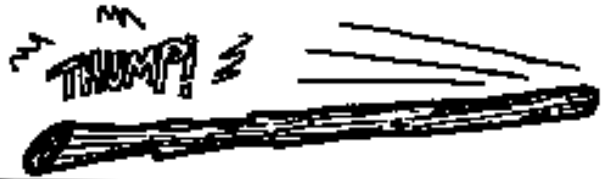
actual button size
available at the YCS office
2" — \$2.00; 1" — \$1.00

What is needed

We need a park that includes the entire study area: 2,300 square kilometres. A park that is:

- Big enough to support large mammals as well as rare plant communities;
- Big enough to include unique bird habitats;
- Big enough to include important archaeological sites and historical routes;
- big enough to include all nine ecosystem types found in the Tombstone/Blackstone region;
- Big enough to remain truly wild.

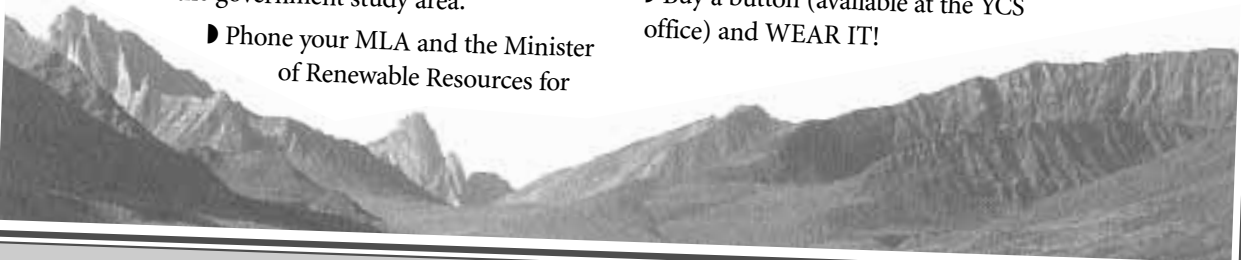
We need a whole park, not half of one — a park that will protect the pristine beauty of the Tombstone Mountains and the Blackstone Uplands for all time. Yukoners should ask for nothing less.



What You can Do

- ▶ Write, phone or fax Eric Fairclough, the Minister of Renewable resources, or your MLA, and say that you support protection of a large Tombstone Mountain Park of 2,300 square kilometres, as set out in the government study area.
- ▶ Phone your MLA and the Minister of Renewable Resources for

- an appointment to discuss the issue.
- ▶ Attend upcoming public meetings and express your opinion in support of a large park.
- ▶ Sign the Wildlands Charter.
- ▶ Buy a button (available at the YCS office) and WEAR IT!





I Am Diesel, Hear Me Roar!

If you live within sight or sound of the Whitehorse power dam over the last weeks, you'll have noticed that the diesel generators are running almost twenty-four hours a day. And that there seems to be a lot of water flooding over the ice below the dam on the Yukon river.

What's going on?

Well, in order to avoid draining the water out of Aishihik Lake, and thus destroying the lake for fish, loons, moose and people, the crown power company, Yukon Energy, is burning diesel instead.

Now, this ought to be cause for some head-scratching by all of us. It's not like there's a huge mine drawing power off of the electrical grid right now. So who's the culprit?

Um, well, the enemy is us.

Yup. If even the 9,000 people who live in Riverdale next to the dam had been given energy efficient lighting, and water heater super-insulation kits, we might not be burning Diesel nearly all the time. Nor would we have to drain Aishihik Lake.

With an aggressive energy efficiency campaign, hard-core greenies might even switch their hot-water heaters off during the peak demand hours, which are from around six a.m. until seven p.m., with the real crunch demand peaking between eight and ten in the morning. The exact hours seem to change a bit, depending on which winter month we're in. The power companies might even provide radio-controlled switches to shut off our hot water tanks during the peak hours.

But none of these things will happen unless we're told how to do them, and why we should. And, aside from the wonderful rush of Energy Week, it does seem to take quite a bit of pushing to get energy efficiency and conservation (EEC) to be taken seriously by the power people. In both senses of the word.

Well, until that happy day when we all get helped to use less power, instead of just firing up the diesels, let's get the word out underground. Let's get a whispering campaign going: "use compact fluorescent bulbs!", "wrap your hot water tank and pipes!", and that old smoothie "get a block-heater timer, or take the bus!"

Maybe if we all whisper loud enough, and get our own acts together, we might get heard over the roar of the diesels. Which might even be silenced by our efforts....

paul davis

Thanks For All Your Helping Hands

With the AGM coming up, and the election of a new Board of Directors and Executive Committee, it is time to look back over the past year at YCS; at our achievements and successes, and at the valuable contribution of the dozens of volunteers who made it all happen.

A huge thanks goes to this year's Board of Directors, Executive Committee and shadow board members. In addition to time spent on regular board functions, this board has invested a tremendous amount of energy in board development issues. In this time they have created a vision and strength that will positively contribute toward the effectiveness of future boards.

There are many other ways, outside of the Board, in which volunteers have made vital contributions to YCS. We're blessed with so many volunteers that we can't possibly name everybody (and there are some out there who would prefer to remain anonymous). But we would at

least like to mention a few of the many tasks and projects that have been made possible by volunteers. Volunteers contribute time, enthusiasm and brilliant ideas to fundraising efforts, research and project development. It is primarily the efforts of volunteers that bring us quarterly issues of *Walk Softly*. They staff the office on Fridays, bring us newspaper clippings, talk to the media, and occasionally wash the dishes. Over the past year, it was volunteers who organized our annual garage sale, revived our membership database and revamped our basement space. Volunteers represented YCS at public meetings, on advisory committees and at other consultation forums. Where would we be without volunteers?!!

One final thought in this big sentiment of appreciation goes out to a few individuals often seen coming and going from the YCS office. Behind the scenes, yet prominent in our minds is the time, energy and enthusiasm for catastrophe that distinguish our dedicated repair and maintenance team. Yeah Craig and Bob, thanks for being just a phone call away.

the staff of ycs

Faro's Potential Legacy

The mining industry often argues that the area impacted by a mine development is quite small and localized. However, they seldom factor in the impacts of roads, of the production of power, or of the downstream contamination from acid mine drainage and heavy metals.

The following excerpt from a consultant's report highlights the very real, long term risks a mine can pose to our watersheds. It is taken from the "Faro Mine Decommissioning Options and Issues Paper," written in 1993 by a professional mining engineer, Robert Rodger, for the federal government's Northern Affairs Program. This paper looks at various scenarios that might be expected to occur depending on the level of decommissioning work done at the Faro mine site. It serves to highlight the long-term liability this mine will pass on, either to its next owner or, failing that, to the public taxpayer. The clean-up bill has been estimated to be well over \$100 million; when the last owner of the Faro mine left town, there was about \$11 million in the fund they left behind to do the job.

The following description is what the consultant predicts would occur in the area if there was no decommissioning plan implemented and no monitoring or maintenance at the site. This "do nothing scenario" is a grim reminder of the down side of mining sulphide ores, and of a regulatory system that has been negligent in requiring both the early development of functional abandonment plans and payment of financial securities sufficient to cover clean-up.

8.1 Down Valley Tailings Impoundment

After Curragh Inc. stopped tailings deposition in the Down Valley Impoundment, zinc concentrations in the water increased to above allowable levels. Without the addition of lime to the water in the impoundment, zinc levels in the water discharged from the impoundment will exceed license levels. It can also be expected that the acidity of the water in the impoundment will also increase over time. As the ARD (Acid Rock Drainage) process develops, the levels of zinc and other metals can be expected to increase dramatically over time.

The impact, over time, of high zinc releases in Rose Creek will be elimination of the fish population in Rose Creek below the mine and in Anvil Creek downstream from the confluence with Rose Creek. The loss would be essentially permanent.

This would include utilization of Anvil Creek by the chinook salmon for spawning and rearing. The impact on the Pelly River can not be forecast with the available information and would require assessment. However, since chinook salmon may have to migrate through a contaminant plume, both upstream as adults and downstream as juveniles, the impact could potentially be significant.

At some point in time, structures such as the Intermediate Dam will fail, resulting in tailings entering Rose and Anvil Creeks. The Cross Valley Dam might provide a first line of defense, but the capacity of the pond is limited. It will fill with tailings and/or fail, perhaps at the time of failure of the Intermediate Dam, perhaps later. Depending on the type of failure, tailings would wash out of the impoundment and could travel some distance down Rose and Anvil Creeks. After a failure, tailings would continue to wash out of the impoundment and would probably reach the Pelly River with time.

Tailings entering Rose and Anvil Creeks will result in vegetation kill all along these creeks and could exacerbate





the effects of high zinc and/or other metal levels on the aquatic resources of these creeks.

8.2 Faro Open Pits and Waste Dumps

Seeps from the waste dumps contain high zinc values. This water presently flows into the DVT Impoundment and would add to the zinc loading entering Rose Creek.

After the Faro pit has filled with water, discharge from the pit will flow through the Zone II pit and waste dump into the North Fork of Rose Creek. The discharge water will be come contaminated and would add to the zinc loading entering Rose Creek.

The Faro Creek diversion channel will fail in time, and the creek will flow into the Faro pit. Depending on where this failure occurs, the high sulphide waste in the waste dump in the Faro Creek channel north of the pit could contribute to zinc loadings in the water of Faro pit.

8.3 Vangorda Plateau

Without water treatment, zinc levels in the water discharged from the Vangorda collection pond will exceed license limits. It can also be expected that acidity of the water in the pond will also increase over time.

The impact over time of high zinc levels in Vangorda Creek are expected to be significant. The lower reaches of the creek are utilized by large numbers of juvenile chinook salmon (up to 20,000 at one time). During the summer, the total number of juvenile salmon utilizing the creek could be several times larger. All may be affected by the contamination, either succumbing to it or becoming increasingly vulnerable to predation. The impact on the Pelly River can not be forecast with the available information and would require assessment.

The Vangorda Creek diversion channel will fail in time, and the creek will flow into Vangorda pit. Since the inverted metal culvert is only designed for a 20 year flood event, failure in that section would probably occur within a short time frame.

Sediment from Vangorda Creek, and from the Grum pit and waste dumps would probably result in high sediment loads in the creek.

8.4 Mill, Surface and other Facilities

An unattended site will increase the risk of accidents, the major health and safety issue at the site.

R2000

In these days of acronyms it is so easy to get bogged down. Y to y, Y to k, R to 1000? All those letters going to somewhere. What is R2000? R2000 is an energy efficient housing concept dreamed up in the eighties. It was supposed to mimic what houses would be like in the year 2000 based on projected energy costs. R2000 homes incorporate energy efficient design and building techniques. The whole house is considered as a system which must be in balance. Increasing concern over greenhouse gas emissions has spurred even more interest in R2000. Besides just reducing carbon dioxide emissions, why should we build this way?

These houses aren't just energy efficient. Because humans live in them and use oxygen, there needs to be a balanced air exchange system (Heat Recovery Ventilation (HRV)) to provide just enough fresh air for its occupants thus making these homes healthier and more comfortable to live in.

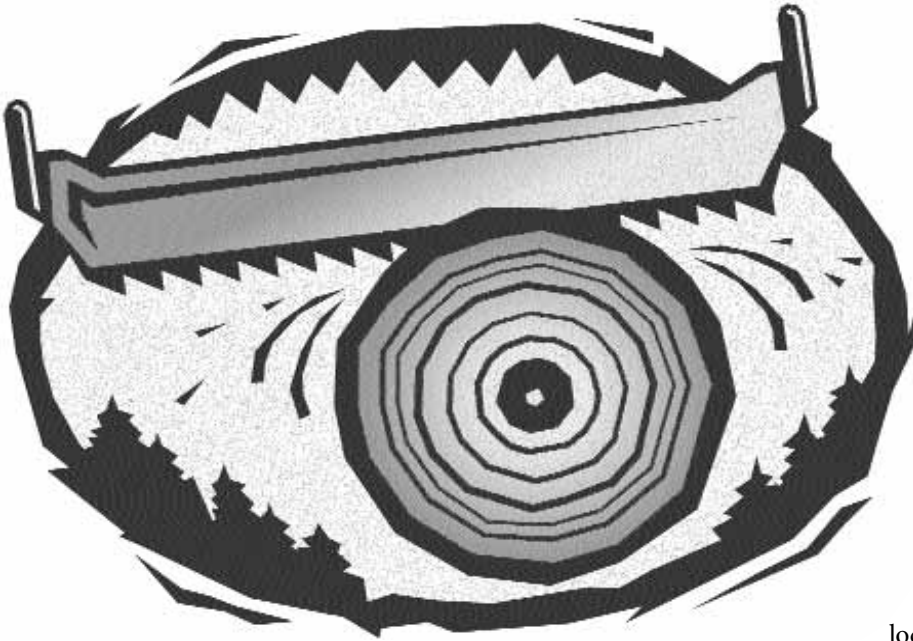
Because so much effort is spent sealing all penetrations to make the house airtight, these homes are far less dusty than conventional homes. This is of importance to those of us who clean their homes or have allergies.

A continuous vapour barrier not only keeps unwanted moisture out of the walls, but keeps it inside the house where we as humans need it. People do best at 40-60% relative humidity. The HRV mentioned earlier keeps the humidity generated by living inside the house from getting too high.

Something else? Oh yeah! They're cheap to operate! Computer modeling helps us determine maximum bang for our buck when it comes to window choice, building orientation to maximize solar gain, insulation levels, etc... All possible factors are manipulated to produce a home that requires as little energy as possible to keep the cold out and heat in for not much extra initial cash outlay. As an added twist, spending less money to be more comfortable produces less carbon dioxide.

Right now there are only 18 registered R2000 homes in the Yukon. If you are in the position of building a new home, seriously consider the environmental and human benefits of going R2000 and get an R2000 certified builder to build your home. If you live in an old shack like myself consider upgrading windows, insulation, doors and seal up those drafty spots.

craig olsen



New Watson Lake Sawmill

So it's almost guaranteed that South Yukon Forest Corp is going to start putting the pressure on for a Timber Supply Agreement of its own. And that's when the Yukon public needs to put its collective foot down. Sure, we all want local processing of wood, and the company says it will provide 24 jobs now, and up to 90 at full

capacity. 200,000 cubic meters is a lot of wood, though. If the next round of the TSA determines that there is enough wood in reasonable trucking distance, and if local loggers want to sell to the mill, they're welcome to it. But there is no reason why we should let South Yukon Timber Corp blackmail the public into giving them a long term tenure. That would mean that either that one mill would gobble up almost all the local wood supply (hmmm...sounds like Alberta and BC!) or, far more likely, the annual cut would be raised by opening up new areas currently not included in the Timber Supply Analysis. Any commercially viable areas that are not presently included in the TSA have been excluded because they are in sub-watersheds into which there is at present no access.

This is the same kind of scenario as all the loggers who invested in faller-bunchers during the 1993-94 boom. Those loggers should not be allowed to clear cut in areas where only selection or shelterwood systems are appropriate just because their equipment is only suitable for clear cutting. And South Yukon Timber Corp should not be allocated a Timber Harvesting Agreement in an untouched sub-watershed because they invested in a big mill without first making sure that the available wood supply is sufficient.

karen baltgailis

You've no doubt heard in the media about the new South Yukon Forest Corp mill in Watson Lake. They've just finished building a nine million dollar sawmill with no guaranteed wood supply. At this time the mill requires 100,000 cubic meters per year. In future years they want 200,000 cubic meters per year in order to make enough money to invest in a kiln and planer. South Yukon Forest Corp is already screaming because they haven't been getting wood due to permitting delays for loggers. DIAND says the delays are due to necessary reorganizing and that in the future the permitting process will run smoothly. But even if all the permits are out in good time next year, the mill still may be crying for wood. South Yukon Forest Corp is negotiating a deal to get wood from Kaska Forest Resources' Timber Harvesting Agreement area. That would be a maximum of 77,000 cubic meters a year. The entire volume planned for permit (non-THA) harvest in the Labiche, Coal and Liard Forest Management Units this year is 187,000 cubic meters. Since trucking wood in from further away is probably not economically feasible, at full capacity the mill needs three quarters of the available timber from the three richest Forest Management Units. And there is no guarantee that loggers will want to sell to them — that will depend on how much they pay compared to other markets.



Traffic What?

A couple of years ago I was at a meeting for the then-new-to-us South Access or Robert Service Way, the big road into town from the Alaska Highway.

I was speaking with a consultant for the city when I pointed out that there was a need for 'traffic calming' at the intersection of Second Avenue and the Riverdale Bridge.

"Traffic What?" was his reply.

I sighed. And carefully explained that there was a movement amongst many city dwellers in Europe and North America to 'calm' motor traffic to make public streets and parks safer and more pleasant for the people who live there.

Now, this is a major culture-change for your typical traffic engineer, educated in the 1970's in any civil engineering school in Canada or the US. You see, in these schools, traffic planning is to get the car people from point 'A' to point 'B', as quickly as possible.

The problem is that the 'point A to B' approach ignores the flattened dogs, and unlivable places that it produces alongside these 'arterial' roads. It's as if nobody pointed out that the noise, the pollution, and the uncrossable bands of asphalt, could be as effective as Berlin Walls in dividing communities...

But not all is lost! Across Canada and Europe, citizens are demanding that their homes and streets are made safer for pedestrians, cyclists, children, and even dogs. By deliberately slowing down traffic, in clever ways.

Like using traffic islands in the centre of smaller intersections which would normally be covered by two stop signs. The traffic islands are high enough that cars with suspension systems have to slow down as they move through, while cyclists and pedestrians just go right over them. Some, in Toronto, and in Holland, become traffic circles with gardens reclaiming the pavement!

And it all started with citizens using words traffic managers had never heard of...

paul davis

Agriculture and you

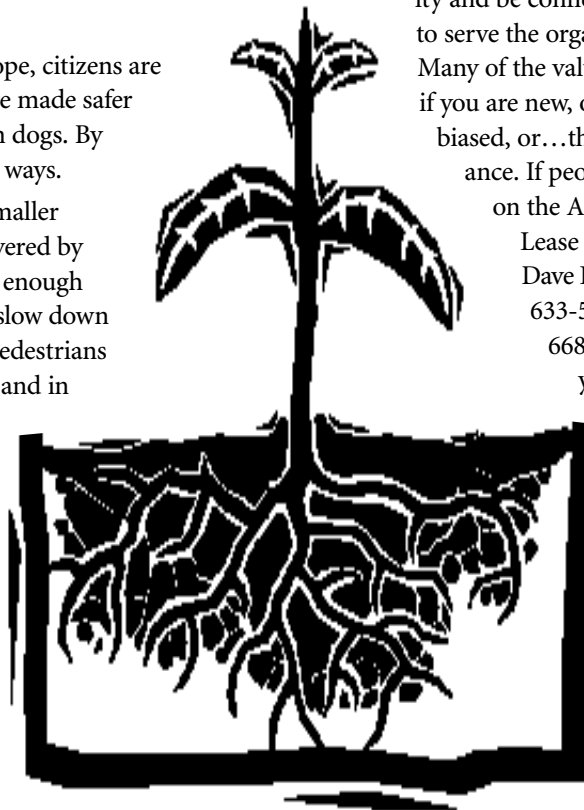
One night in February the YCS boardmembers (who could attend) had a mini retreat. One of the things that we discussed was how to guide YCS volunteers and staff when it comes to things like meetings and written submissions. We decided to begin putting value statements to environmental issues. This allows people more flexibility to speak out if they know what is important. It also allows more people to have input into YCS issues since none of us could ever be as up on the specifics of issues as Jennifer for example. What's the point of all this? As an example we came up with values for Agriculture that YCS would maintain for the current Agriculture Policy review. They are as follows:

- 1) We want to support a local economy and have access to local food
- 2) We want to support local employment
- 3) We want to see only legitimate farmers getting access to agricultural land
- 3) We don't want wildlife to be affected in a significant way
- 4) We want agriculture happening only in planned areas

Given these values as a basis to work with (there are likely others that come up too) a representative of YCS, (in this case me) can work to the best of their ability and be confident that they did well to serve the organization at large.

Many of the values seem obvious, but if you are new, or miss something, are biased, or...they are there as guidance. If people want to comment on the Agriculture or Grazing Lease Policies contact Dave Loeks at Transnorthern 633-5470 or myself at YCS 668-5678 and I can pass your comments on.

craig olson



WANTED!

The Yukon Conservation Society always has a wide range of tasks for volunteers to jump in and tackle. We have short-term tasks, long-term projects and lots of in-between stuff. Some will take an hour or so, some a lot longer. Some require a few skills, many offer new skills to be learned and all offer the feeling of accomplishment!

Below are a few jobs we need help on. If something grabs your interest or if you have ideas of your own, please drop in or give our office a call.

Are you familiar with FileMaker Pro? This data base software forms the template for an interactive database that was designed specifically for non-profit organizations such as YCS. We have acquired the program (free of charge to registered charities) but have not been able to work out the bugs or customize the program to suit our specific needs. We are looking for a volunteer who has the time and expertise to take on this challenge. The person we have in mind for this position will be experienced with FileMaker Pro and will be capable of working independently.

Behind the scenes but high on the list of priorities, YCS needs a handyman. Someone who is willing to volunteer on an as-needed basis, this position varies with the household catastrophes that occur in the YCS office space and adjacent tenant suite. If you have skills to offer — electrical, carpentry etc., please give our office a call.

There is a lot going on at YCS these days and sometimes the office can be a rather hectic place. In attempt to relieve some of the pressures on office staff, we are looking for volunteers to cover reception and office support duties between 10am and 2pm, Monday to Friday.



Volunteers will be responsible for answering the telephone and providing assistance to walk-ins, as well as assisting with other office tasks. If you have the time to commit to one or more days/week, please call our office. Full training will be provided.

YCS is still looking for a volunteer treasurer. This individual will assist the Office Coordinator and the Finance Committee in financial matters that include writing budgets, preparing financial statements and making financial presentation to the board. If you are an experienced accountant/bookkeeping, we need you!

VOLUNTEERS!



WHITEHORSE BIKES!!

Although its hardly ideal biking weather, Whitehorse Bikes!! (formally known as the Whitehorse Bike Coop) has been dreaming and scheming a world where bikes are more widely used than cars.

Following the outcome of our first workshop, we have been focused on organizing awareness raising events and information as means of breaking down the barriers that currently stand between potential cycle commuters and the road. With financial assistance from the Yukon Lotteries, we are in the process of

writing and producing two educational pamphlets. One focuses on the benefits of choosing bikes over cars. The other provides information and suggestions for how to overcome the fears and hurdles of bicycle commuting.

In the spring months we will be coordinating a bike swap. This event will momentarily expand the used bike market of Whitehorse, hopefully bring out the neglected and unwanted machines that are rusting away in basements and sheds all over town, as well as the bikeless in search of a machine. The second workshop will be a hands-on approach to basic bicycle maintenance and repairs, followed by a group ride along the commuter routes of Whitehorse.

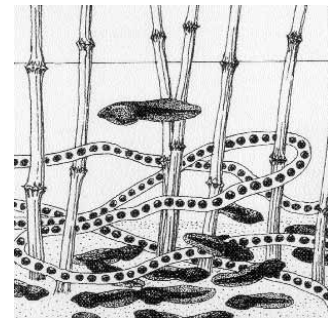
If you are interested in this project, we are looking for volunteer help and would appreciate hearing from you. Contact Rosa and Kirsten at the YCS office.

YUKON BIRD CLUB EVENTS

Thursday 25 March Australia's East Coast! This slide-illustrated presentation by Jim Hawkings will explore the unique and exceptional beauty of Australia's East Coast from Cairns to Melbourne. Meet at the Whitehorse Public Library at 7:00 pm.

Thursday 29 April Shorebird Identification Workshop! From the familiar Killdeer to the elusive Buff-breasted Sandpiper, there are few groups of birds as

fascinating as shorebirds. This visually exquisite presentation by Cameron Eckert will help you make sense of their complicated plumages, unusual forms and extraordinary lifestyles. Meet at the Whitehorse Public Library at 7:00 pm.



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

I'd like to make a tax deductible gift!

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

Sign me up as a 1999 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)

new!

- 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:

VISA # _____ Expiry date ____/____

Signature for VISA: _____

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTAL CODE _____ PHONE _____

- Yes, add me to the YCS' members email list (and get no more than two informative emails a month on Yukon issues or YCS activities).


EMAIL _____


Mail your form to Yukon Conservation Society,
 Box 4163, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 3T3


Advocacy → Research → Environmental Education → Planning → Consultation

Did you know?

...

 YCS and YTG have signed an agreement providing \$150,000.00 to enhance skills and employability of people currently working in environmental protection and awareness. Stay tuned for more information as this gets up and running.

 The annual general meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 31 at 7:30pm at the Alpine Bakery meeting room. We will be electing a new Board of Directors and discussing constitutional changes.

 *Walk Softly* welcomes letters to the editor. Send us your views and news.

Conservation → Sustainable Communities → Grassroots → Non-profit → Volunteers

Yukon Conservation Society

Box 4163, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 3T3

