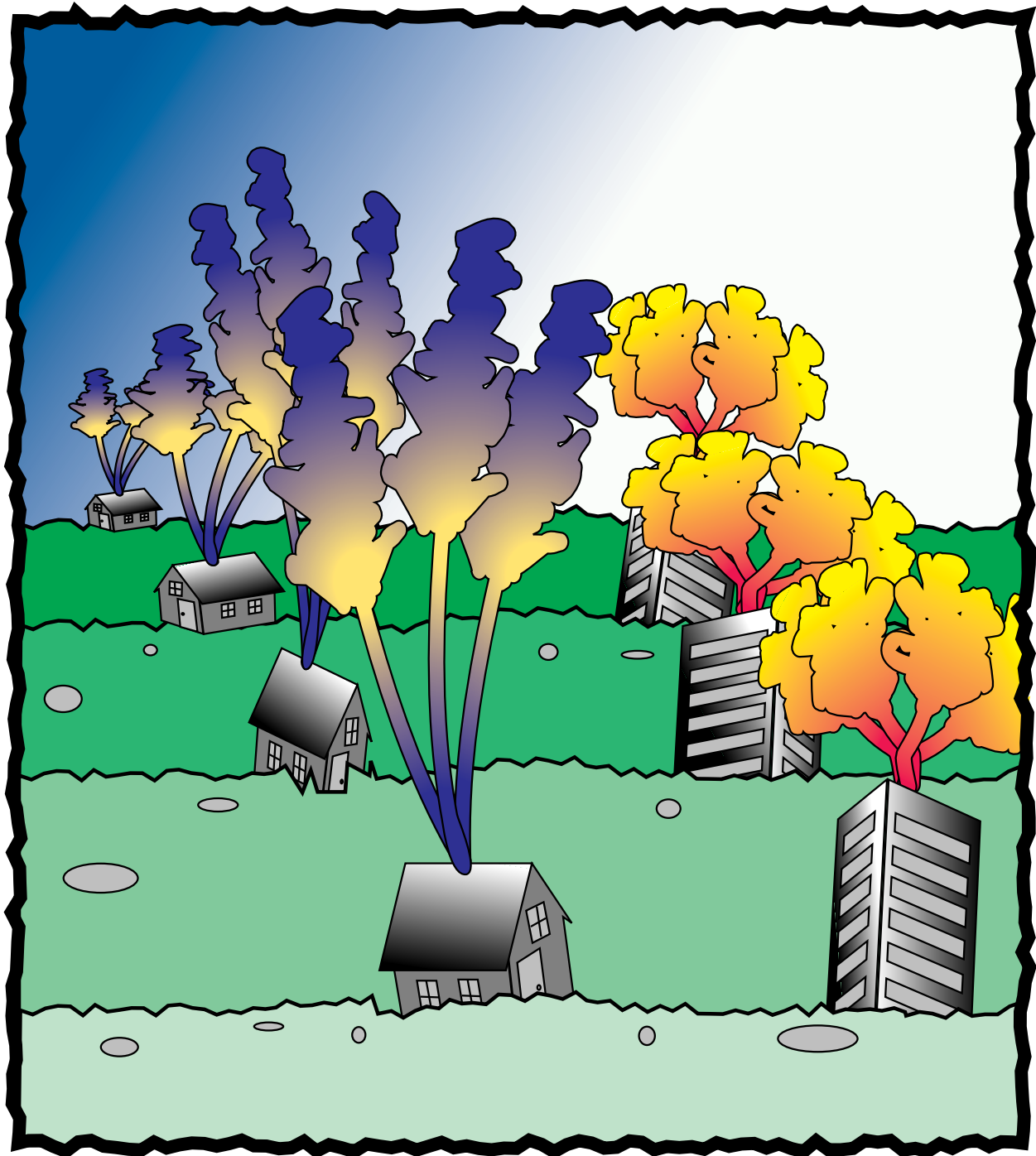


The YCS QUARTERLY

Newsletter of the Yukon Conservation Society

July 1994



INSIDE: Foreign Policy ♦ Environmental Education ♦ News ♦ Sustainable Communities ♦ Y2C2

Towards a Northern Foreign Policy for Canada

A Commentary on the Northern Foreign Policy Conference

It was the end of April when I attended the Northern Foreign Policy Conference, and this year Ottawa—where the conference was held—remained in the biting grip of winter longer than usual. Meanwhile, back in Whitehorse, the weather had turned suddenly tropical, or so I was told. But then again, one knows full well that stories about the weather are what flow fastest in spring. By the time I returned to Whitehorse, the cold front had retrenched.

Participants at the Northern Foreign Policy conference included representatives of NGOs & aboriginal organizations, government representatives—although the Yukon government did not participate—and academics. Those attending deliberated principles for a distinctly northern foreign policy, means of building on existing initiatives, identifying key issues requiring circumpolar cooperation and dismantling the legacy, particularly of isolation among circumpolar residents, of the cold war in the north.

Now that the Liberal government is well into its mandate, the commitments identified in the Liberal's red book are beginning to take shape. Among the commitments identified, the Liberals promised to conduct a review of Canada's foreign policy. To date, this has included establishing various mechanisms for national debate on the various aspects of foreign policy. The Northern Foreign Policy for Canada conference was convened by the Canadian Polar Commission, The Canadian Centre for Global Security with the Inuit Circumpolar Conference and the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, in response to the government's initiatives and resulted in recommendations for bilateral initiatives and possibilities as well as directions for

multilateral undertakings in foreign policy which would give voice and much needed attention to circumpolar issues. Among the proposals developed at the conference was the notion of an Arctic Council, by no means a new proposition, but one which yet to come to fruition.

The proposal to develop an Arctic Council emerged in 1985 from the realization that a permanent political instrument was needed to fully address circumpolar issues on an ongoing instead of an ad hoc basis. With membership made up at minimum by the eight Arctic nations (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, CIS, Sweden and the United States) and including, Canadian proponents argued, aboriginal participation, an Arctic Council would set the agenda, establish priorities, and secure and distribute resources to meet circumpolar aspirations. Significantly, at the recent conference, participants noted the such a body would be key in ensuring that northern issues remain visible on national agendas.

The previous governments in the US and in Canada did not pursue the Arctic Council as a priority. Hence, mechanisms such as the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, which enables scientific and technical cooperation among circumpolar nations on environmental issues, have lacked the leverage of proximate political clout to realize their full potential. In case of the AEPS, this potential includes prevention, clean-up, implementation and enforcement. Until recently, the Americans have consistently resisted the notion of establishing an Arctic Council with an open agenda and aboriginal participation, a proposition endorsed by Canadians, particularly aboriginal organizations. Recently, American interest in an Arctic Council has warmed somewhat, although not on the question of an open agenda—the US proposes a political body be fused to the AEPS—or on the question of aboriginal participation. On one question both



the Canadian and US governments agree: neither supports the role of the Arctic Council as a supra-national institution. Neither government wants to transfer any authority currently held at the national level.

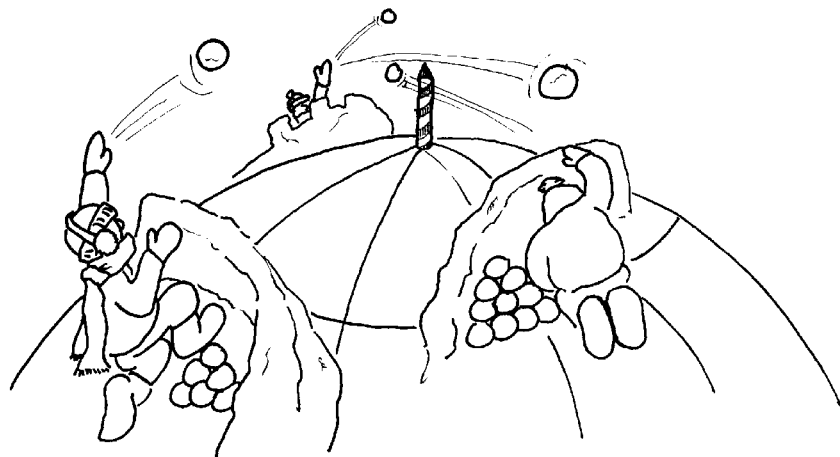
From an environmental perspective would it be helpful to pursue an Arctic Council as proposed by the US? Is this an acceptable second-best option? Possibly, but not likely. The danger that the scientific and technical cooperation on environmental research made possible by the AEPS would be undermined by such direct politicization is likely. And without aboriginal participation, this politicization would reduce the possibility of aboriginal environmental concerns being engaged, much less the inclusion of traditional knowledge as a valid and valuable mechanism for understanding environmental issues in the north. The AEPS is best served, I think, by affiliation to a broadly mandated Arctic Council, but at arms length. Furthermore, ensuring environmental concerns are addressed cannot be limited to the scientific and technical aspects of the issues. The environment would be better served by an Arctic Council with an open agenda which capable of addressing such as international trading agreements and their effects on the north, including their implications for the environment.

As Ron Doering, member of the National Roundtable on Environment and Economy, has often pointed out, the environmental crisis is very much a crisis of governance. Hence, the experience of northerners in building and maintaining the institutions of democracy, honed in northern Canada

through land claims negotiations, should be central to any new political mechanism including the Arctic Council. The Arctic Council would benefit from aboriginal participation as well as consultation with northerners and specific sectors of society such as non-government organizations and associations. The crisis of governance will not be resolved by exclusion of aboriginal peoples from the Arctic Council which would be directing national governments—it will exacerbate it. Nor will it be resolved without explicit provisions for meaningful consultation with northerners.

There are key issues which, from an environmental perspective, are badly in need of attention and which the Canadian government should address either via a broadly-mandated Arctic Council or bilaterally:

- Securing commitment among circumpolar nations to the agreement for transboundary impact assessment, to which Canada should become signatory.
- Development of a binding arrangement allowing for circumpolar conventions
- Development of a Circumpolar Sustainable Development Treaty
- Inclusion of traditional knowledge in decision-making around circumpolar initiatives
- Rooting foreign policy aspirations in domestic policy, by, for example, completion of a land use planning strategy which would allow Canada to meet its own commitments for a protected areas strategy



Will we get stalled amidst the smoke and mirrors approach to the constitutional debate—which ostensibly the Liberals are not engaging—where decisions on whether or not to adopt a policy are made on the basis of perceived sale-ability in the provinces? It was dismaying to many to hear the Minister of DIAND take a highly utilitarian view of aboriginal cooperation across the north, describing it as ‘a solution looking for a problem—that problem [being] national unity.’

Will we continue to follow the foreign policy lead, albeit an uninspired and undecisive one, from the Washington White House? Or will this government enable Canada to implement the foreign policies, programs and institutions the post-cold war era holds out to us? Will it chart an independent course? Will the federal government turn its attention north and build a foreign policy for the nation recognizing its role as a major circumpolar player? Will the government heed the voices repeating the message that occasional vague interest must engage the depth and breadth of issues in the north of Canada and among circumpolar nations? These questions will, of course, not be answered quickly, for like the slow growing and vulnerable Arctic char to which the Minister of Indian and Northern

Affairs, Hon. Ron Irwin referred to in his opening remarks at the conference, transforming northern policy into an effective instrument reflecting both traditional and contemporary directions and inventing a northern foreign policy, will be a task only gradually and carefully accomplished. We can, however, look for the mileposts which would reflect a coming of age in the attitudes of southern governments about the north in an international context. The announcement of the creation of the post of Arctic Ambassador is one such welcome milepost. The establishment of an Arctic Council with aboriginal participation, empowered to address critical issues, especially environmental issues should be another. Let us hope that the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade will pursue the Arctic Council as a central priority of this government and leave the hyperbole to northerners reporting to expatriates on the weather.

The Yukon Conservation Society would like to thank the Gordon Foundation for their generous support enabling a YCS representative to attend the Conference on Northern Foreign Policy for Canada.



Become a YCS Associate Researcher

The YCS is compiling a list of environmentally-oriented people with research, writing, organizing and/or other skills who may be interested in working (for money!) on YCS projects. Possible work activities include producing educational resources, writing research papers, creating slide shows or videos, or coordinating events and projects.

Please send your resume to YCS with a covering letter that clearly highlights: skills you have to offer

areas of environmental expertise; areas of environmental interest; expected daily fees anticipated; time availability; office space/equipment you would require; contact information.

For further information on becoming an Associate Researcher, contact Jennifer Ellis at 668-5678. Mail resumes to YCS, Box 4163, Whitehorse, YT, Y1A 3T3 or drop them off at our office at 302 Hawkins Street.



Editorial

The YCS Quarterly

is published by the Yukon Conservation Society and is available free of charge to members of the Society. Memberships and information about the Society can be obtained by phoning the YCS at (403) 668-5678, by writing to Box 4136, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 3T3, or by visiting the YCS office at 302 Hawkins Street, Whitehorse.

We welcome newsletter submissions and letters to the editor.

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What would we do without volunteers?

In thinking about what to write for this editorial, I considered many topics but finally settled on the topic of volunteers. I questioned that decision since the topic of volunteers doesn't directly relate to any of the stories we have in this issue. But indirectly... this newsletter couldn't have happened without all the volunteer effort given by both writers and production folk.

That's how most things are at YCS. Without the volunteers, we couldn't begin to do what we do. We have volunteers, such as Charles O'Hara and Marie-Helene Comeau who stop in regularly and spend a few hours doing whatever we need at that moment in time. It works well for us and them since we can both schedule their efforts into the YCS some-what scrambled scheme of things. Yeah Charles! Yeah Marie-Helene! And then there is Margaret Miller who has been coming by and diligently working to update and streamline the YCS filing system. It needed it. Just ask her. Alright Margaret!

The volunteer effort given by our Board of Directors is essential and has been since the birth of the Society 26 years ago. Board representation and sweat is ingrained in our present 21 committees. My conservative estimate of total energy given by the Board during a given summer month is about 112 hours! In the winter, this devotion probably doubles as work load for the Board and the varied committees increases with the advocacy and issue work to be done.

And what about this newsletter? Over the past year, we have received so many compliments about the cleaner, more professional look of the newsletter. We've been told repeatedly that the look and content of the newsletter just keeps getting better. Supported with volunteer layout and design assistance from Paul Mantle of Keyline Graphic Design, and illustrations by Tanya Handley, our newsletter just keeps getting better.

We need our volunteers and are very grateful for all and any support that comes our way. If you'd like to join the volunteer task force, just drop in. We need folk to work on issues but also could use the assistance of those willing to come in on a somewhat regular basis to help with things around the office.

Thanks everybody.

shelley gerber

Farewell, Alan

All great rivers eventually reach the sea. Alan Young, past Executive Director for the Yukon Conservation Society is now at the sea in Sooke, but his time in the Yukon was quite a river journey!

Those concerned with the environment sat on the shores of that river, watching Alan hard at work. His accomplishments were many. He began his time in the Yukon working with the Federal Land Use Planning Office largely on the Greater Kluane Land Use Plan. Later, he joined the Porcupine Caribou Management Board in the role of Secretariat. These were excellent opportunities for Alan to become familiar with the Yukon style of collective process needed for arriving at agreements in environmental 'management'. Although he was up against turbulent waters in these pursuits, Alan maneuvered through them quite successfully.

In fact, like water, Alan has a wonderful tendency of finding and choosing the path of least



resistance. One might wonder how an environmental activist could possibly find anything but resistance in his or her work. For instance, when faced with such an extreme concept as industrial forestry, one might be drawn toward an equally extreme position of blockading log-

ging roads or tree spiking! However, Alan seemed to be charged with avoiding polarization for it was the art of finding common ground which was his specialty.

Also, the method in which he established compromise was so intriguing. How can I describe it? Perfectly Zen! It was the ability to patiently receive the ideas of others but rather than dam or disregard them, he would skillfully round out those perspectives bringing people to a more wholistic understanding of the situation or problem, and always with great gentleness.

We all sat on his shores and observed, but before long, many of us jumped in that river and went with the flow. He enlisted tremendous support in the Boreal Forest Caucus as well as the Endangered Spaces and Tatshenshini campaigns. How did he gain all of this patronage? He led by example and by action.

In exploring alternative forest harvesting practices, Alan did not restrict himself to reading books or attending conferences - he also went out in the bush and worked for a selective logger in the Whitehorse area. Actions like this provided a foundation for his advocacy. He also gave a new meaning to the word "dedication". It seemed that his biggest flaw was the fact that he was so accommodating and could not say "NO!" when it came time for something to be done at YCS. Something other than financial return drove him during his position as executive director of YCS because the amount of unpaid overtime he put in was insane! We can only hope that this dedication has washed off on the present members of YCS.

Unfortunately, rivers cannot break their pact with the sea and so Alan has finished this river journey and reached the ocean at Sooke. But don't despair, for if you keep the hydrologic cycle in mind, you will know that rivers run to the ocean evaporation occurs precipitation forms which in time falls in the Yukon. If we put our trust in the cycle, we may see him back here.



COMMUNITY FORESTRY WORKSHOP: *“hard on issues, soft on people”*

High attendance and public opinion at recent forestry meetings suggests that Yukoners are alarmed and apprehensive. Are present timber management practices in the Yukon sustainable? Do forest management plans balance the need for resources other than timber? If not, are there viable alternatives to present forestry practices?

To address these critical questions, particularly the question of alternatives, the Forest Committee of the Yukon Conservation Society (YCS) invited renowned forest ecologist, Mr. Herb Hammond, to share his ideas on sustainable forest use with interested Yukoners.

Mr. Hammond is a Registered Professional Forester, currently living and working in British Columbia. He has over 30 years experience as a landscape ecologist working in temperate and boreal forest ecosystems. As well as teaching practical forestry courses, Mr. Hammond has written numerous papers and books, with his most recent being, *Seeing the Forest Among the Trees* (reference copy available in the YCS library). Mr. Hammond has spent considerable time working with First Nations in B.C., Labrador, and Siberia.

In early May of this year, Mr. Hammond attracted over 65 people to a one day Community Forestry workshop and evening seminar held at Yukon College. This diverse group included representatives from the federal and territorial governments, several First Nations, non-government groups and individuals.

For most of the morning session, Mr. Hammond explored the dynamic relationships between the fundamental components of a healthy boreal forest, and the impacts of conventional timber extraction on the forest. Mr. Hammond cautioned: “[we] have to start seeing landscapes as ecosystems that sustain us, not just as a pile of resources.”

For the remainder of the morning session, partici-

pants voiced (a long list of) concerns about current Yukon forestry practices, i.e. lack of legislation that protects forests, conventional (clearcut) timber practices, decreasing bio-diversity, loss of old growth forests, how to balance what we produce with what we use. Attentive to each comment, Mr. Hammond listed and attempted to group participants concerns. These concerns were frequently referenced to during the following sessions.

The afternoon session started promptly with a discussion of wholistic forest use, followed by a crash course in economics. One of the major stumbling blocks in the field of ecological economics is that society affixes no value to ecosystems and no cost to ecosystem degradation. However, as Mr. Hammond noted, strong, viable economies are rarely based on resource extraction alone.

For the last hour of the workshop, participants questioned Mr. Hammond further on issues related to the practice of wholistic forest use.

After a short supper break, a weary looking (but still enthusiastic) Mr. Hammond presented a shortened version of the day workshop to approximately 35 people attending the evening seminar.

Mr. Hammond brought to the Yukon much needed intuition and experience of sustainable community forestry in the boreal forest. In regards to future logging practices, a parting comment from Mr. Hammond, “focus on what to leave ... not on what to take.”

The workshop was taped (audio and video) and copies can be made available at a nominal cost. Please contact Sue Olsen at YCS (668-5678) if you are interested.

sue olsen

- THINK LIKE A FOREST -

Building Sustainable Communities

For the Yukon Conservation Society (YCS), the building of healthy sustainable communities is seen as integral to long term conservation goals. To effectively identify and respond to an environmental issue a community needs to have people able and willing to work within their community and beyond if necessary, to develop and carry out a plan of action. These people need adequate resources and support. The community needs to be healthy enough to allow for its members to focus on the problem, communicate about the issues, build partnerships, resolve how they wish to address it and then to act.

Most Yukon communities face a number of social, economic, health and environmental issues that impede building the sustainability of their community. Community leaders and others working for change address the issues as they can, typically working with limited resources and a small, varied skill base to draw on. The list of issues demanding attention is long.

Although many of the issues are community specific, there are commonalities in both the problems and the solutions. However, an effective, ongoing network for sharing ideas, knowledge, resources and skills community to community does not currently exist. The need for such an ongoing exchange of information was highlighted in at least three conferences in the last year: The Community Caribou Workshop; The Forum on Northern Protected Areas and Wilderness; and The Community Contaminants Workshop. The ability to respond to problems and to initiate community change is constrained by this lack of shared resources, knowledge and skills.

The need for developing skills and an information network is something that goes beyond geographical communities. Different sectors of society working for change, need to build partnerships on common issues, to share expertise and to learn from each other. Non-government environmental organi-

zations (ENGOS) like the YCS have a lot of skills (i.e. lobbying, media relations, organizing volunteers) and expertise (i.e. on toxics, water pollution, sewage treatment) to offer community people. Environmental groups also have a lot to learn from community people (i.e. about traditional wildlife management practices, local ecological knowledge and observations of an area, cultural awareness and communication, community priorities).

There are also a number of common needs facing both ENGOS and First Nation communities. The need to effectively decipher and keep on top of information, to learn more about sustainability issues, to broaden the skill base of activists and to involve others in the planning and delivery of programs, are shared by these two types of communities. These needs will only increase with the evolution of the land claims process.

Building solid foundations in communities is a comprehensive and long-term project. In the process of exploring the opportunities for developing a community-based training program and information sharing network that would address community needs, the YCS learned of similar ideas and projects being discussed across the country, projects that would be worth linking up with to share knowledge and/or access financial support. The YCS has just received funding from the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, a Toronto-based foundation which supports community work in the North, to spend time planning and developing the "Building Sustainable Communities Project." This first step will allow for the full exploration of program and funding options, for developing community, territorial and national partnerships, and for creating a solid community-based program.

At this stage, the YCS has developed the following draft objectives and goals for the project. It is expected that information gathered in the planning and development phase (July to October) will result in changes to these objectives and goals so that they



will accurately reflect the input of all the partners and the needs of the communities in particular.

Objective

To assist in the development of the capacity of Yukon community members to build and maintain socially and environmentally sustainable communities.

Goals

- Assist community activists through training and support to enhance their ability to animate community action and change.
- Broaden the skill base in Yukon communities to increase participation in the task of developing sustainable communities.
- Improve the anticipation of and response to issues affecting community health and sustainability by developing a network that will allow for the efficient exchange of information among Yukon communities, and between the Yukon and the rest of Canada
- Build partnerships between Yukon environmental non-government organizations (ENGOS),

tribal councils, municipal bodies and other community groups interested in community health and sustainability.

Reaching these objectives will require a significant investment of time. Through its ongoing activities, the YCS has developed a number of important contacts that will benefit the building of partnerships and that have revealed important community resources which will be integral to implementing an effective program. The YCS will be working closely with organizations representing Yukon First Nations people at the territorial and community level, with the Association for Yukon Communities, other non-government organizations working for change in the communities, educational bodies such as Yukon College and the schools, and programs outside of the Yukon that may offer expertise and financial resources.

The Building Sustainable Communities Project will be an exciting and rewarding long-term effort that will benefit communities and their environments throughout the Yukon. If you are interested in learning more about this project, please call Jennifer Ellis at YCS (668-5678).

jennifer ellis

THE GREEN PAGES...

GET YOURS TODAY!

The Green Pages is a directory of Yukon agencies that deal with a variety of environmental issues. Includes contact information for non-government groups, First Nations, government and funding bodies.



To order your directory write to;

Northern Environmental Network
Box 3932, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 3S7

or call 668-2482 and leave your order on our answering machine.

YEAR 3 FOR Y2C2

This is the third year running for the Yukon Youth Conservation Corps. Each summer Y2C2 hires and trains 21 students and works with community groups on environmental and conservation projects. During the last two summers, Y2C2 completed over 80 projects and employed 42 youth. Along with the obvious results of achieved project objectives, Y2C2 program linked youth with community representatives, gave employees valuable training for future job opportunities and served as a positive influence for youth by getting them involved in challenging and worthwhile projects.

Y2C2 workers have worked closely with community representatives and have been stationed around the territory. This year, the students are divided into four crews and located in Haines Junction, Whitehorse, Dawson City and Mayo.

Projects undertaken by Y2C2 are proposed throughout the preceding fall and winter and are selected by a review committee during the months of April and May. The primary criteria used to select projects are: benefit to the environment, educational benefit for the students and organization of the project. The projects lined up for this summer focus on waste management, trail development and interpretation, fisheries, wildlife and vegetation studies, traditional knowledge interpretation, and clean up projects.

The crew leaders started work the beginning of

June and completed a month of training, various projects and assisted with the hiring and training of the field workers. The crew leader training camp ran from May 30 to June 3 at Wolf Creek Campground. It was a busy week that included workshops in supervisory skills, water safety, meditation training, Project Wild, wilderness survival and camp cooking. Activities, such as challenge/initiative exercises and Yukon and global environment discussions, challenged the values and ethics of individuals and society and helped to establish proper method and procedures for the summer program.

Field workers are students aged 16-22 who have background education and experience with the outdoors or environment. Their work began on June 27th with an intensive training camp. Drawing on the expertise of community resources, the Y2C2 crew leaders developed a training camp that addressed challenges that will be faced throughout the summer. As well as learning job skills, the camp provided opportunity for developing group trust and initiative, physical challenges, knowledge of Yukon renewable resources and environmental awareness.

If you have a great idea for a project for this summer, or next, please tell us about it. Like most schedules, Y2C2 summer plans are often subject to change. You can reach Angela (Y2C2 Coordinator) at 667-3041 or Remy Rodden (Environmental Education Coordinator) at 667-3675.

angela walkley

The YCS would like to thank Yukon Electrical and Radio Shack for their generous donations to help us buy new phones for our office (now we have phones ringing off three hooks instead of one!).



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: *Sensing The Natural World*

The number of environmental and outdoor education offerings in the Yukon is impressive. Kids of all ages are provided with opportunities to experience the wild nature of the Yukon. However, I cannot help feeling, after my conversations with some of the professionals designing and delivering these programs, that there are some problems which need to be addressed if students are to gain the skills they need to make intelligent decisions about environmental issues. First, the programs do not, in my opinion, provide enough opportunities for that direct contact with the wild world which makes the young spirit soar; second, there is no sense — as there is in every other subject area in the curriculum — of long term structure, of starting with first principles and building on them year by year as the students move through their school careers; and third, the native worldview has, regrettably, not become an integral part of environmental studies in Yukon schools.

The native worldview is now taking its rightful place in the culture of the planet as a source of alternative ideas about the natural world and our relationship to it. The flood of books about native culture like *Wisdom of the Elders* and the appearance of environmental education sourcebooks like *Rediscovery* and *Keepers of the Earth* reflect the interest in these ideas in popular culture. Beginning with the belief that humans are part of nature in the same way as wolves and rocks and trees, this worldview teaches respect for all beings. Our actions as a species need to be guided by the understanding that all elements of nature are interconnected and that it is only by respecting these connections that we can assure the health of the planet

and the success of the human experiment.

In contrast, the western, Cartesian, worldview sees humans as the repository of all meaning in the world: nature only has value as we accord it to her. This anthropocentric point of view reduces the natural world to a collection of objects, stripping it of its living spirit. One can argue that this view is at the heart of the environmental crisis because it places human desires and aspirations on a plane above the needs of nature and sanctions the destruction of the natural systems which are the basis of all life.

You don't understand, you can't learn our ways from books, you have to learn them on the land."

This clash between native and western traditions is much discussed in academic and environmental circles, but, as yet, the native worldview is not formally included in the curriculum. Some steps have been made to address this gap here in the Yukon. For example, several years ago the Department of Education sponsored a workshop with Thom Henley, the author of *Rediscovery*, which was enthusiastically attended by local teachers. As well, over the last several years the Council for Yukon Indians (CYI) has been busy developing curricula which will

help students in elementary and intermediate classrooms to understand and appreciate the environmental implications of First Nation values and traditions. Building on the foundations laid by programs such as *Keepers of the Earth*, CYI has developed materials which place the native worldview in a local context. However, the availability of these materials does not mean that they are being delivered in the classroom. Unfortunately, I found that, with some exceptions, the native worldview is not well represented in Whitehorse schools.

I keep thinking back to a workshop on Environmental Education offered at the Forum on Northern Protected Areas last November. Norma Kassi and Louise Profeit-Leblanc each made passionate pleas for the instruction of First Nations' lifeways by the schools. The panel twice responded that, indeed, materials needed to be prepared which would pass on native culture to our youth. At this point Norma said: "You don't understand, you can't learn our ways from books, you have to learn them on the land." I would go on to add that you can't learn them with your mind alone; it is in your whole being, in your body, in your heart and in your soul that these understandings reside.

This brings up one of the difficulties of teaching native ways: First Nations people developed their awareness through continuous silent observation and immersion in the world of wild nature. Obviously, schools cannot replicate this experience, but what they can do is offer opportunities on the land which stress silent sensory awareness and which, as a result, cultivate awe for the natural world. This awareness, this awe, is, I believe, strongest and most alive in young children, and can easily be nourished by encouraging them to look, listen, taste, smell and feel the natural beings they encounter in a nature walk or on a solo vision quest. By thus reinforcing their natural instincts we give a precious gift to young children. Barry Lopez has written powerfully about this.

The most moving look I ever saw from a child in the woods was on a mud bar by the footprints of a heron. We were on our knees, making handprints beside the footprints. You could feel the creek vibrating in the silt and sand. The sun beat down heavily on our hair. Our shoes were soaking wet. The look said: I did not know until now that I needed someone much older to confirm this, the feeling I have of life here. I can now grow older, knowing it need never be lost.

The quickest door to open in the woods for a child is the one that leads to the smallest room, by knowing the name each thing is called. The door that leads to the cathedral is marked by a hesitancy to speak at all,

rather to encourage by example a sharpness of the senses. If one speaks it should only be to say, as well as one can, how wonderfully all this fits together, to indicate what a long, fierce peace can derive from this knowledge. (Crossing Open Ground, 1988, p. 150-1)

Opening the cathedral door by focussing on sensory experience of the natural world can begin in the earliest years of school and can be accompanied by instruction in native hunting and gathering techniques. Naming and gathering berries, other plant foods and medicinal plants is the subject of one of the CYI guides mentioned above and is, along with hunting, fishing and trapping, central to gaining an appreciation of the native lifestyle.

The outdoor program offered at Jack Hulland Elementary School brings together all these elements of the native worldview. It takes children in grades 5 and 6 into the bush three times during the year. In the fall the grade 5 students spend three days at a fish camp on Fish Lake with resource people supplied through CYI. There, the kids spend time alone sensing the natural world on a vision quest and learn how First Nations people gathered, prepared and preserved meat, fish and berries. In winter and spring the classes continue with their exposure to the native way of life by pursuing activities like trapping and winter survival. The Jack Hulland program is an excellent example of what a native approach to environmental education can be and it is heartening to learn that it is being looked to by other elementary schools as a model. However, one cannot help but wonder whether the impact of these brief excursions is enough to inspire a love and appreciation for the natural world in the students.

At the high school level longer outdoor trips which focus on outdoor living skills and group dynamics are offered in several schools. G.A. Jeckell Junior High, to name one school, takes kids out on wilderness treks which take up a month of school time over the school year. These trips, according to the instructors, bring about a lot of positive changes in the kids. Outdoor pursuits force people to break down the barriers between each other. Difficulties a group may encounter like bad weather, the impor-



tance of cooperation in achieving the group's objectives, the satisfaction of conquering the challenges of the trail and the unexpected moments of wild excitement on seeing a wolf or a bear all contribute to bonding a group together and to the personal growth of the individual participants.

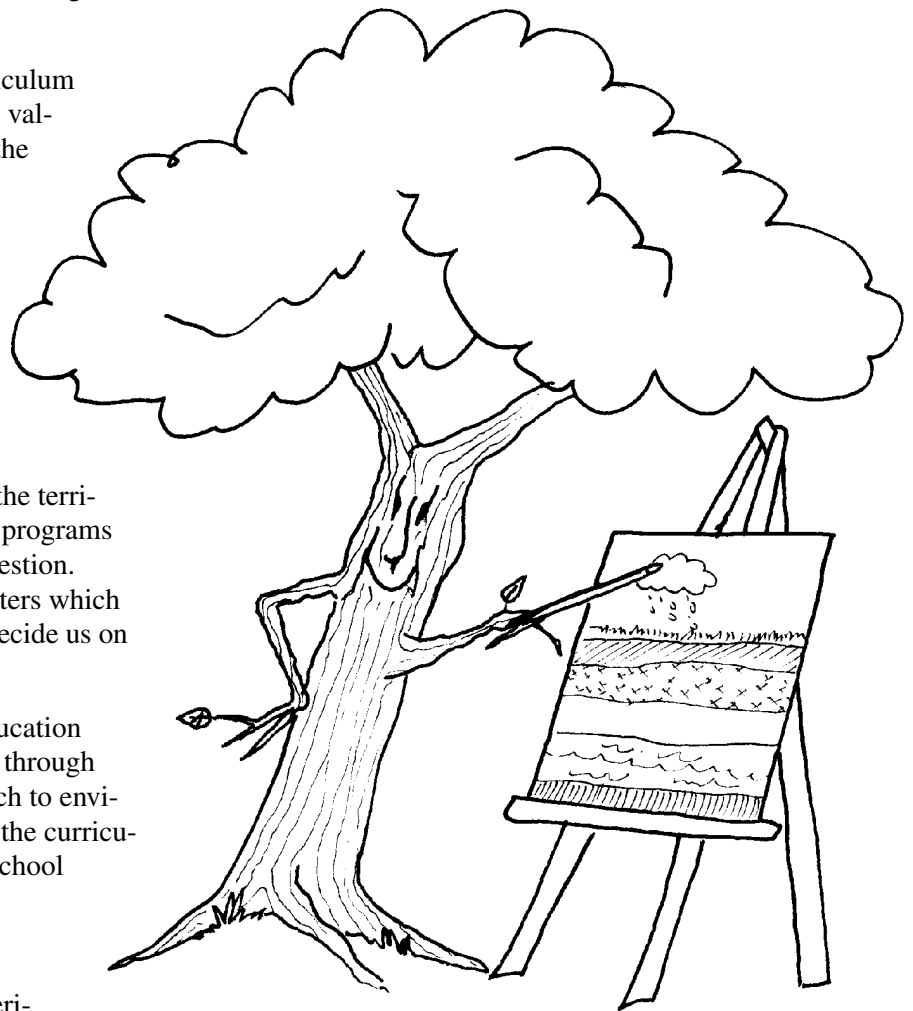
However, environmental education must go further if it hopes as well to prepare young people for making judgements about environmental issues. As Bob Jickling notes in a recent article on environmental education, "... fundamental to these judgements are questions about who we are, our attitudes towards nature, and values that will enable us to create a better society." For students to understand and place themselves within the spectrum of values which underlie different positions on environmental issues they will need both the contact with the natural environment described above and a grounding in environmental studies.

A balanced environmental studies curriculum needs to provide instruction in both the values underlying different positions and the scientific study of ecosystems. As well, it needs to provide opportunities to exercise these understandings through critical thinking and discussion of environmental issues. A number of programs are available which involve students in ecosystem studies with the Department of Renewable Resources in various locations around the territory. I am not sure, however, that these programs grapple consistently with the values question. Science can only help to define parameters which guide our actions; it is our values that decide us on how we will act.

The shortcomings of environmental education in the Yukon can, I think, be addressed through a coordinated, interdisciplinary approach to environmental studies which is included in the curriculum. It can begin in the early years of school with outdoor activities which focus on experiencing the richness of the world through the senses and learning about plants and animals. Later, through experiences in the outdoors, students can devel-

op wilderness skills and learn about native lifeways. Finally, in high school, the larger context can be explored through studies of the native worldview, ecology, environmental philosophy and the politics of environmental issues. Much of this is already in place, but in a piecemeal fashion which exposes only a fraction of students to a fraction of the information they need. At a time in our history when young people are faced with the certainty that they are the first generation who will live at a lower standard of living than their parents, the complex question of what constitutes environmentally responsible citizenship needs to be explored and discussed throughout the school years in a coordinated and progressively complex way. It must happen; the students are ready.

will jones



Clattering Hooves – Proposed New Name for the YCS Newsletter

As noted in the last newsletter, many people feel that the present name of our newsletter, The YCS Quarterly has become quite stale and inaccurate (although we try, the newsletter just isn't published on a regular quarterly basis). If you read the foreword of *Caribou and the Barren-lands* by George Calef, you will find a traditional first nations poem from which the proposed new name for the newsletter comes. Here's the poem:

*Glorious it is to see
The caribou flocking down
from the forests
And beginning
Their wandering to the north.
timidly they watch
For the pitfalls of man.
Glorious it is to see
The great herds from the forests
Spreading out over plains of white.
Glorious to see.
Yayai - ya - yiya.*

*Glorious it is
To see long-haired winter caribou
Returning to the forests.
Fearfully they watch
For the little people,
While the herd follows the
ebb-mark of the sea
With a storm of clattering hooves.
Glorious it is
When wandering time is come.
Yayai - ya - yiya.*

Clattering Hooves – The phrase has a nice ring to it, and conjures up a wonderful image. It seems appropriate also in that YCS folk gather together, somewhat like caribou, in support of nature and work, with our “hooves” clattering, to protect and conserve Yukon wildlands and wildlife. The newsletter is one our ways to make noise and get the conservation message out there.

Care to comment? Write us, drop in to the office or give us a call. Your feedback would be appreciated.

Porter Creek Restoration Project

The Porter Creek system, for which the Porter Creek subdivision is named, has been unstable for the past 20 or more years. The original Porter Creek runs from Rabbitsfoot canyon through the Versluce meadows and into Hidden Lake in the centre of the Porter Creek subdivision.

The Porter Creek Restoration Project will attempt to address the problem of the drying up of Hidden Lake in winter. Water is known to remain flowing at various points upstream, yet doesn't seem to be entering the Lake on a consistent basis. When Hidden Lake dries up, it kills all the aquatic life living in the lake which includes rainbow trout.

In the Versluce meadows area, the creek freezes solid in the winter. Creek water freezes, blocking the stream channel, and subsequently flows out into

the meadow instead of flowing further downstream to the Lake. Hidden Lake is a surface fed, bottom draining lake and so when there is no water getting to the lake it dries up.

A group of people, including a fisheries biologist, two teachers, a student and two others who live in the Versluce Meadows area, formed the Porter Creek Restoration Committee. The committee has devised a plan to restore the creek bed in the Versluce meadows area, making it a more functional as well as more aesthetically pleasing creek. We hope to complete restoration activities by the end of the summer of 1994. The creek can be studied and improved on by classes from the surrounding schools for a number of years offering an excellent opportunity for environmental stewardship.

*nigel young,
student member of the Porter Creek
Restoration Committee*



Guided Nature Walks

A new crew of YCS guides are at it again. Erik Leslie, Steve Grossinger, and Sherri Dowdall are leading the nature walks, in this, the fourteenth season! Come and join them for an exploration of some of the natural wonders in the Whitehorse area.

All hikes leave from the YCS office on 302 Hawkins Street. Self-transportation is necessary; bug spray and sturdy hiking shoes are recommended. Call the office for details on any of the hikes. Sherri, Steve or Erik would be pleased to entice you into joining them for an outing.



Walks Include:

- *Yukon River*
- *Long Lake*
- *Hidden Lakes*
- *Miles Canyon*
- *Grey Mountain*

YCS Nature Appreciation

Come on out and learn some more about various aspects of nature with local experts! All talks are free and filled with interesting facts! Don't forget your binoculars and cameras!

Thursday, Aug. 11 7 pm – Deserts!



Do some desert discovery with David Murray. Meet at the Carcross Desert sign near Carcross or carpool from YCS at 6 pm.

Game Farming Position

The following is the YCS Game Farming position as defined on May 9th, 1994.

The Yukon Conservation Society supports the position of the Fish and Game Association that the question of whether Yukoners support the development of game farming as a local industry has not been adequately addressed by the Government of Yukon.

YCS opposes the development of a game farming industry that results in commercial trade in wildlife and wildlife parts. Game farming will undermine the basic tenant that underlies wildlife management in North America, which is that wildlife is a public resource.

YCS believes that the private ownership and domestication of wildlife species will have negative impacts on wildlife populations, including:

1. increased poaching in response to the creation of a commercial market for wildlife.
2. alienation of land that once supported wildlife populations.
3. increased predator control to protect game farm animals.
4. disease and parasite transmission to wild ungulates.
5. genetic contamination of wild ungulates by semi-domesticated farmed wildlife.

YCS does not oppose the licensing of a few “game farms” where the objective is public viewing of ani-

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT YCS?

Summer's here!! This means that not only is the YCS office filled with all the regulars, but also with the many visitors that pop by looking for information on good places to hike and rivers to glide down. The usual business continues as well. Here's a sampling:

Media Relations Workshop

Four representatives for YCS attended an Alaskan Environmental Network conference this spring. They came back able to host a workshop for locals and both evenings were well attended.

Community Forestry

YCS brought up forester Herb Hammond to present a workshop on community forestry. See related article in this newsletter.

Bonnet Plume

Meetings are continuing on this issue and YCS is represented on the Bonnet Plume Management Advisory Committee.

Sewage

In conjunction with the Sierra Defence Fund, YCS put together and publicized a sewage report card. Whitehorse got a D!

Trail Guides

They're back! YCS will once again be offering guided nature walks during July and August. Call the office for more infor-

mation.

Birdathon

Another birdathon frenzy has successfully come and gone. Thanks to all those that participated!

Hikes and Bikes

Well, we're now at the stage of field testing the maps. Call the office to volunteer and get a preview of some of the trails!

Mine Reviews

YCS is participating in the level II EARP review processes for 3 hardrock mine proposals.

Biodiversity Booklet

YCS is working on putting together a booklet that will describe and elucidate on the Yukon's natural regions for the benefits of schools and the general public.

RV Dumping

YCS is putting out a brochure that will hopefully enlighten misguided RVers as to why they should dispose of their wastes at proper disposal sites.

Disc-ART-ed Articles

A booklet and tour of the Yukon's schools is being planned to introduce students into the joys and practicalities of junk art.

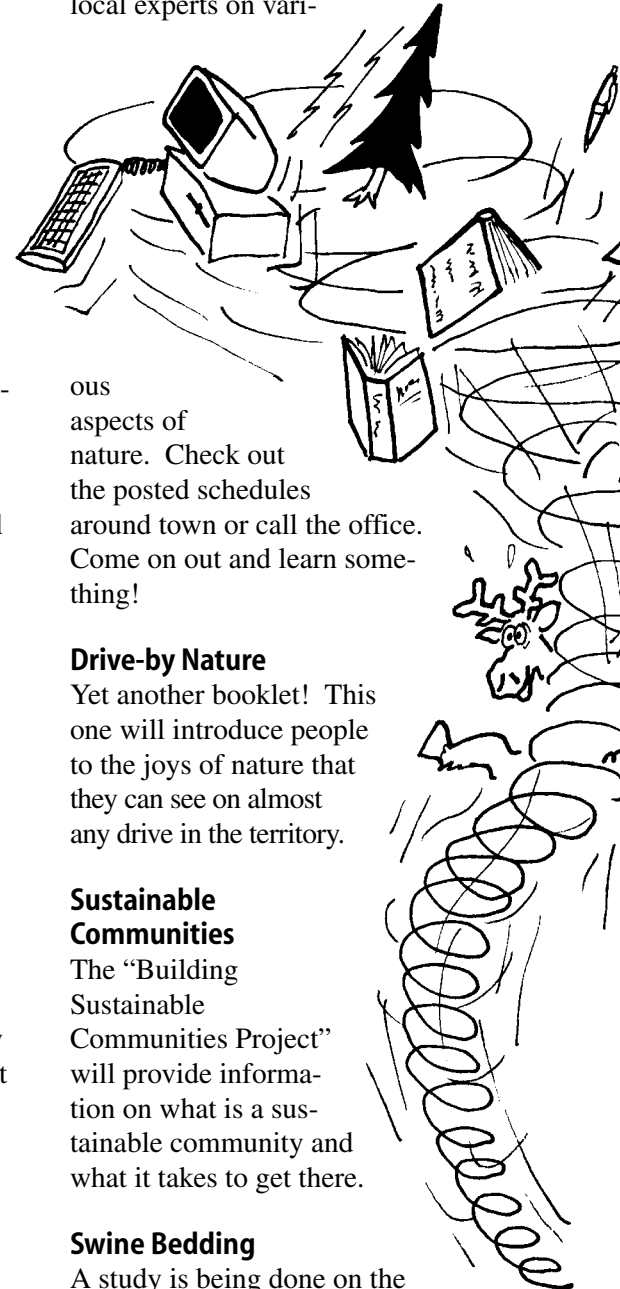
Environmental Industries

A feasibility study of opportunities for local environmental

industries is currently being produced for the territory.

Nature Appreciation Series

The summer series is continuing it's set of free talks given by local experts on vari-



ous aspects of nature. Check out the posted schedules around town or call the office. Come on out and learn something!

Drive-by Nature

Yet another booklet! This one will introduce people to the joys of nature that they can see on almost any drive in the territory.

Sustainable Communities

The "Building Sustainable Communities Project" will provide information on what is a sustainable community and what it takes to get there.

Swine Bedding

A study is being done on the feasibility of using locally produced, non-recyclable waste paper for animal bedding.