

Walk Softly

*Newsletter of the Yukon
Conservation Society
June 1997*

INSIDE: *Green Power* ♦ *Sustainable Community Planning* ♦ *Hormones* ♦ *Volunteers*



Special Interest – HA!

Scenario: Concerned citizen decides to volunteer at the Yukon Conservation Society. Joins the forest (OR mining, OR contaminants OR, etc.) committee. Aids the Society in its battle for stronger environmental legislation, sustainability, sane resource decisions. Time passes. Concerned citizen gets government job. Ceases to be involved with YCS due to that oh-so-familiar looming menace: “Conflict of Interest”. (Da da da DOM!)

This scenario takes place over and over at YCS and organizations like it. We lose valuable concerned volunteers because they are told that involvement with the Society is perceived as a conflict of interest by their higher ups or people they’ll be working with. The terms “conflict of interest” and “special interest groups” are brandished about our heads so often that we fail to notice that these are just more incidents of Orwellian double speak. YCS is not a special interest group and, if everyone is doing their jobs, there is no conflict.

If you are working for the government then at least part of your job is to ensure the sustainable use of resources, public health and safety, and equitable distribution of environmental costs and benefits for the common good. As an environmental watchdog, YCS’s job is to ensure the sustainable use of resources, public health and safety, and equitable distribution of environmental costs and benefits for the common good. Where’s the conflict? It should be a mark in your favour if you are willing to carry the aims of your job over into your discretionary time.

The term “special interest” implies that YCS has something more to gain than ordinary folk or the other parties involved by satisfying our aims. Oddly enough perhaps, YCS doesn’t rake in financial rewards or prestige by ensuring that a mine follows an appropriate abandonment plan, that forests are sustainably harvested or that Dawson City isn’t choking on Whitehorse sewage. By doing this type of work, YCS secures gains and safeguards that all people benefit from. Environmentalists want clean air to breathe, healthy water to drink, and a wondrous, intricate planet capable of sustaining a myriad of life forever. To declare that these desires are part of a “special interest agenda” is to assume that the majority of the planet’s citizens are interested in a limited future of gasmasks and filters on a dying planet.

Accepting that YCS is a special interest group or that working towards environmentalist aims is a conflict to the public good belittles everything we stand for. It implies that the environmental movement is around merely to save some flowers and cutesy animals for little earthy people on EI benefits to walk around smiling blissfully at. It discredits the whole belief that sustainability, environmental awareness and biodiversity are integral components of continued life on this planet.

By mildly accepting that these terms apply to you and YCS, you are participating in a mind set that undermines all basic environmental tenets. Don’t be linguistically hijacked! Don’t go down without a struggle! Environmentalism is not a hobby that can be set aside as you move on with your life.

tanya handley

Words from the Past

While researching “A History of the Yukon Conservation Society: Focus on Kluane National Park 1968-1992”, Will Jones came across the following perspective. In the mid 1970s while researching for his book Yukon, the author Jack Hope interviewed John Lammers, one of the founders of YCS. Here’s some of what John had to say.

Let me point out, in case you happen to think that a nature lover and an environmentalist are the same thing, that they’re not. One who is a nature lover likes trees and birds and flowers. That’s fine, and I respect it. But an environmentalist, in the true sense, is concerned with all elements of the environment, including man. Primarily man. He doesn’t just say, “We must preserve trees or grizzly bears.” He says, “We human beings must interact with our surroundings in such a



way as to perpetrate a high-quality existence for ourselves. Not only ourselves but those generations that follow us. And if we do this in the most prudent way we know, the welfare of trees and grizzly bears will be guaranteed, automatic. Because we will not attack our environment and gobble up our resources as quickly as we can, but will discipline our society to ration out the fixed quantity of nonrenewable resources – like petroleum – to last, and will manage our renewable resources as a farm, to keep them going.

But we aren't doing that now. We're consuming like there was no tomorrow. And everything we consume – power, oil, metal, you name it – comes out of our environment in one way or another. Nothing's for free, you know! And the most active agents of this destruction are industry and government, controlled by inadequate laws. It is in this sphere that we can make real and meaningful changes in the management of our surroundings, and as an environmentalist, I am interested only in this approach, not simply in saving a particular grizzly or acre of land.

"But there's so much of it." That simpleminded statement justifies every manner of abuse to our environment. All right. You happen to be right. By far the majority of the Yukon is wilderness. But let me ask you if you are aware of how unique the Yukon is as a corner of the North American continent? Where else will you find such beauty and diversity of landscape? Of flora and fauna? This place is wonderful. You can get lost here. You can travel or live in real wilderness. It's a frontier. But do you know something? It's unique. Why did your publisher send you here? He could have sent you to more populated and developed places. To Ontario, To Colorado. To Alaska. But no, he sent you to the Yukon, because it is unique.

Well, you can't just look at the Yukon alone. You have to consider what it means in the context of our total human environment, our total society. And let me tell you, there isn't much of it. The Yukon is a unique kind of place for human beings to experience. And the reason is because it has not been populated and developed like every place else.

The physical Yukon is different from elsewhere. And with planning, our society up here could easily offer human beings a life that is different. But to do that we would have to be very honest with ourselves and acknowledge that the thing that is special about the Yukon is our small population, our space, our great natural environment. And our society should steer

people toward a life-style that takes advantage of our particular endowments. Now I do not contend that everyone should do as I do, be a wilderness outfitter. But as you know, there are many more uniquely Yukon opportunities than that. The government employs many people – in fisheries, forestry, historic sites, wildlife, parks. And it could employ many more. Some of the world's economies, after all, are based largely on wildlife. People will pay to see it. Okay, there is that class of opportunity. Then, some people here can earn their living by trapping, fishing, running riverboat shipping services. We have a large native population from whom we can learn and who can learn from us. There are opportunities for scientists, researchers, for small-time prospectors who still pan for gold. There is the bush life, building a cabin, hunting and gardening and fishing. Now you see, these are all things you can't do anyplace else. Even the guy who comes up here to live in a cabin for six months, living off the money saved in the south – that is an opportunity not available elsewhere, and I feel it should be preserved, because it is something that will vanish forever if the Yukon becomes developed.

The Yukon is already a playground for the south, an economic playground. We are digging up our landscape to accommodate the south or, at least, the outside. Our minerals leave the Yukon. We dig up our landscape to build more roads to reach the minerals, and they leave the Yukon. So do the profits, because the mines up here are not locally owned.

The goal is to safeguard the Yukon natural environment, and that environment will form the basis for a unique lifestyle and for a self-perpetuating economy that will go on and on, long after our territory's resource-exploiting industry – like mining – has run out of raw material.

And what we need to do right now is to change some of the laws that encourage destruction of the Yukon's resources. Much of what happens here in terms of resource use is decided either in Ottawa or in the boardrooms of multinational corporations. But I believe that the resource decisions here should be made by our people. We must give our citizens a voice in the planning that goes on, and give them all the facts, the alternatives, and an insight into what is actually happening.

I'm talking about a change in planning procedure, not necessarily a change in our territorial status.



Community Tourism Outreach Project

The YCS Community Tourism Outreach Project (CTOP) is now up and running and the YCS office is abuzz with excitement. Funded by the Department of Economic Development's Community Projects Initiative, this project is aimed at improving the delivery of Yukon outdoor information to the public. This will be accomplished by operating an information service from the YCS office, developing fact sheets for use by other tourism agencies, and by organizing the ever popular Summer Nature Appreciation Series. Making it all happen is a full time summer staff appropriately called the Community Tourism Outreach Coordinator.

Summer is traditionally a busy time for YCS as folks from all parts flock to our office looking for recreational and interpretive information on the Yukon. To assist in the quest we have lengthened our summer office hours (10am-5pm Monday-Friday) and are now compiling resource information on many subjects; camping, wildlife viewing, wilderness safety, plant identification, hiking, river sports, and events in the communities. Visitors to our office may find the information they seek in brochures, reference books, or from the ever helpful office staff (that's me!).

To assist in the delivery of information to the communities, and to folks who do not make it to the YCS office,

the Community Tourism Outreach Project will begin to develop fact sheets addressing information needs not addressed by Visitor Reception Centres and other tourism agencies. Initially fact sheets may only provide rough information to be used by tourism personnel, with further production happening in following summers. We are now in the process of assessing topic areas through questionnaires to Visitor Reception Centres and other agencies interacting with visitors to the Yukon. Responses to date have identified the need for more information on several topics eg. hiking trails, birding, and river activities, and encouragement from these organizations has been terrific.

The Summer Nature Appreciation Series is now in the planning stages. With the popular Wolf Creek Campground Interpretive Series on hold this summer we are hoping to include as many talks and walks as possible into the Nature Appreciation Series. A few ideas in the making include an urban wildlife walk and a dump walk. Anyone with ideas or time would be most welcome to participate in the organization and running of this program.

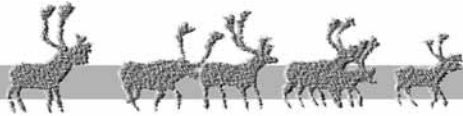
If you have any questions, or ideas for the Community Tourism Outreach Program please come by the office or give us a call. It would be great to hear from you.

rosa brown



Thanks Northerm!

YCS has replaced the windows in our building at 302 Hawkins Street in Whitehorse. Thanks to the generosity of Northerm in Whitehorse, who specialize in window sales, we managed to come in under budget! So thanks to Dave and all the other folks at Northerm. Thanks also to Craig for making it all happen.



Editorial

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is published by the Yukon Conservation Society for members. Memberships and information about the Society can be obtained by phoning the YCS at (403) 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.

We welcome newsletter submissions and letters to the editor. Views expressed in *Walk Softly* are not necessarily those of the Society.

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Even though it's become chic of late to discuss the end of the world you don't hear much about the old Doomsday clock anymore, not since the collapse of the Soviet Union. I suppose changing Doomsday scenarios is akin to changing time zones.

The fact remains we are still perilously close to midnight. Some might even argue the clock has already struck twelve.

The first gong might have been in the mid eighties when researchers in the Antarctic confirmed major ozone depletion in the atmosphere. The second gong might have been in 1992 when governments from around the world agreed (on paper) to drastically curb CO₂ emissions in acknowledgement of the effects of global warming. The third gong could be reverberating now with record flood levels throughout North America and our worst ever period of forest fires.

In the great scheme of things a few metaphorical minutes here or there mean nothing. The hour is upon us. Ask not for whom the bell tolls...

Eight years ago in front of a Whitehorse crowd, an engineer from NASA presented me with a piece of film from the camera Neil Armstrong handled on that very first trip to the moon. I've looked at it many times and marvelled at the audacity of that whole adventure. 'A giant leap' Armstrong called it. And it was. The leap we must make now is a quantum one, requiring all the courage, ingenuity, faith, and wisdom we can muster. Essentially we must shift paradigms. If those missions to the moon mean anything its this – they are when we first manned the firetower, and we've seen smoke ever since.

Kennedy, the man whose vision propelled us to the moon shared a similar fate as Julius Caesar. "Et tu Brutus" and now Rome is burning. We must grasp the meaning of the words *tempus fugit* or else *phagorum kie piomen auriengar thenoumetha* will become our epitaph. (And would someone please shut that fiddle player up.)

andrew macdonald



Southern Lakes Caribou Recovery Program

Yukon's vast tracks of wilderness are not immune to the symptoms of declining biodiversity experienced worldwide. This is particularly true in the Southern Lakes district where the spread of human settlement and activity is greatest, and exert considerable impact on species and ecosystem processes. Habitat loss and fragmentation, uncontrolled hunting, disturbance from vehicles, suppression of wildfires, altered hydrologic cycles, and the introduction of contaminants are some of the conditions that make Southern Lakes increasingly difficult for many life forms to inhabit.

The community-based Southern Lakes Caribou Recovery Program (SLCRP) originated from a stakeholder workshop held in Carcross in January 1993. The program was developed in response to diminishing caribou numbers among three woodland caribou populations the Ibez, Atlin and Carcross herds. The program's initial aim is to restore caribou numbers to more representative levels by eliminating all hunting, protecting critical habitat, and managing human activity that is potentially detrimental to caribou. To do this requires meaningful public involvement and cooperation among various governments responsible for land use decisions in the Southern Lakes region. The SLCRP is directed by a steering committee composed of local residents.

The Carcross herd is often called the urban caribou herd because of its close juxtaposition to the city of Whitehorse. It is the most vulnerable of the three Southern Lakes caribou herds. Local residents and the steering committee have been concerned for the herd's viability over the long term because small populations are prone to human caused extinction. Moreover, a herd's resilience to natural uncertainties like changes in climate, weather, food supply, and predators could be made less capable because of the effects of simplified genetic make up, reduced survival and reproductive capability of too few individuals.

The exact level below which a "minimum viable population size" is identified for caribou and extinction is inevitable is not known. However, it seems clear that the magnitude of the effect of random uncertainties and human caused stress become greater as populations become smaller. If for example the herd numbers 200 or less it seems intuitively unlikely that the population could persist for very long. Its reproductive component

would be too small. Events like disease introduction, a series of bad winters, and/or increased predation could further reduce the population and lead to an unbalanced sex ratio, which could contribute to inbreeding, and this could result in too few viable offspring, and eventually, extinction.

A survey of the Carcross herd this March was carried out to examine this concern. The population size was estimated for the first time using the best techniques available and the herd was found to number 450 caribou. The calf survival was indicative of an increasing population for this year and was 42 calves/100 females. Caribou were distributed in all the normal places as indicated by long term local knowledge. For now it seems we still have a viable naturally occurring herd.

This information is encouraging in light of the fact that human caused mortality has been kept to a minimum by 3 native game guardians who patrol the herds range all winter and have maintained a no harvest status quo for the herd. The greatest source of human caused mortality for the Carcross herd is now road collisions. A total of 5 caribou were killed by vehicle collisions this winter, mostly around the caribou crossing at Jakes Corner. Measures are presently under way to install better signs and roadside markers for alerting traffic at this locality to the presence of caribou during winter.

Now that most of the direct attrition of animals is being dealt with it is time to put greater emphasis on maintaining a place for them to live. The SLCRP steering committee is working with governments, and the public to identify critical caribou habitats, and finding ways to manage them for the long term benefit of caribou. Their desire is to insure that caribou have a contiguous centre of habitation which they can utilize unobstructed by human activity.

Caribou are a good indicator species of large mammal ecosystems. Herd ranges embody large distributions of other prey and predator species as well as a myriad of other component species. The survival of Southern Lakes caribou can be seen as a statement of our ability to coexist with the world we live in. The SLCRP is in one measure an attempt to deal with the world wide biodiversity crisis here at home.

rick farnell



Green Power

Energy is the basis of our economy. It is the basis of our existence on this planet. How we use that energy is very important in how our environment and economy will survive.

Fossil fuel is part of that energy and we have become dependent on it in our daily lives. I cannot shake my dependency on it. Even though I have a solar powered home, I still use fossil fuel every day. I drive my vehicle to work. I use electricity in town. Goods need to be transported to my local store.

The Yukon would be in a disastrous position if fossil fuels were cut off tomorrow. But that's not likely to happen. The oil industry knows how much fuel is left in the ground. And being in the business to make money they would have found alternative forms of energy if they knew we were running out tomorrow. And of course they wouldn't want to raise fuel prices too high or consumers will find alternatives to fossil fuels.

Right now we Canadians are the second biggest producers of CO₂ gas per capita in the world. CO₂ is one of the major contributing gases to the greenhouse effect. And fossil fuels emit lots of it. That's why we need "green power."

"Green power" is defined as energy which comes from non-pollution emitting sources and, by some definitions, from sources which do not cause large environmental impacts on an area's habitats.

Biomass (wood burning in the renewable sense, composting and methane production for heat and electrical production), wind, small hydro, solar power, and geothermal are all considered to be sources of green power.

But in the face of growing concerns over our changing climate why aren't we getting green power? Isn't it the priority? There are possibly two reasons for this: the general public has too many other concerns than to push for green power, and the oil industry lobbyist are working hard at keeping government from changing the regulations to favor green power. Maybe the rise in electrical rates will cause us to make the change.

On the other hand, there was a regulation put in place by the Yukon Party in 1995 that allowed for a non-utility generator (NUG) to sell power to the utilities, YEC or YECL. There is likely some fine print to it but it may

be an important opportunity for producers of green power to set up new projects.

At a Canadian wind energy conference held in Alberta last fall we were told by several key people that if we want green power to happen we must make a business of it. We must prove that it is competitive.

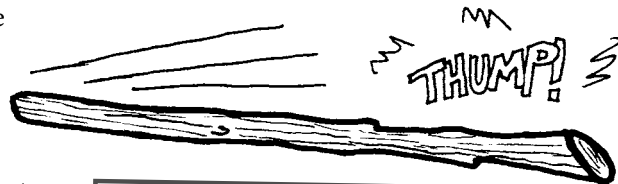
Before we can build green power generators we need government to impose proper regulation such as a carbon tax on uses of fossil fuel (to reflect the cost to our environment) and offer tax breaks to green power producers. Then this will allow "renewables" to become much more competitive.

The price of wind generators is continuing to drop and the wind itself is free. So far based on a 15 or 20 year investment, the cost per kWh of wind energy in the Yukon is in the 10 to 30 cents range. Diesel is about 10 to 13 cents. So as you can see high capital cost is still an issue. Also wind farms have to be installed in good wind locations. Diesels can be installed anywhere. And the wind doesn't always blow. But still, wind is free, and non-polluting.

Green power will also provide opportunities for job creation. A study that was published at an Alaska forum in the early 1980's showed that for every dollar spent on fossil fuel we get about \$1.40 back into the economy, (that's assuming that the fuel is not imported). For every dollar put into biomass we get about \$2.30 back. For \$1 in solar it is \$2.43, and for wind it's \$2.54. For every \$1 that goes into home energy conservation there is \$2.55 that goes back into the economy (Laitner, 1981).

The opportunities for more green power in Yukon is strong and we can make it happen.

jp pinard



If you would like to join the YCS
Alternative Energy Committee stop by
or give the office a call.



The Revenge of the 2000lb Parkas....

The cars are lined up,
edging slowly,
on the north lanes,
the windshields glitter,
it is the city moving,
the drivers intent on
getting out,
getting
away from something
they carry always with them.

*Margaret Atwood
The End of the world weekend,
near Toronto, 1970*

So, there I was, hurtling down Hamilton Boulevard on my bike, when a large yellow and black wall skirted my shoulder. A school bus, up close. Close enough to get a first hand view of the dust in its rivets. A short, polite conversation ensued at the next red light, and then a longer one with the driver's manager and the RCMP...

There are reasons why not everybody wants to use sustainable transportation, such as biking and walking, and harassment is one of them. Try crossing at the marked cross walk in front of Rotary Park in Whitehorse at -40 °C. None of the drivers stop, so intent they are on getting their under-dressed arses somewhere warmer than the seat of their cold-soaked 2000lb parkas...

One of the great paradoxes about living in the Yukon, is that everybody wants to live in the wilderness, while retaining all the modern conveniences of city life. So, they drive enormous distances, often up to 80km a day, between where they work, and where they live. Which is why all of us get to watch our tax money be spent on a super-duper new South Access road. It's also why Whitehorse is in the top 15 cities in Canada for carbon-monoxide pollution. It doesn't take an Einstein to figure it out: just look at the trucks idling in the parking lot at the Big Yellow Store in February, come back an hour later, and many of them are still there, going nowhere, fast.

What can you do?

Well, you could live within walking distance of where you work, or live on a bus route to work. Failing that, if you can fill a van up with people, instead of one person in a car, the air emissions are dramatically reduced. As are the four or five block heaters which don't have to be run every morning for the van-commuters. Which means less diesel is burned at the power plant, and less particulate matter is given off, which makes its way directly into your bloodstream.

If you have to use a motor vehicle, try pooling your trips together. And if you're driving to a distant community, and you have the room, consider offering a lift in your vehicle, using the local radio trading show or paper.

If people have to drive to your workplace, make sure your workplace has cycled/thermostat controlled plugs for visitors, so that their vehicles don't idle unnecessarily. If you must idle a diesel vehicle, consider using a diesel-powered catalytic engine and cab heater, which is twenty-times more fuel and emissions-efficient than idling...it will pay for itself.

And get a real parka. Not the kind that burns gas and weighs 2000lbs. And some winter chimo boots, and over pants. After all, at -40 °C, you never hear about people having \$1300 repairs to their parkas...

paul davis

Paul Davis is a writer and sometimes teacher who lives in Whitehorse, and bikes, walks, and buses to work a couple of days a week, winter and summer. From +34 °C to -58 °C.

Sustainable Community Planning

A sustainable society is composed of sustainable communities. A sustainable community is able to maintain and improve its economic, social and environmental health so that its members can continue to lead healthy, productive and enjoyable lives.

Sustainability can be seen in both absolute and relative terms. Absolute sustainability involves clearly defined limits or carrying capacities; a community is not sustainable unless it recognizes and conforms to these limits. Relative sustainability acknowledges these limits but is more concerned with improvement in trends than with defining these limits.



Sustainable community planning involves developing, through a public process involving all elements of the community, a vision of a sustainable community and principles and strategies for realizing that vision. It includes identifying “sustainability indicators” that will be used to formulate and assess these strategies.

Effective sustainability indicators must be relevant to the community’s vision of sustainability, and must be developed and accepted by the people in the community and understandable to the community at large. They must link social, economic and environmental factors and focus on the long term. They must advance local sustainability, but not at the expense of the sustainability of other communities. Finally they must be based on reliable and timely information, although the initial lack of such information should not disqualify a potential indicator. Examples of sustainability indicators in communities that have adopted sustainable community planning include such items as solid waste generated and recycled, number of children living in poverty, adult literacy, and motor vehicle accident rate.

Sustainability planning must be community-led and consensus-based because the central issue is will, not expertise; only a community-based process can overcome the political, bureaucratic and psychological barriers to change.

Ronald L. Doering, Executive Director, National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy

While the City of Whitehorse has come some distance in the past few years from a mission statement based on the oath of the young men of Athens, it would be stretching the definition considerably to describe the updated strategic plan and current visioning exercise as examples of sustainable community planning. The creation of a community vision statement is a top-down process that fails to fully recognize the links between society, the economy, and the environment. While many trends and constraints are illustrated and discussed much of the discussion is highly questionable or contradictory. Sustainable community planning offers a much better alternative for envisioning and building a sustainable Whitehorse.

bill woolverton

Plant Alliance

There is a quiet and certain growth in respect for the earth and the value of the plants that enrich it. Those with deep feeling for this eventually seek like-minded individuals for the sharing of insights and resources and a community alliance is born. About a year ago, a group of Yukoners came together with a particular interest in the relationship between humans and plants. Some of us specialize in medicinal botany, some in growing herbs, but all wanted to promote the knowledge and usage of plants and protect the earth that provides them.

The Plant Alliance has grown quietly and personably over the past year and has begun to reach further into the community. We now want to offer the insights and resources we have shared with each other to the community at large. Our vision statement: To be an alliance that facilitates growth and wellness in the sharing of knowledge and resources about medicinal or culinary plants and botanically based therapies.

The Yukon Conservation Society has been kind enough to donate space to us for a growing collection of books, periodicals, videos, etc., dealing with everything from growing and wildcrafting herbs to making plant medicines. The library listing also includes many resources not kept at YCS, but available through Plant Alliance members.

We would gladly welcome donations of materials for our collection or suggestions of works to obtain.

We are also a source for information regarding the national and international regulations for plant medicines. At this time in our country, there is a great degree of turmoil in the way we regulate ourselves. Much is happening through the Health Protection Branch which is threatening the freedom of Canadians to learn about and use traditional plant medicines and alternative healing therapies.

The Plant Alliance welcomes you to visit our library at the Yukon Conservation Society or contact us for more information. Call Christine Griffiths at 633-2821 or Laurie Hill at 667-4886.

laurie hill





Hormones

The following article summarizes a *World Wildlife Fund* pamphlet "Reducing Your Risk A Guild to Avoiding Hormone-Disrupting Chemicals." If you would like to read the complete document, stop by the YCS office and pick up a copy.

Industrial and agricultural chemicals are known to have effects on wildlife and humans including cancers, reproductive impairments and even direct poisonings. Now there is evidence that synthetic chemicals, such as pesticides, plastics, persistent organic pollutants (P.O.P.S) and heavy metals are posing another threat. These synthetic chemicals masquerade as hormones, disrupting normal hormonal functions in wildlife and humans. Many people are using preventative measures to limit their exposure, although the true extent of the effects of these chemicals is unclear, as yet. Tens of thousands of chemicals in our environment and in active commercial use are yet to be tested for their potential as hormone disrupters.

Hormones act as messengers in our bodies, telling us how and when to grow, regulating biological functions and producing bodily substances. In the embryo and fetus, hormones guide development of sexual organs, the nervous and immune systems, organs and tissues. Synthetic chemicals are interfering with this process by blocking natural hormones, and sending their own messengers to the cells. As a result hormonal cues are being interfered with during critical developmental stages.

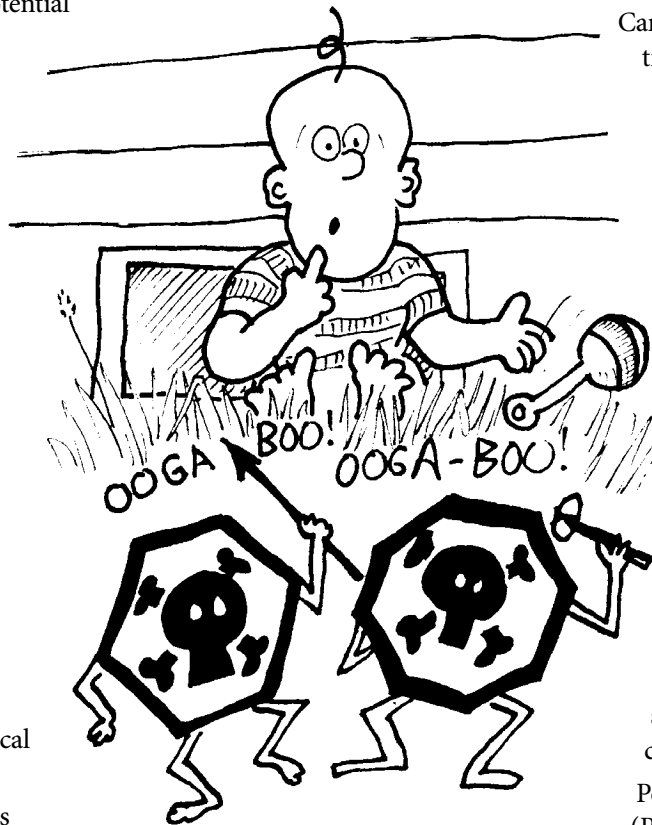
Reproductive abnormalities such as deformed and infertile bald eagles, male alligators with

small dysfunctional sex organs and enlarged thyroid glands in Great Lakes salmon, offer clear evidence of hormone disruption in natural settings. In addition laboratory studies are pin-pointing specific synthetic chemicals which are hormone disrupters. Because the endocrine system of humans, functions in similar ways to that of wildlife, low sperm counts, increased breast, testicular and prostate cancers rates, increased occurrence of hyperactivity and learning disorders are being studied in the context of hormone disrupting chemicals.

Detergents, Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPS), plastics, pesticides, and heavy metals have all been considered to have hormone-disrupting characteristics. Reduction in exposure to these synthetic chemicals is thought to be the best preventative measure to avoid the hormonal disrupting effects.

Nonylphenol ethoxylates (NPEs) commonly known as "detergents" are used in many industrial and household products. In Canada NPEs are used as additives in latex paints, cosmetics, oils, common household cleaners, liquid laundry detergents, soaps shampoos and pulp and paper production. Most NPEs end up being discharged into our municipal sewage systems where during breakdown cause a highly toxic by-product, nonylphenol (NP). Sewage sludge, when discharged into our waterways and when applied to agricultural land, enters our food chain. To reduce the effects of NP simply select soaps and cleaners that do not contain NPEs.

Persistent organic pollutants (POPS) such as dioxins, PCBs, pentachlorophenol, as well as

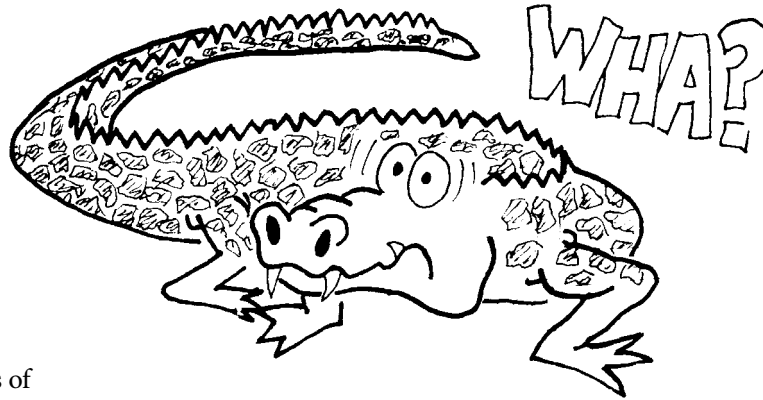




many pesticides including DDT and Chlordane are all chlorinated, persist in our environment, and bio-accumulate. Dioxins are considered to be highly potent hormone-disrupters, and are released as by-products from industrial processes such as chlorine bleaching of pulp and paper, the production of some pesticides and the manufacturing of vinyl. PCBs linger in landfill sites, toxic waste dumps, and throughout the environment. They contaminate fish and birds

to the point that, in some instances, their reproduction is impaired. To reduce exposure of POPs, eat lower on the food chain, follow territorial fish consumption guidelines, choose unbleached paper products and avoid vinyl products.

There are hundreds of kinds of plastics used in various building materials, baby bottles, blood bags, automobiles, airplane kitchenware, clothing, computers, toys, toothbrushes, furniture and food packaging. Phthalates and Bisphenol-A are used in the production of plastics and considered to be hormone-disrupters. Bisphenol A is an ingredient used to make hard plastics. It may be found in a variety of products including thin lacquer coatings, on the inside of food and drink cans, aging underground water pipes, dental products and eyeglasses. Phthalates are used to make plastics flexible and durable and are used in PVC vinyls as well as in paints, inks and adhesives. Phthalates accumulate in fat and have been found in birds eggs, seals, fish, human fat and breast milk. Over time when subjected to heat, these chemicals can leach and migrate into food. In particular, fatty foods which are packaged in plastics can become contaminated by phthalates and Bisphenol A. To reduce your exposure to phthalates and Bisphenol A, do not microwave food in plastic containers or plastic wrap, avoid plastic cling wrap, discourage children from chewing on plastic and consult your dentist before accepting plastic coating treatment for your children's teeth.



Pesticides such as DDT have been proven to disrupt hormonal functions in such species as the peregrine falcon, mink, bald eagles and herring gulls. However concern over pesticides is not just limited to this previously banned pesticide. Children are at greater risk than adults to the effects of pesticides because they consume more food than adults and therefore are taking in more pesticides. Crawling on the floor and in grass also

leaves children more likely to absorb, inhale and ingest pesticides. To

avoid or reduce exposure to pesticides peel fruits and

vegetables. When possible buy organically grown food.

Otherwise, avoid some of the most contaminated fruits and vegetable such as strawberries, bell, red and green peppers, spinach, peaches, celery, apples, green beans, and cucumbers.

Avoid lindane head lice and scabies shampoo for humans and flea shampoo

for pets, use natural lawn and garden maintenance method and avoid areas freshly sprayed with pesticides.

Heavy metals such as lead, mercury and cadmium have long been known to cause ecological and health problems. Their potential as hormone-disrupters is an additional reason to avoid exposure to them. Lead, mercury and cadmium are found in many different products from batteries to industrial effluent from smelters and phosphate fertilizer production.

Incinerators and landfills release significant amounts of mercury and cadmium into the environment and the food chain because the waste they receive contains these metals. Some ways to avoid exposure to these is by removing vinyl window blinds, follow territorial fish consumption guidelines, avoid smoking, reduce car and energy use and properly dispose of dead batteries.

If you would like to know more about what you can do to prevent the use of these chemicals, or how to avoid exposure to them come to the office for a copy of "*Reducing Your Risk A Guide to Avoiding Hormone-Disrupting Chemicals.*"

edited by sandra mc Alpine



What's Happening at YCS?

Things just don't seem to slow down around the YCS office. Now that we are tracking volunteer time (a total of 537 hours for April and May) it has become more apparent how many people give to the society and just how much they give. Take a read below to get a taste of what's happening right now. And in case you miss the point, its thank you, thank you, thank you!

Socio-economic Impact Analysis Workshop!

YCS had two participants at the recent Whitehorse based workshop on Socio-economic Impact Analysis. We are always keen to raise our knowledge level and increase our effectiveness. Thanks for fitting it into your schedules Jen and Bob.

Foundation Meetings!

YCS recently attended a meeting in Seattle at which a number of foundations and non-government organizations had gathered to discuss a variety of environmental issues pertinent to Washington, BC, Yukon and Alaska. We continue to consider additional networking and funding opportunities.

Climate Change!

After a year of scheduling, YCS was finally able to bring Lousie Comeau of the Sierra Club to the Yukon to

talk about climate change. We provided her with a jam packed schedule which included meetings with government representatives, first nations and school classes. Thanks to Sally and Jen and Paul for all their effort in making it a success.

Ross River Wildlife Management Plan!

YCS sent two delegates to the recent two day development meeting held in Ross River. Thanks Yodit and Rosa.

Trade Show!?

Yes, YCS was at the trade show. The forest committee put together a booth supporting sustainable use of Yukon forests. Thanks to the scores of volunteers who made it happen... Paul, Darcie, Will, Mike, Elizabeth, Katie, Peter.....and tons more.

Fundraising!

YCS volunteers worked hard to make the garage sale and birdathon a success. Thanks everyone for all effort. And thanks to folks for the garage sale donations

Summer Jobs!

This year YCS has secured funding for 6 summer jobs. In addition to our longtime Guided Nature Walks Program and the more recent Canyon City Interpretation

Program, this year YCS is embarking on a Community Tourism Outreach Project.

Northern Cross!

YCS continues to work to protect the Porcupine Caribou Herd. Recently we headed a letter writing campaign urging the Canadian government to deny access to the Northern Cross company to re-enter well heads in the herd's winter range.

