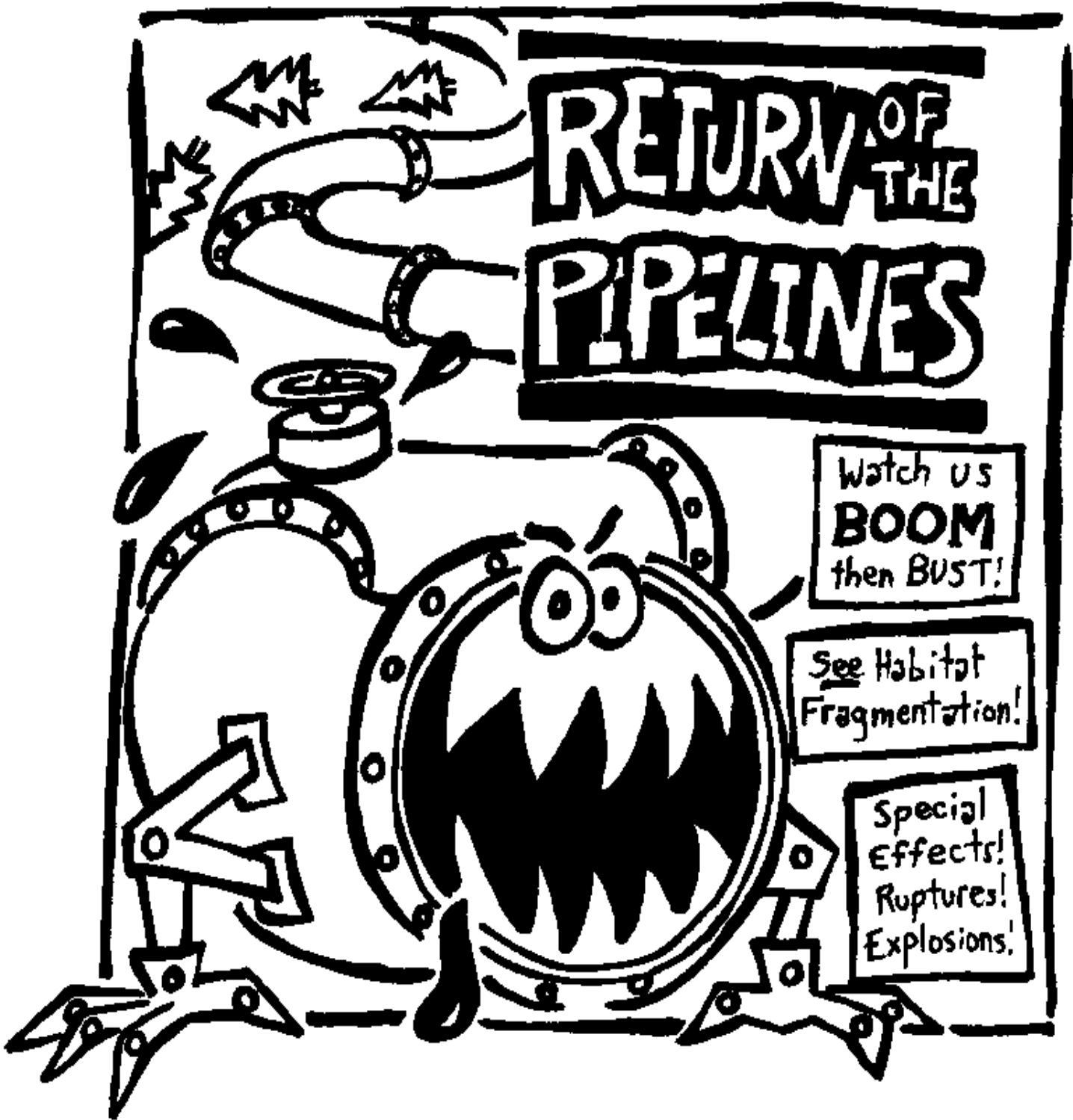


Walk Softly

Newsletter of the Yukon
Conservation Society
June 2000



INSIDE: Return of the Pipeline ♦ Election Frenzy ♦ DAP ♦ THA's by September?

What's Happening at YCS?

Tombstone Park

YCS submitted 4 separate presentations at the DIAND Tombstone Hearings held in Dawson City in early May. We focussed on land use, toxicology, and Canadian United Minerals (the applicant). This was our opportunity to tell DIAND that mining doesn't belong in a Territorial Park. Strong statements were also made by the Tron' dek Hwitch' in and CPAWS.

Trail Guiding Program 20th Anniversary

We are gearing up for our 20th year of Free Guided Nature Hikes in the Whitehorse area. We have hired Lori Schroeder, a long-time Yukon resident, naturalist and interpreter to be our Trail Guide Coordinator. Lori brings with her many years of interpretive experience, including three years working at the Dempster Interpretive Centre up the Dempster Highway. Welcome Lori! Please see information further in this issue about our Trail Guiding Program which will be running in July and August.

Earth Day

On April 22nd, a successful riverside cleanup of the proposed 2nd Avenue extension happened under sunny skies, with the help of many enthusiastic volunteers. Sixty-eight bags of garbage were collected. This was stage one of the cleanup: unfortunately snow cover prevented the cleanup of the riverbank. Thanks to Pat Ellis for her artistic direction with the children, and for producing a wonderful mural with Bob Tate which is now

hanging on the YCS building. Also, many thanks to our many hardworking volunteers and their families! Thanks to Boston Pizza for their donation of pizzas to our hungry workers.

Co-op Student

Since February Brendan Hogan has been working on the Millennium Trail for us. His diligent research and commitment to safe, well-planned trails has served us well. Brendan's high school co-op term ends with the end of the school year. Thanks Brendan!

Katimavik

We said goodbye to our last Katimavik-tim Luc Nadeau last month. Luc proved his dedication to YCS by walking many miles from his home to our office, even when he hurt his ankle and was on crutches!! Thanks for all your help Luc. Our partnership will continue with Katimavik this summer: the Katimavik Leadership Training participants (age 16-19) will be assisting YCS in coordinating a special family event later this summer. Stay tuned for more details.

Fundraising

Christine Cleghorn, our Executive Director extraordinaire, attended

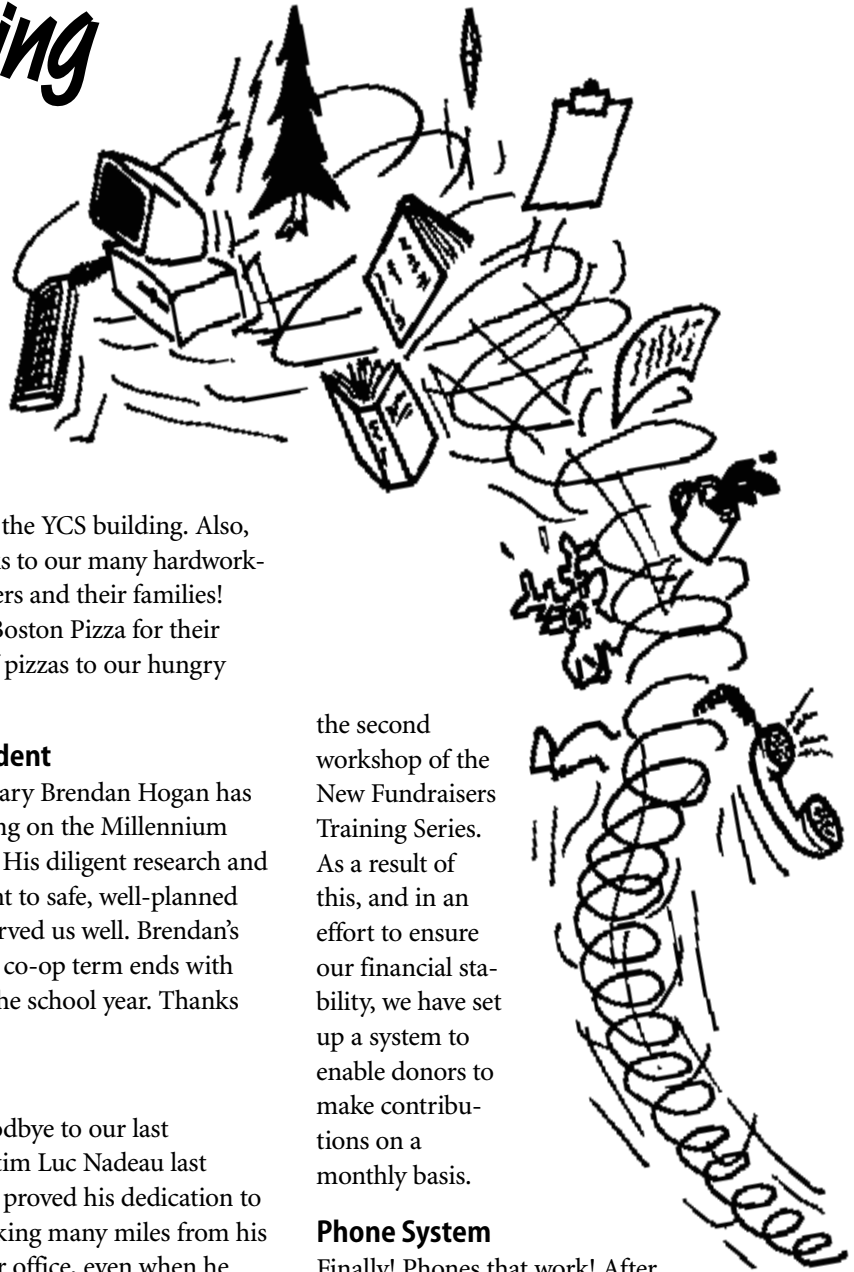
the second workshop of the New Fundraisers Training Series. As a result of this, and in an effort to ensure our financial stability, we have set up a system to enable donors to make contributions on a monthly basis.

Phone System

Finally! Phones that work! After years of banging phones to make them work, and stomping on the floor to let people downstairs know that a call is for them, we have a fancy new phone system!

Newsletter Submissions

Here's your chance to have a say! The Yukon Conservation Society encourages article submissions and letters to the editor for *Walk Softly*. Deadlines are the first of February, May, August and November.





Ok So Ya' Voted, eh?

For those of us living in the Yukon we really are in for some interesting times. We've all just finished getting through a spring Territorial general election, and one in which environmental groups banded together to have more impact on the political process. Raven Recycling, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and the Yukon Conservation Society took out advertisements in the papers and repeated the always-popular environmental questionnaire to candidates. And now, we've a new government.

Which means we can all fall back asleep for the next four years, right?

Wrong!

Regardless of which way you voted, the coming months will be critical for our impact as environmentalists on the incoming Liberal government. As the environmentalist's candidate questionnaire showed, there are serious differences between how individual candidates act on environmental issues, and how their parties act. And we're coming up to leadership conventions for both the Yukon Party and the New Democratic Party.

So, no matter which way you voted, there's no excuse, we have to put pressure on the government of the day, and exercise as much pressure as we can on whom the parties choose as their new leaders.

This is a tiny territory in terms of voters. What one individual says to a politician really can have an impact. So, don't be shy!

Ok, so you clip the newspaper out with the new Liberal Cabinet ministers, and put it up on the fridge — this is a good start. Stay tuned for issues as they arise this summer. It may take all summer for the new government to “get its ducks in a row” on issues — and we may not find out about some decisions until the territorial legislature sits again this fall. Some we may hear about while everybody is out on the land, and we'll have to write postcards to the government from our cabins, or when we stop for supplies somewhere up on the Dempster.

Some of the things you might have to write politicians about this summer include the “unknowns” for the new Liberal government. Such as what does “carrying out the Quartz and Placer [mining] Acts as they were written” mean, as well as what sort of a “review” the Protected Areas Strategy will get. And a lot of what they decide will depend on us.

So, again, don't be shy! Button-hole them in the store!

Or we could all just snooze until the next election...

paul davis

YCS Family Day



Watch out for the YCS Family Day coming up on August 5th this summer!! We have five volunteers from Katimavik who are going to be working throughout the month of July to pull this together. There will be fun and educational naturalist events for the whole family.

It will be held at Kishwoot Island and along the Yukon River where YCS is working to clean-up and rehabilitate the Quartz Road Wetland area for a future wildlife viewing trail. While we were not successful in convincing City Council to cancel their plans for a road through the area, we do have support to work towards a future trail in the area.

The work started this spring on Earth Day with a clean-up and artistic event organized by Beverly Brown and Pat

Ellis. Thanks so much to these two and all the volunteers who came out. Thank you also to Pat Ellis and Bob Tate who contributed the Quartz Road Wetland Mural now on display outside YCS.

We'll be tackling the first efforts in rehabilitation work in August. For the robust volunteer, we'll have some dirt that needs to be pushed around and seeds that need to be spread, so come on out and pick the activity that interests you the most.

For more information on future trail plans, or to sign up as a volunteer for clean-up, re-vegetation, and YCS Family day, please contact Angela Walkley at 668-7427 or YCS at 668-5678.

angela walkley

La Biche Forest Ecosystem Network Update

Unfortunately there has been no progress in finalizing the boundaries of the La Biche Forest Ecosystem Network (FEN). This is the area in the southeast that is supposed to be permanently protected from logging according to a 1996 CEAA mitigation. (See Dec. 1999 *Walk Softly*).

In February 2000 DIAND called a meeting in Watson Lake to finalize the FEN boundaries, but no decision was made because the Liard First Nation and First Nations with trans-boundary claims in the area boycotted the meeting. This is hardly surprising since at the time of the meeting DIAND was issuing timber permits in Liard First Nation proposed settlement land in the La Biche, forcing LFN to file an injunction. If LFN had not taken legal action conservation groups might have been forced to do so, since DIAND was at the same time issuing timber permits within the proposed FEN boundaries. In response to LFN's injunction DIAND withdrew all of the La Biche timber permits. The logging companies demanded compensation at the time, but we have not heard whether they were successful.

After that fiasco, DIAND representatives said they would review the public, industry and technical team comments regarding the FEN boundaries, and make a final decision. However, they have just issued a letter stating that they intend to undertake more extensive First Nation and public consultation.

It is true that First Nation consultation has not been adequate, but it is highly questionable whether new stakeholders like the Watson Lake Chamber of Commerce should become part of the process — the La Biche is nowhere close to Watson Lake. It is ironic that DIAND suddenly becomes interested in public consultation when it can help stall conservation measures, whereas when consultation might slow down Timber Harvest Agreements there is no such interest. Is DIAND just using 'more consultation' as an excuse to log this year within the proposed FEN boundaries? If so, they face the prospect of legal action once again.

karen baltgailis



Volunteers / Donations Wanted

Walk Softly needs your help!

YCS is looking for a volunteer to assist in the coordination, compilation, editing, and production of our quarterly newsletter *Walk Softly*. This is an excellent opportunity for you to learn more about the issues at YCS, to get to know the staff and volunteers, and to brush up on your coordination skills. If you are interested in this rewarding job, please contact the Office Coordinator at 668-5678.

Help Our Garden!

Spring is here and the YCS garden is in need of donations. Our hard working volunteer gardener (Georgina) is looking for: trees, compost bins, compost, shrubs, gravel for paths, plants and flowers, planter boxes, mulch, and rain barrels or large containers to collect water. All donations can be dropped off at the YCS office.



Editorial

Walk Softly

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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.

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Periodically I shake my head in disbelief that the Yukon is home to over 600 organized interest groups. A bit perplexing — seems like a lot for our wee territory. But recently I started to look at small clusters of committed Yukoners in a whole new light.

The 'Argus Affair' has left me contemplating the invaluable role of interest groups to society. Regardless of the outcome of this fiasco, the silver lining of the Argus cloud is that Whitehorse organizations of all shapes and sizes have rallied together with a common sense of purpose in a remarkable show of coalition building.

YCS let off early warning signals on this issue. The Society and the **Yukon Bird Club** launched a campaign to preserve disappearing Quartz Road wetlands. Armed with what meager information the City determined we deserved, these groups started raising awareness of the shoddy decisions the City was making in that corner of town.

The **Yukon Development Education Centre** upped the ante when they invited a citizen activist to town. Maude Barlow from the Council of Canadians unleashed a tide of citizen passion and determination that spawned the formation of the **Citizens Coalition for Responsible Planning**. This growing group became the catalyst for action against the mall development, attending City Council meetings, monitoring the City's actions, scrutinizing City documents.

Not willing to stand by and watch the core of Whitehorse shrivel and die, the **Downtown Business Association** launched legal action to hold the City accountable for unfair subsidies and concessions extended to Argus — estimated as high as \$4 million (and rising). Even the **Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce** has now publicly stated its concerns about actions detrimental to local businesses.

Meanwhile, staff at **Raven Recycling** are monitoring the ongoing saga of landfill and tipping fee avoidance, free gravel extended to Argus and its contractor, and a mounting list of freebies that divert revenues away from the City.

Council and candidates are certain to pause for thought as civic elections roll around this fall, given the snowballing of civic concerns and the presence of such a formidable coalition.

In the meantime, I take comfort in knowing that they are being watched — very closely.

teresa earle



Return of the Pipelines

Wartime Routes

In the 1940s four oil (and associated hydrocarbon derivatives) pipelines were built that criss-crossed the Yukon and adjacent areas. One ran from Norman Wells to Whitehorse, the second ran from Whitehorse to Skagway, a third ran from Carcross to Watson Lake and the fourth ran from Whitehorse to Fairbanks.

In the 1950s a fifth pipeline was built from Haines through to Fairbanks. It ran for the most part adjacent to the fourth wartime pipeline. All these pipelines have now been abandoned and most of the portions sold for scrap and removed.

As can be imagined, wartime environmental controls were non-existent. Vegetation was kept back from the pipelines by using very nasty pesticides, including Agent Orange in later years. Spills from ruptured pipes tended to be monitored from passing aeroplanes.

To their credit, DIAND has been investigating the degree of contamination along the various routes. Some remediation has taken place at contaminated sites.

Alaska Pipeline Take Two

Now there is a concentrated push by both industry and the Yukon territorial government to lay a different sort of pipeline adjacent to the Alaska Highway — a natural gas pipeline. This pipeline would transport natural gas from northern Alaska, and possibly northern Yukon and the Mackenzie Delta area, south to connect with existing natural gas pipelines in British Columbia and Alberta. From there, most of the natural gas would flow to the lower 48 states of the U.S.A.

The Yukon already has a natural gas pipeline in the south-east corner of the territory. Natural gas, about 1.3 million cubic metres per day, is produced at two wells and pumped out along the Westcoast pipeline to Fort Nelson. This pipeline runs from just inside the N.W.T. across a small portion of the Yukon and then into B.C.

The Lysyk Report

Back in the mid 1970s the Berger Inquiry rejected, at that time, the idea of a northern pipeline along the Mackenzie Valley. By 1977 another inquiry was being conducted, the Alaska Highway Pipeline Inquiry, known by the chairperson's name as the Lysyk Report.

Lysyk found that most Yukoners agreed that social and economic effects of a natural gas pipeline could be kept

within acceptable limits. The Northern Pipeline Act was then passed by the federal government in 1978. This Act facilitates the planning and construction of a pipeline for the transmission of natural gas from Alaska and Northern Canada. The Act falls under the authority of the federal Minister of International Trade, presumably because the pipeline starts and eventually ends in the U.S.A.

In 1983 the Yukon Easement Agreement was signed by the Federal government and Foothills Pipelines (South Yukon) Ltd. It gives Foothills an easement in which to build a natural gas pipeline. The easement essentially follows adjacent to the Alaska Highway. It is 240 metres wide but in some sections is narrower.

Before Foothills can commence design and construction it needs the permission of the Minister of International Trade. To get that, it must meet a number of conditions including the establishment of a single planning and regulatory agency with responsibility for engineering, social, economic and environmental aspects of the proposed pipeline. Note that this agency is not for the approval or disapproval of the pipeline, but just to mitigate its effects. As the Agreement now stands, written consent must be provided by the federal Minister of International Trade before September 12th, 2012.

Foothills has its right of way, the natural gas is sitting in northern Alaska and Canada and customers are waiting in the lower 48 states. All Foothills essentially needs is a signature.

Dempster Destruction

As if this isn't bad enough, in 1979 Foothills, the federal government, Alberta Gas Trunk Line and Westcoast Transmission signed the Dempster Link Agreement. This Agreement falls under the purview of the then Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (now called Natural Resources Canada).

The Dempster Link is intended to transport natural gas from the Mackenzie Delta and Beaufort Basin to the main Alaska Highway pipeline. It would follow the Dempster and North Klondike Highways, connecting to the Alaska Highway pipeline near Whitehorse. The precise routing for the Dempster Link has not been defined, unlike the Alaska Highway pipeline.

The Dempster Link Agreement is up for renewal in April, 2000. By the time you have read this, it will probably have



been renewed. And just so everyone is aware, this pipeline is alive and well in the minds of the Yukon Territorial Government. When the boundaries of the proposed Tombstone Park were being set the Dempster Highway right-of-way was kept wide enough to allow for the pipeline to pass through the proposed park.

What Is To Be Done!

Contact the federal ministers of International Trade, Natural Resources and the Environment asking for a full hearing under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act on whether the proposed pipelines should proceed. Our understanding of the fragility of the environment and the failings of technology have grown greatly since the Alaska Highway Pipeline and the Dempster Line Pipeline agreements were signed.

lewis rifkind



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Environment
Minister David Anderson
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La nature, naturellement!

Depuis mon arrivée a Whitehorse, regne un debat d'Etat.

Naturellement, certains sont pour sans savoir pourquoi.

Naturellement, certains sont contre que pour contredire.

Naturellement, les instances politiques veulent de l'argent.

Naturellement, nombreux actes de lobbysmes se font urgent.

Faut-il regarder le court ou le long terme?

Seront nous plus avance si d'autres ferment

Leurs portes, qu'ils partent

en cause d'un Wal-Mart?

Naturellement, il faut suivre le grand jeu economique.

Aurions-nous tendance a oublier les enjeux ecologiques?

Rendre ces animaux sans logis, est-ce logique?

Tout n'est pas question que de gestion.

Qu'ont-ils a proposer d'autre que pleins de bas prix?

Depuis la destruction du marais, certains ont appris

Que la nature est toujours fragile,

Devant ces promoteurs agiles.

Avec tout ce que le Yukon a herite,

Si l'on veut que ca reste tout vert,

Vaut mieux savoir toute la verite.

Impardonnable sont les faits couverts.

Est-ce que ceux qui gouvernent nous bernent?

En ce qui nous concerne, il faut qu'ils concertent.

Laisser la population de cote est un affreux affront.

Si on laisse passer, osez imaginer ce qu'ils feront!!!

La nature n'est pas de la pature!

Si vous avez a porter une decision,

Ne tomber pas dans la derision,

Choisissez la nature...naturellement!

luc nadeau



Timber Harvest Agreement Update

The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) is issuing contradictory messages regarding the future of the Timber Harvest Agreement development process in the southeast Yukon. At a recent meeting with DIAND Minister Robert Nault, DIAND Regional Director General Terry Sewell told YCS and CPAWS that DIAND's current timeline for THA development still stands, despite widespread public opposition to it. This means that as of the end of May the window for public comment is closed, industry will be invited to submit THA proposals in June, and long term THAs will be allocated in the southeast Yukon by September. Yet, two days before he met with us, Minister Nault signed a letter to the Southeast Yukon Proper Landuse Society, stating that THAs of a maximum of five years duration will be issued where forest management planning is not complete.

The Liard First Nation, DIAND and YTG are currently working on a Memorandum of Understanding to begin forest management planning in the southeast. If DIAND goes ahead with their planned timeline, the forests will have been allocated for logging before planning can even begin.

To further add to the confusion, local Forest Resources sources say that public input has been almost unanimously in support of short term THAs, and so DIAND will probably issue 3 to 5 year THAs in the southeast at this time. It would certainly make a farce out of the public input process if DIAND goes ahead and issues long term THAs in September. YCS, CPAWS, the Wilderness Tourism Association, the Trappers Association, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, the Southeast Yukon Proper Landuse Society, and some industry players are advocating 3 to 5 year THAs in order to give industry some security while long term planning is done. Landscape level planning is necessary to identify and withdraw potential protected areas, potential land claim areas, important wildlife habitat, and areas with high tourism or other non-timber economic values before long term forestry leases are signed.

The only player that is still adamantly pushing for an immediate long term THA is South Yukon Forest Corporation. The company wants 200,000 cubic meters per year, which is almost the entire wood supply for the two Forest Management Units close enough for Watson

Lake milling. (Together Forest Management Units Y02 and Y03 only have about 230,000 m³/year.) SYFC insists that they need a guarantee of 200,000 m³/year for at least ten years to access financing for \$20 million in additions they need to make to their facility in order to become profitable. They say that they are not making money right now because the wood is smaller than they expected. They want to install a Hew saw and finger jointing equipment to improve recovery and kilns and a planer mill to produce a higher value product. They also want to install a co-generation plant to power their mill and to sell power on Yukon grid.

YCS has contracted an independent forestry consultant to determine whether South Yukon Forest Corporation really needs to spend \$20 million to become profitable. Our consultant's preliminary results indicate that if SYFC is marginally profitable now, for around \$5 million they should be able to improve their recovery and produce dried, planed lumber. The cost savings in transportation and increased revenues from the higher value product should make enough money that they could repay a \$5 million loan in less than five years. This would mean that a five year THA would be enough to keep SYFC in business until planning is done. If the company can't turn a profit with \$5 million in upgrades and a five year THA, perhaps Yukoners need to think carefully about whether this is the kind of business we should subsidize with virtually the entire wood supply close enough to be milled in Watson Lake.

It is very difficult to sift through DIAND's mixed messages and figure out what they actually intend to do. South Yukon Forest Corporation is obviously lobbying hard, but public opinion is on the side of good planning, with short term THAs in the meantime. The public has stalled the allocation of THAs twice now, but DIAND hasn't gotten any closer to improving public consultation, or doing any long range industry or landscape level planning. One can only hope that DIAND does its homework and looks carefully at SYFC's claims. It would be a terrible shame if one company's bad economics destroyed the southeast Yukon's unique ecological values and the Yukon's chances for a truly sustainable forest industry.

karen baltgailis



What's Happening in the North Regarding Climate Change?

Climate change predictions for the north can seem rather vague, like regional weather forecasts. The reason for this is the huge expanse of land involved and the complex nature of the Earth's climate systems. Expected implications of climate change in the north include: increased storm activity, precipitation changes, habitat shifts, rising sea levels, overall warming. In Yellowknife Feb. 27-29, 2000 there was a workshop to address the issue of climate change impacts and adaptation strategies for Canada's northern territories.

The workshop was attended by scientists and interested / affected individuals, about 120 of them. Although difficult to scientifically attribute to climate change, there were a lot of anecdotal stories about how climate change is being observed. There were references to lack of snow in some places, excess snow in others, dramatic changes in sea ice and permafrost, even new species of salmon being caught in the arctic. There are important changes to wildlife that have been stable as long as people and their elders could remember. Snow depths become too great for caribou to survive in some places, and too thin for seals to raise offspring in others. Warming has a large impact on polar bears too, we have heard about polar bears starving in Churchill because they can't get out onto ice to feed, but they are also dying because of ice caves collapsing upon them due to mid-winter warming and rains.

Climate changes are not just felt by innocent wildlife. There has been a dramatic decrease in winter road access due to warmer winters and later falls. Thaw slumps are becoming commonplace, roads built upon permafrost are feeling the heat and are responding by sinking as the permafrost becomes unstable. There is the same potential for buildings and pipelines grounded in permafrost to



do the same. Hydro electric power potential can be decreased, severe windstorms are being observed, storms at sea have a devastating effect upon coastlines without the protection of sea ice, as an example Tuktoyuktuk is currently losing 15m of coastline per year to erosion without the usual protective winter sea ice cover. These things all happen close enough to home to get people concerned and would-be naysayers are now strongly believing in climate change.

The Yellowknife workshop came a long way from bringing all the answers, but an encouraging thing was that there were representatives from mining companies, highways, communities and engineering firms. There was even a military presence due to concern about defending northern Canada as the previously frozen Northwest Passage becomes open for shipping. The scientists and environmental types were by far the minority, but the overwhelming unanimous feeling is that climate change is a serious problem and we need to do something about it. Although the topic for discussion was adaptation to climate change, it was certainly recognized that what we really need to do is reduce our emissions of carbon dioxide worldwide. Emissions are the root of the problem, any adaptation measures are just a band-aid solution.

craig olsen

The Five Key Issues in DAP

According to negotiators from the Territorial team, this fall may see another (and likely final) round of public consultation regarding the new Development Assessment Process. In the last few months, YCS has boiled down the draft legislation to five key issues that we will be working hard to influence between now and the fall, and focusing on during the next public review.

Enforcement

One of the greatest concerns that YCS and CPAWS both have with DAP is that it does not contain any meaningful provision to require parties to comply with DAP. The Development Assessment Board, after determining that there may have been a violation of a term or condition of a project decision document, may recommend to the relevant decision body that a public hearing be held. In other words, assuming that the Board is kept apprised of project developments, it can only signal problems or violations. For example, if the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has failed to ensure that certain mitigations have taken place, all that the Board can do is recommend that DFO has a public hearing about the matter. It is our view that the Board must have the capacity to require compliance with the provisions of DAP. What is the point in spending the time and money on assessment review if there is not an adequate mechanism in place to ensure the accepted terms and conditions are in fact implemented?

Other provincial assessment regimes (Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia) have compliance mechanisms. In B.C. the legislation goes so far as to have monetary penalties and imprisonment provisions for a person who does not comply with a project certificate of approval.

Assessment Decision Making

DAP fails to provide substantive criteria for decision making. This means that there is no minimum standard for decisions. The UFA objectives, on the other hand, set out at least 4 criteria that should be met by every assessment:

- 1) The assessment protects and promotes the well-being of Yukon Indian People and their communities and other Yukon residents;
- 2) the assessment recognizes and enhances, to the extent practicable, the traditional economy of Yukon Indian People and their special relationship with the wilderness environment;
- 3) the assessment protects and maintains environmental quality and heritage sources; and
- 4) the project is consistent with sustainable development.

We want to see the new legislation explicitly state that, at the end of the day, after all the information is collected and considered, decisions about whether or not projects will go ahead, and how they go ahead, will be based on the above criteria.

Scope and Timelines of Assessing Alternatives

In DAP, assessors must consider alternatives to the project or existing project or alternative ways of carrying it out that would avoid or minimize impacts. We think that the legislation would be stronger and more practical if it avoided this categorization of alternatives. Following the rule of "simpler is better", why not just state that alternatives must be considered? That way as projects weave through the assessment process, a reviewing body would have alternatives to consider and would not be bound to categorizing those alternatives.

To meet the objectives of the UFA, the final decision on what can proceed must be based not just on what prevents negative effects, but on which approach is the most socially and environmentally preferable and economically viable. We need to go beyond minimizing significant effects and start making positive choices that will enhance and maintain our environment and communities.



Phone Kelvin Leary (YTG DAP Unit 393-6431) and Ron Chambers (Federal DAP Unit 667-3175) to tell them that DAP without the above changes is not acceptable environmental assessment legislation for the Yukon.



Public Involvement

The UFA provides a clear commitment to public involvement in the regulatory process. DAP legislation needs to reflect that commitment by;

- 1) Ensuring that any timelines in the regulations only take effect once the recommendation, decision, or related information is put on the public registry;
- 2) ensuring opportunities for participant funding at all stages of the process;

- 3) ensuring access to all communications to and from governments to decision bodies regarding assessment matters, including decisions; and
- 4) ensuring the right of the public to require: reviews of plans, reviews of existing projects, and a Board compliance hearing concerning the violation of terms and conditions of a decision document.

christine cleghorn

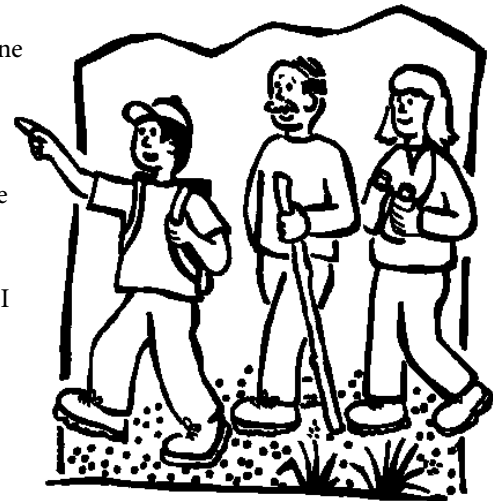
Our Twentieth Anniversary Trail Guiding Season!

Trail guide season is almost here again — our twentieth! A new trail guide coordinator has been hired. That’s me — Lori Schroeder. For those of you who don’t know me, I used to run the Dempster Interpretive Centre. This spring I worked with school groups at Swan Haven delivering migratory bird interpretation and created environmental education tools that are used in Yukon schools. I leaped into the coordinator position two weeks ago and I’ve been running ever since. This summer we will offer our free guided nature hikes from July 1 to August 21. All members of the public are welcome. Our schedule is shown in the table below.

We haven’t yet firmed up any of the theme hikes, but keep a lookout for 101 Edible Plants on Main Street with Bruce Bennett. We are looking forward, once again, to seeing a lot of youngsters come out for Hikes for Tykes. On the afternoon of Wednesday, July 12th we’ll be celebrating

Parks Week at the Quartz Road Wetland in conjunction with CPAWS. On Parks Day, Saturday, July 15th, our Canyon City interpreters will be presenting the first run of Skookum Skits. Phone me at the YCS office for updates.

With the help of the wonderful trail guide manual last year’s coordinator, Tanis Davey, put together, I am jumping the hoops and clearing the straightaway of all the things needing doing — now or yesterday. At the moment, we are hiring four student trail guides. We have some very exciting candidates and I look forward to telling you more about them in the next newsletter. Or better yet, come out and meet them. Look forward to seeing you on the trails.



lori schroeder

Hike Schedule <i>leaving from the YCS office at 302 Hawkins St</i>				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10:00 Yukon River	10:00 am – 4:00 pm Grey Mountain	10:00 Clay Cliffs	10:00 am – 4:00 pm Haeckel Hill	10:00 Long Lake
1:00 Hidden Lakes		1:00 Theme Hike		1:00 Yukon River
3:00 Long Lake		3:00 Hikes for Tikes		3:00 Hidden Lakes
Canyon City Hikes				
7 days a week				
10:00am & 2:00 pm leaving from the Miles Canyon Bridge				

Election Frenzy!

From the moment the writ was dropped it was a race to the finish line. Thirty short days to select from the thin roster of candidates someone who we hope will govern for the good of all once inside the legislature. It's a narrow window and a feverish pitch.

Nornet's effort around the election was to try and get above the battlefield of yes/no answers and abstract the values behind all those questionnaires. We asked many representatives of the non-governmental community to offer a vision statement of what they imagine this society could be. I don't know if the results of that effort (a half page of small print on Friday afternoon newspaper with the wrong visual!) had any impact. But the intention was to offer candidates a sense of what "we" in the NGO community value. Whether our work focuses on issues of natural environment, women, children, the elderly, poverty, justice, disability, health, addictions or spirituality...we share common values and a common vision.

Perhaps we will make a poster of all the statements as a reminder to us all that we are a collection of people who care for the well being of others and for the place we live. We are not simply working on one specific area of expertise but collectively we contribute to the well being of our society and have a shared vision of the future.

High stress levels around the election seem to hinge on the subtle reality that we have deferred too much power to an executive body. We cast our vote and the moment it leaves our hands we have divested enormous decision making powers to members elect. This inherited system of indirect democracy, while it may serve to manage large numbers of people in a single nation state, has created a great distance between the governing bodies and its citizens. In this system it is the NGOs, like ourselves, that have subsequently emerged as the "citizen's voice." We are the shadow government, filling in where the other leaves off; we breathe life and value into a process that is often too bureaucratic for its own good (or ours).



While we NGOs are often "consulted" by government on critical policy initiatives, there is no guarantee that our counsel will be heeded, or worse, that initiatives that have gained the consensus of a wide array of "interest groups" are not implemented. The great challenge seems to be how do we ensure meaningful participation of the NGO community into the process of governance? How do we ensure our participation is effective and respected and "consultations" that drain time and resources from community groups and members not be for not?

In reading a book by Jerry Mander *In The Absence of the Sacred*, particularly the chapter titled: "The Gift of

Democracy," I am fascinated to learn that there is a growing body of evidence among scholars that the Great Binding Law — *Hau de no sau nee* — of the Iroquois Confederacy was the primary model and inspiration for the United States Articles of Confederacy and for the Constitution itself. According to Oren Lyons, Faithkeeper of the Turtle Clan, the "basic strength of Iroquois governance comes from its trust and dependence upon the participation of all the people. National consensus is paramount. There is no process for voting. There is a system of discussion and council that requires agreement from all sides of the council fire; all must finally agree on the subject

before them. All meetings are public. There are no executive decisions." (pp 230)

It's pretty obvious what the "founding fathers" of democracy left out. Granted consensus in such a diverse society and by all the citizens is virtually impossible and would thwart progress to levels intolerable to most. But maybe over time we will have the courage to change the structures of governance to better reflect the needs of the people and allow everyone who desires to participate fully and as equals. Maybe then elections wouldn't have to be so stressful...

Anyone with further thoughts on the subject is encouraged to contact Nornet at 668-2482 or nornet@polarcom.com

chris clarke



The Triple-A-S comes to town

The Yukon Science Institute is hosting the annual American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Arctic science conference in Whitehorse, September 21 to 24. We expect the event to attract 200 to 300 scientists, managers, educators and students working in Alaska and the Canadian North, along with some participants from other circumpolar nations. The AAAS, despite its name, is international in its mem-

Crossing Science and Community Arctic Borders Science 2000

CROSS BORDERS of space — form partnerships across political boundaries in the circumpolar north.

CROSS BORDERS of time—discuss new directions in Arctic science from the viewpoints of younger and older scientists.

CROSS BORDERS of culture and worldviews — explore the evolving relations between Arctic science and Arctic communities.

bership and its scope. It is a not-for-profit organisation, and publisher of the journal *Science*.

The AAAS Arctic science conference is typically more varied and less formal than most scientific meetings. It provides a forum for exchanging recent results and ideas on new or ongoing work. Physical, biological and social science disciplines are represented.

This year's theme is Crossing Borders: Science and Community. The conference will open with a half-day plenary session with talks addressing the theme, followed by two days of concurrent sessions with a broad mix of topics. Posters will be displayed throughout the conference, with their authors available in the poster room during the extended lunch hours.

The Call for Abstracts has been issued, with abstracts due July 17. The conference agenda and the abstracts will be compiled into a book prior to the conference and will be part of the registration materials.

Information on submitting abstracts and on registration, fees, field trips, travel and accommodation is on the conference web site at <http://www.taiga.net/arctic2000>. If you have a question about the conference, email us at arctic2000@taiga.net or call Wanda Leaf at 633-5269.

*Submitted by Joan Eamer,
President, Yukon Science Institute*

Women, Mining and the Environment Conference

This fall the Yukon Conservation Society and the Yukon Status of Women Council will host a conference to explore how women and the environment are affected by mining. While the links between mining and environmental health have been studied for years, input from women, especially at the community level, has been sorely ignored. From September 15-17 we will be starting the conversation about how mining affects women, their families, and the environment they live in with women from Yukon communities and women from Outside who have experience to share. By the end of the conference we hope to have a clear idea of what the important issues are, and an agenda for change.

christine cleghorn

***"We are learning to do
a great many clever
things. Unless we are
much mistaken the next
great task will be to learn
not to do them."***

G.K. Chesterton, 1903



Guide Books For Sale

Now that summer is here (finally!), many of you will be heading out into the wilds of the Yukon to enjoy various activities such as hiking, canoeing, cycling, etc. YCS has many guide books and other resources for sale to help you pick routes and trails, and give you background information on the various regions of the Yukon. Drop by our office between the hours of 10:00 and 2:00, Monday to Friday to peruse our inventory. Titles we carry include:

Whitehorse & Area Hikes & Bikes
Yukon Conservation Society \$18.95

Paddling in the Yukon: A Guide to the Rivers
Ken Madsen \$19.95

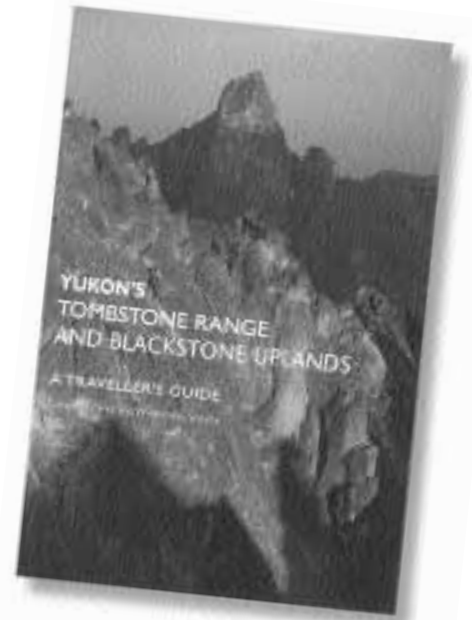
Rivers of the Yukon: A Paddling Guide
Ken Madsen and Graham Wilson \$17.95

The Yukon Hiking Guide: Over 100 Walks, Hikes and Treks
Curtis Vos \$19.95

Yukon's Tombstone Range and Blackstone Uplands: A Traveller's Guide,
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society \$19.95

The Wind, the Snake and the Bonnet Plume: Three Wild Northern Rivers
Yukon Wildlands Project \$12.00

We also carry many more books, trail maps, orienteering maps, naturalist's guides, t-shirts, and other assorted environmental products. Come check it out!



Thank you Volunteers!

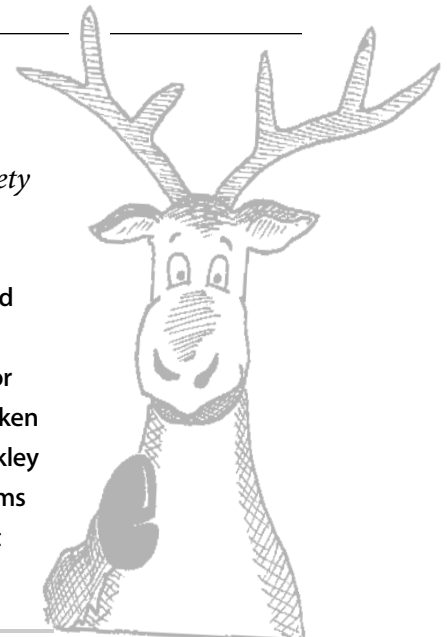
Kudos to our hard-working and dedicated volunteers! The Yukon Conservation Society wouldn't be the vibrant, active organization it is without all your help!

Mike Blower
Beverly Brown
Georgina Brown
Jill Campion
Lisa Chevalier
Tyla Crowe
Paul Dabbs

Paul Davis
Suzanne den Ouden
Teresa Earle
Pat Ellis
Julie Frisch
Liz Hall
Tanya Handley

Alice Hartling
Marlene Jennings
Paul Mantle
Colin McDowell
Jocelyn McDowell
Sue Moodie
J.P. Pinard.

Lewis Rifkind
Bob Tate
Randy Taylor
Bob Van Dijken
Angela Walkley
Andy Williams
Sally Wright



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

I'd like to make a tax deductible gift!

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

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

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

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

Memberships run January to December.

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

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

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

PAYMENT METHOD: Total \$ _____

Cheque enclosed (payable to Yukon Conservation Society)
 I'd rather charge my VISA:
 I'd like to make a monthly donation of \$ _____ on my VISA:

VISA # _____ Expiry date ____/____

Signature for VISA: _____

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTAL CODE _____

PHONE _____

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

EMAIL _____

Mail your form to Yukon Conservation Society,
 Box 4163, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 3S9

Miss Environmental Manners

My dearest Pristine,

Those darn swamps! I just can't seem to get down to bedrock. I've tried the heavy-duty back-hoe, front-end loader, and my ever-trusty D-9 Cat. But it's just bloody hard work to obliterate a natural watercourse! The duck feathers keep clogging the manifold intake! And then, what to do with all that muck? It seems like such an effort to truck it all the way to McIntyre Creek when the Yukon river sits right there ready to carry away all that dirt. How is a guy to earn a buck?

Any suggestions would be appreciated.

Hardly yours,

Joe Argus

Prez, No Life Here, Ltd.

Gentle Reader,

Take solace that you are not alone: the problems you are encountering are shared by developers around the globe. It's just not easy to turn a complex marsh ecosystem into a vast expanse of gleaming asphalt. You're paving a parking lot for a shopper's paradise —

this public service shouldn't go unnoticed. Have you approached your City Council for some compensation for equipment damage? Perhaps you could sell the duck feathers to a duvet maker? Regardless, those pesky migrating birds will soon be finished their spring flight— within weeks, your lunch and manifolds will be safe from marauding beaks of all shapes and sizes.

It is true that the land of the midnight sun presents special challenges. No cover of darkness to cloak covert muck dumping exercises on the shores of the Yukon River. You have to start thinking like an environmental engineer. My suggestion is selling the muck to gardeners. I can picture them now: coming and picking it up themselves on Saturdays; splattering their pristine sport utility vehicles; gleeful cries of "it's so rich!" and "my carrots will LOVE this stuff!" filling the air! It's all in the manner of approach. Keep some yourself and you can put in a few tidy flower beds and maybe a plastic waterfowl or two. This will no doubt appease the radicals and have them clamoring for the Wal-Mart garden section.

Bringing the future to today,

Pristine Acom

Miss Environmental Manners




Yukon Conservation Society

Box 4163, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 3S9



Did you know?

...

-  1.3 million Canadians work for non-profit organizations — 1 out of 11 jobs
-  27% of adults volunteer, averaging 190 hours per person year. The value of the time is \$12 billion/year.
-  Canadians with personal incomes over \$110,000 gave away 2.9% of their incomes in 1997. Those with personal incomes under \$13,000 gave away 4.6%.

