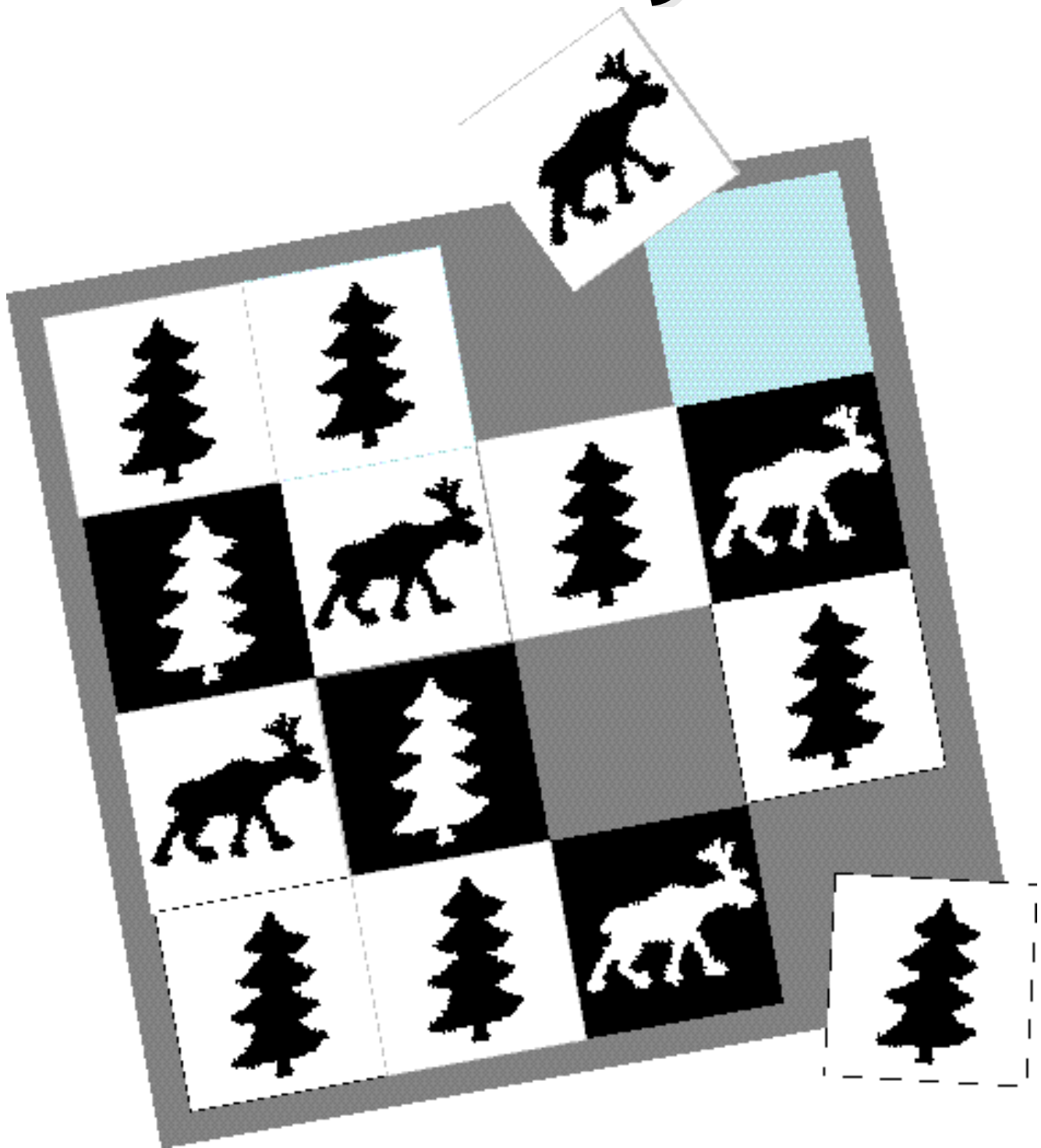


Walk Softly

Newsletter of the Yukon
Conservation Society
January 1996



INSIDE: *Bark Beetles* ♦ *Elephants?* ♦ *Co-management* ♦ *Hides*



Legal Loopholes Remain After Court Decision

At the end of November, the federal Court of Canada handed down its decision on the “Bonnet Plume” lawsuit, a lawsuit brought against the federal government in the spring of 1994 by Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Yukon Chapter. Unfortunately, the decision will allow mining exploration to continue next season without any environmental review.

CPAWS -Yukon argued that when the federal government issued a land use permit to a mining company, Westmin Resources, to construct a winter road into the Bonnet Plume River area it should have reviewed not only the impacts of the road but also the impacts of the exploration work which would occur as a result of the road’s construction. CPAWS-Yukon also challenged the government’s interpretation that the Territorial Lands Act does not apply to mining claims, arguing that the Act does apply and that the government should be issuing land use permits — and therefore doing environmental assessments — for land use activities on mining claims.

The Tetlit Gwich’in First Nation of Fort MacPherson intervened in the lawsuit in support of CPAWS’ arguments. The government, on the other hand, claimed its existing legislation did not give it the authority to regulate land use activities on the mining claims at the end of the winter road and, therefore, it did not need to assess what the equipment that travelled the winter road would do once it arrived on the claims.

The disappointing court decision supports the federal government’s assertion that it does not have to issue permits under the Territorial Lands Act for the clearing, bulldozing, road building or many other land use activities on the Yukon’s 40,000 mining claims. No permits mean no environmental screening is triggered. The judge also stated that the government did not need to assess the end use impacts of the permit it issued for the road’s construction.

On a more positive note, according to the court’s decision the federal government was at fault as it did not consider the Canadian Heritage River nomination in its environmental assessment of the land use permit for the road. Prior to the permit being issued, the Bonnet Plume River had been nominated as a Heritage River by

the federal government, the Yukon government and Nacho N’yak Dun. According to Juri Peepre of CPAWS-Yukon, “It sends a clear message to governments that they can not conduct ‘business as usual’ along Heritage Rivers or other special management areas. Heritage Rivers must be treated with care and respect.”

CPAWS-Yukon will be appealing the federal court’s decision. The Yukon Conservation Society also has a similar lawsuit against the federal government for its failure to consider the impacts of mining exploration work when it issued a land use permit to a mining company moving equipment to its mineral claims in the wolf kill area (see December 1994 newsletter). The YCS is currently reviewing how the Bonnet Plume decision and planned appeal will impact its case.

The passage of amendments to the Yukon Quartz Mining Act and the Yukon Placer Mining Act, and related Mining Land Use Regulations, will help to address some of the deficiencies in the current regulatory process. After over five years of deliberations, the long promised Bill to amend these acts was finally introduced for first reading in the House of Commons on December 14th. However, the same day parliament adjourned until mid February so it will be at least a couple of months before the Bill is passed. Even once passed, the Bill and Mining Land Use Regulations will likely not result in environmental reviews of mining exploration until the 1997 season as industry is calling for a long implementation period (one year for Placer, six months for Quartz).

If passed as currently worded, the new mining act and regulations will still not provide a level of environmental protection found in other jurisdictions. Although the YCS was involved in the committee that helped draft the bill and regulations, there remain a number of key areas we disagree with (e.g. fine levels, thresholds of activity, provisions for security). After the Bill receives second reading, it will go to a committee which will solicit further comments on the proposed amendments. The YCS and others are expected to push for further changes which will strengthen the environmental protection measures in the bill and move it from the 1960s into the 1990s.

jennifer ellis



Why Not Caribou Country...?

When I first saw the Yukon Government information sheet entitled “The Yukon is Elephant Country”, I thought the Heritage Branch was putting out a ‘bit’ on mammoths and plugging the change of the Visitors Centre to a Museum. **WRONG!!!!**

This ill-conceived piece is about “...the search for black gold. Come explore Yukon: it’s open for business.” Yes, and the word Texas is even used in the piece.

This concerned me and led me to get a hold of the more detailed ‘stuff’ the Government is willing to let us read if we want to know more about how they say they are going to administer oil & gas development in the Yukon. These documents are called *Yukon Oil & Gas Regime: Discussion Paper (DP)* and the *Draft Bill for the Yukon Oil & Gas Act (YOGA)*.

Both documents are clearly aimed at industry and informing them of the rules and responsibilities for their ventures and operations in the Yukon. The Yukon Government is being consistent. Their message is clear—the Yukon is open for the exploration and development of its oil and gas resources...it’s renewable resources?...don’t worry about them; They’re being dealt with...by being left out.

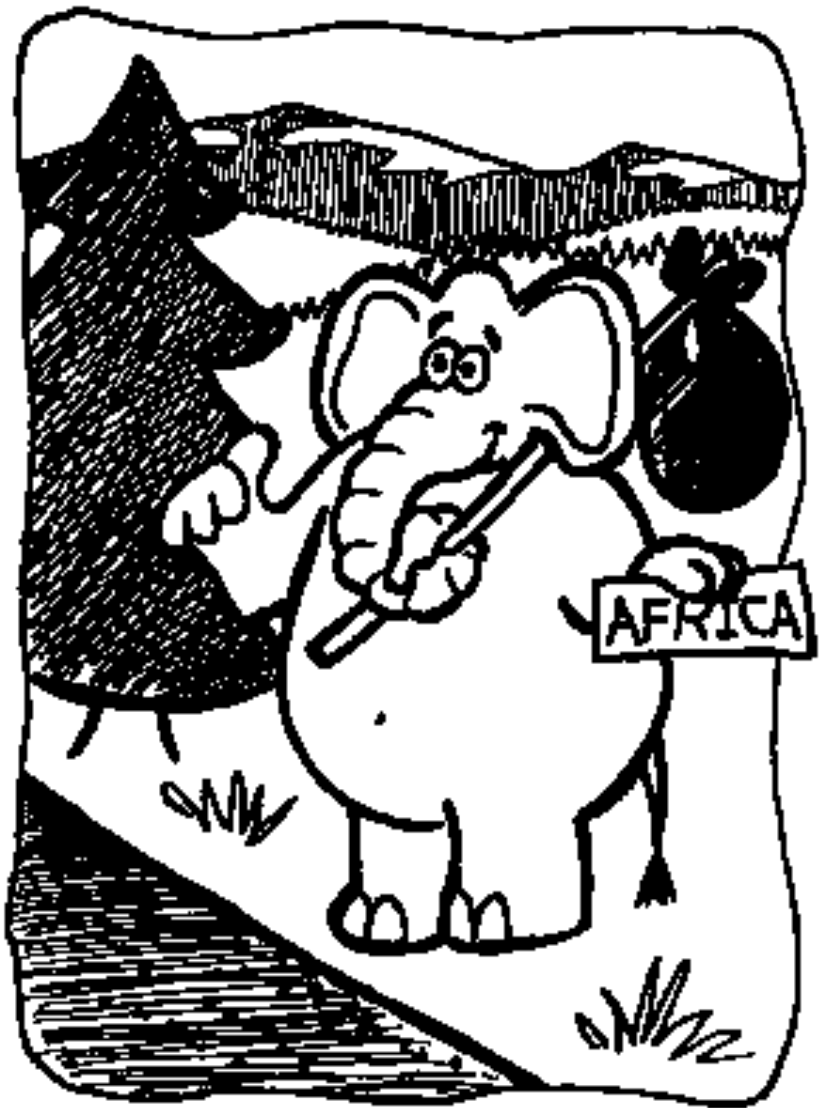
We should be concerned! Without going into a clause-by-clause or a page-by-page analysis of the documents, a few points for your information of the areas of which the YCS will be seeking clarification from the Government:

1. Why is Environment/Environmental Protection not a Priority

While “protect[ion] of the environment” is stated as the third priority (Discussion Paper : 10), the word “environment” appears only twice throughout the main text of the discussion paper. In the YOGA, The Minister does not have to consider the past environment record of a person/company applying for disposition, but whether the person/company owes money to the Government.

While it is recognized that this is an industry-oriented document, is it not important to put

industry on notice that the maintenance of environmental integrity is an important part of the Yukon economy as well? Should not Government’s view of oil & gas development and its role in sustainable development be spelled out, for industry and public? A discussion paper would normally outline the vision a government has on where and how non-renewable resource development fits with the maintenance and enhancement of its renewable resources. **WARNING — THIS GOVERNMENT OBVIOUSLY HAS NONE!!!**



...cont. on page 4



2. Why is there a lack of consistency with the existing environment regime(s)?

One would hope that there would have been a very clear explanation of how the proposed YOGA links with, is affected by and/or is subject to the existing legislative, regulatory, and management regimes—such as the Yukon Environment Act, the Wildlife Act, and land use regulations. In fact, it only raises questions and inconsistencies.

- The documents state “strict procedures must be followed to avoid spills...” The procedures are neither outlined or attached so how is one to determine whether they are adequate? Nor does it say how or if it is linked with the Yukon Environment Act (YEA).
- Critical areas—the insurance and parameters for environmental protection, the process(es) for public involvement, and the disposition of rights to name but three—are just mentioned stating detail to be provided through as yet-to-be-defined regulations.
- There are different penalties for offences between the YEA and the YOGA. In the YOGA, a person is not liable to a fine or penalty of more than \$100K and 1 year in jail. The YEA has much higher liability penalties.
- The YOGA states that a spill must be reported to the Chief Operations Officer. Under the YEA, one reports such a mishap to the Environment Protection Officer.
- There is no clarity on the need for and process to establish formal criteria for the protection of wildlife habitat. It still leaves wildlife habitat protection being done on an ad hoc basis at best. Yet, the Yukon is open for business!!

This Government is even bold enough to state that it has established links with non-existing regimes. The Discussion Paper states that the environment “will be [protected by being] subject to the Development Assessment Process”—a process that has yet to be defined. It is our understanding that the DAP is a tripartite process, at least 17 months away from finalization, and has yet to reach agreement on the terms, criteria or process structure for environment or socioeconomic reviews. Does the Government know something the public does not but maybe should? The Government seems to have pre-determined the results of the next 17 months. Is this Government guaranteeing that the envi-

ronment will be protected? How? In what manner? Under what criteria?

It seems to assume that much is going to be ‘caught’ by an existing ‘environment regime’ which either does not exist (habitat protection), is in the process of being discussed (DAP) or is inadequate at best (land use regulations/permitting). Who is responsible for land and habitat? Who will control the land and access to the drill site? Under what law and/or regulatory regime?

3. Where are the avenues for a public role in decision-making?

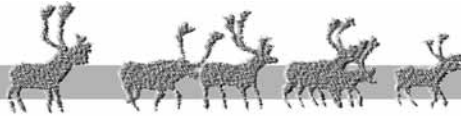
As written, the documents do not provide any avenue for public input or role at any stage unless deemed so by the Minister or the Chief Operating Officer. There is no responsibility for the Minister to provide his reason(s) for granting or not granting rights or licences. Since the Minister has the authority to grant rights “with or without conditions”, the public should have the right to know the rationale. There are no defined points throughout the process for issuing oil and gas rights for public input or role. More importantly, there is no defined process for the public to be involved with the ever so important regulations that will give this legislation its true definition. What is the plan for ensuring the regulatory framework will protect the environment? What is the plan for ensuring public input into the drafting and formulation of the regulations required under the Act?

The above is just a cursory look at some of the key areas of concern. The fact that this is being proposed before Land Claims Settlements have been finalized is a whole other area. Neither the YCS nor the public should be expected to give support and approval to a package that is so incomplete.

Without DAP being finalized, without any wildlife habitat protection regulations, without land claims being finalized, without public involvement in the drafting of the regulations that will clarify the operation and administration of this Act, the YCS with its membership must actively seek substantive changes to this proposed.

And furthermore, why can't we be caribou country?...or moose country?...wolverine?....

jennifer mauro



Editorial

Walk Softly

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, (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.

ycs board of directors

bob van dijen
 cameron eckert
 will jones
 tanya handley
 val loewen
 jennifer mauro
 paul kishchuk
 craig olsen
 joy snyder
 linda netro
 jennifer staniforth

jennifer ellis, executive director
 shelly gerber, office coordinator

workers on this issue

jennifer ellis
 shelly gerber
 tanya handley
 paul mantle

In many cases, how decisions get made is as important as what decisions get made. As discussed in this newsletter, the establishment of Renewable Resource Councils under land claims agreements has increased the involvement of community members in decision-making. These co-management processes, involving half government and half First Nation nominees, allow for elders and others with first hand experience and interest in the land to have a voice in resource management for their area. The Yukon Conservation Society fully supports the co-management processes that have been developed under land claims believing it is critical that First Nations have a central role in decisions affecting their traditional territories.

However, another article highlights one of the keys to successful decision-making is to involve multiple interests, to make sure that everyone who has a stake in the outcome has input into its development. Many of these "multi-stakeholder" processes, therefore, involve not only government and First Nations but land owners, environmentalists, industry and other key community members. This creates more ownership of the decision, making its implementation easier and more enduring.

How then can the benefits of these two processes co-management and multi-stakeholder be realized? For the spruce beetle issue in the Kluane area, a co-management body made up of DIAND, Champagne-Aishihik First Nation, and the local Renewable Resource Council pulled together a committee of diverse interests to advise them on management options for the area. The process appears to be working well and the YCS appreciates being invited to the table. What will happen for forest management planning in Southeast Yukon? Will there be consistency in the approach of the RRCs or will an altogether different process be used?

The YCS is looking at how these processes impact our work, both when we are asked to be involved and when we are not. For example, in instances where we do not have input into the discussions of a co-management process, what weight will our voice to government have next to the recommendations of the legislated co-management body? If we are invited to the table, how do we prioritize our energies and resources in light of the creation of an anticipated 14 RRCs and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board?

We hope future discussions with people involved in co-management bodies and the processes themselves will allow us to continue to explore both the opportunities for, and barriers to, our effective involvement.

jennifer ellis



Working in multi-stakeholder processes

How we can work together toward realizing sustainability in our communities was a central theme at a recent conference in Vancouver. The “Sustainability: It’s Time for Action” conference brought together people from a number of different sectors: municipal and provincial governments, first nations, environmental groups, land owners, educators and industry. Although there was little ‘action’ at the conference, it was heartening to see a diversity of interests promoting sustainability as something we must collectively work towards.

Many of the presentations and discussions focused on the role multi-stakeholder processes (or multi-participant as some preferred to call it) can play in achieving sustainability, whether it be to protect a watershed, develop a land use plan or advise government on its economic and environmental policies. The following outlines a number of factors that should be considered if such processes are to work effectively.

1. Who needs to be involved?

Most conference goers stated it is important to be inclusive and involve those who will be affected by the discussions (i.e. land owners, youth, industry, community groups). At the outset of any process, participants should review who isn’t there that perhaps should be invited. It is also important to involve people who are able to listen and cooperate and to balance interests at the table so no one feels ganged up on.

When First Nation participation was discussed, it was typically as another ‘stakeholder,’ another group which should be at the table on equal footing with other community members. Only one presentation alluded to the role of First Nations as a level of government which may be the body that started the process and is being advised by it. How these multi-stakeholder processes can be integrated into co-management situations would have been an interesting addition to the agenda.

Some people emphasized that many of these processes work best when a participant is from a sector but is not representing the positions of a group. That way participants bring their personal interests and perspectives on issues and do not need to have their positions approved by a board. This allows all members of the committee greater flexibility in responding to concerns raised at the table. However, this approach may not be appropri-

ate for some tasks. In any case, people need to be accountable to their communities and there should be mechanisms in place to facilitate communications back and forth.

2. What should be the aims?

The group will need a clear sense of purpose which needs to be defined at the beginning so all parties know, understand and support it. To avoid frustration there must be a clear idea of the role of the committee. For example, is it advisory or decision-making? There also needs to be an understanding about the relationship of the multistakeholder process to government processes. How will the recommendations of the committee be integrated into decision-making process and what responses are expected? It is important to be aware of the limitations of the process (e.g. regulatory, policy, political constraints) so that members are not unduly frustrated when the group provides advice and government responds by saying it does not have the authority or mandate to implement the recommendations.

The timelines for the process are also important and need to be defined at outset.

3. What homework is needed?

Any process needs a vision to get direction from. One interesting idea for achieving this vision is to first outline what is wanted for the future, and then ‘backcast’ (retrace the steps from this vision back to the present plotting out what must be done in order to get there).

It is important to develop more trust in everyone’s knowledge and not always look to the ‘experts’ for the answers. However, it is also crucial to put concerns and solutions in a broader context as local issues and actions have broader implications.

4. How do you make decisions that are wise and enduring?

If these processes are to gain community support and their plans realized, then people argued these processes must use consensus to make decisions. It is often ‘messy’ but is worth it as people stand behind the decisions and take ownership of the outcome. One presenter preferred to use the term ‘collective wisdom’ instead of consensus. He viewed the process as the pulling together of all the information and perspectives to develop a truth that everyone agrees to.



Good facilitation is key to successful group processes. A chair should be acceptable to all members of the group and must be skilled in bringing people together and keeping the process focused.

5. How do you maintain momentum?

A group needs to plan towards things that are tangible, that can be recognized once they have been achieved. For ongoing processes like roundtables or groups that will be dealing with long-term planning processes, it is important to have practical outcomes that will give momentum to the process. There should also be some process for monitoring, evaluating, providing feedback to the group. It is also important to check-in to evaluate the expectations of participants.

6. How can you draw in the needed support?

It is important that there be adequate resources available to support the process and to ensure there is a level

playing field for participants (which may mean providing support to some members). It is important to not let government off the hook for supporting the process but be careful not to relinquish control to government in exchange for resources.

Consider what other partnerships can be developed. For example, if the committee is a watershed planning process, can the community college help implement decisions or provide information to the committee or the community?

7. How can you reach out to those around you?

It is important for community-based processes to share information and to try to avoid reinventing the wheel by finding out what is already available that can be incorporated into the group's deliberations.

jennifer ellis

Arctic Refuge threatened by U.S. Budget

The struggle to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the calving grounds of the Porcupine Caribou herd, has been a long one. The latest hurdle, the result of a sly move by pro-development forces in the United States, has been cleared but there is no time to relax before the next push is needed.

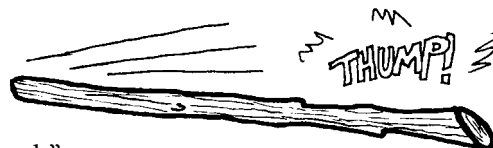
This fall, the U.S Congress voted in favour of a budget package which included \$1.3 billion raised from the sale of oil and gas leases in the "1002 lands" of the Arctic Refuge. Although this area is not currently open to drilling, passage of the budget bill with this provision would clearly create significant pressure to open up the area to oil and gas development.

On December 8th, President Bill Clinton lived up to his promise and vetoed the budget bill, citing the bill's inclusion of drilling revenues from the Arctic Refuge as one of his reasons for doing so. With this veto, a hurdle was cleared. However, a budget will have to be passed very soon and it is unclear whether or not Congress will amend this provision before sending it back to the President.

This next hurdle is expected in January.

The estimated reserves in the Refuge would provide the US with oil for 200 days. The natural values the calving grounds of the Porcupine Caribou, significant feeding and nesting grounds for millions of migratory birds, important polar bear denning habitat could be there forever if protected. If the budget battle is won and mention of the Refuge revenues deleted, another hurdle will be cleared but it still will not mean protection of the area. Full wilderness protection must follow in order to put this struggle to rest.

jennifer ellis



You can help by immediately writing to the President to thank him for vetoing the Budget and to encourage him to remain committed to protection for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Also write our Prime Minister to encourage him to continue to lobby for lasting protection for the Refuge.

William Jefferson Clinton
President
Government of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC
USA 20500
FAX: (202) 456-2461

Right Hon. Jean Chretien
Prime Minister
Government of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0G2
FAX: (613) 941-6900



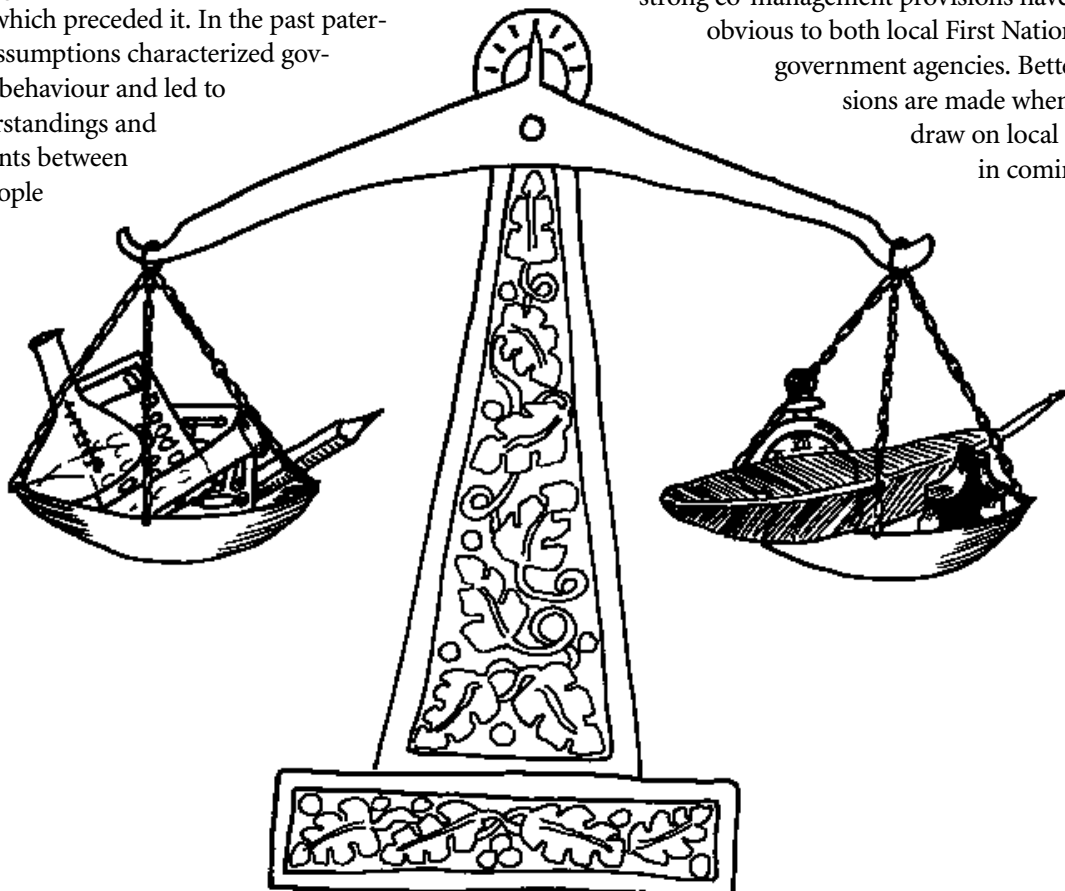
The Evolution of Co-management

Delegates from across the North gathered in Inuvik during the week of November 20-24 to discuss their experiences with co-management and environmental impact assessment at the first Circumpolar Co-management Conference ever held. Inuvialuit, Gwich'in, Inupiat, Inuit and Sami peoples shared the podium with their counterparts from territorial, federal and foreign governments as they described the various co-management regimes established under land claims agreements and the difficulties encountered where such regimes have not been established or have little influence on decisions. In recognition of the increasing importance of co-management in decision-making on resource use in the territory, YCS and NOR-NET supported the participation of three representatives to the conference. It was a great opportunity for Yukoners to gain insight into the workings of the processes which are being established to govern renewable resource decisions in the post land claims Yukon. Co-management is a dramatic departure from the regimes which preceded it. In the past paternalistic assumptions characterized government behaviour and led to misunderstandings and resentments between native people

and government. Charlie Snowshoe, a Gwich'in elder, told a story during the conference about his surprise at coming across a seismic crew slashing straight lines across the land for oil exploration. He couldn't understand what they were doing on his trapline.

This pattern of ad hoc northern development ended with oil discoveries in the Mackenzie Delta and recognition of the hydroelectric potential of the rivers flowing into James Bay. As a result, the settlement of native land claims became a priority and negotiations of the claims ushered in a new era of cooperation and consultation. Starting with the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement and the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, governments agreed to provide a place at the table for native peoples to participate in making decisions about activities going forward in their regions. More recent agreements have reinforced this trend by providing greater legislative authority to native people in such deliberations.

One reason for this evolution is that the benefits of strong co-management provisions have become obvious to both local First Nations and government agencies. Better decisions are made when boards draw on local expertise in coming to their





decisions. Local aboriginal knowledge gained from experience on the land and grounded in respect, brings a uniquely valuable perspective to the table. From government's perspective, understanding local needs makes it easier to plan and coordinate strategies for resource conservation and development. However, there are problems. A persistent challenge to the practice of co-management is building trust and mutual respect between the parties. There is much history to be overcome. Steven Mills of the Vuntut Gwich'in noted ironically that a buffalo biologist had arrived in Old Crow recently without the prior knowledge of the community. No buffalo are found anywhere near Old Crow. To local people this was yet another example of government ineffectiveness in consulting the community. This legacy of mistrust will take time to overcome. In the Yukon, the land claims agreements establish very strong provisions for co-management of renewable resources. The first four Renewable Resources Councils (RRC) were formed last spring in the regions where land claims have been settled. Half the council membership are First Nation appointees and half government appointees. A chair is selected from the membership. These councils make recommendations "on any matter related to conservation of Fish and Wildlife" to the local First Nation, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board (YFWMB), the Minister, and other bodies. The YFWMB is "the primary instrument of Fish and Wildlife Management in the Yukon", is made up of half government and half First Nation appointees and makes recommendations to the Minister.

The experience of other northern peoples teach that for co-management to work, the RRC's recommendations must be respected by the Minister. Without government commitment to the process, co-management cannot work. It is clear from the presentations at the conference that where co-management processes are well-entrenched, local native people have confidence that management solutions can be found and where they are weak or nonexistent workable solutions are hard, if not impossible, to reach. In some jurisdictions processes are in place which allow for meaningful forms of co-management, but there is still another step to be taken. Traditional native culture must now enter the process. Much of the discussion at the conference, both formally and informally, revolved around traditional knowledge and how it can be combined with scientific knowledge. Government biologists and bureaucrats were especially concerned with how they might best incorporate tradi-

tional knowledge into management processes. Attempts were made by many of the First Nations people there to sum up, or describe traditional knowledge to the conference but they insisted that the only way to really understand their worldview was to experience life on the land. It was even suggested that there be a requirement that biologists spend a year on the land under the tutelage of a hunter or trapper who knows the land to be managed. Underlying this issue is a philosophical divide. Science starts by examining the specific and extrapolating into generalizations, while traditional knowledge is based on experience on the land as well as ancient stories and traditions which shape peoples' relation to the real. Science is quantitative, based on measurable understandings of material processes and the interpretation of these numbers, while TK is qualitative, spiritual, and intuitive. In essence, the differences between the two knowledge forms represent two contrasting worldviews. Adopting TK represents a paradigm shift, and adapting co-management to accommodate TK will hopefully lead to the implementation of 'true' co-management.

This attempt to bring together two opposing views reflects other efforts being made across the planet to manage natural systems wholistically. Science's propensity to dissect natural systems into discreet entities is giving way to the understanding that it is the relationships between the parts of natural systems that create the energy which sustains life. These connections must be respected if the systems on which we rely are to function effectively. Our ignorance of the character of those relationships indicates a need for us to show humility, respect and caution when managing natural systems. Making use of local, traditional knowledge may give co-management processes the impetus to bridge the gulf between the piece meal approaches now in place and true ecosystem management.

It is exciting to see the commitment from both government and First Nations to make this new co-management process work. Increasingly in the North, scientists, bureaucrats and local aboriginal people are finding ways to arrive at workable solutions to management problems.

Our involvement was only possible because of the very generous donation of a van by the local Tilden dealer. Thanks once again go to Tilden for their generous contribution.

will jones



Bark Beetles Don't Kill Trees!

This is just one of the many myths that Dr. Art Partridge (Professor, Forest Disease and Insects, University of Moscow, Idaho) debunked on his four day visit to the Yukon in early November. Dr. Partridge was sponsored by the Yukon Science Institute, and as part of his whirlwind visit gave 2 public presentations (Haines Junction, Whitehorse), a public walk (Haines Junction), 2 radio interviews (CBC, Whitehorse), several school presentations, and met with the Haines Junction Spruce Bark Beetle Advisory Committee, and others.

MYTH #1 Spruce bark beetles kill trees

Spruce bark beetles, alone, do not and cannot kill trees. The spruce bark beetle is just one part of the complex sequence of events that has resulted in the death of trees in the Haines Junction area.

Bark beetles are attracted to the chemical signals that stressed trees emit. Individual tree “stress” can be as a result of one or more factors such as, several consecutive droughty summers, several mild winters, diseases that have already weakened the tree, and other perhaps-still-unrecognized factors. The beetle carries fungi in small depressions in its wings, and as the male and female beetle mates in the tree, these fungi are rubbed off onto the tree — these fungi must be present for the beetle to be able to successfully kill the tree.

MYTH #2 The spruce bark beetles in the Haines Junction area flew in from Alaska

Spruce bark beetles are endemic to the Yukon boreal forest. They have always been present, and are a necessary component of the forest. The existing peak of beetle activity in the Haines Junction area has been in progress for at least 30 years. This observation is supported by the age of the regeneration in openings in the affected areas and by scars on long-standing dead trees.

For the most part, bark beetles exist in a state of equilibrium in the forest. Peaks in the population of bark beetles, such as the one recently experienced in the Haines Junction area, occur sporadically and will ordinarily last 2 – 5 years.

MYTH #3 All of the trees are dead

Except in small areas, bark beetles do not kill all of the trees in the forest. Commonly, around 50% of the trees

or less will be killed — only those trees that are already weakened are a target for the beetle. Smaller, younger trees growing in natural openings and trees growing underneath the mature trees remain untouched and will replace the old and weak trees. However, as we look out over the forest from our vehicle or from a plane, we cannot see the live, healthy young spruce growing below the dead trees — leading to the illusion that all of the trees are dead.

MYTH #4 50,000 hectares (500 square kilometres) are affected by the spruce bark beetle

Although beetle activity has been noted over 50,000 hectares, not all of the trees in this area will die. In addition, many of the dead and dying trees are, and have been, affected by insects and root diseases, other than the bark beetle.

MYTH #5 Trees must be removed immediately

White spruce is reported to be “sawable” and “chippable” as many as 20 years after it has been killed. There is no immediate rush to remove killed trees.

Lasting control of the spruce bark beetle is not possible through large-scale timber extraction. The stumps left behind after live trees are logged become habitat for more bark beetles; in particular, clearcutting has been shown to prolong beetle attacks by as much as three years. Removal of live trees also changes moisture and temperature conditions on the forest floor — the fungi that are necessary for tree roots to absorb water and nutrients from the soil can be destroyed with the removal of overstorey vegetation.

The standing and fallen dead trees have a number of important roles in the forest. In particular, they provide food sources and nesting sites for many of the predators and parasites that control the bark beetle and other insect populations throughout their cycle. Any timber extraction operation should leave enough dead trees to allow this balance/control to continue.

MYTH #6 If nothing is done, the situation will get worse

Although spruce bark population explosions can be spectacular, they will abate. Natural recovery is normal for all forest systems. As an example, in the 1940's in the Dezadeash Lake area, a similar sized area to the Haines



Junction area, experienced a peak in the spruce bark beetle population. Nothing was done — 50 years later, there is a functioning forest in this area.

MYTH #7 *The dead trees are a fire hazard*

As soon as the needles drop from the tree, the standing trees are not highly flammable, and generally do not carry fires during a normal fire event. As the trees fall, they begin to decompose, and in the process retain moisture. As such, they are relatively poor fire starters. Dr. Partridge concluded his discussion with a reminder that everything in a forest has a place and a function, and that functions may be both positive and negative depending on the perception of the observer. The spruce bark beetle is part of a process that kills trees, but at the same time it allows for forest renewal by removing old and weakened trees. The bark beetle carries fungi that are necessary for wood decay — as a result, nutrients are returned to the soil. Standing dead

trees are the preferred habitat for many birds, small mammals, insects and other organisms that are necessary for forest functioning. A single snag provides habitat for over 50 birds and animals before it falls to the ground. Then it may become a den site, a mother tree for new trees, a moisture holding sponge, habitat for beneficial fungi, source of insects and grubs for bird and animal feed. It is likely that dead trees have other functions we are not yet aware of. Unless the forest practitioner becomes sensitive to all of these inclusions and functions, she/he will remain doomed to viewing disease and insects as negative entities, and will never learn to work within the system.

Note: For a copy of Dr. Partridge's presentation notes or information on the Haines Junction Spruce Bark Beetle Advisory Committee, please leave a message for Sue Olsen at the Yukon Conservation Society office (668-5678).

sue olsen



“...The Future of Yukon Forests...”

The Yukon-wide logging moratorium was dragging into its eighth month. Loggers from the Southeast had bargained hard to end it. They were starting to use higher-power tactics, demanding that DIAND issue Commercial Timber Permits and let them get ‘back into the woods’.

At this time of year, the screech and roar of fellerbunchers and chainsaws would have normally filled the air, and an endless river of trucks loaded with raw Yukon logs would be heading south for the mills in B.C. But at the beginning of November 1995, it was very very quiet in the Southeast. In fact, the silence was somewhat deafening.

This scene set the stage for a two day conference on ‘The Future of Yukon’s Forests’ held in Watson Lake in early November, sponsored by the Yukon Council on Economy and Environment (YCEE). Against all odds and expectations, the conference was quite calm and productive. By far the most refreshing perspective was

provided by Dr. Winnie Kessler, now the Dean of Forestry at the University of Northern British Columbia (Prince George).

During her career, Dr. Kessler has helped develop forest management policy in Washington DC and in Mongolia (Russia). She pointed out stark differences in the devolution process between the Yukon (where we’re ‘easing into it’) and Mongolia (instant changes, lots of damage already).

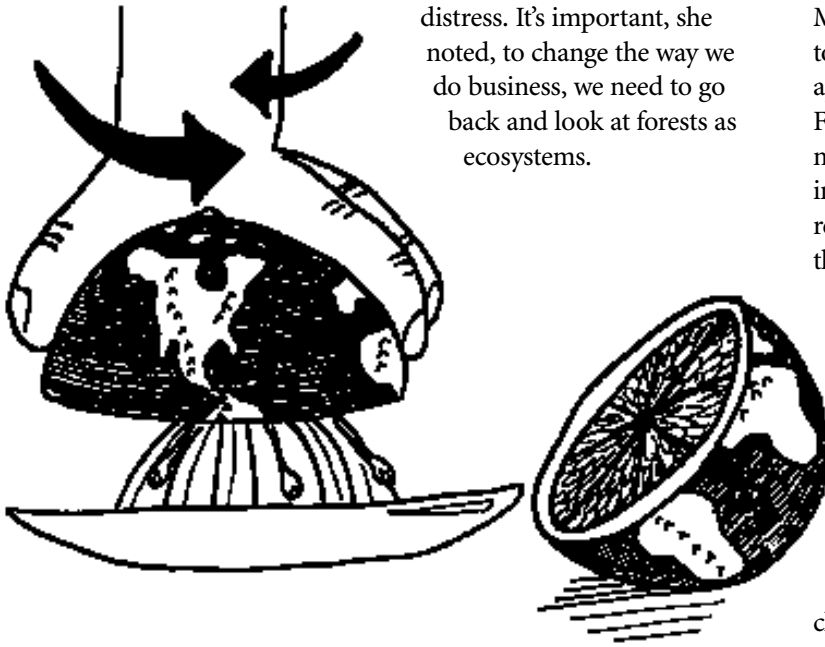
Dr. Kessler highlighted three essential criteria for any sustainable forest management plan. Such a plan must be: Economically Feasible; Ecologically Sustainable and Socially Acceptable. She discussed the value of carefully planned Integrated Resource Management (IRM) as a way of addressing land crowding and competing interests, describing Ecosystem Management (EM) as a fundamental philosophy or approach to IRM which differs from older approaches.

...cont. on page 12



Older approaches (more than five or ten years ago) tended to focus on economic efficiency but overlooked social and ecological aspects. Forest managers operated on the premise that the earth was like an orange juicer, if you needed more juice, you only had to squeeze a little harder.

These attitudes and approaches led to several levels of crisis: social discontent, boycotts, lawsuits, and in many parts of the world, ecosystem distress. It's important, she noted, to change the way we do business, we need to go back and look at forests as ecosystems.



Forest managers, she stressed, must change their assumptions that 'competing interests' means conflict, or that natural events like fire, wind or insects are 'catastrophes'. She observed that most forest managers work well at the stand level but often can't see the big picture (hmm...perhaps the origin of the saying "not being able to see the forest for the trees"...?). This lack of vision, she explained, can have major consequences in the form of "forest health crises" which show up in "short-cycle" systems in the south. In the Yukon, our ecosystems are not yet pushed to the limits, we still have many options as well as the opportunity to learn from the experience of other jurisdictions.

Forests are ecosystems which must not be taken for granted. It's important to use the knowledge of how ecosystem processes work and use that information to do integrated management planning. Dr. Kessler referred to the spotted owl issue as an example of this, although it was treated as an isolated species, it represents the whole process.

She emphasized the need for people to work together to examine what sustainability would look like. People, she said, are integral to the process of change which is starting to occur all over the globe. She cited a number of examples of different cultures who are working to change their forest management practices and emphasized that there are examples in North America as well, such as the US Forest Service and several large logging companies.

Many North American First Nations are also working toward IRM using the ecosystem management approach. She described the work of the Monominee First Nation from Wisconsin as a primary example of managing for sustainability. Their planning approach incorporates the Seventh Generation philosophy which requires planning for seven generations (250 years) into the future.

In her closing remarks, Dr. Kessler reminded the audience that the old question "what can we remove from the land?" must be replaced by "what must we leave on the land?". She recommended that Yukoners strive for forest management by design rather than default, to avoid the potentially devastating consequences of default management.

With Dr. Kessler's words still ringing in our ears (we could actually hear them over the silence of those chainsaws and fellerbunchers), we broke into workshops to brainstorm on what sustainability might look like for the Yukon. These sessions were summarized for the whole group the following morning. The use of Ecosystem Management principles emerged as the clear theme out of most of the smaller workshops.

Over sixty people attended this conference, many of whom had travelled from other communities. It was obvious that the term 'stakeholders' applies to each and every Yukoner when forest management is the issue up for discussion! More and more residents of the Yukon consider this to be their permanent home. If we want to develop a long-term vision for Yukon forests, we must build the momentum for the changes Dr. Kessler insists are necessary. This conference was a good first step.

The next step is ours. We must insist on an ongoing and all-inclusive process as we move toward developing forest policy for the Yukon.

janne hicklin



Power Arm Wrestling

With the release of the Yukon Party government's Energy Plan, the return of the power-hungry Faro mine, the power companies' rate application and a proposed capital hearing, energy issues have been in the news a lot recently.

Here's something to help explain the situation and improve it environmentally.

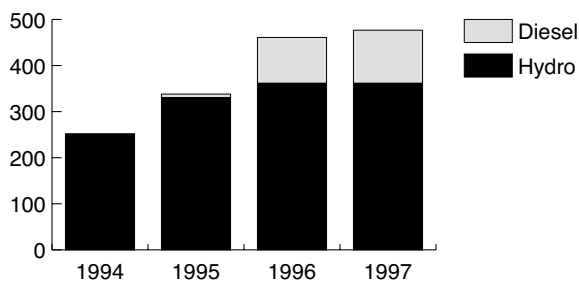
The return of the Faro mine as an electrical customer nearly doubles electrical demand on the Whitehorse-Aishihik-Faro grid. The WAF runs through Haines Junction, Teslin, Carcross, Whitehorse, Carmacks, Faro and Ross River.

WAF is powered mainly by hydro at Whitehorse and Aishihik. Next in line are diesel generators located primarily in Whitehorse and Faro. Other contributions are from small hydro at Fish Lake and the experimental wind turbine atop Haeckel Hill.

Hydro supplied all WAF electrical demand while the Faro lead-zinc mine was closed. During those two years, Whitehorse Rapids and Aishihik ran at full capacity only during winter peak loads. This gave a hydro reserve sufficient enough to meet all non-industrial growth for years.

Supplying electricity to Anvil Range Mining (ARM) changes the situation entirely. Plugging in this industrial customer devours our hydro reserve, 'maxes' our diesels, hastens the need for more energy supply and will 'mine' 1.5 metres of water from Aishihik Lake.

Aishihik could remain five feet below natural levels for years. Mining this water could ruin an ecosystem reliant on shallow water habitat to incubate fish and wildlife. New studies show that low water levels devastate newborn whitefish, aquatic animals and waterbird habitat.



ARM needs all reserve hydro plus 20 megawatts of diesel generation. This contributes to air pollution and global warming. WAF fuel estimates are 27 million litres in 1996 and 31 million in 1997 at a combined cost of \$17.6 million.

Contrary to what the government says, you're helping to pay those fuel costs. In fact, ARM pays 70 per cent of the residential rate and only 57 per cent of the business rate on an average per kilowatt-hour basis.

In 1993, the power companies blamed the Faro mine closure for increasing our electric bills 30 per cent. But now it's back and there's no rate decrease!

This time, the utilities are blaming dryness at Aishihik. True, watershed inflows were half the average in the past two years but they are mining five feet of water from the lake. Furthermore, the Yukon Utilities Board is investigating a complaint from the Utilities Consumers' Group that the utilities wasted two feet of water in 1993 and 1994.

The government's Energy Plan ignores the Yukon Party's election promise to "stop the environmental devastation of Aishihik Lake." YCS and other stakeholder groups could have contributed to the plan but the government closed the door to public consultation. Consequently, the woeful plan contains nothing to resolve our environmental energy problems.

Developing more energy supply exposes us to heavy financial risks and could mean further environmental deterioration — especially since our government favours coal-fired electricity above other less-polluting alternatives.

A coal-fired plant is no solution to the Aishihik situation because producing power with coal has higher operating costs than hydro. The only solution is to reduce the water license to prevent draining the lake water. And let's not ignore the fact that mining and burning coal releases more carbon dioxide than diesel generation.

Demand-side-management is a conservation program with initiatives such as Fuel Switching. This program assists residents to convert from electric heat which is inefficient when powered by diesel generation. DSM reduces generating requirements, fuel consumption and even power rates. Unfortunately, the power companies

...cont. on page 14



are unwilling to fund DSM programs without prior approval of all costs from the YUB.

The YUB offers forums to hear environmental concerns related to power rates or proposals to develop new energy supply. DSM programs could be promoted at the rate hearing this winter. A capital hearing expected in late 1996 offers a forum to support wind and small hydro as alternatives to a coal plant.

The Yukon needs a long-term solution to protect the environment and ensure affordable and stable power

rates while allowing sustainable development. Here are some suggestions that you may wish to share with vote-seekers banging on your door.

- ARM should supply its own power
- keep Aishihik within natural levels
- bring back DSM and less-polluting energy options

If you are more than an armchair intervenor and wish to volunteer, YCS always needs keeners on its many committees, including the one on energy.

gary mcrobb

Tools For Action

The first "Tools For Action Conference" held in Dawson Creek, BC on the last weekend of September brought together about forty five grass-roots activists from Newfoundland to the Yukon. The conference was organized by the Citizen's Advisory for Research on the Environment (CARE), a Dawson Creek based community group.

The conference opened with two excellent presentations on the Friday evening. Vicky Husband (Sierra Club of BC) addressed action at the community level, using her involvement in protecting coastal rainforests to illustrate her points. Gladys Netro (Vuntut Gwitch'in) then spoke of the Gwitch'in peoples' ongoing campaign to protect the calving grounds of the Porcupine Caribou herd to show how an entire community can become involved in an issue and work effectively on many fronts to achieve their goals.

The agenda for the remainder of the conference was designed by the participants. This was an interesting tool in itself, and although there may initially have been some skeptics in the crowd, this self-designed agenda planning worked out very well. It accomplished two important objectives: it gave each participant a sense of involvement in the process; and it ensured that the subjects for discussion would be meaningful to the participants.

Everyone was keen to report on existing community action initiatives across the country. Which groups are working on what issues and what 'tools' they've discovered to make their efforts effective. Where are the gaps and how can the experience of other participants help to fill those gaps by sharing tools and techniques which

they have used successfully in their community or region?

We narrowed the list of potential subject areas down to four broad areas to workshop. They were: How to make an organization more effective?, How to work effectively with other community groups?, How to work more effectively with the community itself?, and How to work with governments and corporations?

Participants agreed to attend these workshops based partly on areas where they felt they could make valuable contributions and partly on areas where they hoped to gain more tools and ideas for their own use.

Several points worth highlighting emerged from the four workshops.

Effective Organizations:

- create the structure to reflect the values of the group (bureaucratic or not?)
- establish effective decision-making methods to achieve quality outcomes
- make sure discussions are open and safe
- provide volunteers with concrete, meaningful jobs
- create small work-groups to avoid burnout through support
- use 'vision' workshops to help ease present frustrations
- acknowledge conflict within group, helps to find underlying problems
- don't forget to have fun together!

Working with other Groups:

- look for common ground that groups can work together on



- find 'small things' each group can contribute to a campaign (they add up!)
- make it easy for other groups to work with yours (providing sample letters)
- remember to 'repay' those groups — be available to help them out too.

Working with the Community:

- hold meaningful meetings, make sure people who come feel useful
- make sure its easy for people to participate in action/campaigns
- use media to get messages across, make it easy for them to 'do it right'
- identify the people you want to involve, then target the groups they belong to
- reward people, thank them through media, give awards, appreciation
- make it painless for people to learn more about your group/issue — funstuff
- make sure your funders ethics don't conflict with your own

Working with Governments and Corporations:

- if you expect things to move slowly, they will — change can occur quickly

- all the same, be patient and persistent
- learn how to make effective presentations, state problem and suggest action
- respect the people, attack the issues
- establish credibility, get your fact straight
- maintain ECO-centric rather than EGO-centric approach

This weekend was anything but 'just another conference!' The organization was casual but very thorough. All ideas were given validity and an opportunity to evolve. Everybody felt recharged and empowered and perhaps most importantly, we all brought home lots of new ideas and tools to assist with the work we're doing in our own communities and regions. Participants will maintain contact by creating a *listserv* on the InterNet. The conference was a great success and if the evaluations are any indication, it won't be the last one!

Both Yukon participants at the conference are involved in YCS' Building Sustainable Communities Project and attended the conference specifically to gather ideas for empowering Yukon communities to act on environmental issues.. For more information, contact Janne Hicklin and/or Gladys Netro, c/o YCS

janne hicklin

Hides for Habitat

Hides for Habitat is a program sponsored by the Yukon Fish and Game Association in cooperation with the Renewable Resources Department of the Yukon government, which raises money for habitat protection through the sale of hides. [this needs to be confirmed - craig is to advise you]

This year, for the first time, Yukon hunters are able to participate in this program. Now when a hunter gets a caribou or moose, if he/she does not want the hide, there is an alternative to leaving it in the bush. An arrangement has been made with Tutshi Tanning in Whitehorse to take the hides and process and sell them.

The money generated goes into a wildlife trust fund. The interest on this money will be used for education and habitat conservation. Projects will be undertaken

cooperatively between the Yukon Fish and Game Association and the Department of Renewable Resources.

Depending on the care taken in preservation of the hide by the individual hunter and the overall hide condition it will bring from \$25 to \$50 to the program. This is a win win situation: 1)hides that may be left in the bush will be brought back for a more full use of the animal, 2)money will be available for conservation programs, and 3)there will be a supply of valuable raw materials for Yukon crafts and clothing.

So far this year 27 moose hides and 5 caribou hides have come in. If you have any hides to contribute and live in Whitehorse, take your hides to Tutshi Tanning Limited at 48 McDonald Road in Porter Creek (633-4293). If you live outside of Whitehorse, please contact your local Conservation Officer.

craig olson



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT YCS?

Mailout!

You've undoubtedly already noticed but YCS has embarked on yet another fund-raising event in the form of a large mail-out. Please help make this effort a success and let us send you your tax receipt!

Hikes 'n Bikes 2?!

YCS is working on a road guidebook for the Yukon. At this stage, we're still working on the pre-production details but hope to replicate the success of the Whitehorse Hikes 'n Bikes book.

Wildlands Concert!

Matthew Lien, Steve Phelps, and Philip Adams will be part of a slide/music/theatre extravaganza at the Arts Centre, Saturday, January 13th. It will highlight the Tombstones and forestry in southeast Yukon and benefit the Wildlands Project. Tickets will go on sale at the Hougen's box office Dec. 20. Come on out for a great evening of entertainment!

Strategic Plan!

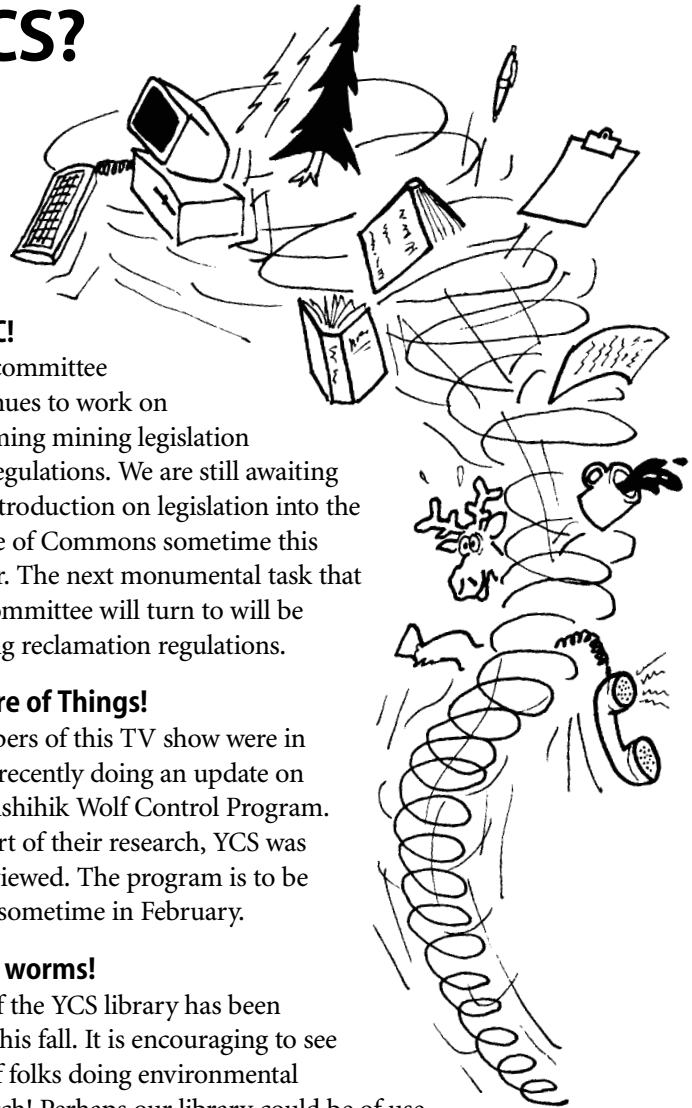
YCS has just received confirmation of funding from the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation to do a strategic plan for the Society. A strategic plan is an important planning tool that establishes an organization's goals, objectives and financial plan.

Sustainable Communities!

Thanks again to the generous support of the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, this project is well on its way! There will be 2 workshops (forestry and mining) in Whitehorse in February or March and 5 regional workshops in the spring.

Whitehorse Mining Initiative (WMI)!

Government, labour, aboriginal, industry and environmental groups forged the WMI agreement on how mining in Canada should proceed. A year after this accord was signed, meetings were held in Ottawa to see who was holding up their parts of the deal. While there was still general support for WMI by all players, YCS's representative reports that it seems to be taking a turn towards a "Keep Mining in Canada" agenda. There is hope, though, as industry is still standing by the environmental and land use recommendations.



YMAC!

This committee continues to work on reforming mining legislation and regulations. We are still awaiting the introduction on legislation into the House of Commons sometime this winter. The next monumental task that the committee will turn to will be mining reclamation regulations.

Nature of Things!

Members of this TV show were in town recently doing an update on the Aishihik Wolf Control Program. As part of their research, YCS was interviewed. The program is to be aired sometime in February.

Book worms!

Use of the YCS library has been high this fall. It is encouraging to see lots of folks doing environmental research! Perhaps our library could be of use to you as well...?

Finlayson Mining!

Stayed tuned for an evening presentation on mining activity in the Finlayson area that is being organized by YCS. Come on out and become informed!

Conferences!

YCS folks have been busy this fall attending workshops and conferences all over the place. Here's a taste: Sustainability — It's Time for Action (Vancouver); Co-Management Conference (Inuvik); YCEE Forestry Conference (Watson Lake); Tools for Action (Dawson Creek); Law Society Forest Workshop (Whitehorse); Spruce Beetle Presentation (Whitehorse and Haines Junction).