

Walk Softly

Newsletter of the Yukon
Conservation Society
December 1996



INSIDE: Debt Management ♦ Agriculture ♦ Tulsequah Chief ♦ Cultural Perspectives



Getting along in the Yukon: Diverse Cultural Perspectives on Resource Management

The following article has been written by a student in the Land Use and Resource Management in the North course offered through Yukon College. It is based on material published by Jackie Wolfe, along with three graduate students, of the University School of Rural Planning and Development in Guelph, Ontario. The material was published in 1991 and can be found in the Yukon College Reader for Geography 222, September 1996 at the College Library, and at the CYFN, DIAND and YCS libraries.

The table on the facing page attempts to compare indigenous and western scientific knowledge systems as they relate to resource management and land use. In this instance, indigenous means North American Native (but not necessarily restricted to America), and Western Scientific means the industrialized world view, of European origin (versus Eastern or Oriental). The two approaches generate different and sometimes opposing resource management principles. The comparisons are an attempt at considering basic views and ways of handling information in each culture. The author of a paper entitled "Indigenous and Western Knowledge and Resource Management Systems" cautions the reader, "It is a starting point for thinking about the possible differences — not an end point, and the question to ask might be: How is it for us?"

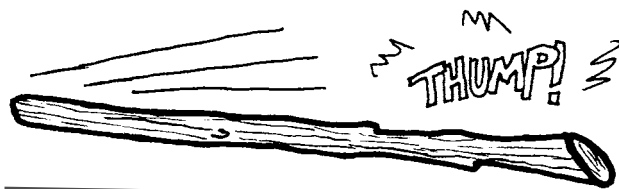
As the issues are complicated and scenarios differ in all combinations of possibilities for each individual case, she admits this is a very simplistic and analytical attempt to inventory the concepts explored. It is meant as a checklist for *starting* the thinking process.

As the Land Claims reach final agreement stages and First Nations become a strong voice in governing the future of the Territory, perhaps a better appreciation of the differences will encourage the necessary quest for complementarity and balance. A considera-

tion of possible variations in outlook may already be a huge step towards integration and consensus-based sustainability — an important First Nation priority. Chapters 11 and 12 of the Umbrella Final Agreement for the CYFN land claims include provisions for multi-agency land use planning and development approvals, and this has now become law.

The article expands on the points raised in the simplified table. The main differences outlined in the comparison between indigenous and western knowledge systems stem from how a culture and information are learned and passed on, and later used in understanding and managing its resources. The table points to a closer relationship (part of the whole) with Nature by indigenous people while the scientific folks tend to be in a class by themselves called anthropocentrism (Man is the centre of the Universe, the Universe is made to serve Man). Indigenous peoples do not try to explain the unexplainable and notice changes in their surroundings. They are perhaps better able to adapt to these changes.

The western, analytical approach tries to parcel off categories and differentiate in some form of hierarchical order. Indigenous peoples are more inclusive, looking at entire systems, and differentiate in detail within the big picture of an ecosystem. Indigenous folks believe that everything has spirit or life energy, and that we are all



We'd like to open this topic up for discussion. Please feel free to forward your written comments to the YCS office. In the Yukon, we have a unique opportunity to work together, and this should be celebrated... And just how IS it, for us or for our communities? Any submission can remain confidential if requested, but please enclose your name and contact numbers for future follow-up.



related. Scientific perspective sees God as a dominating entity separate from Man, and that Man dominates Nature.

These cultural differences affect the fundamental way people think about and resolve problems. It also affects which issues will be considered as important by whom, and in what timeframe. Perhaps being aware of the basic differences will help in practising the tolerance

and respect needed to work together and learn from each other.

Much work is imminent in establishing proper planning techniques to implement sustainable resource management. As the plans will likely be developed by teams comprised of both knowledge systems, YCS thought it relevant to share this information now.

josée bonhomme

Comparison Between Indigenous Knowledge and Western Scientific Knowledge		
<i>KNOWLEDGE</i>	<i>INDIGENOUS</i>	<i>WESTERN SCIENTIFIC</i>
<i>Relationship</i>	Subordinate	Dominant
<i>Communication</i>	Oral Doing and Story-telling	Literate, Didactic
<i>Dominant Mode of Thinking</i>	Intuitive	Analytical
<i>Characteristics</i>	Holistic, Subjective, Experiential	Reductionist, Objective, Positivist
<i>EFFECTIVENESS</i>		
<i>Data Creation</i>	Slow/Inclusive	Fast/Selective
<i>Prediction</i>	Short-term cycles, Recognizes the onset of long-term cycles	Short-term linear Poor long-term prediction
<i>Explanation</i>	Spiritual-includes the inexplicable	Scientific hypothesis, theory and laws
<i>Biological Classification</i>	Ecological Inclusive Internally Differentiating	Genetic and Hierarchical Differentiating

Principles of Indigenous Knowledge and Western Scientific Knowledge	
<i>INDIGENOUS</i>	<i>WESTERN SCIENTIFIC</i>
Living and Conscious Cosmos Everything in the Universe is Alive	Animate/In-Animate Distinction
Everything has Spirit	Separation Between God and Human
Human-Beings in Nature — We are all Relatives	Human-Over-Nature Anthropocentrism
Human-Beings as Part of the Land	Human Control and Harnessing Land
Balance	Hierarchical Systems

Credits: Table reproduced by permission: J. Wolfe, C. Bechard, P. Cizek and D. Cole; *Indigenous and Western Knowledge and Resource Management Systems*, University School of Rural Planning and Development, University of Guelph, Ontario, 1991 and B. Hurlock, Yukon College, 1996.



YCS Revisited

YCS is an environmental group, yes! But, what does that mean and what role does YCS play in your life and the Yukon community?

YCS IS:

- A public watchdog for problems or issues
- An active participant in Yukon decision making (ie water board and energy rate hearings, environmental review processes, assorted advisory committees, and the development and implementation of legislation and regulations)
- Dedicated to educating people about environmental aspects of issues affecting our lives
- An advocacy group promoting ecosystem management, energy conservation, environmental regulation of mining, etc...
- A member of the Wildlands League, working towards protecting wildlands representing the Yukon's biodiversity
- A producer of research projects and papers

YCS OFFERS

- The Nature Appreciation Series
- Guided Nature Walks
- The Bird-a-thon
- Conferences and workshops on diverse topics
- The production of quality publications
- A library of books and resource materials
- The opportunity for members to become involved in research projects

It's funny that I am writing this article now, because I am on my way out the door and headed for India to work on a water drainage project. Accepting this position was not an easy decision for me to make. (People think it was the attraction of the warm weather that tipped the scales). I had been looking forward to the upcoming winter, with significant work being done in developing forestry policy, implementing land claim

settlements, devolution of federal authority and a newly elected government. Certainly an exciting time to be in the Yukon for someone in the field of natural resources management.

I joined YCS when I was in high school. It took me a long time to figure out how my ideas and energy fit in with YCS's mandate and activities. Six years later, I know that YCS is what you make of it. It is defined by the people who get involved and the projects they decide to take on. What gets accomplished at YCS is a product of the ideas that are brought in by individuals.

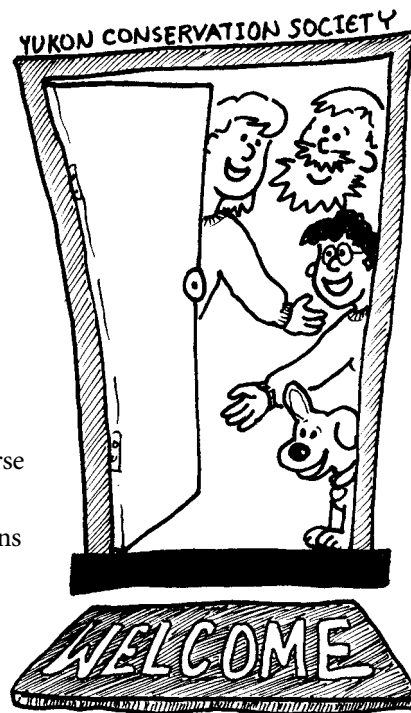
Over the years, YCS has provided me with many valuable opportunities. I have learned from the topics of conversation thrown around in the office, I have used the library and resources for many an academic paper, I have had the experience of working on multi-sided issues, and I have picked up a ton of information from the people involved in YCS activities.

YCS offers an opportunity for all sorts of individuals to work on issues related to the Yukon environment. This means influencing government decisions, contributing to policy and planning, organizing public education, designing and conducting research projects, motivating public on conservation issues, organizing social events, and much more. There are committees actively working on forestry and mining, and there is a significant list of topics addressed by YCS which are simply waiting to be mobilized by an interested somebody. Whether you are a long time member, or just newly

acquainted with YCS, it may be time you dropped by and took a look at what YCS has to offer (and what you have to offer YCS!).

I want to encourage people who have ideas or are enthusiastic about working on conservation issues, to come in and see what you can make of YCS and what it can make of you.

angela walkley





Editorial

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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.

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The Kluane Land Use Plan was signed off by its Commission in August of 1991; thus completing the fifth year in which it has not received recognition by its sponsoring governments.

In common with any consensual public process, there were many who found something to disagree with in the plan. A more positive observation would be that most people agreed with most of it. It found ready enough support by First Nations and the Federal Government, but the Territorial Government of the day wavered over what they perceived to be a dangerous undercurrent of conservation running through the plan. They decided, and here I speculate, to delay their decision until they had been re-elected, which, of course, they were not. They must have cleaned their desks most thoroughly, for the incoming government was obviously unable to find a copy of the plan, and the momentum for instituting sensible land management practices appears lost.

Meanwhile, the pace of change in the Kluane region has been rapid. The area is bounded in the east by that intellectual twilight zone known as the Caribou Enhancement Program. Tourism grows apace, bringing with it many of the excesses which, uncontrolled, afflict that industry. The *Invasion of the Spruce Bark Beetle* has progressed from a minor non-issue to opening an opportunity for industrial scale logging of the region. This apparently, will proceed, to be followed at a decent interval by a forestry management plan. This plan will, one supposes, be prepared by foresters, an ancient and no doubt honourable profession, but one which frequently gives the layperson pause to wonder if it has the faintest idea what it is doing.

What, one wonders, will be the construct of a forest management plan? Will it recognize that geography and climate are god given parameters that create a land of low productivity and resilience? Will it defend natural habitats? Will it protect the heritage trails, grave sites and spiritual places so important to the identity of native peoples? Will it acknowledge the interdependencies of plant and animal populations? Will it identify areas of hazardous terrain and permafrost and prevent the logging of these areas? Will it subscribe to the currently popular and monstrous conceit that it is possible to ape the "natural perturbation" of the forest landscape?

The Kluane Land Use Plan appears to have joined that genre of literature known as "underground." If you can find a copy, it makes for a good read, with an historical perspective and introduction to the resources of the region. All too soon, the latter may themselves become little more than an historical perspective.

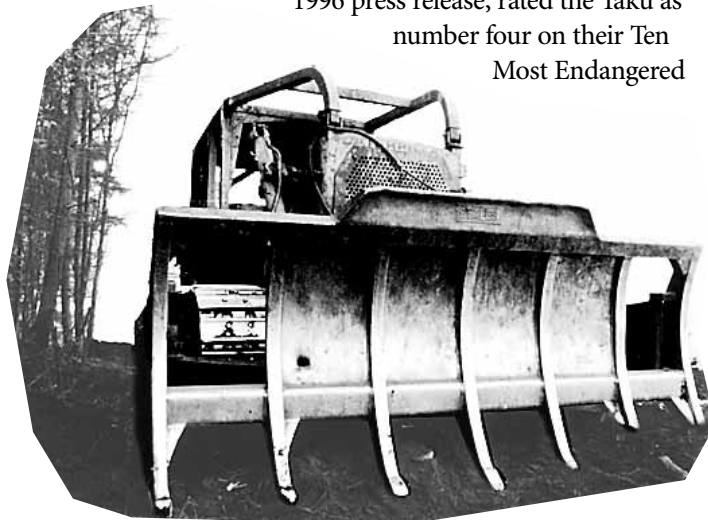
andy williams



Tulsequah Chief

The Taku Wilderness Association was formed in July of 1995 in response to the application by Redfern Resources of Vancouver, B.C. for a Mine Development Certificate for the reopening of the Tulsequah Chief mine under the newly proclaimed Environmental Assessment Act. Redfern, in their latest information circular to our community, has identified a 160 km road from the Tulsequah Chief minesite to Atlin as the only viable access alternative and have chosen to dismiss the shallow draft barge proposal (an alternative the Taku Wilderness Association presented to the Environmental Assessment Office which would not leave an irreversible environmental footprint on the Taku Watershed) and therein lies the problem. The Taku Watershed is at present essentially untouched and pristine and provides prime habitat areas for grizzly, ungulate, and salmonid populations. There are a small number of wilderness lodges and outfitters working in the area but the Taku for the most part has not been studied or even viewed by very many people. We believe the opening up of this spectacular wilderness area will eventually lead to large scale logging (the road corridor has been identified by the District Manager of the Cassiar Forest District as having substantial inventories of timber) and other resource development. Without proper research, habitat studies, and strategic land use plans to take into consideration the inherent wilderness values of the Taku, increased resource extraction and logging will be a major tragedy especially if one considers that the Taku Watershed is one of the very last intact watersheds left in North America. The Outdoor Recreation Council of British Columbia, in a June 3,

1996 press release, rated the Taku as number four on their Ten Most Endangered



Rivers of B.C. list. The reasons for endangered status was, "The Taku, a wilderness river that rises near Dease Lake and flows to the coast near Juneau, Alaska, is ranked No. 4 because of proposed logging, new road access and acid mine drainage."

Redfern's Tulsequah Chief proposal is working its way through the British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office in Victoria and we now find ourselves at the point in the process where the B.C. government is encouraging its citizens (along with the citizens of adjacent jurisdictions who will likewise be affected) to have their say on this important issue. Since the final plan for the actual minesite has not been released to the public, the Taku Wilderness Association has withheld comment on the mine itself but the members of our association are unequivocally opposed to the access option that Redfern has chosen to move their ore concentrate to market. We do not feel that Redfern has adequately researched the potential for employing shallow draft barges on the Taku River and that a comprehensive in-depth analysis of this option should be required. The use of these barges would require that Redfern go through the permitting process in the U.S. but when one considers the potential cost of having a 160 km resources access road carved through an essentially untouched intact wilderness watershed, the Taku Wilderness Association feels it is not too much to ask. There are a number of environmental problems with this mining project but they were perhaps best summed up by D.W. Flynn, B.C. District Inspector/Engineer, Mine Health and Safety Branch, when he stated, "I have no comments on the Baseline Environmental Protocols. I am sure there are other people more willing and infinitely more capable of addressing the myriad of perceived problems and environmental catastrophes that arise when a company/person wants to work on cliffs, swamps, glaciers or flood plains."

To help us in our efforts to see that the Taku is not irreversibly damaged by this access road, we are asking conservationists in the Yukon to send letters to the government officials listed below expressing your opposition to the construction of the road.

Don Weir

*Taku Wilderness Association
tel: 250-651-0047 fax: 250-651-0005*



Write Now!

It is important in your letters to the B.C. government that you request that the Tulsequah Chief project proposal proceed to the Public Hearing stage of the Environmental Assessment process. This will give the environmental community an additional six months to pressure the government to fully study the potential damage which the road construction would precipitate in the Taku.

There are a number of specific problem areas which could be mentioned in your letters:

1) Express your concern over potential poaching over the road route through increased access and dissemination of wildlife populations in the steep river valleys where the ore trucks and wildlife will come into contact with each other.

2) Express concern over increased ore and logging truck traffic on the Atlin and Yukon roads (the ore trucks would go from Tulsequah to Atlin on a new 160 km resource assess road, and then tie in to the existing road infrastructure just north of Atlin, along the Atlin Road to Jakes Corner, the Alaska Highway to the Carcross Cutoff, through Carcross and on to Skagway) and the resultant effect on the tourism industry. We are possibly looking at empty ore and logging trucks moving along the Tagish Road on the way back to Atlin.

3) Request a 3-5 year study of the caribou, moose and grizzly bear populations. The lower portion of the road corridor possesses incredibly rich grizzly bear habitat.

Please address your letters to the following officials. We appreciate your support on this vitally important issue.

MIKE KENT
Project Assessment Director
Environmental Assessment Office
2nd Floor, 836 Yates Street
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4
fax: 604-387-2208

DAVE ZIRNHELT
Minister of Forests
Room 128
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4
fax: 604-387-1040

BILL GOODACRE
MLA Bulkley Valley – Stikine
Room 166, East Annex
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4
fax: 604-356-6844

PAUL RAMSEY
Minister of Environment, Lands & Parks
Room 346
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4
fax: 604-387-1356

FRED J. MIFFLIN
Minister of Fisheries
Centennial Tower
15th Floor, 200 Kent St.
Ottawa, Ont. K1A 0E6
fax: 613-990-7292



Agriculture and Wildlife Conservation in the Yukon

While logging and mining tend to be at the forefront of environmental concerns in the Yukon, impacts of agriculture on wildlife have remained a background murmur. In the territory, so-called “agricultural” land has had a history of extraordinary mismanagement which, while bringing very little economic benefits to society, has resulted in substantial losses of wildlife habitat. Such losses have occurred in a piecemeal basis, and consequently have not received the same attention as mining and logging. Details related to this issue are summarized in the earlier critique I published in the Yukon News on September 4, 1996.

Wildlife is a public resource, and under current policy, wildlife habitat is released to be “developed” into agricultural land without any requirement by the presumed farmer to actually produce anything. True, some farms, such as the Circle D Farm and the Partridge Creek Farm, are very productive, and I acknowledge the genuineness of these people. Unfortunately the vast majority of Yukon farms produce little or no agricultural crops (certainly not at a legitimately commercial level), thereby making their impacts on wildlife unjustifiable. In my previous critique, which was also an open letter to former Renewable Resources minister Mickey Fisher, I stated that “I would like to see the Agricultural Branch publicly release, broken down by region, an accounting of number of hectares released for agriculture and number of hectares in production along with type of crops growing. Any self-respecting agricultural branch should have those figures available. Otherwise, how can the success of the agricultural program be evaluated? I am still waiting for a reply from the agricultural branch.

The territory is badly in need of an improved agricultural policy which explicitly addresses wildlife conservation. One obstacle to achieving this improved policy is that some supporters of agriculture often claim that their practices are not detrimental to wildlife. As I illustrate below, such claims, though based on

observations of wildlife on agricultural land, are often misinformed.

When forests are cleared for agriculture, plant communities and their associated animals are replaced with a different assemblage of living things. Indeed, many species do not require the older forests that are cleared for agriculture, and some, like geese and small birds of open habitats, even thrive with agriculture. In contrast, species dependent on older, coniferous forests for breeding and/or foraging, such as woodland caribou, marten, boreal owls, northern three-toed woodpeckers, golden-crowned kinglets, and Townsend’s warblers, will certainly decline with the expansion of agricultural land. Also, clearing land increases “edge habitat” between forests and open agricultural land. There is a mountain of scientific literature documenting how forest birds nesting near “edge habitat” or in smaller forest patches are more vulnerable to predators that thrive in open habitats than birds nesting in the interior of larger forest patches. In short, clearing forests causes a turn over in which species with strict habitat requirements are replaced with either species that can use a broad diversity of habitats, or with species that thrive on recently disturbed land. By itself, this would not be necessarily terrible. The problem is, however, that agriculture maintains the land in a “recently disturbed” condition, suppressing the forest regeneration that would normally follow natural disturbances caused by fire, catastrophic floods, or wind. Thus, species with





narrow habitat requirements, such as those that breed or forage primarily inside older forests, tend to go locally extinct as a result of agriculture and other land use practices.

Even if a species seems abundant on agricultural land, the species is not necessarily being sustained by that altered habitat. For example, dominant adults of forest birds (e. g. golden-crowned kinglet and Townsend's warbler), may be taking the best breeding territories inside old forests spared by development, where their nests are successful. Meanwhile, young subordinate birds of the same species, which cannot compete for the best territories, may be nesting at high density in small forest patches found inside a farm. Subordinate birds do not prefer the latter patches; rather, habitat losses made these patches the default choice. Small forest patches inside the farm are marginal habitats where the tendency is for predation to be high and nesting success to be low. Thus, even though forest birds could give an impression of being abundant on a farm, the farm habitat is not necessarily sustaining a breeding population in the long-term. Rather, it is acting as a "sink" for individuals that will not succeed in reproducing. In fact, the species could well be regionally declining for some time while seeming abundant in the farm. Even though I used forest birds for this example, the principle applies to many other species, including chipmunks, red foxes, and deer mice.

It is impossible to address in this short article the myriad other environmental impacts of agriculture and cattle grazing which are well documented in the scientific literature. Unfortunately, that literature is written in a technical language which is inaccessible to most people. I can only encourage biologists to re-write that literature in a way that it will contribute to public education.

How do we manage land for agriculture and other developments, such as logging, in order to minimize impacts on wildlife? Landscape ecologists have called for a regional approach to land management. In this approach, rather than "winging" decisions as we go a long — which is exactly what we have been doing — long-term goals are set from the outset.

Essentially, there are four broad steps to the process:

- First, using the best available information but con-

stantly updating it, we decide on the locations, types, and amounts of wildlife habitat that we want to protect within a region (say, the Southern Lakes region in the southwest Yukon). The latter is done not only from data on known distributions of wildlife, but also by mapping habitat types expected to be important to certain species.

- Second, land already developed in the region is mapped.
- Third, we decide on a finite amount of land to be used for farming, logging, and/or other developments in the region.
- Fourth, using principles of landscape ecology, we distribute that development throughout the region in patterns of size and shape which least affect wildlife. These principles include cutting forests such that the clearings have geometric shapes which do not pro-

duce large amounts of edge habitat, and maintaining corridors which reduce fragmentation of wildlife habitat. Sometimes, difficult decisions will have to be made in which we accept local wildlife losses by concentrating development where wildlife values are lower in order to leave larger, more important areas intact.

Land development is known to be reducing the available habitat for a number of wildlife species; however, the effects of development on habitats in the Yukon are yet to be usefully documented.

Yukon State of the Environment Report, 1995

Given adequate research funds and time to do the work, steps 1, 2, and 4 are relatively easy. The third step, a crucial one, is devilishly difficult because it requires a lot of fore-sight and consensus between supporters of wildlife conservation and proponents of agriculture and other developments. To polarize both camps is obviously simplistic and counterproductive. Hence, with this article (which was also sent to the Yukon News and the Minister of Renewable Resources) and my previous critique, I hope to stimulate healthy discussions and cooperation between all stake-holders. If things go well, the end result could be an improved agricultural policy which explicitly addresses wildlife conservation at a regional scale.

Of course, the logging industry has impacts on wildlife which resemble those of agriculture. Many of the concerns and ecological principles outlined in this article are also applicable towards an improved Forest Policy for the Yukon.

alejandro frid



Learning From Our History

Did you ever wonder how the Yukon Conservation Society got its start? Who were the key players and what inspired them? What issues shaped our history? Well, many of the answers are found in a new paper entitled “*A Short History of YCS: relating to the Kluane area 1968–1992*” by Will Jones. The paper details in five chapters the fascinating and often dramatic history of YCS from 1968 through 1992.

“The Founding Impulse” (1968-71) provides rare insight into the inspired dedication of YCS founder, John Lammers. In the first YCS newsletter, Lammers put out a call to action and warned Yukoners that “*we are in danger of losing all of the Yukon’s natural assets swiftly, if greedy, single-minded, unplanned, extraction type of “development” is allowed to spread its cancer here also.*” Indeed, nearly 35 years later, the reality of that “*danger*” still fires Yukon’s environmental community.

“Crisis and Continuation” (1972-75) relates the Society’s “*Wild*” ride in the early 1970’s and subsequent struggle to find a balance between its radical voice and the need to be an effective force for the environment.

One of the most astonishing tactics occurred in the summer of 1972 when YCS president Mike Wild purchased a bulk order of the book, *Black Elk Speaks*, a groundbreaking statement of native environmental consciousness. Wild distributed the book to the entire YCS membership in an effort to inspire a more radical approach. While this action led to Wild’s resignation, it served to highlight the extraordinary passion for the environment which characterized the early years of YCS.

The “Megaproject Years” (1975-78) challenged YCS with the significant environmental threats posed by power-production based projects. Particularly moving for Yukon environmentalists was that an almost unthinkable concept, that of an oil and gas pipeline

from Prudhoe Bay to Inuvik across the Yukon’s North Slope, had the potential to become a reality. In response to the challenge, YCS developed a base of technical expertise and professionalism. By 1979, YCS had gained respect and Jones reflects that it “*was a significant enough force ... not just to be dismissed, it could actually be resented.*”

As “Advocacy and Education” (1979-86) became the focus of YCS, the organization experienced tremendous growth. This growth was reflected by the Society’s annual budget which surged from \$5000 in 1980 to \$184,000 in 1982. Jones points out that “*the quality of the interventions ... raised the profile and improved the reputation of the Society immeasurably and YCS built on this foundation throughout this period.*” Public response reflected the effectiveness of YCS as large crowds of concerned Yukoners become a feature of public hearings on environmental issues.

The “NDP Era” (1986-92) was a result of the “*transformation of the character of Yukon culture caused by the influx of people in the 1970’s and continuing through the 1980’s.*” Optimism was the mood of the

day. However, Jones reveals that the downside of this political shift was the drain of talented activists from YCS into government positions. For YCS, it was a time to re-group and present a new face made up of “*younger, less seasoned individuals.*” Mine abandonment became an issue following the leaching of toxic tailings from the Clinton Creek mine into creeks and groundwater around the mine.

“*A Short History*” takes us only as far as end of the 1986-92 “NDP era.”

Perhaps more time is required before Jones or another author explores the subsequent political era. Even now, it appears that the Yukon is entering a new chapter with the second “NDP era.” During an interview conducted by Jones for the paper Nancy





MacPherson reflected on the first “NDP era” and lamented that “... *when the NDP came in, [there was a] very interesting change in dynamics. Everybody said, ‘oh great, it will be fine now. Right? Wrong! That’s not the way politics works.’* Today, YCS recognizes that despite

the new political reality, we must work harder than ever to effect positive change on behalf of the Yukon’s environment.

cameron eckert

Small Business Environmental Audit

Cast your mind back to 1987 and the release of the book “Our Common Future” by The World Commission on Environment and Development. The book highlighted a number of global environmental concerns. The first paragraph on Energy, Economy and Environment states: “The growth of energy demand in response to industrialization, urbanization, and societal affluence has led to an extremely uneven global distribution of primary energy consumption. The consumption of energy per person in industrial market economies, for example, is more than 80 times greater than in sub-Saharan Africa. About a quarter of the world’s population consumes three quarters of the world’s primary energy.”

In an effort to reduce the world’s consumption at the local level, waste reduction and energy conservation initiatives have been geared to households. However, research has shown that industrial and commercial waste make up sixty percent of the waste stream. In an era where small businesses and home based businesses are on the rise, small businesses have indicated a desire to learn about energy conservation and waste reduction practices.

Businesses today are challenged with a competitive global economy. One of the challenges that businesses have identified is integrating strategies that can meet consumer needs, environmental concerns and ensure that their business operations are cost effective. Many initiatives have been undertaken by larger corporations to become more environmentally friendly, but there are not many resources available to small businesses that would enable them to incorporate environmentally sensitive practices into their operation.

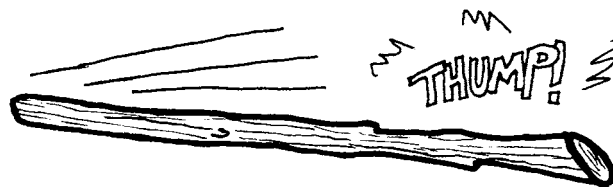
The YCS’s Small Business Environmental Audit and Education Project aims to assist small businesses in

energy conservation and waste reduction by undertaking environmental self audits. We are working with Yukon small businesses to develop a “self audit manual” which will be tailored for convenience, enable small businesses to conduct environmental audits, in-house, and identify areas where they could conserve energy and reduce waste ... and save money!

Already an Advisory Committee comprised of small business representatives, local environmental organizations and governmental agencies have met to discuss the next steps in the project. A draft of the self audit manual will be tested by pilot project participants to determine any gaps in information and how easy the manual is to use. The final draft of the manual will be published in February and sold on a cost recovery basis.

This project has received financial support from the Federal Government-Arctic Environmental Strategy, Yukon Government-Department of Renewable Resources and the City of Whitehorse.

shehnaz ali



The Project Coordinators are very interested in your thoughts and perspectives on this project. If you are interested in this project please contact Shehnaz Ali or Janne Hicklin at 668-5678.



A Cautionary Christmas Carol

Recently, I was lying on the couch thinking about what I was going to do for Christmas gifts this year. I had just closed my eyes for a moment and was trying to see visions of sugar plums dancing in the colours behind my eyelids when a slight hrr-um made me open them again. When I think on it now I must have been dreaming because typically I would have been more alarmed to suddenly notice three beings in my living room.

“Hi there!” they chorused. “We’re the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present, and Christmas Future.”

“This seems vaguely familiar...” I thought.

“We’re giving you the fast-forward version because we’ve got a lot of people to transform before the season starts in earnest,” the middle one said. “Plus we’ve noticed that people today have the attention span of Irish Setters so we try to get all the information out in a commercial-like format. Hit it guys!”

I must admit that my thought processes were still held up on the noticing-three-beings-in-my-living-room part so this didn’t really make a lot of sense to me. Nevertheless, my attention was drawn to the startling bright twinkle in the eye of Ghost of Christmas Past and suddenly I was overwhelmed with visual images complete with a catchy soundtrack. There were joyful dinner parties of friends and family; happy people going for playful walks in gently falling snow; heartfelt greetings, warm hugs, beaming faces; a family cheerily stringing popcorn and cranberries to decorate their home. It was like being a part of the greatest TV commercial of all time! Just when I thought my heart was going to burst with all this merriment and sentiment, a deep but soothing voice-over voice filled my head with words.

“We subscribe to the KISS Principle,” it said. “Keep it Spiritual, Stupid.”

“Spiritual?” I said.

“Spiritual,” the voice intoned. “As in, ‘of or concerning the spirit as opposed to matter.’”

“Oh,” I said.

It took a moment for my mind to empty itself of all that sensory information, but soon I found myself once again able to focus confusedly on the three in my living room.

No sooner had I managed this when the ghost of Christmas Present drew himself up and, winking at me, said “Christmas *present*, get it?” I wasn’t sure but had no time to think about it. Suddenly my mind’s eye was assailed with visions of exhausted shoppers clutching overflowing bags of gifts, decorations and Visa bills. In their frenzy to show their loved ones just how much they were loved they whirled through the stores adding gift upon gift to their staggering loads. The low thrum of their mumbled mantra: “If it can’t be perfect, let it be plenty,” underscored the tinny high speed renditions of Christmas carols sung by cats and the ching-ching of cash registers.

Just as the crowds, sounds, and receipts were becoming oppressively overwhelming, the scene swiftly switched to a cosy hearthside. Beside the crackling fire was a huge tree so heavily laden with decorations that only the cone shape and mental association gave it its identity away. The floor was strewn with piles upon piles of crumpled gift wrap, ribbons, envelopes, cards, boxes and plastic packaging. In the midst of all this a little girl sat with bits of tape and wrapping shards sticking on her hair and clothing, a frown on her face, a colourful plastic “will-make-your-life-complete” object in one hand and a large, technologically advanced, “just-what-everyone-needs” thing in the other.

“Is this all?” she kept whining in a plaintive voice. “Is this all?”

As she asked this, she would shimmer and change, growing and shrinking, aging and regressing, with only the bits of paper and tape remaining the same as she became my brother,





my grandmother, my nephew, my friend, my friend's kid, my friend's dog...

"Enough, enough!" I pleaded. Thankfully, the vision was withdrawn from my mind like a magician's tablecloth trick and I once again found myself sitting shaken on my couch looking less than enthusiastically at the three Ghosts.

The Ghost of Christmas Future looked very grim. I was surprised that I had not noticed before but then I had not had a lot of time between bouts of virtual reality. I finally noticed the black smoke that floated up from under his dark and torn cape like exhaust from a decrepit car and how he reeked of chemicals. He somehow made a person feel claustrophobic, suffocating and sticky without doing anything. As he prepared to do his stuff, I suddenly shouted out.

"Wait! Wait! I know it's going to be awful! I've been thinking about changing for quite awhile now! I'll do it now! Please let me do it! I'llchange!llchange!llchange!!"

The ghosts looked vaguely astounded at my little outburst. They looked at one another for a moment and then Christmas Future shrugged and said, "Well, we can always give her the Feel-Good-Future-to-Aim-For Vision instead. It's a bit shorter and then we can get on with the rest of our visits..." Christmases Past and Present looked at their watches and agreed.

No sooner had I given a sigh of relief than I was whisked off into a scene reminiscent of my first vision. There were some people gleefully making homemade gifts, others were browsing through the Bridgehead catalogue, and still others were checking out craft fairs and used book stores. People were getting together to go skiing or tobogganing and having cosy gatherings. Good cheer and realistic expectations of the season made it much more than a one day event. The gifts, wrapped in newspaper or placed in cloth bags or pillow cases, were not extravagant but heartfelt and well-thought out. Some were handwritten gift certificates for wood chopping, baby sitting, dog walking, snow shoveling... Through it all a sense of peace and joy radiated. The vision faded out slowly and there was still a smell of fresh baked goodies in the air when I found myself back in my living room, alone. I had a big grin on my face, a song in my heart (likely residual virtual reality) and I knew what to do. It was a fine thing.

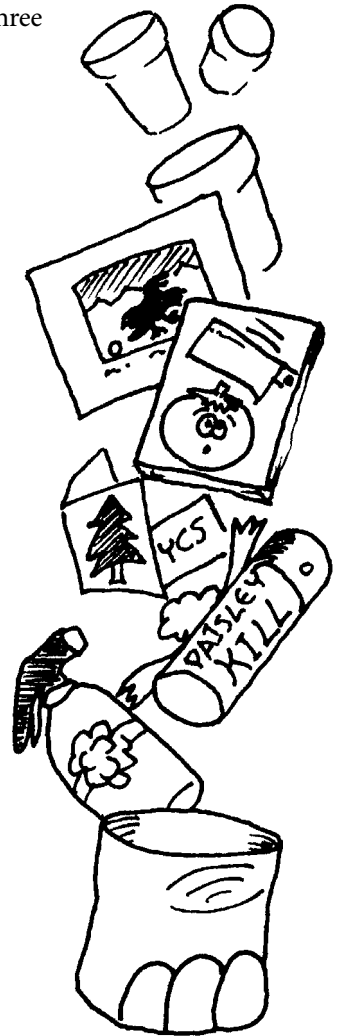
tanya handley

A Quick Christmas Quiz:

Choose the most environmentally friendly gifts:

- a case of styrofoam cups in three handy sizes
- a beribboned basket of toilet and drain cleaning samplers
- an exotic and yet functional elephant foot waste basket
- an elegantly packaged collection of aerosol pesticides
- a YCS membership
- a vegetarian cookbook
- a water-based silk-screened raven print from a local starving artist

Unfortunately real-life Christmas gift decisions are not always so clear. The important thing to remember is to think about what you are buying and how it affects the earth. Think about necessity, utility, packaging, components. Think about the message you are sending to the manufacturer and to the gift's recipient. The same types of considerations that go into your regular shopping should go into your Christmas shopping.





Forests Versus Debt Management

This article is an opinion piece on the direction of forest management in the Yukon. YCS welcomes opinion articles from its membership on any subject pertinent to the Yukon environment. What are your thoughts in the debate about forest practices in the territory? We encourage you to submit your point of view to “Walk Softly.”

Harvesting trees from the Yukon bush has been going on for over a hundred years. We all agree that Yukoners should be able to continue harvesting trees for our local needs. We have seldom relied on timber harvesting as a main source of income, a situation that has begun to change in the last four years. The rising demand for wood led to a tenfold increase in the number of trees harvested in the Yukon during this time, particularly in the Southeast.

This sudden increase in harvest, combined with a lack of policy, has created expectations within the industry that have led to unsustainable levels of capital and infrastructure investment. The result is that industry has now demanded a certain level of harvest to finance their debt. Because timber and pulp values have recently fallen, industry has also demanded the current minimal stumpage fees imposed by the federal government be rolled back to a level that is well below the non-timber value of the trees if they were left standing in the forest. In order for the Yukon to have sustainable forestry we need small scale operations with harvest levels determined by the productivity of the forests. Governments must define policy on this basis. Defining harvest patterns, fees and allocations based on the demands of a debt-driven industry is the anti-thesis of sustainability. Timber harvesters need long-term tenure to small tracts of suitable forest areas, not just for bank security purposes but for the purpose of ensuring responsibility to the resource. Individual operators must be accountable for the volumes of timber in their woodlots and conduct their own surveys and harvest plans so that the cost of harvesting the forest resources is not a cost to government, and ultimately to the owners of the resource, the public.

To ensure that the industry is geared towards supplying local markets as well as value-added or finished product

export markets, stumpage fees must be set and fixed at a suitable level that reflects the cost of management. Allowing the stumpage fee to float with global prices for raw, unprocessed logs (usually a combination of two components, timber and pulp) will decimate opportunities for local secondary industry.

To discourage the export of raw logs we may need a floating stumpage rate for export logs only. This should be set at a very high percentage of the price received, otherwise we will risk creating a boom economy that floating stumpage rates are supposed to avoid. If global timber prices are high, the demand for Yukon wood will be high, regardless of the stumpage fee attached. Local markets are stable and do not fluctuate in the manner of global markets.

In the future, conflicts originating with those who have invested most heavily to supply outside buyers will continue to emerge. The current annual allowable cut (AAC) is set by the federal government at 450,000 cubic meters for the entire territory. This does not include salvage wood, nor allocations made under Timber Harvest Agreements (THAs). The federal government admits that the current AAC is a number pulled from a hat, with no basis on the actual volumes of timber available. It is my belief the current AAC is set too high to provide for a sustainable industry. Assuming the AAC is already set too high, then there is little doubt of increasing pressure to increase timber supply from those with heavy debts on their investments.

A new mill in Watson Lake, scheduled to be operating near March of 1997, will have the capacity to process over 300,000 cubic meters per year. Although the mill owners are looking for only 100,000 cubic meters for the first year of operation, you can bet that this shareholder owned company will want to increase production to maximize shareholder investment.

A major point of controversy will arise when the proponents of this new mill seek their own timber harvest agreement (THA), which they have said they will. (Remember, THA volumes are presently not included in AAC calculations.) Industry may assume that new THAs will not be included in future AAC calculations, rather that they will continue to be above and beyond those levels.

The only bright point in the dilemma of timber alloca-



tion is that increased demands for a local supply of Yukon wood will reduce the opportunity for large corporate pulp operators from outside who see the only method to harvest pulp wood as large scale clearcuts. Who can say that pulp prices won't rise again and the high fibre trees of the Yukon will succumb to the same

fate as most other boreal forests? We as Yukoners must be prepared and have the tools in place to thwart this type of development if we intend to preserve the future of the Yukon's forests.

paul d. sparling

The Dawn of a New Government: A Worrisome Signal??

The November 11th issue of The Northern Miner arrived on the YCS doorstep this morning (Nov. 19). A quick look through to check out the latest news on Yukon mining projects and hype when lo and behold, what catches my eye: a smiling picture of our government leader.

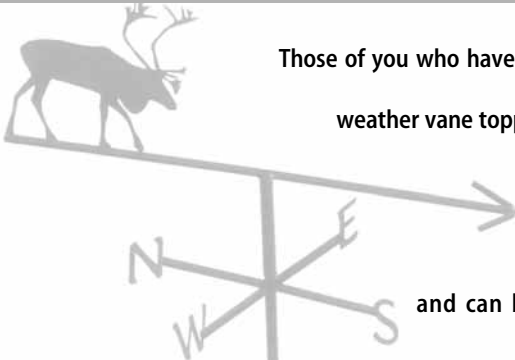
In a half page ad on the back page he has written an open letter to the northern mining industry introducing his government's "approach in support of the mineral industry." The ad then outlines some of the government's future plans. Some of these plans seem quite reasonable: "providing land use certainty by completing the negotiations of outstanding land claims as quickly as possible," "promote a well-trained local labour force by ensuring suitable training is available in Yukon communities" and "implementing the principles in the Whitehorse Mining Initiative, to encourage environmentally responsible mining and encourage continuing open dialogue between industry and other stakeholders" are all laudable goals.

There are two points however which are quite disturbing. The first is to "start an aggressive four-year campaign to encourage investment in the Yukon." YCS questions the wisdom of such a campaign and believes that it is pre-

mature to start any campaign before the necessary legislative tools are in place to regulate the industry, land claims have been completed, processes such as the land use planning and development assessment regimes outlined in the Umbrella Final Agreement are in place and substantial progress has been made in completing the parks and protected areas network. Without this framework in place development cannot proceed in an environmentally responsible and community responsive manner. The second concern is with the plan to "work with First Nations and Canada, and consult with industry to ensure development assessment legislation that is simple, effective, timely and fair to all stakeholders." Consultation on the development assessment process should, and we believe will, be with all stakeholders but the wording of this point sends the wrong message to the mining industry.

The government leader has taken great pains to reassure the mining industry that Yukon will remain "investor friendly" and this message is likely to be repeated at the geoscience forum held in Whitehorse Nov 24th to 26th. It will be our task to ensure that both industry and government behave in a responsible manner.

bob van dijen



Those of you who have been by our office recently have probably noticed the nifty caribou weather vane topping the building. The weather vane was generously given to us (and even installed) by Wendy Ormaond and Phillippe Leblonde of "All in Vane". They make northern theme and custom weather vanes and can be contacted in Whitehorse at 403-633-5600. Thanks you guys.



What's Happening at YCS?

YCS has recovered from the summer's flurry of visitors and unemployed students and has shifted into the winter's work. Winter typically sees a shift from a heavy emphasis on the educational component of our mandate to the research and advocacy components. Through various research projects and participation in conferences and planning meetings, YCS works at having a pro-active influence on the Yukon's environmental issues.

Strategic Plan!

After a lot of work and energy, YCS's strategic plan has recently been completed. Members are welcome, nay, encouraged to come on by the office and have a look at the document! The goal of the plan was to identify where our organization wants to go and how we want to get there. There is a role for you!

Robert Service Way!

The Robert Service Way (South Access Road for all the Luddites out there) Public Advisory Committee meetings continue. The latest revelation is that fish spawning habitat will be destroyed by the road expanding into the river. The city has to develop mitigation and compensation plans to offset this. If you are interested in attending the public meetings as a YCS representative, please contact the YCS office.

Garage Sale!

The YCS garage sale was a huge success with over \$1000 raised! Thanks to all who participated and to Joy, Rosa, Lewis, Vicki, Paul, Bob, Shehnaz and Sherri for their volunteer effort.

Development Assessment Process!

YCS will be working on DAP issues a lot this winter and attempting to influence this far reaching process. If you are interested in the future of environmental assessment and land use decisions, please call the YCS office.

Contaminants Conference!

YCS attended A Canadian Conference on Contaminants, the Environment, and Human Health in the Arctic in Iqaluit this October. The arctic, one of the

world's most fragile ecosystems, acts as a global sink for a wide range of biocides. The conference gathered concerned Northerners, academics, government and business representatives, and scientists in order to develop a clear long-term strategy to deal with contaminants in the North. Talk to Bob if you want to learn more.

Yukon Forests!

The YCS Forest Committee has produced a set of informational materials on trees and forests in the Yukon. Come on by the office and have a look!

Climate Change!

The proposed Climate Change Public Information Sessions have been delayed until next year. (El Nino again?) We'll keep you posted on when they'll be.

A Short History of YCS!

YCS has produced a paper on the history of Kluane Park. Come on down to the office and have a look!

Mining Legislation!

YCS representatives attended mining legislation meetings in late September. Sadly, the legislation has been passed without the changes we requested. There is, however, still hope that the changes can be made when the Regulations are gazetted sometime this winter.

Election Questionnaire

We developed an environmental election questionnaire and with the help of volunteers in each community, many of the candidates were interviewed. Results were published in the Yukon News. Thanks to all the volunteers involved.

