

Lands and People

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just so
 the shadow of the pine tree
 bending

Terry Ann Carter

DOGWOOD INITIATIVE was founded by First Nations, environmentalists, community advocates and labour leadership.

Our mission is to create sustainable community solutions for lands and people. Through strong leadership, policy alternatives, research and campaigns, we promote collaboration to ensure sustainable, local control of land in B.C.

www.dogwoodinitiative.org

CAN FOSSILS FUEL OUR FUTURE?

By Will Horter

Our future is being defined by the battle over control and use of fossil fuels.

Headlines confirm North America's dependence on fossil fuels. Daily you are inundated with stories of record \$50 a barrel crude oil prices, insurgency in Iraq, civil war in Nigeria, unrest in Saudi Arabia. Unprecedented waves of hurricanes, unmatched beetle epidemics, devastating fires, drought and other indications of a growing climate crisis supplement the political and economic headlines. Though reported as disconnected events, they all relate to the global consequences of maintaining North America's

...Energy continued on page 8



All that sparkles is not good: Do you want more oil refineries like this Conoco plant?

ACTIVISTS DEFEAT CROWSNEST RIGHTS AUCTION

By Arthur Caldicott

No bids in the Crowsnest Coalfield rights auction: the power of grass roots activism!

This power became clear in August, when a highly touted auction of coalbed methane rights in the Kootenays went bust.

It was a big blow for the government. The monthly auction of petroleum and natural gas rights has become a steady revenue source for the Province. After natural gas royalties, it makes up the largest revenue contributor to the Ministry of Energy and Mines.

It's easy money. Once a company wins the auction, it has access to billions of dollars of natural gas. Produce the gas, pay the province a small royalty, and pocket the rest. "Come to BC," Richard Neufeld's Energy Ministry tells the companies, "We're giving the stuff away!"

Most months there has been \$20 to \$40 million in the bid envelopes. But this August was different, thanks to the committed efforts

...Flathead continued on page 2

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of some of our allies in the region.

How did it happen? Early in 2004, Neufeld's ministry posted for auction two large parcels of coalbed methane drilling rights in the Crowsnest Coalfield. The coalfield is located in the Kootenays, in of southeast BC. The



And government calls exploration harmless?
Discarded junk at Chevron's test well in Coal Creek,
just east of Fernie

parcels are near the town of Fernie. They overlap the Elk River drainage and the headwaters of the Flathead River, which flows straight into Montana. It is a perfect example of a magnificent Rocky mountain wilderness.

The auction proved to be a public relations disaster for Mr Neufeld.

Fernie sells itself as BC's next resort destination, a new Whistler, and million-dollar homes are popping up. The picture of Rocky Mountain wilderness savaged by coalbed methane development—industrialization of the landscape, and the corruption of the Flathead and Elk Rivers from water removed during coalbed methane extraction—was too much.

Fernie held a town hall meeting. A couple hundred people arrived, and virtually everyone wanted to run the auction out of town. Council passed a resolution calling for a postponement.

Be it resolved that the government of B.C. defer any auction of Coalbed methane tenures for the Crowsnest

—Resolution of Fernie Council

Then Montana became concerned. Governor Martz wrote Premier Campbell. State senators appealed to Colin Powell. The International Joint Commission was apprised. The *New York Times* covered the issue.

BC's response? An assistant to Campbell gave a dismissive reply, in a statement to a local newspaper. Fine Canadian diplomacy.

Neufeld withdrew the auction posting briefly, then opened "information offices" in Elkford, Sparwood and Fernie to promote the sale. Ministry staff began commuting to the area regularly, with side trips to Montana.

When the heavily promoted auction was finally completed, on August 25, Neufeld's staff brought out the envelopes. Not a single bid for the month's big ticket item.

A triumph for wilderness, for sustainable land use, and for the power of citizen activism. People like Ted Ralfe, David Thomas, and Casey Brennan deserve special credit.

The Crowsnest campaign proves that community and environmental activists can frustrate the coalbed methane agenda.

Dogwood Initiative's First Nations partners in Hat Creek are succeeding as well.

We must continue to work hard, though, because the news is not all good.

Secret deal allows Shell to drill

The government is determined to increase revenues by selling coalbed methane rights. In 2003, it passed the *Coalbed Gas Act*. The Act severed coalbed methane from coal rights, and removed rightsholders' ability to sue the government over this expropriation.

The new law affected perhaps 600 freehold owners of coal rights in BC. Most still don't know it's happened. They are small landowners, or small companies. However, four big ones, who hold 70% of the coal rights (Weldwood, Quinsam, Elk Valley, and Tembec) received special treatment. These four have cut secret deals with government to retain their coalbed methane rights.

One of those deals affects the Kootenays, even overlapping with the Crowsnest.

While the citizens around Fernie and Montana were focused on the Crowsnest auction, Neufeld's Ministry was busy making deals with the Elk Valley Coal Corporation, which in turn was making deals with Shell Canada. In August, Shell announced an agreement with one of the Elk Valley mines, Elkview Coal. This fall, Shell will explore for coalbed methane in an area including the north part of the Crowsnest Coalfield. ☒

(See also the story on page 5, about Shell's pursuit of methane profits in the northwest.)



Executive Director's Report

By Will Horter

In nature, autumn is a time of transition—the days get shorter, leaves begin to fall; and you, I, and the other animals begin to prepare for the coming winter. But transitions are not limited to the seasons.

In politics, we are facing a number of transitions that could have a profound effect on our lives.

Our U.S. neighbor is in the final days of its seemingly endless election cycle, an election on which it sometimes feels our future hangs in the balance.

Canada just concluded its own federal election. While it is too early to tell, it appears our newly anointed Prime Minister is grasping to maintain control over his potentially unruly caucus and quash the ambitions of newly resurgent parties.

In BC, we are inundated with the Campbell government's saturation media campaigns on education, jobs and the environment to promote itself and reverse its declining approval ratings—all part of the build-up to this spring's election (did I say the U.S. has a seemingly endless election cycle?).

While these transitions are unsettling, they present opportunities as well as challenges. From record global gas prices, to unprecedented waves of hurricanes, to escalating conflicts over control of fossil fuels in Iraq and now Nigeria, the linkages between the environment and the economy have never been clearer. The worlds of nature and humanity are colliding on the front pages—the pundits and spin doctors haven't yet drawn the obvious connections, but more and more people have.

Dogwood Initiative is riding the waves these transitions create. We have been undergoing our own evolution. We added new staff and reconfigured our Board; we expanded our communication and volunteer efforts to harness the wisdom and resources of you, our growing cadre of supporters. You should begin to see the results this fall. Some examples:

Phase II of our website will be launched soon, making it more dynamic, interactive and accessible.

Our energy program will expand, with more outreach to communities affected by coalbed methane, coal-fired generation, liquefied natural gas and conventional fossil fuels. This expansion will offset the Campbell government's expanding dependence on fossil fuels, and the revenues they generate for provincial coffers. Without many resources, except determination and people power, we have already fought off key aspects of the government's energy scheme.

Our partners—people like you—have stopped coalbed methane exploration and drilling in the Flathead near Fernie (*see page 1*), and in the bucolic Hat Creek near Lillooet. Municipal leaders have passed resolutions demanding moratoria on coalbed methane exploration, baseline and cumulative impact studies and meaningful consultation with affected local people.

Since fossil fuel companies operate across borders, we are helping British Columbian, Canadian and U.S. groups to collaborate and develop joint campaigns. In September we co-hosted a session on *Corporate Energy Campaigning: Using Financial Pressure for Conservation* in Denver. From that workshop, a hard hitting trans-boundary campaign is being planned (*see page 1*).

But none of this could be accomplished without the support of people like you—donors, volunteers, and community contacts and advocates are all essential to our success.

By taking a few minutes to fill out our online survey on our website you can help us better serve your needs. Help us create an organization that touches your hearts, inspires you, and helps you achieve your dreams for your family, your community, and your world.



SHELL STARTS DRILLING IN NORTHERN KLAPPAN

By Arthur Caldicott

Back in December 2003, Minister Richard Neufeld issued a Call for Proposals from those interested in developing northern coalfields. The auction closed in January, with no announcements



Klappan-Groundhog coalfield, outlined, & Spatsizi Plateau Park, shaded

Neufeld's staff was busy, however, negotiating with Shell Canada for access to Klappan-Groundhog Coalfields. The fields hold 9% of BC's coalbed methane potential.

In August, Shell announced its deal: for \$9.5 million, it has exclusive rights to coalbed methane in the area, with work provided to the Tahltan Nation Development Corporation through an agreement between

Shell and the Tahltan.

Ground-zero in Klappan is at the

headwaters of four of BC's major rivers: the Klappan, Spatsizi, Nass, and Skeena. The coalfield partly underlies the Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Park.

This deal and the one with Elk Valley Coal Corporation (*see page 2*) make Shell the largest coalbed methane operator in BC. They plan to be in full-blown production in coming seasons.

Shell's record of illegal gas extraction under Waterton Lakes National Park bodes ill for the Spatsizi. And the company has a well-known history of exploitation of indigenous peoples and destruction of wilderness.

We'll be focusing attention on Shell in the coming year. (*See also story on page 9.*) ☒

MUSICAL LEGENDS ROCK DUNCAN FOR AIR

By Michael Begg

On September 17, the small town of Duncan rocked out to the sounds of big city acts like Neil Young, the Barenaked Ladies, and Randy Bachman. Why the fuss? it was a benefit concert for clean air.

The Cowichan Valley has seen its share of controversy lately over pollution from the Norske pulp mill at Crofton. The mill employs about 1,000 people, making it one of the pillars of the local economy, but also faces increasing scrutiny given that after 50 years it now sits in a rapidly populating area.

So it's easy to see how this dispute has descended into the usual "jobs vs. environment" frame.

But listen carefully and you'll hear some surprising common ground. The unions in the mill want to see stronger clean air laws in BC, so that

companies like Norske will have to follow legally binding standards.

Instead, the current BC Liberal government has cut back monitoring and enforcement staff, and no longer publishes a record of companies that violate their pollution permits. Look at the list of donors to the Liberal party, and you'll find the same companies there.

The concert was a fun event, with the star acts playing to a packed house. The real story here, though, is the growing consensus about the air problem, and the breaking down



Tal and Randy Bachman. Randy's early support gained attention

of traditional barriers between sectors. That's what brought this event off, and made it such a success. ☒

NEW HAIDA DECISION CREATES CRACKS, SETS STAGE

By Michael Begg & Will Horter

Cracks are appearing in the BC government's land use program, just as the anticipated date approaches for the release of the Supreme Court of Canada's decision on the landmark *Haida* judgement in 2002.

The government has dressed up a recent spate of logging and energy laws and policies as an attempt to modernize these sunset industries. The truth is the opposite: the goal is to privatize public resources by deregulating industry and giving it greater control with less oversight.

With little criticism in mainstream media, and with only two opposition members in the Legislature, the government has been almost unfettered in pursuing privatization. There is nothing its super-majority of MLAs and supportive media can do about the constitutional rights of First Nations, however.

That was clear in the latest judgement in the *Haida*'s litigation with Weyerhaeuser. The decision came down on September 28, and came down hard on the government's attempts to transfer control of public lands to resource companies. It also bolsters planned challenges of recent mergers in the logging industry.

The case turned on whether new forestry laws removed Weyerhaeuser's, and the government's, duty to consult the *Haida*. The most important change is that companies can transfer their tenures, or their ownership, to other companies without government approval. This change was aimed at overriding the landmark *Haida* decision of 2002, which required consultation and accommodation of First Nations before tenure (e.g. logging rights) is granted, and before changes in control of the tenure holders.

In the wake of that decision, the government brought in its new forestry laws. Then it tried to force the *Haida* to accept a generic, inadequate accommodation agreement. And then, when the *Haida* refused to sign, Weyerhaeuser began talks to transfer its tenures on *Haida* Gwaii.

That move prompted the *Haida* to return to court, for an order that Weyerhaeuser consult with them about all details of the proposed transfer. Weyerhaeuser argued it has no duty to disclose transfer talks, or to consult about them. Their primary argument was the company's new freedom from government oversight of its negotiations.

The court rejected this argument outright.

What are the implications of this case?

It is a rejection of the government's attempt to get around the *Haida* case. On the first test of their legislative gambit, the government and industry have failed. That reinforces the power of the legal challenges that are coming.

And it signals confidence in the judiciary in the *Haida* decision. This is a good sign for those hoping Canada's Supreme Court will reinforce the law of consultation and accommodation set out in the 2002 *Haida* judgement by the Court of Appeal. Companies and the government are going to be reluctant to go before the lower courts, where until recently, they have tended to be successful. If the Supreme Court of Canada affirms the *Haida*'s earlier victory, there will be a powerful ripple effect across BC.

The timing is very good for our allies. Not only are several First Nations mounting challenges, but there is a growing tide of support for those challenges from groups of people who have historically been nervous about Aboriginal rights. These people, including non-Aboriginal rural communities, environmentalists, labour unionists, and small business operators, now see that the only way to break the status quo and establish a sustainable economy lies with First Nations challenges. And with many First Nations adopting sustainable visions for their territories, an increasing body of people are supporting them.

There is more detail on these challenges in our Dogwood Bulletins of October 6 and September 22 (see the archive under Newsroom, on our website) The challenges include:

The Gitanyow asking the court to overturn the words of the recent forestry laws, including those that failed to protect Weyerhaeuser last month.

A possible challenge by the Hupacasath to the privatization of 2/3^{rds} of their territory near Port Alberni, in Weyerhaeuser's favour.

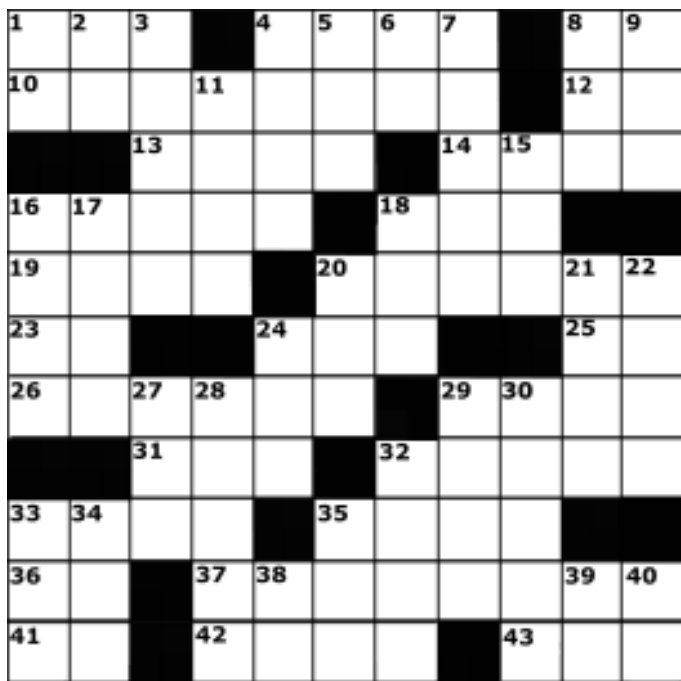
A Huu-ay-aht case against the boilerplate accommodation agreements the government has been pressuring First Nations to sign.

We expect to be writing about the *Haida* judgement from Ottawa in the next issue. Meanwhile, keep your eye on the Bulletins on our website for updates. ☒

The important thing about [this case] is the duty (to consult) doesn't go away because the province legislates away its control".
—Lawyer Louise Mandell

CROSSWORD PUZZLE CONTEST

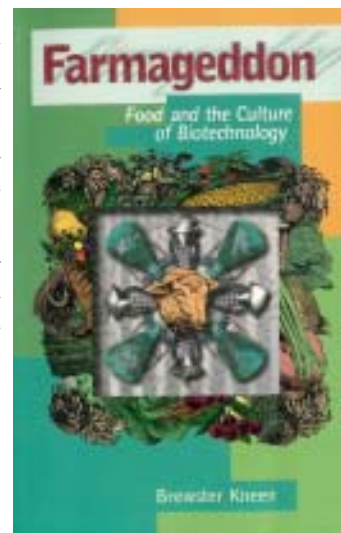
By Michael Begg



The prize this time, for the first person to fax, e-mail or mail us a correctly completed puzzle, is relevant to the food articles on pages 10 and 11 of this issue. It is *Farmageddon*, the popular book by Brewster Kneen about food and the culture of biotechnology.

Brewster is an internationally recognized expert on the food system. He has written five books on this enormous subject, and countless magazine articles. He also publishes, with his wife, Cathleen, *The Ram's Horn*, a monthly magazine of food system analysis. (Cathleen is also the contact for the Foodsystems Network described on page 11.)

The winner will also receive the fabled Dogwood Initiative t-shirt. Contestants and past winners will be pleased to hear that Dogwood now has an artist who has volunteered to help design the shirt—so we'll soon be able to send one to past winners, too. ☒



ACROSS

1. Yorùbá goddess (& Ontario river)
4. London's *White* ____
8. News svc.
10. Runs through Winnipeg
12. A common nominative
13. What blobs do
14. Part of a stove
16. Governor opposed to Flathead auction
18. The day before
19. Expression of understanding
20. Excuse for forestry giveaways
23. Famous Lady
24. "____ there was you" (*Music Man* song)
25. Often precedes alternatives
26. Shakespeare's favourite type of foot
29. Used to identify – e.g. price
31. Deli fave
32. Subject of Asimov's Three Laws

33. Tea, in Mumbai
35. Yugoslavian dictator
36. Undergrads get it (abbrev.)
37. Denver workshop on financial ____
41. Selfish pronoun
42. What tar sands extraction is not
43. 1968 offensive

DOWN

1. Where surgeons work (abbrev.)
2. Hamlet's verb
3. To love worshipfully
4. What Alka Seltzer does
5. "____ Maria"
6. Nebraska, by mail
7. Where mangoes grow
8. Wonder
9. Mightier than the sword
11. Old way of learning
15. Army alumnus (or alumna)
16. Musical computer protocol
17. Most populous continent
18. Moray, for one
20. Maker of disposables
21. Branding image
22. Formerly
24. ____bush or ____mouse
27. Degree of business
28. Radar echoes
29. Young children
30. Approximately
32. What gas prices do best
33. A src. of gas
34. Grass, or money
35. Number of steps in our oil & gas Responsible Development report
38. Egyptian god
39. Latin for "in the matter of"
40. Spielberg classic

USE YOUR VOICE: FILL OUT THE DOGWOOD SURVEY

We've created a new way for you to help build the land reform movement: our survey. We've prepared a set of questions it takes only five to ten minutes to answer. You may receive a copy in the mail, or go straight to the survey on our website. Please do take the time. Your answers, which are confidential, will help us improve our focus, and our communications with supporters, allies, and all the potential supporters of sustainable local control of land. See www.dogwoodinitiative.org for the link to the survey. Oh, and those who complete it receive our new fridge magnet (pictured at right) ☒



SOLUTIONS FOR LANDS AND PEOPLE

BC'S TOP CIVIL SERVANT FOILS FOI—AND BREAKS LAW?

By Michael Begg

It has been just over a year since the conference at which the head of BC's civil service thumbed his nose at the principle of public access to government records.

Ken Dobell, Deputy Minister to the Premier, proudly announced at the conference on BC's *Freedom of Information (FOI) Act* his dislike of the "FOI" process, and revealed his strategy for foiling public requests for records of his work: he destroys the records. That is, he destroys a significant portion of the records, his e-mail. "I delete them as soon as I get them," he told a rather surprised gathering of reporters and government officials.

In the wake of the media kerfuffle that followed, the government issued muted acknowledgements that Mr Dobell's practice

of destroying e-mail was inappropriate, and that other government staff should not follow suit. Government implied that Mr Dobell had improved his ways.

He hasn't.

Concerned about the precedent Mr Dobell was setting, and hoping to salvage some element of the records of BC's top bureaucrat, Dogwood Initiative filed an FOI request for all of Mr Dobell's e-mail since he joined the civil service in June 2001, including a copy of all the e-mail archived on the government system. We filed the request on November 26, to see what

he had been doing in the two months subsequent to the conference.

After five months of delay explained only by the need to consult other parties about the content of the e-mails, the government released to us eleven messages, most of them less than half a page long, containing very little text other than a reference to an attachment. (The attachments were excluded, comically, to "speed up" the consultation process; Dogwood

has now requested copies of the attachments, and are still, almost one year later, awaiting edited versions of all the documents.)

Five of the e-mail messages were dated November 26, the day of the request, and two were from the three days before. Three messages were from November 17, and the last was dated October 26. These are, according to Mr Dobell's FOI staff, the only e-mails on his system, in any folder.

This is quite a feat of diligent deleting. For most of us, e-mail accumulates in our inbox, or in the folders in which we file it, keeping it handy to check later. Not Mr Dobell. Whether it be a business record, which by law must be preserved, or a transitory e-mail such as a lunch invitation, which isn't required to be kept, he deletes 'em all, and quickly.

Either that or almost no one e-mails him, and he sends no e-mail. (Interestingly, none of the notes was sent by Mr Dobell—he must have his "Sent" folder set to delete automatically.)

As for an archive of the e-mails he has been deleting, the government hid behind a policy of not looking into archives, in response to FOI requests. That policy might make sense where the government employees are properly keeping their important records, in electronic and hard copy form. But when that's the only place the records might be, this policy makes a sham of the FOI process.

We have filed an appeal of the government's response to this FOI request. The appeal is in its own slow process, but we hope to set some precedents through it. Unfortunately, the big question—is Mr Dobell violating BC law by deleting his records?—seems to be outside the Commissioner's jurisdiction.

We'll post updates on this story in the Bulletins on our website. And we'll be posting all the material we receive from Mr Dobell on the site, as a means of correcting the record, even if, due to Mr Dobell's high-handed manner, that record is a paltry one.

(Reprinted, with updates, from a September Bulletin. See our website for more.) ☒



Ken Dobell: daily violating BC's law for maintaining public records?



Caribou in the ANWR. Industry wants to drill on 1.5 million acres of breeding grounds.

addiction to cheap, secure supplies of fossil fuels.

Yet absent from the news is analysis of Canada's growing importance to the global fossil fuel industry. Also lacking is commentary on the environmental, economic and social consequences of expanded energy development.

Seeking "energy security" because of domestic scarcity, limits to world production capacity, and instability in the Middle East, Venezuela and now Nigeria, the US government and oil giants like Shell, Conoco-Phillips, and EnCana have turned to Canada to prop up North America's unsustainable rate of fossil fuel consumption (the U.S. has 5% of the world population, but uses 25% of its energy).

Western Canada – North America's gas tank?

To capitalize on this trend and capture a bigger share of the continental market, Gordon Campbell, Ralph Klein, Paul Martin and Stephen Harper are planning to rapidly increase Canadian oil and gas production over the coming decade. A surprise to many, Canada is now already the #1 foreign supplier of oil and gas to the U.S.

There are few remaining big oil and gas sources in the lower 48, putting pressure on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and the Western Arctic Reserve in Alaska. And global production is nearing an absolute capacity limit.

Canada, too, is at its natural gas peak, joining the U.S. in its rush to prop up existing levels of supply by pursuing coalbed methane. But the big prize is the Athabasca tar sands, the largest deposit of fossil fuels outside Saudi Arabia. More like mining than conventional oil production, tar in sandy soils is scooped up and heated (using fossil fuels) to extract dirty oil. The process requires massive energy inputs—and emissions.

It makes little sense to subsidize the use of massive amounts of natural gas (a relatively clean fuel) to produce dirty oil. But that's what is happening. Alberta Premier Ralph Klein has said that every molecule of natural gas from the North could be sucked into production in Canada's tar sands. Once thought to be uneconomical, the tar sands are now producing a million barrels a day and growing, thanks to massive public subsidies.

Growing Impacts

Expanding our role as America's fuel tank will have major impacts across western Canada and the globe. Increasing our production of greenhouse gasses will worsen our embarrassing contribution to the climate crisis. Yet a dialogue about health, environmental and social issues is rare in public debates about energy policy.

The expansion of fossil fuel exploration and drilling threatens many wild and still pristine places, such as the Muskwa-Kechika in north-eastern BC, the fragile coast of BC, the Mackenzie Valley, vast areas of Canada's boreal forest, the Flathead near Fernie, and other special places in the Rockies.

As Canada's conventional natural gas runs

out, coalbed methane is being heavily promoted (subsidized) as a way to maintain perverse production levels. Coalbed methane production brings with it a host of negative impacts, including greater land impacts through more concentrated infrastructure, and damage from disposal of toxic "produced water".

All fossil fuel production uses huge amounts of water. Yet water use and disposal are relatively unregulated. Given the scarcity of clean water in streams, lakes and aquifers,

expect energy companies to have more conflicts with local landowners, First Nations, and municipalities, particularly in Alberta.

The oil and gas industry also threatens the way of life for rural people through private land fragmentation, pollution, and toxic emissions.

And the oil and gas industry infringes on Aboriginal Title and Rights when drilling is permitted without the consent of the affected First Nation, and as traditional hunting and fishing areas are rendered useless through cumulative impacts on ecosystems. Moreover, First Nations see barely any of the wealth extracted from their territories.

Growing opposition

Until now opposition to expanded fossil fuel production has come from local groups and sometimes regional affiliations. But the oil and gas industry is global, not local.



Tailings visible from space: separating & collecting oil from Alberta's tar sands.



Energy intensive: 350-tonne trucks carry tar sand to a processor to separate the elements. The trucks run non-stop all year.

Some of these regional campaigns are, nonetheless, succeeding against hostile government and big corporate interests.

In BC, grassroots activism by local community, First Nations and environmental groups has helped to maintain the federal offshore oil & gas moratorium, stymied the Flathead coalbed methane auction (*see page 1*) and has protected Hat Creek against coalbed methane development.

Despite these successes, people are realizing they can only achieve long-term

victory through co-ordinated campaigns that unite environmental and community groups across borders. Dogwood Initiative is leading efforts to bring activists together so that our collective leverage can encourage a real transition from fossil fuels to alternatives.

In September, this effort took a big step forward, when Dogwood Initiative co-hosted *Corporate Energy Campaigning: Using financial pressure for conservation*, with the Colorado-based Oil & Gas Accountability Project (*see below*). ☒

HOW CAN WE RESPOND? UNITED FINANCIAL PRESSURE

By Will Horter

Follow the money. That's the mantra activists across North America are repeating after attending the *Corporate Energy Campaigning: Using financial pressure for conservation* workshop in Denver.

Dogwood Initiative organized the workshop jointly with the Colorado-based *Oil and Gas Accountability Project* (OGAP), which is widely respected in the western U.S. for its organizing on oil and gas issues. Together we assembled 40 key activists from across North America for an in-depth training and strategy session on how to counter the growing power and impacts of the oil industry.

It's the most financially powerful industry in the world. In North America, the industry is almost fully integrated between the U.S. and Canada. Oil giants like Shell, BP, Exxon/Imperial, Chevron, and Conoco-Phillips operate in both countries, and Canadian gas goliath EnCana recently expanded operations in the US Rockies.

Participants came from the Yukon, Alberta, BC, Ontario, Alaska, Montana, Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico, Louisiana, and Maine. They have been fighting the impacts of the oil industry on their communities and environment. Traditional approaches like community organizing, government relations, legal challenges, and public education have served them well. All agree, however, that new tools are needed.

Financial pressure is one such tool. Though a powerful force in historic campaigns to end slavery (sugar boycotts) and free South Africa from Apartheid (divestment), financial campaigns targeting oil companies are a relatively new approach.

As scandals create demand for stricter corporate governance, our ability to influence industry increases. Financiers—whether they are shareholders, banks, insurance companies or other entities—are risk averse, and we have strategies to enhance risk to create leverage.

We gathered experts who have successfully used these strategies—experts on financing and corporate research, shareholder activism, credit ratings, and corporate dialogue. Our experts were drawn from a “who’s-who” of successful corporate campaigners. *Friends of the Earth* and *Rainforest Action Network* sent trainers, and people from *AmazonWatch* and the *Burma Project* were involved in the preparation.

The workshop's biggest success was the support generated for a new continental fossil fuel campaign. The activists created a Steering Committee, and approved organizing principles, criteria for target selection, and a short-list of target companies.

The coming months should be very interesting, as the foundation is put in place to hit one target corporation's operations across North America—creating political risks, threatening their social licence and right to operate, launching lawsuits; and educating investors, bankers, credit raters, and insurers on undisclosed liabilities.

We are in the early stages of what could be a historic campaign. You can help, by encouraging local initiatives to participate. Dogwood Initiative will keep you informed as we make progress. ☒



Activists gather in Denver: identifying the problems, forging solutions, & sowing a North American movement

RECONNECTING LAND & PEOPLE: SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

By Lena Soots

Food is sacred—not only a basic requirement for human existence, but central to the fundamental interdependence between people and land.

The production, processing and distribution systems that make up our food system are important links in the chain from land to mouth. Creating sustainable communities requires a careful examination of the food and agricultural systems that connect us to the land.

All that is born is born of anna [food]. Whatever exists on earth is born of anna, lives on anna, and in the end merges into anna. Anna is indeed the first born amongst all beings.

—from the *Taittiriya Upanishad* (500 BC)

There is no question: we live in a “globalized” world. Evidence of the globalization of the food system can be found in any supermarket. Bananas, mangos and coffee are familiar items on our grocery store shelves and consumers have come to expect the variety and “exotic-ness” the global food system provides.

An unprecedented scale of concentration now characterizes the global food system, with only a handful of multinational corporations controlling the entire process—from seed to plate. However, increased awareness of the negative effects of the globalized food system has prompted concerned citizens across North America and Europe to develop alternatives.

The alternatives that are emerging are food systems that are as localized as much as possible, based on potential economic, social and environmental benefits.

While completing my Master’s degree at the University of Waterloo I studied a community just starting to explore the possibilities for an alternative, community-based food system. Waterloo Region is located in Southwestern Ontario, 150km west of Toronto. The region has a mix of both lively urban centres and agriculturally productive rural communities, and a unique cultural identity, with Canada’s largest Old Order Amish and Mennonite population.

My research focused on the barriers, opportunities and strategies for creating a more sustainable community-based food system in the area. I spoke with individuals from the local farming community as well as community development professionals and advocates.

I had the privilege to spend time with community members and farmers, sitting around kitchen tables and standing in cold, damp barns. This experience gave me a small but meaningful window into the local farming community, and enlightened me about the realities of our food system. I came away with a deep sense of admiration for the individuals who make up our farming communities: the people whose tireless hard work and dedication to the land give us the food of life.

I found a community with a desire for a deeper connection to each other and the land. I found farmers struggling to maintain their livelihoods and hold onto their family farms in the face of global trends. I found a group of dedicated advocates and community health professionals committed to finding more sustainable solutions for the health and well being of the community. But most inspiring was the sparkle and energy that came with a sense of hope—with the realization among community members that *change is possible!*

The “4 Rs”. Alternative, community-based food systems:

- **RECLAIM** control of farming practices and land use, and return control to farmers and communities, not corporations.
- **RECONNECT** people and land by raising awareness of food and agriculture issues and strengthening rural-urban relationships.
- **RESTORE** the land and promote agricultural practices and processes that enhance ecosystem health.
- **REKINDLE** community through the development of a community food culture and a celebration of food and place.

While I was completing my research, a new non-profit organization called FoodLink was created in the Region with the purpose of “creating a more sustainable local food system”. Dialogue has started, resources have been mobilized, and Waterloo Region is on the path to realizing its vision for a more sustainable future.

The stories I heard during this research are not unique to Waterloo or Ontario—farming

communities all over Canada are struggling against the forces of the global agri-food system. (See *Cliff Stainsby's article, below—ed.*) As a result we are *all* losing our connection to the land. But organizations like FoodLink can be found sprouting up across the country in an attempt to develop community-based solutions for a more sustainable future. Through community-based food systems we can re-connect with the land that gives us life. ☒

Lena Soots is a new arrival to BC, but is already active in food system activities here, including Linking Land & Future Farmers.

To read more about sustainable local food systems go to www.fes.uwaterloo.ca/ers/faculty/smurphy.html and follow the link to Lena's thesis, entitled *Home Grown: Local Food System Development in Waterloo Region*.

YOU CAN JOIN BC'S FOOD DEMOCRACY CAMPAIGN!

By *Cliff Stainsby*



Organic tomatoes from Cliff Stainsby's farm

A common subject links many, if not most, of our social justice and environmental issues regionally, nationally and globally to sustainability—one of the main goals of Dogwood Initiative. The subject is our food system. Sustainability is impossible without significant changes to the ways we grow, harvest, process, distribute and consume our food. With respect to the food system, sustainability can be divided into two equally critical parts. The first is the sustainable production of food and the second is the creation of sustainable food security for all peoples.

The range of issues which require adjustments to the food system is immense. The food system confronts us with significant issues related to toxics, pesticides, cancer, biotechnology, water use, water quality, land use, energy use (the food system in total is the world's largest greenhouse gas emitter), endangered species, corporate concentration, fair trade, the right to know, poverty, and matters of health related to diet, food safety

and nutrition.

In British Columbia we have the BC Foodsystems Network, a loose coalition of social justice groups, environment groups, farm groups, and unions which is engaged in the struggle to bring food security in both its aspects. We work with food producers and processors and we work with those advocating decent incomes and good community nutrition programs.

Currently, we are involved in a campaign against the provincial government's new meat inspection regulations. These regulations threaten to put out of business most of the small- and medium-scale poultry and meat producers and processors around the province, with huge consequential impacts on incomes, community economies, agricultural infrastructure, and the availability of locally produced, nutritious fresh food. It is a proposal, ironically that promotes large scale, intensive industrial agriculture, which is in many ways the biggest threat to the safety of meat. It is these industrial agricultural systems that lead to BSE and Avian flue problems, not the small scale, outdoor, often organic producers and processors.

We have presented the government with a proposal that would protect both the health of consumers and our small and medium scale meat producers and processors. In fact, our proposal would deal with the BSE problem, whereas the government's regulations do not. Our proposal would help sustain agricultural infrastructures, humane meat production methods, local economies and people's health. The government has ignored our proposal.

To join us in our campaign, or to simply find further information go to: <http://www.fooddemocracy.org/index.html>. ☒

Thank you for your generous support:

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STAFF AND VOLUNTEER UPDATE

There's a lot going on at Dogwood. We'd love to have you involved, too!

This edition of the Dogwood update is a bit of a thank-you list. First thanks: to all who responded to our "Help make our office home!" article in the July newsletter. You brought us everything from scissors to a projection screen. And Brainerd Foundation has generously enabled us to buy the remaining items. Your support inspires us.

Next, our growing body of volunteers, many of whom responded to the volunteer postings on the website (under Get Involved/Volunteer). **Charles Campbell** has devoted many hours to several design projects for us, including our new fridge magnet. **erin Carty-Ellison** has helped us keep the office clean. **Amanda Watson** and **Eric** cheerfully helped us get the last newsletter into the mail, and **Heather Clarry** has helped with other mailings. **Joelene Clarke** and **Denise Stocco** are helping us with research and events planning. We now have a videographer, **Adam Bowick**, who'll help us develop our multi-media potential. (Thanks to **Passia Pandora** for helping us find a videographer!) And **Christina Hanson** has just started volunteering, doing corporate accountability research.

There are still **postings** we haven't filled, so if you want to develop your skills (and résumé), or just want to contribute, please check the site, or call us at 370-9930. (One late-breaking new position: PageMaker layout assistance, for *Lands & People*.)

While we're asking you for help, we'll also point out that we have a survey on our website, to gain feedback from you, and to improve the focus of our work and our communications. Those who complete it will receive our aforementioned fridge magnet.

Finally, a pair of welcomes and two thank-yous. We're delighted to welcome to the

Board of Directors
Andy George Jr. and
Bryan Evans. (See
website for
biographies).



Both Bryan and Andrew bring a wealth of knowledge, abilities and experience to the board. We are thrilled to have their leadership in the coming years.

Bryan Evans and son Kieran,
top left; Andy George Jr., right

The thank-yous are to **Murray Dobbin** and **Anne Levesque**, who are both leaving the board to focus more time on other commitments. They have made an invaluable contribution to Dogwood Initiative and our vision for BC. The good news is they will continue to support both, since they are joining our Advisory Round Table. ☘

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