



Fall 2003

Northwatch Appeals Permit to Pollute Issued for Montcalm Mine

North Bay - Northwatch filed an appeal to Ontario's Environmental Review Tribunal in on August 28, seeking to overturn a controversial permit issued to mining giant Falconbridge for the operation of a new mine near Timmins.

Northwatch's appeal of the permit to release polluted mine effluent from the Montcalm Project, a copper nickel deposit under development 70 kilometres northwest of Timmins, focuses on the Ministry of the Environment having given Falconbridge permission to use the Groundhog River to dilute their mine effluent before meeting provincial water quality objectives.

"The solution to pollution is not dilution", said Brennain Lloyd, a spokesperson for Northwatch.

"Both Falconbridge and the Ministry of the Environment acknowledge that the effluent will be toxic. We're appalled that the company is unwilling to invest in building a cleaner mine, but even more shocking is that the Ministry of the Environment would give them a permit to build a dirty operation."

Northeast Goes Tory-Free in Liberal Election Sweep

Adams Mine Declared # 1 Issue in Timiskaming, Election Night Pledge to Kill the Project

In at least one northeastern Ontario riding, environmental issues were front and centre throughout the election debates and in the voting booth, as Timiskaming incumbent MPP and Adams Mine opponent David Ramsay swept to an easy victory.

"The number one issue is the Adams Mine," declared Ramsay on election night. "My pledge is that we will put it to bed once and for all. We've got to kill that project."

Ramsay has been a long term opponent of the Adams Mine. "None of my Liberal colleagues believe in the Adams Mine," Ramsay added, while speaking with friends and supporters at an election night party at his election headquarters.

Debate over the Adams Mine issue was not restricted to Timiskaming riding, where the mega dump would be located. The question was posed to candidates by CBC Northeastern Ontario radio, and raised in local candidates meetings throughout the region. When candidates in Algoma-Manitoulin were asked how they felt about Toronto sending garbage to Kirkland Lake's Adams Mine, only the Tory candidate showed any support. The other three candidates were opposed, generally expressing a belief that Toronto should be responsible to solve its own problem.

"We should not be sending our resources south and taking their garbage back to the North," Green Party candidate Ron Yurick said. Tory candidate Terry McCutcheon felt if it could be proved there was no environmental threat and Kirkland Lake wanted to receive the waste, there could be economic benefits.

However, not all Green Party candidates were as clear on the issue. Nipissing candidate Jaimie Board told CBC Radio that she supports southern Ontario garbage being brought to Nipissing for reprocessing, a position quickly rebutted by Green Party leader.

Northwatch has filed an application for leave to appeal the mine permit. The legal process under Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights requires applicants to make a legal argument that the permit should not have been issued in order to have the permit reviewed by Ontario's Environmental Review Tribunal.

"We filed our application, along with expert statements that confirm the mine will pollute the Groundhog River and that other technology is available to make the mine effluent cleaner than what Falconbridge is proposing", commented Lloyd.

Five other applications have been filed, focussing on provincial parks policy and the impacts of the proposed mine on the Groundhog River Provincial Park, and on the sturgeon fishery that will be directly affected by the mine effluent. The mine design includes a 15 kilometre pipeline which will dump the contaminated mine effluent into the Groundhog River at Six Mile Rapids, a sturgeon spawning ground.

... Cont on page 4.

The Liberals swept to power on October 2nd, taking 72 ridings, with the Conservatives winning 24 and the NDP winning seven. When the legislature was dissolved, the Tories held 56 seats, the Liberals 36 and the New Democrats nine.

Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty included a commitment to "clean air and clean water" in his election night victory speech, but election watchers are saying McGuinty is going to have to move quickly to give confidence that his government will truly be greener than his slash and burn Tory predecessors. During the final days of the campaign, Liberals were seen by some to be backpedaling on the Adams Mine. McGuinty was reported as refusing to rule out the controversial idea of using the abandoned Adams mine in northern Ontario to dump Toronto's garbage in a talk to the Toronto Board of Trade, saying instead that he has yet to be convinced it would be environmentally sound or that the people of Kirkland Lake like the idea.

The Liberals will have a chance to prove themselves soon enough, with decisions about to be made on whether the Ministry of the Environment will issue permits to drain the water-filled pits to allow construction of the mega-dump to begin, despite the lack of other permits or any customers. At the same time, the Ministry of Natural Resources is about to decide whether to hand over hundreds of acres at a bargain basement price to the newest consortium of Adams Mine dump promoters.

INSIDE: Global Day of Action Against Inco, Sudbury Soil Study, Diamond Mine Update, Nuclear Waste Watch, Timiskaming White Pine on Chopping Block, Calendar... plus an insert on Forest Management Planning

Nuclear Waste Management Organization says they are "on track" with Phase II - Discussion Paper due this fall

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization claims to be "on track" and in Phase II of their anticipated four phase program, with their end product being a report to Parliament in November 2005 recommending their preferred option for the long term management of nuclear fuel waste.

To date, Phase II has included web site postings workshops on future scenarios in July and August with "multi-interest teams" of unknown identities (except for the one astronaut whose picture made it to the NWMO newsletter). A "dialogue" forum with what the NWMO refers to as nuclear host communities is in the planning stages, as is a traditional knowledge workshop, both with the now familiar NWMO traits of unknown dates, locations or participants.

In what the NWMO describes as a key milestone, the first major NWMO discussion document will be released some time later this year.

The release date is unavailable, as are details of the "number of specific topical meetings, workshops and sessions" which the NWMO says will follow its release.

According to the Nuclear Waste Management Organization's web posting, the discussion document will "describe various management approaches being considered and outline the key questions that might be used to assess them." A preliminary description of the approach being taken to develop the analytical framework has been posted on the NWMO website, as have the titles of 30 different discussion papers commissioned by the Organization as part of its Phase II activities (only six are available on-line as NW News goes to print, but only the most determined of web site visitors would plunge the four layers deep through the virtual paper pile to discover the "will be available for download soon" message attached to 80% of the commissioned papers).

To date, NWMO references exclude Northern Ontario, despite the prevailing expectation of the Nuclear Waste Management Organization member utilities that the nuclear fuel waste will be coming to the northern Ontario for burial. Even the passing references in NWMO materials belie those intentions, with cozy mentions chats of "with nuclear workers in Quebec or citizen representatives in New Brunswick" and announcements of good intentions to hold workshops in the nuclear reactor communities of southern Ontario.

Northwatch has written to the NWMO for clarification on several points of their work plan, including release date of the NWMO discussion document expected some time this year. In the interim, Northwatch continues to work with other public interest organizations in responding to nuclear initiatives, including those related to nuclear fuel waste and its long term management.

TIMISKAMING WHITE PINE ON CHOPPING BLOCK . . . AGAIN

The Ministry of Natural Resources has announced an October 23rd deadline for comments on a proposed "minor" amendment to the 2001 Forest Management Plan for the Timiskaming Forest, which will incorporate the White Pine strategy proposed by the Timiskaming Forest Alliance. The strategy includes logging some of the few remaining old growth white pine forest ecosystems in Temiskaming District, outside of those in provincial parks.

The White Pine strategy was first proposed as part of the 2001 plan, but was not approved by the Ministry of Natural Resources, following objections by Northwatch and the Temiskaming Environmental Action Committee. Issues included the rarity of pine on the landscape, commitments to a moratorium on the cutting of white pine by MNR and industry in 1995, the failure of the forest industry to do any of the followup research which would have allowed reconsideration of a harvest strategy, and the absence of any evidence that the white pine strategy proposed would not further diminish the pine component of the forest. TEAC and NW have reviewed the revised strategy, which is being used as the basis of the proposed amendment, and find no significant improvements.

Debeers backs off

De beers Canada Corp. announced in late September that it is putting the brakes on its diamond mine project near Attawapiskat. The company says that it has put its multi-million-dollar Victor Project on hold because of problems in obtaining the necessary federal and provincial permits. Without the appropriate permits, Debeers says that it "will be unable to utilize the 2004 winter road."

Everything moving into and out of the exploration site either has to be flown or moved over ice roads created when the muskeg is frozen, resulting in a short work season dependent on winter conditions. Last fall, the company tried a rush job on the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, pushing for a sped up process to issue water taking permits on the basis of the short work season, which Northwatch reasoned should have anticipated, given its yearly occurrence.

De beers' permitting problems with its Ontario project are an echo of difficulties the Company appears to have created with regulators for the proposed Snap Lake mine in the Northwest Territories. NWT projects have also run into snags as Debeers balks at commitments to direct 10% of its production towards NWT's fledgling diamond polishing industry.

ARSENIC CONCERNS IN FALCONBRIDGE

The Falconbridge Citizens' Committee announced at a community meeting in early September that Falconbridge Ltd. has agreed to pay for urine and other health tests, as well as for soil tests of any properties not yet tested.

The committee reported also having discussed with Falconbridge Ltd. any economic fallout from the news that the soil in the town has the highest arsenic levels in Sudbury area. A preliminary estimate of how much it would cost for Falconbridge Ltd. to "buy out" local homes places the price tag between \$17 and \$20 million.

The Falconbridge Citizens' Committee was struck in response to Falconbridge residents' concerns after early data from the Sudbury Soils Study revealed that soil in Falconbridge was five times higher than the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care's guideline for arsenic. The Sudbury and District Health Unit went door-to-door in May, warning residents about the high level of arsenic in area soils.

Join Northwatch Today!

Telephone 705 4970373
Visit www.northwatch.org
Box 282, North Bay, P1B 8H2



Coming Right Up Calendar of Events

October 15-18 - Canadian Environmental Network Annual Conference "Braving The Rapids: Effective Environmental Activism in Turbulent Times" Montreal, Quebec, visit www.cen-rce.org

October 18 - The Aboriginal Beat - Aboriginal Issues Media Forum, Union of Ontario Indians and Canadore College, North Bay, call 1 877 702 52000 for info

Oct 22 - 24 and 24-28 - Straw bale Carpentry and Construction Workshops, Ecology Retreat Centre 1-519-941-4560 or ecorc@stn.net

October 23 - 24 - Ontario Environment Network Youth Eco-Volunteer Strategy Province-Wide Youth Gathering, Camp Kawartha, 705 840 2888 or www.oen.ca

October 24 -26 - "A New Environmental Agenda for Ontario", Fall 2003 Networking Conference and Annual General Meeting, Camp Kawartha, Lakefield, 705 840 2888 or www.oen.ca

October 30 - Open House on the Blind River Water Management Plan, Blind River Marina, 4 - 8 p.m.

November 4 - Dr. David Suzuki will deliver a public lecture at Science North's Inco Cavern on "The Challenge of the 21st Century: Setting the Real Bottomline", exploring the effects of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and the benefits of local food systems. Tickets available in person at Science North, or by credit card by calling 523-4629 or 1-800-461-4898 outside Greater Sudbury. The lecture begins at 7:00 p.m.

November 5 - 7 p.m., Restoration of Junction Creek progress report, INCO Cavern, Science North, Sudbury, 705-675-9109 or www.junctioncreek.com

November 7 - 9 - Northwatch's Fall Meeting, including Friday evening screening of "Water: Lifeblood of Mother Earth" produced by the Union of Ontario Indians' Nijiji Circle, Saturday morning session examining environmental, recreational and planning issues related to the water management planning in northeastern Ontario, Saturday afternoon workshop on source protection of groundwater, water taking and water levels, and Sunday morning session on industrial uses of water, including mining and mega-landfill projects. For details, call 497 0373 or visit www.northwatch.org

November 10 - Municipal Elections

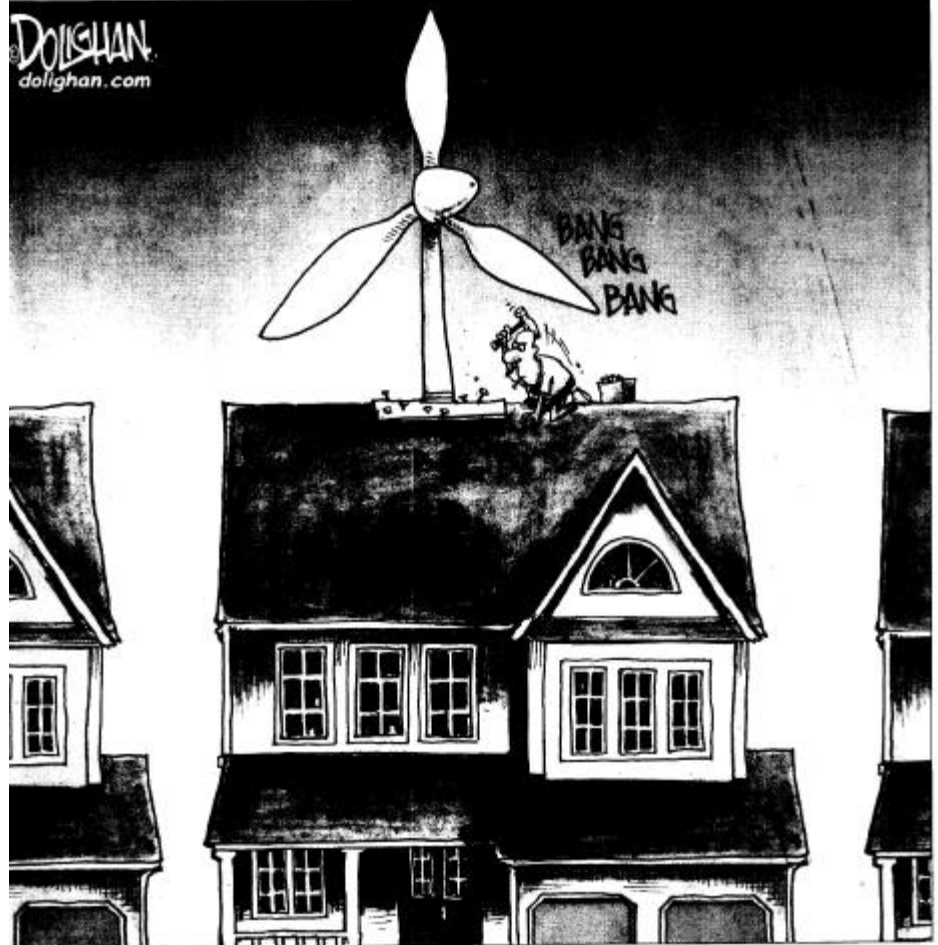
November 13 - 15 - Ecotourism & Adventure Tourism Conference, Dorset. For more information call 705 457-1680 or visit www.fleming.ca/ecotourism.

November 28 - BUY NOTHING DAY, Worldwide event, visit www.adbusters.org/campaigns/bnd/

December 2-3 - Timmins - MNR Regional Advisory Committee meeting

December 12 - 14 - Living Off the Grid Workshop, Ecology Retreat Centre, near Orangeville, tel 519-941-4560 or ecorc@stn.net, <http://welcome.to/ecorc>

February 27-28 - Northwatch Winter Meeting, Sudbury



GLOBAL PROTEST TO GET INCO TO 'CLEAN UP ITS ACT'

A group of Sudbury citizens participated in a global protest against Inco Ltd. in an attempt to get the mining company to "clean up its act", holding a candle light vigil at the old front gates of the Copper Cliff facility on October 7th. Protests also took place in Indonesia, New Caledonia, Guatemala, St. John's, Nfld and in Port Colborne where residents say Inco's presence has negatively impacted their health.

"We're not there to scream and shout," said Cathy Mulroy, a Raging Granny and 30-year Inco employee. She wants Inco to take more responsibility and do more greening of the landscape and conduct more health studies.

"Maybe we should be looking at how much stuff is really coming out of the stack and how much harm it's really doing," said Mulroy.

"And if it takes off the paint on your car, what's it really doing to people's lungs?"

Last year, Mulroy said she had her car repainted because of Inco fallout.

"Let's find out if there are cancer-causing agents in the earth," she said, referring to the fallout from the stack which builds up in soil. Studies are underway in Sudbury to determine levels of contamination.

The Sudbury vigil was part of the first annual The World Unites Against Inco worldwide day of protest.

Falconbridge Permit / cont from page 1

Falconbridge might be feeling fourth time lucky, following the the Ontario Ministry of the Environment's recent approval of their Plan #4 to dump the effluent from a new copper-nickel mine into a sturgeon spawning ground in a pristine stretch of the Groundhog River, and the given the difficulties citizen groups face in having appeals heard before the Environmental Review Tribunal.

Falconbridge's past efforts failed to gain approval for Plan #1 to dump the toxic effluent into the coldwater brook trout fishery in Montcalm Creek, or Plan # 2 to add massive doses of EDTA to slip the effluent through toxicity tests, or for Plan # 3 to build a ditch from the effluent through a newly designated provincial park which was created in large part to protect the Sturgeon fishery. Actually, the ditch was the centrepiece of Plan #0, but it had been tossed out once already because of the park designation; that rejection inspired Falconbridge's plan to dump the effluent into a tiny coldwater creek.

The Ministry of the Environment approved Falconbridge's newest "alternative" of constructing a 15 km pipeline from the mine site to the river in mid-August. Environmental are challenging the approval, and hoping to force a hearing before Ontario's Environmental Review Tribunal to review the controversial decision.

Falconbridge purchased the Montcalm nickel-copper property from Outokumpu Mines for \$14 million in 2001, and is now in the process of bringing the property into production. Falconbridge is projecting that the Montcalm Project will produce a total of 5 million tonnes over its 7 years of operations, at a rate of 750,000 tonnes of ore annually. According to the plan filed with the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, Montcalm ore would be milled for the first year at the Strathcona operation in Sudbury, and then at the Kidd Metallurgical Division in Timmins. Nickel concentrate would be processed at the Sudbury smelter throughout the mine's operating life, contributing 8,000 tonnes annually to Falconbridge's Sudbury production.

In July 2002, Falconbridge applied to the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) for a permit to construct and operate a mine water treatment system, and to discharge the mine effluent to the Groundhog River via a wetland and Montcalm Creek (Plan # 1). Several months later, Falconbridge withdrew that proposal, and in January 2003 submitted a new application. The significant change in the proposal was the addition of two options for discharging mine effluent, with one option (Plan # 3) being to build an 8 km drainage ditch from the mine site to the Groundhog River and the other option (Plan # 4) is to build 15 kilometres of buried pipeline to discharge effluent directly into the Groundhog.

Falconbridge has maintained a consistency of purpose throughout review of the several different options for getting their mine effluent to the Groundhog River. All options have the same goal in mind: get the polluted mine water into the Groundhog River, where the large volume of water in the river will "mix" with the mine effluent, hence lowering the measurable levels of contamination (seemingly, dilution is STILL the solution to pollution). Both the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of the Environment have acknowledged that the effluent will impact the receiving water in general and the sturgeon population in particular. MOE rationalizes this by placing the sturgeon population in a continental context and longer time frame, arguing that "it could take several years before we begin to see a local decline in the numbers of fish. The decline would be arrested when the project ceases operation assuming current exploitation levels and habitat conditions are maintained".

And all this is based on the best-case scenario that Falconbridge and their consultants have painted with respect to the acid generation and metal leaching potential of the property. Northwatch's initial concerns with the project were related to its potential to go-acid, given its close proximity to the notoriously contaminated Kam Kotia mine site, and what Northwatch is concerned has been an inadequate amount of sampling. Falconbridge and the Company's consultants agree that the ore will be highly acid generating.

However, they are predicting that the rock surrounding the ore will not be acid generating. The waste rock will be brought to surface in large volumes and any potential for it to "go acid" could have long term environmental impacts. Acid generation leaches metals and chemicals from the rock, and makes the mine effluent more polluting as well as potentially impacting the pH levels of area receiving water.

Northwatch and the Partnership for Public Lands are each seeking leave to appeal the controversial permit, as is a local resident concerned with impacts on the Sturgeon fishery and other applicants with more general concerns. Northwatch's application focuses on the water quality concerns and the Partnership's on park policies. Under Ontario law, applicants must make the case that "no reasonable person" would have approved the project in order to be granted a hearing. In the interim, Falconbridge is free to proceed with the mine development. A decision on the Application for Leave to Appeal is expected mid-October.

Water for Life

Northwatch Fall Meeting
November 7th - 9th

**Mushkegowuk Meeting Hall
36 Birch Street South, Timmins**

Friday, November 7th

C Registration begins at 6 p.m.

C Video Screening at 8 pm."

"Water: Lifeblood of Mother Earth"

Saturday, November 8th

C Sessions on Water Management Planning

C Workshop with the Canadian Environmental Law Association and Great Lakes United on water supply issues, including source protection, water takings and control levels

Sunday, November 9th

C Sessions on industrial water users, including Montcalm, Debeers and the Adams Mine

C wrap-up strategy session runs til noon

\$25 registration includes meeting registration and information package, lunch Saturday and refreshments throughout the weekend.

C Childcare and Limited travel subsidies are available, if requested by November 1st.

Call Northwatch at 705 497 0373 or email registrations to nwatch@onlink.net
For more details, call or visit www.northwatch.org