

Nuclear Waste Campaign Gears Up for Federal Decision

Proposals to bury nuclear waste in northern Ontario were the focus of a day-long strategy session in late November, when activists from across northeastern Ontario met with some of their national and international counterparts to begin mapping out a campaign leading up to a federal decision point anticipated for November 2005.

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) was mandated by legislation passed by the federal government in 2002 to spend three years looking at three "options" for the long term management of nuclear fuel waste: continued storage of present and future stock piles of nuclear fuel waste at the nuclear reactor sites where the waste is generated and is currently stored; movement to a centralized storage site, either above or below ground; or movement to an underground "geological repository" in the Canadian Shield, a long time favourite of both the nuclear industry and the nuclear boosters in the federal government. Comprised of the primary owners of nuclear fuel waste in Canada - Ontario Power Generation, Hydro Quebec and New Brunswick Power - the NWMO will make its final report to the federal Minister of Natural Resources next November, recommending its preferred option, of the three studied.

To date, the NWMO has released two discussion documents and conducted numerous public opinion polls and focus groups. Its next report, a draft of its final report and recommendations, is expected to be released in the very near future.

Northwatch is gearing up for a campaign launch immediately following its spring meeting on April 23. Campaign components will include local coordinating groups, activities aimed at the municipal, provincial and federal levels of government, and a communications strategy that includes campaign kits, a new web site and a popular education workshop.

Working with other regional and national groups from Saskatchewan to New Brunswick, Northwatch and its campaign partners will drive home the message to federal decision-makers that burying nuclear waste is not an acceptable option, and that the phase-out of nuclear power is the first and most essential step towards building a public consensus on any long-term management approach for nuclear fuel waste.

To stay current on the nuclear waste campaign, email nuke@onlink.net or call 1 888 xxx ssss and ask to be added to the Action Alert list.

Experts Warn Ecosystem Changes Will Continue to Worsen

A landmark study released March 30th reveals that approximately 60 percent of the ecosystem services that support life on Earth - such as fresh water, capture fisheries, air and water regulation, and the regulation of regional climate, natural hazards and pests - are being degraded or used unsustainably. Scientists warn that the harmful consequences of this degradation could grow significantly worse in the next 50 years.

"Any progress achieved in addressing the goals of poverty and hunger eradication, improved health, and environmental protection is unlikely to be sustained if most of the ecosystem services on which humanity relies continue to be degraded," said the study, Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) Synthesis Report, conducted by 1,300 experts from 95 countries. It specifically states that the ongoing degradation of ecosystem services is a road block to the Millennium Development Goals agreed to by the world leaders at the United Nations in 2000.

examined is increasing the likelihood of potentially abrupt changes that will seriously affect human well-being. This includes the emergence of new diseases, sudden changes in water quality, creation of "dead zones" along the coasts, the collapse of fisheries, and shifts in regional climate.

One of the report's four main findings is that humans have changed ecosystems more rapidly and extensively in the last 50 years than in any other period. Experts say that this resulted in a substantial and largely irreversible loss in diversity of life on Earth, with some 10 to 30 percent of the mammal, bird and amphibian species currently threatened with extinction.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) Synthesis Report is the first in a series of seven synthesis and summary reports and four technical volumes that assess the state of global ecosystems and their impact on human well-being. The report can be found on-line at www.millenniumassessment.org

INSIDE: Update on Bennett Env., Hydro & wind sites released; Guides to Forest Certification and Private Prosecution, Calendar of Events, Battery Recycling Campaign, Green Energy, Regulating Smelters



Winter/Spring 2005

Although evidence remains incomplete, there is enough for the experts to warn that the ongoing degradation of 15 of the 24 ecosystem services

Bennett Environmental in the Accused Box

Seven Quebec environmentalists from La Terre d'Abord made a first court appearance in early March, facing charges stemming from a peaceful occupation of the Paul Martin's riding office in Montreal requesting a moratorium and an independent environmental study of the Bennett project. The environmentalists have accused Bennett Environmental of "non respect of Environmental Norms in Quebec" for actions of one of its subsidiary, Récupère Sol inc. in Saint-Ambroise.

At a media conference in late February Stéphanie Leclerc, one of the arrested, explained the reason why they carried out their actions: "All we are demanding is that a moratorium be imposed on Bennett Environmental Inc. toxic waste incinerator project in Belledune, New Brunswick and an independent environmental impact study of the project."

According to Florian Levesque, from Environment Vie, the New Brunswick government approvals to date of the Bennett project is unacceptable and is

"showing the contempt for the citizens this government has while pretending to represent them." Bennet is now preparing to carry out their test burns which, if approved, will get Bennett its required Operating Permit.

Bennett Environmental has previously tried to site a toxic waste incinerator in Kirkland Lake. That project and its environmental assessment are currently on hold. For more information on Bennett and the Belledune incinerator visit <http://www.stopbennett.com/>

Sierra Legal Releases Citizens Guide to Certification

Sierra Legal Defence Fund today released "Understanding Canada's Forest Certification Schemes: A Complete Guide to Filing Appeals and Complaints". This report shows concerned members of the public how to become engaged in the increasingly important issue of forest certification.

Across Canada and internationally, logging companies have increasingly been challenged to respond to public demand to protect and preserve the environment, and the need to maintain their market share, by pursuing forest certification. While the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) logo is the only certification mark conservation groups and First Nations accept as credible for the promotion of sustainable forest management, other industry-supported systems have proliferated in the marketplace. The guide released today shows the public the nuts and bolts of these different certification schemes and walks through the process of challenging claims that certification means sound forestry.

Copies of the report can be downloaded from the Sierra Legal website at: <http://www.sierralegal.org/publications.html>

PROVINCE PUSHES AHEAD WITH HYDRO AND WIND SITES

Last November, the government called for Expressions of Interest to identify potential waterpower sites. In early March, the Ministry of Natural Resources announced that fifty-seven applications were received of which 18 sites have been approved as appropriate for development.

Three of the 18 sites are in northeastern Ontario. They are on the Grassy River near Timmins, Fourbass Lake near Temagami, and the Wanapitei River near Eastaire. The successful proponents will now have 120 days to submit their development proposals for those sites to the Ministry of Natural Resources.

The sites selected have potential for producing between 200 and 300 megawatts of clean hydroelectric energy.

Minister of Natural Resources David Ramsay also announced a six-month window of opportunity, starting April 1, for companies or individuals to submit proposals for sites for wind power development on Crown land. This follows approval given in January of applications from 16 private companies to assess wind power potential on 21 Crown land sites.

Contact the nearest district office of the MNR for environmental assessment details.

Enforcing Environmental Law: A Guide to Private Prosecution

"Enforcing Environmental Law: A Guide to Private Prosecution" by James S. Mallet is now available from Alberta's Environmental Law Centre.

This book will help readers determine when private prosecution is the right tool to address environmental harm, and provides a step-by-step guide to the process, from laying charges through trial and appeal. For details, visit www.elc.ab.ca

The Environmental Bureau of Investigations "Citizen's Guide to Environmental Investigation and Private Prosecution is also available on-line at <http://www.e-b-i.net/ebi/guide.html>. The EBI guide describes what citizens can do to hold polluters responsible for their actions, including private prosecution.

Saturday, April 23

**Northwatch Spring Meeting
&
Nuclear Waste Strategy Session**

9:30 Registration
10-12 Nuclear Waste Strategy Session
Noon Lunch (provided)
1-4 Roundtable on Regional Environmental Issues (open agenda)

The Parlour, St. Andrew's U.C. Hall
399 Cassells Street, North Bay
(please use McIntyre Street entrance)

\$10 includes registration, workshop kit & lunch
Pre-registration requested; Childcare and billets must be requested by April 15th.

Visit www.northwatch.org for more information.

Join Northwatch Today!

Telephone 705 497 0373
Visit www.northwatch.org
Box 282, North Bay, P1B 8H2



\$10 regular, \$25 supporting or group membership

Coming Right Up Calendar of Events

April 2 - Ontario Environment Network Spring Eco-Gathering 2005, Oakville, visit www.oen.ca for info

April 2 - North Bay Household Hazardous Waste Depot reopens

April 6 - Home and Native Land: Protecting the Environment Through Indigenous Rights (Training Workshop) 9:30 am - noon, 215 Spadina Avenue, Toronto, visit <http://sustain.web.ca/> for info

April 7 - Fighting Poverty and Pollution: The 2005 Low-Income Energy Network Conference, 9:00 am - 4:30 pm, Quaker Friends House, 60 Lowther Avenue, Toronto, visit www.torontoenvironment.org

April 9 - The One Stop Conservation Shop Open House, displays and workshops to learn about conservation resources and tools in Nipissing area, 10:00 to 3:30 at the Callander Community Centre, For more information call 1-888-402-4444

April 8-9 - Hungry4Change Youth Activism Conference, Toronto, ON visit <http://h4c.tighosting.com/> for info

April 22 - Earth Day

April 22 - 6th Annual Roots 'n Shoots environmental conference for students, Science North, Sudbury, \$16 per person; <http://sciencenorth.ca/rootsandshoots/index.html>

April 23 - Northwatch Spring Meeting, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., \$10 includes registration, meeting kit & lunch, Pre-registration requested; Childcare and billets must be requested by April 15th. The Parlour, St. Andrew's U.C. Hall, 399 Cassells Street, North Bay Visit www.northwatch.org for info

April 23 - Bring Out Your Dead # 10, Clean North's electronic waste recycling depot and reuse garage sale of "working stuff", including computers, printers, etc. At the Soo PUC building on Second Line, Sault Ste. Marie, from 10 am to 4 pm

April 24 - Northwatch work-a-thon - moving the library and office to its new space! Everyone is welcome!

May 4-7 - Building an Inclusive Movement with a diversity of people, communities and approaches - 2005 National Conference on CED and the Social Economy, Sault Ste. Marie, visit www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/en/pages/conference.asp for info

June 3-5 - Gateway to Nature: Ontario Nature - Federation of Ontario Naturalists 2005 Annual General Meeting and Conference; hosted by the Nipissing Naturalists in North Bay, with exciting field trips, informative programs and innovative ideas. Visit <http://www.nipissing-naturalist.com/ON/conference.htm> for info.

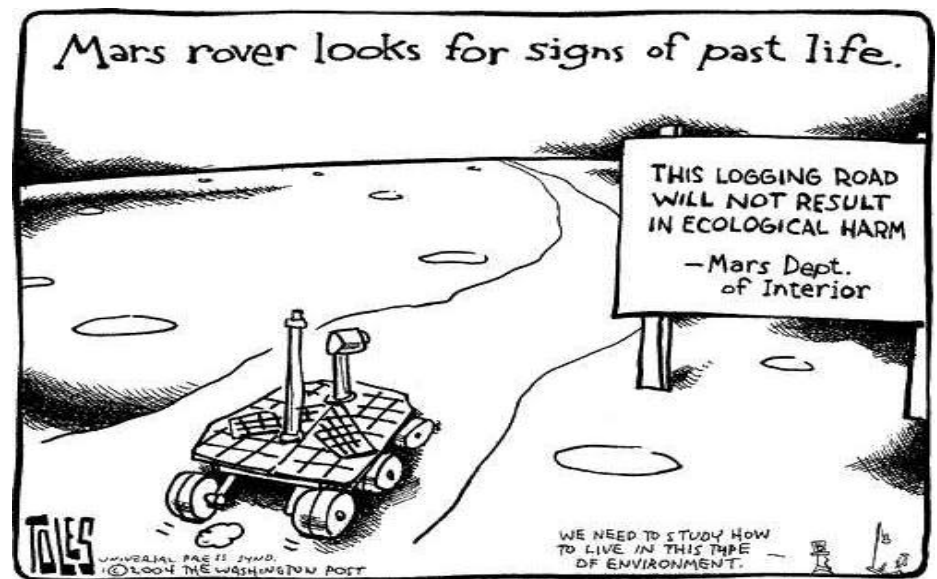
June 5 - World Environment Day

August 6 - 60th Anniversary of the Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima, Japan

August 9 - 60th Anniversary of the Atomic Bombing of Nagasaki, Japan

August 12-14 - Fred Eaglesmith's Great Northern Picnic! Timiskaming Nordic Ski Club, New Liskeard, visit www.fredsnorthernpicnic.ca for info

August 19-21 - Northwatch Summer Meeting, Windy Lake Provincial Park, north of Sudbury, visit www.northwatch.org for info



Nipissing Environment Watch Sponsors 4th Annual Battery Collection Competition

Nipissing Environmental Watch is hosting its fourth annual Used Household Battery Collection Competition. The competition diverts used batteries from the local landfill site and educates students about hazardous household waste. The school that collects the most batteries per student will win a \$500 prize. The second place school will win a \$200 prize. The competition ends on Friday, May 27, 2005.

All types of household batteries including AA, AAA, C, D, 6-volt, and 9-volt batteries, both rechargeable and non-rechargeable, are being collected as well as button batteries, such as are used in watches and hearing aids. The batteries will be taken to the local Household Hazardous Waste Depot for safe disposal.

Organizer Trevor Schindeler says that, "The battery collection competition is a way to get hundreds of students and their friends and family doing something to help the environment. We hope that if someone stops throwing batteries into the garbage, he or she will think twice before putting other hazardous waste into the garbage."

In the last competition students collected a total of 5,711 pounds (2,590 kilograms) of batteries. The winning school alone, St. Joseph-Scollard Hall of North Bay, collected some 2,387 pounds (1,083 kilograms).

There are eight schools participating in the competition. The Battery Collection Competition is generously funded by TD Friends of the Environment Foundation.

Green energy is cheaper, cleaner and more reliable

The Ontario Liberal Party met in January for the first time since winning the Ontario election. The convention focused on the hot-button issue of electricity policy. But the most important issue -- the government's support of nuclear power -- wasn't even on the agenda. Nuclear power should be phased out by 2018. Conservation and clean renewable energy work. We should put them to work for Ontario.

There's a double standard for electricity. Rebuilding nuclear reactors at Pickering and Bruce is being unfairly pushed through in Queen's Park back rooms. Meanwhile, proposals for wind, solar and conservation are subject to a competitive bidding process. The reason is obvious: Nuclear power is too expensive and risky to compete

The cost of Ontario's nuclear electricity was last revealed in 1999 at 7.7 cents per kilowatt hour and has risen since then. Conservation, water power, wind turbines and high-efficiency natural gas plants are all cheaper, cleaner and more reliable than nukes.

Back-room connections are pushing forward the nuclear agenda. Veteran federal Liberal and cabinet minister John Manley was recruited to lead a review committee that backed restart of a second Pickering 'A' reactor. Former Ontario Liberal cabinet minister Murray Elston is head of the Canadian Nuclear Association -- Canada's nuclear industry lobby group.

Ontario Energy Minister Dwight Duncan said in July he'd restart a second reactor at the old Pickering nuclear station, shut down since 1997. The cost was \$900 million, four times a 1999 estimate of \$213 million and double an estimate by Manley in March. It's risen yet again to \$1 billion.

The cost of all four Pickering 'A' reactors has risen from \$780 million to at least \$4 billion. Instead of wasting money on four old, dangerous reactors (2,000 megawatts), that could buy 4,000 megawatts of wind turbines.

In September, Duncan also announced restart of two more old reactors at the Bruce station shut down since 1995 and 1997. These are basket cases with serious technical and safety problems that will cost \$3 billion to rebuild. Secret negotiations with Bruce Power (a private

consortium) will guarantee windfall profits by providing fixed electricity prices for an extended period. The sweetheart deal will also continue to relieve the company of responsibility for radioactive waste management and reactor decommissioning -- a cost of over \$2.3 billion for the eight Bruce reactors.

The two Bruce reactors would also need transmission lines that could be used for 2,000 MW of new wind turbines on the Lake Huron coast.

And Premier Dalton McGuinty and Duncan have repeatedly said they do not rule out new nuclear plants. These would either duplicate the old, expensive CANDU technology, or would gamble on a new untested, high-risk reactor design. The last nuclear plant built in Canada, the Darlington station east of Oshawa, cost a staggering \$14.3 billion.

The government has set the stage for a nuclear revival at Ontario Power Generation by last month appointing three former nuclear industry executives to the board of directors. Nuclear power isn't "clean". It has cancer-causing emissions and has created 30,000 tonnes of radioactive waste in Ontario that will be deadly for hundreds of thousands of years. Repeated reactor problems increased use of coal plants, dramatically worsening acid rain and smog since 1995.

Tougher Regulations Needed for Base Metal Smelters

Several environmental groups engaged in pollution prevention planning with Environment Canada are urging the federal government to take action to reduce smelter emissions.

Smelters in Canada continue to be a major source of pollution to air, land and water. In the 2002 National Pollutant Release Inventory, the three largest emitters of CEPA toxics to air in Canada were Base Metal Smelters - Inco Copper Cliff, Inco Thompson, Hudson Bay Mining & Smelting - and the BMS sector in total produced more than 26% of all CEPA toxic reported releases to air. The Hudson Bay Minerals smelter in FlinFlon is the largest point source of mercury emissions to air in Canada (over 1340 kg annually). Workers and residents in several smelter towns have elevated rates of asthma, cancer and other pollutant related ailments.

The McGuinty government blames the nuclear disaster on bad management. That excuse is wearing thin. Ontario Hydro said that in 1997 as it shut down eight of 20 reactors because of performance and safety problems, the biggest nuclear shutdown in world history.

It's time to wake up and feel the radiation. The problem is the technology. Like cars, nuclear plants break down when they get older. Ontario's nuclear plants will either have to be shut down or rebuilt as they reach the end of their lives between 2008 and 2018 at a likely cost of over \$17 billion. Phaseout is the logical choice

The McGuinty government is only giving lip-service to renewable energy with a paltry target of 2,700 megawatts by 2010, and a similar amount of conservation.

The Liberal Party convention supported paying a premium for clean energy. The government should pay attention to its members and support that. Green energy is cheaper, cleaner, safer and more reliable than nuclear power. It's time for new clear thinking, not nuclear thinking at Queen's Park.

David Martin is energy co-ordinator of Greenpeace Canada. Reprinted with permission.

The legacy from these smelters will live on in the soil, water and ecosystem long after the smelters have closed down. Over the years, many smelters have reduced their emissions, but base metal smelters remain the single largest source of sulphur dioxide in Canada, as well as mercury, arsenic, cadmium, lead, beryllium and nickel.

Environment Canada is proposing to reduce smelter emissions through Pollution Prevention Planning, which is voluntary rather than regulatory in nature. The proposed Notice for this sector lists targets and limits for emission reductions that are not enforceable. Environmental groups are calling on the federal government to force technological change through regulation.

For more information see the Action Alert posted at www.cen-rce.org

