



Nuclear Waste Debate Heats Up Across Northern Ontario

Coincident with the federal election campaign, an out-of-nowhere proposal from some Timmins municipal and business leaders to establish a nuclear waste “research facility” in the Timmins area has sparked afresh the debate over schemes to make northern Ontario a dumping ground for high level nuclear waste. Election candidates, northern Mayors, provincial politicians and local and regional citizens groups all joined the fray.

The firestorm was touched off when Timmins City Councillor Gary Scripnick invited the Nuclear Waste Management Organization to town in late May to petition the Nuclear Waste Management Organization to build a nuclear research facility in Timmins. The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) was created by the federal government in 2002 to evaluate options for the long term management or nuclear fuel waste, including “geological disposal” or burial in the Canadian Shield, a centralized storage facility, or continued management in current locations at nuclear generating stations.

Scripnick had first distinguished himself when he appeared as a private citizen before the federal environmental assessment review panel in 1997 and declared that “they (Atomic Energy of Canada Limited) have decided that burying it in the ground is probably the safest way of (dealing with nuclear waste), I would like to say, yes, that's true and let's go on to siting”.

Presumably on the basis of this enthusiasm, the Nuclear Waste Management Organization put Scripnick on the list for a by-invitation-only regional “dialogue” session in North Bay in March of this year, where Scripnick again sang the praises of the nuclear industry and bemoaned the public's lack of enthusiasm for all things nuclear.

An unadvertised meeting between the Nuclear Waste Management Organization and the Timmins area nuclear booster club was held on May 26. Scripnick and associates seized the opportunity to pitch the idea of a Timmins-based nuclear research facility to the NWMO, and the notion of hundreds of high-paid jobs and a fat federal budget to their townsfolk. To their credit, the NWMO spokesperson attending the meeting clarified that the agency was not looking for a research facility, and that “Timmins or any place with an abandoned mine is not a preferred location for a nuclear waste storage facility”. To their discredit, the NWMO agreed to a meeting that was by no means public, and has excluded any mention of it from their calendar of events. Not quite the “transparent and open” process they boast of.

In response to the developing controversy, Minister of Northern Development and Mines Rick Barolucci, MPP for Sudbury, declared that Northerners will “raise hell” if the federal government pursues a proposal to bury radioactive nuclear waste in the Canadian Shield... *cont.on pg 2*

New Planning Process Launched for Temagami

The Ministry of Natural Resources launched a new planning process for the Temagami area on June 25th. Intended to integrate the planning needs of five provincial parks, eight conservation reserves, and crown land recreational uses, the two year exercise will address commitments made in the 1997 Temagami Land Use Plan for recreational planning, as well as satisfying the outstanding need for parks planning. Three different but integrated management plans will be developed.

Temagami is known throughout the world for its rugged landscape, old-growth forests and cultural, recreational and natural resources. The Temagami area is popular for wilderness camping, with more than 2,400 kilometres of canoe routes. One-sixth of Temagami's 103,000 hectares is wilderness or waterway provincial parks, with 41,000 more hectares of conservation reserves around the parks.

A 1995 user survey estimated 60,000 visitor-days of wilderness canoeing and backcountry travel in the Temagami area, with 40 % occurring within the five parks. The majority of travel into the parks and conservation reserves begins at access points on crown land a considerable distance away. Use is expected to increase.

The resulting management plans will serve as guides for protection and management of resources, visitor use, and overall development within the parks and conservation reserves over the next 20 years. A Crown land recreation plan will address specific management issues related to recreational use of Crown land within the Temagami Land Use Planning area.

The Ministry of Natural Resources has indicated that they expect that the integrated plan will address a wide range of issues, including the distribution of recreational users, maintenance of backcountry canoe routes, environmental protection and restoration, and the protection of natural and cultural heritage features.

Email comments or requests to be included on the mailing list to TIP@mnr.gov.on.ca or call MNR District Planner Rick Calhoun at 474 5546 or faxing to 475 5500.

A public review of background information will begin this fall, with final plans in place in 2006.

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Nuclear Waste Debate Heats Up / cont.

"My plan for northern prosperity does not include storing Toronto's garbage or storing somebody else's radioactive material in Northern Ontario," Bartolucci said. "Northern Ontario is not the radioactive dumping ground for different jurisdictions."

Premier Dalton McGuinty is at least giving tacit support to his northern Minister's position, saying that "we (Ontario) intend to have our say when it comes to the federal government decision on that front."

"Obviously, if you start to transport the stuff out of existing communities, there are dangers connected with transportation and relocation, so we'll make sure we get our say when it comes to that," McGuinty said.

Mayors of the five largest centres in Northern Ontario have been more definite, expressing unanimous opposition to a nuclear waste dump in northern Ontario. At a recent meeting of Timmins City Council Mayor Vic Powers reiterated that position, saying the possibility of a nuclear research facility or storage site in Timmins is a dead issue.

"I think we can lay all your fears to rest. Even if the city wanted this, it's not going to happen," Power told local residents presenting to council.

"The risks are too great and the price tag is too high. There is no deal to strike here", says Councillor Yves Malette. "The nuclear waste project needs to be dumped immediately and forever."

Timmins council, however, remains divided. While the Mayor and Councillor Yves Mallette have both spoken out against any projects that would bring nuclear waste to the region, others say they are still undecided or, like Gary Scripnick, support creating a new nuclear waste industry in the area.

Adams Mine Lake Act Becomes Law - the Dump is Dead

The Adams Mine Lake Act passed by a vote of 63 to 18 in the Provincial Legislature on June 17th. The Lieutenant Governor General was in the house that evening to sign the Bill into law, making the abandoned iron ore mine near Kirkland Lake permanently off-limits as a dump for solid waste.

Federal Candidates Oppose Nuke Dump

Federal candidates surveyed about nuclear waste expressed strong opposition to any proposal to bury nuclear waste in northern Ontario and responded overwhelmingly in support of a full environmental assessment and parliamentary debate before any decisions are made.

The survey canvassed federal candidates' views on support for a full environmental assessment on each and any option being considered for the long term management of nuclear waste, on phasing out nuclear power to avoid continued waste production; community involvement in any future decisions about transportation routes or siting of waste repositories, and support for a full debate in Parliament prior to the Government of Canada making its final decision on a "preferred" option for the long-term management of nuclear fuel waste. Candidates with the Conservative, Green, Liberal and New Democratic parties in the 6 ridings in northeastern Ontario were canvassed. Seventeen of the 24 candidates responded, with fifteen candidates completing the survey. Responses were received from all 6 NDP candidates, 5 of the 6 Green candidates, 3 of the 6 Liberal candidates, and only one Conservative candidate. The responses have been summarized and posted at www.northwatch.org.

Of the successful candidates, new NDP members of parliament Charlie Angus of Timmins-James Bay and Tony Martin of Sault Ste. Marie both expressed strong opposition to the use of northern Ontario as a dumping ground for nuclear waste, as did Liberal rookie Anthony Rota, elected to represent Nipissing-Timiskaming and Liberal incumbent Ray Bonin, representing Nickel Belt. Liberal incumbents Diane Marleau, representing Sudbury, and Brent St. Denis, MP for Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing, both refused to respond.

The Act revokes all existing approvals for the Adams Mine site as a landfill and prevents the site from ever being used for that purpose. The legislation also amends the Environmental Protection Act to prevent the use of other lakes that are larger than one hectare in size as landfill sites.

Nuclear Industry Carries On

The nuclear industry has continued to keep itself busy, with the Joint Waste Owners Group recently releasing "conceptual designs" as well as cost estimates for the 3 options the NWMO is required to consider. The Joint Waste Owners Group consists of Ontario Power Generation, Hydro-Quebec, New Brunswick Power, and Atomic Energy of Canada Limited. Reportedly "anticipating their responsibilities under the Nuclear Fuel Waste Act" they got to work back in 2001 - a year before the Act was passed - to develop the conceptual designs and engineering cost estimates.

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization - consisting of all of the same groups in the Joint Waste Owners Group, minus Atomic Energy of Canada Limited - launched a "third party review" of the designs and cost estimates, and released their review on June 4. The two month review was conducted by ADH Technologies Inc., who self-describe as being well known for their work in the nuclear industry and "experienced in the development and management of major nuclear projects up to the billion dollar range". Not surprisingly, ADH found that their colleagues in the JWO had done a fine job, concluding that "all of the conceptual designs are credible and technically feasible", and that "design details are consistent with the 'conceptual' nature of the work" with "no reason to suspect that an appropriate 'final design' could not be developed for an approach selected from the designs reviewed."

The NWMO's second discussion document, "Understanding the Choices", will be released later this summer. Its release, according to the NWMO, "will be followed by an intensive period of public examination and critique leading to development of draft recommendations in early 2005."

The previous week, the Minister of the Environment released a discussion paper that sets out approaches for a strategy to divert 60 per cent of Ontario's waste from disposal by 2008 and announced that five public forums would be held across the province in late June to discuss waste diversion issues.

Coming Right Up Calendar of Events

August 6 - Anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima

August 9 - Anniversary of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, commemorative gathering on the steps of **North Bay** City Hall, 8 pm

August 13-15 - Northwatch Summer Meeting, Beaucage Park, Nipissing First Nation, near **North Bay**

August 16 - Forest Management Workshops - Intro session in the morning and sessions on ecological objectives and local issues in the afternoon, **Sudbury**, 10-4, call or email Northwatch for details or visit www.northeastforest.net

August 17 - Forest Management Workshops - see above - **Timmins**

August 18 - Forest Management Workshops - see above - **Kapuskasing**

August 19 - Forest Management Workshops - see above - **New Liskeard**

August 19-22 - Dreaming the Future: Building Green Community, An OEN Youth Conference at **Camp Arowhon**, visit www.oen.ca, email kim@kimfry.ca or call 416 530 5792

August 19-22 - Algonquin Social Justice Summer Retreat, Algonquin Provincial Park, www.socialjustice.org

August 24 - Forest Management Workshops - see above - **Sault Ste. Marie**

August 25 - Forest Management Workshops - see above - **Wawa**

September 11-19 - Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup, **across Ontario**, Cleanup supplies, education materials and support provided free of charge. Register by Aug 31. Call 877-427-2422. Info at www.vanaqua.org/cleanup or

September 17-20 - Northeastern Ontario regional meeting of Ministry of Natural Resources' Local Citizens Committee, **Timmins**, for details, visit www.timminslcc.org

September 17-20 - Temagami Wilderness Gathering/weekend with Earthroots, Call Victor Lorentz at 416-

599-0152x13 or visit www.earthroots.org

September 21 - UN Day for Peace

September 23-25 - Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition - Conference & Annual General Meeting in **Perth**, more info at www.healthycommunities.on.ca

October 23 - Canadian Environmental Network Annual General Assembly, **Montreal**. Annual Conference on the Environment October 22-24.

November 5 - 7 - Building the Other Superpower: Pan-Canadian Peace Conference, Ryerson University, **Toronto**. Canadian Peace Alliance, Toronto Coalition to Stop the War, Canadian Voice of Women for Peace and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Call 416-588-5555 <http://ca.geocities.com/peaceconference2004/>



November 19-21 - Annual Meeting and Conference of the Ontario Environment Network, location t.b.a, visit www.oen.ca

November 26 - Regional Workshop on Forest Management Planning on the use of computer models, **North Bay**, visit www.northeastforest.net for details

November 27 - Northwatch Fall Meeting Workshop and Strategy Session on Nuclear Waste and Northern Ontario, membership meeting Sunday morning, **North Bay**, visit www.northwatch.org

May 2005 - Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition and Algoma University will host the May 2005 conference of the Canadian Community Economic Development Network Conference in Sault Ste. Marie

North Bay Group Presents "Best-Looking Organic Yard Award"

Nipissing Environment Watch has launched a new initiative for North Bay and area to promote pesticide-free lawn and garden care. NEW launched the 1st annual "Best-Looking Organic Yard Contest" in April. A winner was announced June 30th.

The winners were Mac and Doris Stewart, who entered the back yard of their downtown residence in the east end of North Bay. Ten gardens were nominated, ranging from a tiny inner city plot to park-like rural properties. All participants received a "Pesticide-Free" sign to post in their yards.

NEW Treasurer, Peggy Walsh Craig said, "It was so much fun to see the effort and enthusiasm people have for their natural and beautiful gardens. We definitely want to do the contest again."

North Bay homeowners who may feel reluctant to give up pesticides need only look as far as Regina Street to learn just how lovely a natural yard can be. Doris Stewart commented, "We often have people come right into our backyard, just to take a look."

The garden has been the site of three weddings. The Stewarts have a yard to be proud of, as well as some extra cash from the \$300 contest prize.

An organic yard was defined as "a home landscape in which all products applied to the plants and soil are in, or close to, their natural state". Products used do not have a skull and crossbones or warning on their label, such as 2,4-D

The City of North Bay is currently developing a pesticides by-law.

ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Although many Canadians recognize the need to work on climate change issues, communities and organizations often lack the resources and focus to move from thought to action. A joint project of Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition and ecoPerth has been designed to address those challenges, and work at a community level to bring together people, resources and ideas to foster positive results. ecoCommunities is a province-wide project that will help small and medium-sized Ontario communities take action on climate change by assisting them to identify, develop, implement and evaluate projects that will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The project is based on the premise that reducing the extent of climate change is a national priority and that community members, working together, can have a significant impact on climate change.

The ecoCommunities approach puts action first, recognizing that while education and awareness programs are helpful, for real change to occur a broad range of people need to take constructive action. By engaging people in action projects, they will also increase their awareness of climate change issues and their commitment to change.

Examples of ecoCommunities actions include promotion of solar domestic hot water systems, encouraging local food production and consumption, providing a simple methodology of identifying the gross greenhouse gas emissions for a small community and translating the data into dollars flowing out of the community, water conservation for households and businesses, an Ecoride car-pooling website, alternative lawn care, and an energy-efficient tree program to identify and maintain the existing municipal tree inventory to provide summer shade and winter wind-breaks.

For further information about the ecoCommunities program in northeastern Ontario, please contact Monique Beaudoin, Northeastern Ontario Community Animator for the OHCC, by email at monique@healthycommunities.on.ca

New Networking Initiative for Sudbury Basin

Northwatch, the Ontario Environment Network, and the Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition are launching an exciting new project in the Sudbury basin.

The Sudbury Basin Environmental Networking Initiative will research barriers and opportunities related to the development of an active and sustainable environment network in the Sudbury Basin, and test potential organizational models that will benefit Sudbury and other similar communities

Supported by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the two year project will hire a full-time staff person to conduct community-based research.

FORESTRY MAPS ON-LINE

The Sierra Club of Canada and Global Forest Watch Canada have undertaken a joint project to collect and make available on-line Forest Management Plans maps developed by forest companies operating in Canada's forests.

The maps made available on-line are intended to be a resource for anyone who is interested, including those working on conservation issues.

According to a disclaimer on the web site, the maps are a product of the forest management planning process and are intended to summarize the proposed harvest operations for the 5-year term and management unit indicated on each map. These maps and associated plans are normally renewed on a 5-year cycle. In most cases, only the outside boundary of the entire 5-year harvest area is shown. Individual trees and other internal blocks of trees that are required to be left unharvested are not necessarily shown. Actual harvest methods are not indicated.

To view the maps and other project info, visit www.globalforestwatch.ca/managementplans/on.htm



Research and outreach to stakeholders will include municipal agencies, educational institutions and student organizations, non-profits including environmental and recreational groups, health organizations, and others.

The project will identify the range of environmental activities currently taking place in the area, as well as the barriers and opportunities groups encounter. Potential networking models to help establish long-term sustainable environmental non-profits will also be explored.

For more information, contact the OEN at (705) 840-2888 or by email at oen@oen.ca or visit www.oen.ca

Focus on Local Food

Sudbury's Foodshed Project has launched a new program to encourage consumers to invest in local food systems.

The Foodshed Project is encouraging consumers to think about the number of food miles that food has traveled to get to your dinner plate the next time you visit the supermarket.

The Foodshed Project is being supported by Environment Canada to develop a Climate Friendly Shopping Planner.

Visit www.geodesudbury.org

Northwatch Summer Meeting
August 13-15
Beaucage Park
Nipissing First Nation
Off Highway 17, 10 minutes west of North Bay



\$20 per person or \$40 per family,
includes camping, cornroast,
childcare and registration.

Arrivals Friday evening, Sessions end
mid-day Sunday.

Join Northwatch Today!
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