

# Walk Softly

Newsletter of the  
Yukon Conservation Society  
Winter 2014



photo credit: Heather Ashthorn

**Inside:** • Kick sledding • Power generating • Recycling

## The Yukon Environmental Training Fund

The goal of the Yukon Environmental Training Fund (YETF) is to support training, retraining, upgrading and improving of occupational skills of those employed by Yukon's environmental groups or individuals working on environmental issues and activities in the Yukon.

Training opportunities offered to assist Yukoners with securing immediate employment or keeping Yukoners up to speed in the Yukon non-profit conservation sector have been funded in past years. Individuals can be successful in obtaining funding if the training makes them immediately employable in the Yukon non-profit conservation sector or if they're currently working in the Yukon non-profit conservation sector and like to benefit from training to stay current in their field.

## The Yukon Environmental Training Fund is available for you!

Check our website [yukonconservation.org](http://yukonconservation.org) for more information about this Fund and whether your training project is eligible for funding or contact Judith at YCS 668-5678.

**Yukon**  
Education  
Advanced Education

### Kusawa Park

This winter, the Kusawa Park Draft Management Plan Public Consultations will take place. Dates are to be decided, but you can always visit [www.kusawapark.ca](http://www.kusawapark.ca) for current information and updates.

## Ideas for a Zero Waste Christmas

This Christmas, if you want to avoid the shops, parking lots, credit card debt, and garbage, here are some ideas to have a Buy-Nothing and a Zero Waste Christmas:

- Make your presents – something delicious or something upcycled and crafty
- Donate your time – to a worthy organization or to your neighbour; think of those less fortunate in our community and in the global community.
- Share your resources and skills – start a tool library in your neighbourhood, a mending or baking club with your best mates, swap healthy zero waste recipes
- Spend time – take the opportunity that the holidays offer to spend time with friends and family (being active outdoors together is even better!)



However you choose to celebrate the special dark season, everyone at YCS wishes you warmth and wonder. Happy Solstice, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!



## A Christmas gift to nature

It's the season of giving. If you want to give your loved ones something lasting and meaningful that doesn't contribute to wasteful consumerism, you can give the gift of nature this Christmas.

Instead of buying gifts for loved ones who really don't need more stuff, you can make a donation to the Yukon Conservation Society in your loved one's name. It's a win-win-win gift! You and your loved ones will feel great about giving to a busy, successful environmental charity, and YCS will use your money to pursue ecosystem well-being throughout the Yukon and beyond!



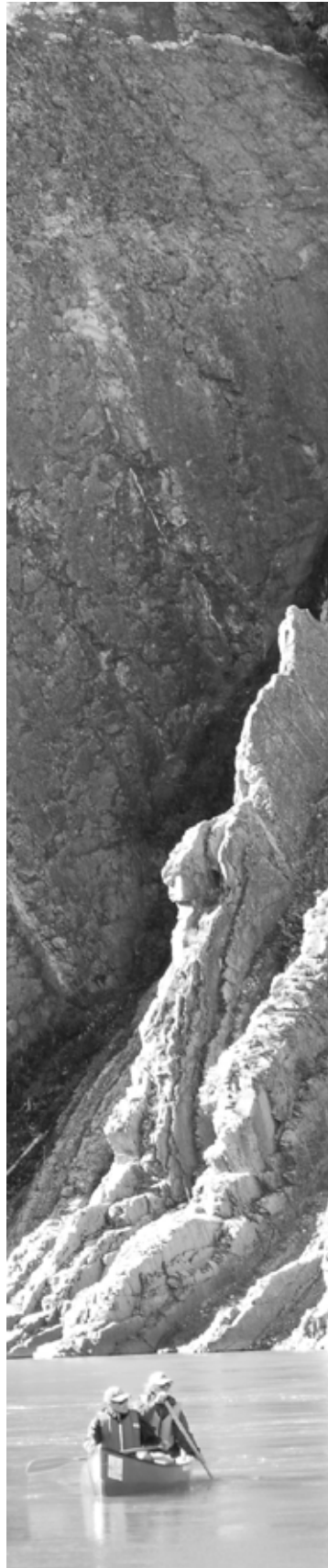
## Peel Watershed Court Case Update – October 24 Continued Hearing

On Friday, October 24, there was a one-day, continued hearing for the Peel court case held in Whitehorse at the Yukon Supreme Court. The reason for this continued hearing: in late August the presiding Judge, Justice Ronald Veale, requested more information on the remedies we (the plaintiffs: YCS, CPAWS Yukon, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun) proposed at the hearing in July.

The continued hearing opened with Thomas Berger presenting our argument, followed by Mr. Hunter's (Yukon government's legal counsel) rebuttal, and concluded with Mr. Berger's reply. Mr. Langlois, legal counsel for the Gwitch'in Tribal Council (GTC), presented briefly to the Judge and affirmed GTC's support for our case. The hearing was wrapped up by 1:30. Despite suffering from a nasty case of bronchitis, Mr. Berger's voice strengthened through the day and he concluded with some colorful and persuasive arguments.

In the July 7-10 hearing, Mr. Berger had presented two remedies to Judge Veale. The first was to have the court declare that the Commission's Final Recommended Plan is the approved plan for the Peel watershed. The alternate remedy offered would have the same result – approval of the Commission's Final Recommended Plan – but by a different route.

At the continued hearing, Mr. Berger pursued this alternate remedy on the basis that there are strong precedents to support it. This alternate remedy is based on the argument that Yukon government violated the land use planning process laid out in the Umbrella Final Agreement and did not properly conduct final consultations. Mr. Berger argued that Yukon government must return to the point in the process where they “left the rails” and properly conduct these final consultations. He argued that Yukon government must consult only on the Final Recommended Plan, not their own plan, which they produced at the last minute and have since approved.



Further, Mr. Berger asked the court to rule that during these final consultations, the Yukon government is restricted in the modifications they can propose. Mr. Berger argued that Yukon government should only be allowed to consult on the three proposed modifications that qualified as modifications: numbers 3, 4 and 5 in Yukon government's 2011 response to the Recommended Plan. Mr. Berger agreed with the Planning Commission that numbers 1 and 2 (regarding access and balance) were insufficiently detailed to qualify as modifications.

Should this alternate remedy be ordered by the court, the end result would be that the Commission's Final Recommended Plan (the plan that the affected First Nations, YCS, CPAWS Yukon and the vast majority of the people in the Yukon support) becomes the approved plan.

In his rebuttal, Yukon Government's lawyer Mr. Hunter, called first for the case to be dismissed, and alternatively, should government be required by Judge Veale to re-do consultations, for unfettered ability to propose modifications.

In his concluding address, Mr. Berger summarized this alternative argument by Mr. Hunter as a “dog's breakfast”.

YCS and our co-plaintiffs are very happy with how the continued hearing played out - our legal counsel took full advantage of this opportunity to clearly and powerfully present the argument for our alternate remedy.

Public interest remained high for this hearing, with both the main court room and the additional courtroom with a live video feed, filled to capacity.

For a more detailed summary of the October 24 hearing, please see the posting on The Peel Watershed Legal Case blog, located here: <https://peelwatershedtrial.wordpress.com/>

Thank you for your ongoing engagement and support in our work together to protect the Peel Watershed!

*Christina Macdonald*

### Walk Softly

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We welcome newsletter submissions and letters to the editor. Deadlines for submissions are Feb 1, May 1, Aug 1, and Nov 1. Views expressed in **Walk Softly** are not necessarily those of the Society.

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## Editorial

by Anne Middler

# Next Generation Hydro

The Yukon Party campaigned on it in 2011, and, as the Yukon government, has now directed the Yukon Development Corporation (YDC) “to plan one or more hydroelectric projects.”

The Next Generation Hydro work plan states: “YDC, a crown corporation, is well positioned to ... lead the Next Generation Hydro conversation with Yukoners.” But as the process moves forward, it does not appear that the process will afford many opportunities for a conversation or even public input. It seems likely that the 18-month process (we are already 6 months in) will be mostly a one-way flow of information.

YCS hopes that the technical and engagement teams that have been hired by YDC to run the process will rethink their approach after a review of the directive, particularly where it describes the work’s purpose: “to plan one or more hydroelectric projects to ensure, together with supporting renewable and, to the minimum extent feasible, non renewable sources of electrical power, for an adequate and affordable supply of reliable and sustainable electrical power in Yukon.”

To YCS, this describes a holistic view of what our electrical system could be – an integrated, diversified and distributed system – rather than One Big Hydro Dam that undoubtedly would destroy a watershed (or productive riparian habitat at the very least), cost billions of dollars, pre-empt economic development opportunities for smaller renewable energy projects, and constitute a massive public subsidy to large-scale resource extraction industries.

YCS is refining our position on hydroelectricity. We know the kinds of small scale, low impact, distributed hydro projects that we support (Skagway’s Goat Lake and Atlin’s Pine Creek/Surprise Lake are two local examples).

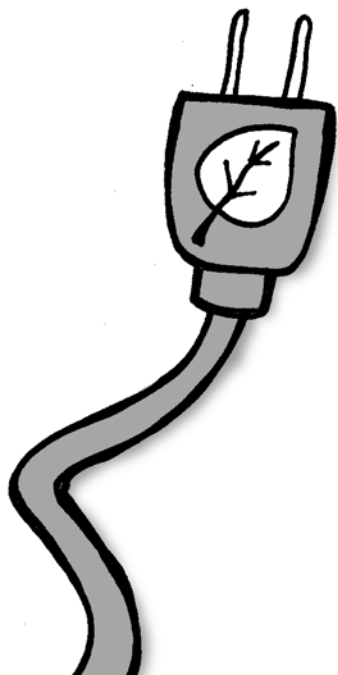
We suspect that a connection to the BC and North American grid (also being investigated in the Next Generation Hydro work), could justify and require more than one big dam. This doesn’t recognize the benefits and advantages of our currently isolated electrical grid (not a perspective we hear very often) and that big dams may be a thing of the past.

Some big hydro enthusiasts claim that a big dam would allow us to electrify currently fossil fueled sectors like transportation and space heating. In our opinion, because big hydro is environmentally, socially and economically risky, it would be preferable to electrify those sectors with other renewables such as wind and solar, supported by complementary distributed and low impact hydro projects.

We will be flooded with Next Generation Hydro communications products over the next year. We ask you read them with an open and critical mind. We encourage you to attend the Next Generation Hydro evening presentations to update the public on the hydroelectric selection process.

Remember that our current “legacy” hydroelectric assets are linked to mining legacies and their infinite toxic environmental liabilities. We should question yesterday’s wisdom of enabling big resource extraction through big energy projects and instead develop natural resources in ways that respect ecological limits and consider seven generations – not just the next one.

Before any decisions are made, the Yukon needs to have a frank and realistic discussion about what our needs are, and how we can best meet them. Let’s update the Energy Strategy for Yukon and chart a path to self-sufficiency and resilience that doesn’t squander the Yukon’s natural capital.



## Keeping the critters on the creeks

The Yukon Conservation Society has over the past few years focussed quite heavily on mining exploration and hard rock mining projects, as opposed to placer mining projects. There are a variety of reasons for this – the huge amount of exploration that occurred from 2009 onwards, the capacity of YCS staff and the somewhat effective use of the Fish Habitat Management System by the Yukon Placer Secretariat in dealing with placer mining operations.

Now that commodity prices have tanked and the staking boom has all but collapsed, YCS is starting to take a hard look at some of the placer projects currently going through the Yukon Environmental and Socio Economic Assessment Board.

In 2014 two of the placer mining projects that were evaluated by YESAB (the Yukon environmental assessors) received the recommendation that they not proceed. This was in line with the submissions from YCS who is opposed to these two projects. In an almost unprecedented move the Yukon Government agreed with YESAB’s recommendations and did not approve the permits for these projects. You can find all the documentation at [www.yesab.ca](http://www.yesab.ca). The two placer operations are YESAB Project 2014-0028 (a placer mine on the Sixty Mile River) and Project 2013-0162 (a placer Mine on Congdon Creek).

Very briefly, the Sixty Mile valley has been extensively worked by placer miners for more than a century, but there are few sections of undisturbed riparian habitat remaining, and this project was right on top of one of them. A land use plan is underway for this region, but thresholds for disturbance for unique habitats such as riparian zones have yet to be determined. In addition it is probable that this section of the Sixty Mile could be within a Yukon River Corridor management zone that would be managed to a higher level of environmental stewardship.

The Congdon Creek project is right on the boundary of the Kluane National Park, and it has never been mined. YCS’s objections were based on two main impacts that cannot be mitigated nor compensated. The environmental impacts on animals such as grizzly bears, sheep and birds and the tourism impacts on a popular hiking trail and access route into Kluane National Park, part of an UNESCO world heritage site, and the noise pollution that will impact nearby Congdon Creek campground.

In both cases YESAB and the Yukon Government agreed with YCS that these projects should not proceed. It must be emphasized that YCS is not anti-mining, we just want it done right and not done in environmentally important areas. Congdon Creek and the mouth of the Sixty Mile are two such areas.

*Lewis Rifkind*



## Anne's Energy Update

# Fracking

YCS brought Caleb Behn and Damien Gillis to Whitehorse, Dawson City and Watson Lake for the **From Experience: Fractured Land Highlights And Discussion Tour** in September. Behn and Gillis shared their unique perspectives from BC about fracking and LNG, and the environmental, social and economic impacts of these rogue industries. Thank you to everyone who came to the events and supported the tour.

September 30 marked the end of the public input component of the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing process. Thank you to everyone who spoke out at community hearings and submitted comments to the Committee.

To read the inspiring messages people sent to the Select Committee, visit

[http://www.legassembly.gov.yk.ca/rbhf\\_submissions\\_report.html](http://www.legassembly.gov.yk.ca/rbhf_submissions_report.html).

We anticipate the Select Committee's recommendation to government in the next few months.

# Moving onto energy solutions... from no to YES!

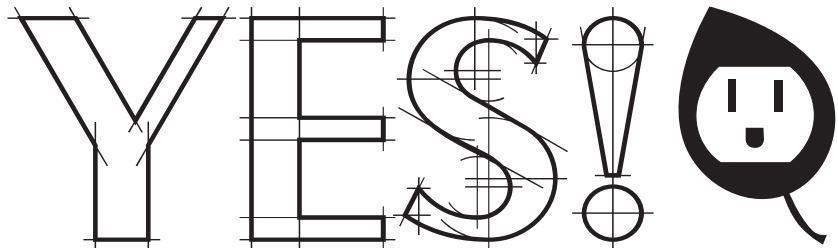
The fracking committee process reinforced that people have serious concerns with increasing our dependence on fossil fuels and would rather see the Yukon moving forward with energy conservation and efficiency, and the development of renewable energy. YCS intends to take a leading role in the conversation and shift by promoting energy solutions.

To that end, YCS secured some funding for a new project – Yukon's Energy Solutions (YES) Showcase – to highlight individuals in our community who have invested time, money and effort into reducing their energy consumption or producing renewable energy, and by extension reducing the impacts associated with their energy use.

YES Showcase project will interview and video document the motivation and methodology of Yukon's Energy Solutions pioneers. We will compile accompanying "how to" info to help others follow in their footsteps. The culmination of the YES Showcase will be a community celebration in May to show the films, share the information, celebrate these individuals and their achievements, and inspire others to follow suit.

We are really excited about this project. A lot of our energy over the past year has been spent opposing the bad and saying NO. We are more than ready to support the good and say YES! YCS would like to start a tradition of recognizing the achievements of energy solutions trailblazers in our community while encouraging and helping others to take similar actions.

*Anne Middler*



## Yukon's Energy Solutions Showcase

### We want want your help!

Do you know someone who has done something awesome – has realized a great idea – to reduce their energy consumption (electricity or otherwise) or to generate their own renewable energy? This could be something to reduce electricity use around their home, some action in the space heating or transportation sector, or maybe they put solar panels on their roof.

Please email your suggestions for nominees to [ycsenergycoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:ycsenergycoordinator@gmail.com). Thank you!

## RECYCLING UPDATE

For those in despair of the closure of the public drop-off area of recyclables by Raven Recycling, fear not! A most unlikely saviour has appeared. Gentle reader, may I introduce you to the City of Whitehorse Mayor and Council. At a special council meeting on November 3rd, 2014, they voted to sole source a contract to a consultant to develop a blue-box pickup program for the City of Whitehorse.

While the final details have yet to be worked out, it tentatively looks like those City households currently getting garbage and compost pickup will also get recycling pickup. This cost of this will be about \$15/month, and will be added to the utility bills. These funds will cover the cost of collection and the processing (the receiving, sorting, baling and shipping south) at the recycling centres. No firm date has been set for the commencement of this program, but late summer of 2015 looks probable. It is unknown how the existing blue box pickup program, run by the Yukon Blue Bin Recycling Society, will be incorporated into this model.

So, for urban residential homeowners of Whitehorse it's good news. As the City program progresses over time it will no doubt gradually expand to include condominium and apartment complexes, similar to what is currently happening with the compost program. At the moment, it does not look like rural residential households will be able to participate in this blue box initiative, although the City is apparently doing some long-term thinking about how to include them.

Now here's the wrinkle. It is still unknown whether Raven will open up its public drop-off bins for recyclables once the blue box program commences. Raven is still open as a bottle refund centre, free store and operator of the Papersave collection program. Even with a partial City blue box program, there is still no financial system in place to cover the full cost of recyclables dropped off by members of the public at Raven Recycling.

The Yukon Government is proposing some changes and expansion to the deposit/refund system on beverage containers, and there is the potential for recycling fees to be added to certain electronic items at the time of purchase. These changes are welcome, but they do not cover the vast amount of plastic, paper and glass products and packaging that the recycling centres have to deal with. Until such time as producers pay for the full cost of the recycling of their products and packaging the financial crunch recyclers' face in accepting, baling and then shipping south the detritus of our consumer culture will continue.

In the meantime, though, please continue to recycle using the bins at the landfill, P&M Recycling's Depot or the Blue Bin Society's collection. Raven Recycling still accepts refundables and continues with its business recycling pickup programs such as Papersave.

For more information on the City of Whitehorse recycling initiatives visit [www.whitehorse.ca/recycle](http://www.whitehorse.ca/recycle). Information about Raven Recycling is available at [www.ravenrecycling.org](http://www.ravenrecycling.org) and the Blue Bin Society is at [www.yukonbluebins.com](http://www.yukonbluebins.com). P&M Recycling is at 607 Ray Street, behind the Coca-Cola warehouse.

*Lewis Rifkind*





## Living small

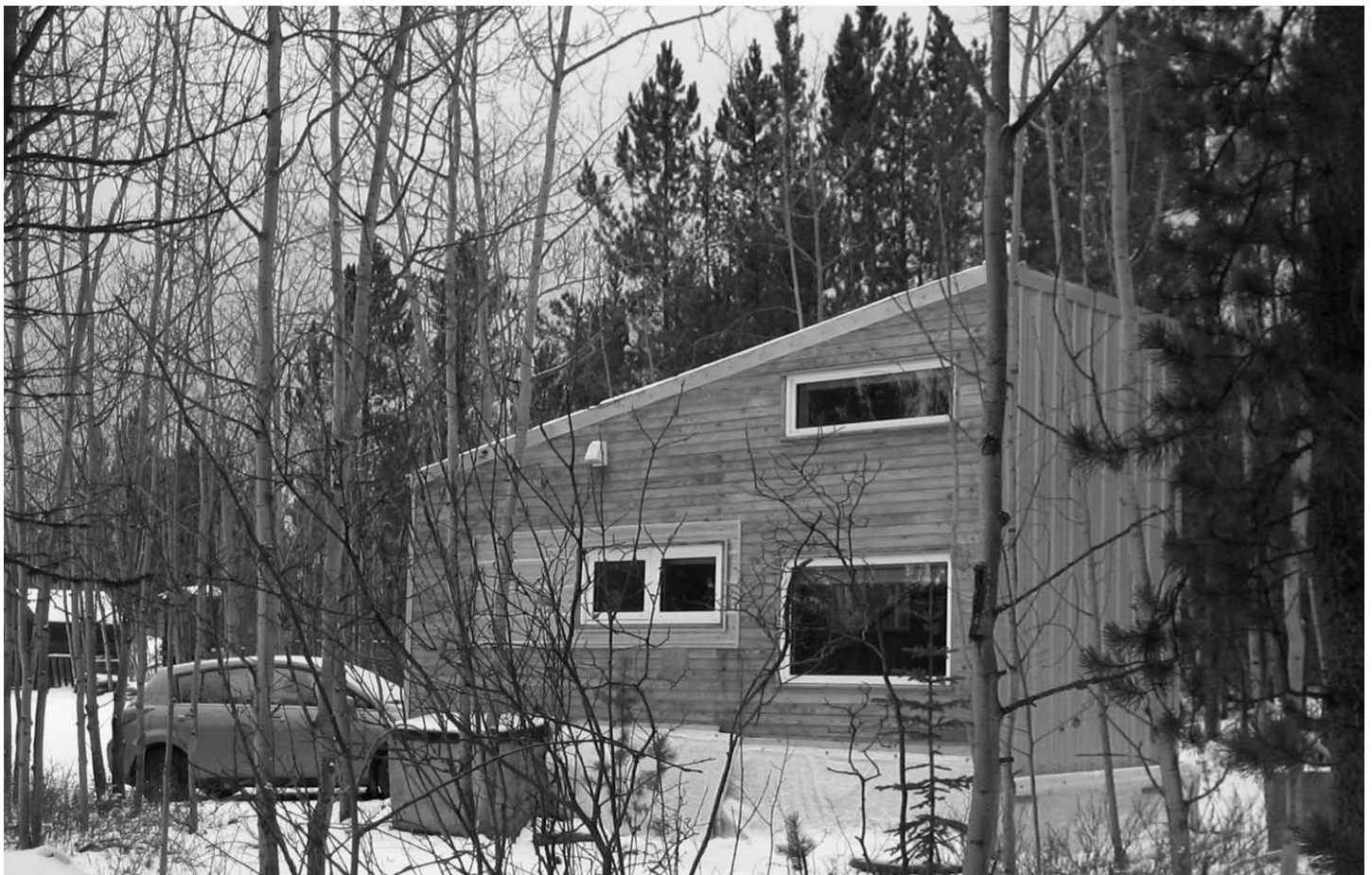
This year I bought my first home. Even though it's a small home, it was still a big decision. For years I've been thinking about buying a home. But as we all know, it's not cheap to buy a house in Whitehorse, especially if there's only one small income to buy with. And my wish list was pretty extensive. I wanted to be able to afford to live alone. I didn't want to own a home that was heated by an oil furnace. Toilets are great, but flushing many liters of drinking water through them didn't appeal to me. I wanted access to running water though. And power. My home needed to have just enough space for me, so I didn't need to waste energy on space heating.

You might be surprised but I managed to find a home that includes everything on my wish list – it's a so called tiny home on wheels. Some of my friends call it my trailer or cabin, but I prefer it when they call it my home. Finding a home that I loved was great, finding a property to put it on was a little bit of a hurdle. Luckily I found a beautiful place in the woods north of town, with access to running water and power.

So far there's only one friend who called my house 'huge' – she expected something tinier. It's not huge by any means; I have just over 200 square feet of living space. This includes a kitchen with full size propane stove and dining table for three, a bathroom with toilet, sink and shower, a living room with couch, a storage area and a beautiful stair case leading to my bedroom.

You might wonder how that all fits in this small space – I think smart design is the key word here. I've lived in my home for just over 5 months now, and it's great. One might think it's easy in the summer since we all spend so much more time outside. And yes, I realized that I spent more time outside this summer than in my years that I lived in a 'real house' in town. Yet, even during the colder and darker days in October and November, I never feel that my house is too small.

I love living in my tiny house for various reasons. It's heated by two very efficient electric baseboard panels, so I don't need oil to heat my home. And because the space is quite small, there's only a small amount of energy needed to heat my entire home.





In the future I'd like to be able to provide all energy needed for my house from renewable resources – solar panels and/or wind energy on a tiny scale. My composting toilet doesn't require any water, so no need to waste water (and also no need to go outside in the midst of winter). I was never someone to waste water anyway, but I find that I'm even more aware of my water I use now, and I know now that (on no-shower days) I use less than 5 liters of water per day. My instant hot water heater doesn't require a pilot light to be on at all times, so I only use propane when I need hot water or when I'm cooking. I don't have a hot water tank that requires constant energy to stay warm. And then there's the fact that due to my limited space, I'm not tempted to buy stuff – my consumption doesn't keep the economy going, that's for sure.

Tiny house living isn't for everyone, I understand that. Most North-Americans are used to having a big house, with many rooms each for its own purpose. It works for me though. The challenge to live in a small space is something I enjoy. I don't have very many belongings, so it was easy to fit everything in my house, and I don't feel like I'm depriving myself of anything I need – space or otherwise. Knowing that my house has a small footprint is nice.

In the last few years, tiny houses have become more popular in the States. I believe this to be partly due to the economic recession. However, I think tiny houses have a real future in Canada, the States and anywhere else really. Not only are they more affordable, and do they have a smaller footprint than regular houses; they also create a great opportunity for community living. Wouldn't it be great to see a regular size lot with two, three or maybe four homes on it? All individuals have their own private residences, while they can have communal access to outside storage, tools, a beautiful vegetable garden, and hopefully their own source of renewable energy.

*Judith van Gulick*

*Living small,  
dreaming big.*

## “Motorization” of the Rotary Centennial Bridge

City of Whitehorse Mayor and Council will be addressing the issue of the possible “motorization” of the Rotary Centennial Bridge (pedestrian bridge across the Yukon River, within the Millennium Trail loop).

Active Trails Whitehorse Association (ATWA) has now been told that the issue will come before Council in February. At that time Mayor and Council will decide whether or not the bridge will become motorized, or remain as designated in the ATV and Snowmobile Bylaws, as a truly non-motorized (summer and winter) route.

It is important that people look at the City's website on Friday afternoons to see what is on the Council Agenda for the following Monday. You will find this information (although not in the same detail) in both our newspapers every Friday night.

Active Trails Whitehorse Association encourages YCS members to get involved in this issue. Our website ([www.activetwa.org](http://www.activetwa.org)) has several suggestions as to what can be done if you oppose “motorization” of the Rotary Centennial Bridge. A number of articles on this website provide background information as to why and for whom the bridge was built, and where the funding came for its construction. We encourage you to visit the site.

*Keith Lay (Active Trails Whitehorse Association)  
activetwa@gmail.com*



## Kicksled Revolution

If you know me, you'll have heard about the Kicksled Revolution. Well, this nebulous concept is celebrating a birthday! It's five years old!

The term was coined at the YCS Christmas Party in 2009. I brought my new kicksled to the party and many guests took advantage of the perfect sidewalk conditions to experience the pure joy of kicking down third avenue.

The kicksled is a ubiquitous Scandinavian invention. It's like a sled pram for parents, or a snow walker for elderly people on icy surfaces. The chair or platform (depending on your sled's design) can pack a lot of gear – from a kid, to firewood, groceries, water jugs or storage bins.

The kicksled is an endorphin releasing health promoting gear packing community building active transportation mode that is both a climate change mitigation and adaptation tool – if only more people had them, and the infrastructure (grit-free, hard packed, interconnected trail system) was in place!

With that vision in mind (as well as the desire to learn more about economic development that did not involve environmental destruction), I enrolled in the Community Economic Development Certificate Program at Simon Fraser University to learn how to move forward the stalled Kicksled Revolution.

It is inspiring to learn about local living economies, social innovation and theories of change while building a network of community economic development practitioners. The program started in October and they've all heard about kicksleds.

Well-designed and built kicksleds were manufactured in the Yukon under the name Solitude Designs, but the business has been dormant for several years. Sometimes if you're lucky you can find a used one for sale on Kijiji. Duffy's Pets sometimes sells the more urban Finnish Esla kicksleds.



About a year ago, I was accepted to pitch the Kicksled Revolution on the Dragon's Den and was excited for the opportunity to engage with Kevin O'Leary about capitalism, social enterprise and a blended bottom line. But I backed out, because my passion and enthusiasm would be overshadowed by my lack of wherewithal, confidence, skin in the game or control of the message. A wise decision with the opportunity to jump on board again in the future if feeling prepared and so inclined.

Hopefully, 2015 will be the year that the Kicksled Revolution actually takes hold and anyone in the Yukon who wants a kicksled will have one! My idea is to establish a social enterprise that distributes kicksleds to keen early adopters, and employs a diverse group of people to build skookum Yukon kicksleds with sustainably harvested, local and or salvaged materials. I look forward to brainstorming the idea with my CED cohort over the next while and welcome any suggestions Yukon people have to help the movement.

One of my fleet of kicksleds will be at this year's YCS Christmas Party to help celebrate. The awesome new YuKconstruct Makerspace is having a "kicksled hack" workshop in the new year, so the momentum is building.

*Anne Middler*

*Join the Kicksled Revolution!*

## Donate your Securities to the Yukon Conservation Society!

Do you know that you can easily donate your securities to the Yukon Conservation Society (YCS) through CanadaHelps? CanadaHelps is a non-profit serving Canadian charities and donors whose mission is to increase charitable giving across Canada by making it easier to donate and fundraise online. Their website states that a donation of securities or mutual fund shares is the most efficient way to give charitably since the capital gains tax does not apply. Your security or mutual fund donation means a larger donation for the charities you support. It also means a larger charitable tax receipt for you!



Go to <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/yukon-conservation-society/> and click on 'Donate Securities'

## Tzeporah Berman's Cheat Sheet to Successful Environmental Campaigns

Tzeporah Berman has been designing environmental campaigns for 22 years since she coordinated the logging blockades in Clayoquot Sound. As part of their ongoing Speaker Series, CPAWS Yukon organized an informative and engaging workshop and evening presentation by Tzeporah on November 17. Part of the information she shared with the packed workshop crowd included 10 components of a successful campaign. These factors are summarized below. Let's keep them in mind as we work together to increase engagement and action on environmental issues!

1. **Motivation not education.** Education opens up an issue and encourages people to discuss all the complexities, but campaigning is all about funneling information into an activity, motivating people to do something or engage with the campaign. People are motivated by an opportunity not an issue.
2. **Keep it simple.** Develop a simple, 'resonant chord' that speaks to peoples' values. Emotion is an important component but know your audience.
3. **Create a narrative.** People love stories. Ensure there are ways for people to engage in the story over time, design moments where decision makers have to respond (poke the dragon).
4. **Repeat, repeat, repeat.** People need to hear something three times to believe.
5. **Target communications.** Given limited resources, be strategic about how you communicate your campaign, which means knowing the target audience.
6. **Focus.** Use places or events to focus peoples' attention and get the message out. An icon can generate conversations.
7. **Anchor moments.** Create your own moments and make real things happen instead of just arguments. Campaigns aren't what you know, it's what you do. Make real things happen – these are anchor moments.
8. **Find your piece.** We don't have to do everything (and can't) - find out what others have done, assess your capacity, skills and where your passion lies.
9. **Claim victory often.** No victory is perfect and solutions are messy. Don't be afraid of being perceived as selling out because you celebrate partial victories – these are needed to show the impact along the way to the end goal.
10. **Build power.** Money and votes move decision makers.

*Christina Macdonald*





## Kotaneelee Well Workover: Preparing To Frack?

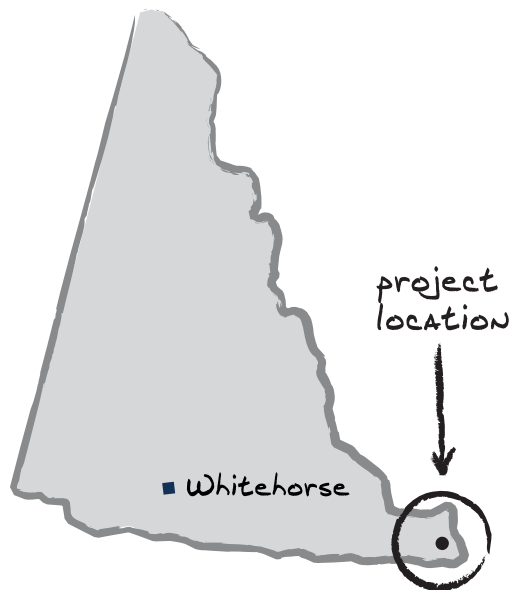
On October 27th this fall, EFL Overseas (EFLO) submitted a proposal to YESAB about “working over” (which really means eking out a few more months of production) 3 existing gas wells in the LaBiche area of South East Yukon, about 150 km from Watson Lake. The wells were semi-abandoned in 2012 when more and more water and less and less gas started coming up - like all fossil fuel projects, it has a finite life span and these wells are essentially at the end of theirs.

What is not in this proposal to YESAB is the fact that EFLO, the company that owns most of the Kotaneelee these days, explicitly stated its need to frack the Kotaneelee in order to get more gas flowing to the Select Committee on the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing. It is clear that the project before YESAB will not resurrect the wells for long, and that there has to be a future project planned that will. This most likely will require hydraulic fracturing.

YCS has compiled comments on the project, you can find them at [www.yukonconservation.org/energy\\_climate\\_change.htm#kotaneelee](http://www.yukonconservation.org/energy_climate_change.htm#kotaneelee). YCS has recommended that the project not go ahead or, failing that, it should return to adequacy review to rewrite its proposal.

EFLO Energy is based in Texas and is a relatively minor fossil fuel company. It includes Pacific LNG (not our LNG but Liquid Nuigini Gas- cute eh?) out of Singapore and Niconsult out of Switzerland. Pacific LNG, in partnership with Merrill Lynch and Inter Oil Corp are building, for Exxon Mobil, an LNG plant in Papua New Guinea. This project got some unfavorable press a couple of years ago when the PNG army was called in to put down local protests after a landslide at a project quarry killed 25 locals.

The major concern we have with the project as written is it appears to have no economic benefit to Yukon at all. There is no benefits agreement with either the Ross River Dena or with the Liard First Nation. The company plans to fly its staff up from British Columbia, and, rather cheekily, to use Alberta health and labour codes- which are, it must be acknowledged, stricter than Yukon labour laws. It is doubtful there will be much in the way of royalties paid.



EFLO seems to have a rather fuzzy idea of which jurisdiction it is operating in. It is cherry picking amongst Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta on the regulations around the project. Sometimes it appears to be making up the rules- for example, its bear control program includes live trapping and removal, however Yukon Environment does not issue permits to live trap bears. EFLO does volunteer to notify Yukon environment when it does this.

The economic viability of the project as described is also a concern for YCS. EFLO plans to produce very little extra gas than the amount that was found to be un-economic in 2012. We have asked that the company post a performance bond to cover the remediation cost if and when it walks away from the project. Recent experience at Eagle Plain shows us that cleaning up and re-capping a single well costs over a million dollars.

In terms of environmental concerns, YCS has several. A re-injection well- an abandoned well, used for dumping polluted water into - is in place on the site but proper base line ground water monitoring as required by the Yukon Water Board has never been done. Without baseline ground water monitoring, we will never be able to say for sure, if pollution surfaces somewhere, if it came from the re-injection well or if it was always there. YCS has asked this be made a condition for the project to advance. Further, according to the YG Environment comments, it is possible that sulphur emissions from leaking gas have almost wiped out rare lichens in the vicinity.

YCS suspects this project will proceed with conditions. One of the conditions we want to see imposed is a directive that under no circumstances is fracking allowed. We think it important to spell this out because one of proposed changes to the YESA Act will be to allow “modifications” of projects to avoid a YESAB assessment. Another of the changes is to allow the Minister of EMR to dictate policy to YESAB, and who is to say that the Minister might not consider that a little fracking of an existing well would be just fine.

*Sebastian Jones*

## Friends of McIntyre Creek's Eco Forum

The Friends of McIntyre Creek (FOMC) hosted an Eco Forum for the general public on October 23rd at the Mount McIntyre Recreation Centre. The purpose of the Forum was to stimulate interest in our gem of McIntyre Creek, to get people involved, to have them take ownership of the McIntyre Creek, and hence to protect this very bio diverse watershed in the center of this Wilderness City.

The Eco Forum was well attended, the audience enjoyed the short presentations and question periods. Seven speakers spoke during the Eco Forum, and they were all authorities in their field. The topics included:

- History of mining and geology of the McIntyre Creek Watershed
- Wetlands and their importance
- Birds of McIntyre Creek
- Plants of the wetlands
- Butterflies of the wetlands
- Fish and water temperature
- Regional Park Planning

Refreshments and fabulous home baked treats by Celeste of FOMC were highly appreciated by all.

FOMC is planning to hold another Eco Forum in the winter of 2015... stay tuned!

*Michael Bendall  
Friends of McIntyre Creek*



*The green heart of  
a wilderness city*



*photo: Gerry Steers*

## Solar Power Generation on the Annie Lake Road

After reading John Maissan's article on solar power in the last YCS newsletter, I felt the need to keep the momentum going and hopefully encourage other Yukoners to supplement their energy needs with renewable. You can complain all you want about the fossil fuel industry's grip on us, but until you take some initiative on your own, you may never break free.

When we first moved out to the Annie Lake Road there was no power lines along the road. So like many Yukoners back then we looked for a way to generate our own power. We erected a wind generator and had a battery bank for storing energy, plus a backup gas generator when needed. That worked fine for many years, but when it came time to replace the equipment, power lines now ran past our place and we made the decision to hook into the electrical grid. But I must admit I really liked being my own power company as it gave me a real feel for what it costs to produce power as well as strong conservation ethic about how to use power when you have it. In the back of my mind I knew at some point I would revisit producing our own power.

That point happened when the Micro-Generation policy was put in place by the Yukon Government. Here was a way that I could produce my own power, feed any surplus I had back into the grid for others to use, as well draw power from the grid when my demand was greater than my production capacity. Over the years I had followed the development of the various fields of renewable energy production solar, wind and biomass. I settled on solar as being the most likely to work for us. The roofs on our house and shop faced south, the advancement in solar panels and inverter technology now insured reliability in the 20 to 25 year span and the cost had dropped dramatically.

So in 2014 we decided to go ahead with the installation of a 3.5KW grid inter-tie solar photo-voltaic installation on our shop roof. First step was to contact the people who administer the Micro-Generation policy, the Yukon Government's Energy Solutions office. The actual process means you end up dealing with Energy Solutions, the Building Inspection branch (building and electrical permits) and Yukon Electric. There are a lot of suppliers of solar equipment out there and it really pays to do your research on the equipment you want to install. We settled on installing fourteen 250 watt solar panels, with individual micro invertors for each panel and an aluminum roof mount that runs parallel to the slope of the roof. Our supplier was Cory Gordon (Sow's Ear Renewable Energy) who is a local dealer for Home Energy Solutions out of Victoria.

Our installation was completed in June and has been working flawlessly. You do find yourself looking at the meter every time you walk by it to see how much power we have supplied back to the grid. You also find yourself being a bit more energy conservative, as you don't want to waste that energy that you are now producing. I'm actually thinking of expanding our system in the future. I've been talking with the Lorne Mountain Community Association (LMCA) about the feasibility of the LMCA putting a solar installation on the Community Centre's roof as well as the roof of its log pavilion, as there is the possibility of Federal government funding through a Green Energy Initiative for public infrastructure.

*Al Foster and Claire Desmarais*



### Things you need to know during the installation:

1. Understand how the Micro-Generation policy works by meeting with the Energy Solution people.
2. If you live outside of Whitehorse and plan on mounting your solar panels on your roof, you will need a building permit. Which means you better know how your roof was constructed, and possibly have the building drawings. Initially I wanted to tilt our panels on the roof to get better production, but to do this you will need to provide an engineering analysis of your roof to prove that it can take the extra wind load. If you leave them parallel to the roof the analysis is not required.
3. Electrical permit is required and a certified person must make the connection to the panel. Use of micro inverter technology simplifies the whole wiring installation plus gives several other advantages during solar production.
4. Once your installation is complete and both the building and electrical inspections are signed off, Yukon Electric will come out and replace your electrical meter with a bi-directional meter. This meter keeps track of when you consume energy from the grid at \$.14/kwh and when you supply your surplus energy back to the grid at \$.21/kwh (the meter does not supply you with your total production).





**YES! I want to protect the Yukon's environment and support the Yukon Conservation Society!**

**I'd like to make a tax deductible gift!**

\$60  \$200  \$500  \$1000  Surprise us! \_\_\_\_\_

I'd like to make a monthly pledge by visa of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (charged on the 15th of each month)

I have made a bequest to YCS in my will

**Please, sign me up as a member:**

Student \$10  Individual \$25  Family \$40 (2 or more people)

I am a **new** member!

I am **renewing** my membership for 2015!

*Memberships are activated on day of receipt and good for 1 year, and include a subscription to the Walk Softly newsletter. Both donations and memberships are tax-deductible.*

Do not send me newsletters. Instead, **notify me by email** when they are online.

**Payment Method:** Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Cheque # \_\_\_\_\_ enclosed (payable to Yukon Conservation Society)

I am putting it on my Visa # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email – for Tax Receipt and YCS Email List \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail completed slip to: 302 Hawkins St. Whitehorse, YT Y1A 1X6 – Phone: 668-5678 – ycs@ycs.yk.ca**

**Thank You Volunteers!**

*The Yukon Conservation Society wouldn't be the vibrant, active organization it is without your help!*

- Computer maintenance, back-ups and support: Joshua Hunt
- Office Support: Julie Frisch
- Membership Database Support: Mary Amerongen & Anat Tal
- Recycling: Raven Recycling
- Communications: Tanya Handley, Lewis Rifkind & Mary Amerongen
- Dawson City Peel events: Wanda Roe

