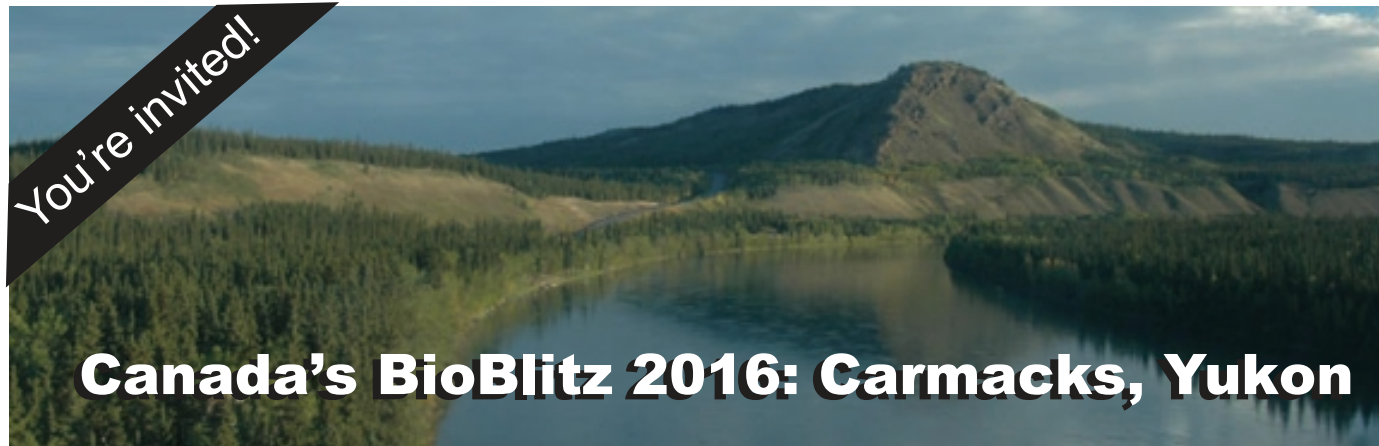


Walk Softly

Newsletter of the
Yukon Conservation Society
Spring 2016



Inside: • Gerry Couture Stewardship Award • Peel Appeal • ORVs and Hikers



Canada's BioBlitz 2016: Carmacks, Yukon

The Biological Survey of Canada (BSC) invites you to participate in the 12th BSC BioBlitz on June 24-26, 2016.

Carmacks: the edge of Beringia

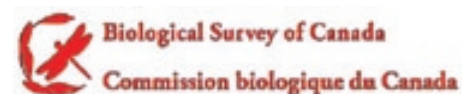
The region around Carmacks fascinates biologists... Why?



Join us in exploring the living wonders of the Yukon! If you'd like more information, contact Syd Cannings at syd.cannings@canada.ca



- It lies at the edge of Beringia, the vast region stretching from the central Yukon to eastern Siberia that was never glaciated during the Pleistocene Ice Ages. This area hosts a number of species found nowhere else in the world.
- It is home to a wide variety of ecosystems: from steppe grasslands, rivers, wetlands, lakes, boreal forest, shrub subalpine, and unglaciated Beringian tundra.
- It is poorly known biologically, since most visiting biologists have driven right by... on their way to Alaska or the Dempster Highway.
- Access into the wilderness: it is transected by two major highways, and two mining roads lead out of town into the higher elevations of the Dawson Range.



Former Executive Directors Win 2015 Gerry Couture Stewardship Award

The Yukon Conservation Society (YCS) is pleased to announce that Gill Cracknell and Karen Baltgailis have been awarded the 2015 Gerry Couture Stewardship Award for their work to protect the Peel Watershed. Since 2009, an anonymous donor has provided the Gerry Couture Stewardship Medal and \$1,000 prize to an individual chosen for outstanding personal dedication to natural resource conservation and management in the Yukon. This is the second time in two years that the award has been shared by two recipients.

The award's donor is inspired by admiration for Gerry Couture's fearlessness, creativity, innovation, and "curmudgeonliness". Gerry has a long and varied past as a commercial pilot, homesteader, trapper, commercial fisherman, and placer miner. For years he was on the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the Yukon Salmon Committee. Gerry most recently worked as YCS's Mining Coordinator until he retired in 2009.

Karen Baltgailis was Forestry Coordinator with the Yukon Conservation Society from 1998 until 2006 when she became the organization's Executive Director. Working closely with CPAWS-Yukon and the affected First Nations, Karen built strong awareness of and engagement in the Peel Watershed land use planning process, and helped launch the court case against Yukon government in January 2014. Karen stepped down as the Executive Director in the summer of 2014.

Gill Cracknell has a long history paddling the rivers and hiking the mountains of the Peel Watershed. Gill began working for CPAWS-Yukon in 2008 as the community liaison, learning from and sharing information with the First Nation communities with traditional lands in the Peel Watershed. From 2012-2015, Gill was the Executive Director of CPAWS-Yukon and worked closely with First Nation leadership to guide the movement to protect the Peel through court hearings at the Yukon Supreme Court and Court of Appeal.

Congratulations, Karen and Gill! Thank you for your many years of leadership to protect and sustain the Yukon's environment.



Previous recipients of the Gerry Couture Stewardship Award are:

- 2014 Simon Mervyn & Eddie Taylor
- 2013 Dave Loeks
- 2012 Mike Dehn
- 2011 Robert Moar
- 2010 Julie Frisch
- 2009 Dave Mossop

For more information about the Gerry Couture Stewardship Award and how to nominate an environmental leader, please see the Yukon Conservation Society website.

photo: Heather Jones

Peel River Watershed - Application for Leave to Appeal Filed with the Supreme Court of Canada

On November 4, 2015, the Court of Appeal released its Reasons for Judgment. While the Court of Appeal found that Justice Veale was essentially correct in reasoning that the Yukon government did not honour the process as properly interpreted, the Court of Appeal disagreed with the remedy granted by Justice Veale. The Court of Appeal allowed the appeal of the Yukon government in part by holding that the matter should be remitted back to the stage of consultation on the *Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*, released by the Peel Watershed Planning Commission in December 2009.

After careful consideration of the Yukon Court of Appeal's decision in the Peel Watershed case, the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, CPAWS Yukon and Yukon Conservation Society decided to apply for leave to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court of Canada. This decision was announced on December 15, 2015 and was accompanied by a public information session. The public information session was filmed and can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSTePF-Hf4Y>

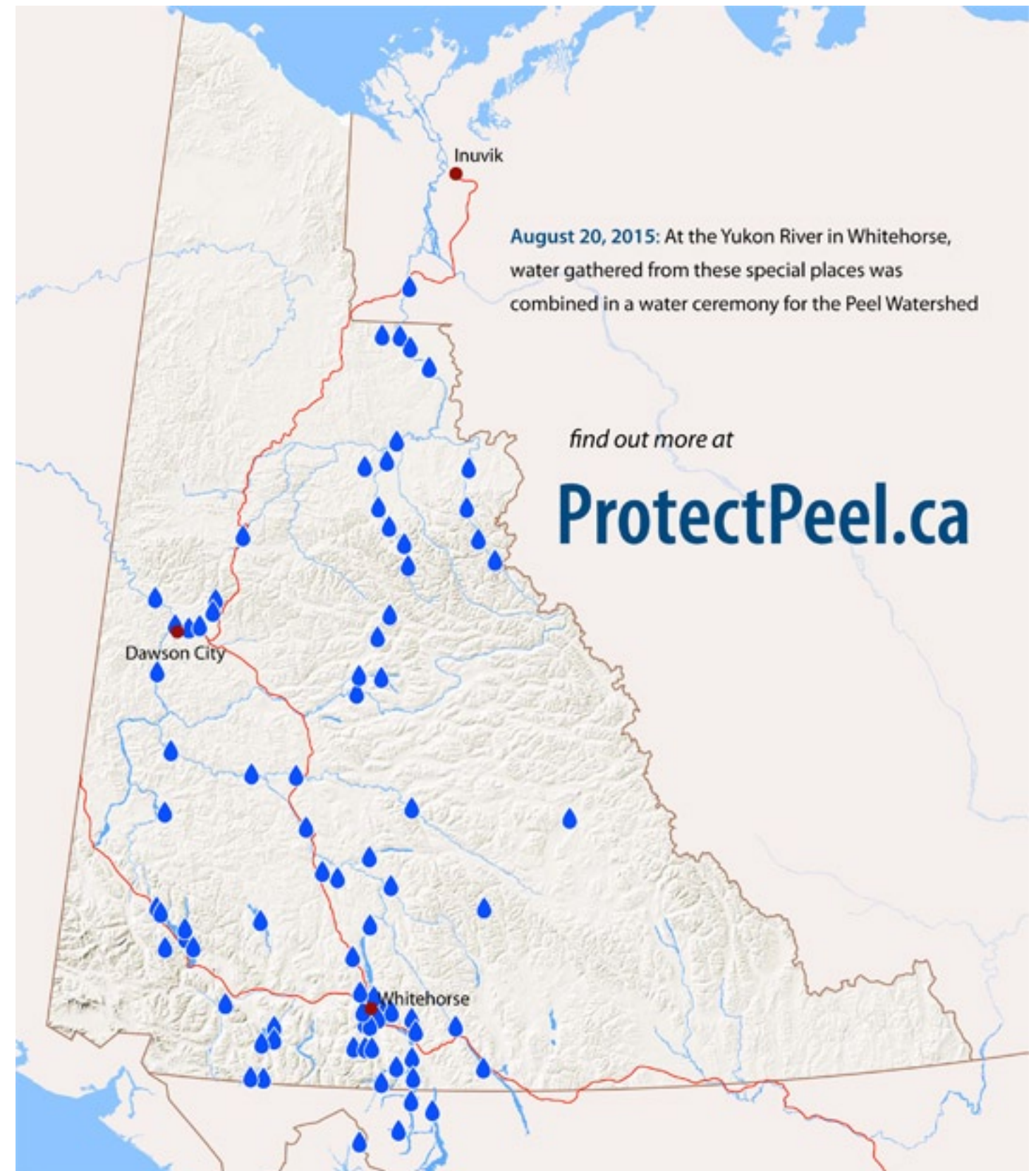
The application for leave to appeal addresses the Yukon Court of Appeal's ruling that the process for land use planning for the Peel Watershed should be sent back to the stage of consultation on the *Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*, released in December 2009. The application seeks leave to appeal the Yukon Court of Appeal's interpretation of the procedure followed for land use planning in the Yukon under Chapter 11 of the Final Agreements between Canada, Yukon and Yukon First Nations. This application is available for reading on the Yukon Conservation Society website.

The ruling of the Yukon Court of Appeal effectively returns the land use planning process to a stage completed approximately four years ago and allows the Yukon government to re-do its consultation with the First Nations and the public and then to choose whether to approve, reject or propose modifications to the *Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*. In the application for leave to appeal we argue that this ruling was a mistake in law and that it does not uphold the integrity of the Final Agreements.

The Yukon Court of Appeal also ruled that proposing modifications to a regional land use planning commission's recommended plan does not preclude the Yukon government from rejecting the plan after final consultation. We argue that this was a mistake in the interpretation of the Final Agreements and that it introduces substantial uncertainty in future land use planning processes in Yukon.

Yukon government filed its response to this application on February 8. The Gwich'in Tribal Council also filed a Motion for Leave to Intervene at this time. We, the applicants, then have a further 10 days to file any reply to the Yukon government's arguments. Three judges of the Supreme Court of Canada will then decide whether leave to appeal is granted. A decision from the Supreme Court of Canada on whether to allow the application for leave to appeal may take a number of months.

*Christina Macdonald,
YCS Executive Director*



Faro Mine, Failure and Future Redemption

“The Faro Mine is one of the largest and most complex contaminated sites in Canada. Located in the south-central Yukon, close to the Town of Faro, it was an open-pit lead-zinc mine from 1969 until it went into interim receivership in 1998. The site covers approximately 2500 hectares and includes 70 million tonnes of tailings and 320 million tonnes of waste rock. Both the tailings and waste rock contain high levels of heavy metals that could leach into the environment in the absence of remediation. As such, there are significant long-term environmental risks associated with the site.”

– Government of Canada, <http://www.federalcontaminatedsites.gc.ca>

“Significant long-term environmental risks” does not even begin to sum up what is allegedly occurring on the Faro mine site right now. Though what is precisely happening is difficult to determine, given the lack of public information.

However, the Yukon Conservation Society (YCS) has reason to believe that the Faro Mine Remediation Branch is in charge of current on-site care and maintenance, and is intending to develop a stabilization and remediation plan at some future date. Faro Mine Remediation Branch is part of the Yukon Territorial Government department of Energy Mines and Resources Assessment and Abandoned Mines section. Funding is supplied from the Federal Government.

What is certain is that the Faro Mine Remediation Project website (www.faromine.ca) is under renovation as of the date this column was being written, and has been for the past three months. For a few years prior to this, it offered little to no information of value, such as water test results. The Twitter account has been dormant for four years.

Further, YCS is under the impression that there are allegedly negative water treatment issues on site, ranging from a discoloured water polishing pond to various ‘spikes’ of metal contamination in ground and surface water both on and off site.

To obtain water test results, the only public source (apart from e-mailing and phoning the Faro Mine Remediation office and requesting them) is the Yukon Conservation Society website (www.yukonconservation.org/mining.htm#faro). These water test results that are being handed to YCS do not necessarily present a complete picture of the water situation at the mine site. They are also offered with little to no analysis.

The Faro Mine Remediation Project is spending a substantial amount of Federal tax dollars with little to no information being made publically available on what the money is being spent on and the impacts of these expenditures.

It is unclear how much is being spent each year on the Faro Mine Remediation Project, although an examination of the Yukon Government contract registry seems to show about \$135 million (in reported contracts, not including government staff wages) being spent over the past four years.

Anticipated future amounts of spending are unknown. A variety of media sources state that the cost is estimated into at least the hundreds of millions of dollars and is likely to take at least four centuries. It has not been possible to obtain clarification of this cost and timeline from an official source.

The project does not appear to be subject to any independent regulatory review or technical oversight committee. No environmental assessment (such as the Yukon Environment and Socio-Economic Assessment Board) or regulatory authority (such as the Yukon Water Board) appears to have undertaken an assessment or issued a regulatory approval on what is currently occurring on site. The last water licence expired in 2009.

The Faro Mine Remediation Project office used to host community meetings and on-site tours but these stopped about four years ago. However, if one is fortunate enough to be attending the Geological Association of Canada meeting that is being held in Whitehorse this summer, there is an exciting field trip to the Faro Mine being offered. The trip, according to their website, allows the participants to “catch a rare glimpse into the belly of the Faro Mine Complex, one of Canada’s most prolific past-producers of lead and zinc” and is limited to twenty participants. Not exactly open and inviting to the rest of us.

YCS is of the opinion that the current lack of transparency around the Faro Mine reclamation cannot continue. Yukoners (and all Canadians) should know on what large amounts of taxpayer dollars are being spent, and the nature of the environmental harm that might be occurring on and around the Faro mine site. Openness and full disclosure must be the route forward.

This must include, but not be limited to, making public the current onsite situation through newsletters, community meetings, websites etc. As well, the past, present and anticipated future costs associated with this abandoned mine cleanup must be in the public domain.

Finally, a timeline must be established and adhered to as to when environmental assessments (such as the Yukon Environment and Socio-Economic Assessment Board) or regulatory authorities (such as the Yukon Water Board) will be engaged in assessing and authorizing both the current activities (care and maintenance) and future activities (stabilization and remediation).

It is time for the various levels of government who are responsible for cleaning up the mess at Faro to redeem themselves and actually begin to do something, and to do it in an open and transparent manner. This threat to the onsite environment, the downstream ecosystems and the salmon-bearing Pelly River cannot be allowed to continue.

–*Lewis Rifkind, YCS Mining Analyst*



March 3 7:15 PM - 8:30 PM
Public Talk: The State of Waste In The North

Christina Seidel (Executive Director of Recycling Council of Alberta) will be giving a public presentation about the current state of waste and recycling in the North. Having worked extensively in waste management policy and diversion with a special focus on northern municipalities, Christina has a wealth of knowledge and experience to share on how northern communities can better divert their waste.

It's Time to Protect the Landscape that we all Enjoy

The City of Whitehorse's old *Snowmobile Bylaw* was rewritten and passed by Mayor and Council in 2012, as was the ATV bylaw.

Both bylaws had to be updated again in February of 2015, after the Yukon Government (YG) changed the *Motor Vehicle Act* sections on ATV and snowmobile operation, and dropped most of the meaningful requirements on the operation of off-road-vehicles (ORVs) on trails (outside City limits). In doing so YG took a regrettable step backwards, a step that is at odds with other jurisdictions such as B.C., which recently strengthened its own regulations concerning ORV use.

Whitehorse's regulations for ORVs are more stringent than those of the territorial government. Within the City of Whitehorse boundaries, "Snowmobile operators must be at least 16 years old, and have a Safe Snowmobiler Card, valid driver's license, insurance, certificate of registration (i.e. attached license plate) and [wear] an approved helmet." <http://www.whitehorse.ca/home/showdocument?id=2802>

The Bylaw prohibits snowmobiles from the Millennium Trail, Ski Trails*, and Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

One concern of Active Trails Whitehorse Association (ATWA) is that, although ATVs must stay on motorized trails, and away from open spaces ** and greenbelts, *** snowmobile operators are under no such restriction. In Whitehorse, trails designated as non-motorized are not truly non-motorized.

As a result, snowmobile users are not always sure where they are allowed to go, and non-motorized users are under the mistaken belief that non-motorized trails are free from motorized use even in winter. This creates conflict. Amending the bylaw would both limit damage to non-motorized trails and reduce user conflict.

* Chadburn Lake Ski Trails, Mount McIntyre Ski Trails, Magnusson Ski Trails, Biathlon Ski Trails are protected from ATV and snowmobile use under the respective bylaws.

** "OPEN SPACE" means a portion of land not occupied by buildings which is under the ownership or control of the Crown, Commissioner of the Yukon or the City and may be used for gardens, landscaping or passive or active recreation as set out in the City's Zoning Bylaw. (ATV Bylaw)

*** "GREENBELT" means an area of land generally left in a natural state which is under the ownership or control of the Crown, Commissioner of the Yukon or the City and may be used for passive or active recreation, trails, or buffers, as set out in the City's Zoning Bylaw. (ATV Bylaw)

The inconsistency between the *ATV and Snowmobile Bylaws* and the confusion it creates for all trail users makes for a compelling argument for Mayor and Council to re-open the bylaw and correct this problem.

There was a mistaken belief among some of those who passed the *Snowmobile Bylaw*, that due to snow cover snowmobiles have less impact on the landscape than do ATV's. There is much research that contradicts that belief. Even the *Snowmobile Bylaw* recognizes that snowmobiles can cause damage to vegetation, as it prohibits operators from "[damaging] any vegetation or ground" while driving their machines "in any area of the City." (General Operating Rules: 24)

Snow depth varies from year to year, and frequently changes throughout the course of the winter. Factors such as degree of slope, southern exposure, height of land, temperature variation, and vegetation cover all play significant roles in determining snow depth. In other words, snow depth is never the same in all areas of the City. Generally, the Whitehorse area does not get enough snow depth to mitigate vegetation damage, and as mentioned above, the City seems to recognize that fact in its *Snowmobile Bylaw*.

If snowmobile operators were required by the *Snowmobile Bylaw* to stay on designated motorized trails and out of open spaces and greenbelts (as are ATV's), then damage would be reduced.

In Whitehorse, singletrack trails in particular can become easily widened by snowmobiles, which require greater trail width. Once widened, they then become more accessible to all types of ORVs. In this City there are far more doubletrack trails than singletrack trails. (See Whitehorse The Wilderness A Guide to the Popular Trails of Whitehorse, p.18.) We cannot afford to risk the loss of more of these singletrack trails, which are particularly enjoyed by walkers.

There is no question that there is a place for the motorized 'out-and-away' trails as defined in the City's Official Community Plan (OCP). ATWA simply asks that motorized recreational users stay on motorized trails, something both the City and the local snowmobile association request of operators. It is now time to add some weight to this request.

If the *Snowmobile Bylaw* were amended to add non-motorized trails, greenbelts and open spaces to its list of prohibited areas it would go a long way to ensuring the protection of our local environment and the enjoyment of those who use our non-motorized trails.

*The Board of Active Trails Whitehorse Association
www.activetwa.org, activetwa@gmail.com*

Shop for Yukon Art at YCS!

Do you know that the Yukon Conservation Society is carrying beautiful limited edition prints by Don Weir? Don has kindly offered YCS partial proceeds from the sales of the prints.

Alpine Colour in the Tatshenshini, 16" x 24" ▶

\$185.00 (tax included)

Don Weir is donating \$75.00 from the sale of every *Alpine Colour in the Tatshenshini Fine Art Print* to the Yukon Conservation Society.



◀ Autumn Colour – Donjek Valley, 16" x 23"

\$185.00 (tax included)

Don Weir is donating \$35.00 from the sale of each *Autumn Colour – Donjek Valley Fine Art Print* to the Yukon Conservation Society, and \$50.00 to Karen's Fund up at the Whitehorse General Hospital which supports breast cancer patients.

We are also carrying four different hand silkscreened prints featuring Yukon wildlife, by Tanya Handley. At \$30, these fun, colourful wolf and raven prints make a great gift – or a perfect Yukon adornment for your own wall! YCS gets all the proceeds from these sales.

YCS BASEMENT CULL!

Volunteer Sue Greetham has worked a miracle in clearing up the YCS basement. Making room for more work!

Sue Greetham and Lewis Rifkind with a load of YCS e-waste for Computers for Schools Yukon.



Walk Softly

is published by the Yukon Conservation Society for members and subscribers. Memberships and information about the Society can be obtained by contacting the YCS office.

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Who, if anyone, should be allowed to drill for oil and gas at Eagle Plain?

It comes as no surprise to learn that Yukon Conservation Society thinks the best uses for the land at Eagle Plain do NOT include developing an oil field.

However, if an oil company IS going to build a network of roads, pipelines, drilling pads and waste pits, along with all the other infrastructure required to develop an oil field in the sub-arctic, we want the people who will be doing the work to be the very best in the world.

Chinese National Overseas Oil Company (CNOOC) and its subsidiary, Northern Cross Yukon (NCY) (CNOOC owns 60% of the shares of NCY) recently proposed a multi-well, multi-year “exploration” project at Eagle Plain.

Unfortunately the track record of this Chinese state-owned company is anything but good. CNOOC has a long history of human rights and environmental violations.

Here is a partial list of CNOOC’s documented human rights violations and environmental crimes. Please note that some of these documented incidents did not lead to charges or convictions and could therefore be considered to be “allegations”:

- In 2004, the U.S. Treasury Department reported that CNOOC had entered into a joint venture in Myanmar with a company “run by a family notorious for heroin trafficking.”¹
- In 2007-08, CNOOC clashed with its Myanmar workers over allegations of low wages, long working hours and other mistreatment of “inhabitants,” concerning “environmental contamination, land confiscation” and other unspecified “human rights abuses.”²

- According to documented evidence, CNOOC security forces and management have worked with police to detain Falun Gong employees and send them to “brainwashing centres”. Witness testimony has further accused CNOOC of arbitrarily dismissing or withholding pay from Falun Gong employees, confiscating their property, torturing them, and facilitating their imprisonment.³
- CNOOC itself likely has played a role in the repression of Chinese political prisoners such as Nobel Peace Laureate Liu Xiaobo, practitioners of minority religions such as Falun Gong, and Tibetans.⁴
- ... (CNOOC) is complicit in the forced resettlement of many rural dwellers — including the majority of Tibet’s 2.25 million nomadic herders — into concentrated settlements.... to clear the way for mining and oil extraction.⁵
- In 2008, CNOOC was accused of abuses of human rights in Burma. Arakan Oil Watch stated in a report that the company “left behind such a trail of abuses and environmental contamination on Ramree Island that outraged locals attacked their facilities”
- In a report released earlier (in 2013), the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right To Food found that many forcibly relocated Tibetans cannot sustain a decent livelihood in the resettlement areas — partly set up with CNOOC funding — and therefore lose not only their traditional way of life, but their economic independence and food security.⁶
- CNOOC’s operational accidents in 2011 included a large oil spill in its Penglai oilfield operation (a joint venture with ConocoPhillips), as well as an explosion in one of its oil refineries in Guangdong province close to a nuclear facility.⁷



- In 2011, CNOOC and its partner ConocoPhillips caused a series of massive oil spills in the Bohai Sea in the South China Sea. They subsequently paid 1.7 Billion Yuan (CAN\$374,000,000) in fines.
- In July 2015, a CNOOC pipeline near Long Lake Alberta started leaking. CNOOC’s fail safe system failed and the leak was only found accidentally two weeks later by which time 31,500 barrels of oil and waste had poured out into the surrounding muskeg. The problems turned out to be so pervasive that the Alberta Energy Regulator shut down the entire facility in September until CNOOC can prove its pipelines are safe.
- The July 2015 CNOOC oil spill was blamed for so badly damaging the reputation of the industry that major pipeline projects became unlikely to ever be built.⁸
- January 2016, a CNOOC hydro cracker (where tar sands crude is turned into syncrude) in Ft. McMurray exploded killing one worker and badly injuring a second.⁹

1. Tim Armstrong, Toronto Star, 2012

2. Amnesty.ca 2012

3. Irwin Cotler, quoting Amnesty International, National Post 2013

4. - 7. Irwin Cotler, National Post, 2013

8. Oilsands pipeline projects look doomed after Nexen oil spill leaves ‘two big football fields of black goo’. Penty R. & Tuttle R. Financial Post July 28, 2015

9. Jeffery Hodgson, Globe and Mail, 2015

This is a partial list of the more widely known crimes and violations by a company that wants to operate in Yukon. YCS does not think that this record constitutes a good corporate citizen, and YCS has no confidence CNOOC will operate with any more care or respect in Yukon than it does anywhere else.

Closer to home, CNOOC, through its subsidiary NCY, has demonstrated a cavalier disregard for the concerns of affected First Nations, of UFA mandated boards and committees and advice from Yukon government.

CNOOC reneged on a deal for monitoring the Porcupine Caribou Herd (PCH) during its 3D seismic program in 2014. It had agreed to follow best practices from Alberta and utilize aerial monitoring of the PCH when the herd approached the operating zone. When the time came for the planes to fly, the company flat out refused.

Similarly, a working group to monitor the effectiveness of mitigations was set up, but CNOOC/NCY refused to participate.

These actions alienated and reduced the trust of the First Nations that have always lived, used and travelled through the Eagle Plain area.

Developing an oil field in the heart of the wintering ground of a major international caribou herd is a big deal.

Doing it right is critical if the PCH is to survive, and if oil and gas development in Yukon is to receive social license.

CNOOC does not seem to realize the reality that it needs to work with RRCs, with the Porcupine Caribou Management Board, with YESAB and with all the government departments involved, not just the agency charged with promoting (and, conflictingly, regulating) oil and gas development.

Instead, it has dismissed the concerns and advice of these bodies; it still refuses to consider stopping operations even if the PCH moves into the operations area (as the herd did this fall, although the company refused to acknowledge this fact), it still refuses to participate in a working group to monitor the effectiveness of mitigations, it still refuses to do aerial monitoring (bizarrely, it argues that aerial monitoring would disturb the PCH more than drilling for oil).

Adding to the concern that CNOOC will cut corners and try to avoid Canada’s and Yukon’s rules is the terrible economics of this proposal — CNOOC/NCY cannot possibly make a profit at current depressed oil prices (~\$30/barrel), and it is uncertain that it could even at the halcyon prices of summer 2014 (recently, the CNOOC/NCY CEO used the figure of \$160/barrel to promote the project).

Experience in Yukon with other money-losing operations such as the Wolverine mine (incidentally, also a state-owned Chinese enterprise), illustrates what happens when the parent company decides to cut its losses.

As has been the experience to date with resource extraction in the Yukon, it is likely that Yukon will have to pay to clean up the mess in this case too.

And, as was the case with Wolverine, local private sector contractors could easily be left high and dry.

Sebastian Jones,
YCS Energy Analyst

How do the new BC rules for ORVs compare to the Yukon's ?

Many Yukon snowmobilers are keen on operating in the BC areas of White Pass, Chilkoot or Haines summit. This winter, they'll need to be mindful of the new *BC ORV Act & Regulations* that became effective on November 1, 2015.

Here's why we should all welcome the new BC rules, quoting from the "Frequently Asked Questions": https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/mof/orv/QA_ORV_Act.pdf

"Why are registration and a number plate or sticker important?"

- Modernizing the registration scheme will help enforcement officers better identify irresponsible ORV riders that endanger others, damage the environment or harm animals.
- In addition, it will help enforcement officers track stolen vehicles since ICBC's registration data would be available to officers 24/7."

So, what exactly would Yukoners need before heading out to White Pass, the Chilkoot area or Haines summit with their snowmobiles? I recently asked that question to several agencies, including the BC agents that handle the new BC ORV Regulations, the ICBC agent in Atlin, Parks Canada in Whitehorse, a BC Conservation Officer, the Motor Vehicle Branch in Whitehorse, and local insurance brokers. Here is a summary of the information received:

- The new BC ORV Act's definition of "Off-Road-Vehicle" (ORV) includes snowmobiles.
- The new BC law applies to all snowmobiles and other ORV operation on BC crown land, including trails and backcountry.

- The White Pass, Chilkoot area, and Haines summit areas are on BC crown land, subject to the new BC ORV Act and Regulations.
- Parks Canada confirmed that the new BC law applies to snowmobile operation in the Chilkoot Trail National Historic Site (CTNHS).
- Yukoners who operate their snowmobile or other ORVs on BC crown land (e.g. Atlin area, Chilkoot, White Pass, Haines summit areas) must carry a certificate of registration for their machine, and display a Yukon license plate on their snowmobile or other ORV.
- Quoting an ICBC agent from Atlin concerning Yukoners operating snowmobiles in BC: "It would be the same as you driving your car/truck to Atlin or other locations in British Columbia, if your home jurisdiction insures and registers your vehicle, BC recognizes that."
- The Whitehorse Motor Vehicle Branch confirmed that in order to register a snowmobile or ATV in the Yukon, proof must be provided of third-party liability insurance. The Yukon license plate must be affixed to the snowmobile or ATV. The cost of registration is \$35.
- A local insurance broker quoted \$53 for third-party liability insurance for a snowmobile, if the owner already has an auto policy with them.
- Snowmobilers and other ORVs must have a driver's license, insurance, registration & license plate when driving across or along a maintained road in BC, including service roads such as mining and forestry roads.
- Operators and passengers must wear helmets at all times.

More info at https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015FLNR0313-001725?WT.cg_n=Hootsuite

The new BC ORV Act was designed to increase environmental protection and safety. But how do the new BC rules compare to the Yukon's?

The Yukon Government's regrettable decision in November 2014 to deregulate ORV operation on trails is at odds with other jurisdictions and has contributed to confusion among Yukon ORVers. Many now believe that there are no rules for ORVs outside of Whitehorse.

More education is needed concerning the remaining rules under the new Yukon ORV regulations: for example, just driving a snowmobile or ATV across a Yukon highway requires a drivers' license, insurance, registration and license plate. Children must wear helmets at all times.

Since most Whitehorse owners of snowmobiles are likely to operate their machine in the White Pass, Chilkoot or Haines summit, it makes sense for them to be prepared with the registration, license plates and third-party liability insurance that are required for operation both in Whitehorse and BC, and to drive on or across Yukon highways.

Many concerned Yukoners are currently working towards ORV laws that better protect the environment. Referring to the new BC ORV Act will help that process.

Dorothy Lebel

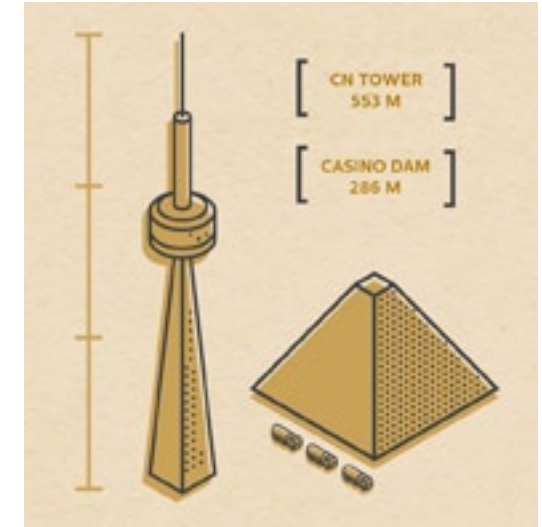
Tailings Dams, Failures, and the proposed Casino Mine

YCS's Mining Analyst, Lewis Rifkind gave a public talk Feb.23 at Hellaby Hall about the risks associated with wet tailings dams in general and the Casino Mine dam in particular. The Casino Mine is a proposed large copper-silver-gold-molybdenum project in the south-west Yukon.

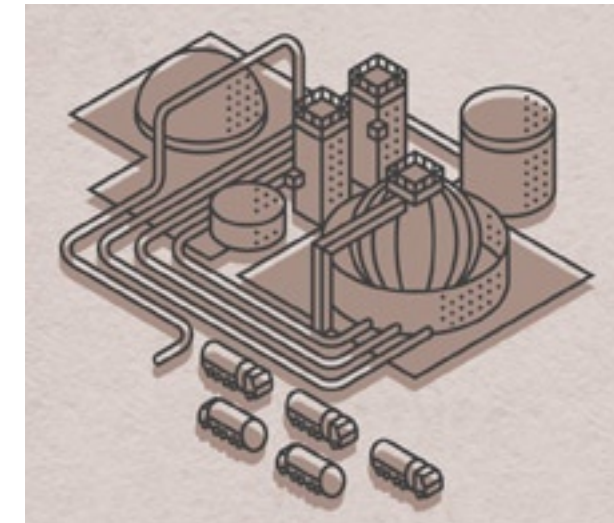
In case you missed his talk, here are some fancy infographics that summarize his key points.



Casino Mine Energy Use will double the Yukon's annual Greenhouse Gas emissions by burning liquefied natural gas onsite.



The wet tailings dam associated with this mine would be 286 metres high, one of the tallest in the world. It will be the tallest structure west of Toronto and they are banking that it will stand forever!



The Casino Mine Access Road goes right through the heart of the Klaza Caribou herd grounds and 125 heavy duty trucks will use it every day!

Walking the talk!

Meagan Christie, our Board president, conducting a blower test to check the air-tightness of the YCS office building.

Personal global environmentalism

When I tell people that I work at the Yukon Conservation Society (YCS), most people assume right away that I'm an environmentalist. Although I have a hard time labelling myself as anything, I usually partly agree with the statement people make. No-one I know (including myself) is an environmentalist 100% of the time, or in everything they do. However, when we get talking about the little things one can do to take pressure off the environment, sometimes people are surprised at 'everything' I do. For me it's second nature to recycle, to buy food in bulk and without packaging whenever possible (hurray for Farmer Robert's, the new organic wholefoods grocer in Whitehorse), to bike to work whenever I can (living 27km from town makes this challenging during the winter months as you might imagine), to reduce & reuse, and the list goes on. You, as a supporter of YCS, can most likely relate to some of the things I mention above.

The other day I was thinking about what it means to be an employee at an Environmental Non-Governmental Organisation (ENGO). I'm very well aware that it means many things to me, and that it probably means many other things to my co-workers. On my search for meaningful employment, I was lucky enough to find two part-time jobs that perfectly reflect my values. One of them – YCS – is focused on my direct environment; the other one – in organic fair trade coffee – affects people around the world. One of them is an ENGO, the other one is a local for-profit business. Both do wonderful, meaningful work. And that's not the only similarity.

At YCS we advocate for and foster, among other things, environmentally-sound land use planning and sustainable mining and energy projects in the Yukon. Responsible development so to say – by doing our best to minimize impacts on the environment we sustain our livelihoods and those of generations of Yukoners to come. Growing one's own food could be one of the – fairly – simple things most people in the Yukon can do. Or they can support local businesses by purchasing food grown by Yukon farmers. Of course, not everything can be grown in the Yukon, and we're used to importing foods from far away countries.



Here's where my 'other job' comes into play. A while ago I was talking to one of my friends about my job at a local organic fair trade coffee roaster. This business is built on personal relationships with coffee farmers, and coffee farmer co-operatives. For the business owners, coffee is all about the farmers. For most of you, coffee is probably about waking up in the morning, about visiting friends, and about the wonderful aromas. And, like me, you most likely can't imagine a world without coffee. For the locavores amongst you, coffee unfortunately doesn't meet the 100-mile (or 1,000-mile) diet. You can however, choose to support coffee businesses that work to reduce the impacts of their industry on the local environment, namely small-scale, fair trade farmers/farmer co-ops. As we all know by now, small scale farming is better for the environment than large industrial farms are. The coffee Bean North Coffee Roasting Co. Ltd. purchases from our farmer friends is certified fair trade (good for the people!), shade-grown (good for birds!) and certified organic (good for everyone!).

I encourage you to do some research next time you're craving bananas, chocolate, sugar, coffee, tea, or any other product that is grown close to/south of the equator by people who live a less luxurious life than you do. It's not always easy to find out if a company uses true fair trade practices in their relationships with local farmers, but it's also not a lost cause. Just like with your locally grown potatoes & greens, and with the blueberries you pick in August, knowing where your food comes from, and knowing you help the people who grew it for you to build their own communities, while doing your part to protect the environment, makes it taste SO much better!

Read more about Fair Trade Certified coffee here: <http://coopcoffees.coop/fair-trade/fair-trade-today/>

– Judith van Gulick,
YCS Office Manager



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 2016!

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 – yics@yics.yk.ca

Thank You Volunteers!



Thank you to all our volunteers for the vital work you do at YCS. If you'd like to help out with any of our events, campaigns, or projects, contact Julia at yicsoutreach@yics.yk.ca or 668-5678. We'd love to have you!

HUGE thanks to:

- Joshua Hunt for all his time spent on upgrading the YCS computers.
- Mary Amerongen for her dedication keeping the YCS membership database up to date.
- Sue Greetham for her incredible work sorting out our basement... it's barely recognizable!
- Mike Tribes for sourcing and installing our new TV, instantly improving our meetings.
- Thibault Doix, Living Streams Environmental Services – for processing invertebrate samples from the BioBlitz.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH to all of you who renewed your membership for 2016, and made a donation to our society in 2015! We wouldn't be able to keep our organisation going without your support! With your help, we'll do great work in the coming year to protect the Yukon's land, water, and wildlife.



YCS Annual General Meeting (AGM) - you're invited!

Tuesday March 29, 5:30 PM, YCS office (302 Hawkins St.)

Join us to learn about our work over the past year and our projects for the coming year. We'll also present the Volunteer of the Year award. Catch up with our staff and board members, and touch base with other familiar folks as well.

The AGM is an opportunity to nominate new members to our volunteer board. If you would like to nominate someone, or are interested in joining the YCS board yourself, now is the time. Any nominations should be submitted to YCS by Tuesday March 22, 2015 – please include the nominee's contact information and a short bio. Feel free to contact us if you are interested in finding out more about the roles and responsibilities of board members.

Please RSVP (ycsoffice@ycs.yk.ca or 668-5678) your plans to attend so that we may ensure quorum (and seating).

Refreshments will be served!



Follow the Yukon Conservation Society on Twitter: [@YukonConservati](https://twitter.com/YukonConservati) and 'like' us on Facebook: Yukon Conservation Society

