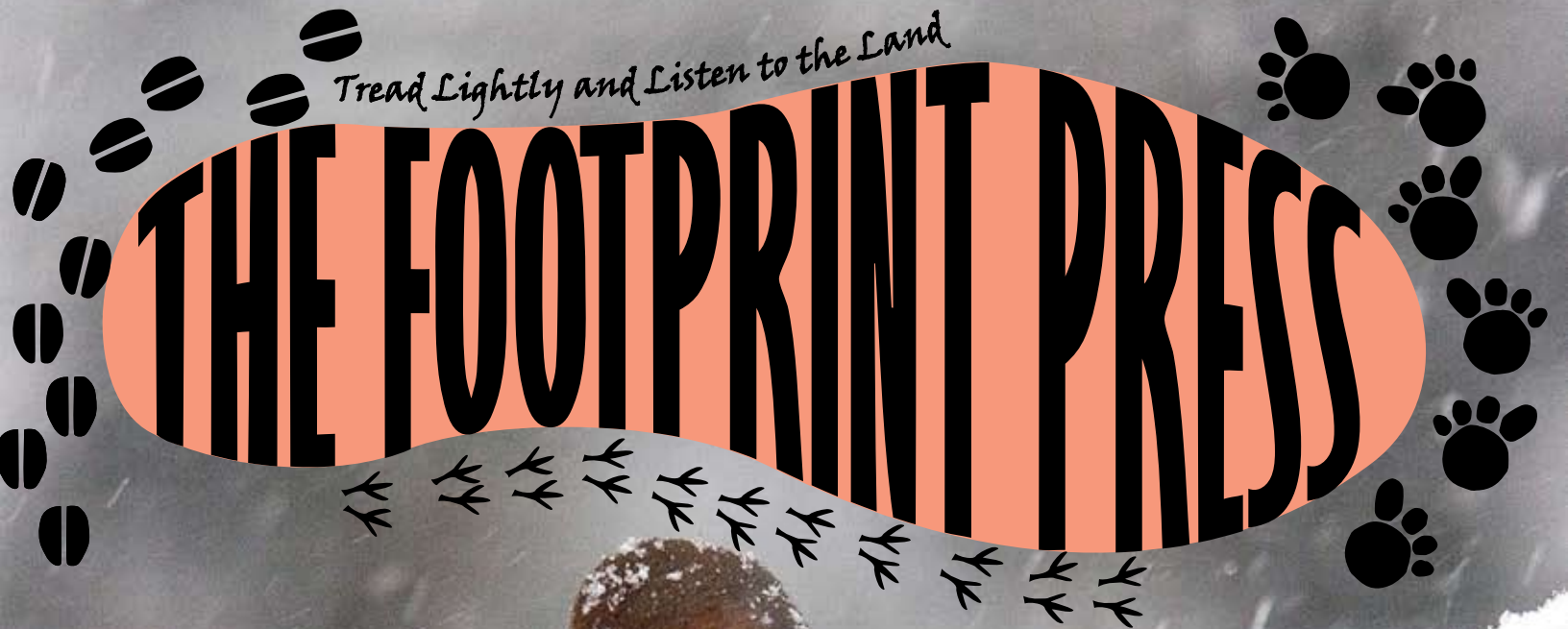


Tread Lightly and Listen to the Land

THE FOOTPRINT PRESS



Issue 3: Winter 2011



Passages from Silverdale, Mission,
Abbotsford and beyond.

Message from the Editorial Committee

Tracy Lyster, Catherine McDonald, Val Pack, Phyllis Young,
Bruce Klassen, Nik Cuff, Don Mair, Mike Diener
Cover photo: Northern Flicker in Silverdale, Bruce Klassen

This issue of the Footprint Press is dedicated to courageous citizens who stand up for Nature and for the public interest. From the release of oxygen from the tallest tree, to the waste disposal processes in the very soil beneath our feet, we have come to learn that all life depends on Nature's services. Ordinary citizens, alarmed by the squandering of these services by irresponsible municipal, provincial and federal governments alike, are becoming organized and speaking out like never before. And these citizens are making a tremendous difference. Economic growth and corporate profits are no longer an acceptable excuse to destroy the environment. Citizens are now demanding more progressive and balanced visions in which environmental and social sustainability principles form the basis of economic development. However we have also come to learn we cannot sit by and trust politicians to make wise decisions. The Auditor General's recent slam on the province for not doing enough to protect our precious groundwater reserves reminds us that politicians are not always motivated by the public good. We have learned that apathy breeds the status quo and we must hold politicians to account, lest with the stroke of a pen they deny our children, and grandchildren, the right to a healthy quality of life. Citizens' voices of reason are beginning to resonate with us all. Thousands of Canadian citizens came together to stop the insane destruction of pristine Fish Lake for a mining dump. Thousands of citizens rallied in Victoria to save our wild salmon. Thousands of students have come together to demand meaningful alternatives to car dependency between the Chilliwack and Abbotsford UFV campuses. No doubt, it was also thousands of ordinary citizens that saved the historic Pelton farm in Maple Ridge from becoming an asphalt grayscape. Committed citizens have even drafted their own policy to address conflicts between the gravel industry and residential neighborhoods after it became painfully clear that the government had disregarded their concerns. With each action, the public becomes more informed and stronger. Our actions, and connections with each other, speak louder than mere words.

Anglers enjoy the Stave River salmon run near Silvermere Island



A Fix for Fraser Valley Transit, or is the Fix In?

Daniel van der Kroon

Abbotsford, Mission, and Chilliwack, with the release of the long-awaited Strategic Review of Transit report from the firm Urban Systems, are at a crossroads for the development of their communities. This is the most comprehensive transit report that has ever been presented to regional decision-makers here, and its release enables our councils, in partnership with the Provincial government, to finally get the ball rolling for transit improvements.

For a couple of years, on behalf of students at UFV, I've been advocating for a "regionalized transit-system" – one that permits inter-municipal travel on transit between Abbotsford and Chilliwack, as currently exists between Abbotsford and Mission. This report is the first to address that issue in a focused way, as well as the question of whether we should have a passenger rail system from Chilliwack to Surrey.

First, the report sets out that everyday, there are in the neighbourhood of 800,000 trips that occur in the eastern Fraser Valley, and that only 1.1%, or about 9,000 of these occur by public transit. If that's not inefficiency, I don't know what is.

Overall, this report concludes that the most cost-effective investment in public transit infrastructure is in bus service, not train service, and that the increases to bus service should be substantial, but mostly deferred until the end of the 30 year period set out in the Vision. There will be much controversy over this finding, given that according to Malcolm Johnston of the Light Rail Coalition, the author has overshot dramatically in estimating the annual operating cost for this service.

The report essentially concludes that regional service between Abbotsford and Chilliwack is necessary and warranted, with a return on investment

that is actually better than the existing Abbotsford-Mission service. They use phrases such as, “great potential to attract ridership” to describe the potential service, and definitely envision the implementation of this service within the 30-year vision – the only question is when we implement it. So local councils, let’s get on with it, ok?

This report has many good things in it – like reinforcing that if we press forward with the sprawling developments in Silverdale, McKee, and Promontory, that the “low density” of these growth areas “further contributes to the challenge of providing attractive two-way transit services to growing areas.” I would suggest that if we build these types of developments, that these neighbourhoods have no claim to the provision of transit service, and we should focus transit resources on neighbourhoods built to accommodate transit service.

Overall, the report calls for modest, unambitious, increases in transit service that will need to be implemented to the letter if they are to have any chance of influencing the style of development and the sustainability of eastern Fraser Valley communities. Is an increase of 0.31 service hours per person over a nearly 20-year period even remotely ambitious? Put another way, this represents merely a 76% increase in transit services per person by 2030, not even doubling a level of service which the same report says is two to five times less than any community with higher transit mode-shares.

That’s right. If we follow the implementation strategy outlined in this report up to 2030, we won’t have close to the same level of service that other com-

munities in BC have now until the year 2030.

As with most reports, anything ambitious is relegated to the extreme long term, with only modest increases called for in the short term. Surely we can do better than this!

With that level of service, I’ll move to Victoria, Kelowna, New Westminster, or virtually anywhere in BC and come back in 2030 to see how things have changed.

Final notes: for anyone who would argue that increasing public transit even to the level of smaller communities in BC with the predictable “better transit service will mean more taxes that are already too high” argument, the report finds that transit currently costs us between \$4 and \$14 in property taxes annually. Please, don’t tell me that’s too much. That’s 1 hour of work for a poorly compensated worker.

Lastly, community planners use the term “transit-oriented development” (TOD). I believe we need to begin to use the term “transit-oriented community”. This report calls for a mode-shift from 1.1% of trips on transit today, to 2.3% by 2030. An extra 1.2% of trips made on public transit barely even registers on the radar screen. Our community leaders should be ashamed of themselves for permitting getting around in this region to remain so expensive, when with an iota of vision and foresight, we could move people far more efficiently, freeing up valuable room in the budget for more worthy things than our cars.

Daniel van der Kroon,
UFV Students for Sustainability



**Members of CAUSS on Highway 1
calling for Rail for the Valley**

Fairies at the Bottom of the Garden? The Story is in the Soil

Sylvia Pincott

Could it be that there really are fairies at the bottom of the garden? When we think about it, there is a lot happening for us that we take for granted. Waste disposal is one of Nature's amazing services that we seldom consider – but waste doesn't just "go away". Indeed, it is only through the services of a multitude of small organisms that we are not buried deep in excrement, corpses, and debris!

Uncountable numbers of terrestrial organisms die each year, and their remains are consumed by organisms of the soil. In the process, soils render harmless any potential human pathogens in waste and in the remains of the deceased life forms. While human waste is generally discharged into disposal systems of some sort, the waste of all other animal and plant life is returned to the soil to sustain life beyond.

How much waste and dead organic matter is produced and processed each year? In "Nature's Services – Societal Dependence on Natural Ecosystems", editor Gretchen Daily references an estimate that the amount of live organic matter produced each year (net primary production by plants and animals) totals about 132 billion metric tons (dry weight) of organic matter (give or take a few billion tons!).

Not only must this amount of organic matter be processed, it must also be recycled back into the land in a form that will sustain the soil and the subsequent life therein. "Nature's Services" continues "... In the space of the period at the end of this sentence, diverse microbial species process the particular compounds whose chemical bonds they can cleave and pass along to other species, in assembly-line fashion, end-products and by-products of their specialized reactions."

When we think about it, how often do we come across a dead animal, bird – or even an insect? Remarkable processes are at work – from the microscopic to the more apparent. When we look closely, even the beleaguered wasps are important processors, quickly gathering and consuming the least of lifeless protein.

Being mindful of the life in the land should surely give us pause before we reach for chemical solutions to insect "problems". Pesticides are seldom selective of their victims, and the good are impacted along

with the "bad". Soils can soon be rendered lifeless with continuous chemical impacts, no longer able to continue the cycle of life from death. Choosing "organically grown" not only spares chemical impacts on our bodies, but spares the life of the land to continue with its vital work.

Consider, too, septic tanks and sewage disposal systems. What a lot of abuse we throw at them! It isn't the "normal waste" that is the problem. The countless aerobic and anaerobic bacteria residing there are designed to thrive and multiply as they digest the natural waste that we provide. It is unfortunate when chemicals far beyond their coping capacity are included in our offerings – "anti-life" ingredients such as anti-bacterial soap, for instance, when it is bacteria that we are depending upon to do this work for us – or Drain-O, bleach, harsh detergents, caustic cleaners, unused drugs, etc. Perhaps it's time for us to give a thought to those tiny workers who are at the receiving end of our waste stream and ensure that they have a healthy environment in which to do their work!

Let us have a care, and spare a thought and thanks for the tiny "fairies at the bottom of the garden" that do the dirty work for us.

Sylvia Pincott, Naturalist Advisor for Naturescape British Columbia



FISH LAKE TAILS

Ava Waxman



On November 2nd, 2010, Jim Prentice, Federal Minister of Environment, refused to grant Federal authorization to allow Taseko Mines Ltd. to develop its Prosperity Mine project. The government took into consideration the conclusions of the Federal Review Panel and agreed with its conclusions about the significant adverse environmental impacts of the project.

Taseko was seeking regulatory approval from the Federal government to destroy Fish Lake while developing a copper and gold mine that would operate in the heart of Tsihqot'in territories, south-west of Williams Lake, B.C.

The Prosperity Mine project had been undergoing an approval process for more than 15 years. Three successive Federal Fisheries Ministers, from 1995 onward, notified both the Province and Taseko Mines Ltd., that a project involving the loss of Fish Lake was not open for discussion. Tsihqot'in communities have not given consent to the Prosperity Mine project which would jeopardize a sacred site of cultural and historic significance and would be in an area of proven aboriginal rights [determined in the Supreme court of B.C.]. Secwepmecommunities had expressed opposition to the power line that would run through their territories which was needed to develop the mine. Nevertheless, Taseko continued to invest time and money to see this development happen.

Taseko ignored traditional indigenous economies while trumpeting the economic benefits of this mine [it would supposedly generate tax revenues of about \$7.5-8 million] and it ignored the associated public costs of this mine. Dr. Marvin Shaffer, in his Federal Review Panel submission, estimated that the Provincial government would be subsidizing the project with \$20 million per year for the life of the project.

The virtually unanimous opposition to the project in the closest and most affected communities did not stop Taseko or Prime Minister Harper. In 2007, new Fisheries Minister, Loyola Hearn, reversed the Federal position and allowed the project to move forward into the Federal Assessment process and Taseko even acknowledged the controversy in its own submissions to the Federal panel:

"...Throughout the more than 15 years that this project has been undergoing economic assessment, significant First Nations and public interest in preserving Fish Lake has been expressed. Notwithstanding the inherent difficulties of trying to preserve a lake in the midst/immediately adjacent to a plant site/concentrator and open pit, Taseko has left no stone unturned in trying to find a way to preserve Fish Lake and develop the Project..."

The threat to Fish Lake is possible because of the government amendments to the Metal Mining Effluent Regulations (MMER) attached to the Fisheries Act. MMER contains a loophole [Schedule 2] that acts as a public subsidy to the mining industry. Schedule 2 allows lakes and riparian areas to be converted into tailings impoundment areas [TIA] at the discretion of the government, saving the mining industry cost for proper mining waste treatment and disposal.

The Federal decision is bigger than just Fish Lake. There are currently sixteen other lakes across Canada being considered for "reclassification" as TIA. The Sandy Pond Alliance came together around an effort to prevent Sandy Pond in Newfoundland from becoming a tailings collection site for a nickel processing plant owned by Vale Inco. The Alliance launched a legal challenge in June 2010 against the Federal government arguing that Schedule 2 is illegal and violates the government's mandate to protect our water.

As Ken Kavanagh, a director for the Sandy Pond Alliance, said "... the focus of our challenge is not just Sandy Pond. It's the fact that we have what we think is an illegal regulation that allows any number of ponds and lakes in this country to be used as toxic dump sites...the destruction of entire aquatic ecosystems that support diverse fish and other wildlife goes against the intent of the Fisheries Act to protect fish and fish habitat."

The Fish Lake battle is not over and there is no telling yet if it will have influence on the Sandy Pond court case. Prentice left the door open in his ruling and with his comment afterwards "...and the company is at liberty to re-submit a proposal to try in some way to resolve or ameliorate the recommendations of the panel in terms of the environment..."

Taseko, the Mining Association of B.C. and the Province, have already stated they intend to seek a way to resubmit the discredited project. With Baird as new Minister of Environment, it remains to be seen if the Federal government will honour its Panel Review process or make a mockery of its own assessment process.

First Nations have also taken further action with Fish Lake by launching a title and rights court case in the B.C. Court of Appeal on November 15, 2010. This is potentially a ground-breaking case and the verdict will probably not come until next year and will likely proceed to the Supreme Court of Canada, which could take several more years.

So, as Xení Gwet'in Chief Marilyn Baptiste says, "The question is, in the meantime, do the industry and governments want to continue wasting effort and money pursuing projects that cannot proceed... or are they finally prepared to work with First Nations to establish a regime that respects all parties and the environment...to focus on viable environmentally sound projects that respects our rights and cultures."

There is also the question of the differences between the Federal and Provincial assessment processes.

Tony Pearse, an environmental consultant, raises the question whether the Provincial approval process was flawed. It didn't have the scope of the Federal review and it did not scrutinize the issues with the diligence shown by the Federal panel for the issues it did consider. The Province did not have any interveners', or experts' testimony to cross examine. Pearse notes that Provincial review was done apart from any meaningful public consultation and that it "...never examined the economic feasibility of the project...it simply accepted without question the company's promotional numbers... [yet] the Federal Panel's report discusses expert evidence ...that seriously undermines the company's economic predictions..."

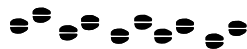
The added issue of a possible government leak of the Fish Lake decision and an unexplained sell-off of Taseko shares more than two weeks prior to it, really makes one wonder just who should be making the decisions for a community.

Ava Waxman

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Plant knot want not: Japanese knotweed Zoey Slater



Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) is a non native plant species that was introduced to Canada in the 1800's from Asia as a desirable ornamental perennial. However its aggressive nature and fast spreading behaviour has made it one of the top priority species to target when implementing control strategies for invasive species. Dense stands of this highly aggressive and destructive species are becoming more and more common throughout the Fraser Valley, including Mission.

There are actually four knotweed species found in B.C., however Japanese knotweed tends to be the species that is more commonly observed within our local area. One of the knotweed species known as Bohemian is a cross between the female Japanese knotweed and the male Giant knotweed. The Bohemian species is the only species that produces

viable seeds that tend to be dispersed by water, as they are often found within riparian areas. The reproduction method for Japanese knotweed is through their rapidly spreading root system that can reach depths of 3 metres and potentially spread up to 20 metres.

Japanese knotweed tends to be found in highly disturbed areas, such as roadsides, in ditches and along riparian areas. It grows in dense thickets shading out all other herbaceous species growing below. The plant can grow up to 3 metres in height and has thick, hollow stems that resemble bamboo, dotted with reddish-brown speckles. The leaves are heart to triangular in shape and when the plant blooms, between August and September, small whitish green clusters of flowers are found along its stems and joints.

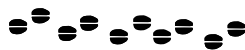
The growth of this invasive plant has severe ecological impacts to our local ecosystems. Due to its aggressive nature and persistence to grow under less than ideal conditions such as drought, it can easily out-compete native species. By forming dense clumps it creates a canopy that sunlight cannot penetrate, therefore making it impossible for other plants to grow beneath, and destroying biodiversity. This then can lead to a reduction of suitable habitat for other species and potentially limit food sources. It has also been noted that Japanese knotweed contributes to an increase in

soil erosion along stream banks because its root systems do not hold soil well. It is such a destructive plant species that it has even been known to grow through pavement.

Invasive species are the second largest threat to biodiversity, and they continue to attack our beautiful natural landscapes. The first steps to stop the problem should be prevention. We as consumers need to be more aware and never purchase or grow any invasive species and opt for native plants. However, if an infestation of knotweed has already occurred, mechanical or chemical controls may need to be used. If using mechanical control methods it is important that all plant parts must be disposed of appropriately because a small root or stem fragment can potentially form a new plant colony.

Japanese knotweed is just one of many invasive species that are running rampant throughout our communities and creating extremely negative consequences that will be seen in the future for years to come. In order to protect the biodiversity of our local flora and fauna we must all work towards removal of invasive species throughout our local ecosystems. For more information on removal techniques of Japanese knotweed check out the Invasive Plant Council of B.C. website: www.invasiveplantcouncilbc.ca

Zoey Slater, Mission



Red frog blues Val Pack

What has red legs, moves faster than a human, and croaks underwater? If you guessed the Red-legged Frog, you would be absolutely correct! Known as Rona Aurora (dawn), by their scientific Latin name, the Red-legged frog is one of the 32% of the world's amphibians facing possible extinction. Similar to the proverbial "canary in the coal-mine", scientists consider amphibians, including frogs, as "indicator species". They let us know just how healthy our surroundings are.

This medium to reddish-brown, smooth-skinned, black "freckled" frog, has the dubious distinction of belonging to a Blue-listed species, that is, it is very susceptible to human or natural-related intrusions on its environment.

Physically, these frogs are somewhat slim, medium-sized amphibians, with the males being

smaller at about 7 c.m. in length than the larger, approximately 10 c.m. sized females. The dark-masked faces of Red-legged frogs reveal off-white stripes on both sides of their faces, extending from the jaw line to behind their shoulders. Red-legs have the appearance of heavily lidded, gold-coloured eyes. Conspicuous "dorsolateral folds" stretch from beyond their eyes, along the sides of their bodies, to their backs. Their long, slim, hind legs are capable of allowing them to outdistance humans, and possibly many of their predators. The skin on the inner sides of the legs reddens as they grow into adulthood, and is described as being "translucent", having the appearance of "red muscle" revealed beneath it. It was due to this unique colouration, this frog received its distinctive name.



The underwater calls of amorous males to their female counterparts, signals the beginning of the breeding season. These “low-pitched, stuttering” noises uniquely made from a depth of up to a metre beneath the water, and often inaudible to humans, begins in January or February (along the warmer, coastal areas), and early Spring, in the colder locations. Taking place in wetlands, ponds, or slow moving streams, mating lasts for only a week or two resulting in the female Red-legged frog laying from 750 to 1300 eggs. These eggs, developing in a jelly-like substance, appearing slightly beneath the water’s surface, are held in a loose fashion by water plant stems. Following an approximate four week period of development, the small embryos hatch into tadpoles, which spend four to five months in this stage, until they become active, little froglets, only about two centimetres in length by the middle of Summer. It is estimated that sexual maturity is reached in Red-legged Frogs when they reach the age of three or four years.

The Red-legged Frogs’ habitat consists of cool, moist forests and wetlands, vegetated ponds, and streams along, or close to, the Pacific coastline in the Lower Mainland, including the North part of the Fraser Valley area of B. C., as well as Vancouver Island, and the smaller islands as far south as Baja, California. They have been found locally in Silverdale and Silvermere Island in Mission. Generally avoiding clear-cut locales, the adults prefer spending considerable time on land, often travelling a fair distance from water sources in damp weather, seeking moist refuge under logs, and other suitable, damp cover. Red-legged frogs, as moist-skinned amphibians, absorb toxic materials from the surrounding air, water, and other environmental materials. Their entire existence

from birth to death depends on static surroundings. There must be little or no change in order for them to thrive, and even survive.

Unfortunately, the Red-legged frog populations are facing reduced numbers in their Western range of this continent; and that problem is also sadly evident in our Lower Mainland area. The Red-legged frogs face many threats to their existence, the number one factor being habitat loss. This loss is being created by human degradation and destruction of the frogs’ traditional dwelling areas due to rapid and expanding development of buildings and roads. Due to this encroachment and fragmentation of their habitat areas, the frogs are therefore experiencing reduced access to their traditional travel corridors, reducing their access to wetlands and breeding areas. As a result, the Red-legged Frog population ultimately faces a loss of genetic diversity as well as a reduction, or even extinction, of its species.

Another great danger, aside from the habitat loss and the increasing numbers of road-kills claiming many Red-legged Frog lives, particularly during mating season, are non-native Bullfrogs. Bullfrogs eat the Red-legged tadpoles, thereby decimating their numbers. The introduction of Green frogs, and Slider turtles, apart from eating the Red-legged tadpoles and froglets, also transmit diseases, and compete for important food sources.

For further information on the Red-legged Frog, contact Frog watch, a division of the B. C. Ministry of the Environment, Lands and Parks, at <http://www.elp.gov.bc.ca/wld> as well as local conservation groups, and Naturescapebc.ca.

Val Pack, Mission

“There’s gravel in everything”, R. Hawes



The Aggregate Pilot Project (APP) was initiated by the province to address “... the persistent and intense conflicts caused by current aggregate operations in the Fraser Valley Regional District and thereby secure a long-term stable aggregate supply.” The public naturally assumed that conflicts between the gravel industry and their communities would be a major focus of the project. However this was not the case and public health concerns about water contamination, toxic silica dust, noise and heavy truck traffic through residential neighborhoods are not a major focus of the document (see articles by Walter Neufeld and Wendy Bales at Footprintpress.ca). I attended the APP public meeting at McConnell Creek Oct.20/10 where it became obvious that the APP was mostly concerned with how municipal

and provincial governments could divvy up the spoils of accelerated gavel extraction. To their credit, citizens took the initiative to generate a constructive solution and drafted a community-centric response called the Aggregate Supply Project, which was released Dec. 3/10. “The Aggregate Supply Project considers the interests of communities and gravel miners...It also provides a progressive plan that promotes the end of Conflict Gravel mining practices,” W. Neufeld. It remains to be seen if the government is willing to collaborate with the community or merely placate the gravel industry.

To view the ASP see <http://www.chilliwacktoday.ca> under Top Stories

Tracy Lyster, Silverhill, Mission

Betting the farm Mike Gildersleeve

On October 20, 2010 the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) handed down their decision denying Steve Pelton's application to have 162 acres removed from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). There was a huge amount of interest and concern about the Pelton application, beginning back in May, 2010, when Maple Ridge Council voted to send it off to the ALC with little debate and no offers of public consultation.

Since then, there has been an impressive outcry of concern with over 200 citizens sending in letters to the ALC. An additional petition with over 1,500 names was added to the previous petition done in 2009 by Pitt Polder Preservation Society already containing 2,335 signatures from those opposing industrial development in this area.

It is interesting that the proponents of this application, highlighted the social, environmental, economic and, in particular, the agricultural benefits of the proposal. The proponents also argued that the location next to the Abernathy Connector, created a prime location for industrial purposes.

For the ALC, the proposal was weighed against the purposes of the Commission as expressed in Section 8 of the Agricultural Land Commission Act:

- 1) "to preserve agricultural land."
- 2) "to encourage farming on agricultural land in collaboration with other communities of interest."
- 3) "to encourage local governments, First Nations, the provincial government and its agents to enable and accommodate farm use of agricultural land and uses compatible with agriculture in their plans, bylaws, and policies."

In their decision the ALC report says that the lands in question had significant agricultural capability and could support a broad range of agricultural activity. The Commission believed that the proposal was an "example of encroaching development into the ALR, which if approved would negatively affect the agricultural suitability of neighboring properties."

It was the Commission's view that the subject lands have good potential for agriculture and are in a productive agricultural area. There were other comments heard at the review meeting stating that "if you buy the land as farm land, then you sell it as farmland."

We certainly must, and do celebrate this decision, and of course, there is still much work for us to do in ensuring agriculture is a viable and hopefully profitable pursuit in our communities. However, the threats to farmland protection continue. In a recent report from B.C.'s Auditor-General, John Doyle (September, 2010), he states that "Inaccurate paper maps, inadequate enforcement mechanisms and under-funding are among the challenges hindering the Agricultural Land Commission in its job of protecting farmland from relentless pressure from developers." (Mission Record, Sept. 16, 2010). The ALC's \$2.1 million budget has fallen almost 30 percent since 2002. Doyle stated that "The fundamental importance of preserving agricultural land is particularly significant given the uncertain effects of climate change on our food imports and our agricultural systems." His report states "that there has been a net loss of ALR land in every Region of B.C., except the north where lands are not as productive as those in the south."

Sadly, it is our own government, as it turns out, that is responsible for the biggest losses to our Agricultural Land Reserve. There are already 225 acres of prime farm land lost to the still developing South Fraser Perimeter Road in Delta. Add to this hundreds more acres of our precious farmland, expected to be paved over as this government's \$3-billion dollar Gateway Program continues to unfold across the Lower Mainland, and finally the prospect of Site C dam on the Peace River, threatens thousands more acres.

Closer to home, in Maple Ridge, we are now facing the prospect of additional requests for lands to be excluded from the ALR as the District initiates its Albion Area Study covering 131.6 hectares, and 89 percent of this land is classified as ALR lands. Smart Centres Corporation owns land in this area and is hoping to have its land rezoned to allow for a mix of commercial, "big box", industrial and residential development. We are, as always, facing more important decisions ahead of us.

So more than ever, it is time for us to find ways to connect with our farming community, expand on our farmers' markets, and support any and all efforts to develop and promote locally grown food. There is no doubt in my mind, that if we look even twenty years into the future, it will be our remaining agricultural lands that will surely hold the most value.

Mike Gildersleeve, Maple Ridge-Mission

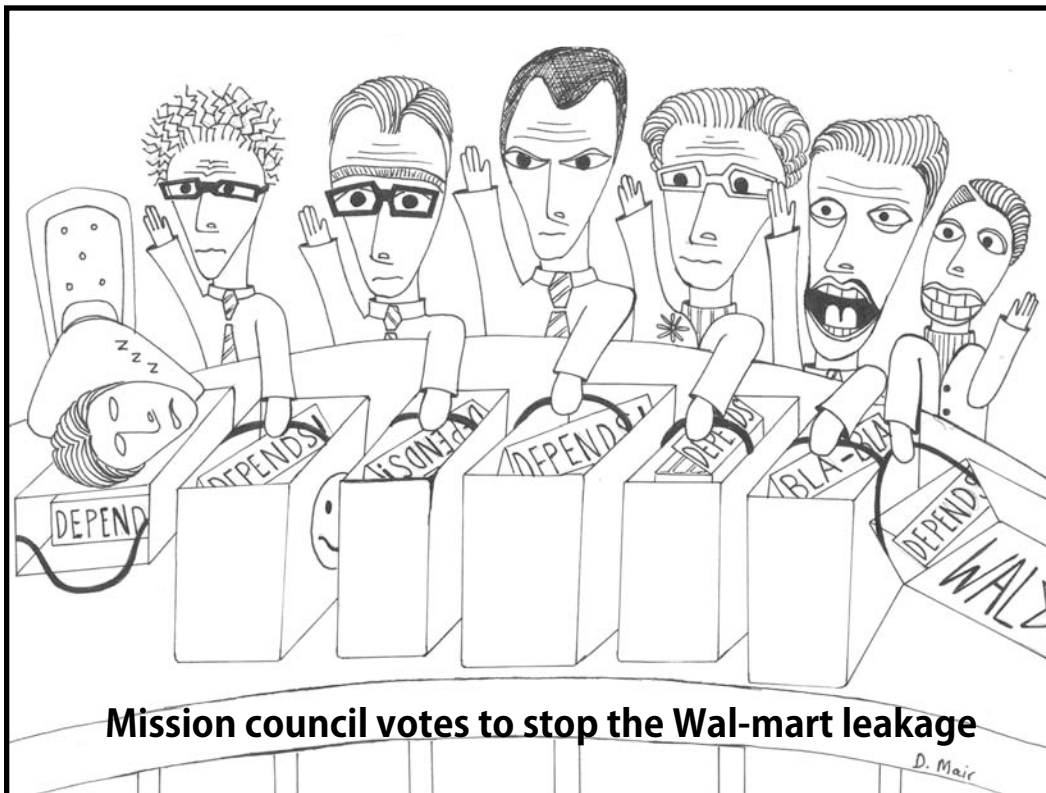
What on earth is going on in Mission?



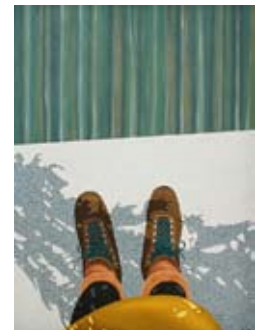
Respect for the physical environment goes hand in hand with respect for the social environment making social justice an imperative for a healthy society.

It is therefore extremely distressing that the B.C. Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA) has raised a red flag in regard of the "egregious infraction" of citizens' fundamental civil rights by the District of Mission. In her delegation to council Dec. 13/10, civil rights lawyer Micheal Vonn expressed her "profound concern" regarding numerous complaints received in regard of Mission's policy of searching citizens homes for possible grow-ops on the basis of high hydro consumption, and then charging citizens a \$5,200.00 fee for the search regardless of whether or not a grow-op is found. Ms. Vonn stated that BCCLA has received more complaints about these searches than any other single issue in its history and this is even more surprising given the relatively small size of

Mission compared to other communities. Vonn described these inspection fees as "extortionate" and concluded that the evidence Mission uses to justify the fees could be found in most people's homes. She added that photos taken do not appear to be the same homes as the ones that were searched and argued that innocent people have been harmed and deserve effective redress and an apology. To the shock of everyone at the council meeting, instead of using the powers it has to right the wrong, thereby avoiding a very expensive class action lawsuit, Mission council dug itself in deeper by refusing to answer questions from the public and threatening to call the police when distressed citizens pleaded to speak. When citizens' most basic rights to security, freedom from intimidation by government, and right to address its elected representatives are violated in this manner, it undermines the most basic principles of our democracy.



Mission council votes to stop the Wal-mart leakage



THE FOOTPRINT PRESS

The Footprint press is published each season as a non-profit community newspaper. This issue was funded by donations to CAUSS at the 2nd Annual Mission Film Festival. Articles are submitted by dedicated residents wishing to share their vision of a more sustainable and just society and who seek to live harmoniously with nature. Circulation is 2000+ on recycled paper. The paper can also be viewed on-line at FootprintPress.ca. Your support is appreciated and your participation is very welcome. Contact us at

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