



The Brief

Vol. 2 No. 9

A project of the NB Media Co-op

June 2011

nbmediacoop.org

Habitat for wildlife or more wood for J.D. Irving?

The government of New Brunswick must decide

By TRACY GLYNN

On the same day that New Brunswickers were rallying for greater wildlife habitat protection in Fredericton, J.D. Irving, the largest license holder of public lands in New Brunswick, held a meeting in the northern New Brunswick community of Kedgwick asking people to support their demand for more wood from the public forest.

Approximately 60 people gathered over a blustering rainy noon hour outside the NB Legislature on May 10th, to call on the government of New Brunswick to protect wildlife habitat and reduce clearcutting in the public forest. The rally, organized by CCNB Action (Conservation Council of New Brunswick), was attended by people from across the province including Kedgwick, Miramichi, Moncton, Sussex, Saint John and Fredericton. Naturalists, forest ecologists, professors, woodlot owners, eco-tourism operators, university students and high school students were among the people found in the rally crowd as well as Natural Resources Minister, Bruce Northrup.

After respectfully acknowledging that the rally was being held on Maliseet territory that had never been ceded, a number of speakers talked of the need to protect and restore the province's wildlife habitat areas. The speeches were interspersed with anti-clearcutting ditties performed by the Fredericton Raging Grannies.

"With your help, we were successful in delaying a decision by the New Brunswick government to adopt the former Liberal government's disastrous 50 year plan that would devastate wildlife habitat in our public forest," said David Coon with CCNB Action. The former Liberal government's, *A balanced management approach for Crown Forest*, allows companies to increase clearcutting on our public lands from 68% to 75%; slash by one third to one half the area of wildlife habitat on our public forest, from 19.1% to as low as 9%; and almost triple the area of plantations on our public lands, from 10% to 28%.

According to Graham Forbes, a wildlife biologist at the University of New Brunswick, many species that need old forest will not be able to tolerate the clearcutting and conversion to plantations if there are not enough untouched stands of 375 ha with trees of a certain size and type. Of the 148 species that the government of New Brunswick lists as forest dependent, the black-throated green warbler, pileated woodpecker, marten, and blue-spotted salamander are examples of the shorter list of 53 species in New Brunswick's forest that need old forest.

Martin Paul from the Maliseet Nation Conservation Council noted the need to work together to protect Mother Earth and reduce clearcutting and ban pesticides. "What we are asking is not impossible. We know that the province of Quebec eliminated pesticides ten years ago. As representatives of the Maliseet Nation, our job is to speak for the species that cannot speak for themselves. We have to remember that Mother Earth does not really need us but we need her. And I think that's worth protecting."

Charlene Mayes, a biologist at the University of New Brunswick, said, "Both clearcutting and monoculture are outdated and destructive practices... Relatively few people are going to benefit from clearcutting and



Around 60 people gathered at the NB Legislature on May 10th to call on the government to protect wildlife habitat and reduce clearcutting. Shown here: Joan McFarland who performed songs against clearcutting with the Raging Grannies; Pascale Ouellette, a Grade 12 student at École Ste. Anne in Fredericton and member of the Youth Action Group who read a section of the Youth Biodiversity Accord drafted by youth from across the province in 2010; and Natural Resources Minister Bruce Northrup who spoke to the media. Photos by Kevin Matthews.

monoculture whereas if you keep the forested lands intact and functioning as nature meant them to, all New Brunswickers benefit and the greater population of Canada and so on benefits," added Mayes. "The 2007 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change tells us that all planetary support systems are highly stressed and the reason for this is habitat loss and degradation. A prudent government would err on the side of caution. Minister Northrup, I urge you and the Premier and your colleagues to adopt a new plan in favour of wildlife preservation and restoration."

Pascale Ouellette, a Grade 12 student at École Ste. Anne in Fredericton and a member of the Youth Action Group, read a section of the Youth Biodiversity Accord that she helped draft with other youth from across the province in 2010. In addition to calling on the government to reduce clearcutting and ban herbicide spraying of the public forest, Ouellette called on the government to immediately increase the province's biodiversity standard to current science-based recommendations.

Following the rally, Minister Northrup said, "It was a good gathering. They have a statement to make and they made it today. We are working on the five year management plan as we speak."

Also on the same day as the rally, Nova Scotia made media headlines over their plan to reduce clearcutting in their public forest by half. The Nova Scotia NDP government has also committed to stop funding herbicide spraying of their forest. Meanwhile, Coon notes New Brunswickers will be paying more for companies like J.D. Irving to spray herbicides on the public forest. "Our tax dollars are used to pay for replacing natural

forest with plantations and dousing them with herbicides at the costly rate of \$1,000/ha. That will add up to over \$600 million over the next 50 years if the Liberal plan is adopted."

Meanwhile, J.D. Irving is mobilizing and asking people to write letters to elected representatives on their behalf. They are calling on people to defend their jobs and their communities. Critics of J.D. Irving's control of the province's public lands, like the Conservation Council, say what the company really wants is more control of public land, to clearcut more public forest and to spray more natural mixed wood forest for their tree farms. They say their plan to clearcut more wood from public land is not only detrimental to wildlife but also to thousands of woodlot owners and many others employed in tourism, recreation and non-timber forest product sectors.

During the worst of the forestry crisis in British Columbia, Fairfax Culppepper, a labour activist in Vancouver, commented on the jobs argument used by management of companies controlling their forest, "The Jim Pattisons and Harold Stantons of the world don't work, yet they make all the profit. If any jobs need to be 'shed', it's theirs. The owners of these companies do nothing for the mills' employees or their communities, they solely profit off of their labour while not working at all." [Fightback, July 10, 2008]

"New Brunswick should follow our neighbours into the 21st century and abandon destructive forestry," stresses Coon.

The fight against homophobia in Canada

By NAJAT ABDOU-MCFARLAND

Many people around the world were shocked to learn of Uganda's anti-homosexuality bill, which would have imprisoned people for homosexual activity, executed repeat offenders, and jailed for up to three years anyone who failed to report within 24 hours the identities of anyone they know who is LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered).

The bill, promoted by the country's evangelical church leaders with connections to American evangelical churches, was dropped from the order paper as the parliamentary session drew to a close in May.

There is a fear that the bill may be brought forward again when parliament resumes. In 2010, a newspaper in Uganda published the names of 100 Ugandans, calling for them to be hanged for homosexuality. In January of this year, leading gay rights activist David Kato was beaten to death in his home in the Ugandan capital of Kampala. He was one of the men listed in the newspaper.

In contrast, LGBT people have won significant rights in Canada. The same-sex marriage bill passed on July 20, 2005 – even though Prime Minister Stephen Harper tried to push the concept of Union onto LGBT people, which would have classified their relationships as inherently

different than a heterosexual union. This was rejected as discriminatory by the LGBT community.

The International Day Against Homophobia, May 17th, is a day when the LGBT community stand together against discrimination, and remember those who have been victims of harassment and assaults. The global day of action originated in Québec with Fondation Émergence organizing a national day against homophobia in 2003. The idea quickly spread to countries such as Belgium, France and the United Kingdom.

This year, a small group of people gathered at the New Brunswick Legislature in Fredericton to mark the global day of action and take a stand against homophobia in the workplace, at schools and in the wider community. Representatives from the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), the NB NDP and Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) Canada spoke at the rally.

In Toronto, PFLAG Canada marked the day by launching an awareness campaign in public transit locations and in print media. The campaign focuses on raising awareness of the support it offers all Canadians facing challenges of sexual orientation and gender identity. It draws attention to the shocking truth that one third of suicides in Canada are committed by people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender – six times the rate of the heterosexual population, and most prevalent among youth. (cont'd page 2)

visit nbmediacoop.org!



NB MEDIA CO-OP
Independent media by and for New Brunswickers

The NB Media Co-op relies on financial support from its members to fund high-quality independent journalism by and for New Brunswickers.

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail: _____

Phone: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____