



# The Brief

Vol. 7 No. 3

A publication of the NB Media Co-op

November 2015

nbmediacoop.org

## The Cumberland Files: NB Natural Resources, industry in synergistic tizzy over whistleblowing deer scientist

By MILES HOWE



**Rod Cumberland asserts that glyphosate applications to New Brunswick’s Crown lands is the cause of the province’s dwindling white-tailed deer population. Cumberland is seen here speaking to a rally of hundreds opposed to the Alward government’s forest plan in May 2014 at the NB Legislature. The forest plan gave an unsustainable amount of wood to J.D. Irving from public lands, according to the critics of the plan.** Photo courtesy of Conservation Council of New Brunswick.

Kjipuktuk/Halifax - The Halifax Media Co-op has acquired hundreds of pages of internal communications from NB’s Department of Natural Resources (DNR) that show the government and forest industry, in particular J.D. Irving, worked together when crafting their response to whistleblowing deer biologist Rod Cumberland’s concerns over forest herbicide spraying.

Upon retiring as a provincial deer biologist in 2013, Cumberland, with early assistance from the Conservation Council of New Brunswick, began to publicly rail against the effects of New Brunswick’s use of glyphosate in its silviculture program. Herbicides have been part of silviculture on Crown lands since the 1970s. An estimated 12,000–15,000 hectares of Crown land are sprayed with the herbicide each year.

Glyphosate mixtures are applied to Crown forest after a clearcut in order to eliminate hardwood tree species and select for softwoods. The plantations largely produce pulp.

Cumberland’s wedge issue was that glyphosate spraying in New Brunswick is responsible for the province’s dwindling white-tailed deer population, as it destroys their food supplies. He has also highlighted the scientifically-proven detrimental health impacts of exposure to glyphosate mixtures, and has gone so far as to liken the future health-related fall-out from glyphosate applications in New Brunswick to “this generation’s Agent Orange.”

Cumberland’s call for action against glyphosate followed similar calls made by woods workers in Kent County and tree planters in Kedgwick such as Betty St. Pierre who say they were sprayed with glyphosates in 2009. More recently, a truck belonging to Forest Protection Ltd., a herbicide application company, was blocked by herbicide opponents for several hours near Rogersville in September 2014.

According to the documents acquired, following Cumberland’s public denouncement of herbicides, DNR began email communication with the big lumber interests in the province, including New Brunswick’s own J.D. Irving, India-owned AV Group, Norwegian-owned Fornebu Lumber and the publicly-trade Acadian Timber as well as the RCMP and the provincial Department of Public Safety.

The emails discuss moving forward on the Cumberland-led issue of glyphosate spraying as an item of business for an already-existing “Risk Assessment Group” to address and analyze.

An email dated January 27, 2014 speaks to the merging of corporate interests and provincial governance. In the email, J.D. Irving’s in-house biologist John Gilbert requests advanced knowledge of the DNR’s stance on Cumberland’s anti-glyphosate claims in order to suitably lockstep his employer’s public reaction. “I need to be aware of the department’s reply to craft our own response,” writes Gilbert.

The email chain suggests that DNR actively sought out an expert who might counter Cumberland’s claims. An email from mid-February 2014 suggests that the search is on for a “specialist or scientist to address Rod’s conjecture,” who could be from “another jurisdiction” if necessary.

Days after the email was sent, R.A Lautenschlager, a biologist and the executive director at the Atlantic Canada Conservation Data Centre, publicly surfaced as a would-be spoil to Cumberland’s anti-glyphosate claims. Lautenschlager, a long time supporter of glyphosate applications in forestry, argued that glyphosates do not negatively impact the abundance of deer food in a debate with Cumberland on CBC Fredericton’s morning radio show on Feb. 25.

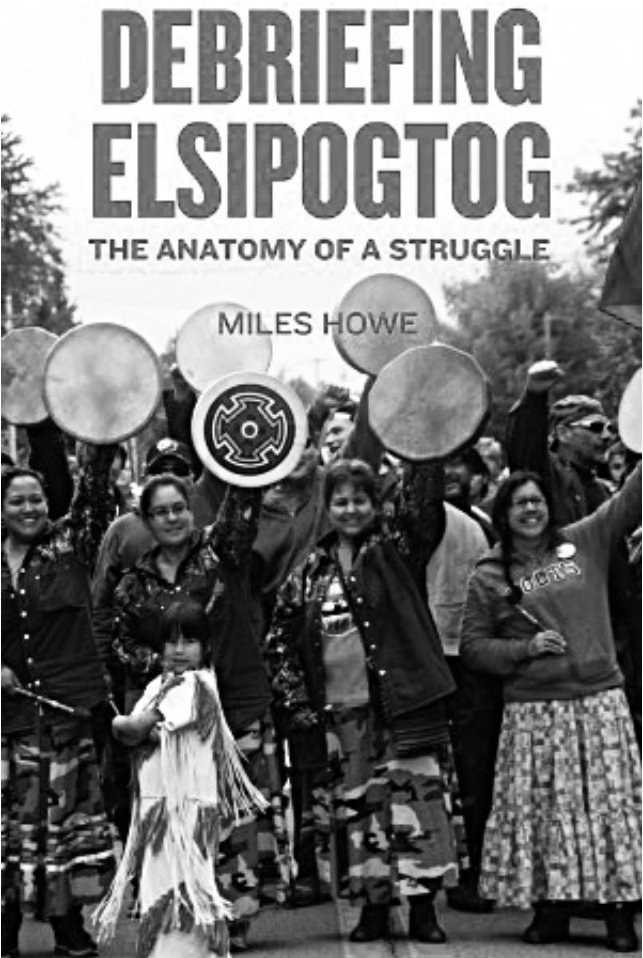
At the same time, speaking points “arising from the R. Cumberland” letter were being drafted internally for DNR spokespeople. Official answers for DNR staff were limited to the potential impact of glyphosate spraying on New Brunswick’s deer population, in particular their access to food.

Whistle-blowing scientists take note: Never underestimate your ability to send your former employer into reaction mode, with all the bureaucratic and corporate cooperation and message massaging that that entails.

*A longer version of this story first appeared in the Halifax Media Co-op.*

## Debriefing Elsipogtog: The Anatomy of a Struggle by Miles Howe Book Review

By JUDY HAIVEN



**Debriefing Elsipogtog: The Anatomy of a Struggle by Miles Howe. Publisher: Fernwood Books, 2015.**

When is a journalist not a journalist? According to CBC New Brunswick’s Information Morning host Terry Seguin, and media guests Dan Leger and Philip Lee, it is when the journalist becomes an activist. Calling freelance journalist Miles Howe a mere blogger, they questioned his credentials as a journalist. Leger even called Howe a “hot-headed fanatic” for his opposition to fracking at Elsipogtog. Howe, whose stories and blogs appear regularly on the Halifax Media Co-op and elsewhere, was arrested in 2013 at least three times by the RCMP near Rexton — basically for being a photo-journalist. His camera and computer were seized by the police. Howe had to resort to crowd-funding to raise money to replace these valuable tools of his trade.

But Howe has the last laugh. He just published his first book, *Debriefing Elsipogtog: the Anatomy of a Struggle*, which provides insight and service to the cause of Aboriginal people and which his detractors cannot erase.

Howe fits into a time-honoured tradition of citizen-journalist — one epitomized by George Orwell, who noted, “Journalism is printing what someone else does not want printed: everything else is public relations.”

Howe broke the story about fracking and showed how far the New Brunswick government, the U.S. company SWN Resources and the police were willing to go to open the province to fracking. Howe also demonstrated the commitment of Aboriginal people, and some white settler communities in the poorest province in Canada, to fight the destruction of their land and water.

Howe closely examines the mythical tradeoff between environmental protection and jobs. He looks at the toll fracking takes — from the chemicals used in the fracking process to the contamination of aquifers, to damage to wells, to possible earthquakes.

Howe also writes about the history and politics of white settler New Brunswick and the seesaw of Tory and Liberal governments. He makes no bones about how the Irvings control the resource and the media sectors.

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# Renewable energy far better than fossil fuels for : Debriefing Elsipogtog creating jobs, clean energy, healthy environment

By DALLAS McQUARRIE

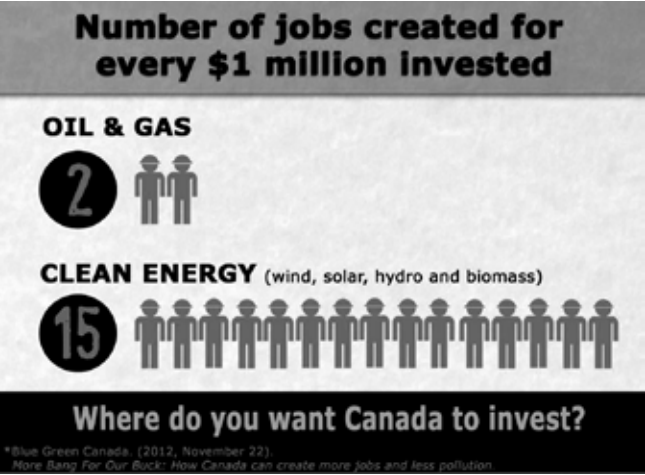


Image: Blue Green Canada.

People wanting to learn more about renewable energy were in Kouchibouguac National Park on October 4 to hear alternative energy advocate Roland Chiasson talk about it as the best way forward in a world facing climate change catastrophe from fossil fuel pollution.

Chiasson, chair of EOS Eco-Energy’s Board of Directors in Sackville, told Kent County residents that solar energy is already a better option than fossil fuels for creating jobs while protecting the environment. Production costs for renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and biomass, have been dropping steadily for more than 30 years and are now competitive with non-renewable energy sources.

In terms of jobs, Chiasson noted that investing \$1 million in oil and gas creates a mere two jobs, compared to 15 jobs created by the same investment in clean energy (wind, solar, hydro, biomass). In Canada today, almost 24,000 people are directly employed in the clean energy sector, compared to fewer than 22,000 jobs in the Alberta tar sands.

“The cost of producing solar energy has been dropping steadily for decades,” Chiasson said, noting that by 2021 the cost of producing solar power is projected to be lower than production costs for non-renewable electricity sources.

His presentation also cited a Canadian Press report that said \$24 billion has been invested in clean energy in Canada since 2009. Similarly, CBC news has recently reported that renewable energy will account for 25% of the world’s energy by 2018.

An environmental group operating in Kent County, Notre environnement, notre choix / Our Environment, Our Choice, organized the event titled, “Renewable Energy and You.”

This association was formed as a citizens’ group helping local residents resist provincial government’s attempts to force shale gas development on them. While its members are currently working on plans for local food production and sustainable development, almost all believe that Brian Gallant’s Liberal government will, like the Conservative government it defeated in 2014, flip-flop on shale gas and again attempt to force the industry on them and their communities.

Gilbert Blanchard is a Kent County resident who is alarmed about the seeming willingness of government and other groups to turn a blind eye to climate change.

Blanchard sees the unprecedented frequency of severe weather conditions as indicating things are getting worse. “In early October we had seen inches of rain in a day and a half,” he said. “We’ve never had that before!”

“If things don’t change, in another 20 years we’ll have to garden indoors,” he said. “In five years the situation is going to be even worse, and while more people will be ‘thinking green’ by then, a lot more damage will also have been done.”

Blanchard already takes great care not to waste water

or electricity, and now wants practical information to help him do more: “Renewable energy is the only way to go, and we need to go beyond talking about what can be done to learning how to actually do it!”

Chiasson’s presentation also featured several examples of New Brunswick families who have slashed their home energy costs by using available alternative energy technologies.

The first, most cost-effective, step is “to make your home more energy efficient through retrofitting and adding additional insulation before installing renewable energy technologies,” Chiasson said.

That means doing things in your home “like putting in an energy efficient furnace, insulating attics, basements and windows, setting thermostats for lower night settings, turning off computers, televisions, and sound systems when not in use, and replacing old style light bulbs with energy efficient ones.”

Susan Hopkins McQuarrie helped organize the Kouchibouguac event. “New Brunswick needs to develop energy sources that don’t destroy the planet,” she said. “Renewable sources of energy are the answer because they present obvious, practical alternatives to fossil fuels.”

Hopkins McQuarrie stated, “New Brunswick can be a leader in developing renewable energy,” and pointed to advances in Scandinavia.

“Most of Scandinavia is geographically and demographically similar to New Brunswick,” she said, “and what they’ve done while facing similar challenges to New Brunswick shows what can be done here.”

One such example is developing local community-based systems using renewable sources for the generation of electricity.

“Places like Scandinavia are miles ahead of us in developing renewable energy sources that, unlike fossil fuels, are clean, generate sustainable jobs, and create a healthy environment for people to live in and raise their families.”

Hopkins-McQuarrie praised the work of the EOS Eco-Energy group and its projects in the Tantramar Region of New Brunswick. She would like to see the provincial government provide the necessary support for groups like EOS Eco-Energy and Renewables NB to expand the excellent work they are doing all across the province.

“Our provincial government needs to stop being a hamster on a fossil fuel treadmill that goes round and round without ever moving forward,” she said.

“The time for renewable energy sources is now. Renewables are good for the economy, good for our health, good for raising children. What we need is a government with the vision to see all that renewables have to offer.”

*Dallas McQuarrie is a NB Media Co-op news writer based in Kent County. A longer version of this story appears on nbmediacoop.org.*

## In Brief

Reproductive Justice NB is denouncing the rape culture that persists at universities in Fredericton, in particular the silencing of discussion of campus rape by some professors and administrators. The feminist collective congratulated St. Thomas University Journalism Professor Jan Wong for organizing a screening at the university of *The Hunting Ground*, a documentary about campus rape on U.S. campuses. One sexual assault has already been reported at St. Thomas University during this academic year that began in September. Campus rape is a very real traumatic experience for one in four women on university campuses in the U.S. Canadian universities do not publish rape statistics.

The Energy East terminal project in the Bay of Fundy has not been approved but that is not stopping TransCanada from moving ahead with disruptive borehole testing. Borehole drilling

## Debriefing Elsipogtog

(continued from page 1)

- The book notes that six of the ten poorest postal codes in Canada are in New Brunswick First Nations’ communities.
- Howe charts the largely untold history of First Nations people in New Brunswick and respectfully weighs the politics and actions of the Assembly of First Nations New Brunswick, the Elsipogtog First Nation and the Mi’kmaq Warrior Society.

- The real villains in the book include the RCMP who sparked violence and made scores of brutal arrests at the protests.

- Harper’s government views First Nations peoples a threat, writes Benjamin Shingler of the Canadian Press: “Federal officials closely tracked the fallout of an RCMP raid on a First Nations protest against shale-gas exploration in New Brunswick, at one point raising concerns it could spawn another countrywide movement like Idle No More. Documents obtained under access-to-information legislation reveal a lengthy email chain last fall monitoring events related to a blockade near Rexton, N.B.”

- In fact, the emails bounced from the Privy Council Office (which serves Harper and the Cabinet), to the Government Operations Centre (an arm of Public Safety Canada). According to Shingler, the Government Operations Centre website boasts it offers an “All-hazards integrated federal emergency response to events,” and emailed out daily reports which dealt with planned protests nationwide.

- This brings me to Bill C-51, the new Anti-Terrorism Act. It directly threatens Aboriginal people and their supporters. The law sets a new standard for arrest and detention. If the police have a reason to suspect that someone or a group may commit a terrorist act, the police can arrest and detain them. They can act on a mere suspicion that an arrest is likely to prevent any terrorist activity.

- Howe’s book shows how the Aboriginal community has fought back against colonial encroachment and oppression — I’m sure the Harper government is paying attention.

- *Judy Haiven is a professor of Management in the Sobeys School of Business at Saint Mary’s University and an associate researcher for the Canadian Centre of Policy Alternatives – Nova Scotia (CCPA-NS).*

- *This book review first appeared in the Sept./Oct. edition of Canadian Dimension.*

creates marine noise and can result in flaring, both of which are detrimental to whales and other wildlife in the surrounding land and waters. “TransCanada is testing in the Bay of Fundy precisely when migratory birds and endangered right whales are at their peak in this area,” says Lynaya McKinley, a resident of Red Head, the small community near Saint John where the Energy East terminal would be located. “Not only has the project not been approved, but National Energy Board hearings haven’t even started. There must be community consultation before any work begins.”



**Students and professors rallied to abolish tuition and implement student debt relief on Oct. 7 at St. Thomas University. The rally, organized by the Fredericton Young Greens, featured Fredericton Green Candidate Mary Lou Babineau, university students, high school students, professors and workers with debt. New Brunswick has one of the highest average student debt loads at over \$34,000.** Photo by Tracy Glynn.

## Community Calendar

**Silver Wave Film Festival.** SWFF runs from Nov. 5-8 in Fredericton and offers a showcase of multicultural, new youth screenings, French and English programming of all genres and lengths and a comprehensive industry series, which brings experienced and emerging producers and filmmakers together. More info: <http://swfilmfest.com/>.

**Project Power.** Cinema Politica Fredericton & the Council of Canadians Fredericton Chapter present *Project Power*, a film by local filmmaker Jon Mann, that examines the massive social movement that stopped the sale of NB Power to Hydro-Quebec during the winter of 2012. Friday, Dec. 4 at 7:00pm at Conserver House, 180 Saint John St., Fredericton. Visit: [cinemapolitica.org/fredericton](http://cinemapolitica.org/fredericton)

**Cinema Política** believes in the power of art not only to entertain but to engage, inform, inspire, and provoke social change. Cinema Política is the largest community and campus-based documentary-screening network in the world. Cinema Política Fredericton screens films on Friday nights at Conserver House, 180 St. John St. at 7:00pm. Check out the films and venues at: [cinemapolitica.org](http://cinemapolitica.org).

## Join the NB Media Co-op today!

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