In Brief...

Nashwaik undermined

• Income of women in NB from all sources was 66% that of men in 2009, according to StatsCan. Of the 300,450 women in NB who have income, their median income was $21,130 while the 283,000 men with income had a median income of $32,040. In 2000, women's income from all sources was 62% of men.

• On August 20th, Moncton City Council voted to ban shale gas development from city property and waterways.

• Bruce Fitch, NB's Environment Minister, should never have issued permits to spray New Brunswick's public forest land as this violates the Conservation Act, according to the Conservation Council. Glyphosates are currently under review by the human health risk department of the provincial forest service. Spraying occurred each year in August and September and lasts about 40 days. New Brunswick pays for the chemical spraying of the public forest. Every year, hundreds of thousands of hectares of forest are sprayed, according to a complaint sent to the Environment Commissioner.

The Nashwaik River, provincially designated “A Class” watershed, is threatened by the Sibactor Mine, a proposed open pit mines for tungsten and molybdenum.

By STEPHANIE MERRILL

Since 2008, there has been a major development project flying under the radar in New Brunswick. The Sibactor Mine is a proposal to develop a mine and mine facility on a provincial forest reserve in southern New Brunswick.

The Nashwaik River, 200km (by road) north of Fredericton upstream from the village of Sibactor, is a remote area, a bit surprisingly, not many people are aware of the mine, and even fewer have been told about it.

The scale of the development is alarming by both New Brunswick and world standards. The information on the specifics of the project is sparse; however, from currently available data, it is projected that the project will be allowed to have an overall footprint of 1800 ha and an open pit 250 m deep. The two associated tailings dams rival the most massive in the world at 87 m at its highest and 6 km combined in length. By contrast, the MacQuaco dam is up to 55 m in height and 0.3 km long.

Some residents and local organizations have been following the 400 million dollar development since its original proponents, Geodes Minerals, registered the project with both the provincial and federal environmental review processes. The project was later and also to Norcliff Resources, a subsidiary of Hunter Dickinson Inc.

The Norcliff-Waddleshaw Associated (NWA) and the New Brunswick Salmon Council are particularly concerned about the potential effect on the Sibactor Mine on the health of the state of the Nashwaik River ecosystem. The watershed has been provisionally classified as “A” ("Excellent") water quality by the provincial government. Water quality is a large contributor to the fact that the Nashwaik is still home to a relative healthy population of salmon. It is an integral watershed, with the scale of the proposed mine site, has taken upon itself to engage with the public. MacFadden has given the public access to interested parties and interested interest groups in the region, and is willing to present meetings.

The public cannot legitimately participate in an EA process if they have no idea that the proposal exists or if they do not know who to contact. Nor does the process get people thinking and talking, and so far most people in the region are unaware of this proposal.

Central New Brunswick has been given official Intervener status by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) for the federal environmental review. CNB will be bringing a suite of academics together to review the EA study report prepared by Norcliff in autumn of 2012.

Taking a closer look at EI reform

(continued from page 1) ... consequences of EI reform? Here we need to pay close attention to the regional demographics and occupations. Unlike the situations in Alberta, British Columbia, and New Brunswick, there are no labour-intensive industries in the New Brunswick labour market. New Brunswick's EI program is a reform for one of the world's largest open pit mines for tungsten and molybdenum.

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