

## “We won’t be intimidated:” salmon group on forest spraying

By MATTHEW HAYES



**Thibert Rock, a singer from France on tour in New Brunswick, and André Arpin, a long-time forest defender from Kedgwick, pose with Stop Spraying signs in August. The signs are appearing across New Brunswick.** Photo from Thibert Rock.

A senior employee at JD Irving, Ltd. warned the Miramichi Headwaters Salmon Federation they would face reprisals if they went public with their opposition to glyphosate spraying, according to a spokesperson for the Federation.

The Federation became the first salmon conservation group in the province to go public with its opposition to glyphosate spraying.

John Gilbert, JD Irving’s chief biologist, contacted the Federation’s president, Randy Lutes, to ask him not to attend a press conference organized by the Alliance to Stop Spraying in New Brunswick on August 1st.

The phone call was confirmed by Lutes, who said Gilbert told him he might not buy a ticket to the Federation’s annual dinner.

JD Irving, Ltd. (JDI) responded to the NB Media Co-op’s request for comment by denying that Gilbert spoke on behalf of the company. In an email statement, Mary Keith, JDI’s communications officer, stated: “Mr. Gilbert made the call without the knowledge of JDI and his comments were his own, not those of the company.”

Downplaying the importance of the call, Judy Lutes, secretary and treasurer of the Federation, said, “We don’t want to burn bridges if we don’t have to.”

Other members of the Federation who heard about the call felt it was an attempt at intimidation.

“John Gilbert warned us that JDI would withdraw access to the river. It has been open since, well, forever,” Kevin Shaw, a director of the Federation, told a press conference in Fredericton on August 1.

Currently, Federation members access the river through Irving property, and individuals who wish to fish on the north branch of the Southwest Miramichi must be members of the Federation.

When contacted by the NB Media Co-op, Gilbert said he had “not officially” spoken to the Federation. He was aware of concerns Federation members had about glyphosate spraying and said he had made an offer to have JD Irving scientists address the group. He refused further comment.

In their statement from Mary Keith, JDI affirmed it continues to be focused on science-based forest practices and responsible use of herbicides.

JDI is New Brunswick’s largest forestry company, and the biggest user of glyphosates in the province, according to 2017 data from the government of New Brunswick.

### Growing opposition to glyphosate

New Brunswick uses more glyphosate in forestry than any other province in Canada, according to the Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health in her 2016 report on glyphosate. Opposition to spraying cut forest land has been growing in New Brunswick.

“People are sick and tired of the forest being poisoned, and there are a lot of first hand accounts of people seeing the forest around their homes being sprayed,” Shaw said.

Shaw grew up in the woods of Juniper and says there are no deer in his forest. The deer harvest has dropped 60% since the mid-eighties, according to the Alliance.

“What’s changed in our forest to cause this loss? Clearcutting and spraying of glyphosates are the two things that have changed,” said Shaw.

Members of the Alliance are also concerned about the potential human health impact of spraying, calling its continuation an ongoing experiment on New Brunswickers.

Glyphosate is a herbicide that kills hardwood trees and ground vegetation. It is the active ingredient in Monsanto products such as VisionMax and Forza that are sprayed to promote growth of softwood plantations in the province.

In 2015, the World Health Organization’s cancer research body listed glyphosate as a “probable carcinogen.” After winning a court battle, California has mandated that, as of July 7, products containing glyphosate carry a warning label that states the products contain potentially carcinogenic ingredients.

The Alliance is calling on New Brunswickers to oppose the spraying of glyphosate. According to a 2016 report of the Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health, 40% of forest land cut in 2014 was sprayed with glyphosate, compared to only 28% in Ontario, and 11% in Nova Scotia. Quebec banned spraying Crown forest in 2001 due to public health concerns.

Margo Sheppard of the Council of Canadians, Fredericton Chapter, said that members were opposed to glyphosate spraying because it was a “quick fix, with long term health and environmental costs.”

Forestry companies have argued that the spraying is needed to keep the industry competitive in the province. NB Power also says that it needs to spray to keep costs down.

Several speakers at the press conference talked about the inefficiencies and low employment rates from outdated forest management practices.

“The province doesn’t employ as many people in its forests as other neighbouring jurisdictions,” said Caroline Lubbe-D’Arcy, a spokesperson with Stop Spraying NB (SSNB). Kim MacPherson, New Brunswick’s auditor general, reported in 2015 that the province lost \$7-10 million each year from its Crown forestry operations in the five previous years, 2009-2014. She cited the costly silviculture program as a key factor.

According to the Alliance, the New Brunswick public is paying \$2.5 million per year for spraying that could be used to hire up to 1000 bush cutters instead. “Doesn’t it make more sense to employ people who could be contributing economically to their community?” asked Lubbe-D’Arcy.

Further action against glyphosate spraying in New Brunswick is planned for later this summer. Alliance member group, ÉcoVie from Kedgwick, is preparing to camp on clearcut land that is slated to be sprayed later this summer. According to spokesperson Francine Levesque, “we are being drowned in spray in our region.”

## Pain of Mount Polley spill felt in New Brunswick

By TRACY GLYNN

Ekpahak/Fredericton - Jacinda Mack, a Nuxalk and Secwepemc woman from British Columbia, was on the unceded Wolastoq and Passamaquoddy territories in New Brunswick in August to intervene at the annual meeting of Ministers responsible for mining and to meet with indigenous communities and those concerned with the proposed Sisson mine near Stanley.

Mack is a survivor of the catastrophic Mount Polley mine waste spill in the Quesnel watershed, home of birthing waters of salmon and other fish.

The Mount Polley spill, what the industry and government dubbed an “impossible event,” occurred in the middle of the night on August 4, 2014. Mack said the breach of the tailings dam sounded like jet engines flying overhead. A toxic slurry of mud and water, estimated at 24 billion litres, scoured old growth forest for 10 kilometres. Mack described the affected area: “Willow trees that grow everywhere weren’t growing in the creekside.”

No one was killed at the Mount Polley tailings spill, the largest in North American history. The same cannot be said of the world’s largest tailings spill that happened about a year later. The Samarco tailings disaster in Brazil on November 5, 2015 killed 19 people, devastated the River Doce and spilled into the Atlantic Ocean.

Nonetheless, for Mack and the people of Xatśúll First Nation, the spill was received as a death in the community: “Our people are grieving. My grandchildren will never know what it’s like to swim and fish in Quesnel Lake. That’s their inheritance, part of our bloodline now.”

There has been a three-year fight to have Imperial Metals, the company behind the Mount Polley tailings spill, fined for numerous violations to British Columbia and Canadian laws protecting fish and water. Mack said it was up to her mother, Bev Sellars, former Chief of the Xatśúll First Nation, to file charges as a private citizen in the eleventh hour, before the three-year time limit was up for fining the company for the incident.

“Our economy walks on the land and swims in the river,” Mack quoted her mother while showing a picture of Sellars dip net fishing in the Quesnel watershed in 1980. The mine has been permitted to continue dumping their waste into Quesnel Lake by the B.C. government.

Mack, coordinator of First Nation Women Advocating Responsible Mining, was part of a delegation organized by the Conservation Council of New Brunswick and MiningWatch Canada that hand-delivered a petition with 40,000 signatures calling for justice for the Mount Polley spill to Minister of Natural Resources Jim Carr at the Ministers’ meeting in St. Andrews on August 14.

Joining Mack at the Ministers’ meeting was Wolastoq Grand Council Chief Ron Tremblay and Ramona Nicholas, one of the Wolastoqiyik grandmothers who has set up a camp where the Sisson tungsten and molybdenum mine’s tailings pond is proposed to be built.



**Jacinda Mack delivering a petition signed by 40,000 people calling for justice for the Mount Polley spill to Minister of Natural Resources Jim Carr on August 14, 2017 at the Mining Ministers’ meeting in St. Andrews, NB.** Photo by Ugo Lapointe.



# Poor optics for Irving newspapers in Sisson, First Nations editorials

By TRACY GLYNN, MATTHEW HAYES AND CHRIS GEORGE



**Wolastoqiyik grandmothers are currently at the proposed site of the Sisson mine, near Napadogan, to protect their traditional lands. The camp is taking donations of food, water and money. They have dug one well and plan to dig more wells and housing.** Photo by Andrea Polchies.

Propping up business interests in the province of New Brunswick in their editorials should not come as a surprise to any reader of *The Daily Gleaner* or *The Telegraph-Journal*, but the newspapers crossed a line in their editorials on July 4 (‘Poor optics of mine opposition’) and July 5 (‘Chiefs should not complain’).

*The Daily Gleaner* accused First Nations of ‘poor optics’ when it told First Nations of the province that they should not have signed accommodation agreements with the provincial government over the Sisson project, proposed as one of the world’s largest open-pit mines near Stanley on traditional Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) territory. The compensation for the open-pit mine was accepted after the provincial government threatened to cancel other tax agreements that First Nations depend on for the delivery of social services.

The claim that First Nations should not have signed the agreement if they remained opposed to the mine implied that First Nations were thankless and greedy.

This stereotype has been mobilized persistently in New Brunswick history to degrade First Nations communities and to undermine support amongst non-Indigenous New Brunswickers. It perpetuates racist stereotypes that are the product of colonial institutions, which limit the agency of First Nations to determine their future.

These stereotypes have no place in the public life of the province in 2017.

Besides being obviously offensive in its paternalism, the editorials failed to explain why the Wolastoqiyik First Nations signed accommodation and tax agreements over the Sisson project. Poor media coverage of the inking of these agreements led people to believe that Indigenous people of the province were suddenly in favour of the mine. Madawaska Chief Patricia Bernard set the record straight.

Chief Bernard explained to CBC on Feb. 13, 2017 that the New Brunswick government threatened to cancel tax deals with her band and other First Nation communities if they did not sign an agreement on the Sisson mine. The

First Nations need the funds from gas, tobacco and sales taxes to pay for essential services in their communities. Chief Bernard made it clear back in February that she and other Chiefs continue to oppose the proposed mine.

The CBC article problematically describes the tax deals as ‘lucrative’ when in fact they are modest and barely cover the needs of communities that have been kept in poverty for generations by failed Canadian policies.

The Wolastoqiyik did not have a veto over the mining project, because their sovereignty has yet to be proven in Canadian courts. These same courts regularly uphold the private property rights of mining prospectors on disputed lands.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent is a key principle found in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) that was adopted by the General Assembly in 2007. Almost a decade later, Canada lifted its objector status to UNDRIP but has yet to implement the declaration in policy or practice.

Proposed resource extraction and pipelines across the country on indigenous land make implementing UNDRIP particularly tricky for the federal and provincial governments. The coercive tactics used by the New Brunswick government to get accommodation agreements with the Wolastoqiyik First Nations demonstrate a failure of the provincial government to take Free, Prior and Informed Consent of indigenous peoples seriously.

It is disappointing that the media in this province—so crucial to holding public institutions to account—have consistently failed to accurately report on issues involving First Nations’ interests and resource exploitation.

Given the extensive coverage in the Canadian press around Canada 150 and Canadian colonialism, and the desire of many Canadians from diverse backgrounds to move towards truth and reconciliation with First Nations people, the Irving newspapers owe their readers and the public a better explanation of the issue.

And, they owe Wolastoqiyik First Nations an apology.

continued from page 1

## Pain of Mount Polley spill felt

The Sisson project proposes to build a modified centreline dam, similar to the Mount Polley dam that failed. According to a new report by Dr. David Chambers of the Center for Science in Public Participation, there are several concerns with the current design of the Sisson tailings pond that have yet to be addressed by the provincial and federal governments in their approval of the mine’s environmental assessments.

The Wolastoqiyik grandmothers have dug a well and plan to build two more at their camp site. Nicholas said the camp is not just about opposing the mine but also reconnecting with the land, which is the traditional hunting territory of the Wolastoqiyik people, home to food and medicines. The camp has received support from the community in the form of cash, food and water donations. Mack visited the grandmothers at the camp on August 15.

“I want to be able to look my children and grandchildren in the eye and to say I did all I could to protect the land and water,” said Mack who left her home near Williams Lake (currently surrounded by raging forest fires) to share her community’s struggles with mining.

A grandmother in the audience at Mack’s talk on August 14 at St. Mary’s First Nation Cultural Centre expressed frustration: “I’m just a grandmother. What can I do to stop the mine and spraying of the forest? The corporations are so powerful.” Joan Green, a retired teacher from Fredericton, responded that people in New Brunswick were able to stop shale gas.

Mack shared specifics of the Mount Polley tailings disaster in attempt to stop another “Mount Polley” from happening while also reminding her audiences to not forget about the love that is crucial to every struggle. Mack said her love story is about salmon fishing with her son: “It’s a struggle but it’s also about love. Don’t forget your love story. With every love story, there’s heartache.”

## Community Calendar

To list your community event, email [info@nbmediacoop.org](mailto:info@nbmediacoop.org). For an updated listing of events, check [nbmediacoop.org](http://nbmediacoop.org).

**Take Back the Night March.** March for an end to gender-based violence. Friday, Sept. 22 at 8:00pm at Fredericton City Hall. Organized by the Fredericton Sexual Assault Crisis Centre.

**5 Days for the Forest.** The Conservation Council’s 5 Days for the Forest, Sept. 25-29 in Fredericton, celebrates our forest in its fall glory with nature walks, art, music, film, food and TREEvia. Visit: [conservationcouncil.ca](http://conservationcouncil.ca).

**Cinema Politica Fredericton** returns for its 10th year of film screenings on Fridays at 7:00pm at Conserver House (180 St. John St.). Check out the schedule at [cinemapolitica.org/fredericton](http://cinemapolitica.org/fredericton).



**Over 100 people gathered at Fredericton City Hall on August 21 to leave colourful chalked messages against racism and white supremacy.**

## Support The Brief

Independent journalism by the NB Media Co-op

### Join

Become a member of your local media co-op. Memberships are \$30/year.

### Donate

The NB Media Co-op is supported with donations from individuals, labour unions and social justice groups. Donate today and help us grow.

Memberships and donations can be paid online at [nbmediacoop.org](http://nbmediacoop.org) or by sending a cheque made out to the NB Media Co-op at the address below.

### Volunteer

- ☐ Research, write, edit, factcheck stories
- ☐ Distribute The Brief
- ☐ Organize special events
- ☐ Sign up for monthly email alerts.

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### NB Media Co-op

180 St. John St., Fredericton, NB E3B 4A9

Email: [info@nbmediacoop.org](mailto:info@nbmediacoop.org), Website: [nbmediacoop.org](http://nbmediacoop.org)

NB Media Co-op

@nbmediaco-op

## NB Media Co-op’s 8th Annual General Meeting & Keynote Speaker Bruce Livesey

Join the NB Media Co-op on Thursday, Sept. 21 at 5:00 pm at the Grad House (676 Windsor St., Fredericton) to review milestones of the past year and plans for the future. Bruce Livesey, award-winning journalist for *The National Observer*, will deliver the keynote on the need for investigative journalism at 7:00 pm at Kinsella Auditorium, McCain Hall, St. Thomas University. All are welcome but you must be a member to vote at the meeting. Contact: [info@nbmediacoop.org](mailto:info@nbmediacoop.org).

