Canada is under-reporting deforestation: carbon impacts of forestry: Wildlands League

By TRACY GLYNN

Canada's forests are emitting more carbon into the atmosphere than they are absorbing, explains Hardie.

"Canada’s forests could make the difference we need this decade to avoid worst case climate breakdown. Forests are irreplaceable carbon sinks and our country is basically one of the largest forests on Earth. There’s more forest area here than all of Brazil or China, for example," says Hardie.

The report, "Boreal Logging Scars: an extensive and persistent logging footprint in typical clearcuts of northwestern Ontario, Canada," states that a total of 650,000 ha of productive forest has been lost in the last 30 years due to roads and other logging infrastructure.

"That’s a staggering loss, equal to 3 times the area of the City of Toronto," says Janet Sunner, the Executive Director of Wildlands League.

Wildlands League wants the government of Canada to revise rules for monitoring deforestation to address the impacts from logging roads and landings in the boreal forest; and, to review and improve its current under-reporting of the carbon impacts from logging.

Beyond reporting deforestation rates more accurately, far harder, forestry needs to be part of achieving “the greatest possible carbon pollution reductions as quickly as possible. We have to adapt. Canada can be a leader globally on climate-smart forestry but we’re not a leader right now.”

Hardie’s organization, Community Forests International, is one of several organizations in New Brunswick working to combat deforestation and the carbon impacts by forestry.

“In New Brunswick, we actively protect and restore the special Acadian forest biodiversity on the forestland we manage, that’s also how we store the greatest possible amount of carbon over the long term," says Hardie.

Hardie’s organization is working with the New Brunswick Federation of Woodlot Owners to “share our forest carbon and climate resilience knowledge with other woodlot owners and managers in the region so it becomes a more of a mainstream approach.”

“Transitioning in a way that shares an economic upside and improve its current under-reporting of the carbon impacts of forestry,” says Hardie.

Tracy Glynn is a reporter for the NB Media Co-op and doctoral researcher with RAVEN, a media activist research project based at the University of New Brunswick.

Why should Saint John seniors pay more for water than the billionaires?

By DOUG JAMES

At a time when governments are encouraging seniors to stay in their own homes for as long as possible, Saint John is charging them more for water than anyone else in the city, including the billionaires who operate Canada’s largest oil refinery and a major pulp and paper mill.

Ever since the late industrialist, K.C. Irving, demanded and got a 25-year “sweetheart” deal for the pulp mill in Saint John in 1957, the city has basically had a series of sweetheart agreements with the city that provide a steady flow of cheap water to fuel their industrial enterprises. The more they use, the more profitable they become.

The demand for water by the Irving Pulp and Paper mill is almost insatiable. It gorges 40 million cubic metres of water out of Spruce Lake annually, causing many to believe that the only reason thousands of west side homeowners were switched to wells two years ago was to ensure a never-ending supply for the industrialists.

I understand that the costs of getting the water to me and other homeowners in such a sprawling city as Saint John, with so many old pipes that need to be replaced, is greater than the cost of getting water to the pulp mill, and that my water is potable, whereas the mill uses raw, untreated water. Some will use this to justify charging residential users more for their water than industry has to pay for its water. But I reject this argument, at least in part, given that industry pollutes the air (we have among the highest lung cancer rates in Canada), which leads to higher healthcare costs.

The pulp mill also adds considerable heavy truck traffic to our streets and bridges, which then require more costly maintenance and repairs for which we, the taxpayers, foot the bill. When there’s a butane leak or explosion at the Irving Oil Refinery, who pays for emergency services? We all know the answer. We do, in both dollars and potential lives lost. Furthermore, the refinery and the pulp mill don’t pay their fair share of taxes on their industrial lands or equipment. They get a break at every turn.

The average Canadian uses between 60-100 cubic meters of water annually, or between 220 and 250 litres per day. As a single retiree, I use considerably less, so I’ll use the bottom end of that range for the purposes of calculating my own costs. I pay a set rate of $1,428 per year for approximately 280 litres per day, a fraction of the actual total.

The report calls the associated carbon cost of Ontario’s forestland deforestation rate “nationally significant,” representing an estimated 16.5 megatons of carbon dioxide equivalent of lost carbon sequestration in the last 30 years.

For more grassroots news, visit: nbmediacoop.org

continued on page 2

continued on page 2

continued on page 2
By TRACY GLYNN

Edmundston pulp mill workers win wage increase and other benefits

As the working class continues to fight the loss of hard-earned gains, there is some good news to start 2020: pulp mill workers at Twin Rivers Paper in Edmundston have ratified a five-year collective agreement that will see their wages increase.

The collective agreement includes retroactive wage increases for a total of 11.25 percent over the life of the agreement. Wage adjustments will include production pay adjustments of 20 cents an hour in 2018 and 2019, and skilled trades pay adjustments of 25 cents an hour in 2018 and 50 cents an hour in 2019 and 2021.

Dave Boucher, President of Unifor Local 29, noted the importance of a strong bargaining team in winning this collective agreement.

“I want to thank the hard-working members for supporting the bargaining committee who worked to ensure that the management adjustments that members of Local 29 must share in the mill’s profits,” said Boucher whose local represents almost 300 members working at the Twin Rivers pulp mill.

Twin Rivers Paper Company, formerly known as Fraser Papers, is a privately-owned company and joint venture between Atlas Holdings and Blue Wolf Capital, their largest shareholder.

The company is one of a handful of companies that hold a license to cut wood from Crown land in New Brunswick, on the unceded territory of the Wolastoqiyik, M’ikmaq and Passamaquoddy.

Twin Rivers holds the Carleton and Restigouche-Tobique Crown licenses, a combined area of 527,179 hectares. They were one of three companies to primarily benefit from the controversial 2014 forestry strategy that guaranteed an equitable share of the Crown forest and its use.

In the early 2000s, many mill workers in New Brunswick lost their jobs when a wave of mill closures hit the province but the management understood that members of Local 29 must share in the mill’s profits," said Scott Doherty, Executive Assistant to Unifor’s National President.

Mayor of Edmundston Cyrille Simard welcomes this collective agreement: “Twin Rivers Paper plays an important role in our economy. This new contractual agreement is good news as it brings stability in our local economy and in the forestry sector for the whole region."

In the early 2000s, many mill workers in New Brunswick lost their jobs when a wave of mill closures hit the province but the management understood that members of Local 29 must share in the mill’s profits," said Scott Doherty, Executive Assistant to Unifor’s National President.

In 2018, the company bought the Pine Bluff mill in Arkansas. The New Brunswick pulp mill in Madawaska, Maine, and a lumber mill in theolina have been purchased by the same group. After the purchase, the Twin Rivers Paper Company announced that it will invest $70 million in the work force to bring cutting edge technology to the mill and to make the operation of the mill more energy efficient.

Depend on how much water each industrial enterprise in the province pays per cubic meter; the refinery pays 26 cents; still far below the rate to $2.77 per cubic meter.

Depending on how much water each industrial enterprise in the province pays per cubic meter; the refinery pays 26 cents; still far below the rate to $2.77 per cubic meter.

Along with reviewing the history and the Chief Medical Officer’s recommendations apply to the developmental stage of the uranium mining industry, several apply specifically to the exploration stage. These guidelines need to be in place in order to protect public health against the gaps in knowledge about cumulative and full-life cycle impacts of the radioactive resource and its use.

With respect to uranium and its products as created by the nuclear reactor process, no one—neither the province nor scientists nor society in general—has answers to these crucial questions about cumulative and full-life cycle impacts. Nor does the province know how effectively radioactive waste can be contained and managed at exploration sites. Bringing deep-seated radioactive waste near a population is akin to letting the genie out of the bottle; there is no return to pre-drill conditions. Just as shale gas exploration has possibly brought deep-seated methane to surface wells in the Maritimes, bringing radioactive material to the surface via uranium exploration will be fraught with insufficient regulatory baseline monitoring and uninform ed reactive response. The damage will have been done and the impacts will be irreversible.

Unfortunately, the government of New Brunswick has a poor record of ensuring citizen health related to exposure to radioactive. A 2008 CIBC report, based on the work of Inka Légère, says that a strong labour movement is needed more than ever in “the face of global economics with free trade for corporations, but highly constrained rights for workers driving down wages in a ‘race to the bottom’.”

“Trickle down economics has failed workers, families and communities for decades. It’s time to turn the channel and try bottom-up economics. Only when we pay workers a fair share of the wealth, invest in their education, job training and benefits will we see the benefits of bottom-up economics,” said Légère.

Twin Rivers Paper pulp mill in Edmundston, New Brunswick, Photo by Tracy Glynn.

Will a uranium mine be Higgs’ next genie?

Medical Officer of Health with respect to shale gas exploration activity, also to apply to uranium exploration. Without sufficient regulation, exploration will inevitably bring to the surface radioactive material from deep within the earth, placing ground and surface waters at risk. With poor setbacks, poor prior testing, poor drilling oversight and poor waste management regulation, domestic water supplies and wells in affected areas will inevitably be placed at risk.

Along with reviewing the history and the Chief Medical Officer’s recommendations apply to the developmental stage of the uranium mining industry, several apply specifically to the exploration stage. These guidelines need to be in place in order to protect public health against the gaps in knowledge about cumulative and full-life cycle impacts of the radioactive resource and its use.

With respect to uranium and its products as created by the nuclear reactor process, no one—neither the province nor scientists nor society in general—has answers to these crucial questions about cumulative and full-life cycle impacts. Nor does the province know how effectively radioactive waste can be contained and managed at exploration sites. Bringing deep-seated radioactive waste near a population is akin to letting the genie out of the bottle; there is no return to pre-drill conditions. Just as shale gas exploration has possibly brought deep-seated methane to surface wells in the Maritimes, bringing radioactive material to the surface via uranium exploration will be fraught with insufficient regulatory baseline monitoring and uninform ed reactive response. The damage will have been done and the impacts will be irreversible.

Unfortunately, the government of New Brunswick has a poor record of ensuring citizen health related to exposure to radioactive. A 2008 CIBC report, based on the work of Inka Légère, then science advisor for the Conservation Council, revealed that the provincial government had not followed up on recommendations presented in a 1982 report when high levels of radioactive radon gas were found in that area dating back to 1981. That lack of action to ensure citizen health and safety from 1981 to 2008 is a legacy for all New Brunswick communities. Communities may find themselves at the mercy of uranium exploration companies, and a government pursuing an ill-advised quest for small modular nuclear reactors.

Lawrence Wuest is an ecologist living in the Upper Nashwaak on an enclosed territory of the Wabaskankshik, M’ikmaq, and Peskotomuhkไท.

---

Seniors pay more for water than the billionaires?

By comparison, the City of Toronto charges industrial customers $3.08 per cubic meter for the first 5,000 cubic meters of water and then gives them a 30 per cent discount; lowering the rate to $2.77 per cubic meter.

Depending on how much water each industrial enterprise in the province pays per cubic meter; the refinery pays 26 cents; still far below the rate to $2.77 per cubic meter. The City of Saint John could wipe out its entire projected 2021 deficit of $12 million and have substantial additional revenue coming into the public purse year after year to pay for public transit, road repairs, lifeguards etc., instead of having to cut coming into the public purse year after year to pay for public transit, road repairs, lifeguards etc., instead of having to cut

If the powers were to be raised the industrial rate for water even to a similar low rate of 40 cents per cubic meter, the City of Saint John could wipe out its entire projected 2021 deficit of $12 million and have substantial additional revenue coming into the public purse year after year to pay for public transit, road repairs, lifeguards etc., instead of having to cut

It is time we treated water for what it is; a valuable resource that is owned by the public. Only the public should determine what it is worth.

Doug James is a member of the Saint John Citizens Coalition.