

## ECONEWS #202

A monthly newsletter funded by your donations that dreams of a world blessed by the harmony of nature, the pleasures of community, and the joys of personal fulfillment, guided and protected by our active citizenship.

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### THE ECO-PERSONALS

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\* **Lovely room to rent**, close to ocean, downtown, \$30/night, 250-382-3810.

\* **Trade land for food**: Fully fenced chemical-free veggie garden, 30' x 60' with well-fed drip-irrigation in Saanich. Call Susanne 250-744-2244.

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### THE ESCAPING OIL

❖ Oil escaping from the Deepwater Horizon oil-well blowout in the Gulf of Mexico: 5,000 barrels a day.

❖ Barrels of Exxon Valdez crude oil that polluted Alaska's seas: 343,000.

❖ Time in which it will leak as much oil as the Exxon Valdez: 2 months.

❖ Time it took to contain the last big blowout in the Gulf in 1980: 10 months.

❖ Depth of the blowout: 1500 metres

❖ Area of ocean polluted by April 27th: 4600 square kilometres.

### THE CLIMATE OF OTTAWA

*Denise Savoie, MP (Victoria) writes:*

EcoNews says it's 'Serving the Vision of a Sustainable Vancouver Island', but I think this newsletter and its readers can stand to be more immodest. Through your tremendous advocacy for the Federal NDP's Climate Change Accountability Bill (Bill C-311), you're helping transform the vision of a sustainable Canada into a reality. If the bill becomes law, it will commit the

federal government to achieve a GHG emission target of 80% below 1990 by 2050. On behalf of our NDP team, I want to thank you for keeping pressure on Parliament to pass it.

You may be interested to know of other Parliamentary climate change initiatives. My Green Commuter Choice Bill (Bill C-466), which has been endorsed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, would make employer-provided benefits tax-free for transit, carpooling and bicycle commuting.

There are MPs from all parties who are concerned about climate change and interested in obtaining non-partisan information, and in my role as Assistant Deputy Speaker, I'm co-hosting the Climate Change Speakers Series with the Pembina Institute. Our first roundtable updated MPs on the latest scientific research; the next featured a rigorous dialogue with an expert on carbon pricing. I've been encouraged by how my colleagues have explored areas of consensus constructively. By holding the details of what we each say in confidence and respecting differences, members feel freer to share ideas and seek solutions. In this way, I hope we may serve our constituents with integrity, and serve your vision of sustainability with resolve.



### TWO-WHEELED CITY FARMING

*Sol Kinnis writes:* When you buy produce from City Harvest, you buy veggies with very little carbon footprint - even less if you walk or bike to our weekly market. City Harvest grows really local food. For the past six months, the members of the Co-op - Alix, Sharon, Sol and Karen - have been tearing up sod, building soil and planting seeds as we convert 12 Victoria backyards into small scale working farms. You might see one of us towing

our tools and bins, since we use bikes and trailers to get around.

We use SPIN-Farming methods - sustainable intensive farming practices on small plots in rural or urban centers. The business was founded by Paula Sobie and Martin Scaia in 2007; as the new owners we are building a worker co-op structure that uses mutual aid to overcome the challenges of surviving as farmers. See [www.cityharvestcoop.com](http://www.cityharvestcoop.com) and sign-up for our list.

### SUMMER IS COMING...

If you like working outdoors, eating delicious food, and meeting new people, this year's Conservation Holidays from The Land Conservancy include ecoforestry education at the Wildwood Ecoforest near Ladysmith (July) and shoreline clean-up at South Winchelsea Island (Sept). You can also stay at the Sooke Potholes Campground and wake up to the sound of rushing water and the smell of Douglas fir and stovetop coffee. The campground, which opens May 21, contains 60 tent and RV sites and a bicycle camp, all just off the Galloping Goose. All proceeds support the TLC's conservation work. Call 250-383-4627 or visit [conservancy.bc.ca](http://conservancy.bc.ca).

### GREEN BUMS SAVE THE FOREST

Every time you wipe, you can either save or harm the forest. If you buy recycled toilet tissue, each kilogram will save 30 litres of water and 3-4 kilowatt hours of electricity, compared to virgin paper straight from the forest. Greenpeace estimates that of the 7 billion toilet rolls used every year in America, only 2% are made from recycled fibres; when our bums insist on virgin paper, they put extra pressure on the forests, and all the creatures that live there. If everyone in Canada switched to recycled paper, we could leave 48,000 trees standing every year. Ideally you want to use non-bleached, 100% post-consumer recycled paper. Ponder this, the next time you sit on the throne.

### ANCIENT FORESTS ALLIANCE

When I arrived in Victoria 20 years ago, the forests were under assault. After persistent campaigns by thousands of activists, some has been saved, but on most of Vancouver Island it's logging as usual. Now a new organization has arisen, the Ancient Forests Alliance (AFA), led by the irrepressible Ken Wu who achieved so much when he was with the Western Canada Wilderness Committee. The AFA is working to

build broad-based support among First Nations, businesses, faith groups, scientists, and naturalist clubs.

In the May 2010 *The Victoria Naturalist*, Ken quotes a 2001 report for the Ministry of Forests in which Dr. Peter Pearse described the history of high grade overcutting: "The general pattern was to take the nearest, most accessible and most valuable timber first, gradually expanding up coastal valleys and mountainsides into more remote and lower quality timber, less valuable, and costlier to harvest. Today, loggers are approaching the end of the merchantable oldgrowth in many areas, and are caught in the vise of rising costs and declining harvest value. The primary sector of the industry no longer earns an adequate return."

Today, 75% of the productive old-growth forests on Vancouver Island have been logged, including 90% of the valley bottoms where the biggest trees grow and most biodiversity resides.

The ASA has a petition at [www.ancientforestpetition.com](http://www.ancientforestpetition.com) calling on the government to create a Provincial Old-Growth Strategy to inventory and protect the remaining oldgrowth forests in regions where they are scarce. They have an urgent goal to raise \$20,000 by this summer, to build their campaigns. See [www.ancientforestalliance.org](http://www.ancientforestalliance.org).

### **SOLAR - FUTURE BLESSING**

Ponder the Sun, and its power. Just 8 minutes and 19 seconds ago, the heat you are feeling was on the surface of the Sun - and it has been producing energy for over 4.5 billion years. May 29/30<sup>th</sup> sees BC's first Solar Days, with activities around the province to highlight the role that solar energy can play in our lives. In 2009, Europe's Solar Days had 7,700 activities in 13 countries; now it has arrived in BC. In Saanich, on May 29<sup>th</sup>, there's a Solar Open House at Saanich Commonwealth Place, Elk Lake Drive, where you can meet local solar installers. The \$2,000 incentive for a solar hot water installation on your roof is still in place for a limited time. See [www.solarbc.ca](http://www.solarbc.ca)

### **COAL - FUTURE CURSE**

200 million years ago, when Sun poured its energy into Earth's early forests, some of the trees fell into swamps, and were preserved. Slowly, the Sun's energy was compressed, heated, and turned into coal. It was coal that provided the energy for the industrial

revolution, and coal that prompted the settlement of Vancouver Island - but when we burn the coal, the released ancient carbon traps heat in the atmosphere. Coal is now the biggest cause of global warming, and its continued use must be stopped.

And yet, even while the government wants to reduce BC's carbon emissions, four new coal mines are being proposed for BC - one in the Comox Valley on lands between Denman and Campbell River ([www.theravenproject.ca](http://www.theravenproject.ca) and [www.complianceenergy.com](http://www.complianceenergy.com)); one in the Peace Region ([www.firstcoal.com](http://www.firstcoal.com)); an open pit mine at Lodgepole, south of Fernie ([www.clinemining.com](http://www.clinemining.com)); and one at Mount Klappan in northwest of BC, near the sacred headwaters of the Stikine, Nass and Skeena rivers.

As the Wilderness Committee puts it, coal is "BC's dirty secret". (See [bit.ly/bmi75B](http://bit.ly/bmi75B)) BC exports over 20 million tonnes of coal a year, mostly to Korea and Japan. Each tonne of coal burnt produces 2.8 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, so BC's exported coal produces 56 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> a year - that's getting close to BC's entire domestic emissions of 63 million tonnes a year. Our exports of natural gas produce a further 53 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e.

All this has to end; we must also find a way to make steel without coal. On Monday May 10<sup>th</sup>, Ben West from the Wilderness Committee is speaking at the BC Sustainable Energy Association's Victoria Chapter meeting at the Burnside Gorge Community Centre. Come and learn more!

### **HOW WALKABLE IS YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD?**

Ever felt the cars are too fast, and it's just not friendly for pedestrians? A "walking audit" is a planning tool that can help turn your neighbourhood into a livable place. Dan Burden pioneered the idea in the early 1980s, when he learned that engineers often never walked the corridors they were designing. A walking audit gets people together onto the street, and brings down the shields between neighbourhood advocates and technical staff. Some graduate students in urban design say they can learn more in a two-hour walking audit than in an entire semester of urban design classes. If you want to promote the idea of a local walking audit with your council's planning staff, you can find all the how-to at [www.bit.ly/walkability](http://www.bit.ly/walkability).

### **TO C, OR NOT TO SITE C?**

It's a big \$6.6 billion decision, and the BC government has just signaled that the long-planned Site C dam on the Peace River will go ahead, after a two year period of environmental assessment. On the one hand, this much new green power could help shift BC's transport to electric power, and help towards the closing of coal-fired power plants Washington or Alberta, if it was exported.

On the other hand, it will flood 4,700 hectares of high quality farmland - enough to feed the whole of the Peace region with local produce, instead of shipping it in from far away in fossil-fueled trucks. It will also drown the rights of the West Moberly and Salteau First Nations, who have communities in the Valley, and disrupt the migration corridors of local wildlife.

Northeast BC also has huge wind energy resources - the BC Sustainable Energy Association has calculated that if the same \$6.6 billion were invested in wind energy, it could produce from 46% to 267% more green power a year. Their conclusion is that the Site C dam merits a very thorough and transparent analysis before it is finally approved.

### **ACTION OF THE MONTH**

#### **THE G-8 AND G-20 SUMMITS**

What to do about climate change? The rapidly approaching emergency is as real as ever, but the global treaty-making process has come unstuck, and the deniers are having a field day.

The annual G-8 and G-20 Summits are intended for the leaders of the world's largest nations to discuss their important concerns - such as addressing climate change, tackling global poverty, and creating a just global economy.

This year, Canada is hosting at the meetings in Huntsville, Ontario (June 25-27), but Harper is refusing to make climate change a priority, and has cancelled the normal pre-meeting of the world's Environment Ministers. We have to let him know that this is just so unacceptable; many other world leaders are frustrated, and think the same way.

**Action:** Phone, write, email Stephen Harper, expressing your views.

Rt Hon Stephen Harper, Office of the Prime Minister, 80 Wellington St, Ottawa K1A 0A2.

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