



Western  
Environment  
Centre  
wecnl.ca

(w) [www.wecnl.ca](http://www.wecnl.ca) (e) [info@wecnl.ca](mailto:info@wecnl.ca) (p) (709) 639-0937

86 West Street, Suite 6, Corner Brook, Newfoundland, A2H 2Z3

## NEWSLETTER WINTER/SPRING 2013

### From the Editor's Desk

Winter and spring often overlap in western Newfoundland, in beautiful ways. For various logistical reasons, WEC's newsletter committee decided to combine the two seasons into this one issue. You will find that many of the pieces connect and overlap with each other.

All around us we see signs of spring. In that vein, Danielle Fequet has provided some useful spring-cleaning tips that leave less of a toxic footprint. Spring is about to take flight at the community garden at the Blow-Me-Down Ski Park; Simon Jansen fills us in on this exciting activity.

Climate change is being felt with increasing force in this province. Read about the highly instructive presentation on this topic given by Nicole Watson of the Climate Reality Project. Ian Hutchings also reviews an important book on the potential economic dilemmas associated with fossil fuel reliance.

That takes us to the extensive material on fracking, a controversial and problematic procedure that has generated much public interest and even outcry. To give my personal opinion, the fact that we are resorting to such technology to extract oil or gas should serve as a wake-up call that we have to think more seriously about energy conservation and about switching our society to renewable energy sources. According to Prof. Tony Ingraffea of Cornell University, fracking makes unacceptable contributions to climate change; yet, New York State recently released a solid peer-reviewed study detailing how the whole state could be converted completely to wind, water, and solar power within twenty to thirty years.

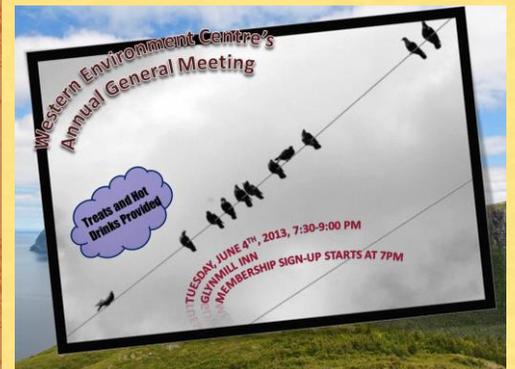
On the surface, such a huge overhaul in infrastructure and attitudes seems unachievable. However, to draw upon a historical example, in 1750 if a person in Britain said that the slave trade and slavery should be ended, he/she would have been denounced as hopelessly naïve. Yet through the foresight and efforts of citizens, groups, slaves, and politicians, by 1834 the British slave system had been virtually abolished. History is all about the realm of the possible; so too is the future.

Edwin Bezzina

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**WEC's AGM**  
**Tuesday, June 4, 2013; 7:00p.m.**  
**Glynmill Inn**



This newsletter was printed on paper certified under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), courtesy of Model Forest of Newfoundland and Labrador.

## WEC's Mandate

The Western Environment Centre (WEC) is a charitable, non-profit, non-governmental organization that is based in Corner Brook and services all of Western Newfoundland. Specifically, the organization strives to:

- engage communities in environmental issues in a balanced, objective, and informed manner
- work with community partners, businesses, and government agencies to build capacity and involvement in projects related to environmental action and sustainability
- create a community of environmentally pro-active citizens

WEC activities can be subdivided into the following areas:

- Long-term projects with dedicated funding from outside sources (e.g. the community garden established at the Blow-Me-Down Ski Park)
- Specific environmental events (e.g. Earth Day, Green Drinks, Earth Hour)
- Working committees
- Detailed responses to inquiries about local and regional issues of environmental concern

## How to become a WEC member

(and how to encourage friends to become members):

Please fill out the membership form on p. 16 and then send it by post to our surface address or by scanned copy to our e-mail address ([info@wecnl.ca](mailto:info@wecnl.ca)). Becoming a member is a fabulous first step to becoming environmentally involved in your local community!

### We're on Facebook!



You can find us by searching  
"Western  
Environment Centre"

### We're also on Twitter



([www.twitter.com/wecnl](http://www.twitter.com/wecnl))

Check out our fabulous  
website:

[www.wecnl.ca](http://www.wecnl.ca)



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### WEC welcomes comments and questions!

Feel free to write to the editorial board ([outreach@wecnl.ca](mailto:outreach@wecnl.ca)) or the Board of Directors ([info@wecnl.ca](mailto:info@wecnl.ca)). We'd love to hear from you.



We have a new phone number:  
**(709) 639-0937**

## Farmers' Market update

On Friday, March 15th, a group of people gathered at the Glynmill Inn to discuss the future of the West Coast Farmers' Market. The gathering brought together citizens, government employees, and market vendors to think and talk about the potential for a market in Corner Brook. The main purpose of the session was to develop a vision which could then be used as a foundation for a business plan.



The event was organized by a small working group that has been meeting since Fall 2012, which includes employees from two government departments, the City of Corner Brook, a faculty member at Grenfell Campus (MUN), and the Western Environment Centre. The session was facilitated by Sean Dolter of the Model Forest of NL, an organization that has much experience in community and economic development.

The session brought forward many ideas for market location and venue, as well as products and activities that individuals would like to see at their ideal market. We also asked people to describe their ideal market of the future and answer questions such as: Who would be there? What would the atmosphere be like? Who would run the market? People were excited about all the wonderful things that a market could bring to Corner Brook, and there was much discussion about its potential as a small business incubator and a way to support smaller producers in particular.

The working group is now meeting to discuss the outcomes of the session and hopes to develop a business plan over the summer months. Although many people have asked whether a market will happen for the 2013 season, it is more realistic to plan for 2014. The working group is also hoping to recruit new members, so if you're interested and have some expertise/skills to contribute, please contact [info@wecnl.ca](mailto:info@wecnl.ca)

Katie Temple



Mark Tierney, Sean Dolter, and Dr. José Lam were among the participants



Farmers' Market/Community Fair during Environment Week activities (June 2009)

Photos E. Bezzina

## Helping WEC as you recycle

Here is a creative way to donate to WEC financially. WEC has an account at Scotia Recycling on 55 Maple Valley Rd (709-634-2025). When dropping off your recyclables, donate by telling the people at the desk that you wish to give the proceeds to the Western Environment Centre. Visit the Scotia Recycling website: <http://scotiarecyclinggroup.com/services-by-location>. For information on recycling on Corner Brook, visit <http://www.cornerbrook.com/default.asp?mn=1.24.100> or phone their recycling line at (709) 637-1630.



## The Climate Reality Project

The Grenfell Campus (MUN) was pleased to welcome Ms. Nicole Watson who gave a fascinating and well-researched presentation on climate change. This talk was part of the Climate Reality Project, the organization established by former U.S. Vice president Al Gore to spread awareness about climate change and press for solutions. ACAP Humber Arm, the Western Environment Centre, and the First United Church were all involved.

Photo E. Bezzina

*“the potential for the green economy is enormous and investing in renewal energy is currently in fact far more profitable than investing in the fossil fuel industry.”*



Nicole Watson, with Angela Vincent of ACAP Humber Arm

It was a very enlightening and worthwhile presentation that started with an overview of climate change and its effects (drought, widespread forest fires, floods, increased incidence of violent storms, and so on). Then, Ms. Watson presented some startling imagery and data on how climate change is *now* being felt around the world. For example, the floods in Australia in 2011 inflicted \$15 billion worth of damage. Hurricanes are now reaching up to Newfoundland with a disturbing frequency.

Ms. Watson's presentation also addressed the virtually unanimous consensus in the scientific community that climate change is happening and that it is being generated by human activity. Between 97-98% of all relevant academic institutions believe that this is the case. Indeed, climate change is no longer a theoretical computer model. Along the same lines, she debunked a number of myths or “red herrings” still being propagated by climate change deniers, one such myth being that climate change is being caused by volcanic activity. The presentation ended on a positive note, outlining how climate change in fact can be averted: the potential for the green economy is enormous and investing in renewal energy is currently in fact far more profitable than investing in the fossil fuel industry.

Edwin Bezzina

For more information, see <http://climatereality.ca>



ACAP HUMBER ARM



## The Blow-Me-Down Community Garden prepares for a new season!



Photo S. Jansen

On March 21<sup>st</sup> we had our registration and there will definitely be some remaining plots available! We will give them away on a first-come first-serve basis, so please get in touch with us if you plan on becoming part of the garden community.

The signs for the Community Garden are ready to go up. They are beautiful! A big thank-you to the City of Corner Brook and to Zachary Moores for their work on this. We will also purchase automatic window openers for our greenhouse; these openers will ventilate the greenhouse more effectively and thus help the plants grow. We are planning to have the openers operating for the first time this season. The first workshop of the season will happen on Earth Day (stay tuned for details).

April is transplant month! This is the time of year when you want to start thinking about growing transplants in a sunny spot of you home. Make sure that you get good quality seed from one of the local nurseries. Each pack has instructions on the back with respect to how many weeks prior to the last frost you need to start the transplants. A period of six weeks is common for things like tomatoes or broccoli. Seed exchanges are also a fun way to get excited about the upcoming garden season. If you know other people who also garden, you can get together over tea and coffee and share seeds and stories about how well the plants fared and the things that you learned. We can't wait for the garden season. Hopefully it will be a good one!

For more information, contact [garden@wecni.ca](mailto:garden@wecni.ca) or call 639-0937.

Simon Jansen

## The Idle-No-More Movement and Bill C-45

In this article, WEC Board Member Stephan Walke discusses how recent changes in environmental legislation are linked to aboriginal issues and the emergence of the Idle-No-More movement.

There is currently a great deal of controversy and public debate buzzing across the country with regard to the Idle-No-More movement and Bill C-45. I think that it is important to keep some of the facts of these issues in the forefront as they often become clouded in political rhetoric, strategy, and media manipulation. Firstly, while the Idle-No-More movement has become an overall rally point in support of Aboriginal sovereignty and legal respect for treaty agreements in Canada, the movement was spurred primarily by the changes made within Bill C-45 with regards to environmental protection. It was Native groups who first took the torch and united in opposition to these changes primarily because the affected areas and resources fell on Aboriginal lands, many of which hold unresolved land claims.

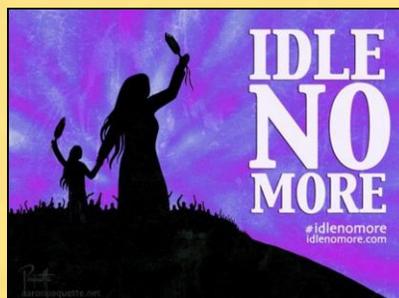


*“...it is not surprising that people are rising up to oppose Bill C-45 and the overall neglect that such legislation shows for Canada’s precious lands and resources.”*

Through the omnibus Bill C-38 of July 2012, surprising changes were made to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. The new CEAA involves a streamlined process of conducting EA’s which diverts most of the responsibility to the provinces, some of whose EA processes are much less rigorous and less comprehensive than the ones previously in existence at the federal level. Before, federal EA’s would consider environmental impacts on a national and international scale, as many provincial processes only have capacity to consider more isolated cases and a limited number of effects. Under the new legislation, estimates put the number of EA’s conducted annually at the federal level as low as 1-10% of the previous 5,700-7,000. Many more alterations to the CEAA became law, including the removal of the Strategic Environmental Assessment which considered not only projects, but also plans, programs, and policies. As well, the breadth of public participation has been reduced. Not only will EA’s have less public consultation, but only citizens whom the EA officer considers to be “directly affected” by the proposed project will be able to participate in the process. It has become clear that the focus has shifted from long-term sustainability and environmental and human health to expediting the process of resource extraction, especially in the oil and gas sector.

With the omnibus Bill C-45, we have witnessed yet more historic changes to Canadian environmental legislation which further the government’s agenda to facilitate faster and less restricted industrial development of Canada’s fragile ecosystems. This time such change came in the form of Canada’s environmental protection policy. The Navigable Waters Protection Act has been altered and renamed the Navigation Protection Act. In its original form, the Act was designed to apply an approval process before any development activity could take place on, in, or near a body of water; but, the Act has been whittled down to include a mere 97 lakes and 62 rivers within the entirety of this vast nation. In Newfoundland and Labrador alone, only one such water body exists: Lake Melville. Any project to be developed on or near a body of water not on that list will not require such an approval process, except in unique circumstances.

*(continued on the next page...)*



left to right: Idle No More rally in Ottawa (December, 2012); Aaron Paquette’s art work; protest against Bill C-45 in Fredericton, NB (January, 2013)

Images courtesy iPolitics/ Matthew Usherwood; Aaron Paquette; Stephanie Merrill

## The Idle-No-More Movement and Bill C-45 *(cont'd from previous page)*

In addition, Bill C-45 also includes changes to Canada's Fisheries Act which as a result only protects those fish species which the government deems "commercially important." In combination with the federal government's recent negotiations for a FIPA (Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement) and a Trans-Pacific Partnership Free Trade Agreement with China, it seems that all of our eggs are being thrown in one big basket (a basket of non-renewable fossil fuels to boot).

This is being done at the expense of not only Aboriginal lands and rights, but also the entire complex ecosystems upon which every Canadian depends. During a time when the frightening effects of climate change are beginning to take true form in surprising ways across this country, and globally, it is not surprising that people are rising up to oppose Bill C-45 and the overall neglect that such legislation shows for Canada's precious lands and resources.

Stephan Walke



### Come join us at Green Drinks in Corner Brook!

The concept of Green Drinks emerged as a way for environmentally-minded people from a multitude of backgrounds to mingle, network, and connect over a few drinks. Since its inception in 1989 by a group of friends in London, UK, Green Drinks has gathered momentum and now boasts over 800 chapters worldwide. These informal gatherings are agenda-free and offer a congenial social atmosphere.

These Green Drinks events draw a diverse crowd eager to share insights, debate, and meet new people. Future Green Drinks will be held on the first Thursday of every month at King Henry's Pub in the Glynmill Inn—so mark your calendar! Upcoming Green Drinks in 2013 will be take place on **May 2<sup>nd</sup>, June 6<sup>th</sup>, and July 4<sup>th</sup> (7:00-9:30p.m.)** and all are welcome to attend.

For further information visit: [www.greendrinks.org/cornerbrook](http://www.greendrinks.org/cornerbrook)



logo design by Laura Simms and Daniel Payne; photo E. Bezzina

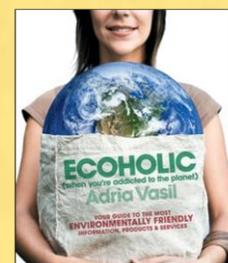
## Spring-cleaning tips

Spring cleaning is just around the corner. Here are some simple ways to reduce the use of harmful cleaning products in your home.

1. Calcium stains in the toilet bowl can be removed with vitamin C. Drop a couple of chewable vitamin C tablets into the bowl, leave them overnight, then scrub with a toilet brush the next day.
2. Rather than using a harsh window cleaner, try a homemade formula using vinegar (1/4 cup), corn starch (1 tbsp), rubbing alcohol (1/4 cup) and warm water (2 cups). If you have it on hand, wipe the glass down with newspaper.
3. For a dirty oven, slather the interior with a paste made from baking soda and hot water. Let it sit overnight then scrub with an abrasive soapy sponge.
4. For a clogged drain try a baking soda and vinegar remedy. Pour about 1/2 cup baking soda and 1 cup of vinegar down the drain; wait 15 minutes while it fizzes like a homemade volcano, then flush with boiling water. A plumber's snake can also help you get rid of clogs without adding toxic chemicals.
5. Clean LCD screens with a mixture of 50:50 rubbing alcohol to distilled water in a spray bottle. Use a cloth rather than paper towel to protect the screen and get it streak free.

Danielle Fequet

*inspired by [crunchybetty.com](http://crunchybetty.com) and Adrian Vasil's guide:*



## Book Review: *Why Your World is About to Get a Whole Lot Smaller: Oil and the End of Globalization*

Jeff Rubin

Random House Canada, 2010; 304 pages

*“Get ready for a smaller world. Soon, your food is going to come from a field much closer to home, and the things you buy will probably come from a factory down the road than one on the other side of the world. You will certainly drive less and walk more, and that means you will be shopping and working closer to home. Your neighbours and your neighbourhood are about to get a lot more important in the smaller world of the none-to-distant future.”*

Jeff Rubin is one of Canada’s top economists. In *Why Your World Is About to Get a Whole Lot Smaller*, he makes speculations about what our world will look like in the near future, as oil reserves dry up and global economies suffer.

This book is for the average reader, and its object is to make one consider the consequences of oil dependency in our everyday lives. According to Rubin, a combination of rapidly dwindling oil supplies and an increase of oil dependence will cause a continuing cycle of worsening recessions and depressions. The book does not envision a positive future. In a world where consumption in developed countries shows little sign of slowing and oil usage is skyrocketing, Rubin predicts what the possible result of the endgame would look like.

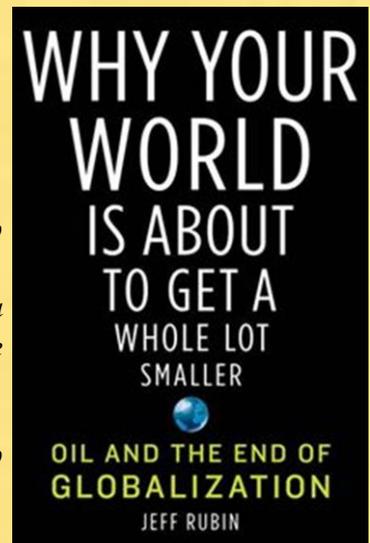
Transportation and environmental costs increase due to high oil prices; also, carbon regulation international trade will dry up and the age of globalization will end, says Rubin. On another level, he asks if renewable energy is realistic on a mass commercial scale. He advises that renewable capacity must be multiplied many times over before it gives the world energy supply some punch.

The resulting fallout from this energy gap will force governments and businesses to create and support localized economies and retreat from international trade and transport. In my view, that’s not necessarily a bad thing in every sense. There would be more people on foot as opposed to clogging up the roads and adding to our collective carbon footprint. However, one has to ask, is going local again as simple as Rubin describes?

You may not find this book to be terribly encouraging in places. Rubin writes, *“With supply dwindling and demand rising, you can expect scarcity. And scarcity means high prices. You can expect triple-digit oil prices in the near future,”* and *“Your food in particular is going to cost a lot more—in fact, it is already getting more expensive all the time.”*

Still, the book is grounded on a strong factual basis. The author uses statistics heavily to point to the economic implosion of the world as we know it. Rubin uses his knowledge to prepare readers for the changes in the economy. He excels at taking complex economic data and applying them to the everyday lives of his readers; as such, this book functions successfully as both explanation and warning. I found it easy to follow, and I am not an economist.

Governments, economists, and engineers should give this book a read. Overall, I’d recommend it, because the world needs to face these global problems and work out a blueprint for its future. As the population grows, the oil supply will run out at some point. The book doesn’t offer much in the way of suggestions, but it does encourage thought and discussion.



Ian Hutchings

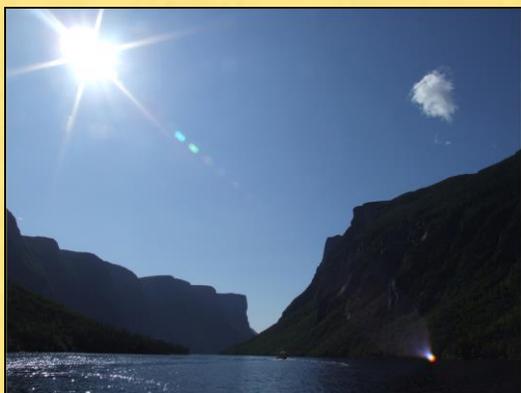
## Citizen Activity on Fracking on the West Coast

The proposal by Shoal Point Energy and Black Spruce Exploration to conduct hydraulic fracturing operations on the west coast has received an overwhelming response from concerned citizen groups. WEC has partnered with many of them.

### Save Gros Morne and Our West Coast Facebook Site

Save Gros Morne and our West Coast aims to disseminate timely information on proposals to conduct horizontal slick-water hydraulic fracturing (fracking) along the West coast of Newfoundland. See their facebook site for updates, news, announcements, videos, photos, and especially an extensive list of resources relating to fracking dealing with many aspects of the topic (public health, fracking chemicals, what is happening in other provinces, and so on). It's a wonderful resource!

<https://www.facebook.com/SaveGrosMorne>



Western Brook Pond

Photo courtesy Save Gros Morne and Our West Coast

See also the following website that is currently being developed; the website is an excellent repository of resources, materials, and updates on fracking:

<http://savewestcoastnl.wordpress.com/>

### The Bay St George Sustainability Network (BSGN)

was formed in December 2009 and is engaged in creating more sustainable communities in the Bay St. George region. A major objective of the BSGSN is to create an inclusive democratic sustainability movement involving citizens of all ages, genders and economic circumstances.

“A sustainable community is one that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is a place where people live, work, and prosper in a vibrant community. In such a community, sustainability is achieved through community participation and the reconciliation of short and long term economic, social and ecological well-being.”

Since 2009, we have created and supported two community gardens and a community market in our region. We work in partnership with government, private sector and local service groups in promoting and supporting local agriculture, food security, healthy lifestyles and nutrition. Another objective of the BSGSN is to address environmental pollution in our region.

address: 3 Washington Drive, Stephenville, NL, A2N 2V5  
tel: 709-643-6362

### The St. Lawrence Coalition

*From their mission statement:* The St. Lawrence Coalition was created to persuade government bodies to issue a moratorium on oil and gas exploration and exploitation in the Gulf of St. Lawrence as soon as possible. The St. Lawrence Coalition aims at bringing the gulf communities together, which share the same concerns and appreciate the natural resources of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Our coalition is inter-provincial as five provinces are involved: Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

website: <http://www.coalitionsaintlaurent.ca/en/coalition>

e-mail: [coalitionstlaurent@me.com](mailto:coalitionstlaurent@me.com)

Sylvain Archambault phone (418) 686-1854; cell (581) 995-4350



Photo E. Bezzina

Sylvain Archambault gives an incisive presentation at the Port au Port forum (April 2013)

*Reprinted here is a media release by the Bay St. George Sustainability Network protesting against the companies' plans to conduct exploratory fracking in the Port au Port Peninsula (dated January 25, 2013).*

Members of the BSGSN are alarmed that despite assurances from the Canada Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (C-NLOPB) of a thorough environmental assessment with public consultation before any decision is made on controversial hydraulic fracturing, Shoal Point Energy (SPE) is planning to commence fracking at their Port au Port Peninsula drilling site within the next few months.

The BSGSN has expressed concerns to C-NLOPB regarding Shoal Point Energy's recent submission to the Offshore Board requesting an extension of the scope of a 2007 environmental assessment to facilitate proposed near-well bore stimulation (fracking) activities."

Shoal Point Energy held three public meetings in Western Newfoundland in the Port au Port, Bay of Islands and Bonne Bay areas in November 2012 to present their oil and gas exploration and development plans including their intentions to use the fracking process at all three locations.

The C-NLOPB has informed the BSGSN that these public meetings conducted by SPE were not Environmental Assessment Public Consultations but "conducted by that company on its own initiative without direction from the C-NLOPB."

The Bay St. George Sustainability Network in its recent letter to the C-NLOPB stated that:

"In a democratic consultation process the public should be given the opportunity to take part in an informed decision making process where, in addition to reviewing the proponent's plans, they also have access to other science-based information regarding the social, environmental, and economic impacts of the development, information which should be independently researched and compiled, not paid for by the proponent or others in the oil industry."

The public meetings organized by SPE and their document requesting an amendment to the Environmental Assessment of the Port au Port Exploration Drilling Program falls far short of the requirements for a thorough environmental assessment (EA).

Fracking technology is very controversial because of its negative environmental and health impacts, with many governments around the world implementing moratoriums or bans on its use. There are significant environmental and health impacts from fracking including contamination of ground water, risks to air quality, the migration of gases and hydraulic fracturing chemicals to the surface, surface contamination from spills and flowback. There are also other related negative social and economic impacts.

This fast-tracked approach by SPE does not meet the requirements of a legitimate and thorough EA process. The BSGSN encourages the general public to contact the C-NLOPB, their MHAs and the premier regarding concerns pertaining to this issue.

Yours sincerely,  
Robert Diamond, Chair BSGSN

## WEC's Board comments on the Scoping Document and Project Description

In March, Shoal Point Energy Ltd./Black Spruce Exploration Corp. submitted their scoping document and project description. In response, the Board of Directors wrote the following letter, which was sent to the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board, various MHAs, and the provincial Ministries of Natural Resources and Environment and Conservation.

The Western Environment Centre engages communities on the West Coast in conversations around sustainable solutions. Combining economic interests and environmental sustainability to ensure the well-being of residents and their surroundings alike is often at the heart of this conversation. We have been involved in numerous conversations like this one in recent years and are happy to provide feedback generally about the project description and the scoping document and specifically about the aspect of public engagement and consultation.

### 1. Extent of the scoping document and project descriptions

From the conversations and decisions we can observe in neighbouring provinces, it is evident that hydraulic fracturing is controversial. Due diligence and a cautionary approach to this technology are imperative. Extending the scoping document and project description to an undetermined number of additional wells until 2019 without provisions to learn from any exploratory wells is too large of a framework. We request that the project description and the scoping document encompass a fixed number of exploratory wells and that additional wells require an update to the EA to learn from past experience.

*“Due diligence and a cautionary approach to this technology are imperative.”*

### 2. A revision of the Project Description

Currently there are no regulations around hydraulic fracturing in this province. Referring to regulations as the project description does (i.e. waste water disposal) that were never designed with hydraulic fracturing in mind while not giving any other amount of detail or specifics makes it impossible to accurately frame a scoping document that addresses potential risks. We strongly suggest requesting an improved project description that lays out in detail how the proponent plans to deal with some of the risks outlined in the project description and draft scoping document. A meaningful public conversation and effective public consultations cannot happen without a detailed picture on how risks are proposed to be dealt with.

### 3. Full chemical disclosure

The Commissioner of the Environment released a report in February, 2013 with particular concern about the chemicals used in hydraulic fracturing. The list the proponents provide in the project description of “typical additives” is completely unacceptable in light of the grave concern residents have expressed over fracking fluids and flowback water. For a meaningful and informed public conversation and an effective public consultation process, a complete and accurate list of chemicals used in the proposed activity must be provided.



Gas-flaring on a gas-fracking well in Scott Township, in rural Pennsylvania (the flare is caused by the release of methane gas, a process common to both oil and gas-fracking)

### 4. No regulatory framework

Currently there are no regulations specific to hydraulic fracturing in this province. This means that there are no enforceable standards, no inspections specific to the concerns around hydraulic fracturing, no legal framework to assess compliance or noncompliance. This also translates into disempowering residents and communities in the immediate vicinity of the proposed operations when it comes to seeking mitigation and/or compensation due to the potential impacts outlined in the project description and draft scoping document. A strong regulatory framework specific to hydraulic fracturing needs to be developed and implemented before any activity is allowed to begin.

## WEC's Board Comments on the Scoping Document and Project Description *(continued from previous page)*

### 5. Effective public consultations

The meetings held by Shoal Point Energy in November 2012 were prior to any project description, nor under the guidance of the C-NLOPB; these meetings provided minimal information by means of a one-page handout. Considering the scale of the conversation regionally and provincially that hydraulic fracturing is receiving, it is clear that well-advertised public consultations have to happen, which need to include full disclosure of all chemicals actually used in the process as well as specifics on how to dispose of the waste water from the operations. The meetings held in November can by no means be counted towards the EA process.

### 6. Accidental spills

Currently the draft scoping document omits any mention of scenarios in the EA assessment that will involve potential spills of fracturing fluids, produced water or flowback water. Only hydrocarbons are currently included. Please broaden the scoping document to specifically include those scenarios.

### 7. Waste water disposal

The project description does not address the disposal of the large amounts of waste water produced during hydraulic fracturing. It repeatedly states, "as per the Newfoundland and Labrador Petroleum Drilling Regulations by a certified waste management contractor." As mentioned previously, there are no regulations specific to hydraulic fracturing, we know of no facility in the region that could accept and properly dispose of the waste water and simply holding the waste water in lagoons in our communities until these details are worked out is entirely unacceptable. A detailed description of the entire life-cycle of the waste water needs to be clearly formulated in the project description and addressed in the scoping document.

8. Accountability can only be proven with solid base line data in place, accurately outlining the existing chemical composition of the ground water, coastal water, and surrounding air PRIOR to any activity. Without any data to compare subsequent data collections, causation can be very difficult to prove. This leaves residents and communities, and ultimately the taxpayer, at risk that possible impacts cannot be directly linked to the proposed activity. Accountability is essential for mitigation and compensation measures. Solid baseline data has to be collected PRIOR to any activity and NOT by the proponent. An independent monitoring program then has to be established to compare subsequent data collection to the baseline data to accurately establish the impacts of the proposed activity to the surrounding communities and the environment.

We look forward to your reply to our concerns and are happy to continue our assistance in framing this conversation.

### **Company websites and information:**

Shoal Point Energy

<http://www.shoalpointenergy.com/>

Black Spruce Exploration

<http://www.blspexp.com/>

for the scoping document and project description, visit

<http://www.cnlopb.nl.ca/environment/bsespe.shtml>



A public forum on fracking drew a very large crowd in Port au Port East (April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013)

Photo: E. Bezzina

## Fracking meeting at Lark Harbour

Simon Jansen, Chair of WEC's Board of Directors, gave a balanced and well-researched presentation on fracking to the people of Lark Harbour in the Bay of Islands on Tuesday, April 23, 2013. This is a site where one of the exploratory wells would be situated. He also gave some recommendations for how the community could prepare itself in the event that the fracking proposal is approved.

Both representatives from WEC and from the companies will be giving presentations in various communities along the west coast of Newfoundland. Watch for announcements! I cannot stress enough how important it is become informed on the issue, because fracking on the west coast could have far-reaching implications on many different levels. Also, people with concerns about fracking are strongly encouraged to write to their local MHA, MP, and town councils. Your voice matters!

Edwin Bezzina



Photo E. Bezzina

Note from the Chair: WEC is happy to provide information sessions upon request to any group in the region free of charge. Groups can be as small as a chat around your kitchen table. This is an important decision for the region. Let's talk.

**The East Coast of Newfoundland** now has its own fracking awareness group! Fracking is no longer just a concern on the West Coast. Stay tuned for more details!



Blow Me Down Provincial Park, Lark Harbour  
(in April)



A containment pond for the storage of fracking fluids  
(Springville, Pennsylvania)

## The Western Environment Centre: Update on the proposed drilling operation in the Corner Brook watershed by Thomas Resources (February-March, 2013)

*Thomas Resources Inc. is in the process of requesting approval for a proposed mineral exploration project near the Corner Brook Lake Watershed. Specifically, the company is looking for the non-toxic minerals garnet and kyanite (used for example in ceramics). The company would like to drill twenty-one holes in nine different locations. Since the project has generated controversy among Corner Brook residents, the company held a public information session on February 28<sup>th</sup>. The Western Environment Centre wrote a letter of response that was sent to the company and to City Council.*

In keeping with our focus on public engagement, the following represents our position on the recent public consultation process for the proposal made by Thomas Resources Inc. to proceed with mineral exploration in the Corner Brook Lake Watershed.

With respect to the recent application made to the City of Corner Brook by Thomas Resources, we feel that more information should have been made available about the proposed project via the City of Corner Brook website prior to the 45-day public consultation period. Ideally enough information would have been provided so that citizens without prior experience could fully understand and digest the scope of the proposed project. For example, clearer maps of the proposed project area would have been beneficial as well as some explanation of the location of the proposed activity with respect to zoning within the Corner Brook Lake Watershed. Furthermore, a summary of the potential risks associated with the proposed activities as well as planned mitigation measures would have answered many questions. We are pleased that Thomas Resources was willing to provide a public information session, but the timing would have been most suited prior to the public consultation period administered by the City. Providing adequate information to citizens initially would have been the ideal scenario and would have facilitated a more informed public consultation process.

*“ ...The timing and nature of the consultation process were not ideal. ”*

Although the proposal in question involves the third stage of development (drilling exploration) and doesn't pertain directly to the full scale of the project, the was finally answered at the information session through Thomas Resources' willingness to provide the public with all available information not only about the drilling but also about the potential quarry and processing facility.

Representatives of both Thomas Resources and their hired consultant company, Stantec, were available for questions and provided answers to the best of their abilities using all available information. That being said, much information is simply unknown at this point and so certain concerns about the overall project remain in the minds of many citizens. These concerns range from potential effects on fish habitats to water quality and its possible health implications. The balance between environmental protection, human health effects, and economic opportunity is often at the heart of issues like this. It is important to recognize that these are by no means mutually exclusive of each other. Thomas Resources can be complimented for meeting with stakeholders and residents as well as their effort to be as transparent as possible.



Photo courtesy Danielle Fequet

The Corner Brook Watershed, at Trout Pond

The format of Thomas Resources' public information session (a format also used and widely criticized in recent public consultations around oil development) raises an important question, though. Are companies and government trying to avoid a public conversation? A positive example to learn from may be the consultations conducted by Corner Brook Pulp and Paper regarding tire-derived fuel. This process involved a presentation clearly outlining the proposed activity followed by an open question and answer period where citizens learned what the issues and concerns of their fellow residents were.

*(continued on the next page...)*

## The Western Environment Centre: Update on the proposed drilling operation in the Corner Brook watershed by Thomas Resources *(continued from the previous page)*

Opportunity was given for personal one-on-one conversation with company reps afterwards. However, avoiding an oral presentation as well as not enabling residents to discuss concerns through an open question and answer period takes away the opportunity to learn from fellow residents. The Western Environment Centre advised Thomas Resources against their format prior to their Thursday meeting, suggesting the importance of an oral presentation.

In comparison to previous information sessions held in Corner Brook regarding other topics, this one was very well attended (which reflects the importance of this issue). We hope that the City of Corner Brook will work together with Thomas Resources to make as much of the material from Thursday's meeting available as possible. Questions, concerns, and feedback received from residents are important to include so that all sides of this conversation are shown. Since Thomas Resources has been open and transparent with all available information and the City has called upon residents to become informed, the City's website would be an appropriate place for such information-gathering.

Overall, it is good to witness citizens taking interest and voicing their opinions on environment and development issues. It is also refreshing to see private enterprises respond to this interest with open information. That being said, the consultations were not prompted by a sound policy or mandate, but were put together due to public outcry. As a result, the timing and nature of the consultation process were not ideal. It would work to the benefit of all parties involved if the City and Thomas Resources continued their efforts to make information available to the residents of Corner Brook, particularly to those who could not attend the public information session.

*Since the public information session, Thomas Resources distributed a letter to all Corner Brook residents, stating that the company has met all the requirements outlined in the Corner Brook Watershed Management Plan. The letter also provided a few details about the Environmental Protection Plan for the project, noting for example that the cuttings (waste rock) will be transported daily offsite by a helicopter to a safe disposal site and that water quality in the watershed will be monitored on an ongoing basis. The decision will be made by the City in late May or early June; this decision will now be based upon the Integrated Municipal Sustainability Plan, rather than the Watershed Management plan. Thomas Resources also has a website: <http://www.thomasresourcesinc.ca/about.html>*

### Five great ways to get involved in WEC

1. Join one of the working committees
2. Join the Facebook group and invite others to do the same
3. Attend WEC events
4. Become a WEC volunteer
5. Participate in the WEC community garden

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## The College of the North Atlantic (Corner Brook Campus) and Grenfell Campus (MUN) collaborate on an exciting composting initiative

The College of the North Atlantic is joining forces with Grenfell Campus in a composting campaign. At a few locations on the CNA campus, bins have been set up by third-year Environmental Technology students. As the bins are filled, they will be brought up to Grenfell on a weekly basis to be deposited in their large industrial composter. Bins will be checked daily.

As reported in the summer 2012 WEC newsletter, the Grenfell industrial composter can handle food, leaves, wood shavings, and paper. Due to the high temperature of 70-80 degrees via aerobic digestion, the machine can even handle meat and dairy products.

If possible, updates on CNA's contribution will be made in future newsletters. Unrelated to the big project, the second year Environmental Techs (my class) have been maintaining a composter as a lab project. Monitoring various parameters of pH, density, moisture and temperature each week worked, as we ended up with a very soily product in a relatively short time.

Ian Hutchings



Photo Ian Hutchings

Composting bin at the CNA



Photo Ryan MacDonald

Grenfell's industrial composter

*Note: Since this article was written, CNA's environmental technology program has been discontinued due to provincial budget cuts and thus the fate of CNA's compost project is unknown at this time.*

## The Food Skills Workshop Kit!

The Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador (FSN) has launched a Food Skills Workshop Kit as part of its Root Cellars Rock project. The Workshop Kit is a new resource for community groups across the province to host hands-on workshops building local food skills and preserving traditional food knowledge. Topics include container gardening, composting, edible wild plants, seed saving, preparing local vegetables, using culinary herbs, canning, and root cellars. Download the workshops for free to start using today in your community: <http://rootcellarsrock.ca/workshops>.





Western  
Environment  
Centre  
wecnl.ca

## Annual Membership Form

Type of Membership: New  Renewal  Lapsed   
annual membership fee: \$10.00

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number (with area code): (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to be added to our e-mail list? Yes  No

What environmental issues interest you the most?

Coastal habitat  Wildlife  Energy   
Urban Planning  Community Garden  Forestry   
Climate Change  Farmers' Market  Transportation

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to help out with WEC events? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be interested in sitting on any of the following WEC committees or working groups:

Events  Fundraising  Farmers' Market   
Newsletter Committee  Community Garden

Are you interested in becoming a Board Member? Yes  No

How did you hear about WEC? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any additional information for WEC?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Benefits of Membership

- Receive updates on WEC events and activities
- Receive our newsletter
- Access to WEC resources
- Become part of a growing organization that is committed to protecting the environment in Western Newfoundland and elsewhere

### Office Use Only

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Origin (e.g. walk-in):  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Payment method:

Cash  Cheque

Memberships expire after 1 year.

### Please return form & payment to:

The Western Environment Centre,  
Suite 6, 86 West Street (2<sup>nd</sup> floor)  
Corner Brook, NL, A2H 2Z3  
E: info@wecnl.ca  
T: (709) 639-0937

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