



COMPASS

Your Guide to the North.

CARC's SUPPORTER No. 2,
NEWSLETTER 2003

SUPREME COURT VICTORY!



I AM PLEASED TO TELL YOU THAT CARC HAS WON A MAJOR VICTORY IN A NWT SUPREME COURT RULING THAT MAY HERALD A NEW ERA OF COMPREHENSIVE LAND AND WATER MANAGEMENT. IN DECEMBER, THE COURT UPHELD A DECISION OF THE MACKENZIE VALLEY LAND AND WATER BOARD TO ORDER A WATER LICENCE APPLICATION TO UNDERGO ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT. THE RULING SETS A TREMENDOUS PRECEDENT THAT MAY WELL APPLY TO OTHER ABORIGINAL CO-MANAGEMENT BOARDS OPERATING UNDER SIMILAR LAWS.

CARC and Canadian Parks and Wilderness (NWT) intervened together in a lawsuit brought by North American Tungsten Corporation Limited against the Board. At issue was the renewal of the water licence for the CanTung mine, located in the watershed of the Nahanni River. The mine had been closed for 16 years when the company re-opened it, planning to mine out the last reserves over the next 3 years. Water quality problems and concern expressed by the public and regulators led the Board to order the company to undergo environmental assessment.

One of the key concerns that motivated us to intervene in the lawsuit was that the company's security deposit for the cleanup of the mine is wholly inadequate. If the mine closes without increasing

its paltry security deposit of not more than \$2.55 million (not even close to the **\$34 million** required for cleanup!), taxpayers will be left holding the bag once again - and the cleanup may never be undertaken.

The Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board is one of the aboriginal co-management boards set up under land claims agreements. The legislation that governs it is different from other environmental assessment legislation, and our submissions to the Court (made by Sierra Legal Defence Fund's Randy Christensen) focused on the Board's ability to implement truly comprehensive land and water management. The Court agreed with our position, making this Board one of the first authorities to depart from the "first come, first served" system of water licensing that

applies to most of Canada.

The North American Tungsten Corporation sought and obtained a stay of the environmental assessment pending its appeal of the Court's ruling, expected to be heard in the spring of 2003. In the meantime, it continues to operate under a temporary water licence - making this a tight race between the life expectancy of the mine and the ability of the Board to impose measures to improve the mine's environmental impact and security. I encourage you to follow our ongoing work on this issue by visiting our website at www.carc.org.

Many thanks,



Karen Wristen,
Executive Director 

A PLAN FOR THE LAND

Last fall, CARC launched the Plan for the Land, a four-year project to assess the ecological, economic, social, and cultural impacts of industrial development in the Slave Geological Province, an area ranging from the northern shore of Great Slave Lake in the Northwest Territories to the Coronation Gulf and Bathurst Inlet in Nunavut.

Since then, CARC has been working hard to demonstrate the potential impacts of a proposed all-weather road and deep-sea port that would service Izok Lake (a proposed base metal mine), and likely other future mines currently in the exploration phase. Part of this work has been undertaken by Petr Cizek, a Yellowknife-based lands and resource consultant who has created maps of the proposed road in relation to the known movements of the Bathurst caribou herd and grizzly bear populations.

“Modeling like this will allow Northern communities to clearly understand the potential impact of any development proposal,” said Shelagh Montgomery, CARC’s

Project Director. Cizek completed the modeling for CARC’s Plan for the Land, to illustrate how effective it can be to combine data from environmental monitoring with development project data.

“The next challenge is to find a way to do the same thing with social and economic data,” said Montgomery. Plans are underway for a workshop later this winter, at which social and physical scientists, resource managers and development companies will share insights as to how social and economic impacts could be modeled together with environmental impacts.

“This would produce a clear picture of the potential effects of any development,” Montgomery observed. “There is really no limit to the number and nature of impacts you can predict, if you’ve got good data collected in a compatible format.”

Standardizing methods of data collection and approaches to modeling will be important themes of the workshop. 🌐



MERCURY

Treaty Still Within Reach

The United Nations Environment Program Governing Council met in Nairobi February 4 - 7 to decide, among other things, what action should be taken to regulate mercury, a lethal toxin found throughout the world. Currently, there is no law to control mercury production and reduce its impacts – and many in the international community would like to see this changed.

CARC was the only Canadian organization to participate as a member of the Global Mercury Assessment Working Group, which was set up by the United Nations Environmental Program to gather evidence about the global sources and impacts of mercury. Our concern is the dramatically elevated levels of mercury in marine mammals and fish consumed in Northern communities, particularly in Nunavut.

The levels in food are high enough to warrant concern for the children born to women consuming a traditional diet. In many places in the world, fish consumption advisories have been issued because of mercury levels. But in Canada, where there is no healthy substitute for contaminated marine foods, no advisories are issued.

Unfortunately, swift action on this toxin has been delayed by countries like the United States, who went into Nairobi opposing the international action on mercury. Under intense pressure from the European Union and the circumpolar nations, they finally relented and agreed to a resolution that will allow the UNEP to continue work toward “a legally binding instrument, non-binding

JOIN US FOR A STUDY TOUR THIS SUMMER...

instrument or other measures or actions..."

CARC will continue to work toward a legally binding agreement and at the same time, communicate the known risks of mercury to Northern communities. We cannot afford to wait for catastrophic public health problems to occur before the world community acts. It is dangerously, wilfully blind to wait until our children suffer the consequences of mercury exposure. Both the problem and its remedy are in plain sight; CARC will continue to push our international partners to have the courage and the political will to act. ❁



CARC is well known for bringing the Arctic to those in the "south" - but this July, we will be turning that mission around, offering an unprecedented opportunity for our supporters to accompany us on a research and ecotourism expedition to Bathurst Inlet.

On the edge of the Northwest Passage, 500 kilometres from Yellowknife, lies Bathurst Inlet, a place of spectacular natural beauty, of more than 125 species of wildflowers, 80 varieties of nesting birds and 13 different mammals. It is also home to the Bathurst Inlet Lodge, a world-renowned ecotourism destination established in 1969 and run in partnership with the local Inuit community.

Each spring, the Bathurst caribou herd, one of the largest free-roaming mammal herds in the world, passes through the area, calving adjacent to the Lodge. Caribou have helped sustain Arctic inhabitants for thousands of years, and the Bathurst herd is still extremely important, economically and culturally, to First Nations between Bathurst Inlet and Yellowknife. But in recent years, the herd numbers have been mysteriously diminishing. A proposed development of a deep water port at Bathurst Inlet in caribou calving grounds, and 300 kilometres of road linking several known and potential mineral deposits only spell more trouble for the already stressed caribou.

For this reason, CARC will be visiting the area to study the caribou herd in its habitat and meet with the players involved in this issue, to discuss our concerns and work together for solutions. We invite you to join us! This all-inclusive trip will include everything from the services of the lodge owner and staff as guide/interpreters, to transportation from Yellowknife and optional participation in research expeditions, including flights over the caribou calving area and the Northwest Passage. Activities from hiking to birding to just relaxing will also be offered!

This promises to be an unforgettable experience in one of the North's most beautiful spots and one of Canada's natural treasures. CARC wants to give supporters like you, who care about Bathurst Inlet and other Arctic places, the chance to see the very real threats they face - we also want to share the vital work CARC is doing to address these threats and keep the Arctic's ecological integrity intact.

As of January 26, 2003, there are 13 places available on the expedition. If you are interested in joining us, please contact CARC Executive Director Karen Wristen at (613)759-4284 or visit these websites:

www.carc.org

www.bathurstinletlodge.com

TO FIND OUT MORE: VISIT US AT www.carc.org

See the Caribou of the Arctic as they've never been seen before... *Seven stories tall!*



NO, IT'S NOT THE PREMISE FOR A B-GRADE SCI-FI CREATURE FEATURE, BUT RATHER A VERY SPECIAL EVENT TO BE STAGED BY CARC. ON APRIL 10TH, 2003, FROM 6 TO 10 P.M., THE CANADIAN ARCTIC RESOURCES COMMITTEE WILL KICK OFF OUR CARIBOU PROGRAM WITH A SPECIAL SCREENING OF THE AWARD-WINNING IMAX FILM "GREAT NORTH" AT THE ONTARIO SCIENCE CENTER IN TORONTO. THE EVENING WILL INCLUDE A WINE AND CHEESE RECEPTION AND ONE OF THE CONSULTING BIOLOGISTS AND CARIBOU EXPERTS WILL TALK ABOUT THE MAKING OF "GREAT NORTH".

"Great North" takes us north of the 55th Parallel, over some of the most majestic – and harsh – terrain in existence, following the caribou herds as they travel some of the 7,000 kilometres of their annual migration route. Nearly one hundred years ago, "Nanook of the North" traversed these same frozen lands, opening a window into a life far removed from anything viewers had seen. His grandson and "Great

North" narrator Adamie continues the tradition, showing us that while technologies may change, the land and the caribou are still an integral part of Inuit culture. The film then takes us further around the Arctic Circle to the far north of Sweden and the Saami people – who also share a special connection to the environment and to the close cousin of the caribou, the reindeer. Only the IMAX format can truly capture

the chaotic excitement of a Saami reindeer round-up!

We invite all our supporters to join us for this evening of fun, festivities, and mega-fauna!

Please contact Ani Arnott at aarnott@carc.org or (613) 759-4284 if you'd like more details or would like to volunteer for this event. 🌱

CARC GIVES THE NORTH A NATIONAL VOICE.

PLEASE JOIN US!

Web of Life: You can join the Web of Life by giving a monthly donation of any amount - and you will receive all the benefits listed below for the appropriate donation level.

Guardians of the Circle: We recognize the significant contributions of members who have been with us for 10 years or more, and whose gifts in any amount have kept CARC strong over the past 30 years. Guardians receive COMPASS magazine and annual reports in their regular mailings.

Northlanders: Northlanders support CARC with a gift of \$100 or more. Northlanders receive COMPASS and Northern Perspectives.

Northern Lights: Northern Lights support CARC with gifts of \$500 or more. Northern Lights Members receive COMPASS, Northern Perspectives and invitations to public events.

Arctic Circle: When you support CARC with a gift of \$1000 or more, you become a member of our Arctic Circle. Arctic Circle Members receive COMPASS, Northern Perspectives, special news releases and invitations to all CARC public events. Members are also invited to accompany CARC on its annual expedition into Canada's North.

If you've any questions about our giving programs and how your gift helps, please call us at

(613) 759-4284 or email us at info@carc.org

Mail to: 200-7 Hinton Avenue North, Ottawa, ON K1Y 4P1

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