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A Dilemma

by Gordon Petersen

“How far is it sensible to explore and develop new hydrocarbon resources, given that the atmosphere may not be able to cope with the utilisation of the hydrocarbon reserves discovered already? Undoubtedly it is a dilemma.”

— Heinz Rothermund, Managing Director
Shell UK Exploration and Production
May 1997

We've all heard a great deal about climate change in the past few years. We've heard how the production and burning of fossil fuels increases atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and methane, and how the increased concentration of these gases will cause such things as changes in precipitation patterns; an increase in the frequency and severity of storms; an increase in the range of diseases like malaria and dengue fever; and increases in sea level which will affect millions of people worldwide, and which could literally erase some low-lying island nations.

By continuing to pump out greenhouse gases at an increasing rate, we're doing a grand experiment on a global scale, and we may not like the outcome. As Wally Broecker, Newberry Professor of Geology at Columbia University in New York has observed, “Climate is an angry beast, and we're poking it with sticks.”

Since Mr. Rothermund made his observation in 1997, much more has been learned about the science of climate change. And the new information suggests that the effects of climate change will be even more severe than previously thought.

From January 17 to 20, 2001, delegations from some 100 member countries of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) gathered in Shanghai to look at the latest scientific findings. The report reviewed the work of some 123 Co-ordinating and Lead Authors, 516 Contributing Authors, 21 Review Editors and 300 Expert Reviewers.

What they said makes for sobering reading: The atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide (CO₂) has increased by 31 percent since 1750. The present CO₂ concentration has not been exceeded during the past 420,000 years and likely not during the past 20 million years. The current rate of increase

is unprecedented during at least the past 20,000 years. (About three-quarters of the anthropogenic emissions of CO₂ to the atmosphere during the past 20 years is due to fossil fuel burning. The rest is predominantly due to land-use change, especially deforestation.)

Globally, it is very likely that the 1990s was the warmest decade and 1998 the warmest year in the instrumental record, since 1861. (New analyses of proxy data for the Northern Hemisphere indicate that the increase in temperature in the 20th century is likely to have been the largest of any century during the past 1000 years.) In the light of new evidence and taking into account the remaining uncertainties, most of the observed warming over the last 50 years is likely to have been due to the increase in greenhouse gas concentrations.

The globally averaged surface temperature is projected to increase by 1.4 to 5.8 degrees Celsius over the period 1990 to 2100. (Temperature increases are projected to be greater than previously predicted, which were about 1.0 to 3.5 degrees C. The projected rate of warming is much larger than the observed changes during the 20th century and is very likely to be without precedent during at least the last 10,000 years, based on palaeoclimate data.)

It's clear. The jig is up for the carbon economy. The question isn't whether or not we should shift to new forms of non-carbon energy, but rather how quickly we can make the change.

And, if we can't even safely burn the already proven reserves, why do we continue to look for more fossil fuels especially in wilderness and frontier areas? Why are we doing irreparable damage to these priceless areas, when we can't even safely burn the resources that have already been discovered? Instead of exploring for new reserves, shouldn't we be using the time remaining until the existing ones are exhausted to find ways of reducing our energy use, and to develop new non-carbon sources of energy?

For Mr. Rothermund, the fact that there is already more carbon fuel available than can be safely burned might be a dilemma.

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Upcoming Meeting

Our next board meeting will be on Sunday, May 13, 10 AM to 4 PM, at the Lebel Mansion in Pincher Creek.

Newsletter

This newsletter welcomes comments and/or submissions from members and others. Please send submissions to the editor at the office or directly by e-mail (mmcragen@telusplanet.net). Please check with the editor for submission deadlines.

The opinions, evaluations, claims and assertions contained in articles appearing in the Castle Wilderness News are the responsibility of their authors, and may not reflect the policies of the Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition. The editor takes responsibility for articles, notices, etc., for which an author is not identified.

***Donations to CCWC are tax creditable
and greatly appreciated.***



... *Dilemma*, continued from page 1

After all, his company is one of the world's largest producers of oil and gas.

For those of us, however, that value wild lands and wild places, the choice is clear. Wilderness and frontier areas should be put off-limits to hydrocarbon exploration or development. When we can't even afford to burn what we've already discovered, why destroy new areas in the search for more? In our part of the world, we should start with the Castle. No more wells should be drilled, and currently disturbed areas should be reclaimed as the existing reserves run out.

A dilemma? I don't think so. •



Electronic Activism for the Castle

Wildcanada.net combines grassroots outreach and internet-based activism to help conservation minded Canadians protect our wild lands. Wildcanada.net is doing a terrific job helping the Castle get protection but we could use your help too.

Visit the Castle Action Centre at www.wildcanada.net to send a free fax to demand that the Castle Wilderness is protected. By joining this free network you can also receive action alerts, tailored to your federal and provincial electoral ridings. •

Mark your calendar for April 2

The National Film Board of Canada presents
a public screening of

Worst Case Scenario

The story of a two-year clash between
Shell Canada
and residents near Rocky Mountain House
over the drilling of a potentially dangerous sour gas well.

With A Keynote Address by Dr. David Suzuki

PINCHER CREEK SCREENING
Monday, April 2, 2001
7 PM at the Community Hall

free admission



Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan Underway

by Dave Sheppard

In southwestern Alberta, the fate of the Castle is the fate of the grizzly bear, for without substantial changes in land use management and habitat protection in the Castle, the great bear will not survive.

As the natural gas industry expands into the north end of the area, as our little local ski hill mushrooms into a permanent town and year-round resort, as logging converts ever more high quality old growth habitat to uniform, low-quality stands of lodgepole pine, leaving behind, in the process, a spiderweb of roads, as damaging random camping and off-road vehicle use spin out of control, as local chambers of commerce promote “world class” snowmobiling, as more and more people crowd into the back country, grizzly bears in the Castle are finding it increasingly difficult to find the safe, secure habitat they need to avoid contact with humans. And for bears, contact often means death.

At long last, however, a reputable conservation scientist is taking a close look at the problem. Under contract to the Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition, Dr. Brian L. Horejsi of Western Wildlife Environments Consulting, Calgary, began work last September on the first phase of a two-year study to prepare a recovery plan for grizzly bears in the Castle and the adjacent Flathead drainage of southeastern British Columbia. The plan will take a close look at grizzly bear habitat, population, and human land use in the area, and recommend the changes in management, including the protection of core habitat, that will be needed to ensure the recovery and continuance of a healthy and sustainable grizzly bear population.



Wayne Lynch

Obviously, the grizzly bear population of southwestern Alberta cannot be healthy if the ecosystem is sick. Restoring the bear and its habitat will ensure a healthy ecosystem, not just for bears, but for most other indigenous species. As the ecosystem goes, so goes the great bear. As goes the bear, so goes the wolverine, the gray wolf, and the fisher, indeed all other species dependent on the wild.

Because of the high cost of the grizzly bear recovery plan project, it has been divided into three phases. Phase one, the assembly of the information (the database), is now well

underway, funded by a \$12,500 grant from the Alberta Ecotrust Foundation. The second phase, the development of the recovery plan, is expected to begin in the spring or early summer. The McLean Foundation of Toronto has contributed \$4,000 toward the second phase and additional funding is being sought. The third phase of the project involves an extensive program of publicity, consultation, and outreach.

Dr. Horejsi has some 30 years experience studying grizzly bears and other wildlife on Alberta's eastern slopes, as well as in British Columbia and the Yukon. Recently, he completed a similar grizzly bear recovery plan for the endangered Granby-Gladstone population north of Grand Forks, B.C.

Dr. Horejsi's study will provide the coalition with sound, well-documented scientific arguments for protecting the Castle-Flathead ecosystem and its wildlife. Of course, science cannot do the job alone.

For more information on the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan Project contact Dave at (403) 627-4914 or email: shepjd@telusplanet.net •



Support the Castle's Fight for Protection

You can help the Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition in its fight to gain legislated protection through a donation to the Alberta Greens or Green Party of Canada. If you are interested in making a donation of \$100 to the Castle 2001 campaign which would *only cost you \$25* then read on.

The Green Party of Canada and the Alberta Greens are partners in the Castle 2001 Campaign. When you give your donation, at least 90 percent will go to fund the campaign—the Alberta Greens/Green Party of Canada may keep up to 10 percent to cover administration costs. The CCWC directs and manages all aspects of Castle 2001 Campaign.

Here's how it works. Write a cheque payable to the Alberta Greens or Green Party of Canada for the amount you want to go to the Castle 2001 Campaign. Mark the cheque "For the Castle 2001 Campaign." Then send your cheque with the enclosed donation form.

Tax receipts will be issued to you by the Alberta Greens/Green Party of Canada. If you pay income tax, the Government refunds, through political tax credits, a large portion of your donation when you file your tax return. The amount refunded is determined according to the following formulas:

Alberta Greens: up to a \$150 donation, there is a 75% tax credit; on the next \$675, a 50% tax credit applies.

Green Party of Canada: up to a \$100 donation, there is a 75% tax credit; on the next \$450, a 50% tax credit applies.

You can also combine donations to the Alberta Greens and the Green Party of Canada. By combining your donation, a \$250 total contribution will only cost you \$62.50.

Example 1:

You give \$150 to Alberta Greens	\$150.00
Government gives you back:	<u>112.50</u>
Your cost after tax return	\$37.50

Example 2:

You give \$100 to Green Party of Canada	\$100.00
Government gives you back:	<u>75.00</u>
Your cost after tax return	\$25.00

Got you thinking?

Please use the coupon on this page to help save the Castle!

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____ Fax _____

Two ways to donate to the Castle 2001 Campaign:

I want to take advantage of the Alberta Greens &/or Green Party of Canada's tax credits.

Enclosed is a cheque payable to *Alberta Greens* for \$_____ marked "For Castle 2001 Campaign"

Enclosed is a cheque payable to *Green Party of Canada* for \$_____ marked "For Castle 2001 Campaign"

I want to help the Castle 2001 Campaign but would prefer to donate directly to the CCWC. Enclosed is my tax deductible charitable donation.

Payment options:

Single donation: \$25 \$50 \$100 \$_____

Cheque enclosed Visa Mastercard

Card # _____

Name on card _____

Expiry date __/__/__ Signature: _____

Monthly contribution: \$5 \$10 \$30 \$_____

Visa Mastercard

Card # _____

Name on card _____

Expiry date __/__/__ Signature: _____

2) Authorized monthly withdrawal on the 1st or 15th of each month. Attach a VOIDED cheque.

I (We) authorize CCWC to withdraw funds from the bank account indicated on the attached voided cheque to cover donation due by me to the CCWC for donation. I (We) understand that I (we) will be subject to normal bank charges through the Pre-Authorized Payment Plan.

Signature: _____

Signature: _____

(Two signatures required for a joint account).

Monthly contributions can be discontinued at any time on your request.

Mail to: CCWC, Box 2621, Pincher Creek, AB TOK 1W0



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