

Squandered Bogs

Since 1950, we in the Northern countries have been acting like loggers and miners in days of yore, come to town from camp on month's end pay-day, squandering our wages on liquor, ladies and entertainment. By Monday morning there's little or no cash left to send home to care for the kids and wife.

In the case of we in the Northern "developed" countries, we have wasted not only much of the planet's oil and resources since WW2, we have spent most of what we should have left to our own future generations.

The decades of relatively easy "free" energy are gone. Recall just back in 1998 when gasoline across Canada was 50¢ a litre, let alone the days before metric when a gallon cost that much. A gallon is like 5 litres so a litre then was 10¢.

Oil once gushed from deep in the earth. Eventually we had to start sucking it up with electric pumps, which cost energy. Now we have to pump life saving water into old wells to force the remaining dregs of hydrocarbon to the surface.

Worse yet, we are now mining sandy oil by the cubic houseful to produce a dozen or two barrels net. The energy gained after steaming the very-crude free of grime is 60%. That is- for every 6 barrels we gain, 4 barrels worth of carbon producing oil energy are burned off to steam another 6 free.

As well, hundreds of tonnes of steel pipe is oh so quickly worn away as the high pressure sandy oil is pumped through it acting like expensive garnet paper. Crews tend the reclamation centres 24/365 replacing pipes and pumps round the clock. Steel and pipe production themselves are very very energy intensive. We've all seen pictures of steel workers dressed in heavy fire-protection suits as red hot molten steel is poured. Just imagine the quantity of planet frying carbon released into the atmosphere for

every kilo of steel. Add the 40% of "wasted" oil sands exhaust to this and we are talking environmental disaster. The worst Canada has ever partaken in

To make global frying matters even worse, the source of this oil is thousands of hectares of pristine Northern Alberta peat bog, one of the largest remaining carbon sinks on the planet.

A carbon sink, recall, is exactly what the term implies. Particulate carbon, bad for life, is sucked down, eaten, breathed, absorbed - by plant life. It is, as you remember from grade school science, through photosynthesis converted into life giving oxygen producing living growing plant life. Peat bogs excel at this. The Burns Bog near Vancouver, BC, Canada, is renowned for removing many tonnes of vehicle and industrial carbon pollution per year. It keeps the local area air cleaner.

Intelligent members of Vancouver, the Greater Vancouver Regional District, and Greenpeace under pressure from the Burns Bog Protection Society have beaten back numerous money making schemes over the decades. At one time the Bog was proposed as a site for the Pacific National Exhibition, a CFL BC Lions Stadium, assorted mega-malls and industrial parks as well as housing. So far, the right thing for the area and the planet has been done.

The Alberta oil sands? Well! No one cares! "They're so remote anyway! The barren area doesn't matter to anyone! The forests being replanted by oil companies do little to compensate for the life-giving lungs of the bog."

To cap it all off (which this sands project should be) Alberta- the 52nd State (after Israel) and the government of Canada have been covertly courted by big oil and "b-i-zitch slapped" by the United States of America to go forth and rape our own country. Can you spell "NAFTA"?

One day Canadians, stand way back, as far as you can and take a good hard look at our lonely planet. You know the view. The one from Apollo 11 – tiny, shiny blue, fluffy white cloud covered. That was 1968. Flash forward to today and think of lungs of a smoker of forty years- brownish, tending to black cancerous spots. We are well on our way to this and consuming the bogs for oil is like smoking unfiltered cigarettes.

In the end it is not just Canada and Canadians that lose, it is the entire planet, it's Ecosystem and the many generations of our very own offspring yet to come, whose pay day cheque we have long since squandered.

End NAFTA Now
Abandon this environmental
nightmare.
Hold those in government
responsible by terminating their
jobs.
Send big oil and the USA home.
Close the Oil Sands catastrophe
down.

Lance Read – A Canadian in Cuba