



2002
Annual
Report

Society
Promoting
Environmental
Conservation



Environmental
protection
since 1969

Board of Directors' Report

SPEC campaigns achieved real gains in 2002. In March, the Federal Court overturned Ottawa's expropriation of the Nanoose Bay test range. We conducted polls that tell us the vast majority of BC residents don't want nuclear warships testing weapons in BC waters. SPEC will face a federal challenge of the Nanoose ruling in March, 2003.

Together with groups in Richmond, SPEC stopped the import of tons of dioxin and PCB-contaminated soil from Oregon to a Fraser River waste site. Because of BC's low standards, it remains cheaper for US companies to ship their toxic waste to BC.

In the spring Norman Abbey joined the Board and set up a Nanaimo office to address the Duke Point gas-power plant and associated Georgia Strait pipeline. In Abbotsford, Sierra Legal Defence Fund lawyer Tim Howard represented SPEC at hearings that put another nail in the coffin of the SE2 power plant.

We appealed a Chevron plan to dump toxic MTBE into Burrard Inlet at levels above provincial standards. Chevron finally amended its plan to meet the safer standard. Industrial effluents, however, are still pouring into Burrard Inlet. That will be a priority for 2003.

TransLink stopped burning high-sulphur diesel in transit buses, and switched back to a cleaner fuel. But the province cut the ACORP program that monitors diesel truck pollution.

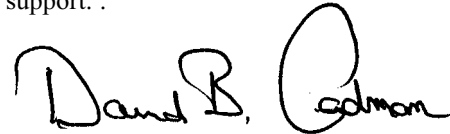
SPEC and the Basel Action Network blew the whistle on illegal Canadian exports of toxic waste

to China. As a result, SPEC vice-president Helen Spiegelman was invited to the Geneva meetings of the Basel Convention on hazardous wastes.

We are proud of our accomplishments, but many challenges remain. The Drinking Water Protection Act fails to protect drinking watersheds. The GVRD continues to pump raw sewage into English Bay. And the province still wants to lift the moratorium on offshore oil exploration.

In 2003, SPEC will launch a campaign to stop "cosmetic" pesticide use in the Lower Mainland. We will continue our air and water quality, solid and liquid waste, and toxics campaigns.

I wish to acknowledge the work of SPEC Directors, staff and volunteers. I also thank the Endswell Foundation, Tides Canada Foundation, Mountain Equipment Co-op, the BC Charitable Gaming fund, the Sierra Legal Defence Fund and West Coast Environmental Law Association, and the Environmental Fund of BC for their crucial support. .



David Cadman
President

Directors David Cadman and Loretta Woodcock were elected to office in the November 2002, civic elections. They are no longer active Directors. SPEC thanks Loretta and David for their efforts and wishes them the best in their new careers at the Vancouver Park Board and City Hall.

2002 Board of Directors

David Cadman, President
Helen Spiegelman, Vice President
John Whistler, Treasurer
Paul Hundal, Past President
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Shirley Roburn, Admin. Coord.
Fae Johnstone, Info. Centre Mgr.
Meredith Severin, Outreach

Air Quality

TransLink switches back to cleaner fuel

After almost two years of burning dirty diesel fuel in the region's 900 diesel transit buses, TransLink's Board decided in November to switch back to less polluting No1 grade diesel fuel. In April 2001, TransLink switched to high-sulphur No2 diesel as a cost saving measure despite opposition from health and environmental organizations.

TransLink's estimated \$760,000 in fuel savings. After the cost of adjusting engines and the effects of the four-month-long transit strike were factored in, savings amounted to less than \$40,000. Meanwhile 47 workers at TransLink's Oakridge and North Vancouver maintenance centres filed WCB complaints because of noxious exhausts from the dirtier No2 fuel.

"We are pleased TransLink switched back to less polluting fuel," said SPEC director **Deming Smith**. "It is important for TransLink to put a high priority on air quality and public health when making decisions."

Over the past two years SPEC urged municipal fleet managers and TransLink to implement clean fuel polices for their diesel trucks and busses. By switching back to less polluting fuel, TransLink is following health authority recommendations for decreased diesel emission. Health authorities recognize the significant health hazard diesel exhaust poses to pedestrians, transit riders and drivers along urban corridors.

A 2001 South Fraser Health Region report found "about as many deaths in the Lower Main-

land are attributable to air pollution as from HIV, accidental falls or traffic accidents." GVRD chief medical health officer Dr **John Blatherwick** noted that "diesel PM tends to sink deep into the lungs where it can cause cancer and other respiratory ailments." In California, where diesel PM is a designated carcinogen, the South Coast Air Quality Management District has mandated the use of low-emission natural gas vehicles for municipal buses, service trucks and emergency vehicles.

"During the recent civic elections a SPEC



SPEC director David Cadman discusses TransLink fuel policy with Burnaby Cllr. Nancy Harris, BC Lung Association's June Yoo Rifkin and SPEC transportation director Deming Smith.

questionnaire found that 82 per cent of candidates across the GVRD supported a policy of having municipal vehicle fleets and buses use the least polluting fuels available," said Smith.

Natural-gas buses are path to cleaner air

On June 15 outside Vancouver's Science World, SPEC joined the BC Lung Association, community activists and Councilors from Vancouver, Burnaby and Richmond in demonstrating **Westport Innovations'** latest natural-gas

powered bus. The Westport engine emits less than 10 per cent of the hazardous fine particulate matter (PM) and only 50 per cent of the nitrous oxides of a conventional diesel engine.

"We know diesel is a serious health hazard," said SPEC president **David Cadman**. "Now we have a made-in-BC technology that can go a long way toward cutting dangerous PM emissions and we want TransLink to seriously consider this option when they purchase new buses."

TransLink's predecessor, BC Transit, experi-

Yet in August, 2002, ICBC and the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection (WLAP) cut the AirCare On Road Program (ACORP) that monitors heavy duty truck and bus pollution.

The GVRD estimates that by 2025 the number of heavy duty vehicles in the Lower Fraser Valley will double to 80,000. That's why in 1996 the GVRD, BC Transit and the BC Ministry of Environment pulled together an annual \$450,000 budget so ACORP inspectors can pull over polluting vehicles.

Although environmentalists wanted annual mandatory testing, as is done in Ontario and as car drivers in BC must undergo, ACORP was seen as a first step. A May 2002 GVRD review concluded that ACORP "is estimated to reduce the risk of diesel exhaust-related disease by 10 percent to 20 percent in the long term, providing a real economic benefit of \$2 to \$7 million per year - far outweighing the cost of the program."

The GVRD tried to meet with provincial officials to keep ACORP running. The **BC Lung Association**, the **BC Automobile Association** and Vancouver

City Council want to put ACORP back on the road.

SPEC vice-president **Helen Spiegelman** appeared before Vancouver Council's Environment Committee in support of a motion to reinstate ACORP.

In early October, SPEC directors **Gabriella Moro**, **David Cadman** and Spiegelman met with WLAP Minister **Joyce Murray**.

Murray indicated a funding mechanism should be developed for industry to cover the cost of ensuring diesel exhaust does not threaten public health and safety.

Murray also said she would meet with the



SPEC supporters about to board Westport Cummins "clean fuel" natural gas demonstration bus at Think EcoCity.

mented with early technology natural gas buses. Those buses sit unused in a TransLink depot.

More than 5000 natural gas powered transit vehicles are manufactured each year for the US market and comprise close to 10 per cent of the total US fleet.

ACORP Cut

Exhaust belching from diesel trucks and buses kills. The US Environmental Protection Agency confirms "diesel exhaust is likely to be carcinogenic to humans by inhalation, and that this hazard applies to environmental exposure."



SPEC Directors Gabriella Moro and David Cadman, WLAP Minister Joyce Murray and SPEC Campaign Coordinator Ivan Bulic discuss putting ACORP back on road.

GVRD, the transport industry, TransLink and ICBC.

Meanwhile ACORP remains sidelined, despite WLAP's 2002 *Environmental Trends Report* that lists "a heavy duty vehicle testing program in the Lower Fraser Valley" among its accomplishments in reducing air pollution.

Energy

Roller coaster year for SE2

2002 was a year of dramatic shifts in the Sumas Energy 2 campaign. In March, SE2 opponents were buoyed by Washington's Whatcom County Council vote to squash a revised SE2 proposal. The revised proposal would still pump two million tonnes of pollutants a year into the Abbotsford air shed. SE2 proponent, NESCO Corporation, submitted the revised version of the controversial 660-megawatt power plant after Washington State's Energy Facilities Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) voted to nix SE2. Meanwhile new panelists were appointed to EFSEC.

In August, the new panel okayed the revised plan which was approved by Washington Governor **Gary Locke**. The BC Government, **Fraser Valley Regional District**, **MSA** hospital staff, the **Downtown Abbotsford Business Association** and environmental organizations were outraged.

"BC will now supply the natural gas which SE2 will turn into pollution to be dumped into

our back yard," said SPEC president **David Cadman**.

In September, SPEC director **John Irwin**, Abbotsford Cllr. **Patricia Ross** and UBC profes-



SLDF lawyer Tim Howard looks on as SPEC president David Cadman speaks to an anti-SE2 rally in Abbotsford SE2 in October.

sor of medicine **Dr David Bates** asked the Canada-US International Joint Commission to review SE2's environmental and health impacts.

A 1991 Canada-US agreement established a "practical and effective instrument to address shared concerns regarding transboundary air

Howard argued that the NEB should consider the full environmental impact of SE2. This position was supported by the majority of intervenors including new Abbotsford Mayor **Mary Reeves**.

NESCO and the Province of Alberta urged the NEB to ignore overall environmental issue and only consider the impact of the transmission line.

On December 09, in a precedent setting decision, the NEB concluded that the plant's pollution is relevant to the Canadian public interest in deciding whether to approve the power line.

"This decision sets a major precedent" said Howard. "The Board decided that we can't leave the protection of the Canadian environment to a US regulator."

"We are glad to see a full picture assessment of this plant's impacts," said **Gerry Scott** of the David Suzuki Foundation, "We urge the province to take a similar perspective as they encourage this



SPEC director John Irwin joins David Suzuki Foundation's Gerry Scott and Abbotsford Cllr. Patricia Ross at September hearings of International Joint Commission on impacts of SE2 power plant on air quality in Lower Fraser Valley.

pollution." Both governments created an International Air Quality Committee to "control transboundary air quality."

"SE2 would significantly increase NOx pollution over the Fraser Valley," said SPEC campaign coordinator **Ivan Bulic**. "This appears to clearly violate the 1991 agreement regarding NOx emissions." But before any IJC review, SE2 would have to get past the **National Energy Board**.

To be viable, SE2 has to run a 9-km power line to BC Hydro's power grid at Abbotsford. In October the NEB held hearings in Abbotsford to approve the line.

A huge anti SE2 rally opened the NEB process. Inside **Sierra Legal Defence Fund** lawyer, **Tim Howard** appeared on behalf of SPEC and the **David Suzuki Foundation**.

type of gas plant and even coal fired plants in BC communities."

Canadian environmental impact hearings on SE2 are set for April 2003, in Abbotsford.

Water Quality

Muddy Waters

On January 23, 2002, Greater Vancouver residents entered their 16th day under a drinking water advisory because of high turbidity levels at the Seymour reservoir. Health authorities advised pregnant women, HIV patients, the elderly, people taking medication and those with chronic illness to boil their drinking water.



*Students call for retention of moratorium on offshore oil and gas exploration at a February rally outside the Legislature in Victoria. SPEC and the 100 member organizations of the **Oil Free Coast Alliance** continue to press for alternatives to offshore oil. The BC Government did not lift the moratorium in 2002 despite strong pro oil statements by Premier Gordon Campbell and Energy Minister Richard Neufeld.*

Turbidity at the Seymour reservoir that supplies much of Vancouver's drinking water, consistently topped 5 NTUs (units of turbidity measurement) and hit a maximum reading of 9.6 NTUs on Jan 10. According to Health Canada guidelines, anything over 1 NTU prompts increased use of chlorine disinfectant. Boil water advisories are issued when turbidity hits 5.0 NTUs.

Turbidity, or cloudiness, is caused by organic matter getting into the water during heavy rains, or when slides occur on slopes made unstable by decades of logging and roadbuilding on the steep terrain of the North Shore watersheds.

The GVRD uses more chlorine disinfectant during high turbidity. Unfortunately chlorine can combine with organic matter to produce trihalomethanes, which have been linked to miscarriages and cancer.

SPEC created a "**water alert**" page on the

SPEC website with links to the GVRD's turbidity index. During the 16-day high turbidity episode, press alerts were issued.

Until a filtration plant is in operation at the Seymour reservoir, turbidity will continue to be a problem. According to a 2001 GVRD Water District report, a new \$450 million filtration plant for the Seymour and Capilano reservoirs is not expected to be running before 2007.

Drinking Water Legislation Fails to Protect Community Watersheds

Legislation introduced in October by Water, Land and Air Protection Minister **Joyce Murray** failed to follow a BC Auditor-General recommendation for a single agency to put health first in decisions on drinking watersheds.

"The Liberal government's amended Drinking Water Protection Act does not resolve the contradiction between resource industries and watershed protection," said SPEC president **David Cadman**. "Despite calls by the Auditor-General for a single agency to make decisions based on what's good for health and the environment, the Act now gives ultimate responsibility for resolving disputes to politicians."

In 1999 the BC Auditor-General determined

The Drinking Water Protection Act still allows seven ministries including Agriculture, Energy, and Forestry to "continue to be responsible for protecting drinking water sources." The Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management will make "land use decisions" in community watersheds.

While medical health officers had the final say over water protection decisions, the new bill now lets cabinet ministers settle disputes arising from "the actions or inaction of one or more ministries, government corporations or other agents of the government."

"If there is a conflict between cattle grazing, logging or mining interests and a local community, the final decision will be made by cabinet and not health authorities," said **Cadman**. "It doesn't take a crystal ball to predict continued conflicts in watersheds and decisions that sacrifice water quality."

Community watershed protection

In 2002 SPEC sponsored a number of public meetings and workshops on community watershed protection. Together with the **Sierra Club of BC**, the **David Suzuki Foundation** and the **Sierra Legal Defence Fund**, SPEC hosted the Vancouver visit of **Dr. David Schindler**, Killam Memorial professor of Ecology at the University of Alberta. Schindler's talk focussed on the

need for source protection of drinking water from agriculture and resource industry pressure.

In April, SPEC helped organize a community watershed workshop at the Roundhouse Centre in Vancouver that featured UBC professor **Dr. Hans Schrier**, CUPE researcher **Kathy Corrigan** and nationally syndicated columnist and author **Murray Dobbin**.

"current groundwater management is inadequate in BC as both the quantity and quality of groundwater are being threatened...by activities such as logging, cattle grazing, outdoor recreation, transportation, agriculture and human settlement." He called for a single agency to replace conflicting ministries to "ensure drinking-water interests are represented in government decisions and to improve accountability."



*SPEC president David Cadman hosts the April 2002 Vancouver visit of University of Toronto's **Dr Helen Lensky**. The author of two books on the Olympics, Lensky spoke at public meetings and met with Lower Mainland civic officials on the impacts of the Olympics.*

Community Drinking Water Atlas

In late 2002, an ambitious project to create a web-based **Community Drinking Water Atlas** was completed (see *SPEC/VEIC Website Report*). The site is an interactive research tool about community watersheds in British Columbia. It allows users to create watershed maps containing information on wildlife populations, water supply, mining operations and forestry activity.

The atlas has a live connection to various databases, so almost every map can display layers of detailed, up-to-date information. Depending on requirements, the user can select criteria, generate reports, and print maps. Information can be used to determine the condition of a specific watershed.

The project was supported by **Mountain Equipment Co-op** and the **Environmental Mining Council of BC**, and built by **Steve Young** of the **Sierra Club of BC**. The Atlas can be accessed through the *What's New* section of the spec website (www.spec.bc.ca).

No watershed highways to Whistler

As part of Vancouver's bid for the 2010 winter Olympics, various schemes have been proposed for routes to Whistler through the Capilano or Seymour watersheds. The latest arose last spring when former Squamish Mayor **Corinne Lonsdale** touted a watershed highway to cut "20 minutes" off the driving time to Squamish.

SPEC directors **Paul Hundal** and **David Cadman** spoke against any new roads through the watersheds. Aside from the cost - estimated at up to \$3 billion - construction related erosion and pollution would compromise water quality. A road would also lead to development in an area that Vancouver voters have indicated they want to keep as a protected watershed.

The GVRD Water Committee agreed with SPEC's position and nixed the highway scheme.

Sustainable Communities

"Recycling Democracy"

When voting in the November 2002 civic election wrapped up, thousands of plastic election signs were left cluttering lawns and cam-



SPEC volunteer Terry Slack helps vice-president Helen Spiegelman recycle November civic election signs.

paigned headquarters. In the past those signs would end up in landfills. This year SPEC launched a project to recycle plastic election signs and keep them out of the dump.

"SPEC helped civic candidates to take responsibility for keeping their signs out of landfills," said SPEC vice-president **Helen Spiegelman**. "We arranged for bundled plastic signs to be taken to a local recycler."

Long time SPEC activist **Terry Slack** organized the sign pick-up which he said reminded him of the 1970s when he developed early city-wide curbside recycling for paper, glass and other recyclables.

A 130,000 sq. ft. development as proposed by Wal-Mart would put up to 150 local retailers out of business

David and Goliath: Taking on Wal-Mart

SPEC director **Deming Smith** continued to work with **Building Better Neighbourhoods** on informing local residents of the impact a **Wal-Mart** big box development would have on South Vancouver neighbourhoods. Smith's prime concern is the pollution, noise and congestion that would be created by an extra 7500 cars and delivery trucks driving to the proposed Wal-Mart.

Equally important is the overall effect on local neighbourhoods. A **Ryerson University** study estimates that a 130,000 sq. ft. development as proposed by Wal-Mart would put up to 150 local retailers out of business. And for every new job created, 1.5 jobs would be lost as small local stores are forced to close.

In the summer of 2002, SPEC distributed 6000 information leaflets to neighbourhoods most affected by Wal-Mart. SPEC also helped

collect almost 10,000 names on a petition that was presented to Vancouver City Council.

Council is expected to make a final decision on Wal-Mart by the fall of 2003.

Election Questionnaire

Most candidates in the November 2002 civic election supported water metering, car-free streets, and improving bus service before expanding SkyTrain.

That was the result of an e-mail questionnaire SPEC sent to more than 400 candidates in the GVRD's 15 largest municipalities including Vancouver, Surrey, Burnaby, Richmond, the North Shore and Coquitlam. Candidates were asked nine questions on regional environmental and transportation issues ranging from climate change to banning cosmetic pesticide use and upgrading the region's sewage treatment plants.

"SPEC conducted this questionnaire



SPEC directors Helen Spiegelman and Alan Herbert share joke with volunteers David Beach and Jennifer Borden at SPEC Holiday Season open house.



George and Helen Spiegelman staff e-waste display in Richmond in October.

Evidence suggests that Canada allows exports of toxic e-waste to Asia in contravention of international law.

because some candidates will end up on the GVRD and TransLink boards and will make decisions that affect all GVRD residents," said SPEC researcher **Jim Hamm**. "In the election there was little debate on issues such as: How do we stop pumping billions of litres of raw sewage into our surrounding waters? How do we deal with climate change?, and Should we put more money into SkyTrain or improve the existing bus system that carries 80 percent of riders?"

Of 175 candidates who responded, 79 percent supported residential water metering, while 75 per cent wanted car free streets and neighborhoods. On banning cosmetic pesticides, 79 percent said yes, while 82 percent supported buses and municipal vehicle fleets using least polluting fuels.

On transportation questions, 72 percent said they would improve existing bus service before expanding SkyTrain. And only 23 percent wanted a Third Crossing from Vancouver to the North Shore.

Full results of the questionnaire were posted on the SPEC website prior to the November 16

election day and were reported in the *Vancouver Province* and local community newspapers.

Waste

Canada dumps illegal "e-waste" in China.

SPEC and the Seattle-based **Basel Action Network** (BAN), a global watchdog group working to stop the dumping of toxic electronic "e-waste" in developing countries, submitted evidence that Canada allows exports of toxic e-waste to Asia in contravention of international law. BAN and SPEC displayed examples of dumped e-waste at an October 23 press conference at the SPEC building. BAN's findings were also featured on CBC TV's Oct. 22, 2002 *Marketplace* broadcast.

SPEC and BAN want Canada to ratify an international accord banning such exports and to follow Europe's lead in enacting legislation for



SLDF staff lawyer Tim Howard is flanked by SPEC volunteers Randy and Cecile Helten.

SPEC as part of the Canadian delegation to the Sixth Conference of the Basel Convention held in Geneva, Switzerland.

GVRD sewage plan allows toxic dumping into local waters

The April 04 decision by BC Water, Land and Air Protection (WLAP) Minister **Joyce Murray** to approve the GVRD's **Liquid Waste Management Plan (LWMP)** did little to stop toxic pollutants from getting into False Creek, English Bay, Burrard Inlet and the Fraser River.

According to the LWMP, the GVRD won't upgrade the Lions Gate sewage treatment plant until 2030, the Iona plant

until 2020, or convert the century-old combined regional sewer outfalls (CSOs) until 2050. Iona and Lions Gate pump over 400 million litres of sewage into surrounding waters every day. Toxicity tests conducted by Environment Canada last year show that effluent from the plants violate the federal Fisheries Act which prohibits the dumping of contaminants into fish bearing waters.

SPEC has urged revisions to the LWMP to begin immediate upgrades of sewage treatment plants and conversion of all CSOs.

"WLAP and the GVRD are knowingly breaching the law and allowing toxic materials to flow into Georgia Strait," said SPEC president **David Cadman**. "Meanwhile whales washing up on beaches are full of toxic substances, and the environment is being subjected to ever higher levels of contaminants."

In March 2001, SPEC, the **T. Buck Suzuki Foundation** and the **Sierra Legal Defence Fund** asked the GVRD to amend its liquid waste plan and upgrade the system to stop the flow of untreated sewage into local waters. SPEC is concerned that untreated sewage is laced with toxins includ-

manufacturer responsibility of electronics.

BAN coordinator **Jim Puckett** showed Canadian e-waste collected in Guiyu, China, late last year by Puckett and Canadian researcher **Clement Lam**. One tag attached to an obsolete computer was from the **Department of National Defence's Nanoose**, BC torpedo test range.

BAN claims the Canadian government is not upholding its Basel Convention obligation to control exports of waste containing hazardous materials such as leachable lead in circuit boards and leaded cathode ray tubes. The e-waste is dumped in rural Asian communities where it is handled under conditions that jeopardize workers and the environment.

"Computers are the pop-cans of the cyber-age," said SPEC vice-president **Helen Spiegelman**. "The difference is that computers and TVs are toxic. Like cans and bottles a generation ago, short-lived consumer electronics end up in landfills. And now we find out it they are exported by the shipload to Asia where labour is cheap and environmental standards are minimal."

In early December, Spiegelman represented

Computers are the pop-cans of the cyber-age. The difference is that computers and TVs are toxic.

ing pesticides, dioxins, PCBs and heavy metals such as mercury, copper, lead and cadmium.

Toxics

...Workin' on the Railroad

The **Canadian National Railway** received a permit in April from the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection to spray roundup, arsenal, telar and other herbicides along rail lines in Surrey, New Westminster, Richmond, Vancouver and the North Shore. Approximately 450 ha of land in the Lower Mainland would be affected.

SPEC will appeal CNR's permit at an Environmental Appeal Board (EAB) hearing scheduled for March 25, 2003. SPEC will argue there is environmental harm associated with the use of herbicides, that local communities are opposed to pesticide spraying, and that the CNR has not demonstrated that it has considered non-chemical alternatives.

Railways are a major pesticide user in the Lower Mainland. They continue to rely on herbicides despite research that integrated pest management can significantly reduce herbicide use.

SPEC's appeal is being supported by local **Council of Canadians** chapters, **Louise Kenworthy** of the **UBC Environmental Law Group**, **Mae Burrows** of the **Labour Environmental Alliance**, **Christianne Wilhelmsen** of the **Georgia Strait Alliance**, and environmental lawyer **Bill Andrews**. SPEC researcher **Kyla Tienhaara** is providing information to support the appeal.

Chevron cuts levels of MTBE discharged into Burrard Inlet

On October 31, **Chevron** lowered the levels of toxic MTBE wastewater discharged from its Burnaby refinery to meet new Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection (WLAP) standards. The maximum level is now .44mg/L. A "temporary approval" had allowed Chevron to dump up to 1.8 mg/L of MTBE.

SPEC subsequently dropped an Environmental Appeal Board challenge of the "temporary approval."

"Chevron realized it can't dump MTBE into Burrard Inlet above WLAP levels. Now less MTBE will end up in Burrard Inlet." said SPEC president **David Cadman**. "We are not satisfied, however, that MTBE is safe even at lower concentrations."

Gas additive MTBE, banned as toxic in California, became an issue when 80,000 litres was spilled at Chevron's Burnaby refinery in 2000. Af-



Safe, non-chemical vegetation management underway on Vancouver's Arbutus Corridor rail spur.

ter denying any contamination, Chevron agreed to a clean-up when Burnaby high school students found MTBE in surface water near Confederation Park. Chevron's plan to pump high levels of MTBE into Burrard Inlet was challenged by SPEC and local community groups.

"Chevron's effluent dumping begs a bigger question," says **Cadman**. "There are 33 permits that allow industries to dump effluents into Burrard Inlet. This is despite commitments by WLAP and local authorities to clean up our waters."

Richmond residents didn't want truckloads of contaminated soil rolling through their community.

In early November SPEC met with public interest organizations including the **Georgia Strait Alliance**, **West Coast Environmental Law**, the **T Buck Suzuki Foundation**, the **Labour Environmental Alliance** and the **Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program** to look at the issue of toxic pollutants.

As a result volunteer SPEC researchers **Sophika Kostyniuk** and **Ling Lin** began a review of waste permits to determine the extent of effluent pollution going into Burrard Inlet. Their findings will be released in early 2003.

Richmond toxic waste import stopped

BC is not a toxic dump for US waste, said SPEC president **David Cadman** on Jan. 24, 2002 after hearing details of a plan by Calgary-based **Hazco Ltd.** to import 8,600 tonnes of dioxin and PCB (pentachlorophenol) contaminated soil from Portland, Oregon to their Richmond, BC

waste disposal site. Hazco obtained permits from WLAP and Environment Canada for the imports.

Dioxin can leach into the aquatic food chain and is classified by the US EPA as a human carcinogen. Lower BC standards encourage US companies ship waste to BC.

Richmond residents didn't want truckloads of contaminated soil rolling through their community. Environmentalists were concerned about leaching into the Fraser River from Hazco's waterfront location. Realtors and property owners want to avoid sliding land values if Richmond is perceived as a "toxic dump."

Richmond Cllr **Harold Steves** shared his Council's anger at not being consulted by Environment Canada.

Kevin Hudson of the Richmond chapter of the Council of Canadians organized public meetings and worked with SPEC on an information mailout about Hazco's plans.

On March 22, Hazco's **Stuart Sommerville** met with **Cadman** and SPEC campaign coordina-



SPEC director Scott Nelson is joined by Vancouver Park Board Chair Heather Deal and Richmond Cllr. Harold Steves at SPEC Holiday Season open house.



Outreach volunteers Carrie Walker and Sarah Blyth staff SPEC "Clean Air" display.

for **Ivan Bulic**. Days later Somerville canceled his deal with soil exporter Portland's **Time Oil Company** and stopped the importation.

Working with cities to limit unnecessary "cosmetic" pesticides

Lower Mainland municipalities are considering by-laws to limit cosmetic herbicides and insecticides used to beautify lawns, gardens and golf courses. Because household applications generally don't need permits, there is little control over how these potentially dangerous chemicals are applied, stored and disposed of. In most cases alternative pest control methods are available.

More than 40 Canadian cities already have by-laws that deal with cosmetic pesticides. Port Moody Mayor **Joe Trasolini** is introducing a by-law following a three-year public education effort.

In September, SPEC vice-president **Helen Spiegelman** appeared before Vancouver City Council's Environment Committee and spoke in support of a by-law on cosmetic pesticides. Her comments were supported by community gardeners and the **Canadian Cancer Society**. Council

put off a decision to June 2003.

In 2003 SPEC will work with community groups, the landscape industry and environmental organizations to reduce the use of cosmetic pesticides. SPEC's new pesticide researcher, **Kyla Tienhaara**, will coordinate these efforts.

Nuclear

Courts squash Ottawa's expropriation of Nanoose Bay torpedo range

On March 06, 2002, SPEC overturned the Federal Government's expropriation of the provincially owned seabed at the **Nanoose Bay** torpedo test range north of Nanaimo. Federal Court **Justice DR Campbell** agreed with SPEC's argument that Ottawa acted beyond its authority in the contentious expropriation.

"The court confirmed the public must have meaningful opportunity to object before an expropriation can occur," said West Coast Environmental Law staff lawyer **Andrew Gage**, who argued

More than 40 Canadian cities already have by-laws that deal with cosmetic pesticides.



David Wright QC, WCEL staff lawyer Andrew Gage, SPEC campaign coordinator Ivan Bulic and SPEC Nanaimo director Norman Abbey celebrate Federal Court Nanoose decision.

The court confirmed the public must have meaningful opportunity to object before an expropriation can occur.

the case on behalf of SPEC.

Ottawa expropriated Nanoose in September 1999 after former BC premier **Glen Clark** refused to lease the seabed to the federal government and the US Navy without guarantees that nuclear weapons would not be brought into the area. During the expropriation process 2,645 individuals and organizations objected to the expropriation.

In April SPEC commissioned a **MacIntyre and Mustel** opinion poll that determined 73 percent of BC residents oppose foreign warships testing in BC waters.

"It's up to Victoria and Ottawa to abide by the wishes of Canadians and ensure that nuclear weapons and reactors are not brought into Nanoose Bay and other Canadian waters," said **David Wright QC**, of **Lawyers for Social Responsibility** who was part of SPEC's legal team.

"The Province recognized the environmental danger posed by nuclear powered ships and passed a motion to make BC a nuclear free zone," said SPEC nuclear campaigner **Norman Abbey**. "The Nanoose Bay range is primarily used by US warships and is operated as part of the US Navy's Keyport, Washington underwater

weapons base."

Over the past two decades SPEC has worked with the **Nanoose Conversion Campaign, End the Arms Race** and other organizations to stop foreign nuclear powered and nuclear weapons capable warships from testing in BC.

In 1995 SPEC lost a court challenge to stop US warships from dumping lead, lithium and copper into fish habitat of Georgia Strait. The courts upheld a decision by former Environment Minister **Sheila Copps** to exempt warships from laws that prohibit dumping of toxic materials into fish bearing waters.

A federal government appeal of Justice Campbell's decision is will be heard in early March, 2003 in Vancouver.

SPEC Nanaimo

Stopping Duke Point power plant

In early 2003, SPEC Director **Norman Abbey** established a SPEC office in downtown Nanaimo. Abbey concentrated on energy issues,

particularly BC Hydro's proposal for a 250 megawatt gas-fired power plant at Nanaimo's **Duke Point** industrial park.

Hydro told Vancouver Islanders their connection to the grid is unreliable and brownouts will occur without a Georgia Strait gas-pipeline crossing (GSX) to fuel a new power plant at Duke Point. There was no time, Hydro claimed, for the BC Utilities Commission (BCUC) to review this mega-project.

In early February, SPEC and local community group formed the **Nanaimo Citizens' Organizing Committee**. They focussed on climate change and local air quality. Duke Point would emit 900,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases annually.

Hydro had asked BC Energy Minister **Richard Neufeld** to circumvent the BCUC review. US energy giants **Williams Corp.** and **Calpine Inc.** were Hydro's partners. By April, however, Calpine's stock had fallen following **Enron's** bankruptcy, and in June they pulled out altogether.

In early May, Abbey unearthed a 1994 Hydro study pointing out that half of BC's electricity generation is wasted and with rational use and conservation, Duke Point was unnecessary.

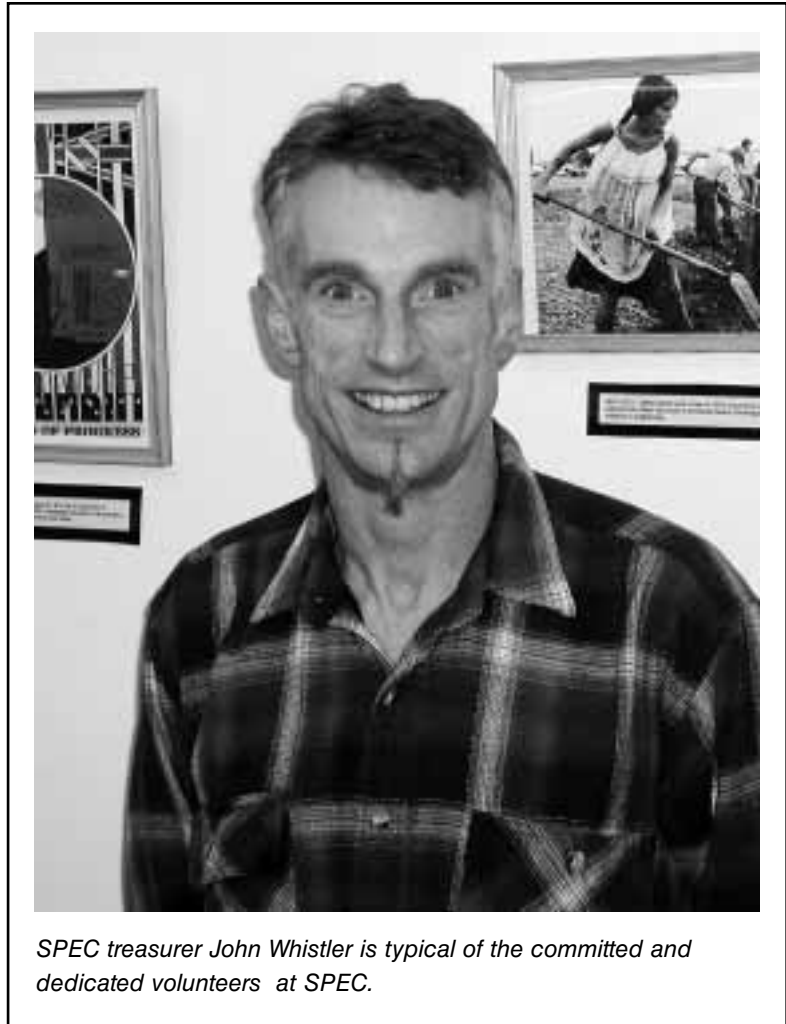
In August, SPEC asked Nanaimo City Council to support a BCUC review of Duke Point, and to join other Canadian cities in Partners for Climate Protection - a Federation of Canadian Municipalities project on the Kyoto protocol. Nanaimo Council agreed to both. Meanwhile, original cost projections for Duke Point and GSX skyrocketed from \$560 to \$710 million.

SPEC and other groups commissioned a review that found Hydro had underestimated the impacts of Duke Point. Nanaimo residents could be exposed to high levels of hazardous fine particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), as well as sulphur dioxides, nitrous oxides, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide. Thirty Nanaimo doctors penned a letter warning there is no "safe" PM10 and 2.5 level.

Minister Neufeld's November 2002 Energy for our Future plan ramped up gas extraction, "streamlined" environmental regulation and

called for a return to coal, off shore oil drilling, and coal-bed methane extraction. A month later Duke Point project manager **Lach Russel** told Nanaimo Council "we're going full speed ahead" with the plant.

At a December luncheon of the Nanaimo



SPEC treasurer John Whistler is typical of the committed and dedicated volunteers at SPEC.

Chamber of Commerce, Minister Neufeld responded to a question from Abbey and admitted that BCUC will review Duke Point regardless of who tries to build it.

During 2002, SPEC director Norman Abbey worked with SPEC's Vancouver office on press releases and public statements. In the summer Abbey had a major opinion piece published in the *Victoria Times Colonist* as well as local Nanaimo papers.

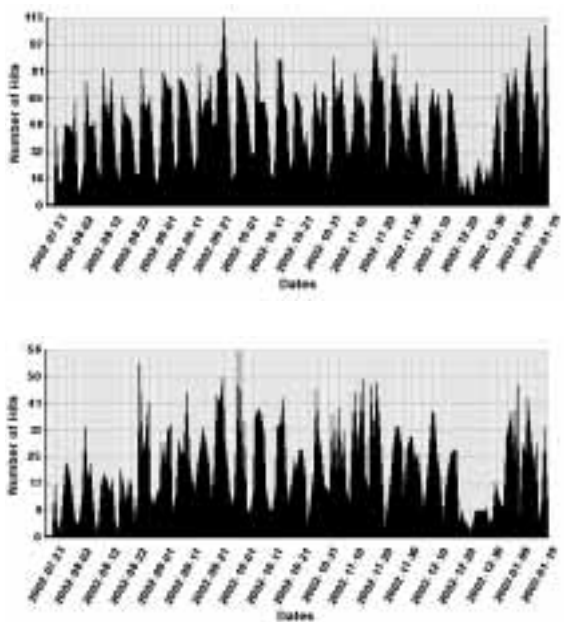
Information Centre

Information Centre Office

Information Centre inquiries ranged from simple referrals to requests for detailed information on toxic spills and environmentally friendly building materials. While phone calls and personal visits to the Centre declined in 2002, there was an increase in website visitors. This is consistent with increased use of the

internet by students and researchers.

Information Centre staff and volunteers **Daisy McColl** and **Anne Ferries** continue to organize and update an archive of environmental documents. **Cecile Helten** completed a thorough "spring cleaning" of the reference library and archived or recycled out-of-date documents.



Graphs showing the latest six month trends in visits to the VEIC (top) and SPEC websites.

The SPEC Building

As of December 31, 2002, the SPEC building and facilities were shared by **City Farmer**, the BC Office of the **National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC)**, the **Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers' and Caregivers' Rights**, **The Land Conservancy of BC (TLC)**, University of Leiden (Neth.) researcher **Anthony Arundel**, and the **Southeast False Creek Working Group**. Shared accommodation rates remain fixed at 2000 levels and contribute to building maintenance.

The 75-seat upstairs meeting hall and 12-seat board room were booked for **360** events throughout the year. Current rates for day or evening sessions remain at 2000 levels.

Maintenance expenditures were modest in 2002. Exterior window casings on the south side of the building were repaired by **Alan Fossen** and **David Beach**. SPEC is considering plans to replace some windows on the south wall, add an electrical circuit on the main floor, repair leaks and upgrade the heating system.

SPEC / VEIC website

Throughout 2002, the SPEC website continued to develop and to incorporate new additions to the two main sections.

The **Vancouver Environmental Information Centre** section of the website provides up-to-date information on a range of environmental topics. A **"Hotline Index"** provides visitors with information on making green purchases, dealing with pollution, and disposing of hazardous materials. It lists tips, links and contact information in over 60 categories.

There are links to green jobs, events, and community groups throughout B C, and a link to the high traffic website managed by **City Farmer**, who operate the compost demonstration gardens at the back of the SPEC building.

The campaign pages contain press releases, articles, event alerts and links to organizations relevant to SPEC campaigns.

Late in 2002, a new feature was added - the **BC Community Watershed Atlas**. The atlas is an interactive research tool about community watersheds which can create maps containing information such as wildlife populations, water supply, mining operations and forestry activity. The atlas also provides contact information on local environmental groups.

Visits to the website fluctuate, dropping slightly during the holiday season and increasing in the new year. On average about 2500 visitors a month access the SPEC website.

Volunteers & staff

Volunteers, supporters and members are the heart and soul of SPEC. They attend rallies, staff display booths, organize our resource library and archives, research campaign issues, and assist with building and property maintenance.

In 2002, SPEC supporters and volunteers included **Cecile Helten, Jennifer Borden, Kate Bottriell, Kirby Johnstone, Tapio Leiva, Marco Procacinni, Annette Clarke, John Clarke, Shaf Mohamedali, Shaunah Majcher, Murray Dobbin,**

Jim Hamm, Sophika Kostyniuk, Stuart McKinnon, David Wright, Andrew Gage, Judi Marshall, Andy Ius, Lori Schlechtleitner, Shannon Campbell, Tim Louis, Anne Roberts, Dr. Fred Bass, Heather McGregor, Yaming Chen, Greg McDade, Joe Trasolini, David Boyd, Yanhua Yin, Eric Chan, Patricia Ross, Nancy Grenier, Laurel McGregor, Anne Ferries, Elaine Johnston, Karen Campbell, Tim Howard, Bill Andrews, Dave Buchanan, Colin Stark, Carrie Walker, Sikee Liu, Annelise Sorg, Libby Davies, Svend Robinson, Nancy Harris, Harold Steves, and many others too numerous to list.

In 2002, SPEC said farewell to Environmental Information Centre coordinator and building manager **Fae Johnstone**. Many people in the local community came to rely on Fae's administrative talents. She will be missed.

During the summer, SPEC was fortunate in having **Meredith Severin** as outreach coordinator. Hired through an HRDC program, Meredith took SPEC campaigns to the local community at numerous festivals and public events.

Meanwhile, SPEC administrator **Shirley Roburn** reorganized and updated the membership data base and made strides in expanding and diversifying funding opportunities. **Peter Bromley**



SPEC outreach coordinator Meredith Severin and volunteer Jay enjoy a laugh as they set up a "rubber ducky race" to demonstrate the hazards of oil spills on wildlife.

compiled a special volunteer email list to quickly broadcast volunteer opportunities that often arise on short notice. Campaign coordinator **Ivan Bulic** continued to add to SPEC's reputation as a leading player in environmental issues.

SPEC Donors

In 2002, SPEC was able to take on several new projects because of financial support from members and donors. Individual donations were key in helping SPEC director **Norman Abbey** open a SPEC Nanaimo desk, from which he campaigned on the **Duke Point** power plant and **GSX** pipeline issues, the pollution of the Nanoose Bay seabed by nuclear submarines, and local pesticide and environmental concerns. Individual donations also played a large role in supporting SPEC's campaign on big-box retailer **Wal-Mart's** plan to open a South Vancouver store that could lead to over 7500 additional car trips a day!

As SPEC enters its 35th year, members range from the original founders of SPEC, now senior members of the community, to children who have received gift memberships from a friend or family member. While most SPEC supporters live in the

Georgia Basin region -in the Fraser Valley, Nanaimo, greater Vancouver, the Sunshine Coast, the Gulf Islands and southern Vancouver Island- other members live as far away as Japan, Korea, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. And while the majority of individual donations come through annual memberships, SPEC supporters have found a diversity of ways to give. Two important giving programs are profiled below.

Planned Giving

In early 1997, longtime transportation activist and member **June Black** remembered SPEC in her will. Over the years, June's bequest has provided seed money to get new campaigns underway, and helped SPEC leverage other project

funds. The fund has also been a 'fall back': SPEC can jump into a campaign on a crucial environmental issue based on the issue's potential environmental impact, even if financially the campaign might not support itself entirely.

The **June Black Fund** is an example of a planned gift. Planned giving is the process of incorporating support for a charitable cause into your long range financial planning. Planned charitable giving has significant advantages; not only will a planned gift support a cause you believe in, but it can reduce the taxes you pay during your lifetime, and increase the percentage of assets you are able to pass on

to family and friends by offsetting estate taxes.

Charitable gifts may be restricted (dedicated to a specific project or theme) or unrestricted. There are other types of planned gifts besides a bequest in a will. These include life insurance policies, charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts, charitable endowments, gifts-in-kind, gifts of real estate, and stocks.

Giving a planned gift is best done in consultation with a professional, as such a gift usually

requires specific legal documentation. For example, SPEC's full legal name - **Canadian Society Promoting Environmental Conservation** - must be included in a will in order to make a legal bequest.

If you would like to consider making a planned gift to SPEC, please feel free to phone us any time at **604-736-7732**, or email admin@spec.bc.ca.

Monthly Donors

David Cadman is past President of SPEC, and a monthly donor.

Q: Why did you join the monthly donor program?

A: "As President, one of my key concerns was to build a vibrant and self-sustaining "campaigning" organization. I am proud that SPEC has the capacity to react quickly to emerging issues like the sudden plans to import toxic soil from Oregon into Richmond, and to sustain long term campaigns, such as cleaning up the seabed at Nanoose, or protecting Burrard Inlet from effluent dumping - a SPEC campaign that has been ongoing since 1969!

Behind the scenes, I have worked hard to diversify SPEC's funding sources, and strengthen SPEC's financial position. In the last two years, with government cutbacks and declines in the global economy significantly reducing the financial support private foundations and governments can extend, it's become more and more important, for any non-profit, to have a broad base of member support.

I joined the monthly donor program because it is the most effective way I can support SPEC. My donations are spread out regularly throughout the year, deducted directly from my bank account. This provides a steady source of income, allowing SPEC to plan for its future activities. It also requires less administration: my membership is renewed automatically, so there is less wasted paper, and more of my money goes to supporting SPEC's core work.

I encourage anyone wishing to support SPEC- whether you're renewing your membership, or becoming a first-time member or donor--to consider becoming a monthly donor."



Monthly donor David Cadman.



Join SPEC or renew your membership.

Yes, please sign me up as a monthly donor!

I _____, authorize Vancity Savings Credit Union ("Vancity") to debit my account at (my financial institution): _____ for the amount of:

\$10, \$20, other: _____

on a monthly/quarterly basis, and to credit Account 234336 Branch 11 at Vancity.

This authorization is for the period beginning _____, continuing until further notice.

signature

signature of witness

date

I have attached a voided cheque.

I am unable to be a monthly donor but I would like to support SPEC's work by becoming a member, or by renewing my membership. Enclosed is a cheque for:

\$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other _____

Please provide the following information:

name _____

address _____

code _____

email _____

phone (h) _____

(w) _____

fax _____

organization /affiliation _____

Additional information:

Please include me on a phone tree email tree

Please tell us if you have a specific campaign area of interest, such as water quality, nuclear issues, air quality, toxics/pesticides, or sustainable transportation: _____

Please do not share my contact information.

Thank you for your support! All donations are tax deductible. Return envelope provided.

Media Coverage

In 2002 SPEC issued **63 press releases**, media advisories and public service announcements to print and electronic media in the Lower Mainland and Southern Vancouver Island. Specific releases were also issued to Greater Vancouver's Chinese language media.

SPEC also organized and participated in five press conferences at the SPEC building. In all cases these media events included a variety of environmental and public interest organizations.

SPEC campaign and events were covered in **430** media stories, articles and reports. This is an increase from 397 in 2001 and 380 in 2000. Coverage includes reports in major daily newspapers, TV and radio as well as community and regional weeklies and student media.

Much of the media interest that SPEC earned can be attributed to the efforts of SPEC president David Cadman who rarely turned down interviews even if it meant a 6 a.m. trip to a downtown radio studio.



Reporters cover press conference at SPEC building.

MEDIA DETAILS

CONTACTS

TV News reports and coverage by local and national TV outlets.

92

Radio Most radio coverage was in the form of news stories. Live on air interviews and call-in show guest spots also made up a significant percentage of radio coverage.

176

Major Newspaper coverage These include stories and mention in major dailies such as *The Vancouver Sun*, *The Province*, *Globe & Mail*, *Victoria Times-Colonist*, community papers such as the *Georgia Straight* and *Vancouver Courier* and Chinese language dailies.

120

Community & Student Press Coverage in community and neighbourhood weekly papers, trade magazines and other outlets.

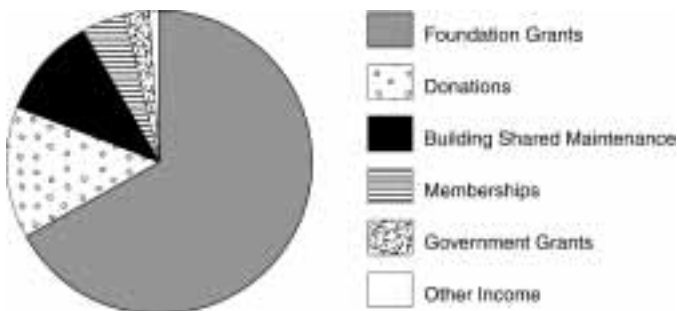
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2002 Financial Highlights

Income

Foundation Grants	95,652
Donations	20,073
Building Shared Maintenance	15,413
Memberships	6,647
Government Grants	3,759
Other Income	<u>1,527</u>
Total	143,072

Income



Expenses

Wages & Benefits	85,717
Subcontractors	37,824
Office Services Equipment & Supplies	16,586
Other Expenses	15,851
Building Repairs & Maintenance	<u>6,912</u>
Total	162,890

Expenses



The above figures are SPEC's financial highlights only. Official financial statements for 2002, prepared by **Mahmoud Viranni CA**, are available upon request.

SPEC's 2001 financial statements were prepared by Mahmoud Viranni CA. This is the first time in over 10 years that SPEC has engaged an accountant.

SPEC gratefully acknowledges the following organizations that provided support in 2002:

Endswell Foundation

Environmental Fund of BC

Mountain Equipment Co-op

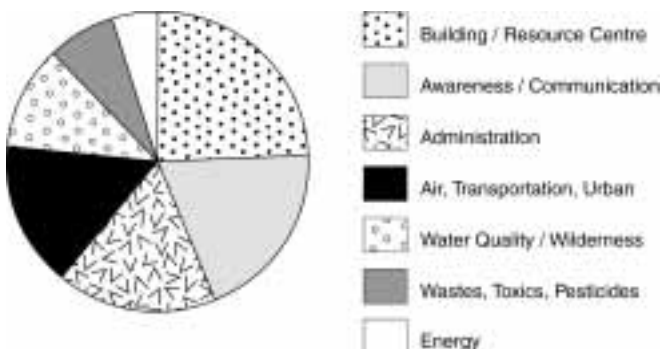
Tides Canada Foundation

Environmental Dispute Resolution Fund

Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency

Provincial Employees Community Services Fund

Expenditures by Project





Society Promoting Environmental Conservation

2150 Maple Street, Vancouver, BC V6J 3T3

Deliver to:

SPEC Annual General Meeting

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text: Ivan Bulic, Peter Bromley,
Shirley Roburn

editing, inside photos: Ivan Bulic
design, cover photos: Peter Bromley

11am, Sunday, April 6, 2003
2150 Maple Street, Vancouver

Members will consider the following changes to the Constitution:

58. A notice may be given to a member, either personally, by e-mail or by mail to him at his registered address.

59. A notice sent by mail or e-mail shall be deemed to have been given on the second day following that on which the notice is posted, and in proving that notice has been given it is sufficient to prove the notice was properly addressed and put in a Canadian post office receptacle or sent by e-mail.

For information about nominations for the Board of Directors, please call 604-736-7732.

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and 80% recycled 60% post-consumer, process chlorine free (inside).*