



SPEC

Healthy Cities Are Our Future

2005 Annual Report



Educate, Activate and Empower Citizens to build Healthy, Livable Cities

Message from the President

It has been my pleasure to serve as President and Chair of SPEC for the past



two years, working with Board colleagues and staff to enhance our focus on urban sustainability. During this time we were pleased to announce the re-dedication of our Kitsilano building

as a Sustainability Demonstration Centre. With the addition of new, renewable energy technology and new programmes, we are enhancing our ability to help citizens learn how to reduce their own ecological 'footprints' and make more sustainable living choices.

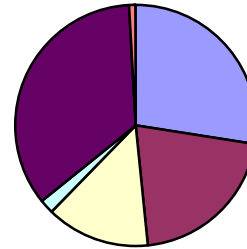
This year we won some spectacular victories for renewable energy, with the defeat of both the Sumas 2 and Duke Point gas-fired electricity projects. We joined with sustainability centres across Canada to enhance our ability to advocate for new sources of clean, renewable energy. We took on new projects including our campaign against the expansion of Highway 1 and the twinning of the Port Mann Bridge. And we continued our campaign to save the Arbutus Corridor.

With a wonderful new Executive Director – Karen Wristen - to handle all of the day-to-day operations of the organization, a new staff team, and dedicated volunteers, I am confident that SPEC will continue to fulfill its mission - to build healthy cities for our future.

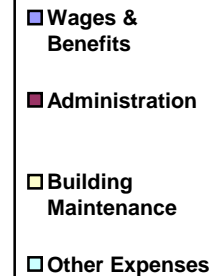
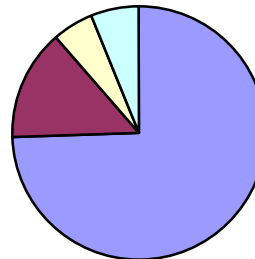
Gerry Thorne,
President

2005 Financial Highlights

Income



Expenses



Income

Foundations	\$45,265
Donations	34,174
Building Income	22,900
Memberships	3,250
Government Grants	57,992
Other	1,146
Total	\$164,727

Expenses

Wages & benefits	\$82,735
Program expenses	36,470
Administration	15,898
Building maintenance	5,700
Other	6,945
Total	\$147,748



Society Promoting Environmental Conservation

SPEC
2150 Maple St.
Vancouver, BC
Canada V6J 3T3

Tel: 604-736-7732
Fax: 604-736-7115
info@spec.bc.ca
www.spec.bc.ca

Board of Directors

Gerry Thorne, President
Joanna Robinson, Vice-President
Dan Rogers, Vice-President
Carole Christopher, Secretary
John Whistler, Treasurer
Paul Hundal
Tracy Keeling

Deming Smith
John Irwin
Genevieve Bucher
Stuart Mackinnon
Eric Doherty
Sara Blenkhorn
Yaming Chen

Staff

Karen Wristen, Executive Director
Ivan Bulic, Campaign Co-ordinator (to March, 2005)
Dave Fields, Transportation Campaigner
Joni Sherman, Building and Administrative Co-ordinator

Interns

Patricia Schulte, Robert Scharf, Claudia Barthelt, Claudia Kaemper, Mark Netten, Ilse Sarady, Damien Gassmann

2005 Volunteers

Jess Metter
Cecile Helten
Daisy McColl
Katie Rusert
Mrs. W. Rusert
Sara Blenkhorn
So Hyang Li
Anita Van der Wouden
Carole Novak
Jordan Cheadle
Helen Zhou
Fae Johnstone
Dan Zuberi

Ruxandra Raba
Rachelle Tersigni
Marg Mahan
Byron Kos
Tali Foley-Herb
Geoffrey Okwedadi
Eileen Yue
Stephen Olson
Elizabeth Hill
Doug Lane
Justin Grenier
Brandon Normon

Eileen Yue
Athena Tang
Tiffaney Au-yeung
Joyce Ng
Jeevan Gill
Nimrat Gill
Long Nguyen
M.P. (Jasper) Shore
Rick Pollay
Robin Walker
Patti Weiss
Dianne Longson

Renewable Energy

Sustainability Demonstration Centre

Changes to the SPEC building this year enhanced our ability to teach citizens how to reduce their ecological footprint.

Story page 6



Sumas II Victory!



The battle over a proposed power plant in Sumas, Washington-threatening

to flood the Fraser Valley with substantial increases in air pollution-waged on for over five years before coming to its abrupt end.

Story page 7

Hydro Foiled



The \$340 million pipeline that came to be known as “GSX” was finally laid to rest-only to rematerialize as a private venture

supported by BC Hydro. Find out what BC Hydro is working on now.

Story page 11

Solar Energy Festival



On July 9th, SPEC hosted its first Solar Festival to introduce the public to its new solar array. Guests visited SPEC’s rooftop decks, where they were offered guided tours of the new installation and explanations of the photovoltaic and solar hot water panels in use on the building. Music and a sampling of food cooked in SPEC’s solar cookers made the day a neighbourhood celebration of the sun’s power.

Transportation

Highway 1 and the Port Mann Bridge

Throughout North America, the building of more roads has proven to attract greater car-dependent development. In Greater Vancouver, automobiles are the largest single source of air pollutants, generating GHG emissions that cause global warming.

Story page 13

Burrard Bridge Cycling Lanes

On March 2, the City of Vancouver held an Open House to present options for modifying the Burrard Bridge and connecting streets. The idea was to address safety concerns by providing additional capacity for pedestrians and cyclists, in a way that respects the heritage elements of the bridge. The options were also supposed to identify impacts on transportation, land use, and neighbouring communities

Story page 20

Greenwashed Wal-Mart Stopped

Wal-mart applied for rezoning of industrial land on Marine Drive, in order to construct its megastore. Residents and environmental groups worked together to fight against this retail giant to protect their communities and local businesses.

Story page 17

All Aboard the Arbutus Corridor



SPEC hosted a contest for the design for future use of the Arbutus Corridor --a unique 11-km

long stretch of rail corridor that runs parallel to Arbutus Street from False Creek to the Fraser River at Marpole.

Story page 18

Car Free Day: September 22, 2005



SPEC joined Vancouver residents taking over the streets on Car-Free Day. Water Street in Gastown was closed to traffic to permit street theatre, music, dancing and an information fair. Volunteer Robert Scharf designed and staffed our booth.

Building Healthy Cities

Southeast False Creek

On March 1, 2005, Council approved the Official Development Plan (ODP) for Southeast False Creek (SeFC). Less than one year later, a project that has been almost ten years in the making is experiencing major setbacks. As the new Council was ushered in, the SeFC project- among others- was dismantled, despite a chorus of protest. SPEC condemned the undemocratic way this was accomplished, in tabling motions without notice and with almost no opportunity for input.

SPEC Director John Irwin, who has worked on the SeFC Advisory Committee for years, observed, “Homelessness in our region has doubled in the past few years, and the SeFC Project was set to begin to address this, looking seriously at social sustainability by including a rich mix of low- and middle-income housing. Other energy efficient and sustainable transportation initiatives related to the project will likely be put at risk by Council's decision to ‘redo’ SeFC after years of public consultation.”

The eco-friendly community was designed to allow people to live, work, play, grow food, recycle waste, save energy, operate businesses, and shop, all in one small area. The project's energy-saving measures proposed composting, low-flow faucets and shower heads, a non-motorized boat service, and “edible landscaping” through channelling rainwater onto rooftop gardens.

“It is regrettable that this new Council’s first actions should be so frankly partisan and dismissive of public input,” said Karen Wristen, Executive Director of SPEC. “Citizens committees have laboured long and hard on the SeFC Project to ensure that it represents the best of what a city could do in terms of truly sustainable development.”



Ecologically speaking, promise exists for the SeFC development. Area buildings will be much more energy and water efficient than the current standards. All City-owned facilities are required to meet the Gold standard of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED); all other buildings must meet LEED’s Silver standard. Buildings in the SeFC area will be on a district heating system that will derive its base heat from a sewer main heat recovery system. GHG emissions reductions for this project look very promising.

Continued page 22

Pesticides



It all started in 2001 after the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the right of the people of Hudson, Quebec to safeguard their homes by banning pesticides. Over 65 Canadian cities, including Toronto, Halifax, and most of Metropolitan Montreal, have since approved pesticide by-laws. This year, Vancouver joined in.



SPEC played a leading role in moving this issue forward with city councils and the general public. We conducted polling in 2003 and found that 81.1 per cent of Vancouver residents and over 80 per cent of GVRD residents supported a by-law restricting cosmetic pesticide use. In early 2004, we launched an on-line [Pesticides Clearinghouse](#) as part of the Real Environmental Alternatives to Pesticides (REAP) project. We also developed educational workshops on alternatives to pesticides and their safe disposal- and all this work is paying off!



As we go to press, Vancouver joins West Vancouver, Port Moody, and New Westminster in proclaiming a by-law restricting pesticide use.

Now, North Vancouver is considering a similar by-law. If North Vancouver's City and District adopt pesticide by-laws, that will leave only Burnaby, Surrey, and Richmond among major GVRD municipalities without cosmetic pesticide by-laws. "This is extremely encouraging," said SPEC Executive Director Karen Wristen. "We have been working with local communities and municipal leaders to raise awareness of the hazards of unregulated pesticide use. Now we are seeing real changes that will protect the environment and all North Shore residents."

SPEC continues to work with local governments throughout the BC to encourage them to consider similar pesticide restrictions.

Food Safety and Security

SPEC's efforts were rewarded in June 2005 when the GVRD recommended to the Agricultural Land Commission that Barnston Island be retained in the ALR despite an application for exclusion from some landowners. The GVRD also passed a bylaw zoning the land for agricultural use, to limit future land-use options and make it easier to stop removals from the ALR.

This is not the end of the story; the Agricultural Land Commission is expected to rule on the exclusion application in April, 2006.



SPEC advocated for the retention of the ALR lands in 2004, arguing that it is critical to retain productive farmlands in close proximity to city markets. Loss of local farmland poses an increasing threat to a sustainable and secure food supply. Currently our food travels an average of 2,500 km to reach our dinner plate. In the face of diminishing and more expensive fossil fuels, this is clearly unsustainable. SPEC continues to oppose the conversion of Lower Mainland farmlands into uses that increase the production of greenhouse gases.

“The ALR (Agricultural Land Reserve) is not meant as a reserve to compensate for poor land-use planning”, said SPEC Director Carole Christopher. “If land is taken out of the ALR and used for development, there is no incentive for smart growth. Giving agricultural land over to development invites poor land-use decisions and very shortly will create the need for more exclusions on a grander scale.”

Christopher's comments were part of a SPEC submission to the Agricultural Land Commission which oversees applications to withdraw or ‘exclude’ parcels of land from the ALR.

The river valley has excellent soil conditions for growing a wide range of crops with high production levels. For example, the area around Abbotsford is one of the three best areas for growing raspberries in the world. Recently, applications were filed to exclude 900 acres of these lands for industrial use.

According to a study by SmartGrowth BC, only 17 per cent of industrial floor space in Abbotsford is currently being used. By comparison, the average industrial use in the GVRD is 50 per cent. If Abbotsford approached the levels of use in the GVRD, it could almost *triple* its industrial lands *without* removing more farmland from the ALR.

background on the ALR, page +23

ENERGY

Sustainability Demonstration Centre

from page 1

The new SPEC Sustainability Centre demonstrates how to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and reduce ecological 'footprints'.

In July, SPEC worked with the Vancouver Renewable Energy Co-operative to install solar panels (photovoltaics) - which convert the sun's energy into electricity- on the roof of the SPEC building.



With the generous support of a Green Building Fund grant, offered by VanCity and the Real Estate Foundation of BC, SPEC was able to secure a 1.4 kilowatt system, capable of producing about 1.5 megawatt hours of electricity annually. It provides about half of the annual power consumption for the building.

We also installed Vancouver's first grid-tie, which allows SPEC to sell power into the BC Hydro grid at times when the building is not drawing from the cells. This relatively new process (in BC), requires a net-metering agreement with BC Hydro and the installation of a special meter.

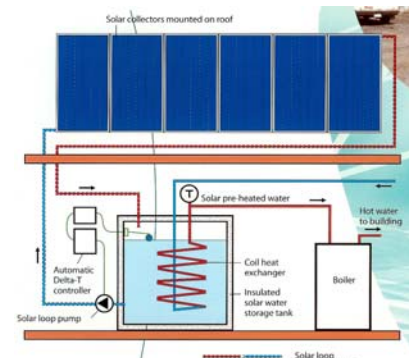
With the installation of these solar panels, we reduced the SPEC building's GHG emissions by 800 kg a year!

Now, the challenge is to save another 200 kg. SPEC is installing a solar space heater to help boost basement heat. In addition, by examining older lighting fixtures and replacing them with newer, better positioned fluorescents and LED lighting, SPEC should be able to meet the challenge.

Homeowners looking for a cost-effective solar energy solution might want to consider solar hot water systems, which can achieve financial payback in relatively short time frames, and are very affordable. Ultimately- while we strive to replace conventional methods with renewable forms of energy - focus must remain on *conservation*!

SPEC's new solar panels are up and running. You can see how much power the panels are producing today by clicking the live link on SPEC's website: www.spec.bc.ca.

Our solar hot water system reduces gas use by 40%. In its 25 years of service, we have replaced the pump once.



Sumas II Victory!

from page 1

The battle over a proposed power plant in Sumas, Washington- threatening to flood the Fraser Valley with substantial increases in air pollution- waged on for over five years before coming to its abrupt end. After two days of argument, the Federal Court of Appeal took the rare step of issuing an immediate decision: Sumas Energy 2's (SE2) appeal had no merit and should be dismissed. SPEC, the David Suzuki Foundation, and residents of the Lower Fraser Valley were present for the ruling and throughout the proceedings. The counsel of Tom Berger, Howard Mann, and Tim Howard, who represented SPEC and the David Suzuki Foundation through Sierra Legal Defence Fund, was crucial in this victory.

SE2 wanted to build an international power line through Abbotsford from its proposed natural gas-fired power plant, located less than half a kilometer south of the Canada-U.S. Border. The power plant would have 'plugged in' to the BC Hydro power grid, drawing energy out of Canada and back into the U.S.



According to evidence presented before the Washington State Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC), the amount of natural gas that SE2 was predicted to burn each day would have

been equal to 55 per cent of the total residential consumption for the entire state of Washington. SE2 would have emitted 2.4 million tons of carbon dioxide annually, compounded with an additional 800 tons of smog-producing pollutants.

Starting back in early 2000, SPEC worked with Abbotsford Councillor Patricia Ross, Whatcom County Councillor Connie Hoag, and environmental and health organizations to organize effective opposition to SE2. SPEC wrote to the International Joint Commission in September of 2002, asking them to help in protecting the health and environment of Canadians living in the Lower Fraser Valley by reviewing the environmental and health impacts of SE2.

At the same time, SPEC applied to the National Energy Board (NEB) for a ruling that an assessment on the air quality impacts of the natural gas power plant be required in order to approve their connection to the BC power grid.

In December 2002, the NEB ruled in SPEC's favour in a landmark decision, saying that the impacts of the American plant affecting the Canadian side of the border were *properly* the subject of their assessment here in Canada. Working with Tim Howard, SPEC went on to make presentations at the subsequent NEB hearing, which dragged on for 30 days of hearings between May and September of 2003.

Environment Canada identified the Fraser Valley airshed as "already subject to some of the poorest air quality in Canada". The proposed plant would have pumped close to 3 tonnes of

pollutants into the airshed every day. Dr. Ian McKendry, a UBC atmospheric scientist, informed the NEB that SE2 computer air modelling “seriously neglected the complexities of the Lower Fraser Valley and underestimated background pollution concentrations.” Environment Canada also cited that crop damage in the Fraser Valley, due to ozone, is estimated to be in the millions of dollars; supporting evidence was not permitted at the NEB hearing.



Tim Howard represented SPEC and The David Suzuki Foundation in Court through the Sierra Legal Defence Fund.

Further evidence presented- though not permitted- included information from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which identified the Fraser Valley airshed as “unhealthy for sensitive people due to unacceptable pollution levels of ground level ozone and particulate matter.” A 2003 B.C. Lung Association report warning that pollutants in the air, such as ozone and fine particles, were dangerous to health- especially to asthmatic children and elderly people- was also rejected. Perhaps the biggest hole in the evidence: a decision made by BC Hydro not to build a fossil fuel-burning power plant in the Fraser Valley almost ten years prior.

After all of the evidentiary setbacks, SPEC was amazed when, on March 4, 2004, the NEB rejected SE 2’s application. This marked the first time the NEB had ever rejected a project for environmental reasons, and it set a

precedent for turning down future energy development proposals. The NEB concluded that SE2 would not be in the Canadian public interest; it would increase air pollution in Canada and the environmental costs would outweigh the benefits. SE2 immediately appealed to the Federal Court of Appeal.

Meanwhile, due to the prolonged opposition, the owners of SE2 were forced to return to the American regulators (EFSEC) in October of 2004 to ask for an extension on their air emission permit, originally approved in 2003. An appeal against the extension was filed by the Provincial Government and the City of Abbotsford. Abbotsford Councillor Patricia Ross was key in organizing residents of Abbotsford, urging them to attend the hearing and oppose the permit. The local Salvation Army offered a van and a driver for transportation, and others were urged to car pool.



Tim Howard and then SPEC president David Cadman at a rally for SE2 in 2002

Despite all of our efforts, the permit was re-issued. “The EFSEC decision to issue the PSD Air Emission permit ignored the whole basis of Canada’s opposition, which is the physical characteristics of this airshed,” said Patricia Ross. “This airshed, with its unique topography with

the mountainous region that traps pollutants and poor airflow most of the time, makes this about the worst location they could possibly have chosen.”

The Federal Court of Appeal heard our case in November 2005. Joining Tim Howard on the legal team, reknowned counsel Thomas R. Berger, Q.C. donated his services, along with Howard Mann, a specialist in some of the NAFTA arguments rasied by SE2 in the appeal.

SE2’s appeal did not serve the interest of Canadians, according to Tim Howard. If SE2 won its appeal, it would seriously erode Canadian control over Canadian resources and laws. “Canadians would be appalled to think their regulators might not be able to take human health impacts into account when they make a decision,” said SPEC Executive Director Karen Wristen.

SE2 President Chuck Martin said that the NEB decision to deny the power line application was invalid because it was based strictly on local opposition, ahead of the Canadian national interest and the interests of the regional electrical power market. Patricia Ross countered that virtually all residents north of the 49th parallel opposed SE2 because it would be a major point source of air pollution in the already sensitive Fraser Valley airshed.

Abbotsford MP Randy White said the NEB “did not err in law when it denied SE2. It is the NEB's mandate to protect the Canadian public's interest and to protect the environment and the air residents in the Fraser Valley have to breathe.”

In its appeal, SE2 stated that the NEB should have considered American companies covered by NAFTA *before* the interests of Canadian citizens. SE2 maintained that the Board should have provided open and free access to Canada's transmission corridors, just as the U.S. accords the same right to Canadian utilities.

Tim Howard rebutted, “SE2 claims that the NEB decision is an illegal barrier to trade under NAFTA, and that NAFTA means that trade trumps environmental protection. We will be urging the Court to reject that argument and preserve the ability of Canadian authorities like the NEB to protect the health of Canadians from foreign pollution sources.”



Abbotsford Councillor Patricia Ross led local organizing efforts.

On November 9, 2005, the Federal Court of Appeal unanimously dismissed SE2's appeal on all grounds, rendering its decision directly from the bench at the conclusion of the hearing. It also ordered SE2 to pay the costs of the parties that opposed its appeal. Sierra Legal Defence Fund lawyer Tim Howard commented, “It is extremely rare for the Court to dismiss an appeal right at the hearing, and the Court's decision to do so states loud and clear that SE2's appeal has no

merit whatsoever.”

“It sets an important precedent for U.S. power companies looking to set up shop on the border, where their emissions will pollute Canadian airsheds, so that they don’t have to deal with strict state laws governing domestic air pollution,” said SPEC Executive Director Karen Wristen. “Our national regulators have a duty to protect the health of Canadians too, and the Court has confirmed it today.”

Morag Carter, Climate Change Programme Director for the David Suzuki Foundation added, “The judge’s decision... bolsters the case for clean, renewable energy and a new focus on conservation and efficiency.”

The Federal Court of Appeal dismissed the company’s arguments that such a ruling exceeded the NEB’s powers under its statute, and also rejected SE2’s position that it violated NAFTA by creating trade barriers.

Environmentalists are optimistic that the outcome will send a strong message to foreign corporations. “Canada’s environment is not for sale,” said Karen Wristen. “Any other company that tries to pull something like this again would be in for the same long and costly fight.”

SE2 has decided *not* to appeal the Federal Court of Appeal’s decision. The combined efforts of thousands of Fraser Valley and Whatcom County residents, environmental and health organizations, and local decision makers who worked very long and hard to protect their communities, have been rewarded. “We can all breathe easier, now,” said Sierra Legal lawyer Tim Howard. “This is an example of what can be accomplished

when citizens and environmental organizations unite to stop an injustice to the community.”

Background on the Sumas 2 hearings can be found online at www.spec.bc.ca.

Canada’s Sustainability Centres



SPEC is a founding partner of a new network called Canada’s Sustainability Centres. Affiliated with the European Federation of Ecosites, CSC will help sustainability centres across Canada to improve renewable energy programmes, communications and government relations. All CSC centres promote and contribute to environmental protection, sustainable development, and social equality. Visit www.ecosites.ca for more information.



Hydro Foiled

from page 1

The \$340 million pipeline that came to be known as “GSX”

was finally laid to rest- but not without a fight. After more than four years of struggle, BC Hydro cancelled the Georgia Strait Crossing (GSX) project, admitting they had overestimated the need for natural gas on Vancouver Island.

Hydro Generation Executive Vice-President Dawn Farrell said the Crown corporation now believed Vancouver Island’s energy needs would be best served by adding new electrical transmission lines from the mainland, and by gas deliveries from the existing Terasen pipeline between the mainland and the Island.

First proposed in 2000, as a joint project of US-based Williams Gas Corporation and BC Hydro, GSX was designed to supply natural gas through a pipeline from Whatcom County, Washington to southern Vancouver Island. Hydro had long argued that Vancouver Island faced a looming supply crisis, while a growing coalition of opponents countered that reducing electricity demand and developing Island-based renewable energy sources was a viable solution.

With the drastic rise in natural gas costs, Farrell said the project “no longer made economic sense,” admitting it was “cheaper for Hydro to abandon the project than to carry it through.” Abortive decisions associated with the foundering GSX megaproject cost Hydro ratepayers -- and B.C. taxpayers -- \$120 million in 2004 alone.

Duke Point Project Revived

Despite BC Hydro’s confessions, the Duke Point project- a gas-fired power plant that had been rejected by the BC Utilities Commission (BCUC) in 2003- rematerialized as a private sector project *supported* by Hydro. BC Hydro announced an agreement to sell the site to a private company, Pristine Power Corporation of Alberta; the company would build the plant and then sell the power back to Hydro.

“Having learned more about Hydro’s broader electricity strategy, we were not happy with the idea of simply committing the Island to a fossil-fuel electricity future,” said Tom Hackney, President of GSX Concerned Citizens Coalition (GSXCCC).

“If built, Duke Point would annually emit 13 tonnes of hazardous air pollutants and 800,000 tonnes of GHGs over Nanaimo and Gabriola Island,” said SPEC Energy Researcher Norman Abbey in his presentation to Nanaimo Council. “Moreover, evidence at the current BCUC hearings show that there is no need to build this power plant at this time.”



SPEC and a dozen other groups intervened before the BCUC to oppose the second attempt by BC Hydro and its

private partner to build the 252 megawatt plant at Duke Point near Nanaimo. More than a hundred people turned out at the January BCUC meeting to express their objection.

Speaker after speaker decried the gas plant plan on a variety of grounds, including: increasingly high fuel costs, damage to local air quality, increased GHGs, and Hydro's failure to prove the plant was necessary. "The Duke Point power plant...will leave a legacy of expensive and polluting energy on Vancouver Island," said Norm Abbey of SPEC. "BC Hydro is mortgaging our economic and environmental future."

Intervenors said that a combination of conservation, industrial demand management, and replacement of the existing transmission cables could be used to bridge the "supply gap" that BC Hydro had used to justify the \$280 million project. That alleged gap, they argued, was theoretical and based on a worst-case scenario. It did not take into account the potential for industry to assist by curbing power usage during peak demand periods—an offer that was on the table for Hydro to accept.

"In the long term, clean, renewable energy- such as wind, micro-hydro, and solar- will be the foundation of Vancouver Island's energy future," said Guy Dauncey, President of BC Sustainable Energy Association.

Unexpectedly, the BCUC approved the Electricity Price Agreement (EPA) between BC Hydro and Pristine Power on February 17, 2005. "One day after the world celebrated an international accord (Kyoto) to reduce emissions that cause climate change, BC Hydro and

BCUC are committing us to more than 900,000 tonnes of new GHG production," said Hackney.

The interveners immediately appealed, accusing the BCUC panel of bias--the appearance that it had already made up its mind on the contract before the hearing was held. On January 23rd, the interveners filed a motion to disqualify the panel and set aside its decision, citing an in-camera meeting the panel had with B.C. Hydro representatives as part of the evidence of bias.

Transcripts from the meeting revealed that the panel had prejudged the outcome of the hearing before receiving arguments and cross-examination from SPEC and other interveners.

In his application, coalition lawyer William Andrews declared, "This is an application for an order that the commission panel disqualify itself on the grounds of a reasonable apprehension of bias and denial of procedural fairness and natural justice during the hearing."

SPEC and fellow interveners asked the BC Court of Appeal to halt construction of the gas-fired power plant. In the same proceeding, a coalition of heavy industrial electricity users also filed an application for leave to appeal the BCUC decision that approved BC Hydro's 2004 EPA with Duke Point Power Limited.

"Gas-fired electricity is not the best way to a secure electricity supply for Vancouver Island," said Tom Hackney. "This plant would expose consumers to volatile gas prices for the next 25 years, and it would cost ratepayers \$35 million per year whether it runs or not."

SPEC Executive Director Karen Wristen believes that the project makes no sense in a post-Kyoto world. “Decision-makers at every level need to look seriously at incorporating our nation’s commitment to GHG reduction when they review projects, and to consider the long-term implications of power generation methods.”

On the morning of June 14th, the BC Court of Appeal granted leave to appeal the BCUC’s decision. This decision *merely* allowed SPEC to go on to the next stage- actually arguing the appeal was yet to come; scheduling it would take months.

Hydro wanted an expedited hearing, citing the fast-approaching “drop-dead” date, at which time the contract would be considered uneconomic to complete. There was a clause in the contract allowing Hydro to cancel because of gas cost risk. An extraordinary provision of the contract allowed Hydro to invoke the clause in the event that SPEC et al were granted leave to appeal the BCUC decision.

Hydro’s Board was inundated with calls, faxes, and letters, from citizens frustrated with its costly and ill-considered plans. “Under the terms of the contract, BC Hydro or the government can now cancel the Duke Point Power agreement with no liability,” said Tom Hackney. “They should do so now, so Hydro can get on with more cost-effective and environmentally appropriate projects.”

The next morning, we learned that BC Hydro had exercised its right to cancel the Duke Point Power deal.

As it turns out, Vancouver Island’s power is still on. NorskeCanada made some adjustments to its production process that helped reduce peak power demands and now Hydro can get on with some serious energy conservation measures. Demand management, together with the development of renewable energy resources are the most economically and environmentally responsible ways to serve Vancouver Island for the long term.

SPEC congratulated Hydro on a decision that will benefit all British Columbians for years to come.

Footnote: Sadly, any optimism we might have worked up for the future of energy in British Columbia was dashed within days, when Hydro announced that it would immediately resurrect plans for the controversial Site C dam on the Peace River. Hydroelectric power does not contribute *as much* to GHGs as the defeated projects would have, but it raises an entirely different suite of cultural, social, and environmental issues. Follow the issue as public consultation unfolds at www.spec.bc.ca.

TRANSPORTATION

Highway 1 and the Port Mann Bridge

from page 2

Throughout North America, the building of more roads has proven to attract greater car-dependent development. In Greater Vancouver, automobiles are the largest single source of air pollutants,

generating GHG emissions that cause global warming. Already 40 per cent of the total GHG emissions in the GVRD come from the transport sector. In order to meet reduction targets for the GVRD, this total needs to be 35 per cent lower than current trends. In response, the City of Vancouver is developing a Climate Change Action Plan that calls for cuts in auto-produced emissions.



Transportation engineers warn that building freeways leads to greater automobile congestion and increased pollution. Despite this forewarning, Premier Gordon Campbell and BC Minister of Transportation Kevin Falcon continue to tout a \$3.9 billion “Gateway Project” that will increase traffic volume, encourage more car-centered development, threaten greenspace, increase air pollution and GHG emissions, and reduce funds available for public transit. Expanding Highway 1 and twinning the Port Mann Bridge will not solve congestion; it will increase it.

In November, the Livable Region Coalition (LRC) - founded by Lower Mainland citizens and sustainable transportation advocates including SPEC- advocated accelerating proposals already in TransLink’s 10-year plan. Scheduled for completion in 2007, queue jumper or bypass lanes at the Port Mann Bridge would enable buses to move freely past congested traffic. Immediate planning and budgeting for express bus services connecting Langley to the Sky Train Millennium line, and other upgrades

to inadequate bus service south of the Fraser River, would alleviate congestion at the Bridge, and make room for the movement of local goods. Long distance movement of goods would be by rail.

Plans for the Gateway Project have been delayed, pushing its delivery date out as far as 2014. David Fields, SPEC’s new Transportation Campaigner, responded to the Gateway announcement: “There are safer options that can be implemented faster than the Gateway plan and that are significantly cheaper. Instead, the Minister has cobbled together parts of transportation schemes—roads, bicycle lanes, maybe a light rail system some time--that won’t add up to a viable solution.” SPEC opposes urban freeway expansion and advocates for better public transit.



“While the LRC recognizes that not everyone can or wants to take transit, there are many people who would appreciate the option of not driving in rush hour traffic and not having to own and operate a 2nd or 3rd family car. Others would jump at the opportunity to reduce their environmental impact. Currently, commuters along the Hwy 1 corridor do not have this choice” said Karen Wristen, Executive Director of SPEC and a spokesperson for the LRC.

The GVRD Planning and Environment Committee requested a meeting with the

provincial transportation minister in February, after a regional report detailed concerns about the province's plans to expand the Lower Mainland's highway system. The GVRD report says the project, which proposes to add five lanes of traffic across the Fraser River between Surrey and Coquitlam, could have a profound impact on how the region's population grows, promoting a "more dispersed, automobile-oriented land use patterns."



Falcon refused to meet with the committee and has yet to explain how Provincial plans will fit with district policies and plans, (e.g. Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP)). The expansion of Highway 1 and the Port Mann Bridge is not supported by the GVRD and several municipalities are likewise opposed. GVRD Director and Vancouver Councillor David Cadman said the Province's program "basically plans to build the freeways we rejected. What it will do is put all of that traffic on to three major streets- 12th Avenue, First Avenue, and Hastings Street- which can't be widened."

The GVRD plan proposed improvements to the high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) capacity of the Port Mann Bridge, but was not in support of increased capacity for general-purpose traffic, which the twinning proposal would create. The

GVRD also proposed HOV capacity on Highway 1 from the eastern edge of the GVRD to south of the Ironworkers Memorial Bridge, as well as bus-lane improvements. The Gateway program calls for widening the highway from 216th Street in Langley to McGill Street in Vancouver.

On November 3rd, during a crowded all-candidates meeting, David Emerson, BC's Senior Minister in the previous parliament, said that he viewed the twinning of the Port Mann Bridge as "not essential" to the proposed Gateway Strategy. Mr. Emerson also stated that he supported the LRSP and that the federal dollars allocated to support transportation were for sustainable infrastructure.

David Fields, SPEC's transportation campaigner and spokesperson for the LRC, believes this is a significant indication that a core element of the Gateway Project may not receive the Federal funding it requires to move forward. The Conservative Party had no position on this matter going into the election and has yet to take its stand.

Some support does exist for the Gateway project; the Township of Langley supports it, and Mayor Kurt Alberts sees it as a boon for his constituents. "The reason for supporting the twinning of the Port Mann Bridge is not to make it easier, necessarily, for people to commute to their jobs out of Langley, but to have the businesses in Langley still being able to move their goods and provide their services throughout the region," he said.

Current levels of congestion on the Highway 1 corridor can be reduced

much more efficiently than the projected \$3.9 billion Gateway Project. At least a portion of the Port Mann Bridge congestion problem can be attributed to the fact that there is no public transit service on the Highway 1 corridor.

The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) just announced a plan to build 16 rapid transit lines for under \$1 billion. “Toronto’s plan shows that rapid transit can be built quickly and for less money than expanding freeways,” said SPEC Director Eric Doherty. “This kind of rapid transit could be serving our whole region for the cost of expanding just this one urban freeway.”

Doherty, a master’s student at the UBC School of Community and Regional Planning, recently prepared a report- *Transportation for a Sustainable Region*- that laid out a suite of transit investments that would cost less than a third of the highway expansion scheme. Combined with traffic management measures, these transit investments would make freeway expansion unnecessary, while avoiding increased air pollution in the region. These solutions would also have traffic flowing within two years, while the Province’s plan will further delay traffic through 8 to 10 years of construction.

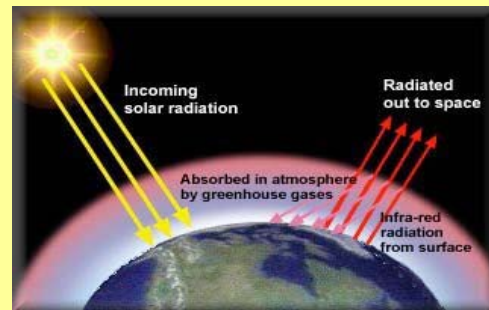
Unlike the Province’s Gateway Plan, the alternatives identified by the LRC are congruent with the commitment to environmental sustainability implicit in the LRSP.

“Contrary to what Gordon Campbell would have you believe, there are other options. The Gateway Plan will lock the Lower Mainland into increased air pollution causing health related impacts

such as asthma and.... double the traffic-related air pollution. That will have health impacts—and financial impacts—for years to come,” said David Fields. “Using transportation alternatives, we can move people in a way that is safer, and implement them faster and cheaper.”

The capital costs of the measures proposed in Doherty’s report would be in the order of \$413 million. The full text of the report can be found at www.livableregion.ca

Climate Change Information Centre



SPEC celebrated the Kyoto Protocol- February 16, 2005- with a new website designed to foster an understanding of climate change and help people discover new ways to reduce GHG emissions. The site features links to the most up-to-date information available from federal and provincial governments, as well as the City of Vancouver. Visit www.spec.bc.ca for more information.

Greenwashed Wal-Mart Stopped *from page 2*

Vancouver has long been praised for its mixed-use neighbourhoods that allow people to shop for most things at small stores near their homes. The city's major vision statement and planning document, CityPlan, strongly supports small-scale, neighbourhood business districts.

Contradicting that vision, Wal-Mart's application for the rezoning of industrial land- allowing for the construction of a big-box store on the south side of Marine Drive- posed a serious threat to the sustainability of these districts and directly challenged the city's stated planning policy.

Three years ago, Wal-mart applied to construct a 150,000 square foot retail mall on the old Dueck site near Main Street and Marine Drive. In response, (then) SPEC Director Deming Smith, along with the Building Better Neighbourhoods Coalition (BBNC), worked to organize neighbourhood opposition and ensure that their voices were heard at City Council.

The 5,000-name petition that circulated in opposition of Wal-Mart's original application, noted that a big-box retailer would "divert nearly \$50 million in retail sales from local merchants and put an estimated 75 to 150 local stores out of business" and "attract 7,000 car trips each day, causing increased air pollution, traffic congestion, and noise."

After an 18-month hiatus, Wal-Mart reemerged with a new 'green' design for their proposed retail store, while maintaining the layout. Councillor Anne Roberts challenged the new proposal

stating, "No matter how you paint it green, it doesn't get around the land-use issue. It doesn't get around the fundamental flaw that this is not smart growth."

Deming Smith called the design "greenwashing." He said it doesn't change the fact that the megastore will draw customers away from the city's small neighbourhood shopping centres. Deming stated that big-box retail kills neighbourhoods and increases pollution, no matter how 'green' the buildings may be. The new design couldn't solve the basic environmental problem it would create.

Large retail chain operations, dependent upon much larger markets, drawn from far wider geographic areas than local shops, also depend on customers who drive cars to their stores- creating vehicle traffic, noise, pollution, and the blight of gigantic parking lots. "Our primary concerns," said Councillor Roberts, former chair of BBNC, "are the impacts on local businesses, increased traffic and air pollution, and sprawl."

Despite the projected big-box retailer's compounding economic destruction of the local community, Wal-Mart was seeking a *break*: rezoning for commercial retail. Many local business owners- already struggling to compete with big-box retailers- contended that allowing major corporations to buy cheap industrial land and get it rezoned commercial penalizes small businesses that must pay much higher prices for land already zoned commercial.

Roberts contended that large stores can work in Vancouver, if they fit into urban neighbourhoods in ways other than

building design. She pointed to Mountain Equipment Co-op, a megastore for outdoor equipment on Broadway that meshes with the surrounding neighbourhood; it is on a transit line and attracts pedestrian traffic. Ross Hill, President of the Kerrisdale Business Association noted that, although London Drugs is larger than many of the small retail operations in Kerrisdale, it worked with the community to design a store that fit into the neighbourhood.

Both Hill and SPEC Coordinator Ivan Bulic said they find the city's approaches contradictory. On one hand, planners work hard to promote neighbourhood centres through CityPlan consultation and design model green neighbourhoods like Southeast False Creek. On the other hand, council and planners open the door to big-boxes on industrial land that run counter to all of that.

Fortunately, SPEC and the BBNC were able to convince Councillors to oppose Wal-Mart's proposal. On June 28, Vancouver City Councillors voted against rezoning applications from Wal-mart and Canadian Tire for over 400,000 square feet of retail space on Marine Drive in South Vancouver. The big-box stores were predicted to generate a 25 per cent increase in traffic, noise, and pollution in the Marine Drive area, which already experiences congestion during rush hours.

"This is a great day for the people of Vancouver," said former SPEC Director Deming Smith. "They said 'NO' to big-boxes in their neighbourhoods and they were heard." We sincerely thank all of you who wrote letters or appeared at the hearings and made these wins possible.

The support of our informed and caring members is what moves governments to make decisions for sustainability.

A new and bigger coalition is working to permanently change the City Plan to prevent large volume retail within city limits.

All Aboard the Arbutus Corridor *from page 2*



The Arbutus Corridor is a unique 11-km long stretch of rail corridor that runs approximately parallel to Arbutus Street from False Creek to the Fraser River at Marpole. At one time, the rail line crossed the Fraser River and continued on to Steveston. Remarkably, a commuter could travel on the inter urban passenger train from Steveston to downtown Vancouver in less time than it would take by car today. Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPR) owned and operated the line for nearly 100 years. CPR discontinued service in 2001 and

simultaneously applied to the City to rezone the lands for commercial and residential use.

Instead, the City developed an Official Development Plan (ODP) designating the rail line as a transportation/greenway corridor. The City of Vancouver and the CPR have been locked in a legal battle ever since. SPEC actively endorsed the use of the corridor as a transportation/greenway corridor, even before the ODP. In 2001, SPEC hosted a community meeting to discuss the best uses for the land. Visions for the Corridor included bicycle and pedestrian pathways, community gardens, urban greenways, mini-parks, and some form of heritage streetcar service.

In March 2004, SPEC launched *All Aboard the Arbutus Corridor*, a public design contest inviting the professional and general community to submit designs and ideas for the future development of the corridor. SPEC received 75 entries and prizes were given in three categories: professional, pre-professional, and general public.

All the entries were displayed on March 18, 2005 at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design.

The \$500.00 grand prize was awarded to “Arbutus Corridor Revival” (professional) Yolanda Bienz and Ron Vander Eerden. A weekend on Hornby Island was awarded to “Arbutus Bikeway” (professional) by Rob Grant, and Kevin King, a UBC planning student, received a gift certificate from Mountain Equipment Co-op for “The Arbutus Corridor Design Study”. Alex and Marie Cherkezoff won the community prize and gift certificates

from David Hunger and Murray’s nurseries for “Memory Lane--Passages through Time”.



SPEC was very grateful for the many members of the public, university students, and professionals who took the time to share their vision of the Corridor, and to the many local sponsors who provided funding or gifts to make the Corridor Design contest possible.

SPEC continues to work with the City of Vancouver to revitalize this important urban corridor. Details for the *All Aboard the Arbutus Corridor Design* competition are available at:

www.spec.bc.ca



Arbutus Corridor Cleanup Committee

Brandon Norman isn’t the sort of guy to let things ride when they’re not going right. When he realized that the Arbutus Corridor near his home was becoming overgrown with weeds and filled with litter, he acted. He tried calling CPR to get their support for a cleanup but was

told this was “not a priority” for the rail line. Then, he came to SPEC and offered his services, his truck, and all the friends he could muster, if SPEC would do the media relations work and help raise some funds.



The *Arbutus Corridor Cleanup Committee* was created and volunteers and sponsors came forward to help. Brandon removed about 4 tonnes of trash and volunteers bagged countless bags of weeds and leaves. The result, easily seen looking south from 41st Avenue, is a lovely, park-like boulevard.

Brandon and SPEC continue to work with the City to have trash bins placed near bus stops, to avoid heavy littering in the vicinity.

Burrard Bridge Cycling Lanes *from page 2*

On March 2, the City of Vancouver held an Open House to present options for modifying the Burrard Bridge and connecting streets. The idea was to address safety concerns by providing additional capacity for pedestrians and cyclists, in a way that respects the heritage elements of the Bridge. The options were also supposed to identify impacts on transportation, land use, and neighbouring communities.

Community groups, frustrated with the City’s indecision on how to make it safer, refer to the Burrard Bridge as the scene of an *accident waiting to happen*. SPEC collaborated with Better Environmentally Sound Transportation, Heritage Vancouver, and West End Residents Association to demand action from the City.

“The City of Vancouver has been studying and consulting on a plan to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety for over ten years now,” said Karen Wristen, Executive Director of SPEC. “The best solution is to reassign two traffic lanes. The Lions Gate Bridge carries over twice the number of motor vehicles in one half of the number of traffic lanes.”

In 2001, the False Creek Crossing Study (an intensive process of community and stakeholder consultation, which won an award from the Institute of Transportation Engineers) concluded that lane reassignment was a viable option. Pedestrian and cyclist traffic volumes have increased dramatically since that time, while single occupancy vehicle traffic has not. Bicycle traffic is expected to increase further, with the implementation of downtown bike lanes.



“The management of crossings and major arteries is key to shaping the transportation choices of Vancouver residents,” said SPEC Executive

Director Karen Wristen. “If the City is serious about sustainability and about reducing GHGs, it needs to view all decisions like this through the sustainability lens: wouldn’t it be more sustainable to maintain the heritage values of the Bridge, manage traffic flow within the existing infrastructure, and encourage cyclists and pedestrians by providing safe passage?”

In July, SPEC was elated to discover that the City was finally able to move forward on the fate of the Burrard Bridge. The Council voted 10-to-1 in favour of reallocating two lanes on the bridge for bicycle traffic during a *one year trial period*. They also instructed staff to fully design and cost out potential modifications that would expand the Bridge’s sidewalks, while making provisions for high-occupancy or high priority vehicle lanes.

SPEC fought for the reallocation of these two lanes. “It costs virtually nothing to do,” said SPEC Director John Whistler, who attended years of consultation meetings on SPEC’s behalf. “And the increased public safety and efficiency of traffic flow will be an enormous benefit to everyone.”

The option preferred by City staff was to widen the sidewalks at their outer limits- a plan that was never going to solve the pedestrian/cyclist interface. The plan would require the sidewalk to narrow at bridge pylons, causing pedestrians and cyclists to *merge* at four points. With some 5000 people making a trip across Burrard Bridge daily, it is difficult to see how this costly change could make a significant difference.

“Council’s decision today is very much in keeping with its commitment to clean air,” said Whistler. “Whenever we decide to allocate transportation infrastructure money, we should be thinking about how our decisions can promote alternate transportation choices”.

Sadly, this long-awaited decision is already being challenged.

Following Vancouver’s municipal elections, the new Council’s NPA members brought forward a motion to abandon the experimental closing of two lanes on the Burrard Bridge. The motion sought to proceed directly to the very expensive option of widening the sidewalks- a proposal which was *rejected* by the citizens’ Bicycle Advisory Committee and *condemned* by the citizens’ Heritage Commission for its interference with the heritage values of the Bridge.

The July decision gave priority to pedestrians, cyclists, buses, and carpoolers- precisely the direction we need to move. It respected the submissions of citizens’ advisory committees and left room to revisit the situation if the experimental lane reassignment did not work.

Thirty-two Vancouver citizens turned out for a special meeting of Council, convened on December 20th, to speak against the NPA motion. The Minutes of that meeting reflect some thirty viable reasons to proceed with reassignment, including environmental, economic, planning, and democratic process issues.

Only Charles Gauthier, Executive Director of the Downtown Business

Improvement Association, spoke in support of the motion. Gauthier claimed that the lane reassignment would increase traffic congestion, negatively impact transit users, traffic circulation, and the flow of goods movement through downtown.

The motion carried; City staff have been directed to proceed with the design and budgeting of two plans to widen the sidewalks- with and without 'pinch points' at the Bridge pylons. In SPEC's opinion, either measure is a costly mistake that this Council is unlikely to embrace once the price tag is revealed. So- in a sense- we're back to square one, with one exception: the future of the Bicycle Advisory Committee has also been brought into question by the Mayor's advisory committee review initiative.

Building Healthy Cities

Southeast False Creek

from page 3

Many transportation measures are being implemented to reduce single occupant transportation. Narrower, more pedestrian-friendly streets with grassy swales will reduce contaminant run-off of urban streets into ocean waters. The area will incorporate car cooperatives and lower parking ratios. Most importantly, the new development will encourage walking, cycling, and transit use through good urban design and easy access to public transit. The existing

ferry system on False Creek will also help to reduce automobile travel.

Together, these measures should greatly reduce emissions that contribute to local air pollution and global warming. Urban agriculture will also increase the ecological, social, and economic sustainability of SeFC. The target: 12% of the produce consumed by residents of SeFC to be grown on-site in community, private deck, and rooftop gardens. A strong policy that encourages the development of green roofs, which can be designed for gardening or bird habitat, will further effectiveness.

Keeping all of these sustainability measures incorporated into the SeFC plan, however, will require persistent persuasion from community members. SPEC is active on the City's SeFC Stewardship Group, and continues to work to increase the ecological, social, and economic sustainability of this important urban watershed development.

Sustainability Boot Camp

SPEC organized an event to educate 2005 municipal candidates about the mix of sustainability issues that exist in their communities- issues they will face in their positions as councillors. The *Sustainability Boot Camp* was the first event of its kind in the GVRD. The *Boot Camp* was designed to provide a place for learning and networking with non-profit leaders in the various fields of sustainability. It took place Oct. 27, 2005, at the Surrey Campus of Simon Fraser University.



Moderated by Dr. Michelle Rhodes of the University College of the Fraser Valley, the event featured three panels of speakers, presenting from various non-profit organizations whose mandates involve urban sustainability issues. Presentations included: community planning, transportation, housing, air quality, agricultural land reserve, recycling, municipal energy planning, and liquid waste management. Questions were fielded from a mix of candidates in various municipalities throughout the Lower Mainland. Fifty-nine GVRD candidates attended.

Food Safety and Security

From page 5

The ALR was formed in 1973 to preserve scarce agricultural land in BC. Since then it has become a model for other jurisdictions. At the same time it has been eroded within BC as it has come under intense pressure from developers and municipalities eager to expand their residential and industrial base. While ALR farmland currently fetches about \$25,000 per acre, a landowner could sell the same piece for up to \$300,000 as an industrial site.

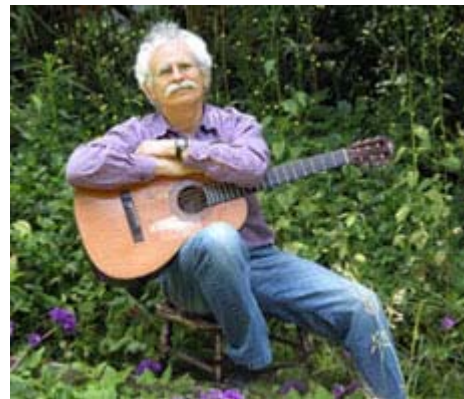
The Province recently changed the structure of the Land Commission from

a Province-wide panel to several regional panels. Under this newly structured commission, the approval rate for decisions coming before panels has increased dramatically.

Applications for sub-divisions and second homes erode the potential for economically feasible farm operations by chopping up the land into small plots. The quality of lands within the ALR is suffering, too, as a result of a trend in favour of removing productive land and 'replacing' it with lower quality land from other areas of the Province.

"It was a wise decision to put land aside in the ALR", says Christopher. "Given the potential for food 'insecurity' in the future, the ALR is a precious reserve and the precautionary principle should be first and foremost in the minds of commissioners."

Bob Bossin Birthday Benefit



SPEC members and friends gathered in January to celebrate the 25th anniversary of our Kisilano Sustainability Demonstration Centre and Bob Bossin's 60th. Bob and friends performed to a packed St. James Hall.

SPEC says goodbye...

This year we are sad to say goodbye to three of our wonderful Directors.



Deming Smith served on the SPEC board for well over a decade. His wise counsel and professional expertise in transportation

planning enriched our programmes throughout his years at SPEC. Deming's effective community organizing work ensured many victories; we remember him particularly for his work to prevent big-box stores from overtaking Vancouver neighbourhoods. Deming also contributed to the Arbutus Corridor Project, especially in the early stages of brainstorming and planning around the contest. He remains a close friend and colleague and we wish him well at his new desk at Better Environmentally Sound Transportation (BEST).



Tracy Keeling joined the SPEC Board in 2001 after working as SPEC's Air and Water Quality campaigner. As a Board member, Tracy was actively involved in issues of air

quality in the GVRD. She worked to encourage strong regulations and to stop the practice of dirty fuel switching. Her

dedication to environmental education was instrumental in shaping SPEC's communication and outreach programs. Tracy was also active in building a diverse and stable fundraising base by nurturing relationships with major donors and helping to grow SPEC's membership. She leaves SPEC to begin another adventure- this time as a mother! We will miss her enthusiasm, energy, and passion for the environment. We wish her all the best and look forward to working with her in the future.



Stuart Mackinnon joined the Board in 2003 as president from November 2003 to April 2004. He stepped into the Presidency during a time of transition and did

an admirable job. Stuart has a passion for parks and green spaces; he was specifically concerned with curbing the increasing commercialization of public parks in Vancouver. He was active in the pesticides campaign and was successful in encouraging Vancouver City Council to pass a by-law to reduce cosmetic pesticide use in the region. Stuart was also very supportive of the summer interns and volunteers and often took time to transport them and the SPEC displays to and from community events. We will miss his spirited contributions to SPEC board meetings and wish him well in future endeavors.