

COAL ACTION MURIHIKU CAM

News Update No 6 Nov–Dec 2012

Summer Fest is Back!

Summer Fest, “Shaping our Future. We have Options!” is gearing up to be a great event. The website <http://nocoalsummerfest.org.nz> is going live this week for information, programme and registration options. Check it out and plan to come.

Friday afternoon will see a tour of local mining sites and the briquette plant. Saturday will be an educational day at the camp with an update of developments in the coal world since Summer Fest 2012, followed by regional roundups from groups across Aotearoa/NZ, then scrummy food. In the afternoon there will be inside information from Queensland guest Rob McCreath about strategies used in Australia; strategizing and workshops, including using social media effectively; and action led campaigning and self-care when campaigning.

Sunday is the public education day at James Cumming Wing, Gore, with updates around Solid Energy, lignite and CANA with Jeanette Fitzsimons and Kristin Gillies; and climate change with Gareth Renowden over the year since Summer Fest 2012. This is followed by Peter Hardstaff from WWF presenting the BERL report around low carbon options for Southland, and maybe a speaker on health issues. After lunch, Rob McCreath, chair of Friends of Felton, will tell his story and inspire us on issues, actions and support to ensure we achieve success as they have done. He will describe how they stopped the



Felton Valley mining project and set up the Lock the Gate campaign, then answer questions. Cath Wallace from ECO will explain landowners' rights here in NZ under the Crown Minerals Act. A panel will conclude the day, then a cuppa. Music and entertainment are planned for Friday and Saturday nights – if you can sing, dance, play an instrument or tell jokes, we should love to hear from you!

Offers of help with setting up and taking down marquees and tents, pre-cooking food and helping prepare salads etc will be most appreciated, to ensure that CAM's huge efforts in taking on the organising this year will all come to fruition positively.

Rangimarie Jenny Campbell Co-convenor

PS No news yet on the opening of the briquetting plant – we await developments!

You've Been Trumped

Social/Educational/Fund-raising event at
St James Theatre Gore Tuesday 11 December
Tickets are \$20 which includes wine, cheese & nibbles from 7pm, then the movie at 7.30.

A great opportunity to have a relaxing night out, meet other CAM members and supporters while helping CAM to raise some campaign funds.

A poster will be circulated for you to advertise to friends and sell tickets to the event. We are counting on your support!

Don't Worry – It's All In The Plan

Long suffering Gore rate-payer, Joe Novak, gets it all off his chest

Councils are obligated to formulate long term plans to comply with the Local Government Act. This enables local decision making, while promoting the economic, environmental, and social well being of the community.

The Executive Summary of the Ten Year Long Term Gore District Plan states: "For the first time since the Gore District Council was established, the council is planning for an increase in population, based on the assumption that a large scale lignite project will be completed in the next 10 years. In making this assumption the council wants to make it abundantly clear that it is not an economic cheerleader for lignite development in the district. Rather it is working closely with the owner of the resources so that council is not caught flat footed if a large scale project should receive the necessary consents to proceed."

The issue is how accurate the Long Term 10 Year Plan will be in anticipating the changes in that time. While the Council was bending over, meticulously working on the lignite fuels plan, it had a firecracker dropped down its pants with the Alliance sheep chain closure. That closure was inevitable, while the lignite rooster was never a good runner to begin with. In recent years other uncomfortable adjustments to the local economy have been imposed. The Creamoata closure, and that of the paper mill which closely followed, were all unplanned.

Caught 'flat-footed'? Not our council!

This would be no problem if planners and planning were free. It becomes bothersome when the economy creaks and an inevitable loss of regional

population looms. In response to this new austerity Council plans to keep within a stringent 5% increase in rates in future. With the national inflation rate running at 2.7% over the past 10 years this will represent a 46% increase in rates above the rate of inflation, providing of course they can keep within the stringent 5%!

Ten months into the Plan, how does it all look?

A year ago thermal and coking coals were fueling a China boom. It was bound to go on forever. But a year down the track international coal prices have been dashed to dross. Solid Energy, that over-energetic kid on the block, has closed its big mine at Spring Creek, dismissed at least a quarter of its workforce and been forced to sell its subsidiaries. Unfortunately, these may be unsaleable. The crisis is



so serious that even some of Solid Energy's coveted lignite rich farms could be put on the block. All this, while their \$30 million dollar experimental briquetting princess sits idle. But no one should complain, as it could be a unique Southland feature: the cleanest, quietest coal plant in the world. Yet amongst all this disastrous news, not once has the promoter of brown coal conversion flinched, and changed its plan to mine, convert, and, process lignite.

Surely, warnings that NZ needs to prepare for an influx of South Pacific refugees due to global warming must be noted in the Plan? But probably not. However, the Plan does note that the Mataura Swimming Pool uses lignite and has a negative environmental impact. To compensate, the Council has allowed an increased budget to plant 10% more trees. This shows that our Council really does take climate change seriously.

When planning fails to improve outcomes and enrich the community then questions should arise of whose interests the Council serves. Here in the Gore District there are no doubts. After all, the local body industry is not a cheerleader for the lignite industry.

Special Event!

Talk by Dr Hamish Campbell

**"From Sir James Hector to Oil:
an ABC of Catlins Geology"**

7.30–9.00pm Tuesday 4 December

Owaka Museum

Dr Campbell is a Senior Scientist at GNS Science, palaeontologist/geologist at Te Papa, and author of popular books on NZ geology.

No Need for Nudity

Jeanette Fitzsimons responds to Jane Young's opinion piece in last month's newsletter

"The Naked Truth" is a good reminder that technology is not going to solve the problems we have created with over-population and, especially, over-consumption. However, the idea that without fossil fuels we would be homeless and naked because currently everything we do uses them is going a bit too far.

The author issues us a challenge:

For just five minutes carry out an activity that does not require the use of any fossil fuels; or of any object whose raw materials, manufacture and/or transport depended on fossil hydrocarbons.

OK, I'm digging my potatoes from the garden – compost grown, last year's seed saved, no artificial fertilisers or pesticides. Gotcha! Oops – but the spade is steel and coal is used in steel making. But wait – steel can be recycled with no need for coal, at much higher rates than we currently recycle, using only electricity. Now that photo-voltaic solar panels are about a tenth of the price they used to be, sustainable electricity looks possible. Must take that broken spade to the recycling centre. And coke for steel making can now be made with waste wood – but probably not at the scale the world currently uses steel. So less steel, but certainly not none. Spades and hydro generators rather than guns and bombs?

Now I'm bringing in wood for the stove to cook dinner. Nice and sustainable – we never cut a living tree. Oops – hard work without the chainsaw,

and it burns petrol. What's it going to run on? Well, chainsaws use little enough fuel – we can get enough ethanol or biodiesel from crop wastes. And of course, sharpening saw blades rather than getting new ones.

Naked? I don't think so. What with wool, cotton, bamboo fibre, hemp, silk, there's plenty of choice there without using fibres made from oil. Let's leave naked for mid summer at the swimming hole.

Then plastics. Looking around, it's computer, cooking utensils, drain pipes, toys – plastic is light, strong, cheap, and all made from oil. It won't be cheap any more, but the same chemicals found in oil are also in wood.

The car – that's the hardest for those of us in rural areas. But mine already uses half the fuel of the NZ fleet average and my next one will do better still, and be using much less. Solar electric trains for freight and mass transport. A range of fuels made from biological wastes, for some personal transport, used sparingly.

So the real question is scale. Using less, reusing, recycling and sharing more, and making what we really need from sustainable materials. There are technological answers, but not on the scale we are used to, and not growing every year. We can't afford to keep mining fossil fuels forever just because it's hard to manage without them – that way lies extreme climate change and will make Sandy look like a little bit of bad weather.

We Are Not Alone!

Finnish cartoonist, Seppo Leinonen, writes: "In Finland we had 1/3 of our land area covered with moss or mires or wetlands. But most of them have been drained for the forestry (great deal of it in vain, but after all wetland was destroyed.) Finland is also the only nation that will continue to burn peat as energy. It is a big threat to our finest and oldest peat-bogs. And it pollutes even more than burning coal. (It also destroys ecosystems and spoils waterways.) Our former right wing government weakened our environmental system. Now mining companies occupy Finland."



Santa Does Live in Finland!©Seppo Leinonen www.seppo.net/e/

Hurricane Sandy – The New Normal?

Here are some of the points made in an article by Gary W Yohe appearing in “The Conversation”, an Australian website that provides in-depth independent analysis and commentary on environmental, economic, scientific and political issues: theconversation.edu.au/

Are we now experiencing the “new normal” climate? In the US alone, “weird weather” has been seen in recent years:

- Hurricane Sandy – a storm of historic proportions.
- Extreme heat causing rail lines to buckle, major highways to bulge, and runways to melt.
- Floods, flash floods, droughts, heat waves, fires, and freakish snowstorms all ravaging parts of the country one season after another.
- The severe Texan drought and heat, which in 2011 produced dozens of consecutive days over 100°F (38°C), was followed by summer flooding of the same places in 2012.
- River levels in the Mississippi were so low in August 2012 that river transport had to be curtailed.
- Lightning has sparked wildfires in Colorado and other western states, and their devastating impact has been fuelled by dead trees that are the products of bark beetle infestation.
- Multiple episodes of heavy rainfall and other extreme weather events over short periods of time have produced multiple impacts, including flooding of critical infrastructure.



"Dreaming of a White Christmas!" ©Seppo Leinonen www.seppo.net/e/

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Jenny Campbell is the Southland contact for both CAM and CANA (Coal Action Network Aotearoa) jennycam@extra.co.nz 027-351-0180

If you would like to make a donation to local or national campaigns, cheques may be sent to:
John Purey-Cust

203 Champion Rd RD4 GORE 9774

Newsletter items to Jane Young by February 10:
janejimmyoung@slingshot.co.nz

Does this mean that the United States and other countries around the world are now experiencing the “New Normal”?

Well actually, no. The changes in the current climate that have been observed across the planet are the products of only about 50% of the warming to which we are already committed, thanks to our past emissions of heat-trapping gases. Even if, literally overnight, we achieved an 80% emissions reduction, the planet would still warm by at least another 1°C by the middle of this century. We are continuing to commit ourselves to “more and more warming and more and more climate change and increasingly intense and frequent extreme weather events ... what we have been experiencing recently is only the harbinger of a future that will be punctuated by more severe weather extremes and increasing damage – all driven as the future unfolds by past and future emissions of heat-trapping gases.

We are NOT seeing the ‘new normal’!

NZ Turns Its Back On Kyoto

The NZ Government won't be signing up to the legally binding second Kyoto Protocol commitment period from 2013. Instead, it has announced that it will pledge to reduce emissions under the parallel “United Nation Convention Framework”. (Convention targets aren't legally binding.)

Climate Change Minister Tim Groser claimed that New Zealand stood 100% behind its existing commitment and was on track to meeting targets.

Green climate change spokesman Kennedy Graham said the announcement meant the Government was withdrawing from global efforts under the Kyoto Protocol to fight climate change and was instead aligning with countries who will just talk about it.

Australia has announced a conditional decision to join the 35 other countries that have said they will sign up to a second Kyoto commitment period.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“Most cars on our roads have only one occupant, usually the driver.”

Carol Malia, BBC Anchorwoman

“It wasn't the Exxon Valdez captain's driving that caused the Alaskan oil spill. It was yours.”

Greenpeace advertisement, New York Times, 25 February 1990