

# Chapter Action Updates



by Brent Patterson

## Chapters hold all-candidates debates

The Kamloops, Comox Valley, Williams Lake, Surrey-Langley-White Rock, Medicine Hat, Calgary, Red Deer, Prince Albert, Peterborough, and Brockville chapters helped organize all-candidates debates this past election. The Conservative candidates in half of these debates failed to attend. In Calgary a house plant was put in the place of the absent Conservative candidate, while in Red Deer the local media noted that an election lawn sign was used to represent the absent Conservative.

## Peterborough soapbox campaign

The Peterborough-Kawarthas chapter in Ontario conducted daily rallies, one issue per day, at their farmers' market over a 17-day period during the election. Issues raised on the soapbox included health care, F-35 jets, the CBC, and our declining democracy.

## Stop the Pave!

The Delta-Richmond, Surrey-White Rock-Langley, and Vancouver-Burnaby chapters have been active in the campaign against a \$2-billion, 40-kilometre four-lane highway now under construction in British Columbia. The highway will be a source of greenhouse gas emissions, will endanger the Fraser River and wetlands, and will destroy farmland as well as an Indigenous site. To oppose it, the chapters took part in a "South Fraser Protection Camp," which was set up following a march and the planting of seedlings in the path of the highway where construction work required clear-cutting a lush hillside of trees. (See image on the cover of *Canadian Perspectives*).

## Inverness petitions against fracking

The Inverness County chapter collected 1,200 names on a petition against fracking – the controversial gas extraction

To illustrate the waste associated with bottled water, members of the University of Alberta chapter teamed up with Greenpeace Campus and Edmonton-based visual artist Dianne Connors to create a "bottled waterfall" as part of World Water Week in Edmonton in March.



Scott Harris

method that both uses large amounts of water and endangers groundwater – and had their petition tabled in the Nova Scotia provincial legislature. This contributed to a provincial government decision to undertake a review, with some public input, of fracking in Nova Scotia.

## Campbell River opposes bottled water applications

The Campbell River chapter, working with the Sechelt Nation, is raising concerns about applications for bottled water takings from more than 40 streams around four remote inlets, including Jervis Inlet, on British Columbia's central coast. If approved, this could drain about 112,000 litres a day from each stream. The chapter is demanding a full provincial environmental assessment and consideration of the applications as a group rather than individually.

## Ottawa defends Lansdowne Park

The Ottawa chapter organized a public forum to defend Lansdowne Park, a 40-acre public space on the Rideau Canal that is under threat by private development. The city has entered into a public-private partnership with a sports and entertainment group to transform the park into a 350,000-square-foot commercial space with stores, restaurants and bars. At the forum, Maude Barlow said, "The debate over Lansdowne Park is part of the struggle around the world to protect the commons against private interests. The commons includes public space and that which is part of our shared, common heritage and needed for life."

## Guelph fights Nestlé

The Guelph chapter is working as part of the Wellington Water Watchers to stop Nestlé from gaining a 10-year permit to pump millions of water daily from

their local aquifer in southern Ontario. Their campaign included a three-hour walk from downtown Guelph to the front gates of the Nestlé plant in the neighbouring community of Aberfoyle.

## Golden chapter takes names to the B.C. legislature

The Golden chapter collected more than 500 signatures from people opposed to the Beaver River Hydro Project, a private river-diversion project on the Ventego and Cupola creeks to generate electricity for export. The petition – presented to the British Columbia legislature – expresses concern about the project's environmental impacts and calls for a moratorium and environmental assessment.

## Red Deer aquifer win

The Red Deer chapter has been fighting against a proposed gravel pit on top of an alluvial aquifer in Alberta, arguing it will pollute local water sources. The chapter, working with others in the area, convinced the Red Deer County municipal planning commission to vote overwhelmingly against this project.

## Lethbridge works with Kainai Nation

The Lethbridge chapter is working with members of the Kainai Nation who are calling for a moratorium against fracking on their reserve in southern Alberta. Bowood Energy and Murphy Oil have leased almost 130,000 acres of land there, and use fracking on at least 16 drill sites on the reserve. There is concern that the fracking operation could affect the Oldman Watershed from which Lethbridge and several other towns draw their drinking water.

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