

1 of 1 DOCUMENT

St. John's Telegram (Newfoundland)

January 12, 2007 Friday**Information session to be held on Lower Churchill****SECTION:** BUSINESS; Pg. D1**LENGTH:** 246 words

The northeast Avalon branch of the Sierra Club of Canada and Grand River Keeper Labrador Inc. are inviting the public to a day- long information event on the Grand River (Lower Churchill) Saturday.

The event will feature viewings of "Grand River, Labrador's Treasure, Newfoundland's Secret" - an 18-minute educational film produced with funding from Riverkeeper, an environmental group whose director's include Robert F. Kennedy Jr. - followed by presentations by Clarice Blake Rudowski, president of Grand Riverkeeper Labrador and Peter Earle of the local Sierra Club branch, among others.

The presentations will take place at two-hour intervals: 10 a.m., 12 p.m., 2 p.m., 4 p.m. and 6 p.m., with group discussions to follow.

Part of the discussions will focus on the environmental impact of the proposed hydroelectric dams on the Grand River.

"Global warming is becoming a big issue, and the oxygen production of approximately 84 square kilometres of land along the river (would be compromised) by flooding in the river valley," said Derek James, one of the event's organizers.

Other topics of discussion will be alternative sources of power and equivalent ways the river can contribute to the province's economy, James said.

Snacks, refreshments and activities for children, including face- painting will also be available at the event, as will copies of the film.

The event will take place at the Masonic Temple, Cathedral Street in St. John's Saturday, between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m.

LOAD-DATE: January 12, 2007**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

Report on the Educational Sessions conducted by
GRAND RIVERKEEPER LABRADOR INC. (GRKL)
hosted by the **Northeast Avalon Sierra Club**
St. John's, Newfoundland on January 13, 2007

Clarice Blake Rudkowski, President, GRKL held three sessions at the Masonic Lodge. Members of the Northeast Avalon Sierra Club advertised the sessions and their members provided beverages and snacks for break times. As well, they arranged for members to ferry me around the city as needed, i.e. to/from the venue, to/from airport and for media interviews. A friend accommodated me in her home to save on hotel bills. Because money was so tight, it was only with this cooperative effort that it was possible to pull it off.

8 (30" x 40") Posters, showing the negative consequences of the Upper Churchill Hydroelectric Project, were hung on the walls of the Lodge. Our DVD, about a canoe trip on the lower part of the river, was on sale at the door along with informational handouts. My talk started out with discussion of the Upper Churchill, using the posters as reference points. This was followed by a showing of our DVD (Labrador's Treasure, Newfoundland's Secret) and ended with a lively questions and answer period. Each session was attended by an average of 30 people with one having 50. The afternoon session was very child-friendly when a volunteer brought along face paints much to the delight of the kids.

1 of 1 DOCUMENT

St. John's Telegram (Newfoundland)

January 14, 2007 Sunday**Activists target dam proposal****BYLINE:** Rosie Gillingham**SECTION:** PROVINCIAL; Pg. A4**LENGTH:** 679 words

They call it Labrador's Treasure and Newfoundland's secret. But a group of environmental advocates are determined to get the secret out of just how precious the Grand River is and why residents throughout the entire province should be concerned about it.

Close to 100 people turned out Sunday at Masonic Park in St. John's for a seminar - hosted by the Northeast Avalon Sierra Club Group of the Sierra Club and Grand Riverkeeper, Labrador Inc. - to discuss the devastating impact the proposed dams from the Lower Churchill hydroelectric development would have to the environment and people of the area.

Held at four different times throughout the day, the seminars included an educational documentary film, speeches and discussions on the issue.

Northeast Avalon Sierra Club Group of the Sierra Club chairman Peter Earle said his organization took on the project to make people more aware of the issue.

He said many island residents have the notion the Lower Churchill development will be nothing but positive.

"People have to realize there is a cost associated with that," Earle said. "the cost being, essentially, the destruction of a huge river system running through central Labrador."

The river - known as the Churchill River - is the most historic, cultural and ecologically diverse region of Labrador, containing many archeological sites, historical sites and structures, while it also provides habitat for many species of plants, animals and birds.

The construction of dams, Earle said, would destroy much of that.

Last year, Premier Danny Williams announced the province would develop the megaproject alone.

Construction is slated to begin in 2009, with Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro aiming to have the project generating power by 2015.

It was registered with environmental regulators Dec. 1, including submissions under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and the provincial Environmental Protection Act.

The proposal is to construct and operate two hydroelectric power generating facilities on the lower section of the river at

Activists target dam proposal St. John's Telegram (Newfoundland) January 14, 2007 Sunday

Gull Island and Muskrat Falls. The two facilities have a combined power generation capacity of approximately 2,800 megawatts.

At Gull Island, a dam - measuring 1.3 kilometres long and 99 metres high - would produce a 225-kilometre reservoir that would involve flooding 85 square kilometres.

A smaller dam - about 60 kilometres long - would be constructed at Muskrat Falls, with a reservoir requiring flooding of 36 square kilometres.

"That whole free-flowing river will be converted into a much more stagnant reservoir," he said, "and that has biological implications and it has implications for those who live on the river who earn their living from it."

Instead of physically blocking a river, he believes alternative ways to generate power can be found with further discussions.

Grand Riverkeeper president Clarice Blake-Rudkowski said with very little benefits from the project coming to Labrador, she said it is not worth it.

"We feel it's too much to ask to sacrifice our river for the sake of a few jobs through construction phase and no power being slotted for Labrador use," she said. "It's just a clear case of rape and pillage."

She noted the government should be thinking, instead, about alternative sources of energy, such as wind power, and using the river for other economic development, such as tourism and in harvesting the forest for its unique plants.

"There's all sorts of other things that could be happening that's not going to destroy our river forever for our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren," said Blake-Rudkowski, whose father travelled the river for years as a trapper.

"It's far more valuable left in its natural state than having dams put on it."

Monday is the deadline to submit public comments concerning the environmental process, Earle and Blake-Rudkowski hope more people will write Environment and Conservation Minister Clyde Jackman and express their objection to the project.

"People have to speak up," Earle said. "We've got to start taking our environment more seriously."

rgillingham@thetelegram.com

LOAD-DATE: January 14, 2007

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

GRAPHIC: The audience watches a documentary on the Grand River Saturday in St. John's at a seminar about the impacts of hydro development on the Labrador river. - Photo by Joe Gibbons/The Telegram

PUBLICATION-TYPE: Newspaper