

**For immediate release: June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

**GRAND RIVERKEEPER OFFICIAL CANOE PORTAGES THE STREETS OF ST. JOHN'S TO HIGHLIGHT THE PLIGHT OF THE GRAND RIVER (A.K.A. CHURCHILL RIVER)**

Groups and Concerned Individuals in the St. John's area come together to support Grand Riverkeeper Labrador, Inc. in their campaign to educate and promote awareness of the ecological, cultural, aesthetic, and economic impacts of the proposed Lower Churchill Hydroelectric Project in Labrador.

Information sheets will be distributed at the crossroads at Prince Philip Parkway and Allandale Road during the morning rush hour on Wednesday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, and between 11:30am and 12:30am at various areas along Water Street, downtown.

Roberta Frampton Benefiel, Vice President of Grand Riverkeeper Labrador (GRK), states, "No amount of money could adequately compensate for the destruction which will be caused by damming this near-pristine 56,00 sq mi (93,000 sq km) watershed. The groups and individuals providing information are united with us by their respect for the natural and cultural environment which would be forever lost to two huge reservoirs should this project be built."

Dr. Murray Rudd, Canada Research Chair in Ecological Economics at Memorial University states in his submission to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency on the Draft Guidelines for the Environmental Impact Statement, "Billions of dollars will be invested in the Lower Churchill and tied up for decades..." " If, as it appears, the objective of the Province is simply to generate revenue for future generations, are there not better ways to do it? How could billions in debt financing be used for alternative investments that (1) provide better overall returns on investment and (2) are less risky" ...

Julie Huntington, Executive Director of Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society states, "We Newfoundlanders and Labradorians boast that we live in an unspoiled land and we promote this view as a tourism draw both nationally and internationally. CPAWS-NL opposes the unnecessary flooding of boreal forest, destruction of fish habitat, and the creation of health hazards, in order to create massive, non-sustainable energy projects like the Lower Churchill. This large project will alter seasonal river flows, disturb aquatic species migration and life cycles, and adversely effect species and habitat within the outer boundaries of the proposed Mealy Mountains National Park."

Nick Burnaby of the Atlantic Canada Sustainable Energy Coalition (ACSEC) states: "We should not rush into convincing people that large hydroelectric dam projects, which destroy natural Canadian boreal ecosystems and wild rivers are providing us with benign, green energy solutions. It is important that all options are evaluated thoroughly, including a serious examination of smaller scale, less destructive projects that would diversity our energy supply and maximize benefits to local communities."

The portage and information distribution blitz will be followed by a meeting with environmental groups and concerned citizens to discuss alternatives and other important issues relating to the Lower Churchill Hydroelectric Project.

For further information please contact the following:

Grand Riverkeeper Labrador, Roberta Frampton Benefiel-780-██████████927 or 709-██████████370

Dr. Murray Rudd, Canada Research Chair in Ecological Economics at MUN-709-██████████439

Nick Burnaby, Atlantic Canada Sustainable Energy Coalition (ACSEC) 709-██████████348

Julie Huntington, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society-Newfoundland and Labrador Chapter

(CPAWS-NL)- 709-726-5800