



2001 Annual Report

Society
Promoting
Environmental
Conservation



Environmental
protection
since 1969

Board of Directors' Report

2001 was a watershed year for SPEC. The GVRD's November 1999 decision to stop logging in the North Shore watersheds is still reverberating as we monitor the development of a new watershed management plan. SPEC directors and volunteers were instrumental in organizing community opposition to the GVRD scheme to privatize a new Seymour/Capilano filtration plant. And our advocating for an effective provincial drinking water protection act reflects the importance of water quality to all British Columbians.

Though the Board remains committed to the water campaign, it hasn't relaxed its other campaigns. During 2001 SPEC worked to improve air quality in the region, limit liquid waste, eliminate toxic pesticides and protect public transit. The energy campaign focussed on maintaining the moratorium on offshore oil exploration, stopping the Sumas Energy 2 power plant and working with the North Burnaby community on the accident-plagued Chevron Refinery.

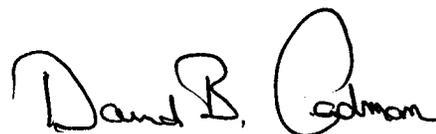
In 2002 the nuclear campaign will take on new importance after our Federal Court success in overturning Ottawa's expropriation of the Nanoose Bay torpedo range. And our efforts to stop industrial pollution will be challenged as we go through the process of appealing Chevron's plan to dump toxic MTBE gas-additive directly into Burrard Inlet.

While the campaigns remain at the centre of the Board's concerns, we remain mindful of the need to strengthen the structures that support the

campaign. A modernized website and updated computers give SPEC enhanced effectiveness. And ongoing maintenance of the building allows the Environmental Information Centre to provide services that include public education and outreach, community venues and organizing community events such as Environment Now. A new feature of SPEC's communication capacity is our ability to issue Chinese language press releases and public service announcements.

It can be difficult to determine our effectiveness. One measure is media presence. In 2001, SPEC was mentioned in almost 400 TV, radio, newspaper and magazine stories. That is a remarkable more than one-a-day average.

SPEC's accomplishments are due to the dedication and efforts of the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, members and supporters. We thank the Endswell Foundation, Tides Canada Foundation, Walter & Duncan Gordon Foundation, Mountain Equipment Co-op Environment Fund, VanCity, West Coast Environmental Law Environmental Dispute Resolution Fund, Sierra Legal Defence Fund, Environmental Fund of BC, BC Charitable Gaming and all the individual members and supporters for their generous support.



David Cadman

President

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Air Quality

Greenhouses and dirty fuel

Protecting air quality in the Lower Mainland is a priority for SPEC. Since the groundbreaking 1990s *Clouds of Change* report and the GVRD's 1994 Air Quality Management Plan, public transit, cycling and clean fuel technologies have been identified as the best ways of reducing air pollution. Encouraging manufacturing, agriculture and transportation industries to burn clean fuels is key to the plan. But no plan can succeed unless applied.

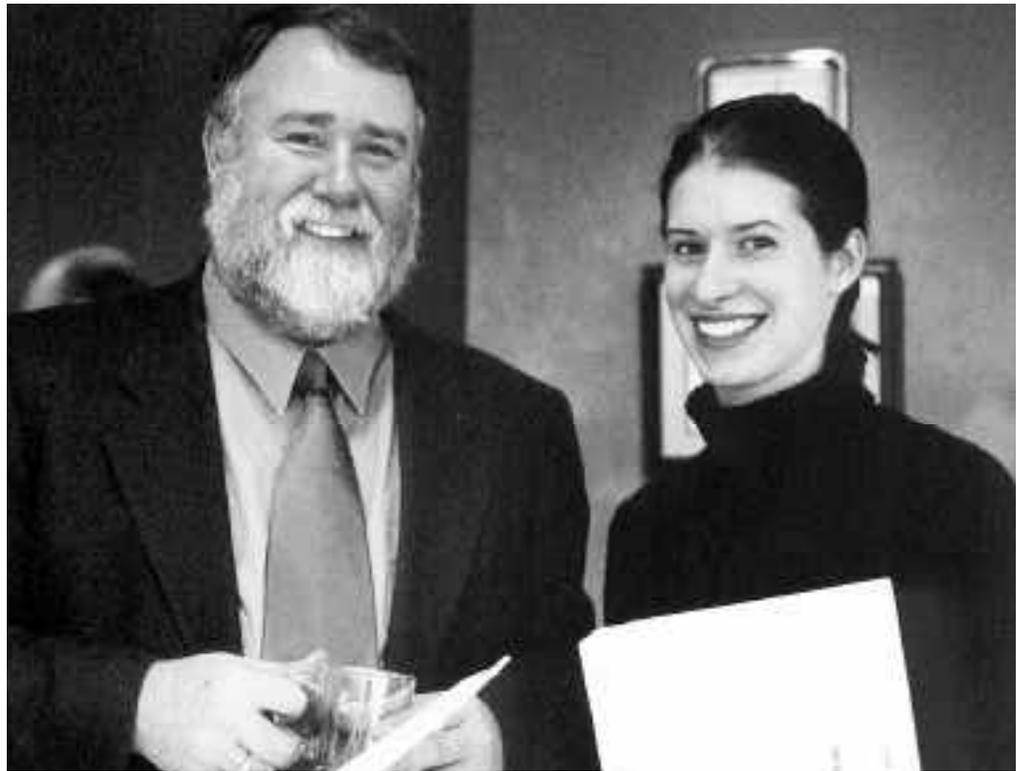
Over the winter of 2000-2001, natural gas prices went up. Greenhouse operators need a lot of energy to heat their huge structures which have mushroomed in the Lower Fraser Valley with the availability of cheap natural gas. When gas prices spiked greenhouses and other industries started burning diesel, wood chips and other dirty fuels that exceed GVRD permitted air quality levels.

Under pressure from greenhouse operators, the GVRD relaxed permits and let about 100 operators burn dirty fuels with consequent increases in Fraser Valley air pollution.

In January, SPEC urged the GVRD Board to enforce existing air quality regulations. SPEC directors **Tracy Keeling** and **David Cadman** argued that environmental regulations should have the same force as health and safety rules. No business would be allowed to violate fire or safety regulations when the price of fire extinguishers or hard hats takes a jump.

"It's unfortunate that GVRD directors are sac-

rificing the health and air quality of the region to compensate some businesses because of variable energy prices," said Keeling. "Environmental regulations should not be discarded every time energy prices fluctuate." With the return of lower natural gas prices by late spring, most industries switched back to cleaner natural gas. The GVRD has not, however, adjusted its regulations to prevent future dirty fuel switching.



David Cadman and Tracy Keeling at GVRD air quality meetings

TransLink switches to dirty diesel

In February 2001, **TransLink** reversed a decade-old policy of using the cleanest possible fuel in buses and switched to dirty, high-sulfur diesel. TransLink head **George Puil** claimed the change would save approximately \$45,000 a year.

According to a 2001 **Vancouver Richmond Health Board** report, "air pollution is an important public health problem. About as many deaths in the Lower Mainland may be attributable to air

pollution as from HIV, accidental falls or traffic accidents." Health Board authorities are particularly concerned about diesel particulate – the microscopic airborne particles visible as a black cloud coming out of exhaust pipes – because they lodge deeply in the lung and contribute to emphysema and cancer.

In 1990 TransLink's predecessor, BC Transit, decided to use low-sulfur No.1 Diesel, despite slightly higher costs, to encourage the bus and trucking industry to voluntarily switch from No.2 Diesel which contains twice as much sulfur and

emits more particulate.

BC Transit hoped a greater demand for clean fuels would eliminate the price difference. But despite Transit's example, most trucking companies did not switch to clean fuel.

Vancouver opts for dirty diesel

In 2001 the City of Vancouver renewed a multi-year contract with Chevron to supply the city's fleet of trucks and machinery with dirty No.2 Diesel. SPEC president David Cadman cited local Health Board concerns when he urged Council's Environment Committee to purchase cleaner No. 1 fuel instead. Except for Councillors **Tim Louis** and **Dr. Fred Bass**, Vancouver Council decided that keeping fuel costs down outweigh health and environmental concerns.

Chevron

SPEC continues to work with North Burnaby residents on problems related to Chevron's accident-plagued North Burnaby refinery. SPEC issued press statements, made presentations at Burnaby City Council, met with the GVRD, Chevron Canada and BC Environment Ministry officials, and supported the efforts of **BRACE** (Burnaby Residents Against Chevron Expansion) organizers **Judi Marshall** and **Shannon Campbell**.

A highlight of the campaign was in early April, when North Burnaby high school students **Matthew Clive** and **Kevin Kelln** found toxic gas-additive MTBE in groundwater collected outside the refinery. The boys were conducting a science project to determine "the effects of the Chevron oil refinery on the surrounding environment and community" and wanted to see if traces of a May 2000 spill of 80,000 liters of MTBE from the refinery had migrated into surrounding areas. Minute amounts of MTBE, a carcinogen that will be banned in California by 2004, can contaminate water supplies.

Clive and Kelln contacted SPEC when lab tests showed MTBE in their samples. Chevron



Judi Marshall and David Cadman at the Chevron refinery

spokesperson **Ray Lord**, however, claimed Chevron's own tests have "yet to find anything resembling what was reported (by the boys)." On April 18, Lord said "SPEC is blowing things way out of proportion" and implied SPEC was using the boys to "to advance a particular cause."

Despite Chevron denials, City of Burnaby engineer **W.C. Sinclair** reported on April 11 that "samples taken from the site identified by the students showed MTBE to be 21 microgram/L(itre) in the pooled surface water." Sinclair also revealed that as early as April 04, Chevron told BC Environment Ministry officials that groundwater within the

refinery contained "concentrations of MTBE on-site (which) are significantly higher than those found off-site, including those sampled by the City."

Following news of the Chevron cover-up, environmental lawyer **William Andrews** appeared before Burnaby Council. Andrews was acting for SPEC with assistance from **West Coast Environmental Law Association**. Burnaby Councilor **Nancy Harris** grilled Chevron officials who promised a new "regime of openness that will rebuild trust with the community." Chevron's "openness", however, was short-lived.

In July, BC Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection (WLAP) Manager **Ray Robb** noted "Chevron has not disclosed the additional information on MTBE concentrations. The delay in reporting this information is incongruous with the commitment of refinery manager **Tom Kovar** and other Chevron officials to openly communicate the environmental data for the refinery to the Ministry and the public."

Meanwhile Environment Canada's National Pollutant Release Inventory listed Chevron as the country's top MTBE polluter, ahead of



The Chevron tank farm, site of the MTBE spill.

Newfoundland's notorious Come by Chance refinery. And in October an environmental compliance audit determined that Burnaby releases more pollutants than its refineries in California.

The audit was the first of three reviews ordered in 2000 by the BC government following a series of Chevron accidents that include dumping tons of toxic dust over residential neighbourhoods and an explosion that injured two workers. SPEC was able to review the report despite "a corporate decision to not release a copy of the report to SPEC", according to Lord.

At the end of 2001, Chevron applied for a permit to dump MTBE contaminated wastewater directly into Burrard Inlet. Andrews reviewed the application and asked BC WLAP Minister Joyce Murray to declare the refinery a contaminated site. The minister did not respond to Andrew's submission. SPEC will appeal the permit before the **BC Environmental Appeal Board**. Hearings are expected in late spring of 2002.

Meanwhile Burnaby Council recognized the efforts of the students Clive and Kelln, and BRACE's Judi Marshall by giving them good citizen awards for their efforts in protecting the local environment.

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BRACE activist
Judi Marshall
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**On March 29,
2002, Whatcom
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overwhelmingly
against the
revised SE2.**



Councillor Patricia Ross, David Cadman and Connie Hoag celebrating Feb EFSEC decision at Watcom County Courthouse

Energy

Sumas Energy 2

On Feb. 16, the 11-member Washington State **Energy Facilities Site Evaluation Council** (EFSEC) met in the Whatcom County Court House in Bellingham, Wash. before a packed crowd from both sides of the border. When EFSEC chair **Deborah Ross** announced the Council was rejecting the 660-megawatt **Sumas Energy2** (SE2) gas power plant, a cheer erupted from the jammed courtroom and rippled through the overflow crowd in the street.

EFSEC's decision was the culmination of two years of community effort to stop a power plant that would pump more than three tonnes of pollutants a day into the Lower Fraser Valley airshed. The decision was particularly satisfying for SPEC president **David Cadman** who worked closely with **Sierra Legal Defence Fund** (SLDF) staff lawyer **Tim Howard**, Abbotsford Councillor **Patricia Ross**, Whatcom County

Councillor **Connie Hoag**, Abbotsford Business Association president **Mary Reeves**, the David Suzuki Foundation's **Gerry Scott** and the **Council of Canadians** in raising public awareness about SE2. SPEC made presentations to EFSEC and the National Energy Board, organized media events and attended meetings with Federal Environment Minister **David Anderson** and former BC Minister **Joan Sawicki**.

SE2 parent corporation NESCO resubmitted a "revised" proposal that is substantially the same as the rejected plan. The BC Government is now formally opposed to the revised scheme, which must be reviewed by EFSEC as well as by Whatcom County Council before going to Washington Governor **Gary Locke** for approval. On Mar. 29, 2002, Whatcom County voted overwhelmingly against the revised SE2.

GSX

During the debate over SE2, BC Hydro announced plans to build a **Georgia Straight**

Crossing (GSX) submarine pipeline to carry natural gas from Sumas, Wash. to Cobble Hill on Vancouver Island where GSX will hook up with the existing grid and supply three new gas power plants on the Island.

SPEC supported efforts of a growing number of Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands residents who cried foul over GSX. They argued that Hydro should develop wind, solar, geothermal and tidal power before committing the province to a fossil fuel energy future. If BC is to meet its Kyoto commitments and cut fossil fuel use, Hydro shouldn't build GSX. Opponents also noted the effect of an underwater pipeline on marine habitat of Georgia Strait.

Working with **Dermot Foley** of the David Suzuki Foundation, SLDF's **Tim Howard** prepared a formal submission to National Energy Board hearings in Vancouver in January 2002, and on Vancouver Island in April. The GSX campaign promises to continue well into 2002.

Oil Free Coast Alliance

A keynote of the May 2001 BC Liberal government Throne Speech was forming a Scientific Review Panel to examine the three decade old moratorium on offshore oil and gas exploration. Both Premier **Gordon Campbell** and Energy Minister **Richard Neufeld** say lifting the moratorium will revive North Coast communities.

Oil exploration is an old issue for SPEC. In 1971, SPEC's **Gwen Mallard** and **Alice Coppard** hitchhiked to Ottawa with a 60,000-name petition opposing oil exploration and tanker traffic. The 1960s and 70s were marked by disastrous oil spills including one in Vancouver Harbour that washed crude oil onto West Vancouver beaches.

In September 2001, SPEC met with environmental, First Nations, coastal community and public interest organizations in Victoria and formed the **Oil Free Coast Alliance** to campaign for main-

tenance of the moratorium. With almost 90 member groups, the Alliance held a press conference in Vancouver where **Jennifer Lash** and **Oonagh O'Connor** of **Living Oceans Society**, **Arnie Narcisse** of the **BC Aboriginal Fisheries Commission**, **John Radosevic** of the **United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union** and **Dale Marshall** of the **Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA)** joined SPEC's David Cadman outside downtown Vancouver's Four Seasons Hotel where petro-corporations and bankers were talking about lifting the moratorium.



David Cadman speaks at October press conference for Oil Free Coast Alliance

Despite Neufeld's claims of massive benefits for the North Coast, the Alliance points out that exploration brings with it the risk of a disastrous spill. A Chevron Canada assessment reports that fewer than a dozen jobs would be created in the first three years of exploration. And no one is even sure if BC waters hold reserves that can be economically retrieved. Predictions are based on unsubstantiated 1960s estimates .

With Haida First Nations now claiming control of all waters off the Queen Charlottes, this high profile issue be a major campaign for SPEC and the Oil Free Coast Alliance.

Fewer than a dozen jobs would be created in the first three years of oil exploration.



Scott Nelson, Peter Bromley, David Cadman and Nandita Sharma outside secret biotech meetings in Vancouver.

GMO Labeling

Bowbrick set July 31 as deadline for public feedback on Bill 18. SPEC activists **Scott Nelson** and **Peter Bromley** produced and distributed hundreds of GMO information cards on Bill 18. In August over 500 filled-out cards were forwarded to Victoria.

Government officials said they had already received 890 letters, emails and faxes of which a startling 99.1 per cent supported mandatory labeling. BC numbers match Canada-wide polls on GMO labeling

Despite the massive outpouring of support, BC's new Liberal government quietly killed Bill 18 claiming food labeling is a federal responsibility. And besides, they said, federal Bill C-287 on mandatory labeling was up for debate in the House of Commons. C-287 was defeated in October. The BC government has no plans to resurrect Bill 18.

GMOs

Food Fight at the Rage

On April 11, 2001, more than 400 young people crammed the dance floor of downtown Vancouver's Rage nightclub and boogied to the melodious vibes of **JeetK DaTripmaster** and **Strong Like Tractor**. They were celebrating ***Food Fight***, a GMO awareness night organized by SPEC staffers **Saraid Wilson** and **Sarah Blyth**.

The April event was co-sponsored by 21 businesses and community organizations and featured entertainers and speakers who urged Vancouver youth to support mandatory labeling of genetically modified (GMO) food. The event coincided with former BC NDP Attorney General **Graeme Bowbrick's** introduction of **Bill 18**; an act for mandatory labeling of GMO foods.

Patenting Human Body Parts

Another aspect of genetic technology arose in May when the **Canadian Biotechnology Advisory Committee** met secretly at Vancouver's posh Wall Centre Hotel to discuss patenting of human body parts. The taxpayer funded committee supports biotech research conducted by multi-national corporations, patent lawyers and academics. In 1998, the most recent year for which statistics are available, the Canadian government gave \$314 million to biotech research.

Holding invitations to the meeting, SPEC's **Scott Nelson** and **Capilano College** instructor **Nandita Sharma** attempted to speak to the Committee. They didn't much beyond a line of biotech security staff. A SPEC press release did succeed in informing the public of the Committee's secret agenda.



David Cadman holding biosolids sample with GVRD staffer Nancy Grenier. Ivan Bulic, on right, holds sample during SPEC visit to GVRD Annacis Island sewage treatment plant.

A SPEC poll showed 70 per cent of Lower Mainland households would pay up to \$150 a year to upgrade sewage system.

Liquid Waste

In 2001 the GVRD submitted a draft **Liquid Waste Management Plan (LWMP)** to the BC government for approval. Unfortunately the Plan fails to meet federal fisheries laws by allowing the continued dumping of raw sewage into Burrard Inlet and Georgia Strait from the Lions Gate and Iona sewage treatment plants. Nor does the Plan

falls. The GVRD hoped to fast track the Plan and get provincial approval by the autumn of 2001.

Together with **David Lane** of the **T. Buck Suzuki Environmental Foundation** and with assistance from the **Sierra Legal Defence Fund**, SPEC made submissions to the GVRD and Vancouver City Council calling for upgrades to meet federal laws. SPEC also commissioned a poll showing 70 per cent of Lower Mainland households would pay up to \$150 a year to upgrade the sewage system. GVRD claims it is too costly to convert CSOs earlier than 2050.

SPEC wrote to BC Water Land and Air Protection Minister **Joyce Murray** urging her to withhold approval of the draft LWMP until it meets minimum standards. "Fifty years is too long to continue pumping sewage into our surrounding waters and beaches," said SPEC president David Cadman. Murray approved the Plan in April 2002.

Meanwhile SLDF staff scientist **John Werring** released data indicating that GVRD "raw sewage is know to be acutely toxic to fish and aquatic life. It is laced with hundreds of deadly toxins including PCBs, dioxins, furans, pesticide residues and heavy metals such as mercury, lead copper and cadmium."



SPEC staffers Ivan Bulic and Peter Bromley at Annacis Island.

outline a specific timeline for upgrading the 100-year-old combined storm sewer outfalls (CSO) that pump millions of litres of raw sewage into False Creek and English Bay during winter rain-



Seniors, students, disabled and workers demonstrate outside Vancouver City Hall for end to the four-month long transit dispute.

Anne Roberts compiled a report on the forum, *Pedestrian Safety*, which was submitted to both Vancouver City Council and the School Board.

SkyTrain

Also in February, SPEC director **Deming Smith** asked the BC Auditor-General to review the SkyTrain Millennium Line project. Smith's request followed three independent reports, including one by UBC transportation expert **Peter Boothroyd** that indicated the new line would add up to \$1.7 billion to the costs of building rapid transit in the GVRD. The need

for a financial review was reinforced in April, when Gordon Campbell advisor **Ken Dobell** floated a scheme for a privatized subway from downtown to the airport. Dobell proposed the airport line just three weeks after TransLink voted to cut 160,000 hours from inner city routes that more than 80 percent of transit users rely on.

"It is astounding that TransLink would even contemplate another mega-project when they haven't figured out how to keep existing buses on the road," said Smith. "While fares are going up and buses are disappearing, Dobell and TransLink boss **George Puil** want to build yet another mega-project. We need an audit now."

Transit Labour Dispute

The big transportation story of 2001 was the labour dispute that kept buses off Vancouver streets for over four months. SPEC was concerned that prolonged service disruption could destroy public confidence in transit, decrease ridership, and take years to rebuild the system.

Soon after buses stopped running, labour mediator **Vince Ready** proposed a solution to get

Transportation

Transportation issues occupied considerable attention in 2001. A summer-long transit dispute, bus fare hikes, privatized subways to the airport and a resurrected scheme for a North Shore tunnel were among the key issues that SPEC activists worked on.

Pedestrian Safety

Polls repeatedly indicate that traffic congestion, transit and pedestrian safety top the list of public concerns in the Lower Mainland. In an average year 20 pedestrians are killed and more than 600 injured on Vancouver streets. In late February 2001, SPEC organized a public forum on pedestrian safety with Vancouver City Councillors **Tim Louis** and Dr. **Fred Bass**, Vancouver School Trustee **Allan Wong** and community organizer **Anne Roberts**. Close to 100 people packed a Vancouver Public Library meeting room to discuss ways of making Vancouver streets safer.

the system up. Ready's report was supported by drivers as well as seniors, students, business associations, the disabled and community groups. TransLink, however, ignored the report and the public. Vancouver City Council also refused to hear public delegations and barred the doors to City Hall after a stormy Council session.

SPEC contacted seniors organizations, the **Canadian Federation of Students**, disabled groups, **BEST** and business associations. After 110 days without buses, SPEC organized a July breakfast meeting of approximately 40 business owners from Gastown, Robson Street, Chinatown and Lonsdale Quay. Local media covered the meeting which sent a message to TransLink that a continued disruption in service was not only harming air quality, but also damaging the economy.

SPEC volunteers distributed 100,000 leaflets across Greater Vancouver calling for adoption of the Ready report. Buses started rolling a week later when TransLink finally used Ready's report to resolve the dispute.



SPEC volunteers hand out flyers on the corner of Granville and Broadway.

Third Crossing

Meanwhile the issue of a Third Crossing of Burrard Inlet resurfaced. SPEC was instrumental in squashing 1970s plans for a grandiose network of bridges, tunnels and freeways that would have transformed Vancouver into LANorth. This time **West Vancouver Councillor John Clark** and **Vancouver Park Commissioner Alan DeGenova** are promoting a tunnel from Main Street to Lonsdale Quay so Olympic 2010 visitors can get to Whistler. SPEC issued press releases opposing the scheme. North Vancouver and Vancouver City Councils subsequently squashed the proposal; for now at least.

Water Quality

SPEC's efforts to protect drinking water absorbed considerable resources during 2001. Drinking water was a major issue for both the public and decision makers at all levels of government.

The efforts of SPEC directors, volunteers and staff focussed on three areas: participating in the process around the development of the Provincial Government's new **Drinking Water Protection Act** (DWPA), working with communities across BC to protect local drinking watersheds and SPEC's ongoing activities regarding the Greater Vancouver water system.

BC Drinking Water Protection Plan

In Late 1999 the BC government, jolted by the Walkerton tragedy and a critical report by the BC Auditor-General, held province-wide public consultations on a proposed **Drinking Water Protection Act** that culminated in February hearings in downtown Vancouver. In March BC provincial health officer **Dr. Shaun Peck** reinforced the call for tougher drinking water protection. Peck cited at least 28 outbreaks of waterborne illnesses in BC, and noted the province leads the country with the number of communities under boil-water advisories.

After 110 days without buses, SPEC organized a breakfast meeting of approximately 40 business owners from Gastown, Robson Street, Chinatown and Lonsdale Quay.



Will Koop makes presentation for SPEC at Drinking Water Protection Act hearings in Vancouver.

SPEC organized community participation at the public DWPA consultations and prepared a submission calling for a halt to logging, mining, cattle grazing and other industrial activities in drinking watersheds, the creation of a single agency to regulate water protection, and the creation of dedicated drinking watershed preserves.

SPEC watershed researcher **Will Koop** organized a press conference with **Paul George** of the **Western Canada Wilderness Committee** and Kootenay environmentalist **Colleen McCrory** at the Vancouver hearings. The draft DWPA introduced by

BC Environment Minister **Ian Waddell** failed to establish a single water agency nor meaningful restrictions on industrial activities.

Following the May provincial election, new Minister of Water Land and Air Protection, **Joyce Murray** rescinded the DWPA and appointed a panel to review the DWPA. The panel submitted recommendations that include strengthening source protection, creating a lead agency to manage drinking water from source to tap and ensuring that protecting water be given precedence over industrial activity. Murray indicated that amended drinking water legislation would be introduced in the Spring 2002 legislative session.

Community Watershed Protection

SPEC, meanwhile, continues to work with communities on the Sunshine Coast, the East Kootenays and First Nations on watershed protection. Particular focus was applied on **Arrow Creek** where **Will Koop** prepared a comprehensive case study (at www.spec.bc.ca/spec/drinkwater/arrowmain.htm) on their community watershed campaign. SPEC's work was supported by Vancouver's **Mountain Equipment Coop**.

Through the autumn, SPEC contracted with **Dr. Susan Germain** to research province-wide community watershed protection. A member of **Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment** and trained in environmental science as well as medicine, Germain consulted with



David Cadman, Susan Germain, Shirley Roburn discuss community watershed protection project.



Public pack June 14 meeting in Burnaby to oppose privatization of GVRD water filtration plant.

First Nations, provincial health authorities and UBC watershed researcher **Dr. Hans Schrier**. Germain worked with the **Sierra Club** and the **Environmental Mining Council of BC** to develop an interactive mapping project identifying in graphic form the stresses on every watershed in the province. The mapping project is expected to be complete by August 2002.

Privatization of GVRD water filtration plant

In April 2001, the GVRD announced plans to privatize construction and operation of a new \$430 million water filtration plant for the Seymour/Capilano reservoir. The GVRD water committee had been planning a new filtration plant since the early 1990s. Foreign multi-national corporations, experienced in privatizing public utilities in the US and Europe, lobbied the GVRD for a public private partnership (P3) which would let them **design, build and operate** the plant, and pocket the profits. In Canada public facilities are designed and built under contract, with daily operations remaining in public control.

GVRD head **George Puil** and Water Committee chair, Surrey Councillor **Marvin Hunt**, claimed a P3 deal would save money and bring in experts unavailable locally. Four international cor-

porations - **US Filter/Vivendi, Earthtech, Bechtel** and **CH2M Hill**- were short listed. Hunt said the public would not lose control of its water system because a P3 deal would not invoke NAFTA clauses that have let corporations overrule elected officials elsewhere. The *Vancouver Sun* weighed in with editorials touting P3s. And since it was such a good deal, Hunt said, there was no need for public consultation.

SPEC, other public interest organizations and thousands of outraged citizens thought otherwise. **Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)** researcher **Kathy Corrigan** released GVRD documents showing a P3 deal would realize few savings. Local GVRD engineering staff said they didn't need foreign experts to operate a filtration plant. In May, Ottawa international law expert **Steven Shrybman** produced a legal opinion that under NAFTA "this proposed undertaking puts at risk the capacity of government to maintain the highest standards of water quality." According to Shrybman a P3 deal could leave taxpayers "liable to the company for the loss of future profits that would run well into the tens of millions of dollars."

SPEC, the **Council of Canadians** and CUPE organized public meetings and submitted motions for public consultation at municipal councils. The

"I am particularly concerned," said Svend Robinson, "that the federal government is attempting to influence decisions made by local politicians."



GVRD relented and held a June 14 “information” meeting in Burnaby that was packed by an overflow crowd of 700 citizens.

Speaker after speaker told Hunt and GVRD executive **Johnny Carline** to keep the water system public. At a second meeting on the North Shore 500 people said the same.

On June 29, in a dramatic reversal, the Water Committee backed out of the P3 scheme. Hunt cited public opposition as reason for the about face. But the multi-nationals tried to move the Water Committee back into the P3 camp.

On September 07, seniors officials of the federal **Dept. of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)** met behind closed doors with Hunt and Carline. The meeting was organized by the

Canadian Council for Public Private Partnerships, a branch of the Washington, DC-based **National Council for Public Private Partnerships (NCPPP)**. The NCPPP lobbies on behalf of US Filter, Earthtech and Bechtel.

Learning of the DFAIT meeting, SPEC president David Cadman and others went to the GVRD where a surprised Marvin Hunt indicated the DFAIT meeting was open. Moments later Hunt left the room without explanation. When Cadman followed, GVRD security said the meeting was closed and ordered him out of the building.

The secret meeting raised alarms that the GVRD might revert to a P3 deal after all. Burnaby **MPSvend Robinson** raised the issue in the House of Commons. “I am particularly concerned,” said Robinson, “that the federal government, acting on behalf of a lobby group and perhaps foreign corporations, is attempting to influence decisions made by local politicians.” SPEC access to information requests were rejected by DFAIT because of “the events of September 11 as well as the political situation that has evolved since then.”

At an Oct. 18 meeting of the GVRD Water Committee, Hunt claimed the DFAIT meeting was a “private briefing” closed to the public. When dozens of speakers urged Hunt and Carline to stand by their June decision, the Committee passed a motion to not privatize the water plant. A subsequent motion calling for open GVRD meetings was defeated.

Turbidity

SPEC efforts to monitor water quality in the GVRD got a big boost in November when the GVRD had developed a daily water quality index to measure turbidity levels in the watersheds. The GVRD has said turbidity – silty organic material suspended in water – was not a health concern, despite numerous studies (**Health Canada 2002**) linking turbidity to gastrointestinal diseases. Turbidity also necessitates increased chlorine disinfectant which can combine with organic material in the water to produce cancer-causing trihalomethanes.

Warnings are now posted on the SPEC website when turbidity exceeds safe levels.

Arbutus Corridor

When the last CPR freight train completed its 11-kilometer run from False Creek to Marpole along the Arbutus Corridor on May 31, 2001, a century of rail history ended. It also marked the start of what could become an equally long debate on the future of the Corridor.

In June SPEC director **Alan Herbert** hosted a community meeting on the Corridor at SPEC. “The Arbutus Corridor is a tremendous opportunity where transit can be compatible with greenways, pedestrians, bikes, gardens and with usable public open spaces,” said Herbert. In 2000, Herbert was instrumental in organizing the **Save Arbutus Corridor Committee** when the CPR floated plans for condos and commercial development along the rail spur.

The June meeting attracted local residents, community gardeners and transit activists as well as Vancouver Quadra MP **Steven Owen**. Participants proposed options ranging from high-speed passenger rail to a mixed-use bikeway and linear park.

The CPR still owns the Corridor, but says it is prepared to sell for \$100 million. The land is currently valued at under \$500,000 for tax purposes, a figure the CPR has never challenged. The railroad went to court after massive public opposition persuaded City Council to quash CPR’s development plan. Currently neither the railway nor the City are actively pursuing legal action.

Pesticides

The Supreme Court of Canada’s groundbreaking 2001 ruling upholding the right of **Hudson, Quebec** to limit pesticide use, was a victory for everyone concerned about pesticides. The court decision and a **House of Commons Environment Committee** report raising questions about the health hazards of cosmetic pesticides, reinforced SPEC’s efforts to limit the proliferation of toxic pesticides.

Following the Supreme Court decision, SPEC activists commented on TV, in newspapers and on

province-wide radio programs. During a live segment on a Victoria radio station, a **Monsanto Corporation** executive said “government control” could erode a consumer’s right to choose what chemicals they purchase.

In BC commercial users apply pesticides under permits that require reporting on location,



Councillor Fred Bass (centre) speaks to children from Kitsilano Daycare after the CPR sprayed Roundup on the adjacent Arbutus Corridor.

amount used and reasons for application. But over-the counter cosmetic pesticides need no permits. There are no regulations to prevent householders from buying, storing and misusing any amount of toxic pesticide. Nor are there statistics on how the 6000 registered Canadian pesticides, most of them cosmetic, are used.

A 1996 Quebec study found that **80 percent of accidental poisonings involved children under five** who got into household pesticides. It is precisely to prevent these tragedies that SPEC invited **Marlene Jennings**, MP for Notre-Dame-de-Grace/Lachine to Vancouver in October.

Hudson, Quebec falls in Jennings’ riding where she is sponsoring Bill C-267; a federal act to limit cosmetic pesticides. While in Vancouver, Jennings addressed a public meeting at the Vancouver Public Library, conducted media interviews, and held a workshop for municipal engi-

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neers on the Hudson Decision. Jennings stressed the need to limit cosmetic pesticides and outlined how local municipalities and communities can be proactive in setting limits within municipal jurisdictions.



Enthusiastic defenders of community values

Green Communities

Wal-Mart

In the autumn of 2001, **Wal-Mart**, the biggest corporation on the planet, unveiled plans for a huge 24-hour big-box store surrounded by acres of paved parking on SE Marine Drive in South Vancouver. If built, Wal-Mart would generate up to 7,000 additional car and heavy truck trips a day into the area.

“A Wal-Mart at this site would create air and noise pollution all day and all night,” said SPEC director **Deming Smith**. Working with local community organizer **Anne Roberts** to form **Building Better Neighbourhoods**, a coalition of local residents and organizations, SPEC launched a campaign to inform Vancouverites of the impact a Wal-Mart would have on local neighbourhoods. The campaign has gained national attention as thousands of South Vancouver residents sign petitions, attend meetings and send letters to City

Hall. Approval for the development will go before Vancouver City Council on June 27, 2002.

Jericho volleyball courts

Over the summer and fall, the **Vancouver Park Board** floated a plan to spend \$90,000 on 12 sand volleyball courts in Jericho Park for a single user group. Besides contravening the original plan for Jericho, the courts would impact on critical greenspace and increase noise pollution and car traffic in the park.

SPEC director **Loretta Woodcock** supported local community groups opposed to the scheme and spoke at Park Board meetings. The Board eventually bowed to public opinion and shelved the plan.

SPEC website

Beginning in April, the SPEC website **www.spec.bc.ca** was upgraded and expanded. Major structural changes were made while maintaining the site’s functionality.

For purposes of clarity and ease of use, the site was divided into two main sections. The **Vancouver Environmental Information Centre** section is now aimed at the general public and provides reliable and up-to-date resource information on a wide range of topics. There are listings for **“green” community events, jobs, community resources, links to environmental groups** throughout the Lower Mainland and BC in general, and information on meeting rooms and office space for community groups. A direct link remains to the website managed by **City Farmer** located in the SPEC building.

The SPEC section focuses on campaign issues and presents those issues from the specialized, in-depth perspective of the Society. It is aimed at those who want detailed information about environmental issues that concern Vancouver and the Lower Mainland. It provides press releases, articles, event listings, notices and links that are directly related to SPEC’s campaigns.

Visits to the SPEC website are increasing with each press release and event alert issued.

Media Coverage

Much of SPEC's efforts are aimed at educating and informing the public about environmental issues. SPEC's policy is to use existing electronic and print media to reach as many people as possible.

In 2001 SPEC issued **65 press releases** and public service announcements, and was mentioned in **397 media stories, articles and reports**. These include front page articles in major dailies such as the *Globe & Mail*, *Vancouver Sun* and *Province*, TV and radio news reports, as well as independent community and regional weeklies and local student media. 2001 saw an increase in media coverage from **380** in 2000 and **281** in 1999.

Most media coverage was the direct result of SPEC activities. SPEC also organized press conferences and issued media advisories related to ongoing campaigns and scheduled events. A secondary source of media coverage is when reporters contact the **Environmental Information Centre** with specific questions or to seek comment on current issues. Only in a very few cases, were SPEC staff or directors unable to respond to these queries.

Although SPEC staff attempt to monitor media coverage, not all articles and stories are reflected in these records. The media coverage can be broken down as follows:

MEDIA	DETAILS	CONTACTS
TV	These are mostly TV news reports. Though some are extended public affairs programs.	<u>80</u>
Radio	Again these are mostly news stories. A significant number are also live interviews on public affairs programs or call-ins where SPEC spokespeople are guests answering questions about specific issues.	<u>176</u>
Major Newspaper coverage	News stories in the <i>Vancouver Sun</i> , <i>Province</i> , <i>Globe & Mail</i> , <i>National Post</i> , <i>Victoria Times-Colonist</i> , international and regional dailies as well as major community papers such as the <i>Vancouver Courier</i> and <i>Georgia Straight</i> .	<u>80</u>
Chinese language media	This is an area that has been difficult for SPEC to adequately access and monitor. In 2001 Dr. Yaming Chen and Yanhua Yin have been translating news releases and PSAs into Chinese for distribution to the Chinese language media. Vancouver has three Chinese language daily newspapers, two radio stations and a TV station with mixed Mandarin and Cantonese language programming. There are a number of Chinese language weeklies and magazines, and Chinese language programming on Cable networks. CO-OPradio and other stations also carry Chinese language programming. On a per capita basis, Chinese speakers lead the region as consumers of media.	<u>25</u>
Local	Magazines, student press and local community newspapers across BC.	<u>36</u>

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Sponsored Events

Environment Now

In October, SPEC held its fourth annual ***Environment Now*** series at the Vancouver Public Library. The series was co-sponsored by **VanCity Credit Union** and the **Vancouver Public Library**. The theme focused on what indi-



The crowd at Ian McAllister's Environment Now presentation.

viduals and groups can do to affect change. SPEC directors, staff and volunteers managed the events and provided information tables. At different lectures community groups set up display tables: the **Raincoast Conservation Society**, **Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives**, the **David Suzuki Foundation**, **The Land Conservancy of BC** and **Farm Folk City Folk**. The Series was covered in newspapers, on radio and the internet. Approximately 600 people attended this year's presentations.

On October 3, UVic law professor and author **David Boyd** tackled environmental policy in Canada. Introduced by **VanCity** President **Greg McDade**, David pointed to our failure to incorporate environmental limits, values, and costs into our economic system, and government's continuing bias toward economic growth over environmental protection. He said despite Canada's poor performance, there have been recent reductions in air pollu-

tion and municipal waste, improved sewage treatment and energy efficiency, and increases in recycling and park creation.

On October 10, Mayor **Joe Trasolini** of Port Moody introduced Quebec Liberal MP **Marlene Jennings** who described her efforts to introduce a federal private members bill banning the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes. Marlene said the recent Supreme Court of Canada decision to uphold a ban of cosmetic pesticides in Hudson, Quebec was a significant legal event.

On October 17, SPEC Director **Loretta Woodcock** introduced Abbotsford City Councillor **Patricia Ross** who demonstrated how persistence and public political support is crucial in addressing environmental issues at the community level. In 2001, aware of how it would impact the Lower Fraser Valley, Ross led citizens and local government in opposition to the **Sumas Energy 2 (SE2)** gas fired power plant.

The closing ***Environment Now*** event on October 24 drew a capacity crowd to for a multimedia presentation by activist and photographer **Ian McAllister**, introduced by BC Green Party leader **Adrian Carr**. Using slides, music, video and live commentary, Ian painted a vivid picture of how grizzlies have become a mere pawn in a political and economic board game. Actual population of grizzlies remain in dispute, and the lack of solid numbers disturbs many, including federal Environment Minister David Anderson.

Think City

In December 2001 and January 2002, SPEC helped organize the ***Think City*** conference at the Roundhouse Community Centre in Vancouver. Together with **Better Environmentally Sound Transportation (BEST)**, the **Coalition of Progressive Electors (COPE)**, **Council of Canadians**, **Headlines Theatre**, **Vancouver Independent Media Centre**, **Momentum Magazine**, the **Seniors Network**, **Tenants' Rights Action Coalition**, and the **Vancouver and District Labour Council**, the conference explored how community initiative can make a difference in BC communities. Five main themes of the one-and-a-half day

conference were strengthening neighbourhoods, developing the local economy, improving transportation, strengthening public services and nurturing cultural communities.

The SPEC Building

Shared Accommodations

As of December 31, 2002, the SPEC building and its facilities were shared by **City Farmer**, the BC Office of the **National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC)**, **The Land Conservancy of BC (TLC)**, and the **Animal Defence and Anti-Vivisection Society**. Shared accommodation rates remain fixed at 2000 levels and cover building maintenance, and the cost of sharing the fax machine, the meeting room and the board room.



Meeting Room Rentals

The upstairs meeting hall and board room were in steady use throughout the year, with bookings ranging from 20 to 50 per month. Most bookings were for evening events. In December, meeting room rates increased to reflect higher utility and maintenance costs.

Maintenance

There were significant maintenance expenditures in 2001. A water heater element was replaced and the furnace air filters were cleaned to improve heating efficiency. On the building exterior, the wooden sun valences on the south wall were removed due to their poor condition, and the wall was refinished with recycled paint obtained through the Recycling Council of BC's Materials Exchange Program. A start was made in replacing the deteriorated window casings on the south and east sides of the building. Approximately 20 windows will have to be replaced over the spring and summer of 2002.

The Vancouver Environmental Information Centre

Phone calls and personal visits to the Information Centre averaged between 15 and 20 per day, and varied according to the season. Inquiries range from simple referrals, to requests for information and detailed information on issues such as toxic spills and environmentally friendly building materials. In the last quarter, there appeared to be a slight trend away from telephone calls and toward visits to the VEIC website (see SPEC website above). In November, meanwhile, volunteers began a more comprehensive cataloguing of the contents of the reference

library. The library contains newsletters, brochures, clipping files, government documents and periodicals touching on a wide variety of environmental issues. When complete, more detailed list of publications will be posted on the VEIC website. SPEC also has an archive that is open to the public.

Exterior walls were refinished with recycled paint obtained through the Recycling Council of BC's Materials Exchange Program.



SPEC volunteers Jennifer Borden and Laurel McGregor preparing mailouts with staffer Sarah Blyth.

Anne Roberts, Dr. Fred Bass, Heather McGregor, Yaming Chen, Greg McDade, Joe Trasolini, David Boyd, Yanhua Yin, Eric Chan, Patricia Ross, Nancy Grenier, Laurel McGregor, Naseem Gulamhusein, Eileen Seto, Anne Ferries, Elaine Johnston, Karen Campbell, Tim Howard, Bill Andrews, Dave Buchanan, Colin Stark, John Irwin, Carrie Walker, Sikee Liu, Annelise Sorg, Libby Davies, Svend Robinson, Nancy Harris, Harold Steeves, and many others too numerous to list. Volunteers, supporters and members are the heart and soul of SPEC.

Volunteers & staff

SPEC campaigns depend on the efforts of our supporters and volunteers. They include Cecile Helten, Jennifer Borden, Kirby Johnstone, Tapio Leiva, Norman Abbey, David Wright, Andrew Gage, Judi Marshall, Shannon Campbell, Dr. Susan Germain, Tim Louis,



Shirley Roburn, SPEC's new administrative coordinator.

In 2001 SPEC said goodbye to administrative coordinator **Saraid Wilson** and welcomed **Shirley Roburn**. After a whirlwind of activity organizing *Food Fight* and working on funding proposals, Saraid found herself drawn to life as an artist in Montreal. Shirley brings energy, enthusiasm and a social activist background to her new position. She will be handling day-to-day administration, fundraising, and membership development.

Environmental Information Centre coordinator and building manager **Fae Johnstone** continues to handle the many questions and details needed to keep SPEC running smoothly. Communications coordinator **Peter Bromley** was instrumental in developing SPEC's new website and supervised the design and production of numerous information materials.

Early in 2001, SPEC was fortunate in having air and water quality campaigner **Tracy Keeling**. Her talents, however, didn't go unnoticed by The Land Conservancy who offered her an opportunity to manage their Pit Meadows programs. Tracy remains with SPEC as a member of the Board. SPEC also lost youth outreach worker **Sarah Blyth** after her contract ended in October. Sarah is now working on community development programs in Ecuador. Meanwhile campaign coordinator **Ivan Bulic** continues to assist SPEC directors, staff and volunteers.

In Memorium

SPEC mourns long-time activists

In 2001 SPEC and the environmental community of BC lost three outspoken and irreplaceable voices.

Will Paulik

Long-time crusader and original SPEC director, **Will Paulik**, died on Jan. 02, 2001. Will joined SPEC in 1970 and represented the organization on numerous boards and commissions.

Will was passionate about protecting Fraser Valley wetlands and was instrumental in creating Garry Point Park in Steveston. As early as the 1960s, Will called for action to preserve the Fraser Delta from industrial development, pollution and loss of wetlands. In 1992, Will received the BC Environment Award for his work as "a tenacious environmentalist long before it was fashionable. His unfaltering perseverance has helped protect the Fraser River."

Derrick Mallard

SPEC founder **Derrick Mallard** died on June 01, 2001. Together with his wife Gwen, Derrick founded SPEC in their Coquitlam, BC home in late 1969. As a lecturer at SFU, Derrick was able to enlist like-minded academics and students in a campaign to stop local refineries and chemical plants from dumping effluent into Burrard Inlet. The Mallards soon expanded into campaigns to stop BC Hydro from spraying pesticides, and organized a BC wide 60,000-name petition calling for a moratorium on offshore oil exploration. Derrick and Gwen moved to Vancouver Island in 1972 where they continued to work on conservation issues.



Will Paulik

David Davies

This year also saw the loss of long-time SPEC volunteer **David Davies**. A native of Wales, David traveled and worked in Australia, India and Iran where he was impressed by how people repaired, reused and recycled virtually everything. Arriving in Vancouver in 1956, David applied that conservation ethic locally. In 1969 he joined SPEC's West Vancouver branch where, as a member of the **Municipal Recycling Task Force**, he initiated a Waste Audit of North Shore businesses. In his later years David worked on models for sustainable transportation systems in the Lower Mainland. David Davies died on Oct. 17, 2001.



Dave Davies examines early recycling depot.



Join SPEC, or renew your membership!

This year, consider shifting your member contributions to automatic debit. As a small, member-driven organization, SPEC strives to keep overhead costs low, and concentrate resources on campaigns. Switching to an automatic debit membership/donation lowers administrative costs and regularizes your contribution over the year. It also provides a stable source of funding to SPEC, and allows us to plan more reliably. Please consider becoming a monthly or quarterly donor.

Yes! Please sign me up as a sustaining donor. I have filled out the back of this form and a voided cheque is attached.

Please debit my account:

- Monthly Quarterly
 \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 other (please specify) \$ _____

Signature _____

I prefer to renew my membership yearly. Enclosed is a cheques for my membership as:

- Student/Senior (\$10)
 Low Income (\$10)
 Individual (\$20)
 Family (\$30)
 Friend of SPEC (\$50)
 Patron (\$100)
 Corporation (\$250)
 Benefactor (\$500)

name _____

address _____

code _____

phone (h) _____ (w) _____ fax _____

email _____

organization /affiliation _____

Additional information:

Please include me on a phone tree fax tree email tree

Please tell us if you have an interest in a specific campaign areas such as Toxics / Pesticides, Nuclear Issues, Sustainable Transportation or Water Quality: _____

Please do not share my contact information.

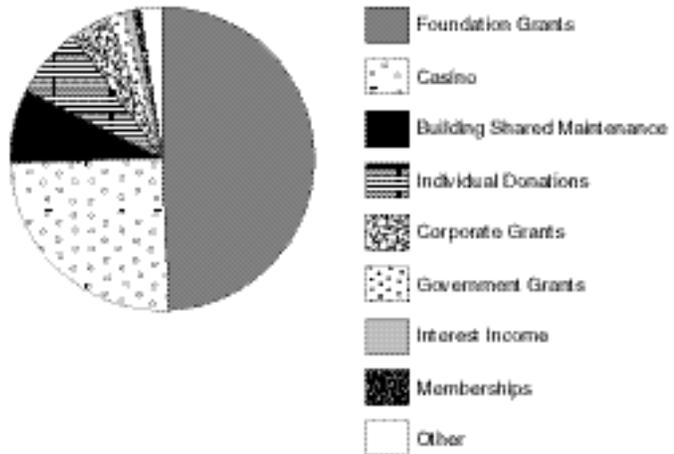
Thank you for your support! All donations are tax deductible.

2001 Financial Highlights

Income

Foundation Grants	94,153
Casino	48,400
Building Shared Maintenance	14,934
Individual Donations	14,529
Corporate Grants	8,093
Government Grants	3,093
Interest Income	1,927
Memberships	1,530
Other	<u>4,472</u>
Total	191,132

Income



Expenses

Wages & Benefits	79,931
Subcontractors	31,390
Office Equipment and Supplies	8,070
Advertising & Promotion	8,020
Telephone & Utilities	6,658
Building Repairs & Maintenance	3,858
Fundraising	3,070
Other Expenses	<u>12,289</u>
Total	153,286

Expenses

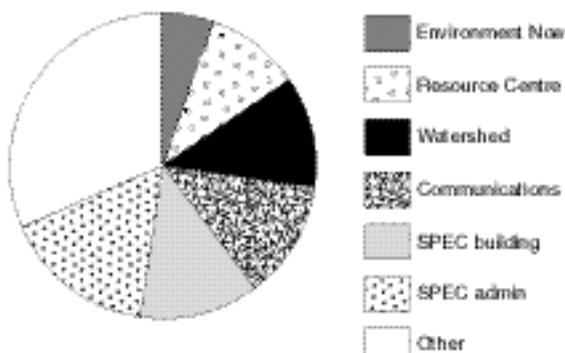


The above figures are SPEC's financial highlights only. Official financial statements are available upon request.

SPEC's 2001 financial statements were prepared by Mahmoud Virani, CA. This is the first time in over 10 years that SPEC has engaged an accountant.

SPEC gratefully acknowledges the following Foundations that provided support in 2001: Endswell Foundation; Tides Canada Foundation; the Walter & Duncan Gordon Foundation, Mountain Equipment Co-op Environment Fund, VanCity, BC Charitable Gaming funds, West Coast Environmental Law Environmental Dispute Resolution Fund.

Expenditures by Project



Society Promoting Environmental Conservation

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text, editing & inside photos:
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SPEC Annual General Meeting

7pm
Thursday, May 16, 2002
2150 Maple Street, Vancouver

For information on the nominating committee or general meeting, please contact us at 604-736-7732

Established in 1969, the Society Promoting Environmental Conservation is a non-profit organization dedicated to environmental research, advocacy and education. SPEC operates the Vancouver Environmental Information Centre.

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