

Endangered species legislation

Provincial and federal government present new bill

BY TODD MACLEAN

Both the federal and the PEI provincial governments will be presenting endangered species legislation next month.

PEI's bill is into its third and final reading, and will most likely be passed. The federal government is reintroducing a revised bill from last year's legislation, however, and thus it remains to be seen if this new bill will more effectively meet the needs of Canada's species at risk.

Lori MacAdam, a fourth year Environmental Science student at Carleton University, is currently working on a campaign involving all campuses across the country to allow students a chance to voice their opinions on endangered species before the federal legislation comes about in April.

Some of the plans of action in the campaign include the organization of a "23 seconds of silence" for Canada's 23 extinct and extirpated species; public rallies and debates on the topic of endangered species; a letter writing campaign to the Minister of the Environment; and the signing of a petition that is being circulated among campuses.

All of this is being done in order to generate enough public pressure and input for the federal government to present a strong and effective national legislation.

Kate MacQuarrie, a member of Island Nature Trust, sat on the task force to advise the federal legislation last year, and said that a lot of people had many problems with it.

"If the new national legislation has the same negative attitude towards private landowners as the last one, then it probably will not go through," MacQuarrie said. "But if they take into consideration the rights and privileges of land-

owners affected by endangered species, then it will be passed."

MacQuarrie also said that both the national and provincial legislations, if passed as laws, are expected to be very complimentary to one another. The federal one will only have jurisdiction over species which cross borders, while the provincial one can concentrate on species that are native to that particular province.

"It will involve formal pro-

tection to make it illegal to harass, harm, kill, etc. the particular species, and it will also emphasize protection of habitat," she added.

Art Smith, Director of Fish and Wildlife, said that there have been protection programs in the past, but now it is time to have some legislation to back things up.

"Provincially, it will give us the ability to formally recognize endangered species," he said. "It will provide financial

assistance, giving us the ability to afford protection, and it will also promote co-operation amongst people dealing with threatened species."

The proposal will be brought back to the provincial legislature's next sitting, and thus is expected to be passed. In the meantime, however, attempts will be made to generate public support for MacAdam's national campaign for the federal legisla-

tion.

"We will be circulating the petitions and information pages around campus over the next couple of weeks," said Jamy-Ellen Proud, VP Internal of UPEI Student Union. "It's great that a single student took this much time to put it all together. It's a big time commitment on her part, and so hopefully there will be a lot of awareness generated for this campaign."

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