

Bathurst Protected Areas meeting.  
Matthew Jamieson Jonah

"The meeting went well, 5 "green" voices out of 15 and almost 300 people in attendance."

I began with a bit of an ad libbed intro about how it was a nice change to see the forest industry talking like the sky is falling, all due to a measly 3% of productive forests being removed. While doing so I passed out some Dentyne Ice Cinnamon gum to Louis LaPierre and the audience.

I'd like to begin bit by talking about common sense and how our world, in my mind, has begun to lose it.

WASHINGTON, DC--According to an Environmental Protection Agency study conducted in conjunction with the U.N. Task Force On Global Developmental Impact, consumer-product diversity now exceeds biodiversity. According to the study, for the first time in history, the rich array of consumer products available in malls and supermarkets surpasses the number of living species populating the planet.

"Last year's introduction of Dentyne Ice Cinnamon gum, right on the heels of the extinction of the Carolina tufted hen, put product diversity on top >>> > for the first time," study chair Donald Hargrove said.

Scientists are calling the current decrease in biodiversity one of the worst episodes of mass extinction in the Earth's history. The rate at which species are currently vanishing approaches that of what ended the Age of Dinosaurs 65 million years ago and resulted in a loss of 76 percent of the world's species. The current era of biodiversity depletion, however, is unique in that it is the first mass extinction has occurred in conjunction with an expanding industrial society"

So with this knowledge in my mind, I awoke this morning in a soft bed within a warm house. The house was built on Roughwaters Dr. by my great-grandfather in the early 1900's. Since the day of my birth, I've been able to wake up in that bed and look across the river to the mill. The mill is as connected to my family, as we are to it.

My great great grandfather Archie Jamieson, worked in the wood camps that

supplied that and other mills, my great grandfather, Peter Jamieson, also worked in the wood camps and ran logs down the Nepisiguit. My grandfather, Everret Jamieson, was a paper maker at the mill. My father had a wood lot and here I stand this evening, doing something that I feel my forefathers would appreciate. I am supporting the protected areas strategy.

For the last century, New Brunswickers have managed their forests, waters and their fields using one of our greatest gifts, common sense. Common sense has served us well, and we have survived, some have even prospered. Unfortunately, slowly, the world around us, began to lose its gift of common sense. Bigger began to be seen as better, we began living for today and thinking less about the tomorrows to come. Soon the mills began to "upgrade." My great grandfather didn't need to run the logs down the river anymore, they had trucks. Rapidly, everything began to change.

That rapid rate of change hasn't slowed down any and, in my opinion, our common sense has become a bit diluted. Today, we seem to need a thick scientific report with GIS maps, satellite images and an analysis of "enduring landscape" features to tell us that it might be a good idea to set aside a measly 4.3 % of our whole province from industrial development.

How crazy has the world become, when the forest industry can't survive with access to 97% of our province's forested lands. 97%. Even if all 12 areas you're recommending were protected, that would still leave 97% of our province's forested crown land in "management plans."

I think it is a sad day, when New Brunswick citizens are pitted against each other, for the things we share. When we have to come to "public" meetings to justify why clean air, rivers and healthy land are important to us. When the forestry lobby pretends to care so much about jobs. Where was the Forest Products Association when mechanization was eliminating our jobs, where was the Forest Products Association when contractors were brought in from Quebec to work in our woods? Where will they be in five years when the mills begin closing and downsizing due to a lack of timber?

I still have a lot to learn, but that doesn't change the fact that I love my province. I am proud to be a New Brunswicker, but sometimes it is hard to feel that way when I see how we let ourselves be pushed around by the forest industry. This is the government's third attempt at protecting large areas of the province. The last two reports were shelved and now, unless we

support this one, the same is likely to happen. We currently only have 1.4% of our province permanently protected from logging and mining. That is the lowest amount in Canada.

British Columbia, already has 10.6 % protected, and are still going.

Ontario, already has 6.5%, and they plan to add significantly to that.

Nova Scotia, 8%,

Alberta 9.3%

Yukon 8.2%

Manitoba 6.8%, have a plan in place to complete their protected areas system by year 2000.

The protected areas strategy represents good science, as well as common sense. I support it fully. Not only do all 12 areas need to be protected, they also need interim protection. Small and medium sized areas of protection also need to be included in the future development of the strategy.

The sweet smell of the mill is embedded in my mind, as embedded as is the knowledge that my family has been dependent on the woods since we arrived. I know where my bread has been buttered for the last 5 generations. I know that the soft bed I woke up in was paid for by my forefathers toil in the woods. But I also know that when I look out the window, the logs are no longer in the river, they are hauled in by truck, 24 hrs a day and the same thing is happening at every other mill in the province, every day.

We all know that we are overharvesting. I know that our natural forests have 32 native species and when we clearcut, we generally only replant 2-5 species. I know that the profits from this and 11 other mills in the province go to shareholders in the US who know nothing and care little about Bathurst, New Brunswick or the forests that my children will inherit.

Please implement all the recommendations of your protected areas strategy,

Sincerely,

Matthew Jamieson Jonah