

Everyone,

Here it is, the longest night of the year, and we've skipped out of going to Lanark for a solstice event¹ because we're so crowded by obligations & demands made on our minds by bureaucracy & document deadlines and on our vehicles by pizza-delivering & mash-requiring kids, while, hypocritically enough, one of the things we're reserving our strength for is our own solstice fire tomorrow night,² but we guess that's the way things go.

This has been a year dedicated to our survey of the route of the proposed Energy East pipeline, as well as to whatever it was we were doing before we set off in pursuit of it, other than the Polar Vortex winter having burned up more than all of our firewood, and having killed off almost all of our water-hibernating frogs.³ Doubtless the 49 pages of our departures during the first half of the year isn't going to be light reading in the present generation,⁴ though it may interest biographers if we do overthrow the Energy East pipeline.

At the beginning of August, we went east & then west along the pipeline route, but you can read about what we did at places where paintings were completed at <http://vulnerablewaters.blogspot.ca/> In New Brunswick we salvaged Unionid Mussels thrown up by Hurricane Arthur, in Quebec we bushwhacked into waypoints where no pipeline has yet run, near Ignace we photographed ruby-stemmed native *Phragmites*, in Calgary we spoke of what would be needed to plan recovery for Chorus Frogs, in Fort McMurray we pulled pebbles of bitumen & golf balls from the Athabasca River, and we were Empressed⁵ by the local art gallery & general store in Empress. At 11.3 km W of Mortlach we collected what may be the first invasive *Phragmites* Reeds taken in Saskatchewan, we were amazed by the Assiniboine River across Manitoba, and we experienced spring-like high water levels across Ontario.



Our conclusions about the pipeline are summed up in the essay of the of-course-we're putting-out-a-calendar-about-it-which-constitutes-the-ideal-holiday-gift⁶ – “*there is no counter-argument to the global imperative to minimize the emission of fossil carbon – the product that [these Tar Sands pipelines] would transport should simply not exist... so this project is really a hymn of praise to our beloved country – deglaciated North America – where the lifeblood of her streams and rivers is threatened by an untenable project.*”

1 <https://ecolanark.wordpress.com/2014/12/06/lev-solstice-party-dec-20th-2014/> - for what we missed

2 https://groups.google.com/forum/?hl=en#!topic/naturelist/aF-5L35_HGM – for an account of the fire

3 oh, yes, repeated public events of Mudpuppy watching, Rory's Ph.D. thesis defense (search the departures pdf for a poem ending “</thesis defense>”), a spring trip to Eden Mills for visiting & drift, off to Cockburn Island for herps at the behest of the NCC, Aleta flying to BC to visit siblings, packing all the museumish stuff from the Store into a full-size retired semi-trailer, and setting up surveys of roadkill along Hwy 401 & of the proposed Leda Clay dump in Carlsbad Springs. Non-pipeline paintings & events are at <http://karstaddailypaintings.blogspot.ca/>

4 - http://pinicola.ca/documents/2014_early_dep.pdf - for the departure records from the database before we left

5 <http://www.empressive.ca/> - to visit the empressive gallery

6 <http://vulnerablewaters.blogspot.ca/2014/11/fragile-crossings-2015-calendar-is-out.html>

We're very lucky in a lot of ways, and we're blessed by having colleagues & friends who have helped this audacious undertaking by introducing us to places where the pipeline would cross their rivers, with “*Can't you stay just another day?*” hospitality, and by organizing events, purchasing paintings, contributing to the crowd-funding campaign, finding vehicles, custom-building computers, and contributing huge piles of dry firewood.

We won't go into the squalour of our interactions with this and that since we got home, but just say that, after considerable struggle, the house is very full of dry specimens and boxes of books & periodicals. There is one couch that we keep mostly clear in the living room, Dog-clogged passageways to desk & computer, a lazy-boy chair that is sometimes free but more often piled high, and the bed where we're sleeping downstairs near the wood stove for the winter. We enjoy living next door to Jennifer & Rory and 2.5 year old grandson Samuel, who is beginning to work his narrative proclamations into help with the chores “*I am pulling this Cedar branch back to the Goats.*” The weather of the past year produced green-as-Guelph growth in *Thuja* Cedars across eastern Ontario, and we're thinning our stands to stoke the Goats, milking one Goat twice a day, and gathering eggs from 17 hens, taking over the livestock chores from Jennifer for the winter.

You can find this letter at <http://pinicola.ca/aboutus.htm> (along with last year's letter, which we never whooped around), and at http://pinicola.ca/documents/2014_poems.pdf you can find a listing of the rather snippish poems we've produced this year. Oh, and we published a book that thinks globally and sorts drifted material locally...

LANDSCAPE



*Progress Toward a Philosophy
of Sustainable Occupancy*

Landscape: Progress towards a philosophy of sustainable occupancy

Landscape is a collection of essays and other documents, written since we came home from Haida Gwaii in 1989, that are relevant to understanding human occupancy of our home municipality of North Grenville, United Counties of Leeds & Grenville, Ontario, Canada. The collection originated in the meetings about the first Official Plan for the amalgamated township when Fred protested that the proposed plan seemed to be combine Third World rates of population growth and First World levels of personal income, and the mayor snapped that “You can't stop growth.” [***see the page for this book***](#).

all the best for progress towards equilibrium in 2015,



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7 One of myriads of winter-happy Corixids from the Red Deer River – see <http://vulnerablewaters.blogspot.ca/2014/10/4-october-2014-finds-me-on-long-wood.html>