

# NEWSBEAT

## Slingin' sludge: QRP bows to communi outrage at Milburn Lal

By NEIL HORNER  
Observer Reporter

RESPONDING TO public outrage over their dumping of 100 tandem truckloads of refined sludge on a Milburn Lake area farm, Quesnel River Pulp began removing it Thursday.

The move came in response to a raucous public meeting held in the Bouchie Lake hall on Tuesday night, where over 200 area residents shouted and jeered while company and Ministry of Environment representatives explained both their reasons for the application of the material and its safety.

What particularly infuriated many at the meeting was the lack of public notice given by either the company or the ministry.

Speaking to the latter issue, Ministry of Environment representative Doug Mackintosh conceded that an error had been made.

"Up to 1996, it was up to the manager's discretion as to whether it would be publicized," he said. "I issued it without publicity, but the permit ran out after 15 months and nothing was done. When the mill approached us last



Angry Milburn Lake resident speaks up at a public meeting in Bouchie Lake Hall about pulp mill sludge.

November to reapply, public notice was required. In error, I assumed the original permit had been published and no objections or complaints had been received. Based on that, we told the mill they didn't have to publish."

He noted that he had since informed the mill that this was not the case and ordered them to stop stockpiling the material

on the Crick property until a 30-day process had been completed.

For their part, Quesnel River Pulp stressed that not only was the refined sludge safe to apply to agricultural land, but actually beneficial.

In her presentation, process control technologist Anna Rankin said the material in question is made up mostly of small wood fibres, with a residual

amount of sodium and sulphur, nitrogen and phosphorus.

"This is biodegradable and a good soil enhancer," she said. "There are no harmful levels of heavy metals, while the nitrogen and phosphorus are tightly bound, so they are released slowly."

She noted that the greatest benefit of the sludge is as organic matter, which keeps the soil loose and open, holding in the moisture.

As well, she noted that, unlike the chemical fertilizers used in normal agricultural practice, the slow-release of the nutrients from the sludge allows high absorption by plants and very low runoff.

She conceded that there is an odour problem, but stressed that keeping the piles small, monitoring wind direction and incorporating the material quickly into the ground would minimize this.

Rancher Ken Cameron agreed with the company about the product's value as a soil amendment and stressed that it was the most environmentally friendly option for disposal of the sludge.

He runs the Daishowa farm on the



Anna Rankin stresses benefits.

banks of the Fraser and he said he has seen superb results from its application.

"We got an unbelievable crop," he



Delores Broten wants answers.

said. "Since we applying it in 19 have at least doub production."

Similarly, ML Wilson came support.

"If you look at in the sludge, there chemicals tha hazardous to pec livestock," he said. we have here is fea unknown."

However, Milburn Lake re were not convinced

Speaker after s went to the micro and grilled assembled ex demanding agai again for the sludge removed from the property.

Fears of well contamination wer as was the concern runoff from the s Milburn Lake, wh described as a sm fragile ecosystem.

Although it noted that the binding of the n would probably r cleaner, less n water in the lake e chemical fert currently used residents were satisfied.

In an interview the meeting, Rea

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Quesnel's **WEATHER FORECAST**

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Cloudy w/sunny breaks & showers or flurries High: 4° Low: -2°	Mainly sunny High: 4° Low: -5°	Mixed cloud & sunny periods High: 3° Low: -6°	Mixed cloudy & sunny periods High: 5° Low: -4°

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**QUOTE OF WEEK**

"I can't think of anything else I would rather do. My goal of seeing a Canadian rider competing in the Tour de France is a dream I feel I share with thousands of people across the country."

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$3x^2 - 2yx + ?$   
 $17y + 3x$   
 $6xy^2 - 2$

$x + 2x = 4$   
 $3x = 7y$   
 $4y + x = -1$

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