



Global Nonviolent Action Database

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Experimental Lakes Area obstructed by Canadian Conservative government (Save ELA) 2012-2013

June 2012 to September 2013

2012

to: 2013

2013

Country: Canada

Location City/State/Province: *Northwestern Ontario*

Location Description: *Freshwater Research Facility in Boreal Forest*

Goals:

1. To reverse the decision by the Canadian Conservative government to close the freshwater research facility
2. To identify an alternative sponsor to take over the freshwater facility and secure funding for the facility's continued operation
3. To save forty years of research investment currently on-going at the facility
4. To challenge the Canadian Conservative government's policies and legislation that promote energy projects by waging a "war on science."

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 002. Letters of opposition or support
- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 004. Signed public statements
- 005. Declarations of indictment and intention
- 006. Group or mass petitions
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols › "Death of Evidence - No science, No evidence, No truth, No democracy"
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 010. Newspapers and journals
- 011. Records, radio, and television
- 015. Group lobbying
- 016. Picketing
- 032. Taunting officials
- 038. Marches
- 043. Political mourning
- 044. Mock funerals › Death of scientific evidence mourned at Parliament Hill
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 048. Protest meetings

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 002. Letters of opposition or support
- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 005. Declarations of indictment and intention
- 006. Group or mass petitions
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 010. Newspapers and journals
- 011. Records, radio, and television › Rick Mercer's Rant - CBC TV
- 015. Group lobbying
- 016. Picketing
- 032. Taunting officials
- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 048. Protest meetings

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 002. Letters of opposition or support
- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 004. Signed public statements
- 005. Declarations of indictment and intention
- 006. Group or mass petitions
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 010. Newspapers and journals
- 011. Records, radio, and television
- 015. Group lobbying
- 032. Taunting officials
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 048. Protest meetings

Methods in 4th segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 002. Letters of opposition or support
- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 005. Declarations of indictment and intention
- 006. Group or mass petitions
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 010. Newspapers and journals
- 011. Records, radio, and television
- 015. Group lobbying
- 016. Picketing
- 032. Taunting officials
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 048. Protest meetings
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Methods in 5th segment:

- 002. Letters of opposition or support
- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 004. Signed public statements
- 005. Declarations of indictment and intention
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 010. Newspapers and journals
- 011. Records, radio, and television
- 015. Group lobbying
- 032. Taunting officials
- 048. Protest meetings
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Methods in 6th segment:

- 002. Letters of opposition or support
- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 005. Declarations of indictment and intention
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 010. Newspapers and journals
- 011. Records, radio, and television
- 032. Taunting officials

Notes on Methods:

Scientists and environmental groups formed a coalition to Save ELA, launching a battle of rhetoric that encompassed numerous forms of dialogue that engaged the public, the media, and the government. The Coalition to Save ELA, scientists and environmentalists have helped to make the connections between the closing of ELA and what is at stake for our environment.

Classifications

Classification:

Defense

Cluster:

Environment

Group characterization:

- Canadian First Nation Peoples
- Environmentalists
- citizens at large
- scientists

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

Diane Orihel – Freshwater Ecologist and Founder of Coalition to Save ELA

Coalition to Save ELA

David Schindler – First Director of ELA and Recipient of International Environmental Awards

Partners:

Scientists

Environmental Groups and Environmentalists

Local Concerned Citizens

Council of Canadians

Lead Now

Ontario Liberal Government

International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Manitoba NDP Government

External allies:

Workers at the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans

Opposition political party leaders in office (Liberal, New Democratic, Green Parties)

Municipal leaders in office

Involvement of social elites:

Maude Barlow – Leader of the Council of Canadians

Elizabeth May – Leader of the Green Party

Kathleen Wynne – Ontario Liberal Leader

Greg Selinger - Manitoba NDP Leader

Scott Vaughn – Executive Director of the International Institute of Sustainable Development (IISD)

David Suzuki – Founder of the David Suzuki Foundation

Rick Mercer

Jian Ghomeshi

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

- List of 42 groups - listed in Additional Notes (too lengthy for this section)

Groups in 2nd Segment:

- Citizens United for a Sustainable Planet (CUSP)

Groups in 3rd Segment:

- None

Groups in 4th Segment:

- None

Groups in 5th Segment:

- None

Groups in 6th Segment:

- None

Additional notes on joining/exiting order:

All the support entered the campaign at an early stage. No group has exited

Segment Length: 2.5 months

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

Canadian Conservative Government

Greg Rickford – Member of Parliament for Kenora, Ontario

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

47 public commentaries or public references in media

Campaigner violence:

None known

Repressive Violence:

None known

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

4 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

3 points out of 3 points

Notes on outcomes:

The campaign was successful in keeping the facility open, finding a new sponsor and securing funding - the main thrust of their campaign.

There is ambiguity as to whether the scientists are able to save their work.

The campaign also failed to reverse the federal environmental policies and legislation related to the "war on science" that promote economic development through energy development campaigns.

The Experimental Lakes Area (ELA) is an environmental freshwater research facility designed to monitor an isolated and contained ecosystem that encompasses an area containing 58 small lakes in Northwestern Ontario. The facility's purpose is to study and correct problems concerning the food chain and ecosystem on which life on the planet relies.

Researchers from around the world have accessed this facility and 745 peer-reviewed scientific articles from independent scientists and universities have been produced from the research conducted on site.

On 17 May 2012, the Canadian Conservative government announced their decision to shut down the facility by end of March 2013, citing cost cutting of \$2 million. Using public statements, newspaper articles and public forums, scientists challenged this logic, identifying a cost of \$50 million to dismantle the facility. Noting federal government moves supporting extraction that threatens the environment, critics said that the closing represented a "war on science."

Scientists, environmentalists, and concerned citizens formed the Coalition to Save ELA to stir public debate. Citizens held rallies and political protests, writing editorials in local newspapers, as well as using social media to express concerns that reflected the views of scientists and environmental groups.

The campaign began officially on June 5, 2012 when scientists rallied at the Manitoba Legislature Building in Winnipeg Manitoba. At the rally scientists, led by Save ELA organizer, Diane Orihel, met with local politicians to publically express their concerns. The same day a political protest was held outside the Kenora Ontario MP, Greg Rickford's office to speak out against the federal omnibus bill that contained the legal processes for shutting down the facility. Leadnow, a politically motivated environmentalist group was responsible for organizing 90 political protests the weekend prior, against the omnibus bill.

On June 11, 2012, a public panel was held in Kenora to discuss the intended closure of ELA. Over a hundred people attended that gathering. The following day a protest rally was held in Dryden Ontario to protest the intended closure of ELA.

Notable allies came forward such as the Council of Canadians, the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, and First Nation communities in Ontario and Manitoba. More than forty-five groups and organizations made public declarations denouncing the government's decision to shut the facility. A local cottage group, Lake of the Woods District Property Owners Association, launched a petition signing and letter writing campaign amongst its members. Over 23,000 Canadians signed various petitions during the campaign, defending the Experimental Lakes Area facility.

On July 10, 2012, scientists initiated a significant protest on Parliament Hill in Ottawa Ontario, the nation's capital, staging a mock funeral that hosted over 2,000 people, using the slogan, "Death of Evidence - No science, No evidence, No truth, No democracy." The event was dramatized with a formal funeral procession, as well as eulogies imparted by prominent scientific spokespeople, opposition political leaders, and Diane Orihel, the lead organizer for Save ELA.

Scientists in Winnipeg Manitoba held a similar mock wake at the University of Manitoba.

Further public rallies were held in Kenora on August 24, 2012, and April 1, 2013. Winnipeg Manitoba also hosted an additional political protest on September 18, 2012 at The Forks, a popular gathering place.

Scientists launched a new focus in the fight to save ELA on August 14, 2012, featuring the prevalence of liver toxins in Canadian lakes. The media covered this new approach, producing close to twenty articles. An Environics poll identified that three quarters of Canadians oppose the shutting down of the facility, including 60% of Conservative voters.

In the month of September, 2012, numerous opposition political leaders stood up in Parliament during Question Period to make public statements of support for ELA and to ask whether the Conservative government was willing to reverse its decision to close the facility.

The campaign ended on September 2, 2013 with a formal announcement from the Ontario and Manitoba provincial governments that the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) would be sponsoring the facility, with a funding agreement between the two Provincial governments, Ontario and Manitoba. The IISD's mandate for ELA includes an emphasis on strengthening the links between social, economic, and environmental factors related to sustainable development.

Research Notes

Influences:

The Save ELA campaign was influenced by the magnitude of what is at stake; evidence of pollutants that leads to environmental health (1).

The Save ELA campaign and the scientists struggle with the "war on science" became intrinsically linked because of the Canadian Conservative government policies and legislation to diminish science-based evidence (2).

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Additional Notes:

There are a number of videos integrated within the sources (URL links provided)

There are three locations identified on the map:

1. Ottawa, Ontario - location of largest action - protest on Parliament Hill
2. Location of the Experimental Lakes Area, Boreal Forest in Northwestern Ontario
3. Winnipeg, Manitoba - location of new sponsor - International Institute for Sustainable Development

Groups joining in First Segment (not sufficient space in identified text box)

- o City of Winnipeg's Executive Policy Committee
- o Winnipeg Foundation: Friends of the Experimental Lakes Area Inc.
- o Council of Canadians
- o Liberal Party of Canada
- o New Democratic Party of Canada
- o City of Kenora
- o Kenora Support Group for ELA
- o David Suzuki Foundation
- o Boreal Forest Network
- o District Municipality of Muskoka
- o Mathew Coon Come, Grand Chief, representing the Cree Regional Authority
- o Centre for Ecological Research
- o DIVERSITAS of the Western Pacific and Asia
- o Japanese Society of Limnology
- o Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists

- o Global Lake Temperature Collaboration
- o four former Directors of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans
- o Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association
- o Tall Grass Bakery
- o East Asian Federation of Ecological Societies (EAFES)
- o Ecological Society of Japan
- o Australian Society for Limnology (?SL)
- o Entomological Society of Canada
- o Science Directors of the Canadian Rivers Institute (CRI)
- o Entomological Society of Manitoba (ESM)
- o Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography (ASLO), the Ecological Society of America (ESA), the International Society of Limnology (SIL), the Society of Canadian Limnologists (SCL), the Society for Freshwater Sciences (SFS)
- o Ontario Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (AFS)
- o Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC)
- o International Association for Great Lakes Research (IAGLR)
- o Canadian Aquatic Resources Section of the American Fisheries Society (AFS)
- o Atlantic Geoscience Society (AGS)
- o International Society for Limnology (SIL)
- o Gord Mackintosh, representing the Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship, and Jim Bradley, representative for the Ontario Minister of the Environment
- o eight pre-eminent aquatic scientists via the Coalition to Save ELA
- o Society of Canadian Limnologists (SCL)
- o University of Waterloo Graduate Students Association
- o The Water Institute
- o National Council of Women of Canada
- o Israel Oceanographic & Limnological Research, Inc.
- o Smithsonian Environmental Research Centre
- o North American Lake Management Society (NALMS)

o Idle No More Movement

Name of researcher, and date dd/mm/yyyy:

Michelle Shephard 21/11/2013

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