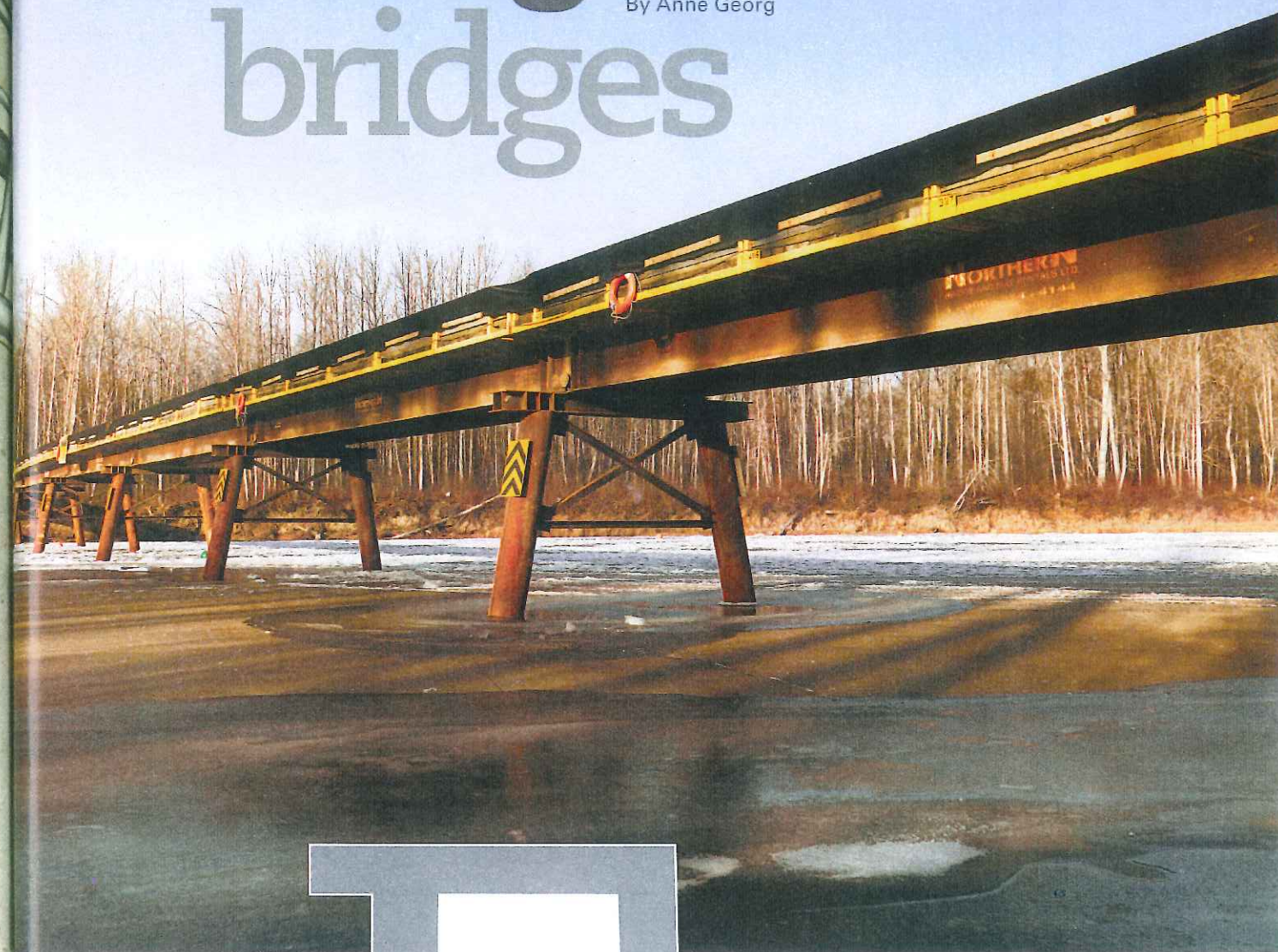


Building bridges

Respect and trust protect a jewel of the community

By Anne Georg



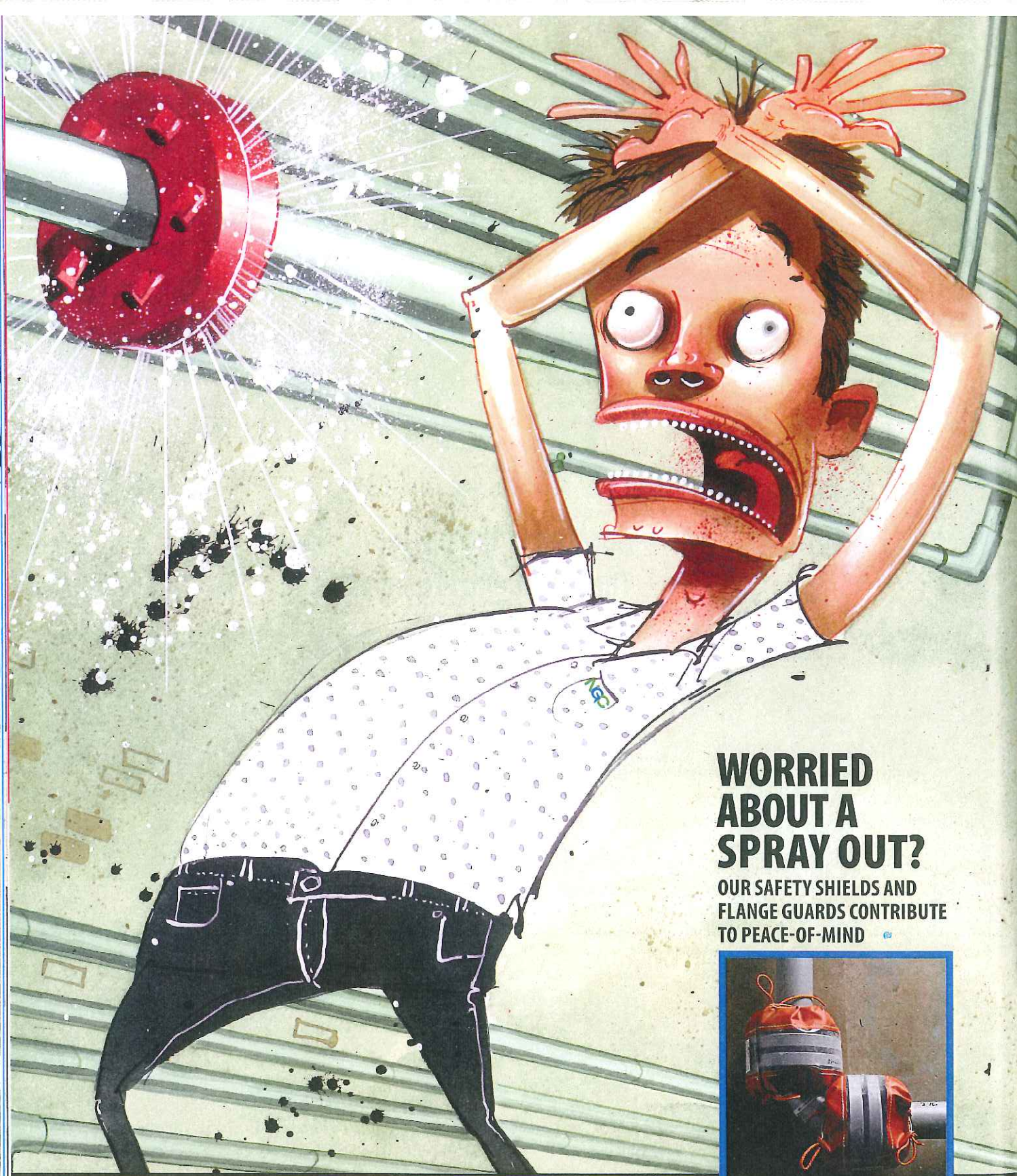
For Jim Lewis, the pristine, remote and beautiful Clearwater River is a sanctuary. Furthermore, over three decades of his personal history are deeply imbedded there. He says the Clearwater River has literally shaped his life and who he is.

"I've had a high-stress, fast-paced lifestyle," says the retired business owner. "I just love spending time with my family on the river." He reminisces about his three daughters learning to swim in the Clearwater River, and in the winter, the family regularly takes their snowmobiles 75 kilometres upstream to Lewis's trapping cabin. As a trapper, he also regularly uses the river to reach his trapline.

When Lewis goes downtown in Fort McMurray, Alta., he invariably meets acquaintances who want to know why he is still in Fort McMurray, as most retirees leave this northern industry town.

Not Lewis. He has his trapline, his family and the Clearwater River, all of which tie him inextricably to the area. ▶

To facilitate construction of two crossings of the Clearwater River near Fort McMurray, Enbridge installed a temporary bridge that remained in place for about seven months.



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Cranes use roller cradles to support a welded section of pipe during the Clearwater River horizontal directional drill pull back operation.

CLEARWATER HERITAGE RIVER SOCIETY

That's why, as part of the Clearwater Heritage River Society (CHRS)—a non-profit, multi-stakeholder advisory group that includes boaters, trappers, kayakers and snowmobilers—Lewis worked tirelessly to obtain Canadian Heritage River status for the Clearwater River. He recalls that when the process started, 22 stakeholders were involved, many of whom had never spent any time on the Clearwater River.

After 16 years of often arduous consensus building among groups as disparate as hunters, loggers, oilsands companies,

canoeists, boaters, snowmobilers and trappers, the Clearwater River was finally declared a Canadian Heritage River in 2004. The designation gives national recognition to Canada's outstanding rivers, and ensures long-term management and conservation. And it means that the CHRS will scrutinize any development on the river, which flows into the Athabasca River at Fort McMurray.

"We want the river to stay as close as it can to [the] wilderness experience you get now," says Lewis. "So it has to be protected. It is a jewel in our community."



The Enbridge project

Construction on Enbridge's Woodland pipeline (140 kilometres, from Imperial Oil Limited's Kearl oilsands project to Cheecham Terminal) began in early 2011, after receiving approval from Alberta's Energy Resources Conservation Board.

Plans for the Clearwater River called for construction of the two pipelines, with Norealis (112 kilometres from Norealis Terminal to Cheecham Terminal) scheduled for 2012. But because the temporary bridge would already be up for the Woodland pipeline, Enbridge bumped up the timeline of Norealis to take advantage of having the team and equipment in the area. By combining the two projects, Enbridge was also able to reduce the environmental footprint of the projects.

One of the first tasks was installing the two pipelines underneath the Clearwater River. Enbridge always treats any operations near water with extreme caution, and this was no exception. Enbridge chose horizontal drilling because it is less disruptive to the environment and eliminates the need for clear cutting right along the river edge, leaving unobstructed natural views from the river.

In addition, Enbridge left the temporary bridge up so ATCO Ltd. could use it for one of its projects and further minimize the environmental impact of industry on the fragile environment.

Lewis points to a large-scale map of the leases in the Wood Buffalo area.

"Every square inch is designated to oilsands companies—just not the one long green strip that is the Clearwater River valley. We need to preserve it." Lewis is quick to add that he and his colleagues on the CHRS don't begrudge industry its place in the community.

"Enbridge [Inc.] came in and worked respectfully and left the smallest footprint possible," Lewis says. "This is what we like to see." ►

PHOTO: ENBRIDGE



After a tunnel was drilled under the Clearwater River, a swivel is attached to the pre-assembled pipe section. The swivel will pull the pipe through the drilled underground tunnel.

STARTING OUT ON THE RIGHT FOOT

In 2011, Enbridge built two pipelines through the Clearwater River Valley: the Woodland pipeline and the Norealis pipeline. To facilitate construction, a temporary bridge across the Clearwater River was installed and remained in place for about seven months. But before a shovel was lifted, the rules were spelled out.

"When we do our kick-off meeting, even before we begin contracting, I meet with the contractor's foreman and senior management at Enbridge," explains Alain Ouellet, construction manager, LP mainline projects Canada, at Enbridge.

"The first thing I mention is that this is not our land. We have to ask permission to install a pipeline because that land belongs to someone, whether it's the government, private or aboriginal. We have the right to install the infrastructure with the proper permit. But we also have to respect the land and people—even if it is in the middle of the bush."

As part of its pipeline public involvement program, before work began Enbridge reached out to people who use the river, including the CHRS.

Lewis recalls the first meeting the CHRS had in 2009 with Enbridge. "Alain came in with a proposal and said he was looking for our support," Lewis recalls. "Enbridge answered all of our questions; their project description looked good and Alain had no trouble at all getting our support."

PUBLIC CONSULTATION BENEFITS ALL STAKEHOLDERS

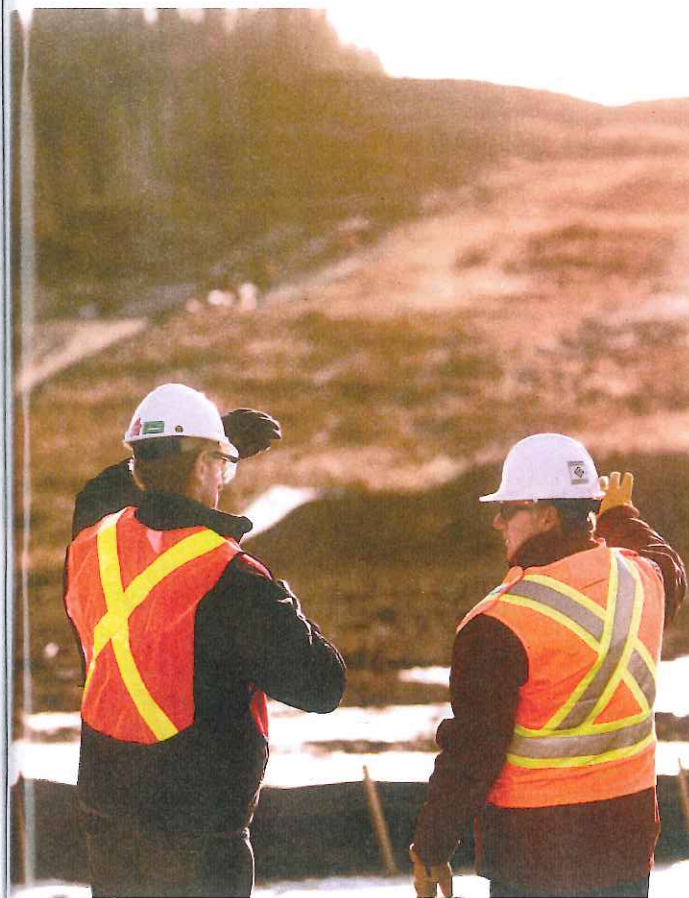
For Enbridge, the CHRS members' input was invaluable because they have an in-depth knowledge of the river. Ouellet incorporated their advice by adding safety signage and managing boating traffic during construction. With their help, Enbridge also gained a deeper appreciation of the potential impacts of construction—particularly to recreational users of the river at the crossing location.

"Because the river is such a big part of the history and pleasure of the locals, we had to be extremely polite and respectful," Ouellet stresses that showing respect and developing good relationships with stakeholders will create goodwill and help Enbridge's standing when it needs to build other pipelines in the future.

A SNOWMOBILER'S PERSPECTIVE

Real Chartrand knew the pipelines were coming, but not when or where. As the president of the McMurray Sno-Drifters Association, he was concerned about the many trails in the Clearwater River valley that might affect the 400 club members. When Chartrand received a call from Ouellet, he immediately knew the Sno-Drifters were in good hands.

"Alain put me at ease right away. We went up in a helicopter with him and he showed us where the route was in relation to our trails. Right then and there I knew that Enbridge would always be up front with us."



Alain Ouellet (right), construction manager on the Clearwater River crossings project, and Kent Cornelius, Enbridge's vice-president, major projects.

Ouellet continued to meet with the Sno-Drifters to explore the options to relocate the snowmobile trails while Enbridge built the pipelines to ensure safety and members' continued enjoyment of the area. After listening to what the snowmobilers needed, Enbridge moved some trails and cleaned up others, installed lighting for night riding, erected signs on trails leading to barricades, employed flag people at crossings to warn snowmobilers of construction obstacles, and moved existing shelters and fire-pit areas to the new trails.

"We had no incidents whatsoever," Chartrand says. "Alain kept us informed every time Enbridge was doing something on or close to the trail. There were no negatives—they did their job and we did ours to keep communication open. That's all it takes."

Chartrand recommends that other oil companies treat stakeholders as Enbridge did during the Clearwater River project. "You put people at ease when you show them how committed you are to communicating with them," he says. "I'd work with Enbridge anytime."

DOING THE RIGHT THINGS

From Lewis's perspective, Enbridge left no stone unturned in ensuring the safety and showing respect for all of the users on the Clearwater River.

Enbridge crews put buoys in the river to create a well-marked route past the bridge. It placed ads in the newspapers and on ▶

Clearwater River valley: beauty and abundance

Wild and remote, the Clearwater River flows 295 kilometres from its headwaters at Broach Lake in northern Saskatchewan to its confluence with the Athabasca River at Fort McMurray. Its upper banks tower over a narrow stream bed with boulder-strewn rapids, rocky ledges and dramatic waterfalls. Downstream, the river calms and widens.

In 1778, explorer Peter Pond crossed the Methye Portage to the Clearwater River, opening up the fur trade. During the following century, a steady stream of voyageurs, traders, explorers and adventurers followed the Methye Portage across the Arctic continental divide to the westward-flowing Clearwater and its link with the Arctic waterways.

Today, the spectacular beauty and natural abundance of this Canadian Heritage River offers a pristine environment for canoeists, rafters, naturalists and eco-tourists seeking a genuine wilderness experience.

Fishermen revel in the bounty of northern pike, walleye and grayling found in the Clearwater River.

The Clearwater River valley has plentiful wildlife including deer, wolverines and caribou. In the spring, hunters come to the area for bear; in the fall, they come to hunt moose. As a commercial trapper, Jim Lewis traps mainly wolves, marten, beaver and fish for national and international markets.

Birdsong is a constant in the Clearwater River valley. Lewis goes through two 80-pound sacks of sunflower seeds in a year feeding a variety of birds like blue jays, evening and pine grosbeak, chickadees, sparrows and woodpeckers from his trapper cabin. He hears owls at night, but rarely sees them.

Vegetation includes trees such as aspen, black spruce, larch, willow and birch, and cattails.



Heritage River designation process

Established in January 1984, the Canadian Heritage Rivers System is a cooperative program developed and run by the federal, provincial and territorial governments. The objectives of the program are to give national recognition to Canada's outstanding rivers, and to ensure long-term management and conservation of their natural, cultural and recreational values.

More than 40 rivers with a total length of 11,000 kilometres are in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System. They range from wilderness rivers of the Barren Lands to rivers in densely populated areas of southern Canada.

local radio to inform residents about the timing and scope of the project. Signs were also posted in town and at all of the boat launches in the area, alerting the public to the temporary bridge. CHRS was regularly updated on the project's progress.

The company maintained the natural serenity and aesthetic of the riverbanks by keeping a wide tree buffer, so people going down the river couldn't see the development. The temporary bridge was built at an existing opening to avoid having to cut a new right-of-way.

"Enbridge proved themselves to be more than capable," Lewis says. "They were respectful of the Heritage River status, they kept the public well-informed and they came to CHRS meetings to fully explain their program."

BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

While Enbridge was working on the river, the hull of a sunken, burned boat bobbed above the waterline not far from the temporary bridge. The members of CHRS wanted to have it removed.

Enbridge provided a solution. "We used slings to bring it to the bridge and hoisted it onto a trailer to get it out of the river," Ouellet says. "This is what we do to support the community as much as possible and to show them that we are a good neighbour."

More recently, Lewis was out on the river on his snowmobile. He noted seven men around a big square hole in the ice and went over to ask them what was going on. They were from Enbridge and said they were looking for the anchors that had been left behind after the buoys were removed.

"I suggested that they wait until spring, when the ice was melted," says Lewis, chuckling. "They said no way, they needed to get them out now." When Lewis arrived home he found a photograph that showed where the buoys had been. He called the Enbridge crew to tell them. They thanked him and informed him that they had found the anchors using global positioning system readings.

"Now, that's excellent," Lewis exclaims. "They could have easily walked away. But they wanted to leave the river as they'd found it. I couldn't ask more of Enbridge. They did all of the right things."

PRIDE IN ENBRIDGE'S APPROACH

Ouellet derives huge satisfaction from working with the community, getting the job done with their full support—and hearing the kudos for Enbridge.

"I take a lot of pride in what I do and I take pride in working for Enbridge, so when I represent Enbridge, I do whatever I can to establish a positive image for the company." He adds that Enbridge's public involvement program is an example of a consultation process where there was a respectful, meaningful exchange of information.

"We've built that input into our planning process and made our project better," Ouellet says. "We look forward to strengthening the relationships we have established with this group as we construct the crossing and move into operating the pipeline." ■



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