



# Bluefish delay may mean higher power rates

The replacement of the Bluefish Dam, some 20 km outside Yellowknife, is delayed a full year because warm weather caused the ice road supplying the site to close early, according to the NWT Power Corporation. An official with the corporation said if the dam fails, power customers could be in for a "significant" rate increase.

## Not enough time to ship supplies and machinery to dam construction site: NWT Power Corporation

by Andrew Livingstone  
Northern News Services

The delay in replacing a dam in imminent danger of collapse at the Bluefish hydro site could lead to a "significant" increase to power bills, according to the NWT Power Corporation.

Despite the urgent need to replace the 60-year-old Bluefish dam, Power Corp. has delayed the project a full year because it didn't have time to supply its construction site. Warm weather forced the closure of the winter road to the facility across Prosperous Lake on April 7, said Mike Bradshaw, director of corporate communications with the NWT Power Corporation.

It was only last September that Power Corp. was threatening legal action against the Mackenzie Val-

ley Land and Water Board if it did not approve the \$17-million project immediately. It warned the dam's collapse was "imminent," and that it could not "accept any delays or disruptions which may arise due to any matters."

**"The rate impact rises dramatically if the old dam fails."**

Yellowknife gets most of its hydro power from the Snare River, but Bluefish, which was sold to Power Corp. by Miramar Mining in 2003, supplies about 7.5 megawatts. The Snare Hydro plant can provide a maximum of 21 megawatts of power, so having Bluefish up and running is imperative during peak power usage, which usually occurs in the coldest winter months when usage can reach 30 megawatts, Bradshaw said.

The land and water board granted an emergency exemption for the pro-

ject on Oct. 7, stating in a letter it was "persuaded that there are limited options available for (the corporation) to respond to the unexpected and accelerated deterioration of the dam over the last year."

### Warmer weather

Bradshaw said while the corporation was able to get some of the supplies to the site during a month-long period between early March and April, including those for a 50-person camp, fuel tanks and a water and sewage treatment facility, the corporation was unable to get heavy equipment like back haul trucks, heavy graders and 30,000 square feet of sheet pile - weighing in the hundreds of tonnes range - to the site.

Despite the warmer than usual winter this year, the three diamond mines using the Tibbit to Contwoyto winter roads managed to transport 3,506 loads weighing 121,000 tonnes

in less than two months before that road shut down for the season March 24.

On Wednesday, Bradshaw e-mailed to say that power customers could pay a lot more on their bills if the dam fails.

"The impact on rates is approximately one cent per kWh," Bradshaw stated, referring to the rate rider the territorial government-owned company plans to charge customers to pay for the project.

"The rate impact rises dramatically if the old dam fails and we're forced to replace hydro with diesel generation. The cost of diesel fuel alone would be \$7 million per year."

Bradshaw said if the dam fails before Power Corp. can replace it, the company will have to build a new diesel plant at Jackfish Lake to provide more power to the city. He predicted the current plant at Jackfish would take a beating

because of its infrequent use.

"We'd see some serious wear and tear on the diesel generators there now because they are only on for a few hours a year," he said, adding the impact on customers would be "pretty significant."

Bradshaw said the corporation is looking at other options to get some of the equipment and materials out to the Bluefish site by barge, but he said it's an uphill battle.

"It's looking like a long shot right now," he said of shipping the remaining supplies by water to the site, some 20 km outside the city.

Bradshaw said the dam is holding up, so far.

"We're doing a lot of site monitoring daily, plus there is 24-hour surveillance," Bradshaw said. "The snow pack this year is down, it's below average, so we're hoping the run off isn't going to cause any problems. So far it's looking pretty good."



**The Explorer Hotel**



# Thai New Years dinner buffet

Friday, April 30, 2010 at 5:00 pm

**Trays and platter**

- Assorted fruit platter
- Rice paper rolls with chili dipping sauce
- Assorted Dim Sum
- Marinated pork and shrimp wrapped in lettuce leaves
- Olive and pickle platter

**Chef attended station**

- Pad thai station boc choy, sprouts, cabbage, tofu, rice noodles, shrimp, boiled eggs, sliced bbq pork, daikon, julienne carrot, julienne cucumber, limes, chives, peanuts, soy sauce, palm sugar

**Hot food**

- Steamed shark with Mango Chutney
- Fried Chicken With Lemon Grass
- Lumpia with Sprouts and Vegetables
- Steamed rice
- Baby Boc Choy with Bamboo Shoots and Oyster Sauce
- Pork Satays with sambal cucumber relish
- Spicy beef stir-fry

**Desserts**

- Sugar sprinkled donuts
- Orange honey puffs
- Sticky rice with mango
- Grass jelly
- Lychee nuts
- Yogurt cream mousse
- Jack fruit
- Sago with palm sugar
- Green tea and coconut cake
- Thai style crème caramel



**\$34.95**  
per person

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