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Depths of depression

National Depression Screening Day is today (Oct. 9.) This international event raises awareness about depression as a common, impairing, and expensive health problem.

Depression involves symptoms such as sadness, worthlessness, sleep problems, hopelessness, indifference, suicidal thoughts, difficulty concentrating, and fatigue. An estimated 122,865,000 new cases of depression emerge every year worldwide. Compared to all other health problems (e.g., diabetes or stroke), depression is the second leading cause of disability in the world.

In Canada, roughly 3.2 million employed Canadians will experience depression in their lifetime and these depressed individuals will take nearly 32 days off work per year. Depression costs the Canadian economy \$14.4 billion each year in lost productivity and in treatment costs.

In Nova Scotia, depression affects an estimated eight per cent of people per year, which exceeds the Canadian average of five per cent. These numbers, although staggering, fail to capture the intense suffering accompanying depression.

Of note, depression has a high treatment success rate in Nova Scotia and elsewhere. Interpersonal therapy, antidepressant medication, electroconvulsive therapy (in severe cases), and cognitive behavioural therapy are all proven to eliminate or to reduce depression. Treatment often makes a major difference for patients, allowing them to resume their lives.

Dr. Simon B. Sherry (associate professor, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, Dalhousie University); Cynthia Ramasubbu (research assistant in Dalhousie's personality research team).

Largely laughable

In his Oct. 4 opinion piece, Jamie Simpson said forestry in Nova Scotia was “largely lawless.” To anyone in the industry — from small private landowners, harvesting and trucking contractors, Christmas tree growers, or forest product producers — this is a “largely laughable” notion.

From forest management decisions to cutting the trees, to selling logs, to trucking logs, to producing products, our industry is governed step by step, by many pieces of legislation and numerous regulations. Harvesting the land in question, being Crown land, would have only added another layer of regulatory requirements. A lawless industry it is not.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time I've heard Mr. Simpson or his former colleagues at the Ecology Action Centre attempt to confuse the reading public with broad, misleading statements. Because they simply don't like the extensive regulations or legislation that govern an industry they deny any governance exists. It's simply their opinions and tired tactics that, as usual, provide no real action or accountability for forest management.

Jeff Bishop, executive director, Forest Products Association of Nova Scotia

Cry for the wilderness

In your Oct. 4 Opinions section, there was an aerial shot of land that was supposed to be protected because it was designated an environmentally sensitive area. The picture brought tears to my eyes.

It was so environmentally sensitive that it was 95 per cent clearcut. A few clumps of trees were left for the moose to use. How generous! Would these clumps of trees be for the one anorexic moose who was in need of a toothpick?

What did the Department of Natural Resources do with the wildlife that was living there? What they're best at — shooting defenceless animals!

Up until a few years ago, I thought DNR was there to protect the environment and wildlife. Boy — I must have given my head a crack when I fell off that turnip truck. What a farce our government is. DNR really stands for Department of Nothing Remaining.

It proves once again how the almighty dollar is worth more than anything else on this planet. And they try to push down our throats that our forests are being managed properly (and another fall from that turnip truck). One would have to be blind and deaf not to know and see what is

happening to our forests and wildlife. We continue to be led by greedy governments.

Susan D. Stevens, Chester Basin

Heartbreak lake

I'd like to add my comments to Jamie Simpson's Oct. 4 opinion piece and Stewart Lamont's Oct. 7 letter.

I was born on the west branch of the St. Mary's River, in Guysborough County, in 1928. There was a small, secluded lake not far from the river where I caught many brook trout as a teenager. The lake was surrounded by thick woods in the middle of a swamp.

I went back there several years ago to see the place where I'd spent many happy hours. Imagine my surprise and heartbreak when I drove back down the woods road and viewed the lake exposed and all brown around the edges. It had shrunk to a little pond.

The woods were gone, all cut to the ground! It looked like it had been struck by an atomic bomb, the ground torn up by large machines with no sign of replanting. The St. Mary's River was nearly dry except in deeper pools. The river used to be full of Atlantic salmon during their summer run in June and they are gone.

I have also witnessed this clearcutting in Hants and Colchester counties. Why is even 50 per cent clearcutting allowed? It seems to give licence to cut everywhere. When is this insanity going to end?

Herbert Jordan, Dartmouth

Shubie Canal kudos

Kudos to the Department of Natural Resources and to the Garnett family for reaching an agreement that would preserve a traditional portage between Lake Thomas and Fletchers Lake at the Lock 4 site of the Shubenacadie Canal in Fall River (Oct. 7 story).

Once fully implemented, the agreement will result in the province gaining clear title to the entire lock site while allowing uninterrupted travel on the Dartmouth Lakes-Shubenacadie River route, our province's most historical waterway. It is gratifying to read that the province is giving the Shubenacadie Canal Commission \$35,000 for new signage and landscaping at the site.

Dusan Soudek, Halifax

Forge ahead on New France

Re: "Interest grows in New France provincial park," (Oct. 6 story). Just rebuild it, especially the railroad. Visitors will come from all over the world to see it.

Barbara Gerritse, Canning

Overrated frack method

Re: an Oct. 3 letter urging that fracking be done using "liquid" propane. In fact, the propane used is in gel form.

The letter writer also said that this process produced no contaminated water, and that, too, is misleading. Flowback waters from the well areas accompany methane, benzene and other gases, and there is always brine and it might contain arsenic and or radioactive molecules from natural sources, depending upon what the well was drilled through. They also add other chemicals that might pose a health problem if there are gas or water leaks from the well casing.

During 2014, Gasfrac shares have traded very low from \$13 to between \$1.30 to \$2.16 for the last 52 weeks.

Don Wilson, Brule Point Weekly Flyers