

## Weir Proposed for Peace River

By Helene Walsh, Friends of the Peace

For more than two years now a proposal by Canadian Hydro Developers to build a weir on the Peace River has been going through the approval process in Alberta. Friends of the Peace, a conservation group based in Peace River, has been providing input to the process. AWA, CPAWS-Edm. and FAN have been supporting their efforts, and recently together submitted a formal request to the Federal Government for a more thorough review of the project.

The proposal is for a 6-meter weir on the Peace River just upstream of Dunvegan (north of Grande Prairie) for electrical generation. Public hearings will be held this fall by a



*Peace River*

joint panel of the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board and the Natural Resources Conservation Board.

The Peace River is the most diverse and productive river valleys in the Parkland of Canada. It is a nationally significant waterway which supplies water to the Peace Athabasca Delta, one of the largest freshwater deltas in the world. This project has potential to interfere with future efforts to enable flooding of the delta, a process which has been already seriously affected by the Bennett Dam on the Peace River in BC.

The Peace River supports several species of migratory and residential fish, the passage of fish both upstream and down are of concern with respect to this project.

The south facing slopes of the river valley support the last remaining habitat for prairie and parkland vegetation which has virtually all been destroyed by agricultural development throughout Alberta. Those south facing slopes will be subject to increased slumping and invasion by weeds as a result of this project.

Several other sites along the Peace River are being considered for weirs, the determination on this project will set a precedent for this kind of development along the Peace.

A more thorough review of this project is necessary through the federal Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. 

