



Local activists helped stop the medical incinerator at Rockefeller University from burning radioactive animal carcasses.

support. "We put together information for editors and reporters who lived in the neighborhood," says Bishop. "Their PR guy had no place to go." Parents plastered literature on Rockefeller's grounds. Schoolchildren wrote letters to the university. "Rather than cause them gross embarrassment," said Bishop, "the university was given every opportunity to withdraw." It finally did, a few months later.

But the university's withdrawal merely postpones the battle over who gets stuck with the constant flow of radioactive lab animal carcasses, currently being shipped to a dump in South Carolina which may close in 1994.

There are alternatives to blowing radioactive dust into New Yorkers' air conditioning vents, says Dr. Jay M. Gould, formerly of the Environmental Protection Agency's science advisory board. He argues that the biomedical industry reaps financial benefits from the use of radioisotopes, and so should pay for their storage and monitoring. They can also use more expensive but more stable "safe isotopes" for epidemiological research, says Gould. "If the cost goes up, so be it. Our kids' health is worth it." For more information, contact Sam Bishop and Gerard Schriffen at (212)254-6897.

— Matthew Reiss

Rafting with the Cree

For 5,000 years, nomadic Cree natives have wandered along Canada's Great Whale River, a subarctic land of rolling hills, peat bogs and spruce they call "The Garden." Although they have more recently settled in a village on James Bay, the Cree still subsist largely on game animals. The construction of Hydro-Quebec's proposed Phase II dam in the Great Whale River would wipe out not only their food sources, but their lifestyles, history and ancestral home. "As long as the land is intact our culture is intact...When we say the land is our life, the developers don't understand this," explains former chief Robbie Dick.

Matthew Reiss

Two years ago, in a plea for help, Chief Matthew Mukash canoed with other Cree down New York's Hudson River. Hearing their message, Eric Hertz, president of Earth River Expeditions, which runs rafting trips, offered to teach the Cree to guide river trips on the Great Whale River to generate cash and jobs and help raise public awareness about Hydro-Quebec.

There was one problem: Historically, the Cree have avoided tangles with whitewater rapids. But neither Hertz nor the Cree were to be easily deterred: In August 1992, Hertz, four Cree volunteers, and a hardy group of 20 paying guests took off on a commercial rafting trip down the Great Whale.

They paddled a 20-mile stretch about 50 miles inland from the community and hit little whitewater—but when they did, it was huge. A couple of eight-foot waves, parted down the middle by a foamy tongue of water—not-too-facetiously named the Pearly Gates—were clear testimony to Hydro-Quebec's desire to harness the power, and to Hertz's missionary zeal.

By the end of the trip, Vera George, the only Cree woman in the group, had decided to take over the rafting operation. She subsequently left her house in town to move back to the bush. In December 1992, the tribe laid out \$15,000 for new rafting equipment, and helped lead several trips this past summer. Despite this encouraging start, Eric Hertz

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Barry Tessman

The Cree now lead rafting trips—one economic alternative to damming their rivers for power.

wonders when the Cree will be able to run trips independently; the Cree wonder how their new business will fare; and everyone wonders how it will contribute to the final outcome of the dam proposal.

Does Matthew Mukash believe, in his heart of hearts, that the dam will eventually go through? "Never," he says. After experiencing the die-hard resiliency of the Cree people, many are optimistic that he's right. Contact: Earth River Expeditions, 180 Towpath Road, Accord, NY 12404/(800)643-2784.

— Carol Goodstein **E**