

RESPECT

Potential angles for articles: RESPECT project

The RESPECT project is a photoessay of the modern-day boreal forest that informs all Canadians on a national treasure. Aerial pictures shot from a bush plane capture the beauty, power and mystery of the landscapes and all the life within them. The following pitches can be developed into news stories and/or full-length articles for newspapers, magazines and other media. Please contact Louise Larivière louise@borealcommunications.com for more information.

A. The North as a place of personal change

After three consecutive days in the North, people start to experience bodily and mental changes. What are these changes and why do they occur?

This story will investigate these changes from both a scientific perspective and from the personal experiences of the narrator.

B. A sensual experience of the boreal forest

RESPECT is an odyssey. Through it, two parallel journeys unfold. One is the personal quest of a narrator, a pilot and a rotating cast of photographers flying across the country recording the images and voices of the people and landscapes of the boreal forest. The other is an ever-expanding collection of the many journeys of life in the boreal forest, of the people, plants, animals, microorganisms, rivers, lakes, mountains and rocks that, together, create a beautiful mosaic. Taken together, these journeys, images and stories paint a vivid and vibrant picture of life in its myriad of forms in the boreal forest. And more importantly, they underscore the forest's importance to the lives of all Canadians – even those who have never had the privilege of setting foot in it.

An article written in a travel log / blog-style from the perspective of the narrator, pilot and/or photographer. The article will recount the adventure highlighting experiences through each of the five senses as the team moves far north and then towards James Bay, canoeing up or flying above the Albany River until it reaches James Bay.

C. RESPECT and World Environment Day: the trek!

RESPECT is an awareness program targeted at urbanites; it unites diverse talents and experiences to inform the public about environmental issues. The story will position RESPECT as a Canadian contribution to World Environment Day and explore the importance of Canada's vast boreal forest in the context of the 2009 theme.

June 5th is World Environment Day (WED). The United Nations uses WED as a tool to raise global awareness of the environment and to enhance political attention and action. The 2009 theme is 'Your Planet Needs You-UNite to Combat Climate Change', and will focus attention on the December climate convention meeting in Copenhagen and the links to overcoming poverty and forest management.

An educational kit will be produced by team at Harbourfront Centre and Boreal Communications to inform a younger public of the contribution of the boreal forest towards providing clear air and water. The kit will be comprised of several elements, each with its own unique take on RESPECT themes. Pictures at the Harbourfront Centre exhibit will inform the public on a variety of issues related to ecosystems, biodiversity and climate change. A multimedia presentation will promote the North as a hospitable place to live. A short documentary film will explain, in a poetic way, how we can all contribute to protecting nature. This article could summarize these different initiatives around WED and beyond.

D. Boreal night skies, RESPECT and the International Year of Astronomy

There is nothing quite like a night sky north of the 49th parallel – dancing northern lights, bright constellations, billions of stars. The skies are especially striking for urbanites accustomed to city night skies muted by light pollution. This story will look at astronomy in the boreal forest, including the historical and present importance of the stars to the culture and activities of First Nations communities. It will also address the issue of light pollution. This story is particularly relevant because 2009 is the International Year of Astronomy; RESPECT is a Canadian contribution to this global initiative.

"The International Year of Astronomy 2009 is a global effort initiated by the International Astronomical Union (IAU) and UNESCO to help the citizens of the world rediscover their place in the Universe through the day- and night-time sky, and thereby engage a personal sense of wonder and discovery." <http://www.astronomy2009.org/>

E. The impacts of climate change on the boreal forest

Climate change is a hot topic. Literally. Its effects are felt around the world, and the boreal forest is no exception. The article will explore the ways in which the boreal forest is affected by climate change, from the perspectives of industry, First Nations and non-indigenous communities living in the boreal forest and biodiversity. While much of the facts are discouraging, the article will leave the reader with reasons for hope. It will also include some examples of actions at the local and national levels to ensure the sustainability of the boreal forest.

F. Canada's Boreal Forest, a national treasure

From a young age, many Canadians learn that faraway tropical forests are exotic, sexy and valuable; and that the boreal forest in their backyard is boring and serves a functional or utilitarian role. The RESPECT project refocuses the lens through which we look at the boreal forest. It forces us to look at what the boreal forest provides to all Canadians (and everyone around the world) in terms of culture, industry and ecosystem services such as provision of clean air and water. It introduces urbanites to the people who call the North their home. It shows the mysterious, awe-inspiring and sometimes violent side of the boreal forest. RESPECT depicts the boreal forest as it is: a national treasure.

INFORMATION: Louise Larivière (514) 294-8794 louise@borealcommunications.com