

The potential exists for Nanoose to become a far more productive community, beginning with the closure of CFMETR and its conversion to peaceful, non-military uses. With careful planning, conversion can bring many benefits to the Nanoose community, which experience shows completely outweigh the disadvantages of closure.

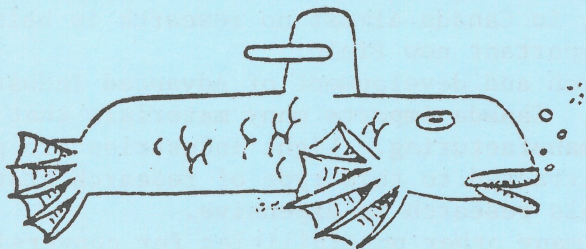
WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1. Read the N.C.C. conversion report to the People's Enquiry into CFMETR. It is available for \$3.00 (to cover photocopying and postage) from the N.C.C. office.
2. Try to get your union to pass resolutions supporting conversion of CFMETR. Send copies of the resolution to politicians, local papers, etc.
3. Invite the N.C.C. to your organization or union to do a presentation or workshop on conversion.
4. Information about the details of CFMETR's integration into the local economy would be very useful. If you can help with this research, contact the N.C.C. office.

Please contact us if you would like to work on conversion or would like further information:

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In Vancouver, contact 420-5098 or 985-6740.



NANOOSE: Why Conversion?

There is a common perception amongst communities which host military bases or military-related industries. It is that closing the local military institution(s) would be economically devastating to the community. Accordingly, the civic leaders and local business people of such communities tend to be staunch supporters of the adjacent military facility. It is not hard to see how such a perception comes about: the military installation brings money into the local economy in the form of direct jobs. As well, the value of goods and services bought locally by the military is usually significant. The Canadian Forces Maritime Experimental and Test Ranges (CFMETR) at Nanoose Bay, 15 km north of Nanaimo, is a typical example. Local politicians and business people are quick to point to the \$5-10 million that is brought into the local economy. They seem solidly, and justifiably, convinced of their perception of CFMETR as an economic benefit. The surprising thing is: This perception is incorrect.

Ironically, the main source of information which shows the benefits of converting military installations is the Office of Economic Adjustments (OEA) - a branch of the U.S. Department of Defense. Economic conversion of military facilities can be defined as the process of developing alternative uses for workforce and facilities presently engaged in military production. In 1981 the OEA did a study of 94 communities affected by military closures over the previous twenty years.

In almost every case, after an initial period of economic hardship lasting an average of 2-3 years, the local economy more than recovered. The report concluded that the converted facilities employed more than 50% more people than the former military installations. Conversion projects included airports, industrial parks, technical and academic institutions, recreational centers, fire protection and correctional sites. Three crucial observations of the report are: 1. The communities that had the shortest transition periods were those that had planned for conversion well in advance of actual closures. 2. Private companies did not like

to locate near military facilities because it meant competing with the military for salaries and job benefits. 3. In most cases, local community leaders who had strenuously resisted the closures in the first place, would not have the facility back even if the government came "begging".

Aside from increasing the number of jobs available, other benefits that were reported include: Development of long term economic planning. Diversification of the local economy, with many small businesses filling in for one large military installation. Business benefits, such as instant space and low front-end cost. A greater than usual sense of cooperation developed with business, government, and labour pitching in to tide over the hard times caused by the closure. The experiences of these communities identifies several criteria which would be fulfilled by an "ideal" conversion project.



In the case of CFMETR, these criteria would include the following:

- employment of at least as many as are employed at CFMETR presently (about 75 Canadian civilians).
- employment of all of the present civilian staff who choose to stay, with a minimum amount of retraining necessary for their employment in the new endeavour.
- provisions for a good quality work environment for the employees.
- fulfillment of a regional or community need that is not presently being met.
- encouragement of the growth of new industries in the region.

- environmental soundness and wise use of local resources.
- chosen by the local community, and in harmony with local community values.
- Canadian owned and operated, use of local and domestic suppliers of materials, equipment and components.
- efficient use of the CFMETR grounds, buildings, docks and roads (almost all movable equipment at CFMETR is U.S. owned and would presumably be removed if the base were closed).



Since it is very important that the Nanoose-Nanaimo area come up with its own conversion plan, the Nanoose Conversion Campaign is confining itself to making suggestions that are intended to be informative and promote dialogue. Some of these are:

1. A marine biological station, possibly coordinated with the stations in Nanaimo and Bamfield. Payroll would be about the same as CFMETR and many skills would be transferable.
 2. Alternate energy research and development. There is an enormous need for such research in Canada. Research stations of this type encourage businesses to move nearby to take advantage of the research facilities. Retraining would be minimal.
 3. A biotechnology research and development complex. Presently, in Canada almost no research is being done in this important new field.
 4. Research and development of Advanced Industrial Materials. Canada imports many materials that it could be manufacturing. Light industries are particularly attracted to this type of research station as materials research is expensive.
- There are many other possibilities for conversion of CFMETR.