



# The Vision Quest

How can we bring meaningful change to the world?

By Elder Dave Courchene

*Go to the land, writes Nii Gaani Aki Inini (Leading Earth Man) – Dave Courchene, of the Anishinabe Nation, in this story of the Seven Grandfather Teachings.*



A YOUNG BOY WAS TROUBLED by what he was seeing in the world – climate change, continued wars, violence and hatred. He decided to ask Grandfather what he could do to help make a change.

Grandfather replied, “The question you are asking can only be answered by going on a Vision Quest. It’s a rite of passage to help you become a man,” answered Grandfather. “It’s time now for you to go to the land. It will teach you how to survive by showing you the order and laws of Creation. To understand who you are, you must ask your ancestors your question, and call on the Earth and nature to teach you. We have a special place called Manitou Api, meaning: ‘the place where the Great Spirit sits’. You will be alone for four days and four nights, fasting with no water and no food. This will clear your mind and cleanse your body so it can be ready to receive and live your vision.”

The young boy left and arrived at Manitou Api. He chose a place close to the pine trees. Placing his offering of tobacco in a circle, he seated himself at the centre. Night came quickly. He gazed at the bright sky full of stars. Finally, he fell asleep.

He awoke to the sound of a long howl—a wolf in the distance. He was a bit afraid, but he felt more at ease as the sun rose and warmed him up. The birds seemed to sing in joy, seeing the sun rise again.

There was no vision that night, but the boy could now see more of nature than he’d ever noticed before. A deer walked by gracefully, not taking notice of him. He saw little creatures on the land, birds flying by, a butterfly landing on his hand before fluttering away.

Throughout the daytime, the boy witnessed and felt so much. His emotions ran in many different directions, and his mind questioned why he was there. Somehow, the land kept him in the circle. For three days and nights he felt himself going through a transformation, but yet... no vision.

The fourth night came, and he asked Spirit for a vision. He drifted off to sleep.

In a dream state, he suddenly found himself surrounded by seven animals, standing around his circle. Amazing how real it all seemed!

As he sat in the centre of the circle, Buffalo stepped forward and spoke.

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is published four times per year by the  
Manitoba Eco-Network/  
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Manitoba Eco-Network is affiliated with  
the Canadian Environmental Network.

Individual subscriptions to *Eco-Journal*  
are available as part of a supporting  
membership to the Manitoba Eco-Network at  
a cost of \$30. Group membership dues are  
\$50. Associate membership dues are \$100.

The opinions expressed by contributors  
are their own and do not represent  
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Manitoba Eco-Network is a registered charity  
(# 128446846 RR0001).

**For advertising rates, please contact**  
**info@mbeconetwork.org, or 947-6511.**  
**The advertising deadline for the**  
**Spring 2019 edition is March 1, 2019.**

## Remembering Sandra Madray

*By Anne Lindsey, Former Executive Director*



PHOTO: WINSTON MADRAY

**MANITOBA ECONETWORK IS SADDENED TO REPORT** the passing of a long-time member and Manitoba activist, Sandra Madray, on August 17, 2018.

Sandra was the co-founder, with Margaret Friesen, of Chemical Sensitivities Manitoba, a local group advocating for individuals who experience acute adverse reactions to common chemicals, and for a reduction of chemical exposures in the environment. On behalf of her group, Sandra served on the Board of the Network, for a number of years. Her work had impacts well beyond Manitoba, as noted in this tribute written by Anne Lindsey, former Executive Director of the EcoNetwork, and a friend of Sandra's.

A group of Sandra's friends and colleagues are working on creating a legacy project in Sandra's memory. While they have not yet settled on its exact nature, it will very likely include a strong educational component on the issues of chemical sensitivity. Regardless of their final direction, they know it will require some financial resources. They will endeavour to provide charitable receipts for any donations readers may care to make to this project. Please contact Anne at 204 452-2352 if you would like further information, or to arrange a donation. Thanks in advance for your support.

*I went to visit a friend and colleague recently* – someone I hadn't seen for awhile. Sandra Madray was in the final stages of cancer. She was dying. I was shocked and deeply saddened to see the physical changes the disease had wrought on my beautiful friend. She was so thin, and in so much pain.

Cancer is horrific in every circumstance but the cruel irony in Sandra's situation is that she worked much of her adult life in a volunteer capacity to prevent cancer and other illnesses. In particular, those caused by and associated with environmental and industrial chemicals.

As a co-founder (with Margaret Friesen) of the local group, Chemical Sensitivities Manitoba and an advisor to the national organization, Prevent Cancer Now, she participated as a citizen/environmental representative in countless government consultations on laws and regulations regarding chemicals. She sat on the National Stakeholder Advisory Council for the Chemicals Management Plan and on the Canada-United States Regulatory Cooperation Council. She served on the Board of the Manitoba Eco-Network for several years, and was active in the Children's Health and Environment Partnership. Sandra educated herself (and others) on the science and public policy of chemical exposure and what it means for human health. Studying reams of documents, she did the arduous and often thankless work that many of us have neither the patience, nor the appetite for, as we trust hopefully that our governments will make the right decisions in the public interest.

Because she did that work, she knew that our hopeful trust is misplaced and that most regulatory decisions about chemicals are not taken with the utmost care to protect health or the

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## February

### 2 Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour

7pm-10pm, Centennial Concert Hall  
The Banff Mountain Film Festival (BMFF) World Tour brings the excitement, the spectacle, and the richness of the mountains and mountain culture to Winnipeg. Featuring spectacular, inspiring, funny, exciting, and thought-provoking mountain films from around the world, the BMFF is an exhilarating exploration of the mountain world from remote landscapes and cultures to adrenaline-packed action sports.

**Tickets available at [accmanitoba.ca/events/bmff](http://accmanitoba.ca/events/bmff)**

### 3, 24 Free Snowshoeing

10am-4pm, Living Prairie Museum  
Drop in for free snowshoeing on the first and last Sunday of February. No experience required, and we supply the snowshoes! Sizes are available for small children to adults. Be sure to wear winter boots.

### 3-9 Jack Frost Challenge | Bougeons en Hiver

The Jack Frost Challenge is a free, week-long challenge for all Manitobans. The challenge is to reach 130 active kilometres as a team of 1-5 persons. Kilometres can be logged for fun winter activities, such as; walking, running, biking, skating, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, tobogganing, and more! The objective of the Jack Frost Challenge is to encourage active modes of transportation, all year round. We want all Manitobans moving in Winter!

**Register online at [greenactioncentre.ca](http://greenactioncentre.ca)**

### 9 Seedy Saturday

10am-3pm, Canadian Mennonite University, North Campus

A gathering of gardeners, farmers & eaters celebrating local seeds, native plants, regional food and the beginning of a new growing season. Kids activities, seed swap, vendors, and refreshments by Tall Grass Prairie.

**Visit [winnipegseedsaturday.wordpress.com](http://winnipegseedsaturday.wordpress.com)**

### 19 Recycling and Waste Seminar

7pm, RM of Gimli Multi-Purpose Bldg.  
The Gimli Environmental Advisory Committee is holding a seminar on recycling

## Living Prairie Museum Winter Speaker Series

*Begins January 15th, 2019, and continues every other Tuesday at 7 p.m. until March 12th.*

This interesting group of speakers will share their knowledge of the plants, animals, and natural areas of Manitoba. Guests must register in advance, and admission is by donation.

**January 29:** Discovering the Brokenhead Wetland Interpretive Trail

**February 12:** Living with White-tailed Deer

**February 26:** Up Close and Personal with Owls and Owl Research in Manitoba

**March 12:** Discovering Mushrooms

## Discovery Evenings

*Monday evenings at 7:30pm, Franco-Manitoban Cultural Centre (340 Provencher Blvd) on the second floor (Salle Antoine-Gaboreau).*

Hosted by Nature Manitoba.

Admission is only \$5 for members (non-member rate \$10). No registration required.

**February 4:** The Lake Winnipeg commercial fishery: is it sustainable?

**February 25:** Grasslands, Tundra and Apartments: Discoveries and Adventures from Nature Manitoba's Bird Stewardship Programs

and household hazardous waste for residents of the RM of Gimli. The event will be at the RM of Gimli Multi-Purpose Bldg. 17B N Colonization Rd. There will be a short talk, Q&A, and handouts.

### 24 Natural Household Products Workshop

1pm-2pm, FortWhyte Alive

Looking for an alternative to harsh cleaning products and their plastic waste? Green Action Centre will be on site to guide you through the easy steps of making your own toothpaste, hand wash, and all-purpose cleaner, with samples to take home. \$30 or \$25 for FortWhyte Alive Members.

**Book online at [store.fortwhyte.org](http://store.fortwhyte.org) or register with our bookings office by phone at (204) 989-8355 x 311**

## March

### 6 Reel Green Gala

7pm, The MET

Our 9th annual Reel Green Gala is the Manitoba Eco-Network's annual fundraiser and a chance to support positive environmental awareness, education, and action within this incredible province. Join us

for a relaxed evening of re-connection with friends, and with the beauty of the natural world around us. Inspiring films, tasty eats, and incredible silent auction prizes.

**More information and tickets at [mbeconetwork.org](http://mbeconetwork.org)**

### 19 Composting Workshop

7pm, RM of Gimli Multi-Purpose Bldg.

The Gimli Environmental Advisory Committee is holding a workshop on composting. The event will be held at the RM of Gimli Multi-Purpose Bldg. 17B N Colonization Rd. There will be a talk, Q&A and handouts.

### 30 Gardening Saturday

9am-4pm, Canadian Mennonite University

Manitoba's annual Gardening Saturday is back with workshops focused on Growing Prairie Potential. New and exciting this year: Free tradeshow admission to general public, \$10 for each workshop offered, different workshops with local presenters, and two engaging panel discussions with gardening educators.





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## Remembering Sandra cont'd...

environment, but rather, lean heavily toward maximizing commercial profits and expedience. She knew that as a result, we inhabit a chemical soup of hazardous exposures to pesticides, cosmetics, plastics, vehicle and power plant emissions and other by-products of the hydrocarbon society.

Sandra's cancer may or may not have been attributable to environmental or workplace exposures, but many cancers are, and in all those cases, the pain and suffering, the unmitigated sadness and loss for family and friends is probably preventable.

Always kind, generous and with good humour and deep conviction, Sandra used her knowledge to advocate tirelessly for better solutions to society's problems. She campaigned especially for the most vulnerable – for children, the elderly, the chemically-sensitive (of which she was one) and the immune-compromised. A quiet warrior, she never sought special recognition for her work.

Some of the efforts she engaged in were successful – one recent example being the Manitoba law to prohibit many chemical pesticides in lawn care. With her own urban yard – an oasis of gorgeous native plants, buzzing and bright with butterflies and pollinators – as an example of better, healthful solutions for green space management, she worked with a coalition of groups to end unnecessary exposures to so-called “cosmetic” pesticides, some of which are linked in epidemiological studies to a variety of diseases, including cancer, respiratory and neurological/developmental problems. When Manitoba joined numerous other provinces in legislating against lawn chemicals, it was a small, but significant step forward in preventive medicine.

It is beyond sad that in Manitoba, it now seems destined to be reversed. Even though recent polling shows that most Manitobans consider pesticide-free to be the best approach, powerful forces support chemical solutions for weed control, and they appear to have the ear of the current government behind the scenes. Possibly acting on inside-knowledge, one lawn company owner was quoted in Home Décor and Renovations Magazine as saying that the (regulation) would be amended for 2019, and that he was optimistic that it would allow “licensed lawn care professionals to resume the use of more effective weed control products.” We can only surmise that he was referring to substances like 2,4-D, dicamba and mecoprop. As citizens, not only must we make every effort to avoid unnecessary products like cosmetic pesticides and scents, we must also continue to encourage our government not to take this terribly backward step. In fact, it would actually be more appropriate to strengthen the law by adding glyphosate-based compounds, such as Round Up, a weed control product with links to cancer, to the list of prohibited substances. Round-Up's sordid history of cover ups by its manufacturer, including the fact that its carcinogenic properties were long known about and hidden, is steadily being revealed in court challenges brought by cancer victims.

Sandra will not be with us to see a possible reversal of the policy that she contributed to, and once again, have to endure the impacts of lawn pesticides on her chemically-sensitive body. But if this change of policy comes to pass, so many will be impacted, including the children and all the other vulnerable people that she worked so hard to protect. How many of them will have to sicken and perhaps die before a clean, common sense and precautionary approach to green spaces is adopted once and for all in Manitoba? For Sandra Madray's sake, let this number be zero.

Sandra passed away at the age of 68, on August 17, 2018, with her beloved husband Winston and family members at her side. 🌱

## Old Grace Starts Multi-Family Composting

By Debby Lake, Old Grace Housing Co-op Resident



PHOTO: OLD GRACE HOUSING CO-OP

**HOW DO YOU LIVE SUSTAINABLY IN A COMMUNITY** of 64 households? Members of Old Grace Housing Co-op (OGHC) found a way to divert much of our food waste from the landfill with the support of Green Action Centre's (GAC) **ON SITE Multi-Family Composting Project**. After attending an information session in 2017, representatives of OGHC signed an agreement with GAC in January 2018 to participate in this project.

During the summer, GAC arranged for delivery of compost bins made by Urban Eatin' Landscapes. Once our construction and landscaping were complete, we moved the bins to their permanent location, and Teresa Prokopanko from GAC led a composting training session for OGHC residents. Kitchen scrap containers, fridge magnets and printed materials supplied by GAC were distributed at that session.

OGHC residents put their kitchen scraps in the bin labeled “greens” and cover them with leaves or straw from the bin labelled “browns.” Using a compost aerator supplied by GAC, we turn the active compost pile every week to 10 days. When the first bin filled, we changed its label to “maturing” and started using the third bin for greens. This fall, OGHC members gathered leaves from the stately trees of our old Wolseley neighborhood for next year's browns bin. We find the triple-bin system perfect for our needs, though one set is not big enough for an engaged community of our size. We plan to order another set of bins next year.

We are grateful to GAC and to our neighbor Rebecca Routhier who is helping us as she works toward her certificate as Master Composter. We look forward to using mature compost in our gardens and indoor plant pots next summer. 🌱

PHOTO: OLD GRACE HOUSING CO-OP

# Centre for Resilience launched at CMU

By James Magnus-Johnston

**FROM TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS** Earlier this spring, Canadian Mennonite University launched their new innovation centre--the Centre for Resilience.

The Centre for Resilience (CR) is a co-working lab for civic-minded entrepreneurs and researchers on the fourth floor of CMU's historic building at 500 Shaftesbury Blvd. The CR's goal is to develop policy, design, and enterprise innovations for a resilient economy that improves social equity and environmental protection.

"We're thankful for the opportunity to create a space designed to meet the needs of the 21st century," says James Magnus-Johnston, director of the centre. "The CR will improve the impact of social entrepreneurs, and allow students to work on complex, real-world problems."

A number of organizations are already working out of the CR, or developing long-term partnerships. Some of the residents working on ecologically-focused projects include:

- **The Manitoba chapter of A Rocha**, a Christian organization that promotes conservation, education, and sustainable agriculture
- **Compost Winnipeg**, a social enterprise that collects, composts, and tracks organic waste from residents, businesses, and events
- **Greentech Canada**, a company that distributes low-impact technologies for air purification and laundering, reducing environmental impact
- **Gardens Manitoba**, an organization which convenes gardening activities, provides opportunities for learning and mentorship, and promotes ecologically restorative gardening practices

The CR is helping to convene some of these stakeholders to foster land-based projects on the CMU grounds. Gardens Manitoba is working on the development of a passive solar greenhouse for the campus, which will help the organization deliver programs and support the work of the on-campus farm, stewarded by the Metanoia Farmers Co-operative. Compost Winnipeg is also working to expand their

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PHOTO: JAMES MAGNUS



PHOTO: JAMES MAGNUS

“Being a part of the CR is exciting, says Kelly Kuryk, project manager for Compost Winnipeg.” Sometimes in the environmental world you are in a little bit of a bubble,” she says. “The Centre for Resilience is all about tying it in with the academic community, and tying it in with other enterprises and socially-minded operations.”





# Outdated Policies Discourage Kids' Play

## Active Transportation

By Sean Carlson, Green Action Centre

**IF YOU WERE BORN BEFORE THE MID-90S** or so, chances are your childhood included what we might now call “free-range” or “risky” play. You probably played in the street until one of your friends yelled “car!” and you migrated to the safety of the boulevard. You probably walked or biked to your friends’ homes. You probably rode your bike to 7-11 for slurpees, or in my case, Pokémon cards. This kind of childhood is regrettably far less frequent than it used to be. We have seen a steady decline in the number of children walking to school, which corresponds to a general decline in children’s freedoms to go places at all. I’ve passed through neighbourhoods that are eerily quiet on warm summer afternoons—no children yelling or giggling, just the occasional passing car or barking dog. And I’ve come to learn that this isn’t just a result of busy lifestyles. Children under 12 are apparently prohibited from this kind of independent outdoor play.

### SUPERVISED AT ALL TIMES

In summer of 2018, Katharina Nuss, a Winnipeg mom, was investigated by Child and Family Services for allowing her two children, aged 7 and 3, to walk together to the bakery down the street. There were no streets to cross and she was watching them from her yard. While the file was quickly closed, Katharina was told that children under 12 must under no circumstances be unsupervised by an adult, including walking to school and other independent activities. Upon writing to the Department of Families to express her concern, she was met with the same response: it’s simply the law and it must be enforced.

But what exactly does the law say on the subject? Section 17(2)(g) of Manitoba’s Child and Family Services Act states “...a child is in need of protection where the child being under the age of 12 years, is left unattended and without reasonable provision being made for the supervision and safety of the child.” At some point, we seem to have settled on “reasonable provision” meaning direct adult supervision at all times. Manitoba isn’t unique in seeing a decline in children’s freedom to play, but we are unique

in our legislation: only Manitoba, New Brunswick, and Ontario have legislated minimum ages, with Manitoba’s and New Brunswick’s at 12 years old, and Ontario at 16 but with an apparently different interpretation. And this 12-year figure comes up repeatedly when talking with parents. We share the benefits of active transportation and make a solid case for kids walking and biking to school, and yet we hear:



“We share the benefits of active transportation and make a solid case for kids walking and biking to school, and yet we hear: “All of what you’re saying makes sense, but isn’t that against the law?” Unfortunately, at this time, we aren’t able to tell them otherwise.

*“All of what you’re saying makes sense, but isn’t that against the law?”* Unfortunately, at this time, we aren’t able to tell them otherwise.

### THE RESEARCH

The blanket prohibition on unsupervised kids is problematic because it does not take into account the research evidence that has emerged in the last few years, as summarized in the 2015 Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play. The Position Statement was the result of two systematic reviews of studies related to the risks and benefits of active and risky outdoor play, and was intended to clear up disagreement and



ambiguity around the issue. According to the Statement’s authors, it was “informed by the best available evidence, interpreted by a group of Canadian experts representing 14 organizations, and reviewed and edited by more than 1,600 stakeholders.” The statement itself does not mince words: “Access to active play in nature and outdoors—with its risks—is essential for healthy child development. We recommend increasing children’s opportunities for self-directed play outdoors in all settings—at home, at school, in child care, the community and nature.” A number of other facts are referenced in the research, among which are “When children

are closely supervised outside, they are less active,” “Canadian children are eight times more likely to die as a passenger in a motor vehicle than from being hit by a vehicle when outside on foot or on a bike”, and “Outdoor play is safer than you think! The odds of total stranger abduction are about 1 in 14 million based on RCMP reports. Being with friends outdoors may further reduce this number.”

The overall message of the Position Statement is that we as a society are not interpreting risk accurately, and children are worse off for it. Since 2015, we’ve seen an even higher level of support for outdoor and risky play—On June 1, 2018, the Chief Medical Officers of Health, composed of lead public health officers from each province and territory along with Health Canada, announced their endorsement of the Position Statement, adding their own recommendations for the public to “Get involved in public policy discussions relating to active outdoor play and advocate for school policies and government policies (at all levels) to be supportive of active outdoor play,” and to “Share evidence and increase parents’, caregivers’, policy makers’ and decision makers’ awareness and understanding of the benefits versus the risks of outdoor play.”

We know that Canada is underperforming when it comes to youth getting minimum levels of physical activity—we have ParticipACTION ratings of D or lower in categories like active transportation, sedentary behaviours, and overall physical activity. How is it that parents are being denied the chance to implement what high-level public health officials are telling us is essential for healthy development? Paradoxically, a policy intended to protect children from harm can result in more chronic illness and mental health problems, to say nothing about the environmental problems related to driving. It makes sense that if children can play in a way that’s exciting and stimulating for them, that they could be drawn away from the sedentary activities and screen time that have become epidemic. Yet, right now, parents have two legal options for children to access outdoor play: either drive children, or escort them on foot. There is no room for the third option of allowing kids incremental gains in independence to build their self-esteem and sense of control. Children in single-parent or car-free households face additional compounding barriers that make it even more likely they will end up on the couch.

## PUSHING BACK AGAINST FEAR

Thankfully, we’re seeing small steps forward across North America, with some of

the first examples of legislative solutions. On March 15, 2018, the state government of Utah signed into law Bill SB65, which clarified that it is not neglect to allow children of “sufficient age and maturity” to walk to or from school and play outside, among other things. State legislators have said the intent is to allow parents, who are the best judges of their children’s abilities, to determine how and when to teach their children more responsibility. Lawmakers in Texas and New York have also shown interest in following suit, as have individual municipalities—On November 7, 2018, the city of Ithaca, NY declared themselves a free-range kids town. Mayor Myrick believes that “*Given the choice between living here, where your kids can run outside and find a bunch of friends to play with, and another city where just allowing your kids to walk home from the park could get you arrested, we know that families will joyfully choose Ithaca.*”

We hope to see Manitoba change its policy on unsupervised kids based on the evidence highlighted in the 2015 Position statement. And we know there is public support for our own free-range kids bill—Katharina Nuss’s Change.org petition to bring such a bill to Manitoba has received over 8500 signatures to date, and a Winnipeg Free Press poll found 82% of respondents in support of parents’ being the best judges of their children’s capabilities. An enthusiastic government endorsement of active outdoor play, with all its benefits, would have far-reaching implications.

While we can (and should) continue to upgrade our infrastructure to make our streets even safer for all users, aligning our laws with the research evidence could magnify the impact of existing public health and climate change initiatives. Updating the law is practically free, and would allow existing organizations and programs to apply the most recent evidence to their work. By assuring parents that they are not obligated to be present with their child until the age of 12, and may in fact be harming a child if they are, we could help move families away from fears that may not be based on an accurate assessment of the risks their children face.

The result? Happier and healthier kids, a bit more free time for stressed-out parents, and fewer cars on the road. 🌱

*Sean works with the Active and Safe Routes to School Program at Green Action Centre. He can be reached at [sean@greenactioncentre.ca](mailto:sean@greenactioncentre.ca) or 204-925-3777 ext. 103.*

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## Centre for Resilience cont’d...

operations using a state-of-the-art composting technology powered by solar energy.

In addition to land-based projects, the Centre hosts a number of entrepreneurs working on projects in social services and digital marketing, including:

- **Being Pukka**, an organization that uses positive psychology to train, coach, and consult individuals and businesses
- **Blossoms Senior Care**, a non-medical, private care company for seniors
- **Sly Bird Creative**, a communications and marketing firm
- **Red Moon Media**, a digital marketing firm

“What’s neat is the natural interplay between these stakeholders,” Magnus-Johnston says, pointing out that Compost Winnipeg will be able to supply the CMU Farm with composted soil, and the Metanoia workers will avail themselves of one of the greenhouses.

Being a part of the CR is exciting, says Kelly Kuryk, project manager for Compost Winnipeg. “Sometimes in the environmental world you are in a little bit of a bubble,” she says. “The Centre for Resilience is all about tying it in with the academic community, and tying it in with other enterprises and socially-minded operations.”

CMU students are also active participants in the CR. This fall, CMU launched a new course in collaboration with the CR called the Social Innovation Lab, a new experiential learning course. In the course, organizations and businesses pitch “problems” to students, and students respond by designing, proposing, and implementing solutions.

“It’s a different way of thinking about a practicum,” Magnus-Johnston says. He adds that the CR’s profile is rising in Winnipeg. He recently served as one of the judges at a social innovation challenge organized by the economic development agency North Forge Technology Exchange.

It will be fascinating to see how the CR develops in the future.

“I feel quite excited about it,” Magnus-Johnston says. 🌱

*If you’re interested in participating in CR activities or learning more, reach out to James at [jmagnus-johnston@cmu.ca](mailto:jmagnus-johnston@cmu.ca) or 204.952.7751. Dedicated desks are \$150/month.*



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## Vision Quest cont'd...

"I am the Buffalo. I bring you the Law of Respect. Respect all life on Mother Earth. Respect Elders and people of all races. The essence of respect is to give."

The Buffalo said, "I come to let you know you must now serve your people. This is what respect is, to give yourself to the people using the laws we bring you."

Then an Eagle that had landed from the sky made his way to the young boy. "I, the Eagle, bring you the Law of Love. Love the Great Spirit. Love the Earth. Love yourself, your family, and your fellow human beings. Every act of kindness and love will change the universe and change your world."

Next, the Bear stepped forward. "I, the Bear, bring you the Law of Courage. In life you will need the spirit of courage to overcome

yourself. Humble yourself to the Great Spirit by showing gratitude for your blessings. I also bring other good teachings from your brothers and sisters that have arrived on your homeland."

Finally, the Grandmother Turtle slowly made her way forward. "I bring you the Law of Truth. Truth is walking all the Sacred Laws brought to you by the Grandfather Animals that came before me. We are Spirit Grandfathers who sit at the Central Council Fire who oversee all of Creation and provide spiritual help. At times we'll come to you in dreams or visions. Sometimes we'll give you strong feelings, and put words in your mind to speak."

"I, Turtle, represent Woman, the giver of life—your Mother Earth, and your own mother who gave you life. I bring you the ways of

sons that you must follow; the four elements of life—Earth, Air, Water and Fire; the four elements of your human nature—Spirit, Emotions, Body, and Mind; and the four directions—North, South, East, and West, where the Grandfathers sit in the spirit world."

The young boy suddenly awakened, knowing he had received his vision. He was excited to return to see Grandfather.

Grandfather said, "It is now your choice whether to answer the call of Spirit, my Grandson. You are free to make your choice. The Seven Sacred Laws can make you free. If you live in opposition to these Laws, you will be out of balance. Your troubles as man began when you lost touch with the Earth, the Original Mother to all life. Man became cold in the heart and allowed his gift of the mind to overwhelm the



“There was no vision that night, but the boy could now see more of nature than he'd ever noticed before. A deer walked by gracefully, not taking notice of him. He saw little creatures on the land, birds flying by, a butterfly landing on his hand before fluttering away.

ILLUSTRATIONS: HENRY GUIMOND, TURTLE LODGE

your fears, live your true spirit, and overcome the evil you will find in the world created by humans. To walk in courage is to do the right thing – to always take the high moral road."

Then the Sabe stepped towards the young boy and said, "I am Sabe. Some call me Bigfoot or Sasquatch. I bring you the Law of Honesty. Never lie, gossip or judge, and be honest with yourself and others. Always speak kind words from your heart. Be true to your word."

The Sabe touched the boy on his head with his furry hand before he returned to his spot.

The Beaver then stepped forward. He said, "I, the Beaver, bring you the Law of Wisdom. Everyone has a special gift. Show wisdom by using your gift to build a peaceful world. To know wisdom is to know yourself."

Then the Wolf stepped forward, bowing its head in humbleness, being in the presence of a human being. He said, "I, the Wolf, bring you the Law of Humility. Think of others be-

your ancestors, who walked with these Laws. There is so much suffering because the people have forgotten the Laws and are walking another path that has taken them into darkness. When the human beings walk with the Seven Sacred Laws, then there will be peace."

"On my back are thirteen markings, representing the thirteen moons of the journey Mother Earth makes around Grandfather Sun, a symbol of the Great Spirit. Thirteen also represents the nine moons it takes to be created in the womb of your mother, plus the four sea-

other gifts. The mind lacked the spiritual foundation to guide its thoughts and actions. It was easy for the dark energies to seize control over the minds of men to destroy life by destroying the Earth. Man has yet to awaken from this nightmare he is in."

Grandfather looked closely at the boy. Man must begin by going back to the land, your mother, who will help awaken anyone who searches for the light, for the truth. You have been given your vision, Grandson. What will be your choice?"

*Dave Courchene – Nii Gaani Aki Inini (Leading Earth Man) is a respected Anishinabe Elder and Knowledge Keeper who has devoted his life to creating a healthy environment for current and future generations. He founded the Turtle Lodge International Centre for Indigenous Education and Wellness in Sagkeeng First Nation in Manitoba, where he hosts International Roundtables Supporting Ancient Indigenous Knowledge, including the Onjisyay Aki International Summit on Climate Change in 2017, and has initiated the Grandmother Teachings on coming-of-age and Vision Quest rites of passage for youth of all cultures.*



# Our Emergent Earth

By Jacob Buller



PHOTO: JACOB BULLER

**RECENTLY I READ HOW SEVERE** the changes in our planetary climate and subsequent geography will be in 12 years if we do not change direction. This means that if you have children under the age of 6, they will see major climate impact before they are even able to vote. There's no question to this science. I'm also reading about how ExxonMobil knew about climate change in the 1970s, misled the public about it, and is now challenged by San Francisco and eight other coastal cities due to geographic impact caused by climate change.

As they develop cognitively, our growing children will have many questions. They will ask what action the generation before took regarding climate change. They will ponder, "How do I help and guide my own children given this planetary shifting?" They may feel torn between the need of immediate action and the need of historical context. Maybe they will live in full acceptance of a protracted planetary puberty, and—embracing their humanity—will simply be able to adjust to their environment. Kids can be good at this.

“Between ice shelf collapses, skyrocketing carbon PPMs and tankers moving through a melting arctic, the time of change and maturation is here. The electric cars don't come fast enough and the need to express our humanity in new ways grows stronger. Except there are no planetary adults, no avatars, to guide us through this turbulent time. As a planet, we are in this together, young and optimistic.

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To facilitate a regenerative biosphere, perhaps we need to re-evaluate biosphere relationship assumptions. Like a clear-thinking youth, we could start by questioning the results of col-

lective actions, challenge them and ask where they are taking us. Maybe we need to grow down and set aside our differences, hatreds and selfishness and work together because we are—indeed—all in this together.

Typically, mainstream efforts lead towards divisiveness. Many of us are born into cyclic stories of lack, frustration, stagnation and abuse. We are told to only look out for number one, anything goes and the biggest bully wins. Despite the historical entrenchment of these stories, there are living examples that show this

*continued to page 10 >>*



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## Emergent Earth cont'd...

perceived status quo is not unanimous. There are many examples of communal, cooperative lives that sit outside the mainstream.

Today we have everything we need to survive and thrive. We just need to know how to steward, and how to share. Today in our place in history we are like a twelve-year old with our feet in two different worlds; an awareness of the history of childhood and an unfolding world of maturation, adulthood and possibility. But how many people on the edge of maturation practice the art of stewardship?

To steward we must operate within a given set of latitudes. Without the care and consistency of the simple discipline of living within our means, the constructs of our past fall apart, leaving grasping hands and little to stand on. In order to share, we must know what our unique needs are, what our boundaries are, what is fantasy and what is reality. We must care for our whole human being well in order to share well with other human beings. Only then can stewardship be lasting and regenerative.

The maturation I speak of is the shifting of collective efforts from the divisive effects of the stories of our old world, to stories and efforts that result in building each other up, co-operation, meditation, cohesion and coherence. To growing up and out of the old ways of disenfranchisement and into the egalitarianism of planetary adulthood. Proof of this passage into wisdom may be when we come into true balance with our biosphere. When care and responsibility for our biosphere is woven into our communities, and the earthen canvas receives the healing and regeneration it needs.

Ecovillages are a starting point in this direction. In ecologically conscious villages, the collective efforts of the community can make the community not only sustainable, but regenerative. As visionary communities created with specific ecological, cooperative intentions, they are value-based. The most resilient of them tend to harbour social enterprises, but all operate within the latitudes of their local biosphere.

To enable a stronger, more cohesive response to the changes of our planet, perhaps a reinvention of human habitation is in order that considers awareness of and alignment with human needs. This may be our only way to change the direction of our collective efforts.

The design sphere of ecovillages delineates a human-scale community. Some have shared housing, further reducing associated costs. From infrastructure (or lack thereof), car-sharing coops, permaculture gardens and more, the resources required for living in an environment restructured for cooperative lifestyles can be more cost-effective and require less individual financial expenditure. The catch is that they require personal accountability.

A redesign of the urban communities we are familiar with can implement ecological values in a pervasive manner. Done right, other points could be accommodated, includ-

As part of the cohesive, shared response to evolutionary maturation, new initiatives are unfolding across Canada. Conversations between O.U.R. Ecovillage and Yarrow in BC, La Citie Ecologique in Quebec and the Tycoed Restorative Farm have yielded a new group called Ecovillages Canada. It's website, [ecovillages.ca](http://ecovillages.ca) features content on the components and elements of human-scale intentional communities with ecological values, with spotlights on successes in Canada. Existing media includes blog posts of visits to communities in both Canada and the US, reviews on relevant books and its newsletter.

Its official newsletter "Our Co-Creators" debuted covering three intentional communities in Manitoba; Northern Sun Farm, Ploughshares and Myriad Village. The second issue features Manitoba's two earthships and an interview with a tradesman who worked on both. In the most recent are initiatives and stories about connecting children to nature and the planet. Three upcoming issues will include themes on permaculture, society, planetary stewardship, and the newsletter may expand to include other Canadian regions.

The future holds more outreach programming and media. This team aims to bring ecological as well as self-awareness courses to Canadians. If you want to be informed, sign up for 'Our Co-Creators', the official newsletter of the [ecovillages.ca](http://ecovillages.ca) website.

This dynamic, growing team needs your help. Ecovillages Canada is looking for bloggers, writers and more to get the word out. Upcoming website forums will require moderators. Also needed are organizers for film and fundraising events. Be part of a team of people who care about the planet enough to want to pass it on to a younger generation.

Your help is needed. You have a role to play in the evolution of our planet. Our youth will be looking to you and the actions you took in this time of change. Perhaps your calling exists with the emerging ecovillage community in Manitoba. Perhaps your calling is in Ontario, British Columbia or another province. Whatever you do, remember that our children are already asking questions. What do you want to tell them you did in this time of great change? What is your response, your answer in these times of great change? This is a time when actions speak louder than any words.



ing secure jobs, better education, many facets of health including mental, psychological and social. Intentional communities incorporating nature and healthy living practices improves wellness for ourselves and our children. Architectural firms are already weaving nature into our neighborhoods. In Winnipeg, architecture firm Nadi Design integrated natural play parks, bike trails and fountains into the new Bridgwater Trails neighborhood. Cohlmeier Architecture worked gardens, markets and community meeting space at The Forks.

Northern Sun Farm, an off-grid community located south of Steinbach has about twelve residents who require very little in terms of financial resources. Others are intentional communities with multiple businesses to provide economic self-sufficiency, like Twin Oaks in Louisa County, Virginia.



# IPCC 1.5°C Report

## Deep climate action urgency

By Curt Hull, P.Eng. Project Manager

ON MONDAY OCTOBER 8, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a report on how quickly we need to take carbon out of the atmosphere to limit global warming to 1.5°C and avoid its most destructive consequences. The report itself has a lot of complex scientific information and hundreds of pages in five deeply considered and well-researched chapters. However, there is also a 34- page Summary for Policymakers (SPM).

This a “summarize the summary” and my suggestions for where we should focus our efforts to prepare for the future foretold in this report.

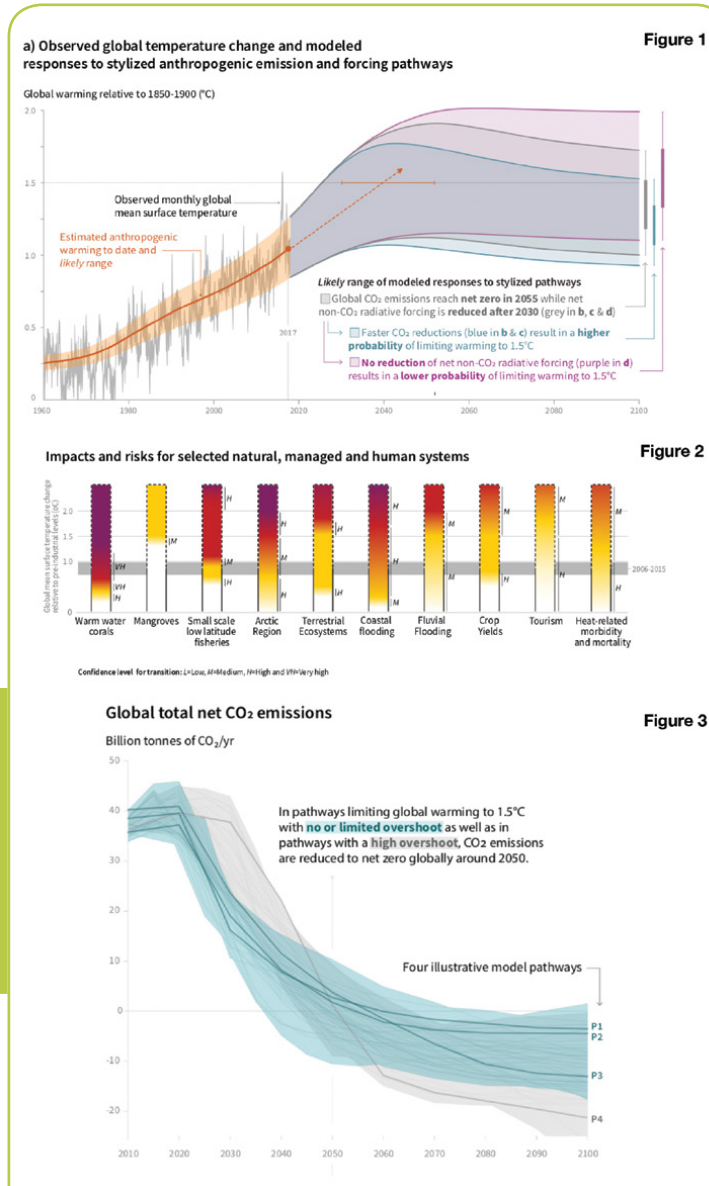
I draw your attention to three key figures within the SPM: (Middle of the page.)

### THE BOTTOMLINE OF THIS REPORT -

THE WORLD NEEDS TO:

- Cease fossil fuel expansion immediately
- Precipitously reduce GHG emissions no later than 2030
- Be actively withdrawing atmospheric carbon by 2050

**FIGURE 1: GLOBAL AVERAGE ANNUAL TEMPERATURES** (SPM page 7) - This graph shows global average annual temperatures in the recent past and projections of possible future temperature envelopes. However, the levelling off of the graph only happens if we achieve the greenhouse gas emission reductions in the scenarios presented in Figure 3. Without those emission reductions, the curve keeps increasing until positive feedback loops become predominant drivers of further warming and the world enters an era of climate that humans have never seen before and which put civilization in peril.



**FIGURE 2: IMPACTS AND RISKS** (SPM page 14) - The coloured bars represent global impacts and risks in various areas like coastal flooding and crop yields. The darker colours represent more risk. You can see a substantial increase in risk for each 1/2 degree of global warming.

These are primary climate impacts. These coloured bars do not include risk of secondary impacts which are much more difficult to predict and quantify; impacts like mass migrations of climate refugees, political turmoil and economic uncertainty. These are the really dangerous consequences for the world and Manitoba.

**FIGURE 3: GLOBAL NET CO2 EMISSIONS** (SPM page 19) - This figure is the most disturbing. It says that, in order to avoid the continued increase in temperatures and the increasing impacts that result, the world needs to cut emissions precipitously starting no later than 2030. The later this decline begins, the more that global temperatures will overshoot 1.5°C. Moreover, emissions need to reach net zero by around 2050 and then go negative - In other words, we need to withdraw a huge amount of carbon out of the atmosphere just to stabilize global warming.

Given the current global political reality, there is serious doubt that the world will take the dramatic action required to remove carbon from the atmosphere at the scale and timeframe in Figure 3. Therefore, I suggest that the most responsible course of action is to put all of our effort into building our resilience to the primary and secondary impacts of climate change. Resilience means providing for our essential needs ourselves without fossil fuel. 🌱

### TO ACHIEVE TRUE AND ADEQUATE RESILIENCE, BY 2030 MANITOBA MUST

- **Food** - Feed ourselves locally without synthetic fertilizers or diesel for machinery
- **Shelter** - Heat and cool all of our buildings (old and new) without natural gas
- **Transportation** - Move all goods and people without gasoline or diesel

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