



Survey Says... 88% of Manitobans Want Boreal Protected

New polling, the boreal summit,
and designing our collective future

By Ron Thiessen, executive director Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society (CPAWS) – Manitoba chapter

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Manitoba has the increasingly rare opportunity to plan for land use in its northern regions before the arrival of widespread development. Comprehensive planning can ensure security for business, communities, and wildlife, including the threatened woodland caribou.

PHOTO: RON THIESSEN

PROBE RESEARCH CONDUCTED A POLL for the International Institute for Sustainable Development in February of this year that clearly demonstrates Manitoba's vision for our province's vast boreal region is highly focused on conservation. According to the results, 88 per

cent of Manitobans believe the province should protect at least half of the boreal forest.

We have an amazing opportunity that most places in the world have lost. Manitoba is envied around the world for having a largely intact canvas that we can paint with a balance of sustain-

able developments and a wholesome environment. In many jurisdictions, the brushes have splattered their entire landscapes with piecemeal developments and now they are trying to restore a healthy balance, which is extremely challenging and expensive.

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Inspiring People, Celebrating Nature

Reel Green 2015

By Curt Belton, Executive Director, Manitoba Eco-Network

AS THE FLURRY OF ACTIVITY that surrounds an event like Reel Green dies down, it gives just a few moments to reflect upon what it is we are actually doing. Working to promote positive environmental action can seem like you are swimming upstream all the time, and that someone keeps building dams that you have to try and hurl yourself over. Faced with the ongoing reality of climate change, momentum for projects that you know will have a detrimental effect on ecosystems, and policies that don't seem to take into account the broad picture of sustainability, it can seem like those of us pursuing environmental justice and sustainability face insurmountable odds. That is why it is important to take time out to reflect on the positive work that we do get done, and look to the beauty of nature to inspire us.

At Reel Green this year we saw *How Wolves Change Rivers*, an incredible story of how the reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone National Park had a profound positive effect on the entire ecosystem and even changed the rivers. We also saw the beauty of belugas in the icy waters of Hudson Bay in *Swimming with Belugas*, and were inspired by the tenacity of 93-year-old Alice Kolisnyk as she used her walker to traverse portages in her canoe trip in Northern Ontario in *Nonagenarian Canoeist*. The incredible beauty of nature and the inspiring actions of people reminding us that there is still work to be done to protect what we hold dear for now and the future.

We also celebrated the work of two dedicated environmentalists, Peter Miller and Carolyn Garlich, who have been working diligently for positive environmental change and inspiring others for over 30 years. Peter and Carolyn have a longstanding association with the Green Action Centre and the Green Action Committee of the Universalist Unitarian Church. Peter was a founding member of Time to Respect Earth's Ecosystems and Carolyn has been a board member for the Eco-Network. Separately, and together this remarkable couple have unequivocally earned their joint Lifetime Achieve Award. Looking at the work of Peter and Carolyn and exchanging thoughts and sharing experiences with others at Reel Green is a time to renew your commitment and prepare to throw yourself into the next challenge. So as spring comes our way let's continue to celebrate nature and be inspired by others!



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APRIL

11, 21, 30 **Prairie Planting Workshops**

Living Prairie Museum

Learn everything you need to know about native prairie plants; how they can be included in your landscape design and why using native plant material is so important from a conservation perspective. The workshop includes a presentation, discussion, and wildflower seed planting demonstration.

Contact the Living Prairie Museum at 204-832-0167 to register.

14 **Climate Change Boot Camp - For Teachers**

Manitoba Education and Advance Learning

This all-day event will provide a setting for teachers and administrators to learn facts and solutions about one of the most urgent issues of our time. Participants will receive hands-on training from local experts about the science, impacts in Manitoba and around the world, and the solutions.

Contact climate.connection@mymts.net for more info.

15 **Deadline for Manitoba Greenest School Contest**

What does it mean to be a "green school" and how does yours rate? Win \$500 for your school.

Check out the details at mbeconetwork.org/youth.

20 **Organic Gardening Workshop - FREE for Eco-Network Members**

Fort Garry Library, 6:30pm

Just in time for spring planting, local author Hugh Skinner will present tips based on his book *Gardening Naturally*.

To register, contact info@mbeconetwork.org or 204-947-6511.

21 **Composting Workshop**

Assiniboine Park Conservatory, 7pm

Learn the benefits of composting, how to get started, and key factors for successful composting.

Details at gardensmanitoba.com.

23 **Sisler High School Sustainability Conference**

Join the students of Sisler for a day of creative presentations and student-led hands-on workshops during Earth Week. The conference is for students in grades 6-9 and is limited to 4 students and one teacher from each school.

Contact climate.connection@mymts.net for more info.

22-28 **Earth Week**

(Earth Day - April 22nd)

Celebrate our natural environment with events throughout the province. Check out our Events page at mbeconetwork.org and stay connected to what's happening.

27 **Radical Reels Film Tour - Alpine Club of Canada, Manitoba Section**

Gas Station Theatre

Experience more than half a dozen wild adrenaline-pumping sports as seen through the eyes of some of today's top athletes in the best action sports films from the Banff Mountain Film Festival.

Details at accmanitoba.ca.

MAY

3 **Green Drinks**

King's Head Pub, 5pm

Working or volunteering in the environmental sector? Join us for an informal monthly get-together of after-work bevies.

RSVP to info@mbeconetwork.org.

3 **Arts Junktion Brunch & Art Auction Fundraiser**

U of Winnipeg Atrium

ArtsJunktion has been reclaiming materials destined for the landfills and redistributing these materials to artists, teachers and the general public. Details for this annual fundraiser at artsjunktion.mb.ca.

13 **Birding for Beginners with Nature Manitoba**

Bunn's Creek, 365 McIvor

Details at naturemanitoba.ca.

21 **Annual Golf Tournament**

Manitoba Environmental Industries Association (MEIA)

Details at meia.mb.ca.

27 **Conference: Sustainable Energy in Manitoba Schools**

Providence University College - Otterburne, MB

For details, contact Bruce Friesen-Pankratz at 204-324-6416 or friesen-pankratzb@blsd.ca.

4-June 3 **Bike To School Month**

Thousands of Manitoba school children will join students from across Canada to celebrate biking and walking to school this Spring. Join the celebration!

Details at greenactioncentre.ca.

JUNE

3 **Clean Air Day**

Visit greenactioncentre.ca for details on events.

3 **Sunset BBQ at FortWhyte Alive**

Staged outdoors in FortWhyte's beautiful lakeside setting, this fun and informal event continues to stand as FortWhyte's signature fundraiser.

Details at fortwhyte.org.

5 **Green Drinks**

King's Head Pub, 5pm

6 **DIY Homesteader Festival**

Fraserwood, MB

Offers people a fun and warm way to learn important skills they can bring into their modern life. Details at homesteaderfest.ca.

11 **Downtown Farmers' Market**

Manitoba Hydro Place, 10-3pm

13-19 **Bike Week Winnipeg**

Events will be held in every corner of the city that encourage all Winnipeggers to get on their bikes and ride!

Visit bikeweekwinnipeg.com for details.

26 **Wilderness Skills Intensive with Prairie Shore Botanicals**

Boissevain, MB

Develop a more intimate connection with nature while learning the four most important elements in wilderness survival: shelter, water, fire, and food. Details at psbotanicals.com.



Green Your Commute With Sustainable Transportation

Greet spring with green commuting

By Jaret Olfort & Lea Grzenda, Green Action Centre

AH THE ARRIVAL OF SPRING; the crocuses, the robins, the slushy sidewalks, the raptor migration, and then – the bikes!

Whether it's to school, work, the grocery store, or the beer store, spring makes it easier for us to choose environmentally responsible and more sustainable transportation. When we remove the added steps of not having to add layer after layer of clothes or study the weather channel to plan routes to avoid the snow drifts and icy sidewalks, sustainable movers can spend more time enjoying their transportation, rather than planning it.

Green Action Centre is poised for another season of active events and wants to get you thinking about the ways in which you get around. A few perks about green transportation are:

- **IT'S AFFORDABLE;** Green Action Centre, and many others, have already done the math so we will spare you the details, but compared to driving, parking and buying fuel and covering insurance, green transportation will save you approximately a billion dollars throughout your lifetime (give or take).
- **IT'S EASY;** as easy as learning to tie your shoes, ride a bike, or move one foot in front of the other.
- **IT'S FUN;** pop in your headphones and rock out or play the game where you can't step on a crack (for fear of breaking your mother's back), or people-watch on the bus, or carpool with friends (and play punch buggy of course).
- **IT'S FOR ALL OF US,** regardless of our abilities.

This spring the action kicks off with Bike to School Month from May 4 to June 3 for all schools in the province. This new event hosted by the Active & Safe Routes to School Program wants to get kids moving by riding their bikes to school. To mix the learning with the fun, we are offering free workshops to your school. Simply



PHOTO: GREEN ACTION CENTRE

Spend more time enjoying transportation, rather than planning it.

“Celebrate biking to school – and why not walking, skateboarding or riding your scooter!

pick a workshop and we will come to your school and teach you something new about your bike; you can choose to spruce up your bike with a mechanical workshop, challenge you and your bike balance abilities with Bike Trials or even tantalize your tastebuds by bringing by our Bike Blender to mix delicious smoothies.

Clean Air Day is back again on June 3 this year to wrap up the Bike to School Month of events. Celebrate biking to school – and why not walking, skateboarding or riding your scooter too! To add even more excitement, Clean Air Day will be in celebration with a Guinness World Record Helmet Attempt day (June 3) to recognize 10 years of the low helmet initiative.

Join us to break the world record of over 1300 people wearing helmets simultaneously! Register your school by visiting www.greenactioncentre.ca/content/register/

And finally, the Commuter Challenge runs from May 31 to June 6. In 2014, over 8000 Manitobans signed up for the challenge, and together logged a total of 612,322km and prevented a total of 96,419kgs of CO2 from going into the atmosphere. By walking, biking, carpooling, taking transit, telecommuting, or even kayaking for those lucky enough to live near water, we can all do our part to lessen our impact on climate change. Manitoba has had the highest participation rates across the country for over a decade, and this year we plan on continuing the streak. With prizes, events, and freebies, what could possibly stop you from registering your workplace or yourself as an individual? To learn more and sign up, visit greenactioncentre.ca/event/commuter-challenge-2015/

See you outside!



Reducing U of W's Impact On Global Warming

Divestment from fossil fuels a necessary step

By Peyton Veitch, UWSA vice-president advocate, & Sarah Thorarinson, UWSA environmental ethics co-director



PHOTO: SHELDON BIRNIE

The University of Winnipeg Students' Association is pushing for fossil fuel divestment.

THERE'S A MOVEMENT GATHERING STEAM on campuses across this country. Students and faculty are raising their voices to demand that their university endowments withdraw their investments from fossil fuel companies. Recognizing that these companies cannot continue to extract and burn carbon at current rates if we are to stay below the two degrees of warming necessary to avoid runaway climate change, public institutions, including our own University of Winnipeg, can lead the way in charting a fossil-free course.

Divestment from fossil fuels is a necessary step in reducing the U of W's impact on global warming. Universities across North America are increasingly scrutinized with respect to their investment practices, sponsorship policies, and partnerships. Canada's weak commitments to climate change mitigation in favour of the federal Government's resource extraction priorities have given universities the chance to become part of the environmental movement and are constantly being challenged by students and the community to engage in sustainable practices.

These institutions should lead by example to display the message they want their students to

“ The campaign to divest from fossil fuels is a natural fit at the U of W, a campus that prides itself on sustainability.

carry forward, as it is the students who will inherit these challenges in the years to come. This means not only cultivating meaningful discussion in the classroom, but also exhibiting the values the university instills in its students through experiential learning.

The campaign to divest from fossil fuels is a natural fit at the U of W, a campus that prides itself on sustainability. Since 2006, the university has annually reported its greenhouse gas emissions. It made a policy commitment to comply with the Kyoto Protocol reduction targets by reducing its overall GHG emissions to a minimum of six per cent below 1990 levels by 2012 and 10 per cent by 2016.

To date, through a major energy retrofit that started in 2009, emissions at the University of

Winnipeg have gone down by 40 per cent. Ongoing sustainability efforts include, but are not limited to, further GHG reductions, LEED buildings including the Richardson, Buhler, RecPlex and McFeetors buildings, waste diversion infrastructure, a subsidized UPass for students, and expanding our curriculum to include more courses with sustainability content.

With so much effort going into making our campus a sustainable, healthy and ethical environment to acquire an education, why would we support an industry that only seeks to destroy the future these students will inherit? In so many ways we vote with our dollar, and we are doing just that in favour of fossil fuels when university money is tainted with dirty oil stocks. This is not just an environmental issue but also a moral one, with the support of varying departments, student groups, faculty and community.

Moral opposition to societal ills is embedded within the walls of the U of W. In its previous incarnations as Wesley and later United College, the institution was an incubator of the “social gospel”; a new form of Christian theology that sought to end exploitation and poverty in the here and now, rather than the hereafter.

This commitment to a more just and ethical world still represents what is most endearing about the U of W. On March 3, the U of W announced that it would become the first post-secondary institution in Manitoba to affiliate with the Workers' Rights Consortium, ensuring that all university apparel being sold is ethically made. Just as the university has acknowledged that it is immoral to support companies profiting from the sale of clothing produced by workers who are not fairly compensated for their labour or protected on the job, it must also recognize that it is immoral to invest in companies perpetuating a climate crisis.

We all have a responsibility to act in securing a healthy environment for current and future generations. Changing light bulbs is not enough. We have to shift away from our reliance on fossil fuels. Working hand in hand with students, faculty and community members, the U of W has a golden opportunity to show the way forward. 🌱



Working with you for a Greener Future



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88% of Manitobans...

I think if most places in the world could do it all over again, they would likely conduct comprehensive planning to produce the place that they want to live in, rather than the places they now have. As most of Manitoba's boreal is undeveloped, we have the luxury to learn from the mistakes of others and get it right for our collective future.

On the heels of the polling results, the Boreal Summit, organized by the provincial government, was held in February in Opaskwayak Cree Nation, with planning as the central focus. Representatives from provincial and Indigenous governments, industry and business leaders, conservation groups, and community organizations gathered to discuss the future of the province's Boreal Region. Despite our 'prairie province' label, this immense, largely intact tract of forest and wetlands accounts for approximately 80 per cent of Manitoba's landscape.

The summit was well-timed for starting the process toward a sustainable plan for Manitoba's boreal as the poll clearly shows that Manitobans are most likely to support the idea of land-use policies that strike a balance between development and conservation.

It's evident we are ready to design a plan for maintaining our wildlife populations and ecological services such as fresh water, clean air and carbon storage in tandem with business investment, partnerships, and employment that are so good for the economy. Everyone in Manitoba would benefit from this. It is our good fortune that we have the opportunity to produce a plan founded on principles of responsible land use and protection.

The boreal landscape remains largely without commitments to industrial resource uses, including forestry, mining and hydro-electricity. It has only recently become technologically and economically feasible for expansive development.

Developed now, a plan for our lands and resources will be far more effective than one complicated by the inevitable resource use proposals that will certainly arrive.

Balance, Prosperity, Community, Leadership and Self Determination, Investment, Certainty. With a positive and productive tone, the consensus themes that dominated the summit made it clear that we are ready to move forward.

CPAWS looks forward to the next steps involved in designing a comprehensive Boreal Plan



PHOTO: RON THIESSEN

“ To move forward, a major component of a Boreal Plan must be Indigenous land use planning that is supported by, and involves, governments and stakeholders.

for Manitoba. Including supporting Indigenous peoples in developing plans for the resource management areas.

To move forward, a major component of a Boreal Plan must be Indigenous land use planning that is supported by, and involves, governments and stakeholders. By stitching together these large Indigenous land use plans that identify a system of zones that allow for various uses, we would know where to conserve and maintain ecosystems and where industrial activities can take place without being challenged. We could create certainty for all rights-holders and stakeholders on the landscape which would increase the business investment potential in Manitoba by reducing the risk of controversy.

The Manitoba government, the business sector, and conservationists have already engaged with some First Nations in designing their land use plans and several plans have been legislatively approved. This is evidenced by the four final

land use plans of First Nations of the east side of Lake Winnipeg. Presently, Nisichawayasihk, Mosakahiken, and Opaskwayak Cree Nations are at some stage of developing land use plans for their large (thousands of square kilometers) resource management areas.

The federal and Manitoba governments have committed to working with Indigenous communities to create land use plans for their traditional areas. We encourage appropriate investment from governments and stakeholders on the Boreal landscape to work with interested Indigenous leaders to explore this rare and one-time only opportunity to create a healthy and sustainable future for all Manitobans. 🌱

Voice our views about the future of the Manitoba's Boreal treasure with the Manitoba Insight Survey. Your input will help inform planning and decisions related to the future of the province and the people who live here. Please go to <http://bit.ly/borealmbs> to do the survey.



A Way to Grow

By Tommy Allen, Urban Eatin' Gardeners Worker Co-op



PHOTO: MARK KLASSEN

Eight L-shape raised beds provide lots of growing opportunity for the students.



PHOTO: TOMMY ALLEN

A large de-barked elm log at Grosvenor School, with oak logs in the background.

IT'S GREAT TO SEE HOW MANY PEOPLE in Winnipeg want to engage youth and community in the act of growing food. We are fortunate to be able to help some of those folks in their worthy endeavours. There are many exciting ways to build a new vegetable garden, but we have found that the wooden raised bed is a simple and dependable solution – it has numerous advantages over in ground beds and does not burden most budgets. We aim to use reclaimed wood, and we fasten the corners using angle iron and nuts/bolts creating a variety of shapes. Constructing beds makes up a sizeable chunk of our work each season, although we also love projects that allow us to step outside of this familiar box.

Over the last few years, we've had the privilege of working with Grosvenor Elementary School to enable every classroom to plant a vegetable plot of their own. In 2013, Mark Klassen facilitated workshops with each classroom for the planning, seeding and planting of the vegeta-

“It's very rewarding for the children to learn about food sustainably, and the hands-on component is very engaging for the students. At recess we often see the students nibbling on the herbs trying and tasting each of them.

– Brad Corbett, past principal of Grosvenor School

ble gardens into raised beds that we constructed on the south side of their school. Next to the beds, we placed a triple compost bin made from salvaged pallet-wood, to be used for any garden waste and some of the school's lunch waste.

The classrooms have now grown a multitude of vegetables and pollinator attractors such as lettuce, sunflowers, tomatoes, basil, bee balm, and lavender. We also facilitated a pop bottle fence garden, where the children (or parents, rather) collected bottles and hangers to install

200 herb-planted bottles on their chain link fence. Our goal this past season was to create an “outdoor classroom” near their south entrance, replacing a flat sod area with over a dozen native (including some edible) shrubs, and more noticeably two-foot diameter reclaimed (and de-barked) elm logs from Wood Anchor. Much of the sod was left on-site to create a small hill, and then covered in cardboard (biodegradable weed suppression) and wood chips. As the shrubs grow to their mature size, this area will become



PHOTO: TOMMY ALLEN

Although planted late in 2014, the gardens proved bountiful at St. Mary's Anglican Church in Charleswood.



PHOTO: DAN LAMB

The expandable garden features 18 raised beds and a 7' deer fence



PHOTO: TOMMY ALLEN

The Urban Eatin' crew begin assembling raised beds, and apply a mineral-based non-toxic treatment called Lifetime Wood Treatment.

a small, enclosed “forest” for the children, providing a place of discovery, learning and play.

Another inspiring project we were involved in during 2014 was at the NorWest Co-op Community Food Centre on Tyndall Avenue. NorWest has partnered with Community Food Centres Canada (CFCC) to create a fully programmed community kitchen in the Inkster neighbourhood, and it called for some vegetable beds in the back (among other things). Our role was to construct eight L-shaped raised beds along with four taller accessible beds, all using salvaged CN shipping crate lumber. We re-used patio stones from their front pathway to create a rear patio area, and worked with the Weston Youth Co-op to move all of the soil and wood chips.

The Abundance Community Garden is an additional example where raised beds matched the needs, providing a church in Charleswood with 18 beds to plant. Deer were a problem, so a seven foot deer fence was constructed for the whole area, with room for expansion. A compost bin, as always, was included along with a large 1000L rain barrel for watering. This barrel still has to be filled up from the distant church, but plans are in the works for a picnic shelter which will double as a rain water collector.

In 2014, we entered the National Co-op Challenge and became one of eight co-ops across Canada to receive \$25,000 towards a 2015 project (view our 90-sec video at urbaneatin.com/video). With this, we are looking forward to facilitating food growing endeavours in four Winnipeg neighbourhoods – Chalmers (in Elmwood), North End, Brooklands, and Spence Neighbourhood – and we will be doing so via some new electric bikes and trailers whenever possible.



PHOTO: TOMMY ALLEN

The backyard of the NorWest Co-op Community Food Centre begins its transformation.

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The Blue Dot Movement in Winnipeg

By Elizabeth Shearer, Blue Dot organizer, and Nicole Jowett

CANADA IS A COUNTRY THAT PRIDES ITSELF ON its vast natural beauty and its respect for human rights. Yet for many Canadians, the ability breathe clean air, drink fresh water and eat healthy food is a daily struggle. Environmentally irresponsible policies threaten the health of citizens as well as the planet.

The Blue Dot Movement is a campaign being led by people across Canada to ensure that all citizens have the right to a healthy environment. Starting locally and building nationally, ordinary people are taking extraordinary action to create lasting changes in environmental policy.

The ultimate goal of the Blue Dot Movement is to have the right to a healthy environment enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Right and Freedoms so that our foundational values as Canadians are reflected in the highest laws of our country. With this right included in the Canadian constitution, we can only move forward on matters of the environment, no matter which government is in power.

Such a significant goal requires a strategy. Canadians across the country are working with their local leaders to pass municipal declarations that recognize their constituents' right to a healthy environment. This groundswell of community support and successful municipal declarations will be lifted up to encourage each province and territory to pass an Environmental Bill of Rights. Finally, cities and provinces from coast to coast to coast will lead the way for an amendment to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The national Blue Dot Movement is growing: 26 municipal declarations have already been adopted across Canada and there are now over 70 municipalities actively working with their communities to pass municipal declarations across Canada. We are coming up on 68,000 Canadians who have signed the pledge to support the Blue Dot Movement!

The Pas, Whitemouth and Dunnottar are the first three municipalities in Manitoba to have successfully passed the declaration! In Winnipeg, we have a base of over 500 Winnipeggers who have signed up to take action for the Blue Dot Movement. Our local movement is lead by a mix of trained volunteers



PHOTO: KYLE SCHAPPERT

Thumbs up for the Blue Dot! The Winnipeg Blue Dot community holding up a big blue dot at the Winnipeg Blue Dot Kick Off event on Dec. 14th, 2014.

and concerned citizens who are organizing together to make sure their voices are heard on matters of the environment at the local and provincial level.

After a municipal declaration is passed here in Winnipeg, our campaign shifts towards supporting more and more remote and rural communities to get on board. The success of this campaign will be directly tied to the passion and diverse expertise of people taking action at the local level. To start your journey with the Blue Dot Movement in Manitoba, visit bluedot.ca/join-us and check off that you'd like to volunteer to be contacted by your local organizer with next steps.

You can connect with the Winnipeg Blue Dot Movement online at [Facebook.com/BlueDotWinnipeg](https://www.facebook.com/BlueDotWinnipeg), learn more about the National Blue Dot Movement at BlueDot.ca or e-mail your local organizer winnipeg@bluedot.ca to connect with other local blue dot leaders.

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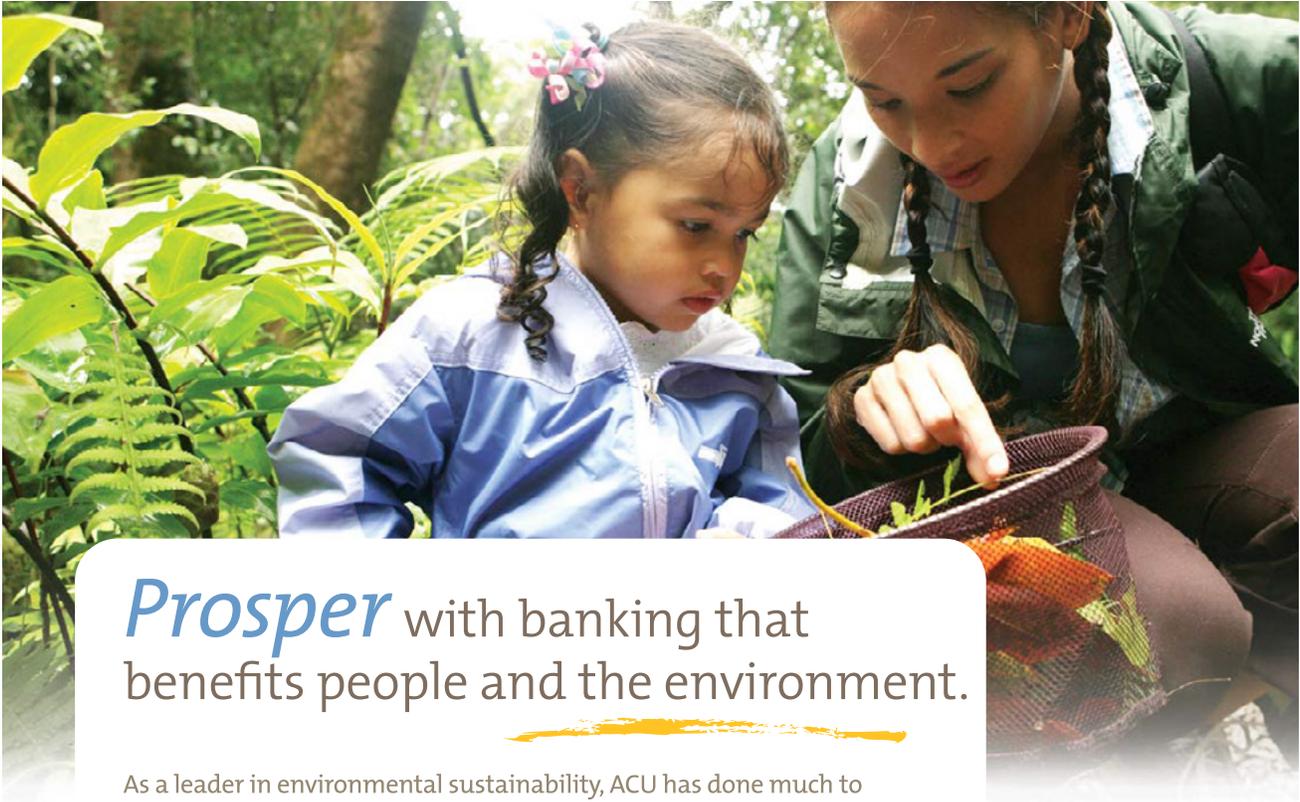
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