



MANITOBA ECO-NETWORK

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A message from Member Richard Dilay:

Dear friends,

Since retiring 2014, I found myself with more time available to consider how I could translate my increasing interest in environmental issues into more concrete action. My wife and I had already been adjusting our lifestyle to become more environmentally sustainable. We went from two vehicles to one smaller vehicle and now just simply drive much less. Our home is already fairly energy efficient, but we have been doing things like replacing light bulbs with LEDs. We eat much less meat these days and compost vegetable waste. Local organizations such as the Green Action Centre and Climate Change Connection have many ideas for a more sustainable lifestyle. In order for this kind of effort to have a real impact, however, millions of Canadians need to be doing the same.

For many years, we have donated to charitable organizations that we want to support. While our income has decreased somewhat in retirement, we are able to continue to donate and offset some of that through charitable tax deductions. More often, I find myself donating to local and national environmental organizations such as the Manitoba Eco Network (MbEN) and the Environmental Defence Canada. The MbEN web site lists many local partner organizations that depend on charitable donations, at least in part, to do their work. Again, thousands of Manitobans and millions of Canadians need to do the same for greater impact.

From time to time, I have volunteered to support the work of charitable and not-for-profit organizations. Many local environmental organizations depend on volunteers and the MbEN web site and monthly bulletin lists some of those volunteer opportunities. While I had been a member of the Manitoba Eco Network for several years, I became a board member in 2019 and briefly served as Chairperson. It happened to be at a challenging time when MbEN was going through a major transition period. Again, more Manitobans should consider volunteering for local environmental organizations to increase our impact.

For many years, I have also been involved in political campaigns. These days, I am particularly interested in supporting political parties and candidates that have solid environmental platforms. I also find myself writing to local politicians at all levels of government and governing parties to advocate doing more to address climate change, reduce plastic waste and eliminate environmental toxins. Sometimes this may be part of a larger non-partisan campaign or simply on my own. Often, there is some response to my letters. Yet again, the more Manitobans and Canadians are politically engaged and holding their elected officials to account, the more impact we can collectively realize.

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In summary, the following are some ideas to put our interest in environmental issues into concrete action:

1. Adopt a more environmentally sustainable lifestyle.
2. Donate to environmental organizations.
3. Volunteer with environmental organizations.
4. Support political candidates and parties with solid environmental platforms and challenge governing parties to do more to address environmental issues.

Take care,
Richard Dilay
Past Chair of the Manitoba Eco-Network Board of Directors