



Annual Report 2015-2016

April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016

PHOTO: Shane Jordan

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Message from the Chair



During the last year the Manitoba Eco-Network continued to elevate its profile in the community. The dedicated efforts Manitoba Eco-Network staff and the Executive Director are largely responsible for the increased reach of the organization.

The Eco-Network has been a unionised workplace for the past year as a part of CUPE Local 2348. Working within the collective agreement has been a positive experience for all; in particular, the participation of a staff member on the board has worked extremely well.

We welcomed four new members to our board, Nicola Garrett, Natasha Klaponski, Alexander Wieb, and John Coombs. There

are now twelve members of our board representing a good cross section of the members of the Manitoba Eco-Network. However, we are still looking for more representation from member groups with targeted skills.

Work on the strategic plan is nearing completion and we expect to present a final draft to the membership at our Annual General Meeting in September. The plan will represent input from the board and staff of the Manitoba Eco-Network, information collected in a member survey, as well as input from Pam Simmons of coreNICHE Consulting.

As the pressures on the environment and our social structures increase, the importance of a strong network of groups working on these issues increases equally. The Manitoba Eco-Network is the path to that strong network. It is critically important that we are able to count on all of the supports we have had in the past, and also that we are able to develop new supports in the future. We count on your help.

John Fjeldsted
Board Chair

Message from the Executive Director



Over the past year the Manitoba Eco-Network has been striving to work collaboratively with our colleagues in the environmental community. Synergy and cooperation is a great thing, connecting, and working together with people who share your sincere concern for the environment. This is affirming for the challenging work we do. The whole idea of the various groups from the environmental and social movements working together only gives strength to what we do, and helps to lighten the load. It doesn't matter whose logo is on the poster, it is getting the message out that is important. Our work in the environmental movement should not be a competition, but rather a collaboration.

Last spring we were asked to provide input to the National Energy Board and we did so by collaborating with member groups and asking for broad input from our membership. We have offered webinars, workshops, and member forums on topics ranging from compliance with the CRA regulations, to writing successful funding applications. We offered a provincial environmental debate prior to the election, in concert with member groups, and reached out beyond our membership in promoting almost 200 events for Sustainability Month in October. This is only part of what it means to be a network, working together towards a hopeful vision.

In the fall we saw the election of a new federal government. This appears to have thawed the charity chill. And this, in combination with the momentum from the Paris Accord, seems to be giving hope that we will see some real action on climate change at the national level. At the provincial level we saw a new Climate Change Plan but we can only hope that it will have the desired effect in reducing emissions of greenhouse gasses.

Hope is a key word here. We need to remain hopeful that the work that needs to be done, gets done, and we need to sow the seeds of hope. Our youth need to believe that striving for environmental justice, and working relentlessly on issues of climate change are worth the effort. The general public needs to know that supporting progressive policies and making sound lifestyle choices can make a difference. We must continue our collective work in the environmental community to provide a hopeful view of a just and dignified future for all, and help to find the path to get there.

Curt Belton
Executive Director

Manitoba Eco-Network

The Manitoba Eco-Network (MEN) is a non-profit organization which promotes positive environmental action by connecting people and groups in our communities and aims to be an environmental resource for all. Since 1988 the Manitoba Eco-Network has been carrying out public education on matters concerning the environment.

Our Mission:

The Manitoba Eco-Network's mission is to facilitate environmental awareness and expand community connections. We serve as an umbrella for environmental non-governmental organizations across the province. We welcome individual, ENGO, and associate members to our organization.

Core Services

EcoCentre

The EcoCentre is located on the third floor of Winnipeg's Mountain Equipment Co-op.

Manitoba Eco-Network continues to provide overall coordination and financial management of the EcoCentre. In partnership with Mountain Equipment Co-op, Manitoba Eco-Network sublets space to Green Action Centre, Trails Manitoba, Wilderness Committee, and Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society - Manitoba Chapter. The EcoCentre is significant in that it is a hub of activity with dozens of meetings happening monthly in the boardroom involving a multitude of ENGOs.

The work of everyone is strengthened by regular social gatherings such as coffee afternoons and bbqs, as well as the informal discussions that occur due to the close proximity of the EcoCentre organizations.

Information and Media Service

Manitoba Eco-Network is a hub for individuals, journalists, and not-for-profits, providing access to local environmental information via network sharing, as well as providing presentations on a wide variety of environmental topics to groups in the community.

We also act as a go-to resource for extensive eco-event and green job listings around the province.



Lunch and brainstorming on the rooftop: Blue Dot, Green Action Centre, and Manitoba Eco-Network.

Core Services continued...

Connecting to our Members and Manitobans

The Manitoba Eco-Network provides networking and information services for our individual members and member groups, as well as meeting space, equipment use, and discounted ad rates for the Eco-Journal. As well, we provide referrals from the media, government, and public on issues relating to the expertise of our member groups, and promote their work and action through social media, as well as outreach activities and events.

Our monthly Green Drinks evening at the King's Head Pub continued to be a relaxed and casual way to network amongst our members and anyone interested in having some great chats about the current environmental movement.



This past year, we hosted a variety of learning opportunities for our member groups and the general public, including an Imagine Canada Public Policy webinar, a members-only forum on Energy and Climate Change, and a lunch & learn of Indigenous perspectives on Culture, Relationships, and Knowledge.

Indigenous educator and researcher Tabitha Martens discussed the understanding that Indigenous cultures are relational and strongly tied to land-based ethics that stem from historic values and traditions, and that working with Indigenous communities requires an understanding and awareness of these values from an Indigenous worldview.

We were also pleased to have S3 Interior Design, one of our associate members, help us with some incredible pro bono redesign for our offices. The new space feels great and we're very grateful to S3 for helping us improve our work environment.

Resource Centre - Alice Chambers Memorial Library

Manitoba Eco-Network is proud to continue our operation of the Alice Chambers Memorial Library. The library contains environmental resources in the form of books, reports, periodicals, journals and DVDs for free loan to the public. With the help of skilled library volunteers, the entire collection has been inventoried and moved over to a new online system which will soon be available for public access.

Core Activities

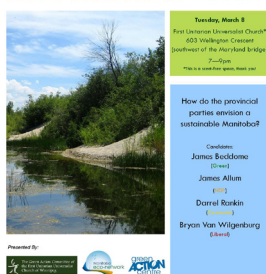
Meeting with the National Energy Board (NEB)

The Manitoba Eco-Network was invited to meet with NEB as they began their process of contacting stakeholders for feedback regarding pipeline safety. The Eco-Network broadly consulted with our member network and were able to have 5 member groups present to participate in the discussion. The groups put forth their concerns with respect to the Energy East Pipeline and its potential impact on water ways across the province, as well as climate change implications.

Provincial Election Forum

Manitoba Eco-Network was a partner and co-host for the 2015 Provincial Election Forum held in March. Executive Director Curt Belton was the moderator of the forum, and despite a lack of interest from the mainstream media there were many people who viewed the event online after the event. In this lively debate, candidates from all provincial parties were invited to respond to a series of questions that included topics such as climate change, transit and health-related issues.

Provincial Election Environmental Forum



The forum poster was distributed widely.

Keynote at University of Winnipeg 'Charge' Conference

In February Curt Belton was invited to speak to an audience of 150 prospective teachers at the University of Winnipeg's annual 'Charge Conference'. The themes of this conference included Indigenous Perspectives, Sustainability and Technology. Based on his thirty plus years of experience in the public school system Curt outlined his vision of "whole school sustainability" interweaving the social, environmental and economic components and bearing in mind Indigenous perspectives. The keynote address was concluded with concrete examples of sustainability in action in the public school system.

National Battery Day

Kildonan Place gave the Eco-Network and the environment some "positive energy" in the form of used batteries this past February, by holding a one day collection site in celebration of National Battery Day. Not only did they help in diverting thousands of batteries from the landfill, they donated \$1 to the Eco-Network for each of the 2000 batteries collected!



Visitors to Kildonan Place pedaling to charge their batteries on National Battery Day.

Core Activities continued...

Grant Writing Workshop for Staff and Member Groups

In March we brought in a facilitator from Volunteer Manitoba for a one day workshop on grant writing that was attended by the staff of the Manitoba Eco-Network and staff from member groups as well. The facilitator took us through the process of writing effective funding proposals and among other things reminded us of the importance of paying attention to details. The information was very well received whether it was new, or a refresher to our knowledge base, and the sharing of experiences amongst the participants was invaluable. This is the kind of opportunity that the Eco-Network should continue to strive to provide.

Commuter Challenge

We participated in the annual Commuter Challenge presented by member group and friends, Green Action Centre. As a group, our staff managed to save over 56 kgs of GHG emissions from entering our atmosphere, saved 25 litres of fuel, and burned more than 8000 total calories during our green commuting to works by way of cycling, walking, and transit.



Ciclovía

We had a great time sharing climate change facts & tips and chatting with folks at our table in the Bike Zone at Ciclovía.

Blue Dot Campaign - The Right to Healthy Environment



The Blue Dot Winnipeg crew on Earth Day.

The Manitoba Eco Network continued our role as the Manitoba partner with the Blue Dot Movement of the David Suzuki Foundation until December, when the program changed to a more national focus. Despite great efforts on the part of the Blue Dot, ourselves, and others involved, very little headway was made at the civic level. It was hopeful to see that the provincial government was willing to table legislation for the right to a healthy environment. The Eco-Network was asked to provide input on the legislation and we broadly encouraged input from member groups and the general public. Time will tell whether or not the provincial legislation will go forward.

Sustainability Month

The Manitoba Education for Sustainable Development Working Group contracted the Manitoba Eco-Network to coordinate Celebrating Sustainability Month throughout the month of October.

The goal of Celebrating Sustainability Month is to inspire and empower Manitobans to accelerate the uptake of sustainable living.

The purpose of this special month-long initiative is to draw Manitobans together to:

- Communicate the need to learn about, and put green thinking and environmental stewardship into action;
- Showcase sustainability efforts of individuals and organizations
- Raise awareness about the need to deepen our commitment to sustainability;
- Take actions that result in sustainable living now and in the future;
- Build new capacity for sustainability in Manitoba; and
- Engage in actions that contribute to Manitoba's commitment for a "Get Green" awareness campaign in Manitoba's "TomorrowNow".



A packed house at Sustainability Night 20x20.

The opening event Sustainability Night 20X20 was a huge success with seven presenters. Presentations shared ongoing projects, initiatives, ideas and research that are contributing to a sustainable Manitoba.

A calendar of events was hosted on the sustainabilitymonth.ca website showcasing over 206 sustainability events from 63 different organizations. Connections were made with over 1000 individuals. Media coverage throughout the month included CJOB, CKUW and CBC interviews.

The #GetSustainable Challenge was run once more to get people talking about sustainability on their social media platforms. Users posted pictures of their personal sustainability actions (e.g. making a meal from scratch, using active transportation), a project with sustainability features (e.g. green buildings, events at a local school), or other sustainability actions in their community.



Winnipeg Folk Fest @Winnipegfolk · Oct 20

Did you know we partnered with 10,000 Villages to sell fair trade treats at the Corner Store at #WFF2015? @sustainable_mb #getsustainable



Winnipeg Folk Fest @Winnipegfolk · Oct 19

October is sustainability month! What steps do you take to live a more environmentally friendly life? @sustainable_mb #getsustainable



Winnipeg Folk Fest participating in #getsustainable challenge.



Tabitha Martens presenting at 20x20.

Reel Green and Protecting our Earth Awards

Reel Green Celebration

The Reel Green Celebration is our big opportunity to try to reach beyond the 'Green Circle' and engage more broadly with the general public on issues of environmental sustainability. This year we were fortunate to hold our event at the historic Metropolitan Entertainment Centre, and the films looked and sounded amazing on the big screen. Attendance with higher than ever, as was the media interest generated through our focus on including local filmmakers in the programme.



People fill the room at the Met.



Guests check out the amazing raffle and live auction prizes at Reel Green.



A guest enjoys the atmosphere and films.

Ian Mauro's film, *The Meechim Project*, told an inspiring tale of the return to gardening and self-sustaining farming to the community of Garden Hill where the cost of fresh produce is something that southerners cannot even comprehend.

The film *Tallurutuip Tariunga: Lancaster Sound*, a Build Films production, was a wonderful example of how a local filmmaker wove together an expression of Innu culture with modern thoughts of environmentalism. Also by Build Films, in collaboration with our member group Oceans North, *Protecting Manitoba's Beluga Estuaries*, brought attention to the 56,000 belugas who migrate here annually.

The quality of the films, local content, larger audience, greater media interest, and inclusion of Indigenous perspectives, all combined to make this our most success Reel Green ever. We look forward to being back at The Met for next year's celebratory and inspiring evening.

Environmental Awards

The Anne Lindsey Protecting Our Earth Awards ('Earthies') are awarded each year at the Reel Green Celebration to recognize significant contributions to the awareness and protection of Manitoba's environment. This year was a test run of our new application process and we had seven nominations from a diverse group of applicants.

Manitoba Nature Summit was the winner of this year's award, a dedicated group that works with educators to promote the virtue of having children play outside in nature.



Source: Video - Manitoba Nature Summit

Image from nominee video (Manitoba Nature Summit).



Reel Green guests watching the nominee video.

As always choosing a winner is a difficult task and we had many other worthy nominees. These included: Kristin Westdal, a wildlife biologist working with belugas in the North, CBCRA/Recycle Everywhere for their work in promoting recycling, University of Manitoba Sustainability Office and their on-campus sustainability work, K-Tec Earth Movers who work on reducing emissions in the industry, Chief David Crate for his work in Fisher Bay, and Arts Junktion who promote the reusing of materials for art.

The short video celebrating the work of these nominees was a highlight of the programme at this year's Reel Green. Check it out on our youtube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bS0quxManRs>).



Ruth Lindsey-Armstrong accepts 'Earthie' on behalf of Manitoba Nature Summit.



Source: Build Films - Oceans North Canada
Image from nominee video (Kristin Westdal).

Climate Change Connection

Climate Change Connection is raising awareness by connecting Manitobans to facts and solutions.

We have reached and inspired thousands of people: children in Turn Your Key presentations, young adults in Youth Conferences on Climate Change, and adults of all ages in our presentations, panels, boot camps, and group work.

We assist (and have sometimes helped initiate) groups who are working to solve the climate challenge and build a resilient Manitoba. We continue to build collaborative networks with the province and the city, with NGOs, with business leaders, and with First Nations on active transportation, on public transportation, on sustainable energy, on agricultural bi-products for biomass, and on "green" construction.



Gimli High students learn about climate and watersheds.



Climate Pledge Tree. Created by 188 students at Arborgate School.



Susan talks with students about climate change.



Highlights



CLIMATE CHANGE CONNECTION

- Working with AKI Energy and the band council and people of **Northlands Dënesųliné First Nation**, completed an Integrated **Community Sustainable Development Plan** for Lac Brochet, Manitoba. This 67-page plan involved 189 hours of work, 3 trips to Lac Brochet, 15 days in community, and 2 community engagement sessions. NOTE: This was beyond our work plan. This will also yield \$2,800 in revenue.

Completed 67-page Integrated Community Sustainable Development Plan for Lac Brochet, MB

- Organized and hosted a **Climate Change Boot Camp** for Teachers in Winnipeg and another for teachers in the Evergreen School Division.



Curt and Susan present at Climate Change Boot Camp for teachers .

- Formed a **Sustainable Energy Skills Education Committee** with representation from Manitoba Department of Education, industry & business associations, Red River College, and University of Manitoba working to build bridges between the WC Miller Sustainable Energy program in Altona, post-secondary education, and industry.

- Initiated a partnership between **Manitoba Education and Climate Change Connection** to develop a resource for teachers to assist them in educating and engaging their student. This will also include the creation of two new videos.

- Served on the **Manitoba Round Table (MRT) for Sustainable Development** and on the Sustainability Act Review and Work Plan sub-committees.

Highlights continued...

- Met with the Mayor, Winnipeg City Councillors, citizen Transit groups, and Winnipeg Transit to discuss ways to **improve transit ridership** based on the "Human Transit" principles (humantransit.org).
- Facilitated two 3-hour education sessions for **NextUp Youth Education Program**: Climate 101 - The basics, 2) "Climate Solutions". The second session included presentations from four solution-focused organizations.
- Participated in a series of meetings with **Southwest Rapid Transitway** project planners to ensure that Phase 2 is easily accessible to pedestrians and that the active transportation pathway is useful and attracts cyclists.
- Helped organize and present a **"Solutions Economy Idea Jam"** series of 5 evening events plus a Saturday workshop from Nov 2 - 14. Each session focused on involving public to set up social enterprises.
- The **Transformative Buildings Group**, with Sustainable Building Manitoba held a successful bus tour of 4 inspiring, energy-efficient buildings for about 45 architects and other building professionals.



Participants at Solutions Economy Idea Jam.



Image from FreshStories - Family Transport
Video #1: Car Share.

- Produced two new **FreshStories**. The videos focus on family transportation and highlight Walking School Buses, Car Share, and helpful alternatives.
- Gave a **climate change presentation to teachers in Waboden Manitoba via Skype**. Engaged in lengthy discussion session afterwards to give the teachers support for presenting climate change to their students.
- The **Biomass Economy Network (BEN)** (50by30.org) has worked with the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) to clarify regulations for biomass heat systems. OFC has agreed to educate inspectors and municipal permittees.

- Continued to collaborate with **Assiniboine Park Zoo**. We partnered with the zoo staff on several events, assisted them in organizing a climate change youth forum, were invited to speak at several of their events, and displayed twice at the zoo during the summer.

- Helped organize 2nd official **Bike Week Winnipeg** (bikeweekwinnipeg.ca). Consisted of 48 events over 7 days attended by ~3000 people. The week ended with the 8th annual Bike to Work Day: 59 morning pit stops, 450 people at BBQ, 2285 cyclists counted riding to work.



Beautiful commute during Bike Week.

Summary

The following metrics quantify Climate Change Connection's efforts to increase awareness among Manitobans, with phase XIV representing the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

Number of...	Phase								
	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV
Connection_update mailings posted	20	18	18	20	12	16	13	11	10
Connection_update subscribers	448	479	824	1135	872	843	849	207	226
Idle-free zone (IFZ) municipalities, schools, businesses, gov't agencies	32	24	32	69	46	42	11	7	8
Idle-free zone (IFZ) signs and kits	178	186	294	278	156	96	31	39	30
Media coverage events earned	29	32	13	13	21	10	14	7	10
Prof. dev. & networking events attended	28	30	19	26	25	27	28	52	29
<i>Turn your Key-This School is Idle-Free (TYK-TSIF)</i> venues	4	4	4	2	14	5	4	9	3
TYK-TSIF students & teachers reached	400	792	161	62	1137	465	265	585	142
Webpages added or modified	25	45	41	50	25	28	39	New	15
Display opportunities	22	19	24	13	15	12	11	7	10
Meetings organized or attended	52	132	168	105	144	134	145	134	150
Presentation attendees	1200	1056	3988	2359	1537	2426	1696	3107	1438
Presentations given	30	26	43	34	35	40	33	20	36
Youth Conference attendance	189	270	345	450	270	310	580	440	248
Youth & Teacher Conferences	4	4	4	4	4	3	5	4	4

Manitoba Environmental Youth Network

Engage. Connect. Empower.

We are working towards a network of youth throughout Manitoba who are passionate, motivated, knowledgeable, and actively seek to create meaningful, positive environmental solutions in their schools and communities. We offer resources, support, inspiration, and collaborative opportunities in order to facilitate action and foster a sense of community for all environmentally minded youth in Manitoba.



Assiniboine Credit Union presenting Youth Coordinator, Ellen, with funding for Youth Mentorship.

Engage

Over **400 students** benefited from **workshops and presentations offered by MEYN** throughout the year. These dynamic sessions involve students in the process of exploring environmental issues, whether it is through art, role playing, or discussion.

Popular topics this past year included climate justice, project design and management, and local issues.



Students brainstorm about local issues and climate.

Our newsletter, website, and social media continue to be a hub for communication, information, and inspiration.

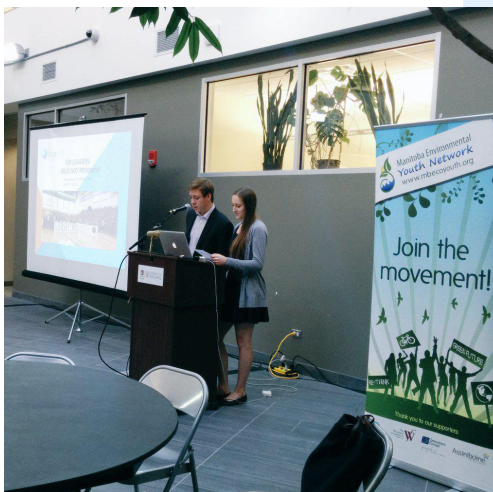
MEYN networks and participates in other youth focused organizations such as the Manitoba Envirothon and Youth Encouraging Sustainability.

Connect

163 students and teachers came together for our two Green Space youth conferences held this year. Participants take part in a day of powerful and inspiring workshops, activities and discussions. It is an opportunity for students to learn what other schools are working, teachers to network, and community organizations to connect and share their resources available.

The first Green Space conference was held in the spring at the University of Winnipeg and focused on skill building towards action projects. **76 students from 11 different schools participated.**

The agenda for the day included an opening keynote from the student leadership group at St. John's Ravenscourt and their work on the Right to a Healthy Environment Campaign with the Blue Dot movement.



Students from St. John's Ravenscourt speak about their work with the Blue Dot Movement.



Students explore the world of vermicomposting.

Other workshops focused on how to share their projects and raise awareness through video production, vermicomposting, and bike maintenance.

163 students and teachers: inspired and armed with knowledge to take on action projects in their community

The second conference was held in the fall in partnership with Oak Hammock Marsh. Focused on the theme of water, the conference was dubbed Blue Space. **70 students from 10 different schools participated.**

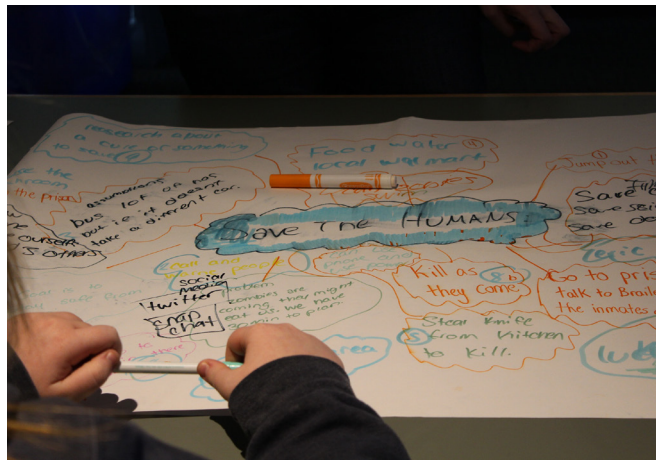
The agenda for the day included an opening keynote from Lake Winnipeg Foundation to set the stage for the day including sessions on land use mapping, art awareness, and citizen science.



Postcard created by student to raise awareness about protecting our water.



Ellen introduces students to project planning 101.



These students have a solid plan for fending off a zombie attack.



Using art to communicate about the environment.

Students and teachers leave these conferences feeling inspired and armed with the knowledge to take on action projects in their school community. We stay in touch throughout the year to support their initiatives, whether it's assisting in background research, delivering specialized workshops, or providing whatever help they need to ensure their projects' success.

We assist students and teachers, providing support to ensure their project's success

Empower

A special focus this programming year was on a Cycling project funded by the Winnipeg Foundation through their **Youth Vital Signs Response Grant**.

The aim of the project is to foster a culture of cycling among Winnipeg youth by working them directly to develop the skills needed to incorporate active transportation (specifically cycling) in their lives.

This includes identifying barriers to participation and developing strategies to work around them. This includes bike safety workshops, and action projects that address barriers to cycling in the community.



Organic Lawn Care

2015 was an exciting summer for the OLC program with the **introduction of the Pesticide Ban through Bill 55** by the Province of Manitoba. This pivotal change was the impetus to make some changes to the OLC program, and consider other programming opportunities to work with Manitobans to help them adapt to organic lawn care management.

The Organic Lawn Care program continued to provide a variety of resources to the community this year and **reached over 300 people** through workshop delivery, tabling events, lawn-tool lending library, and requests for information. Much of the work in the 2015 season was focused on educating residents of Winnipeg interested in alternative solutions to weed maintenance who were supportive of organic lawn care solutions but did not know where to begin when it came to managing their lawn organically.



Workshop participants begin to fill seats at an organic lawn care workshop.



Justin discusses lawns as ecosystems.



Demonstrating how to sharpen reel mowers.

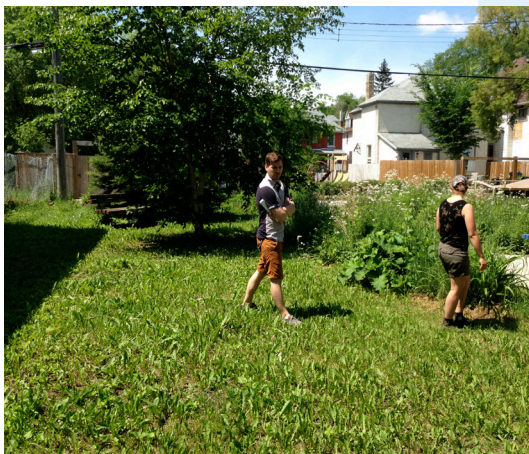
Workshops continued to be delivered at libraries throughout Winnipeg, and in partnership with community groups (e.g. Gimli Environmental Council, West Broadway Community Organization), and lunch-and-learns with businesses and agencies. **In total nine workshops were held.**

The **existing workshop presentation was updated** to reflect the increased need for information on dealing with weeds in a more comprehensive manner. Additionally, staff was able to attend a number of events throughout the season, setting up a table to conduct outreach, answer questions, distribute materials, and advertise upcoming workshops and the lawn-tool lending library.

One of our most significant projects of the summer was working with West Broadway Community Organization (a member organization of the Manitoba Eco-Network) to transition a plot at one of their community gardens on Young Street from a heavily weeded lawn to a clover lawn. The actual conversion will take place in the spring of 2016.

This will be an exciting project as it will **demonstrate the viability of alternatives to Kentucky blue grass** to Manitobans, and highlight the **importance of biodiversity** in our urban landscape.

We hope that this kind of work will open the door to new partnerships in the future to strengthen our ties with communities in Winnipeg, and increase participation with the OLC program and the Manitoba Eco-Network as a whole.



Visiting the site for next year's demonstration clover lawn conversion project.

The Organic Lawn Care program reached over 300 people during the 2015 season

The OLC program looks forward to continued engagement with Manitobans on organic lawn care management and to support them as they transition away from pesticides. As well, they recognize the opportunities available to engage the member groups in order to strengthen supportive programming.



Justin and Ellen, our Organic Lawn Care team.

Water Caucus

We promote and communicate the value of freshwater, the need for water conservation and we encourage greater protection of our province's freshwater for all Manitobans.

We don't always have the opportunity to see how our work is changing perspectives on the environment, but sometimes we interact with someone in such a way that the impact is immediate.

One of these occasions happened at the 2015 Fringe Festival. We were using an interactive watershed model to show children how water and pollutants move within our watershed and make their way to Lake Winnipeg. We asked if any of them liked to swim in Lake Winnipeg. Initially, they all indicated that they had never even been to Lake Winnipeg. But when we listed the names of some of the Lake Winnipeg beaches, many of the children realized that they do go to those beaches and have a connection to Lake Winnipeg.

One boy even realized that his mom had been baptised in Lake Winnipeg (a very meaningful occasion for their family). This realization changed his perspective on the importance of protecting the health of the lake. He immediately began talking to his mom about wanting to make a difference.

A key element in getting people to care about the environment is helping them realize that they already love it!

Niakwa Trail Rain Garden – partnerships and hands on learning

The Water Caucus provided many opportunities for hands-on engagement this year. The largest project was the Niakwa Trail Rain Garden (at Fermor Ave and St Anne's St). This project brought together representatives from Save our Seine, HTFC Planning and Design, the City of Winnipeg, and others. During the design and site planning we were able to share knowledge, expertise and hands on training between organizations.

Over 50 volunteers, including a team of volunteers from Superstore, and from Royal Bank of Canada, were involved in **planting more than 600 native plants** at the site. Two media events at the site allowed us to engage with and educate a diverse crowd on the importance of stormwater management, and the value of freshwater.



Volunteers plant over 600 native plants at the Niakwa Trail Rain Garden.

Education and Outreach

We offered several educational opportunities for the public over the 2015-2016 year.

We organized a **hands-on DIY rain barrel workshop** on May 10, 2015. The event was organized in partnership with Sustainable South Osborne Co-op. The workshop had room for 10 individuals, and it was full.

We brought childrens' activities to two summer festivals: **Folk Festival and Fringe Festival**. These events gave us the opportunity for conversations with children and their parents about water issues in Manitoba. The children were able to learn in a very tactile way by painting rain barrels and interacting with an Enviroscape landscape model to learn about what we can do to make a difference in Lake Winnipeg.



Painting rain barrels, and learning about water conservation at Folk Fest.



Lining up to ask questions of federal candidates.



Curt shows Kids' Fringe visitors how rain moves through our communities.

Leading up to the 2015 federal election, we reached out to educate and engage the public by holding a **Federal Forum on the Environment**, organized in partnership with Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Green Action Centre, and the Green Action Committee of the First Unitarian Universalist Church to organize. The forum took place on Oct 13, 2015 and brought together federal candidates (Robert-Falcon Oullette, Andrew Park, and Matt Henderson) to address questions about environmental issues. Around **100 people were in attendance** from the community and local environmental organizations.

We shifted the focus of our annual stakeholder workshop to engage with the next generation of stakeholders. The Manitoba Eco-Network water and youth programs partnered together with East Interlake Conservation District, and Oak Hammock Marsh to organize **Blue Space Youth Conference** on November 26, 2015. Lake Winnipeg Foundation's Kirsten Earl McCorrister gave the keynote, and sessions covered topics ranging from water issues, to project management, to community engagement. There were **70 students in attendance from 10 schools** (see summary of event on page 18).

We participated in **Water Week** by hosting a film screening event. We screened the documentary "One River Many Relations". A very engaged group of people stayed for a conversation with filmmaker, Michael Tyas. We also highlighted Water Week events and water issues in a special Water Week e-bulletin.

Connecting with the Community

The Water Caucus connected with individuals, organizations and the media through hands on projects, social media, workshops, participating in consultations, and providing resources.

Being a voice for the environment

Attended the following committee meetings and consultations:

- Combined-Sewer Overflow Advisory Committee (City of Winnipeg),
- Lake-friendly Stewards Alliance,
- Surface Water Management Strategy Advisory Team,
- Provided information and advice to Enbridge for their Water Strategy,
- Recommended priority issues for Minister Hunter Tootoo, Department Fisheries and Oceans (consulted member groups to represent their concerns),
- Attended multiple City of Winnipeg public consultations, and provided feedback.



Megan chats with Virgin Radio's Ace Burpee on RBC Blue Water Day.

Networking with other likeminded organizations to strengthen our voice

Attended the following events:

- Dunnottar Water Awareness Day,
- CWRA luncheons,
- Webinars,
- "Building a Community Network for Water" event,
- MEIA Speed Mentoring.

Engagement by numbers

- Attended **5 festivals/events**, interacted with **>500 people**,
- Responded to **13 requests for information from the public**, **7 media requests**, and **2 requests for presentations**,
- Distributed **60 water saving devices and informational brochures**,
- **Featured 17 local presenters** in our updated Water Directory (resource to connect teachers with speakers on variety of water topics mbwatercaucus.org/resources/water-directory),
- Added **3 items to library**,
- Added **94 new e-bulletin subscribers** to water e-bulletin,
- Average e-bulletin open rate was **40.6%**.

Looking to next year

We approached several organizations over the last year about piloting a “Depave Paradise” project in Winnipeg. Depave Paradise, a project of Green Communities Canada, engages community volunteers to replace paved areas with gardens and native species. The removal of impervious paving reduces storm water runoff, allowing water to be filtered by plants and soil before entering waterways.

In May of 2016 we will be partnering on our first “Depave Paradise” project together with Brooklands School and Urban’ Eatin’ Landscapes. A paved site, formerly a basketball court, will be transformed into an outdoor classroom for over 200 elementary students to enjoy.

We are also working with our Organic Lawn Care program and West Broadway Community Organization on a demonstration clover lawn conversion project to be completed in summer of 2016. Clover lawns are more durable, and require less water than conventional lawns. They also attract pollinators, and improve soil health through nitrogen fixation.

Demonstration projects, such as the Niakwa Trail Rain Garden, Depave Brooklands, and West Broadway clover lawn conversion project are hands on projects that **engage community members in environmental action**. They are also great opportunities for **educating policy makers, and providing examples of tools** that can be used to support environmental policies.



Proposed depave site at Brooklands School.



Artist's rendering of site design.

Member Groups

The member groups of the Manitoba Eco-Network are an integral part of spreading positive environmental action throughout the province. They are each with distinct areas of specialty and expertise, and we encourage you to learn more about them and how they are helping to support strong environmental sustainability in Manitoba.

Alpine Club of Canada – Manitoba

A Rocha

Assiniboine Park Conservancy

Bike Winnipeg

Bird Studies Canada

Call2Recycle *

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives - Manitoba

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society - Manitoba

Chemical Sensitivities Manitoba

Churchill Northern Studies Centre

Daniel McIntyre/St. Matthew's Community
Association (DMSMCA)

Environmental Health Association of Manitoba

Food Matters Manitoba

FortWhyte Alive

Gardens Manitoba

Gimli Environmental Advisory Committee (GEAC) *

Green Action Centre

Green Action Committee of the Unitarian Church

Green Kids

International Institute for Sustainable Development

Lake Winnipeg Foundation

Living Prairie Museum

Manitoba Energy Justice Coalition (MEJC) *

Manitoba Environmental Industries Association

Manitoba Nature Summit

Manitoba Ozone Protection Industry Association

Manitoba Wildlands

Mixedwood Forest Society

Native Orchid Conservation

Nature Manitoba

Oak Hammock Marsh

Oceans North Canada

Organic Food Council of Manitoba

Peg City Car Co-op *

Prairie Shore Botanicals

Project Peacemakers

Rockwood Environmental Action Community
Taskforce (REACT)

Safer Wireless Manitoba

Save Our Lake (SOUL)

Save Our Seine River Environment

Sierra Club Canada - Prairie Chapter

Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions

Social Planning Council of Winnipeg
Sustainable Building Manitoba *
Transition Winnipeg
University of Manitoba Clayton H. Riddell Faculty of
Earth, Environment, & Resources

University of Winnipeg Campus Sustainability Office
UniVERT (Université de Saint Boniface)
Western Canada Wilderness Committee
Wildlife Haven Rehabilitation Centre
The Wildlife Society – Manitoba Chapter

Associate Member Groups

Our associate members are a diverse group of environmentally-aware businesses that strive to increase sustainability through their actions and practices.

Aurora Farm	S3 Interior Design
Falcon Trails Resort	Sustainable Organic Solutions
Manoverboard	Tall Grass Prairie Bread Company
New Leaf Biologics *	Tire Stewardship Manitoba
Red River College	Urban Eatin' Landscapes

* Indicates a new member group

Funders & Contributors

Manitoba Eco-Network wishes to thank the generous individual donors and supporters in our community, and acknowledge the following funders which have provided grants, donations, or gifts-in-kind over the past year.

Core Services

Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship

United Way Donor - Designated Gifts Program

City of Winnipeg Employees

Province of Manitoba All-Charities Campaign

Mountain Equipment Co-op

Manitoba Education for Sustainable Development Working Group

Eco Journal

Manitoba Hydro

M.E.N./T.R.E.E. Legacy Endowment Fund

Winnipeg Foundation

Climate Change Connection

Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship

Manitoba Hydro

Tire Stewardship Manitoba

Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning

Manitoba Environmental Youth Network

The Winnipeg Foundation

Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning

Assiniboine Credit Union

Organic Lawn Care

Government of Manitoba, Green Team

City of Winnipeg – Parks and Open Spaces Division – Greenspace

Water Caucus

Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship

Federated Co-operatives Limited - Co-op Community Spaces

City of Winnipeg - Community Incentive Grant Program

Environment and Climate Change Canada - EcoAction Community Funding

RBC Blue Water Project

HTFC Planning and Design

J & K Zinn Landscaping

Casera Credit Union

Volunteers

Manitoba Eco-Network wishes to express our gratitude to the many volunteers who have made this year possible.

Your contributions have made an immeasurable impact.

THANK YOU



Danna Ambrosio
Jackie Avent
Natalie Baird
Lianne Belton
Rob Belton
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Debbie Curtis
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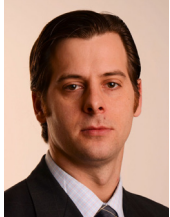
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Manitoba Eco-Network Staff - (from left) Ellen Cobb-Friesen, Megan Krohn, Susan Lindsay, Christie Fischer, Curt Hull, Curt Belton.

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