



Art Meets Science at the AYCCF

By Erica Young, Manitoba Eco-Network Youth Coordinator



Youth forum attendees at one of the many sampling stations on the pond at FortWhyte Alive.

LIVING ON A RESEARCH VESSEL in the Arctic is not an experience that most Canadian teenagers can expect to have included in their high school education. Ameena Bajer-Koulack of Kelvin High School in Winnipeg is one of the few. Having participated in the Schools on Board program that gives youth the chance to work with scientists on board the CCGS Amundsen, Bajer-Koulack was keen to bring what she learned about Inuit culture, scientific research, climate change and its impacts on the North back to her community.

Enlisting her friend Samara Froese, along with other members of the SEED (Sustainable Ethical Environmental Development) group at Kelvin, she set about organizing the Arctic Climate Change Youth Forum (ACCYF). Held every second year, the forum is a chance to bring the Schools on Board experience to a wider community.

Planning a conference for 100 students is a tall order and Bajer-Koulack and Froese admit they had a lot to learn about cooperation and communication to make it all happen. To add to the challenge, a partnership had been established with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra (WSO) and the New Music Festival, so they were being asked to plan a day that would bridge art and science.

What seemed a perplexing task at first gradually started to come together. When students arrived at the forum on February 5, a diverse array of workshops awaited them. Presenters shared their insights and gave demonstrations on topics that included acoustic ecology, Inuit throat singing, outdoor survival skills and ice coring. Each session was a unique learning experience that blurred the lines between art and science. Participants were introduced to the sights, sounds

Inside this Issue:

Arts Meets Science	cover, 4
Executive Director's Letter	2
Eco-Events in Manitoba	3
Citizen Bird Monitoring	4, 5
Community Gardening	6-7
Producer Responsibility	8
Misuse of Antibiotics	9
Grants for MEN	10
Environmental Awards	10
Library Welcomes Festival DVDs	11
Film Fest Sponsors	11
Water Caucus Conservation Event .	12

and science of the Arctic, an environment on the front lines of climate change.

Vincent Ho, composer for the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, delivered a captivating keynote, illustrating how art can serve as the documentation of science. He drew on examples from recent history where popular songs and films translated the results of scientific research into a message that everyone could understand.

Bajer-Koulack and Froese hope that the bridge between science and the arts can be built more often, especially at school, where class subjects fall into distinct compartments. "Science is fascinating stuff!" says Bajer-Koulack. But it isn't always accessible and dismissing it as the boring domain of the "smart kids" means that people miss out.

These two friends also feel that what science has to say about climate change is a message this world desperately needs to hear and understand. They know that many solutions exist. Using a diversity of art forms could be one way of awakening us to what we stand to lose and stirring our imaginations to believe in the possibility of change.

Froese and Bajer-Koulack encourage everyone to get involved in making a difference and not be intimidated: the artsy types, the science buffs and everyone in between. They hope to see more youth taking initiative and turning dreams and plans into reality. They had no idea what they

continued on page 4 >>

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Executive Director's Letter

SPRING IS IN THE AIR, and it is that time of year when things are "all systems go" here at the Eco-Network. Our film festival will be over as you read this, but it has been exciting to peruse new environmental documentaries as we have prepared for the event. Besides having a great festival, we now have some cool additions to our library of videos. If you missed one, come down and borrow it! Big thanks are due to Lise Smith and our crew of volunteers who worked on the festival, not to mention all the terrific sponsors. Proceeds will support costs associated with maintaining our Alice Chambers Memorial Library as a resource for the environmental community.

Late February saw a group of folks from the EcoCentre travelling to Thompson (six gals in a van to be precise) to do presentations and be a resource for that city's Community-Led Emissions Reduction project. We spoke on composting, organic lawn care, eco-driving, school travel planning, youth networking and climate change, and discussed potential project ideas with an enthusiastic Thompson committee. We also met with high school students at R.D. Parker Collegiate, and folks from the University College of the North, and squeezed in a visit to Pisew Falls — beautiful!

This was my first time in Thompson, and I appreciate the new (albeit brief) perspective it gave me on life in the north. We look forward to seeing what specific actions residents there will take in their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Speaking of perspective (and the library for that matter), the *Manitoba Co-operator* is one of the publications in our library that I like to read on a regular basis. In fact, while it's definitely geared to the agriculture sector, it provides a good view on which issues are garnering attention out in rural Manitoba at any given time. Manitoba has the peculiar distinction of concentrating the vast majority of its population into one southern city, we can't afford to overlook the contributions, aspirations, impacts, and views of our neighbours all around. It's easy to understand why we city dwellers sometimes get accused of "perimeter-itis."

Other work keeping us hopping includes the need to seek out new sources of funds for the Eco-Network. Cutbacks at all levels are posing challenges to the non-profit sector — but we're happy to announce some new grants for projects, check out page 10 for details.

And finally, in my rambling "stream of consciousness" letter, I'll touch on the troubling news from Ottawa that the federal government seems to want out of the business of environmental assessment (EA), at least to some degree. Heeding complaints from many project proponents and provinces, it seems that the feds are prepared to abandon the practice of assessing the impacts of new interprovincial and international pipelines and power lines and new nuclear plants. These projects will now be reviewed only by the National Energy Board and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. Many groups wonder if this is the beginning of the end of EA at the federal level. Considering that EA is one of the few ways that the Canadian public can formally engage with environmental decision making and be sure that expertise in the area is appropriately available, this could be a real blow to public participation, and to the environment.

There will likely be more on this topic in *Eco-Journal*, and on our website, as it unfolds. Citizen feedback might help Ottawa realize the real value of EA and reverse this disturbing trend.

On that note, we wish everyone a happy and productive spring season!

Anne Lindsey
Executive Director, Manitoba Eco-Network



EcoCentre women at Pisew Falls.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHONI SHUKSTER LITINSKY

APRIL

9-11 Manitoba Breeding Bird Atlas Project Launch

Many special presentations and workshops to demonstrate how easy, and how much fun, bird atlasing can be. Location: FortWhyte Alive. For more info: www.birdatlas.mb.ca/

18, 29, May 4, 15, 26

Prairie Planting Workshops

Learn all about native prairie plants and how they can be included in your home or cottage landscape design. From Anemone to Zizia, John Morgan of Prairie Habitats will explore the many beautiful and hardy plants that call Manitoba's prairie home. 1:00-4:00 p.m. at Living Prairie Museum (2795 Ness Ave). To register: 832-0167. Cost is \$35 for members of Friends of LPM; \$40 for non-members.

19 Age of Stupid Screening

A movie screening and presentation hosted by Candi Bezte (M.Sc.) to kick off Earth Week. Starts at 7:00 p.m., doors open at 6:30 at the Park Theatre (698 Osborne St.) Tickets are \$5 and all proceeds will be donated to charity. For more info and tickets: 444-3172 or candi@bezte.ca.

21 Eco-Friendly Fundraising Dinner

Project Peacemakers' annual dinner will take place at the United Church in Meadowood (1111 Dakota St). Come enjoy delicious vegetarian dishes, a speaker and a silent auction. Tickets are \$10 (children-\$5) and must be purchased in advance: 775-8178 or info@projectpeacemakers.org.

22 Earth Day 2010 Event

There will be enlightening speakers, eco-friendly displays and children's activities. Topics will include "What does it mean to be food secure?"; woodland caribou; how students have banned bottled water on their campus, and other ethical issues related to water. 6:30-9:00 p.m. at St Mary's Rd United Church (613 St. Mary's Rd). Admission is free and all are welcome!

25 Eco-Adventure

Celebrate Earth Day in Action! Cycle, paddle, run, navigate and blade the 11th Annual EcoAdventure. With the help of Swamp Donkey Adventure Racing, FortWhyte Alive has created an all-new eco-adventure racecourse for 2010. Early bird deadline: March 15, 2010. Registration deadline: April 16, 2010. For more info and to register: www.fortwhyte.org/ecoadventure.

30 Run with Porter Early-bird Registration

Run with Porter (RWP) is an eco-friendly fun run and walk scheduled for June 6, 2010 in beautiful Bird's Hill Park with eco-friendly 5 km and 10 km walk and run options, sunrise yoga and organic breakfast. For more details and to register, please visit www.runwithporter.com.

MAY

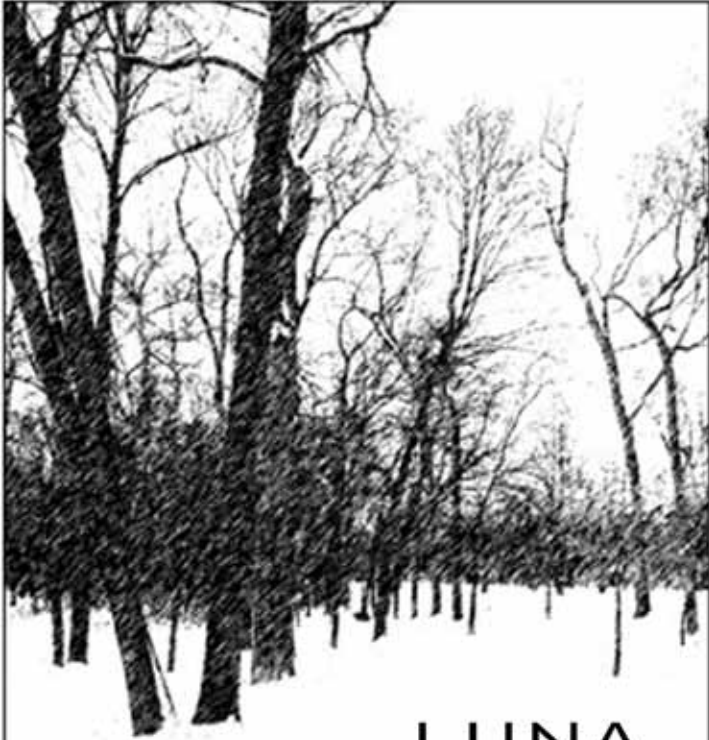
2 Compost Bin Sale

Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre is hosting a one-day bin sale from 9:00-11:00 a.m. in the front parking lot. Sponsored by the East Inter-lake Conservation District, compost bins will be sold at a reduced price of \$30. www.oakhammockmarsh.ca.

8 Gardening Saturday

Presented by The Friends of The Assiniboine Park Conservatory, this year's Gardening Saturday promises to inspire the gardener within. Experience: a tradeshow, demonstrations, container gardening contest, 17 different garden workshops, and feature artist Tyrrell Mendis's photographic images. 9:00-4:00 p.m. at Canadian Mennonite University (500 Shaftesbury Blvd). For tickets and other info: www.friendsconservatory.com or 895-4560.

Please email your event notices to info@mbeconetwork.org.



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The Dawn of Citizen Science

Volunteer-scientist partnership the key to improved environmental monitoring

By Christian Artuso, Bird Studies Canada - Manitoba Program Manager

THERE IS NO DOUBT that the environmental conservation movement faces many challenges. With over six billion people on the planet and counting, most estimates are that over three-quarters of the earth's land is under direct human influence and that our species consumes a third of the net primary productivity of the earth's ecosystems despite representing 0.5 percent of total biomass. There is therefore not only less space but also less energy available to support other species and the web of life.

There is mounting evidence of the direct and indirect impacts of such a hefty human presence: climate change, habitat fragmentation and degradation, loss of regional biodiversity, and the list goes on. We still cannot quantify the cumulative and synergistic affects of those changes and their impact on the fundamental ecosystem processes that keep our air clean, our water pure, our soils fertile and our climate regulated.

This means we need a series of environmental "thermometers" and we need to be watching those thermometers carefully. The increasing magnitude of that task has led to the formation of an intriguing partnership between scientists — whose training equips them to examine the environment — and citizens, lay people who

want to take part in the process of monitoring their own backyards and beyond. This partnership is referred to as "citizen science."

Citizen science projects use a scientifically rigorous sampling framework designed by professionals, but volunteers collect the data. The benefits of this approach are clear. Firstly, large datasets can be assembled in a very cost-effective manner, greatly increasing our monitoring capacity. And secondly, participants are given a hands-on learning experience, greatly increasing public awareness and understanding.

To date, the majority of citizen science projects deal with bird monitoring. Birds may be a logical starting point due to their relative ease of monitoring and ability to capture the human imagination. Since the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (which described the death of birds due to DDT and other pollutants, and is credited with kick-starting the environmental movement), we know just how good a thermometer birds can be.

In Manitoba, the Christmas Bird Count and the Breeding Bird Survey are two of the best known projects, but participation in the Christmas Bird Count is much higher. This could be because the Breeding Bird Survey requires a more advanced skill set — bird identification

by ear. The challenge for citizen science, then, is to find ways to engage a much broader public. If citizen science is to truly influence public awareness, and hence have real bearing on environmental protection, it is critical that everyone have the chance to learn by doing.

This is the aim of the Manitoba Breeding Bird Atlas (www.birdatlas.mb.ca), an ambitious attempt to broaden the pool of environmental volunteers in Manitoba using a variety of participation methods: everything from documenting a robin nesting in a suburban yard, to submitting a photograph of an unidentified species, to conducting point counts or engaging in wilderness camping with a supplied recording device. Anyone can participate and everyone can build their skill set, especially as the Atlas project includes workshops and coaching networks. The idea is to go beyond those who typically volunteer for bird projects and broaden the base of the active volunteer pyramid.

If it is true that people protect what they love and love what they know and experience, then the engagement of individuals and communities in the process of monitoring will inspire a more informed and proactive citizenry. Ultimately, that will benefit all aspects of the environmental movement. 🌱

<< continued from page 1

Art Meets Science cont'd...

were getting themselves into when they signed up to organize the ACCYF (thankfully, they admit, or they might not have done it!). But when the conference closed, with a performance by a group of Inuit youth that included throat singing and drum dancing, they shared an amazing feeling of accomplishment.

These days they're working on introducing their peers at Kelvin to composting. To promote the initiative, they used their acting skills to explain how composting works and get everyone on board. Going class to class, they wheeled a compost bin, with Bajer-Koulack hiding inside like a jack-in-the-box, waiting to spring out and spread the word. Their creative tactics will serve them well as they continue to make change. 🌱



Co-Chairs of the youth forum Samara Froese and Ameena Bajer-Koulack.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WYLES BURDENIUK



Calling Birders and Naturalists

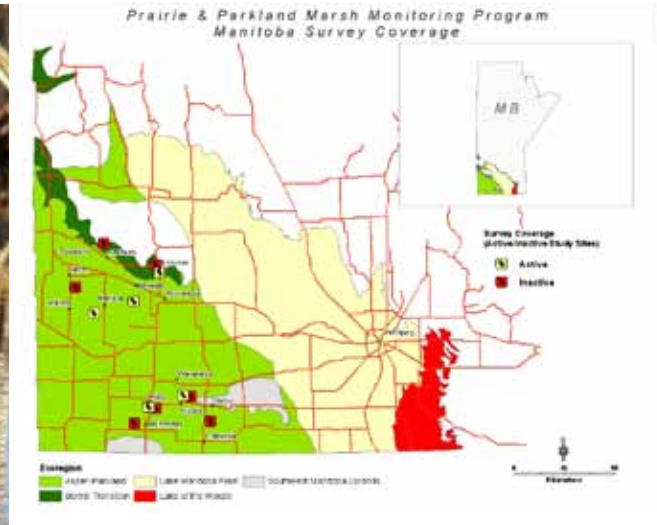
Summer marsh bird monitors needed in southwestern Manitoba

By Katherine Brewster, Outreach Coordinator, Prairie and Parkland Marsh Monitoring Program – Bird Studies Canada



PHOTO COURTESY OF J. CONKIN

A pair of Horned Grebes.



Map of current survey areas.

BIRDS ARE AN IMPORTANT PART of the environment in which we live. Birds occupy almost all terrestrial, freshwater and marine habitats and tend to be sensitive to environmental stressors. By monitoring bird distribution and habitat use, we can make some assessment regarding the health of the environments they inhabit; in essence, our environment.

The prairie provinces support hundreds of bird species during the breeding season. Approximately 300 species breed in Manitoba. These birds use habitats from the prairie grasslands to boreal forests, and from the marine coast of Hudson Bay to the numerous ‘pothole’ marshes characteristic of the southern regions. We need to collect data on all of these species if we are to better understand our environment and how it is changing.

The seemingly countless marshes that characterize the Prairies are the primary reason for the region being identified as the most important waterfowl production area within North America. Naturally, the region is also valuable to a host of other wetland-associated birds. In the past century, there have been extensive landscape-level changes that have resulted in the

widespread loss and degradation of wetland habitats. In response to habitat conservation needs, the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture (PHJV) was established in the late 1980s to provide leadership to achieve healthy and diverse bird populations through conservation partnerships.

To improve conservation efforts for several species of wetland-associated birds, we need to improve our knowledge of species distribution, and patterns of species occupancy in relation to habitat characteristics. In partnership with the PHJV, Bird Studies Canada (BSC) began the Prairie & Parkland Marsh Monitoring Program (PPMMP) in 2008. Support is generously provided by: Ducks Unlimited Canada, Environment Canada, The Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research, Manitoba Sustainable Development Innovations Fund, TD Friends of the Environment Fund and Wildlife Habitat Canada. In Manitoba, there are active study locations near the following communities: Cardale, Erickson, Fairfax, Pope and Wawanesa. We hope to expand to seven other communities in southwestern Manitoba in the near future.

Opportunities exist to participate with the program as a marsh bird monitor. BSC is

seeking enthusiastic individuals that have bird identification skills to conduct marsh bird surveys at locations in southwestern Manitoba. Marsh monitoring is a fun activity that gives people an opportunity to experience a group of birds that are often overlooked.

Marsh bird surveys involve recording all birds detected during a 15-minute period at a specified survey location. Participants will survey a route of about six to eight survey stations, which in most cases will require walking a few kilometres over uneven terrain. Marsh birds are most active during the morning and evening, so surveys are conducted between sunrise and 10:00 a.m. or between 6:00 p.m. and sunset to coincide with peak bird activity. The survey targets 10 focal species (including rails, bitterns, and grebes), but many other wetland-associated birds are documented.

Participants need to be able to identify 60 species of birds by sight and about 60 percent of these birds by sound. Training materials will be provided, but some prior experience with bird identification is necessary. Surveys are conducted between May 22nd and June 31st. Participation in this program can require as little as 12 hours per year, but volunteers are encouraged to do as many surveys as they wish. 🌿

To participate, or to simply learn more about the program, please contact Katherine Brewster at: prairieprograms@birdscanada.org or (306) 249-2894.



Growing Community

In seven easy steps, fresh produce and local rewards

By Sheldon Birnie

THERE MAY STILL BE snow on the ground, but spring is definitely in the air! Eager gardeners have started planting indoors and in greenhouses in anticipation of spring's last frost. Community gardens across the province have begun planning for the growing season, choosing seeds and drawing up plans for this year's gardens.

Community gardens provide many benefits to a community, from food security to green space, involvement of community members and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. In Manitoba, much of the food we consume comes shipped to us from thousands of kilometres away, while much that we do produce by way of agriculture and livestock production is shipped out of the province.

"Food is such an important part of our lives; nutritionally, socially, culturally we can't do without it," says Tyler Guerrieri, a member of the University of Manitoba Student Community Garden. "If you think about it, the knowledge of cultivating plants is at the very core of civilization: the practice of agriculture allowed for a reinvestment of time and energy from hunting and gathering towards the arts and philosophy."

During the first and second world wars, community "victory gardens" were promoted by the governments of Canada, Great Britain, the United States and Germany as a means of securing access to food. The Manitoba Legislature was even home to one during the Second World War.

"Possibly the most important aspect of our gardening experience was the willingness of our group to assist each other," says Susan Ostapowich of the Edgewood Estates community garden. "Sharing the watering or weeding when someone was away or not physically able, and simply sharing their experience and knowledge."

Getting a community garden off the ground and running smoothly is no walk in the park, though. First of all, land has to be available for planting.

"Our project was fully supported by our apartment complex, Edgewood Estates," Ostapowich says, "and would not exist without their generosity." Vacant lots can sometimes be used, or unused land surrounding a facility or a hydro right-of-way, with the owner's permission.

With 54 community gardens in Winnipeg alone, getting involved with one in your area shouldn't be a problem. If, for some reason, it is, consider starting your own with a group of like-minded people. Social networking sites are a great way to find those interested parties, and there are plenty of resources first-timers can access to get started (see article sidebars).

So break out your worn-out blue jeans, dig up your gardening gloves and get your trowels ready! Spring is in the air and there's gardening to be done! 🌱



Starting your own community garden

- 1. Organize a group of people interested in gardening from your community.** Delegate organizational and practical tasks to dedicated volunteers. A member who is somewhat versed in contract and grant writing is useful. Or become an expert, through online research and by talking to other community gardens.
- 2. Find and secure a location.** While there are many options, this is not as easy as it may seem. Civic, corporate or private lands are all options you should explore. The plot ought to have easy access to water and electricity. Fencing is also of interest, as Manitoba is home to many four-legged creatures hungry for good eats. When a suitable plot is found, getting permission and signing a contract with the property owner is a must.
- 3. Time to plan, plan, plan.** Ensure maximum sunlight and ample space is available for all you intend to plant. Make sure to have your plan in writing, so it is accessible to all who will be using the space. Now is the time to decide if you want to go organic, pesticide-free, or whatever. Make sure



- everyone is in agreement. If some prefer natural, while others are interested in chemical use, make sure to plan for separate growing areas, so that everyone can be happy with the final result.
- 4. As you get right into the season, expenses will be an issue.** From seeds to trowels, wheelbarrows to fencing, costs will rise as you get further into the year. If garden members can pool existing resources such as tools or lumber, then you're ahead of the game. If these things need to be purchased, consider bartering with neighbours, or picking them up at garage or yard sales. Consider a community yard sale of your own to raise funds.
 - 5. Communication is key to a successful season.** Volunteers should all be on the same page as the leadership (if such division of labour exists in your



Some of the many community gardens in Manitoba

Compiled by Tessa Vanderhart

Winnipeg:

Millennium Garden:

Located on the east side of Henderson Highway at the Chief Peguis Trail junction.
Contact: Darlene Karp-Chairperson at 669-1710.

Riverview Garden:

Located off Churchill Drive on the banks of the Red River, next to Riverview Health Centre.

Sherbrook Community Garden:

West side of Sherbrook, just south of Broadway.

Furby Street Community Garden:

190 Furby St.

Spirit Park Community Garden:

198-206 Young St.

Contact: Audrey Logan at 774-8361

St. Matthews/Maryland Community Garden:

390 McGee St.

Contact: Jacob Carson at 779-8957 or stmmcd@yahoo.ca.

Spence Neighbourhood Community Garden:

637-639 Maryland Ave., 607-611 Langside Ave.
415 Sherbrook Ave.

Contact: Kathryn MacKenzie, Greening Coordinator at 783-2834.

William Whyte Community Garden:

Powers, between Aberdeen and Redwood Ave.

William Whyte Community Flower Garden:

corner of Redwood Ave. and Aikins St.

Daniel McIntyre/St. Matthews Community Association Community Gardens:

774-7005, dmsmwinnipeg@gmail.com.

Osborne Village Community Garden:

101 Pembina Highway.

University of Manitoba Student Community Garden:

uofmgarden.pbwiki.com.

Rural Manitoba community gardens

Pinawa:

F.W. Gilbert School and Pinawa Secondary School, 753-2559, 753-2693
lightda@sdwhiteshell.mb.ca
smiths@sdwhiteshell.mb.ca.

Grandview & District Community Resource Council:

546-2085, gvdrc@mts.net

Notre Dame des Lourdes:

Tenant's Association Manoir Notre Dame,
Contact: College Regional Notre Dame, 248-2167.

Clearwater, MB:

Contact: Harvest Moon Society at info@harvestmoonsociety.org.

Gimli community garden: For more information Contact: Birdie at 204-642-5024.

Steinbach and Area Garden Club:

Contact: Ernie Klassen, citygardens@mts.net, or call 204-380-2786.

Winnipeg Community Garden Network

A group of like-minded Winnipeggers who love to share information about community gardening. You can subscribe to the listserv at: <https://lists.riseup.net/www/info/wpgcommunitygardens>
Contact: Karen Lind at 474-7949 or umlindkm@cc.umanitoba.ca

Finding land for your garden

The City of Winnipeg coordinates allotment gardens through Community Services at 1539 Waverley St. or 986-2665. There are also rental allotments available — your own (non-community) garden for \$30 for the season.

Manitoba Hydro allotments in transmission line right-of-ways in the North End, Fort Garry, and St. Vital. Call the Manitoba Hydro Property Department, Box 815, Winnipeg, R3C 2P4 or phone 474-4043.

Grant opportunities:

Manitoba Community Places Program:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/grants/cpp.html>

Education for Sustainable Development grants

(Province of Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro): http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/esd/grant/recipients_09.html

Neighbourhoods Alive!:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/ia/programs/neighbourhoods/programs/ci.html>

Evergreen grants: <http://www.evergreen.ca/en/funding/grants/walmart.sn>

Selkirk Community Renewal Corporation

small grants: 204-482-7005, or by email at scrc@mts.net

General grants that may be applicable are available at: http://mbconetwork.org/funding_guide/

Gardening resources

City of Winnipeg community gardens policy:

<http://winnipeg.ca/publicworks/ParksandFields/CommunityGardens/Images/Garden%20Policy.pdf>

Social networking site for gardeners with lots of great tips: [Hyperlocaore.ning.com](http://hyperlocaore.ning.com)

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/kindergarten/child/com/commun.htm>



ALL PHOTOS: COURTESY OF FOOD MATTERS MANITOBA

organization) when it comes to plot layout and work load. Weeds and pests won't be taking time off, so neither should your group. If someone in charge of a task will be gone for a period of time, make sure to communicate that to someone else in the group who can pick up the slack. Try a listserv or wiki, or old-fashioned meetings.

6. **Get into it!** Record your progress based on your initial plan through the year, so to be better prepared for years to come. Spread the word on your garden at local farmer's markets and other community events. Hold work bees during critical times (such as harvest and planting) to get volunteers out and recruit new members.

7. **Have fun!** Gardening is a great excuse to get outside and get your hands dirty. When your plants start producing, share extra produce with local food banks or at community events.



Environment Ministers Promote Extended Producer Responsibility

Goals include waste reduction, pollution prevention

By Sheldon Birnie

IN CANADA, over 30 million tonnes of waste is created annually, with just over 25 percent being diverted from landfill and recycled. Much of this waste comes from packaging and non-recyclable products with a limited lifespan.

While facilities exist for recycling goods such as used cell phones, batteries, and televisions, it is up to the consumer to find them and dispose of their used goods, or failing that, send them to the landfill. When it comes to packaging, though, consumers often have little choice in the matter, and rarely see the amount of packaging used behind the scenes.

But the tides are turning: in October 2009, the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) approved in principle a Canada Wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility and Sustainable Packaging.

"Clearly we need to do much more to reduce waste from the residential, industrial, commercial and institutional sectors across Canada. Committing to Extended Producer Responsibility and launching a Sustainable Packaging Strategy are two critical steps," said Ontario Environment Minister John Gerretsen in a press release from the CCME.

With extended producer responsibility (EPR), manufacturers must deal with the product into the post-consumer phase. For example, many computer companies now include a guarantee that they will recycle the product after its useful life is over — from "the cradle to the grave."


Shifting this responsibility also shifts the physical and financial cost from taxpayers and municipalities — who in the end have to deal with the waste sent to landfills — providing opportunities to focus time and money on other concerns.

By promoting EPR, the CCME hopes to minimize the environmental impacts of production by reducing the consumption of energy and natural resources inherent to the ethos of disposable consumption. As a result, parallel goals of pollution prevention and biodiversity preservation will also see positive gains. The less waste created, the less pollution created — and the less biodiversity is negatively impacted.

Along with EPR, sustainable packaging is being promoted as a further method of reducing waste. In the food service industry, for example, tonnes of waste are created just in transporting goods from one area to

another, before a dish is even assembled in the kitchen. That waste is again passed onto municipalities, and the costs associated with it borne by society rather than the producer.

The CCME plan is to develop nationwide systems for certifying and labelling compostable and recyclable packaging and then educate the food industry about sustainable packaging.

The implementation of these ideas in a timely manner will reduce the volume of waste currently managed by municipalities. By shifting the burden from the consumer to the producer, this strategy is likely to result in a net benefit to the consumer in the long run, while providing opportunities for companies to become competitive in their response to new policies. The less municipalities spend to deal with waste, the more that resources can be redistributed throughout a community. 



The true story of
Someone who was
*inspired.**

Sarah's passion for learning and travel led her to Mexico, where she also found . Now Sarah is teaching her daughter Katia that by planning and saving, there will be a  of education ahead.

We're inspired to help you find ways to set goals and save for tomorrow with RRSPs, TFSAs and RESPs.

 Sarah & Katia
ACB Members

assiniboine.mb.ca
(1-877) 958-8588

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*Good things happen here.



Antibiotic Misuse Threatens Human Health

Continuous dosing of livestock also promotes environmentally damaging conditions

By Ian Lordon, Communications and Outreach Officer, Beyond Factory Farming

YEARS AFTER SIR ALEXANDER FLEMING first discovered penicillin in 1928 he remarked, “I certainly didn’t plan to revolutionize all medicine by discovering the world’s first antibiotic, or bacteria killer.”

Fleming’s discovery, which he stumbled upon when Petri cultures of bacteria became contaminated by mould in his untidy lab, would indeed revolutionize medicine in the latter half of the 20th century providing a ‘magic bullet’ for medical practitioners around the globe. Thanks to penicillin, and the many varieties of antibiotics its discovery would later inspire, a cure for tuberculosis, scarlet fever, diphtheria, syphilis, gonorrhoea, meningitis, and dozens of other diseases and infections that had plagued humanity for centuries had been found.

It is odd then that nearly three generations after the first patients were successfully treated with penicillin, the greatest consumers of antibiotics in North America do not suffer from any disease or infection. They aren’t even human.

Cows, pigs, chickens, and other livestock consume roughly 70 percent of all antibiotics manufactured in the U.S. — an estimated 12 million kilograms per year (Canadian statistics are not maintained, but likely reflect U.S. numbers because agricultural practices here are the same). It has become standard practice for industrial livestock producers to feed their charges with large and continuous doses of antibiotics to promote growth and prevent infection. Thanks to this antibiotic regime, crowded, unsanitary conditions that would otherwise result in unacceptable losses for producers have instead become the norm.

These conditions, wretched as they are for the animals, are only more deplorable when one considers their contribution towards antimicrobial resistance that threatens to disarm the ‘magic bullet’ of antibiotics. Research has shown that microbes conceived amid the unsanitary environment common to industrial farms, and resistant to antibiotic therapy, are finding their



Heavy antibiotic dosing allows cows to be kept in close quarters.

way to human hosts. Once there, doctors are resorting to increasingly exotic and expensive antibiotic therapies to cure their patients.

One American study estimated that the direct hospital costs of managing antibiotic resistance in the United States are between \$100 million and \$10 billion per year, and the U.S. Office of Technology Assessment has estimated that the costs of five types of infection spread within hospitals due to antibiotic resistance were \$4.5 billion per year.

Six years ago, the World Health Organization reported that the evidence clearly linked resistant, sometimes killer, bacteria to non-human usage of antimicrobials and called the situation “a crisis which threatens to rob the world of opportunities to treat or cure many infectious diseases”. It also recommended governments legislate an end to non-therapeutic

administration of antibiotics in agriculture. In 2006, the European Union adopted a ban on the practice.

Here in Canada, despite hospital costs arising from antibiotic resistant microbes of a similar order to those in the U.S., there is no such ban in place and none in the making. In fact, in 2009, Ottawa decided to disband the 10-year-old Canadian Committee on Antimicrobial Resistance (CCAR) and has ignored pleas from health experts and scientists to establish a Canadian Centre for Antimicrobial Resistance.

In effect, Canadians are suffering from illness, taxpayers are bearing increased health-care costs, scarce hospital resources are needlessly tied up and the effectiveness of antibiotics compromised, all so that an outmoded and unnecessary agricultural practice can be maintained. The time has come for it to stop. 🌱

New Grants for the Manitoba Eco-Network

By Anne Lindsey

WE ARE OFTEN ASKED about where our funding comes from, and the answer can be a longish one, because we cobble together funds for our work from quite a variety of sources. We like to acknowledge and thank all contributors — and now seems like a good time for an update on some recently confirmed grants for work in this coming year.

Our long time supporters at the Winnipeg Foundation have approved funding for two of our projects: \$15,000 will go to the Youth Environmental Network, representing a second year of support from the foundation, and another grant of the same amount has been made for the Children's Health and Environment Partnership (CHEP). This will be the third year of capacity-building support for the partnership as it has launched and consolidated its development of a voice for children's environmental health in Manitoba.

Recent progress has included the beginnings of constellations (subcommittees) on policy, and on urban aboriginal populations, as well as work with the Manitoba Child Care Association to build capacity around CEH in childcare centres. Health Canada, through its Safe Environments Program, helped to fund a recent two day workshop for this sector (and others).

Our Youth Network is also grateful to Assiniboine Credit Union's Community Grant Fund for its contribution to 2010 work. Erica Young and the Steering Committee will be looking to build on the numerous successes of last year, including the Power Shift trip to Ottawa and the Greenspace Forum.



RBC Blue Water Project Community Action Grant cheque presentation to MEN Water Caucus staff. Pictured: Sacha Kopelow, Celicia Sequeira (RBC), Meeghan Gavin, Josh Brandon.



YMCA Youth Eco Internship Program, funded by the Government of Canada's Economic Action Plan

The Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, a national foundation with an interest in strong water policy in Canada, has once again granted funds to the Water Caucus. This will be the fifth year of support from Gordon for our work with groups concerned about water issues across Manitoba. They are joined by the RBC Blue Water Project's Community grants stream, which is supporting our pilot Water Conservation and Stewardship initiative. This program is also benefitting from the work of one of our two

interns from the YMCA-YWCA of Canada's Youth Eco-Intern program.

The recession has led to decreased profits for many foundation endowment funds as well as belt-tightening at all levels of government. Undoubtedly, this will translate into big challenges in funding for the non-profit sector over the next couple of years, so we are especially grateful for these current grants to our work. We see them as a vote of confidence in our environmental leadership in the community.

It's time to think about nominating your favourite environmentalist(s) for the

2010 Manitoba Eco-Network Annual Environmental Awards

The awards, started in 1990, are given "in recognition of significant contributions to the protection and awareness of Manitoba's environment". It is a great way for us to recognize the hard work of our peers in the environmental community.

3 categories are available: **Individual, group, and "special".**

You can download a nomination form and see a list of all the past winners at:

www.mbeconetwork.org.

If you do not have access to the internet, call us at 204-947-6511 for a copy of the form.

The deadline for nominations this year is May 3.



BLUESTEM WILDLIFE



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New In the Library

All of the materials in the Alice Chambers Memorial Library may be loaned out free of charge. There is no-charge postal delivery outside Winnipeg. Please contact Erica Young, Resource Assistant, at 947-6511 for more information. www.mbeconetwork.org/library.php

New DVDs:

Films on DVD as featured at MEN's Reel Green Film Festival, March 13

Nourish

(26 min. + several "shorts")
Worldlink, 2009

Nourish tells the story of our food system, revealing the ways that food connects to our environment, health and communities. The film's strength is its offer of specific actions to help viewers transition to a sustainable food future.



A Sea Change

(83 min.)
Nijji Films, 2009

Follow the journey of retired teacher Sven Huseby. *A Sea Change* documents his quest to examine the state of the world's oceans. Seawater chemistry has been altered by excess carbon dioxide, changing and affecting the entire food web. A unique stylistic touch sees Sven correspond with his grandson, reflecting on the world that will be left for future generations.



Dirt! The Movie

(86 min.)
Common Ground Media Inc., 2009

"Dirt is very much alive." Soil is made from the same elements as the stars, plants, animals and us. *Dirt!* tells the story of Earth's most valuable and underappreciated material — from its origins to its degraded end. International experts introduce us to the wonders of, and need for, a mutually beneficial relationship with soil.



H2Oil

(76 min.)
Loaded Pictures, 2009

Water vs. oil: *H2Oil* tells the story of one of the most destructive projects of our time: the Alberta tar sands. Four barrels of fresh water are used to process each barrel of oil. Huge, leaky tailings ponds laden with carcinogens now dominate the landscape. Is oil worth the environmental cost?

A Chemical Reaction

(79 min.)
PFZMedia, 2009

When Dr. June Irwin noticed a connection between her patients' health conditions and their exposure to chemical herbicides and pesticides, she didn't sit quietly. A community movement led to the town of Hudson, and eventually the whole province of Quebec, banning the use of these herbicides and pesticides. *A Chemical Reaction* tells the story of a model of effective community action.

Garbage! The Revolution Starts at Home

(76 min.)
Garbagecan Productions, 2007

The McDonalds collected their garbage for three months, and then were taken on a journey to find out where it goes. Organic waste, the stuff they flush down the toilet, the plastic bags they use, the air pollution they create when driving — they learn that for every action there is a reaction affecting both them and the planet.

In Transition

(50 min.)
Smith & Watson Productions, 2009

"The Transition movement is about communities around the world responding to peak oil and climate change with creativity, imagination and humour, and setting about rebuilding their local economies and communities. It is positive, solutions-focused, viral and fun."
—Transitionculture.org

We Are the Land

(32 min.)
Poplar River First Nation, 2008

Follow members of the Poplar River First Nation as they embark on a journey to rediscover their land, past, and culture.

Bhutan: Taking the Middle Path to Happiness

(65 min.)
Vendetti Productions, 2007

Bhutan is taking a unique approach to development, one anchored in Buddhist teachings. The government makes "Gross National Happiness" a priority and is working to protect their environment and culture as they open their doors to the West.
—Bhutan-film.com



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Water Conservation Programs Seeing Results

Benefits explored at MEN Water Caucus workshop

By Tessa Vanderhart

ON MARCH 19, the Manitoba Eco-Network's Water Caucus hosted a day-long workshop, "Water Conservation and Beyond..." The meeting was attended by more than 20 participants, many of them just looking to get involved, and occurred during a week celebrating water conservation, with International Bottled Water Free Day on March 11 and International Water Day on March 22.

MEN Water Stewardship Liaison Meeghan

BUILD executive director Shaun Loney discussed the local NGO's role in "Water Conservation for Low-Income Households." BUILD performs retrofits funded through the province, improving the energy and water efficiency of both public buildings and private, low-income households.

The changes pay for themselves quickly — a full or deep retrofit, including an efficient furnace,

“...a full or deep retrofit, including an efficient furnace, costs \$6,000 in equipment, and saves \$1,500 per year...”

Gavin distributed copies of a feedback sheet used in a pilot project that gets Winnipeg families involved in water conservation. Currently a pilot project in River Heights, participants receive two low-flow showerheads, sink aerators, and dye tablets as well as training on all aspects of home water conservation.

Gavin joked that the dye tablets are one of the most family-friendly aspects of the project — kids love seeing the bright dye leak through toilets, though that is obviously a sign of a bad leak. But, she said, the dye packets can make a huge difference: leaks account for to 20 percent of water use in Manitoba.

After three months, project volunteers return to the family's home to find out what worked and what didn't. Participants at the Water Caucus meeting filled out feedback sheets just like the ones participants will, documenting barriers to water conservation that included renting, lack of knowledge, and lack of time to both correctly dispose of hazardous wastes and purchase eco-friendly cleaning products.

costs \$6,000 in equipment, and saves \$1,500 per year, Loney said, resulting in huge savings after the equipment is paid off in four years.

Counting the retrofits that BUILD has completed to date (185 low-income, 170 Manitoba Housing, and 1,324 water-only retrofits), a total of \$550,000 in utility costs will be saved each year. In one year those buildings will use 120 million fewer litres of water.

Last year, for example, BUILD performed a complete retrofit on 185 Smith St., a Manitoba Housing building, and reduced water bills by \$60-\$161 per suite, or \$60,000 per year.

Loney added that BUILD employs people who come from backgrounds of criminality and mental health issues, as well as new Canadians and aboriginals. An Oppenheimer study in the U.S. found that similar companies (improving energy efficiency in low-income households) put \$17 in social good back into the economy for every dollar spent.

Another speaker, Kevin Freedman, documented his self-imposed challenge to limit his water use to 25 litres per day. During March,



PHOTO COURTESY OF TESSA VANDERHART

Shaun Loney, Executive Director of BUILD, presented on Water Conservation For Low-Income Households.

Freedman has been leading eight others in reprising the challenge, and his talk, "How You Can Be an Example of Conserving Water at Home: The 25L Month Long Challenge," addressed the methods he uses during the challenge, and generally, to reduce his water consumption.

Freedman noticed in his travels to Australia and Israel that it is possible, and in fact easy, to maintain a high standard of living while using water mindfully. While the average Canadian uses 329 litres of water per day, he only uses 100 on average (and of course, 25 during the Challenge), by reducing shower length, toilet flushes, and by re-using greywater.

Local advocacy organization Water Watch gave a brief presentation on "Keeping Winnipeg's Water Public," educating participants about the City of Winnipeg's plan to create a public-private partnership to deal with Winnipeg's water services.

To close the day, Laura Allen from Greywater Action, an organization based in California presented via webcam on "Recycling household water: greywater for beginners."



Complimentary copy

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