



The Forgotten Crop

Industrial hemp in Manitoba

Sheldon Birnie



The Golden Boy is known for his sheaf of wheat. But could Manitoba's future include a lot more hemp?

GOLDEN FIELDS OF WHEAT, bright yellow fields of canola, or silvery-blue tinted fields of flax surround most of Manitoba's highways, and are at the forefront when discussing agriculture in the province. Tall green fields of hemp rarely come to mind when thinking of Manitoba's agricultural highlights, but this local crop has some major potential.

Hemp, or *cannabis sativa*, is a plant that has been in cultivation for its strong plant fibers and for its seed oil for over 8,000 years in Asia, and later the Americas. Because of its close relation to marijuana, legal hemp cultivation all but ceased in North America in 1937 following the passing of that year's Marihuana Tax Act in the United States and the listing of marijuana under the Opium and Narcotics Act in Canada (1929).

Meanwhile, hemp production worldwide continued apace, with China, South Korea and the former Soviet Union producing much of the world's harvest. Thanks to new strains of hemp having been developed with low levels of THC, Canada's hemp ban was lifted in 1998. Since then, Manitoba has become a leader in hemp production in North America.

"We choose to use Manitoba Harvest Hemp Seeds for a number of reasons," says Eton Harris, a member of the Mondragon collective, a restaurant in Winnipeg's Exchange District that specializes in vegan and local foods. "They are amazingly delicious and extremely healthy and go great on top of our salads and in a number of dishes we serve."

With a slight crunch and a rich, oily texture, hemp seeds are a great source of dietary protein

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and essential fatty acids and can be used to complement salads, fish, or just about any dish you think needs a little sprucing up.

"But besides being tasty," Harris continues, "the local aspect of it is just as important to us. The more self-sufficient we are in our community, the better for the environment and for our local economy."

According to Health Canada, nearly 5,000 acres (about 2,000 hectares) of hemp were in production in Manitoba in 2009, down from a high of 30,000 in 2006. Manitoba is home to four processors who deal with hemp, Manitoba Harvest (Winnipeg), Hemp Oil Canada (Ste. Agathe), Hempco (McGregor) and Farm Genesis (Waskada). Other processors across the country buy Manitoba hemp to process outside the province, generally for seeds and oil.

The Parkland Industrial Hemp Growers (PIHG) of Dauphin is a producer co-op specializing in industrial hemp. PIHG has adapted hemp varieties for Manitoba and elsewhere in Canada. The Emerson Hemp Distribution Company is currently the only processor of hemp fibre, mainly for animal bedding and bio-nesting for small animals, though the potential uses for hemp fibres include pulp for paper and automotive composite products.

In April 2010, however, the Manitoba and federal governments announced more than \$3.3

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IMAGE: NIGEL SUTCLIFFE

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Executive Director's Letter

SINCE THE LAST ECO-JOURNAL, the federal election has come and gone, and the environment was not a widely discussed issue. Considering the huge impacts of Canada's energy sector, and burgeoning global concerns about climate change, the lack of public discourse on environment was kind of an "elephant in the room" phenomenon. Our successful All-Party Forum on the Environment (co-sponsored by Green Action Centre, the Provincial Council of Women and the Green Action Committee of the Unitarian Church) played to a packed house. Candidates Ilona Niemczyk (Liberal), Dennis Lewycky (NDP) and Jacqueline Romanow (Green) acquitted themselves well in a lively exchange ably moderated by CJOB's Richard Cloutier. Despite our best efforts, the Conservative Party did not send a representative.

Time will tell what is in store for the environment under the new majority government. The only reference to a positive environmental action in their campaign platform was a promise to extend by one year the ecoENERGY tax credit for home retrofits.

It's interesting though, that an Internet poll done for the Historical Dominion Institute showed that the huge upsurge of support for the NDP was greatly assisted by youth voting on their top issues: health care and the environment, along with jobs. If that trend persists, we may hear a lot more discussion about environmental concerns in the next federal election.

Catastrophic flooding along the Assiniboine River, and in other parts of the province is top of mind at the time of writing, and Josh Brandon from our Water Caucus staff points out the environmental concerns — global warming and wetland loss — that are major factors in the flood scenario. See his article at http://mbeconetwork.org/water_caucus. Meanwhile our thoughts are with the many Manitobans — some of them friends, relatives and colleagues of ours, who are facing the flood waters.

Springtime in Winnipeg and Manitoba comes complete with chemical concerns, unfortunately. There is still no cosmetic pesticide ban in this province. Yet, BC appears poised to become the next province with legislation, joining Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. And Nova Scotia released a discussion paper on a cosmetic pesticide ban earlier this year. Will Manitoba be the last to get on board? As usual, Eco-Network is offering free Organic Lawn care workshops in May and June — see the events calendar for dates — and we'll be continuing our Reel Mower sharpening workshops too! Maya Thau-Eleff and Jonathan Ventura are the OLC staff for this summer. Thanks to the City and the Urban Green Team (Province of Manitoba) for assisting with funding for this project.

The City of Winnipeg is making it more difficult for residents to sign up for a buffer zone against the malathion used for mosquito control. Proof of residence and identification is now required to be submitted, in person, or by fax.

Finally, there are more comings and goings in our office: Erica Young has been with us for several years, serving both as resource assistant in the Alice Chambers Memorial Library, and as the Coordinator of the Youth Environmental Network, where she helped to pioneer GreenSpace, the annual youth environmental gathering, and animated many "eco-youth" groups around the city and province. She is pursuing farming aspirations, with a local mentorship this summer. And Ryan Simmons has been a YMCA Eco-Intern, producing numerous short videos about our projects and groups. See his good work by clicking on our YouTube channel from the front page of our website. Thanks Erica and Ryan! Wynne Kvist has joined us in the role of Bookkeeper, and will also be taking over Library duties. Bev Sawchuk is our new Coordinator. Bev is the former President of member group, Save Our Seine, and has volunteered with the Winnipeg Humane Society. After leaving a private sector job, Bev gained an Environmental Studies degree at the U of W, and subsequently worked for Manitoba Water Stewardship, SLMcLeod Consulting, and as interim Environmental Coordinator for the Winnipeg Airport. Welcome Bev and Wynne!

And here's wishing a happy and eco-friendly summer to all our Eco-Journal readers. 

Anne Lindsey
Executive Director, Manitoba Eco-Network



For more environmental event listings see our website calendar at www.mbeconetwork.org.

JUNE

2-8 **Manitoba Eco-Network Mow Better Clinics**

Learn about the advantages of push mowers, and better ways to mow your lawn ... beginning with a sharper blade! Take advantage of our lawn lending library, which includes mower-sharpening kits, aerators and sprinkler timers. Venues: June 2 - Bronx Park Community Centre; June 8 - River Osborne Community Centre. To register, call 947-6511; email olc@mbeconetwork.org or visit www.mbeconetwork.org.

4 **Save Our Seine Trails Day Celebration**

11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Meet at the green space east of Royalwood Bridge (St. Anne's Road and Shorehill). Admire the river-bottom forest and unique folk carvings of local artist Murray Watson. Enjoy a BBQ and fiddle music along the Seine! Free admission. For details of this and other Trails Day events, visit www.winnipegtrails.ca.

5-11 **Commuter Challenge**

If you bus, walk, cycle, carpool, telecommute or participate in any form of green commuting from June 5 to 11, 2011, register your commute online and be entered to win some great prizes! Visit: <http://greenactioncentre.ca/content/about-the-commuter-challenge>.

7-15 & July 12-21

MOPIA Industry Awareness Sessions

Learn about regulatory obligations, new and emerging refrigerants and industry technologies. For dates, locations and other info, email mopia@mts.net or visit www.mopia.ca.

7-29 **MB Eco-Network Organic Lawn Care Workshops**

Free workshops run 7 to 8 p.m. Venues: June 7 - Henderson Library; June 14 - Louis Riel Library; June 22 - St. Boniface Library; June 29 - West End Library. To register, visit www.mbeconetwork.org; email olc@mbeconetwork.org or phone 947-6511.

10-12 **Wilderness Skills Intensive in Turtle Mountains**

Instructors Dwayne Logan and Laura Reeves will guide you through key survival skills that everyone can use. For info: 534-2303 or visit <http://www.ofek.com/roomtogrow/wilderness/default.html>.

11-25 **Field Trips with Native Orchid Conservation Inc.**

2011 is the International Year of Forests, and this year, NOCI will visit different kinds of forests and forested wetlands in Manitoba. Join us: June 11 - Five Corners trail (Mt. Nebo area); June 18 - Woodridge Bog; June 25 - Brokenhead Wetlands old trail. To register, contact John Dyck at 204-222-7188 or email jwdyck1@mts.net.

11-25 **Green Action Centre Composting Workshops**

Free composting workshops on June 11 at Lord Roberts Community Centre and June 25 at Riverview Community Centre. To register, visit www.greenactioncentre.ca or call 925-3776.

11 **Henteleff Park's Spring Tree Planting**

Join us at 1964 St. Mary's Road for the 8th Annual Spring Tree Planting and Park Visit, followed by Henteleff Park Foundation's AGM. 10:00 a.m. to noon. Guided bird walk at 8:00 a.m. For info: 955-4490.

11 **Pastured Poultry**

FortWhyte Alive, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Learn what it takes to raise chickens on pasture for meat. Construction of chicken tractors will also be included. Cost: \$55 (FortWhyte Alive members \$50). Call 989-8354 or farms@fortwhyte.org.

18 **Workshop: Livestock and Water Quality in Manitoba**

Gimli, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. In 2007, Manitoba's Clean Environment Commission (CEC) released a report on how changes to hog production could help reduce the contribution of that industry to water quality problems. Are we on the right path to building a sustainable livestock industry? Presenters will include CEC Chair Terry Sargeant and representatives from the Manitoba government, industry, scientific and environmental communities. For info, contact josh@mbeconetwork.org or phone 943-0318.

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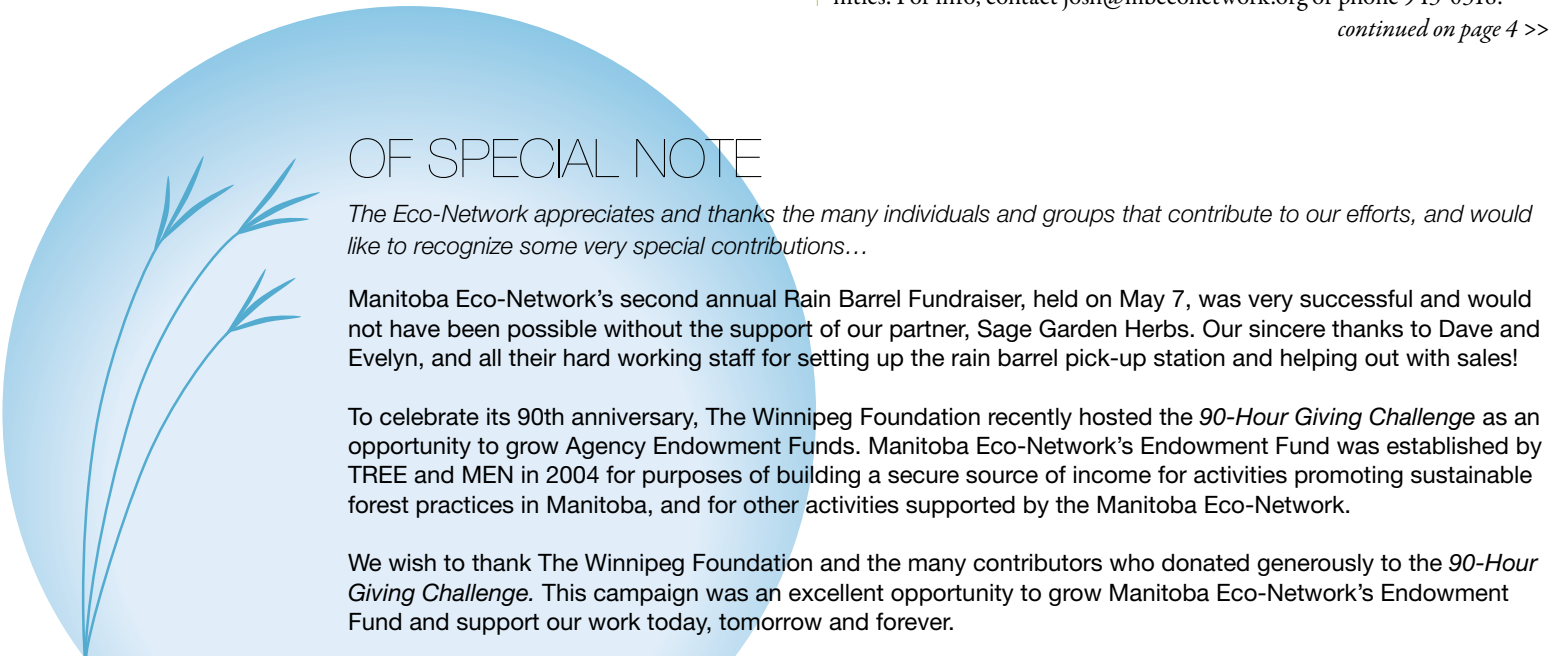
Manitoba Eco-Network is affiliated with the Canadian Environmental Network.

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The opinions expressed by contributors are their own and do not represent the views of the Manitoba Eco-Network or its member groups.

For advertising rates, please contact Beverley Sawchuk at info@mbeconetwork.org, or 947-6511. The advertising deadline for the October 1 edition is September 6, 2011.



OF SPECIAL NOTE

The Eco-Network appreciates and thanks the many individuals and groups that contribute to our efforts, and would like to recognize some very special contributions...

Manitoba Eco-Network's second annual Rain Barrel Fundraiser, held on May 7, was very successful and would not have been possible without the support of our partner, Sage Garden Herbs. Our sincere thanks to Dave and Evelyn, and all their hard working staff for setting up the rain barrel pick-up station and helping out with sales!

To celebrate its 90th anniversary, The Winnipeg Foundation recently hosted the *90-Hour Giving Challenge* as an opportunity to grow Agency Endowment Funds. Manitoba Eco-Network's Endowment Fund was established by TREE and MEN in 2004 for purposes of building a secure source of income for activities promoting sustainable forest practices in Manitoba, and for other activities supported by the Manitoba Eco-Network.

We wish to thank The Winnipeg Foundation and the many contributors who donated generously to the *90-Hour Giving Challenge*. This campaign was an excellent opportunity to grow Manitoba Eco-Network's Endowment Fund and support our work today, tomorrow and forever.



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Forgotten Crop cont'd...

million in funding for Plains Industrial Hemp Processing Ltd. to build a fibre processing plant in Gilbert Plains that would increase their capacity to handle up to 18,000 metric tonnes of hemp each year.

Currently, the market for hemp is a small but growing one, and Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives cautions growers to "proceed with caution" before jumping in. As the situation stands today, growers must still apply for a license to grow hemp from Health Canada, as it is still a heavily regulated crop.

However, with the recent interest in "eating local," it is possible that demand for Manitoba grown hemp products such as hemp seeds and hemp protein powder could rise. Should demand for "green" products that could be made of hemp fibre composites also rise, Manitoba could see production of hemp rise in coming years.

If you are curious about hemp products, call your local grocery store or your favourite restaurant and ask if they carry Manitoba hemp products.

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Eco-events cont'd...

24 **Bike To Work Day**

Celebrate the bicycle as a fun, safe and healthy mode of transportation. Travel alone, with a partner or as a team to ultimately reduce pollution and traffic congestion. For info, visit www.biketowork-daywinnipeg.org.

JULY

14 **Basics of Beekeeping**

FortWhyte Alive, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Learn the basics of these fascinating insects. Visit our beehives and extracting operations. Contact 989-8354 or farms@fortwhyte.org.

26-27 **Teaching/Learning with Monarchs**

J. R. Walkof School, Winkler. A workshop that combines classroom activities and field trip experiences. The goal is to empower educators with the knowledge, experience, materials, confidence and passion to raise Monarchs in their classrooms. For info: www.monarchteacheretwork-westerncanada.com.

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

Voicing Youth's Right to the City

"On the streets, you can feel like you're on the outside looking in."

By Karina Cardona Claros, Project Manager, Children's Health and Environment Partnership of Manitoba

WHAT WOULD A REPORT CARD

from Winnipeg's youth on the state of the city tell us? Would anything in it surprise us? Who would pay attention to the investigators' findings? Would we be motivated to action by the stories and recommendations? These are big questions that we ought to be asking ourselves.

If you grew up in this unique prairie place, I imagine that you have a good sense of how few spaces are designed as health-building, youth-inspired environments intended to foster our sense of wonder and play. As a kid, you quickly become aware that the city is designed for adults to function with their cars and to carry out their daily adult tasks. Depending on where you live, this may be told to you by the lack of sidewalks in your community, by the inability to cross a road safely on the way to school, by inappropriate remarks as you stand at a street corner, or by the fact that you've never tended to a vegetable garden growing near your home. As you grow up, you try to find creative ways to appropriate that space but are often told once more that it's not for you by signage and law enforcement. For example, following sustainable commuting practices, staying active, or simply unable to afford the bus, you ride your skateboard down the sidewalk and are ticketed for your actions. It seems you just can't get a break.

On the afternoon of Tuesday, May 18th, former Governor General Michaëlle Jean visited Winnipeg to listen carefully to these very stories as told to her by members of the Graffiti Art Programming's Aboriginal Youth Advisory Council at the event, "Voicing Youth's Right to the City." Ms. Jean was in Winnipeg once again because it's a place in which she sees great potential and whose young citizens she wants to continue to support through the Michaëlle Jean Foundation. The gathering showcased an impressive collection of uncensored, thoughtful and passionate compositions by participants who worked with artist-mentors to curate their performances and artwork. It was a loud plea for how youth need more hands-up from decision-makers whose actions directly and indirectly affect the quality of youth's daily lives, and ultimately, the trajectory of their futures. A project empathetically coordinated by Emily Skinner, a Master's student at the University of Manitoba's Centre for Environmental Health Equity, the day was the culmination of a year-long exploration in building trusting



Jessica Canard, 20, is a vivid and engaging cyclist, avid longboard skater, and uber-talented artist. Her artwork is a mixed media depiction of the city incorporating reuse of an old door, discarded skateboards and other up-cycled materials.

"If you grew up in this unique prairie place, I imagine that you have a good sense of how few spaces are designed as health-building, youth-inspired environments..."

relationships which facilitated the exploration of inequities experienced by these brilliant urban youth. Local videographer Ryan Simmons captured the event so that it can be shared with a larger audience.

These perspectives cannot fall on deaf ears, complacent minds, or nihilist fortresses. Winnipeg youth need to have the integrity of their childhoods respected. Many people and agencies are working hard to ensure that this is possible. On November 4th, Children's Health and Environment Partnership of Manitoba will be hosting a gathering to help assemble this puzzle of children's environmental health. Later this summer, we will launch a website update to reflect the broader issues surrounding the well-being of youth. We look forward to keeping you informed about innovative projects in our community that may inspire or support your own ideas and actions.

www.graffitigallery.ca



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www.cehe.ca

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What is Wrong With Lake Winnipeg?

CBC doc *Save My Lake* sheds light on environmental impacts

By Sarah Petz

FOR MANY MANITOBANS, Lake Winnipeg has been a favorite vacation spot for years. But some may be surprised to realize that the beaches they've come to know and love have been taken over by a toxic green sludge that hugs the coasts of the world's 10th largest freshwater lake.

Save My Lake, a documentary that premiered on CBC's *The Nature of Things* March 17, explores the environmental and scientific factors that are causing the slow deterioration of Lake Winnipeg. The film was produced Paul Kemp and directed by Jeff Newman of Stornoway productions in association with CBC.

Kemp said he was motivated to investigate the lake's condition after realizing its decline while vacationing at Victoria and Albert beaches.

"I've been going to Victoria Beach and Albert Beach for [...] about 40 years of my life, and over the past couple of years I really started to notice something was going on with the lake. I'd boil water, algae advisories [...] things I didn't remember as a kid," said Kemp.

A walk with his son one afternoon make Kemp realized there was really something wrong.

"Basically, it was fine one day when we were swimming, and the next day we went right to the same place, and he came out covered with green up to his neck. It kind of scared me because I was like 'oh I don't know about this,'" Kemp said.

The green sludge Kemp refers to is caused by algae, which is typically a positive part of a healthy lake ecosystem. However, the high level

of chemical nutrients seeping in to the lake's huge watershed from agricultural and hydro practices and sewage run-off have caused the algae population to explode. This has proven to cause a growing fish population and a lot of happy fisherman in the short term. Yet as the algae die, they sink to the bottom and begin to deoxygenate the lake. If not solved, this could threaten the survival of the lake's entire ecosystem.

The rapid spread of the algae blooms has lead to more diverse species cropping up in the water as well, some of which could be harmful to humans. Cyanobacteria, which is more commonly known as blue-green algae, has become prolific in Lake Winnipeg and is a toxic form of the species that is especially dangerous to small children and animals.

Since the documentary was released, Kemp says people have been contacting him frequently asking whether or not the lake is safe to swim in at all.

"I'd say, generally, it's safe if the algae is moderate and not very thick, but every summer we're getting more and more of the blooms, so you have to watch it when those things actually hit. I wouldn't put my kid in the water or my dog," Kemp said.

While those who frequent the lake seem to have caught on that there's a problem, they may not be as aware of what's behind it, said Kemp.

"The larger point for me is the public should be more aware of what's causing it in the first place. They know about the blooms because they



Ducks Unlimited biologist Shane Gabor appears in the film to discuss the benefits of "prairie pothole" wetlands.

see them, but what they don't know about is why they're there," he said.

Since the film's release, Kemp has been asked to speak at numerous functions about the issues brought to light in his film. The film is also becoming integrated into the school system in Manitoba and parts of western Canada.

Kemp is happy that the film has become a catalyst for getting people engaged in the issue.

"The good thing is that a huge number of people across the province watched the film, and a huge number of people across the country watched the film [...] we're going to get more and more awareness," he said.



Above: Since about 1913, the Netley Cut has allowed water from the Red River (L) into Netley-Libau Marsh (R), which has had a dramatic effect on the marsh ecosystem.

Right: Water-sampling equipment.

Far Right: Algae at Victoria Beach can make swimming unpleasant.

Below: Lake Winnipeg at sunset.





Prairie Networking

A re-introduction to the Sierra Club

By Sheila Muxlow, Director, Sierra Club Prairie

THE TIME HAS NEVER BEEN more pressing for local people to come together and advocate for healthy, sustainable ecosystems and communities. Following the 2011 federal election, a Conservative majority has the potential to push through some disastrous policies that would move us further away from our need to address climate change, ensure food and water security and uphold human and environmental rights. The task of local people to follow government policies and create strong grassroots networks that are willing to fight for environmental justice is rarely easy, which is why I wanted to take this moment to introduce you to the Sierra Club Prairie Chapter as a resource available to help achieve this end.

The Sierra Club Prairie Chapter is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization with the mission of creating a diverse, well-trained, grassroots network committed to protecting and upholding the health and integrity of our prairie communities and ecosystems. We are committed to the principles of environmental justice, which means that people most direct-

ly impacted by an environmental issue must be involved in the solutions to address the problem. We also support the struggles for Indigenous sovereignty that seek to ensure Treaty Rights and Indigenous traditions are upheld and maintained. We have a vast alliance of allies, experts and other ENGOs who we work closely with to put pressure on decision makers so as to ensure just outcomes for people and the planet. We are governed by an Executive Committee that has yearly elections and is open to all our members.

Our office is based out of Edmonton, Alberta, which admittedly has meant that a major focus of our work is on the issue of tar sands. As an unconventional source of fossil fuels, the tar sands are a window into the environmental and human rights problems that will arise if we continue down a path addicted to oil. Tar sands use three to five times as much water and energy as conventional fossil fuels; they demand the fragmentation and displacement of vast swaths of the traditional territory of numerous First Nations and Métis communities within Treaty 6 and 8, undermining the ability of indigenous people and treaty beneficiaries to live off the land as they have been doing for generations. Furthermore the tar sands demand a huge level of infrastructure including upgraders, pipelines and oil tankers to transport the fuel to markets around the world.

In addition to working on the issues of tar sands, the Sierra Club Prairie advocates for numerous improvements that would improve our community and environmental health. Our campaigns span everything from the issues of pesticides and vehicle idling, to water conservation and parks protection. At present our two major campaigns for the prairies are asking for protections and prioritizations of water rights for ecosystems, human rights, treaty rights and future generations. We openly oppose the establishment of water markets that threaten to allocate water on an ability-to-pay principle rather than a rights-based framework. Furthermore we advocate for the development of a green economy through the construction of new small-scale renewable energy infrastructure, home retrofits and re-skilling that promotes local economic autonomy and sustainability.

But our campaigns are only as strong as the people who support them — please take a moment to check us out and help build the movement for environmental justice we need to see!

For more information about the Sierra Club Prairie and how you can take advantage of the research, resources and expertise of the organization please visit www.prairie.sierraclub.ca

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Groups Appeal Government Decision on Pollution Controls

Call for renewed emissions mitigation to limit toxins

By Susanne McCrea, Executive Director, Boreal Forest Network

THE LOUISIANA-PACIFIC CANADA LTD. (LP) Swan Valley oriented strand board plant was just given a license, on March 24, 2011, to remove the pollution controls many of us fought for when the company came to Manitoba in 1994. They pleaded poverty and the Manitoba government let them take the controls off to save money, a move that would never be allowed in the U.S..

This decision is in stark contrast with the great work Manitoba Conservation is doing to support the First Nations led bid for an UNESCO World Heritage Site on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

The Boreal Forest Network (BFN) and Concerned Citizens of the Valley have launched an appeal to call for controls to be required at the mill.

LP can now, legally, increase their actual emissions of hazardous air pollutants (HAPs), from the dryers and press, 100 fold. Total volatile organic compounds (VOCs) will increase from 25 tons per year (tpy) to 1,140 tpy. And that's not all.

"This license allows astonishing high emissions of both NOx and VOCs from the same facility," said U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) consultant and toxics expert, Dr. Charles Simon. "This is a recipe for tropospheric ozone and smog. It cannot and will not be avoided. That is a serious degradation of air quality permitted by this license. VOC + NOx + particulate matter + sunlight = tropospheric ozone, smog, and citizen trips to the ER."

NOx stands for nitrogen oxides. They're produced from the reaction of nitrogen and oxygen gases in the air during combustion, especially at high temperatures. Benzene is another toxic substance increased from 0.29tpy to 6.7tpy in this license. It's not considered safe at any level of exposure.

The Boreal Forest Network and the Concerned Citizens of the Valley launched an appeal, based on numerous errors in fact, of *Environment Act license*, # 2954, on April 20, 2011, calling on Manitoba Conservation to insist that LP either keep the Regenerative Thermal Oxidizers (RTOs), or implement Regenerative Catalytic Oxidizers (RCOs), or the newer and less expensive biofilters.

We've been battling this issue since it resurfaced two years ago when the RTOs were, quietly, turned off on a temporary permit.

We thought we'd won a permanent victory when the RTOs were written into the original 1994 license by the Filmon government. The NDP joined us in heralding this as a victory when they fought for the pollution controls with us while in opposition.

In 1994, the Clean Environment Commission (CEC) conducted hearings that lasted for several weeks and included testimony from the EPA. LP had just received the largest fine ever levied by the EPA and the agency had reached an agreement with the company to install RTO pollution controls at 11 of its 13 plants. RTOs are a highly effective incinerator that removes 90 percent or more of the most dangerous emissions.

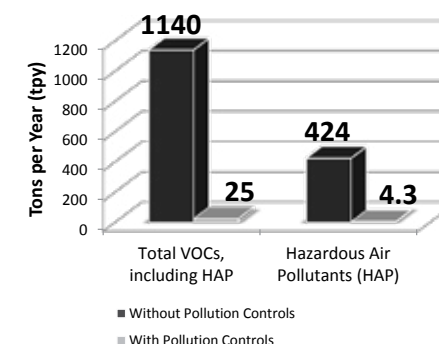
We were forced to participate in the most recent CEC process, in July 2009, under protest when the Manitoba Conservation terms of reference for the process denied us a full public hearing process with hearings in Winnipeg and Swan Valley. We had to settle for a one way submission process in a meeting held only in Swan River, effectively limiting the participation from Winnipeg environmental groups and concerned Manitobans. We got no intervenor funding and had to raise over \$50,000 to provide experts reports — one from Dr. Simon — that didn't make it into the CEC report. In September 2010, they recommended to do away with the controls.

Support the appeal of *Environment Act License* #2954 by contacting your MLA, Conservation Minister Bill Blaikie and Premier Greg Selinger and calling on them to insist that LP either keep the regenerative Thermal Oxidizers (RTOs), or implement RCOs, or the newer and less expensive biofilters.

For more information contact BFN at: borealaction@gmail.com.

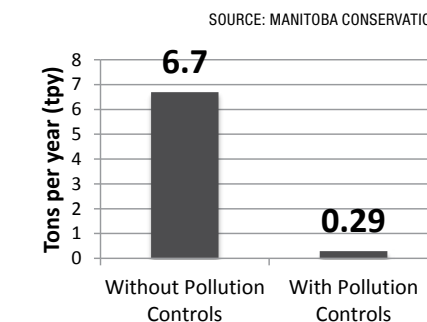
For background articles on this issue, see Eco-Journal editions from Vol. 19 No. 5 (Dec. 2009) and Vol. 20 No. 4 (October 2010) at Mbeconetwork.org/eco_journal.

LP VOC and HAP Emissions



SOURCE: DR. CHARLES SIMON'S REPORT TO THE CLEAN ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION

LP Benzene Emissions



SOURCE: MANITOBA CONSERVATION

“Based on the fact that benzene is a human carcinogen, it is the requirement of Manitoba Conservation that benzene emissions be reduced or eliminated wherever possible.”

—Tracey Braun, Director, Environmental Assessment and Licensing Manitoba Conservation



Rio+20 and the United Nations

Youth participate in preparations for 2012 Earth Summit

By Nicholas Cherlet

BACK IN DECEMBER, I found myself having a phone conversation with my superior at an NGO I belong to. This in itself was not unusual. The topic, however, was: did I want to go to New York City in March to participate in some UN meetings? Invitations to events in other cities and countries come fairly often if you're involved in the environmental movement, but the reality is that you have to turn down most of them. This time though, they were actually offering money to send me there, and so I jumped on it.

At the time, I didn't know much about the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) Second Preparatory Committee Meeting or "PrepCom" for the 2012 Earth Summit (the meeting I was set to attend), or the Rio process in general (the Earth Summit "Rio+20" as well as three preparatory committee meetings). I was certainly aware of it, as anyone who follows the environmental policy sphere would have been, but my knowledge of what actually went on behind those checkpoints was minimal.

However, We Canada, our organization, is all about influencing next year's Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and so it seemed essen-

tial to educate ourselves about the process. A person can read thousands of books, but there is no substitute for actually being there to experience the thing. Fast-forward a few months, and on March 4th, I was touching down at JFK. After two days of side events (related to, but not part of the Rio process or the UN), as well as exploring Manhattan (for which two days is woefully insufficient), the PrepCom itself began. Getting my pass was difficult, not because I didn't have the required documentation or hadn't been cleared, but because they had run out of blank cards. Eventually though, I did get in, and it was a fascinating place to be.

Sure, on the surface, watching each country's representative take far too long to answer a question assigned to them by the chair is incredibly dull. Eventually though, you start to understand "UN-ish", and begin to detect meaning in what these representatives say. What is on the surface bland and meaningless fluff has in fact a great deal of meaning. It's like learning a new language — the more you understand what's being said, the more you want to learn more. Thankfully, learning was easy as I (and the three others from our initiative who went), had two experi-



The author takes time out from PrepCom to visit the United Nations Sculpture Garden.

enced Canadian delegates to show us around and make sure we were up to speed.

This was a fascinating experience. I got to see what really does go on behind those checkpoints that tourists see whenever they visit the UN. From the outside, it seems out of reach, out of touch and in the main, irrelevant. However, that is not the case. The fact that somebody from high school was in these negotiations shows that they are not out of reach. The people who go to these meetings are just like you and I. They are people who realize that what goes on behind those checkpoints has a huge bearing on the outside world. For that reason, it's invaluable to understand how it works.

Nicholas Cherlet blogs for the Manitoba Environmental Youth Network at www.mbecoyouth.org, where this article originally appeared.

New In the Library

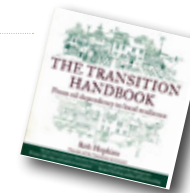
All of the materials in the Alice Chambers Memorial Library may be loaned out free of charge. There is no-charge postal delivery outside Winnipeg. Please contact Wynne Kvist, Resource Assistant, at library@mbeconetwork.org or 947-6511 for more information. www.mbeconetwork.org/library.php.

New Books:

The Transition Handbook: From Oil Dependency to Local Resilience

By Rob Hopkins, Founder of the Transition movement
Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 2008

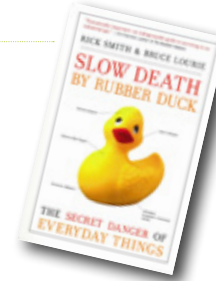
Both a visioning guide and a how-to book, The Transition Handbook recognizes that the move away from oil-dependency is inevitable and suggests that this move can result in a better future. Rather than feeling fear and guilt over peak oil and climate change, the author describes how communities can use this opportunity to reinvent themselves through economic, social and cultural change. Transition Initiatives are already underway in a few communities in the UK and this guidebook will help others develop a vision for their own Transition Initiative and take steps to develop more self-sustaining communities.



Slow Death by Rubber Duck: The Secret Danger of Everyday Things

By Rick Smith & Bruce Lourie
Counterpoint, 2009

Concerned with the link between environmental and health issues, two Canadian environmental advocates embarked on an experiment to test the effects of chemicals that surround us every day. The authors experiment on themselves, using standard scientific testing to measure the levels of seven toxic chemicals in their bodies before and after performing regular everyday activities. In addition to the results of these experiments, the book presents information about the chemicals that were tested and related health effects and legislation. The book provides hope with "Action Items" to effectively reduce the pollution levels in your body and to help initiate changes in legislation.



Manifestos on the Future of Food & Seed

Edited by Vandana Shiva
Featuring essays by Michael Pollan, Carlo Petrini, Jamey Lionette, Prince Charles & Vandana Shiva
South End Press, 2007

Compiling ideas from hundreds of food communities and organizations that came together for the International Commission on the Future of Food and the Slow Food movement's Terra Madre gathering, this book outlines the necessary steps toward a new model of food production. The effects of industrialized farming on food quality, health, the environment, society and culture are analyzed and practical suggestions for sustainability, freedom and diversity in food production are given.



Featured Book Review

The Human-Powered Home: Choosing Muscles Over Motors

By Tamara Dean
New Society Publishers, 2008

WE'VE COME A LONG WAY since the housewives of the 1950's collectively shouted "Eureka!" upon receiving their first washing machines and vacuum cleaners, freeing them from the "shackles" of household chores, and allowing many to enter the workforce. We now live in an era of cheap energy and convenience-gear technology. The fuel of our own bodies is required so little in our daily tasks that most of us have an unwanted surplus in need of burning. Which brings me to the central theme of this book: "what if I could harness this energy?"

People choose to harness their own power for many reasons, the least of which (in developed nations) is to save money. As the author points out, a one-hour workout on a bike or treadmill will produce no more than a penny's worth of electricity. Yet, the pages of this book are filled with the profiles of inventors and entrepreneurs who cite exercise, independence from the grid, tradition, political statement, pollution reduction, and increased connection to their products for choosing muscles over motors.



Bike blender demonstration courtesy of Green Action Centre!

The Human-Powered Home is both a technical manual for building an array of devices, from treadle-powered water pumps to pedal-powered electric generators, and a fascinating history of human power through the ages. In the developing world, it continues to be an economical and efficient option.

While the author claims that no special skills are required to follow the step-by-step instructions, it is evident that some basic tools and handiness are in order. For those of us who are not handymen or women, commercially available human-powered products, such as coffee mills and push mowers, are also profiled and reviewed in this book.

Green Action Centre staff successfully followed the instructions laid out in this book to build a pedal-powered bicycle blender which will be used to draw people to their event displays. While the idea of using a bicycle to blend a smoothie will appeal more to most than that of using a hand crank to wash clothing, this book contains something for anyone interested in harnessing their own energy, whether as part of a lifestyle change, or just a fun project.

—Reviewed by Laurel McDonald

FREE Organic Lawn Care Workshops and FREE "Mow Better" Reel mower sharpening Clinics

Manitoba Eco-Network is pleased to offer free Organic Lawn Care Workshops and "Mow Better" Reel Mower Sharpening Clinics. Learn how to care for your lawn from the ground up, and promote healthy grass by mowing with sharp, properly maintained mowers! One lucky participant can sign up to have their mower sharpened in the demo. Participants will be able to take advantage of our lawn lending library which includes mower sharpening kits, aerators and sprinkler timers (deposit required).

Organic Lawn Care Workshop Dates:

Henderson Library (1-1050 Henderson Hwy) Tuesday, June 7 • 7:00-8:00 PM.	Louis Riel Library (1168 Dakota St) Tuesday, June 14 • 7:00-8:00 PM.
St. Boniface Library (131 Provencher Blvd) Wednesday, June 22 • 7:00-8:00 PM.	West End Library (999 Sargent Ave) Wednesday, June 29 • 7:00-8:00 PM.

Mow Better Clinic Dates:

Bronx Park Community Centre (720 Henderson Hwy) • Thursday, June 2 • 7:00-8:00 PM.	River Osborne Community Centre (101 Pambina Hwy at Confusion Corner) • Wednesday, June 8 (Clean Air Day!) 7:00-8:00 PM.
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All workshops are free but registration is required.
To Register: 947-6511 • ola@mbeconetwork.org • mbeconetwork.org



Cyclist Safety Versus Driver Stress

Bike to the Future seeks mandated room on the road

By Charles Feaver

WINNIPEG'S BIKE TO THE FUTURE organization is lobbying for amendments to the *Manitoba Highway Traffic Act* that would require drivers to allow a full metre of clearance when they pass a cyclist.

Thirteen states in the U.S. have enacted a "three-foot rule," which requires vehicles passing bicycles to allow three feet of clearance. In Canada, Nova Scotia has passed a one-metre rule, and the Ontario legislature is considering a bill that would require at least a metre of clearance. Bike to the Future believes an amendment of this kind in Manitoba would clarify the rules on "sharing the road," and if successfully implemented, would make the roads feel safer for cyclists and encourage more people to use their bike for transportation around the city.

Bike to the Future wrote a public letter to Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors Jim Rondeau, recommending that the provincial government enact a one-metre rule, and sent copies to the local newspapers. Readers sent in some 300 comments to newspaper websites in response to the story. A sampling of those comments show what some drivers think about sharing the road. A number of themes showed up in what they wrote:



PHOTO: CHARLES FEAVER

The adoption of a one-metre law could help improve safety for cyclists like this one on Winnipeg's Osborne St.

Cyclist safety is secondary to the rapid flow of traffic:

>>> "If cyclists want a one meter clearance, the city is gonna have to build bigger roads. I'm sorry but when it's rush hour, and you've got wall-to-wall traffic jamming up the roads, pardon me, but there isn't a one-meter clearance to spare. If these cyclists go out during the busiest times, they are taking a risk."

Dismissal with a green spin:

>>> "Let us make 10,000 cars on St. Mary's Rd spend an extra 5 minutes a day idling and going slow, 50,000 minutes of vehicle exhaust, so that 3 cyclists can get their thrills cycling in February."

Dismissal of cycling for winter transportation in the city:

>>> "Honestly [a] 1-meter rule on the highway just makes sense for the cyclist's safety. But there should be a law to STOP BIKING IN WINTER. It's ridiculous to see bikers on the street in winter, it's unbelievably dangerous, if they fell due to snow or slippery roads and the car behind them couldn't stop on time..."

Resentment of having to pass a bicycle that got past when traffic was stopped:

>>> "I find it unnerving when I safely pass a bike, waiting for oncoming traffic to clear so I can give them a clear buffer ... and am thanked by them riding past me at a light, having to repeat the process over again."

The feeling that cyclists should be licensed and insured like cars and trucks:

>>> "Simple solution, if cyclists want to have a say on the rules of the road, they should get licensed and pay insurance since they are bound to be the cause of some accidents. That way they can also be charged and have their license revoked when they do break the rules."

These comments may not represent the views of Winnipeggers in general, but they represent the views of people who have the time and inclination to write a comment on a newspaper's website about vehicles and bicycles sharing the road. However, they demonstrate what some people think the rules are — or should be, and make it evident that Winnipeg has a long

way to go before cyclists are welcomed and safe on the road.

Cycling organizations in U.S. states which implemented the three-foot rule report that changing the law is an important first step, but that it is essential to follow up with ongoing public education to achieve a common understanding of how to share the road.

Bike to the Future believes that making the roads safer for cyclists is a key step in encouraging more people to use their bikes for transportation. Establishing the one-metre rule in law and in drivers' minds is the organization's top legislative priority. This is a long uphill ride! Yet attitudes can change over time, like they did regarding smoking in public places, or drinking and driving.



Complimentary copy
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