

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



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Message from the Chair

As I begin to think of what to include in this message, I am struck by one of Martin Luther King Jr.'s quotes, "This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism". Although Dr. King's focus was on civil rights and the horrendous injustices inherent in racism, the essence of his message is very true in relation to the work we are engaged in at the Manitoba Eco-Network.

Much of our efforts through both the *Healthy Environment*, *Healthy Neighbourhood* and the *Navigating the Law to Protect the Environment* projects have been driven by the environmental injustice experienced by people in lower income communities or in situations of conflict with powerful financial interests. Many of the calls we receive every month are from individuals seeking advice and information about how to begin to respond to new threats to the basics of a healthy environment, safe clean water, and fresh air.

We continue to be funded by grants for specific projects and by individual donors, like many of you, who understand and care about the essentials of a healthy environment and the need to treat all elements of the natural world with great respect.

I want to extend a huge thank you to the staff of the Manitoba Eco-Network; Glen Koroluk, Allie Caporale and Heather Fast for their ongoing work and to the board members who have given generously of their time and of course, to the donors who help to keep the doors open!



Vicki Burns

Message from the Executive Director

In our strive for environmental and social justice it seems that one step forward, two steps back is the normal progress these days. According to the latest State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, in 2023, 783 million people faced hunger and 2.4 billion people were moderately or severely food insecure, these are alarming figures that are on the rise, since pre-COVID pandemic levels. The major drivers for malnutrition and food insecurity are conflict (ie, war), climate extremes and economic shocks, combined with growing inequalities. We live in a country that is rich in resources and ranks very high for many global indicators that measure quality of life, economic development, health and well-being. Yet similar trends in Winnipeg show that food bank use has more than doubled in the last 20 years with over 70,000 people using the food bank in any given month, a sign that growing economic inequalities are not only between nation states, but as well, within nation states, whether they are rich or poor. The universal value of “Leave No One Behind” will become even more important, as we transition away from fossil fuels.

“Leave no one behind is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It represents the unequivocal commitment of all UN Member States to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine the potential of individuals and of humanity as a whole.” (United Nations Sustainable Development Group)

For those of us in Canada, on top of reducing GHG emissions by 45% by 2030 and achieving net zero emissions by 2050, we must make sure that the policy and fiscal instruments we use, do not cause greater harm to those who are most vulnerable and to those low-income households who are struggling financially day-to-day.



Glen Koroluk

About the Eco-Network



The Manitoba Eco-Network works throughout Manitoba. Our office is located in Winnipeg on Treaty One Territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabeg (Ojibwe), Ininew (Cree), Oji-Cree and Dakota Peoples, and the National Homeland of the Red River Métis. Our drinking water comes from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation in Treaty Three Territory and our hydroelectricity is sourced from First Nation communities along the Nelson River in Treaty Five Territory.

We are a public interest environmental organization seeking to promote and facilitate good environmental governance and the protection of Manitoba's environment for the benefit of current and future generations. MbEN undertakes community-based research and engages in advocacy opportunities that promote meaningful public participation in environmental governance processes and access to environmental justice.

Our Mission

To promote good environmental governance, support and build capacity, advocate for environmental justice, and act as a bridge between environmental organizations, the public, and all levels of government.

The charitable objectives of the organization are:

1. To carry on education activities, to develop an awareness in the community concerning the conservation and enhancement of the environment; and
2. In furtherance of the aforesaid, to encourage other Canadian organizations which do the same.

Activities



- 1) Collaborate with MbEN members and other concerned, affected and impacted groups/organizations to develop and activate a clear, consistent framework and process for engaging, organizing, and bringing forward the voice of the environmental community to provincial policy/regulatory discussions.*

Collaborative Campaigns

With [26 other organizations from across the country](#), we supported and signed on to the [Canadian Environmental Law Associations \(CELA\)](#) submission to the Ministers of Environment and Climate Change and Health on Bill C-28, an Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, calling for further amendments to the Act to better protect our health and environment.

We [joined 30 local organizations](#) on a campaign initiated by Cosmetic Pesticide Ban Manitoba, to withdraw Bill 22 in the Manitoba Legislature, as it would allow for the more use of toxic herbicides on lawns. Our presentation in opposition to Bill 22 can be seen [here](#).

We continued our engagement with the [Protect the Public Utilities Board \(PUB\) Coalition](#), and presented our brief to the Standing Committee in Manitoba Legislature deliberating on Bill 36, an Act that would weaken the PUBs role in energy rate setting. Our presentation can be found [here](#).

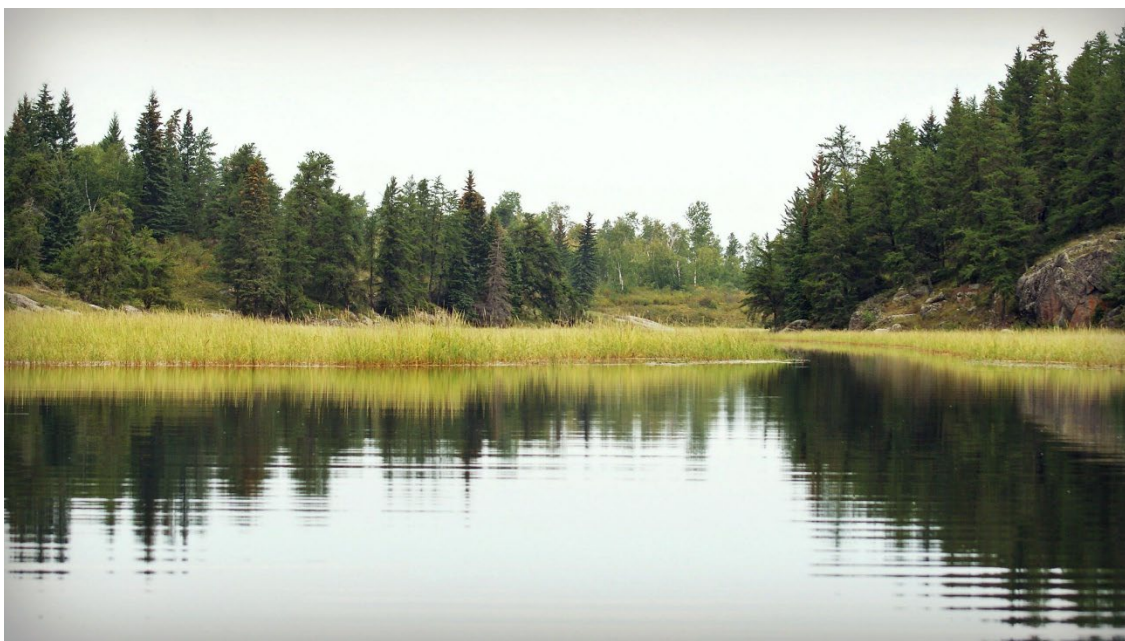
We joined Manitoba Energy Justice Coalition, Sustainable Building Manitoba and Wa Ni Ska Tan Alliance of Hydro-Impacted Communities, [expressing our concerns](#) about Manitoba Hydro's Integrated Resource Planning process.

Together with the Wilderness Committee, [we lent support towards](#) Fisher River Cree Nation's request to have the Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change designate the Sun Gro peat mining expansion as a project under the Impact Assessment Act of Canada.

We join 130 organizations across the country [calling on Honourable Chrystia Freeland](#), Minister of Finance, to significantly increase spending to support low-income Canadians in enabling energy retrofits.

In a letter to Honourable Joyce Murray, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, [we join 15 other groups](#) across the country, asking for the ministry to stop ongoing degradation of fish habitat in Canada and use the powers granted, to undertake cumulative effects assessment.

We started talks with a number of groups in Manitoba that work on water issues, in response to the governments newly released Water Action Strategy and organized an ENGO – Government bilateral meeting with Manitoba Water Science and Watershed Management Branch.



Partnerships

We joined as a community collaborator to the newly created Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) project, led by Dr. McLachlan at the University of Manitoba, entitled, *Mentoring and Training the Next Generation of Environmental Researchers Working in the Indigenous North*.

We continued our partnership with Camp Morningstar in assisting their struggle to defend their lands from open pit mining.

We continued our fundraising efforts with Our Line in the Sand, Manitoba Energy Justice Coalition and What the Frack Manitoba, under the Save Our Water campaign, to raise enough money to hire a professional engineering company to testify at the Manitoba Clean Environment Commission hearing regarding the silica sand extraction project in Vivian, MB. Our closing statement at the hearing can be found [here](#).

Networks

This year MbEN staff and Board were active and involved in the following Networks:

- Canadian Environment Network (RCEN) – Environmental Planning and Assessment Caucus
- Network of Networks (facilitated by Canadian Community Economic Development Network – Manitoba Branch). We collectively developed an [important policy directive](#), asking government to make the non-profit sector thrive.
- Wa Ni Ska Tan Alliance of Hydro-Impacted Communities (a community-academic research partnership funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC))

Consultations

We participated in the following Consultations and Law Reform initiatives:

- Bill S-5, Amendments to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA)
- Bill C-226, The National Strategy Respecting Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice Act
- Bill 22, The Environment Amendment Act (Pesticide Restrictions)
- Bill 36, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Public Utilities Board Amendment Act
- 2020 National Model Construction Code Adoption for Manitoba
- Government of Canada proposed Frame for Clean Electricity Regulations
- Manitoba Hydro Integrated Resource Plan (IRP)

All our submissions and comments can be found on our [Policy Advocacy page](#).



- 2) *Continue to develop and deliver activities that build capacity, connect and support MbEN members and Manitoba's environmental community.*

The Healthy Environment Healthy Neighbourhood Project



The *Healthy Environment Healthy Neighbourhood* (HEHN) project was a major focus for the Eco-Network in 2022-2023. Inspired by the work of community activists from St. Boniface and Point Douglas, this project documented the experiences of residents who live in mature neighbourhoods that are in close proximity to industrial sites. In particular, we focused on gathering insights from the community about the environmental and health impacts that arise when living, working, and/or playing near industrial developments and brownfield sites in Winnipeg. We also explored whether such community members have access to environmental justice by examining the available regulatory tools available to the public to address environmental and health concerns. The final report, [*The Burden of Concern*](#), which sets out the results of our study and recommendations for policy and legal changes that could improve access to justice for impacted community members, was published in March 2023.

The HEHN project used a community-based research approach, which involved guidance from an advisory committee of local experts and advocates and conducting private interviews with community members in our project areas. We focused on gathering information about the lived experiences of community members in these areas located near heavy industrial sites. They shared stories of excessive noise, fires, noxious odours, explosions, and worries about health. Many community participants shared evidence of the impacts of industrial pollution, including soil tests that deemed vegetable gardening to be unsafe at their homes. All interviewees expressed worry and concern at what was happening to their neighbourhoods and felt they had little to no support from government when they have sought legal and policy changes that could help improve their situation.

With support from a talented group of students from the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Law, the HEHN project team researched available policy and legal mechanisms at the municipal (i.e. City of Winnipeg) and provincial level that could improve the access to environmental justice of the citizens within our project area. We also engaged in the federal parliamentary process associated with Bill S-5 to support the recognition of environmental human rights (i.e. the right to a healthy environment) and improved protection of vulnerable populations from environmental and health impacts under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*. Overall, we found that current regulatory frameworks at all levels of governance in Canada include few, if any, mechanisms that facilitate access to environmental justice for the public and vulnerable populations. There is a lack of accountability mechanisms available in relation to toxic substance

regulation, clean-up of contaminated sites, and enforcement of existing environmental and health requirements.

Climate Safe – Green City



Starting in April 2023, MbEN will be focused on Phase 2 of our neighbourhood climate resilience work. We have named this phase *Climate Safe, Green City*, a title that captures the key themes of climate resilience that are important to our community partners. We are exploring ways to improve greening in these neighbourhoods, as well as to identify and address climate-related safety concerns. The foundation of this work is in the relationships we develop, not only with our primary neighbourhood partners of West Broadway, the West End, and Spence Neighbourhood, but also with other community groups and residents in these areas.

The outcome of the *Climate Safe, Green City* project is an increased understanding of neighbourhood climate needs and a series of projects that will help with climate change mitigation at the neighbourhood level. Project development and implementation will be an iterative process. We will pursue cross-cutting partnerships with other organizations whenever possible in the interest of supporting enhanced green spaces and sustainable safety plans.

3) *Diversify revenue opportunities and improve financial sustainability*

With financial support from the Winnipeg Foundation through an Adapt Grant and Organization Development Fund, we were successful in hiring PARKKA Fundraising Solutions to develop our Fund Development Strategy and implement its components. We are confident that this long-term strategy will give us the financial diversity that we require, as an environmental non-profit charity, focussing much of our work in the area of policy advocacy.

For our Climate Safe, Green City project (formerly called Neighbourhood Climate Resilience project) we were successful in obtaining students from the Department of Urban and Inner-City Studies, University of Winnipeg, to help us with the project and they were paid salaries through the MITACS program.

On a fee for service basis, we completed our participation as a consultant on the research team for the study, [*Qualitative Methods for the Next Generation of Impact Assessment*](#), sponsored by the Impact Assessment of Canada. Our annual appeal, which is our most important fundraiser, is now running more smoothly with a new contact database platform. We have grown our list to over 400 supporters.

4) Work with member organizations to educate and engage the public on environmental issues

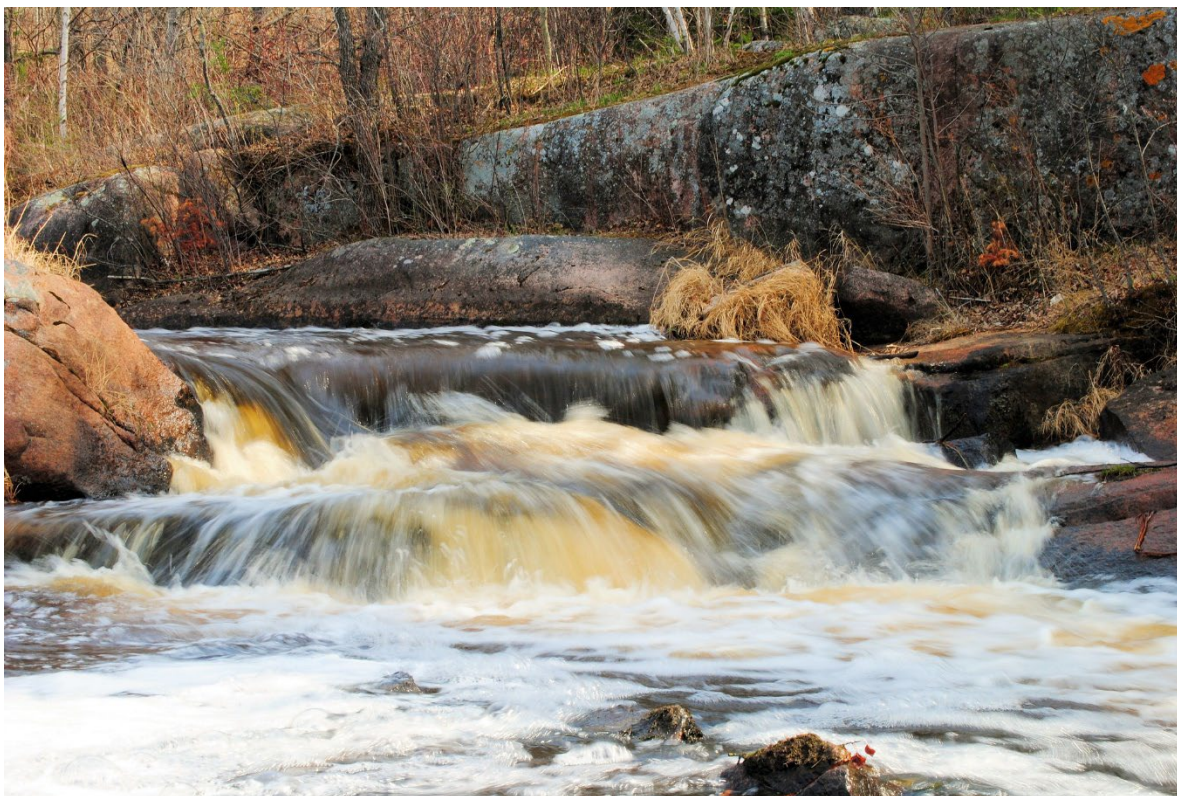
We participated in a press conference with three other local organizations (Hog Watch Manitoba, Our Line in the Sand, Brokenhead Area Environmentalists), concerned about water quality impacts in the Brokenhead River watershed.

We worked with a number of Winnipeg based organizations to help organize and co-sponsor the Mayoralty Debate on Environment & Climate Change. We also contributed to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternative's Alternative Municipal Budget (AMB), [writing the water chapter](#), and participated in the press conference, on public release of the AMB.

We receive and respond to information requests from the general public, grassroots organizations and the media on a weekly basis.

We publish the [Eco-Bulletin](#), a monthly e-newsletter which includes environmental news, actions, resources, and events from across Manitoba.

We regularly post information and events on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#). In 2022/2023, our Twitter account saw growth of 6% and our Instagram followers increased by 16%. On Facebook, we have continued to grow with over 3900 followers, a 10% increase over the previous year, For LinkedIn we are starting to see more utility with this platform as we increase our engagement, with a 16% increase in followers this past year.



5) *Continue to develop and strengthen governance and operational capacity of MbEN*

This was a big year for the Manitoba Eco-Network, as it moved out of the Eco-Centre at 330 Portage Avenue, situated on the third floor of the Mountain Equipment Coop building. The Coop went bankrupt and was bought out by a holdings company based out of California, who in turn sold the building to a REIT based out of New York. The 20-year history of five environmental organizations sharing space came to a sad end. We are now happily renting space from CCPA Manitoba at the John Howard Society Building on Ellice Avenue.

We continued the updating of our current strategic plan, with a goal of completing by our next AGM. Our active committees include the Strategic Planning Committee, Policy Advocacy Committee and Fundraising Committee.

We held a successful AGM January 26 2023, with 14 organizations with another 12 individual members attending.

Financial Statement

REVENUE	March 31, 2022	March 31, 2023
Donations	35,200	55,671
Memberships	2,490	1,633
Tenant Recoveries	55,394	17,611
Grants		
Manitoba	5,000	--
Winnipeg Foundation	40,000	61,000
Canada	14,239	7,511
Other	38,989	52,875
Other Income	6,960	15,441
TREE Endowment Fund	4,094	4,233
Interest	737	470
TOTAL	203,103	216,445

EXPENDITURES	March 31, 2022	March 31, 2023
Wages & Benefits	132,135	137,154
Amortization	42	--
Special Events	--	29,468
Projects & General Expenses	89,015	47,319
TOTAL	222,963	213,941

SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	March 31, 2022	March 31, 2023
TOTAL	(19,860)	2,504

Staff (as of March 31, 2023)



Glen Koroluk (they/them) - Executive Director

Glen started as ED of MbEN in February 2019. Before that, he worked in the private sector with a local environmental software company, was the community housing and grants coordinator for an inner-city neighbourhood renewal corporation and worked for various national and provincial environmental non-governmental organizations in Manitoba for almost 20 years as a campaigner and community organizer. Glen volunteers as a board member with the National Farmers Foundation and holds a BSc. from the University of Winnipeg, that focused on geography, climatology and statistics.

Heather Fast (she/her) - Policy Advocacy Director



Heather transitioned from Board Member to Policy Advocacy Director in July 2021. She is a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Manitoba's Natural Resources Institute and teaches the Environmental Law 3600 course in the Faculty of Law. Heather has three prior degrees from the University of Manitoba from the Faculty of Arts (Global Political Economy) and the Faculty of Law (J.D. and LL.M.). She was called to the Bar in 2014 and undertook legal and policy work for several organizations including the Manitoba Law Reform Commission, the Public Interest Law Centre and The Great-West Life Assurance Company (now Canada Life) before returning to her graduate studies.

Alexandra Caporale (she/her) – Resource Manager



Alexandra joined the MbEN on a full-time basis in September 2021 after contributing to the Building Community Climate Resilience project in the spring of 2020. Alexandra is a recent graduate from the City Planning program at the University of Manitoba and has previously worked with the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ on many placemaking projects.

Contracts

Book-keeping: Derek Bassey (A3 OfficeWorks)

Fund Development Strategy: PARKKA Fundraising Solutions

Clean Environment Commission hearing: Public Interest Law Centre/Matrix Solutions Inc.

Translation and scribing service: Spectra Scribe, Frenchetera

Board of Directors (at April, 2023)

Vicki Burns, Chair

Laura Tyler, Vice Chair

Phil Lancaster, Treasurer

Lindsay Robinson, Secretary

Chantel Henderson

Josh Brandon

Dr. Kirit Patel

Kathryn Dompierre

Stacey Chaboyer

Karen Fletcher

Cameron Hunter

Dr. Patricia Fitzpatrick

Active Committees

Executive, Strategic Planning, Policy Advocacy, and Fundraising

Volunteers & In-Kind Support

We would like to thank our volunteers who helped in various small projects in 2022-2023.

Geoffrey Mulcahy assisted us in updating our database of eco businesses throughout the province.

Nelson Rufaro Madziyire assisted us in updating our database of grants and funding opportunities.

Shaylynn Pelikys assisted us in updating our database of media contacts, ranging from national-level news organizations to independent newspapers. Shaylynn also learned to do basic legal and policy research to support the HEHN project.

Richard Dilay – for his experience in volunteering on our Fundraising Committee

Students from the Pro Bono Students Canada MB Chapter and Environmental Law Group at Robson Hall, Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba undertook a range of different pro bono policy and legal research for us: Prachi Sanghavi, Alyssa Thomas, Ryan Hall, Julia Beal, Jenny Bi, Brenden Drews, Jenna Jeffrey, Nicholas Mark, and Kerith Tung.

The Healthy Environment, Healthy Neighbourhood Advisory Committee, consisting of Michelle Berger, Greg Selinger, Jon Gerrard, Catherine Flynn, Shirley Thompson, Guy Jourdain, Byron Williams, Jennifer Chen, Christine Trickey, Lea Mutch, Malaya Marcelino, and Sande Harlos, for providing personal stories and guidance. Folarin Solademi, who volunteered to create maps for the HEHN project. Sarah Cooper, for their guidance and academic support during the HEHN project.

Funders & Major Donors (over \$500)

Summer Jobs Canada	Carl Durand
Lawton Partners Charitable Giving Foundation/ Novek Family Endowment	Aurelie Mogan in Memory of Don Sullivan
The Winnipeg Foundation	Sandy, Orlie, Meredith & Barrette Plett
Assiniboine Credit Union	Bill & Shirley Loewen
Manitoba Law Foundation	Anonymous
TREE Legacy Endowment Fund	Winston Madray
All Charities Campaign	G. Selinger
Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions Inc.	Aurora Farm
Carolyn Garlich & Peter Miller / Gift Funds Canada	Dunsky Energy & Climate
Vicki Burns & John Gosselin	Katharina Stieffenhofer
Carl von Baeyer & Deborah Lake/ Aqueduct Foundation	Erica Young
Pro Bono Students of Canada (in-kind)	Sean McCormick
Simon Hall CPA (in-kind, in part)	Ken and Debbie Rubin Public Interest Advocacy Fund/Ottawa Foundation
Mennonite Central Committee	Helen Garrod
LUSH Charity Pot	Katarina Kupca
Ray & Fenella Temmerman	Prairie Architects Inc.
Dan Blankstein	Donald Begalke
Robert & Sylvia Fenton	Ken Klassen/ InfoTechnika
Hugh & Valerie Arklie	Geoff Dueck Thiessen
Robert McClement & Karen Tjaden	Ploughshares Community Farm/Matthew Wiens

