

Take the Commuter Challenge!

By the Green Commuting Project

You get up on a beautiful June morning, grab your bag or briefcase and keys and head out the door. As you pass the driveway, you stash the keys in your pocket, and walk right on by, leaving the car shining in the sun and money for gas folded in your pocket.

You have just accepted the challenge—the Winnipeg Commuter Challenge 2000. You are one of 10,000 Winnipeggers who is walking, cycling, taking transit or carpooling to work—anything to leave your car at home—from June 5 to 9, Environment Week in Canada.

Most of those 10,000 people will be employed at one of a few dozen companies and organizations in Winnipeg, which register their workplaces to participate. In most cases the registration will be entirely electronic. Commuters will register their ordinary commuting mode at the beginning of the Challenge via an Internet link and then record their commuting mode each day in a simple form that is automatically sent to their email. This streamlined scoring process doesn't require much administration. In the case of workplaces which do not have widespread email access, a combination of paper tally and electronic recording will still proceed with a minimum of administrative hassle.

Local companies and organizations will compete with others in their size category and be eligible for prizes. The totals for Winnipeg will form our score in the national challenge.

Winnipeg Commuter Challenge 2000 is being organized by the Green Commuting Project, which is a service of Resource Conservation Manitoba, known to many previously as the Recycling Council of Manitoba. The Green Commuting Project has been working to implement workplace-based programs to facilitate cleaner modes of commuting than single-occupancy vehicles since October 1998.

"We need a way to make it real. To show people that alternatives like busing or biking are completely viable, and that we aren't lone weirdos going against the grain. We are the vanguard of a shift that all of society will eventually make as we learn that driving everywhere just can't be sustained," said Toby Maloney, one of three Green Commuting Project staff.

Commuter Challenges are annual events in cities like Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver, and Calgary, which is preparing now for its 10th Annual event. But Winnipeg Commuter Challenge 2000 is the first entry by Winnipeg, and it comes at a time when the challenge will be truly a national event for the first time.

Winnipeg well organized

Previously, cities challenged one another but with no real coordination at the national level and no effort to recruit more cities and towns. Sustainable Alberta, a Calgary-based organization that has organized the Calgary challenge for nine years, has taken the lead in recruiting more cities this year. Others that are just joining or which have participated previously include Edmonton, Regina, Red Deer, Montreal, Hamilton-Wentworth, St. John, Victoria and London.

The Green Commuting Project was planning to get involved anyway, but is pleased that cities like Edmonton and Regina are also on board. "We think we stand a chance of beating some of the other newcomers, and surprising some of the established commuter challenges, because we are well organized," Maloney said.

To pull off the challenge the Green Commuting Project has lined-up a network of partners that are involved in related activities. Winnipeg Transit, the Manitoba Cycling Association, Roller Sports Manitoba, and Prairie Pathfinders are transportation-related organizations that have agreed to partner with RCM in organizing the event. Other partners are more involved in health and active transportation such as the Manitoba Lung Association, the Manitoba Fitness Directorate, Heart and Stroke Foundation Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg.

The City of Winnipeg, Winnipeg Transit and the Fitness Directorate (through the Manitoba Go for Green organization) have all signed on as sponsors of the event, as well as the Winnipeg Foundation, the International Institute for Sustainable Develop-



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Winnipeg Group Wins Award

Congratulations to SAVE OUR SEINE, the St. Boniface and St. Vital based group which has been working for many years to restore the habitat of the Seine River as it flows through Winnipeg. The group was awarded Environment Canada's Environmental Citizenship Award in a ceremony on March 25. The ceremony also marked the completion of the repair to the Seine River Siphon, a structure which channels the Seine River under the floodway. The siphon had been leaking for years, leading to a situation in low flow years when the river did not flow from the outlet at all. 43 groups, led by SOS, formed the Coalition for a Canoeable Seine River to lobby

for the siphon's repair.

Save our Seine spokesman JP Brunet comments that the repair to the siphon will dramatically improve the river environment, especially in times of low flow, when an estimated 8-10 cubic feet per second previously lost to the floodway will once again flow through the City.

SOS also reports that the recommendations of the Seine River Task Force to form a Heritage Greenway along the Seine, are now moving forward. The study has been adopted by the Riel Community Committee, and will now go forward to City Council for approval.

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New Book on Manitoba Mixedwoods

A booklet on Manitoba's mixedwood forests has been published by the Mixedwood Forest Research and Advisory Committee (MFRAC). It is the product of almost two years of work, involving over a dozen contributors and editors. Its publication was made possible by a generous grant from the Thomas Sill Foundation.

Copies of The Manitoba Mixedwoods - A Forest in Transition are available for \$12.95 at Prairie Sky Bookstore (Westminster Ave), the Aboriginal People's Library (Sutherland Ave), and McNally Robinson (Grant Park and Portage Place).

With Thomas Sill's assistance, MFRAC has launched a provincial tour by forest researcher Dan Soprovich. Dan has been visiting schools across the province, delivering presentations on his MFRAC-sponsored tree cavity study. All those

schools which have hosted presentations will receive a complementary copy of this booklet. With a copy in their library, those schools which haven't had the chance to hear Dan's talk will be encouraged to invite him in.

MFRAC was founded in Swan River, Manitoba in September 1996. It is currently registered as a not-for-profit corporation in the province of Manitoba with over 60 members. Its mission is "to develop and encourage research and educational activities that promote an understanding of the ecological functions of the southern mixedwood forest, its biodiversity and its sustainable use."

MFRAC has launched or co-sponsored research studies in the Duck and Porcupine Mountains on the importance of tree cavities for birds and small mammals, on
see "Mixedwoods..." on page 7 ►

Eco-Network Steering Committee, 1999 - 2000

Dennis Bayomi - Winnipeg Vegetarian Association

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Peter Walker - Manitoba Federation of Labour

Our Food ... Our Health ... Our Future...

This year's Organic Agriculture Conference was just as successful as last year's, at least according to the participants. Some 250 people from all over the province gathered to hear great speakers, eat great food, and get involved in awesome networking and discussions. A highlight of the event was the New Farmer Outreach Panel, convened by David Neufeld, which featured three youthful Manitobans who are carrying out various agricultural pursuits. Here, we reproduce David's introduction to the Panel, and the presentation by Charlene Rowland of the Whiteshell Permaculture Collective.

INTRODUCTION TO NEW FARMER OUTREACH

BY DAVID NEUFELD, ROOM TO GROW GREENHOUSE, BOISSEvain

This must be one of our society's most worthwhile and demanding tasks - to nurture the next generation of farmers. And so we may be excused - due to the enormity of the task and elusiveness of its beginning - for being in denial to the depth that we seem to be. How do we encourage even one soul to enter into what so many are exiting?

Fortunately, the success of this task is for the most part out of our hands - for it is a spiritual phenomenon that sparks in a farmer the desire to be a caretaker of a piece of this earth, its plants and its creatures. And it is a spiritual phenomenon that sparks in a homemaker the desire to acquire for the home the very best that this good Earth can provide.

Let us most simply from this time on say: "We will in no way diminish, dissuade or distract this spark. Rather in our deepest beings, we believe that this spark will prevail". Then, in the glow of that assurance, we will be led in our own ways and in a collective way to give what is needed in whatever place and to whomever we see with that desire. The denial has died. We have begun.

In this workshop, we ask young farmers to speak to their passions, strengths and fears. We are listening.

CHARLENE ROWLAND

Charlene is one of the founding members of the Whiteshell Permaculture Collective which is located 3 kms east of River Hills MB on the edge of the Whiteshell bioregion. This newly formed collective strives to gently steward their 80 acre mixed forest/pasture/bogland using Permaculture and other sustainable techniques. She has spent six years self-educating through apprenticeships and workshops at various Institutes and farms across Canada and the United States. She has studied and researched sustainable lifestyles and Permaculture techniques as well as organic agriculture. She has received a Permaculture Design Degree.

My response to a corrupt world society based on corporate financial institutes that drain and destroy the Earth, was to dream and envision an existence that was separate from that society. It is my goal and main objective to achieve such a lifestyle and inspire and teach others to do the same.

Permaculture

In search of more information on how to live this way, I found many inspiring examples to learn from and follow. I learned a term and system of ecological principles called, Permaculture, that seems to unify all aspects of living sustainably on Earth. Along with other practical systems, Permaculture principles stress re-learning from our ancestors and returning to their simpler techniques. I have found this principle increasingly relevant as I strive towards my path as a Manitoba Agriculturalist/Permaculturalist.

Each time I meet a local farmer from my area I learn much practical, bioregionally-based information, even if they support the corporate economy I resist. They have many seasons of regional knowledge I can use to my advantage. Therefore I highly encourage a sustainable knowledge and skill exchange within Manitoba to promote more young farmers to move towards these ecological methods. Regionally-based learning centres stressing hands-on type workshops would increase the larger sense of community.

Creating opportunities

Working and living collectively does not support the Capitalist system so these are not skills taught in today's civilization. Although tribal/ancestral or village-based societies were/are often more ecological and self-supporting, humans have gradually lost the ability to work collectively toward a focus. Creating opportunities for re-learning and sharing this knowledge would support fresh young farming enthusiasts.

One barrier to creating these skill centres or educational scenarios is, of course, funding. I dream of being free from global financial dependency by developing a farm-based economy. I have a personal love and interest in gardening and hope to eventually grow enough organic vegetables and seeds to be able to sell locally or trade for that which I can not create myself. I believe other young sustainable market seekers would greatly benefit from advice and help from already established local systems. Information about various Government grant programs and rehabilitation initiatives would also encourage a newer interest in these areas.

Seed Exchange needed!

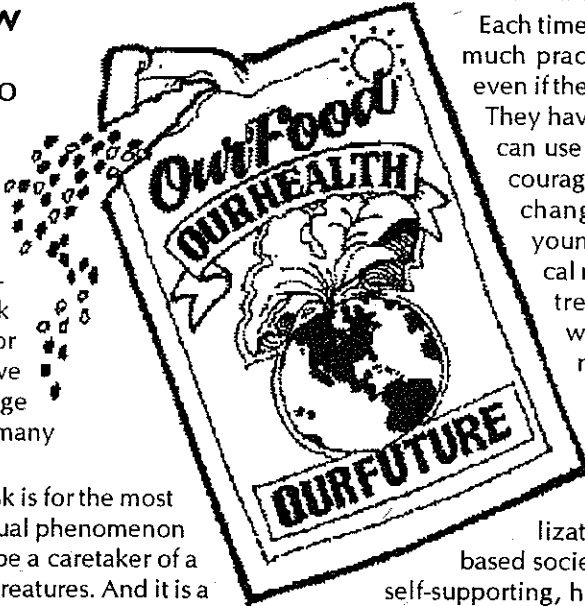
As an organic grower, and because I choose to grow mainly vegetables from this bioregion, I have found it hard to locate appropriate seed sources. Perhaps a Manitoba based seed exchange network could support new and old gardeners alike!

In my opinion Manitoba is brimming full with potential. Manitoba is on the edge of such extreme ecosystems. With so much ecological diversity there are many exciting combinations to be found.

To summarize: Organizing opportunities for eager young Manitoba agriculturalists to share and learn with experienced ones will greatly encourage, as well as educate, those who will feed the future.

Agriculture is the fabric of culture.

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What's Happening

April 12 - Launch of "The Manitoba Mixedwoods" with Lindy Clubb and Gloria Goulet. 8 pm at McNally Robinson's Grant Park location.

April 18 - Democracy and Desserts - Herizons magazine proudly presents Judy Rebick, author of *Imagining Democracy*, at the West End Cultural Centre for a fundraiser with singer/songwriter, Ellen Thorn. Tickets are \$12. For more information or to order tickets with your credit card, call 774-6225 or the West End Cultural Centre at 783-6918.

April 20 - Manitoba Naturalist Society Action Committee meeting, 7 pm at #2 - 70 Albert Street. All are welcome. The new co-chairs are Jennifer Line (umlinejm@cc.UManitoba.CA) and April Kiers North.

April 26 - Perspectives on the Ethics of Consumerism from Professor Arthur Schafer, Director of the Centre for Professional and Applied Ethics at the University of Manitoba, 7:30 pm in the Main Ballroom at the International Inn on Wellington. Professor Schafer's address, which is free to the public, launches the conservation conference listed below.

April 26 - 28 - The Ecology of Waste Reduction: Stewardship and Sustainability, the fourth biennial conference co-hosted by Resource Conservation Manitoba and Manitoba Association

of Regional Recyclers. Low income and students rates available. Call 947-6511 for more information.

May 11 - Exploration of Fair Trade and other Alternative Economies at the first meeting of a local chapter of Council of Canadians, 7:30 pm at the Nine Circles Community Health Centre, 705 Broadway. Call Shirley at 944-9408 for further information. Everyone welcome.

May 13 - Fair Trade Fair, 11 am to 3 pm at Robert A. Steen Community Centre, 980 Palmerston, sponsored by Ten Days for Global Justice. Call Audrey McClelland, at 783-1107 for further information.

May 17 - Panel discussion on the Effects of Globalization on Local Conservation at the Manitoba Eco-Network's Annual General Meeting and potluck dessert social, 7 pm in the Multi-Purpose Room, Crossways in Common. Call 947-6511 for more information.

June 16 - Natural Landscapes and Wildflower Gardening. A variety of knowledgeable guests will lead the discussion and share information from 6 to 9 pm at St. Timothy Parish Church, 135 John Forsyth Road. Call 949-3760 for more information.

June 24 - Tour of Eight Natural Gardens. For details call, the Manitoba Naturalists Society, 943-9029.

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Commuter Challenge

continued from page 1

ment and Assiniboine Credit Union. Most have also agreed to participate and that has organizers pumped.

"We feel like we are accomplishing something for the long run by bringing together these particular organizations. There is a lot of work to do in Winnipeg to encourage alternative transportation and we need to work together with a broader group of interests than simply environmental groups if we want to shift our culture in the direction of active transportation," Maloney said.

Clean Air Day

Winnipeg Transit has been key to the process by joining the organizing process for Winnipeg Commuter Challenge 2000 early and enthusiastically. Winnipeg Transit will run its own promotion for Clean Air Day, which falls in the middle of Environment Week, and has offered advertising space on the sides of

45 buses for a month up to and including the Challenge. The City of Winnipeg is the largest workplace on side so far, although it is still ironing out the details about who will participate. For the first year, it will probably be content with registering the administration campus downtown, but that includes many of the people who make the decisions about transportation and the councilors themselves.

The organizers are still looking for sponsors and for in kind donations that can be used as prizes. Several workplaces have already pre-registered, but many more are welcome. If you would like to find out more about Winnipeg Commuter Challenge 2000 or to pre-register you can call the Green Commuting Project at 925-3777, send email to rcm@escape.ca or drop by the office on the 2nd Floor of 70 Albert Street, in the Eco-Centre shared with the Manitoba Eco-Network and other groups.

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Wolves: Permits To Poison?

Recently, Lindy Clubb was asked to look into rumours of strychnine poisoning of wolves in southwestern Manitoba. She found that the rumours were true. As Lindy reports: "Manitoba Conservation staff from the Dauphin region were reacting to disappearing livestock by burying strychnine in the ground and hoping it was a couple of problem wolves that would dig it up, eat it, die and solve the problem. Power snares and cyanide guns had failed. However, I had written about a low population of wolves in the Riding Mountain National Park area the year before and I knew we didn't have reliable, recent data for wolf populations".

Follow-up revealed that some problematic assumptions were in play regarding the role of wolves in the region, and that in fact, strychnine use was banned in Manitoba some 8 years ago. The issue was brought to Conservation Minister, Oscar Lathlin, who took quick action to ensure that the practice was halted.

A Letter to the Minister

On March 26, Gloria Goulet, a recognized wolf expert in Manitoba, sent the following letter to Minister Lathlin:

Dear Minister, I understand that you requested termination of predator poisoning in the province after learning that the Wildlife Branch, Manitoba Conservation, was violating the Federal Government Pest Control Products Act. I wish to express my appreciation for your quick response.

I am also aware that predator control policies have recently been reviewed by the Wildlife Branch. I wish to inform you that there are two major wolf-related issues in southwestern Manitoba: (1) the perception of extensive livestock predation by wolves and (2) the need for wolves to move, unmolested, on private and crown lands, between regional wilderness areas.

Livestock producers have a right to make a living and problem predators should be removed. BUT, only after investigation by knowledgeable people confirm their involvement in a loss. In my informed opinion and based on data from District Occurrence Reports and P.F.R.A., the evidence for problem wolves in southwestern Manitoba is anecdotal and circumstantial. The relatively high reported loss of livestock could be attributed to other predators such as bear, coyote and domestic dog, disease or human rustlers. I also discern a need for a thorough investigation and analysis of perceived "wolf problem areas" before they are classified as a Wolf Control Area by the Wildlife Branch.

Indiscriminate Killing

As you are aware, the pesticides that were used in Manitoba are non-targeting and kill, indiscriminately, a variety of scavengers including: wolf, coyote, eagle, owl, raven, magpie, fox, wolverine, mink, weasel, domestic dog, etc., etc.. The consequence is a loss of biodiversity that will result in an imbalance in natural processes. For example, rodent populations increase

quickly when natural predators decline. An increase in the density of beavers (wolves and other predators eat lots of beaver during the summer months), ground squirrels, pocket gophers and mice, as a result of a decrease in natural predation, could have a negative economic impact on local communities, trappers and farmers in the area around the community pasture.

If strychnine or cyanide are ever used again for predator control purposes in Manitoba, they would have to be registered for use. This would include a documented need for the registration, and consent from the Provincial Conservation Ministry when the request for registration is made. During review of the submission, the Environmental Assessment Division would contact their provincial colleagues in Environment Canada. The public would also be given opportunity to comment before the registration is finalized, and again each time the product is used there would have to be a notification published in a local newspaper.



Do we have a wolf problem? Photo by Gloria Goulet

There is a broader perspective to the predator control issue in southwestern Manitoba. DNA analysis of regional wolf tissue samples suggests that Riding Mountain National Park wolves are at risk of extirpation. This is an issue that will be receiving more attention in the near future, with the passing of the proposed Species At Risk Act and the recently released Report of the Panel on the Ecological Integrity of Canada's National Parks. Key findings of that report identify a decline in the RMNP wolf population to very low levels, and isolation due to regional land use changes (Chapter I, page 1-13, Vol. II). However, wolves can still be killed by hunters in possession of an unused Big Game tag, during a specified season, on lands adjacent to the national park. A moratorium on wolf hunting within the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve would provide the wolf population an opportunity to recover and time to develop and implement a regional wolf conservation program.

Monitoring Wolf Populations

I have been monitoring wolf populations and wolf-related issues, including livestock predation and genetic structure of wolf populations, since 1994, in southwestern Manitoba. The results of monitoring are available in two reports completed for Riding Mountain National Park¹. I have enclosed, for your information, a copy of the livestock predation report. As well, in the capacity of volunteer member of the Canadian Aboriginal Caucus on Article 8(j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (Environment Canada), I have reviewed government policy documents on the proposed Species At Risk Act and the ecosystem approach to biodiversity conservation, for the purpose of recommending inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge.

I would like to meet with you, at your convenience, to provide you with my suggestions for: (1) alternative methods of

see "Wolves..." on page 10 ►

Letters to the Editor

An article in the last issue of the Journal by Ann Stewart, Information Officer for the Pimicikimak Cree Nation, prompted this response from Manitoba Hydro:

The Editor:

Re: "Cross Lake, Manitoba in 1999: Americans are wired into a Human Rights Crisis" by Ann Stewart (Eco-Journal, Jan/Feb. 2000).

Ann Stewart has been retained by the Pimicikimak Cree Nation (Cross Lake First Nation) to represent their interests in the US. In her article, Ms. Stewart provides a good insight into the methods she employs - taking some pride, apparently, in having Americans believe that Manitoba is "an environmental and human rights slum" as quoted in the article by George Crocker, executive director of the Minnesota based North American Water Office. We trust that not all of your readers would agree that Manitoba should be described in such terms - in fact, we expect that many of you, like us, would be deeply offended by such an inflammatory and inaccurate description.

Ms. Stewart has been promoting just such a view among American environmentalists, regulators and legislators in the hope that they will become inflamed enough to discourage their local electric utilities from importing electricity from Manitoba.

The article begins with grim suicide and unemployment statistics, followed by references to hydroelectric development and the Northern Flood Agreement. She goes on to suggest, then, that all the social and economic difficulties in the community are the result of a single utility's activities. In doing so, Ms. Stewart

mixes a great deal of innuendo with a number of fallacies.

For example, she suggests that environmental assessments were not considered in the 1970s. We would agree that approaches to assessment have advanced significantly since that time. However, it is misleading to promote an impression that no environmental studies were undertaken. An extensive body of work was compiled through the Lake Winnipeg, Churchill and Nelson Rivers Study Board, the subsequent Federal Ecological Monitoring Program, the Nelson River Group's 1986 Cross Lake Environmental Impact Assessment Study and many other studies.

Ms. Stewart reports the concerns of Cross Lake Councillor Cathy Merrick that her father sits at home with nothing to do because "the land is under water" but fails to mention that there was no flooding of Cross Lake Reserve land and that less than 1 per cent of Cross Lake's entire 3,600,000-acre resource area was flooded.

Cross Lake Councillor Kenny Miswaggon expresses concern about the lack of recreational facilities, saying "Today, our kids get out of school at 3pm and until it starts the next morning, they have nothing to do, no place to play, no pocket money." Ms. Stewart and Mr. Miswaggon fail to mention Manitoba Hydro's contribution of a 500-seat indoor arena built in the early 1980s, at Cross Lake's request, to create recreational opportunities.

There is no question that some of the hydroelectric projects in northern Manitoba resulted in adverse environmental impacts. Through the passage of time and with the help of mitigation works such as the Cross Lake Weir put in place by Manitoba Hydro, the environment has largely stabilized and, in many instances, recovered.

It is not the case that the environmental impacts "wiped out" the use and development of natural resources by local residents. People are surprised to learn that virtually the same number of people are engaged in trapping in Cross Lake resource area now as there were before the hydro projects were put in place (an average of 172 people pre-project and 169 post-project). While the local commercial fishery in Cross Lake was seriously affected for a period, the 1990s have been the most successful period for income from commercial fishing (not including compensation payments from Hydro). Employment levels in the commercial fishery are virtually unchanged as well.

While Manitoba Hydro has accepted responsibility for addressing environmental and community impacts of hydroelectric projects, we invite others to examine carefully the environmental benefits associated with these developments. The most notable is the ability of hydroelectric generating stations to produce energy with very low greenhouse gas emissions. These gases are produced in reservoirs, but at very low quantities. Manitoba Hydro has been exporting electricity to the United States since 1971 and since that time it has delivered 131,986 gigawatt-hours of electric energy to American utilities in Minnesota, North Dakota and elsewhere. Coal-fueled generating stations producing this same amount of electricity would have created approximately 157,000,000 tons of carbon dioxide in this same period. In effect, by displacing coal-fueled generation (the most prevalent technology in our market area), the environmental dividend of hydroelectric generation is a significant contribution to the reduction of greenhouse gases over the past three decades.

the Ecology of Waste Reduction Stewardship & Sustainability

Co-Hosted by Resource Conservation Manitoba &
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April 26 to 28, 2000

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While there is no method of generating large amounts of electricity that does not have environmental impacts, we firmly believe that overall, hydroelectricity is a very attractive source of supply for our province—and through the trade in electricity, for our neighbours as well.

We have been able to reach agreements to fulfill the Northern Flood Agreement with four of the five NFA communities and have moved on to much more cooperative relationships with these First Nations. Your readers might want to consider carefully whether they agree that this province is an "environmental and human rights slum" before lending their support to the publicity efforts of the lobbyist for Cross Lake.

Yours truly,

Glenn Schneider, Public Affairs Manager, Manitoba Hydro

Pimicikamak Cree Nation responds:

It is difficult to know where to begin to respond to Manitoba Hydro's public affairs officer (who came to Manitoba Hydro from a background as a PR officer for the Canadian nuclear industry).

Mr Schneider lives in Winnipeg, a jewel of a city on the Canadian Prairies, with universities, opera houses, paved streets, low unemployment and crime, superb health services and a functional environment. He does not, because of environmental racism, share or perhaps even know the daily experiences of the Pimicikamak Crees of Cross Lake. We live at the epicenter of Manitoba Hydro's northern megaproject—which sells one third of its socially and environmentally devastating product to American utilities.

Readers of the Eco-Journal may find it easiest to trust neither the Crees nor Hydro in evaluating this debate, but rather advert to the facts themselves and the pronouncements of independent parties.

The millions of acres of flooded, despoiled and now-inaccessible boreal lands and waters are indisputable. So are the thousands of miles of devastated shorelines, the mercury contamination, and the lives we have lost (including a number for which

Manitoba Hydro has been found legally liable because it made our habitat hazardous).

These facts led Mr Justice Ferg to rule in 1982 that Hydro's project "drastically altered" our society and environment and "almost turned the [eco]system upside down from a state of nature". (In doing so he ordered Manitoba Hydro, which had fought our efforts strenuously, to build an arena for our community to begin to replace our lost recreational heritage. Last month—seventeen years later—we won a further judgment ordering Hydro to meet its long-overdue obligations to provide a fund to operate and maintain the arena. We still have no other recreational facilities for our people.)

These facts led Canadian Geographic in 1991 to describe Cross Lake as follows: "What used to be a lake is now little more than a muddy pond... You can see the old water line on the rocks. Now fields of willows and weeds grow in the muck. To get to the receded water, residents have built long, fingery docks, some jutting up 50 metres out from the houses like parched tongues seeking moisture."

(The weir that Manitoba Hydro built has solved little or nothing. Our environment is still turned upside-down. We have recently explained this to senior Hydro representatives in person. They have not contradicted us. However, they appear not to have informed Mr. Schneider, who is content to repeat these harmful lies, which among other things contribute to a deadly state of hopelessness among our people.)

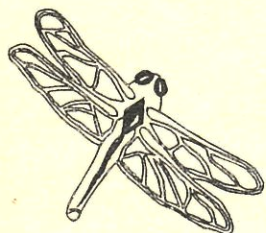
These facts led the 1991 Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry (chaired by a Chief Justice) to characterize Hydro's project as a vast assault on the Manitoba environment with concomitant social impacts on Aboriginal peoples.

These facts led a 1999 Inter-Church Inquiry into this situation (chaired by a World Council of Churches representative from South Africa) to state that our people have been subjected by Hydro and the governments of Manitoba and Canada to "an ecological and moral catastrophe".

These facts led the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples to state in 1996 that: "[t]he Churchill River Diversion has subse-

... continued on page 9 ►

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Robin Faye

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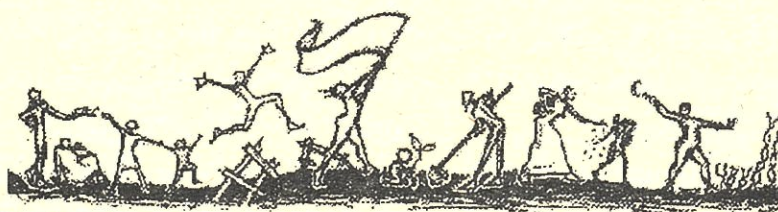


Illustration from the
Resistance is Fertile
website, at <<http://www.resistanceisfertile.com>>

Mixedwoods Launch

continued from page 2

critical habitat for the Golden-winged Warbler, and on wolf populations. It has successfully raised over \$100,000 for these research projects.

With its reputation as a community-based forest conservation group growing, MFRAC is seeking to establish a lakefront forest research and education centre in the heart of the Duck Mountains. Letters of support from forest scientists and conservationists from around the province are now being received.

For further information about MFRAC, its first publication and its activities, please contact: Dr. David Kattenburg, Executive Director at 204 725-3308.

Attend the official Launch of The Manitoba Mixedwoods, and meet two of the book's authors, Lindy Clubb and Gloria Goulet on Wednesday April 12 at 8pm at McNally-Robinson's Grant Park Location.

Eco

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Investigating What's in the Pantry

by Mikel Magnusson, Biotech Working Group

Don't like the thought of eating genetically-modified foods? Take action with a few phone calls.

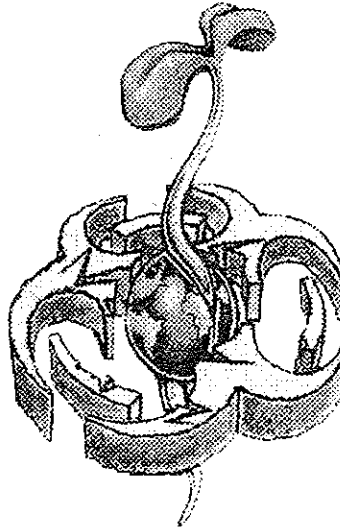
Last November, I got directly involved in the growing debate (pun intended) surrounding genetically modified food. I did so by picking up the phone and giving the food industry a ring. And you know what? They listened. Now, I'm not a distant relative of the McCain clan or a power broker of any variety. What I am is a so-called "consumer" of food products. And how can a mere consuming serf curry favour with the kingly corporate producers of our food supply? Easy. Take a close look at that pop can, pasta box or candy wrapper some time. Neatly printed on the packaging is your invitation to whisper sweet something into the ear of corporate North America: the customer response or service line.

I found these 1-800 and 1-888 toll free numbers a convenient way to express my concerns about GMOs. And who better to hear these concerns than the industry that essentially delivers these dubious delights to our market shelves? And it is effective. Each call is delivering a clear message into a system designed to develop effective marketing strategies. If every member of the public who had concerns about GM food (an Angus Reid poll pegged it at 67%, a Prairie Research Associates survey registered a whopping 75%) phoned these response lines the market would respond.

And how much easier can activism get? I just walked into my kitchen and began writing down 1-800/1-888 numbers. Soon I was chatting away with customer service reps about the value of long term testing and the need for labelling legislation. As of this writing I've talked to over a dozen representatives of food, beverage and candy companies. The results (as unscientific as they are) were hardly surprising: almost all used GMOs.

Nevertheless, I've been quite inspired by my little phone canvass. I felt I had done something, no matter how small, and I knew that my individual act is only that, but I had fun doing it.

The following numbers were found on the labels and packaging of various food products I bought in the previous two months. The companies represented here are mostly using GMOs in their products. I hope these numbers prove to be helpful. Have fun!



Armstrong Cheese Co. Ltd: 1-888-277-7182
Yves Fine Foods Inc: 1-800-667-9837 (moving to non-GMO use)
Lipton: 1-800-565-7273
Canada Safeway Ltd: 204-946-4200
Hostess Frito-Lay Co: 1-800-376-2257
Mars Confectionery: 1-888-709-6277
Nestle: 1-800-387-4636
Sobe Beverages: 1-800-588-0548
Loblaw Companies Ltd: 1-416-967-2501 (not toll-free)
Kellogs: 1-888-876-3750
Cadbury Chocolate Canada Inc: 1-800-565-6317
Hershey Canada Inc: 1-800-468-1714
Old Dutch Foods Ltd: 1-877-228-2273
Canbra Foods Ltd: 1-800-635-3296
Coca Cola Company Ltd: 1-800-452-2653
Kraft Jacobs Suchard Ltd: 1-800-268-6450

Note: if you are looking for a speaker about genetically-modified foods, the Biotech Working Group has established a "Speakers Bureau" which would be pleased to send someone out to your next meeting or event for a presentation. Contact the group via the Manitoba Eco-Network office 947-6511.

ECO



You are invited ...participate! explore! discover! enjoy! learn!

EECOM Conference 2000

Great Plains Ecosystem Education "Whose home on the range?"

Riding Mountain National Park, Manitoba, Canada

August 17 to August 20, 2000

EECom: The Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication Conference 2000 will be a learning experience which draws from the riches and diversity of Great Plains ecosystems, is built on the cultural wealth and wisdom of Great Plains peoples and is nurtured by the dedicated educators and communicators who are committed to the environment.

Papers, Posters, Displays -

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For Registration Information -

Mail: EECOM 2000, Box 9, Wasagaming, MB. R0J 2H0,
ph. 1-204-848-7284, fax 1-204-848-2596 or
e-mail Friends_RMNP@pch.gc.ca or
visit our website at www.escape.ca/~parkplus

Letters to the Editor

continued from page 7

quently become well known for its massive scale and detrimental effects on the northern Manitoba environment and the Aboriginal peoples who live there. Although the project directly affected the lands and livelihood of five treaty communities ... and one non-treaty community, they were not consulted, nor did they give approval for the undertaking ... Reserve and community lands were either flooded or affected by dramatic changes to levels in surrounding lakes and rivers, and traditional land-use areas were damaged or rendered inaccessible...."

Most recently, the Sierra Club of North America, after viewing the mega-project first-hand with a number of other American environmental organizations, concluded that "hydroelectric development of this magnitude and type is not clean, benign or renewable: it devastates land, water, species and their habitats, and the people who live with this environment, and it often displaces truly renewable energy alternatives and conservation measures." The Sierrans urge "all [American] utilities to divert expenditures from this type of harmful hydropower to development and use of cleaner, renewable alternatives such as wind and solar power, and to conservation programs."

Finally, the United Nations has again found Canada to be in violation of its international human rights obligations, particularly with respect to deprivation of our peoples' right to self-determination, to not be deprived of our own means of subsistence and to our natural wealth and resources (Article 1, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights). We agree; our own people's experience is a case study in dispossession.

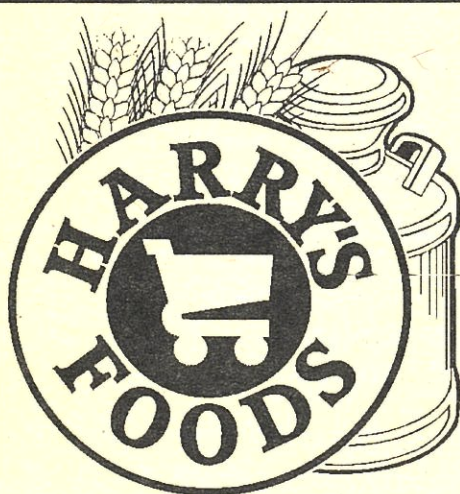
We have never described Manitoba as an environmental slum. However, there is no other description for the vast amount of northern aquatic and terrestrial environment sacrificed by Manitoba Hydro for its mega-project. We know; we live in it. This situation has not "stabilized" and "recovered". On the contrary, the erosion, destabilization, and destruction continues in a dynamic, terrible way, and Manitoba Hydro is poised to compound it—and make Minnesotans and Manitobans complicit in this environmental crime.

Our people suffer the brunt of the impacts. Manitoba Hydro's treaty termination agreements with other Cree bands have not begun to address the social impacts on their communities, and we believe, will not do so. Neither will Mr. Schneider's and Manitoba Hydro's past and presently puny efforts to honour—and its continuing strenuous efforts to minimize and deny in public and before the courts—its minimal treaty obligations to us under the Northern Flood Agreement of 1977.

Finally, we know that Americans and Canadians alike are no longer taken in by big utilities' self-serving "environmental" claims. The answer to emissions and destruction of lands and waters is to conserve, use power efficiently, and invest in true renewables such as wind and solar. Manitoba Hydro's artificially low price structure, achieved in large part at the expense of Cree lives and our environment, discourages or prevents all of these essential strategies in Manitoba and the upper Midwest.

John Miswagon, Chief, Pimicikamak Cree Nation

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*E.g. FLOUR: Corn Meal, Millet, Rye, Whole Wheat, Barley, Oat, & Spelt
GRAINS: Rolled Oats, Oat Bran, Golden Flax, Wheat Bran, Red Lentils
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Wolves

continued from page 5

predator control and (2) development of a regional communication strategy that would inform, and ultimately benefit, local residents and communities on the two wolf-related issues. I would also welcome an opportunity to review and contribute to the new policies on predator control policies.

Thank you, Gloria Goulet
ggoulet@mb.sympatico.ca

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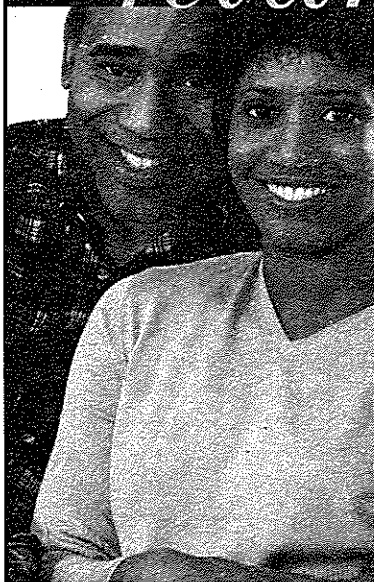
The Status of Gray Wolves (Canis lupus) in the Riding Mountain Region of Manitoba and Recommendations for Conservation. Report prepared for Riding Mountain National Park (RMNP), Manitoba, 1997.

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The Jubilee Fund is a coalition of faith organizations determined to help people overcome problems associated with economic and social deprivation. Assiniboine is the first financial institution in Canada to partner in such a fund. Together we are committed to dignity and self-sufficiency within communities.

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Signature: _____

The Manitoba Wildlife Rehabilitation Organization

by Lisa Schaldemose, Executive Director

With the admission of over 1800 injured animals and 8000 public inquiry calls, 1999 was a busy year for the Manitoba Wildlife Rehabilitation Organization! In efforts to accommodate the growing number of injured wildlife received each year, this private, not-for-profit organization has undertaken a number of expansion/improvement projects at its rehabilitation centre in Glenlea, Manitoba.

MWRO's latest projects include the addition of a 12'x24' waterfowl pond sponsored by Canada Trust, an orphan rabbit enclosure, and an owl pre-release enclosure both sponsored by the Manitoba Government's Special Conservation Fund. Please spread the word that MWRO is looking for carpentry volunteers to assist in the completion of these projects. MWRO is also seeking assistance in other areas including fundraising, rehabilitation, driving to pick up injured animals, and public education. For volunteer information, call 883-2122.

Public education essential

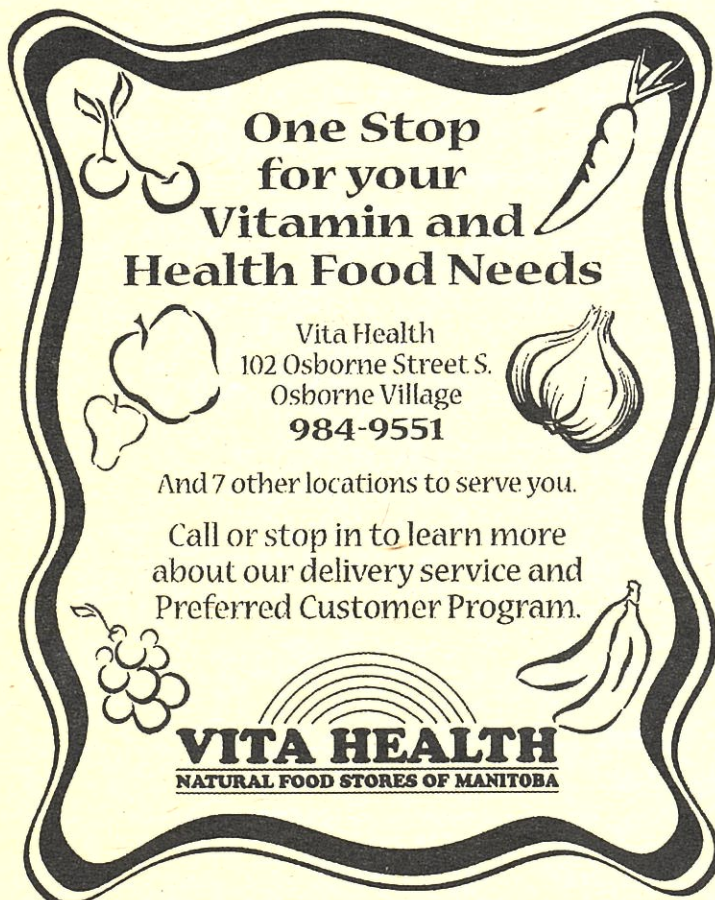
Manitoba Hydro and the Thomas Sill Foundation have sponsored the construction of an 80 foot educational enclosure to house MWRO's five non-releasable educational Birds of Prey. Public education is essential in reducing the number of negative human/wildlife interactions each year, and preventing the admission of numerous unnecessary orphans. All presentations are performed by skilled presenters and include a visit from two

of MWRO's non-releasable Animal Ambassadors. Recently, MWRO developed four different educational presentations to cater to a variety of age groups: "Keeping 'em Wild" teaches young children the differences between wild animals and pets, and promotes a greater appreciation of animals in their natural surroundings; targeted for grades 3-6, "Adaptations" focuses on wildlife's incredible physical and behavioural adaptations, and how they help an animal survive in its environment; junior high students experience the negative human/wildlife interactions and how they can prevent such disastrous outcomes in the "Extinction" program; high school students and adults experience a day in the life of a rehabilitation centre in "A Walk on the Wild Side".

Sponsor your favourite species!

In 1999 MWRO introduced its Animal Sponsorship Program, in which anyone can choose to sponsor one of their favourite species of wildlife, from the clever little House Sparrow for \$10 to a majestic Bald Eagle for \$500 per year. Sponsorship makes a great gift and includes a personal certificate featuring a colour picture and natural history information about the chosen animal, and an invitation to all major release events. All donations are tax deductible and contribute to the operation of the rehabilitation centre, medical expenses, convalescent care, and pre-release training for wildlife.

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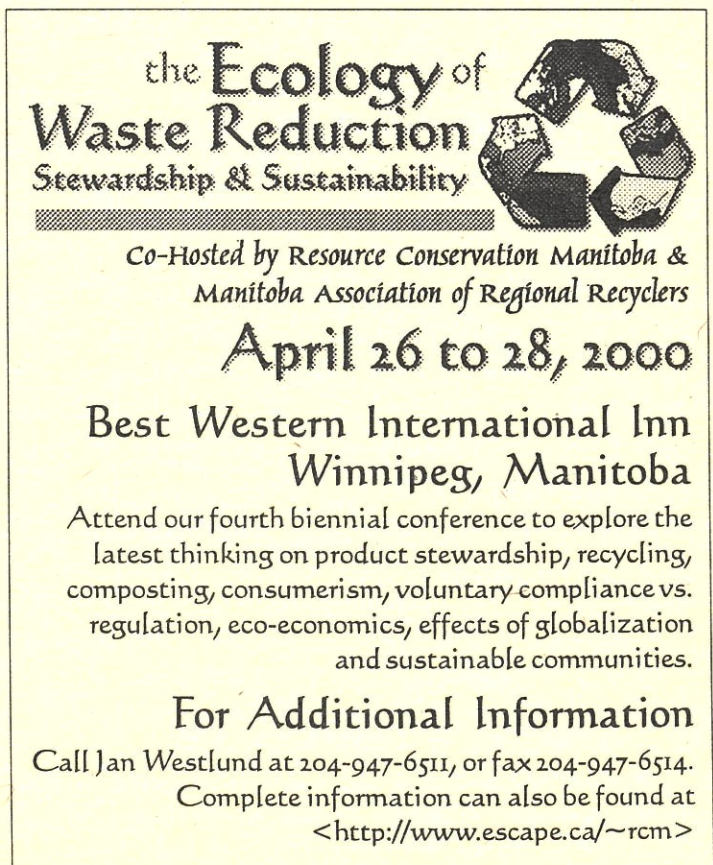
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Wolves

continued from page 5

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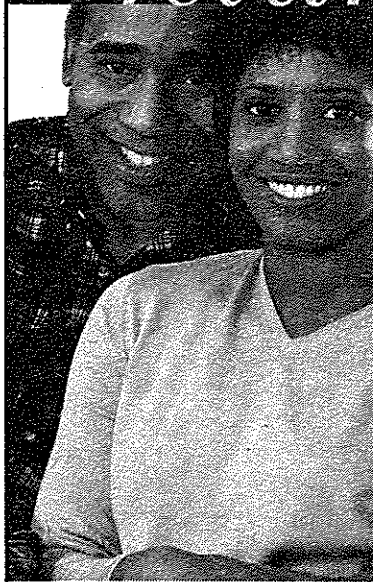
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Earth Day 2000 to Focus on Clean Energy

By Ian Barnett, Fort Whyte Centre

As the sun rises on Saturday, April 22, people will gather at Fort Whyte Centre to partake in a traditional Aboriginal ceremony and to begin the celebration of Earth Day 2000.

As in 1999, Earth Day Winnipeg is being planned and organized by Fort Whyte Centre, one of Canada's most respected environmental education facilities. A full day of festivities and events will focus on the international Earth Day theme of "Clean Energy Now!"

New to this year's event is the first ever FORT WHYTE ECO-CHALLENGE, an urban adventure race leading through Fort Whyte Centre's lakes and forest, Assiniboine Forest, and the streets of Winnipeg, finishing at the Forks. Each leg of the race features a different form of non-polluting transportation, including canoeing, running, cycling and rollerblading. The final event of the race will be scaling a 26-foot artificial climbing wall. Participants will compete in team, relay or individual categories. The evening before the race will feature a pasta dinner and motivational talk from Phil Roadly, Captain of Team True North, finishers of the 1999 Eco-Challenge in Patagonia.

Once the sunrise ceremony and the start of the Eco-Challenge are complete, the focus of activity will shift to The Forks, with events starting at 11:00 am. Here are some of the highlights:

- Throughout the day, enjoy entertainment by top local acts.
- Cheer on the intrepid Eco-Challengers as they cross the finish line and scale the climbing wall.
- Explore the Earth Fair, highlighting the activities of local and national conservation groups and focussing on the theme of Clean Energy

- Activities for kids of all ages at the Children's Eco-Village, sponsored by the Manitoba Children's Museum.
- Become a life size game piece in a giant board game called "Power in Action", where participants will learn the consequences of the energy choices they make everyday.

The winner of the Fort Whyte Outdoor Classroom Challenge, sponsored by Cambrian Credit Union, will also be presented as part of the festivities. Middle years schools have been asked to present a conceptual plan for their outdoor classroom that creates a biologically diverse habitat in their school yard. Winners will receive prizes that will allow their plan to become a reality.

Please join us at both Fort Whyte Centre and the Forks to celebrate Earth Day 2000. For more information contact:

Eco-Challenge/Outdoor Classroom Challenge - Keri Brasch - 989-8364

Forks Events/Earth Fair - Kristin Kent - 989-8364

Volunteer Opportunities - Michelle Eldridge - 989-8368



Earth Day 2000 (Saturday, April 22) Events Schedule

Fort Whyte Centre Activities:

6:30 am - Sunrise Ceremony

9:00 am - Start of Eco-Challenge

Forks Activities: 11:00 am - 4:00 pm

Free Entertainment by local performers

Earth Fair, Children's Eco-Village, Power in Action - life size Board Game, Fort Whyte Eco-Challenge, Finish Line, Vertical Adventures Climbing Wall

ECO

The Manitoba Eco-Network

2-70 Albert Street, Winnipeg, MB R3B 1E7

Sign me up as a member of the Manitoba Eco-Network

Enclosed is a cheque for:

\$25 Supporting member (individuals)

\$40 Group membership

\$50 Other organizations (businesses, government departments and corporations that do not otherwise qualify for group membership)

I'm also enclosing a donation of _____ to help with your public education activities.

[Charitable tax receipts available for amounts over the cost of membership]

Total Amount enclosed _____

I'm interested in volunteering for the Eco-Network. Please call me!

Name(s) _____ Group (if applicable) _____

Telephone # () _____ E-Mail _____

Mailing address _____ Postal Code _____

Area(s) of interest _____ Volunteer skills _____



A supporting membership includes a subscription to **Eco-Journal** as well as notice of events and regular updates on issues and is open to any individual.

Group members are entitled to nominate representatives for a position on the Eco-Network Steering Committee. Group membership is open to any non-governmental, non-profit group which has as one of its objectives the enhancing or furthering of environmental quality, protecting the environment or environmental education.