

ECO-JOURNAL

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Exports Fueled Increase In Emissions

Provincial actions don't answer all the questions

By Anne Lindsey

The euphemistically nicknamed "steam plant" operated by Manitoba Hydro at East Selkirk, has been in the spotlight over the past couple of months. Residents downwind of the plant, on the North side of Birds Hill Provincial Park, noticed that many species of trees in the area have been dying off, and that a layer of black soot could often be seen around their homes. These residents were convinced that the coal-fired electricity-generating East Selkirk plant was the culprit, especially given the huge increase in the operating capacity of the plant over the past 2 years, and especially since the plant runs without any modern pollution abatement equipment. Roscoe Road resident, Rick Northwood, tried unsuccessfully for months to have action taken. But decision-makers did not begin to take notice until two articles by reporter Aldo Santin hit the front page of the Winnipeg Free Press.

Denial

Manitoba Hydro spokespersons at first staunchly denied that the plant could be the source of the problems, claiming that they were within the constraints of their operating license. But a number of other factors suggested otherwise, including an examination of the trees by University of Winnipeg Forestry professor, Richard Westwood, who believed that the damage was either a result of disease or of environmental stress,

which could indicate the stack emissions, and called for further study. Particularly alarming were reports of a hair sample analysis of a sick horse in the area, which showed elevated levels of arsenic and other toxic elements associated with the emissions from the plant's stack.

A look at the operating license showed it to be unclear and poorly written, according to Scott Kidd (a Winnipeg environmentalist and former lawyer). The license to operate the 40 year old plant was based on a computer model of projected emissions, and on assumptions in the environmental assessment such as "Few people spend much time outdoors in Manitoba in winter".

Lucrative Export Market

The most recent version of the license (1992) indicated that the plant was only to run during periods of drought or emergency, yet Hydro asserted in the newspaper coverage that the plant was going full-tilt in order to take advantage of the lucrative export market into the Northern US. Its consumption of coal increased from about 70,000 tonnes over the 3 year period from 1990 to 1993 to some 500,000 tonnes during a two year period from 98-2000.

Things did not look very positive for a Crown Corporation utility which markets its product as "environmentally friendly", nor for a Provincial Government whose Conservation Minister was participating in national/provincial talks on how Canada could meet its climate change commitments.

Perception and reality

A flurry of meetings ensued, with residents calling for a complete closure of the plant, and a variety of mixed messages coming from utility president, Bob Brennan. Greg Selinger, Manito-

see "Coal-Fired Plant ..." on page 6 ►



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Appeal Continues....

THANK YOU to all you generous people who have made a donation to this year's Manitoba Eco-Network Appeal. The money which we earn from charitable donations is extremely important in our overall budget, and really helps us continue to do what we do. In keeping with our Organic Lawn Care Education

Project, this year's appeal features a special incentive—a copy of Carole Rubin's book, *How to Get Your Lawn and Garden Off Drugs*, for donations of \$100 or more. If you haven't made your contribution yet, remember that a donation before December 31 is eligible for a 2000 tax receipt. Once again, thanks to all our supporters!

New Resources available in the Library

■ East Side of Lake Winnipeg—All Weather Road Justification and Scoping Study, Executive Summary, H.N. Westdal and Associates and Dillon Consulting

■ In Harm's Way: Toxic Threats to Child Development, Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility—exploring the intersection between environmental chemicals and child development

■ Canadian Solutions—Practical and Affordable Steps to Fight Climate Change,

David Suzuki Foundation and the Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development

■ The Boreal Forest Directory, The Taiga Rescue Network—lists 170 participant organizations from Europe, North America and Russia.

Please note the change in address (at left) for Manitoba Eco-Network. Also, we have a new fax number: 989-8476. Both are effective immediately. **ECO**

Collection Expands Thanks to Charlotte Ferree

Over the past several years this long-time Manitoba Eco-Network member, and avid reader herself, has generously purchased magazine subscriptions to support our Resource Centre collection. This fall Charlotte has made possible our subscription to Britain's *The Ecologist*.

This foremost international magazine features well-researched, detailed articles written with a discerning ecological perspective. It is a most valuable addition here for students and activists alike. Our warm appreciation goes to Charlotte for her thoughtful contribution. **ECO**

Captain Canola and the Great Plains Greasers...

Readers may recall an article about a project initiated by Blair Hamilton with the Arnaud 4-H group, in which the young people planned to produce biodiesel fuel from canola oil. News from Arnaud indicates that some 20 to 25 gal-

lons of the fuel have actually been produced, but as yet, the group has not secured a piece of machinery in which to test it. The search continues ... stay tuned for future developments. **ECO**

Eco-Network Steering Committee, 1999 - 2000

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Focus on the Environment: Election Campaign Forum

by Pat Elazar, photography by Rick Freeman

100 people attended an election forum on Environmental issues at St Matthews/Maryland Church on November 22 sponsored by Manitoba Eco-Network and the Wolseley Residents Association. Four of the six recognised candidates in the federal riding of Winnipeg Centre took part in the forum, which was moderated by mayor Glen Murray.

Taking part were: Harold Dyck, Communist; Mikel Magnusson, Greens; Kevin Lamoureux, Liberals; and Pat Martin, NDP. Michel Allard, PC, sent regrets. The audience was a healthy mixture of seniors, students, workers, activists and concerned citizens.

Each candidate was asked to respond to questions on greenhouse gas reduction and shifting to renewable energy sources; effects of globalisation and international trade on environmental and social welfare; and GM food labeling. These three opening questions were posed in advance by the Eco-Network and gave the candidates the opportunity to showcase both their respective party's commitments to environmental issues as well as their own individual grasp and convictions on those issues.

And, not unexpectedly, there were differences in the party 'planks' on environmental issues. Mr. Dyck pointed out that Winnipeg centre is one the poorest ridings in the country and that ANY environmental proposals had to cover social justice and economic opportunity issues as well. Mr. Magnusson presented a highly detailed platform for environmental rehabilitation complete with spending estimates and job creation/loss projections. Mr. Martin proposed very concrete federal government initiatives such the energy retro-fit for federal government buildings that he has already successfully advanced as a private member's bill.

Mr. Lamoureux reminded that since he would be inside of the governing caucus, he could best forward previously introduced initiatives such as support for energy efficient automobiles as part of a liberal environmental strategy.

The candidates then responded to questions and statements from the audience on a range of issues. Some of the topics covered were: Housing rehab/refit; transportation policy and gas tax regimes; how to best encourage organic/sustainable agriculture; the proposed new highway east of Lake Winnipeg; Medicare and "rogue provinces"; Federal involvement in GMO research; making corporations more accountable; and GMO labeling.

Mayor Murray as moderator, made sure that every candidate kept to the three minute timeline for replies. The question and answer format ensured that the candidates stuck to the subject rather than attacking their opponents. Thus, each candidate was able to make their point and the discussion never descended to the kind of free-for-all that the televised leaders debates did.

This did not prevent Mr Martin from pointing out that although Mr Lamoureux personally supports GMO labeling, his party in government failed to act on the issue. It also did not prevent Mr Lamoureux from pointing out that although federal NDP members perhaps did themselves help to "man the barricades" at Clayquot sound, it was the provincial NDP government of Mr Clark that eventually allowed the clear-cutting there.

The forum was enlightening and well-received by the audience. Community residents and activists alike were thankful for the opportunity to examine the prospective candidates at close range. We are all glad that we live in a democracy where all viewpoints can be expressed in a forum of this quality.



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What's Happening

January 8 - HANTAVIRUS AND LYME DISEASE IN MANITOBA. Dr. Robbin Lindsay, a research scientist with Health Canada, will discuss the health issues surrounding these two diseases. A Manitoba Naturalists Society Indoor Program, 7:30 pm at the Franco-Manitobain Cultural Centre. Call 943-9029 for further information.

February 5 - CLIMATE CHANGE FOR THE MASSES. Dr. Danny Blair will discuss the substantial warming of our global climate in the past century and impacts of climate change. A Manitoba Naturalists Society Indoor Program, 7:30 pm at the Franco-Manitobain Cultural Centre.

February 22 to 25 - SHARING COMMON GROUND: THE SIXTH PRAIRIE CONSERVATION AND ENDANGERED SPECIES CONFERENCE. Conference focuses on key issues, information, research and trends related to prairie landscape and species conservation. Royal Crown Conference Centre, 83 Garry Street. Early bird registration before January 15, \$95; after that date, \$125; Students before January 15, \$55; after that date, \$75. For more information call Frontline Associates 1-204-489-2739; frontlin@escape.ca

February 23 - TOOLS FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN LIVING. Mark Burch leads a discovery of everyday choices to diminish our ecological footprint. 1 pm to 4 pm at the University of Winnipeg, Bulman Centre. Admission \$8 at the door.

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More on the issues of Maple Leaf Effluent and the Assiniboine River

by Anne Lindsey

In the last issue of the Eco-Journal, we reported on findings that the waste water treatment facility for Maple Leaf Meats in Brandon, had exceeded its license limits for key effluents into the Assiniboine River, including fecal coliforms and ammonia, in June and July. Dave Kattenburg had written to Manitoba Conservation asking how these issues would be rectified, and to recommend that more frequent monitoring of the effluent be undertaken.

Larry Strachan, Director of Approvals for Manitoba Conservation responded that monitoring and enforcement of the license provisions is now the responsibility of the Park-West Regional office of Conservation, and noted that requiring the City of Brandon to do more frequent testing MAY be more advantageous. Conservation also assured Kattenburg that they were aware of the problems being experienced with the ultraviolet disinfection system, and that they were satisfied that the problem was now rectified.

Additional coliform spikes

Kattenburg checked the monitoring records for August and found that another "gush" of high fecal coliform content effluent (2,200 FCU/100ml) occurred on August 2. (The geometric mean for the month however, was still well within the license limit of 150 FCU/100ml). He repeated his belief that more frequent testing should be required in light of these periodic "gush" events.

On Oct. 17, he received a letter from Bernie Chrisp, the Director of the Park-West Regional office, stating that they did not feel that additional monitoring by the City of Brandon is required, but adding "however, this office will undertake its own surveillance by conducting periodic monitoring of the effluent as necessary". The City of Brandon has now reportedly agreed to do more frequent testing, and in fact, did so in the month of September, increasing tests from 3 times to 5 times per week. The September monitoring reports reveal two more spikes in the fecal coliform counts, occurring on September 6 (1,100 CFU/100ml) and September 8 (490 CFU/100ml), which leads to the question of how often these spikes happen and for how long each time? Further, what does it mean when a spike occurs—are there public health implications?

Surface water must be treated

Dr. Jim Poplow at Manitoba Health says that these spikes probably do not matter very much if we ask who is harmed by them. He argues that since surface water must be cleaned and treated anyway before it is used for drinking, and because "spikes" are diluted in the overall flow of the river, high fecal coliform events do not pose a public health risk. He notes that Portage la Prairie chlorinates Assiniboine River water, after "burning out" the organic matter with potassium permanganate. Poplow comments that coliforms are considered a secondary risk after that of nutrient loading.

But this doesn't satisfy Kattenburg, who points out that untreated Assiniboine River water is used extensively for irrigation, that water treatment facilities are occasionally known to experience problems, and that some coliforms are highly pathogenic.

Furthermore, in flood events, river water travels overland and

can enter aquifers through groundwater wells which have been improperly capped. (This was expensively demonstrated in the 1997 flood, when many wells had to be disinfected after incursion of Red River water).

All surface waters in North America are suspect

Perhaps these points answer the question of why we monitor for fecal coliforms at all, if in fact they are not considered a public health risk by authorities. It's true that all surface waters in North America are now suspect in terms of total coliforms and E. coli, and that indeed, the Assiniboine River is polluted before it even reaches Brandon, but does this give us an excuse to add more of a burden to the ecosystem? Surely in this age, we can argue that the fewer fecal coliforms in surface water, the better. License limits are important and must be respected.

Following the report in October's Eco-Journal, Kattenburg received a message from a senior official in the Conservation Department expressing concern that the appropriate action be taken. Kattenburg repeated his request for more frequent testing to be mandated, pointing out that this could be an extremely important political issue for the government, especially if downstream water users experience health impacts as a result of high loads of fecal coliform in the effluent.

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Coal-Fired Plant

... continued from page 1

ba's Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro, found it necessary to educate himself quickly about the operations of the plant and its role in the overall power generation system of Hydro.

Meanwhile, the issue caught the eye of American activists working on behalf of Pimicikamak Cree Nation. (PCN demands settlement of the Northern Flood Agreement before any more electricity export from this province takes place).

They were quick to publicize the fact that not all of Manitoba Hydro's exports to the Northern states are in fact hydroelectric power.

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission is to rule November 30 on a proposed new contract for Manitoba Hydro to export an additional 500MW of firm energy to Xcel Energy of Minneapolis—formerly Northern States Power. And since the avowed wish of the Doer government is to export more hydroelectric power, and use the resulting revenues to underwrite northern development, perception and reality about Manitoba Hydro become extremely important.

New license bans exports

Perhaps it was not altogether surprising then, that the Conservation department quickly issued a new, revised license for the East Selkirk plant, a prominent feature of which is its stipulation that "the licensee shall not operate the thermal generating station for the purpose of export sales". But the government and Hydro stopped short of a pledge to shut the plant down entirely. On the surface, this clause in the license appears to mean that as long as any power is flowing south, the plant may not be fired up, which seems to indicate a de-facto closing of the operation, except in cases of the most dire emergencies. Residents at first were assured that this was indeed the case, but since then it has become clear that the real intent of the words is that the plant may not be operated SOLELY for the purpose of export. A series of caveats outline the circumstances in which the plant may be fired up. And the latest word is that it will run again in order to diminish the inside stockpile of coal which apparently is in danger of spontaneously combusting.

The new license would appear to be a victory of sorts for the downwind residents, they can now breathe somewhat easier about the impacts of future emissions on their own health and that of the surrounding environment, but many questions remain.

Contaminated site should be cleaned up

For example, why not close down the plant entirely? Originally, the intent was to retire the facility in 2005, though Hydro has mused that it could be kept open longer than that. If it is indeed required to assure reliability in the system, as Hydro claims, then why not convert the plant to an efficient natural gas turbine, with very low emissions? Too costly? Aren't public health and the environment worth it?

And on the same issue, wouldn't it be the most responsible course of action for the government to require that Hydro clean up the site? The ash lagoon for the facility is the recipient of bottom ash and fly ash, both of which contain a variety of toxic substances, and it is well-known to area residents that the ash lagoon overflows in periods of high water, contaminating both Cooks Creek and the Red River.

Monitoring reports of groundwater wells around the facility show elevated levels of arsenic, barium, boron and other elements, which quite likely could be emanating from both the ash lagoon and the coal storage pile. This too, warrants further investigation and action.

And what about the impacts of past emissions? If the plant is shown to be the cause of the tree die-off, or for any health impacts on residents or workers, or property damage, who will take responsibility?

And finally perhaps, this whole issue raises the bigger questions of Hydro's overall policies for provision and export of electricity. The Public Utilities Board has some responsibility for Hydro oversight, and so does the provincial government. And of course, Hydro's Board of Directors is accountable for what Hydro does. Yet there is a sense amongst some in the environmental community that Manitoba Hydro is a law unto itself—that Hydro drives the agenda, not the government. How long would the Selkirk Generating Station have continued to operate at full bore if concerned citizens like Rick Northwood had not persisted in bringing the issue to public attention? Do we in fact, have a reliable energy system? Is it fair and equitable for everyone regardless at what end of the transmission line they live? Maybe it's time for a full public review of all Manitoba Hydro's operations.

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The Death of a Habitat

by Penny Ridge

It began in 1994. The proposal was to "create five mini-habitats represented within Manitoba and to use the areas for education..." The five mini-habitats were: tall grass prairie, boreal forest, aspen parkland, wet lands and riverine transition. The project was supported by Shell Canada, the R.M. of Springfield, and the Transcona/Springfield School Division. Now, six years later, the Springfield Collegiate Habitat is maturing, and for those who take the time to look, it has become a place of infinite beauty. It is maintained by students, and members of the community have donated plants and time to the evolution of the habitat.

But, from its inception, the Springfield Collegiate Habitat has attracted controversy. The controversy has escalated to the point that the School Board has now passed a motion to eradicate the habitat and replace it with grass. How did this happen? It began with a petition spearheaded by two local senior citizens who considered the habitat "an eyesore". The petition was presented at a school board meeting. Also at this meeting, a former student was allowed to make a presentation defending the habitat, but could not present her petition in its support.

Eight concerns

The first motion by the Board was simply to investigate the cost of eliminating or relocating the SC Habitat. When faced with a flurry of phone calls against this motion, the Board made another motion allowing the school two weeks to submit a written proposal addressing eight concerns, with the proviso that if the answers were not acceptable, the Board would decide the future of the habitat.

Briefly, those concerns were that someone be designated as a volunteer head of the project, the identification of a student group willing to maintain and groom the habitat, a schedule be prepared outlining and assigning specific duties involved in maintaining the habitat, including summer months, a yearly written report to be submitted to the board addressing the above requirements, an immediate plan of action to eliminate "the present unsatisfactory appearance of the Habitat", reducing the size of the habitat, removing "overgrowth", clear the ditch in front of the habitat, prior approval of any program of planting, seeding or re-designing, a yearly review by the Board of compliance by the school to these requirements, and finally that all costs and funding require-

ments will be the responsibility of the habitat committee and Springfield Collegiate. To teachers already overloaded this looked like a large and time consuming task, but we voted to answer all of the Board's requirements. Richard Zuk, the Science/Math department head agreed to be the SC Habitat Project committee leader, a committee of students was formed, a schedule was presented, a thirty inch border was mowed along three sides of the SC Habitat, and the Board was informed that no more plantings were planned as the habitat was being left to mature. The Committee also agreed that the board would do a yearly review on the project and that Springfield would continue to fund the maintenance costs. So, essentially, all the conditions were agreed to or met.

This did not satisfy the Board which sent back seven points for clarification, further action, or comment. This document was filled with vague, undefined terms such as "present unsatisfactory appearance", "removal of individual components of the ecosystem (ie individual trees...from time to time (no reason given))", "overgrowth", and "Habitat Committee will be continuously supervised".

Final decision

Despite the initial detailed response given by Springfield Collegiate, and a follow-up response to the second document, on October 17, 2000, the final decision came from the Board in the form of a motion which stated "That the Springfield Collegiate Habitat Project be terminated and that the property upon which it is now situated be returned to the previous grassed state." The timeline for this destruction is the beginning of the summer holidays.

Science curriculum requires habitat study

Forgetting for a moment the global implications of destroying habitats, examine the impact of the destruction of this particular one. The Habitat is located in the front of Springfield Collegiate, within easy walking distance of an elementary and middle school. Every Science curriculum with the exception of Grade 5 requires study of a habitat in some form. Its use also crosses other curricula such as Art, English, and Math.

The Board suggested that students can be taken to the Fort Whyte or the Winnipeg Nature Parks to study habitats. Oakbank is a rural community. In order to have students study



see "Habitat ..." on page 8 ►

Government Task Force Wades into Garbage

by Jan Westlund, Resource Conservation Manitoba Policy Committee (Solid Waste)

"Consumerism is a system that links those without awareness to the action of those without scruples to produce destruction without precedent."—Mark Burch, *Stepping lightly: Simplicity for people and the planet*

An additional concern of unchecked western consumerism is the need to manage the mountains of garbage it produces. This is something we have done rather flagrantly here in Manitoba.

According to Statistics Canada 1996, we share with other prairie provinces the questionable distinction of being some of the most wasteful people in the country. We discarded 840 kg per person here compared to 590 in Nova Scotia, 610 in Ontario, 620 in British Columbia and 750 in Quebec.

To add insult to injury, we've developed, willy nilly, a network of over 314 landfill sites (65% of which serve less than 1000) to dump it.(1) This total, too, compares very unfavourably with the rest of Canada where Albertans, with well over twice the population, require only 242 landfills and Nova Scotia, with 10% less people, can manage with just 19.(2)

Resource Conservation Manitoba has long maintained that such an abundance of landfill capacity creates a low cost, "disposal friendly" environment that economically favours land filling over waste minimization. This makes it virtually impossible to "sell" the necessity of waste reduction (witness the reduced per capita rate of waste in provinces like BC and Ontario where landfill siting has been a herculean task over the past decade or two necessitating long-time waste reduction programs).

Apparently the provincial government agrees. Over the last two years its Regional Waste Management Task Force (RWMTF) has sought to rationalize our system for dealing with waste province-wide. It cites as motivating factors the concern about downward pressure on waste reduction activities; as well as alarm at the level of new waste disposal facility development, and continued appeals for financial support for waste management activities.

The Task Force and process

Representatives from Manitoba Natural Resources, (then) Manitoba Environment, Association of Manitoba Muni-

cipalities, Manitoba Rural Development and Northern Association of Community Councils comprised the Task Force relying on a process which involved secondary research in North America, stakeholder meetings, a circulated discussion document and workshops. The results were published last December in the *FINAL REPORT OF THE MANITOBA REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE: Regional Integrated Waste Management Action Plan and Recommendations*. The

government requested public comments on this Report through the month of October 2000. It appears to be a useful, if flawed, first step.

Recommendations

The Task Force's vision calls for reduced dependence on land filling; clear, concise and consistently enforced environmental standards; and regional solid waste planning.

Intended as a framework to guide potential actions and decisions, 44 recommendations have been divided into 11 action areas and are complemented by 18 consensus-based observations. The proposed recommendations, which are suggested to "kick start" the rationalization process, are framed under three categories of actions:

1. High Environmental Protection: encourages a level playing field; reforms waste management facility approval process; amends the Waste Disposal Ground Regulation.
2. Integrated Solid Waste Management: establishes regional solid waste planning; improves waste reduction and diversion components; establishes partnerships and economic incentives.
3. Regional Coordination: calls for coordinated technical assistance; institutes funding provisions; establishes flexible regional solid waste management districts; focuses attention to northern and remote communities.

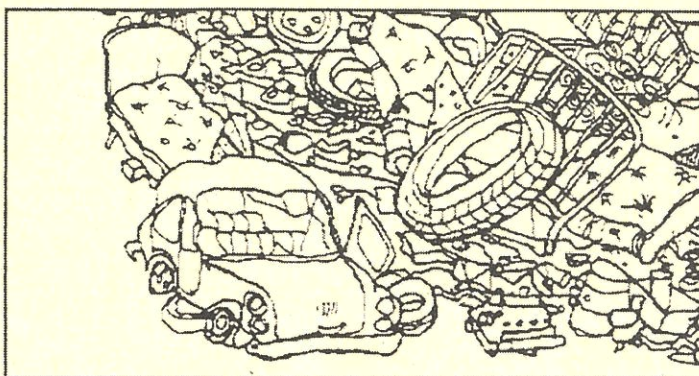
Several regional waste management systems currently exist. This report recommends that the province be divided into eight flexible waste management districts to encourage further partnering. To facilitate regional waste management planning, the Task Force proposes that an oversight agency and a corps of regional waste management coordinators be developed, funded through a cost sharing arrangement and drawing on a variety of resources from existing provincial stewardship programs.

The RWMTF recommends that funding be made available to all municipal corporations and community councils and to First Nations communities if partnered with off-reserve communities. It tackles that thorny issue of excessive landfill capacity province-wide by establishing these funding priorities:

- closure and decommissioning of waste disposal grounds;
- establishment of waste transfer stations;
- [creation of] waste diversion systems;
- development of regional waste management systems.

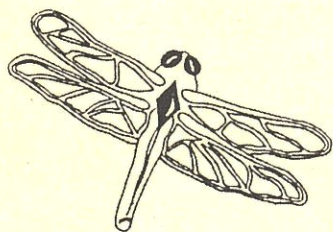
The Task Force has voiced several suggestions which give

see "Promising Approaches" on page 10 ►



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Opinion: Inaction on Climate a Global Tragedy

by Anne Lindsey

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the failure of last month's climate change negotiations in The Hague is a tragedy of global proportion. Faced with the knowledge that climate patterns are already shifting in unpredictable ways, having profound impacts as a result of extreme weather patterns, and knowing that the situation will only worsen if the status quo is maintained, world leaders have done the planet, and all of us, a great disservice by their inability to move decisively to action.

Hot Air

To make matters worse, it is Canada that bears the embarrassing distinction of having been one of, if not the most obstructive nation at these talks. In spite of Lloyd Axworthy's strong words about Canada having the most to lose as climate change advances, Canada's delegation persisted in calling for measures which threaten the environmental integrity of the Kyoto Protocol. Loopholes like carbon sinks (meeting some of our carbon reduction targets by claiming credit for our existing forest and agricultural land); "hot air" ("credits" created when some countries adopted targets higher than their current projected emissions); and export of nuclear power plants do nothing to actually reduce the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that we are emitting.

More Concern about Climate than about Taxes

It's stunning that our government could stick to this position during an election campaign in which an Environics poll showed that more, many more, Canadians are concerned about the impacts of climate change than are concerned about taxes. And yet, we have sent this government back for a third term as a majority in Ottawa. As so often happens with environmental questions, there seems to be a massive disconnect between what people think is important, and the message that they send to politicians.

Switch to leadership

Climate change isn't going away however, and it is now once again squarely on the shoulders of a Liberal government in Canada to ensure that we, the world's number two per capita emitter of greenhouse gases, quickly and definitively cut our own emissions, and moreover switch our international position from one of leadership to the brink of disaster to one of leadership to a greener future.

There's no lack of resources to guide this transition—many of them emerging from the non-governmental environmental community. The David Suzuki Foundation, The Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development and the Climate Action Network nationally are all proposing steps which must be taken if Canada is to meet our commitments under the Kyoto protocol. And research published by these groups demonstrates why and how such steps can benefit society as a whole—from direct health benefits as a result of lowered air pollution, to the economic benefits of job creation. Locally, groups such as Resource Conservation Manitoba, Fort Whyte Centre and Citizens for Better Public Transit in Winnipeg are doing their part to help citizens make better choices about transportation and other energy uses that impact climate change.

However, the transition can only be made if the federal and provincial governments work actively to facilitate it. They can start immediately with "no regrets" measures like energy conservation retrofits for all public buildings, and assistance to community groups working on energy conservation measures for residences.

The election is over. It's time to roll up our sleeves in Canada and start working for change. If climate change talks resume in six months, as proposed, let us hold our heads high as Canada goes to the table as a progressive agent for solutions, not as an international fossil.

Eco

Land to be Mowed

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a habitat, teachers must now load students onto a bus, (\$5 per student), and students must also pay a \$2.50 admission fee. So, the price of visiting a habitat has now risen from zero to \$7.50, per student. In the case of Fort Whyte, the cost is similar. Both trips involve a time allotment as well of up to three hours, as opposed to twenty minutes if students just have to walk across the road.

Make no mistake, this is not a criticism of either Fort Whyte or Living Prairie, rather a view of unnecessary expense and time.

Destruction of a valuable teaching tool

One of the purposes of a school board is to support the education of children, yet this Board has chosen to destroy a valuable teaching tool. This is especially ironic when schools all over the country are fighting to find funding in order to create habitats.

Recently Springfield Collegiate received a request from a

former student who is presently completing graduate work in the Faculty of Architecture. She is taking an elective called "Urban Ecology" and is creating a paper investigating community perception as a function of sustainability-related intervention. She wishes to use the Springfield Habitat for part of her research. Obviously, the Habitat is remembered and can remain useful to students long after they graduate. In some cases, the Habitat has guided students in their career choices.

David Suzuki stated that "Nature by definition is wild and unpredictable and some people find this unsettling". Perhaps this explains most clearly the decision to return the property where the Habitat is now located "to the previous grassed state..."

Penny Ridge is a teacher at Springfield Collegiate in Oakbank, Manitoba

Editor's note: The cost of bulldozing the habitat is approximately \$9,000. Undoubtedly, the Board will also incur future costs for continued maintenance of its proposed turfed area.

Teachers and the principal of Springfield Collegiate, who signed a petition in favour of keeping the Habitat, were reprimanded by the School Board for their action.

Promising approaches

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hope for a new era of waste reduction in Manitoba. These include:

- the closing of all landfills that pose "unacceptable" environmental risk in three years (providing unacceptable is defined in a meaningful way);
- the requirement to submit a statement of need or a regional impact assessment for all new facilities (either of which would have made the development of the current BFI landfill site at Rosser highly unlikely);
- the requirement that all municipalities should become part of a waste management region within 10 years;
- the development of a co-ordinating agency to help municipalities develop and implement regional structures;
- the establishment of incentives for organic waste management;
- continued support for waste reduction targets; and
- the implementation of full-cost accounting principles to track waste management costs.

Sins of Omission

Perhaps because the City of Winnipeg did not have a seat on the Task Force, this Report lacks focused discussion about waste management in the Capital Region which is a massive gap considering the relatively-affluent population base of the area and its resulting volumes of waste. The many pressing issues associ-

ated with uncontrolled landfill development surrounding Winnipeg need to be addressed by the provincial government now. While the Task Force does suggest a pilot project be undertaken in Manitoba's Capital Region to enhance and demonstrate the benefit of regional partnerships, it would seem rather late in the day for such a tentative approach to a seriously convoluted situation.

Also missing is a strategy to remedy the unhealthy competition for waste which has developed over the past several years within the province. If not actual government intervention to direct waste to the most appropriate facility in the province (flow control), some other type of regulation is required to limit the downward spiral of tipping fees and the neglect of waste reduction programs which that competition breeds.

Despite the lack of attention to these two crucial issues, the report's recommendations should be implemented immediately. A moratorium on new landfill sites is required while this new system is entrenched. Presumably the resulting eventual reduction in landfill sites and attention to waste diversion opportunities will lower our overall per capita waste in the foreseeable future.

Notes:

(1) These figures are from Manitoba Environment, 1999. One hundred and twenty seven Waste Disposal Grounds have been closed since the enactment of the Manitoba's Waste Disposal Ground Regulation in 1991.

(2) Statistics Canada, Preliminary Results of the Waste Management Industry Survey: Business Sector, 1996. **ECO**



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THE ARCHDRUID LEAVES US

David Brower passes away at age 88

By Steve Rauh

David Brower was one of North America's most visionary environmentalists. On November 5, 2000, at the age of 88, he died of cancer at his home in Berkeley Calif.

Dave was perhaps not as well known in Canada as in the U.S, but he was a member of the Manitoba Eco-Network Advisory Council and he was a close associate of mine for 25 years. In 1992, he was the keynote speaker at the CEN Annual Meeting held at Hecla Island where he presented a more positive and hopeful picture for the future of the Earth than the previous speaker's (Jean Charest, then Federal Minister of Environment) endorsement of the Free Trade Agreement. He received more standing ovations than any other speaker I remember in my 10 or so years of CEN AGAs.

Dave was a supporter of the James Bay Cree, the Chairman of the Third Conference on the Fate of the Earth held in Ottawa in 1986, and spoke throughout Canada on a number of issues.

Opposed nuclear power plant

Many people credit him with the founding of the modern environmental movement, in fact his work was immortalized in John McPhee's book, *Travels with the Archdruid*, a title which stuck with Dave throughout his life. He was the first executive director of the Sierra Club. In that position he built the club from a regional organization of several thousand members in 1950, to a national organization of 70,000 members in 1969. He left the Sierra Club when they would not oppose the siting of a nu-

clear power plant on the California coast and when they refused to see the international importance of the environmental movement. He then founded Friends of the Earth, and later the Earth Island Institute.

Nobel Prize nominee

Dave Brower started his environmental career as an advocate for wilderness and national parks. In his 80s he travelled the planet advocating the need for CPR—conservation, preservation and restoration. He was nominated 3 times for the Nobel Peace prize by Congressman Ronald V. Dellums. Congressman Dellums wrote of Dave, "Through his uncompromising stance and his visionary publication program, he has provided cultural tools to modify military and industrial exploitation, arousing the public to call for the judicious use of the world's resources in otherwise complacent, over-sated populations. Dr. Brower's long-range efforts have developed the language, images, and issues of global peace to the idea, and the idea to practice".

Although Dave was not one to shrink back from the devastating reports on ongoing environmental degradation, he always believed that we had the ability to change the current course of history. In his final book, published when he was 82, he wrote the following:

"Perhaps at this moment in our time on Earth we should... consider again this couplet from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe:

'Whatever you can do, or dream you can begin it.

Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.'

"Do you have magic in you? You bet. Magic is the little genetic genius that has been evolving for three billion years: It connects us all to each other and to everything that has come before and that still lives on the planet. That is some magic, and it was formed in wilderness. Let us begin. Let us restore the Earth. Let the mountains talk and the rivers run. Once more and forever."

Should humanity move to an equitable and enriching and sustainable world, we will look back with gratitude at the legacy of boldness and genius and power and magic that David R. Brower gave to the earth.

ECO

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Member Group Profile: Students for Sustainability

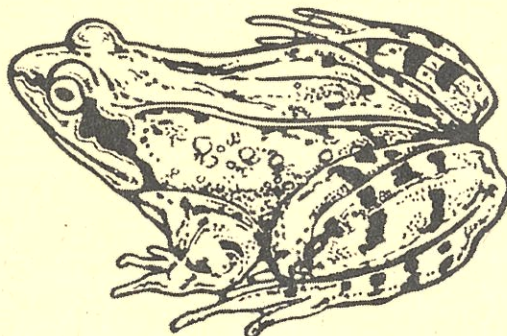
Students for Sustainability is a non-profit, community outreach group formed by environmental science students at the University of Manitoba. Through community outreach initiatives and the efforts of University students we are committed to the promotion of environmental and ecological sustainability in Manitoba.

It is important for us to build lasting partnerships with all organizations, groups and individuals within Manitoba who are concerned about the environment.

What we do

Our outreach efforts include:

- Participating in community projects that promote sustainability
- Informing University students of upcoming environmental events, workshops, conferences and public hearings so that they can get involved
- Providing organizations/groups within Manitoba with student volunteers to help coordinate various projects, events, conferences, workshops and other related undertakings
- Enhancing professional development of Environmental Science students at the UofM through workshops, speakers and special projects
- Encouraging students outside the Environmental Science Program to become involved with our initiatives.



Some of the projects we are taking on this year...

Environmental Directory for Manitoba

Working in collaboration with the Eco-Network to create a directory that reads like a telephone book, listing environmental groups as well as products and services that are environmentally sustainable.

Recycling Depot in Osborne Village

Campaign to get a recycling depot in Osborne Village for apartment dwellers.

Visual Representation of Lifestyle

A visual display depicting the effects that North American lifestyle choices have on the environment. For instance, linking pop bottles together to represent how many liters of water a toilet wastes in one day. It will be displayed during Environmental Awareness Week at the UofM campus (Jan.29-Feb. 2)

We will also have a web page up and running by Dec. 1 and would love to have you come by and visit our site. The web-address will be posted in the Eco-network offices, or can be obtained by calling the program coordinator.

If you would like more information about our group's efforts feel free to contact us. We look forward to hearing from you!

Ajaleigh Williams (program coordinator)

Email: ajaleigh@mts.net

Phone: 487-0658

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The Manitoba Eco-Network

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

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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 _____

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.

