

ECO-JOURNAL

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East Side of Lake Winnipeg Planning Initiative Underway

by Anne Lindsey

In fulfillment of an election promise, the provincial government has begun the process of "Pre-consultation" for a Broad Area Planning Process on the East Side of Lake Winnipeg. This kind of process, also known as Land Use Planning, was one of the recommendations of the Consultation on Sustainable Development Implementation (or COSDI), an initiative of the former government.

Conservation Minister, Oscar Lathlin, has named three government staff members from his department and Aboriginal and Northern Affairs to carry out the Pre-consultation phase, and they are currently meeting with representatives of various stakeholder groups, and communities and First Nations in the East Side region. Environmental groups were invited to a session in Winnipeg on January 25, in which plans and schedules for this first phase were discussed.

Terms of Reference needed

A number of concerns were raised, along with some strong suggestions for how the consultations might progress. Chief amongst these is the need for terms of reference, both for the pre-consultation, and for the planning process itself. As it now stands, according to several of the group reps present, the process looks more like a plan for the co-ordination of a variety of developments, including an all-weather road, forest harvesting expansion, mining interests, and hydro transmission lines to name but some of the possibilities touted for the area. RCM's John Sinclair, who was one of the Core group members for COSDI, pointed out that the COSDI recommendations for Land Use Planning are not linked to development. And Scott Kidd of Canadian Parks and Wilderness reminded those

present that this kind of process needs to start with the "null hypothesis" of no development, and must look at ecological sustainability of an area and how this can be protected. Kim Tyson added that the prevailing view in our culture seems to be that land is "useless" unless something is developed on it or extracted from it. She pointed out that the East Side is already a

fully functioning ecosystem and asked if this process couldn't start at an earlier point, rather than assuming that further development will necessarily take place.

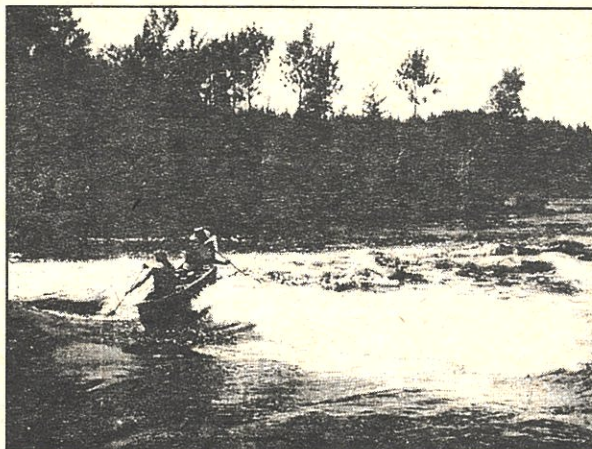
Glen Koroluk of Manitoba's Future Forest Alliance cited the need for an inventory which describes the background of the area and what already exists in terms of population, natural features, recreation, industries and so on. This information is being gathered through an Ecosystem Based Management Program, according to Bruce Bremner of Manitoba Conservation, but is not yet publicly available.

Don Sullivan, also of MFFA, pointed out that Traditional Ecological Knowledge must be included in any study of the area.

A number of recommendations were made regarding the procedure for the pre-consultation. For example, it was suggested that the minutes of the various meetings be made publicly available, using the public registry system, and the Internet. Stuart Kaye felt that the whole process should be opened up to the public. It was also felt that a draft of the Pre-Consultation report should be circulated to the various participants for comments prior to being submitted to the Minister. Gaile Whelan-Enns, with the Canadian Nature Federation, noted that this would be consistent with other COSDI recommendations, and with the Federal Environmental Assessment Process. She also suggested that a protocol for consultation be adopted, such as the one developed by the National Round Table on the Environment and Economy.

Geographic scope

Another topic discussed was the size of the planning area. Several maps were displayed with a proposed planning area, which participants generally agreed was too small and seemed



Canoeing on the Pigeon River. Photo by Ellen Wieser

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own and do not represent the views of the
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An Ecological Perspective for School Board?

Steve Rauh, member of the Campaign
for Pesticide Reduction! Winnipeg, Steering
Committee member of the Manitoba
Eco-Network, and former Board member
of the Canadian Environmental Network,
has announced his candidacy for Trustee
in Manitoba's largest school division,
Winnipeg 1. One of Steve's goals is to
bring an ecological perspective to the
School Board, hence his commitment to
working for healthy and safe indoor and
outdoor environments for students and
school personnel. Educationally, he sup-
ports classrooms and schools which facili-
tate the development of critical thinking,
involving students in both independent
and collaborative decision-making about
their learning. "This is the route that edu-
cation must take if the environmental and
social problems of our time are to be re-
solved", says Steve.

Student endorsement

The Kelvin High Students' Environmen-

tal Awareness Committee has endorsed
Steve's campaign, which may make him
the only trustee candidate who is actively
supported by a students' organization.
Steve is excited by their endorsement and
by the energy of this new group and their
commitment to getting more young peo-
ple involved in environmental work. He
is also endorsed by Carl Ridd, former
University of Winnipeg professor, and
long time community activist. Steve's
views on education are welcomed by
Muriel Smith, former Deputy Premier of
Manitoba, and another noted community
activist who says "Steve's goals match
mine for the education of the children of
Winnipeg".

This Ward 1 by-election is being held
to replace Anita Neville, who recently
made the move to Parliament. Ward 1 in-
cludes River Heights, Crescentwood,
South Osborne/Riverview/Lord Roberts
and parts of Tuxedo.

ECO

Biotechnology Resources

Manitoba Eco-Network has been
closely following the international debate
on biotechnology. We have several bind-
ers of newspaper articles from across the
continent as well as other publications,

wide-ranging website notations, refer-
ences to important research works and
analysis of international agreements.
Please feel free to drop by and peruse this
collection at your leisure.

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THANK YOU

The Manitoba Eco-Network wishes to acknowledge the generous support
of the **George Cedric Metcalfe Charitable Foundation**, who have provided
a grant to assist in the publication of Eco-Journal.

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John Sinclair - Resource Conservation Manitoba
Eb Scherer - Manitoba Naturalists Society
Christina Waddle - U.M. Recycling and Environment Group
Peter Walker - Manitoba Federation of Labour

Protect Ecological Integrity in our Provincial Parks

by Ron Thiessen, Western Canada Wilderness Committee, Manitoba Chapter

To the majority of Manitobans the label *Provincial Park* brings to mind pristine wilderness, recreational opportunity, and the promise of permanently preserved untamed paradise set aside for future generations. The Manitoba provincial NDP government has a drastically different view when it comes to defining a provincial park system.

Vast areas of the land base in our most treasured provincial parks are currently open to logging. 47% of Whiteshell, 62% of Nopiming, and 61% of Duck Mountain Provincial Parks' total areas are available and all are being extensively clearcut by multi-nationals such as the Pine Falls Paper Company and the Louisiana Pacific Corporation.

It comes as no surprise that Manitobans are typically alarmed when they learn this is the case. The majority of park visitors have been previously unaware of the clearcut logging due to buffer zones left on the parks' highways. These token strips of forest ensure that the public perceives endless wilderness as they pass through.

Connection to the landscape

Through our Wilderness Committee door to door canvass we discovered that this severe resource extraction completely undermines and negates Manitobans' perception of provincial parks, which is to preserve natural biodiversity. As both Manitobans and Canadians, our lives, memories, and visions are intimately connected to the Canadian landscape that is embodied in our remaining wilderness. We need only look at the images of loons, kingfishers, beavers, mountains and prairies that adorn the paper and metal Canadian currency in our pockets to verify this connection.

During the course of the year 2000 our WCWC canvass team knocked on over 140,000 doors in Winnipeg and surrounding areas with the purpose of informing and mobilizing the general

public. We offered verbal and printed information coupled with postal/email addresses of the appropriate officials, and later on in the year, postcard mailers. These mailers are designed to make it convenient for every Manitoban to voice their opinion on the

mass resource extraction that is presently devouring our cherished provincial parks.

Habitat protection is essential

Present clearcut logging activities in our parks are diminishing the homes of many species of wildlife that depend on habitat protection for their continued survival. These species range from lynx, cougar, coyote, bear, bald eagle, fox, gray wolf, white-tailed deer, owls, a variety of songbirds, and many others. If you ask any con-

servation biologist, they will tell you that habitat fragmentation and loss is the leading cause of extinction and extirpation of plant and animal species worldwide.

The threatened Woodland Caribou's southernmost habitat in Manitoba is in Nopiming Provincial Park. Over the years their habitat has been severely degraded and fragmented by industrial operations. If these massive logging endeavors are allowed to continue at the present rate there is no doubt that the 65-70 animals in the Nopiming herd are in jeopardy of extirpation in this range.

Another creature that is suffering from habitat loss in Manitoba's Provincial Parks can comfortably fit on a tablespoon! These tiny creatures, the colourful wood warblers, are actually neotropical migrant birds. They fly over 5000 kilometers, in the dead of night, from their winter homes in the tropical rainforests to their summer nesting and breeding habitats in Manitoba's boreal forests. Many of the wood warbler species found in Manitoba are either deciduous or coniferous old-growth dependant. As already stated, industrial activities in Manitoba's parks are destroying wildlife habitats at a fantastic rate in this province.

Clearcutting not sustainable

Clearcut logging degrades the natural ecosystem. Scientific studies show that clearcutting does not imitate natural fire disturbances. Furthermore, replanted mono-culture forests lack age distribution and diversity of species making them more susceptible to insect infestation, fire, and disease. Clearcutting is also a highly mechanized, low employment practice. Over the years, mainly due to advancements in technology there has been a steady increase in the amount of trees cut every year coupled with a huge decrease in jobs per acre of forest harvested. Of all industrialized countries, Canada has one of the lowest rates of

see "Ecological Integrity ..." on next page ►



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What's Happening

FEBRUARY 19 - FOSSIL DISCOVERIES IN THE CHURCHILL AREA OF NORTHERN MANITOBA. Dr. Graham Young has, for the past several years, been one of a group of scientists studying fossils and rocks in the Churchill region, which 440 million years ago was a shallow tropical sea and shoreline straddling the equator. A Manitoba Naturalists Society Indoor Program, 7:30 pm at the Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain.

FEBRUARY 23 - ART OF THE WILD. An evening of images, storytelling, poetry and action featuring Sheldon Oberman, Garry Raven, and readings from the eco-poetics issue of Contemporary Verse 2. Presented by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), Manitoba Chapter at 7:30 pm at Crossways-in-Common (222 Furby St.). Tickets \$5. For more information call CPAWS Manitoba at 339-0247.

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.

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. Registration, \$125; students, \$75. For more information call Frontline Associates 1-204-489-2739; frontlin@escape.ca

FEBRUARY 23 AND 24 - OUR FOOD...OUR HEALTH...OUR FUTURE: *Exploring Manitoba's Organic Food Chain And Other Strategies For Sustainability,* University of Winnipeg, Bulman Centre. 7 pm Friday and 8 am Saturday. Registration, \$65; low income/students, \$35. Registration includes Friday evening and all Saturday sessions plus organic luncheon buffet Saturday.

MARCH 11 - APRIL 28 - THE DISPOSSESSED: *Living With Multiple Chemical Sensitivities,* a photo exhibit by Rhonda Zwilling. Severe reactions to common chemicals in the home and workplace are rapidly growing. *The Dispossessed* unfolds the drama and presents a story both compelling and vital. Those with families, co-workers or patients having asthma, allergies, chemical sensitivity or other respiratory diseases will find this exhibit exceptional. Showing at the Main Access Gallery, 121-100 Arthur Street, 956-2089.

MARCH 17- WALK THE TRANS CANADA TRAIL THROUGH WINNIPEG from 10 am to 2 pm. Choose your nearest portion of about 40 kms of the Trail which will be set up with starting stations and maps. Handout materials contains detailed maps, way to record the portion you cover, ways of evaluating the route and a chance to win Trans Canada Trail merchandise. Starting stations will be located at: Bunn's Creek at Henderson Hwy.; Bunn's Creek at Douglas Park; Kildonan Park near Peguis Pavilion; St. John's Park; the Forks near Explore Manitoba; Omand's Creek Park; Assiniboine Park near the west gate; Harte Trail at Perimeter Hwy.; Harte Trail near Assiniboine Forest; and Fort Whyte Centre. Call Kathleen Leathers at 284-1652 for more information.

Ecological Integrity

continued from page 3 ...

employment per acre of wood cut. Alternative methods such as selective logging provide more jobs, maintain biodiversity, and ensure a sustainable logging industry for future generations. In other words, Clearcut logging makes no ecological or economic sense for Canadians.

At a time when the Canadian government has promised to preserve 12% of Canada's total acreage it is shocking that the Manitoba provincial government authorizes such extensive logging operations in the paltry 4% percent of Manitoba that has been "protected" in provincial parks.

We all know that the next generation won't have the privilege of a second chance to correct the mistakes our generation might make through shortsightedness. The Wilderness Committee believes that Canadians have a responsibility to protect species biodiversity. It is a reasonable request that our provincial parks be granted immediate, and full, permanent protection from industrial exploitation and development which threatens their ecological integrity.

If you would like more information on the Western Canada Wilderness Committee and our campaigns please feel free to contact us.

Ron Thiessen (campaigner)

Phone: 942 9292 Email: wccwc@cool.mb.ca

ECO

East Side Planning

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to be driven by plans for an all-weather road. It was noted that if transmission lines were to be discussed, the proposed new dams should also be included in the study area, especially since the government has pledged that any potential new developments will not take place in stages. It was also suggested that since the entire region drains into Lake Winnipeg, the Lake itself should be included in the planning process. Gaile Whelan-Enns pointed out that the Coalition on Land Use Planning (which includes a number of the groups present at the meeting) had made a number of recommendations regarding geographical scope of the process to the Minister over the past year, but that no responses were received.

John Sinclair reminded the group that even in a formal licensing process, there is an obligation to consider alternatives to a development and the "no go" approach. In his view, having maps and assumptions already set out has the effect of limiting the discussion and tends to keep people thinking "in the box".

Finally, Scott Kidd stressed the need for a moratorium on Class 2 and Class 3 developments in the area during the planning process, including staking of mining claims. He noted that many diamond stakes have recently been made, and that there is talk of tantalum mining in the region. Simultaneous planning and development will damage the credibility of the process and of the province, he said.

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My Adventures at the Public Registry

by Scott Kidd, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Manitoba Chapter

In the last edition of the Eco-Journal, in an article on Manitoba Hydro's East Selkirk coal fired generating station, I was quoted as stating that the environmental licence for the plant, prior to Manitoba Conservation's October 2000 revisions, was unclear and poorly written. In this article I wish to follow up with my efforts to review the October 2000 revised licence at Manitoba Conservation's Public Registry.

It all started in early January, when having a spare moment, I decided to finally have a first hand look at the revised licence. I trundled down to Manitoba Conservation's library located in the VIA Rail Station, which is also where Manitoba Conservation's main public registry is housed. (As an aside, an acquaintance provided me with a copy of the original licence, so this was my first attempt to view the East Selkirk file at the public registry). I looked up the East Selkirk file in the index and discovered that it was Client File No. 3253.00. I then went to the filing cabinets only to find that file no. 3253.00 was not in the cabinet. As the East Selkirk station has been such a hot issue, I simply thought that someone had taken it out. I then asked the librarian if she knew where the file was. To my surprise, she told me that the East Selkirk file is no longer in the public registry.

Apparently there was a time that files could be permanently removed from the public registry. It is my understanding that this is no longer the case. Anyway, the file could not be readily obtained. I have since learned that Manitoba Conservation keeps a separate, or client, file outside of the public registry. So, if one wanted to see the whole East Selkirk file, you could request to view the client file. However, you have to make arrangements to do so, which defeats one of the purposes of the public registry, which is ease of access to such files.

Substantial changes

Back to my story. The librarian then told me that she had a

copy of the East Selkirk licence, which she had set aside because she thought there would be more inquiries like mine. I greatly appreciated her foresight. However, when I read the licence, I noticed that it was an older version of the licence, and not the licence as revised in October 2000. I then asked if she had a copy of that licence. No dice.

I then left Manitoba Conservation and went to the Manitoba Eco-Network Office, which also houses a public registry. I was pleased to discover that Manitoba Eco-Network did have a copy of the revised licence. And the wording of the "Review and Revocation" section of the revised licence has been changed substantially from the earlier licence.

Essentially, the Station now has to be run in accordance with the provisions of a letter written by Manitoba Hydro on October 20, 2000 to Manitoba Conservation. The letter contains an "Expected Five Year Operating Plan" for the Selkirk Station. As the Eco-Journal noted in its previous edition, there is still some dispute as to whether this operating plan allows the station to be used for export purposes at all. However, that is not the point of this story.

Getting back to my adventure, a copy of the October 20, 2000 letter was not on file at the Eco-Network office. This was troublesome, as one cannot interpret or enforce the licence if you do not have a copy of the letter. I then called Manitoba Conservation and asked them to forward a copy of the letter to the Manitoba Eco-Network so it could be on file. The Eco-Network received the letter and I was finally able to read the revised licence in its entirety.

Frustrating

All of the above was a very frustrating and time-consuming process. Before commenting further, I wish to say that all of the staff at Manitoba Conservation were very helpful and accommodating. As such, it was the condition of the public registry, and not them, that was frustrating.

Meaningful participation

For the public to be able to participate in environmental assessments in a meaningful way requires that the public have access to all relevant documents at times and locations that are easily accessible. While my experience with the public registry may have been unique, I think it is important to note that the Report of the Consultation on Sustainable Development Implementation (COSDI) made a series of recommendations as to how the public registry in Manitoba could be improved. Two of their many recommendations were to increase the hours the registry is available, and the long-term retention of public registry files. On June 29, 2000, Minister Lathlin announced that his government was adopting the COSDI Report in its entirety. Given my adventure, I hope changes to the public registry are made soon.

Eco



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The Livestock Report: An Analysis

by Regan Reader

In an effort to make sense of the raging livestock industry debate within Manitoba, an independent panel released its report on Monday, January 22. *Sustainable Development in Manitoba: Finding Common Ground*, was an attempt to do just that; to present an assessment and chart a plan of action capable of incorporating the diversity of strongly held views expressed by Manitobans. Recent developments in the livestock industry that precipitated the report, and the furor that has accompanied them, have been centred primarily around the expansion of corporate hog farming. The report then, looks mainly at the sustainability of the hog industry in Manitoba and the feasibility of further expansion.

Lacking in urgency

Presented with the task of establishing recommendations which give fair and adequate consideration to the concerns of business interests and environmentalists alike, the panel's success at finding 'common ground' has been demonstrated by the relatively positive impressions voiced by members of both camps. The kudos were not unanimous and it might appear that the report was more favourably received by the hog industry than by those hoping for stronger environmental precautions. Vicky Burns from Hogwatch expressed her frustration with the report feeling that while there were a number of commendable points, (the recommendation for phosphorus level monitoring for example), the recommendations were by and large much weaker than is needed, and lacking the urgency that the current situation calls for. Particularly disappointing for Burns was the lack of inclusion of research materials from outside the

province. Given the extent of recent regulatory changes and information stemming from the United States and Europe, she felt that this detracted from the immense time and effort invested in preparing the report. Still more frustrating for Burns is the reaction of the province to the report, "The speed with which they dismissed the proposed Performance Bonds makes us question how seriously they are going to consider any of the recommendations."

Recommendations carefully crafted

When asked about the possibility of any intensive livestock operation (ILO) being sustainable, Burns responded, "We simply do not think that it is possible to have intensive confinement situations, with thousands of animals under one roof, and at the same time have healthy conditions for the workers, the animals, the neighbouring residents and for the environment." Her concerns were echoed by the reaction of Christine Common-Singh, former member of the Manitoba Environmental Council, "It was a major disappointment to me to learn that some recommendations will not be considered by government. They are carefully crafted to interact with and reinforce each other. The elimination of even one major recommendation will

substantially weaken the holistic outcome which was anticipated by thoughtful and far-sighted authors."

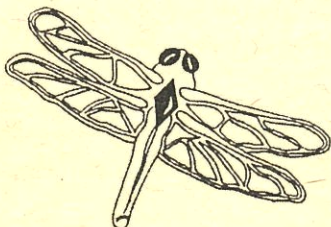
Veto Power for the Province?

Among the recommendations made by the report is the increased involvement of the province in the expansion and monitoring of Intensive Livestock Operations (ILOs). This is to be re-



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by E. Kim Tyson, B.Sc.- Ecology, B.Ed.

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SPACE IS LIMITED

alized in a variety of ways; from making more readily available information on the latest relevant technologies, to compiling data providing an overview of the entire province's soil types, water quality and regional viability with respect to ILOs (something which does not currently exist), and perhaps most significantly, revising the approval process to allow veto power for the province. This final recommendation would serve to relieve the pressure on municipalities often ill-equipped to decide on ILO proposals, a role which all too often results in severed friendships and divided communities. Additionally it allows for a further safety valve in the ILO application process. If applicants are required to submit to a provincial environmental impact assessment in addition to the municipality's land use bylaws, there is

NO PLACE FOR POLITICS

Sasha Harvard, an Honours Political Science student at the University of Winnipeg with an interest in the issue, shared his impressions of the Livestock report:

The committee's recommendation for a provincial veto on all new Intensive Livestock Operations is commendable, and the prospect of our current government having that level of control is exciting. But it falls short of recommending the creation of an autonomous body within government to make the veto decision, and thus leaves room for a future government to simply ignore its own veto rights, for political ends. Given the conservative voting patterns of rural Manitoba, where ILOs might mean big money, the politicization of the provincial veto is almost assured. Environmental decisions of this kind are too important to be left to a politician.

Also, the concept of "balance" remains unclear: the committee shies away from stating that this industry can have zero environmental impact, saying rather that a "balance" can be achieved between economics and environment. This implies that ILOs are "too good a deal" to be shelved over purely environmental concerns. They imply a need for some give-and-take between the industry and environmentalists. A reasonable political compromise, but what I fail to see is how this industry can be so lucrative we can't live without it, yet have a profit margin so narrow it can't afford to clean up 100% of its waste.

Since we're talking about a new industry, there is no weight to its history, no emotional ties, no 4th-generation ILO owners weeping about family traditions. So why should our environment compromise? It's fine for the report to ask that the livestock industry pose no threat to human health, or land and water quality. But without a binding law, and with our provincial veto resting in the hands, perhaps, of a future minister whose constituents feel they need an ILO, our environment continues to be simply a brick in the wall, something to be considered, to be weighed against political consequences. And that is no step forward.

In all, the report, like our existing laws, represents a set of ideals. Its recommendations will need to be complemented by an activist regulatory body, less prone to political winds than the average MLA. If a "balance" is to be achieved here, it must be between our standard of living and the future of our ecosystem. Politics must not be part of the formula.

further insurance that the proposal is in fact a development acceptable both environmentally and to the surrounding community. A further consequence of provincial involvement, as is seen in Saskatchewan, is the emergence of a broader-view perspective on how and where exactly the industry is expanding. One of the key points made by the panel, was the surprise they experienced at the lack of a comprehensive overview of the ILO industry in the province. While the panel concluded that there is potential for the industry to continue to expand sustainably, this expansion is dependent upon the utilization of the factor that most makes Manitoba suited for intensive livestock production: its vast space.

Cumulative impacts

Under the current municipality approval process, with each municipality reviewing applications in isolation, there is a real tendency for hog farms to be concentrated within a limited region, each municipality giving little consideration to the cumulative effects on air and water quality. Nick Carter, one of the report's authors and former Chair of the Manitoba Eco-Network, commented that, "When it comes to the [livestock] industry, government is behind. The industry has gone ahead with market forces, but when you have a government with a tendency towards de-regulation, you tend to let things slide."

Crisis in farming

After reviewing the history and recent development of agriculture within the province, the panel made a number of interesting points. First, and one that should come as no surprise, is the international aspect of the situation Manitoba farmers now find themselves in. The liberalisation of trade has led to a need for the traditional grain farmers of the prairies to produce ever increasing amounts of commodities accompanied by ever increasing amounts of expensive chemical inputs. This struggle to remain internationally competitive has led to a glutting of the market and the subsequent and continuing fall in grain prices. The crisis in farming over the past decade and the exodus of rural residents to urban centres has led to an atmosphere where rural communities are often more than willing to endure odour and the involvement of large foreign enterprises as a means to improve their own chances of survival. Given this reality, the report makes certain noteworthy recommendations. First, is that the province should provide special recognition of the distinc-

see "The Livestock Report ..." on next page ►

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The Livestock Report

continued from previous page ...

tion between the two main categories of farms. Large scale, intensive, and often corporate owned operations are not to be treated the same as small scale, often family-run farms. The report also recommends that the defining threshold level of 'animal units' per operation be reduced from the current 400 animals to 300, and that this number apply across species. Recognizing the difficulties faced by small farmers, the report suggests that certain regulations, such as the restriction of spreading manure on fields during winter, be relaxed.

Alternatives to be explored

In its sensitivity to rural development, it stresses the need to explore alternative means of accessing markets and livelihoods not in direct competition with the export-oriented ILOs. One way of pursuing this, it suggests, is by focussing on consumer demand for livestock and produce which has been raised in an ecologically friendly way respectful of the animal's quality of life. Along similar lines, the report suggests the potential and sustainability of a mixed and integrated small farm, a farm which might, for example, include the production of grains alongside the production of livestock, and thus provide the opportunity of a self-sustaining system with the livestock providing organic fertilizer and the grains providing feed and bedding. This more diversified vision of farming offers an alternative to the highly specialized 'factory' farm type of ILO. Carter also commented that it was in

respect to the small farmer, and those with niche market produce (eg: free range or organic) that the real usefulness of single desk selling, were it to be re-instituted, would be realized.

Pathogens and antibiotics

The report addresses, to a limited extent, the issue of pathogen and antibiotic contamination of water sources. It notes that the traditional view, that once manure was incorporated into the soil the virulence of any pathogens it might be harbouring would be eliminated, has since been disproved and that there is a distinct possibility that such pathogens could find their way to the human population. Rather than questioning whether expansion of the industry might increase these risks, particularly given the relative ease of pathogen transmission between the similar hog and human biologies, the panel recommends that further research into 'best practices' for the industry should be made a priority. The report refers to the recent publication of a letter signed by 30 organisations and over 50 doctors calling for a ban on the subtherapeutic use of all antibiotics related to, or the same as, those being used by humans. It also notes, tellingly, that Europe is significantly further ahead than either the United States or Canada in the implementation of protective measures. Unfortunately, the attention devoted to the problem of potential antibiotic resistance was extremely brief given its potential significance.



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Climate change impacts

The report, commendably, gives mention of climate change in several respects. It notes the seriousness of the problem posed by global warming, and the swiftness of the rate at which it is occurring, considerably faster than was originally anticipated. The implications for the livestock industry in Manitoba are two-fold. First, is consideration of the contribution of livestock to climate change via methane emissions (in Canada, agriculture is responsible for 10% of greenhouse gas emissions). This, the report suggests, can be mitigated through the use of improved manure management techniques. Second, is the need for farmers to be pro-active in preparing for climatic changes that will include the possibility of water shortages and increased flooding. In anticipation of this, farmers should look at production systems requiring less water, and should avoid, in siting decisions, proximity to flood plains. The report also calls upon the province to actively inform the public about ways to both reduce and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Only 10% of applicators do correct soil testing

A significant recommendation on which the province has so far made little comment is that of including the monitoring of phosphorus levels along with that of nitrogen. Currently only the nitrogen content of manure being spread on fields is being regulated. This can lead to a potential overload of phosphorus, a nutrient which in excess, results in the eutrophication of lakes and rivers. Carter noted an important side effect of phosphorus monitoring: if one controls according to phosphorus levels, one requires greater spread room between ILOs, and this automati-

cally resolves a number of questions regarding siting. "Control by phosphorus should be a long-term objective. Currently however, only 10% of applicators do correct soil testing. We don't really know just where we stand as far as the phosphorus situation. We need better information, better equipment and better trained contracted manure spreaders."

In the end, recognizing the need to balance between the three spheres of the environment, the economy and social equity issues, the panel seems to have succeeded in their prescribed goal of finding 'common ground'. Given the restrictions of their mandate, the limitations of available data and the frequent ambiguity of the term 'sustainability', it was likely no mean task to not only establish a comprehensive, broad-based assessment of the livestock industry, but to outline a prescriptive course of action which gives due consideration to the interests of all stakeholders. Carter noted the opportunities presented by Manitoba's current situation and the room for innovation nationally and internationally, "We could lead the way. If we do it right."

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Interested applicants should forward a resume with cover letter to the following address, before February 16, 2001, to: Search Committee, c/o Manitoba Naturalists Society, 401 - 63 Albert St., Winnipeg, MB R3B 1G4

Positive Presentations:

A Workshop on Best Practices for Stream Crossings and Erosion Control

by Lindy Clubb

If you're going to have a conference you might as well have dynamic speakers, a mixed audience, and a warm room for them to unite in during the winter. The Manitoba Heavy Construction Association held a workshop for two days early in December and they met all of the above requirements and more.

It was an interesting time for me, being the sole environmentalist among engineers, industry, company owners and equipment operators. How do you get an uncompromising position-taker to a conference? Invite them. Open the doors and trust them. I believe I gave my first positive presentation during that conference and I had a good reason.

Manitoba Heavy Construction Association (MHCA) teamed up with the Northern Plains Chapter of the International Erosion Control Association (IECA) for these workshops to broadcast best practises for stream crossings and erosion control. It was a voluntary initiative. Not only did industry organize the conference, MHCA made sure they covered all the important angles—the current rules and regulations, impacts to fish and water, case studies, design models, and plenty of information to take home. Thank you Dave Gylywoychuk (MHCA) and Mark Myrowich (IECA). It was heartening to see all players in a room talking and agreeing on the information. MHCA led the way with nothing more than volunteer enthusiasm, connections, expertise and examples, and a desire to improve the way industry conducts

itself. It was my first glimpse into the way we look at erosion control in our province.

Legal requirements

The key speakers were a mix from companies and government departments. Beth Thompson from the Federal department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) told us about fish habitat and what the law requires. Manitoba Conservation's Bruce Webb informed us about requirements to stay within provincial laws, with an emphasis on municipalities and regional areas. Manitoba Highways actively practises erosion control and engineer Randy Pitz gave a presentation. Two employees of Louisiana Pacific's Woodlands Division discussed stream crossings for logging operations. Dennis Windsor from Manitoba Hydro offered us some entertaining videos and rueful case studies from the north, where they learned the hard way to deal with specific site conditions like muskeg.

Restore it the way it was

John McCullah, a hydrologist, flew in from Redding, California to teach a mini crash course on planning, design, and control of erosion effects. I certainly learned a lot. I doubt if we could have found a better or more effective speaker on this topic. The slogan for hydrologists is to "restore it the way it was". Or as John McCullah said about his closest salmon spawning habitat "give me an excavator and a bulldozer and I'll do restoration". There's

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a promise. We could use equipment in a beneficial way for habitat—for help instead of harm. What a concept. We just need to learn the when and the how and to follow the principles of “decrease, detain, divert and displace” to reduce run-off. If you can see the run-off on slopes, like hills and gullies, then 30-50 tons of soil are leaving their homes and moving out, usually settling in the way of sediment in streams, where the particles smother spawning areas and collect in gills to smother the fish.

It was news to most of the operators and owners in the room that DFO meant business where the policy of no net loss to fish habitat was concerned. Silted and straightened streams kill fish. Rip rock, the handiest solution I could think of to prevent streambanks from eroding, turned out to be a mistake. Where rock is present and vegetation is absent on streams, lakes and rivers, so are fish. Plants like natural grasses and small trees (willow, poplar, etc.) are essential. They reduce the speed of water entering the stream, filter sediment, absorb energy, hold or stabilize soil and provide food and shelter for fish. European legislation mandates that both sides of a stream have vegetation so the food is plentiful, like on our dining room tables. Canada hasn't completely caught onto these new concepts of restoration and rehabilitation, but Federal Fisheries are urging us in that direction.

More education is needed

DFO's Habitat management program goals are to conserve, restore and develop habitat so we don't keep losing fish. To back up this policy, they have hired more biologists, and are prepared to put in a system of monitoring, and possibly fining or jailing offenders. This sent ripples of anxiety throughout the audience, since most planners and operators don't think to call the fisheries people as part of an approval or permit process. Now they know better. Over time, I think, the province and the feds will cooperate in better ways of managing erosion and sediment loss.

Everyone agrees we need more education.

When companies, contractors, and developers all understand that a tremendous amount of erosion occurs from open areas—that erosion happens big time before we can even see evidence of it, that sediments from roads seek and find the closest waterbody and cause damage—and that various low tech and low cost techniques can be used to prevent erosion in the first place, then we'll begin to see the benefits of education. We could see it as no net loss of soil.

Incentives

What are some of the incentives for people to practise erosion control? We'd have safer roads with lower maintenance costs, and we'd have healthier water and more fish. If we practise erosion control in stages while we're building instead of after or not at all, costs go down substantially. At least that's what Highways found when they did some cost/benefit analysis.

If we insisted that all tenders for development included plans to eliminate erosion, to install erosion control measures like grading and roughing up slopes, fencing, putting permeable panels in ditches, using on site supervisors and monitoring projects, then we would be looking after the environment while we develop infrastructure. Also, these measures add structural integrity, increase profits, the sites look better and they stop costly prosecution or mitigation in the future. It's how they are beginning to do things in the deserts of Nevada and the hills of California.

Think of others

Personally, I needed to see the good side of the corporate face, and have them willing to listen to a concerned citizen's point of view. My presentation reminded the drivers of development that when they fire up the tractors (or the feller bunchers, spyder hoes, tommies, scrapers, front-end loaders, backhoes, caterpillars, excavators, dump trucks, and on and on) they could think of others. The people hunting for wildlife and wild mint, wearing rubber boots and eager to wade into the streams. The fish, mammals and birds that arrived before the equipment, and the shy ones who come out at night—deer and beaver, raccoons and owls—those ones that run when the equipment is going. It's also about habitat. If we put erosion controls in place, there's no loss of sediment. If there's no loss of sediment and vegetation, there's no loss of fish, of wildlife, or of water quality. And we're all better off.

I was pleased and proud to be part of a valuable gathering. Next time I'll take Dave's advice and let the audience know I can use a chain saw, drive standard, and don't protest at every conference. I was too busy applauding at this one.

Recommended Reading:

1. Manitoba Stream Crossing Guidelines for Protection of Fish and Fish Habitat (DFO & Manitoba Conservation)
2. Shorelines, Shorelands and Wetlands (Manitoba Hydro)
3. Watercourse Crossings (National Energy Board)
4. Erosion and Land and Water magazines

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Sila Alangotok: Inuit Observations on Climate Change. This video, produced by the International Institute for Sustainable Development, documents the observations of the Inuit of Sachs Harbour on Banks Island about the way the climate is changing over time. In their own words, community members communicate the enormous impact that these changes are having on their way of life, and on the environment of this far northern area. Perhaps the most compelling footage is of the melting permafrost. This is an important documentary for policy makers and for all Canadians about the impacts of climate change in our own

back yard. Kindly donated by the International Institute for Sustainable Development

Stepping Lightly on the Earth, by Mark Burch, New Society Publishers. Mark's new book extends his thinking about and practice of voluntary simplicity to the planet as a whole. This effort elaborates substantially on his first book adding a somewhat more politicized point of view. Its a stimulating read which will reaffirm your own overtures into simple living.

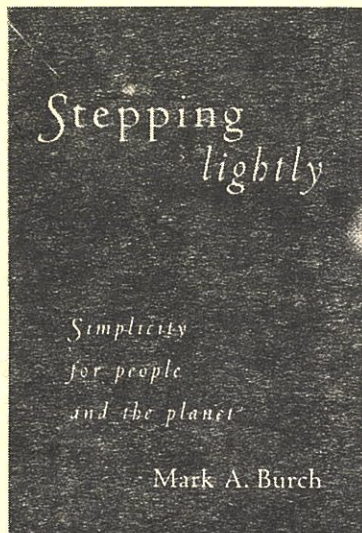
Natural Capitalism, Creating the Next Industrial Revolution by Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins and L. Hunter Lovins, Little Brown and Company. Natural Capitalism recognizes the critical interdependency between the production and use of human-made capital and the maintenance and supply of natural capital. And not a moment too soon! It does so by introducing four central strategies: 1) radical resource productivity; biomimicry; service and flow economy; and investment in natural capital.

The authors introduce fascinating examples of these strategies transforming industries around the world. Three strong reasons to read this book: 1) it builds on Paul Hawken's workable vision put forward in *The Ecology of Commerce*; 2) it gives the reader immense hope for human enterprise into the future; and 3) you'll learn why Mayor Glen Murray was extolling its virtues at the same time as unveiling his green strategy for our own little piece of the planet.

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