

Genetically Engineered Crops and Participatory Research Producers, Pundits and Paradigms

By Ian Mauro, Environmental Science Masters Candidate, University of Manitoba

"Any study of paradigm-directed or of paradigm-shattering research must begin by locating the responsible group or groups", Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 1962

This summer, while conducting my Masters research on the impacts of GE crops on farmers, rural communities and the environment, I found myself in Toronto, of all places, gaining perspective on the groups driving the genetically engineered (GE) crop debate. During this first week of June 2002, two opposing conferences took place, discussing biotechnology and the future of life. Unaware, most Torontonians sat on their patios, while farmers around the world worked their fields.

"There is absolutely no real serious environmental negative impact that has occurred to date from the introduction of 50 million hectares ... of farmland which are now planted to GM crops", Patrick Moore, co-founder of Greenpeace, 2002

The Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) was holding their annual convention, a gathering of over 14,000 people from over 50 countries, the largest conference of its kind on the planet. The most powerful pharmaceutical, chemical and seed companies were all under one roof to display the latest trends in life sciences. The event was primarily a madhouse of suits, ties, security and jargon on technology, with very little discussion about the broader social, political and ecological implications of GE.

Token lecture not a genuine debate

A media brunch with keynote speaker Patrick Moore, one of the founders of Greenpeace, was the only discussion on the environmental effects of GE. It was a token lecture, designed more for public relations purposes, than genuine debate. Moore was there to explicitly dispel growing concern about the environmental risks of GE crops and hype the benefits.

The conference goes primarily focused discussions on developing marketable products with their technology. An interesting example: transgenic goats spliced with spider genes that are able to produce a polymer in their milk, which can be refined into "spider silk", a material stronger than steel used for bullet proof clothing.

Grassroots gathering against GE

"You know what [Europeans] say about GMOs? If you want to find out whether they're dangerous or not, just watch the Canadians, they're doing the experiment for us! We have been involved in a massive experiment for over 5 years now, GMOs are in the food stream and we've never given our consent!", David Suzuki, Geneticist and Environmental Activist, 2002



Greg Goldsborough is worried about unanticipated long-term impacts of his GE crops. Photo by Jim Sanders

In a downtown park, hours after Patrick Moore finished his presentation, David Suzuki took to the podium as the keynote speaker for the *Biodevastation: Grassroots Gathering Against Genetic Engineering* conference. A diversity of people, street theatre groups and free organic food filled the sunny venue. Suzuki emphasized that the science of GE is still its infancy, and that it is way too early to be growing these crops on a commercial scale.

Suzuki's speech was the finale to the three day counter conference, held annually, in whatever North American city BIO's meeting is in. This gathering, sponsored by NGOs, brings together well-known environmental thinkers (Vandana Shiva, Brewster Kneen, Brian Tokar, etc) and the public to discuss the effects of GE technology on society and the environment.

Ruthlessly anti-GMO

It was an encouraging space to learn about the risks of the technology. The gathering was, however, ruthlessly anti-biotech, unwilling to concede that there might be benefits associated with GE.

"It works on both sides: You have the extreme groups on the anti-GMO, you also have big business which I don't trust all the time or ever, telling you something else on the other side; and we're stuck in the middle", Greg Goldsborough, Manitoba Farmer, 2002

Out of the big city, back in my home province, I find myself face to face with the reality of the situation—walk-

see "Producers, Pundits and Paradigms" on page 8 ►

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Hampers, Hope to Inner City L.I.T.E. Christmas Campaign

L.I.T.E. (Local Investment Toward
Employment), is a non-profit group
dedicated to community economic de-
velopment in Winnipeg's inner city.

L.I.T.E. subscribes to the
principle that the use of
locally produced goods
and services will gener-
ate employment and op-
portunities for inner-city
residents, leading to
neighbourhood stability,
a healthier environment
and human dignity. To
quote from a recent

L.I.T.E. brochure, "A healthy (local)
economy is needed to create jobs and
reduce dependence on outside assist-
ance. When money is circulated in the
community, everyone benefits".

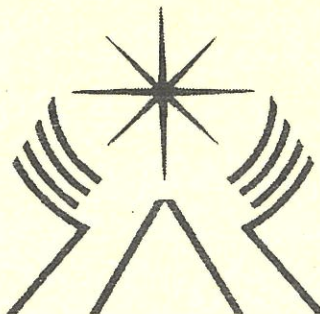
To that end, every Christmas season
L.I.T.E. collects donations to purchase

hamper supplies from community-
based businesses, and delivers the sup-
plies to the Christmas Cheer Board for
distribution. Businesses include

Neechi Foods, Andrews
Street Catering, and the
Northern Star Workers'
Co-operative, among
others. You can support
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holiday purchases at
these stores, or make a
donation at any Winni-
peg credit union. Money donated to

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ner-city economic development, youth
programs and housing renovation.

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Ave., Winnipeg, R2W 2M6, Phone (204)
942-8578, E-mail: lite@mts.net, or visit
their website at www.lite.mb.ca.



Thanks to Our Volunteers!

Our warmest thanks go to each of
the following people who have volun-
teered for us over the past year!

JK Bridgman, Blanche Denechezhe,
Kate Dykman, Sylvie Hebert, Michael
Foth, Lori Macri and Tina Portman.

Eco-Erratum

The remarkable photograph of a
Great Grey Owl which appeared on
page 2 of the September/October is-

sue (volume 12, issue 4) should have
been credited to Ian Ward. Our sin-
cerest apologies for the omission.

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How protected are Provincial Park reserves? Preserving the Manigotogan River

By Ron Thiessen, Western Canada Wilderness Committee

This past September was the deadline for decisions on the first group of Manitoba's park reserves. Caribou River and the Trappist Monastery park reserves were officially pronounced new provincial parks while the other four, East Paint Lake, Amisk, South Atikaki, and Manigotogan River saw their incomplete consultation and review processes extended beyond the legislated deadline.

Park reserves are a Filmon government creation that place chosen areas in an evaluation and consultation process that involves the public, First Nations, and industry. The goal of this process is to design and commit to a permanent designation—this can range from full protection to full availability for industrial practices such as clearcut logging and mining operations. Options also exist for the establishment of multi-purpose areas that allow for combinations of wilderness preservation, industrial, heritage, and recreational uses.

The Western Canada Wilderness Committee has actively campaigned for the last two years to see the Manigotogan River park reserve completely and permanently protected. The Committee is also striving to expand its boundaries from the presently meager 250-meter buffer to 2.5 km on each side of this magnificent waterway. This will ensure the ecological health of the river and surrounding area for wildlife and traditional uses while maintaining it as Manitoba's most accessible premier canoe route.

Rich in boreal wildlife

The Manigotogan River flows northwesterly from Nopiming Provincial Park and empties into the east side of Lake Winnipeg across from Hecla Island (see map). It's a spectacular ex-

ample of what the Canadian Shield is famous for—towering pines, cascading waterfalls, and rich with boreal creatures such as the threatened woodland caribou, owls, fox, moose, a variety of songbirds, otters, and eagles.

In July of 2002, the Wilderness Committee began distribution of 10,000 postcard mailers designed to allow individuals to conveniently express themselves to government on the future of the Manigotogan River park reserve. Coupled with an internet e-mail campaign, the Manitoba government has seen over 1000 submissions from the Canadian public indicating

their desire to see this precious representation of our natural heritage saved for future generations.

With a 5-year extension of the Manigotogan's consultation and review process now set firmly in place, the Wilderness Committee is campaigning for a legislated move that will change the current recreational development Land Use Category (LUC) to backcountry. This classification change will provide appropriate and concrete protection against all industrial activity within the park

reserve's boundaries during the length of the extended consultation period. If the park reserve lingers in the misleading recreational development LUC, it will remain available and tempting for industrial activity such as mining and logging operations. If the Manitoba government is serious about conducting a fair land use planning process, legislation must be put in place to safeguard the park reserve from industrial developments while the study and consultations are in progress. You can't develop first, and plan later!

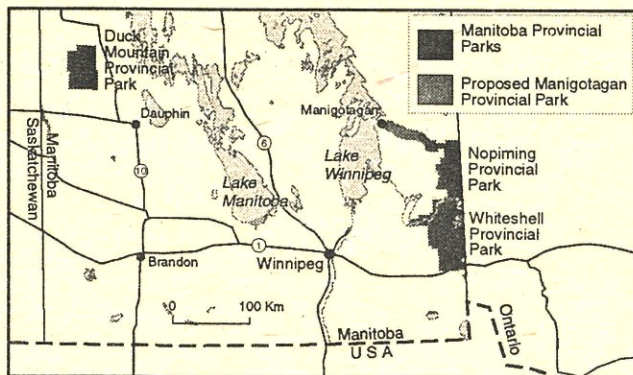
Tripling the boundary

Good news for the Manigotogan recently arrived when Gary Doer announced a great step in the right direction, "We are committed to protecting this spectacular river. We will consult with local First Nations, and communities and stakeholders as we work towards tripling the current 250-metre boundary on each side of this popular canoe route."

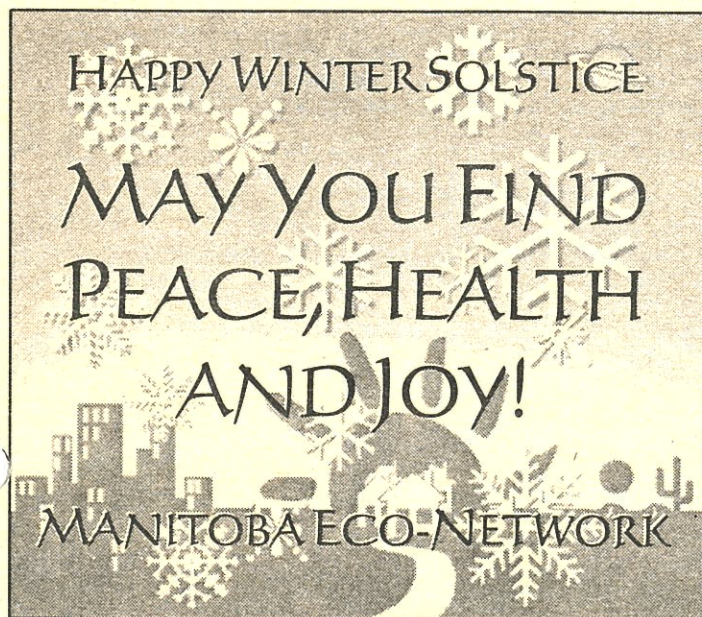
Following the premier's declaration, the Wilderness Committee immediately designed a new e-mailer that commends Gary Doer for his words while encouraging him to act on them by taking the necessary steps to guarantee the long-term health of the Manigotogan River. This means full, permanent protection from all industrial exploitation plus a 10-fold expansion of the boundaries to ensure that 2.5 kilometres are protected on each bank.

For those who wish to express their opinion to the Manitoba government regarding the Manigotogan river, you can connect to www.wildernesscommittee.mb.ca/manigotogan.htm#ballot to conveniently fill-in the on-line ballots. Every request for preservation brings us one step closer to saving the Manigotogan!

ECO



The Manigotogan River needs a 2.5 kilometre buffer zone to protect the river and area from extraction industries.



What's Happening

Sunday, December 15: Manitoba Naturalists Society Winnipeg Christmas Bird Count. Call Rudolf Koes for more information at 661-0763.

January 6: Photography of Birds with Robert Taylor. A description of techniques and equipment, with examples and stories from experience across Canada, East Africa and the Galapagos. \$2 for Manitoba Naturalist Society members, \$4 for non-members. Contact 943-9029 for more information.

Early January: Monthly meeting of HogWatch MB in Portage la Prairie. Contact Glen Koroluk at (204) 947-3082 for details.

January 15-17, 2003: Twentieth Annual Red River Basin Land and Water International Summit Conference - Watershed Management: Time for a Unified Voice. The Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg, Manitoba. For more information visit www.reddriverbasincommission.org or call (204) 982-7250.

February 18th, 2003: Freshwater Forum, at the Winnipeg Convention Centre. A one-day conference on the status of Manitoba's fresh water resources, presented by the Manitoba Clean Environment Commission and the Freshwater Institute. For more information, contact Rory Grewar at (204) 945-7091.

Schedule for Winnipeg Waste Water System Review

The Manitoba Clean Environment Commission has released the public hearing schedule to review the current operation and future upgrading of the City of Winnipeg waste water collection and treatment systems.

The hearings will examine a number of issues including system capabilities for preventing discharges of untreated sewage during malfunctions, environmentally appropriate limits of materials in effluent, current and planned effectiveness of the systems in treating waste water to achieve the discharge limits, adequacy of system upgrading plans and schedule and adequacy of processes being followed in reviewing those plans and schedules.

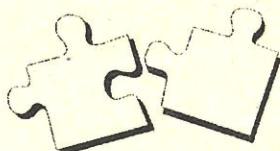
Detailed information, including relevant background studies, to assist participants in preparing their submissions for the hearings, will be made available through the province's Public Registry.

Times and Locations:

Winnipeg, Jan. 20, 21 and (if necessary) 22; Winnipeg Convention Centre, 375 York Ave.; 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. & 7:00 - 10:00 p.m. (Jan. 20 & 21), 9:00 a.m. (Jan. 22). Simultaneous French language translation service available.

Selkirk, Jan. 27 and (if necessary) 28; Selkirk Banquet and Conference Centre, 168 Main St.; 7:00 - 10:00 p.m. (Jan. 27), 9:00 a.m. (Jan. 28)

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Our Food, Our Health, Our Future: Making Manitoba Food-Secure

By Anne Lindsey

Organic Agriculture and Food Security—it may sound like a strange marriage. After all, isn't 'food security' about getting enough to eat—in other words, poverty? And isn't 'organic' an elite food choice available only to the well-to-do? How can these topics be discussed in the same sentence?

That's just what's happening more and more often all over the world as people realize that food security means much more than a visit to the food bank, and that conventional agriculture is increasingly under pressure to meet the varying demands of increased food production, healthy and safe environmental practices, and the sustainable livelihoods of farmers and rural communities.

Conference on food security

Early in the New Year, food security and organics will be the subject of a gathering and conference in Winnipeg. *Our Food, Our Health, Our Future: Making Manitoba Food-Secure* will be the fourth iteration of the successful Manitoba Organics conferences co-sponsored by the Eco-Network, Organic Food Council of Manitoba, U of W Students Association, and others.

It's a natural evolution for the Organic Food Council, whose vision includes all people having access to safe and sustainably produced food. And it makes sense to people like David Northcott, the Executive Director of Winnipeg Harvest, too. After all, he says, "enough food" is obviously a priority for low-income earners and food bank users, but these folks are just as interested as the rest of the population in healthy food choices and local accessibility.

In April of this year, the Organic conference groups came together with a broader coalition including Winnipeg Harvest, West Broadway Development Corporation, Klinik, and Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives to consider the dimensions of food security in Manitoba. Rod Macrae, Co-ordinator of Toronto's Food Policy Council, and an authority on Canadian organic agriculture policy facilitated the meeting. Macrae says more people need to see themselves in the food security picture, and one way to paint that picture for a larger audience is to discuss the indicators of food insecurity in Canada.

Most know little about growing food

For example, we only have to consider how far most of our food travels, how many producers are being forced to leave the land, the staggering numbers of people who are using food banks, and how little most of us know about growing and preparing food, to realize that food security is illusory, even in this land of plenty. Outside of the grain trade, according to Macrae, Canada is a net importer of food, and Ontario alone has a 'food deficit' of \$3 to 4 billion per year.

And the issue goes far beyond southern Canada. For millions of subsistence farmers, security depends on the right and ability to save seed from the harvest for next year's planting—a practice surviving from the earliest forays in food produc-

tion, and one that is threatened by the patenting of genetically-engineered seeds. For Northern residents, wild-crafted and country foods, free of contamination from long-distance transport of toxics such as persistent pesticides and heavy metals, are essential for physical and cultural sustenance.

Food production in jeopardy

The modern concentration of agriculture in the hands of giant multi-national agri-business corporations, vertically-integrated to control every step from planting to retailing, threatens our ability to feed ourselves, and food production the world over is in jeopardy with the looming impacts of climate change.

So, what is needed to make Manitoba more food-secure? There were several outcomes from the April meeting. The group agreed that more co-operative and inter-agency work was both possible and essential to build a solid constituency for food security in this province. It was proposed that a part-time staff person could be housed with one of the participating groups, to help co-ordinate future Food Secure efforts. (This hasn't happened yet, but an electronic list serv exists to share info).

Developing a Community Garden/Food Source Network was another sug-

gestion. Utilizing tools like the OFCM Guide to Organic Food in Manitoba, this would provide direct links between producers and consumers, notice of farmers' market opportunities and so on, as well as provide a resource network for groups involved in urban food production, such as community gardens. Jonah Clark and Kreesta Doucette created a Food Secure electronic database in support of this goal. OFCM committed to explore possibilities for secure winter storage of locally-grown organic root crops and products such as cabbage, to encourage higher local production levels for winter markets and distribution. This research is currently underway.

Co-operative initiatives

A particularly exciting initiative was the co-operative effort between Dan and Wilma Wiens, organic farmers in Ste. Adolphe, and the Good Food Club initiative at West Broadway Development Corp. Members of the club (inner-city residents, many of whom are on very low incomes) worked over the summer on land allocated by the farm to grow organic vegetables, which then came back into the community via the competitively-priced 'veggie van' and a 'community café'.

Finally, it was decided to expand the Organic Food Conference to include the broader issues of food security. Planning is underway now for an event that will feature a free community feast of Manitoba-grown organic foods, cooked by the Good Food Club, at the Thunderbird House on the evening of February 28. The evening will include a keynote speaker, the story of



Illustration by Stephen Jackson

see "Food Security ..." on page 9 ►

A profile of potters Dave Krindle and Karen Taylor Artists Inspired by Love of Earth

By Steve Rauh

The media would have us believe that the greatest gift of the holiday season is the year-end surge of the GNP. But the greatest gift is, really, the opportunity to be reflective; reflective about the meaning of our lives and reflective about how we might improve the well being of our communities.

The work and art of two Winnipeg potters, Karen Taylor and Dave Krindle offered me a moment of hopeful reflection. They have sought to incorporate an environmental ethic throughout all aspects of their work and art.

Dave is one of Manitoba's premier potters. He has been creating and selling his pottery for 20 years. He has also taken in apprentices to help them learn the millennia old craft of pottery. Karen was Dave's apprentice but is now a full studio partner, but as is true in the relationship of apprentice and mentor, she is also part leader and part teacher.

While at his studio I interviewed Dave to learn more about the environmental aspects and cultural values of his and Karen's work. What follows are his words interspersed with some of my comments and questions.

Could you explain your recycling practices?

In our work, we try to recycle as much clay as we can, our own clay and clay from other potters that would be discarded. We soak down our unfired clay scrap for reuse. The clay that is contaminated is used as construction material on the outside of kilns and things like that.

We are careful not to allow our dirt and minerals to go down the drain. We let our water sit, pour off the clean water and reuse it, and the sediment at the bottom is reused for construction material. We burn wood slabs rather than using petroleum products because wood is a renewable source. And we try to limit the size of our projects to as modest as they can be and still work. Some of them get large by their nature, but we are not attempting to overpower people. We are far more interested in persuasion in the work.

Much of the work to make our studio as sustainable as it can be, has been spearheaded by Karen Taylor, my studio partner, who has brought in a lot of the studio methods. Between the two of us we hope we can continue this, get better as the years go on, share the knowledge with other potters and learn from other potters too. It is very important that in each person's endeavors they take a look and determine how they can make changes. The changes may be very small, but that doesn't mean they are unimportant.

Dave also explained that up to half of their clay is recycled. All of Karen Taylor's pottery is formed with recycled clay. It is more labor intensive to recycle clay, but it saves money and energy. Potters clay is brought in from Alberta, Ontario and California.

Dave went on to describe that the industry standards regulating toxic material go unmonitored in most artists' studios so the use of heavy metals and other toxics are not as tightly controlled as they ought to be. He and Karen avoid the use of refined glazes that include heavy metals such as cadmium. They carefully dry any waste products from their studio so that no contaminants will go down the drain into the river systems.

In our glazes, we tend to use local materials as much as we can—wood ash, local earth.

These form the basis of some very beautiful and original glazes. Because one is using local materials, the glazes are going to come out different in Manitoba than they would elsewhere; the ashes and earth are a little different than elsewhere. The net result is something that is more expressive of place.

Can you tell me how your work as an artist contributes to the cultural shift needed to preserve the earth?

I believe that we have grown up with North American values; bigger is better, more is better, fame is better than quietness, progress is better than steady state. We see ourselves always and ever advancing and wanting more. Things always have to be better than before. The potters of 3000 years ago, though, were as smart and as creative as I am. In the arts, there is no real progress in terms of ideas, each person tries to put their heart and soul into their work. The technological tools might change, but the art isn't any better or worse, it is simply different.

That a person's work is expressive of their heart and soul is essential to a steady state society?

For me that is very true, to try to work out a way that I can do my work, be satisfied with my

work and not hurt the earth. A modern person must take into account modern realities, which to me means adapting to the realities of limited resources, high population and the terrible demands on the earth. How are we going to change it? So, I try in small ways to do that.

What brought me here, in terms of this belief, was a love of the bush. I found I love being there; I love how it made me feel as a person. I didn't want to tear it down. I wanted to express the pleasure it gave me.



Karen Taylor and Dave Krindle, displaying examples of their recycled clay pottery. Photo by Dan Moroz

In our work, we try to recycle as much clay as we can, our own clay and clay from other potters that would be discarded

Somehow that became what I wanted to express in my work, and doing so took me back into using more natural materials, learning the traditional, the old ways, the pre-industrial ways of doing pottery. It is very difficult to do that. There is a lot to learn and we don't have the community structure and knowledge that indigenous traditions had.

You said that you wanted to work in ways that did not hurt the earth. Can we also do work that can enrich the earth and our lives?

I truly believe that. I believe that artists choose materials, they choose ways of working, and they choose subject material. In each of these areas, they can choose materials, which cost less of the earth. They can use less refined materials. They can find ways of working that use less energy and leave a lighter footprint. And in their work they can deal with some of the ideas that the modern environmental movement has brought to the fore, our place in nature, our place in the universe, our place as stewards of our communities and our land and of the earth.

One of the things pottery has taught me is how wonderful were the old folks 3000 years ago and the stuff they did, how much was in there. I have gained a love of tradition and a love of the work of the past. I don't have to escape from the past to

make good stuff, what I have to do is learn from it.

And the diversity of work throughout the world, the very many small ways that people have done things, is a constant inspiration. So you end up wanting to keep the beauty of the land, the beauty of small groups of people doing wonderful creative things, and somehow in your own work you want to be part of that, you don't want to be part of the overarching empire, so much, as you do want to be just some other humans

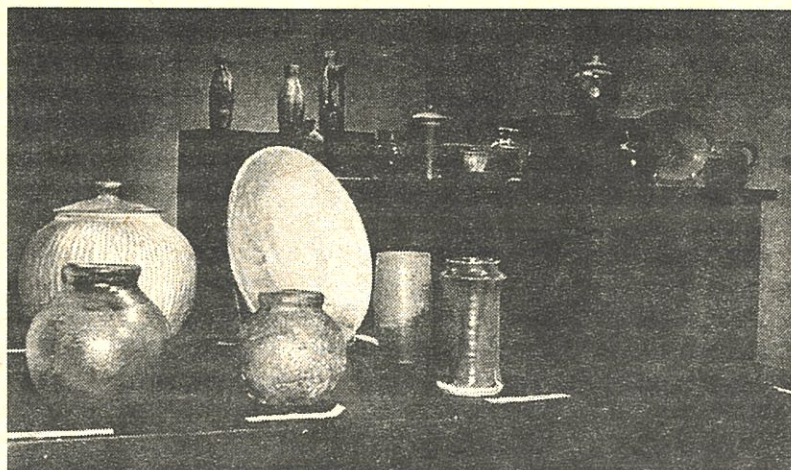
rootin' around on the face of the earth. I see myself that way, and I think that is a revolutionary idea because it plays against social hierarchy.

So, if we are looking at somebody who takes the fruits of the earth and makes beautiful food out of it, they are just as important as somebody else. You get a sense of humility

about work and you start thinking, "I don't have to work so big, I don't have to make so many things. I want my work to be good, and I want to be for real. Don't make it more grandiose than required." So at that point, you start changing the aesthetic away from big and grandiose, where louder is better, to what I call for lack of a better term, coin of the realm. Travelers used to bite the coin to see if it was made of real gold—something that has some substance to it. I want each pot I make to connect a person back to the stuff of the world, the physical facts of life.

People have been making clay vessels for many generations. Clay as a substance speaks of its ancient earthly origins and records the marks of the potter in the fire. In a time when we live in carefully regulated environments, when our work is increasingly virtual, an object of earth shaped by a human hand and completed by fire can link us to our roots.

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Traditional, pre-industrial pottery techniques tend to use less refined material and less energy. Photo by Dan Moroz



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Producers, Pundits and Paradigms

... continued from page 1

ing with a farmer through his field of transgenic canola. We are talking about his experiences as a producer of GMOs—the risks and benefits—and his opinions and perceptions of the overall debate.

Greg Goldsborough, like many farmers, feels trapped by the enormity of the issue. On his farm, benefits are being realized by using GE canola, due mostly to better and easier weed control (the crop has a gene spliced into it making it herbicide resistant). However, he is worried about long-term unanticipated impacts.

Short-term agronomic and economic benefits are the primary reasons for rapid adoption of GE crops by farmers. However, since their introduction in 1996, genetic pollution—or unwanted contamination of GE pollen and/or seed resulting in herbicide resistant plant populations—is becoming a major issue.

Legal issues from unwanted contamination

The legalities and politics of growing GE canola is also a problem. I spoke with Percy Schmeiser—the first farmer in the world to be sued by Monsanto for patent infringement—about his case. He expressed his concern that corporations could sue individual farmers even though the technology is obviously out of control.

"In the fall of 2000, Statistics Canada reported there were 22,100 fewer farmers on the Prairies than there had been the year before", Ingeborg Boyens, Another Season's Promise, 2001

Producers bear most of the immediate risks and benefits associated with food production, and by implication, GE crops. Given the current economic climate on the prairies, it places them in a make or break situation.

Farming today comparable to 1930s

Farming in Canada today is comparable to the depression of the 1930s. The headlines read of a 'farm crisis', producers are leaving the land in record numbers, ghost towns are proliferating, Canadian traditions are being lost. Any technology that promises to affect a farmer's bottom line, in this time of rural uncertainty, is indeed powerful.

So how do GE crops size up overall? Are they valuable for farmers as a whole? What are the social, economic and environmental risks? How does one gauge this?

"The farmer's knowledge is totally ignored. It's what the companies want to do to the farmer, that they are testing, it's not what the farmer wants to have done", Pat Mooney, ETC Group, 2002

Local and experience-based knowledge of farmers is extremely valuable for monitoring and assessing the risks and benefits of GE crops. As stewards of the land, producers see first hand the efficacy and impacts of the technology; yet, they have almost entirely been left out of the dialogue on the impacts of GE crops.



Percy Schmeiser is the first farmer to be sued by Monsanto for GE crop patent infringement. Photo by Ian Mauro

Participatory risk assessment—whereby farmers are consulted and worked with on their farms—represents the cornerstone of our research. Over the past two years, I have been working with Stéphane McLachlan, at the University of Manitoba. We have been consulting with producers across Canada, through individual and group interviews, in order to better understand their experiences and opinions. This data will be used to guide further on farm ecological monitoring, and ultimately, all of the data will be mapped spatially using remote sensing and geographic information systems (GIS).

Our interviews have also been recorded on video—in a collaboration with Winnipeg production company DWD—and are being turned into a feature length farmer-focused documentary video on the impacts of GE crops on farmers, environment and rural communities. The anticipated release date will be sometime in the New Year.

The idea that resource providers have tremendous insight on the impacts may seem obvious, however, it is hardly ever documented. The conventional research paradigm for assessing risk of GE products excludes non-expert knowledge, in favor of models based on small-scale manipulative experiments. Our results are people-rather than technology-focused and show that the cumulative experiences of farmers and rural communities are one of the most important aspects of this real world, unplanned experiment that is taking place on the Canadian prairies.

"Truth is lived, not taught", Herman Hesse, Magister Ludi, 1969

If society is to advance the GE food issue in an honest and meaningful way, we should avoid partisan extremism, instead locating the debate with those who understand it, live it, and are most immediately impacted by it. This means listening to our farmers.

Producer participation in research

Experts in industry, academia and governments might consider conducting research on agriculture and GE technology with the meaningful participation of all producers and other stakeholders. This is the only way that producers—and society as a whole—will get appropriate and responsible research and technological innovation. Anything less will only perpetuate the acrimonious debate at the expense of those who can least afford it, as was observed in Toronto this summer.

Hype and rhetoric exist on both sides of the GE issue. Farmers, unlike most urban residents, where the debate is located, are connected to the land and have a grounded and largely unheard perspective. As one of the many farmers I interviewed this summer told me, "This issue isn't black or white, the gold is in the grey".

Eco

Local Resources for Community Mapping

By Liz Dykman and Larry Laliberte, Manitoba Eco-Network

Larry Laliberté and Liz Dykman made a presentation about community mapping to the Science Teachers Association of Manitoba SAG conference this fall. They described how community mapping can provide a means of empowering citizens to learn more about their local environment.

Why make a map of our community? Community mapping is a way to gain a better understanding of the environmental issues in our neighbourhoods by expressing complex environmental factors in a visual way. Making a picture of the current state, or a future vision, of our environment makes the issues more immediate and can help to develop a sense of stewardship for our surroundings.

Barefoot cartography

Information that can be presented in a spatial way can be compiled from a huge number of sources. And we don't have to rely on official data sources either. We can gather our own data as "barefoot cartographers". Every map presents the world from a certain perspective. Making our own maps allows us to show how WE view our environment.

Examples of themes for our community map might be all the green spaces in our neighbourhood (or a plan for future green spaces), community garden plots, cycle-friendly routes or a map of naturalized habitat areas.

A mapping project need not involve anything more complicated than hand drawing significant environmental features on a base map of the area. There are several local sources for maps that could be used as a base for a community mapping project. One source is the City of Winnipeg Planning, Property and Development Department. For about 5 bucks you can get a custom 11 X 17 map of any area in the city. See <http://www.city.winnipeg.mb.ca/ppd/maps.stm>.

Air photos and topographic maps, which are also very useful in mapping, can be obtained at Manitoba Conservation, Geomatics Branch and for detailed historic maps of Winnipeg, visit the Provincial Archives at 200 Vaughn St.

Web Resources

Greenmap Places in Winnipeg:

www.arch.umanitoba.ca/greenmap/pages/wpgsites10.html

Designed by the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Manitoba, the website provides a listing of all things 'green' in Winnipeg. The layout is organized by categories, such as Culture and Design, Information and Social Resources, Nature:

Fauna and Flora, Toxic Spots etc., and each main topical area is then further broken down into sub-headings that contain descriptions and links to more information. For example, under the fauna and flora section are links to organizations like the Manitoba Naturalists Society as well as information on special areas and projects within the city like the Friends of Bruce Park. There are also many pages, often the result of student research, that provide an extended description and analysis of "green places" in Winnipeg through the use of informational text, photos and references for further study.

Finally, what will continue to make the website useful for community mapping, beyond its current state as an environmental directory for the city, will be the ability of individuals and groups to improve on and add new material, especially maps, to the website.

Urban Habitat Stewardship Network:

www.gatewest.net/~cwhp/

The network, listed under the category *Nature: fauna*, sub-heading, *significant habitat*, in the Greenmap Places in Winnipeg website, consists of various groups working together for the promotion, preservation and restoration of local wildlife habitat. Through the network's website, users can access descriptions and data (most of it downloadable) related to habitat sites, habitat enhancement and restoration projects in Winnipeg and the surrounding areas.

The website provides easy access to this information through a clickable map of Winnipeg that is divided into sections. Each of these sections allows users to access a more detailed map showing the locations of habitat sites or restoration projects along with a table that lists and organizes the projects into five habitat types; Prairie, Aspen, Oak, Riverbottom Forest and Wetland. Once in a particular project, users are provided with an overview of the area accompanied by a habitat quality assessment which includes an overall rank of the site along with measures of the faunal and floral diversity, aesthetics, historical value, public usage and potential risks, just to name a few.

Also provided at the project level is a detailed species list that includes the common and family names. Finally, the Urban Habitat Stewardship Resource Network provides information and guidance for users to start their own habitat project.

If you want more information on community mapping, contact the Alice Chambers Memorial Library at (204) 947-6511 or mbeconet@mts.net.

ECO

Food Security Conference

... continued from page 5

the Food Club efforts over the summer, and opportunities for those present to share their own stories and ideas for developing food security. This will be followed by a full day of speakers and workshops covering 5 'streams' of food security and organic agriculture topics, at the Bulman Students' Centre, University of Winnipeg on Saturday, March 1st.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives is undertaking

the co-ordination of the event. For more information about the Conference, please contact Harold Schuster at CCPA, 927-3200, or harold@policyalternatives.ca

To find out more about food banks, and for volunteer opportunities, check the Winnipeg Harvest website at www.xpressnet.com/harvest. To participate in the Food Secure list serv, contact Paul Chorney at West Broadway Development Corp., 784-1560.

ECO

Recent Boreal Conference Successful

By Susanne McCrea, Boreal Forest Network

"For our people, the boreal forest is not a campaign, not a destination and not a subject for study ... it is our home," said Chief John Miswagon of the Pimicikamak Cree Nation, addressing a standing-room-only crowd at the biannual, international *Forests of the Northern Lights Conference*, held at the University of Winnipeg, September 20th to 21st, 2002.

The two-part conference, co-hosted by the Taiga Rescue Network (TRN) and its North American affiliate, The Boreal Forest Network (BFN), was attended by environmental groups and indigenous peoples from the circumpolar taiga or boreal forest regions of the world.

Strong public attendance

Chief Miswagon, Elizabeth May (from the Sierra Club of Canada), climate change specialist Dr. David Schindler and Alexey Yaroshenko of Greenpeace Russia were the keynote speakers, who made presentations on an inspiring mix of topics relevant to the boreal forest. The main themes of the conference were, Traditional Knowledge, Climate Change, Identifying and Protecting Boreal Forest, and Competing to Coexisting: Shifting our Views on Economic and Spiritual Values. Panel discussions followed to expand on each of these topic areas. About 300 people attended at the University portion of the conference, which was open to the public.

A group of 100 activists, non-profit organizations and indigenous peoples spent the next four days at strategy sessions, at the Wilderness Edge Retreat Centre, in Pinawa. The member

groups of the TRN and BFN met to share experiences, network and develop action plans. Several resolutions were adopted.

Among those was a resolution by participating groups to call upon the governments of all boreal forest nations to fulfill commitments to strengthen the rights of indigenous peoples. A resolution was also adopted to support the Pimicikamak Cree people in their effort to achieve recovery of lands and people affected by Manitoba Hydro's industrial projects.

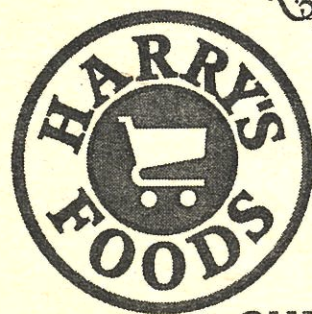
The Network will focus attention on protection of old growth northern forests and other high conservation value northern forests, and the protection and maintenance of biodiversity in boreal forest eco-systems. This includes the restoration of biodiversity in second growth forests, degraded and deforested lands. It will also work towards the development of sustainable forestry practices and draft specific criteria for the sustainable use of boreal forests. Other mandates of the organization are the prevention of destructive practices that lead to pollution and industrial exploitation, and protection and maintenance of the cultural values of local and indigenous peoples.

This year's conference was well attended, involved lively debate, and provided an opportunity for a great exchange of information and contacts among member groups.

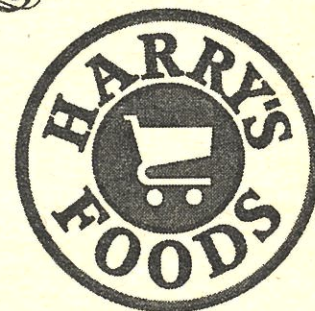
The seventh biannual meeting of the Taiga Rescue Network will be held in the Russian Far East, in 2004.

For further info, or to join the Boreal Forest Network, visit their websites at Borealnet.org or Taigarecue.org.

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Don't Stand About Idling

By Rachel Van Caesele

It's something you do everyday. Picking up the kids from school/music lessons/hockey practice, they are taking a few extra minutes. No problem. You switch on the hazard lights and wait, engine idling. Or maybe you are totally ravenous. Problem is, everyone else seems to be as well. But hey, it's a fast food drive-thru. In just a few minutes, you'll have a grease-stained paper bag in hand and bean burrito in mouth. You sit in your car in the line-up, listening to music, engine idling.

Next time you are sitting around in your idling car, count to ten. If whatever you're waiting for has not arrived (the caboose, your perpetually late friend, a veggie burger with extra pickles) turn the engine OFF. When you idle your vehicle for more than 10 seconds, you burn more fuel than it would take to restart your engine.

Save \$70 each year

As Canadians, we idle our vehicles an average of five to 10 minutes a day. It wastes approximately 100 litres of gas a year. I don't know about you, but I get pretty excited when gas prices drop to a shockingly low 55 cents a litre for two days. It is usually around 70 cents.

You can save \$70 a year by simply turning off your vehicle when you are going nowhere. Seventy dollars buys a whole lot of veggie burgers, with or without extra pickles.

Idling does more than waste money. It can make you sick. Burning fossil fuels like oil and gas produces emissions that aggravate existing heart and lung diseases, and cause respira-

tory illnesses. For example, two common tailpipe emissions - hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides - react to form ground-level ozone. Ozone irritates and inflames the respiratory tract. Do you know any one with asthma? (Better question: who doesn't know someone with asthma?) They'll thank you for not idling. Ground-level ozone has been implicated as a bronchoconstrictor, causing airways to shrink or close, precipitating deadly asthma attacks.

Reduced vehicle maintenance

But doesn't all that restarting harm the engine? No, that is a myth. In fact, idling is no good for an engine that was designed to MOVE the car. Here's why: An idling engine is not operating at its optimal temperature, meaning fuel combustion is incomplete. This leaves fuel residues that can condense on cylinder walls, where they contaminate oil and damage engine components such as spark plugs. When spark plugs are goosed up, fuel consumption increases by 4 to 5 percent. More money burned. Finally, idling can allow water to condense in the vehicle's exhaust, causing rust

in the exhaust system. As if the mean, salty streets of Winnipeg weren't enough to corrode your muffler to flaky brown bits.

If you need a bigger picture yet, think GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE. Vehicle emissions contribute to climate change. Transportation is the single largest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Canada. Although tailpipe emissions from vehicles are unavoidable if you have to drive, emissions from idling are totally unnecessary and easily prevented. If every driver of a light-duty vehicle in Canada avoided idling for just five minutes, it would prevent more than 4500 tonnes of CO₂ from entering the atmosphere.

Reducing GHG emissions

You can't switch on the news lately without hearing about the Kyoto Protocol. Whether Canada signs on or not, one thing remains certain—our lifestyles are having a major impact on the environment. We must reduce our GHG emissions, and we can start by changing our individual attitudes and behaviours. Each of us produces about 5 tonnes of CO₂ a year through unsustainable lifestyle choices. Here's an easy change to make: turn off your car at busy railway crossings. You are not going anywhere. Not idling is a simple way to help reach Canada's target of reducing GHG emissions to 6 percent below 1990 levels by the period 2008-2012.

Stick to the ten second rule. Ten seconds tick by and you still haven't moved? Shut the engine OFF. And don't be afraid to spread the word. Whenever you are in anyone's idling vehicle, I suggest dramatically counting down from ten as if you are a rocket scientist preparing for lift-off. Yes, they will look at you funny, but they certainly won't forget to shut down their engine next time they are idling their vehicle and you aren't within shouting distance.

Rachel Van Caesele works for Climate Change Connection. For more info about anti-idling and how climate change affects Manitobans, visit: www.climatechangeconnection.org. **ECO**

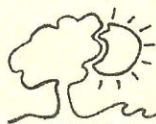


It's Time for Action!

We don't have to look far in our communities to see the need for environmental action.

Clean air, clean water, a clean environment and the preservation of our natural heritage is important to us, our children and future generations.

EcoAction 2000 is leading the way. Dynamic partnership and funding opportunities are open to non-profit groups in your community.



ecoACTION2000

1-800-665-7135 MB/SK

1-800-567-1570 AB/NWT/Nunavut

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/ecoaction>

Take action for a healthy environment



Canada

New Manitoba Eco-Network Member Groups

Social Planning Council of Winnipeg

The SPCW identifies social planning issues, develops and promotes policy, raises community awareness of social issues and serves as a link between the 3 levels of government and community neighbourhoods. Originally formed as the Community Welfare Council in 1919, the SPC looks for progressive solutions to issues including health services, child and family poverty, Aboriginal issues, a need for more coordinated planning, a breakdown in race relations, affordable housing and the rejuvenation of the Main Street area.

The Social Planning Council recognizes the links between the social and environmental issues that need to be addressed in order to foster healthy, equitable communities. Integration of social and environmental concerns is being undertaken through the formation of an environmental committee to advise SPC's board of directors. This is in response to the increasing impact of environmental degradation on children and low-income families. Areas of investigation for the committee may include: children's health, inner city environmental issues, food security, public transit, impact of the city on rural environments, and restoration of city green spaces.

Social Planning Council of Winnipeg

412 McDermot Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R3A 0A9

CONTACT: Wayne Helgason

ph: (204) 943-2561, fax (204) 942-3221

@spcw.mb.ca

www.spcw.mb.ca

International Erosion Control Association, Northern Plains Chapter

The Northern Plains Chapter of the IECA strives for discovery, collection, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge towards the attainment of effective and economical methods of erosion and sediment control. The chapter was formed in 1999 and includes North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

The IECA-NP holds educational events several times per year in rural and urban areas, bringing in experts from other regions. The organization also advocates for erosion control through conservation districts and municipalities, including the City of Winnipeg, working to stop loss of soil and enhance fish-bearing streams. The IECA-NP's parent organization publishes the magazine Erosion Control.

IECA-NP is available to give presentations on the topic of erosion control and operates an information resource line at (204) 475-1322. If you are interested in joining and/or volunteering for the organization, contact Mark Myrowich.

International Erosion Control Association, Northern Plains Chapter

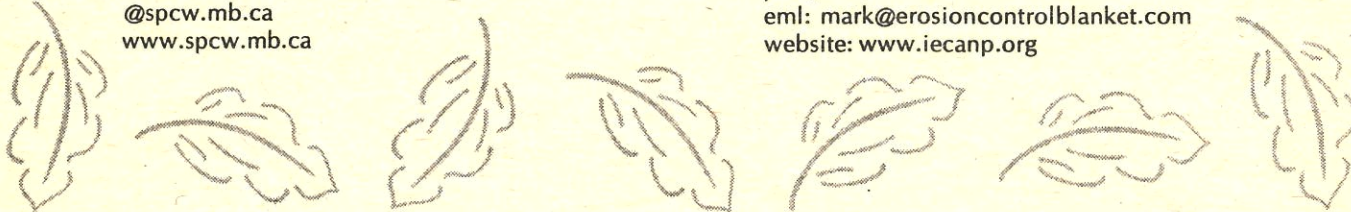
104 Trottier Bay, Winnipeg, MB, R3T 3Y5

CONTACT: Mark Myrowich

ph: (204)782-8813

eml: mark@erosioncontrolblanket.com

website: www.iecanp.org



The Manitoba Eco-Network

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

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

Enclosed is a cheque for:

\$25 Supporting member (individuals)

\$40 Group membership

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

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

[Charitable tax receipts available]

Total Amount enclosed _____

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

Name(s) _____ Group (if applicable) _____

Telephone # () _____ E-Mail _____

Mailing address _____ Postal Code _____

Area(s) of interest _____ Volunteers 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.

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

