

ECO-JOURNAL

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Wuskwatim Consultations: Where's Your Voice?

by Merrell-Ann Phare

Manitoba Hydro, and its proposed 33% partner, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (NCN), have filed their requests for the various necessary licenses and approvals with Manitoba Conservation and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to allow them to construct another hydroelectric development in northern Manitoba. The Wuskwatim Generating Station and associated transmission lines ("the Wuskwatim Proposals") have been in the planning stages for a number of years, and have generated extensive debate in the environmental and Aboriginal communities. Now that the license applications have been filed, a number of public participation and consultation processes have begun, each with its own purpose. There are at least four consultation processes in Manitoba regarding the Wuskwatim generating station and transmission lines.

Manitoba Hydro / NCN Consultation Process

Manitoba Hydro and NCN have been engaging in public consultations with northern Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities since September 2001. The general goals of these consultations are to ascertain the communities' issues and concerns, their perspective on alternatives to the projects, their specific concerns about the impacts of the Wuskwatim Proposals (as predicted by Manitoba Hydro), and then finally, their comments on the Environmental Impact Statement prepared by Manitoba Hydro and NCN.

NFA Consultation Process

The second process affects only the communities that signed the Northern Flood Agreement (NFA), that is, Nelson House (Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation), Norway House, Cross Lake (Pimicikamak), York Factory (Kitche-Waskahigan), and Split

Lake (Tataskweyak Cree Nation). The NFA is the agreement that provides the means to address the damages experienced by these Aboriginal communities in the last round of hydro-development in the 1970's. Section 9.2 of that agreement states that "Manitoba Hydro shall not make any decisions in respect to any such future developments unless and until a process of bona fide and meaningful consultation with the communities has taken place." This consultation is to ensure that the rights of these five communities are not further jeopardized by more Manitoba Hydro activities, such as implementation of the Wuskwatim Proposals.

CEC Hearing Process

The third consultation process is through the Clean Environment Commission (CEC) hearing process. The CEC has been instructed by the Minister for Manitoba Conservation to hold general public hearings (set for February 2003) on two main issues: the justification, need for and alternatives to the Wuskwatim Proposals; and the

potential environmental, socio-economic and cultural effects of the construction and operation of the Wuskwatim Proposals. Because most, if not all, of the negative impacts of Wuskwatim will be felt in the north, a large amount of the CEC's attention is being focused on ensuring that the voice of Aboriginal peoples is heard in what is certainly an unfamiliar process to them. The CEC managed to secure an unprecedented \$1.2 million in participant funding to allow both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal interests to intervene in the upcoming hearings. The CEC is supposed to recommend to the Minister whether Environment Act licenses should be issued to Manitoba Hydro and NCN for the Wuskwatim Proposals, and (if so) with what terms and conditions.

The hearings will largely be about reviewing the 18-binder Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that Manitoba Hydro and NCN submitted along with their license application. The EIS outlines their view of the potential environmental, social, and economic effects of the Wuskwatim Proposals. As well, these documents include an analysis of the "need for and alternatives to" the project, which attempts to explain whether Manitobans need more electricity (even if it is just for export), see "Wuskwatim ..." on page 8 ►



A meaningful consultation process is a legal requirement of the Northern Flood Agreement. Photo by Shaunna Morgan

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member groups.

In Memorium

The Eco-Network notes with sadness
the passing of our long-time member and
supporter, Kenneth Emberley.

Ken was known throughout the activ-
ist community in Winnipeg for his stead-
fast and tireless efforts to educate all of
us about a host of issues, and to lobby
every level of government for change.
Amongst his many areas of volunteer
work (or perhaps, more correctly, pas-
sions), Ken would list peace and disarm-
ament, labour issues, human rights,
ecology, international development, and
world history. And of course, in his spare
time, ballroom dancing.

Ken was extremely well-read, and gen-
erous with his materials. Many will re-
member him for his distribution of pho-
tocopied information at community
events. He donated many books to the
Eco-Centre Library over the years, and in
spite of declining health, was often found
here, pouring over new materials.

Ken was one of the first recipients of
the Manitoba Eco-Network Environmen-
tal Award. He will be missed.

A memorial service will be held at
Crescent Fort Rouge United Church, Fri-
day, October 10 at 2:00pm.

ECO

News from Resource Conservation Manitoba

Resource Conservation Manitoba is
building on the success of the Winnipeg
Commuter Challenge to launch climate
change initiatives with local workplaces
and schools.

The Commuter Chal-
lenge has become the
cornerstone event of
RCM's commitment to
encouraging Winnipeg
to take action on cli-
mate change. The 2003
Challenge marked the
first time Winnipeggers
finished with the high-
est participation among all Canadian cit-
ies! With just over 10,000 participants—
double the 5,000 who took part in 2002—
Winnipeg edged out Ottawa (9,598 par-
ticipants) and Vancouver (9,219 partici-
pants).

The Winnipeg Commuter Challenge
has truly been an evolution. "We started
the challenge in 2000, working with just

over 30 workplaces and roughly 1300
participants and have enjoyed exponen-
tial growth, reaching over 10,000 peo-
ple from over 150 workplaces and schools

in 2003", confirmed
Serge LaRoche, pro-
gram coordinator, Re-
source Conservation
Manitoba, who orga-
nizes the annual sustain-
able transportation
event.

Winnipeg's impres-
sive first place finish is
thanks to the commit-
ment of hundreds of individuals who
volunteer their time to coordinate the
event. "The enthusiasm and dedication
of school and workplace coordinators and
the Commuter challenge planning part-
ners are the reason the Challenge is so
successful in Winnipeg", explained
LaRoche. The Commuter Challenge

see "**Commuter ...**" on page 7 ►



WINNIPEG
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Commuter Challenge
2003

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John Sinclair, Resource Conservation Manitoba

Lise Smith, Living Prairie Museum

F.O.O.D. (Fresh Option Organic Delivery) Business Delivers Organic Produce

By Julie Fine

A few months back, over a cup of organic tea with a spoonful of local buckwheat honey, I sat down to talk with Marnie Feeleus of Fresh Option Organic Delivery (F.O.O.D) about her new business. Marnie and her husband Kevin offer a natural and organic food delivery service to homes, restaurants and health food stores. Their family business focuses on local produce and vegetarian items. Here are some snippets from our chat.

How did you come up with the idea to start F.O.O.D?

Kevin and I both have backgrounds as chefs and we thought we would open a restaurant. A series of lifestyle changes led us to this point. One of our goals was to create a family-based, small business that would give our son a sense of where his food came from. We saw a gap in the need for a distribution system that linked Manitoba organic growers with consumers, and from here, F.O.O.D. was born.

What does your service offer?

The main product is a weekly delivery of a fresh box containing a changing variety of organic fruits and vegetables. Each week the contents differ based on seasonal availability, price and what each household needs. In addition to the fresh box delivery, we offer a range of non-produce foods from our catalogue.

How does someone get started with F.O.O.D?

Anyone can sign up on-line at www.freshoption.ca or call our office at 474-2640. Your fresh box is delivered weekly to your door on a pre-arranged evening depending on what area of the city you live in. It comes in one of three sizes: small, medium and large. The photos on our website show the sizes and sample contents of what a box may contain in a typical week.

I have a few allergies, so I'm wondering if the contents of this box are completely set or can I make some substitutes?

When you sign up, you can customize your box by specifying your allergies, dislikes, as well as preferences for substitutes. The contents of the box vary seasonally and from week to week. You'll find a list of what is available on line at the beginning of each week and you can make one additional substitute as well.

Do you offer any suggestions about how to cook or prepare some of the foods included in the box?

Yes, each week, the box includes recipes, storage tips, related news/events and information about the benefits of buying organic and local products. Sometimes we include producer profiles and links to other web sites that are of interest to customers. If we add the occasional unusual vegetable or fruit, we include a recipe that will help you incorporate it into your

household menu. It's important to share ideas, promote healthy eating and good wholesome foods, by getting back to home cooking. We want to help people do this.

What about groceries other than fruits and vegetables, is this something that I can have delivered?

Yes, we're very excited about the wide ranges of Manitoba organic foods that we can offer, including freshly baked breads, fair trade coffee—roasted to order in Winnipeg, bulk grains, legumes, seeds and

flours. As well you can order from a full range of grocery items, including vegetarian cheese, dairy and meat alternatives, pasta, snacks, cereal, bulk staples, beverages, baking supplies, tofu, condiments and baby foods.

Having opened in April of 2003, what are some of the challenges you've encountered?

Well, we're definitely breaking new ground here in Manitoba and that hasn't been easy. In trying to source as much locally produced food as possible, we found there was a lack of ready-to-eat Manitoba produced foods. There is really no established system of distribution for locally produced organic food other than direct farm-gate sales, and now the Prairie Sun Organic Market. This means that growers are accustomed to exporting out of province and to the States and Europe in large amounts. Most of what is consumed organically here is imported. Essentially what happens is the primary crops are shipped out, someone else "value-adds" to the product, whether that means packaging or processing, and then we buy it back at an elevated cost.

What kinds of goals do you have for the future and where do you see your business taking you?

One dream is to bring organic food into the schools, especially by providing an educational element about why we should consume organic foods. I'd also consider expanding into the area of ready-to-eat Manitoba produced organic foods because in sourcing local products, I have become aware there are opportunities and gaps to be filled there.

F.O.O.D has a table at the Prairie Sun Organic Market and you'll see Marnie at other venues around the city.

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Checking out the F.O.O.D. display at the Prairie Sun Organic Market. Photo by Julie Fine

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What's Happening

Oct 4, 5—Visit Save Our Seine at the Community Booth in St. Vital Centre, (by Sears across from Appelt's Jewellery). Learn about SOS and the community's efforts to protect a very special forest in St. Vital from destruction. See the new SOS display booth. The 79 acres of pristine "Grade A" forest habitat along the Seine River is the largest remaining woodlot along any river in Winnipeg. SOS will be selling its new T-Shirts as well as "On the Living Edge", handbooks for waterfront living—both items make great gifts, and Christmas is around the corner! Donations accepted and will be entered in a draw to win a personalized copy of Robert Bateman's newest book "Birds".

Oct 8—International Walk to School Day. A worldwide event to celebrate the environment, your health, and the many benefits of walking. Contact Resource Conservation Manitoba at 925-3777 for information on how to register your school.

Oct 9—Manitoba Hydro Informal Public Meeting. 7:00 pm Head Office, 820 Taylor Ave. Winnipeg. Call 474-3311 for more information.

Oct 11–13—Thanksgiving Weekend at Fort Whyte Centre. Truckload Birdseed Sale. Afternoon Matinees—Wild Goose Chase (12, 1 and 2 pm, each day) It's the peak of the fall Canada Goose migration and Fort Whyte will be a staging ground for up to 15,000 of these honking critters. Guided Bison Hikes—2 pm each day

Oct 15—First Annual Organic Gala! The Organic Food Council of Manitoba (OFCM) and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra (WSO) present an evening of organic food and music in celebration of the Manitoba harvest. Held at the Fort Garry Hotel, on October 15th, the night features inspiring music by the WSO and an exquisite organic feast. With strolling minstrels, organic wine, meat/vegetarian/vegan options, a variety of short concerts, door prizes, silent auctions, and more, this is a night you will not want to miss! For more info or to order tickets, contact Donna of the WSO at 949-3964 or e-mail dwills@wso.mb.ca Tickets are \$125 per person or \$1000 for a table of 10. A tax receipt will be issued.

Oct 16—Food Security in Winnipeg: Community Kitchens and Beyond. Speakers panel, displays, networking and launch of handbook for community kitchens. 8:30 to 4 at Calvary Temple, 400 Hargrave St. \$15 registration includes lunch and handbook. Childcare available, please book in advance. Deadline for registration is Oct. 3. Contact Judy (940-24333) or Cheryl (940-1653) to register.

Oct 16-17—Parks and Protected Areas Research Forum of Manitoba Symposium. Includes speakers, workshops and poster sessions. Norwood Hotel, Winnipeg. For more information see <http://net101.geog.umanitoba.ca/~ecosites/index.html> or contact Michael Campbell, campblm@ms.umanitoba.ca or (204) 474-8514

Oct 17-31—Living Prairie Museum: Tall Grass Tunnel of Terror & Ghost Hike. Join the Living Prairie Museum for an evening of spooky fun! 2795 Ness Avenue. For more information please call 832-0167 or email prairie@winnipeg.ca

Oct 18—Experience The Seine River Forest Join SOS for an autumn walk through the Seine River forest (Bois-des-esprits) in St. Vital from 1 to 4 p.m. This breathtaking 79-acre forest is hidden behind St. Anne's Road, between Bishop Grandin Blvd. and Warde Ave. This forest has been labeled an "ecological jewel" by the City Naturalist. This is your chance to take a 30-60 minute walk through forest! Parking is available in the Canada Post parking lot at St. Anne's Road near John Bruce Road.

Displays and refreshments will be set up in the park by the John Bruce footbridge. To obtain more info or volunteer, please call SOS Coordinator, David Danyluk at 470-9247.

Oct 20—Trans Canada Trail Progress in Manitoba (Manitoba Naturalists Society Indoor Program). Speaker is Rosemary Dzus, Executive Director of MB Recreational Trail Association. 7:30 pm at the Pauline Boutal Theatre, Franco-Manitoban Cultural Centre, 341 Provencher. \$2 for MNS members, \$4 for non-members. Call 943-9029 for more info.

Oct 23—Manitoba Energy Plan Discussion Meeting. Shaun Loney, Director of Energy Policy from Manitoba Energy, Science and Technology will share the provincial government's draft energy plans for input/comments/feedback from the ENGO community members. 10:00am–2:00pm, Thursday 23rd October. 6th Floor, Hammond Building, 63 Albert Street. Lunch will be provided. Please respond to Jared Whelan indicating your attendance by Thursday 16th October at weassoc@web.ca or 947-3400.



From Tao Te Ching by Bantam

Nov 2—Build a Roosting Box, Fort Whyte Centre. Workshop at 1pm. Make your winter yard bird friendly by building a roosting box. Different from a nest box, this larger shelter provides perching space for many birds allowing them to use each other's body heat to survive the night. Please bring your own hammer. Pre-registration required. Members \$14, Non Members \$17. Call 989-8355 for more info.

Nov 3—The Woodland Caribou of Eastern MB: Conservation and Management of a Threatened Species (MNS Indoor Program) Dr. Doug Schindler, U of W Wildlife Biologist, will be discussing the ecology and management of woodland caribou and research relative to habitat utilization and range identification. Regional conservation strategies are also discussed in the context of industrial development. 7:30 pm at the Pauline Boutal Theatre, Franco-Manitoban Cultural Centre, 341 Provencher. \$2 for MNS members, \$4 for non-members. Call 943-9029 for more info.

Nov 7–10 (tentative)—Communities and the Impact of Climate Change Conference hosted by CUSO (Canadian University Service Organization). Themes are: Communities and CC, Knowledge and CC, and Tools for Communities. Venue in Winnipeg TBA. For more info contact: Louis Helbig, Conference Director, CUSO National Secretariat Tel: (613) 829-7445 ext 236 or Louis.Helbig@cuso.ca

Nov 9—The World of the White Tail Deer. Fort Whyte Centre, 2 pm. This is the peak of the mating season, or rut, for the White Tail Deer. Ken Cudmore, Fort Whyte's Site Manager and deer expert will present a slide show and lead a walk through our forests searching for some of our resident White Tail Deer. Ken will track deer by looking for rubs and scrapes and will attempt to draw alert bucks in from the woods using antler rattling and deer calls. Call 989-8355 for more info.

Nov 13–14—Erosion & Sediment Control Techniques: Learning from One Another. Fairmont Hotel, Winnipeg. For more info contact the International Erosion Control Association, Northern Plains Chapter at (204) 477-1700.

Nov 17—Wapusk: White Bear of the North (MNS Indoor Program) Dennis Fast will take us on a year-long tour of the polar bear's domain and feature some rarely photographed locations and events, including camping with the bears on a remote, fireweed-covered island. 7:30 pm at the Pauline Boutal Theatre, Franco-Manitoban Cultural Centre, 341 Provencher. \$2 for MNS members, \$4 for non-members. Call 943-9029 for more information.

Fogging Controversy Continues...

By Glenda Whiteman, Executive Director, Concerned Residents of Winnipeg (CROW), Inc.

Despite improved communication between levels of government and the public, there remain a lot of unanswered questions with respect to Government's handling of West Nile virus in Manitoba and, in particular, its use of pesticides.

Manitoba is the only province in Canada which fogged its citizens in 2003, having sprayed the rural communities of Virden, Deloraine and Stony Mountain in August. CROW, Inc. travelled out west to try to get some answers. Sadly, we were unable to prevent fogging but we were able to act as a resource for angry residents of those communities who were told, "There's nothing anyone can do to stop this." Despite amazement by community members because of the negligible presence of mosquitoes, fogging in these towns continued as announced.

Requests for trap counts denied

CROW's repeated requests to the province for actual mosquito trap counts and locations were denied. Finally, on September 12, weekly trap count averages were released to the Winnipeg Free Press. Interestingly, although most updates can be found on the Manitoba Health website at www.gov.mb.ca/health/wnv, the weekly mosquito counts which were released to the Free Press do not appear.

While the province has been busy this year developing the science to justify fogging people, the City of Winnipeg appears to be avoiding the issue by concentrating on larviciding. Although the City likes to brag about its innovative use of the environmentally friendlier BTi, CROW is still waiting to be told where and how they are applying Dursban for larviciding purposes. The City also continues to encourage the use of Dursban around the base of elm trees on boulevards despite the fact that it's been banned for use in Winnipeg's schools and playgrounds.

Better public education

Levels of government worked jointly to provide better public education. Pilot projects were introduced in Wolseley and Garden City, called TEAAM, Targeted Environmental Action Against Mosquitoes. Teams of TEAAM blanketed these neighbourhoods with educational materials about reducing mosquito breeding sites, personal protection (including safety Tips on Using Personal Insect Repellents), an optional yard audit, and unfortunately, the typical advice to use DEET. More information about TEAAM can be found at www.winnipeg.ca/cms/bugline/teaam.



Earlier in the summer, Town Hall meetings were held to introduce and get feedback for the proposed Civic Environment Strategy, sections 8.1 and 8.2 of which pertain to pesticides. This document and several stakeholder responses can be found at www.winnipegcec.org/environmental_strategy. Look for CROW's response to be added soon.

As well as monitoring the press and writing letters, submissions and information requests, CROW attempts to fulfill a number of other important duties. This summer CROW had information tables at community functions from which we collected and submitted numerous buffer zone requests from citizens all over Winnipeg. As mentioned, we also travelled to rural communities faced with imminent fogging to provide information and assistance.

CROW also monitors the chemical industry's forays into our education system. We recently attended Amazing Grains at Red River Exhibition Park, a field trip provided for Manitoba schoolchildren with numerous sponsors including the Manitoba government and pesticide/ pharmaceutical giants Monsanto, Dow, Dupont and Bayer. Sadly, the only mention of the word "organic" that we observed appeared on posters still up from the Prairie Sun Organic Market. For more information, see www.aitec.mb.ca/amazinggrains.htm.

Mosquito Café

One of CROW's goals is to increase awareness of the pesticide issue through cultural events which promote harmony and a sense of community rather than controversy in the streets. Watch for announcements about Mosquito Café. To date, three have been held at Westminster Housing Co-op, the Mondragón Bookstore & Coffeehouse and Academy Coffee Co.

CROW, which incorporated as a non-profit organization in March of this year, is the Manitoba member group of the Canadian Coalition for Health and Environment. CCHE is a non-profit organization founded in February 2003, made up of groups across Canada who have united to discourage the unnecessary use of toxic chemicals to kill mosquitoes that may carry the West Nile virus. CCHE's mission is to raise nation-wide public awareness on the issue of pesticides and other toxic chemicals by engaging doctors, scientists, interested groups and individuals across Canada and by creating ties with similar organizations throughout North America and overseas. CCHE encourages and supports the use of ecological strategies to protect human health and the environment.

CCHE has released an ecological West Nile virus strategy, which can be found on their website at www.cche-info.com. Their strategy document includes background information, comments on specific pesticides, and recommendations for healthy solutions. The Coalition encourages governments and the media to educate the public on safer effective approaches to dealing with mosquito-borne diseases. Both CROW and CCHE welcome new members, enquiries and donations; write to CROWinc@mts.net or CCHE@mts.net, or call (204) 229-9613.

CROW is a new member group of the Manitoba Eco-Network

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Going to the Hogs

Continued with letter from Manitoba Conservation and response from Ted Ross

**From: Mr. Al Beck, Manager
Environmental Livestock Program
Manitoba Conservation**

Re: Going to the Hogs article by Mr. Ted Ross, May/June issue of the Eco-Journal

I commend the efforts of the Roseisle Creek Watershed Association in protecting and preserving the natural habitats of the Babcock/Roseisle Valley area. Such areas provide many alternative use opportunities for people as well as performing essential ecological functions. However, some of the discussion in the article should be placed in proper context.

The Province of Manitoba is committed to the principle of keeping local land use decision making in the hands of local decision-makers, that is the elected municipal councillors. This provides the best opportunity for local people to interact with their elected officials to decide the future of their local area. Ideally, this interaction would occur through the development of municipal development plans and land use zoning well in advance of consideration of specific proposals.

Technical Review Committees (TRC) are established under The Planning Act. The role of the TRC is to provide support to local government by providing preliminary technical assessments and reports on proposals for livestock operations. The TRC assesses a proposal based on information provided by the proponent, other information available to members, local and provincial land use policies, the Farm Practices guidelines and pertinent regulations. The TRC will describe the potential effect of a proposed operation in terms of the assimilative capacity of the land base to use livestock manure on a sustainable basis as a crop nutrient. Comment will also be provided on the potential for nuisance odours....

A TRC report does not provide an environmental assessment as protection of the environment lies within the purview of Manitoba Conservation. The proponent may proceed to acquire the detailed hydro-geological and geophysical information needed to support an application to Manitoba Conservation for a permit to construct a manure storage facility. The detailed information is used by Manitoba Conservation to assess the proposed design of manure storage facilities and sustainability of proposed manure application to farm land. Usually the collection of detailed information engenders considerable cost and proponents are reluctant to proceed to this step unless there is some assurance of approval from the municipal council. Therefore, the detailed information is typically obtained after approval to proceed has been obtained from municipal council. Regardless of the location, site-specific detailed information must be provided to Manitoba Conservation before any permit request may be considered by the department.

[Ed note: edited for length]

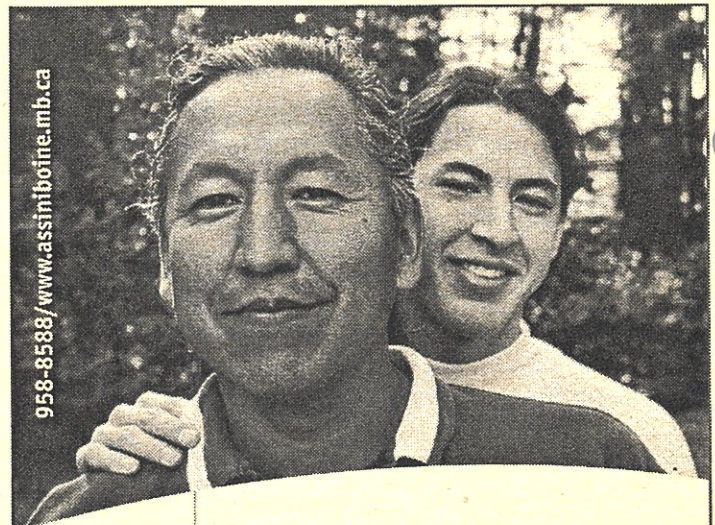
**From: Ted Ross, President
Roseisle Creek Watershed Association**

Re: Mr. Beck's letter concerning "Going to the Hogs"

I appreciate Mr. Beck's commendation on the efforts of our association to protect the natural habitats of the Babcock/Roseisle Valley. Unfortunately, our efforts so far have gone unheeded. We are loosing to putrid manure pits (euphemistically referred to as "lagoons") full of millions of gallons of untreated feces, urine and toxic waste destined to be spread onto soils, and potentially into subsurface waters and rivers.

Rather than debate the process Mr. Beck describes in his letter, I will share some information with you. You read it, then decide yourself if the hog industry is safe (to our environment and health) and respectful of people.

Our experience with the Technical Review Committee and Conservation Process is that they are formulated, first and foremost, in the context of commercial interests. In my opinion, and in that of many others in rural Manitoba, our health and nature's health are treated as secondary to commercial enterprise. The two operations near our valley serve as good examples.



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Think about where you bank.

- We are quite certain, by way of aerial photos, that one of these operations has a lagoon built too close to surface water contrary to the Environment Act (the permit to this operator has been under appeal to Conservation since July 2002). We see another proponent building in a moose habitat, then is found digging with a backhoe in a marsh (aquifer recharge area). This latter operator has also been allowed to build contrary to the farm Practices Guidelines in that there are too many residences within 1 mile of the site. And this is what the so-called good operators are doing. Never mind the practices of the bad operators.

- If my calculations are correct these two operations will use 200 million litres of water a year, at a time when fresh water scientists are alerting governments to drought conditions and the need for more effective water management.

- We are seeing woodlands bulldozed to provide more room for the spreading of hog excrement to meet manure management plans.

Consider these requirements in the Environment Act and be your own judge as to how well our drinking water is protected.

- A manure pit can be 100 m (300 ft) from any surface watercourse, sinkhole, spring or well (ref. the Environment Act: Schedule A-1. Siting Requirements).

- The bottom of a manure pit can be 1.0 m (3 ft) above the elevation of a water table (ref. the Environment Act: Schedule A-2 (g) General Construction Requirements). And don't be comforted by plastic liners as their design specifications have a seepage tolerance.

- The contents of a manure pit can be spread as close as 16 ft from a well if the slope is less than 4 % (less than 4ft slope over 100 ft, for example). Reference the Minimum Manure Setback

Distances in the Farm Practices Guidelines).

I would ask your readers to give some thought to these facts. Manitoba's hog population grew by 42.9% between 1996 and 2001 (ref. Winnipeg Free Press, Oct 24, 2002). Our yearly hog production is now around 6.8 million (Stats Canada). Information I have read states that a hog produces at least 3 times the excrement humans do (ref. Waterkeepers Alliance). So hogs in Manitoba are producing the human waste equivalent of nearly 21 million people. And this untreated waste is spread on fields. Sounds like a huge risk to me, and must certainly be a big contributor to the death of our lakes.

Not to pick on Mr. Beck, but I get upset with the government advocates of this industry. How many of these people have their homes or business just 1/2 mile from 8000 pigs and their open-air toilet? How many of them are dependent on drinking water from a well fed by an aquifer under a pit holding millions of gallons of untreated animal excretion. I expect the answer is none! And if our local experience is any indicator, most of the operators and owners of these large corporate animal factories (I'm not talking about family farms) won't even live near their operations.

It would be interesting to hear from your readers as to their experiences with these operations. I am getting sick and tired of how our politicians protect this disgusting industry, while the family hog farms collapse, and our waters die. The whole business reminds me of the debates and issues concerning the tobacco industry not so many years ago... air and water pollution from these hog factories being just a different form of "cancer".

[Ed note: edited for length]

ECO



Commuters Take the Alternative

...continued from page 2

has provided the momentum for RCM to develop projects with the network of coordinators who are looking for ways to promote and develop permanent alternative transportation options in their workplace and school.

RCM's Active and Safe Routes to School program is one such project. The current priority for the program is the promotion of International Walk to School Day on October 8. Over 60 schools from across the province have already signed up for the event. "School Administrators, teachers and parents are excited about participating in International Walk to School Day. The event builds neighbourhood commitment to reduce dangerous traffic congestion around schools, improve air quality and share important traffic safety skills with children. Walk to School Day is one way communities can reduce greenhouse gas emissions", explained Andrea Lamboo Miln, program coordinator, Resource Conservation Manitoba.

RCM has recently embarked on the 'Going Green' pilot project. The goal of Going Green is to assist four Winnipeg workplaces to develop and implement Transportation Demand Management initiatives, such as infrastructure enhancements

(providing bike lock-up and shower facilities), employer sponsored benefits (membership in Winnipeg Transit's EcoPass program) and employee-led initiatives (developing a 'bike-buddy' program).

New to RCM's programming is 'Off Ramp Manitoba'. The goal of the project is to provide resources and support for Manitoba high schools who wish to implement campaigns that encourage students to take the 'off ramp' and use alternative forms of transportation. "To achieve this goal, RCM will work with student leaders in their efforts to foster awareness of climate change and transportation issues", affirms Larissa Ashdown, coordinator of Off Ramp Manitoba.

RCM is excited about fostering its relationship with Commuter Challenge school and workplace coordinators and developing its role in promoting community-based approaches to tackle climate change. For more information on these and other RCM climate change projects, please call 925-3773 or visit www.resourceconservation.mb.ca.

ECO

Wuskwatim Consultations

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and if so, whether we need to generate it by building another dam, or whether there are alternative means (like wind, or biomass) that can make more environmental, social or financial sense.

The hearings have not yet begun and parts of the EIS have already been vigorously criticized. Pimicikamak, a funded intervenor, recently submitted a motion to the CEC asking that Manitoba Hydro change what Pimicikamak sees as a highly flawed description of the project. Pimicikamak argues that despite a comprehensive, long-term program to convert Manitoba's northern rivers (in particular the Nelson) into massive generators of hydro-electricity, Manitoba Hydro has described the project as only the current project, that is, Wuskwatim and the associated transmission lines. Pimicikamak insists that the EIS should review the entire scope of hydroelectric development in north, not just the current Wuskwatim Proposals, since it is clear that past, present, and future hydro projects are intimately linked as part of a singular and cohesive hydroelectric development plan. Pimicikamak calls this plan the "Whole Project", and is requesting that Manitoba Hydro be required to submit revised information on impacts of the Whole Project.

While this may appear to be a technical issue, it goes to the heart of the long history of conflict between many northern Aboriginal peoples and Manitoba Hydro. Pimicikamak states that their motion is not about opposition to hydroelectric development. It has, at its basis, their fundamental desire to ac-

knowledge the wrongs of the past to ensure that they are never again repeated. The CEC will hear oral arguments on this particular motion on September 30, 2003. This hearing is open to all members of the public to attend, but only those registered by September 12, 2003 can present their views. The CEC regular hearings on all other matters are in February 2003 and anyone can attend and present their perspective.

Section 35 Consultation Process

The fourth, and in many ways most important, consultation process underway is that required by section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. In that year, the Aboriginal and treaty rights of the "Indian, Inuit, and Métis" peoples of Canada were "constitutionalized", that is recognized and affirmed by the Constitution. Before this, the federal government regularly "infringed" (impacted, took away, or somehow diminished) treaty and Aboriginal rights, and did so without consulting with Aboriginal peoples first. Even after 1982, the Manitoba government refused to acknowledge the existence of treaty and Aboriginal rights in Manitoba, or that it had any obligation not to infringe those rights (for example by allowing developments, such as hydro development, that would cause those impacts).

The section 35 constitutional provision has been interpreted in such well known Supreme Court of Canada cases as Sparrow, Delgamukw, and Marshall. The Supreme Court in these



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cases has primarily said two things: first, governments must not infringe Aboriginal and treaty rights, but, second, if they must, they have to follow the process that is set out in those cases. This process is the only way by which a government can legitimately, and legally, infringe on treaty and Aboriginal rights, even to the point of total extinguishment of those rights.

While this infringement process involves numerous elements, a very significant part is the "consultation" requirement. Consultation generally requires that a government must, before making a decision (such as granting a license to a hydro development company to build and operate a dam) that might infringe a treaty or Aboriginal right, try to understand what rights may be impacted, the extent of potential impacts on those rights, and how to either not impact the rights or to do so as minimally as possible. They must approach this consultation in good faith with the true intention of trying not to infringe on Aboriginal and treaty rights. Courts have made clear that, if asked, Aboriginal peoples must engage in the consultation process, but that they are entitled to a reasonable amount of resources so that they can review and understand the information (for example, scientific, engineering and legal) that they receive about the project, and then provide their informed perspective to government on the potential infringement.

Right now, the federal and provincial governments are engaged in section 35 consultations with northern First Nation and Métis peoples. Recently, Manitoba Hydro released information that indicated that it wanted to receive all licensing approvals by the end of 2003 so that it could begin construc-

tion in January 2004. Given the legal requirement for consultation with governments to occur before they make any decisions to license the Wuskwatim Proposals, some communities have asked how this short deadline could possibly allow the governments enough time to engage in truly meaningful consultations with them.

While the governments may be trying to approach the section 35 consultations "in good faith"; it doesn't look very promising. Most communities are not aware of the real purpose of these consultations. They do not have the money to hire scientific, engineering or legal advice so they can ensure that they fully understand the issues. The consultations are being managed on a small budget by government staff who have never conducted a treaty and aboriginal rights consultation. The consultation facilitator that the governments have hired has stated that her role is not to interpret treaty and Aboriginal rights, and it is uncertain whether she knows the requirements for meaningful consultation as set out in the law and will be able to ensure the consultation is legally correct and protects Aboriginal and treaty rights.

Will any of this matter?

While it is unclear how the results of each of these processes will relate to each other, there is no requirement that they must. This could create a difficult situation for decision-makers. What is clear is that each of them must be done right. The CEC will evaluate and make recommendations regarding the adequacy of the Manitoba Hydro / NCN public consultation processes, and, if they follow the approach taken by other quasi-judicial entities (like the National Energy Board), they will do the same regarding the section 35 consultation. This is important because if a proper section 35 consultation hasn't occurred, a decision to license the Wuskwatim Proposals could be overturned by a court in the future. Even if all other regulatory requirements have been satisfied. Even if it never is taken to court, failure to deal properly with the potential impacts on the rights of Aboriginal peoples would represent yet another injury to the northern landscape and its communities. All Manitobans, including the aboriginal peoples, must understand this is a turning point in our province regarding the protection of Aboriginal and treaty rights and the natural environment. Each person has the chance to have their voice heard to ensure that all consultation processes are meaningful and effective, and they must seize the opportunity if the most informed, equitable and moral decisions about northern development are to occur. Never has there been such opportunity to participate in, and affect, the future of Manitoba.

Merrell-Ann Phare is Legal Counsel to the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER), a First Nation environmental organization in Winnipeg.

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Court decisions have clarified that resources for informed review must be made available to First Nations. Photo from CIER

New Publication Available

Getting the Message Out

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A Joint Project of the Sustainability Network and IMPACS, this guide is designed to help environmental groups focus their communication efforts. (172 pages)

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Table of contents and first chapter
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IMPACS

Manitoba's Public Registry Online

Information from the Alice Chambers Memorial Library

Manitoba's environmental public registry (PR) provides a window of information on events that have shaped and continue to shape Manitoba's landscape. Any proposed developments that require approval under Manitoba's Environment Act must be filed in the PR. It includes a wealth of information on proposals, including environmental impact statements, management plans, maps and facility diagrams, reports from technical advisory committees and verbatim transcripts of Clean Environment Commission hearings.

In the latest word on the PR, Final Report of the Chair—Core Group on the Amendments to the Environment Act 2002 (Section I-12.B Public Registries), it was noted that "there are considerable improvements that could be made to the public registry system", one of which is the "greater use of electronic information". Arguably, the dominant forum for the dissemination of electronic information is the Internet, so in the context of Manitoba and the PR, the question that must be asked is "Where is PR in terms of access and availability of information online?"

Announcements and Summary Information

Since 2001, all new material deposited to the PR has been indexed by the staff of the Manitoba Eco-Network and announced on Eco-Man, a listserve for environmental issues relevant to Manitoba. The text of the announcement to the listserve is then placed on the Internet in the form of an easy to understand index, with the aim of providing a quick and easy aid for the public to ensure they are viewing the complete contents of a particular file. See: www.web.net/men/mbprposts.htm

The files are arranged by file number and encompass all of the contents noted and organized by the date that a piece of material was added to the PR, with the most recent first. Other information included on the webpage includes the client name, type of development, license information and the Rural Municipality where the proposed development is to be situated. Finally, each PR file has a link to the file summary available at the Manitoba Environmental Approvals website.

Although it only provides information on proposals since 1996, the Manitoba Environmental Approvals website is very useful in getting a quick overview of PR files, provided that you know the year and class of development or the region in which the development is located. The strongest feature of the Approvals website is that once a license has been issued, the complete text is added as a link off of the summary page to allow the public to get the full text of the license online. See: www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/envapprovals/archive/arcindex.html

Searchable and Downloadable data

If you want to search for files and compare similar files, a new website launched by the province is very useful. The Public Registry Database provides users with the ability to search by entering keywords, client name, operation type, file and license number. This allows users to gather related material together for their research needs. See: www2.gov.mb.ca/concat/Regquery.htm

Finally, the ACML has placed an Excel file (PR Master File) online that contains the information of every file released

through the public registry. The spreadsheet is useful because it allows users to sort data by file number, operation type and client in order to group similar developments for research. This file includes developments that occurred prior to 1996. See: www.web.net/men/Data/

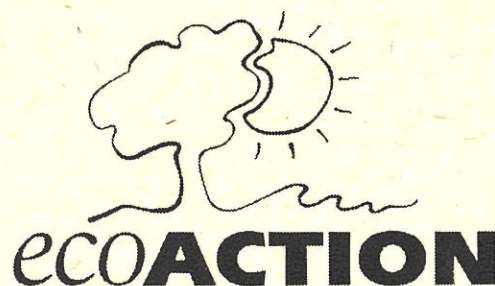
What Now?

By using the combination of these online resources, an individual can quickly cobble together information on a given file or development type. However, the online sources are scattered and not user-friendly. There is room for improvement in online access to this information.

What is needed is an online one stop, comprehensive, and easily searchable, full text retrievable documented system. A good example of such a system is the recent Georgia Strait Crossing Pipeline Limited GSX Canada Pipeline Project. See: www.neb-one.gc.ca/registry/gsx/pubreg_e.htm

However, it must be stressed that the Final Report of the Chair also noted that "not all people have access to computers" so, while many challenges lie ahead as it relates to serving up the PR over the Internet, this should in no way take away from the work needed to maintain and improve the print PR depository system found at twenty locations throughout the province. But, as they used to say on the riverbank, "that's another story".

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Winter Research in the Subarctic

by Jennifer McCulloch, Churchill Northern Studies Centre

As human activities continue to potentially disrupt the balance of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and alter climatic conditions, the need for environmental monitoring becomes essential. Because it is thought that climatic changes will be seen first in the north, environmental monitoring, like the type being performed at the Churchill Northern Studies Centre (CNSC), will provide valuable information.

For the past 26 years the Churchill Northern Studies Centre (CNSC), located 20 kilometres east of Churchill, Manitoba, has promoted and assisted research and education in the north. In addition, over the course of the last four years, the CNSC has developed its own in-house research at seven long-term monitoring sites to observe various tundra and forest ecosystems and the potential impacts of climate change on these ecosystems. For the past three summers, baseline data has been collected in relation to biodiversity, carbon storage, plant phenology, permafrost status and meteorological data.

Seasonal research limitations

However, in the past, research being performed in this region has been restricted to spring and summer months due to logistical difficulties. Unfortunately, this has created a gap in the understanding of how the winter months contribute to the development of the various ecosystems. For instance, composition and survival of plant communities is greatly dependent on the amount of snow coverage. If over time the area experiences a change in precipitation levels, a change in plant species could be observed.

Over the past two years the CNSC has begun to bridge this gap in understanding by continuing its monitoring program through the fall and winter. Such monitoring has included bi-weekly data collection at temperature probes installed at each site to make record of both freeze-thaw cycles and snow pack temperature gradients. Bi-weekly snow depth measurements at each monitoring site were taken as well as observations of

what mammal and avian species were making use of the various sites during the winter months.

Beyond the bi-weekly monitoring, more intensive sampling took place in February when the CNSC hosted a group of Earthwatch volunteers and students from the University of Alberta under the direction of Dr. Peter Kershaw from the University of Alberta. Earthwatch is a non-profit organization that assists in teaming up volunteers with research projects. Such a relationship aids not only with the labour aspect of research but also greatly helps maintain funding for the project.

Volunteers help with winter ecology studies

This February's Earthwatch team saw volunteers arrive in Churchill from the U.K., USA, and Japan. Upon arrival they assisted in obtaining data about the winter ecology of the area by digging snow pits at each site.

From each pit several measurements were taken including definition of the different precipitation events by determining the various layers, density of the snow from the various layers, types and size of snow crystals making up the layers, vertical and horizontal hardness of the various layers, pH and particulate matter. Such data will provide a much better understanding of all aspects of the ecosystem. For instance vertical hardness can be used to determine the energy required for a fox to dig through the snow to catch a lemming or the energy required for a caribou to dig to the ground to reach the desired vegetation. Horizontal hardness can be used to determine ease of small mammals to tunnel through the snow and data regarding amount of water in the snow will give a better understanding of soil development.

Because this research has only been active for the past two years, conclusions obviously cannot be made yet, but it is anticipated this research will continue for many years to come. It is also hoped that upon hearing about this successful winter sampling other researchers will be intrigued about the area and, as a result, the type of research being performed in this subarctic environment will continue to expand.

For more information about the Churchill Northern Studies Centre, visit our website at www.churchillmb.net/~cnscc or phone (204) 675-2307. For more information about Earthwatch, visit their website at www.earthwatch.org.

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For more info or to order your tickets, contact Donna of the WSO at 949-3964 or e-mail dwillis@wso.mb.ca Tickets are \$125 per person or \$1000 for a table of 10. A tax receipt will be issued.

Too Good to Waste!

Get Ready for Waste Reduction Week, October 20-26, 2003

Canadians produce more than 21 million tonnes of garbage annually, making us one of the five biggest waste-producing nations in the world, per capita. We are also the third highest energy-consuming country, per capita. And, in the same year that we spend a total of three billion hours commuting to and from work, each of our cars releases about 4850 kg of greenhouse gases and other harmful emissions, and each of our SUVs gives off about 8070 kg.

The good news

Waste Reduction Week (WRW) is a community response to environmental and social problems generated by overconsumption and waste. The aim is to encourage action on conservation and waste reduction. 2003 marks the third year for WRW as a national event. Cities, towns, schools, companies, and community organizations in all thirteen provinces and territories are taking part.

The theme of the week, "Too Good to Waste," is intended to convey an appreciation for the richness, diversity and beauty of the world, and to call Canadians to protect the environment by conserving resources and curbing wasteful practices. Each day of WRW has a designated theme:

Monday—home; Tuesday—travel; Wednesday—work; Thursday—school; Friday—play; Saturday—shopping; Sunday—community

The ways to participate in WRW are innumerable. Individu-

als, schools, workplaces, and organizations can pick up on an idea from elsewhere, or do something completely different. In previous years, the University of Manitoba Recycling and Environmental Group launched their Residence Recycling Challenge, organizers in Manitou staged "litterless lunch" days in the school cafeteria, and the mayor of Thompson made an official WRW proclamation.

As well, students of Red River College took tours of the Canadian Waste recycling facility, the Town of Roblin aired a recycling video on a local cable station twice daily, and the University of Winnipeg Womyn's Centre held a free reusable pad-making workshop.

More information

Resource Conservation Manitoba coordinates WRW in Manitoba. For more information or activity suggestions, or to request a free full-colour poster or WRW handbook, visit www.resourceconservation.mb.ca, or call 925-3775 in Winnipeg, or 1-866-394-8880 toll-free. Don't forget—you can register your Waste Reduction Week event and be entered to win a fabulous prize!

WRW in Manitoba acknowledges support from the Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation, Manitoba Conservation, the City of Winnipeg, Manitoba Hydro, the Manitoba Association for Resource Recovery Corporation, and the Tire Stewardship Board.



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