

Decision Time for Manitoba's New National Park

By Roger Turenne, Chair, CPAWS-Manitoba Lowlands Committee

In March of last year, Premier Gary Doer and David Anderson, then federal environment minister, signed an agreement to work toward the creation of Manitoba's third national park, in the northern Interlake, by May 2005. Public consultations were to be complete by the end of 2004. These consultations have not even started. It is now too late for the May deadline to be met, again. This park has been under discussion for almost 13 years and deadlines have come and gone in the past, without results. Is this more of the same?

What is at stake is a two-part area north and south of Grand Rapids. It contains magnificent sand beaches and the longest freshwater sand spit in Canada. It supports some of the greatest concentrations and diversities of inland colonial nesting birds anywhere in the country. It has an abundance of wetlands, bogs, marshes and shallow lakes that serve as major staging areas for waterfowl and shorebirds during fall migration. There are spectacular limestone cliffs and a karst, or limestone, topography with characteristics that make it unique in the world.

It also contains two natural features that cry out for protection. The first is the southwest portion of the Long Point component. This is the only place in North America where the five major species of ungulates, including white-tailed deer, moose, elk, the threatened woodland caribou and the reintroduced wood bison share a common habitat.

Lake changes colour with air temperature

The second is Little Limestone Lake. What could be more unique than a lake that changes colour with the air temperature, from a brilliant turquoise to a robin's-egg blue? That's what happens in Little Limestone Lake. It is the finest example of a marl lake in the world, according to Dr. Derek Ford, the world's foremost authority on karst, where marl lakes occur.

(Marl is created when calcite, the chief constituent of limestone, is chemically precipitated from warm water.) Immediately to the south of Little Limestone Lake are two caves that serve as hibernacula for little brown bats, the most northerly such hibernacula in the province.

Such a spectacular natural area should be a no-brainer for inclusion in the park. Yet Little Limestone Lake and the bat caves are situated just outside the proposed boundary, with no

protection whatsoever. For years governments have caved in to mining industry pressures to leave this area out because of its presumed mineral potential. It's time for the province to tell industry that they can't have this globally significant jewel of central Manitoba.

Paralysis in public policy?

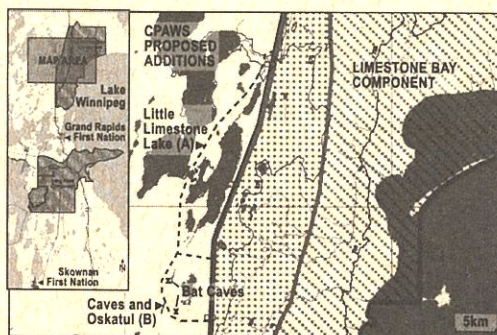
There is another problem with the most recent park proposal. The map released in 2004 contains two parts: "core lands" and "proposed additions." The difference is not a reflection of the rela-

tive importance of the two, which, from a scientific perspective, are all essential to the integrity of the park. Rather, they reflect the timidity of the provincial government in moving ahead without the permission of the mining and forestry sectors who have not "signed on" to the whole package. Striving for consensus is praiseworthy, but not when it leads to paralysis in public policy. Will Premier Doer cave in to industry pressures to scale back, or will he stand firm on the best conservation project his government has ever brought forth?

Full support from local communities is critical to the creation of the park, and commendably, the two governments do not wish to proceed without it. But the town of Grand Rapids and some First Nations have been reluctant to engage in the process. They have a lot of leverage and, understandably, they are using it. They have let governments know that they want a number of unrelated issues dealt with before tackling the park, such as resolving compensation for the building of the Grand Rapids hydro dam, a desire for additional reserve land, and forestry allocations.

Until now, governments have preferred to deal with each such issue separately and avoid linkage. It hasn't worked, in spite of the governments' best efforts over the years to address the issues. It is a real dilemma: agree to bargain other issues to get the park, or move forward with the park establishment process

see "Decision Time" on page 3 ►



A marl lake and bat hibernacula for National Park?

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member groups.

Environmental Award Nominations now open!

We are calling on folks to nominate
their choices for the 2005 Manitoba Eco-
Network Environmental Awards. As last
year, the categories are Individual, Group
(should be a non-profit, non-governmental
group), and "Special".

Please provide your own name and
contact information, as well as that of
your nominee. We also request a written
explanation of why this person or group
deserves recognition by their peers. Nomi-
nations should be submitted to the Steer-
ing Committee by May 6, 2005. Please
send by email to: mbeconet@mts.net.

If you need to use snail mail, please
contact us, because we'll be moving of-
fices on May 1st, and would not want to
lose any nominations in the shuffle!

The awards will be presented in con-
junction with our Annual General Meet-
ing on May 26th at our new office: 3rd

Floor, 303 Portage Avenue. For informa-
tion on previous Environmental Award
winners, please visit our website at
www.mbeconetwork.org/project_awards.asp

Moving day approaches!

This will be the last issue of **Eco-Jour-
nal** published at 2-70 Albert Street. May
1st is the anticipated move-in date for
the Eco-Network and our fellow Eco-Cen-
tre groups at the newly-renovated space
on the 3rd floor of Mountain Equipment
Co-op's Portage Avenue building. Work
is now underway in the space, and we
are beginning to pack up our gear and
preparing to settle in the new home. For
some views of work in progress, please
visit our website at www.mbeconetwork.org/projects_relocation.asp.

Eco

Winnipeg Wild! Action Centres

Last summer, CPAWS Manitoba and
Wildcanada.net launched an online sur-
vey to determine Winnipeggers' favour-
ite parks and wilderness areas, and why
these areas are important to them. Sur-
vey results were compiled in January 2005
and showed a keen interest by respond-
ents to take action to protect their favour-
ite parks and wilderness areas.

The newly launched online Winnipeg
Wild! action centres provide educational
information and steps that individuals
can take in support of the two areas most
frequently identified in the survey re-
sponses. They focus on Bird's Hill Pro-
vincial Park, which is next in line for

public involvement in the development
of a park management plan, and the east-
ern boreal forest, including Whiteshell
and Nopiming Provincial Parks. The prox-
imity of the eastern Manitoba parks and
wilderness areas to Winnipeg makes them
popular cottaging and recreational des-
tinations, and as a result, heavily im-
pacted by human use.

For details, please visit us at:
www.winnipegwild.net. To receive
monthly email updates on issues related
to parks, wilderness conservation and
CPAWS activities, join CPAWS Mani-
toba ParkWatch Network by e-mailing:
parks@cpawsmb.org

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Eco-Network Steering Committee, 2004-2005

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Action Alert: Part One of Two

The Toxic Tale of Smelters

By Anna Tilman

Base metal smelters are a major source of pollution in Canada. For the most part, these large metallurgical facilities have been operating for decades in fairly remote areas, and are a central and dominant feature of their communities.

These operations (about a dozen in Canada) are in the business of extracting metals of economic value from rock for global markets—primarily copper, lead, zinc and nickel, with numerous other metals, such as, cobalt, cadmium, silver, gold, platinum and palladium as by-products. In the process of extracting these metals, vast amounts of hazardous pollutants of detrimental value to human health and the environment are released to air, land and water.

To a large extent, these facilities remain aloof from the Canadian public eye—out of sight and mind, until an incident, or an over-arching environmental issue, such as acid rain, impacts on the larger populated areas of Canada and the U.S.

Over the years, in the face of regulated limits, many smelters have reduced their emissions by the construction of sulphuric acid plants and the introduction of other technologies. Despite this, the base metals sector remains the single largest industrial source of sulphur dioxide emissions in Canada, as well as emissions of a number of highly toxic metals—mercury, arsenic, cadmium, chromium, lead, beryllium, and nickel.

To put this into numerical perspective, approximately 800,000 tonnes of sulphur dioxide (SO₂) are emitted annually

from smelters in Canada, about one-third of all industrial sources. Three facilities alone—Inco Copper Cliff (Sudbury), Inco Thompson and Hudson Bay Mining & Smelting (HudBay) in Flin Flon contribute to more than 80% of these emissions, with each of the two Manitoba facilities emitting in the order of 200,000 tonnes.

The HudBay smelter, in operation since 1930, is notorious for its emissions of mercury—one of the most pervasive toxic substances known. While emissions from this facility were in the order of 20 tonnes about 15 years ago, they remain inordinately high (over 1,340 kg annually) today, making this facility the largest point source of mercury emissions to air in Canada.

Bad for health and environment

SO₂ along with other pollutants are a major cause of acid deposition, which is intrinsically linked to other environmental issues such as climate change and the leaching of mercury (in its most toxic form, methylmercury) into rivers, lakes and streams. Likewise, the toxic metals—arsenic, cadmium and the like, add to the witches' brew of toxins that poison water and soil, severely compromising the health and diversity of the forests, vegetation and the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems upon which we all depend.

In terms of human health, exposure to SO₂ (as a gas and in the form of miniscule sulphate particles) can contribute to asthma, bronchitis, cardiovascular disease and possibly lung cancer. Workers directly exposed to SO₂ are particularly at risk to lung disease. Similarly, mercury and lead are extremely toxic and a cause of developmental and neurological disorders, as well as damage to organs, while arsenic, nickel, chromium and cadmium are associated with the development of various cancers. For a number of these substances, there is no threshold below which adverse effects cannot be found.

Communities in Sudbury, Thompson, Rouyn, Flin Flon, Trail and other smelter towns, as well as nearby communities, bear the brunt of the pollutants most directly, and are particularly at risk of having elevated rates of asthma, cancer and other pollutant-related ailments. But it doesn't stop there. Because many of these pollutants, such as SO₂ and mercury, are long-distance travellers, their influence on environmental and human health is exerted hundreds and even thousands of kilometres from their source.

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Disturbing toll from emissions

The legacy from these smelters will live on long after these facilities shut down. In economic terms, the costs for remediation, health care and lost opportunities for other development are significant. The toll from these emissions is very disturbing for a country with an "advanced" economy.

see "Smelter Action" on page 10 ►

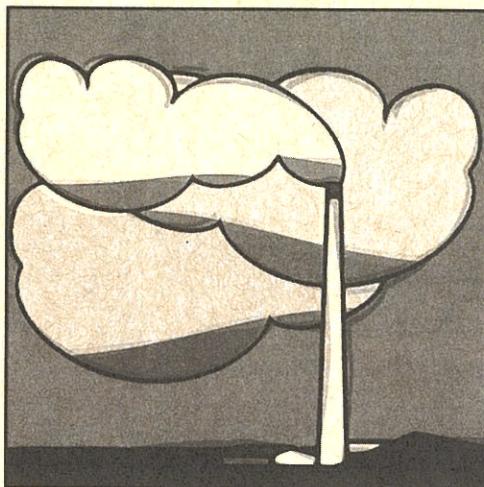


Illustration by David Henry

Decision Time

continued from page 1...

in the hope that local communities will ultimately get on board? All the facts are known about the proposed park. All the studies have been done. Federal financing is in place. All the players are identified and know their interests. It's now time for them to sit down together, bargain in good faith, and create a legacy for future generations.

There are indications that the long-delayed public consultation process will soon get underway. The Manitoba Lowlands National Park will be the third and last national park created in Manitoba. It is worth doing right. All those who care about preserving some of our last remaining wilderness should participate in this process and make clear to governments that they strongly support the park proposal, with the addition of Little Limestone Lake and the bat caves. The public meetings will be advertised, so watch for them.

For more information and to get a visual sense of what this extraordinary landscape looks like, go to www.cpawsmb.org and view the spectacular 10-minute slide show from the Manitoba Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. Just follow the links to: A National Park Struggles to Be Born. **ECO**

What's Happening

April 6-7 The Red River Basin Institute presents "Research and Education in an International Watershed: Implications for Decision Making" Second International Water Conference at the Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg. See http://www.tri-college.org/watershed/water_conference.htm for more info.

April 8 "Woody Workshop: Information on Hybrid Poplar" hosted by Pembina Valley Conservation District in partnership with MB Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives' Agro Woodlot Program. 10:00 a.m. to 4:00pm at the Manitou Curling Rink in Manitou. Presentations by the MB Forestry Association, Dr. Wendell Johnson—U of Minnesota, and Tam McEwen. Please call (204) 242-3267 for more info.

April 21 Project Peacemakers Eco-Friendly Dinner. 6:30pm at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Roman Catholic Church, 4588 Roblin Blvd. Dr. Eva Pip will speak on water issues in Manitoba. Tickets are \$10 and must be purchased in advance. For more info call 775-8178 or email info@projectpeacemaker.org.

April 21 From Framework to Footwork: Putting Food Security on the Policy Table. 1:30pm-4:30pm at the Winnipeg Convention Centre, Millennium Suite. This presentation will provide an overview of what citizens can do to build food security in their own community. For more info or to register call Anna Kirbyson at 943-2561.

April 22 What's Food Security got to do with Regional Economic Development and the Small Firm Economy? 9:30 a.m.-3:30pm at Crossways in Common, 222 Furby Street. This presentation will focus on the small firm economy of the Emilia Romagna region of Northern Italy; the role of co-operation in growth and global competitiveness of small firms in international markets; and how this model has informed approaches to development in the food and agriculture sectors in British Columbia. For more info or to register call Anna Kirbyson at 943-2561.

April 22 2nd Annual 7th Generation Mother Earth Day Walk. Starts at noon at the Legislative Building to The Forks for picnic and speakers. All welcome in support of Indigenous Peoples community struggles. Bring a drum! For more info or to volunteer/donate call 947-9772.

April 24 Earth Day Celebrations. For more info see page 12.

April 24 EcoAdventure & Earth Day Celebration at Fort Whyte Centre. Free admission all day! Earth Day Activities 1-4pm. Call 989-8355 for more info.

April 24 Celebrate Earth Day at Oak Hammock Marsh. Join the Centre's interpreters for guided tours of the marsh to learn just how important wetlands are for the health of the planet. Call 467-3300 for more info.

April 28 Woodland Caribou Recovery Planning, Management and Issues—Free Public Session. Canada's Model Forest Network will be holding public sessions on woodland caribou recovery planning at the Radisson Hotel 288 Portage Ave. from 8:45am - 4:15pm. ENGO presentations from the Western Canada Wilderness Committee and the Sierra Club starting at 1pm. Free to attend. Lunch and breakfast provided. For a copy of the agenda, call Wilderness Committee at 942-9292 or email info@wildernesscommittee.mb.ca.

April 30 & May 1 Crocus Days at Living Prairie Museum, 2795 Ness Avenue. Welcome spring to the prairie with a celebration of our provincial flower. Join us for guided hikes, crafts, and the opportunity to purchase a crocus plant from Prairie Originals Nursery. 10am to 5pm, no admission charge. Call 832-0167.

May 1 Join the Coalition to Save the Elms in celebrating the 3rd annual Arbor Day in the Park! 12:00pm-4:00pm at Assiniboine Park- Mayors Grove (near the conservatory). This free event includes children's activities, tree-planting, climbing demonstration and entertainment by local bands Nathan and Sister Dorothy. Call 832-7188.

May 1-7 Celebrate Compost Awareness Week. For activities happening around the province and for ideas for you to do in your community, visit <http://www.resourceconservation.mb.ca> and click on the compost project button or call the Compost Infoline at 925-3777. Also see p.10 for additional Compost Action Project announcements.

May 25 Resource Conservation Manitoba Annual General Meeting. 3rd Floor—303 Portage Ave. 7pm. Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of RCM! Call 925-3770 for more info.

May 26 Manitoba Eco-Network Annual General Meeting and Environmental Awards Ceremony 3rd Floor—303 Portage Ave. Business Meeting 6:30pm. Awards presentation and desserts at 8pm. Join us to celebrate!

June 2 Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society—Manitoba will hold their Annual General Meeting at 7pm at 3rd Floor—303 Portage Ave. Contact 949-0782 for more info.

June 5-11 Commuter Challenge 2005! Visit <http://www.resourceconservation.mb.ca/gci/CC/> or call 925-3772 for information on how to get involved.

ECO



Fledgling owls. Photo copyright Christian Artuso, 2004

Manitoba's Lands & Waters

Go to:

manitobawildlands.org©

Hydro Developments

Go to:

energymanitoba.org©

Forest Management from Aboriginal Perspective

by Carissa Wieler, TREE member and Board Member of Manitoba Model Forest

I recently attended a conference entitled "How to Measure Good Forest Management: An Aboriginal Perspective", sponsored by the Canadian Model Forest Network and the First Nations Forestry Program (March 8-9, Winnipeg). Attendees included aboriginal people from across Canada, from Labrador to Vancouver Island, as well as representatives from NGOs, industry, government and academia. We assembled to learn more about forestry indicator and certification systems, with a specific focus on aboriginal and treaty rights and perspectives. As an avid note taker, I offer you some of my notes from the conference, as well as a few reflections on the conference as a whole.

Indicators and Forest Certification

Participants learned about sustainable forest indicators, their benefits and limitations. Indicators can be qualitative or quantitative measurements of change, or evidence that a good practice is occurring. A limitation of indicators is that they tend to reduce wholes into parts. There also appears to be a gap in indicator systems with respect to aboriginal perspectives and participants were encouraged to become involved in indicator development at the local level.

Participants also learned about forest certification, its benefits and limitations, and first hand experiences from aboriginal communities. Forest Certification is a voluntary, non governmental program that verifies a company's forest management systems, operations and products against a standard.

The three main certification systems active in Canada are through the Canadian Standards Association (CSA), the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI). While each system has its own distinctions, all include aboriginal interests and protection of rights to some degree. SFI is the most recent to include aboriginal interests (as of January 2005).

For an aboriginal community, involvement in the certification process emerges along three lines of opportunity. First, aboriginal communities can pressure companies to ensure their rights are protected. Second, aboriginal communities can participate regularly and constructively in the certification process. Third, FSC certification can be appealed to the FSC if the decision to award certification appears to contravene an aspect of the standard, such as an aboriginal right.

Not a guarantee of aboriginal or treaty rights

Participants were cautioned that certification is not an avenue for policy change and does not always guarantee that aboriginal and treaty rights will be respected. Also, aboriginal communities seeking certification for their own forests could save significant costs by entering a niche market for aboriginal products, rather than certifying their wood.

Iisaak, an aboriginal community with a timber licence in Clayoquot Sound (Vancouver Island), sought FSC certification a couple of years ago. The community felt that FSC certification would yield greater acceptance of old growth harvesting from NGOs, greater recognition of legal and customary rights

of aboriginal people, and increased marketing power. Now FSC certified, the community faces the challenge of moving certified wood to the market. A solution has been to sell wood through an EcoLumber cooperative in BC.

Ktunaxa Kinbasket Treaty Council, located in the Kootenays, was part of a larger FSC certification process initiated by Tembec, the main employer in the region. Certification took place within a broader, evolving relationship between Ktunaxa and Tembec, the workings of which were outlined for us. A key aspect is the consultation and accommodation agreement.

Consultation expectations are clarified by means of a consultative framework, currently in development, which includes a matrix indicating the type of consultation expected to occur for different company activities, ranging from notice only, to full consultation. Accommodation expectations include protection of rights (i.e. full access to land for sustenance), goods and services procurement, an employment strategy and

business ventures. It was emphasized that the relationship is two-way and based on mutual respect and responsibility. Differences within the community are also being addressed, with the goal of protecting and strengthening both cultural and business interests. It was exciting to hear about these and other aboriginal success stories.

Involvement, perseverance and information

Emerging themes throughout the conference included: Aboriginal involvement in indicator and certification processes is important; Patience and perseverance is key to ensuring aboriginal rights and needs are addressed; Transfer and translation of workshop information to the grassroots level is needed.

I found this conference to be informative, but there was limited opportunity for participants to engage in dialogue around the perspectives they brought to the conference. This did not go unnoticed by participants, some of whom voiced their concern. "Who is this conference for?" a participant asked out loud during lunch. "Are aboriginal perspectives truly being considered?"

Meaningful public involvement and education reaches beyond one-way communication, into the realm of dialogue. Dialogue involves a willingness to look through the eyes of the other, to communicate ethically and from a place of acceptance. While I gained much from the conference, I left wanting more. The question still lingers in my mind: What is good forest management from an aboriginal perspective?

The following acknowledges and provides the website for the aboriginal communities who gave presentations at the workshop: Algonquins of Barriere Lake, Quebec, www.algonquinnation.ca/barrierelake; Black River First Nation, Manitoba, www.blackriver.ca; Iisaak Forest Resources, BC, www.iisaak.com; Innu Nation, Labrador, www.innu.ca; Ktunaxa Kinbasket Tribal Council, BC, www.ktunaxa.org; Whitefeather Forest Initiative, Ontario, www.whitefeatherforest.com/

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Participants from across Canada heard success stories at forest management conference.

A CROW's-Eye Vision

by Glenda Whiteman, Concerned Residents of Winnipeg, Inc.

It is wonderful to look ahead to a society where everyone understands that it is not smart to eat, drink, sleep, breathe and bathe in chemicals; that it is not healthy to expose ourselves to combinations of chemicals; that it is truly unsafe to expose ourselves repeatedly to the same chemical, even at very low doses. Imagine when our politicians have stopped offering 'poison' to citizens in towns and cities to kill 'pests' and instead offer advice on ecological turf and pest management; when residents and legislators understand that it is not dandelions but pesticides that are 'noxious'. Then the general public will be stronger, healthier, better able to ward off flu, colds and viral infections, and take fewer sick days because our immune systems will have recovered from the annual and repeated low-dosage exposures to organophosphate nerve toxins.

Let us look through our rose-coloured glasses and picture what it could be like to live in Manitoba, when we have headlines like this: *Cancer Rates Dropping; Socially Responsible Investments Offer Best Returns; Lake Winnipeg Recovering; Schools Report Fewer Cases of ADHD; Fertility Rates Up, Endometriosis Diagnosis Down; Manitoba Life Expectancy Highest in Canada.*

Employers and legislators will understand the reality that it is far more profitable to create safe environments in which to live and work and we will see disability rates plummet. Stockholders and investors will insist that their money be used only in ways that will not cause harm and corporations will find creative ways to be both ecological and fiscally competitive. Our doctors will no longer be tied to a system that virtually forces them to pull out their prescription pads and instead they will have time to listen, and health care costs will decline. Our municipal, provincial, and federal decision-makers will have heeded the advice of such entities as the Toronto Public Health Environmental Protection Office (1998), the federal Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development (2000), The Canadian Association of Physicians for

the Environment (2002), the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development (2003), the Ontario College of Family Physicians (2004), the Sierra Club of Canada (2005) and the Canadian Coalition for Health & Environment (2005)—and everyone in Canada will be protected from pesticides. We will stop pouring billions of dollars and immeasurable energy racing to 'find the cure' for this or that disease and instead will focus on identifying what makes us sick in the first place. Governments will no longer register and use products with insufficient safety data (zonolite, thalidomide, baygon, 2,4-D....).

We will all be safer and healthier because we can have access to all the information about all the contents of all the products in our environment, and we will be able to effectively avoid toxins in our carpets, shoes, clothing, computers, cell phones, personal hygiene products, food, water and air. And we will consider it obvious that we should pay, up front, the 'true cost' of every single purchase.

So, how do we get there? How do we reach the point when the public and the politicians understand that the planet is one single, coordinated organism; that what we do to our air, water and soil, we do to ourselves? How do we start spending our fi-

nancial and human resources searching for ways to prevent disease, rather than on scrambling to cure disease? How do we stop poisoning ourselves?

Elsewhere in Canada, public opinion polls demonstrate irrefutably that the cosmetic use of pesticides is not welcome. Quebec, for example, is far ahead of us in terms of their understanding of the consequences of pesticide use. They have no choice—they have more people, more industry, and more 'progress' that has resulted in much more pollution and many sick people.

They now have a Provincial Pesticide Code. Malathion will not be legal in Quebec after next year. 2,4-D will not be permitted there either, in spite of recent heavy lobbying efforts by the industry to have it excluded from the code. Quebec is be-



Illustration by Amy Choi

Twelve Steps: Freedom from chemical addiction

We live in a chemically addicted environment. Just as with any other addiction, we can recover one step at a time:

- 1 Inform yourself and share your knowledge with others. The CROW Links & Resources web page will get you started. (www.CROWinc.org)
- 2 Contact your politicians. Look on CROW's website for sample letters and contact information.
- 3 Share your concerns about toxins and ask questions of senior officials at Insect Control Branch (City of Winnipeg), Pesticides Approvals Branch (Province of Manitoba) and their superior, Deputy Minister of Conservation (Province of Manitoba).
- 4 Buffer Up! Request notification and a buffer zone from all insecticide applications from both Insect Control Branch and Weed Control Branch.
- 5 Find allies among friends, neighbours, co-workers and ac-

quaintances and together, consider possible options for increasing public awareness.

- 6 Have your group or organization endorse CROW's Open Letter calling for an end to fogging with Malathion.
- 7 Connect with others concerned about this issue.
- 8 Join a coalition of groups in calling for a cosmetic pesticide ban (in Winnipeg, there is a Partnership for Pesticide By-law).
- 9 Sponsor to have a copy of the Pesticides Literature Review by the Ontario College of Family Physicians placed in a Manitoba doctor's office waiting room. (e-mail CROWinc@mts.net)
- 10 Contact CROW Inc. to request our display or speaker services for your community event, meeting, or place of employment.
- 11 Invest your money only in SRI's or use your clout as a shareholder to demand sustainable practices.
- 12 Donate time or money to an organization working to reduce pesticides.

ginning the work of creating safe housing for victims of chemical injury. We have the opportunity to learn from their mistakes before we have no choice. Let us stop increasing our population of people who have nowhere safe to live. We can make Manitoba a province that will be safe for everyone.

It is becoming clear that more people would refrain from using pesticides if they knew more about healthier choices. CROW would like to become a resource for anyone in the province looking for alternatives to pesticides. We hope to train and supervise the CREW (Concerned Residents Educating Winnipeg) to provide the latest resources and information on *healthy* alternatives to pesticides for lawn care, landscaping, gardening, home pest infestations and insect prevention at lo-

cal fairs, organic stores, and door-to-door, beginning Earth Day weekend and continuing through the summer. Donations towards this initiative will be graciously accepted.

At time of writing, Winnipeg City Council is considering a new insect control strategy. The new city entomologist, Taz Stuart, proposes to phase out the use of chemical pesticides in favour of more biological alternatives. Although there are some serious flaws in this new plan, it is a definite step in the right direction. The most obvious way you can show support for these new safer initiatives is to register your buffer zone. Better yet, team up with like-minded people and safely organize to protect your entire neighbourhood with a community buffer.

For more info, see www.crowinc.org.

ECO

Federal Review calls for Public Comment Is 2,4-D Really "Safe"?

By Anne Lindsey

2,4-D (2,4-Dichlorophenoxy acetic Acid) is the most commonly applied lawn care chemical in Canada. 2,4-D kills broadleaf weeds such as dandelions and plantain, and is extremely popular in Winnipeg, where informal store surveys reveal that it is the most commonly purchased lawn chemical, most often in combination with other substances.

A review of the registration of 2,4-D for use on lawn and turf was recently completed by Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA)—the body charged with registering all pesticides that are permitted to be used in Canada. PMRA released its "Proposed Acceptability for Continuing Registration" discussion paper on Feb. 21, 2005, giving the public until Earth Day, April 22nd to comment before a final decision is made on continued registration. Although Canada's Pest Control Products Act explicitly forbids the use of the word "safe" in advertising for pesticide products, PMRA declared that "2,4-D can be used safely on lawns and turf" in the "information note" posted on its website: wording which greatly concerned many observers.

The lawn care industry is, of course, delighted with the PMRA's announcement—having lobbied long and hard for the continued use of 2,4-D. But environmental and health advocates from across the country are calling for a closer look at the discussion document, and revealing a number of troubling aspects of the report.

Report is premature

Dr. Meg Sears of the Canadian Coalition for Health and Environment comments that perhaps the most generous thing one can conclude is that the report and announcement are premature: PMRA states that several important pieces of data had not been received at the time of the report's publication, notably studies on developmental neurotoxicity, reproduction, and dioxin contamination of 2,4-D products (see below).

Another concern evident from the document and follow-up research conducted by Paule Hjertaas, a Saskatchewan environmentalist, is that the report does not even apply to many, if not most, of the 2,4-D products available "off the shelf" in Canada. Hjertaas shows that many of the commercially available products contain the "DEA" form of 2,4-D (or PROBABLY contain it, labels do not provide unequivocal information). The PMRA states: "The DEA form of 2,4-D had a different toxicological profile compared to the other forms". It goes on to describe a variety of effects reported in available studies and

foreign review summaries, including "more severe thyroid and reproductive organ toxicity at lower dose levels when compared to all other forms of 2,4-D", and "... pure DEA causes brain and spinal cord demyelination in rats and is immunotoxic in rats and mice", amongst others.

The report repeatedly asserts that PMRA does not consider the DEA form of 2,4-D to be toxicologically equivalent to other forms, and that it has requested further information from the manufacturer. It states numerous times "Mitigation measures for the DEA form of 2,4-D may be proposed depending on the outcome of the current review of additional information". Meanwhile, these products remain available for retail sale.

"Real life" exposures must be studied

PMRA indicates that it "considers aggregate exposures to the same pesticide from all sources and routes of exposure". However, it does not consider its effects in combination with different pesticides, even though 2,4-D is almost always used in combination with other synthetic herbicides (predominantly dicamba and mecoprop). In fact, later on in the document, PMRA asserts that the frequent grouping of 2,4-D with other pesticides (including mecoprop) in epidemiological studies has the effect of "confounding" the results of these studies looking at potential cancer or reproductive effects in humans. One might suggest that it's time that "real life" exposures to common chemicals are studied. Until then, surely the precautionary principle should prevail.

Contravenes Environmental Protection Act

As noted above, the PMRA report was published before the required dioxin analyses had been provided to them by the Industry Task Force II on 2,4-D Research. According to Dr. Meg Sears, dioxin contamination has been problematic in the past, but since 1983 the federal government has been assured by the manufacturers that it is no longer a problem and no further monitoring has been carried out.

Sears emphasizes that under Canada's Environmental Protection Act (CEPA), dioxins with 2 or more chlorine atoms are targeted for virtual elimination. Dioxins with two and three chlorines will be the predominant contaminants in 2,4-D, although some higher-chlorinated forms will be present. How-

continued on next page ►

Is 2,4-D Really "Safe"?

continued from page 7...

ever, the PMRA is only asking for analyses of dioxins with 4 or more chlorines. Thus, the PMRA is in contravention of the CEPA. It is also asking for an experiment to be conducted that will ignore the most serious problem. In Canada there is no monitoring of contamination of commercial products or of herbicide-related dioxins in the environment (e.g. in sediments in waterways adjacent to golf courses). Dioxin contamination may be an important contributing factor in inconsistent epidemiological evidence regarding herbicides.

Childhood cancers need more attention

There are numerous other concerns relating to the methodology of this report, but a particularly troubling one relates to the proprietary nature of the input and advice by the five-member Science Advisory Panel. The PMRA document lists only "key elements" of this Panel's report, one of which is that "The Panel indicated that childhood cancer issues should receive greater attention". PMRA seems to dismiss this concern, indicating that there aren't enough studies available on children's exposure to pesticides to allow a determination of cause and effect relationships!

Again, Sears notes that PMRA chose to focus on animal studies provided by industry to conclude that it cannot be determined whether or not 2,4-D causes cancer. Dogs are sensitive to 2,4-D and cancers have been seen. However, rat studies were used, despite the fact that rats are better equipped to deal with toxic chemicals than people are. Moreover, the Ontario College of Family Physicians found in its study published in April, 2004

that the open, peer-reviewed literature regarding humans is clear enough for doctors to advise avoidance if at all possible. Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and leukemia are frequently noted in association with 2,4-D use, along with brain tumours and neuroblastoma in children.

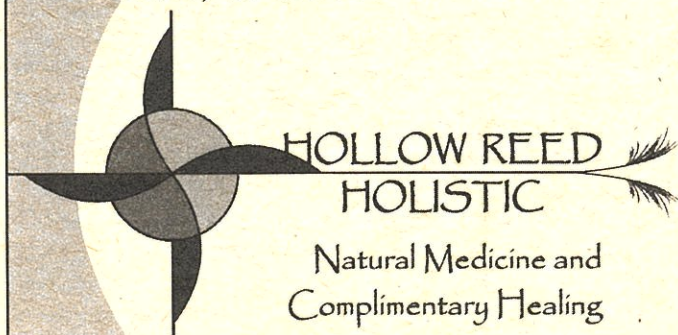
Is it acceptable?

PMRA does recommend some new precautionary measures be taken, including lower application rates, restricted frequency of application, more restrictive buffer zones to protect non-target plants, and label statements on commercial (not domestic) products relating to toxicity. It also wants people to know that runoff into aquatic habitats should be avoided and that groundwater contamination is possible in permeable areas. Overall, however, its assertion that 2,4-D does not entail "an unacceptable risk of harm to human health..." is problematic. Surely, determining "acceptability" of risk is a choice that Canadians need to make for themselves after considering all the evidence. In this case, "all the evidence" is not available, and if registration is renewed, Canadians will continue to be exposed involuntarily to this chemical. Given that an alternative method of weed control exists (organic lawn care), the continued use of 2,4-D seems neither necessary nor prudent.

Note: the Province of Quebec's Pesticide Code bans the use of 2,4-D. The Quebec government has reviewed PMRA's document and decided that the ban will remain in place.

PMRA's document PACR 2005 -01 can be found at <http://www.pmra-arla.gc.ca/english/pdf/pacr/pacr2005-01-e.pdf>. Comments should be sent to the Publications Co-ordinator, PMRA, Health Canada, 2720 Riverside Drive A.L.6605C Ottawa, K1A 0K9 or by fax: 613-736-3758, or email to prma_publications@hc-sc.gc.ca by April 22, 2005. **ECO**

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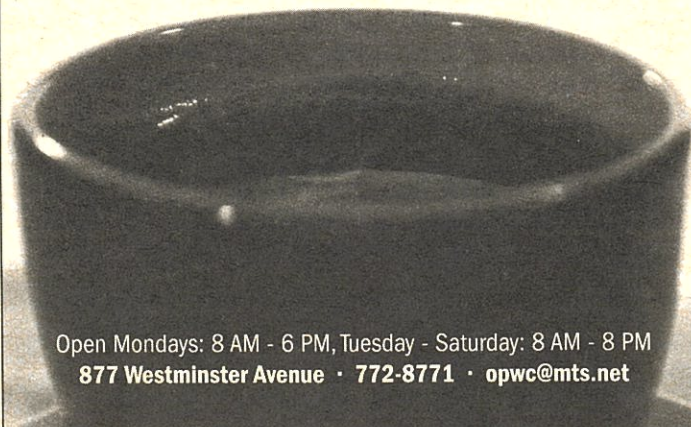
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Riding Mountain Ecosystem Atlas Released

By Beth McKechnie, CPAWS-Manitoba

Citizens, landowners, educators, planners, conservation organizations, researchers and government agencies in the Riding Mountain region now have a new resource to work with—the Riding Mountain Ecosystem Community Atlas.

The atlas project was initiated by CPAWS as a means to provide a single document source for a range of information on land use issues in the Riding Mountain region. Because the ecological health of our national parks depends not only on how lands within park borders are managed, but also on what happens in the greater park ecosystem, it is important that everyone has easy access to relevant information when making decisions about the future of the region.

While it was recognized that a great deal of information already existed, it was spread around different sources and was not always easy to access. By compiling the information and returning it to local communities in the form of a printed atlas and electronically on a web site, CPAWS hopes the atlas will contribute to sound land-use deci-

sions. In turn, this will help to ensure the long-term well being of the Park and the economic future of its neighbours.

The atlas focuses on the 13,810 sq km area that forms the boundaries of the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve, which encompasses Riding Mountain National Park and the 15 rural municipalities that surround the Park. The content is a combination of information, figures, tables, photos, and a series of 41 maps covering items of common interest such as soil, water, vegetation, flora and fauna, human history and local economies, key wildlife and ecologically distinct areas, and the challenge of maintaining ecological integrity.

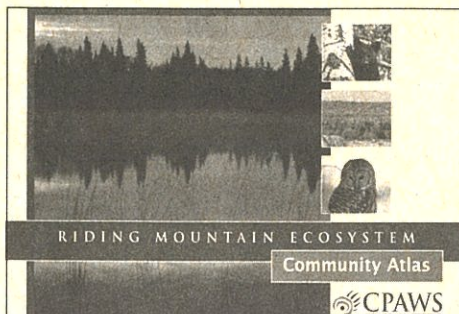
Copies of the atlas have been distributed to high schools, regional libraries, Rural Municipality and Conservation District offices located in the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve, and to members of the Coalition of First Nations With Interests in Riding Mountain National Park, as well as other individuals and organizations.

Community involvement was critical in the two-year effort to develop this atlas. Key collaborators on the project included Riding Mountain National Park of Canada, the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve Management Committee (which includes local landowners), the Coalition of First Nations With Interests in RMNP, and the RM of Park. Information and assistance was also provided by various government agencies and other conservation organizations working in the region.

The Riding Mountain atlas is part of a larger CPAWS project to compile information about land use for the greater park ecosystems of four national parks that also includes: Gulf Islands National Park Reserve in BC; Bruce Peninsula National Park; and St. Lawrence Islands National Park in Ontario. CPAWS gratefully acknowledges financial support for the project from the Government of Canada's Voluntary Sector Initiative, through the Parks Canada Agency, and the in-kind support of ESRI Canada.

The Riding Mountain Ecosystem Community Atlas is available for purchase in printed form (92 pages, 11x17, full colour) for \$75 or as pdf files on CD for \$5 through CPAWS Manitoba (tel: 949-0782 or email: info@cpawsmb.org). It can also be downloaded for free at: www.cpaws.org/community-atlas/ridingmountain.html.

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Smelter Action

continued from page 1...

Clearly, action is called for to deal with this most serious problem. So what is being done or not done?

Despite decades of operation, the two Manitoba smelters (Inco-Thompson and HudBay), which currently contribute about 50% of all the SO₂ emissions from this industry, do not have the technology in place to capture the sulphur or otherwise reduce their emissions substantively. These facilities are the only two smelters operating in Canada without sulphur fixation or a similar method of avoiding such emissions. "Canada is alone among developed countries in permitting the operation of a smelter without sulphur fixation" (1). Nor have these companies expressed willingness to invest in such technology or alternative approaches to significantly reduce these emissions, something which should have been done years ago.

Notes:

(1) CRU International (Commodities Research Unit) reports that only 6% of copper smelters had no sulphur fixation in 2001.

Part Two will be published in the May/June issue of the *Eco-Journal*. Sources for data and other information in this article may be found in the full version, posted in the on-line *Eco-Journal* at www.mbeconetwork.org, or by contacting the author at annatilman@sympatico.ca.

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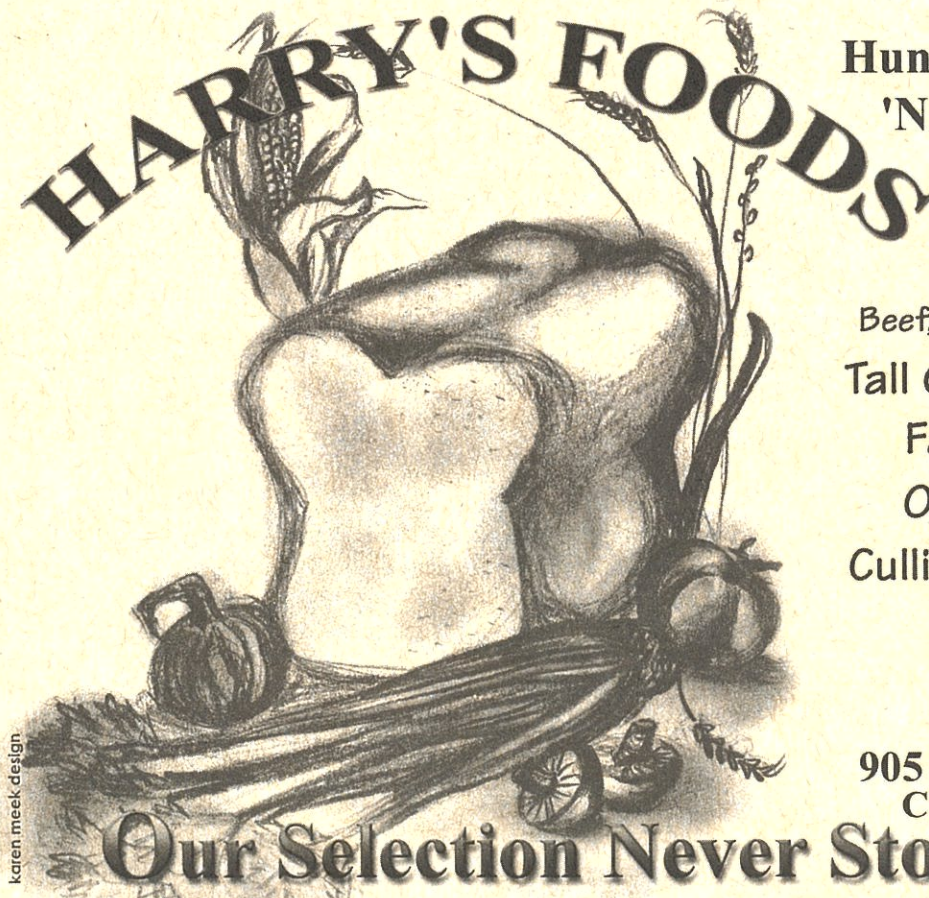
Master Composter Course Back by Popular Demand!

RCM will be holding a 3rd Master Composter course for 15 participants in June, 2005. Dates to be announced in April. Go to <http://www.resourceconservation.mb.ca> and click on the compost project button to get your application today or call the Compost Infoline at 925-3777 for an application or more information.

RCM's Compost Action Project will be holding compost clinics and open houses at our demonstration sites this summer. We have new workshops: Compost Tea, Vermicomposting, Hot and Fast Composting, and Finished Compost along with our very popular basics workshop. Come to our demo site this summer and talk to Master Composters and/or trained staff and see compost in action! Go to <http://www.resourceconservation.mb.ca> and click on the compost project button or call the Compost Infoline at 925-3777 to get further information on locations, dates and times of workshops and open houses.

Celebrate Compost Awareness Week, May 1-7. Check out our website for activities happening around the province and for ideas for you to do in your community. <http://www.resourceconservation.mb.ca> (Click on the compost project button).

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Our Selection Never Stops Growing!!

Youth Lead Greenhouse Gas Reduction

By Alon Weinberg

Does global climate change sometimes seem like too big a problem for you to tackle as an individual? Well, with the Kyoto Accord recently coming into effect, Canadians are now scrambling to live up to our collective commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Youth Environmental Network (YEN), in promotion of the One Tonne Challenge (OTC), is helping to spread the word on achievable, everyday solutions to our carbon-emitting dilemmas. The OTC is an Environment Canada program designed to encourage Canadians to reduce their personal carbon footprints by at least 20%, or one tonne off the annual Canadian average of over 5 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per person.

Through a federal grant worth \$100,000, distributed to more than 20 youth-oriented environmental NGOs, YEN has been able to provide three grants to Manitoba organizations. Receiving larger core grants were the University of Manitoba Recycling and Environmental Group (UMREG) and Resource Conservation Manitoba (RCM) in partnership with Freeze Frame, the International Film Festival for Kids of All Ages. A smaller grant was awarded to the Ecological Males and Females in Action (ECOMAFIA) at the University of Winnipeg.

Youth design programs for youth

What is unique about the YEN grants is that youth are able to design programs that facilitate the reduction of greenhouse gases by other youth. Not only do environmentally-engaged youth find fun, creative ways to transmit greenhouse gas-emitting

strategies to their peers, but they are fast becoming the leading environmental educators of the society as a whole. Since climate change will have such long-lasting impacts on the planet and its inhabitants, it is only natural that young people, such as Daniel Gravenor and Christa McGregor of UMREG, are promoting the One Tonne Challenge.

The two have been engaged in facilitating more sustainable transportation options to the U. of Manitoba campus. "With the U of M being a suburban campus, most people have to commute to come to class. The current infrastructure makes it easy for people to use single occupant vehicles, while hard for people who want to bicycle," said Daniel Gravenor, co-coordinator of UMREG's One Tonne Challenge. Gravenor organized a bike compound design competition, and will work to see the winning design become a reality. "By providing bike shelters we will finally make it easier for people to bike to the U of M on a regular basis". McGregor also created the Faculty Fuel-Free Feud, a friendly competition among students to see which faculty can achieve the greatest emissions reductions over the semester.

Meanwhile, downtown at the U. of Winnipeg, Shayne Peitsch, Scott Harrison, John Proven, Melissa Bennett and the folks at ECOMAFIA are really working on educating their fellow students on some basic things they can do to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Earlier in the year, ECOMAFIA hosted a winter-biking workshop with Kevin Miller of the Manitoba Cycling Association. The group also created a campus transportation survey and is in the process of collecting the data on the over five hundred that were filled out. Everyone who filled out the survey at their table during Campus Commuter Challenge week was entered to win daily prize packages that included compact fluorescent lightbulbs and gift certificates to local green businesses. In addition to cycling, the collectives at both universities are encouraging more people to carpool, directing people to the website www.carpool.ca.

Jacob Carson of RCM, already coordinating the Off-ramp program in high schools, teamed up with Remi Huberdeau of the Freeze Frame film fest to create a new category of film on climate change and the One Tonne Challenge. Freeze Frame is offering youth filmmaking workshops that will better enable them to document the lifestyle changes taking place as part of the national Kyoto-related efforts. Find out more about Freeze Frame at (www.freezeframeonline.org).

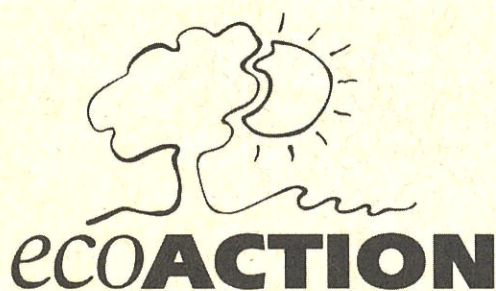
Not limited to only one tonne

Just as Kyoto is an international first step towards more significant long term greenhouse gas reductions, so are many youth not limiting themselves to reducing their emissions by only one tonne. Realizing the universal seriousness of this problem, young people are doing what they can in their own day to day lives to reduce their personal impact on the environment.

On the YEN website www.co2zilla.ca, there are many good ideas for reducing our carbon emissions footprint.

Alon Weinberg is the Youth Environmental Network's prairie coordinator for the One Tonne Challenge.

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This year's Manitoba Earth Day Celebration is calling on all Manitobans to come celebrate and learn more about the Earth, the demands our lifestyles place on it (known as ecological footprint) and the sustainable alternatives now available.

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Shop the EcoMall, where representatives from local "green" businesses can field any questions about their eco-friendly products and services.

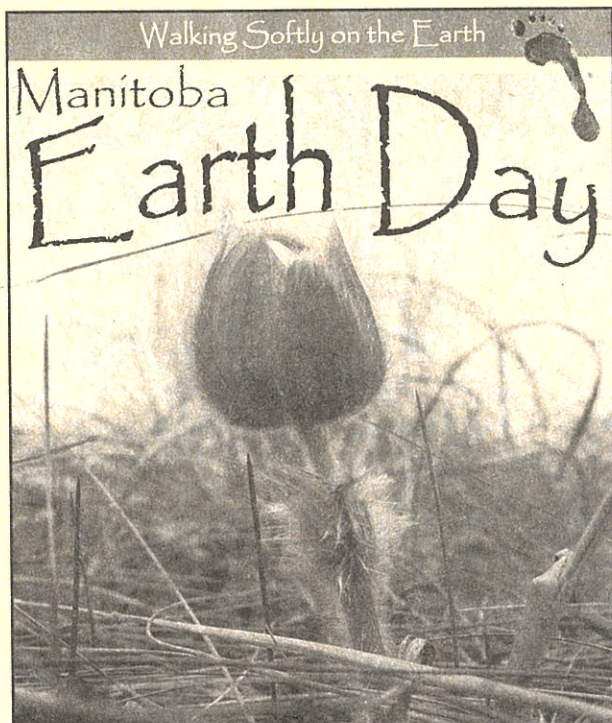
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Highlights:

- **Workshops** throughout the day (Bike Tune-Ups, Water Usage, Composting etc.).
- **Eco Quiz** to test your knowledge

about the ecological impacts of everyday living (prizes).

- **Footprinting Station** Compare the size of your ecological footprint to people around the corner and around the world.



- **Bird's Eye View of the Conservatory** with trips to the treetops.

- **EcoMall** Experience alternative shopping with local environmental businesses, products & services.

- **Reduce It!** Posters, displays and information about environmental problems that affect us all and the solutions to reduce them.

- **Reuse It!** Free kids' craft table.

- **Recycle It!** Exchange your old cell phones/ink cartridges for a free tree.

- **Rethink It!** Browse this exhibit to see how "garbage" can be transformed into art.

For more info, contact:

Lise Smith, 467-3305 or
lises@mts.net

Kristina Hunter, 474-6461
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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.

