

ECO-JOURNAL

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Your big opportunity to dream small Small Farms Challenge

By David Neufeld

"If you know what you want from the farm," Mary councils as we drive, "you can make it with much less." The light is fading away under a heavy grey sky with a sliver of sun peaking over the horizon—giving the crystal edged poplar, oak and chokecherry trees a purpley-blue glow. We're on a winding, hilly road covered in last night's snow that in turn covers yesterday's freezing rain.

At one point Mary reaches over to caution my edgy driving. "You have to watch for snowmobile tracks that look like vehicle tracks. They can lead you right off the road," she says softly. "So make sure you stay in the middle of the road." The road isn't much wider than the wheels of my half ton and clearly my truck and its cousins aren't kings-of-the-road back here. I slow down and sharpen my focus, submitting to her intimate knowledge of these parts.

Mary and her husband Lorne both grew up in the Turtle Mountains in small-farm families. Lorne is Metis and Mary has Mennonite roots. The skills they needed to farm modestly and sustainably came naturally to them by way of their parents. They decided early in their marriage that they wanted to grow or gather as much of their own food as they could. They've raised a family of five, have no debt and can live and travel as they please on their retirement income—almost all this off of the money they made from a very modest three-quarters (480 acres) of marginal land. Mary also drove school bus for a number of years.

Viable for new or downsizing farmers

It seems to me, people choose to live near to centres of power, and accept the busy lifestyle this proximity demands, or they choose to live further away from cities, bill boards and power brokering influences in order to have more flexibility in determining their quality of life. Perhaps this is how we (hill

people) console ourselves when driving older-model cars and trucks or when we try to explain our lifestyles to our children. Whatever it is, I see a relaxed beauty surrounding Mary, Lorne and many other smaller-scale farmers—a contentedness I don't see nearly as often in people who've chosen to live on a larger, more bank-managed scale. It's not that one is inherently better than another, but some of us feel it's

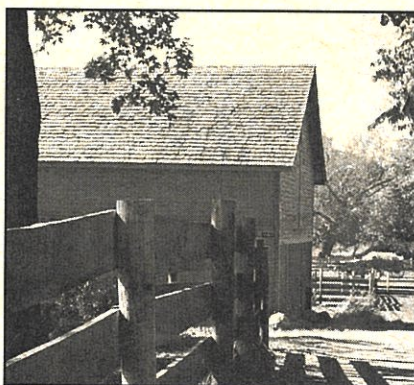
important to raise the profile of smaller scale farmers, so that the option is more visible and seen as viable for new or downsizing farmers.

Or is it that simple—a personal choice issue? Our remote rural areas on the prairies are steadily losing residents. Since I was a lad (about 30 years ago) our municipality has lost half of its population. For some of us hermits, this isn't a totally bad thing, but for a community that wants to keep its businesses and services, this outflow of consumers, volunteers, rural living experts and potential young farmers can be devastating. The larger the farms and the larger the equipment, the fewer people it takes to keep the land producing food. Farmers will drive greater distances to get what they need and it is less likely that they will remain interdependent with their neighbours.

As the realities of high costs and low commodity prices squeeze capital and profit out of the farm, each farm family becomes increasingly vulnerable to the promises of the industry. And so perhaps it is as much a community choice issue as it is a personal issue. Our community, at least, is beginning to embrace the small-farm movement as a potential force in helping to repopulate our rural areas.

The culture in agriculture

We're careful not to criticize individual large farmers for their choices. After all, we've all been complicit in letting the culture slip out of agriculture. We've all begun to wonder if the road we've been on is going in the right direction—considering we all want a thriving community that offers job and career options for our youth. We all recognize the vulnerability of farmers caught up in an industry that pushes getting-bigger-will-solve-the-cash-flow-problems thinking. Paraphrasing Mary, we as a community are beginning to say, 'if we know what we want as a community we can make it with smaller pieces'. We each understand the logic that our town-based



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Celebrate Your Peers

Nominations wanted for MEN Environmental Awards

It's that time of year again—time to
recognize the environmentalists among
us who have truly stood out for their com-
mitment and hard work. Every year, the
Manitoba Eco-Network confers awards on
a number of Manitobans who have made
“significant contributions to the aware-
ness and protection of Manitoba's envi-
ronment”. Anyone can nominate a
Manitoban for this award—please call our
office (947-6511) or go to our website

([http://www.mbeconetwork.org/
projects_awards.asp](http://www.mbeconetwork.org/projects_awards.asp)) for an official
Awards Nomination Form (new this
year). And check the website too, for past
award winners. The Steering Committee
of the MEN manages the voting and se-
lection process.

The awards will be presented at a re-
ception in conjunction with our Annual
General Meeting, to be held on June 15th
at the Eco-Centre.

ECO

Celebrate Earth Day

Events this April 22-23

April 22—Pesticides in Children!, an
Earth Day forum. **Concerned Residents
Of Winnipeg (CROW)** is organizing a
one-day public forum to bring experts
from across North America to give pres-
entations on the themes
of chemicals in our bod-
ies, the effects (especially
on children), and what
can we do about it.
Bulman Centre, Univer-
sity of Winnipeg. Free
admission, donations ac-
cepted. Tickets available
on-site for the delicious
organic evening meal (\$10) followed by
entertainment & relaxation at the Drag-
onfly Café. For more info contact (204)
229-9613 or visit www.CROWinc.org.

April 22-23—Earth Day Celebration
at **Oak Hammock Marsh**. A fun filled day
for the whole family! Join our interpre-
ters for guided tours of the marsh to see
just how important wetlands are for the
health of the planet. Make you own com-

post and discover how to create neat new
treasures from recycled trash! Call 467-
3300 for more info.

April 23—Celebrate Earth Day with
us as we explore the idea of sustainable



communities, 11am-
4pm at **Assiniboine Park
Conservatory**. Share your
thoughts for making our
Manitoba communities
greener and learn about
sustainable examples
working around the cor-
ner and around the world.

Event highlights include
interactive booths about sustainable
transportation, planning/design and
green spaces, a showcase of Manitoba
sustainable projects and communities,
book sales, entertainment, a children's
art project and free trees for participants
traveling to the event in a sustainable
way. For more information, contact Lise
at 254-9176.

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Eco-Network Steering Committee, 2004-2005

Allan Diduck, UofW Environmental Studies

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Amy Hawkins-Bowman, Organic Food Council of Manitoba

Kristina Hunter, U of M, Faculty of Environment

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Joseph Prymak, Consumers for Responsible Energy (CoRE)

Lise Smith, Consumers Association of Canada, MB Chapter

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Will CEC hearings cover all the issues? OlyWest: The Broader Scope

by Anne Lindsey

On the day that Winnipeg's City Council made a commitment to provide a package of financial incentives to the Olywest Pork Processing Plant, the council chamber echoed with assurances that there would be Clean Environment Commission (CEC) hearings which would answer any and all outstanding questions about the plant before a licence was issued.

What does this mean exactly? For some Councillors, it appears that the promise of CEC hearings is an assurance that no harm will come to the environment, the public or workers as a result of the plant's licensing. It seemed to further reassure some councillors that the decision to provide financial incentives to the company, without really knowing all (or even much) of the social and environmental impacts of the project, was not an imprudent move. But much will depend on what the commissioners actually consider about the project and, when they have made their recommendations, on what the provincial government will decide.

A movement is building amongst many in the environmental community to urge the government to call for a broad scope for hearings. Essentially, once Olywest submits their formal application for a license to Manitoba Conservation, the Minister (the Hon. Stan Struthers) must issue "Terms of Reference" (ToR) for the public hearings which will undoubtedly take place. (In fact, the government has already announced that it will make participant funding available for groups wishing to intervene at the hearings). The ToR sets the scene for what must be considered by the CEC. They can include environmental, social and economic issues—more broadly, all the components of "sustainability".

High degree of controversy

Given the high degree of controversy surrounding the proposal, and the hog industry in general, a broad scope only makes sense. Different groups will have varying views on what is important. The Concerned Citizens Coalition, primarily residents of the Transcona/St. Boniface area close to the site, are on the record that they do not oppose the industry, or the plant, per se. They believe that their community is not a suitable place

for such a plant, and want to see it located elsewhere, preferably not near any residential areas. They are justifiably concerned about odour from the plant, particularly as it will affect their property values and quality of life.

At the other end of the spectrum, Fred Tait, of the National Farmers' Union and HogWatch, will be insisting that the hearings include a consideration of the sustainability of the hog industry in Manitoba—including the latest raft of regulations

regarding manure management and water quality management zones. Tait, and many other rural residents, wonder just how much more manure the province's lands and waters can take. Are we approaching the saturation point, and does it really make sense to go that far?

Watchers of past environmental assessments in Manitoba cannot help but be reminded of the process whereby the licensing of pulp or wood products mills has proceeded separate from consideration of the sustainability of the

wood supply required to furnish the mills. Giving a licence for this huge new plant without examining the supply of hogs it requires would be an analogous situation.

Many important issues

There are many other important issues at stake, and all deserve due consideration by the CEC. For example, at City Hall, Diana Ludwig—a nurse with the MFL's Occupational Health Centre—presented disturbing evidence that as the technology for kill plants has "improved" (ie. become faster) slaughterhouse work has earned the status of the most dangerous occupation in North America, creating high rates of serious worker injury and even death. The vast majority of jobs in the plants are low paid, and do not attract long term workers. These statistics prevail, no matter where such a plant is located.

The environmental issues, alluded to by David Epp in his article (*Posterity, Pork and the Public*, page 5), are also complex. The public needs answers to questions such as the disposition of the waste water from the plant—can the City's sewage treatment facilities manage the extra capacity? What will be the composition of the waste water stream? Hogs are fed a cocktail of low level antibiotics and hormones in their feed, and what will be their impact on the waste water?

The hog industry has had major impacts in rural Manitoba. It has been welcomed as a saviour by some, but has left many small farmers and rural residents despairing about the future of their lands, waters and livelihoods. Now, City residents have an opportunity—perhaps even an obligation—to pay closer attention to the full cycle of possible impacts. Weighing costs and benefits is never an easy task, but it is made much more difficult when the scope for hearings is narrow. This is an excellent time to ensure that all of the issues are on the table.

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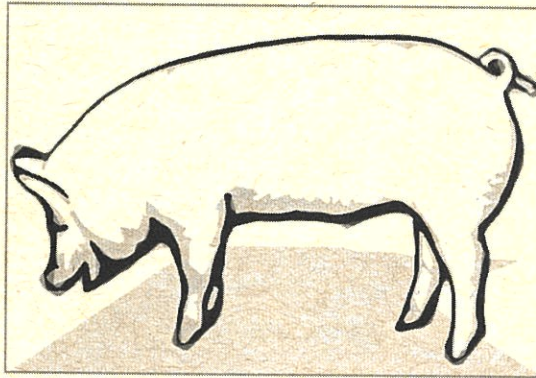


Illustration by David Henry

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What's Happening

April 9—Manitoba Wildlife Rehabilitation Organization *New Volunteer Orientation*. Registration is required as seating is limited. 1pm at the Wildlife Haven Rehabilitation Centre, Glenlea. Please call the centre to register in advance. 883-2122, or e-mail us at mrwo-cent@skyweb.ca

April 12—*A Gardener's A-Z of Native Plants* Manitoba Naturalists Indoor Program. With Marilyn Latta, Chair of Habitat Conservation Committee. Slide show and talk on native species that thrive in various micro-climates, plants for formal vs. naturalized gardens and attracting birds and butterflies. 7:30pm at Kelvin High School, Rm 31. \$5 for MNS members, \$10 for non-members. Call 943-9029.

April 12—*Save Our Seine Annual General Meeting*. Update on the Staté of the Seine and business meeting. 7 pm at Morrow Gospel Church, 755 St. Anne's Rd. Contact SOS at 740-9247 for more info.

April 19—Peak Oil Symposium, *When Energy Demand Exceeds Supply: Impacts on Transportation and Cities*. The University of Winnipeg, through its Centre for Sustainable Transportation and its Institute of Urban Studies, is hosting an all day symposium to review energy futures and their implications for transport and cities. It will draw attention to the potential need for action by individuals, the private sector and government agencies to forestall the worst of these implications. Featuring internationally-recognized authorities on the subject of 'peak oil'. Winnipeg Art Gallery. Registration is \$175 before Mar. 31, regular \$200, student rates \$50 and \$75. See http://ius.uwinnipeg.ca/pdf/oil_registration.pdf.

April 19—*The Long Emergency: Surviving the Converging Catastrophes of the 21st Century*. Free public Lecture with James Howard Kunstler. In conjunction with the Peak Oil Symposium. 7:00pm at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Muriel Richardson Auditorium.

April 20—*The Impact of Olywest*. What does increased hog production mean for Manitoba? Speakers will include Rick Dove from Waterkeepers Alliance, Dr. Michael Broadway, author of *Slaughterhouse Blues*, and Marlene Halverson, Farm Economics Advisor for the Animal Welfare Institute. Sponsored by the Winnipeg Humane Society, National Farmers Union and Manitoba Eco-Network. 7pm at the Viscount Gort Hotel. Admission free, donations accepted. Call 943-0318 for more info.

April 20—*Waverley West Area Structure Plan Public Hearing*. A Special Meeting of the Riel Community Committee has been called to conduct a public hearing for the Waverley West Area Structure Plan. 5:00pm in the Council Chambers, Council Building, 510 Main Street. For info contact Marc Pittet, Clerk of the Riel Community Committee at 986-4229.

April 22-23—Earth Day events listed on page 2.

April 29—Manitoba Naturalists Society *European Buckthorn Removal Day*, 1:00pm-2:00pm at Assiniboine Park (north of Zoo parking lot). For more information please call Helen at the Naturalist Services Branch at (204) 986-7235.

April 29—Project Peacemakers *Eco-Friendly Dinner*. Please join us for our wonderful spring fundraiser. All food is vegetarian, with some vegan dishes. Our guest speakers are always very challenging and informative on environmental issues, and the entertainment, is, well, very entertaining! Don't forget our famous Silent Auction. Guest speaker is Jo-Ellen Parry from

the International Institute for Sustainable Development. 6pm at St. Paul's Anglican Church, 830 North Drive. Tickets are \$10, \$5 for children under 12. For info or tickets contact 775-8178 or info@projectpeacemakers.org.

April 29-30—*Rotary Classroom Open House and Crocus Weekend*, 10am to 5pm at Living Prairie Museum (2795 Ness Avenue). For more information please call (204) 832-0167 or visit www.livingprairie.ca. Admission is free!

May 6—The Simplicity Practice and Resource Centre presents *Invitation to Simplicity: A Workshop about life choices*. Discover the key values and practices of Voluntary Simplicity; Reconnect with your personal sources of reward in life; Discover a community of like-minded friends and neighbours; Grow in awareness of how much is enough; Begin visioning the sort of change you want to be in the world. Fee is \$35.00 (includes handouts and break refreshments) 9:00am to 4:30pm Westminster Housing Co-op, 145 Maryland. Pre-Register with SPARC by April 29 @ 475-4233 or info@simplicitycentre.ca.

May 6—*Youth Stewardship in Environment Showcase* See the ingenuity students from across the province have to offer to help protect our environment. Dozens of projects will be on display at Oak Hammock Marsh for judging. Call 467-3305 for info.

May 20-21, June 4 & 18—*Native Plant Sale*, 10am to 4pm at Living Prairie Museum (2795 Ness Avenue). For more information please call (204) 832-0167 or visit www.livingprairie.ca.

May 20-22—*Marsh Discovery Weekend*. Explore the biodiversity of Oak Hammock Marsh while discovering the fascinating lives of the creatures that call the marsh home. Explore some of the best-kept secret areas of the marsh as we take you along for a tour to the North Birding Area, tall-grass prairie and the artesian spring. Bug crafts and insect movies as well as canoe rides and marsh walks will turn this weekend into an exquisite all-natural experience. Call 467-3305 for info.

May 25-27—*Manitoba Envirothon* at the International Peace Gardens, Boissevain, MB. To volunteer for this event see http://www.mbforestryassoc.ca/Envirothon/envirothon_home_page.htm.

May 27—Spring tree planting and guided nature walk at Henteleff Park. We will be planting native trees and shrubs to help restore the river bottom forest within the park at 1980 St. Mary's Road. 10:00am to 12:00pm. Coffee, drinks and muffins provided. Please bring your families and friends along with a spade/shovel for planting. We have never let a bit of cold or rain stop us in the four previous plantings! For more info contact Julie Sveinson 986-3549.

June 4-10—*Commuter Challenge 2006: Join the Winning Team!* Join the Winning Team by participating in the Commuter Challenge 2006. This friendly competition is a way of showcasing Manitobans who have chosen climate-friendly modes of transportation, such as taking transit, carpooling, walking, running, rollerblading, and cycling. As a participant in this national sustainable transportation event, you can help to reduce your greenhouse gas emissions and provide an opportunity for employees or students to get fit and save money. Plus there are great prizes to be won! Sign up your workplace or school now. Visit www.resourceconservation.mb.ca or call 204-925-3772 for more details.



Posterity, Pork, and the Public

By David Epp

By now many of us have heard of a proposal by OlyWest to build a large pork slaughtering and processing facility in St. Boniface, with construction scheduled to begin next spring and full operation in 2008.¹ This consortium of Olymel L.P., Hytek Ltd. and Big Sky Farms Inc. wants to construct a \$200 million facility with the capacity of 2,250,000 hogs per year, and the potential to employ 1,100 people.² The economic benefits of a proposal with those kinds of numbers obviously garner serious consideration. OlyWest is also trying to alleviate any environmental concerns the public might have.

What's not to like? How about the track record? It's about time the pork processing industry started implementing better technology and showing commitment to the environment. While technological developments can, in some cases, minimize or eliminate environmental / ecological issues, that really hasn't been born out with the hog processing industry. Industry-wide, including Manitoba, incidents of sewage lagoon breaching, and even intentional discharge into waterways abound.³ Not exactly a track record to be proud of.

Government reluctance to enforce legislation

Part of the reason there have been so many incidents is most governments' inability or reluctance to effectively enforce what minimal legislation there is. There are quite a variety of issues to be concerned with. Dr. Eva Pip, of the University of Winnipeg, has written a comprehensive review on the effects of the livestock industry on human health and the environment. The full review can be found at [http://](http://www.hogwatchmanitoba.org/evapip/evapip01.html)

www.hogwatchmanitoba.org/evapip/evapip01.html. Among the numerous concerns she has examined are:

Odour—let's face it; these animals, in these numbers, produce voluminous quantities of gas and sewage. It isn't fragrant. Who wants to be praying on a daily basis for favourable wind orientation?

Phosphorus—a major contributor to algal blooms, which have been shown to have devastating consequences on lake and river ecologies. Phosphorus is present in large quantities in hog manure.

Viruses, bacteria and protozoa—hog manure is an excellent vector for a multiplicity of pathogens; Salmonella, Campylobacter, Brucella, and Cryptosporidium, to name a few.

To be fair, the sewage issue has been a fairly vexing problem, but new technologies are being developed. Research at the University of North Carolina, a state with a major hog industry, has identified promising new hog sewage treatment technologies.⁴ They include fixed-media biofiltration, constructed wetlands, and high temperature anaerobic waste digestion and solids composting, among other innovations. However, at the time of writing, not all details of the Olywest proposal are available, so their management practices and use of technology remain to be seen.

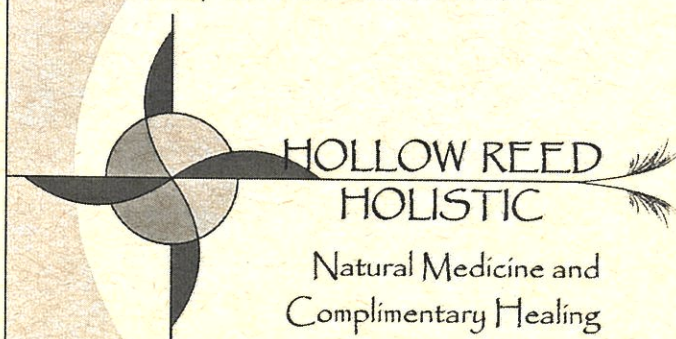
There once was a time when nearly all manner of industrialization could be implemented with no factoring in of the ecological damage that might result. Most of these issues, of which the pork processing industry is a typical example, boil down to weighing short-term economic benefit against potential long-term environmental damage. Let's stop flirting with this scenario and take steps to ensure there will be a healthy, clean environment for posterity. Changes to better practices often need to be spurred on by the public. As more details of the OlyWest proposal are revealed, let's make sure that environmental concerns are truly given the attention they warrant.

References

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2. www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/November2005/14/c4884.html
3. www.hogwatchmanitoba.org/news0304.html
4. www2.ncsu.edu/ncsu/univ_relations/news_services/press_releases/00_10/259.htm

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MANITOBA WILDLANDS

Making Connections

Eco-Network Member Group Forum 2006

By Liz Dykman

For the last several years, Manitoba Eco-Network has been organizing annual fora to bring together individuals from our member groups to discuss issues, participate in capacity building workshops, and get to know each other better. This year we took the forum out to Onanole, Manitoba, just south of Riding Mountain National Park, in an effort to build better connections between environmentalists from around the province. Thanks to a grant from the Canadian Environmental Network, we were able to subsidize travel for participants and accommodation at Smokey Hollow Resort. A well-attended Water Caucus meeting Friday afternoon and evening preceded the Forum on Saturday, March 11th.

Diversity

Attending the forum were folks from as far away as Thompson, Flin Flon, Swan River, and The Pas, as well as many from western Manitoba. In addition to representing many areas of the province, participants also represented a wide variety of issues. This diversity of issues was the focus of the morning session:

Watershed concerns

Bill Paton, president of the Brandon and Area Environmental Council, presented some of his research findings on the state of the Little Saskatchewan River. (The forum took place in the Little Saskatchewan River Watershed). The river is undergoing eutrophication, or nutrient enrichment, with algae blooms becoming a problem.

The Little Saskatchewan is an interesting case because its watershed is entirely within Manitoba, so there is no chance to blame the problems in the basin on pollution coming from beyond our borders. Impacts on the river include very low flow in dry years, the 10 000 cattle being raised in the watershed, cottage developments, dams, industry (Maple Leaf plant at Brandon and the ethanol plant at Minnedosa), and climate change. Some of the biggest concerns are the appearance of an algae species that produces a neurotoxin, E. coli contamination, the levels of endocrine disrupting chemicals in the water due to runoff of hormone-laden manure, and over-allocation of water for irrigation, domestic and industrial purposes.

Dr. Paton and his students and colleagues are building an impressive bank of data on the state of the river.

Challenges in the north

Melissa Branconnier spoke to the group on the programs and activities of the Environmental Youth Centre in Thompson. Melissa discussed the environmental challenges facing northern communities regarding waste. Transportation costs for recyclables and toxics are prohibitive, there is a lack of environmental awareness, the efforts being made by individuals are not well coordinated, and the environmental champions in the community are subject to burnout.

The Environmental Youth Centre has a contract with North Central Development as part of the Community One Tonne Challenge project for developing a fish offal composting project in several outlying communities. They are hoping to refocus this project in partnership with the Thompson Zoo, which is already composting their barn waste. Another area of work for the Youth Centre is providing work training for at-risk youth. There is an effort to combine work training with environmental projects such as tree planting or lakeshore cleanups.

Melissa has many ideas to expand the work of the Centre, such as community gardening, and reclamation of the former dump. Her creativity and enthusiasm were inspiring to the group.

Planning and Nutrients

Ruth Pryzner of Citizens for the Responsible Application of Phosphorus (CRAP), presented on watershed planning issues. Ruth outlined a number of concerns with the proposed Water Quality Management Zones for Nutrients (WQMZ), and the push from the province to create development plans. Ruth articulated

the need to create watershed plans before development plans. She also expressed concern that because WQMZ are based on the Canadian Land Inventory of soil types, they do not adequately take into account local variation in topography and impacts on groundwater recharge areas. Another concern is that a lot of research about watersheds is needed in order to make meaningful decisions. The agenda for planning can be set in early stages when the topics to be researched are decided, and Ruth feels there may not be much opportunity for public input. Additionally, the planning process does not appear to engage First Nation communities, or address potential conflicts between neighbouring planning areas.

The forests and the trees

Dan Soprovich discussed the over-allocation of forest resources in the Swan River area.

The Inter-Mountain Forest Area is totally allocated, leaving no leeway for events such as forest fires. The Louisiana Pacific (LP) Oriented Strand Board plant was given an environmental license without a proper analysis of the amount of forest available to supply the plant. Initial estimates of regeneration rates have had to be revised because they were based on flawed assumptions, yet the earlier assumptions have been the basis for LP's operating plans for the last ten years.

Because of total allocation of the forest, small operators who once logged selectively are now clear-cutting and selling smaller logs to LP. Dan hopes that because LP's environmental license has expired, there will be public hearings regarding a renewed license, and more accurate information can be used for the forestry decisions.



Anne Lindsey pauses on the snow-heavy trail in Riding Mountain National Park. Photo by Les McCann

Capacity workshops

In the afternoon, our executive director, Anne Lindsey, and Hugh Arklie, of the Thomas Sill Foundation, led a fundraising workshop. They offered a great deal of practical advice on how to go about approaching foundations and other funders for environmental grants. Anne highlighted a number of good resources for fundraising (available for loan from our library), and Hugh provided some valuable insights from his experience on the "other side" of the funding request.

Media Skills

With the help of reporter turned farmer, Larry Powell, Anne led a second workshop on media skills. The challenges and sometimes opportunities of getting media coverage from a remote setting were discussed, as well as practical tips for getting the attention of the news editor and writing a news release.

Organizing a campaign

The final workshop of the day was Campaign Organizing, led by our Water Caucus Coordinator, Glen Koroluk. Glen introduced the organizing matrix developed by the Sierra Club.

Picking up on themes discussed the previous day in the Water Caucus meeting, Glen then lead the group in working through these elements for a campaign to save the Little Saskatchewan River. The strategizing around this issue led to a proposal to develop a watershed plan for the basin to serve as a model for other areas in the province. A number of people at the event committed to working on this issue.

Dinner with the Minister

Minister of Conservation, Stan Struthers, was welcomed to the gathering for supper Saturday night and came ready to discuss issues with the participants—who were impressed that he ditched his speech in favour of getting to the nitty gritty of the group's concerns. One might say that Stan was on the hot seat with topic areas ranging from proposed regulations for nutrient management, to plans for changes to the stewardship of waste, to forest allocations.

Hearings

Specifically, he was asked to call for Clean Environment Commission (CEC) hearings on the Pembina Valley Water Allocation Project—he said there would be an announcement soon—and on the LP licence renewal (discussed above). Stan noted that an important component of the LP licence renewal will be a formal Section 25 consultation with First Nations in the area.

He was also asked to set a broad scope for the anticipated hearings into the Olywest kill plant, slated for construction in Winnipeg. Given that the CEC expanded the scope of the Maple Leaf hearings in Brandon to include the sustainability of the hog industry in Manitoba, participants felt there is a good case to be made for a broad scope. Stan noted that an official proposal from Olywest has yet to be received by the department.

New regulations

On the issue of regulating phosphorous applications under the Water Protection Act and the Manure Management Regulations, the Minister encouraged groups to correspond with him and the Minister of Water Stewardship about concerns they may have. The large-scale agriculture industry has mounted a strong and concerted lobby in opposition to the new regulatory regime, but Stan reiterated the government's goal of protecting water in the Province. Many in the group spoke about the need for strong regulations in this area.

Flin Flon participants noted their concerns about proposed new regulations on recycling and product stewardship, and were encouraged to attend upcoming consultations on these subjects. Stan noted his desire that the consultations travel to remote parts of the province, to facilitate participation. He also stated that he wants municipal recycling programs to continue.

Finally, Stan was invited to "stay tuned" to the proposal for a citizens' watershed planning process for the Little Saskatchewan basin, discussed in the campaign planning workshop earlier in the day.

The evening ended with an entertaining and informative presentation about the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve by Valerie Pankratz.

And fun...

Built in to the weekend schedule was some time to socialize informally, and some opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors. It was a special treat for us city folk to go for a ski in beautiful Riding Mountain National Park. There was about a metre of

snow on the ground, and conditions were excellent. Despite a few dramatic spills, a fabulous time was had by all the skiers.

Overall reaction to the Forum was very positive, and we look forward to opportunities to hold events in other areas (budget permitting!), and to keep making connections with all the folks who are doing great work around the province.



Minister of Conservation, Stan Struthers, discusses issues. Photo by Cate Wallis



Kathy Storey, Anne Lindsey, Liz Dykman, and Jackie Avent wax up the skies. Photo by Les McCann

Small Farms Challenge

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businesses, schools, hospitals, youth social circles, service agencies, and churches will become more stable with more people living in the countryside. Ultimately, we feel it is about us—individually and as a community—making choices through which we gain power to decide who we benefit, and how our quality of life is mirrored in the quality of life of our neighbours.

In early 2004 our local Agriculture Committee (under the Turtle Mountain Community Development Corporation umbrella) published a book that highlighted 20 smaller scale farmers in the area, entitled 'Successful Small Farms in Southwest Manitoba'. With this publication we were making the point that it is still possible to fashion a comfortable lifestyle while thinking and acting modestly on the farm. The average age of the farmers on those 20 farms is high, and the activities, as with Lorne and Mary, are for the most part traditional beef and/or grain operations.

Naturally enough, our next step in lets-try-on-some-new-thinking is launching a contest to draw out farm plans that we know are simmering under the straw hats and ball caps out there. There are markets, philosophies, technologies, energy options and cooperative methods that farmers fifty years ago couldn't imagine. So the pool of possible farms and rural businesses is much larger than what Mary and Lorne and their generation had to choose from. This is not to say we have to think

non-traditionally when we dream. It just means that we're open to hearing any plan that may be drifting or rumbling around inside your head or between you and a partner. Bottom line, (here's the pitch) we *want to hear from you*. If you've ever dreamt of owning and/or managing a viable small farm or rural business on the prairies, we want you to commit your dream to paper and submit it to us. To be honest, we are particularly interested in ideas that would serve remote locations, but we are also keen to hear about ideas based on urban proximities. We know there's a wealth of ideas out there and so we're offering advisory help in the process, generous prizes and opportunities to mix with other small and wannabe smaller scale farmers. We ask that you add as many numbers as you can manage, so that you (or someone somewhere) can explore the potential of your idea further—hopefully making it a reality.

If you need to draw on our advice, you'll need to send us a draft before 1 Sept. '06. But if you want to go it alone, the final submission date is 1 Nov. '06. We've put some resources at www.boissevain.ca—follow the Small Farm Challenge link to the pages that carry a full description of the Challenge, Small Farm links, and a business plan worksheet—the use of which is recommended but optional. If you prefer not to use the internet, we encourage you to call and leave a message at 1 800 497-2393 with your name, phone number and address. We'll send you more information.

Note to community activists: We're keen on other rural communities using this as a model. Let us know how your experiment evolves. Enjoy!

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Extended Producer Responsibility New Direction for Waste Management

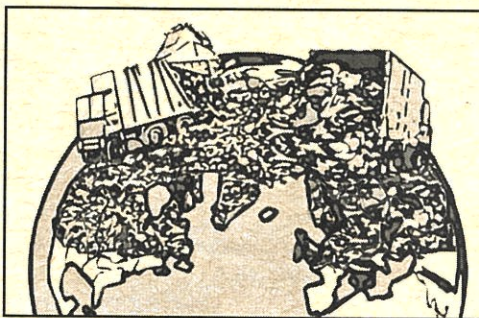
By Lisa Quinn, Resource Conservation Manitoba

In the 1990s, in an effort to fulfill a commitment made to reduce waste by fifty percent by the year 2000, Manitoba passed the Waste Reduction and Prevention (WRAP) Act and three regulations targeted at key designated waste products—blue box waste, tires and oil. These three programs have resulted in less waste going to disposal, but have not achieved the ambitious 50 percent target. In addition to falling short of this goal, environmental, economic and legislative developments over the last 15 years have led to the need to reassess Manitoba's approach to managing waste and the breadth of materials encompassed by provincial programs.

Leading the Province in the development of this new direction is Green Manitoba. The agency is in the process of establishing extended producer responsibility (EPR) programs for host of products, including tires, printed materials and packaging, household hazardous waste (HHW) and electronic waste (e-waste).

Current Situation

The Waste Reduction and Prevention (WRAP) Act, enacted in 1990, establishes a regulatory framework to encourage the development and implementation of waste reduction and prevention programs. Currently there are three regulations under this Act, each targeting a different waste material:



- **Residential Recycling**—Introduced in January 1995, the Multi-Material Stewardship Regulation (39/95) created the Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation (MPSC) to collect the 2-cent levy placed on beverage containers and distribute it to municipal governments to help fund residential recycling programs.

- **Tires**—In March 1995, the Province introduced the Tire Stewardship Regulation (33/95), which created the Tire Stewardship Board (TSB) to recover and recycle used tires. To fund their activities a levy was placed on tires sold in the province.

- **Oil, Filters and Containers**—Used Oil, Filters and Containers Stewardship Regulation (86/97), enacted in 1997, led to the founding of the Manitoba Association for Resource Recovery Corporation (MARRC) to collect and recycle

used oil, filters and containers.

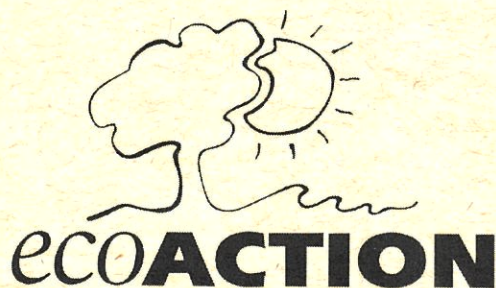
These programs have had significant success with reducing the amount of their respective materials entering landfills. However, due to the increased recycling rates achieved by MPSC and TSB, without changes to their revenue base, these programs are no longer financially sustainable. Furthermore, while these three programs have been successful, there is still a staggering amount of waste being sent to landfill. Manitoba generates more waste than the Canadian average and only diverts 22 percent from landfill, ranking our province third in the nation in terms of waste production and sixth for waste diversion.

New Direction

Extended producer responsibility (EPR) is a principle that places responsibility for managing waste on those who are best able to reduce or eliminate it—producers and consumers. EPR involves producers assuming financial and/or physical responsibility for the waste generated by their products. Through transferring waste management obligations from municipal governments to product producers, EPR initiatives attempt to solidify the link between product design and end-of-life management, thereby encouraging producers to consider the long-term impacts of their products and encourage them to redesign their products to be environmentally benign.

Similarly, EPR initiatives compel consumers to take responsibility for their role in waste production. In most Manitoba municipalities, it is as taxpayers, not consumers, that the public supports waste management. Generally, the taxes paid do not reflect the amount of garbage a household generates; therefore, there is no financial incentive for the public to reduce consumption or consider the environment when selecting goods. EPR initiatives establish a system in which consumers pay directly for waste management through the price of the products they purchase, thereby encouraging consumers to purchase eco-friendlier goods.

The concept of EPR was first introduced in Germany in the



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see "Waste Management" on next page ►

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Waste Management

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early 1990s and has since been adopted in many other nations for a wide range of products, including tires, HHW, packaging, e-waste and vehicles.

In Canada, there are upwards of 50 programs, both voluntary and mandatory, that incorporate elements of EPR. Manitoba's oil regulation is one such example. It places responsibility for managing used oil and related products on the provincial suppliers. These companies have joined together to fulfill their obligations, forming MARRC, an organization responsible for operating a collection and recovery program. The oil regulation will serve as the model for a series of new regulations. Green Manitoba and Manitoba Conservation will be developing for tires, printed materials and packaging, household hazardous waste and e-waste.

These new regulations will identify the first seller/importer of a designated product in Manitoba as the steward. Stewards' responsibilities will include:

- Developing a convenient and consistent province-wide collection system for these materials
- Determining a sustainable method for managing the waste generated by their products
- Undertaking a public awareness campaign to educate consumers about the program
- Determining how to finance the program
- Ensuring government-established targets for performance are met
- Reporting on the finances and performance of the program

Stewards must develop a plan for fulfilling these responsibilities to be approved by the Minister of Conservation. Stewards will be permitted to develop individual plans or may join together to develop a collective plan for managing their obligations.

Essential Elements to Successful EPR Initiatives

The benefits of instituting a full-scale EPR program extend beyond reducing municipal governments' financial burden and ensuring landfill space is preserved. These initiatives have been found to yield substantial benefits, including: lowering energy consumption and greenhouse gas production levels, reducing dependency on virgin materials, increasing recycling rates, spurring on new business enterprises, generating new job opportunities, and providing financial savings to companies improving their design, production and distribution processes.

However, in order for an EPR program to achieve this range of benefits certain program elements must be established and enforced, including mandatory requirements for stewards to collect and recycle the waste generated by their products, financial support systems that encourage design for the environment, and government established-targets for reduction and recycling, as well as mechanisms to enforce these targets.

EPR is an essential tool in Manitoba's efforts to reduce waste going to landfill, and if properly implemented could provide positive environmental and economic outcomes. But EPR is only one tool in the toolbox needed to reduce the waste generated and diverted from landfills. In order to reach the so far elusive 50 percent reduction target, the Province must develop

a comprehensive Waste Reduction and Prevention Strategy—a comprehensive plan encompassing all waste, including materials that are not suitable for EPR, such as organic and construction and demolition debris. The plan must address not only waste generated by households, but also the waste produced by institutions, governments and businesses, and must employ a variety of tools including: EPR initiatives, composting, increased standards for landfills, user-pay collection systems, landfill bans and taxes, and educational campaigns.

Public Input

Each of the new regulations will be open for public feedback for a 28-day period. In addition, each of the stewards must consult with interested stakeholders when developing their plans. The first of the regulations, the Tire Stewardship Regulation, was posted on March 17 and is open for comment until April 21. The proposed regulation and guide for stewards are available online at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/pollutionprevention/>, at Manitoba Conservation's public registries or from the Pollution Prevention Branch (945-8443 or 1-800-282-8069 ext. 8443).

This is an opportunity for public and NGOs to play a role in shaping the direction of waste management in Manitoba for decades to come.

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Learn to Build Solar Greenhouses at SNAC

Greenhouses and Food Security

By Jennifer Bamford and Shirley Thompson

Dependence on food grown at great distances from where it is consumed undermines food security. "Food security is a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice" (Hamm and Bellows, 2003). The lack of winter ice roads this year brought this home to Manitobans as the food security of people in northern communities was compromised, playing havoc with their diets and health. Dependence on unreliable winter roads to transport food led to, for example, the cost of four litres of milk in the Island Lake area reaching almost \$20.

Greenhouses, designed for northern climates, offer the ability to produce local, healthy foods all year round in Manitoba with very little energy, even in remote communities. Solar greenhouses can provide an extension of our short growing season in Manitoba and expand our capacity to grow food while requiring little or no energy input if designed properly. As most food in the global economy travels more than 2,000 kilometres to reach Manitoba, any local production reduces transportation and environmental impact.

Local production reduces environmental impact

Rather than a long distance relationship with our food and the people who grow, pick and package it, it creates a sense of community and security knowing who grows our food and its environmental impacts (e.g., that it is not chemically sprayed or overpackaged to travel great distances). Today's global food system is dependent on mechanization, large inputs of fertilizer and pesticides, monocropping, biotechnologies, processing and refrigeration, as well as vast transportation, marketing, and supermarket networks.

Greenhouses provide an opportunity to get off this destructive path and bring down the cost of food to make healthy food choices more accessible. This summer, a greenhouse will be built at the St. Norbert Arts Centre (SNAC) that will incorporate solar design principles as well as an aquaculture system and hydroponic gardens. The greenhouse has been designed by a number of community members under the direction of internationally acclaimed architect, Tang Lee, Professor of Architecture, Faculty of Environmental Design at the University of Calgary. Tang Lee has taught building science, sustainable design, solar energy and environmental health for over 25 years.

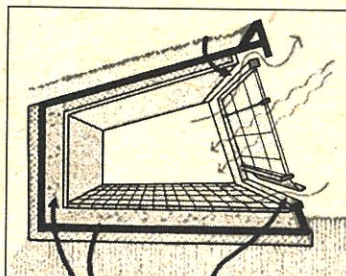
Learning to build more sustainable greenhouses

The greenhouse will serve as a demonstration of solar design, greenhouse food production, and aquaculture systems as well as natural building. The construction of the building will be carried out in a workshop setting to maximize its educational capacity. Once complete, there will be extensive documentation of the energy inputs compared to year round temperatures. This information will be made public in order to facilitate the construction of more sustainable greenhouses.

Traditional European greenhouses—Quonset style or hoop greenhouses—are glazed on all sides, which is a design inappropriate to northern climates. Designs with glazing or polyethylene plastic on all sides are inspired by the need for

collecting large amounts of solar radiation in European climates, that have rainy, yet warm winters.

During the very cold months in Manitoba, we have a large amount of sun in a very short day. A study done by Manitoba Agriculture states that a 496 square metre double layered poly greenhouse costs approximately \$17,355.04 for electric heat and lighting for a growing season from September to May. Greenhouses that are glazed on all sides lose tremendous amounts of heat as soon as the sun goes down. It is important to challenge these geographically inappropriate designs in order to develop ways of doing things that have very little damaging impact on the environment.



Design for harsh northern climates

Solar design and natural building contribute to the use of simple local energy sources and sustainable technologies in Manitoba, while attempting to increase local food security. For example, the greenhouse designed for the St. Norbert Arts Centre incorporates the basic principles of solar design for harsh northern climates, namely:

- Glazing oriented to receive maximum solar heat during the winter. The SNAC greenhouse design has a large vertical south-facing wall made up of recycled windows. During the coldest winter months the sun peaks at a 30-degree angle, making any sloped glazing unnecessary for receiving solar gain.
- Incorporating Heat storing materials to retain solar heat. The SNAC greenhouse design includes large amounts of thermal mass including an earthen plastered wall, brick floor, a large tank of water, as well as a large soil filled growing space.
- Efficient amount of insulation to prevent heat loss. The SNAC greenhouse will be insulated with straw bales, which have an insulation value of up to R-40.
- Rely primarily on natural ventilation for summer cooling. A series of heat circulation ducts will pull hot air that has risen to the top of the greenhouse outside during summer and be re-circulated in winter by releasing slowly through recycled dry mortared bricks in the floor.

Workshops throughout the summer

The St. Norbert Arts Centre is hosting a series of natural building and passive solar design workshops throughout the summer and you are invited to participate. Attend the whole construction—which offers the opportunity to participate in the construction of the passive solar greenhouse—for a session or a weekend, with housing and food options available. Session One runs from May 29 to June 18 and Session Two runs from June 25 to July 16. At both sessions, you can learn construction techniques including passive solar design, wall framing, ductwork, earth plaster, and working with straw bales and recycled materials. An aquaculture course with Tang Lee is also being planned for early August.

For more information about the courses and specific course content please refer to St. Norbert Arts Centre at <http://www.snac.mb.ca/> or call (204) 269-0564.

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Canadian Environmental Grantmakers Network Funders Convening in Manitoba

by Anne Lindsey

The Canadian Environmental Grantmakers Network (CEGN) is an organization that brings together the major environmental funders in Canada, be they private, community, public and corporate foundations, or government and corporate funding programs. CEGN began as an informal network in 1995, and has since formalized its operations to provide opportunities for information-sharing, collaboration, training and professional development, research, and communications for its 50 or so members from across the country. Together, CEGN's members provide over \$50 million in environmental grants in Canada. While CEGN directly serves its members—environmental grantmakers—by helping to strengthen the environmental funding sector, it also of course, supports environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS) of which there are many right here in Manitoba.

members of the environmental community in Manitoba will be invited to a lunch session where they will have the chance to meet with funders for some informal discussion about their groups and the work that they do. The CEGN also asked the Manitoba Eco-Network to convene a panel of speakers for an overview of some of the "hot topics" confronting us here in this province.

Prior to the meetings, the grantmakers will have the option of three different "site visits" in the Southern Manitoba area.

One group will tour the research ship Nema at Gimli, hosted by the Lake Winnipeg Research Consortium, another will travel along Red River Heritage Drive, visit Lower Fort Garry and Oak Hammock Marsh, and a third will participate in a "Green/Heritage Building" tour in downtown

Winnipeg, highlighting the MEC building, Red River College and the Exchange District.

CEGN is not a granting agency in itself, but its website is a useful one for ENGOS to have in mind. It provides links to the websites of its members—a good place to start when seeking funds, a list of resources for grant seekers, as well as profiles on environmental grantmaking by region across the country, and well-researched briefs on emerging issues. The website is at www.cegn.org.

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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.

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

