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Forest Stewardship Council may Offer Hope

By Eric Reder, Western Canada Wilderness Committee

For over two decades, logging in provincial parks has been a controversial issue in Manitoba. As in many other jurisdictions, there are competing interests for public land, those being protection for social or environmental reasons, and industrial use such as resource extraction.

Public consultation and government reports have both shown support for protection of parks from logging. The January 2006 Summary of Public Comment Letter regarding Nopiming Provincial Park states that, overwhelmingly, citizens wanted better protection of parks. The 1993 Clean Environment Commission report recommended phasing logging out of parks. Unfortunately, the government so far has not had the fortitude to stand up to corporate interests and protect wilderness.

Manitobans are left wondering *when* there will be real, meaningful protection for provincial parks, for wild lands, for the environment? The hopeful answer is *within the next few years*, and here's one reason why.

Tembec, a giant multinational corporation that has tenure over a section of Manitoba's wilderness larger than the province of PEI, is attempting to gain Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification, awarded if they meet strict standards as responsible managers of public forests. Tembec is the logging company currently clearcutting Nopiming Provincial Park, as well as using wood cut from Whiteshell and Duck Mountain Provincial Parks.

Tembec agrees to FSC certification

In January 2001, Tembec's national office signed an agreement with the World Wildlife Fund to have all their logging operations in Canada certified through the FSC. This certification is meant to indicate forests are being harvested in a sus-

tainable and responsible way. An FSC logo on a product lets consumers know that the product is sourced from sustainable and responsible harvest practices. FSC certification is an ongoing process, so once an operation applies for their certification, they must continue to run their operation according to FSC standards. In many jurisdictions, including Manitoba, FSC standards are more stringent than provincial law. While FSC certification isn't perfect, it is recognized as the best certification currently available in the world. Until robust laws protect our wilderness, FSC certification can be a stepping stone on the path towards preserving Manitoba's forests.

One component of the FSC standard is that logging companies must work with citizens and non-government organizations toward permanently protecting areas of special interest in the logging certification area. Nopiming Provincial Park lies entirely within Tembec's Forest Management License area (FML 01), which would suggest Tembec will move forward with protecting the park. The disappointing truth is that because the government doesn't prohibit logging in the park, FSC doesn't even recognize Nopiming as a

park. That fact alone should send a message to government that the level of protection for our parks is inadequate.

These areas include Springer Lake Proposed Ecological Reserve, which is a tiny area of forest and wetland in Nopiming, nominated for protection due to large populations of rare Green and Mink frogs, and for its biodiversity. In one part of Tembec's application for FSC certification, the company stated that the Springer Lake area would be left untouched until a decision on the proposal was made. Unfortunately Springer Lake also appears as clearcut block 2516A in Tembec's 2006 Annual Operating Plan. At their recent Open House in Winnipeg, Tembec's top forester Vince Keenan tried to argue away the glaring difference between their application to the FSC and their actual activity by somehow blaming the discrepancy on the government's Conservation department.

Springer Lake is just one of many indications of Tembec's blatant disregard for the public's wishes. Tembec is also using a loophole in protection to log close to the Manigotagan River, an area that was celebrated as protected just two years ago. Most

see "FSC Certification" on page 8 ►



Clearcutting is underway in Manigotagan River Provincial Park and Springer Lake Proposed Ecological Reserve.

Inside This Issue

Conserving Orchids	Page 3
Louisiana-Pacific Overallocations	Page 5
Toxic Substances Protection	Page 7
Planners Network	Page 9
Reader Opinion Survey	Page 11

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Manitoba Eco-Network/Reseau
Ecologique du Manitoba Inc. at
3rd Floor, 303 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2B4

phone: (204) 947-6511

fax: (204) 989-8476

email: info@mbeconetwork.org

<http://www.mbeconetwork.org>

Editor

Heather Laird
email: hlaire@mts.net

Contributors this issue:

Sue Black, Michael Goodyear,
Anne Lindsey, Sandra Madray,
Richard Milgrom, Andrea Ramlogan,
Eric Reder, Dan Soprovich

Layout

David Henry

Manitoba Eco-Network Executive

Chair

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Environment, Earth and Resources

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News from the EcoCentre

By Anne Lindsey

At the time of writing, we're doing last minute preparations for our Eco-Evening at the Park Theatre. Look for a write up on the event, along with a list of all the fantastic donors of cool prizes, in the next Eco-Journal. We'd like to congratulate EcoNetwork member, Camille Guenette, who was the winner of the Annual Appeal draw for a basket of local foodstuffs from Fresh Option Organic Delivery. Hope you enjoyed your goodies, Camille! Thanks once again to all the generous Appeal donors.

In staffing news, Climate Change Connection welcomes Curt Hull to its Project Management team (he joins Susan Lindsay). Curt comes to us from the private sector. He is an electrical engineer by training, and has worked for many years with Winnipeg-based Vansco Electronics. He brings a passion for climate change education and action, as well as a strong background in project and financial management and planning, and a his-

tory of community volunteer work. As a member of the Alpine Club of Canada, Curt is a climber, and an avid practitioner of self-propelled transportation. Curt will be based out of the University of Winnipeg office of Climate Change Connection. He can be reached by phone there at 786-9963. Susan will be in our EcoCentre office at 943-4836.

We also want to welcome Natalie Asselin to the position of part time resource assistant in the Alice Chambers Memorial Library. Natalie is a researcher by profession, and works with a marine mammal scientist from Fisheries and Oceans on really interesting projects in Canada's arctic and Hudson's Bay. Having caught up with routine library chores, Natalie wants folks to know she is willing and able to assist them with tracking down materials for their environmental work. You can catch Natalie in the Library on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, or email her at library@mbeconetwork.org

Climate Champions

by Anne Lindsey

There is no "Climate Champions" installment in this issue (hopefully next one!), but in the meantime, here's a recommendation for those interested in furthering their own education about climate change. Read the new book, *Heat: How to Stop the Planet from Burning*, by George Monbiot.

This world-renowned writer, and winner of the UN Global 500 Award for Environmental Achievement, has researched and produced an inspiring book about how emissions reductions of 90% can actually be achieved by the year

2030. With rigorous analysis, he demonstrates how housing, power and transport systems can be transformed with existing technologies, using his home country of the UK as a case study.

This can only happen, however, with a concerted program of government action. Can governments and citizens actually rise to the occasion?

David Morris, of the Institute for Self-Reliance in Minneapolis, writes the following about this book:

see "*Climate Champions*", on page 10 ►

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Conserving Our Native Orchids in Canada's National Seed Bank

By Doris Ames, Native Orchid Conservation, Inc.

In the spring of 2006, Native Orchid Conservation Inc. (NOCI) began a new project to conserve native orchid species. This involved the long-term storage of orchid seed capsules in Canada's national seed bank (Plant Gene Resources of Canada) at Saskatoon. Although we believe the in situ conservation of native orchids within protected habitats is the primary means of protection, we also believe that ex situ preservation in a cryogenic seed bank provides some additional insurance. Long-term storage may improve our ability to respond to rapid environmental changes that may be harmful to native orchids.

Since 25% of Canada's vascular plants are considered rare and there are many native orchids among them, we believe that it is important to conserve their genetic biodiversity by storing some of their seeds in an appropriate facility.

In March 2006, when we became aware that the national seed bank was expanding to include Canadian wild plants in its storage system, we approached Dr. Richard St. Pierre, who is head of wild plant conservation, about storing seeds from Manitoba's 36 orchid species in that facility. He agreed to help us with this project, developed the appropriate protocol for the collection and handling of the seeds, and supplied us with seed envelopes and data forms to fill out for each sample.

Protecting the plants from predation

The first major concern we had was how to protect the plants and seed capsules from predation, notably by white-tailed deer. Dr. St. Pierre and his graduate student Nancy constructed some cages out of chicken wire consisting of 5mm wire mesh approximately 30cm in diameter and 30cm high. The cages would be put over the plant and held in place with 4 bamboo stakes. NOCI members later constructed another few dozen similar wire cages; some taller ones with 2" holes for tall *Cypripediums* and *Platanthera* species with their bee and *Lepidoptera* pollinators, and some smaller ones with 1" holes for smaller orchids like *Listera cordata*, that have small pollinators like fungus gnats, and for those orchids that are self-pollinating.

In June, Dr. St. Pierre came to Manitoba to help us initiate the project and we took him to several locations that had orchid populations suitable for sampling. We slipped cages over the selected plants and used bamboo stakes to hold the cages in place. We tried to select plants from as many species and different locations as we could. We carefully recorded their location and other data, photographed them and marked the cages with flagging tape to help us find them more easily when the bushes leafed out.

After August 15th, we began to collect the seed samples. We learned a lot about how to judge if the seed capsules are ripe enough so that they don't rot in storage but before they have burst open and dehisced. Plants have to be checked very frequently during the collection period in late summer and fall. Sometimes the predators got to them first. They were eaten by

animals such as white-tailed deer, sandhill cranes, meadow voles and possibly others.

Severe damage from late spring frost

2006 was not a very good year for orchid growth. Many of the *Cypripediums* especially *C. acaule* were severely damaged by a late spring frost and even though they flowered nicely in some areas they produced almost no viable seed capsules. The drought and extremely hot weather last summer took its toll on all the orchid species. We managed to collect seed capsules from 17 species of orchids at 15 different locations between August 15 and September 15th, which we sent off by courier to the seed bank in Saskatoon.

In December of 2006, NOCI board member Peggy Bainard Acheson visited the national seed bank laboratory in Saskatoon. Dr. St. Pierre took her on a tour of the facility and showed her just what happened to the orchid seeds we had sent to him. After being examined under a microscope and cleaned in the laboratory they were put into vacuum-packed foil packages and put into the intermediate cold storage vault where they are being held at -4°C. After tests for viability are made on them the viable seeds will be transferred to the long-term storage vault and held at -20°C.

Peggy took many interesting photos of the facility and Dr. St. Pierre sent along some additional ones. If you would like to see more photos of this project please attend Seedy Saturday at the Assiniboine Park Conservatory on February 24th. We have been asked to give a slide show presentation on this project at that time.

We expect this project to last 3-5 years, as we need to collect seed capsules from the rest of the 36 orchid species in Manitoba. There are also many more locations and kinds of habitat where orchids grow. We have applied for permits to remove orchid seeds from plants in protected areas and are also applying for a permit to collect a small amount of seeds from the three endangered orchid species in Manitoba each year. That way, over five years, we should be able to collect a reasonable amount of seed from each species and location.

A legacy to leave for future generations

This is an exciting project and one that is filled with hope for the future. I would like to encourage people who are interested in collecting seeds from other rare native plant species and medicinal plants to contact Dr. St. Pierre. A collection of seeds from the rare native plant species in Manitoba will be a fine legacy to leave for future generations.

For more information, you can e-mail the author at adames@mts.net, or visit the NOCI website at www.nativeorchid.ca. Dr. St. Pierre's email address is stpierre@agr.gc.ca. The website for Plant Gene Resources of Canada is <http://www.agr.gc.ca/pgrc-rpc>.

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C. acaule seed capsules, in the wild.
Photo by Richard Reeves

What's Happening

February 9—Eco-Eclectica—a fundraiser put on by U of W student group Eco-MAFIA. Featuring the Paperbacks, Perse, Come the dawn, Stasi Baren and more! At the Pyramid Cabaret, 176 Fort St. Doors open at 9pm. Tickets \$6.00 in Advance and \$8.00 at the door. Available in advance from members of EcoMAFIA, band members and the UW info booth. Call 786-9189 for more info.

February 9—The New City: How the Crisis of Canada's Cities is Reshaping Our Nation, a free public lecture presented by Institute of Urban Studies and Leadership Winnipeg. In his new book, urban affairs journalist John Lorinc offers a compelling call for action, and stresses the powerful linkages between urban-related policies (at all levels of government) and the livability of Canadian cities. 7:00 pm at Eckhardt-Gramatte Hall, University of Winnipeg. Donations to Winnipeg Harvest will be accepted. Contact: Michael Dudley 982-1145 or m.dudley@uwinnipeg.ca.

February 10—La Salle River in Winter. A perfect Winter Active Day! Explore the beauty of the LaSalle River and tour the secluded Pollock property. Hike length approx. 9 km. End your hike with a delicious Italian DeLuca lunch and an exciting presentation on new Winnipeg Trails. Meet at 10 am at the St. Norbert Catholic Church on rue St. Pierre. Cost is \$20, Registration deadline is Feb. 2nd See www.prairiepathfinders.mb.ca.

February 12—Plan to attend MOPIA's 13th Annual General Meeting at Red River College, 2055 Notre Dame Ave. beginning at 7:15 pm. Call 338-0804 for more info.

February 12–15—Public Open House Meetings on the Future of the Pointe du Bois Generating Station. Manitoba Hydro's oldest generating station requires major repairs or replacement. The public consultation will examine alternatives for the future of the generating station. Contact Bill Henderson at whenderson@hydro.mb.ca or (204) 474-3499, or visit www.hydro.mb.ca/pointedubois for more information.

Feb 12—Old School Gym, Pointe du Bois, 3–8 pm.

Feb 13—Lac du Bonnet Legion Hall, Lac du Bonnet, 3–8 pm.

Feb 15—Promenade Room A, Norwood Hotel, 112 Marion St. Winnipeg, 3–8 pm.

February 16—Native Orchid Conservation Inc. Annual General Meeting. 7:30 pm at the Manitoba Lawn Bowling Centre, 1212 Dakota Street in St. Vital. Following the business meeting, Alan Mason and Yvonne Lozinski will give a slide presentation on the rich, natural environments and Mayan Ruin sites of Central America — Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras. Silent auction, door prizes, and refreshments. All welcome but only members may vote. Contact Peggy at 261-9179, email bainardp@mts.net or visit www.nativeorchid.org for more info.

February 17—Eastman SeedSavers SEEDY SATURDAY. 9:30 am–3:00 pm. at the Beau-Head Seniors Centre, 645 Park Ave. Beausejour. Seed, bulb, root and garden magazine exchange. Speakers are Dr. Eva Pip on Pesticides at 10 am, Shirley Froehlich of Prairie Originals on native plants at 11 am, Dan Benoit on Metis heritage Seeds at 12:30 and and Jane Seniw, Arborist at 1:30 pm. Silent auction at 2:30 pm. Admission is by donation.

February 20—David Suzuki Tour. What would you do for the environment if you were prime minister? David Suzuki is traveling across Canada to find out what you think, and he'll take your ideas to Ottawa to make sure your voice is heard. The Winnipeg event takes place at the Burton Cummings Theatre. 6:30 pm. Tickets will be available from TicketMaster. Contact 947-3400 for more information.



Woodruff Showy, protectively caged. Photo by Richard Reeves

February 21—What you Should Know About Public Private Partnerships, with John Loxley, Professor of Economics, U of M. Presented by the Council of Women of Winnipeg. 12 noon in the Paddlewheel Restaurant, The Bay downtown. Please be seated by 12, you are welcome to bring or buy your lunch. There will be time for questions from the audience.

February 21—The Lake Eco-System: A Primer for Cottages and Canoeists with John Shearer, Senior Biologist, ELA. Presented by the Manitoba Naturalists Society, 7:30 pm, Kelvin High School, Rm 31. Admission \$10 or \$5 for MNS members. Call 943-9029 to register.

February 23—Farm Focus Day at Boissevain School, celebrating/stimulating rural diversity with a Trade Fair and presentations on farm opportunities. Includes Manitoba Food Charter AGM from 11:30–12:15. Announcing winners of the Small Farm Challenge. No registration. Lunch provided by Turtle Mountain Ag Society for \$2. Comedy/Music evening. For more info Call/Email: (204) 534-6296 / tmedc@mts.net

February 24—Reversing the Trend Conference at Boissevain School—presentations on repopulation and viability of smaller scale farms and rural businesses. Pre-registration requested. Call: (204) 534-6296, or email: tmedc@mts.net. Cost is \$15 including lunch.

February 24—SEEDY SATURDAY in Winnipeg. 10:00 am–3:00 pm at the Assiniboine Park Conservatory. Speakers are Stefan Fediuk on Heirloom Plants for the Home Garden at 11 am, Charlene Rowland on Permaculture on the Prairies at noon, Doris Ames on Conservation of Native Orchid Species at 1 pm. The video *How to Save Seeds from Vegetables* will show at 2 pm. Displays and vendors open all day. Admission is by donation.

February 26—March 26—Fair Trade Manitoba One Month Challenge. Ensure your coffee, tea and chocolate is fair trade for 1 month. Sign-up deadline is Feb. 17. See www.fairtrademanitoba.ca for info.

March 9—Eastern Manitoba Youth Conference on Climate Change, in Beausejour, Manitoba. Presented by Climate Change Connection and Resource Conservation Manitoba. The conference is FREE for students and teachers in the surrounding area. Space is limited and only 4 students and one teacher will be accepted from each school. For more info call (204) 943-4836.

March 19—Evening lecture on The Science and Politics of Global Warming at the University of Winnipeg, by Dr. Andrew Weaver, one of the world's most respected climatologists and lead author of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's next climate assessment. Time and room TBA. For more info visit dannyblair.uwinnipeg.ca, or call 947-6511.

March 22—World Day for Water. What better place to celebrate annual World Day for Water, than Oak Hammock Marsh! Take in fun water activities from Project WET and Make a Splash! Call 467-3300 for more information.

ECO

Overallocation of Forests to Louisiana-Pacific

By Dan Soprovich, Bluestem Wildlife

Editor's Note: Part One of this article appeared in Volume 16 # 4 of *Manitoba Eco-Journal* (Sept/Oct 2006). You can read the article in its entirety, with endnotes, on the *EcoNetwork* website, at www.mbeconetwork.org.

Relative to the volume that Louisiana-Pacific and TetrES asserted was sustainable on an annual basis over 100 years (LP/TetrES HSG AAC (1995)), by far the greatest reason for their substantive errors of conclusion related to the 'growth and yield' figures that were derived by Louisiana-Pacific and its consultants, and used by Louisiana-Pacific and TetrES. Growth and yield

assumptions are the assumptions on how fast a forest grows, and how much fibre the forest will yield to industry. The growth and yield assumptions are fundamental and critical to modeling forest 'sustainability'. For example, if one assumes that a forest will yield twice the volume per unit area than it really does (i.e., a case where a modeling assumption confronts the 'real world'), then one will have to cut twice the area predicted on the basis of the faulty assumptions to achieve the same total volume (e.g., cut an area of 200 km² vs 100 km²). An error of this magnitude has huge implications to the real-world impact of a forestry development on biological diversity, the number of ovenbirds in the forest, water yield, soils, etc..

Incongruity in yield values

Prior to, and during, the 1995 Clean Environment Commission (CEC) hearings, independent experts challenged the hardwood growth and yield assumptions developed by Louisiana-Pacific and its consultants, and accepted by the provincial bureaucrats and government-of-the-day. For example,

- Canadian Forest Service forester Jim Ball, in his August 17, 1995 letter as posted to the Public Registry, wrote "... the company should explain this apparent incongruity and reconcile the yield values of 150-170 m³/ha-1 to be cut in the first three years with volumes of 300-400 m³/ha-1 for well stocked stands used in the HSG simulation (7-17) to project future stands". In his December 15, 1995 letter, Mr. Ball wrote "If plot selection was biased to well drained sites where greater growth occurs (Jameson 1963), and if such elevated growth data—for example, 400 m³/ha—were used in the Harvest Schedule Generator it follows that the sustainability analysis should be rejected."

- Soprovich (1995) outlined a number of sampling problems respecting the data from which Louisiana-Pacific had derived its growth and yield assumptions. On that basis, and on the basis of published growth and yield data from the scientific literature, Soprovich concluded that the assumptions represented substantive overestimates, and recommended that the growth and yield assumptions, and Environmental Impact Statement, be rejected by the Commission. Soprovich stated "In the absence of being able to independently assess LP's data collection methodology, and to quantify the impact of this methodology on bias and precision, we cannot have a great deal of confidence in the LP data." and "If growth and yield is considerably overestimated,

as I suggest, this invalidates all analyses presented in the EIS."

Over a decade later, with its long-term Environmental License expired on December 31, 2005, Louisiana-Pacific is in the process of the development and licensing of a second long-term Forest Management Plan. Importantly, Manitoba Forestry Branch has derived new yield assumptions from a new sampling effort in support of the wood supply analysis and Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) determination for the Duck Mountain (Manitoba Forestry Branch 2004). For aspen and other hardwoods, the Manitoba Forestry Branch yield assumptions were substantially lower than those used by Louisiana-Pacific and TetrES in their Forest Management Plan and Environmental Impact Assessment.

Comparison of Forestry Branch and Louisiana-Pacific/TetrES yield assumptions

The Manitoba Forestry Branch and Louisiana-Pacific/TetrES yield assumptions are not directly comparable for various reasons. For example, the Forestry Branch made methodological changes to

forest inventory (e.g., changes to the derivation of crown closure) and changes to its classification of forest ecosystems (e.g., stratification in relation to species composition and crown closure). Valid comparison of the yield assumptions required a number of assumptions and adjustment to develop 'Forestry Branch Modified' yield assumptions (see Soprovich 2006).

Perhaps the most useful comparison of yield assumptions is for forests of age 60 years post-disturbance, because this was the hardwood rotation age in the Duck Mountain at the time of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Manitoba Natural Resources 1992). For the purpose of their 'sustainability' analysis, Louisiana-Pacific and TetrES assumed the aspen forest to yield an average of 328 m³ per ha across the Duck Mountain (see trembling aspen chart). In contrast, the Forestry Branch Modified assumption was 158.4 m³ per ha. Given the almost decade of experience, the obvious sampling biases by Louisiana-Pacific and its consultants (Soprovich 1995), and a presumed increase in sample size, one must conclude that the Manitoba Forestry Branch (2004) yield assumptions are 'correct'. Therefore, for the purpose of their Environmental Impact Assessment, Louisiana-Pacific and TetrES assumed that Duck Mountain aspen forests would yield 2.07 times the true yield at rotation age.

Louisiana-Pacific and TetrES assumed that balsam poplar and white birch forests would yield at the same rate as aspen forests, and applied a universal set of yield assumptions. This assumption was also challenged. For example, in his December 15, 1995 letter, Mr. Jim Ball wrote on mixedwood sites in Riding Mountain, "balsam poplar (both reproduction and mature trees) grows more slowly and does not reach the same diameter as aspen; I suspect that this is also generally true for FML #3."

continued on next page ►

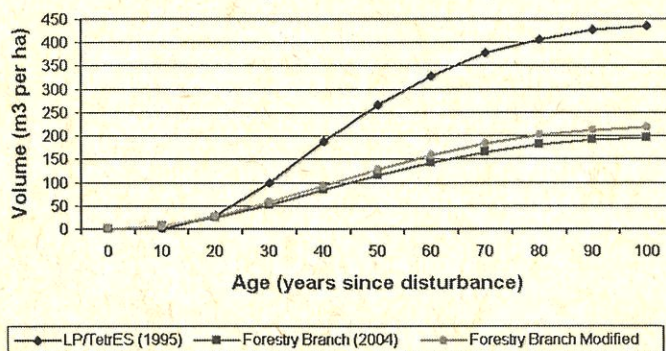


Figure 1. Trembling aspen yield assumptions for the Duck Mountain, Manitoba.

and "... arguments for grouping, as presented by TetrES ... are seriously flawed."

The Manitoba Forestry Branch (2004) did not provide yield curves for balsam poplar or white birch forests. However, the availability of curves for the MDE stratum (mixes of aspen, poplar, and birch) provides an opportunity to compare yield assumptions. Louisiana-Pacific and TetrES assumed that mixes of the three species would yield 328 m³ per ha at age 60 across the Duck Mountain. In contrast, the Forestry Branch Modified assumption was 129.8 m³ per ha (Soprovich 2006). For the purpose of their Environmental Impact Assessment, Louisiana-Pacific and TetrES assumed that these hardwood forests would yield 2.53 times the true yield at rotation age. The even greater disparity for the MDE stratum as compared to the aspen forest stratum is clear evidence in support of Mr. Ball's assertion that Louisiana-Pacific and TetrES had wrongly assumed that yields of the three species would be equivalent.

It is now obvious that Louisiana-Pacific and TetrES used grossly inflated yield assumptions for their examination of the 'sustainability' and environmental impact of the Louisiana-Pacific Canada Ltd. forestry development. Most importantly, because future forest age structure is extremely sensitive to yield assumptions, the disparity is so great that one can only conclude that Louisiana-Pacific's environmental impact assessment and 'sustainability' analysis were not valid. Therefore, it is fair to state that Louisiana-Pacific has been operating for more than a decade in the absence of an environmental impact assessment, and that the Manitoba government has allowed it to do so.

Does the present government have it right?

While it is now established that government was not credible in terms of fibre management or forest management at the time of the Louisiana-Pacific deal, it is also clear that the present government continues to lack credibility respecting the management of forests (i.e., management for things other than fibre). For example, per the Manitoba Forestry Branch AAC determination methodology of the day, Louisiana-Pacific and its consultants applied a 15% netdown for their 'sustainable' harvest level to account for assumptions on fibre losses to fires and other factors (TetrES 1995). However, for its recent AAC determination, Manitoba Forestry Branch (2004) assumed that fires would not occur in the Duck Mountain over the 200-year simulation period. If the wood supply analysis had assumed a reasonable impact of fire

(i.e., because fires will occur in the 'real world'), and made reasonable assumptions respecting other factors that were ignored, the reduction in the hardwood AAC would have been even greater than 36.1%. The decision to ignore obvious factors that will influence the forest age structure of the Duck Mountain demonstrates that the present government-of-the-day is prepared to compromise the maintenance of the biological diversity, and other ecological 'goods and services' of the forest, for short-term fibre sustainability. Further to this, the basis for the wood supply analysis is clearly not in keeping with the 'precautionary principle'.

Given that the previous Environmental Impact Assessment was fatally flawed and therefore irrelevant, and given that the present government has allowed Louisiana-Pacific to operate in the absence of a valid Environmental Impact Assessment since 1999, we are left to conclude that 'Today's NDP' differs little from 'Yesterday's Conservatives' when it comes to sustainable management of the people's forests. And to understand that, in this province, it is fine and well to table invalid Environmental Impact Assessments.

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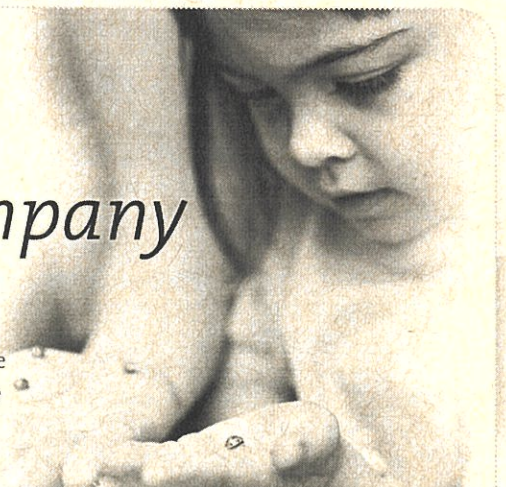
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Illustration by David Henry

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Chemical Exposure: Are We Adequately Protected?

By Sandra Madray, Chemical Sensitivities Manitoba

Canadians are concerned about the ever-increasing presence of environmental toxins and their effects on our health and the environment, and most importantly, the effects of these toxins on children's health and the developing fetus. While we observe the more obvious effects of chemical exposure, we cannot be misled by the apparently innocuous nature of some chemicals; particularly when there can be long latency periods before ill effects materialize.

The Canadian Environmental Act (CEPA 1999) which is currently under review by the Federal Government, is a fundamental piece of legislation designed to protect human health and the environment. However, CEPA has shown throughout its existence that there are areas within the Act that are not very effective. Such an example is our continued exposure to toxic substances from consumer and cosmetic products. Environmental groups have called for more definite and timely action through the provisions of CEPA to reduce this exposure.

To date, the federal government has categorized 23,000 chemicals in current use. Four thousand of these chemicals require further attention with 500 categorized as high priority substances because they are inherently toxic to humans. These high priority substances are also considered to be persistent, bio-accumulative and inherently toxic to the environment.

Disturbing levels of exposure to toxins

In 2005, Environmental Defense tested 11 people across Canada and detected 60 of the 88 toxic chemicals tested for. In a 2006 follow-up study of 13 family members, test data indicated an average of 32 chemicals in the parents and 23 in the children. Included were cancer-causing substances, hormone disruptors and chemicals that cause reproductive disorders and disrupt the development of children. While these are small studies, it is still disturbing news. Canada, through CEPA, must incorporate more tangible outcomes reached through clear goals, objectives and timelines for exposure reduction.

As we take a critical look of environmental pollution, one very contentious issue is the cost of illness resulting from exposure to environmental toxins. This is quite apart from the cost to the environment. In 2005, the Ontario Medical Association

gave a conservative estimate of \$1 billion/year for the province of Ontario as a result of health effects from two pollutants—ground-level ozone and fine particulate matter. The measurable effects included emergency room visits, premature deaths and hospital admissions. And that is not even considering job and school absenteeism and the reduced quality of life for those who are greatly affected by these pollutants. In all, we cannot continue to ignore this evidence.

But as consumers, we continue to be bombarded with some of these toxic products or toxic-containing products and assume that they are safe because they are available in the marketplace. That is a fallacy. The unsuspecting public has access to these products because of the lack of regulations to adequately control, label, ban or otherwise restrict these products. Hopefully, there will be provisions within CEPA to adequately deal with and provide clear, easily understood information on toxic or harmful chemicals in consumer products.

The use of safer alternative products should be promoted so that we can ultimately reduce our chemical exposure and ensure a cleaner, safer environment.

Another area of great concern is that of chronic low-level chemical exposure, one that most of us ignore. However, there is evidence to indicate that exposure to chemical mixtures can produce unexplained health effects, and in some cases, the effects are far greater than anticipated. This has been observed in some unexplained cancer clusters and several cases of multiple chemical sensitivities.

CEPA should provide a consistent mechanism

We cannot ignore exposure in the workplace. Some workers can be exposed to many toxic substances but although there is adherence to the safe limits for each chemical, the chemical combinations can pose health risks. The important and critical issue here is multi-chemical exposure. Also, these limits are not safe for all workers, as some are sensitive at very low levels of exposure. We need to better protect these workers; this has to be addressed through safe substitution of toxic chemicals. If this is not feasible, reduction or removal from use is the next best fit. CEPA should be instrumental in providing a consistent mechanism to facilitate this switchover.

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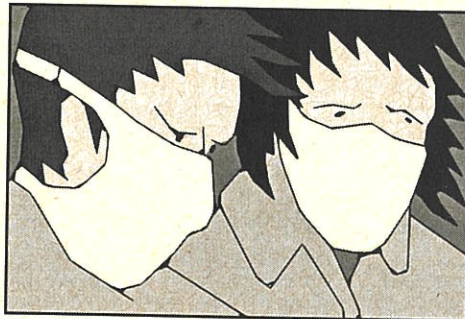


Illustration by David Henry

Manitoba's Lands & Waters

ManitobaWildlands.org
EnergyManitoba.org



MANITOBA WILDLANDS



Manitoba Food Charter Update

By Jennifer Heinrichs

The Manitoba Food Charter set out to identify what Manitobans believe food security should look like. Over the past year, over 70 groups of people from all walks of life and all parts of Manitoba got together to talk about food. Their thoughts and opinions were put together in a one-page document, called the Manitoba Food Charter. The Manitoba Food Charter is currently supporting and connecting Manitobans engaged in food security activities throughout the province, providing public education, and dialoguing with government.

To facilitate this work we have added an Urban Regional Liaison, Paul Chorney, a Rural Regional Liaison, Eric Busch, in Clearwater, and a Northern Regional Liaison, Donnamay Morin in the Pas. They are available to work with you any time and their contact information is on our website. We also welcome our Office Manager, Kelly Janz and our Communications Coordinator, Jennifer Heinrichs.

If you did not have the opportunity to get involved in the formation of the Food Charter over the past two years, there are still many ways in which you can take action. We are establishing Food Access, Public Education, and Food Policy working groups and have many volunteer opportunities in public awareness campaigns, media relations, administration, research, event planning, community development, fundraising, developing online tools, and more.

You can also become a signatory member of the Manitoba Food Charter. This means identifying steps you will take in your

own life towards achieving food security for all Manitobans. It also means following through on those steps, because without action the Manitoba Food Charter is just a piece of paper.

Here's what some people are already doing:

Individuals:

- Asked grocers for local foods
- Learned how to cook & preserve
- Started composting food wastes
- Got healthy foods in schools
- Ate meals with friends and family
- Shared garden plots with friends
- Attended food security meetings

Groups & Organizations:

- Started cooking programs in schools and for New Canadians
- Initiated and supported over 100 community gardens in Northern Manitoba

Government & Business:

- Developed a northern gardening manual
- Supported local food processing
- Featured Manitoba food in restaurants and meetings
- Published food security stories in newspapers
- Initiated CED businesses, local preserves & inner city youth farmers markets

Tell us what you're doing too! We would love to feature food security initiatives in our newsletter and on our website. The Manitoba Food Charter Website is at <http://food.cimnet.ca> or phone us at (204) 943-0822. You can also attend the Food Charter AGM in Boissevain on Feb 23 (see information in the Calendar on page 4).

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MFC Steering Committee and staff sit down to a meal

FSC Certification

continued from page 1

of the Manigotagan's run into Lake Winnipeg is protected in the newly created Manigotagan River Provincial Park. The first five kilometers flowing out of Quesnel Lake, however, are located in Nopiming Provincial Park, where the government of Manitoba legally permits logging. Owl 02B and Owl 02C are Tembec's reference numbers for their clearcuts along the Manigotagan. Proper forest stewardship would have dictated voluntary protection rather than putting this small area on the clearcutting block, but Tembec chose their usual path of disregard. In order to attain FSC certification Tembec should be forced to end their outrageous contempt for the wishes of Manitobans.

The Manitoba government has been complicit in the degradation of these areas, too, not raising objections to Tembec cuts. In fact, government approved the clearcuts for the 2006 harvest year. The delicate and fragile forests I've just mentioned may well already be lying in ruin, a barren waste in the provincial park for years to come.

What Tembec's application for FSC certification should mean

is that Tembec's actions are held to a standard higher than the questionable provincial forestry laws. It remains to be seen whether the certification standards are tough enough. The ultimate goal is for government to pass laws that protect parks thoroughly. Manitobans should get involved by sending their opinion to the government, asking them to remove industrial activity from our provincial parks.

More information can be found on our website at wildernesscommittee.mb.ca

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**BLUESTEM
WILDLIFE**



DAN SOPROVICH, M.Sc.
Wildlife Ecologist

Box 1442
Swan River, MB
R0L 1Z0

Phone/ Fax: (204) 734-3054
e-mail: dsop@mts.net

Member Group Profile

Planners Network Manitoba

By Richard Milgrom

Planners Network Manitoba (PNmb) was established in January 2006. Its primary goal is to draw attention to the importance of planning in addressing issues of social inequity and environmental degradation. The intention of the founding members is to make the links between the concerns of many locally-based interest groups and broader planning and decision making processes at the municipal and provincial levels. This will involve activist roles in public education, promoting the development of alternative plans, and joining with other groups in coalitions to sponsor events designed to raise public awareness about social and environmental issues.

PNmb is a local chapter of the continent-wide Planners Network (PN), and joins Montreal and Toronto as active Canadian chapters. PN was founded in the mid-seventies, building on concerns raised by the US civil rights movement. For many years, it functioned just as a network, providing planners, community organizers, activists and academics access to others who shared their concerns regarding social and environmental justice, occasionally meeting for conferences, and distributing a newsletter. PN has grown though, and since the mid-1990s the conferences have become annual events, and the newsletter has blossomed into a quarterly magazine, *Progressive Planning*.



Photo from www.plannersnetwork.org

To date PNmb has approximately one hundred individuals on its local email list. These people include professionals, students, academics, and activists, and the numbers represent connections with more than thirty other activist groups in Winnipeg and Manitoba (including the Manitoba Eco-Network).

Early discussions in the group have identified a range of issues that need attention. These include: urban sprawl and its broad range of social, fiscal and environmental impacts; urban aboriginal issues, particularly those related to social inequity; alternative transportation strategies, including those that would support public transit and active transportation; affordable housing and homelessness; and the regeneration of downtown.

Group discussions were formalized in a strategy session held in late November with approximately 30 participants. The results of this work are currently being reviewed by the PNmb Steering Committee to help determine more concrete actions for the coming year. PNmb has been active over the last year however, sponsoring, or co-sponsoring a number of events.

In April 2006, PNmb worked with the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Manitoba to present the local premier of Dr. Sheri Blake's film *The Detroit Collaborative Design Center: Amplifying the Diminished Voice*. The film documented the participatory design processes of the Design Center, and a panel of invited guests discussed this approach to design after the screening. Proceeds from the event were used to help send four University of Manitoba city planning students to the annual PN conference held in Chicago that year.

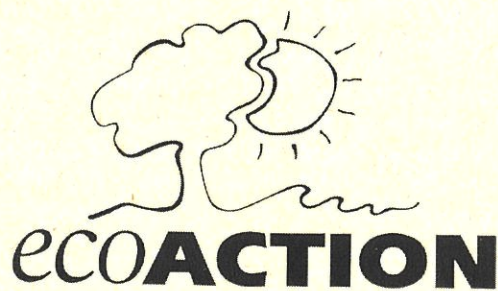
Helped organize Winnipeg Community Roundtable

In the fall, PNmb became more involved with other local groups. In September, it joined with seven others to organize the Winnipeg Community Roundtable, a response to Mayor Sam Katz's City Summit that was only open to invited guests. This was followed in early October by a mayoral candidates' debate, just before the municipal election. Working with nine other community-based organizations and advocacy groups, the debate focused on building a livable city.

Most recently, PNmb worked with the University of Manitoba's Faculties of Nursing and City Planning to present three public talks by Cathy Crowe, the Toronto-based homelessness activist. PNmb members also organized tours for Cathy of the city's shelters and other support agencies that work with homeless individuals.

PNmb will launch a local website in the near future. The main Planners Network website can be found at www.plannersnetwork.org, and includes more information about the organization as well as links to resources. Many articles from *Progressive Planning* magazine are also available in the "publications" section of the site.

For more about PNmb or to join the email list, please contact Richard Milgrom at richardmilgrom@gmail.com. **Eco**



Helping communities create a healthy environment
Aider les collectivités à créer un environnement sain

Have an idea for an environmental project?
Contact us at:

Avez-vous une idée pour un projet
environnemental dans votre communauté?
Contactez-nous au :

1-800-567-1570
www.ec.gc.ca/ecoaction

What's the Deal with Organic Milk?

By Andrea Ramlogan

The organic sector has been a shining light in the agriculture sector for a number of years. With a North American market estimated at approximately \$20 billion, the organic sector has been growing between 20-30% per year for the last decade, and the future projections look equally promising.

Increasing consumer demand is driving a steady growth in the organic market, with dairy the fastest growing products in organic food sales. The strong growth in the organic dairy market has fueled a sustained interest in organic dairy production, including the transition to organic of numerous conventional systems each year. Demand is expected to grow, as consumers maintain a strong interest in organic products for health and environmental reasons. New certified organic dairy farms around Canada are needed to supply these growing markets.

Most of the organic milk produced in Canada is marketed through a few companies, including Organic Meadow (a farmers' cooperative headquartered in Guelph, ON), Valley Pride (owned by Avalon Dairy of British Columbia). Other organic dairy products, including cheese, butter and ice cream can also be seen on many grocery shelves. Some producers process organic products on-farm and market directly to consumers.

Some Differences in Organic Production

To certify a dairy farm as organic, the land must be farmed without synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides, or insecticides for three consecutive years. The organic farmer must implement management practices and physical barriers to prevent commingling of organic and non-organic products and to prevent contact of handling operations and products with prohibited substances. Physical buffers (a minimum of 25 feet) are needed wherever fields and pastures adjoin areas where prohibited substances are applied. If equipment to be used on the organic land is also used on conventional crops, the equipment must be cleaned prior to use on organic crops. Storage areas must also be thoroughly cleaned.

Cattle must be fed an organic ration for 12 months, and the use of antibiotics and synthetic hormones is prohibited. Animals older than 6 months must have access to pasture in season, and

outdoor access throughout the year, weather permitting.

Accurate record keeping is also crucial to a successful organic farm. Functional recording methods must be established and maintained to retain organic certification. The stamp of a certification body is the assurance for consumers that a product has been inspected and verified by an independent third party and is in compliance with organic standards.

The Motivation

In the early years of organics, many farmers carried very strong ethics with them into the barnyard as a motivation for organic production. Resistance to chemical use, a desire to see improved herd health and interest in fulfilling a growing consumer demand fueled organic transitions. With improved market access and stable premiums, organic production has become desirable

to a larger population whose primary impetus may be to achieve higher profitability, often while maintaining a moderate herd size. Many farmers have found that a transition to organic dairy production has allowed them to keep the family farm profitable. Strong milk premiums and expanding markets mean more income into the farm, especially when combined with lower input costs associated with organic farming practices.

Organic dairy farming is based on a foundation of soil management, quality crop and forage production, and effective animal husbandry.

Many agree that becoming a successful organic farmer means that you need to start thinking about your farm in a new way. Solutions to problems are planned with an emphasis on prevention, and in fact, one of the most important changes for a conventional farmer is a new way of looking at problem solving. Because most synthetic products are no longer options, the organic dairy farmer must use alternative strategies to respond to the same types of problems the farmer experienced as a conventional farmer.

Pieter Biemond, the chair of Organic Meadow, and a long-time organic dairy farmer has said: "The hardest part of transition happens between a farmer's ears." This mindset shift, and the move towards a whole systems approach to agriculture is truly the key to successful organic production.

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Access to pasture is one cow-friendly requirement.

Climate Champions

continued from page 2

"George Monbiot... takes up where Al Gore and many others leave off. *Heat* is a remarkable book. For it is not written to convince the unconvinced (of) global warming, but to educate the already-persuaded, those who exited the theater after watching *An Inconvenient Truth* with fire in their bellies, ready to fight

the incoming menace about what must be done, and ready to face the significant sacrifices that will have to be made along the way". (Excerpted from the web-based www.truthout.org political news agency—you can read the rest of Morris' interesting and perceptive commentary at http://www.truthout.org/issues_06/010907EB.shtml).

Sound interesting? It is. This is an excellent book, (and review). A copy of *Heat* is available for loan from the Alice Chambers Memorial Library.

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Organic Milk in Manitoba

By Sue Black, Manitoba Organic Milk Marketing Co-op

The Manitoba Organic Milk Marketing Co-op (MOM's) is a new group in Manitoba. We are a small group of existing milk producers who are moving towards the production of organic milk. Starting in December 2005, a series of meetings were initiated by Chris McCarville's (co-op developer), and Andrea Ramlogan, Ontario Organic Farmers' Co-op (member relations manager). A core group of producers evolved out of these meetings.

Progress has been made towards making locally produced organic dairy products in Manitoba. MOM's first farm to start the one-year transition to organic, in November 2006, is the Black Family Farm of Deloraine. Larry and Sue Black run a fifty-cow dairy with their son, Dave, and his girlfriend Ashley Holm. The Blacks have never used chemicals on their fourth generation farmland, but will accomplish a 25-year goal by becoming organic in the dairy, as well. Three other Manitoba dairy farms are poised to begin their organic transition in 2007.

Until there are a few producers on stream, the first organic milk will likely be processed for industrial products. To guarantee security of supply, a minimum number of producers must

be pooling their milk before local fluid milk is processed here. Don't look for MOM's-produced fluid milk products to be on the store shelves before fall of 2008.

This project seems to capture everyone's support. We have had help from the Manitoba Government, the Organic Producers Association of Manitoba, and the Dairy Farmers of Manitoba. With their help, MOM's hosted a very successful workshop in Winnipeg, "Organic Dairy Farming Opportunities in Manitoba" on November 29 and 30, 2006. There were presentations on an overview of organic systems, a farmer's transition experience, market opportunities with OntarBio, and keynote speaker Dr. Paul Dettloff, DVM.

MOM's members have been getting to know each other, and investigating the market and the diverse systems of organic milk production in other parts of the country. Our goal is to envision the best possible organic milk system, and create a long-term, farmer-controlled industry in Manitoba. We are excited about this opportunity, and grateful for the support from our community.

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Eco-Journal Reader Opinion Survey

The Eco-Journal has been publishing for quite a number of years. It may be time for a change in our format or coverage, and we would very much like to get feedback from you, our readers.

Whether you are a long-time reader, or have come more recently to our pages, please take a few moments to answer the

following questions. If you don't want to cut up your Journal, you can also find this survey on our website at <http://www.mbeconetwork.org>, or you can send an email with your responses (and any further comments) to info@mbeconetwork.org. **Thanks for your help!**

1. Tell us where you receive the Journal:
☐ Home mail; ☐ Office mail; ☐ Library; ☐ Online;
☐ Other _____
2. How much of the Journal do you read?
☐ Cover to cover; ☐ Most articles; ☐ A few articles
3. Do you share your copy of the Journal with others?
(Please write the number of people in the relevant space):
___ Family/friends; ___ Co-workers; ___ Public/customers
4. Please rate the value of the Journal to your knowledge of environmental issues in Manitoba, on a scale of 1 to 5. 1 being "not valuable" to 5 being "very valuable" ____

5. Are there any specific topics or environmental issues you would like to see more coverage of? Do you have ideas for articles you'd like to see?

6. In a few words, tell us what you like about the Journal:

7. What about things you don't like?

8. How can we improve the Journal?

9. The Journal is printed on paper made from unbleached 100% post-consumer fibre. Which of the following best describes your preferences:
☐ I like the rough, textured look;
☐ It's too dark and photos are murky;
☐ Other _____
10. If the Journal were published as a tabloid, we could include more articles and have a wider distribution. (Costs would be higher, so more advertising revenue would be needed!) Would you like us to use a tabloid format?
☐ Yes; ☐ No
11. Have you wanted to advertise in the Eco-Journal, but not done so for any of the following reasons?
☐ Too costly; ☐ Lack of information; ☐ No time to prepare an ad; ☐ Other (please explain) _____
12. Any other thoughts for us?

Return the Survey to Manitoba EcoNetwork, 3rd Floor, 303 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3B 2B4

Churchill Northern Studies Centre joins the EcoCentre Southern Exposure

By Michael Goodyear

In an effort to tip the balance, the Churchill Northern Studies Centre (CNSC) hopes to bring a little global cooling to Winnipeg with the opening of our new office in the EcoCentre. Having been a Manitoba Eco-Network member for several years now, it seemed like a logical location for our next big step. Staffed by Pat Hardy and Shawn Lund of the Tunnelwood Group, the CNSC's Winnipeg office will function both as a base for upcoming fundraising efforts and a point-of-contact between Churchill and our many southern-based clients.

Founded in 1976, the CNSC is an independent, non-profit research and education facility located twenty-three kilometres east of Churchill, Manitoba. The CNSC provides accommodations, meals, equipment rentals, and logistical support to scientific researchers working on a diverse range of topics specific to northern science. The CNSC also supports a wide variety of educational programming ranging from general interest to university credit courses.

Located on the marine coast of historic Hudson Bay, the CNSC is situated along a transition zone where the northern limit of the boreal forest meets the southern extension of Arctic tundra. The scientific importance of transitional zones as barometers of environmental change is critical to our understanding of glo-

bal warming and its related impacts. Each year, more than one hundred researchers and dozens of "citizen scientists" participate in over fifty projects as diverse as polar bear population dynamics, carbon cycling, atmospheric physics, and the societal impacts of a changing climate.



The Churchill Northern Studies site

Since 1985, the CNSC has occupied several buildings on the site of the former Churchill Research (Rocket) Range. Built in the mid-1950's as part of the International Geophysical Year of 1957-58, the rocket range made possible a clearer understanding of Earth's upper atmosphere and was instrumental in the development of the Canadian designed and manufactured Black Brant rocket. Many of the buildings are now over forty years old, poorly insulated and lack some of the modern equipment required by today's increasingly complex studies.

The Churchill Northern Studies Centre is currently embarking on a major capital fundraising plan for the eventual replacement of its aging facilities. We envision our new EcoCentre location figuring prominently in these efforts. Please stop by and say hello to Pat and Shawn to learn more about the CNSC and our exciting plans for the future.

Visit the Churchill Northern Studies Centre online, at: www.churchillscience.ca

Eco

The Manitoba Eco-Network

3-303 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2B4

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

Enclosed is a cheque for:

- \$25 Supporting member (individuals)
- \$40 Group membership
- \$50 Other organizations (businesses, government departments and corporations that do not otherwise qualify for group membership)

I'm also enclosing a donation of _____ to help with your public education activities.
[Charitable tax receipts available]

Total Amount enclosed _____

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

Name(s) _____ Group (if applicable) _____
 Telephone # () _____ E-Mail _____
 Mailing address _____ Postal Code _____
 Area(s) of interest _____ Volunteer skills _____

Group members are entitled to nominate representatives for a position on the Eco-Network Steering Committee. Group membership is open to any non-governmental, non-profit group which has as one of its objectives the enhancing or furthering of environmental quality, protecting the environment or environmental education.

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

