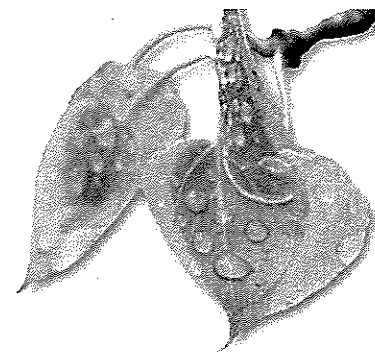
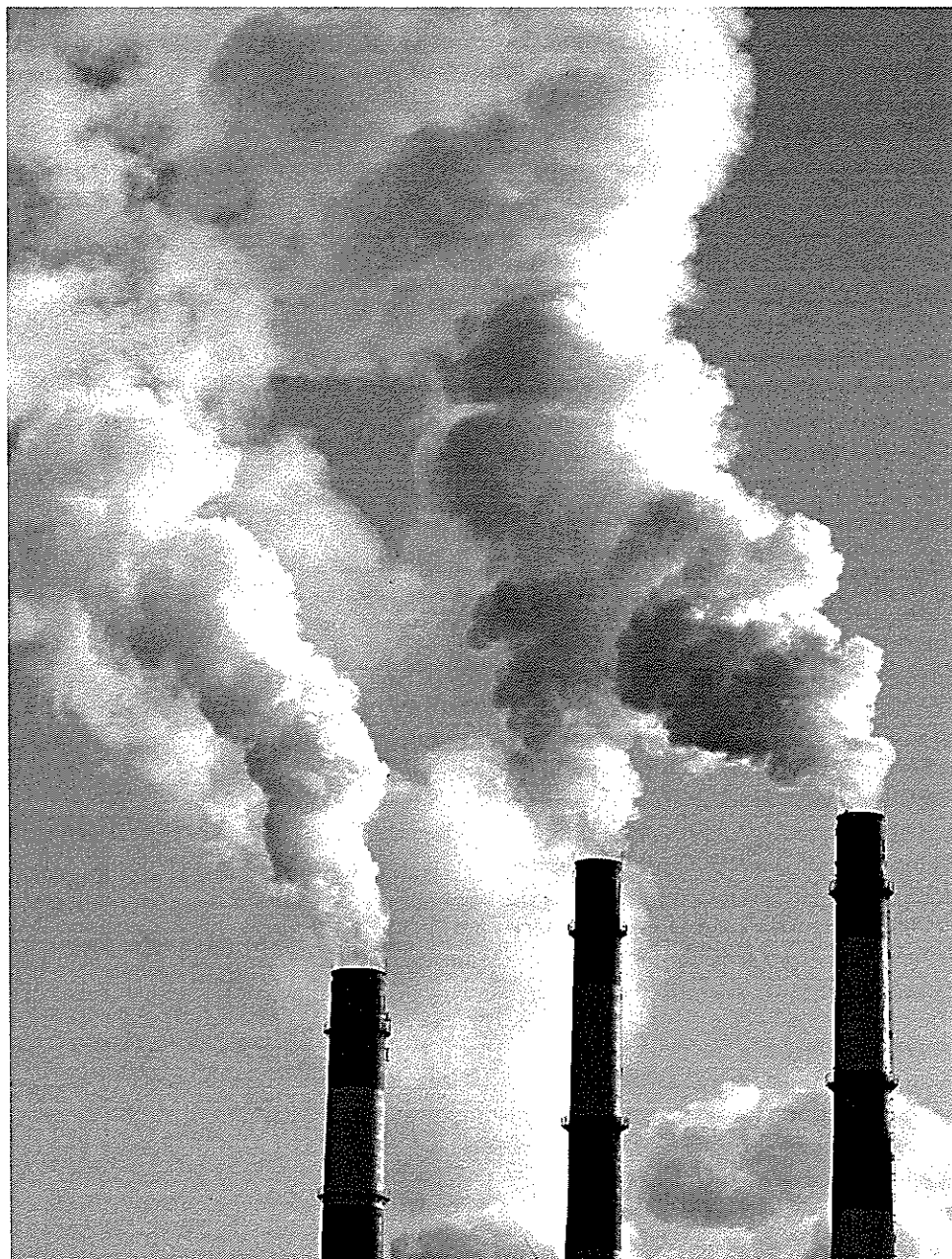




Cap and Trade, Offsets and Carbon Sequestration

A primer to systems for reducing greenhouse gases

By Curt Hull, Project Manager, Climate Change Connection



Cap and trade systems seek to reduce emissions gradually while offsets provide other environmental benefits.

Inside this Issue:

Cap and Trade.....	cover, 4
Executive Director's Letter.....	2
Eco-Events in Manitoba /	
Eco Film Series	3
The Threat of GM Alfalfa.....	5
From Blue Box to...Where?	6-7
Water and Wastewater Privatization	8
Show Us Your Moves!	9
Environmentally Conscious ATV Use... ..	9
Tar Sands Not Just an Alberta Issue ..	10
DVD Review: Tar Sands Showdown... ..	11
New In the Library	11
Waterway Protection	12

SINCE THE ELECTION of President Obama last year, there has been hope that the United States will start to take action against climate change. Lately there's been increasing talk about cap and trade, emission offsets, and carbon sequestration — especially in talks between the Canadian and U.S. administrations.

But mention any of these terms to most people and their eyes will glaze over. The truth is, these systems can't win this fight alone. But they could play a valuable role as long as we keep them in perspective and fit them into a much broader, more intense, and complete system.

Cap and trade

A cap and trade system is intended to provide a mechanism to encourage emitters of large amounts of greenhouse gas (GHG) to invest in changes that will reduce their emissions.

In a cap and trade system, large emitter companies will be allowed to produce no more than a set amount of GHG emissions — a cap. The cap will be different for different industrial sectors and it will be reduced on a schedule so that overall emissions continually decrease. (See Figure 1 on page four.)

At the end of each year, large emitter companies will report their emissions. The figure shows that for Company 1, actual emissions are less than the cap. Therefore, the amount of emissions less than the cap earns them credits that they can sell or trade. The emissions of Company 2 are more than the cap, so they will need to buy credits and/or offsets.

continued on page 4 >>

eco-journal

is published five times per year by the
Manitoba Eco-Network/
Réseau Ecologique du Manitoba Inc. at
3rd Floor, 303 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 2B4
Phone: 204-947-6511 / Fax: 204-989-8476
info@mbeconetwork.org
www.mbeconetwork.org

Editor: Joel Trenaman
editor@mbeconetwork.org

CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE:

Lindy Clubb, Chris Douglas, Lynne Fernandez,
Cathy Holtlander, Curt Hull, Sacha Kopelow,
Kassie Kyle, Anne Lindsey, Tim Lutz,
Steve St. Louis, Joel Trenaman, Erica Young,
Fraser Young.

Design & Layout: Tracey Shillington
www.simpliflivedesigns.ca

MANITOBA ECO-NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE:

Jim Chapryk, *Sierra Club Winnipeg Group*
Dennis Cunningham, *Member at Large*
Julie Fine, *Organic Food Council of Manitoba*
Sandra Madray, *Chemical Sensitivities Manitoba*
Joseph Prymak, *Consumers for Responsible
Energy (CoRE)*
John Coombs, *Manitoba Naturalists Society*
Natasha Szach, *EcoPIA*
Liz Dykman, *Member at Large*

Manitoba Eco-Network is affiliated with
the Canadian Environmental Network.

*EcoCentre groups gratefully acknowledge the
contributions of Mountain Equipment Co-op.*

Individual subscriptions to *Eco-Journal*
are available as part of a supporting
membership to the Manitoba Eco-Network at
a cost of \$30. Group membership dues are
\$50. Associate membership dues are \$60.

Canada Publication Mail Sales Agreement
#40010075, Postage paid at Winnipeg, MB.
Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:

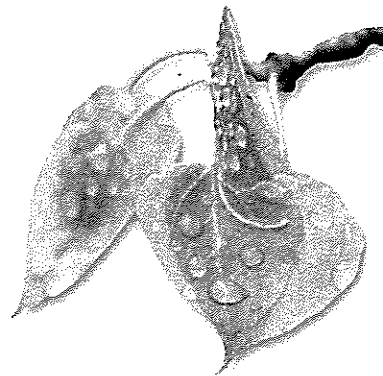
Manitoba Eco-Network
3rd Floor-303 Portage Ave.
Winnipeg, MB R3B 2B4

The opinions expressed by contributors
are their own and do not represent
the views of the Manitoba Eco-Network
or its member groups.

For advertising rates, please contact
Lise Smith at info@mbeconetwork.org,
or 947-6511. The advertising deadline
for the June 1 edition is May 6, 2009.



Printed by Kendrick Quality Printing on 100%
chlorine-free, post-consumer recycled paper with
vegetable based ink.



Executive Director's Letter

AT A RECENT LUNCH GATHERING of the Eco-Network staff, I was struck by how our numerous projects form their own "mini-network" within the MEN as a whole. And just as in any network, the project staff really benefit from sharing information and resources with each other, and collaborating where possible. So, when the Brandon organizing committee for the Water Caucus event in that city said they wanted someone to talk about the basics of climate change and how it impacts water, Curt Hull, the Climate Change Connection (CCC) Project Manager seemed an obvious choice. And when CCC does a Youth Conference, it only makes sense to involve the Youth Network Coordinator, Erica Young.

During that lunch we talked about lots of other overlapping work, Organic Lawn Care and CCC, for example. Conventional lawn practices have climate change impacts: that harmless looking lawn fertilizer off-gases to become nitrous oxide, the most potent greenhouse gas. Not to mention those two-cycle, gas-guzzling power tools and their CO2 emissions. The Water Caucus also fits with Organic Lawn Care: the same hardy prairie perennials we use to convert our lawns to more natural landscapes are also excellent water conservers. And the list goes on.

Current Eco-Network projects are in full swing as we move out of the winter cold. Here is a snapshot of work just completed or coming soon.

The Youth Network recently finished organizing a youth consultation on Child- and Youth-Friendly Land Use and Transport Planning Guidelines (see Erica's article in this issue), and is starting up a new year of Eco-Youth networking and capacity-building with funding from the Winnipeg Foundation.

For Climate Change Connection, a rural youth climate change conference in Manitou, Manitoba is fast approaching, and CCC is looking forward to enhanced work in the areas of anti-idling and outreach to climate-friendly businesses. (As well as travelling to Thompson for the Water Caucus event!)

Speaking of the Water Caucus: Josh and Sacha are pulling together a capacity building event in Thompson for April that will feature Roger Hunca from the Maritime Aboriginal People's Council, speaking on the use of lakes as mine tailings ponds. Water Caucus is also in the final stages of developing a new tabloid on groundwater, for widespread distribution.

The Children's Health and Environment Partnership continues to add content to the new website at www.childrensenvironment.ca and recently completed workshops (funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada) with childcare providers, educators and other front line personnel on ways to avoid exposures that are toxic to children's health — including lawn care chemicals, which leads to....

Organic Lawn Care: several presentations are on the schedule already, including two in Portage la Prairie, and the City of Winnipeg has provided some of the funding needed for our usual summer series of public workshops and displays here in Winnipeg.

Add all this to our Eco-Evening (April 24), the Eco-Film Series (the last Wednesday of each month), and a Member Forum scheduled for May, and it's the usual busy time for all of us. Hope to see you at some of these events!

Anne Lindsey
Executive Director, Manitoba Eco-Network

Recognize Our Environmental Heroes

THE TIME HAS COME ONCE AGAIN for nominations to the "honour roll" of environmentalists, the Manitoba Eco-Network Environmental Awards. Nominations close June 1. www.mbeconetwork.org

APRIL

17 Activate your Commute. Learn tips on how to stay safe while walking and cycling in Winnipeg. Jessie and Scot will help you choose a route — safe, scenic or direct. Come and check out the latest equipment to make getting around easier and more enjoyable. 12-1 p.m., Millennium Library, free admission. For more info: Winnipeg in motion at 940-3648.

20 Book Launch: Maintaining Whole Systems On Earth's Crown. Join Herb Hammond and the Silva Forest Foundation for the launch of their latest book, *Maintaining Whole Systems on Earth's Crown: EcoSystem-based Conservation for the Boreal Forest*, featuring an informative and visually beautiful presentation of Canada's boreal forest. Location: McNally Robinson (1120 Grant Avenue), 7pm. Hosted by McNally Robinson Booksellers, the Sierra Club Prairie, CPAWS MB and Manitoba Wildlands.

21 Eco-Friendly Dinner. The Project Peacemakers annual dinner will take place at Charleswood United Church (4820 Roblin Blvd.) at 6:30 p.m. There will be a vegetarian buffet dinner, displays and a silent auction. Archbishop Weisgerber will speak about "The Green Gospel," and the Steve Kirby

Trio will entertain. Tickets are \$10 (age 12 and under \$5) and can be obtained at 775-8178 or info@projectpeacemakers.org.

25 Adventure Race. Sign up for the Red River Valley Clean Cities Coalition Winnipeg Chapter's version of *The Amazing Race!* The race will take place downtown (from 1-2:30 p.m.) and feature environmental sustainability and transportation tasks. First place wins a new bike! There will also be alternative transportation exhibits and activities throughout the day. For more info and to register: slitinsky@cleancitieswinnipeg.org, www.cleancitieswinnipeg.org or 204-986-2453.

Manitoba Eco-Network presents:

Another Eco Evening

At last something to smile about!



OUTSIDE JOKE
(IMPROV COMEDY TROUPE)

10x10x20
(10 INNOVATIVE ECO-PROJECTS, 10 SLIDES EACH, 20 SECONDS PER SLIDE)

FRI. APRIL 24TH
FRANCO MANITOBA CULTURAL CENTRE
(340 Provencher Blvd) [7-10pm] [\$20]

TICKETS: Email: caj@303-will-st.ca, Plato's Cave (264 Tache Ave, Monrovia, 311 Albert St), or by calling 947-6511

MORE INFO: www.mbeconetwork.org - 947-6511

music • mingling • munchies

emgear • leau • ORGANIC MEXICO • Your Step to Eco 51 Plaza

26 Eco Café & Market. Find earth-friendly products and connect with local environmental groups over fair trade coffee! 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. at the R.A. Steen C.C. (980 Palmerston Ave.). Free admission, donations welcome. For more info: Manitoba Earth Day Committee at 474-6461 or MBEarthday@gmail.com.

MAY

2-3 Jane's Walk is a free series of neighbourhood strolls led by volunteers who offer an insider's take on Winnipeg's vibrant and fascinating neighbourhoods. The walks are a celebration of urban activist and writer Jane Jacobs, and seek to raise urban literacy by combining the simple act of walking with personal observations, urban history, planning, design and civic engagement. An exceptional opportunity to rediscover Winnipeg! For more info: Beth at 925-3772, beth@resourceconservation.mb.ca or www.janeswalk.net.

7 Eco Book & Film Club. This bi-monthly meeting of the EBFC will be a viewing and discussion of *To the Tar Sands* (2008), which follows a group of 19 environmentalists as they cycle 1,300 km across Alberta to witness firsthand the impacts of the tar sands boom. 7 p.m., Eco-Centre (303 Portage Ave), all welcome. For more info: Erica at 947-6511, or library@mbeconetwork.org.

9 Vegetable Gardening for Beginners. This workshop will take participants through the basics of planning, planting, nurturing and harvesting a vegetable garden in Manitoba. Offered at the A Rocha Pembina Valley field study centre's garden (30 min. SW of Morden), modest workshop fees apply. Overnight stays at the centre can be arranged. Expect to get dirt under your fingernails! To register: 204-246-2059. www.arocha.org

31- June 6 10th Annual Commuter Challenge. The Commuter Challenge is a national sustainable transportation event celebrated during Environment Week. It's a friendly competition between workplaces and schools to encourage individuals to walk, cycle, carpool or take transit on their daily commute. Prizes are awarded to workplaces with the highest participation rates, but the main objective is to highlight the importance of green and active commuting in creating healthy communities through increased physical activity and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. For more info: www.resourceconservation.mb.ca or 925-3777.

Please email your event notices to info@mbeconetwork.org.

Eco-Film Series

Each evening we will show a feature film and a short film, followed by a moderated discussion on the issues.

April 29: A Sense of Wonder

This film, depicting scientist and author Rachel Carson in the last year of her life as she battles cancer and the chemical industry, offers an historically accurate and powerfully moving portrayal of this amazing woman, who many consider the "patron saint" of the modern environmental movement. You will not walk away unmoved! Co-hosted with Nature Manitoba.

May 27: The World According to Monsanto

This shocking film tells the tale of an industrial empire that, thanks to misleading reports, collusion, pressure tactics, and attempts at corruption (in Canada, no less) has become the world's largest seed manufacturer. It is also a call to action regarding the labelling of GMO ingredients in food products.

Admission:

\$5 for members, students or low-income
\$8 regular admission

Tickets at the door

7pm at the Ellice Theatre & Cafe
585 Ellice Avenue

Ph: 947-6511 for more information,
or visit www.mbeconetwork.org.

Come early or stay late for
something delicious to eat!

Cap & trade cont'd...

Sequestration and offsets

An offset can be produced either by preventing GHG production or by sequestering carbon. Projects that prevent GHG production prevent emissions that would have occurred otherwise. An example would be building a wind or solar power generation system to replace a coal-fired electrical plant.

Carbon sequestration means trapping or removing GHG from the atmosphere. There are two ways to sequester carbon: geological sequestration — basically storage of carbon dioxide deep underground; and biological or terrestrial sequestration — the net removal of GHG from the atmosphere by plants and micro-organisms and its storage in vegetative biomass (biological) and in soils (terrestrial).

Things get complicated

It is really important to prevent leakage in cap and trade systems until the systemic reach becomes global. For example, it's possible for companies to reduce their emissions by outsourcing high-emission production to another country or region that is outside the system.

A key problem with emission prevention projects is additionality. For example, someone needs to determine whether a wind power system would have been built anyway even without the investment derived from selling carbon offset credits.

Sequestration projects need to produce measurable results and have some degree of permanence. Protocols or rules need to be developed for every type of offset scheme and application region; landfill gas schemes that work in the tropics may not work in the arctic. Reliable, independent auditors need to validate each project before it starts and verify each result.

Value

There are enormous opportunities for good with offset systems. Many biological sequestration projects involve changes to land use, agriculture, or forestry practices. These could slow or reverse habitat destruction activities such as cutting of rainforest or drainage of wetland.

Also, by effective use of tools like the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), it's possible to transfer some real wealth and sustainability to developing nations. CDM allows developed countries to invest in offset projects in developing nations instead of the more expensive alternative of reducing emissions or buying credits at home.

However, sufficient value has to be given to these schemes to make them more attractive than the destructive alternatives. Protocols need to be developed to address all of the issues of additionality, measurement, permanence, validation, and verification for each type of offset. Working out these mechanisms is the subject of much study and a hot topic of much international debate right now.

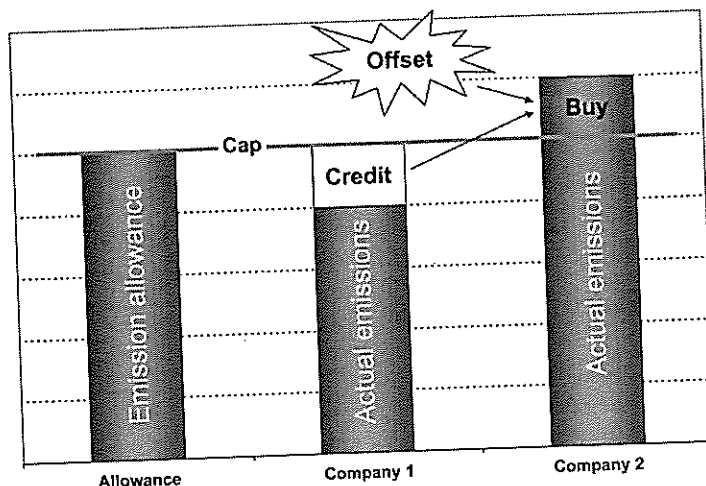


Figure 1: An example of a cap and trade transaction.

Offset providers

There are a lot of companies out there offering offsets. Some are a lot like snake oil salesman — you really don't know what you are getting.

The Manitoba Government, along with Canadian Standards Association (CSA), and the Canadian Climate Exchange has created the Green Registry (<http://www.greenregistry.org/>) for buying and selling offsets. CSA involvement assures users that the carbon offsets traded are real. Offsets are validated and verified, and each tonne of carbon is serialized. So, once it is sold, it is only sold once. Right now the Manitoba registry is voluntary.

In the near future, the registry will likely be involved in Manitoba's commitment to the Western Climate Initiative (WCI). Beyond the WCI, it looks likely that North American or global emission trading schemes will be coming. Systems like these will likely require emitters of 25 or even 10 kilotonnes (KT) to report and trade emissions. As an example, the Health Sciences Centre generates 23 KT per year.

However, all of this validation and verification of carbon credits costs money — thousands of dollars per project. So, it doesn't make sense for municipalities with small landfills, or for individual farmers to worry too much about trying to make money with cap and trade.

What's the good of it?

Cap and trade has been valuable in the past. It was first used successfully on a global scale in the battle to shrink the "hole in the ozone." After 1990, a cap and trade policy got industry to dramatically and quickly reduce the production of ozone-depleting chemicals.

But the ozone problem involved a relatively limited number of companies dealing with the manufacturing of specific chemicals. Greenhouse gases are much more pervasive, come from many more sources, and reducing them is much more complicated. The truth is, cap and trade, emission offsetting, and carbon sequestration can't achieve our goal alone.

The real danger is over-reliance on any of these. If we treat them as magic bullets and let them do it for us, we will delay the emission reductions that each and every one of us must make. We need to massively reduce our greenhouse gas emissions right now. Otherwise, we may be damaging the planet so badly that it will not be able to feed all of our children.

If we don't ensure complicated mechanisms like these are just parts of a much broader, more intense and complete system, we may have a lot of explaining to do to our grandkids before we go.



From bare metal to back-up, we build and administer everything from high-volume web servers to small office file servers. And we do it all with Free Software. We also discount most community-based organizations.

transparency@parit.ca **<http://parit.ca>**



The Threat of GM Alfalfa to Sustainable Livestock Production

By Cathy Holtlander, *Beyond Factory Farming*

BEYOND FACTORY FARMING is very concerned about the implications of genetically modified alfalfa, particularly its impacts on sustainable livestock production.

In 2005, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Health Canada approved genetically modified (GM) Roundup Ready alfalfa for unconfined release into the environment and for use as livestock feed. Roundup Ready alfalfa is genetically engineered to withstand application of Monsanto's glyphosate herbicide, Roundup. The agencies' decisions were based on submissions from Monsanto itself — with no independent studies. Since then, private field trials have taken place in undisclosed locations across the country.

Monsanto and its partner company, Forage Genetics International, have indicated they wish to commercialize GM alfalfa in Canada. Unregistered varieties of alfalfa cannot be sold in Canada, so variety registration is the last hurdle they need to clear before Roundup Ready alfalfa can be sold in Canada.

The CFIA has proposed new regulations which will considerably shorten the time required to get a seed variety registered. It is expected that alfalfa will be placed in the category of crop seeds that do not require new varieties to exhibit improvements over old varieties. The CFIA does not require market acceptance to be considered either, even though major export markets such as Europe and Japan will not accept varieties with GM traits. For more about the proposed seed variety regulations and

their implications, listen to the Making the Links interview with Terry Boehm, available at Saskorganic.com.

Contamination of non-GM with GM alfalfa is certain if the crop is grown commercially. Alfalfa is pollinated by bees, which range widely and often unpredictably. Buffer strips between GM and non-GM crops would be ineffective as a result. As "feral" alfalfa (domestic alfalfa that survives on its own in the wild) growing in ditches, pastures and meadows all across Canada becomes contaminated it will form a reservoir of GM alfalfa genes that bees will have ready access to.

Alfalfa is an important forage crop. It is an important soil-builder in organic farmers' crop rotations as it fixes atmospheric nitrogen via special bacteria it harbours on its root nodules, improving soil fertility. The ability to fix nitrogen also allows the alfalfa to synthesize plenty of protein, making it highly nutritious feed for livestock. Alfalfa grown to enhance soil fertility can be harvested as hay and fed to animals over winter. Animals thus perform a "value added" service to a crop grown for agronomic purposes. This practice provides additional revenue for farmers, whether they raise livestock themselves, or sell the hay, resulting in more economically viable farms.

GM alfalfa looms over this ecologically balanced symbiotic production system, because GMOs are prohibited in certified organic agriculture. If GM alfalfa is commercialized, alfalfa crops and seed will become contaminated by GMOs as

canola did. Organic farmers will have to take alfalfa out of their crop rotations. This will be devastating to organic agriculture in general, and will have a particularly harsh impact on certified organic livestock production.

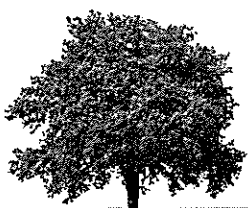
In the U.S., civil society groups were successful in getting an injunction to stop the planting of GM alfalfa until such time as a properly done environmental assessment was completed. The injunction cited the damage to organic farmers as a key concern that had not been addressed in Monsanto's original application for commercial release. We are expecting the American environmental assessment to be completed fairly soon. If the new study provides for release in the U.S. we can expect a strong push to get a variety registered in Canada so the product can be sold in both countries simultaneously.

Beyond Factory Farming has joined with many other organizations from across Canada to support the work of the Saskatchewan Organic Directorate's Organic Agriculture Protection Fund and the Canadian Biotech Action Network to develop the national No to GMO Alfalfa Campaign to stop the introduction of GM alfalfa in Canada.

Our life is frittered away by detail...

simplify, simplify.

~ Henry David Thoreau



Simplicity Sessions on:

Ecological Simplicity: April 14, 21 & 28, 2009

Simplicity and Money: May 5 & 12, 2009

Simplicity and Time: May 19 & 26, 2009

All Sessions from 6:30-9:00 pm

Location: R. A. Steen Community Club, 980 Palmerston Avenue

For more information and to register, call: **204-475-4233**

info@simplicitycentre.org | www.simplicitycentre.org

The Manitoba Eco-Network thanks

d.a. Niels Kitchenware & Restaurant Supplies Ltd.

for their No Bag Campaign, and their customers for saying 'no thank you' to 2,000 bags!

The company generously donates to the Eco-Network every time a bag is declined.

Manitagan River Canoe Map

Beautiful, new, artistic and informative!

Developed by MEN's GIS and Mapping Centre.

Available directly through MEN (call 947-6511) or at Mountain Equipment Co-op.

An excellent gift for paddlers!

\$10



From Blue Box to...Where?

Photography and Text by Steve St. Louis



1.

RECYCLING: WHERE DOES IT GO? was a photo essay that I completed as my independent professional project for Red River College's Creative Communications program. All students propose and produce a project of their own selection. Projects are promotional, creative, documentary, or research-based, and can be in the form of video, audio, print, performance and more.

I decided to focus on recycling, as there seemed to be a lot of misunderstanding and speculation about the recycling process. There is a lot of information online as to where our recycling goes and how it is processed. However, the average person doesn't actively seek out that information. Typically, when the recyclables leave the blue box, few people know what happens next. I wanted to find the answers to some of the more common questions that people had. The first step was to go to the source and photograph the recyclables at different recovery facilities. The photographs are high impact, and arguably possess an artistic quality with their combination of patterns and colours. The photographs engage the viewers and provide a look inside places where they wouldn't normally have access. I hope the photos help people feel more connected to the bigger picture and encourage them to learn more about recycling.

These are selections from the complete photo essay, which was exhibited at Red River College's ONWARD Gallery from Feb. 26 to March 6.



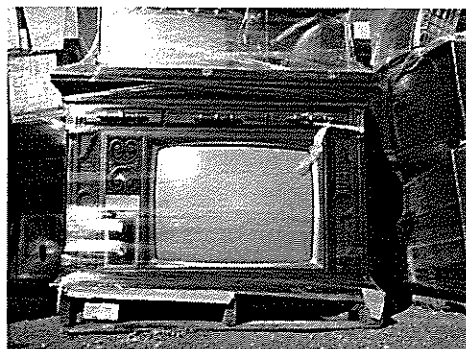
2.



3.



4.



5.



6.

1. Tonnes of material recycled from depot, blue box, and apartment recycling programs in Winnipeg: 1998 — 23,638, 2008 — 45,560
Source: City of Winnipeg Water and Waste Dept.

2. International Paper Industries handles the recycling contract for the City of Winnipeg — 160,000 kg of material each day.

3. A "glass road" at the Brady Road Landfill. All the glass we put in the blue box gets reused. Other examples include landscaping projects, base for sidewalks, and fill material for retaining walls.

4. Aluminum recycling is so efficient it can take as few as 60 days for an aluminum can to be recycled, turned into a new can, filled with product, and back on the store shelves. It has a very high re-sale value and can be recycled indefinitely without losing its structural integrity, making it the most valuable packaging material collected by recycling programs. *Source: MPSC*

5. The tubes in this old TV set contain hazardous materials such as lead and phosphorous. These are melted down and disposed of safely or re-used wherever possible. It's crucial for the environment that electronics don't end up in landfills. *Source: Syrotech Industries*

6. Much of Manitoba's e-waste is shipped to SIMS Recycling in Brampton, Ontario. Components such as steel, copper, aluminum, gold, and silver are used for re-manufacturing. All of Manitoba's e-waste is processed in North America. *Source: Green Manitoba*



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

Manitoba's Lands & Waters

ManitobaWildlands.org
EnergyManitoba.org



MANITOBA WILDLANDS

Environmental Concerns of Water Privatization

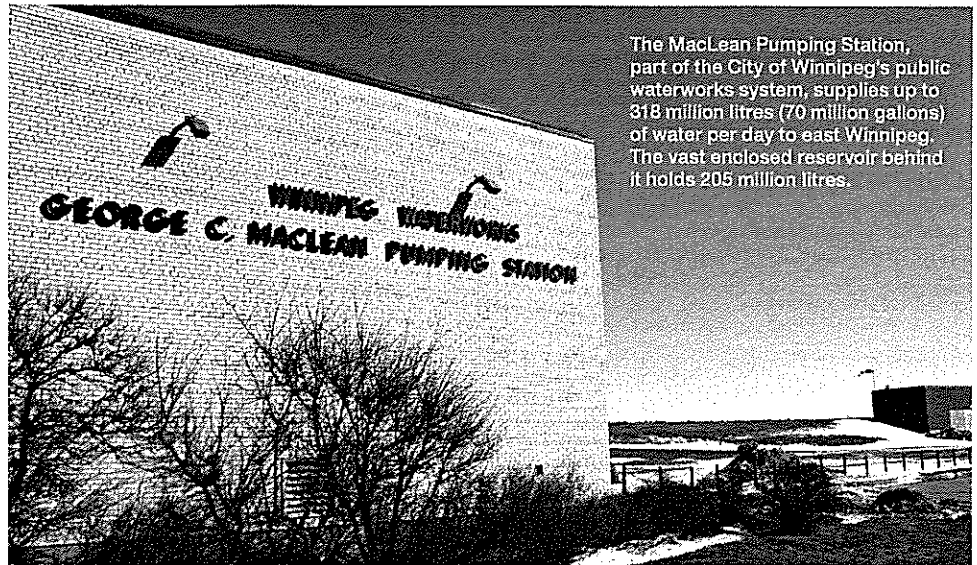
By Sacha Kopelow,
Water Caucus Coordinator, Manitoba Eco-Network

CASE STUDIES AROUND THE WORLD show a trend of increased environmental degradation under privatized water systems. From Argentina to France, and here at home in Canada, communities have seen environmental concerns disregarded by corporations seeking to profit through private water provision and wastewater treatment agreements.

The profit factor is key: private systems are accountable to shareholders expecting a return on investment, while public systems exist to provide the service within more reasonable financial parameters. When profit is the central goal, rate increases and cost cutting are standard. Cost cutting can mean softer environmental regulation, weaker monitoring, less effective technology, and a reluctance to research and develop better environmental practises.

Sadly, privatization schemes are often pushed through government processes so effectively that the public and decision-makers don't have time to fully educate themselves as to ramifications. Even when communities facing severe financial and environmental consequences seek to take back their system, they can find that the contract is entrenched long term and includes loopholes through which the private "partner" can duck responsibility for clean-up costs. In 1994, the regional municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth contracted with a private corporation for the operation of their water and sewage system. Two years into a ten-year contract, the sewage plant dumped 180 million litres of raw sewage into the harbour and surrounding areas. The company was found responsible for the spill, but the municipality ended up paying for all of the damages.

While privacy laws diminish the transparency of corporate activities, a public system is better able to reveal environmental records and respond to community voices. In a corporate, commercial, competitive model, cooperation and innovation are restricted and guarded, while public institutions are better situated to share resources and ideas and are often built through a history of collaboration, for example with universities. The Prairies are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, and as an agricultural region, heavily dependent on a healthy water cycle. As water conservation and wastewater management becomes more and more critical, the ability of public systems to develop new adaptation strategies and technologies and to take action in partnership with the public will be extremely valuable to Manitoba.



The MacLean Pumping Station, part of the City of Winnipeg's public waterworks system, supplies up to 318 million litres (70 million gallons) of water per day to east Winnipeg. The vast enclosed reservoir behind it holds 205 million litres.

Photo: Joel Trenaman

Water and Wastewater Privatization: A Clear and Present Danger

By Lynne Fernandez, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives — Manitoba

SINCE PASSING A MOTION at the November 16, 2008 Council meeting to adopt the recommendations of a Deloitte consulting report on the issue, the City of Winnipeg has made a bold move to dismantle our Water and Waste Department's public governance structure. The motion was passed with little public consultation or notice.

The report tabled at the meeting made several recommendations including:

1. That the City of Winnipeg adopt the concept of a City-owned Municipal Corporate Utility (MCU) as a "new arm's length business model" that would operate city-owned utilities, including water services. Under corporate law, the new corporation would be able to withhold information from the public.
2. That the public service be authorized to procure a "strategic partner" that would "bring private sector experience to the design, construction, finance and potentially the operation of the North and South End Water Pollution Control Centres as well as potential operation of the West End Water Pollution Control Centre." This is a less-than-direct reference to a Public-Private Partnership (P3), and a private corporation would be the private partner. The MCU would be the "public" partner.

The MCU, by definition, will be less public than the status quo and may prevent the public from knowing key information. We do not know which private-sector service provider will be chosen as the strategic partner, but the City has already spoken with American Water, Suez Environmental and Veolia Water. These corporations have less-than-stellar reputations in other countries: they have restricted peoples' access to water and violated environmental standards.

The City Council minutes do not explain why we should move from the current public governance model to an MCU. The existing model is serving Winnipeg very well. Neither do the minutes deal with the pressing concerns we have with P3s (they tend to raise costs, decrease service and have caused serious environmental problems in other jurisdictions).

Provision of water and wastewater services is of great importance and the City should not undertake major changes to the governance of these services without extensive public consultation. MCUs in other jurisdictions have undermined public accountability and attracted privatization threats. P3s are extremely controversial, and the list of potential strategic partners is extremely worrisome. Winnipeggers deserve answers to the many questions arising from City Council's actions.

A similar version of this article was previously published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives — Manitoba.

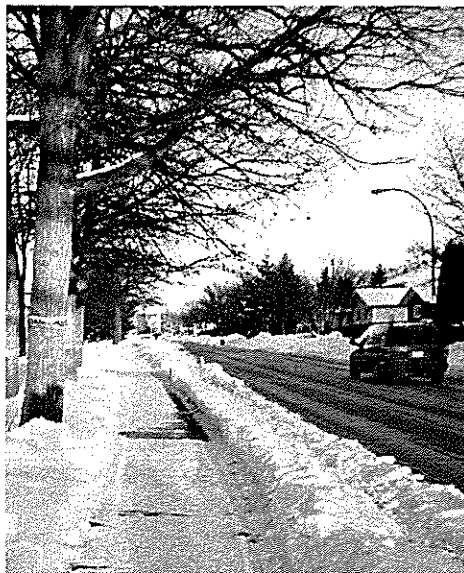
Show Us Your Moves!

Manitoba youth explore their transportation habits through photography

By Erica Young, Manitoba Environmental Youth Network Coordinator

IN JANUARY 2009, the Manitoba Environmental Youth Network invited young people across the province to participate in a project called "Show Us Your Moves!" With cameras in hand, they braved the cold to document their transportation habits, taking pictures to illustrate the positive things about how they get around, as well as what needs to change. This investigation was prompted by an invitation from the Centre for Sustainable Transportation (CST) at the University of Winnipeg to provide feedback on their "Child- and Youth-Friendly Land-Use and Transport Planning Guidelines for Manitoba."

Rising childhood obesity rates, the lack of independence that children have growing up in neighbourhoods where they have to be driven everywhere, and the heightened vulnerability that kids have to air pollution caused by the growing amount of traffic in our cities are all factors that led the CST to write these guidelines. Because Canadian cities have been designed mostly for cars (the way that adults get around), the needs of children and youth have often been ignored. As the pictures that were submitted to "Show Us Your Moves!" demonstrate — lots of feet and bus stops — young people are much more dependent on walking and busing to their destinations. (If we had held this project in warmer months, bikes and skateboards likely would have shown up as well.) Eager photographers took over 200 images, talked to their friends, and even interviewed bus drivers. Through a series of workshops they looked for the common themes, came up with advice on how to make transportation more youth-friendly and compared their ideas with those outlined in the draft guidelines.



Top: Cleared sidewalks make a big difference when you need to walk to get where you're going.



Right: It can get pretty cold waiting for the bus in a Winnipeg winter!

At first glance, some of the photos submitted didn't appear to have anything to do with transportation. Surely some graffiti, or a mouldy sandwich and some candy wrappers don't have anything to do with getting from point A to point B? But the photographers pointed out that fear of gang activity is one thing that makes some youth feel unsafe when walking to their destinations.

New Brochure Promotes Safe, Environmentally Conscious ATV Use

THE MIXEDWOOD FOREST SOCIETY has recently produced a tri-fold colour brochure on the topic of ATV (off-road, four-wheeled vehicle) use, at the request of rural residents. The brochure, called *Tread Lightly*, is aimed at a wide audience, giving safety and best practice information within its text. It also makes the connection between ATVs and off-road vehicles and increased harm to land, water and fish.

The Manitoba version holds two specific inserts: one for Duck Mountain Provincial Park and its heavily used trail systems, and the second a short survey with safety advice. Nationally, Nature Canada is carrying the brochure since so little educational material is available on this topic. The inserts are examples of what people can do in their areas.

Free copies can be obtained from the Eco-Network office, or by calling Lindy Clubb at 475-9608.

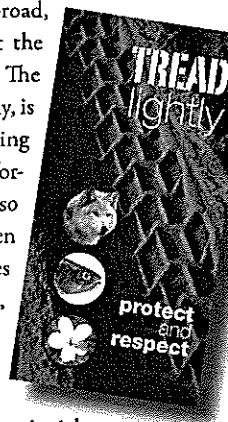


Photo: Fraser Young

Photo: Kassie Kyle

Untidy sidewalks and bus shacks, cluttered with litter, also make youth feel unwelcome and send a message of disrespect for their modes of transportation.

To see the full presentation and all of the photos submitted, visit our website: www.mbecoyouth.org. More information on the CST guidelines can be found at: www.kidsonthemove.ca.

Guesthouse · Wilderness Skills · Greenhouse

www.RoomtoGrow.info

204.534.2303 · roomtogrow@xplornet.com

splatT webworks

grassroots technology

splatit.ca

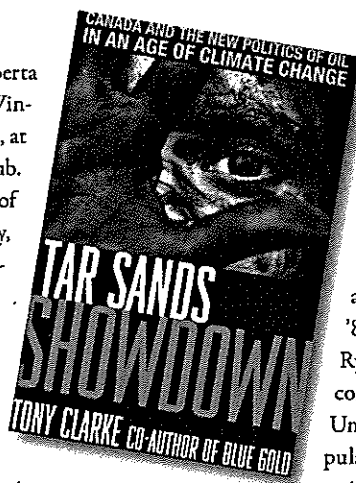
Tar Sands Not Just an Alberta Issue

New book argues Canada's future at stake

By Anne Lindsey

IF YOU THOUGHT THAT THE TAR SANDS was just an Alberta issue, Tony Clarke wants you to think again. Clarke spoke in Winnipeg recently to promote his new book: *Tar Sands Showdown*, at an event organized by the Winnipeg chapter of the Sierra Club. The extraction of bitumen oil from the tar sand formations of northern Alberta is one of the major issues facing Canada today, argues Clarke, and not just because of the climate change implications of developing and exploiting this fossil fuel resource, though those impacts are of staggering proportions.

He makes a strong case for the central role of tar sands oil in determining Canada's future. Essentially, he says, we can continue being the resource base for continued U.S. oil dependence, or we can take back control of our energy and environmental strategies "with a view to phasing out production and making a deliberate transition to a new energy future based on renewable resources rather than fossil fuels."



That alternative would be a tall order, particularly considering the very high level of foreign ownership of current tar sands operations, and the degree to which we have already forfeited Canadian control through energy-sharing clauses of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Clarke headed up the Action Canada Network, a national coalition that fought against the free trade deals of the late '80s and early '90s. At that time, people like professor John Ryan, then at the University of Winnipeg, pointed out that by committing ourselves to proportional energy-sharing with the United States, we were locking ourselves in to a kind of compulsory oil export regime, something which Mexico wisely negotiated its way out of during NAFTA talks. The events of 9-11, peak oil and U.S. concerns about energy security have only served

to intensify the relationship.

Clarke discusses another, perhaps more insidious way that the tar sands are influencing the rest of Canada: a shift in Canada's economy in recent years to an emphasis on resource extraction, at the expense of manufacturing and "value added" jobs. Federal and provincial tax treatment and subsidies for oil and gas exploration serve to tip the playing field domestically, and the increasing value of the Canadian "petro-dollar" deals a blow to exporting industries. The resulting migration of workers from the industrial heartland and economically depressed areas of the country causes problems for both the Alberta communities which are their destination, as well as for the homes they leave behind.

Finally, and most tragic, is the irreversible impact that tar sands extraction is having on the environment and the traditional lands, health and cultures of Northern Alberta's aboriginal peoples. The extraction of oil from tar sands creates three times as many greenhouse gas emissions as conventional oil development, and the tar sands are on the way to becoming Canada's largest CO2 emitter. Oil extraction and upgrading utilizes and pollutes vast quantities of fresh water, and have meant strip-mining vast swaths of the boreal forest. Clarke describes the situation as an "ecological nightmare."

Manitobans may ask what role they can play in the "tar sands showdown" that Tony Clarke and many others are calling for. Keeping informed through some of the many websites and networks on this issue can be a start. *Tar Sands Showdown* is an excellent overview, and contains suggestions of how people can get involved — from engaging their community, church, labour or student group to write letters, to actually organizing a campaign around a Manitoba-specific tar sands topic like the proposed Keystone Pipeline expansion. That project is designed to transport tar sands crude to the U.S. Gulf Coast, through Manitoba, taking advantage of our subsidized hydro rates to assist with pumping costs.

Ultimately, we have to end the notion that we are somehow neutral observers of the events unfolding to the west of us, and take responsibility as Canadians. While profits from tar sands crude largely flow out of the country to foreign private interests, all Canadians will be bearing the negative consequences for many years to come.

Tar Sands Showdown is available for loan from the Alice Chambers Memorial Library.

Sharing common values



Like you, we believe great things can be achieved when people with similar values work towards common goals. If being part of a co-operative that is both profitable and compassionate appeals to you, *talk to us.*

(1-877) 958-8588
WWW.ASSINIBOINE.MB.CA

Assiniboine 
CREDIT UNION

New In the Library

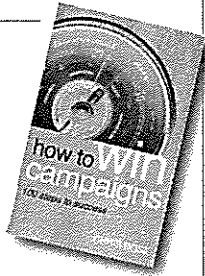
All of the materials in the Alice Chambers Memorial Library may be loaned out free of charge. There is no-charge postal delivery outside Winnipeg. Please contact Erica Young, Resource Assistant, at 947-6511 for more information. www.mbeconetwork.org/library.php

New Books:

How to Win Campaigns: 100 Steps to Success

By Chris Rose
Earthscan, 2005

Chris Rose is a British ecologist and writer who has worked with WWF International, Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace. The book is a comprehensive resource to environmental campaigning, including communications, research, planning, execution and media relations. It illustrates specific cases, but remains general enough to be a valuable resource to Canadians. Rose also maintains an informative website at Campaignstrategy.org.



Interactions Within Forest Ecosystems

By Bob Austman
Manitoba Model Forest/Manitoba
Education, Citizenship and Youth

Designed as a Grade 7 Science unit, this resource covers essential ground in defining ecosystems, describing flora, fauna and the human relationship to the boreal forest.

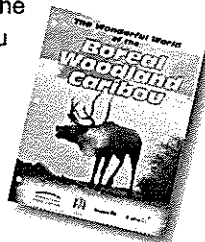


Also available online at [Manitobamodelforest.net/ SpotlightOn.html](http://Manitobamodelforest.net/SpotlightOn.html)

The Wonderful World of the Boreal Woodland Caribou

Manitoba Model Forest/Eastern
Manitoba Woodland Caribou
Advisory Committee

Intended for use in the Senior 2 (Grade 10) curriculum, this teaching resource provides an introduction to the life cycle of the caribou in Manitoba, as well as to the biological study of the animal, and the First Nations experience.



Featured DVD Review

To The Tar Sands

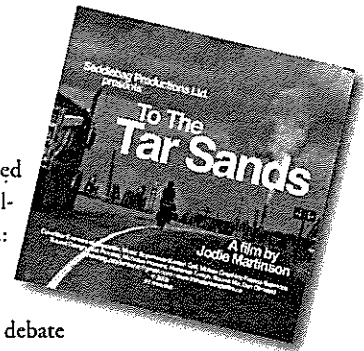
Saddlebag Productions, 2008, 61 min.

TO THE TAR SANDS tells the story of nineteen young cyclists who cycled 1,300 km from Waterton Lakes National Park to Fort McMurray, Alberta, asking everyone they met along the way an open-ended question: "How has the tar sands boom affected you?" The goal of their trip was to help Albertans gain a better sense of what is happening across the province, and offer all Canadians some insight into a controversial debate about the country's most significant resource development. They liken their role to that of a doctor who can visit houses all over town, giving the practitioner the perspective to diagnose an epidemic long before the individuals suffering from a disease notice that they aren't the only ones.

Over the course of following their journey, captured in this one-hour documentary by Jodie Martinson and Saddlebag Productions, we meet quite a cast of interesting characters. These include a greenhouse operator, a local historian, city officials, the chief of a First Nation, children protesting seismic testing, and even the locals in a small town bar on a Saturday night. Most of those interviewed are concerned about the negative impacts of the tar sands. However, their concerns seem linked to a diversity of other issues, from health impacts to United States militarism.

One of the cyclists comments that many of the people they interviewed seemed to be inspired by the *To The Tar Sands* tour. It is portrayed that the continued development of the tar sands, moving ahead at breakneck speed, seems inevitable until a group of young cyclists roll through town and create a space for questioning that development.

We invite you to come and be inspired by this story at the next gathering of the Alice Chambers Memorial Library Book and Film Club on May 7 (see Events on page three). "What are the impacts of the tar sands?" is a question that needs to be asked not only in Alberta, but here in Manitoba as well.
— Erica Young



Periodical Profile

Periodical Profile features magazines and newsletters of interest to *Eco-Journal* readers. The Alice Chambers Memorial Library has a range of periodicals available for loan.

Alternatives Journal (Alternativesjournal.ca)

The publication's tag line is "Canadian Environmental Ideas + Action" — an accurate descriptor of the content found in the magazine. Issues are theme-based, but include a wide range of content including features, interviews, commentaries, book reviews and research reports. Its 42 pages are full colour, creatively designed and light on advertising.

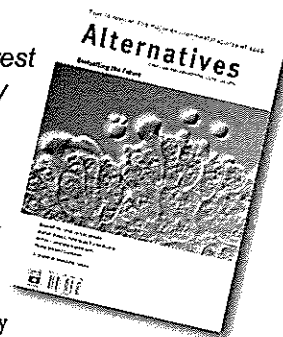
The current issue on the Eco-Network newsstand (Vol. 35, No. 2) focuses on "Biofuelling the Future," while upcoming themes include "Best of Books," "Ecology" and "Communities."

Alternatives is produced six times per year and is the official journal of the Environmental Studies Association of Canada, as well as a registered charity. It has about 3,000 subscribers, and a one-year subscription costs \$36.75. Current Executive Editor Nicola Ross is a biologist, award-winning writer, author, climate change consultant and writing instructor.

Founded at Trent University in 1971, and based at the University of Waterloo's Faculty of Environment since 1984, *Alternatives* is a great example of what can occur when academic perspectives are applied in an accessible manner.

The editors themselves put it best in a recent call for submissions: "*Alternatives Journal* combines the learned rigour of an academic journal with the breezy style of a magazine. We aim to publish the best environmental writing in the country — writing that is engaging, thought-provoking and insightful."

—Joel Trenaman





Groups Protest As Government Alters Waterway Protections

Changes placed in federal budget bill designed to limit environmental assessments

By Tim Lutz

THE NAVIGABLE WATERS PROTECTION ACT (NWPA) is a piece of legislation that was enacted to protect Canadians' public right of navigation. Navigable Waters, according to Transport Canada, are defined as "including any body of water capable of being navigated by any type of floating vessel for the purpose of transportation, recreation or commerce." As such, it is clear how this is important to canoeists, kayakers, and operators of shipping companies. Is it an environmental issue? You bet it is.

Currently, before any person or company can build a "work" (dam, bridge, causeway etc.) on a navigable body of water, he/she must first comply with a process that includes an automatic federal environmental assessment as well as public consultation. This trigger for the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act is an important safeguard to our waterways.

The federal government attempted to fundamentally alter the Act before the 2008 election by planning to modify a few key definitions. They attempted to pass changes that would create a sub-tier of waterways they called "minor." "Minor" waterways would be excluded from the Act, ostensibly to cut red tape and speed up development projects in the name of economic recovery.

Excluding these "minor waterways" would be troublesome for several reasons. Firstly, while at first the government proposed criteria for what would be defined as "minor," those criteria were later abandoned. That would leave discretion to the Minister of Transport to declare whether a waterway is minor or not. Would the Seine River in Winnipeg be minor? According to the abandoned criteria, yes. According to a minister at some unspecified future date? Who knows? Secondly, works on these "minor" waterways could go ahead in spite of strong public opposition and without an environmental assessment.

When this issue came to light, several people and groups worked at raising awareness and to stop the proposed changes. The Canadian Rivers Network brought it to my attention first, and their website, Ispeakforcanadianrivers.com remains an excellent resource for further information.

As we well know, this past autumn an election was called, resulting in the initial government proposal's withdrawal from Parliament. I naively breathed a sigh of relief, as the changes seemed dead, and my MP assured me they would not come back. The same government did return, however, and have introduced these NWPA changes once again. This time, though, they are included in none other than Bill C-10, the Budget Implementation Act 2009. While media reports inform us of the economic stimulus measures in the budget, they have failed to mention that Bill C-10 has many other parts that are unrelated to the budget or economic stimulus.

When this came to light, more groups and individuals gathered to fight these changes. The Sierra Club of Canada, the David Suzuki Foundation, Lake Ontario Waterkeeper, and the Boreal Forest Network joined the cause, along with dozens of other organizations and thousands of individuals. A Facebook page was started with the goal of reaching 1,000 members, but as I write, it's close to 5,000 strong. People took the time to write their MPs and express their concerns, and are now writing senators.

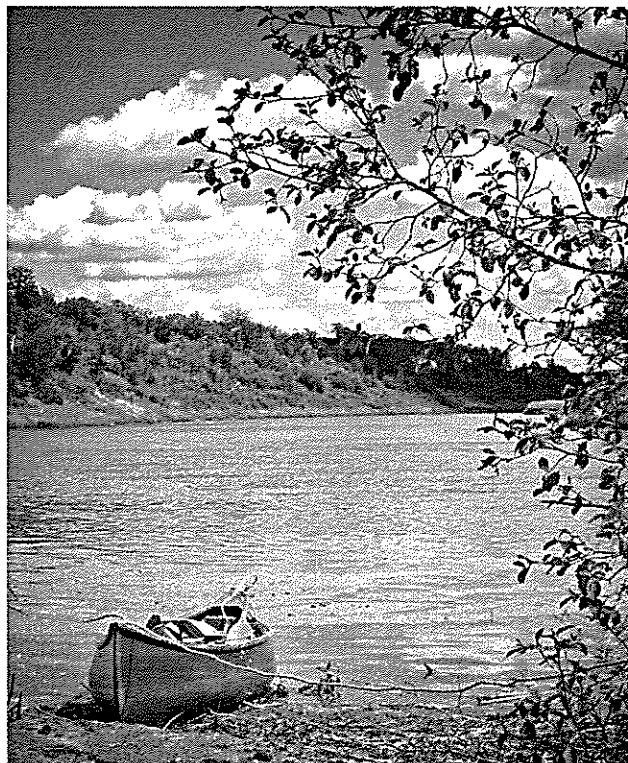


Photo: Chris Douglas

Navigable waters like those of the Assiniboine River may face new conservation challenges.

The Conservatives were the ones who introduced the NWPA changes into Bill C-10, and are understandably not responsive to calls for their removal. The NDP, Green Party, and Bloc Québécois all have spoken out against either the changes themselves, or their inclusion within the budget bill despite a lack of consultation from user groups/stakeholders. While some Liberals initially spoke out against it, they voted for Bill C-10 in the House of Commons, and Mr. Ignatieff did little to slow its passing.

As this article goes to print, the Senate Finance Committee has just passed the Act, despite the range of objections. The Canadian Rivers Network reported that several senators were not happy with the process and plan to hold hearings on the subject. I urge you to get involved, and to communicate with those senators.



Complimentary copy

Please consider subscribing at
204-947-6511 or
www.mbeconetwork.org