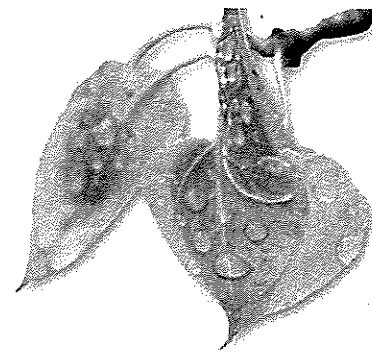




Why Not Spend Your Summer on Sustainability?

A profile of environmentalist Ryan Anderson

By Andrew McMonagle



Ryan Anderson in front of the Terry Fox Memorial in Thunder Bay. Fox ran for 143 days straight averaging a marathon per day.

FOR RYAN ANDERSON, environmentalism has three parts: body, mind and action.

Last summer, he tested these three aspects as he went across Canada using only the power of his body. He started in Victoria, BC at mile zero of the Trans-Canada Highway, and made it to St. John's, NL in 49 days by foot and bicycle. Anderson raised almost \$10,000 for the David Suzuki Foundation in the process. He wanted to challenge not only his body, but the image of environmentalism.

"Everyone thinks you have to sacrifice something from their lives for the environment," he said. "That's a misconception." He noted that bike riding isn't for everybody. He wants people to realize that using smaller, fuel-efficient cars or hybrids is a great place to start.

"People don't have to give up driving or taking showers," he said. "There are alternatives." Anderson works as a landlord for Globe Agencies in Winnipeg. He was attracted to them for their dedication to low-flow toilets, good recycling practices and smoke-free buildings.

In preparation for his gruelling trek, he trained for two years. During that time, he looked for sponsors and charities to get involved with. He found that the David Suzuki Foundation was the best fit. He liked their non-profit, non-partisan status, and that the money he would raise would go to good places.

While the charity was a big part of it, raising awareness came first. He looked to Terry Fox for inspiration. After reading his autobiography, Anderson knew that the cross-country tour was the

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right thing for him. "It's not just about the money," he said. "It's trying to get people to ask questions."

After crossing the country, Anderson did a few presentations at schools to get children to ask the questions necessary for living sustainably. He wanted to inspire them to ask where their food comes from, and how people can lessen their impact on the planet without having to completely change their lives. He plans to do more presentations in the future.

For his journey across the country, Anderson had friend Sean Mooney riding in a car with him. Anderson tried to get sponsorship from GM to provide a hybrid vehicle for the ride, but was unable. "They didn't see the benefit," he said.

Instead, they used a Honda Civic, which he appreciated for its fuel-efficiency.

Mooney had to part from Anderson in Toronto due to schedule conflicts. Anderson continued alone, with few supplies. "I went for three weeks without a sleeping bag or tent," he said. "It's about the hard-core determination."

He had met many other people biking long distances without a support team, so his confidence was high. He camped with just a blanket and a fly from his tent. Otherwise, he stayed with friends and people he met along the way. He only stayed in hotels if the weather was too poor.

Anderson is excited about his future plans. He wants to eventually bike across the world.

His philosophy is simple. "Never travel the same path twice," he said. "I believe anything is possible."

Courtesy of Ryan Anderson

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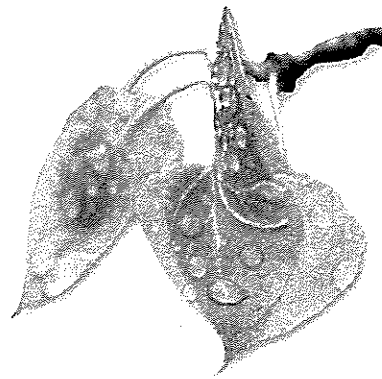
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Executive Director's Letter

I HAD A STRANGE AND INTERESTING EXPERIENCE on April 25th. Asked to be a panellist at the Mayor's Symposium on Sustainability, I went to the Winnipeg Art Gallery that morning with more than a healthy dose of skepticism. The City of Winnipeg, led by Mayor Katz, wants to be sustainable, we had been told, and this large event was to be the kick-off for developing a new master plan, with sustainability — in all its manifestations — as the centrepiece.

Odd, I thought as I pedalled downtown. Didn't City Council, just the week prior, pass the huge Tuxedo Yards (aka IKEA) development proposal with a minimum of public input? Didn't they recently decide on a path leading to potential privatization of Winnipeg's water? Weren't they still stubbornly holding out against a cosmetic pesticide bylaw? Heck, didn't our last Plan Winnipeg, with its "Downtown First" underpinning get honoured only in the breach in decision after decision on the council floor? What exactly was going on?

I soon found out that even though many fellow citizens shared my initial doubt, they showed up en masse that morning, armed with 30-second sound bites articulating their own (or their organization's) vision for a more sustainable city. And as the day wore on, cynicism gave way to a positive and hopeful mood as participants listened to each other, then participated in a series of roundtable discussions on topics like "land-use planning," "food in Winnipeg," "green infrastructure," "affordable housing," and "innovative financial tools."

Maybe the series of recent Statistics Canada reports highlighting Winnipeg's underwhelming environmental performance are an impetus to action from the top, or maybe not, but Mayor Katz, who stayed for the entire day, insists that he is committed to a new way of doing business in the city. His attitude is echoed by the top bureaucrat at city hall, Glen Laubenstein, and articulated by the energetic team of (mostly) young and insightful planners brought together to make this happen.

The first step is gathering input from citizens in an inclusive outreach process that might be the largest effort of its kind ever attempted in North America. My fellow panellists, all but one of whom came from "away," were suitably impressed by the process, the degree of enthusiastic, practical-minded participation, and the congruity that emerged about the need for more walkable communities, better mass and active transport options, curbing sprawl and making our city more "green." Any Winnipegger is invited to join the conversation online at SpeakOutWinnipeg.com and at other planned forums. It is a great start.

As always, though, at the end of the day, the test will be how all this input is gathered into a meaningful plan for sustainability, and then, how the plan will be manifested at all levels of the city — in neighbourhoods, in business, and perhaps most important, on the floor of council, where momentous decisions are made. Just how would the Tuxedo Yards development look anyway, viewed through a sustainability lens? Will the culture of citizen participation triumph over backroom deals with people of influence? We may have to wait a while to find out, but meanwhile — get involved!

And yes, the warm weather finally approaches. Check out composting, lawn care and gardening workshops being offered by environmental groups at the public libraries, Grow A Row for your local food bank, and tune up the bicycle for a trip to a farmers' market. Register your home for a buffer against pesticide spray programs at Winnipeg.ca/cms/bugline/ and plan a hike or canoe trip in a provincial park. Happy summer, and see you again in the fall!

Anne Lindsey
Executive Director, Manitoba Eco-Network

JUNE

6 International Trails Day (ITD)

The Winnipeg Trails Festival is celebrating ITD with trail events at several locations: Harte Trail (9 a.m.), Bishop Grandin & Seine River Greenways (10:30 a.m.), Sturgeon Creek (11 a.m.), Prairie Pathfinder Hikes at the Forks (5 p.m.), and Evening Celebration at the Forks (7 p.m.). For more info: www.winnipeg-trails.com or jlukes@shaw.ca.

9 Manitoba Eco-Network AGM / Awards

Get to know your Eco-Network at our Annual General Meeting (7 p.m.), followed by the Environmental Awards Presentation (8:30 p.m.). Location: Eco-Centre (3rd floor of 303 Portage Ave.). Hors d'oeuvres (6:30 p.m.) and desserts (8:30 p.m.) served. Please RSVP to Lise at 947-6511 or info@mbeconetwork.org. (Note: only group members can vote at the AGM.)

14 Paddlefest Manitoba

This is Manitoba's biggest paddling event for paddlers of all skill levels and interests. Participate in a Paddle Canada mini kayak lesson, learn how to campfire cook like a gourmet, check out the latest gear and boats to hit the water, and more. Free, at Fort Whyte Alive from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. For more info: www.paddle.mb.ca

19 Bike to Work Day

Bike to Work Day Winnipeg is our chance to celebrate the bicycle as a safe, fun and healthy mode of transportation. Last year, over 11,000 cycled and over 2,400 registered to win great prizes. We are determined to make it even bigger and better this year. For more info: www.biketoworkdaywinnipeg.org

Organic Lawn Care Workshops

The Manitoba Eco-Network is pleased to offer free Organic Lawn Care Workshops. Don't miss your chance to learn how to effectively maintain a beautiful lawn without the use of pesticides and synthetic fertilizers. Be good to your health and the environment!

- June 8 Cornish Library - 20 West Gate (7-8 p.m.)
- June 9 Transcona Library - 111 Victoria Ave. W (7-8 p.m.)
- June 11 Henderson Library - 1-1050 Henderson Hwy (7-8 p.m.)
- June 15 Osborne Library - 625 Osborne St. (7-8 p.m.)
- June 16 Sir William Stephenson Library - 765 Keewatin St. (7-8 p.m.)
- June 18 West End Library - 999 Sargent Ave. (7-8 p.m.)
- June 20 Millennium Library - 251 Donald St. (1-2 p.m.)
- June 22 Charleswood Library - 5014 Roblin Blvd. (7-8 p.m.)

For more info or to register: olc@mbeconetwork.org or 947-6511

Composting Workshops.

Resource Conservation Manitoba is offering free one-hour basic composting workshops throughout June. Dates, locations and registration information at: www.resourceconservation.mb.ca or 925-3777.

Native Orchid Conservation Inc. is running the following field trips. Participants must be NOCI members, and you can join the day of the trip. Cost is \$10 per adult, \$5 per child.

- June 13 Mt. Nebo
- June 20 Woodridge
- June 27 Brokenhead Wetlands
- July 4 Portage Sandhill WMA

For more info or to register: www.nativeorchid.org or 475-9878.

28 Paws in Motion

Walk with your furry friends in support of Winnipeg Humane Society shelter animals and join us for this massive special event, held at the Assiniboine Park. For more info and to register: www.winnipeghumane.org

JULY

5 The 12th Annual Herbfest

Does your herb garden have good bugs or bad bugs? Herbfest is the free family friendly event to discover. Participate in garden tours, childrens' activities, and enjoy lavender lemonade, vendors and live entertainment. Guest speakers include Katrina Froese, Kat Binding and John Russell. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Assiniboine Park Conservatory Grounds. For more info: herbsocietymb@mts.net.

AUGUST

15 First Annual Run With Porter

This 5-km eco-friendly run/walk has been organized to raise funds for the Sunshine Fund of Manitoba in honour of Porter Francis. Taking place at Birds Hill Provincial Park, the day will begin with sunrise yoga and an organic breakfast. www.runwithporter.com

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





An Eco-Evening to Smile About

ON APRIL 24, many gathered at the Franco-Manitoban Cultural Centre for some good news and easy laughs at the Eco-Network's 3rd annual fundraising Eco-Evening. The theme for the evening was *something to smile about*, and there definitely was.

The laughs were thanks to the improv comedy troupe Outside Joke, and their outrageous tales of radishes and peaches, organic farms and shopping malls. The good news was delivered *pecha kucha* style throughout the evening, highlighting ten innovative and inspiring eco-projects:

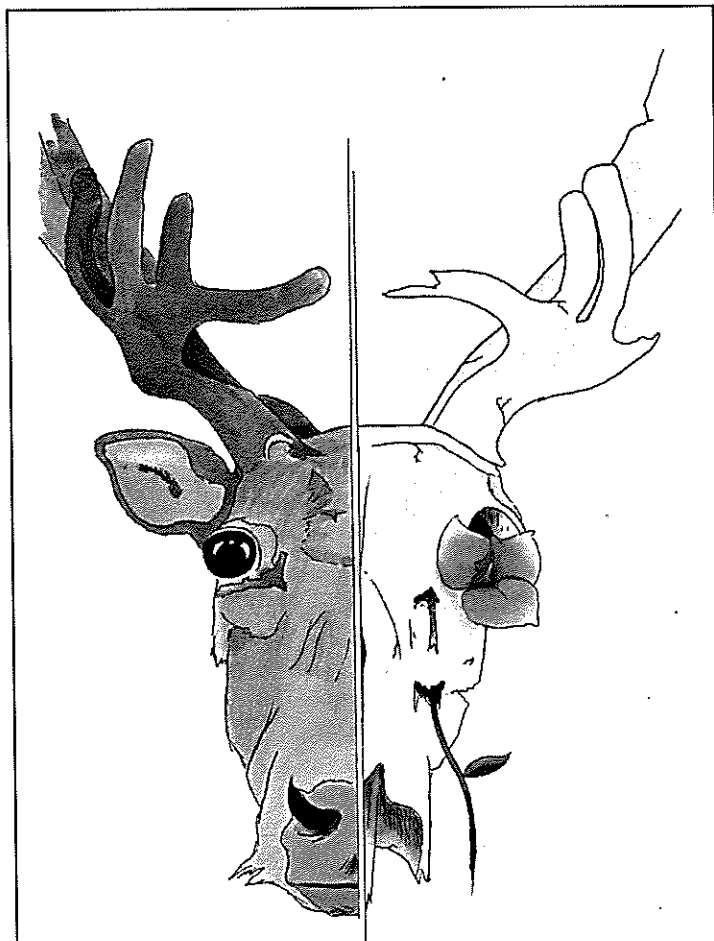
- The Landless Farmer Collective
- Community Composting in Stonewall
- Aboriginal Boreal Conservation Leaders Project
- The Bike Dump
- Growing Up Organic
- Mapping the Manigotagan
- Paying for Waste
- Argyle's Outdoor Education Classroom
- Students Banning Bottled Water
- Spence Neighbourhood Organics Pickup

The Eco-Network warmly thanks all presenters, and our event sponsors: EatIt.ca, Ecogear, and Organic Meadow.



Lisa Smith

Outside Joke's Jane Testar "plants radishes" and (inset) Vinay Iyer and David Jacks promote the U of W bottled water ban.



The Human Touch

This piece illustrates the battle between natural habitats and human greed. As a former reforestation worker, I have seen firsthand the devastating effects of clear-cut logging practices. Our lust for material items blinds us to the source: we are destroying our forests, home to the threatened boreal woodland caribou.

—Nigel E. Sutcliffe



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Federal Report Shows Caribou Habitat Under Threat

CPAWS calls for halt to logging and road building to protect ranges

By Ron Thiessen, Executive Director, CPAWS Manitoba

IN APRIL 2009, a groundbreaking scientific report was released from Environment Canada on boreal woodland caribou. The report shows that woodland caribou are in worse trouble than what was previously thought and underscores the importance of protecting large areas of habitat from human-caused threats in the boreal forest. It also confirms that threats to woodland caribou need to be managed at the range level and significant parts of those ranges need to be protected.

The woodland caribou is an icon of Canadian wilderness, and this new report shows that immediate action is needed in Manitoba and across the country. CPAWS is leading a national campaign to protect the habitat of boreal woodland caribou. It has resulted in widespread public concern for the species and thousands of letters being sent to the federal environment minister.

In Manitoba, we are calling on the province to revise its strategy for protecting caribou by making large-scale boreal forest protection its key objective. This would be a grand step toward fulfilling their legal obligation to protect caribou habitat as required under the Manitoba Endangered Species Act. An immediate halt to logging, road building, and other developments is needed in critical intact caribou habitat until the government is able to demonstrate that adequate measures have been put in place to ensure the long-term protection of their habitat. Protected areas designations to safeguard caribou and its boreal forest habitats would rightfully require consultations with First Nations.

The Manitoba government must undertake the research necessary to fill gaps in knowledge of caribou populations and trends. It's essential that Aboriginal traditional knowledge be used alongside federal and provincial science.

What are the specific concerns in Manitoba?

Eleven boreal caribou ranges are found within Manitoba. The present extent and condition of eight Manitoba boreal caribou ranges are considered to be sufficient to maintain self-sustaining caribou populations providing no further disturbance takes place. Using existing information, these eight ranges have been identified as requiring the "entirety of the current range" habitat for caribou survival.

What is the extent of habitat already disturbed by humans?

The average extent of human disturbance within Manitoba's boreal caribou ranges is higher than that in neighbouring Saskatchewan and Ontario. On average, 17 percent of the area of boreal caribou ranges in Manitoba is directly impacted by human disturbance. A total of 23,786 square kilometres of caribou habitat in our province has been disturbed by humans.

How many caribou are there in Manitoba and how large are their collective ranges?

The current estimated population of boreal caribou in Manitoba ranges from about 1,800 to

3,150, though precise population estimates are not available for some ranges. Boreal caribou ranges cover 211,857 square kilometres (81,798 square miles) of Manitoba's land base.

What extent of disturbance would be permissible and still enable caribou to survive?

According to the federal report, three caribou ranges in Manitoba may be resilient to further human disturbance, due to large range size and low human footprint. These include Wapisi, North Interlake and Atikaki-Berens. However, the level of human disturbance compatible with caribou persistence is not yet known.

The "big picture" solution for healthy caribou and our boreal forest

In 2007, 1,500 highly respected scientists from more than 50 countries around the world called for protection of Canada's boreal forest. The scientists' letter to the federal and provincial governments recommends preserving a minimum of half



The woodland caribou is an icon of Canadian wilderness, but its habitat needs further protection.

Courtesy of CPAWS

of Canada's boreal forest in protected areas while allowing only carefully managed development on the rest. This is in accordance with the Boreal Forest Conservation Framework, a plan already endorsed by Canadian conservation groups, 25 Canadian First Nations, and more than 75 major businesses with annual sales of \$30 billion. Ultimately, to keep Manitoba's caribou alive and the boreal region fully functioning for all of us, Premier Gary Doer must live up to his commitment to the Boreal Framework by announcing his pledge, and a process, to protect the majority of our province's boreal wild lands and waters.

Mapping Becoming Valuable Environmental Campaign Tool

New city cycling map joins MEN green map and Manigotagan canoe route guide

By Teghan Beaudette

A WINNIPEG COMMITTEE consisting of environmental groups, cycling enthusiasts and city officials recognized the increasing importance of maps as tools for environmental strategies and campaigns and recently released a 2009 edition of the Winnipeg Cycling Map. The map serves as a key part of a three-pronged strategy to promote cycle travel in Winnipeg, which includes plans for a Bike to Work day and a GPS tracking project which will have hundreds of cyclists track their routes throughout the city.

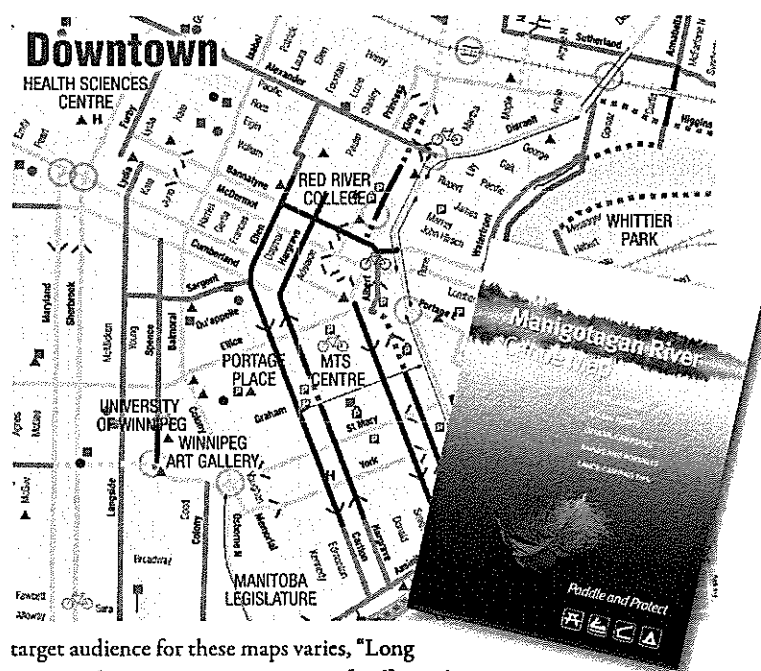
The Winnipeg Cycling Map is the most recent addition to a family of three major maps that have been developed for Manitoba and the Winnipeg area: the interactive Manigotagan River Canoe Map and the geographic information system Green Map for Winnipeg and Area. These maps are part of a growing trend towards creating tools to encourage environmentally sustainable behaviour.

Curt Hull, the project manager of the Winnipeg Cycling Map committee, explained the map's relevance to inspiring behaviour change, "We want to encourage and support everyone to choose to use their bicycle as transportation as well as for recreation, but we were mostly trying to appeal to someone who has never used their bicycle to get to a destination before. We see the map as a strategic part of reaching that goal — encouraging people to ride."

Hull and his committee are tapping the wisdom of a developing trend; maps plotting environmentally friendly routes have become increasingly relevant to urban and rural residents, looking to make environmentally sustainable choices and changes in their routines. Their creators, supporters and users have started an international movement known as Green Map Systems at GreenMap.org. Green Map Systems have published over 365 Green Maps covering areas in over 54 countries all over the world.

Wendy Brawer, the founder and director of Green Map Systems, explained that the relevance and increasing popularity of Green Maps has to do with the maps' ability to empower individuals to make changes and "gently guide users to more sustainable choices for everyday living at home while travelling or for planning and research purposes."

The gentle guidance coupled with what Brawer considers the main ingredients of Green Maps, "local knowledge, a selection of the 170 universal Green Map Icons and [the] ancient power of maps," provides a strong basis for these maps to increase the impact of environmental strategies. Brawer indicated the



target audience for these maps varies, "Long time residents, newcomers, visitors, [and] youth are some of the target audiences, but they are used by journalists and researchers, community developers, social innovators and policy makers too."

The Winnipeg Cycling Map Committee received support from the City of Winnipeg, Bike to the Future, the Winnipeg Trails Association, Climate Change Connection, One Green City, Resource Conservation Manitoba, the Manitoba Cycling Association and Winnipeg cyclists — to ensure it was strong enough to serve as both a guide and advocacy tool. The committee researched eco-maps and cycling maps from across the continent to create something that would address their goal of creating not only a guide for cyclists but an advocacy tool to encourage the city to address infrastructure problems that are negatively affecting cycling in the city.

Hull believes that the City of Winnipeg needs to take further steps to increase this infrastructure for cyclists (including things like bike boulevards and traffic circles to calm traffic) if the Winnipeg Cycling Map is to make a significant impact: "The map serves to make people aware of what exists but without the infrastructure that allows cyclists to feel safe [and] provides a reasonably direct, fully-connected route to their destinations, many people won't feel they can make the choice."

The Winnipeg Cycling Map and the Green Maps movement both serve as a very popular and important initial step towards a partnership between residents, mapmakers, map users and city officials in encouraging environmentally sustainable behaviour.

Links:

<http://greenmap.mbeconetwork.org/citymap.htm>

<http://www.mbeconetwork.org/canoemap/index.htm>

<http://www.winnipeg.ca/PublicWorks/MajorProjects/ActiveTransportation/>

Manitoba's Lands & Waters

ManitobaWildlands.org
EnergyManitoba.org



MANITOBA WILDLANDS

Nuclear Power in Manitoba?

Why Pinawa should not pursue new reactors

By Pat McNamara

PINAWA, MANITOBA has rebounded well after the closure of the Whiteshell Nuclear Laboratory a decade ago. Its economy has diversified and no longer suffers the stagnation of single-industry towns. Sadly, if the mayor of Pinawa gets his way, the community will return to its dependence on the dirtiest and costliest energy source on the planet; Mayor Blair Skinner wants to build nuclear reactors in Pinawa. This would be huge step backward for Pinawa and for the entire province of Manitoba.

Manitoba is currently the envy of every jurisdiction in North America as 98 percent of its electricity comes from a clean and renewable energy source: hydroelectric dams. Manitoba's current peak demand load of 4,250 megawatts is met by 14 dams that produce 5,000 megawatts of electricity each year. Increased demand from growth in the province is not an issue, as the potential exists to develop a further 5,000 megawatts of hydroelectric power.

Manitoba does not need nuclear power. Reactors are being proposed in Manitoba to sell electricity to the United States and to provide a lifeline to the Canadian nuclear industry that is in its death throes.

Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL), a federal agency that exists to build and supply reactors, has not sold a reactor anywhere in the world in more than 10 years. AECL's most recent fiasco was the cancellation of the Maple reactors they were designing to provide medical isotopes for MDS Nordion, replacing the Chalk River, Ontario station. Canadian taxpayers are responsible for \$600 million in development costs, \$80 million to decommission the reactors and up to \$1.6 billion for the legal action MDS Nordion has launched against AECL.

Taxpayers are also responsible for the costs of decommissioning abandoned uranium mines, the cleanup of several towns and laboratories and a yearly

\$350 million subsidy to AECL, to name only a portion.

The nuclear industry's "Achilles Heel" is the massive volume of radioactive waste it has created from all parts of the nuclear fuel cycle. Four hundred million tonnes of radioactive mine tailings are a constant source of contamination to air, water and soil. The 12 mines near Elliot Lake, Ontario killed 10 lakes and 55 miles of the Serpent River. It is literally a river of poison carrying radioactive material from the dead lakes to Lake Huron. There is no way to clean it up.

There are currently more than two million spent fuel bundles in storage at reactor sites in Canada. No country in the world has come up with a method of disposing of this high-level waste. It remains dangerous for half a million years.

We will soon have a great deal more high-level waste to deal with as Canada signed on to the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP). The GNEP states that the country that exports uranium for use in nuclear reactors must take the waste back and be responsible for its disposal. As Canada supplies up to 40 percent of the world's uranium, we will become home to 40 percent of the high-level radioactive waste created on the planet.

The United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission estimated that a major nuclear accident would cost about \$1 trillion. The owner of the nuclear reactor would only be responsible for the first \$75 million while taxpayers would have to come up



An aerial view of the AECL operations near Pinawa.

with the balance. Even a small accident or release can have devastating consequences.

The beef industry in Canada collapsed when one cow was found with BSE. Nine countries have closed their borders to Canadian pork because of swine flu. The Canadian grain industry could be wiped out if tritium or other contaminants were released from one of the nuclear reactors proposed for the prairie provinces.

The Pinawa community and its local government must be commended for reinventing itself after AECL closed the Whiteshell Laboratory. Pinawa's newfound diversity will help ensure future prosperity and an enjoyable lifestyle.

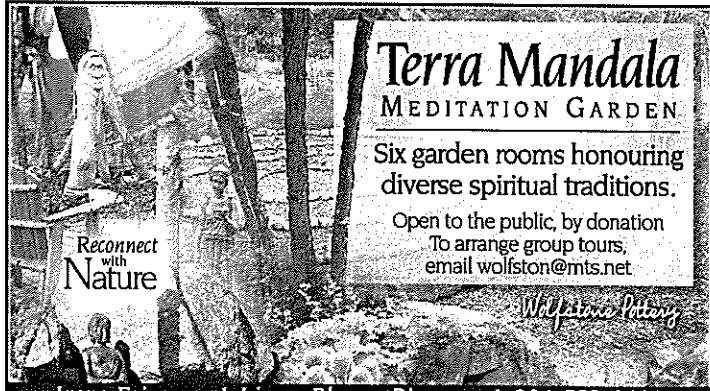
Mayor Skinner is playing Russian roulette with the future of Pinawa and Manitoba at stake. All of the achievements and good work from the past 10 years can be destroyed in a nuclear instant. Are Manitobans and the residents of Pinawa willing to accept that risk?



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Feeling the Sting

Honeybees and Colony Collapse Disorder

By Bev Sawchuk

The Eco-Journal ran a contest inviting students to submit essays on environmental topics written over the past academic year. The following is an edited version of a paper written for Professor Kent Simmons' Environmental Biology course at the University of Winnipeg. The author receives a one-year MEN membership.

IT MIGHT BE EASY TO OVERLOOK the services provided by pollinators, but without pollination, food webs and ecosystems would collapse. Pollination, the transfer of pollen from one flower to another, is critical to the production of fruit and seeds in most plants. Honeybees are the unsung heroes of the food chain because they provide pollination services for one-third of the foods that we eat.

Honeybees are disappearing around the world. Losses have occurred in the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Britain, Brazil, Australia and Asia. Specifically, the crisis has affected 50 percent to 90 percent of honeybee colonies in the United States. In Taiwan, about 10 million honeybees were reported to have disappeared in just two weeks. Canada's Fraser Valley produces about one-fifth of the world's blueberries, but it no longer has a sufficient number of honeybees to support pollination. This has contributed to an increase in the cost of energy in food production and transportation, which has led to a world food price inflation of 45 percent. There are worldwide shortages of rice, wheat and corn, and deadly clashes over the rising cost of food have erupted in Egypt, Haiti and Africa.

This phenomenon of bee loss, termed Colony Collapse Disorder or CCD, was first reported in 2006. One of the symptoms of CCD is a complete

absence of worker bees in colonies. The nest is abandoned, with the honey and pollen left behind. Often, only the queen bee and some recently emerged young bees remain. Beekeepers find no evidence of predators that feed on bees, such as wasps or mammals that like honey, nor do they observe any dead bees. Pests or bees from other colonies will often overrun a failing bee colony, but in the case of CCD, the hives are left untouched.

A 2007 report prepared for United States Congress indicated that honeybee losses are not uncommon. The number of managed honeybee colonies decreased from 5 million in the 1940s to 2.5 million today. However, the CCD phenomenon differs from previous losses in that bees are simply not returning to the hive. In addition, the magnitude of CCD is highly unusual. Colony losses are rapid and occur in much larger numbers than previously seen.

There is no definitive answer as to what is causing CCD. The United States National Academy of Sciences has identified habitat loss as a factor in the decline of honeybees and other pollinators. Urbanization, a primary generator of environmental change, has altered and reduced habitat of honeybees which face a hostile environment on golf courses, corporate grounds, school grounds and city parks. To a bee, a green lawn is like a desert.

There could be some connection with the increasing worldwide use of a wider variety of pesticides. In North America alone, pesticide use has doubled since 1960. The annual global use of 3 million tons of insecticides, herbicides and fungicides causes ecological damage by poisoning non-target organisms. Because pesticides are often applied by broadcast spraying over a large area such as a forest or agricultural field, the end result is exposure of non-target organisms that are on-site in addition to organisms that are off-site and suffer exposure through aerial or aquatic drift.

Monoculture, which covers much of the world's arable land, is also being examined. For the farmer, advantages of single crop plantings include the fact that a monoculture crop blooms and can be harvested at the same time, and that it can be treated with the same pesticides. For the honeybee, however, pollen collected from only one type of crop may not provide a balanced and nutritious diet. Scientists have shown that malnourished bees are more susceptible to disease and pesticide poisoning.

What can the public do to help? Become aware of the delicate ecosystem in backyards, gardens and fields, and do not use pesticides indiscriminately. While farmers and forest managers are the biggest users of pesticides, urban green space comprises a significant proportion of land treated with pesticides. Homemade organic pesticides can be very effective alternatives, and many free recipes are available on the Internet.

It is unlikely that a single factor is the driving force behind Colony Collapse Disorder. Ecosystems worldwide have been affected by cumulative degradation from deforestation and urbanization as well as air, water and soil pollution. The effects of climate change, such as an increase in disease as well as changes in reproduction/bloom time and species distribution, are likely contributing factors.

Pollination is a pivotal process in ecosystems, and an issue of paramount importance for global food supply. Albert Einstein is believed to have said that our existence is inextricably linked to bees, and if the bee were to disappear, man would have only four years of life remaining. It is apparent that continued scientific research is needed, along with international political support and sufficient levels of funding.

Like so many other environmental problems, there will be no quick and easy solution. Many of the forces in nature are still beyond the grasp of our understanding, and humanity is feeling the sting. ☹

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Students Promoting Organic Lawn Care

Save Our Waterways brings sustainable message to riverside homes

By Maia Scholfield

SAVE OUR WATERWAYS, OR SOW (pronounced sew) was originally founded by one of our members, Natalie Baird. She lives on Kingston Crescent, and had noticed that even though her street runs right next to the Red River, residents were still using chemical herbicides and pesticides on their lawns. She thought that maybe people just didn't consider that what they were putting on their lawns could have an effect on the river, so she began to think of options.

Organic lawn care is caring for your lawn and garden without the use of chemicals, and has most of the same results as chemical lawn care. Contrary to how may it sound, there isn't much more work involved. And so, SOW was born with a commitment to promoting these better practices. Save Our Waterways is composed of a handful of students from Collège Jeanne-Sauvé — including the school's Environment Committee — that aim to inform people of the choice of organic lawn care.

Originally Natalie thought of making T-shirts and selling them at our school for profits that we would then donate to the Lake Winnipeg Foundation. We decided to make all sorts of things — reusable bags, winter mittens, lunch boxes, and the T-shirts — all with re-used materials. Once we began planning, we realized that even though we would be promoting the Lake Winnipeg Foundation, our contribution might not be enough to make a noticeable

change. We thought if we could find something more substantial, something that we could take to the people, we could possibly make more of an impact.

Almost everyone has a lawn, or some form of it, so we thought that it was something that could unite everyone. It was also something we could link to another problem (phosphates in Lake Winnipeg). There is no company in Winnipeg that of-

We needed some money for tools, grass seed, compost, and publicity, but to apply for most grants you need an established organization to represent you.

Amazingly, MEN had a full-fledged program of their own, which they ran every spring with university students. They even had a PowerPoint presentation with all of their information on it. With that problem solved, we decided to write a survey, and go door

“We thought if we could find something that we could take to the people, we could possibly make more of an impact.”

fers truly organic lawn care. As there is no organic standard in lawn care, most companies use words like “eco” and “green” in their name or product to make them sound more environmentally friendly. Unfortunately, most companies still use harmful chemicals, although you can get certain services that don't require chemical use.

Our plan was then to have one day of a weekend in the spring where volunteers from our school would get together to do an organic makeover on select lawns, as a demonstration to homeowners. We would then have a follow-up night to inform everyone of what we had done and to provide more information on organic practices. This is where we joined forces with the Manitoba Eco-Network (MEN).

to door down Kingston Crescent to see how many people were using lawn care companies, how many people would be interested in or knew about organic lawn care, and to promote the presentation of the Eco-Network. At the time of writing, in early May, I had surveyed about 70 houses, and the response was good — people were very interested. Plans were set for a follow-up meeting, as well as the distribution of pamphlets with more information and DIY tips.

I hope you can get involved, and remember: your actions do have an impact! Let's Save Our Waterways!

Natalie Baird (art.in.the.streets@hotmail.com)

Maia Scholfield (the.green.scene@hotmail.com)

The yards of homes on Kingston Crescent drain directly into the Red River, increasing the need for organic lawn care practices.



Get Unfogged!

By Josh Brandon, Living Green, Living Well Coordinator, Resource Conservation Manitoba

ACCORDING TO WINNIPEG chief entomologist Taz Stewart, malathion, a chemical insecticide the City uses in its final line of defense against mosquitoes, is "less toxic than table salt." I am waiting for the condiments at the City Hall cafeteria to be replaced before I come to easy terms with the City's mosquito control policy. In the meantime, citizens across Winnipeg are organizing to protect themselves and their environment from unnecessary and counterproductive risks of practices like chemical fogging. Resource Conservation Manitoba's Living Green Living Well program has launched a campaign to educate citizens about the potential risks of chemical pesticides, actions they can take to protect themselves and their communities, as well as to open the conversation about how to organize around issues of toxins in our environment.

What are some of the risks of malathion?

Malathion is a chemical insecticide that attacks the nervous system of the target insect by inhibiting the production of an important neurotrans-

mitter, acetylcholine, which transmits information between nerves. Because almost all organisms with nervous systems — including humans — use

acetylcholine, malathion poses far-reaching risks to human health and the environment. Although the estimated exposure from a summer of fogging is far below a fatal human dose (approximately 140 grams) smaller doses may have cumulative effects, particularly for chemically sensitive individuals and children.

Health Canada advises that the risks from malathion are low when used appropriately, given the speed at which the product breaks down in presence of air. Unfortunately, the real-world conditions of application seldom coincide with laboratory test procedures. It is impossible to keep airborne chemicals from coming into contact with our aquatic ecosystems, despite the warning on the product labels to avoid any such exposure. Wind conditions change erratically and temperatures fluctuate. Even the best-trained workers make mistakes as application procedures become routine. Finally, the commercial product contains impurities as well as many untested, proprietary ingredients that amplify its effects when compared to the approved product. For this reason, Resource Conservation Manitoba recommends the application of the precautionary approach in the absence of scientific certainty — especially when the practical benefit of fogging, an actual reduction in mosquito counts, is minimal at best, or negative if effects on predatory species are considered.

What have citizens been doing?

Winnipeg remains one of the only major urban centres in North America that sprays malathion in residential areas. To confront this fact, a meeting of concerned citizens was held this April at the Eco-Centre to plan strategies and share information about insecticide program. We discussed which power-holders need to be informed about the risks of malathion, as well as identifying potential allies to bring onside. As a result of the meeting, we resolved to continue to work to overturn the City of Winnipeg's policy on chemical fogging. In particular, we will continue an education program on the risks of chemical pesticides, and the alternative measures residents can take to reduce their exposure to mosquitoes, while working with other groups concerned about the issue. We also resolved to spread education on the buffer zone program, with a goal of 2,000 residents signing up in 2009.

What actions can you take?

Among the best ways you can protect yourself and your immediate family from pesticides is to sign up for buffer zones both for the insecticide program and the chemical weed control program. Whether you live in an apartment or a house, rent or own, as a resident you have a right to ask for a buffer zone around your home where the City can not spray pesticides, unless there is a health concern. Email 311@winnipeg.ca to sign up for a buffer zone, or go to Livinggreenlivingwell.ca/get-unfogged for more resources and information about these programs. Tell your friends and neighbours and get them signed up also. Aside from buffer zones, be sure to let your elected representatives at the city, provincial and federal level know about your concerns. Finally, the actions you take in your own backyard, like checking for standing water, can reduce the presence of mosquitoes. Working together, we can change the culture of insect control. Meanwhile, pass the salt, not the malathion, please.

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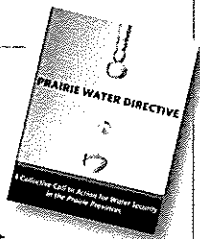
New In the Library

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:

**Prairie Water Directive:
A Collective Call to
Action for Water Security
in the Prairie Provinces**

By Tony Maas and Lindsay Telfer
Sustainable water management across the entire region is the goal of the Prairie Water Directive and its 19 supporting organizations, including MEN and a number of its member groups. The document — as well more information — can be also found at Prairiewaterwatch.ca.



New DVDs:

A Sense of Wonder (DVD)

Directed by Christopher Monger
Sense of Wonder Productions, 2009

By working from the author and scientist Rachel Carson's own words, and filming mostly at her Maine cottage, actress Kaiulani Lee brings the inspirational environmentalist to life on screen. The film was screened in April as part of MEN's Eco-Film Series.



Library Resources Now Online

LOOKING TO RESEARCH an environmental issue in Manitoba? Visit the newly launched website of Environmental Libraries of Manitoba (ELM): www.envirolibraries.mb.ca.

To promote the many information resources available to Manitobans on environmental issues, this joint web portal was created by an informal collective of libraries including: the Alice Chambers Memorial Library at the Manitoba Eco-Network; the Architecture/Fine Arts Library at the University of Manitoba; the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources; the Conservation and Environment Library (whose partners include Manitoba Conservation, Manitoba Water Stewardship, Environment Canada, Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment and Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency); the Institute of Urban Studies at the University of Winnipeg; the International Institute for Sustainable Development; and the Manitoba Museum Library & Archives.

Featured Book Review

Carbon Shift: How the Twin Crisis of Oil Depletion and Climate Change Will Define the Future

Edited By Dr. Thomas Homer-Dixon, Random House, 2009

THE LAST FIVE YEARS have seen a remarkable global rise in concern about environmental matters — and, in particular, about climate change. Not surprisingly, publishers have taken note of this attitudinal shift, and have published a series of books on climate change issues.

Many of these books follow a common formula: they describe the problem, forecast the awful consequences of inaction, cast blame on various people, industries, or governments, and then end on a note of optimism — telling us how we can work together to solve the problem. The problem's complexities often get lost in the process.

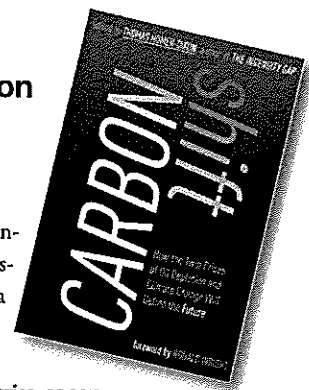
What makes *Carbon Shift* — a new book edited by award-winning author and professor Thomas Homer-Dixon — unique and well worth reading is that it recognizes, both in its thesis and in the six essays it contains, the complexity that is climate change. First, in his thesis, Homer-Dixon argues quite persuasively that: "...we must solve [the twin crises of oil depletion and climate change] both at once, because each makes the other harder."

Homer-Dixon readily admits that enacting solutions to climate change will be challenging. After all, we are profoundly dependent on the fossil fuels that threaten to make our planet uninhabitable. Ultimately, he believes that only a "carbon shift" — a swift transition to much cleaner energy — can save our planet and species.

As for the essays, they offer six distinct and often contradictory views on the twin crises by leading Canadians in their respective fields — two by oil experts (David Keith, David Hughes), two by economists (Mark Jaccard, Jeff Rubin), and two by journalists (William Marsden, Jeffrey Simpson). One contributor argues that climate change is the most urgent problem we face; another believes that the end of cheap energy is the greater threat. One essayist believes that the market can solve the problem while another takes a more pessimistic view.

Some readers may find the lack of consensus frustrating and even unnerving. However, it also engenders much needed debate about a complex issue that is key to us being able to effectively solve it.

—By Sean Petty, Chair, Sierra Club of Canada's Winnipeg Group



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.

Next American City (Americancity.org)

IT'S TWICE THE SIZE of Texas, and bigger than most European countries; even most environmentalists are unaware of the details of the massive plastic and garbage collection floating in the Pacific Ocean (Eastern Garbage Patch). The most recent issue of *Next American City* magazine tackles the issue in great depth in "The Largest Problem You've Never Heard Of."

Next American City was started in 2002 to focus on solid research, unexplored areas of urbanism and the then-budding field of psycho-geography. Thanks to its commercial success, the magazine has a high visual standard and is a great source of info-graphics, for those who like them.

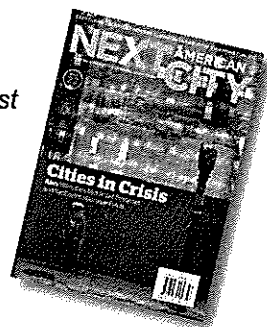
Each issue of the quarterly, Philadelphia-based magazine tackles a different theme: Issue No. 22 (Spring 2009), "Cities in Crisis" looks at green design, among other topics.

The issue is packed with issues of interest to ecologists, including "Now You're Cooking With Grease," a mainstream look at how biodiesel is becoming a municipal program across the U.S., saving gas, money and pollution. The only problem that remains, the article explains, is disposing of the waste product, glycerin — soap — in an environmentally friendly way.

The magazine's optimistic tone entreats readers to design transit maps and mail them to city councils — after all, this is how London's Tube was born.

A one-year subscription to *Next American City* is \$37.

—Tessa Vanderbart



At the Trough

A documentary exposé of the corporate hog industry in Manitoba

By Katharina Stieffenhofer

IN THE MIDST of the current 2009 pandemic outbreak of influenza A (H1N1) virus, commonly known as swine flu, a review of the locally produced documentary film, *At The Trough* (completed between 2006-08) seems particularly timely. The filmmakers intended to educate the public and generate discussion across the U.S. and Canada about the detrimental health, environmental and social effects of factory farming, or Intensive Live-stock Operations (ILOs), and the corporate hog industry in Manitoba in particular.

Mexican news media speculate that the 2009 swine flu outbreak may have started in February at a Smithfield Foods pig plant in La Gloria, Mexico amid complaints about its intensive farming practices. Ironically, Andrew Nikiforuk, author, journalist and contributor to the documentary, warns that Manitoba, the Canadian province with the third-largest hog industry, meets the conditions that could make it a nexus of the kind of viral pandemic currently occurring. He also predicted that the resulting border closures to Canadian pork exports would destroy the livelihoods of Canadian producers.

At The Trough gives a voice to the experience of farm people, academics and community activists and shares stories that expose the destructive nature of the global economy and in particular, the corporate hog industry in Manitoba. The film reveals how citizens can and have fought back to regain control of their communities and livelihoods by offering solutions to counter the industrial agricultural model.

The documentary project started as a collaboration of three individuals who were concerned about the negative consequences of the proposed Hytek/OlyWest hog processing and rendering plant in Winnipeg as well as the related industrial-scale hog production in Manitoba. The film's images provide a shocking — at times stomach-turning — insight into the systemic cruelty and inhumane treatment of farm animals, and the flagrant violations of environmental safety standards.

Well-chosen experts lend credibility to the documentary through their research and well-con-

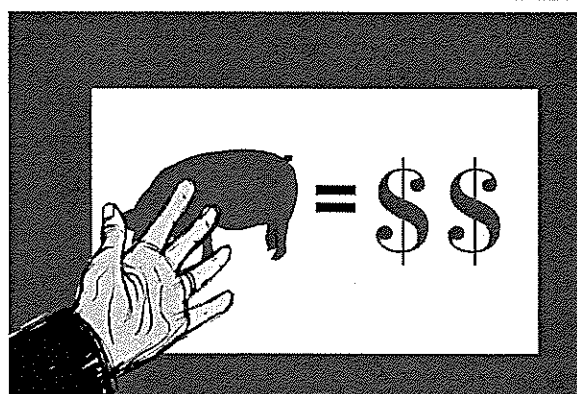
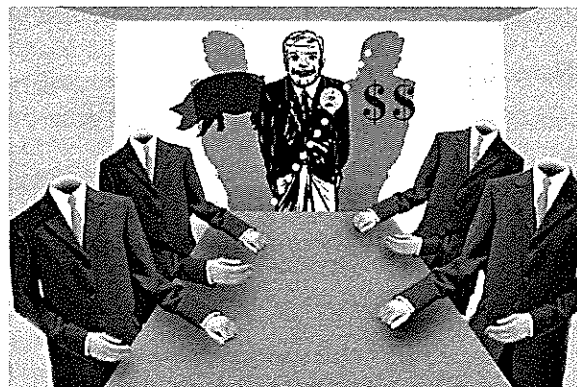
sidered opinions. Fred Tait, Manitoba coordinator of the National Farmers Union, identifies what he believes has been the Manitoba government's role — allowing special interest groups, such as the Manitoba Pork Council, to take over decision-making and regulatory function of the hog industry.

Another expert, Dr. Eva Pip, a professor of water quality and toxicology at the University of Winnipeg, said that E.U. member countries such as the Netherlands, Germany etc. have already banned ILO practices after experiencing environmental contamination. In North America, governments have yet to respond to the numerous examples of environmental devastation caused by ILOs.

The documentary concludes on a hopeful note by offering sustainable alternatives to ILOs, such as smaller, family farm operations that raise pastured pork in a way it has been practiced for centuries as part of traditional mixed farming. This practice results in healthier meat, less pollution, and more humane treatment of the animals.

Increasingly, the public demands to know how and where their food is raised, and it is the consumer dollar that is already leading this quiet revolution back to local, sustainable food production. The popularity of farmers' markets and restaurants offering local and organic food, as well as the interest in local joint marketing and cooperatives such as Harvest Moon Local Food Initiative or the Manitoba Grass Fed Beef Producers' Association, are evidence of this powerful and growing social movement.

Recently, the Manitoba government has implemented a number of small changes, such as including agriculture (including hog barn) workers under the Employment Standards Code, having new barns meet a building and fire code standard, more requirements for manure management planning and



At the Trough features a cartoon sequence lampooning the hog industry.

Graphics courtesy of Glen Koroluk

reporting, and a ban on winter spreading of manure for operations over 300 animals. The partial moratorium is explained at Friendlymanitoba.org.

One minor criticism: The cartoon-like, propaganda-style animations, may serve to connect with the classroom/student set — but, in my opinion, it might work better as a stand-alone treatment on corporate culture, as they tend to undermine the seriousness of the issues and credibility of the expert presenters.

At The Trough serves to inform the public and raise awareness about the multiple problems associated with ILOs. The documentary premiered at the Global Justice Film Festival last fall, and it has been shown in six University of Winnipeg classes, plus during the University of Manitoba Environmental Awareness Week just this past spring. The film will continue to be presented in university settings and classrooms, and at conferences and grassroots film festivals. 🐷

The DVD is available to be borrowed from the Alice Chambers Memorial Library.



Complimentary copy

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www.mbeconetwork.org