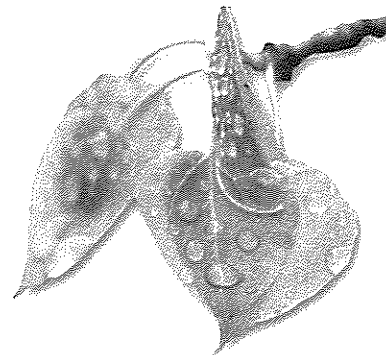




The 25L Water Experiment

Ever thought about how much water you use in a day?

By Kevin Freedman

TWENTY-FIVE LITRES OF WATER weighs about sixty pounds. It is approximately one cubic foot and could easily fit in your dresser drawer should you find the need. It is not a lot of water, considering the amount we use to wash our clothes or shower. For the entire month of June I challenged myself to live on less than twenty-five litres each day for everything I did requiring water.

It was in a sports equipment store waiting for a client that I first wondered how little water I could use in a day and still function normally. I began to jot down notes: six litres per toilet flush, four litres to drink daily, three to four litres per day for laundry etc.. I have always enjoyed a challenge, whether it was moving west alone at the age of eighteen, learning a second language at twenty-five, or hitchhiking to Newfoundland; I could not resist this one. Would I be able to drastically reduce my water use? How long could I do it for? Later that evening I told my partner Arum what I was planning and the ball was officially set in motion. Over the next week I brought my family and several of my friends into

the loop, decided to take pledges for UNICEF and contacted every local media organization I knew of.

Day one began early in the morning as I filled up a large jug—my sole water outlet for the month—with exactly twenty-five litres of water from my outside hose tap. The challenge was on. As part of this challenge I had to stay as healthy and hygienic as I usually would be, so this meant washing my body every day, keeping my laundry clean and not letting myself become dehydrated. On day one I was able, by being completely stingy, to wash myself (which I did with a bucket and cloth), brush my teeth and shave with less than three litres of water. In the evening I went to play water polo, which I do every Monday, and was caught in a funny situation afterwards. In keeping with my goal of staying hygienic, after practice I stood in a room with two-dozen showers, and to an onslaught of strange looks, washed myself with a cloth and water from a bottle I had filled up at home.

Arum and I split our house's two toilets, me getting the upstairs one and her the downstairs one so

continued on page 4 >>

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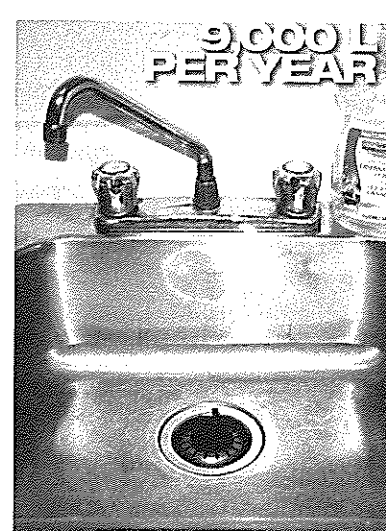
Kevin's "tools" for the month, including his 25 L jug.

Though front-loading washing machines use 40-75% less water than top-loaders, their wash cycle can still use as much as 80 L of water.

Standard showerheads flow at a rate of about 14 L per minute. A low-flow model can reduce that to as little as 3.8 L per minute, according to Natural Resources Canada.

A leaky faucet that drips once each second wastes 9,000 L of water per year.

All photos courtesy of Joel Trenaman, except for water bottles (far left), courtesy of Kevin Freedman



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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:

Kate Dykman, Kevin Freedman, Louis Helbig,
Anne Lindsey, Brian Miller, Marcus Rempel,
Lise Smith, Katharina Stiefenhofer

Design & Layout: Tracey Shillington
www.simplelifedesigns.ca

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Executive Director's Letter

IT'S FALL, and change is once again in the air! To start with, Manitoba Eco-Network will start to look a bit different over the next couple of months. An updated logo will replace our long-standing three elm leaves motif, and our website is getting an overhaul in look and functionality, including some interactive components.

A number of people have been hard at work on these tasks over the summer, in particular Tracey Shillington the designer, and Mikhail Kolybaba, our youthful web and computer guru. Lise Smith has juggled all the input and comments, and Sacha Kopelow provided helpful artistic inspiration. Check out the website this month www.mbeconetwork.org and enter our contest.

Other changes around here include a couple of new projects, both relating to climate change. Kate Dykman describes "ecoDriver" in her article on page five. This partnership project between Resource Conservation Manitoba, the Centre for Sustainable Transportation and the Eco-Network, supported by Natural Resources Canada and Green Manitoba, brings Melissa Dupuis to our office coordinating the Idle-Free component. And Shoni Litinsky joins us in the position of Community Facilitator for the Community Led Emissions Reduction program being rolled out by Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs. Shoni will assist coordinators in numerous municipalities and neighbourhoods around the province as they plan and implement GHG emissions reduction in their communities.

During the summer, we've been delighted to have Kaitlin Alexander in the office working on a series of short podcasts about climate change to be used on the CCC website, on YouTube, and at a Podcast Festival scheduled for November 7 at the Millennium Library. Kaitlin is a Grade 12 student at J. H. Bruns Collegiate, and a budding climatologist herself. Check out her website at www.climatesight.org. We stood by amazed as she prepared the scripts, produced her own graphics, and together with her band, played the original music for these podcasts.

Organic Lawn Care was underway for its ninth season during May, June and July, with Sasha Suarez-Amaya and Sara Braun doing the legwork. There continues to be a strong demand in Winnipeg for non-chemical approaches to lawns and gardens, and this year we found ourselves being invited to many rural communities as well. Urban Green Team and the City of Winnipeg funded our Winnipeg work, and we were also able to do workshops in Brandon, Winkler, Winnipeg Beach, Portage la Prairie and Stonewall. The trend away from lawn chemicals seems to be a province-wide interest and we understand that Manitoba Conservation is planning public consultations on a potential provincial cosmetic pesticide ban.

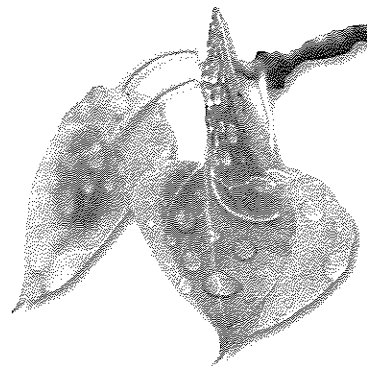
It's both interesting and exciting for Eco-Network to be in a position to house these kinds of projects and initiatives—particularly with so many young people involved—and a reminder of how critical it is to have a stable base of operations such as we have developed with a lot of community support over the years.

On a bigger scale, there's also change happening—as I write this, the wires are abuzz with talk of another federal election. So far, I haven't heard much talk about the environment as an election issue, but it should be hard to ignore with world leaders meeting in December in Copenhagen to finalize the next round of agreements on climate change. Youth from across Canada will be pressing exactly that point to our federal politicians when they gather in Ottawa for Power Shift later in October. Power Shift aims to engage and give voice to youth on climate change and facilitate their ability to share their agenda for a cleaner, greener future with their peers and the rest of society. Erica Young, coordinator of our Youth Environmental Network, and Dean Medeiros of Climate Change Connection are working hard to get fifty keen young Manitobans from all over the province to the meeting in Ottawa, by bus.

Last but not least, we're really pleased that Dean was accepted as part of Canada's youth delegation to the climate talks in Copenhagen. There's lots of friendly pressure on him from all of us here at the office to ensure that Canada emerges from the meetings as a champion of emissions reduction! Dean will be blogging from Copenhagen, and you'll be able to follow him on www.climatechangeconnection.org.

So, as is usual in the fall, things are all-systems-go at the Eco-Network. Get all the details of our many events, and those of other environmental groups on the Eco-Journal's Events page and on our website.

Anne Lindsey, *Executive Director, Manitoba Eco-Network*



OCTOBER

1-31 International Walk to School Month (IWSM)

Did you know that over four million people from more than forty-two countries participate in IWSM activities? To find out more and how you can get involved: Call 925-3773 or visit www.resourceconservation.mb.ca.

14 Can Winnipeg Become a Sustainable City?

Presented by Michael Dudley, Institute of Urban Studies, as part of the Millennium Library's free Skywalk Lecture series. Location: Carol Shields Auditorium, 12:10 p.m.

15 The Age of Stupid (MB premiere)

Are we Stupid? This movie, released internationally on Sept. 21, features Pete Postlethwaite as a man living alone in the devastated future world of 2055—looking at old footage from 2008. It explores its title's harsh question and forces us to ask: why didn't we stop climate change when we had the chance? One show only: 7:00 p.m. at the U of Winnipeg (Eckhart-Grammate Hall). Admission is free. Arrive in a climate-friendly way for a chance to win prizes! For more info: 947-6511 or www.climatechangeconnection.org.

19-25 Waste Reduction Week

Did you know that 70 percent of landfill waste could be either reused or recycled? Find out what you can do to reduce your waste at www.wrwc.ca.

20 Bike Shorts Film Festival

Anyone who loves riding bikes and/or likes films should really enjoy this! Sponsored by Bike to the Future. There will also be a Bike Art display and Bike Valet. Location: Cinematheque (100 Arthur St.), 7:00 p.m., \$10. For more info: donengl@mts.net or <http://biketothefuture.org>.

24 International Day for Climate Action

Check out what thousands of communities around the globe are doing at www.350.org.

End of October

The Eco-Network Water Caucus and Friends of the Earth Canada invite you to two free participatory workshops on implementing **Soft-Path Water Management strategies for Manitoba** (one workshop will focus on rural areas and one on Winnipeg). Dates and locations TBA. For more info: Sacha at 943-0318 or sacha@mbeconetwork.org.

NOVEMBER

7 The Climate Change Podcast Film Festival

The festival will be held at the Millennium Library's Carol Shields Auditorium from 2:00-4:00 p.m..

19 Manitoba Plant Life; Our Amazing Inheritance

Presented by Richard Staniforth as part of Nature Manitoba Discover Evenings. Location: Centre culturel franco-manitobain (340 Provencher Blvd), 7:30 p.m. \$2 for members/\$4 general. For more info: 943-9029.

19 ACML Discussion Club

Our theme this month is "The Century of the Self." We'll gather to watch part of this thought-provoking documentary, share snacks and have a discussion on the roots and methods of modern consumerism. Visit www.mbeconetwork.org for suggested resources on this topic. Then join us on the 19th to share what you've learned. All welcome! Location: EcoCentre (3rd floor of 303 Portage Ave), 7:00 p.m..

Throughout November

Master Composter Training Course for Immigrant Communities

This free training course will lead to certification and emphasizes raising compost awareness in immigrant communities. For times, details and to apply: 925-3776 or compost@resourceconservation.mb.ca.

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

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OF SPECIAL NOTE

The Eco-Network appreciates and thanks the many individuals and groups that contribute to our efforts, and would like to recognize some very special donations...

Ashley Kalagian and Steve Blunt; in honour of their wedding guests from around the world.

Peggy Lawrence, family & friends; in memory of Tim Hunt.

Seven Oaks Eco-Action Committee; proceeds from their 2009 Earth Day Celebration.

Investors Group (Winnipeg West); support from their Consultants, Associates and Assistants.

<< continued from page 1

25L Water cont'd...



Courtesy of Kevin Freedman

Kevin carrying water upstairs to the bathroom.

that I could hold off on flushing mine. This allowed her and our guests to flush whenever they pleased. I had turned off the water to the toilet tank so that I would only be able to manually fill it with water I brought from my jug. I found on my first flush that instead of the six litres I thought the toilet needed for a full flush, it in fact required eight litres for it to work properly. This would be the first of several times I needlessly wasted water during the month. I found out early on though that by pouring about three litres of water directly into the toilet bowl I could initiate a flush (which I would sometimes do).

Later in the week I did laundry for the first time, and having done laundry by hand for several months in Indonesia, this was not new. It is a physically demanding activity as well as time-consuming, but I was able to reuse more than half of the water I used for washing laundry by using it in my toilet, something I was also able to do with excess water from my shower and from dishwashing. By the end of the month, had I not reused all of this water, nearly

one-third of my total use, I would not have stayed within my twenty-five-litre per day limit.

Over the month I brought a barrage of water bottles with me everywhere so I would never go thirsty. I also used one specifically for cleaning a urinal if I had to use one, and to wash my hands afterwards. Every time I wanted to shower I had to boil water and bring several litres upstairs in a couple of pails, and I could only ever fill up my water bottles (the only things I drank out of to save dishes) in one location. In the end, I found that it was this awareness I forced upon myself that made it easier to conserve water. And it really was easy. After the first week it all became habit, and in the end I averaged a little more than nineteen litres of water per day for the month, less than nine percent of what the average Winnipegger uses.

Since then I have gone back to showering, using faucets around the house and drinking juice and milk again. My water use has increased, but during the month of July, without much thought Arum and I each used less than a quarter of the water an average Winnipegger uses in that time. It goes to show that when it comes to water conservation, a little effort can go a very long way.

Throughout his experiment, Kevin also documented his experiences on a blog: theweeklyregale.blogspot.com.

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Eco-Driving Comes to the Prairies

Changing habits behind the wheel reduces environmental impact

By Kate Dykman, ecoDriver Program Co-Coordinator

EVEN THOUGH WE don't control the price at the pump, we can control how quickly we use it. The idea is that through good maintenance, a more relaxed driving style and cutting out short trips, you can make a difference in the amount of money you spend on fuel—and the health of the planet. EcoDriver Manitoba is a new program of Resource Conservation Manitoba and the Manitoba Eco-Network which teaches a combination of driving habits and car maintenance that ensure whatever you drive, you get the best fuel economy possible. This program is generously funded by Natural Resources Canada and Green Manitoba.

Drive smoothly

There are a number of common myths that keep drivers from realizing their best fuel economy. One being, accelerating quickly in urban stop-and-go conditions will get you there faster. According to Natural Resources Canada, this driving style will only save you 2.5 minutes per hour on the road. That means for your aggressive driving efforts, you could be using as much as thirty-nine percent more fuel before getting caught at the next red light. By accelerating gently, coasting to a stop, and anticipating traffic flow, you can reduce your gas consumption considerably.

You've probably heard this before, but following the speed limit will save you fuel. When you drive 120 km/h instead of 100 km/h you use twenty percent more gas to get you to your destination! While driving on the highway, follow the limit and maintain a steady pace—using your cruise control will help.

Be idle free

Another myth in our climate is idling times. The truth is, idling for ten seconds or more will use more fuel than turning off and restarting your engine. It's a zero MPG activity that most of us do unconsciously! So become aware of when you idle—this could be while waiting at train crossings, picking up a passenger, or at the drive-thru for your morning coffee. If Canadian motorists reduced their idling by just three minutes a day, it would be the equivalent to taking 320,000 vehicles off the road for the entire year!

Typically our idling times increase in the winter, but with improvements in modern engines and better quality oils, it only takes thirty seconds even in extremely cold weather to be ready to go—the best way to warm up all your vehicle's systems is to gently drive it for the first five kilometres.

Simple maintenance

If you want your vehicle to perform well and get the best fuel economy, you need to follow the maintenance practices and schedule in your owner's manual. But how does it relate to saving fuel? A poorly maintained vehicle can increase fuel consumption by as much as fifteen percent! Keeping your tires inflated and your oil and air filter changed at recommended intervals will make a difference in how much fuel you consume.

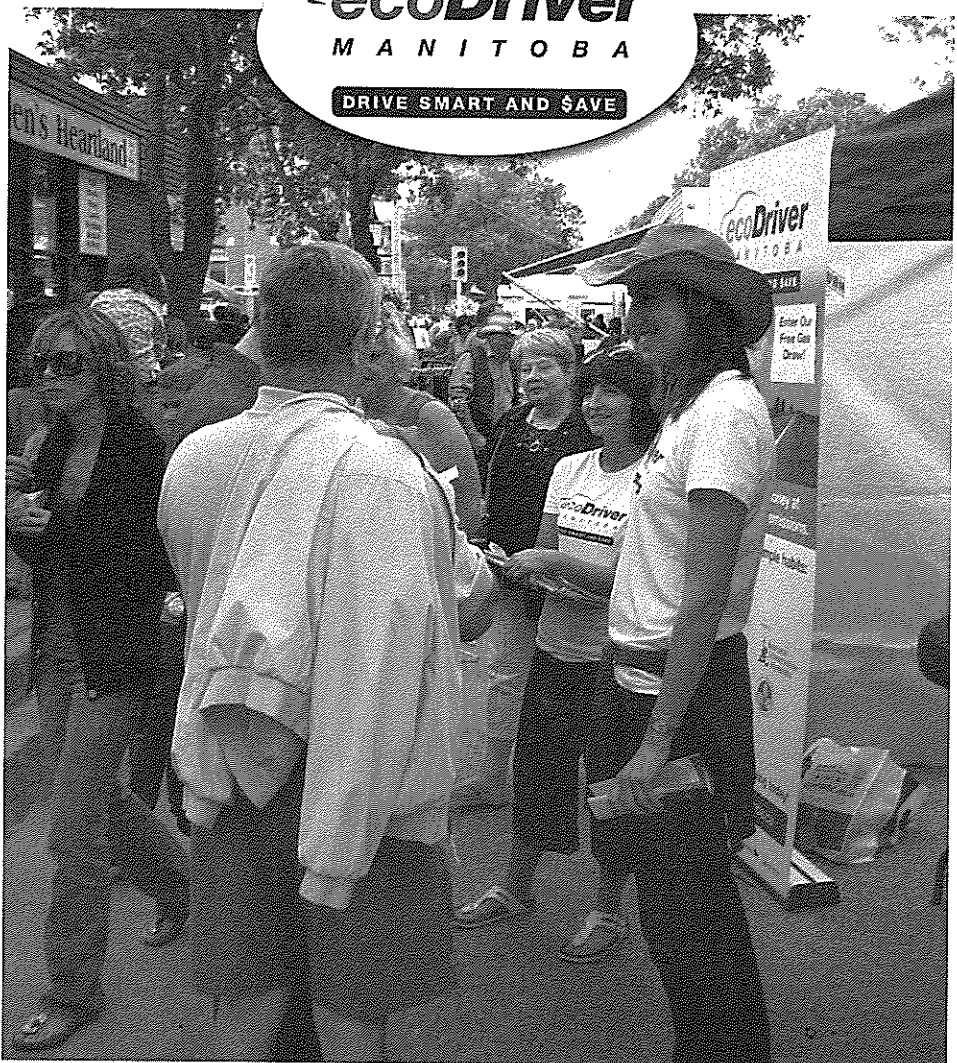
Buying for environmental benefit

Of course the journey starts with what you drive—choosing a fuel efficient ride is much

easier with help from the Natural Resources Canada ratings for all new and used vehicles. This is found on the NRCan website under Transportation. There can be as much as 100 percent difference in fuel economy between vehicles of the same class, so a little research can pay off in thousands of dollars in fuel savings over time, and an important reduction in household emissions.

The EcoDriver Manitoba team offers free workshops and maintenance clinics to the public covering all aspects of eco-driving. To book one for your group or workplace, visit www.ecodrivermanitoba.ca, a new website that gives you the tools

to drive smart, save money, and reduce your impact.



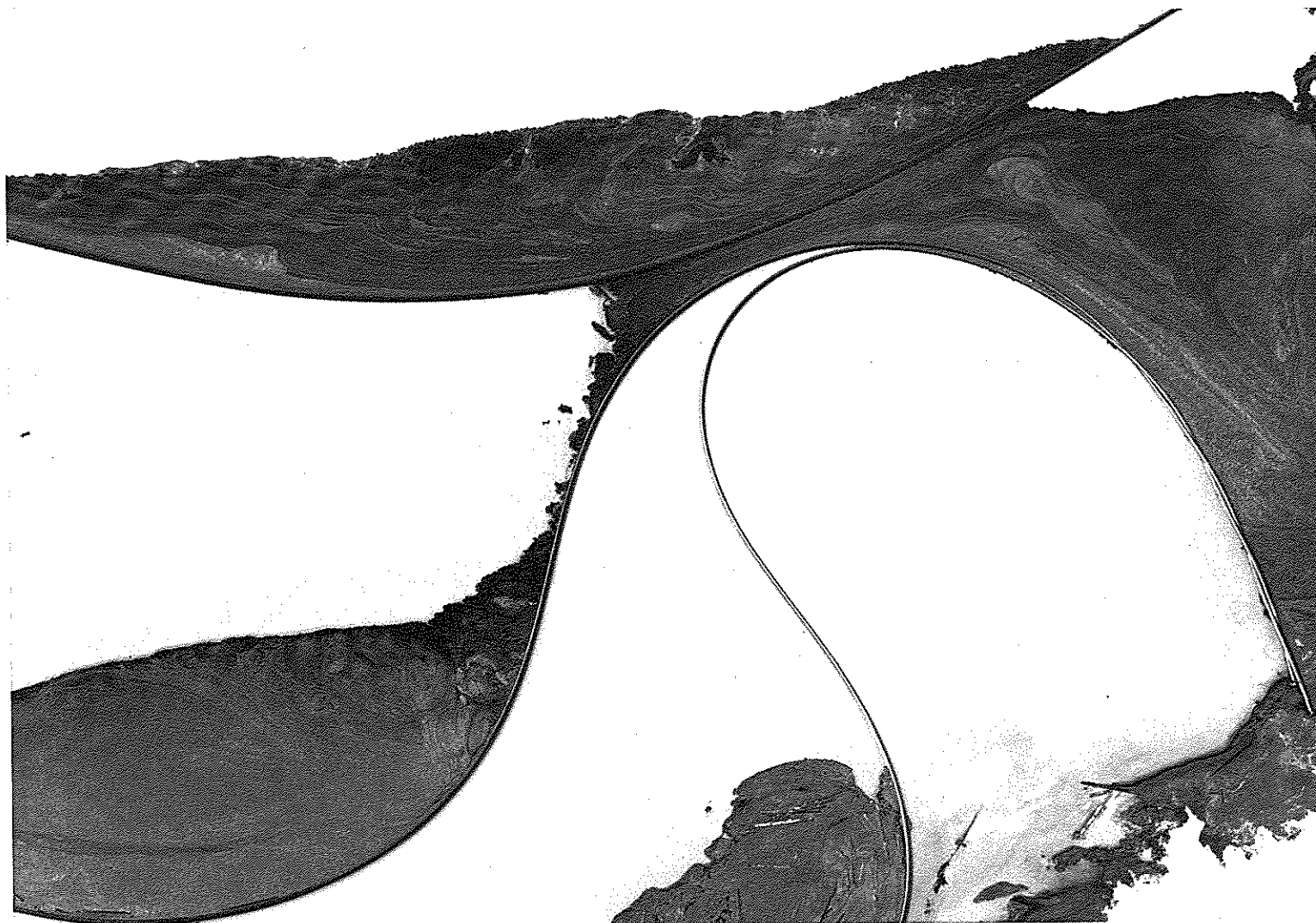
Melissa Dupuis and Kate Dykman (on right) greet the public at an EcoDriver display event.

Courtesy of EcoDriver Manitoba



Beautiful Destruction

Photography by Louis Helbig



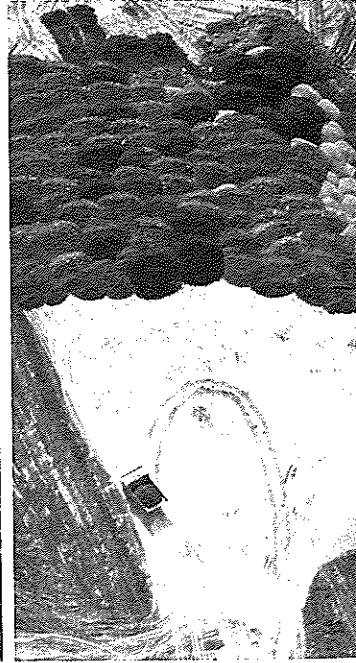
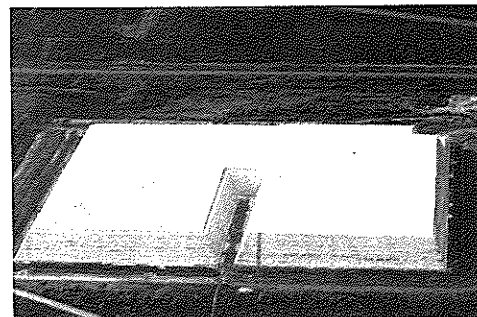
(Above clockwise)
Surface detail of bitumen residue boomed by floating pipes on toxic water. In 2008 it was revealed that 1,600 ducks were poisoned to death after landing on the water.

Multi-coloured piles of slag, each mound a dump truck load. Slag is the coked residue remaining after bitumen is upgraded to synthetic crude.

The Syncrude Mildred Lake Upgrader.

Sulfur, a byproduct of oil refining, is stored in block structures reminiscent of ziggurats.

Open pit bitumen mine: unlike conventional, hard rock mining with a fairly limited footprint, the shallow tar mining operations spread across the landscape.



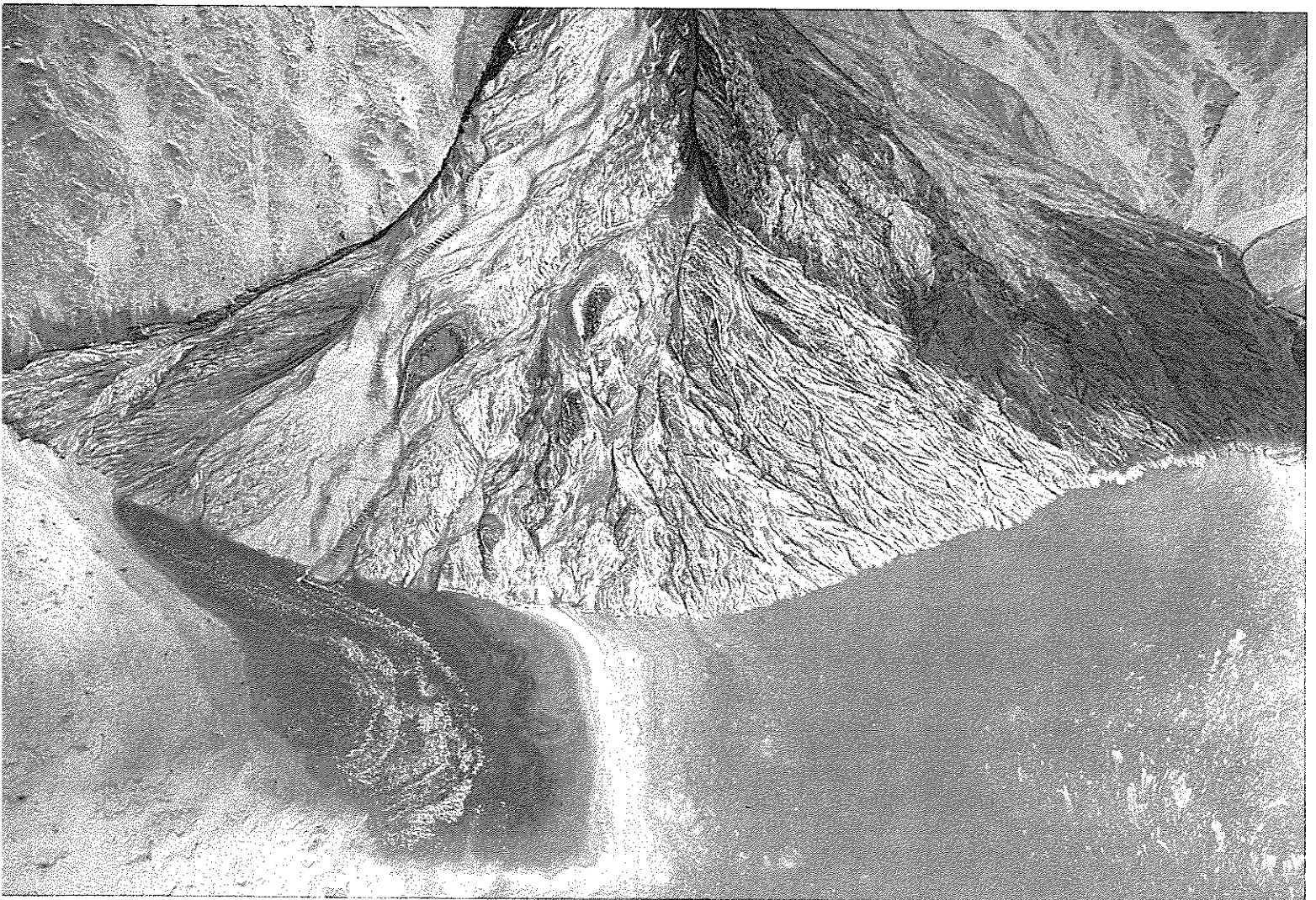
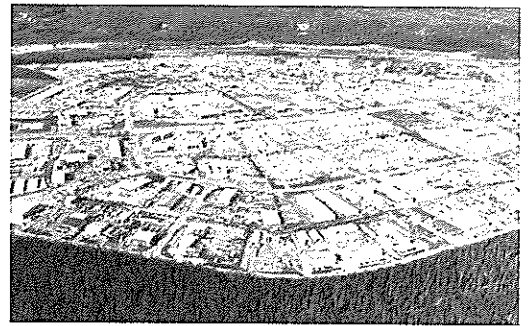
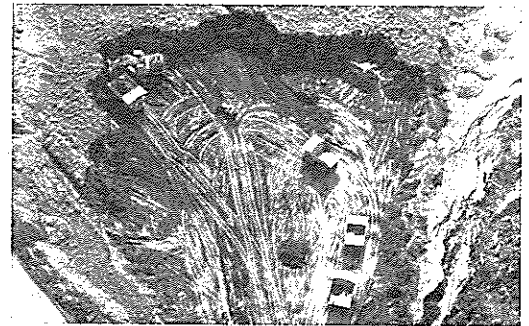
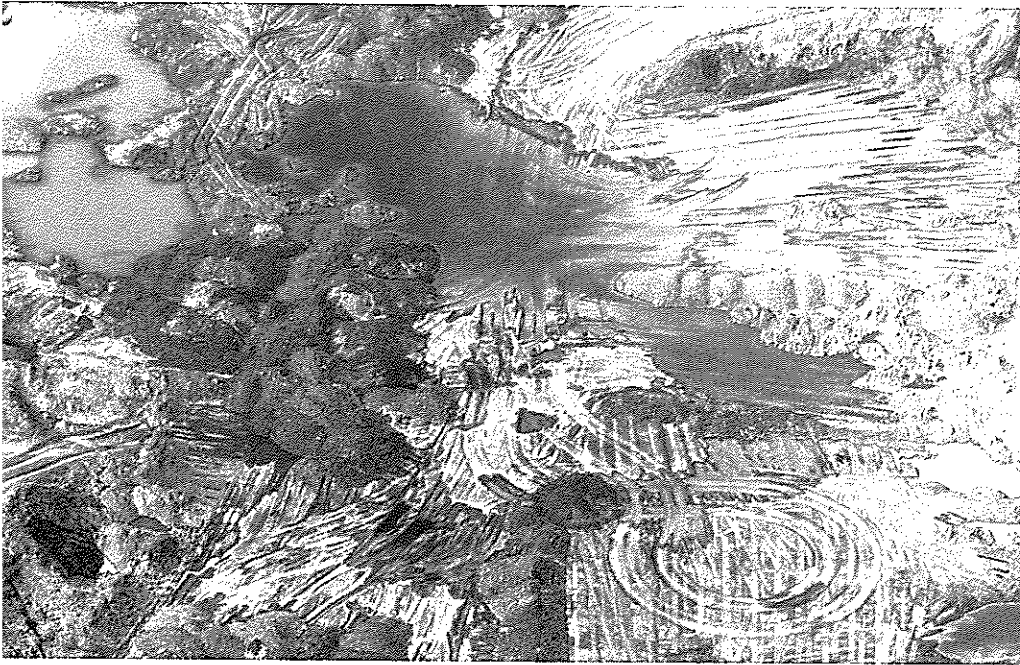
IN THE SUMMER OF 2008, Ottawa photographer Louis Helbig and his partner traced the skies above the Alberta Tar Sands in their 1946 Luscombe airplane as he took thousands of shots of the beauty and devastation found in the immense landscapes beneath. He compiled the photos for a major exhibition, "Beautiful Destruction", and has since been working to place them before the eyes of the public and policymakers. Helbig seeks to encourage discussion and debate on tar sands issues. The images have graced the covers of *Environmental Health Perspectives*, *FutuRéale* and the *United Church Observer*, and exhibited at places like the Contact Toronto Photography Festival, and Ottawa's arts & architecture gallery. There are limited-edition prints for sale on his website, LouisHelbig.com.

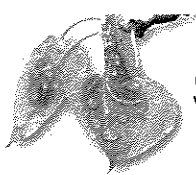
(Top left clockwise) Open pit bitumen mining at the Syncrude Aurora North Mine.

Stripping the first layer of 'overburden,' a layer of earth, sand and gravel up to 100 feet deep covering the bitumen ore or tar sand.

Fort McMurray's industrial supply yards cut into the surrounding wilderness.

An alluvial fan formed by effluent pouring into the Muskeg River Mine's tar pond.





A Devastating Diversion

Is Manitoba Hydro's green brand a distraction from a crippled northern river system?

By Marcus Rempel

AN ELEGANT, ultra-green building has risen at 360 Portage Avenue. Manitoba is getting A+ marks for its Power Smart energy efficiency efforts. First Nations are giving the thumbs up to partnerships with Manitoba Hydro on new dams, which promise jobs and an ongoing revenue stream to their communities. Hydro boasts a forty-three percent Aboriginal northern workforce today, thanks to the company's strategic outreach.

One would think that anyone questioning the blessing of clean, green hydroelectricity, or the largesse of our provincial power utility towards First Nations, must be an ill-informed, stubborn contrarian, refusing to see the light of a new, just, environmentally and economically sound future shining through the super-clear glass of Manitoba Hydro's new showpiece downtown headquarters. We who beg to differ have a lot of explaining to do.

The new building, the new dams, the new partnerships—they all do represent improvements—are superficially grafted on to a fundamentally dirty and destructive system. Take Wuskwatim; this new "run of the river" dam, flooding only 1/4 km², with the blessing and buy-in of the local Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, may well generate some of the cleanest power in the world, when considered as a project unto itself.

But Wuskwatim does not work without the Churchill River Diversion (CRD), one of the largest and most destructive projects in the north. The CRD floods 800-plus km² of boreal forest and raises the level of South Indian Lake by three metres. It holds back eighty-five percent of the Churchill's natural flow, diverting the water to hydro generating stations to the south, including Wuskwatim. The massive, unnatural influx of water causes widespread erosion and habitat destruction to this day, seriously degrading the waters and the land base of the northern Cree.

Hydro will argue that compensation has been paid, so its liabilities to the land and local peoples have been covered. But how does one monetize these ongoing costs of a hydro-manipulated water regime: unnatural fluctuations flood nests and burrows, and small creatures die. Shorelines can't stabilize. Trees lose their grip on the soil, lean, gangle and tear away. Fishing nets fill with dead trees instead of fish. Pristine waters choke with mud. Traplines are flooded. Islands



Michelle Gunderson

and beaches, with ancient gravesites and long-favoured family campsites, wash away. Bones of Cree ancestors stick painfully out of the banks.

The new dams only add to these damages incrementally. But expanding a wound only slightly is not the same as healing it. And monetary compensation does nothing to allow the boreal rivers and lakes to recover. Is the point of the new deals to bring healing, or buy a silence that allows Hydro's biggest skeletons to remain closeted?

One such skeleton: the CRD, unlike much smaller Wuskwatim, has never been licensed under the Environment Act. No comprehensive environmental assessment of the CRD has ever been done, and no environmental terms have ever been applied to its operation. As of May 2009, Manitoba Hydro is in the process of quietly applying for final licensing for the CRD. Despite recommendations from the Clean Environment Commission and the Consultation on Sustainable Development Implementation—both government-appointed bodies, Hydro is not applying for environmental licensing, only Water Power licensing, thereby avoiding environmental inquiry into, and regulation of the Churchill diversion that underlies the whole northern power system.

Manitobans have the cheapest electricity in North America. We all like a bargain, but isn't it time we found out what kind of bargain we've entered into? There has to be a better way to steward our boreal rivers. Without environmental licensing and a public review, we'll never find it.

Marcus Rempel is Hydro Justice Coordinator with the Winnipeg-based Interfaith Task Force on Northern Hydro Development. He can be reached at rempe.marcus@gmail.com.

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1. Visit our website sometime in October;
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3. Send your answers to info@mbeconetwork.org before Oct. 31;
4. Enjoy reading all about us!



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DAN SOPROVICH, M.Sc
Wildlife Ecologist

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e-mail: dsop@mts.net

The Mel Johnson School Gardening Project

Documenting a model of sustainability education

By Katharina Stieffenhofer

FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS, Eleanor Woitowicz, a teacher for thirty-four years at Mel Johnson School in Wabowden, Manitoba, has been setting up small vegetable gardens right at her students' homes. Eleanor teaches the students how to grow their own vegetables sustainably and pesticide-free, and is literally growing a healthier community in the process. The program and number of gardens is ever expanding and has grown from twelve to fifty-eight. This year Eleanor and fellow teacher and volunteer Bonnie Monias are partnering some of the young gardeners with community elders.

The community of Wabowden is located north of the 54th parallel, 650 km north of Winnipeg. Though the community has road access and a grocery store, they still share the challenges that northern communities face when it comes to accessing fresh, healthy and affordable produce on a regular basis. Wabowden is home to approximately 600 residents, the majority of whom are of First Nations or Métis heritage.

The Frontier School Division's 'Veggie Adventures' science curriculum literally laid the seed for the school gardening program, which is also supported by the Bayline Regional Roundtable. But it took Eleanor's creative leap of faith and avid gardening skills to take the gardening out of the classroom and into the community. Her tireless effort has kept the young gardeners motivated; she checks each of her students' gardens on her own time after school,

on the weekends and during the summer holidays. What has kept Eleanor going is the wonderful rapport that develops with the kids over time.

The students learn valuable skills in sustainable food production, healthy eating, and food preparation. Children are more



Charlie and her sisters harvest onions and radishes.

Katharina Stieffenhofer

likely to eat food they have grown and prepared themselves. Habits and skills established early in life are usually retained and passed on to future generations. Participation in this project gives the students a sense of pride and accomplishment. Following the example set by their children, many parents have shown interest in growing their own food and incorporating more varieties of fresh vegetables into their family diets.

Word about this innovative school gardening project is spreading far and wide—it has been presented at the Northern Harvest Forum in Thompson, and most recently, the 2009 Growing Local conference at the University of Winnipeg. After seeing Eleanor and Bonnie's "Gardening in the Classroom" presentation at the latter event, I decided on the spot to create an educational documentary film about the project to promote the concept and to provide a tool to aid replication of the school gardening program in other communities. The film follows Eleanor and her students through the growing season and documents the processes

of seeding, planting, caretaking, harvesting, food preparation, preserving and feasting.

The film has recorded the effect of this project in Wabowden and beyond. Ian Barnett, Special Programs Manager at Winnipeg's Fort Whyte Farms, invited twelve of Eleanor's young gardeners for a four-day workshop on sustainable farming practices this past August. The students had a fabulous time while gaining hands-on experience with aspects of market gardening, bee keeping, pastured poultry and pigs.

The documentary will be completed by February 28, 2010. To date, the film's production has been supported by the Manitoba Health and Healthy Living School Nutrition Support Team, Northern Healthy Foods Initiative/ANA, Manitoba Conservation/SDIF, Frontier School Division, Manitoba Hydro, Heifer International and the National Film Board.

To read interviews with some of the Wabowden gardeners, visit www.mbecoyouth.org.



Kristen shows Eleanor her first ripe tomatoes.

2009 Award Winners Announced

By Anne Lindsey

THE MANITOBA ECO-NETWORK'S 2009 Environmental Awards were presented on June 9, in conjunction with our AGM. As usual, three recipients were selected from a number of nominations.

Anders Swanson was nominated in the "Individual" category by Bike to the Future Co-Chair Kevin Miller. Anders has been a tireless advocate for cycling and bicycles in Winnipeg, leading the way to a comprehensive network of cycling routes and infrastructure designed to make cycling safer, easier and more accessible. He has paid particular attention to the needs of inner-city children, teaching them to repair and build their own bikes. His creative website, OneGreenCity.com is used by Active Transportation promoters of all stripes, and he has gained the respect of politicians, city administrators and community groups with his hard work, non-confrontational style and absolute commitment to making Winnipeg a greener place.

In the "Group" category: The Organic Food Council of Manitoba (OFCM) has been building awareness about healthy local organic food and connecting farmers with consumers for nearly a

decade. Through innovative projects like Growing Up Organic and the Farm Mentorship Program, OFCM is facilitating local organic eating in child care centres and other institutions, and is helping a new generation to learn sustainable agriculture from seasoned practitioners. OFCM worked with local producers to help make Manitoba organic milk a reality, has played a key role in pushing for government policy improvements regarding organic growing, and is instrumental in the grow-

gester; use of compost teas and a variety of natural and biological controls for weeds and fungi; diversion of about 10,000 litres of waste cooking oil from area restaurants as a bio-diesel source for golf course vehicles and tractors; and use of native species for plantings around the golf course. As Greg embarks next year on a term as president of the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association, he will be taking the Clear Lake examples and lessons to a national audience—one that needs to hear his mes-

We salute this year's other nominees:
Ryan Anderson, La Broquerie's Gabriel Gagne, school principal Curt Belton, and Shelmerdine Nurseries.

ing movement to build a just, sustainable and local agricultural economy in the province. OFCM was nominated by Anne Lindsey.

Nominated by Celes Davar, Greg Holden, Superintendent of the Clear Lake Golf Course, is the winner in the "Special" category. Greg has led the operation of the golf course and restaurant at Clear Lake for sixteen years, transforming it from a conventional course to a model of sustainability, innovation and recycling. The conversion stems from Greg's personal commitment to the health of the planet. Innovative features of the golf course include: the use of composting toilets and a di-

sage of sustainability for this popular sport.

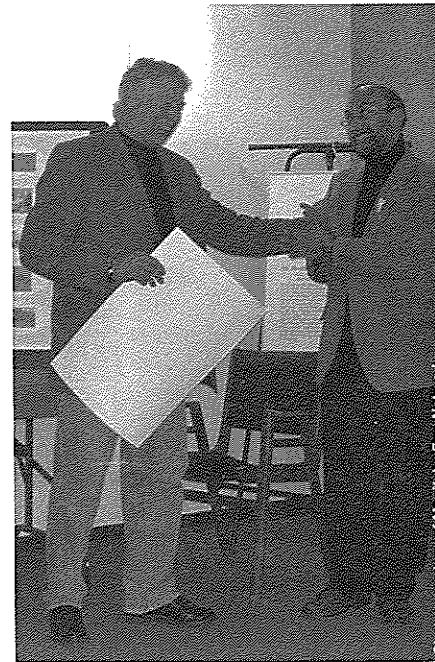
We salute this year's other nominees: Ryan Anderson, who biked across Canada to raise awareness of environmental issues; La Broquerie's Gabriel Gagne, who practices and shares with rural neighbours a low impact, sustainable way of life; school principal Curt Belton, who has inspired students and teachers in developing action and education for sustainability at Rockwood School; and Shelmerdine Nurseries, which led the way in taking toxic pesticides and garden products off the shelf, choosing instead to promote environmentally friendly alternatives.

(Left to Right)

Kevin Miller describes Anders Swanson's achievements.

Anne Lindsey celebrates with OFCM's Julie Fine and Janine Gibson.

Greg Holden accepts award from Celes Davar.





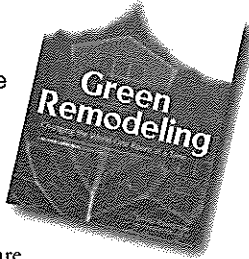
New In the Library

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.mbconetwork.org/library.php.

New Books:

Green Remodeling: Changing the World One Room at a Time

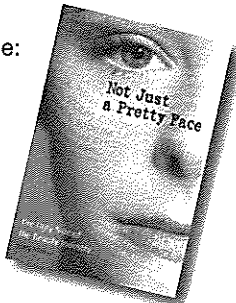
By David R. Johnston
and Kim Master
New Society
Publishers, 2004



If you've decided that home renovations are a worthwhile use of resources, it's better to think about how to best go about improving a room or dwelling according to sustainable principles. Industry veterans Johnston and Master created a comprehensive guide to "green" renovations, from choosing materials to energy efficiency, but also with aesthetics in mind.

Not Just a Pretty Face: The Ugly Side of the Beauty Industry

By Stacy Malkan
New Society
Publishers, 2007

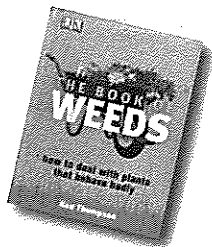


Cosmetics are largely unregulated. Many contain hormone-disrupting chemicals, carcinogens and reproductive toxins. Learn what most common "beauty" products are made from. The book also talks about how activists have made moves to hold the industry accountable, and spread knowledge to the consumer. It's still an uphill battle.

The Book of Weeds

By Ken Thompson
DK Publishing, 2009

This beautifully designed, colourful book is a great guide to help gardeners identify and control weeds—annuals, perennials, waterweeds, you name 'em. The book will tell you how to eradicate them: when, how, and with what.



DVD Review

Addicted to Plastic

By Ian Connacher

Métropole/Mongrel Media, 2008, 85 minutes

PLASTIC IS THE "CHEAPEST, strongest, most ubiquitous material ever invented," we are told in the first few minutes of Ian Connacher's documentary *Addicted to Plastic*. The Ontario filmmaker takes the viewer on a worldwide journey exploring the sheer magnitude of plastics consumption, while also featuring many individuals who are reacting to this reality with unconventional or innovative approaches.

The film points out that, originally developed in the face of anticipated shortages of natural resources, plastics really are a scientific marvel. They can be adapted to fit demand for almost any usage, and can easily change colours and styles. After WWII, many factories converted to producing plastics, rushing to market with every product you can think of. That they were cheap and disposable was considered a good thing—a reprieve from shortages and a boon to growing families.

In fact, one of the strengths of the documentary is that Connacher accepts plastic is here to stay, figuratively and literally—the film notes that every piece ever made still exists (except for what's been incinerated). While plastics are examined critically, to its benefit the film spends little time vilifying the industry, or guilt-tripping consumers about the daily practices that have led us to where we are.

According to the preamble, Connacher and a friend visited twelve countries, conducted forty-nine interviews and accumulated 300-plus hours of video over two years. The results are presented much more casually than you would expect for such a "heavy" subject. The style of presentation make it seem like Connacher woke up one day, noticed all of the plastics around him and decided to explore why this was the case, as well as potential consequences. The tone and music can be a bit quirky, and there are amusing animation sequences depicting the life of a plastic nurdle (a resin pellet that is the transferable building block of most plastic items).

That's not to say the film is lacking in serious analysis or scientific focus. Connacher begins his journey 1,000 miles off the coast of California in the "Eastern Garbage Patch." The central North Pacific gyre collects plastics here due to the "toilet-bowl effect" of the current. These are slowly broken down into smaller pieces, creating a plastic soup dined on by sea creatures (and commencing bioaccumulation).

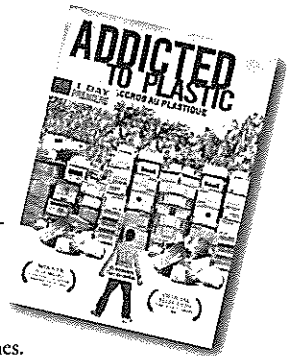
The documentary's middle section is devoted to figuring out what's happening with all of the plastic that is created and remains on land. The pitfalls of conventional recycling are examined, such as how to separate all the different grades of plastics, and how to increase consumer and industrial participation. *Addicted to Plastic* also documents many positive stories of reused and recycled materials, including refilled plastic bottles in Denmark, e-waste adaptation in India, and innovative railroad ties and carpets in the United States.

Yet Connacher fails to provide enough depth when it comes to other key areas of concern. The film does a great job of emphasizing the degree to which we have the plastics. "It's everywhere. That's the problem," says its tagline. But is that really the problem—why should we worry then? The film has a puzzling progression, as it doesn't really broach the harmful—or potentially harmful—chemical effects of plastics until after the 50-minute mark.

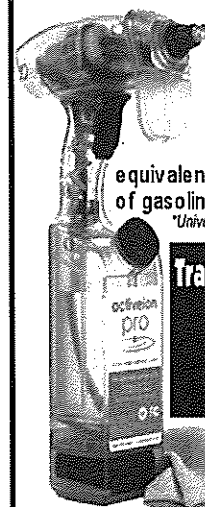
Chemicals like DEHP are used to manipulate plastics into shapes. Connacher consults experts on these common plasticizers, called phthalates, including a scientist who believes they could alter development of the brain. As one of the scientists to sound alarms over Bisphenol A, a main ingredient in polycarbonate plastics, Frederick vom Saal shares his thoughts on the likelihood of low-dose health effects.

Overall, the relatively brief attention paid to the human health science of environmental plastics accumulation is the weakest point in what is otherwise an informative, internationally focused, even-handed documentary that reinforces just how widespread plastics are, not only in our everyday lives, but in the unseen corners of the planet. ♻️

—Joel Trenaman



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Manigotagan Map Showcased in Ottawa

Attending the Canadian River Heritage Conference

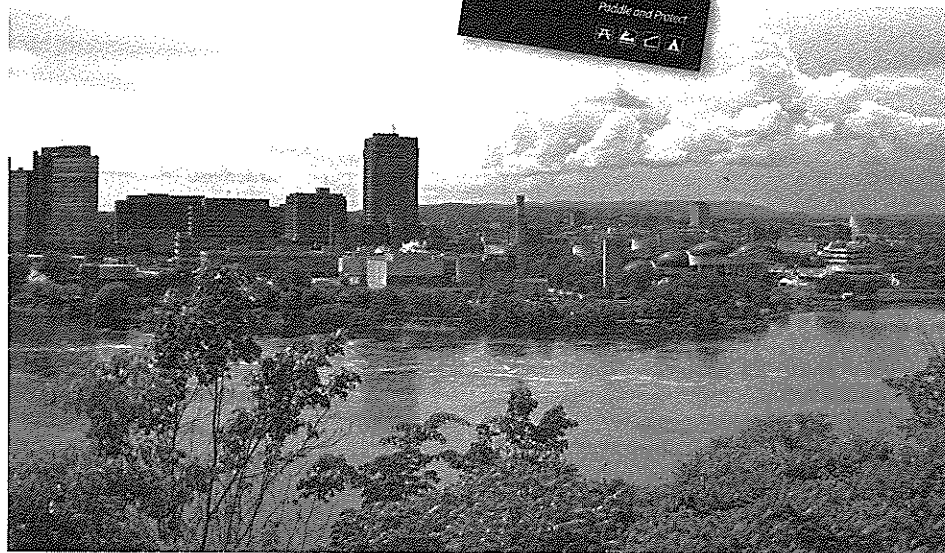
By Brian Miller

THE CANADIAN RIVER Heritage Conference was held in Ottawa from June 14 to 17, and the Manitoba Eco-Network (MEN) was able to participate. The sixth annual conference was titled "Our Living Rivers: Linking Nature, People and Places through Time." MEN was given space to present the paper version and interactive GIS web-map for the Manigotagan River project.

As the only project of its kind at the conference, "Manigotagan: A Digital Portrait of a Wild River" received much interest from the conference attendees that stopped by the display in the poster room. The idea of an interactive map was so enticing to some that a couple of different groups were inspired to look into the idea for their own river projects.

There were many other poster presentations on a wide variety of topics, from marmot populations in Newfoundland to white-water rafting in British Columbia, and invasive species to chemical contamination. The majority of the time at the conference was spent in concurrent sessions, where two presenters discussed their project or initiatives regarding their river of interest. These were far too numerous to attend all of them.

While the Manigotagan was the only Manitoba river represented at the conference, groups from across the country were in attendance to showcase special rivers, discuss conservation, recreation and heritage, and display initiatives to protect fragile river ecosystems. While much attention was given to the Ottawa River and its related tributaries, several key speakers discussed major rivers from all corners of the country. The first keynote speaker talked about a river system in the far northwestern corner of B.C., so remote that less than a handful of people visit it every year. Chiefs and representatives from the Aboriginal community talked about their peoples' histories relating to the importance of, and spiritual connection to, the rivers and water.

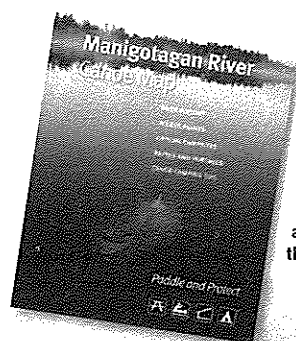


(Above) The Ottawa River and view across to Gatineau. (Below) One of the Rideau Canal's many lock stations.

Seven different regional field trips took place on the conference's second day, including an excursion to Victoria Island, a sacred Aboriginal space in the middle of the Ottawa River; a canoe tour of the river voyageur-style via the Rideau Canal system; an exploration of the Farmer's Rapids Generating Station; and a behind the scenes look at a local museum. A Rideau boat tour, which was an hour-long trip south along the canal to the locks at Dows Lake, showcased the recreational and green areas along the canal, while the guides discussed the biking and walking paths on the banks, and maintenance of the skate trail in winter.

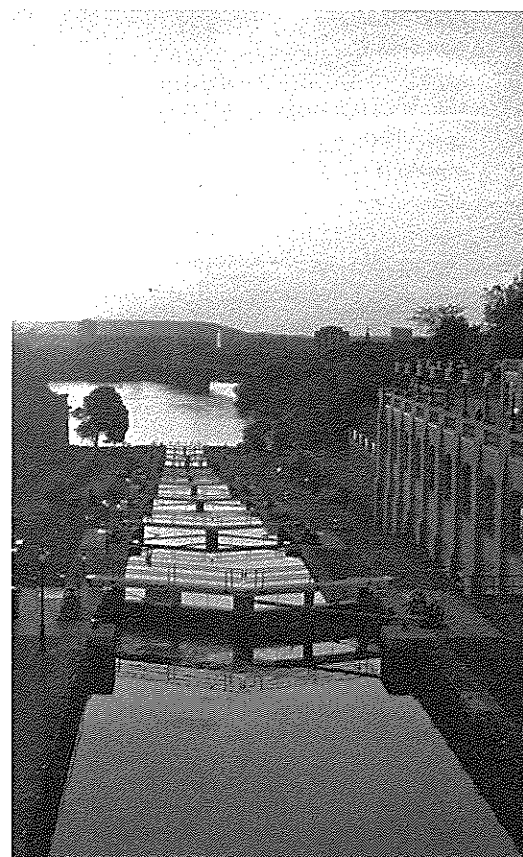
The conference's focus was to emphasize the importance of Canadian rivers to our culture, history, and environment, and at the end of the conference you couldn't help but feel a much greater appreciation.

More information on the conference can be found at www.riversconference.ca



The Manigotagan GIS map is attracting attention outside the province.

Photos courtesy of Claire Givaudoni



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