

Eco-JOURNAL

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January-February 1992

Shared farming: Crossing the chasm between farm and city

by Toby Maloney

If farmers are helpless in the face of systemic problems like sky high input costs, rock bottom commodity prices, ballooning debt and soil degradation, then what can city dwellers do other than numb their compassionate senses at the mention of the "farm crisis?"

The easy answer is change the system, but how?

An innovative pilot program that tries to build community between farmers and city dwellers might have one answer. The name of the program is "Shared Farming" and the idea in a nutshell is to match the obvious demand for produce in the city with local growers who practice sustainable farming.

Buying groups contract in advance with a pool of farmers who grow for their produce needs. The buyers pay current

market prices and the farmer benefits by receiving the amount that would otherwise be pocketed by wholesalers, retailers, and brokers in between. The city dweller benefits from a secure and healthy source for food.

Shared Farming organizer and Ste. Adolphe farmer Dan Wiens knows that setting up a pilot program to find fair prices for local farm products by bringing consumers in regular personal contact with producers won't be the quick fix to get farmers through the winter. But he also knows that something has to give.

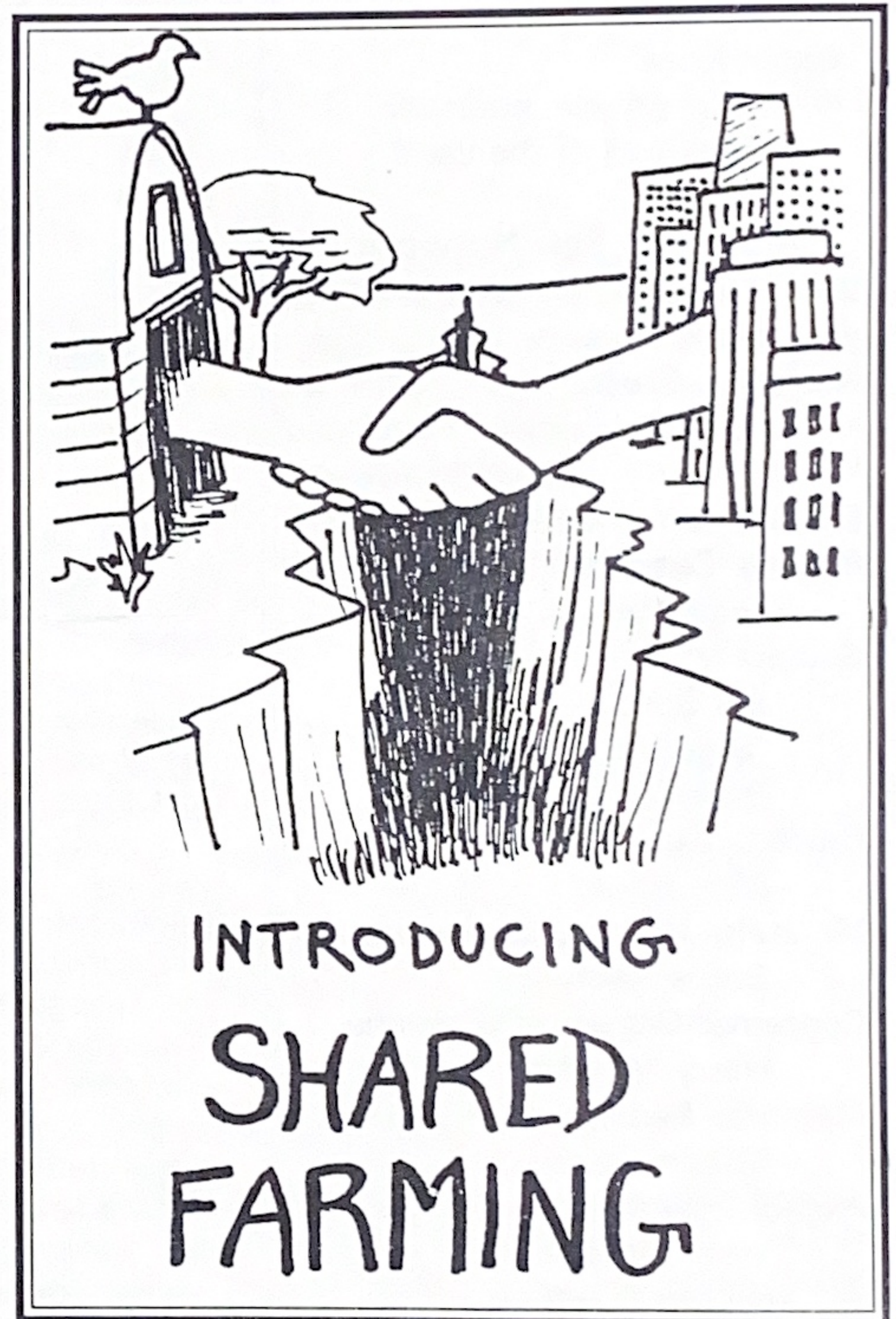
"The system isn't working right now. It's obvious. Farmers all know it ... One of the differences is I've decided to look for alternatives," says Wiens.

With 80 per cent of Manitoba produce grown for export, farmers are heavily exposed to the vagaries and inequities of world markets. Meanwhile produce available in Winnipeg supermarkets travels an average of between 1300 and 1800 miles before being consumed. The ratio of energy expended to the food value produced has reached ten calories to one with processing and transportation responsible for eight calories compared with two to one for

locally grown produce.

Shared Farming organizer Ray Epp, who started the group as part of Stewards of the Land, attributes this to an agribusiness system that "has a vested interest in keeping farmers and urban people apart."

For instance, farmers receive only pennies for the grain in a loaf of bread, but the local bakery he is a partner with is proving that the profit margin for the



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Editor:

Toby Maloney

Contributors this issue:

Bill Goddard, Anne Lindsey,
Toby Maloney.

Front page graphic courtesy

Stewards of the Land.

Manitoba Eco-Network

Co-ordinator:

Anne Lindsey

Executive Chair:

Jack Dubois

Vice-Chair and Canadian Environmental Network National Steering Committee Representative:

Brian Pannell

Secretary:

Bill Goddard

Steering Committee

Bryan Johnson

Citizens Against Neurotoxins

Nick Carter

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Steve Rauh

Concerned Citizens of Manitoba

Harry Mesman

Manitoba Federation of Labour

Rhoda Rempel

Project Peacemakers

Karen Beattie

Rainforest Action

Information Network (RAIN)

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Reread:

by Toby Maloney

Party animals

The everpresent debate between the "electoral Greens" and the "movement Greens" seems to have resulted in a productive compromise in California where enough signatures (80,000 plus) were collected to put the party on the next statewide ballot.

For background on the Green Party in the United States see "The Greens: To Party or Not?" in the October issue of *Z Magazine* (photocopy available at the Network resource centre). The article by Brian Tokar looks at the various tensions between local organizers who want candidates accountable to the movement and national organizers who settle for Green endorsed candidates and coalitions at the state and federal level.

The word on weed

The movement to rehabilitate the once proud reputation of the humble hemp plant is well along according to the January-February issue of *Alternatives* which reports that marijuana (herb, ganja, pot, grass -- use a synonym appropriate for your generation) advocates are pointing to hemp as an alternative to forest destruction for making paper and other creative uses. The stalk once grown by George Washington and Thomas Jefferson (and used for the first draft of the American Declaration of Independence) could replace wood pulp as a paper source because it is several times more productive on a per acre basis than the slower-growing trees that are now the standard, according to advocates like the Business Alliance for Commerce in Hemp (BACH) which apparently also favours piano concertos.

*Weeding out the
world's environmental
problems,*

Alternatives Vol. 18 No. 3

A quick flip through other periodicals

Truth vs. Facts

An article in the September-October issue of the new advertisement-free *Ms. Magazine* stolidly supports the wisdom of mother's and families in the face of misapplied science. **Truth vs. Facts** by Paula DiPerna relates instances where women's warnings were dismissed out of hand and later proved right. In a "Women and The Environment" section the magazine also reprints from other works including a chapter from Rosalie Bertell's "No Immediate Danger: Prognosis for a Radioactive Earth." (Photocopy of section available in Network resource centre).

Hydrogen bombshell

Links Magazine writer Eric Niens is getting the word out on the so-called clean Hydrogen propelled automobiles. Working from reports in German newspapers where car manufacturers have been producing Hydrogen-burning versions of their cars, Niens documented several concerns about the contribution to the Greenhouse Effect from the vapours created by burning the gas and the sordid connection with James Bay destruction in the summer issue of *Links*. Hydro Quebec has signed deals to supply the large amounts of electricity needed for separating the H's from the O's in St. Lawrence River water. Niens' one-person campaign has also included a letter in the *Globe and Mail* and a reprint of his article in the winter issue of *Earth Island Journal*, published in San Francisco.

*Articles cited in ReRead are available in the
Manitoba Eco-Network Resource Centre
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Will that be paper or plastic?

by Anne Lindsey

Guess what? **Re-using** is a more environmentally-friendly option than **recycling**, at least as far as grocery bags are concerned.

That's the not-so-surprising conclusion of a new report by Prof. Robert Fenton at the University of Winnipeg. **Grocery Bag Comparison, Report #1**, documents an examination of the relative merits of plastic, paper, and reusable nylon bags for carrying home one's groceries.

Fenton compared studies which used a wide complement of parameters, including energy and raw materials used, and volume of emissions released to the environment during manufacture, use and discard to compile a "Resource and Environmental Profile Analysis" (REPA) of the different bag types. He then looked at the effects of multiple use of bags, and of plastic bag recycling programs on the "environmental footprint" left by the various types. Even under the assumption of a (highly unlikely) 75% recycling rate, and an improbable use frequency of 10 trips for plastic, the re-usable "permanent" bags still come out on top. (Paper bags, incidentally, do not stack up well when all indicators are considered).

Environmentalists will be relieved to know that what they have been saying all along is, in fact, correct. And now they will have a well-researched, concise report to back them with "the facts". (I for one will brandish it triumphantly).

The **Grocery Bag Comparison** is part of a larger study called the Winnipeg Packaging Project, which will also examine coffee cups, egg cartons and milk containers in later phases. The project is partially financed by a \$10,000 grant from the Environmental Innovations Fund. A research assistant was also hired under the On-Site program.

Some may sigh in frustration at the use of all this hard-to-come-by cash to prove something that was a pretty sure bet all along, but Bob Fenton points out that this comparison of reusable bags with paper and plastic had previously not been done in North America. Furthermore, he says, most of the studies which compare paper and plastic disposables are done by the plastics industry, and therefore aren't "independent." His approach is to get all the information onto a level playing field, and to work from there.

A sensible idea, considering the amount of conflicting information currently available.

It's just that it's hard not to wonder **why** we have to go to all this trouble to resolve an issue which seems almost frivolous compared to some of the other environmental questions facing the planet. After all, people did just fine without disposable grocery bags for years ... (and in many parts of the world, they still do!).

Grocery Bag Comparison is available for reference in the Resource Centre, and for those who have now been convinced, we also have re-usable nylon **Eco-bags** for sale in the bookstore.

P.S. The now familiar, colourful **Eco-bags**, a project of Mennonite Central Committee, were the brainchild of our Steering Committee member, Rhoda Rempel, and are now being sold across North America.

NETWORK PEOPLE

Toby finds his niche!

We're happy to report that **Toby Maloney** is now a regular staff member at the Eco-Network, thanks to the generosity of a foundation which wishes to remain anonymous. Toby's new, official title is "Director of Communications." In this position, he'll continue to edit **Eco-Journal** as well as picking up a number of other communications-related tasks aimed at increasing the profile of the Network, our member groups and the work that we all do.

Toby is a familiar face at the Network, of course, having been active in a number of roles over the past years, both as paid staff and volunteer. He was responsible for the new look of **Eco-Journal** last year, and for our primer, **Springtide** in 1990. Toby also co-ordinated our hazardous waste public participation project in 1989.

Fellow travellers

Executive Director, **Anne Lindsey**, is currently on a tour of the Philippines, as a guest of the Philippine Development Assistance Program. Anne will be visiting a number of NGO-run community development projects, and doing some environmental networking with Philippine groups.

Meanwhile, members of our Steering Committee have also been busy lately. **Brian Pannell** attended a major international conference in Paris just before Christmas. The event was for non-governmental groups to examine and respond to documents and agendas being prepared for the Earth Summit (UN Conference on Environment and Development) to be held in Brazil in June.

Steve Rauh has just returned from Harare, Zimbabwe, where he spoke at the First General Assembly of the Forum of African Voluntary Development Organizations, and did some ground work for a possible 5th Conference on the Hope and Fate of the Earth to be held in Zimbabwe. (Watch the March/April issue of **Eco-Journal** for reports from Zimbabwe and the Philippines).

COUP II (the sequel)

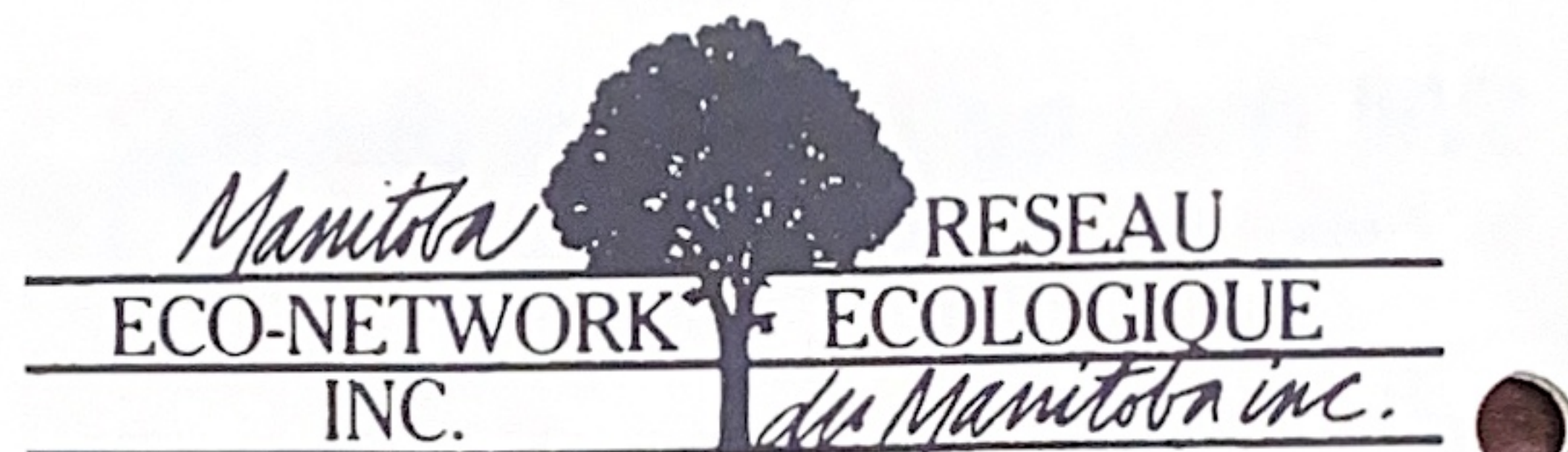
Bryan Johnson has been busy directing the Canadian Organic Unity Project's drafting of a set of national standards for Canadian organic food production, processing and marketing. These have been submitted to the European Community, and should pave the way for exports of Canadian organic food to the European market.

Bill Goddard recently attended an Environment/Development meeting in Fredericton, New Brunswick, sponsored by the International Affairs Caucus of the Canadian Environment Network. (See Bill's report in this issue).

Introducing ...

And last, but not least, we are delighted to welcome **Karen Beattie**, representing the Rainforest Action Information Network, to an interim position on our Steering Committee.

Calendar of Events



FEBRUARY

February 13: A talk by Stuart Wulff of the South Pacific People's Foundation on Nuclear Testing in the Pacific and Environmental Concerns with is being sponsored by the **YM-YWCA International Development Branch**. Starts at 7:30 p.m. at Downtown Y, Lower Level (301 Vaughn). 989-4170 for more information.

February 14: Canada-wide day of protest against individual and environmental destruction caused by the trapping and poaching of fur bearing animals. Sponsored locally by **Manitoba Animal Rights Coalition**. Call James Pearson (477-6203) for details.

February 14 to 16: The third **Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Workshop** will be held in Brandon. Built around the theme of "integrating Land Use, People and Endangered Species," the workshop will be of interest to naturalists, farmers, academics and agricultural/resource professionals alike. Co-hosted by the Rural Development Institute at Brandon University, Department of Natural Resources, and the Manitoba Naturalists Society. More information from the Institute 727-9734.

February 15: **Al Cafe** features environment issues with a night of entertainment, a brief talk and information tables at the West End Cultural Centre. John Miller from **Links Magazine** will speak on pesticides and environment implications in developing countries. Entertainers include Ed Dufort with his environment songs and the Wyrd Sisters (to be confirmed). Doors open at 7:30 with a show time of 8 p.m. Tickets are \$6 at the door (\$3 for students/unemployed). Non-Smoking event. Families are welcome. Al Cafe has broadened its base beyond Latin American issues to become a social and political forum for the entire activist community.

February 19: **Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society** Annual General Meeting. Eco-Network office 201-128 James Avenue, 7:00 p.m. Highlight slide presentations on Atikaki and Grass River Provincial Parks. For more information call 237-5947.

February 22: **Concerned Citizens of Manitoba** regular meeting 10:30 a.m. Eco-Network office 201-128 James Avenue.

February 23: "Tatshenshini Wilderness Quest" multimedia slide presentation. Learn more about the international fight to save North America's wildest river. Sponsored locally by **Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society Manitoba**. Basic Medical Sciences Building (Bannatyne and Emily) 8 p.m. Admission \$7. Tickets available from CPAWS members or at the Manitoba Eco-Network office. For more information call Kim Monson 233-2588 (eve.) or 786-9485 (days).

February 26: **International Development Branch of YM-YWCA** sponsors lunch with Filomeno Sta. Ana, Secretary General Freedom from Debt Coalition on the debt issue in the Philippines. St. James Y, 150 Ferry Road at noon. Tickets are \$6. For more information call 989-4170.

February 27: **Global Change Game** (environment and development simulation game) sponsored by the **University of Manitoba Recycling and Environment Group** and **Rainforest Action Information Network**. Open to students and general public. Tache Hall auditorium 1 p.m. Phone 474-9118 for more information.

COMING UP: Organic Producers Association of Manitoba holds its annual conference in March. Sorry no details available. Call 1-748-1315 for information.

MARCH

March 2: **Project Peacemakers Peace Festival** kicks off with the first in a series of six workshops. Topics include "500 Years of Indigenous Resistance," "Media-watch," "Conflict Resolution (within congregations)," "Children and Violence," and "Peace Education Through the Arts." Each workshop evening is hosted at a different church to better facilitate the ecumenical nature of the organization. Call 775-8138 for more details.

March 15: **Eco-Journal** deadline for advertising and submissions to the March-April issue.

March 17 to 20: Forest Awareness Week. Various events at the University Centre and elsewhere on campus, University of Manitoba. Sponsored by **UMREG (University of Manitoba Recycling and Environment Group)** and the **Rainforest Action Information Network**. Call 474-9118 for more information.

APRIL

April 4. Environmentally Sound Packaging Coalition meeting in Winnipeg. Call the Network at 956-1468 for details.

MAY

May 7 to May 10: Brandon United Nations Youth Seminar sponsored by **Marquis Project**. Theme: Indigenous Peoples and the Global Environment. Open to youth, 15 to 20 years old. Speakers include Tim Grant editor of **Green Teacher** Magazine and Rodrigo Contreras of the **World Council of Indigenous Peoples** (re: rainforests), etc. BUNYS is a four-day live-in conference for Manitoba youth, which includes keynote speakers, workshops, simulations, drama and music. Registration fee, which includes room and board and all programs and materials, is \$150. For more information call Celia Sarbit at Marquis 727-5675.

May 28-29: **Third Annual Marquis Global Environment Inservice and Conference**. Thursday evening and all day Friday. Theme: How to Teach about the Environment and Activities to Engage in During Environment Week and Year Round. Open to teachers and the general public. A parallel conference for students will happen in Brandon simultaneously, using many of the same speakers and activities. Speakers include Candace Savage, wildlife photojournalist and author of the children's book "Trash Attack," Moyra Tooke, curriculum development co-ordinator, Common Heritage Program, Ottawa. In all, there will be two keynote speeches and at least ten workshops. Last year over 170 teachers and interested individuals from across Manitoba attended this event. For more information, contact Debbie Jennings at Marquis 727-5675.

Environmentally Speaking produced by the Manitoba Environmental Council airs every Wednesday at 9:30 p.m. and again on Saturday at 1:30 p.m. on VPW-11.



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Minister: Department will become

Following an article in our last issue by NDP Environment Critic Marianne Cerilli reflecting on some ideas for creating change, we decided to interview Environment Minister Glen Cummings, who has held the portfolio for three years, to see what direction he plans for his department.

Eco-Journal (EJ): There's been a massive shift in public perspective on environment issues in the past ten years -- most of that shift in public opinion seems to favour a more activist role for government in both regulating and developing programs. What's your perspective on the role of government in solving our environmental problems?

Glen Cummings (GC): There's no question in my mind nor should there be in anyone's mind the responsibilities are increasing in the area of environmental protection. Those governments that don't demonstrate a change in how they approach environmental regulation, how they approach licencing from an environmental and economic standpoint will face the consequences. I think the public does expect a much more active and much more responsive role on the part of the government.

That includes providing information -- access to information -- making sure the public is comfortable. The public has a right to know and providing that information allows for informed government and public interchange. It allows for better decision making on the part of the government.

EJ: Does it also extend to things like starting recycling programs or government investment in alternative energy sources?

GC: It does. I think the difference how we have approached some of those topics as opposed to how our critics would have us approach them is that we believe that, in recycling for example, we have to move to develop the markets

as we are developing the ability to collect the material -- newsprint being a good example. There has been a dramatic change in the newsprint industry in this province alone. The differences that have occurred in the last two years between Repap and Abitibi and the demand for paper out there in the public are affected

"The Environment Minister isn't quite as lonely as he used to be. We also see that improvements in areas heavily to do with environmental protection have spinoffs that are very beneficial to the environment."

all the way from the top of the industry through to the recycling industry. It means that our process doesn't move as fast as even I think it should but it tells me that we will end up with a process that will be very community-based and will be responsive to the real needs of the public because the moods and demands the public makes are shifting as well.

Also you have to look at what I see as, in the long run, the more damaging issues -- tires, hazardous materials being wasted that could be recycled. That all has to be tied into the drive for more efficiency in energy, for example. We should not burn fuel that exceeds in value the material that we are trying to recycle.

Government regulation and simply imposing more taxes isn't the only answer. We can use economic tools, however, to drive some of the material in terms of recycling and in terms of how the public views these materials when they're doing their purchasing and that's

an area that I hope to explore extensively in the next little while.

EJ: What about your role as Environment Minister in cabinet? Will environment concerns ever get the kind of attention or profile that economic questions have?

GC: The reality of being in cabinet today as Environment Minister is that there's an increasing awareness among all of the public and that's reflected by the people in cabinet. Whether it's this cabinet or others the environmental issues are getting much more attention. The Environment Minister isn't quite as lonely as he used to be and the fact is that we also see that improvements in areas having to do with environmental protection have spinoffs that are very beneficial to the economy.

EJ: Do you sense that your colleagues in other portfolios are having their departments consider the environmental consequences of their policy decisions?

GC: One of the principles of sustainable development is that you put environmental responsibility into all areas of government. The Ministers of Agriculture or Energy and Mines have to have environmental concerns. We've addressed that joint interlinking through developing a committee of cabinet which, as Environment Minister, I chair. I also chair the land use committee of cabinet. The Environment Minister has combined a number of responsibilities that give me better access to working co-operatively and influencing decisions of government different to what I suggest would have been the case a generation or a decade ago.

EJ: Some provinces, Ontario in particular, have established an independent enforcement arm of the Environment Department to investigate and prosecute environmental violations.

more proactive, resort to courts

is this type of enforcement capability something you are considering?

GC: It's correct to say we try to bring people on with technical expertise and not necessarily investigative expertise. As with every department of government we are under some financial pressures and restraints in terms of expanding the number of people that are available. On the other hand I believe that by co-opting other parts of government including the police force to work in enforcing the Environment Act that we are able to gain in that respect. I know that we believe there are more things we can do in this area. What we try to do is focus on the priority areas.

We are already working with the known generators of hazardous waste and helping them find suitable ways of dealing with the material. By being a department that is facilitative as well as enforcement oriented, however, we can sometimes provide information or share information with generators as to how they can more economically operate. The Hazardous Waste Management Corporation, for example, will, for a fee, provide a waste audit for a corporation that will help them reduce their waste and find economical means of disposal. So we're trying to offset the problem of having people throw their waste in the ditch by saying 'Wait a minute, we will be here as enforcers but we may also have some ideas of what you may be able to do with it to keep your costs down.' We know that we can't drive the costs through the roof and not be able to provide some answers at the same time.

EJ: You alluded to 'sustainable development' earlier, but that's a phrase environmentalists have come to view with suspicion or cynicism. To many it's a convenient label for the same kind of projects and policies we have always had. What, in your view, is the real substance behind the phrase?

GC: There are hundreds of different

aspects that different people want to apply to the term 'sustainable development.' The fact is, however, that in providing a standard of living for our community we also need to recognize that part, a big important part of that, is environmental protection as well. And providing that balance between the

“I also see the
Department
responding more
through
the court system.
It's not by choice...
it's a reality
of the expectations of
the public.”

recognition of the living standard that we have and the pressures that puts on the environment.

I agree with you that there are a number of times when people will loosely use the term sustainable development to try and justify something that maybe hasn't had an environmental audit. But I firmly believe that as we continue to go down the path of providing a more sustainable development appreciation within the province, and it's largely my responsibility to make sure that message is out there, is that we recognize very clearly the linkage between our activities in our economy and the effects on the environment and that a healthy environment leads to a healthy economy.

We have an enormously important opportunity to demonstrate that we can strike a balance between the two. We have a lifestyle in Canada that's envied around the world. We need to make sure that we recognize the environmental

responsibilities that go with that or we won't be able to sustain it.

EJ: Well can we sustain it? Our current level of consumption of resources as individuals and as a society -- is it sustainable?

GC: Good point. And when I use the word sustain, when I say sustain that doesn't mean that I'm not talking about change. We know there are a number of things that we can and should do better in terms of the impacts on the environment and that's why we increase regulatory responsibilities. That's why we try to choose energy consumption patterns that are not going to lead us down the path to an unsustainable situation. We also know that the type of enterprises that we want to attract to this province need to be those that are not only sound in their business practices but have a minimal impact, in terms of sustainability, on our environment.

EJ: What can we expect in terms of new environmental programs or initiatives in the coming year? What are your priorities for the department?

I certainly have a number of issues which I hope to proceed on through this coming year. Some are issues that I identified last year and haven't been able to bring them through to fruition. I recognize that there's a continuing expectation and certainly an expectation on my part that we will bring into control the four waste streams that we identified through the WRAP process -- tires, used oil, newsprint and containers.

More than that the implementation of Sections 8 and 10 of the Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act and the establishment of a Hazardous waste management site will go along way towards providing the infrastructure to allow us to continue with the regulatory and the more active elimination of materials from our waste stream that shouldn't be there.

Conference report:

Building an alternative economic agenda

by Bill Goddard, Crossroads Resource Group

The International Affairs Caucus of the Canadian Environmental Network took a major initiative when it held its first intensive workshop on alternative economics in Fredericton January 10 to 12. About 35 people attended the workshop hosted by the Conservation Council of New Brunswick.

Lynn Sabean, the I.A.C. co-ordinator worked with Janice Harvey of the Council to plan and implement the meeting. The method of capturing our ideas included intense workshops, brainstorming sessions for 'writing' a book on alternative economics, and presentations by resource people both in person and via video. We had lunch and supper on site, so we could keep the focus on the workshop goals. We had a special resource person from the Movimiento Ambientalista Nicaraguense (Nicaragua) who provided an international perspective from the 'south.'

The working sessions also included the connection to the Earth Summit, or UNCED (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development). Peter Padbury with the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC) led one session on how NGO's can get involved in the UNCED process. Peter stressed that soliciting southern critiques of the working documents are an important way of getting response from the south on the northern agenda. (If you want to receive the most recent information on this process, contact Lynn Sabean at (604) 358-2555, or FAX (604) 358-7950.)

The weekend was organized into three parts, 1) Sustainable Local Economies, 2) Sustainable National and International

Economies, and 3) Moving Forward: Drafting the Agenda and Strategic Intervention. George Peabody was our official Scribe. He collected our ideas during the brainstorming on the 'book'. This document is entitled "From Local to Global: Transition to Sustainable Economies," and is also available from Lynn (IA). It contains two parts: 1) Core elements of sustainable local economies, 2) Core elements of sustainable national and international economies.

Both David Brooks and Michael Bradfield, who are professional economists, pointed out the impossibility of the proposal in the Brundtland report (Our Common Future) that one more round of 'economic growth' could lift the 'developing' nations out of poverty and ecological degeneration.

We learned about a very novel quasi-government in the community of Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania. A pictorial representation of the quasi-government system will be available through the network office. It has all the qualities of a two party democracy. Membership is voluntary, and the 'taxes' are also voluntary. A model is being developed for application to a bioregion of Maine and New Brunswick.

The role of co-operatives in sustaining local economies without dependence on 'foreign' investment was shown by the video on the Cheticamp, N.S. cooperatives, which have been developing since 1911.

The concept of regional study groups was proposed in the workshop on defining sustainable economic principles. The proposed study groups may focus on local community or more global communities of communities, as outlined in Daly and Cobb's book, *For the Common Good* (1989).

George Peabody's report, David Brooks' paper, and several others provided as resources for the workshop will be made available at the Eco-Network resource centre.

If you and your organization would like to participate in an 'alternative economic study group' please contact Dr. Bill Goddard, 947-9160 or 774-6482.



New resources available at the Manitoba Eco-Network

Since the last issue of Eco-Journal our resource centre has received some very useful materials and reports available for research and perusal.

- Hot off the press is an important resource for educators called the **Canadian Environmental Education Catalogue** published by the Pembina Institute in Alberta. The project compiled a database of 4000 titles and reviewed 1200 for this edition of the catalogue. The catalogue comes in a three ring binder (made from recycled soft drink containers) so it can be updated on a subscription basis. The catalogue lists and describes curriculum materials, background information, games and activities, fiction/non-fiction stories and display/motivational materials. It has quick listings by general topics and reference to page numbers for detailed listings.

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The Network has a copy available for use in our resource centre and information about ordering is contained in an advertisement elsewhere in this issue.

- There's nothing like a concise clear fact used in context to make your point. Statistics Canada has produced a useful survey of statistics on **Human Activity and the Environment**. The publication notes that it is a "statistical overview of Canada's physical environment and the interactions between people and other elements of the natural system."

"This source book focusses on the activities of individuals and the socio-economic systems in consuming resources, in building and reshaping landscapes and in generating wastes, as well as changes in the conditions of land, water, air and plants and animals." One of the strengths of the publication is the breakdown into provincial and bio-regional statistics as well as the national figures.

- If you're the person in your office who has been wanting to make some environmentally-friendly changes in the workplace,

but uncertain how to go about it, the Harmony Foundation has a new book which you should take a look at. **Workplace Guide, Practical Action for the Environment**, is a 170 page manual chock-full of great information for greening the workplace. Proving that recycling is not your only option, **Workplace Guide** covers such topics as water, energy, purchasing, transportation, property management and more, and gives thumbnail sketches of companies all over Canada which have succeeded in improving their environmental record. A reference copy is available in our Resource Centre, and we will soon have some copies for purchase.

• Also received: **Environmental Issues: A City of Winnipeg Status Report, 1991** from the Research and Policy Analysis Branch of the Board of Commissioners -- outlines activities and issues for each department/area of concern for the City; **What you Told Us ... Forests**, the report of the provincial Sustainable Development Unit's workshop on forests (Land and Water Strategy series); **International Affairs Caucus** materials analysing the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development process and position papers.

Passing on a bright idea

by Anne Lindsey

The Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet has passed a resolution on energy efficiency it would like other Manitoba municipalities to emulate. At its Dec. 17 council meeting the R.M. called on Manitoba Hydro to expand its rebate program to include energy efficient lightbulbs. Councillor George Ylonen, a Concerned Citizens of Manitoba member who introduced the motion complains that "the bulbs are available, but they're so darned expensive."

Ylonen feels that Hydro consumers would be encouraged to purchase the efficient lightbulbs if a rebate were available.

A Manitoba Hydro representative says that a rebate program for energy efficient light bulbs in the *commercial* sector is currently being compiled under the Power Smart program. He says it may be in place by mid 1992. Rebates in the residential sector are "under discussion."

Meanwhile Hydro is screening several makes of compact fluorescent bulbs to assess their performance. Some good results have been observed with the rebate programs for outdoor timers for block heater plugs and energy efficient shower heads - also part of Power Smart.

George Ylonen is still hoping that other Manitoba municipalities will take up the call for light bulb rebates in the residential sector.



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Community continued from page 1

go-between is hefty indeed. Tall Grass Prairie Bread Co. buys and mills local organically grown grain at three times the market price and still shows a profit, he says.

"Where does that money go? What constitutes the price of food?" Epp asks. "It's financing takeovers of retail food chains or processors -- who is being served by that? Our whole food system is being bought up by people who have no interest in healthy agriculture, in a healthy culture," Epp says. Incidentally, as a result of recent takeovers, Epp says the tiny bakery's one horse mill is now the largest Canadian-owned flour mill in Winnipeg.

Already active in organizing community land trusts -- a way of decommmodifying land and making it available for farmers who have been forced off by bankruptcy -- Stewards of the Land has been looking for practical ways of helping the farm community. To do that the group is relying on a conviction that consumers and farmers have a shared interest in fair prices, ecologically-sound farming practices, and local economic development.

It isn't the first time this kind of approach has been tried. At a recent meeting in Winnipeg the group heard from a Japanese visitor that in her country a similar project, the Seikatsu Club started in 1965. One woman who wanted to buy healthy milk for her family organized a larger group of buyers which led to a producer-consumer co-operative with 220,000 families and a bank account of more than a \$billion.

Closer to home in Minneapolis-St. Paul the Community-supported Agriculture project has grown from two producers to 16 in two years. Epp and Wiens are travelling to Minnesota to meet with and learn from the group there before finalizing the mechanics of the Manitoba system for the next growing season. Other experiments with sustainable communities are being conducted on the eastern seaboard.

Buyer groups, whether they are based on neighbourhoods, workplaces or organizations such as churches, will consist of about twenty families who will plan, with the group's assistance, their summer produce needs. Hopefully that would include canning and freezing to replace expensive winter imports, Wiens says. They will invest their money in the co-op and receive vegetables, grain, or fruit in return. Farmers can receive fair compensation at market prices by eliminating the middle-person and retaining the purchase price Wiens believes.

A pool of farmers will supply the orders on a weekly basis to

a group leader and then withdraw payment from the co-op. Ideally the contact will be meaningful, leading to familiarity with the needs of both communities and developing a bond.

In Japan for instance, producers often include family photographs or reports on the year's outcome so consumers know who is growing their food and how. Consumer groups also get together for workshops on canning and preserving or preparing food.

The overall goal of the program is to make healthy food universally acceptable and available and to provide an opportunity for small producers to survive and prosper.

So far the Shared Farming group has had several meetings with individuals interested in the concept and is arranging further meetings with groups interested in becoming buyers, so far mostly churches who have expressed an interest in moving to the next stage of involvement. Shared Farming is planning lunch meetings (all organic Manitoba produce) to get the buyer groups up and running.

Epp and Wiens appreciate that to work the system relies to an extent on the altruism of city dwellers who will do more work than they might otherwise have to in order to eat, but the two organizers are fairly sure that urban consumers care about the land and where their food comes from.

As Epp points out "the most important part of the food system is the land and the people who look after the land." And it could just be that more and more people will come to understand that they, too, can play a part in looking after that land.

For information about upcoming Shared Farming meetings or to contact Stewards of the Land phone 774-6223. Mailing address is 232 Home Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba. R3G 1X1.



Marianne Cerilli
NDP Environment Critic

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Volunteers needed to meet demand for wildlife rehabilitation

by Toby Maloney

There's an immediate need for more volunteers with the Manitoba Wildlife Rehabilitation Organization (MWRO) because of a large increase in the number of sick or injured birds and animals the group is treating. In the last year alone the volunteer organization has seen a dramatic increase in the number of "patients" from 600 to 1000.

According to Mary O'Shaughnessy, the group's volunteer co-ordinator, the increase seems to be attributable more to increased awareness about MWRO's service than any increase in the number of injuries or disease in the bird and animal population.

Manitoba Wildlife Rehabilitation Organization, with the exception of O'Shaughnessy's part time staff position as volunteer co-ordinator, is a "totally volunteer" organization. Unlike most provinces there is no wildlife hospital or facility in Manitoba. MWRO has announced a plan to open an animal hospital by relocating older buildings and moving onto a site at the Glenlee Research Station at the University of Manitoba.

For the past seven or eight years that MWRO has been operating, sick birds and animals have been picked up by volunteers with flight cages in their own homes and taken to veterinary hospitals, which have also volunteered their services. The growth in patients has been constant since the group formed in 1984, but publicity about the group's development plans probably accounted for the larger jump in the past year's figures.

The group operates under both provincial and federal permits, since in most instances it is illegal to shelter wild animals. Volunteers staff the group's phone number (832-6976) with call forwarding to their homes. Calls come in from both individuals and government agencies like the Department of Natural Resources which find injured animals. Runners trained to handle the wild animals, pick up the patient and bring them to rehabilitation volunteers who are trained to assess the animals' needs.

The medical volunteers either take the animals to a veterinary hospital for treatment or care for them at home. MWRO receives everything from Great Blue Herons and owls to rare species like Peregrine Falcons that have been trapped or shot and the occasional Bald Eagle suffering from eating mercury poisoned fish in northern lakes.

A typical call in the city involves a bird that has struck a window or a power line. In rural areas shootings are a common incident. Fortunately the group has volunteers in many areas of the provinces and co-operates with the closest veterinary hospital

where possible.

Phone volunteers who receive the calls and set the group's response in motion are the most critical volunteer need right now, says O'Shaughnessy. She says it is difficult to find volunteers who are free or at least at home during the daytime hours.

The typical shift is 6 hours once a week or once every two weeks, but O'Shaughnessy says it really is up to the volunteer to decide how much time to commit. The phone volunteers receive orientation training and a manual so they can give advice and assess the need over the phone before referring a case to a medical volunteer.

The group also has a need for runners with vehicles. No experience is required because the organization provides the training and starts new volunteers off with smaller animals. Runners usually are on call one day a week.

Volunteers who keep at it can also work up to being medical volunteers. They need to prepare a facility in their home and have the co-operation of a vet. Orphan care is another area dedicated volunteers can employ their care and respect for wild animals. Every species needs to be handled differently and the job can be very demanding, with feedings every two hours and constant care.

Central to the group's philosophy is the right for all of the animals in care to be treated as wild animals and not adopted as pets. The occasional bird is too injured to be released in the wild, but almost all the animals are released as soon as possible after recovery.

Anyone interested in exploring volunteer opportunities with the Manitoba Wildlife Rehabilitation Organization should call 832-6976 and leave a message for Mary O'Shaughnessy.



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