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NATURE AND THE HUMAN HEART: A RURAL SCHOOL YARD RESTORATION PROJECT

by Lorna Kopelow

"The care of rivers is not a questions of rivers, but of the human heart."(1)

The Yard Project at Richer School began with two dreams:

One was to transform our dull and vacant front schoolyard into a place rich with plants and wildlife. The other was to awaken love and respect for the environment.

Our first step exemplified the way in which a project like this can fit in with the school curriculum. The Grade 3/4 class measured and mapped the front yard, learning a good deal about measurement, direction, scale, legends and teamwork.

The learning was tinged with real excitement. This was a long way from a page in a textbook. We had measuring tools! We had maps! We were really doing something!

To gather ideas and suggestions we circulated the resulting map and a questionnaire amongst students, staff and the community. The contributions from the children gave us a taste of the enthusiasm and creativity which the Yard Project would bring forth - suggestions ranging from growing tomatoes and potatoes for french fries and pizza, to an intricate maze which would lead to a clubhouse accessed by a secret password.

A landscape plan

With this information, we drew up a landscape plan. Advice from Ted McLachlan, then heading up Winnipeg Wild, a habitat restoration program, helped us greatly.

We now had lots of ideas and growing interest; what we needed next was money. Guy Dupas came to our rescue - not a local millionaire, but Community Development Officer with the Réseau Communautaire, and an expert hand when it came to filling out funding applications.

Generous support came from the Environmental Youth Corps (MB Department of the Environment), the Special Conservation Fund (MB Department of Natural Resources), and the Canadian Wildlife Foundation.

We were now closer to putting our fingers in the earth. Which was a problem. We had no earth. What we found instead, when we investigated with our shovels, was thin soil mixed with too much sand, gravel, and rubble to be usable.

We chose four planting areas in the yard, tracked down a backhoe, and had the areas dug out to a suitable depth. Soil was brought in, and the students moved it all by hand into the planting beds. Grimy and exuberant, the little ones used ice-cream pails and the older ones used wheelbarrows and shovels to complete the really monumental task. Every member of the staff pitched in alongside the students.

Meanwhile, from a list of native prairie plants, staff members and each class chose the plants they wished to have in the gardens. We bought seedlings from Prairie Originals and Prairie Habitats, two Manitoba businesses which specialize in prairie restoration.

Planting day was wonderful! After a rain-drenched fortnight, we had started to worry that school would end for the year before the weather cleared enough to plant. It was an immense relief when blue sky and sun appeared just in time.

Trowels and seedlings were at the ready

Everything was on hand. We had installed an outdoor water outlet and bought a hose and nozzle. Water was warming in a barrel in the sun, so that our tender seedlings would not be shocked by an icy bath. Lemonade was ready to be served in the reusable glasses we had purchased. Lawn chairs were on hand for our community volunteers. Trowels and seedlings were at the ready. Soap, a towel, and a basin of water were set up near the door.

Class by class, the children came out to plant.

One large bed near the door was devoted solely to native prairie plants. Native plants also went in a bed running along the sidewalk which leads to the front door; however, we left space here for donations from other gardens in the community, and for the bulbs (tulips, day lilies, and muscari) the children had requested.



Photo by Lorna Kopelow

Older students help younger ones plant native prairie flowers

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NEW PROJECT WORK BEGINS: MEN TO UNDERTAKE A "SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ASSESSMENT"

With funding from Health Canada and
Environment Canada's Community Anima-
tion Project, and in partnership with Mani-
toba Rural Development, the Eco-Network
is undertaking a "sustainable
communities assessment" of
Manitoba's Community Round
Tables.

This project aims to evalu-
ate the progress of the Round
Tables in their work towards
sustainability, based on the
original mandates of the Com-
munity Choices program, and of
the Community Animation Project.

There are (or have been) some 90 Round
Tables in the province, the majority of
which are in the south. They cover a wide
spectrum in terms of their activity levels,
accomplishments, and recognition in the
community. Our team of researchers will be
surveying a sample of the Round Tables,
along with other relevant organizations in
their communities. Questions will cover a

wide variety of topics, from the degree of
inclusiveness of the Round Table, to its
integration of health, environment and eco-
nomic issues, to its facilitation of locally-
controlled initiatives.

We'll also be attempting to
discern what kinds of support,
both private and public, that
communities need to assure
their long-term health, prosper-
ity and viability. The results of
our research will be the basis
of a strategic planning work-
shop at the Rural Forum con-
ference in Brandon at the end of April. Our
research team consists of Mark Burch and
David Kattenburg, both of Brandon, Janine
Gibson from Pansy, and Carl Braun from
Nelson House. This group brings a vast
wealth of experience and knowledge to the
project.

If you'd like more information, please
contact Anne Lindsey, the project co-
ordinator, at 947-6511.

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WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR EARTH DAY?

Some folks in the community are propos-
ing that organizations "do their own thing"
this Earth Day, by organizing special events
in the week around April 22. For example,
the Winnipeg Vegetarian Association is
holding a special "Earth Day Vegetarian Pot

Luck" on Sunday the 18.

Why not let Eco-Journal and the Eco-
Network be your calendar organizer for Earth
Day. Call us with your events and we'll
publish them in the April edition of Eco-
Journal!

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1998-1999

Eco-Network Steering Committee

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ROCKWOOD ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION COMMUNITY TASKFORCE (REACT)

by Al Rear

REACT Inc. began in 1990 with the following mission statement: "to assist its members and the community as a whole to become more environmentally responsible". Throughout our nearly eight years of existence, we have promoted environmental attitudes and actions regarding the three R's, packaging, lifestyle, environmental issues, safe products and water conservation. These have been introduced through presentations to schools and groups, brochures, surveys, newsletters, fair day displays and demonstrations.

We have promoted recycling and enabled the residents of Stonewall and area to take part through five depot days, then ran a recycling depot from 1991 to 1993. The Shell Environmental Fund paid for three collection bins and a glass shelter. Because of our example, in 1993, the town began a curb-side "blue bag" program for collection of recyclables.

Environment watchdog

As a member of the local Community Round Table (CRT) REACT was able to ensure that environmental issues are included in the area's vision and action plan for the future. Our efforts were commended by the provincial Environment Department. REACT has been designated by the CRT as the environment watchdog for the area, since the Town has accepted the CRT's vision and action plan.

For several years, REACT has organized successful Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days with the help of the provincially funded program. On those days we also had a collection of building materials for the Habitat Re-Store which helps fund Habitat for Humanity.

Through Environment Canada's Environment Week grants, REACT sponsored school promotion for three years. The first year we gave out free composters with appropriate literature to at least a dozen schools and individuals. The second year we gave reusable grocery bags (with promotional inserts) to each Kindergarten to Grade 6 students in the Interlake School Division. The third year we presented a reusable lunch bag (with a brochure) to each Kindergarten to Grade 6 student.

In 1994, REACT was nominated for a provincial Sustainable Development Award

We have placed books regarding environmental topics into the local library. Contests were run in the local schools regarding environmental topics. Travel mugs and T-shirts with REACT logos on them were sold or given away as prizes to promote our causes and to discourage the use of Styrofoam cups. We have helped promote tree planting in the area, planting more than 100 trees ourselves at the local landfill site.

Community composting was tried but due to lack of labour and available space, has been put on hold.

We were partially involved with nearby water pollution, hog issues and an oil spill.

At our Annual General Meetings we have had presentations by an MP and an Environment Department representative, amongst other interesting and informative speakers.

Our funding to date has come from several sources. Seed money came from the Town of Stonewall and RM of Rockwood. The Town also provided us with On-Site workers for two years and with on-going office space and paper supplies. Funds for the recycling depot and other expenses came from the provincial (then) Environmental Innovations Fund, the Community Services Council, the federal Environmental Fund, as well as our sale of recyclable materials. In-kind contributions have come from thousands of volunteer hours by our members and other concerned citizens.

Waste Minimization Award

In 1998, REACT and the Town of Stonewall were presented the Waste Minimization Award, Best Municipal Program by Resource Conservation Manitoba for recognition of outstanding achievement in the field of waste management.

Also in 1998, a Backyard Composting Program was started by REACT in Stonewall to assist citizens with yard waste. A bylaw limiting the amount of yard waste which can be placed at the curb weekly was passed in Stonewall. REACT had conducted a survey in 1997 on the amount of yard waste being produced and what the reaction would be to a curbside limit. The results of the survey greatly assisted the town council in formulating the bylaw.

At present we have approximately 30 members.

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**A Conference on
Organic Agriculture
in Manitoba . . .
Friday Feb. 26
& Saturday 27
Bulman Centre
Univ. of Winnipeg**

Plenaries:

**Where Is YOUR Next Meal Coming From?
Can Organic Farmers Feed the World?
The Privatization of Nature !!!**

Plus workshops on:

**Social/Health and Environmental Benefits of
Organics, Seed Saving, Non-Chemical Weed
and Pest Control, Pesticide Transfer from
Industrial Agriculture & more ...**

\$5 for Friday night public event - Lynn Miller, Editor
Small Farmer's Journal; \$30 for Saturday's sessions
(\$20 for students/low income) includes organic lunch

**Call Manitoba Eco-Network at 947-6511 for
additional information & to register**

WHAT'S HAPPENING...

February 10 - Environmental Action Meeting, 7:30 pm at 63 Albert Street - Find out how you can learn more about the issues and take an active role in finding solutions. Hosted by Manitoba Naturalists Society.

February 21 - Winter Tree Identification: Enjoy a winter wonderland on a sleigh ride through the forest while learning how to identify trees without their leaves. Meet at 1 pm sharp at 2799 Roblin Blvd (City of Winnipeg building just inside the Assiniboine Park). Dress for the weather. Space is limited to 20 people so register early by calling Coalition to Save the Elms at 832-7188.

February 21 - Potluck Supper at Grace Lutheran Church, 211 Kimberly Avenue. Hear Ernest Bergbusch, associate member of the North End Sponsorship Team and former Canada Immigration Counsellor in Vienna speak as well as entertainment by the Winnipeg Labour Choir. Ticket are \$2 for children under 12 and \$5 for adults plus a supper dish or dessert to share. Call Howard at 253-0419 or Elisabeth at 667-5546 for more information

February 22 - Manitoba Naturalists Society Indoor Program, 7:30 pm at the Franco Manitobain Culturel Centre, Salle Jean Paul Aubry. Featured are members' presentations and environmental initiatives by Manitoba Hydro, relating to the Churchill Weir project.

February 24 - Caribou Commons Concert at the Pantages Playhouse. Audience members will be transported to the wilderness home of the Porcupine Caribou Herd, to their calving grounds in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and to the remote northern village of Old Crow Yukon. This multi-sensory presentation features the live music of award-winning Yukon composer and recording artist Matthew Lien and the seven-piece Wildlands band enriched by digital sound recordings from the Arctic wilderness and set ablaze with stunning photography by Ken Madsen. Tickets through Ticketmaster, call 780-3333.

February 26 - Cafe de Todos with Hugo Torres featuring keynote speaker Lynn Miller, Editor of the Small Farmer's Journal. The evening kicks off the organic agriculture conference in the multipurpose room, Bulman Centre, University of Winnipeg. Doors open at 6:30, entertainment starts at 7. Admission \$5.

February 27 - OUR FOOD ... OUR HEALTH... OUR FUTURE: A Conference on Organic Agriculture in Manitoba at the Bulman Centre, University of Winnipeg. Includes plenaries, workshops and luncheon address by Pat Mooney of the Rural Advancement Foundation International speaking on the 'Privatization of Nature'. Admission \$30 (\$20 for low income or students) includes a hot organic

lunch. Pre-registration required by calling Manitoba Eco-Network at 947-6511.

March 5 to 7 - A Citizens' Conference on Food Biotechnology: designer genes at the dinner table ... a public discussion on the future of food. University of Calgary. Registration forms and information available through Manitoba Eco-Network at 947-6511.

March 8 - Manitoba Naturalists Society Indoor Program, 7:30 pm at Franco Manitobain Culturel Centre, Pauline Boutal Theatre. Dr. Robert Roughly of the University of Manitoba will discuss the use of fire as a conservation management tool to maintain the biodiversity of tall grass prairie.

March 16 - Backyard Landscaping: Learn how to turn your yard into a work of art. 7 pm - 9 at 2799 Roblin Blvd. Call Coalition to Save the Elms at 832-7188.

April 20 - Pruning: Learn how to prune trees like the pros! (or at the very least, learn how to choose a good pro to do the work for you). This is an outdoor, hands-on workshop, followed by classroom instruction from 7 pm to 9 2799 Roblin Blvd. Call Coalition to Save the Elms at 832-7188 to register.

June 1 - Tree Identification Tour: Join Coalition to Save the Elms on a tour of old Tuxedo, resplendent with a variety of trees and shrubs. Meet at Park Blvd and Nanton Avenue by Assiniboine Park at 7 pm sharp.

June 22 - Dutch Elm Disease: Learn how to detect, prevent, and control DED to protect Winnipeg's renowned and stately elms. 7 pm at River Heights Community Centre. Call Coalition to Save the Elms at 832-7188 for more information.

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"Assiniboine was very helpful when it came time for us to expand. We couldn't have done it without them."

Think about where you bank.

As a natural foods co-operative, Harvest Collective has its roots in a food buying club started in a community club basement nearly two decades ago. Today, Harvest provides consumers with high-quality organic foods in a community atmosphere out of two different neighbourhood stores.

At Assiniboine, we invest in home-grown ideas like Harvest to help our community prosper and grow.

What does your bank do with its profits?

ASSINIBOINE CREDIT UNION

Banking the way it should be.

A SYSTEM TUNE-UP FOR THE COMING ERA

by Mike Nickerson, Guideposts for a Sustainable Future

Powerful new tools are available to deal with unemployment and climate change. Joe Jordan, MP for the Ontario riding of Leeds-Grenville, is committed to bringing them to public attention. If we choose to use these tools, we can turn the tide of events and put hope back into the future.

The plan has two parts:

The first is to acknowledge that pollution, unemployment and resource depletion are problems and to include them in our assessment of progress. At present, GDP (Gross Domestic Product) is used to measure progress. It is a tally of all the money spent in a year. GDP is a poor measure of well-being since it makes no distinction between desirable expenditures like food and education and "regrettable" ones like burglar alarms and the treatment of pollution related disease.

The "7th Generation Bill" which Mr. Jordan is working on as a Member of Parliament, proposes an improved measure of well-being. It will account for depletion of natural resources and subtract "regrettable" expenditures. It will also acknowledge contributions to well-being for which no money is paid. Homemaking, child and elder care and voluntary community activity all improve our well-being. When they are not recognized, as when GDP ignores them, they are depreciated. The result is fewer of these services provided less enthusiastically.

Improving our measure of well-being would be like getting new eyes with which to see as we steer our way into the future.

The second step:

Once we have accepted the broader range of costs and benefits that affect well-being, subtle shifts in our governing process will help immensely.

It is popular to resent taxes, yet few of us object to the education, health care, fire protection and other services they pay for. However, the system needs a tune up. Even though Canada has acknowledged the serious dangers of climate change, billions of our tax dollars are used to subsidize the very processes which deliver carbon fuels and make it easy for us to pollute with them. Any effort to address climate change without reassessing the em-

ployment of our tax money in this way is like running an air conditioner while the furnace is blazing. Better that we should use tax power to encourage solar energy where every step taken reduces the need to use polluting fuels.

Taxes are a powerful tool. Besides raising money for public services, it is well known that when something is taxed, we get less of it. Taxing employment (income tax) makes it more expensive to hire people, which results in fewer jobs. If we taxed pollution, polluting activity would cost more and we would do less of it. Doesn't it make more sense to tax things we don't want rather than taxing the things we do want? Tax shifting, as this is called, can put more money into people's pockets and actively discourage the release of dozens of pollutants that are proven to cause problems. In the revised system, we would be encouraged to avoid the pollution taxes. Companies would compete to provide non-polluting alternatives and real progress would be made.

Full cost accounting

Full cost accounting is where the costs of diminished resource supplies, pollution, and unemployment are included when calculating the cost of producing goods and services. If prices included these external costs, we could, in our millions, help solve critical problems by shopping for bargains. Because nature doesn't charge for supplying resources and absorbing waste, there are no real prices to fill the accounting columns. The social costs of unemployment are even harder to assign to particular products. With tax shifting, however, we need only identify the value that citizens put on health, the environment and dependable social relations. The tax tool can then be applied accordingly and problems would be discouraged and solutions given the advantage.

An expanded measure of well-being along with a slow but steady shift in the source of tax revenues can go a long way toward securing the future. The "7th Generation Bill" aims to focus public concern on this opportunity. You can help make it happen.

More details are available. Write for a free copy of Measuring Well-Being. From: Joe Jordan, MP, House of Commons, Ottawa, K1A 0A6. Postage to the House of Commons is free in Canada.

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Bell River Canyon Update

LOUISIANA PACIFIC BACKS AWAY FROM THE BELL RIVER CANYON

by Lindy Clubb, Western Canada Wilderness Committee, Manitoba Chapter

Louisiana Pacific, under pressure from the public, politicians, and the Parks and Forestry Branches of Manitoba's Department of Natural Resources, has made a change in plans. The company will not be clearcutting in five areas by the only road leading into the spectacular Bell River Canyon. As well, an independent quota holder who had permits to clearcut next to the road has been moved to another site. It took many months, many letters, many phone calls, several articles, media attention from CBC radio, and the support of two Senators to keep clearcuts from the Bell, but we were successful.

In the war for and against our forests, after the skirmish on clearcuts, the next battle will be for generous buffers around this sensitive area.

Parks staff are working on establishing boundaries for Protected Area Status in the Bell Canyon, but the process is flawed. Will Parks give a nod to industry and carve the canyon into bits and pieces or will they be generous with our public lands, joining the Bell and the nearby Steeprock Canyon on grounds of ecological and recreational integrity? Think of your own back yard, your own body, and whether you would like to remain whole, or succumb to the practices of industrial forestry, where only the limbs remain on the landscape.

For everyone's benefit we will continue our efforts to safeguard lands. Many thanks to all those who have helped this Canyon to survive intact.

ECO

Federal Assessments: **HERE TODAY, GONE TOMORROW**

(Manitoba's Future Forest Alliance v. Canada) by Donald Sullivan

In 1995, the federal government heralded a new era of environmental protection for Canada when it proclaimed the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) into law. Canadians were given assurances that the new Act would provide one assessment that considered all environmental effects of an entire project.

Now, merely four years into its implementation, CEAA is providing Canadians with no such environmental assurances. The largest projects imaginable in Canada are receiving a negligible level of federal involvement under CEAA, leaving the provinces with unfettered opportunities to pursue their narrow interests at the expense of Canada's environment. A recently approved forestry project in Manitoba illustrates the seriousness of this problem. In late 1997, the government of Manitoba granted environmental approval for a 11,000,000 ha Forest Management Licence Area (FMLA) authorizing Tolko Inc. the right to harvest over 2,000,000 cubic metres of wood per year in northern Manitoba, to construct over 800 km of new all-season roads crossing over twenty remote navigable waterways, and to expand the existing mill and construct a new mill in the future.

Existing federal studies in this area concluded that forest harvesting would put fisheries and fish habitat at high risk in over half of the FMLA, and that the entire area had "continental" significance for migratory birds and other large mammals due to the diversity of species present. These very same studies also concluded that there was an absence of baseline information needed to determine the effects of such a mammoth undertaking on the biodiversity of the region.

Federal panel review

Back in 1990, enough significant concerns were raised with Repap's (Tolko's predecessor) proposed forest harvesting, road construction, and mill expansion activities, that the federal government referred the entire project to a federal panel review for a comprehensive environmental assessment. However, shortly after a 1992 Supreme Court of Canada decision upholding the constitutionality of federal environmental assessment, Repap stated it was no longer proceeding with its proposed project. As a result, the federal review was shelved.

In 1995, Repap then proposed the present project, with Tolko buying out Repap in 1997. Yet, this time around, there has been no federal panel review; nor has there been a federal assessment of the entire project. Indeed, the reverse has occurred.

Instead of assessing the whole project, the federal government now states that its assessment duties under CEAA encompass nothing more than assessing the bridges crossing navigable waterways, on a bridge by bridge basis. To date, after having received an application for one bridge crossing by Tolko, the federal government has limited the scope of its assessment to the effects of the one bridge alone - not the road requiring the bridge; not the harvesting requiring the road and bridge; and not the mill requiring the harvested wood, road, and bridge.

This splitting of the entire project into numerous smaller ones by the federal government is occurring even though provincial authority to construct the bridge and roads on Crown lands requires that they be needed to serve the mill. There is no authority to simply harvest the timber and by-pass the mill.

Thus, according to the position now taken by the federal government, CEAA would require not one assessment of everything, but over twenty assessments of next to nothing.

In March 1998, Manitoba's Future Forest Alliance, with assistance from the Canadian Environmental Defence Fund, commenced an application for judicial review in the federal court seeking a declaration that the entire project required assessment under the CEAA. To make their case, the Alliance points to section 15(3) of CEAA which says that "in relation to" these physical works, federal environmental assessments shall be conducted in respect of:

"every construction, operation, ... or other undertaking proposed by the proponent in relation to that physical work that is proposed by the proponent..."

What Courts Have Said In The Past:

In support of their argument, the Alliance points to several court decisions.

The most recent decision was in July 1998, in *Friends of the West Country Association v. Canada*. The Federal Court interpretation of s.15(3) concluded that CEAA required a federal assessment of a proposed logging road and two required bridges, and not simply two separate assessments of each bridge without regard to the road (or the logging).

While the Federal government has appealed that decision, the Alliance believes the Court got s.15(3) right.

Also, in September 1997, the Newfoundland Court of Appeal rejected arguments seeking to split the assessment of the Voiseys' Bay project into separate assessment of exploration works and permanent works.

It overturned a trial court decision and found that both types of works were part of one project and therefore also one assessment.

There are also two strongly supportive decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada regarding this matter. The leading Canadian environmental assessment case is the 1992 decision on *Friends of the Oldman River Society*, which upheld the constitutionality of CEAA's predecessor, the Environmental Assessment and Review Process Guidelines Order (EARPGO), in application to a provincial dam project.

In this decision, the Court rejected arguments that assessment of federal navigable waters approval for the dam was restricted to the effects on navigation. The Court expressly affirmed that, even prior to environmental assessment, the federal government was required to consider interests broader than navigation to make decisions under the Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWP). As observed by the Court, absent of broad consideration of interests, there would be no justification for ever approving a crossing: a crossing would always have negative impacts on navigation.

Thus, for the Court, it was implicit in NWP decision-making that the federal government needed to take into account the overall project's advantages and disadvantages in deciding whether to issue a federal permit for the project. All environmental assessment added was the duty to consider the environment.

Additionally, in 1994, the Supreme Court's judgment in *Quebec v. Canada (National Energy Board)* overturned a decision of the Federal Court of Appeal and upheld the jurisdiction of the National Energy Board. This decision authorized the Board to assess the

environmental implications of the proposed James Bay II hydro-electric project when dealing with an application to construct an international power line across the Canada-United States border. The Court found that it was an error to limit the scope of federal inquiry to the effects of the transmission line at the border. According to the Court, "it is proper for the Board to consider in its decision-making process the overall environmental costs of granting the licence sought."

Federal Position Regarding its Responsibilities To Conduct Assessments:

The Federal government has not identified a single decision that supports its narrow interpretation of CEAA. Why then do they insist on taking this position? In short, the rationale for the federal position is not law, but politics. Politically, the current federal agenda is not to step on provincial toes, as part of its national unity strategy.

When viewed in this context, it is almost irrelevant what CEAA says: the real issue here is the willingness of the federal government to abdicate its environmental responsibilities to serve its present political agenda. Protecting Canada's environment from potentially damaging development projects is just not in the cards.

The fact that the future may require a different agenda, such as a stronger federal role in the environment, or that its present actions may set legal precedents that may not be politically reversible, seems to weigh very lightly on federal shoulders.

Equally, the issue is not actual conflict, but potential conflict. In the present case, the province of Manitoba has never objected to federal assessment of the whole project. In 1991, following the federal decision to assess the entire project, the province agreed to make the assessment joint. In 1996, when a modified version of the same project came forward for approval, the province again asked the federal government whether the whole project required assessment. This time it received a different answer.

The most worrisome part of all with the current federal position is its denial of any national responsibility for long-term environmental planning. In the 1970s, environmental planning was regarded as a critical tool, with environmental assessment providing the trigger for such long-term planning.

Today, the federal approach to assessment turns that thinking on its head: not only is such planning not critical to national interests, the federal government now says it is prohibited from carrying out such planning.

This theory of national responsibilities, or the lack thereof, is seriously flawed. The federal government would have us believe that it cannot possibly regulate resource activities like mining and forestry because they fall within provincial jurisdiction. Therefore, it has no jurisdiction to assess such activities. Yet, there has been federal regulation of mining and forestry mill effluent for decades because of fisheries concerns. The theory is also flawed, because it presents federal assessment as somehow equivalent to regulat-

ing provincial interests.

The Supreme Court in *Oldman* expressly distinguished between federal assessment and federal regulation, and gave a broader reach to assessment. In short, where a project threatens national environmental interests like fisheries, migratory birds, and biodiversity, there is authority for federal assessment of the activities causing such effects even if such activities are provincially regulated resource activities like forestry and mining. According to the Court, environmental assessment is about gathering information, particularly information on federal interests, it is not about regulating provincial interests.

An example may make this distinction between assessment and regulation clearer. If a road which includes a bridge that requires federal approval also crosses a vulnerable stretch of migratory bird habitat on provincial Crown land, the federal government could

assess the vulnerability of this habitat and conclude that it would not authorize the crossing permit for the bridge under NHPA. In this way, broad federal environmental assessment would lead to a narrow federal decision. In no way does this federal assessment regulate provincial Crown land.

Accordingly, CEAA assessment of the entire Tolko Manitoba project does not amount to federal regulation of the entire project. It means simply that, at a minimum, all federal interests are fully considered. In addition to the fisheries and migratory birds issues identified above, federal interests in this Manitoba forestry project are extensive:

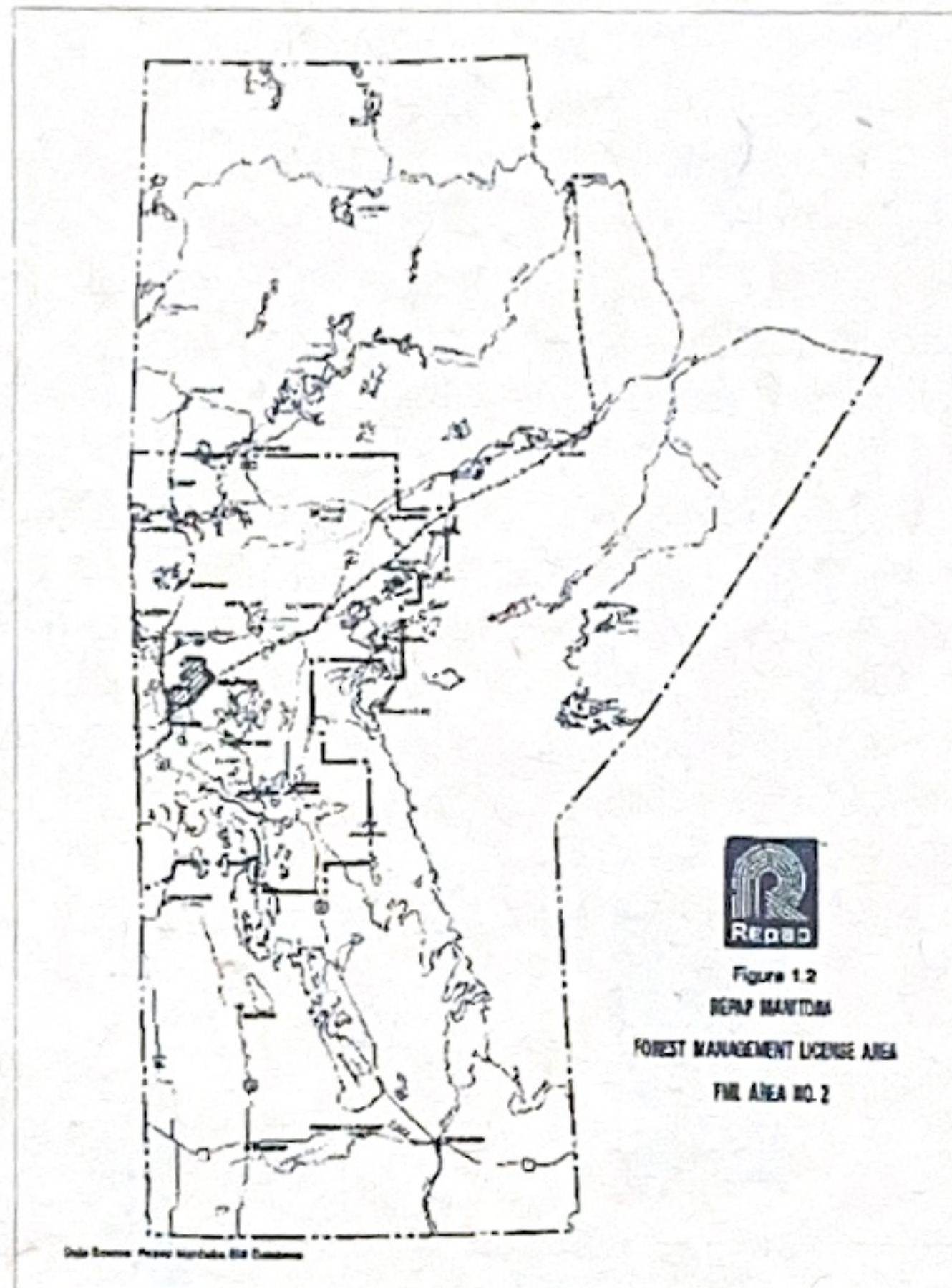
- * 80% of the timber harvested is exported to the United States using an international rail line from the mill sites;
- * Mill effluent is federally regulated and was a source of federal concern back in 1990;
- * First Nations have settlements and Traditional Land Use areas throughout the region with established commercial fisheries operations; and
- * \$3 million in federal funding has gone to reforestation with no environmental assessment of the biodiversity implications of reforestation of three tree species where over eight now exist.

Conclusion:

In short, the present court case seeks to affirm three propositions:

(1) A project is a whole, not a part of a whole. By the dictionary, a project is "a plan; a scheme; an undertaking that is carefully planned and designed to achieve a particular end." When a forestry company states in its very application for crossing approval that it needs approval to provide "year-round access to our logging operations", it destroys the meaning of the term to decide that the project is simply a bridge.

(2) For bridge crossing applications, federal decision-making must consider matters broader than the crossing itself. The history of federal NHPA approvals prior to and without environmental assessment shows that the decision-making framework had to be broader than the crossing itself.



See *Federal Approach* page 11 ►

WOMEN WHO HOWL FOR WOLVES

by Lindy Clubb, Western Canada Wilderness Committee, Manitoba Chapter

Barry Lopez has written that wolves range in color from "slate blue to almost pure white, through chocolate brown, ocher, cinnamon, gray, and blond.... they spend a good part of their time with their young and playing with each other. I once saw a wolf on the tundra winging a piece of caribou hide around like a Frisbee for an hour by himself. You can look at a gray wolf standing in the snow in winter twilight and not see him at all. You may think I'm pulling your leg - I'm not. Sometimes even the Inuit can't see them, which causes the Inuit to smile." Barry Lopez is a wonderful writer and he studies wolves, but his isn't the only gender interested in them.

Gloria Goulet, an independent biologist, has released the results of two years of survey work in the Riding Mountain National Park region of Manitoba. Her report explodes the province's opinion that wolf populations are faring well. The combined effects of poison, road kill, hunting, disease and lack of wolf immigration from nearby wilderness regions may be reasons for the decline.

Their numbers are dropping

"Wolves are extremely vulnerable due to current hunting regulations and human attitudes" Goulet says. "Their numbers are dropping, not rising. Wolves are opportunists, like us, but when it's meal time they chuck the notion of private property. Wolves have plenty of elk and moose to eat in winter, and thousands of beavers to eat in summer, all within safe Park boundaries, but wolves can be lured elsewhere to become victims of hunters and farmers. Bear baits, concentrated elk activity on lands used for hunting adjacent to RMNP, and white-tailed deer feeding stations outside the park

provide food in the form of concentrated prey for hunting, gut piles and carrion. An easy food source associated with human activity would attract frequent visits by wolves and other scavengers. Wolves have been observed hiding inside hay bales on private land, as ungulates approach to feed on the bales. In one instance a group of wolves repeatedly visited a bear bait to scavenge the contents of a barrel. Eight wolves were recently videotaped as they approached a provincial biologist in response to a predator call being used to attract moose. The wolves were in full sight in a large meadow for more than 2 minutes."

Most wolves do not kill livestock

We share a taste for meat with wolves, but are more fastidious in our habits and consume a lot more livestock than wolves. David Mech has investigated wolf predation in Minnesota for many years. He found that "most wolves do not kill livestock even when they are in or near wolf territories." Gloria found that wolves seldom preyed on domestic stock. Instead, they liked to clean up the carcasses they found on farmers' land. "Wolves also scavenged the carcasses of 18 cattle that had been killed by lightning, 6 km south of RMNP", she says.

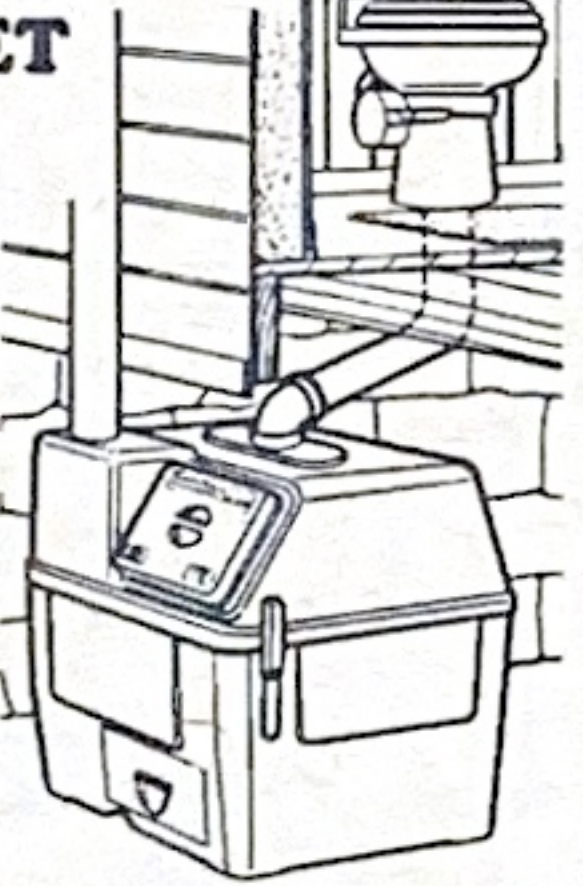
With so much resource use going on around the Park, wolves are bound to range far and wide looking for more opportunities to clean up. Gloria found that a wolf pack denning and raising pups in the midst of a livestock operation near Lake Audy preyed on natural food, not domestic animals. These findings challenge the conventional folksy wisdom of wolves wantonly destroying tame ani-

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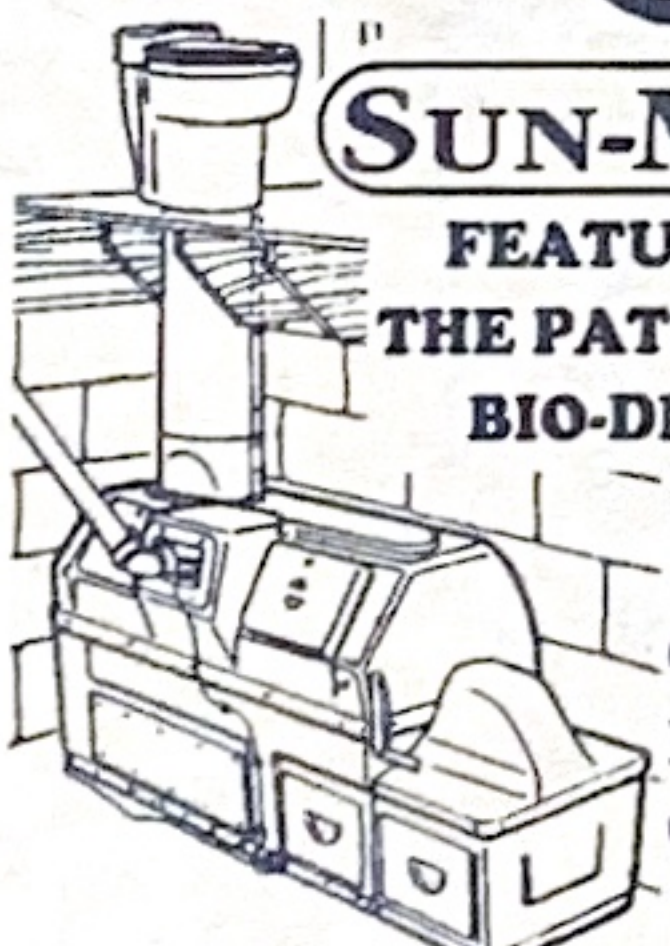


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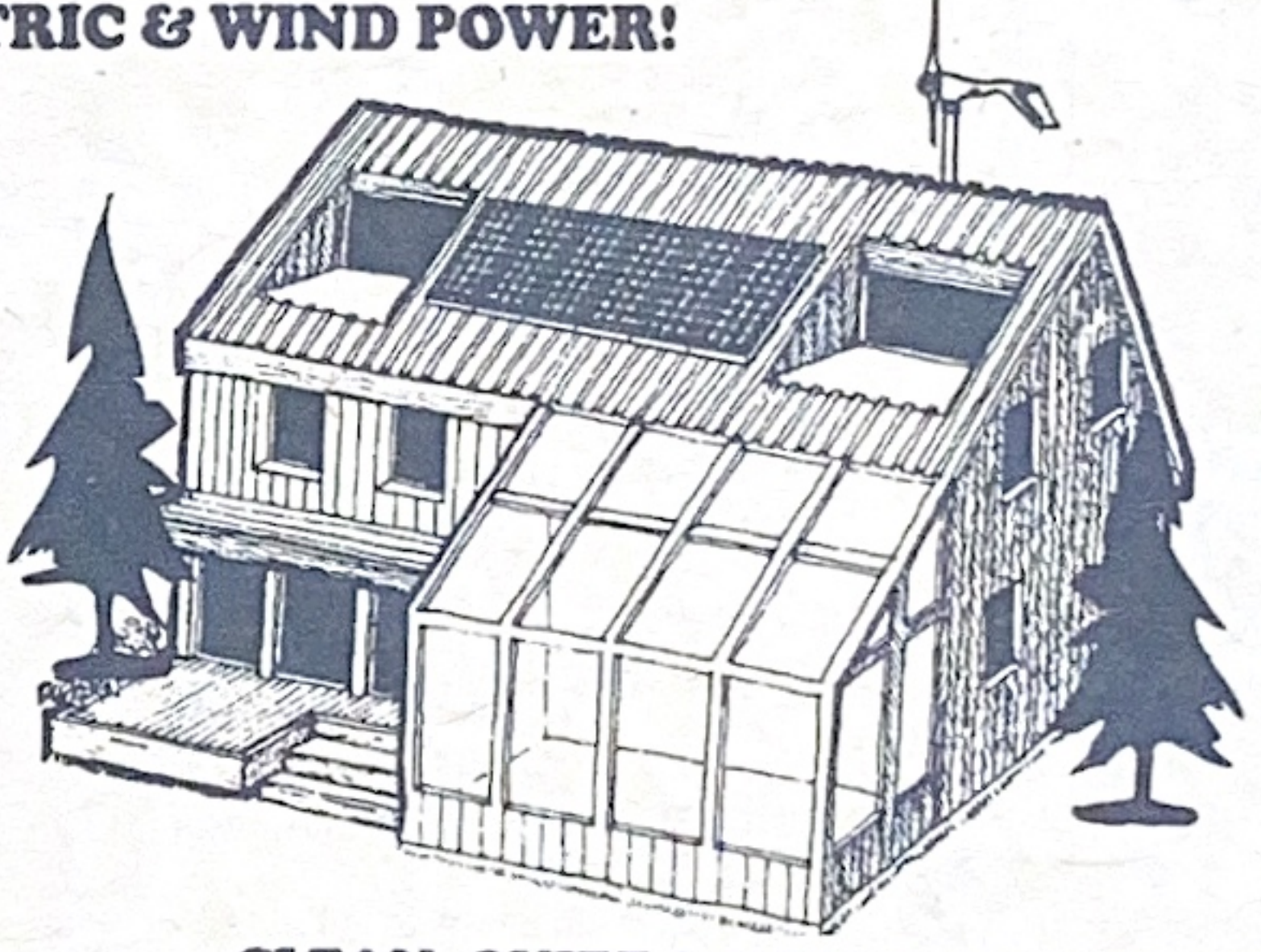
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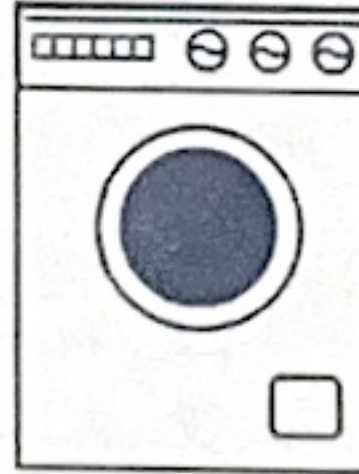
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imals, never able to live in proximity to farms.

The private and crown lands surrounding the Park are a mix of grain farms, livestock production, habitat preservation, sport hunting, recreational activities and ecotourism activities. Attitudes are as mixed as the activity. Farmers might have doubts about the presence of wolves but people who travel to the area for wildlife watching would be thrilled to see or hear one. Standing in my farmhouse yard or on the shores of Clear Lake it's certainly a thrill to listen to the wild, haunting howls of a nearby pack.

Ecotourism would benefit

Gloria's report notes that ecotourism would benefit from a healthy wolf population... "The establishment of the International Wolf Center in Ely, MN has produced a significant economic-ecotourism benefit to the region." At present, it's the attitude of hunters and farmers and their economic activities that dictate whether a tourist will see a wolf or not. Balancing those interests within provincial policy is going to be a tightrope act.

Or, as Gloria writes, "it is possible to identify the biological, ecological and anthropogenic factors contributing to the decline in the region's wolf population, but we need to address co-operative efforts between resource use and survival of a species, between jurisdictions and attitudes, between hunting regulations and ecotourism opportunities, and ultimately, the question of just who is responsible for long term survival of regional wolf populations?"

One individual with a vendetta against wolves can wipe out an area's population. Trapping of wolves is legal. So is poisoning wolves (by provincial predator control staff) if you think they are about to munch on your stock. Hunting and habitat losses may prove too much for our wolf packs. As long as wolves are listed as a species to be hunted (Manitoba's 1998 *Guide to Fishing & Hunting Adventures* lists two hunting outfitters who advertise timber wolf hunts as part of their services) there will be conflict and wolf numbers will be at risk. If wolves aren't removed from the hunting lists they may disappear in the future, like they did from so many regions in Europe, Asia, and America.

We are the top predator of wolves. We have eliminated wolves throughout many parts of America in the past, with government sanctioned bounties on their hides providing financial incentives and rewards. Thousands of other animals lost their lives through indiscriminate use of poisons like strychnine and cyanide, intended for but not eaten by wolves. At the time, the motive for the war on wolves was to protect settlers. Barry Lopez documents the treatment of wolves as an enemy in his book *Of Wolves and Men*, "The European wolf hunter of 1650 might kill twenty to thirty wolves in his lifetime; a single American wolfer of the late 1800s could kill four or five thousand in ten years."

Protecting wolves from people

Now the issue is to protect wolves from people. Wolves are part of an animal population that communicate without speech or bullets, but who contact each other nonetheless. They have three systems of communication - vocal, postural, and olfactory. Gloria has had great success when she calls wolves, and she never knows who will answer. "Ravens put on the brakes when they hear me call," she says, smiling, "and since coyotes, loons, geese and elk all start their calls or songs the same way, they answer to wolf calls." The way to find wolves, she adds, is to call for them or find the kills they come back to.

Is she afraid of interfering with their meals? They may give warnings in the way of sounds like growls, but she's never found them to be overtly aggressive. If they have the choice they leave. Natu-

ral Resource Officers can attest to just how aggressive human hunters can be when it comes to the chase, but wolves don't interfere with gene pools by singling out healthy trophy-making prey, hanging the best parts on the wall, and wasting the meat. Wolves capture and feed more frequently on old, very young or sick prey, according to researchers, and they share the meat with other scavengers like birds and coyotes. Wolves are an important part of the complex fabric of life in the wilds. We are still trying to figure out what the cloth is made from, how it's woven together, and what threads we can pull before the entire weaving comes undone.

Gloria says gray wolves are an indicator species of natural ecosystem health because they're few in number (compared to prey species), highly mobile and vulnerable to human impact. Our activities affect the wolf more than their activities affect us.

Wolves are elusive by nature, still a mystery to us, and they are not colonizing the land in numbers that can keep pace with people and secure their habitat. We are tampering with the wilderness systems that wolves prefer by eliminating habitat, and by entering the wild places that we have left. "The National Park is the only place within the region where wolves can reproduce in a protected and undisturbed environment. Extensive big game hunting seasons around RMNP provide ample opportunity for high human-caused wolf mortality." In other words, shoot on sight. The hunters are not currently required to turn in the wolves they kill, so it's a problem for us to know how many we have left in the province. Trappers are better at forwarding information. They spend more time in the woods.

Curious about our habits

In the Duck Mountains(DM), wolf numbers are dropping, too. "Prior to 1992, the annual DM wolf population was estimated at 60-70 individuals. Twenty-seven of the forty wolves snared during the 1992-93 trapping season showed signs of mange and were discarded by trappers. The DM wolf population has been estimated at between 10-20 wolves over the past 3 trapping seasons. (Pachkowski, pers. comm., 1996)."

Logging, road building and snowmobile trails have all had an effect on the wolves' ability to breed and den safely. However, it's not always their privacy that's at issue. It seems they are as curious about our habits as we are about theirs, and our presence overlaps at times without our knowing anything about it. Gloria would sometimes call for wolves and wait and wait and for hours nothing would happen. When she looked around she found that wolves had been watching her from hidden locations. Incidents like these amuse her. She doesn't fear wolves. As a teenager, at the Assiniboine Park zoo, she shared ice cream cones with a pack of wolves housed behind a low fence. In those days everyone fed the animals, but times have changed.

Now she gives talks in schools about her respect for wolf boundaries, her tracking and collaring and monitoring. After a recent visit a young student put up his hand and yelled "Why don't you leave the wolves alone and put the money into regulations to protect them?" Good idea, since there aren't any. However, people don't want to share with wolves, they want to control them. We will need a great deal of co-operation from people and some enforcement of regulations to protect wolves. We've always assumed that wolves were doing fine and someone was looking after their populations. Gloria says visitors and tourists to the park assume the wolves are fine, but that's not the case.

In her approach to students and volunteers, she suggests "try

See *Tracking a Pack* page 11 ►

SCHOOLYARD RESTORATION

continued from page 1 ...

We planted a third bed with Saskatoon bushes, and we prepared a fourth for raspberries. Our dreary grey gym was well-suited for vines, being constructed of jutting bricks; here we planted Virginia Creeper and Wild Grape.

Our final step that June was to mulch the beds heavily with flax straw to control weeds and conserve moisture. The straw worked extremely well. While it was an exceedingly dry summer, only a few waterings were needed, and weeding was minimal. Students who lived near the school helped with this.

By the time we returned to school, the garden had filled out considerably. The yellow Evening Primrose towered taller than many of the children. The Many-flowered Aster bore hundreds of tiny, white fringed blossoms. Many of the plants had been chosen because their blooming periods occurred in spring, early summer, and fall, when the children would be at school. September colours included the bright yellow, button-like flower of the Helenium, the blues and purples of the Smooth and New England Asters, and the beautiful reds of Dogwood bark and Highbush Cranberry leaves.

Only three species hadn't made it through the summer (Indian Breadroot, Leadplant, and Meadow Blazing Star). Not a single act of vandalism had occurred.

Four projects since September:

Four projects have happened since September. We created a space for a vegetable garden to be planted and maintained by students and the community. The community will have 'picking rights'.

Families, students and staff built seven large cedar planters. Professional carpenter Keith Loszchuk, whose daughter, Jenna, is in Grade 7, headed up the project. This spring, each class will fill its own planter with plants chosen and raised by the children.

Using growing lights confiscated by the RCMP from a marijuana operation, our Resource teacher, Jeff Enns, worked with students to create a 'Grow Room'. This spring we will start our seedlings under lights.

In December, Seine River teacher Mark Lussier, a well-known champion of birds, helped a group of Richer students build six cleverly-designed bird feeders.

So much learning has taken place during our Yard Project. Perhaps, most importantly, we are exposed to 'nature's intelligence' (2), its interconnectedness.

An outdoor classroom

We are starting to use our yard as an outdoor classroom. For example, a math class designed the vegetable garden by determining that the four-sided shape with the greatest area and smallest perimeter is a square. (We wanted to minimize the rototilling; only the perimeter will be tilled to keep out quackgrass, since mulch will control weeds within the garden).

In a Language Arts class, each student went out to the garden and wrote a poem about a plant. Similes, adjectives, and the use of a thesaurus were learned along the way.

Much of our project remains to be done. Although at times the

tasks seemed daunting, the abundant rewards entice us to continue. We want to plant trees and shrubs, add bilingual identification signs, build a compost bin and bird bath, start vermicomposting, build bird shelters, create a bog, lay down paths, include picnic tables, benches, and a sandbox ... as soon as projects are completed, new ideas seem to appear.

Already, life exists where there was none before. Aside from the many plants, we have seen worms, bees, wasps, spiders, ladybugs, frogs, garter snakes, salamanders, Richardson's ground squirrels,

and butterflies. Our Pearly Everlasting plants, to our delight, swarmed with the caterpillars of the Painted Lady butterfly last summer. As the feeders go up, we are confident that we will be visited by many birds. Four bat houses built during an Ecotopia workshop await inhabitants.

In an article on environmental education, David Sobel points out that children are now spending less time in natural surroundings and are more likely to worry about the environment (3). A study of adults working to protect the environment found that they 'attributed their commitment to a combination of two sources - many hours spent outdoors in a keenly-remembered wild or semi-wild place in childhood or adolescence, and an adult who taught respect for nature (4).'

Our dream is to provide opportunities for bonding between children and the natural world.

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Lorna Kopelow is a teacher at Richer School and a former Manitoba Eco-Network Steering Committee member.

Sweetgrass

green
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thin and sweet
it smells like cinnamon
you can braid it.
It smells like honey
flies like it.

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TRACKING A PACK

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to think of how a wolf responds." People vary in their responses, too. Gloria tracked a pack south of the Park for a year, and a few people joined her on one of her visits. One of the group went off on his own and found two wolves standing and watching him. They were large and black with green eyes. Naturally, he was a little intimidated. "At first I wished that I had a gun," he told Gloria. When both wolves quietly moved away he said he wished he had a camera. That sums up the way we could evolve in our relationship with wolves. From shooting, trapping and poisoning them to watching them and wishing we could record the moment.

There should be wolves

Plenty of people do want to see wolves stay with us. Carla Ponech, a U. of M. graduate student, just finished a survey of human attitudes towards wolves. Of the region's residents, 80% of them agree with the statement there should be wolves in the area. We have a different economy now, and a different population of animals. During the Depression era, local people used the wild animals extensively to support themselves. "Wolves were extirpated from RMNP during the 1930s - along with beaver, pine marten, fisher, mule deer and river otter - due to unrestricted trapping and hunting. Given the economic downturns in the era, the motives were probably to feed and clothe families of the hunters and trappers. But it's not like that now.

Wolves were well established through recolonization by the 1950s. The fate of wolves is still in our hands. They aren't colonizing into the Duck and Porcupine wilderness areas as one would expect. Hunting, pressures from conflicting human use of the land, poison bait, have all taken their toll on wolves. We have long treated them without respect, as vermin to be controlled at our whim, and, like mice in our house, we have difficulty accurately determining their numbers. The provincial Department of Natural Resources is doing its part to collect voluntary information on wolves, but we have little reliable data as yet. Parks Plus People at Riding Mountain, the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve and the Duck Mountain Trapper's Association helped fund Gloria's survey. So did the RMNP and their wardens, who helped with information. We need more.

I saw my first timber wolf a few weeks ago, on a trip to Dauphin. She was larger than a coyote, her tail was thicker, she was lynx colored, dun and buff toned, blending with the pale palette of late fall fields. She stopped on an overgrown side road, turned her head so I could see a white patch of snowshoe hare stuffed in her mouth, and managed to convey both curiosity and confidence in her glance. It was a memorable, perhaps never to be repeated moment. I never want to lose the opportunity to see these elegant, wild animals, to read about the myths they have inspired and to celebrate the kinship of their complex social order. Gloria will be working with all the different players in the wolf game to help ensure their existence in this province - conducting surveys, contributing to research, raising public and official awareness, and she deserves our support.

"Long ago when the earth was new, the Anishinabe was walking the earth naming all of creation, lands and waters. He was alone, and Creator placed the wolf to walk with Anishinabe and be his friend and brother. The Creator told them what happens to one will happen to the other. This has come to pass. We've had our lands taken, been hunted for our hair, and pushed to extinction. Now we are seeing the wolf returning and gaining strength in those places he was once destroyed. This teaches us that Anishinabe will also return and gain strength in the places we were destroyed. Perhaps the wolf will lead the way to a more natural living and teach the new comers to respect Mother Earth," said Ann Dunn, a Chippewa elder and published story teller. In native teachings, the people who belong to the Wolf Clan are providers and caretakers. It's up to us to respect and protect the wilderness that wolves have colonized, and to learn the lessons in their way of living. We are fortunate to have the wolves, and we must protect them.

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1. Goulet, Gloria, "Report on the Status of Grey Wolves (*Canis lupus*) in the Riding Mountain Region of Manitoba and Recommendations for Conservation Management." 1997
2. Goulet, Gloria, "Report on Wolf Activity and Livestock Predation around Riding Mountain National Park, Manitoba." 1998
3. Lopez, Barry, "Of Wolves and Men." 1978

ECO

FEDERAL APPROACH

continued from page 7 ...

The present federal approach is inconsistent with that history. It accepts the forestry company's operational need for the crossing to serve forestry operations without considering the environmental implications of such operations if the crossing is approved.

(3) CEAA is remedial legislation; it requires regard for what was previously not required. In particular, while project proponents have an interest in broadly identifying the economic benefits of the whole project (and in this project, the proponent has pointed to the jobs of the entire project - mills as well as harvesting, reforestation, and construction), they have not had the same interest in broadly identifying the environmental and social costs of the whole project.

Environmental assessment is thus designed to ensure that the full environmental implications are identified, particularly impacts on federal interests - not just the potential economic benefits to a

proponent or a province.

In this context, it is absurd to interpret CEAA to limit assessment duties to parts of projects instead of the whole project, and to limit federal regard to less than what was required under the Navigable Waters Protection Act, without CEAA.

Questions should also be asked about the role and purpose of the federal government when groups like the Alliance are forced to go through a lengthy and expensive court challenge simply to get the government to comply with its own laws. Given the scale of this project, the historically curtailed federal panel review, and the enormity of potentially significant adverse and irreversible effects on federal interests, the Alliance believes strongly that this is a critical case. If the federal government won't assess all of the components of a project, what is the point of assessment?

ECO

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To apply, please send resume by March 12, 1999 to: Important Bird Areas Project, Manitoba Naturalists Society, 401 - 63 Albert Street, Winnipeg, MB R3B 1G4

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