

A CAUTIONARY TALE OF A CREEK

by Lindy Clubb

The province of Manitoba has engineered 1700 miles of major drains in the Red River Valley, "servicing" about 4 million acres for railroads and agricultural purposes. Drainage began in earnest in the late 1800's - for railroads and arable land, and for soldiers returning from the wars. Non native veterans were rewarded with land for serving their country. In turn, the country served municipalities by giving up water. Larry Whitney of the Department of Natural Resources Water Resources Branch, confesses to the cumulative effects. Small enough to be overlooked, gaining enough ground to be viewed as progress, these multiple drains have evolved into "a tyranny of small decisions," reducing the energy of water. In significant areas of southern Manitoba, streams are unable to replenish themselves, bogs and marshes can't act as food or filters, fish and fowl numbers are in decline. In other words, aquatic systems can't do their jobs.

But agriculture and transport can. Value added cereal and oilseed crops are dry and safely carried away by hopper cars into local distant plants for processing. Grain crops are spared the flooding effects of summer rains by a series of check dams, erosion control structures, drop structures, wood or rock crib structures, weirs, gabions (rock filled bags or wire nets) and culverts. Add the web of railroads and highways into the Red River Valley picture, and you have an extensive gridwork, something resembling graph paper from the air.

Drainage projects may not be as obvious to the average eye as a gravel road, but maintaining them falls under the strong protective arm of the province regardless of their location. The Donohoe family of Petersfield, Manitoba discovered just how far a legislative arm can reach into anyone's farm.

A tradition of preservation

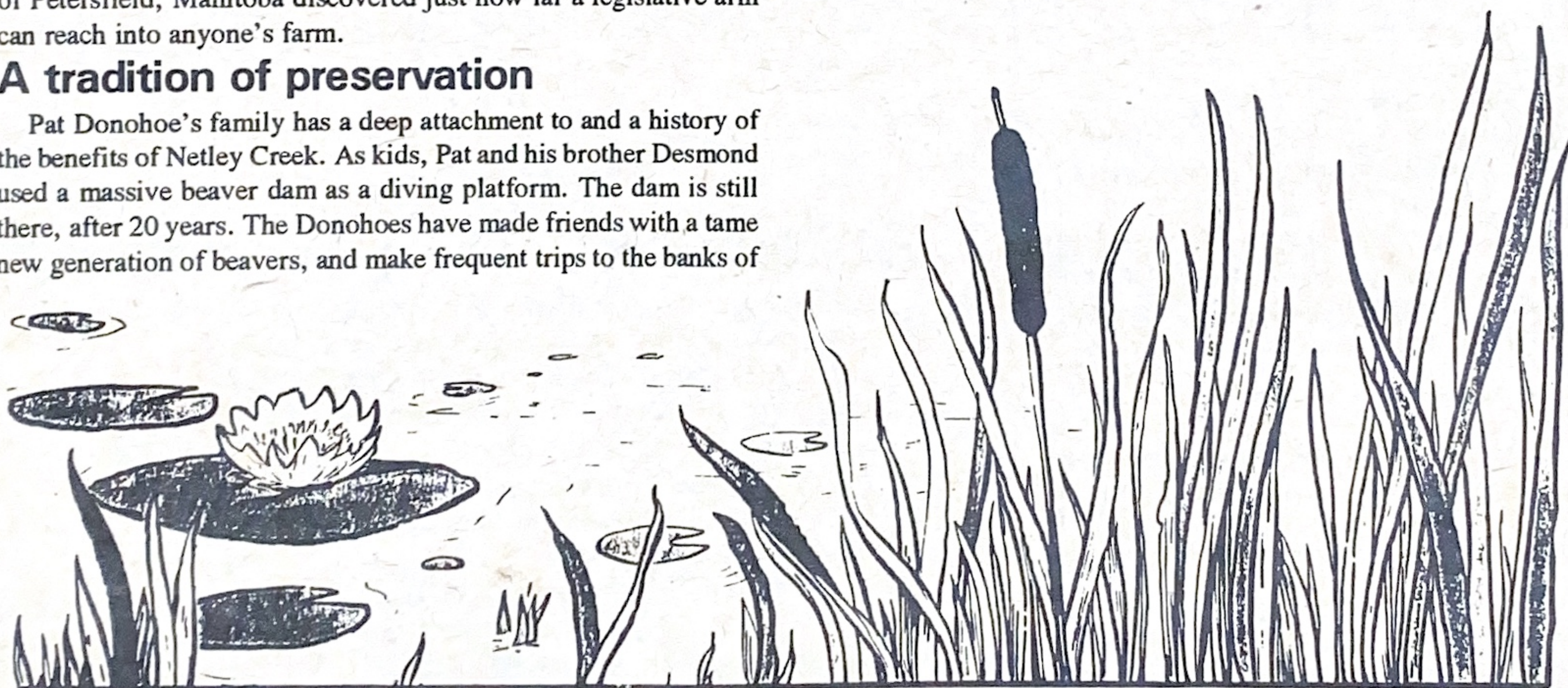
Pat Donohoe's family has a deep attachment to and a history of the benefits of Netley Creek. As kids, Pat and his brother Desmond used a massive beaver dam as a diving platform. The dam is still there, after 20 years. The Donohoes have made friends with a tame new generation of beavers, and make frequent trips to the banks of

the creek to watch eagles, owls, otters, wood ducks, songbirds, mink, marten, deer and small mammals. It's become a habit to visit, an easy walk from the house. The creek is a one and a half mile asset running right through Pat's farm, his Dad's farm, and his brother's farm. It's always been untouched natural habitat: a tradition of preservation. When the Donohoes were told new regulations outlawed cattle from the banks of the stream they complied. After all, it was an effort to help the creek.

Not all regulations they were asked to comply with were as agreeable. Pat and his wife Leslie were a little dismayed when officers from the provincial Department of Natural Resources approached them for permission to access the Netley Creek for drainage purposes. "No way" was the answer and they sent the officers packing. Natural Resources invoked a little used and heavy handed section of the Water Rights Act authorizing 'consent of entry for surveys and in stream work' without permission. The Donohoes called Winnipeg lawyer, Markus Buehrt, to find out their legal rights, and called Ducks Unlimited for back up. The Act has authority over land titles and DU had a vested interest in the Marsh, not the Creek. Also, most of the other land owners on Netley Creek had no objections to the removal of trees. They were grain farmers, absentee landowners, or compromised by debts to other provincial organizations.

Pat and Leslie panicked when they heard chain saws approaching. They found a phone number for Greenpeace, the only environment activist group they knew of, and called for help in the form of

See **DRAINAGE** page 11



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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACT UPDATE

The Manitoba Government's Proposed Sustainable Development Act (nicknamed the "Development Act" by some) is heading off to Legislative Counsel for drafting into legal language. While many will welcome this step as a way of better knowing exactly what it is we will have to deal with, it does increase the likelihood of the Act going forward for First Reading in the Spring Session of the Legislature.

Five public hearings on the White Paper were held, and in spite of very short notice, and the holiday season, a fair number of presentations were made (the vast majority of which were highly critical). There is widespread agreement that the consultation period was inadequate for such a far-reaching piece of legislation. The multi-stakeholder advisory committee, at which the Eco-Network was represented, concluded its five sessions unable to offer any consensus recommendations, although most participants agreed that some substantive work on identifying issues was being done, and that given more time, some areas of consensus would have been reached.

The Eco-Network will be pressing for further public consultation once the drafting work is complete, but this Act appears to be on the fast track for "Rio Plus Five", the follow-up to the Earth Summit scheduled for later this year. Unfortunately, the Act as it currently looks will be a real step backward for environmental protection in many areas, and especially for the right of the general public to participate meaningfully in decision-making, ironically a key aspect of "sustainable development".

It's not too late to send in your comments. They may be directed to Hon. Glen Cummings, Chair of the Sustainable Development Committee of Cabinet, Legislative Building, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 0V8.

All submissions to the Public Hearings and to the Round Table are on file in the Public Registry, one node of which is housed at the Eco-Network Resource Centre. We also have some additional copies of the White Paper.

ECJ

THANKS TO YOU . . .

The Eco-Network's 1996 Annual Appeal has been tremendously successful topping over \$5000 for the first time ever. This is due to our faithful supporters and many generous contributors who've made environmental education through the Eco-Network a focus for their charitable donations.

AND TO INVESTORS GROUP:

As well, a hearty 'thank you' to Investors Group who recently granted Manitoba Eco-Network the sum of \$1000 to be applied to "raising public awareness of local environmental issues". As always, these independent contributions are essential to maintaining our basic services. Many thanks to you all!

1996-1997

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Harvey Williams - Time to Respect Earth's Ecosystems

ACTION ALERT!!!

CITY CONTINUOUSLY MOVING TOWARDS UNSUSTAINABILITY

by Jan Westlund, Resource Conservation Manitoba

The recently released Preliminary Current Estimates for the City's 1997/'98 Budget indicate a desire to throw out **all waste minimization programs with the exception of recycling**, and trash the newly-established Waste Minimization Strategy (which took the last two years, \$100,000 and the input of hundreds of citizens to create). In addition, cuts are proposed in valuable public and school promotion of Water Conservation programs citing success of initiatives thus far as justification.

On the waste front, this means composter rebates, christmas tree chipping, and the 'Leaf It to Us' leaf collection program which we've come to depend on to keep organics from landfill will no longer be available. As well, proposed strategies like emphasizing community reuse rather than simply recycling, promoting backyard composting, providing a recycling program for multifamily dwellings, expanding the list of recyclables collected at the curb, and phasing-in material bans have all been eliminated.

In short, all but the most basic recycling program has been scrapped even though the Preliminary Current Estimate concludes, "The loss of these programs is regrettable as **the waste minimization program is an investment in sound environmental stewardship and future cost savings**. The impact to the public will be the loss of well known and accepted environmental programs and ultimately **increased collection and landfill costs**."

Once lost, this wide variety of programs encouraging future frugality through waste minimization and water conservation will be difficult to reinstate unless a more environmentally-friendly city council can be found. If you are one of the thousands of people who views such short term hacking to be offensive in the light of reasonable, long term goals, please get involved now!

Call, fax, e-mail or write your city councillor as well as Bill Clement, Chair of the Works and Operation Committee (986-5232) and Bill Carroll, Commissioner (986-2377). Let them know you'd rather have waste minimization programs than new year's eve celebrations or parades.

Make your views known before Works and Operations meets on Friday, February 28. Even better, attend your Community Committee's review of the Estimates for the Tax Supported and Utilities budgets. Call your Community Committee for dates and times. **ECJ**



Special thanks are due to Daniel McKay, who has volunteered his skills and services in the layout of this issue.

ORDER OF SAGKEENG FIRST NATION GOVERNMENT

Whereas: the people of Sagkeeng First Nation have informed the Chief and Council of Sagkeeng First Nation that it is desirous to maintain Sagkeeng First Nation lands, including lands used for traditional purposes, **free from any products and/or by-products produced, discarded, or used in production of implements of mass destruction or electric energy by means of Nuclear Fission.**

Therefore, Be it Resolved: Sagkeeng First Nation hereby declares itself and any and all lands used for traditional purposes to be **free from any products and/or by-products produced, discarded or used in the production of implements of mass destruction or electrical energy by means of Nuclear Fission.**

Be It Further Resolved: any person or corporation found to be in contravention of this Order in Council is guilty of an offence against the people of Sagkeeng First Nation and is liable to a fine and or imprisonment or both under Sagkeeng First Nation's rules and regulations.

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WHAT'S HAPPENIN'

Wednesday, February 19, 7:30pm. Community Economic Development Seminar Series "Reflections on a Co-operative Economy: Lessons from Northern Italy", presenter is John Restakis. Mondragon Bookstore and Coffee House, 91 Albert St. For more info, call Assiniboine Credit Union Community Development Office: 958-8756

Friday, February 28, 7:00pm. (Entertainment starts at 8pm) CHO!CES presents Cafe de Todos at the Underground Cafe, 70 Arthur St. Featuring Hugo Torres, Ben Sures and the Labour Choir, celebrating another year of CHO!CES activities. Donation at the door.

Sunday, March 9, 1:00pm. Fort Whyte Centre presents "Backyard Safari", an exploration into the "wilds of the city". Learn how to recognize and encourage biodiversity in your home habitat and community landscape. With Ted McLachlan. For info: 989-8355.

Wednesday, March 12, 7:30pm. CED Seminar "Learning from Experience: Community Economic Development Businesses in Winnipeg", Mondragon Bookstore and Coffee House, 91 Albert. Call 958-8756 for more info.

Monday, March 31, 7:30pm. Manitoba Naturalists Society Indoor Program: "The Riding Mountain Conservation Plan" presented by Jack Dubois. Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain. Call 943-9029 for details.

Wednesday, April 9, 7:30pm. CED Seminar "Worker Co-ops: The Mondragon Challenge", presenter is Russ Rothney, Assiniboine Credit Union Community Development. Call 958-8756 for more info.

CLEAN AIR ACTION!

The Council for a Tobacco-Free Manitoba is asking the City of Winnipeg to ban smoking in restaurants and bars. A committee has been struck by the Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Margaret Fast, with the purpose of drafting a by-law, which will then go before City Council. Consider the following facts:

- Second-hand smoke is the third ranking known cause of lung cancer;
 - Food service workers have a 50% higher risk of developing lung cancer than the general population;
 - Standard ventilation systems cannot eliminate second-hand smoke; it takes the average system three hours to remove 95% of the smoke from one cigarette;
 - There is twice as much nicotine and tar in second-hand smoke as in the smoke inhaled by the smoker;
 - Second-hand smoke contains more than 4,000 chemical compounds.
- THERE IS NO SAFE LEVEL OF EXPOSURE TO SECOND-HAND SMOKE**

A city by-law will send a strong message to youth (who are most at risk for becoming addicted, and heavily targetted by industry advertising) that smoking is socially unacceptable, and it will significantly reduce a major environmental health hazard.

If you care about this issue, take action! A majority of Manitobans share your concerns, but the tobacco industry will play hardball, and will support their campaign with big dollars.

***Call, write or fax your City Councillor and let him/her know that you support smoke-free restaurants and bars in Winnipeg.**

***Let your favourite restaurant know that you would like smoke free dining (you can send this message on your bill!)**

For more information, contact the Council for a Tobacco Free Manitoba, c/o the Heart and Stroke Foundation: 949-2012 (Dawn Marie Turner).

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TREE-LINE



by Harvey Williams, Time to Respect Earth's Eco-systems.

PRESSURING REPAP TO EXPAND

Killing the Goose that Lays the Golden Eggs

The acquisition of Repap Enterprises Inc. by Avenor Inc., another Montreal Pulp and Paper Giant has been widely publicised. What has not received as much publicity, at least locally, is the fact that along with Repap, Avenor has also acquired a

"...wood pulp and newsprint prices, which fluctuate wildly at the best of times, are currently bottoming out from a period of free fall."

staggering new \$2.2 billion debt load. Avenor, already with a considerable debt load of its own, intends to reduce its debt by selling off various bits and pieces of Repap Enterprises including Repap Manitoba.

Repap Manitoba, unlike most of the rest of Canada's pulp and paper industry turns a tidy profit because it has developed a superior product that meets a niche requirement.

Repap's profitable product is a superstrong unbleached Kraft paper used to make bags to contain dense materials such as cement. Ironically, Repap's Kraft paper actually saves some trees because less paper is required to make a bag of the same strength and size than from conventional Kraft paper. Such a profitable and unencumbered operation would be attractive to investors.

Recent articles in the Globe and Mail and the pulp and paper industry trade journal, Papermaker, document an industry in trouble because it is burdened with production overcapacity. As a result, wood pulp and newsprint prices, which fluctuate wildly at the best of times, are currently bottoming out from a period of free fall. The November issue of the Papermaker paints a bleak future for the industry due the expansion of production in Asia and Eastern Europe and the increasing self-sufficiency in newsprint consuming regions.

It is in the face of this reality that the Filmon government continues to press Repap Manitoba to invest \$250 million in the construction of additional wood pulp production capacity for an already saturated export market. Attaching such a condition to the sale is like tossing an anchor to a drowning person. Not content to leave well enough alone, the Filmon government jeopardizes the future of Repap Manitoba's present 850 employees. Manitoba government may be killing the goose that lays golden eggs.

PINE FALLS PAPER COMPANY ASPIRES TO EXPAND

The Pine Falls Paper Company, doubtless with encouragement from the province, is scouring financial markets for investment in the construction of a new 1500 tonne per day pulp mill. Much of the wood supply for the new mill would come from the presently inaccessible boreal forest north of Atikaki Provincial Park. Residents of native communities in the area report that company representatives have pitched the benefits of logging to them. It seems doubtful that the company would proceed with plans for

such a massive expansion without some assurances from the province. The company is presently engaged in the piecemeal construction of an all weather road up the east side of Lake Winnipeg. The next stage of construction will cross the Bloodvein River and open vehicular access to large areas of hitherto inaccessible wilderness.

To date, there has been no indication that public consultation will occur prior to the granting of a forest management license to harvest Manitoba's last remaining expanse of untouched boreal forest. When TREE inquired about such a possibility, the Minister of Natural Resources would not give a definite answer.

If the province is serious about the application of sustainable development principles, it would provide ample time for public consultation well in advance of granting any more forest management licenses and would require a comprehensive environmental impact assessment of road construction into new areas instead of assessing the impact of individual sections.

Moreover, it makes no economic sense to develop more pulp and paper production in light of the situation described above for Repap.

For more information, contact Harvey Williams at 269-7477.

Write to Natural Resources Minister, Glen Cummings insisting that there be a full public consultation prior to any further commitment of forest lands.

ECJ

Search the Green Lane for Environmental Information!



<http://www.mb.doe.ca>

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- Climate
- Ozone Depletion
- Wildlife
- Air Quality
- Flood Damage
- Habitat Protection
- Legislation/Policies
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New Federal Legislation Will Have Major Implications For Environment

by Anne Lindsey

As if you didn't already have enough to do, there's plenty of new federal legislation to study and respond to. All of it has direct implications for the protection of our environment.

Bill C-62, An Act Respecting Fisheries is the first major overhaul of the Fisheries Act since its inception in 1868. The Fisheries Act has been an extremely important piece of legislation for environmental protection, partly because fish habitat is affected by almost any development that involves water, including forestry, hydro, mining and irrigation. Federal responsibility for fisheries has been the trigger for landmark environmental assessment cases, including Rafferty-Alameda, the Oldman Dam, and the Kemano Dam in BC.

The new Bill however, aims to delegate responsibility for freshwater fisheries to the provinces. In Manitoba, at least, it is very clear that the province does not have either the political will or the necessary resources to manage either fish or their habitat. Staffing levels and expenditures in the provincial fisheries branch have dropped consistently since 1991, resulting in a totally inadequate potential here for research and monitoring.

The importance of fisheries to Manitoba's biodiversity and economy, and to our Aboriginal peoples, mean that public consultation which includes Manitobans is extremely important.

Write to the Hon. Fred Mifflin, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ont. K1A 0A6 to express concern and interest in this Bill, and to request that the Standing Committee on Fisheries hold a consultation meeting in

Manitoba. Copy your letter to The Chair of the Standing Committee, Joe McGuire, MP, same address, fax (613) 996-1962. A copy of the Bill may be obtained by calling the clerk of the committee, Eugene Morowski at (613) 996-4258.

A copy of the Bill, as well as background information prepared by the CEN Fisheries Working Group, is available for viewing at the Eco-Network Resource Centre. A contact person for the Working Group is Alice Chambers (Manitoba Naturalists Society) ph. (204) 753-8348 (Pinawa)

Bill C-65, The Canada Endangered Species Protection Act, introduced last Halloween, has been welcomed by many groups working on endangered species conservation, under the umbrella of the Endangered Species Coalition. However, the Act has many shortcomings, including the fact that there is no obligation to list endangered species, or to protect critical habitat. Moreover, the Act will not apply throughout Canada, meaning that species will only be protected on federal lands and territories (eg. less than 2% of BC). Provincial legislation in this area is a mostly ineffective patchwork.

The Coalition is asking that groups contact their provincial governments (in Manitoba, this would now be Glen Cummings, Minister of Natural Resources), asking for tougher laws for species protection, and to Federal MP's.

The Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development is conducting hearings on this Act. The Clerk is Normand Radford ph (613) 996-1483, fax (613) 992-7974). Written submissions will be accepted by the committee til the end of

February. Address is House of Commons, Ottawa, Ont. K1A 0A6.

Sample letters, background information, and a copy of the Bill are available for viewing at the Eco-Network Resource Centre. As the Coalition states: "When it comes to endangered species, a weak law isn't a mistake that can be easily fixed. A weak law means extinction".

Biotechnology Provisions of the new Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA): The Federal Government introduced a reformed CEPA in December, following its response to the report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development on the draft Act. (That report was entitled "It's About our Health").

Responding to strong concerns on the biotechnology issue, the Standing Committee held hearings and wrote a report on biotechnology regulation in Canada, which contained several strong and important recommendations which have been endorsed by groups in the CEN's Biotechnology Caucus. Unfortunately, the biotechnology provisions of the new Act do not follow the Standing Committee's recommendations. Background materials and a copy of CEPA are available for Review at the Resource Centre.

The Biotech. Caucus is asking you to provide strong expressions of support for the committee's recommendations through letters to the Prime Minister; Sergio Marchi, Minister of Environment; Ralph Goodale, Minister of Agriculture; Charles Caccia, Chair of the Standing Committee, and David Dingwall, Minister of Health. All can be mailed at House of Commons, Ottawa, Ont. K1A 0A6 (Postage free!).

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NETWORK AWARD WINNER RECEIVES RESEARCH GRANT

Forest Research in Duck and Porcupine Mountains

by David Kattenburg

The North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) has announced a \$70,000 grant to Swan River biologist Dan Soprovich and the Manitoba Naturalists Society in support of a research project to be carried out by Mr. Soprovich on tree cavity habitat in the Duck and Porcupine Mountains of western Manitoba.

Meeting the habitat requirements of cavity-dependent wildlife: A study proposal was one of fifteen projects from Canada, Mexico and the United States to receive funding during NAFEC's second grant cycle in late 1996. A total of approximately \$950,000 were awarded. The CEC notes that these grants will enable communities throughout Canada, Mexico and the United States to join the Commission in working collectively to conserve and protect the North American environment.

Cavities in live and dead trees provide habitat for birds and other species. These species are threatened by forestry practices which optimize fibre production. Dan Soprovich's research project will determine the use by cavity-dependent species of old-growth and young naturally-disturbed forests in the Duck and Porcupine Moun-

tains, and of clearcuts where 0.3%, 1%, 2.5% and 5% of the trees have been left standing. Forest stakeholders will be able to use these data to develop strategies for sustaining cavity-dependent species.

The project will be steered by the Mixedwood Forest Research and Advisory Committee (MFRAC), currently comprising 28 people from a wide range of backgrounds and organizations. MFRAC will counsel and encourage this project, disseminate findings across North America and promote other community-based initiatives related to forest ecology, regional economic development and human health. Project leaders hope to work closely on this endeavour with Louisiana-Pacific Canada Ltd. and the Manitoba provincial government.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Dan Soprovich, Bluestem Wildlife Services (204) 734-3054

Herta Gudauskas, Manitoba Naturalists Society (204) 943-9029

Janice Astbury, Coordinator, North American Fund for Environmental Cooperation (514) 350-4357

"INVEST IN PEOPLE" ALTERNATIVE FEDERAL BUDGET DEMANDS

On February 12th, Winnipeg-based CHOICES: A Coalition for Social Justice, and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) housed in Ottawa, will release their 1997 Alternative Federal Budget in communities across Canada. Its main agenda is to outline economic options that centre on the needs of people and of communities. In particular, it will deal with what are seen to be the four major, inter-related problems that exist in the Canadian economy:

1. Sustained high unemployment;
2. Rising poverty and marginalization for many, especially for young people, women and their children, people of colour, First Nations people, and people with disabilities;
3. Tax policies that prevent sharing the costs of our public programs and services fairly; and
4. Debt reduction policies that favour the wealthy at the expense of public programs.

The Alternative Federal Budget will challenge the government to accept the following targets: reduction of unemployment to at least 6%, reduction of poverty to at least 12%, and reduction of the federal debt to 60% of Gross Domestic Product.

The Framework Document released on January 23rd outlines measures which could be taken to reach these targets. They include the creation of an Emergency Job Creation Program to invest in

See SUPPORT page 10

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NUCLEAR WASTE PANEL GETS AN EARFUL IN MANITOBA

by Anne Lindsey

The Federal Panel reviewing the Atomic Energy of Canada, Limited (AECL) plan for disposal of radioactive waste in the Canadian Shield spent three days in Manitoba during the month of January. The first day was at Sagkeeng First Nation on the Winnipeg River, the remainder in Winnipeg. At Sagkeeng, the Panel's usual Hearing procedure was turned on its head when Chief Jerry Fontaine indicated that Sagkeeng elders would have the floor first, as is customary practice in the community. Only when they were finished speaking would other members of the community, invited guests and finally, AECL representatives, have the opportunity to present their case.

Some of the experiences with which Sagkeeng First Nation has contended from years of developments on the Winnipeg River were recounted. A strong message was brought forward that the Earth must not be treated as a dumping ground for nuclear poisons, and that nuclear wastes would never be welcomed into Sagkeeng's territory, including traditional lands. (See declaration on Page 3). Paul Lussier, of Lac du Bonnet, who attended part of the day's proceedings, reported that he was deeply moved by what he heard, and that he had learned a great deal. Others echoed his sentiments.

Considering the fact that these hearings were mandated to examine only the CONCEPT of deep rock disposal (the siting for such a project will be considered separately), a surprisingly large number of people attended in both locations. In Winnipeg, the vast majority of presenters were firmly opposed to the idea of deep rock

disposal. Many cited mistrust of the nuclear industry and fear of serious accidents either in the transportation of the waste from reactor sites primarily in Southern Ontario, or in the eventual underground vault itself. Many suggested that nuclear power be phased out altogether.

Those who did speak in favour were almost exclusively either residents of Pinawa, the site of AECL's Whiteshell Nuclear Research Establishment, or employees of AECL.

Dr. Marvin Resnikoff, a nuclear physicist and nuclear waste management consultant based in New York, presented an analysis of the impacts of radioactive waste transportation predicted by Ontario Hydro as part of the overall Environmental Impact Statement. His report, on behalf of Concerned Citizens of Manitoba, raises several issues of major concern, including the fact that Ontario Hydro appears to have grossly underestimated the probability of and severity of accidents. In addition, Hydro utilized outdated and inappropriate data and did not even consider transportation outside of Ontario.

The proponents (AECL and Ontario Hydro) appeared to be taken aback by Resnikoff's presentation and in the absence of their transportation specialist due to illness, were unwilling to pose questions about his analysis.

Concerned Citizens of Manitoba presented results from a province-wide poll question the group commissioned from Viewpoints Research, which showed that more than 76% of Manitobans would

See CONCEPT page 10

WORLD-WISE '97

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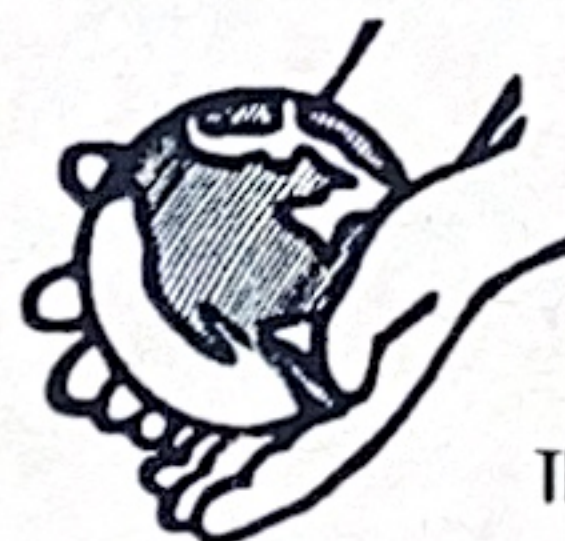
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at (204) 482-4775 or 1-800-894-2621

To book exhibit space, contact:
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- ♦ Triple S Community Futures Development Corporation

IN THE RESOURCE CENTRE...

Open daily from 9 'til 4 (or later some days ... call ahead) at #2 - 70 Albert Street. Look for these recent publications available now:

CHALLENGING FREE TRADE ... in Canada and the Americas; SPECIAL 7 YEAR REPORT by the Council of Canadians

WASTE REDUCTION AND PREVENTION STRATEGY REPORT 1996 by Pollution Prevention Branch, Manitoba Environment, Report No: 96-13

CLIMATE OF HOPE: NEW STRATEGIES FOR STABILIZING THE WORLD'S ATMOSPHERE by Christopher Flavin and Odil Tunali, June 1996, World Watch Paper #130

ONTARIO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE BOOK 1996-'97 compiled by Ontario Environment Network

If you're interested in the current discussion around the Province's Sustainable Development White Paper, ask for our file of commentary and analysis from a variety of organizations.

Drop by, browse and borrow titles from our library which includes such favorites as:

HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH? The Consumer Society and the Future of the Earth by Alan Durning, 1992, The Worldwatch Environmental Series

BOUNDARIES OF HOME; Mapping for Local Empowerment edited by Doug Aberley, 1993, The New Catalyst Bioregional Series, Gabriola Island, BC

WALLEYE WARRIORS; An Effective Alliance Against Racism and for the Earth by Rick Whaley with Walter Bresette, 1994, New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island, BC

A HUGE ROUND OF APPLAUSE !!!

In the 'somewhat late but better than not at all' category is this mention of the generous response we received to our requests for contribution to our silent auction last fall. While these contributors have certainly received our heartfelt thanks in person and in letter, you haven't heard of their much-appreciated support.

At our Awards Dinner in September, we auctioned off an exciting variety of gifts supplied by:

Brian McMillan of Prairie Stained Glass
Henry Klassen of Fine Line Builders
Manitoba Naturalists Society
Harry and Donna Mesman
Folkfest Organizing Committee
Prairie Theatre Exchange
Resource Conservation Manitoba
Rick Penner
The Sheep Boutique
Vermicomposting Products (Lydia Giles)
Debbi Waters Wright

Support Community Economic Development

From page 8

community social and environmental needs including energy conservation, and the construction of social housing and community child care centres; redistribution of work time so as to better share available employment; strengthening of public sector employment; support of community economic development by setting up a National Investment Bank funded by financial institutions, and maintenance of low interest rates.

Citing statistics showing shifts towards a two-tier health care system, tax loopholes for highly profitable corporations and the rich, continuing high unemployment especially amongst youth, and steadily eroding social security programs, the Alternative Federal Budget calls on the government to take responsibility for the economic crisis, not by its current program of massive spending cuts, but by investing in people, putting Canadians back to work and regaining control over our finances and monetary policy from foreign investors.

For more information about the 1997 Alternative Federal Budget, call CHOICES at 944-9408.

ECJ

Concept Impossible To Test

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oppose burying nuclear waste underground in Manitoba. The group noted that the poll result was consistent with ongoing support for Manitoba's High Level Radioactive Waste Act, which prohibits the underground disposal of nuclear waste in this province. The general tone of most other presentations supported this sentiment. This however, did not deter one Pinawa resident and former AECL employee from suggesting that he would encourage his home community to volunteer itself as a potential future nuclear waste repository site! (Downstream on the Winnipeg River, the residents of Lac du Bonnet and of Sagkeeng First Nation have shown overwhelmingly that they will never support such a proposal).

While siting for an eventual dump is not technically on the Panel's agenda, the issue of social acceptability of the idea definitely is and will continue to raise its head in all the communities which the Panel will visit in the coming 2 months. Most Canadians, like everyone else the world over, do not want a nuclear waste dump for a neighbour, no matter how many nuclear industry personnel insist that it will be safe. Simply put, it is impossible to actually test the concept of deep rock burial of nuclear waste: the time frames involved are just too long. The proponents are anxious to have the Panel recommend that siting proceed, so that they can claim to have solved the problem of what to do with nuclear waste. If the hearings in Manitoba (and the earlier one in Saskatchewan) are anything to judge by, this issue of social acceptability will be one of the most difficult for the Panel to resolve.

Hearings will continue through the end of March in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick. The Panel is expected to deliver its report and recommendations to the Federal Cabinet later this year. For more information about this issue, call 452-2352. Transcripts of all the hearings may be obtained from the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, and may be found on CEAA's Home Page: <http://www.ceaa.gc.ca>

ECJ

Drainage Task Force Established

From page 1

immediate "on the ground" activism. Toronto's Greenpeace referred them to the Eco-Network in Winnipeg. There, they were given numbers for Earth First! and Western Canada Wilderness Committee. EF!'s Dave Nikarz called and didn't get an answer. I found a message to call Pat Donohoe in my living room two days later. It said URGENT. I phoned immediately. Pat's first question was "How do I stop the chainsaws? I can hear them up the road and they'll be here tomorrow. You should see what they're doing! It's disgraceful. There's not one tree left on the banks of the creek." I told him to ask them to stop until we had a chance to find out what's going on. So he did. And it was a small firm from Beausejour with real guys trying to make a few extra dollars and they said "Sure. We won't cut any more 'til you give the go-ahead."

It was a statutory holiday. None of the provincial departments were open. Pat had a referral on his one piece of correspondence from Natural Resources to call Manitoba Environment. I started making calls on Tuesday morning. By Thursday morning, a group had gathered by the banks of Netley Creek for a site inspection. Pat and Leslie were pointing out the trees they would allow to be removed, carefully selected and under their supervision. The men who drove through a storm to be there included the regional Chief of Fisheries Habitat, engineers from DNR's Water Resources Branch, and the Regional Director of Natural Resources. They were under pressure to stop the project before the Donohoes got a court injunction.

Not many branches knew what was taking place in the engineering portion of DNR. Wildlife wasn't informed. The one Fisheries official asked to approve the project was told it was a simple drainage operation, mostly maintenance of an already altered stream, and only 25 feet on either side of the creek would be "enhanced" before in-stream work began the following year. This meant clearcutting of some very large and stately trees upstream of Highway 8, removing all the willows and fruit trees, and straightening out the figure 8's in Buffie's Crossing ahead of the Donohoe's farm. That's where the chainsaws really came into play.

The engineers didn't want any brush to go

in the water or any beaver dams to stand in the way of run off from farmers' fields well upstream. Several municipalities had agreed to the work, but no-one seemed to know who authorized it. Engineers' reports had been looked at by reeves and councillors and approved immediately. After all, this is practical, common sense economic decision making. Or, as one of the St. Andrew's councilmembers said to an angry Leslie Donohoe when she asked about wildlife "You can eat wheat but you can't eat beaver." Another council member said "They need to clear the stream. If you're worried about the birds they can come and live in my back yard."

Fish Spawning Capacity Affected

Leslie Donohoe is an intrepid woman, not be taken lightly or to have her concerns dismissed. Leslie looked at the context of the problem and asked a lot of questions. She wondered how drainage would affect the wider reaches of Netley Marsh and add pollution from the use of chemicals in agriculture. The creek is a feeder stream for a large, productive marsh compromised by Manitoba Hydro's regulation of water levels. Ducks Unlimited shared her concerns and are looking into an agreement with the Donohoes to continue protection of the few unaltered miles of the Creek before it drains into the Marsh. So is the woodlot management association, since any of the elm or oak trees that were cut down could be milled for profit, rather than just carted away and burned.

Then there are the fish. Cover removed from the banks raises the water temperatures and affects spawning capabilities. So does removing the riffles and curves and deadfalls that slow the flow and give shade, camouflage and vegetation for breeding and spawning fish. Suckers like gravel, not silt laden streambeds, and pike need flooded vegetation. She learned of a similar project with tragic results in the sandy soil of nearby Willow Creek.

Despite the official line of having learned from past mistakes, no assessment had been carried out on the Creek. The process didn't allow for a wide review and the engineers didn't realize the consequences of altering riparian zones. Advertisements were local and went unnoticed. Permits are required only for new works. The initial changes to Netley Creek predate the Environment Act. Maintenance work is easy, mitigation is a struggle.

That doesn't mean that owners rights weren't flouted and water resources engi-

neers didn't get a thrashing with the complaints about this project. One unnamed official said later that "it was embarrassing. One Department not talking to another illustrates symptoms of a problem - we should be approaching projects as a whole, drainage systems included." With a view that "this is long overdue", an InterDepartmental Task Force on Drainage has since been formed bringing together the Department of Highways, Environment, Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development to produce a White Paper on the Water Rights Act, to expand and to include stakeholders. The way it's staged now, most of the decisions will be predetermined then made public and discussed. The discussions will be polite, accommodating, non-confrontational, undemonstrative, and unvarying from an established pattern of what's best for the government at the time, but it will include the municipal committees that were never contacted in the first place.

Privatization Is Coming

Perhaps we won't have to scramble to find out who's responsible for what in the future. The truth is Manitoba's Natural Resources is so under funded they HAVE to offload drainage maintenance work onto the people who benefit and who called for it in the first place. Originally, Manitoba and Canada had a partnership agreement for mutual funding. The Natural Resources Transfer Act in the 1930's ended help with upkeep. Nor can the department afford costly legal battles. Property owners do have the right to protest. Walls come down when local people's anger rises up (unless you own a small sawmill operation in the Swan Valley area). The atmosphere of privatization and cost cutting is coming to the Planning Districts near you.

My advice to anyone in a similar situation? Welcome the fact that some people will introduce you with pride as environmentalists from out of town. Call the acting co-ordinator for Fisheries Habitat at 983-5045 and ask for her help. She'll provide it. Insist on talking to someone else if the person you were referred to isn't available (75% of the time). Inform the media and tell the government afterwards. Talk to local, regional, provincial and then federal authorities about process. Mention the loss of life from projects like our numerous 'drainage ditches'. Water has done so much for us. We cannot live without it. What have we done for water?

ECJ

H O M E G R O U N D

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS!

The Manitoba Eco-Network will present an evening of Nature Readings - both original and non-original fiction and poetry, on Sunday, April 20th at the Angel Deli on Main Street. Featured readers will include David Arnason, Jake MacDonald, Barb Schott ...and... you(?) The event will be open to the public.

\$5.00
Cover
Charge

Proceeds to the
Environmental
Resource Centre

Please send submissions of up to 1,000 words on the subject of home, nature or environment (especially in Manitoba) to the Eco-Network office before April 1, for a special issue of Eco-Journal on Nature Writing, to be published after the event. Writers with successful entries will be encouraged to read from their work at Home Ground.

Phone the office at
947-6511 for further details.

**The Manitoba Eco-Network, 2-70 Albert Street
Winnipeg, MB R3B 1E7**

Sign me up as a member of the Manitoba Eco-Network
Enclosed is a cheque for:

- ☐ \$25 Supporting member (individuals)
- ☐ \$40 Group membership
- ☐ \$50 Other organizations (businesses, government departments and corporations that do not otherwise qualify for group membership)

I'm also enclosing a donation of _____ to help with your public education activities.
[Charitable tax receipts available for amounts over the cost of membership]

Total Amount enclosed _____

I'm interested in volunteering for the Eco-Network. Please call me! ☐

Name(s) _____
Group (if applicable) _____ Telephone # () _____
Mailing address _____ Postal Code _____
Area(s) of interest _____ Volunteer skills _____

Group members are entitled to nominate representatives for a position on the Eco-Network Steering Committee. Group membership is open to any non-governmental, non-profit group which has as one of its objectives the enhancing or furthering of environmental quality, protecting the environment or environmental education.