

Eco-JOURNAL

Manitoba RESEAU
ECO-NETWORK ECOLOGIQUE
INC. du Manitoba inc.

Volume 1 Number 2

March - April 1991

Creating a Sustainable Agriculture

by Anne Lindsey

The population of Virden swelled by about 250 one recent weekend as delegates arrived for the annual organic farming conference organized by the Organic Producers Association of Manitoba (OPAM), an Eco-Network member group.

This was the third event of this kind hosted by OPAM. The first attracted a small group of organic farmers eager to discuss farming methods and ways to market their products. The next year, organizers were stunned as almost 300 people showed up, filling the local legion hall to overflowing and providing ample evidence for a real turn-around in the attitude of Manitoba's agricultural community. To the satisfaction of OPAM's directors, the trend continued this year as the event moved into more spacious surroundings in the Virden Collegiate.

Bette Scott, one of the organizers, said that delegates this year seemed not just curious, but very serious about learning more about organic methods and applying the knowledge back on the farm. Indeed, the atmosphere at the conference was one of dedication and thoughtful hard work. Building a sustainable agriculture is clearly a serious business - one which requires patience, wisdom and creativity, and which pays off with tremendous rewards

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OPINION



Green Plan panned

by Helen McCullough

There can be no justification whatsoever for the federal government's decision to delay regulations that would halt discharge of persistent toxins into Canadian waters. The health and economic prosperity of Canadians is founded on environmental protection. The mindset that attempts to balance jobs against environmental protection is not only obsolete, it is suicidal and must be changed.

The federal Green Plan is an abject

failure. In the midst of a global environmental crisis that threatens the survival of humanity, the Mulroney government offers Canadians a bandaid solution. Its failures, too numerous to detail include failure to:

- \$ stop pollution at its source and prosecute polluters;
- \$ stop the sell-out of Canadian forests and jobs to foreign interests;
- \$ prevent the sell-out of Canadian water

See RESPONSIBILITY — Page 7

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

ECO-NETWORK OPEN HOUSE AND SOCIAL EVENING

Drop by and visit our new office 201-128 James Avenue during Environment Week, Tuesday June 4. Entertainment and refreshments are planned, as well as the presentation of our first annual Environmental Participation Awards. See you there! (And don't forget your own mug).

ECO-NETWORK AGM

Manitoba Eco-Network Annual General Meeting, Tuesday May 14 at 7 p.m., at our office - 201-128 James Avenue. Short business meeting followed by updates on activities of our member groups. Please bring your own mug!

Eco-JOURNAL

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Editor: Toby Maloney

Computer Layout: Mark Lowe

Contributors this issue:

Anne Lindsey, Steve Rauh,
Barb Eros, Helen McCullough,
Toby Maloney

Manitoba Eco-Network

Co-ordinator Anne Lindsey

Executive:

Chair Jack Dubois

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Environmental Network
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. Project Peacemakers

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REREAD: A quick flip through other periodicals

Who's setting the agenda?

Environmental groups should pick and choose before entering consultations with government and industry, says Great Lakes United rep John Jackson. In *Network News*, the newsletter of our sister network in Ontario, Jackson advises setting priorities carefully to avoid being overrun by the proliferation of time consuming government consultations.

"The most substantial threat posed by becoming trapped on the endless merry-go-round of consultations is the loss of our direction. Our energies go into those topics that government and industry choose to consult us on. By dropping everything to participate ... we cease to set our own agendas. Government and industry priorities become our priorities."

*Making consultations worthwhile,
Network News, Autumn 1990*

Oil up in arms

Here's a statistic from *Earth Words*, publication for Friends of the Earth, that ought to crash like a sonic boom over the House of Commons in Ottawa:

The cost of one CF-18 fighter plan (not including air to wherever missiles) is greater than Ottawa spends annually on all research and development on energy efficiency and all renewable energy technology.

The article noted that instead of easing our dependence on the fossil fuels that underwrote the Gulf War, since 1984 Ottawa has cut its budget for energy conservation and renewable energy programs by 93 per cent. Other cuts include the National Research Council's Energy Branch which was conducting solar and wind power research and the Canadian Home Insulation Program.

*Preventing the next Gulf War,
Earth Words, February 1991*

Re-review

Harvey Williams, president of TREE, reviews *Home Place: Essays in Ecology* by Stan Rowe in the February issue of *Manitoba Naturalists Society Bulletin*. Williams' review raves about Rowe, a forest ecologist and environmentalist at the University of Saskatchewan, and calls him "Canada's Aldo Leopold."

Needless to say, Williams recom-

mends the book both for its ideas and its "well turned prose."

*Home Place: Essays in Ecology, MNS
Bulletin February 1991*

Swan Hills song

The Alberta government is looking at an expansion to the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation facility at Swan Hills to better handle solid wastes, according to an article in (Alberta) *Environment Network News*. A \$45 million rotating incineration kiln would be added to the three kilns already in operation, but that's just the latest in a series of hazardous waste mistakes the province has made, says Edmonton MLA John McInnis.

McInnis, who is the Alberta NDP Opposition Environment critic says that at the same time the provincial government "has been talking about importing more hazardous wastes from other regions to support the new expansion project and to reduce the financial burden of the facility."

One of those regions could be Manitoba, which currently has no intention of building an incinerator. In any case McInnis warns against an increase in the transportation of hazardous wastes "which is already a problem in Alberta."

*Is the Swan Hills Expansion
Appropriate? Environment Network
News, November-December, 1990.*

Green vs. Greed

Lawyers and environmentalists have laboured for years to reform legislation for little personal gain, but large intervenor funding awards, especially in Ontario, have begun to attract a second wave of lawyers specializing in environmental law, according to an article in *Earthkeeper*.

Kathy Cooper, executive director for the Canadian Environmental Law Association, writes that "as this field of law expands rapidly, people are wondering if it is just a new way for lawyers to cash in." She backgrounds the history of environmental law reform in Canada and concludes that "helping to reform public hearing processes [will] ensure that the environment will 'cash in' instead of the lawyers."

*Green lawyers, Earthkeeper,
January-February,*

**ALL OF THE PUBLICATIONS IN
RE-READ AND MORE ARE AVAIL-
ABLE FOR YOUR USE AT THE
ECO-NETWORK RESOURCE
CENTRE 201-128 JAMES AVENUE.**

**Deadline for May-June issue of Eco-Journal is May 15.
Articles, cartoons and advertising welcome. Suggestions
and ideas also welcome. Call 956-1468 or mail submis-
sions to Box 3125 Winnipeg, Mb. R3C 4E6.**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday April 14: U of M Continuing Education Afternoon Series "A new look at life on earth ... our relationship with our planet" 2 p.m. Winnipeg Art Gallery Visual Artists and the Environment, with Robert Enright and a panel of Manitoba artists.

Sunday April 14: Project Peacemakers panel: Beyond the Gulf: A time for reconstruction and reconciliation. Discussion of the political, regional and environmental consequences of the Gulf War 7:30 p.m., Bethel Mennonite Church, Carter and Stafford. Free admission. More info. 775-8178.

Monday April 15: Workshop with visitors from the Phillipines to discuss Phillipine and Manitoba environmental issues. 9am to 4pm, location TBA. Open to the public. For more information call Mary Stuart at 943-0381.

Sunday April 21: Earth Day activities at the Forks, starting with a sunrise ceremony at 6:30 a.m. Booths, hands-on activities, open air concert etc. For more info. call 783-9006.

Sunday April 21: Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, panel on Nuclear waste disposal in Manitoba? with Anne Lindsey, Concerned Citizens of Manitoba, and Egon Frech, Atomic Energy of Canada. 2 p.m. Planetarium Auditorium. Admission free.

Monday April 22: More Earth Day events, Corporate Clean Air Challenge.

Thursday April 25: Fundraising banquet for Earth Day, with guest speakers Dr. Jane Goodall and Premier Gary Filmon. Tickets are \$100 per plate.

Friday April 26: Public lecture by Dr. Jane Goodall at the Walker Theatre. Tickets are \$5 at Select-a-Seat. Call **Earth Day** at 783-9006 for more info.

Saturday April 27: Manitoba Naturalists Society Annual General Meeting. 9 a.m. at the Faculty Club, U of M. Luncheon speaker Dr. Jennifer Shay, 12:30. Tickets are \$15. More info. 943-9029.

Sunday April 28: Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, presentation Balancing Development with Preservation, with Alison Elliot, Endangered Spaces Campaign. 2 p.m. Planetarium Auditorium, admission free.

Sunday April 28: Project Peacemakers Environmentally-Friendly Dinner at St. Marks Anglican Church, Time and Ticket price TBA. More info. 775-8178.

Tuesday April 30: Consumers Association/Recycling Council of Manitoba panel How Does Your

Garden Grow?, with Vere Scott, compost expert; Nico Vanderbonk, organic gardener; Merv Pritchard, Plant Sciences, U of M, and Ward Teulon of NUTRILAWN. 7:30 p.m. Versatech Industries, 436 William Ave. More info. 942-4207.

Tuesday May 7: TREE regular meeting, 7:30 p.m. Unitarian Church, Sargent and Banning. More info. 956-1468.

Tuesday May 14: Manitoba Eco-Network Annual General Meeting. 7 p.m. Network Office, 201-128 James Ave. Short business meeting, and updates on the work of Manitoba groups. Bring your own cup!

May 15 DEADLINE FOR ADVERTISING AND EDITORIAL COPY FOR MAY-JUNE ISSUE OF ECO-JOURNAL.

Monday June 3: Environment Week begins, keep your eyes open for advertising of events!

Tuesday June 4: Manitoba Eco-Network Open House and Social Evening. 7 to 10 p.m. Drop by and see our (not so) new office! Refreshments and entertainment.....bring your own mug!

Thursday June 6: Eco-Network and associated Environment and Development groups: Opening night of A Manitoba Forum on Environment and Development: The Road to Brazil, 7 p.m. U of M. More info. 474-8501. (See article this issue).

Friday June 7: Environment and Development Conference continues.

June 14-20: Aboriginal Cultural Society International Pow-wow and Environmental Gathering. Theme is "Mother Earth's People." Pow-wow at Convention Centre, June 14 to 16. Environmental gathering at the Forks June 17-20, featuring Dr. David Suzuki and aboriginal women speakers. More info: 582-2383.

Saturday June 15: Winnipeg Co-ordinating Committee for Disarmament, Walk for Peace, starting at the Legislative Grounds. More info: 786-8938.

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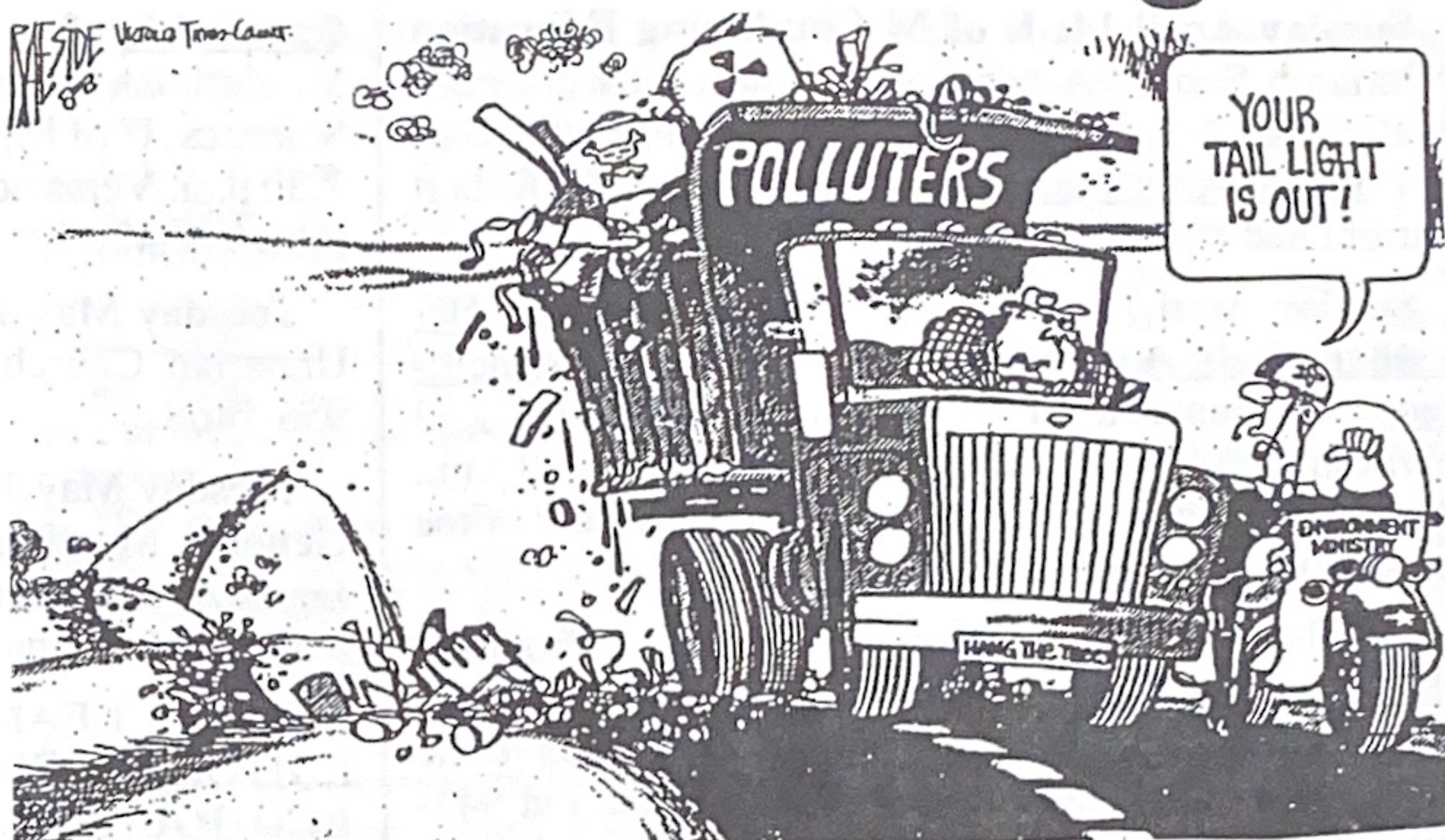
Editorial: Innovative new tax grab

Just how is the Environmental Innovations Fund being spent anyway? A partial answer to this question was provided courtesy of the *Winnipeg Free Press* this past week. It was revealed that the fund, created by a tax on non-returnable liquor bottles, and earmarked by the Filmon government for innovative projects by community groups and enterprising businesses, was instead being used to finance a number of government programs. The Department of Natural Resources was the biggest benefactor, according to the *Free Press* article, with Agriculture and Environment also sharing in the bounty.

The news started to come out when it was found that Jim Moore, campaign manager for cabinet Minister Jim Ernst's reelection in Charleswood, was awarded \$20,000 from the Fund in an untendered contract to study the recycling potential for newspapers in Winnipeg. The information was already readily available to the government, however, having been compiled several months before by the Resource Recovery Institute, the popular "blue bag" recycling group now folding for lack of funds.

These revelations are a disturbing signal

RESTE VIKTORIA Times-Courier



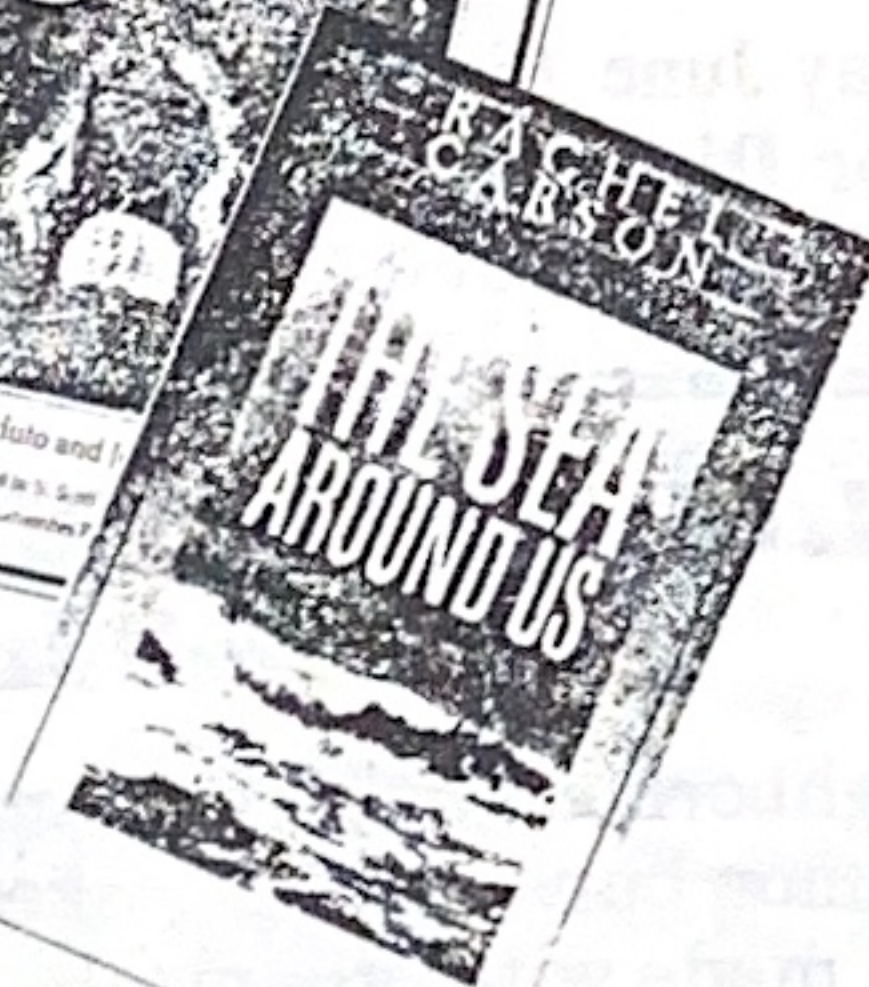
to taxpayers who were misled about how the Fund was to be utilized. This is particularly disturbing to environmental groups who could put money from the Fund to good use in our day-to-day work. In some cases, a grant from the Fund could mean the difference between staying in "business" and closing down a group's operations.

The Eco-Network currently has two ap-

plications in to the Environmental Innovations Fund. One can only hope that the government will see fit to spend some of its bottle-tax revenue on this particular worthy cause. Letters to the Environment Minister are in order!

Write: The Hon. Glen Cummings, Minister of Environment, Room 344 Legislative Building, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 0V8.

On the Shelf: New books at the Manitoba Eco-Network bookstore



Lessons of the Rain Forest \$23.95
Keepers of the Earth \$23.75
The Sea Around Us \$25.80

Where Have All The Birds Gone?

by John Terborgh \$18.95

Why are tropical migrant species disappearing from our forests? Can we save the birds that are left? Terborgh takes a more comprehensive view of migratory birds than is usual -- by asking how they spend their lives during the half-year they reside in the tropics.

The Real World of Technology

by Ursula Franklin \$8.95

Technology has built the house in which we all live. Compared to peoples of earlier times, we rarely have a chance to leave the house that technology has built and its continuing to build. In these essays, Ursula Franklin examines this house and describes the ways in which prescriptive technologies have turned our perception of reality upside down.

As Long As The Rivers Run: Hydroelectric Development and Native Communities in Western Canada

by James B. Waldram \$29.95

In this volume James B. Waldram examines the politics of hydroelectric dam construction focusing particularly on the negotiations and agreements between the developers and the Native residents. A detailed examination of the experience with hydro development of three Native communities -- South Indian Lake and Chemawawin (now Easterville) in Manitoba and Cumberland House in Saskatchewan.

Simple in Means, Rich in Ends: Practicing Deep Ecology

by Bill Devall \$16.50

In this work, Bill Devall provides guidelines for enriching lives without impoverishing the earth. He addresses ways to explore ecological self, engage in effective political action, and employ deep ecology principles in ones professional career.

Making peace with the earth

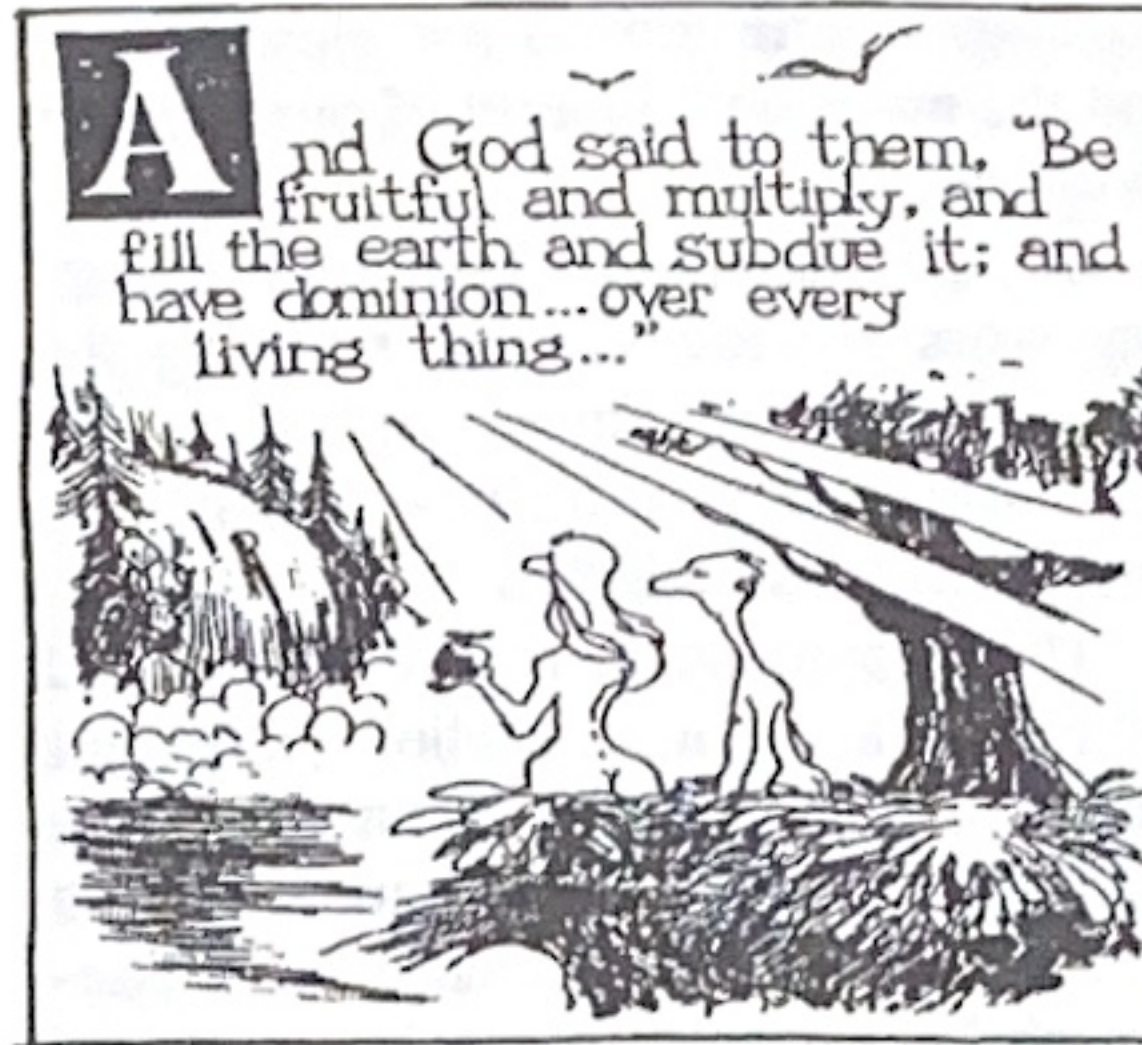
adapted from a speech by Steve Rauh at University of California's Restoring the Earth Conference

Recent world events underline the need to join our concept of environmental restoration with anti-militarism, or to put it more positively, with peace. Peace needs to become an explicit part of our environmental ethic because, as has become clear in the Gulf War, the priorities of the military state can no longer co-exist with environmentalism.

As Dr. Martin Luther King has said, the choice is not between violence and non-violence -- it is between non-violence or non-existence. Dr. King's warning becomes ever more compelling and more prophetic as the violence against the earth increases the pace of species extinction and habitat degradation.

In restoration we turn toward life as partnership. Partnership with other species that inhabit the earth. In restoration we turn toward nature as co-creators.

In the military state we cultivate killing and destruction, and we *legitimize* the destruction. But the social rationalization for



"giving" us the right to kill violates human nature. As we are to human nature -- so are we to the earth.

I have been working for ten years in the peace and environment movements to get them to pay attention to their common goals and the source -- violence -- of their common problem.

There has been some movement. SANE/Freeze adopted a resolution at their 1986 national convention calling for a major shift of military funds toward environmental restoration. Environmental organizations are working on the nuclear arms race.



But if the earth's habitat is to survive we must do more. Restoration means saying -- loudly and clearly -- *no* to militarism in Central America. It means saying *no* to our military role in the Gulf and in the Middle East. It means saying *no* to the legitimized violence of the state that claims the right to take life.

Restoration means saying *yes* to the opportunities and options that humanity has to reinhabit the earth, to relearn the wonder of nature, and to give to life the poetry and hope that is in abundance on our small home.

Stop the spray!

Until the day comes when human health and environmental protection become a priority at City Hall we all have to endure the entophobia of those in power. Like it or not, plans to continue with mosquito fogging, spraying for cankerworms and Dutch Elm disease and various other forms of introducing biocides into our community and our environment remain in place even while a city task force looks at alternatives.

Because of the hard work of many activists in the fledgling days of Manitoba environmentalism we do have one effective tool at our disposal for preventing spraying -- registering an objection so your immediate vicinity will be exempt. The City is supposed to respect a buffer zone of 100 metres for mosquito fogging and 30 metres for other toxic applications.

Two or three objections can exempt a whole city block from the mosquito fogging, so you might want to encourage your neighbours to use a copy of the enclosed tear-off to send to the Insect Control Branch. Much of the Wolseley area has been exempted entirely because of the large number of objectors. With a little local action your neighbourhood could once again become a safe place for Purple

Martins, ladybugs and humans.

The city will usually send confirmation of your objection in the mail. Remember to keep a lookout during spray days -- the city has been less than conscientious about

buffer zones in past years. Also don't forget to phone the mayor's office and your councillor to remind them what a waste of tax money and risk to human health the spray programs are.

The City of Winnipeg
Insect Control Branch
3 Grey Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2L 1V2

Dear People:

Please excuse my property at _____
from any and all spraying of insecticides, herbicides and biological agents of any kind. While I respect the rights of others to expose themselves and their families to these toxins I hope you will respect my right to be excluded. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Attitudes need to change: conference

Continued from Page 1

not just in food quality and soil fertility, but also, one senses, in great personal satisfaction for those who are engaged in it.

The workshops and discussions throughout the conference demonstrated that a sustainable agriculture consists not simply in the techniques used in growing and harvesting food, but in a much larger context of our entire society's relationship to food and to the land: our attitudes about health, about wealth, and about our fellow species (both human and non-human).

Change needed

It's becoming painfully clear that a sustainable agriculture will not be achieved under the standards that currently prevail. While inputs of expensive petrochemical-based fertilizers and pesticides are spiralling upwards, prices paid to producers are creating a farming crisis. At the same time a majority of the urban consumers that dictate the low price regime, are increasingly ignorant of the source of their food.

Every year, economics forces more and more farmers off the land, while tonnes of

precious Prairie topsoil are blown away, and the nutritional quality of our food deteriorates.

OPAM's annual conference and day-to-day work are focussed on restoring this badly-battered system and providing support for producers who are switching to one which is more sustainable.

Their approach is non-confrontational: "We don't say that conventional farming is necessarily bad, just that we have an alternative method which works for us" says Scott.

Attendance at the conference was diverse — organic farmers and gardeners, buyers and sellers of organic foods, government ag. reps, even people advertising "environmentally-friendly" products for sale registered. There were also conventional farmers eager for information and seeing hope for possible solutions to their own problems. One man from Roblin heard about OPAM for the first time when the event was advertised on the radio and decided to find out more about organic farming. As he put it, "We've got to do something...the situation's getting pretty bad out there".

He and his young son listened attentively and took copious notes as Dr. Stuart Hill of McDonald College in Montreal gave an absorbing keynote address on the importance of a healthy agricultural system. With the aid of slides and humour, Dr. Hill painted an almost magical picture of the life in a healthy plot of soil — from tiny one-celled creatures interacting in beneficial ways, to the larger arthropods and earthworms, along with quantities of organic matter — all doing their part to create a fantastically balanced ecosystem.

An enchanting notion, but one which is extremely practical, and even necessary if we are to sustain an agriculture into the coming decades and beyond. According to Hill, healthy soil conserves moisture, absorbs and helps neutralize toxins, and increases the production of beneficial nutrients — all essential as the Prairies face year upon year of drought and ever-increasing toxic loading in the atmosphere. A healthy soil is also economically sound: it reduces the need for expensive nitrogen fertilizers and, in conjunction with judicious timing of seeding, can also reduce the need for herbicides and pesticides as it supports natural systems of weed and pest control.

What about getting to a sustainable system? It may not be easy says Stuart Hill, but the good news is that many

of the requirements are readily available to us, or can be made available if we so choose. The motivating factor is the determination of each individual, working within the community, to challenge conventional notions of our relationship to the environment. For example, to see ourselves more as part of an operating agricultural ecosystem rather than attempting to control it.

Marketing and education

One of Hill's requirements, that organically-produced food be readily available for purchase, especially in urban areas where the large markets are, was the subject of workshops at the conference. Paul Chorney of Harvest Natural Foods Collective in Winnipeg (also a member group) spoke about Harvest's experience in retailing organic food.

Bette Scott and OPAM dream of an organic food outlet based in Virden, one which would facilitate the marketing of Manitoba organic foods around the province, as well as providing an organic food alternative for the local population.

Connections between producers and purchasers are vital, not just for physical access to products, but also for information exchange and education about the realities of food production and life on the farm. One of OPAM's new projects, just getting off the ground, is an Organic Agriculture Resource Centre and Demonstration Farm, planned for the farm of Celia and Robin Guilford, near Pilot Mound. It will serve as a place where prospective organic farmers can get information, and where people can observe examples of organic farming methods in progress — an exciting idea, and one which deserves our support.

Resources:

Organic Producers Association of Manitoba, P.O. Box 687, Virden, MB R0M 2C0. Harvest Collective, 877 Westminister Ave. Winnipeg, MB R3G 1B3. Marquis Project, 200-107 7th. St. Brandon, MB R7A 3S5.

Synergy, a magazine about sustainable farming on the Prairies, (review next issue).

Books: *Pesticide Alert* by Laurie Mott and Karen Snyder, pub. by Sierra Club Books, \$9.95; *Agricide* by Michael Fox, Schocken Books, \$11.50; *Organic Agriculture Directory*, Les Editions Humus, Inc. \$6; *The Soul of Soil* by Grace Gershuny and Joseph Smillie, Gaia Services, \$15.50.....all available at the Eco-Network bookstore. **Plus.....**lots of material on agriculture, gardening and composting available in our resource centre.

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A Manitoba stop on the road to Brazil

by Barbara Eros

A three-day forum at the University of Manitoba this summer will help prepare non-government organizations for participation at a United Nations conference on environment and development in 1992.

Sponsored by local environment and development groups, "A Manitoba Forum on Environment and Development -- the Road to Brazil" will promote citizen involvement and allow an opportunity for Manitobans to become more informed about the UN and parallel non-government processes leading up to the "Earth Summit."

The Earth Summit or United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June of 1992 is expected to play a major role in setting the agenda for countries to address environment and development issues into the next century. The summit will be an opportunity for nations of the world to work collectively and co-operatively on the issues as well as a unique opportunity for non-government organizations and grass roots activists to have input into this important policy-making process.

The preparatory process leading to the Brazil '92 conference is well underway. In

addition to the events which will formally be part of the UN policy process there are a number of non-government processes being developed nationally and internationally. There will be a major conference of non-government organizations parallel to the Earth Summit in Brazil.

The Manitoba forum at the U of M from June 6 to 8, 1991 will help mobilize our participation in the international preparations. Open to everyone, the event will include plenary sessions, speakers, workshops and an open public forum. It will also be an opportunity to examine environment and development issues that are critical to Manitobans.

Several non-government groups, including the Development Education Project of the International Centre for Students at U of M, Manitoba Eco-Network, Manitoba Council for International Co-operation, Natural Resources Institute, the Winnipeg Branch of the United Nations Association and YM-YWCA International Development Branch are working co-operatively to organize the conference. The conference is made possible in part by funding from Environment Canada (Environment Week '91) and the Canadian International Development Agency Public Participation Program.

The conference is being organized to increase understanding of the global nature of these problems as well as to stimulate action concerning environment and development issues leading up to and beyond the Brazil summit.

For more information contact Barbara Eros, Conference Co-ordinator, International Centre for Students, 541 University Crescent, University of Manitoba, R3T 2N2 (204) 474-8501

Responsibility rests with Cabinet

Continued from Page 1

- and jobs to foreign interests;
- \$ reduce carbon dioxide emissions to control global warming;
- \$ introduce a strong Environmental Assessment Act, including an Environmental Auditor General. Bill C-78 fails to improve the deficiencies of current EARP guidelines;
- \$ provide fair and prompt settlement of land claims;
- \$ preserve 12 per cent of land through a national parks system;
- \$ improve municipal infrastructures, especially inadequate sewage and water systems;
- \$ provide a coherent plan for alternate energy and conservation.

The ultimate responsibility for these failures rests with Cabinet. Each one of these failures is a national disgrace. In combination, they are an outrageous and intolerable insult to Canadians. Members of Cabinet who have the slightest understanding of the magnitude of the insult should either resign or call for an immedi-

ate Cabinet decision to halt the discharge of persistent toxins into Canadian waters.

There is mounting public perception that business pressure and cabinet secrecy are being used to undermine the Green Plan and that this was the reason for the original delay and then another round of consultations.

Canadian governments must cure their myopic approach to environmental protection and their attempts to dismantle the process of environmental assessment, which is the foundation of truly sustainable development. Short term gain does not lead to economic prosperity.

The wholesale sell-out of Canadian forests and the continued pollution of water and air is economic madness for which taxpayers are required to pay, in billions of dollars for clean-up.

It is not the future of the planet which is at stake, it is the future of its inhabitants.

Helen McCullough is president of the Winnipeg Water Protection Group

VOLUNTEER JOB OPPORTUNITIES!

Index Researcher -- The Network is seeking a person (or persons) to compile a subject index of articles in our periodical and newsletter collection. The idea is to facilitate use of the collection by visitors to our resource centre. This task has great educational potential! Work time can be flexible within our regular office hours.

Eco-Journal Book Reviewer -- Write a short review of one of the new books in our bookstore. Must be able to write clearly and critically and must be willing to meet a deadline (June 15 for the next issue).

Eco-Journal Reporters/Writers -- Cover an event, write a profile or give us your opinion. Talk to the editor about your idea. Original articles preferred over reprint suggestions.

If you have an interest in any of these positions call the Network (956-1468) for an interview.



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