

ECO-JOURNAL

Volume 8, Number 5

November/December 1998

EIGHTH YEAR FOR AWARDS

This year's Manitoba Eco-Network Environmental Awards were presented at a friendly evening of beautiful music by Winnipeg "world music" band, Vijaya, and of delicious desserts contributed pot-luck style by the people present. Mennonite Central Committee graciously provided the use of its Board Room for the event, an excellent location.

This is the eighth year of our environmental award, and the roster of deserving recipients is growing! This is also the first time that we have honoured a person who has already received the award.

Alice Chambers - a resident of Pinawa, received so many nominations that it definitely wasn't a contest, a real testament to the esteem in which this tireless worker is held by fellow environmentalists. Preferring to work behind the scenes, scrutinizing and commenting on environmental proposals in careful detail, and in the process amassing and dispensing an awesome amount of information on everything from pesticides to forestry to waste management to endangered species, Alice Chambers is a name one will rarely encounter in the media. Yet almost everyone in the environmental community (and in relevant government departments) knows and respects Alice and has drawn upon her expertise and knowledge of issues at some time in their work.

Our challenge was what to present to Alice, since she already has the actual award. The solution arrived at was - to plant a tree (Alice thought this was an excellent idea). The next question was where. After some thought, we approached the St. Norbert Arts and Cultural Centre, which has well-kept and beautiful grounds adjacent to an old river bottom forest along the LaSalle. In addition, Alice has family members who have been active in preserving and developing the site and Centre. SNACC agreed wholeheartedly, and the next step will be for Alice to pick a favourite native tree species, and for us to consult with SNACC's site committee

about where to plant it. (Thanks to City Forester, Mike Allen for some helpful consultation about suitable tree species and planting tips).

The "individual male" award was presented to **Dave Kattenburg** - this Brandon activist has made news of late with his bid for the post of Brandon Mayor in the recent election, on a platform of economic democracy.

In presenting Dave's award, Toby Maloney who until recently was making his home in Boissevain in Western Manitoba, spoke

of how Dave's name just keeps popping up in any environmental or community development discussions in that part of the province. And this is not surprising: Dave has been active in mobilizing public response to the proposed Maple Leaf hog processing plant in the City, and its implications for the environment and community development. As well he was the co-co-ordinator of Brandon's Healthy Community group, known as Vision Quest.

Dave's other achievements include the creation and facilitation of the Mixedwood Forest Research Advisory Committee, a pro-active response to Louisiana Pacific's mill and forestry activities in the Swan River area, out of which is growing an important body of research on the Mixedwood forest habitat.

This year's "group" award goes to **Anishinaabe Turtle Island Protectors** - an organization of First Nations' representatives on the East Side of Lake Winnipeg, spearheaded by Garry Raven of the Hollow Water First Nation, and assisted in its work by Don Sullivan of the Manitoba Future Forest Alliance. ATIP organized an effective response to Tembec's (Pine Falls Paper Company) bid to build an all-weather road up the east side of Lake Winnipeg to access more forests to feed its Pine Falls mill.

ATIP successfully pointed out that the Company's environmental assessment was fatally flawed, and that it did not address the interests of the First Nations communities which occupy this wilderness area. Garry spoke about the number of groups that have been visiting his community over the last year, travelling to the area to learn more about the way of life and the environment on the East side of the Lake. (One such visiting group was the Manitoba Eco-Network Youth Caucus Ecotopia '98). Anishinaabe Turtle Island Protectors is now working to compile information on Traditional Use Areas and Traditional Ecological Knowledge on the East side of Lake Winnipeg.



Garry Raven accepts the "group" award on behalf of Anishinaabe Turtle Island Protectors.

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Volume 8, Number 5
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1998
(date of issue: December 1, 1998)

ECO-JOURNAL

is published five times per year by the
Manitoba Eco-Network/Reseau
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The Manitoba Eco-Network is affiliated
with the Canadian Environmental Network.

Individual Subscriptions to **Eco-Journal** are
available at a cost of \$20 or as part of a
supporting membership to the Manitoba
Eco-Network at a cost of \$25. Group mem-
bership dues are \$40. Advertising rates are
available upon request.

Canada Publication Mail Sales Agreement
#0530212, Postage paid at Winnipeg, MB.

The opinions expressed by contributors are
their own and do not represent the views of
the Manitoba Eco-Network or its member
groups.

CEN ANNUAL MEETING - A REMINDER OF OUR TASK

by Anne Lindsey

This year's Canadian Environmental Net-
work Annual General Assembly (AGA),
held in Quebec in October, once again
brought out what the National Network can
be at its very best. The information ex-
change, learning, and "networking" that
went on was truly inspiring. However, the
gathering also highlighted the many areas
of structural difficulty which the organiza-
tion faces, dealt with in a series of challeng-
ing, but healthy discussions at the Busi-
ness Meeting.

The CEN plays an important role in the
lives of many grassroots environmental
groups across the country, even though its
name is not well-known, and its operations
perhaps less so still. Any group or indi-
vidual that has benefitted from its connec-
tion to its regional Network (here, the Mani-
toba Eco-Network), or who has gained in-
formation from its Network on events and
groups in other provinces, owes at least
some gratitude to the National Network of
which we are a part. It is through the CEN
that the provincial (or affiliate) networks
gain some funding from the federal govern-
ment, and gain access to a wealth of knowl-
edge and experience from coast to coast to
coast. It is also often through the efforts of
the CEN that people from across the coun-
try have the opportunity to participate in
federal government consultations on a va-
riety of environmental issues, ensuring that
a wide diversity of perspectives may be
heard.

An outstanding highlight of this year's
conference was the presence of Binky
Thomas and Jesse Ides, elders from the
Makah Nation in Washington state, where
a battle is raging over plans by the Makah
to hunt grey whale as their treaty right.

As Alec Stuart describes in his article on
page 10, their presentation illuminated a
seldom-heard perspective on resource and
treaty issues. Yes, the Makah clearly have
treaty rights to hunt the grey whale, of this
fact there is no doubt. But Binky, along with
other elders of the Nation, is urging the tribal
government to forgo these rights. As she
put it so simply: "In times past, the whales
have helped us, now it is our time to help
the whales". She cited the near-demise of
the whale population, the industrial pres-
sure they are encountering in their winter-
ing habitat along Baja California (Mitsubishi
is proposing a giant salt mine which could
have severe impacts), and the fact that the
Makah don't need to eat whale meat any
more, their diets have changed. In her view,
the cultural aspects of the whale hunt, and
the challenging physical and mental prepa-
ration which must be undertaken by the
whalers, including traditional seamanship
on the difficult waters of the Pacific North-
west Coast, can be carried out without the
actual taking of whale life. She and her fam-
ily have suffered for these views at the
hands of the tribal government. And envi-
ronmentalists who have taken their side to
protect the whales run the risk of being
branded racist for "not supporting treaty
rights".

The presentation by the Makah elders
sparked a thoughtful and reflective discus-
sion on the part of the 100 or so people
gathered in a circle before them, about how
to better understand these issues, how to
stand by what you believe, and at the same
time, build solidarity between our commu-
nities. How it's crucial for all of us not to
accept the simple dichotomies presented by

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1998-1999

Eco-Network Steering Committee

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RAY BURNS - MANITOBA NATURALISTS SOCIETY
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HARRY MESMAN - MANITOBA FEDERATION OF LABOUR
ALEXANDRA MORRISON - RESOURCE CONSERVATION MANITOBA
STEVE RAUH - HARVEST COLLECTIVE

OUR FOOD, OUR HEALTH, OUR FUTURE: A CONFERENCE ON ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

COMING SOON: FEBRUARY 26 & 27, 1999

Manitoba Eco-Network, along with the Organic Producers Association of Manitoba, the U of W Students Association, Metis Horticulture and Heritage Society and the Winnipeg Vegetarian Association are joining to hold this landmark event at the University of Winnipeg. Our goal is to bring together producers, consumers, retailers, processors and anybody else who's interested to discuss and learn about the many facets of organic agriculture. Workshop topics include marketing organics, buying locally, seed saving, and pesticide trespassing, amongst others.

Our keynote speakers are horse farmer and highly respected editor of the Small Farm Journal, Lynn Miller, who will deliver the



opening address "Our Food, Our Health, Our Future" on Friday evening, and Winnipeg's own Pat Mooney on the Privatization of Nature - latest developments in genetic engineering, and their implications for the food supply.

This promises to be an exciting and invigorating event, complete with organic food (of course), excellent entertainment, and a dynamic trade show. We hope to catalyze the start of a Sustainable Agriculture Support Network.

Interested in attending? Call us at 947-6511 to ensure that you receive registration materials well in advance. **ECO**

AWARDS RECOGNIZE CONTRIBUTIONS

continued from page 1 ...

Humboldt's Legacy - formerly known as Green Earth, North America's oldest "Ecological Department Store" received an award in the "special" category. Created in 1988 to fill a niche for sustainable products, the store continues to live up to its mandate for carrying a stock of clothing, stationary, household products, tools, personal care products, (and much more) which is carefully selected for low environmental impact and attention to social justice.

Its owners, Willi and Kris Kurtz have also developed a firm reputation for providing reliable information on environmentally-friendly products. In accepting the award, Willi reflected on this, the 10th

anniversary of the store, and how we as a community in Manitoba still have a long way to go if we wish to achieve sustainability. He paid tribute to the various small community-development businesses which have developed and flourished over the past several years in the City, and to the customers at the store who have shared in Humboldt's Legacy's mission for a better planet.

The Manitoba Eco-Network Environmental Award was established in 1990 to salute "significant contributions to the protection and awareness of Manitoba's environment". Recipients are chosen by the Steering Committee of the Network from amongst nominations submitted from the community. **ECO**

OFFICE SPACE

AVAILABLE FOR RENT IN THE HISTORIC EXCHANGE DISTRICT

Office space is available in the second floor premises currently shared by the Manitoba Eco-Network, Resource Conservation Manitoba, Taiga Rescue Network and the First Nations Environmental Network. Excellent bus connections, friendly working environment, shared meeting space, kitchen and washroom facilities. Hardwood floors. Freight elevator. Rent is reasonable and negotiable.

**For more information contact Anne or Jan
at 947-6511 or Randall at 925-3777.**

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR ANNUAL APPEAL!

If you haven't already done so, consider sending a donation (any size welcome!) to this year's Annual Appeal Campaign. Once a year, we approach our members and supporters with a request for a financial contribution. Monies raised in this appeal go directly to supporting our work on behalf of Manitoba's environment, including the production of Eco-Journal.

Your support is crucial to the continued existence of the Eco-Network. Charitable tax receipts will be issued.

**Thank you to everyone who has
contributed so far!**

THE RIVER OF LIFE CUT OFF FOR THE CROSS LAKE CREE

by Will Braun, Mennonite Central Committee

The flow of the mighty Nelson River translates into toasted bread, lit streets and hot showers for Manitobans. The waters that were once the life source of Cree people in northern Manitoba now sustain industry and contemporary lifestyles. The Churchill-Nelson Hydro-Electric Project, initiated in the 1970s, has largely severed the Native people's cultural relationship to the waters. Where the river was once spiritually connected to the Cree people, it is now connected to southern hydro consumers via 900 km long transmission lines.

While Manitobans benefit from power rates among the lowest in the world, and Manitoba Hydro, a Crown utility, enjoys huge profits (\$110.5 million last year), the community of Cross Lake is left to pay the debilitating human costs of development.

Of the \$1 billion worth of electricity produced by Manitoba Hydro last year, 80% came from the Churchill-Nelson project. As one of several Aboriginal communities on the Churchill-Nelson river system, the Pimicikamak (Cross Lake) Cree Nation would like Hydro customers to know what is happening at the 'other end' as light switches in the south are casually flicked on.

Ecological Imbalances

Hydro development has resulted in flooding, a reversal of seasonal water regimes, and rapid fluctuations in water levels. The ecological imbalance this creates has far-reaching effects on the people who have depended on the land and water for their very being since time immemorial. Trapping, fishing, and hunting are dramatically affected. Kids get rashes from swimming. Mercury toxins pollute the water. These impacts have led to unemployment, erosion of culture, and social breakdown. "Our whole way of life has been changed, in fact, destroyed," says Tommy Monias, Cross Lake Band employee.

Fellow Band member George Ross adds, "The South is benefiting at the expense of our misery." The people of Cross Lake live the consequences of our electrically endowed southern lifestyle.

NFA Recognized Adverse Effects

In 1977, the Northern Flood Agreement (NFA) was signed by federal and provincial government, Manitoba Hydro, and the affected Bands. It recognized that the Bands would experience adverse effects, but promised that they would 'be dealt with fairly and equitably.' The NFA made provision for land transfer (4 acres of new reserve land for every acre affected), compensation, and extensive community development. For 21 years government and Hydro have delayed negotiations, evaded implementation, and taken refuge in legal processes.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples concludes that, "The NFA ... history has been marked by little or no action in implementation of NFA obligations and a long, drawn-out (and continuing) process of arbitration to force governments to implement their obligations".

Government numbers show that 14,000 hectares of land are owing to Cross Lake under the NFA. To date, none of the land has been transferred.

A comprehensive environmental impact assessment has never

been done, and governments have neglected their responsibility for environmental monitoring prescribed under the NFA.

Though many small compensation claims have been settled, more substantive NFA provisions remain unaddressed.

The 1991 report of the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry states that the NFA is a modern day treaty and as such, 'must be interpreted liberally from the Indian perspective so that its true spirit and intent are honoured.' Such an interpretation would centre around the stated goal of the NFA to work towards "the eradication of mass poverty and mass unemployment."

Export Revenues

The energy industry is moving toward deregulation, increased trade, and fierce competition. In the last fiscal year, 28.5% of Manitoba Hydro revenue came from export, mostly to the US. There is mounting pressure and incentive for Hydro to overrun justice, as well as ecological considerations, in the pursuit of an economic edge.

Hydro and governments have tried hard to extinguish their sizable liabilities under the NFA. Four of five Cree bands that signed the NFA have since entered agreements which discontinue many of their NFA rights in favour of large one-time cash and land settlements. Having withstood immense pressure from Hydro and government, the Cross Lake First Nation resolutely maintains that implementation of the original agreement, which is to extend for the life of the project, is the only honourable approach.

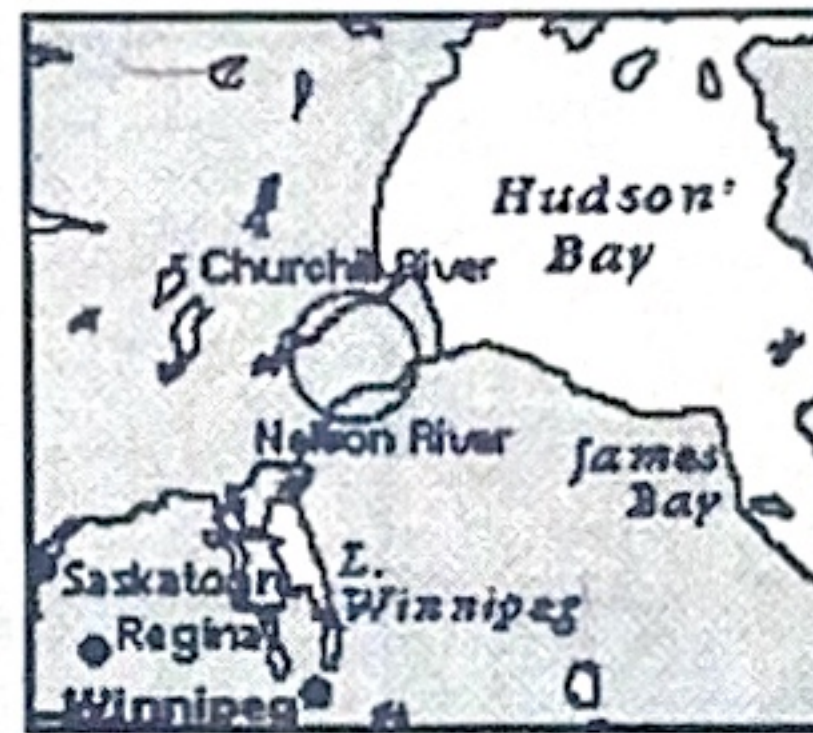
Injustices Are Too Monstrous

Cross Lake Chief Roland Robinson says his people are taking a solid stand: "The injustices are too monstrous. The delays are too long. The deaths are too many. Despite efforts which have already begun, our voice will not be silenced."

On October 30, the people of Cross Lake asserted inherent jurisdiction over their land and lives, publicly signing their Hydro Payment Law. The new law provides community members with the option of paying their hydro bills into a community trust fund rather than to Manitoba Hydro, which has huge outstanding debts to Cross Lake for unmet NFA obligations. By assertion of inherent rights and responsibilities, and by defiance of beholdenness to Manitoba Hydro, Cross Lake takes a bold and historically significant step toward an honourable place for their people in society.

It is in the interest of governments and Hydro to keep the public in the dark regarding the effects of hydro production, and they have been effective in doing so. But with increasing involvement of church, environmental, and human rights groups, the era in which northern Aboriginal people suffer without public notice or concern may be over.

Those living at the other end of the transmission line are asking us to become aware of the unaccounted human costs they pay for the hydro we use, and to take responsibility for our use of hydro. The people of Cross Lake graciously invite us to stand with them in seeking a relationship of honour and respect between themselves and the rest of society.



GREEN COMMUTING PROJECT

by Toby Maloney

Many environmentalists have already opted for more ecologically sustainable means of getting to work, by replacing or severely restricting car use in favour of cycling, walking, or public transit. Sometimes these decisions have required a degree of planning or effort that many citizens are unlikely to make at this time.

Some of the barriers are structural — planning problems, work and home locations, and schedules that favour car use. But other barriers include awareness, small obstructions at the workplace itself, the absence of a culture that respects alternatives, and perceptions about safety or the efficacy of a particular mode of transportation. Hopefully some of these can be addressed collectively at workplaces with a new two year pilot program of Resource Conservation Manitoba.

The Green Commuting Project aims to reduce production of greenhouse gases by providing practical encouragement for employees at ten work sites in Winnipeg to use means of transportation other than individual vehicles. The selected sites may include private sector work places, government departments and institutions.

Why a small effort to curb greenhouse gas emissions here? Because we have to start somewhere!

• Leading scientists have determined that greenhouse gases are already disrupting climate. July 1998 was the 15th consecutive month that recorded a new record for average global surface temperature. Extreme events such as droughts, floods and hurricanes

are occurring with increasing frequency.

• In Manitoba transportation activity — commercial and personal — accounts for 38% of greenhouse gas emissions.

• In Winnipeg the vehicle occupancy rate during morning rush hour is calculated to be 1.2 persons per vehicle.

It's not our intent to judge people or employers, but to offer support for making environmentally-conscious transportation choices. Starting in 1999 the project staff will be contacting selected larger institutions, businesses and government departments and their respective unions or employee associations.

It's expected the benefits to employers could include potential savings through improved job satisfaction, improved employee health and therefore increased productivity.

Resource Conservation Manitoba (RCM), founded in 1985 as the Recycling Council of Manitoba, is a non-profit centre for applied sustainability. Its aim is to put into practice the best ideas for moving towards sustainability and to respond in a practical way to critical issues identified by scientists, and environmentalists.

The Green Commuting Project is funded by Environment Canada's Action 21 fund, and private sources. The project is a two year pilot for western Canada. For more information contact RCM at 925-3777 or email rcm@escape.ca. RCM shares the Environmental Resource Centre at #2-70 Albert Street with the Eco-Network and other environmental groups.

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CITIZENS FOR BETTER PUBLIC TRANSIT IN WINNIPEG

Member Group Profile by Gord McGonigal

"Winnipeg Transit is a partial utility-partial department that continues to cost the City money." This blunt statement casting transit as a public liability comes from a recent report to Winnipeg City Council by its Committee on Tax Reform. The report continues, "Council should give serious consideration to a delivery method that will curtail or eliminate the annual cost it currently experiences." Is this suggesting the elimination of the transit subsidy, or some form of privatisation for Winnipeg Transit?

In addition, several City reports (TransPlan 2010 and the Strategic Infrastructure Reinvestment Policy) have called for an independent body — at arm's length from government — to oversee Winnipeg's buses and roads. Free from direct political accountability, it is anyone's guess what an independent agency would mean for transit service in Winnipeg. Clearly, a battle is looming over the future of Winnipeg's public transit system.

On the plus side, Mayor Murray has been a strong and knowledgeable supporter of the transit system. As councillor, he served on the Ad Hoc Committee on Transit Matters, and is credited with at least one innovation (the Power Hour transfer) that resulted in the first increase in ridership in decades.

Enter the Citizens for Better Public Transit in Winnipeg. Formed a year ago, our group seeks to promote the economic, social, and environmental advantages of public transportation, with the aim of enhancing and safeguarding the transit system in Winnipeg. We monitor transit developments, and represent transit riders' concerns at various meetings. CBPTW also hopes to provide a forum for discussion between Winnipeg Transit and its riders. Recent activities have included meeting with a Winnipeg Transit manager to discuss scheduling, and participation in the Public Service Project's privatisation awareness campaign. We have also polled our membership, and presented their priorities to Mayor Murray. These include reinstating discount fares for seniors and students when paying cash, and traffic priority measures to favour buses.

In these uncertain times, it is important that we organise to protect the public transit system. Meetings of the CBPTW are held monthly, at the EcoNetwork office. Anyone sharing our goals is welcome to attend. For more details about CBPTW and transit issues in Winnipeg, please see our WWW page at <http://www.mbnet.mb.ca/~mcgonig/cbptw>, or contact Gord McGonigal at 284-7727 or Jim Jaworski at 944-8827.

ECO

FOREST MANAGEMENT IN MANITOBA: ANNUAL ALLOWABLE CUTS COMPROMISE DIVERSITY

by Dan Soprovich

Annual Allowable Cut - A familiar term to those of us who take an interest in logging plans and environmental assessment of the long-term impacts of logging our forests. It is defined as the amount of wood that Manitoba Forestry Branch determines can be logged each year within an area. But what does it really mean to the wonderful and diverse forms of life to be found in these forests? As a former Department of Natural Resources wildlife biologist who dealt often with industry and government foresters and biologists, and the environmental community, my experience is that the vast majority does not understand how this figure is derived. This is not surprising. Consider that most wildlife biologists, myself included, would much rather 'play' with warm cuddly lifeforms than suffer the mental anguish of wading through numbers, models and statistics.

Many of you are likely to be asking yourself "Why is it important for me to understand the derivation of something so technical?". My answer: A general understanding of the archaic manner by which Manitoba calculates the Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) allows one to understand the landscape (or large) scale implications to our biological diversity. And to understand how meaningful change in the management of our forests is constrained by the current usage of AAC in the forest industry.

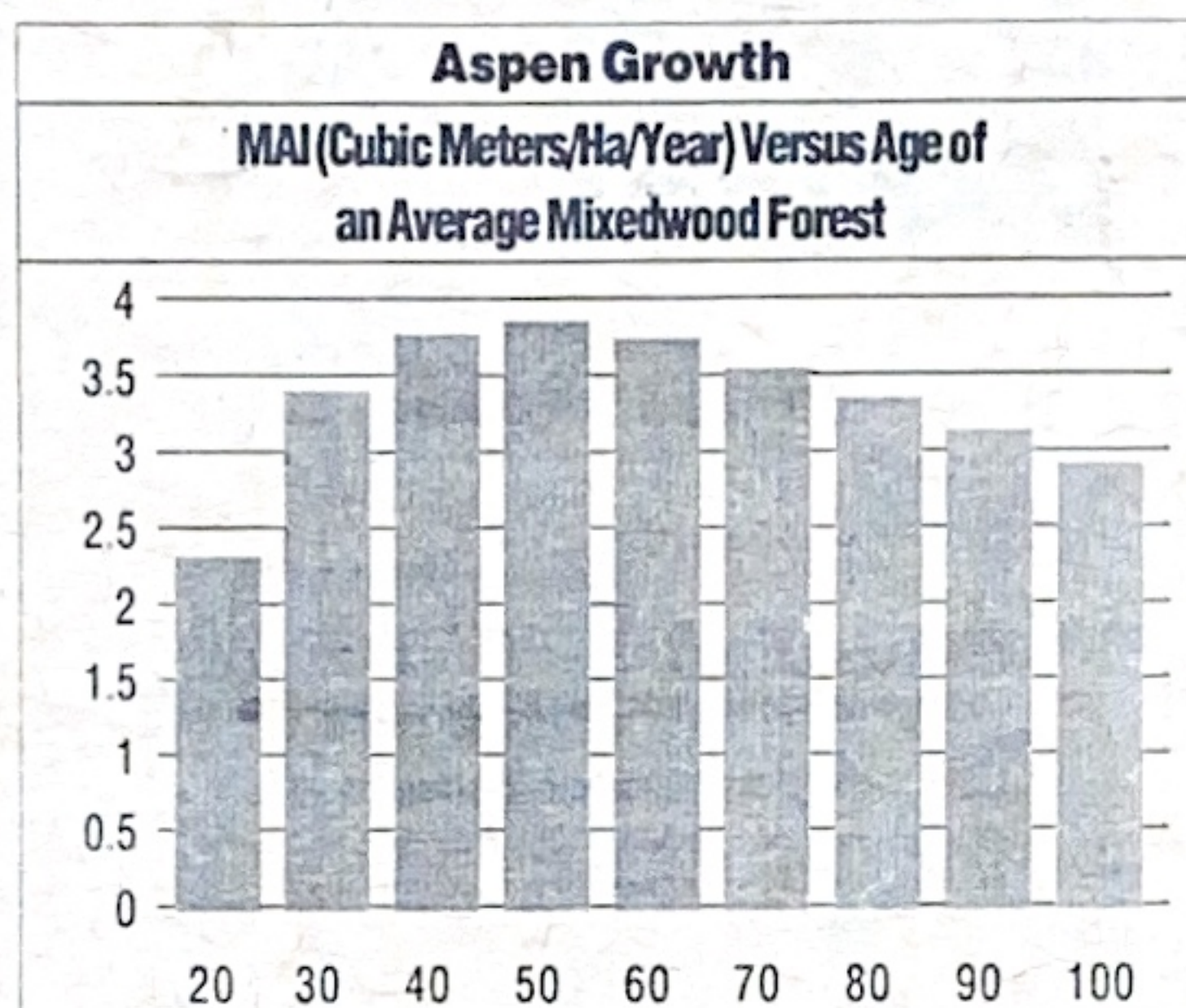
Rotation Age

Foremost, we must understand the meaning of the term 'rotation age'. This is simply the age at which the forest manager wants to log the forest. For a rotation age of 100 years, the forest would be cut at 100 years of age and then allowed to grow for another 100 years at which time it would be cut, or 'rotated', again (presumably ad infinitum). Because the rate of growth varies among species and in relation to site conditions, rotation age will also vary. For example, black spruce forests growing on well-drained clay soils in the Porcupine Mountains have a rotation age of 80 years; those growing on poorly-drained organic soils have a rotation age of 140 years. Most importantly for this discussion, rotation age will also depend on the objectives of the forest manager.

Because trees grow at different rates through their life cycle, and because trees die and fall over as a forest changes ecologically with time, there is an age at which a forest can be rotated to produce the greatest amount of fiber for industry. For example, data on the aspen mixedwood forests of Saskatchewan suggest that the greatest long-term supply of aspen fiber can be obtained by cutting the forest every 50 years. Because such a rotation age would eliminate all forests older than 50 years of age across a landscape, this is known as 'short-rotation'.

Exactly what are the Manitoba government's objectives in calculating AACs for our forests? While there are objectives at both landscape and stand (site-specific) scales, perhaps the most important question for our discussion is "What mix of forest ages can we expect the AAC to produce in these managed landscapes?". We can address this question with an example from a Manitoba

Forestry Branch report entitled "Provincial Forest Inventory Annual Allowable Cut Procedures". This example is for a black spruce forest growing on a good site with a rotation age of 80 years; age structure of the forest is displayed at 10 year intervals of cutting. Forestry Branch uses the term 'cutting class' to categorize the



forest into broad age classes (eg. for our black spruce forest, cutting class 2 encompasses ages 16-30 (15 years) while cutting class 3 encompasses ages 31-70 (40 years)). Note that our black spruce forest initially has only 32 hectares of 'overmature' (cutting class 5) forest, and that this 'decadent' (a term that industrial foresters often use to describe old-growth) forest is quickly liquidated. Most importantly, the impact of cutting this forest at the calculated AAC is to ensure that nowhere within the landscape is the forest allowed to age beyond 'mature' (cutting class 4), where mature is the rotation

age of 80 years. Note also the Forestry Branch concept of a "normal" forest wherein none of the forest is allowed to age beyond rotation age (i.e. to become cutting class 5). This 'normal' forest is actually what is known as a forest regulated to rotation age.

In this particular case, exactly one-eightieth of the forest area would be one year old, two years old, etc. to 80 years of age; the

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area in cutting class 0 is that which has not been replanted or has not regenerated naturally. The objective of such a forest age structure is to provide a perfectly stable annual supply of fiber to industry. Of course, such a forest is more theoretical than real. For example, the 1980 fire in the Porcupine Mountains consumed more than 40% of the productive forest thereby requiring an immediate recalculation of the AAC.

The effect of applying an AAC in the real world depends very much on the initial age structure of the forest. If there is little old forest to begin with, like our example, then the old forest will be quickly liquidated and none of the forest will be allowed to become old. This is the present situation for the white spruce forests of the Porcupine Mountains: Tolko's recent 13-Year Forest Management Plan indicated that cutting would eliminate the mature and overmature white spruce forests before 20 years of logging (and likely within, or almost within, the 13-year plan period). Contrasting with this is the impact of the hardwood AAC on the aspen forests of the Duck Mountain, where most of these forests are older than rotation age. Rather than liquidate all the old forest quickly, the objective of the AAC in this situation is to slowly (relatively) produce a forest regulated to rotation age. Because the rotation age of these aspen forests is 60 years, the AAC is designed to cut approximately one-sixtieth of the forest area each year. So, according to this methodology and with reasonable assumptions, it would take about 60 years for the old forest to be eliminated.

What are the impacts on biodiversity?

So, it is apparent that the principal objective of the AAC is to provide for the greatest possible production of wood fiber for industry through short-rotation of our forests (the exception being the small amounts of no-harvest areas located in provincial parks and other natural areas). What we must next ask ourselves is "How will this impact on biological diversity?". There is absolutely no question that the short-rotation of our forests impacts biodiversity. Recognize that many ecological changes occur as forests become old. Trees become large and may succumb to fungi like white heartrot thereby making them particularly suitable as nesting trees for woodpeckers and other species, or natural cavities may form where branches or tops break off making them suitable locations for a barred owl nest. Gaps form in the forest and mammals may den in hollows in trees that have fallen over. Species of plants make use of dying and dead trees thereby assisting in the cycling of nutrients within the system. In our relatively enlightened age, most of us recognize that species have adapted to virtually every environment to be found on our planet. We therefore do not find it surprising that some species have found their place in the old forest.

Although the importance of maintaining some old forests within a landscape is obvious to most Manitobans, it is worthwhile to consider and remember a few examples for future reference. The American marten is a member of the weasel family whose optimum habitat is the old conifer-dominated forest. Dr. Ian Thompson, arguably the top North American expert on marten habitat requirements, concludes in a jointly-authored 1994 paper that 20% of the forest should be old (8% 100-140 years, 8% 140-180 years, and 4%

180+ years) to maintain marten populations in a boreal forest landscape. Given the rotation ages on good sites of 60 years for jackpine and balsam fir, 80 years for black spruce and 100 years for white spruce of the Porcupine Mountain, the prognosis for this species does not appear good. It also worth noting that this species has recently been listed as endangered in Newfoundland, largely due to present and predicted future shortages of old conifer habitat.

Species could be eliminated

Let's take a look at the birds of the aspen mixedwood forests. A recent study by Schieck and Nietfeld (1995. In Relationships between stand age, stand structure, and biodiversity in aspen mixedwood forests in Alberta) found that only 3 of 57 species of

birds were most abundant in mature forests (51-63 years post-burn) while 36 of the species achieved their greatest abundance in old forests (122 years post-burn). Brown creeper, American redstart, red-breasted nuthatch, winter wren and black-throated green warbler were found only, or almost only, in the old forest. Consider

also the yellow-breasted sapsucker, a species that requires cavities or holes in trees for nesting. The Alberta study found the old forest to be optimal for this species; mature forests were used only infrequently and therefore represent habitat likely to be inadequate for population maintenance. While this species was found to make considerable use of young fire-originated forests, it is critical to recognize that clearcut forests do not provide the dead and live trees found in these fire-originated forests and are therefore unlikely to provide suitable habitat. Under a short-rotation clearcut management system, the only habitat available to this species would be the sub-optimal mature habitat, and it is not inconceivable that this species could be almost eliminated from landscapes.

Manitobans want jobs but not at any cost. Witness the recent survey for Tolko wherein "key" people ranked the value of the forest as "... a natural environment to provide a home for wildlife, play a part in the workings of the natural environment and provide a wilderness legacy for future generations ..." to be almost equal in importance to "... use of the forest as an economic resource ...". In the United States and some Canadian provinces, we find that AACs have been calculated to reflect these societal objectives. Across the border in Saskatchewan, the management plan for the Pasquia-Porcupine Forest Management Area proposed to take some 15,000 ha of steep slopes, ecologically sensitive areas and uneconomical sites out of production. The plan further required that a minimum amount of

old aspen forest be maintained and that 2.5% of the aspen trees be left on cutovers. All of these requirements were designed to maintain biological diversity. For the Porcupine Mountain in Manitoba, we observe an AAC calculated on the basis of removing only 50 ha due to steep slopes, including uneconomical stands, and requiring no old growth. It is time for Manitoba to follow the lead of a number of provinces and the majority of states in the United States. It is time to set and incorporate biological diversity objectives in the derivation of our AACs, and to throw our present method onto the slag heap of less enlightened times.

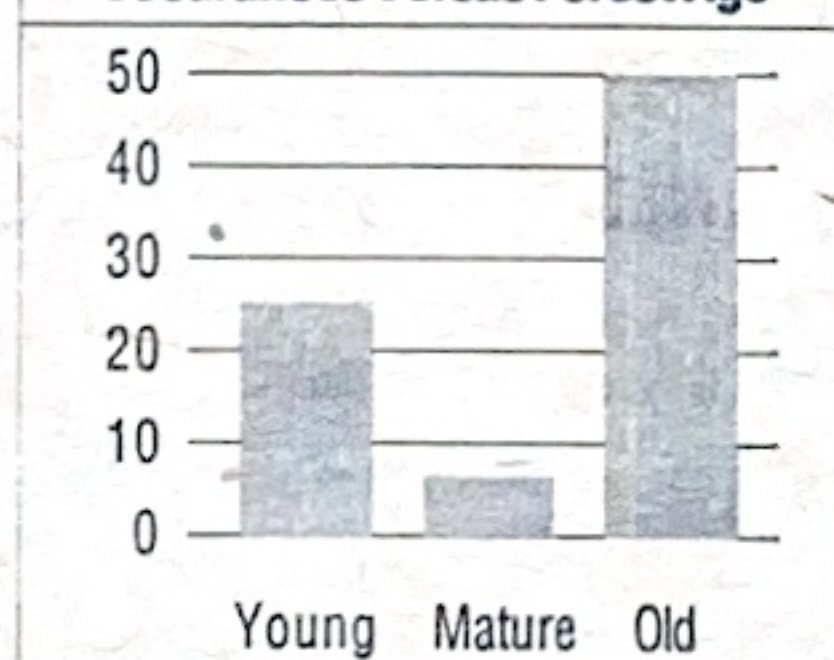
Dan Soprovich Bluestem Wildlife Services, Swan River
dsop@mb.sympatico.ca

Hectares by Cutting Class

	0	1	2	3	4	5
initial	14,831	2,345	12,397	18,230	3,547	32
10 years	2,235	17,847	5,692	21,941	3,667	0
20 years	2,235	10,413	13,799	20,253	4,682	0
30 years	2,235	7,938	11,540	24,394	5,275	0
"Normal"	3,032	9,043	9,043	24,201	6,063	0

Habitat Selection of Yellow-Bellied Sapsuckers

Occurrences Versus Forest Age



A UN TREATY ON PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS

Craig Boljkovac, Canadian Environmental Law Association Board Member

In late June 1998, almost 100 countries and over 150 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) gathered in Montreal for an opening round of negotiations to draft a global, United Nations-sponsored treaty on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). The POPs of immediate concern in this initiative have been well known for many years as some of the worst "bad actor" substances in existence. Chemicals such as dioxins, furans, PCBs, and pesticides such as DDT, chlordane and toxaphene are all on an initial list of twelve being considered by the UN (United Nations) for action. POPs such as these are dangerous substances that tend to break down slowly, travel through air and water to regions far distant from their original sources, build up in the tissues of organisms, and concentrate up the food chain. POPs have the potential to injure humans and wildlife even at low concentrations. Evidence has indicated that POPs have affected high predator species. Such effects include: reproductive failure and population decline; feminization of males and masculinization of females; abnormally functioning thyroid glands and other hormone system dysfunctions; compromised immune systems; behavioural abnormalities; tumours and cancers; and birth defects.

This UN initiative is the result of many years of work for many NGOs and some governments who recognize the threat that POPs pose to the health—physical, cultural and social—of many peoples, and the ecosystems upon which they depend.

Canada is a driving force for a POPs treaty.

The fact that Canada was the setting for the first negotiation

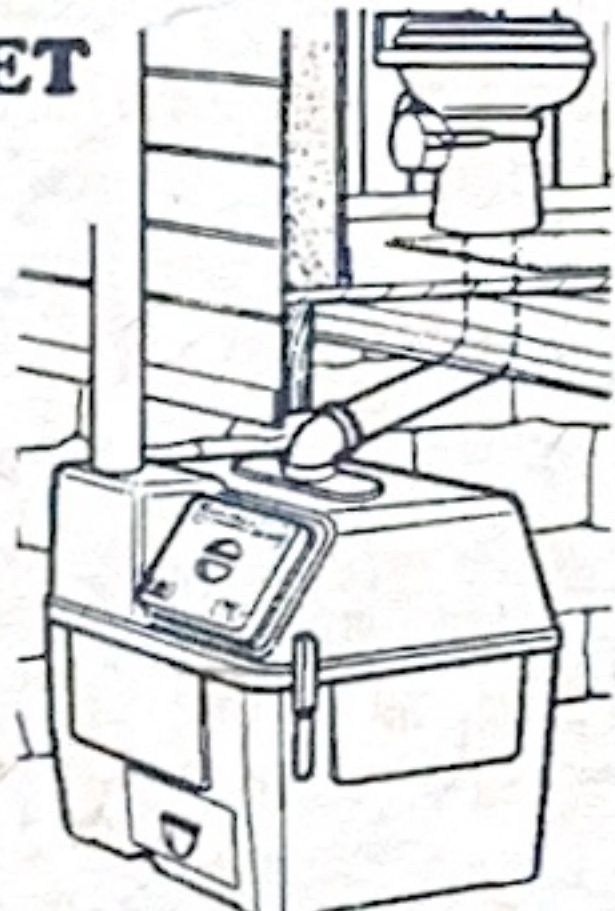
was no accident—nowhere on earth have the dangers of POPs been better studied and publicized than in the Great Lakes and Canadian Arctic. The Canadian government has pumped millions of dollars into researching where POPs come from, how they get into ecosystems, where they end up (eg, in the tissues of humans and other top predators) and what their effects are. Canada's arctic peoples—especially the Inuit—are exposed to certain POPs at levels much higher (sometimes ten times higher or more) than comparable populations in southern Canada. This is despite the fact that Inuit live many thousands of kilometres from virtually all sources of POPs. It has been shown that POPs can evaporate at their release point in the environment and condense again at a point sometimes many hundreds of kilometres away. This pattern—called the grasshopper effect—can repeat itself multiple times until the substance reaches the Arctic. Once there, the Arctic acts as a kind of cold trap. Evaporation, if it occurs at all, does so much more slowly. The substance is then taken up into the ecosystem. In the Great Lakes, local sources of POPs are certainly a greater concern, thanks to the preponderance of industrial activity. Distant sources can also have an effect, however. DDT levels in Great Lakes sediments, for example, decreased slowly, if at all, after it was banned in Canada and the United States. It has been determined that DDT still in use in countries like Mexico is making its way north on air currents to the Great Lakes basin. The Great Lakes region is one of the best-documented regions in the world regarding the effects of POPs. Wildlife have been impacted tremendously by POPs—herring gulls, cormorants, bald eagles, mink, otter and even humans have shown

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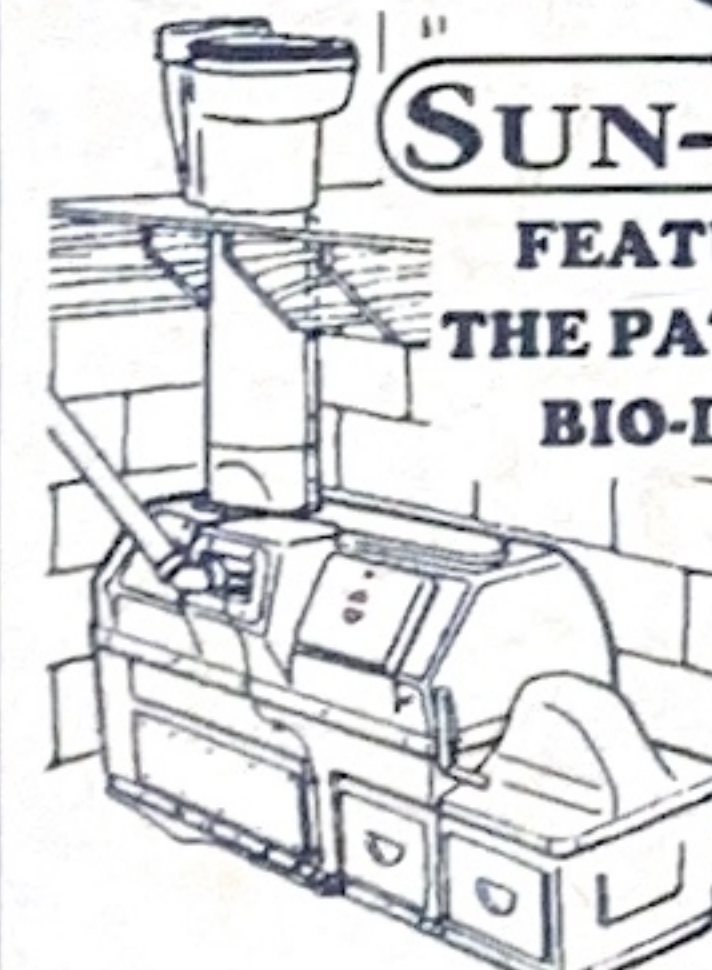
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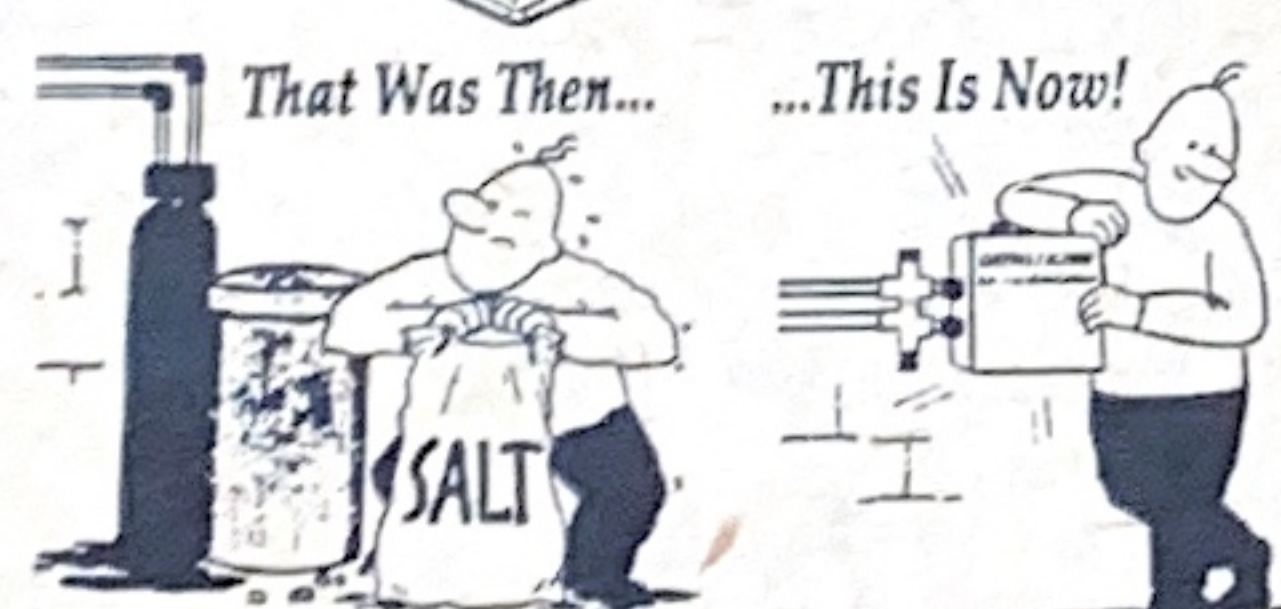
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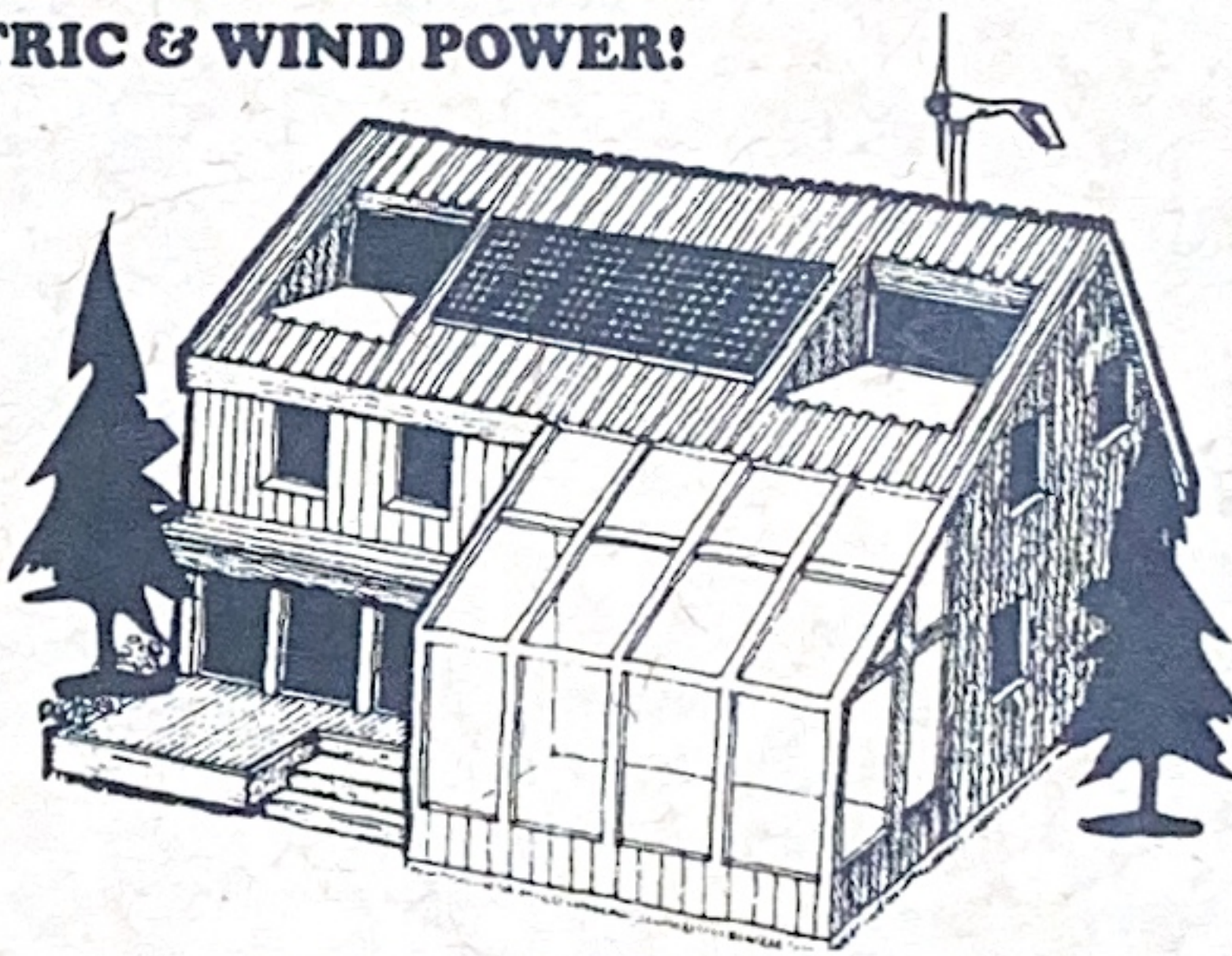
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effects associated with the presence of DDT, PCBs, mirex and other POPs. Such effects include the obvious (such as malformed limbs and beaks in waterfowl), and the subtle—female-female pairings of nesting herring gulls, for example. In humans the effects include decreased attention span in children whose mothers eat Great Lakes fish.

Canada's lack of domestic action on POPs belies international reputation

The Canadian government has done a laudable job of publicizing the plight of the Arctic and Great Lakes among countries considering action on POPs—in fact, Canada can be considered to be a driving force for a treaty. This high level of international activity, unfortunately, is not matched by domestic action on POPs. While most of the twelve POPs on the initial UN list for action have been banned in Canada, the real challenge will be how additional substances will be added to the original list of twelve. There are tens of thousands of potentially harmful chemicals being produced today, and while these twelve are among the worst, a treaty that lacks a dynamic process for adding substances to the list for action internationally will do little to protect human health and the environment. Unfortunately, Canada's abysmal domestic framework for dealing with toxic substances will greatly constrain it from advocating a strong process for adding substances to the POPs treaty list. The federal Toxic Substances Management Policy (TSMP) and the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) prevent meaningful action on anything but the most harmful of substances. Criteria for persistence in the environment, ability to bioaccumulate in an organism, and proven release outside of the workplace are all so narrowly written in the current TSMP and CEPA that only a handful of substances—such as those already on the POPs list—will be supportable for action by Canada.

Opportunities for change

Canada can move now to exert its leadership on the POPs issue in a number of ways. A new CEPA (Bill C-32) is before Parliament. In its current form, however, it merely codifies the TSMP. CELA, the World Wildlife Fund and other environmental organizations have proposed changes to CEPA that would enable other substances—such as endocrine disruptors—to be acted upon domestically. Secondly, the Government of Canada could exert bold leadership internationally by committing to a process for adding new substances to the POPs list that goes well beyond the small list it has acted upon domestically. This would be consistent with Canada's acknowledged leadership on the issue, and would prevent its certain erosion. At present, Canada is headed down a road where its hard-fought gains—in the form of a POPs treaty—are being seriously undermined by its weak domestic record. Political intervention is necessary at the highest level to put the government back on track. The environment and its human inhabitants deserve no less.

Craig Boljkovac has been on the CELA Board since 1991. He currently works on toxics issues full-time in Ottawa for World Wildlife Fund Canada.

For more info, go to:

<http://www.psr.org>

International Persistent Organic Pollutants Elimination Network

<http://irptc.unep.ch/pops/>

Site by the United Nations

<http://www.wwfcanada.org>

World Wildlife Fund Canada on endocrine disruptors

ECO

THE DIRTY DOZEN:

**12 Persistent Organic Pollutants
on the list for a global treaty.**

All 12 POPs are endocrine disruptors.

1 - DDT:

Pesticide – still widely used in southern countries for malaria control; eggshell thinning in birds; associated with chronic human health effects; endocrine system disruptor

2 - PCBs:

Coolant in electrical transformers, heat exchange fluid, additive in paints, plastics and paper; lethal to fish at high doses; reproductive failures in wildlife; associated with immune system suppression, behavioural abnormalities and developmental problems in humans

3 - Dieldrin:

Insecticide; highly toxic to fish and other aquatic life; frog embryos exhibit spinal deformities

4 - Endrin:

Insecticide; highly toxic to fish

5 - Aldrin:

Insecticide; toxic to humans, fish and other wildlife

6 - Chlordane:

Insecticide; toxic to humans and wildlife; possible human carcinogen; may affect human immune system

7 - Mirex:

Insecticide, fire retardant; toxic to plants, crustaceans and fish; possible human carcinogen

8 - Toxaphene:

Insecticide; highly toxic to fish; possible human carcinogen

9 - Dioxins:

Unintentional by-product of combustion, pesticide manufacture; toxic to wildlife; associated with enzyme disorders, immune system disorders, chloracne and cancer in humans

10 - Furans:

Unintentional by-product of combustion, PCB manufacture, pesticide manufacture; effects similar to dioxins; possible human carcinogen

11 - Heptachlor:

Insecticide; associated with bird population declines; lethal to mink, rats, & rabbits; adverse behavioural changes and lowered reproductive success in wildlife; possible human carcinogen

12 - Hexachlorobenzene:

Fungicide, industrial solvent, by-product; lethal to some wildlife; associated with adverse reproductive effects in wildlife; accidental poisonings in humans resulted in wide range of effects

CEN CONFERENCE REPORT

by Alec Stuart, Resource Conservation Manitoba

This year's Canadian Environmental Network Conference, held just outside St-Ligouri, PQ, was held from October 16th to the 18th. The theme of the conference was "networking", that famously vague term which gives everybody the excuse to chat with old friends and make new ones - under the guise of making contacts.

Networking aside, the conference gave me some valuable insights into how the CEN is run. I had been aware of the organization for years, but only on a very peripheral level - I knew it was there, but I didn't know what it did. For the information of those readers who may not be aware of the functions of the CEN, it acts as a coordinating body for all of the various Eco-Networks across the country (such as our very own Manitoba Eco-Network). The CEN organizes a number of caucuses, such as the Toxics caucus, and the Energy caucus, which allow people from across the country to communicate and share ideas about these issues.

Connections with the East

Environment Canada also works with the CEN to consult with member groups, and through the CEN provides some funds to the member Networks.

The conference was well-attended, with around one hundred and twenty attendees, most of whom participated in as many of the sessions as they could possibly manage. I really don't know if some of the delegates were able to sleep at all. Given the less than ideal state of the mattresses and pillows, I'm not sure why I bothered to try. And after my blankets were stolen on the second day of the conference (they were used to make a sound barrier for the translator's booth), I pretty much gave up too.

Given the location of the conference - in rural Quebec - there was a strong francophone presence. In addition to this, the Maritime provinces were well-represented, with large contingents from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, P.E.I and a small delegation from Newfoundland. It was really nice to be able to connect with folks from the East. Given the distance between the West and the Atlantic Coast, you don't often run into them.

First Nations Issues

The first day of the conference was devoted to First Nations environmental issues. In particular, I found the afternoon session to be interesting. Two elders from the Makah Nation in Washington State were on hand to give their side of the whaling story. The Makah Na-

tion has successfully argued that they should be allowed to resume their traditional whale hunts. The two elders present at the conference told their side of the story. As opponents of the hunt, they and their families have faced repeated harassment in their quest to overturn this decision. They put forth a number of very compelling arguments for why their people should not be whaling. Not only was their presentation fascinating, but it was interesting to get a different perspective on this issue. Most mainstream media sources have only given us one side of the story - the pro-whaling side. Given the potential of this issue to generate conflict between the environmental movement and the First Nations, it was interesting to be able to hear about the other side of the First Nations story as well.

On Friday night I attended my first caucus, the Health and Prosperity caucus meeting. After a fairly lengthy discussion (which took up a lot of the allotted time), the name of the caucus was changed to Health and Sustainability. While I personally agree with the name change, I only wish it hadn't taken up so much time. I was much more interested in hearing what people had to say on the issue of health and the environment. As to the caucus proceedings, one interesting point was raised by Lobie Daughton, the chair of the caucus, which I believe that all environmental groups should take note of. He pointed out that Health Canada has much more money available than Environment Canada does, and they are willing to provide grants to environ-



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mental groups, provided that the issue is linked into health in some way. Food for thought.

On to Saturday and the beginning of the Annual General Meeting. A number of administrative resolutions were put forward, and we discussed the budget and several other issues at length. Maybe it's not interesting, but it is very important for the running of the organization, so most of the delegates worked hard at making their way through the issues here.

Francophone Participation

Saturday also saw a rather controversial resolution put forward by the RQGE (the Quebec version of our own Eco-Network). They submitted a proposal that called for a study to be done on two very controversial issues, one of which would see the CEN changed drastically, with the groups in the country divided into regions, and each region to receive an equal share of Environment Canada funding. The other one called for a minimum 25% francophone participation on all caucuses and committees of the CEN, and all documents to be provided in both official languages - or adequate compensation (this was not fully explained) would have to be provided for the RQGE. Well, given the current state of national affairs, this proved to be a red flag for some of the Anglophone delegates, and francophones from other provinces, and the meeting quickly turned into a microcosm of Canada, with arguments about language, nationalism and the preservation of our country. Luckily, saner heads prevailed and the decision was put off until the next day. It really is unfortunate that regionalism and national issues have to be present at a meeting such as this. There were a lot of great people at the conference, all of whom were very committed to their work with the environment. If we could only put

aside our regional differences, and focus on the environment, just think of what we could do.

CEN Youth Caucus

I also attended several meetings of the CEN Youth Caucus over the course of the weekend. It is interesting to note that Manitoba seems to have one of the strongest youth groups in the country. Many of the participants kept referring to our Youth Caucus as a model for their work. It's really nice to know that the hard work done here in Manitoba is being recognized.

Anyways, on to Sunday, and the final day of the conference. We went back to the RQGE resolutions and debated them further, without too many harsh words or hurt feelings. Finally, the motion was passed, and we moved onto a wonderful hour of cultural exchanges, where many of the feelings hurt during the bitter debating were mended.

After a nice lunch (wonderful food at the conference by the way), I hopped in a van and drove off.

The final act of the CEN conference became known on the following Tuesday. The RQGE had brought a reporter from Le Devoir during the Sunday debates without making this fact known. This individual then printed a rather inflammatory story the next day, which didn't make the CEN look good at all. It is really too bad that this had to be the closing act at an otherwise very positive and helpful conference. It is my wish that the CEN and indeed the Canadian environmental movement in general could put aside whatever regional or linguistic differences exist between us and just try to get along. We're all here for the same cause, so let's work on it together.

Everything else aside, the conference was a great experience. The camp where it was held was just beautiful. It was set on a bluff above a river, with huge old maple trees everywhere. The weather was simply gorgeous (22 degrees on the Sunday!) and the people were really friendly. The food was fantastic, with good options for vegetarians. I will admit that I never got used to the breakfast drinks they served, which were strange combinations of fruit juices and milk. The passion fruit and milk wasn't too bad, but the rest were a bit odd for my liking. All in all I had a great time, and I hope I'm able to attend more CEN conferences in the future!

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MESSAGE TO HEART

continued from page 2 ...

the mainstream media, how we need to talk to each other. The New Brunswick Environmental Network recently began holding "talking circles" with First Nations people over treaty and logging issues, an experiment which is having positive results for the communities there.

We must take Binky's message to heart. Not only have the whales helped people in times past, so have the forests, the fish, the air, the soil, the water. They still help us. And now, more than ever, when we have the knowledge to understand that they are all at profound risk from our human actions, and the ability to make both technological and behavioural change, it is time to help them.

What you can do about the whaling issue: Write to the Makah Tribal Council, PO Box 115, Neah Bay, Washington, 98357. Tell them that you support their treaty rights, but that you respectfully request that they forgo the whale hunt.

More information on the industrial threat to the grey whale can be found in the Earth Island Journal, vol. 13 No. 3, available at our Resource Centre.

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NEW IN OUR RESOURCE CENTRE

NUCLEAR BEEF ANYONE?

The latest issue of Nuclear Awareness News contains the information that irradiation of beef is now permitted in the US. In addition, the Canadian Cattleman's Association has reportedly filed an application with Health Canada for beef irradiation in this country. Irradiation of flour, spices, onions and potatoes has been permitted in Canada for several years. Just another reason to eat organic food!

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT ROUND-UP

...but couldn't find out from Monsanto:

The Journal of Pesticide Reform's Fall feature article is about the ubiquitous Monsanto herbicide Round-Up. Touted by its maker as environmentally and toxicologically benign, Round-Up is predicted to generate \$3,000,000,000 (yes, that's billion) in annual sales by the year 2,000, a significant portion of which will be in Canada. JPR's editor, Caroline Cox, cites 183 references, most from refereed journal sources, in an article which gives the lie to Monsanto's "benign" claim. Glyphosate (the active ingredient) and its most common formulation, Round-Up, are implicated in a whole suite of ecological and health impacts including death of beneficial insects,

acute and chronic effects in humans and other animals, reproductive effects and impacts on seed quality.

A WORKERS' MANUAL ON POLLUTION PREVENTION: How to clean up your workplace and the environment at the same time

From the Canadian Labour Congress

Workers are at the front lines of toxic warfare when their jobs involve hazardous substances. What's more they suffer a "double dose": exposure in the plant, and exposure in their communities when toxics contaminate air and water. Using the theory and practice of Pollution Prevention means shifting the focus of environmental programs from managing and controlling the release of pollutants entering the environment, to preventing the pollution at its source. This is an excellent manual for getting a pollution prevention program established in the workplace, including collective bargaining, building community alliances and lobbying for effective legislation.



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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.