

MANITOBA ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK NEWS

office
copy



the manitoba environmental
NETWORK

OCTOBER 1988

POTASH PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Minister of Environment and Workplace Safety and Health, Ed Connery, has instructed the Clean Environment Commission (CEC) to hold public hearings to receive evidence and representations concerning a proposed potash mining operation in the R.M. of Russell.

The proponent of the project, Canamax Resources Inc., has applied for and been granted approval in principle to proceed with the project.

The second stage of the licencing process will be dealt with at public hearings on Tuesday, October 25 in Russell and on Thursday, October 27 (and 28th if necessary) in Winnipeg.

In making its recommendations to the minister, the CEC will consider (a) the adequacy of the proponent's environmental impact assessment including alternative tailings management methods (b) any limits or conditions that should be applied to the development and construction phase (stage 2) and (c) preliminary recommendations for limits, terms and conditions that should be imposed during the preliminary operational phase of the development.

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RECYCLING IN MANITOBA

Manitoba Soft Drink Recycling Inc. (MSDR) is a non-profit organization supported by the soft drink beverage companies in Manitoba. MSDR operates a multi-faceted, voluntary recycling program concerned primarily with the collection of aluminum soft drink cans and plastic bottles.

These items can be delivered for redemption at their new location on Bental Street or at their recyclo-mobile which shows up on a regularly scheduled basis in various grocery store parking lots around the province.

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The Manitoba Soft Drink Recycling Inc. has provided financial assistance for the distribution of this newsletter. Their support is gratefully acknowledged.

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THE MANITOBA ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK OFFICE IS LOCATED AT 202-128 JAMES AVE., WINNIPEG, MANITOBA. MAILING ADDRESS - P.O. BOX 3125, R3C 4E6 (204) 956-1468

CONSULTATION MEETINGS WITH ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

The Network is presently arranging a series of consultation meetings to take place between Manitoba environment groups and Ed Connery, Minister of Environment and Workplace Safety and Health.

The format has not been finalized as yet, but it is anticipated that the meetings will be "one-on-one" sessions between the minister and individual groups.

If your group is interested in participating in these meetings, please contact John Barker at the Manitoba Environmental Network office.

PUBLIC FORUM REPORT RELEASED

Several months have passed since the Manitoba Environmental Network and CUSO sponsored "Our Common Future - A Public Forum on Environment and Development" in June 1988. Since that time concern about and interest in the issues of environment and development have, if anything, grown stronger.

These organizations have recently completed the report on the public forum. The first section of the report includes transcripts of the keynote address delivered to the forum by Lloyd Timberlake of the International Institute for Environment and Development, as well as transcripts of panel presentations and summaries of workshops. A Resource Section listing reading material, organizations and other information on sustainable development is also included.

Copies of the document can be obtained by contacting the Network or CUSO (774-8489).

GLOBAL 500 AWARDS PROGRAMME

Two years ago, United Nations Environment Programme began a series of awards for environmental achievement - a tribute to successes on the front lines of global environmental action. This roll call of honour is called Global 500 because, like the environment, its scope is global, and over the years 1987-91 UNEP will make 500 awards.

UNEP hopes that by recognizing and publicizing the achievements of those who work to preserve and improve the environment, many others will be encouraged to follow their example.

If you know of individuals or groups that may merit an award, nomination forms are available at the Network office.

The Manitoba Environmental Network exists to facilitate communication among environmentalists, especially in Manitoba, and between environmentalists and government decision-makers. Membership is open to any non-government, non-profit group that has as one of its objectives the enhancing or furthering of environmental quality, protecting the environment or carrying out environmental education.

PROVINCIAL SECRETARIAT.....JOHN BARKER
EXECUTIVE
PROVINCIAL COORDINATOR.....JACK DUBOIS
VICE-PRESIDENT (ALTERNATE).....BRIAN PANNELL
SECRETARY-TREASURER.....vacant

STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE MANITOBA ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK

Arnold Baker	-	Westman Wilderness Club
Jack Dubois	-	Wildlife Society, Manitoba Chapter
Randy Eros	-	Solar Energy Society of Canada Inc., Manitoba Chapter
Bill Goddard	-	Crossroads Resource Group
Letty Last	-	Recycling Council of Manitoba
Dennis Muldrew	-	Manitoba Naturalists Society
Brian Pannell	-	Manitoba Environmentalist Inc. (MEI)
Anne Wieser	-	Concerned Citizens of Manitoba

THE MANITOBA ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK RESOURCE CENTRE IS OPEN
MON. 9:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. WED. & THUR. 8:30 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Oct. 19 Food Irradiation Public Forum. Sponsored by Altrusa Club of Winnipeg. 7:30pm, Theatre A, Basic Medical Sciences Bldg., 730 William Ave.
- Oct. 23 River Clean-Up at the Forks/Tache Promenade. Sponsored by the U. of W. Outdoors Club and UWSAFE. For more info contact Bryan Osborne at 889-1031, or Joel Miller at 452-6140.
- Oct. 23-29 Industrial and Hazardous Waste Management. A resource management seminar sponsored by the Banff Centre School of Management. For info contact the Network office.
- Oct. 25 Clean Environment Commission Public Hearings on the proposed Canamax Resources Inc. potash mining operation. 10:00am, Russell Inn, Russell, Manitoba
- Oct. 27-28 Clean Environment Commission Public Hearings on the proposed Canamax Resources Inc. potash mining operation. Thursday, October 27, 7:00pm at the Environmental Laboratory, 745 Logan Avenue, Winnipeg. If necessary the hearings will continue on Friday, October 28 at 9:30am at the same location.
- Oct. 25-27 10th Canadian Waste Management Conference. Winnipeg. For info, contact Dave Thompson at the Manitoba Department of Environment and Workplace Safety and Health, 945-7083.
- Nov. 3-5 Challenges to Canadian Security in the Year 2000, a conference of the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security. For information, contact Janet Gould, United Nations Association, Winnipeg Branch, 488-4057.
- Nov. 7 Clean Environment Commission public hearing to receive evidence and representations concerning proposed water quality designation of Clearwater Lake. 7:00pm, Wescana Inn '84', 439 Fischer Ave., The Pas.
- Nov. 12-28 International Conference: "Our Common Future: A Gathering of those who wish to facilitate the emergence of a planetary society." Oaxtepec, Morelos, Mexico. More info available at Network office.
- Nov. 18-19 Manitoba Council for International Cooperation Fall Conference. See page 4.
- Nov. 19 Manitoba Naturalists Society, Wildlife Art Exhibit and Auction. 10:00am - 5:00pm, Lions Manor. \$1.00 admission. For information call 943-9029.
- Nov. 26 Marquis Project, Third Annual Global Agricultural Issues Conference. Brandon, Manitoba. For further information contact The Marquis Project at 200, 107 - 7th Street, Brandon, R7A 3S5, Tel: (204) 727-5675.

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PRODUCTS PROGRAM

Environment Canada is currently developing an "Environmentally Friendly Products Initiative". Products and processes that conserve energy, are recyclable, biodegradable and free of ozone-depleting substances will be identified by a distinctive logo. The program is to be directed towards the consumer and, it is hoped, will increase demand in the retail market for environmentally safer products. The "operational target date" is January, 1989. A copy of the Environmentally Friendly Products Program Conceptual Framework is available at the Network office.

SUPERMARKET COMMENT CARDS

Some of the major supermarkets are providing postage-paid comment cards, requesting customer reactions to service, selection and prices. These cards will make a good vehicle for consumers to express demand for reduced and biodegradable packaging, recyclable products, recycling depots, and other environmentally sound services and products.

WEB

Monday, Oct. 3, Dan McCann, formerly of WEB communication Network, gave an introductory briefing on using WEB.

WEB was established as a service of Nirv Nonprofit, a nonprofit enterprise established to help individuals and the nonprofit community make more effective use of current communication and computer technology.

The Manitoba Environmental

Network is a member of WEB. Information about this computer network is available at our office, and the user and installation manuals can be referenced in our resource area.



"SUSTAINING THE ENVIRONMENT-TRANSFORMING THE FUTURE" is the title of this year's annual fall Linkages Conference being sponsored by the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation (MCIC).

The report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, Our Common Future, (1987) carries a revolutionary message: we must all find the means and political will to sustain our planet.

Linkages '88 will bring together representatives from United Nations agencies, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, the provincial and federal governments, and industry as well as development planners, educators, persons involved in the environment, peace and women's movements and concerned individuals.

The conference will take place on Friday, November 18 (6:30pm-9:30pm) and Saturday, November 19 (9:30am - 4:00pm) at the University of Manitoba. Panels and workshops will focus on the visions, power and politics of sustainable development.

For more detailed information about this event, contact Sari Tudiver, MCIC, 60 Maryland Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3G 1K7, (204) 786-2106.

THE GROUNDWATER POLLUTION PRIMER - PART SIX

HEALTH HAZARDS OF
GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION

Our lack of knowledge about the health hazards of common groundwater contaminants, and the scientific uncertainty that swirls around the risks they pose to people make any discussion about the safety of water supplies highly controversial.

The only direct method of proving that a particular chemical is a human health hazard is to observe its effects after it has already caused cancers, birth defects or other health problems. In fact, much of what we know about the health hazards of toxic chemicals comes from direct experience - usually in the workplace where people have been exposed to high levels of a known chemical for many years.

Much of what is suspected about the health hazards of chemicals comes from animal tests. It is assumed that what causes health problems in animals will cause the same problems in people.

What follows is a short summary of what is currently known about the health hazards of common groundwater contaminants.

SOLVENTS

Solvents are known to cause severe skin irritation, nervous system effects, liver and kidney damage, cancer, genetic damage, and reproductive problems. Common sources of contamination by solvents include leakage from dumps, improper storage, handling and disposal, and leakage from septic systems and sewer lines.

PESTICIDES

Some pesticides are known to cause

long-term health problems such as nervous system damage, suppression of the immune system, cancer, genetic damage, and reproductive problems such as birth defects and sterility.

The major source of pesticides in groundwater comes from farming practices, although serious contamination problems have resulted from improper storage, transport and disposal of these chemicals. Pesticides are also widely used in forestry, lawncare, and gardening.

NITRATES

When nitrates exceed the officially acceptable level of 10 parts per million (10 parts nitrate, a million parts water - abbreviated as 10 ppm) in drinking water, the "blue baby syndrome" known as infant methemoglobinemia has been observed. In simple terms, the infant's blood is prevented from absorbing the quantities of oxygen required.

Nitrates are actually converted to nitrites, once inside of us, and it is possible that nitrosamines, some of which may be carcinogenic, will be produced. (It is the nitrite content of cured meats such as bacon that has raised similar concerns about nitrosamines in our digestive systems.)

A 1984 Australian study of nitrates in drinking water found evidence of a much higher rate of birth defects such as spina bifida in the infants of women exposed to levels of nitrates between 5 and 15 ppm while they were pregnant. A health survey examining the relationship between drinking water quality in agricultural areas of New Brunswick and birth defects was carried out in 1985 by Health and Welfare Canada, but the results were not available at the time of this writing.

The major source of nitrates in groundwater is the agricultural use of commercial chemical fertilizers. Manure, septic tanks, leaky sewer lines, and sewage sludge disposal are also significant nitrate sources.

PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

Gasoline and other petroleum products are such a common part of everyday experience that their toxic nature is difficult to appreciate. However, gasoline contains over 225 chemical compounds and additives, including benzene, a proven human cancer-causing agent.

Fortunately, unlike most groundwater contaminants, petroleum has a tell-tale odour that can be detected at extremely low concentrations, long before any health problems arise. Petroleum can cause headaches, skin irritation, itchy eyes, and internal burning sensations. Affected people have complained about drowsiness, depression, and anxiety. Prolonged exposure may result in damage to the liver, kidneys, bone marrow, and spleen.

Long term exposure to even low levels of gasoline may increase ones risk of developing cancer. There is little information about the risks of exposure during pregnancy. However, some components of gasoline may be harmful to the fetus if the mother is exposed to high concentrations.

Exposure to fuel oil has similar short-term health effects to those of gasoline. However, little is known about its long-term health effects.

The major source of contamination by petroleum are leaking underground storage tanks, leaky home heating oil tanks and piping, and accidental spills.

HEAVY METALS

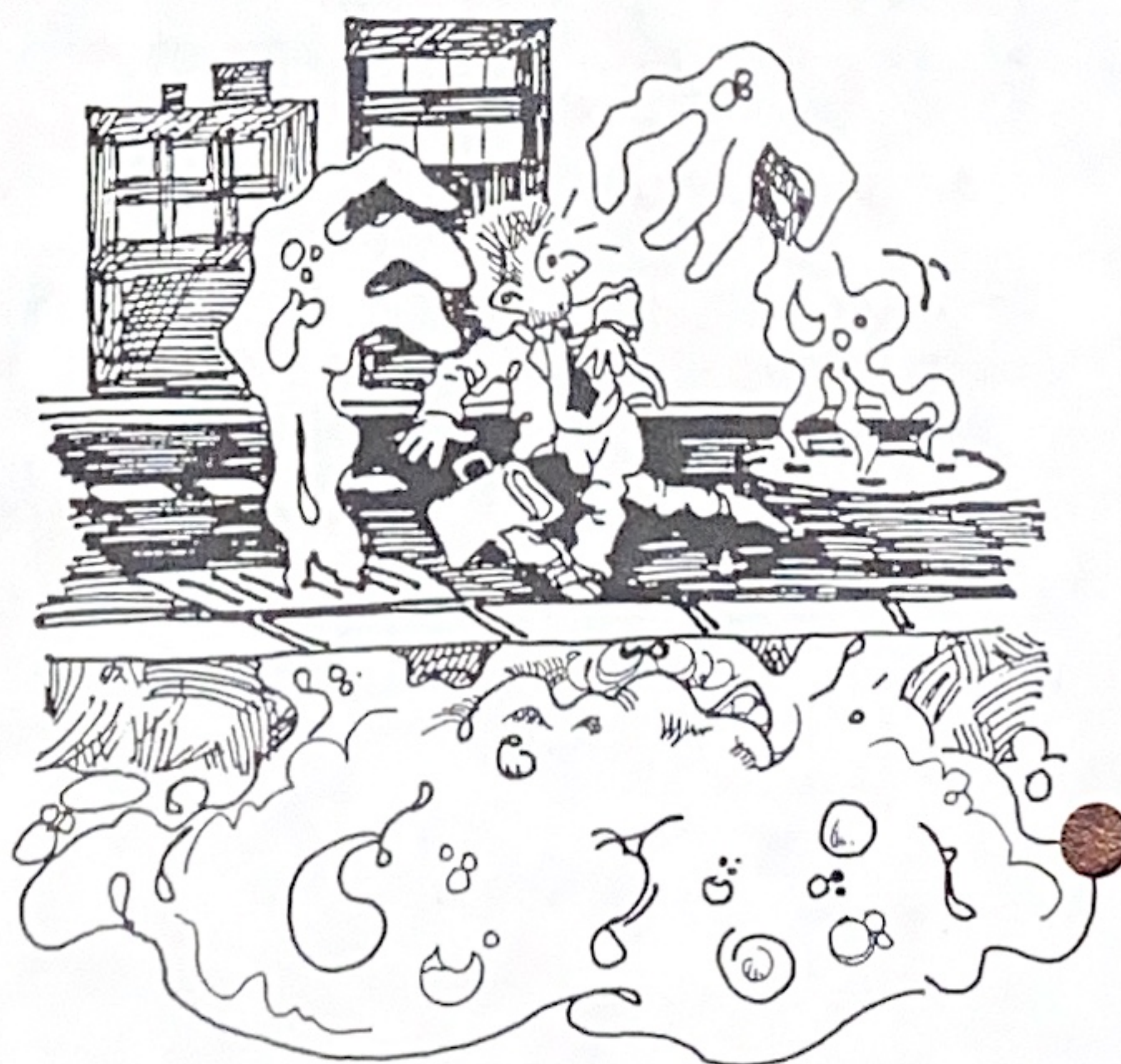
Heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, chromium, arsenic, mercury and nickel have been linked to numerous long-term health problems. Major sources include municipal and industrial waste dumps and lagoons, mining, smelting, wood preserving operations, septic tanks, leaky sewer lines, and sewage sludge disposal.

Exposure to high levels of lead in the general environment has caused learning disabilities and brain damage in children. Lead is also known to cause reproductive problems in animal tests.

Cadmium and chromium are known to cause kidney damage, and are suspected cancer causing agents. Both metals have caused birth defects in laboratory animals. Chromium is a serious skin irritant as well.

Arsenic and nickel have been shown to cause cancer in industrial workers. Mercury exposure has been linked to birth defects and damage to the central nervous system.

Source: The Groundwater Pollution Primer. Conservation Council.



RESOURCES

NORTH AMERICAN ENVIRONMENT

A new magazine of the American Society for Environmental Education. The ASEE has expanded the scope of its previous publications - American Environment and Environmental Education Report and Newsletter - to include news from Canada, and in the future, Mexico. The co-editors are: Dr. Bradley Smith, from Delta College, Michigan, and; Cindy McCaffery, Pallister Resource Management Ltd, Calgary. The magazine will be published quarterly. The first issue (summer, 1988) is on the rack in the Network resource centre.

PRAIRIE PROVINCES WATER SUPPLY CONDITIONS REPORT (updated to Aug. 22, 1988). Published by PFRA, using information provided by the Prairie Drought Monitoring Network.

This water supply and soil moisture conditions report identifies the 1988-89 drought risks, including water supply and soil moisture for pasture, forage, and crop production. This report is now available in the Network's resource centre. The next Water Supply Conditions report is scheduled to be available in November.

SELLING CANADA'S ENVIRONMENT
SHORT: The Environmental Case
Against the Free Trade Deal.

This analysis, prepared for the Canadian Environmental Law Association, examines the environmental implications of the Canada-U.S Free Trade Agreement. The twenty page booklet gives brief overviews of the importance of the deal to the environment and of the concept of sus-

tainability, and then deals specifically with the implications of the deal with regard to topics including Acid Rain, Water, Energy, Forests, Agriculture, Pesticides, Waste and Standards/Incentives.

A ten-title reference list serves as a useful source list for more detailed analyses. A tear-off signature form is provided which can be returned to The Canadian Environmental Law Association, in support of their efforts to oppose the "Deal".

A copy of the booklet is on the shelf in the resource centre. Additional copies are available, for \$1.00 each, from the Canadian Environmental Law Association, 243 Queen St. West, 4th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 1Z4.

AS IF WE PLAN TO STAY

A collection of essays, subtitled Social and Environmental Directions for New Brunswick, has been prepared by the Environment and Development Group of the CUSO program in New Brunswick.

The booklet is concerned with the sustainability of our communities, and the environment on which they depend. It explores some of the crucial issues for New Brunswick (many equally applicable elsewhere), and illustrates a particular kind of development - development for social, environmental and economic sustainability.

A copy of this publication is on the shelf at the Network office. As well, copies are available, for \$2.50 (postpaid) from CUSO, 180 St. John Street, Fredericton, N.B., E2B 4A9.

RAINFOREST ACTION NETWORK

The Rainforest Action Network is a non-profit organization working to stop the destruction of the world's tropical forests. RAN's work includes publishing monthly Action Alerts and quarterly World Rainforest Reports which highlight current tropical forest issues and ways people can take action to stop the destruction; pressuring international corporations and development agencies to stop projects that destroy tropical forest ecosystems and indigenous cultures; collaborating with other environmental, scientific, and grassroots groups in efforts to preserve this unique and irreplaceable resource - tropical forests.

More information can be obtained by writing: Rainforest Action Network, 300 Broadway, Suite 28, San Francisco, CA 94133 USA.

INTERNATIONAL URANIUM CONGRESS RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Over 200 people from around the globe spent 6 days in June in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada - the uranium industry capital of the world - attending an international congress against uranium mining (WISE NC 295.3016). Endorsements for the Congress came from 165 environmental, energy, peace and development organizations from 22 countries. Many plans were made to continue resistance against the uranium industry. The following resource materials resulting from the Congress can now be ordered:

1. Proceedings - To be published late fall. Pre-publication price is CDN \$15 (including postage) until 15 October, when the price will increase to CDN \$25 (also including postage). The Congress proceedings will contain a complete list of available audio- and video-cassettes, films, and papers.
2. Video-cassettes and film - video tapes of keynote speeches, panel discussions, and selected workshops will be available at a cost of about CDN \$35 for 2 hours. Broadcast-quality film of the International Forum, press conference, and interviews with international participants will also be available for cost plus handling.
3. Papers - copies of written presentations will also be available at cost of duplication and postage.
4. Audio-cassettes - The full Congress is available on cassette tapes. The distributor for these is Quality Sound Services, 461 Lorne St., Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. S4R 2J5. These must be ordered directly from Quality Sound. The price for the full set of 45 cassettes is CDN \$160, single cassettes are CDN \$5 (plus shipping charges)

Sponsors are needed to purchase sets of audio, audio-visual, and print resources for Northern Saskatchewan communities. Donations to this important effort can be sent to the address below.

Contact: International Uranium Congress, 2138 McIntyre St., Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. S4P 2R7 (Note: please do not send checks drawn on banks outside Canada for any of the material as collection charges are astronomical.)

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTES

The Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corporation has published "A Handy Guide to Household Hazardous Waste." The information/tips pamphlet folds out into a poster which categorizes common household wastes (by usage and class; i.e. corrosive, flammable, toxic or reactive), identifies alternatives to hazardous chemicals, and provides information to help reduce, reuse, recycle and recover hazardous wastes.

Copies are available at the Network office, or may be obtained from the Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corporation, 226-530 Century, Winnipeg, Man., R3H 0Y4.

CLIMATE CHANGE DIGEST

A summary of the results of a study prepared for the Canadian Climate Centre with regard to the implications, for Canada, of predicted climatic change, is now available in the Network Resource Centre. Eight titles are included, as separate volumes, including such topics as The Implications of Climate Change for Agriculture in the Prairie Provinces, and the summary report, Economic Perspectives on the Impact of Climate Variability and Change.

BOOK REVIEW

THE HOLE IN THE SKY

The Hole in the Sky, by John Gribbin (A Bantam New Age Book) is about the complex atmospheric chemistry of ozone depletion. It provides an account of the scientific debate and policy development leading up to the Montreal Protocol, and slightly beyond.

Gribbin's intended audience is the layperson, so jargon is avoided, and scientific discussions start with the basics. The involvement of scientists in the often controversial policy debate is described, making this book a very interesting insight into the role of the scientific expert in modern decision making.

There is repetition when the author explains in greater scientific detail aspects mentioned earlier, or flips between science and the policy debate. These weaknesses suggest the book was hastily written and published, but it is otherwise well edited.

What makes this book valuable is that it provides the reader with an up to date, solid understanding of the ozone layer depletion problem.

Available at the Network bookstore, the book is only \$5.25.

by Jim Sparling

POTASH HEARINGS

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The proponent has completed an environmental review which can be seen at several libraries including the Winnipeg Public Library

and the Environment Department Library at 139 Tuxedo Avenue.

Anyone interested in making a presentation at either of the hearings is requested to contact the CEC (Box 17, 550 - 500 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, R3C 3X1, telephone 945-7123) prior to the hearing date.

There are environmental groups in Manitoba that are willing to assist individuals interested in participating in this process but who are unsure as to how to become involved. If you would like to express your opinions on this mega-project and would like assistance please contact the Manitoba Environmental Network.

RECYCLING IN MANITOBA

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MSDR has been in operation since September, 1986 and has achieved good results in the recovery of recyclable beverage containers.

According to general manager Lance Morrison, the company's recovery rate of aluminum cans has increased by 75% from last year. In September of this year they collected over 25,000 pounds of P.E.T. (plastic) soft drink bottles (roughly 325,000 bottles). Pound for pound, the recovery rate of P.E.T. is now almost equal to that of aluminum.

In addition to collecting soft drink containers MSDR talks to elementary and junior and senior high school groups about recycling.

For further information about MSDR, visit them at their new location at Unit #1, 20 Bentall Street, Winnipeg, R2X 3A8 or call 694-5352 or toll free 1-800-982-7554.

BOOK STORE

Agricide: The Hidden Crisis That Affects Us All by Michael W. Fox. \$10.95

The Greenpeace Book of Antarctica: A New View of the Seventh Continent by John May. \$29.95

The Hole in the Sky: Man's Threat to the Ozone Layer by John Gribbin. \$5.50

The Master of the Game: Paul Nitze and the Nuclear Peace by Strobe Talbot. \$27.95

Our Common Future: A Reader's Guide by Don Hinrichsen. \$7.50

Our Common Future: World Commission on Environment and Development. \$14.95

The Passive Solar Energy Book: A Complete Guide to Passive Solar Home, Greenhouse and Building Design by Edward Mazria. \$18.95

Pesticide Alert: A Guide to Pesticides in Fruits and Vegetables by Laurie Mott and Karen Synder. \$9.95

In The Rainforest by Catherine Caufield. \$8.95

Resource Manual for a Living Revolution: A Handbook of Skills & Tools for Social Change Activists by Virginia Coover et al. \$16.95

Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics by Paul W. Taylor. \$15.95

Saving the Tropical Forests by Judith Gradwohl and Russel Greenberg. \$17.50

Wilderness 1989 Sierra Club Engagement Calendar. \$16.50

Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered by E.F. Schumacher. \$9.95

Sustainable Development of the Biosphere edited by W.C. Clark and R.E.Munn. \$35.00

World Resources 1987: An Assessment of the Resource Base That Supports the Global Economy by the International Institute for Environment and Development, World Resources Institute. \$21.95

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Conservation: A Thoughtful Way Of Explaining Conservation to Children by Robert Ingpen and Margaret Dunkle. \$9.95

Numerous other titles are on order. Special orders can also be placed.