

NEW GOVERNMENT FOR MANITOBA

Environmentalists are "guardedly optimistic"

by Anne Lindsey

September 23rd dawned as a new day on the Manitoba political scene: the first non-Tory government elected in 11 years. Could this be the change that environmentalists have been waiting for? Opinions around the community are somewhat mixed, but Don Sullivan of Manitoba's Future Forest Alliance pretty well sums it up with his comment. I'm "guardedly optimistic" says Sullivan. And so are many of our colleagues.

Without a doubt this was an election notable for its almost complete lack of reference to the environment. Except of course from the Green Party camp, which conveyed a credible and clear environmental message whenever it got the opportunity (and in the media, the opportunities were minimal).

Part of the problem can be attributed to the environmental community itself. For the most part, we just weren't out there in force pushing our issues. This was the first time in my tenure at the Manitoba Eco-Network that we did not organize a leaders' debate on the environment. The energy required for organizing such an event just wasn't available. And it appears that groups on the whole did not seek answers from the parties on environmental questions which could then be publicized and used as a checklist for accountability later on.

An exception here is the last-minute promise wrested from Gary Filmon that a Tory government would ban penned animal hunting. The International Fund for Animal Welfare indicated receiving the same commitment from the NDP.

Written Responses

Another, less publicized piece of work in this area was done by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society's Manitoba Chapter. CPAWS received written responses from the NDP on a number of conservation issues, including a promise of a full land use plan-

ning process on the East Side of Lake Winnipeg prior to any more road building or forestry expansion activities by Tembec. This is no small commitment, and one which environmental groups and First Nations in the affected area will demand be honoured. CPAWS' Roger Turenne is also pleased about a pledge to end the process of staged licensing of development projects in Manitoba.



From agriculture to zoos, Manitobans have a lot of questions to ask ...

Pressing Environmental Concerns

What about some of the other pressing environmental concerns in this province? For example, the expansion of corporate hog barns and the general trend of corporate agriculture displacing farming? Our provincial response to climate change issues? A provincial government position on genetically modified foods? Landfill proliferation? Pesticide overuse? Obviously, we have yet to see where the penny drops on these subjects, since almost nothing was said about them by the government-elect during the campaign. However, a section of the NDP's response to the CPAWS questionnaire is possibly illuminating: The question: "How do you rank the importance of environmental issues in Manitoba relative to other concerns?" was answered as follows:

"It is not possible to rank the importance of environmental concerns from "little priority" to "top priority" in relation to other concerns as no government should ever see any issue in a context that does not include the environment. Such a bifurcated view of society is part of a mind-set that should not be allowed to play any role in the future of this province. Any progress this province makes must be environmentally sound, and an NDP government will obtain and act on the advice that will allow us to ensure that all our decisions are environmentally sound".

Proof in the Pudding

Encouraging words for sure. We can only hope that this sensibility will continually be present at the Cabinet table. As Randall McQuaker, Resource Conservation Manitoba's Executive Director, puts it: "the proof will be in the pudding".

Eleven years of Tory rule has not been kind to Manitoba's environment. Nor has it been kind to most of our environmental groups. When unwilling to put up with sustainable development double-talk, many have seen funding denied, even while they've taken on a much greater workload as environmental watchdogs.

Environmentalists have a right to feel "guardedly optimistic". Dare we hope that the "new day" can last into the new millennium and beyond?

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Volume 9, Number 4
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 1999
(date of issue: October 1, 1999)

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.

NEW PRAIRIE PARK OPENS IN STONEWALL

The Rockwood Environmental Action
Community Task Force invites everyone to
visit the Stonewall Tall Grass Prairie which
it officially opened on Sep-
tember 25. The 2 acre Prairie
site, located west of Stone-
wall's Regional Health Centre,
is being preserved as a public
park. It contains over 60 spe-
cies of rare native Manitoba
wildflowers and grasses such
as bergamot, harebell and big
bluestem. REACT reports
that Tall Grass Prairie once
covered nearly all of the
southern Interlake and Red
River Valley, but now occurs
on less than 1% of its former



range. It is considered Canada's most en-
dangered ecosystem. The Stonewall Tall
Grass Prairie was originally discovered by
the Manitoba Naturalists So-
ciety's Tall Grass Prairie In-
ventory in 1989. Formerly a
golf course, much of the site
was never broken. Through
the cooperation of the Town
of Stonewall, the Interlake
Regional Health Authority,
and the volunteers of RE-
ACT with funding from the
Province and Shell, the
Stonewall Tall Grass Prairie
will now remain as a perma-
nent reminder of Manitoba's
rich natural heritage. **ECO**

HARVEST COLLECTIVE CLOSES

Sad to say, Harvest Collective, Winni-
peg's main retail source of organically grown
foods, and long time member group of the
Eco-Network, has closed its doors. The or-
ganization had been struggling for some time
to balance its books and meet the many
demands on its resources.

In spite of growing numbers of custom-
ers and burgeoning interest in organic
foods, Harvest's internal resources
couldn't quite stretch to accomodate eve-
ryone's needs. The stores have been of-
fered for sale, and negotiations are
underway with a potential purchaser. Hope-
fully, both stores will be open again for
business in the near future.

Meanwhile, Harvest's demise has left its
many customers scrambling to find other
sources of organic foods. This has been a

benefit to a number of other outlets in the
City who are starting to see their business
pick up.

We are fortunate to have these other op-
portunities for organic shopping. See the
ads on page 8 of this journal for a sampling
of where to shop organic. And don't forget
the Manitoba producers of organic foods.
They are pleased to hear from customers
directly and will welcome your call. A list is
available in our Consumers Guide to Certi-
fied Organic Foods in Manitoba, just \$3 at
our office.

*And while we're on the subject of or-
ganic food...* Our Food, Our Health, Our Fu-
ture - A Conference on Organic Agricul-
ture in Manitoba is getting set for Round 2!
Look for more information as we organize
for this event in February. **ECO**

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CITIZENS' HEARING ON PORK PRODUCTION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

by David Kattenburg, Westman Community Action Coalition

The growth of industrial hog production and processing is the focus of increasing scrutiny across North America. In their pursuit of global pork markets, the Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta provincial governments have eliminated hog marketing boards, encouraged the proliferation of industrial-scale hog barns and competed for pork processing plants in their communities — often with the aid of generous subsidies.

In response, critics are calling for more vigorous environmental review and regulation of these activities. They are concerned about nuisance odours, fecal pollution of surface and groundwaters, human health impacts and about the profligate use of energy and water resources. They are also concerned about the socioeconomic impacts of industrial hog production and processing. Industrial scale production is contributing to the collapse of family farms.

Hog development deals are often cloaked in secrecy. The Manitoba provincial government, for example, has ruled that Maple Leaf Meats' proposed pork processing plant in Brandon will not be subjected to a full-scale Clean Environment Commission hearing, as provided for under the Manitoba Environment Act. Its Memorandum of Understanding with Maple Leaf Meats is confidential. The Westman Community Action Coalition is supporting a court bid to obtain this document.

In the wake of a North America-wide collapse in hog prices (largely due to overproduction) both the Canadian and US governments are now offering financial bail-out packages to hog producers, a move many say will lead to further distortions in the industry and escalating environmental impacts.

Citizens' Hearing

A two-and-a-half-day Citizens' Hearing on Pork Production and

the Environment will be held in Brandon, Manitoba between Friday, October 29 and Sunday, October 31. Guests will be invited from throughout Prairie Canada and the US Great Plains. The Citizens' Hearing will convene shortly after 1 pm on October 29 and adjourn late Saturday or early Sunday. Action-oriented workshops will follow, or run concurrently.

The general and specific aims of the Citizens' Hearing and workshops are:

- to increase public understanding across prairie Canada and the US Great Plains of industrial hog production and processing and its environmental and socioeconomic impacts;
- to stimulate public debate across Manitoba about the impacts of Maple Leaf Meats' Brandon processing plant and its feeder network of factory hog barns;
- to stimulate public involvement in decisions related to hog production and processing;
- to stimulate public response to upcoming Environment Act proposals on Maple Leaf Meats' Brandon plant and to large-scale swine production facilities in Western Manitoba;
- to lay the groundwork for community monitoring and research projects on the impacts of Maple Leaf Meats' Brandon plant, and swine production barns in western Manitoba;
- to establish a Prairie Canada-US Great Plains hog action network.

Organization

The hearing is being organized jointly by the Westman Community Action Coalition and the Sierra Club Prairie Chapter. Assistance is being provided by the Manitoba Environmental Council, the National Farmers' Union and the Southern Alberta Environmental Organization. A \$10,000 grant has been awarded by the

See Hog Hearings page 9



SAVE THOSE LEAVES!

Resource Conservation Manitoba's Composting Education Project reminds you to take advantage of that amazing free resource which becomes available in the Fall - *Leaves!!*

An excellent source of carbon in your compost pile, leaves are available in abundance at this time of year, but hard to find in the Spring when the compost pile is ready for action again. RCM recommends storing leaves in large plastic bags and ensuring that they stay dry.



Remember that oak leaves take longer to break down but are okay for the compost pile, as long as other leaves are mixed in.

If by chance you're not yet composting, now's the time to start. (Many of us use our compost bins all winter, freeze/thaw action being a great way to start that decomposition process). Call Audrey at 925-3777 for compost info, or better yet, attend a (Free) "Compost 101" workshop. RCM offers several this Fall. Pre-registration necessary.

WHAT'S HAPPENING...

OCTOBER 10 - THIRD ANNUAL WINNIPEG VEGETARIAN COMPASSIONATE THANKSGIVING DINNER AND FUNDRAISER: With lecture on 'The Environment and Our Food Choices' by Carl V. Phillips, MPP, PhD., assistant professor of public health at the University of Minnesota. The all-vegan dinner menu will be provided by Satkar Vegetarian Cuisine. Tickets for the dinner and lecture are \$14 for WVA members (2 for \$25), \$16 for non-members, \$10 for children under 16. Lecture only at 7:30 pm: \$4 for WVA members, \$5 for non-members. All tickets must be purchased in advance and are available at Humboldt's Legacy, 887 Westminster (772-1404).

OCTOBER 12 - OPEN MEETING OF THE MANITOBA NATURALISTS SOCIETY ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION COMMITTEE: After a summer of relative inaction, things are heating up on the environmental front in Manitoba. This meeting will provide an opportunity to review the status of ongoing issues (eg. East side of Lake Winnipeg, game ranching) and to identify new issues that need attention. Please arrive between 7 and 7:25 pm at the Sixth Floor Solarium, 63 Albert Street (above the MNS Office).

OCTOBER 18 - COMPOST 101: Free Workshop offered by Resource Conservation Manitoba's Compost Education Project. Centennial Library Auditorium, 2nd Floor. 12 noon (50 minute workshop). Call 925-3777 to register and for more information. RCM is offering 4 other workshop opportunities if this one doesn't suit your schedule.

OCTOBER 18 - THE ADDICTION OF MUSHROOM HUNTING: Dr. Olchowecki, retired professor from the U. of M's Department of Botany, will discuss the art of mushroom identification and his forays with local and national groups. He will bring books and literature from organizations which will further knowledge in this fascinating topic. Manitoba Naturalists Society Indoor Program, 7:30 pm at the Pauline Boutal Theatre of the Franco Manitobain Cultural Centre.

OCTOBER 23 - A PUBLIC MEETING ON YUGOSLAVIA: Focussing on refugees, aid, and ecological devastation. 6 pm, UW Bulman Centre. Peace Alliance Winnipeg for more info: 582-4248.

OCTOBER 29 TO 31 - A CITIZENS' HEARING ON PORK PRODUCTION AND THE ENVIRONMENT: At the Agricultural Extension Centre, Brandon. Organized by the Sierra Club Prairie Chapter and Westman Community Action Coalition (Brandon). For more information, contact WCAC at 1-204-725-3308 or email to: citizen@westman.wave.ca

NOVEMBER 8 - THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH: Join Julia Schoen as she shares her trip to the beautiful national parks of the Grand Circle area: the mountains of Colorado, the rainbow colours of Utah and the rugged cactus lands of Arizona. Manitoba Naturalists Society Indoor Program. 7:30 pm at the Pauline Boutal Theatre of the Franco Manitobain Cultural Centre.

NOVEMBER 14 - 12TH ANNUAL NON-VIOLENT PLAY FESTIVAL: Discover creative alternatives to violent toys from 1 - 4:30 at

Robert A Steen Community Club, 980 Palmerston Avenue. Free admission. Call Project Peacemakers at 775-8178 for more information.

NOVEMBER 17 - WVA DINNER AT SAWATDEE THAI RESTAURANT: 7 pm at 555 Osborne Street. Tickets must be ordered in advance by calling WVA at 889-5789.

NOVEMBER 18 and 19: Author and activist Brewster Kneen will be in Winnipeg for a book-signing with his new book on the impacts of the BIOTECH industry at Mondragon, and a public event. Details TBA. Call the Eco-Network at 947-6511 for more information closer to the date.

NOVEMBER 22 - PADDLING THREE RIVERS: Discover the little known but fascinating Missouri, Buffalo and Wapiskau rivers, located in diverse geological regions of the North American continent. With vastly different origins and characteristics, MNS members are drawn to these areas by their curiosity, sense of adventure, and appreciation of nature. Roger Turenne hosts this Manitoba Naturalists Society Indoor Program 7:30 pm at the Pauline Boutal Theatre of the Franco Manitobain Cultural Centre.

NOVEMBER 30 - WINNIPEG VEGETARIAN DINNER AT MASSAWA RESTAURANT: 7 pm at #200 - 121 Osborne Street. Tickets must be ordered in advance by calling WVA at 889-5789.

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- Publications/Brochures
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LAWLESS LOGGING

What we can do about it

by David Nickarz

In the November/December 1997 issue of the Eco-Journal I wrote about a dangerous logging bridge over the Manigotagan River in Nopiming Provincial Park. The Pine Falls Paper Company (PFPC) built this illegal logging bridge without Canadian Coast Guard authorization and in clear violation of their own Environment Act licence.

According to PFPC Environment Act Licence No. 1557E, "7. The Licencee shall (i) not construct permanent bridges over the Manigotagan River;" This bridge will be in place from 1993 to at least 2003—that's 10 years. Two definitions of 'temporary bridges' state they should be in place for no more than 1-2 years. In the same section, "(iv) ...the siting, construction and removal of any temporary bridges is done in a manner which will: . . . (c) not create a hazard to canoeists." The bridge is a clear hazard to canoeists with it's 1 foot clearance at high water.

To date there was no reason given by Manitoba Environment as to why they refuse to enforce their own Environment Act Licence.

The discovery of this bridge has alerted the Coast Guard to almost two dozen other unauthorized PFPC bridges. Since then most of the bridges have been given permits under the late authori-

zation section of the Navigable Waters Protection Act—all except the original bridge in Nopiming Park.



It has now been two years since we told the Coast Guard about this public hazard. As of Tuesday, September 14, 1999 this bridge has still not received a permit from the Coast Guard!

To make a long story short, the delay is because there is very little staff in the Coast Guard's Sarnia office to get the permitting process finished. Communication between departments has delayed the permit.

I don't know about you but I'm pretty damn sick of waiting for our impotent government to take action to protect the environment. In the case of these illegal logging bridges we are simply asking that Manitoba Environment and the Coast Guard act on a clear violation of the law.

Concerned citizens have spent their own time and resources monitoring environmental devastation across this province. Earth First!'s Citizens Watch Campaign had discovered several violations on our May Long weekend trip in May,

1999. We found apparent violations of the Forestry Act in the form of fire hazards from logging, clear cuts that were larger than recommended in the Wildlife Guidelines, forestry equipment left to rot in an old clear cut and much more.

I alerted the Minister of Natural Resources to these issues in a letter dated June 27 and have not yet received an answer. Do I even want an answer? I know what their answer is going to be. Deafening silence.

We must now form a citizen's monitoring network for Wilderness in Manitoba. It is clear that our government agencies are no longer willing to monitor or enforce environmental laws.

"Forest Watch" groups already exist in other provinces. I know of groups in B.C., Ontario, and Alberta that monitor and report on violations of environmental laws in the woods. They do very good work.

I would like to take it a step further. Our group could do on-the-ground investigations on request. Most people do not know about the Fisheries Act or the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act so we would help with legal research.

The next step would be to publicize the issue in the media and in

See *Legal Actions* page 11 ☺

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CHEMICAL SENSITIVITIES INFORMATION EXCHANGE NETWORK MANITOBA (CSIENM)

by Marg Friesen

"Multiple Chemical Sensitivities" (MCS) is not the term I would choose. Nor is "Environmental Illness" (E.I.) or "Environmental Sensitivities" (E.S.). However, these are the terms that have become popular and are used to describe an acquired disorder where adverse symptoms occur in response to low levels of a substance or substances that do not seem to affect most people. Health and Welfare Canada, in a 1991 "Issues" pamphlet, states that "Although environmental sensitivities are often linked to allergies in that affected persons seem to react to unusually small doses of the substance(s) to which they are sensitive, they are unlike traditionally defined allergies in that they do not exert their effects in the same way." Substances taken for granted such as perfumes, gasoline, pesticides, chlorine and household cleaning products can trigger reactions.

Two Chemists and a Biologist

The Chemical Sensitivities Information Exchange Network (CSIENM) was conceived as three of us, two chemists and a biologist, shared our experiences dealing with chemical sensitivities that we believed were related to exposures at the workplace. We did not think our experiences were unique. What happened to others who had been chemically injured on the job? Or those injured outside the workplace?

An interesting picture emerged over the next few months as we started talking to others. Next to join CSIENM was a woman who had become seriously ill as a stay-at-home Mom while living in a new house trailer. Then a teacher whose illness started out with chronic fatigue. Then a former veterinarian forced to give up his

profession due to chronic fatigue and chemical sensitivities. Next a fellow with a machine repair business and a darkroom technician. Then in succession, four teachers. (Chemists I can understand, but why teachers?) With time, more people - varied backgrounds, occupations and chemical exposures. Some appear to have had long-term low exposures to a toxic substance such as formaldehyde or organic solvents, whereas others started experiencing symptoms after a short-term high-level exposure. Some after dental work, others after renovations at home or the workplace. Some working and leading "normal" lives, others unable to even do their own shopping and leading isolated lives.

Symptoms are diverse and individual: headaches, breathing difficulties, stomach and bowel problems, joint and muscle pain, heart and circulatory disruptions, chronic fatigue, rashes, nervous system disturbances, difficulty concentrating and mood swings. Impacts on lifestyle range from being mild (such as avoiding the detergent aisle when shopping) to being completely disabled.

Why chemical sensitivities? One theory is that the human body has not evolved to cope with the ever increasing chemicals being introduced into our environment. The presence of chemical sensitivities seems to have paralleled the industrial, technological and chemical development of our modern world. Nicholas Ashford and Claudia Miller, well known and respected in the field of chemical exposure, have written one of the best books on the subject "Chemical Exposure: Low Levels and High Stakes" (2nd Edition) and I suggest those interested in knowing more should have a look at this book (I have a copy).

A NEW PAGE IN PLANNING

by Brian Pannell

On May 10, 1999 COSDI (Consultation on Sustainable Development Implementation) gave its final report to the Province of Manitoba. So far there has been no formal reaction. Informally, the report has had little impact on the events transpiring on the East side of Lake Winnipeg.

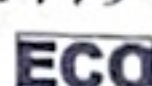
But there is an interesting percolation going on in Manitoba Hydro. What is happening is that Manitoba Hydro is participating in, and funding through a third party, a planning process for future energy supply and demand - this in advance of any application of a development licence under the Environment Act.

As the advertisement in this issue states: "As presently envisioned, the consultation will involve approximately 8 members of the public in direct, detailed and continuing discussions with Hydro. There will also be a system for informing the wider interested public about the discussions and soliciting their input." This initiative is not the general public consultation which Hydro will undertake in relation to any development project which proceeds into the licensing application phase. It is different and, dare I say it: better.

To help ensure that the discussions are informed and thorough, and heighten the opportunity to be influential, the eight public participants, together with other public participants, will

have access to expert and independent knowledge, as well as funding for coordination, communication and travel to meetings. In other words, the process mirrors the resources that can be made available to an intervenor at a Public Utility Board hearing or a Clean Environment Commission hearing, without the time pressures and the extent of corporation decision making that is usual by the time those venues have been reached.

It is too early to know what will come from this exercise. In my view the likely worst case is that it ends as a discovery process: that is, an exchange of knowledge between the parties so that they are largely aware of each others' position when and if hearings begin. The best case would be something more; perhaps the reaching of agreement on one or more matters. We can but wait and see. It is, however worth noting that many of the ideas which Manitoba Hydro is discussing today were raised at the turn of the decade during the Conawapa hearings, such as adding generation to the existing Notigi control dam while moving toward natural gas and away from coal for thermal generation.

For those who wish to find out, by participation to a greater or lesser degree, where this process leads, I may be contacted at 779-4668 or 6-597 Broadway, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 0W7. 

How many people in Manitoba have chemical sensitivities? It is hard to say until prevalence or epidemiological studies are done. The Environmental Illness Society of Canada estimates about 15%. In surveys conducted by health departments in California and New Mexico, 16% of respondents said they were "unusually sensitive to everyday chemicals" and 6% in California and 2% in New Mexico had been diagnosed with MCS.

Ashford and Miller in their book state that, "Based on increasing outbreaks of sick building syndrome, increased reporting of symptoms in contaminated communities to state health departments, increased recognition of problems in the industrial workplace, and the increasing numbers of physicians treating chemically related sensitivities, the existing evidence does suggest that chemical sensitivity is on the rise and could become a large problem with significant economic consequences related to the disablement of productive members of society."

Approach by the medical community in Canada to MCS is also diverse. At one

end of the spectrum is Nova Scotia which has a specialized facility which provides treatment and conducts research into MCS. (It is funded by the Nova Scotia provincial government and administered by Dalhousie University.)

At the other end is Manitoba - no facilities and no specialized treatment. But there are signs that things are changing. First of all, more and more people are reporting MCS-type symptoms. Also, the general public is becoming more informed about chemical sensitivities. As seen by letters to the editor in local papers regarding perfumes and pesticide use. There are also advances at the workplace and medically and politically. MCS has become a health and safety issue in many workplaces and labour unions are starting to become involved. In April of 1997, The Public Service Alliance of Canada, the largest federal union, published a booklet called "Multiple Chemical Sensitivity at Work. Guide for PSAC Members." This booklet contains valuable information for most people with MCS - whether or not it is workplace related.

The Diagnosis

Medically, MCS research, diagnosis, and the use of appropriate clinical practices seems to have gotten hung up because of a lack of a universally accepted definition or diagnostic test. This may soon change as the Archives of Environmental Health (May/June 1999 issue, vol. 54, #3) a well respected scientific journal, has just published what it calls "the first consensus definition of the controversial syndrome known as multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS)." Their press release goes on to say "Dr. Kaye Kilburn, editor of the Archives of Environmental Health and one of the [34] authors of

the consensus, hailed the new MCS definition as a practical and orderly step that was overdue. Although physicians do not yet fully understand the etiology of MCS, anyone who meets the consensus criteria should be diagnosed and—just like asthmatics—counseled about the need to avoid those exposures that aggravate their symptoms."



1999 Consensus Criteria for Multiple Chemical Sensitivity:

1. The symptoms are reproducible with repeated [chemical] exposure.
2. The condition is chronic.
3. Low levels of exposure [lower than previously or commonly tolerated] result in manifestations of the syndrome.
4. The symptoms improve or resolve when the incitants are removed.
5. Responses occur to multiple chemically unrelated substances.
6. Symptoms involve multiple systems.

There is also encouraging news in the political area. Last June (1999), a private member's motion (M-468) was presented and debated in the House of Com-

mons. The motion reads: "That, in the opinion of this House, the government should recognize: (a) multiple chemical sensitivity, chronic fatigue syndrome, and fibromyalgia as illnesses that have the capacity to cause disability, and (b) those suffering the disabling aspects of these diseases require protection and a strong moral commitment to their well-being." In a highly unusual move, indicating strong support from all five federal parties, this motion was referred for study to the Standing Committee on Health. CSIENM is preparing a brief for presentation to this committee.

Preventable and Reversible

Multiple chemical sensitivity is preventable and reversible. With appropriate lifestyle and "workstyle" changes, people often make significant or total recoveries. Complementary and alternative medicine treatments have been found by many to be beneficial.

The goal of CSIENM is to provide opportunities for the exchange of information on chemical sensitivities, especially as it relates to Manitobans. CSIENM is preparing information about this condition for the general public, labour unions, the medical community and politicians. Contact: Marg Friesen 204-261-8591 E-Mail: madray@autobahn.mb.ca

Informative websites:

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www.mcsrr.org
<http://biz-comm.com/CIIN>

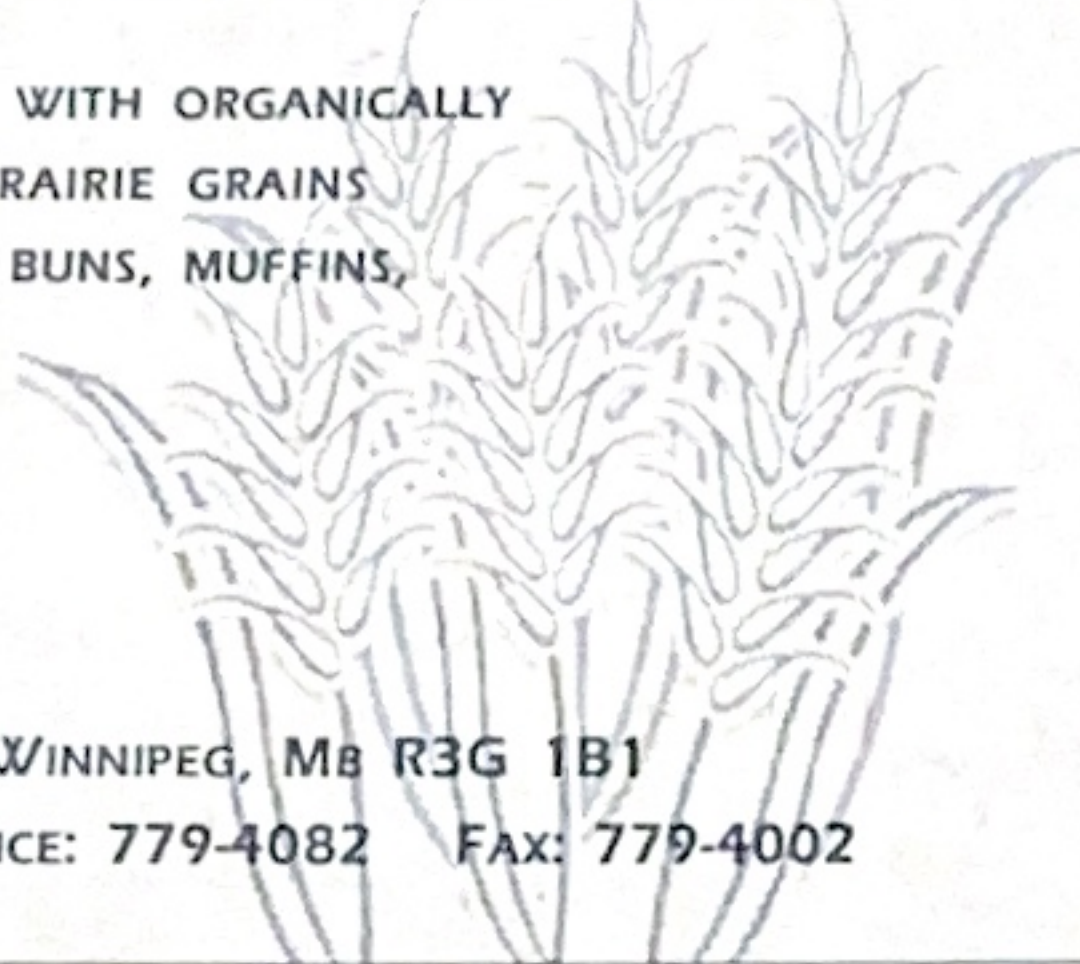
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BIOTECH WORKING GROUP NEWS

ALL BEANS ARE NOT CREATED EQUAL ...

by Jan Westlund

The next time you sip a soymilk blender drink comforted that its phytoestrogens will ward off mid-life osteoporosis or heart disease, check the label on your soy product. Despite the fact that soybeans are also believed to inhibit the development of breast and prostate cancer, lower cholesterol and offer all the essential amino acids needed for human health, chances are if its not labelled 'organic' you may be getting a great deal less than you've bargained for. And, in some ways, a deadly amount more. That's because genetically engineered soybeans are increasingly replacing conventional varieties resulting in decreased isoflavones and increased pesticide residues according to recent studies referenced in the flow of information through our Environmental Resource Centre. The imperative to purchase only organically-produced soy products is becoming apparent.

1 Peer-reviewed research published in the Journal of Medicinal Food (Vol. 1, No. 4, 1999) showed an overall reduction in phytoestrogen levels of 12-14 percent in the two genetically-altered, herbicide-tolerant soybean strains tested as compared to conventional counterparts grown under similar conditions. (Most of this reduction was attributable to reductions in genistin and, to a lesser extent, daidzin levels.)

2 The news gets worse: According to research by agronomist Dr. Charles Benbrook who reviewed over 8,200 US university-based soybean varietal trials in 1998, farmers growing Monsanto's Roundup Ready (herbicide resistant) soybeans used 2 to 5 times more herbicide measured in pounds applied per acre, compared to the other popular weed management systems used on most soybean fields not planted to RR varieties in 1998. His analysis

continues the steady erosion of credibility of pro-biotech forces who've argued that genetic engineering will reduce or eliminate pesticide use.

3 Information into the Eco-Network office, which we are currently attempting to verify, states that Monsanto has already received permits for a threefold increase in herbicide residues on genetically engineered soybeans in Europe and the US, up from 6 parts per million (PPM) to 20 PPM to reflect this increased use of pesticide.

4 Benbrook's finding haven't have come to light a moment too soon. Swedish researchers, Dr. Lennart Hardell and Dr. Mikael Eriksson, publishing in the March 15 1999 Journal of American Cancer Society, maintain that exposure to Glyphosate (Roundup) 'yielded increased risks' for Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, a form of cancer.

Recently developed Canadian standards for organics refuse to allow genetically modified foods to wear that proud label. American organic

standards also disallow genetically engineered products, although that requirement has been under attack by those attempting to rewrite new US standards (see article in EJ Vol 8, Number 2) last year and may be challenged again in the round of discussions currently underway.

To side step the debasement suffered by the humble soybean and the danger involved in continuing to build healthy, plant based diets around it, the bean of choice must be organically produced. And, most preferably, in Canada. The fact that genetically engineered crops threaten to contaminate open-pollinated, organic fields growing nearby will give concerned citizens yet another reason to enter the current debate on biotechnology.

ECO

HOG HEARINGS TO PROBE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

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Montreal-based North American Fund for Environmental Cooperation (NAFEC). The Sierra Club (US) has awarded US \$5,000 to bring US participants to the hearings and workshops.

Commissioners Terms of reference have been set for the Commissioners of the Citizens' Hearing, based largely on the procedures of the Clean Environment Commission. They will be expected to assess the strength and validity of positions and arguments presented in the course of the hearing, with specific reference to the range of issues tabled before them.

They will also be free to identify issues or themes that merit further study or exploration. Based on their assessment of testimony, they will issue specific recommendations as they see fit. Minority/Majority opinions will be welcomed and encouraged.

Finally, the Commissioners will issue a full report and set of recommendations within one month of the Citizens' Hearing. Commissioners include the current Chair of the Manitoba Environmental Council, Dr. Bill Turnock and Christine Common-Singh, a member of the Council and a member of the Manitoba Round Table for Sustainable Development.

Admission to the hearing is free of charge. Prospective participants are asked to pre-register if possible, particularly if they wish to cross-examine witness or testify. Registration for the workshop portion is \$30 which includes two lunches and two dinners. Contact the Westman Community Action Coalition at Box 22021, Brandon, MB R7A 6Y9 or phone (204)725-3308. E-mail is citizen@westman.wave.ca.

ECO

FROM BACKYARD TO BACKYARD

A Modern Day Landfill Saga

Ever wonder what happened to the creosote-contaminated soil removed from several Transcona backyards close to the Domtar site? The answer is that it has been placed in someone else's backyard. In the new St. Clements Landfill in the community of Libau, to be precise. What's more, the people of the Libau area were not informed that the contaminated soil was coming their way. And they are not happy about it.

Some 250 people packed a community meeting on the subject recently, and led to the formation of a new group, tentatively called Friends Against the Libau Landfill. The landfill is controversial for more reasons than the disposal of the creosote soil.

Libau residents, Ernst and Edith Henrichsen want to investigate whether the province's Environment Act was violated when the landfill site was moved without proper notification of the community, and because public consultation on the issue was inadequate. Following is an open letter to former Premier Gary Filmon, outlining the community's concerns.

An Open Letter to Premier Filmon Regarding an Environmental Concern

from Ernst and Edith Henrichsen

In the past decade, it seems that in Manitoba the environment has taken a back seat to politics and money. Many mega-projects are being pushed through with little environmental impact assessment and with next to no public input. At a time when most of the western world is scrambling to clean up past mistakes, we continue to insist on making them. So it is easy to understand that people feel frustrated when their right to participation and right to information are being violated.

One such project is the R.M. of St. Clements' new Libau Landfill which was proposed to handle Municipal Solid Waste from the R.M. of St. Clements and perhaps a few small neighbouring municipalities. To our surprise, in May 1999, the RM of St. Clements signed an agreement with Wasteworks, a HazCo Company from Alberta to promote and operate the landfill. The agreement includes the following article:

Part B:307 (b) "Wasteworks and all its affiliated companies shall actively promote the Landfill as a suitable location for the disposal of all Commercial, Industrial and Special Wastes in the geographic region of southeastern Manitoba, and shall not promote nor provide management services for a similar Landfill within a radius of 150 kilometers of the Landfill".

As a result of the above Agreement we decided to take a closer look at the entire landfill project from preliminary to construction. We thereby came to the conclusion that if this site had been honestly judged by its preliminary data and the numerous alterations needed to construct it...THIS LANDFILL WOULD NOT EXIST.

This landfill is situated in the midst of a wetlands - swamp, peat bog and wildlife area, with highly erratic subsoil conditions, with little previous data and overlying four types of aquifers.

During construction, many problems occurred because of the insufficient amount of underlying clay, high ground water conditions, artesian conditions, till and stone outcroppings. This resulted in the proposed one-meter man-made clay liner not being installed. Why was there not more preliminary work done, prior to undertaking any construction, to ensure the site was conducive? Why was

this project not abandoned at that time because of all those difficulties?

Why were the Guidelines for the Siting of a Class 1 Waste Disposal Ground in Manitoba (Guideline No. 94-01E) not used for the siting of this site? These Guidelines indicate that: "a minimum set back distance of 2 km is REQUIRED between the boundaries of a waste disposal ground and any known wetlands."

This Landfill is built in the midst of a wetlands!

The Guidelines also tell us: "sites with shallow water tables or perched aquifers that preclude proper liner installation SHOULD BE EXCLUDED." "Sites with less than 10 meters of impervious or low permeability materials overlying aquifers SHOULD BE EXCLUDED." "The site should be located in an area where, if there is a release from the facility, pollutants can be contained and corrective actions taken to prevent adverse effects on water supplies and return the facility to compliance with groundwater and surface water quality objectives"

If building of the first waste cell could not be accomplished as proposed because of poor underground and high water conditions, how would we ever contain and clean up this site if it was contaminated?

The Libau Landfill is now intended to be a Mega site - a competitor to the BFI Rosser site and City of Winnipeg Brady site. The RM of St. Clements' Council, through this company, is also hoping to attract business from other Provinces and the northern States. The Domtar site in Transcona was the first customer in June of this year, when 40,000 tonnes of contaminated soil were brought to the landfill, although this site was never proposed as a Soil Treatment Facility.

Clean Sweep - Seine River Trail



Save Our Seine (SOS) Annual Cleanup

The event will take place Saturday, October 16, 1999 beginning at 10 AM behind Robin's Donuts on Provencher Blvd. The cleanup area will be the length of the trail from Provencher to Youville. The public is asked to dress for the weather, bring work gloves, boots, a shovel, as well as to pack a lunch.

In case of rain, the Cleanup will take place Sunday, October 17, at 1 PM.

For further info: 233-0294

If this landfill issue had been put before the public, by the Council of the RM of St. Clements, in the manner it is now being promoted and operated ...as a dumping ground for the geographic region of Southeastern Manitoba and beyond...with the inclusion of Commercial, Industrial and Special Wastes...THIS LANDFILL WOULD NOT EXIST.

Hundreds of letters have been sent to the Minister of Environment and other Departments. The response has not satisfied our concerns. We find it appalling that any one would take such a chance on our precious resources - water, tens of thousands of Manitobans use the water from these aquifers every day! The Carbonate Aquifer, being the biggest and best yielding aquifer, takes in the entire centre of the Province and beyond. Also, very little thought was given to our friends immediately north of this landfill - the Brokenhead Ojibway First Nation with their land and Buffalo Ranch bordering this site and their water supply

being pumped approximately 4 miles north west of this landfill site. To the east of this site is a major farming operation, the Greenwald Colony Farms Ltd., who were not made aware of the magnitude of change to the landfill operation.

We know that the BFI Rosser and the City of Winnipeg Brady sites can handle the waste in the Capital Region for the next 100 years. We also have numerous soil treatment facilities already operating in the Province! Why do we continue to build more landfills, especially in lands not conducive for such use, as is the case with the RM of St. Clements Libau Landfill?

We find it rather sad that just prior to the Clean Environment Commission Hearing on Solid Waste Management in the Capital Region in August of 1995, we read that the Ministerial opinion

regarding the development of this landfill was that the Minister did not feel these Hearings would impact the RM of St. Clements and their plan for development of their landfill site, although they are in the Capital Region!

In 1999, it is unacceptable to build such a project on the "out-of-

sight, out-of-mind" mentality. This practice belongs in the dark ages not in the dawn of the new millennium.

We also believe that this landfill was built more on money, politics and compromise rather than on data and expert opinion.

These kinds of projects should be sited and built through our experts in the Departments of Environment and Natural Resources and not by provincial and municipal elected officials.

Therefore, Premier Filmon, if you are concerned about Manitobans and our health and well-being, we ask you to

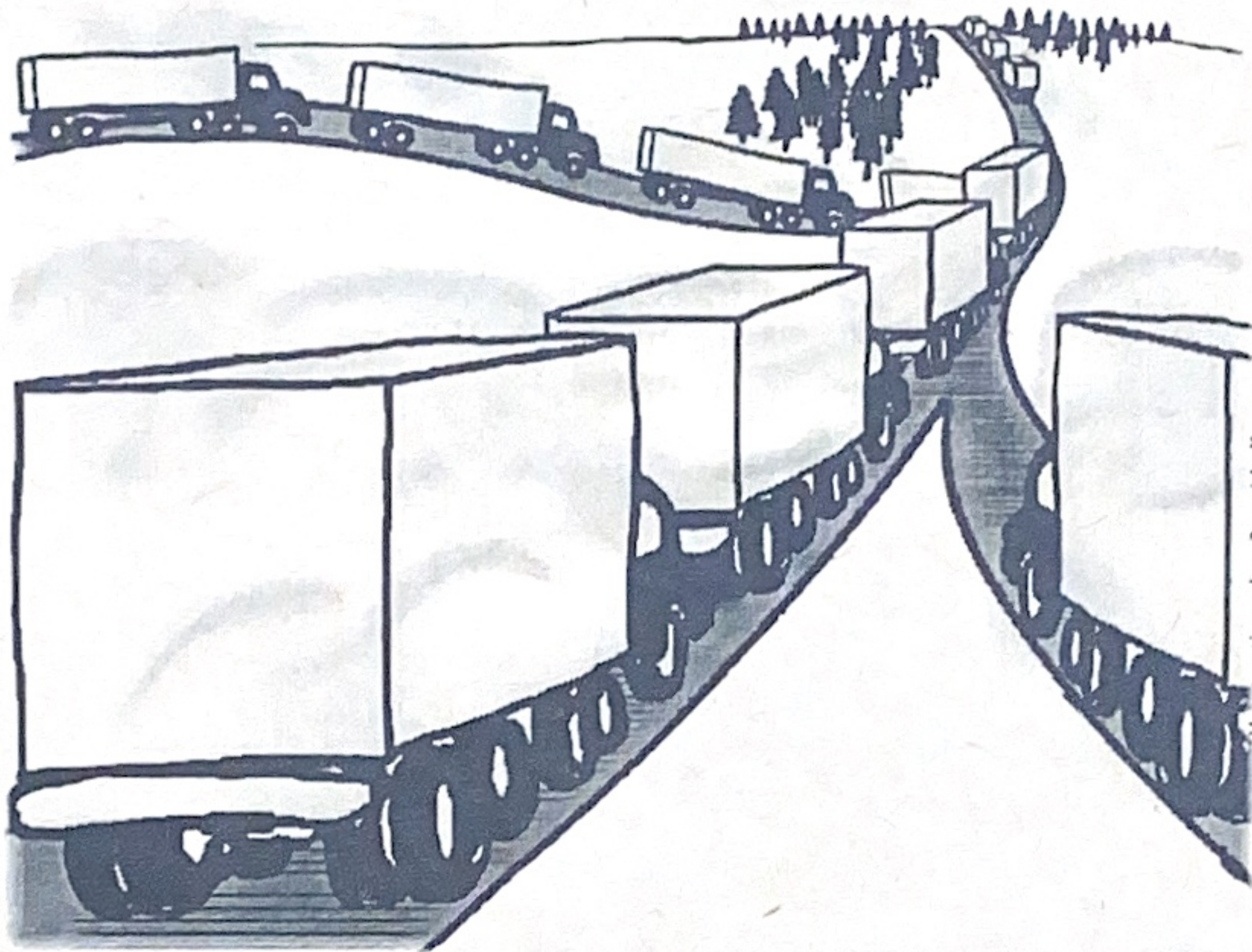
halt the operation of this landfill and let us have an independent evaluation of this site.

We appreciate your attention and await your reply to our concerns of this very serious public issue.

Election Assurance

Well, an election has intervened. During the election, the Henrichsen's received an assurance from the NDP that, if elected, they would reform the Environmental Assessment provisions of the Environment Act. FALL is hoping they will follow through on this promise. The group is looking for additional support and advice (as well as dollars to help them finance a likely court challenge). Anyone wishing to help out can contact Ernst Henrichsen at (204) 766-2667.

ECO



LEGAL ACTIONS AGAINST ILLEGAL LOGGING

continued from page 5 ...

the political arena. We would also use creative measures to enforce the laws. Don't worry, I'm not talking about burning bridges or spiking trees.

For example, in the case of the illegal logging bridge over the Manigotagan River in Nopiming Park: Upstream there is a sign that insults the intelligence of anyone who is canoeing down the river. It states "Caution! Temporary Bridge Ahead" with a little "Portage" sign tacked on. The sign should read "Danger! Permanent Illegal Logging Bridge Ahead". Before the bridge, the site was classified as a medium difficulty rapid which you could shoot going down stream at certain times of the year. The "Portage" sign should read "Use Portage or Risk Serious Personal Injury or Death".

A creative action would be to replace the sign with a more accurate one. The inaccurate sign could be removed and returned to the Pine Falls Paper Company for recycling.

My experience with the Earth First! Citizen's Watch Campaign over the last 3 years has shown me that there is ecological lawlessness all over Manitoba. Trying to bring it to the attention of the authorities has proven futile.

We all must find creative ways of making life hell for those who profit from lawlessness in our forests—be they corporations or government departments. Call me at 338-6326, e-mail me at dnickarz@autobahn.mb.ca or write to me at 599 Talbot Avenue, Winnipeg, R2L 0R7 with any ideas or comments.

ECO

NOTICE: INDIVIDUALS AND ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS MAY PARTICIPATE IN CONSULTATION WITH MANITOBA HYDRO

Manitoba Hydro recently agreed to a public process on energy planning in advance of seeking a licence for any specific development proposal. Notice of this consultation is to be widely circulated.

Although the specific subject matter of the consultation is to be determined by the participants, topics are likely to include possible future hydro-electric dams, demand side management and the use of natural gas for electrical generation. Manitoba Hydro has begun to examine the implications of possible new generation at one or more of the following locations: Notigi, Wuskwatim and Gull. An application to build a natural gas fired station in southern Manitoba may occur for an in-service date as early as 2002.

As presently envisioned, the consultation will involve approximately eight members of the public in direct, detailed and continuing discussions with Hydro. There will also be a system for informing the wider interested public about the discussions and soliciting their input. If you wish to be kept informed about, participate in or make a submission to the discussion, please contact Brian Pannell at 204-779-4668, 6-597 Broadway, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 0W7.

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

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

I'm also enclosing a donation of _____ to help with your public education activities.

[Charitable tax receipts available for amounts over the cost of membership]

Total Amount enclosed _____

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

Name(s) _____ Group (if applicable) _____

Telephone # () _____ E-Mail _____

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A supporting membership includes a subscription to **Eco-Journal** as well as notice of events and regular updates on issues and is open to any individual.



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.