

LOCAL MORATORIUM IN PLACE FEDS URGED TO PHASE OUT PESTICIDES

by Anne Lindsey

The House of Commons' Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development released its long-awaited report on pesticides on May 16, triggering a flurry of debate and discussion across the land. Environmental groups are delighted of course. The report echoes many of the concerns that groups have been expressing, along with those of important players in the health care community such as the Canadian Public Health Association and the Ontario College of Family Physicians. On the other side of the debate we find the pesticide producers and lawn care companies who use millions of gallons of these products every year.

Threat to Health

Ian Greaves, President of Campaign for Pesticide Reduction! Winnipeg (CPR! Winnipeg) says its high time that Parliament recognizes the threat to health posed by commonly-used pesticides, especially to more vulnerable members of society such as children, seniors and the chemically-sensitive. And this is exactly what this report does in recommending that the government give "absolute precedence to the protection of human health in all pesticide management decisions".

While expressing the views of a majority of the Committee (chaired by Davenport MP, Charles Caccia), the report also has dissenters amongst Alliance Party members who say that it goes too far. Caccia however, holds firm to his contention that dandelions are not a threat to public health, while pesticides are making people ill. The report calls for a gradual phase out of

pesticides for purely cosmetic uses over the next 5 years.

It also calls for comprehensive changes to the 30 year old legislation and regulatory system governing pesticides in Canada, urging the application of the "precautionary principle". (For more information on the precautionary principle, see Jan Westlund's interview of John Jackson in this issue).

Any action on these recommendations will have to be taken by the government in the form of new legislation and/or amendments to regulation. The Minister of Health, Allan Rock, is currently considering changes to the Pest Control Products Act, and Liberal backbencher

Marlene Jennings is shepherding a Private Member's Bill through the House, calling for a ban on pesticides for cosmetic purposes.

Spraying Moratorium

The report comes at a time when public action around pesticide reduction is heating up. In Winnipeg, CPR! has won a year-long moratorium on chemical spraying in and around children's playgrounds, tot lots, day cares and playing fields under City of Winnipeg jurisdiction. The moratorium comes as a result of presenta-

tions and petitions to the City's Standing Committee on Protection and Community Services, and is supported by Medical Officer of Health for the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Dr. Margaret Fast.

Councillor Harvey Smith (Daniel McIntyre) proposed the motion to the Committee, which also agreed to increase the size of warning signs used by the City when pesticides are applied, and the length of time signs must remain in place after spraying. Greaves notes that this is a small but significant victory, being the first time that the City has actually implemented any kind of moratorium on pesticides. However, the ban is only for one year, and since children's areas are sprayed on a rotational basis anyway, it will have to be extended to future years in order to make a difference in the overall amount of pesticides used around the city, he says.

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Winnipeg's playgrounds: pesticide free in 2000

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200 Vaughan St.
Winnipeg, Manitoba
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Volume 10, Number 3

May/June, 2000

(date of issue: June 1, 2000)

Eco-Journal

is published five times per year by the
Manitoba Eco-Network/Reseau
Ecologique du Manitoba Inc. at

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Winnipeg, Manitoba
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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 membership
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.

ENVIRONMENT IGNORED IN NDP BUDGET 2000

by Anne Lindsey

Eco-Network Steering Committee members and many member groups are upset that the new NDP government's first budget said virtually nothing about the environment. A couple of brief mentions are not backed up with any funding allocations. In fact, the overall expenditures for the Department of Conservation are down slightly. A promise to implement "Large Area Planning" (one of the recommendations of the Consultation on Sustainable Development Implementation) is part of a rejigging of Environmental Stewardship functions within Conservation, and welcomed by those who have been seeking such a process, particularly on the East Side of Lake Winnipeg. But there is no money set aside for what could be a costly process. If carried out properly, LAP would involve obtaining expert scientific advice, holding regional meetings (often in remote areas of the province) and an excellent communications strategy, none of which comes cheap.

In the first 8 months of its mandate, this government has shown very little interest in environmental concerns, and the budget only confirms this impression. In the Legislature, Premier Doer has made much of his fight against the Devil's Lake

Diversion Project, and some movement has been made to block the export of water from the province, but at the same time the government has pushed forward the controversial plan for a massive expansion in the hog industry which only promises to add to environmental problems such as water pollution.

The International Institute for Sustainable Development fared well in the budget, maintaining its share of Conservation funding at a whopping \$1.1 million for their national and international programs. Local environmental efforts, in contrast, are hardly mentioned. (There is a commitment to maintain funding for the fight against Dutch Elm Disease).

Of particular concern is the fate of the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund. Money remaining in the Fund after the incoming NDP put a freeze on it, was absorbed back into General revenues at the end of the fiscal year, while applications languished in Department offices. Many local ecology groups were counting on assistance from the Fund for implementing environmental projects. The appropriation for the Fund (which is created from a consumer levy on environ-

see "NDP Budget ..." on page 4 ►

THANKS SHIRLEY!

Thank you to outgoing Steering Committee member, Shirley Lord, of CHOICES. Shirley is also retiring from her job and moving on to other tasks in CUBA! (She'll still be Winnipeg-based however). We have appreciated Shirley's advice and feedback as a Steering Com-

mittee member. Replacing Shirley as a CHOICES rep. is Beth Peto. Christina Waddle of the University of Manitoba Recycling and Environmental Group also joined the Steering Committee at our AGM on May 17. Welcome to Beth and Christina!

ECO

Eco-Network Steering Committee, 1999-2000

Dennis Bayomi - Winnipeg Vegetarian Association

Beth Peto - CHOICES Coalition for Social Justice

Steve Rauh - Campaign for Pesticide Reduction! Winnipeg

John Sinclair - Resource Conservation Manitoba

Ed Scherer - Manitoba Naturalists Society

Christina Waddle - UM Recycling and Environmental Group

Peter Walker - Manitoba Federation of Labour

CAPTAIN CANOLA AND THE GREAT PLAINS GREASERS

by Anne Lindsey

The Arnaud 4-H group has an ambitious project on the horizon. These young people want to create some "biodiesel" fuel, and what's more, they want to use it to power a combine during this year's harvest.

The project is the brainchild of Blair Hamilton, a Community Economic Development consultant who moved to Arnaud from Winnipeg last year. Hamilton has been eager to involve himself in the agricultural community of 63 people and amongst other things, volunteered his services as a judge for the local 4-H competitions. While getting to know the 4-H folks, he realized that a biodiesel project might just grab the interest of this youthful group. And it did. 10-year old Carol Martin, a 4-H member for just one year, says she's eager to learn about how to make biodiesel, and if it will work. She's also curious to see how many other folks take an interest in the project.

Alternative technologies

It has already garnered the attention of the Manitoba Eco-Net-work Steering Committee, who agreed that we would co-sponsor the effort. MEN Chairperson, Dennis Bayomi feels that the project is a great way to involve youth in thinking about and demonstrating alternative technologies. Carol Martin agrees: "I think it's good that people in 4-H are going to learn this kind of thing because then we'll have experience when we are older" she says.

Plans are now unfolding for procuring the equipment necessary to "cook" the bio-diesel fuel, and to demonstrate its use. Hamilton is hoping that most of this equipment will be donated. (So if anyone has an idle combine sitting around that they'd like to put to good use, please contact us! Donors can be provided with a charitable tax receipt for the fair market value of their

contribution of goods, equipment or cash).

What is biodiesel anyway?

Essentially, biodiesel is vegetable oil, minimally processed to allow it to be burned in an internal combustion engine. The processing equipment required is very simple, consisting mainly of a sturdy barrel and a mixer.

The oil can be procured fresh from a processor, or can be recycled from other sources, such as food services. Biodiesel can be used as a replacement for regular diesel fuel in everything from cars to farm machinery.

Low to no emissions

Biodiesel use has some very positive outcomes for the environment. It releases no sulfur dioxide, reduces soot emissions by 40 to 60%, carbon monoxide by 10 to 50%, and polycyclical aromatic hydrocarbons by a whopping 50 to 97%. In addition, biodiesel eliminates net carbon dioxide emissions because a crop of oil-producing plants will absorb exactly the same amount of carbon dioxide in order to produce a gallon of vegetable oil as a gallon of vegetable oil emits when it is burned in an engine. (In Tickell, Joshua and Kaia, "From the Fryer to the Fuel Tank"

Green Teach Publishing, Sarasota, Florida, 1999). Thus, biodiesel holds promise as a fuel alternative in the fight against climate change.

We'll be following the efforts of the Arnaud 4-H group as this project unfolds. They hope to develop a web site and will be doing some media work to share their experiences with the world. My guess is this will capture plenty of attention. Look out for this project as harvest time approaches.

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PESTICIDE REDUCTION BY-LAW?

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In addition, the moratorium does nothing to slow the application of the pesticides by lawn care companies or by private homeowners, ensuring that many exposure opportunities still exist for the City's children.

CPR! Winnipeg's ultimate goal is to see the City enact a tough pesticide reduction by-law, something that the City of Halifax is currently considering. If Mr. Caccia's recommendations are taken seriously by his colleagues in government, however, we can skip that step, and move on to the important task of transi-

tion to pesticide-free healthy green spaces and gardens. Plenty of information is available, though it's tough to find a truly organic lawn care company in Winnipeg at the moment.

For help in getting your lawn and garden "off drugs", check out the web site of the World Wildlife Fund at www.wwf.ca or that of the City of Toronto: www.city.toronto.on.ca/parks/healthylawn Locally, contact the Campaign for Pesticide Reduction! Winnipeg at 889-6021.

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What's Happening

June 10 - Save Our Seine's Annual Tree-Planting event, 10 am at the end of Youville north (by Bertrand Avenue). Dress for the weather, bring work gloves, boots, a pail, a shovel and a lunch. In case of rain, the event will take place Sunday June 11 at 1 pm.

June 12 - Public hearings in order to receive comments on Plan Winnipeg ... 2020 vision, 9 am in the West Committee Room of City Hall. Please register with the Clerk of the Executive Policy Committee at 986-2136. A copy of the Plan is available through the City of Winnipeg's web site <<http://www.city.winnipeg.mb.ca/>>. Copies are also available at the City Clerk's office, City Hall.

June 13 and 14 - Hollow Water First Nation will be hosting a conference (partially sponsored by the Manitoba Model Forest and the Canadian Forest Service). Register to hear the views of Manitoba Conservation, developers such as Pine Falls Paper Co and Manitoba Hydro as well as Parks Canada concerning the upcoming Land Use Planning exercise for the East Side of Lake Winnipeg. Potential economic development opportunities, partnerships and proposed resource and access development activities will be explored. Agenda, presenter, registration, contact, feast and entertainment information will be available by calling Mike Waldram at 1-204-367-5232. There is no charge to delegates.

June 16 - Natural Landscapes and Wildflower Gardening. A variety of knowledgeable guests will lead the discussion and share information from 6 to 9 pm at St. Timothy Parish Church, 135 John Forsyth Road. Admission is free. Wildflowers, books

and bird supplies will be offered for sale. Call 949-3760 for more information.

June 17 - The 19th Annual Peace Walk, 12 noon at the Broadway side of the legislative buildings. This year's theme is, *Working for Peace*. Prior to the walk, there will be a Peace Worship service at Broadway Disciples at 11 am.

June 24 - Tour of eight Natural Gardens. For details, call the Manitoba Naturalists Society, 943-9029.

June 27 - Public Workshop on Sustainability Indicators for Manitoba. Circle of Life Thunderbird House, Sundance Area, 6 to 9 pm. Co-hosted by Healthy Winnipeg, Healthy West St. Paul and Stonewall Community Round Table. Call Tammy Gibson at 945-7093 for further information. Consult www.susdev.gov.mb.ca/indicators for a list of other workshop dates and locations around the province.

August 13 - Run for Caribou: Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society fundraiser at Assiniboine Park. Inline skate at 8 am and 10 km fun run at 9 am. For more information or to volunteer, contact CPAWS Manitoba at 339-0247.

August 17 to 20 - Great Plains Ecosystem Education, 'Whose Home on the Range?' The Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication Conference 2000 will be a learning experience which draws from the riches and diversity of Great Plains ecosystems. For information about papers, posters or displays, call Garry Enns, Conference co-Chair at 1-204-726-6305. For registration information, call 1-204-848-7284 or email Friends_RMNP@pch.gc.ca

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NDP BUDGET 2000

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mentally-costly products like disposable diapers) is the same for this year, but there are no hints about when or how the money will be made available.

The fact is that environmental groups can't wait forever for the government to decide whether or not it will provide some funding assistance for vital public education programs and innovative action on the environment. The government is obviously concerned about health care, and we know that our health is directly affected by the state of the environment. It's time that this important connection was recognized. An investment in a

healthy environment today is as much an investment in health as the addition of new hospital beds.

The ecological community wants to alert the government that it cannot simply ignore environmental issues like climate change, in the hopes that they will go away. They are calling on the Department of Conservation to get itself organized, especially with regard to the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund, and to recognize and support the important contributions made by local environment and conservation groups.

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THANKS TO HASTA!

A group of "Highly Aware Students Taking Action" (HASTA) at Kelvin High School visited the Eco-Network recently to find out more about what we do and how we do it. The visit was part of their participation in the Winnipeg Foundation's visionary project, the Youth In Philanthropy Program. The program was set up in order to "introduce high school students to philanthropy and the world of community development".

Nine schools were given \$5,000 each by the Winnipeg Foundation, which they could, in turn, donate to charitable organizations of their choice. Most schools set up Youth Advisory Committees for the project, but at Kelvin, it seemed like a natural fit for HASTA, which was already active on a wide range of social issues including landmine awareness and human rights.

All the groups found themselves needing to do some soul searching to discover shared values that could guide them in their grantmaking recommendations. They also carried out site visits to charitable agencies across the City. The environment was one of the priorities identified by HASTA, leading them to recommend a grant of \$630 to the Eco-Network, to assist with ongoing expenses.

HASTA's other choices for grants covered a wide range, and included Project Peacemakers, one of our member groups. HASTA also chose Agape Table, Habitat for Humanity, Jocelyn House, Osborne House, and Winnipeg Harvest. Other school groups selected Broadway Neighbourhood Centre, John Howard Society, The Winnipeg Humane Society, Rossbrook House, North End Womens Centre, Manitoba Institute on Society and Sexuality, Knowles Centre, Literacy Partners of Manitoba, the Manitoba Wildlife Rehabilitation Organization, and many others.

This was clearly an excellent opportunity for the youth involved across the City. At the awards ceremony on May 17, all the student groups had a chance to speak about their experiences. They described what it was like to learn about the pressing needs in many sectors of society, about their discovery of the sheer numbers of charities, their struggles in

coming to consensus about which groups to support. They spoke too of their admiration for the people who work and volunteer for Winnipeg's charities (some were motivated to become volunteers themselves). The Winnipeg Foundation is to be congratulated for this innovative project.

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The Kelvin High School student members of "Highly Aware Students Taking Action" (HASTA), active on a range of social issues including landmine awareness and human rights.



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THE SPRING BEAR HUNT: WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

By Vicki Burns

There is growing concern about the ethics of a spring bear hunt. In 1999, the Winnipeg Humane Society passed a resolution calling for a ban on the spring bear hunt.

Our main concern stems from the fact that the accidental killings of mother bears during the spring hunt are inevitable.

Here's why:

- It is next to impossible for even black bear experts to distinguish nursing mothers from other females in the spring when bears emerging from hibernation have their longest and thickest coat of the year.

- The fact that most bear hunters are positioned in tree stands overlooking bait sites further inhibits their ability to distinguish nursing mothers since their nipples are simply not visible from above.

- The fact that bears come to bait most frequently at dusk further decreases the visibility factor. Contrary to popular belief, mother bears are not with cubs in tow all the time. In fact, we

are informed by a leading black bear expert that mothers do not bring their cubs to bait sites as they can smell other bears in the vicinity and want to protect their cubs from predating male bears. Therefore cubs are left a safe distance away.

- Statistics tell us that most black bear hunters are first-time hunters, especially those who avail themselves of outfitters. These inexperienced hunters are often unable to distinguish between male and female bears, much less between nursing mothers and other females. While the outfitters themselves may be more experienced in telling nursing mothers apart, the fact is they are often not with their clients at the time of the kill.

- Cubs orphaned in the spring have zero chance of survival as they are still nursing and have not yet learned how to forage on their own. If not killed by a predator, they will starve to death. A study from the Ontario Department of Natural Resources indicates that an or-



see "Orphaned cubs ..." next page ►



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THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE EXPLAINED

An Interview with John Jackson

by Jan Westlund

John Jackson of the Citizens' Network on Waste Management in Kitchener, Ontario was in Winnipeg recently to present at the Ecology of Waste Reduction: Stewardship and Sustainability conference co-hosted by Resource Conservation Manitoba and Manitoba Association of Regional Recyclers. He spoke with Jan Westlund, Manitoba Eco-Network Coordinator who also helped organize the conference:

MEN: You've been invited to speak at this conference as part of a session entitled, *The Ecological Impacts of Globalization: How well does free trade care for your community*. Conference organizers wanted to hear about the "precautionary principle" in depth and learn how it might apply the brakes to global trade discussions. Can you define the principle for any reader who may not be familiar with it?

JJ: In 1998, an international group of scientists, government officials, lawyers, and labour and grassroots environmental activists met at Wingspread in Racine, Wisconsin. They issued a consensus statement calling for the use of the precautionary principle in environmental decision-making. This is how they defined the precautionary principle:

"When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically."

As many people understand, the prevention approach has become a guiding approach in addressing pollution issues and increasingly in addressing other environmental problems. For example, pollution prevention, as defined in 1995 by the Government of Canada in *Pollution Prevention: A Federal Strategy for Action*, "seeks to eliminate the causes of pollution rather than treating the symptoms, reflecting a major shift in emphasis from 'control' to 'prevent'."

A serious prevention approach must include the precaution-

ary approach. In recognition of this Canada's recently revised Canadian Environmental Protection Act (1999) includes the precautionary approach as a guiding principle in its preamble although pressure from industry has left it rather crippled.

MEN: I'd like to know more about that but for now can you tell me how the precautionary approach might best be applied. It's often bandied about as a concept but there doesn't seem to be much willingness or agreement on how to actualize this cautious approach.

JJ: Practising the precautionary approach requires that we use the following five components: We must anticipate the possible outcomes and act to prevent harm if we suspect that it may occur. The burden of proof that the action will not cause harm must be placed on those who wish to take the action. (This is sometimes called the 'reverse onus' approach.) We must fully explore alternative ways of carrying out the action that is being proposed, including doing nothing. Decisions must be made in an open, democratic process so that all those who may ultimately be negatively affected have full access to information and full right to make the decisions on matters that could affect them. And, finally, the reversibility principle should be applied. This means that we must ask ourselves whether, if we later discover that the action has unpredicted consequences, we will be able to repair the damage and return to previous conditions.

MEN: Are you suggesting that the precautionary principle be brought into all decision making?

JJ: That might not be a bad idea in general but reasonably there are some situations where it is essential.

It's clear we must take the precautionary approach in matters where the potential damage is serious and long-term, so we don't want to take the risks involved. For example, we don't fully understand the contribution of human activities to climate change,

... continued on next page ►

ORPHANED CUBS

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phaned cub takes from between 11 to 30 days to starve following the death of its mother.

While we do have laws in place in Manitoba which prohibit the killing of mother bears with cubs, they are simply not being enforced. There has never been a single charge laid for killing a mother bear, much less a conviction. It is clear that there is either no will to enforce this law or it is too difficult to obtain a conviction. In either case, the law as it now stands is clearly ineffective at protecting cubs from being orphaned.

There are also regulations for tracking the demographics of bears killed during the spring hunt. They require hunters to submit the reproductive tract and a tooth from each bear killed. However there is only about 60% compliance with that regula-

tion and no consequences for hunters who do not comply.

Based on 1998 statistics, about 30% of bears killed in Manitoba during the spring were female. (That estimate is consistent with information from Ontario and with a study by black-bear expert, Tom Beck, from Colorado.) Of these females killed, 25 to 30% were recently pregnant. From that it is estimated that at least 100 to 150 cubs were orphaned in Manitoba's spring bear hunt in 1998.

In the U.S., 27 states allow bear hunting, but only six states allow a spring hunt. Recently the province of Ontario banned the spring hunt. Isn't it time for Manitoba to follow suit and ensure that unethical hunting practices like the spring bear hunt no longer exist in our province?

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ACTING TO PREVENT HARM

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but we do have enough evidence to show that the results are serious. Therefore, we must take a precautionary approach and dramatically change human activities that contribute to it.

The connections between certain substances and cancer are still debated, but we do have enough evidence showing a connection and the results of being afflicted by cancer are so serious that we must take a precautionary approach to avoid cancer.

Some substances last so long that we must take the precautionary approach and not introduce them. For example, with Polychlorinated biphenols (PCBs), scientists tell us that, even if future exposure to PCBs were eliminated now (which is impossible to achieve), PCBs would be passed on from mother to child at levels that would cause serious harm for several generations. Therefore, we must not introduce substances that have the same types of longevity characteristics that PCBs have.

MEN: Doesn't that run contrary to our current use of risk assessments to determine safety limits?

JJ: You're right, the precautionary approach is considerably different. The commonly used standard risk assessment approach has as a basic assumption that a certain level of damage is acceptable and that controls can be introduced or actions can later be taken that will take care of the problems created. For many environmental decisions, this is not the case. The damage may be so serious individually, or the damage may have such widespread and long-term impacts that the risks should be avoided by prevention. Remember, at the core of the prevention approach is the precautionary approach.

MEN: You mentioned the Wingspread consensus agreement on precautionary principle having been reached in 1998 but we first noted the concept floating around much earlier than that.

JJ: Starting in 1987 with the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission), the precautionary principle has become a term that is frequently put into international agreements. These have included the Montreal Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (1987); amendments to the London Convention on Ocean Dumping (1991); the Bamako Convention on the Ban of Imports into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa (1991); the Rio Declaration (1992); the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992); the Helsinki Convention on Biological Diversity (1992); and the Montreal Biosafety Protocol (2000). It is also in the current U.N. negotiations on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).

MEN: From all these precedent-setting agreements, one would think that the precautionary principle is firmly entrenched and frequently used.

JJ: Not exactly. The precautionary approach is still vociferously debated each time someone proposes to put it into an international agreement. It is often included in ways that weaken the principle or mean that it isn't seriously implemented.

Remember I mentioned the recent rewriting of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act? There, the principle is diminished

by having a 'cost-effective measures' qualifier included. It states, "where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation".

Other qualifiers like 'reasonable measures', 'taking into account technical and economic considerations' or 'at the lowest possible cost' all render the principle almost completely powerless. The European Community even includes risk assessment in its definition of the precautionary principle, which is totally contrary to the principle itself.

The second problem is whether the international agreement, and thus the precautionary principle, will be subsumed to trade agreements such as NAFTA and those negotiated under the World Trade Organization. For example, when the Biosafety Protocol was being negotiated, Canada's original negotiating position was that the protocol should be subsumed to the WTO trade agreements. This would have vitiated any hoped for benefits of the precautionary principle.

The third problem is that the precautionary principle appears only in the preamble but it is not operationalized in the latter parts of the agreement.

MEN: That's really the challenging part isn't it? How does one put such a protective principle into practice?

JJ: Frankly, the first step is for us to recognize that the precautionary principle is an essential guiding principle in environmental decision-making. Then it needs to be included in legislation and agreements. To do this, we should require that the worst case scenarios of possible environmental impact be presented. Then we need to require that alternative ways of addressing the issue are fully explored, including the 'do-nothing' alternative. We must accept that precautionary concerns are adequate and valid reasons for a government to refuse a permit or to require action, including that these refusals or requirements cannot be nullified by international trade agreements. Finally, we should ensure that the precautionary principle be the basis both for proposals and for taking action on existing problems, e.g., to ban a substance already in use.

MEN: Thanks for your thoughts on this important principle. Any final words?

JJ: The strenuous use of the precautionary principle is essential for the well-being of ourselves and future generations as well as for all other life with whom we share this planet.

John Jackson has worked with citizen's groups for the past 20 years, with a focus on waste management issues, environmental contamination issues and water quantities and flows issues. He led the successful 12 year fight to prevent a hazardous waste incinerator and landfill from being built in the Niagara Peninsula.

For those who want to explore this concept further, Eco-Net-work has a good handbook available in the Resource Centre about the Precautionary Principle, written by J. Tickner, C. Raffensperger and N. Myers for the Science and Environmental Health Network.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Debate Surrounding the Northern Flood Agreement Continues

I have never worked for the "Canadian nuclear industry"

GLENN SCHNEIDER, MANITOBA HYDRO

The Editor:

In your March/April edition, you printed a response to my letter in the same edition concerning the harmful US publicity campaign by a lobbyist for the Pimicikamak Cree Nation (PCN). I trust that you will allow me the space to respond.

Let me begin by stating that, contrary to the assertions by PCN, I have never worked for the "Canadian nuclear industry".

Manitoba Hydro has acknowledged impacts to the environment from its projects and has, over the years, acted to address its responsibilities. We cannot accept responsibility, however, for all economic and social circumstances, including unemployment and suicides, affecting the Cross Lake First Nation.

At the end of the day, facts are facts. PCN does not dispute the facts concerning Cross Lake cited in my previous letter—the stable employment in the trapping industry, the success of the commercial fishing sector in the 1990s—facts that support our proposition that the environment has stabilized and

significantly recovered. The weir in Cross Lake has restored average water levels to within one foot of the pre-project levels. We certainly dispute that "millions of acres" were flooded; in fact flooding in NFA areas amounted to about 300,000 acres—and to repeat, there was no flooding of Cross Lake reserve land and only one per cent of the land in their entire resource area was affected by flooding.

After many years of negotiation and with goodwill on the part of all concerned, we now have implementation agreements with four of the five NFA communities and have moved on to much more cooperative relationships with those communities. We would like to arrive at a similar arrangement with Cross Lake First Nation.

Manitoba Hydro would not suggest that its perspectives represent the only "truth" with respect to NFA history and current issues. We trust the average person would recognize, however, when they are being asked to accept an emotional appeal rather than a rational and factual argument.

Yours truly,

Glenn Schneider, Manager of Public Affairs

ECO

When we have decided, we will speak with our own voice

SPLIT LAKE CREE FIRST NATION'S POSITION

In response to our letters and articles about the campaign of the Pimicikamak Cree Nation for justice in regards to the Northern Flood Agreement and future hydro developments, Split Lake Cree First Nation, one of the Nations directly affected by Hydro development in Northern Manitoba, wishes to share its position.

Our Position: a strong voice

We, the Split Lake Cree First Nation, are committed to furthering the development of our First Nation and providing our people with greater opportunities, while maintaining our cultural integrity. Our ability to preserve our culture depends on our ability to create opportunities for our young people, making it possible for them to succeed in our traditional territory and outside. We are poised to embark on this new journey and intend to continue to explore opportunities and alliances that will push forward our progress.

In true democratic spirit, all our Members are involved in the decision-making process; we are united in the choices we make. Responsible utilization of our natural resources is the path we have decided to take. Split Lake Cree Elder William Beady's comments reflect the feelings of our people, "The lands, the waters and the resources provided for us in the past. We can't exercise our traditional pursuits as in the past be-

cause the waters have changed. Yet, these waters and their power could once again help to provide for our people."

Our reverence for the land, and our thorough traditional knowledge of the critical interrelationships of our ecosystems will ensure we utilize Nature's bountiful resources within a tolerable level of environmental impact.

Our ability to effectively move forward to capture opportunities and create new business relationships within our Resource Area has been challenged by others claiming to speak for us. We respect others' views and understand others' needs to follow their own paths. We must also be granted that same courtesy—particularly in decisions that concern our lands, our waterways, our resources and our lives.

Split Lake Cree greatly resent and oppose broad public statements in which we are seemingly represented. No one has been authorized to speak on our behalf. We are a proud and strong people. We speak with an equally strong and proud voice—our own.

Split Lake Cree First Nation is moving forward cautiously, but with determination. We are gaining strength in ways we had come to fear would never be possible. Only we are in a position to decide what is best for our people, our land and our waterways—because it is our future. When we have decided, we will speak with our own voice.

ECO

OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE EAST SIDE

June 13 and 13, 2000

Hollow Water First Nation invites interested people to a conference on developments on the East Side of Lake Winnipeg, particularly the impacts of a proposed all-weather road into this virtually roadless area. It's thought that the area will become the focus for increased economic development activities in the coming years, in areas such as mining, forestry, recreation/tourism opportunities, and cottage development. The potential costs and benefits of all of this are poorly understood by the First Nations communities in the region.

"Sharing Our Resource/Sharing our Future" will be held at Hollow Water, and is partially sponsored by the

Manitoba Model Forest and the Canadian Forest Service. It will feature discussions and presentations on Treaty Land Entitlement, natural resources, land use planning, economic development and wildlife management. Organizers are also hoping that the conference will act as a venue for government, industry, civil society and area communities to exchange information, consult and share common concerns.

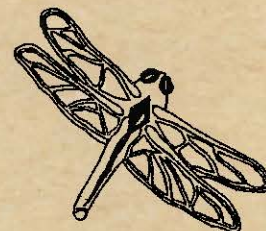
The Conference is free of charge. Camping is available nearby. To register, call Gary Raven or Garf Bushie at Hollow Water (204) 363-7278 or (204) 363-7215, or Bev Dube at the Model Forest (204)367-5232.



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DECISION MAKING AS IF THE ENVIRONMENT MATTERED

by Mike Nickerson

Bill C-469, the "Canada Well-Being Measurement Act" (CWBMA) could transform the decision making process.

What we count and what we measure signifies what we value. When all we count is monetary transactions (GDP), talk about environmental quality and social cohesion does not produce action. When we legitimize other factors by measuring and reporting on them in our core measure of progress, they become visible. That visibility, in turn, enables anyone to see how policies and actions affect the measures and encourages decision makers to pay attention to them.

The purpose of the CWBMA is to establish a set of indicators to measure "the economic, social and environmental well-being of people, communities and ecosystems in Canada." The Act would require public input to determine the "the broad societal values on which the set of indicators should be based."

There are two things you can do to advance Bill C-469. One is to encourage people to think about and discuss what well-being means to them. What do we value? How can we tell if the circumstances related to those values are getting better or worse?

A *Public Participation Kit* is available from the 7th Generation Initiative with suggestions for holding discussions about the questions above. It includes a feedback sheet so we can collect the opinions that will determine what should be measured.

Think of your issue. How can we tell if the situation is getting better or worse? This is the information needed to establish an

effective monitoring system that can inform good decisions. Please help us collect this information and expand the network of interest needed to assure that the potential of this Act is not watered down for lack of public participation or strategic coordination.

The second thing you can do is to lobby your MP. Our experience so far has been that when people review the Act and background materials, they see the sense of it and add their support. The trick with MPs is to get their attention. They are very busy. They do, however, respond to persistent constituents. Ask your MP what s/he thinks of the "Canada Well-Being Measurement Act". S/he can get full details from the Ottawa office of Joe Jordan MP. Check back every week or two until you get a response. Contact information for all MPs is available from 1-800-667-3355

The Act is politically safe because it only requires that we pay attention to the factors that people identify as important. What will happen when these concerns are legitimized by regular reporting and witnessed moving up or down is another story. This is the domain of stages two and three of the 7th Generation Initiative.

For more detail, see: < <http://www.cyberus.ca/choose.sustain/index3.html> > or ask us for a free copy of the new edition of "Measuring Well-Being".

Write postage free to:

Joe Jordan M.P., 7th Generation Initiative
Rm. 422, Confederation Building
House of Commons, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

Or contact:

Mike Nickerson, Coordinator
sustain@web.net ph: (613) 269-3500
<http://www.cyberus.ca/choose.sustain>
Sustainability Project - Inviting Debate
P.O. Box 374, Merrickville, Ontario, K0G 1N0
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"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world, indeed it's the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead

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The Eco-Journal will
be back in October

UNDER DISCUSSION: HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Industry representatives, Winnipeg, municipal and provincial officials and environmental non-government organizations have met several times over the past year to determine the parameters of a made-in-Manitoba program to manage the collection of hazardous materials. Organizational structure, collection systems, designated materials, liability issues and, most importantly, who pays for the program are all under debate. This is the next step in the province's unfolding Waste Reduction and Prevention Strategy which brought us the Used Tire, Used Oil Products and Manitoba Product Stewardship Programs.

Based on these discussions, the province will write a draft regulation this summer for public consultation in the fall, so watch for your opportunity to comment. Keep your eye on the crucial issue of how much responsibility industry will be given for cleaning up after itself. This concept has its roots in Manitoba's own Waste Reduction and Prevention legislation of 1990 and work done by the Council of Canadian Ministers of the Environment in the mid '90s.



Ideally, disposal expenses will be internalized by the company as a cost of doing business and shared with its customers as needed. This common-sense approach would terminate what amounts to subsidization of many large multinationals by local taxpayers who have been covering disposal costs of products from which they may have derived neither profit nor utility.

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NEW STUFF IN THE RESOURCE CENTRE

Check out the following new additions:

Video: *The Pig Picture* on the Hog industry in North Carolina, with a discussion about implications for Manitoba hosted by Vicki Burns of the Winnipeg Humane Society

Books: *Canada's Forests at a Crossroads: An Assessment in the Year 2000*, by the World Resources Institute

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity at Work, by the Public Service Alliance of Canada

The Manitoba Mixedwoods: A Forest in Transition, by the Mixedwoods Forest Research and Advisory Committee

Farmageddon: Food and the Culture of Biotechnology, by Brewster Kneen

Report: Pesticides: Making the Right Choice; For the protection of human health and the environment, House of Commons Standing Committee On Environment and Sustainable Development.

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The Manitoba Eco-Network

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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.