

WEST COAST ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

SHARING OUR SUCCESSES



RODNEY WILTS

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PREFACE

I would just like to say a great big thank you to all of the groups who participated in the creation of this book. As you soon shall find out, everyone is extremely busy with very important projects, yet they took the time to provide me with the information needed to write the stories. It was clear from everyone I dealt with that people are committed, enthusiastic and guardedly optimistic about the issues they were dealing with.

Everyone at West Coast Environmental Law deserves credit for this book. The initial vision, plan and fundraising were all done long before I arrived. During the writing, the staff all had great suggestions, many of which have found their way into the book. In particular, Karen Campbell should get much credit for supervising the whole project, editing and adding to it, and seeing it out the door.

As you begin to read, you will undoubtedly see many recurring themes. Community, creativity, mutually beneficial partnerships, and bold action can all be experienced through many of these stories. We have tried to represent groups from across Canada, but BC seems to pop up a disproportionate number of times. This is due to two reasons: we live and work in BC and are therefore most familiar with what is going on now; and a lot of leading edge work is happening here. With that caveat in mind, we do cover the nation from coast to coast, perhaps not as well as we would have liked.

This book is intended to be interactive. It does not have buttons to click, or make many sounds, but hopefully, it will inspire action. If anything is clear from these successes, it is that community involvement brings progressive change.

Rodney Wilts
May 2001

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INTRODUCTION

A green revolution is upon us. All across this country community groups, environmentalists, labour organizations, faith communities and individual citizens are taking action to restore, protect and improve our planet. The number of environmental initiatives occurring in Canada is truly staggering. It would take a book of this size just to state the names of all the groups who are working toward sustainability. Because we can't give credit to everyone, we decided to create just a snapshot of some of the progressive environmental initiatives happening today in Canada. These stories range from an individual picking up recyclable goods on his bicycle, to a multi-million dollar company creating cleaner cars and buses. We hope that by reading these stories, you will be inspired to make your own move towards sustainability and improving the health of our planet.



CHAPTER 1

SAVING OUR NATURAL HERITAGE

Canada is a country that has been blessed with an abundance of wild spaces and wild creatures. Unfortunately, these wild spaces are rapidly vanishing due to human activities such as logging, urban development, poor mining practices, introduction of invasive species, and so on. Across our country courageous citizens are coming together to preserve some of what is left, or to recreate what is already gone. The conservancy movement has exploded, and people and groups are buying and protecting properties in order to protect many diverse ecosystems. Community groups are raising their voices loud for the government to protect threatened areas; and citizens are embracing the role of stewards of our natural environment.

Here are just a few examples of what is happening everywhere in Canada to save our natural heritage.

WATERBIRD WATCH COLLECTIVE

One of BC's picturesque gulf islands, a committed group of residents, and an increasing number of happy herons - this is the recipe for the Waterbird Watch Collective (WWC), a group formed in 1994 to monitor and document water bird populations around the coast, lakes and ponds of Salt Spring Island. Salt Spring is known for its charm and natural beauty, and is becoming a popular spot for artisans and retirees. With the influx of people has come development, and threats to the natural ecosystem. In order to protect against these threats, WWC decided to do more than simply monitor and document bird populations - it decided to take a positive, proactive stance on behalf of coastal wildlife and habitat areas.



RAISING CONSCIOUSNESS BRINGS SUCCESS

Through public information, local awareness efforts, working with local government, and a host of educational programs, WWC has raised the collective consciousness of the Island. Their list of successes is impressive, highlighted by the purchase of the McFadden Creek Heronry. The heronry is the first internationally designated Important Bird Area in British Columbia. Since purchasing the property the number of nests has almost doubled, from 70 in 1992 to 131 in 1999. By establishing a 1,000-metre buffer zone around the heronry, WWC has protected heron, eagle, osprey and oyster catcher nesting sites and guaranteed an unfragmented canopy of vegetation over the island to dispel eagle predation.



EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION AND MAPPING

Other successes have included recruiting the Salt Spring Kayaking Club to assist in mapping eel grass meadows and kelp forests around the coast of the Island. A signage project in partnership with another island and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is also underway to educate people about intertidal flora and fauna. Nina Raginsky, the coordinator and heart of the Collective says “the success of these projects is entirely due to the participation of WWC participants in community education, communications mapping and letter writing campaigns. Through community involvement in protecting disturbance to intertidal and subtidal marine habitat, and monitoring of nesting, feeding and breeding waterbird habitat around the island, we have managed to have a real impact on the island.”

Not satisfied to rest on their laurels, WWC plans to continue educating the public about their important role in stewardship, and about the impacts of development, disturbance and pollution on this fragile and finite ecosystem.

NATURE TRUST OF NEW BRUNSWICK – SAM ORR’S POND



Don Vail

For thousands of years the Passamaquoddy people came to what is now known as Sam Orr's Pond. The Passamaquoddy came to Sam Orr's to eat the quahogs, which are not usually found in such northern latitudes, and to seek protection behind the sheer cliff that protects the eastern side of the 30 acre pond. When the Nature Trust of New Brunswick first formed, it was suggested that this pond be conserved. Eleven years later, and after many lessons learned, the 270 acre property surrounding the pond became the Nature Trust's tenth nature preserve.

A SPLIT POND...

The pond, and land around it, was split between two owners: a retired judge, and an absentee American owner. Judge Earl Caughey agreed to give his portion to the Trust, but only if the other half could also be obtained. Realizing he would not live to see this happen, Caughey deeded the land to his daughter, on the understanding that work would continue until the area was fully protected. Gene Sharp, Senior Scholar in Residence at the Albert Einstein Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts owned the other half. During his younger years, Dr. Sharp often visited the property. “It was an idyllic place,” he says. But he agreed to donate the land in exchange for a tax deduction.

TAXES, TAXES, TAXES...

Lawyers on both sides of the border worked diligently to sort out the tax situation. In Canada, donations of land trigger capital gains taxes, the same as if the land had been sold for a profit. In the end, Dr. Sharp was happy to donate the land to the Nature Conservancy (US) who then gave the property to the Trust. This avoided the tax penalty, and achieved the desired US income tax deduction for Dr. Sharp. While not going so far

as to say this set a precedent, Linda Stephenson of The Nature Conservancy of the Atlantic Region (Canada) says “it does help us demonstrate how much more conservation could be done if we did not have this tax disincentive in place.”

A GRAND SUCCESS

Once the details were worked out, Dr. Sharp went one step further than anyone expected and donated not only the pond, but the entire 220-acre property which included another very large tract of woods, beaver pond and meadow. The property will now be protected in perpetuity by the Trust for all to enjoy. The success of the Trust shows that the conservancy movement is spreading across Canada from its initial success in BC and Ontario. Every time a group is successful in overcoming arcane and illogical tax rules that discourage private land conservation, or that discourage people from donating land, the movement grows stronger.

For more information, visit the Nature Trust website at www.naturetrust.nb.ca.

COCHRANE WILDLIFE RESERVE SOCIETY – SAVING THE SWIFT FOX

Endangered species and good news have been almost as synonymous as oil and water over the past decade in Canada. The federal government has been unable to pass effective legislation, eleven new species were recently listed by the Committee On the Status of Endangered Wildlife In Canada (COSEWIC)¹, and habitat destruction and fragmentation continues unabated. However, optimism can be found in the work of the Cochrane Ecological Institute (CEI) – Cochrane Wildlife Reserve Society and their efforts to save the swift fox.



BRINGING BACK THE SWIFT FOX

CEI is devoted to the preservation of North America’s biodiversity through the conservation and breeding of endangered indigenous species, ecosystem restoration, wildlife rescue, education, and the monitoring of habitat loss. In 1972, CEI imported swift foxes from the United States to set up the first captive-breeding colony of this species destined specifically for re-introduction into their historic range in Canada. Despite the early work of the CEI, COSEWIC listed the swift fox as extirpated in Canada in 1978. Work on the breeding colony continued, with foxes being released into their historic range in Alberta in 1983, and in Saskatchewan in 1985.

PROVIDING HOPE

The breeding colony continued until 1997, increasing the number of swift foxes to an estimated 289 in the wild in 1998. That same year, COSEWIC down-listed the fox from extirpated to endangered – a lower level of threat. Much work still needs to be done to return the foxes to healthy numbers, but the CEI initiative has arguably been the most successful reintroduction program to date. As Clío Smeeton, president of CEI said, “this

¹ Listing was released November 30, 2000 and can be found at www.cosewic.gc.ca/COSEWIC/list_nov00.pdf.



project has shown that the environmental niche is still available for the species and that reintroduced swift foxes...are able to survive, breed, and raise their young in the wild.” This also provides hope, optimism and a good example for the reintroduction of other extirpated species.

VALUABLE PARTNERSHIPS

A partnership has now been formed with the Blackfeet Nation in Montana, USA to release swift foxes onto Blackfeet lands. Swift foxes are considered to be an integral part of the spiritual, social and cultural heritage of the Blackfeet Nation. Other partnerships include the provincial and federal governments, the University of Calgary, and a host of European universities including Oxford, Cambridge, Copenhagen and Queen’s University of Belfast. These partnerships give CEI access to those who have power to make change, provide a range of expertise, and bring international attention to the issue. Reintroducing species without providing and protecting habitat is a futile exercise. For this reason, CEI has worked hard to persuade the government to protect lands. They have also worked to educate the public and landowners on ecosystem restoration and protection.

For more information visit the CEI website at www.ceinst.org.

LAKE EUGENIA PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION



The beautiful, but extremely noxious weed known as purple loosestrife.

The purple loosestrife’s ability to infest marshy areas and destroy native species is legendary. But in Lake Eugenia, Ontario, the weed finally met its match.

THE PROBLEM

All across this country, fragile ecosystems are being invaded by non-native species. They have names like smooth brome grass, knapweed, scotch broom, and the hideous sounding dog-strangling vine. Without natural competition, these species spread rapidly, and have little to no value for wildlife. Perhaps no invasive species is as beautiful as purple loosestrife; it produces an abundance of bright purple flowers, and blankets entire areas. Its ability to infest marshy areas and destroy native species is the stuff of legends.

PROGRESSIVE COTTAGERS

Over the years, 350 cottagers on Lake Eugenia have taken action on a variety of environmental issues such as pollution, over-development and water quality. In 1994, the steward of the Lake Eugenia Property Owners Association alerted the cottagers to the arrival of loosestrife. This warning bell propelled the cottagers into action, and into the marsh. A massive effort was organized for the summer of 1995. The area was carefully charted for location and density of plants, landing points were identified and flagged, volunteers recruited, and a field kitchen setup. Seventy volunteers spent a day pulling and dragging loosestrife away. Similar pulls were organized for the next couple of years, keeping the loosestrife at bay, but not solving the problem.

SCIENCE IN ACTION

In the fall of 1997, the cottagers heard about an environmental group working at the University of Guelph, that had completed research on tiny beetles who eat the flowers of the loosestrife, but do not attack other plants. Two thousand beetles would be needed to

do the job, at a price tag of \$1,000 – more than the dues collected by the Association for the entire year. The Association did some fundraising, bought the beetles, and released them on the loosestrife.

A 1999 inspection revealed that the beetles had survived the winter and were still eating what was left of the dreaded purple weed. In the summer of 2000, the Association declared the project a success. Only a handful of plants remained, and they were outside of the major growth area. Nancy Matthews, Secretary of the Association, states: “I think it is important to emphasize that the heroes ... are just ordinary people who, faced with impossible odds, still worked very hard at a dirty mucky task in order to make one small corner of the world a better place.”

Now that the loosestrife has been licked they are moving on to new challenges. Local pine trees are being threatened by budworm and fungus, and the Association, sustaining the energy that brought them together on the loosestrife, are now working for the trees.



CHAPTER 2

CREATING LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

We all live as part of a larger community. I Ching provides us with ancient Chinese wisdom (B.C. 1150 or thereabouts) when he said "Water, everywhere over the earth, flows to join together. A single natural law controls it. Each human is a member of a community and should work within it."

The groups featured in this chapter are working within their communities to make them more sustainable. Each group is helping to create an alternative vision of community, and a different conception of society. As each community is unique, so are these examples; they range from pesticide by-laws to oil and gas development in the Arctic. What they all share is a commitment to sustainability.

THE WORKING CENTRE



Creating a just, equitable and green society starts at the community level. The Working Centre in Kitchener, Ontario is providing a building block for exactly that kind of community. Joe Mancini, one of the originators of the Centre, describes it as "a volunteer inspired venture that seeks to give individuals and groups access to tools and opportunities to become involved in the building of communities." That may be easy to say, but to truly implement it takes committed people, creativity, and a lot of work.

The list of projects undertaken by the Working Centre is diverse. It includes training people in computer recycling, providing voice mail boxes for the community, establishing a barter system, setting up community gardens, producing a catalogue of alternative work options, and creating a guide to living simply in the Kitchener-Waterloo region.

REVITALIZING

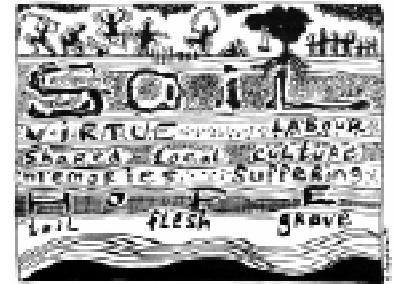
A current project is to revitalize a downtown three-story building that has been decaying for the past 30 years. An environmental approach is being taken to the renovation by reusing as much of the old wood and materials as possible, retrofitting for energy efficiency, and using extensive recycled building materials. The first floor of the building will serve as a co-operatively run store for craft workers and BarterWorks members. BarterWorks is a program that allows people to trade goods or services without using money. The first floor will also have a resource area which will provide computer training, a community meeting space, an office, and support for microbusinesses and people looking for work.

GOING UP

Located on the second floor will be two of the Working Centre programs – Recycle Cycles and a computer recycling program. These programs provide opportunities for unemployed or underemployed individuals to gain experience recycling bicycles or computers for resale, which has obvious environmental and social benefits. Tools will be available to the community for use on recycling projects, and for arts and crafts. The third floor will provide housing in the downtown area for low-income individuals. Quality, affordable housing in downtown urban areas is often insufficient. The Working Centre has found a way to address this important social dilemma by creating housing for low-income people in its space.

Although this building will primarily serve low-income people, it will be open to the many volunteers who participate in Working Centre projects. As Mancini says, “the building will be instrumental in encouraging new community initiatives by acting as a meeting place and catalyst for creative environmental ideas.”

For more information, visit their website at www.theworkingcentre.org.



LIFECYCLES – GROUNDWORKS LEARNING AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE

Strong communities rely on strong local economies. LifeCycles, a youth driven organization, has addressed community economic development, local food security and sustainability in an incredibly successful way. Since 1994, LifeCycles has provided people with the skills to contribute positively to their communities through garden creation, education, advocacy, training and research. Underlying their work is the realization that our relationship with the natural world is key to maintaining healthy communities.

FOOD SECURITY?

Those who work on local food security and environmentally sustainable agriculture have had much cause for pessimism in the past few years. Consolidation and corporatization of our food economy is becoming an unnerving reality in North America. Canada has been a key supporter of trade liberalization – a trend that many fear will further erode our food security. Fortunately, a ray of light is emerging in the small acts at the community level, where people are committing to local healthy food production. LifeCycles is working to support that commitment.

GROWING A STRONGER LOCAL ECONOMY

In 1998, a Community Economic Development (CED) mentorship initiative started to train young farmers in business skills, and work with young entrepreneurs to support and guide them in the development of their agriculture/food related businesses. Out of the CED initiative grew GroundWorks, a new centre for the development of a community-based food system in the Greater Victoria region.

GroundWorks provides programs and services which enhance the local economy, such as a library, computer support, advice, and links to people and programs in the agricultural food community. One GroundWorks program is Common Harvest, a direct-to-door organic vegetable box program that supports emerging farmers, and works to create community maps on food security. Matt Strand, a founder of GroundWorks, describes



the need for the project: “In an era of increasing globalization, the ability for smaller players to be viable participants in the community economy becomes increasingly difficult... Through GroundWorks, we hope that the community of Greater Victoria will work together to ensure that the health of the local agriculture and food economy continues.”

Groundworks is on the web at www3.telus.net/cground/groundworks.html.

UBC JAMES TAYLOR CHAIR IN LANDSCAPE AND LIVEABLE ENVIRONMENTS



“Demonstrating what could be possible”

Sprawling suburbs, a car based society, and physical barriers to community and individual interaction – these are the problems created in the last 50 years through poor, or non-existent, urban planning. The James Taylor Chair (JT Chair), a research arm of the University of British Columbia Landscape Architecture Program, is seeking to remedy this problem by demonstrating what British Columbia neighbourhoods and

communities could be like if they were designed and built to conform with emerging local, provincial and federal policies for sustainable development.

THE SOLUTION IS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

At the 1987 United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development, an assessment of the state of the global biosphere indicated that the solutions to global environmental problems lay largely at the local, and particularly at the site development level. Yet, the majority of ongoing research in landscape sustainability is being done at the ecosystem level (landscapes larger than 3,000 square kilometres). To address this imbalance, the JT Chair has focused its research at the site-specific scale.

A SUSTAINABLE VISION

One of the first projects of the Chair was the 1995 Surrey Design Charrette, in which a group of North American architects and landscape architects illustrated what the South Newton area of Surrey (one of the fastest growing municipalities in the region) might look like if designed for sustainable development. The results included a natural drainage system, walkable neighbourhoods, interconnected street systems, lighter and greener infrastructure, mixed dwellings and affordable housing. A follow up report was published showing how infrastructure costs could actually be reduced by implementing the strategies for sustainable development.

In January 1999, thanks to partnerships with the JT Chair, Surrey City Council endorsed principles of sustainability as the basis for the East Clayton Neighbourhood Concept Plan (NCP). Public involvement was key to developing the plan, as various stakeholders participated in a four day charrette to come up with a draft version of the NCP.

MORE THAN JUST A PLAN

Once implemented, the East Clayton NCP will result in lower replacement costs for infrastructure, 40 percent reduced car use per resident, 70 percent less traffic on arterials, increased land efficiency, and the elimination of negative impacts on receiving streams due to an infiltration based storm system.

An 8 to 10 hectare pilot site is now being developed, which will serve as a strong encouragement for other communities to undertake similar initiatives. These models and plans could be developed all across North America, as exhibited by the innovative example of the JT Chair.

For more information, contact jtchair@interchg.ubc.ca.

EVERGREEN FOUNDATION

Schools are a prominent feature in any vibrant community. Unfortunately, they too often resemble urban deserts, with exotic grass species, a couple of shrubs and a lot of asphalt. Evergreen sees each of these places as an opportunity to create an oasis for nature and a natural classroom, in the heart of the community.



BRINGING COMMUNITIES AND NATURE TOGETHER

Evergreen is a national non-profit organization with offices in Vancouver and Toronto. Their mission is to bring communities and nature together for the benefit of both. According to Denise Philippe, Program Manager, “Evergreen engages people in creating and sustaining healthy, dynamic outdoor spaces – in our schools, our communities and our homes.”

Evergreen has helped over 110 schools across Canada to transform traditional barren school grounds into meadows, ponds, woodland habitat and vegetable patches through its Learning Grounds program.

TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS

Learning Grounds has brought teachers, parents, administrators, students, maintenance staff and community members together to transform barren school grounds into green spaces. In Nova Scotia and British Columbia alone, 20,721 square metres of land have been transformed and over 7,042 native plants have been planted.



Learning Grounds helps to develop ecologically improved landscapes, increases plant and animal diversity, and provides a community model for ecological restoration. Learning Grounds also provides youth with an invaluable opportunity to learn about ecology through a dynamic process and to develop an appreciation for, and connection with, the natural world.



INTEREST IN GROWING

More interest than ever is being expressed from schools looking to green their grounds. Evergreen continues to support schools, and currently has a web registry which allows schools to register their projects and find out how other schools have created and sustained their own school ground projects. Evergreen has also produced a number of resources to inspire, inform, and guide people through the process of restoring and naturalizing their school grounds.

As Denise notes, “the time when children could roam freely, exploring wild back yards and neighborhood ravines, seems to belong to a not so distant past.” With the help of Denise and the people at Evergreen, space is being created for children to roam freely and to explore nature, both now and in the future.

Visit Evergreen on the web at www.evergreen.ca.

SUSTAINABILITY OF ARCTIC COMMUNITIES

A group of researchers knew that the Arctic was vulnerable to massive environmental and socioeconomic changes. They decided to work with the community to define problems and outline alternatives, in order to create sustainable Arctic communities.

“For the last few decades the scientific community has expressed concern about the vulnerability of the Arctic and its residents to environmental, social and economic changes... Recent research results show the Arctic climate and ecosystems are indeed changing substantially with impacts on people living in and outside the Arctic.”

– From a plan written for the US National Science Foundation Arctic System Science Project.

Five years ago, natural and social scientists from Canada and the US, sharing membership in the High Latitude Ecosystem Directorate, decided to act upon this growing concern. The group decided to focus on the combined effects of climate change, and oil and gas development on barren ground caribou and on indigenous communities that depend on caribou as a major source of food.

SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Partnerships were formed between 23 researchers and four Indigenous communities – Old Crow in the Yukon, Arctic Village in Alaska, and Aklavik and Fort McPherson in the Northwest Territories. The partners considered ways the community could address possible future changes expected from climate change, and oil and gas development. Vegetation changes, caribou population dynamics, local labour markets, mixed subsistence and cash economies, and oil field-caribou interactions were all examined and modeled.

The final product is an interactive website that allows users to select from among 80 scenarios that consider climate change, development and tourism, and to view simulation results on measures of sustainability, and have the simulation outcomes explained. While not providing conclusions, the study does stimulate thinking about policies that can affect the sustainability of Arctic communities. Often oil and gas developments looks attractive in the short term, but these scenarios indicate that within a 40-year time span, problems will start to occur. This concern does not exist in the Arctic alone – our whole society is too often fixated on short term gains at the expense of long-term health and

environmental quality. The beauty of this project is that it points out the need for long term holistic thinking, especially in fragile ecosystems.

PUTTING TOGETHER THE PUZZLE

These models are only a small part of the picture. The team of researchers has now moved on to a three-year study looking at the relationship between climate change, offshore oil developments and bowhead and beluga whaling. Sound science and local knowledge lead to reliable information that will help shape alternative modes of development, and a different conception of society.

For more information, visit their website at www.taiga.net/sustain.

MUNICIPALITY OF CHELSEA

Some local governments have been more proactive than others in using their power to protect the environment. On the leading edge is the Municipality of Chelsea in Quebec.

Chelsea is the first municipality in Canada to pass a bylaw restricting the use of pesticides as well as a stringent wetlands protection bylaw. Its pesticide example has since been picked up by 30 other local governments, including the city of Halifax and the town of Hudson, Quebec.

PESTICIDE PROBLEMS

Pesticides have been linked to numerous problems in the environment. Some are known or suspected carcinogens, while others are suspected neurotoxins. Most often it is children who are exposed to pesticides in fields and playgrounds, and who are most susceptible to suffering serious health effects as a result of this exposure. Potential health effects do not stop on the grass, as it is possible that local water supplies may be contaminated with pesticides.

In December 1998, the Municipal Council of Chelsea adopted a bylaw restricting the use of pesticides to areas of infestation, essentially banning the application of pesticide for cosmetic purposes. According to the bylaw, any pesticide spraying could only occur after a permit is granted with municipal approval. This bylaw is a progressive step. It is a recognition that the application of toxic chemicals for aesthetic purposes will no longer be tolerated, and that health and environmental implications of pesticide use are real.

This issue has become a lightning rod for municipal environmental action. In June 2001, the Supreme Court of Canada released a precedent setting decision that upholds the right of municipalities to pass bylaws prohibiting the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes. In this case, two pesticide companies challenged a bylaw passed by the Town of Hudson, Quebec that restricted the use of pesticides. The Court not only upheld the validity of the municipal bylaw, but emphasized that “courts must respect the responsibility of elected municipal bodies to serve the people who elected them and exercise caution to avoid substituting their views of what is best for the citizens for those of municipal councils.”² This decision is a major victory for local democracy and the environment.

Chelsea is not only ahead of its day because of its stance on pesticides, but also because of its stringent wetlands protection initiative.

² 114957 Canada Ltée (Spraytech, Société d'arrosage) v. Hudson (Town), Supreme Court of Canada, 28 June 2001, www.lexum.umontreal.ca/csc-scc/, para. 23.



WETLAND PROTECTION

Concern about wetlands have allowed Chelsea to take a further step towards sustainability. Wetlands across the country are becoming imperiled by development: they are being drained to provide agricultural land or land suitable for building; they become sinks for effluent, pesticide and agricultural runoff; and they become fragmented as a result of improper land use planning. Chelsea decided to address this issue in 1999, when it conducted a review of its bylaws. It consulted with the public and a biologist to determine how it could act to protect its natural heritage. Wetlands were identified by the community and by scientists as being in need of protection.

So, stringent restrictions concerning building or developing in areas surrounding wetlands were enacted, requiring that anyone who wanted to perform work in, or near, a wetlands area would have to submit a biologist's report showing the benefits of the proposed work and describing the impacts on wetlands. These reports are now reviewed by the municipality and municipal approval must be given before the work can go ahead.

A PROGRESSIVE EXAMPLE

Although the population of Chelsea is small (about 6,000 people), they have provided a strong model to the rest of the country for proactive municipal legislative reform leading to on-the-ground improvements for the environment and human health. In Chelsea, we have an example of the broadening role of local governments in protecting the environment, locally important ecosystems, and the health of area residents.

The environment department of Chelsea can be contacted at environnement@municipalite.chelsea.qc.ca.

CHAPTER 3

A NEW WAY TO GET AROUND

A better way to title this chapter might be “a new b-old way to get around.” The proposals for sustainable transportation are not radical leaps in technology, but rather opportunities to walk more, use your bicycle, and make the best out of public transportation. You have probably heard these suggestions before; now read about these groups that are making it happen.

BETTER ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND TRANSPORTATION (BEST)

Like most great things, Vancouver-based BEST grew from humble beginnings. BEST started out as a grassroots cycling education and advocacy group. From there it has evolved into an integrated voice for all environmentally sound ways of getting around BC's Lower Mainland.

A BEST COMMUNITY

Driving BEST is a vision of “communities where it is pleasant and convenient to walk, cycle or take transit; streets and neighbourhoods where children can safely walk to school, or play outside; urban planning based on people rather than cars; shops, homes and businesses that are clustered together; a city where driving is an option, not a necessity.”

In 1991, BEST started out with just a few committed volunteers, and over the last ten years has grown to a membership of 700, providing a respected voice in the community, with the government, and in the media. In the early days, BEST coordinated the Annual Ride for the environment, and Bike to Work Week events. BEST also started Our Community Bikes, a do-it-yourself bike store, which, due to its great success, has since been spun off into its own non-profit organization.

CITIZEN EMPOWERMENT

Education has always been a main component of BEST. BEST is working with people throughout the Lower Mainland to raise awareness, instigate discussion on sustainable transportation, and reduce vehicle trips in the region. BEST staff work with student leaders in secondary schools, deliver workplace programs to reduce vehicle trips, and seek



opportunities to reclaim the streets from vehicle traffic so that they are more people friendly. BEST's numerous public events expand awareness and acceptance of the bicycle as a legitimate form of transportation in urban areas. How-to tool kits on transportation, land use, the environment, and liveable neighbourhoods have been instrumental in promoting citizen empowerment.

The work BEST has done in coordinating Bike to Work Week has proven to be so successful that the campaign was expanded to become Bike Month – June has now been declared Bike Month in BC by the Minister of Transportation and Highways. BEST continues ever onward and upward, working to make their vision of sustainable transportation systems and liveable communities a reality. As their slogan says, BEST is constantly moving for change through education, advocacy and example.

For more information, visit their website at www.best.bc.ca.

GREENEST CITY – ACTIVE AND SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL



What could be a more heart-warming story than Mom or Dad dropping junior off at school in the warmth and comfort of their brand new sport utility vehicle? Kids inhale the fumes, as the car idles while morning kisses and last reminders are given out. Greenest City is working on something better, something less alienating, and more active, healthy, safe and sustainable.

Perhaps it is increased media coverage on threats to children's safety, or maybe it is just part of a broader societal dependence on the car, but for whatever reason, parents are increasingly opting to drive their children to school. This seemingly innocuous practice has real impacts – increased traffic, more pollution, and decreased safety in busy school zones. The problem perpetuates itself, as those left to walk become increasingly vulnerable to compromised air quality, traffic and personal dangers.

GETTING COMMUNITIES WALKING

Greenest City, a community-based environmental organization based in Toronto, is committed to reversing the "drive-to-school" trend through their Active & Safe

Routes to School Program (ASRTS). The program gets communities walking again through a wide variety of methods.

CELEBRATE THE WALK TO SCHOOL

One of the creative ways ASRTS has helped to get communities walking is with the Walking School Bus. The Walking School Bus is an organized walk to school that improves children's health through physical exercise, while providing safety in numbers. Special walking days celebrate the joys of walking and present an example of how active transportation can contribute to safe streets and clean air for all. Neighbourhood

walkabouts and community mapping highlight potential dangers, and barriers to sustainable transportation so that these issues can be remedied. Greenest City realizes they won't get everyone walking to school immediately, so they have helped to implement a No Idling at School Rule in order to improve air quality. They also recognize that institutional and structural barriers must be addressed – such as excessively wide roads that are too busy to cross. Greenest City works at the community level to bring about these changes.

Greenest City was the innovator of this project, but they are certainly not alone. Way to Go! in British Columbia has implemented a similar program and Go For Green is heading up a national Active and Safe Routes to School program. In Ontario alone, in the year 2000, Greenest City estimates that 350 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions were avoided by having fewer cars on the road and more people on their feet – walking one step closer to safer, friendlier, more sustainable communities.

For more information, visit their website at www.greenestcity.org.



CHAPTER 4

FIRST NATIONS AT THE FOREFRONT

First Nations are the traditional stewards of the land. They continue in this role today, often forming the first and last line of defence for environmental protection. First Nations have often been proactive as well, providing alternative economic models and traditional ways of living that help lead to greater sustainability. It was Chief Seattle in 1854 who expressed First Nations' connection with the land by writing:

Every part of the Earth is sacred to my people.

Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clear and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people.

The sap which courses through the trees carries the memory and experience of my people.

The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man.

This connection has not been lost, and now finds itself being expressed through the stewardship efforts of First Nations across Canada.

CHIPPEWAS OF NAWASH FIRST NATION

The traditional territory of the Chippewas of Nawash covers over 3 million acres in Southwestern Ontario. It includes the Bruce Peninsula and a good portion of the UN designated Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve. When Europeans first arrived in the "Queen's Bush," as it was called, the Chippewas of Nawash were the stewards. The land was thick with forests, birds, fish and animals. While much of the landscape has been altered, the commitment of the Chippewas to the environment has not. The Chief and Council have made a conscious decision to provide leadership on environmental matters in their traditional territory.

ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP

This commitment to leadership has been expressed through numerous public campaigns and activities. Some examples include:

- hosting two fishing conferences comparing traditional ecological knowledge with modern science;
- making a submission to the International Joint Commission, a Canada-US body that works to protect transboundary lakes and rivers, to express opposition to bulk water diversions or exports;
- spearheading opposition to Ontario Hydro's proposal to build storage containers at the Bruce Nuclear Power Plant;

- stopping a development on an island that would have caused irreparable environmental damage; and
- opposing the unsustainable harvesting of white cedar.

While not opposed to logging entirely, the Nawash wanted to ensure that it be done sustainably on their traditional territory, protecting habitat and allowing for natural forest regeneration. Teaming up with the Bruce Peninsula Environmental Group, the Nawash insisted the forestry company adhere to a strict management plan before allowing the company to improve a road allowance to gain access to its land. To ensure an environmental assessment was done on the access route, the Nawash, together with the Chippewas of Saugeen, Wildlands League and the Sierra Legal Defence Fund, went to court. That action prompted the municipality to order a provincial environmental assessment.

GOALS FOR A JUST FUTURE

Underlying the Nawash's environmental actions are three goals:

- to conserve the natural environment in accordance with traditional ways;
- to protect First Nation peoples' rights and to re-assert Native environmental management ethics; and
- to overcome opposition to Native rights in the Bruce-Grey area of Ontario by working with local non-Native residents to preserve the environment.

The history of the the Chippewas of Nawash has been a struggle for justice, including environmental justice. This struggle continues as they work towards sustainable resource management on their traditional territories.

This story is told in depth on the excellent Dibaudjimoh Nawash website at www.bmts.com/~dibaudjimoh.

PICTOU LANDING FIRST NATION AND FIRST NATIONS FORESTRY ASSOCIATION IN NOVA SCOTIA

Living off of the bounty of the forest is part of the First Nation's heritage. Sustaining both themselves, and the forest has become a mission for the Pictou Landing First Nation.

Netukulimk is a Mi'kmaq concept of harvesting resources without jeopardizing the integrity, diversity or productivity of the environment. The concept of Netukulimk is currently being applied by the Pictou Landing First Nation (PLFN) in the Mi'kmawey Forestry project.

Much of the forest on the PLFN's land has been degraded over time. In order to address this problem, the PFLN created a management plan, and then began working on the woodlot in the 1980s. This work culminated in Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification, in March of 2000. Hard work and careful stewardship has returned this forest to its pre-colonization state – rich in species and structure. The Pictou Landing First Nation never failed to recognize that people should not dominate the forests, but rather must treat all the land with respect.



ABOUT THE FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

The FSC is an international, independent certifying body that has had tremendous success in its own right. Wood that is harvested using techniques that are environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and ecologically viable may receive FSC certification. This certification gives consumers the ability to choose wood products that come from well-managed forests. Since its inception in 1993, FSC certification has become the most recognized standard by environmentalists. FSC continues to gain popularity, both within First Nations, and the broader community.

FORESTS FOR THE CHILDREN

An underlying principle of Netukulimk is that nothing is to be used without protecting the integrity of the whole. According to William McKay, Director of the project, "the success of this initiative has resulted in ensuring there will be 'Forests for the Children.' This tangible operation stands as a working example of true sustainability for Mi'kmaq and others." The Mi'kmawey Forestry project has proven to be such a success that work is now beginning on the certification of more Mi'kmaq woodlands.

For more information, contact forestry@north.nsis.com.

THE WEST KITIKMEOT/SLAVE STUDY SOCIETY

It has often been said that knowledge is power. Knowledge can also translate into sustainability. Far too often it has been the opposite, where a lack of good information has led to unsustainable decision-making. To address this information gap, First Nations, scientists and community members in the Northwest Territories have worked to collect knowledge in advance of mining development, instead of learning hard lessons afterwards.

Resource companies, particularly in the mining sector, are awakening to the wealth of possibilities of development in the Canadian Arctic. Development is rushing ahead, often without the full knowledge of potential scientific or social impacts. One area known particularly for its mining potential is the West Kitikmeot/Slave area of the Northwest Territories. The area is home to Inuit, Dene and Metis peoples, who depend upon its natural resources. Due to lack of sufficient information and data, the cumulative effects of extensive mineral development are poorly understood. To remedy this problem, the West Kitikmeot/Slave Study (WKSS) was initiated to provide an information base to support sound resource management decisions, and to examine the short-term and long-term effects of development.

UNIQUE PARTNERS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

A unique feature of the WKSS is that it is a partnership of aboriginal and environmental organizations, government, and industry. These partners joined together as a society in late 1995 to ensure that the effects of development on the environment, wildlife and people of the region are minimal, and that northern people get a share of the benefits that may come from development.

Cooperation and participation of many parties has helped to create a strong information base to enable sound resource management decisions to be made that will be sustainable over the long term. The Study has also provided a forum for the community to share information on issues, while respecting the diversity of interests involved. Reports on

issues such as grizzly bear nutritional ecology and habitat use, and historic water quality, have been posted to the WKSS website as the study continues through its final year.

At the beginning of this year, research had been completed on an additional five projects, and more are in the works, including: a traditional knowledge study of caribou and calves in the West Kitikmeot region (Tuktu and Nogak); research into the effects of on-ice drilling on water quality; a study of wolverine ecology, distribution and productivity; research on wolves and eskers; a study on Dogrib traditional knowledge of caribou; and research into the summer behaviour of the Bathurst caribou herd. There are a number of other innovative and important projects currently underway. “We’re beginning to see the fruits of our research,” said WKSS Chair Larry Aknavigak. “The WKSS board is proud of this work and we want the results to be openly and easily available to all.”

TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

Perhaps the most innovative of the Study components is the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Research in the Kache Kue study region. This project is focusing on learning about the ecology of the region from the traditional knowledge of Chipewyan elders. Key species, habitat and the effects of development are the main areas of focus, with the goal of developing indicators of ecosystem health. Researchers work with the elders to understand the meaning of their stories, to collect information on traditional land use, significant cultural and spiritual sites, and to document the information in written form with maps.

“WKSS has made a point of making Study information very public,” Aknavigak said. “We believe all our partners: industry, aboriginal groups, environmental groups, governments – and the general public – should have access to our research information. That’s an important part of the philosophy of WKSS.”

All projects that are part of the Study must show community support before they can be approved. When the Study is complete, it will provide a better understanding of the potential effects of development on this fragile ecosystem, and possible ways to mitigate these adverse effects.

WKSS reports are available free-of-charge on the WKSS website (www.wkss.nt.ca), or by contacting wkssa@internorth.com.



CHAPTER 5

THE PARTICIPATION REVOLUTION

Perhaps this entire publication could be called “The Participation Revolution.” Behind each success story is the work of dedicated citizens participating in creating a sustainable society. However, this chapter focuses on citizens involving themselves in decision making – getting their voices heard over what is often seen as the din of corporate interests and bureaucratic white noise. It is about creating an ever-increasing sphere of influence for the public – those who are most affected, and often consulted the least. The public are clamoring for a bigger piece of the decision-making pie – and getting it!

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY INTEGRATED WASTE/ RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

“Cities have the potential to shift from being repositories of waste to great sources of raw materials...Local authorities can spur the transition by providing incentives for composting, recycling, and waste-based industries.”

– Molly O’Meara, State of the World 1999, p. 141

Halifax has begun to recognize this potential, and by doing so has created less waste, saved money, and helped create a better community.

Our dominant perception of waste disposal is to pick it up at the curbside and have it taken away. Until recently, few urban dwellers thought about where it goes or what happens to it. This has led to a host of problems, and as landfills reach their capacity, new solutions are being sought. These solutions could be to ship urban waste to smaller, remote communities or into the States, or preferably, we can find creative alternatives to waste incineration and landfilling.

GARBAGE CRISIS

Halifax Regional Municipality was suffering from a waste disposal crisis in the early 1990’s. By 1994, a citizen stakeholder committee was created to address the issue. After nearly a year of volunteer-led meetings and research, the committee proposed the Integrated Waste Resource Management Strategy – a multi-pronged approach to dealing with solid waste. The cornerstones of this project were: 10,000 green organic carts used for bi-weekly collection of residential waste; refuse collection on the alternate week; two modern compost plants; an improved recycling program; better processing of waste; education programs; and regulations on the diversion of organics, recyclables and construction materials from landfill. This system was implemented by the Municipality with phenomenal results.

COMMUNITY BASED SOLUTIONS

Only one full year into operation, Halifax Regional Municipality has achieved nearly 50 percent diversion of waste from landfills. They have proven that a community-based, four stream waste diversion system works in an urban setting, and have demonstrated a new approach to achieving a plant waste-free landfill (i.e. no fruit peels, grass clippings or vegetable scraps). The citizen's stakeholder committee has now evolved into the Community Monitoring Committee, an arms length non-profit society that plays a watch dog role for the new system.

The benefits of this new system are many: it has helped to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by diverting organic material (decomposition in landfills creates methane, a greenhouse gas); landfilling waste has been reduced by almost 50 percent from the old system, and over 70 percent since 1989; and the municipality has dealt with a potentially very difficult situation. In the words of Brian Smith, Director of the Solid Waste Resources Branch, "for the municipality, working with the community directly to achieve a politically popular solution to what had been a difficult, divisive and expensive garbage problem, has been a major accomplishment." Judging from the interest expressed from local governments across Canada, and internationally, the Halifax experience provides a positive example that is sure to catch on.

For more information on the Halifax Regional Municipality Solid Waste Resource Management System, please visit the Municipality's website www.region.halifax.ns.ca and click on Solid Waste Resources.

CANADIAN AUTO WORKERS WINDSOR REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL

The participation revolution has expanded well beyond environmental groups, and is encompassing labour, women's groups, faith communities, farmers, teachers and more. One only has to look to Seattle or Quebec City for examples of the protests around the globe on international environmental issues, to see what a broad-base of support is behind this green revolution.

When one thinks of the Canadian Auto Workers, the images that most often spring to mind are likely of workers building cars, and a union providing a strong voice for labour issues. It is not as well known that the CAW is involved in broader social and environmental issues. As stated by Mark Parent, a CAW member, "we see the importance in helping illustrate the link between community concerns and workplace concerns, because the CAW regards the environment outside the workplace as merely an extension of our work environment. For that reason, protecting the environment ultimately protects our jobs, and the health of all our families."

HEMP AND THE CAW?

The CAW Windsor Regional Environment Council was formed from CAW members to unite the local unions into a collective voice regarding environmental issues in the community and the workplace. One Council project was a coast-to-coast campaign to legalize the growing of industrial fibre hemp in Canada.

Hemp has numerous environmental benefits, including:

- one year's harvest of 10,000 acres devoted to hemp will produce as much as 20 years growth of 40,000 acres of wood pulp land;



- industrial hemp can be used to produce more than 5,000 textile products, ranging from rope to fine laces, reducing the need for synthetics;
- hemp grown for the production of biomass fuel could reduce dependency on oil and coal energy;
- hemp paper can be recycled seven to eight times, compared with three times for wood pulp paper; and
- an acre of land will produce two to three times as much hemp fibre as cotton.

With these facts in mind, the Council set out to educate the country, and encourage the legalization of hemp.

Several courses of action were undertaken as part of the campaign. Information kits were created and sent out across the country. Petitions were circulated which collected thousands of signatures, and were tabled in the House of Commons. Using the CAW network, public events were held, information booths were displayed at a variety of functions, and articles were published in CAW magazines.

NEW LEGISLATION SIGNALS SUCCESS

Success came when the House of Commons approved Bill C-8, unanimously endorsing a Senate amendment that would remove mature hemp stalk from the list of controlled substances under Canada's drug laws. The CAW is now working to ensure that Canada develops strategies to maximize growth in the global hemp industry. In Parent's words: "by taking a decisive position in the debate on industrial hemp, we not only help set Canada on the path to self-reliance and strengthened autonomy, but more important, we help to point society on a course toward managing a more sustainable environment."

For more information, visit their website at www.caw.ca.

COUNCIL OF CANADIANS – "MAI NOT" CAMPAIGN

In the spring of 1997, the Council of Canadians learned that the Canadian government, along with the other members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) were negotiating a new international trade agreement that would have unprecedented power. By relaxing national investment laws and granting corporations new rights against states who wouldn't liberalize their own laws, the balance of power between states and corporations was seen to be tipping toward private corporate interests. The name of this secret deal was the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). As more information was revealed, it became clear that this new treaty would give private corporations in every signatory country the legal status of nation-state corporations, and more dangerously, it would give them powerful tools to enforce their new rights. This agreement envisioned governments being compelled to safeguard corporate interests over the rights of their own citizens, or the health of the environment.

ENVIROS OF THE WORLD UNITE

Citizens and community groups representing workers, women, the poor, farmers, the cultural community and environmentalists were outraged by the proposals to give preference to multinational companies, and the secretive manner in which these trade liberalization talks were being conducted.

A massive grassroots campaign against the MAI began in Canada and across the world, inspired and led by the Council of Canadians, a citizens' watchdog organization founded in 1985. A network of 40 national groups was formed to spread the word about the MAI. Public education sessions were held everywhere from university campuses to church basements. The outpouring across the country was remarkable. Hundreds of people were in attendance at most of the sessions. At each stop, the Council found themselves moved by the quality of the presenters, and impressed with the depth of the research and creative thought that had gone into their presentations.

Presentations by sector and organization made it very clear that every major environmental, cultural, social, human rights and labour group in the country was opposed to the MAI in its current form. Canadian society came together in an unprecedented way to contest this flawed model for international rule-making, and to present a wealth of ideas for alternatives based on human and earth-centred values. Opposition swelled, and in 1998, the OECD bowed to the pressure and cancelled the agreement.

MAI-NOT AFTERMATH

Beyond the MAI-NOT victory, the Council has remained concerned about how this process started in the first place, and whether it will be resurrected in another forum. In 1998, the Council set out across Canada again to listen to public opinion on the MAI, in order to be able to give much needed advice to the federal government on how to ensure that these types of closed-door negotiations are not be repeated.

A MODEL FOR THE FUTURE

Taking the comments expressed by Canadians, the Council prepared a detailed report for the federal government. The report put forward a model that reflected the concerns of civil society to government, as it participates in international negotiations on our behalf. The basic tenet of this model is that the economy exists to serve people and communities, not private global capital, and government must uphold this essential principle in the international arena.

For more information about the MAI and other issues, visit the Council of Canadians' website at www.canadians.org.

DEMOCRACY WATCH – CANADIAN COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT COALITION

The environmental movement has grown from protecting trees and protesting pollution, to working on reforming economic and trade institutions to create more accountability and better communities. When it looked like major bank mergers were going to change the structure and dynamics of finance in Canada, Democracy Watch founded the Canadian Community Reinvestment Coalition, to ensure the rights of communities and small businesses were respected throughout these changes.

A 1997 review of financial services legislation inspired the creation of the Canadian Community Reinvestment Coalition (CCRC) by a non-profit organization called Democracy Watch. The CCRC's purpose is to ensure that the rights of communities and small businesses are respected as our finance and banking regimes change.

The CCRC concluded that the lending and investment practices offered to many people, especially women, visible minorities, and small businesses were discriminatory or



inadequate. The Coalition felt it could help to build healthier communities and a healthier environment by working to educate people on the rights of financial consumers; by working to increase the rights of financial consumers; and by working to increase the responsibility of financial institutions.

STRENGTH IN PARTNERS

The CCRC's list of partners gave the coalition immediate respect. CCRC had over 100 groups from across Canada on board, including the Canadian Federation of Students, the National Anti-Poverty Organization, the National Council of Women in Canada, Sisters of Service, Montreal City Mission, Low Income Families Together, and Alternatives North. The CCRC and its partners jointly drafted position papers, and met with policy makers nation-wide to inform the public and decision-makers about their concerns.

Between November 1996 and April 2000, the Coalition released a collection of papers and reports, held news conferences, distributed information kits, met with federal politicians and high level bureaucrats, and encouraged the government to make changes to financial services legislation. Success was reached when Bill C-38 was introduced by Paul Martin in June of 2000; this bill contained key provisions to ensure financial institution accountability, and consumer and community protection measures. This bill died on the order paper when the federal election was called in 2000, but has since been introduced and passed second reading in the spring of 2001.

One dimension of the solution to our environmental problems is to shift the way business is done in Canada. This must include encouraging community economic development, reducing corporate concentration, and empowering the poor and the disenfranchised. By holding financial institutions accountable, the CCRC has helped to facilitate the growth of an alternative economy, one that embraces the principles of sustainable development, and is just and equitable for all.

Democracy Watch has organized other coalitions that focus on the influence of business on government policy and corporate wrong-doings, including the nation-wide Corporate Responsibility Coalition, made up of 30 citizen groups from a wide variety of sectors. All of Democracy Watch's coalitions advocate changes to laws that will reduce the influence of corporations on government and require corporations to act responsibly.

For more information, visit their website at: www.dwatch.ca.

NORTH AMERICAN COMMISSION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION (NACEC)

International trade agreements have been a major source of controversy over the past decade, with NAFTA being no exception. Protestors have raised, and are still raising, concerns about lack of input, ever-increasing power for corporations, and the potential for governments to lower environmental and labour standards to encourage investment. The Citizen Submission Process, set up as part of the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAFTA's environmental side agreement) attempts to address these issues.

When NAFTA was being negotiated, citizens and community groups concerned about its impact on environmental protection wanted the governments to guarantee that environmental laws would continue to be enforced. To ensure this, a side accord, the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC) was signed by Canada, Mexico and the United States, and came into force in January of 1994. As part of the

agreement, the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (NACEC) was born.

CITIZEN'S SUBMISSION PROCESS

Probably the most unique feature of the Commission is that private citizens and non-governmental organizations can make a formal submission asserting that one of the NAFTA governments (Canada, US, Mexico) is not enforcing its environmental laws. If certain criteria are met, as laid out in Article 14 of the Agreement, the Commission can recommend a report be prepared. The Council, comprised of the environment ministers (or their equivalent) in the three NAFTA countries, may then instruct the Commission to prepare a factual record on the submission. While the Commission has no real powers of enforcement, it can investigate formal complaints and publicly state its findings in a factual record. The factual record documents the details of the non-compliance issue, and serves to "expose" the offending government. Factual records have no legal standing, but are embarrassing for governments. A final factual record is made available to the public upon a two-thirds vote of the Council.

Initially, environmentalists were skeptical of the usefulness of the agreement. For several years, the citizen submission process was largely underused. But with time, people began to see the possibilities.

MORE THAN JUST SYMBOLIC

The inspiring part of Article 14 is that it recognizes that citizens and NGO's have a role to play in enforcement of our environmental laws. In addition, it also increases governmental accountability. No longer could governments ignore their own laws, and the complaints of their citizens, with complete impunity.

Progressive action through the citizen submission process under NAAEC has been slow, but patience has rewarded those who have persevered. Perhaps no single group has reaped more rewards on behalf of the public by using Article 14 than the Sierra Legal Defence Fund (SLDF). Sierra Legal is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing free litigation and scientific services to the environmental community. Only two factual records have been prepared by the Commission thus far, and one of those was for a complaint filed by Sierra Legal.

CHANGING BEHAVIOUR

Sierra Legal complained that Canada was failing to enforce the *Fisheries Act* against BC Hydro for repeated damage to fish and fish habitat. After three years, and much hard work, the Commission released a factual record, stating "based on the information provided by [Sierra Legal Defence Fund,] Canada and B.C. Hydro, in many situations the operation of B.C. Hydro facilities has caused and/or continues to cause harm to fish habitat." As a result, BC Hydro has taken steps to reform its practices. It is now funding the creation of a salmon stream in Vancouver's Stanley Park, and is taking other steps to ensure that its practices do not cause damage to fish habitat.

While the success of the citizen submission process has been debated, it is an admission by government that citizens have a right to participate in enforcement and protection of our environment. One curious indicator of its success is the fact that the Canadian government has been spearheading high-level efforts to weaken the powers of the



Commission. People are looking for greater accountability, more citizen involvement, and stringent enforcement of existing safeguards. The future of environmental protection relies upon citizens being empowered in decision making and enforcement. The Citizen Submission Process is a small, but important, step in this direction.

For more information, visit their website at www.cec.org.

ENVIRONMENTAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION FUND – WEST COAST ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

“Solving local problems by supporting public access to environmental legal resources.”

Legal advice is almost always expensive. Environmental groups are almost always low on financial resources. However, there are times when it is necessary to use the services of a lawyer, whether it is to get a legal opinion on how to stop logging on private or crown land; to go to court to stop noxious air emissions from pulp mills or industrial facilities; or to protect against a strategic lawsuit against public participation (SLAPP). West Coast Environmental Law has made it their mandate to help concerned citizens and groups resolve environmental problems by providing legal and expert assistance.

EMPOWERING CITIZENS

A cornerstone of West Coast’s community empowerment strategy is the Environmental Dispute Resolution Fund (EDRF). Established in 1989, the Fund provides financial assistance to citizens and community groups for three purposes: litigation or participation in administrative tribunals; participation in alternative dispute resolution; and to pay fees to hire scientific experts to prove harm to the environment.



Successes that have arisen under this program have been many and varied. The EDRF has been responsible for stopping helicopter logging in BC watersheds; has helped citizens make submissions to government for better air quality regulations with respect to crematorium emissions; has stopped pesticide spraying in a number of regions across the province; and has guaranteed the rights of citizens to participate in local decision-making regarding land use planning and development. The EDRF has supported cases before the Environmental Appeal Board, the BC Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal. Through the EDRF, citizens have been supported in negotiating land purchases and setting up conservation covenants, participating in planning processes to protect ecological values, undertaking detailed reviews of proposed projects, and going to court to protect citizen involvement and environmental values.

The EDRF allows citizens and grassroots community groups to participate in environmental decision-making on a more even footing with corporate or government interests. By empowering citizens to protect the environment in the legal arena, West Coast Environmental Law and the Environmental Dispute Resolution Fund are leveling the playing field and creating stronger, empowered communities.

For more information, visit the website at www.wcel.org.

CHAPTER 6

ECOLOGY AT WORK

Sustainability and profit do not have to be mutually exclusive. As illustrated by this chapter, many businesses that work to bring about environmental changes are also rewarded with increased profits. Reducing waste, targeting environmentally friendly consumers, and anticipating future needs based on existing environmental problems are all strategies that can make money. This chapter highlights three diverse examples of ecology at work. These examples are only the tip of the iceberg of those working within ecological constraints, and still making a healthy living.

ECO-EFFICIENCY CENTRE IN BURNSIDE

Can the environment and the economy be mutually supportive? To demonstrate that it can, Dalhousie University and Nova Scotia Power Inc., with support from the Halifax Regional Municipality, started the Eco-Efficiency Centre in Burnside. Burnside is the largest industrial park in Atlantic Canada, made up of over 1,300, mainly small, businesses. In general, most small businesses do not have the money or expertise to address the environmental issues facing them.

MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE

The Eco-Efficiency Centre employs a variety of strategies to encourage businesses to 'green' the industrial park. The primary vehicle of the Centre has been the Eco-Business Program; a voluntary program in which companies adopt an environmental code, and set reduction goals for waste, water and energy. By committing to the program, companies undergo an environmental review of their facilities. Businesses and the Eco-Efficiency Centre are mutually supportive, with local businesses committing to a greener tomorrow, and the Centre assisting with tools and expertise that will help them get there, while potentially increasing profits.

Each year, the Centre hands out awards to successful companies. By recognizing companies that have achieved significant reductions and innovative improvements in environmental management, the Centre also encourages others to follow these innovative leads, and inspires new ways of lessening corporate environmental impacts in the Industrial Park. An equally successful component of the program has been fostering partnerships for 'waste' exchanges. Wooden pallets, metals, packaging materials and leftover food have all been redirected out of the waste stream into useful applications.



THE RESULTS ARE IN

Since June 1999, the Centre has enrolled over 50 companies in the Eco-Business Program. A recent follow-up has reported a cost savings for the companies of \$90,602; solid waste diversion of 1,569 tonnes; liquid waste diversion of 26,265 gallons; and water reduction of 3 million gallons. It appears as if the Eco-Efficiency Centre has answered the question: "Can the environment and the economy be mutually supportive?" The answer is a resounding "Yes."

For more information, visit their website at www.dal.ca/eco-burnside.

BALLARD POWER SYSTEMS



In the late 1980s, Ballard Power Systems, a BC-based company, adopted "Power to Change the World" as their vision. Soon, Ballard fuel cells will be able to provide efficient, clean power where we need it most. Fuel cell powered buses, automobiles and trucks could provide the performance consumers expect without today's levels of pollution. In addition to powering cars and buses, power generators could power homes and businesses without the need for high voltage transmission lines, and the pollution associated with coal or natural gas plants. Not just a flash in the pan, Ballard has been a world leader in fuel cell technology for more than a decade.

Almost all cars on the road today use a version of the internal combustion engine. It is noisy, smelly, and creates noxious fumes that are a major contributing factor to global warming. Unfortunately, over the past sixty years, society has become increasingly reliant on the car as the primary means of transportation. Knowing that the personal automobile is not going away, Ballard Power Systems decided to work on building a cleaner engine using hydrogen power.

THE NEXT GENERATION, NOW

In 1997, Ballard, already the world leader in proton exchange membrane fuel cells, partnered with several car companies to develop the next generation of efficient and clean engines using the Ballard® fuel cell. In order to succeed, the engines must meet the performance requirements of transportation vehicles with higher efficiency, and lower emissions than the internal combustion engine.

By the time they are ready to be mass marketed, fuel cell engines will be comparable to conventional engines in size, weight, operating life, acceleration and speed. However, by using hydrogen (which can be obtained from methanol, natural gas or petroleum) combined with oxygen, no combustion is needed to create power, leading to potentially significant reductions in pollution.

The day when we see hydrogen-powered vehicles on the road is not as far away as many people think. Throughout 1999, six hydrogen-fueled buses powered by Ballard® fuel cells operated in regular service with the Chicago Transit Authority and in Vancouver. In the Chicago program alone, three buses clocked more than 5,000 hours in service, covered over 48,000 kilometres, carried more than 100,000 passengers, and emitted nothing more than water vapor. A new engine is now entering field trials that weighs half as much as the ones used in Chicago and Vancouver, and offers even better performance.

A BRIGHT FUTURE

Strong support for clean air and concern about global warming has resulted in increased air quality standards in the US that may lead to a demand for zero emission vehicles. Ballard will be ready to fulfill this demand. Ballard's vision statement "Power to Change the World" is slowly becoming a reality. Indeed hydrogen power, if the hydrogen is derived from renewable sources, will help change the world for the better.

For more information, visit Ballard's website at www.ballard.com.

FRESH PIKS ORGANICS

Brent Hammond was a young entrepreneur with a big vision – to use business as a catalyst for environmental and social change. He recognized that conventional food supply is unsustainable, and potentially unhealthy. Widespread use of pesticides, large distances between farmer and consumer, and poor soil stewardship are all problems associated with conventional food supply. Hammond felt he could "promote, support and model a healthy relationship with oneself, others and the earth by providing education and quality organic food choices with care and integrity."



A MODEST START

From a modest start – a home-office in a large, shared house, a "cooler" across town, a computer, and 27 customers, Hammond launched his business in February, 1997. Fresh Piks faced many challenges, but vision backed by dedication, determination, attention to detail and high standards has resulted in a success story that continues to evolve. Fresh Piks now enjoys the reputation of delivering the freshest organic produce right to the door of its 850 weekly customers. Deliveries are made three days a week to most areas of Victoria and the Saanich Peninsula. Customers receive a weekly list of "what's in the box," but still have choices. They can make substitutions by phone, fax or email.

A GREEN WAY TO DELIVER VEGGIES

Fresh Piks was the first organic produce company to deliver a significant volume of produce by bicycle. Twenty-five percent of deliveries are made by bicycle and trailer. The bike program demonstrates Fresh Pik's commitment to an organic culture. Fresh Piks' colourful logo on both vans and bicycle trailers not only promotes the company, but also reminds travellers that they can make a difference through conscious food choices and alternative transportation.

Fresh Piks values and respects its approximately 12 dedicated, socially conscious staff members, who, as team players, take part in business decisions. Fresh Piks' ethical commitments are shown in what it gives back to the community. Fresh Piks has donated computers to local NGOs working on agriculture issues, donated food to schools and community events, and has supported environmental groups in a myriad of ways.

FROM THE SOIL, RETURNED TO THE SOIL

Waste is reduced to a bare minimum at Fresh Piks by reusing, recycling or composting everything possible. Produce is delivered in plastic bins, which are picked up weekly and reused over and over. Plastic bins were intentionally chosen over cardboard boxes, or



wood which degrades over time and would have to be replaced. Any spoiled produce is composted and given to local farmers for use on fields.

Door to door delivery of organic vegetables is now spreading like wildfire across the country, partially due to the example and the vision of entrepreneurs such as Brent Hammond. Hopefully, other box programs will follow Fresh Piks' lead in using sustainable transportation, being involved in the community, providing fair employment, and delicious, healthy, fresh organic produce.

For more information, visit Fresh Piks' website at www.freshpiks.com.

CHAPTER 7

PROVIDING PROGRESSIVE MODELS

Out of the morass of consumerism, natural resource exploitation and unsustainable economics, a new way of thinking is emerging. Progressive models are showing us what could be possible if we thought beyond our current ways. The following groups have all worked towards changing the system, spurring on a green revolution, and providing alternatives.

One of the systems criticized most often is the forest tenure system (through which forestry companies are granted logging rights on Crown land). Large corporations, practicing unsustainable logging are the status quo in many parts of Canada. A new dawn is arising in the forestry sector, providing models that will sustain economies and ecosystems in perpetuity.

SILVA FOREST FOUNDATION

Logging by large timber companies threatens aspects of the environment that are most valued by communities, such as recreation opportunities, clean water, wildlife, viewscapes and more. Unfortunately, both government and industry have been unwilling to recognize that the protection of community values requires a significant reduction in the amount of trees that we cut. Overcutting threatens other economic activities such as tourism, and negatively impacts on the timber economy because of the so-called “falldown” effect. When old growth forests have been logged, the remaining second growth forests will not contain the same quantity and quality of timber. Government and industry see even minimal protections for non-timber forest values as red tape that must be cut, and as unwarranted limitations on their “right” to log. However, more and more communities are embracing a new approach to forest management and planning that makes ecological integrity its primary focus.

Until recently, communities were at a disadvantage in discussions with industry and government, as they did not have the capacity to do comprehensive planning to identify what types of forest management would sustain both their forests and communities. Citizens and environmental groups were forced to rely on forest company findings and forest company data to counter forest company arguments.

PROVIDING RELIABLE INFORMATION

Silva Forest Foundation (SFF) has set out to remedy the lack of reliable information by preparing comprehensive ecosystem-based maps for communities. These maps are used to develop workable long-term economically and environmentally sustainable solutions for a diversified, community-based economy. The maps identify ecological sensitivity to



disturbance, the amount of old growth forest remaining, the extent of past and planned logging, the location of protected networks to maintain biodiversity, and areas where a variety of ecologically responsible human uses can take place. In this manner the ecosystem-based plans determine first what needs to remain in the forest before deciding what can be removed.

In each case, SFF works with a broad cross-section of the community, including government, industry, NGOs and individuals. Communities become empowered by having comprehensive and sophisticated information for forestry planning. Decision making about the level of cut, areas to be protected, and the type of forestry to be conducted is improved through community involvement, and the availability of accurate information. In British Columbia, ecosystem-based planning and mapping has been accomplished for five rural communities and one First Nation (see the story on Cortes/Klahoose in this chapter, and on Harrop-Procter in Chapter 8 for examples of Silva Forest in action).

MAINTAINING ECOSYSTEM INTEGRITY

Susan Hammond, Executive Director of SFF, explains their philosophy best by saying: "The Silva Forest Foundation's mission is to initiate and support significant changes to the ways humans use forests, so that natural capital and ecosystem integrity are maintained and restored rather than depleted and degraded; and so that human communities and economies are maintained over the long term. Our guiding principle is: the forest sustains us; we do not sustain the forest."

Silva Forest Foundation's website address is www.silvafor.org.

NORTHWEST ENVIRONMENT WATCH BC (NEW BC)

"In this world, nothing can be said to be certain except death and taxes."

– Benjamin Franklin in a letter to Jean-Baptiste Le Roy, 13 November 1789



Not your typical tax experts, the staff at NEW BC.

Taxes are here to stay, that much is certain. But how we are taxed has changed over time, and Canada's *Income Tax Act* is one of the most complex and inaccessible laws that we have. It is also constantly being amended to reflect the changing reality of Canadian society. Changes in the tax system may attempt to address loopholes, injustices, or the changing values of Canadian society. In British Columbia, concern for the protection and conservation of the environment has emerged as an important value which is not adequately reflected in our current tax system. NEW BC works to change existing tax policy (both federally and more so, provincially), so that it more accurately represents the ecological costs of goods and services, thereby steering the economy towards sustainability.

NEW BC is the Canadian affiliate of an American non-profit, Northwest Environment Watch. They envision a 'new BC' with thriving communities, economic vitality, and more intact eco-systems. They view tax shifting as a way to encourage society to move towards this vision.

A GOOD KIND OF TAX

Tax shifting is about providing incentives. It seeks to move the requirement to pay taxes from things that are good, like labour and investment, to things that are detrimental,

such as pollution and the depletion of resources. For the past several years, NEW BC has worked to build support for tax shifting in the labour and environmental movements, working with unions and NGOs. NEW BC has established relationships with over 70 business leaders in BC who now make important connections between their business interests, the economic vibrancy of BC, and the need for a healthy environment.

TAX SHIFTING IN ACTION

Although tax shifting has played an important role in promoting incentive for sustainability throughout Europe, it has remained on the fringes of Canadian tax policy. Thanks to NEW BC, and those working with them, the BC government announced a commitment to begin tax shifting projects in its 2000 budget. The first example of tax shifting targets the mechanisms that permit beehive burners to continue to burn wood waste, which have a detrimental impact on local air quality. This proposal encourages productive use of wood residue. Although it is a small step, it is one of North America's first tax shifts, and is of interest to numerous US jurisdictions and the federal government. This tax shift represents a real structural change and is one of the necessary steps we must take to change society's behaviour. And there is reason for optimism. In 2000, the BC government has already started discussions on taxing new vehicles according to efficiency, rather than price.

NEW BC can be found on the web at www.newbc.org.

SEVENTH GENERATION INITIATIVE

"There is a tradition in some societies to consider the interests of the next seven generations whenever decisions are being made.

For the modern world to do the same would mark our passage to maturity."

- Planning for Seven Generations, by Mike Nickerson

The political election cycle dominates our society. Government decisions are made for short-term ends, at most looking five to ten years into the future. It is this kind of short-term vision that has led to an emphasis on economics over ecology, and deregulation in the name of competitiveness. The Seventh Generation Initiative encourages policy makers to consider the impacts of their decisions on the well-being of the public for generations to come. This is a massive project that demands a whole new mindset where the well-being of people comes before economics, for policy makers and politicians.

THREE STAGES TO SUSTAINABILITY

To make this project manageable, the Seventh Generation Initiative is approaching the problem through three stages. The first stage is to define society's values in a way that is consistent with the long term well being of people and ecosystems. Currently, economic thinking measures the progress and well-being of a society by looking at its gross domestic product (GDP). This leads to skewed decision-making because GDP does not reflect social or environmental values, or the loss of natural capital. Instead, the Seventh Generation Initiative has proposed the *Canada Well-Being Measurement Act*.

If passed, the *Act* would require that a new measuring system be developed, taking into account such factors as economic inclusion, income distribution, crime, unpaid work, biodiversity, durability of goods, natural resource stocks, pollution and more.



Once values consistent with long-term well-being are established, the next step will be to assess all proposed policy and legislation for their long term impacts. This second step will involve another legislative proposal, the *Seventh Generation Act*. This *Act* would mandate governments to ensure that all public decision-making be assessed with long-term social and environmental impacts in mind.

CLEARING THE PATH FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

As we move towards assessing policies and legislation for long-term impacts on human well-being, it will become easier to move our society towards full cost accounting, product stewardship, tax shifting to act as a disincentive for environmentally degrading activities, and other legislation aimed at improving conditions in the long term. This is the third stage, when decision makers consider their impacts upon seven generations.

While the plan may sound like a blue-sky dream, it is already starting to come to fruition. Support for the *Canada Well-Being Measurement Act* has come from Joe Jordan, a Liberal MP from Leeds-Grenville who introduced the Bill in the House of Commons and is working to get it passed into law. A Measuring Well-Being booklet has been published, and has met with great praise.

By reaching out to communities and creating networks of like-minded folks, the Seventh Generation Initiative is creating a broad foundation of support for legislative changes for long-term sustainability. The time frame for this project is ongoing, but changes are happening, and work will continue until the interests of the next seven generations are protected.

A copy of the Measuring Well-Being booklet is available for free at sustain.web.ca or by writing to P.O. Box 374, Merrickville, Ontario K0G 1N0.

For more information, visit the Seventh Generation Initiative website at www.cyberus.ca/choose.sustain.

CORTES ECOFORESTRY SOCIETY

"To create perpetual ecological and economic benefits for the entire community..."

Cortes Island is a stunning place in the Discovery Islands of BC – big trees, sandy beaches and a wonderful sense of community. Despite its other-world beauty, it is still subject to real world British Columbia forestry practices. During the 1990s, dissatisfaction within the community and the Klahoose First Nation was growing with the cut levels and style of harvesting of the logging company, MacMillan Bloedel on private forest lands on Cortes Island.

A BAD SITUATION GETS WORSE

Community concern heightened, and their bad situation became intolerable when MacMillan Bloedel sold two parcels of land to a smaller operator, notorious for poor forestry practices, who promptly clearcut the land. Next, the Ministry of Forests announced in March 1999 that virtually all of the Crown land harvesting rights on Cortes had been granted to Canadian Forest Products, without consultation with the Cortes community or the Klahoose First Nation.

Hoping for a long-term solution, the Cortes community wanted to do more than protest the situation. The First Nation and the community decided to purchase all of MacMillan Bloedel's land on the island and administer the lands as a Community Forest. Out of this idea came the Cortes Ecoforestry Society (CES).



THE CORTES INITIATIVE

Negotiations began initially with MacMillan Bloedel and then were transferred to its corporate successor, Weyerhaeuser. By April 2000, an agreement was reached between Weyerhaeuser, the Klahoose First Nation, and CES. This agreement became known as 'the Cortes Initiative,' and established a proposed process by which the First Nation and CES could gain control of the Weyerhaeuser lands on Cortes, and include them in a Community Forest with additional Crown Forest lands. Management of the forest would be shared between Klahoose First Nation and CES, using the principles of sustainable forestry. This initiative had the overwhelming support of the community.

Unfortunately, the provincial government has been hard to convince. Despite the initiative being supported by the public, First Nations and a multi-national forestry giant, the province is still reluctant to accept this bold new model. If the initiative is accepted, it will lead to the largest model of ecosystem-based forest management in British Columbia, and a model of cooperation between First Nations and the non-aboriginal community for their mutual benefit. Regardless of whether the BC government ultimately supports this arrangement, this is a good example of community cooperation in the formation of new alliances for environmental protection. The community was faced with incredible adversity, and potentially unsustainable practices. All interests came together, and made mutually beneficial partnerships leading to a bold and innovative solution.

For more information, visit the CES website at oberon.ark.com/~ecofor.

CITIZENS FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY

Air pollution respects no boundaries. It has been well-documented that industrial pollutants can travel thousands of miles, making their way into the Arctic, the oceans and rural areas far away from major sources of pollution. Organic farmers in Ontario know that air pollution is affecting crops and contaminating soil. Concerned about the effects of air pollution on their organic produce, these farmers decided that they wanted to do more to protect the environment, and decided to demonstrate the power of renewable energy.

Organic farmers are known for their concern about what goes in their soil. One farmer in Ontario took this to the next level. Ziggy Kleinau was concerned about how air and water pollution were affecting crops, animals and human health. After realizing that a great deal of air and water pollution originated from fossil fuel electricity generation, and recognizing the risks inherent in nuclear power generation, Ziggy joined other organic farmers in a push to promote renewable energy to power Ontario farms.

And so in 1996, the Citizens for Renewable Energy (CFRE) breathed its first breath. One of their members was able to power his farm from a solar/wind hybrid system. As well, the CFRE held education and awareness campaigns to promote the widespread installation of photovoltaic and wind energy systems.



IF IT'S NOT SCOTTISH...

Workshops on renewable energy were held, and membership grew. Probably the most popular workshop to-date was a hands-on training session featuring the assembly of a Scottish design wind turbine made from scrap parts (just to show that renewable energy need not be a proton exchange membrane fuel cell, or something equally as complicated). The workshop was so popular it was repeated several times, and has now been made into a video and guide kit.

RAISING AWARENESS

CFRE has also participated in public forums on energy matters and has made presentations before federal and provincial agencies such as the Atomic Energy Control Board on nuclear concerns, and the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and the Environment. CFRE has become a regular fixture at conferences and festivals, seizing on any opportunity to spread the good news of safe, clean, renewable energy. Several small renewable energy systems have been installed across the province.

CFRE has faced an uphill struggle to ensure that the Ontario government includes renewable energy generation in the mix of power sources offered to consumers in the emerging deregulated energy market. Despite the adversity, progress is being made, attitudes are changing, and CFRE believes that a renewable energy future is possible.

For more information, visit the CFRE website at www.web.ca/~cfre.

CLIMATE PARTNERS NETWORK

The recent failure of negotiations in the Hague, Netherlands, to get a firm agreement on global greenhouse gas emission reductions means it is even more imperative that citizens and businesses make emissions cuts voluntarily. It is with this in mind that the Climate Partners Network was formed to encourage people and organizations to minimize their own activities that contribute to global warming.

The science is becoming more certain, and many believe that the impacts of climate change are already being felt.

Climate change is perhaps the most threatening environmental problem facing the world today. While education campaigns have done much to bring awareness to the issue, many people still feel powerless to take action. Climate Partners Network has stepped to the forefront to provide people with an opportunity to take positive action in offsetting harmful greenhouse gas emissions.

The concept is simple: individuals log onto the Climate Partners' website to calculate their yearly CO₂ emissions. They then purchase "offsets" that are aimed at compensating for their activities that lead to climate change. Offsets fund public projects that reduce CO₂ emissions, and provide social benefits like improved air quality, less traffic and more jobs. Some examples could be creating new bike trails, supporting reforestation projects, and promoting renewable energy.

The idea of offsets builds upon mechanisms being developed internationally. At the international level, these mechanisms enable developed countries to offset some of their greenhouse gas emissions by sharing emission reduction technology with the developing world.

Money from offsets goes into the ClimateCare Trust. In order to ensure the projects are suitable, and will indeed lead to reduced greenhouse gas emissions, an independent Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel, representing a cross section of greenhouse gas experts and community interests, was formed. However, Climate Partners will only work if people participate. In order to boost participation, Climate Partners has teamed with the British Columbia Auto Association to market their concept to the 700,000 BCAA members through direct mail, point-of-purchase displays, and advertising in its magazine.

As Dennis Rogoza, founder of Climate Partners, says, "While the problem of global warming and climate change may seem overwhelming, we believe that every person can be part of the solution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions."

Find out how to offset your impact at www.climatepartners.com.

SELECTIVE FISHERIES PROJECT

The government of Canada is often the target of criticism by environmentalists, and usually, deservedly so. However, the federal government has created programs that are leading to greater sustainability, such as their efforts to inspire a shift toward selective fisheries. We are delighted to be able to include an example of a federal success story.

Much has been written about the critically low numbers of pacific salmon on the West Coast. Depleted salmon stocks are attributable in large part, to over fishing, but also to unselective fishing gear which harms non target species, referred to as by-catch. The federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) has recognized that one solution to marine species depletion – not just for salmon, but groundfish, invertebrates, seabirds, marine mammals, and all other species at risk of over-exploitation – is in the widespread adoption of selective fishing techniques.



DFO initiated the Selective Fisheries Program in June 1998. The purpose of the program is straightforward: to develop gear and methods that enable the harvest of target species while releasing unharmed or avoiding the capture of by-catch, including marine mammals and seabirds. Since its inception, the Selective Fisheries Program has funded proposals to develop, modify or test selective salmon fishing practices.

Commercial fishers, First Nations, and recreational fishing operators have all received funding for selective fishing experimental projects. Approximately \$18 million has been invested in over 100 experimental pilots testing innovations in gillnet, seine, troll and recreational salmon fisheries. As the Selective Fisheries Program winds down in 2001, DFO plans to implement the findings of the experimental pilot projects into the Integrated Fisheries Plans and individual harvest plans.

Michelle Imbeau, a DFO employee, recognizes that "selective fishing represents a fundamental change to conservation-based fisheries for the benefit of present and future generations. In meeting conservation objectives, fishing opportunities and resource allocation will be shaped by the ability of all harvesters – First Nations, commercial and recreational anglers – to fish selectively."

For more information, contact ImbeauM@pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca.



CHAPTER 8 ON THE GROUND ACTION

This final chapter is a hodge-podge of different efforts and initiatives to improve the environment through direct action. These groups are implementing the policy shifts being advocated in Chapter 7. They demonstrate that progressive change is possible.

Sustainability starts at home, at least for Milt and Barb Wallace. They decided to “put their money where their mouth was,” and start a demonstration site for sustainable living. Their story reminds us that it is possible to live in harmony with our environment.

SUN RUN CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING

“A family-sized model of sustainable living...”



Picture: The friendly faces of Milt and Barb Wallace awaiting those interested in learning first-hand about “the integration of mind, body and spirit and our human energies with those of plants, animals and nature.”

Milt and Barb Wallace have put their beliefs into practice in Cameron, Ontario, where they combine organic gardening, alternative energy, sustainable building and personal growth. They are long term environmentalists, working in the environmental field for years, and often reacting to environmental threats. However, in 1989, the Wallaces shifted from telling others what not to do, deciding instead to live by example. Out of this idea came the Sun Run Centre for Sustainable Living.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

The Centre is now a full-blown family-sized model of sustainability. It is “off-grid,” supplied with energy primarily by photovoltaic cells, along with some windpower. Most of the food is grown organically on-site, supplemented by dairy products from a few rare breed cows. A small woodlot on the property provides a learning ground for ecologically sensitive forest management. Volunteers and apprentices have helped add a rainwater collection and distribution system, a toilet that does not use water, and other low impact amenities.

COVERING THE GREEN SPECTRUM

Over the past decade, the Wallaces have offered workshops on everything from alternative power production, straw bale and cob construction, and permaculture, to sustainable village design. A community-shared agriculture project ran for four years, teaching

volunteers about green business, in order to integrate the centre within the broader community. The Wallaces' vision of sustainability includes more than just clean air and clean water; it is also about creating healthy and happy people. In order to facilitate this, the Sun Run Centre also focuses on personal development, community formation and spirituality.

Over the last decade, interested folks have flooded through the Centre, representing diverse backgrounds including local citizens, university groups, seniors and school groups. Sun Run is also providing an example for the rest of the world. People from over 22 countries have visited, and the Centre has been featured in magazines and on television. Their efforts to promote sustainability are catching on.

THE WORD IS SPREADING

Milt and Barb Wallace started with the mandate "to encourage and support others who are ready to implement lifestyle changes that demonstrate a holistic approach to living a high quality of life while walking lightly on the earth." They have done even more than that: they are an inspiration and a guide for the thousands of people who have visited Sun Run; they are teaching us to live sustainably; and are fostering a real sense of community. Sustainable communities and living centres have started up across the country, and now can be found in most, if not all, regions. The Sun Run Centre is only one example of this growing movement, but what makes the Wallaces unique is that they have done it for so long, with such a broad-reaching impact.

You can find the Sun Run Centre on the web at www.lindsay.net.com/sunrun.

NO INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE COMPANY (NICE CO.)

Recycling and rural living are rarely synonymous concepts. Most people see this as a problem; Jacques Boisvert saw it as an opportunity. Living on the beautiful, but recycling-challenged, Sunshine Coast of BC, Jacques decided he would pick up recyclable goods himself...on his bicycle.

Jacques Boisvert formed No Internal Combustion Engine (NICE). The mandate of NICE was to provide superior recycling pickup service, performed with a non-polluting vehicle. Equipped only with a bicycle and a custom trailer (designed and fabricated by Jacques himself), he picked up the bottles and cans of 100 customers, every two weeks for two years. Customers had prime service, with their recyclable goods being picked up at curbside, just like in any major city. Twenty-five metric tonnes of material was transported over 3000 km of mountainous coastal geography. Harmful emissions were avoided through the use of appropriate transportation technology (a bike).

NICE has demonstrated that it is possible to reduce dependence on harmful energy sources. Through Jacques's efforts, awareness about recycling and sustainable transportation has been raised. NICE gets us all thinking of ways we can improve our own communities through individual action.

Jacques can be reached at jacques_boisvert@dccnet.com.



HARROP-PROCTER WATERSHED PROTECTION SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY CO-OPERATIVE



The acrimonious relationship between the forestry industry and environmental groups in BC is well-known throughout Canada. Poor logging practices have led to serious environmental problems – increased siltation in water supplies, concerns about pesticide use, species loss, and a reduction in the natural filtration process performed by healthy ecosystems. That is why it is surprising to hear that the Harrop-Procter Watershed Protection Society, based in the Kootenay region of British Columbia, is now working to promote logging in the area. The Society is working toward a new style of logging, designed to benefit the entire community through an ecologically sensitive approach.

A TIME TO GET CREATIVE

As the 1990s drew to a close, government officials made it clear to environmentalists that no further protection within the Kootenay Lake Forest District would be forthcoming. Eleven percent of the land base had already been protected, and the attitude of the forestry industry was less than cordial. Not included in the 11 percent was the community watershed. The community had two choices: form blockades to try to force the government to buckle, or come up with a creative solution to protect their water supply. This pressing concern brought the community together to brainstorm on a strategy that would protect their water resources, while stimulating economic activity. Out of this process came the idea to create a community forest.

Initially, the community sought to engage government and industry in developing a sustainable harvesting plan, but this was to no avail. Forced to look elsewhere, the community contacted the Silva Forest Foundation with a view to implementing ecosystem planning (see Chapter 7). Walking the middle ground between preservationists and loggers, a community forest proposal was created, combining environmental values with business and economic interests. The economic component of the community forest would be made up of eco-certified timber and lumber, non-timber forest products, value-added manufacturing, and no-trace eco-tourism.

BREAKTHROUGH

Hard work, thorough research, and a middle ground approach translated into success for the community, as they were chosen as one of seven community forest pilot projects in the province. This project represents an important breakthrough in tenure reform; their plan is a mix of ecosystem and economic priorities, with a healthy dose of community control. The timber harvest is based on what to leave, and not how much to take. As of 2001, forest planning was underway, with plans for harvesting, as well as trials for non-timber forest products sustainability.

For more information, contact hpwater@netidea.com.

INUVIK COMMUNITY GREENHOUSE

Just above the 68th parallel, in the arctic community of Inuvik, Northwest Territories, is the largest community greenhouse of its kind in the world. Less surprisingly, it is also the most northern commercial greenhouse in North America. Apart from providing fresh, tasty vegetables, the greenhouse also acts as a focal point for the community.



OLD BUILDINGS, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

In November 1998, the Community Garden Society of Inuvik was born. It had its eye on an old quonset style arena, slated for demolition, as the site for its vision of a community greenhouse.

Once the building was acquired, the tin roof was removed and other renovations to make the arena suitable for a greenhouse were undertaken. The renovations were completed, using \$61,000 of material salvaged from an adjacent demolished school. Raised planters were built onto the gravel floor of the arena to insulate it against permafrost.

A second floor was added to one end of the building adding 4,000 square feet. The second floor is home to a separate commercial greenhouse which generates money to offset the operation costs of the entire building. The remainder of the building, approximately 12,000 square feet, is home to the community greenhouse. Many of the plots at the community greenhouse are sponsored by local businesses for the benefit of elders and youth.

COMING TOGETHER

A wide variety of people have come together at the community greenhouse – experienced and novice gardeners, old and young, including interest from local members of the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in Nations. Aside from community development, the other focus for the greenhouse is to ensure a more successful harvest of vegetables, and to allow for a greater variety of crops in an area where fresh produce is either unavailable or too costly to import.

The summer of 2000 was the first year of full operation of the greenhouse. The commercial greenhouse, staffed by two employees, produced a large crop of bedding plants and starter vegetable plants for early June sales. This was a great success. Hanging baskets and planter boxes were arranged as part of the Town of Inuvik's beautification program.

As the bedding plants moved out, the commercial greenhouse shifted to hydroponic tomato and cucumber production. Downstairs, in the community plots, people were planting as early as the first weekend in May, and gardened until the beginning of September. Many of the plots were very successful and yielded a wide variety of vegetables. A composting program was started and is raising community awareness of the importance of composting and recycling. As the kinks in the ventilation system get worked out over the next season, even better yields are expected.

Inuvik Community Greenhouse can be reached at greenhouse@permafrost.com.



ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND AND THE SIR ANDREW MACPHAIL FOUNDATION

Prince Edward Island was originally covered by Acadian forest that included white pine, red spruce, hemlock, sugar maple, beech, and dozens of other varieties of trees and shrubs. Like most places in Canada, the original forest was logged, and has been replaced with young stands of white spruce, red maple and poplar. As these replacement stands are of low commercial value, the provincial and federal governments subsidized clearcuts, follow-up brush burning, herbicide spraying and conifer plantations. In the late 1980's, frustrated by the Prince Edward Island government's continued obsession with clearcutting and conifer plantations, the Environmental Coalition of Prince Edward Island began thinking of alternatives.

AN OPPORTUNITY

In Orwell, PEI, 140 acres of public land are leased to the Sir Andrew Macphail Foundation, a community organization dedicated to the enhancement and promotion of the indigenous ecosystem. The Environmental Coalition became interested in 110 acres of woodlands, including a mix of older Acadian-type forest, with recent clearcuts, conifer plantations and mixed hardwoods.

Working together, the Environmental Coalition and the Foundation started a native plant nursery, that now includes almost 100 species. The provincial tree, the Red Oak, is rare on the Island, but thousands are now growing in the nursery. Education is the primary purpose of the nursery, but it has also started selling plants, increasing the amount of native species grown in PEI, while helping to provide funds for the program's educational work.

SHARING A LOVE OF NATURE

It is the woods that remain the key component of the project. Sound forest stewardship, including thinnings, small patch cuts, and replanting of native plants is helping to create a high-value, long-lived forest. Nature trails with interpretive material now wander through the woods, highlighting the work done and distinguishing different forest types.

The community has been involved right from the beginning. Workshops have covered everything from mushrooms and basket-making, to pruning trees. School tours and a summer program called "Sharing a Love of Nature" caters to younger visitors. By reaching out to the community, the Environmental Coalition of PEI and the Sir Andrew Macphail Foundation have moved beyond restoring an Acadian-type forest, and are creating stewards for that forest for generations to come.

You can visit the cyberwoods at www3.pei.sympatico.ca/garyschneider.

EQUITERRE – COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

A major hurdle for small organic farmers is that most of their expenses come in the spring (seeds, soil work, equipment...), but it could be a couple of months until the produce is ready to sell. Out of efforts to remedy this hardship on farmers blossomed the idea of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). Through the CSA program, members of the community buy shares in a farm in advance of the season, giving the farmer easier access to capital when it is needed most. While this program is very helpful, it takes a significant amount of work and organization, and that is where Equiterre comes in.

The word Equiterre is taken from the French words for equity and the earth. It is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting ecological, socially just choices through action, education and research from a standpoint that embraces social justice, economic solidarity and the defence of the environment. Equiterre has been a pioneer of CSA in Canada. Since 1995, Equiterre has coordinated the Quebec Network of Community Supported Agriculture Projects – the only network of its kind in Canada.

Currently Equiterre has a network of 46 farms. Each farm produces weekly baskets that are distributed straight from the farm to the consumer. Equiterre acts as the hub of the whole system, advertising, encouraging, lending support, and linking customers with farms. Thanks to their experience with CSA, Equiterre is also able to lend expertise and resources to assist new farmers.

Too few people have heard of the concept of CSA, or know that it is available in their community, and for that reason Equiterre has been busy on the streets. Education is a major component in Equiterre's CSA project. It has a travelling display that is shown at various events, and it distributes and hosts workshops on various aspects of CSA. Recently, Equiterre held a conference that was attended by over 200 people, including the Quebec Minister of Agriculture. In conjunction with the conference, Equiterre launched "Je cultive, tu manges, nous partageons" (To Harvest, To Eat and To Share), the first book of its kind in French, full of stories and practical tips for farmers and consumers interested in CSA.

Apart from being of assistance to farmers, CSA also links consumers with the source of their food – the farm. Work farm parties and harvest celebrations are held by many of the farms which educate the public about where their food comes from. By encouraging local farming, Equiterre promotes food security, community economic development increases, and minimizes the need for transportation of food to markets. All farms in the Network are organic, meaning less pesticides are being used.

Thanks to Equiterre and CSA farmers, Quebec has a more secure food supply, a growing collection of organic farmers, and a growing awareness of sustainable agriculture.

For more information, visit their website at www.equiterre.qc.ca.



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