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B E T W E E N T H E
i s s u e s

BETWEEN THE COVERS:

Two-Eyed Seeing

Ignorance is Strength?



an ecology action centre publication

www.ecologyaction.ca

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Features

Two-Eyed Seeing

/ 16



Ignorance is Strength?

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B E T W E E N T H E i s s u e s

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VOL. 30 NO. 2

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EAC Annual General Meeting

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Bloomfield Centre's Multipurpose Room

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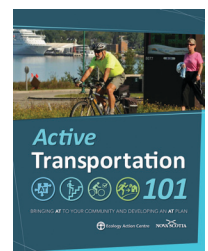
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Active Transportation 101:

Bringing AT to Your Community and Developing an AT Plan



Letter from the centre

Renewed Vision in Blinding Times

The recent introduction of federal Bill C-38 ushers in an era of scant funding and lax environmental regulation, as federal policy seems to turn a blind eye to the environment. The hostile climate towards environmental NGOs has grown so extreme that Canadian environmental icon David Suzuki resigned from the Board of Directors at the David Suzuki Foundation in order to speak out freely without jeopardizing the Foundation's charitable status. This June, the EAC joined over 500 other groups across Canada in darkening its website "in defence of nature and democracy," and will continue to stand in solidarity with the wider environmental community in Canada.



The BTI Team.

In "Ignorance is Strength", Erin Burbridge explores one aspect of the political climate in the environmental sector—the Orwellian control of federal research. Burbridge reports on the censorship of federal scientists, and the impacts on Canadian science when knowledge sharing and free flow of information aren't allowed to happen. Also in this issue, Mark Parent, Vice-Chair of the National Roundtable on the Environment and Economy (NRTEE), gives a first-hand account of the challenges faced by a group that has been promoting a sustainability agenda in the federal

government since 1988. NRTEE will no longer be funded as of April 2013.

On a more hopeful note, Sam Fraser offers a renewed vision for how science is approached, as he gives light to a research methodology that integrates traditional and scientific knowledge in "Two-Eyed Seeing." In an interview with Mi'kmaq elder Albert Marshall, Fraser finds an eye for both the spiritual and the physical in the environment.

Nobody has a brighter vision for our environmental future than parents. As Jonathan Rotsztein discovers in this issue's "Being Green" column, parenting brings a new sense of purpose to protecting the environment. He interviews three families who strive for sustainability in their everyday lives in order to reshape a society in which "children don't need to be 'environmentalists' at all." Another parent brings environmentalism home in this issue's "La Vie en Vert," where readers meet Janya Freer, a local mom who is at the cutting edge of a green birthday parties movement.

Parents and citizens across Nova Scotia are stepping up to the plate in support of the environment. As Membership Coordinator Ryan O'Quinn reports in "Destination 2012," the EAC's growing number of members (soon to be 2,012!) bring the EAC to life, and demonstrate that the environment is a strong priority for citizens even when federal policies make it seem otherwise.

Tim Roberts and Heather Hunter report on important issues-based work made possible by EAC members. Roberts' "Connecting Cyclists to their City" investigates the politics of creating cycling infrastructure in the Halifax area, while Hunter encourages citizens and municipalities to be creative in their approaches to stormwater management.

As always, we hope that this issue of BTI will shed light on the issues, open your eyes to new perspectives, and offer renewed visions for a sustainable future!

- BTI Editors

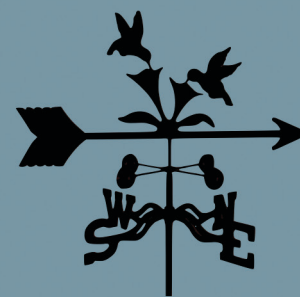

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The Chronicle Herald

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Nova Scotia can inspire federal fossils

(Energy Issues Committee) In recent months, we completed Phase I of the Atlantic Canada Sustainable Energy Coalition project. Over a six year period, collaboration between the EAC and like-minded groups throughout the region contributed to huge advancements in sustainable energy policy and practice in Atlantic Canada. Thanks in large part to that work, Nova Scotia is now home to Canada's first independent energy efficiency agency, has some of the most aggressive renewable energy targets in the country, and is one of the few jurisdictions in North America to have hard caps on emissions from its electricity sector. Phase II of the Atlantic Canada Sustainable Energy Coalition project is gearing up now. The EIC will be working with its partners to make Nova Scotia and the other Atlantic provinces champions for sustainable energy policy at the national level, so the rest of Canada can learn and benefit from our achievements.

beaches and sheep

(Coastal Issues Committee) We are excited to participate in a five-year international partnership project based on community conservation called the Partnership for Canadian Caribbean Community Climate Change Adaptation. Study sites are being set up in Jamaica, Tobago, Nova Scotia and PEI and the project focuses on tourism and fisheries. Part of the project will include a Community Based Vulnerability Assessment to assess current and future community vulnerabilities to climate change. Our Coastal and Restoration Coordinators were whisked to sunny Tobago this month to meet with project stakeholders and discuss general project goals. In other news, Groundswell is gaining momentum with two new wells, including one at Ross Farm. The groundwater team enjoyed a tour of the farm, and several sheep are now trained in groundwater monitoring.

hooks, longlines and sinkers

(Marine Issues Committee) We're busier than ever with proposed changes to the federal Fisheries Act, presentations to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, and contemplation of the many cuts to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. In May, we held the final meeting of the Eastern Scotian Shelf Integrated Management Advisory Committee, an initiative we worked on with others for over a decade to implement the Oceans Act and achieve better management of our ocean environment. Suffice it to say that we are disappointed. Luckily, our work on sustainable seafood is starting to pay off. The Chedabucto Bay Trap-Caught Shrimp winter fishery was successful. Off the Hook delivered sustainably harvested, directly traceable fish to restaurants, retailers and wholesalers in Halifax and Toronto in March and April, and it is gearing up for a long season of fresh, fair fish. The fight against open-net pen fish farming continues to heat up in Nova Scotia—native Atlantic salmon, the lobster fishery and basic democratic processes are at stake. After a lengthy battle, the Canadian longline swordfish was certified by the Marine Stewardship Council. The fishery kills 35,000 sharks and up to 500 sea turtles each year. Our fight led to some strict conditions on the fishery to improve, and a growing awareness from retailers that not all "green" labels can be trusted. A small victory, but we'll take it!

farm focus (Food Action Committee) Heliotrust is establishing new field trials for selecting more disease-resistant potatoes and wheat. Raymond Loo of Springwillow Farm in P.E.I. is helping us out with the potato end of things. His family developed a blight-resistant potato called Island Sunshine. A group of farmers have been collaborating with us to develop a less expensive hoop house that is now easier to install and move. This hoop house will extend the production season. We worked with the Villeneuve Family Farm to build a low-cost carrot washer and Chestnut Acres Farm to build a new kind of flame weeder based on work at the University of Washington. It is action all the time on the farm, especially with such an early spring!

safe and sustainable communities (Transportation Issues Committee) Our new publication, *Active Transportation 101: Bringing AT to Your Community and Developing an AT Plan*, helps guide you and your community or municipality through laying the groundwork for an AT-friendly environment. It was developed through a partnership between the Ecology Action Centre and the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness. We also advocated strong safety, sustainable transportation and land-use elements in the Road Safety Action Plan, the Sustainable Transportation Strategy and the Childhood Obesity Prevention Strategy.

brick by brick (Built Environment Committee) The Morris House project is launching its website, morrhoused.ca, and it is looking for creative ways to sell bricks from historic properties and to raise money to support its placement and an addition to the building. We continue to develop a standard survey to use with businesses and service providers located on the fringe, to examine housing locations and transportation habits. The Our HRM Alliance—now with a membership of 39 organizations—continues to provide input to HRM on the RP+5 process and Centre Plan. The EAC is cognizant of the balance it must strike between density, height, and community consultation. The HRM has expressed reserved support for density bonusing, which allows developers to add two more stories to the height of a building if they provide some sort of pre-authorized community good, but asserts that more complete public consultation is necessary before the plan proceeds.

bill should live up to its "good" name

(Wilderness Issues Committee) We were shocked to see the contents, or lack thereof, of the recently passed and dubiously titled Good Forestry Management on Crown Lands Act. The bill was intended to change the way forest companies access wood from crown land, from seemingly endless lease agreements to short-term license agreements, with provisions for sub-licensing with value-added hardwood producers—progressive steps forward that the EAC supports. But the name of the bill was inappropriate and problematic. Any bill with such a lofty title needs more substance than just minor tweaks to be credible, such as mechanisms for public engagement in how our crown lands are managed and rules to reduce clearcutting and improve forest harvesting practices. The EAC fought for the inclusion of such provisions in the Law Amendments Committee, but we were ultimately rejected. As with many forest policy initiatives promised by this government, we are left waiting for the progressive changes they keep saying are coming... eventually... down the road... soon...



ecobriefs

By Mike Ruxton

Bumbling Honeys

The pesticide industry produces chemicals that supposedly protect plants from pests. The pests are the enemy. Systemic pesticides mimic the defense mechanism of many organisms by making the treated plant poisonous to the pest. The plant is infused with the pesticide, and any pest that feeds on the plant ingests the pesticide. For this approach to be effective, the poison must act quickly to minimize damage the pest

- Exposure to thiamethoxam severely compromises homing abilities in foraging honey bees.

- Exposing bumble bees to imidacloprid greatly compromises hive colony growth rates and queen bee production.

- The method used to plant neonic-treated seed produces dust clouds that are highly toxic to foraging honeybees.

The research points to flaws in the approval process for pesticides. Honey bees aren't necessarily killed outright by

Clothianidin-treated corn seed is currently banned in Germany.

Pettis et al, Naturwissenschaften, 2012 Feb; 99(2):153-8

Henry et al, Science, v. 336, 20 Apr 2012, pp. 348-350

Goulson et al, Science, v. 336, 20 Apr 2012, pp. 351-352

Tapparo et al, Environ. Sci. Technol., 2012, 46 (5), pp. 2592-2599

Blood Sucking

In the 1990s, several mammals previously unknown to science were discovered in the Annamite Mountains on the border between Vietnam and Laos. These included the saola, the Truong Son muntjac deer, and the Annamite striped rabbit. Scientists have been using camera traps to photograph the local wildlife. Leeches are a recent addition to their monitoring repertoire.

The idea evolved from a Copenhagen Zoo expedition monitoring and tracking tapirs in Malaysia; a team member was attacked by leeches, a very common experience. Veterinarian Mads Bertelsen and the team discussed the leech attack and elaborated on the possibilities. Bertelsen contacted Thomas Gilbert of the Centre for GeoGenetics at the University of Copenhagen with the idea, and a proof-of-concept experiment with medicinal leeches showed that goat DNA survived in the leeches for at least four months.

Gilbert e-mailed Nicholas Wilkinson, a Vietnam-based wildlife ecologist with the University of Cambridge, U.K. and asked for some leeches. Wilkinson collected twenty-five leeches from the Quang Nam Saola Nature Reserve in the



Sarah Burwash

might inflict. Bees, however, aren't pests; they provide a service to the plants. But what is poisonous to pests is also typically poisonous to bees. The nature of systemic pesticides means the pesticide also ends up in the nectar and pollen of the plants. Pesticide regulation is supposed to mitigate the harm to bees by ensuring the pesticide does not kill bees.

The most common systemic pesticides are known as neonicotinoids, or neonics, because they have nicotine-like properties. Neonics are bad for bees, no question, but the pesticide manufacturers argue that the exposure levels that bees encounter are not harmful. Numerous recent studies call that claim into question. Here are a few examples.

- Exposure to imidacloprid weakens honey bees resistance to the fungal parasite *Nosema*.

exposure to neonicotinoids, but their abilities to forage, reproduce, and fight infections are potentially highly compromised.

Many groups have called for the banning of neonics. In March, commercial beekeepers and environmental organizations (represented by the Center for Food Safety) petitioned the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to ban clothianidin, another neonic, immediately.



Sarah Burwash

Annamite Range and sent them to Copenhagen. Gilbert's team found mammal DNA in 21 of the 25 leeches; four had fed on the Annamite striped rabbit, one on the Truong Son muntjac deer, six on the small-toothed ferret-badger, and three on the serow. This was the first evidence that the ferret-badger lived within the reserve. The Annamite striped rabbit and Truong Soc muntjac deer are so rare they are listed as Data Deficient by the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species.

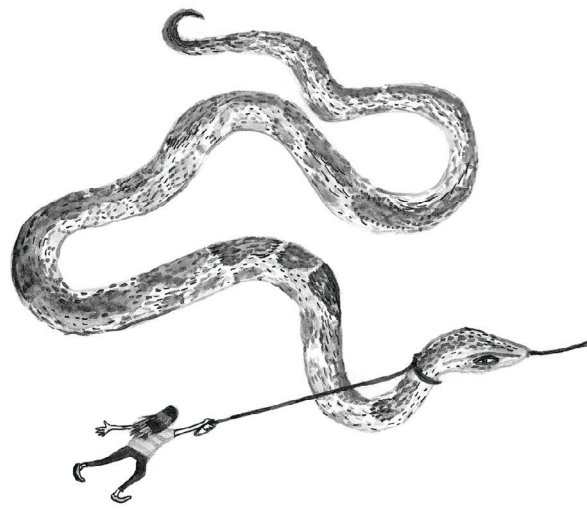
The leech method is not specific enough to provide information on an animal's population size, but it will help delineate population range. The Wildlife Conservation Society in New York intends to include leeches in its upcoming surveys on the Laos side of the Annamite Range.

Nature, v. 484, issue 7395, 23 April 2012,
Ewen Callaway Centre for GeoGenetics,
University of Copenhagen,
24 April 2012 press release
Current Biology, Volume 22, Issue 8,
R262-R263, 24 April 2012

Bone Crushing

The wildlife in the Florida Everglades has been transmogrified; evidence is much stronger than circumstantial. In the 1990s, raccoons, opossums and rabbits were the most common road kill in the Everglades National Park (ENP). Raccoons, the bandits of thousands of campsites across the continent, are not a nuisance in the ENP today. Naturalists haven't seen a rabbit in years; opossums are scarce; bobcat and deer populations have been decimated.

The agent of this transmogrification is the Burmese python. In 2005, you could purchase one as a pet for \$20. As a young pet, they are apparently easygoing, but they consume large amounts of food, and they quickly become difficult to handle and house. An adult Burmese python, at almost 4 metres in length, is difficult for a lone human adult to handle. Do not leave a Burmese python alone with a child—they are opportunistic feeders. Owners of Burmese pythons often resolve their inconvenience by releasing the snake into the wild.



Florida naturalists started to find Burmese pythons in the wild in the early 1980s. By 2000, the Burmese python was an established species. It breeds in the early spring, the female typically laying a clutch of 12 to 36 eggs. Now, each year ENP staff are removing more than 200 Burmese pythons from the wild. In June 2006, Florida applied to get the Burmese python included in the injurious wildlife regulations under the Lacey Act. This would prohibit the importation and interstate transportation of live snakes or viable eggs. Public hearings and environmental assessments followed in due course, and in January of this year, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service finalized the listing for the Burmese python, the yellow anaconda and the northern and southern African pythons. All four species have been found in the ENP.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service press release,
January 17, 2012
Andy Coghlan, *New Scientist*,
January 31, 2012
Dorcas et al, *PNAS*, January 30, 2012
Gade & Puckett, *USGS blog*,
February 6, 2012

Skin Crawling

Remember the hygiene hypothesis, that a lack of early childhood exposure to common environmental microbes is strongly correlated with allergies? A team of Finnish researchers led by Ilkka Hanski has now proposed the biodiversity hypothesis, which states that contact with a biodiverse environment is important for the development of a healthy immune system. Hanski and his colleagues chose their subjects at random from a region of Finland with a wide

range of biodiversity. All subjects had participated seven years earlier in a comprehensive childhood allergy study and had lived their whole lives in one home.

Hanski's team looked at four questions: the relationship between environmental biodiversity and the community of microbes living on participants; the relationship between allergic hypersensitivity and environmental biodiversity in the vicinity of the subjects' homes; the relationship between atopy and subject microbiota; and the relationship between skin microbiota and the health of participants' immune systems.

The study found several interesting correlations. Allergies were related to the neighbourhood biodiversity; the greater proximity to forests and farms and native flowering plants, the lower the prevalence of allergies. On the other hand, those living in urban environments or near bodies of water had significantly higher levels of allergies. One striking result was the strong negative correlation between diversity of gammaproteobacteria on the skin and allergic hypersensitivity. The presence of one particular gammaproteobacteria, *Acinetobacter*, was a particularly strong predictor of allergic sensitivity.

Hanski conjectures that the diversity of microbes sharing our lives also influences other diseases such as asthma and even depression. The study was specific to Finland, and Hanski encourages researchers around the world to replicate his study in their local environments to determine how general his results are.

Rachel Nuwer, Science, 7 May 2012

Hanski et al, PNAS, May 7, 2012

Mark Kimver, BBC News online, May 8, 2012



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A strong voice for sustainability and the environment.

Lives Lived: The National Round Table on Environment and Economy 1988-2013

By Mark Parent



The Birth and Mandate

Founded in 1988, the National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) was Canada's response to a call by the United Nations for all countries to re-examine the environmental challenges facing the planet and to formulate creative solutions. In his comments at the creation of this new advisory board, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney stated that the "Round Table will be providing leadership in the new way we must think about the relationship between the environment and the economy and the new way which we must act."

For twenty-four years, the NRTEE has responded to this mandate with innovative research, the assembly of organizations and individuals in the fields of the environment and the economy, and the provision of top-quality advice to governments and businesses.

The fact that this independent, but federally financed, board reported directly to the Prime Minister of Canada demonstrated its prominence and importance, particularly within the Canadian government. As such, it counted high-ranking business people, academics and political leaders among its members.

Sustainable Governance and Development

In its early years, the publications of the Roundtable focused on environmental governance and attaining

sustainable operation of governments and businesses. With the vision of sustainability becoming more entrenched within the Canadian social fabric, the Roundtable moved on to examine issues of water quality and availability, as well as to publish several reports on the importance of preserving our biodiversity.

In 1993, the work of the Roundtable materialized in a legislative bill announced by the Honourable Jean Charest. In the NRTEE Act, the unique leadership role of the Roundtable was underscored, as the Act noted that "the purpose of the Round Table is to play the role of catalyst in identifying, explaining and promoting, in all sectors of Canadian society and in all regions of Canada, principles and practices of sustainable development."

The Environmental Costing of Economic Activities

In 2003, the NRTEE set out to assign economic indicators to Canada's natural resources. The goal of this project was to ascertain whether current economic activities were threatening long term environmental sustainability. At the heart of this project was the question of whether the GDP was the proper measurement for economic progress or whether some other, more inclusive, yardstick could do a better job of supporting economic activity and environmental protection.

As the NRTEE moved into its adolescence, it began to experience some growing pains. Political partisanship, which had been absent during the foun-

ation of the Roundtable, began to creep in. However, the challenge of environmental and economic sustainability proved to be too important for the work of the NRTEE to be sidetracked by political considerations. Under the leadership of Dr. Robert Page and David McLaughlin, the organization began an ambitious publication schedule, focusing on the challenges of climate change.

This multi-year series of publications examined issues such as carbon pricing policies, the impact of climate change on Northern Canada, and ways to transition to a low carbon future. It also provided suggestions on how businesses could build resilience in the face of the challenges brought by climate change. A joint project with the Canadian Geographic Society exposed thousands of school children to accessible and important information regarding the changes that Canadians from coast to coast may experience from climate change.

Different Directions

This new burst of energy was well received by the business community across Canada but somewhat skeptically by the funding body for the NRTEE—the federal government. The position of the NRTEE was changed, and many would say downgraded, when the board stopped reporting directly to the Prime Minister and began reporting to the Minister of the Environment.

Increasingly, it seemed that the Roundtable and the federal government were going in different directions. While the federal government condemned any sort of carbon pricing and opted for sector-by-sector regulation, the Roundtable touted the benefits of a national carbon pricing system. While the Roundtable preached the benefits of sustainability, the Federal government increasingly came to see sustainability as a hobbling of economic productivity. While the

NRTEE trumpeted the importance of biodiversity and protection of water, the government increasingly seemed to be turning a deaf ear to environmental concerns. Federal political support for the Roundtable began to wane. Appointments to the board were not made and its membership was reduced.

However, the NRTEE continued its work. Accordingly, when Minister Peter Kent asked the NRTEE to look at provincial contributions to climate change along with the value of using the life cycle approach (LCA) within government, staff and members responded with enthusiasm by working hard to provide these additional reports to the government by the April 2012 deadline.

Preparing for Death

Sadly, right before these reports were due to be released to Minister Kent, the 2012 Federal budget disclosed that legislation to cut the NRTEE would be brought to the Canadian Parliament as of April 2013. The death of the NRTEE was announced as one of several cost saving measures, although many individuals pointed out that for a five million dollar budget, the government received value for money.

The media noted the demise of the NRTEE, but other issues such as the cutting of the civil service overshadowed its untimely death. Moreover, because the NRTEE is a legislated body with its own Act, the organization could not be terminated as quickly as other organizations and boards. It is possible that when the NRTEE is finally put to rest in 2013, there will be a lot of discussion across the country on what a short-sighted decision this has been.

In the meantime, the staff and board are working hard to finish reports and to preserve the unique and important intellectual property that has been built up over twenty-four years. It would be nice to say that we had done our work and were no longer needed (the rationale given by the Minister of Finance when he announced that the NRTEE would no longer be funded), but unfortunately this is not the case.

Granted, the recognition that economic prosperity and environmental care must go hand in hand has grown. Even political leaders such as Wildrose leader Danielle Smith have had to admit that climate change is a reality and that economic progress can only be sustained when this is taken into account. Unfortunately, there are still many whose vision is attenuated and who see concern for the environment and concern for the economy as mutually exclusive. They may mouth the words when they have to, but in their hearts, they do not support the vision of sustainability.

Life After Death

When the final eulogy is written, therefore, the conclusion regarding the twenty-five year life of the NRTEE will be that a lot was accomplished, but more still needed to be done. If the NRTEE were an individual rather than an organization, the obituary heading would include these words—"the untimely death."

The positive note in all this, though, is that the NRTEE did not invent the idea of sustainability. In spite of naysayers, it remains true that economic progress cannot exist apart from strong environment stewardship. Sooner or later, even the die-hard obscurantists will have to figure this out. When they do, and perhaps even before, the NRTEE may be brought back to life and continue its important national mission.

Mark Parent has a long history of involvement in issues related to the environment and the economy. He served in the House of Assembly in Nova Scotia between 1999 and 2009. As provincial Minister of Environment and Labour, he was instrumental in bringing forward an innovative bill on economic and environmental sustainability. While he served as Minister of Agriculture, he championed local agriculture and encouraged the industry to move towards long term sustainability. The Nature Trust Society of Nova Scotia recognized Mr. Parent's leadership in land conservation by awarding him their Conservation Award for 2009. He is currently Vice-Chair of the NRTEE.

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Pain in the Drain

By Heather Hunter



Ashley Sprague

The last time you were caught in a downpour, jumping over sidewalk rivulets and trying not to get splashed by passing cars, perhaps your thoughts didn't automatically jump to where does all this water go? What contaminants might be in it? But stormwater, the rainwater and melted snow that runs off roads, lawns, roofs and other hard surfaces, merits some real environmental action. Stormwater often contains motor oil, gasoline, sediment, fertilizer and other contaminants which damage natural aquatic habitats. Without proper stormwater management practices, serious environmental and economic consequences, such as erosion and loss of habitat can result.

Cameron Deacoff, an Environmental Performance Officer with the Halifax Regional Municipality, took some time to explain why we should be giving this issue some major consideration and offered some steps that we can take at individual and municipal levels to improve our stormwater management practices.

Why you should care about storm water management

Water is a finite resource. Fortunately, it is efficiently conserved through the

hydrological cycle, including the processes of evaporation, transpiration, condensation, precipitation, surface runoff and percolation. This natural water cycle is disrupted by human intervention. In urban landscapes in particular, impervious surfaces such as roofs, roads and parking lots render the land unable to absorb water. Instead, stormwater runs over streets and sidewalks and along the way becomes polluted with oil, garbage, fertilizers, pesticides and other contaminants. Stormwater transports hundreds of pollutants, many of which may be harmful to both humans and the environment. Unlike sewage wastewater, stormwater is often not treated before it enters our waterways.

While good stormwater management has always been important, it is now being seen as more of a hot-button issue as people gain a better understanding of the impact on environments, including erosion, removal or destruction of fish and wildlife habitat. Stormwater pollution also causes direct damage to fish and other aquatic organisms. We understand that stormwater needs to be managed—efforts should be made to reduce contaminants in street runoff, and there should be some treatment before stormwater joins up with natural waterways. In addition, we understand that we should avoid directing stormwater into wastewater systems (that is, sewers that handle wastewater from toilets, tubs, laundry, and so forth) because wastewater systems are not designed to treat stormwater flows. During heavy rainfall events, treatment processes can fail as throughput exceeds the capacity of treatment facilities, resulting in untreated overflows. Other risks associated with poor stormwater management include flooding, basement backups, and associated property and financial losses.

The importance of stormwater management is not going to decline. Cameron explains that aging infrastructure is making the issue more serious today. "Much of the infrastructure in the

ground was put there several decades ago," he says, "and maintenance and replacement needs are ramping up." He adds, "Climate change is also having an impact on the issue because our weather patterns are changing, resulting in increasing volumes of precipitation and increasing intensity of rainfall events. Winters have been milder, resulting in less storage of precipitation as snow and ice, making for shifting hydrological patterns for which stormwater management systems were neither designed nor constructed."

Enhancing your individual stormwater management practices

Cameron offered these tips:

- Retain as much natural land cover on your property as possible (that is, do not cover the ground with asphalt or concrete unless necessary). Direct the downspouts (eaves troughs, foundation drains, sump pumps, and so on) from your house onto the surface of your property for drainage into the ground, or at least ensure that they are not connected to the wastewater sewer system.
- Store and manage waste materials properly so that they do not flow into storm sewers, swales, and so on during a storm. This includes covering dirt piles and removing litter and pet waste.
- Landscape your property with plants and other materials that are native to where you live. These have fewer needs for fertilizers and pesticides, which should be used sparingly if at all.
- Support fees for stormwater management. These services benefit you and the environment.

At a municipal policy level, there are many steps that cities and towns in N.S. can take to improve stormwater management practices. Recommendations include:

- Having your town or city conduct a review of water-related issues within

their jurisdictions and those jurisdictions shared with neighbouring municipalities.

- Ensuring that municipal urban design and planning jointly consider water quality and water quantity along with land use and transportation.

- Devoting some attention to retrofitting issues in older urban areas and not focusing all attention towards improving development practices in new “greenfield” areas.

Some municipalities such as the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Victoria, B.C., have begun implementing progressive by-laws to counter stormwater pollution. In Cambridge, significant investments in catch-basin cleaning, street sweeping and urban forestry programs have been made.

In Victoria, by-laws have been passed for businesses as well as construction and development sites. Businesses must be fitted with a “Storm Water Rehabili-

tation Unit,” which is a generic term for any system designed to remove targeted contaminants. In general, any system that removes solids such as gravel, sand and silt, and floating materials like oils and trash should be adequate. At construction sites, regulations prevent construction waste water from being directly joined to drainage systems or sewer systems. Hazardous wastes are tightly controlled with spill plans in place, and after construction has finished, the site must be cleaned up to prevent excess gravel, dirt and pollutants from entering natural waterways.

Stormwater management practices may vary across municipalities, and depending on existing infrastructure, different levels of investment may be required. However, the first step is to raise our level of awareness about the issue. To reduce harm to our natural waterways and our overall ecological footprint, stormwater management must become

a permanent part of our “environmental consciousness.”

Take Action

Keep as much natural land cover on your property as possible

Landscape with native plants and avoid using pesticides

Direct downspouts from your house so that stormwater drains into your lawn and does not connect to your wastewater sewer system

Ask your city or town counselor to make improving stormwater management a priority

Check out the EAC's blog at www.stormwatercentral.ca for more information on innovative stormwater management practices and policies.



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Destination 2012

By Ryan O'Quinn



Ryan O'Quinn

Seasoned EAC canvasser, Scott Biggar, tells Carolyn Skerry (and Jetson the dog) all about the EAC.

Any time the door opens, you never know who's going to be there. Is it going to be a mother in the middle of cooking dinner for her kids after a long day of work? Or a couple just sitting down to enjoy an after-dinner glass of wine while listening to classical music? Or will there be a giant stampede of dogs and cats trying to escape their home once the door is opened? These scenarios are everyday occurrences for our EAC membership canvassers.

For the first time in EAC history, a year-round membership support and awareness campaign is in full swing. Our dynamic team of committed and passionate EAC membership canvassers have now been to nearly every neighbourhood in the Halifax Regional Municipality. Team members have spent hours knocking on doors, fumbling with numb hands and frozen pens in the depths of a -20 degree Celsius Canadian winter. They've hidden under trees in the rain, chased after escaped house pets, walked hundreds of kilometres and spoken to thousands of people in the past eight months. Driving the team is a goal of obtaining 2012 members in this year of 2012. We've now achieved a record 1700 members, and with the continued support from our community, we are

sure that our 2012 goal is just around the corner.

"Bigger social change has historically been driven by groups of people who have the "strong ties" that come from face-to-face contact and relationship building, since they are then willing to make the bigger personal investments and risks necessary to force real change."

*From Revenge of the Beaver:
Building Power in the Age of the
Canadian Culture War
by Matt Price*

Being the EAC Membership Coordinator is truly fantastic and satisfying. With years of previous fundraising experience for campaigns with multiple international non-profits, this is my first opportunity to work directly for the cause, in the centre of change where the action happens. It is amazing to meet incredible new people every night, speak on behalf of the EAC and engage the citizens of Nova Scotia with conversations about our environment.

There is never a dull moment. We've heard hilarious comments at the door. Some of our favourites include, "I HATE when my garlic comes from

China!" "I hate composting because of the fruit flies!" "Ecology Action Centre. Yeah, yeah, yeah, I get it. Birds bees trees. Whaddaya want?" The team have seen deer and fox burrows in our latest neighbourhood. One time in December, it was so cold—so very cold—that when speaking to a woman on her porch, I couldn't see her. At all. She had her porch light on above and whenever I spoke, my breath was frozen fog distorting her face. Creating a rapport can prove to be challenging in such conditions!

Susan, now a legend on our team, has been spending time at the both the Historic and Seaport Farmers Market. Every week, Susan enjoys interacting with our long time members, as well as our new members. Sometimes she bumps into members at the market that she had met only nights before in their neighbourhood. For one of the largest municipalities in the world—equivalent to the size of P.E.I.—the HRM is surprisingly small at times. One of Susan's favourite memories was being welcomed

Meet Scott:

Hobby:

Plucking metal strings on wood and sometimes people clap.

Favorite food:

Ryan O'Quinn's pizza

Favorite Canvassing moment:

Receiving a bag of chips at a door, 5 days before Halloween.

Loves most about

EAC/Environment:

Bilbo the magic office dog, being able to cycle out of the city to camp and how the EAC is making this more accessible for everyone!

Future goals:

More musical touring, helping the province meet its renewable energy targets

into a new member's home for two cups of hot tea on a -15 degree Celsius evening. Small gestures speak volumes!

One of the greatest pleasures of introducing the concept of supporting the EAC through membership is hearing stories from people in their communities and all the amazing things they do to make a difference. One woman we met had just raised enough money for a lung transplant for her neighbour and is heavily involved with three other community groups while being a mother and working part time. The amount of dedication and compassion that people display in times of adversity is awe-inspiring. And right now, in 2012, we are experiencing times of environmental adversity. With massive cuts at Environment Canada, a weakening commitment to protecting our environment at the federal level, and only two percent of donations accrued in Canada being

directed towards environmental organizations, the challenges we face are great but not insurmountable. Our members allow us to rise to this challenge.

As a membership-based organization, our members are a major source of our inspiration. At one time in EAC history, it was only our members who kept the organization alive. Our members provide insight and feedback, and they fuel our work to continue striving for a more sustainable and environmentally conscious Nova Scotia. It's amazing to meet complete strangers who were unfamiliar with the EAC, inform them of our various committees' efforts and then see them volunteering less than a week later, becoming engaged, active members. We're excited to see who we meet next and how they will fit in our diverse, active environmental community.

Our membership team would like to thank everyone who has invited us

Take Action

Watch Ryan chat about EAC membership with Three Sheet
<http://bit.ly/LOx31V>



into their homes for tea and all our new members who have given us their attention and have chosen to become active with the EAC. Your stories, hospitality and kindness keep our spirits high and provide the fodder we need to seek out our 2012th member.

Ryan O'Quinn has been EAC's Membership Coordinator since August 2011 and recently discovered he likes fiddleheads. When he's not at the EAC, he's onstage performing with local hip-hop "Quinn-ter" Three Sheet.

Remember the EAC in your will.



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Connecting Cyclists to their City

By Tim Roberts



Brent Halverson is trying to increase discussion between cyclists and potentially affected businesses to secure the best solution for all parties.

A certainty arising from discussions about the Crosstown Connector is that Halifax Regional Municipality won't please everyone. Brent Halverson fears HRM will try to do exactly that.

"Often when there are infrastructure discussions, you have two or more sides and the city tries to meet the needs of both sides," Halverson says. "But you can end up with a plan that doesn't meet the needs of either side and you're stuck with this infrastructure that you then have to live with."

The potential for such a non-solution has led Halverson, a devoted cyclist and an employee at a small business on Halifax's Agricola Street, to facilitate dialogues between groups as the city's final decision approaches.

But will increased discussion between the most vocal groups on the topic result in the best outcome for cyclists, businesses and the city itself?

A good start, stalled

The Halifax Peninsula measures only 7.5km in length and 3.3km at its widest point but is home to more than 60,000 residents. The peninsular population swells with the daily influx of workers and annual influx of students, and this density is only going to increase; HRM is following the national urbanization

trend, and city planners foresee a more vertical downtown core.

Increasing population density requires consideration of how people will get around. HRM's Active Transportation Plan has long foreseen an increase in cycling, but such an increase requires improved cycling infrastructure.

That's largely why, when the Halifax Cycling Coalition ("HCC") had Councillor Jennifer Watts present a petition to HRM Council on July 6, 2010, a petition which favoured a north-south bike corridor, the city was quick to approve the idea in principle.

As noted in a report for Council dated November 2, 2010, the HCC proposal "was very much in line with Council-approved policy in the AT Plan." Further, HRM's Traffic and Right of Way Services had already viewed such a bike corridor (dubbed "the Crosstown Connector") as a city priority.

Following the November 2, 2010 report, which supported implementation of the corridor by the end of 2011, the city went into data-collection mode. HRM eventually suggested five potential paths for the Crosstown Connector to follow.

The ensuing discussion about the "best" Crosstown Connector route is now threatening to delay implementation past the 2013 construction season.

Discussion leads to debate

One proposed Crosstown Connector route stands out when you look at a map of the Halifax Peninsula.

The "Agricola route" is long, straight and central. It runs by hospitals and universities. It offers access to downtown and Dartmouth. It skirts tourist attractions from Point Pleasant Park through the Hydrostone Market. It is bus-free and relatively flat, which is saying something in Nova Scotia. Beyond all that, HRM's bike counts affirmed the Agricola route is already the most popular route among cyclists.

This makes the final selection sound like an easy decision. The HCC has championed the Agricola route from the outset and hasn't been alone in doing so. Public consultations held this past spring revealed the Agricola route was the top choice of 60 percent of participants.

A number of Agricola Street businesses, however, voiced concerns. Chief among them was the potential loss of on-street parking. The Agricola route, in its current version, would eliminate street parking on one side of the street from Cunard Street through North Street and would eliminate street parking on both sides from North Street through Young Street.

Business owners say a significant part of their revenue comes from customers driving to their businesses from off the peninsula. Without a place to park, the argument goes, such patrons might spend their money elsewhere.

The HCC says the business community's on-street parking argument implies cyclists lack the spending power possessed by drivers. To counter this implication, the HCC organized a series of "cash mobs" whereby cyclists convened on a shop with cash in hand as a sign of support for businesses along the Agricola route. It was a nice gesture in what has occasionally been a snippy debate.

One may wonder, however, if the

Take Action

Participate in HRM's summer discussions about where the city's north-south corridor should run and how it should look.

Check out www.halifax.ca/cycling/index.html for updated information.

If you're eligible to vote in HRM's October 20, 2012 election, go to the voting booth informed about the candidates' positions on the Crosstown Connector.

attention focused on Agricola Street businesses and the HCC positions has reduced the Crosstown Connector discussion to a public debate about street parking.

Trying to see the forest for the trees

Brent Halverson is a bike advocate who works at an Agricola Street bike shop, a business likely to benefit from a dedicated bike route travelling past its front door. But he isn't convinced the Agricola route should be the Crosstown Connector-elect.

He's spoken with nearby businesses who explain they're already maximizing their on-street profit and who are far more dependent on bulk delivery of goods for their businesses. These are often small businesses with little margin for loss, concerned about the effect of bike lanes on delivery zones.

Knowing central Halifax is subject to potential development, Halverson is wary of change that could lead to businesses moving elsewhere and potential alteration of Agricola Street's character.

Halverson also wonders if the debate about parking and deliveries overshadows what cyclists are agreeing to if the Agricola route goes through as planned: painted lines on both sides of the street. Halverson would prefer either a two-way bike lane physically separated from

motorized traffic or the Connector to rely on calmer side streets running parallel with the peninsula's busier streets.

"This proposed [Agricola] route seems to be for the existing commuter base," Halverson says. "And they're taxpayers promoting a healthier lifestyle, so it can be justified. But most regular commuters are already used to being in traffic."

"My opinion is now that it's more important to create safe areas to bike for people who currently aren't comfortable in traffic. Once we build up a greater population of cyclists, then more infrastructure will follow."

The silver lining of a slow process

The ongoing debate explains how a devoted bike corridor originally intended for implementation in 2011 still hasn't come to fruition. Progress this summer is vital if we want to see construction begin next year. David MacIsaac, the city's TDM Supervisor, confirms that tendering for 2013 construction requires approval from Regional Council by the fall of 2012.

This timeline could be tricky. HRM staff have just considered the original public consultation sessions, and their recommendations need approval from the city's Transportation Standing Committee and the Peninsula Community Council before they reach Regional Council.

The lengthy process, however, may simply have been an unintentional result

of the city's best intentions. The EAC's Janet Barlow sits on HRM's Active Transportation Advisory Board and feels the delay regarding the final Crosstown Connector decision will be significantly reduced when the time comes to integrate more bike lanes on the peninsula.

"I think HRM is being careful to determine the proper decision-making process," Barlow says. "If it was repeated every time, we'd be in trouble, but hopefully it will be more streamlined in the future."

MacIsaac confirms the city's deliberation has been with an eye towards ensuring the best choice. On that front, the issue is coming back to the public for further input.

"We left the internal consultation component of the timeline intentionally vague," MacIsaac says. "The initial public consultations revealed, among other things, that people are looking for more detail, so we're looking at two or three more opportunities for public engagement in June and July."

So if you see yourself (or people you care about) cycling on the Halifax Peninsula in the future, turn your mind to how you think it should work. Then let HRM know how you feel.

How should the city connect Halifax's North End to its South End for cyclists? Connect to your city and have your say.

Tim Roberts used to commute by bike on Edmonton's straight wide streets. He currently finds Metro Transit's door-to-door service too convenient to pass up.



Agricola Street: a cyclist's haven at its northern tip with increased hazards closer to downtown.

Two-Eyed Seeing

By Sam Fraser

You know the feeling. It happens deep in the forest, atop hills and mountains with wide vistas, in a canoe on a river or a sailboat on the ocean. You could be standing next to running water, noticing the green growth around you, insects dashing across your vision. The smell of everything. You could be on your back outside at midnight, gazing up at the unfathomable heavens. You sense the presence of mammals, fish and birds, though they are hidden from your view. Everything moves, ticks and hums in time with the rhythm of the universe, and you are both participant and observer. You are aware of the natural processes occurring around you that last years, centuries, millennia, minutes. You feel at home in this environment, a natural participant in the life around you, in harmony with the world's music.

If you are lucky, you'll feel a sense of spiritual elevation, a transcendence that connects you with the organisms around you. You might feel a profound sense of belonging. The world might even convey to you a new understanding of yourself and your environment. Revelations and epiphanies come to you. This special knowledge comes from within you and from the spirit of the organisms above and around you and beneath your feet. Your mind has been changed by this new understanding, and your spirit elevated by this feeling.

When you return to your own space and routine, how do you describe this exuberant feeling to someone? What words can convey the rare feeling of joyful connection with creation? It can be difficult to talk about this feeling with others, or explain it to someone who hasn't shared in it. Poets like Thoreau and Mary Oliver are praised for their ability to wrangle the words necessary to convey this transcendent emotion. When we say to our friends, "Let's go for a hike" or "Let's go canoeing," are we really saying, "Let's immerse ourselves in the natural environment and seek that

transcendent feeling of interconnectedness with all life forms"?

But there is a word, in use for countless generations, that encapsulates this complex emotion, as well as the need for sustainability to ensure the survival of creation: Netukulimk. Netukulimk is a Mi'kmaq word that is a guiding principle of indigenous culture. Broadly, it means treating nature with respect and reverence, acknowledging our responsibility and committing to reciprocity. It means being open to the spiritual understanding that we can receive from creation. How can we move toward benefiting from the principles of Netukulimk? Through Two-Eyed Seeing.



Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources

Albert Marshall, Mi'kmaq elder

Netukulimk

Albert Marshall is an elder in the Eskasoni First Nation in Cape Breton. He coined the term Two-Eyed Seeing after sensing a need for it in mainstream culture.

Our materialistic culture, says Marshall, teaches us that we don't have to worry about anything because there is an answer for every problem. If we are unhealthy, we can take a pill. If we are unsatisfied with our lifestyle, we can buy something to improve it. The individual has the power to affect their own life, without having to rely on anything or anyone but ourselves.

Netukulimk teaches us that every living thing is both physical and spiritual. If we can engage fully with the environment, we can learn from the spiritual world. Each individual is given a special knowledge and understanding from this spirituality. We then have a responsibility to share this knowledge with our community so that we can learn to reduce our impact on the world made by the Creator and to care for those who are incapacitated.

Marshall says there is a need to spread this understanding into the dominant mainstream culture. Our materialism has caused us to over-exploit our natural resources. Our environment is being decimated across the globe to extract resources needed to fuel our species' continued expansion. Netukulimk teaches us how to take only what is necessary for our survival. We sustain ourselves, while sustaining the natural world and species we depend on. We won't take more than we need and threaten the health of our ecosystem.

But Two-Eyed Seeing does not tell us to abandon our lifestyle, or for everyone to quit their jobs and pursue spiritual enlightenment in the middle of the woods. Our culture has achieved a lot that is good and that should be retained. Two-Eyed Seeing is about respecting the strengths of both Western culture and Indigenous culture. In particular, the scientific community in Nova Scotia and elsewhere has used Two-Eyed Seeing to benefit from both perspectives.

Two-eyed seeing and the scientific community

Two-Eyed Seeing has been adopted into a program called Integrative Science at Cape Breton University, led by Dr. Cheryl Bartlett. This program incorporated the philosophy as one of its foundational principles. Students of the program learned to combine knowledge of the physical world with wisdom from the spiritual world. Although the

Take Action

Contemplate the spiritual side of all living things

Spend more time in the woods

program has ended, during the period when Integrative Science degrees were offered at the university, more indigenous students graduated from the science program than at any time previously.

In Halifax, Dr. Heather Castleden at Dalhousie University has integrated the approach into her study of the effects of pollution at Boat Harbour. Alongside standard practices of measuring levels of pollution and toxins in the environment and population living near the site, Castleden is also facilitating traditional story circles and healing ceremonies. The results of the indigenous healing methods will be presented alongside standard scientific findings. For the members of the Mi'kmaq community there, this is a more complete way to measure and interpret the effects of pollution on Boat Harbour and to continue the healing process.

Kejimikujik National Park is now an official Dark Sky Preserve, meaning there is no artificial light within its borders. To take advantage of the stargazing and research opportunities this creates, a Sky Circle has been built in the middle of the park, equipped with comfortable chairs and a powerful telescope. Within the Sky Circle, there are regular workshops that embody the philosophy of Two-Eyed Seeing. One workshop describes the stars in the night sky from a Western scientific perspective, covering topics like the life cycle of a star, while another workshop comes from the native perspective and talks about what can be learned about our yearly cycle from native star lore.

Personal Perspective

For me, Two-Eyed Seeing is a reminder. With the double perspective, I am reminded that there is another way: a separate path, distinct from the mainstream rat race of production and consumption, which leads me into the ordered chaos of creation. I can pause and think about the decisions I am making, evaluate them, and determine for myself whether I am favouring the hustle-bustle world of human development and expansion, or the respectful, calm approach of Netukulimk. I don't feel like I'm being coerced in one way or another; I am simply reminded that I have options, that the spiritual world of the creator is present around me and will welcome me. It exists and I am a part of it at all times.

When not running around in the woods, Sam Fraser sits on the EAC's Board of Directors.

action in verse

Haikus Written During Poetry in the Bluff Hikes on The Bluff Wilderness Trail.

Curated by Nanci Lee

Earth, roots, rocks carry me
Back into my sleeping self
In peace and awake

Rich Campbell

Landscapes in the East
Everything in proportion
And a space for us

Sue Sherwin

The air is so clear
You can see right through the rocks
Breathe the granite in

Andy Wainwright

Specks of green bud
nub along branches circling
slim young tamaracks

Lichen leaves on rock
grey petals flower its curve
four seasons of art

Gwen Davies

Sunlight danced on The Bluff
I felt the heartbeat of a birch
Nary a word passed between

David Patriquin

Ignorance is Strength?

By Erin Burbidge

I believe that a guarantee of public access to government information is indispensable in the long run for any democratic society... if officials make public only what they want citizens to know, then publicity becomes a sham and accountability meaningless.

- Sissela Bok,
Swedish philosopher, 1982

For years, fisheries scientists had been trying to crack the mystery of why the wild salmon in British Columbia's Fraser River were disappearing. In January 2011, Dr. Kristi Miller, a Department of Fisheries and Oceans research scientist, published evidence of what may have been a key factor in the salmon population crash. In a study published in *Science*, one of the world's preeminent scientific journals, Dr. Miller and her co-authors reported the first evidence that the infectious salmon anemia (ISA) virus was circulating in wild and farmed Pacific salmon populations. While the link between the virus and population declines has yet to be established, this discovery was very significant—so much so that *Science* notified over 7,400 journalists about the publication of the research. The notice told journalists that they should feel free to contact Dr. Miller.

Once upon a time, a journalist who wanted to know more about the story could have simply contacted Dr. Miller directly. But not anymore. Journalists who wanted to speak with Dr. Miller were deflected by the Privy Council Office, which also quashed a press release about the publication in *Science* and refused to allow Dr. Miller to speak publicly about her discovery.

Controlling the Message

What happened to Dr. Miller wasn't unique; rather, it drew public attention to a phenomenon that journalists had been facing ever since the Conservatives

came into power. Shortly after the Prime Minister took office in January 2006, members of the Prime Minister's Office tried to up-end a long-standing practice whereby any reporter was free to ask questions of the Prime Minister at press conferences. Instead, the Prime Minister's staffers tried to start dictating which journalists would get to ask questions. This led to a dust-up with the Ottawa press corps in May 2006, when a number of reporters walked out of a press conference after Prime Minister Harper refused to answer their questions. Weeks beforehand, then-Environment Minister Rona Ambrose had intervened to stop a federal scientist from speaking publicly about the science behind his novel, which was set in a future when climate change had devastated many parts of the planet. Concerned about the increased 'politicization' of science, in October 2010, 85 Canadian scientists, signed an open letter calling on politicians to end the subversion of scientific information for partisan goals.

Then in June 2010, the Canadian Association of Journalists wrote an open letter excoriating the federal government for its tight restrictions on sharing information. The letter painted a stark portrayal of a government struggling to control and spin communications to Canadians; one where reporters are regularly blackballed and denied the opportunity to ask questions of the Prime Minister at press conferences. Access to public events is often restricted, and independent footage by photographers and videographers has been replaced by hand-out photos and video footage shot by the Prime Minister's press office. Even more worrying is that instead of speaking to scientists and policy-makers—the ones best able to explain the nature and impact of their work—journalists are now often directed to media officers with little knowledge of the subject matter. Spin is replacing substance. In its letter, the Canadian Association of Journalists reminded our leaders

that, "Politicians should not get to decide what information is released. This information belongs to Canadians, the taxpayers who paid for its production. Its release should be based on public interest, not political expediency."

This critique was echoed several months later in an opinion piece by the President of the Canadian Science Writers' Association published in the internationally-renowned journal *Nature*, which argued that "...openness is being held ransom to media messages that serve the government's political agenda."



Sylvia Dove

Sadly, the calls for openness went unheeded. In October 2011, *Nature* published a study which demonstrated the first evidence of an ozone hole above the Arctic. One of the lead authors on the study was Dr. David Tarasick, an atmospheric researcher employed by Environment Canada. Unfortunately for the Conservative government, the study was published at the same time that the federal government had announced it was considering cutting funding to Arctic atmospheric research stations. Given the huge import of the study, numer-

ous journalists attempted to contact Dr. Tarasick to speak with him, but their requests for interviews were refused.

Once more, the refusal of access prompted a wealth of protests from Canadian media. In February of this year, the Canadian Science Writers' Association, the World Federation of Science Journalists and other interested groups sent an open letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper calling on him to once again allow open access to federally-funded researchers. And in an editorial published the following month, *Nature* criticized the Canadian government for muzzling its scientists and called on it to loosen the stranglehold over federal researchers, noting that,

“Policy directives and e-mails obtained from the government through freedom of information reveal a confused and Byzantine approach to the press, prioritizing message control and showing little understanding of the importance of the free flow of scientific knowledge.”

Avoiding Unwanted Criticism

The Conservative strategy of obfuscation and avoidance seems to have paid some dividends for a government that has frequently been criticized for its failure to address the threat of climate change. In the spring of 2010, journalist Mike De Souza reported on a leaked Environment Canada report that showed an 80 percent reduction in the level of media coverage of climate change from 2007. The report noted that federal scientists had observed a marked decline in requests for interviews from high-profile media outlets, which often have same-day deadlines. It further stated that, “Our scientists are very frustrated with the new process. They feel the intent of the policy is to prevent them from speaking to media.”

As the Conservative government continues to dismantle the infrastructure that supports publicly-funded environmental research, blunt the environmental assessment process and eliminate key environmental protections set out in the Fisheries Act, it seems that its media strategy is one prong in a larger campaign to silence its critics.

Threat to Democracy

Openness is crucial to the proper functioning of the scientific enterprise. The honest and non-partisan sharing of experimental methodologies and results provides an opportunity for scientists to scrutinize each other's work. Through this scrutiny, flaws in the research can be brought to light. But where scientific discoveries are suppressed and the free flow of knowledge is stymied, opportunities for reviewing and challenging the results of others' work can be severely limited.

Similarly, a strong democracy is one that encourages the open exchange of ideas between citizens and guards the freedom to debate and challenge policies and laws being put forward by the government. The presumption should be one of openness, with citizens' right of access to timely and complete information assiduously protected. It is telling that non-democratic governments are characterized by strict controls on flow of information and severe restrictions on the dissemination of scientific information. In George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984*, he envisioned a society under the rule of a totalitarian government that had all but done away with science, and which had supplanted free inquiry with blind adherence to the 'truths' espoused by the government. One of the slogans of the regime was “Ignorance is strength.”

But it is knowledge that will help us to address the many social and environmental perils facing us. In a world which depends on a bewildering ar-

ray of technologies for its day-to-day maintenance—technologies that greatly impact our social and environmental well-being—it's more critical than ever that governments make decisions based on sound science. The only way we, as citizens, can decide whether the government is making sound decisions is if we are kept informed of new scientific developments and the policies and laws to which they give rise. If we are to hold our government responsible for its decisions, we need to have access to the same information that our elected officials do—without the spin, the delays and the roadblocks. As Canadians, we need to remind the government that open access to tax-funded research is a right, not a privilege to be doled out only when politically expedient.

Erin is a recent graduate of Dalhousie's Master of Resource and Environmental Management program and a regular volunteer with BTI. She's eagerly awaiting another Nova Scotia summer full of hiking, beaches, and BBQs.

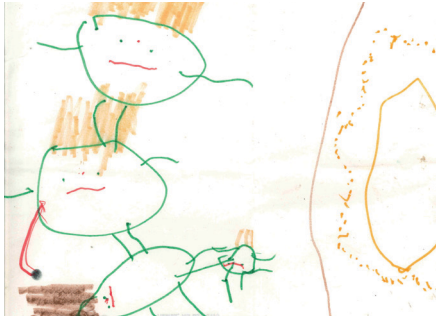
Take Action

Want to speak up for your right to know? Here are some ideas:

Contact your MP and let them know that you think open and free communication about government-funded research to the Canadian public is key, and that you want the government to eliminate the restrictions it has put on this communication.

The national “Right to Know” Week is dedicated to increasing awareness about the importance of the public's right to access government information as one of the basic tenets of democracy and good governance. This year, it runs from September 24 – 28, 2012. Consider getting involved in organizing a local event.

By Jonathan Rotsztein



Dylan Benautio

Drawing by Dylan Benautio of green living with his family. Dylan is pictured holding a hockey stick.

Raising young children is a great challenge. But being environmentally conscious doesn't take any extra effort, say Nova Scotian moms and dads. Since new parents are already undertaking a huge commitment, it's easy to limit consumption, choose alternatives and educate the next generation about how to have a more sustainable relationship with the increasingly limited resources we have available.

Nicole Arsenault and her husband Nick Wilkinson are the parents of one-year-old Miles. Arsenault says that, "While I very much appreciate that many baby products are now made of high-quality, natural materials and are produced in environmentally-sensitive and ethical ways, it is still important to remember that most of the products marketed to parents are entirely unnecessary."

The family manages their consumption, trying to purchase as little as possible. Food is their focal point. "Eating local, organic food that has been produced by farmers who share our commitment to the earth is central to our thinking about green living," Arsenault says. "Toddlers take a lot of time, so our meals have certainly become less elaborate, but it is certainly possible, even easy, to eat simple, wholesome, local and ecologically-produced food."

For Arsenault, nourishment comes naturally. "Being a breastfeeding mother is a part of this commitment to providing the best food," Arsenault encourages. "It's a great source of joy to be a nursing

mom, and it's extremely convenient to have a ready supply of healthy, ecological comfort food on hand at all times!"

Mom, dad and Miles are also a proud car-free family. "We've adjusted to a rhythm of taking our time and expecting to do fewer things in a day, which is probably good for us anyway," Arsenault says. "Being car-free ensures that we get fresh air and exercise every day, while dramatically reducing our ecological footprint."

Arsenault and Wilkinson also follow a do-it-yourself lifestyle, especially when it comes to entertainment. And Miles sets the tone. "Our little guy's favourite things to play with are things around the house that he sees my husband and me using daily," Arsenault shares. "Pots, spatulas, a toothbrush, and the watering can are more fun than any toy we could buy!"

"We're a TV-free family, because no TV show could ever compare to the fun of playing outside or having a dance party in the living room," she adds. "If Miles grows up with the ability to be creative and make his own fun, he won't need gobs of stuff to entertain himself!"

Miia Suokonautio and husband Chris Benjamin are the parents of three-year-old Dylan and newborn Nelly. They use education to instill values of gratitude and respect for the natural world in bringing up their children. Suokonautio knows sustainability begins at home. "As my eldest child grows and begins to take on ever-increasing independence, I watch with marvel as he makes decisions for himself and for what he needs and wants," Suokonautio says. "Although I know he is influenced by his preschool and his care providers, the bulk of what informs his decisions is what he has experienced in our family, day in and day out, for the past three and a half years."

But Suokonautio knows this is only half the battle. "It might feel easy to congratulate myself on being a green parent because I use cloth diapers, forego a car, do my best to eat local, stay close to home during vacations, keep a garden, buy used/fewer goods, etc.," Suokonautio reflects. "I do all these things and hope that through their witnessing

of their parents making these kinds of decisions, my children will learn about green living." However, she knows that because environmental issues relate to cultural and collective choices, green parenting is also about larger system change.

"My green parenting is about envisioning and working toward new and different cultural norms," Suokonautio asserts. "After all, my hope is that my children don't need to be 'environmentalists' at all." She instead wishes that they grow up in a culture where environmentalism is so commonplace and so taken for granted that to live otherwise would be inconceivable.

Some degree of consumption is inevitable. Jolyn and Eric Swain, parents of six-year-old Samuel and newborn Malcolm, are the owners of Nurtured Products for Parenting on Robie Street in Halifax. For Jolyn Swain, "Being a green parent to me means accepting my responsibility to reduce waste and saying no to our culture's disposable 'conveniences', but also implementing and teaching my children how to positively contribute to their environment."

Swain uses her business to help educate parents and offers sustainable resources when a purchase is necessary. "This extends to providing resources to customers, especially when they are going through a major change like growing a family," Swain says. "There's an integral relationship between providing education on the products and benefits that may seem small but can be very powerful to the environmental impact when parents make that decision, like using cloth diapers over disposables."

Good parents strive to love and provide for their children, giving them resources, experiences and opportunities to grow into healthy adults. Green parents take that philosophy a step further by considering how their choices can positively protect the environment and inspire their children to do the same.

Jonathan is a childless writer and graphic designer in North End, Halifax.

Happy Birthday, Maxwell

Six-year-old Maxwell Chapman asked his friends not to give him any new toys for his birthday. Instead, he asked his thirteen birthday party guests to bring donations to the Ecology Action Centre. Maxwell loves nature, so he and his mom thought the Ecology Action Centre was a good fit for his interests. His favourite animals are sand dollars and whales, and he enjoys hiking, swimming and canoeing with his family. His school, École LeMarchant St. Thomas, also participates in the EAC’s Active and Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) program, which works to provide active transportation options for Maxwell and his classmates.

“There are a lot of dilemmas when you’re raising kids and thinking about the environment,” said Maxwell’s mother Janya Freer. “It’s hard for both kids and grown-ups to appreciate what we have.” Maxwell’s birthday was a “win-win situation,” according to Freer, because it gave the family and their guests a chance to talk about the environment, while reducing the family’s environmental footprint. “We try to buy our toys second-hand, so it didn’t make sense for us to get a bunch of new things.” Although Freer said she felt a little mean at first, Maxwell ended up liking the idea, and proudly accompanied his mom to drop off the birthday donations at the EAC’s Fern Lane office. The experience gave Maxwell a chance to discover exciting new things about the EAC’s work—now he’s excited to become a “friend” of Hector the Shark!



Louise Hanavan



Brad Macinnis

Well-wishes to Maggy Burns

As Internal Director Maggy Burn headed out for a one-year leave of absence, she was celebrated in true EAC style. Staff and the board all pitched in to host a french toast breakfast, complete with maple syrup and mimosas. We wish Maggy all the best in her new adventures as Director of Labour Market Programs at Phoenix Youth Programs.

Green Avengers

The EAC’s Green Avengers team hit the Bluenose Marathon in full force this year. The team of 31 staff and volunteers engaged 296 supporters and finished 4th of 46 charities registered, raising \$10,890 for the EAC. Bulky team member Hector the Shark managed not only to complete the 5K in fins, but also finished at a respectable-by-landlubber-standards 45 minutes.

Top fundraisers on the team were Jocelyne Rankin, Hector the Blue Shark and Pat Kipping. Many thanks to all those who sponsored the Green Avengers! “Generosity is just another form of green energy,” says Pat.



Carlos Garduno

Staff Snippets

We’re very pleased to be celebrating some anniversaries at the EAC this year. 2012 marks ten years of exceptional EAC work for Janet Barlow of the Transportation team and Raymond Plourde of the Wilderness team. It’s so fine to be able to acknowledge these long-term employees at this year’s AGM. Here’s to another ten years!

The Food Team said farewell to Libby Dean, who wrapped up her research, and the Our Food project is taking the summer off due to a funding gap. While we wish Marla MacLeod and Garity Chapman all the best in their home gardens this summer, we’re already looking forward to their return in the fall. Until then, the Food Team will be in the capable hands of returning staffer Alison Froese-Stoddard and Mhari Lamarque.

Our Internal Director, Maggy Burns, is away from the EAC on a one-year leave. While she’s off gaining new knowledge and experience at Phoenix Youth Programs, Louise Hanavan has stepped down as Co-chair of the Board to keep her desk in good order for the year. Coastal and Water staffer Ashley Sprague will also be taking a leave of absence to work in Jamaica with the Robin Rigby Trust for a few months this fall.

Cape Breton Coastal and Water staffer Scott Aucoin is off to new adventures with Parks Canada, and the Cheticamp team is joined by the dynamic and energetic Glen Bourgeois. NSCC engineering student Katie Fleck spent the month of May as an intern on the Groundswell project with the Coastal Team, and Jade Atkins began her summer internship as Bird Conservation Intern in June.



Dear Ecohead
I love bees, but I hear they're threatened.
What can I do to help them?

-Buzzed about Bees

Bees are awesome. They're cute (though decidedly not cuddly), they make honey and they pollinate plants. Unfortunately, these amazing insects are in serious decline all over the world, with wild bees in worse shape than domesticated species like honeybees. Habitat loss and toxins like pesticides are big threats to bees, and all of it thanks to us humans.

So what can we do to help them?

Support local bee-keepers and honey producers, and if you are really keen, consider becoming a bee keeper—the Halifax Honeybee Society has some great resources to help out beginner bee keepers.

If you have a garden, you can make it into a little haven for wild bees. There are an estimated 4,000 species of bees in North America, with at least 60 species in Nova Scotia. Some are solitary, like leafcutter bees and mason bees, while some, like bumblebees, are social and live in colonies. They have different nesting needs and have different preferred plants. Here is some information that will help you identify a few local, native bees: <http://bit.ly/K5h80q>

Andony Melathopoulos, a honey pathology technician with the Canadian federal agricultural research department currently working towards his PhD at Dalhousie University, recommends choosing plants that flower at different times from spring to fall so that bees will have a food source for longer.

“In a city there is a lot of food for bees to eat when, for example, the dandelions are blooming, but towards the late summer there may be a bit of a dearth. Bees will appreciate having flowers blooming at those times, so keep an eye out this summer for times when there is nothing really attracting bees. Look up, look sideways, look down and if you don't see anything flowering, those are good guides as to where you might be able to fill a gap.”

A good nursery should be able to help you find plants that bloom at different times. I've even heard of a smartphone app that will help you find native plants that attract bees, called BeeSmart.

A good bee garden needs a place for the bees to have access to water.

It should go without saying, but just in case it doesn't, don't use chemical pesticides on your plants.

Provide a safe place for bees to nest. For ground-nesting bees, like digger bees, that means leaving a clear, sunny spot where they can have direct access to well-drained soil. You can also build a bee nesting box. Learn how to make boxes to attract your favourite native bees here: <http://bit.ly/KlsvQs>.

So, there are a lot of cool things you can do for bees. But, sadly, all this is very small compared to the larger picture. Melathopoulos says,

“The fate of bees is bound up with how we manage the landscape, and the forces shaping the landscape are almost too large to conceive. How to change the direction of these forces is an even more complicated question. If you consider the rate of palm plantation expansion into the forests of Indonesia or Malaysia, to pick the starkest example I can, it becomes hard to consider how individual actions can even begin to engage this run-away development. Personally, I think the key thing is to recognize that we presently do not have an answer to address this challenge. We need to be sober about this and commit ourselves to finding an answer, not through traditional forms of lobbying, protest or individual initiative, because they have largely have not worked, but through something entirely new.

I certainly would encourage people to buy honey from local producers and grow bee friendly gardens, but to do it with no illusions - the honey is delicious and following a bee from flower to flower is a simple pleasure without equal.”

halcraft ad

seasonalgourmet

By *Katrina Ross*

Zucchini Chips

What to do with all of those zucchinis in the garden that are growing at an alarming rate? In mid-summer, zucchinis are so abundant that August 8th is now a holiday called “slip some zucchini onto your neighbour’s porch day.” I am very fortunate to have parents that are low maintenance gardeners and very often receive zucchinis that are the size of baseball bats. The best thing to do with these monstrous “zukes” is to dehydrate them into crispy chips covered in crumpled dulse and sesame seeds.

What’s in Season?

Vegetables include beans, beets, broccoli, cauliflower, corn, cucumber, eggplant, fennel, herbs, peas, peppers, tomatoes and zucchini. Summer is the best season for many fruits like melons, blueberries, cherries, plums, peaches, raspberries and strawberries. Try herring, mackerel and rock crab for summer seafood.

Zucchini Chips

- 1 large zucchini (4 cups sliced)
- ¼ cup tamari or soya sauce
- 2 T apple cider vinegar
- 2 T olive oil
- 2 T honey
- 1 t cumin
- 3 T dulse roasted and ground
- 3 T sesame seeds



Katrina Ross

Directions

1. Thinly slice the zucchini with a mandolin
2. Mix liquid ingredients and cumin together
3. Drizzle the liquid mixture over the sliced zucchini and let stand for at least an hour
4. Drain liquid and lay marinated zucchini slices on the tray of a dehydrator and sprinkle with sesame seeds and finely crumpled dulse
5. Dehydrate for 4 hours at 110F until crisp

If you do not have a dehydrator, cook in a conventional oven at the lowest temperature possible, watching carefully to make sure they do not burn.

Check out the Food Action Committee’s blog for more mouth-watering zucchini recipes:

<http://adventuresinlocalfood.wordpress.com>

Katrina Ross is a volunteer with the Food Action Committee, the coordinator of “Eating by the Seasons” cookbook and an avid seasonal cook.

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45 = number of minutes it took Hector the Shark to run 5 kilometres on land in the Bluenose Marathon 108 = number of groups in the Atlantic Coalition for Aquaculture Reform, which is calling for a moratorium on further expansion of open-net pen salmon aquaculture 25,200 = number of kilometres that the frozen haddock available at Halifax grocery stores has travelled from wharf to processor to consumer 228 = number of kilometres haddock available through EAC's Off the Hook program has travelled from wharf to processor to consumer 779 = number of commercial hand liners fishing in the Bay of Fundy in 1996 20 = number of commercial hand liners fishing in the Bay of Fundy in 2008 0 = number of commercial hand liners fishing in the Bay of Fundy in 2012 2170 = number of fish shares delivered to Off the Hook subscribers in 2011 2 = number of hours it took Fid Resto to sell out of traceable Off the Hook halibut in May

Recent EAC Successes:

- The EAC worked in partnership with 108 groups in the Atlantic Coalition for Aquaculture Reform to host a successful rally and press conference against open pen net salmon aquaculture.
- Starting September 1st, 2012, the speed limit in school zones when children are present lowers to 30km/hr in areas where the speed is 50km/hr.
- On behalf of Nova Scotia's environmental community, the Nova Scotia Environmental Network (NSEN) recognized Our HRM Coordinator Jen Powley as Environmentalist of the Year in their Eco-Hero Awards.

The Ecology Action Centre Needs Your Help



Please fill out this membership form and return to the EAC.

CONTACT INFO:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email (for monthly e-newsletter) _____

Memberships and donations are tax deductible.
Thank you for your support.

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