

THE BLOB

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BOTRYLLUS SCHLOSSERI
CIOMA INTESTINALIS
THE DFO AND DIDEMNUM



vol. 27:3 fall 2009

BETWEEN THE issues

BETWEEN THE COVERS:
The BLOB & Other Horror-Inducing UFOs
The Green Jobs Nine



Features

The BLOB

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

an ecology action centre publication

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letters to the centre

Dear Editor,

The 2009 summer edition of BTI has several inspiring and informative articles in wind energy. The supporting and opposing views are eloquently articulated and they stimulate readers to further discussions and involvement.

There seems to be a broad agreement that fossil fuels are polluting and should be replaced by other sources of energy. Yet, even advocates of wind energy are faced with difficult choices, as quite often the windiest spots are the most environmentally sensitive ones (Digby Neck).

Our journey to clean energy will be shorter, cheaper and more fruitful when people with opposite views cooperate and resist the temptation to protect local interest at the expense of global good. Advocates need to consider the legitimate views of the opponents to wind turbine and do not label them as anti environment; instead they should try to find solutions to satisfy both sides. The opposing groups should cooperate and work to find acceptable locations for the turbines. Only with spirit of understanding and cooperation we will overcome the daunting task ahead of us.

- Max Raissi P.Eng.

Dear Editor,

I was disappointed by the quality of discourse in the article *Wind Power: A Community Perspective*. While it did convey the problem of social friction which results largely from bad renewable energy policy, the authors did not deal with this in a constructive manner and instead reiterated some of the myths. One example is the claim by Alice Power & Richard Gray that Denmark and Germany have been unable to shut down any of their coal-fired generating plants.

Poul Erik Morthorst, a senior energy researcher at the National Laboratory for Sustainable Energy at the Technical University of Denmark, remarks in *The Toronto Star*, Tues May 12th 2009 that “In recent years, we have seen quite a number of old plants being decommissioned, and this can partly be seen as a consequence of increased wind power capacity. In 2007, for example, electricity generated from coal and natural gas fell 19 per cent and 26.6 per cent, respectively, compared with the previous year, according to the Danish Energy Agency. Renewable power, about 67 per cent of it from wind, increased 11.1 per cent. Since 1990, carbon dioxide emissions in Denmark have fallen 13.3 per cent, even though gross energy consumption has increased 6.7 per cent over the period.”

For the full story which gives a good overview of the pro and con sides of wind energy and explains why “social friction” occurs see: *For and Against Windpower*:

<http://www.thestar.com/business/article/632642>

-Peggy Cameron

We welcome your reactions to any article you read in BTI, along with your questions, suggestions and comments. Address your messages to the Editor, betweentheissues@ecologyaction.ca; or send by mail to BTI Editor (see address on inside cover).



Emma Boardman

Climate Change Day of Action On October 24th, over 400 activists gathered on the Halifax Commons. EAC staffer Kermit de-Gooyer's 4 ½ month-old twins, Gordie and Kier, were even there taking in their first protest!

letter from the centre

Take Heart...

I long to accomplish great and noble tasks, but it is my chief duty to accomplish humble tasks as though they were great and noble. The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker.

– Helen Keller

This past October 24th, committed Nova Scotians bundled up in the chill and rain in the Halifax Commons to join the world for one of the most widespread days of environmental action in the planet's history. People gathered at over 5,200 events in over 180 countries to call for a new direction on the climate crisis. Together,

they called on world leaders to commit to a concrete plan of action geared towards cutting CO2 emissions back to 350 parts per million – the number scientists say is the safe upper limit for CO2 in our atmosphere.

The next round of climate talks will take place in Copenhagen in December, where world leaders will meet to draft a new global treaty on cutting emissions. Concerned global citizens hope world leaders will take their cue from the events on October 24th and finally commit their nations to concrete emissions standards that will reduce the CO2 in our air, which currently stands at 387 parts per million.

While Nova Scotians await news of political commitment in Copenhagen, there are plenty of local environmental issues to focus on, stemming from the same lack of foresight, planning and regulation that have resulted in dangerously elevated CO2 levels. As you read this, developers are dumping slate, gravel, and other construction debris into Halifax Harbour, creating new parcels of land for private development, further damaging the already-imperiled Harbour ecosystem (see “Our Shrinking Harbour...”, p. 18). In parallel events unfolding in woodlots across the province, sustainable forestry practices are giving way to aggressive new harvesting strategies that are permanently denuding Nova Scotia of its timber in order to make way for private residences (see “Forest No More”, p. 8).

And in a story eerily similar to the 1958 horror classic *The Blob*, a jelly-like menace borne on the hulls or in the ballast of commercial ships is invading the waters off Nova Scotia and threatening marine biodiversity and the health of the fisheries (see “The Blob...and Other Horror-Inducing UFOs”, p. 10).

What's a concerned Nova Scotian to do when faced with so many examples of our species' destructive effect on our planet? It may sometimes be tempting to throw up our hands, convinced that we've made a mess that simply can't be cleaned up. But instead, we could take heart from the many inspiring stories about how individuals and communities are rallying together to promote change. Take the Bridgewater high school students profiled on p. 12, who are taking on the challenges in their community with an equal mix of passion and realism.

Then there's the “Seniors on Board” initiative fostered by Ecology Action Centre's TRAX project under contract with the Nova Scotia Community Based Transportation Association. This innovative program is looking for ways to empower older adults to use public transit and other community-based transportation systems (see: “Getting Around During the Golden Years”, p. 9).

Finally, in keeping with the adage that ‘every cloud has a silver lining’, in “Green Jobs Nine” (p. 14) we explore the opportunities open to the provincial government for combining responsible environmental stewardship practices and sustainable economic growth.

It's good to know that even in the face of serious challenges, there's room for hope and potential for change. And whether you're a delegate in Copenhagen or an individual looking to make an impact in your own community, it's never too late to take action.

- The Editors

actionisourmiddlename

la vie en bleu! (Coastal Committee) Coastal Coordinator Jen Graham is charting a course for climate change adaptation in coastal communities in Nova Scotia. Her journey has taken her to Acadian communities around the province such as Chéticamp, Clare and Pomquet, where she delivered presentations in French to local residents and business owners on climate change, coastal vulnerabilities and adaptation strategies for communities. These presentations were very popular and extremely well received. Félicitations Jen! Coastal and Water projects blend once again in a new report published this fall by the Coastal Issues Committee. The report contains coastal and water policy recommendations to the provincial government for the draft water strategy and coastal development policy. This concise report is available on the EAC's website. Check out EAC's recommendations and have your voice heard by sending comments to the provincial government as it develops these strategies.

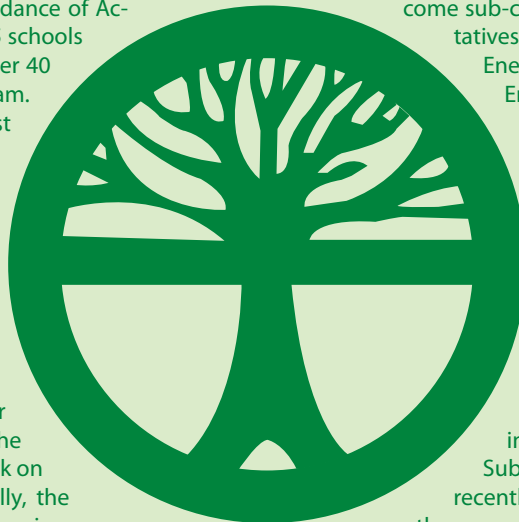
goods miles and great smiles (Transportation Issues Committee) The School Travel Planning project will work in depth with two new schools on transportation issues: Basinview Drive Community School and Westmount Elementary. This will be done under the guidance of Active & Safe Routes to School. Provincially, 115 schools participated in Walk to School Month and over 40 schools use the We Often Walk (WOW) program. Pace Car welcomed four new communities last spring; at least three more will join this fall. And there's a new Walking School Bus guide at [HYPERLINK "http://www.saferoutesns.ca/"](http://www.saferoutesns.ca/) www.saferoutesns.ca. TRAX's Goods Miles Program has begun, a project to increase awareness of the GHG emissions caused by the transportation of the goods we buy and to encourage the purchase of locally-produced goods. TRAX is also collaborating with the communities of Bridgewater and Antigonish on idling reduction actions. The campaign includes public awareness and work on municipal level policy and regulations. Finally, the manual for the bus training for seniors program is complete. Recruitment of youth volunteers has begun for program delivery.

a wild and weedy summer (Food Action Committee) The Urban Garden Project piloted a new program last summer, "Homegrown", a traveling workshop series on learning to cook what we grow and to grow what we love to eat. In September, we also hosted our first annual North End Community Garden Tour in collaboration with the Go North! Festival. We explored the inspiring gardens throughout north end Halifax on foot and on bicycle and created a beautiful new map of creative and collective gardens. We launched two new websites this season, the Halifax Garden Network, www.halifaxgardennetwork.com for all things garden in HRM, and Sharing Backyards, www.halifaxlandshare.ca to help people connect, share land and start gardens. Garity Chapman, Urban Garden Project coordinator, recently returned from a three-week garden tour in New York, Philadelphia, Toronto and Montreal, and is inspired and ready for the winter planning months.

three giant leaps (Wilderness Committee) The amount of protected wildlands in this province is increasing. On September 17 the provincial government legally designated the Ship Harbour - Long Lake area as Nova Scotia's newest protected Wilderness Area, ensuring it will remain "forever wild" by making it off-limits to all forms of industrial activity. At an October celebration of the new Wilderness Area, Environment Minister Sterling Belliveau spoke of the province's next steps. He announced a new candidate protected area, the Five Bridge Lakes Wilderness Area, which would conserve 8,000 hectares of the Chebucto Peninsula in HRM. Belliveau also announced that consultations will be held to evaluate options to establish a large wilderness area within Crown lands in and near the Chignecto Game Sanctuary in Cumberland County – the first step in protecting this area. Please visit <http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/protectedareas/> for information on how to become involved in these important public consultations!

from fossil fools to smart representation (Energy Issues Committee) Energy Coordinator Cheryl Ratchford continues to represent environmental interests on the demand side management Program Development Working Group (PDWG) and low income sub-committee. Cheryl and other EIC representatives also participate actively in the Renewable Energy Stakeholder Process. The Building Energy Efficiency Project held a community training session on "Energy Management: Teams and Goals" for rural community centres involved in the project at NSCC Middleton on October 29. The session's purposes included complementing the technical energy reports each community centre received in the spring of 2009, strengthening the human resource component of energy management and raising the profile of energy awareness and energy monitoring in these rural communities. The Energy Subcommittee on Public Education (eSCOPE) recently held a "Fossil Fools Film Fest" featuring three evenings of film at The Hub in downtown Halifax, with each film followed by lively discussions.

ahoy, mateys... (Marine Issues Committee) Over the summer, the swashbuckling Marine Issues Committee was busy navigating the waters of marine conservation and sustainable fisheries and community resilience in Nova Scotia. Collaboration is the name of the game these days in MIC. SeaChoice guru Rob Johnson traveled to Monterey, California with the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions to work on sustainable seafood issues and projects with 15 other NGOs from across North America. Meanwhile, Sadie Beaton has been traveling Nova Scotia talking to folks for a research project to discover the barriers and opportunities that direct marketing local seafood might present. Shannon Arnold went up close and personal with the undersea world off Port Joli, helping the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – Nova Scotia with scientific transects - scuba diving with lobsters! A group of MIC's dynamo volunteers is launching an exciting new online restaurant and retailer directory for sustainable seafood lovers in Halifax this fall. In partnership with the David Suzuki Foundation and a battalion of other NGOs, our fisheries scientist Alex Curtis staged a mighty offensive showing why the Canadian longline swordfish fishery is not worthy of an eco-label. Watch the MIC web page for an upcoming campaign to push the point home!





EVENTS

EAC Open House
December 1, 4-7pm
Join us at our Fern Lane home
for some refreshments and festive cheer.

Screening of A Sea Change: Imagine a World Without Fish
December 2009
Visit www.ecologyaction.ca/content/marine for more details
Help us keep oceans and climate change on the agenda
in the lead up to Copenhagen.

DFO Public Consultations
on a new Area of Interest for a Marine Protected Area
Choosing the Area of Interest
October 13 - December 13, 2009
Management for the Marine Protected Area
January - March, 2010

Last Day for Organic Christmas Tree and Wreath Orders
December 9
Order in person, by phone (429-2202)
or online at www.ecologyaction.ca

Christmas Tree Pickup Day
December 12 - 9am-1pm
Bloomfield Centre

Winter Walk Day
Any day in February
Schools or groups may register, starting in December at
www.taketherooffwinter.ca

On Canvas – Art for the Planet
An EAC fundraiser, in partnership with FRED.
FRED, 2606 Agricola Street
Opening: Feb 8, 2010
Closing Gala: Feb 27, 2010

Sixth Annual Sable Island Update
March 3, 2010 – 7pm
Auditorium, Sobey Building, Saint Mary's University

Help us celebrate the EAC Volunteers
during Volunteer Appreciation Month
April 2010!




now, that's a plan(-ning committee) (Built Environment Committee) To inform their waste reduction toolkit, our Construction and Demolition Project continues to look at specific case studies of buildings slated for demolition - such as the Charles Morris house on Hollis Street in Halifax. In October, 75 students from the Eastern Shore District High participated in tours of our green office as part of their global geography class! A Built Environment subcommittee has recently been struck to look at issues around planning. This subcommittee will meet regularly at 5:30 on the third Wednesday of each month.



EAC and FRED. present:

on canvas
art for the planet



-  Location: FRED, 2606 Agricola
-  Opening: Mon Feb 8th, 2010
-  Closing Gala: Sat Feb 27th, 2010

Watch our website for advance viewings.
All paintings will be available for sale. Proceeds support the EAC



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By June Hall

The big melt

It just doesn't get any more accurate. Basing their measurements on 50 million laser readings from NASA's Ice, Cloud and land Elevation satellite, scientists with the British Antarctic Survey have confirmed that the ice sheets off Greenland and Antarctica are, indeed, shrinking. Most worryingly, the rate of melting appears to be accelerating, and is happening much faster than models predicted.

Many glaciers along the margins of the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets are picking up speed, and the Greenland ice-sheet is now thinning at all latitudes, the effect extending inland for hundreds of kilometres in some areas. One Greenland glacier is moving at a faster rate than has ever been recorded for a glacier, while in parts of Antarctica, the ice sheet thinned by nine metres per year on average between 2003 and 2007.



One factor overlooked till now is that the ocean lapping the edges is warming up. Factor in sea-level rise over the years ahead, and as Hamish Pritchard, lead scientist of the survey, puts it: "To some extent, it's a runaway effect. The question is, how far will it run?" It is too early to make predictions, say the scientists, but we certainly should be worried.

Nature online, 23 Sep.; Guardian Weekly, 11 Sep. '09

Imperiled marine habitats

Only glimmers of hope remain for the world's shellfish reefs and beds, according to a new report by the Nature Conservancy. Compiling published data and information from other sources, "the report provides the first global view of the distribution of oyster reefs" in temperate and subtropical estuaries. Hard to imagine, but they're faring worse than are coral reefs and mangroves. Indeed, they are likely the world's most imperiled marine ecosystem: 85 percent of them have been lost entirely, and disease and development threaten most of the rest.

Reasons for the decline vary, but involve the usual culprits: pollution, overfishing, the spread of exotic species, and so on. In brief, for a very long time we have treated shellfish purely as a resource to be mined, ignoring the critical ecological services they supply. The good news is that oyster reefs *can* bounce back, though "the challenge...is great." The report also provides what the authors call "realistic and cost-effective" strategies to help restore and manage the reefs.

New Scientist, 28 Mar. '09
www.nature.org/initiatives/marine/shellfish/

Energy to Europe

"Flights of fantasy" that will benefit only western multinationals, or genuine attempts to spur development on the African continent? A proposal to build the world's largest ever dam, on the Congo River in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has received support from the World Bank, among others. Graced with twice the generation capacity of the Three Gorges Dam in China, Grand Inga would provide electricity to South Africa, Egypt and various West African countries.

But the plot thickens. Word is that the feasibility study also includes transmis-

sion lines to southern Europe, ostensibly to guard against a continent-wide power failure.

Providing cheap power to Europe is a spin-off of several other proposals. For instance, Nigeria, Niger and Algeria, with EU backing, have signed an agreement to transport Nigerian gas through a pipeline to Europe "under the guise of bringing power to poor Africans." Also on the drawing board, an ambitious solar and wind project that has as its aim nothing less than "a sustainable supply of electricity for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa up to the year 2050." The latter project would ring the Sahara and the Arabian Peninsula with power plants.

The sums of money involved boggle the mind, Cdn\$85 billion for Grand Inga and Cdn\$635 billion for the desert solar project, especially when you consider that less than 30 percent of Africans currently have access to electricity. Could it be done better? Critics would aim for much smaller, local projects with far less impact on the environment.

Guardian Weekly, 28 Aug. '09;
www.desertec.org

Land grab

You know what they say: they just aren't making any more of it. An Ecobrief a year or two ago described how British supermarkets are snapping up agricultural land abroad, especially in the Caribbean, in order to guarantee supplies of cheap food. But now whole countries are getting into the act. Since the food crisis of 2008, nations such as South Korea, Saudi Arabia and China, none of which can feed their people using only national agricultural production, have embarked on a huge buying spree, as always in poor countries. Also hoping to cash in: "some of the world's largest food, financial and car companies."

An article written in July reported that “nearly 20 million hectares (ha) of farmland – an area roughly half the size of all arable land in Europe — has been sold or has been negotiated for sale or lease” during the previous six months. In comparison, about 10 million ha was purchased during all of 2008. India has taken another tack, lending money to companies so they can purchase land — 350,000 ha in Africa alone in recent months. And think really desperate conditions: at least six countries are known to have bought large areas in Sudan, “one of the least food-secure countries in the world.”



Janet Wilson

It is expected that about one-fifth of the purchased land will be used to grow biofuels. Naturally, the tab for environmental problems will be left for the host countries to pick up.

Guardian Weekly, 10 Jul. '09

Unforeseen consequences

Macquarie Island is a bleak sort of place, situated in the south Pacific, between New Zealand and Australia (politically, it's part of Tasmania). And like many islands, this nature reserve and World Heritage Site has a major problem with invasive species.



Janet Wilson

The latest round of the story is complicated. Around the year 2000, following a dramatic decline in seabird populations, government officials embarked on an extermination program aimed at feral cats, which were dining on the chicks. Success, however, brought other problems. The cats were also keeping in check rabbits and rats, whose populations promptly rebounded. One hundred thousand rabbits now crowd the island's 128 square kilometres.

Rabbits, of course, eat plants, and they set to with a gusto, devastating the island's vegetation and in turn harming native wildlife. So now the government is exterminating rodents, including rabbits, a program expected to take up to seven years. An object lesson in conservation biology, it would seem, though some scientists are happy with neither the analysis nor the solution. It's never simple.

Journal of Applied Ecology, Jan & Oct. '09

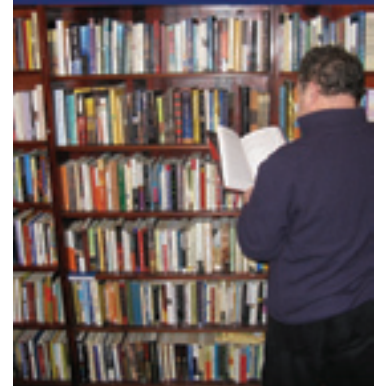
Ragamuffin Earth

We've done quite a number on poor old Earth. Ecosystems everywhere have been changed beyond recognition, whatever your point of reference. Hawaii is a case in point. Lush rainforest blankets many

of its precipitous slopes, but it's a rain-forest composed almost entirely of invasive alien species, a “trash ecosystem” in informal language, an “anthropogenic” or “degraded” one in scientific terms. Compliments are few and far between for waste places such as these, areas heavily influenced by humans but not under active management.

A few ecologists, however, are taking another look. We're stuck with these places, they say, and we should take a good look at what they offer. They cover perhaps 35 percent of Earth's surface. Maybe they're havens of biodiversity; in Hawaii's case they certainly teem with life, even if most of it is alien...

Nature, 23 July '09



Trident Booksellers and Café
1256 Hollis Street
Halifax

Forest No More

By Kermit deGooyer



Kermit deGooyer

Old hemlock and pine forest on Sixth Lake, currently for sale.

Two summers ago my wife and I were driving the backroads of Pictou County looking for what the forest maps indicated was a mature spruce and hemlock forest on River John.

When we found it, it was, well, gone.

A young man wearing a forester's vest was sitting in the cab of his pickup eating a sandwich.

"Hi" I said "do you know who owns this land?", pointing to the large empty spot where the forest had been.

"Yup, that's Wagner's". Then he rolled his eyes and shook his head. Without even introducing myself as a conservationist, the contractor proceeded to tell me what an aggressive company he thought they were. "I don't like doing work for them." At one point, he added "they even sent us back to cut the beauty strips along the road that Kimberly Clark left."

Wow, could it be? A forestry company worse than paper giant Kimberly Clark – the notorious environmental bad boys assailed by Greenpeace for

their part in destroying Canada's boreal forest, and with a history of unabashed clearcutting here in Nova Scotia.

Unfortunately, the answer appears to be 'yes'. Wagner Forest Management is a new type of landowner in Nova Scotia. And after scooping up half a million acres cheap from Neenah Paper (formerly Kimberly Clark) in 2006 they're also one of the largest landowners in the province. Unlike the forestry companies we're used to, Wagner has no mill in Nova Scotia and no desire to see their properties remain in forestry use. Companies like Wagner are more aptly described as real estate speculators, the beneficiaries of cash-strapped logging companies who are just now starting to unload hundreds of square kilometres of forest land in Nova Scotia.

Unlike in the past, the money these days is in real estate development, not forestry. So Wagner's business model is basically to liquidate the remaining timber on their lands (even my friend's "beauty strips" apparently), then shop the properties around to developers anxious to cash in on a wave of baby boomers seeking exclusive recreational properties throughout the undeveloped backcountry. As a sign of things to come, an outfit called "Cottage Country" has already submitted plans for Phase 1 of a several-hundred unit development that may eventually chew up 5,000 acres of forest land on Long Lake near Mount Uniacke.

Wagner may soon be joined by other land investors eager to join the permanent deforestation movement in Nova Scotia. Right now Neenah Paper's remaining half-million acres, spread throughout central Nova Scotia, are on the market. JD Irving Ltd. is trying to sell nearly 200,000 acres in western Nova Scotia, having closed its Weymouth mill a few years ago.

Unfortunately, the provincial government and most municipalities have been caught flat-footed by this sweeping change in land use for the Nova Scotia

backcountry. In fact, the lack of land-use controls on forests and lake frontage is used as a selling point to would-be investors. For example, JD Irving's sales brochure plays up the fact that their lands are "offered free of any conservation restrictions". Thankfully, the incoming government announced a big chunk of money (just over \$80 million) for land acquisition in the September mini-budget. This will help secure and conserve some of the lands currently on the market. But in the long run, it will be too expensive for Nova Scotia to hang onto the undeveloped and accessible lakes, rivers, and woods we have till now taken for granted without much stronger land-use regulations. The provincial and municipal governments will need to work quickly on that one.

Take Action

- Call, fax or email and encourage your MLA to support the Buy Back Nova Scotia initiative.

- Sign the electronic petition at: <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/buybacknovascotia/>

- For more information and actions visit the Buy Back Nova Scotia website: www.buybacknovascotia.ca

Promoting land use regulation and other practical (and affordable) ways to prevent the widespread loss of the backcountry has become a focus of the Buy Back Nova Scotia movement, of which EAC was a founding member. More on this broad coalition of outdoor groups, municipalities, and determined citizens can be accessed at www.buybacknovascotia.ca.

Kermit is a longtime forestry campaigner at EAC. He's OK with logging beauty strips so people can see what's really going on in the forest.

Getting Around During the Golden Years

By Lisa Corra

“If I had asked the people what they wanted they would have said faster horses.”

-Henry Ford

The challenge for Henry Ford was to convince society that vehicles could do the job of horses. The challenge in North America today is to convince people that transit can do the job of private automobiles.

As seniors, my maternal grandparents enjoyed many pastimes. Individually, Joe would play the piano while Alice chatted on the phone to her four children. Together, Joe and Alice would indulge in crossword puzzling or would get in the car for a drive. On December 1, 1999, at age 82, Joe passed away, leaving Alice without her life partner and without a driver.

Alice now lives with her youngest child, Tara. Their car has seen better days but Tara still drives it. A new car is not an option with Alice only receiving senior's pension. Though they aren't worried about saving for a new car, transportation issues are a concern.

Alice is 87 years old and walks with a cane. She had a hip operation about ten years ago following a fall. Alice is concerned about the eventual loss of her car, saying “Well, you know with me it would be a bit of a worry because I am quite lame. Not just that, but in my situation, I might need an operation on my knee. I could get the bus, but it would be a bit of a worry for me.”

Alice and Tara live by Lake Banook in Dartmouth, a 10-minute walk from the nearest bus stop. Alice is aware of other alternatives, like the door to door service provided by Access-A-Bus, but is unsure of who provides the service and how to book a trip.

A new program being developed by the Ecology Action Centre's TRAX project, under contract with the Nova Scotia Community Based Transportation Asso-

ciation (NSCBTA), is trying to alleviate Alice's fears. The project, entitled “Seniors on Board” involves the production of a manual to empower older adults to use public transit and other community-based transportation systems.

TRAX has operated as a voice for sustainable transportation in Nova Scotia for a decade. When initially established, TRAX limited its focus to Halifax, but now focuses on both rural and urban transportation issues. The project's partner, NSCBTA, works to “get Nova Scotians where they want to be”. NSCBTA represents providers of inclusive transportation services. When first incorporated, the association's members focused on providing accessible transportation to people with mobility impairments. The organization now focuses on providing services to any person who is transportation disadvantaged, be it by age, income, or health status.

The partnership between TRAX and NSCBTA is fairly new and works to address the fact that all citizens, no matter what their level of ability or income, still need to choose the most environmentally-efficient mode of transportation.

“The Seniors on Board project aims to help seniors be part of the community” says Jen Powley, one of the TRAX coordinators. “Seniors have so much to offer. Transportation issues should not limit them.”

Powley explained that it is a burden for both seniors and their children to have seniors dependent on their children or friends to get them to medical appointments, take them for groceries or run them to the pharmacy. Asking for a ride to a bridge game or to volunteer is unlikely – if depending on someone else for a ride, a senior will prioritize their needs. Activities of daily living come before social activity.

The Seniors on Board project attempts to address some of the concerns of Nova Scotia's aging population. Angus MacIsaac, former Minister of Health and Chairperson of the Senior's

Secretariat, wrote “Nova Scotia is aging. Each month, 700 Nova Scotians turn 65. The population of seniors will nearly double by 2026.” A task force on aging was established in October 2004. Funding for the Seniors on Board project is a result of this task force's Positive Aging Strategy.

Reflecting on her physical condition 10 years ago, Alice says “At 77 I must have been really agile ‘cause I didn't really consider myself a senior.” But now, at 87, there's no escaping that she needs special care, particularly with transport. The Seniors on Board project is an attempt to show seniors that this type of special care can be found with public transit or community-based transportation as long as the seniors themselves know what they need and how to ask for it. The project wants to prove to seniors like Alice that society as a whole cares about them. TRAX is trying to teach seniors how to ride a faster horse.

Lisa Corra grew up in Dartmouth and recently graduated with a MA in Atlantic Canada Studies from Saint Mary's University. She is a freelance writer working on her first novel, set in Halifax in 1968.



THE BLOB ...and Other Horror-Inducing UFOs

By Sadie Beaton



Photo Courtesy of Project UFO

The moniker “Sea Squirt” comes from the feeding and excretion process when the organism ‘squirts’ water out of its all-purpose sphincter. Pictured here – three squirtly species Project UFO is on the lookout for: the sea vase, golden start and violet tunicate.

A mysterious creature from another planet, resembling a giant blob of jelly, lands on earth. The people of a nearby small town refuse to listen to some teenagers who have witnessed the blob’s destructive power. In the meantime, the blob just keeps on getting bigger...

Thus reads the plot summary of the 1958 horror classic *The Blob*. However, it may just as well describe a family of alien aquatic species set to terrorize Nova

Scotia fishermen and shellfish farmers. In this case, the creatures are known as sea squirts or tunicates, small marine invertebrates that tend to be globular in shape with a gelatinous consistency and a slimy or leathery outer membrane, much like, well... blobs. And the teenagers? In this case, Cape Breton’s Project UFO is sounding the alarm.

After a brief adolescence of free swimming, sea squirts grow up and attach themselves alone or in colonies to any underwater surface they can find. They then enjoy a sedentary life, filtering nutrients from the water column and ex-

pulling their waste. They are found living anywhere from rocks and seaweeds to wharf pilings, the undersides of boats, and aquaculture cages. While some sea squirts are thought to be native to Nova Scotia waters, several species have recently invaded from other areas.

Sea squirts are just one example of a biological invasion –now considered to be one of the leading environmental threats to our world’s aquatic habitats. Aquatic aliens are transported to new parts of the world every day, often hitching a ride in the ballast or on the hull of commercial ships. Interestingly, since 1970, a new invading sea squirt has been reported every five years in our coastal waters. In partnership with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans’ “Atlantic Zone Biofoul Monitoring Project”, Project UFO reports five alien species of particular concern in the province – the golden star (*Botryllus schlosseri*), sea vase (*Ciona intestinalis*), violet (*Botrylloides violaceus*) and club tunicates (*Styela clava*), as well as the dreaded *Didemnum*.

In the past few years a new and particularly antagonistic species of sea squirt known as *Didemnum* (aka “The Blob”) has been spotted creeping northward along the United States side of George’s Bank- one of the world’s richest fishing grounds. A colony described as “a thick

Take Action

• **Seafaring type?**
Boat owners are on the front lines of slowing the spread of sea squirts! Clean your boat carefully before traveling into new areas, checking the bottom, motor, and gear for sneaky hitchhikers.

• **Landlubber? Join Project UFO and help fight the alien invasions! Check www.projectufo.ca for details. You can also report aquatic invasives to the DFO AIS Hotline at 1-888-435-4040.**

carpet of porridge-like goop” has spread over more than 100 square kilometres, forming a frightening barrier between fish and their food.

Other alien strains of sea squirt are already having a devastating effect on the marine environment and local economies. As they spread to new surfaces, their thick mat-like colonies or water balloon-like clusters tend to crowd out or even smother other native species. They can also diminish food supplies for other filter feeders, reducing marine

tin foil hats and flashlights pointed to the sky, the “UFO” in Project UFO actually stands for Unidentified Foreign Organisms and is an innovative collaboration between scientists, community volunteers and students at Cape Breton University and Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP) Cape Breton. The initiative is dedicated to helping increase awareness and gather scientific data about alien species that threaten Cape Breton’s biodiversity.

This summer and fall, Project UFO

Invasive species are known to be one of the leading threats to biodiversity around the world. Biodiversity loss occurs when invasive species:

- outcompete native populations for food and space
- alter established food webs
- interbreed with native species, changing the gene pool
- introduce diseases and parasites

Courtesy of Project UFO, 2009

diversity and harming cultured shellfish. Shellfish farmers struggle to remove these tenacious jelly blobs from mussel socks, boat hulls and ropes.

This is where Project UFO comes in. Though the name may bring to mind



Photo Courtesy of Project UFO

participants have been deploying settlement and collection plates in waters all around Cape Breton, in the hopes of gaining a better understanding of the sea squirts that have already arrived, and which areas might be particularly vulnerable to their colonization. They’ve also been doing sea squirt checks at local boat ramps and docks.

“It’s critical for us to better understand the current and future threats to our local marine ecosystems,” Dr. Martha Jones of Cape Breton University says. “Over the past two years, we’ve learned an incredible amount about the biodiversity in our local harbours, and their susceptibility to invasions by alien species. It has also been very informative to talk with local fishermen about the ecological changes they have observed over the past few years and decades in the marine environment.”

Besides sea squirts, the Project UFO team is also on the lookout for other



Photo Courtesy of Project UFO

nefarious aquatic invasives including European green Crab, Asian shore crab, Chinese mitten crab, Japanese skeleton shrimp, lacy crust bryozoan, dead man’s fingers, spinycheek crayfish and rock snot. Project UFO also hosts a variety of events, from a recent Eel Swimbladder Nematode workshop to annual kid’s summer camps, and even a Name The Sea Squirts Contest- with entries ranging from Cutie and Sweetie to Billy Bob Bowling Pin. True bastions of citizen science, community volunteers often lead the charge, gathering science and spreading the word about the potential effects of these alien species.

As Project UFO’s creative and enthusiastic approach shows, we need to work together to keep the blob from growing.

Sadie Beaton loves sea monsters of all kinds, but especially ones with funny names. Most days she can be found researching sustainable seafood and fisheries issues with the Marine Issues Committee. To get involved in local sustainable seafood action or just to tell her about your favourite sea monster, write a note to sadie@ecologyaction.ca

Home Improvement: Youth Building a Sustainable Community

By Michael Johnstone



Having only recently slipped out of the category of youth and into adulthood, I have often wondered about the generation immediately behind my own. How are they dealing with the specter of global warming and the immense need to correct our environmental behaviour before it is too late?

I had the chance to find out in March 2009. I joined a small delegation from the Ecology Action Centre and Dalhousie's Cities and Environment Unit on a trip to the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg to host a community consultation session with local residents. We were there to assist the municipality in

developing its Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ISCP), a 30-year vision required for municipalities to receive a share of federal gas tax money which would then be used to build sustainable community infrastructure.

Part of the consultation process was to meet with students from Park View Educational Centre, a local high school situated along the LaHave River in Bridgewater. Excited, but always the cautious skeptic, I spent much of the trip to Bridgewater wondering what we would encounter with these young environmentalists. Would we come across a group of unbridled, optimistic idealists, not yet worn by the pressure and urgency of global climate change? Or would we find ourselves faced with a generation at a loss for words, stunned at the catastrophe they have been handed?

After brief introductions and a bit of

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background on who we were and what we were doing, we set off to explore the community led by our local young guides. They pointed out sidewalks that ended abruptly, curb corners in disrepair that posed great difficulties for persons with disabilities, a lack of safe cycling routes—many of the same issues faced by so many communities in Nova Scotia. The youth were neither optimists nor pessimists as I had anticipated. They were, in fact, remarkable realists.

At a local big-box retailer we wandered across a massive field of asphalt (devoid of almost all pedestrian markings) and they told me that one of their biggest concerns was for the heart of Bridgewater. Development was good, they said, but to a point. Unlike most teens where I grew up, they had little desire to live in the big city. For them, Bridgewater had a soul that they wanted to protect. While

many expressed a desire to go away for university, they wanted to return home to raise their families and build their careers. Their future was in this town and they had no desire, gas tax money or not, to see it turn into a buzzing metropolis.

After only one afternoon in their quiet community, I, a lifeline urbanite, began to see why. They were building something here, not with lumber and concrete, but among each other and with their families. Like so many small communities in Nova Scotia, their most important infrastructure projects consisted of building the human network. They did not want bike trails and more pedestrian crossings so that they could get from A to B faster (not once did speed of travel come up). They wanted to make the community more enjoyable, more livable, more like home.

When the sketching, photographing, diagramming and writing was done I

watched as one of the students and his father hopped onto their bicycles in the brisk March air and slowly rode off down a dirt road for the long trip home. They were talking about the future, both of their community and of their own plans together, as they rode away. It was clear that this was a life that was well-worth sustaining.

To read the complete reports developed from the community consultations in Lunenburg, Windsor and Annapolis Royal, and learn more about Integrated Community Sustainability Plans, visit: <http://www.ecologyaction.ca/content/municipalities-green-mobility>.

Michael Johnstone worked as an assistant with the Ecology Action Centre's Sustainable Transportation Committee between 2008-2009. He lives in Halifax where he is putting finishing touches on his degree at Dalhousie University.

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The Green Jobs Nine

By Jonathan Rotsztein with Mark Butler and Maggy Burns

In 2007 the government of Nova Scotia passed the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act* with the stated goal of having one of the cleanest and most sustainable environments in the world by 2020. Two years later, the government is in the thick of meeting (and missing) the 21 goals, which include renewable energy, wilderness protection, water treatment and building standards. As the government implements the goals there is an incredible opportunity to create jobs and economic opportunities.

Ontario's provincial government introduced the *Green Energy and Economy Act* and Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty takes every opportunity to proclaim that the legislation will create 50,000 jobs. The Nova Scotian government may not want to come up with a number but all 21 goals can create jobs. Sometimes 10 or 20, sometimes 500 or 1,000.

Nova Scotian officials need to determine what legislation, training, and investment is required for these new jobs. The scenario nobody wants to see is Nova Scotians continuing to head West to work in the Tar Sands while we bring in workers from Ontario or Massachusetts to install wind turbines, develop energy efficiency software, or identify wetlands.

With global institutions and governments finally accepting the realities of peak oil and climate change, transformation is on the way. The following nine recommendations will allow our provincial government to position Nova Scotia to truly lead the world into this exciting and necessary new economy based on job creation and environmental sustainability.

One: Demand Side Management (DSM)

The most important short-term action any government can take to reduce greenhouse gases and increase energy security is to invest in energy efficiency. In October 2009, the provincial government introduced legislation to create a sole-purpose, independent administrator for energy efficiency. This agency, called Efficiency NS, is the first body of its kind in Canada and will reduce Nova Scotians' electricity usage and create many new jobs in energy efficiency. The agency will spend over \$200 million over the next four years. Saving energy creates more jobs-per-dollar-spent than producing energy, be it renewable or non-renewable.



Two: Feed-in Tariffs (FITs)

Under feed-in tariffs, the power utility pays higher rates for renewable energy, thus allowing the industry to develop the necessary infrastructure to compete with traditional, less expensive (and more established) sources like coal, gas and nuclear. Over time renewable energy becomes more competitive

and it is able to compete with and overcome its dirty rivals outside a tariff structure. This model is proving successful in many countries from Germany to China. The introduction of feed-in tariffs would give a big boost to renewable energy and create jobs.



Three: Develop a Green Energy Labour Market Strategy



A comprehensive labour market strategy is required to maximize the local employment benefits from energy efficiency and renewable energy. Clear shortages in the energy efficiency workforce will only worsen as spending ramps up. Nova Scotia's energy efficiency workforce includes a range of trades and professions from energy auditors, system installers, local building supply stores and manufacturing. Currently, Nova Scotia Community College is beginning to train a "green collar" workforce. However, without a clear strategy to invest in the right training for the right people, the Nova Scotian workforce will miss out on these opportunities and we could see delays in uptake on new energy efficiency programs.

Four: Increase Quality Improvement Silviculture

Increasing funding support for quality-improvement silviculture will provide green jobs while helping to shift the sector away from clear-cutting, monoculture planting and herbicide use and towards a broader product base from the forest, supporting value-added manufacturing that requires quality timber. Currently, only 2 percent of silviculture funding is allocated to the quality improvement category; the remaining 98% helps to subsidize clearcutting.

Illustrations by Jonathan Rotsztein



Five: Invest in Rural Transit



During EAC's province-wide consultations, rural Nova Scotians shared their desire for increased sustainable transportation options. Along with creating direct jobs in rural areas, such as transit operators, mechanics and administrators, this investment would open up job markets to the 30 percent of Nova Scotians without a vehicle. Sustainable transit systems play a role in the health of our population and our communities while reducing reliance on single-occupant vehicles and their associated emissions.

Six: Increase Consumption of Locally-Produced Foods

Farming is a labour-intensive sector, so buying locally grown and produced foods directly translates into locally grown and produced jobs. Nova Scotian farmers' share of the money we spend on food has been on the decrease. Increasing their share of the food dollar from 7.2 percent to 20 percent would create approximately 8,500 jobs. The government should continue supporting local food industry through several levers, including their sustainable procurement policy and increased marketing through Select Nova Scotia. We also recommend changes to allow the regional distribution of provincially-inspected meats, which will give local meat farmers access to grocery store markets.



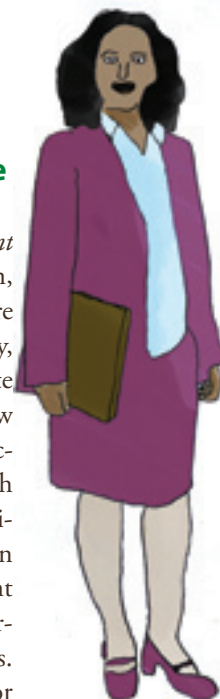
Seven: Ban the Sale and Use of Cosmetic Pesticides

Statistics Canada research indicates the lawn care industry is booming in every Canadian jurisdiction where cosmetic pesticides have been banned. Since the enactment of the cosmetic pesticide by-law in HRM, the number of firms in Halifax has increased by 53 percent from 118 to 180 companies and companies have grown in size. HRM's by-law has created at least 250 new green jobs. The more than 300 landscaping companies outside Halifax can expect a similar boom from a provincial ban on the sale and use of cosmetic pesticides, creating at least 350 new green jobs.



Eight: Require Municipalities and Sectors to Develop a Specific Climate Change Adaptation Plans

Through the *Municipal Government Act* or the Climate Change Action Plan, the provincial government should require all municipalities and sectors (forestry, mining, etc.) to develop a specific climate change adaptation plan outlining how they will protect people and infrastructure and reduce the costs associated with climate change. Developing the associated risk assessment maps and adaptation plans will provide immediate employment for recent graduates of Geographic Information Science and Planning programs. This will create a minimum of 50 jobs for graduates who are currently leaving the province to find work. Further, climate change adaptation requires relocating or reinforcing vulnerable infrastructure. These public works projects will create jobs for engineers as well as many construction jobs using local labour and equipment.



Nine: Increase Building Deconstruction

A shocking 25 percent of our municipal waste stream comes from renovation and demolition. Building deconstruction is the process of disassembling buildings set for demolition and recycling and reusing many of the component materials rather than condemning them to landfill. The deconstruction of buildings creates six to eight jobs for each job created by standard demolition. The re-use of these materials creates opportunities for private sector companies by continuing to foster value-added manufacturing from waste resources. Improved legislation could encourage or require deconstruction and a small investment could create a provincial distribution system. Progress in this area would build on Nova Scotia's world-class reputation for waste management and continue to develop the economic sector that has emerged from this expertise.

Jonathan Rotsztain is a professional writer and graphic designer in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He welcomes comments or queries at j.rotsztain@gmail.com

Mark Butler and Maggy Burns are EAC's Policy and Internal Directors respectively. They share an office, but not a brain.



McNabs Island Adventure

By Jocelyne Rankin



Cathy McCarthy

McNabs aerial photo

On a summer Sunday, I once again marvelled at the ease with which Halifaxians and residents of HRM can access unique natural areas and tucked-away treasures like McNabs Island. As the Water Coordinator at the Ecology Action Centre, I organized a day-trip to the island for a modest-sized group of people, luring them with the tagline of a McNabs Island Adventure. I was as much of a participant in this event as everyone else, having never discovered for myself the lore, legends and life on McNabs.

The trip was one of the activities for “Paint the Town Blue”, a month-long series of events on water conservation, pollution prevention to Halifax Harbour and stewardship of our water resources. Cathy McCarthy, the savvy president of the Friends of McNabs Island Society, wisely suggested that any education and outreach campaign on pollution prevention to Halifax Harbour, especially floatables, would need

to incorporate an experiential education component. Seeing first-hand the beach whistles (tampon applicators) and other debris that washes up in the hundreds on the beaches of McNabs Island would cause anyone to change their behaviour and put plastics, latex, cigarette butts and all other non-degradable things in the garbage rather than down the toilet.

An eclectic group of people young and old gathered at Cable Wharf to set off to the island. There was a young couple who recently moved here from Winnipeg, small groups of friends, students, new Canadians from China, environmentalists and outdoor enthusiasts. The intrepid Eve Burns was our guide for the day and she was a wealth of information, anecdotes and adventure. I was slightly unprepared, not having a set itinerary for the day, but our fearless leader concocted a plan to explore the forts and period homes of the island while checking out the beaches and trails.

The group set out towards Fort Ives, passing by ruins thought to be once-occupied by the dwarves who worked for one of the island fairgrounds. A pair of deer skirted across the trail ahead of us and evidence of their presence, in the form of tracks and droppings, was easy to spot on the island. We peered in through dusty windows to get a glimpse of the sparse interior of the various houses and estates on the island. I took a moment to explore a grove of apple trees, likely a favourite of the deer, and snacked on an apple that had been too high for them to reach. We pictured what it must have been like to come with hundreds of other young people for summer picnics and activities on the island. It was easy to do on such a beautiful late summer day while also taking in the views of the harbour and downtown Halifax.

Our trek continued to the Northern shore of the island where evidence of a lack of sewage treatment was most obvious. Here the plastic, latex and other debris was tangled up in the dried seaweed and littered the shore. Eve said the cleanup crew last summer noticed a re-

Take Action

- **Avoid flushing plastics, latex, cigarette butts and other non-degradable material. These can end up in the harbour and on McNabs Island.**
- **Dispose of pharmaceuticals, chemical products, fuel oil and other toxic material at the Household Hazardous Waste depot in Bayer's Lake on certain Saturdays every month.**
- **Divert rainwater from gutter spouts onto permeable ground such as grass or a garden. Rainwater can then be absorbed by the soil and recharge groundwater sources rather than flowing through sewers and into the harbour.**

markable decrease in plastic debris washing up on the island when the wastewater treatment plant was operational. Since the treatment plant will not be operational for another year it is clear that a lot more education and outreach work will be required. On this side of the island we spotted a grey seal out in the sheltered bay lazily observing us on the beach. We had a picnic lunch by the Teahouse and took a moment to rest in the sun. Our tour continued to the south part of the island and Fort McNab. We poked through the abandoned fort and learned about the efforts of the Friends to keep the properties from becoming too overgrown with vegetation. Devil's Island was visible from the top of Fort McNab, looking south. Our route back to the pier took us along the Searchlight Trail, Cliff Trail and the Colin Stewart Trail to the south and west of the Fort to rejoin the Garrison Road to the east of McNabs Pond.

Exploring the beach while waiting for the boat to pick us up, I spotted a razor clam swishing in the shallow water, its short fleshy muscle wriggling back and forth. The noise of the splashing water attracted my attention and I peered closer. Suddenly it grabbed hold of the sand and flipped its body up vertically and slowly sucked itself down into the sand before eventually disappearing completely.



Eve Burns

Typical litter washed up at Ives Point, McNabs Island

I had never seen a clam be so active before and I felt comforted to know that despite the impact we have had on the harbour ecosystem, there is still quite a bit of marine life in the water, on the beaches and intertidal zone of McNabs Island. The work that the Friends of McNabs Island do to engage youth and the public, protect and conserve the island and push for improved water treatment in HRM is certainly making a difference!

Jocelyne Rankin is the Water Coordinator with the Ecology Action Centre. She recently organized Paint the Town Blue and is a keen hydrophile.

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Photo courtesy of the Sable Island Green Horse Society

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Our Shrinking Harbour

By Sadie Beaton



Sadie Beaton

Environment Canada has stated that Bedford Basin is the only place in Atlantic Canada you can legally dump acidic slate.

35. (1) “No person shall carry on any work or undertaking that results in the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat.”

-Fisheries Act, R.S., c. F-14.

Day and night, tonne after tonne, slate, gravel, and other construction debris is dumped straight into Halifax Harbour. Slowly, but surely, dump trucks from HRM and across the Maritimes are “infilling” parts of the Bedford Basin, creating new parcels of land for private development where critical fish habitat once existed.

Call it jurisdictional confusion, regulatory inertia, or the beauty of the

free market. Call it what you want, but without a master plan for Halifax Harbour, a plan integrated with the provincial coastal development policy and climate change action plan, there is nothing to stop developers from making a killing on infilling projects that threaten water quality, destroy fish habitat, and increase our vulnerability to climate change.

There is a clear view of our shrinking harbour from the Sobeys parking lot on the Bedford Highway. At this site, currently owned and under development by the Halifax Waterfront Development Corporation Limited (“WDCL”), one dump truck after another can be seen winding its way through thirty-odd acres of human-made land to deposit a load of construction and acidic rock in the Basin and Harbour.

WDCL and the Halifax Regional Municipality are in the final stages of planning for a large mixed-residential development, including a marina and upscale shops, once infilling is complete. This development will be built on what used to be original Harbour bottom and pristine fish habitat.

Infilling is one of the more visible ways that fish habitat can be altered or destroyed, by burying bottom habitat, removing the fertile intertidal and shallow sub-tidal zones where many fish feed and spawn, and eliminating water column habitat. More indirectly, the resulting silt can also settle at a distance from the original infill, smothering organisms that depend on bottom habitat.

“Harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat”, or HADD, is a concept at the heart of the *Fisheries Act*, one of Canada’s oldest pieces of legislation. This habitat destruction is happening right under our noses, yet regulatory bodies have been able to look the other way. Because Fisheries and Oceans Canada (“DFO”) has failed to declare a HADD, no Environmental Assessment has been triggered. There has been no opportunity for public input or involvement, and no compensation has been paid to restore critical fish habitat elsewhere in the Harbour or in adjacent watersheds.

“Aha,” you might think, “this is because Halifax Harbour isn’t fish habitat.” Wrong. You wouldn’t know it from the way we treat it, but Halifax Harbour is still a functioning, living ecosystem. This productive (though polluted) coastal estuary provides valuable marine habitat and supports important fisheries resources. Indeed, lobsters are fished extensively, especially around McNabs Island, but also in the Northwest Arm and Bedford Basin. Sea Run Brook trout, Atlantic salmon, Gaspereau, whales, seals, and American eels still navigate through the harbor as well, often traveling into the various streams and lakes that feed the estuary.

UNDERWATER REAL ESTATE

Though the Canadian legal system considers the ocean as a common good to be looked after by the federal government, some developers have found a loophole. Back before Confederation, some “water lots” along Halifax Harbour were granted to private landowners. Water lots are legally defined as parcels of land on the seabed of the harbour, attached to the land parcel and extending outward from the shoreline underwater. Legally considered private property, these sections of ocean floor escape federal jurisdiction, thereby releasing owners from the regular obligation to protect and respect fish habitat including paying compensation for a HADD infraction.

Those concerned with this infilling loophole argue that these water lots were intended for wharfs or docks for local fishermen that would extend out into the water as temporary constructions. In recent times, however, various property owners (including the WDCL) have flouted the original definition by adding retaining walls, permanent walkways and even buildings that extend to the end of their water lot. Indeed, these structures may cause permanent changes to the shoreline and intertidal zone.

With the creation of over 30 acres of new infilled lands that will eventually be expanded to 50 acres in total, (about the size of five George’s Islands), it is too late to reverse the extensive habitat loss that has already occurred. However, it is never too late for DFO to declare a HADD. Indeed, it is only fair that WDCL acknowledge the environmental impact of the project and pay due compensation for the immense loss of habitat the development has caused. After all, the WDCL already receives huge sums from the tipping fees companies pay to dispose at the infill and expect much more from sales of the developed land.

As Sackville River Association president Walter N. Regan notes, compensation from private developers who have damaged a public asset is integral, and “even though restoration projects cannot bring back lost marine habitat, they can deter future habitat loss by making the proponent pay the true cost of habitat destruction.”

HABITAT RESTORATION

Just beyond the Bedford Sobeys parking lot sits a small tidal pond known as Moir’s Pond, named after the candy factory that once sat where the grocery store does today. Surrounded by layers of industrial and commercial development, the pond also sits abreast of the ever-expanding moonscape of infill.

Moir’s Pond is connected to a narrow stream (Nile Mile River) which connects to Paper Mill Lake, part of the Kearney Lake system which in turn runs out of the recently protected Blue Mountain / Birch Lakes Cove Wilderness area. Incredibly, significant numbers of Atlantic salmon, Sea Run Speckled trout, Gaspereau and American eels travel up through the pond looking to get upstream for spawning.

Question- What did the Atlantic salmon say to his buddies after hitting a 15 foot tall concrete wall? *Answer-* Dam.

Despite significant odds, the hardest of these migrating fish survive swimming to Greenland and back, Harbour pollution and shoreline alterations, only to be thwarted upstream. Three hydroelectric dams along the Kearney Lake system- built before fish ladders were mandated – stop salmon, trout, Gaspereau and eels from completing their life cycles.

As Regan has suggested, creating fish ladders for the three dams would be a relatively low-cost and effective use of habitat restoration money. He notes, “If we accept that we are going to be doing some development, like an infill along

the shore, then there are ways to do it that are respectful to the fisheries that exist, or could exist in the Harbour and adjacent watersheds.”

HALIFAX HARBOUR IS ALIVE

EAC Coastal Coordinator Jennifer Graham is also concerned about the precedent this project may set. While many departments, corporate bodies and community groups have interest or responsibilities, Halifax Harbour lacks an overall plan that recognizes and respects it as a functioning ecosystem. She notes, “The bigger question is, where is it going to stop? Will developers be allowed to cover the harbour in parking lots and condominiums? This harbour is a living system and we should be planning for a mixed-use, ecologically productive harbour that we can all enjoy now and into the future.”

A master plan for the harbour, integrated with provincial coastal and climate change policies, won’t solve the pre-Confederation water lot loophole, but it would make it easier to for the government to prioritize restoration and prevent further habitat degradation from infilling projects. As Regan concludes, “It may be too late to stop this development project, but we can ensure that development doesn’t happen this way again, without an environmental assessment, without HADD compensation, and without adequate public input.”

Sadie Beaton used to think that infilling was something you did to a pie crust. This article was originally published by the Halifax Media Co-op. The Halifax Media Co-op is a member-funded media cooperative that aims to combine participatory, democratically produced media with professional standards. You can help sustain independent media in Nova Scotia by clicking <http://halifax.mediacoop.ca/>

La Vie en Vert

Welcome to our “green society page” where we provide you with an inspiring (and pleasantly green-tinged) view of recent happenings in the EAC community.



Charlene Boyce Young

Paddling into the Sunset

The lucky winner of our Chestnut canoe raffle was Andrew Vassallo from just outside Windsor. Andrew, who is moving to Ontario, gifted this gorgeous canoe to his parents. Don't we all wish we had kids like that! Andrew and his dad are pictured here. Long-time EAC friend Graham Smith was the winner of the second prize, a new bicycle. He's making great use of it! It's not his first bike, but it is the first new bike he's ever owned. Of course, our environmental campaigns were the biggest winner, since the raffle raised over \$6,500 for EAC!

Only in NS, Canoe Sighting

“On Wednesday, my wife and I visited Grand Pre National Historical Site ... After our visit we went into the gift shop One woman said she had just gotten a canvas canoe that her son had recently won in a raffle in Halifax. He was moving and gave it to her. It was from Ontario and had been rebuilt and came with an account of its history and restoration. Jo and I looked at each other in disbelief. She in turn was amazed to learn that I was the one who restored it. She lives in Windsor and plans to paddle it in Lake Pizquid. The canoe is in good hands and well appreciated.” *-Don Gordon*



Maggie Burns



Kim Thompson

Salty Surprise

EAC closes the office one day each summer so our staff can play on the beach! It helps staff stay in touch with the semi-palmated sandpipers, the kelp, the moonsnails and the ocean breezes. This year a seagull even stole our lacrosse ball! However, the biggest adventure was Sustainable Transportation Coordinator Jen Powley's first ever dip in an ocean. She picked some of the coldest swimming weather ever. Her quote of the day was, “Wow, it tastes salty!”

Wild Times

On the third weekend of October over 35 EAC-ers came together for our annual retreat. Our usual mix of volunteers and staff included cooks, musicians, dancers, philosophers, activists and contrarians. The retreat was at the Centre Burlington Community Hall in Hants County. Participants toured two local organic farms on which the EAC has working land easements. We also got in touch with our wild sides, considered radical propositions about our future and, of course, ate very well.

Inspired Generosity

Having a functional computer system isn't sexy but it's definitely invaluable. EAC has struggled for many years with computer systems that were "the best we could do." In recent memory, things became so bad that our printer wouldn't work properly for over a month! We were rescued by the generosity of Joel Rafuse and the folks at Digital nGenuity. They took the extraordinary step of donating hundreds of hours of labour to bring our network into the 21st century. Their expertise as business network specialists has made a huge difference at EAC.

An extra special thank you goes out to Joel's son, Matthew Rafuse, pictured here, whose concern for environmental protection and conservation inspired his Dad to donate the time and resources of his company to the EAC.



Joel Rafuse

Solar Wayne, Solar Gain

It's an exciting time in our basement right now. We are re-vamping our solar system thanks to solar guru and generous volunteer Wayne Groszko and his team! With a few strategic changes to our system we hope to dramatically increase our solar gain (and have warmer feet).

Staff Snippets

As always, EAC is about change! Our friend and colleague Amy Henry-Morgan has moved across the pond. We wish her well and hope she gets the chance to work on active transportation in Liverpool. We also say a fond farewell to Maureen Strickland, Researcher for the Construction and Demolition project, and Noel Taussig, fearless coordinator of The Birds Are Back Celebrity Challenge. We also bid adieu to some exceptional summer students - Eliana Clay, Renee Huntley, Carey Jernigan and Teresa Thomas. However, we are poised to welcome some new interns: Maryanne Nduati, setting a great pace as a Pace Car Officer, and Daniel Charbonneau and Caitlyn Chappell, tackling herbicide spraying and sustainable forestry research respectively. Corey Clamp has become a key part of the TRAX team as the Idleless Program Developer. There's no wheel-spinning here as he helps two Nova Scotian communities reduce unnecessary idling. Lisa Kretz has also joined the TRAX team as the Goods Miles Coordinator. She will be researching the impact of local vs. imported goods... with her good-smile in place!



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By Suki Starfish

Aries: In 1981, the inspiring and legendary Aries **Rudy Haase** led a successful lobby to get an important uranium mining moratorium in place in Nova Scotia. In October of 2009, finally, this moratorium has been made into law! So celebrate both the fact that uranium will now safely stay far underground where it belongs and the fact that you really can make a difference. Then continue to do what you do best: lead others to take concrete action!

Taurus: Every earth sign has been guilty of it at some point, and you, my little bull, are particularly prone to it: you hang onto a piece of clothing for years and years, until it is far too worn out to donate to charity. What to do with those beloved old clothes? Make them into something new! Cut out the nicest areas and transform them into a pillow, a teddy bear or part of a quilt. Even if you are “all hooves” in the sewing room, you can probably manage to make patch or a simple pouch. Use the worn parts as rags for cleaning.

Gemini: You are quite the stylish one, and you are good at staying up on the latest news and cultural trends. So you must be thrilled that you can now enjoy your sushi free of enviro-guilt, by using the Seachoice Sustainable Sushi Card that was published earlier this year. I know you’ve likely already told your friends about it and told them they can download it for free from www.seachoice.org. So what else can I tell you? Did you know that Halifamous Marine Activist **Susanna Fuller** is also a Gemini? It’s true.

Cancer: You’re a holistic sort of nurturer and know that big piles of shiny gifts don’t do a child much good. She may enjoy

them for a while, but she’ll also learn that fun equals materialism and she’ll expect bigger and bigger piles of gifts each year. It distresses you to see a beloved child overwhelmed with more toys than she can handle. So if you should happen to be in charge of planning a child’s party, why not give her something far more valuable? You can boost her self-esteem and cultivate her sense of empathy and compassion, by asking party guests to make a donation to a charity of the child’s choice in lieu of gifts. Websites like echoage.com make it easy. Oh, and this concept works for grown up parties – such as weddings - too.

Leo: Action is your middle name with Mars in your sign right now. Double entendre intended: you have extra energy to get done those things that have been on your “to do” list for ages, and with Mars’ magnetic energy, you may just meet that someone special while taking action on an issue dear to your heart. So come out to that meeting, workshop or special event you’ve been meaning to attend! Sultry lionesses may want to wear a pair of EAC’s Mars-coloured “Take action, get action” underwear for an extra confidence boost.

Virgo: Our Virgo Premier, **Darrell Dexter**, is making some pretty impressive strides in nature conservation. In the fall of 2009, the Province announced a new protected area (the 14,700 hectare Ship Harbour - Long Lake Wilderness Area on the Eastern Shore), a new candidate protected area (the Five Bridges Lakes Wilderness Area), public consultations on a third area in Cumberland County and a \$70 million increase to the provincial land acquisition budget. So write the government to congratulate them on a job well done and remind them of the importance of continuing in this direction.

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Libra: Feeling the pinch, with stern Saturn bearing down on your sign this year? Save money by shutting down your computer at night or anytime it's not in use. Set it to hibernate after 20-30 minutes of activity rather than using a screensaver, which looks innocent enough, but will actually keep your monitor running at full power. According to an energy calculator at le.com, just one computer left on every night can cost about \$42 American per year (or as I like to think of it, about 20 bars of fair-trade chocolate). That may not sound like much, but it adds up: 20 computers left on at night cost over \$800/year in energy costs and their combined emissions equal that of one car on the road.

Scorpio: What does *Silent Spring* have to do with your morning cup of steamy, caffeinated goodness? Bird songs, or lack thereof. Imagine the gentle peeping of the migratory birds who make their homes on small, family-run organic coffee farms, with local trees left where they belong to provide important habitat for them. Now picture a giant coffee plantation where the hot sun beats down on acres of pesticide-laden coffee crops. Either scenario is a reality that you make happen with what you buy. If you'd rather support the former, ask for "shade grown" as well as organic and fair trade.

Sagittarius: It's hard being an eco-conscious Sadge sometimes. You have an innate wanderlust and thirst for adventure, but you know that taking a plane ride or cruise to an exotic locale contributes way too much to your personal carbon footprint. For you, the key to a satisfying "stay-cation" – where you stick close to home in order to save both money and carbon emissions – is to try something new. Is there a part of the province

you've never visited before? Go there. Never had a bike holiday, ridden the Tidal Bore, or gone wilderness camping? Do that.

Capricorn: You're always the one who does everything for other people, but with your birthday, Christmas, and New Year's Eve all coming up, it's time to relax already and let your friends and family spoil you! Trust me, they wanna. So read a book (EAC's Capricorn Internal Director recommends Barbara Kingsolver's *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*) or go for a meditative walk in the woods while they prepare a sumptuous organic feast for you. Help them only in deciding what to serve and whom to invite.

Aquarius: Like EAC's Aquarian Energy Coordinator, Cheryl Ratchford, you are probably happy that Bullfrog Power is now available in this province, allowing Nova Scotians more choice through the option to purchase renewable energy to power their homes and businesses. You are always looking to make a difference in the world (and in your power consumption) and this is one way you can do so.

Pisces: Expansive Jupiter rubs rings with unconventional Uranus in your sign for a large chunk of 2010, making this the perfect year to expand your horizons. So try something new and green! Go to the EAC's *Art Gala* in February at FRED and treat yourself to a glorious new painting. Take up hiking and challenge yourself to visit each of Nova Scotia's beautiful protected areas. Start biking to work, or participating in another action of your choice.

Suki Starfish likes to spend the winter cuddling with a certain Virgo sea star and feasting on mussels beneath the caressing ripples of shallow waters near Halifax. Follow her on Twitter @Starfish_Suki.

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James Desmond: Taking Action Against Environmental Racism

By Mark Butler



Candice Baldwin

James Desmond during an Oct 2009 tour of the first generation landfill which revealed several leachate seeps

What makes a person speak up, speak out, stand up, stand out? When I asked James Desmond that question he said without hesitation: "Because of the love I have for the community and the people."

James' community is the African Nova Scotian village of Lincolville (pop.95), which lies along Highway 16 between the Trans Canada Highway and Canso in Guysborough County. Lincolville was founded by black loyalists who came north with other loyalists following the American War of Independence in the 1700s. James' ancestors got the land nobody else wanted, rocky land away from the coast, yet they managed to create a community in unbearably harsh conditions.

For the next 200 years or so, the rest of the County showed no interest in Lincolville real estate. This changed in the early 1970s when the municipal

dump, adjacent to the black community of Sunnyville on the outskirts of the town of Guysborough, caught fire. The County wanted to move the landfill to a new location and chose Lincolville, another black community.

This didn't sit well with James and his friends. As a young man he was reading Huey P. Newton, Eldridge Cleaver, Malcom X and other black writers. The civil rights movement was spreading across North America and to James, the siting of the new landfill next to Lincolville wasn't a coincidence, it was racism.

James and his friends protested the proposed landfill, but without success.

Over the next 25 years, his concern about, and opposition to, the dump didn't lessen. James went on to work as a community development officer in Guysborough for the Black United

Front, a community development organization. He enjoyed going to bat for people and can still see the results of his work today in the County. When the Front closed its offices, James went west to work and spent time on a merchant ship moving cargo between Halifax and Cuba. Today James works as a security officer in Antigonish.

In 2004, as the old landfill became an environmental liability, having no liner or leachate collection system, the County proposed a second landfill on the site. Again the community protested and again the landfill went ahead. This time, older and wiser and still outraged, James is keeping the pressure on.

James, Wendy Campbell and other community members shared their concerns with the media and social justice and environmental organizations such as the Halifax Coalition Against Poverty, NS Public Interest Research Group, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, and the EAC. The EAC, with advice from the East Coast Environmental Law Association, determined that the old landfill is leaking contaminants into the surrounding environment and does not have a leachate collection system as required in their closure permit.

These days it might be too much to describe James as hopeful, but with outside scrutiny and the renewed involvement of the Office of African NS Affairs, the potential for respectful dialogue and solutions acceptable to the community is a real possibility.

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EAC Index:

256 new members brought in during our recent canvass (as of October 31): 1139 members currently (November 2, 2009) 1219 followers on Twitter 460 fans on Facebook (November 16, 2009) Over 17,000 hectares declared wilderness protected this year alone

No. of years spent on each campaign to obtain this designation: more than 10 No. of ppm of CO2 in the atmosphere that scientists say is safe: 350 No of ppm of CO2 in the atmosphere currently: 390 # of environmental activists that supported the Climate Change Day of Action event in Halifax: over 400 # of years EAC has won the Best Activist Organization award from the Coast: 6 as of this year

Recent EAC Successes:

- Legislation introduced to establish Efficiency NS Corps: EAC has fought for this independent administrator for years
- New stronger wetland policy introduced
- Sustainable transportation project with Ross Creek Arts Centre reduced km travelled by campers by 85%.

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