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

BETWEEN THE COVERS:

Reducing Food Miles

Ecological Economics



 an ecology action centre publication

www.ecologyaction.ca

Features

Reducing Food Miles

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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. 27 NO. 1

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what's new

Shiny new publications, hot off the modem:

1. *How We Fish Matters* report (www.howwefish.ca).
2. *Seafood Traceability in Canada*: Traceability systems, certification, eco-labeling and standards for achieving sustainable seafood, written by Anna Magera and Sadie Beaton (www.seachoice.org).
3. Green roof policy document (coming soon to www.ecologyaction.ca), which deals with various law and policy tools available to Nova Scotia municipalities.
4. *On the Frontlines: Strategies for Healthy Beaches in Nova Scotia*. (www.ecologyaction.ca) This strategy report, written by beach researcher Sadie Beaton, outlines the EAC's seven goals for better beach management in Nova Scotia and can help guide Nova Scotia toward healthy beaches.
5. *True Grit* (www.ecologyaction.ca). A discussion paper on beach management in Nova Scotia. This must-read has already set a record for downloads from the EAC's website!
6. Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Brochure and FSC-Certified Printers & Wood Suppliers in the Maritimes (www.novascotiaforests.ca).
7. *Is Biomass Energy Green?* (www.novascotiaforests.ca).

And a new book:

Pick up a copy of *Restoring the Acadian Forest: A guide to forest stewardship for woodlot owners in the Maritimes* (Jamie Simpson, 2009) at the Ecology Action Centre office, or check it out at www.restelluris.ca.

letter from the centre

Little Change, Big Change. Tourism, business, transportation and our food supply are all connected to our beautiful surrounding sea and landscape. These precious natural resources are in turn affected by our economy. If we don't take care of what we have or plan to preserve those things that bring us income, then our environment, which supports life and funds our way of life, will wither, leaving behind a dying economy.

In this edition of *Between the Issues*, we explore some of the ways that the environment is affected by our economy and vice versa. What can we do to positively change our economic structure and ultimately protect our environment? Think policy change, think governmental change, think green investment.

Ever heard the uniquely Canadian saying, "Little snow, big snow", or vice-versa? It suggests a snow storm with tiny flakes leaves more accumulation than one with large flakes. Often, change happens at this pace. An accumulation of small changes over time has a longer lasting effect than a scattering of large changes.

Change occurs with the launching and progression of small projects. Protecting our greenspaces and beaches is vital to the sustainable economy needed to keep tourism and other industries healthy. However, many of our natural treasures are in economic limbo, without a quantifiable value attached. Funding and investment structures need to shift, and both citizens and decision makers must learn to think of long-term benefits. When stakeholders only see short-term dollar signs, then our fish stocks disappear, our forests are clearcut and sprawling cities are inefficiently thrown together.

Looking for green economic sustainability in the long term means fighting for policies that value, sustain, protect and benefit the environment. EAC board, staff, members and volunteers strive to make those policies a reality. If we continue to offer persuasive and well-researched arguments and policy critiques, local and provincial governments will listen, the environment will be protected and the economy will thrive. Small actions can lead to big changes, and those changes are within our reach.

We hope you will read this issue, and find inspiration to be an even better environmentalist and activist. Don't just talk to the people that can make the changes—be the people that can change the structure. **Think Big Change.**

~ BTI Editors

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**And all our generous donors
who responded to our
recent end-of-year appeal.**

**Your support
means we can continue to take action,
to ensure a more sustainable Nova Scotia.**

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garden aprons (Food Action Committee) FAC launched a cooking class with a focus on local foods to warm up a cold winter. Over three Thursday evenings, more than a dozen participants learned to cook a variety of winter vegetables, sustainably caught/raised fish and meat and heritage grains. The classes were taught by Sarah Bennetto-O'Brien and Owen O'Brien, professionally-trained cooks passionate about local food. We had an amazing response and a long waiting list and we're looking to make this a more regular FAC activity. Many thanks to Mount Saint Vincent University for the use of their kitchen and to our interns, Anna Drapeau and Tawnya Walsh, for helping organize the class. Nova Scotian gardeners have been dreaming of spring since the cold days of January. The Food Action Committee is pleased to be coordinating the Halifax Landshare program. If you'd like to garden but don't have a yard or if you have a yard you'd like to share, visit <http://www.ecologyaction.ca/foodaction> and click on Projects.

emerald web is sparkling

The Kings County Emerald Web (EW) pilot project is complete. Kings County eco-initiatives have been identified by EAC staff through online research and two participatory workshops in December and January. The Citizen Science project at Saint Mary's University assisted the Emerald Web project by using Greenmaps™ to develop our pilot tool. We await funding to continue moving the project ahead. The EW section of the website has also been developed. Visit the project section of the Food Action page for more project details.

fabulous forests

 (Wilderness Committee)

Quality-based forestry (an alternative to clearcutting) is picking up steam, thanks to a small pilot project by the Department of Natural Resources supported by the Ecology Action Centre. Although 97 percent of DNR funding still supports work that depends on clearcutting, this project is an important step in the right direction. The EAC encourages DNR to continue and expand this project. Staff members Jamie Simpson and Kermit deGooyer gave a presentation to the Forest Products Association of Nova Scotia on clearcutting and it was roundly well-received. Jamie was also invited to speak about forestry before a resource management class at St. Francis Xavier University, at a conference at Kejimikujik National Park, on behalf of the Nova Scotia Botanical Society, and before a forestry class at the University of New Brunswick.

walking off the winter blahs

(Active and Safe Routes to School) Hundreds of students across Nova Scotia participated in Winter Walk Day in February (see www.taketherooffwinter.ca for the latest tally). The Making Tracks pilot program has had an excellent response: over 400 children and youth received safety training in walking, cycling and skateboarding skills. Pace Car communities continue to grow, with at least three more launching this spring.

fishery reform

 (Marine Issues Committee)

Meetings to discuss the *How We Fish Matters* report have been held in the Pacific Region and in Newfoundland and are being scheduled for other Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) regions. Following from the How We Fish project, our focus on the extensive bycatch in the Atlantic Canadian pelagic long-line fishery resulted in the submission of a proposal to DFO for reform in the fishery, including bycatch limits for sensitive species and comprehensive at-sea monitoring. We presented the proposal at the Atlantic Large Pelagics Advisory Committee meeting in late February. The Shrimp and Brews events at the Garrison Brewery in November were a tremendous success, including both an invitation-only VIP event in the afternoon and a sold-out public event in the evening. Over 150 attendees were offered the opportunity to taste Chedabucto trap-caught shrimp. Further recent seafood highlights include Susanna Fuller's trip to the Common Vision meeting on sustainable seafood in Boston; Rob Johnson's participation in a Nova Scotia Food Security gathering, where he introduced some diversity to the farm-centric discussions; and the production of SeaChoice assessments for eight new species which will go out for peer review in the near future. Sadie Beaton and Anna Magera completed the Seafood Traceability Report, and Rob Johnson attended the Seafood Choices Alliance Summit in San Diego – both efforts are helping to bring Atlantic Canadian seafood to the forefront of seafood sustainability.

sustainable transportation – IMBY

(Transportation Issues Committee) The towns of Windsor and Annapolis Royal and the District of Lunenburg have been confirmed as participating communities for TRAX's Municipalities for Green Mobility Project. TRAX has been contracted by the Nova Scotia Community Based Transportation Association to develop and pilot a train-the-trainer program that will encourage seniors to use public transportation. We also continue to respond to unsustainable transportation proposals in HRM, including the province's proposal to pave the railcut and HRM's proposals to widen Bayers Road and Bell Road. Help is welcome!





EVENTS

For more information, visit www.ecologyaction.ca

Wading In: Watershed Management in Nova Scotia

March 26-27, Wolfville, NS

To register to contact: water@ecologyaction.ca

Earth Hour

March 28, 8:30pm

The Geography of Hope

EAC's Third Annual Lecture with author Chris Turner

March 31, 7-9pm, McInnes Room, Dalhousie, \$10/\$15

Earth Day

April 22

Learn to Build Your Own Wind Turbine Workshop

April 27 - May 2, 2009, Windhorse Farm, near Bridgewater, NS

\$650-\$795 per person

For more info: www.silverfootwind.com or

gogreen@ecologyaction.ca

Commuter Challenge

May 31 to June 6

www.commuterchallenge.ca

HRM Bike Week

May 31 to June 6

Canadian Environment Week

May 31 to June 6

Clean Air Day

June 3

World Environment Day

June 5

Trails Day

June 6

EAC Garden Party

June 7, St. Mary's Boat Club

Join us for our first ever "no-stuff" auction and bid on priceless experiences!

World Ocean Day

June 8

This year's theme: "One climate, one ocean, one future."

Go Skateboarding Day

June 21

EAC Annual General Meeting

June 22, 7-9pm

Multipurpose Room, Bloomfield Centre

Featuring the Annual EAC Awards

Nominations due April 30 ... Watch our website and e-newsletter!

the green design debates (Built Environment Committee) BEC co-hosted a day-long workshop, "Green Investment in Built Heritage" on February 16 at the North Street Church. The nearly 100 attendees heard that "the greenest building is the one that is already standing," and left armed with information to prepare this building stock for a low-carbon, clean energy future while respecting its historical and heritage value.

During the past several months, a joint subcommittee of BEC and the Transportation Issues Committee (TIC) hashed out a thoughtful response to HRM's Urban Design Task Force about the HRMbyDesign initiative. The topic is complex and elicited passionate responses. The letter to HRM articulated the EAC's concern over the lack of enforceable sustainability standards for both urban development and alternative transportation and outlined the changes the EAC would like to see in order to support the plan. The EAC encourages HRM to pursue the authority to set standards for sustainable building design so that future HRM plans, including the downtown plan, include more sustainability measures. Vancouver is an example of a city setting sustainability criteria for new buildings.

ditch the bottle (Coastal Issues Committee) Think bottled water is too trashy? The EAC has joined a coalition of groups, including the Polaris Institute, Oxfam Canada, the Council of Canadians and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, to encourage municipalities to ban the sale of bottled water in municipal buildings around Nova Scotia. On March 20, the Coalition will make public art out of water bottles found in the trash cans of municipal buildings in HRM. To watch wasteful water bottles wobble, visit www.ecologyaction.ca/coastal_issues and click on "bottled water."

Coastal Nova: Where Nova Scotia meets the Sea is a five-part series featuring public talks and a workshop to promote public engagement and discussion around coastal issues in Nova Scotia. The Coastal Nova project is a collaboration between the EAC, Saint Mary's University and Dalhousie University's Marine Affairs Program. Events will take place from March through July 2009. Visit www.ecologyaction.ca/content/coastal-nova for more information.

Question: How many stakeholders does it take to achieve strong water policy in Nova Scotia? Answer: all of them! That's why the EAC and Clean Annapolis River Project (CARP) are teaming up to host Wading In: Watershed Management in Nova Scotia on March 26 and 27 at the Old Orchard Inn in Wolfville. This forum will bring together watershed groups, provincial government officials, NGOs and scientists to learn about what's working (and what's not) in water resources management in Nova Scotia and beyond. The outcome of the workshop will be a blueprint for future water resources management in Nova Scotia. For more information, contact Jocelyne Rankin, the EAC's Water Coordinator, at water@ecologyaction.ca or 442-5046.

ecobriefs

By June Hall

One good deed

Surely during his eight years in office, U.S. President George W. Bush did something good for the environment? Astonishingly, yes. On January 6, at the very end of his second term, Bush acted to protect three huge areas in the Pacific Ocean. In fact, he's set aside more ocean than any other leader in history.

Encompassing 195,280 sq mi (505,773 sq. km) in total, the three "national monuments," as they are called, include pristine coral reefs, far-flung island chains, and the deepest canyon on Earth — the Mariana Trench, which runs for hundreds of miles. This is in addition to the almost 140,000 sq mi set aside around the northwestern Hawaiian Islands in 2006.

It turns out we have to thank his wife Laura who, alongside others, fought "determined opposition" from Vice-President Dick Cheney and business leaders in the Marianas Islands. She found a sympathetic ear in her husband, who in recent years seems to have been converted to the cause — just not in the Gulf of Mexico or off the coast of California, where last summer he lifted the ban on offshore oil drilling.

(Nature, January 14, 2009)

A few impacts

As we lick our wounds over the global economic crisis, herewith is a tiny selection of its impacts on green-friendly industries:

First, there is the widespread failure of markets for recycled materials. It follows that if we consume less, less will be produced and therefore shipped. A reduction in shipping means diminished need for cardboard boxes, which often contain recycled material. And what goes for cardboard goes for other materials too. After record prices for used paper and aluminum in the summer of 2008, we now anticipate reduced demand, plummeting prices, mountains of unwanted scrap, and falling revenues for cities. So what's needed? Policies that ensure the survival of recycling.



Lower oil prices, in part a result of reduced demand, are having an impact on industries involved in alternative energy. Lay-offs, stalled projects and grim financial forecasts are putting brakes on solar energy, an industry that had, until recently, been flourishing. In Australia, the U.S. and China, among other countries, projects are being scaled back or halted.

And then there's wind power, which used to have the breeze at its back. Here, too, the credit crisis is having an impact, especially in the U.S., where, for example, one of the top underwriters was the now bankrupt Lehman Bros. Germany, a titan in the world of alternative energy, is also seeing a downturn in wind projects, as is Britain, whose ambitions are extraordinary — and perhaps not attainable. Its goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60-80 percent by 2050.

Not all is bad news, however. Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty is introducing a Green Energy Act that aims to make Ontario a world leader in alternative energy. Further developments await!

Slow death

No doubt about it, forests in western North America are under assault. In recent years, there has been no shortage of bad news, including the spread of the mountain pine beetle, which is chomping its way across a huge swath of forest stretching from B.C. to Mexico.

But an article in *Science* reports a far more insidious process. The everyday mortality rate of trees in the old-growth forests of California, Idaho, Colorado, Arizona and the Pacific Northwest has, on average, doubled over the last few decades. In California it has climbed from 1 percent per year in 1983, to 1.7 percent at present, and jumped from 0.3 percent in the 1970s to 1.3 percent today in the Pacific Northwest. It's a big deal when you think long-term and do the math.

What's driving the change? No matter how they analyzed the data, the authors of "this stunningly important paper" could see only one answer: the rising temperatures and drier climates brought to us courtesy of global warming. Although proof is elusive, the study has been praised for its rigour and thus provides us with a real wake-up call.

The really scary thing? Unlike in tropical forests, where similar mortality increases are being matched by the growth of young trees, there's no sign that seedlings are growing any faster. The forests are thinning, with all that means for wildlife and carbon storage.

(Science, January 22, 2009)



Rising sea levels

Mohammed Nasheed, the new president of the Republic of Maldives, an island chain in the Indian Ocean, has big plans. He intends to set up what he calls a "sovereign wealth fund" as a way to save his people's livelihood.

A poster child for the dangers of global warming, the Maldives could well disappear altogether as sea levels continue to rise, since its average elevation is only 1.5 m, and its highest point a mere 2.3 m. This peril was brought home forcefully by the 2004 tsunami, which inflicted substantial damage.

Nasheed proposes to use some of the island's tourism revenue to buy land in India, Sri Lanka and Australia, places where his people could move if need be. "We do not want to leave the Maldives, but we also do not want to be climate refugees living in tents for decades," he said.

However dramatic their situation, the number of people involved — 350,000 — is relatively small. Contrast that with the figures given in a recent World Bank study: 56 million people in 84 developing countries, it says, will be at risk if worldwide sea levels rise by 1 m. Topping the list in terms of population affected is Vietnam, with Egypt, Mauritania, Guyana and the Bahamas also in the top ten. Surprisingly, Bangladesh gets only a nod.

(Guardian Weekly, November 14, 2008 and January 2, 2009)

Carbon muncher

It's not a well-known fact, but the two billion or so tonnes of cement used worldwide each year are responsible for more carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions than the entire aviation industry. In fact, the cement is estimated to produce five percent of global totals.

Various methods have been tried over the years to reduce emissions, but none has “had a significant impact on the market.” Now, however, scientists at Novacem, an enterprise based at Imperial College, London, are embarking on a £1.5-million project to test a promising new approach.

Their secret? Use magnesium oxide and special mineral additives in place of limestone, which is primarily calcium carbonate. The result? The substitute material emits no CO2 during production — which happens at significantly lower temperatures, thus requiring less energy — and the resulting cement absorbs more CO2 from the atmosphere as it hardens. Overall, this “green” cement has a negative carbon footprint: over its lifetime a tonne of the stuff should remove 0.6 tonnes of CO2 from the air vs. the 0.4 tonnes normally contributed.

So what could go wrong? Countering industry skeptics, the researchers say there are abundant magnesium resources. Industrial byproducts can even be used. But will it succeed in large-scale structural projects? Plainly more research is needed.

(www.Guardian.co.uk, December 31, 2008)

Foxhunting in Tasmania

Although foxes, which are native to Europe, have exacted a terrible toll on Australia’s wildlife, only recently have they gained

a foothold on Tasmania, presumably because facial tumour disease is killing off their major predator, the Tasmanian devil.

But now a \$26-million (AUD) project funded by the state government aims to exterminate them completely with a careful program of baiting — perhaps the most ambitious such attempt in the world. To track down the miscreants — which number perhaps only 150 on this large island — the project is relying on DNA analysis of feces. Talk about a needle in a haystack!

(Australian Geographic, January-February 2009)



Janet Wilson



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Youth On Track

By Cheyenne Dickinson



Session participants work together to patch a tube.

Seven teenagers file into the gym, wheeling borrowed bicycles ahead of them. They lean the bikes against the wall and immediately huddle in small groups, chatting among themselves.

They are all members of the Adolescent Centre for Treatment (ACT) program, an IWK Hospital initiative providing rehabilitative mental health treatment for youth aged 13 to 19. They've come to participate in an abridged version of Making Tracks Cycling, a hands-on safety skills program developed by Active & Safe Routes to School.

Since its June 2008 launch, Making Tracks has taught hundreds of children how to walk and wheel in their communities with increased confidence and safety. The program provides hands-on, experiential skill training in the areas of pedestrian, cycling, skateboarding and in-line skating safety. It's a unique approach to bridging the small gap between health care and the environment, and it may whet the appetite of participants to pursue active transportation as a lifestyle choice.

Natasha Hopfner, an occupational therapist with the IWK ACT program, thought the program would provide an excellent opportunity for the at-risk youth with whom she works. "It's a great chance for them to get out and try something new," she says.

The full program includes 15 to 18 interactive exercises normally offered over multiple sessions. Hopfner decides to let the youth get a taste of the program first, then gauge interest for further steps. "If the interest is there," Hopfner says, "then this program may be a prime opportunity for some of our teens to develop their leadership skills and deliver the program to younger youth at the Centre or in their home schools."

Joe Quercia, a cycling expert, is the trainer for the session. He introduces himself and jumps right into some team-building exercises. Distributing game cards for "cycling bingo," he fires off the instructions: each person must mingle with the others and try to match names to the different activities on the card. The group sets to work, trying to find out which of their peers has traveled back and forth to school by bike, who has had a bike stolen, or who has made a bicycle day trip.

After more team-building, the group reforms a circle and Quercia delves into the nuances of multi-season cycling gear. He quizzes the teens about what they should bring for different conditions – one by one, each item they mention is revealed from his backpack. "Wow," marvels one, "you're like a bicycling superhero."

Quercia distributes helmets and explains how to wear them properly.

"What if I can't breathe?" a participant asks.

"Then it's too tight," Quercia replies.

He then explains proper bike fit, instructing the group how to determine proper cockpit length and how to adjust the saddle to the correct height.

If the teens stray from their task, Quercia skillfully reins them back in. With an hour left in the session, he pulls out a tool kit and announces it's time for everyone to get their hands dirty.

Everyone pairs up to work on some basic maintenance skills. Fully engaged, they take off both front and rear wheels, remove a tube, and learn how to pinpoint and patch a puncture. One brawny teen with a keen sense of humour entertains the crowd, and helps his peers figure out what to do. It's inspiring to watch.

The session ends, and the participants grab their bikes and filter out in single file. There hasn't been a single mention of greenhouse gases, but an important environmental message has been delivered. The teens seem to have enjoyed themselves – each of them thanks Quercia as they exit. Although short, the session has been enough to pique the interest of at least some, hopefully bringing them one step closer to becoming Cycling Superheroes in their own right.

Cheyenne is the Community Advisor for Active & Safe Routes to School. She enjoys being outdoors and spooning with her dog.

Take Action

Bike safety is essential for all cyclists, from novices through experienced riders. Check out the Making Tracks safety manuals on the Active & Safe Routes to School website: <http://saferoutesns.ca/index.php/special/making-tracks/>

Ban Cosmetic Pesticides: Hope Springs Eternal

By *Chris Benjamin*



The time has come for Nova Scotia to ban cosmetic pesticides. Actually, it came last spring; then it went. With any luck, it will be back again this spring.

Last May, our Ministers of Environment, Municipal Relations and Health Promotion & Protection instructed staff of all three departments to get together over the summer months and “look at options to address the use of landscape pesticides for cosmetic purposes.” For the record, a cosmetic pesticide is any herbicide, insecticide, or fungicide used purely for aesthetic purposes, and does not include pesticides used in agriculture or forestry.

Pesticide survivors and health and environment advocates across the province let the government know they want Nova Scotia to follow the lead of Quebec and Ontario and become the third province to ban cosmetic pesticides. They eagerly awaited the fall sitting of the Legislature and the heated debate it would surely hold.

It never happened. The closest MLAs have come to discussing the issue was when both opposition parties brought forth their own Private Member's Bills allowing Nova Scotian municipalities the right to enact cosmetic pesticide bans. Neither was passed. As it stands, only HRM can restrict cosmetic pesticide use and Nova Scotia is the only province in the country that actually prohibits municipalities from making their own protective rules about cosmetic pesticides.

Given that the three major provincial political parties have all expressed interest in regulating cosmetic pesticides, it seems likely it will become a platform issue when an election is called. With luck and common sense, these unnecessary, polluting, dangerous products will be off our shelves by this time next year.

An effective piece of legislation will do five things.

First, it will ban all cosmetic pesticides except in the case of a threat to public health or an ecosystem.

Second, it will prohibit not only use but also the sale of cosmetic pesticides, as otherwise we are left with retailers as dope

dealers, their shelves filled with illegal lawn drugs. have been hurt by pesticides, who suffer acute and chronic illnesses, and the countless more who will be hurt by future cosmetic pesticide application, have waited long enough. Legislators across North America must stop dithering over the growing body of evidence showing the harmful health effects of pesticide exposure: increased risk of dozens of cancers; neurological and reproductive effects; birth defects, fetal death and intrauterine growth retardation; and Parkinson's disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and Alzheimer's disease. The cost of treating these illnesses far surpasses the economic value of these products. In fact, a 2008 study by Seattle Public Utilities concludes that “each household converting from synthetic to natural [lawn-care] practices produces nearly \$75 in annual ongoing public health, ecological, water conservation, and hazardous waste management benefits.”

The economic benefits of provincial and municipal pesticide bans are many. The lawn care industry is booming wherever cosmetic pesticide use has been banned. Statistics Canada reports that the number of landscaping companies in Toronto has increased each year since that city implemented a cosmetic pesticide ban. Since HRM enacted its cosmetic pesticide by-law, the number of landscaping companies has increased by more than 50 percent, as has the number of employees per company. Most of this growth is sparked by organic landscapers filling the niche for pesticide free yard-work created by the ban. In Quebec, retailers tell the EAC that sales in lawn care products (equipment, accessories, organic pest control and soils) have increased since the provincial ban was implemented. Overall, organic lawn care products are growing at nearly twice the rate of conventional pesticide sales. The public is ready for change. According to a November 2007 poll by Corporate Research Associates Inc., 69 percent of Maritimers supported a ban on the use of cosmetic pesticides. That means that whatever government is elected this spring, it's a no-brainer. A well thought-out ban on cosmetic pesticides will enact an easy win for our economy, our health and the environment.

Chris Benjamin is the Healthy Lawns Coordinator at EAC and father of Dylan.

Take Action

Read Pesticide-Free Nova Scotia's 5 backgrounders, found at

www.ecologyaction.ca;

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Nova Scotia;

Write your MLA or City Councillor and tell them you want a cosmetic pesticide ban in place this year!

Practice sustainable landscaping

dealers, their shelves filled with illegal lawn drugs.

Third, municipalities must be given the right to pass their own local bans, which, as we've seen in Ontario, can be stronger than provincial rules.

Fourth, a pesticide ban must include a strong education component. Communities that pass restrictive cosmetic pesticide by-laws and support them with education are successful in reducing the use of pesticides by between 51-to-90 percent, compared to a 10-to-24 percent reduction in those with no educational component to their by-laws.

Finally, effective legislation will include mechanisms that enforce the new rules, especially at the retail level. Our limited resources are better used here than inspecting every Nova Scotian lawn.

The thousands of Nova Scotians who

On The Front Lines: Strategies for Healthy Beaches in Nova Scotia

By Sadie Beaton



From the low-lying reddish sand shorelines along the Northumberland Strait, to the high white dunes of the southwest shore, Nova Scotia's coast is adorned with an astonishing diversity of beach systems. Intricate and beautiful, they are also one of our province's most valuable assets. Residents and visitors alike greatly value their access to healthy beaches for recreation, tourism and shellfish harvesting.

Offering more than just sunbaths, clam-bakes and sandcastles, these systems form a buffer between land and sea, protecting us from storm surges and the impacts of climate change. They also provide critical habitat for many uniquely adapted species, from the resident Tiger Beetle to the visiting Piping Plover.

WHAT IS A BEACH, ANYWAY?

Though we often imagine a beach as a simple accumulation of sand, gravel or cobble along the shore, beaches are actually much more. These dynamic and interconnected coastal systems stretch underwater to offshore sand bars and often include dunes, salt marshes, and lagoons or barachois ponds on the landward edge. Healthy beaches rely on new supplies of sand and gravel stored elsewhere on the coast to help them respond to coastal change. The same sediments that fall from eroding coastal cliffs to become beach sand may later become the building blocks of a nearby salt marsh.

DIGGING FOR TREASURE

Though a day at the beach may mean a leisurely sunbath or birdwatching session for some, for others it is hard work. Shellfish harvesting, especially "clamming", is an important recreational and commercial activity that has long taken place on many of Nova Scotia's beaches. The soft-shelled clams and quahogs sought by harvesters are not only delicious steamed and dipped in butter – they are also sensitive filter feeders, making them excellent indicators of beach health.

Unfortunately, sewage and septic contamination have compromised beach health and water quality in many important clamming areas, with serious implications for the province's shellfish harvesting industry. The number of closures has more than doubled in Nova Scotia over the past 15 years, at an estimated cost of \$8 million each year in lost revenues.

WE NEED TO PROTECT BEACHES SO THEY CAN PROTECT US

Nova Scotia's beaches are in trouble. On the front lines of climate change, these systems are not adequately protected. Accelerated erosion, habitat degradation and threats to public access are already threatening the natural functions and processes of Nova Scotia's beaches. In turn, our human-made beach infrastructure, including roads and boardwalks, is increasingly susceptible to damage.

Situated as they are between land and sea, beach systems often fall into a "bureaucratic black hole." Several government departments in the province have beach management responsibilities, including testing water quality, promoting tourism, reviewing development or alteration proposals and protecting endangered shorebirds. However, no lead agency is accountable for the overall health of Nova Scotia's beach systems.

Nova Scotia needs a bold approach to beach management that considers the entire ecosystem. Healthy beaches need room to move and respond to wind, waves, and other weather-related factors. The sensitive wildlife and vegetation species that bring life to the beach system need protection from human disturbance. People need ensured beach access to responsibly enjoy our shores into the future, whether for swimming, surfing, birdwatching or shellfish harvesting.

TRUE GRIT

Over the last 12 months, the Coastal Issues Committee at the Ecology Action Centre has researched various aspects of Nova Scotia's amazing beach systems along with elements of beach management happening in other places. A synthe-

Take Action

Express your hopes and concerns about the future of Nova Scotia's beaches to our key coastal decision makers:

A) The Provincial Oceans Network - Developing the emerging Sustainable Coastal Development Strategy.
hustonje@gov.ns.ca / (902) 424-2996.

B) Parks Division of the Department of Natural Resources – Responsible for much of the current management happening in Nova Scotia's beaches. carrolhe@gov.ns.ca / (902) 662-5062

C) Your local MLA and municipal councillor.

sis of available information can be found in an EAC discussion paper, True Grit: A New Vision For Healthy Beaches in Nova Scotia (available at www.ecologyaction.ca/coastal_issues).

Combining this research with the results of a True Grit workshop this past fall, the EAC has worked with various partners to identify key beach management goals for the province. These goals are outlined in a strategic report, On The Front Lines: Strategies For Healthy Beaches in Nova Scotia (also available at www.ecologyaction.ca/coastal_issues).

Sadie Beaton works as a Marine and Coastal Researcher at the Ecology Action Centre. She enjoys long walks on the wet beach sand, with a leashed dog and plenty of sunscreen. Especially when these strolls are followed by a meal of freshly steamed Nova Scotia hand-dug clams.

THE SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE BEACH MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

- 1. Beaches and coastal systems are protected by clear and enforceable laws;**
- 2. Beaches have room to respond to coastal change;**
- 3. Diverse wildlife and vegetation communities thrive on beach systems;**
- 4. Citizens continue to responsibly access public beaches;**
- 5. Communities are directly involved in beach management;**
- 6. Relevant beach management information is available, accessible, and widely used;**
- 7. Leaders work together to protect and promote beach health.**

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How We Fish Matters...

By Susanna Fuller

Over time, the number of people employed as fishermen in Canada has declined dramatically, with the most publicized drop in employment occurring after the cod collapse in Newfoundland in the early 1990s. And over time, fishing vessel efficiency and capacity of fishing gear to catch more fish has increased. These two trends are not unrelated.

Fishing in Canada is not currently regulated based on the impacts of fishing gear to the ecosystem. As part of the Ecology Action Centre's efforts to increase knowledge on the impacts of fishing and provide well researched policy solutions, we partnered with the Living Oceans Society in British Columbia, and the Marine Conservation Biology Institute based in Washington State, to complete a project entitled "How We Fish in Canada."

We gathered scientific information on all fisheries in Canadian waters, with a focus on the bycatch – incidental catch of non-target species – and information on damage to seafloor habitat. The fishing gears most commonly used in Canadian waters are illustrated in Figure 1. We then brought together a group of people from across Canada who were knowledgeable about the different types of fishing gears used in Canadian waters, and reviewed the scientific information we had gathered, incorporated experiential knowledge. The result of this meeting was a relative rating of the impacts of 13 commonly used fishing gears on bycatch / discarded species

continued on page 14

Fig. 2

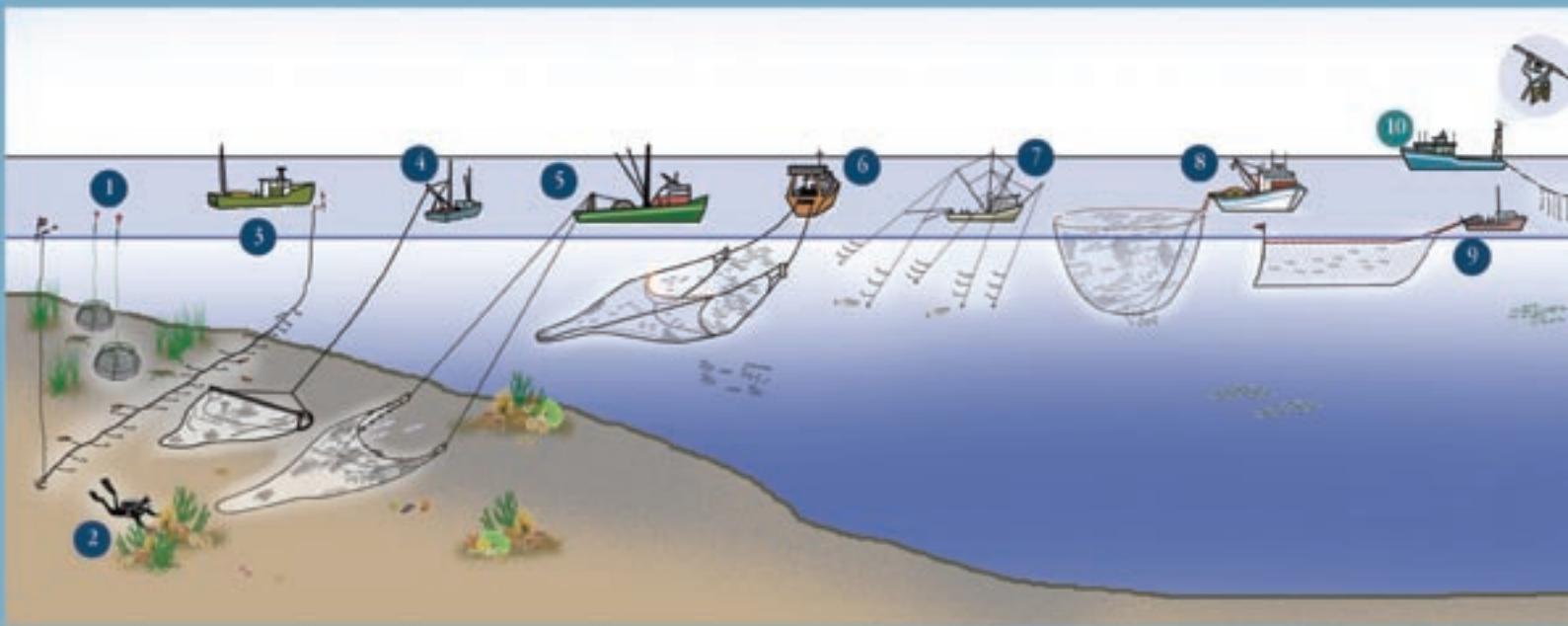
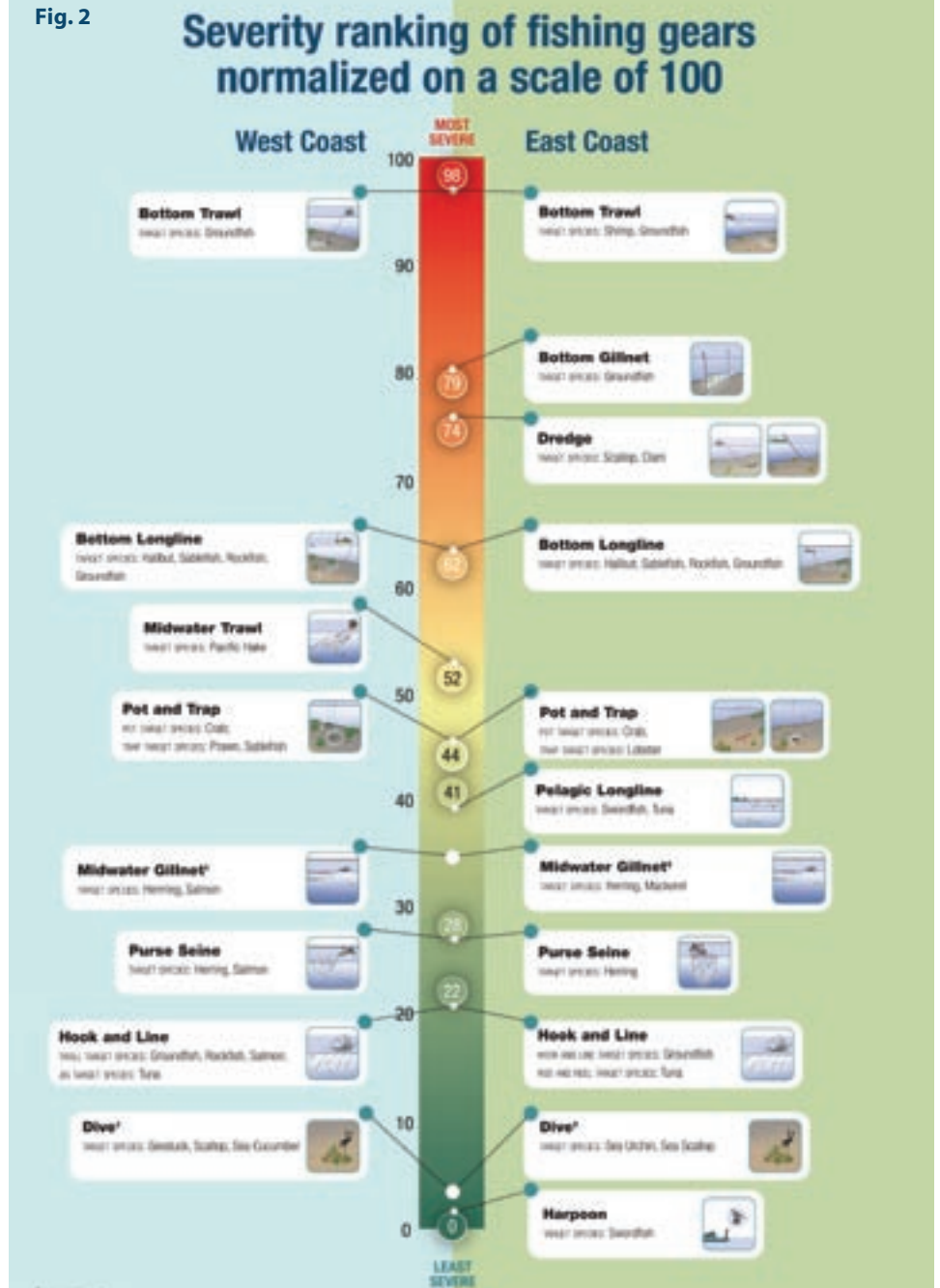


Fig. 3 Rating of ecological impacts of fishing gears used on the west and east coasts of Canada.
 Ratings are based on expert consultations, available DFO data and reviews of the scientific literature.

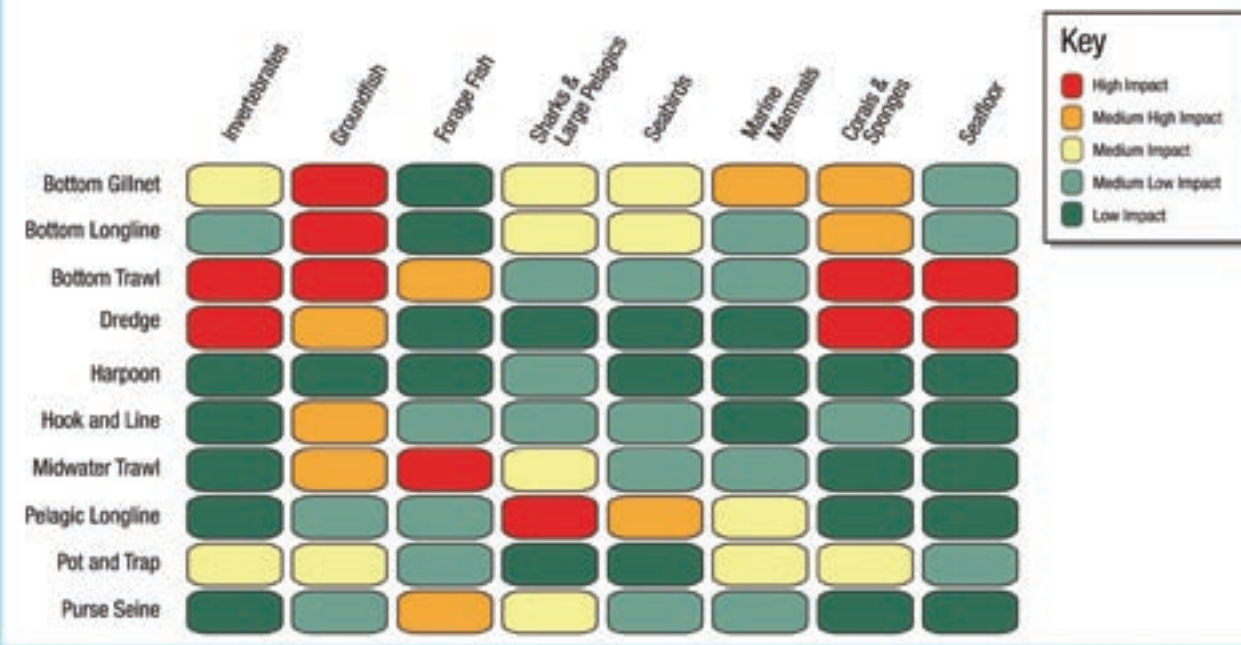
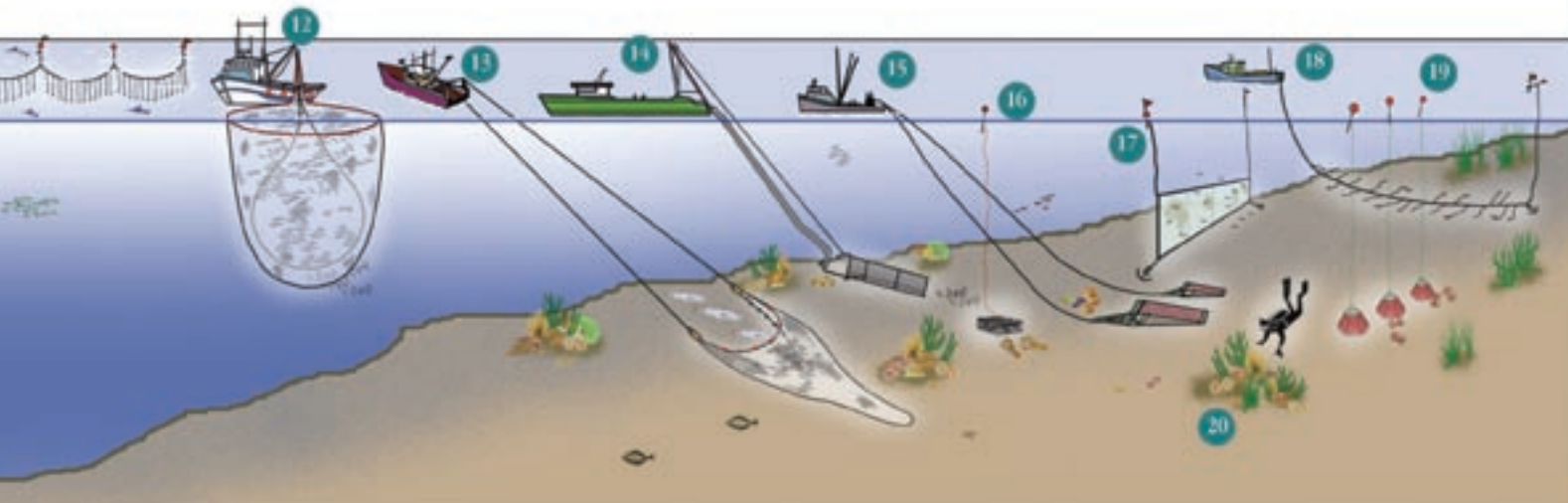


Fig. 1 Illustration of common fishing gears used in Canada (gear and vessels not drawn to scale)

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| 1 Prawn Trap | 9 Midwater Salmon Gillnet | 17 Bottom Gillnet (groundfish gillnet) |
| 2 Dive | 10 Pelagic Longline (swordfish longline) | 18 Groundfish Bottom Longline |
| 3 Groundfish Bottom Longline | 11 Harpoon (swordfish harpoon) | 19 Pot and Trap (crab pots) |
| 4 Shrimp Beam Trawl | 12 Purse Seine (herring seine) | 20 Dive |
| 5 Groundfish Otter Trawl | 13 Groundfish Otter Trawl | |
| 6 Midwater Trawl | 14 Offshore Hydraulic Clam Dredge | |
| 7 Hook and Line | 15 Dredge (scallop dredge) | |
| 8 Salmon Purse Seine | 16 Pot and Trap (lobster trap) | |

Key

- West coast gear type
- East coast gear type



and elements of seafloor habitat (Figure 2). The next step was to conduct a survey of ~100 individuals involved in the fishery, to have them compare the overall ecological impact of one gear, with another, without knowing which gears they were comparing.

The survey results were remarkably similar among the various groups we sent surveys to (Figure 3), showing agreement on ecosystem impacts of fishing gear between conservationists, scientists, fishermen and fisheries managers. The survey results we then used to rank the relative impacts of fishing gear (Figure 4), and to propose recommendations to include these relative impacts in fisheries science, management and policy.

The results of the “How We Fish in Canada” show clearly that bottom trawling has the most severe ecosystem impacts, bottom dredges the second most severe, and that gears such as hook and line methods, harpoons and diving have the least ecosystem impacts (Figure 4). The EAC and other organizations, along with the scientific community have generally agreed that different fishing gears have different ecosystem impacts and that these impacts need to be considered when mak-

ing fisheries management decisions, particularly in light of the need for both precautionary and ecosystem based fisheries management, not to mention the degraded state of the world's oceans and fish stocks.

The final recommendations from this research project are that fisheries managers should implement management strategies that minimize the impacts of fishing gear on bycatch and habitat, that adequate scientific data be collected on fisheries bycatch and discards and habitat damage, and that fisheries policies are developed and implemented to ensure that ecological impacts of fishing gear are minimized. The next steps in the project are to make specific recommendations for each fishery in Canada, that we hope will be considered as fisheries begin to be managed through a broader ecosystem approach.

When fisheries were conducted from coastal communities, using small boats, and gear that did not require large engines to pull it through the water, there was some built in ecosystem protection. Small boats could not go that far from shore, smaller engines could not pull large bottom trawls, dredges or miles and miles of surface longlines.

When discussing fisheries in the context of an economic downturn, and more importantly in terms of economic stimulus, we hope that the results of our study will be used to begin to restructure Canada's fisheries, and use lower impact fishing gear that often requires more people to be on board fishing vessels, and at the same time will allow for some ecosystem recovery. In no other industry is the environment and economy more linked – we depend solely on the natural oceanic environment to produce wild fish. When we overfish, destroy the ecosystem or fish one stock to collapse, the economy is automatically affected. How we fish does matter. There are many examples of gear modifications, substitutions, low impact fisheries, area closures throughout Canada. We need to celebrate these examples, support low impact fisheries, and continue to ask where and how our fish was caught.

The entire “How We Fish” report as well as background documents can be accessed at [www. Howwefish.ca](http://www.Howwefish.ca).

Susanna Fuller is taking care of her baby, but still very concerned about the state of the world's oceans.

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Ecological Economics: The Way Forward When Business As Usual is Unsustainable

By Lisa Kretz



I was not monetarily rich growing up and I remember from a young age, being frustrated by how my economic limitations resulted in less freedom. I became troubled by the gulf between what was affordable and what was ecologically sustainable and the apparent necessity of boundless growth and ever-increasing consumption seemingly required to sustain our economic system.

Today, we are faced with a crashing global economy and massive personal losses in Canadian investments. How to respond as environmentalists is key. I suggest we work to envision new ways of building. The time is ripe for hope, innovation and a focus on creating a just society. Our collective response to this crisis can foster the world we want to see: a world powered by clean energy and with sustainable jobs for its citizens, a world where ecosystems thrive and local organic food is plentiful. The time is now for ecologically sustainable and socially responsible economics and the way forward will require some ingenuity and boldness.

What would an ecologically sound response to the current situation look like? I believe it would encompass creating thriving local communities with full employment, guaranteed healthcare, housing, education, leisure-time and a healthy ecology.

What can government do?

We want to see our governments respond by aiming for full employment, preparing Canadians for a low-carbon economy and ensuring ecological sustainability is afford-

able for everyone. Fundamentally, governments must recognize that healthy ecosystems are a necessary precursor to a strong economy. Thriving ecologies supply the foundation for our survival. Government investment in the health of our ecosystems will not only create jobs in the near term but also have long-term benefits. Healthy ecosystems will mitigate climate change and help protect us from the social, ecological and economic disasters that will result from a failure to act. Government investment could take its inspiration from 1930s job creation projects that dramatically enhanced national parks in the United States. These new jobs would allow us to work with the environment rather than simply extracting short-term wealth from it.

This winter, the federal government released a budget that failed to embrace a serious greening of the economy. Creating environmentally sound infrastructure and green jobs are the obvious choices for both the short- and long-term health of local, global and national economies. For example, a serious investment in public transportation is essential. Research into alternative transportation methods built on renewable energy sources will have immeasurable benefits. Building cities and rural communities around affordable, dependable, efficient transportation is crucial.

Now is the time to let government know what Canadians want. Rather than struggling to get back to business as usual, let's fight for and create unusual business. Let's make clear the direction in which we want to move. As an example, we could

declare a national day of public transportation. If you cannot make it to work using public transportation, stay home in solidarity. Cram buses, ferries and subways so full that cities are unable to keep up with the demand. Let business-as-usual grind to a halt for a day, because without workers there is no economy. Let's show our politicians that ecologically-viable transportation alternatives are what Canadian citizens want.

What can business do?

There are more jobs needing to be created than we can imagine. There is a serious need for research into ecologically-sound engineering, science, food production, energy production, housing, transportation, clothing and the like. Local organic food, solar/tidal/wind energy, ecologically-sound housing and transport, and recycled and biodegradable products are all viable directions for stimulating green economies – the job possibilities and business opportunities are inspiring.

The time is ripe for a new way of thinking. We need to start creating and demanding ecologically sustainable and socially responsible jobs, housing, transportation and more. Our businesses, buildings and farms determine the impact we have on the environment and how we live our lives. The rising price of energy and the challenge of climate change mean that we will all need to be creative in preparing for rapid and transformative change. The North American auto industry is being forced to adapt and many other businesses



are already well on their way down this path towards greener business.

What can individuals do?

When money is tight, every purchase we make matters. Being reminded of this is sometimes a good thing. We think harder about our needs as opposed to our wants. An economic downturn helps make re-use appealing; there is a resurgence in clothing swaps, buying used and finding innovative uses for what otherwise might be treated as garbage. We start to remember all the things that cost little monetarily but give our lives meaning, such as time hiking and biking and



time spent with family and friends sharing homemade foods, games and stories. We are reminded that what we need and what we want are different things.

This is a time for individuals to stop identifying exclusively as consumers and to spend some time discerning what really matters. A recession allows the economically-privileged to pause in the scurrying toward the next purchase. A recession allows for a wider recognition of the hardships faced daily by many. I see the economic downturn as an opportunity to think, act, and feel in ecologically-sustainable ways. We need to demand such changes from our governments and from ourselves.

A recession can act as an equalizer. If society is structured to benefit the few at the expense of the many, then a serious disruption to this system can be an opportunity. There is a brief pause in business as usual. Governments are being forced to invest in society. That investment can be directed towards social, environmental and economic change. At this moment, people are open to, and looking for, ways of doing things differently.

When I was younger, I felt I couldn't change a system I knew to be unsustainable and fundamentally destructive. But when that system starts to teeter, there is hope for revising it. In our economic recovery let's ensure we don't return to our old habits of conspicuous consumption, but instead create a society that invests in a clean environment and less poverty. Sustainable economies are necessarily premised on ecological health and now is the time to demand jobs and infrastructure that reflect this.

Lisa Kretz recently completed a Doctorate in Philosophy at Dalhousie University with a specialization in Environmental Ethics. She believes it is essential to utilize ecological insights to guide human practices.

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Moving Toward a Healthy Food and Farm System: Reducing food miles and increasing local benefits

By Jen Scott



It is crucial to find the opportunity in this time of environmental and economic crisis. When the price of gas goes up (crisis), people get creative about saving gas (opportunity). When there is a big storm (crisis), people stop to help their neighbours (opportunity). When Maple Leaf had its processed meat recall (crisis), direct sales of Nova Scotia-produced meat went up (opportunity). The trick is to turn these crisis-generated opportunities into long-term, durable opportunities.

The food and agriculture crisis is three-fold. First, our local farm and food system is unstable. Farmers are not earning enough money and our food processing sector is unraveling. Second, imported industrial food is increasingly suspect. Recent spinach scares and tainted meat – and even milk products adulterated with melamine – awaken us to the value of knowing and trusting who we buy food from. Third, the cost of gas went way up and could skyrocket again in a post-peak oil world. Our whole global agricultural system is vulnerable because it is so energy-intensive. It is built on the assumption that there will be plenty of cheap energy sources - for trucks to transport food everywhere; for growing food using lots of cheap fertilizer (made with natural gas); and for processing food (frozen, then microwaved) for everyone.

Opportunisticly, this crisis is fueling an increase in demand for locally-grown, ecologically-produced food. Here is a chance to build a healthier, more durable, local food and farm system; to replace the

imported products with our own home-grown food; to reduce the transport of food over long distances; and to build viable farm and food businesses supported by Nova Scotians.

Benefits of a Re-Localized Food System

Increase the portion of our food dollar that goes to local farmers

In 2007, EAC's Food Miles Project estimated that of all the money people spent on food in Nova Scotia, less than 7 percent of it filtered back to Nova Scotian net farm income. A more local-based food system could improve this situation. By buying local food directly from farmers, we increase the percentage of our food dollar that pays for the quality of the food rather than for the shipping, advertising, packaging and preservatives.

Rebuild our food self-reliance Fruit

Nova Scotia is known for its orchard and berry fruit production, and we used to be very self-reliant in these fruits. Much of the wealth in the Annapolis Valley was built from apple orchards. Apple production has declined over time and we now produce about four times as much as our fresh apple consumption. (Many apples are used for juice and cider). Ironically, we import about half of the fresh apples we eat, which means we are importing and exporting apples at the same time. With blueber-

ries, we produce about twenty times what we eat, and we import very little. Currently, Nova Scotia produces about 60 percent of the strawberries we consume, but just 30 years ago we produced 140 percent. We used to produce about the same quantity of pears as we consumed, but now we produce barely 20 percent. We have the capacity and knowledge to produce most of what we eat in northern fruits and we could regain that if we act quickly.

Vegetables

Only a couple of decades ago, we produced more beans, beets, cabbage and carrots than we ate in this province. Now (aside from carrots) we produce far less than what we consume. We know we have the potential to produce a much greater share of what we eat in almost all northern vegetables.

Meat

In 1997 we were 80 percent self-reliant in pork. Now we are closer to 15 percent. In a dozen years we have lost most of our pork producers and it has been generally acknowledged that a 'commodity approach' to pork production isn't working for Nova Scotia producers. In other words, our producers can't compete with global pork production (and can't produce pork at the global price). We're going to have to produce and sell pork differently – possibly free-ranging in the summer and selling directly to consumers to cut out the middleman. Selling direct can give both producers and consumers a better price. This is a win-win opportunity.



Lamb is a meat that is highly environmentally-sound because the livestock are fed mostly pasture and hay, crops that keep the soil covered and increase its organic carbon content — particularly when sheep manure is returned to the soil. Unfortunately, we import close to 80 percent of the lamb we consume. Lamb imports travel an average of 18,000 km and the carbon footprint associated with this transport is very high (nearly 2.5 kg of greenhouse gas emissions per kg of meat). If we substituted all imported lamb with locally-produced lamb, we could increase farm cash receipts by an estimated \$9 million. The primary by-product from lamb production — wool — could generate a potential natural insulation business, creating additional energy savings.

Beef is a fascinating story too. It defies reason that Nova Scotians import between 70-to-80 percent of the beef they consume. Mostly from Alberta. In trucks. We import an estimated 15 million kg of beef every year from feedlots in Western Canada, when we could produce all the beef we need right here. Our speculative beef cattle could also be grass-fed, providing us with a much healthier and more ecologically-sound product. Eliminating just the transport of this beef would be the equivalent of taking 6,032 cars off the road per year. Replacing imported beef with local beef could inject \$85 million into farm cash receipts. This is an example of economic stimulus that reduces greenhouse gas emissions at the same time.

In 2006, only 23 percent of the meat in retail grocery stores here (Atlantic Superstore, Sobeys, and Co-Op) was produced in Atlantic Canada, yet we are perfectly suited to produce all the meat we consume in this region. We would have to increase and improve our processing facilities, but that would bring much-needed employment and economic stimulus.

Generate employment in rural areas

In 2004 — the most recent year in which an estimate is available — Nova Scotia agriculture generated 10,281 direct and indirect Person Years of Employment (total hours of employment divided by 2,000 hours to give the equivalent of a full time job). If Nova Scotians bought more local food, this number could be increased substantially. As an example, if we replaced all beef and lamb imports with locally-grown product, we could generate an estimated 1,860 jobs in rural Nova Scotia.

It is reasonable to have some imported food so we have variety in our diets. But imported food destabilizes our local food system if it is too prevalent and it doesn't generate local economic, social, and environmental benefits the way local food does. Imported food has costs we don't often think about. The transportation of food, which accounts for approximately 30 percent of the transport trucks on our highways, wears on publicly-funded roads and produces greenhouse gas emissions, congestion, pollution and accidents. Ad-

ditionally, the effects of imported industrial food on our health is borne by our tax dollars.

Do we as consumers have any influence when it comes to New Zealand lamb, Mexican tomatoes, or apples from Washington State? No. The greatest benefits of a healthy local food system are better food, viable farms, the ability to have a meaningful connection with food production in the province and, ultimately, the ability to support and influence farming here in Nova Scotia.

Jen works with Marla MacLeod on the Food Miles Project — a collaboration between the EAC and the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture.

Take Action

- Join the Food Action Committee at EAC. We meet at 5:30 pm every third Monday. Contact Marla MacLeod for more information (phone: 442-1077, email: foodaction@ecologyaction.ca).
- Buy food from farmers directly through a farmers' market, a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) initiative, or a farm store. For listings see: www.acornorganic.org, www.localfood.nsfarmersmarkets.ca, www.nsfarmersmarkets.ca, or www.selectnovascotia.ca.
- Learn how to shop, cook and eat seasonally. Eating by the Seasons cookbooks are available for \$10 each from the EAC. Stay tuned to hear about seasonal cooking classes!

Planning and Funding a Green Future for Municipalities

By Graeme Fisher and Laena Garrison

Between 2005 and 2010, Nova Scotia municipalities will receive approximately \$145 million in federal gas tax transfers. In order to continue receiving their portion, all 55 municipalities in Nova Scotia are required to have Integrated Community Sustainability Plans (ICSPs) completed by 2010.

ICSPs ensure direct investment in local green infrastructure. The funds can be used for environmentally sustainable municipal projects that contribute to cleaner air, cleaner water or reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Examples of eligible infrastructure projects include public transit, rail lines, bike lanes and bridges, drinking water purification systems, organic waste management and community energy systems.

In developing their ICSP, each municipality is being asked to incorporate the four pillars of sustainability — environmental, social, cultural and economic — to create a vision for the type of community they want to be in the 21st century. They are also tasked with setting long-term (20- to 30-year) goals, and initiating specific actions

to achieve these goals. Some municipalities have existing planning documents and some of these already meet the ICSP criteria. (Other municipalities have no planning strategies whatsoever). ICSPs are not meant to replace current plans, but rather to consolidate and/or expand upon them.

Over the course of 2009, the TRAX Project of the Ecology Action Centre will spearhead Municipalities for Green Mobility, a project in which TRAX will partner with the Town of Windsor, the District of Lunenburg and the Town of Annapolis Royal to help these municipalities incorporate sustainable transportation best practices into their ICSPs. TRAX will lead a public session in each community to identify common elements for a citizen-based vision of sustainable transportation. TRAX will provide an overview of the findings to municipal staff and help staff translate the findings into sustainable transportation goals and actions for their ICSP. These actions may include changes to Municipal Land Use by-laws, such as switching from minimum to maximum

parking requirements for commercial and residential development. The broader goal of the project will be to develop a Municipalities for Green Mobility toolkit for use by the other 52 municipalities in Nova Scotia.

The ICSP plans will set the stage for the growth and development of Nova Scotia municipalities over the next 30 years. Public consultation is a mandatory component of the ICSP process, but it is up to each municipality to determine the level of public involvement in the development of its plan.

Make sure your voice is heard. What community values do you want to see protected and passed on? What issues of concern do you want to see addressed? How do you think federal gas tax funds should be spent?

For more information about ICSPs and TRAX's Municipalities for Green Mobility Project, contact Jen Powley or Laena Garrison, TRAX Coordinators at 429.0924 or trax@ecologyaction.ca

Graeme Fisher works for Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. Laena Garrison is the TRAX Coordinator with the EAC.

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Green Mobility Capital Grants: Incentive, Innovation, and Impact

By Jen Scott



Pictou Elementary School students trying out their new commuter trail. The trail was built with support from the 2008 Green Mobility Grant Program. Photo Credit: Maggy Burns

In November 2007, just after the price of gas in Nova Scotia spiked, the second round of Green Mobility Grants were announced. These are grants for non-urban community groups and municipalities with proposals for improving alternative transportation infrastructure. The original 'green stimulus package'.

The grant program was the brain-child of EAC's Maggy Burns, and EAC inspired Conserve Nova Scotia to make it possible by funding these green transportation initiatives in rural communities. The Green Mobility Capital Grants program was born, and in the first year, 12 applications for funding were received. Nine projects were awarded a grant. Projects included bicycle parking, paved shoulders and bike lanes, passenger vans for community based transportation systems and trail links.

Program success is based on providing Nova Scotians with viable, ecologically-friendly alternatives to driving alone in their cars and trucks... to work, school, events and appointments. These alternatives are challenging to provide in areas with little or no public transit, significant distances to services and employment and dispersed populations.

This year's Green Mobility Grant applicants proposed many grassroots solutions and place-based innovations. In January, 12 out of 29 applicants were selected to receive a total of \$160,000 in funding. Applications were evaluated based on the likelihood that the proposed projects would shift travel patterns and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. The applicants demonstrated the real need and desire for improved transportation options in NS. It was heartbreaking not to be able to fund more projects, as

many of the applications were excellent. We hope that provincial investment in sustainable transportation will grow.

The following projects were selected for funding (in alphabetical order):

Annopolis County Recreation Services:

\$17,365 for their Share the Road Campaign. They will install 120 share the road signs and 12 bike racks on designated bike routes throughout the County. This infrastructure is part of a larger active transportation plan to promote cycling as a means to get to work, to school or run errands.

Town of Berwick:

\$9,500 for a solar bus shelter with bike rack. This bus shelter for Kings Transit users will have lighting powered by a solar panel, and will be constructed using local materials and labour to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Cape Breton Regional Library:

\$1,595 for bike racks and signs at three rural libraries.

Cape Breton Regional Municipality:

\$24,478 for infrastructure to support public transportation in the smaller towns around Sydney. This will include: 12 bus bike racks, 18 bike racks, and a transit shelter in Glace Bay. This infrastructure will help people who want to ride a bike to the bus stop or ride a bike one way and take the bus on the way back.

Chéticamp Economic Council:

\$10,374 to make Chéticamp bicycle-friendly. Bike racks, share the road signs, and bicycle lanes will soon be part of the town. This project will create an incentive for local residents to shift their transportation patterns and ride bikes instead of driving cars.

Kings Paratransit Society (KPS):

\$25,000 for an accessible mini-bus.

KPS is a community-based transportation system that offers point to point service in Kings County. They have a client base of seniors, persons with disabilities, and others in need. They also plan to offer feeder service from outlying communities to connect with the Kings Transit system.

Le Transport de Clare (LTC):

\$25,000 to help purchase an accessible bus for their innovative community-based transportation system. This group is working to reduce the need for all members of a household to have cars by providing reliable, accessible, and affordable public transport service. LTC received funding from other sources which permitted us to reallocate these funds to another group.

Dynamite Trail Association:

\$25,000 for a 4 km trail upgrade, part of a 10 km trail near Mahone Bay. This trail will have a safe surface for those challenged by mobility issues and will provide a viable, alternative transportation route to the local and amenities in Mahone Bay.

RECAP (Route Enhancement

Committee of the Aspotogan Peninsula):

\$4,368 for installation of locally manufactured bike racks at 10 key locations in the Hubbards area.

Ross Creek Centre for the Arts and Kids Action Program (KAP):

\$25,000 towards the purchase of two 12-passenger vans. This project is a partnership between two organizations in the Canning area that want to increase access to their youth programs and reduce individual car trips.

Town of Springhill:

\$2,030 to install bike racks throughout the town.

Strait Area Transit Co-op:

\$3,600 to help purchase bus bike racks and bus shelters for the local transit system, a 26 passenger bus and 2 accessible vans serving 4 local municipalities, recently launched in October 2008.

Town of Truro:

\$11,600 for on-road bike lanes and the installation of bike racks throughout the town. Residents of Truro have not felt safe cycling in the town and have very few places to park their bikes.

The projects are scheduled to be complete by October, 2009. Stay tuned for further details.

Jen Scott is the Green Mobility Grants Coordinator. She lives in Hants County and telecommutes and car pools to work.

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By EcoHead



henry mac

Send your questions for EcoHead to betweentheissues@ecologyaction.ca

Dear EcoHead

My girlfriend and I have been talking about marriage, and I am ready to pop the question. After seeing Blood Diamond, I want to make sure I don't buy a conflict diamond. But how can I prove I am the romantic guy she needs without a traditional diamond ring? Are Canadian diamonds any better?

-Starry-Eyed and In Love

Dear Starry

While it's true that Canadian diamonds aren't "conflict diamonds", and Canadian mining companies are required to adhere to certain environmental standards, mining is never free from taking a toll on the environment. According to miningwatch.ca, "There are no clean diamonds. Exploring for them, digging them out of the ground and selling them requires sacrifices from the natural environment, from the wildlife and fish that live on it, and from the Aboriginal people who depend on it." Diamonds are formed deep beneath the earth, so no matter how conscientiously they are mined, land and/or water must be disturbed in order to access them.

And what about that gold setting? Gold mining is an extremely wasteful and environmentally destructive process. Many mines use toxic substances like cyanide and mercury to extract the gold. It is said that to create one 1/3-ounce gold ring, 20 tons of waste and 13 pounds of toxic emissions are produced. On top of this, many mines are built in sensitive ecological areas or traditional tribal lands – January 2009's National Geographic and nodirty-gold.org are two sources for more information.

As the devastating social and environmental impacts of gold mining are becoming widely known, many jewelers are working with recycled gold. So if you're set on getting something shiny and new, one option is to have a diamond alternative such as moissanite, which is manufactured in labs, set in a recycled gold ring.

However, the best bet for the environment is to avoid buying something new at all. A family heirloom with a meaningful history is likely to be cherished even more than a new rock. If you can't find one from your family, ask her parents if they have a great-grandparent's ring that would be special to your sweetie – and explain to them why you are asking for it.

Pawn shops and antique stores are also great places to find used jewelry – and you might just find a bargain to go along with it! Then you can put the money you save towards organic catering at your wedding...or donate it to a good cause.

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BEING GREEN

EAC has a remarkable cadre of volunteers pulled from all walks of life. This year, Volunteer Week in HRM coincides with Earth Day in April. In honour of this, the EAC celebrates Alana Green, a member and volunteer who will soon be leaving the country.

Not Only Green By Name

As interviewed by Amy Thomas

Alana Green is 24, an aspiring environmentalist, a first degree black belt, and a successful entrepreneur. She graduated from Saint Mary's University in 2007, receiving a Commerce degree with a double major in Marketing and Small Business and Entrepreneurship. By day, Alana works in marketing, and by night she runs Green Choi Kwang Do, a Halifax-based martial arts school.

Her concern for the environment is close to her heart. She grew up in Bathurst, NB with an environmentally-aware mother, who made her own cleaners, composted and recycled. In 6th grade, Alana started The Animal Lovers Club at her school and got permission from the principal to pick up trash in the woods across from the school.

As an entrepreneur, Alana believes that protection and concern for the environment can go hand in hand with business development. She started volunteering with the EAC in the summer of 2007 with the goal of using her skills and experience in marketing and business to help the organization. Through her involvement, she was able to broaden her knowledge of environmental issues and build a network of contacts in the environmental field.

Q) What environmental accomplishment are you most proud of?

A) I helped out with the Pesticide Nova Scotia campaign. Their efforts made huge strides in terms of pesticide legislation in Nova Scotia. That was really exciting to be a part of. Although I didn't play a huge role, it was neat to see things change.

I'm always really proud to help out with the work parties [monthly hands-on events furthering the green renovation to the EAC's office] because the EAC's Fern Lane office is a showcase of what is possible with green buildings. I think it's fantastic that all these little projects can show people what each one of us can do to make our homes and offices eco-friendly.

Q) What sets the EAC apart from other similar environmental organizations?

A) I'm impressed by how organized and established it is. It's not just young hippie types, but rather a very diverse group with many intelligent people with different backgrounds



Photo Credit: Charles Borne

that come together to get things done. I think that's why it has seen so much success.

Q) What can people do at the grassroots level?

A) Beware of green-washing. Because green is so popular, companies are taking advantage of it, so you have to be smart as a consumer. Companies have been holding back on finding less wasteful ways to do things, but now that there is more demand from the public, things will change.

People will make responsible choices if they have a choice to make.

Q) As an environmentalist, are there any changes you're working on personally?

A) One thing I'm really big on is reducing the amount of stuff I buy new. Trying to break the habit of buying, buying, buying.

Q) What advice do you have for readers who are interested in volunteering?

A) Just go out and do it! Subscribe to the EAC newsletter, there are lots of opportunities listed there and it'll keep you informed as to what's going on. When you see a date and time where they're looking for volunteers, just go for it. That's the first step, then you can get an idea of areas that are of interest to you.

Don't feel like you have to wait for a specific time or an orientation. You'll learn by doing; you don't have to know everything or anything about environmental issues. It's a learning experience and the EAC just needs people who are willing to help in any capacity. I've learned so much through volunteering with the EAC. It's just been really wonderful.

Q) Choi Kwang Do and environment... is there a connection?

I guess the connection can be made by looking at the principles of Choi Kwang Do: Honesty, Humility, Gentleness, Perseverance, Self-Control, Unbreakable Spirit. Be honest with yourself and don't ignore the reality of climate change, be gentle on the environment and your body in terms of the toxins we put in it, persevere to make change in the world and be heard, and have unbreakable spirit when going forward: remain passionate, enthusiastic and unwavering in your beliefs.

Q) What's next?

In late March I am leaving for Japan. (Yes, my flight will be carbon offset!) I have the opportunity to teach English in public school. It's going to be an amazing experience to see how things are done in another country – education, recycling, commuting, and buying habits.



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La Vie en Verte

Welcome to our new “Green Society Page” where we’ll provide you with an inspiring (and pleasantly green-tinged) view of recent happenings in the EAC community.



EAC fans get their hands dirty restoring a beautiful wood and canvas Chestnut canoe. The canoe was donated to the Centre by Jack and Jacqui Warkentin and is presently being restored by Don Gordon, a student of famous Nova Scotian wooden canoe artisan Harold Gates. The finished product will be auctioned off as a fundraiser. To admire the canoe visit our annual Garden Party on June 7.

Want to know more about Chestnut Canoes? Check the 1997 Nimbus-published book, *The Story of The Chestnut Canoe*, by Kenneth Solway.

Photo credit: Maggy Burns



Celebrating over a decade of successful conservation teamwork at the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS) Gala Dinner are (L-R) TIANS President Darlene Grant Fiander, EAC Wilderness Coordinator Raymond Plourde, TIANS Chairman Danny Morton, EAC Conservation Planner Kermit deGooyer and EAC Coastal Coordinator Jen Graham. The EAC was honoured to receive the 2008 Parks Canada Sustainable Tourism Award of Excellence from TIANS for our work in the conservation and protection of Nova Scotia’s wilderness and coastal ecosystems.

Photo Credit: Anna D’Alessio



Photo Caption: On December 13th the Bloomfield Centre’s parking lot was transformed into an organic Christmas forest! A crew of EAC staff volunteers and members enjoyed the scent and festive spirit of our annual organic Christmas tree fundraiser, which sold close to 425 trees and nearly 200 chemical-free wreaths

Photo credit: Emma Boardman

“Action really is your middle name!” That’s what one recent visitor to EAC exclaimed when he discovered that four of our staff members are, or are about to be, new parents! Congratulations to Kermit & Clare, Zak & Kiersten, Susanna & Shawn and Chris & Miia.

et Aussi

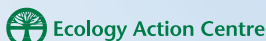
• Comings and goings at EAC include fond farewells to Jessica Penner – spinner of our Emerald Web project – and Sonja Bhatia, our intrepid forestry intern. We also welcome two dazzling mermaids to our Marine team: Alex Curtis and Shannon Arnold. The Coastal team welcomes Noel Taussig who helped build our office and now returns to help build our bird campaign. Our Active and Safe Routes to School project welcomes Amy Henry-Morgan who is zipping along as our new Pace Car Coordinator. We also say hello/goodbye to Kim Thompson and Zak Miller who have successfully wrapped up the Green Renovation Support Project. We are happy to say that Zak's been recycled into a brand new job as Building Energy Efficiency Coordinator. And we're not letting go of Kim without a fight either!

• Each year the Yves Rocher Foundation's Women of The Earth Awards honour women who are full of lively green ideas. This year, EAC superwoman Susanna Fuller won second prize for her work researching marine biodiversity, making recommendations to the government on sustainable fishing practices and educating consumers and suppliers about ecologically responsible fishing.

Thank you to the many individual donors whose contributions made the EAC's 2008 annual appeal such a success. We raised over \$7,000 in end-of-year gifts! A special thank you to the Carter Foundation, which has been a terrific supporter of our work. This year they closed their doors but left us with a hugely generous farewell gift of \$10,000. The funds we've raised will help us weather the storms of bad economic times and continue to move Nova Scotia toward true sustainability.

“By some estimates, we may have already lost half of the songbirds that filled the skies forty years ago.”

Bridget Stutchbury, *Silence of the Songbirds*.



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Eco-Horoscopes

By Suki Starfish

Aries: With Venus and Mars canoodling in your sign, you'll feel extra-sexy for most of May. So show off that amazing booty of yours in some Ecology Action Centre underwear, which feature sassy environmental double entendres like "Eat Local" and "Take Action, Get Action."

Taurus: It's a great time to exercise that green thumb! If you live in an apartment, find someone with land at www.halifax-landshare.ca and make an arrangement that suits both parties. If you own land but can't or won't garden, you can use this site to meet a gardener who will cultivate your land and share the goodies. It's a Taurus' dream come true!

Gemini: When a literary mood hits you this June, make a picnic lunch, grab a friend and a copy of Twilight Meetings (available from the Ecology Action Centre

for \$20) and head to the park. Bask in the sun, read a great book about local farming, and share a locally-grown feast with a friend as you discuss the book afterwards. What better way for a Gemini to spend an early summer afternoon?

Cancer: You'll feel more outgoing than usual this July, when Mercury heads into your sign. So although you generally prefer to socialize with a few friends at home rather than go out, you should accept when your Leo pal invites you to accompany her to Green Drinks on July 29 (or on the last Wednesday of any month. Email greendrinkshalifax@gmail.com for more information.) You might even meet a dark-eyed Taurus who shares your unusual passion for sea cucumbers!

Leo: Your fellow lion, Chris Turner (author of The Geography of Hope), is speaking in

Halifax on March 31 at the Ecology Action Centre's third annual fundraising lecture. He's sure to engage, inform and give you hope for a sustainable future. "Plus, he's a hottie!" says an EAC staff Leo.

Virgo: You are always frugal, but with Saturn in your sign for most of 2009, you'll feel an even stronger-than-usual urge to pinch your pennies. Save money and reduce your carbon footprint by doing simple, effortless things like turning off your computer at night, switching to energy-efficient light bulbs and unplugging your TV when you turn it off rather than letting it quietly suck power in "standby mode."

Libra: A social whirlwind like you should have no problem engaging co-workers in the Commuter Challenge, held from May 21-June 6 this year. The competition and

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prizes are extra incentive to take sustainable transportation — walking, biking, or bussing — to work. Though the real benefits, of course, include reducing your carbon footprint, having fun and getting in shape for summer with the extra exercise. Stay tuned to www.commuterchallenge.ca for more details on how to register.

Scorpio: As a water sign, you are naturally concerned with protecting our watershed from toxic and radioactive mine waste. According to the Sierra Club, uranium mines “contaminate water and result in the release of radon gas into the atmosphere for centuries, even millennia.” Despite the high risk to our environment and to human health for generations to come, the government is considering lifting our current moratorium on uranium mining. Scratch that activist itch you will feel March and April. Visit www.sierraclub.ca/atlantic to send a letter to politicians — including fellow Scorpio, Environment Minister David Morse — urging them to keep uranium underground where it belongs.

Sagittarius: There will be a full moon in your sign on June 7. Celebrate by spending the afternoon at the EAC’s Annual Garden Party, enjoying the beautiful view from St. Mary’s Boat Club and browsing and bidding on the unique experiences on sale. This will be the first year that the Garden Party is “stuff”-free: selling lessons, getaways and services rather than material goods. Tame your tendency toward bling and find the perfect gift for that hard-to-buy-for couple’s wedding in July.

Capricorn: SeaChoice is making it easier for businesses to serve up sustainable seafood and for consumers to ask questions about where their ocean goodies come from. So when a seafood-loving Virgo comes into your life later this year, you’ll be well-prepared. Download an easy-to-follow seafood guide from www.seachoice.org and tote it along to a local restaurant — or to a retailer to buy ingredients for a cozy home-cooked meal.

Aquarius: You may be able to hide it from your friends, but you can’t hide it from

your Astro-aunt Suki: you enjoy being called the oddball hippie granola-cruncher. But now that even corporate drones are starting to care about the environment, part of you is having a bit of an identity crisis. Never fear. There is always work to be done and it is you who others will turn to for eco-guidance. After all, we are now in the “Age of Aquarius.” So keep up-to-date on issues and advise them well.

Pisces: You’ll itch to try new and exciting things this year. So take that belly dancing or cooking class you’ve always wanted to sign up for or organize a book exchange with some friends — you’ll read something you never would have chosen for yourself and expand your world. Don’t forget to encourage all those new friends to join the EAC!

Suki Starfish is a seastar (Asterias vulgaris). She enjoys munching on mollusks, hanging out on rocky shores and watching Bollywood musicals.

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Recent EAC Successes:

- Releasing a ground breaking national report on impacts of fishing gear.
- Distributing another \$160,000 worth of Green Mobility Grants, with the support of Conserve NS.
- Fighting to ensure the new energy efficiency administrator is put in place this year.
- Continuing to maintain public awareness and vigilance around the uranium exploration and mining moratorium.