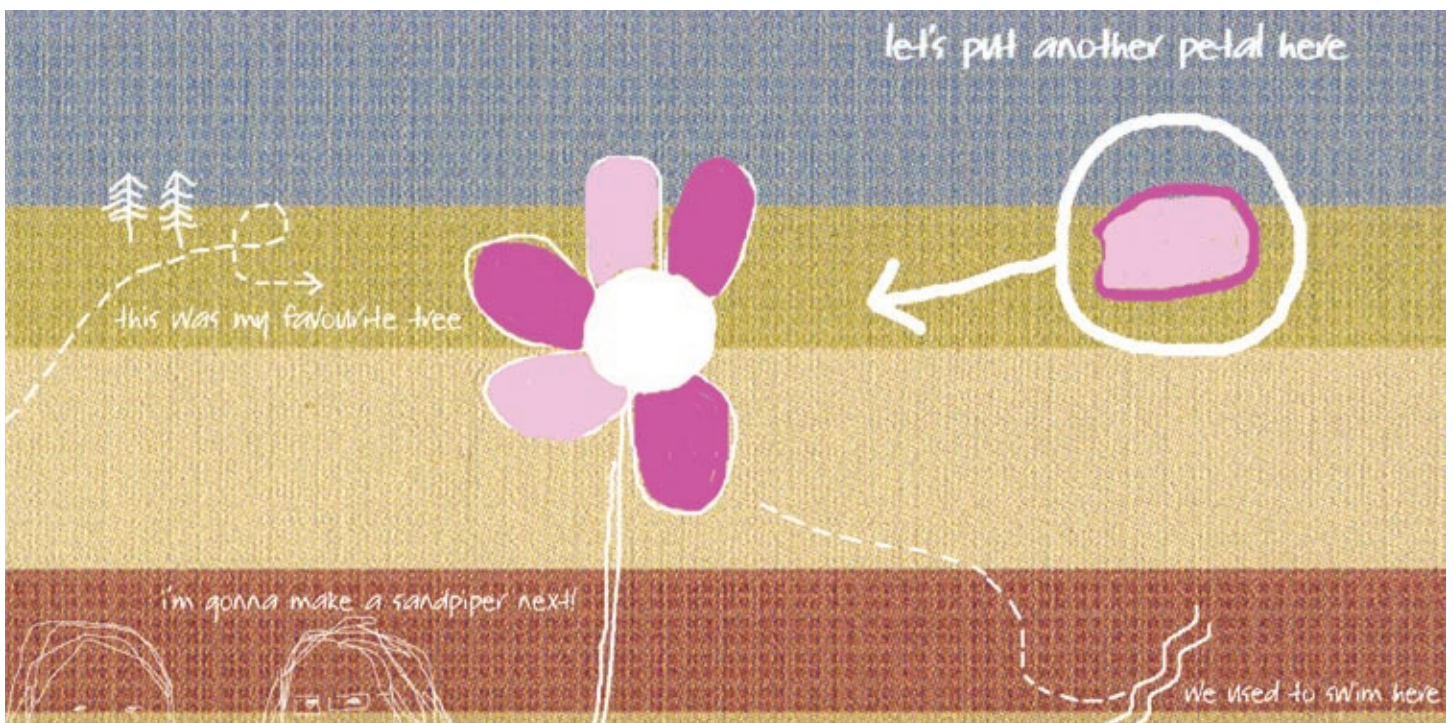


vol. 25:1 spring 2007

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

**BETWEEN THE COVERS:**  
**How To Eco-Adventure**  
**How To Make Energy**  
**How To Live on the Coast**







In the past months, EAC's Fern Lane building acquired a deck made of FSC certified lumber donated by the Nagaya group of low impact foresters. Thank you also to Alex Cole of Little Foot Yurts for the coppiced railings. Our building is now wheel chair accessible.

Join us over the summer for sunny afternoons on the deck!

*Photo: Maggy Burns*

**BETWEEN THE ISSUES**  
VOL. 25 NO. 1

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Ecology Action Centre 2705 Fern Lane Halifax, Nova Scotia B3K 4L3

## letterstothecentre

**Dear Sirs,**

I am staff advisor for the Earth Savers Environment Club at Clark's Harbour Elementary School. This club is composed of Grade 2 and 3 students who are willing to give up one lunch break a week to learn about environmental issues and do projects for the school. For 5 weeks we have followed their interest in Sable Island which has culminated in a school display. They wanted to donate some of the money they earned in a walkathon to support the protection of Sable Island and we wrote to Zoe Lucas' Green Horse Society. She suggested that your group would be able to accept our donation and were also involved in the protection of the island.

Yours truly,  
*Deborah Gregory*

**Hello Maggy,**

It was great to meet you and thanks for the tour of your impressive facility. You must be thrilled, and I'm thrilled for you. It's great to see so much dedication towards the pursuit of sustainable living. Thanks for demonstrating leadership – hopefully we'll be able to join you there soon.

Keep in touch.  
*Keith Tufts*

*Senior Environmental Designer, New Halifax Farmers Market*

**Hello EAC,**

I grew up in Cheverie [Hants County] in the 1950's, and walked across the creek everyday to attend the one room school. My brothers, sisters and I have very vivid memories of the tidal waters surrounding us on both sides. Calmer waters on one side and often roaring waves coming up over the wooden barrier on the other, causing school to be delayed until the tide went out! It was an incredible walk to school as we were completely a part of the tidal force and all the nature it brought with it. And then, the tidal waters in the marsh disappeared. When my brother and I first viewed a full tide again this past spring, we shed tears of joy to see it as it once had been. Thank you for restoring this treasure.

Sincerely,  
*Marilyn Mitchell*

**Between the Issues:**  
Environmental Quarterly  
The Voice of the Ecology Action Centre

To reach our readers with your ethical or sustainable products or services email advertising@ecologyaction.ca

The advertisement includes three magazine covers: the first shows a tree, the second shows a group of people, and the third shows a map of Nova Scotia.

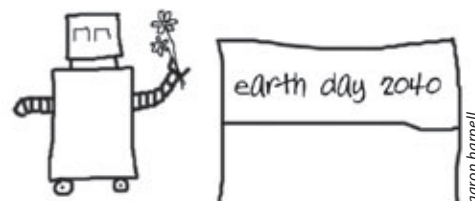
# editorial

Green is the new black. Every political party is scrambling, on the provincial, federal and recently, HRM has upped the ante, to see who can appear more green. Women are trading in their little black dresses for little green dresses.

Indeed, during the past months, we've been offered up ostensibly "green" legislation, in Ottawa and in Halifax. The switcheroo of federal Environment Minister was supposed to signify more of a get tough approach. Or at least provide ample obfuscation until the next election. New legislation has been tabled either before or after annual budget releases, although we await the new and improved Clean Air Act. The recent US Supreme Court ruling that green house gases are indeed pollution might just help swing the Act in the right direction. But if we are to take the budgets as the lead, both federal and provincial governments have failed to put their money where their purportedly minty green mouths are said to be. Perhaps our political leaders need to be reminded that they cannot have their environmental cake and eat it too, and green icing is just not enough.

Canadians tell us they care about the environment. The public opinion tipping point has been reached (well, except in Alberta). Yet, it remains to be seen how required individual efforts will shift from the philosophical to measurable actions. With the rise of environmental issues to the top of the polls, one might think there would be a bit of gloating by the environmental community. While we can take some solace in the opinion spike, past experience tells us that this is not cause to sit back and watch. We've been here before. The environment has been at the top in the 1970's, and the late 1980's. And, again, here it is. The question remains, can we make the shift that is needed to truly stem the tide of environmental destruction.

Nova Scotia Environment & Labour Minister Mark Parent has made laudable efforts to move Nova Scotia towards becoming one of the "greenest" places in the world by 2020. Yet, we see continued stalling in making this more than just political rhetoric. What has happened to the promise of a Voluntary Planning review



of our forest management strategies? Why on earth did HRM Council vote to widen roads to increase traffic flow, when residents are screaming for transit and bike lanes, not to mention a safe climate for pedestrians. The LNG and petrochemical plant is approved for near pristine coastal areas, so that we might have the honour of feeding the mighty monster to the south with more unrenewable energy sources. There are endless proposals to expand mineral and gravel mining, at the expense of fish, fish habitat, farmland and coastal communities. Why is it that we still don't have a local food procurement policy for government institutions? We seem stuck on an antiquated unsustainable development agenda, that will only lead us further down the path to a brown and grey province, rather than a green and blue province.

It is as if we are a deer in the headlights - we know there is danger, but are too petrified to take action. Yet, with the corporate sector getting on the green bandwagon, the only missing ingredient is some true political will, and some genuine reflection on the goals of achieving a green Nova Scotia, and a green Canada. If we are truly to achieve "ecologically" sustainable prosperity, lets get on with it. It's not rocket science, but will require some hard decisions and a true paradigm shift. Perhaps MLA's will start by riding bicycles, along the much needed bike routes, during their stay in HRM, rather than renting fuel inefficient vehicles at the tax payers expense. Now that would be leadership.

This issue of BTI focuses on the "how to", and quite frankly, the how to take care of our environment is not all that exciting, and it will require some shifting of presently accepted resource use habits. It is more than climate change legislation. It requires diligence, government leadership and individual behaviour change. We need coastal protection policies as described by Meg Banavage on page 10. We need to consider energy efficiency (not undersea coal mining) and actually make the leap to really conserve. Brendan Haley's piece

on page 16 gives us a few tips. These tips are not too dissimilar to those that come in the envelope with the NSPI bimonthly bill - yet, where is the government legislation on efficiency?

There are glimmers of hope, suggestions that Nova Scotia might be heading in the right direction, at least on a few fronts. On page 25 EAC's Wilderness Coordinator, Raymond Plourde gives us the details of the recent commitment to the promised designation of 12% of the province as protected wilderness areas. Our feature, provides some guidance to the powers that be from Nova Scotian youth, whose access to resources will certainly be affected by what we do today. Children have a few words of guidance for Stephen Harper. Simple advice for our future that it might be wise to heed. It's as easy as ABC. We welcome the return of Ecobriefs - those short, lovely windows into environmental and human health issues around the globe. Catherine Joudrey takes us out of town, on some small footprint adventures, by bus, by bike and by train.

We also celebrate heros - particularly the tragic passing of Dr. Ransom A. Myers. Ram was a beacon of hope and light in the murky world of depleting ocean resources. Ram's spirit and commitment to doing good science in the interests of marine conservation remains with those who had the fortune of knowing him.

The problem with green being the new black is that there are ever so many shades of green, and black is one simple colour. Federally and provincially, we seem to have just entered the paint store, and are comparing swatches - until the brushes are bought, and the paint is on the wall, kind, but vigilant reminders must be communicated to elected officials and their advisors. Until Finance Ministers are trading in their black socks for green socks, the corks should probably be left on the bottles of (locally produced) champagne.

*Susanna Fuller is the editor of Between the Issues, and is looking for a replacement. Any takers?*

# actionisourmiddlename

**fishing habitat & farming vs mining** (Coastal Issues Committee, Food Action Committee) In keeping with what seems to be a theme in Nova Scotia, the proposal to expand the gypsum mine in Windsor has met with opposition from the community. How is it that we can talk sustainable prosperity and a greener Nova Scotia, and continually face mining developments at the expense of truly sustainable livelihoods? These are the questions being asked by the residents of the Avon Peninsula as they face expansion of a nearby gypsum mine. Does it make sense to allow a foreign controlled strip-mine company, which has already consumed thousands of acres in the area, to strip-mine the Peninsula? Might it not make more sense to maintain the natural ecosystem services of the area, promote local farms and artisanal food production that will last far longer than the mining operations? This issue is a microcosm of the larger challenge facing the province as we begin to speak the language of a greener province, but fail shift our paradigm to support ecologically sustainable development.

**working together** (Energy Issues Committee) The EAC made a joint presentation with the Nova Scotia Co-operative Council to the Standing Committee on Economic Development on renewable energy and rural development. Now the departments of energy, economic development and agriculture are meeting to discuss how renewable energy can benefit rural communities. The Co-op Council says rural communities are being excluded from participating in renewable energy markets, and the EAC believes this is hampering the developing of the clean energy sector. For more information read *Electricity Feed-Laws: A Standard, Fair Price to Power Renewables in Nova Scotia* on the energy issues web-site and go to the NS Co-op Councils web-site at <http://www.nscop-council.ca/energy/>

**going the distance** (Food Action Committee) What percentage of food consumed in Nova Scotia is locally produced? How far is our food traveling from farm to plate? What are the environmental, social and economic impacts of our food choices? Curious to know the answers? So are we! The Food Action Committee has just begun a research project examining the food miles associated with a Nova Scotian diet. We expect that this project will provide much needed data with regard to the distance that our food is traveling and the resulting greenhouse gas emissions. Project results will be used to encourage local governments and institutions to adopt local food buying policies, supporting local producers and harvestors. For information on this project, please contact Marla MacLeod at [food@ecologyaction.ca](mailto:food@ecologyaction.ca)



**going carbon neutral** The Sierra Club, in collaboration with the EAC, are making a film with local youths to show individuals that adopting simple habits can reduce carbon emissions and help stop climate change. Zachariah Taheri, a Grade 9 student at Gorsebrook Junior High, plays Captain Carbon, the main character of the film. "Captain Carbon is a normal kid," says Zachariah. "He is listening to the radio and hears all this stuff on global warming and decides he is going to do something." His character goes around Halifax and shows people how to cut carbon emissions from their lives. Wayne Groszko, the EAC's Solar Gain Coordinator, is keeping tabs on the emissions that the project creates. Then, the crew will take on projects to offset these emissions and show the results in a documentary. "It's going to be the first carbon neutral film done in Atlantic Canada," says Myriam Hammami, the Sierra Club's Education Program Coordinator.

**what about efficiency?** (Energy Issues Committee) Climate change is the challenge of this century and the EIC wants Nova Scotia to shape up! To avoid dangerous climate change we need emissions to be reduced by at least 30% below 1990 levels by 2020. Currently, this target as well as a more aggressive target is being run in a large electricity sector modeling exercise at the EAC's insistence. The EAC was one of the only organizations opposing the last fossil-fuels based electricity rate increase. Why? Because it is cheaper to reduce energy waste than it is to keep buying fossil fuels and building power plants, and this option is being neglected. Energy efficiency can deliver substantial cuts in pollution while saving everyone money at the same time. We are circulating a Nova Scotia Energy Efficiency Resolution to businesses, community organizations, and municipalities. Please get your organization, business or municipal council to sign on to support an energy efficient Nova Scotia: [http://www.ecologyaction.ca/energy\\_issues/resolution.htm](http://www.ecologyaction.ca/energy_issues/resolution.htm)

**lincolnville update** First other people's garbage, now contaminated wells. Predictable, one might say. On February 10th the Save Lincolnville Campaigners, which includes the EAC, attended a meeting with the Concerned Citizens of Lincolnville in Upper Big Tracadie. At the meeting a new issue, water management, was raised. The municipality is exploring building a municipal well for which residents would pay an estimated \$2500 per household, in addition to annual fees. Despite concerns that the landfill is impacting water quality, residents believe they should be able to continue using their wells. Residents are calling for municipal testing of well water and do not want to be forced to pay for a clean water source while the municipality refuses to acknowledge grievances with the landfills.



**a kettle of fish** (Marine Issues Committee) MIC has a suite of projects on the go. Most recently, the Surf and Turf Working group – a collaboration between Food Action Committee and MIC, as well as CPAWS-NS, and SeaChoice hosted an event called “Loaves and Fishes” on March 22nd, to bring together fishermen, farmers, fish sellers, chefs and government to discuss the way forward to sustainable fisheries, local food and food security as well as exploring markets for sustainable seafood. The event was a great success and we expect several interesting collaborations over the coming months. In partnership with the Living Oceans Society of Sointula, BC and the Marine Conservation Biology Institute of Redmond, Washington State, the EAC has launched a project to analyse the ecological impacts of all fishing gear. Jen Ford has been hired to complete this project. Welcome Jen! MIC continues to be involved in a coalition of groups across Canada in working to ensure that a new Fisheries Act is an improvement over the old Fisheries Act, and upholds the principles of precaution and the ecosystem approach, and protects coastal communities.

## **sustainable prosperity. what is the holdup?**

(Wilderness Committee) Standing Tall continues to work for an open, effective public process through Voluntary Planning to develop the province's new natural resources strategies: Forests, Mines, Parks, and Biodiversity. We need these strategies to get off the ground; the province has been promising to start work for two years now, and a final proposal from NS Department of Natural Resources now seems to have ground to a halt at Cabinet. Hop over to Standing Tall at <http://www.novascotia-forests.ca> and hit the ACT NOW! button to find out how you can help break the logjam, or call Minga O'Brien or Joanne Cook at 902.429.1335.

**we've got gas** (Coastal Issues Committee) The Keltic Petrochemicals Inc. LNG facility was approved with 59 conditions on March 14th by the provincial Minister of the Environment. EAC's participation in the provincial environmental assessment has now concluded. The federal EA process is expected to begin in April 2007. We will remain involved in that process by informing the public when the report is available for public review, and providing feedback to the federal agency. Our webpage [www.ecologyaction.ca/lng](http://www.ecologyaction.ca/lng) will continue to be updated. We thank and congratulate every individual and resident who has participated in the process and taken the brave step of voicing their opinion. We also thank all our volunteers who assisted the EAC in its efforts to ensure a strong presence in this process. Have we already said comprehensive coastal planning? Anyone? Bueler? Anyone?



## events

**Earth Day**  
April 22 annually  
[www.earthday.ca](http://www.earthday.ca)

**HRM Bike Week**  
June 3-9  
[www.halifax.ca](http://www.halifax.ca) for event details

**Commuter Challenge**  
June 3-9  
[www.commuterchallenge.ca](http://www.commuterchallenge.ca)

**EAC's Annual Garden Party**  
June 10th, 2007, 1-4 PM  
St. Mary's Boat Club

**(Lament for the) Oceans Day**  
June 8th  
Halifax Waterfront,  
10:00am -3:00pm

**EAC's Annual General Meeting**  
June 21st 7-9 PM  
North Street Church,  
corner of Fuller Terrace and North

**EAC Volunteer Orientation**  
Bimonthly  
Contact Emma at  
[volunteering@ecologyaction.ca](mailto:volunteering@ecologyaction.ca)  
or call 442-0202

**Fern Lane Up Keep Parties**  
4th Saturday of every Month  
10 AM-2PM  
2705 Fern Lane  
Contact Maggy at  
[centre@ecologyaction.ca](mailto:centre@ecologyaction.ca)  
or 429-5287

**HelioTrust Open Farm Days**  
Throughout the Spring,  
Summer and Fall  
See [www.helioTrust.ca](http://www.helioTrust.ca)  
for schedule and details

**Coastal Futures Learning Circle**  
Changing Coasts: What can we expect? How can we respond?  
June 5th 10 AM-3 PM (various locations including Truro, Springhill, Port Hawksbury, Middleton, Bridgewater).  
Contact 442-5046 for more information.

**a committee is reborn** (Built Environment Committee) The Urban Issues Committee recently transformed into the Built Environment Committee to absorb several new people and issues, many of them stemming from our Fern Lane Renovation. Lively conversation about good and bad development, green buildings and brownfield sites, green roofs and upcoming projects is to be had at the monthly BEC meetings. We welcome new members and look forward to future projects.

## **the tortoise wins the race**

(Transportation Issues Committee) The EAC's Pace Car project approval comes not a day too late, given the increase in pedestrian injuries and deaths in HRM. Last fall and this winter Active & Safe Routes to School partnered with Canada's home, car and business insurers to pilot the Pace Car program. Parents and other residents pledge to slow down and drive within the speed limit, essentially becoming moving speed bumps and making it safer for kids and others to walk and cycle in their communities. The partnership was renewed for the coming year in order to launch the program province wide in April, making it widely available to communities. [[asrts@ecologyaction.ca](mailto:asrts@ecologyaction.ca), [www.ecologyaction.ca/asrts](http://www.ecologyaction.ca/asrts)] This March, the Making Tracks pilot project wrapped up after testing out some new approaches with five pilot schools. EAC says goodbye to Making Tracks Coordinator Diana Prosser-Lewis, who is moving to Ottawa with her family. The project has left a wonderful legacy and improved application of the program greatly. Thank you Diana!

## **a successful day in the mud**

(Coastal Issues Committee) “Chomp, chomp” What's that sound? It's the noise of large chunks of Nova Scotia's coast being rapidly gobbled up for quarries, residential development, and new industries. The CIC and its many allies around the province continue to work for a comprehensive provincial coastal strategy as an alternative to piecemeal, unsustainable development. Disappointed, but not daunted by the Minister of the Environment's recent decision to approve Keltic's LNG and Petrochemical facility in Goldboro Guysborough County, we continue to support local groups working on coastal issues around the province. You can help residents of Digby Neck fight the proposed White Point Quarry by attending or submitting comments at upcoming public hearings about this project. Our recent workshop, Six years in the Mud: Lessons learned and moving forward for Maritime Salt Marsh Restoration was a great chance to toast the coast. Eighty five participants from government, community and academia spent two days working together for salt marsh protection and restoration. Thank you to everyone whose support made this successful event possible.

# ecobriefs

By June Hall, with illustrations by Janet Wilson

## How safe are we?

Calculating risk is a tricky business. Take bisphenol A, a chemical much in the news today. According to manufacturers and the Health Canada website, we the public have nothing to fear. Recent scientific results, however, may give us pause.

A building block of the clear polycarbonate plastics used in water and babies' bottles, toys, the lining of tin cans, and more, bisphenol A is an estrogen mimic that leaches into the environment over time. Almost certainly you have some in your body right now, albeit at very low levels.



In the two latest studies, the chemical was fed to pregnant mice at environmental levels. In both studies the daughters were affected, not the mothers, and then only when they reached adulthood. In one, about a third of the daughters developed breast cancer; in the other, abnormal chromosomes were found in 40% of their eggs.

Even before this, environmentalists had been marshalling their forces. In late February, assemblywoman Fiona Ma introduced a bill that would ban both bisphenol A and phthalates from all products used by children under three in California. Health Canada has responded to Canadian concern by including it in the first 200 chemicals they'll be screening for toxicity out of the thousands that were OK'd years ago without proper testing.

*Env. Sci. & Tech.*, 20 Dec., 17 Jan.; *Globe & Mail*, 7 Mar.

## Going, going...

China's booming economy may have claimed another victim: the baiji, a pale, almost blind porpoise that lives in the Yangtze River — although perhaps that should read "lived," as a six-week scientific survey has failed to find a single one of these endangered creatures. If the baiji is indeed extinct (and team members give it virtually no hope of surviving), it will be "the first cetacean lost in modern times." Cetaceans include whales, porpoises and dolphins.

And that's not all. Also endangered is the finless porpoise, another Yangtze inhabitant and the world's only freshwater porpoise. After finding fewer than 300 of them, the team estimates at most a population of 1400, meaning that numbers have declined by 50% since the last survey in 1991.

Both these animals face daunting challenges from pollution and heavy shipping traffic, and from the widespread use by fishermen of rolling hooks, illegal lines known to snag and drown the baiji. Add in a series of megadams planned for the Yangtze and its tributaries, and the case seems hopeless.

*Science*, 22 Dec.

## Unloved species

Charismatic, vulnerable, even cuddly: we're all aware of the dangers faced by such "flagship species" as elephants, tigers, pandas and gorillas. Far less loved but equally endangered are a host of other animals



and plants, unloved species that also deserve our attention, as do the ecosystems in which they live.

The Zoological Society of London, which amongst its many activities runs the London Zoo, has a program known as EDGE, an acronym of Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered. On its website (below) you'll find a list of the hundred mammal species most at risk in the world. Check out the website to find out more about each species and the amount of effort directed towards it, rated none, limited, or active. As EDGE emphasizes, little or no conservation effort is directed at a full two-thirds of these animals. At the top of the list: the baiji, which as we saw above, may already be extinct. Many of the species listed are decidedly unlovable. And that's just the mammals. Snakes, spiders and parasites, anyone?

[www.edgeofexistence.org/species/top\\_100.asp](http://www.edgeofexistence.org/species/top_100.asp)

## Sun and wind

Several news items on the alternative energy front. First, a new building code makes it mandatory in Spain to install solar panels on both new buildings and buildings undergoing renovation. The code also calls for better insulation, increased use of natural light, and other energy-saving provisions, resulting in a 40-55% reduction in CO2 emissions per building.

In Germany, meanwhile, the amount of electricity generated by photovoltaics is rising by nearly 50% a year (including 152% in 2004!). A recent report estimates that Germany, Japan and the U.S. account for 78% of the solar electricity generated worldwide. Especially popular in Europe and Japan is the use of photovoltaics in building materials such as roofing and glass walls.

Facing much stiffer opposition is a new wind turbine developed by Arizona-based Southwest Windpower. Small, quiet and about half the price of competitive models, the turbine can be installed in your own backyard on a tower as short as 11 metres high, provided your lot and wind speeds are large enough. The main problems: zoning codes, the neighbours — and birders.

Lastly, a village in England hopes to become carbon neutral. Helped by a modest government grant, Ashton Hayes has

installed wind turbines, solar panels, and insulation and is planning “a micro-electric grid powered by biofuel or wood pellets.”

*Env. Sci. & Tech.*, 29 Nov., 13 & 20 Dec.

## Garbage dump

It's time to give Mt. Everest a rest, say environmentalists. Trampled under the boots of thousands of tourists each year, it's become little more than a garbage dump, contaminated as it is by half a century's worth of discarded mountaineering equipment, medical waste, faeces and much, much more. Further, the task of providing water,



food, electricity and lodging along the trail (think inns and internet cafés) is severely taxing local resources. Add in global warming and you're well on the way to an ecological disaster.

Sir Edmund Hillary, who with Tenzing Norgay was the first to climb the mountain and has devoted much of his life since 1953 to helping villagers in the region, is appalled by the crisis and supports the push to close the mountain. The Nepalese government (which charges a team of seven climbers US\$94,000 to even set foot on the mountain), and the many sherpas who depend on the climbers for their livelihood, are understandably resisting the appeals.

*Guardian Weekly*, 27 Oct.

## Disposal problem

Although wood treated with chromated copper arsenate (CCA) can no longer be bought in the United States, there's still plenty of it around, a situation likely to last for decades, as the stuff is resistant to rot. Trouble is, arsenic leaches over time from CCA-treated wood, contaminating the soil beneath, yet the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) still allows the wood to be discarded in landfills.

Enter Hurricane Katrina, and a vast amount of tangled debris, much of it treated wood and all of it destined for landfills, some of them hastily constructed, unlined, and situated on the swampy delta. Given that a team of researchers from the University of Miami estimates that Hurricane Katrina debris contains a total of about 1740 metric tons of arsenic, residents are understandably concerned about the potential impacts on groundwater and local ecosystems.

The research team has developed a scanning device capable of identifying the treated wood, but separating the wood from other debris, they say, remains a very difficult task. In future, however, the EPA needs to develop better guidelines about cleaning up after a disaster — and to ban treated wood from landfills. Canada should follow suit.

*Env. Sci. & Tech.*, 24 Jan.

## writercall

Have you got an eco-story to tell?

We are seeking submissions from readers on the following topics:

### Sustainable Adventures

Let us know your favorite “little footprint” adventure. Please include directions, distance from the nearest centre, directions by foot, bike, boat, bus or train and a few special details that make this one of your most favorite spots to visit. We are encouraging our readers to explore Nova Scotia.

### Green Economies

BTI is collecting stories on “green” businesses, business potential or new ways of doing business that can support a truly ecological sustainable economy in Nova Scotia.

Submissions should be ~400 words. Photos welcome. Submissions selected for print will appear in upcoming issues of BTI and all submissions will be posted on our website. Please send submissions of 400-600 words to [betweentheissues@ecologyaction.ca](mailto:betweentheissues@ecologyaction.ca)

## membercall

### Ecology Action Centre

#### Annual General Meeting

June 21st, 2007, 7pm-9pm

Location: North Street Church, corner of Fuller Terrace and North St.

Nominations for EAC's Annual Awards will be accepted until May 31st, 2007 and voting will commence immediately afterward until June 15th, 2007. Nominations may be submitted to [awards@ecologyaction.ca](mailto:awards@ecologyaction.ca), through the EAC website ([www.ecologyaction.ca](http://www.ecologyaction.ca)) or in writing to the Awards Committee: 2705 Fern Lane, Halifax, NS, B3K 4L3.

### The Sunshine Award

The Sunshine Award is given to a group or an individual who has made a particular, effective effort in an environmental issue in Nova Scotia during the prior year.

### Tarred Duck Award

The Tarred Duck Award is presented to a group or individual who has acted in violation of environmental issues or advocated for economic development without consideration for the environment.

### Bubby Mooers Award

Bubby Mooers was a folk artist who carved interesting characters and figures out of wood. He gave very generously of his art and of himself. His artwork is humorous and sensitive and any donations were given the EAC's annual Garden Party for auction. The Bubby Mooers Award is to be given to someone who has given of themselves, either over time or in the past year to environmental issues in Nova Scotia and to the Ecology Action Centre in particular.

### Tooker Gomberg Award

Tooker Gomberg was a master with the media. From ‘Golden Turkey Awards’ to ‘Burying a Car’ to ‘Robinhood at the Toronto Stock Exchange’, Tooker knew how to garner media attention. This award goes to the person or event that most creatively and brilliantly ‘made the news’ in the past year.



**Howard Epstein, MLA**

**Halifax Chebucto**

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# tiresatire

*By Aaron Harpell*

“Tires. You are probably aware that in Nova Scotia, under the present legislation, it is illegal to incinerate tires.” -*Lafarge’s former Brookfield cement plant manager Jim Cross, 2001*

“What we will not be doing is getting into incineration, I can tell you that.” -*Resource Recovery Board CEO Bill Ring, 2007*

Setting:

Two captains of industry meet with two public relations practitioners in a committee room in Halifax.

CAPTAIN #1: Thanks for coming in guys.

CAPTAIN #2: I loved your work with Pioneer Coal.

MARKETER: Thank you. ‘Strip Mining’ was such an ugly term. Almost sexual. ‘Surface Mining’ is so much kinder.

CAPTAIN #1: And the eco-tours of Boularderie Island will be such a boon to the local community.

MARKETER: Well, we may not be able to call it an eco-tour. It rolls off the tongue so nice, but apparently it doesn’t stand for economy, it stands for ecology.

CAPTAIN #1: But the land will look like the moon afterwards, won’t it? Kids’ll love that on school trips.

SPOKESPERSON: They will.

CAPTAIN #2: So that’s what we want. We want the Boularderie treatment.

MARKETER: That’s what we want to give you.

CAPTAIN #1: What ever it takes. There’s a million tires in Nova Scotia that could be turned into new carpets, more flexible roads, or bumpers on docks... we have to make sure that doesn’t happen.

CAPTAIN #2: We want them burned.

SPOKESPERSON: So what we want to do, we want to figure out what the village people are gonna come at you with. So you just fire away and we’ll see where we’re at.

CAPTAIN #2: Well. The opposition. You know...

CAPTAIN #1: It’s all cancer, cancer, cancer...

MARKETER: I know. That word scores so poorly in focus groups.

CAPTAIN #2: The furans, the dioxins...

SPOKESPERSON: “But burning tires in our cement kiln is cleaner than coal.”

MARKETER: ‘Cleaner than coal.’

CAPTAIN #2: That’s nice. That’s nice.

CAPTAIN #1: What if we just peg the public as being anti-industry?

SPOKESPERSON: They hate cement.

CAPTAIN #1: They do. I feel that. I feel that everyday.

MARKETER: We’ve used the ‘environment versus economy’ equation a lot. It’s starting to wear thin.

SPOKESPERSON: What about one last push?

CAPTAIN #2: “Unionize and we’ll leave town.” “Complain about cement dust and we’ll cut jobs.” “Talk about zinc, iron, lead, mercury—”

MARKETER: The protesters, and you will have some, pretend it’s just a few nuts, they’ll come out with studies.

CAPTAIN #1: Oh, we can find some scientists too, I’m sure.

SPOKESPERSON: Zinc, iron... these are good things right? I mean, don’t we take vitamins with all those things? Are the economic terrorists gonna ban spinach?

CAPTAIN #2: Barium is delicious.





SPOKESPERSON: You can't trust scientists, anyway.  
 CAPTAIN #2: I don't. First they said global warming would make sea levels rise then they said it would create deserts. Which is it?  
 MARKETER: So, you want to burn tires... wait, that's wrong.  
 SPOKESPERSON: You want to incinerate tires in your cement plant.  
 CAPTAIN #1: Well that's illegal. You can't incinerate tires in Nova Scotia. We want to burn... I mean, as fuel, we want to, *heat* these tires...  
 MARKETER: You want to recycle tires as fuel.  
 CAPTAIN #1: Yes! I think so.  
 CAPTAIN #2: People like recycling. That's good.  
 MARKETER: But people pay a fee to the Resource Recovery Board to recycle their tires, are they really going to want to subsidize your fuel costs?  
 SPOKESPERSON: We're recycling. We're reclaiming tires? We're recapturing the tires' energy. We're...  
 MARKETER: "We're recovering the tires' energy." It's the fourth R: reduce, reuse, recycle, recover. Right in front of us the whole time: The Resource Recovery Board. It's so simple.  
 SPOKESPERSON: It's kind of beautiful.  
 MARKETER: It's some kind of wonderful.  
 CAPTAIN #1: "We are not incinerating tires."  
 CAPTAIN #2: "Under no circumstances will we be burning tires."  
 SPOKESPERSON: "We are in the energy recovery business."  
 MARKETER: The kids will love it. Chucking a tire into a cement kiln on a school trip.  
 CAPTAIN #1: Well, it would have to be cut into pieces first. Cleaner burn.  
 MARKETER: No, that's not as fun. Whole tires is more wholesome.  
 SPOKESPERSON: "Some kids swing on tire swings, some kids swing tires."  
 CAPTAIN #2: Thanks guys. This is great. Can you give Clearwater a call? 'Dragging the ocean floor' could use the Lafarge treatment.

*Satirist, graphic design and illustrator Aaron Harpell designed the magazine you're reading. The Conservative government makes him laugh on a regular basis.*

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# How To: Live on the Coast

By Meg Banavage



Are we loving our coasts to death? Unsustainable coastal living risks destroying what we love so much.

*Photographer: Raymond Plourde*



Protect sand dunes by building a boardwalk to the beach.

*Photographer: Amber Nicols*

Humans have always been drawn to the coast. Today, many of our recreational activities take place on the coast and more and more people are seeking the coastal life. Cooler temperatures, ocean breezes and beautiful sunsets provide a relaxing atmosphere. Ironically, when living on the coast is not done in a responsible and sustainable manner, homeowners and visitors may destroy the natural features they so enjoy.

Coasts and coastal wildlife are sensitive to human impacts. Unwise coastal building and recreation can cause increased erosion, sedimentation, habitat loss, pollution, and disturbance to wildlife. Coastal properties and infrastructure may also be vulnerable to flooding and storm surges and become expensive to maintain.

There are many ecologically sensitive features that make up the coastal environment. Beaches, dunes, salt marshes, inter-tidal areas, and barrier islands are friendly neighbours that act as natural buffers to reduce the impact of storm surges and floods by absorbing and dissipating wave and storm energy. Salt marshes and wetlands are also natural filters and water purifiers. These coastal features are essential habitat for land and marine plants and animals, some of which are rare or endangered, such as Piping Plovers that nest on sand and cobble beaches.

These sensitive coastal features are least suitable for development. In order to protect humans and the coast, it is best to avoid building on sensitive coastal features altogether. Building structures on dunes and beaches that constantly change and erode will only make the area more prone to erosion damage.

Here are some things to consider to minimize the impacts of coastal living.

## **Where to Build**

### ***Check it out!***

A site assessment by a qualified professional prior to construction will identify sensitive areas on your property that should be

permanently protected. It will also reveal areas on the property prone to floods and other damages.

### ***Know where to draw the line.***

A development setback is a strip of land adjacent to a waterbody or sensitive feature where building is prohibited. The recommended setback requirement depends on the type of coast and sensitivity specific coastal features. Typically, setbacks vary from 20 to 200 metres. Building behind the setback will not only protect coastal habitats, it will also protect the property from damage caused by sea level rise.

## **Land Use**

### ***Keep it covered.***

Living on the coast requires working with the land, not against it. Clearing vegetation can remove necessary topsoil and shrubs that help reduce surface runoff, erosion, and maintain water quality. Leave a buffer of shoreline plants, and clear only what you need for your access road, buildings, and sewage treatment system.

### ***Keep it safe.***

After buying shorefront property, many people want to protect their land from erosion. Erosion is a natural process, but building can accelerate it at an unnatural rate. The most common “hard erosion control” methods may protect one property but increase erosion elsewhere on the shore. Concrete sea walls, breakwaters and stone reinforcements alter the shoreline and water circulation patterns. Soft erosion techniques, like planting native grasses and trees in a wide vegetated buffer zone, reduce wave energy and maintain coastal habitats. Plants also lock soil in place to reduce erosion on slopes, and can filter potential pollutants before they enter the water.

### ***Keep it floating***

Less is more when constructing docks! It is far cheaper and less damaging to the shoreline to make use of existing structures



instead of building a new one. Permanent docks cause habitat damage, alter circulation patterns, and effect fish passage. A better alternative is a floating or post-supported dock that allows fish movement. Use non-toxic building materials and obtain a permit from the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources before construction.

### Day-to-Day Activities

#### Keep it clean.

Motorized boats bring discharge (oil, garbage, etc.) into harbours. Non-motorized canoes, kayaks and sailboats are a better choice. For motor boats, a four-stroke motor is quieter, uses less gasoline, emits less green house gases and is also less disturbing to wildlife. As well, always clean boats on the shore using non-toxic cleaning products.

#### Keep it regular.

Malfunctioning septic systems can have serious consequences for human health and water quality. Septic systems on coastal lots require regular maintenance and pumping. Proper siting is essential, as wet soils can interfere with waste treatment and allow harmful chemicals and pollutants into the water.

#### Do the dirty work.

Pet owners are responsible for their animal's actions. Off-leash dogs can chase or kill wildlife and shorebirds, or damage sensitive habitats. It is also important to clean up all pet wastes.

#### Pick it up.

Plastic is the most common source of coastal litter. It can take up to 500 years for a plastic bag to decompose. Plastics can also strangle, poison, and kill birds and marine mammals. Glass and cans left on the beach not only cut wildlife, but homeowners attempting a bare-foot walk as well. Pick up and properly dispose of all shoreline litter.

#### Leave it to the birds and the bees.

Spring and summer months (May through August) are very important for breeding birds. Songbirds and willets may be nesting in the dune grass surrounding salt marshes, and Piping Plovers and terns can be found on cobble or sand beaches. Avoid disturbing nesting areas on the coast during nesting period. Keep motorized vehicles off the beach at all times of year, as they can damage habitat, and during nesting season crush eggs, chicks.

Humans will continue to be drawn to the coast. Following these guidelines on living with it will ensure the coast is there to enjoy for years to come.

*Meg Banavage is an International Development Studies Major at Dalhousie University with a minor in Environmental Studies. Recently completing an internship with the EAC's coastal department she is now looking for an awesome summer job.*

## Quick Tips for Coastal Living

**C**lear only space for the home and access road and leave a wide buffer of plants.

**L**et the grass grow to 8 cm to retain moisture.

**E**ngine maintenance of boats, done regularly, keeps waters clean.

**A**quatic plants absorb run off, in addition to being aesthetically pleasing.

**N**ative vegetation and low maintenance shrubs reduce erosion.

**C**hemical fertilizers and household products pollute the water and harm septic systems. Use natural cleaning products.

**O**pt for building boardwalks over dunes to reach the beach.

**A**dhere to setback requirements.

**S**eptic systems require constant maintenance.

**T**ry to use eco-friendly building material and install energy efficient systems.

**S**anitation devices and holding tanks installed on boats reduce water pollution.

For more information on sustainable coastal living, visit these websites:

Ecology Action Centre [www.ecologyaction.ca](http://www.ecologyaction.ca)

Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources <http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/>

St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association <http://www.heartofthebay.ca/>

The Bluenose Coastal Action Foundation <http://www.coastalaction.org/>

The Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup <http://www.vanaqua.org/cleanup/>

The Living By Water Project <http://livingbywater.ca/>



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**Ecology Action Centre**

# feature

## Dear Mr. Harper

In response to David Suzuki's "If You Were Prime Minister.." cross country tour, students from the Harbourview Montessori School in Westmount, Nova Scotia put some of their ideas to paper.

These suggestions are both a testament to the level of understanding of environmental issues by today's school children, and a plea for the children of the future. In the world of electronic communications, they are also a reminder of the importance of a real letter in conveying public sentiment (illustrations are also helpful!).



Dear Stephen Harper

If I were Prime Minister I would try to make the world a better place to live in. Ways to do this may be like not driving our cars or not having a lot of factories in the city. To try and make the world a better place we could walk to work and take the bus. If we cut down the trees in the forest we will have no oxygen. The world is our home and if we continue to pollute more and more then the world will die and we will too.

for Victoria - candelaria Agall School  
Harbourview Montessori, City Sydney NS



Dear Steven Harper, I think my class could teach you how to take care of the Earth. If I were prime minister of Canada, I would not pollute. Pollute makes me sad. You breathe air and if you breathe polluted air, you might get very sick. If you keep making global warming, polar bears might

die.  
Love Bailey Karrel age 7



Dear Stephen Harper,

If I were the Prime minist of Canada I would make a law that will stop cutting down trees. You have to take care to stop polluting the enviro. Animals are dying. In my schools, I learned that its so important to take care of the environment. May be you didnt learn that when you were a little boy.

Wish @ B @ him you no

From Ian vs. Stephen Harper.





Dear Mr. Harper,

If I were the prime minister of Canada, I would make it a law to compost. Also, I would try to prevent pesticides from being used. I live in a city where windmills are being used for cleaner electricity. There are about 6 other windmills in different cities around me. Also, people in Canada would not be allowed to clear cut! You may not know how to protect the environment, but some of these ideas could help you!

From Emily O'Leary  
age 8



# artandtheenvironment

By Bob Haywood, *Outside the Lines*

DAVID SUZUKI: The Autobiography  
Published by Douglas & McIntyre  
ISBN:9781553652816  
22.95 pb

Let me state my bias right up front- I am not a big fan of *The Nature of Things*. That is not to say I have never watched it (how can you be a Canadian and not) but I am not a regular viewer of the show. However, I have always been a big fan of David Suzuki and the work he does for the environment and the numerous causes he has been involved in and after reading his biography I am even more enthused.

Of course the book starts out with the beginning of his life and his family—grand parents, parents, sisters etc. He developed a great relationship with his father and with nature even though this was accomplished during the Japanese internment when his family was forced to move because of racist beliefs. While this was traumatic for him and his parents, he survived and excelled.

His early years were filled with numerous outdoor adventures in swamps and fishing. When his family was forced to relocate to Slocan in interior BC during the war, he began his formal schooling. After his first year he was placed into Grade 4. Following the war, his family relocated to Southern Ontario. Again he did well in school, especially science, and after graduation from high school, he attended Amherst College and then to Chicago for his PhD. During this period, David married his first wife, and had children and when he graduated he was offered jobs in the US and Canada. He accepted an offer in the US, but soon returned to Canada as a professor in Edmonton and then in Vancouver at the University of British Columbia.

His academic life consumed him, which caused difficulties with his family, and ultimately resulted in divorce, with renewed efforts at rebuilding his relationship with his children. Meanwhile his career with CBC began and has lasted till the present. The book explores this area thoroughly, including detailed background that led to some of the episodes—he devotes full chapters to the Amazon Rainforest, the Stein Valley and Haida Gwaii as well as Papua New Guinea.


I was very interested in the chapters dealing with the founding and growth of the David Suzuki Foundation as well as the discussions leading to the Kyoto Agreement and the Earth Summit. When talking about the Foundation he was good at describing

the frustrations of getting an activist based group up and running, finding the funding to keep it going and to do productive work. He also mentions, much to his credit, the role his wife Tara plays in its development (he remarried in 1972). Not only was she “instrumental in getting the organization off the ground while learning everything from rules governing charities to board-staff relations, newsletter production, fund-raising techniques, and personnel issues but she had given up a prestigious teaching position at Harvard University to be a full-time volunteer for the foundation”.

When the foundation was established, one of the first decisions was to not accept government funding. This enabled the foundation to take positions that were opposed to the government without the worry of losing funds. The foundation has been, and continues to be involved in numerous projects which he documents in the book.

In the chapter on Kyoto and Climate Change he talks about the skeptics and refutes their arguments and then moves on to describe the 1997 meeting in Kyoto. He discusses the circus atmosphere and the lobbying that was going on as well, as the general disappointment most delegates felt towards the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan all of whom wanted a “watered down” agreement. He talks about Al Gore and how many American environmentalists pinned their hopes on him, but as we know Gore brokered a deal in which a 6% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions was agreed upon. This is a very interesting chapter for the majority of us who were not able to attend the conference and cannot believe that our politicians would have a problem signing such a basic agreement.

The book was a good read, but I would like to mention a problem that I have with David Suzuki. He discusses the importance of science in general and goes on to decry the science illiteracy in our politicians. So why hasn't tried to change this by getting involved in politics? I have always wondered why he has not been involved in the political system. At one point in the book he says how great Lucien Bouchard was as an environmental minister, but imagine David Suzuki as Minister of the Environment. I realize the argument concerning distancing himself, but if he really wants to have an effect on the system then he has to jump in and change it. The most recent cross country tour, “If you were Prime Minister”, raising awareness about the environment as an election issue, was perhaps, as close as we will come to having David Suzuki as a member of our elected leaders.

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# Celebrating Heros

By Susanna D. Fuller

## Missing Ransom A. Myers

Have you ever laid down, on your stomach, with a flashlight and tried to entice a baby crocodile to come closer? Or followed poisonous box jellies as they bounced on the waves, simply to observe the unique relationship with the small fish seeking refuge in the tentacles? Have you ever gathered all the data in the world, to show the devastating impacts fishing activity has had on top predator populations? Or developed new spawner recruit curves? Have you ever risked your job by speaking out, because you knew it was the right thing to do?

These are just a few examples that give us a glimpse into Ransom A. Myers, son of a rice farmer from Mississippi, who made it his life's work to ask the big questions and speak out on marine conservation issues. Ram died on March 27th, after braving an inoperable and untreatable brain tumour. If we weren't so devastated, we might see the irony such a brilliant, overactive brain, as the victim of its own overactive cells.

Ram was known to many around the world as a ground breaking scientist and ardent conservationist, never afraid to speak his mind about the implications of his research. In many circles, Ram had a very public face. One might wonder, who that person was, behind those radio and television interviews, behind the diversity of published papers.

During the time of his illness, and in the days following his death, everyone who knew him has reflected on Ram's character, spirit and place in this world, shared stories and memories, sadness and laughter. For those of us in the field of marine conservation, one of the questions that surfaced was what motivated a scientist who could have worked in any field, for anyone, to chose conservation of marine ecosystems as his *raison d'être*?

Ram, as he was known to most, or Randy as his brothers and sisters fondly referred to him, was the most intelligent, most compassionate and kindest person I have ever known. Recently, while walking home after celebrating his life with fellow graduate students, I was reminded that he was also one of the happiest people, as well. Ram was never afraid to say exactly what he thought, and the probability of him being wrong was very low. Ram believed in breaking the rules, as long as they weren't important ones and no one got hurt



in the process (like phoning the lab from an airplane, long after passengers had been told to turn off all electronic devices). He believed in honesty and in moral obligation. Ram was kind, almost to a fault, dragging graduate students and visiting speakers home, often unannounced to his already busy and bustling family. Ram was not judgemental, but had strong opinions. He had a wonderful way of making people feel included and important, but at the same time he knew who to trust. Ram believed that students who worked hard could make all the difference in the world. Ram's mind worked faster than anyone's and he always expected people to catch on as quickly as he did.

Ram was many, many things to many, many people. The world has lost a voice, one of the loudest and clearest, for marine conservation. It has lost a voice in statistics and mathematics. It has lost a voice that asked the big questions, and figured out how to answer them. It has lost a father and a husband. It has lost a friend and a mentor. But above all of these things, the world has lost a very, very good person. And, as when the marine ecosystem loses members of the top of its food chain, there are repercussions, as Ram's recent research showed. Ram's work on this earth was far from done. His death leaves an even greater imperative, for those of us left behind to speak out, to use science as a tool for change, to demand that change and more than anything to work together to help make up for the loss of his voice. Along the way, he would also want us to take snippets of time to cuddle babies, explore tide pools, read broadly and ask questions. Ram is, and will continue to be dearly missed.

## Thank you to Martin Rudy Haase

On April Fool's Day, the same day that we said goodbye to Ram, another hero turned 85. Martin Rudy Haase is recently celebrated

in Neal Livingston's documentary on his life. It premiered to a standing room only crowd at the Chester Playhouse on November 18th. Rudy and his wife Mickey moved to Nova Scotia in the 1960s and in their unassuming, persistent and kind way, have contributed immensely to the environmental movement around the world, and particularly to land conservation in Nova Scotia. Never underestimate the power of a letter, says Rudy, who has written over 10,000 letters in his time. Letters to the editor, letters to politicians, letters to Presidents of the United States. Rudy's commitment to tobogganing and to shoveling out his Goat Lake farm driveway by hand, provide valuable insight into his personality. What could be more joyful than speeding down a pristine, white hill surrounded by trees that you had protected from being clear cut? Maybe walking through a rain forest in Costa Rica that he had helped protect. Or through a piece of property in New Zealand he once owned and sold to people who would keep it wild, rather than the developer who was willing to give him much more than the land was worth. Maybe sailing along a protected island or piece of coast that once faced clear cutting or poor coastal development. The film gives us just a taste of Rudy's life, his experiences and accomplishments, but it clearly illustrates that he and Mickey are indeed, heroes to be celebrated.

With luck, Black River Productions film will be shown on CBC television in the coming months.

*Susanna Fuller is one of Ram's graduate students. Memories included in this piece were contributed by his family, his students and colleagues. Donations in Ram's name may be made to his family (his wife Rita, and children Emily, Rosie, Sophia, Carlo and Gioia), to the Ecology Action Centre's Marine Program and to the Nova Scotia Nature Trust. For more details please see <http://as01.ucis.dal.ca/ramweb/>.*

# How To: Make Energy by Saving It

## Energy Efficiency: Nova Scotia's Forgotten Energy Resource

By *Brendan Haley*

### The Story of Maggy's House

Maggy owns a house in a neighbourhood near you and she arranged to have a home energy efficiency audit. An energy advisor arrived and inspected her house to see how much energy was being wasted, and created a list of measures to improve her house's energy efficiency. These included caulking and weather stripping doors and windows, adding insulation in the basement, installing a low-flow showerhead and faucet aerators, and buying energy efficient appliances.

After Maggy followed this advice she found her annual electricity and fuel bills were reduced by 30% - from \$2,555<sup>1</sup> to \$1,788.<sup>2</sup> She now saves \$767 dollars a year. The changes cost her \$5,000. She will recoup this investment from the money she saves on her bill in 6 1/2 years, or in 5 1/2 years with help from an incentive offered. Since Maggy is using less electricity and oil, less fossil fuel needs to be burned. Her energy efficiency measures have reduced global warming pollution by 4 tonnes of green house gases per year. Plus, Maggy's house is now more comfortable and more attractive to prospective buyers because it is cheaper to heat.

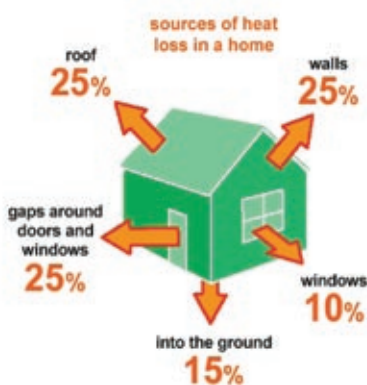
It makes both economic and environmental sense for Maggy to invest in energy efficiency. In addition to the immediate benefits to Maggy, the energy utility's costs decrease because they buy fewer fossil fuels from outside Nova Scotia and reduce their contributions to air and global warming pollution. Just as Maggy saves money from investing in energy efficiency, the province as a whole can also save money while creating local jobs. However, not enough individuals and businesses have followed Maggy's lead. People encounter barriers in the form of high up-front costs, a lack of expertise, lack of time, a scarcity of efficiency products on the market, weak government standards, or a lack of incentives. Every day we contribute to the global climate crisis and waste huge amounts of energy and money by failing to improve our energy efficiency!

### How Much Can Energy Efficiency be Improved?

A lot! When we save energy, we are decreasing pollution. Instead of burning more

fossil fuels to heat and light our houses, we can receive the same (or better) warmth and lighting using more energy efficient practices and technologies.

From 1970 to 1998, even with no national strategy, through energy efficiency and conservation, Canada saved more energy than the combined total of all forms of new energy that were produced. Without such efficiency an additional 200 mega-



tonnes of carbon a year would have entered the atmosphere and consumers would have spent over \$50 billion more.<sup>3</sup> The energy we save is a massive resource - bigger than any oil or gas boom. Imagine what we could do if we actually developed a strategy to improve our efficiency!

### How Much Does Energy Efficiency Cost?

In contrast to the coal and oil currently imported into Nova Scotia, efficiency can be viewed as an abundant and domestic form of energy that reduces air and carbon pollution while providing local economic development benefits. It is also cheap!

Well-run efficiency programs typically return \$2-\$4 of value for every \$1 invested. Other jurisdictions are finding that it costs them only 3 cents to save a kilowatt-hour of electricity by creating standards, programs and incentives. This is about 67% cheaper than the costs of supplying more energy! Efficiency is a smart investment because it is cheaper than buying fossil fuels and spending money on new power plants. In Nova Scotia we have been wasting energy and wasting money for years by not harnessing the efficiency resource to its full potential.

### How Much Should Nova Scotia Invest in Energy Efficiency?

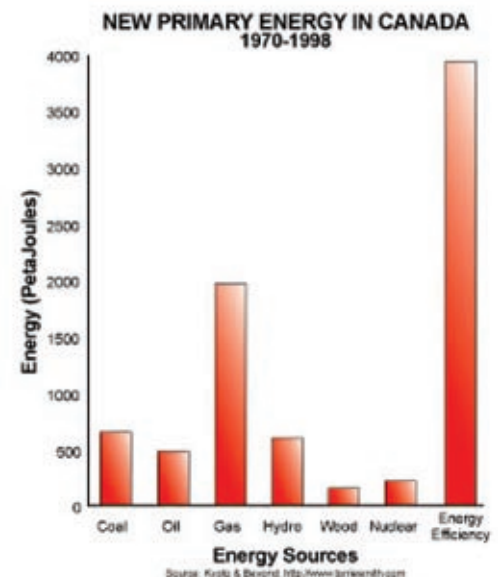
To save money we should invest in programs that set standards, provide expertise, outreach, and financial incentives to Nova Scotians if the cost of these programs is less expensive than buying other forms of energy. Usually an efficiency potential study is conducted to assess how many savings are available in one region.

In some jurisdictions, they have found that they can cost-effectively hold electricity demand flat and begin to reduce it, and to reduce gas and oil consumption by 1% per year in the near term. Based on this experience, if Nova Scotia were to invest \$30-\$50 million per year in energy efficiency, we would all save money!

This is not even considering the benefits to the environment and society from energy efficiency. To meet our international commitments to reduce global warming pollution by 2010 and achieve at least a 30% cut from 1990 levels by 2020, efficiency will be the biggest part of the solution. Efficiency is also integral to reducing the burden energy costs place on low-income Nova Scotians.<sup>4</sup>

### What is the Best Way to Deliver Energy Efficiency?

Unlike building a power plant and purchasing coal from overseas to produce energy, we can save energy house-by-house, business-by-business, and industry-by-industry.





This requires legislated efficiency standards, consistent annual investments, a team of energy experts, and an overall strategy with targets and timetables. Efficiency programs are sometimes run by energy utilities (such as Nova Scotia Power). However, this can create conflicts of interest. Why? Because utilities make money by selling energy and are not always rewarded if energy usage is reduced.

It's in the best interest of the public to have an independent agency with proper public oversight administering energy efficiency programs. Many jurisdictions have such separate, independent agencies (e.g. Efficiency New Brunswick, Efficiency Vermont, Efficiency Maine, New Jersey Clean Energy Programs, Wisconsin Focus on Energy). Here in Nova Scotia the government has recently created Conserve Nova Scotia – a quasi-independent efficiency agency.

### Will my Utility Bill Increase to Pay for Energy Efficiency?

No – bills will be lower as a result of energy efficiency over the long-term. This is because:

- 1) The programs funded create opportunities to decrease individual utility bills by using less energy
- 2) Efficiency investments are less costly than energy production. This means fewer surprise rate increases to pay for polluting fossil fuels and their power plants.

Energy efficiency programs are best paid for through a dedicated user fee on electricity and fuel oil rates. Typical energy efficiency charges are about \$0.0024 per kilowatt-hour of electricity or \$0.013 per litre of oil. The efficiency charge is paid for everyone who consumes energy in exchange for incentives, and programs that ensure fewer rate increases and reduced pollution from fossil fuels and power plants. The annual cost to the average Nova Scotian household can be recouped by changing 2-3 incandescent light-bulbs to more efficient compact fluorescents.

### What is Currently Happening in Nova Scotia?

Two very important efficiency policies are currently being developed in Nova Scotia:

- 1) Conserve Nova Scotia has been created as

a new agency of the Provincial government. The EAC wants the new agency to set targets and establish a financing mechanism to implement all cost-effective energy efficiency improvements in Nova Scotia.<sup>5</sup>

2) The Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board has ordered Nova Scotia Power Inc. (NSPI) to create an efficiency policy (called Demand Side Management). The EAC wants NSPI to contribute at least 3-5% of its revenues towards energy efficiency.<sup>6</sup>

### What Can I Do?

1) Have yourself, your business, or organization sign the Nova Scotia Energy Efficiency Resolution at:

[http://www.ecologyaction.ca/energy\\_issues/resolution.htm](http://www.ecologyaction.ca/energy_issues/resolution.htm)


2) Write to the Premier and tell him you want Conserve Nova Scotia to set targets and establish a funding mechanism to implement all cost-effective energy efficiency improvements in Nova Scotia.

3) Write to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board to tell them you want Nova Scotia Power to contribute to improving energy efficiency.

4) Get a Home or Business Energy Audit See: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/energy/> (under Smart Energy Choices)

5) Join the Ecology Action Centre to help us work for a more efficient Nova Scotia <http://www.ecologyaction.ca/membership.shtm>

1. 2003 NS average – Statistics Canada
2. Average savings from EnerGuide for Houses Program
3. Kyoto and Beyond - <http://www.torriesmith.com/>
4. See Affordable Energy Coalition - [http://www.ecologyaction.ca/energy\\_issues/EPSE.pdf](http://www.ecologyaction.ca/energy_issues/EPSE.pdf)
5. To see the EAC recommendations for this agency visit - [http://www.ecologyaction.ca/energy\\_issues/ConserveNSRecommendations.pdf](http://www.ecologyaction.ca/energy_issues/ConserveNSRecommendations.pdf)
6. See EAC Priorities for the NSPI plan at [http://www.ecologyaction.ca/energy\\_issues/EACPrioritiesEEES.pdf](http://www.ecologyaction.ca/energy_issues/EACPrioritiesEEES.pdf)



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## How To: Live in the City

By L. Jack Yurko and Kim Thompson

In order to live successfully in an urban environment it is important to remember that it is only possible if you also maintain a relationship with the rural environment. One does not need to leave the city to do this, but can live life in a way that constantly reinforces that the world only functions well when all parts are in harmony. While making decisions try and maintain a deeper connection with the processes that are often obscured up by urban infrastructure and order.

Do you grow any of your own vegetables or fruit? I can answer for myself and say no. I, like many other people, use the excuse of not having a yard to grow a garden. A valid enough reason, but I do have about ten houseplants. Why is it I can grow these and not herbs, lettuce, or a tomato plant? Can I not use the pots on my deck to grow carrots as well as azaleas? Perhaps we have become so accustomed to houseplants growing in pots not vegetables—but that is only convention not a rule. Vegetables are surely just as appealing to the eye and nose as a tropical plant. If I grow even a small amount of food I would have a deeper understanding that food comes from nature not from a store.

Try walking or cycling to the store and only buying what you can carry in your arms or on your bicycle. Carrying home your groceries will make you aware of how it is packaged. It is surprising how little gets put into such large containers. By taking up space in your bag or panniers, you may now realize the problems with excess. You now have less room to carry home yummy goods because of all the extra plastic and cardboard wrapped around so many items. Walk or bicycle to the farmers market, and I am sure you find that walking out of the farmers market with 4 bags of quality items will be more satisfying than driving home with bags and bags of, uh, bags.

A visit to one of your local utilities might awaken a stronger sense of responsibility for your use of those services. A lot of energy goes into purifying our drinking water. In your home, you turn on lights or the stove and you do not see the smoke that is resulting from that action (unless you can see the red and white striped stacks of Tufts Cove in Dartmouth). When you go camping and cook your food on a fire you see smoke and you understand that cooking your food is affecting the air quality. The smoke from your home-cooked meal is emitting from a power plant that is likely nowhere near you. Personal knowledge of what the smoke stack scrubbers can remove, and more importantly can not remove, may affect your decision to leave your TV on for your pet when you are out.

Do I have to suggest to any urbanite to go hang out in the park? Probably not. Most of us like to spend many days playing with our friends, throwing balls to our dogs, and enjoying the grass and trees. Even in the winter I take the route that has the most parks along the way. I am able to absorb the energy from the trees while the grass absorbs my weight and gives my step bounce. We are lucky to live with such an expansive tree canopy, and so many lakes right in the city.

I believe that none of this is news to Nova Scotians, my experience is that we are closer to nature than most. But even the closeness of the sea does not always keep us true to what we know to be best, so consider this my gentle reminder.



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## How To: Say Thank You

*Your support inspires us!*

Thanks to amazing support from our membership we have raised \$114,000 towards our Capital Campaign goal of \$140,000. In the next few months we are seeking supporters to contribute the final \$26,000 and bring the campaign to a close.

When the Ecology Action Centre purchased our new home in July 2006, it was one of many firsts for our organization. For the first time, we became homeowners, and initiated the first green office renovation project in Nova Scotia. We moved into our newly renovated, energy efficient, environmentally friendly, and healthy office space in June 2006.

Since then, Fern Lane has become a model and inspiration for the hundreds of visitors who have toured our building or taken a virtual tour. Our new building has increased staff and volunteer effectiveness (and happiness!), raised the public profile of the EAC, and allowed us to broaden and deepen our partnerships. Fern Lane has been a wise and fruitful investment.

To pay for Fern Lane renovations we launched our first Capital Campaign with a direct appeal to our membership in December 2006. We are so inspired and gratified by the support we have received. Our success is due to ongoing support from our amazing membership. Many sizes and types of donations are helping us reach our goal.

The Capital Campaign supporter profiles below feature two of our wonderful donors:

“Even though I haven’t lived in Halifax for the last 10 years, I



want to contribute what little I can to the EAC. It is an inspiring model of community collaboration and action. I couldn’t count the number of times I have called the EAC for information on issues, policies, strategies and processes. It gives me hope to see what is being accomplished at Fern Lane.” *Maria Recchia, St. Andrews, NB*

“As long as I can remember there’s been an EAC in Halifax. I



admire and respect all those people who kept the organization and its spirit alive. I like to try and thank, support and encourage those who work so hard to protect our ecology.” *Colleen O'Malley, Halifax, NS*

For more information, or to donate contact Maggy Burns, Capital Campaign Co-Chair, 2705 Fern Lane, Halifax, NS B3K 4L3 (902) 429-5287 [centre@ecologyaction.ca](mailto:centre@ecologyaction.ca)

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## Exploring Home: Adventures with a Small Footprint

By Catherine Joudrey

It's leg stretching time! The days are brighter, the weather is warming up, and the trees are turning green. Spring fever! After a winter bundled up, this is prime time for exploring our lovely province. Using sustainable methods of transportation can add more excitement to any day trip. Taking a bus, walking and biking helps to protect the environment from harmful air pollutants.

Bus travel can be fun; it's low stress, easy, and affordable. Buses allow for leisure time, whether it be catching up with that dusty book on your night shelf or having a chat with a friendly companion. Catching 40 winks is also a possibility. After all, you can relax knowing you're taking the safest form of travel, public transportation. Environmentally speaking, each bus can take an average of 45 cars off the road. This significantly reduces air pollution and helps improve traffic congestion. These transportation methods are also great ways to make new friends. Keeping environmental health in mind, why not explore a new part of Nova Scotia or revisit an old favourite with one of these sustainable day trips!

### Victoria Park - Truro

Truro's beautiful Victoria Park is always a favourite on my list. This 400-acre park boasts two waterfalls, Waddell Falls and Joseph Howe Falls. They are especially stunning in the winter. Both become frosted over with long, dangling ice crystals. In warmer weather, enjoy a seat on the park bench. Listen for the soothing sounds of water slipping off the ragged cliffs. The park's trails cater to visitors of all ages and fitness levels. For those looking for a challenge, try Jacob's Ladder, it's 175 steps to the top but worth every step. A look off station half way up the stairs offers a break and allows for a beautiful view of the Lepper Brook. Numerous trail maps posted throughout the park help prevent confusion.

If you're traveling at the end of June, take a splash in the public swimming pool located at the entrance of the park. The pool is sure to refresh you after a day of exploration. While in Truro, take advantage of a walk through the downtown. The old architecture and ambience of the town is refreshing. Keep an eye out for tree sculptures that are located throughout the town. And, there is a fabulous Frenchy's and Louis that aren't picked over by city folk, so many treasures are left to be found.

### Truro: Getting There the Sustainable Way

Truro by Bus: Acadian Lines is a sustainable and convenient option. The 1-1/2 hr trip from Halifax bus terminal begins its first departure at 7:15am. The last returning trip is 8:53pm, allowing for

a fun filled day of exploring. Happy childhood memories of my friendly school bus driver singing "wheels on the bus go round and round" come flooding back when I step on the Truro bus. The beginnings of a great day! Upon arriving in Truro, Victoria Park is around a 15-20 minute walk. You can take your bicycle on the bus for an additional fee.

Truro By Train: VIA Rail leaves Halifax on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 12:35pm. The trip to Truro is about an hour and a half, but you will have to wait a few days to come back the same way! For more information on train travel contact VIA Rail at [www.viarail.com](http://www.viarail.com).

Truro by Bicycle: To bicycle to Truro, if leaving from Halifax, take the Waverly Road in Dartmouth to the Rocky lake Irving, which meets the Route 3 and then follow to Truro. Truro is about 96km from Halifax and 92km from Dartmouth.

Distance from downtown Halifax: ~ 100km

Further information: <http://www.town.truro.ns.ca/main.htm> and <http://www.smtbus.com/> and <http://www.town.truro.ns.ca/depart/parks/VicParkbrochure.pdf>



Truro's Victoria Park boasts two waterfalls. Photo: Catherine Joudrey

### Hemlock Ravine

Hidden within Halifax, Hemlock Ravine is 197 acres of lovely wilderness. Made up of five trails, the park offers something for everyone. Most of the park is filled with large hemlock trees, some of which are over 300 years old and 80 feet tall. Originally, Nova Scotia's lieutenant governor, John Wentworth, owned the property. In the late 1790's, he lent property to Prince Edward. During upgrades to the grounds, the Prince built a heart shaped pond for his mistress, Julie St. Laurent. It became known as Julie's pond. Upon Edward and Julie's return to England in 1800, the property was neglected. Currently, the Halifax Regional Municipality owns the land, and the trail system is a royal treat!

### Bedford Highway: Sustainable Travel

A great thing about Hemlock Ravine is its location. In the heart of the city, it is easy to hop on a bus or to bike there. A quick, 20-minute journey from downtown, Metro Transit's 80 and 81 buses can take you there. Driving on the Bedford Highway past the Kearney Lake exit you will see the Music Rotunda. It's the white round building, originally part of the estate. The road located across the highway is Kent Avenue. Turn left onto Kent Avenue and at the end of the road the trail system begins. Happy Trails!

Distance from downtown Halifax: 15km

Further information: <http://www.halifax.ca/metrotransit/schedules/index.html> and <http://www.trailsCanada.com/index.htm>



### Grand Pre - Wolfville

Grand Pre National Historic Site is a fascinating Acadian settlement on the shores of the Minas Basin. Grand Pre has a history of conflict. In 1713 it was taken over by the British. Thirty-one years later, the French and British declared war again. Unfortunately for the French, in 1755 the British decided to deport the Acadians from their homes. Many were sent to the southern United States, Massachusetts to Georgia, to begin new lives.

While the grounds are accessible all year, the historic site officially opens on May 1st. When open, the historic site is alive with activity; people dress in period costume. It's worth the time to wander through the buildings to learn the detailed history of the French



Grand Pre Historic Church is easily reached by bus or bicycle.

*Photo: Catherine Joudrey*

expulsion. For those with their picnics baskets, the grounds offer a beautiful view. In the summer, lovely flowerbeds can be seen throughout the site.

For the wine lovers among us, Domaine de Grand Pre Winery is located nearby. Winery tours are available beginning mid April. The town of Wolfville is nearby and there are countless low traffic cycling roads and nearby towns to be explored. Small inns and bed and breakfasts are easy to find so the trip can be made into a week-end or midweek getaway.

Distance from downtown Halifax: ~ 80km

Further information: [www.grandprewine.ns.ca](http://www.grandprewine.ns.ca) and [www.pc.gc.ca](http://www.pc.gc.ca) and <http://www.grand-pre.com>.

### Grand Pre: Getting There the Sustainable Way

Acadian Bus Lines offers several daily trips to Wolfville, the closest town to Grand Pre. Luckily, for bike owners, for an extra \$5 you can bring your bike on the bus. Upon arrival in Wolfville, it's an easy 10km bike ride to Grand Pre on Highway 1 east. The winery is on route. The historic site is located on Grand-Pre Road, off Highway 1.

### A Sustainable Conclusion

Nova Scotia's rich history is evident in these three areas. Enjoy the lovely days of spring with a stroll through one or all of these parks. By getting there by bus, walking or biking, you are taking a step to protect the health of the environment. Hopefully, you'll feel healthier, too! Sustainable adventures can be made any time of year, visit [www.trails.gov.ns.ca](http://www.trails.gov.ns.ca).



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# How to Give Gifts of Securities

By Richard Nickerson

The next time you are considering a gift, you may want to look at your investment statement, rather than your bank account. Canadians hold hundreds of millions of dollars in stocks. New government tax incentives could result in a new wave of giving.

The barrier has now been removed for those who would like to gift securities that have appreciated in value. The government already supports the generosity of Canadians by providing a tax credit for donations to charities; more recently, the capital gains tax on gifts of publicly listed securities has been eliminated.

If you would like to make a donation of \$1,000 or more, I would encourage you to look at your investment statement rather than your bank account. You may find a stock or mutual fund that has grown in value and has a significant unrealized capital gain. The funds must be in a non-registered investment account, meaning that this

does not work for investments held in an RRSP. These are the investments you may want to consider donating rather than using cash.

The government defines listed securities as shares, rights, bonds of most Canadian and certain foreign stock exchanges. They also include units of Canadian public mutual funds and segregated fund trusts. Donations must be made to a charity.

Remember that when you sell property that has appreciated, such as a stock, you generally must pay tax on 50% of any capital gain in the year of disposition. This is the generally the difference between what you purchased the shares for, and the fair market value at the time of the sale.

The bank stock you've held for the past 10 years probably has quite an unrealized capital gain and tax liability that goes along with it. Raising funds by selling the stock could significantly reduce the amount of your gift.

	<i>Sell Shares and Gift Cash</i>	<i>Donate the Stock Directly</i>
Value of the Donation	\$10,000	\$10,000
Cost Base	\$2,000	\$2,000
Capital Gain	\$8,000	\$8,000
Capital Gain Rate	50%	0%
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Don't sell the shares! If those same shares are donated directly to a charity rather than sold, the capital gain tax would be eliminated. So if you are looking to make a donation, consider investments that have a large unrealized capital gain. Just don't sell the shares, but rather transfer them directly to the charity.

The following example will illustrate the benefit of donating shares directly to a charity. Mrs. Smith is considering donating \$10,000 to a charity. Let's assume she has already donated \$200 this year and is taxed in a high marginal tax bracket of about 48%.

Mrs. Smith owns shares of ABC Inc., a listed security, that has a fair market value of \$10,000. She originally purchased the shares many years ago at a cost of \$2,000.

Mrs. Smith is considering whether she should sell the shares of ABC Inc. and gift the proceeds, or transfer the shares directly to the charity. Which is better?

You can see from the chart that Mrs. Smith would come out well ahead (\$1,920) if she decides to donate the shares directly rather than sell and donate the proceeds.

Here is where the donor would receive two tax benefits for a gift of securities, rather than just one for a gift of cash. The first is the standard tax credit, and the second is the elimination of the capital gain. One gift provides you with two tax benefits.

If Mrs. Smith decided to donate \$10,000 in cash rather than of using her shares, she would still receive the tax credit but would still have a unrealized capital gain. Later when she sells the ABC Inc.

shares, she would pay tax on any capital gains. This would have a negative impact on her overall net worth.

Do you own demutualized shares? Not too long ago, a number of Canadian life insurance companies converted from mutual companies to public companies; many of these policy holders received demutualized shares. Generally these shares were received with a zero tax cost base, which means that they could trigger a substantial gain when they are sold. Any eligible investment with a significant gain should be considered.

About ten years ago, the federal government introduced a reduction in the capital gains tax on donations by 50%. With this introduction, there was a three-fold increase in donations of publicly traded securities between 1997 and 2000.

With the recent tax changes and stock market conditions, one bank economist predicts that security gifts will increase by 50%.

I wonder just how many people have embraced the tax incentive and are looking to donate appreciated securities?

This is just one of many charitable gift strategies that you may want to consider. Please seek the advice of your accountant, legal or other professional advisor when you are considering a gift.

*Richard Nickerson, CFP, CDEFA is a financial planner that works Assante Wealth Management in Halifax. He is a member of the Social Investment Organization and a member of the Canadian Association of Gift Planners.*

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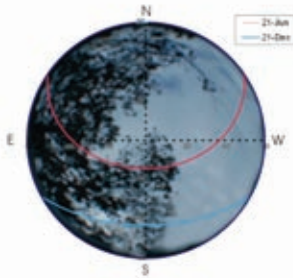
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## How To: Get to 12% Wilderness Protection

**Nature conservation picks up steam in Nova Scotia  
Province acquires \$27 million of land from Bowater for protection – more to come**

*By Raymond Plourde*

In December the Voluntary Planning Taskforce on Heritage released its final report to government and the public. In a section examining the future of our Natural Heritage the taskforce recommended, among other things, that the provincial government “Work diligently and with a sense of urgency to complete the provincial protected areas network”. This was the latest in a long line of policy reports recommending more protection for our rapidly vanishing wilderness in Nova Scotia.

In June 2003 World Wildlife Fund Canada released its ground-breaking national Nature Audit. In it they found that Nova Scotia had only about ten percent of its landmass left in a relatively wild and natural state. In a speech in Halifax in November of that year, WWF Canada president Monte Hummel put it in perspective: “Nova Scotia is lagging behind its commitment to complete a representative network of protected areas,” he said. “More needs to be done, and time is of the essence. WWF’s Nature Audit, released in May of this year, indicated clearly that Nova Scotia has very little intact wilderness to choose from, so you have to save the best of what’s left quickly before it’s gone”.

And of course the Nova Scotia Public Lands Coalition has been advocating for more protected areas for years. The NSPLC is a coalition of over 50 groups and organizations from across the province that have been fighting for better nature conservation for over a decade. Leading members include the Ecology Action Centre, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Sierra Club of Canada, the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia, Trout Nova Scotia and The Nova Scotia Salmon Association.

Now it appears that our cumulative efforts have combined to produce some tangible results. Just last month Premier Rodney MacDonald announced the acquisition of 29 outstanding natural areas from the Bowater Mersey paper company. The deal, worth \$27 million, will permanently protect over 10,000 hectares (nearly 25,000 acres) of wildlands in six counties in southwest Nova Scotia. These areas protect significant wetlands, old-growth forest stands and habitat for endangered species such as the mainland moose and the Blanding’s turtle. Specific areas include the Shelburne National Heritage River adjacent to Kejimikujik National Park, lands adjacent to the Tobetic, Cloud Lake, and Tidney River Wilderness Areas, and the Bog Lakes area near Kaiser Meadow in Lunenburg County.

At the announcement in Liverpool Premier Rodney MacDon-

ald promised protection for these special areas. “One hundred per cent of this land is slated for conservation,” he said. “A significant majority of the acquisitions will be designated in a way that brings Nova Scotia closer to our 12% commitment for protected areas.” (The 12% figure comes from the minimum national goal committed to by Canada at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and later signed onto by all 10 provinces.) Natural Resource Minister David Morse added “The significant majority of these lands will be protected as Wilderness Areas or Nature Reserves.” This is good stuff indeed.

Once the Bowater lands are officially designated and thus added to Nova Scotia’s protected areas network later this year the province will have approximately 8.3 % of the land under legal protection. That means we will still have about 3.7 % left to protect – slightly more than 200,000 hectares. That’s roughly equivalent to two more Cape Breton Highland National Parks in size. So we still have a long way to go.

So what’s the plan you may ask? Well, within days of the Bowater land deal Environment minister Mark Parent surprised everyone when he introduced a sweeping new set of environmental goals and targets in a new bill called the “Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act”.

Among other things it commits the government to protect at least 12 percent of the provincial landmass by 2015. As of press time the bill was working its way through the legislative process. Barring any unforeseen problems it should be law by the time you read this. This would mean the government will have a legal obligation to meet the target by no later than 2015 (and hopefully sooner). It also means that the identification and protection of important wilderness areas is about to accelerate in order for the province to begin making strides towards that goal.

The Nova Scotia Public Lands Coalition has identified 19 such “hotspot” areas on publicly owned Crown land and has been pushing for their protection for years. In 2005 two of these areas – Gully Lake and Eigg Mountain – became Nova Scotia’s newest protected Wilderness Areas, bringing the total number of these large natural areas up to 33. There are still 17 more hotspots that we feel should be studied and hopefully designated as the province moves forward. For more information on these areas and the ongoing efforts to better protect nature in Nova Scotia please visit [www.publicland.ca](http://www.publicland.ca).

*Raymond Plourde is EAC’s Wilderness Coordinator and has worked tirelessly to move Nova Scotia towards its 12% target.*



*Photo: Raymond Plourde*

# ecohoroscopes

By Suki Starfish

**ARIES** (March 21- April 19): You should take your friends to see the award-winning documentary, Sharkwater ([www.sharkwater.com](http://www.sharkwater.com) for theatre information starting March 23.) It features stunning photography of the beautiful, ancient, misunderstood creatures, as well as gripping human drama and a thrilling musical soundtrack. It even includes an interview with Aries Mark Butler of the Ecology Action Centre. (Just be careful if you decide to take any sensitive Pisces friends: the movie contains some disturbing images of violence against sharks.)

**TAURUS** (April 20- May 20): When an introspective mood hits in mid-April, it's the perfect time to go for a spring hike. Visit your favourite natural area or get ideas on easy car-less getaways from this issue of BTI. When you do all the work you do protecting the environment, it's important to rejuvenate and remind yourself why you care!

**GEMINI** (May 21- June 21): So you've seen An Inconvenient Truth and, and if you're a typical gregarious Gemini, you told everyone you know that they must see it too. But now what do you do? If you're stuck for ideas about how to help, visit [www.ecologyaction.ca/climatechange](http://www.ecologyaction.ca/climatechange) for helpful tips from the EAC's projects about what you can do about the climate crisis in Nova Scotia.

**CANCER** (June 22- July 22): It is easy to make sustainable seafood choices at the supermarket and at restaurants, thanks to Sea Choice's Canadian seafood card. Support healthy oceans, fish habitat, responsible hook and line fishermen and fishing communities with every fish purchase. Download your seafood card from [www.seachoice.org](http://www.seachoice.org) or pick one up from the EAC office. Just remember, starfish make better astrologers than food.

**LEO** (July 23- August 22): Led by the charming, funny and enthusiastic Leo, Jennifer Graham, the Coastal Issues Committee is an exciting committee to get involved with, particularly in the summer months. They meet the last Thursday of each month, at 5:30pm. Join them to protect Nova Scotia's unique coastline as well as the people who live near it and depend on it for their livelihoods.

**VIRGO** (August 23- September 22): A health-conscious earth baby like you will adore the Food Action Committee's publication, Eating by the Seasons, featuring recipes for each season made with local, organic ingredients. It even includes tips on where to find local, organic produce and a sustainable seafood guide. This treat for your body and your planet only costs \$10 and can be obtained by contacting Zoë at [info@ecologyaction.ca](mailto:info@ecologyaction.ca) or (902) 429-2202.

**LIBRA** (September 23- October 22): You'll be feeling extra competitive in May and June, when Mars is opposite your sign. This is perfect incentive for participating in the Canadian Commuter Challenge on June 3-9. You and your co-workers (or classmates if you are a post-secondary student) sign up at <http://www.commuterchallenge.ca/english/> to leave the car at home and take active transportation or public transit to work that week. The groups (communities, workplaces, universities, etc.) with the highest participation rates win! So encourage everyone you know to join in.

**SCORPIO** (October 23- November 21): This spring, you should think about getting a home or business energy audit ([www.gov.ns.ca/energy](http://www.gov.ns.ca/energy)). Energy efficiency can make a huge difference in reducing our overall carbon emissions, plus it saves businesses and homeowners money by cutting fuel costs. While you're in a carbon-emission slashing mood, visit [http://www.ecologyaction.ca/energy\\_issues](http://www.ecologyaction.ca/energy_issues) to learn more about energy efficiency and to sign the resolution for a more energy efficient Nova Scotia.

**SAGITTARIUS** (November 22- December 21): This summer is a splendid time for all Sagittarians to learn more about solar power. The EAC's new Solar Gain project ([www.solargain.ca](http://www.solargain.ca)) works to promote the use of solar energy to heat water. They help make it easier for businesses to make the switch—saving money and helping the environment—with providing information, consultations, supplier information and more.

**CAPRICORN** (December 22- January 19): New(ish) EAC Internal Director, Maggy Burns, sets a shining example for all Capricorns by using her natural business savvy in an environmentally positive way. She runs her own successful and environmentally-friendly business, Re-cover Journals (featured in the last issue of BTI). She has also been instrumental in boosting our Capital Campaign, which has raised over \$114 000 towards our green office at Fern Lane. For more information on the campaign, which is seeking supporters to commit the final \$26 000 it needs to reach its goal, please visit <http://ecologyaction.ca/newhome/capital.htm>

**AQUARIUS** (January 20- February 18): Born on February 8, 2007, the EAC's new Built Environment Committee is an Aquarius just like you! The Urban Issues Committee and the Built Environment Working Group came together that romantic evening, shortly before Valentine's Day, to create this exciting new committee. It will work on urban and planning issues as well as promoting more sustainable buildings and construction in NS, showcasing the EAC's green home, and more. Attend meetings the second Thursday of each month at 5:30pm.

**PISCES** (February 19-March 20): Like most fish and artistic humans, you are attracted to shiny things. There will be a lot of pretty things to look at and bid on - including pottery, jewellery, getaway packages, plants and much more - at our Annual Garden Party on June 10. The always-entertaining Trailer Park Boy, John Dunsworth, and notable personality Nancy Regan will act as auctioneers. It will be held at St. Mary's Boat Club, where you can always take a break from the proceedings to gaze in awe at the view of the Northwest Arm. Taking in beauty for a good cause – what more can you ask for?

*Suki Starfish is a Northern Sea Star (Asterias vulgaris) living in the waters off Halifax. When not working as the EAC's resident astrologer, she can be found munching on molluscs and growing back the odd limb that gets damaged by predators.*



# How To: Party – Save the Date! June 10th, 2007

By Hanita Koblents

When the snow begins to fall in mid-January, a group of dedicated EAC volunteers are already starting to think about spring. If you were a fly on the wall of this Committee's near-weekly meetings, you might not suspect that they were organizing one of the Centre's biggest annual fundraisers—the EAC Garden Party & Auction.

Committee members drink tea and munch on organic biscuits while discussing women's soccer, choir practice, anti-bullying techniques for youth, and plans for the next home renovation. Somewhere in the midst of all this casual socializing, the hard work of organizing such an event gets done: sponsors are confirmed and thank-you letters sent out; tickets and posters are designed and printed; donated items are catalogued, bundled, and written up in the event program.

Closer to the date, more volunteers are enlisted to prepare food for the guests, dig perennials out of their gardens for the plant sale, and help set up and run the auction. When the event finally happens, it's almost like an extension of those casual weekly meetings, except there are a couple hundred more people gathered to share refreshments, listen to live music, catch up with old friends, and make some new ones. Besides raising funds to support a great cause, one of the main reasons people keep coming back every year to the EAC Garden Party, is to enjoy this casual family-friendly opportunity to socialize with others who share the same passionate concern for the earth.

The 2007 Garden Party promises to be more of the same, with a few improvements. This year the organizing committee has decided to try a shorter live auction to allow more time for the aforementioned hobnobbing. We have also engineered some improvements that we hope will get everyone through the check-out line a little more quickly. Celebrity guest auctioneer John Dunsworth will be back this year (many thanks to Bill Carr for stepping in

last year!) and joining him will be our special guest Nancy Regan. As always our faithful supporter, CBC's Olga Milosevich will be there to greet everyone.

Besides meeting up with old friends, another reason people keep coming back to the Garden Party is to bid on the incredible array of beautiful, useful, and good quality items

that are donated to the auction. It is always remarkable how many local businesses are willing to generously support the EAC by contributing their goods and services. Several hundred items are donated every year ranging from local services to weekend getaways, original arts and crafts, to food and wine.

Major Sponsors (those who contribute more than \$500 value) in years gone by have included the Nova Scotia Pottery Guild (there are always dozens of pieces of original pottery); Taylor Made Security (installation of a basic home security system); TreeWorks (arboricultural services); among others.

The outcome: nearly \$20,000 to support the Centre's core functions. This year two Gold Sponsors have also been confirmed: Credit Union Atlantic, and Assante Wealth Management.

Please join us this year for the EAC's Ninth Annual Garden Party & Auction on Sunday June 10th at the Saint Mary's Boat Club:

Noon-1pm: Viewing,  
Refreshments, and Live Music  
1-2 pm: Live Auction  
2-4 pm: Silent Auction  
(and more Music & Refreshments)

If you would like to join the Garden Party Committee, or volunteer at this year's event on June 10th, call Zoë Miles at the EAC at 429-2202.

*Hanita Koblents has been a member of the Garden Party Committee since 2001.*

## EAC PROJECT STAFF AND COMMITTEE CONTACTS

### CORE STAFF

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Janet Barlow 442-5055

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For more information on our Go Wild project, visit our website: [www.ecologyaction.ca/gowild](http://www.ecologyaction.ca/gowild)



**go wild!**  
Redefine your lawn.



The Ecology Action Centre is encouraging you to keep the lawn mower in the shed this summer, get out the hammock and put up your feet.

Take a look around your property. Do you use or need all of the lawn you have? Could sections of the property be allowed to revert to a more natural state or be replaced by flower beds, shrubs, or vegetable gardens? Could grass be replaced with lower maintenance groundcovers? Could you use more lawn-converting ideas?

**Thank you to our generous members and donors.**

**The Fern Lane Capital Campaign is now seeking just 26 friends giving \$1000 each.**

**To contribute, contact Maggy Burns at 429-5287.**

**Recent NS Successes:**

- **Launch of Solar Gain Project**
- **250,000 SeaChoice cards distributed throughout Canada**
- **Food Miles research project begun**
- **4500 Nova Scotians saw "An Inconvenient Truth"**
- **173 vehicles taken off the roads and recycled by EAC's Steer Clean project**

## The Ecology Action Centre Needs Your Help



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

**CONTACT INFO:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email (for monthly e-newsletter): \_\_\_\_\_

Memberships and donations are tax deductible.

Thank you for your support.

**TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP:**

Monthly Contribution:

\$5  \$10  \$20 Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Contribution:

\$40 Regular  \$60 Contributing/Family

\$120 Supporting/Sustaining

\$20 Student/Senior/Unwaged Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT METHOD:**

Cash  Cheque  VISA  Mastercard

Name on the card: \_\_\_\_\_

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_