



Western Environment Centre

Western Newfoundland's Environmental Education Organization

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Newsletter Spring 2011

From the editor's desk

New and exciting things are happening at the Western Environment Centre! In this issue, you will read about the highly active working groups and committees that have been busy organizing events and projects. We have also profiled the work of a very energetic volunteer, Katie Temple, and included information from other environmental and groups, such as Ducks Unlimited.



Recently, a controversial waste management issue appeared on people's radar screens in this area: the proposal by Corner Brook Pulp and Paper to test the use of Tire-Derived Fuel (TDF) as a fuel source in their plant operations. Simon Jansen, the WEC's Chair, provides his thoughts.

Be sure to read as well the book review by Jennifer Madore of an important text that provides enormously helpful guidance and case studies for environmental advocates and groups of all colours. We also included some details about some fabulous upcoming events currently being planned by the WEC. One event that I would like to emphasise is the upcoming annual general meeting. See April MacDonald's vibrant poster on this page for more details.

The members of the Outreach and Communications Committee who prepared this newsletter hope that you will enjoy reading it. We certainly enjoyed writing it. Together, we can all continue to build critical mass and momentum to bring about real environmental change in our communities.

Edwin Bezzina



→ Topics include:

- The future of WEC
- Voting for the new Board of Directors
- WEC's mandate and direction
- Community Garden
- Farmers Market

Free Hot Drinks and treats!!

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Western Environment Centre's Annual General Meeting

May 10th 6-9pm
Membership sign-up starts @ 5:30
Harbour Grounds Cafe
9 Humber Rd
www.wecnl.ca

Come celebrate Earth Day with us on Wednesday, April 27th, starting at 5:30p.m. in front of the First United Church (West St., Corner Brook).



There will be refreshments, activities, and then a guided tour of the Corner Brook Marsh. At 7p.m., we'll all go to Sorrento (on Park St.) to watch the humorous environmental film *No Impact Man*. Thanks are extended to the United Church and the Environmental Policy Institute (Grenfell Campus, MUN) for their help.

What is the WEC

The Western Environment Centre was founded by a small group of dedicated Corner Brook environmentalists in 1998. They recognized the need for an environmental resource centre and a meeting place for concerned residents to discuss environmental issues. As a result, the Western Environment Centre was founded and opened on West Street.

The Western Environment Centre moved to a larger office in December, 2001. With this change in location came a change in direction, with WEC moving away from advocacy work towards environmental education. To accomplish this, WEC formalized its constitution, and became Incorporated in September 2003 (Inc #48448). In June 2006, the WEC applied for and was granted charitable status.

Our Board of Directors consists of interested individuals from the community with a variety of backgrounds. We feel that this variety gives us the necessary balance to look at environmental issues from a variety of perspectives. Ultimately, we strive to help facilitate the transition to a more sustainable future. Sometimes this means baby-steps. Sometimes it means taking big steps quickly.

In 2009 we received funding to hire our first staff person to work on organizing a local Farmers Market. In 2010 we received funding to start a Community Garden. Both of these projects are ongoing and they are growing every year. We are still very small and cannot do all the things we would like to do. But let's not have *perfect* be the enemy of the good. And good things we do.

The WEC has a number of active working groups and committees: i) the West Coast Farmers Market Working Group; ii) the Outreach and Communications Committee (which develops and manages the WEC website and Facebook site as well as the WEC newsletter); iii) the Events Committee (which organizes WEC events); and iv) the Community Garden Working Group.

Simon Jansen, Chair

The TDF issue

In the autumn of 2011, the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Mill conducted public consultations about a proposed test to determine if Tire-Derived Fuel (TDF) could feasibly be used as a fuel source in the Mill. A number of concerned citizens and groups in the Corner Brook area opposed the test, arguing for example that the Mill does not have the necessary technology for using TDF and that the health effects on the local population and environment would be harmful.

The issue is currently off the table since the Mill has withdrawn the proposal (although the issue certainly remains a topic of discussion). How was the WEC involved? The WEC did not support either the Mill's viewpoint or those opposed to the trial. The WEC's Board of Directors welcomed the opportunity to examine and address the issue, although it was certainly challenging to grapple with the highly complex technical aspects involved in a field that has many opposing viewpoints.

The WEC did raise significant concerns that adequate research and review of the literature had not been carried out to answer many of the questions involved. For all of the potential sources of pollutants, very little information had been provided, except to indicate that data and modeling show that the emissions would be below ambient air quality standards, were TDF to be used. The WEC was not opposed to the trial in principle, but called for more research and more specific data on emissions and their long-term cumulative effects.

In the end, it came down to a number of broader questions: What truly makes an expert and what makes an expert trustworthy? How much risk are we as a community willing to accept in disposing of our waste? Who should pay for such disposal? What makes an independent committee for monitoring such tests "independent"? What is the best procedure for involving the community? Is our opposition to such tests merely the result of a "not-in-our-backyard" reaction? How can we balance our own needs with the broader imperative of dealing with toxic waste?

Every one of these questions has many different answers and together they help define us a community. The main mandate of the WEC is to help you understand the issues involved.

Simon Jansen, Chair



Residents protesting against the proposed trial

Image: Tom Cochrane, cornerbrooker.com

Update from the Community Garden Working Group

The Community Garden Working Group is smelling the first signs of spring. Workshops are being organized that help with the planning of what to plant and when to start transplants. We are also eagerly waiting to hear back if our proposal for a greenhouse and a second site will be approved. We can't thank enough all the volunteers who are putting their heads together to work on the logistics of the workshops, to search for funding opportunities to increase our budget, and to reach out into the community to spread the word about yet another exciting season of gardening. Corner Brook is thrilled about this initiative. It shows when we look at the list of people who are signing up on our waiting list to get a plot. Here is some more good news: we have received approval for an expansion of the current site at the Blow Me Down Ski Park, which will give us an additional ten plots. A second site would be wonderful, but even though we have some ideas and prospects, nothing is confirmed yet. If you know anyone who wants to host a community garden on their land, please let us know!

Our community garden working group is always welcoming more people who want to get involved. You can contact us at info@wecnl.ca to find out more. As soon as the workshops are in place we will post them on our website at www.wecnl.ca. You can also find us on Facebook.

Update from the Farmers Market Working Group

The West Coast Farmers Market is gearing up for its third season, with local farmers bringing a selection of the freshest, in-season produce for you to choose from. Come out and enjoy the atmosphere of the market with entertainers as well as artisans and crafts people displaying their original and homemade wares. The market will take place at Margaret Bowater Park in Corner Brook from July 9th to October 29th, 2011. That's every Saturday! With so much to see and hear don't miss the market and your opportunity to support local business!

For information or to register as a vendor please contact Carolyn Wheeler at 634-9470 or email info@wecnl.ca.



Image WEC website

Earth Hour

On Saturday, March 26th, the WEC helped organize an Earth Hour event with the Grenfell Campus of Memorial University of Newfoundland and the First United Church in Corner Brook. Held in the United Church basement, there were sweets, refreshments, music, and fine conversation. Thanks to all those who participated and helped out!

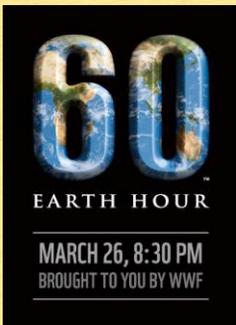


Photo courtesy E. Bezzina

Six great ways to get involved in the WEC

1. Join one of the subcommittees
2. Join the Facebook group; invite others to do the same
3. Attend WEC events
4. Become a WEC volunteer
5. Visit the Farmers Market in the summer
6. Participate in the WEC community garden

How to become a member

(and how to encourage a friend to become a member):
E-mail info@wecnl.ca or by phone at (709) 634-9470; see the form on p. 8. Membership fees help the WEC run its programs and activities. Becoming a member is a fabulous first step to becoming environmentally involved in your local community.

We're on Facebook!

You can find us by searching by Western Environment Centre.



We're also on Twitter

(twitter.com/wecnl)



The Western Environment Centre is developing a **wonderful new website** which will be launched in the near future. Stay tuned!
(In the meantime, please use the current website www.wecnl.ca)

Volunteer profile: Katie Temple, volunteer extraordinaire!

When Katie Temple moved to Corner Brook from Guelph in 2010, she joined the WEC because of its involvement in local food projects. She has been very active in the Farmers Market, numerous WEC events, as well as the community garden that has been established at the Blow Me Down Ski Park. She is also an active member of the Community Garden Working Group and is planning a number of community gardening workshops in the near future.



What motivated you to become involved in the WEC?

I had been involved in environmental groups in Guelph and St. John's for ten years and when I moved to Corner Brook, WEC seemed like an active and interesting group; and, the focus is on food projects and that's what I've been interested in for the past couple of years.

You're quite the gardener, aren't you? What is your favourite thing to grow?
Well, I'm a gardener in training. I've gotten into broccoli and potatoes. Potatoes are exciting because they're like a secret; you don't know how many there will be until you dig down. I was excited about broccoli because it grew so well. We didn't have any pests last year.

If you could change one thing related to sustainability in this area, what would it be?

I would improve the bike trail system. There have already been improvements and it encourages me to ride my bike more often, but a better system would encourage even more people. Separate bike lanes would be great; so would improvements to the side of the road, getting rid of dangerous gutters and potholes, and so on. If electric bikes were available to people, that would be a fabulous incentive. Maybe the city could start lending out electric bikes.



From the archives: photos from the peaceful demonstration with the First United Church, Corner Brook, during the U.N. Climate Change Conference at Bali (Dec., 2007; Photos courtesy E. Bezzina, Susan Pottle)

Five tips for the environmentally conscious chef

1. If you bake in ceramic or glass, you can reduce your oven temperature by 25° F because these materials are much better than metal for conducting and retaining heat

2. Keep them covered: To prevent heat loss, keep pots and pans covered while cooking (unless it's otherwise stated in the recipe)

3. Human power: Rather than using electric kitchen gadgets, consider hand beaters, handheld coffee grinders, or just the reliable basic cutting knife (apparently, Amish ingenuity has developed hand-powered blenders and food processors)

4. Match the element to the size of the pan: try to avoid using small pots on larger burners since that wastes energy; be sure to keep the elements clean as they will thus conduct heat better

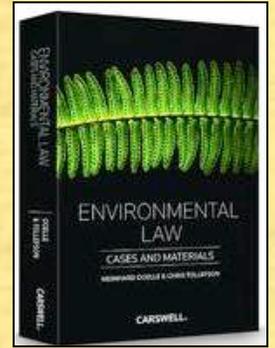
5. Try not to be so curious when oven-cooking: opening the oven door and peeking inside causes 20% of the heat to escape

Source: Adria Vasil, *Ecoholic: Your Guide to the Most Environmentally Friendly Information, Products, and Services* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009), p. 170.



Book review

Meinhard Doelle and Chris Tollefson, *Environmental Law: Cases and Materials* (Toronto: Thomson/Carwell, 2009). 535p. Paperback.



This wonderful book is designed to be used as a text for practitioners in environmental law and for law professors for teaching introductory environmental law courses at Canadian law schools. However, anyone involved in environmental advocacy in some way will find this book useful. The book is unique and a great resource because it is comprehensive and specific to the Canadian setting.

Doelle and Tollefson are well-respected and leading Canadian environmental law scholars from each end of the country. Meinhard Doelle is an Associate Professor at the Schulich School of Law in Dalhousie University (Halifax), Associate Director of the Marine and Environmental Law Institute, and Director of the Marine and Environmental Law Programme. Tollefson is a Professor of Environmental Law at the University of Victoria's School of Law and Executive Director of the University's Environmental Law Clinic. Such a mix of collaboration from Eastern and Western Canada adds considerably to the book's breadth. Even though there is no specific content on Newfoundland and Labrador, many of the examples and much of the material would be applicable to this province. The treatment of environmental law at the federal level is especially relevant.

One of the book's strengths is its discussion of International Environmental Law. This corpus is not necessarily binding in the Canadian sphere, but the legal principles and precedents from IEL can be used strategically in environmental advocacy work in this country. The book's introductory chapters provide the basic highlights of IEL, suggesting the ways that Canadian courts can recognize and cite international environmental laws and treaties. Also, the chapter uses case studies to illustrate how the Supreme Court of Canada took direction from international law and applied it in the Canadian legal sphere. Legal practitioners and law students will find such material extremely helpful. The second chapter expands on this further, focusing on Canadian Common Law and especially tort law (which is the dominant practice in environmental law). Those who do not have a legal background might find the technical language in the chapter challenging. But the cases cited are certainly instructive and are well worth the read.

The book focuses on many intricate aspects of environmental law and explains their differences and why these differences are so important. An example of this is found in Chapter Five, "Regulatory Compliance and Enforcement Strategies" (which investigates the distinction between compliance measures and enforcement measures). Equipped with such a substantive and well-documented understanding of these approaches, an environmental advocacy group can be much more effective and successful in the legal system, whether that group is representing a particular environmental cause or is advising counsel.

Environmental groups and advocates will find enlightening the fourth chapter, which explains environmental regulation in Canada. The chapter exposes the false assumptions of "assimilative capacity" (for example, the capacity of a body of water to absorb waste materials or toxins without long-term damage to aquatic or human life). This principle underlies many Canadian environmental policies as well as the Environmental Impact Assessment process.

Chapter Seven is a very strong and comprehensive chapter explaining the Federal Environmental Assessment process and is currently very relevant as Newfoundland and Labrador have recently engaged in public hearings regarding the proposed Churchill Falls project. This chapter clearly articulates challenges with this system including the notorious task of project scope determinations and what aspects of the project are to be 'scoped out.' Environmental advocates who have such knowledge of the federal process will be thus more adept at articulating their concerns to government agencies in a language and with a presence that agencies cannot dismiss. Moreover, the chapter can also help advocates oversee and safeguard the EA process.

A strength of the book is its focus on equipping environmental advocates and legal practitioners with the necessary background knowledge for taking legal action to protect the environment. The authors have faithfully reproduced the opinions and arguments of experts in the field. The overall effect is a concise and well-organized investigation of a variety of topics, from environmental regulation, judicial review, compliance, and enforcement to indigenous peoples' rights, parks and protected areas, species protection, and climate change.

(continued on next page)

Unfortunately, although the book's table of contents is detailed and descriptive, there is no index, which undermines the book's value as a quick reference for key terms and issues.

However, one of the great attributes of the book is that the authors are primarily academics. That background and breadth of knowledge gives the authors more flexibility to address emerging areas of environmental law. This is important, because much of environmental law has only been established through the courts and legislation in the last thirty years. It is a continually evolving field, because environmental science continues to make striking breakthroughs; the courts must draw upon environmental law scholars for advice on how to interpret scientific data within a legal framework.

Overall, this is a very helpful and well-structured book, written by two authors who go beyond merely describing the current state of environmental law in Canada's courts.

Jennifer Madore, BA, LLB

News from Ducks Unlimited Canada

Project Webfoot Wetland Education Program- New Field Trip Site in Western NL

Project Webfoot is an international, interdisciplinary environmental education program aimed at teaching young people about wetlands and their associated values. One component of Project Webfoot in Atlantic Canada is the curriculum-linked grade-four program which aims to teach and inspire conservation leaders of the future. Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) has been involved in wetland education programs in Atlantic Canada since 1997 and in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) since 2003. In this province, DUC has delivered education programs to 170 classes reaching about 4,000 students.



This sponsorship-based wetland education program has two main components: the in-class kit and the outdoor field trip. Until now, only the in-class component has been available to students in western Newfoundland, but we are pleased to announce that a field trip location is being established for the first time in Corner Brook. There are currently several classes of students within traveling distance to the new field trip location who are already registered in the in-class component and who will now have a chance to experience the outdoor aspects of the program.

The establishment of a new field trip has been made possible by generous corporate financial support. This contribution will provide all the materials needed to run the field trip and enable five grade-four classes to participate. In addition, Corner Brook Pulp and Paper has graciously agreed to host Project Webfoot field trips at the Corner Brook Marsh and provide materials to build a dipping platform. Further support for Project Webfoot will come through DUC dinner and auction events. Sponsorship will provide a bus subsidy for participating classes, thus enabling DUC and community partners to deliver engaging wetland field trips.

Some of the exciting field trip activities students will engage in include "critter dipping" for aquatic invertebrates, bird-watching, and playing games with an ecological theme. The field trip is designed to help students feel a sense of connectedness with the natural world and to develop environmental awareness and stewardship among them. Project Webfoot also encourages students to plan action-based wetland conservation projects in their own communities.



This year, five classes have already been sponsored in part by the ACAP Humber Arm, and with further support there is potential for more classes to participate in field trips. In addition, volunteers are being recruited for the delivery of this program. So please let us know if you are interested in getting involved. The field trips are scheduled to run in early June.

Ducks Unlimited is currently recruiting volunteers for the delivery of this program. Anyone interested in volunteering is invited to attend a volunteer training session on Tuesday, April 26th from 12:30-4:00p.m. in the Sobey's Community Room (at the Valley Mall, Corner Brook). A light lunch will be provided. This will be followed by a visit to the Corner Brook Marsh for on-site training. Please RSVP if you are planning on attending. Ducks Unlimited will also be hosting a free tour of the Corner Brook Marsh on April 26th from 6:00-7:00p.m. departing from the Glynmill Inn parking lot.



Corner Brook Marsh

Danielle Fequet
Conservation Programs Specialist
Ducks Unlimited Canada
For more information contact: d_fequet@ducks.ca
Check out free DUC educational resources online at:
<http://www.ducks.ca/aboutduc/how/edu.html>

Images from <http://www.ducks.ca>

Watch for these lovely Newfoundland flowers in the spring! (images courtesy of Dr. Henry Mann, retired biology professor, Grenfell Campus, Memorial University of Newfoundland)



Wild Lily-of-the Valley
Maianthemum canadense



Rhodora
Rhododendron canadense



Coltsfoot
Tussilago farfara



Yellow Lady Slipper
Cypripedium parviflorum



Chuckley Pear
Amelanchier (sp.)



Trailing Arbutus
Epigaea repens



Western Environment Centre

Membership Form

Type of Membership: New Renewal Lapsed

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Would you like to be added to our e-mail list? Yes No

What environmental issues interest you the most?

Coastal habitat Wildlife Energy

Urban Planning Community garden Forestry

Climate Change Farmers Market Transportation

Other: _____

Would you be willing to help out with WEC events? _____

Would you be interested in sitting on any one of the following WEC committees and working groups:

Events Fundraising Farmers Market

Outreach and Communications Community Garden

Are you interested in becoming a Board Member? Yes No

How did you hear about the WEC? _____

Do you have any additional information for the WEC?

Benefits of Membership

- Receive updates on WEC events and activities
- Receive the newsletter
- Become part of a growing organization that is committed to protecting the environment in Western Newfoundland and elsewhere
- Access to WEC resources

Office Use Only

Date: _____

Origin (e.g. walk-in):

Payment method:

Cash Cheque

Memberships are tax-deductible.

The WEC will protect your private information. We never share or sell our membership lists to others.

You can cancel your membership at anytime. To do, so please contact us at 709-634-9470.