



# **THE CANADIAN SOCIETY OF ENVIRONMENTAL BIOLOGISTS Newsletter / Bulletin**

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# CSEB Newsletter Bulletin SCBE

VOLUME 66, NUMBER 2, 2009

CSEB Website <http://www.cseb-scbe.org>

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**Cover Photos:** (Front cover) Jim Armstrong, Senior Environmental Biologist, Metro Vancouver, using a mini ponar sediment sampler during a sampling trip to Boundary Bay organized by the Boundary Bay Assessment and Monitoring Program. July 29, 2009. (Back cover) Sediment sample from Boundary Bay sampling trip organized by the Boundary Bay Assessment and Monitoring Program. July 29, 2009.

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**CSEB NEWSLETTER 2009**

Vol. 66, Number 2 Summer 2009

The Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists Newsletter is a quarterly publication. The Newsletter keeps members informed of the Society's activities and updates members on the current affairs and advances in the field of environmental biology. This publication draws together the widely diverse group of Canadian environmental biologists through a national exchange of ideas. Members are invited to contribute papers, photos or announcements that are of a national biological and environmental interest. Letters to the editor are welcome. This is a volunteer non-profit organization and we rely on your participation to make the newsletter a productive forum for ideas and discussion.

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**LE BULLETIN de la SCBE 2009**

Vol. 66, Numbre 2 Éte 2009

Le Bulletin de la SCBE est une publication trimestriel de la Société Canadienne des Biologistes de l'Environnement. Le Bulletin informe les membres des activité de la Société sur événements courant ainsi que les progrès qui font en sciences de l'environnement. Par un échange d'idées au niveau national, cette publication intéresse un groupe très diversifié d'environnementalistes Canadien. Les membres sont invités a contribuer des articles, photos (noir et blanc) ou des messages qui sont d'intérêt nationale en sciences biologiques et envrionmentales. Les lettres à l'editeur sont bienvenues.

**Tout la correspondance d'affaires, y compris les abonnements, les changements d'adresse, les exemplaires retournés et les formulaires:** CSEB National Office, P.O.Box 962, Station F, Toronto, ON, M4Y 2N9. **Les lettres à l'editeur:** Gary Ash, Editor, courriel: [gash@golder.com](mailto:gash@golder.com)

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**The Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists****CSEB OBJECTIVES**

The Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists (CSEB) is a national non-profit organization. Its primary objectives are:

- to further the conservation of Canadian natural resources.
- to ensure the prudent management of these resources so as to minimize environmental effects.
- to maintain high professional standards in education, research and management related to natural resources and the environment.

**OBJECTIFS de la SOCIÉTÉ**

La Société Canadienne des Biologistes de l'Environnement (SCBE) est une organisation nationale sans but lucratif. Ses objectifs premiers sont:

- de conserver les ressources naturelles canadiennes.
- d'assurer l'aménagement rationnel de ces ressources tout en minimisant les effets sur l'environnement.
- de maintenir des normes professionnels élevés en enseignement, recherche, et aménagement en relation avec la notion de durabilité des ressources naturelles et de l'environnement, et cela pour le bénéfice de la communauté.

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## NATIONAL News

### PRESIDENT'S Report

*Submitted by Brian Free, CSEB President*  
**Greetings!**

Summer is here and many CSEB members are spending more of their time in the great outdoors. For many, it's a busy field season, collecting environmental data for projects underway from coast to coast. For others, it's a camping vacation, hiking along a popular trail, fishing, bird-watching... even gardening brings us closer to Nature. And those mosquitoes and black flies -- I can't leave them out! Even Nature's friends don't get a free ride!

I'm excited about this year's CSEB workshop on environmental monitoring. After all, environmental monitoring plays a big role in the work of most biologists. If we're not collecting data, we are designing programs for data collection, or interpreting environmental data for our clients. This information is used to support decision-making by all levels of government and also to inform the public. For all environmental biologists, it's important to keep abreast of the latest thinking regarding monitoring strategies, recent innovations and to learn about programs from across Canada. Check out our workshop program on the CSEB website. Offer your ideas and other assistance to the organizing committee. Promote this workshop with your friends and colleagues.

I hope you all have a wonderful summer, and while you're enjoying Nature (and feeding the bugs), remember how important is the role of environmental biologists. And continue to support the CSEB! The success of the CSEB is rooted in the many members who volunteer. I look forward to hearing from you!

Brian Free, President  
 bfree@cseb-scbe.org ☎

## 2009 CSEB WORKSHOP & AGM

*Submitted by Brian Free, CSEB President*  
**Greetings!**

The Annual General Meeting of the CSEB-SCBE will be held on Thursday, October 15 at 4:30 pm at the Days Inn West in Edmonton. If you are attending the workshop on environmental monitoring, be sure to attend the AGM!

Reports will be presented on activities across the country and on the finances of the organization. Nominations for all positions on the Board of Directors are very welcome. You can even nominate yourself!

If you have ideas about the future direction of the Society, please bring them to the AGM. Your Board of Directors wants to hear from you! ☎

## WILDLIFE GROUPS cheer court ruling on sage grouse

*Reprinted from Calgary Herald*

Environmental groups are hailing what they call a landmark federal court ruling that will force Ottawa to protect habitat of the endangered sage grouse — a species that has been reduced to a few populations in Alberta and Saskatchewan.



"It's a very big win," said Cliff Wallis of the Alberta Wilderness Association, one in a coalition of six environmental groups that launched the action under the federal *Species at Risk Act*.

"It's a reprieve. I hope it will prevent further incursions and fragmentation of their habitat."

A federal court has ruled that with the amount of scientific information available, it's unreasonable the federal environmental minister has failed to designate critical habitat of the sage grouse. Environmentalists plan to ask for protections such as greater setbacks when oil and gas companies are working nearby sage grouse mating areas.

However, there are still major legal battles to come.

Mike Wong, acting director general for the National Parks Directorate, said the government's legal counsel is reviewing the decision. Meanwhile, he said the government will continue what it's already been doing.

In April, Alberta Fish and Wildlife officials counted only 66 male sage grouse in their springtime strutting grounds — down from 78 last year. Most Alberta sage grouse feed on the silver sagebrush around the hamlet of Manyberries, in the south-eastern corner of the province. ☎

## NOTICE of CSEB CONFERENCE & AGM

### Final Call for Papers & Presentations

**Theme:** Environmental Monitoring

October 15-16, 2009 in Edmonton, Alberta

If you are interested in helping plan the conference or would like to present a paper, please contact Gary Ash at [gash@golder.com](mailto:gash@golder.com) or Anne Wilson at [anne.wilson@ec.gc.ca](mailto:anne.wilson@ec.gc.ca)

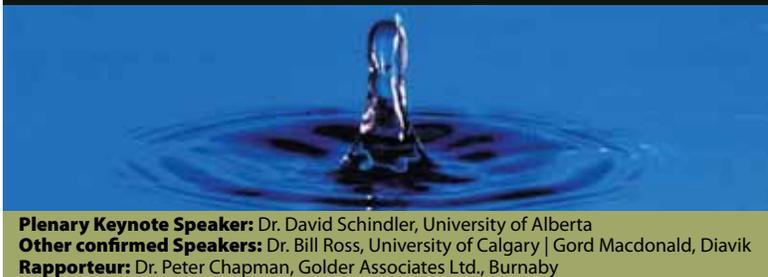
**Deadline:** 15 September 2009

# Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists



## Environmental Monitoring – The Basis for Better Decisions

Workshop and Annual Meeting  
October 15–17, 2009 | Edmonton, Alberta



**Plenary Keynote Speaker:** Dr. David Schindler, University of Alberta  
**Other confirmed Speakers:** Dr. Bill Ross, University of Calgary | Gord Macdonald, Diavik  
**Rapporteur:** Dr. Peter Chapman, Golder Associates Ltd., Burnaby



### NOTICE OF WORKSHOP AND CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

**Workshop Sessions:** Thursday October 15 & Friday October 16, 2009  
**Local Field Trip:** Saturday Oct 17, 2009

#### TENTATIVE SESSIONS

- **Monitoring Design and Standards**
- **Aquatic System Monitoring**
  - Regulatory monitoring such as:
    - Environmental Effects Monitoring Program (EEM)
    - Diavik Diamond Mine case study
    - Toxicity testing
    - Upcoming municipal under CCME strategy
  - Research monitoring such as:
    - Characterizing natural variability
    - Ekati incineration effects on sediments
- **Terrestrial**  
**Possible topics include:**
  - Wildlife e.g. GNWT wolverine study, caribou
  - Birds
  - Vegetation, dust deposition, soils?
  - Soils
- New technologies
- Climate change
- Other topics

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*Abstract deadline Sept. 15, 2009*

## REGIONAL News

### BRITISH COLUMBIA News

#### Metro 911: Metro Vancouver Employees Save a Life on the Water

It was intended to be just a training exercise on one of Metro Vancouver's new boats off the coast of Coal Harbour... and yet it quickly became a life rescue situation...



Above: Metro Vancouver employees helped save the life of an elderly gentleman on his nearby sailboat... (Stock Photo.)

With an overcast sky, a bit of wind and relatively calm waters, it could have been any other day off the coast of our region.

Yet this was the day that four Metro Vancouver employees intervened in an incredible rescue feat to save a life.



Above: Metro Vancouver crew operating the new Landing-Craft boat during training exercises. Pictured: David Maag. P&P. David was captaining the boat at the time of rescue.

Four Metro Vancouver P&P employees, including Derek Bonin, Planner, Jim Armstrong, Senior Environmental Biologist, Dave Dunkley, Geoscientist, and David Maag, Senior Project Engineer,

were on board one of our new landing craft boats, conducting training exercises with Captain Jimmy Watt, the Chief Instructor of West Coast Powerboat Handling. Following safety procedures and training guidelines, this day out on the water was intended to be an exercise in emergency procedures and training on boat handling.

Just off the coast of Coal Harbour, the team were in the midst of conducting safety training exercises on this maiden voyage (the newly commissioned 26 Quay Craft Landing-Craft had less than 10 h on its engine), when they suddenly noticed a 38 foot sailboat acting strangely, with an elderly woman struggling at the helm of the cockpit while heading into an increasingly strong wind.

Captain Jimmy Watt explains, "As we approached Coal Harbour (Vancouver harbour) from the East, inbound, we took notice visually and by Radar of a 38' sailing vessel heading out of Coal Harbour, under power into a 15 knot wind, just off our port bow." A closer look revealed that it was an elderly couple on board, and both were in danger. Neither of them were wearing a lifejacket.

"The man was dangling precariously over the port side of the sailboat, just forward of her cockpit," says Capt. Jimmy, "with a female person at the helm, desperately trying to control the vessel in rough seas."



Above: An overcast day didn't help the conditions for the struggling couple in their sailboat.

Within minutes, the Crew found themselves involved in a marine rescue situation that involved a 38 foot sailing vessel, two elderly crew, and still far from the shore of the harbour.

The gentleman, likely in an attempt to adjust the mooring lines and fenders in the strong wind, had gotten entangled and had fallen over the side of the boat. "The fellow did not have his railing fully up on the sailboat and slipped over the side," says Jim Armstrong. Becoming ensnared in the mooring lines and fenders essentially saved the sailor from falling completely overboard and being submerged in the bitterly cold Pacific water, but with every passing second, the gravity of his body weight pushed him closer to being submerged. Meanwhile, the woman was at the helm, struggling to keep the boat under control, and likely would not have had the strength to help pull him up out of the water.

The Metro Vancouver crew of Jim, Dave, Derek, and David, in addition to Captain Jimmy, knew instantly that this was a very grave situation. Without hesitation, they responded immediately. "The Metro Vancouver Crew brought the Landing Craft around

and alongside the sailing vessel,” says Captain Jimmy. With both vessels now side by side, and both making way into the strong wind, the Metro Vancouver crew, with Jimmy, proceeded to save the man from falling into the water.

Captain Jimmy says that with the nature of this fall and entanglement, “He would not have been able to re-board his vessel unassisted. His first mate would not have had the strength to recover him either.”



Above: Mooring lines. The elderly sailor became entangled in the sailboat’s fenders and mooring lines, leaving him dangling dangerously off the side of the boat, only inches from bitterly cold water, and without a lifejacket.

The sailor was hauled upwards and gently lowered into the landing craft’s cargo bay. The crew then proceeded to untangle him from the mooring lines and fenders that had halted his fall overboard. After a quick review of safety exercises to ensure he was alright, the sailor again boarded his boat to join his thankful first mate and to continue on their voyage.



Above: The new Landing Craft that was used during the water rescue which was on its maiden voyage. Metro Vancouver has over 30 boats as part of our operational fleet. These boats are used for a variety of purposes that support our work, including everything from sampling and environmental research to patrolling the seas and lakes around our regional parks and our watersheds. Metro Vancouver has recently purchased two of these – one will be going to Pacific Spirit Park to patrol our beaches, and the other to Coquitlam Lake for various projects through P&P and watershed management.

The heroic and selfless actions of the crew were instrumental in saving this man’s life. Commending the crew for their quick and outstanding response, Capt. Jimmy says, “There is no doubt in my

mind, that had it not been the quick action of our Crew, this incident would not have had a happy and successful outcome.”

Jim Perkins, Superintendent of Fleet Services says, “I’d like to give a real note of recognition and a real round of applause to the 4 Metro Vancouver crew members, who under the guidance of instructor Capt. Jimmy Watt, effected a rescue of a member of a 38’ sail boat.” Jim hesitates to think what would have happened had it not been for the fast reaction and excellent skills and training of our staff. He says, “If not for the quick and safe response from the Metro Vancouver crew, it is doubtful the rescued party would have survived the experience.”

Jim adds, “This reinforces why we want people trained not just to the regulatory level, but also on using the equipment. The standards of training and safety practices we have in all of our work efforts are excellent, and it is for these types of situations that we need to be prepared for. It’s not just about our internal use, but also serving the residents of our communities.”

Heather Tomsic, Standards, Training & Communications Coordinator in SSEM agrees. “The efficacy and value of training is vetted by response capability in an emergency.” Heather adds, “Many thanks to the crew for their quick and professional action in a very real time of need.”

Without the presence of Metro Vancouver crew on the water off Vancouver last week, it could have been a very different and grim outcome.

Heartfelt congratulations to the four crew members for their selfless action and exemplary rescue response.

Putting training into action, they saved the life of one of our residents. Well done! ☺



Below: The newly commissioned Landing Craft boat used in the ocean rescue.

## ALBERTA News

*Submitted by Brian Free, CSEB President*

The Alberta Government continues on its path to set clear direction for future development and resource management. Under the Land Use Framework, the Gov't has divided the province into seven large regions and it is preparing Regional Plans that will give direction on how these regions should develop over the long term. All other plans will have to align with these Regional Plans, including municipal plans and watershed plans. These plans will have major consequences for environmental management in the province. Two of these planning initiatives have been announced, one in the north (Lower Athabasca Regional Plan) and one in the south (South Saskatchewan Regional Plan). They didn't start with the easy regions; the Lower Athabasca region features the Fort McMurray oil sands and Cold Lake heavy oil; the South Saskatchewan Region is struggling with a limited supply of water for a growing population and economy.

Many questions are being asked about the precise nature of these plans by environmental organizations, community groups and others. For the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan, the Gov't has finally announced some guidelines for the appointed Advisory Council and a Terms of Reference for the Plan itself. Among the planning considerations are three scenarios for oil sands development:

- current production
- approximately 2.5X current production
- approximately 4X current production

Other considerations include thresholds related to air pollution and to water use and the conservation of the boreal forest. For more information about the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan, including a 72-page profile of the Lower Athabasca Region, see <http://www.landuse.alberta.ca/>

Some good news on the endangered species front. Ecojustice, an organization pursuing environmental issues via the legal system, filed a lawsuit in 2008 against the federal Environment Minister, Jim Prentice, on behalf of four Alberta and Saskatchewan environmental groups. The law suit alleged that he failed to identify critical habitat of the Greater Sage Grouse, which contravenes the Species at Risk Act. The good news is that they did win their case! This may have significant repercussions for other endangered species, as well. More information can be found on the Ecojustice web site at <http://ecojustice.ca/media-centre/press-releases/landmark-court-victory-forces-government-to-protect-endangered-species-habitat>. Also, see the article reprinted from the Calgary Herald on page 3 of this newsletter.

On another front, the Clean Air Strategic Alliance has submitted its recommendations to the Alberta Government regarding a new and improved Clean Air Strategy for the province. CASA recommends 14 goals and many specific actions that the Gov't should include in the new strategy. Check it out at the CASA web site at [http://www.casahome.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/recommendations-for-a-cas\\_final.pdf](http://www.casahome.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/recommendations-for-a-cas_final.pdf)

There are lots of issues in Alberta and ample opportunity for CSEB members to get involved. One good way is to volunteer

to help out with the 2009 CSEB workshop on Environmental Monitoring. The program is shaping up well, and we're happy to have Dr. David Schindler as a keynote speaker. Alberta members should take advantage of this opportunity to re-charge their batteries! Just contact your Executive or anyone on the organizing committee. ☺

## SASKATCHEWAN News

*Submitted by Joseph Hnatiuk, CSEB Saskatchewan Regional Director*

The Annual General Assembly (AGA) of the Canadian Environmental Network (RCEN) was held in Edmonton Alberta during 11-14 June 2009 at Grant MacEwan Community College. There were over 70 delegates representing environmental non-government organizations from across Canada. Prominent speakers, interesting workshops, effective business meetings, great venue and food (vagen) made the AGA a great success. More specifically, the AGA included updates of the various caucus activities, such as Agriculture, Water, Environmental Assessments, Biodiversity and Mining. Joseph Hnatiuk, as the RCEN/CSEB representative, chaired the combined Environmental Protection Assessment (EPA caucus) meeting with the Water caucus. The discussion focused mostly around the impact of the Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWPA) amendments on Environmental Assessment (EA). That discussion was led by Peter Karwacki from Les Amis de la Rivière Kipawa of the Water caucus steering committee.

The State of Environmental Assessment in Canada Panel with Cindy Chiasson, Executive Director, Environmental Law Centre (Alberta), Karin Buss, Legal Counsel, Ecojustice (Alberta) and Joseph Hnatiuk, EPA Caucus Steering Committee / Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists was very good. Cindy and Karin gave very detailed, informed and frank presentations, while Joseph gave a good presentation on EPA caucus work in 2008 and what's being anticipated for 2009. ☺



Joseph Hnatiuk, CSEB Representative, front row on the left

## New Environmental Model for Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan is adopting a new, results-based model for environmental regulation that will improve protection of the environment, while promoting innovative new tools in environmental management.

“Under a results-based environmental model, the regulations will describe the environmental protection that is to be achieved, but will leave the ‘how’ to those who run the plants, factories and mines,” Environment Minister Nancy Heppner said. “They will have the flexibility to design effective environmental safeguards that make sense for their operations. The government’s job will be to ensure that they do what they promise to do.”

Heppner said the result will be better environmental protection because the processes and tools will be custom-designed for the specific situation, as opposed to the current system in Saskatchewan, where the Ministry of Environment issues permits and approvals that specify the environmental protection measures and how they should be implemented.

- In developing and implementing the new results-based regulatory model, the Ministry of Environment will move forward on a number of initiatives, including:
- Streamlining, consolidating and modernizing environmental legislation, starting with The Environmental Management and Protection Act, The Environmental Assessment Act and The Forest Resources Management Act;
- Developing a Saskatchewan Environmental Code that will set the framework for improved environmental management through clear statements of desired environmental outcomes and standards;
- Reorganizing the ministry to better deliver the requirements of results-based regulation;
- Providing an electronic platform for environmental information and program delivery, including web-based environmental applications and reporting. This will mean a streamlined application process and transparency in reporting results; and
- Continuing to engage the public, First Nations and Métis and stakeholders in consultation as the design and implementation of the new regulatory framework move forward.

“Over the past eight months, we have engaged industry, communities, non-governmental organizations and First Nations and Métis organizations in discussions about the need to update and streamline our approach,” Heppner said. “We heard a clear endorsement from those we spoke with of the move to a results-based model, while always ensuring that the protection of the environment is our first priority.”

During the fall and winter of 2008, Ministry of Environment staff and consultants held 18 meetings with 74 stakeholder organizations. A second round of consultations began early in May, with opportunities for public input.

The consultant’s final report and the government’s response are available on the Ministry of Environment’s website at [www.environment.gov.sk.ca](http://www.environment.gov.sk.ca).

Source: Saskatchewan Environment web-site. ☎

## MANITOBA News

*Submitted by Dr. Bill Paton, Manitoba Regional Director*

In a recent article to the CSEB Newsletter, I shared my views on the lack of sustainability of the hog industry as currently run in Manitoba. Naturally, I was primarily concerned with the environmental impacts of the industry but now the economics have become really problematic.

On June 25, 2009, the Manitoba and the Federal Governments announced a Targeted Advance Payment (TAP) under the Agri-Stability program to Manitoba’s hog farmers. This according to federal Agri-Food Minister, Gerry Ritz “will deliver much needed cash flow to the farmers.”

Through the TAP program, approximately 277 eligible producers will have access to more than \$37 million in funding. The average advance would be in the range of \$136,000.

“Challenging circumstances throughout this year including high feed prices (biofuels), a strong Canadian dollar (likely to remain so for some time when U.S. debt load is considered), the COOL regulation in the U.S. and the false connection to the H1N1 flu have created tight market conditions and financial hardship for many hog producers,” said Manitoba Agriculture Minister Wowchuk.

“In response to industry requests, this federal-provincial program has been implemented to address urgent issues and this advance will provide immediate financial assistance now when producers need it the most.”

Some of the press reports indicated that the increased costs associated with new environmental regulations were also responsible. Despite this handout, there are daily reports in the news of farms going under or catching fire.

I hope to address the linkage of H1N1 flu-virus to the hog industry in a later report. The information is still accumulating in that regard. ☎

## TERRITORIES News

*Submitted by Anne Wilson*

Hi to all from the land of the midnight sun! Summer North of 60 is off to a slow start, with cooler than normal temperatures, but almost endless sunshine with the long days. Field biologists are gearing up for the summer programs as the ice is finally coming off the lakes at higher latitudes, and some of us desk biologists are starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel for all the annual reports which are out for review.

Things have also been busy for the 2009 CSEB Workshop Co-chairs, as we get things organized for the meetings this October 15-16th in Edmonton, Alberta. Gary Ash and I are the Co-chairs, and we are looking for volunteers to work on various committees. The theme is “Environmental Monitoring – the Basis for Better Decisions” and we have an exciting line-up of presenters shaping up. You can contact Gary Ash or me by email if you are interested in presenting on any of the workshop

topics, which are listed on the CSEB web site with the call for papers poster.

Activity on various projects in Nunavut and the NWT continues apace for the larger projects, although we have certainly seen the smaller projects decline in number. Given the continued high price of gold (above \$900 an ounce), the slowdown in exploration activity must be evidence of the financing difficulties caused by the current economic conditions. Here's a thumbnail sketch of active projects, and some thoughts on cumulative effects on a national basis.

### Project Updates:

#### *Mining:*

In the NWT, there are now three proposed new mines undergoing environmental assessment, and each is just winding up the scoping stage. Terms of reference for Environmental Impact Statements (aka Developer's Assessment Reports in the NWT) have been released for the Tyhee NWT Corp.'s Yellowknife Gold Project, Canadian Zinc Corp.'s Prairie Creek Mine, and Fortune Minerals Ltd. NICO bismuth-gold-cobalt-copper property 160 km northwest of Yellowknife. It is good to see that a high standard of information is being required, and that there is consistency across projects in what is done. Information on current projects is available from the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board's site at <http://www.mveirb.nt.ca/>.

The latest update from De Beers on the Gahcho Kue Diamond Project reveals that the company is doing more feasibility work, considering current market conditions. No firm date has been given for the release of the Developer's Assessment Report.

Tamerlane Ventures Inc. has received their water licence for the test mine proposed for the Pine Point area, but has not proceeded to construction, given the unfavorable credit market and low price of zinc.

In Nunavut, construction proceeds at Agnico-Eagle Mine's Ltd. Meadowbank Gold Mine, currently doing dewatering prior to dike construction in the Tailings Impoundment Area, and shortly proceeding with further dyke construction in-lake to access the deposits, which will be mined as open pits. Nothing is easy in remote northern sites, and particularly not when working in pristine areas. The Meadowbank water licence includes turbidity standards for lake dewatering and for all discharges, and this has proved challenging for the mine to meet. One of the challenges turned out to be getting representative field turbidity readings; it turned out that a glitch in the meter usage overstated results significantly. Lessons learned: always double check field results with lab tests, and don't agitate samples using a turbidity probe!

The Doris North gold project is still in the planning stages, as the new owner Newmont Mining Corp. works out a regional mining approach. Baseline work continues this summer.

Not much has been going on for the various base metal properties in Nunavut. Things are quiet for Sabina Silver Corp.'s proposed Hackett River Mine (lead, silver, copper, lead, and gold), and for OZ Mineral's High Lake and Izok Lake base metal properties.

Although Baffinland Iron Mines Corp. scaled back work at their iron ore property at Mary River (north Baffin Island), the Nunavut Impact Review Board has released draft Environmental

Impact Statement guidelines for review. The next step will be for the proponent to draft an EIS in accordance with the final guidelines, when they are released.

AREVA Resources Canada Inc. has applied for permits for mine development at the Kiggavik uranium property, and this has gone to the Nunavut Impact Review Board for environmental assessment. Exploration and feasibility work continues for other uranium targets near Baker Lake.

#### *Taltson Hydro Expansion:*

The NWT Energy Corporation proposes to increase electricity production on the Taltson River system, with expansion of the existing facility plus construction of a 435 km long transmission line to the diamond mines. Following submission of the Developer's Assessment Report in March, the environmental assessment is proceeding through the technical review stages.

#### *Oil & Gas:*

Nothing further on the Mackenzie Gas Project, which is on hold pending release of the Joint Review Panel's report.

#### *Municipal:*

The Canadian Council of Ministers for the Environment signed the Canada-wide Strategy for the Management of Municipal Wastewater Effluent in February, so now work will go forward to implement the Strategy. For the South, this will mean systems will have to meet performance standards, conduct monitoring, and look at environmental discharge objectives (among other things) with time frames based on risk and size. The North is being given a five year period to determine reasonable and protective performance standards for systems which face challenges of extreme climatic conditions, infrastructure limitations, capacity, and logistics. Environment Canada is collaborating with other Northern stakeholders to identify and plan for further work to determine Northern performance standards. This summer, programs are underway to characterize four northern systems in order to evaluate performance. Data from a number of other systems will also be compiled to round out the community data inventory.

Wastewater regulations are expected to be drafted by the fall. Further information on the Strategy is available on the CCME website at: [http://www.ccme.ca/ourwork/water.html?category\\_id=81](http://www.ccme.ca/ourwork/water.html?category_id=81)

#### *Cumulative Effects:*

The federal government's stimulus spending is short-cutting the environmental assessment for perhaps 12,000 projects, and Ecojustice and the Sierra Club Canada are challenging this in court. It would have to be acknowledged that these types of projects are generally well-understood, but some of the infrastructure projects definitely have the potential to impact surface and sub-surface waters. And what about the incremental effects of these and other developments?

#### *Let's Hear From You:*

What are you and your colleagues doing north of 60 that our members would be interested in? You can let me know about it, or draft up an article for inclusion in the newsletter. Let's optimize our membership in the CSEB by using it as a networking and communication forum! Also, I would appreciate hearing from northern members with ideas about what we can initiate by way of CSEB activities – both of the fun as well as the educational variety! Please email your thoughts to me at [anne.wilson@ec.gc.ca](mailto:anne.wilson@ec.gc.ca). ☺

# Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists

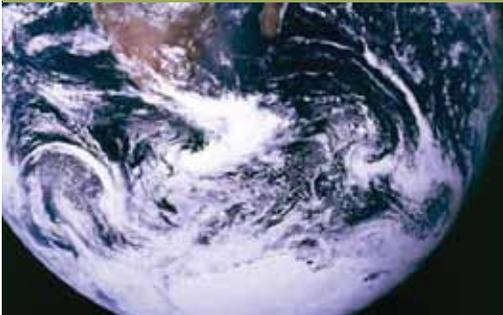


## Environmental Monitoring – The Basis for Better Decisions

Workshop and Annual Meeting  
October 15–17, 2009 | Edmonton, Alberta



**Plenary Keynote Speaker:** Dr. David Schindler, University of Alberta  
**Other confirmed Speakers:** Dr. Bill Ross, University of Calgary | Gord Macdonald, Diavik  
**Rapporteur:** Dr. Peter Chapman, Golder Associates Ltd., Burnaby



<b>FULL:</b>	Members: \$150
	Non-Members: \$190
	2 Day Conference, lunches + banquet
<b>STUDENTS:</b>	Members: \$ 50
	Non-Members: \$ 70
	2 Day Conference, no banquet
<b>SINGLE DAY:</b>	Members: \$ 75
	Non-Members: \$105
	Banquet: \$ 35
	Field Trip: \$ 35

**REGISTRATION**

### NOTICE OF WORKSHOP AND CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

**Workshop Sessions:** Thursday October 15 & Friday October 16, 2009  
**Local Field Trip:** Saturday Oct 17, 2009

**TENTATIVE SESSIONS**

- **Monitoring Design and Standards**
- **Aquatic System Monitoring**
  - o Regulatory monitoring such as:
    - o Environmental Effects Monitoring Program (EEM)
    - o Diavik Diamond Mine case study
    - o Toxicity testing
    - o Upcoming municipal under CCME strategy
  - o Research monitoring such as:
    - o Characterizing natural variability
    - o Ekati incineration effects on sediments
- **Terrestrial**

**Possible topics include:**

  - o Wildlife e.g. GNWT wolverine study, caribou
  - o Birds
  - o Vegetation, dust deposition, soils?
- New technologies
- Climate change
- Other topics

**CONTACT: Anne Wilson or Gary Ash | [anne.wilson@ec.gc.ca](mailto:anne.wilson@ec.gc.ca) | [gash@golder.com](mailto:gash@golder.com)**

*For on-line registration and hotel information, see [www.cseb-scbe.org](http://www.cseb-scbe.org)*



**The Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists**

48<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

Environmental Monitoring – The Basis for Better Decisions

**October 15 & 16 2009, Field Trip October 17**

Days Inn West at 10010 179A Street NW,

Edmonton AB T5S 2T1

**REGISTRATION FORM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
First Last Title

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
City Province/State Postal Code/Zip Code

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Fee:\*

**Full** (member) \$150.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Includes two-day workshop, lunches, one banquet ticket  
 (non-member) \$190.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Includes two-day workshop, lunches, one banquet ticket

**Student** (member) \$50.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Includes two-day workshop, lunches  
 (non-member) \$70.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Includes two-day workshop, lunches

**Single Day** (member) \$75.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Includes lunch Check Day: Thursday October 15   
 (non-member) \$105.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Includes lunch Friday October 16

**Extra Banquet Ticket** \$35.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Note Any Dietary Requirements? \_\_\_\_\_

**Attend Local Field Trip (to be held on Sat. 17 Oct.)** \$35.00 \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL FEES:** \$

**DO YOU PLAN TO ATTEND THE BANQUET (Thursday 15 Oct)?** Yes  No

**\*Note: No Refunds after 5 October 2009**

**PAY BY CHEQUE:** Please make cheque payable to "CSEB"

Mail To: CSEB Annual Meeting  
 c/o Danette Sahulka, Stantec  
 #103-611 Corydon Avenue  
 Winnipeg, MB R3L 0P3

**PAY BY CREDIT CARD: \*\***

Check Credit Card Type: Visa  MasterCard  (Sorry no American Express)

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**\*\*Note: Credit Card charge will show as Golder Associates Ltd.**

**Fax Form** Attention Danette Sahulka, Stantec at (204) 284-4795

**CSEB AGM AND WORKSHOP, 15-16 October 2009**

**Where to Stay**

Holiday Inn Express Hotel and Suites, 10017-179 A Street, Edmonton, AB T5S 2L4. The guest rooms have been recently renovated, and the conference rate (\$129 plus tax per night) includes a complimentary hot breakfast. To get the special conference rate, phone (780) 483-4000 and book under the group CSEB. For additional information, the website is [www.hiewestedmonton.com](http://www.hiewestedmonton.com)

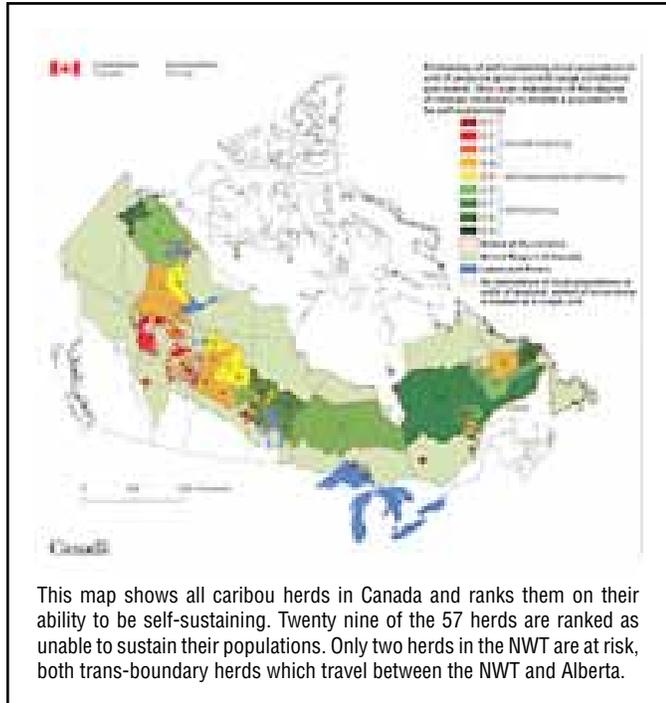
The Days Inn & Suites West Edmonton, 10010-179 A Street, Edmonton, AB T5S 2T1 This is the hotel where the conference is going to be held, and is just across the street from the Holiday Inn Express Hotel and Suites. The conference rate (does not include complimentary hot breakfast) is a bit less at \$119 plus tax per night phone (780) 444-4440. Guests should reserve under the name CSEB or group code number CG0734. For additional information, the website is [www.daysinnwestedmonton.com](http://www.daysinnwestedmonton.com)

**Please Note:** The cut-off date for receiving the conference rate is **18 SEPTEMBER 2009**. Book NOW!!!

## FEDERAL REPORT on the Status of Northern Caribou

**SOMBA K'E/YELLOWKNIFE** - A report released in April by Environment Canada indicates the nation's caribou are in decline and could disappear before the end of the century if changes to habitat and a recovery strategy are not put in place.

However, the eight herds of caribou in the NWT are less at risk than the rest of the country, with only two trans-boundary herds assessed as unsustainable.



This map shows all caribou herds in Canada and ranks them on their ability to be self-sustaining. Twenty-nine of the 57 herds are ranked as unable to sustain their populations. Only two herds in the NWT are at risk, both trans-boundary herds which travel between the NWT and Alberta.

The complex 300-page report outlines the ability of the sustainability of 57 herds across Canada to their current habitats. Population trends – average population increase vs decrease – of herds analyzed in the NWT from the Gwich'in, Sahtu and Inuvialuit regions are indicated to be self-sustaining; the population in the Gwich'in region was reported to be increasing.

However, more accurate trend data are required to depict the sustainability of herds in North Slave, Deh Cho and South Slave and Sahtu, which are said to be above critical – more than 300 population, the report's highest rating.

Herd disturbance – whether natural, such as fires, or human interference -- is listed as low or moderate for all herds except for the two trans-boundary herds between Alberta and the NWT.

Boyd Warner, an outfitter with Bathurst Inlet Developments, said the report is encouraging and reflects what outfitters have been seeing within the herds.

"It's nice to finally see something that enlightens the fact that we are seeing herds that are healthy," he said.

Warner said they have seen a shift in caribou migration patterns and with this shift in pattern the problem of properly reporting on the animal can be tough, hence the incomplete and unknown numbers surrounding population trends and sizes.

"Caribou seem to be spending more time in the barren lands. These caribou seem to be spending more time there and part of the problem is there is no one out there to report caribou in that region."

Hunting primarily in the North Slave region with his outfitting company, Warner said they are seeing strong numbers in the herds in that region, a region with unknown population trends. Warner hopes the GNWT will find this report insightful and take a look at the amount of caribou tags they give out annually, a number that was cut by half in 2007 to 750 from 1,500 to slow declining caribou numbers.

"We've been told they are in drastic trouble," he said. "Once people start to believe that people begin to fight over who gets the resource. We don't have a serious problem so let's not fight over it, so I hope this comforts Northerners that things are sustainable and increasing and we're not in a situation where we are losing our caribou at a high rate."

The report says small populations face a high risk of extinction when populations become isolated, as is the case for most small caribou populations in Canada, due to human-caused range loss.

Herds in Alberta and across the prairies are facing serious issues with sustainability and are most affected by resource development in the region.

"This report will be valuable to people when the Mackenzie Valley pipeline project starts to take shape," he said, adding what is seen in Alberta with dwindling sustainability among herds due to resource development, particularly the oil sands, could easily happen with a project like the pipeline.

Environment Canada responded to News/North questions on the report about the lack of complete information on NWT herds stating, "The report identified a number of information gaps. Further work to determine the necessary detail on population data for NWT is currently underway."

Environment Canada said the problem causing a lack of sustainability within the herd populations "is predation, associated with natural or human-caused landscape conditions that favour young forests and higher densities of alternative prey, resulting in increased risk of predation to caribou." They said "Boreal woodland caribou require habitat conditions that allow them to meet their life history requirements, such as adequate forage quality and quantity to allow breeding and recruitment of calves and large enough tracts of preferred habitat to allow spatial separation from predators and alternative prey throughout the year."

Environment Canada said this report is the first step towards a strategy.

"The scientific report will be publicly available on the Species at Risk Act public registry for a 60-day comment period, and consultations will be undertaken over the coming months with provinces and territories, Aboriginal people, industry and others in order to finalize the identification of critical habitat."

The report will help the Federal Government develop a recovery strategy for the summer of 2011. ☞

## GHOST BIRD Film Review

*A Film by Scott Crocker, Director  
Damir Frkovic, Cinematographer*

Ghost Bird made its world premiere on May 6th and 8th at the Hot Docs Canadian International Film Festival, North America's largest documentary film festival.

Ghost Bird is a fascinating look at Ivory-billed Woodpecker, a species that was believed to have gone extinct some 60 years ago. This bird, the second largest woodpecker in the world, has been the subject of a number of possible sightings in the bottomland forests of Arkansas since 2004. Scott Crocker's film blends interviews with scientists, politicians, bureaucrats, local citizens and birders with footage of the forested habitat of the species, to shine light on the debate about whether the species does indeed persist. Ghost Bird raises suggestions of misleading reporting, unsettling conservation funding decisions and questionable science. It's more than a film about the Ivory-billed Woodpecker; it's a film that explores the relationships between science, conservation funding, politics, hunting and ecotourism.

The sightings of what many, including the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, believe to be the real thing prompted a local tourism boom in Brinkley, a small town of 3940, in Monroe County, Arkansas. Self-described on the Town's website as the "capital of Ivory-billed Woodpecker Country," this town saw the establishment of many new businesses and the rejuvenation of others, as birders



came to Brinkley in hopes of seeing this elusive woodpecker. The Ivory-billed Woodpecker loaned its name to gift shops, restaurants, motels and even the "woodpecker haircut." With no recent sightings or proof of the existence of the bird, this tourism boom has softened. That hasn't stopped many birders and local folk from investing many person hours of time trying to find this elusive creature. The US Fish and Wildlife Service, which lists this species as endangered, and not extinct, has created a Recovery Team and Recovery Plan and is engaged in research and investigations around this species in both Arkansas as well as Florida, where some believe the woodpecker also persists. Perhaps the \$50,000 reward posted by the Nature Conservancy for evidence of a live bird in Arkansas will help resolve this debate.

Scott Crocker has created a thought provoking and intriguing film that will appeal to anyone with an interest in the conservation movement in North America.

For more information, see <http://www.hotdocs.ca/index.php/audience/>

Review contributed By Tom Hilditch, Savanta Inc., CSEB Member ☺

## BOOKS OF Interest

### **Greener Pastures: Decentralizing the Regulation of Agricultural Pollution.**

*Elizabeth Brubaker. University of Toronto, Centre for Public Management Monograph Series. University of Toronto Press, May 2007. \$39.95, cloth.*

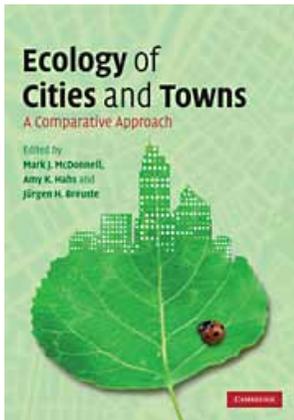
As farms increase in size and become increasingly industrialized, the problem of agricultural pollution is gaining urgency across Canada. The response from most environmentalists and provincial governments is to push for

more centralized regulation. In *Greener Pastures*, Elizabeth Brubaker, Executive Director of Environment Probe, exposes the detrimental effects of such regulatory changes, which tend to exacerbate, rather than curb, pollution.

For centuries, Brubaker explains, conflicts about farming were resolved by the parties directly involved, aided by common-law courts. The rule, "use your own property so as not to harm another's" fairly and effectively resolved disputes between farmers and their neighbours and curbed environmental damage. Beginning in the 1970s, however, concerns about restraints on the growth of agriculture, prompted governments to replace the common law with more permissive provincial statutes.

*Greener Pastures* chronicles the centralization of agricultural regulation and the resulting environmental harm. Brubaker focuses, on the right-to-farm laws (passed by every province in recent decades) that have freed farmers from common-law liability for the nuisances they create. She shows how these laws have made possible an unsustainable intensification of agriculture, and argues for a decentralized, rights-based decision-making regime. This thoroughly researched and impressively thought-out study challenges many common assumptions about environmental regulation, and proposes fresh answers to grave environmental and political questions.

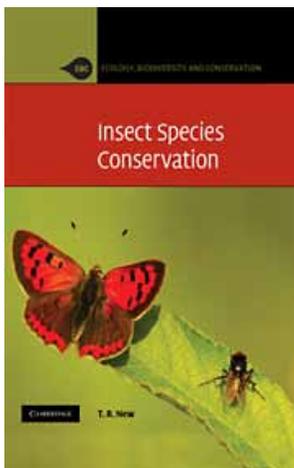
## BOOKS OF Interest



### Ecology of Cities and Towns. A Comparative Approach.

Mark J. McDonnell, Amy K. Hahs and Jürgen H. Breuste, Eds. Cambridge University Press. July 2009.

The unprecedented growth of cities and towns around the world, coupled with the unknown effects of global change, has created an urgent need to increase ecological understanding of human settlements, in order to develop inhabitable, sustainable cities and towns in the future. Although there is a wealth of knowledge regarding the understanding of human organization and behaviour, there is comparably little information available regarding the ecology of cities and towns. This book brings together leading scientists, landscape designers and planners from developed and developing countries around the world, to explore how urban ecological research has been undertaken to date, what has been learnt, where there are gaps in knowledge, and what the future challenges and opportunities are.



### Insect Species Conservation.

T.R. New. Cambridge University Press. July 2009.

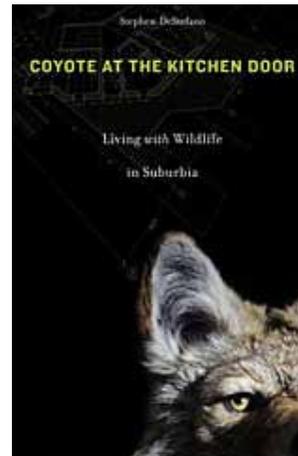
Insects are the most diverse and abundant animals that share our world, and conservation initiatives are increasingly needed and being implemented globally, to safeguard the wealth of individual species. This book provides sufficient background information, illustrated by examples from many parts of the world, to enable more confident and efficient progress towards the conservation of these ecologically indispensable

animals. Writing for graduate students, academic researchers and professionals, Tim New describes the major ingredients for insect species management and conservation, and how these may be integrated into effective practical management and recovery plans.

### Coyote at the Kitchen Door. Living with Wildlife in Suburbia.

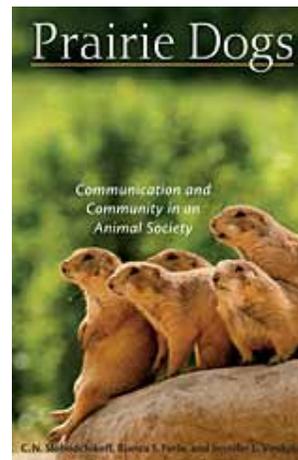
Stephen DeStefano. Harvard University Press. January 2010. Hardcover \$24.95

A moose frustrates commuters by wandering onto the highway; a cougar stalks his prey through suburban backyards; an alligator suns himself in a strip mall parking lot. Such stories,



which regularly make headline news, highlight the blurred divide that now exists between civilization and wilderness.

In *Coyote at the Kitchen Door*, Stephen DeStefano draws on decades of experience as a biologist and conservationist to examine the interplay between urban sprawl and wayward wildlife. As he explores what our insatiable appetite for real estate means for the health and wellbeing of animals and ourselves, he highlights growing concerns, such as the loss of darkness at night because of light pollution. DeStefano writes movingly about the contrasts between constructed and natural environments and about the sometimes cherished, sometimes feared place that nature holds in our modern lives, as we cluster into cities yet show an increasing interest in the natural world.



### Prairie Dogs. Communication and Community in an Animal Society.

C. N. Slobodchikoff, Bianca S. Perla, Jennifer L. Verdolin and Constantine Slobodchikoff. Harvard University Press May 2009 \$39.95 US hardcover.

This timely volume could be called a 'prairie doggy treat'. The authors synthesize the results of their long-running study of Gunnison's prairie dogs (*Cynomys gunnisoni*), one of the keystone species of the short-grass prairie ecosystem. They set their research in the context of the biology of the five *Cynomys* species found in the United States and Mexico, and detail their investigation into the prairie dogs' sophisticated system of barks, yips, and chirps, which Slobodchikoff argues represents a referential communication capable of fine distinctions among predators.

Seen as vermin that spoiled valuable rangeland, prairie dogs were long the subject of eradication campaigns and are now threatened by habitat loss and the loss of genetic diversity. The authors hope their research will help to pull the prairie dog back from the brink of extinction, as well as foster an appreciation of larger conservation challenges. By examining the complex factors behind prairie dog decline, we can begin to understand the problems inherent in our adversarial relationship with the natural world. Understanding these interactions is the first step toward a more sustainable future. ☺

## VORTEX OF PLASTIC COULD BE TURNED TO FUEL

### Conservationists hope to build ship to process ocean debris

Kate Devlin - Daily Telegraph

It has been described as the largest rubbish tip in the world. Deep in the Pacific Ocean, the bottle tops, plastic bags, discarded nets, toothbrushes, toys and myriad of other objects that make up what has been dubbed the “plastic vortex” cover an area twice the size of Texas. Just over a decade after it was discovered, some conservationists believe that it is now too large to ever be removed.

Yet an audacious scheme could clear up the six million tones of plastic estimated to have collected in the swirling currents. It would utilize a floating “processing plant,” a ship anchored next to the vortex, that could convert some of the plastic into diesel to power the plant.

If the conservationists’ initial experiments, which will be recorded for a National Geographic documentary, prove successful, they hope to build a prototype and eventually export the idea to other oceans and rivers clogged with plastic debris.

While volatile weather in the region means that the vessel could not survive the extreme winds that batter the area at certain times of the year, the researchers are hopeful that the ship could operate for months at a time, making a significant dent in the rubbish, and — equally importantly — encourage greater awareness of the problem, so that people will dump less plastic.

Discovered in 1997 by an environmentalist called Charles Moore, the plastic vortex is on the edge of the North Pacific Gyre, where several large ocean currents converge, carrying rubbish from the Pacific coasts of North America, Canada and South-East Asia.

The vast majority of the waste is plastic, including packaging, cups, cigarette lighters and syringes, with much of it suspended just metres below the surface. Environmentalists say this wreaks havoc on wildlife: Plastic items are regularly found in the stomachs of dead fish, birds and other mammals, and can enter the food chain of humans.

In response, a group of conservationists have organized Project Kaisei, named from the Japanese for “ocean planet.” Supported by Ocean Voyages Institute, a not-for-profit organization, the Scripps Institution of Oceanography and Brita, the water company, they plan to spend around 70 days in the vortex from the start of August and aim to remove around 40 tons of plastic and other debris.

But the cleanup will not be easy. First, the team, which will include scientists, investors, sailors, environmentalists and volunteers, will have to painstakingly separate and assess the rubbish. They then plan to experiment with different methods of retrieving the debris, learning how best to convert it to fuel.

The problem until now has been that some plastics cannot be recycled, and have to be placed in landfill. However, new technologies are allowing companies to transform these materials into fuel. A car can be run for an hour from a lump of plastic the size of a ice cream carton.

If the initial experiments prove successful, the Kaisei team hope to start a larger cleanup operation within 18 months. This could involve the conversion of a ship into a waste-disposal factory that recycles some plastic, collects other types, and converts still more into fuel. The group hopes they will inspire others to clean up choked waterways, as well as reduce plastic consumption on land.

“We are cautious but very hopeful that we now have the technology to start clearing up what is a disaster for our oceans and the wildlife that live there,” says Doug Woodring, whose brainchild the project is. He admits it could be years before his dream of significantly reducing the size of the vortex takes shape, but says he hopes to show “the real damage that our casual and extreme use of plastic is doing to our environment.”

It has certainly attracted attention. Lisa Rolls Hagelberg, from the United Nations Environmental Program, says that Kaisei’s mission “has been called the ‘good news’ conservation story the world has been waiting for.”

Jo Ruxton, an underwater documentary filmmaker, who worked on the BBC’s much-lauded Blue Planet series, and who will take a crew on board the expedition, adds: “At worst this could create massive publicity about the dangers of our use of plastics, but I think that it is going to achieve much, much more. Often with conservation stories, what you are telling people is the bad news, that this or that has happened.

“But this is different. This time, there could be a solution.”



**“I see a rabbit, a gopher and a field mouse.  
The rest is just a blur.”**

**CANADIAN SOCIETY OF ENVIRONMENTAL BIOLOGISTS  
LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DES BIOLOGISTES DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT**

**FORMULAIRE D'ABONNEMENT  
MEMBERSHIP AND NEWSLETTER/SUBSCRIPTION APPLICATION**

**Regular Members:** persons who have graduated from a college or university in a discipline of biological sciences, and who are or have been professionally engaged in teaching, management, or research related to natural resources and environment.

**Student Members:** persons who are enrolled in an accredited college or university in a discipline of the biological sciences, and who are preparing themselves for professional work in teaching, management, or research related to natural resources and to the application of sound ecological principles to management of the environment.

**Associate Members:** persons who support the purposes and activities of the Society but who do not qualify for Regular or Student membership.

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**Membres Réguliers:** les personnes ayant un degré ou diplôme d'un collège ou une université dans une discipline des sciences biologiques et qui sont ou qui ont déjà été engagé professionnellement en aménagement, enseignement ou recherche tenant à l'environnement ainsi que ressources naturelles.

**Membres Étudiants:** les personnes qui étudient dans un collège ou une université reconnu dans une discipline des sciences biologiques, et qui se préparent à travailler comme professionnel soit en enseignement, aménagement ou recherche tenant aux ressources naturelles et à l'application de principes écologiques à l'aménagement de l'environnement.

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