



# Whitewater Lake

High water levels create challenges for communities and wildlife

By Tim Poole

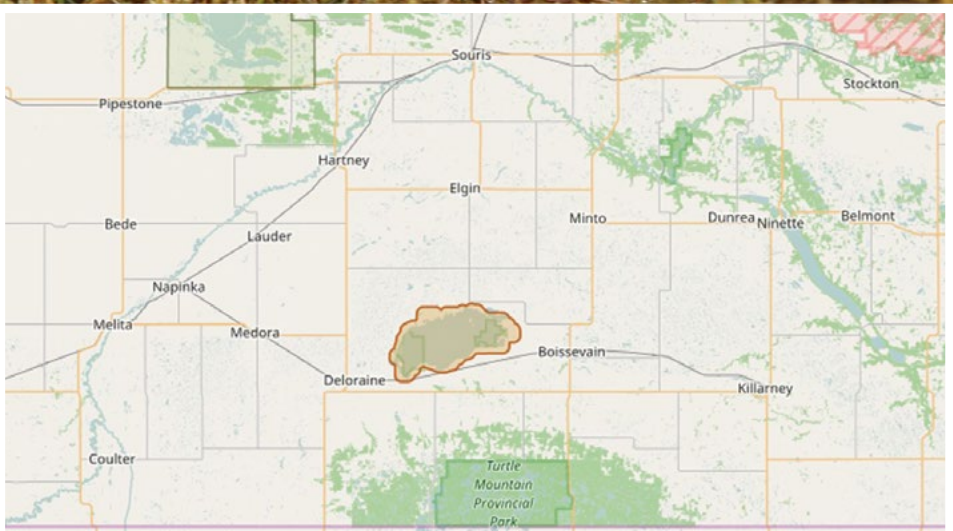


Buff-breasted Sandpiper.

**THE TENSION BETWEEN** economic interests and nature is something those of us working in the environment sector need to resolve if we are to see a reversal in the long-term losses of biodiversity. As our climate changes, these tensions may become more acute as extreme weather leads to greater risk of flooding and drought. Wetlands are a critical component of efforts to mitigate for a changing climate, providing community services such as flood control, erosion prevention, filtration and groundwater storage. Of course, biodiversity is even more dependent on wetlands as places to provide shelter, nutrition and drinking water. This article explores a proposal to build a drainage channel around Whitewater Lake in southwestern Manitoba, the possible impacts on globally important habitats for birds, and whether there are alternative solutions to developing drainage in this particular situation.

The prairie potholes are among the most productive wetlands anywhere on our planet,

*continued on page 6 >>*



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## Executive Director's Message

*By Karen Peters*

**THIS PAST AUTUMN**, it has been very inspir-  
ing to be involved in the work that we all do at  
Manitoba Eco-Network and our member agen-  
cies. In this first year of recognizing Truth and  
Reconciliation, we are building our direct rela-  
tionships with our Indigenous partners toward  
that aim, as well as supporting the work of our  
members, and our Climate Change Connection  
partnerships as they do the same. Our Indige-  
nous partners are also integral to the work of the  
Water Caucus and Youth Outreach programs.

I'm looking forward to being part of the  
Manitoba Eco-Network's 7th annual Reel  
Green Film Festival celebration and fundraiser  
at The MET on March 16, 2017. It's important  
for us to take time as environmentalists to cele-  
brate this beautiful planet we live on and the good work we're involved in to protect it. That's what  
this event is all about. We'll have the inspiring line-up of short films that you've come to expect at  
the Reel Green FF, and we will recognize the nominees and winners of the Anne Lindsey Protect-  
ing Our Earth Award. Because we have such a beautiful venue for the event, we've decided to add  
a bit more glamour this year. Of course, the fashion industry is recognized for being particularly  
polluting (second only to the oil industry), so we don't want you to have to go out and buy a new

“ Reel Green is our main fundraiser and a great way for you to  
show your support for our work in promoting positive environ-  
mental action in this province. It's also the perfect night for envi-  
ronmentalists to celebrate this beautiful planet we live on and the  
good work we're involved in to protect it. I hope to see you there!

outfit. I'm looking forward to seeing what you come up with under the theme of “second-hand  
glamour.” We'll have a green carpet laid out when you arrive for you to show off your finest thrifty  
style. We'll have a short fashion show featuring some local designers using sustainable textiles,  
and there will even be an MCC Pop-Up Thrift Shop to browse, in case you need anything extra  
to jazz up your outfit.

New this year, we're hosting an exclusive reception for supporters like you before we open the  
doors to the public. I invite you to come mix and mingle with some of the filmmakers, and fashion  
designers over drinks and a light supper. Reel Green is our main fundraiser and a great way for you  
to show your support for our work in promoting positive environmental action in this province. I  
hope to see you there! Please let us know if you are interested in participating in the Green Carpet  
event — participants are free to either wear their own lovely creations, or a favourite finds to the  
event, or they can hunt for a new treasure at the Pop-Up Sale. 🌱

*Karen Peters is the executive director of the Manitoba Eco-Network.*



PHOTO: KAREN PETERS



## JANUARY

### 1 Horse Drawn Sleigh Rides

*Fort Whyte Alive*

**Time:** 10am – 1pm.

**Tickets:** \$15, \$12 for Members; \$5 per child  
Ring in the New Year with a horse drawn sleigh ride through our winter wonderland and enjoy a hot chocolate fireside.

**Call (204) 989-8355 to register**

### 24 Practising Permaculture:

*Nature Manitoba*

**Time:** 7:30pm

**Tickets:** \$5 for NM members/  
\$10 for non-members

Learn about the different ways Sustainable South Osborne Community Co-op is using permaculture techniques to foster self-reliance and food security in the community.

**Contact the Nature Manitoba office at (204) 943-9029 or [info@naturemanitoba.ca](mailto:info@naturemanitoba.ca) for more info or to register.**

### 24 Commuting Ambassadors III: Behaviour Challenge

*Green Action Centre*

Do you want to sing the praises of creative commuting with your co-workers but no one seems to be listening? Explore the many facets of behaviour change from a social marketing, transitions and systems perspective. Walk away with some strategies you can apply to create a more commuter friendly and active workplace.

**Contact Beth at 204-925-3772 for full details and registration.**

### 28 Commuting Ambassadors IV: Building a Healthy Commuting Plan

*Green Action Centre*

Get your workplace in gear with this all new Commuting Ambassadors session – building a healthy commuting plan for your workplace. We'll help you build the business case for a commuting program, create a team, set goals, build the plan, and measure and celebrate successes. **Contact Beth at 204-925-3772 for full details and registration.**

## MARCH 16

### Reel Green Fundraiser and Reception

Join us on March 16 for the Manitoba Eco-Network's 7th annual Reel Green evening. Enjoy inspiring short films, delicious food, live and silent auctions, and the chance to support the Eco-Network through this key fundraising and network-strengthening event.

**For more info and to purchase tickets, visit**

**<http://mbeconetwork.org/about/green-reel-events/>**

### 31 Introduction to Backcountry Camping

*Nature Manitoba*

**Time:** 7:30pm

**Tickets:** \$5 for NM members/  
\$10 for non-members

This workshop will give you the information and skills you need to attend an intermediate or advanced level Nature Manitoba trip. It also includes a hands-on backcountry trip in May.

**Contact the Nature Manitoba office at (204) 943-9029 or [info@naturemanitoba.ca](mailto:info@naturemanitoba.ca) for more info or to register.**

### 7 A Year in the Life of Red Squirrels in the Yukon

*Nature Manitoba*

**Time:** 7:30pm

**Tickets:** \$5 for NM members/  
\$10 for non-members

A talk that highlights how Yukon Red Squirrels are able to survive and reproduce in this harsh environment.

**Contact the Nature Manitoba office at (204) 943-9029 or [info@naturemanitoba.ca](mailto:info@naturemanitoba.ca) for more info or to register.**

### 16 Astronomy Night Northern Lights

*Oak Hammock Marsh*

### 21 Birding for Beginners

*Nature Manitoba*

**Time:** 7:30pm

**Tickets:** \$5 for NM members/  
\$10 for non-members

This workshop will cover the equipment you will need, the principles of bird identification, where to look for birds and the variety of birds to be found in Manitoba.

**Contact the Nature Manitoba office at (204) 943-9029 or [info@naturemanitoba.ca](mailto:info@naturemanitoba.ca) for more info or to register.**

### 28 Backcountry Food Prep

*Nature Manitoba*

**Time:** 7:30pm

**Tickets:** \$5 for NM members/  
\$10 for non-members

This workshop focuses on food planning and preparation for short and long hiking and canoeing trips, from gourmet to minimalist approaches.

**Contact the Nature Manitoba office at (204) 943-9029 or [info@naturemanitoba.ca](mailto:info@naturemanitoba.ca) for more info or to register.**

## FEBRUARY

### 2 World Wetlands Day

*Oak Hammock Marsh*

Celebrate this very important day for the Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre. Take in a special presentation, learn to play "Shuffle-Duck", visit our hands-on exhibits, and tour the marsh on a guided snowshoe walk to learn about the importance of wetlands around the world.

### 3-5 2017 Winter Getaway

*The Wildlife Society*

The next Winter Getaway has been scheduled for February 3-5, 2017. **More details will be circulated closer to the date.**



# How to Help the Climate

## Behavior Based Energy Conservation in Buildings

By Michael Cann

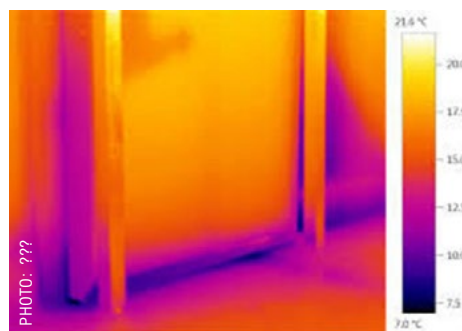
**BUILDING OWNERS IN BOTH** residential and commercial buildings can make better decisions about managing their energy use and costs when they have access to the right information and tools. Just being informed about how your building uses energy or compares to other similar buildings can lower energy consumption through intentional and simple lifestyle choices in heating and lighting. Residential and commercial buildings are responsible for 31.2% of Canada's total energy use and are responsible for 11% of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. Reductions in building energy consumption will have a direct effect on the greenhouse gas emissions that are responsible for climate change. Global energy demand remains high despite compelling evidence that greenhouse gas emissions from energy consumption and production are a major contributor to global warming.

Because of their significant energy savings potential and cost-effectiveness, behavioral energy conservation programs are becoming increasingly popular with building owners and managers to improve energy savings results. By avoiding barriers faced by more traditional energy efficiency programs such as prohibitive capital costs, behavioral energy conservation programs may be able to tap into potential energy savings that have been resistant to other initiatives. A large component of this approach to conservation involves getting building occupants to use less energy through simple changes in lifestyle choices. Similar to the adoption of seatbelts over two generations, and the widespread adoption of recycling over just one generation, the hope is that behavioral energy conservation programs can become a normalized way of life that has a significant impact on our environmental impact. Just as replacing the windows in a building can result in less energy consumed, so can persuading the occupants to turn off lights or set thermostats more efficiently.

In order for building owners, managers, and occupants to see how their activities impact their energy consumption, there needs to be a process in which they receive regular updates on their energy consumption through energy reports, audits, or benchmarking pro-

grams. Smart thermostats have been developed that regulate your heating based on your schedule and the building's occupancy, and most have some method of reporting that allows the user to see how their energy consumption relates to their average consumption. In the case for larger, commercial office-spaces, an energy manager may be needed to provide energy consumption metering and reporting, but some utilities are beginning to provide this data to end-users automatically. There are some privacy concerns in developing these tools for customers because the service providers would require the customer data, but legislative and policy frameworks may provide the needed security for customer's data.

Locally, behavioral energy conservation programs are just beginning to take off. One such program is Race to Reduce Manitoba, a behavior-based energy conservation program that motivates large commercial office-space building owners and managers to engage in a friendly competition to reduce their energy consumption by 10% in four years. Race to Reduce has already had massive success in Toronto and is kicking off in Manitoba on January 1st, 2017.



One of the most promising tools for changing user behavior through energy-use awareness is thermal imaging. Thermal imaging shows the difference between dark areas where there is heat loss and the bright areas where heat is retained. (See photo.) Making the invisible visible can have a powerful and compelling effect on human behaviour by providing an emotive stimulus that encourages the user to engage in the consideration of energy conservation. Research out of Plymouth Uni-

versity in Devon, UK explored the behavioral impact of visualizing heat loss from residential dwellings and the implications for energy conservation. The research used thermal imaging to show homeowners the heat escaping from their homes to investigate any motivational effect on energy conservation behavior such as adopting retrofit efficiency measures, purchasing efficiency equipment upgrades, and employing efficient daily habits. From the research: "Given that cost-effective measures are available to improve home energy efficiency, there lies a challenge in raising homeowners' awareness of inefficiencies and motivating them to act, for example, install draught proofing, adjust heating controls, and close curtains at night. The "inertia" may partly be due to the fact that energy is invisible. A householder may "know" terms associated with energy use but may have difficulty relating that to specific behaviors and may even be misinformed. For example, householders tend to overestimate the energy use from visible behaviors (turning on lights) and underestimate less visible uses, for example, energy involved in heating water. Knowledge of energy use is predicated on what is experienced: light, heat, convenience rather than the amount of energy required to provide these benefits. Understanding the energy used for space heating may be even trickier. Modern central heating systems use energy in invisible ways (especially when compared with more traditional heating such as open fires where the supply of available fuel can be seen, and users intervene, for example, adding logs for more heat).

Despite the cost-effectiveness and associated benefits from thermal imaging based behavioural energy conservation programs, the results may not persist after the stimulus is removed and may not accurately show results if there is overlap with traditional energy efficiency programs such as large-scale retrofits. The upshot is that these programs can be cost effective with savings from just the first year of operations. Also, an increase in efficiency measures does not necessarily equate to a reduction in energy demand in buildings as users may change their behaviours or be dissatisfied with their comfort levels.

## Featured Book Review

*This Changes Everything:  
Capitalism vs the Climate*

Author: By Naomi Klein  
Publisher: Simon & Schuster, 577

IN *THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING*, Naomi Klein argues that in order to address climate change we need to first address the inconvenient truth that capitalism is the root cause of our environmental crisis.

This book does an excellent job of explaining how the climate and our current economic model are at odds with each other. The author breaks down the interconnected relationships between consumption, capitalism, and climate through exhaustive research that is documented in 52 pages of notes in the back of the book.



Klein explains that the market can not be trusted to save us because our addiction to profit and growth is digging us into an environmental deficit every day. The key to solving this crisis is to rein in corporate power, rebuild local economies, and reclaim our democracies.

In my experience, most people that have read this book haven't actually finished it. This book is hard to finish — not because of the language or length, but because every chapter highlights just how difficult it will be to address climate change and why the door is closing fast on our ability to do anything about it. For people struggling through the first two parts of the book, I would suggest jumping ahead to the third section, "Starting Anyway" to find examples of successes and what to do next.

If you want to know more about the interconnectivity of economics and climate and are looking for the motivation to do something about the climate crisis, this book is for you. 🌱

—Michael Cann  
*Climate Change Connection*

# Green Action Centre Presents

The Jack Frost Challenge 2017!

By Justin Quigley



**“Bouger” (French verb):**  
*to move*

**GREEN ACTION CENTRE IS GEARING UP** for its annual “get outside and bouge event”: Bougeons en hiver: The Jack Frost Challenge. Sign up as an individual or enter your team of up to five people, and commit to getting outside to ‘bouge’ like you’ve never ‘bougé’ before (if you’ll pardon our French). The goal is to commute outdoors as a team; to school, to work, to shop, or just to have fun — for 130km — between February 11th and 18th. The method of motion is up to you, so long as it is human-powered; skate, ski, walk, run, bike, snowshoe or dance (moves such as the snow blower are preferred). As long as you are outside and travelling, you may track your kilometres!

Get ready for a bunch of fun events throughout the week and before, both big and small, with a chance to win some serious prizes and log

“Green Action Centre is gearing up for its annual “get outside and bouge event”: Bougeons en hiver: The Jack Frost Challenge. The goal is to commute outdoors as a team; to school, to work, to shop, or just to have fun — for 130km — between February 11th and 18th.

those kms! Attend some of our joint events as well, with a chance to log some kms outside of the Jack Frost Challenge designated week! Stay tuned for more information at <http://greenactioncentre.ca/module/commuterchallenge/>, as we are releasing a bunch of exciting information in the New Year. 🌱





<< continued from page 1

## Whitewater Lake...

containing up to 88% of the global breeding populations of some duck species. Many potholes were drained in previous decades to provide land for agriculture. Large inland alkali lakes are another feature of this region. These lakes are especially important for tens of thousands of migratory shorebirds on their passage between their breeding and wintering grounds.

The most well-known of these lakes in the southwestern Manitoba prairie potholes is Whitewater Lake. Situated north of Turtle Mountain Provincial Park and between the towns of Deloraine and Boissevain, Whitewater Lake Important Bird Area (IBA) contains concentrations of shorebirds, waterbirds and waterfowl which have been recognised by

Birdlife International, the world's largest nature conservation partnership, and Canadian partners, as a site of global significance for birds and biodiversity. Those who have visited the lake over many decades describe the ever changing water levels, where the lake levels alter between dustbowl and overflows. Whitewater Lake is a terminal basin, meaning that there is no outlet for water. Effectively, within this small water catchment, all excess water runs into the lake and the lake expands to accommodate it. Water levels in southern Manitoba remain very high, and, around Whitewater Lake, this has led to flooding of property and agricultural land, leading to loss of income for local producers. Attempts to remove water

from surrounding land only serves to further increase lake water levels. There are even fears that the expanding lake might even flood the town of Deloraine.

Conflict arises over how best to respond to such a situation. A commonly held solution is to construct a drainage channel, moving water out of Whitewater Lake and into the Medora and possibly Elgin Creeks. This led to the commissioning of an Environment

Tundra Swan flock in flight.



Short-billed Dowitcher flock in flight.

Act Proposal by local Rural Municipalities. This is currently under assessment by the Provincial Government. Criticism of this proposal surrounds the lack of alternative solutions and lack of assessment of impacts on globally important concentrations of birds using the lake.

Monitoring by volunteers from the Manitoba IBA Program in 2015 and 2016 has indicated that even during this wet cycle, Whitewater Lake continues to provide staging or breeding

here are a few thoughts about this process and some of the issues that have arisen:

- i. The application to build a drainage channel could cause significant change to the natural environment? Therefore, has a wide range of alternative options been explored? For example, could the town of Deloraine be protected by a diversionary trench if water levels continue to rise?
- ii. Wetlands are critical, not just to the wider environment, but also to our own well-

at Chaplin Lake IBA. Could something similar be achieved at Whitewater Lake?

- iv. A water strategy was in development over several years but was dumped by the new government – a broader strategy to drainage issues could alleviate local problems and avoid band-aid solutions.
- v. Many water issues in Manitoba are caused by drainage and loss of wetlands. Could this proposal either create or exacerbate problems in other areas? Along a similar



Pectoral Sandpiper



Western Grebe

## 2015

**800 Pectoral Sandpiper** counted in spring migration. This species breeds in northern Canada and Alaska. This is more than 1% of the North American population.

**71 Buff-breasted Sandpipers.** This is a significant concentration of this globally Near-threatened species.

**2,197 Short-billed Dowitcher,** a species which breeds in the Hudson Bay Lowlands. This represents nearly 2% of the global population.

## 2016

**930 Pectoral Sandpipers** counted during fall migration. The figure is over 1% of the North American population.

**2,080 Western Grebes,** equating to over 1% of the global population of this species.

**4,175 Short-billed Dowitcher.** This figure represents over 3% of the global population.

**1640 Tundra Swans** in late fall, just under 1% of the North American population.

habitat for thousands of birds. Highlights included (see chart above).

Furthermore, in 2016, Black-necked Stilts bred at Whitewater Lake, the only known pair in the province. It also has the largest colonies in Manitoba of breeding long-legged adding birds, including White-faced Egrets, a species only recorded breeding here since 2005.

The conflict that has arisen at Whitewater Lake between wildlife and the surrounding communities presents a challenge to community-based conservation programs. To conclude,

being. Intact wetlands will be critical for communities and wildlife as they adapt to climate change, especially given predictions of more extreme weather events. There needs to be greater thought to the overall impacts of climate change in watershed planning.

- iii. Whitewater Lake qualifies as part of the Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network (<http://www.whsrn.org/>). Communities, industry and government in Saskatchewan have embraced the economic opportunities this presents

basis, many of the issues at other large Manitoban wetland complexes such as Delta Marsh and Netley-Libau Marsh, both IBAs, have been exacerbated by lack of forward planning.

- vi. Flooded land around the North, West and East Shoal Lakes IBA was purchased from the private landowners by the provincial government earlier this decade. This approach could also be applied to Whitewater Lake and in turn, the lake be promoted on a wider scale as a destination for ecotourism. Developing wildlife sites as visitor centres is more commonly applied in the UK and has been shown to benefit communities by developing local businesses.

A decision on whether to grant a license to build the drainage channel is expected soon. These conflicts are not simple to resolve, and the above suggestions are attempts to widen the debate at Whitewater Lake and other schemes in the future. The challenge at Whitewater and other places is to find a way forward, while protecting communities and retaining habitats for wildlife. For more information see [www.importantbirdareasmb.ca](http://www.importantbirdareasmb.ca) or email [iba@naturemanitoba.ca](mailto:iba@naturemanitoba.ca). 🌱



# Onjisay Aki Youth Statement

Turtle Lodge, September 19, 2016



**"WE ARE GRATEFUL** to be on the land today. We are very grateful on the Turtle Lodge and the Knowledge Keepers for gifting us with the teachings and space to receive knowledge in a safe and loving way. We acknowledge we must always begin with the Spirit. We reach out to the highest source of power and influence, found in the spirit and the land. We strive to make an alliance with Mide Aki (the Kind-hearted Mother Earth), an alliance that begins with our Elders and Knowledge Keepers. This alliance will ensure the survival of all our children.

We identify ourselves, and our brothers and sisters, as resilient and adapting spirits to all facets of life. We know the answers are to be found within our own people when we are nurtured and grounded in our own identity, languages, ceremonies, traditions and teachings,

We are committed to grounding ourselves in the respectful relationships between Mide Aki, Knowledge Keepers, Youth and the teachings that are being passed down.

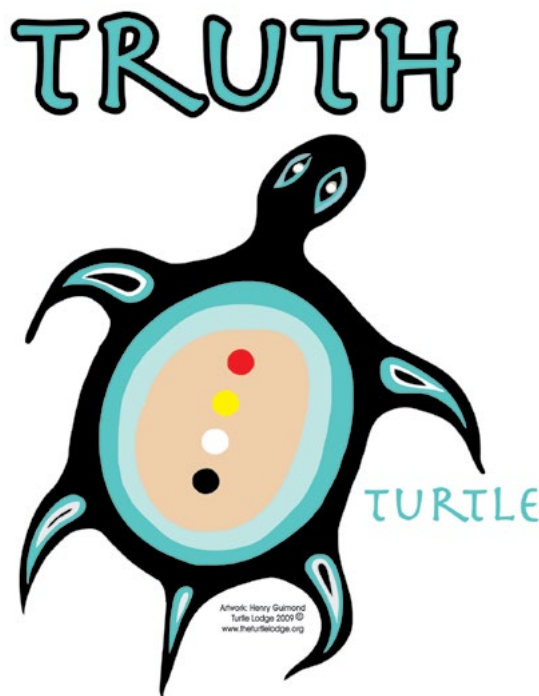
We have heard our Elders speak, we have received our direction and inherent responsibility to live Mino-Bimadisiwin, which means to live the good life.

We recognize ourselves as messengers of the knowledge to inspire other Youth to do ceremony and join us in honouring, recognizing and celebrating the ones who have passed, the ones that are here the ones yet to come. We commit ourselves to reaching out to Youth from our home communities to join us.

Water is life, the blood of our beautiful Mide Aki. This water, this blood of the earth, will unite us as her children, as we, the

Indigenous People, speak with voice of the land herself. The water will carry our message. Once the offerings are made the water will carry our love to all waters of the Earth. As we drink the water we can be healed with Mide Aki.

We are walking in the footsteps of our ancestors as loving and kind spirit warriors — Vision Walkers. Acknowledging the spirit, we honour the knowledge and accept the privilege and gift of sharing this beauty for the betterment of our people, our Creator and most importantly Mide Aki — our kind-hearted Mother, the Earth." 🌱



*The Onjisay Aki Youth & Knowledge Keeper Statement was originally written by Onjisay Aki Co-Chair Sadie-Phoenix Lavoie and Summit Co-Coordinator Janell Jackson, on behalf of the Youth, at the sacred fire at Turtle Lodge on Saturday September 17, 2016. Its message was inspired by the ceremonies, teachings and guidance from the Knowledge Keepers at the Onjisay Aki Youth Climate Summit led by the First Peoples (Sept 16-19, 2016). Co-Chair Lavoie took the statement into a sharing circle with Youth and Knowledge Keepers on Sunday September 18, for their input and consensus. After the document was finalized, it was taken into ceremony and, with the help of Grandmothers Florence Paynter,*

*Mary Maytwayashing and Sherry Copenace, spiritualized through a water ceremony on Lake Winnipeg on September 19, for its message to be carried by the water and shared worldwide.*

— The Turtle Lodge, [turtlelodge.org](http://turtlelodge.org)



# Air Quality and Climate Change

Students respond to the environmental challenges of their generation

By Bo van der Midden

**GOING OUTSIDE** for a breath of “fresh air” is no longer a reality in most Canadian cities. Even in Winnipeg, where the air quality is considered good, indoor air is usually safer to breathe than outdoor air.

Last winter, Green Action Centre purchased technical equipment to measure air pollutants for several new climate change presentations that highlight how active transportation and composting can improve the quality of our air and our health. The presentations introduce elementary and secondary school students to the Air Quality Health Index, a tool developed by the Government of Canada to indicate when air pollution might compromise the health or safety of populations at risk: young children, the elderly, people with lung and respiratory illnesses, and those participating in strenuous outdoor activity.

The Air Quality Health Index measures a combination of harmful pollutants including ground-level ozone, particulate matter, and nitrogen dioxide. Similar to the UV Index, the relative safety of air quality is measured on a scale from one to ten. A reading between one and three indicates good air quality, readings between four and six indicate moderate air quality, and the range from five to ten (or higher) indicates poor air quality, or highly polluted air.

The one notable exception to improved outdoor air quality was at Neil Dennis Kematch Memorial School, located on Sapotaweyak Cree Nation between Swan River and The Pas. Air quality readings in this school were in the average range, but the outdoor range was significantly better than indoors. The reduced emissions from vehicle traffic in rural areas is visibly noticeable with tools that measure air quality.

When students use this equipment in and around their schools, they get immediate, visible feedback about air pollution and greenhouse gases. Holding a Dylos air quality monitor up to the back of an idling school bus, the reading jumps from the usual 200-500 range

into the thousands. Wide eyes and loud shouts are common. Students’ reactions range from excitement to outrage.

When we return to the classroom, the quality and intensity of questions indicates that students are in the process of comprehending the air they breathe in a whole new way. Is it

eliminate smells, it would release carbon dioxide rather than methane into our atmosphere. And, if we made use of the end product—compost—we could also eliminate or drastically reduce our dependence on synthetic fertilizers, which release nitrous oxide into the atmosphere. Nitrous oxide’s warming potential is nearly three hundred times greater than carbon dioxide.

It’s easy to point the finger at Manitoba’s two largest greenhouse gas emitters: the Brady Road Resource Recovery Facility and the Koch Fertilizer Plant. But the impact of our individual choices leads to some unpleasant conclusions. A solid 50 percent of global food waste occurs in the home—not in restaurants or other industries that regularly toss shocking amounts of food. Those of us who eat meat also contribute to 35 percent of methane from human-related sources, and 65 percent of global nitrous oxide emissions.

Thirty years ago, atmospheric ozone was one of the primary environmental concerns. When scientists discovered that chlorofluorocarbon gases (CFCs) in spray bottles and coolants negatively affected the atmosphere, they were criticized by the chemical industry. But the international community eventually acknowledged the severity of ozone damage, uniting to create the Montreal Protocol that phased out industrial CFCs.

Holes in the ozone layer were considered irreversible damage, and many in my generation felt paralyzed by the environmental burdens we’d inherited. Recent research suggests that holes in the ozone layer are beginning to heal thanks to the Montreal Protocol. It will be interesting to observe what happens thirty years from November’s ratification of the Paris Agreement. Is it too soon to dream that we can reverse climate change?

*Bo van der Midden is a budding vegetarian on the Compost Team at Green Action Centre. Details about free classroom presentations can be found at [greenactioncentre.ca](http://greenactioncentre.ca).*



PHOTO: TY JOHNSTON

worse to take the bus than to ride in a car? If carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas, should we all stop breathing? If you don’t own a car, does that mean you don’t have a driver’s license?

The questions I hear from students during the waste reduction version of our new climate change presentations are similarly insightful. Why doesn’t our city have a green bin program? Are you a vegetarian? Can you help us set up a compost bin at our school?

We’re used to hearing that cars and other modes of transportation powered by fossil-fuels contribute to climate change, but we rarely hear about some of the primary sources of greenhouse gases generated by our food cycle. When organic materials such as banana peels and eggshells are buried in landfills where they get no oxygen, the anaerobic decomposition process releases methane into the atmosphere, and methane is 36 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas.

If we composted our kitchen scraps with leaves in a backyard bin or in outdoor windrows, the presence of oxygen and carbon would not only



# KEEP CALM AND REEL GREEN

**MANITOBA ECO-NETWORK • REEL GREEN FUNDRAISING GALA**  
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# Project 333

## A Minimalist Fashion Challenge

By Teresa Looy

### What is P333?

**THIS PROJECT IS AN ATTEMPT** to reduce clothing consumption. It's a three month-challenge in which you wear only 33 items. You put the rest of your closet in boxes, not to be touched until the three months are up.

### Why do P333?

- The fashion industry is one of the most polluting industries in the world
- Human rights and labour violations are rampant in the fashion industry
- Less clothing = less laundry, less time choosing, folding and tidying
- Less clothing = less stress, and more time in the mornings
- Less clothing means you get to wear nothing but your favourites for three months straight!
- If you love a challenge
- If you travel a lot
- If you're interested in minimalism and voluntary simplicity

### P333 Rules

Check out the Be More With Less blog (<http://bemorewithless.com/project-333>) for rules, inspiration, and support. I've paraphrased the "rules" of the project here for your convenience:

- The challenge lasts three months — start anytime you like
- You get to have 33 items; including clothes and accessories (yes — that means scarves, belts, jewelry, outerwear, and shoes count!)
- DON'T count your socks, underwear, sleepwear, workout clothes, and wedding rings (or similar)
- Choose your items and box up (don't give away yet) the rest of your wardrobe
- Feel free to replace any items that you realize don't fit, or that wear out, during the challenge (from your wardrobe or the store)
- There are no age or gender limitations

### My P333 Challenge

I'm running this challenge from November 1, 2016, until January 31, 2017. At first, I didn't think there was any way I'd ever be able to in-

clude my outerwear and shoes, but for December and January, I'm going to do it! Many people include their sunglasses, backpack, or purse in their 33, but I decided to let them be my exceptions because I don't use them for fashion purposes. The P333 Challenge is meant to be personalized and adapted to suit the needs of every challenger, and that is why it is the perfect challenge for almost every person's lifestyle and wardrobe.

You can do this challenge no matter what your circumstances! People are doing it all over the world, in climates that range from tropical to, well... ours. They work in offices, yoga studios, as parents, and as executives. They commute by car, bus, bike, foot, and roller blade. Some travel lots, while others never leave their home cities. Parents do it for their babies, 20-somethings are up to the challenge, and middle-aged people are jumping on board this trend as well. And the challenge can accommodate every type of fashion sensibility, including hippies who wear yoga pants and dreads, and administrative assistants wearing high heels and nail polish.

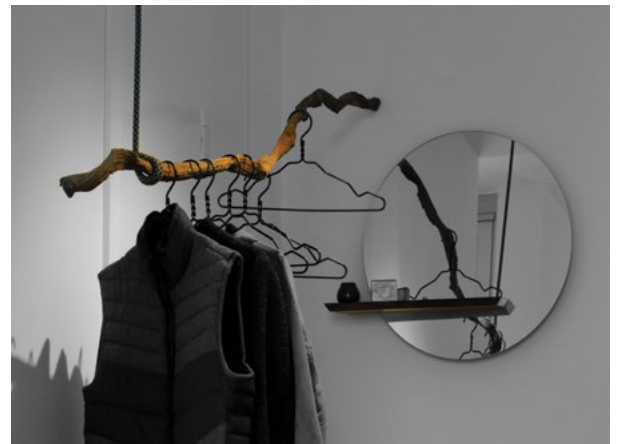
So, you can do it too if you are feeling inspired. The best part is that all your clothes are still in storage, so if it's REALLY an emergency or you just can't take it anymore, all you have to do is unbox your stored items.

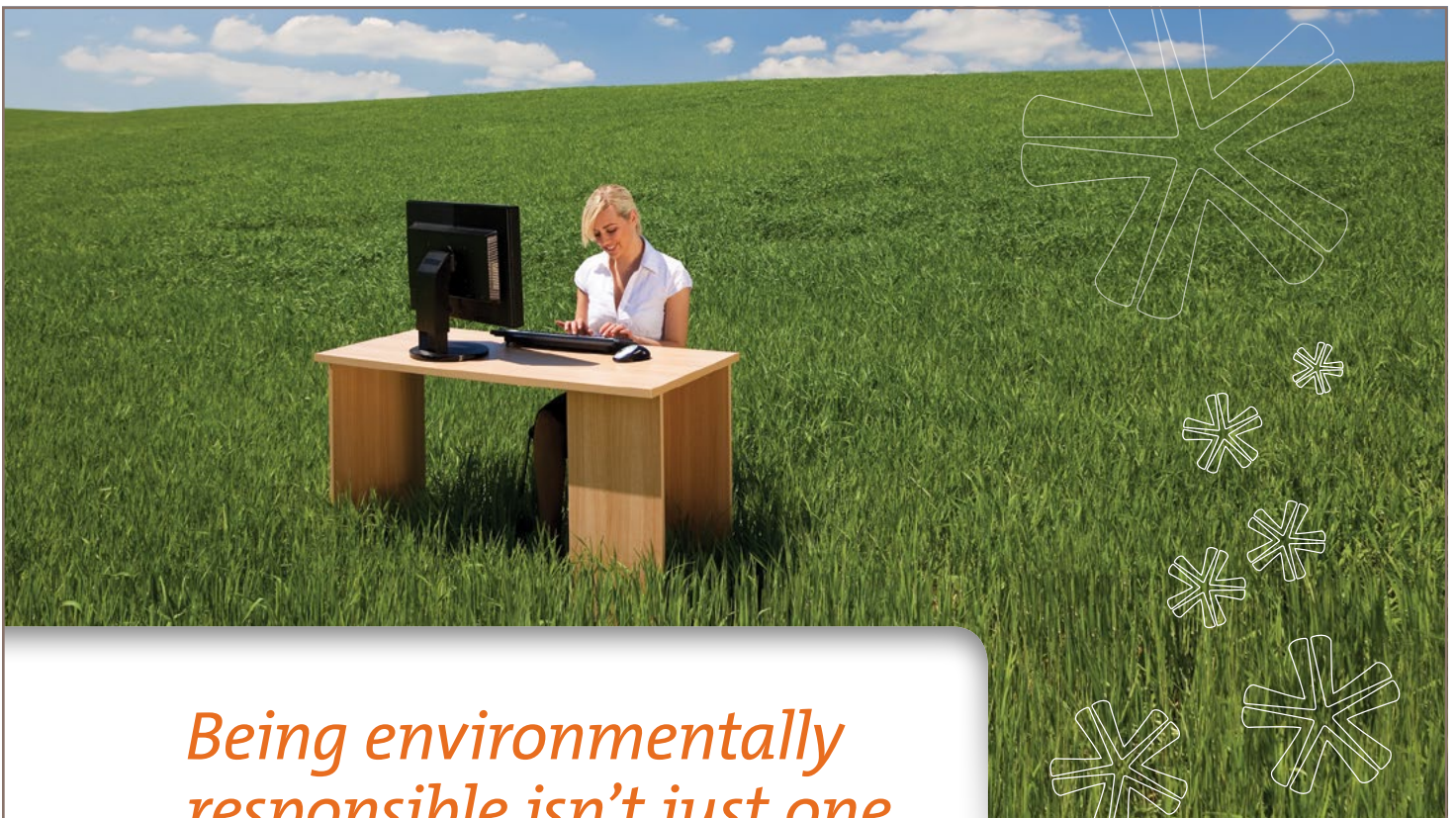
Would you like to know the most surprising thing I've discovered during this challenge?

After a full month of P333, there are seven items that I haven't even worn once yet, and a full 40% of my list haven't been worn more than once. And, this is the best part, I've received more compliments on my clothing and appearance since I started this challenge than ever before! Maybe because I only kept my favourites (and they're favourites because they look AND feel good).

Would I do this challenge forever? No. It has limitations, like the severe practicality required, and the fact that I have to store several items that I love and use, simply because they aren't versatile enough. But this challenge is already reshaping the relationship I have with my things — reminding me that my things are there to serve me, not the other way around. I find this reflection especially helpful around the holiday season, to refocus on what's important to me.

PHOTOS: RANIER HALLMAN





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