PETITCODIAC
WATERSHED ALLIANCE

The Current

FEBURARY 2010

Sustainable Growth – Is it even possible?

The Petitcodiac Watershed Alliance was fortunate enough to obtain funding for two environmental intern positions through the YMCA this winter, so we decided to explore some sustainability issues in our watershed. One of the issues that we have been looking at is sustainable agriculture and the other is sustainable forestry management. We are looking at growth in these two industries, and considering its' impact on our watershed environment.

A lot of the issues that we are struggling with right now: climate change, pollution, energy shortages and rising fuel prices are actually symptoms of unsustainable growth. Ocean acidification, ozone depletion, freshwater shortages and a net loss in biodiversity are all indicators that if we continue doing business the way that we are today, then we are already at the earths' carrying capacity for the human species. If we want the human species to be sustainable then we have to learn to live in such a way that we don't deplete or contaminate the earth's resources as we go about our daily routines. I recently came across an article that had some good insights on managing our earth's resources. It suggested that there are five levels of sustainability that we should use to test the impact of our use of the earth's natural resources:

1. We should use a resource if when we use it, it actually makes more of that resource available for future use.
2. We should use a resource only if it will be lost by not using it.
3. We should use a resource only if it is unaffected by our use of it.
4. We should not use a resource if it will become degraded or polluted because we are using it.
5. We should not use a resource if it will be lost or depleted forever because of our use of it.

Unfortunately most of our resource use fails all levels of the sustainability test described above. Think just for a moment about how much water we use every day— and then how much of that water is polluted once we are done with it? Water conservation is sometimes a difficult concept to sell in Atlantic Canada because we have abundant freshwater resources. But, if nearly every drop of water we use is left polluted, we need to use less to pollute less.

Use less = Pollute less

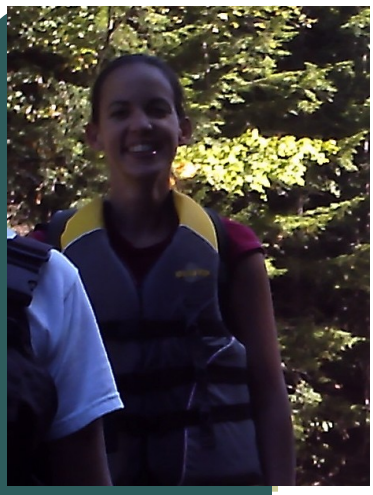
As humans, we seem to have a great deal of trouble identifying and changing our consumptive habits. Perhaps this is because we are living in a society that is fueled by growth. Our governments are focused on economic sustainability more than resource sustainability and what we all tend to overlook is that one is highly dependant upon the other.

Today when I look at the forestry industry, I see increased harvesting of our natural wood resources and diminishing returns for New Brunswickers. This kind of exploitation is neither economically nor environmentally sustainable. The market forces in the agricultural industry are forcing farmers to invest in technologies that can be harmful to the natural environment. Factory farms where thousands of animals are kept in one place or the use of genetically modified seeds has been shown to have environmental implications that can affect even our little watershed. Small family farms are struggling to make ends meet, because the cost of purchasing the resources they need to keep their farms operating is going up, while the return on their investment dollar is diminishing, forcing them to get bigger or get out of business. Having all of our food resources shipped into our province is not going to be economically sustainable for our province in the long term, nor is it environmentally sustainable for an earth undergoing climate change.

Most of us think that technology will save us. All that technology has really done in the past century is help us to cheaply make use of the earths resources at a faster rate. Technology can save us as long as some of those resources are there. What happens when they are gone? What are we doing about it in our watershed?

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Mélanie LeBlanc



Melanie LeBlanc

Mélanie LeBlanc graduated from Saint Mary's University in Halifax, NS, with a Bachelor degree in geography. She is presently pursuing a Masters degree in Environmental Studies from the University of Moncton.
Mélanie joined the Petitcodiac Watershed Alliance last summer as a volunteer to learn about the Petitcodiac River watershed for her Master's thesis. She participated in our monthly sampling activities, our Pollett River Restoration project and our Irishtown Nature Park project.
She's now an important member and employee of our team thanks to the Youth Eco-Internship Program, sponsored by the federal government through the YMCA.

Chris McKnight

Chris McKnight

Chris graduated with a social sciences degree from St. Thomas University in 2005 then went on to pursue a Bachelor degree in Environmental Studies from the University of Manitoba.

He spent one year working with Fisheries and Oceans in their Habitat Management program - assessing the potential impact of specific projects on fish and/or fish habitat.

Since returning to New Brunswick, Chris has worked with First Nation communities identifying adaptation techniques to climate change impacts. He is also an active member of numerous community groups. Chris was hired through the Youth Eco-Internship Program, sponsored by the federal government through the YMCA.

Rebecca Woodman

Rebecca Woodman

Rebecca graduated from St. Francis Xavier University in 2006 with a B.Sc. degree with honours in Biology.

She worked for two and a half years as a research technician with the Analytical Sciences Group at the Royal Military College in Kingston, ON, where she conducted chemical and nuclear analysis of soil, water, plants and aquatic organism samples.

Rebecca moved to Riverview in the spring of 2009, and began working for the Petitcodiac Watershed Alliance in November through the Science Horizons program sponsored by Environment Canada. She is currently doing research on sustainable agriculture and how agriculture affects our watershed environment.

Envirothon NB 2010

The Petitcodiac Watershed Alliance has been invited to be the aquatic specialists for the upcoming Envirothon 2010 competition. This competition, open to high school students from around the world, is administered in New Brunswick by the Canadian Forestry Association (CFANB), and is celebrating it's 10th anniversary this year.

There are more than 20 schools in the Province of New Brunswick, with registered Envirothon teams for the 2010 competition. The national competition will be held at Mount Allison University in Sackville from April 29th to May 1st, 2010. The winner of the national competition will go on to participate in the international competition which will be held at California State University in August.

During the school year, Envirothon teams build their knowledge on 5 environmental subjects: land (soil), forestry, aquatic environments, wildlife and a fifth subject that changes from year to year. This year the fifth subject is groundwater protection. Workshops and field trips are organized with specialists during the school year to prepare the teams for the provincial competition.
In May, N.B. Envirothon teams will test their theoretical and practical knowledge by doing field tests under supervision of natural resources specialists. For the competition, the teams must prepare a presentation on how to solve a serious environmental problem, given to them the day before. They must include all 5 subjects in their presentation. This competition helps students understand the complexities of the ecological and environmental problems that we face today.

The PWA will be participating in a training workshop for our local New Brunswick students on Saturday March 20th at MacNaughton High School. Our participation in this event will build on our Water Quality Education program that we already have in place for our local district 1 and 2 schools.

Upcoming Events

EARTH DAY
APRIL 22

Watch for more details on local earth day events in our watershed.

Petitcodiac Watershed Alliance Annual General Meeting
-Tuesday, June 1st
More details to follow.

Alliance du bassin versant
Petitcodiac
Watershed Alliance

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The greatest danger to our future is apathy. – Jane Goodall (1934)

Membership Levels:

□ **Fish Friend $20**: includes quarterly newsletter, occasional updates.

□ **River Rescuer $50**: includes quarterly newsletter, updates, members only mug.

□ **Watershed Supporter $100**: includes quarterly newsletter, updates, annual report (State of the watershed), members only t-shirt.

□ **Corporate/ Watershed Supporter $250 +:** all of the above, plus placement on our web -site.

- **Checks should be made out to PWMG-GSBP Inc.**
- **NEW—renew on line— find the link on our web-site.**

SEND TO/ ENVOYÉ À
Petitcodiac Watershed Alliance
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Thank-you to our sponsors for their generous donations in 2009.

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