



Environment north

2010 Annual Report

“The human race has never actually disposed of anything. In fact the word “disposal” has no scientifically meaningful definition. In particular, we do not have any technology for disposing of nuclear waste.”

*Dr. Gordon Edwards
President of the Canadian
Coalition of Nuclear
Responsibility*

The carbon footprint of air travel was written by Environment North board member Scott Harris. Sometimes air travel cannot be avoided for example when visiting distant family. Carbon offsets can be a way to minimize the environmental impact.

The Nuclear Waste Management Organisation is proceeding with its mandate to identify a host community. Julee Boan, Environment North board member discusses the hazards associated with the storage of nuclear waste – safely for 250,000 years.

Our society requires electricity but how much and from what sources is the question. Conservation and renewable energy **are key to the world’s green energy future.** Renewable energy has the least environmental consequences. Environment North members Gaétan Ayotte and Kerstin Muth discuss the benefits of wind energy, one of the greenest sources of energy. In the fall, Environment North developed a position paper on the complex issue of community and corporate wind farms, in particular the Big Thunder Wind Park.

Conservation is the greenest **“source of energy”.** The feasibility of building or retro-fitting near net-zero energy buildings was discussed in the article on green building by Environment North member Kerstin Muth.

The municipal elections in the fall prompted an article by Julee Boan stressing the importance of municipal politicians to think global and act local. Healthy, sustainable communities depend on healthy ecosystems and politicians need to hear about environmental priorities from the community.

To read the articles go to [Articles](#)

Public Awareness: Hosting Community Events



Dry Storage of Nuclear Waste
Photograph by Robert Del Tredici

“Ontario’s Nuclear Legacy” was the topic of the 2010 Annual General Meeting. Gordon Edwards, president of the Canadian Coalition of Nuclear Responsibility and Robert Del Tredici, photo-documenter of the nuclear industry, were guest speakers at the AGM. They also spoke at Superior Collegiate and Vocational Institute, provided a photo display, visited Ignace and spent an evening with members of Environment North discussing nuclear issues. Their trip to Ignace was an opportunity to speak with concerned citizens and see the community first hand. Ignace is among a few communities who are considering becoming a disposal site for nuclear waste.

Environment North supports a phase-out of nuclear energy. Environment North is opposed to nuclear energy primarily because of the production of radioactive toxic waste and the high construction and decommissioning costs.

Northwatch and Environment North co-hosted follow-up events on the nuclear waste issue. Brennain Lloyd of Northwatch spoke at an evening session in Thunder Bay and visited Ear Falls and Ignace, in order to provide more information to communities on the nuclear waste issue.

Environment North teamed up with the Lakehead University Student Union to organize the

second annual rally in Waverly Park drawing attention to the climate change issue, in particular to the goal of lowering global carbon dioxide emissions to below 350 parts per million in order to prevent potential catastrophic climate change and also to the International negotiations occurring in Mexico at the time. The event closed with a march to Hillcrest Park and provision of a free pumpkin to all participants. Speakers at the rally included Graham Saunders, president of Environment North, Dr. Adam Cornwell, Lake University faculty, Jay Stapleton, candidate for city council, and Bruce Hyer, Member of Parliament for Thunder Bay-Superior North.



Rally participants at Hillcrest Park

Participation in Regional Events:

Environment North participated in the following events:

the first Sustainable Communities Conference at Lakehead University organized by the Lakehead University Student Union,

the first Thunder Bay Green Expo organized by Earthwise,

and the Green Trade Show in Terrace Bay.

Graham Saunders gave a presentation on gardening and growing your own food at both the Sustainability Conference and the Green Trade Show. Copies of the book *Gardening with Short Growing Seasons*, sponsored in part by Environment North, were sold at these

and other events.

Charlene Rogers, Environment North board member attended the Ontario Mining Action Network (OMAN) conference and Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forests (MNDMF) Workshops which were held in Thunder Bay in the fall. One of the concerns in the Ring of Fire is the failure of some mining companies to adhere to regulations. Claim staking is bypassing proper land-use planning. For example, claims have been staked in a pattern that clearly represents rail lines. An airport was built in the Ring of Fire area prior to receiving proper permits. These situations suggest that the mining industry is leading land use

planning in the north, rather than using proper mechanisms that are in place or being developed within the Far North Act and others. Charlene has been appointed the Northwestern Ontario representative to the Ontario Environment Network.

Graham Saunders flew through hurricane-like weather on his way to a conference in Sudbury about severe weather. The conference was organized by the Ontario Centre for Climate Impacts and Adaptation Resources. Topics included infrastructure and emergency response improvements necessary in a climate with increased frequency of severe weather events.



Pebble Beach in Marathon
October 26, 2010
Photo by Chris Walton

Letters to Government Ministries

Alternative energy sources are being developed in order to reduce the carbon footprint. Biomass holds particular interest as a source of economic and energy development in Northwest. However, peatlands are important stores of carbon. Peatland ecosystems are provide a cooling benefit, fold control and water filtration. For these and other reasons Environment North joined other environmental organization requesting that the Government of Ontario prohibit the development of peat as a biomass fuel.

Comments were submitted to the Nipigon River Water Management Plan. The plan appeared weak in assessing flows and levels during extreme conditions which, given anticipated climatic changes, will likely occur more often. The “new nor-

mal” of more frequent extreme events needs to be incorporated in the planning.

Early in the year Environment North submitted comments to the Proposed Growth Plan. Environment North called upon the plan to be framed within two emerging realities: reducing dependence on fossil fuels and adaptation to a changing climate. Approaches that value conservation and stewardship will produce true sustainability for Northern Ontario communities. Environment North encourages the government support changes that move us toward a lower energy future and for decentralization of political decision-making.

Environment North signed onto a collective request to the Government of Ontario to enact anti-strategic lawsuits against pub-

lic participation (anti-SLAPP) legislation. SLAPPs are an abuse of legal proceedings and stifle citizens’ and public debate.

Environment North sent letters to many Senators urging them strongly to pass the Climate Change Accountability Act. Additional changes in climate patterns are highly likely to further stress and disrupt the environment with profound impacts on social and economic functions in Canada. All levels of governments, industries and individuals urgently need a framework in order to plan the path to a (nearly) fossil fuel-free future. Unfortunately, the bill did not pass following an unacceptable breach of democratic process.

To read the letters go to: [Letters](#)

“All level of governments, industries and individuals urgently need a framework in order to plan the path to a (nearly) fossil fuel-free future.”



Funding Support for Local Initiatives

Environment North is a proud supporter of the Environmental Film Network (EFN). This year our financial support assisted the EFN in continuing its monthly film series. Graham

Saunders represented Environment North at the EFN screening of the Canadian film *Powerful: Energy for Everyone*. He assisted with the post-film discussion of renewable energy

possibilities here in Thunder Bay. We look forward to further partnership as we develop an education and awareness program on deep geologic storage of nuclear waste.

Do you know of a local project that would help to improve our environment? See our website for a funding application form under "Contact Us".

Participation in Community and Regional Initiatives

"Northern Connections" aims to enhance leadership and capacity of northern groups and build strong networks for conservation and community sustainability.

Environment North continues to be represented at the Earthwise Energy Group. The group meets monthly to consider initiatives that will assist in implementing the Community Environmental Action Plan and is collecting data on the community of Thunder Bay's annual greenhouse gas emissions since 2005. An energy guide for business has undergone its second printing and is available on line from Earthwise. The group has also promoted EarthHour and taking the Power Pledge.

Northern Connections and Environment North have partnered on various projects. Northern

Connections provided the financial and technical resources to post both the 2010 AGM lecture on "Ontario's Nuclear Legacy" with Gordon Edwards and Robert Del Tredici and Brenna Lloyd's (of Northwatch) discussion of Nuclear waste on Ustream.

Board Member Susan Grinstead has created an education resource on solar energy. After a nine-month peer review process, her work has become part of a unit called "Passive Solar Heat-

ing" on the Ontario Ministry of Education's website. The unit is now a resource available for teachers. Access can be obtained by contacting the local school board.



Susan and Maurice Grinstead have been heating their home with a passive solar greenhouse for 30 years. Photo submitted by Susan Grinstead.

Looking Ahead: Environment North 2010 Retreat

On November 13, 2010, the Environment North board and a group of interested members met to prepare a Moving Forward plan for the organization. It was a day filled with great conversation.

We reaffirmed our commitment to the Four Strategic Areas of Focus that were identified at the strategic planning session held in April 2007: Lands and Water, Human and Ecosystem Health, Climate Change and Energy and Community Sustain-

ability. Using this context, we began to identify some "topics" that we could focus on, as an organization, over the next few years. Ultimately, environmental concerns do not neatly fall into any one of the Strategic Areas of Focus, but by identifying some of the ongoing and upcoming issues for our region, we are able to use our Strategic Areas of Focus to frame our discussions about them – and identify ways in which we can play a leadership role in ad-

ressing these issues.

The topics we identified were resource extraction, nuclear waste, northern Ontario community sustainability and regional energy.

Environment North will continue to promote economic and environmental sustainability for communities in Northern Ontario. And given the upcoming elections we plan to keep environmental priorities in the minds of the public.



Poplars

2010 Financial Report

	Budget 2011	December 2010	December 2009
<i>Receipts:</i>			
Memberships	\$ 500.00	620.00	395.00
Donations: Individual	750.00	448.16	582.20
Corporate		0	475.00
Grants & Project Funding		0	10,000.00
Project Fundraising	1,000.00	1,300.00	5,092.25
Other		120.00	0
<i>Total Receipts</i>	\$ 2,250.00	2,488.16	16,544.45

<i>Expenditures:</i>			
Charitable Programs & Donations	\$ 500.00	290.00	14,890.00
Meetings & Communication	1,000.00	768.51	368.29
Fundraising, Conferences, Education	2,500.00	2295.47	150.00
Salary & Benefits			118.81
Membership Fees Paid	50.00		50.00
Honorariums	1,000.00	1,000.00	40.00
Professional Fees			
Banking Fees	20.00	10.50	12.50
Other			70.04
<i>Total Expenditures</i>	\$ 5,070.00	4,364.48	15,699.64

<i>Assets:</i>		<i>Liabilities:</i>	
Bay Credit Union PCA	\$ 7,044.88	Lake Superior Initiative	\$ 1,392.11
Bay Credit Union Term	10,000.00	Climate Initiative	300.00
		Food Initiative	186.60
		Enduring Property	15,286.17
<i>Total Assets</i>	\$ 17,164.88	<i>Total Liabilities</i>	\$ 17,164.88

Acknowledgements

Environment North thanks the members for their ongoing interest and financial support.

We gratefully acknowledge the Lakehead District School Board in helping to sponsor the Nuclear Legacy event. Thank you also to Northern Connections

for covering the travel expenses for a conference in Sudbury which planted the seed for the conference Climate Change: Moving towards Adaptation held in Thunder Bay.

This year we acknowledge the contribution of Dr. Mehdi Zahaf,

Lakehead University. From 2006-2010 he was the Environment North webmaster posting documents to the site whether he was nearby in Thunder Bay or as far away as Tunisia. We wish Dr. Zahaf all the best in his new research projects.



Jarvis Bay

Members—getting involved! by Charlene Rogers

This year was my first on the Environment North Board of Directors and it has been my pleasure to manage the e-mail communications for the organization. Filling this role has given me the opportunity to help keep you informed about our board meetings, events in and around the city and opportunities for action through the Environmental Bill of Rights, letters to parliament and consultation meetings. It has also allowed me to get to meet some of you, albeit “virtually”.

Those who know me know that I am a bit of an “information junkie” and I love to share it! So, I’ve also set up a brand new and improved Facebook page for Environment North. You can

check us out and become a fan at this [“link”](#).

Another project I hope to implement is member involvement in **the organization. We’re developing** a list of activities that we think members might like to be involved in so that you can take a more active role in what we do in and around the city and region. If you have time and would like to be more involved, please drop me a line at environmentnorth@gmail.com **to let me know and I’ll add your name to our list of folks!** When you write, please let me know **what types of things you’d like to do.**

Thank you for your continued support!



Sparrow eggs

Photos by Kerstin Muth (unless otherwise indicated)

Environment North strives to improve and protect the environmental sustainability and socio-economic well-being of Northwestern Ontario through:

- Leadership
- Research
- Partnerships
- Education
- Community advocacy and capacity- building

Environment North’s specific actions revolve around respect and shared responsibility for air, water and land, *the essentials of all life.*



Post Office Box 10307
Thunder Bay, ON P7B 6T8
Canada

E-mail: environmentnorth@gmail.com

A regional non-government
charitable organisation focused
on environmental sustainability

environmentnorth.ca