



**"Because we don't think about future generations,
they will never forget us."**

Henrik Tikkannen

July 2012

OWC needs your vote for the **'Protecting the Mountain Headwaters Through Education'** project. Go to the [Shell Fueling Change](#) website.

Also see the [2012 OWC Annual Report](#)

Knapweed Roundup at Cottonwood Park, 5 to 9 p.m. on July 19th. Bring gloves & bags, food & water, and wear long pants. Register with OWC (or just drop on by).

No SAGE meetings until autumn.

Charges of 'Intimidation' Dropped by Crown

Last summer three women from the Kainai Nation were arrested and charged with intimidation for peacefully protesting the initiation of oil and gas exploitation on reserve land.

One of the women accused pleaded 'not guilty' to the charges, and filed Notice of a Constitutional Question. At her seventh

appearance, council for the prosecution informed the court that the Crown has directed a stay of proceedings.

This very good news is dampened slightly by the fact that the lengthy process of prosecuting these people has achieved the intended result of chilling dissent within the

community who are requesting a moratorium on drilling and hydraulic fracturing until there is proper monitoring of air and ground water quality, and until scientific study deems these extraction processes safe for people living in the region, both now and into the future.

For more information visit the KLEW website, www.klew.org

Summer Camp Approved near Police Lake

Councillors of Cardston County are hearing an application by the LDS church for the conversion of wilderness property into a youth camp that can accommodate 500 people. The camp intends to use the recreational facilities at nearby Police Lake for

their activities.

Concerns have been raised about the impact of activities on wildlife, water abstraction, wastewater management, the impact of transportation to and from the site on the single

access road, and the ability of facilities at Police Lake to accommodate this size of group.

Local landowners affected by the proposal have rallied in opposition.

Tyson Bohnert Receives Emerald Award

Congratulations to Tyson Bohnert who was recently awarded by the Alberta Emerald Foundation for his Neighbourhood Environmental Stewardship project.

Tyson, 15 years old, hosted the Canyon Neighbourhood Nature Club for six years. He has been recognized locally for his exemplary leadership and volunteer work, and continues to develop his stewardship experience by building a greenhouse and by exploring 'food forests' (creating pro-

ductive landscapes using the principles of permaculture).

Tyson has been active in SAYEE, the University of Lethbridge Campus Roots Garden, Southern Alberta Permaculture (SAP), and O.U.R. Eco-village, an internationally recognized leader in Permaculture.

SAGE would also like to congratulate past-president Paul Bohnert for his nomination for an Emerald Award in the category of Public Education & Outreach.

Black Out, Speak Out

SAGE joined a coalition of over 500 organizations and 18,000 individual Canadians in blacking out their websites for a day in a symbolic protest of the government's proposed (now passed) omnibus bill, C-38. This bill emasculates environmental laws and procedures, and advances government efforts to intimidate environmental organizations and muzzle scientists doing research on the environment.

The 'Black Out, Speak Out' initiative was a symbolic event to raise awareness about this

systematic and cynical 'attack on nature and democracy.' It has been argued that a budget bill should not be the mechanism to amend current environmental law, particularly when this bill has been allowed only a limited time to be debated in parliament.

The federal government has voted to adopt the legislation at third reading, and the bill has already received first reading in the Senate in what is expected to be an expedited process.

Alabama Bans Sustainable Development

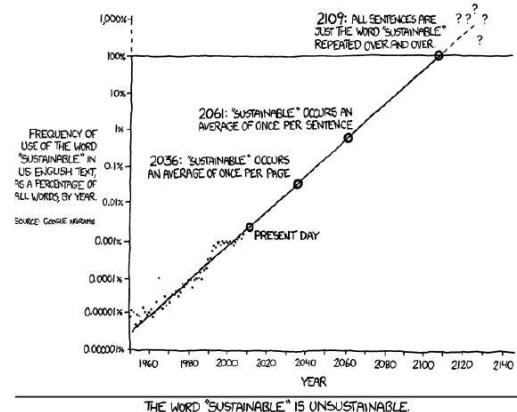
The State of Alabama has passed a law that prohibits the implementation of "policy recommendations that deliberately or inadvertently infringe or restrict private property rights without due process, as may be required by policy recommendations originating in, or traceable to 'Agenda 21,' adopted by the United Nations in 1992 at its Conference on Environment and Development."

Agenda 21 says that human beings are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature; that States shall cooperate in a spirit of global partnership to conserve, protect and restore the health and

integrity of the Earth's ecosystem; and that the right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations.

The reaction against Agenda 21 is being advanced by the Koch brothers, who fund much of the climate-change denial industry and other anti-environmental initiatives. The agenda is being presented as part of a vast international conspiracy that invokes the 'right of eminent domain', and undermines the personal right to profit by externalizing costs to the environment. For these people, sus-

tainable development is a danger because it mandates clean air and water for everyone, and advances smart growth, social justice, green energy, and livable communities - obviously, quite intolerable goals.



Conspiracy Theorist Speaks at SACPA

Funded by big oil through the Friends of Science, climate comic, Tim Ball, recently shared his raucous shtick at SACPA on the science of conspiracy theory.

The presentation was a rollicking jumble of metaphors and invectives that suggested that thousands of experts and scientists world-wide have orchestrated a grand deception with the motive of inaugurating a World Government commanded by the arch-villain, Maurice Strong. Or, was it Margaret Thatcher behind the curtain who created the IPCC in order to capture the Falkland Islands so as to control the oil and gas in the region, from which her

husband would handsomely profit? Or, was it a fiendish plot by (was it Rotarians?) to eliminate weather stations around the globe and, thus, our ability to know the real temperature?

Ball went on to share a series laughable charts implying the blatant manipulation of measurements by scientists intent on making the data fit the Theory. The reason they might do this was not clear, but these thousands of scientists distributed around the world, in a multitude of sectors, funded by myriad sources, somehow collectively feared they would be visited in the night by the IPCC mafia. Later in the routine, with Ball on a roll, he claimed that scien-

Interesting Links:

A Climate of Corporate Control <http://www.ucsusa.org/>
 The Carbon Bathtub <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/big-idea/05/carbon-bath>

How Can We Cope With Contaminated Water From Fracking
 The Sky is Pink [Short Video by Josh Fox, of Gasland] [Scientific American](#)
[Vimeo](#)

Going in Reverse: Tar Sands Threat to Central Canada and New England <http://www.nrdc.org/>

tists were now discovering that CO₂ actually had a cooling effect on climate (there goes 150 years of scientific observation to the contrary).

Ball also shared some amusing anecdotes that 50% of universities should be shut down because of their adherence to a liberal education (an education-for-unemployment); that home schooling provides better student results on state exams (I think he said 3 to 4 times better) than despoiled public schools; and that the Kennedy assassination was covered up by the 'terms of reference' dictated by The Government.

Overall, SACPA offered an amusing frolic through the fields of conspiracy (and lunch was good, as always).

Southern Alberta Group for the Environment (SAGE)

A Leading Voice for a Healthy and Environmentally Sustainable Community.

Visit us at: <http://sage-environment.org/>

If you are interesting in getting involved, contact us at:

sage-communications@sage-environment.org



Climate Wars (2008)

Lethbridge College hosted Gwynne Dyer to speak to the students last year - he delivered an interesting presentation on his book *Climate Wars*.

In the book, *Climate Wars*, Dyer explores the geopolitical implications of climate change, having interviewed scientists, policy-makers, and military experts from around the world. He creates seven scenarios, presented from bad to worse, of humankind reacting to the challenges of water scarcity, food security, coastal flooding, and declining fossil energy supplies. Between the scenarios he outlines the science of global warming / climate change, and the politics that informs our collective response to these challenges.

Dyer is interested in the science of global warming, but he is more interested in how we will respond to the challenges. As a military historian, therefore, his perspectives are nuanced by strategies that might be deployed in reaction to stressed societies. He begins the book by saying: "The military profession, especially the long-established great powers, is deeply pessimistic about the likelihood that people and countries will behave well under stress" (p.5). The military profession, as a result, has taken climate change very seriously - even in the United States, where the Pentagon released a [report](#) on the potentially catastrophic consequences and strategies for managing crises.

Climate Wars is unique in the connections it makes from the direct impacts of climate change (water scarcity, food security, and so on) and the social reactions to these crises. "This is not just a formula for famine; it is also a formula for war. All round the world, countries facing mass starvation will be just a bit closer to the equator than countries that can still feed their people, and some of the countries on the losing side will be sufficiently developed to make

their unhappiness with this outcome felt. (People always raid before they starve.)"

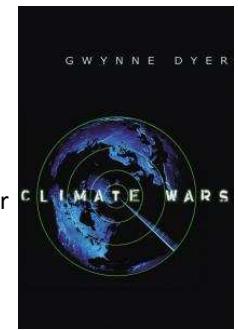
Regarding the science, Dyer clearly accepts the IPCC as the world's expert international organization and emphasizes the very conservative approach they take. The reasons for this conservatism are threefold: "However, governmental involvement does imply an inbuilt conservatism in the "policy-relevant" conclusions of the IPCC, for governments do not want reports that force them into major unanticipated expenditures. Another reason for the conservatism is the natural dynamics of a consensus-based process, in which the scientists on each committee are much likelier to reach consensus at the lowest common denominator of a range of estimates about the severity of the problem than at the high end of the range. A third reason is the fact that the IPCC (which does not do original research) imposes a cut-off date after which newly published scientific studies cannot be included in the material considered by the various working groups" (p.92). In other words, as dire as the predictions published by the IPCC Synthesis Report are, they are very likely to under-estimate the effects. As such, Dyer's scenarios are given more credence.

There are two main strategies to manage climate change - the first is mitigation (avoiding the worst impacts by reducing greenhouse gas emission and the sequestration of carbon through reforestation); and the second is adaptation (managing the crises as they come). Though mitigation is clearly the better option, Dyer argues that it is adaptation that will be the approach generally taken by humankind. He quotes David Keith from the University of Calgary as saying: "The sad fact is that the optimal strategy for each country is to get other countries to cut their emissions while each country does nothing. The sad fact is that if you spend a lot

of money to cut emissions in your country, you're distributing the benefits of that cutting all over the world, but all the costs of the cutting are in your country. This is the way an economist would think about it. Another sad fact is that one of the things that people talk about a lot now, more and more publicly, is the difference between mitigation – cutting emissions – and adaptation: dealing with the climate change. But when you think about this from the perspective of a national government, if you spend money on adaptation in your country, you know the money will be spent in your country, and the benefits will be there. If you spend money on mitigation, those benefits are being spread around the world" (p.165).

Overall, the book makes an unflinching case that humankind should be preparing for the worst - our collective unwillingness to mitigate, and the likely collapse of states due to the stresses of climate change will exacerbate what already will be a difficult situation. Dyer presents some things that our technological society will be able to do to give us time to react, mainly involving geoengineering. Geoengineering represents two main approaches to masking the warming: one is to reflect more energy back into space; and the other is to sequester more carbon from the atmosphere. He is clear that geoengineering is an act of collective desperation, but one that we should be prepared for. The arguments against geoengineering include unanticipated effects from employing technologies and the moral hazard of creating a false impression that we can continue to do what we are doing.

Climate Wars is a very balanced and provocative book. Also, consider reading his [journalism](#) for more insights.





**A leading voice for a healthy and
environmentally sustainable community**

Box 383 Lethbridge AB T1J 3E9

June 28, 2012

To Prime Minister Harper
Government of Canada

Cc: Premier Redford
Jim Hillyer, M.P. Lethbridge Consituency
Hon. Diana McQueen, Minister of Environment & SRD
Elizabeth May, Green Party of Canada
Kirsty Duncan, M.P., Liberal Party Environment Critic

Re: **Bill C-38 and Environmental Protection**

It was William Petty, the founder of classical political economy, who said, “labour is the father of material wealth, the earth is its mother.” It seems that the father has been killed; and what the Government of Canada under your leadership is currently doing to the mother is mythically unspeakable. The unfolding of this oedipal tragedy is manifested in Bill C-38, and represents more generally the ideological disconnect between economy, society, and the environment (upon which economy and society are dependent).

Please consider the following list of recent actions by the Government of Canada that substantiate our concerns. Many of these actions were components of the 430-page omnibus bill recently passed by parliament, of which more than 170 pages were amendments to environmental assessment and regulations, and to laws addressing environmental charities.

This list is as follows:

- Making significant changes to environmental laws and procedures through an unprecedented omnibus bill that allows little opportunity for scrutiny or debate (particularly with limitations set on parliamentary timelines).
- Diminishing of the statutory protection of fish habitat to those of ‘important’ species with commercial, aboriginal, or recreational value. Unfortunately nature is not so selective – in other words, protecting habitat protects the perseverance of *all* fish species (the rationale of previous legislation), so protecting habitat for ‘important’ fish species is irrational, both in intent and in practice.
- Apparent violation of the obligation of the federal government to consult with First Nations to accommodate their treaty and aboriginal rights.
- Federal government asserting control over the approval process for pipelines (like the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline, Trailbreaker, and Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain expansion), limiting independent regulatory oversight and the opportunity for transparent scientific assessment and public process including the participation of environmental non-government organizations.
- Limiting timelines for environmental assessment, including 18 months for an NEB hearing, regardless of the complexity of the proposed project, and the level of scrutiny required to protect the public interest and welfare by protecting the environment.
- Canadian backsliding on previous environmental protection commitments that have allegedly been safeguarded in trade deals (so as to prevent a global race-to-the-bottom of environmental stewardship in a crass effort to attract investment and development).
- Canadian withdrawal from the Kyoto Accord, which represented a very small commitment towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

- Eliminating funding to the Polar Environment Atmospheric Research Laboratory (PEARL) in Eureka, Nunavut, which makes key measurements used to detect and analyze the ozone hole over the Arctic (the largest ever having been detected last winter).
- Eliminating funding for the Experimental Lakes Area, a 44-year-old program covering 58 small lakes that scientists have used to conduct real-world experiments on entire ecosystems. Research done in this program has dramatically altered environmental policy across North America, and has incubated some of the world's greatest research on water while developing some of the world's leading scientists.
- Eliminating funding for the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE), an important source of research on the relationships between economy, society and the environment.
- Massively cutting Environment Canada's budget by 20% and reducing its staff by 11% in 2011 after a decade of steady budget cuts that had already left it barely functional. Core functions of many departments, like habitat protection or monitoring of air pollution, have been reduced or cut as a result.
- Undermining food sovereignty by amending the Seeds Act and Plant Breeder Rights, eliminating enforcement of the Product of Canada label, and prioritizing trade deals that benefit multinational corporations instead of local farmers.
- Muzzling of government (public) scientists in the media: Environment Canada prevented David Tarasick from speaking about his ozone layer research, which had been published in the journal *Nature*; the Privy Council Office stopped Kristina Miller, a researcher at Fisheries and Oceans, from granting interviews about her work on sockeye salmon decline in B.C., findings previously published in the journal *Science*; Environment Canada ordering scientists attending the International Polar Year Conference in Montreal to have a 'government liaison' present during conversations with reporters; Scott Dallimore, a geoscientist working for National Resources

Canada, requiring a lengthy process involving ministerial approval to gain permission to be interviewed by journalists about a paper published in *Nature*.

- Environment Minister Peter Kent's unsupported accusations of 'money laundering' involving foreign and domestic environmental agencies, taking sides between business and the environment rather than seeking consensus in addressing concerns voiced in the best interest of all Canadians, present and future.
- Public Safety Minister Vic Toews listing domestic threats 'based on grievances – real or perceived – revolving around the promotion of various causes such as animal rights, white supremacy, environmentalism and anti-capitalism'.

Clearly these amendments to the National Energy Board act, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, the Fisheries Act, and the Species at Risk Act were not intended to improve the protection and conservation of our environment and natural resources, but a systematic effort to 'provide greater certainty to investors keen to develop Canada's vast resources' as promoted by Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver. Removing substantive rules from acts and relegating them to regulations with ministerial oversight is clearly not in the public interest, as it transforms scientific assessment into political expedience, promoting the special interests of industry at the expense of the long term interests of Canadians.

Abandoning federal responsibilities for fisheries and oceans, which have historically provided a provincial/federal balance in the process of environmental impact assessment, does not make Canada stronger economically in the long term – quite the opposite, sound environmental protection makes Canada more economically resilient in the long term. Harassing and intimidating environmental organizations does not advance democratic conversation – quite the opposite, it diminishes the voices that can offer creative alternatives in the best interests of all Canadians, present and future.

Wealth and prosperity cannot be measured by the GDP. Real prosperity represents the well-being of citizens, and economic and social resilience for future generations. Undermining the ability of our environment to provide the natural resources required by our economy and to perform as a sink for our wastes enervates our collective prosperity. As the Earl of Lauderdale observed, the transfer of public wealth into private riches does not serve the long term interests of a nation. In short, the calculated and cynical assault on environmental protection, conservation and discussion by your government is a transparent effort to foster short-term economic goals that will leave us all much poorer, now and in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Braum Barber".

Braum Barber
Southern Alberta Group for the Environment
(SAGE)