



SCAN

SIERRA CLUB ACTIVIST NEWS

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Environmental “Nobel Prize” Honours Grassroots Heroes



For the last ten years, a San Francisco family foundation has bestowed extremely generous, prestigious, but, above all, strategic awards to eco-heroes. The Goldman Environmental Foundation is known world-wide for the “Goldman Prize,” which over the years has been awarded to activists including: Lois Gibbs (housewife-organizer from Love Canal), Ken Saro-Wiwa (Ogoni writer, environmental activist against Shell activities in the Niger Delta, murdered by the Nigerian military government), Sam Labudde (whose work on board a Mexican tuna vessel documenting the slaughter of dolphins led to a ban on imperiling dolphins in the tuna fishery), Alexander Nikitin (the first political prisoner of the post-Soviet USSR, who has accused the government of allowing abandoned nuclear submarines to leak radiation in to the sea), as well as Canadians, Matthew Coon-Come, Grand Chief of the Cree, and Colleen McCrory, hero of fights to protect wilderness in B.C.

This year, Sierra Club of Canada staff and volunteers were thrilled when Bernard Martin, in-shore fisher from Petty Harbour, Newfoundland, whom we had nominated, and Jorge Varela, Honduran campaigner against shrimp aquaculture with whom we have worked closely, joined the roster of outstanding and courageous activists from six continents. The 1999 winners of a prize of (US)\$125,000 each, represent a range of concerns and issues. We dedicate this issue of SCAN to

them, and hope that you will raise your voice to assist their campaigns.

Here are their stories:

Bernard Martin fights the industrial fishery

Bernard Martin is a fourth generation fisher from Petty Harbour, Newfoundland, who was honoured for his work to halt the annihilation of the East Coast cod fishery by the industrialized, high-tech dragger fleet. Along with other in-shore fishers, Martin worked tirelessly to reduce the cod quotas, fearing that catch rates were driving the fishery to commercial extinction.

Fishers from Petty Harbour and neighbouring Mattox Cove have long been in the fore-front of marine conservation efforts. In the early 1960s, alarmed by the increased use of monofilament gillnets, whose indestructible plastic created ghost nets across the ocean floor) and factory trawlers, the village successfully petitioned the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to ban such technologies from a ten mile area adjacent to Petty Harbour. In 1983, the fishers banded together to form the Petty Harbour Fishers Cooperative, building their own fish plant to secure more of their future.

In 1992, the Grand Banks cod fishery was closed, and the fish plant lay idle. Following the closure of the cod fishery, DFO pressured the fishers to harvest capelin, but they refused. They knew the fishery could never recover if those species at the base of the food chain were lost, and advocated conservation instead. Bernard Martin has continued to campaign for marine conservation, visiting fishers from Eritrea to Nicaragua to New Zealand through the efforts of Greenpeace and Oxfam, as well as helping to form Fishers Organized for the Revitalization of Communities and Ecosystems (FORCE).

In 1993, Bernard joined the Sierra Club of Canada’s “Clayoquot Express,” a cross-country rail protest against the logging of Clayoquot Sound. At whistle stop speeches across Canada, Bernard linked the assault on our forests and fisheries, saying “There is no difference between Fisheries Products International taking the last of the big cod, and

MacMillan Bloedel taking the last of the big trees. It all boils down to corporate greed and government mismanagement.”

Despite the personal hardship of being arrested thousands of miles from home, unemployed, and having to return for trial and jail time, he chose to be arrested after joining a blockade against the clear-cutting.

As the United Nations now recognizes that of the world’s seventeen major fisheries, thirteen are collapsed or collapsing, Bernard Martin believes it is increasingly urgent that the lessons of Newfoundland’s ecological and economic disaster be heeded around the world. “When I speak to people in other parts of the world about the collapse of Canada’s East Coast fisheries, I like to say, ‘If we have nothing else to offer at least take some lessons from us in how not to manage your fisheries,’” says Martin. “Ultimately, that may be our most valuable fisheries export.”

The reality is that the people and communities of Newfoundland were robbed. Large corporate interests, with government aid, wiped out one of the planet’s richest fisheries.

We have learned little in Canada from the disastrous mismanagement of the immense marine resources of our East Coast fishery.

There has never been a commission of inquiry, no accountability or assignment of responsibility for the disaster. Politicians and industry have some convenient scapegoats — cold water, seals, and, of course, the fishers themselves — anything but the truth. Truth is, technology was the driving force of the fishery collapse. New, highly efficient draggers, with nets capable of scooping up 20 747’s, wasting as much as they caught, plied the ocean floor year round. With radar, sonar could fish until they hunted down the last fish. The technology exceeded the ecosystem’s ability to recover.

As the fishery began to collapse, fishers from communities like Petty Harbour unsuccessfully challenged the quotas in a Federal Court action for an environmental assessment. One long-term fisher, with generations of experience told a visiting DFO scientist, “I’ve been out there, and I can tell you in a hundred years there’s never been a time when there were no cod in those

waters. The cod are in trouble.” He was told, “I’m sorry, but you are only one single data point.”

Bernard Martin was in the heart of the struggle to stop the draggers from destroying the fishery. The tragedy of that ecological disaster did not stop his conservation work. He has been working for Marine Protected Areas, attempting to create a climate of public understanding and support for the concept. As well, Bernard is currently very active in opposition to the privatization of our fishery. The use of “ITQ’s,” “Individual Transferable Quotas” is an anti-ecological, commercialization of the already devastated fishery. It moves us further away from community control and conservation.

Jorge Varela and the shrimp mafia

The Sierra Club also works with another of this year’s award winners, Jorge Varela of Honduras. Jorge Varela was honoured for his work in exposing the ecological and social devastation wrought by shrimp aquaculture.

Both of these men, one from Newfoundland and one from Honduras, are essentially part of the same struggle — protecting the planet’s ocean life from the impact of rapid expansion and globalization of the fisheries, wild and domestic. The corporatization of our oceans can be seen in the on-going profitability of the corporations that destroyed the East Coast fishery. When Fisheries Products International had no cod left to scoop out of the ocean off Newfoundland, the company retained profitability. While small coastal communities suffered, FPI converted itself from a fishing company to a seafood acquisition company, winning corporate awards along the way. And the seafood they purchased was, quite often, from the burgeoning aquaculture industry in the developing world, such as that against which Honduran fishers have fought, and, in some cases, been murdered for that opposition.

Shrimp aquaculture, in particular, has had devastating impacts around the world. More than half the world’s mangrove forests have disappeared, and much of that has been due to the clear-cutting of coastal mangroves to build

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A Word from the Chair

Paul Senez



Only 6 months to go before the Y2K problem puts an end to business as usual. Hello, new paradigm. Are you ready?

Okay, so it's a nice dream. The truth of the matter

is that the adherents of the expansionist world view (a.k.a. the military-industrial complex) will certainly not stand by and allow the computer systems that play such an important role in our daily lives collapse. Even if it means spending \$6 billion globally to fix the "problem". Just imagine what the Sierra Club could do with only one tenth of that amount.

Sierra Club of Canada activists are involved in a variety of issues at the regional, national and international levels. From Georges Bank, off the coast of Nova Scotia; air quality in Ontario; implementation of the Lands for Life plan; Alberta water quality and quantity; urban sprawl in Edmonton; protecting the Great Bear Rainforest of coastal British Columbia; to climate change; biotechnology and pesticides — **your** collective voice is being heard. Witness the recent announcement to finally move the residents of Frederick Street affected by the infamous Sydney Tar Ponds. Sierra Club activists deliver results.

But they can't do it without your support!

Now, more than ever, members are needed to bolster the national voice of the Sierra Club of Canada and the provincial/regional voices of the Club's chapters and groups. Memberships to the Sierra Club of Canada are the perfect gift for our modern consumer culture — there is no excessive packaging; they are 100% Canadian; one size fits all; and they do not disappoint. Your support provides much-needed funds and increases our campaigners' clout when they can claim to speak for hundreds of thousands of concerned Canadians. So, get your family members, your friends, the moms of the soccer league, your bowling buddies, and your classmates to join one of the most progressive environmental organizations in Canada. If you are already a member, consider making a donation.

With summer upon us, remember your sunscreen as you participate in the outings programs offered by your local chapter/group. You can contact them directly for information. Get off the couch and enjoy Canada's splendid environment.

Above, are listed just some of the exciting and important issues that the Sierra Club of Canada is involved in. Set your web browser to www.sierraclub.ca for more information (but do it soon 'cause after December 31st there is no guarantee that your computer will work).

Notes from the Executive Director

Elizabeth May



I am frequently asked, "Where does Sierra Club of Canada get its funding?" — to which I usually laugh mirthlessly. The word "funding" conveys a sense of prosperity

and security that is foreign to our experience. We have no secure source of funds. Membership dues barely cover the costs of newsletters and Sierra magazine. To cover these costs, most of dues are directed to the chapters and their offices across Canada. Thus the heart of what we do — campaigning, raising awareness, research, and education — has to come from funds raised in addition to membership dues.

We have been blessed with a core of dedicated supporters who have, time and time again, helped us extremely generously. We are also supported by the Sierra Club of Canada Foundation, which, as a registered charity, is able to receipt donations, as long as they are for purposes of a charitable nature. (More direct political work, or lawsuits, for example, are not considered charitable and are supported from non-receiptable donations.)

It amazes me how many people assume that we, and other environmental organizations, receive pots of government money. I think that due to the core funding provided in the past to groups supporting gender equity, consumer advocacy, or health promotion, for example, Canadians assumed that environmental groups received the same support. As funding for other sectors was slashed in recent years, I was asked by at least one reporter how we were managing in the "down-sized" world. My standard answer was that it was like being a Cape Bretoner during the Great Depression: we never noticed a difference.

Some groups receive substantial funding from corporations. Sierra Club, in both Canada and the United States, has very strict ethical guidelines. Essentially, we won't take money if the source of those funds was damaging to the environment. It is easy assessing the really obviously inappropriate sources of money — oil and gas, chemical, industrial logging, and nuclear (although, I must digress to mention that while enduring a two day cross examination recently in SCC's lawsuit against the sale of CANDU reactors to China, AECL's lawyer thought it was worth checking if we were funded by AECL's competitors overseas — the nuclear industry in the U.S. or France!). And it is easy feeling good about the good guys, like Mountain Equipment Co-op. Sometimes, however, we enter a grey zone. Companies, and people for that matter, inevitably pollute a bit. Sometimes our boards (chapter and/or national) have to struggle with the possibility of real money (which we NEED) and the source of money (not squeaky clean).

Once one of our chapters checked with the national board about a company about which we were unsure. Board members checked out ethical funding reports and found the company had a strong rating,

and I tried to bury niggling doubts. The chapter was thrilled when the company committed \$15,000 to the project. But before the cheque was in hand, I had a call from the project coordinator. Good news, sort of. The \$15,000 donor company had found another company willing to provide a matching grant of \$15,000. The matching company was Monsanto. In a rather tentative tone, our project coordinator asked if a donation from Monsanto would be acceptable. I shared with him one of my fantasies. "I keep hoping that we could be given a one million dollar donation from Monsanto so I could burn it in a public place," said I. He sounded crestfallen. I suggested he could try the board, but didn't imagine they would accept the money. He said he wasn't surprised and he would explain to his donor that we couldn't accept the matching \$15,000 from Monsanto.

Something fascinating happened then. The first company said that if SCC did not take the Monsanto \$15,000, we would lose the initial \$15,000. Now, there was genuine sadness in the air. We said goodbye to a total of \$30,000. But it certainly left me wondering if the whole thing had been a sting operation for Monsanto. My paranoia was buttressed recently when reading a wonderful book that I had been meaning to read since it came out a few years ago — Toxic Sludge is Good For You — Lies, damn lies and the public relations industry. Authors Stauber and Rampton do a brilliant job of uncovering the outrageous lengths to which corporate polluters will go to discredit the "enemy" (us — honestly, in one passage Sierra Club is literally described as "the enemy" by a major PR firm) and protect their interests (profits, over human life and the environment.) They quote from O'Dwyer's PR Services Report, "...companies are finding that cold cash will buy them good will from hard-up environmental groups in the belief [that] the imprimatur of activists will go a long way in improving their reputation among environmentally-aware consumers."

So, dear supporters, you now know exactly why we depend on you so much. Lots of small donations, (and, don't worry, we appreciate big ones too!) create a more independent, diverse and honest base for our work. We operate on a smaller, tighter budget than the other national environmental groups, and, at the same time, cover more issues.

The reality is that, just as Dr. Digby McLaren notes in this issue, society is overwhelmed by individual problems, and fails to see the whole picture of a planet in decline. We try to keep the whole picture in mind, to recognize interrelationships, and common sources of various symptoms. Mostly, we try to stem the tide of assaults on our environment. And to do that we need your help.

New Appointment

Sierra Club of Canada Executive Director, Elizabeth May, has recently received a unique honour. Dalhousie University, as a result of a substantial anonymous donation, has endowed a new permanent chair: "The Elizabeth May Chair in Women's Health and the Environment." Elizabeth will be the first Chairholder and will be developing the Dalhousie program in Women's Health and the Environment in conjunction with the Maritime Centre for Excellence in Women's Health. Although being a Professor at Dalhousie in Halifax for the 1999-2000 academic year will take Elizabeth away from Ottawa, she will remain Executive Director, with Deputy Director Angela Rickman and other members of the Ottawa management making it possible to reduce the Sierra Club workload to a tolerable level of over-commitment.

Changing of the Guard

We'd like to extend a heartfelt thank-you to Peter Lloyd for his dedication and commitment to the Club. Events unfolding in Peter's life have led him to decide to step down as President of the Board of Directors of the Sierra Club of Canada. Peter remains on the National Board, however.

At the last Board meeting in May, the Board of Directors elected Paul Senez as our new Chair — the first ever from British Columbia.

Paul worked with the British Columbia Chapter on forestry and wilderness issues, and has been a member of the BC Chapter's board of directors for three years. He has networked extensively within the environmental community of BC and Canada, and has demonstrated leadership and cooperation to achieve change.

Paul is occasionally a sessional lecturer in the University of Victoria's School of Environmental Studies, and is a director of the Ecoforestry Institute Society. His commitment to conservation is matched by a dedication to improving education and elevating public debate on environmental issues and choices.

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high production shrimp ponds. Mangrove forests once covered three quarters of the world's coastlines, often in conjunction with coral reefs. The root systems of mangrove trees rise like the flying buttresses of medieval cathedrals supporting the trees above the muddy waters. The ecosystem is a miraculous combination of forest, wetland, and sea — offering a rich and diverse habitat for a wealth of biodiversity. Species such as the endangered olive Ridley turtle, the white-breasted sea eagle, the tree-climbing fish, the proboscis monkey, the dugong, and even the Bengal tiger, depend on the mangrove forest. Underneath the mangroves, the soft soils provide excellent habitat for burrowing prawns and other mud dwellers. The mangroves are often referred to as “nurseries” for the coastal fishery. They are rich, diverse and highly productive. These characteristics have attracted the shrimp aquaculture industry resulting in massive clear-cutting of the forests.

This devastation has an ecological domino effect, often leading to the loss of once rich coastal fisheries, the loss of agriculture as salinization creeps inland, as well as the dislocation of whole communities.

Dr. Vandana Shiva, a prominent Indian scientist and activist, has estimated that for every shrimp farm, 15 jobs in India are created for the farm itself, 50 addi-

tional people are employed to provide security for the farm, and as many as 50,000 people are displaced through loss of their land, their traditional fishery and agriculture.

A further benefit of the mangrove forests has been their ability to buffer the effects of tropical storms. As devastating as Hurricane Mitch would have been in any event, its impact was worsened where mangrove forests had been removed. So too in Bangladesh, a 1991 tidal wave killed thousands of people. A tidal wave of familiar force had passed through the area in 1960, without loss of life, due to the protective effect of the mangroves.

The boom in shrimp farming has been rapid. Just retrieve from your memory how recently shrimp started appearing on every menu, and offered at astonishing prices at your local supermarket — from a 1986 price of (US)\$14/pound to 1996 price of (US)\$5/pound.

The industry, often referred to as “pink gold” in the lucrative Thai shrimp market, was spurred on by the export-led development strategies favoured by the International Monetary Fund. Cash crops for export meet targets set by IMF “Structural adjustment plans” (SAPs). Their harsh economic provisions can cause extensive social and environmental devastation. In addition

to the destruction caused by shrimp aquaculture when in operation, the shrimp ponds are very prone to disease and have an extremely short lifetime, collapsing after 5-10 years and leaving the area virtually unusable — salinated and contaminated.

Jorge Varela has seen first hand the disaster brought on by the shrimp industry. He has worked with the fishers and residents from the Gulf of Fonseca, which borders Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua, to protect their common fishing grounds from the shrimp farmers. Their organization, CODDEFFAGOLF, has succeeded in securing two successive moratoria on the expansion of shrimp farming, is bringing 107,000 hectares of wetlands under protection and is working on the massive relief and rehabilitation effort required after the devastation of Hurricane Mitch. In the course of their work, Honduran fishers opposing the shrimp industry have been murdered. This, sadly, is not that uncommon in the global struggle against the “shrimp mafia” as they have been dubbed in Thailand. In Bangladesh, for example, over one hundred people have been killed in conflict with commercial shrimp farmers. Around the world, activists working to raise awareness of this grotesque industry, mark November 7, the anniversary of the

1990 murder of Karunamoi Sarder, a village activist against shrimp farming, who was abducted, tortured, raped and murdered — her body dumped in the village centre.

Jorge Verela visited Canada in the winter of 1998, at the invitation of Sierra Club of Canada, to help raise awareness of the ecological and human costs of “cheap shrimp.” We are overjoyed that his work has been recognized with the (US)\$125,000 prize.

For more information on shrimp aquaculture, contact the national office or check our web-site. SCC national office is the secretariat for the Industrial Shrimp Action Network global public education campaign. Please do NOT order shrimp in a restaurant or buy it in the supermarket. Much of it is from shrimp ponds.

Samuel Nguiffo opposes the Chad-Cameroon pipeline

One of the most monstrous oil and gas proposals ever is being fought by courageous activists in Chad and Cameroon. The Goldman Prize has been awarded to Samuel Nguiffo, director of Cameroon's Centre for Environment and Development. He is a hugely influential leader, currently the sole African representative to the

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Winners from Asia, Island Nations and Europe

The other 1999 winners were:

Jacqui Katona and **Yvonne Margarula**, Australian aboriginal women, who are opposing a uranium mine proposed for the heart of Kakadu. The Kakadu National Park, Australia's largest, has been recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Yet, incredibly, the Australian government has granted approval to Energy Resources of Australia to mine uranium within the park, on the ancestral lands of the Mirrar people. Mining within the Kakadu was supposed to be illegal. The Mirrar people, led by the energetic and committed duo of Jacqui and Yvonne, have waged a desperate campaign to stop the radioactive contamination of their lands. The campaign has galvanized opponents, both aboriginal and environmentalists. Currently, 67% of Australians oppose the mine. As Jacqui says, “We must fight on, win or lose. It's about our heritage and our integrity.” Write: Australian High Commission
50 O'Connor St, Suite 710
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L2

Michal Kravcik is a Slovakian hydrologist who was honoured for stopping a government-planned mega-dam on the Upper Torysa River. The dam, which was intended to provide drinking water, would have dislocated four historic villages and destroyed the surrounding countryside. Michal fought back with a brilliant and simple alternative — a series of small dams and weirs, hand-built through the villages, to deliver the same amount of drinking water as the ill-conceived mega-project. His group, People and Water, ran summer camps, protests and built demonstration projects to convince the public of the feasibility of the “Blue Alternative.” In the end, not only did Michal stop the dam, but the movement is credited with the unprecedented 84% of the popular vote for the prime ministerial candidate who opposed the dam.

Ka Hsa w Wa is a heart-stoppingly brave young man, who has endured the brutality of Burma's military dictatorship. Born a member of the Karen, an ethnic minority in Burma, he has been part of opposition to the illegal repression of the dictatorship since he was eighteen years old. He was arrested in 1988,

following participation in student demonstrations, tortured for three days and released. Unable to return to his own home, or even be known by his real name, after the killing of an estimated 10,000 people, Ka Hsa w Wa was forced into the forests in the hills along the Thai border. It was there that he discovered the links between human rights and environmental abuses, as companies such as U.S.-based UNOCAL supported environmental destruction and murder by military security forces, protecting their oil pipelines.

Rather than escape Burma, he has continued to risk his life. Living on the run, making his way through the forested remote hill country, he has documented literally thousands of cases of forced labour, execution, rape and confiscation of property, all in aid of the oil pipeline consortium. His collected information has been used before the U.S. Congress, and, most recently, in a ground breaking case against UNOCAL, brought in the U.S. courts. In 1995, he co-founded EarthRights International, which has opened a Washington office.

At the Goldman Prize ceremony, he brought the full opera house to tears with a song, in Karen, to the mother he has not risked visiting for more than a decade.

A Personal Note in Closing

Our brief contact with these activists, particularly people like Oronto Douglas, Samuel Nguiffo, Jorge Verela and Ka Hsa w Wa, humbles us. As Canadian activists, we face certain challenges, exhaustion, financial trouble and sometimes painful losses. But, we do not face death squads. We do not risk torture. We, thank God, live in a democratic and free country. We are blessed through accident of birth. We have no excuse not to give a little more of ourselves, our time and resources, when so many more of our brothers and sisters risk so much more. E.M.

Action

Canada's Co of Oil and G

Moratoria under attack in Nova Scotia and British Columbia

Canadians from coast to coast must band together to oppose a concerted effort by the oil and gas industry to remove current prohibitions on oil and gas development offshore. On the East Coast, the moratorium on drilling on Georges Bank is due to expire at the end of 1999. On the West Coast, an open-ended moratorium has been in effect since 1971, prohibiting drilling or exploration off the B.C. coast. The ban also included tanker traffic through the Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound.

But both coasts are facing threats to lift the moratoria on tap into the offshore oil and gas reserves. While Federal Fisheries Minister David Anderson, who prior to a life in politics was a prominent advocate for the B.C. moratorium, has remained adamantly opposed to oil and gas development in currently protected waters, the provincial governments of both coasts may be wavering.

Canada has increased its oil and gas capacity significantly since the science on climate change made it clear that more fossil fuels only worsen the crisis. Yet, the development pressure continues, blind to the climate change implications.

Nova Scotia

The provincial Liberal government of Russell MacLellan convened the Georges Bank Review Panel to consider whether or not to extend the moratorium past its December 31, 1999 expiry date. The panel's report is due by the end of June and the decision by the provincial government is expected by mid-summer. The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and the Offshore Technologies Association of Nova Scotia have launched a major PR campaign for lifting the Georges Bank moratorium. Environmentally concerned citizens must fight back.

Nova Scotia has not banned all offshore oil and gas. Quite the contrary: There is a bonanza in offshore leases and aggressive exploration on the Scotian Shelf. Conservationists, including Sierra Club, have been pushing hard to see permanent protection of the Gully, a significant underwater canyon in the Sable area, which is home to bottlenose and grey whales.

But Georges Bank was treated differently from the Scotian Shelf, with a moratorium put into effect ten years

ago. The United States, which shares the rich waters of Georges Bank, also placed a moratorium on oil and gas drilling in the area, to protect its fishery. The U.S. has already taken action to extend the moratorium to 2012 on its side of the border.

Georges Bank is hugely significant ecologically and is considered one of the most biologically productive continental shelf eco-systems in the world. In addition to a highly valuable fishery, it is home to an enormous range of marine species, from seabirds, sea turtles, and corals to whales. The Leatherback Turtle would be under increased stress from oil and gas activities, as would the Northern Right Whale. Both are endangered species of particular concern. But there are other species, also endangered found on Georges Bank, including six species of whale, three other turtle species, the Atlantic cod and other species not yet listed, but believed to be at risk. The barndoor skate, for instance, has not yet been listed by COSEWIC, but is generally accepted to be in serious trouble.

The oil and gas industry has argued that technology has so advanced since the moratorium was enacted, that industrial activity and the fishery can operate side by side. The fishermen aren't convinced, and neither are environmental groups. The Sierra Club's Eastern Canada chapter has made the extension of the moratorium on Georges Bank its number one conservation priority. Environmental groups and fishery interests have collaborated in the "No Rigs 2000" coalition. Despite strains over the damage done by inappropriate fishing technology (see profile of Bernard Martin in this issue), the groups have made common cause over the need to keep oil rigs off of Georges Bank.

British Columbia

Meanwhile, on the other coast, the NDP government of Glen Clark is under heavy pressure to lift its moratorium — and Clark appears to be on the verge of allowing oil rigs offshore. The pressure has come from pro-oil businesses in the Prince Rupert area, home to Deputy Premier Dan Miller, B.C.'s current Minister for Mines and Energy. In early June, 1999, the Northern Development Commission hired a Vancouver-based consultant to carry out a two-month feasibility study. Many fear this will lead to a "green light" for the oil and gas industry.

This is not the first time the moratorium has been reviewed. A 1986 environmental assessment concluded that there were many significant and unanswered environmental concerns. The panel, chaired by Ewan Cotterill, wrote, "A major oil blow-out could have significant socio-economic effects on the British Columbia north coast and the residents of its communities." Despite these concerns, the Panel gave a cautious green light to limited exploration and development.

Before the moratorium could be lifted, however, the Exxon Valdez ran aground and public resistance to tanker traffic and oil development galvanised. Following the spill, Premier VanderZalm appointed an out-spoken opponent of lifting the moratorium, David Anderson, Canada's current Minister of Fisheries, to head an inquiry into oil transportation and oil spills. Anderson reported that the risk of spills was high. Even routine transportation of oil could be expected to result in serious spills. This view was confirmed in a subsequent federal report on tanker safety. Panel Chair David Brander-Smith commented at the time, "We are not even ready for a medium-sized spill, let alone the big one."

A 1998 study by the Geological Survey of Canada estimated offshore oil and gas reserves in the Dixon and Hecate Straits at 9.8 billion barrels of oil and 25 trillion cubic metres of natural gas — five times the size of Newfoundland's Hibernia oil fields. While this report represents nothing more than an educated guess based on computer modelling of seismic information from the 1960s, it has fuelled the pro-oil development groups in B.C. As the fishery and forestry continue in decline caused by over-exploitation and mechanisation, job-hungry communities are looking offshore.

But the waters off British Columbia could not be a more inappropriate place to even explore for oil. A combination of rich ocean life and a fierce and unpredictable climate, make exploration, development and tanker traffic very risky business. What is at risk are the waters off Haida Gwaii, otherwise known as the Queen Charlotte Islands, a candidate National Marine Park. Grey whales are found in these waters, as are minke and orcas, a rich salmon fishery, seals, otters and sea lions and an array of sea birds. The United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union oppose lifting the moratorium for fear that the troubled fishery could be devastated by a fledgling

Alert!

Coasts Face Threat as Development!!

oil and gas industry. So too so many First Nations oppose the lifting of the moratorium. In fact, the issue is considered too controversial by the Commissioner of the B.C. Northern Development Commission to allow public meetings. The two-month feasibility study will be conducted through private interviews.

Meanwhile, as on Georges Bank, the US government has extended its moratorium to 2010.

Take Action to Protect our Oceans:

Write:

Premier Russell MacLellan
Province of Nova Scotia
P.O. Box 726
Halifax, N.S. B3J 2T3

Premier Glen Clark
West Annex
Room 156
Parliament Bldgs.
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

Sample Generic Letter

(ie works for both NS and BC, please adapt)

Dear Mr. Premier,

I am writing out of concern that you may consider lifting the long-standing ban on oil and gas exploration and development offshore on (Georges Bank/British Columbia coast).

Oil and gas development is completely incompatible with our fisheries and poses a serious risk to marine life, including threatened and endangered species. As the U.S. government has extended its moratorium on oil development offshore, it would undermine their conservation initiative if Canada lifted the moratorium.

Please extend the moratorium, and this time, make it permanent.

Sample Letter

to Federal Minister of Fisheries

The Hon David Anderson,
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

I am very concerned that on both coasts provincial governments are considering lifting the moratoria on oil and gas development. Your opposition to the environmental risks of oil and gas development in coastal waters is well known. Please do whatever you can to ensure that the moratoria in place in Nova Scotia for Georges Bank and for offshore British Columbia remain in force.

Thank you.

Sample Letter

(to the Editor)

To the Editor:
Chronicle Herald
1650 Argyle St.
Box 610
Halifax, N.S. B3J 2T2

As Nova Scotia considers lifting the moratorium on oil and gas development on Georges Bank, it is important to weigh carefully all those values that are at stake: Our beautiful waters, that draw thousands of tourists to our (your) province; The abundant marine life, and especially those species in dwindling numbers, such as the endangered Right whale; our fisheries and the people who depend on them; and ultimately, the stability of global climate as unending pursuit of fossil fuels and its rapid consumption is pushing the planet's atmosphere out of balance.

I hope all Nova Scotians will convey their concerns to the provincial government and say "No to Oil Rigs" on Georges Bank.

Sample Letter

(to the Editor)

To the Editor:
Vancouver Sun
2250 Granville St.
Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3G2

Apparently the pro-offshore oil development forces have gotten the ear of Glen Clark's government. Recent news reports seem to suggest that BC might actually consider lifting its moratorium on oil and gas exploration, development and tanker traffic in the wild, violent and life-giving waters off-shore. Have we learned nothing from the 1988 oil spill that left a slick from Washington state to the beaches of Pacific Rim National Park? Have we forgotten the Exxon Valdez and the ecological disaster of the spring of 1989?

The moratorium protects more than whales and seabirds. It also protects jobs in BC in the fishing industry and in our growing tourism industry. The US has extended its moratorium. BC should do the same.

Late Breaking News

Urgent Action Needed on Bill C-32, The Canadian Environmental Protection Act

The Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA), the Act that most Canadians assume is protecting our environment is being watered down. The House of Commons Standing Committee on the Environment made improvements to the bill in a number of key areas. These improvements were subsequently obliterated by the Liberal majority in Parliament, buckling under to pressure from industry lobbying and insulting all Canadians by ignoring the democratic process. Now, more than ever, Canadians' health and environment are threatened.

The government has weakened the precautionary principle, has exempted industry from achieving virtual elimination of the most toxic and dangerous chemicals, and watered down the process for assessing the dangers posed by some 23,000 chemicals that are currently in use in Canada. The Environmental Auditor General, Brian Emmett, has given the Canadian government very poor marks for its handling of toxic substances, but instead of strengthening its policies, the government is poised to gut them.

We Need your Help!

Bill C-32 is now at the Senate, where the Senate Standing Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources will review it. The bill cannot be allowed to pass as it stands, or we risk health and environmental degradation due to poor control of toxic chemicals. We will continue to put more pressure on our health care system as more of us become ill due to environmental contamination, and we will be shifting the burden of cleaning up our toxic legacy onto our children and future generations.

Take a few minutes to call, write, and/or email the members of the Senate Committee, and ask them to exercise sober, second thought. Tell them to put health and the environment before industry profits. Tell them to send Bill C-32 back to the House of Commons with the Environment Committee's original amendments.

You can write to Senators, POSTAGE FREE, at:
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A4

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phone: 613 947-2220, ghittr@sen.parl.gc.ca
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Senator Archibald Johnstone, phone: 613 943-1073, johnsa@sen.parl.gc.ca
Senator Richard H. Kroft, phone: 613 992-7436, kroftr@sen.parl.gc.ca
Senator Alasdair Graham, Leader of the Government of the Senate,
phone: 613 992-3770, (no email address)
Senator Sharon Carstairs, Deputy Leader of the Senate,
phone: 613 947-7123, carsts@sen.parl.gc.ca

Planet by the numbers...

(Sources: "Vital Signs," the 1998 report of the World Watch Institute, Canadian Geographic, May/June 1999 issue, Ontario Medical Association)

1
percent of global economic output — \$413 billion — spent on advertising

80
life expectancy in Japan, highest in the world. Cuba's life expectancy is higher than that in the US.

300,000,000
number of people who fled natural disasters in 1998

52,000
number of people who died in India due to air pollution in 1998

1,800
number of people who died in Ontario due to air pollution in 1998

3 million
number of deaths estimated in China due to air pollution between 1994-1996

250
percent increase in Canada's carbon dioxide emissions from 1960 to 1990

0.5
percent of global population living in Canada

2.5
percent of world's energy used by Canadians

70
percent of Canadian energy sources from fossil fuels

1.5
percent of Canadian energy from renewable sources

Environmental "Nobel Prize" Honours Grassroots Heroes

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"CEO's Process," a World Bank initiative to bring CEOs of logging companies, conservation groups and developing country representatives together.

Nguiffo is working against time to stop the proposed (US)\$3.5 billion Chad-Cameroon pipeline. The World Bank and its private sector branch, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) are considering approving (US)\$240 million in loans for the pipeline — monies to assist some of the most powerful and prosperous oil companies in the world: Shell, Exxon and Elf. The proposal will be decided this fall by the World Bank Board of Directors, including the Canadian Executive Director, Ms. Terrie O'Leary. His struggle will no doubt be helped by the global spotlight created by the Goldman Prize. Sierra Club of Canada has expanded our work to raise awareness in Canada about the pipeline and its environmental and social consequences, in collaboration with partners in the Halifax Initiative, focusing on international financial institution policies.

Nguiffo leads a campaign in Cameroon to focus attention on the accelerating rate of deforestation in the rich tropical rainforests of central Africa, currently one of the last remaining rainforests on the continent. The rainforests of central Africa are second only in size to the Amazon, but they are disappearing fast. Cameroon is

Africa's largest exporter of raw timber. Its forests are home to a range of endangered species, including the black rhinoceros and chimpanzees, as well as endangered forest-dwelling peoples, including the Baka and Bagueli, often incorrectly referred to as "Pygmies."

The pipeline threatens a triple threat to the environment. It would increase greenhouse gases by making one billion barrels of crude oil available for burning — pumping 800- 1 million barrels of oil per year for 25 years over the lifetime of the project from oil-rich southern Chad. It would also destroy large areas of rainforest as it snakes its way from Chad to the coast of Cameroon, 650 miles (1,050 Km) from the oil fields. It would also impose environmental costs, such as the Ogoni people of Nigeria have experienced in oil spills and gas flaring. With these human costs, local opponents of the project also fear human rights abuses, such as those inflicted on the Ogoni and Ejaw (check spelling?) of the Niger Delta. Prominent Nigerian environmentalist and lawyer for Ken Saro-Wiwa, Oronto Douglas has commented, the Bank and the IFC "should not use taxpayer money to facilitate human rights violations, environmental degradation, and social injustice, which has been the pattern the Bank has been facilitating over the past 50 years."

Oronto Douglas has warned, based on his experience with some of the same companies in the Niger Delta, that the project has an enormous potential for increased violence by security guards if the pipeline is approved. "When I talk of killing," he says, "it's not just human beings here. When the project goes to Cameroon, they will kill animals, they will kill ecology, and squash it to death. And we want to prevent it."

(Note to readers: The Sierra Club "Boycott Shell Campaign" is still in effect in protest against the on-going abuses in Nigeria.)

It is one of the more appalling aspects of the Chad-Cameroon proposal that the World Bank, whose mandate is to alleviate poverty, is being asked to give funds to the largest oil companies in the world. As Samuel Nguiffo has said, "If the aim is to really promote development and fight against poverty, is it really necessary to do it through some of the richest companies in the world? This is not money for development."

To support sustainable energy policies and protection of the Cameroon rainforests, please write to The Hon. Paul Martin, Minister of Finance and Terrie O'Leary, Executive Director to the World Bank: Paul Martin, M.P., House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario (no stamp required) and Ms. Terrie O'Leary, Executive Director for Canada, The World Bank, 1818 H

Sample Letter

Dear Mr. Minister/Ms. O'Leary

I am writing to urge that Canada vote against the proposed loan to support Exxon, Shell and Elf in their plans to build an ecologically devastating oil pipeline from Chad to the coast of Cameroon. There is no way that a loan of ten cents, much less \$240 (US\$) can be justified to assist in the Chad-Cameroon pipeline. Firstly, it is inconceivable that Canadian tax dollars, directed to the World Bank for spending to alleviate poverty, would be re-directed to the most powerful multinationals on Earth.

Secondly, no public monies should be used to promote fossil fuels which threaten the planet with catastrophic impacts of global climate imbalance. The Bank should target whatever energy loans it makes to appropriate scale, energy-efficiency and renewable energy projects which meet human needs — not the greed of Shell and Exxon.

Lastly, the project runs counter to Bank policy established after disastrous Amazonian projects, that Bank-funded projects should not compromise pristine rainforests.

Canada should exert all our influence to insist on a new policy at the Bank, and other multi-lateral institutions in which we have a voice, that public monies should no longer be used for the exploration or development of new fossil fuel reserves. Existing supplies are more than adequate to destroy our environment at current rates of use.

Scientific Perspectives

El Niño and Climate Change

Dr. Jim Bruce is one of Canada's leading climate scientists. He chaired on of the three working groups within the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), comprising 2,000 of the top world experts in climate change, until his retirement from the Atmospheric Environment Service of Environment Canada last year. He is a recipient of the Order of Canada.

The El Niño event of 1997-8 was the most intense in one hundred years of record. While there is a danger of blaming nearly every weather disaster on El Niño, global estimates of 1997-8 damage were \$33 billion. These damages followed a familiar pattern:

- 50,000 homeless from floods in Ecuador and Peru
- Peruvian fish catch reduced 45%
- Drought and forest fires in N.E. Brazil, Southern Caribbean and Panama
- Panama Canal too shallow for many ships
- Severe storms and mudslides in California
- 100 deaths from heat stress in Texas and thousands in India
- Unprecedented forest fires in Florida
- The worst floods in 40 years in SE Africa and China
- Drought and forest fires in Indonesia
- The worst drought of the century in Papua New Guinea

And so on. In Canada, the El Niño signal is not as strong as in the tropics, the sub-tropics and in mid-latitudes closest to the sub-tropics. However, the warm dry conditions over most of Canada, and the January ice storm of 1998, are thought to be at least partly connected to the strong El Niño event.

El Niños are events in which the equatorial surface water temperatures are much above normal in the eastern Pacific. Up to 20 or so years ago, they occurred every 4-7 years and were interspersed with normal or colder water than normal (La Niña) events. El Niño and to a lesser extent La Niña cause major distortions in weather patterns, changing the normal paths of jet streams and bringing abnormal conditions, drought, floods, heat or cold, to many parts of the world. La Niña conditions are not normally as disruptive and usually of opposite effect in a given region. The 100-year record suggests that La Niñas are also becoming more intense and El Niño conditions becoming more frequent since the 1970s.

In scientific circles, a major argument has been raging. Are the increases in El Niño intensity and frequency observed over the century, culminating in the 1997-8 event, a trend in natural

variability, or are they related to increased radiative forcing at the Earth's surface due to rising concentrations of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from human activities?

Recent research strongly supports the latter view. In the April 22, 1999 issue of Nature, A. Timmermann and colleagues of the prestigious Max Planck Institute in Germany, report their recent findings. They modeled El Niño events with a fine-scale equatorial resolution. They concluded that with "increasing greenhouse gas concentrations, more frequent El Niño-like conditions and stronger cold events in the tropical Pacific Ocean result". This derives mainly from a strengthened thermocline (thin layer dividing warm near surface waters from cold deep waters) with greenhouse warming of the surface, in the eastern equatorial Pacific.

This research confirms earlier studies at the equally prestigious Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory at Princeton, (Knutson and Manabe 1997, Journal of Climate). Their 1997 results indicated that the rising El Niño frequency and intensities could not be explained without invoking greenhouse gas forcing of the system. They too, predicted continued increases in El Niño warming of the eastern Equatorial Pacific with continued build up of atmospheric greenhouse gases. Several published theoretical studies support these conclusions.

Thus, those who have claimed that the "natural" variability of the El Niño-La Niña (ENSO) system is responsible for most of the observed climate change over the past few decades are confronted with a serious dilemma. If this research is valid, as it appears to be, then El Niño can no longer be thought of as a purely natural phenomenon. Rather, its devastating impact is being significantly increased by human activities.

'Perspectives on the Environmental Problem'

Dr. Digby McLaren delivered the following talk at the first annual "Eco-Summit" held on Parliament Hill on May 10-11, 1999. The Eco-Summit was organised by one of our heroes, Liberal MP from York (Ontario) Karen Kraft-Sloan, and brought together some of Canada's top scientists to exchange views and research with Parliamentarians. Dr. Digby McLaren, former President of the Royal Society of Canada, originator of the Global Change Programme, co-author/editor of Planet under Stress, former head of the Canadian Geological Survey and member of the Order of Canada, is also a Sierra Club of Canada member and supporter.

The science of Ecology is defined as the study of the interactions of living organisms with their physical, biological and chemical environment within our world. This system of interactions has existed since the beginning of life about three and a half billion years ago or more, and life has adjusted to the continuous chemical and physical changes brought about by life itself. I call this global system Eco One. Recently, a few tens of thousands of years ago, humans appeared on Earth, and played a minor role in adjusting Eco One to the system.

The global population grew slowly and highly irregularly until the discovery of a seemingly endless store of energy buried in the Earth in the form of coal and oil. This brought about what we call locally the Industrial Revolution and led to two events of major significance.

Firstly, a rapid and still growing increase in population — from one billion in mid 19th century to six billion today. Such growth involves many conflicting problems and opinions — demographics, moral and religious opinions, family planning, women's rights, education, health, and impact on food supply. Continued growth would appear inevitable for some years ahead.

Secondly, huge and ongoing growth in energy use, largely from coal and oil, which constitute major sources for global pollution, gaseous, liquid and solid, including new compounds, many of which have been shown to be poisonous or damaging to plants, animals and human beings, and previously unknown on Eco One.

In less than 200 years, human beings have transformed the system we call Eco One, to a global system that involves rapid and accelerating physical and chemical changes together with biological destruction. I shall call this system Eco Two.

We are now faced with major problems that must involve all disciplines: science, humanities, economics and politics in their solution, and we must recognise that we live on a finite planet with a finite supply of resources, and take immediate measures to halt and reverse the ongoing destruction of the existing ecosystem, for which the major driving forces remain over-use of energy, that is inevitably linked to pollution of many kinds, and over-population.

Frequently, concern for the environment is set aside for more weighty considerations: such as concern for business, family, or recreation. When interest is taken, however, in environmental matters by the public and press, it tends to be directed piecemeal to specific problems so that the overall perception of the condition of the planet grows slowly. It is hard for us to realize that the lives of all human beings on Earth depend entirely on use and support furnished by its atmosphere, lands and waters and all that lives in them — in Eco Two, and that we are systematically and increasingly fouling and destroying them.

How shall we understand this paradox?

Good News on Recent Issues we have "SCANNED"

- **House of Commons** overwhelmingly passed the **Tobin tax** resolution. While non-binding, the strong support for currency transaction controls that included Paul Martin's vote, sends a strong political signal.
- Residents of Frederick Street in heavily contaminated Sydney, Nova Scotia have been offered a buy-out by the provincial government. The offer itself is shabby, (take it or leave it for no more than \$40,000/house), and leaves out families on other streets where arsenic has been found in their basements, but it is a major step for the government to recognize the principle of moving families. Sadly, the provincial government still

refuses to admit that there is a health hazard and has said the move is for "compassionate reasons."

- **Lands for Life** process in Ontario ended up adding 2.4 million hectares to protected area status, including critical forest areas in the Algoma Highlands and Spanish River. The decision is far from perfect, especially as it has promised logging companies that they will have the same amount of wood fibre from the province's forests. That means intensified logging in all non-protected forest areas of central and northern Ontario. All this within Premier Mike Harris's scheme for industry "self-regulation."

- **Alberta's Special Places 2000** finally did something special. The Whaleback was, at long last, protected. Last year, Amoco Canada Petroleum Ltd. voluntarily offered to relinquish its leases on the Whaleback — without compensation. The government appeared uninterested in the offer and the environmental community was left to muse that the industry was more environmentally sensitive than the government. But finally, light, and the Whaleback, dawned. The Whaleback, the largest, intact montane landscape in Canada, is home to 2,000 elk, grizzly bears and more than 80 species of songbirds.

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- YES! Please send me a copy of "AT THE CUTTING EDGE" (\$28.75 includes shipping)

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Sierra Club of Canada, #412 - 1 Nicholas St., Ottawa ON K1N 7B7
(Membership fees are not tax deductible.)

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Contact Sierra Club National Office.



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Green lettering on yellow recyclable background. Post on lawns or in windows.

\$5 each \$60 for 20 Plus shipping.

Contact Sierra Club National Office.



Sierra

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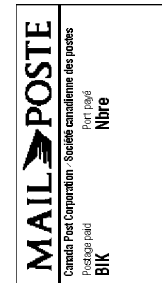
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